

DREAMING BETWIXT AND BETWEEN: ONEIRIC NARRATIVES IN HUIJIAO AND
DAOXUAN'S *BIOGRAPHIES OF EMINENT MONKS*

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DAOXUAN'S *BIOGRAPHIES OF EMINENT MONKS*

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A Thesis Prepared for the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (2018)
(Religious Studies)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Dreaming Betwixt and Between: Oneiric Narratives in Huijiao and Daoxuan's *Biographies of Eminent Monks*

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NUMBER OF PAGES: ix, 432

Abstract

This project explores the evolution of medieval Chinese Buddhist perspectives on dreams through a series of in-depth comparisons between the oneiric narratives preserved in Huijiao's (慧皎) *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 [GSZ]) and Daoxuan's (道宣) *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [XGSZ]), drawing inspiration from contemporary Sinological and Buddhist Studies scholarship, as well as anthropological and psychological perspectives on dreaming. In addition to using these comparisons to address questions related to the diachronic transformation of Chinese Buddhist thought and practice from the early sixth- to mid-seventh centuries, I also posit (and provide evidence for) the hypothesis that dreams (and the stories told about them) represent a potent conceptual metaphor for the “betwixt and between” experience of liminality: a hypothesis that I hope inspires discussion and debate in the broader oneirological community.

I approach these topics through four interrelated case studies. Chapter One uses dream narratives to investigate the various modes of oneiric practice ascribed to Chinese monks (and laypeople) in GSZ and XGSZ, focusing on three specific subtopics (dream telling, dream interpretation, and dream incubation) to evaluate the differences between the episodes preserved in both collections. Chapter Two examines the differing ways that Huijiao and Daoxuan engaged with both Chinese and (Indian) Buddhist oneiric conception tropes when describing the birth and early lives of exemplary monks. Chapter Three posits that Huijiao and Daoxuan made distinctive (and historically-situated) use of oneiric narratives to help situate China within the imagined geographies of contemporary Chinese Buddhists. Finally, Chapter Four explores the distinctive ways that oneiric narratives were used in GSZ and XGSZ to negotiate the interactions between exemplary Buddhists and indigenous Chinese religious practices, practitioners and deities.

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Acknowledgments

As someone who is occasionally overwhelmed by Eeyore-like tendencies, I am intimately aware of the extent to which the successful completion of this project can be credited to the care, encouragement, and solicitude of my family, friends, and colleagues. Dr. James Benn, my advisor at McMaster, has been unwavering in his support, whether providing practical advice, reading draft chapters, or sending out detailed responses to my translation questions at all hours of the day and night. His compendious knowledge of both the Buddhist Studies and Sinological literatures helped direct me toward innumerable useful sources, and to avoid just as many dead-ends. Likewise, my time studying with Dr. Funayama Tōru at the University of Kyoto was one of the most productive and intellectually-stimulating periods of my life. My approach to the *Eminent Monks* literature owes much to our weekly translation meetings, where I was the constant beneficiary of his encyclopedic command of the primary Buddhist literature. I cannot believe that I have had the good fortune of studying with two such exemplars of intellectual generosity.

While at McMaster, I also benefited immeasurably from my courses with Drs. Shayne Clarke and Mark Rowe: both of whom demonstrated the highest academic standards and inspired me to strive after the same. I am also indebted to the tireless work of three sets of departmental administrators: Doreen Drew, Sheryl Dick, and Jennifer Nettleton (McMaster); Angela Thibodeau (Mount Allison); and Barb Truscott, Diana Greene, and Andrea McIntyre (Carleton). Whether shepherding me through the graduate studies process or helping to facilitate my teaching responsibilities, I know that it would have been nigh impossible to have completed this project without their assistance.

Though academic work is often a solitary pursuit, thinking back on the dissertation process has also reminded me innumerable interactions, both long-term and fleeting, that helped to propel me forward. Dr. Robert Company has been a consistent source of support and encouragement, sharing sections of his unpublished manuscript and offering helpful comments on my penultimate draft that have improved the final version of this project. Dr. Chris Handy, one of my oldest academic colleagues, has been a stalwart friend and ally. Nate Lovdahl read through the entirety of a previous (and much rougher) draft, providing a variety of invaluable suggestions. Ruifeng Chen helped me to track down a number of obscure references. Dr. Peter Kuling, a childhood friend, came through with some last minute editing support. Nakayama Keiki kindly volunteered his time to work on a variety of Japanese sources with me. Funayama Junko indefatigably arranged for my accommodations in Kyoto. Dr. Matsuoka Hiroko helped me to get settled in to life at the Institute for Research in Humanities. My surrogate academic family at Mount Allison (Fiona Black, Andrew Wilson, Barb Clayton, and Susie Andrews) took me in during a difficult time in my life, and reminded me of the joy of being part of a caring, collegial department. Dr. Noel Salmond mentored me during my initial semester at Carleton. Finally, Drs. Kevin Buckelew and Alex Hsu were inspiring collaborators, and encouraged me to think more deeply about the significance of commentarial practice in Chinese Buddhism.

In addition, I would also like to express my thanks to Dr. Kelly Bulkeley, who recommended a variety of oneirological sources and buoyed me up with his enthusiasm about my project; Dr. Anna Shields, who offered wise counsel on both methodological matters and the exigencies of contemporary academic life; Dr. Wendi Adamek, who gave me a singularly helpful piece of dissertation advice (namely, to write in order to “perfume my own mind” (following Śāntideva)); and Dr. G. William Domhoff, who shared some unpublished research on the reliability (or lack thereof) in reported dreams.

I also have the immeasurable good fortune of being part of a loving, supporting family. My parents (Jack and Linda) have always believed in me, even when my own convictions on that front were somewhat lacking. To them, and to Aaron, Tara, Brian, and Myles, I want to apologize for all of the times that I rushed away from a Thanksgiving or Christmas meal to get back to work on this project. Knowing that you would all be there when I returned made leaving a little easier. Finally, Joanne was a constant source of strength during this final, seemingly interminable year. Whether keeping me fed, reminding me to take the occasional break, or just giving me something to look forward to, I don't know how I would have finished without her.

Finally, this research would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, BDK Canada, the Chung Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, Fo Guang Shan, the Sheng-Yen Lu Foundation, and McMaster University. I am humbled by the fact that each of these groups saw merit in my project, and hope that the results live up to their expectations.

Abbreviations, Conventions and Primary Sources

All transliterated Chinese terms are rendered in pinyin. To avoid confusion, I have silently emended the text of all quotations to employ this romanization scheme as well. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

Abbreviations – Reference Works

CJKV – Charles A. Muller (editor), *CJKV-English Dictionary of Confucian, Daoist, and Intellectual Historical Terms*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/dealt/>.

DDB – Charles A. Muller (editor), *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>.

DILA – Huimin Bhikṣu 釋惠敏 (director); Aming Tu 杜正民, Marcus Bingenheimer 馬德偉, Jen-Jou Hung 洪振洲 (co-directors), *Buddhist Studies Authority Database Project*, <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/>

GR – *Grand dictionnaire Ricci de la langue chinoise*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer: Taipei Institut Ricci, 2001). [Accessed digitally via *Pleco*]

Hirakawa – Hirakawa Akira, *A Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary*, (Tokyo: The Reiyukai, 1997).

Hucker – Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, (Taipei: Southern Materials Centre, 1985).¹

HYDC – *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大辭典, (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 1993 / 2010). [Accessed digitally via *Pleco*]

Mochizuki – Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信亨, *Mochizuki Bukkyō Daijiten* 望月佛教大辭典, (Tokyo: Sekai seiten kankō kyōkai, 1933–1936).

Nakamura Hajime 中村元, *Bukkyōgo Daijiten* 佛教語大辭典, (Tokyo: Tōkyō shoseki, 1982).

SCM – Paul W. Kroll (ed.), *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017). [Accessed digitally via *Pleco*]

Abbreviations – Primary Sources

FYZL – *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 [T. 2122, see *Works Cited* for print edition]

GSZ – *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 [T. 2059, see *Works Cited* for print editions]

T. – Taishō Tripitaka (CBETA version). 《大正新脩大藏經》與《卍新纂續藏經》的資料引用是出自「中華電子佛典協會」(Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, 簡稱 CBETA)的電子佛典系列光碟 (2016). <http://www.cbeta.org/>

XGSZ – *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [T. 2059, see *Works Cited* for print edition]

1 Note: numerical references (in the format “Hucker #”) are to entry numbers rather than page numbers.

Introduction

When I first began to consider writing a dissertation on the topic of dreams in medieval Chinese Buddhism, my decision to do so was bolstered by some of the disciplinary perspectives I encountered in my initial literature review. As Jean-Pierre Drège suggested, after surveying various extant oneiromantic manuals preserved in the library cache at Dunhuang, “stories of dreams abound in China's history, as well as its literature”¹ – a perspective that accorded with my initial observations regarding the plethora of oneiric narratives in the medieval sources that I had surveyed. This, of course, meant that I could not help but agree with Michel Strickmann's characteristically bombastic claim that attending to dreams will play a “crucial role” in helping contemporary scholars reconstruct a historically nuanced perspective on the “real China” as lived.² In the intervening years, it became clear that I was not alone in seeking to address this disciplinary lacuna, given the wealth of research that has since emerged, considering various aspects of this topic from a variety of perspectives.³ Attending to these new developments, as well as hearing about an upcoming monograph on the topic by as eminent a scholar as Robert Ford Company,⁴ has forced me to realize that my initial conception of the project,

1 Jean-Pierre Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang” in *Nouvelle Contributions Aux Études de Touen-Houang*, edited by Michel Soymié, (Paris: Librairie Droz, 1981), 205–249.

2 In particular, he argues that:

Westerners have been content to project their own type of self-categorizations upon the Chinese. Too willingly have we imagined a Chinese world neatly parcelled out among “Buddhists,” “Taoists,” and “Confucians.” Even “Animists” may inhabit this imaginary China, since we naturally tend to export our outworn notions (like our shopworn technology) to the ends of the earth, where distance real or imagined reduces all to the facile terms of model, or ideal (25).

Michel Strickmann, “Dreamwork of the Psycho-sinologists: Doctors, Taoists, Monks” in *Psycho-sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture*, edited by Carolyn T. Brown, (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1987), 25–46. Though Western scholarship has become considerably more nuanced in the application of such categories in the thirty years since Strickmann gave voice to these critiques, the issue of reifying groups of religious actors into intentional (even agential) “traditions” and “-isms” has continued to the present day, as discussed in Robert Ford Company, “On the Very Idea of Religions (in the Modern West and in Early Medieval China),” *History of Religions* 42 (2003): 287–319; Robert Ford Company, “Religious Repertoires and Contestation: A Case Study Based on Buddhist Miracle Tales,” *History of Religions* 52:2 (2012): 99–141.

3 For an overview, see the literature review to follow and *passim*.

4 Personal communication. Fortunately, Dr. Company has reassured me that there should not be too much overlap between our projects, given that he is focusing primarily on the Northern/Southern Dynasties period, using a broad swath of narrative and other sources (as he has done so effectively in addressing a variety of other subjects) rather than focusing exclusively on the *Eminent Monks*. Regardless, even a cursory examination of the footnotes in pages to follow will make my methodological and historiographical indebtedness to Company's research abundantly clear. Also, he has kindly provided me with a draft version of his chapter on dream interpretation, which will be cited below as: Company, “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft).

which amounted to little more than an attempt to provide a synoptic overview of dream narratives from the early medieval period, was no longer viable. In reviewing my notes and translations, however, I began to realize that they could also contribute to a more modest, but consequently more analytically rigorous, project, focusing on the various accounts of dreams preserved in the hagiographical collections compiled and edited by Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554) and Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667): namely, the Liang Dynasty *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 [T. 2059], hereafter GSZ) and its early Tang sequel, the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [T. 2060], hereafter XGSZ).

At this point in the history of the discipline, Huijiao and Daoxuan's compendious hagiographical collections scarcely require an introduction, as they have served as primary sources for investigations into a variety of historical phenomena during the past century of scholarship on medieval Chinese Buddhism, shedding light on a remarkable array of topics⁵ (e.g., interactions between Buddhist clergy and political authorities,⁶ historical processes of scriptural translation and transmission,⁷

5 For a simple example that highlights the breadth of the perceived utility of these sources, consider the frequency with which they are cited across a majority of the articles in John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi, eds., *Early Chinese Religion - Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, Volumes 1 and 2, (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

6 See, for example, Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Andreas Janousch, "Emperor as Bodhisattva: The Bodhisattva Ordination and Ritual Assemblies of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, edited by Joseph McDermott, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 112–149; Tom DeRauw, *Beyond Buddhist Apology: The Political Use of Buddhism by Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (r. 502–549)*, PhD diss., Ghent University, 2008; Shi Longdu, *Buddhism and the State in Medieval China: Case Studies of Three Persecutions of Buddhism (444–846)*, PhD diss., SOAS, 2016.

7 In particular, all of the classic synoptic overviews of this process of transmission and development rely heavily on historical data from these collections. See: Tsukamoto Zenryū, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: From Its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan*, trans. by Leon Hurvitz, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1985); Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, third edition (with a foreword by Stephen F. Teiser), (Leiden: Brill, 2007 [1959]); Kenneth K. S. Chen, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

monastic auto-cremation,⁸ and Buddhist iconographic traditions).⁹ More recently, these sources have begun to be interrogated themselves, in order to explore their compilers' perspectives on a variety of issues, as demonstrated by John Kieschnick's diachronic analysis of the continuities and changes in Chinese Buddhist notions of exemplarity in the Liang, Tang, and Song editions of the *Eminent Monks*;¹⁰ Koichi Shinohara's penetrating explorations of the issues of genre, sourcing, and editorial intent in both Huijiao and Daoxuan's collections;¹¹ and even my own provisional attempt to chart the imagined geographies of these two collections.¹² Various other examples could be adduced here.

We cannot definitely determine the historicity of any particular episode in GSZ or XGSZ,¹³ or even the extent to which Huijiao and Daoxuan themselves were convinced of their historical factuality. Fortunately, we can sidestep the methodological challenges posed by such aporias by following the path broken by John Kieschnick, Koichi Shinohara, Robert Ford Campany, James Benn, Funayama Tōru and others in choosing to focus instead on the effects that these narratives had on the discourse communities¹⁴ that discussed, copied, and transmitted them. Moreover, given that the period between

8 The classic study of this topic remains James A. Benn's *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

9 See, for example, Alexander Coburn Soper, "Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China," *Artibus Asiae (Supplementum)* 19 (1959): iii–296; Zhiru, *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); Yü Chün-fang, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

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

11 See: Koichi Shinohara, "Biographies of Eminent Monks in a Comparative Perspective: The Function of the Holy in Medieval Chinese Buddhism," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 7 (1994): 477–500; Koichi Shinohara, "Two Sources of Chinese Buddhist Biographies: Stupa Inscriptions and Miracle Stories," in *Monks and Magicians: Religious Biographies in Asia*, edited by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, (Oakville, ON: Mosaic Press, 1988), 119–228; Koichi Shinohara, "Writing the Moment of Death in Biographies of Eminent Monks," in *Heroes and Saints: The Moment of Death in Cross-cultural Perspectives*, edited by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 47–72.

12 See: Christopher Jensen, "Mapping Religious Practice in the Eminent Monks: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections," in *Digital Humanities and Buddhism: An Introduction*, edited by Daniel R. Veidlinger, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018 [in press]).

13 Kieschnick outlines this issue in the introduction to *The Eminent Monk*, 2.

14 Robert Ford Campany has probably been most consistent in demonstrating the interpretive efficacy of this method, as exemplified in his 2009 book on the social realities of the transcendence-seeking (*xian* 仙) tradition in early medieval

the compilation of GSZ (ca. 530 CE)¹⁵ and XGSZ (ca. 645 CE, with later additions)¹⁶ bridges the gap between the political tumult and religious bifurcation of the Northern / Southern dynasties period¹⁷ and the politically unified and culturally florescent years of the Sui (581–618) and early Tang (618–645 / 667),¹⁸ I would argue that a sufficiently nuanced comparison between these two collections can be used as a natural experiment in the transformation of the Buddhist imaginaire during this interval, highlighting the evolution of the ways that Chinese Buddhists conceived of (and thus interacted with) their dreams.¹⁹ By approaching the dream episodes²⁰ contained in these sources anthropologically (e.g., interrogating them critically and abandoning the “hermeneutic of retrieval”),²¹ I hope to explore the

China (*Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China*, [Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press]) and his copiously annotated translation of an early collection of Chinese Buddhist miracle tales from 2012 (*Signs from the Unseen Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China – A Study and Translation*, [Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press]). Much of the discussion that follows is heavily indebted to the methodological insights I garnered from these two books.

- 15 While the last dateable account in GSZ can be traced to 519, Shinohara (and others) have suggested that the collection reached its finished form around 530 CE. See, for example, the discussion in Shinohara, “Biographies of Eminent Monks in a Comparative Perspective,” 482.
- 16 Though Mochizuki’s *Bukkyō daijiten* lists the compilation date of XGSZ as 645 (i.e., the 19th year of the Tang dynasty’s *Zhenguan* reign period (627–649), (Vol. 4, 3129), Shinohara suggests that “it was first completed by Daoxuan in 645 but expanded later with additional material he prepared before his death in 667” (144): “Changing Roles for Miraculous Images in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: A Study of the Miracle Image Section in Daoxuan’s ‘Collected Records’” in *Images, Miracles, and Authority in Asian Religious Traditions*, edited by Richard H. Davis, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 141–188. For further reflections on the dating of this compilation (with particular attention paid to later interpolations [both during Daoxuan’s life and after his death]), see Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 78–79.
- 17 For a helpful historical overview of the period, see: Mark Edward Lewis, *China Between Empires: The Northern and Southern Dynasties*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). See also: Tsukamoto’s *History of Early Chinese Buddhism*, Vol. 1 and Zürcher’s *Buddhist Conquest of China*, both of which include detailed discussions of the differing religious cultures of the Northern and Southern kingdoms. For a discussion of macro-region theory in the context of Daoxuan’s life, background and overall outlook (as a Southern Buddhist), see Huayu Chen, *The Revival of Buddhist Monasticism in Medieval China*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 16–42.
- 18 For the purposes of the present study, any mention of the “early Tang” should be read as a reference to the historical period covered in Daoxuan’s XGSZ. For a helpful overview of the political, cultural, economic realities of this period, see: Mark Edward Lewis, *China’s Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Charles D. Benn, *China’s Golden Age: Everyday Life in the Tang Dynasty*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also: Tsukamoto’s *History*, Vol. 2; Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*.
- 19 I am following Faure’s use of the term “imaginaire” here (i.e., as a description of “the way beliefs are rendered in images”), as I believe that this concept is probably as applicable in the context of oneiric experience (and subsequent “dream telling”) as anywhere. See: *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, translated by Phyllis Brooks, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3 and 10–14.
- 20 See the *Appendix* for a tabular summary of all of the episodes under consideration.
- 21 I am borrowing this methodological insight from Michael I. Como, who uses it to describe his approach to understanding the figure of Prince Shōtoku as one that emerged following a centuries-long process of social construction:

[O]nce we abandon the hermeneutic of retrieval, new avenues of inquiry emerge. For the student of Japanese

ways that Huijiao and Daoxuan's religious, social, and political contexts, as well as their own idiosyncratic perspectives on the oneiric, both shaped and were shaped by the discourse communities of literate lay and monastic Buddhists that read, copied, and shared these hagiographical collections.²²

Reviewing these two collections, I noted that the dream episodes preserved in GSZ and XGSZ share a significant commonality with regard to their narrative function: specifically, these stories often describe the dreams of monks, nuns, and laypeople as vehicles that convey their recipients through a variety of interstitial spaces and states.²³ Much of the present project consists of my attempt to offer a systematic exploration of the dreams that Huijiao and Daoxuan, as well as their discourse communities, associated with such key liminalities as those between conception and birth (Chapter Two), life and death,²⁴ disparate geographical regions (Chapter Three), Buddhism and local religion(s) (Chapter Four), the human and extrahuman realms (*passim*), and doubt and certainty (*passim*). This observation,

religion, perhaps the most valuable textual sources are those that are legends or fabrications of later generations. Far from being dross to be discarded in favor of hard historical data, these entries are valuable precisely because they are not mere reportage but rather products of the religious imagination of the age. Throughout this book, I therefore consider the construction of the rites and legends of the Shōtoku cult as creative religious acts. The chapters that follow thus seek to uncover the processes behind the construction of the cult of Shōtoku, not to uncover the truth about Prince Kamitsumiya (8).

Shōtoku: Ethnicity, Ritual, and Violence in the Japanese Buddhist Tradition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). This corresponds to the “anthropologico-historical” approach taken by Bernard Faure. See *Visions of Power* (4) for an overview. There are obvious and fruitful parallels between these positions and Campany's attention to “discourse communities” (outlined above).

- 22 This approach parallels the one adopted by Kieschnick in his exploration of the evolution of Chinese Buddhist notions of exemplarity from the Northern / Southern dynasties period to Song dynasty. *The Eminent Monk*, 3–4 and *passim*.
- 23 As an aside, Liu Mingming's 2015 dissertation makes use of “the liminal” as an analytical category in her discussion of the formation of *zhiguai* 志怪 as a Chinese literary genre, arguing that texts so described exist in the conceptually fluid space between “history and fiction, the natural and supernatural, as well as belief and disbelief” (44). *Theory of the Strange: Towards the Establishment of Zhiguai as a Genre*, PhD diss., UC Riverside, 2015).
- 24 While both GSZ and XGSZ are replete with examples of oneiric visions associated with the deaths of exemplary monks (whether they are ascribed to the moribund monastics themselves or to their grieving disciples and patrons), I have opted not to dedicate an entire chapter to this topic herein because it has already been the subject of a wealth of excellent studies. See: Shinohara's “Writing the Moment of Death”; Koichi Shinohara, “The Moment of Death in Daoxuan's Vinaya Commentary,” in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, edited by Bryan Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 105–134; Robert Ford Campany, “Return-From-Death Narratives in Early Medieval China,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 18:1 (1990): 91–125; Zhenjun Zhang, *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural in Early Medieval China: A Study of Liu Yiqing's (403–444)* Youming lu, (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

coupled with my general research on dreams as embodied phenomena (as will be discussed below), has led me to posit the following theory: the phantasmagorical dreaming state represents the foundational human experience of liminality, through which human beings first encounter the dividing lines between internal and external, real and imaginary, subjective and objective.²⁵ Considering the dream state as an embodied, conceptual metaphor for liminality²⁶ is useful for two reasons (one analytical, the other methodological): analytically, it provides a framework that can help to explain why dream narratives were seen as so compelling (and obviously significant) to Huijiao and Daoxuan (and their respective discourse communities); and, methodologically, it highlights the status of dreams as embodied (or perhaps more literally “embrained”)²⁷ phenomena, which suggests a nuanced (and appropriately constrained) means of rehabilitating the comparative project of Religious Studies scholarship.²⁸ By detailing the specific physiological, neurological and phenomenological states associated with dreams,

25 For an overview of anthropological sources treating the issue of dreams as liminal space, see Roger Ivar Lohmann, “The Role of Dreams in Religious Enculturation among the Asabano of Papua New Guinea,” in *Dreams: A Reader on the Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming*, edited by Kelly Bulkeley, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 111–132, 114–118. For instance, Lohmann provides evidence of many cultural contexts in which dreams are understood as locales for encountering supernatural [/extrahuman] beings, while also noting that “in dreams one seems able to transcend boundaries of space, time, and death,” which grants them a privileged epistemic status in dealing with these sorts of liminal states (116). I discuss my reasons for opting to include this sort of cross-cultural data below.

26 The compendious literature on conceptual metaphor, and its relevance to the present study, will be treated below in the section on *Metaphors and Liminality*.

27 George Northoff uses this term as part of a helpful corrective to the postmodern, cultural constructionist dictum that human thought and behaviour are entirely plastic and unstructured entities until being moulded by the forces of culture. See: “Cultural Neuroscience and Neurophilosophy: Does the Neural Code Allow for the Brain's Enculturation?” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cultural Neuroscience*, edited by Joan Chaio, Shu-Chen Li, Rebecca Seligman, and Robert Turner, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 21–40. In particular, he posits a dialectical process whereby the “enculturation of the brain” (the internalization of culturally-specified symbols and practices, which can then subsequently play a causal role not only in higher order thinking but also in pre-rational processes like affective response and visual object processing) occurs alongside the “embrainment of culture” (whereby mental systems [affective, sensorimotor, memory] constrain and direct the forms that culture can and will take): a loop he describes as “culture-brain iterativity” (26–28). For a devastatingly effective critique of the central myth of cultural constructionism, see Steven Pinker's *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature*, (New York: Viking, 2002). These issues will be addressed in more detail below.

28 The most famous testament to the comparative impulse in Religious Studies is surely that of Max Müller, the founder of the discipline: namely, “to know one is to know none” – a claim that he made as part of an extended analogy between the study of comparative linguistics and the comparative religious studies. See: Friedrich Max Müller, “The Science of Religion: Lecture One (1870)” in *The Essential Max Müller: On Language, Mythology, and Religion*, edited by J. Stone, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 113.

we can thereby hope to determine the underlying *qualia*²⁹ that serve to constrain the panoply of cultural responses to oneiric experiences.³⁰ These underlying commonalities help to explicate the existence of seemingly parallel cultural forms (e.g., understandings of nightmares, approaches to oneiromancy, perspectives on dream etiology) that have emerged convergently, in regions separated by unbridged gulfs of space and time.

Overview: Dreams in Chinese Religion

Before further discussing the role of embodiment in my thinking about dreams, and the effect of these reflections on the overall positioning of this project, however, it is first necessary to provide an introduction to the subject matter at hand by offering a brief (and necessarily partial) overview of the understanding(s) of dreams that predominated in medieval China and medieval Chinese Buddhism (and the scholarship that these topics have occasioned).³¹ These perspectives can be broadly subdivided into four relatively discrete categories:³² 1) ontological and epistemological speculation about the nature of

- 29 I am using this term in the general sense of the subjective component (or “phenomenal character”) of an experience. For an overview of historical usages (as well as various more restrictive definitions), see Michael Tye, “Qualia” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2016. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/qualia/>. For a general discussion of the issues related to this problem in the context of Religious Studies as a discipline, see Sumner B. Twiss and Walter H. Conser, eds., *Experience of the Sacred: Readings in the Phenomenology of Religion*, (Hanover, NH: Brown University Press, 1992).
- 30 For a helpful discussion of the relationship between the modular nature of the human mind and the nature / development of religious concepts, see Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001).
- 31 Defending the necessity of providing this sort of background information when investigating a specific region or era's oneiric tradition(s), Serinity Young argues that “without the fullest possible understanding of the cultural context of a dream, without understanding how a particular culture values dreams – what it believes is possible within dreams – and without a grasp of its symbol system, an enormous part of its meaning is lost” (11). “Buddhist Dream Experience: The Role of Interpretation, Ritual and Gender,” in *Dreams: A Reader on the Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming*, edited by Kelly Bulkeley, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 9–28.
- 32 My proposed typology is indebted to Richard Strassberg's “three main generalizations” about pre-modern Chinese perspectives on dreams: 1) a focus on “pragmatic spiritualism” and a resultant concern with “the implication of dreams for personal welfare both in this world and in the afterlife”; 2) a tendency to regard “dreams as contingent on a web of external stimuli rather than arising independently from purely psychological factors”; 3) the conviction that dreaming was “an out-of-body state that was often termed 'spirit-wandering' (*shenyou* 神遊),” (1). *Wandering Spirits: Chen Shiyuan's Encyclopedia of Dreams*, translated and with an introduction by Richard E. Strassberg, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008). The decision to focus on dream etiology as a separate category was inspired by the comparative perspective outlined in Kelly Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions: A Comparative History*,

dream and wake (typical sources: philosophical treatises); 2) cosmological, medical, and/or demonological³³ theorization about the etiology of dreams (typical sources: medical texts, philosophical treatises, doctrinal texts); 3) typological analysis of dream omens (typical sources: mantic texts, histories); 4) historiographical and pseudo-historiographical telling of prodigious dream stories (typical sources: “strange tales” [*zhiguai* 志怪],³⁴ histories, miracle tale collections). Each of these types will be outlined briefly below.

The first category (philosophical speculation on dreams) employs the discombobulation that one experiences upon waking from a vivid oneiric experience³⁵ to cast doubt upon simplistic attempts to unilaterally characterize waking perception/cognition as (ontologically) “real” and sleeping perception/cognition as (ontologically) “false.” It also problematizes any sense of epistemological certitude related to the question of whether one is asleep or awake at any given moment. This category is typified by the historical through-line linking the *Zhuangzi*'s 莊子 butterfly dream (4th c. BCE),³⁶ the

(New York: New York University Press, 2008).

33 This is, of course, not to imply that these would have represented discrete categories in traditional China, as Strickmann noted in “Dreamwork of the Psycho-sinologists,” “no clear cut distinction is made between the physical and the mental, medical and ritual healing also are not clearly differentiated” (29). Strickmann offers a much more detailed disquisition on these issues in *Chinese Magical Medicine*, edited by Bernard Faure, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

34 For a superlative introduction to the “strange tale” genre and its influence in medieval China, see Robert Ford Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996).

35 The epistemological uncertainty associated with dreams has been a consistent topic of speculation in the Western philosophical tradition since the time of Plato, with the most famous articulation of these doubts surely being found in Descartes' *Meditations*. See: Jennifer M. Windt, “Dreams and Dreaming,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, accessed online at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/dreams-dreaming/>.

The seeming universality of this experience is one of the reasons for my suggestion that it is analytical meaningful to approach dream experiences as embodied metaphors for the state of liminality: a proposition that I outline below.

36 This episode, one of the most famous in all of Chinese literature, is translated by Burton Watson as follows: Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he didn't know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt that he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou. Between Zhuang Zhou and a butterfly there must be *some* distinction! This is called the Transformation of Things (18, *emphasis in original*). *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, (New

Liezi's 列子 parable of the sleeping country (ca. 4th c. CE),³⁷ and the tale of the “World Inside of a Pillow” (8th c. CE),³⁸ In the first case, and in spite of the fact that the narrator of *Zhuangzi's* “butterfly dream” seems loath to reject of the epistemological superiority of wake over sleep, this text also describes the “True Man of Old” (*guzhi zhenren* 古之真人) as one who “sleeps without dreaming.”³⁹ This line of thinking, which clearly predated the earliest influx of Buddhist texts into China, was

York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

Cf., 昔者莊周夢為胡蝶，栩栩然胡蝶也，自喻適志與！不知周也。俄然覺，則蘧蘧然周也。不知周之夢為胡蝶與，胡蝶之夢為周與？周與胡蝶，則必有分矣。此之謂物化。（*Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, 112).

Rudy Vavril, in *Rêve Lucide et Pensée Chinoise: Étude de méthodes onirothérapeutiques*, (PhD diss., Université de Lyon, 2010), argues that this account can be read as a case of “pre-lucid” dreaming: lacking the aspect of intentionality but otherwise representing a case of distinctly non-ordinary dreaming (91–96).

For a relatively recent discussion of this didactic tale, which argues that it can be read as a radically skeptical rejection of the Cartesian “I” (i.e., the doubting subject), as well as a helpful overview of prior scholarship comparing Zhuangzian and Cartesian doubt, see Xiaoqiang Han, “Interpreting the Butterfly Dream,” *Asian Philosophy* 19:1 (2009): 1–9. As a corrective to the context in which I cited this episode, see Jung H. Lee, “What is it Like to be a Butterfly? A Philosophical Interpretation of Zhuangzi's Butterfly Dream,” *Asian Philosophy* 17:2 (2007): 185–202, which argues that focusing on this episode's epistemological significance can cause a reader to ignore its larger moral argument, whereby behaving *as* a butterfly is seen as a normative path of practice that parallels the various other exemplars discussed elsewhere in the Inner Chapters (198–200). For a comparison of the respective rhetorical effects achieved through *Zhuangzi's* playful posture of epistemological skepticism, as contrasted with the *Zuozhuan's* 左傳 omenological approach to dreams (discussed below), see Li Wai-ye, “Dreams of Interpretation in Early Chinese Historical and Philosophical Writings” in *Dream Cultures: Toward a Comparative History of Dreaming*, edited by David Shulman and Guy Stroumsa, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17–42. Therein, Li draws a memorable contrast between the “readability” of historicized dream accounts in the *Zuozhuan* with “dreamability of the world” in *Zhuangzi*. See also: Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 64–65; Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 9–10.

- 37 In brief, this parable posits a country illuminated by neither sun nor moon, and whose populace wakes only briefly after every forty-nine days consecutive days of sleep. As a result, the residents of this region “think that what they do in dreams is real, and what they see waking is unreal.” A. C. Graham, translator, *The Book of Lieh-tzu: A Classic of Tao* (New York: Columbia University Press, (1960 [1990])), 67. Cf., 西極之南隅有國焉，不知境界之所接，名古莽之國。陰陽之氣所不交，故寒暑亡辨；日月之光所不照，故晝夜亡辨。其民不食不衣而多眠。五旬一覺，以夢中所為者實，覺之所見者妄（*Liezi jishi* 列子集釋, 64–65).

Describing the *Liezi's* general perspective on ontological and epistemological challenges posted by dream experiences, which elaborates upon the Zhuangzian position, Graham posits that while

the new prominence [of such issues] may well be the result of Buddhist influence, the treatment of the theme remains purely Taoist; there is no implication that it is either possible or desirable for the living to awake from their dream. Indeed, except in the second episode (where Yin Wen says that the breath of all that lives, the appearance of all that has shape, is illusion'), perception and dreaming are given equal weight. If waking experience is no more real than dreams, then dreams are as real as waking experience. We perceive when a thing makes contact with the body, dream when it makes contact with the mind, and there is nothing to choose between one experience and another—a claim supported by a series of parables designed to abolish the division between illusion and reality (59).

See also: Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 65–66, for a discussion of the *Liezi's* parable of a miserable rich man who spent each night dreaming of the pain of penury, in contrast to his affable servant, whose pleasant oneiric visions yielded access to his every desire.

nonetheless profoundly compatible with Buddhist philosophical claims about the ultimately illusory nature of the phenomenal world, which is often pithily described as being “like a dream” or “like an illusion” (or both).⁴⁰ Given this fruitful historical coincidence, it is perhaps no wonder that Daoxuan described the monk Huiman, a diligent practitioner of austerities, as one who was without fleas and lice, and who slept without dreaming (a clear, albeit unsignalled, reference to the Zhuangzian “True Man”).⁴¹

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- 38 In this oft-retold tale, an ambitious youth stops at a roadside inn, where he is presented a pillow by a sagely older man. Falling asleep while waiting for his supper, the young man experiences a dream vision of an entire life (marriage, official service, public accolades, but also calumny and ruin). Only upon waking does he discover that he is still in the inn, with his oneiric second life having elapsed in less time than it had taken for a pot of millet to cook. For a translation of the version collected in the early Song encyclopedia *Taiping guangji*, see William H. Nienhauser, Jr., trans., “The World Inside a Pillow” in *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, edited by Yau-Woon Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau, (Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 1996), 435–438. Also discussed in: Roberto K. Ong, *The Interpretation of Dreams in Ancient China*, (MA diss., University of British Columbia, 1981), 127–128; Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 67. See also: Zhang's exploration of the “dream adventure inside a microcosmic world” motif, as presented in both the fifth-century *Youming lu* and the later “World Inside a Pillow” version in *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural*. He argues, in opposition to Knechtges, that it seems to contain inspiration from Indian Buddhist sutra materials (175–188). Cf., David R. Knechtges, “Dream Adventure Stories in Europe and T'ang China,” *Tamkang Review* 4.2 (1973): 101–119.
- 39 As per Watson's translation: “The True Man of ancient times slept without dreaming and woke without care; he ate without savouring and his breath came from deep inside” (42). Cf., 古之真人，其寢不夢，其覺無憂，其食不甘，其息深深 (*Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, 228). This same trait is ascribed to the sage (*shengren* 聖人) in the text's *Outer Chapters*: “With the sage, his life is the working of Heaven, his death the transformation of things. ... He sleeps without dreaming, wakes without worry. His spirit is pure and clean, his soul never wearied” (120). Cf., 故曰：聖人之生也天行，其死也物化 [...] 其寢不夢，其覺無憂；其神純粹，其魂不罷 (*Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, 539). See also: Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 10. It should be noted that dreamlessness was not the only atypical nocturnal state to be lionized in the classical Chinese context. For example, Antje Richter in “Sleeping Time in Early Chinese Literature” in *Night-time and Sleep in Asia and the West: Exploring the Dark Side of Life*, edited by Lodewijk Brunt and Brigitte Steger, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 24–44, outlines the idealization of a particular type of insomnia (namely, that which occurs as a consequence of punctilious attention to duty) across a variety of sources and genres (33–37).
- 40 For a discussion of the employment of this simile in the *Diamond Sutra*, see Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le Bouddhisme Tantrique en Chine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 292; Ong, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 104. Campany makes a similar point about Mahayana Buddhist perspectives on the (doctrinally-necessary) meaninglessness of dreams in Mahayana Buddhism, citing a variety of sutrās as evidence (“Dream Interpretation,” (unpaginated draft)). As Bernard Faure argues in *Visions of Power*,
dreams in Mahayana Buddhism play essentially the role of a negative metaphor, serving to reveal the lack of reality of this world. ... In the idealistic tendency of the Yogācāra movement in particular, dreams and reality, insofar as they are mental creations, are both stripped of any ontological status. Even the 'absolutization' of dreams, as formulated by certain Mahayana thinkers, does not lead to its revalorization (118).
This characterization is clearly not universally applicable in the Chinese context, as will be seen below. Subsequent occurrences of this trope in Tang poetry are discussed in Zhang, *Buddhism and the Tales of the Supernatural*, 189–190.
- 41 T. 2060: 552c. See below for a theoretical discussion of intertextuality in GSZ and XGSZ.

Second, classical and medieval Chinese sources proposed three discrete (and at least partially incompatible) dream etiologies, each of which was tied to a particular cosmological schema.⁴² First, hearkening back to the songs of soul flight preserved in the *Chuci* 楚辭 (a collection of pre-Han poetry from the eponymous southern kingdom)⁴³ and to the traditional viewpoint that Wang Chong 王充 (27–ca. 100) criticizes in his *Lunheng* (論衡, ca. 90 CE),⁴⁴ we find some suggestions that oneiric experiences were simply the sensory activities of the *hun* 魂 soul travelling outside of the body during sleep.⁴⁵ Second, and drawing on the correlative cosmology, early medical texts (such as the *Yellow*

42 In an essay whose later nuance is somewhat undercut by a problematically essentialist introduction, Thorsten Botz-Bornstein (building from Radhakrishnan) suggests that "Eastern" cultural traditions (a category into which he lumps Hinduism, Taoism, and Indian, Chinese and Japanese Buddhism) valorize dreams and posit linkages between waking and oneiric existence, whereas "Western" approaches shortsightedly focus on epistemological issues (e.g., "How do I know if I'm dreaming?") (65–67). "Dreams in Buddhism and Western Aesthetics: Some Thoughts on Play, Style and Space in Asian Philosophy," *Asian Philosophy* 17:1 (2007): 65–81. The varieties of Chinese dream etiology presented here give lie to this facile dichotomy. Moreover, rather than adopting a Western / Eastern distinction, it seems to make more sense to posit a temporal one. Moderns, especially in regions where scientific or Freudian dream discourses have triumphed, seem to circumscribe the meaning and significance of dreams in ways that pre-modern peoples the world over would have found profoundly shocking. This matter will be discussed below (in the section labelled "The Phenomenology of Dream States and the Comparative Project").

43 For a discussion of the role and functions of dreams in *Chuci*, see the introduction to Gopal Sukhu, ed. and trans., *Songs of Chu: An Ancient Anthology of Works by Qu Yuan and Others*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), xxxvii. This notion of oneiric travel is also cited in the *Liezi's* account of the Yellow Emperor's voyage to the magical kingdom of Huaxi:

Falling asleep in the daytime, [the Yellow Emperor] dreamed that he was wandering in the country of Huaxi. This country is to the West of Yan province in the far West, to the North of Tai province in the far North West, who knows how many thousands and myriads of miles from the Middle Kingdom. It is a place which you cannot reach by boat or carriage or on foot, only by a journey of the spirit (Graham's translation, 34). Cf., 晝寢而夢，遊於華胥氏之國。華胥氏之國在弇州之西，台州之北，不知斯齊國幾千萬里；蓋非舟車足力之所及，神游而已 (*Liezi jishi* 列子集釋, 25).

The role of the oneiric in the interactions between human adepts and deities in the founding of Shangqing Taoism will be discussed below.

44 Forke outlines the position of the famed Han Dynasty skeptic in the introduction to his translation of the *Lunheng*: Dreams, says Wang Chong, are visions. When good or bad luck are impending, the mind shapes these visions. He also declares that dreams are produced by the vital spirit, which amounts to the same, for the mind is the vital fluid. In Wang Chong's time there already existed the theory still held at present by many Chinese that during a dream the vital spirit leaves the body, and communicates with the outer world, and that it is not before the awakening that it returns into the spiritless body. Wang Chong combats this view, showing that dreams are images only, which have no reality. He further observes that there are direct and indirect dreams. The former directly show a future event, the latter are symbolical, and must be explained by the oneirocritics (27).

Wang Chong [Wang Ch'ung], *Lun-Hêng*, translated and annotated by Alfred Forke, (London: Luzac & Co., 1907). See also: Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 13. This issues are treated in more detail in Chapter Two.

45 For a historical overview of the bipartite model of the soul in early China, see Muzhou Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 63–66. Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, argues that the (textual) *locus classicus* for this understanding of dreams is the

Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine) postulated that dreams resulted from imbalances in bodily pneumas (*qi* 氣),⁴⁶ with some positing that these correspondences were so ineluctable that particular dream contents could reliably be used to diagnose specific types of deficiencies or superfluities.⁴⁷

Finally, both medical texts and daybooks⁴⁸ posited that distressing dreams could be a sign of demonic infestation, listing a variety of exorcistic cures for such afflictions.⁴⁹

Zuozhuan, which includes over thirty accounts of dreams and their interpretation (6–7). In the context of Chinese spirit mediumship (or “shamanism”), Lin argues that Six Dynasties sources differentiate between dream travel to the spirit realm and the type achieved via ecstatic trance, through he notes that extant sources contain a dearth of examples of either method. Lin Fu-shih, *Chinese Shamans and Shamanism in the Chiang-nan Area During the Six Dynasties Period (3rd–6th Century AD)*, (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1994), 164–170. The reasons for my discomfiture regarding the use of the term “shamanism” in the Chinese context (necessitating my use of “scare quotes” in the previous sentence) will be explored in the chapter on interreligious dreaming (Chapter Four). Zhang, in *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural*, makes the unsourced claim that “the detached soul motif was very popular in traditional Chinese narrative and drama” and that “[s]ince the 1930's, this motif has been considered as derived from the dream-soul belief in Indian culture” (205–206), prior to arguing **against** this position using some of the same sources cited above (206–215).

46 Drawing upon the connotative range of Hellenistic philosophical terminology, Stephen Bokenkamp, argues that “pneuma” is an apter translation for *qi* than any term in regular English usage. See: *Early Daoist Scriptures*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 15–20. For an overview of the constellation of issues related to this translation choice, see Robert Ford Campany's discussion of the “Pneumatic Idiom” in *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), 18–21.

47 For example, see the discussion of plethora within the arterial system (*mai* 脈) in *Huangdi neijing suwen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic – Basic Questions*, Volume I: Chapters 1 through 52, translated by Paul U. Unschuld and Hermann Tessenow, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011): “When the yin [qi] abounds, then one dreams of wading through a big water and is in fear. When the yang [qi] abounds, then one dreams of big fires burning. When both yin and yang [qi] abound, then one dreams of mutual killings and harmings” (286–287). Cf., 是知陰盛則夢涉大水恐懼，陽盛則夢大火燔灼，陰陽俱盛則夢相殺毀傷 (*Huangdi neijing suwen jizhu* 黃帝內經素問集註, 65). Vavril, in *Rêve Lucide et Pensée Chinoise*, offers a helpful elucidation of the diagnostic use of dreams in *Huangdi neijing*, paying especial attention to the development of the notion of pathological *qi*, paralleling the previously cited example (176–199). Also see: Liu, *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo* 夢的迷信與夢的探索, 81–98.

For some examples of the diagnostic use of dreams from Sun Simiao (making them approximately contemporaneous with Daoxuan), see Sabine Wilms, *The Female Body in Medieval China. A Translation and Interpretation of the "Women's Recipes" in Sun Simiao's "Beiji qianjinyaofang"*, (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2002), 329, 344, 361. This putative linkage between bodily *qi* and specific dream experiences is also attested in *Liezi* (see Graham's translation, 66–67). These issues are also discussed in: Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 10; Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 125; Strickmann, “Dreamwork of the Psycho-sinologists,” 29–31.

48 By “daybooks,” I am referring to the jointly hemerological / exorcistic / medical almanacs that have been discovered via the archaeological excavation of various Han dynasty tombs, implying that they were employed by a broad swath of the literate population. For an overview of the most current scholarship on these fascinating texts, Donald Harper and Marc Kalinowski, eds., *Books of Fate and Popular Culture in Early China: The Daybook Manuscripts of the Warring States, Qin, and Han*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017). For a helpful discussion of the audience(s) for these texts, see the section on “Makers and Users of Daybooks” in Donald Harper's contribution to this volume, entitled “Daybooks in the Context of Manuscript Culture and Popular Culture Studies,” 91–137, 97–110.

Third, and drawing on mantic traditions traceable back to the Shang Dynasty,⁵⁰ dreams could be interpreted as omens, in much the same way as could atypical astral events, the sudden appearance of the *qilin* or other auspicious beasts, or the spontaneous generation (or demise) of revered plant and animal species.⁵¹ This cultural system was promulgated via two discrete textual traditions: first, histories, many of which abounded in accounts of dream interpretations heeded or ignored, and the resultant effects upon the individuals and polity;⁵² and second, mantic manuals, which often included

49 In *Chinese Magical Medicine*, Strickmann argues that the linguistic identity between *jing* 精 as "vital essence" and as "semen" highlights a cultural tendency to hypostasize (external) spirits, physiological states, and psychological phenomena:

the Chinese terminology suggests ... that man is externalizing his own psycho-sexual processes and imprinting them upon nature. When ill and searching for causes, he takes cognizance of these projections (as if seeing his own image in a cracked mirror) and reincorporates them, intellectually and spiritually, in the form of shock, terror, disease, and debility. Thanks to this 'accident' of terminology, we are able to gain a remarkable intimation of a world inhabited by perilous beings personifying breath and semen - phantom panting, demonized gasps, spectral sighs, lurking halitosis, walking nightmares, marauding wet-dreams, galloping nocturnal emissions (73).

Donald Harper's translation of selections from the Shuihudi daybooks reveal a functional linkage between demons, distressing dreams, and dolorous emotional states, given that similar exorcistic techniques are employed to dispel all three classes of phenomena: "Spellbinding" in *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 241–250. See also: Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 10; Donald Harper, "Wang Yen-shou's Nightmare Poem," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47:1 (1987): 239–283.

50 See: David N. Keightly, *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978). For a brief introduction and typological overview of the types of extrahuman beings attested in the oracle bone corpus, see Robert Eno, "Deities and Ancestors in Early Oracle Inscriptions" in *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 41–51.

51 On the historical status of oneiromancy in China, the *Hanshu's* "Treatise on Literature" (yiwenzhi 藝文志) positions dream divination as a superlative form of mantic practice. 《易》曰：「占事知來。」眾占非一，而夢為大，故周有其官 (1773). This passage is discussed in Ong, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 166–167. See below for a detailed discussion of the *ganying* cosmology, which underlies all of the specific examples cited above. For a specific discussion of the ancient and medieval discourses relating to favourable portents (including dreams), see Tiziana Lippiello, *Auspicious Omens and Miracles in Ancient China: Han, Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties*, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series XXXIX, (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute, 2001).

52 See: Li Wai-ye, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007; Rudolph G. Wagner, "Imperial Dreams in China," in *Psycho-sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture*, edited by Carolyn T. Brown, (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1987), 11–24; Li, *Dreams of Interpretation*; Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*; Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*. One important point made by Wagner (and echoed by Li) highlights the importance of dream etiologies in these historical accounts: specifically, given that dreams have multiple potential sources (some of which are malign), determining their origins is vital to divining their significance. This hermeneutical issue, and the dangers of misinterpreting or ignoring an important oneiric vision, are key sources of drama and tension in narrative texts from the *Zuozhuan* onward (18).

typological lists of specific dream images and their significance (whether auspicious or ill-boding).⁵³ A striking contrast between these textual sources can be seen in the approaches to oneiromancy advocated therein: while manuals and daybooks are positioned as accessible hermeneutical technologies, allowing any thoughtful user to correctly parse the contents of their own dream visions,⁵⁴ the histories generally describe the task of dream interpretation being delegated to professionals, whether palace attendants, spirit mediums (*wu* 巫), masters of techniques (*fangshi* 方士) or other religious professionals.⁵⁵ We will return to this matter in Chapter One, which considers the various types of oneiric practice ascribed to exemplary Buddhist monks in GSZ and XGSZ, including cases where they came to play the role of dream interpreters, as well as ways that these accounts both employed and contested the standards of traditional Chinese oneiromancy.

Finally, and reflecting a much more personalistic cosmos than the mechanistic viewpoint presumed by the mantic texts described above, many classical and medieval Chinese texts also characterize dreams as potential loci of interaction⁵⁶ between the human and unseen realms, within

53 See: Lisa Raphals, *Divination and Prediction in Early China and Ancient Greece*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Anna-Alexandra Fodde-Reguer, *Divining Bureaucracy: Divination Manuals as Technology and the Standardization of Efficacy in Early China*, (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014); Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*; Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang”; Jean-Pierre Drège, “Notes d'oniologie chinoise,” *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 70 (1981): 271–289. Also see: Company, “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft).

54 Fodde-Reguer argues that the evidence from extant daybooks and oneiromantic manuals suggest that these texts were “technological” rather than “occultic,” in that they were as practical tools whose use was not restricted to religious professionals or other elites (46–48 and *passim*). Likewise, Harper and Kalinowski argue that such texts are best understood as “technical literature,” defined as “texts that are informational sources of applied knowledge” (4).

55 For various examples of Six Dynasties-era spirit mediums performing divination, see Lin, *Chinese Shamans and Shamanism*, 233–235. For some examples of the oneiromantic role played by the “Masters of Techniques” in the classical and early medieval periods, see Kenneth Dewoskin's translation *Doctors, Diviners and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 111, 138–140, 156. In *Wandering Spirits*, Strassberg notes that the *Book of Poetry* contains references to “great men” and “elders” performing dream interpretation (4). See also: Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 54–57.

56 As Company notes in *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, the rhetorical context of medieval Chinese Buddhist narrative literature was one in which “oneiric and visionary experiences are considered channels of communication to the hidden world of spirits, ghosts, bodhisattvas, heavens, Pure Lands, and purgatories” and in which “dreaming is a mode of real contact with other beings, not a mental event merely internal to the dreamer” (58).

which individuals could converse with gods, Buddhist deities, the spirits of the dead, the servitors of the chthonic bureaucracy, and other extrahuman forces.⁵⁷ In another departure from the implicit viewpoint of the aforementioned mantic texts, these dream contacts are generally not described as hermeneutical riddles to be decoded, but rather as self-evident (and self-validating) admonitions, which could only be disregarded at the dreamer's peril. Since this final category of dreams can be seen as a subset of the *ganying* 感應 (stimulus/response) narrative, I will defer further discussion of it for the section on such narratives that follows.

When considering these four types of dream discourse, I was struck by the degree to which they were not only discrete, but in some cases actually incommensurate. Much like Ebenezer Scrooge's initial assumption that the monitory apparition of Jacob Marley was nothing more than a blot of mustard or an undigested potato,⁵⁸ it is clear that individuals in medieval China could select between a

57 Describing the rationale for titling his translation of *Mingxiang ji* (冥詳記) “Signs from the Unseen Realm,” Campany states:

Ming's root meaning is that which is hidden, dark, or obscure. That it is a *realm* so denominated in this case – the realm of spirits, gods, Buddhas and bodhisattvas, the dead, the afterlife, in short, the whole teeming cosmos of beings we normally do not see but which (this and similar texts argue) is no less real for being normally invisible to us – is made clear by the content of the work, which consists not of subtly mysterious portentlike clues or anomalies of just any kind but of miracles that *demonstrate*, or show forth the existence and *modus operandi* of, an unseen order of things (14).

On the term “extrahuman,” see Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, wherein he notes that more typical English descriptors for spiritual beings and forces (such as “supernatural” or “superhuman”) have connotations that are somewhat misleading in the Chinese context, where such beings

were not necessarily 'supernatural' – in the sense of 'above' or 'beyond' the natural world. They were not necessarily 'superhuman' either – in the sense of having greater power than man. Some amounted to no more than minor irritations and were effectively checked with the performance of exorcistic acts. While both 'supernatural' and 'superhuman' entail the sense of 'superior,' 'better,' or 'stronger,' the term 'extra-human' only refers to the sphere of existence of the powers without reference to their quality, strength, or nature (6).

While Buddhist texts and iconography introduced the Han and early medieval Chinese to a full-fledged cosmological system whose deities could indeed be appropriately described as “superhuman,” I found it notable that very few of the medieval dream accounts I came across over the course of my research featured descriptions that highlighted the majesty or power of these beings, or inspired Otto's *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* in these dreamers (as described in : Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, translated by John W. Harvey, [London: Oxford University Press, 1923], 8–41). In contrast, it is much more likely that, for example, a dream incubation ritual performed in the presence of a Guanyin image will lead to an oneiric encounter with “a monk” or perhaps “a divine monk.” I discuss this issue in Chapter 2.

58 U. C. Kneppflmacher, ed., *A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens and Other Victorian Fairy Tales*, (New York and

variety of available cultural repertoires when attempting to interpret, classify and, when necessary, respond to any particular oneiric experience. The general awareness of these polysemous interpretive possibilities among the ancient and medieval Chinese is clearly demonstrated by the existence of various dream typologies dating back to at least the compilation of the *Zhouli* 周禮 in the second or third century BCE.⁵⁹ Such schemas clearly reflect a society in which these diverse cultural repertoires were open possibilities, and where individual dreamers (or their designated interpreters) were responsible for determining whether a given experience represented an imbalance of *qi*, a demonic infestation, an encounter with a local deity, or simply the imaginal detritus of an overly spicy dinner. While this diversity of interpretive options was broadly available, the breadth of explanatory possibilities was even greater for medieval Chinese Buddhists, who could rely not only on the indigenous cultural resources detailed above, but also on perspectives drawn from the canons of Indian, central Asian, and apocryphal (Chinese) Buddhist scriptures, as well as exegetical and praxical traditions that subsequently developed in China.

Toronto: Bantam Classics, 1983): “Why do you doubt your senses?” “Because,” said Scrooge, “a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There’s more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!” (17)

- 59 For the dating of the *Rites of Zhou*, see the discussion of the “Three Rites Canons” in Michael Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 173–178. For a discussion of the typologies proposed in the *Rites of Zhou* and Wang Fu’s *Essays of a Recluse*, both of which were premised on the necessity of differentiating between dreams of various etiologies, see: Ong, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 152–155; Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World’s Religions*, 54–55; Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 12–13; Strickmann, “Dreamwork of the Psycho-Sinologists,” 27–28. The Han Dynasty scholar Wang Fu’s ten-fold typology, presented in a chapter entitled “Dreams Set Forth,” is particularly notable for its structure, which draws examples for each of its categories from the annals of history. As in the case of the *Zhouli*, its categories run the gamut of oneiric etiologies mentioned above, though it lacks any explicit reference to demonological dreams:

Among dreams there are direct correspondence dreams, symbolic dreams, distilled-thought dreams, dreams that recall one’s thoughts, status-dependent dreams, dreams produced by sensations, seasonal dreams, antithetical dreams, illness dreams, and temperament-dependent dreams (119). Translated in Anne Behnke Kinney, *The Art of the Han Essay: Wang Fu’s Ch’ien-Fu Lun*, (Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University Center for Asian Studies, 1990).

Cf., 凡夢：有直，有象，有精，有想，有人，有感，有時，有反，有病，有性 (*Qianfu lun* 潛夫論, 315). For Chen Shiyuan’s six-fold typology, which is based almost entirely on the *Zhouli*’s despite being written over fifteen hundred years later, see Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 80–84. These ways of categorizing dreams were clearly culturally current in the medieval period, as seen in the XGSZ account of Sengmin explicitly citing the *Zhouli* typology (T. 2060: 463b), as discussed in Chapter One.

A diverse array of perspectives on dreams can be seen in the textual corpora of early Indian and Central Asian Buddhisms. Specifically, many sutra sources (both Nikāya⁶⁰ and Mahayana) employ the dream as an easily-grasped, metonymic shorthand for the illusory nature of embodied existence: just as oneiric visions dissolve into airy nothings upon waking, so too does the cycle of *samsara* obviate the significance of all embodied existence. While the underlying metaphysical assumptions vary between doctrinal traditions (with the most recondite perspective on dreams found in the idealism of the Yogācārins), this general usage remains relatively consistent.⁶¹ In contrast, many narrative sources feature oneiric events whose meaning, significance and truth value are accepted as givens: a seeming contradiction (if not direct repudiation) of the philosophical position mentioned previously. Some examples can be drawn from the traditional (and oft-retold) Buddha biography and the Jātaka tales, such as the historical Buddha's miraculous conception through Queen Māyā's hierophanic dream, and

60 I am here using the term “Nikāya” to describe early Buddhism in an effort to avoid the pejorative “Hinayana.” For an exhaustive discussion of these issues of nomenclature, which posits that “Hinayana” was almost certainly a rhetorical construction (specifically, a straw-man) attributable to early Mahayana authors, see Jonathan A. Silk, “What, If Anything, Is Mahāyāna Buddhism? Problems of Definitions and Classifications,” *Numen* 49:4 (2002): 355–405.

61 For example, Ong surveys a wealth of Buddhist literature that would have been available to a Chinese reader, including Madhyamaka positions put forward in the *Mahaprajñāpāramitā sutra* and the *Dazhidulun*, wherein dreams both symbolize and contribute to the delusory nature of reality (*Interpretation of Dreams*, 111–117). He offers the following poetic (but overstated) summary of this material: “Hence, the whole message of Buddhism to somnolent humanity is this: Wake up!” (117). See also: Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 79–108; Faure, *Visions of Power*, 114–143; Strickmann, “Dream-work of the Psycho-Sinologists,” 37–42; Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins*, 291–336. For a summary of Xuanzang's (Yogācāra) position, which uses dreams as an undeniable proof that the consciousness is capable of constructing a world without external input, see Tao Jiang, *Contexts and Dialogue: Yogācāra Buddhism and Modern Psychology on the Subliminal Mind*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), pp 76–81. For detailed comparative exploration of western traditions of philosophical phenomenology with Yogācāra theory (both in its Indian origins and its Chinese manifestations, see Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002). Xuanzang gives the following account of delusive phenomena in his “Demonstration of Consciousness Only,” “[t]hey are nonexistent but appear to exist, like illusions, mirages, things in dreams, images in a mirror, echoes in a valley, the moon [reflected] in water, and the effects of conjuring” (286). Francis H. Cook, trans., *Three Texts on Consciousness Only*, (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1999). While the foregoing statement appears to merely be a critique of delusion (understood in a restrictive sense), Lufthaus offers the following helpful corrective:

Yogācārins are *not*, however, saying that dreams are entirely fictitious realms with no connection to a 'real' world. Quite to the contrary, the key example offered in Vasubandhu's *Twenty Verses* is a wet dream, which is to say, based on fictitious factors (the erotic imagery in a dream) an actual physical event (seminal emission) which carried ethical and moral consequences has transpired (478, emphasis in original).

several instances of the Buddha serving as an oneiromancer to kings.⁶² Since I plan to address these sources in an upcoming monograph on the medieval Chinese reception of these materials (based on Daoshi's treatment of them in *Fayuan zhulin*), I will defer further discussion of this topic at present, save in cases where the specific monastic biographies under consideration make reference to them.

Given the clear disparity between the valorization of “true” (i.e., prophetic) dreams in Buddhist narratives and their denigration (or at least marginalization) in doctrinal sources, it is perhaps unsurprising that later Buddhist exegetes resolved this contradiction by creating typological systems of dream etiology, under which only certain types of dreams were seen as meaningful or significant. For example, the *Milindapañha* (ca. first c. BCE – second c. CE) offers the following six-fold typology:

[King Milinda:] “Venerable Nāgasena, men and women in this world see dreams pleasant and evil, things they have seen before and things they have not, things they have done before and things they have not, dreams peaceful and terrible, dreams of matters near to them and distant from them, full of many shapes and innumerable colours. What is this that men call a dream, and who is it who dreams it?”

[Nāgasena:] “It is a suggestion, O king, coming across the path of the mind which is what is called a dream. And there are six kinds of people who see dreams – the man who is of a windy humour, or of a bilious one, or of a phlegmatic one, the man who dreams dreams by the influence of a god, the man who does so by the influence of his own habits, and the man who does so in the way of prognostication. And of these, O king, only the last kind of dreams is true; all the rest are

62 For a lengthy discussion of the dreams related to the historical Buddha, including various sources for his oneiric conception narrative, as well as “true” (i.e., prophetic) dreams ascribed to both the Buddha himself and to his forsaken wife (among others), see Serinity Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus: Buddhist Dream Narrative, Imagery, and Practice* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1999), 21–41. See also: Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 80–82, where he makes the somewhat contentious claim that the Queen Māyā account represents an instance of dream incubation. For an example of the Buddha as a dream interpreter, see the *Mahāsupīna Jātaka*, whose frame account sees the King of Kosala bamboozled by self-serving Brahmin oneiromancers following his experience of sixteen portentous dreams. Their chicanery is only revealed when the Buddha appears to offer a genuine explanation, after which point he then proceeds to tell his royal interlocutor about a past age when another king had experienced similar visions that he (in a prior birth) had explicated. See: Robert Chalmers, trans., *The Jataka* (Vol. 1), edited by E. B. Cowell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895), 187–194. For a discussion of the role of gender in these dream tales that focuses on their tendency to either downplay the agency of female dreamers or to stress the ways that immoral women could use dream visions to cause mischief, see Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, 152–162. A discussion of the “dream of the wicked queen” trope in Indian Buddhist literature can also be found in Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 35–37.

false.”⁶³

This etiological typology is repeated more or less verbatim in the influential fifth-century *vinaya* commentary *Shanjianlü piposha* (善見律毘婆沙 [T. 1462]),⁶⁴ save that the causes of “true” dreams⁶⁵ have been expanded to include those caused by good or evil divine beings and those resulting from

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- 63 T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *The Questions of King Milinda*, Sacred Books of the East Vol. 36, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1890), 157–158. For an overview of this text's history in China, see Paul Demiéville, “Les Versions Chinoises du Milindapañha,” *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 24:1/2 (1924): 1–253, 255, 257–258. It should be noted that the version included in Demiéville's translation does not appear to contain the section on dreams, though other contemporaneous Indian texts certainly did (as will be discussed presently). This typology's association of certain types of dreams with the humoral qualities of certain types of dreamers was prefigured, in the Indian context, by the *Atharva-Veda*, as discussed in Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities*, 18–19. For additional discussion of traditional Indian dream typologies, which also features a discussion of the *Milindapañha*, see Angela Sumegi, *Dreamworlds of Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism: The Third Place*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 55–57.
- 64 Thomas Newhall, “Shanjianlü piposha 善見律毘婆沙,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%96%84%E8%A6%8B%E5%BE%8B%E6%AF%98%E5%A9%86%E6%B2%99>: “A translation that corresponds in part [to] the Pāli text *Samantapāsādikā*, a commentary on the Vinaya by Buddhaghosa. Trans. by Saṃghabhadra 僧伽跋陀羅 at Zhulinsi 竹林寺 in 488.” While many previous scholars have posited that *Shanjianlü piposha* is a straightforward translation of *Samantapāsādikā* (most notably, Bapat and Hirakawa [cited below]), this view has been increasingly contested in recent scholarship. For a helpful overview of these textual issues, see: Gudrun Pinte, “On the Origin of Taishō 1462, the Alleged Translation of the Pāli *Samantapāsādikā*,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 160: 2 (2010), 435–449. For more on dreams in the *Samantapāsādikā*, see: Sumegi, 57.
- 65 For a discussion of the category of “true dream” in Indian Buddhist philosophy, see Keijin Hayashi, “The Term 'True Dream' (Satya-svapna) in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 29:5/6 (2001): 559–574. Discussing Indian dream typologies, Angela Sumegi, *Dreamworlds*, employs Jadunath Sinha's dichotomy between “representative” and “presentative” dreams to differentiate between the views of those who see dreams as mere reiterations of previously perceived waking imagery, in contrast to seeing dreams visions as resulting from the sleeping mind's active perception (which is seen as a six “sense,” alongside the five sense organs) (50–52). It is this second understanding of dreams that underlies all Indian Buddhist accounts of oneiric encounters with gods, spirits and other forms of Buddhist extrahuman entities. This dichotomy is roughly analogous to Faure's theory (outlined in *Visions of Power*) that medieval Japanese Buddhists employed one of two approaches to dreams, the “hermeneutic” and the “performative”:
- Some interpreters, adopting a Corbinian perspective, see these visions as retaining an element of authenticity and so constituting evidence for the existence of the intermediary world. Others do just the opposite and see in them the signs of confirmation or prefiguration of practice, in all cases oneiric doublings of events that have happened or are on the point of happening on a real-world level. We have thus two models for dreams: the hermeneutic model that leads to 'keys to dreams' and to oneirology; and the 'performative' model that tries to recognize the higher truth of an 'imaginal' (but not purely imaginary) event like the transmission of the Dharma, as it figures in the dreams of Keizan and Hanshan. Buddhist masters thus appear as 'elite dreamers,' established at the summit of the oneiric hierarchy (128–129).

one's karmic allotment.⁶⁶ This notion of oneiric verification,⁶⁷ which happens to correspond perfectly to the *stimulus-response* logic of indigenous Chinese miracle tales, clearly undergirded Huijiao and Daoxuan's approach to the dreams of exemplary monks (as will be discussed below).

In this way, we see that the notion of the “true dream” was profoundly ideologically compatible with oneiric practice, as such dream experiences could thereby be parsed as signs of an individual's karmic allotment and/or the efficacy of their praxis regimen. While the history of such practices can be

66 See: Strickmann, “Dreamwork of the Psycho-Sinologists,” 38; Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, 45–47. For more detail, see P. V. Bapat and Akira Hirakawa's translation of *Shanjianlü piposha* 善見律毘婆沙 (T. 1462), which concerns two key topics: 1) dreams caused by divine beings and 2) those that are “prognostic” [*xiangmeng* 想夢]:

The dream caused by divine beings – There are some divine beings who are good acquaintances; there are others who are not good acquaintances. If they belong to the former category, they display good dreams in which people are enabled to attain good things. If they belong to the latter category, they display evil dreams in which they are enabled to attain evil things. This dream is real. A dream that is prognostic – A man has [accumulated] in one's past life merit or demerit (罪). If he has accumulated merit, then a good dream is displayed. If demerit, then is displayed an evil dream. Like the dream of the mother of the Bodhisatta. When the Bodhisatta was about to enter the womb of his mother, [she] saw a dream in which a white elephant came down from the heaven of Tāvātimsa gods and entered her right side. This is the dream which is prognostic. If in a dream one sees that he is worshipping the Buddha, or that he is reciting suttas, or that he is accepting the precepts of good conduct, or that he is giving charities, or doing various kinds of meritorious acts, then this is a dream which is prognostic (356–357).

Shan-Chien-P'i-P'o-Sha, A Chinese Version by Saṅghabhadra of Samantapāsādikā, (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1970).

Cf., 「天人夢者，有善知識天人，有惡知識天人，若善知識天人現善夢，令人得善。惡知識者，令人得惡想現惡夢，此夢真實。想夢者，此人前身，或有福德或有罪，若福德者現善夢，罪者現惡夢，如菩薩母夢菩薩，初欲入母胎時，夢見白象從切利天下入其右脇，此是想夢也。若夢禮佛誦經持戒，或布施種種功德，此亦想夢。」 (T. 1462: 760a8–16)

One testament to the fact that the *Shanjianlü piposha's* typology would have been salient to Daoxuan is that his junior collaborator Daoshi's (道世, d. 683) cites it extensively in the “Dream” chapter of FYZL (T. 2122: 533b21–c9; 1018–1019 [punctuated edition]).

A particularly significant aspect of this etiological system, especially when considering the fourth type of dream, is that an oneiric vision of a morally laudable action is read as a reliable sign of one's positive karmic balance. Given the cross-cultural evidence for the extent to which dream content is malleable (i.e., that it responds to both waking actions and culturally-mediated ideals [as outlined below]), this understanding of dreams would clearly create a virtuous cycle (in both the literal and figurative senses of the term). Specifically, such beliefs would help to generate a system in which an individual's Buddhist praxis and ideation would contribute to consequent dreams of Buddhist deities and practices, which would then further reinforce their identity as a Buddhist practitioner, and consequently create an increased motivation to perform Buddhist practices and an increased likelihood of experiencing “Buddhist” dreams. We see evidence of such a cycle in action in medieval China, especially by Daoxuan's day, as discussed in Chapter One.

67 Here, I am indebted to Eric M. Greene's masterful discussion of the phenomenon of “verificatory visions” (defined broadly) within the early medieval Chinese Buddhist episteme. See: *Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, (PhD diss., University of California, 2012). The extent to which Huijiao and Daoxuan saw dreams as “verificatory visions” is explored at length in Chapter One.

traced back to the South Asian subcontinent (both in Buddhist and extra-Buddhist sources),⁶⁸ there is also considerable evidence of their adoption by Chinese,⁶⁹ Japanese,⁷⁰ and Tibetan⁷¹ Buddhists. In the context of medieval Chinese Buddhism, it is this aspect of religious dreaming that has received the most sustained scholarly attention, given the central role of verificatory⁷² dreams in both confession rites⁷³ and meditation practice. These prior studies, and the insights they provide on the oneiric practices described in GSZ and XGSZ, are treated in Chapter One.

Now that we have completed this all-too-brief overview of the disparate (but oddly commensurate) perspectives on dreams that would have informed Huijiao and Daoxuan's

68 For instance, Serinity Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, discusses ritualized dreams in *Upanishadic* sources (129–133). See also: Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 31–36; Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities, passim*. For an extensive discussion of dreams in South/Central Asian tantric texts (as translated into Chinese), see Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins*, 291–336.

69 As will be discussed presently.

70 The central role of dreams in Japanese Buddhism is most clearly outlined in writings focused on its most exemplary dreamer: the Kamakura monk, Myōe 明慧. See: Frédéric Girard, *Un moine de la secte Kegon à Kamakura (1185–1333)*, *Myōe (1173–1232) et le Journal de ses rêves*, (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1990); George J. Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). For the interplay between Myōe's dreams and his ritual life, focusing on the dialectical relationship between his dream content and specific ritual observances, see: Mark Unno, *Shingon Refractions: Myōe and the Mantra of Light*, (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2004). See also: Faure, *Visions of Power*, 124–126; Kawai Hayao 河合隼雄, *Bukkyō to yume 仏教と夢*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994).

71 Dreams play a central role in both Tibetan Buddhist historiography (where they serve the various types of signific roles also seen in the Chinese sources to be considered below) and ritual (given the perceived similarities between the liminal states of sleep and *bardo*). See: John Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, Revised Edition, (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2007), 408–414. See also: Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, for a discussion of Tibetan dream yoga and other forms of ritualized dreaming (117–146); and Sumegi, which explores the “verificatory” function of dreams in this context (103–104). For a comparative project that considers Tibetan oneiric practices in light of contemporary neuroscience, see Evan Thompson, *Waking, Dreaming, Being: Self and Consciousness in Neuroscience, Meditation, and Philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), especially 139–166.

72 As noted above, I am borrowing this term from Eric M. Greene, *Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience*, 6. See Chapter One for a discussion of the role of dreams within the overall framework of visionary verification that Greene proposes.

73 Though it has become commonplace to translate *chanhui* (懺悔) as “repentance” (as in the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism's* definition), I am following Funayama Tōru in opting to use the term “confession” in its place. As he argues, even though the term “confession” bears some unavoidably Catholic connotations, it is to be preferred over the alternative because it clearly refers to outward religious practice, in contrast to “repentance,” which could just as easily apply to a psychological attitude of remorse. See: Funayama Tōru, “Rituals of Confession (*chanhui*) in Fifth–Sixth Century China” in *Regional Characteristics of Text Dissemination and Relocation of People in the History of Chinese and Indian Religions with Special Reference to Buddhism*, (Kyoto: Kyoto University Institute for Research in Humanities, 2011).

understandings of the oneiric episodes that they chose to include in their respective collections, it is necessary to consider the generic features of such episodes themselves. To do so, we must consider them in their proper rhetorical context as proselytic documents, wherein dream episodes (and other miraculous elements) were read as proofs of exemplarity in keeping with the primary episteme of the medieval period: namely, the ideology of stimulus and response (*ganying* 感應).

Dreaming and the Stimulus-Response Episteme in Medieval China

As Robert Sharf so eloquently demonstrated in *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, one of the fundamental assumptions of the medieval Chinese episteme⁷⁴ was the logic of stimulus / response, whereby both natural phenomena and human actions were understood to impel correlative reactions from the cosmos itself.⁷⁵ This conceptual paradigm predisposed the medieval Chinese to judge natural phenomena (e.g., astronomical objects, seasonal cycles), as well as perceived prodigies (e.g., atypical animal births, plants growing out of season), in evidentiary terms – as signs of either the (im)morality of human conduct (especially of those in the upper echelons of society) or of the efficacy of specific religious beliefs and practices.⁷⁶ This perspective can be seen as a logical continuation of the ideology

74 For a parallel discussion, which highlights the role of the Buddhist episteme (and especially the notions of karmic recompense and the six realms of rebirth [六道 *rokudō*]) in remaking the Japanese worldview during the Heian period, see William Lafleur, *The Karma of Words; Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 26–59.

75 See: Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 77–97, wherein he traces this cosmological notion from its earliest articulations as a form of homeopathic magic to its later development into a “fully-fledged cosmological theory” (84). For an exploration of this logic within Han and early medieval histories, as well as Taoist and Buddhist textual sources, see Lippiello (*passim*). In *Strange Writing*, Campany provides a pellucid discussion of the evidentiary role of such manifestations (and of the stimulus / response cosmology more broadly) in the miracle tales collected by early medieval Chinese discourse communities (322–323). This shared episteme is cited by Lippiello as her rationale for discussing auspicious omens in court histories alongside their occurrences in medieval Buddhist and Taoist texts, as she suggests that they were “part and parcel” of “one syncretic culture” (24).

76 As Sharf notes in *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, the notion of “miraculous retribution” found in many medieval narrative collections (and outlined below) can be read as a moralistic interpretation of this same cosmological principle (94–95). He posits that this is the reason that, from the time of the Han, dynastic histories typically included a chapter titled 'Five Phases,' which recorded

of a “readable” world: an epistemological position traceable back at least as far as the late Shang dynasty (ca. 12th c. BCE), and one that underlies the subsequent use and popularization of various forms of mantic technologies.⁷⁷ In this context, the notion of *ganying* resonance was the causal framework that made the cosmos “parseable.”⁷⁸ In addition to its use as a part of a *prospective* hermeneutical system (as in the cases of Chinese divination practice mentioned above), the *ganying* episteme was equally implicated in the *retrospective* creation of order, via the narrativization of these significant phenomena.⁷⁹ Such stories were recorded by the authors/compiler of the earliest extant

occurrences of unusual phenomena or wonders (*guai*) including earthquakes, avalanches, feather-rain, and the birth of two-headed chickens. The principle of sympathetic resonance was invoked to explain celestial portents, moral retribution, ritual efficacy, natural and astronomical cycles, political upheaval, and so on. It is, therefore, to be expected that the principle would similarly influence the Chinese understanding of Buddhist cosmology, philosophy, and monastic practice (*ibid.*, 97).

See Lippiello for a translation of one such compendium from the *Song shu* (completed ca. 488 CE): the earliest such collection dedicated specifically to recording auspicious omens (273–322).

77 I am borrowing the term “readable” (in this context) from Li’s *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*. For a discussion of Shang dynasty mantic techniques, as well as a detailed discussion of the oracle bones as historical sources, see David N. Keightley’s *Sources of Shang History*. Lisa Raphals, in *Divination and Prediction*, offers a comparative discussion of Chinese mantic sources up to the Han dynasty, including material from the *Yijing* 易經, ritual texts (e.g., *Liji* 禮記 and *Zhouli* 周禮), histories, commentaries and philosophical texts (e.g., *Zuozhuan* 左傳 and the *Mencius* 孟子), and almanacs (such as the famed Shuihudi daybooks). For more information on the cleromantic, hemerological, and exorcistic material found in these daybooks, see Poo Mu-chou, “Ritual and Ritual Texts in Early China” in *Early Chinese Religion: Part One - Shang Through Han (1250 – 220 BCE)*, edited by John Lagerway and Marc Kalinowski, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 281–314.

78 As discussed in Li’s “Dreams of Interpretation,” in the *Zuozhuan*, [d]reams establish causality - on the symbolic level, as a sign that is fulfilled, unravelled, or betrayed; on the literal level, as advice or warning heeded or defied. The representation of dreams is motivated by the need to interpret and define causes and consequences. In this sense it asserts or questions the ‘readability’ of the world and shapes our understanding of causality, human agency, and possible ‘reason in history’ (be it a moral scheme rewarding good and punishing evil, or a certain vision of order or teleology) (17).

Li generalizes this argument by positing that this perspective reflects the general historiographical vision of *Zuozhuan* in *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*. For a discussion of the linkage between divination and the the correlative cosmology in early China, see Raphals, *Divination and Prediction*, 327–352.

79 Note: in a prior draft, I had used the term “anomalies” here, only to realize upon rereading that doing so was equivalent to failing to acknowledge Poo’s terminological distinction between “superhuman” and “extrahuman,” given that the *ganying* episteme is premised on the assumption that such atypical occurrences are nonetheless a predictable part of the natural order. Campany’s comments on this terminological issue, as outlined in *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, are *apropos*:

while the events depicted in *Mingxiang ji* and similar texts are certainly presented as instantiations (and indeed verifications) of karmic law, they are also, *from both protagonists’ and implied readers’ points of view*, presented as surprising, shocking, paranormal, and strange – as interruptions of the ordinary, normally apparent everyday course of things. As a rough, preliminary characterization we might say that these events as depicted in such texts are ‘miracles’ not in an ontological sense (‘nature’ does not get ‘suspended’) but in an epistemological one: they alert characters in the stories and hearers and readers of the stories to the existence of beings, places, and states of affairs normally hidden from their view (15, ff. 58 [emphasis in original]).

Chinese histories (such as the *Zuozhuan* [mid-5th c. BCE]), where they were employed to such rhetorical ends as legitimizing political authorities. That said, in the centuries that followed, and, in particular, in the years after the fall of the Han, this storytelling tradition came unmoored from the official context, whereby a variety of discourse communities came to employ these narratives of “miraculous response” for their own multifarious purposes.⁸⁰

A particularly noteworthy development, which was a logical outgrowth of the aforementioned tendency of Zhou 周 (1046–256) and Han 漢 (206 BCE–220 CE) histories to explain worldly phenomena as resulting from the possession (or loss) of the Mandate of Heaven by the reigning clan, many of these “strange tales” served to dramatize the notion of moral reciprocity (*bao* 報).⁸¹ Such tales would have been especially poignant in this era of tumult and uncertainty, during which the sociopolitical apparatuses for dealing with ethical lapses were perceived as increasingly capricious and unreliable.

Moreover, in addition to the clear lineal ties that can be drawn between this medieval narrative tradition and its earlier Chinese antecedents, the idea of a cosmos grounded on the principle of

Lippiello makes the similar argument that omens are natural (albeit atypical) phenomena (20). I find these perspectives to be more useful than the one put forward by Liu, *Theory of the Strange*, who posits that the distinctive feature of *zhiguai* as a genre is its concern with “other-worldly” matters (50), as I would argue that position grossly underrepresents the variety of cultural repertoires available to the medieval Chinese for transecting the alleged gulf between the human and “supernatural” worlds (e.g., mantic techniques, exorcism, oneiric practice). This issue is likely a result of Liu's relatively narrow focus on *zhiguai* as a literary genre, which inherently downplays the ritualistic and proselytic potential of such narratives, especially when transmitted by religious communities.

80 For some prototypical Buddhist examples of early Chinese “miraculous response” narratives, consider the story collections related to Guanshiyin, which are described in Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, *Rikuchō koitsu Kanzeon ōgenki no kenkyū* 六朝古逸觀世音応驗記の研究, (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1970). See also: Robert Ford Campany, “Earliest Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin” in *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 82–96; Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 49–51 and *passim*.

81 See: Campany, *Strange Writing*, 367–369. For dreams in *zhiguai* as a dramatization of this principle of reciprocity in action, see Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 19.

ineluctable moral reciprocity proved to be a near-perfect fit with the recently translated Buddhist concept of karmic causality.⁸² Relatedly, just as imperial courts since the Han dynasty had maintained records of miraculous happenings as a (somewhat self-serving) means of exalting the ruling house, they also expected similar reports back from their Buddhist clients, given that any purported miracles could be read as signs of the efficacy of their patronage and/or the exemplarity of their clients.⁸³ This “reporting requirement” (to borrow a phrase from contemporary “Management-ese”) proved to be a natural fit with a medieval Buddhist culture of burgeoning oneiric practice, as the same dream visions that were serving as verifications of moral purity or meditative attainment could simultaneously be viewed as evidence of *ganying* in action.⁸⁴ In such a context, the practices of both dream telling and

82 As discussed in Sharf, *Coming to Terms*; Campany, *Strange Writing and Signs from the Unseen Realm*, *passim*. (1996; 2012a). Zhang, in *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural*, argues that the fifth-century *Youming lu* contains first-hand evidence of the gradual incorporation of Buddhist notions of karma into the framework of moral retribution, as it includes both traditional accounts (i.e., ones that make no reference to Buddhist concepts or logics, such as ghosts exacting vengeance on the living) and composite ones (e.g., those making reference to the cycle of rebirth or the realms of rebirth), 89–102. Likewise, Donald E. Gjerdtson offers a helpful elucidation of the history of the Buddhist notion of karmic retribution and role of the *zhiguai* collection *Mingbao ji* in helping to adapt this notion to the Chinese context (119–126): *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T'ang Lin's Ming-pao chi*, (Berkeley, CA: Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, 1989). The parallel between karma and *bao* was not lost on early Buddhist exegetes. For example, Lippiello discusses a section of the GSZ biography of Kang Senghui (ca. mid–3rd c. CE), in which the monk explicates the Buddhist notion of karma by referring to specific classical Chinese examples of auspicious omens: as she suggests, in this account, “[t]he Chinese concept of 'stimulus and response,' reflecting the harmony and correspondence between Heaven and man, was evoked to introduce Buddhist ideas of retribution” (163).

83 In addition to describing this process in the Han (27), Lippiello notes that members of the Department of Ceremonials (*Libu* 禮部) under the Tang, were in charge of collecting and authenticating favourable omens. The officials of this bureau had the duty to examine all the auspicious signs presented to the court from different regions: in the case of immovable objects, such as intertwining trees, envoys were sent to the spot to authenticate and draw pictures of the phenomena reported (126).

In the Buddhist context, she notes that, from the fifth century onward, Buddhist miracles also came to be prized by Chinese rulers, citing examples from the Song, Sui and Tang (197–203). A fascinating example of this dynamic can be seen in Koichi Shinohara, “Guanding’s Biography of Zhiyi, the Fourth Patriarch of the Tiantai Tradition” in *Speaking of Monks: Religious Biography in India and China*, edited by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, (Oakville, ON: Mosaic Press, 1992), 97–232. In this detailed analysis of a cache of secondary documents relating to the founding of the Tiantai school’s *Guoqing* temple (國清百錄 *Guoqing bolu* [T. 1934]), Shinohara effectively captures the social dynamics of this process, whereby a munificent patron is inspired to donate by the eminent reputation of a famous monk, which then obligates the deceased monk’s disciples to visit the court and report on the miraculous consequences of having engaged in these Buddhist capital projects: these negotiations are seen ultimately resulting in Guanding’s compilation of a biography of Zhiyi that is rife with miraculous happenings (100–106). This is a perfect example of a discourse community in action, and provides support for assuming that similar motives guided the production of textual corpora for which we lack the sort of background information provided by the *Guoqing bolu*.

84 For a discussion of the *ganying* episteme serving as a cosmological rationale for the efficacy of Buddhist rituals, see

purposive dreaming could not help but become more prevalent: a development that we will consider in Chapter One.

Though a culturally competent⁸⁵ monastic literatus in medieval China (e.g., Huijiao or Daoxuan) would have been familiar with philosophical speculation on dreams, as well as the various etiologies ascribed to oneiric experiences and the typologies used to subdivide them (as discussed above), such abstruse concerns are rarely ever reflected in the dream episodes preserved in GSZ and XGSZ. Instead, they are much more akin to the descriptions of oneiric experiences found in *zhiguai* collections,⁸⁶ official histories,⁸⁷ biographies of filial children and other literati texts,⁸⁸ as well as Taoist hagiographies

Sharf, *Coming to Terms*, 119–124.

- 85 I am using this term as a generalization of Michael Riffaterre's concept of *literary competence*. See Graham Allen's cogent summary in *Intertextuality* [Second Edition], (New York: Routledge, 2011), where he describes it as the notion that an informed reader will approach a text with “a knowledge of the sociolect which will unlock its initially hidden meanings” (121). In this view, “texts suppose inter-texts, which the reader must then actualize within a semiotic reading of the text” (*ibid.*). Thus, by “cultural competence,” I am referring to the ability to approach cultural phenomena (not only texts, but also rituals, icons, and other cultural products) with the necessary (albeit possibly implicit) background knowledge necessary to comprehend them.
- 86 See: Campany, *Strange Writing*, 265 and *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 58–59. Zhang, *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural*, 174–221. For some additional examples, see: Kenneth G. Dewoskin and J. I. Crump, trans., *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Alvin Cohen, trans., *Tales of Vengeful Souls: A Sixth Century Collection of Chinese Avenging Ghost Stories*, (Taipei: Ricci Institute, 1982).
- 87 As discussed in Lippiello; Li, “Dreams of Interpretation”; Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*; Wagner, “Imperial Dreams in China.”
- 88 For example, Huangfu Mi (皇甫謐), a literatus of the third century CE, made extensive references to omens and prodigies (in general) and dreams (in particular) in his *Records of the Emperors and Kings*, which drew heavily from the cosmological weft texts that were so strongly tied to Han-era formulations of the *ganying* episteme. See: Keith Knapp, “Heaven and Death According to Huangfu Mi: A Third Century Confucian,” *Early Medieval China* 6 (2000): 1–31, esp. 11–13. For another example, various medieval versions of the tale of Ding Lan (an individual enshrined as one of the Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars for serving a wooden statue of his mother with diligence and filiality after her premature death) include an episode whereby the mistreatment of the statue prompts an oneiric response, in which the deceased mother appears to either the filial son or the guilty party. For a detailed, source critical analysis of the complex history of this tale's various retellings, see the *Appendix* to Keith Knapp's *Selfless Offspring: Filial Children and Social Order in Medieval China*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 191–194. We see a similar usage preserved in the *Family Instructions for the Yan Clan* penned by the sixth-century literatus Yan Zhitui (顏之推), wherein he encourages his descendants to embrace Buddhism by drawing upon popular accounts of dreams as evidence of the posthumous survival of the soul:

[T]hough the body dies, the soul is still preserved. When a man is alive in the world, it seems inappropriate to look for future existence; but after death the relation to former existence resembles that of old age to youth or morning to night. There are not a few cases in society where souls have appeared in dreams, descending upon the body of concubines or inspiring a wife or maid to ask for food or request a blessing. Nowadays people, if poor, humble, sick or sorrowful, without exception blame themselves for not cultivating good deeds in a former life (147–148).

and revealed texts.⁸⁹ In all of these cases, reported visions are often accepted unquestioningly as the result of *ganying* in action. When one considers the fact that the discourse communities responsible for this variegated corpora of texts were pursuing a variety of (occasionally incommensurate) rhetorical goals, the consistent revelatory role played by oneiric episodes is particularly striking. In this respect, it is clear that these groups were all drawing upon a shared cultural repertoire (the evidentiary dream), in spite of the various types of discontinuities (rhetorical, situational, ideological) between their contexts of composition and transmission.⁹⁰ As an aside, and as testament to the perdurable appeal of “responsive dreams” within the Chinese episteme, it is notable that such accounts have continued to serve as evidence of spiritual efficacy within Chinese proselytic literature to the present day.⁹¹

Yan Zhitui [Yen Chih-T'ui], *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan*, translated by Teng Ssu-yü, (Leiden: Brill, 1968).

A final example, which serves to highlight the extent to which medieval literati had internalized this episteme, can be seen in the medieval apotheosis of Confucius via biographical accounts that depict him as the product of his mother's oneiric congress with a deity called the “Black Emperor” (see Lippiello, 152, 281 ff. 65; Lionel Jensen, “The Genesis of Kongzi in Ancient Narrative,” in *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius*, edited by Thomas A. Wilson, [Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002], 175–221).

- 89 For a specific, and particularly dramatic, example, see Yoshikawa Tadao, “Yume no kiroku – Shūshi meitsūki” (夢の記録 – 《周氏冥通記》) in *Chūgoku kodaijin no yume to shi* 中国古代人の夢と死, (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1985), 61–110, which outlines the structure and contents of a dream journal kept by a medieval Daoist youth by the name of Zhou: a textual collection saved from destruction and recompiled by Tao Hongjing (陶弘景, 456–536). These dream records detail over a year of oneiric interactions between Master Zhou and various Taoist deities, eventually culminating in the youth's suicide – a terminal sign of his faith, motivated by the assumption that physical death would allow him to take his place among the gods. For a discussion of oneiric communication between the living and the dead, as recorded in Tao Hongjing's annotations to the *Declarations of the Perfected*, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 39–50. Moreover, the role of oneiric visions in the Shangqing revelations is discussed on pages 135–155. See also: Strickmann, “Dreamwork of the Psycho-Sinologists,” 31–36. As one final example, consider Franciscus Verellen's article on Taoist usages of *ganying* narratives, as exemplified in Du Guangting's tenth-century *Record of Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism* (*Daojiao lingyan ji* 道教靈驗記). In this article, Verellen outlines the ways that this collection appropriates Buddhist homiletic forms (such as a retributive cosmos), but couches them in language borrowed from *literati* discourses on the *ganying* cosmology (e.g., those found in the *Daode jing*, *Book of Rites*, and official histories) (226–227). “Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism: The Inversion of a Buddhist Apologetic Tradition in Late Tang China,” *T'oung Pao* (Second Series) 78:4/5 (1992): 217–263. Perhaps unsurprisingly, one of the key examples treated therein is an extensive dream narrative, within which an immoral Taoist cleric is terrified into moral acquiescence by an oneiric vision of the posthumous punishments associated with his conduct: both this form of dream revelation and its subsequent effects upon the man's conduct were prefigured centuries earlier by isomorphic Buddhist narratives (240–242).
- 90 That said, such discontinuities should not be overstated. For instance, consider Shen Yue (沈約, 441–513): not only was he a literatus who compiled a treatise on auspicious miracles for the *Song shu*, but he was also a devout Buddhist and a student of Tao Hongjing – a testament to broad appeal and application of the *ganying* episteme in the early medieval period (as discussed in Lippiello, 120).
- 91 For instance, Adam Yuet Chau provides an example of a paean to a local dragon god (Heilong Dawang) written in

Within the specific context of medieval Chinese Buddhist narrative, it is clear that the dream episodes under discussion, as representative instances of the *ganying* episteme, were employed for particular rhetorical purposes by Huijiao and Daoxuan. In considering what some of these rhetorical functions might have been, I find Campany's outline of the “standard” medieval Buddhist miracle tale helpful, as its clear distillation of such narratives provides a schematic perspective on issues that might otherwise be obscured by the welter of particular details contained in each story. His schema includes the following five elements (cited below in abbreviated form):

1. A seed of religious instruction or pious habit is planted in the protagonist; (...)
2. The protagonist does something that is “marked,” positively or negatively, in the field of specific Buddhist values or precepts; (...)
3. There occurs an anomalous – often strikingly contra-natural – response to the protagonist's act; details are frequently supplied to persuade the reader to see the occurrence as a response to the specific act in question and not an accident; (...)
4. Others react with amazement to the response, or else with scepticism; in the latter case, further anomalies occur or an inquest (*yan*) is conducted, often by a ruler or official, and the sceptic is convinced; (...)
5. These events in turn stimulate (*gan*) positively marked Buddhist acts by others.⁹²

Though Campany notes he did not explicitly consult hagiographies (such as GSZ) when laying out the foregoing schema, many aspects of it certainly apply. In considering the dream episodes in the *Eminent Monks* corpus in terms of their narrative structure, I found that those included by Huijiao seem more concerned with persuasion (#3), and to include fewer cases where an “unadorned” dream (i.e., one that is not bolstered by additional waking miracles) is cited as a persuasive instance of *ganying*. As such, they seem to have been written to downplay or preempt the potential objections of skeptics – an

1989, wherein one of the examples of the deity's efficacy was his oneiric visitation of a Qing general – a visionary experience that was allegedly reported to Emperor Kangxi (r. 1661–1722), earning the local temple various plaudits (209). *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). Similarly, many tales related by the discourse community associated with the twentieth-century Pure Land monk Yinguang (印光, 1861–1940) cite oneiric experiences as evidence of the monk's “possible spiritual power and transcendent nature,” as described in Jan Kiely, “The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses: Master Yinguang and His Pure Land Revival Movement” in *Making Saints in Contemporary China*, edited by David Ownby, Vincent Goossaert, and Ji Zhe, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 30–77, 32 and *passim*.

92 Campany, *Strange Writing*, 324–328.

implicit instance of (#4). In contrast, Daoxuan seemed more comfortable with the innately persuasive power of dreams, as well as their innate evidentiary value: a hypothesis that I will explore below.

Campany also suggests that Huijiao (and others) were hewing to tropes, symbols and signs of exemplarity that would have been intimately familiar to a reader conversant in Taoist hagiography, but posits three key differences between these two related genres: 1) emphasis on the physical bodies of monks (and especially their miraculous transformation into relics); 2) focus on power over local gods and religious professionals; 3) a “levelling of the playing field when it comes to the abilities of adepts versus those of ordinary persons,” and thus a focus on the miraculous powers resulting from “fervent Buddhist devotional practice.”⁹³ For my purposes, this third point seems most pertinent, as it also seems to represent a potential distinction between the dreams episodes in GSZ and XGSZ, as the second collection includes far more accounts of non-monastic dreamers, including a more than fourfold proportional increase in oneiric conception narratives.⁹⁴ This also supports the contention that Daoxuan (and his discourse community) might have found dream practice more immediately accessible, whereas Huijiao's seems to have been more likely to reserve such activities (and their purported consequences) for exemplary monks.⁹⁵

As suggested above, considering the dream accounts from GSZ and XGSZ in light of the *ganying* episteme (and following Campany's schema) seems to reveal a salient disjunction between the

93 *Ibid.*, 329–332.

94 As outlined in *Table 2.1* (in Chapter Two). In particular, there are two oneiric conception narratives in GSZ and fourteen in XGSZ, though the later collection is only slightly more than twice as long as its antecedent.

95 On a related note, Strickmann, in *Mantras et Mandarins*, argues that the types of oneiric witnessing seen in Chinese (proto-)Tantric sources, especially ritual manuals, differ markedly from the examples seen in secular Chinese sources. He argues that these secular sources follow both social conventions and the hermeneutical standards of popular dream manuals, whereby supreme deities only appear to high-ranking individuals (such as emperors), in contrast to the democratized oneiric realm posited in Buddhist sources (297). Cf., Campany, *Strange Writing*, 323.

perspectives of their respective compilers, as evidenced by the characteristics of the oneiric episodes that they opted to include. In particular, Huijiao, as a prototypical monk-literatus writing for the explicitly proselytic purposes,⁹⁶ tended to include episodes whose narrative structures and functions paralleled those seen in secular accounts of miraculous response⁹⁷ (such as those preserved in the near contemporaneous *Song Shu's* “[Treatise on] Auspicious Omens as Tokens” [符瑞]).⁹⁸ In these accounts, dreams often serve as liminal spaces, allowing spiritually advanced monks (and occasional members of the laity) to interact with the denizens of the extrahuman realm: interactions that tended to be characterized (either implicitly or explicitly) as resulting from either specific ritual practices or the generally exemplary conduct of these individuals. Even so, the dreams themselves generally tended *not* to narratively function as unequivocal and unilateral responses [ying]. Instead, the majority (65%)⁹⁹ of dream narratives in GSZ feature additional miraculous confirmations (e.g., shared dreams, provision of verifiable information about the outside world, waking to discover that an object seen in an oneiric vision was now present in the bedchamber),¹⁰⁰ suggesting that Huijiao was at least somewhat

96 As discussed in Arthur Wright, “Biography and Hagiography: Hui-chiao's Lives of Eminent Monks” in *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 73–111, 76. Originally published in Silver Jubilee Volume of the Zinbun Kagaku Kenkyūsho. (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 1954), 383–432. See also: Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 7–10.

97 Given the central role of *ganying* narratives in official histories, *zhiguai* collections, and anecdotal literature, I cannot help but agree with Wright's claims about the continuity (both in style and substance) between GSZ and contemporary (“secular”) historiographical writings (76–77, 86). For this reason, I must reject his assertion that Huijiao was unimpressed by miracles accounts, which he posits would only have been included to “awe” the “simple” (76). Lippiello falls back on this same erroneous interpretation, drawing on Zürcher's notion of relatively discrete traditions of elite and popular Buddhism (159). Shinohara's “Biographies of Eminent Monks in a Comparative Perspective” effectively dismisses this uncritical reliance on the “elite / popular” dichotomy, arguing that “members of literati groups in medieval China were also themselves quite interested in miracle stories,” (482). He supports this point by noting both the place of prominence given to miracle working monks in the organization of GSZ and the cases where Huijiao opted to include miracle narratives that had been absent from his primary sources (*ibid.*). To a similar end, Gjertson offers a variety of helpful examples of elite medieval Buddhist exegetes drawing on indigenous miracle tales in their commentaries and biographies (40–42).

98 *Song shu*, 759–874. Partially translated in Lippiello, 273–322.

99 For the raw data upon which I based this calculation, see the *Appendix*.

100 For shared dreams as a trope in Indian literature, see Doniger O'Flaherty, 61–80. For a brief discussion of this trope in the Chinese context, see: Vavril, *La Science des Rêve en Chine*, 222–226. For an example of shared dreams in GSZ, see the account of Daojin's 道進 bodhisattva ordination found in Dharmakṣema's 曇無讖 biography (336c, discussed in Chapter One) or the shared dream of thirty monks testifying to the excellent rebirth of their teacher Huiyao 慧耀

ambivalent about whether oneiric visions alone represented compelling evidence of an efficacious response.

In contrast, Daoxuan (the renowned exegete, Vinaya master, and Buddhist miracle tale aficionado)¹⁰¹ clearly had a deep and personal relationship with the phenomenon of visionary revelation (both oneiric and otherwise), as eloquently summarized by William Bodiford:

Daoxuan (596–667) relied as much on his dreams and visions of the Buddha as on his scholastic learning. Or, rather, it might be more correct to say that dreams and visions constituted an indispensable part of his scholastic learning. For Daoxuan the Buddha was neither a figure confined to the ancient past nor a philosophical abstraction. The Buddha was a living presence, one who could confirm and expand on the details found in written sources.¹⁰²

Whether this represents an idiosyncratic feature of Daoxuan's own religious worldview, or a side-effect of the popularization of oneiric practice among Buddhists of the early Tang,¹⁰³ the XGSZ departs from the precedent set by the prior volume in two ways: first, by including more accounts whose attested auspicious responses are dream visions alone (i.e., lacking any subsidiary miraculous confirmations), and, second, by including dreams as “parallel miracles” alongside other auspicious responses (e.g.,

(662b06). For impossible knowledge, see Fa'an's 法安 discovery of buried bells, which was based on a prior oneiric vision (362c, discussed in Chapter Four). For oneiric articles transported into the waking world, see the biography of Tandi 曇諦 (370c, discussed in Chapter Two).

- 101 See Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, for an overview of Daoxuan's (proselytic) motives for compiling XGSZ, as well as the organizational principles he employed and the sources he tended to rely upon (6–11). For a detailed discussion of Daoxuan's various contributions to medieval Chinese monastic life, drawing from his various monastic practice manuals (among other sources), see Chen, *The Revival of Buddhist Monasticism*, 93–165. For a nuanced discussion of Daoxuan's background and biography, especially as related to the compilation of XGSZ, see Fujiyoshi Masumi, 道宣伝の研究 *Dōsenden no kenkyū*, (Tokyo: Tokyo shi kenkyū sōkan, 2002).
- 102 William M. Bodiford, “Introduction” to *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, edited by William M. Bodiford, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005), 1–16, 7. This issue is discussed at length in John R. McRae's contribution to this volume, “Daoxuan's Vision of Jetavana: The Ordination Platform Movement in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” 68–100. For an overview of the role of dreams and visions in Daoxuan's practice (and, in particular, the visionary experiences provided the impetus, as well as the practical instruction, that he relied on when standardizing Chinese Buddhist ordination practice), see: 71–74. See also: Chen, 93–118; Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins*, 323.
- 103 This can be credited in no small part to the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi (智顓, 538–597), whose confession ritual (and related system of oneiric verification) became a ubiquitous preparatory phase for individuals seeking bodhisattva ordination. As discussed in Daniel R. Stevenson, “The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism” in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, edited by Peter N. Gregory, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 45–98. The role of Zhiyi in the popularization of oneiric practice is treated in Chapter One.

cases where “someone had a miraculous dream, someone else smelled a marvellous fragrance”), which attests to the evidentiary value ascribed to such visions in Daoxuan's worldview. As a result, in the case of XGSZ, the ratio is almost entirely perfectly inverted, with 57% of oneiric episodes being presented as either *prima facie* miraculous or as part of a list of co-occurring miraculous confirmations. Thus, I would suggest that Huijiao (perhaps due to personal predilection, historical circumstance, or some combination of the two) was more “religiously unmusical”¹⁰⁴ than his successor, at least so far as the oneiric realm was concerned: a perspectival difference whose statistical shadow is cast across the types of episodes that the two opted to include in their respective collections. Evidence for this contention, as well as its various corollary impacts, will be considered at length in the chapters that follow.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Searching for Dreams in Canonical Buddhist Literature

My approach to the historiographical puzzle of reconstructing the perspective(s) on dreams held by Huijiao and Daoxuan, as well as their respective discourse communities, has been quite straightforward, though as a result it has been somewhat less nuanced than might be optimal.

Specifically, I decided to delve into this topic through the simple expedient of loading up the 2016 Edition of the *CBETA Electronic Tripitaka*,¹⁰⁵ performing a full-text search of GSZ and XGSZ (T. 2059 and 2060) for *meng* (夢) (“dream”), and then translating all of the episodes revealed by this method: in

104 For a discussion of this term, which Weber famously applied to himself, see Christopher Adair-Totef, *Fundamental Concepts in Max Weber's Sociology of Religion*, (New York: Springer, 2015), 30–31. Though this is by no means definitive proof, I find it striking that Huijiao's biography in XGSZ contains no dream accounts (or other visionary experiences) (T. 2060: 471b), nor do any of his chapter commentaries make any substantive references to visionary dream experiences. The only significant exception is his frequent mention of Emperor Ming's dream (a ubiquitous legend that was oft-employed as a temporal marker in medieval Buddhist literature, as discussed in Chapter Three).

105 Accessed online at: <http://www.cbeta.org/>. For a brief history of the CBETA project, see Aming Tu, “Appendix 2: The Creation of the *CBETA Chinese Electronic Tripitaka Collection* in Taiwan” (translated by Xin Zi) in *Spreading Buddha's Word in East Asia: The Formation and Transformation of the Chinese Buddhist Canon*, edited by Jiang Wu and Lucille Chia, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 321–335.

essence, performing a contemporary version of the concordance analyses of yesteryear.¹⁰⁶ I will be the first to acknowledge the two major drawbacks of this approach: first, focusing on the term *meng* can – and indeed did – produce both false positives and false negatives; and, second, relying on the CBETA edition (which is essentially just a digitized version of the *Taishō Tripitaka*) potentially obscured the editorial hands of Huijiao and Daoxuan, given that it is based on much later woodblock editions of the texts in question.

In the first case, the problem is twofold: while some uses of the character *meng* might not actually be references to dreams (as in the case of the toponym Yunmeng 雲夢),¹⁰⁷ it is also possible that a dream account may not actually employ the character 夢.¹⁰⁸ The second problem is obviously much more serious than the first: while even a cursory reading can easily detect a false positive, the only way to definitively rule out the possibility of a false negative is to go through both collections line by line, which of course negates the advantages of a searchable electronic corpus entirely! This issue is further complicated by the fact that medieval Chinese included several other (admittedly rarer) terms for dreams.¹⁰⁹

106 For one classic example, see Julian F. Pas, “Six Daily Periods of Worship: Symbolic Meaning in Buddhist Liturgy and Eschatology,” *Monumenta Serica* 37 (1986): 49–82.

107 As in the case of the idiom “swallowing the waters of Yunmeng” seen in the biography of Huiming 慧命 (T. 2060: 561c6).

108 See, for example, the dialogue between the youth (and future monk) Zhenguan and his parents, as recorded in XGSZ (T. 2060: 701c–702a), wherein the lad explains that he should be permitted to take ordination because of an oneiric conception. The issue is that the conception event, narrated previously, is not described using the term *meng* 夢. Faure's *Visions of Power* eloquently summarizes this challenge (albeit in the context of research into medieval Japanese Buddhism):

This different conception of the boundary between sleep and waking sometimes makes it difficult to tell whether we are dealing with visions or dreams, with modes of waking or of sleeping, with lucid or deluded consciousness. The border dividing the visible from the invisible does not follow the line we think of as obvious (116).

109 For a discussion of the historical orthography of the character *meng* 夢, exploring the significance of its transformations from the Shang dynasty onward, see: Rudy Vavril, *La Science des Rêve en Chine: Hommage à Liu Wenying*, (Paris: Éditions You Feng, 2010), 8–13; Liu Wenying 劉文英, *Meng de mixiu yu meng de tansuo* 夢的迷信與夢的探索, translated by Yuasa Kunihiko 湯浅邦弘, *Chūgoku no yume handan* 中国の夢判断, (Tokyo: Tōhō shoten, 1997), 7–11. For a nuanced discussion of the variety of terms for sleep in texts from the same period, see Richter, 25.

In the second case, it is clear that both Huijiao and Daoxuan's collections continued to be revised and altered (whether purposively or otherwise) in the centuries between their initial compilation and the carving of the Korean woodblock edition that eventually served as the base text for the Taishō canon.¹¹⁰ My forthcoming research on Daoshi's perspective on dreams, which draws on the editorial changes he made when citing, paraphrasing and occasionally reinterpreting earlier Buddhist materials, has reminded me just how profoundly such editorial decisions can impact one's reading of a text. As such, I will be the first to acknowledge the extent to which the present argument could be strengthened by consulting the manuscript versions of GSZ and XGSZ currently held at Nanatsudera and Kōshōdera in Japan: a research project that I intend to follow up on as soon as time and finances permit.

My response to both of these potential critiques is essentially a simple *mea culpa*. I acknowledge that both of these issues highlight the contingency of the present project, which has been constrained by the exigencies of time and other practical concerns. Nonetheless, it remains my hope that this study will serve as a useful starting point for the burgeoning disciplinary discussion of dreams in early medieval Chinese Buddhism, by highlighting key issues, introducing some important historical and cultural dynamics, and suggesting potential directions for future research.

As an aside, Daoshi employs a number of idiosyncratic terms for sleep and dreaming in FYZL, occasionally inserting them into his citations from Buddhist doctrinal sources. I will be considering this issue in my upcoming monograph on the topic.

110 For a general overview of the history of Buddhist sutras, which includes a brief final chapter describing later print editions, see: Kogen Mizuno, *Buddhist Sutras: Origin, Development, Transmission*, (Tokyo: Kōsei, 1981). For a more detailed account of the history of the Taishō, which takes into account both the trends in Japanese Buddhist Studies at the turn of the twentieth century and the broader geopolitical motives that undergirded the massive scholarly effort required to collate, emend and compile the critical apparatus for this scriptural collection, see: Greg Wilkinson, “Taishō Canon: Devotion, Scholarship, and Nationalism in the Creation of the Modern Buddhist Canon in Japan,” in *Spreading Buddha's Word in East Asia: The Formation and Transformation of the Chinese Buddhist Canon*, edited by Jiang Wu and Lucille Chia, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 284–310.

Data-Driven Coding

Once I had highlighted the dream episodes in GSZ and XGSZ via the procedure detailed above, it was then necessary to analyze them. To do so, I considered employing the Hall and van de Castle coding system, given that its utility has been demonstrated in analyses of both historical and ethnographic dream reports.¹¹¹ In particular, one major asset of this approach is its more than fifty-year history of usage, which has allowed several generations of dream researchers to become trained in its use; this, in turn, yields a great degree of replicability, both between data-sets and between graders. I am currently in the process of preparing a paper that does just this, as I believe that the results generated thereby (concerning the ratio of male to female figures, the affective states described, and other attributes included in the Hall and Van de Castle system) will offer some valuable insights into the daily lives of monastic dreamers, given the established correspondences between dream imagery and waking life.¹¹²

Unfortunately, this method's greatest strength (i.e., its pre-defined [and thus replicable] categories of analysis) also diminishes its ability to adequately attend to any particularities in the data sets being considered, which renders it less than ideal for analyzing dream episodes as strongly characterized by specific generic and rhetorical features as those contained in GSZ and XGSZ.¹¹³ This

111 This method was initially proposed in Calvin Hall and Robert Van de Castle, *The Content Analysis of Dreams*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966). For an exploration of the significance and potential utility of this method for researchers in the humanities, see: G. William Domhoff, "Using Content Analysis to Study Dreams: Applications and Implications for the Humanities" in *Dreams: A Reader on the Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming*, edited by Kelly Bulkeley, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 307–319. For a contemporary perspective on the application (and applicability) of the Hall and Van de Castle model, see G. William Domhoff, *The Emergence of Dreaming: Mind-Wandering, Embodied Simulation, and the Default Network*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). The methodological appendix to this volume ("Measurement and Statistical Issues that Need to Be Addressed in the Study of Dream Content") is particularly helpful and has been made freely available online by the author: http://www2.ucsc.edu/dreams/Library/methodological_appendix.html

112 On research into the correspondences between waking and dream life, see Bulkeley, *Big Dreams*, 112–127. For a thoughtful, albeit very brief, attempt to catalogue the dream experiences described in XGSZ, see: Elizabeth Kenney, "Dreams in Further Biographies of Eminent Monks," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 51:1 (December 2002), 504–507.

113 For instance, the Hall and Van de Castle coding rules for "characters" include four parameters: **Number/Status**, **Sex**, **Identity**, and **Age**. In turn, the allowable values for the **Number/Status** parameter are: 1 – individual, 2 – group, 3 –

issue is cogently addressed by Barbara Tedlock, albeit in the context of her own anthropological research:

Another reason for the abandonment of content analysis by anthropologists is that our formal training in linguistics encourages us to reject the basic assumption of aggregate statistical research, namely, that meaning resides within single words rather than within their contexts. ... Dream narratives are not dreams, and neither narrating nor enacting dreams can ever recover dream experiences. Furthermore, dream symbols taken in isolation can be misleading if the researcher has not spent at least a year observing and interacting with the culture in order to gather enough contextual details to make sense of local knowledge and produce a 'thick description' of that culture.¹¹⁴

To take this salient objection into account, I chose instead to approach this material using a discourse analysis approach, following the guidelines outlined by Linda A. Wood and Rolf O. Kroger.¹¹⁵

Specifically, when performing my data collection and analysis, I generally adhered to this approach,

individual dead, 4 – group dead, 5 – individual imaginary, 6 – group imaginary, 7 – original form, 8 – changed form. The other parameters have similar sets of values, as summarized by William Domhoff at *dreamresearch.net*: <http://www2.ucsc.edu/dreams/Coding/characters.html>. Under this system, the “character” in a dream about the bodhisattva Puxian would be classed as “5MPA” (imaginary individual, male, prominent, adult), which is also likely the way that one would code a dream of a divine monk (*shenseng* 神僧) (though an argument could also be made for “5MSA” [S=stranger]). This is an issue because it represents a “closure” of the data that potentially limits the breadth and depth of one’s analysis. For example, in my (currently unpublished) research on dreams in canonical Lotus Sutra miracle collections (presented at the CSSR conference in 2014), I made the observation that the reported oneiric visions of lay dreamers contain many fewer references to specific Buddhist terminology than those ascribed to monastics (i.e., they are more likely to dream of a miraculous monk, a divine monk, or an unnamed Buddha, than of the Many Treasures Stupa, the Bodhisattva Never-Disparaging, or Maitreya Buddha). Relying on the Hall and Van de Castle coding system would have obviated the possibility of making this observation, as each of these “characters” would simply have been coded as instances of 5MPA.

- 114 Barbara Tedlock, “A New Anthropology of Dreaming” in *Dreams: A Reader on the Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming*, edited by Kelly Bulkeley, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 249–264, 250. As an aside, this is specific instance of the general insight that inspired David Maines’ clarion call toward narrative sociology: namely, that research methods designed to yield “objective” data from human subjects often do so by denying the messy, contingent nature of the human stories and lives being represented by demographic statistics, as well as the ways that complex feelings and opinions are, by necessity, jammed into the Procrustean beds of linear scales (e.g., from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). “Narrative’s Moment and Sociology’s Phenomena: Toward a Narrative Sociology,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 34:1 (1993), 17–38. Discussing this issue in the context of such scales, Maines argues that,

all of [these scales] impose closure by denying the research subjects as biographically-embedded, self-narrating persons.... In imposing closure, that is, in building data reduction into the data collection process, the researcher is put in the position of having to speculate about the phenomena being studied (24–25).

This is an especial irony, given that survey respondents – given the opportunity – are often more than willing to delve into their rationales for having selected specific responses.

- 115 Linda A. Wood and Rolf O. Kroger, *Doing Discourse Analysis: Methods for Studying Action in Talk and Text*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000). Drawing on the theories of J. L. Austin, they proffer an extremely inclusive vision of “discourse,” seeing it as a form of action and a means of accomplishing some end in the social sphere (4–5): a perspective that is clearly commensurate with the approach to GSZ and XGSZ outlined above.

which involved defining my source of data (i.e., the dream episodes from GSZ and XGSZ), deriving categories of analysis (sometimes known as "codes") by making an initial pass through the data while trying to bracket (to the greatest extent possible) my provisional conclusions,¹¹⁶ and then re-assessing the data (as many times as necessary) in order to trace the occurrences of these themes.¹¹⁷ While this data-driven coding method cannot claim to be as “objective” as a content analysis in the Hall and Van de Castle mode, it has the advantage of allowing the categories of analysis to “bubble up” from the material itself: as such, it can be seen as a hybrid qualitative / quantitative approach. Specifically, it combines a close reading of the sources being considered (for the sake of generating initial “codes”) with the quantitative reassessment of the entire corpus that then accounts for occurrences of these specific qualities. As such, it was only due to the flexibility (and data-driven quality) of this approach that I was able to highlight specific (and seemingly idiosyncratic) features of these corpora, such as the frequent occurrence of dreams associated with liminal life events, and Huijiao and Daoxuan's differing modes of engaging with the *ganying* episteme.

Bodies, Brains, and Dreams

In reviewing extant literature on dreams in Chinese religion, I noticed that a sizable majority give rather short shrift to valuable insights that can be drawn from the breadth of extant anthropological and psychological research into oneiric and oneiro-cultural phenomena.¹¹⁸ In some respects, I suppose this

116 As Wood and Kroger note, "the initial reading is both part of and necessary for analysis" (87).

117 Ibid., 55–142. In particular, I found their description of the completion of a discourse analysis project helpful: The endpoint is not that one stops finding anything new with further cases, but that the analysis of the cases considered to date has been thorough. The researcher must judge whether there are sufficient data to make an (interesting) argument and to warrant or justify that argument (81).

See also: Richard E. Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), especially chapters two, three and seven.

118 This dynamic was already in evidence almost ninety years ago, when the eminent folklorist Berthold Laufer laments that he may never have time to review the psychological literature on dreams, in spite of the fact that the respective annals of psychology and sinology were much less overstuffed in his time than they are today. “Inspirational Dreams in Eastern Asia,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 44:172 (1931): 208–216, 208.

should have been unsurprising. Though many Religious Studies scholars (myself included) were initially drawn to the discipline by the appealing prospect of embarking upon a “Long Search,” unravelling an overarching “monomyth,” or other such perennialist projects, this approach to the discipline has now come to be seen as not just passé,¹¹⁹ but even ideologically suspect.¹²⁰ For this reason, and, in particular, because descriptions of my proposed project have prompted concerns about “science as an imperialist Western episteme,”¹²¹ I feel compelled to offer a brief justification of my decision to include such material herein. For those who find this line of argument problematic or unpersuasive, I should note at this point that my position on the monastic dreams described in GSZ and XGSZ was drawn first and foremost from the texts themselves (using the data-driven coding method described above); I have only employed psychological and cross-cultural material to bolster my historically- and textually-situated conclusions. But given that such materials are present, I will briefly outline my rationale for including them.

The first objection to a fully cultural constructivist position,¹²² at least with respect to sleep and dreams, is the ubiquity of these phenomena across vast swaths of the biosphere, especially in light of the generally accepted definition of “sleep” adopted by the psychologists, zoologists, and other

119 In some unpublished research from early in my PhD program, I performed a discourse analysis (using the method outlined in the previous section) to study twenty-five years of archived McMaster Religious Studies syllabi, to assess potential patterns in RS scholarship and pedagogy. One of my findings was a gradual disappearance of comparative language in all but the most thematic of courses (e.g., “Death and Dying: Comparative Views”).

120 For a nuanced and historically grounded overview of the issues with perennialist position, with specific reference to the study of mystical experience, see: Robert H. Sharf, “The Rhetoric of Experience and the Study of Religion,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7:11–12 (2000): 267–87. For some specific reflections on these issues in the context of Religious Studies pedagogy, which addresses the fact that students will inevitably draw comparative conclusions even when cautioned against doing so by their instructors, see: Kimberley C. Patton, “Stumbling along between the Immensities’: Reflections on Teaching in the Study of Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65:4 (1997): 831–849, 840–843.

121 This is a more-or-less direct quote from a personal communication, but I think it would be impolitic to cite its source.

122 I.e., the only ideological position from which it might be even remotely sensible to ignore psychological and cross-cultural research when considering embodied phenomena.

scientists investigating this physiological state:

“Sleep” describes a state of 1) reduced awareness of and responsiveness to external stimuli. It has 2) a restorative effect on neural tissues (i.e., brains and/or nerve fibers) and 3) is homeostatically regulated. When an organism is deprived of it in the short term, 4) the body will attempt, with increasing urgency, to remedy this lack. 5) Moreover, prolonged deprivation will lead to decreased well-being and impaired functioning.¹²³

For virtually all animals (from fire ants to kangaroos, caimans to sea jellies)¹²⁴ regular “sleep” (as per the foregoing definition) is as necessary to life as food. Though it is unclear whether all of these creatures dream (and, what, if anything, the term “dream” would mean for an animal without a brain), it is certainly the case that, in the mammals studied to date, the sleep state includes one or more periods during which the individual's brain generates and responds to purely internal (i.e., non-sensory) stimuli, while the body is prevented from enacting these reactions through the immobilizing effects of REM muscle atonia: in other words, the presence of a mental phenomenon that, in humans, would be described as dreaming.¹²⁵ To reiterate: human beings, like the vast majority of other terrestrial creatures,

123 For this definition, I have synthesized the material presented in: Paul Martin, *Counting Sheep: The Science and Pleasures of Sleep and Dreams*, (London: Flamingo, 2003); Matthew Walker, *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams*, (New York: Scribner, 2017); Andrea Rock, *The Mind at Night: The New Science of How and Why We Dream*, (New York: Basic Books, 2009); Clete A. Kushida, ed., *Sleep Deprivation: Basic Science, Physiology, and Behavior*, (New York: Marcel Dekker, 2005); J. Allan Hobson, “The New Neuropsychology of Sleep: Implications for Psychoanalysis” in *Dreams: A Reader on the Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming*, edited by Kelly Bulkeley, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 221–232.

124 I have chosen most of these examples as a poetic demonstration of the ubiquity of sleep rather than for any other rhetorical purpose. That said, I opted to highlight the case of sleep in the *Cassiopea* sea jelly (formerly “jellyfish”) – a study that has recently received extensive popular coverage following its initial publication – because it represents a fascinating instance of sleep in a life-form without a brain, which seems to be a testament to an even longer evolutionary provenance for this behaviour than had previously been assumed. Ravi D. Nath, et al., “The Jellyfish *Cassiopea* Exhibits a Sleep-like State,” *Current Biology* 27:19 (2017): 2984–2990; Carrie Arnold, “Jellyfish caught snoozing give clues to origin of sleep,” *Nature: News* (21 September 2017), accessed online at: <http://www.nature.com/news/jellyfish-caught-snoozing-give-clues-to-origin-of-sleep-1.22654>. For the other listed examples, see: Deby L. Cassill, et al., “Polyphasic wake/sleep episodes in the fire ant *Solenopsis invicta*,” *Journal of Insect Behavior* 22:4 (2009): 313–323; George A. Cicala, et al., “Sleep and other behaviours of the red kangaroo (*megaleia rufa*),” *Animal Behaviour* 18:4 (1970): 787–790; Marvin Bassan, et al., “Activity patterns in Caiman sclerops (*crocodilia*),” *Psychophysiology* 5:2 (1968): 201. For a general overview of sleep across animal species, focusing on its adaptive value and function, see: James M. Krueger, “What exactly is it that sleeps? The evolution, regulation, and organization of an emergent network property,” in *Evolution of Sleep: Phylogenetic and Functional Perspectives*, edited by Patrick McNamara, Robert A. Barton, and Charles L. Nunn, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 86–106.

125 For the firing of hippocampal neurons in dreaming rats mimicking their waking progress through mazes, see: Albert K. Lee and Matthew A. Wilson, “Memory of Sequential Experience in the Hippocampus during Slow Wave Sleep,”

sleep, and, like the vast majority of mammals, dream. In the last fifty years, our collective understanding of sleep and dreaming has increased exponentially, due in no small part to the the ever-increasing sophistication with which we are able to map and image brains. To my knowledge, none of these findings have ever provided any evidence that human dreams are categorically different than those of our mammalian brethren (especially when compared to the primates with whom we share the closest evolutionary links).¹²⁶ Thus, I would argue that anyone hoping to investigate dreams under the banner of unidirectional cultural causality (i.e., that culture informs biology, but that biology does not inform culture), or who rejects the claim that better understandings of biology and neurology would help us to understand cultural phenomena related to sleep, is adopting a theoretical position that can only be described as a non-starter. More specifically, denying the formative effect that these underlying neural processes have on aspects of the lived human experience (experiences that link all human dreamers regardless of culture), is tantamount to denying the evolutionary heritage that humans share with all other mammals: a crypto-theological¹²⁷ position that requires one to posit an unbridgeable

Neuron 36:6 (2002), 1183–1194. For neurally lesioned kittens enacting “waking” behaviours during REM sleep, see Michel Jouvet's groundbreaking research throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s. For a representative sample, see: M. Jouvet and D. Jouvet, “A Study of the Neurophysiological Mechanisms of Dreaming,” *Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology Supplement* 24 (1963): 133–157. This research has been extensively summarized in the popular literature, (e.g., including Martin, *Counting Sheep*, 101; Rock, *The Mind at Night*, 14–19). As an aside, and as a peculiar edge case, it's important to note that certain types of marine mammals exhibit a peculiar (and phenomenologically mind-bending) ability to engage in uni-hemispheric sleep, wherein each half of the brain sleeps independently, leaving all executive and motor function in the charge of the wakeful hemisphere.

126 See: Kung-Chiao Hsieh, et al., “Sleep Architecture in Unrestrained Rhesus Monkeys (*Macaca mulatta*) Synchronized to 24-Hour Light-Dark Cycles,” *Sleep* 31:9 (2008): 1239–1250. This study aims to evaluate whether rhesus monkeys could be used to test interventions ultimately intended for human sleepers, experimenters used a variety of scanning techniques to monitor a variety of sleep-related parameters, and concluded that “sleep-wake architecture, regulation, and consolidation in rhesus monkeys were found to closely resemble sleep in humans with only minor exceptions,” thus making them viable subjects (1249). For a general overview, which suggests that differences in a small number of neural parameters can account for the diversity of mammalian sleep patterns, see: Andrew J. K. Phillips, et al., “Mammalian Sleep Dynamics: How Diverse Features Arise from a Common Physiological Framework,” *PloS Computational Biology* 6:6 (2010). Accessed online at: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1000826>. More broadly, some exciting recent research into the dreams of young children (less than eight years of age) suggests that they seem to dream in a less vivid, narratively elaborate fashion than older children and adults, highlighting the role of complex neural development in the construction and/or *post facto* creation of dreams, as discussed in Domhoff, *The Emergence of Dreaming*, 119–166. I see this as a testament to the biological principle of “ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny.”

127 I am borrowing this term from Donald Wiebe, “The Failure of Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion,” *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* 13 (1984): 401–422, though I am expanding its usage context slightly. In particular,

categorical gulf between humans and all other living things.¹²⁸

I am certainly not alone in making this argument. Indeed, many of the more theoretically nuanced studies produced in the last thirty years of religious studies and anthropological scholarship have sought to combat reified, “superorganic” notions of culture by focusing on embodied experience.¹²⁹ For my perspective, this was a sorely required development. That said, I would nonetheless contend that most such studies do not go far enough, in that they tend to focus on the “enculturation of the brain” (i.e., the process whereby individuals internalize the cultural schemas that condition their actions, modes of thinking, and even “pre-conscious” perception) to the exclusion of the other half of this dyad: the “embrainment of culture” (i.e., the process whereby innate aspects of the human cognitive and perceptual apparatus, as well as other experiential aspects of our embodiment, constrain the types of cultural forms that people will intuitively find, in Lévi-Strauss's words, “good to

while Wiebe was concerned with scholars importing theological assumptions (e.g., the privileged status of religious experiences, the *sui generis* quality of religious phenomena) into religious studies, I am concerned with the extent to which dogmatic cultural constructionism is *itself* a faith position, as will be discussed below.

128 This is, in fact, a special case of the (crypto-theological) position implicitly taken by hard-line cultural constructionists, as this position requires adherents to deny the existence of inherited tendencies and behaviours among human beings. To do so is to ignore the results of over a hundred years of convergent evidence from every relevant scientific discipline (e.g., psychology, physiology, genetics, zoology, primatology), all of which demonstrate the phylogenetic continuity between human beings and all other living creatures, given that the inheritance of instincts among **all other species** is utterly uncontroversial. Thus, holding this position requires one to posit a principle of anthropic exceptionalism that is precisely analogous to a “Young Earth” creationist arguing that fossils, radiocarbon dating, and plate tectonics (among other lines of evidence) are all ruses employed by Satan to test the faith of the believers. For a persuasive discussion of the myriad logical issues with this postmodern stance, see Edward Slingerland, *What Science Offers the Humanities: Integrating Body and Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 99–147.

129 For a discussion of the concept of “superorganic culture” (summarized as the notion that humans are “not natural, but cultural”) and the various ways that cognitive anthropology problematizes this claim, see Maurice Bloch, *Anthropology and the Cognitive Challenge*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 37 and *passim*. For Ann Swidler's influential approach to culture, which focuses on individual choices between available cultural repertoires, a theoretical orientation that she formulated in specific response to previous theories that, in her words, transformed people into “passive cultural dopes” (1986, 277), see: Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,” *American Sociological Review* 51:2 (1986): 273–286; Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Constance M. Furey makes the compelling argument that the acknowledgement of embodiment in religious studies has been a helpful corrective to previous generations of intellectualist scholarship and its privileging of doctrine, but notes that many of these newer studies focus on bodies in the singular, ignoring the effects of interpersonal linkages and affect: Constance M. Furey, “Body, Society, and Subjectivity in Religious Studies,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80:1 (2012): 7–33.

think with”).¹³⁰ As I will argue below, considering dreams as embodied, conceptual metaphors for liminality is a representative example of a conclusion that can be drawn by taking “embrainment” seriously. Regardless, the notion of enculturated brains / embrained cultures is not alien to Buddhist Studies scholarship, even if the ramifications of this position have not always been systematically addressed. For instance, Bernard Faure (1996) noted that the “reality of any *imaginaire* is predominantly historical and localized,” stressing both the psychological and cultural aspects of phenomena that are “at the same time inscribed deep within each human being and inherent in social relations.”¹³¹ Likewise, treating the notion of embodied culture seriously represents the clearest way of avoiding the linguistic trap that Company so clearly elucidated in his article on “The Very Idea of Religions”: a thoughtful repudiation of the tendency to aggregate communities of discrete and diverse individuals into the shambolic, reified monoliths that we describe as “Buddhism” or “Taoism.”¹³² The decision to focus instead on discourse communities serves as a helpful corrective to this academic excess, in that it returns individuals (and their differential employment of shared cultural repertoires) to the center of the historical study of Chinese religions, while in the process forefronting the socially functional role of narrative (an issue that will be discussed in the context of dream discourses below).

Before we can turn to the understanding of narrative that underlies the present study, however, I must offer an additional justification for my decision to include psychological and comparative material herein. In this, I am drawing some inspiration from Maurice Bloch's discussion of his rationale

130 See Northoff for a cogent overview of this process. For some studies that take this embrainment process seriously, see: E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley, *Rethinking Religion: Connecting Cognition and Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Morton Klass, *Mind over Mind: The Anthropology and Psychology of Spirit Possession*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Boyer, *Religion Explained*; Slingerland, *What Science Offers the Humanities*.

131 Faure, *Visions of Power*, 12. The second of the above quotations is a citation from Jean-Claude Schmitt's *La Raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiévale* (quoted in Faure, *ibid.*).

132 Company, “On the Very Idea of Religions,” *passim*.

for advocating “cognitive literacy” among his anthropological colleagues. In particular, his argument (which is directed toward cultural anthropologists, but applies as easily to Sinologists or Buddhist Studies scholars) is as follows: when scholars theorize about human motivations, modes of thought, and forms of rationality (i.e., the subject matter of cognitive science) but fail to take the conclusions of cognitive science into account, it is not that they are somehow remaining “methodologically agnostic,” it is that they are granting privileged epistemic status to “commonsense” folk psychologies,¹³³ even though many of the assumptions underlying such discourses have since been empirically disproved.¹³⁴ This is an especially salient problem in the context of dream research: an arena in which psychoanalytic (and, in particular, Freudian) theory has gained the status of oft-unquestioned folk wisdom.

Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was a landmark publication in the western understanding of the oneiric realm, positing a variety of compelling hypotheses about the underlying function of dreams (e.g., the “wish-fulfillment” theory) and the psychological mechanisms in place to shield the psyche from taboo desires (e.g., his theories of “dreamwork” and the “psychic censor”). Moreover, Freud's theories were not proposed in the rarefied air of academic speculation, but were rather posited in the course of his attempt to provide analysts with the tools to untangle the serpentine geographies of their patients' nocturnal visions and to transform them into road-maps for subsequent

133 See: Bloch, 8–10, and *passim*. See also: Slingerland, “What Science Offers the Humanities”; Harvey Whitehouse and James Laidlaw, eds., *Religion, Anthropology and Cognitive Science*, (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007).

134 A major example can be seen in the research of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, whose pioneering insights into human rationality have spawned the entire field of behavioural economics. Their Nobel Prize-winning research, whose broad and far-reaching conclusions have been empirically retested and verified by innumerable research teams worldwide, highlights the extent to which human decision-making processes are regularly (and reliably) prejudiced by systematic cognitive biases, making us (to borrow Daniel Ariely's memorable phrase) “predictably irrational.” For their foundational paper in behavioural economics, see: Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk” *Econometrica* 47:2 (1979), 263–291. For two helpful summaries intended for a non-specialist audience, see: Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), which outlines thirty years of behavioural economics research into cognitive heuristics, and Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).

journeys to psychological wellness.¹³⁵ That said, and while I acknowledge that many of Freud's later acolytes have attempted to disengage their master's proclamations from the contexts in which they were initially given voice, it remains the case that Freud's theories (and, in particular, his views on dreams) are inextricably bound to his specific (and thus testable) claims about the underlying structure and function of the human mind: as evidenced by his own claim that he was offering “a scientific procedure” for dream interpretation.¹³⁶ From this standpoint, Freudianism has proven to be a dismal failure, given that every major assumption and every foundational claim underlying his approach to oneirocriticism has since been utterly repudiated.¹³⁷ While Jungian analysis has not been subject to the same degree of criticism (due at least in part to Jung's reticence when it came to formally defining key concepts [e.g., the “collective unconscious”]), this mode of dream analysis is dogged by many of the same issues.¹³⁸

135 Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Third Edition, translated by A. A. Brill, (New York: Macmillan, 1913).

136 Freud, 83. Hobson also comments on Freud's initial commitment to seeking a scientifically robust understanding of the oneiric (330).

137 Hobson notes that the sum total of all research into the psychological and neurological phenomenon of dreaming have left the Freudian “disguise-censorship” model of dreams “without the faintest modicum of support” (322). See also: G. William Domhoff, *The Scientific Study of Dreams: Neural Networks, Cognitive Development, and Content Analysis*, (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2003). After offering a nuanced and compelling summation of current dream theory, Domhoff then devotes a chapter to discussing “every major claim made by Freud and Jung, none of which stands up against the empirical evidence that is available” (135). For an appraisal of the evolution of Freud's theories throughout his lifetime, see: Malcolm Macmillan, *Freud Evaluated: The Completed Arc*, (New York: Distributors for the U.S. and Canada, Elsevier Science, 1991). Frederick Crews, in his lengthy review of Macmillan's book entitled “The Verdict on Freud,” offers the following devastating assessment, based on the historical reappraisal offered therein:

[W]e learn from Macmillan that the founder of psychoanalysis, once he had forsaken laboratory work for the care and understanding of neurotics, neither thought nor acted like a scientist; he sincerely but obtusely mistook his loyalty to materialist reductionism for methodological rigour. In fact, it was just the opposite, an inducement to dogmatic persistence in folly. Thus, we cannot be amazed—except insofar as we may be veteran subscribers to the Freud legend—that the product of his efforts proved to be a pseudoscience (67).

Psychological Science 7:2 (1996): 63–68.

138 See: Domhoff, *The Scientific Study of Dreams*, 144–147. Likewise, Tao Jiang's comparative monograph, which aims to consider the Yogācāra notion of *ālayavijñāna* in light of the Freudian and Jungian concepts of the “unconscious,” makes the following dismissive assessment of Jung's theorizing:

The origin of this apparent contradiction [between incommensurate understandings of the ego] can be traced to Jung himself; he randomly tosses around ideas as he goes along without giving consistent definitions of his concepts (101–102).

While this may seem like a tangential issue (given the relatively narrow scope of the present study), I feel that it behooves me to bring it up due to the fact that many studies of dreams uncritically employ Freudian terms and concepts as if they are universally applicable, regardless of the historical and cultural context under discussion,¹³⁹ which makes them precisely the sort of “folk wisdom” decried by Bloch. This is an especially pernicious problem for scholars in the contemporary west, given that, to quote Kukla and Walmsley's pithy claim, “we are all Freudians now.”¹⁴⁰ This is evidenced by the fact that terms such as “repression,” “Oedipus complex,” “sublimation,” and “catharsis” (none of which have stood up to psychological scrutiny in their Freudian formulations)¹⁴¹ are part of our vocabulary for

139 As soon as I began to consider this issue critically, I was consistently dumbfounded by the extent to which otherwise careful scholars would offhandedly insert references to Freudian psycho-dynamics into their scholarship on dreams, exposing a clear assumption that these theories represent accurate facts about the functioning of the human mind. For a brief (and necessarily incomplete) catalogue, consider the following: though Roberto K. Ong correctly notes that “the Freudian reading of dream-symbols is culture specific” (65), he later makes uncritical use of the notion of “the Freudian dream-work mechanism of condensation” in the Chinese context (118). Zhang's *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural* employs the Freudian concept of “dreams as wish-fulfillment” when discussing the *Zhouli's* dream typology (206–207). Faure's *Visions of Power*, in discussing Myōe's sexual dreams, makes the claim that “sublimation and elaboration are among the motivational causes of dreams” without acknowledging the Freudian origin of these terms (124–125). Hsia simplistically reads one of Matteo Ricci's dreams while *en route* to Nanchang as a “classic” case of Freudian “wish-fulfillment” (225): R. Po-Chia Hsia, “Dreams and Conversions: A Comparative Analysis of Catholic and Buddhist Dreams in Ming and Qing China: Part I,” *The Journal of Religious History* 29:3 (October 2005): 223–240. Tedlock, in spite of her nuanced call to approach dream cultures on their own terms, uncritically lauds prior anthropological sources that assume the existence of minds characterized by explicitly Freudian psychodynamics (e.g., “transference” and “projection”) (252, 254). Likewise, in the context of a theoretically nuanced and thoughtful exploration of the role of dreams in instantiating and adapting contemporary American culture, Jeanette Mageo nonetheless makes various unwarranted assumptions about the Oedipal urges (39), Freudian psychomotor / psychosexual development (34), etc. See: Jeanette Mageo, *Dreaming Culture: Meanings, Models, and Power in U.S. American Dreams*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). In a more extreme example, Tao bases his entire comparative essay on “the notion of the unconscious as it has been developed in modern Western psychology, first by Freud and later Jung,” ignoring the fact that these understandings of “the unconscious” have been rejected by the vast majority of “modern psychologists” (87). In contrast, Kawai Hayao's analysis of Myōe's dreams (in *Bukkyō to yume* 仏教と夢) is an entirely different case: though many of his interpretations draw upon Jungian concepts (such as archetypes), his lifelong career as a Jungian analyst is testament to his profound familiarity with psychoanalytic theory. Though I do not necessarily agree with his conclusions, he is not guilty of the same sort of unreflexive usage that I am critiquing here.

140 André Kukla and Joel Walmsley, *Mind: A Historical and Philosophical Introduction to the Major Theories*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006), 41. Serenity Young, in *Dreaming in the Lotus*, makes a similar point near the end of her introduction, though she quotes W. H. Auden to do so: “Freud is not more a person now but a whole climate of opinion” (18).

141 For the empirical rejection of the notions of repression, the Oedipus Complex, and sublimation, see Hobson, “The New Neuropsychology of Sleep” and Domhoff, *The Scientific Study of Dreams*. For a contemporary study that directly contradicts catharsis theory and which includes an extensive bibliography of studies that illuminate other aspects of this issues, see: Brad J. Bushman, “Does Venting Anger Feed or Extinguish the Flame? Catharsis, Rumination, Distraction, Anger, and Aggressive Responding,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28:6 (2002): 724–731.

describing mental phenomena: an issue that is only made thornier by dialectical relationship between minds and culture introduced above. Moreover, given the extent to which dream content is determined by cultural context,¹⁴² it is perhaps no surprise that Freudian patterns are occasionally manifested in Western dreams,¹⁴³ though this is clearly no reason to assume that such terminology can profitably be applied in any other case. It is for this reason that I intentionally abjure Freudian understandings of the nature, function, and interpretation of dreams in the study that follows.

Given these concerns, and in keeping with the precedent set by Wendy Doniger in *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities*,¹⁴⁴ I think that it would be salutary to briefly outline the overall perspective on dreams that undergirds my own approach to this material. Though I do not necessarily make specific mention of all of these concepts and orientations in the chapters to follow, it seems more prudent to provide as complete a reckoning as possible at the outset, so as to avoid falling afoul of my own unacknowledged assumptions.

142 While the specific subject matter of dreams is obviously profoundly conditioned by personal experience, it is also the case that a robust body of cross-cultural research has helped to outline some large-scale oneritic themes that appear to be universal: e.g., “being chased,” “falling,” “arriving too late,” “trying again and again to do something,” “sexual experiences,” “flying through the air” (as discussed in Bogzaran and Deslauriers, *Integral Dreaming: A Holistic Approach to Dreams*, [Albany: SUNY Press, 2012], 92–93). The discovery of these sorts of cross-cultural continuities were one of the primary inspirations for Bulkeley to posit the existence of “big dreams” (as he describes in his book of that title), 1–2, 145–270.

143 See: Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, 18–19; Doniger, *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities*, 42–53. As an aside, Amira Mittermaier's study of dreams in contemporary Egypt offers a fascinating glimpse into the culturally creative ways that modern Egyptian Muslims have fused traditional perspectives on the role of visionary dreams in piercing the veil between worlds (*al-Barzakh*) with imported Freudian perspectives. See: Amira Mittermaier, *Dreams That Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 13–15.

144 One of the chief stylistic features of Doniger's landmark book is her decision to offset her exegetical explorations of Indian dream tales with the Western sources that were called to mind by her primary investigation. As she states, I have had recourse to the Western texts that I have used, not in the hope of saying anything about them that has not been said before by scholars better versed in the Western traditions than I am, but as an aid to understanding the ideas expressed in the Indian texts. It is, in any case, impossible for us to ignore our assumptions and preconceptions when we read foreign texts, and only by examining those assumptions, to see what it is that makes us find the Indian texts so puzzling, can we hope to understand why some Indians did not find them puzzling, while others did. The inclusion of these Western texts thus serves a kind of psychological or epistemological purpose: it helps us to understand how we understand the Indian texts. But it is meant to serve an ontological purpose as well: to help us understand the actual problem set by the Indian texts (5).

The Phenomenology of Dream States and the Comparative Project

Though the landscape of dreams seems to be as boundless and expansive as the human imagination itself, these vistas are as constrained by the underlying (and universal) architecture of sleep as is a painter by the palette of available colours and the selection of brushes available to her. In particular, as the dreamer's brain oscillates through its nightly sleep cycles, each stage of which is characterized by unique patterns of neural activation and neurochemical releases,¹⁴⁵ the subjective qualities of the associated oneiric experiences follow along in lockstep: more specifically, dreams associated with the onset of sleep (hypnagogia), non-REM sleep, REM sleep, and the transition to wakefulness (hypnopompia) all possess their own sets of distinctive qualitative features.¹⁴⁶ Even within REM sleep, it appears that certain statistical patterns (e.g., the frequency of interacting with “bizarre” imagery, ratios of pleasant to unpleasant dreams) hold across demographic and geographical lines.¹⁴⁷

145 For an overview of these specific states, see Matthews, *Why We Sleep*, 193–218; Domhoff, *The Emergence of Dreaming*, 167–198; Bulkeley, *Big Dreams*, 95–111. See also: Owen Flanagan, *Dreaming Souls: Sleep, Dreams and the Evolution of the Conscious Mind*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 65–93.

146 For a discussion of the subjective qualities and underlying neurological states associated with hypnagogia, see: Deiter Vaitl, et al., “The Psychobiology of Altered States of Consciousness,” *Psychological Bulletin* 131:1 (2005): 98–127; Andreas Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia: The Unique State of Consciousness Between Wakefulness and Sleep*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987). For example, Vaitl (et al.) describe the oneiric events associated with hypnagogia as “dreamlets,” which are characterized by “[s]pontaneous, transient, fragmentary nonemotional visual and auditory impressions of varying complexity” that are “usually rather static, without narrative content,” and lack the overt egoic involvement of the subject (101). While early dream researchers tended to assume that oneiric experiences were exclusive to REM sleep, more recent dream lab studies have demonstrated that non-REM dreams also exist, though they possess discrete subjective qualities, including a lack of vivid imagery, quotidian content, and repetition (or even perseveration). For example, Flanagan summarizes the distinction between typically REM and NREM dreams nicely:

As REM dreams share properties with psychotic thought [e.g., exaggerated pattern recognition], NREM dreams share properties with neurotic thought. NREM dreams often have obsessive qualities – worrying, for example, about whether one's appointment book which before going to sleep one has no reason to think is anywhere other than where it always is, say, in one's briefcase, might have been left in the restaurant where one had lunch – and then worrying about this over and over again (34).

147 As Domhoff notes in *The Scientific Study of Dreams*, based on decades of research using the Hall and Van de Castle method, “there is a stable pattern of cross-cultural similarities and differences in dream content,” such as relatively higher occurrences of “aggression than friendliness,” “misfortune than good fortune,” and “negative emotions than positive emotions” (26). This has led to the positing of the “continuity principle,” which argues that there is continuity “between most aspects of dream content and waking thought” (*ibid.*). See also: Bulkeley, *Big Dreams*, 112–127. I will consider the ramifications of this insight in the sections on dream telling (below and in Chapter One). For those who might object on principle to the idea of ascribing these “Western” phenomenological categories to “Eastern” dreams, it should be noted that both traditional Indian Buddhist sources and Chinese ones took mental states seriously enough to offer their own typologies of these phenomena, which (in support of the “embrainment of culture” hypothesis) correspond to many of the categories discussed above. For instance, the *Questions of King Milinda* (cited

The reasons for attending to the phenomenological qualities of particular sleep states is most clearly demonstrated in the case of sleep paralysis, a parasomnia involving the persistence of REM muscle atonia into (semi-)wakefulness, as the characteristic subjective features of this experience (e.g., panic, the sensation of chest compression, inability to move or vocalize, and/or a feeling of ominous presence)¹⁴⁸ have been uncontroversially linked to the ubiquitous cultural traditions of malevolent extrahuman assailants that attack by pinning, and occasionally sexually assaulting, their recumbent

above) includes the following typology of sleep experiences, which corresponds quite nicely with the descriptions of hypnagogia, REM, NREM states outlined above:

The feeling of oppression and inability in the body, O king, of weakness, slackness, inertness--that is the beginning of sleep. The light “monkey's sleep” in which a man still guards his scattered thoughts --that is the middle of sleep. When the mind has entered into itself--that is the end of sleep. And it is in the middle stage, O king, in the “monkey's sleep” that dreams are dreamt (Rhys Davids translation, 161).

It should be noted that there are no references to dreams in the extant Chinese versions of this text (T. 1670A and 1670B): an intriguing disparity!

For a non-Buddhist example, Liu Yiqing's (劉義慶, 403–444) fifth-century Chinese anecdote collection *A New Account of Tales of the World* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語), anticipates the notion of continuity between sleep and wake:

When Wei Jie was a young lad with his hair in tufts, he asked Yue Guang about dreams. Yue said: “They're thoughts” (*xiang* 想). Wei continued, “but dreams occur when body and spirit aren't in contact. How can they be thoughts?” Yue replied, “They're the result of causes (*yin* 因). No one's ever dreamed of entering a rat hole riding in a carriage, or of eating an iron pestle after pulverizing it, because in both cases there have never been any such thoughts or causes.” (104, as per Richard B. Mather's translation, *Shih-shuo Shin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 2002]).

Cf., 衛玠總角時問樂令「夢」，樂云「是想」。衛曰：「形神所不接而夢，豈是想邪？」樂云：「因也。未嘗夢乘車入鼠穴，擣齏噉鐵杵，皆無想無因故也。」衛思「因」，經日不得，遂成病。樂聞，故命駕為剖析之。衛既小差。樂歎曰：「此兒胸中當必無膏肓之疾！」 (See annotated version: *Shishuo xinyu* (2009), 223.

Liu makes use of the distinction between dreams as “thoughts” and “causes” in *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo* 夢的迷信與夢的探索, tracing the history of this typology (147–153). For a discussion of the significance of dreams as *xiang* 想 (which he translates in this context as “meanings” or “ideas”), see Campamy, “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft).

148 See: J. Allan Cheyne, Steve D. Rueffer, and Ian R. Newby-Clark, “Hypnagogic and Hypnapompic Hallucinations during Sleep Paralysis: Neurological and Cultural Construction of the Night-Mare,” *Consciousness and Cognition* 8:3 (1999): 319–337. This paper involved drawing on both cross-cultural descriptions of the “night-mare” phenomenon and contemporary understandings of the brain during REM sleep and hypnagogia to formulate a questionnaire, which was then administered to both local subjects and online respondents. According to their results, this state is associated with three discrete forms of subjective experience, which they label “the intruder,” “the incubus,” and “unusual bodily experience” (e.g., the “Out-of-Body” experience), all of which are entirely explicable based on the patterns of neural activation occurring during this stage of sleep. Likewise, see Shelly Adler, *Sleep Paralysis: Night-mares, Nocebos, and the Mind-body Connection*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 9–16, for an overview of the specific psychophysiological experiences associated with this state.

For a specific Chinese example, consider famed Tang physician Sun Simiao's 孫思邈 concern about the medical effects of women having oneiric intercourse with ghosts: Wilms, *The Female Body in Medieval China*, 362 ff. 979. The topic of oneiric sex with spirits is discussed in the chapter on Miraculous Pregnancy. On the danger of depletion (or even soul loss) linked to oneiric intercourse, see Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 209–210.

prey (e.g., incubi/succubi, fox spirits, *yakṣiṇī*):¹⁴⁹ a clear example of the “embrainment” of culture discussed above.¹⁵⁰ Though the characteristics of the GSZ and XGSZ dream episodes under investigation¹⁵¹ render it virtually impossible to make any definitive claims about the inner phenomenological states that might have prompted any particular dream experience,¹⁵² I know that my knowledge of these underlying states guided my reading of the accounts treated in this project, which is why it feels important to discuss this issue here. Moreover, this scrutiny led me to focus on the very brevity of these accounts, which distinguishes them from the dream reports shared in many other cultural contexts,¹⁵³ and to posit a potential explanation for this stylistic feature, as will be discussed in the section on *Dream Telling* in Chapter One (“Oneiric Practice”).

149 Adler titles her exploration of these folkloric / mythological beliefs a “transhistorical bestiary” (37–54). Also discussed in Cheyne, Rueffer and Newby-Clark, *passim*.

150 For a particularly noteworthy example of the enculturation / embrainment dyad in practice, see Adler's *Sleep Paralysis*. In addition to providing an excellent cultural history of both sleep paralysis as experienced and as studied, she also offers a fascinating glimpse into a nexus of cultural, psychological and genetic factors that led to a rash of otherwise unexplainable deaths among Hmong immigrants to the US in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In particular, Adler uses the notion of a nocebo (the antonym of “placebo”) to explain the rash of Hmong deaths attributed to SUNDS (Sudden Unexpected Nocturnal Death Syndrome) during this period, suggesting that they occurred due to the unpredictable coincidence of a congenital heart defect among Hmong people, cultural beliefs in an assailing night spirit, and a period of profoundly stressful deracination, which was not only the ideal condition for generating sleep paralysis but was responsible for preventing these immigrants from availing themselves of the traditional religious remedies (94–133). She argues that this confluence of factors seemed to cause these otherwise healthy Hmong immigrants to literally scare themselves to death.

151 For example, most accounts are extremely terse (often less than a single line of text) and include very few descriptions of either dream contents or the dreamer's emotional responses (as noted in Kenney, 504, 507). In fact, one of the most common dream types in both collections is simply an oneiric vision of a monk who delivers a specific, unambiguous message. Another issue is the fact that very few biographies in GSZ or XGSZ contain more than one dream account, making it impossible to perform “within-subject” comparisons based on the principle of diachronic (“within-subject”) dream continuity.

152 Another issue, of course, is the possibility that these dream narratives might have been pious fictions ascribed to Huijiao and Daoxuan's idealized monastic protagonists, which were originally told by devoted disciples, the eulogizers who prepared their mortuary inscriptions, monastic clients reporting miracles back to their patrons, or even the compilers themselves. I will discuss this issue below, in the section on dream narratives.

153 That said, they bear a number of stylistic similarities with the mode of recording dream omens employed in Chinese historical sources, as discussed above and *passim*. See, for example, Kalinowski's description of reported dreams in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳: “The dream images, whether clear or obscure, seem most of the time to have a self-evident meaning. The interpretations are quite rare, short, and rarely raise a contradictory debate” (360). Discussed in Marc Kalinowski, “Diviners and Astrologers Under the Eastern Zhou: Transmitted Texts and Recent Archaeological Discoveries” in *Early Chinese Religion: Part One - Shang Through Han (1250 – 220 BCE)*, edited by John Lagerway and Marc Kalinowski, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 341–396.

Though other intercultural parallels are perhaps less overt than the aforementioned example of sleep paralysis, one can easily list multifarious similarities between the dream cultures of ancient Mesopotamia and Greece, early medieval China, medieval Europe, and those of contemporary indigenous groups in Brazil, Melanesia, and Papua New Guinea (among myriad potential examples), with these similarities running the gamut from proposed theories of dream etiologies and the relationship between sleep and wake, to practices related to dream telling and oneiromancy.¹⁵⁴ I would argue that such similarities are, in fact, to be expected, as they represent other instances of the embrainment of culture (i.e., the development of particular cultural forms in response to innate psychophysical experiences). This observation is, of course, not a terribly provocative one, as anthropologists in particular have long been engaging in dream-related research using comparative methods (or at least attending to comparative evidence).

In light of these insights, and while acknowledging the sheer impossibility of reviewing the entirety of the vast literature on dreams in the world's religions, I have nonetheless attempted (when possible) to supplement my observations related to the oneiric culture of medieval Chinese Buddhism with relevant examples from other traditions (both historical and modern). In light of the tentative nature of these proposed parallels, I have typically consigned them to footnotes. That said, since the GSZ and XGSZ are often silent (or at least remarkably terse) on issues related to oneiric practice (not to mention broader questions on the role and status of such experiences in the lives of medieval Buddhists), I have occasionally had cause to turn to these comparative materials for potential insights, as partial and inconclusive as they may be. While I would never rely on such sources exclusively, I would argue that the existence of relevant examples from other cultural traditions cannot help but

¹⁵⁴ These examples (and many others) will be treated in comparative footnotes throughout the present study.

strengthen my conclusions (for all of the reasons outlined above).

I find the following analogy instructive: consider an experimenter who wishes to investigate the nature of human creativity, and thus decides to invite a variety of participants into a lab filled with coloured building blocks. She then proffers them an open invitation to build something from these raw materials, without offering any additional instructions. While an analysis of such an experiment would obviously need to account for the various specific structures (buildings, animals, abstract shapes) that participants chose to construct, as well as the relevant cultural, biographical and other demographic details of each participant, it would also need to provide a precise accounting of the nature of the raw materials, including the shapes, sizes, and colours of the blocks, and the way(s) that they were presented to the participants, as these factors could not help but influence the end products created by each of the experimental subjects.

As the previous example makes clear, I am certainly not privileging “embrainment” over “enculturation,” just advocating the importance of paying attention to both. As a counterpoint to the foregoing discussion (as well as a segue into our next topic), I would like to briefly discuss the plasticity of dream content, and its resultant openness to the influence of an enculturated brain. Donald Tuzin, in his analysis of Arapesh encounters with the spirits of the dead, made the following observation on the link between oneiromantic schemas and dream contents:

Systems of dream interpretation may have a rather distinctive character. Though transmitted like any other item of culture, they are set apart by their close association with the dream experience itself. Indeed, inasmuch as it momentarily represents a very relevant part of the sleeper's cultural surround, the interpretative system appears to have an inordinately large part in constructing the dream's manifest content. The individual is struck by the poignant accuracy of the diviner's interpretation, not realizing that the dream content was itself a partial artifact of his (the

dreamer's) prior knowledge of the interpretative system.¹⁵⁵

Similarly, Barbara Tedlock's article on the “New Anthropology of Dreaming” cites not only the experiences of other researchers who have experienced the gradual transformation of their own dreamscapes over the course of their ethnographic research programmes, but also includes a first-person account of the evolution of her own oneiric world based on experiences before and after being initiated as a dream interpreter in a contemporary Mayan community.¹⁵⁶ Based on Tedlock's work, the perspectives of many psychologists, historians and ethnographers (summarized above and considered throughout the present project), and the specific details preserved in the GSZ and XGSZ dream episodes under discussion, I would argue that narrative (and, in particular, the process of dream telling) plays a central role in this process of enculturation: a proposition I will outline in the next section.

Dream and Narrative / Dreams as Narratives

Two of the most significant hurdles in the path of any study of dreams (whether historical or contemporary) are undoubtedly their privacy and interiority: issues whose significance is redoubled (or perhaps even raised to an exponential power) by the tendency of dreams to recede from the conscious awareness of the dreamer with the onset of wakefulness, and thus allowing them to evade even introspective analysis. Thus, with the possible exception of neural imaging and dream lab studies (which rely on dream reports collected at the moment of waking), any study of dreams is actually a study of dream telling: in other words, the process whereby these internal, phenomenologically

155 Donald Tuzin, “The Breath of a Ghost: Dreams and the Fear of the Dead,” *Ethos* 3 (1975): 555–578, 560–561, with a partial citation in Lohmann (2001), 116. For an application of these conclusions in the Chinese context (with specific reference to oneiromantic manuals discovered in Dunhuang), see Drège's “Notes d'oniologie chinoise” and “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang” – both of which explore correspondences between reported dreams and the contents of oneiromantic manuals. Harper's article on “Wang Yen-shou's Nightmare Poem” makes a similar claim in his discussion of a Han Dynasty poem: “Assuming that there was a tradition of maintaining dream records, we may speculate that such records would have contributed to the iconography of the spirit world in ancient religion in the same way that animal worship and shamanistic visions helped shape the images of the spirits” (257, ff. 63).

156 Tedlock, “The New Anthropology of Dreaming,” 257–260.

evanescent wisps are concretized into stories that can be told, interpreted and shared. This dynamic is eloquently described by Bernard Faure:

Oneiric imagination is doubtless destined to remain an arena where conflicting interpretations constantly arise. Between dreams and the writing down of dreams, there is a 'spacing,' a '*travail de l'écriture*' that modifies radically for us – condemned as we are to written 'traces' – its content and meaning. It is in the last analysis as impossible to retrieve the original experience that left this trace, or even to affirm the existence of such experience, as to deny it.¹⁵⁷

To put it more simply, as does Roger Lohmann, “[d]reams are experiences hidden from public life; they become social only in the telling.”¹⁵⁸ In the following section, I briefly outline my perspective on the multifarious correspondences between dream and narrative, both in the Chinese context and more broadly, as these theories and observations provide the foundation for this entire project.

By opting to discuss dream episodes instead of dreams themselves, I am able to approach these materials in light of the “narrative turn”¹⁵⁹ that has characterized much contemporary social scientific discourse. In particular, this focus has allowed me to fruitfully employ Company and Swidler's methods, considering dream narratives in light of the discourse communities that shared and transmitted them, while also considering the types of cultural repertoires (“toolboxes”) that these stories represented and the uses to which they were put (as discussed above). I would argue that this approach is especially apropos in the context of dream narratives, as this process of narrativization is also the means by which remembered oneiric experiences can come to exert an influence on individual lives: even though dream experiences themselves evaporate within minutes of waking, they can be

157 Faure, *Visions of Power*, 142. A similar point is made in Donald Harper's discussion of a Han Dynasty nightmare poem: The relationship between this piece of dream literature and a dream dreamt by the poet is another question. One cannot assume that dream literature transcribes actual dream experiences. As I demonstrate in this article, Wang Yen-shou's literary dream drew upon incantations used to recover from a nightmare rather than upon the nightmare which prompted the poet to compose the “Meng fu” (253 ff. 61).

See also: Bogzaran and Deslauriers on the intersubjective context of dream recall and telling, 132.

158 Lohmann, “The Role of Dreams in Religious Enculturation,” 115. See also: Mageo's *Dreaming Culture*, which considers the “vital public aspect” that dreams develop through the process of being told (1).

159 To use David Maines' prescient phrase (cited above, ff. 114).

preserved through the telling, whether personal (meditation, journaling) or interpersonal (dream sharing, dream interpretation). Moreover, once these dream narratives become incorporated into an individual's self-conception, which is itself a narrative construction,¹⁶⁰ they become socially functional, coming to inform decisions, shape perceptions, and, perhaps most importantly, motivate additional tellings.¹⁶¹ As is the case with all memories,¹⁶² these internalized dream accounts are tweaked, modified

160 On the topic of the “self” as a narrative construct, see Jerome Bruner, “The Narrative Construction of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry* 18:1 (1991): 1–21; Jerome Bruner, “Self-Making Narratives” in *Autobiographical Memory and the Construction of a Narrative Self: Developmental and Cultural Perspectives*, edited by Robyn Fivush and Catherine Haden, (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 209–225.

161 For a detailed discussion of the social and cultural dynamics of intersubjective dreaming (especially through the process of dream telling), see Bogzaran and Deslauriers, *Integral Dreaming*, 119–132. In this vein, Barbara Tedlock's *New Anthropology of Dreaming* argues that “dreams play an important part in mastering new affective experiences and assimilating them into one's self-schemata” (261). Likewise, Lohmann's “The Role of Dreams in Religious Enculturation,” offers the following account of the role of dreams in the development and maintenance of the religious world views of the Asabano of Papua New Guinea:

When I asked people to describe their religious beliefs and the reasons they found them compelling, very often dreams were given as an explanation. Asabano attribute a high degree of experiential reality to the dream (*aluma*). Elders and missionaries assert the existence of certain mythological beings, and when Asabano in turn have dream encounters with these beings, it is easy for them to believe that they in fact exist: Seeing is believing. Dreaming is, therefore, a catalyst for cultural transmission, providing personal experiential verification of incoming information (112).

Given the verificatory function of dreams in medieval Chinese Buddhism (discussed above and in Chapter One), it is clear that this perspective would have been entirely comprehensible to Huijiao and Daoxuan (and their respective communities).

As an aside, choosing to focus on the cultural dynamics of storytelling (a phenomenon that is relatively well understood) allows me to remain agnostic on the complex issues related to the neurological etiology of dreams and the resultant consequences for their significance. For the record, I am suspicious of the view that dreams are pure “imagination” (Botz-Bernstein, 69) or that they represent “the mind at play” (Bulkeley, *Big Dreams*, 129–130). This “oneiro-mystical” position is most uncritically articulated by Robert Moss:

Dreams have meaning and they can be interpreted. Dreams exhibit the same kind of creativity and poetic consciousness that is at play in art and literature. And they may be the trace elements of a universal language of signs and correspondences that humans once could speak before the darkening of their minds (44). *The Secret History of Dreaming*, (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2009).

In contrast, I am much more convinced by the various models that characterize dreams as the *ad hoc* attempts of sleeping brains to create meaning from the phenomenological detritus of nocturnal neural firings. By this view, apparent meaning is epiphenomenal, arising due to both the underlying order imposed by our networked neural architectures and the prefrontal cortex's attempt to apply narrative logic to this phantasmagoria. This view inspired Flanagan to describe dreams as “the spandrels of sleep,” employing a term borrowed from Stephen Jay Gould's writings on evolutionary theory (53 and *passim*). As can be seen, in this view, the role of narrative in creating meaning from oneiric experience extends even into the primary act of dreaming itself. That said, my skepticism is perhaps just a side-effect of the inherent nihilism involved in being an insomniac atheist who studies Buddhist dreams.

162 For an overview, consider any of Elizabeth Loftus' myriad contributions made to both academic and lay conversations on memory over the last forty years, which have demonstrated the unreliability and malleability of human memory across all axes and in all contexts. Some specific examples are cited below, as they become relevant. A representative example is Elizabeth F. Loftus, “The Malleability of Human Memory: Information introduced after we view an incident can transform memory,” *American Scientist* 67:3 (May-June 1979), 312-320.

and retrofitted every time they are recalled, allowing them, over time, to conform even more closely to personal predilections and inherited cultural schemas;¹⁶³ this is an especially salient possibility in the case of dreams, given their inherently plastic, potentially ambiguous character. This is one of the reasons that I am not overly concerned about the historicity of any particular oneiric episode in GSZ or XGSZ: even if a specific dream narrative cannot be definitively ascribed to its idealized monastic source, it could nonetheless have exerted influence on the medieval Chinese discourse community due to its status as an example of an “elite dreamer’s”¹⁶⁴ dream, moulding both the first-order contents and the second-order tellings of subsequent oneiric experiences.¹⁶⁵

Since I have no reason to doubt that Chinese Buddhists in the medieval period would have seen themselves as a “dream community,”¹⁶⁶ especially given the role of oneiric confirmation in both meditation and ordination practice (as mentioned above and as discussed in Chapter One), I was somewhat hesitant to employ the aforementioned (semi-)functionalist approach to dreams in this context, for fear of inadvertently doing violence to their worldview through my etic theorizing. Then, I fortuitously encountered the following account from the Warring States-era master of *realpolitik* Han Fei 韓非 (c. 280–233), which highlights the extent to which acknowledging the social function of dream-telling would not have been a wholly alien notion to an educated Chinese monk:

163 For a parallel case, consider Peter Stromberg’s study of the gradual homogenization of evangelical Christian “Born Again” narratives through the process of telling and retelling, as well as the socially transformative act of sharing these stories: *Language and Self-Transformation: A Study of the Christian Conversion Narrative*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

164 Faure coins this phrase in *Visions of Power* to describe the Keizan, Myōe and other Kamakura Buddhists, though I would argue that it is just as applicable in early medieval China (129).

165 The role of cultural expectations (such as traditions of dream interpretation) upon dream content has already been discussed above, and will be considered at various points throughout the present study.

166 Faure (1996) uses this term to describe the medieval Japanese Buddhist context. For a relevant comparison (which is discussed in Chapter Three), see: Yoram Bilu, “Oneirobiography and Oneirocommunity in Saint Worship in Israel: A Two-Tier Model for Dream-Inspired Religious Revivals,” *Dreaming* 10:2 (2000): 85–101.

At the time of Duke Ling of Wei, Mi Zixia was in favour with him in the Wei State. One day, a certain clown, when seeing the Duke, said, “The dream of thy servant has materialized, indeed.” “What did you dream?” asked the Duke. “Thy servant dreamt of a cooking stove,” replied the clown, “on seeing your Highness.” “What? As I understand,” said the Duke in anger, “who sees the lord of men in dreaming, dreams of the sun. Why did you see a cooking stove in your dream of me?” The clown then said, “Indeed, the sun shines upon everything under heaven while nothing can cover it. Accordingly, who sees the lord of men in dreaming, dreams the sun. In the case of a cooking stove, however, if one person stands before it, then nobody from behind can see. Supposing someone were standing before Your Highness, would it not be possible for thy servant to dream of a cooking stove?” “Right” said the Duke and, accordingly, removed Yong Chu, dismissed Mi Zixia, and employed Sikong Gou.

Some critic says: The clown did very well in making a pretext of dreaming of a cooking stove and thereby rectifying the way of the sovereign, whereas Duke Ling did not fully understand the clown's saying. For to remove Yong Chu, dismiss Mi Zixia, and employ Sikong Gou, was to remove his favourites and employ a man he regarded as worthy.¹⁶⁷

When reading this account in light of the *Principle of Irrelevance*,¹⁶⁸ a number of significant points come to light, such as the following: 1) the presence of an established and implicitly understood system of oneiromancy and a related understanding of dream etiology, as can be seen in the clown's claim that seeing the Duke generated his dream, and the Duke's subsequent assumption that the clown's dream

167 See: Wenkui Liao, translator, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu: A Classic of Chinese Political Science*, (London: A. Probsthian, 1959), Vol. 2, 196–197.

Cf., 衛靈公之時，彌子瑕有寵，於衛國。侏儒有見公者曰：「臣之夢淺矣。」公曰：「奚夢？」「夢見灶者，為見公也。」公怒曰：「吾聞見人主者夢見日，奚為見寡人而夢見灶乎？」侏儒曰：「夫日兼照天下，一物不能當也。人君兼照一國，一人不能壅也，故將見人主而夢日也。夫灶，一人燬焉，則後人無從見矣。或者一人燬君邪？則臣雖夢灶，不亦可乎！」公曰：「善。」遂去雍鉏，退彌子瑕，而用司空狗 (*Hanfeizi xin jiaozhu* 韓非子新校注, 934-935).

168 The introduction to Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path according to The Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), offers a number of useful hermeneutical principles for reading normative sources, drawn in part from her reading of biblical studies scholarship. These include: the **principle of embarrassment** [“when an author reveals, in the course of a discussion, something that is quite unflattering to the group or position that he or she represents, there is a high degree of probability that the statement has a basis in fact” (65–66)]; the **principle of irrelevance** [one can assume the likely reliability of “incidental mention” of “items unrelated to the author's primary agenda” (66–67)]; the **principle of counter-argument** [when one finds statements of the form “One should *not* believe X’ or ‘One should *not* do Y’,” they serve as “evidence that at least some members of the community were involved in the offending practices, hence the author's need to argue against them” (67–68)]; and the **principle of corroborating evidence** [in cases where the existing textual and archaeological record is silent, “even data widely separated from our Indian sources in time and place – anthropological reports from contemporary South East Asia, for example – can help raise new questions and alert us to previously unseen issues, when we return to our texts with these insights” (68–69)]. I make relatively frequent use (both signalled and unsignalled) of these principles throughout the present study. In particular, my decision to consult and consider both psychological and cross-cultural materials (discussed above) can be seen as an application of this “principle of corroborating evidence.”

was an “incorrect” response to this stimulus; 2) the normalcy (i.e., the literally unremarkable character) of both telling and interpreting dreams, not only in the explicit context of oneiromancy, but also in other social circumstances (e.g., in this case, dialogue between lord and underling); 3) the fact that significant life decisions could be made based on the contents of dream narratives, even in the case of second-hand dream reports; and, 4) the overt acknowledgement that such reports could be fallacious and that this acknowledgement somehow did not obviate point #3. For a more detailed discussion of the social function(s) of dream telling in medieval Chinese Buddhism based on an examination of all the relevant episodes from GSZ and XGSZ, which addresses each of these features (as well as many others), see Chapter One.

Metaphor and Liminality

When reading through the dream episodes included in GSZ and XGSZ, I could not help but notice the frequency with which I was able to empathize with the accounts of the monastic dreamers described therein. More specifically, I was rarely surprised by the monastic responses to their particular oneiric experiences, as the dreams I had intuitively read as “auspicious” or “inauspicious” (based on their contents and imagery) were almost always treated as such by the protagonists of the GSZ and XGSZ accounts in question. Once I made this initial observation, I was forced to confront the sheer volume of such “easily parsed” dream narratives, which seemed as ubiquitous as a newly-learned word. Why was I able to understand these accounts? Why was this form of intercultural and inter-temporal communication possible?¹⁶⁹ Though I acknowledge that the years I have spent studying Chinese language and culture might have offered some entrée into the medieval Chinese worldview, I lack the

169 For instance, Tedlock's “New Anthropology of Dreaming” offers an example of an Australian academic whose Kuranko interlocutor unquestioningly ascribed a positive valence to the anthropologist's dream of “flying like a bird” and “being in a high place” - dreams that the anthropologists had also considered auspicious (256–257).

confidence (or hubris) to propose that as a unilateral solution. Discussing a related issue, Wendy Doniger argues that such cross-cultural similarities exist “because the same basic human mind is searching for a limited set of metaphors with which to make sense of the same basic human experiences, be the expressions Eastern or Western, 'factual' or 'imaginative’”¹⁷⁰ While I agree with this insight, I would extend it by suggesting that, in at least some cases, the metaphors themselves are part of the embodied equipment of these “basic human minds,” based on my understanding of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory. Since I employ this theory at several points in the analysis that follows, I will now dedicate a few pages to outlining its key propositions, at least to the extent to which they informed my approach.

Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* proposed the (then revolutionary) theory that metaphors represent the fundamental currency of human cognition, such that these metaphorical correspondences (and, in particular, the correspondences between simpler “source” domains and more complex “target” domains) play a central role in structuring human thought and language. These conclusions, which have subsequently been verified by scholars from a variety of disciplines (including psychology, cognitive science, and linguistics),¹⁷¹ have thereafter come to influence virtually all spheres of academic discourse.¹⁷² That said, this foundational volume left one of their most significant contributions more or less inchoate: namely, the embodied nature of metaphorical cognition. This

170 Namely, she is exploring the conceptual similarities between “Western” science and “Eastern” spirituality, though I think that the insight speaks equally well to other instances of intercultural communication. Wendy Doniger, “Western Dreams About Eastern Dreams” in *Dreams: A Reader on the Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming*, edited by Kelly Bulkeley, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 233–238, 233.

171 See the afterword to 2003 printing for an exploration (and extensive bibliography) of the supporting research that was performed since the book's original publication. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By (With a New Afterword)*, (University of Chicago Press: London and Chicago, 2003 [1980]), 246–264.

172 According to *Google Scholar*, this book alone was cited over fifty thousand times since its publication (<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=KEU0vpcAAAAJ>). While my intent with this statement is not offer an “argument *ad populum*,” such a citation index is surely a relatively persuasive metric for determining the influence that a book, author or theory has exerted over academia as a whole.

notion, which was subsequently elaborated upon at length in *Philosophy in the Flesh*,¹⁷³ can be summarized by misquoting an old joke: “when it comes to human thinking, it's metaphors all the way down.” However, unlike that adage (which was intended as a *reductio ad absurdum* related to the paradox of infinite regress), this theory posits a firm foundation for the (largely culturally-conditioned) edifice of increasingly complex metaphors that all humans use to think about and describe the world: specifically, that all of these metaphorical complexes are grounded in a relatively small number of specific, embodied experiences. As one example of this view, consider the fact that most languages draw the metaphorical association between words associated with temperature and those describing emotional valence (e.g., coldness, warmth); in Lakoff and Johnson's view, this is not seen as some sort of linguistic accident. Instead, such correspondences are explicable by the fact that, in the vast majority of human lifetimes, an individual's first experience of emotional closeness is strongly correlated with the physical closeness of being held.¹⁷⁴ Likewise, the converse is also true: emotional “coldness” is similarly correlated with increased physical distance and lack of contact. Given that our brains (i.e., the shared cognitive hardware that continues to breathe some life into the old Tylorian saw about the “psychic unity of humanity”) function as associative matrices, these two experiences become metaphorically mapped; as such, the fact that so many languages include polysemous mappings between words related to physical and emotional “warmth” results from this metaphorical linkage, which is (temporally and cognitively) prior to any specific linguistic usage.

In the case of the present study, I would argue that this understanding of embodied, metaphorical cognition allows us to gain some purchase on the notoriously evanescent and

173 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*, (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

174 See: Lakoff and Johnson (1999), 46, 49, 59. For more examples, see “Table 4.1 – Representative Primary Metaphors” (*ibid.*, 50–54).

phantasmagorical subject of dreams by giving us a precise way to locate them within the specific mode of cultural discourse employed by medieval Chinese Buddhists. While the observation that dreams represent a foundational human experience¹⁷⁵ is certainly not a new one, and while some dream researchers have long argued that the embodied aspect of the oneiric experience can provide a solid grounding for comparative analysis,¹⁷⁶ the potential utility of considering dreams themselves as root-level conceptual metaphors has yet to be fully embraced. Specifically, I would argue that, just as the vast majority of human beings have the primary experience of a metaphorical linkage between bodily warmth and emotional closeness (and the secondary experience of using languages whose vocabularies and idioms are built upon this linkage), so to do dreams serve as primary metaphors that can be deployed in a variety of contexts, given the biological and neurological givenness of the dream experience. I will consider three of these metaphorical usages, all of which emerged from my close reading of GSZ and XGSZ dream episodes, below.

The first two of these metaphorical understandings of dreams cohere not only with various specific examples from the Chinese dream literature (outlined above and treated in detail in the chapters that follow), but also with Bulkeley's phenomenological distinction between “small” and “big” dreams:¹⁷⁷

175 Or even a foundational *mammalian* experience (as discussed above).

176 Many such examples are treated in previous sections and throughout. As an aside, Li (in *The Readability of the Past*) argues that the liminal quality of dreams was already instrumental to their rhetorical utility in the *Zuozhuan*, noting that “the potential continuum between dreaming and wakeful states [is] analogous to the fluid boundaries between the realm of spirits and the human world” (238), and that the “readability of dreams in *Zuozhuan* is a function of continuities between past and present, dreaming and waking states” (239).

177 Specifically, Kelly Bulkeley's *Big Dreams* offers a nuanced, cross-cultural overview of the phenomenological qualities of both small dreams (i.e., unremarkable, evanescent mental phenomena that evaporate upon waking) and big dreams (i.e., those oneiric visions that jolt a dreamer awake, convinced of the meaning and significance of the perceived experience): (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). This second category is further subdivided into aggressive, sexual, gravitational, and mystical dreams, the reported subjective qualities of which map cleanly onto both reported dream accounts from GSZ and XGSZ, and those I have encountered in my comparative reading.

1. [SMALL] DREAM AS ILLUSION / DELUSION / CAUSE OF BEWILDERMENT;
2. [BIG] DREAM AS NUMINOUS VISION.¹⁷⁸

I would characterize the “dream” in both of these cases as the Source Domain for the metaphor because both types would almost certainly be cognitively prior to other forms of both delusion and mystical experience. In the case of the “small dream,” (virtually) every human child is likely to have had the experience of conflating an oneiric experience with reality, only to either realize for themselves (or be told) that it was “just a dream.” With the passage of time, these experiences become schematized and can then be called upon when it is necessary to conceptualize other forms of mental phenomena. For instance, the particular metaphorical entailments associated with these dream experiences are useful when realizing that one cannot be harmed by one's thoughts or that mental phenomena are personal (i.e., the concept of interiority).¹⁷⁹ In engaging with the medieval Chinese Buddhist discourse on

178 One would be remiss not to notice the parallel between this phenomenological typology, and the traditional Indian and Chinese ones discussed above. Similar distinctions between “big” and “small” (i.e., meaningful and meaningless) dreams are ubiquitous across human cultures. For other examples, see: Robert Tokinson, “Ambrymese Dreams and the Mardu Dreaming,” in *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific*, edited by Roger Ivar Lohmann. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 87–105, 89–90, which explores the variety of perspectives on dreams (from credulity to outright rejection) of Ambrymese Islanders. Likewise, Simcha Fishbane's overview of early rabbinical dream interpretation includes a translation of the “Dream Tractate” from the *Babylonian Talmud*, which includes the following claim (implying a differential approach to the truth values of different dreams): “R. Johann also said: 'Three kinds of dreams are fulfilled: an early morning dream, a dream which a friend has about one, and a dream which is interpreted in the midst of a dream. Some add also, a dream which is repeated’” (200). “Every Dream Becomes Valid Only By Its Interpretation’: Dreams, Dream Interpretations, and Dream Interpreters in the Babylonian Talmud” in *Deviancy in Early Rabbinic Literature*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 177–212. For a discussion of the Greco-Roman distinction between “empty dream” (*enupnion*) and “prophetic dream” (*oneiros*), see: M. Andrew Holowchak, *Ancient Science and Dreams: Oneirology in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 94–95.

179 For one relevant example from the literature related to the development of the “theory of mind” in three- to five-year-old children, see Joan Peskin and Vittoria Ardino, “Representing the Mental World in Children's Social Behavior: Playing Hide-and-Seek and Keeping a Secret,” *Social Development* 12:4 (2003): 496–512. This study explores the increasing success of children within the target age range at two independent but correlated tasks (playing hide-and-seek and keeping a secret), noting that performance in both is seen to improve concurrently. They summarize their findings as follows:

few three-year-old children can successfully play hide-and-seek and keep a secret. These two social behaviors share, as their cognitive underpinning, the need to represent someone's ignorance of what the child knows to be true, and to act on this knowledge by concealing information. Not only was the onset of successful performance on both of these social behaviors related to each other, but successful performance appears to be related more to young children's developing ability to represent someone's ignorance, than their developing ability to inhibit a salient response. This study supports the importance of a conceptual understanding of mental states in the development of young children's social behavior (509–510).

This is in line with other disciplinary research that has charted out of the gradual development of a sense of

dreams preserved in the *Eminent Monks*, this metaphorical usage is prevalent enough as to be unavoidable, such as the claim that “delusive mental phenomenon X” is “like an illusion, like a dream” (*ru huan ru meng* 如幻如夢).¹⁸⁰ The intertextual resonances of these claims, which simultaneously echo both Indian Buddhist metaphysics and the classical Chinese philosophical tradition, have already been considered above.

In the second case (the “big dream”), some oneiric visions seem to represent a form of non-ordinary consciousness that seems pregnant with significance, replete with portentous imagery, and suffused with a phenomenologically compelling sense of having travelled beyond the confines of one's bedchamber and/or having engaged in encounters (uplifting, horrifying, or both) that belie the seeming fact that one had been sleeping quietly at the time. I would argue such dreams can be generalized and subsequently recruited to serve as a source domain when considering other non-ordinary states of consciousness. As in the previous discussion of dreams as illusions, it is equally plausible here to assume that an individual's first experience with such states would have been in a “big dream,” given that such oneiric events often (though not always)¹⁸¹ occur unbidden: a fact that obviously differentiates them from the types of mental states that are experienced in the context of meditation, the ingestion of psychotropics, ecstatic dance, and other modes of inducing such psycho-physiological effects.

That said, this second metaphorical domain is likely more culturally contingent than the previous one, as these mental connections would only be likely to develop among individuals in a

“interiority” (e.g., a realization that one's mental states are internal to oneself and are thus not inherently accessible to others). Doniger also comments on this phenomenon in *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities*, summarizing cross-cultural research on the eventual realization of the interiority of dream experience, even in cultures less dismissive of their meaning than the stereotypical Western perspective (54–55).

180 T. 2060: 602b17–18.

181 For a counterexample, see the discussion of dream incubation in Chapter One.

cultural context where dream experiences were shared and whose worldviews would, at least theoretically, permit the possibility of a dreamer engaging in oneiric travel or otherwise encountering gods, spirits, deceased relatives and other beings while asleep. This is certainly true of the medieval Chinese context (as discussed above and as will be considered in more detail in Chapter One). Moreover, the literature related to various medieval Buddhist confession rituals makes the metaphorical identity between dreams and other non-ordinary states explicit, as can be seen in the oft-cited claim that a confirmatory vision of a buddha or bodhisattva – which is taken as a sign that the ritual practitioner's confession has been efficacious – can occur in a dream *or* in a meditative trance.¹⁸²

In addition to serving as an embodied experience of both mental delusion and non-ordinary, visionary consciousness, I would argue that dreams also represent a salient, embodied example of the experience of liminality,¹⁸³ that in-between state most often associated with ritual performance, which has been so productively discussed by van Gennep, Victor Turner and many later scholars.¹⁸⁴ As in the

182 Discussed above and treated at length in Chapter One.

183 Botz-Bernstein suggests that dreams may be seen as a foundational experience of weirdness:

the feeling that what is now an objectified (even though unreal) reality had been utterly *real* while we were dreaming yields the impression of strangeness or uncanniness. Dreams are not perceived as strange while we are dreaming but they become strange when we are looking at them from the objective point of waking life (67–68 [emphasis in original]).

184 It should be noted that I am not the first to make this observation. For an example from her discussion of the role of dream conception among Australian aborigines, see Elizabeth den Boer, “Spirit Conception: Dreams in Aboriginal Australia,” *Dreaming* 22:3 (2012): 192–211. Most relevant to the current discussion is the following observation: The dream process shows similarities with initiation rites, for example, in its tripartite structure. In the first phase is separation, by falling asleep the dreamer is literally separated from the active, external world into another (altered) state of consciousness, enters into the internal, private realm of the dream-space. Next, there is the dream as the liminal phase entailing information about the transition (the new situation). In the rite this is the period in which, for instance, the initiate is placed symbolically “outside the society.” During sleep and dream, the dreamer is also temporarily in a comparable situation. Finally, the dreamer awakes and reenters society, and by remembering and eventually sharing the dream incorporates the contents or message of the dream into one’s life and into society. The sequence, *entrée – victime – sortie*, proposed by Hubert and Mauss for studying specific forms of sacrifice (1954 [1898], 19–50), could well serve as an example of Van Gennep’s rites of passage (194).

For one of the foundational discussions of these topics, see Victor W. Turner, “Liminality and Communitas” in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), 94–130. Of note for the present argument is the fact that, even though he does not include “sleep/wakefulness” in his long catalogue of “liminality vs. status system” binomes, he does suggest a linkage between liminality and embodiment:

This list could be considerably lengthened if we were to widen the span of liminal situations considered. Moreover,

two previous cases, it seems plausible that, in instances where the metaphorical language of sleep is invoked to describe liminal experiences, these usages would be far from linguistic accidents, but would rather reflect a source / domain mapping,¹⁸⁵ whereby embodied experiences from dreams (e.g., feelings of otherness and uncanniness, a sense of detachment from one's body) are invoked in other metaphorically-related contexts (such as ritual practice). This linkage coheres with the phenomenological character of dreams themselves, in that dreaming occurs during a phase of sleep (REM) whose overall level of mental activation and whose loci of activation (e.g., the visual cortex, the limbic system, the proprioceptive system) are so similar to wakefulness that it is often called “paradoxical sleep.”¹⁸⁶ Given the universality of oneiric experience, it is profoundly plausible that this psycho-physiologically liminal state (wherein one is unconscious but imagining, unmoving but active, sightless but experiencing visual imagery) provides valuable metaphorical inferences for helping to conceptualize other such interstitialities.

When I read the various dream accounts collected in GSZ and XGSZ through this embodied, metaphorical lens, I immediately noticed that these narratives were often situated at particularly liminal junctures in the lives of their respective protagonists, such as the moment of conception, ordination, or in the face of impending mortality.¹⁸⁷ Many other examples relate to the (often troubled) interactions between Buddhists and the adherents of other religious traditions, or Buddhists travelling between regions.¹⁸⁸ My goal in this project is to investigate the dreams associated with these specific

the symbols in which these properties and manifested and embodied are manifold and various, and often relate to the physiological process of death and birth, anabolism and katabolism (107).

185 Note: I am currently seeking additional support for this hypothesis, though the persistent association of dreams with liminality in GSZ and XGSZ (as well as in other Chinese sources) is suggestive.

186 As noted in Walker, 52. See previous section on the phenomenology of sleep states for more details.

187 In the first case, the reported dreams were obviously ascribed to prospective mothers – a topic that will be addressed in detail in Chapter Two.

188 Kalinowski (2009) makes a similar observation about the dream narratives reported in the *Zuozhuan*: “the dream generally occurs when the dreamer is in a critical situation: a battle is about to begin or a marriage has been contracted;

liminalities, as well as the potential reasons that medieval Chinese Buddhists might have found the stories of such oneiric experiences to be worthy of dissemination. In so doing, I am remaining agnostic on whether any specific monk, nun, or layperson actually underwent any particular oneiric experience. Indeed, while it could be the case that these liminal experiences provoked specific oneiric outcomes (or even that the dreamers engaged in dream incubation rituals in order to engender them), it is also possible that the strength of the metaphorical relationship between dreams and liminality (i.e., the “aptness” of this metaphor) simply made such narratives particularly plausible or compelling for medieval Chinese Buddhists, rendering them more likely to be retold, preserved, and disseminated.

Given the number of dream narratives related to these broader liminal states, as well as the fact that some of these liminalities (e.g., Buddhism and local religion, Chinese and foreign) would have been undergoing a process of redefinition during the transition from the Northern/Southern Dynasties period to the unification under the Sui and Tang (i.e., the eras discussed in GSZ and XGSZ respectively), I feel that we can attain a valuable perspective on the cultural dynamics of the “Sinicization”¹⁸⁹ of medieval Chinese Buddhism by attending to these narratives. Finally, given that this project focuses on the linkage between dreams and the liminal in medieval Chinese Buddhism, I have chosen to highlight this fact in my chapter titles by borrowing Victor Turner's evocative phrase “betwixt and between” to describe the circumstances being considered in each.

a conflict of succession comes up or illness has struck” (360).

189 The (rather tired) example that is most often trotted out to explain the scope of possible approaches to this “Sinicization” progress is a continuum running between Zürcher's “Buddhist Conquest of China” and Kenneth Ch'en's “Chinese Transformation of Buddhism.” For a more nuanced perspective, see: Sharf's *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*. This issue is treated at great length in Chapter Three.

Chapter Outline

While the overburdened Recycle Bin on my computer's desktop speaks to the plurality of available options and avenues for inquiry that I considered in the course of assembling the present project, the twin constraints of page space and person hours ultimately forced me to reign in a project that had threatened to extend *ad infinitum* in a variety of incommensurate directions. As such, I have opted to restrict my discussion to four topics: Chapter One – *Engaging with the Liminal: Oneiric Practice in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Hagiographies*, which explores three key forms of dream-related activity described in GSZ and XGSZ, and their respective relationships with their historical antecedents – namely, dream telling, dream interpretation, and dream incubation (i.e., intentionally seeking oneiric responses via ritual action); Chapter Two – *Dreaming Betwixt and Between Conception and Birth*, which outlines the continuities and discontinuities between the accounts of the births of exemplary monks and the numerous cases of oneiric conception preserved in official histories and *zhiguai*, as well as translated Buddhist texts; Chapter Three – *Dreaming Betwixt and Between Regions*, which focuses on the ways that dream narratives were used to posit and contest the perceived relationship (and perceived hierarchy) between India and China (and, in particular, between Indian and Chinese Buddhists); and, finally, Chapter Four – *Dreaming Betwixt and Between Religions*, which parallels the previous chapter, but instead explores the variety of ways that Huijiao and Daoxuan used the liminal arena of dream experiences in order to (re)define the relationships between indigenous Chinese deities, religious professionals, and sacred spaces in light of the intercessions of exemplary Buddhist monks.

Conclusion

Though I cannot lay claim to the literary and theoretical sophistication that allowed Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty to structure *Dreams, Illusions, and Other Realities* as an “academic Purana,”¹⁹⁰ one similarity between our respective projects (and our approaches to them) is the extent to which form was dictated by content. As such, the present project is something of a chimera, incorporating cross-cultural, psychological, Sinological, and Buddhological materials: a panoply of diverse sources that are intended to reinforce one another. In the chapters that follow, I explore various narratives in which dreams serve as liminal events, transforming and refiguring the lives of dreamers, as well as interstitial spaces, within which the various denizens of the extrahuman realm could be encountered directly. In so doing, I consider the specific roles played by dreams in the GSZ and XGSZ, yielding some insights into the evolution of the lived experience of Chinese Buddhism between the sixth and seventh centuries (in general) and the divergences between the perspectives of two exemplary Buddhist proselytizers (in particular). The present state of this research, and the conclusions that I am drawing from it, are not my final word on this topic, but rather a snapshot of a fluid process rendered concrete, like a dream told upon waking.

190 Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities*, 6.

Chapter One – Engaging with the Liminal: Oneiric Practice in the *Eminent Monks*

Given a cultural context in which dreams were often interpreted as an efficacious vector for communicating with the “unseen realm” of gods, ghosts, and ancestors, and where the causes for such oneiric visions were often explained via the stimulus-response (*ganying* 感應) episteme, communities of medieval Chinese Buddhists were primed to engage regularly (and in meaning-generative ways) with their dreams. Moreover, stories of such visionary interactions likewise came to serve as a form of proselytic currency in the religious economy, with compelling tales of informatory and confirmatory oneiric miracles¹ serving to further deepen the religious commitments of monastics and lay devotees, and to win over potential donors and converts. As such, one could expect that analyzing the oneiric episodes preserved in GSZ and XGSZ would yield a variety of insights into the ways that medieval Chinese Buddhists interacted with the oneiric realm. The results of this analysis, which I will outline in the present chapter, can be subdivided into three specific modes of oneiric practice (dream telling, dream interpretation, and dream incubation) that testify to both the significance ascribed to dreams in these communities and the ubiquity of engaging with such experiences.

In exploring these three types of practice, one can observe certain salient differences between their descriptions in Huijiao and Daoxuan's respective collections. For instance, even though both collections include all three types of dream practice, the characteristics of the reported dreams differ, with Daoxuan's collection including more dreams that lack additional confirmatory miracles, which is in keeping with his tendency to treat oneiric experiences as epistemologically valid sources of true

1 I propose this typology below.

information about the human and extrahuman realms. This observation is commensurate with both Daoxuan's personal experiences with transformative, informatory dreams², and with the increasing popularity of dream visualization in conjunction with rites of confession, as influentially codified by Zhiyi (and others). Likewise, GSZ is much more likely than its successor to include “elliptical” dream reports (i.e., dream narratives within which the dream content itself is not described), which also seems to highlight the fact that he (and his discourse community) prized reported dream content less than Daoxuan's. Finally, practices related to deliberately sought dreams are described more frequently and in more detail in XGSZ, which accords with the popularization of such practices in the interval between the compilation of the *Eminent Monks* and its sequel. That said, and unlike the case studies presented in chapters two through four, I was most struck by the commonalities between the accounts considered below. In both collections, Buddhist monks and lay devotees are frequently seen sharing dream stories, approaching monks (and other oneirocritics) for insight into the meaning of their dream visions, and performing specific rituals to engender oneiric responses – all of which serve to highlight their shared participation in medieval Chinese dream culture.

Dream Telling

In recent years, a small coterie of scholars of Chinese Buddhism have expended a fair amount of intellectual effort exploring the ritual programme associated with the process of “confession and oneiric confirmation” that seems to have been so prevalent in the medieval period. In particular, Eric Greene's recent work has begun to clearly elucidate the process of monastic dream interpretation (and, in

2 I hope the reader will forgive this seeming neologism. Given one of the roles played by dreams in the medieval Chinese context (discussed in the introduction and below), it seemed fitting to borrow a term from the study of literal signposting: specifically, in the vocabulary of signage, an “informatory” sign is one whose purpose is to “give drivers essential information to enable them to find their way to their destination,” whereas “confirmatory” signs (e.g., those situated after intersections) “give confirmation and often additional information about the route ahead” (223). See Peter S. Kendrick, *Roadwork: Theory and Practice*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).

particular, its assumptions about the nature and function of oneiric images) that would have invariably undergirded this practice.³ My own reflections on these complex and multifarious issues, which are based on my survey of all references to dreams in GSZ and XGSZ, will be considered below (in the sections on Dream Interpretation and Dream Incubation). Before turning to these issues, however, I would first like to focus on a practice that was not only essential for these rituals of confession, but that is also attested to (either implicitly or explicitly) in a reasonable subset of all of the biographies included in both *Eminent Monks* collections. This is, of course, the practice of “dream telling” itself.⁴

Before we even turn to the broad swath of examples from both collections wherein the narration of dreams is itself a key plot point (i.e., cases of explicit dream narration), it is instructive to note that every single dream episode featured in both collections is itself an instance of *implicit* dream narration. While this claim may at first seem like a truism, I would argue that it is, in fact, significant. To make this case, consider the countervailing pressures against medieval Chinese Buddhist monastics and lay devotees telling dream stories: Chinese monks and nuns are theoretically prohibited from engaging in

3 For the interpretation of visions (oneiric and otherwise) within the context of *chan* practice, see Eric M. Greene, *Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience*, 199–258. His current reflections on these issues were presented on Aug. 23rd, 2017 at the IABS conference (Toronto) in a paper entitled “What exactly are “meditation texts” and what should we do with them?,” wherein he argued that most medieval Chinese meditation texts are surprisingly unconcerned with outlining techniques of practice, and that they instead tend to focus on the specific contents of meditative visions. In this way, he argued that these texts functioned primarily as diagnostic guides for meditation masters, with the contents of visions (including dreams) being interpreted as signs of the disciples' personal morality and meditative attainment. I am eagerly awaiting the formal publication of these results. These issues will be discussed extensively below, in the section on Oneiric Practice.

4 I am borrowing the phrase “dream telling” from Roberto K. Ong's path-breaking dissertation on Chinese oneirocriticism (146). For a thoughtful and nuanced exploration of the socio-dynamics of this process (with especial attention paid to potential power imbalances between ethnographer and ethnographic subject), see Douglas Hollan, “The Cultural and Intersubjective Context of Dream Remembrance and Reporting: Dreams, Aging, and the Anthropological Encounter in Toraja, Indonesia,” *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific*, edited by Roger Ivar Lohmann, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 169–188. Commenting on this practice in her masterful study of dream culture in contemporary Egypt (*Dreams That Matter*), Amira Mittermaier makes the compelling observation that “a gap separates fieldwork and ethnography. And another one (or the same?) splits dream-experience and dream-telling” (27). Company also explores dream telling as a narrativizing social process in “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft).

oneiromancy (according to the *bodhisattva* precepts promulgated by the *Brahma's Net Sutra* [*Fanwang jing* 梵網經]);⁵ the *Eminent Monks* corpus contains several discursive uses of the intertextual stock phrases such as “like a dream, like an illusion,” which are used to highlight the ultimate unreality nature of these experiences (and, by extension, all phenomenal experiences);⁶ and, one of the plaudits employed in XGSZ's biography of Huiman is that his level of spiritual refinement was such that “his

5 As per the (apocryphal) *Brahmā's Net Sutra* (**emphasis added**):

If there is a Buddhist disciple [lit., “son of a good family”] who, with ill intent [lit. “evil heart-mind”] and for the purposes of benefiting himself, buys and sells male and female desire [lit., “forms” (*se* 色)]; or prepares food with his own hands; or pounds [in a mortar] or grinds [with a millstone]; or physiognomizes men or women; or **analyzes dreams for good or bad omens, or to see if it will be a boy or it will be a girl**; or performs incantations; or practices the fine arts; or employs methods of taming eagles; or if he combines together the hundred types of poisonous herbs, the thousand types of poisonous herbs, snake venom, [poisons derived from] gold and silver, or *gu* poison: all of these are actions lacking compassion. If one intentionally does such a thing, he has committed a minor misdeed.

C.f., 「若佛子！以惡心故、為利養故，販賣男女色，自手作食、自磨自舂，占相男女，解夢吉凶，是男是女，呪術工巧調鷹方法，和合百種毒藥千種毒藥、蛇毒生金銀蠱毒，都無慈心。若故作者，犯輕垢罪。」 (T. 1484: 1007a23–27, translated after consulting J. J. M. de Groot, *Le Code Du Mahayāna En Chine: Son Influence Sur La Vie Monacale Et Sur Le Monde Laique*, [Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1893], 61).

For the term “qing gouzui 輕垢罪,” see: *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E8%BC%95%E5%9E%A2%E7%BD%AA>: “Trifling sins; light transgressions. As contrasted to grave offences 重罪. These are discussed extensively in the *Brahmā's Net Sutra*.”

For a helpful overview of this text, including its contents, its compositional history, and a discussion of its perceived impact on the behavioural standards among Japanese monks in the centuries after Saichō, see Paul Groner, “The *Fanwang ching* and Monastic Discipline” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 251–290. Also see: Funayama Tōru 船山徹. *Higashi Ajia Bukkyō no seikatsu kisoku Bonmōkyō: saiko no katachi to hatten no rekishi* 東アジア仏教の生活規則梵網經：最古の形と発展の歴史 Kyōto-shi: Rinsen Shoten, 2017. As an aside, Michel Strickmann rather cheekily makes use of the same rhetorical strategy I am employing here (i.e., contrasting the seeming prohibition on divinatory practice with evidence of said practices) in his discussion of various mantic technologies outlined in medieval Buddhist texts such as the *Consecration Sutra* and the *Book on Divining the Requital of Good and Evil Deeds*. See: *Chinese Poetry and Prophecy: The Written Oracle in East Asia*, edited by Bernard Faure, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 78–81.

Given that Daoxuan was known in his time as a great master of Buddhist law, I look forward to exploring the perspective(s) on dreams and dreaming expounded in his writings on Vinaya, though this must remain a project for another day.

6 It is instructive to consult Zhiyi (智顓, 538–597 CE) on this issue, as he considers it in *Mohezhiqian* 摩訶止觀 [T. 1911] as part of an argument that Buddhahood can only be attained by dispensing with all dichotomous thinking. This claim, which is found in the section on the Constantly Walking Samādhi, begins by denying the individual capacity to reach Buddhahood through mind or body:

Again, be mindful [as follows]: “Do I attain Buddhahood through the mind, or do I attain Buddhahood through the body?” [You then realize that] you do not need the mind or the body to attain Buddhahood; you do not need the mind to attain the Buddha's visible form (*rūpa*), and you do not need form to attain the Buddha's mind. Why is this so? As for mind, the Buddha is without substantial mind, and as for form, the Buddha is without substantial form. Therefore form or mind is not required for attaining complete wisdom (*sambodhi*). The Buddha's visible form is already extinct, including [the other skandhas [up to his consciousness, which is already extinct [that is, empty of

body was without fleas and lice, and he slept without dreaming.”⁷ In spite of this apparent anti-oneiric bias, myriad medieval Chinese Buddhists (including the original authors of the materials from which the biographies were drawn, the two named compilers, and the later monastic and lay devotees who copied and circulated these collections) clearly considered it important to share certain specific stories about certain specific historical individuals having certain specific oneiric experiences. The historicity of these episodes is, of course, beside the point (though, as we will discuss below in the section on Dream Incubation, it *does* seem that medieval Chinese Buddhists actively employed well-attested ritual techniques in order to inculcate particular oneiric states); instead, the most salient feature of these narratives is that the various members of these discourse communities, by opting to retell or otherwise circulate these accounts, were in effect offering an implicit endorsement of the meaning and significance of dream experiences. To put it plainly: if they did not find such episodes compelling, meaningful, and/or significant,⁸ why would they have opted to preserve them? As for why these episodes were so “sticky,” one undeniable factor would have been the extent to which they hewed to the stimulus/response logic of traditional Chinese omenology, as presented in traditional histories,

substantial Being]. Translated by Paul Swanson, *T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's Mo-ho Chih-kuan: Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 272-273.

Cf., Neal Arvid Donner, *The Great Calming and Contemplation of Chih-I – Chapter One: The Synopsis*, (PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1976), 244. Following this exhortation to apophatic enlightenment, the monastic master continues his argument by offering a variety of similes related to oneiric experiences, such as the following:

[Conventionality] is as when a person goes to a great swamp and is hungry and thirsty, and in a dream obtains delicious food, only to awaken with an empty stomach. He thinks to himself that all existing things are like [the things that “exist”] in this dream. You should be mindful of the Buddha in this way. “Repeatedly be mindful [of Amitâbha], without resting. By utilizing this mindfulness you should realize birth in the land of the Buddha Amitâbha.” This is called the “mindfulness of [external] marks just as they are” (translated by Swanson, 275).

7 「身無蚤虱，睡而不夢」 T. 2060: 552c11. Not only is this statement a clear intertextual reference to the *Zhuangzi* (古之真人，其寢不夢 [228]), but its grammatical parallelism overtly equates a body unpolluted by parasites to a mind unclouded by dreams. Given the clear rhetorical goal of lauding the monk's spiritual attainment, it is perhaps unsurprising that this claim harkens back to one of the earliest references to self-cultivation in the canon of Chinese literature, i.e., the notion that the “True Man of ancient times slept without dreaming and woke without care” (as discussed in the introduction).

For a discussion of the denigration of sleep (and the characterization of an ideal ruler as an insomniac) in early Confucian and Legalist writings, see Richter, “Sleeping Time in Early Chinese Literature,” 28–38.

8 My interpretation here is tied back to the *Principle of Irrelevance* (as outlined in the *Introduction*).

divination manuals, *zhiguai* 志怪 and other contemporaneous texts, which meant that these medieval Buddhist narratives of efficacy were expressed in an idiom that was deeply familiar to both monastic and lay audiences.⁹

The variety of binaries transected by these narratives (e.g., divine / human; dream / vision; dream / reality; dream / omen), which in turn highlights the liminal status of the oneiric in the medieval Chinese imagination, is best demonstrated through a brief example from the XGSZ biography of Baoqiong (寶瓊, 504–584 CE), occurring as the monk neared his demise:

That night, a divine man suddenly came and addressed [Baoqiong], saying: “The monastic overseer of Pengcheng has now preceded you into non-existence. [He had] personally dreamt of ascending to Heaven, where there was a rescript requesting that he lecture [on the scriptures].”¹⁰

In this brief example, we see the practice of dream telling, an activity that often linked monks with their elite patrons (as will be discussed below), expanded to interactions between monks and the extrahuman realm, with the divine monk implicitly ascribing such value to an oneiric vision that it warranted visiting the titular Baoqiong.

9 As discussed at length in the *Introduction*.

10 爾夕神人忽來報曰：「彭城僧正，今先無常，自夢上天有疏請講。」(T. 2060: 479b16–17). It should be noted that my (admittedly tentative) reading is based on the punctuation employed in XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 232 (and reflected in the citation of the text included above). Given that I was somewhat uncertain about this rendering, I also consulted the Japanese version in *Kokuyaku issaikyō* (1938), *Histories and Biographies* (Vol. 8) [史傳部八], where this episode is punctuated as follows: 爾夕神人忽來報曰：「彭城僧正，今先無常。」自夢「上天有疏請講。」(174–175). I would render the latter version as: “That night, a spirit man suddenly came and addressed [Baoqiong], saying: ‘The monastic overseer of Pengcheng has now preceded you into non-existence.’ [Baoqiong then] personally dreamed that, up in Heaven, there was a rescript requesting that he lecture [on the scriptures].” In this second case, the commensurability of dreams and visions as confirmatory miracles is highlighted, as is the general practice of dream telling, but the striking image of a deity appearing to tell a dying monk about an unnamed person’s dream is lost. Given the lack of relevant context clues in the episode, I must leave this conundrum unresolved at present.

Elliptical Dream Reports

The central role of dreams within the medieval literature of omens, and the extent to which the dream telling practice evidenced in the two first *Eminent Monks* collections actively engaged with this tradition, can be seen most plainly in what could be described as “elliptical”¹¹ dream reports: in other words, those wherein the content of the oneiric experience itself is entirely elided. Surveying all such dream episodes in GSZ, one encounters cases wherein a monk has a communicative dream (*tongmeng* 通夢) on the same night as a famous monk;¹² a lay patron repeatedly has eerie dreams;¹³ a monastic assembly detects the presence of evil spirits through their distressing dreams;¹⁴ an imperial eulogy mentions auspicious dreams as a sign that a recently deceased monk had attained a positive rebirth;¹⁵ a crown prince realizes his spiritual progress thanks to his experience of a communicative dream;¹⁶ a layperson's dream experience is widely disseminated;¹⁷ and a lay patron's experience of a dream [or, perhaps, his “stimulus/response dream”]¹⁸ leads him to convene a monastic assembly.¹⁹ In none of these cases is the content of the dreams mentioned whatsoever, making it clear that they were playing a

11 I am following the *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication's* definition of “ellipsis” here: “In narratology, an implicit or explicit gap in the temporal representation of sequential events; in film, usually signified by a cut (or other transition).” Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday (eds.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 121. In the context of the writings of Chinese short story author Yu Hua, Hua Li clearly describes the way that such elliptical episodes create a “hypothetical plot” wherein “the reader must to some extent construct this hypothetical plot in order for the actual story to seem meaningful,” “Entrapment and Enclosure: The Poetics of Space and Time in Yu Hua's Two Short Stories,” (quotation from Suzanne C. Ferguson), *Rocky Mountain Review* 67:2 (2013), 106–123, 109.

12 當進感戒之夕，朗亦通夢。T. 2059: 336c29. This episode describes a dream ascribed to the monk Daolang 道朗, which will be discussed in detail below. It should be noted that many translations of this account (including those of Yoshikawa and Funayama, Yamabe and Greene) presume that this was not only a communicative dream, but one whose contents were shared with members of a monastic community at a great remove from Daolang.

13 譙王屢有怪夢 T. 2059: 344b18 (from the biography of Guṇabhadra [Qiunabatuoluo 求那跋陀羅 (394–468)]).

14 眾屢厭夢。T. 2059: 344c24 (also from Guṇabhadra's biography, discussed in Chapter Four).

15 一二遲見法師，方可敘瑞夢耳。T. 2059: 378b06 (from the biography of Sengyuan 僧遠 [414–484]).

16 通夢有感，於是改意歸焉。T. 2059: 379c28 (from the biography of Sengzong 僧宗 [438–496], discussed below).

17 至文宣感夢，方傳道俗。T. 2059: 411c08 (from the biography of Faxian 法獻 [424–498]).

18 Yoshikawa and Funayama's translation includes the entire term *ganying* 感應 here, even though the source text only uses *gan* (see the next footnote for a citation) (Vol. IV, 345).

19 齊文宣感夢之後，集諸經師。T.2059: 414c08 (from the biography of Hui ren 慧忍 [395–494], discussed in Chapter Three).

purely structural role in these narratives: in other words, it appears that Huijiao (as well as the original authors and later transmitters) of the tales recorded in GSZ were convinced that the members of their target audience(s) would have been able to parse the significance of these dream episodes based solely on their placement within the narratives in question, even in the absence of any information regarding their contents.

These elliptical dream episodes are not restricted to the earlier collection, though they are significantly rarer in XGSZ. Reading through each dream episode in the later text reveals the following five situations: excellent dharma lectures yielding miraculous responses (including a marvellous scent and strange dreams);²⁰ a secular authority figure experiencing (*gan* 感) a distressing dream after he seeks to extend his control over the sangha;²¹ a magistrate experiencing (*gan* 感) discomfiting dreams after imprisoning a Buddhist monk;²² a monk predicting his own death after an unpleasant dream;²³ and a monk emerging from seclusion after experiencing (*gan* 感) a dream.²⁴ Though the elliptical episodes in both collections are entirely comparable in terms of their narrative function, I would argue that a meaningful difference between the texts is revealed by considering the respective distributions of these episodes. In GSZ, seven of the forty-nine dream episodes under consideration are in the context of these elliptical episodes (~ 14%), whereas in XGSZ, that ratio is only five of one hundred and thirteen (~ 4%) – a statistical relationship that is rendered even more significant by the fact that XGSZ is more than twice as long as its predecessor.²⁵ Thus, in keeping with my hypothesis about the differences

20 或聞異香，或感怪夢。T. 2060: 543a15 (from the biography of Xingdeng 行等 [570–642]). This represents an example of a dream as a “parallel miracle” (as discussed in the Introduction).

21 夜感惡夢。T. 2060: 555c05 (from the biography of Facong 法聰 [468–559]).

22 令感惡夢。T. 2060: 556c14 (from the biography of Falin 法懷 [466–557], discussed in more detail in Chapter 4).

23 吾與汝別，近夢惡，將不起矣。T. 2060: 606a08 (from the biography of Faxiang 法嚮 [553–630], discussed below).

24 遂感夢而出。T. 2060: 643b01 (from the biography of Zhiqin 智勤 [586–659], discussed below).

25 See the *Appendix* for details.

between Huijiao and Daoxuan's approach to dreams (as outlined in the introduction), we see that the specific content of dreams is much more likely to be narratively-functional in XGSZ, in contradistinction to the more numerous elliptical usages in GSZ. To put it plainly, this is one more point suggesting that Daoxuan took dreams – and, in particular, the contents of oneiric visions – as a topic worthy of serious discussion.

This point is reinforced by a seemingly apologetic editorial aside²⁶ to an elliptical episode in the XGSZ's biography of Zhiqin:

At this time in Dengzhou 鄧州, the Buddha dharma had fallen into decline.²⁷ [Thus,] all of the region's religious people and laity approached the mountain to respectfully request that [Zhiqin] emerge to preserve [the dharma].²⁸ Thereupon, [the monk] experienced [*gan*] a dream and came out. As for this dream, its particulars were not explained.²⁹

時鄧州佛法陵遲，合州道俗就山禮請，願出住持，遂感夢而出，其夢不詳子細。

While this metatextual commentary could simply be read as a pure statement of fact, straightforwardly describing a lacuna in its sources, I would argue that the relatively small number of elliptical episodes in the later text and its greater recognition of dreams as “proofs” of spiritual attainment and moral purity vitiate against such an interpretation. On the whole, the XGSZ is almost unilaterally a text wherein the purported contents of dreams *matter*. In contrast, GSZ not only has three times more

26 It is, of course, also possible that this aside could be credited to the original source (whether oral, inscriptional or textual) from which Daoxuan drew this account, though in that case too it is nonetheless still notable that the XGSZ compiler chose to include it.

27 See SCM for 陵遲: “wearing away over time, like a mound erodes and levels down; gradual(ly) decline.”

28 “*Zhuchi* 住持,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BD%8F%E6%8C%81>:

To hold firmly to. Especially 'preserve the teachings.' Same as 加持. To maintain equanimity unflinchingly (Skt. *Tisthati*); ... One who dwells in a monastery and cleaves to the Buddha-dharma. A superintendent monk. To act as supervisor and teacher of a monastery. An abbot [院主, 住持職].

29 T. 2060: 643a29-b2; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 3, 963. Dr. James Benn (personal communication) suggested “I will not recount its details” as a translation of “*buxiang zixi* 不詳子細.” This reading is more grammatical than mine, but given the copious evidence of Daoxuan's decisions to include detailed dream accounts, it seems unlikely that he would simply eschew the chance to include another evidentiary dream in his collection. That said, this phrase could simply have been preserved from the original source of this biography.

elliptical dream episodes (when considered as a proportion of the whole), but also lacks any similar commentarial asides bemoaning a failure to have taken note of dream contents, which accords well with the simpler narrative function of dreams in the earlier text.

Regardless, even though their respective distributions of the elliptical episodes differ, the fact that narratives featuring such lacunae were interpretable by sixth- and seventh-century discourse communities is a clear indication that the narrative function of oneiric episodes was already so well established in medieval literature, and their significance so clearly understood, that such details were not deemed necessary to convince readers of their meaning or significance. Thus, in the same prototypical way that a sagely teacher's arrival in the Pure Land might be heralded by a whiff of an extraordinary aroma, so too could an evanescent dream experience serve as an indication of a brush with the extrahuman realm, even if its contents were lost to history (or otherwise absent). In fact, such lacunae could even potentially be read as signs (albeit oblique ones) of the potential historicity of these accounts, as a fabulist teller obviously could have “dreamed up” specific oneiric visions for their hagiographical protagonists.

We find a pertinent example of the narrative function of these episodes, which also happens to highlight the prevalence of dream telling among medieval Chinese Buddhists, in a section of Dharmakṣema's 曇無讖 (385–433) biography associated with the monk Daolang 道朗 (d.u.).³⁰ By way

30 Michael Radich, “Daolang 道朗,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E9%81%93%E6%9C%97>:

Monk of the Eastern Jin 東晉 (316–420). He first attained fame together with Huisong 慧嵩 in Hexi 河西. He assisted Dharmakṣema in his translation of the *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 T 374, the Dharmakṣema (“Northern”) translation of the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra. He also wrote a commentary on the text, which was esteemed among the scholars of the ‘Nirvāṇa school’ that grew up around the interpretation of the sutra in the fifth century.”

of background, it is important to note that Daojin 道進 (d.u.), another of Dharmakṣema's disciples, had recently received a bodhisattva precept ordination thanks to a visionary experience that had subsequently been vouchsafed by a miraculous dream shared between his monastic compatriots.³¹ This is relevant because Daolang's (undisclosed) dream vision is interpreted in light of this experience.

At this time, a śramaṇa named Daolang was establishing a reputation³² west of the passes. Right on the evening that Daojin had his experience [*gan*] of the precepts, Daolang also had a communicative dream.³³ Thus, though [Daojin was] his inferior in terms of his “precept years,”³⁴ [Daolang] sought to become his disciple. Since that time, those who have received [the precepts] from Daojin number over a thousand. The transmission of this method³⁵ continues to the present

- 31 Eric M. Greene (drawing on the research of Yamabe and Funayama) highlights Daojin's importance in establishing a fifth-century praxis lineage relating to the transmission of the bodhisattva precepts: a practice that was vouchsafed by his own oneiric experience and whose inheritors thus felt justified in receiving and transmitting by virtue of such experiences alone (i.e., without a preceptor) (200). He translates the relevant section of Dharmakṣema's biography as follows:
- [Daojin] wanted to receive the bodhisattva precepts from Dharmakṣema. Dharmakṣema said: “First repent your transgressions!” [Daojin] then repented assiduously for seven days and seven nights, but on the eighth day when he went to receive [the precepts] Dharmakṣema suddenly became angry. Daojin thought, “This must be because my karmic obstructions have not yet been eliminated.” He then exerted himself strenuously for three years, alternating *chan* practice with rituals of repentance. Eventually while in trance Daojin saw Śākyamuni Buddha together with various great beings bestow upon him the precepts, and that night ten other people living there all had dreams of exactly what Daojin saw. He then went to Dharmakṣema to tell him, but as soon as he arrived within ten paces of him Dharmakṣema stood up suddenly and exclaimed, “Excellent! You have already been granted the precepts! I will now serve as your witness.” Then, in the presence of a buddha-image, [Dharmakṣema] explained the precepts one by one (*ibid.*).
- Cf., Nobuyoshi Yamabe for an alternate rendering of this episode (though it should be noted that there are no substantive differences between these respective translations). “Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination in the Brahmā Net Sutra” in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, edited by William Bodiford, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 17–39, 19–20.
- 32 More literally, “exciting interest.” Yoshikawa and Funayama (Vol. 1, 228 ff. 5) note that this Daolang is mentioned in both the *Weishu* and the *Chusanjangji*.
- 33 Yoshikawa and Funayama read this communicative dream (*tongmeng* 通夢) as a specific reference to Daolang undergoing the same dream experience as Daojin's companions (see Greene's translation of the Daojin episode [200] for details): 道朗もやはりそのことを夢に見えた (Vol. 1, 228 ff. 5). While such a reading is certainly plausible given the context, I would argue that it is not necessary to ascribe such significance to the phrase, given the logic of elliptical dream episodes and the reasonable frequency with which they occur in GSZ. As I am arguing throughout this section, dreams were in-and-of themselves seen to serve as auspicious omens at the time of the text's compilation, so it is also plausible that putative link between Daolang's dream experience and those of Daojin's compatriots may have been retrospectively created, simply due to their temporal coincidence. Yamabe makes the same assumption (20).
- 34 “*Jiela* 戒臘,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%88%92%E8%87%98>: “the number of years a monk has been ordained.” Since the source text is very terse here, I found Yoshikawa and Funayama's translation particularly helpful. Specifically, they discuss this matter at length in ff. 7 (Vol. 1, 228), wherein they note that even though Daolang was Daojin's senior in terms of the number of years that the two had been ordained as monks, Daojin had become his *de facto* superior by virtue of his prior receipt of the *bodhisattva* precepts.
- 35 Given that this section seems to be describing a specific ordination procedure, I think that “method” is as viable a translation of *fa* 法 as “dharma” here.

day and all [who employ it do so following] the rule passed down by [Dharma]kṣema.³⁶

時沙門道朗，振譽關西，當進感戒之夕，朗亦通夢。乃自卑戒臘，求為法弟，於是從進受者千有餘人，傳授此法，迄至于今，皆識之餘則。

For this episode to make narrative sense, it is necessary for the reader to make a specific assumption about medieval dream telling practice. Though the location of Daolang's practice is not specified here (save that he is somewhere in the expansive region “west of the passes”), it is clear that he is not present in the assembly at Guzang³⁷ alongside Daojin and Dharmakṣema. Thus, the implied premise, which must have been implicitly accepted by readers in Huijiao's day, is that word of the oneiric confirmation of Daojin's vision must have somehow reached Daolang, requiring it to have been perceived as noteworthy enough to warrant oral accounts of it being circulated throughout the region. Once this narrative reached the elder monk, he then must have (re)interpreted his own oneiric experience as having occurred contemporaneously with (and thus to have been related to) Daojin's vision, which – even in the absence of additional confirmatory evidence – he still considered to be sufficient grounds to upend traditional rules relating to monastic hierarchy and to become a disciple of his “junior” monk. In each of the other cases mentioned above, elliptical dream episodes function in a similar manner, requiring the reader to make specific assumptions about the evidentiary value of dream tales and thus providing evidence of the enthusiasm with which such tales were disseminated in the medieval Chinese context.

36 T. 2059: 336c28–337a2; punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 79.

37 “Guzang 姑臧,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%A7%91%E8%87%A7>: “Formerly a city in Liangzhou, Gansu 甘肅, and an important center for communication with Tibet.” See the *Buddhist Place Authority Database* for maps and a list of biographical sources wherein this site is mentioned: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000045045>. The location of Daojin's experience is specified when he is introduced into Dharmakṣema's biography: 「初識在姑臧。有張掖沙門道進。欲從識受菩薩戒。」 (T. 2059: p336c19–20).

Dream Telling in Monastic Pedagogy

While the very presence of oneiric episodes in GSZ and XGSZ serves as testament to the practice of dream telling in the medieval period (as mentioned above), the latter collection includes a variety of accounts that speak to a more nuanced engagement with dreams than is evidenced by its predecessor. One of the clearest examples of this distinction can be seen in the XGSZ's various accounts of monastic teachers discussing dreams in the context of their pedagogy: a theme that is utterly absent from the accounts preserved in GSZ.³⁸

The first major theme among the XGSZ's accounts of monastic pedagogy is the use of dreams in the context of moribund monks' final lectures to their disciples. More specifically, while dream episodes related to the deaths of exemplary monks are a mainstay of both collections (given that oneiric visions represent one clear option for narratively rending the veil occluding the posthumous destination of these monastic protagonists), it is only in XGSZ that we see evidence of oneiric experiences being treated by the expiring masters as “teachable moments.” For our first example, we turn to an episode from near the terminus of the biography of Huiyue 慧約 (452–535): a monk perhaps best known for bestowing the *bodhisattva* precepts upon Emperor Wu of the Liang 梁武帝 (r. 502–549).³⁹

In the eighth month of the first year of [Liang Wudi's] Datong reign period [535 CE], a messenger cut the limbs from trees outside the gates, saying: “A palanquin will be coming by in the future. [These branches] must not be permitted to obstruct the road.” [Other] people did not yet comprehend [the meaning of this]. Then, on the sixth day of the ninth month, [Huiyue] experienced an illness and laid down on his right side with his head facing north.⁴⁰ His divine

38 When it comes to accounts of monks actively employing dreams in their pedagogy, the most relevant example from GSZ sees a junior monk asking about a dream of Puxian, though no record of their conversation is included (T. 2059: 379a26). Note: this perceived disparity could also be a side-effect of the fact that the XGSZ biographies tend, on the whole, to be longer and to include more dialogue.

39 As discussed in Tom de Rauw, *Beyond Buddhist Apology*, 48–49.

40 A posture most often associated with the death of the Buddha and replicated in innumerable iconographic iterations throughout South, Southeast, Central, and East Asia. See: Gail Maxwell, “Buddha, Life of the, In Art” in *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell Jr., (New York, Macmillan Reference, 2004), 92. For a variety

consciousness was calm and delighted; he was not at all anxious about his condition.

Addressing his students, he said: “I dreamt of the four groups⁴¹ in a great assembly, [bearing] pennants and flowers and arrayed in mid-air, [ready to] accompany me [as I] mount the clouds and go. The advantageous reward⁴² [of my final human birth] will soon come to an end.”

On the sixteenth day, the imperial aide Xu Yan was dispatched by imperial edict to ask after [Huiyue's] illness. The latter replied: “Tonight I must go.”

[That night,] during the second chant of the fifth night watch,⁴³ a strange fragrance filled the room and [those to Huiyue's] left and right paid their respects. Then, he said: “That this arising has a [corresponding] death is naturally and constantly so. [You all] must diligently practice mindfulness and wisdom, and must not give rise to disordered thoughts.” When his words ceased, he clasped his hands [to his chest] and immediately entered nirvana. His springs and autumns were eighty and four.⁴⁴

乃以大同元年八月使人伐門外樹枝，曰：「輿駕當來，勿令妨路。」人未之測。至九月六日現疾，北首右脇而臥，神識恬愉，了無痛惱。謂弟子曰：「我夢四部大眾，幡花羅列空中，迎我凌雲而去，福報當訖。」至十六日，勅遣舍人徐儼參疾，答云：「今夜當去。」至五更二唱，異香滿室，左右肅然，乃曰：「夫生有死，自然恒數，勤修念慧，勿起亂想。」言畢合掌，便入涅槃，春秋八十有四。

As can be seen, this account is almost schematic in its adherence to the hagiographical standards of the “good death,” as manifested in Huiyue's equanimity in the face of his illness, his bodily posture, his foreknowledge of the specific time and date of his incipient demise, and the continuation of his pedagogical engagement with his disciples until the very moment of his death.⁴⁵ One ubiquitous

of examples, see: Patricia E. Karetzky, *Early Buddhist Narrative Art: Illustrations of the Life of the Buddha from Central Asia to China, Korea and Japan*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000).

41 As per “Sibu 四部,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%9B%9B%E9%83%A8>, this term can be used in two disparate fashions: #1 – “monks 比丘 (bhikṣu), nuns 比丘尼 (bhikṣuṇī), laymen 優婆塞 (upāsaka), and laywomen 優婆夷 (upāsikā)” and #2 – “the four grades [四輩]: men, devas, nāgas, and ghosts 鬼” (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%9B%9B%E8%BC%A9>). Either option is plausible in this instance, given that this divine assembly could certainly include extra-human beings.

42 “Fubao 福報,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E7%A6%8F%E5%A0%B1>: “A blessed reward, e.g. to be reborn as a man or a deva.” For this ideology of reward / retribution (*baobao*) in practice, see: Gjertson, *Miraculous Retribution, passim* and Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 34–36 and *passim*.

43 For an overview of timekeeping in medieval Chinese Buddhism, which highlights the variety of significations ascribed to these temporal expressions, see Pas, “Six Daily Periods of Worship,” 52–55. See also: Bedini, *The Trail of Time*, 15–16.

44 T. 2060: 469c23–470a3, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 186.

45 For a discussion of the specific characteristics of the “good death” in early medieval China, as well as the textual sources used to establish this position, see: Shinohara, “The Moment of Death in Daoxuan's Vinaya Commentary,”

signifier of such deaths, the auspicious dream, was so well integrated into this cultural schema that it could essentially be assumed. Specifically, this account elides a first-order description of Huiyue's dream, opting instead to include his second-order discussion of this experience with his disciples. Though the paraphrase of Huiyue's disquisition preserved in this account runs scarcely more than twenty glyphs, it nonetheless manages to convey something of the master's pedagogical efficacy, as it succeeds in seamlessly integrating a ubiquitous narrative trope (the “great teacher being welcomed into a posthumous teaching post”) with a foundational doctrinal point related to the difficulty of achieving a human birth.⁴⁶ In affective terms, this lesson also manages to prepare his students for his incipient passing: an interpretation that is reinforced by considering his subsequent deathbed counsel, wherein he emphasizes the transient nature of human life and urges his students to continue their diligent practice.

In much the same way that Huiyue's final discourses provided his students with an immediate, personalized vision of the Buddhist mortuary cosmology, the XGSZ biography of the monk Yancong 彦琮 (557–610) highlights the central role of monastic pedagogy in inculcating terrifying visions of the chthonic realms in the minds of their students and patrons. For our present purposes, it also represents a superlative instance of dream telling in a Buddhist discourse community, wherein the relating of an oneiric episode manages to simultaneously laud the teaching of an exemplary monk, testify to the veracity of the Buddhist vision of karma and its repercussions, and demonstrate the lasting benefits of Buddhist practice. The following excerpt is drawn from a eulogistic section of the monk's biography

105–133. In particular, he argues that, unlike the translated “sickness scriptures” (which focus on illness as a metonym for impermanence, Daoxuan viewed an ailing monk's final moments as a major factor determining the nature of their subsequent rebirth (120–122), which helps explain why episodes such as this one would have been included in XGSZ. Jacqueline I. Stone addresses this theme in its roughly contemporaneous Japanese context in “With the Help of 'Good Friends': Deathbed Ritual Practices in Early Medieval Japan,” in *Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism*, edited by Jacqueline I. Stone and Mariko Namba Walter, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), 61–101.

46 This brief sermon elegantly instantiates the rhetoric of Buddhist anomaly accounts, as described by Campany in *Strange Writing* (outlined in the introduction).

following his unexpected death due to a sudden illness:⁴⁷

In a suppression of the [Buddhist] Way by secular authorities, an imperial decree assigned [Yancong] to a civil office.⁴⁸ Though he regularly found himself receiving highest honours, [such plaudits] were never able to match his [exemplary] qualities. As a result, when it came to establishing and adhering to the doctrine of emptiness, his wide-ranging spirit⁴⁹ gradually [allowed him] to fathom its depths. His lectures have been repeated from generation to generation, and from the beginning have still not yet been withdrawn from circulation or discarded.

[Yancong] happened to dream of entering the hells, where he saw the causes and conditions of suffering. Thanks to his memorization of scriptures and the names of various buddhas, he managed to be freed and was sent to the top of a mountain tower. He also toured through many hells, which all looked identical to those [mentioned] in the lectures of famous monks. [Seeing] the five kinds of suffering visited upon [those imprisoned therein], he was endowed with the words to describe them. Finally, thanks to his [prior?] lectures⁵⁰ on the ten kinds of wholesome behaviour,⁵¹ he eventually woke up after long time. For the next few years, he often dreamt about these prior events, but by invoking the names of buddhas and bodhisattvas he again managed to be free of them.⁵²

抑道從俗，勅附文館，屢逢光價，能無會情。斯乃立操虛宗，遊情靡測。講誦相沿，初未休捨。會夢入地獄，頗見苦緣，由念經佛等名，蒙得解脫，送往山樓之上。尋又歷觀諸獄，備覩同講名僧，五苦加之，具言其狀，為說十善，良久方覺。至後數年，更夢前事，由稱佛菩薩名，又蒙放免。

47 For an account of the monk's affliction with dysentery and subsequent death in 610 CE, see the final section of his biography: 「素患虛冷發痢無時。因卒于館。春秋五十有四。即大業六年七月二十四日也。」 (T. 2060: 437c23–25).

48 Hucker #7714 (文館): “Civil Official or Civil Office, the most common generic term throughout history for civil service personnel and their posts as distinguished from Military Officers or Military Offices.” For a helpful overview of the organization of the imperial Chinese government, see Wilkinson, 253–260.

49 HDC has a number of definitions relating to both concentration (e.g., 「#1: 潛心; 留心」) or fickleness of spirit. In context, I think that the first is much more likely to be accurate.

50 I am unsure about my rendering here. This could also refer to his attempt, while asleep, to speak or recite the “ten kinds of wholesome behaviour,” which would represent an interestingly thaumaturgic use of these praxical maxims.

51 See: “Shi shanye 十善業,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?53.xml+id\(%27b5341-5584-696d%27\):](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?53.xml+id(%27b5341-5584-696d%27):)

The ten kinds of wholesome behavior expected of lay practitioners in Mahāyāna. Abbreviated as 十善 and also the same as the ten wholesome precepts 十善戒. The reward for observing these precepts is rebirth in one of the heavens or rebirth among men, depending upon the degree observance. They are practiced to counter the ten kind of unwholesome behavior (十惡/十不善業).” They include: “not killing; not stealing; not committing adultery; not lying; not speaking harshly; not speaking divisively; not speaking idly; not being greedy; not being angry; not having wrong views.”

52 T. 2060: 438a6–12, punctuated as per XGSZ [2014]. vol. 1, 52–53.

Here, we see powerful evidence of the ability of religious teachings to shape the imaginaires of those who promulgate them.⁵³ Whether Yancong actually had these experiences is irrelevant: instead, it is notable that the members of the XGSZ's discourse community could clearly identify with the experience of an auditor internalizing key Buddhist doctrinal teachings, to the extent to which they could serve as a psychological anchor during a nightmare.⁵⁴ Moreover, it places Yancong's teachings within a lineage of transmission: just as his initial hellish vision paralleled descriptions that he had heard in prior monastic lectures, it is strongly implied that his own popular lectures on the topic (which were subsequently “repeated from generation to generation”) were inspired by this initial experience. Likewise, the monk's eventual success “breaking free” from his distressing vision⁵⁵ is credited to his (oneiric?) meditation on the “ten types of good behaviour” – a doctrinally apposite practice, given that these behavioral precepts were understood to guarantee a positive rebirth, which apparently lent them the perceived apotropaic power to dispel visions of hells. For these reasons, Yancong's dream is an “informatory miracle” *par excellence*, as it alone is seen as sufficient proof of the validity of Buddhist cosmology, without even the faintest suggestion that this experience should be taken as anything other than a direct window on the unseen realm of the dead, even in the absence of any other confirmatory miracles.⁵⁶

53 For an overview of scholarship demonstrating linkages between religious teachings (such as cosmologies and oneirocritical systems) and dream experiences in a variety of cross-cultural contexts, see the Introduction.

54 Leslie Anne Ellis provides a helpful overview of the psychological and psycho-therapeutic research into the most effective techniques for addressing recurring nightmares, noting that a shared feature of many is the development of a capacity to assert the ego within these distressing dreams (168–170, 178–180). *Stopping the Nightmare: An Analysis of Focusing Oriented Dream Imagery Therapy For Trauma Survivors with Repetitive Nightmares*, (PhD diss., Chicago School of Professional Psychology, 2014). As an aside, the phenomenological description of “waking up after a long time” sounds remarkably similar to the subjective reports of individuals awakening from sleep paralysis (as described in Adler, 74–93 and *passim*; Bulkeley, *Big Dreams*, 183–184, 223–227).

55 For the role of Buddhist teachings in promulgating these sorts of distressing and doleful images in medieval China, see: Cole, *Mothers and Sons*, *passim*; Stephen F., *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 170–184; Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, 31–48 (for a specific discussion of the role of religious artwork); Zhiru, *passim*.

56 Though the loss of most of the texts ascribed to Yancong makes it impossible to verify, I would not be surprised if the monk made frequent reference to these dream experiences when lecturing on karma and morality. On the loss of Yancong's writings in the aftermath of the fall of the Sui, see: Michael Radich, “Yancong,” *Digital Dictionary of*

The biography of the monk Zhixi 智晞 (557–628),⁵⁷ who will also be discussed in Chapter Four, concludes with a dialogue wherein the monastic protagonist, whose demise was impending, discusses a dream vision of his next birth to assuage the concerns of his disciples. After chiding them for their desire to meet with him again in another life and warning them that they would need to punctiliously cultivate themselves without relying on others in order to do so,⁵⁸ one of his disciples then seeks to clarify the matter, saying: “We do not yet know where the master's (*heshang* 和上) next birth shall be.”⁵⁹ Zhixi then replied as follows:

As for what I saw in a dream, I had been rewarded [with a birth] in *Tuṣita* [Heaven]. Its lofty palaces, with their turquoise hues, were situated in the northwest [corner of] Heaven. I saw the Great Teacher “Learned One” [i.e., Zhiyi]⁶⁰ and on his left and right there were many celestial men who were all settled on jewelled seats. Only one seat was vacant. I asked the reason for this, and the reply was: “Guanding will come here six years hence, ascending in order to discourse on the dharma.”⁶¹

答云：「如吾見夢，報在兜率，宮殿青色，居天西北。見智者大師，左右有諸天人，皆坐寶座。唯一座獨空，吾問所以，答云：『灌頂却後六年當來，昇此說法。』」

The narrative then continues on to describe the circumstances of the monk's death. Following the *Principle of Irrelevance* (and in keeping with the numerous examples considered previously), I interpret the absence of any recorded reaction to this instance of monastic dream telling as an indication that such discussions were commonplace enough as not to warrant any comment. In addition to helping to inculcate an image of *Tuṣita* Heaven in the minds of his disciples (and thus paralleling a narrative function demonstrated in the examples from Huiyue and Yancong's biographies), I would argue that

Buddhism, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%BD%A5%E7%90%AE>.

57 For the role of Zhixi in the early Tiantai hierarchy, see Penkower, 274 ff. 64.

58 「汝等欲得將吾相見。可自勸策行道力不負人。」 (T. 2060: 582c18–19)

59 「弟子因諮啟。未審和上當生何所。」 (T. 2060: 582c19–20).

60 It should be noted that this account does not use Zhiyi's name here, instead using the epithet “Learned One” (*Zhizhe* 智者). That said, given Zhixi's place within the Tiantai hierarchy, the explicit mention of Guanding, and the fact that “Learned One” commonly designates Zhiyi in texts of the period, this seems like a reasonable identification. See (DDB): <http://www.buddhism-dict.net.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%99%BA%E8%80%85>.

61 T. 2060: 582c20–23, punctuated as per XGSZ [2014], vol. 2, 710.

this episode also serves another useful purpose. Namely, by explicitly stating that Zhiyi 智顓 (538–597) had already taken his place as a heavenly teacher and that Guanding 灌頂 (561–632) would be joining him in the near future,⁶² this narrative not only reinforces and legitimizes the Buddhist cosmology, but also confirms that the Tiantai teaching lineage (of which Zhixi was a part) was puissant enough to persist after death.

These previous themes, relating to the complex interrelationship between dreams, the telling thereof, monastic pedagogy, and medieval conceptions of rebirth, are even more fully represented in the biography of the monk Zhenguan 真觀 (538–611),⁶³ who was renowned in the Sui dynasty for his erudition, exegetical prowess, and practice of austerities.

On the eighth day of the fourth month of the seventh year of [Sui Yangdi's] Daye reign period [611 CE], the Adjutant⁶⁴ Li Zishen profoundly requested that [Zhenguan] go out into the countryside to lecture on the *Great Nirvāṇa [Sutra]*. He initially departed from the [Temple for Amplifying the Virtue of South] India,⁶⁵ [with his lectures] beginning with an explanation of interment,⁶⁶ but when he finally reached the Chapter on Encountering Illness,⁶⁷ he had a dream

62 As can be seen, the monk's prophecy, while close, did not actually end up coming to fruition (given that Guanding died within four years). I find that this detail telling, as it implies that the present account must have been relatively faithfully recorded (in keeping with the *Principle of Embarrassment*), as it would have been easy for Daoxuan (or any later copyist) to silently emend the prediction.

63 See: *Foguang Dictionary* (5337)

64 See Hucker #5713 for this title, whose usage seems to have varied substantially throughout Chinese history. In the Sui, it refers to “a 2nd or 3rd level executive officer found in most military Guards (*wei*) who served at the dynastic capital” (452).

65 A mountain retreat and teaching temple that Zhenguan had previously been responsible for founding. See: Foguang dictionary and *Buddhist Authority Place Database*: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000011656>. It is in the rough vicinity of Mount Tiantai (approximately 150km as the crow flies [as determined via the great-circle distance calculator on <http://www.movable-type.co.uk/scripts/latlong.html>]).

66 Perhaps in comparison to the practice of cremation, which is discussed in the *Nirvana Sutra*? I'm not sure what to make of this clause. For a discussion of the Buddha's death in this text, see John S. Strong, “The Buddha's Funeral,” in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses and Representations*, edited by Jacqueline I. Stone and Bryan Cuevas, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 32–59. For the specifics of the preparation of the body, see Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, which he somewhat irreverently describes as the creation of a “deep-fried Buddha” (38). Unlike the “Chapter on Encountering Illness,” which is obviously an explicit textual reference (see below), a full-text search of T. 374 reveals no references to *zangdi* 葬地.

67 Though it is not clear which of the many versions and translations of this famed scripture would have served as the basis for the monk's lectures, there is indeed a “Chapter on Encountering Illness” in the Dharmakṣema translation: *Xianbing pin* 現病品, T. 374: 428b–432a. English translation by Kosho Yamamoto accessible at:

vision of three men, whose appearances and clothing were extremely sumptuous. They bore pennants and, with all due ceremony, said: “[We have been] dispatched from the Pure Land to express our eager anticipation [of your arrival].”

On the sixth day of the sixth month, [Zhenguan] became bedridden due to illness. He also dreamt that he and the Learned One [i.e., Zhiyi] were sharing a palanquin, flanking and safeguarding a revered [Buddha] image. They were helping the Buddha return to the mountain. When he awoke, he sighed in admiration and said: “In ancient times, sixty-two years responsively signified [*ying* 應] a complete life, but thanks to the power of lecturing on the *Dharma Lotus*, [my life] has been extended by ten years. Now, at seventy-four, I am repeatedly presented with these responses [*ying* 應] to the completed span of [my] life.”

He then summoned his myriad disciples and instructed them concerning future events, saying: “If one wishes for good birth,⁶⁸ if one wishes to attain spiritual potency, if one wishes to escape from [the cycle of] birth and death, if one wishes to be endowed with the Buddha dharma, it is suitable and necessary to uphold the precepts, to practice meditative absorption,⁶⁹ to study cognitive discernment, and to broadly disseminate the true dharma. Do not allow your time to pass unproductively, and there will be none who do not attain [their due].”⁷⁰

大業七年四月八日，司馬李子深更延出邑講大涅槃。初出天竺，自標葬地，至現病品，夢見三人容服甚盛，把幡俱禮云：「淨居遣仰。」至六月六日以疾而臥，又夢與智者同輿夾侍尊像，翼佛還山。覺已歎曰：「昔六十二應終，講法華力更延一紀。今七十四復致斯應，生期畢矣。」即集內眾，訓將來事，曰：「欲生善道，欲備神力，欲出生死，欲具佛法，宜須持戒、修定、學慧、弘通正法，勿令空過無所得也。」

As can be seen, Zhenguan's dream vision is shown to have served as an impetus for the renowned lecturer to offer his students some final reflections on the various (this- and other-worldly) benefits attendant upon Buddhist practice. As in the cases discussed previously, his dream telling could not help but serve as testament to the veracity of Buddhist doctrinal claims related to death and (re)birth, while also inculcating specific images of the denizens of the Pure Land in the minds of his auditors. In this case, the monk's vision also served to reinforce a putative bond between the monastic teacher and his

http://www.nirvanasutra.net/convenient/Mahaparinirvana_Sutra_Yamamoto_Page_2007.pdf.

68 For an excellent introduction to the various realms of rebirth in Chinese Buddhism, with especial attention paid to the role of artistic representations in transmitting this ideological system, see: Stephen Teiser, *Reinventing the Wheel: Paintings of Rebirth in Medieval Buddhist Temples*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

69 The DDB entry for “*ding* 定” notes that this term is often used to translate the Sanskrit *dhyāna*, *samādhi*, *samāhita*, *samāpanna* (all forms of “meditative absorption”) (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%AE%9A>). Given that it is not itself a transliteration, I have avoided using transliterated Sanskrit in my translation above.

70 T. 2060: 702c14–24, punctuated as per XGSZ [2014], vol. 3, 1248.

exalted predecessor Zhiyi (a process of lineage creation / maintenance that we also saw in Zhixi's biography).⁷¹ Moreover, the oneiric image of a Buddha image “returning to the mountain” while being flanked by the two great monastic teachers could certainly be read as a repudiation of the official order that had impelled Zhenguan to depart from his alpine residence, given that it was participation in this lecture tour that seemed to precipitate his illness. Moreover, given that this biography ends with an extensive description of the posthumous miracles ascribed to the deceased master's corpse,⁷² this notion of the Buddha's return could also be interpreted as a conflation of Zhenguan's numinous power with that of a Buddha image.⁷³ Finally, given the present study's focus on the evolution of the *ganying* 感應 framework as it applies to dreams, I find it notable that the moribund monk uses the language of responses [*ying* 應] to describe his visionary dreams. This is in keeping with the standard XGSZ pattern described above, as he clearly required no additional confirmatory evidence to interpret these visions as reliable signs.

Zhenguan then receives a message from Mount Tiantai, as well as a gift of fragrant thyme and rock sugar,⁷⁴ which inspires him to begin planning for the praxical particulars of his incipient demise.

71 The notion of indirect lineages was central to the early legitimation of the Tiantai school, with Zhiyi (and his disciple Guanding) positing an unbroken line of transmission from Śākyamuni Buddha to the Tiantai founder via Nāgārjuna's treatise on the *Greater Perfection of Wisdom* (as described in Young, *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*, 126). For an overview of the various teachings lineages posited in early Tiantai, see Xu Wenming, “A Study of Early Transmissions of the Tiantai school,” *Buddhism, Religious Studies in Contemporary China Collection* (Vol 5.), (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 87–105.

72 T. 2060: 703a.

73 For a discussion of monastic remains as bearers of numinous power in medieval China, see Benn's *Burning for the Buddha*, 15–16 and *passim*; Bernard Faure, “Relics and Flesh Bodies: The Creation of Ch'an Pilgrimage Sites,” in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, edited by Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 150–189.

74 「爾日天台送書并致香蘇石蜜。」(T. 2060: 702c24). Though it is not explicitly specified here, it seems likely that these items were intended to be employed as medicinal compounds. For example, thyme was a well-attested medicinal substance during this period.

When medieval scholars treated diseases they used hot water and liquid treatment for ten days in order to remove the five illnesses of numbness, which are brought about by the eight winds. When this ten-day treatment did not terminate the disease, they prescribed thyme and the roots of herbs. And when the stalks and roots did not show any alleviating effect, the topmost branches and the farthest roots, swallowed as medicine, were considered effective in

Soon thereafter,

it so happened that someone dreamt of a flying palace [/temple] coming to welcome [Zhenguan]. The *śramaṇa* Baohui also heard drum beats and music [resonating] in the open air. In the middle of the night, on the first day of the seventh month, [Zhenguan] sat in the lotus position. He bathed himself, gargled and put on clean clothes, saying: “There is a person who has requested that I lecture on the bodhisattva precepts.” Sitting upright and relaxed in this way, [Zhenguan] imperceptibly⁷⁵ met his end at Zhongshan's⁷⁶ old temple.⁷⁷

嘗有人夢飛殿來迎，沙門寶慧又聞空中鼓樂。至七月一日中夜跏坐，盥嗽整服，曰：「有人請講菩薩戒也。」端坐怡然，不覺已滅，逝於眾善之舊寺。

Here, we see the pattern of “parallel miracles” attested elsewhere XGSZ (and described in the Introduction), wherein oneiric visions are clearly ascribed the same evidentiary value as other forms of miraculous response, given that they are reported as temporally coterminous events, in contrast to the “dream and subsequent confirmation” pattern seen in GSZ. Also, an otherwise peculiar facet of this episode (namely, the monk's last words) can best be explained by considering the strong ideological bond between dream visions and the receipt of *bodhisattva* precepts in the medieval Buddhist worldview.⁷⁸ Specifically, and in keeping with the trope of dream elision mentioned above, it seems profoundly likely that the monk's last words pertain to his experience of a final visionary dream, even though the oneiric event itself is not mentioned in the text. When he is seen preparing himself for death, Zhenguan explains his actions by stating that someone has beseeched him to lecture on the bodhisattva

the termination of evil influences. (55) Ilza Veith, “Introductory Study” to *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine: Chapters 1–34*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002 [1975]).

For a general discussion of the interaction between Buddhist and Chinese medical traditions in the medieval period, see C. Pierce Salguero, *Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). For a discussion of the role of Buddhism in bringing sugar refining technologies to China, see Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, 249–262.

75 Thank you to Robert Ford Campany for this reading (“imperceptibly”) and for noting that it reinforces the thematically significant tendency of this account to subtly shift between perspectives (e.g., Zhenguan, his congregation, an unnamed person, Baohui, Zhenguan, and back to an unnamed member of the congregation, who fails to notice the demise of the monk due to the utter peacefulness of his death) (personal communication).

76 A temple in the vicinity of Zhenguan's home temple. See: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000011473>.

77 T. 2060: 702c27–70a2, punctuated as per XGSZ [2014], vol. 3, 1248–1249.

78 The link between bodhisattva precepts and oneiric visions is discussed below, in the section on dream incubation.

precepts: a claim that only makes sense if the request has come from an individual residing in the heavens. While this request could have been conveyed via a dream *or vision*, the former option seems more likely, given the ubiquity of visionary dreams within Zhenguan's biography (as ascribed to both the titular monk and his disciples). For further discussion of the bestowal of precepts upon extrahuman beings through the medium of oneiric visions, see Chapter Four.

While it would be possible to adduce a number of additional examples,⁷⁹ I will conclude this section with a pair of accounts whose monastic protagonists express diametrically opposing views on the meaning and significance of oneiric visions. The first, and more positive, perspective is drawn from near the end of the biography of Faxiang 法嚮 (553–630), a monk of the early Tang who was revered for his practice of austerities.⁸⁰

At the beginning of winter, during the fourth year of [Emperor Taizong's] Zhenguan reign period [631 CE], [Faxiang] addressed his disciples, saying: “You and I [will be] parted. I recently dreamt of a serious illness,⁸¹ from which I will not recover.” After thereupon taking to bed for twenty days, he suddenly arose and demanded hot water, bathed himself, and shaved his head. From the fifth day [*chen* 辰] to the tenth [*you* 酉] he faced the west, and then he met his end. His was seventy-eight years old.⁸²

貞觀四年冬初，謂門人曰：「吾與汝別，近夢惡，將不起矣。」遂臥二十日，忽起索湯，盥浴剃髮，自辰至酉，面西而終，年七十八。

After an interlude describing his disciples' handling of his mortal remains, including the construction of a mortuary *stūpa*, the account then offers a brief synoptic overview of the monk's mode of practice:

79 E.g., from the biographies of Zhituo 智脫 (541–607 [499b20]), Zhiwen 智文 (509–599 [609c23]), and Zhiyi (564c19).

80 Discussed in Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 21, 35.

81 While *e* (惡) can refer to any evil or unpleasant phenomenon, the GR entry also suggests that it can refer specifically to an illness, which is clearly more *a propos* in the current context.

82 T. 2060: 606a8–10, punctuated as per XGSZ [2014], vol. 2, 806.

During Faxiang's lifetime, he constantly practiced *dhūtas*⁸³ in the wilderness, where he tamed and subdued the wild beasts. He contemplated the western direction, while orally chanting “Namo Buddha.” He did not often lecture on the [Buddhist] dharma, though he would offer one or two phrases when the situation warranted it. As for those [destined for] calamity or felicity, he permitted them to avoid [these outcomes] by relying on that which had been seen in dreams.⁸⁴

嚮生常日，投陀林野，馴伏猛獸，觀想西方，口唱南無佛，不多說法，隨緣一兩句。有災祥者令避，託以夢想所見。

These two short episodes eloquently summarize Faxiang's perspective on dreams, which seems more akin to the viewpoint of earlier generations of charismatic wonder-workers⁸⁵ than to that of the scholar monks described earlier in this section. In the first episode, we see another instance of dream elision, with the monk's dream only revealed to the reader via his telling of it to his disciples, to whom he cites it as a sign of his impending demise. Though Faxiang is characteristically terse in this speech, his actions in his final minutes do manage to provide his followers with an exemplum of the Buddhist “good death.” Much more compelling, however, is the second episode, wherein the monk's habitual avoidance of preaching is contrasted with his counseling of “those destined for calamity or felicity” by consulting the contents of oneiric visions. Given the ambiguity of the grammar in this clause (*tuoyi mengxiang suojian* 託以夢想所見), it is not clear whether Faxiang's method involved engaging with the contents of his own dreams or interpreting those of his interlocutors: both would have been viable options in the medieval Chinese context.⁸⁶ Regardless, this thaumaturge monk's decision to privilege

83 I am reading 投陀 as a non-standard transliteration of 頭陀, following a suggestion by Dr. Funayama Tōru (personal communication). While this reading is not attested in either Nakamura or Hirakawa, it is certainly contextually appropriate.

84 T. 2060: 606a15–17, punctuated as per XGSZ [2014], vol. 2, 806.

85 The most obvious example of this prior model of Buddhist thaumaturge is Fotucheng 佛圖澄 (d. 348). See: Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 73–74; see also the translation of his *GSZ* biography by Arthur F. Wright in “Fo-t'u-têng: A Biography,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 11: 3/4 (1948), 321–371. This wonder-working monk's activities as an oneiromancer will be discussed below.

86 In other words, it is not clear whether his pedagogical practice was more grounded in dream interpretation or dream incubation (and subsequent retelling). Regardless, both of these practices will be discussed in detail below. As an aside, an earlier episode in Faxiang's biography sees him performing Zhiyi's *Lotus Flower Repentance*, though he does not reveal the significance (nor even the form) of the auspicious omen that he experienced in response [應 *ying*]: 「行智者法華懺。嚮依法行。三七專注大獲瑞應。知而不言。」 (T. 2060: 605c20–21). For an overview of this ritual procedure, which can indeed extend to twenty-one days of practice, see Stevenson, “The Four Kinds of Samādhi,” 67–

oneiric experiences over doctrinal verities is a potent testament to the significance of such visions in the medieval episteme, notwithstanding the fact that such a perspective was clearly an idiosyncratic one.

A final example, which speaks to the paradoxical allure of dream telling, while also presenting a decidedly more negative perspective on the ontological significance of oneiric experiences, can be drawn from the XGSZ biography of Sengmin 僧旻 (467–527) (a renowned dharma master with strong ties to the Liang court).⁸⁷

Sengmin had constructed a Maitreya Buddha image and made various types of offerings to it. Morning and evening he reverentially paid his respects [to it]. Thereafter, he had a dream vision of Maitreya Buddha dispatching a transformation bodhisattva,⁸⁸ who accompanied him to a bodhi tree. The bodhisattva said: “[As for the] *bodhi* tree, in the language of the Liang, it is called the 'enlightenment spot tree.’”

[Sengmin's] disciple was inclined to promulgate these words. Sengmin heard this and cautioned him, saying: “The *Rites* have six dreams, but as for the true dreams, there is only one.⁸⁹ It really

72.

87 For background on the pedagogical activities of this prominent monk (many of which were undertaken at the imperial behest), see: De Rauw, 177 ff. 506, 191–194.

88 This appears to be a reference to the doctrine of the “transformation bodies” of Buddhist deities. “Huashen 化身,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%8C%96%E8%BA%AB>: The temporal body of the Buddha (Skt. *nirmāṇa-kāya*). The transformation of the Buddha’s body into the form of a sentient being in order to teach and save them. In order to teach sentient beings, this kind of buddha-manifestation utilizes superknowledges to appropriately discern and respond to their various capacities.

89 This is a clear reference to the *Zhouli* 周禮, where one finds an overview of Zhou Dynasty dream divination:

占夢：掌其歲時，觀天地之會，辨陰陽之氣。以日月星辰占六夢之吉凶，一曰正夢，二曰噩夢，三曰思夢，四曰寤夢，五曰喜夢，六曰懼夢。季冬，聘王夢，獻吉夢于王，王拜而受之。乃舍萌于四方，以贈惡夢，遂令始難驅疫。(38). Cf., Eduard Biot's French translation:

XXIV. DEVIN DES SONGES (TCHEN-MOUNG) Il s’occupe des saisons de l’année par rapport aux songes. Il examine les instants de réunion du ciel et de la terre. Il distingue les émanations des deux principes mâle et femelle. Par les positions du soleil, de la lune, des planètes, il devine les présages heureux ou malheureux des six sortes de songes. Ces six sortes de songes sont : 1) les songes réguliers, 2) les songes terribles, 3) les songes de réflexion, 4) les songes de veille, 5) les beaux songes; 6) les songes de crainte. A la fin de l’hiver, il visite solennellement l’empereur pour lui demander s’il a eu un songe. Il présente à l’empereur les présages déduits des songes heureux. L’empereur les reçoit en saluant. Il place les nouvelles pousses des céréales dans la direction des quatre régions pour les offrir aux mauvais songes (aux esprits qui ont envoyé les mauvais songes). Aussitôt l’empereur ordonne de commencer la cérémonie de purification, d’expulser les miasmes pestilentiels.

Édouard BIOT (1851), *Le Tcheou-li, ou Rites des Tcheou — Tome II*, accessed online at:

http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/chine_ancienne/B_livres_canoniques_Petits_Kings/tcheou_li_2/tch_li_2.pdf.

Robert Ford Campany offers an extensive discussion of the significance of this passage in his upcoming book (personal communication).

is the case that they provide premonitions⁹⁰ of good and ill [outcomes], which is why the Zhou [dynasty] established an office of dream divination. It fell into disuse in subsequent generations, precisely because the common people frivolously [circulated] an enormous quantity [of false reports] that they diluted [the truth] and haphazardly made many baseless attributions.⁹¹ As for my previous dream, it's only a mental image.⁹² You must not transmit it!”⁹³

旻嘗造彌勒佛，并諸供具，朝夕禮謁，乃夢見彌勒佛遣化菩薩送菩提樹與之。菩薩曰：「菩提樹者，梁言道場樹也。」弟子頗宣其言，旻聞而勗之曰：「禮有六夢，正夢唯一，乃是好惡之先徵，故周立占夢之官。後代廢之，正以俗人澆薄，亟多假託。吾前所夢，乃心想耳，汝勿傳之。」

As can be seen, this account includes two elliptical cases of dream telling: first, when the narration jumps from Sengmin's initial dream to his student's response, it is clear that the teacher must have chosen to inform his student of the matter; second, and in spite of the master's cautionary note to the contrary, the disciple then must have relayed this dream episode to a biographer, as there is otherwise no way that this episode would have made its way into the XGSZ. While these cases of dream telling are intriguing on their own, they are all the more notable when considered in light of the content of Sengmin's instruction. Specifically, when the disciple wishes to promulgate this dream narrative, presumably as testament to his master's greatness, Sengmin demurs, citing two traditional Chinese rationales: namely, the rarity of reliable dreams from the perspective of traditional Chinese oneirocriticism,⁹⁴ and the implied similarities between the current situation and one from the Zhou Dynasty, where intemperate dream telling was blamed for the entire oneirocritical enterprise losing

90 Or, more literally, “fore-signs.”

91 This could also just be a reference to falsehoods, though the reference to the Zhou dynasty potentially implies a textual engagement with this ancient period, given that ancient texts would have been the primary means for a medieval monk to interact with Zhou culture.

92 This could perhaps be rendered more colloquially as “only wishful thinking.”

93 T. 2060: 463, b14–20, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 158–159.

94 Based on the *Zhouli*'s typology, as discussed in the *Introduction*. In Campany's “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft), he draws a distinction between dream interpretations meant to “diagnose” current situations and those meant to predict the future. This distinction is reflected in the present project via the distinction I am drawing between oneirocriticism (the former) and oneiromancy (the latter), which parallels Sumegi's distinction between “presentative” and “representative” dreams, and Faure's discussion of “hermeneutic” vs. “performative” ones (see *Introduction*).

credibility.⁹⁵ He concludes his lesson by describing his own dream as resulting from wishful thinking⁹⁶ and admonishing his disciple not to share it – a directive that his disciple clearly contravened (as noted above). These elliptical tellings exhibit a pleasing symmetry that reinforces their paradoxicality: Sengmin, perhaps motivated by a perceived “teachable moment,” implicitly shares a dream experience with a student as a means of launching into an disquisition on the unreliability of confirmatory dreams. In contravention of this lesson, his pupil then implicitly retells the story, perhaps to laud his master's wisdom or (if he accepted the standard medieval perspective on dreams as auspicious omens) to testify to the spiritual efficacy of his master's practices.

As can be seen, the XGSZ's accounts related to the employment of dreams in monastic pedagogy speak to the nuanced, multifarious, and at times incommensurate perspectives on oneiric experience that must have been current by the mid-seventh century. Given that the previous collection includes no comparable episodes, it is possible that these perspectives may have developed (or at least risen to prominence) during the century and a half between the compilation of these two volumes. That said, the decision to include such material could also be credited to differences between the editorial agendas of Daoxuan and Huijiao: a hypothesis that could most effectively be investigated via a large-scale discourse analysis of the representations of monastic pedagogy in each collection.⁹⁷ As an aside, it

95 T. 2060: 463b17–20 (cited in full above). This classificatory scheme is discussed in Ong (152), wherein he notes that the traditional interpretation of these six categories is that they correspond to dream etiologies. In this context, 正夢 dreams are those that are not attributable to specific mental or emotional stimuli from one's prior waking state (which, in turn, makes them the only category worthy of interpretation). As an aside, this may also be an intertextual reference to the description of dream divination cited in *Han shu's* “Essay on Literature” (1773), as discussed in the *Introduction*.

96 This dismissive association between dreams and mental images (*xinxiang* 心想, which I suggest above could in this instance be translated as “wishful thinking”) would certainly have been familiar to a Buddhist in Sengmin's day. For one example using this specific terminology, we can refer to the discussion of nocturnal emission from the *Ten Recitations Vinaya*: 佛雖如是結戒，今諸比丘夢中出精，心生疑悔。」阿難問佛：「夢中有心想不？」佛言：「有心想而不作。」 (T. 1435: 14b5–8). That said, given the previous reference to the *Zhouli*, it is also possible that the monk might have been referencing the third of the six types of dreams described in that text, though it is described using a cognate character (三曰思夢) (38).

97 More broadly, this could even represent an evolution in Chinese Buddhist vernacular literature, with the later collection

should be noted that the previous section only included *narrative* episodes related to monastic pedagogy, whereas both collections also include occasional quotations from epistolary correspondence, written discourses and commentaries, though in this case as well such editorial inclusions are much more common in XGSZ than its predecessor. I am currently in the process of exploring these literary discussions of dreams in a separate monograph, which I intend to publish in the near future.⁹⁸

Dreaming in Dialogue: Dream Telling and the Laity

As noted in the *Introduction*, one of the key factors in the large-scale adoption of Buddhism in medieval China was its compatibility with the indigenous *ganying* framework: as demonstrated by the (well-studied) parallels between Buddhist miracle tales and those produced by other discourse communities. Given that we have direct evidence of imperial patrons soliciting miraculous response narratives from monastic communities during this period and that dream experiences are considerably easier to come by than most other prodigious omens, one might reasonably expect that the monks of GSZ and XGSZ would have engaged in dream telling practice as a means of connecting with their patrons and non-clerical contemporaries.⁹⁹ In addition to dream telling, of course, such interactions also often involved dream interpretation (which we will explore in the next section).

Unlike some of the topics considered previously, I have found no substantive difference between either the usage frequency or the characteristic features of this trope across the two collections

being more likely to include reported speech (and thus to preserve specific instances of purported instruction) than its predecessor. I would be interested in investigating this question in the future.

98 My first foray into this topic was presented at a 2015 meeting of the Kyoto Asian Studies Group. In the years since, I have also worked through the near five hundred references to dreams in *Fayuan zhulin*, which I intended to incorporate as a comparative foil.

99 For my literature review of contemporary scholarship on the *ganying* framework and efficacy narratives in the medieval Chinese context, see the *Introduction*.

under consideration, which underscores the extent to which telling tales of miraculous dreams seems to have been a common cultural practice throughout the Liang and into the early Tang. Thus, I will merely outline a selection of these episodes below, in order to give a sense of the variety of actors, contexts and consequences associated with dream telling in GSZ and XGSZ. To begin, consider the following examples from the earlier collection. First, Sun Quan 孫權 (182–252), the founding ruler of Wu during the Three Kingdoms period, allows the monk Kang Senghui 康僧會 (d. 280) to enter his kingdom by virtue of having heard about Emperor Ming of Han's dream experience,¹⁰⁰ even though he had never before encountered a *śramaṇa*.¹⁰¹ Second, Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu-Song 劉宋孝武帝 (r. 454–464), after the demise of the famous auto-cremator Huiyi 慧益 (d. 463), experiences a variety of miracles (hearing pipes and flutes, smelling unusual fragrances), and that night dreams of the deceased monk entreating him to follow the Buddha dharma. In response, he sponsors a *zhai*,¹⁰² at which he orders that each of these auspicious omens be set down in writing.¹⁰³ Third, Xiao Zhangmao 蕭長懋 (458–493) (posthumously honoured as Emperor Wen 文帝 of the Southern Qi 南齊) is convinced to reform his conduct by a dream experience and thereupon attempts to convince the monk Sengzong 僧宗 (438–496) to come and lecture for him.¹⁰⁴ Fourth, the prince Xiao Ziliang 蕭子良 of the Southern Qi (455–494), on the basis of a *gan* 感 dream, convinces the monk Faxian 法獻 (424–498) to disseminate his

100 For an extensive discussion of the significance of this episode within medieval Chinese Buddhist historiography, see Chapter Three.

101 T. 2059: 325b.

102 See the “Dream Incubation” section below for a discussion of dreams associated with the practice of *zhai*.

103 T. 2059: 405b. The circumstances surrounding Huiyi's death are detailed in Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 36–40.

104 T. 2059: 379c28. This is also one of the “elliptical episodes” discussed above.

relic veneration method to the lay and the religious communities.¹⁰⁵ Finally, Luxian 陸咸, the governor of Wu 吳 commandery,¹⁰⁶ forgets and is then reminded of an oneiric encounter, which he then (implicitly) employs to convince Prince Jian An 建安殿下 (476–533) to sponsor the creation of Buddha images.¹⁰⁷

Likewise, a variety of examples from XGSZ speak to this same confluence of actors, contexts and consequences in the Sui and Tang dynasties: the monk Yancong (discussed above) has a puzzling dream about a golden figure and, when he describes it to his patron (Yang Jun 楊俊, the Prince of Qin [571–600]), the Sui royal responds by commissioning a Guanyin image matching this description;¹⁰⁸ Yuan Ang 袁昂 (461–540), the Director of Pasturage¹⁰⁹ for the Chen region, dreams about his monastic teacher's eon-spanning study of the Buddhist dharma across multiple lifetimes, and was so affected by

105 T. 2059: 411c08. The ritual programme associated with this tooth relic (or another one claiming similar provenance) are discussed in John Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 185–187. For the role of bodily relics of the Buddha in Tang imperial ritual, see Huang Chi-chiang, “Consecrating the Buddha: Legend, Lore, and History of the Imperial Relic-Veneration Ritual in the T'ang Dynasty,” *Chung-hwa Journal of Buddhist Studies* 11 (1998): 483–533. Relating to the current issue, Huang notes that this particular tooth relic was enshrined in Nanjing by Emperor Ming of the Southern Qi, but that it does not seem to have played an important role in the subsequent ritual practices of Emperor Wu of the Liang (499). Also, I am grateful to both Strong (186) and Huang (499 ff. 21) for noting the potential confusion between this particular pilgrim monk (法獻), who travelled to Central Asia and returned with a bodily relic, and his more famous predecessor (with whom his name shares its romanization [*Faxian*] - 法顯). I was dangerously close to making this error myself!

106 The only listed date for this figure is 507 CE, when the events described herein are said to have occurred. See his entry in the *Buddhist Authority Database* [陸咸] (<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A003456>).

107 T. 2059: 412a-b. While I would not want to read too much into what is clearly a very terse account, this episode, which revolves around a layman seemingly being induced to remember a previously forgotten dream through a conversation with an extrahuman monk, brought to mind the research of Elizabeth Loftus (and others) into the malleability of memory. In particular, the role of monks as dream interpreters in the medieval period (as discussed below) could be seen to dovetail with the proven capacity of ideologically motivated interlocutors to (intentionally or unintentionally) create false memories through oneirocritical techniques. See, for example, G. Mazzone, E. Loftus, A. Seitz, and S. Lynn, “Changing Beliefs and Memories through Dream Interpretation,” *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 13:2 (1999), 125–144.

108 T. 2060: 437a.

109 Hucker #3023.

this dream that his experience entered into the literary record;¹¹⁰ the monk Fayu 法御 (d.u.) experiences an oneiric vision, discusses it widely, and, as a result, “completes the royal road;”¹¹¹ Emperor Yang of the Sui 隋煬帝 (569–618) dreams of the (deceased) Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597), which convinces him to pen the calligraphy for the monk's tombstone;¹¹² and, as one final example, Emperor Wu of Qi 齊武帝 (440–493) dreams of a mysterious mountain and sends out an edict seeking clues related to its location. In response, a local elder memorializes the Emperor, revealing the location of a peak matching the name of the one seen in the Emperor's oneiric vision, which leads the ruler to respond by constructing a Buddhist temple at the site.¹¹³ In all of these cases, we see that dream discourse played a meaningful role in the interactions between monks and their elite patrons, with oneiric experiences frequently being cited as sufficient conditions for a variety of religious practices, running the gamut from making cash donations to seeking precept ordinations.

110 T. 2060: 465a. Though this account notes that his experience was “as recorded elsewhere,” I have had no luck tracking it down. A full-text search of the Taishō reveals no relevant references to this Yuan Ang in any texts that predate (or are contemporaneous with) XGSZ 「及得善夢如別記述。」 (T. 2060: 465a12–13). Also see: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A003147>

111 T. 2060: 547a12–14. 「寤以告之。正披此義。即因而遂廣。乃成王路矣。」 I'm not exactly sure how to render the phrase (*wanglu* 王路), as HDC lists a variety of potential options, ranging from literal roadways to careers in government. Given that the monk was dreaming about coming into contact with a monk wielding an enormous official seal, I think that the most likely interpretation is that either his “wide dissemination” of the story reached as far as the imperial house, or that comprehending the dream and then discussing it allowed him to find an official career.

112 T. 2060: 568a. I was somewhat surprised to find a monk as revered as Zhiyi associated with a tyrant like Emperor Yang, which the *Principle of Embarrassment* suggests would render this account additionally plausible. While it does not deny the episode (and, in fact, explicitly lauds the quality of the emperor's calligraphy), it does emphasize that he was deposed before the engraving on the tombstone was completed. As such, I cannot help but wonder how a medieval reader would have conceptualized this episode within the standard *ganying* framework. Cf., 「隋煬末歲巡幸江都。夢感智者言及遺寄。帝自製碑。文極宏麗。未及鐫勒。值亂便失。」 (T. 2060: 568a12–14). In another episode of dreams telling from Zhiyi's biography, which I have opted not to include as it was likely intended as an allusive witticism, a munificent patron (Prince Shixing of Chen 陳始興王) opines: “I had previously dreamt of encountering armed bandits. At this time, however, some gentle thieves have appeared. Hair ropes and chunks of bone, which lead me to think about dragging my tail in the mud in their midst.” (因歎曰：「吾昨夢逢強盜，今乃表諸軟賊毛繩截骨，則憶曳尾泥中。」 [T. 2060: 564c29–565a01]). Though the lord's “dream” likely did not represent an actual oneiric experience, this episode still highlights the rhetorical use of dreams in lay-monastic discourse, helping to demonstrate the cultural currency of the dream as a poetic device in the medieval Chinese context.

113 T. 2060: 678a27.

In both collections, we see a variety of shared themes, including 1) interactions between Buddhist monks and individuals at various levels in the imperial bureaucracy; 2) a bi-directionality in dream telling encounters (i.e., monks informing laypeople of their dreams and vice versa); 3) a causal relationship between dream telling practice and subsequent Buddhist activities (e.g., providing material support, commissioning statuary and construction projects, choosing to engage with Buddhist pedagogy, and receiving / providing precept ordination); and, finally, 4) implicit or explicit engagement with the *ganying* framework, through which such experiences become construed as rife with significance, linking them in a causal chain with prior practice and subsequent response. In sum, these multifarious interactions help to highlight the central role that the basic act of narrating one's dreams played in the religious lives of medieval Buddhists: a psycho-social process whose significance could *only* be missed by a post-Industrial, post-Freudian reader whose perspective on the potential influence of the oneiric world upon the waking one had been rendered anemic by more than one hundred years of stimulants, artificial light, and interiority.¹¹⁴

Dream Interpretation

In spite of the centrality of dream interpretation within the divinatory technologies of medieval China, the topic remains relatively under-researched in both contemporary Sinology and Buddhist Studies.¹¹⁵

Specifically, even though we have clear evidence of oneiromantic practice dating back to the oracle

114 For a helpful discussion of the intersubjective act of dream narration, see: Bogzaran and Deslauriers, 119–145. On the variety of ways (social, psychological, affective, material cultural) that 21st century sleep differs from that of our forebears, especially in the context of pre-modern Europe, see: A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past*, (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2005).

115 For instance, Jean-Pierre Drège, “Notes d'oniologie chinoise,” contrasts the wealth of studies related to this topic in other historical / cultural contexts with the relative dearth of relevant materials in studies of historical China (272–272). In the years since his writing, some notable contributions have been Liu Wenying's *Zhongguo gudai de mengshu* 中國古代的夢書 and Meng de mixun yu meng de tansuo 夢的迷信與夢的探索, Rudy Vavril's *La Science des Rêve en Chine*, Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*; Drège and Drettas, “Oniromancie”; Fodde-Reguer, *Divining Bureaucracy*; Raphals, *Divination and Prediction*, and Company's forthcoming book on the topic.

bones, the *Zuozhuan* and the *Rites of the Zhou* (among many other early sources),¹¹⁶ as well as the practical texts providing oneiromantic instruction found in Shuihudi and the Dunhuang library cache,¹¹⁷ it is impossible for us to know which specific techniques would have been known to and embraced by the early medieval Buddhist monks discussed in GSZ and XGSZ. Moreover, even if we knew which oneiromantic manuals (or orally transmitted traditions of interpretation) were known to early medieval Buddhists, this still would not necessarily reveal how oneiromancy was actually performed. As Drège notes, most manuals provide interpretations for single dream images, requiring the oneiromancer to consolidate and/or synthesize a variety of entries when performing any given act of interpretation; in addition, various other circumstantial elements (such as the day of the dream) could modify the interpretation, requiring the interpreter to exercise their own discretion and judgment in this synthetic process.¹¹⁸ As such, for our present purposes, the clearest way to explore the practice and conception of

116 Discussed above and in the *Introduction*.

117 For an overview of these mantic texts and the typological categorization of dream images, see: Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang,” 207–210 and *passim*; Drège and Drettas, “Oniromancie” (279–281). Campany makes the salient observation that this organizational schema bears some striking similarities to the arrangement of materials in “category books” (*leishu* 類書): “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft). On oneiromancy in the Shuihudi daybooks, see Fodde-Regeur, *passim*; Raphals, 211.

118 Drège, “Notes d'oniologie chinoise,” 273. These hermeneutical issues, as they apply to a single dream interpretation manual, as discussed in Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang,” 237–247. With regard to the role of situation-specific judgment, oneiromancy is markedly similar to the process of medical diagnosis employed in medieval Chinese medicine: a process which often (and surely not coincidentally) involved the analysis of patients' dreams. Strickmann's *Chinese Magical Medicine* draws on the medieval Taoist *Essentials of the Practice of Perfection* (*Zhengyi fawen xiuzhen zhiyao* 正一法文修真旨要) to discuss the diagnostic utility of dreams in the context of medieval apotropaic ritual. For example, in the case of cardiac illness, “the symptom consists of dreaming at night of a man dressed in red, holding a sword or staff and coming to frighten you” (125). Moreover, as Anna-Alexandra Fodde-Reguer argues in *Divining Bureaucracy*, the earliest Chinese dream interpretation manuals are congruent (in terms of language, stated aims, and standards of practice) with the earliest medical manuals:

Dream divination manuals such as the *Yuelu* 岳麓 Academy Dream Divination Book (*zhan meng shu* 占夢書, dating to the Qin dynasty 221–206 B.C.E.) suggest that many early Chinese thinkers saw the practice of deciphering the meaning of dreams as akin to the diagnosis of the vessels found in early Chinese healing techniques. Through a close analysis of the Dream Divination Book as compared with the medical text the *Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor* (*Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經, dating to the Han dynasty 206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.), I argue that relationships exist between what is deemed divination and Chinese medicine, particularly with regard to external and internal influences on the body. Moreover, it will become evident that dream divination, much like healing, was a perfectible technique, by which I mean a skill that one could develop through the use of manuals (35).

Relatedly, Drège, in “Notes d'oniologie chinoise,” opines that some of these interpretations must have been systematized by the Han dynasty (274). This accords with the intertextual recurrence of certain key symbols (such as

oneiromancy in GSZ and XGSZ is to carefully review the instances of the practice that Huijiao and Daoxuan opted to include in their respective collections.

For the sake of clarity, my use of the term “oneiromancy” in the previous paragraph should not necessarily be read as a reference to the activities of a specific class of religio-mantic practitioners (such as *wu* 巫 [spirit mediums] or *fangshi* 方士 [masters of techniques]).¹¹⁹ Instead, many of the acts of dream interpretation described in medieval anecdotes (such as those found in GSZ and XGSZ) were *not* performed by professionals, but rather individuals who for whatever reason had established a reputation for their ability to parse these visions.¹²⁰ They could include ministers, teachers, professional associates, spouses, disciples, and family members. In fact, in some cases, the task of interpretation seems almost unilaterally to be a matter of propinquity, with interpretations being proffered by whoever was close at hand. Within such a social context, it is no wonder that Buddhist monks – especially those deemed “eminent” – would have filled this role for many medieval Chinese Buddhists.

dreams of celestial bodies being consumed) between early official histories, XGSZ and Chen Shiyuan's Ming dynasty encyclopedia, as will be discussed the Miraculous Pregnancy chapter.

119 Notwithstanding the fact that these groups were indeed often associated with the task of dream interpretation. For *fangshi*, see Kenneth J. Dewoskin's *Doctors, Diviners and Magicians*. For instance, Dewoskin's introductory summary of the various techniques employed by the *fangshi* includes “dream analysis” (27). His subsequent translations of episodes from the *Record of the Three Kingdoms* (111, 138–140) and the *History of the Qin* (156) include a variety of instances of dream interpretation. As for spirit mediums (*wu*), Lin Fu-shih's dissertation offers one of the most concise and well-informed summaries of their role as dream interpreters in the early medieval period (164–168). *Chinese Shamans and Shamanism in the Chiang-nan Area during the Six Dynasties Period (3rd–6th century A.D.)*, (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1994). We will consider the role of *wu* as dream interpreters in the *Eminent Monks* in Chapter Four. As an aside, Lin's claim that “it was a shamanistic [i.e., *wu*] belief that, in the dream, the human sometimes could encounter the supernatural world or receive messages from spirits” (166) is clearly far too narrow, based on the multifarious roles and interpretations of the oneiric across Chinese religion (and, in particular, in the Buddhist context) that we have considered previously and will be discussing throughout this project.

120 Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang”: “l'interprète n'est pas nécessairement un spécialiste de la divination. C'est souvent une personne de l'entourage du rêveur qui a simplement un peu plus de talent à démêler les fils du songe. Il peut s'agir un ministre, d'un officier ou d'un fonctionnaire de rang élevé ou subalterne, mais aussi d'un parent, par exemple l'aieul ou l'épouse, ou encore d'une servante, d'une matrone ou même d'un hôte de passage. Quoi qu'il en soit, on ignore d'où l'onirocrite tire son autorité pour interpréter les songes” (246–247). For other discussions of the *dramatis personae* of the early and medieval Chinese oneirocritical milieu, see: Fodde-Reguer, 46–48; Raphals, 86–101; Company, “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft).

The Oneirocritical Milieu

As outlined in the Introduction, mantic technologies played a central role in ancient and medieval Chinese society, from the astrological, hemerological, oneiromantic and pyromantic methods employed by the servitors of the imperial bureaucracy, to the daybooks, almanacs, spirit consultations, and traditions of sortilege that were the common currency of members of every social stratum.¹²¹

Intriguingly, and in contrast to the often polemical discourse employed in medieval Buddhist sources when considering the traditions with whom they were competing for patronage and perceived efficacy, GSZ and XGSZ are both incredibly sanguine when it comes to discussing traditional oneirocriticism, provided that its findings were congruent with their proselytic aims. Some examples include Han Emperor Ming's dream of the “golden man” (which was then interpreted by his counsellors), Zhiyi's mother's dream of a white mouse (which was interpreted by a local oneiromancer as a sign of an exemplary birth), and the dream of the monk Sanguo's (三果, d.u.) sister-in-law, whose description of (Buddhist-tinged) chthonic realms was only correctly interpreted by local spirit mediums.¹²² In all of these cases, the conclusions of these non-Buddhist dream interpreters seem to have been uncritically accepted as genuine, at least to the extent to which they were preserved for posterity in the hagiographical corpus as testaments to the responsive efficacy (*ganying*) of Buddhist doctrine and practice. These socio-dynamics are the central concern of Chapter Four.

121 For a helpful discussion of current scholarship on each of these mantic traditions (and many more besides), see: Marc Kalinowski (ed.), *Divination et société dans le Chine médiévale*, (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2003). For recent scholarship on daybooks, see the Introduction.

122 Note: all of these examples will be considered at length below, with Emperor Ming's dream being discussed in Chapter Three, Zhiyi's mother's dream in Chapter Two, and Sanguo's sister-in-law's dream in Chapter Four.

Buddhist Engagement with Traditional Modes of Oneirocriticism

The examples considered above notwithstanding, the role of dream interpreter in GSZ and XGSZ was certainly not the exclusive province of non-Buddhist religious professionals. Indeed, one would expect that Buddhist monks would have been logical candidates for this role, given the extent to which they were integrated into the fabric of medieval society. That said, when I first considered this matter, I initially assumed that there would be an appreciable difference in the character of monastic dream interpreters and the techniques they employed between GSZ and XGSZ, following Kieschnick's argument about the preponderance of foreign monks (and foreign magic) in the earliest strata of tales of monastic thaumaturges, which I expected would mean that the two collections could be distinguished based on the form(s) of dream interpretation being practiced.¹²³ In contrast with this assumption, however, and in keeping with his general discussion of the significance of divination as a hallmark of supernatural efficacy in the *Eminent Monks* corpus as a whole, foreign monks seem no more likely to play the role of dream interpreter than their Han Chinese counterparts. Moreover, instead of drawing upon the “exotic” prestige of Indian divinatory methods,¹²⁴ each of the examples to be considered below is instead congruent with the same standards of dream interpretation promulgated in Chinese

123 Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 82–90. Specifically, he notes:

[T]wo characteristics of the Liang Biographies are particularly important for tracing the evolution of Buddhist spells in China. First, the reader may have noticed that virtually all of the spell-casting monks mentioned so far were foreigners. Second, the spells mentioned in the Liang Biographies, unlike spells in later biographies, are known only as generic “spells” (*zhou*), and do not reflect widespread knowledge of the technical spell literature that assigned specific names and attributes to various spells (86).

124 The exoticizing assumption that Indic ritual modalities trump Chinese ones is discussed by Kieschnick in *The Eminent Monk* (*ibid.*), as well as in Young, *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*:

[W]hen Aśvaghōṣa and Nāgārjuna came to be cast as immigrant deities of sorts, appearing personally to instruct Chinese devotees in the most efficacious ritual technologies of ancient India, these patriarchs instantiated models of divinity and ritual practice that Chinese audiences would likewise have recognized as fully accordant with traditional Chinese norms. Chinese sources advertising Aśvaghōṣa's and Nāgārjuna's divine incarnations and thaumaturgic prowess served to show that the most vaunted Chinese models of sanctity and salvation had in fact been perfect in ancient India, and that Buddhist ritual programs were thus the most powerful and suitable for religious devotees in latter-day China (12).

This issue is addressed at length in Chapter Three.

oneirocritical manuals and narrative sources.¹²⁵ Finally, and in spite of the presence of such episodes (which will be discussed below), I could not help but be a bit surprised by the dearth of relevant examples:¹²⁶ while the histories and *zhiguai* literature abound with cases of individuals dumbfounded by baffling or incomprehensible oneiric imagery, the vast majority of dream episodes in GSZ and XGSZ are depicted as clear and unambiguous communiques from the extrahuman realm.¹²⁷ I will suggest a possible explanation for this observation below (in the section entitled “Dream Interpretation vs. Dream Exhortation”), but I will begin this section by briefly considering all of the instances of overt monastic dream interpretation included in both collections, subdivided based on the categories of traditional Chinese oneiromancy.¹²⁸

Interpretive Principle #1: Analogy

As suggested above, the monks who interpret dreams in GSZ and XGSZ¹²⁹ seem to be adhering to

125 As outlined in the Introduction.

126 I found Kieschnick's discussion of this issue in *The Eminent Monk* (i.e., the relative paucity of divination accounts in the *Eminent Monks*, in comparison to the obvious importance of divination in medieval society) to be a little disingenuous:

Perhaps it was precisely because of the importance attached to divination in society at large that the *Biographies* deliberately downplay the importance of fortune-telling. That is to say, by at once affirming the ability of monks to see into the future, and at the same time dismissing this ability as insignificant, the *Biographies* underline the greater importance of the specifically Buddhist concerns that separated the monk from the local fortune-teller. Further, this rhetorical move, suggesting that divination was a small matter for eminent monks, suggests even greater, unspoken powers (80).

While his interpretation is by no means improbable, I still found this claim somewhat methodologically suspect, as the same conclusion (i.e., that divination was an important part of life in Sui, Tang and Song China) could have been reached if the *Biographies* contained a wealth of relevant examples.

127 Robert Ford Company makes this same observation in his forthcoming book on dreams in the early medieval period, differentiating between dreams requiring interpretation and those that are directly “communicative” (“Dream Interpretation,” (unpaginated draft)).

128 As an aside, many previous studies of Chinese dream interpretation discuss a form of oneirocriticism that utterly ignores symbolic content, focusing instead on hemerological issues relating to the day / time of the experience (Fodde-Reguer, 47–51; Drège “Clefs des Songes,” 232–233; Company, “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft)). I find it striking that this form of interpretation is utterly absent from the GSZ and XGSZ accounts considered below, possibly reflecting a concern with the prohibition on monastic fortune-telling (discussed above).

129 Note: I am explicitly **not** referring to them as “monastic dream interpreters,” given the ubiquity and accessibility of these techniques and technologies (Fodde-Reguer, 44–46; Drège, “Clefs des Songes,” 245–247; Harper, “Daybooks in the Context of Manuscript Culture,” 97–104 [which discusses this issue in the broader context of access to and use of mantic daybooks]; and Company, “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft)). Each of these cases seems to provide

standards of oneirocriticism that were well-established in both narrative sources and dream interpretation manuals, which would have made them eminently parseable by their respective discourse communities.¹³⁰ First, instantiating what seems to be the most universal form of dream interpretation,¹³¹ XSGZ includes a number of instances of oneirocriticism wherein dream images are “decoded” via their analogical associations with individuals, objects, and processes in the waking world.¹³² In these cases,

evidence of a culture within which it was not seen as atypical to discuss dream visions with friends, family members, and underlings. In such a context, the decision to discuss them with one's religious teacher(s) is utterly unremarkable!

130 For an overview of the types of rubrics employed in traditional Chinese oneiromancy, see: Drège, “Cleps des Songes,” 211–213; Drège and Drettas, 379–382; Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 30–37. Vavril, in *La Science des Rêve en Chine*, subdivides Chinese dream interpretation into three discrete categories: directly parseable, paradoxical (discussed below), and indirect (which he further subdivides into a variety of categories, including symbolic, analogical, and homophonic) (69–120). Given the relatively small number of relevant examples in GSZ and XGSZ, many of these specific subcategories are not represented therein.

131 The notion that dreams can be interpreted as metaphors is discussed in the introduction. For a contemporary example of this form of analysis, see: George Lakoff, “How Metaphor Structures Dream: The Theory of Conceptual Metaphor Applied to Dream Analysis” in *Dreams: A Reader on the Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming*, edited by Kelly Bulkeley, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 165–184. The major failing of the approach proposed in this article is the uncritical acceptance of certain (now debunked) aspects of Freudian dreamwork, such as a distinction between latent and manifest content (172–173). In spite of this, Lakoff's general perspective on dreams is almost entirely commensurate with my own. For instance, he argues that “dreams make use of metaphor because thought typically makes use of metaphor” (174). Even though he rejects the possibility that dreams are “merely” random neural activity, he also acknowledges that

it is possible that a fixed, conventional metaphor system could channel random neural firings into a meaningful dream. In other words, if dreams turn out to be triggered by random neural firings, it would not follow that the content of dreams is random (174).

This profound insight is often ignored by dream researchers, who seem allergic to the notion that their subject of study might not be “intrinsically” meaningful, often leading them to issue screeds against those who have the temerity to suggest otherwise. For instance, Bulkeley, in *Big Dreams*, argues that

[i]f dreaming were a purely chaotic process, then we would expect the content of dreams to contain an unpredictable, arbitrary mish-mash of any and every possible kind of thing. There should be no rhyme or reason to it, just senseless noise (106).

Bulkeley is employing this straw-man argument against (among others) Owen Flanagan, whose notion of dreams as “the spandrels of sleep” has been discussed above. Flanagan, in contrast to this caricature of his position and in keeping with Lakoff's perspective, instead argues that the patternicity and structure of human cognitive apparatus would function to make meaning out of random firings, and that these patterns are created through our waking activities and experiences; it is for this reason that he makes the challenging claim that perhaps individuals *should* feel guilty for immoral actions committed in dreams, given that the pathways for the creation of said oneiric images were clearly laid through one's waking thoughts and behaviours (179–183). Such a claim is utterly incoherent if one accepts Bulkeley's caricatured version of this position. Exploring the perspective on these issues put forward in Buddhist disciplinary rules, Ann Heirman notes an intriguing tension between the fact that a monk who expels semen in a dream is guilty of no wrong-doing (given the lack of intentionality), but is still described as possessing a “chaotic mind” (and thus being less “enlightened”): “Sleep Well! Sleeping Practices in Buddhist Disciplinary Rules,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 65:4 (December 2012): 427–444 (with this discussion found on 428–430).

132 Roberto K. Ong's section on “The Associative Approach” differentiates between “decoding dream symbols by direct association” (which he defines as a process based in culture-bound associations [e.g., dragon = royalty, in the Chinese context]) and “decoding dream symbols by poetic logic” (172–186). That said, the discussion of his first category

the dreamer (or an associate) employs either standard conceptual metaphors (e.g., GOOD IS UP, MORE IS BETTER, UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING)¹³³ or more culture-bound examples (e.g., dragons symbolize royalty) to elucidate the contents of a dream. As noted above, these acts of interpretation are entirely non-psychologized: rather than aiming to excavate hidden truths about the aims, motivations or personalities of dreamers, the oneirocritical gaze is turned outward, where it is focused upon traces of the subject's future and the means of manifesting (or averting) the foreseen outcomes.¹³⁴ In so doing, such interpretations gain the advantage of being utterly unfalsifiable, as any failure of the predicted future to become actualized can always be explained away as a side-effect of an oneiromantic prescription being followed incompletely or imperfectly.¹³⁵ It should be noted that no directly parallel cases are found in GSZ, though the paucity of such accounts in XGSZ as well prevents me from drawing any firm conclusions based on this lacuna.

includes such symbols as the sun, stars and sky, which (while obviously possessing particular cultural resonances in China) could also be read as universal symbols, especially when being interpreted as referring to loftiness or prestige (an issue that he makes note of himself on page 174). As such, I have opted not to differentiate between these two categories here. In his section on “direct” interpretation (contrasted with the mode discussed previously), Drège, “Cleps des Songes,” includes dreams whose manifest content admits straightforward interpretation (e.g., combed hair: auspicious; unkempt hair, inauspicious), those interpreted by analogy (e.g., dreams related to heights [mountains, terraces, pavilions] are signs of official promotion), and those analyzed by virtue of the cultural symbolism associated with a salient detail (e.g., colours, animals, articles of clothing), (237–240).

As an aside, I am pleased to note that both Ong and Drège, as well as the classical and medieval Chinese authors upon whom they based their studies, intuitively grasped the metaphorical aspect of dreaming, even though a theoretical framework for understanding this process (i.e., conceptual metaphor) had not yet been proposed, as the two independent hypotheses mutually bolster one another. In this, it is similar to Darwin's proposal of the theory of natural selection, which he promulgated in spite of lacking an accounting for the mechanism of heredity (i.e., genetics); in this paradigmatic case, the subsequent union of the two theories clearly had more explanatory value than either one considered individually. For an overview of the eventual synthesis of these theories, see David Quammen *The Reluctant Mr. Darwin: An Intimate Portrait of Charles Darwin and the Making of His Theory of Evolution*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), 206–235.

- 133 For a helpful (albeit necessarily partial) list of these sorts of primary metaphors, see Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 50–54. Summarizing the centrality of such metaphors to cognition, they argue that, even if non-metaphorical thought about subjective experience and judgment is occasionally possible, it almost never happens. We do not have a choice as to whether to acquire and use primary metaphor. Just by functioning normally in the world, we automatically and unconsciously acquire and use a vast number of such metaphors. Those metaphors are realized in our brains *physically* and are mostly beyond our control. There are a consequence of the nature of our brains, our bodies, and the world we inhabit (59, *emphasis original*).
- 134 This narrative function of dream interpretation is discussed in Company, “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft).
- 135 For an example of this sort of *post facto*, moralistic, unfalsifiable approach to dream interpretation, see Li's discussion of the dreams of Lord Wen and Ziyu of Chu (from *Zuozhuan*) in *The Readability of the Past*, 267–269.

Without belabouring the point, we can now briefly consider each relevant instance of such interpretation in the *Continued Biographies*, in order to develop an inductive picture of the way(s) that Daoxuan (and his sources) envisioned this form of oneiromantic practice within the lives of eminent monks.

1. Huishao 慧韶 (455–508), a youth who had just heard an inspirational lecture at Kaishan monastery, dreamt of returning there to pick plums. Though he wanted to taste them, he was initially only able to attain the branches and leaves. Upon waking, he interpreted his own dream experience as a genuine response (*zhengying* 正應) that indicated that he would eventually manage to achieve knowledge of the deepest profundities of the Buddhist teaching.¹³⁶ Here, we see the novice relying on a variety of standard (and extended) metaphors (KNOWLEDGE IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT → GAINING KNOWLEDGE IS FILLING A BASKET)¹³⁷ in assuming that his initial failure to taste the (literal) fruits of his labour was nonetheless a sign that he would eventually succeed. In this case, Huishao's (entirely self-fulfilling) prophecy was bolstered by his classification of the dream experience as a response to his piety and studiousness. Huishao's interpretation is also commensurate with the standard readings of such images in traditional Chinese oneiromantic manuals: an intertextual correspondence that seems unlikely to be coincidental.¹³⁸
2. Sometime before the death of the monk Tanqian 曇遷 (543–608), a member of his congregation had a dream that the eastern corner of their monastery's Buddha Hall began to collapse. Though they tried to bolster it, a pillar in the north-east corner sank into the ground and could not be retrieved. Since this was the corner of monastery that housed Tanqian's quarters, Daoxuan (or an earlier account he was quoting) notes that “this was an omen of his demise.”¹³⁹ Once again, the poetic logic at work here is quite obvious: a monastery building metonymically represents its occupants,¹⁴⁰ with its most important member mapping onto a support pillar without which

136 當夕感夢，往開善寺採得李子數斛，撮欲噉之，先得枝葉，覺而悟曰：「吾正應從學，必踐深極矣。」
T. 2060: 470c24–26, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 190.

137 This is related to two key metaphorical domains outlined by Lakoff and Johnson in their discussion of the complex metaphors associated with our innate philosophy of mind: namely, “thinking is object manipulation” and “acquiring ideas is eating” (*Philosophy in the Flesh*, 240–243).

138 For instance, the Dunhuang manual (P. 3908) translated by Drège in “Cleps des Songes” includes interpretations of “climbing trees” (“there will be a happy event” [216]) and “eating fruit” (“auspicious for someone far away” [220]). Though the specifics of these oracles do not apply directly, they certainly bear the same positive valence. This correspondence (and those to follow) echo Tuzin's observation that familiarity with oneiromantic traditions represents “a very relevant part of the sleeper's cultural surround, [in which] the interpretational system appears to have an inordinately large part in constructing the dream's manifest content” (560–561). As an aside, Drège notes that the relative auspiciousness of specific dream images is quite consistent over time and between manuals (“Notes d'onirologie chinoise,” 274–275), which lends support to my decision to cite P. 3908 below as a representative sample.

139 初，未終之前，有夢禪定佛殿東傾，數人扶之還正，惟東北一柱陷地，拔之不出。遷房屬於陷角，故有先驗之徵。T. 2060: 574a23–26, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 2, 667.

140 Lakoff and Johnson argue that metonyms are a discrete cognitive/linguistic structure, which the most salient aspects of a complex system or situation (*Metaphors We Live By*, 35–40). In particular, this dream image corresponds to the

the entire structure would crumble. As in the previous case, reading a crumbling residence as a sign of incipient misfortune is also attested in medieval Chinese oneiromantic manuals.¹⁴¹

3. The monk Daoji 道積 (568–636), on the day that he was assigned the task of overseeing a massive monastic construction project, dreamt of two lions flanking the existing Buddha image with streams of pearls ceaselessly flowing from their mouths. Upon waking, the monk himself overtly employed the mode of interpretation currently being considered, saying:

The king of the beasts is sovereign,¹⁴² which shows that the flow of the dharma will be unimpeded. Precious jewels welled up of their own accord, which is also an analogy for the unceasing donation of alms. The unseen is conveyed and the secrets are disclosed; my meritorious [project] will be completed at this very location.¹⁴³

Once again, this interpretation seems intuitively obvious, given its compatibility with both standard conceptual metaphors (e.g., MORE IS BETTER) and traditional Chinese oneirocritical readings of these symbol (e.g., pearls, lions).¹⁴⁴
4. The famed exegete and commentator Huiyuan 慧遠 (523–592), in the process of preparing a commentary on the *Nirvana Sutra*, dreamt of ascending Mount Sumeru, where he saw a sculpted image of a Buddha reclining between two trees, dusty from seeming neglect. After the monk cleared away the accumulated dirt and venerated the image, it emitted an effulgent light. Upon waking, Huiyuan stated that the dream was an auspicious sign of the utility of his commentary.¹⁴⁵ As in the cases described above, this interpretation is blatantly obvious: the monk ascends Sumeru (the Buddhist *axis mundi*) (UP IS GOOD), and finds an image of Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* there, which attests to the importance of the dream experience (PROXIMITY IS RELATEDNESS). His intercession (wiping the image) then allows its light to shine forth (KNOWING IS SEEING; UNDERSTANDING IS ILLUMINATION).¹⁴⁶ In comparison with the previous three examples, this dream report's imagery is notable for its employment of specific Buddhist imagery, though certain oneiric images (e.g., climbing a mountain, Buddhas) are also attested in Chinese oneirocritical discourse.¹⁴⁷

metonymic linkages they describe as “Institution for People Responsible” and “The Place for the Institution” (38).

141 Drège, “Clefs des Songes”: “a house collapses” → “omen of sickness”; “a ruined house” → “very inauspicious”; “a house moves” → “inauspicious for the head of the family” (222).

142 “Zi zai 自在,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E8%87%AA%E5%9C%A8>: “Sovereignty, independence, freedom, omnipotence, mastery, unimpededness.”

143 初，積受請之夕，寢夢崖傍，見二師子於大像側連吐明珠，相續不絕。既覺，惟曰：「獸王自在，則表法流無滯；寶珠自涌，又喻財施不窮。冥運潛開，功成斯在。」

T. 2060: 696b3–6, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 3, 1218. Also I am following the punctuated version in reading *shou* 狩 as *shou* 獸.

144 In the chapter on “Valuables and Goods” (as well as elsewhere), Chen Shiyuan's dream encyclopedia includes numerous historical anecdotes related to dreams of pearls, most of which are auspicious. This chapter begins by noting that “many who dreamt of pearls, jade, cash, and silk enjoyed glory and renown” (154). Also see: Drège, “Clefs des Songes”: “a lion” → “omen of great honours” (224). Conversely, the dream described above could be thought to contradict the reading “picking up valuable goods” (which is thought to signify “loss of wealth” [228]), though this might also explain why no one is depicted interacting with the streams of pearls.

145 T. 2060: 492a.

146 As above, see Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (50–54) for these sorts of primary metaphors.

147 Drège, “Clefs des Songes,” “dreams of honouring a Buddha indicate receiving the support of a powerful person,” which is not terribly relevant in this case (221). This manual also includes numerous instances of the UP IS GOOD trope,

5. Immediately following this episode, Huiyuan also prayed for a sign that it would be appropriate for him to use this commentary as a basis for future lectures. He then dreamt that he was manually creating images of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, but that prior to their completion, someone else took up the brush and completed them on his behalf.¹⁴⁸ Upon waking, he interpreted his vision as an indication that his teaching would reach future generations, and then proceeded to disseminate the teaching widely (relying on this miraculous confirmation as a warrant for his practice).¹⁴⁹ As in the previous examples, the imagery here would have been as unmistakable to a medieval Chinese reader as it is to us: Huiyuan's vision of being superseded during his religious practice is directly analogous to the process whereby his lecturing tradition would be transmitted by the junior members of his dharma lineage. In addition to serving as an excellent example of analogical dream interpretation, the other most notable aspect of this episode is the fact that this dream is described as having occurred after the monk explicitly prayed for a sign – a process that will be discussed in detail in the section on Dream Incubation.

6. Penultimately, the monk Huizhu 慧主 (541–629) is described experiencing a frightening dream in which the heavens and earth go dark, and the multitudes of beings are without eyes in the aftermath of his precept ordination. He wakes up sweating and panicked, but offers no immediate oneirocritical reading of the vision. Instead, when the Northern Zhou persecution began (557 CE),¹⁵⁰ the monk then assumed that his dream had been a fore-sign of these events and goes into hiding near his ancestral home.¹⁵¹ An intriguing aspect of this narrative is that the dream episode contained herein is profoundly polyvocal: since it occurred in the context of the monk's receipt of precepts, it could certainly be read as a form of “verificatory vision”¹⁵² related to its protagonist's karmic allotment. Instead, it proposes an intuitively plausible analogical interpretation by engaging with both standard Chinese oneirocritical tropes (darkened heavens and earth are inauspicious)¹⁵³ and embodied metaphor (e.g., under the KNOWING IS SEEING and

wherein dreams of being on top of things (e.g. trees, houses, pavilions) are always interpreted as auspicious signs (214–233, *passim*). Likewise, Chen Shiyuan's encyclopedia states “when someone dreams of ascending mountains and hills, or climbing up towers and terraces, he will soon obtain an official position. These words can be trusted” (120). Though our monastic protagonist was obviously not concerned with obtaining an official position, the valencing of his interpretation obviously follows this same pattern.

- 148 In particular, this narrative refers to seven buddhas and eight bodhisattvas, which appears to be a reference to the deities specified in the early fifth century *Sutra of the Great Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spells Spoken by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* (T. 1332). See: “*Qifo bapusa* 七佛八菩薩,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%B8%83%E4%BD%9B%E5%85%AB%E8%8F%A9%E8%96%A9>. Moreover, this dream narrative seems to specifically be referring to the ritual of “opening the eyes” of Buddhist statuary, which commemorates their completion and their investiture with divine presence. For instance, Liu Shufen details the prevalence of this rite in North China by the sixth century, drawing on statue inscriptions as evidence: “Art, Ritual, and Society: Buddhist Practice in Rural China during the Northern Dynasties” *Asia Major* Third Series, 8:1 (1995), 19–49, 40–41. Given that this ritual form would have been very salient to both the monk and his ritual community, it is easy to see how a reader could homologize Huiyuan's abortive involvement in this ritual with the general process of monastic succession.
- 149 T. 2060: 492a.
- 150 See: Shi, *Buddhist Persecution in Medieval China*, for an overview of this period (78–126).
- 151 T. 2060: 612b.
- 152 Note: I am borrowing the term “verificatory vision” from Greene. This concept will be discussed at length in the section on sought dreams (to follow).
- 153 Drège, “Cleps des Songes”: “the sun and moon disappear” → “very inauspicious” (215). Also, given that “clear skies” and an “illuminated earth” are both associated with great benefit (214, 215), it seems reasonable to assume that the

UNDERSTANDING IS ILLUMINATION metaphor schemas, blindness can logically be read as a sign of ignorance, and the combination of the UNDERSTANDING IS ILLUMINATION and the UP IS GOOD schemas suggests that the darkened sky could easily represent the fall of Buddhism [a source of knowledge] from its proper place, especially when bolstered by the indigenous “Buddha as sun” metaphor).

7. Finally, Zhiyi (the third Tiantai patriarch and ostensible founder of the school) is described experiencing an oneiric vision of visiting a craggy cliff side and being pulled up the mountain by a solitary monk. He then describes the matter to his disciples, and they respond by asserting that he had certainly been dreaming of Mount Tiantai. This interpretation is then relied upon to sanction the community's relocation to this site.¹⁵⁴ In addition to the general metaphorical and Chinese oneirocritical associations with climbing mountains (discussed above), this account surely presents the clearest case of what Drège described as a “direct” interpretation: Zhiyi's dream of ascending a mountain is a sign that the entire community should do so (LEADER IS COMMUNITY metonym).¹⁵⁵ As for their selection of sites, Zhiyi's disciples do not ground their oneirocritical reading on any particular topographical features from the master's vision, but rather on the prospective site's preeminence (as they note that it “had been entrusted to the sages” and that a variety of eminent monks, as well as the exemplary people of Jin 晉 (265–420) and Liu Song 劉宋 (420–479), had all taken up residence there).¹⁵⁶

In each of the above cases,¹⁵⁷ the monastic dreamers (or their disciples, in Zhiyi's case) engage in acts of dream interpretation that were entirely commensurate with salient examples from oneiromantic manuals, histories, and *zhiguai*: a fact that would have been obvious to the XGSZ's culturally literate discourse community. We will delve into these sorts of intertextual resonances in much more detail in Chapter Two, which considers a variety of oneiric conception narratives from GSZ and XGSZ, and explores the multifarious ways that they engage with both indigenous Chinese and Buddhist imagery and motifs.

inverse would be read as equally inauspicious.

154 T. 2060: 564c.

155 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 38.

156 顛以夢中所見通告門人，咸曰：「此乃會稽之天台山也，聖賢之所託矣。昔僧光、道猷、法蘭、曇密，晉、宋英達，無不栖焉。」(T. 2060: 564c19–22, punctuated as per XGSZ [2014], vol. 2, 625)

157 Another possible example is the account of Huiming 慧命 (531–568), who – as a youth – found his body is caressed by light in a dream (T. 2060: 561a), after which point a famous monk informs him that he would be an ideal monastic. Since the monk's dialogue contains no explicit reference to the dream, I have opted not to include it here. That said, Chen and Drège both speak to the ubiquity of the “bright light as good omen” trope, so it is indeed plausible that this conversation is an instance of implicit dream interpretation which would have been easily parseable to a medieval reader.

In sum, these accounts considered thus far would have been narratively functional, in that they could simultaneously attest to the perspicacity of the interpreters and the propriety of the courses of action that their interpretations were claimed to reveal. That said, they nonetheless betray a fundamental orientation toward dreams that is somewhat out of step with the implicit model revealed by the majority of the oneiric episodes that Daoxuan selected for inclusion in his collection. Specifically, the episodes outlined above situate dreams in the mechanistic realm of mantic practice, rendering their contents equivalent to arrangements of yarrow stalks or cracks in ox scapulae. As we will see below in the section on “Dream Exhortation vs. Dream Interpretation,” XGSZ’s standard use of dreams relies instead on a substantially different interpretative principle, which is drawn from direct application of *ganying* theory instead of the correlative cosmological assumptions underlying standard mantic techniques.

Interpretive Principle #2: Linguistic Play

A second hermeneutical principle, this one visible in both GSZ and XGSZ, relies on the assumption that the meaning of a dream vision might be concealed via wordplay,¹⁵⁸ whether glyphomantic (related to the orthography of specific characters)¹⁵⁹ or homophonic (related to their pronunciations).¹⁶⁰ Unlike

158 While I disagree with Bulkeley’s contention that oneiric experiences should be interpreted as a form of play, given the lack of direct intentionality that characterizes all but lucid dreams (*Big Dreams*, 129), I nonetheless acknowledge the plausibility of the notion that dream images could themselves be playful. As noted by Flanagan, the unconscious mind is much more likely to draw these sorts of impressionistic parallels, given that the prefrontal cortex (i.e., the seat of rationality) is partially “off-line” during sleep (139–162).

159 Roberto K. Ong describes this method at length (including a variety of examples of its usage), under the heading “Ideographic Analysis” (192–196). See also: Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang,” 241–244.

160 See Ong’s discussion of “Paronomastic Linkage,” (187–192). See also: Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang,” 240–241; Company, “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft); Vavril, *La Science des Rêve en Chine*, 90–105. For a comparative perspective, Scott Noegel provides ample evidence of the role of punning in the ancient Near Eastern oneiromancy, drawing examples from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, early Hellenistic writings, and later rabbinic literature: *Nocturnal Ciphers: The Allusive Language of Dreams in the Ancient Near East*, (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 2007). I find Noegel’s contentions about the Mesopotamian linguistic context particularly apposite (19–24), given that the variety of pronunciations of different cuneiform glyphs allowed for more paronomastic possibilities than a strictly alphabetical system. This is, of course, all the more true in the Chinese context. Moreover, his reflections on the relationship between dreams, language, ritual and power also strongly echo the Chinese context:

the somewhat mechanical process of “decoding” involved in the use of a dream manual, such interpretive processes would obviously have relied upon the skill and insight of the diviner, thus rendering them unsuitable for codification within these popular guides.¹⁶¹ In contrast, such readings do, however, make excellent efficacy narratives, which could certainly help to explain Huijiao and Daoxuan's decision to include them.

For our only example of logographic dream interpretation, we turn to the GSZ's biography of the famed fourth-century monastic thaumaturge Fotucheng 佛圖澄 (d. 348), whose prodigious mantic abilities were also seen to extend to dream interpretation.¹⁶² In this episode, Shi Hu 石虎 (295-349), the despotic third emperor of the Later Zhao dynasty (319–351), relates an oneiric vision to his monastic confidante:

Hu was once taking a nap and saw in a dream a herd of sheep carrying fish on their backs, coming from the northeast. When he woke up he asked Cheng about it. Cheng said, "It is not a good omen. The Xianbei shall have the central plain!" The Murong family later did make their capital there.¹⁶³

Since the extant biography does not discuss Hu's response to Fotucheng's prediction, the only plausible

For if words are loci of power, then ambiguous dream images, when recorded accurately by the diviner as ambiguous words, represent potentially unbridled forms of power. Punning interpretations limit that power by restricting the parameters of a dream's interpretation. The dream cannot now mean anything, but only one thing. The employment of puns in the process of interpretation, therefore, constitutes an act of power. There is nothing 'playful' about wordplay in ancient Mesopotamia (40–41).

This parallels the Chinese ideological position on the magical power and efficacy of the written word, whose earliest antecedents are outlined in Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 13–52. For a discussion of the adaptation of indigenous Chinese traditions of talismanic writing by Buddhists (which ultimately rests on the same convictions about the power of the written word), see Robson, “Signs of Power,” 135–139 and *passim*; Copp, *The Body Incantatory*, *passim*.

- 161 I am borrowing the term “decoding” from Freud, who uses it to dismissively characterize the “popular opinion” that “treats the dream as a kind of secret writing in which every sign is translated by means of a fixed key into another sign whose significance is known” (79). See Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang,” for a discussion of the skill and intuition associated in medieval histories with the employment of these techniques (241–244).
- 162 For a discussion of various thaumaturgical skills and abilities ascribed to this wonder-working monk, see Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 73–74, 84–88. For a full translation of his GSZ biography, including a historical overview and discussion of his impact upon other contemporary Buddhists, see Wright, “Fo-t'u-têng: A Biography,” *passim*.
- 163 Wright, “Fo-t'u-têng,” 361. Campany also cites this episode in “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft).

narrative rationale for including it is as testament to the monk's mantic efficacy: a goal that was rendered substantially more achievable by the fact that his biography was compiled more than a century after his death (i.e., long after the Xianbei had ousted the Later Zhao).¹⁶⁴ Though the account does not explicitly outline the monastic master's oneirocritical method, it is clearly a case of glyphomancy, given that the first character in “Xianbei” (鮮卑) consists of a fish (魚) nestled next to a sheep (羊);¹⁶⁵ that said, Fotucheng's interpretation could also be read as a composite one, as a northeasterly path would have indeed been the direction of ingress for these interlopers, given that the Xianbei were “a group of eastern Siberian proto-Mongols from the Tungus region.”¹⁶⁶ Even though we know that Huijiao and Daoxuan relied on a variety of sources for their respective collections (including oral narratives), it seems plausible to assume that this account had always been a textual one (or at least one intended for a literate audience), as the miracle at its heart would only have been parseable by a lettered reader (or auditor).¹⁶⁷

Just as the previous account contains the only instance of glyphomantic dream divination in the *Eminent Monks* collections under consideration, paronomastic dream interpretation is (almost) equally rare, with the only potentially relevant example¹⁶⁸ occurring in the XGSZ's biography of the monk

164 Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 74.

165 As noted in Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010), vol. 3, 333 ff. 1; Wright, “Fo-t'u-têng,” 361 ff. 98.

166 GR (*Xianbei* 鮮卑). Based on his survey of classical and medieval materials, Drège, “Clefs des Songes de Touen-Houang,” proposes a special category of these complex dream interpretations, requiring the expenditure of particular oneirocritical effort on the part of the interpreter. This category includes all cases where: “L'apparence du rêve est parfois complexe ou peu claire. L'onirocrite combine alors plusieurs mantique, l'une éclairant ce que l'autre ne dévoile pas” (244).

167 It is almost certainly a stretch, especially given the general terseness that characterizes reported speech in such accounts, but I could not help but take note of Fotucheng's response to his patron's question (i.e., 「不祥也」), which Wright renders somewhat wordily as “It is not a good omen” (cf. T. 2059: 386b2–3). If Fodde-Reguer is correct in her hypothesis about the widespread circulation and employment of dream manuals in medieval Chinese society, I would argue that this phrasing is significant, as it represents a response in the same terse, formulaic phrasing that one would find by consulting an oneiromantic manual (e.g., “very auspicious,” “very inauspicious”).

168 An “irrelevant example” is arguably found in Fotucheng's biography, cited above, as it involves no monks (or even an overt act of dream interpretation): “Afterwards Murong Jun made his capital at Ye and lived in Shi Hu's palace. He

Tanyan 曇延 (516–588).

Tanyan secluded himself, silently intending to make a great commentary on the *Nirvana [Sutra]*. But he was afraid that he had obstructions due to his unenlightened state. Every [day] he prayed for sincerity in his sleeping and waking lives.¹⁶⁹ One night, he dreamt of a man wearing white clothes and riding a white horse whose mane and tail [were so long that they] brushed the ground. [The man] discoursed upon the meaning of the sutra, and Tanyan grasped the horse's tail in his hand as he took part in this pure dialogue.

After awakening, [Tanyan] thought [to himself,] saying: “This must have been Aśvaghōṣa. He gave me the proper starting point. When I grasped the horse's tail, I knew his basic meaning. After speaking of these matters, it then became knowable.” He then expounded a commentary, where he explained the matter in verse, saying: “taking refuge in the womb of the Tathāgata,” “the inconceivable dharma,” and so on.¹⁷⁰

延幽居靜志，欲著涅槃大疏，恐有滯凡情，每祈誠寤寐。夜夢有人被於白服乘於白馬，駿尾拂地，而談授經旨，延手執馬，駿與之清論。覺後惟曰：「此必馬鳴大士授我義端，執駿知其宗旨，語事則可知矣。」便述疏說偈曰：「歸命如來藏」，「不可思議法」等。

When considering this story, I was initially flummoxed by Tanyan's confident assertion that the man he had seen was none other than the famed Indian Buddhist exegete Aśvaghōṣa, given that I could find no contemporaneous iconographic representation of this monk in which he was depicted astride a horse.

That said, it is notable that the Chinese rendering of the monk's name (馬鳴) is actually a translation of the Sanskrit sobriquet “Horse Neigh” (*Aśvaghōṣa*), which he earned by dint of the fact that his efficacious preaching inspired even horses to take heed.¹⁷¹ As such, I would argue that Tanyan's

often saw in a dream a tiger gnawing his arms. This meant that Shi Hu was a malevolent ghost” (Wright's translation, 368). This dream is used as a pretext to disinter and dishonour the corpse of the former despot. Though no overt oneirocriticism is on evidence here, and any implicit dream interpretation could not be credited to Fotucheng (given that he was already deceased at this time), the claim that this oneiric image “meant” that he was being assailed by the ghost of Shi Hu is clearly a reference to the fact that the “Hu” in his name (石虎) literally means “tiger” (*hu* 虎). I read the off-handedness with which this claim is made as evidence of the cultural currency of this form of dream interpretation (via the *Principle of Irrelevance*).

169 This is an interesting claim. I'm not sure what “sincerity in sleeping” would amount to, especially given the Vinaya injunction that stipulates that monks are not culpable for (mental / physical) sins committed while asleep, given the lack of intentionality of individuals in such a state.

170 T. 2060: 488a24–b1, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 274.

171 This episode is outlined as follows in Aśvaghōṣa's biography:

The king ascertained that the bhikṣu was a well-learned person of superior ability and understanding who taught and benefited the people in a broad and profound manner, and whose eloquent preaching could edify even nonhuman beings. In order to remove his courtiers' doubts, he ordered that seven horses not be fed for six days. On the morning of the sixth day, he assembled all Buddhist and non-Buddhist śramaṇas of different schools and invited

interpretation relies on the punning assumption that a (seemingly nondescript) man on an extraordinary horse must actually be a monk who took his name from just such an equine.

Interpretive Principle #3: Paradox

The final mode of traditional Chinese oneirocriticism evidenced in the GSZ and XGSZ,¹⁷² paradoxical interpretation, has a particularly long and storied history. The prototypical example, cited by both Bulkeley and Ong, is drawn from the *Zuozhuan*:

In 632 BCE, the armies of the Qin and Chu peoples met in a decisive contest, and on the eve of battle their two kings both had dreams that augured their respective fates. Duke Wen of Qin dreamed that he was being held down on his back by the Chu leader, who was sucking out his brain matter. When he awoke, Duke Wen was highly alarmed by this bizarre and disgusting dream, but his top minister gave him a surprisingly positive reading of its meaning: “Auspicious! Our side received heaven, while Chu bent face down as if accepting punishment. We have, in addition, softened him.” From an ordinary human perspective, it might have looked like the Chu leader was winning the dream fight, but from a heavenly perspective it was the Jin leader who was facing in the most virtuous direction, that is, toward the sky, which boded well for the Qin in the waking battle to come. The “softening” seemed to be the result of the Qin brain matter (symbolizing intelligence, cunning, guile) passing through the hard teeth (symbolizing weapons and defenses) of Chu, which again pointed to future military success.¹⁷³

the bhikṣu to preach the Dharma to them. All those who listened to him became enlightened. The king tethered the horses in front of the assembly and placed grass before them. Betel, which horses like, was also placed in the fodder. With tears flowing, the horses listened to the [bhikṣu’s] preaching without any thought of eating the fodder. Thus everyone knew that the bhikṣu was no ordinary person. Because even horses could understand his words, he was named Aśvagoṣa (“Horse Cry”) Bodhisattva (13). From “The Life of Aśvagoṣa Bodhisattva,” translated by Li Rongxi, in *The Lives of Great Monks and Nuns*, (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2002).

Cf., 王審知比丘高明勝達。導利弘深辯才說法乃感非人類。將欲悟諸群惑。餓七匹馬至於六日旦。普集內外沙門異學請比丘說法。諸有聽者莫不開悟。王繫此馬於眾會前以草與之(馬嗜浮流故以浮流草與之也)馬垂淚聽法無念食想。於是天下乃知非恒。以馬解其音故。遂號為馬鳴菩薩。』(T. 2046: 184a3–9).

172 It should, of course, be noted that some traditional modes of Chinese oneirocriticism are absent from these collections, such as chronomantic oneiromancy (which analyzes dream visions based on the time of day that they occurred) and hemerological oneiromancy (which considers them in light of their positioning within sexagenary calendrical cycle). See: Drège, “Clefs des Songes,” (232–233); Drège and Drettas, “Oniromancie” (384–386); Fodde-Reguer (46–56).

173 Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 57–58. Ong discusses this dream in the context of the Han recluse Wang Fu's tenfold typology of dreams (discussed in the introduction), which includes the “paradoxical” as one of its types: On the eve of the battle of Chengpu, Duke Wen of Qin dreamt that the Viscount of Chu lay on top of him and sucked out his brain. This was very bad indeed. When the battle took place, however, it turned out to be a great victory for him. This was an extremely paradoxical dream (154). Cf., 晉文公於城濮之戰，夢楚子伏己而盥其腦，是大惡也。及戰，乃大勝。此謂極反之夢也 (*Qianfulun*, 315).

Note that this is an implicitly ontological claim: given the purported (and unquestioned) relationship between dream

If one was to chart a continuum of oneirocritical modalities, ranging from the most “objective” [i.e., the mode that requires the least expertise and individual discretion on the part of the interpreter]¹⁷⁴ to the most “subjective” [i.e., the mode that involves the most virtuosic and idiosyncratic style of interpretation], the *analogical* mode would be situated near the “objective” pole,¹⁷⁵ *linguistic play* (the *paronomastic / glyptomantic* mode) would be located firmly in the “subjective” realm, and the *paradoxical* mode would surely be found near (or at) the “subjective” pole. As the *Zuozhuan* example indicates, offering a paradoxical interpretation of a dream requires the oneirocritic to not only abandon the standard symbology and connotative ranges of traditional oneirocriticism, but also to contravene the dreamer's own affective response to such an experience.¹⁷⁶ Thus, this technique seems to be the most socially constructive of all the forms of dream interpretation previously considered, as it allows the interpreter to create a hopeful, meaningful, or valuable narrative from an unbidden experience that had

and reality, an oneiric vision that does not accurately correspond to the dreamer's life is not faulty or incorrect, it is *paradoxical!* This episode was clearly culturally salient enough to be cited in Chen Shiyuan's Ming dynasty dream encyclopedia: see Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 72 ff. 21 and 130. See also: Li, *The Readability of the Past*, wherein she focuses on the rhetorical force of this episode:

Lord Wen of Jin's dream is an indeterminate sign, an enigmatic riddle based on the rift between surface and meaning. Because the reader is still at the threshold of the action, such tensions suggest open possibilities and alternatives. It is not clear whether the dream 'actually' portends Jin victory or whether Hu Yan's interpretation emboldens Lord Wen and influences the outcome of battle (268–269).

Li's observations on the performative character of this form of interpretation are applied to the medieval Chinese Buddhist context below.

- 174 On this understanding of dream interpretation as technology, see Fodde-Regeur. For instance, she argues that, [t]he *Dream Divination Book* provides instructions on dream divination to a non-exceptional agent beginning with a list of rules for dreamers based on cosmological patterns, and emphasizing that the body and mind are microcosms of these patterns. The authors of the text employ a language and vocabulary that would have been familiar to a Qin dynasty reader, as such language was a part of the shared culture of the time. Rules for divination are clearly mapped out for the reader and no experts are necessary to divine” (46 and *passim*).
- 175 The existence of dream manuals implies that, at least in simple cases, it was thought that the process was mechanistic enough that consultation with a mantic professional was, in most cases, unnecessary. Though his discussion is organized differently and draws upon different examples, Campany's overview of dream interpretation narratives posits a similar spectrum of complexity (from “simple” to “complex” hermeneutics) (“Dream Interpretation” [unpaginated draft]).
- 176 Bulkeley's imaginative reconstruction of the Duke Wen example (in *Dreaming in the World's Religions*) highlights this social dynamics that would likely underlie the provision of such an interpretation:
The minister, confronted with a frightened and confused leader on the morning of a decisive battle, may have felt a special urgency to discover a paradoxical level of meaning, if only to get the king's mind off the disturbing imagery of the dream's surface content (58).
This parallels Li's interpretation (cited above).

previously been a source of fear, shame or disquiet.¹⁷⁷ As such, this form of divination could be seen as a conscious attempt to “rewrite” or “remake” the future, especially in a cultural context whose assumptions about the efficacy of mantic technologies imply a future that is readable and thus fore-ordained.

Somewhat surprisingly, the GSZ also includes an episode whose content is almost as blatantly inauspicious (at least superficially) as that of Duke Wen's dream, wherein the monastic exegete Huiyan (慧嚴, 363–443), who was already concerned about whether his compilation and annotation of the *Nirvana Sutra* was accurate, dreams about being berated by an imposing figure for his “trifling additions” to the text.¹⁷⁸ Unlike many of the *analogous* dreams detailed above, this seems to be an example of a *literal* vision (i.e., one requiring no interpretation): the most common type of dream described in GSZ and XGSZ by an enormous margin (the significance of which will be considered below). However, in keeping with the paradoxical mode (and in contravention of the typically credulous response to such visions that characterizes vast majority of accounts in the *Eminent Monks*), his companions respond by saying:

This is probably just [a result of] your desire to warn and admonish future generations. Supposing that [our activities] were definitively inappropriate, why would you have immediately been given this dream?¹⁷⁹

This argument convinces the monk not to withdraw his version of the text from circulation, and the

177 I found Douglas Hollan's ethnography of Indonesian dream telling instructive on this point, as his informant, describing a response to a seemingly inauspicious dream, reveals a self-conscious awareness of the cultural dynamics of this form of oneirocriticism:

This was a “bad” dream that may have foretold my death. But I went to a dream expert who was able to change the dream so that my father didn't really want to kill me. Instead, it was a reminder from my father that he was hungry and wanted to be fed. So I went out and sacrificed a pig for him (175).

178 T. 2059: 368a. This episode is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

179 『此蓋欲誠厲後人耳，若必不應者，何容即時方夢。』, T. 2059: 368a26–27, punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 262–263.

propriety of this decision is later vouchsafed by an additional dream vision. What is striking about this interpretation, and what makes it an ideal segue into the next section, is that instead of using alternate readings of traditional Chinese dream symbols (as we saw in the interpretation of Duke Wen's dream), Huiyan's companions instead rely entirely on the *ganying* framework, arguing that the bare fact the monk had a responsive dream (regardless of content) meant that it should be read as a positive omen. Though this is the solitary instance of such an interpretation in the *Eminent Monks* corpus, it is a potent testament to the evidentiary value ascribed to oneiric visions.

Implicit Dream Interpretation

Paralleling the previous discussion of implicit dream telling, many of dream episodes from both *GSZ* and *XGSZ* that do not contain explicit dream interpretations (i.e., those considered above) are still predicated on implicit acts of oneirocriticism that, I argue, would have been silently read into them.¹⁸⁰ While the case of Huiyan considered above overtly dramatizes this process, it is clear that many of the elliptical dream narratives discussed previously only make sense when read through this lens. For instance, when a magistrate is visited by nightmares after imprisoning the monk Falin, his subsequent decision to release his prisoner clearly resulted from an unreported interpretation of the significance of these malign nocturnal visions.¹⁸¹ Another relevant example can be seen in the *XGSZ* biography of the monk Faning 法凝 (411–503), which includes an episode that features Emperor Wu of Qi 齊武帝

180 Fodde-Reguer argues effectively for the ubiquity and exoteric nature of these techniques, drawing on evidence from Han dynasty sources, suggesting that it is erroneous to consider them 'occultic' or 'esoteric' practices:

While 'religion' indicates the realm of the metaphysical, dream divination may be most immediately understood as a technique practiced in the physical, objective world. Gods or deities were not called upon to aid in such divination methods. While the 'occult' is defined as 'knowledge or use of agencies of a secret and mysterious nature,' the texts discussed below do not claim to discuss secrets, nor do they engage with mystery. Their purpose is to clarify, teach, and act as a manual for users. Even the terms used in the *History of the Han* such as 'shushu' [數術] ('calculations and arts') allude to clarification and calculation. Thus, categorizing such texts as 'occult' provides them with an obscuring patina of exoticism. Such exoticism connotes specialists, when the purpose of such texts was in fact to remove the exceptional agent" (44–45).

181 T. 2060: 566a, discussed in Chapter Four.

(440–493) dreaming of traipsing through a mountain range that bears his name.¹⁸² When a town elder in the Gui region petitions the throne with a claim that a disused road marker in his region proves that a local peak had once be called “Mount Qi,” the emperor rejoices and opts to build a Buddhist temple on its peak.¹⁸³ This episode is particularly striking in that the dream report itself contains absolutely no distinctively Buddhist imagery, but instead seems predicated upon the numinous power and liminal status of mountains in the medieval Chinese cosmography,¹⁸⁴ as well as the assumption that oneiric experiences are meaningful, responsive phenomena. As such, what provokes the monarch's response, at least as far as his rationale can be reconstructed (given the brevity of this account), is precisely the fact that he interprets a general case of miraculous response (i.e., a dream image that corresponds to waking reality) through a Buddhist lens. Finally, a particularly striking aspect of many of these narratives is the extent to which oneiromancy often seems *unnecessary*, as the subject matter of the dream visions, when described at all, leaves little room for uncertainty.¹⁸⁵

Dream Interpretation vs. Dream Exhortation

As we have seen (and as will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on oneiric conception), some of the dream episodes contained in GSZ and XGSZ are not divorced from the shared symbology of Chinese oneirocriticism, with imagery such as dragons, swallowing celestial objects, and climbing mountains seemingly carrying the same significance that they did in official histories, popular

182 T. 2060: 678a27. Mentioned above, in the section on “Dream Telling.”

183 T. 2060: 678a-b.

184 This understanding of mountains is discussed in Chapter Four, in conjunction with my discussion of oneiric interactions between Buddhist monks and mountain deities.

185 One counter-example, which I consider in Chapter Four, is found in a XGSZ episode centering on the dream of the monk Sanguo's sister-in-law, who receives an oneiric communique from her deceased husband. This case is intriguing, because of the contrast between the reported content of the dream (which is presented as a clear, discursive narrative) and the woman's response (she is described as awakening to feel confused and uncertain about the meaning of the vision). Her perplexity is only resolved when she consults a local spirit medium, who interprets the vision for her. Such episodes (rare as they are) could be read as testament to the retrospective process of dream narrativization (discussed in the Introduction).

narratives, and oneiromantic manuals.¹⁸⁶ But such accounts are dwarfed by the enormous preponderance of narratives that seem intentionally designed to thwart such interpretations: dreams of “A monk saying...,” “A strange man saying...,” and other equally unevocative non-events, all of which are devoid of the images that serve as the raw materials of standard Chinese dream interpretation. Such accounts radically unask the question of oneirocriticism by positing an incommensurate hermeneutical framework: namely, dream as exhortation,¹⁸⁷ where the experience's suasive force is grounded in the *ganying* framework (i.e., in the very fact of the dream itself) rather than its contents. We saw an overt elucidation of this principle in the Huiyan episode translated above.

To this point, there are a plethora of examples from both collections that display this “anti-oneiromantic” character. For example, in the GSZ biography of Guṇabhadra (求那跋陀羅, 394–468), the monk is called upon to interpret a ruler's dream, which he does. That said, the account includes no information about the patient's oneiric experience itself, save that it was unpleasant and recurring (*lǚ you guaimeng* 屢有怪夢),¹⁸⁸ which short-circuits the typical narrative logic of dream interpretation stories by denying the reader the opportunity to follow an “Arthur Conan Doyle-ian” chain of deduction from dream experience to waking life. Likewise, for an oneiric account with minimal

186 In such cases, the *Eminent Monks* discourse on dreams seems analogous to a contemporary Taoist record of dream miracles studied by Drège in “Notes d'oniologie chinoise,” wherein he notes the extent to which the symbolism and qualitative valences of dream imagery hew closely to the evaluations of such images in oneirocritical manuals (285–289). This parallels the arguments for the cultural situatedness of dreams and dream interpretation put forward by Gregor, Tuzin, Tedlock, Mageo, Doniger and others (as cited above).

187 This term owes a debt to Greene's (2012) notion of “verificatory visions,” defined as symbolic signs that verify “the practitioner’s attainment not by being similar to what the state of *dhyāna* is (a calm mind, or a blissful body), but through a more obscure and potentially flexible process;” this process is then defined as “the arising of a new object of consciousness as a symbolic sign indicating a given meditative attainment” [56 and employed *passim*.]. While “exhortative dreams” and “verificatory visions” often play a functionally similar role (i.e., indicating the achievement of a certain level of spiritual development), their contents are often vastly different (as in the numerous cases of dreams with virtually no recorded imagery noted above). As such, I would posit that exhortative dreams represent the literary encoding of verificatory visions, in a manner intended to narratively replicate their function while simultaneously circumventing the application of indigenous oneirocritical methods.

188 T. 2059: 344b18.

narrative content and a reading so literal that it can barely be called an interpretation, we can just as easily turn to Zhiyi's biography. After sojourning at an over-crowded monastery, the famed monk claims to have dreamt of person saying “I am Guanda 冠達,” who then asks him to move “to the third bridge.” Upon waking, Zhiyi states: “Guanda is [Emperor] Liang Wu's dharma name... [And] the third bridge, is this not Guangzhai 光宅 [temple]?” Following this straightforward reading, Zhiyi proceeds to relocate to the famed Buddhist patron's newly founded monastic retreat.¹⁸⁹ Finally, in an account that initially appears to be engaging in standard oneiromantic tropes (given the wealth of specific, imagistic details contained therein), the monk Yancong dreams of a golden image presenting him with a crystal bowl of wine and asking him to drink from it. Upon awakening, the monk is initially puzzled by the potential significance of this dense and evocative dream, but, in a clear inversion of the standard dream interpretation narrative, a local prince, upon hearing about this oneiric experience, simply responds by commissioning a Guanyin statue matching the one seen in the monk's dream.¹⁹⁰ Once again, dream exhortation trumps dream interpretation. Thus, we can see two seemingly discrete subsets of dream episodes within both Huijiao and Daoxuan's collections: those that are more or less commensurate with traditional oneiromantic narratives (such as those discussed in the “Analogical Interpretation” section above and in the “Oneiric Conception” chapter) and those that definitively are *not*, whether by actively flouting narrative conventions or by simply failing to provide the types of details that are typically present in such accounts.

189 末為靈曜褊隘，更求閑靜，忽夢一人，翼從嚴正，自稱名云：「余冠達也，請住三橋。」顛曰：「冠達，梁武法名，三橋豈非光宅耶？」乃移居之。T. 2060: 565c25–28; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 2, 628–629.

190 T. 2060: 437a. The trope of the oneirically sanctioned image is also seen in the tale of the monk Xuanhui 玄會 (582–640), who dreams of a Buddha and, upon waking, takes the dream as an impetus to construct a matching image (542c29): another case of an oneiric exhortation.

Though this claim would be difficult to prove, a plausible explanation for this bifurcation of dream episodes (and their implied hermeneutics) is that these two types of narratives had originally been intended for different readerships, with the “exhortative” dreams representing an intra-group discourse (for internal consumption within the Buddhist discourse community) and the “interpretive” dreams an inter-group one (intended to convince outsiders of the magical efficacy of Buddhist monks).¹⁹¹ The intertextual readability of certain accounts between groups (i.e., the employment of standard oneiromantic tropes in those accounts intended for the laity) is certainly intuitively plausible: both Huijiao and Daoxuan were clearly aware of the proselytic efficacy of miracle stories (as discussed in the introduction) and they obviously both possessed the cultural competency to make sure that these accounts would have been readable to their respective patrons.

Even if this is true, however, it leaves a major question unanswered: why did so many of the accounts in both collections adopt the (seemingly counterfactual) strategy of positing dream experiences whose meaning and significance are so pellucid that they can be followed verbatim, with no interpretation required. This question gains additional force when considered in light of the various factors vitiating against such a counter-intuitive approach, such as the clear distrust of such experiences undergirding the “like a dream, like an illusion” trope (discussed in the introduction to this chapter) and the seemingly universal experience of dreams whose content is manifestly untrue (or at least utterly bewildering).¹⁹² That said, it is certainly possible that this represents a case of subject matter shaping

191 For a detailed overview of the linguistic, sociological and anthropological perspectives the role of social discourses in creating and reinforcing in- and out-group identities, see Anna Duszak, “Introduction” to *Us and Others: Social Identities Across Languages, Discourses and Cultures*, (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2002), 1–28.

192 See, for instance, the Chinese typologies of dreams discussed in the Introduction (such as those of Wang Fu and the *Zhouli*), under which only a small subset of dreams are considered meaningful (or even interpretable). Such typologies are equally common in various cultures' oneirocritical systems: Hindu (Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 30; Doniger, *Dreams, Illusions and Other Realities*, 15–21); Islamic (Mittermaier, 6–8; Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 202–205); Ancient Greek (Holowchak, 71–124; Noegel, 193–194); and those of a variety of

narrative form: since these monks were specifically being selected on the basis of their exemplary character, perhaps it is simply the case that the notion of them receiving direct communication from the unseen realm was inherently plausible to a medieval Chinese readership. While there may be some truth to this explanation, I would suggest that it may also reflect the existence of a specific subset of medieval Buddhist dreams that we know *were* read as practical exhortations: namely, those dreams that had been specifically sought in the context of ritual practice. Considering the significance of such oneiric visions in context (i.e., the fact that the receipt of such dreams was seen as a proof that one was sufficiently prepared to receive certain forms of ordination or instruction) yields an alternate explanation for the sorts of “exhortative” dreams described above. Given that such dreams were experienced in a ritual context, and given the (implicit or explicit) role of elder monks in explaining and contextualizing such dreams (discussed above), perhaps these GSZ and XGSZ episodes should not be read as the “initial tellings” of these dreams, but rather their final forms, after the process of monastic oneiromancy had “closed” any open signifiers. We now turn to these “sought” dreams.

Dream Incubation

As we have already seen, oneiric practice clearly played a central role in the lives of medieval Chinese Buddhists (or at least the exemplars whose tales were recorded for posterity in the *Eminent Monks*), with both collections containing a plethora of accounts related to monks and lay patrons receiving, and often unquestioningly heeding, exhortations that they received in dream visions. While many of the

indigenous societies, including the Toraja of Indonesia (Hollan, 175–177) and those of the Hagen people of Papua New Guinea (Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew J. Strathern, “Dreaming and Ghosts among the Hagen and Duna of the Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea,” in *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific*, edited by Roger Ivar Lohmann, [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003], 43–59, 44–46). This list could basically be extended *ad infinitum*, given that the vast majority of cultural traditions I have reviewed during my research posit their own local typologies of oneiric experience, typically including (among other elements) some variant of Bulkeley's “big” vs. “small” dreams.

communicative¹⁹³ dream experiences discussed in the previous sections seem to have arrived unbidden (at least based on the minimal clues present in these terse biographical sketches), both collections also include evidence that medieval Chinese Buddhists also sought such visions purposefully, through a variety of praxical methods. The dreams encountered in the aftermath of such practices were accorded considerable epistemic value, as they were seen as responsive communiques from the unseen realm. For reasons that will be explored presently, and in keeping with the standard nomenclature of dream research, I will refer to the nexus of beliefs and practices associated with the purposeful inculcation of oneiric experiences as “dream incubation.”

As Kimberly C. Patton argues, this term, which was originally coined to describe a specific practice from ancient Greek and Near Eastern religion,¹⁹⁴ has taken on an “expanded, almost impressionistic usage,” such that it is now employed to describe “any kind of intentional sleeping to produce dreams.”¹⁹⁵ In an attempt to rein in the most *outré* of these usages, and to allow the term to retain some descriptive utility, she draws on early Hellenistic practice to posit the following schematic

193 I.e., that they contain new information about the external world and that this information is parseable). For a discussion of *ganmeng* 感夢 that explores this type, as initially outlined in Wang Fu's *Qianfulun*, see Liu, *Meng de mixin yu meng de tansuo* 夢的迷信與夢的探索, 100–101.

194 In addition to a wealth of cross-cultural and trans-temporal reports suggesting that psycho-spiritual techniques for inculcating specific dream visions are a ubiquitous feature of human cultures (see below for a variety of examples), contemporary psychological research also supports the plausibility of such accounts. For instance, a study by T. J. Hoelscher, et al. demonstrated that external stimuli related to a dreamer's own concerns, presented during sleep but without waking the dreamer, was much more likely to be incorporated into reported content of their dreams: a salient finding, given the ritual contexts in which much religious incubation occurred (e.g., deathbed *nembutsu* practice). See: Timothy J. Hoelscher, Eric Klinger, and Steven G. Barta, “Incorporation of concern- and nonconcern-related verbal stimuli into dream content,” *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 90 (1981): 88–91. Likewise, Roberto Saredi (et al.) found that a laboratory “incubation” method (I include the “scare quotes” in deference to Patton's argument about the analytical utility of this term when applied outside of the religious context [outlined below]) produced more detailed dream reports that included more references to the subject's “incubated” concerns. They posit that the dream “incubation” procedure likely influenced the salience / memorability of dream content or effected subsequent recall and retelling upon waking, though they note that it is a “non-specific effect” that works “for some of the people some of the time” (207). Roberto Saredi, George W. Baylor, Barbara Meier and Inge Strauch, “Current Concerns and REM-Dreams: A Laboratory Study of Dream Incubation,” *Dreaming* 7:3 (1997), 197–208.

195 Kimberly C. Patton, “A Great and Strange Correction: Intentionality, Locality, and Epiphany in the Category of Dream Incubation,” *History of Religions* 43:3 (2004), 194–223, 197.

definition: dream incubation is “comprised three elements, enacted in this particular order: (1) intentionality, (2) locality, and (3) epiphany.”¹⁹⁶ In this framework, “intentionality” refers to both the practitioner's motivating desire to receive an oneiric vision and to any preparatory activities (e.g., purification rites) thereby necessitated; “locality” designates a symbolically demarcated or physically separate space whose numinous character and/or historical ties to oneiric practice inspires aspirants to seek dreams there; and “epiphany” denotes the received vision, which is interpreted by its recipient as an actual interaction with one or more extrahuman beings. Drawing on Jonathan Z. Smith's notion of the “rectification of categories,” Patton suggests that “dream incubation” can maintain its analytical utility on two conditions: first, that the original (cultic) context of the term is heeded, and, second, that at least two of the three elements detailed above are present.¹⁹⁷

There are several reasons that this term seems particularly apposite in the context of medieval Chinese Buddhist practice. Specifically, the practice of dream incubation is predicated on cosmological assumptions that are a near-perfect fit with those underlying the *ganying* framework: e.g., human actions can impel responses from the cosmos [or extrahuman beings within it]; these responses can manifest in the oneiric realm; and, finally, dreams resulting from such responses have meaning and significance, which can be parsed by (some) humans. Thus, even though the “responsive dream” is only one of many dream etiologies proposed in classical and medieval Chinese sources (as discussed in the introduction), the purported existence of such oneiric phenomena demonstrates that “incubated

196 Patton, “A Great and Strange Correction,” 202.

197 Patton makes this case as follows:

I believe that the category of dream incubation is still useful and can still continue to be rectified, as long as we know and respect its highly specific historical context, and appreciate its profoundly cultic meaning. To reiterate, incubation meant deliberate sleeping in a holy place after ritual preparation in order to produce religiously meaningful dreams in which the god showed himself or herself in an efficacious way to solve the problem, heal the illness, or give the message (*ibid.*, 208).

dreams,” and the information gleaned from them, would clearly have been meaningful categories within the medieval Chinese episteme. This observation becomes increasingly plausible when considering the interpersonal pedagogical context in which dream experiences were told and interpreted (seen above), as these same communities of practice also provided instruction on the means by which such visions could be attained and parsed.¹⁹⁸

As always, we do not know whether any of the given dream episodes discussed in this section represent actual dream experiences. That said, the prevalence of dream incubation, especially in the context of these forms of oneiric witnessing (as will be discussed presently), reveals a clear avenue whereby accounts of exhortative dreams would have come to seem plausible (and perhaps even commonplace) to medieval Chinese Buddhists, both among monastics and the laity. For instance, if even a reasonable subset of the recipients of the *bodhisattva* precepts had been granted this ordination only after an oneiric confirmation, this implies that a sizable percentage of the *Eminent Monks'* discourse community would have had a direct, personal experience of *at least one* dream that had been “read” by a monastic master, preceptor or other authority figure, as an instance of the stimulus/response paradigm in action, thus normalizing this form of revelatory practice.

Eric Greene's dissertation does an admirable job elucidating the hermeneutical and epistemological contexts of visionary experience in fifth- and sixth-century Chinese Buddhism,

198 Zhiyi considers this issue in some detail in the *Understanding Dhyāna Pāramitā: A Method in Stages (Shichan boluomi cidi famen 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門* [T. 1916]), where he argues that an appropriately nuanced reading of dream experiences can only be performed by a skilled teacher. Greene translates the relevant section as follows:

Indeed, it is quite difficult to distinguish true [signs] from false ones, and one must thus not take [any signs] to be definitely true until they have been recognized by a master. Such matters must be decided in person, and cannot be judged on the basis of textual descriptions. For this reason when a practitioner is first carrying out such repentance practices he must have access to a skilled teacher who can distinguish the true from the false (196).

highlighting the perceived continuity between the meditative and oneiric visions experienced in the aftermath of various preparatory practices.¹⁹⁹ In discussing the prevalence of these practices, he draws on the broadly influential writings of Zhiyi, who cautions against attempting to interpret such visions for oneself, and is particularly critical of the practice of attempting to “reverse engineer” such attainments by focusing on and attempting to attain the specific visions described in *chan* texts.²⁰⁰ That said, in contrast to the manifest content of Zhiyi's cautionary statement, Greene suggests that it should be read as a critique of a prevalent fifth- and sixth-century practice, which then requires a radical reframing of the entire textual tradition related to such experiences.²⁰¹

Framing these texts as “meditation manuals” might occasionally obscure as much as it illuminates. Perhaps better that we think of them, at least in part, as something more akin to handbooks for interpreting visions. It is worth noting that in such a case the skill possessed by the master, such as the master with whom Zhiyi recommends one consult about the meaning of any and all visions, is explicitly taken as comparable (but superior) to the information found in *chan* texts.²⁰²

199 Note: Greene's dissertation generally focuses on the phenomenon of the “verificatory vision” (defined on pg. 6 and used *passim*) as an unbidden sign of one's meditative attainment. As he suggests, the specific content of such a vision is of secondary importance at best:

By 'verificatory' I mean that these visions are not significant merely as acts of perception or as the acquisition of knowledge relative to the object seen. Rather the occurrence of the vision—having this particular experience—is deemed to signify something about the person to whom it appears (*ibid.*).

That said, he notes that some apocryphal Chinese texts ascribe the same significance to both meditative and oneiric visions: For instance,

the Contemplation Scriptures too often assume a semiotic equivalence between dreams [and] what I have called 'verificatory visions,' and in many cases it is said that either result will attest to the success of one's practice.

Sometimes a dream is the only result mentioned (245–246).

Such oneiric experiences would, of course, correspond to Patton's notion of “intentionality,” in the context of dream incubation.

200 Greene, 194–197.

201 This observation is implicitly in keeping with the *Principle of Counterargument* (outlined in the introduction).

202 Greene, 197. For an excellent example that highlights the quest for “verificatory visions” in XGSZ, see the biography of the monk Narēndrayāśas 那連提黎耶舍, whose *dhāraṇī* practice yields a “confirmatory vision” of himself bodily becoming a Buddha: 曾依舍利弗陀羅尼。具依修業。夢得境界。自身作佛。如此靈祥雜沓 (433a8–9). On the evolution of *jingjie* 境界 from “perceptual object” to “verificatory vision” in fifth and sixth century Chinese Buddhist practice, see: Eric M. Greene, “Visions and Visualizations: In Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhism and Nineteenth-Century Experimental Psychology,” *History of Religions* 55:3 (2016) : 289–328, 318–319. This sort of vision, which lacks any additional extra-oneiric confirmation, is much more common in XGSZ than its predecessor volume.

Moreover, Greene provides substantive textual evidence from contemporaneous contemplation sutras of dreams experiences serving as “verificatory visions,” either as indications of provisional meditative progress or as unilateral signs of success that supplant the necessity of meditative proofs entirely.²⁰³

Building upon this material, the next section begins by outlining some of the key textual and praxical contexts within which dream incubation was advocated and practiced in medieval Buddhist literature, and then turns to the GSZ and XGSZ for additional evidence (partial and contingent as it may be) of these visionary practices in action, with the aim of exploring those practices that can be seen “in action” in accounts preserved in the early sixth and mid-seventh centuries.

The Oneiric Witness: Confession and Dream Response in Medieval China

In the years since Strickmann made his doleful assessment of the state of oneirological inquiry in studies of Chinese religious history,²⁰⁴ one of the areas that has received the most concerted attention (at least in the context of medieval Buddhism) is the role of dreams in confession rituals, where they served to signify that one's contrition had been accepted as genuine. Moreover, these rituals were not performed exclusively as a ethico-soteriological ends unto themselves; instead, Buddhist preceptors and meditation masters also included them (and the visions engendered by them) within larger ritual programmes, relying upon the presence and contents of received oneiric visions as signs that the positive qualities of a particular disciple had been vouchsafed by the unseen realm. In keeping with the general role of dreams within the *ganying* episteme (outlined above), oneiric “verificatory visions” were read by Buddhist teachers and preceptors as signs that a disciple was prepared for the next stage in their respective praxis path (whether it be the conferral of bodhisattva precepts or of a new form of

203 *Ibid.*, 246.

204 Strickmann, “Psychosinology,” 25.

meditative visualization).²⁰⁵ Such visions were especially salient in the case of the receipt of bodhisattva precepts, given that the apocryphal *Fanwang jing* (i.e., the source of these behavioural maxims) explicitly required some form of “verificatory vision” as a prerequisite to the conferral of the ordination:

If a child of the Buddha wishes with good intentions to receive the bodhisattva precepts, he can ordain himself in front of the statues of the Buddha and bodhisattvas. He should repent for seven days and, after seeing auspicious signs (*haoxiang* 好相, J. *Kōsō*), he will acquire the precepts. If he cannot see auspicious signs, he should definitely see them [even if it takes] fourteen days, twenty-one days, or even one year. Only after seeing the auspicious signs can he receive the precepts in front of the statues of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.²⁰⁶

Though this text does not explicitly list dreams in its catalogue of “auspicious signs,”²⁰⁷ the various accounts considered in the present project are a clear testament to the fact that many medieval Chinese Buddhists interpreted them in exactly this way. Moreover, Funayama Tōru has already extensively catalogued a variety of dream experiences associated with *bodhisattva* precept ordination in the *Eminent Monks*, so it is unnecessary to reduplicate his conclusions here.²⁰⁸

Contexts: Confession and Dreams in the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra*

One of the key scriptural sources employed to sanction visionary dream practice in medieval China was clearly the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi* (*Banzhou sanmei jing* 般舟三昧經 [T. 418]) sutra, whose central

205 See: Kuo Li-ying, *Confession et Contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois du V^e au X^e siècle*, (Paris: EFEO, 1994), 64 ff. 13.

206 T. 1484: 1006c5-18, translated by Yamabe, “Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination,” 18.

207 As per Yamabe's translation: “Auspicious signs mean that [he sees] the Buddhas come and rub his head, that [he] sees light, flowers, and various extraordinary signs” (*ibid.*, 19).

208 Note: while this this topic clearly deserves further attention, I am somewhat constrained by the fact that this chapter has already expanded to a rather unwieldy length. As such, I must consider it further in a future publication. For an excellent introduction to bodhisattva precepts in early medieval China see: Funayama Tōru 船山徹, “Rikuchō jidai ni okeru bosatsukai no juyō katei” (六朝時代における菩薩戒の受容過程), *Tōhō gakuho* 67 (1995): 1–135. Therein, he discusses several of the dream narratives considered above (namely, those associated with Daojin and Tuoba Tao), as well as Huiji's dream (discussed below), and those related to Prince Xiao Ziliang and the innovative recitation practices that developed in his court (see Chapter 3) (88–89). In addition, he also discusses a dream vision from *Biographies of Famous Monks* related to the monk Wangfa's bodhisattva precept ordination (77).

role in both confession rituals (defined broadly) and Zhiyi's meditation programme has been exhaustively investigated in prior scholarship.²⁰⁹ For our present purposes, one of the most striking aspects of this text is its deft reimagining of the ontological significance of dreams, as they are not seen as ultimately illusory phenomena (and thus as paradigmatic examples of the generally unreliable quality of human cognition and of embodied existence as a whole), but instead as significant and meaningful visions. Greene provides an eloquent summary of this process:

Indeed in this text even waking visions of the buddhas, obtained while in meditation, are eventually analogized to dreams. Of course the dream analogy in Mahāyāna texts is usually taken as a philosophical reflection on ontology—just as dreams are produced by the mind (and hence “empty”) so too are all things, including the buddhas. Interestingly, however, the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi* also uses the analogy in a different way, explaining that similar to a dream this meditation practice allows one to actually see and hear faraway things in defiance of the normal laws of space and time. But apart from what the text explicitly says about why meditation and dreams are similar, the background assumption here seems to be that the two experiences can mean the same thing—both kinds of visions attest to success in the meditation practice in question.²¹⁰

This overt identity can be seen in the text's description of an Amitābha²¹¹ visualization ritual, whose successful completion is reflected in either a meditative or oneiric vision:

[B]odhisattvas, whether they be ascetics or wearers of white [laymen or lay women], having learned of the Buddha-field of Amitābha in the western quarter, should call to mind the Buddha in that quarter. They should not break the precepts, and call him to mind single-mindedly, either for one day and one night, or for seven days and seven nights. After seven days they will see the

209 Daniel B. Stevenson, *The T'ien-T'ai Four Forms of Samādhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui, and Early T'ang Buddhist Devotionalism*. (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1987), 75–81, 161–175; Greene, *Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience*, 245, 255–257; Kuo Li-ying, *Confession et Contrition*, 64 ff. 13. Swanson, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight, passim*.

210 Greene, 245. While Greene is primarily concerned with the Chinese context of these practices, Yamabe (in “Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination”) notes some striking parallels between between this text, the *Ākāśagarbha* sutra and the *Upāliparipṛcchā* sutra, positing a tradition of visionary confession traceable back to India and/or Central Asia (28–36).

211 As an aside, while Amitābha is obviously more typically associated with the practice of *nianfo* than with confession, Greene (2012) helpfully outlines the linking of these praxical categories in the in the apocryphal fifth-century *Sutra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha* (which, of course, also ties the practice to visionary dreaming). As he argues, this sutra states that “if one maintains the precepts one will be able to obtain the needed visions in dreams 'without practicing seated meditation' (雖不坐禪)” (85 ff. 32). For an overview of the contents and textual history of this apocryphon, as well as its links with the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra*, see Yamabe Nobuyoshi, *The Sutra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha: The Interfusion of the Chinese and Indian Cultures in Central Asia as Reflected in a Fifth Century Apocryphal Sūtra*, (PhD diss., Yale University, 1999).

Buddha Amitâbha. If they do not see him in the waking state, then they will see him in a dream.²¹²

For narrative evidence of the pragmatic identity of oneiric and meditative visions in medieval Chinese Buddhism, we need look no further than the GSZ's hagiographical telling of the life of Dharmakṣema's disciple Daojin, whose master only granted him permission to be ordained following three years of intensive confession and his subsequent receipt of a meditative vision (discussed above).²¹³ What is striking is that a variant version of this story (relayed in Zhiyi's commentary on the *Brahma's Net Sutra* [T. 1811]) is identical in all respects, save that the disciple's verificatory vision instead occurs in a dream.²¹⁴ This alternate version, which Yamabe argues was likely based on the earlier (and no longer extant) *Lives of Renowned Monks*,²¹⁵ is significant for our purposes due to the conceptual slippage that clearly occurred therein. Whether it was an intentional alteration on the part of Huijiao or simply a result of narrative drift, the presence of this conceptual slippage is indicative of the equivalent evidentiary value ascribed to dreams and meditative visions. Zhiyi's decision to cite the earlier version of the story is a further testament to the importance of dream visions in his own praxis framework, but also highlights the fact that his later formalization of a praxis schema linking dreams and confession should not be seen as an innovation, but rather a codification of previously known and accepted practice.²¹⁶

212 Paul Harrison (trans.), *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sutra*, BDK English Tripitaka 25-II, 25-III, (Berkeley, CA: The Numata Centre for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1998), 18. Cf., 菩薩若沙門白衣所聞西方阿彌陀佛刹，當念彼方佛，不得缺戒，一心念——若一晝夜、若七日七夜——過七日以後見阿彌陀佛，於覺不見，於夢中見之。(T. 418: 905a14–17)

213 Greene's translation of this episode is cited above.

214 As discussed in Yamabe, "Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination," 22–24. This is congruent with Greene's observation on the "semiotic equivalence" between dreams and meditation in the *Consecration Sutras* (246), suggesting just how widespread this perspective might have been.

215 Yamabe, "Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination," 23.

216 As an aside, Yamabe notes that Zhiyi's form of dream incubation practice is still followed by the monks of the Tendai school in contemporary Japan, citing an evocative personal account from a Japanese monk who received an oneiric confirmation after monks of diligent practice (*ibid.*, 36–38).

This is not to say that either the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi* or the role of dreams therein was uncontroversial in medieval China. For instance, extant correspondence²¹⁷ between Huiyuan of Mount Lu 慧遠 (334–416) and Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344–413) sees the former contesting the propriety of this practice due to its association with the oneiric:

[134b4] Next, a question about *nianfo samādhi* and the reply:

[134b5] [Hui]yuan asked: With regard to the *nianfo samādhi*, as the sections on *nianfo* in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* explain it, they frequently draw on dreams as a metaphor. [But] dreams are in the domain of unenlightened beings. Whether one is deluded or understands, [dreams are] to be understood as restricted to the self. But the *sūtra* says that [by means of the] *nianfo samādhi* one sees the Buddhas. One questions them, then they answer back and thus resolve the snares of doubts.

[134b8] Now if the Buddhas [so seen] are the same as what is seen in dreams, then they would just be what one sees in one's own imagination. If one focuses this mental image, one achieves *samādhi*; in *samādhi*, one sees the Buddhas. [But] the Buddhas that one sees do not come in from outside, nor do I go out [to them]. It is a direct matter of the focus on the image and reason coming together, much the same as in a dream. If I do not go out of myself, and the Buddha does not come in, then how is there elucidation (*jie* 解)? Where would this elucidation come from? But if [the Buddha] really does come from without in response [to the meditation], then one should not use dreams as a metaphor. [Rather,] the meeting would be through [the Buddha's] supernatural power (*shentong* 神通). Because of not being the true characteristic, there could therefore be “going” and “coming.” “Going” [and “coming”] are thus talked about on the *sūtra*'s surface and are not the real intent of the *samādhi*. In the end, what makes the connection [between meditator and Buddha]?²¹⁸

Not only is this description of the unreality of oneiric experience (and, relatedly, its “non-communicative” character)²¹⁹ utterly incompatible with the various dream miracles explored throughout the present project, Huiyuan's persistent references to dream visions as “metaphors” for *nianfo* visualization²²⁰ suggest that he was not aware of the dream incubation practices associated with this

217 As compiled in the dialogical *Dasheng da yi zhang* 大乘大義章 (“Topics on the Great Meaning of the Mahāyāna” T. 1856). Discussed in Charles B. Jones, “Was Lushan Huiyuan a Pure Land Buddhist? Evidence from His Correspondence with Kumārajīva About *Nianfo* Practice,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 21 (2008): 175–191.

218 Translated in Jones, 178–179.

219 In contrast, both *GSZ* and *XGSZ* contain instances (three and five, respectively) of the compound *tongmeng* 通夢, which I translate as “communicative dream.”

220 *Yu* 喻 is the Chinese term being rendered here as “metaphor.” For a general discussion of this term in conjunction with Chinese dream interpretation, see the introduction. For the first example from Jones' translation, cf. *The Great Wisdom of Dharma Teacher Kumārajīva (Jiumoluoshe fashi dayi* 鳩摩羅什法師大義): 「般舟經念佛章中說。多引夢為喻。」 (T. 1856: 134b5–6)

text, that these practices had not yet developed, or that he (for whatever reason) did not deem them to be worthy of discussion or consideration. Kumārajīva's response, in contrast, ascribes a much greater epistemological value to oneiric experiences, rejecting Huiyuan's reductive reading.²²¹

As people can, through the power of dreams, go and see things that are far distant, so does the Bodhisattva [who practices] the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*. By the power of this *samādhi*, one sees all the distant Buddhas, and no mountain or forest can obstruct one. Because people do believe in dreams, it serves as a metaphor. Moreover, dreams are spontaneous occurrences. They are like this without [the practitioner] expending any effort. How then could one expend the effort and not achieve the vision?

[134c17] Again, as for the bodies of all Buddhas having set characteristics, these ought to be [seen as merely] the delusions of thoughts and discriminations. But the *sūtras* explain that all Buddhas' bodies are produced from the aggregation of conditions, and have no self-nature but are ultimately empty and quiescent, like dreams and magical illusions. If this is so, then the bodies of all the Buddhas seen by practicing in accordance with the explanations should not be merely delusions. If [the vision of the Buddhas] is a delusion, then everything must be a delusion. If it is not a delusion, then nothing else is a delusion either.²²²

Intriguingly, the Kuchean monk's assessment of the possibility of dream travel is much more compatible with traditional Sinitic views on the topic (as discussed in the introduction) than those of his Chinese interlocutor. That said, he too does not seem to consider dream visions as anything other than an analogy for the types of *samādhi* discussed in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi sutra*, especially given that

221 Following Richard H. Robinson, Jones argues that Huiyuan's perspective can best be characterized as a form of “naive realism,” which draws a firm line of demarcation between sensory phenomena (real) and mental phenomena (false), under which the notion of a mental phenomenon, such as a dream, providing novel insights is clearly impossible (185). While I agree with this assessment in principle, I think it fails to do justice to the complexity of Huiyuan's position. As we have seen in the Introduction (and will continue to be demonstrated throughout this project), medieval Chinese Buddhist perspectives on dreams were myriad and multifarious, drawing from both Buddhist and Sinitic traditions. In this way, and given the ubiquity of oneiromantic technologies (as well as narratives of dream interpretation) at this time, both of which rely upon the underlying premise that *at least some* dream experiences must be communicative, it is virtually unthinkable that Huiyuan did not share this perspective. To support this claim, consider the following claim, which is ascribed to Huiyuan in GSZ and was recorded by one of the many devotees alongside whom he had sworn to seek rebirth in the Pure Land:

Now we meet the good fortune that we without (previous) deliberation in unison (strive) for the Western Region (*Sukhāvātī*). Since the study of scriptures has opened up our faith, and bright feelings have spontaneously developed, the image of the motive power pervades our sleeping and dreaming, and our happiness is a hundred times greater than of those who “come like children (to their father).” (T. 2059: 359a, translated in Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 249).

How should we read this statement, which clearly seems to ascribe some value to oneiric images of the Pure Land. Is it an ahistorical retrojection, a sign of the evolution of Huiyuan's thought over his lifetime, or perhaps a sign that his stance in his communication with Kumārajīva was a rhetorical posture?

222 Translated in Jones, 182.

he describes them as “spontaneous occurrences”: a characterization that seems profoundly incompatible with Buddhist dream incubation practice.

Contexts: Confession and Dreams in the *Mahāvaiṣṇava Dhāraṇī Sūtra*²²³

In terms of Zhiyi's expansive meditation programme, as outlined in *Mohe zhiguan* and elsewhere, the previous practice was seen as the cornerstone of the “constantly walking *samādhi*,”²²⁴ whereas he based his instructions for the “part walking and part sitting *samādhi*” on the *Vaiṣṇava (fangdeng 方等)* confession ritual.²²⁵ For our purposes, two aspects of this practice are of preeminent importance: one theological, the other praxical. In the first case, this text includes several references to a micro-pantheon of oneiric deities, the twelve dream kings (shier mengwang 十二夢王), who are said to testify to the practitioner's permission to perform of the ritual:

Prior to beginning the actual practice itself all prospective participants must undergo a week of purification and preparation. During this time they maintain constant vigilance over themselves, confess past sins, and offer prayers in an effort to seek an auspicious dream from one of the Twelve Dream Kings (*mengwang*) who protect the *Fangdeng duoluoni jing* and its practices. If the proper type of dream occurs it signifies that permission has been granted for that individual to perform the repentance. Once this condition has been fulfilled the participants then master the essential *dhāraṇī* and ritual procedures to be used in the practice and are administered

223 “*Da fangdeng tuoluoni jing* 大方等陀羅尼經,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%A4%A7%E6%96%B9%E7%AD%89%E9%99%80%E7%BE%85%E5%B0%BC%E7%B6%93>:

Lancaster's catalogue gives the Sanskrit title of **Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*; Lang Chen suggests **Mahāvaiṣṇava-dhāraṇī-sūtra*. 4 fasc. trans. Fazhong 法衆 during 402–413 in Zhangye 張掖. ... Lancaster's catalogue gives the Sanskrit title of **Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*; Lang Chen suggests **Mahāvaiṣṇava-dhāraṇī-sūtra*. 4 fasc. trans. Fazhong 法衆 during 402–413 in Zhangye 張掖. [...] The text is divided into the five sections of: (1) introduction 初, (2) receiving assurances of future enlightenment 授記, (3) dream activity 夢行, (4) maintenance of the precepts 護戒, and (5) the inconceivable lotus 不思議蓮華. [...] In the section on activity of dreams, he explains the one-week practice of the Dharma 七日行法; the *puṣpa-jāta* bodhisattvas make the vow bring about the rebirth of the sentient beings into their Pure Land 淨土, and the Buddha again explains the causes and conditions from the past to Ānanda. [...] This text had a significant influence on the Tiantai school due to the attention given to it by Zhiyi 智顛.

For a complete translation of this text, see: Swanson, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 1633–1658.

224 Stevenson, *The T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samādhi*, 75.

225 *Ibid.*, 82.

twenty-four special precepts that they must adhere to over the course of the retreat.²²⁶

That said, they remain somewhat mysterious figures, differentiated only by their (pseudo-)Sanskrit names (T. 1339: 642a) and mentioned briefly (if at all) in the standard reference works.²²⁷ In his attempt to situate them, Donner suggests that they should be understood as personifications of specific oneiric signifiers, drawing on the traditions of “verificatory vision interpretation” discussed by Greene:

It is clear that the term "dream-king" 夢王 actually means the same as "divine manifestations" 神明, and signifies certain auspicious dreams which the practitioner may have when asleep, that may be understood as a kind of signal to him. These dreams include five for laypeople: 1) flying; 2) seeing images, relics, stūpas and crowds of monks; 3) a king on a white horse; 4) oneself crossing a river on an elephant; 5) climbing a high mountain on a camel's back. They include four for monks: 6) climbing a platform and turning towards 'wisdom'; 7) receiving ordination; 8) sitting by a Buddha-image and asking other monks to provide offerings; 9) entering *samādhi* while seated beneath a tree. There is one for kings: 10) travelling far and wide with a sword at one's side. There is one for government ministers: 11) seeing people washing and dressing themselves. And there is one for wives 夫人...: 12) riding a sheep-drawn cart into deep water where poisonous snakes lurk. These dreams then are signs or omens that the practitioner is ready to receive the teaching.²²⁸

226 *Ibid.*, 84. Also discussed in: Kuo, *Confession et Contrition*, 64. The *Mahāvaiṣṭya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* reads: At that time the Buddha said to the Dharma-prince Mañjuśrī, “While I am in this world or after I have left this world, if there are good sons and good daughters who come to where you are, seeking this dhāraṇī sūtra, you should teach them to seek the twelve dream kings. If they are able to see one of the [dream] kings, you should teach and confer upon them the teaching of the seven-day practice” (Swanson translation, 1651). 爾時佛告文殊師利法王子。若我在世若去世後。若有善男子善女人。來詣汝所欲求陀羅尼經者。汝當教求十二夢王。若得見一王者。汝當教授七日行法。文殊師利白佛言。云何名為十二夢王。云何名曰七日行法。(T. 1339: 652a5-9) This passage is then cited in Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* as an endorsement of this form of oneiric practice (T. 1911: 13b1; translated in Swanson, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 286–287).

227 As Donner notes, The names of the twelve 'dream kings' are listed in the sutra at 642a in transliterated Sanskrit (or other non-Chinese language). These names are obscure and I have made no attempt to restore them. Under his entry for “twelve dream kings,” Oda cites this passage from the sutra, which is not much help, while Mochizuki has no entry at all in his dictionary; the idea is not widely known in the Sino-Japanese tradition” (337 ff. 149). In my survey of reference works, I found that the situation has not changed markedly since Donner's day (minus the recent scholarship of Kuo Li-ying, Swanson and Kuramoto (discussed below)).

228 *Ibid.* Cf., T. 1339: 652a10–b6. Swanson evaluates Donner's decision to translate shenming 神明 as “divine manifestation” (a term Zhiyi borrowed from the *Vaiṣṭya Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, as seen in the quotation above) as follows: [It] does justice to the context, but there is no reason not to take the literal meaning of “gods” or (as in Stevenson, *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, 249), “guardian spirits.” These dream-kings or “spirit-kings” are the transformed figures of Dandala and his retinue, who have abandoned their evil ways and use the *tanchi dhāraṇī* for benefitting sentient beings (see the sutra, 643c12–644a2). Details on what is involved in this divine “endorsement” are given later in the sutra (287).

While his contention is correct in stressing the openness of this practice to both monastics and lay people, it has otherwise been disproved by the recent scholarship of both Kuo Li-ying and Kuramoto Shōtoku, who have explored the visionary practices advocated in the (oft translated) *Vaipulya Dhāraṇī sutras* and their significance within the early Tiantai school: practices that included the quest for oneiric verification. More striking, however, is their discussion of an engraved stele found at Qingliansi 青蓮寺 in southern Shanxi, dating to 560 CE, which depicts both monks and lay donors receiving the specific oneiric visions associated with the twelve dream kings, in cartouches whose placement implies that this stele was intended to be ritually circumambulated.²²⁹ While this is obviously a single data point, it highlights the fact that the parameters of oneiric practice had continued to develop in China between the years of the compilation of GSZ and XGSZ.

The second significant aspect of this practice is its strictly delimited timeline (namely, the fact that it was performed for seven days). By attending to accounts that either mention it by name (i.e., *fangdeng*) or those that describe their protagonists engaging in confession rites with durations that multiples of seven, Kuramoto list a variety of accounts from GSZ and XGSZ that indicate the prevalence of this ritual modality in medieval China.²³⁰ Given that this confession rite occurred in a specially appointed ritual arena (“locality”), was predicated on an attempt to receive an oneiric vision

229 See: Kuramoto Shōtoku 倉本尚徳, “Hokuchō jidai ni okeru hōdōzan to kōsōgyō” 北朝時代における方等懺と好相行, *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū ronshū* 仏教文化研究論集 12 (2008): 50–80. These discoveries are also discussed by Kuo Li-ying in a paper entitled “Visions, Dreams, and Dhāraṇīs: A Way of Salvation in 5th - 6th Century Buddhist China,” delivered at the EFEO colloquium on *Buddhism and Universalism* (Kyoto: October 3–5, 2014). While her CV lists this paper as “in press” with the *Cahiers D'Extreme Asie* for 2016, it has not yet been published. As an aside, noting the proximity of Qinglian to Huiyuan's home temple, Kuramoto tantalizingly supposes that the great monastic master may have been involved in the oneiric practices described above (63–64). This hypothesis is granted additional credence due to the large number of oneiric episodes featuring this great teacher (as discussed in Chapter Three).

230 Specifically, Kuramoto cites a single example from GSZ and three from XGSZ (52, 56, 57, 58). It is notable that they do *not* all involve oneiric visions – highlighting the fact that the notion of verificatory “good signs” (*haoxiang* 好相) was interpreted broadly at this time.

(“intentionality”), and that the resultant vision was understood as a communication from the “unseen realm” (“epiphany”), I think it is wholly appropriate to consider these confession practices to be prototypical instances of Chinese Buddhist dream incubation.

Dreaming and Zhai (齋) Practice in the Eminent Monks

Though oneiric visions related to various forms of confession feature heavily in the doctrinal, praxical, and hagiographical literature of the medieval period, my survey of GSZ and XGSZ demonstrates that other praxis regimens also seemed to have been used as techniques for incubating dreams. First, we will turn our attention to dreams that seem to have been inculcated via participation in *zhai*: a polysemous term describing a welter of practices, including abstinence, precept observance, communal worship, and fasting/feasting that loomed large in the praxical repertoires of both medieval Chinese Buddhists and Taoists.²³¹

In keeping with my general contention that oneiric visions came to represent a key form of *ganying* response within the medieval Chinese Buddhist imaginaire, especially by Daoxuan's time, we would expect to see a practice as central as *zhai* occasioning many such responses, especially given its

231 For an excellent overview of the topic, see Sylvie Hureau, “Buddhist Rituals,” in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, edited by John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1207–1244, 1213–1230. In a previous draft, I (confusingly) used the traditional, food-related translation of the term *zhai* here. Thank you to Robert Campany for catching this error (personal communication). Robert Ford Campany, also employing the *Principle of Irrelevance* (as discussed in the introduction), has compellingly argued that material included in the *Mingxiang ji* demonstrates that the lay practice of maintaining one or more rooms dedicated to *zhai* practice in one's home was sufficiently widespread in the medieval period as to not warrant any comment or explanation. “Abstinence Halls (*zhaitang* 齋堂) in Lay Households in Early Medieval China,” *Studies in Chinese Religions* 1:4 (2015), 323–343. Also see: Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 51–55. For a discussion of the valences of this term as it pertains to medieval Taoism, see Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, translated by Frank Kierman, Jr., (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), 291–298, 379–386. See also: David W. Chappell, “The Precious Scroll of the Liang Emperor: Buddhist and Daoist Repentance to Save the Dead,” in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, edited by William Bodiford, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 40–67, 47–48.

frequent employment as a public demonstration of piety and a commitment to Buddhist principles that linked the monastic and lay communities.²³² Moreover, the connection between *zhai* and precepts (both in terms of the performative recitation of precepts at the *zhai* assembly and their heightened observance during the preparatory period leading up to the *zhai*), suggests a conceptual and praxical overlap between *zhai* and confession,²³³ which in turn implies that many of the same *ganying* functions (e.g., providing verificatory visions) would almost certainly map from one context to the other.²³⁴ Also, the distinctly Chinese character of the *zhai* assembly, whose development could be seen as a form of apocryphal practice,²³⁵ could itself be seen as an oneirogenic spiritual technology,²³⁶ given that early sixth-century practice involved monks and lay people “chanting buddhas’ names and bowing until the middle of the night and until exhausted.”²³⁷ When imagining the psychosomatic effects of this crepuscular / nocturnal practice, especially in light of the role of monks as medieval dream interpreters (as discussed above), it is certainly plausible to posit that some of the dream narratives that are described above (and considered throughout this project) would have owed their genesis to

232 Indeed, given that lay participants would often demarcate their participation in a *zhai* by adhering to a more stringent set of precepts and by outfitting themselves in purified clothing (Hureau, 1215–1216), it would not be an overstatement to describe this practice as a form of ritualized liminality. As argued above, this “betwixt and between” state can be seen as an embodied, experiential link between *zhai* and oneiric experience.

233 Campany, *Signs*, notes that medieval laypeople often conflated the two practices, referring to this composite entity as 齋戒: “practicing abstinence and [adhering to extra] prohibitions” (52).

234 Campany (*ibid.*), in his translation and study of *Mingxiang ji*, makes this general observation regarding the role of *zhai* practice as an efficacious stimulus (*gan*): “suitably pious performance of the abstinence ceremony was argued to constitute a stimulus powerful enough to draw forth this sort of miraculous response from the unseen world. Other story patterns similarly suggest that contact between the seen and unseen worlds was unusually open on the days of abstinence observance. These are the days, for example, on which several stories depict dead family members as periodically returning to visit their living kin, warning them of retribution for sins and urging them to stricter practice” (55).

235 For the notion of “apocryphal practice” (a shorthand means of describing those religious observances that owe their genesis / elaboration to indigenous Chinese scriptural compositions), see James A. Benn, “Where Text Meets Flesh: Burning the Body as an ‘Apocryphal Practice’ in Chinese Buddhism,” *History of Religions* 37:4 (1998), 295–322. See Hureau (1219–1221) for a discussion of the apocryphal sources employed to “Sinify” Indian precept recitation (*uposadha*) practice.

236 Given the demonstrable continuities between the circumstances of one’s waking life and the contents of their dreams (discussed in the introduction), I think it is profoundly significant that the dream manual translated by Drège in “Clefs des Songes” (P. 3908) explicitly ascribes a positive valence to dreams of *zhai* performance (“performing a *zhai*: a very good omen”) (221, verified in Plate XXIX). Oneirogenic indeed!

237 Hureau, 1222, translating *GSZ* (T. 2059: 417c8–9).

participation in such assemblies.²³⁸

This intuition is borne out when one considers the variety of examples from both GSZ and XGSZ that (implicitly or explicitly) describe dream experiences related to *zhai* practice. In the earlier collection, we see the monk Xuangao 玄高 (402–444)²³⁹ responding to the unfair calumny of his lay patron, the crown prince of the Tuoba Wei, by ordering him to sponsor a *Golden Light zhai* (*Jin guangming zhai* 金光明齋) and to engage in a seven-day confession.²⁴⁰ As a result (*nai* 乃),²⁴¹ his father, the Tuoba ruler, proceeds to have a dream that vindicates his son, the subsequent consequences of which are discussed in Chapter Four.²⁴² In an inversion of this causal structure, the monk Huiji 慧基 (412–496), while in the process of overseeing the construction of Baolinsi 寶林山, first has a dream of the bodhisattva Puxian 普賢, then commissions an image of him, and, finally, in commemoration of the completion of the project, arranges for a large-scale *zhai* for the region's lay and religious

238 Lending further plausibility to this assertion, Hureau cites the following example from *Mingxiang ji* (subsequently quoted in *Fayuan zhulin*): “A man falling asleep on the fasting night dreamt he sat on the preacher's seat and received from a monk a sutra in one scroll, with a list of bodhisattvas' names to recite” (1227). Likewise, Company's translations of accounts from *Mingxiang ji* describing *zhai* practice (“Abstinence Halls”) include several references to the nocturnal character of this ritual, as well as the fact that it was often carried out over extended periods (ten days or more), which also supports the contention that it could easily have served as a dream incubation ritual (328–330). This contention is granted additional plausibility when cross-cultural evidence is taken into account. For one example, contemporary French researchers investigating the effects of nighttime vigils and reduced sleep on cloistered monks and nuns discovered that they were both more likely to experience hypnagogic hallucinations and to dream about participating in religious rituals (935–938). Isabelle Arnulf, Agnès Brion, Michel Pottier, and Jean-Louis Golmard, “Ring the Bell for Matins: Circadian Adaptation to Split Sleep by Cloistered Monks and Nuns,” *Chronobiology International* 28:10 (2011): 930–941.

239 Note: the account of this monk's birth following an oneiric conception is discussed in Chapter Two.

240 高令作金光明齋，七日懺懺。(T. 2059: 397c8–9).

241 T. 2059: 379c9. Victor H. Mair has argued that medieval Chinese literature is often characterized by its “paratactic” structure, whereby narrative flow is created through the linkage of discrete episodes connected through conjunctions (like *nai* 乃), thus creating narrative linkages between “references to dreams, drinking of alcoholic beverages, and the appearance of ghosts and spirits” (14), and the events immediately preceding and following them (“Transformation as Imagination in Medieval Popular Buddhist Literature,” in *India in the Chinese Imagination: Myth, Religion, and Thought*, edited by John Kieschnick and Victor H. Mair, [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014], 13–20). Here as well we see dreaming as one liminal state among many.

242 For a discussion of the narrative logic of intersubjective dreaming, see Doniger, 61–80.

communities.²⁴³ In XGSZ's accounts of dreams and *zhai*, in contrast, the implied causal relationship is strictly unidirectional, as we see in the hagiographies of Huichao 慧超 (435–526) and Lingrui 靈睿 (565–647). In the first case, the famed monastic preceptor only consents to bestow a bodhisattva precept ordination upon Emperor Wu of Liang after his royal patron repeatedly holds *zhai* ceremonies and subsequently has a verificatory vision corresponding to his waking practice.²⁴⁴ We see this stimulus-response paradigm invoked even more overtly in the case of Lingrui's mother, a woman who, desiring the birth of a son, holds a *zhai* and resultantly experiences an oneiric conception.²⁴⁵ As can be seen, three of these four accounts (i.e., barring Huiji's seemingly spontaneous vision) suggest that *zhai* practice served as a ritual technology of dream incubation in the medieval Chinese context, wherein participants seeking some form of oneiric communication or confirmation would engage in purificatory practices and communal ritual (*intentionality*), in either a sacred space (such as a monastery or a *zhai* hall) or a space sanctified through the presence and ritual action of the members of the Buddhist community (*locality*),²⁴⁶ and subsequently experienced visions that were read as genuine communications from the unseen realm (*epiphany*), likely due in no small part to the legitimating effect of their temporal association with the ritual itself. Given the linkage between *zhai*, confession and dreams (discussed above), even Huiji's dream, which seemingly occurred unbidden during his labours

243 T. 2059: 379a-b. [基嘗夢見普賢，因請為和上。及寺成之後，造普賢并六牙白象之形，即於寶林設三七齋懺，士庶鱗集，獻奉相仍。] This episode is discussed in Funayama, “Rikuchō jidai ni okeru bosatsukai,” 75.

244 T. 2060: 468b. For a discussion of Huichao's employment as the Rectifier of Monks by Emperor Wu, and, in particular, his role in sentencing the monastic hagiographer Baochang to exile, see: De Rauw, 204–205.

245 其母以二月八日道觀設齋因乞有子 (T. 2060: 539c). This episode serves as a perfect example of the role of oneiric narratives in bridging liminalities, given that it not only describes an oneiric conception, but also the interaction between religious traditions, given that his mother performs her *zhai* practice in a Taoist temple on a Buddhist feast day (the eighth day of the second month [cf., Hureau, 1215]): an offence that culminates in blood pouring from all the orifices in her poor son's head, leading her to abandon Taoism and allow her son to join the Buddhist sangha. For the *zhai* ritual as a site of inter-religious interaction, also see the discussion of the GSZ biography of Tanyi in Chapter Four chapter, wherein a monk is depicted holding such a rite in order to open a channel of oneiric communication with local mountain deities.

246 See: Campany, “Abstinence Halls,” which explores a variety of references to “abstinence halls” in early medieval literature, demonstrating that they were a relatively well-attested feature of lay dwellings.

in constructing a new temple, culminates in a large-scale communal *zhai* at the recently completed Baolinsi: a rite whose goal may have been to inculcate similar oneiric experiences in the ranks of the lay donors who had been invited to participate.

Seeking Signs: Vows and Intentionality

In Drège's brief discussion of dream incubation, he argues that such practices were much less common in China than in the ancient Near East (and elsewhere), noting that he was only able to find one reference in the ethnographic literature related to contemporary China / Taiwan: a dismissal that is largely grounded in his exclusive definition of incubation as an oneiric practice undertaken solely in temples.²⁴⁷ In contrast, the ritual and iconographic frameworks of medieval Chinese Buddhism included various means whereby the praxical logic of *locality* could be adhered to without requiring supplicants to literally sleep in a discrete Buddhist site. While the receipt of specific *epiphanies* was clearly the goal of the incubation practices we have already discussed (confession and *zhai*), the dynamic of seeking informatory miracles through ritual is nowhere more clear than in the seemingly common practice of making vows,²⁴⁸ often before images, as a means of stimulating an extrahuman response.

247 Drège, “Notes d’oniologie chinoise,” 277–278. That said, he does note the presence of such practices in the late medieval Sinosphere, citing an 11th century account from *Konjaku Monogatari* of a samurai seeking a vision from Kannon, as well as the relative frequency with which Japanese devotees slept in Medicine King temples when seeking to incubate healing visions. In addition to his sole modern Chinese counterexample (a Lu Dongbin temple in Taiwan known as a site for dream incubation practice), some recent historical research has also demonstrated that being associated with incubation practice was, in fact, a source of prestige in Chinese Buddhism. I encountered one salient example in Brigid Vance's analysis of Ming encyclopedias and gazetteers related to a Buddhist temple at Nine Carp Lake (Fujian), which had developed a reputation as a site for receiving auspicious dreams (“Where to Dream? Divinatory Practice in Late Ming China,” presentation at AAS 2017, 2017/03/18). Also see: Ong, 41–44 (thank you to Robert Company for noting that I had not cited this account in a previous draft [personal communication]). Based on the material discussed in this section, I find it entirely plausible that such practices were already part of the Buddhist praxical armamentarium by the Tang dynasty.

248 This practice represents another case where an indigenous Chinese episteme (namely, the *ganying* framework) dovetails almost perfectly with the common Buddhist hagiographical trope of an “act of truth,” whereby a vow made with correct intention and unimpeachable sincerity will inevitably provoke a response from the world itself (or the deities overseeing it. In his classic article on the topic, E. W. Burlingame (1917) discusses the ritual logic of this practice as follows:

In connection with the Power of Truth are sometimes mentioned Powers of Righteousness, such as the power of

The practice of making vows when seeking informatory miracles is a frequent trope in both GSZ and XGSZ, though it is more common in the later collection: a finding that is consistent with my general contention regarding Daoxuan's commitment to the evidentiary value of dreams. Some examples from the earlier collection include episodes from the biography of Dao'an 道安 (312/314–385), who experiences a dream vision after making a vow seeking confirmation that his textual practice is in keeping with standards of orthodoxy,²⁴⁹ and Guṇabhadra, who sees a confirmatory dream after both performing regular confession *and* requesting a numinous vision of the bodhisattva Guanshiyin 觀世音 (indicating the commensurability of these practices).²⁵⁰ The later collection includes a greater number of these episodes, but they follow the same general pattern: Huiyuan 慧遠 (523–592), uncertain of whether his exegetical output should be lectured upon, arises a vow, prays for a sign, and receives a dream vision;²⁵¹ one of the disciples of the monk Tanqian 曇遷 (543–608), seeking insight into the posthumous destination of his great teacher, prays for insight and thereby (*nai* 乃) has an

goodness and the power of merit; and, as well, the superhuman might of spirits, deities, and Buddhas. Such mention does not mean, however, that the Act of Truth in any way depends for its efficacy upon the co-operation of these other forces, powerful though they are. Truth, in and by itself all-powerful and irresistible, is essentially distinct from them, and operates independently of them. Truth, to the exclusion of any ordinary physical power or cause, is the sole power whereby the conjurer causes rain to fall, fire to turn back, poison to be struck down. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished by the Truth. Men, gods, powers of nature; all animate and inanimate things alike obey the Truth. Even the Buddhas themselves employ Acts of Truth (431–432).

“The Act of Truth (*Saccakiriya*): A Hindu Spell and Its Employment as a Psychic Motif in Hindu Fiction,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (July 1917), 429–467. For a discussion of the history of this concept in Indian Buddhist literature, which focuses on the rhetorical features of these narratives and draws primarily from the corpus of Jataka literature, see David V. Fiordalis, *Miracles and Superhuman Powers in South Asian Buddhist Literature*, (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008), 101–107.

249 安常注諸經，恐不合理，乃誓曰：「若所說不堪遠理，願見瑞相。」乃夢見胡道人，頭白眉毛長，語安云：T. 2059: 353b17–19. I find the double use of the sequential/causal marker 乃 in this passage quite telling. This episode is translated by Arthur Link as follows:

An frequently annotated the sutras, but he feared that [his interpretations] did not harmonize with the principles [of the sacred texts], so he then pronounced the following vow (*pranidhāna*), “If what I have explained is not very far from the principles, may I behold an auspicious sign!” He then dreamed that he saw an Indian man of *Dao* who had white hair and long eyebrows...” (34–35).

This episode is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

250 ..., 即旦夕禮懺，請觀世音，乞求冥應 (T. 2059: 344b11–12).

251 ..., 發願乞相，夢見自手造素七佛... (T. 2060: 492a10–11). (Discussed in Chapter Three)

oneiric vision of the Pure Land;²⁵² and the monk Zhizao 智瓘 (556–638), convinced that his illness could only be cured through divine intercession, spends ten days concentrating on Moonlight Bodhisattva 月光菩薩 before receiving an oneiric cure.²⁵³ As a final example from XGSZ, we should consider the case of the layman Sun Jingde 孫敬德 (d.u.), who has an image of Guanyin constructed despite being seemingly unaware of the praxical tradition related to this figure (as will be seen presently). When he is falsely imprisoned, he makes a vow of his innocence (a Chinese instance of the “act of truth” trope described above?), and subsequently receives an oneiric vision of a monk who teaches him to recite the *Guanshiyin Saving Lives* sutra.²⁵⁴ This apparition informs him that he will manage to be spared if he successfully recites the list of Buddha names included in that text. Maximizing suspense, the account then describes the layman barely managing to finish his recitation prior to reaching the execution ground, after which point the executioner's blade shatters each time he attempts to mete out Jingde's punishment: a prodigious sign of extrahuman intercession that precipitates the layman's pardon.²⁵⁵ While all of these cases are relatively similar, those from XGSZ are more likely to rely exclusively on dreams as verificatory phenomena, whereas those from GSZ typically involve additional extra-oneiric proofs (such as Guṇabhadra's miraculous ability to speak fluent Chinese after his dream experience and the subsequent confirmation of Dao'an's vision through the arrival of scriptures from India).

252 既卒之後，有沙門專誠祈請，欲知生處，乃夢見淨土嚴麗，... (T. 2060: 574a26–27). Campany, in *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, notes the significance of dreams (and dream telling) in helping to dramatize these Buddhist realms in the imaginations of medieval Chinese Buddhists (58–59).

253 T. 2060: 585b.

254 *Guanshiyin jiusheng jing* 觀世音救生經 (mentioned in the biography of the monk Sengming 僧明, T. 2060: 693a1). In terms of its contents and usage, this text is quite similar to the apocryphal *Sutra on Protecting the Lifespan* (*Hu shenming jing* 護身命經 [T. 2866, 2867]), given that both contain lengthy lists of intercessory deities, and thus seem to have been composed for ease of recitation and copying. See: Bryan D. Lowe, “The Scripture on Saving and Protecting Body and Life: An Introduction and Translation,” *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 27 (2014): 1–34. For a discussion of the medieval practice of reciting the names of buddhas and bodhisattvas, see Kuo Liying, “La récitation des noms de 'buddha' en Chine et au Japon,” *T'oung Pao* Second Series 81:4/5 (1995): 230–268.

255 T. 2060: 693a.

An important subset of these “sought after” visions are those wherein the (typically) implicit dream incubation involved the supplicant expressing their vow in the presence of a Buddhist icon (some of which were already considered above). Considering such episodes in light of Patton's typology, it is clear that they represent self-evident examples of incubated dreams, in that these experiences occurred in a clearly cultic context, involved an intention to receive information (or other benefits) from the unseen realm, (implicitly) took place in a sanctified locale (i.e., in the presence of a Buddhist image), and resulted in knowledge (or other miraculous responses) whose provenance was clearly beyond the human ken. While examples of such visionary practice are present in both collections, they are also more common in the *Continued Biographies*,²⁵⁶ which is compatible with the hypothesis that such practices had become much more widespread by the mid-seventh century. As an aside, I also found it striking that many of these visionary episodes involve their protagonists supplicating Guanyin: some examples of which have already been considered above. While this observation is perhaps explicable by the general ubiquity of this bodhisattva's cult in the early medieval period, it could also potentially be attributed to ritual developments that occurred in the interval between the compilation of GSZ and its sequel.²⁵⁷

256 Note: I will be the first to admit that, due to the terseness of many of these accounts, it was often difficult to definitively determine whether a specific monastic practice was being causally linked to the provision of dreams. For a complete overview of my assessments, see the *Appendix*.

257 Yü, *Kuan-yin*, still provides the most exhaustive overview of the Chinese cult of Guanyin, exploring the early textual tradition (102–118), miracle tales (160–180), and exemplary monks (198–212) that led to the widespread popularity of this deity during the early medieval period.

For confession rituals linked to early esoteric Guanyin scriptures (which were embraced by the Tiantai community from Zhiyi's time onward), see Yü, *Kuanyin*, 268–270; cf., Stevenson, *Four Forms of Samadhi*, 106–111. This ritual programme is also discussed in Koichi Shinohara (2014), *Spells, Images, and Mandalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals*, (New York: Columbia University Press), 15–16 and *passim*. Given that the practices associated with these sutras in medieval India involved dream incubation and confirmations (50, 73–76, 140–141), it seems plausible that these ritual elements would have been retained in their Chinese iterations as well. For example:

If the practitioner recited the Secret Heart Mantra 108 times with compassion (“the mind of compassion”), he will be praised by all the Tathāgatas in numerous worlds and his sins will disappear. Avalokitēsvara will soon appear in a dream and fulfill the practitioner's wishes” (140–141).

Note: this text was first translated in the late sixth century and retranslated by Xuanzang, who Daoxuan worked with closely following the initial compilation of XGSZ (127–130). Also, one of the primary sources discussed in this book is the *Miscellaneous Collection of Dhāraṇīs* (T. 1336), which includes a number of spells associated with Guanyin, was

The first of these episodes (and the only relevant example from GSZ) is seen in the biography of the monk Senghong 僧洪 (d.u.),²⁵⁸ who had boldly contravened an imperial edict restricting the use of copper by casting an enormous image of Guanshiyin; as a result, he had subsequently been arrested and was awaiting execution. From his prison cell, the monk recited the *Guanshiyin Sutra* and “took refuge in the Buddha image,”²⁵⁹ which prompted it to appear in his dream and reassure him that no ill would befall him. In his vision, the monk noted a discoloration in the metal of the image's chest. On his execution day, the cart conveying him to the place of punishment broke down *en route* and the oxen pulling it fled: a confluence of events that inspired the local magistrate to pardon him. Returning home, the monk then opened the mould for the first time and saw the same imperfection on his own image's chest, proving the genuine communication between them. He then responded by performing austerities unto death.²⁶⁰ Though the veneration practice itself took place in Senghong's prison cell (and thus

translated / compiled between the years of GSZ and XGSZ. This lends further support to the notion that monks in Daoxuan's day would likely have had a different relationship with oneiric visions (especially of Guanyin) than those in Huijiao's.

Note: I will be the first to acknowledge the provisionality of this hypothesis. While it is certainly a plausible and parsimonious explanation for the ubiquity of such references in XGSZ, I would argue that a degree of circumspection is warranted, given the dearth of details pertaining to these monks' specific practices in many of these accounts. That said, while Stevenson, in *Four Forms of Samadhi*, notes that Zhiyi's manual dedicated to the Guanyin confession is, unfortunately, no longer extant (67), the clear link between repentance and oneiric confirmation in Zhiyi's overall thought and practice (discussed above) provides additional support for the notion that at least some of the Guanyin miracles discussed in this section could indeed be viewed as resulting from dream incubation.

258 T. 2059: 410c–411a. The version in GSZ is nearly identical to that found in *Mingxiang ji*: Cf., Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 166.

259 This presence of this phrase is one of the discrepancies between the GSZ version and the one found in *Mingxiang ji*. While older version of the tale merely sees Senghong concentrating on Guanshiyin and reciting the associated scripture one hundred times per day (*ibid.*), the GSZ telling also has the monk “single-mindedly taking refuge” in the image (唯誦觀世音經。一心歸命佛像。[T. 2059: 410c24–25]). See: “*Guiming* 歸命,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%AD%B8%E5%91%BD>: “To surrender, submit, go along with, pay allegiance to.” The DDB entry also suggests that *guiming* 歸命 can be used as an abbreviation of (*guiming dingli* 歸命頂禮): “Prostrating in homage... Bowing by prostrating the whole body to the ground; to prostrate oneself with the head at the feet of the one revered” ([http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?6b.xml+id\(%27b6b78-547d-9802-79ae%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?6b.xml+id(%27b6b78-547d-9802-79ae%27))).

260 洪後以苦行卒矣 (T. 2059: 411a1–2). For the most detailed study of the historiographical, ideological, and devotional characteristics of such forms of corporal mortification in medieval China, see Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*. Since this conclusion (i.e., Senghong's death by austerities) represents the only other substantive difference between the

seems to have lacked a religious “locale”), I would argue that this account nonetheless includes at least two (and possibly all three) traits of paradigmatic dream incubation defined above. More specifically, while the presence of *intentionality* and *epiphany* are fairly unambiguous, I would suggest that the narrative logic at play here, whereby the scorch mark on the statue's chest proves that Senghong had indeed been interacting with that specific image, implies a fluid notion of sacred space, whereby the imprisoned monk could invoke his particular icon (even from a distance) and thereby receive the attendant this-worldly benefits. As such, and given the commonalities between this account and those detailed above, it is certainly conceivable that the ritual actions performed by Senghong, tersely elucidated as they may be, were entirely consistent with patterns of oneiric practice that would have been deeply familiar to the GSZ's discourse community.²⁶¹

In various accounts from XGSZ, the link between image-based practice and subsequent dream experience is presented even more plainly, often through the use of explicit logical connectives.²⁶² For

Mingxiang ji and GSZ versions of the stories (in addition to the matter of “taking refuge in” a Buddha image, discussed in the previous footnote), perhaps these praxical distinctions are indicative of differences between their respective discourse communities. It is, of course, also possible that such practices rose to prominence in the roughly thirty years between the compilation of *Mingxiang ji* and GSZ. As an aside, the notion of individuals consigning their lives to Buddhist extrahuman beings in thanksgiving for specific acts of intercession is also seen in the chapter on Oneiric Conception, which discusses various cases of parents allowing the children that they sought through Buddhist practice to “leave the household” at a young age.

- 261 Another potential example of this form of invocation can be seen in the GSZ hagiography of the monk Fayi, whose titular monk responds to an incipient illness by constantly focusing his mind on Guanyin, which thereby (*nai* 乃) causes him to experience an efficacious dream of a man performing surgery upon his innards (常存念觀音乃夢見一人，破腹洗腸，覺便病愈. [T. 2059: 350c23–24]). Though this narrative does not involve an explicit vow, the *ganying* response that the monk's practice provokes strongly implies that he was indeed seeking oneiric healing. As an aside, this episode also typifies Huijiao's approach to dream visions, as the monk's subsequent recovery (rather than the dream itself) serves as the miraculous confirmation of the efficacy of his practice. For a discussion of “dream surgery” in medieval Chinese Buddhist narratives that situates such tales within their broader cultural context, see Salguero, *Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China*, 132–133. This episode is also discussed in Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 103; Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 172–173.
- 262 As an aside, the XGSZ account of the monk Daozhen could also be read as an example of this trope, albeit one whose logical linkages are implicit. Therein, the monk performs constant visualization practice dedicated to Amitâbha, subsequently has a dream informing him that his Pure Land practice was not complete, and wakes up to radically reorient his praxis (focusing on scripture recitation and infrastructure projects, as instructed by his dream) (T. 2060: 550c). That said, since the linkage (practice → dream → consequence) is less overt than the other examples considered in this paragraph, I have decided to relegate it to a footnote.

instance, the monk Sengmin constructed a Maitreya image and performed twice-daily veneration practices; *consequently*, a dream was seen (*nai meng jian* 乃夢見).²⁶³ Similarly, an unnamed woman, who had received the lay precepts and the method of Guanyin devotion from the monk Sengrong 僧融 (early fifth c. CE), engaged in both recitation and mindfulness practice (presumably focused on the bodhisattva) upon being imprisoned. These practices *resulted in* a dream (*yin meng* 因夢),²⁶⁴ which subsequently allowed her to be freed. Likewise, the father of the Silla monk Jajang (慈藏, mid. seventh c.) sought an heir by engaging in material practices focused on Guanyin and then made a vow upon their completion; this caused a beneficent omen in the form of a dream to arise in response (冥祥顯應, 夢星墜入懷).²⁶⁵ A final example involves the mother of the monk Xinxing 信行 (540–594), the eventual founder of the Three Stages School (*Sanjie jiao* 三階教). After she had “failed to conceive for a long time,” she successfully experienced an oneiric conception only after supplicating the Buddha (就佛祈誠, 夢...).²⁶⁶ As we saw in the case of Senghong above, each of these brief narrative snippets includes at least two of the characteristics of religious dream incubation: namely, the *intentionality* of these supplicants (with regard to the receipt of oneiric visions) and the respective *epiphanies* that resulted from them. Moreover, many of them explicitly describe image veneration practice (with its attendant focus on *locality*) as a precursor to such *epiphanies*, as evidenced by the use of the various logical connectives seen in the examples considered above.

263 T. 2060: 463b14–16. 「旻嘗造彌勒佛并諸供具。朝夕禮謁。乃夢見彌勒佛遣化菩薩送菩提樹與之」。

264 T. 2060: 645b29-c1. 「婦入獄後。稱念不輟。因夢沙門立其前。足蹴令去。」

265 T. 2060: 639a13–16. 「素仰佛理乃求加護。廣請大捨祈心佛法。并造千部觀音。希生一息。後若成長。願發道心度諸生類。冥祥顯應。夢星墜入懷。因即有娠。」 This account is discussed in more detail above, as well as in chapters two and three.

266 T. 2060: 559c18–20. 「其母久而無子。就佛祈誠。夢神擎兒告云。我今持以相與。寤已覺異常日。因即有娠。」 As was the case with the Jajang account, this one is also discussed in the Oneiric Conception chapter.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated above, and in partial validation of the “Sinification” hypothesis, many of the oneiric practices described in GSZ and XGSZ share marked similarities with the broader dream culture of medieval China (as outlined in the Introduction). This is clearest in the case of dream interpretation, given that the miracle stories of the perspicacity of exemplary monastic oneiromancers show them employing precisely the same hermeneutical strategies found in official histories, strange tales (*zhiguai*) and popular manuals of oneiromancy. The same could be said of the general practice of dream telling. However, such an interpretation elides some important distinctions, such as the sheer quantity of implicit dream interpretations in both collections (i.e., the inclusion of dream accounts that are described as straightforwardly communicative), the fashion in which monks are seen employing dreams as part of their pedagogy, and the potent linkages posited between Buddhist deities (e.g., Guanyin) / practices (e.g., *zhai*) and receipt of verificatory oneiric visions. In all of these cases, we see the eminent monks of GSZ and XGSZ participating in a religious economy wherein it behooved them to simultaneously engage with traditional dream culture, and to position themselves as uniquely qualified to provide religious goods related to it. In the following chapters, we will explore some of the specific contexts in which this complex and multifarious perspective on dreams developed.

Chapter Two – Dreaming Betwixt and Between Conception and Birth

Given the utility of the DREAMS AS LIMINAL STATE trope, it is no wonder that individuals in many pre-modern cultures found oneiric conception tales to be worth telling.¹ Indeed, in a world without such technologies as ultrasound imaging and *in vitro* fertilization (and without an imaginaire informed by them), visionary dreams were often thought to provide otherwise inaccessible insights into the inscrutable bio-spiritual mechanisms of impregnation and gestation.² As will be seen below, such concerns were clearly salient to monastic storytellers in medieval China, who drew intertextual

1 Since it would obviously be impossible to include a synoptic overview of the myriad occurrences of this trope in the oral traditions and written corpora of the world's religious traditions, I have contented myself with selecting a few salient examples: **First:** in a dream ascribed to the prospective mother of Saint Thierry (an eleventh century Catholic exemplar), she sees herself in a church, clad in liturgical robes. Despite being illiterate, she says the Mass flawlessly, blesses the congregation, removes and replaces her robes, and is bid adieu by the assembly as she departs to return home. Fearful of the potential hubris of this vision, she visits a local wise woman, who assuages her anxieties by informing her that her visions had been sent by God. It is a clear sign of the presence of a saintly child within her womb. See: Michel Lauwers, "L'institution et le genre. À propos de l'accès des femmes au sacré dans l'Occident médiéval," *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 2 (1995): 279–317, 279–280, for a translation of this saint's "life" from Latin to French. This episode, minus the actual dream content, is also discussed in Schmitt (1999). **Second:** den Boer (2012) describes conception dreams among Aboriginal Australians, wherein the standard pregnancy is understood to be initiated when a man "finds" a child in his dream prior to his partner's impregnation:

A father always 'finds' his child in a dream and in association with water either in a waterhole or in the falling rain. Even if in the first instance he 'finds' his child in water in waking life, he will see it in a dream later on when he is asleep in his camp. In his dream he sees the spirit child standing on his head and catches it in his hand after which it enters his wife (201, quoting Elkin).

Third: describing the traditional dream culture of Zambia, Nelson Osamu Hayashida notes that many women who dream of ancestors, especially in a recurrent fashion, will ascribe a pregnancy to the literal reincarnation of this ancestral spirit and will subsequently dub their child with the ancestor's name: *Dreams in the African Literature: The Significance of Dreams and Visions Among Zambian Baptists*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 62–63.

It was the combined force of the breadth of relevant examples from GSZ and XGSZ, combined with cases such as these (i.e., a woman sanctified due to her impregnation with a holy fetus, men initiating pregnancy through the oneiric insertion of a spirit child, pregnancy as the reincarnation of an ancestor), that inspired me to approach this topic by proposing the "(Maternal) Body as Container" metaphor (see below), as doing so allowed me to address these sorts of transhistorical and cross-cultural parallels.

2 The introduction provides a general overview of an isomorphic cultural process: namely, the extent to which medieval Chinese Buddhists relied upon dream narratives to provide insights into the posthumous destination of deceased teachers and loved ones, while also charting out the geography of the chthonic realm of the Ten Kings and outlining the bureaucratic processes employed in their demesnes. I would argue that the dream conception narratives treated below fulfill a similar narrative function, as they propose localized solutions to the issues arising from potential disparities between indigenous Chinese and Buddhist theories of embryology and "ensoulment." Moreover, and in an even more direct parallel with dream encounters with the dead, they also serve as evidence of karma and transmigration in action. For a general discussion of the role of dream narratives in addressing the cognitive dissonance arising from competing cultural schemata, see Mageo, *Dreaming Culture*, 1–22. Based on a survey of both cross-cultural and laboratory data, Bulkeley's *Big Dreams* characterizes oneiric sexual encounters as one of the prototypical "big dreams" (a term he uses to describe dreams whose phenomenological qualities [such as vividness, salience, persistence into wake] often lead dreamers to ascribe them with lasting, transformative significance), 160–176. For a study of the oneirogenic character of prior miscarriage experiences among pregnant Californian women, which notes that such dreams were often particularly memorable due to the fact that they were distressing enough to lead to premature waking, see: Paulina Van, Tene Cage, and Maureen Shannon, "Big Dreams, Little Sleep: Dreams During Pregnancy After Prior Pregnancy Loss," *Holistic Nursing Practice* 18:6 (2004): 284–292.

inspiration from both Buddhist antecedents (in particular, the narrative of Queen Māyā's dream)³ and from indigenous Chinese accounts preserved in histories and *zhiguai* in order to extol the exemplary origins of the monks whose biographies are included in GSZ and XGSZ.⁴ That said, while both collections include these sorts of oneiric conception narratives, there are two major differences between them: first, they are much more common in XGSZ than GSZ; and, second, the XGSZ accounts are much more likely to employ dreams as informatory visions. In the present chapter, I will discuss these observations, noting that (as was the case in previous chapter) these distinctions seem largely attributable to either Daoxuan's perspective on dreams (in particular, his convictions about their spiritual efficacy and their broad accessibility), to the increasingly widespread performance of Buddhist oneiric practices by Daoxuan's time, or both.

In making this case, I have considered a variety of factors: the identities of dreamers, the functions ascribed to dreams, and some of the intertextual linkages that informed the ways that culturally-competent readers (both among monastics and the laity) would likely have read these episodes. In keeping with the general orientation outlined in the *Introduction*, I believe that an appropriately nuanced understanding of these oneiric conception narratives can only be reached by

3 Hsin-Yi Lin, discussing the Chinese reception of the Queen Māyā narrative, highlights the extent to which the vast majority medieval Chinese sources focus on the singular episode of the bodhisattva's descent, as opposed to the four discrete dream narratives found in some Indian sources – “1) a six-tusked white elephant entering into her womb, 2) feeling herself flying up in the air, 3) climbing a high mountain, and 4) receiving homage from a large crowd” (73) – arguing that so doing minimizes the significance of the mother's bodily experience. See: *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: Discourses and Practices*, (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2017). I discuss this matter below, in the section on the (MATERNAL) BODY AS CONTAINER metaphor. For a general overview of Queen Māyā's oneiric conception narrative, see Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, 21–24; Sumegi, 58–61.

4 Note: I am not the first to take note of this trope! See, for example, Natasha Heller, “From Imperial Glory to Buddhist Piety: The Record of a Ming Ritual in Three Contexts,” *History of Religions* 51:1 (2011): 59–83:
[W]hen Song's mother was pregnant, she had a dream in which a monk appeared to her, identified himself as Yongming Yanshou, and asked to borrow a room to complete a copy of the *Huayan jing*. This device, familiar from monastic biographies, establishes that Song was fated to be Buddhist and connects him with an earlier monk (74–75).

That said, though she gestures to the trope, Heller offers no relevant citations therein.

performing a close reading of the texts in question, while also attending to the neurophysiological features of sleep. In so doing, I also explore the putative linkages between stories, minds, and bodies by considering specific references to maternal embodiment, based on the conceptual metaphors employed in these narratives. Given the symbolic potency of these dream experiences, I argue below that the accounts of oneiric conception in GSZ and XGSZ were also used by medieval Buddhists as a means of exploring how karma and rebirth functioned in practice, what exactly it meant to be an exemplary Buddhist, and the extent to which such potentialities were “destined” or “innate.”

While the current topic may appear to be something of a digression, my impetus for considering it emerged naturally from the data-driven coding of the dream episodes in GSZ and XGSZ. In particular, one of the major distinctions between the two collections – a divergence whose magnitude only became clear to me when I actually started tabulating occurrences of specific themes, tropes, and actors – was what seemed to be a meaningful shift in focus between Huijiao's volume and Daoxuan's, in that the latter contained three times more cases of dreams ascribed to lay women. The vast majority of this divergence can be attributed to oneiric conception narratives, which account for only 3% of the total relevant uses of the term *meng* 夢 in *Gaoseng zhuan* (2 of 61), whereas they represent 9.6% (14 of 146) of uses in *Xu gaoseng zhuan*.⁵ While this disparity is striking on its own terms, the differences between the representations of this phenomenon are both stark and somewhat startling. Particularly notable is the diversity of representations found in the later source. Whereas the GSZ's two accounts both focus solely on prospective mothers meeting with monks in their dreams, the XGSZ includes a somewhat baroque assortment of images and activities: mothers climbing *stupa* towers, swallowing

5 Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, argues that this demographic observation holds in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism as well, noting that “the most frequently preserved women's dreams in Buddhist biographies are conception dreams. Given that the conception dream of the Buddha's mother, Queen Māyā, is so well known, it is not surprising that such dreams figure prominently in Buddhist biographical literature; indeed, they are stereotypical” (15).

statues, encountering apparitions while bathing, talking to deities, and riding white lions through the air.⁶ While it would obviously be imprudent to make any generalizations about the former text's accounts (given the dearth of data points), it is compatible with a general trend toward lengthier and more descriptive dream reports in the latter text, which is congruent with Daoxuan's general commitment to miracle tales as potent arms in the proselytizer's arsenal, as well as his personal experiences with dreams as verificatory visions. Moreover, and in keeping with the general hypothesis outlined in the introduction, I think it is notable that both of the conception accounts in GSZ contain additional confirmatory miracles, whereas a mere 20% (three of fourteen) of those found in XGSZ do, thus providing another instance where Huijiao seems to be adopting a more circumspect position than his successor regarding the miraculous status of oneiric visions. These two points are summarized below (*Table 2.1*).

In exploring these discrepancies, the present chapter aims to provide a detailed reckoning of the dream conception trope as it is presented in the Liang and Tang editions of the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, and to attempt to explore the rhetorical and culturally-constructive ends to which it was put. In addition, given the cultural currency of this trope in medieval Chinese histories / biographies (as will be considered below), I will also outline some of the intertextual linkages that likely informed its employment in the *Eminent Monks* corpus. As an initial proviso related to the issue of this trope's complex intertextual history, I must acknowledge that I have not attempted to track down the original loci of all such images. Instead, the examples adduced below are intended to make the less robust (but also less tendentious) claim that they represent the sorts of tropes that culturally-compentent literati-monks would have been actively engaging with in their roles as writers, editors, and compilers.

6 For an overview of these accounts, see Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth*, 94–109.

Vol.	Taishō Ref.	Name	Additional Miracles	Content
GSZ	370c26	Tandi	TRUE	Upon waking, Tandi's mother discovers that two items gifted to her in her dream had appeared in her bedroom. When Tandi was a child, he recognized the items his mother had received in her dream.
GSZ	397a07	Xuangao	TRUE	At birth, the room is filled with a remarkable fragrance (<i>yixiang</i> 異香) and radiant light (<i>guangming</i> 光明)
XGSZ	465c10	Zhicang	FALSE	
XGSZ	468b23	Huiyue	TRUE	At birth, the room is filled with fragrance and light (<i>guangxiang</i> 光香)
XGSZ	477b04	Falang	FALSE	
XGSZ	478a24	Huiyong	FALSE	
XGSZ	531c04	Zhiyan	FALSE	
XGSZ	539c14	Lingrui	FALSE	
XGSZ	556b16	Fajing	FALSE	
XGSZ	556b17	Fajing	FALSE	
XGSZ	559c19	Xinxing	FALSE	
XGSZ	564a20	Zhiyi	TRUE	At birth, there is a profound illumination that lingers for two days.
XGSZ	564a22	Zhiyi	TRUE	<i>As previous</i>
XGSZ	609b08	Zhiwen	FALSE	
XGSZ	639a16	Jajang	FALSE	
XGSZ	658b29	Zhikuang	FALSE	

Table 2.1: Additional Evidence of Spiritual Potency (*ling* 靈) Related to the Dream Conception Narratives in *Gaoseng zhuan* (高僧傳, T. 2059) and *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (續高僧傳, T. 2060)

In general, I would argue that this trope represents another instance of these Buddhist authors/compiler employing the metaphysical *ganying* 感應 (stimulus-response) framework.⁷ Also, given the frequency with which oneiric conception also figured in contemporary histories, their presence in the Liang *Biographies* (and its early Tang sequel) is hardly surprising. It is also notable that the image of the Buddha's miraculous conception, via an oneiric descent in the form of a white elephant, had also become a cultural commonplace by the early Tang, included not only in Buddhist narratives and iconography, but also providing a “visual convention” for many other depictions of miraculous birth (as argued by Julia K. Murray).⁸ In addition, it is clear that Huijiao and (to an even greater extent) Daoxuan saw the value of such tales as engines of proselytism (as discussed in the introduction), which is particularly relevant in this case given the association between Buddhism and the provision of this-worldly spiritual goods in the medieval period.⁹ The provision of children, and especially sons, would clearly have been viewed through this lens.

As such, and in light of the fact that I am merely attempting to provide a snapshot of the “rhetorical landscape” within which the *Eminent Monks* collections were situated, I will be drawing many of my examples of dream conception narratives in “secular” sources from the catalogue of

7 As discussed at length in the introduction.

8 Julia K. Murray, “The Evolution of Pictorial Hagiography in Chinese Art: Common Themes and Forms,” *Arts Asiatiques* 55 (2000): 81–97, 83. She summarizes her overall argument as follows:

I traced the origins of these patterns to two major sources: textually, the life of Houji in the *Shijing*; and pictorially, the life of the Buddha in the narrative illustrations associated with the spread of the Indian religion. The combination of the two was possible because the visual representation of the supernatural events in the Buddha's early life was compatible with pre-existing Chinese textual descriptions of the lives of gods. The *Life of the Buddha* accordingly offered a suitable model for pictorial hagiographies of indigenous deities, and the interaction of native and foreign elements produced a common stock of imagery and conventions that could be used to illustrate the lives of gods whose cult developed at any date (93).

9 Many of the accounts to be considered below are preceded by explicit descriptions of the mothers praying to conceive (the “stimulus” [*gan*]), with these dreams serving as the “response” (*ying*). For a discussion of the relationship between praying for pregnancy and responsive dreams, see the chapter on Oneiric Practice. For the *zhiguai* compiler Tang Lin's perspective on “birth retribution,” as evidenced in the *Mingbaoji*, see Gjertson, *Miraculous Retribution*, 119–122.

auspicious omens compiled at the close of the fifth century (492–493 CE) by the famed poet and literatus Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513) and included in the history of the Liu Song dynasty (*Song shu* 宋書).¹⁰ This text is notable as one of the first systematic attempts by a Chinese historiographer to attend to beneficent omens in a comprehensive way, providing both chronological and thematic overviews of the subject.¹¹ Given this rhetorical goal, the time of its composition, and the sources (both extant and otherwise) that its compiler drew from, it serves as ideal comparative fodder, as it represents a reasonable summary of the types of images and story tropes that Huijiao (in particular) would have been aware of, given that GSZ was compiled less than thirty years later. I will, of course, examine a variety of other materials in the coverage that follows, but this catalogue has served as an excellent starting point.

More generally, the antiquity of the “dream conception” trope is evidenced by the fact that Wang Chong 王充 (27– ca. 100), in his skeptical masterpiece *Lunheng* 論衡 (ca. 90 CE), felt it necessary to critique it. In particular, his argument, which is levelled not only at oneiric conception narratives but rather at all miraculous pregnancies, essentially argues that they should be seen as instances of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy: a bold claim, given that his examples are drawn from the biographies of idealized exemplars, including Emperor Yao 堯 and the Han Emperor Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 206–195):

May be that the mothers of Yu, Xie, and Houji were just going to conceive, when they happened to swallow a grain of pearl-barley and a swallow's egg, or walked upon the foot-prints of a giant. The world is fond of the marvellous, a propensity which has been the same in ancient and modern times. Unless they see wonders, people do not believe that a person possesses

10 For the background of this text and its compiler, see Lippiello, 112–149.

11 See Lippiello's study and translation for a more thorough discussion of the organization and contents of the “Treatise on Auspicious Omens as Tokens,” (127–145, 265–322). This source is introduced in some detail in previous chapters.

extraordinary faculties. ... The fecundation by the dragon and the dream of the meeting with the spirit are of the same nature. The mothers of Yao and Gaozu were just about to become enceinte, when they met with a thunder-storm and a dragon carrying clouds and rain along. People seeing these phenomena then told the stories.¹²

That said, even Wang was not willing to completely discount the significance of such phenomena, which would have been a truly bold rhetorical manoeuvre for a Han Dynasty intellectual, given the bond between *ganying* historiography, cosmological speculation, and imperial legitimation in vogue at the time (as discussed in the introduction):

The Five Emperors and Three Rulers all had Huangdi as their ancestor. He was a Sage, who first received a grand destiny. Therefore all his descendants became emperors and rulers. At their births there were miracles of course, which, if they did not appear in things, became manifest in dreams.¹³

Wang's tacit acceptance of the evidentiary value of dreams¹⁴ represents a case of this typically iconoclastic thinker hewing closely to the cultural consensus, already established by the Han Dynasty, that such “big dreams” (to use Bulkeley's phrase) represented significant and meaningful communications from the extrahuman realm. As has already been established, the centuries that followed saw this trope replicated and extended in a variety of literary genres, from history and poetry, to strange tales (*zhiguai* 志怪) and Buddhist hagiography.

12 Wang Chong, 323 (Forke trans.).

Cf., 或時禹、契、后稷之母，適欲懷妊，遭吞薏苡、燕卵、履大人跡也。世好奇怪，古今同情，不見奇怪，謂德不異，故因以為姓。(…)「感於龍」，「夢與神遇」，猶此率也。堯、高祖之母，適欲懷妊，遭逢雷龍載雲雨而行，人見其形，遂謂之然 (76).

13 *Ibid.*, 324. Cf., 五帝、三王皆祖黃帝；黃帝聖人，本稟貴命，故其子孫皆為帝王。帝王之生，必有怪奇，不見於物，則效於夢矣 (77).

14 In particular, Forke's introduction notes that even though Wang rejected the (then-current) cultural consensus that dreams were the sensory input of the [*hun*] soul, which was thought to wander about while the body slept, he nonetheless maintained that they could still offer veridical insights about future happenings:

'Dreams,' says Wang Chong, 'are visions. When good or bad luck are impending, the mind shapes these visions.' ... He further observes that there are direct and indirect dreams. The former directly show a future event, the latter are symbolical, and must be explained by the oneirocritics (27).

See also: Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 13. That said, as Raphals notes, Wang's skepticism was such that he remained dubious about the extent to which fallible human soothsayers could reliably read such omens, even though he did not dispute the existence of the signs themselves (187).

In my reading of the dream-conception episodes found in GSZ and XGSZ, I was drawn to the following two overarching themes, both of which will be considered in detail below: first, imagery related to the breaching of the boundaries of the maternal body; and, second, the Buddhist reimagination of the “precocious child” trope. My exploration of these themes will also highlight other relevant distinctions between Huijiao and Daoxuan's approach to this topic, which are largely commensurate with the general disparities between their two collections posited above, and, in particular, with Daoxuan's seemingly greater conviction of the rhetorically compelling quality of dream narratives.

Medieval Chinese Perspectives on Pregnancy in Context

In order to appropriately contextualize the specific accounts of oneiric fecundation that will occupy us for the remainder of this chapter, it is first necessary to outline the basic understanding(s) of conception and pregnancy that were then current in medieval China (and, specifically, in medieval Chinese Buddhism).¹⁵ Having done so, it will then be possible to explore whether, and the extent to which, the accounts preserved in GSZ and XGSZ would have been seen as “miraculous” by a contemporary reader. Before addressing these issues of historical context, however, I believe it is first necessary to address a central conceptual metaphor for impregnation found in many of these accounts, as its cross-cultural and trans-temporal ubiquity implies that it represents a particularly intuitive idiom for

15 My interpretation of the medieval Chinese Buddhist perspective on pregnancy was informed by: Sabine Wilms, “Nurturing the Fetus” in *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, edited by T. J. Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 71–73; Jesse J. C. Choo, “That ‘Fatty Lump’: Discourses on the Fetus, Fetal Development, and Filial Piety in China Before the Eleventh Century CE,” *Nan Nü* 14 (2012): 177–221; Vanessa R. Sasson, “A Womb with a View: The Buddha's Final Fetal Experience” in *Imagining the Fetus: The Unborn in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, edited by Vanessa R. Sasson and Jane Marie Law, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 55–72; Robert Kritzer, “Life in the Womb: Conception and Gestation in Buddhist Scripture and Classical Indian Medical Literature” in *Imagining the Fetus: The Unborn in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, edited by Vanessa R. Sasson and Jane Marie Law, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 73–89.

describing this embodied phenomenon.

Specifically, many of the dream conception narratives we will consider in this chapter share a common trope: namely, pregnancy resulting from a foreign object or agent entering the mother's body. While one could approach this imagery from a naively Freudian perspective and assume that such “insertions” are merely oblique references to the penetration of intercourse,¹⁶ I think it is more salient to consider them in light of the phenomenon of metaphorical cognition (as mentioned in the Introduction). In particular, all of the images to be considered below seem to be derived from a shared metaphorical schema: [Maternal] BODY AS CONTAINER.¹⁷ While these accounts obviously feature specific imagery drawn from the cultural patrimony (both Buddhist and otherwise), which will be considered in some detail below, it is first necessary to explore the root metaphor at work here.

As Lakoff and Johnson argue, and has been experimentally demonstrated in myriad cross-cultural studies performed in subsequent years, the embodied experiences of infants and young children lay the groundwork for cognitive templates that are then employed, through the process of metaphorical cognition, when encountering novel stimuli that can map onto them (whether wholly or partially).¹⁸ The most fundamental of these are the “ontological” metaphors (e.g., PLENITUDE IS UP;

16 My rationale for rejecting this approach is outlined in detail in the introduction.

17 For a general discussion of the CONTAINER schema, see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 29–32, with examples *passim*. They introduce the topic as follows:

We are physical beings, bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of our skins, and we experience the rest of the world as outside us. Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surfaces (29).

For specific information on the age at which infants develop this schema and the ways that it later serves to undergird a variety of forms of metaphorical cognition, see Jean M. Mandler, “How to Build a Baby: II. Conceptual Primitives,” *Psychological Review* 99:4 (1992): 587–604, 597–598.

18 See the new afterword to the 2003 printing of Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* for an outline of the various lines of research that have converged to confirm their initial hypotheses since their initial publication in 1980 (243–276).

PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOTION), given that they are undergirded by innate neural modules related to sensing the locations of body parts (proprioception) and moving them through 3D space. Such metaphors are continually reinforced through each subsequent experience of such interactions, from an infant's first tentative squirms and kicks onward. This explains the recurrence of this sort of metaphorical language across cultures and time periods, and the ease with which such metaphors can be recognized and understood by readers in different cultural contexts.¹⁹ In the case of the descriptions of pregnancy that we will consider below, the language being employed centers on the CONTAINER schema, wherein physical entities are described in terms of the spatio-structural relationships between “interior, boundary, and exterior.”²⁰ It is when considered at this level of abstraction that the metaphorical linkages between these conception accounts become clear: the mothers described therein become pregnant after the *boundaries* of their bodies are breached,²¹ and some *external* object or agent transitions from the *exterior* to the *interior*. Attending to this metaphorical underpinning helps to highlight the shared logic underlying all of these accounts, even in cases where the exact means by

19 For an eloquent summation of the conceptual metaphors evidenced in the philosophical writings of the Warring States period, see Edward Slingerland, *Effortless Action: Wu-Wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

20 *Ibid.*, 597.

21 On the issue of boundaries (and the breaching thereof), Iris Marion Young's eloquent exploration of the phenomenology of pregnancy discusses two discrete ways that carrying a fetus subverts the standard (and typically unconscious) sense of possessing a cohesive, bounded body: first, the panoply of internal sensations that lead an expectant mother to realize that her body contains an entity that is, at once, intimately connected with but also ultimately separate from her; and, second, the physiological changes that cause the maternal body's boundaries to shift more quickly than can be adapted to by her proprioceptive sense-of-self: “In pregnancy I literally do not have a firm sense of where my body ends and the world begins. My automatic body habits become dislodged; the continuity between my customary body and my body at this moment is broken” (49–50). “Pregnant Embodiment: Subjectivity and Alienation” in *On Female Body Experience: “Throwing Like a Girl” and Other Essays*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 46–61. As an aside, in her scathing overview of the vast majority of existing literature related to pregnancy, Young employs the container metaphor as one example of a disempowering discourse:

Pregnancy does not belong to the woman herself. It is a state of the developing fetus, for which the woman is a container; or it is an objective, observable process coming under scientific scrutiny; or it becomes objectified by the woman herself as a “condition” in which she must “take care of herself” (46).

For another perspective on the problematization of bodily boundaries during pregnancy, see Joyce Davidson, “Pregnant Pauses: Agoraphobic embodiment and the limits of (im)pregnability,” *Gender, Place and Culture* 8 (2001): 283–297. Finally, Jan Draper provides a useful review of the literature related to these issues in “Blurring, moving and broken boundaries: men's encounters with the pregnant body,” *Sociology of Health & Illness* 25:7 (2003): 743–767, 746–751.

which the maternal body is breached differ (e.g., whether the external object is incorporated via ingestion, penetration of the skin, or otherwise).

The use of this metaphor also potentially explicates the reason that the prospective mothers in these tales, some of whom are described as purposive, active individuals in the lead-up to their oneiric impregnations, are then described in the dream accounts themselves using bland, inert verbs²² (e.g., “see,” “observe,” “obtain,” “enter” [Refer to **Table 2.2** (below)]): when the maternal body is mapped onto the CONTAINER schema, certain aspects of the source domain (such as the fact that containers are objects which are acted upon by agents, rather than agents themselves) can be carried over. When such assumptions are compatible with cultural presuppositions about female bodies and female agency, it is all the more likely that they will appear salient to the discourse communities that came to share such stories.²³

In a way, the present issue can be read as a microcosm of the dissertation as a whole, in that both are concerned with the complex, dialogical process linking underlying neurophysiological givens (dreaming and a specific instance of metaphorical cognition, respectively) with the particular cultural resources available to medieval Chinese Buddhists, as well as the meaning-generative qualities of these interactions. As such, we must now consider the notions of conception and embryology that were current in sixth- and seventh-century China, as these were the raw materials from which storytellers

22 Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, makes a similar observation regarding Indian and Tibetan oneiric conception narratives, within which women become simply the “passive recipients of fetuses” (15).

23 As one example, Lin's *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* notes that the first account of the Buddha's birth translated into Chinese (the late Han “Master Mou's Treatise Settling Doubts” [*Mouzi Lihuolun* 牟子理惑論], cited in *Hongming ji* [弘明集, T. 2102]) is extremely circumspect about his mother's agency, stating that it “does not have much to say about Māyā, even not mentioning her name. She is simply 'the queen' from whom the Buddha 'borrowed the form.' It is the Buddha's active decision and descent that results in her pregnancy” (81).

(both named and unnamed) constructed the tales of miraculous pregnancy preserved in GSZ and XGSZ.

In reviewing the relevant literature, it becomes apparent that medieval Chinese perspectives on conception can be broadly subdivided into two incommensurate categories, based on their underlying logics: first, conception as resulting from a generative union of forces; and, second, conception as a father's conferral of an inchoate life upon the mother.

The first category emerges from the philosophico-medical tradition preserved in the *Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic* and subsequent related works, wherein male and female bodies are essentially considered to be homologous structures, differentiated primarily by their respective allotments of material energy (*qi* 氣); this idealized, androgynous form, around which a specific system of medical diagnosis and treatment was built, is described by Charlotte Furth as the “Yellow Emperor's Body.”²⁴ In this context, conception results from the generative merging of opposites, wherein the father's seminal essence (*jing* 精 – associated with primordial *yang* 陽) combines with the mother's blood (*xue* 血 – associated with primordial *yin* 陰), creating new life in a way that is analogous to both the process of

24 Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999). See the discussion of “The Yellow Emperor's Body” for Furth's nuanced and sophisticated exploration of the history and development of this conception, which she uses to ground her assessment of the later development of “women's medicine” in the Song and subsequent dynasties (19–58):

Following the *Book of Changes*, doctors liked to pair these [i.e., the terms for male (*nan* 男) and female (*nü* 女)] with the first two foundational hexagrams, *qian* and *kun*. *Qian* and *kun* spoke of cosmogenesis through the metaphor of the coital couple and evoked yin and yang as male and female generative principals; *qian* and *kun* also spoke of the father and mother as microcosmic embodiments of the truth – in the words of the neo-Confucian philosopher – that Heaven and Earth are one family. Here is homologous gender in the body, not as similar anatomical structures mapped on one another but as matching and independent functional processes, patterned like the synchronized movements of dancers in a duet (27).

This position is echoed in Sun Simiao's seventh-century claim concerning women's health, that, in spite of certain illness whose etiologies are directly tied to sexual dimorphism, “if an illness is due to the *qi* of the four seasons, or to the divisions [of day and night] and to imbalance of cold and heat or to repletion and depletion, it is no different from that of men” (translated in Furth, 71).

cosmogony²⁵ and the moment-by-moment causative flow of *qi* posited by the correlative cosmology.²⁶ In this context, where bodies are seen as congeries of functionally-defined systems, instead of structurally-defined assemblages of muscles, bones, organs, and fluids, the creation and gestation of new life are primarily described in terms of the “Conception Channel”²⁷ – a biophysical process present in both male and female bodies – rather than the (unilaterally female) womb.²⁸ In contrast, but still stressing the equal participation of both parties, Buddhist embryologies (both translated and apocryphal) argued for conception as the “merging of two sexual fluids,” tying the subsequent stages of fetal development to Buddhist cosmological notions of dependent origination and karmic causation,

25 According to Anna Andreeva and Dominic Steavu, the first extant Chinese account of conception and gestation, which is found in the 4th c. BCE *Guanzi* 管子, is one in which these cosmological parallels are highlighted (4): “Backdrops and Parallels to Embryological Discourse and Reproductive Imagery in East Asian Religions” in *Transforming the Void: Embryological Discourse and Reproductive Imagery in East Asian Religion*, Anna Andreeva and Dominic Steavu (eds.), (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–50. The perceived isomorphism between the generation of the cosmos, the generation of the embryo and the generation of the present moment subsequently spawned expansive traditions of both mystical speculation and religious practice, many of which centered on controlling the process of moment-to-moment becoming (as symbolized by one's breath). These practices were typically conceptualized as a means of extending the lifespan. See: Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 130–159. For an early example of these discourses in the context of cultivation, see Harold D. Roth, “The Inner Cultivation Tradition of Early Daoism” in *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald J. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 123–148. For a discussion of the employment of embryological language in a variety of soteriological contexts throughout Chinese history, see Andreeva and Steavu (eds.), chapters 1–6.

26 Furth, 47–48. Jessey Choo's “That Fatty Lump” also considers the linkages between fetal development and the Five Phases cosmology, but foregrounds the (pseudo-parasitic) interaction between mother and fetus, as described in a variety of medieval medical texts (191–194). For a discussion of the origins of these cosmological notions and their relationship to the development of Chinese medicine, see Paul U. Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1985), Ch. 3 (“Unification of Empire, Confucianism and the Medicine of Systematic Correspondence”), 51–100.

27 See Furth, *A Flourishing Yin*:

The Conception Channel connected the generative center around the navel in all bodies, and pathologies associated with the Highway channel – tumors, internal growths, hernias, and swellings of the genitals and lower abdominal cavity – afflicted both males and females. Still, some singular channel functions hinted at sexual dimorphism in the energy pathways used in generative function by males and females respectively (44).

28 *Ibid.*:

Rather than synecdochally signifying 'woman,' the womb was one of a number of supplementary leftover parts fitted into a scheme of bodily organization whose main thrust is in describing vital process, not visible form or anatomical structure (44).

This tendency to downplay sexual dimorphism is seen in contemporary manuals of Traditional Chinese Medicine as well, as attested in Nathan Sivin's translation of the *Revised Outline of Chinese Medicine*, wherein the womb is characterized as an “auxiliary” component of the cardiac and renal systems, and receives a scant paragraph of coverage in the chapter on these functional systems (230–231): *Traditional Medicine in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1987).

with the sufferings of both mother and infant used as testament to the primacy of pain, discomfort and unsatisfactoriness in embodied existence.²⁹

The second category, in contrast, is both considerably older and considerably less philosophically nuanced: namely, that conception was – in some capacity – the domain of the father, whereas the mother was responsible for the subsequent task of “nurturing” the embryo (and, eventually, the baby). One early example, dating back to at least the eighth or ninth century BCE,³⁰ can be seen in the poem “Liao E” (蓼莪) (from the *Classic of Poetry* [*Shijing* 詩經]), which records the lament of a son unable to provide appropriate filial service to his parents:

O my father, who begat me!	父兮生我、母兮鞠我。
O my mother, who nourished me!	
Ye indulged me, ye fed me,	拊我畜我、長我育我。
Ye held me up, ye supported me,	
Ye looked after me, ye never left me,	顧我復我、出入腹我。
Out and in ye bore me in your arms.	
If I would return your kindness,	欲報之德、昊天罔極。
It is like great Heaven, illimitable. ³¹	

Alan Cole, who discusses this passage as part of his overview of the “Confucian” antecedents to the maternocentric version of Buddhist filial piety that developed in medieval China, posits that the language used here casts the father as the generative agent in the process of copulation.³² He supports this reading by referring to the legal precedent whereby

29 Andreeva and Steavu, *Transforming the Void*, 9–26, 11. The (adult) child's obligation to repay the moral/karmic debt incurred through maternal suffering is treated throughout Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), but especially in chapters 4, 7 and 9. See also: Choo, “That Fatty Lump,” 204–211.

30 This dating of the “Minor Odes” is based on the linguistic research put forward by W. A. C. H. Dobson in “Linguistic Evidence and the Dating of the “Book of Songs”” *T'oung Pao* Second Series, Vol. 51: 4/5 (1964): 322–334, 323.

31 Translated (in a bilingual edition) by James Legge, *The She King or the Book of Poetry*, The Chinese Classics: Vol. 4 – Part 2, (Taipei, SMC Publishing, 1991 [1876]), 352.

32 Cole, 21–22.

a wife who did not produce children within three years could be legally returned to her natal family, since it was believed that she alone could be culpable for the failure of conception. Apparently it was inconceivable that fathers could fail in this regard.³³

Moreover, he notes that one of the earliest Chinese Buddhist apocrypha to deal with filial piety argues that a monk's primary moral responsibility is to convert his parents to Buddhism. This text inverts traditional family roles, describing parents as the monk's “children/disciples (*zi* 子),” while in the process differentiating between “the child/disciple that produced (*sheng* 生) them and the child/disciple that nurtured them” – an obvious recapitulation of the *Shijing*'s vision of conception.³⁴

This second perspective on conception, wherein the father bears near unilateral responsibility for the generation of the nascent life, is obviously much more compatible with the narratives contained in the *Eminent Monks* (and summarized in Table 2.2):³⁵ a compatibility that is reinforced when we consider them in light of the “exemplary child” trope, which will be discussed in some detail below.

33 Cole, 22.

34 Cole, 45. Specifically, he argues that:

the character *sheng* does not mean 'give birth' here, but rather 'beget', with a meaning that has more in common with older Confucian ideas of reproduction already discussed in Chapter 2. If so, then the father is being identified as the first cause and the mother as the nurturer. Otherwise, the character *sheng* would have to mean 'give birth,' clearly signalling the mother's contribution, with the father later being the nurturer, a role that never seems to have been assigned to him in filial formations that precede or follow this one (*ibid*).

Cf., *The Sutra on the Difficulty of Repaying the Kindness of Parents*: 「諸比丘有二子：所生子、所養子，是謂比丘有二子。」 (T. 684: 779a16–17)

35 That said, I would not extend this observation to make any conclusions about the relative prevalence of these two disparate models of conception among literate medieval monks, given the conclusions of recent research into the cognitive psychology of religion. In particular, the work of Justin Barrett, which drew on contemporary American and South Asian subjects, demonstrated a phenomenon that he termed “theological correctness,” which describes the process whereby individuals can simultaneously hold propositionally-learned theological claims about the nature and character of spiritual beings, while reasoning about them using standard cognitive inference systems. In the American example, he first had participants discursively describe their understandings of the Christian God, which prompted them to reproduce learned (“theological”) dicta: e.g., “God is everywhere [omnipresent],” “God is All-Powerful [omnipotent].” The participants were then told a story relating to the Christian God, and in which one of these counter-intuitive concepts was employed. When later asked to retell the story, their reimaginings of the events demonstrated that they had mentally recast the deity via the standard “Active Agent” template, with the counter-intuitive propositions (e.g., omnipresence) being replaced by intuitive ones (e.g., discrete, geographically- and temporally-sequential actions). Described in Boyer, *Religion Explained*, 82–91, 273–285. As such, it is quite possible that the Chinese monks under consideration were aware of both perspectives on conception, but employed the more intuitively obvious one when telling (or retelling) these biographical tales.

For instance, early and medieval Chinese sources, both Buddhist and otherwise, frequently make the implicit assumption that the moral (and even ontological) character of an infant is inherited from the father. This is the underlying logic of the various forms of heirogamy depicted in Chinese narrative materials, from the fathering of Confucius by a Dark God³⁶ to the impregnation of the mother of Liu Bang (刘邦, 256–195 BCE: i.e., the founding emperor of the Han 漢), by a dragon,³⁷ wherein exceptionally brave, wise or ethical children are seen to result from such unions. The obverse process (i.e., malign spirits siring offspring with human women) is also found within medieval narrative and medical literature – a trope whose explanatory power is persuasively explicated by Furth:

“Dreams of intercourse with ghosts” was an old medical syndrome understood as a form of possession afflicting women with weak bodily defense systems and depleted inner organs, inviting invasion. In classical authors like Chao Yuanfang, such dreamers were victims of supernatural agency, weeping without reason and talking to the empty air – their affliction clearly akin to types of spirit possession found in popular religion. By placing the syndrome under the category of depletion fatigue, Chen Ziming emphasized its construction around weak bodily defenses inviting the incursion of “ghost pathogens” (*xie guimei*) from without, thus underscoring wayward emotions as a tragic aspect of affliction rather than morally improper fantasy. Qi Zhongfu thought that such dreams, which could produce *jia* swellings and cases of “ghost pregnancy,” were especially prevalent among the many widows and nuns of the palace. This construction of illness as spirit possession rendered a woman blameless while showing her as passive. When males, usually youthful, damaged their health from seminal emissions provoked by female ghosts, they were seen as succumbing to erotic temptation. Respectful of the honor of their upper class clients, medicine showed a concern for female chastity.³⁸

Whether the offspring were being produced through intercourse with benevolent or malevolent extrahuman agents, this trope is in clear tension with the ideological presumptions of medieval Chinese

36 These apotheosizing accounts were already common by the Han dynasty, as outlined in Michael Nylan and Thomas Wilson, *Lives of Confucius: Civilization's Greatest Sage Through the Ages*, (New York: Doubleday, 2010). See, in particular, the section on “Kongzi as Scion of the Black God or Dark Lord” (91–94).

37 Dubs' footnote to this section in the *Han shu* attests to the long history of reading this episode as a sexual encounter: Wang Minsheng (1720–1798) adds that sexual intercourse is implied. Shen Qinhan (1775–1831) adds that the conception here is similar to that in the stele of 175 A.D. to the Emperor Yao, which says, 'Qingdu had intercourse with a red dragon, and gave birth to Yi Yao,' [Yi was the surname of Yao], and the Lingtai stele at Chengyang, which says, 'She wandered and glanced around on the shore of the [Yellow] River, and, affected by intercourse with a red dragon, she then gave birth to Yao.' This account thus likens Gaozu to his supposed ancestor, Yao” (28 ff. 1). Homer H. Dubs, trans., *The History of the Former Han Dynasty by Pan Ku*, Vol. 1, (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1938).

38 Furth, 90. This matter is also discussed in Sabine Wilms, *The Female Body in Medieval China*, 362 ff. 979.

Buddhism, given that their favoured pantheon of extrahuman beings (i.e., celestial buddhas and bodhisattvas) were almost unilaterally characterized using the language of clerical celibacy, thus rendering any notion of direct supernatural fecundation profoundly ideologically problematic.³⁹

Another reason that dream intercourse with a buddha or bodhisattva would have been interpreted in the medieval Chinese context as a dangerous (and possibly heretical) delusion is that the canonical Buddha biographies, which were widely read and extensively represented in medieval iconography, presented a specific, desexualized model of oneiric conception (as will be discussed below). All of this helps to explain the narrative utility of the (MATERNAL) BODY AS CONTAINER metaphor.

Finally, it is important to note that, in contradistinction to the “Yellow Emperor's Body” model proposed above, women's bodies were often interpreted in the medieval Chinese context as categorically different from men's, with boundaries that were inherently more porous due to the presence of sexually dimorphic traits (such as vaginal openings) and processes (such as menstruation, conception / gestation, and lactation).⁴⁰ For example, the renowned seventh-century physician and pharmacologist Sun Simiao 孫思邈 argued that it was this very permeability that rendered women especially susceptible to a variety of adverse health outcomes, with this “pregnability” occasionally described as an overt consequence of their primary sexual characteristics:

39 For a discussion of the polyvalent (and at times paradoxical) skein of Buddhist perspectives on sexuality and desire, see Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). For a discussion of the symbolism of the Buddha's sheathed penis (one of the Thirty-Two Marks), which is often taken as a karmic outcome of the lifetimes throughout which he cultivated perfect sexual continence, see John Powers, *A Bull of a Man: Images of Masculinity, Sex and the Body in Indian Buddhism*, (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), 13–14. This matter is also discussed in Faure, *The Red Thread*, 60–61.

40 Note: contemporary western feminist analyses have also spoken extensively about the perceived porosity of pregnant female bodies, describing ways that these characteristics become loci of subjugation and censure. One influential elucidation of this position was articulated by Robyn Longhurst, where she argues that pregnant bodies can be seen to occupy a borderline state as they disturb identity, system and order by not respecting borders, positions and rules. Their bodies are often considered to constantly threaten to expel matter from inside—to seep and leak (quoted in Davidson, 288).
See also: Draper, 748–751.

Their monthly courses flow out or are retained within, now early, now late, stagnating and congesting blood, and interrupting the functions of the central pathways. The injuries from this cannot be enumerated in words. [...] Sometimes as they relieve themselves at the privy above, Wind from below enters, causing the twelve chronic illnesses.⁴¹

Commenting on this passage, Furth notes that

this is a female body marked by instability of boundaries: open to invasion, now penetrated sexually or chilled by invading winds, now leaking and draining what cannot be contained. Blood is the visible sign of this instability, now overflowing without, now subject to hidden blockages and stagnation. In Sun Simiao's imagery, this blood as *yin* was a holistic figuration of woman's bodily nature.⁴²

Given that the vagina was seen as a site of demonic ingress (especially in cases of sexual intercourse with ghosts or spirits, as described above), it is perhaps unsurprising that medieval Chinese medical manuals included instructions for the exorcism of such malign forces through vaginal fumigation: the literal displacement of demonic *pneumas* (*qi*) with a benign counterpart created by burning apotropaically efficacious herbs.⁴³ The image of the “leaky” or “porous” female body also occurs in Buddhist discourse (both Indian and Chinese),⁴⁴ lending it additional salience in the narrative contexts

41 Translated in Furth (71).

42 Ibid., 72.

43 Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 243, 245–246. Lin, in *Dealing With Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, provides the compelling example of a sixth-century Buddhist *dhāraṇī* sutra that explains infertility via this same demonological language:

According to the text, people are childless because there are “yakṣas and rākṣasas that delight in devouring human fetuses” and are able to “kill fetuses in the womb.” Also, when a husband and a wife are having intercourse, these demons can cause their thoughts to be distracted so that pregnancy does not occur, or can cause swelling of the womb that destroys the fetus and leaves the woman barren. Sometimes, after a child is born, these demons kill it in infancy (184).

Buddhist thaumaturgy is then proffered as the solution to such issues.

44 See Faure, *The Red Thread*, 62. The Indian Buddhist perspective on the female body, with particular attention paid to issues of purity and pollution, is discussed at length in Amy Paris Langenberg, *Birth in Buddhism: The Suffering Fetus and Female Freedom*, (New York: Routledge, 2017). Given this conception of the female body, I was particularly struck by one particular metaphorical entailment of the BODY AS CONTAINER schema: namely, just as one would characterize a bucket of blood differently than a bucket of gold doubloons, many Chinese Buddhist hagiographies note that the prospective mothers of exemplary monks and nuns suddenly find themselves behaving with greater wisdom, alacrity and/or probity thanks to the intimate bond with their idealized fetus (as described in Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, 101–102). Though many of the accounts that she cites do not include dream narratives, I nonetheless felt compelled to mention them here, as they reinforce my metaphor-based analysis (and offer a perfect parallel to case of Saint Thierry cited above [ff. 2]).

As an aside, it should be noted that this narrative trope is also applied to male dreamers. For instance, the section on “Food and Drink” in Chen Shiyuan's sixteenth century dream encyclopedia includes a reference to a story about Emperor Xizong of the Tang (r. 873–888) dreaming of consuming the *Book of Chess*, only to wake up a master of the

we will be exploring below.

In the section that follows, we will explore a variety of narrative accounts relating to the (MATERNAL) BODY AS CONTAINER metaphor, taking pains to highlight the instances when these schematic mappings allow us to draw additional inferences about medieval Chinese Buddhist understandings of dreams. For instance, and as noted above, some of these stories impel us to consider the prospective mother in light of questions more broadly applicable to containers (e.g., “What has been placed inside of them? By whom?”). Likewise, if an oneiric event or figure is being cast as the generative agent (i.e., that which places the fetus into the mother), we would hypothesize that many of these accounts would elide the contribution / significance of the future monks' fathers: a hypothesis that is borne out when considering these accounts as a whole.⁴⁵

The Exemplary Child Trope in Medieval Chinese Materials

In addition to the intertextual linkages created through the “actions of / actions taken upon” maternal bodies outlined above, the miraculous conception narratives preserved in GSZ and XGSZ share an additional trope with the accounts of oneiric fecundation found in contemporaneous official histories and strange tales. In keeping with the *ganying* framework mentioned above, the children whose births resulted from these auspicious events are often described using the language of moral exemplarity, intellectual precocity, or other forms of excellence. For instance, innumerable examples of such usages can be found in the *Songshu's* record of auspicious miracles (as will be discussed below). That said, the

game (138), testifying to the porosity of boundaries between body and mind, as well as the waking and dream worlds.

45 Note: due to considerations of space, I was unable to include this line of argument in the present chapter. Instead, I am in the process of writing it up as a self-contained article, which I intend to submit for publication in the near future. My basic theory is that these stories would have been particularly salient in cases where the father was either absent or died unexpectedly, as they would have helped to justify a decision to consign a youth to a monastery, even if he was technically too young to be ordained. I will briefly return to this theory below.

link between miraculous response and the “precocious child” trope predates the *Songshu* by at least a millennium, given that it is first cited in the *Classic of Poetry (Shijing)* in the context of the mythical Lord of Millet (*Houji* 后稷), whose mother became pregnant after treading on a god's footprint.⁴⁶ As such, both Buddhist accounts and those from official histories can be seen to follow this narrative formula: *propitious conception* → *exemplary child*.

In a fruitful coincidence between the rhetorical needs of official historians and Buddhist biographers, one of the primary features of such exemplary children was a tendency to behave in a precociously, morally “adult” fashion: a desirable trait for both future emperors and monks. Anne Behnke Kinney, one of the preeminent scholars of early Chinese representations of women and childhood,⁴⁷ has written at length on the widespread popularization of this trope by the Han Dynasty, noting that such accounts provide

an early example of the generally negative associations connected to childhood and of the preference for representing the heroic personality as one that is not tainted by infantile traits. The tendency to elide juvenile attributes in the depiction of heroes is consistent with the generally accepted notion in early China that childhood was a stage in human development characterized not by positive traits, such as innocence or purity, which confer upon the child a spiritual status superior to that of the adult, but by features such as ignorance, helplessness and immaturity, which emphasize the child's unformed and unsocialized state.⁴⁸

46 Anne Behnke Kinney (1995), “The Theme of the Precocious Child in Early Chinese Literature,” *T'oung Pao: Second Series*, 81: 1/3 (1995): 1–24, 2–4.

47 See, for example, Anne Behnke Kinney, trans., *Exemplary Women of Early China: The Lienü zhuan of Liu Xiang*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Anne Behnke Kinney, ed., *Chinese Views of Childhood*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

48 Kinney, “The Theme of the Precocious Child,” 6. See also: Anne Behnke Kinney, *Representations of Childhood and Youth in Early China*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 33–52. The employment of this trope in the Buddhist context is explored by Miriam Levering in “The Precocious Child in Chinese Buddhism,” in *Little Buddhas: Children and Childhoods in Buddhist Texts and Traditions*, edited by Vanessa R. Sasson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 124–156, wherein she focuses primarily on the Chinese repurposing of Buddhist narrative materials, such as the Buddha's nativity, the enlightenment of the Dragon Girl (from the *Lotus Sutra*), and Sudhana's attainment of bodhisattvahood in one lifetime (from the *Flower Adornment Sutra*). The one point of intersection with my own study can be seen in her brief discussion of such tropes in hagiographies, though she only considers a single example from GSZ (the biography of Dao'an [道安, 312/314–385]), and dedicates much more time to accounts from the Song, Ming and Qing periods.

Given that many of the monastic biographies that will be considered below are predicated upon the aspiring monk's desire to “leave the householder's life” at a young age, the employment of this “childhood-eliding” trope makes strong narrative sense. Moreover, given the perennial concerns about monasteries housing social undesirables (one of the rationales often invoked to justify anti-Buddhist persecutions),⁴⁹ we can also posit that any viable rhetorical justification for the practice of consigning young children to the care of the monastic community⁵⁰ would have possessed a clear, pragmatic value to both Buddhist apologists (i.e., those concerned with defending the reputation of the Buddhist sangha) and to hagiographers (i.e., those concerned with demonstrating the moral and spiritual excellence of specific subjects, even if the social circumstances of their births may have seemed sub-optimal).

49 See, for example, Kenneth Ch'en, “On Some Factors Responsible for The Antibuddhist Persecution Under The Pei-Ch'ao,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 17:1/2 (1954): 261–273. A “straw man” version of this position is outlined in the early fifth-century “Discourse to Elucidate the Refutation” (cited in Sengyou's [僧祐, 445–518] *Hongming ji* [弘明集], T. 2102):

Now, however, when I observe all śramaṇas, [I feel that] they are all lacking in talent; they live gregariously and they are vulgar. I have not seen anyone outstanding [among them]. They are confused and indistinguishable, just like a river in which the [muddy] water of the Jing River and the [clear] water of the Wei River have merged. They are disordered, just as if perfume and *you* (i.e., *caryopteris divaricata*), [the foul-smelling water plant,] are put in the same box (translated by Harumi Hirano Ziegler (2015), *The Collection for the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism*, Vol. 1, (Moraga, CA: BDK America), 208).

This account goes on to describe the various personal and moral failings of contemporary monks: a catalogue of diverse critiques running the gamut from improper sources of livelihood (e.g., farming and divination) to moral laxity (e.g., misleading the credulous and seeking personal aggrandizement) (208–209). For a careful discussion of the political, ideological, economic and religious context of these persecutions, see Shi, *Case Studies of Three Persecutions of Buddhism, passim*.

50 That said, this degree of parental control over the destinies of children was certainly not without precedent in traditional China. For instance, Kinney, in *Representations of Childhood and Youth*, provides a detailed discussion of the nebulous moral / legal status of infant abandonment and other forms of infanticide (97–118). For a discussion on the Indian Buddhist perspectives on consigning young children to the care of monks, see Langenberg, *Birth in Buddhism*, on the phenomenon of “child pledging” (142–146). Also see: Langenberg, “Scarecrows, Upāsakas, Fetuses, and Other Child Monastics in Middle-Period Indian Buddhism,” 65–70 and *passim*.

Baselines: Oneiric Conception in GSZ

As mentioned above, it would surely be unwise to attempt to draw any strong conclusions about Huijiao's position on the meaning, significance or evidentiary value of dream conception narratives based solely on the two accounts included in GSZ. There are simply not enough data points. That said, given that these two narratives are rather detailed, they nonetheless introduce a number of tropes that are later deployed (or contested) in XGSZ. As such, I believe it is salutary to consider them both in some detail here, as they provide an excellent introduction to the subject at hand.

Tandi (曇諦, 347–411)

We can begin by considering the biography of the monk *Tandi*, whose account is probably most notable for its narrative cohesiveness: unlike many medieval biographies (both monastic and otherwise) that were assembled after the fact by compilers, this short account seems entirely of a piece, with each episode serving to advance the overall narrative. While it is not possible to determine who originally authored it, its cohesive, non-episodic nature implies that it was likely transmitted relatively faithfully, making it a good place to start when considering the medieval Buddhist view of oneiric conception in the Liang dynasty.

Shi *Tandi* was a person of the Kang family, who had once resided in Sogdiana.⁵¹ In the time of Emperor Ling of the Han [r. 168–189], they moved near to the Middle Kingdom. Under Emperor Xian of the Han [r. 189–220], at the peak of the unrest, they moved to Wuxing.⁵² Di's father, Rong, offered sacrifices as the Administrative Aide⁵³ to the governor of Ji Province.⁵⁴ His mother, Lady Huang, was taking an afternoon nap when she had a dream vision of a monk, who referred to her as “mother.” He entrusted her with a single deer-tail [fly whisk],⁵⁵ along with a

51 “*Kangju* 康居,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%BA%B7%E5%B1%85>. This reading is corroborated in the *Buddhist Studies Place Authority Database*: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000055089>.

52 In the northern part of modern Fujian province. See: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000018194>

53 Hucker #4623.

54 According to HDC, this corresponds to one of the original eight administrative divisions of China.

55 These whisks, which appear to have often been presented to monks by their wealthy patrons as gifts, are discussed in

couple of engraved iron paperweights. Upon waking, she saw that these two [types of] items were both there. As a result, she became pregnant⁵⁶ and [later] gave birth to Tandi. When Tandi was five years old, his mother showed him the deer-tail [fly whisk] and other items. Tandi [then] said: “The King of Qin⁵⁷ presented those to me.” His mother said: “Where had you put them?” He replied that he did not recall.

釋曇諦，姓康，其先康居人。漢靈帝時移附中國，獻帝末亂移止吳興。諦父彤，嘗為冀州別駕。母黃氏晝寢，夢見一僧呼黃為母，寄一麈尾，并鐵鏤書鎮二枚，眠覺見兩物具存，因而懷孕生諦。諦年五歲，母以麈尾等示之，諦曰：「秦王所餉。」母曰：「汝置何處？」答云：「不憶」。

When he reached ten years of age, he left the householder's life. He studied without following a teacher, his awakening as natural [as if it was] Heaven-sent.⁵⁸ Thereafter, he accompanied his father to [the city of] Fan in Deng [prefecture],⁵⁹ where he encountered a Man of the Way named Seng Lüe from the Region within the Passes. [Tandi] immediately called out Lüe's name and Lüe said: “Young fellow, how did you know to call me by my old name?” Tandi replied: “Formerly, [you would have] immediately called me 'Master⁶⁰,' as you were my [lit., “Di's”] *śrāmaṇera*. [Once,] for the sake of the community of monks, you were picking vegetables, when you were wounded by a wild boar and unconsciously cried out.”

至年十歲出家，學不從師，悟自天發。後隨父之樊鄧、遇見關中僧習道人，忽喚習名，習曰：「童子何以呼宿老名？」諦曰：「向者忽言阿上，是諦沙彌，為眾僧採菜，被野豬所傷，不覺失聲耳。」

The teacher Lüe had once been as a disciple of the dharma teacher Hongjue, and had been wounded by a wild boar when picking vegetables for the monastic community. But at first, Lüe

John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), where he comments on their symbolic and functional similarities with *ruyi* scepters (145). He also quotes an early medieval scholar, who described the use of these whisks by adepts of the *Pure Conversation* school, comparing “the relationship between a lecturer and his fly whisk to the relationship between a soldier and his sword” (*ibid.*), which helps to explain the symbolic significance of this item. In discussing this episode, Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, ignores the Buddhist significance of this item, describing it only as “Daoist duster” (99).

56 HDC cites examples from the latter Han and the early Tang attesting to the usage of 懷孕 as a binome meaning “to become pregnant.”

57 See: Yao Chang [the personal name of the first emperor of the Latter Qin] 姚萇, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%A7%9A%E8%90%87>. Also: *Buddhist Studies Person Authority Database*: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A002520>.

58 The compound 天發 occurs several more times in *GSZ*. Since I was a bit uncertain of my reading, I am indebted to Yoshikawa and Funayama's Japanese translation (2010), which renders this passage as: 「師匠に就いて学ぶではないのに、理解力は天生のものであった。」 (Vol. 3, 104).

59 See: (樊城) <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000027163>; (鄧縣) <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000027186>.

60 Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010) have 「heshang 和尚」 (“preceptor,” “master”) as a translation of *shang* 上, noting that a 阿 is simply an honorific prefix (Vol. 3, 105, 106 ff. 3). Also see: “heshang 和尚,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%92%8C%E5%B0%99>.

did not remember it. He therefore paid a visit to Di's father, who fully explained the entire situation, and also showed him the paperweights, deer-tail [whisk], and so on. Lüe, who suddenly understood, wept and said: "My former master was the dharma teacher Hongjue. My teacher had lectured on the *Lotus [Sutra of Fine] Dharma* for Yao Chang [the King of Qin]. Since he was a mendicant who preached in the capital, this Yao Chang had presented my teacher with these two [types of] things. Those things are now here." Lüe then called to mind and calculated the time of Hongjue's death. It was precisely the day that those items had been given! He again remembered the time that he had been picking vegetables, and was profoundly shaken and astonished.⁶¹

碧經為弘覺法師弟子，為僧採菜，被野豬所傷。碧初不憶此，迺詣諦父，諦父具說本末，并示書鎮塵尾等，碧迺悟而泣曰：「即先師弘覺法師也。師經為姚萇講法華，貧道為都講，姚萇餉師二物，今遂在此。」追計弘覺捨命，正是寄物之日。復憶採菜之事，彌深悲仰。

Di then made excursions into various scriptures and documents; once they met his eye, [they were] committed to memory. Later on, he entered Huqiu monastery [in the state of] Wu.⁶² There, he lectured on the *Book of Rites*, the *Book of Changes*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, seven times apiece, as well as the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Great Chapter*⁶³ and the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, fifteen times apiece. He also enjoyed composing articles and [his] collected [works fill] six fascicles, which also circulated widely. He cherished [his time among] the forests and streams, until he finally returned to Wuxing, where he entered Guzhang [Prefecture]'s Kunlun Mountains.⁶⁴ There, he led a quiet life, drinking from the mountain streams for more than twenty years. He passed away in his mountain temple at the end of the the [Liu-]Song Dynasty's Yuanjia reign period [ca. 453 CE]. His springs and autumns were more than sixty.⁶⁵

諦後遊覽經籍，遇目斯記。晚入吳虎丘寺，講禮、易、春秋各七遍，法華、小品、維摩各十五遍。又善屬文翰，集有六卷，亦行於世。性愛林泉，後還吳興，入故章崑崙山，閑居澗飲二十餘載。以宋元嘉末卒於山舍，春秋六十餘。

Whether this tale was written at the time of Tandi's death (mid-5th century) or nearer the compilation of

GSZ (ca. 519 CE),⁶⁶ the concept of transmigration was still in the process of being naturalized in the

61 This sounds very much like Rudolph Otto's description of the phenomenological character of an interaction with the *numinous*. See, in particular, the discussion on 5–41.

62 Also know as *Yunyansi* 雲巖寺 and located west of modern day Shanghai. See: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL00000009973>

63 For *Dapin* 小品 as an abbreviated title for the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra, see: "Dapin bore jing 小品般若經," *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?59.xml+id\(%27b5927-54c1-822c-82e5-7d93%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?59.xml+id(%27b5927-54c1-822c-82e5-7d93%27)).

64 A mountain range in Jiangsu: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000018171>

65 T. 2059: 370c24 – 371a16. Following punctuation and variant characters from GSZ (1992 [2007]), 278–279.

66 This account seems to have been drawn largely from *Chu sanzang jiji* (出三藏記集), which was compiled in 515 CE (i.e., not long before Huijiao's compilation of *Gaoseng zhuan*). That said, it is unclear when the sources upon which the CSZJJ account was based were originally composed. See the entry on this text in *The Princeton Dictionary of*

Chinese context: a process that relied as much (or more) on narrative evidence than on doctrinal pronouncements.⁶⁷ In this context, the present tale seems to function as a proof-text for the Buddhist notion of rebirth, with its combination of a mysterious dream vision, the miraculous appearance of oneiric artifacts in the waking world, and the later confirmatory encounter with a monk who had been the child's disciple in his previous life. This rhetorical goal is further implied by a structural contrast between the present episode and the vast majority of dream accounts preserved in the monastic biographies of XGSZ. In the latter text, the mothers' pregnancies are (implicitly or explicitly) characterized as a response (*ying* 應), impelled by either the mother's request for a child or by a spontaneous dream experience (a self-contained narrative unit), whereas Tandi's story contains a variety of interleaved stimulus/response dyads, each providing an additional line of evidence for the veracity of the events depicted therein.⁶⁸ As can be seen in *Table 2.1*, both of the dream conception narratives in GSZ include subsequent, extra-oneiric miracles, implying that an oneiric experience alone was not considered fully persuasive. One possible explanation, as I have proposed previously, is that the roughly hundred-and-fifty year gap between the compilation of GSZ and XGSZ saw a marked increase in the popularity of Buddhist dream incubation practice, which would certainly help to explain why the later text's oneiric conceptions were so often seen as miraculous responses: i.e., in at least some of these cases, the dreams (and subsequent pregnancies) had been explicitly requested. In the

Buddhism, edited by Robert Buswell and Donald J. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 192.

67 This corresponds with the second of Donald Gjerston's postulated rationales for the telling of Buddhist miracles in medieval China: "illustrations of the efficacy of Buddhist piety, often through descriptions of the inexorable workings of the law of karmic retribution" (296). "The Early Chinese Buddhist Miracle Tale: A Preliminary Survey," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101:3 (1981): 287–301. For a more nuanced discussion of the rhetorical functions of these Buddhist narratives, see Campany, "Return-from-Death Narratives," 91–125. Likewise, Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*, considers the impact of such concerns on the development of the Taoist mortuary cosmology. See, for example, 37–59.

68 Given that Tandi's biography contains two overt miracles (the appearance of the fly-whisk and paperweights, and his impossible knowledge of an episode from the elder monk's life), this could be read as an instance of the "foreign monk as thaumaturge" trope that Kieschnick, in *The Eminent Monk*, describes as a distinguishing feature of Huijiao's collection (in contrast with later collections, wherein such miraculous efficacy has been more fully "Sinicized"). See: 84–87, 110.

current tale, in contrast, the mother expresses no specific desires, nor is any other cause for the dream conception listed, implying that this narrative was included in Huijiao's collection for a different reason.

As noted above, and as will be treated at length in the section on the XGSZ's accounts of dream conception, the majority of the latter text's episodes include imagery referring to the breaching of maternal bodies. In contrast, the account of Tandi's conception does not feature any language or imagery that could be persuasively read as a symbolic representation of the mother's impregnation. Indeed, both the verbs employed in Tandi's mother's dream account are almost entirely passive: she sees (*jian* 見) a monk, who calls out / refers (*hu* 呼) to her, and she is then “presented” (*ji* 寄) with gifts. These gifts, in turn, do not in any way symbolize sexual intercourse or impregnation, but rather her inchoate son's past and future lives as a lecturer and scholar. Moreover, while this account does provide evidence of the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration (e.g., the continuities between Hongjue and Tandi's lives, and the fact that Tandi has spontaneous access to the elder monk's memories), it is notable that the story itself makes no reference to the sexual aspect of incarnation: a notable contrast with some of the XGSZ accounts treated below.⁶⁹ That said, the fact that she is called “mother” by the oneiric apparition implies one of three (non-mutually-exclusive) possibilities: 1) Lady Huang is already pregnant at the time, 2) the monk's speech is a form of (biologically) performative utterance,⁷⁰ and/or 3) this is a subtle reference to the fact that the elder monk was about to become her son. Regardless, the language and imagery employed in this episode consistently downplay the sexual, embodied aspects of

69 See, for example, Faure, *The Red Thread*, overview of the process of transmigration consists of the soul of a liminal decedent being drawn into the “spectacle” of sexual intercourse between a couple, only to become attached to the mother's body (20–21). See also: Andreeva and Steavu, 14–17; Langenberg, *Birth in Buddhism*, 43–47; Choo, “That Fatty Lump,” 194–197.

70 Here, I am using the term as it is defined by J. L. Austin in *How To Do Things With Words*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962 [1955]): namely, a verbal act such that “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” (6).

the conception experience, which could seem compatible with the negative figurations of bodies (especially female bodies) and sexuality in medieval Chinese Buddhism.⁷¹

In terms of the PRECOCIOUS CHILD trope, the youth is certainly described in terms that highlight his exemplarity and uniqueness, as well as his atypical maturity and intellectual probity. That said, the descriptions of the monk-to-be do not employ the standard hagiographical clichés seen in many of the XGSZ accounts. For instance, the four-character phrase describing the youth's wisdom (*wu zi tian fa* 悟自天發), which Huijiao reproduced verbatim from the biography of Tandi found in *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 (T. 2145), occurs only eight times in the entire Taishō Canon, all eight of which are citations of this same biographical narrative.⁷² Additionally, while many of the XGSZ accounts describe monks entering the sangha at a very young age, the present account's usage of that language is somewhat inscrutable. While it describes Tandi “leaving the house[holder's life]”⁷³ (*chujia* 出家) at ten years of age, the fact that he practices without a teacher and that he continues to travel about with his father imply that he was still living at home at this time.⁷⁴ As will be discussed below, this text's

71 See, for example, the discussion of the “filthy” maternal body in Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, 125–128. Likewise, Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, provides extensive textual evidence that medieval Chinese Buddhists viewed the potential impurity of Queen Māyā's womb as a Buddhological dilemma to be resolved (often by positing a hermetically-sealed boundary between her body and the fetal bodhisattva) (75–78) – a point also made by Sasson, “A Womb with a View,” 63–65. Amy Paris Langenberg, *Birth in Buddhism*, problematizes this characterization as it applies to Indian Buddhist notions of birth, arguing that descriptions of the polluted maternal body were used to rhetorically valorize the path of female renunciation, 167–175.

72 As determined via a full-text search of the CBETA edition of the Taishō (2016).

73 Note: I employed this somewhat awkward circumlocution in order to preserve the ambiguity of the phrase, in that it is not clear whether or to what extent Tandi was formally ordained.

74 The question of ordination age seems to have vexed Buddhists since the institutional religion's inception. While Vinaya prescriptions seem to prohibit the full ordination of anyone under twenty years of age, Indian textual traditions post a variety of incommensurate rules for the ordination of novices, with some going so far as to state that a seven-year-old who is capable of scaring away crows is a suitable candidate for initiation. See: Amy Paris Langenberg, “Scarecrows, *Upāsakas*, Fetuses, and Other Child Monastics in Middle-Period Indian Buddhism” in *Little Buddhas: Children and Childhoods in Buddhist Texts and Traditions*, edited by Vanessa R. Sasson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 43–74. Particularly relevant for many of the cases discussed in XGSZ is the explicit suggestion that such child ordinations could be allowed in cases of financial need, as Langenberg argues (employing John Strong's notion of the monastery as a “commensal community” including not only monks but also stray animals, local deities, and indigent children):

seeming discomfort with young children leaving home to join the sangha is not carried forward to the miraculous conception accounts preserved in XGSZ.

Xuangao (玄高, 402–444)

The second oneiric conception narrative preserved in GSZ describes the early life of Xuangao and shares a variety of features with the Tandi biography outlined above, including the cohesiveness of its narrative.⁷⁵

Shi Xuangao, whose family name was Wei, and whose original name was Lingyu, was a person of Wannian⁷⁶ [in] Fengyi [Prefecture]⁷⁷. His mother, madame Kou, was originally a non-Buddhist. When she first came to the Wei family, she became pregnant with a girl, who was Gao's elder sister. From birth, [this sister] already believed in the Buddha. She thereby took a vow on her mother's behalf, wishing that there would be no differences of opinion within their family, and that [her mother] would be able to receive the Great Teaching [i.e., Buddhism].

Strong's "commensal community" would have particular relevance to orphaned or indigent children like Ānanda's nephews who might have frequented Buddhist monasteries, performing odd jobs or presenting the monks with small offerings such as tooth sticks or flowers in return for monastic scraps. Our vinaya text, with its tale of resentments stirred up when needy children hang about the *vihāra*, could be taken as evidence for the occasional presence of small children in the monastic commensal community. Indeed, the crow-scaring rule seems to represent an attempt to provide a legitimate place for young children within the monastery hierarchy, particularly in the case of orphaned or indigent youngsters (54).

To further nuance this picture of the early Indian context, see: Shayne Clarke, *Family Matters in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014), and, in particular, his discussion of child "monks" and nursing mothers entering into monastic life, which describes as instances of "family-friendly monasticisms" (159–161).

Such dynamics were clearly also present in Chinese Buddhism, as noted by Levering:

when one looks at the biographies of Chan monks in the Song dynasty, it appears that the minimum age requirement for becoming a postulant as well as for ordination as a novice was never enforced. The age at which a person left the householder's life varied widely. Some indeed were reported to have passed the examination for ordination (for males, reading 500 sheets of the Lotus Sutra or reciting from memory 100 sheets; for a female, reading 300 sheets or reciting from memory 70 sheets) and been ordained as novices at the age of nineteen, the minimal legal age for postulants. But this was by no means the norm. Chun-fang Yu reports that Jiangshan Canyuan, a descendent of the famous Chan figure Fu Dashi, 'left the householder's life at three and became ordained at seven.' Perhaps this case was unusual, but there are also in the Chan Transmission of the Lamp collections accounts of children who became postulants at seven, nine, eleven, thirteen, and fourteen years old, or became ordained at the ages of fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen (129).

75 For another rendering of this episode, which I discovered after completing the above translation, see Whalen Lai, "The Century of the Holy Man in Chinese History (316–439): The Death of Hsuan-Kao," *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies* Third Series, 5 (2003): 143–161. Likewise, Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, briefly cites the Xuangao account as the prototypical case of the *Eminent Monks'* perspective on miraculous birth (99).

76 An area near modern Xi'an: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000042451>

77 See: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000043362>

Then, in the third year of the [Latter] Qin dynasty's Hongshi reign period [402 CE], the mother had a dream vision of an Indian monk⁷⁸ strewing flowers,⁷⁹ which filled the room. Upon waking, she was already bearing [a fetus] in her womb. She [was pregnant] until the eighth day of the second month of the fourth year, when she gave birth to a boy. The house suddenly filled with a strange fragrance and the walls were lit with a shining illumination, which extended outward until the next morning and then subsided. The mother took the boy's birth as an auspicious omen, which is why she named him “Spirit Born” [*Lingyo* 靈育]. As his contemporaries came to focus these [events], he was repeatedly praised as “World Eminent” [*Shigao* 世高].

釋玄高，姓魏，本名靈育，馮翊萬年人也。母寇氏，本信外道。始適魏氏，首孕一女，即高之長姊。生便信佛，乃為母祈願，願門無異見，得奉大法。母以偽秦弘始三年，夢見梵僧散華滿室，覺便懷胎，至四年二月八日生男。家內忽有異香，及光明照壁，迄旦乃息。母以兒生瑞兆，因名靈育。時人重之，復稱世高。

When he was twelve years old, he took leave of his family and entered the mountains, [though] for a long time [they had] not yet granted him permission to do so. On that particular day, a scholar who was sojourning in the Gao family's home told them that [their son] had wanted to enter the Zhongchang⁸⁰ mountains and [become a] recluse. His father and mother immediately climbed up after him. That evening, they both saw the various members of the community coming to see [Xuangao] off,⁸¹ and by the next morning all had inquired after him. His father and mother said: “Yesterday, [you] finished bidding adieu [to Xuangao]; now can we get back to searching for him?” The villagers said: “None of us know [where he] went,⁸² so how could we possibly have seen him off?” His father and mother immediately realized that the people who had come by yesterday to inquire after [Xuangao] were deities.

When Xuangao first reached the mountain, he wanted to immediately leave the house[holder's

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- 78 I found it notable that the edition of GSZ prepared for the Song Dynasty's Household Library (宮) featured the variant character *hu* 胡 (“foreigner” / “barbarian”), as per Taishō footnote #3.
- 79 For a roughly contemporaneous Chinese perspective on flower offerings in Indian Buddhism, see Faxian's pilgrimage record (高僧法顯傳 [T. 2085]), which makes numerous mentions of this practice: Li Rongxi, trans., “The Journey of the Eminent Monk Faxian” in *The Lives of Great Monks and Nuns*, (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2002), 163–214. See, for example, 165, 166, 170, 176, 182. Moreover, instructions for this practice were translated into Chinese by the third or fourth century CE, in such texts as the *Sutra on Consecrating and Washing Buddha Images* (灌洗佛形像經 [T. 695]), as discussed in Liu Shufen, “Art, Ritual, and Society: Buddhist Practice in Rural China during the Northern Dynasties,” *Asia Major* Third Series 8:1 (1995): 19–49, 37–38.
- 80 Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010) note that the precise location of these mountains is unclear, but that they might be south of Chang'an (citing evidence from a history of the Han – Northern/Southern Dynasties linking this mountain to Zhongnan shan 終南山 [Vol. 4, 51 ff. 5]). Cf., <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000042627>.
- 81 According to HDC and GR, 祖送 can refer to either holding a farewell celebration OR funeral rites (specifically, the accompaniment of the funeral cortege). Thematically speaking, it obviously makes the most sense if these spirits were celebrating / mourning the “loss” of Xuangao from the householder's life. I'm not happy with these few lines, and feel like they all hang on the reading of the character 送. Yoshikawa and Funayama silently substitute 見送 throughout these lines, but this does not address the ambiguity (as JMDict defines the Japanese variant term as both “see someone off [at a station]” and “to bury someone”).
- 82 I'm not sure about this. They could also just be saying “None of us know [what you are talking about],” with the *xing* 行 being read in the sense of “action” or “activity.”

life], but the mountain monk did not permit it, saying: “Since you do not have the approval of your father and mother, the [Buddha's] Teaching [states that you] cannot enter the monastic life.” Xuangao then temporarily returned home, expounding his request that he [be permitted] to enter the [Buddhist] path. After doing so for twenty days, he was then finally able to [realize] his prior ambition. Since he already rejected the secular life and was opposed to the [mundane] world, he changed his name to “Profound and Lofty” [*Xuangao* 玄高]. Born with an innate perspicacity, he became learned without [effortful] contemplation.⁸³ When his years reached fifteen, he was already [able to] lecture on [the Buddha's] Teaching to the mountain monks. After receiving the precepts, he thereafter focused his energies on meditation and *Vinaya*.⁸⁴

年十二辭親入山，久之未許。異日有一書生寓高家宿，云欲入中常山隱，父母即以高憑之。是夕咸見村人共相祖送，明旦村人盡來候高。父母云：「昨已相送，今復覓耶？」村人云：「都不知行，豈容已送？」父母方悟昨之迎送乃神人也。高初到山，便欲出家，山僧未許，云：「父母不聽，法不得度。」高於是暫還家，啟求入道，經涉兩旬，方卒先志。既背俗乖世，改名玄高。聰敏生知，學不加思。至年十五，已為山僧說法。受戒已後，專精禪律。

As in the Tandi biography discussed above, the events leading up to Xuangao's birth (including the oneiric conception) are not described in stereotyped or clichéd language, and seem to contain a specific reference to the details of the famed monk's later life. In particular, the image of an “Indian monk scattering flowers” could be read in at least three ways: 1) as a reference to Xuangao's later training by Buddhahadra, with the blossoms themselves (*hua* 華) signifying the Flower Garland Sutra (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經));⁸⁵ 2) as an allusion to a specific visionary technique encompassed within the meditation

83 Yoshikawa and Funayama read this as an indirect reference to the *Analecets*, wherein the dichotomy between being “wise without learning” or “learned without being wise” is outlined (Vol. 4, 53 ff. 1). Cf., *The Analects* 16.9 (Yoshikawa, Vol 3. 22–23): 孔子曰，生而知之者，上也，學而知之者，次也，困而學之，又其次也，困而不學，民斯為下矣。 Cf., Slingerland's translation: “Confucius said, 'Those who are born understanding it are the best; those who come to understand it through learning are second. Those who find it difficult to understand and yet persist in their studies come next. People who find it difficult to understand but do not even try to learn are the worst of all’ (196).

84 T. 2059: 397a4–21. Punctuated and incorporating variant characters from *GSZ* (1992 [2007]), 409.

85 While this is perhaps a bit of a stretch, it is a suggestion that is nonetheless compatible with one traditional mode of Chinese dream interpretation (described in Chapter One), whereby specific written characters used to describe dream phenomena are interpreted indexically: for instance, an Indian monk distributing flowers (梵僧散華滿室) could be read as an omen of the monk's future receipt of the *Huayan jing* (華嚴經) from Buddhahadra. Discussing the relationship between these two monks in the context of the transmission of the *Huayan jing*, Aramaki Noritoshi clearly summarizes the central role played by the young Xuangao in the transmission and popularization of this scripture: the “mutually respectful relationship of Xuangao with Buddhahadra around the second year of Jianhong period (421 CE) implies the possibility that the *Huayan jing* in 60 fascicles, translated by the latter just within the same year, was transmitted directly to Xuangao, and he started to study the scripture in the light of his religious experience. Xuangao at the age 20 or so may appear to be too young to dictate the course of the historical

method that the Chinese monk would come to learn from his Indian master,⁸⁶ or 3) as a reference to a purification ritual enjoined prior to engaging in meditation practice.⁸⁷ Another similarity to the Tandi account is the fact that Huijiao's stance on the positioning of the dream / conception event within the *ganying* framework is not entirely clear: while the mother's dream could be seen a response (*ying*) to her daughter's heartfelt vow (*gan*), the birth itself is also attended by additional miraculous phenomena, including a marvellous fragrance and mysterious illumination.⁸⁸ As suggested previously, this narrative

development of Huayan tradition, but his genius in achieving *samadhi* and his historical role in founding Northern Wei (386–534 CE) Buddhism should prove to be sufficiently fundamental to initiate this primarily Northern development of the Huayan tradition" (172).

"The Huayan Tradition in Its Earliest Period" in *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism*, edited by Imre Hamar, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 169–188.

86 As noted by Chen Jinhua, the specific meditation method that Buddhahadra passed on to Xuangao was recorded in his *Damoduoluo chan jing* (達摩多羅禪經) (104–107). See: "Meditation Traditions in Fifth-Century Northern China: With a Special Note on a Forgotten 'Kaṣmīri' Meditation Tradition Brought to China by Buddhahadra (359–429)" in *Buddhism Across Asia: Networks of Material, Intellectual and Cultural Exchange: Volume 1*, edited by Tansen Sen, (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2014), 101–130. While flower imagery is used at various points in this text, I think the most compelling example is found in the second fascicle, where the practitioner is instructed to visualize various types of blossoms surrounding his body as part of his meditative practice: 觀察時，見周匝熾然，相起身處，其內有種種雜華、淨妙、珍寶，周匝遶身；又自見身種種雜寶、諸功德相，微妙莊嚴。修[*]行見是諸相已，慧眼開廣，自顧其身，周遍觀察；(T. 618: 321a8–11). Chan Yiu-wing renders this section as follows:

Then the practitioner sees, during his meditation that everything around him is blazing and there are multiple forms of flower within his body with lots of pure and wonderful jewels surrounding him. In addition, he also sees within himself all sorts of multiple jewels and positive effects which are extremely wonderful and glorious. Having seen all these visions, the wisdom-eye of the practitioner has become wide open. He then continues meditating all over his own body (451).

An English Translation of the Dharmatrāta-Dhyāna-Sūtra - With Annotation and a Critical Introduction, (PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, 2013). Also notable is the fact that both the biography and this meditation manual employ the character 華 (rather than 花) to describe these blossoms.

87 For an example of the strewing of flower petals in the context of a Buddhist meditation rite (albeit in the Japanese context), see Anne Nishimura Morse, "Ritual Objects," *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert Buswell, (New York: Macmillan, 2004), 726–729, 727.

88 Marvellous fragrance is a fairly standard trope in such accounts, where it is often used to indicate the proximity of Buddhist deities or exalted Buddha realms (e.g., the Pure Land): as such, it is more common in accounts of Buddhist monks who are near death or who have recently passed on. For some examples of this trope in some contemporaneous narratives, see C. Pierce Salguero, "A Flock of Ghosts Bursting Forth and Scattering: Healing Narratives in a Sixth-Century Chinese Buddhist Hagiography," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 32 (2010): 89–120, 96, 101. That said, it is also quite possible that the compiler of this account was explicitly linking the oneiric image of strewn flowers (at the time of conception) with the presence of a superlative scent (at the time of the infant's delivery). Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, provides references to a variety of other hagiographical accounts that link the birth of future exemplary monks/nuns with the appearance of numinous illumination or fragrances (102–103): a trope that is not exclusive to cases of oneiric conception. Robert Ford Campany also notes that many medieval accounts use such sensory phenomena as shorthand references to the proximity of the "unseen realm" (personal communication). Also see: the various accounts in *Mingxiangji* that Campany lists in the index to *Signs from the Unseen Realm* under the heading "fragrance as sign of the miraculous" (294).

structure may imply that the author(s) / compiler(s) of this account did not consider the oneiric conception itself to be sufficiently compelling (from the standpoint of proselytic efficacy).

On the matter of maternal bodies, the Xuangao account shares a number of themes with that of Tandi, and can thus be similarly contrasted with the tales preserved in XGSZ. Specifically, though the language employed in this account acknowledges the material embodiment of Xuangao's mother slightly more than does the previous, in that the term used for pregnancy therein specifically references her womb (i.e., *huaitai* 懷胎), this language is used to describe her realization that she is pregnant, rather than the impregnation itself. In contrast, many of the accounts from XGSZ that will be considered below use this terminology as part of the dream conception narratives themselves, to describe an external object actively being inserted into the mother's body, often via the chest. More broadly, even though this episode *does* refer to the mother's womb (at least after she has awoken), the actual dream imagery is not connected whatsoever to the process of impregnation or conception; instead, its central image, the flower-strewing monk,⁸⁹ can plausibly be interpreted as a precognitive vision of Xuangao's future teacher⁹⁰ (as discussed above). That said, one parallel between it and many of the XGSZ accounts is its overt denial of the mother's agency. Specifically, the narrative sequence strongly implies that Madame Kou had been visited by this oneiric vision as a response (*ying*) to the compelling ethico-magical force of her daughter's vow,⁹¹ rather than due to any goal, desire or

89 With that being said, it also an unequivocal fact that flowers function as the external sex organs of plants and that they bear a visually homologous relationship with female gonads (as overtly represented in the works of Georgia O'Keeffe). That said, this symbolism is not terribly common in contemporaneous Chinese sources. For instance, Alfred Koehn's study of pictorial representations of flowers notes that the motif seems to have been imported into China along with Buddhism (an iconographic system in which blossoms represent purity and liberation, as opposed to sexuality): "Chinese Flower Symbolism," *Monumenta Nipponica* 8:1/2 (1952): 121–146, 121. Commenting on this issue, Lothar von Falkenhausen notes that "[t]he lack of floral imagery at the earliest stages of Chinese art history has aroused much puzzlement" (54 ff. 4). "Action and Image in Early Chinese Art," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 17 (2008), *Studies in Chinese Art History / Études sur l'histoire de l'art chinois*, 51–91.

90 I am, of course, not taking the oneiro-mystical position (critiqued in the introduction) by assuming that this event literally occurred as described.

91 Given the brevity of the current account, it is not possible to determine whether this spiritually potent utterance should

preparatory practice of her own. As such, and as was the case with the Tandi biography considered previously, there is no evidence herein that the present episode refers to a tradition of Buddhist practice related to the provision of children, as it seems implausible that the episode described here represents any sort of standardized ritual, given the central role played by the future monk's elder sister.

As for the Exemplary Child trope, it is employed in a fashion that is far more congruent with the later XGSZ accounts, with the discrepancies between the Xuangao and Tandi episodes suggesting that the tales collected by Huijiao predate the more “standardized” usages seen in XGSZ. First, the account features an intertwining of tropes, drawn from both the Buddhist and Literati canons. For instance, the notion of a miraculous birth being signalled by a marvellous fragrance and the appearance of lambent illumination in the birthing room can be tied back to a variety of Buddhist sources (as already discussed), whereas the notion of a young child being “learned⁹² without effortful contemplation” seems compatible with both Buddhist and Literati standards of exemplarity. That said, if Yoshikawa and Funayama are correct in reading the phrase “born with an innate perspicacity, he became learned without [effortful] contemplation” (*congmin shengzhi xue bja si* 聰敏生知學不加思) as an intertextual engagement with the *Analects* (as described in the footnote above), this would obviously serve as to reinforce the connection between “Confucian” learning and Buddhist spiritual attainment: a rhetorical move that would have been appealing to the audience(s) for whom Huijiao

be interpreted as an instance of the Buddhist “truth-force vow” (discussed in Chapter One), of sympathetic resonance (*ganying*), or both. As an aside, the daughter's action can also be read in light of the transmogrified perspective on filial piety propounded in the (roughly contemporaneous) *Sutra on Repaying the Kindness of Parents*, which argues that the truly devoted child's primary religious obligation is to ensure the conversion of their parents to Buddhism (as discussed in Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, 42–44. Since this scripture was clearly intended for a monastic audience, I would argue that Huijiao (or the original author of this episode) could have been making a rhetorical point about such moral obligations by ascribing such action to a young girl.

92 That said, the simple use of the the term *congmin* 聰敏 (which could also be translated as “wise”) is a fairly common descriptor for exemplary youths, as we will see below (in the biography of Zhizang and elsewhere).

compiled the GSZ. Moreover, if this was indeed an *Analects* reference, it is likely that the following line presents an additional allusion, through which Xuangao's wisdom is subtly being described as superior to that of Kongzi. Specifically, and in contrast to the famed developmental arc of the Great Sage's knowledge (which *began* at fifteen),⁹³ the pious youth described in this account is already able to lecture on the Buddhist dharma to local renunciant monks at that tender age. As we will see below, these sorts of connections are made even more explicitly in some of the accounts from XGSZ. However, and as a point of commonality with the Tandi account discussed above, the phrase used to describe the young monk's wisdom is a near *hapax legomenon* within the Taishō canon,⁹⁴ whereas it echoes a variety of literati sources,⁹⁵ implying that a standardized language for exemplary Chinese Buddhist children had yet to develop at this time. As a final point of commonality with the Tandi episode, this narrative describes a milieu within which the ordination of minors was treated as a social ill, even when the child's birth was heralded by various auspicious omens and in spite of his subsequent (miraculous) perspicacity. This situation reaches its culmination when the young Xuangao attempts to

93 *Analects* 2:4 (as per Yoshikawa (1978), Vol. 1, 51), emphasis added: 子曰：「吾十有五而志于學，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳順，七十而從心所欲，不踰矩。」 Cf., Ames and Rosement translation (1998), “The Master said: 'From fifteen, my heart-and-mind was set upon learning; from thirty I took my stance; from forty I was no longer doubtful; from fifty I realized the propensities of Heaven; from sixty my ear was attuned; from seventy I could give my heart-and-mind free rein without overstepping the boundaries’” (76–77).

94 Specifically, I was only able to find the phrase 「聰敏生知學不加思」 (T. 2059: 397a19–20) (or lexically-related variants) in two other places in the entire *Taishō* canon: first, in a quotation of this biography included in *Fayuan zhulin*, which is more or less identical (barring the inclusion of some variant characters): 聰敏生知學不加思 (T. 2122: 905b13) and in the preface to a meditation manual by the seventh-century Tiantai monk Xuanjue, which was written by Weijing, the governor of Qing. Therein, the governor describes his great teacher using very similar language to that used in the Xuangao biography, providing a subtle testimony to the salience of these sorts of monastic hagiographies, even centuries after their initial compilation: 大師俗姓戴氏。永嘉人也。少挺生知。學不加思。」 (T. 2013: 387b26–27 [**emphasis added**]). The background information on this text was drawn from: *Chanzong yongjia ji* 禪宗永嘉集, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E7%A6%AA%E5%AE%97%E6%B0%B8%E5%98%89%E9%9B%86>.

95 While I was not able to find a direct quotation, similar phrases are used in a variety of earlier historical sources to describe exemplary children. See, for example, the *Shiji* account of the exemplary childhood of the Yellow Emperor: 生而神靈，弱而能言，幼而徇齊，長而敦敏，成而聰明 (1). Cf., Herbert J. Allen's translation (from his *Sūma Ch'ien's Historical Records*, [London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1894]): “Born a genius, he could speak when a baby, as a boy he was quick and smart, as a youth simple and earnest, and when grown up intelligent” (accessed online at: <http://ctext.org/shiji/wu-di-ben-ji>).

take refuge with an elder monk, who refuses to allow it without the permission of the child's parents. This seems to reflect the somewhat precarious place of Buddhism in Liang society, especially with regard to the sorts of critiques that had so frequently been directed at the early Chinese *sangha* regarding its members' lack of filial piety and the perversion of traditional social roles.⁹⁶ The silent acceptance of the ordination of children that characterizes many of the biographies preserved in *XGSZ* highlights the sea-change in Chinese popular sentiment between the compilation of these two collections.

Now that these two examples have been considered in some detail, we can now turn our attention to the various miraculous conception accounts collected in *XGSZ* (and summarized in **Table 2.2**). I would argue that exploring them in light of the “Breaching Maternal Bodies” and “Exemplary Child” tropes (whose inchoate forms were considered above) highlights the development of new, and more cohesive, understandings of both oneiric conception and the role of Buddhist miraculous response (*ganying*) in this process.

96 See Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, 14–64; Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, 41–55 and *passim*. Other examples from contemporaneous primary sources are treated above.

Vol.	Taishō Ref.	Name	Reported Imagery (Mothers' Dreams)	Verb(s) (Mother)	Exemplary Child Trope?
GSZ	370c26	Tandi	A monk addresses her as “mother” and presents her with a deer-tail [fly whisk] and iron paperweight	See (<i>jian</i> 見)	TRUE
GSZ	397a07	Xuangao	An Indian monk (<i>fanseng</i> 梵僧) scatters flowers, filling the room.	See (<i>jian</i> 見)	TRUE
XGSZ	465c10	Zhizang	Mother circumambulates city, sees celestial illumination and stars falling to earth. She takes and swallows them.	Circumambulate (<i>churao</i> 出繞), Take and swallow (<i>qu er tun</i> 取而吞)	TRUE
XGSZ	468b23	Huiyue	Mother sees a giant holding a gold statue who orders her to swallow it. She also sees a purple illumination entwining her body.	Swallow (<i>tun</i> 吞), See (<i>jian</i> 見)	TRUE
XGSZ	477b04	Falang	Mother sees a divine person atop a tower entering her bosom (<i>huai</i> 懷).	See (<i>jian</i> 見)	TRUE
XGSZ	478a24	Huiyong	Mother physically climbs a buddha <i>stupa</i> in order to obtain two golden <i>bodhisattvas</i> .	Climb (<i>deng</i> 登), Obtain (獲)	FALSE
XGSZ	531c04	Zhiyan	Mother climbs to the “sign of the wheel” at the top of a <i>stupa</i> spire and sits upon it. She observes something approaching in the distance.	Climb (<i>deng</i> 登), Sit (<i>zuo</i> 坐), Observe (<i>shi</i> 視)	TRUE
XGSZ	539c14	Lingrui	Mother is seated in a pine forest, when an alms bowl made of the seven precious flies down from the treetops and enters her mouth.	See (<i>jian</i> 見), Sit (<i>zuo</i> 坐), “Consume” (<i>rukou</i> 入口)	TRUE
XGSZ	556b16	Fajing	[Pre-conception] Mother enters a lotus pond and receives a prince.	Enter (<i>ru</i> 入), Receive (<i>peng</i> 捧)	FALSE
XGSZ	556b17	Fajing	[Pre-natal] Mother rides a white lion as it frolics in the sky.	Ride (<i>sheng</i> 乘)	FALSE
XGSZ	559c19	Xinxing	Mother dreams of a spirit holding up a baby, and he promises it to her.	None	TRUE
XGSZ	564a20	Zhiyi	Mother dreams that fragrant smoke in five colours spiralling around/in her bosom . She wants to dispel it, but hears someone telling her that she earned it through actions in past lives and that it represents her possession of a “kingly way.” (<i>wangdao</i> 王道).	Want (<i>yu</i> 欲), Shake off (<i>fu</i> 拂), Hear (<i>wen</i> 聞)	TRUE
XGSZ	564a22	Zhiyi	Mother dreams of swallowing a white rat (x3).	Swallow (<i>tun</i> 吞)	TRUE
XGSZ	609b08	Zhiwen	Mothers observes a foreign monk who presents her with a pine tree and tells her that her son will receive a deer-tail [fly whisk].	Observe (<i>du</i> 覩)	TRUE
XGSZ	639a16	Jajang	A star falls and enters her bosom .	None	TRUE
XGSZ	658b29	Zhikuang	Mother enters a stream to bathe and a prince in a jewelled boat lodges in her [<i>laitou</i> 來投]	Enter (<i>ru</i> 入)	TRUE

Table 2.2: Dream Imagery (Nominal and Verbal) in *Gaoseng zhuan* (高僧傳, T. 2059) and *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (續高僧傳, T. 2060)

Breaching Maternal Bodies in XGSZ⁹⁷

The “Swallowing” Trope

On the topic of breaking through bodily boundaries, we can first turn our attention to the swallowing trope, given that four XGSZ accounts feature prospective mothers dreaming about ingesting a variety of non-comestible items: stars, a golden statue, a jewelled alms-bowl, and a white rat (as seen in **Table 2.2**).⁹⁸ Intriguingly, it appears that this notion of “swallowing as impregnation” has a storied history outside of the Buddhist context, traceable back to accounts of the founder the Shang dynasty,⁹⁹ with some scholars (e.g., Mizukami and Boodberg) arguing that the earliest of these draw on a phonetic and etymological linkage between pregnancy and the name of the bird whose egg the Shang mother-to-be dreamt of swallowing.¹⁰⁰ That said, the versions of these stories related in the *Songshu* reveal that, by the late fifth century, the potent symbolism of pregnancy arising through the ingestion of a foreign body trumped this putative lexical linkage by focusing on the action itself, as can be seen in the accounts of the mothers of Yu of Xia, Tang of Shang (previously mentioned), and Gao of Han, who

97 Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval China*, citing a study by Lin Yunjo, subdivides the oneiric conception narratives found in medieval Chinese biographical collections into three categories: “First, mothers dream of objects falling into their abdomens or of them swallowing something to get pregnant. Second, they dream of propitious omens related directly or indirectly to Buddhism. Third, they dream a divine person, a child, or a monk being reborn as their child” (96). I would argue that approaching this issue from the standpoint of conceptual metaphor, as I do below, offers considerably greater interpretive utility than the typology suggested above. She briefly outlines some of the cases of the ingestion trope in hagiographies that I consider below (96–97). She also considers a number of the traditional Chinese accounts discussed below, such as those of Houji and Han Gaozu (see, in particular, 106–107), but without noting their respective engagements with the “breaching maternal bodies” trope.

98 The issue of the permeability of the internal boundaries of female bodies (and, in particular, the boundaries between the alimentary and reproductive systems) undergirds one of the practice of medieval Chinese obstetrics intended to address the issue of breach birth: “On the basis that the fetus would recognize its own father, they had mothers swallow a pill made of cinnabar paste combined with the husband’s pubic hair, maintaining that the child would then correct its movements and emerge holding the pill in its hand” (74). Jen-der Lee, “Childbirth” in *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, edited by T. J. Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 73–75. This issues, including additional methods for dealing with breech birth, are treated in much more detail in Jen-der Lee, “Childbirth in Early Imperial China,” translated by Sabine Wilms, *Nan Nü* 7.2 (2005): 216–286, especially 249–252.

99 Translated in Lippiello, 276.

100 Peter A. Boodberg, “Some Proleptical Remarks on The Evolution of Archaic Chinese,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 2:3/4 (1937): 329-372, 340 ff. 46.

are described swallowing (*tun* 吞) a divine pearl,¹⁰¹ an egg,¹⁰² and an inscribed red pearl¹⁰³ (respectively). Once the object consumed became an open signifier, this trope's expressive potential increased exponentially, as now any symbolically significant item could thus be incorporated into the maternal body. In its revised form, this trope remained in use for at least another thousand years, as evidenced by a reference to Ming Taizu's mother becoming pregnant after the dream experience of swallowing a pill presented to her by a Taoist adept.¹⁰⁴ It is, of course, notable that *tun* (吞), the verb employed in all of these accounts, does *not* refer generally to eating, but specifically to the process of swallowing something whole,¹⁰⁵ thus representing the foreign object being incorporated into the maternal body while maintaining its own boundedness and structural integrity: in other words, the concept *tun* (吞) draws explicitly on the (MATERNAL) BODY AS CONTAINER metaphor by taking ingestion out of the context of “eating” and employing it instead as a means of conveying an external entity across the fleshly boundary of the mother's body, from outside to inside. Given its compatibility with this embodied metaphor (which was then extensively elaborated, nuanced and extended via the “embrainment” of Chinese culture), it is unsurprising that it became a striking, symbolically potent trope, with extensive potential for later reuse.¹⁰⁶ In light of this history, I find it hard to imagine a culturally competent medieval Chinese reader encountering the aforementioned episodes from XGSZ

101 *Song shu*: 母曰修己，出行，見流星貫昴，夢接意感，既而吞神珠 (763). Cf., Lippiello, 274.

102 *Song shu*: 有玄鳥銜卵而墜之，五色甚好，二人競取，覆以玉筐。簡狄先得而吞之，遂孕 (763). Cf., Lippiello, 276.

103 *Song shu*: 母名含始，是為昭靈后。昭靈后游於洛池，有玉雞銜赤珠，刻曰玉英，吞此者王。昭靈后取而吞之 (766). Cf., Lippiello, 283.

104 Hok-lam Chan, “The Rise of Ming T'ai-tsu (1368–98): Facts and Fictions in Early Ming Official Historiography,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 95:4 (1975): 679–715, 691, 714.

105 As per HDC: “整個咽下去。”

106 As an aside, Langenberg, *Birth in Buddhism*, notes that the Indian tale of Sujātā (the townswoman who supports the bodhisattva prior to his eventual enlightenment) seems to be predicated on the notion that eating oblations could result in pregnancy: a belief that she argues could have been inherited from the Vedic-Hindu ritual and mythic traditions (140). Though I would not care to speculate about how widely such discourses would have been distributed in medieval China, I nonetheless considered the cross-cultural parallel between these two cases of the “swallowing as impregnation” trope to be worthy of mention.

without (implicitly or explicitly) considering them in light of these broader, intertextual linkages, especially in cases where the object consumed was itself redolent with Buddhist connotations, as was the case with the dreams of swallowing a “golden statue”¹⁰⁷ and a “jewelled alms bowl.”¹⁰⁸

Diagrammatically, we see that the narrative logic of these two accounts is essentially bipartite, demonstrating a fusion of indigenous Chinese and Chinese Buddhist tropes:

(Indigenous) *Swallowing* trope + (Buddhist) *item* →
Pregnancy with Exemplary Child (Indigenous), who becomes a monk (Buddhist)

As an aside, it should be noted that, at times, the form of exemplarity displayed by these children is itself cast in the Buddhist mould: a topic that will be considered in more detail below.

For a paradigmatic example, consider the case of the monk Huiyue 慧約 (452–535), whose mother was the recipient of the “golden statue” dream referenced above.

[Huiyue's] mother, Lady Liu, had a dream of tall man holding a golden image, who ordered her to swallow it. She also saw a purple luminescence twining around her body. As a result, she became pregnant. Immediately upon waking, her psyche (*jingshen* 精神) became buoyantly cheerful and her intellectual capacities became brilliantly acute. When she reached her delivery date, light and fragrance filled [the room] and [the infant's] body was white as snow. Because of these events, people of the time referred to him as “Spirit Radiance” (Lingcan 靈燦). As a result,

107 As an aside, it is possible that this episode might have been intended as an allusion to the oft cited (yet apocryphal) account of the arrival of Buddhism in China (as outlined in GSZ), via Emperor Ming's dream of the Golden Man: 明皇帝夜夢金人飛空而至 (T. 2059: 322, c20–21). Even if the “Golden Image” in the XGSZ dream account was not consciously intended to parallel the famous “Golden Man” trope, it is certainly plausible that could have triggered this association for readers, especially given the extent to which this oneiric image was put forward as both the prototypical Buddhist miracle and the *terminus post quem* for the arrival of Buddhism in China. This image is discussed at length in Chapter Three.

108 For a general discussion of the multifarious symbolism of the alms bowl (and its potential applicability as a synecdoche of monastic life), see Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, 107–111. For the symbolism of the Buddha's jewelled alms bowl, as it pertains to the medieval apocalyptic cult of Prince Moonlight Bodhisattva, see Erik Zürcher, “Prince Moonlight: Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” *T'oung Pao* Second Series, 68: 1/3 (1982): 1–75, 29–32. The origins, significance and iconographic traditions surrounding the Buddha's alms bowl are also discussed in Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*, 111–115. For a discussion of Daoxuan's imaginative use of this iconic artifact, which employs his understanding of the Indian cult of this “contact relic” as part of his justification for establishing a Chinese ordination platform, see Koichi Shinohara, “The Story of the Buddha's Begging Bowl: Imagining a Biography and Sacred Places,” in *Pilgrims, Patrons and Place: Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions*, edited by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 68–107 (and, in particular, 90–97).

[the child's] character was steadfast and his essential nature was tranquil.¹⁰⁹

母劉氏，夢長人擎金像令吞之，又見紫光繞身，因而有孕，便覺精神爽發，思理明悟。及載誕之日，光香充滿，身白如雪，時俗因名為靈粲，故風鑒貞簡，神志凝靜。

As can be seen, most of the tropes mentioned above are present in this brief account, albeit in the more “active” mode that I would argue characterizes the XGSZ approach to oneiric conception. For example, unlike the profoundly asexual imagery used in Tandi and Xuangao's accounts in GSZ, Lady Liu's dream involves a large man ordering her to swallow the golden image: a potential linkage with the androcentric vision of conception that was articulated in the *Shijing* (as discussed above). Once she internalizes this golden figure (a clear reference to Buddhist statuary) and becomes pregnant, she finds that her own intellectual capacities have become rarefied (a clear case of the MATERNAL BODY AS CONTAINER metaphor).¹¹⁰ The child's birth is occasioned by other auspicious events and he goes on to exhibit an exemplary character (of the sort that will be discussed presently). As for the purple luminescence that coalesces around Lady Liu's body, this image will be considered in more detail in the section on Zhiyi's birth (below), as it is a shared detail present in both.

For a more complex case, we can turn to the biography of the renowned scholar-monk Zhizang (智藏, 458–522), whose mother's pregnancy was also heralded by oneiric imagery drawing on this inherited somato-cultural metaphor. The translation below picks up after an overview of the monk's family's exemplary pedigree of government service:¹¹¹

Shi Zhizang,¹¹² whose secular family was of the Gu clan and whose original [ordination] name¹¹³ was Jingzang, was a person of Wu in the State of Wu. ... His father, Ying, [served as Imperial]

109 T. 2060: 468b23–27, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 182.

110 Paralleling the narrative logic employed in the case of Saint Thierry's mother (discussed in ff. 2 above).

111 Briefly discussed in Lin (2017), 96.

112 Note: while DDB gives his name as Zhizang, it is written “Zhicang” in the Dharma Drum annotations.

113 I am following the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism's* entry on Zhizang 智藏 here (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%99%BA%E8%97%8F>).

Audience Attendant,¹¹⁴ but died young. His mother experienced a dream of circumambulating the city of Wu, making a complete circuit. There were dense clouds in all four expanses [of the sky], but then the center of the Heavens opened, [revealing a] brilliant light. Myriad stars fell to earth, and she took and swallowed them. For this reason, she became pregnant and subsequently gave birth to Zhizang.¹¹⁵

釋智藏，姓顧氏，本名淨藏。吳郡吳人。[...] 父映奉朝請，早亡其母嘗夢。出繞吳城一匝，密雲四布而天中開朗，眾星墜地，取而吞之。因而有娠焉，及生藏也。

In this account, the relationship between the pregnancy tropes outlined above becomes further complicated, in that the “impregnating” items (stars) are in no way exclusively related to Buddhism, as there is a notable and storied history of astral bodies as agents of fecundation in “secular” Chinese sources. For instance, the “Treatise on Auspicious Omens” from the late fifth century *Songshu* (mentioned above) credits astral contacts with the impregnation of the mothers of a variety of legendary rulers, including the Yellow Emperor 黃帝,¹¹⁶ his son, Emperor Shaohao 少昊,¹¹⁷ Emperor Zhuanxu 顓頊,¹¹⁸ and Emperor Yu 禹¹¹⁹ – in other words, three of the five Sage Emperors of antiquity,

114 Hucker #1954.

115 T. 2060: 465c7–12.

116 As translated by Lippiello: “His mother was called Fu Bao. She witnessed a great flash of lightning which surrounded the star *shu* of *dou* (the Dipper), with a brightness that lightened all the country beyond the city. She was affected by this and thereupon conceived a child” (266). As in the Laozi biography that will be considered presently, the pregnancy here is expressed via the ganying framework (感而孕). Cf., *Song shu*, 母曰附寶，見大電光繞北斗樞星，照郊野，感而孕(760).

117 As translated by Lippiello: “His mother was called Nü Jie. She witnessed a star like a rainbow floating down the stream to the Hua islet. She dreamed thereafter that she was affected by it, an attitude which resulted in the birth of Shaohao” (269). As in the previous example, note the explicit invocation of ganying framework: 母曰女節，見星如虹，下流華渚，既而夢接意感，生少昊 (*Song shu*, 761 [emphasis added]).

118 As translated by Lippiello: “His mother was called Nü Shu. She witnessed the *yaoguang* Star go through the moon like a rainbow; she was affected by it in the Palace of Mystery, and thereafter, Zhuan Xu was born near the Ruo River.” (269) Cf., 帝高陽氏，母曰女樞，見瑤光之星，貫月如虹，感已於幽房之宮，生顓頊於若水 (*Song shu*, 761).

119 As translated by Lippiello: “His mother was called Xiu Ji. One day she went out and saw a falling star go through the lunar mansion Mane. She dreamed that her thoughts were moved by this event and swallowed a divine pearl. Xiu Ji's back cut opened and bore Yu in Shiniu” (274-275) Cf., 帝禹有夏氏，母曰脩己，出行，見流星貫昴，夢接意感，既而吞神珠。脩己背剖，而生禹於石紐 (*Song shu*, 763).

as well as the founder of the Xia dynasty!¹²⁰ For a slightly later example, the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (a popular “florilegium” from the early seventh century, employed by literati and others when composing topical essays)¹²¹ includes such an episode related to the biography of Laozi 老子 in the “Way of the Transcendents” (仙道) subsection of its chapter on numinous anomalies (*lingyi* 靈異):

Laozi was surnamed Li; his name was Er, and he was styled Boyang. He was a person of Lai village, Ku county, in the kingdom of Chu. ... His mother felt a great star [inside her] and conceived. Thus, although he had received his *pneumas* from Heaven, he was born in the Li family and so had Li as his surname.¹²²

Though the text is ambiguous on what exactly Lady Li “felt” or “experienced” [*gan* 感], the causal connection is clear and unmistakable. It is important to note this ambiguity concerning the exact nature of the “feeling” or “experience” that caused her pregnancy, as we will return to this issue in the following section (on the “penetration” of maternal bodies), which includes additional examples of women becoming pregnant after stars lodge in their bodies.

120 As an aside, Lin (2017) notes that Daoshi 道世 (d. 683 CE), in his encyclopedic seventh-century tome *Fayuan zhulin* (法苑珠林 [T. 2122]), explicitly contrasts the miraculous birth of the Buddha with those ascribed to these Chinese culture heroes, as seen in her translation of the following passage:

The bearing of the Buddha (by Māyā) is therefore distinct from that of King Yao 堯 and King Shun 舜, and his birth is also dissimilar to that of King Yu 禹 and King Qi 契. As for the omen of the Emperor Dark’s entry into the Dream [of the mother of the First Emperor of Han dynasty] or its sign of white light filling the room, although these omens might be regarded as auspicious signs, how could they be comparable to those at the Buddha’s birth? (88).

121 For a helpful overview of this text, including the helpful suggestion that it is better classified as a florilegium than an encyclopedia, see Jessey J. C. Choo, “Yiwen leiju” in *Early Medieval Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, edited by Cynthia L. Chennault, Keith N. Knapp, Alan J. Berkowitz and Albert E. Dien, (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2015), 454–464. For a general introduction to the *leishu* genre, see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual (Revised and Enlarged)*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 955–962.

122 Translation by Campamy, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 426. Even though *Yiwen leiju* cites the *Shenxian zhuan* (Traditions of Divine Transcendents) as the source for this account, Campamy does not take this version of the biography as his primary text, but nonetheless includes a translation of it in his “Text-Critical Notes” (*ibid.*). Cf., 老子，姓李，名耳，字伯陽，楚國苦縣賴鄉人也。其母感大星而有娠，雖受氣於天，然生於李家，猶以李為姓 (*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, 1329).

More broadly, it is notable that imagery related to stars was sufficiently well-attested in official and unofficial histories to warrant a relatively lengthy discussion in Chen Shiyuan's (陳士元, 1516–1595) encyclopedic *Lofty Principals of Dream Interpretation* (*Mengzhan yizhi* 夢占逸旨, 1562 CE), wherein Chen associates this providential oneiric image with scholarly dreamers attaining “the highest ranks in the official examinations.”¹²³ In making this case, he cites a number of examples that attest to the continued salience of this image in later imperial China:

The mother of Huang Kang dreamt that she swallowed a star; consequently, Kang became renowned during the the Song dynasty. The mother of Huang Jin dreamt that a star entered her body; consequently, he enjoyed a notable career during the Yuan dynasty. Gao Huan of the Northern Qi dynasty walked among the stars, and Wu Qiao of the Southern Tang possessed a named that matched that of a star. From this, one can understand that dreams of stars coming into contact with the body are auspicious, while stars falling down in the countryside are unlucky.¹²⁴

While I am sure that other examples could be adduced,¹²⁵ the foregoing are more than sufficient to demonstrate the fact that the official and unofficial histories, as well as other narrative collections, attest to a long-standing cultural precedent whereby seeing stars (whether in dreams or awake) was deemed a sufficient cause for impregnation, and (moreover) that the resultant child would be in some way exemplary.

123 Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 115.

124 *Ibid.*

125 For example, the general issue of astral conception is discussed in Edward Schafer, *Pacing the Void: Tang Approaches to the Stars*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977):

In China, the stellification of souls never enjoyed the same popularity as the mummification of bodies. Nevertheless, the idea was far from unknown. Sometimes the tales of such splendid events are difficult to distinguish from the traditions of the descent of stars - often, no doubt, without any human ancestry - to fertilize antique queens. For instance, the Divine King in Yellow, surnamed Xuanyuan, was born after the irradiation of his mother by the Pole Star. Such lusty spirits without doubt often took the visible form of meteors. Moreover, stories of the impregnation of noblewomen by vagrant sunbeams and aggressive rainbows - agencies not very different from stars - are almost too numerous to mention. These presences were most usually seen on earth as dragons of sidereal origin which assumed plainly human shapes (126).

As such, the account of Zhizang's mother's impregnation seems to break the narrative logic posited previously, in that both the *swallowing* trope and the *items* consumed (i.e., the stars) are much more suggestive of indigenous Chinese imagery than Buddhist. Intriguingly, however, this oneiric episode begins by describing his mother “circumambulating” (*rao* 繞) the city – a term that I opt to read ritualistically (instead of the more generic “went around”) because of the fact that the text then specifies that she performed a “complete circuit” (*yiza* 一匝): a meaningless descriptor unless her explicit goal was something other than practical travel. Though a city is obviously not a standard target of Buddhist veneration, it remains the case that circumambulation, as a ritual practice, seems likely to have been imported into China by Buddhists, or at very least to be much more strongly associated with the *stupa* cult than with any indigenous form of religious practice.¹²⁶ In this context, it is perhaps notable that a variety of medieval Buddhist ritual programmes (such as the *fangdeng* confession), which include circumambulation, also employ dream incubation as a means of determining whether the ritual actor's aspirations have been realized.¹²⁷ Regardless, the foregoing implies that it might be justified to update the previous diagram as follows (at least in the case of Zhizang's mother):

126 That said, I will be the first to acknowledge that my case here is relatively circumstantial. For instance, none of HDC's various entries for 繞 refer to the ritual practice of circumambulation, nor does CJKV, whereas the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* does. The article on “Circumambulation” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* makes no reference to Chinese practices, (edited by Lindsay Jones. Vol. 3. 2nd ed. [Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005], 1795–1798). See also Padma Sudhi, “An Encyclopaedic Study on Circumambulation,” *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 65:1–4 (1984): 205–226. Sudhi critiques Hastings' claim (from the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*) that circumambulation is a religious phenomenon of Indo-European origin, arguing that “it is a worldwide practice which is adopted by different ethnic groups, sometimes by the instinct of imitation and sometimes by having an understanding of the controlling power and its limitations of the time and the space” (206). That said, she nonetheless offers no evidence for pre-Buddhist circumambulation in China. See also: Stanley K. Abe, “Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple,” *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 1–31, wherein Abe notes the “surprising” rarity of references to circumambulation in fifth-century Buddhist narrative and scriptural sources (5). As additional evidence, he notes that the apocryphal fifth-century *Sutra of Trapuṣa and Bhallika* (*Tiwei boli jing* 提謂波利經) includes a detailed description of the practice, which implies the possibility that circumambulation might not have been a familiar activity to the lay audience for whom that sutra was composed (10).

127 For the link between dream incubation and the *fangdeng* confession ritual, see Chapter One. On the role of circumambulation in the Lotus Samādhi (another key visionary practice of the Tiantai school) and in Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan*, see: Swanson, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 1918–1919.

(Buddhist) ritual practice + (Indigenous) *Swallowing* trope + (Indigenous) *item* →
Pregnancy with Exemplary Child (Indigenous), who becomes a monk (Buddhist)

Intriguingly, the biography of Zhiyi, which we will consider in detail later (as it contains numerous examples of these tropes) is even more overt in drawing upon and fusing Buddhist and Chinese materials in describing his mother's oneiric impregnation, going so far as to include two discrete accounts: one of which exclusively features indigenous Chinese imagery, the second of which is based entirely on Buddhist notions.

“Penetration” Tropes

In his expansive survey of the various sutras that helped to shape medieval Chinese Buddhist perspectives on motherhood, Alan Cole notes that this literature bifurcates the maternal body crosswise, into a “good / nurturing” top half (smiling face, nourishing breasts) and a “bad / polluting” bottom half (source of foul impurities, as well as the physical site of the body-rending travails of childbirth, which some of these texts explicitly posit as analogues of hellish tortures).¹²⁸ When such an ideology is considered in the context of a monastic religion with a (theoretically)¹²⁹ celibate clergy, it is perhaps unsurprising that many of the accounts of oneiric impregnation in the *Eminent Monks* take one of two approaches to this problematic topic: 1) circumspection regarding the language / imagery used when discussing female bodies (as in the GSZ accounts treated previously); or 2) elision of the sexual component of impregnation by employing the MATERNAL BODY AS CONTAINER metaphor (as in the XGSZ examples discussed above). Certainly one would not expect to see the graphic language used to describe the mother of Han Gaozu copulating with a dragon or King Wen of Zhou's mother orgasming after stepping into a giant's footprint (as will be discussed below). That said, the act of

¹²⁸ Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, 230–231.

¹²⁹ For example, Faure, *The Red Thread*, provides a detailed account of monastic sexual excesses in medieval China and Japan, as described in both Buddhist and lay sources (144–157).

“swallowing whole” is by no means the only mode of ingress through which a mother could come to “contain” a new life. In this section, we will consider some additional images used in XGSZ to describe the process of oneiric conception, all of which draw on the CONTAINER metaphor and which are, in certain cases, considerably more overtly sexual than I would have predicted.

In the first case, three accounts from XGSZ refer to foreign items or entities “entering the bosom” (*ruhuai* 入懷) of a prospective mother in a dream. In the case of the famed Sillan monk Jajang 慈藏 (d.u.), we see his mother's bosom penetrated by a star,¹³⁰ in an episode that will be considered in more detail in Chapter Three. Second, in the case of Falang's mother, we see not only this penetration trope, but also the rarefication of maternal morality during pregnancy (albeit with a profoundly Buddhist slant) and the use of stereotypical language to describe the child's exemplary character:

[As for the] initial circumstances of Falang's birth, his mother was called Madam Liu and she had a dream vision of a divine person astride a multi-storied palace, which entered her bosom. In her dream, [her experience] was like the descriptions of one's body floating in the air, and so forth. Immediately upon waking, her four limbs felt empty and light, [and] it was unlike an ordinary day; as a result of this, she totally eliminated the flavours of the five pungent herbs.¹³¹ Therefore, by the time he had lost his milk teeth, it was clear that [Falang] surpassed ordinary youths. He was perfectly pure in his filial respect and upstandingly just in his resolute conduct.¹³²

朗託生之始，母曰劉氏，夢見神人乘樓殿入懷，夢中如言身與空等。既而覺寤，四體輕虛，有異恒日，五辛雜味，因此悉斷。爰在韶亂，卓出凡童，孝敬純備，志操貞立。

130 夢星墜入懷 (T. 2060: 639a16).

131 Wuxin 五辛, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BA%94%E8%BE%9B>:

The five forbidden pungent roots, for which lists vary according to the text. There are various lists, and it is often the case that the definitions of the terms given in the list are difficult to distinguish from each other, as is the case of the five terms given in the Sutra of Brahmā's Net: 大蒜, 草蔥, 韭蔥, 蘭蔥, 興渠; other lists include 蔥, 薤, 韭, 蒜, 薑. They generally include such pungent plants as leeks, scallions, garlic, onions, ginger, and chives. If eaten raw they are said to cause irritability of temper, and if eaten cooked, to act as an aphrodisiac; moreover, the breath of the eater, if reading the sutras, will drive away the good spirits.

132 T. 2060: 477b3–7, punctuated as per XGSZ [2014], vol. 1, 224–225.

Finally, Zhiyi's mother's is seen dreaming of fragrant smoke coiling its way into her bosom (*yinghui zai huai* 縈迴在懷), which also seems to draw on this “penetration” trope. This account will be considered below.

In all of these cases, the foreign item or entity avoids the “dangerous” half of the bifurcated mother by lodging directly in her upper body. Unlike the “swallowing” trope, whose Sinitic pedigree seems pretty unequivocal, this image could be traced back to either Buddhist or non-Buddhist accounts of oneiric conception (or both). Specifically, Chinese translations of the Buddha Biography often describe Queen Māyā's oneiric conception by saying that, after the incarnating bodhisattva descended from Tuṣita Heaven, he either entered her womb (兜率下入母胎)¹³³ **or** entered her right side (入於右脇).¹³⁴ That said, this trope is also employed extensively in official histories. For example, the *Songshu's* accounts of the dreams of the mothers of Han Emperor Jing 景帝, Han Empress Yuan 元后, and Sun Quan 孫權 (founder of the kingdom of Wu 吳), each feature this language, with the sun, the moon, and both the sun and the moon (respectively) being described entering the bosoms of these expectant mothers.¹³⁵ The three XGSZ accounts cited above share this conceptual space. Though I

133 See, for example, T. 190: 682c29.

134 See, for example, T. 190: 683b14.

135 There is a strong verbal and grammatical parallel between these three accounts: (景帝) 男方在身，夢日入其懷，以告太子，太子曰：「是貴徵也」；(元后) 禁妻李氏方任身，夢月入其懷，生女，是為元后；(孫權) 堅妻吳氏初任子策，夢月入其懷；後孕子權，又夢日入懷。(《Song shu》, 768, 769, 780). The three accounts mentioned above are translated in Lippiello, 288, 290, 309. Note: the account of Empress Dowager Wang states that she was already pregnant, which alters the narrative function of the oneiric image – transforming it into an augury of her unborn son's exalted character. For an example of the salience of these accounts to early medieval Buddhists, we need look no farther than Sengyou's *Hongming ji* (弘明集 [T. 2102]), where a debate about the divisibility of body and spirit contains the following claim:

Furthermore, the sun and moon have their places in the sky, and land stretches a thousand *li* between east and west as well as between south and north. It is unlikely that [the moon] comes down and enters into the bosom of a common woman. Dreams and phantasms [夢幻] are unreal. There is no base from which they arise” (70, Ziegler translation).

Cf., 「又日月麗天廣輪千里。無容下從返婦近入懷袖。夢幻虛假無有自來矣。」(T. 2102: 59a4–6).

would be hesitant to offer a definitive interpretation of the image of a deity atop a tower,¹³⁶ I would nonetheless suggest that regardless of the specific qualities of the penetrating agent (a deity atop the tower, an astral body, or coiling smoke), all of these uses of the trope follow the pattern adduced above. Specifically, they each share the same narrative logic: any child conceived under such auspicious circumstances, who was inserted into the mother's body by a numinous external force or entity, surely possesses an exalted destiny. Intriguingly, this narrative logic would have been equally parseable to a culturally competent monastic or lay reader, given the well-attested co-occurrences of this trope outlined above.

In spite of the problematization of sexuality (and women's bodies) in medieval Chinese Buddhist ideology, several of the accounts of dream conception found in XGSZ describe their respective oneiric conceptions in overtly earthy terms. As in the “entering the bosom” narratives above, the metaphorical logic is simple:

Symbolically redolent *item* / *entity* + Breaching of Maternal Body (Insertion into CONTAINER) → Pregnancy with Exemplary Child (Indigenous), who becomes a monk (Buddhist)

As the first example of such imagery, we can turn to the initial lines of the biography of the monk

Zhikuang (智曠, 526–601/602):

136 In addition to the possibility that this structure may have been a reference to the jewelled pagoda that shielded the bodhisattva from female impurities (discussed in Langenberg (2017) and cited above), it may also be read as a simplified description of the Many Treasures Stupa: an image that was already a popular iconographic motif in the Buddhist art of the fifth/sixth centuries. See Eugene Wang, *Shaping the Lotus: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China*, (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2005), for a thorough-going description of the evolution of representational logic of these images (3–51). As an aside, the use of such generic descriptors (e.g., a “spirit man” or an “unusual monk”) rather than the names of Buddhist deities is one factor that differentiates the dream reports of laity and monastics in both GSZ and XGSZ: a suggestive hint that these reports represent the transmission of dream narratives through different channels (i.e., those for whom such terminology would have been meaningful vs. those for whom it would not have been). I explore this hypothesis in a (currently unpublished) article on the differences between lay and monastic dreams in two Tang dynasty *Lotus Sutra* miracle collections. I presented the initial results of this research at the 2014 CSSR conference in Victoria.

Shi Zhikuang, whose [secular] family name was Wang, was originally of the Taiyuan clan, whose primary residence was in Xubu. His deceased father had later resided in the State of Jing, in Xinfeng county. When his mother first wanted to become pregnant, she dreamt of entering flowing [water] to bathe.¹³⁷ A princeling riding a jewelled boat came and lodged¹³⁸ [inside her]. When she then awoke, she was with child. After his birth, her son grew up clever and diligent.¹³⁹

釋智曠，姓王，本族太原，中居徐部。厥考後住荊州新豐縣。母初將孕，夢入流浴。童子乘寶船來投。便覺有娠。及生長，敏而重行。

This account is notable for several reasons. First, it represents one of the few instances whereby the conception event is *not* represented metaphorically: instead, a literal child enters the prospective mother's body.¹⁴⁰ Second, just as the “princeling” is in no way an exclusively Buddhist image (as it equally suggests the “divine lads” of Taoist iconography), the jewelled boat is equally ambiguous.¹⁴¹

More overt yet, however, is the undeniably sexual imagery seen in the account of the monk

Zhiyan's conception:

His mother, a wife from the Zhang clan, on the day when she first yearned to become pregnant, dreamt of going up Tongxuan monastery's *stupa*. She climbed up to the top of the spire¹⁴² and sat

137 Given the brevity of this account it is difficult to gauge the symbolic valence(s) of the mother's lustral act, as it exists on a continuum from the preparatory ablutions required of those about to partake in religious activities (purest) to the dangerous, “barbarian” practice of mixed-gender bathing observed in peripheral regions (see Edward H. Schafer, “The Development of Bathing Customs in Ancient and Medieval China and the History of the Floriate Clear Palace,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 76:2 [1956]: 57–82). In the present case, the fact that this “dream bath” was predicated by her desire to be pregnant implies that she may possibly have sought the aid of a (Buddhist) religious professional in order to pray for fecundation, and that this dream may have been a *post facto* reiteration of actual purification practices (for the recapitulation of recent events in dreams, see Bogzaran and Deslauriers, 46, 53). That said, the fact that the dream culminates in her impregnation gestures to the second pole of this dichotomy.

138 I am following GR's reading of *tou* 投: “loger chez; séjourner; passer la nuit à; se rendre à”. I think that this is a more plausible option than the primary definition (related to throwing or abandoning), given the co-verb “come” (來). As an aside, the fact that this term can also refer to sowing seeds (an agricultural metaphor whose salience need not be belaboured here) further reinforces the penetration imagery. Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, briefly considers this episode, but does not render the phrase in question (101).

139 T. 2060: 658b28-c1.

140 For the other two examples, see the biographies of Fajing (556b16), whose mother is presented with a prince after entering a lotus pond, and Xinxing (559c19), whose mother dreams of being promised a baby by a spirit.

141 See, for example, Mochizuki's entry on the 七福神, a heptad of benevolent deities revered extensively in Japan but likely imported from China (1914–1916).

142 Literally, she rose up to “the sign of the wheel,” “i. e. the nine wheels or circles at the top of a pagoda” (See: *Xianglun* 相輪, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E7%9B%B8%E8%BC%AA>).

[upon it]. In the distance, she saw [something] approaching through the air, but she never felt afraid. It turns out that this was the great omen, signifying [her son's] attainment of the way and incarnation into [a human] birth. Among teachers of men, there is no more extraordinary sign. Indeed, [she] knew that the two brilliances had entered her bosom. Even [the sign of] intimacy¹⁴³ with two dragons cannot compare to this.¹⁴⁴

母氏張夫人，初懷孕日，夢昇通玄寺塔，登相輪而坐。遠視臨虛曾無懼色。斯乃得道超生之勝兆。人師，無上之奇徵。是知二曜入懷。雙龍枕膝。弗能及也。

In this account, we see the nearest thing to a heirogamy preserved in either GSZ or XGSZ, perhaps indicating that such an account represented the outer limit of what sixth- / seventh-century monastic biographers deemed appropriate (or at least worthy of transmission). While I would not want to read too much into the narrative structure of this episode, given its brevity, it is notable that it is entirely compatible with medieval Chinese Buddhist understandings of embryology and conception: specifically, the text claims that the mother saw something approaching immediately after her body was physically penetrated by the spire, which is congruent with the notion that the numinous substance of the prospective child (which bears both its consciousness and its karmic allotment) is drawn to the mother's womb during the process of copulation. Later, when the account employs another penetration trope (“entering the bosom”) to describe this event, it is notable that the fertilization process is described in the context of an encounter with “two brilliances,” which could be a reference to the sun and moon (the intertextual resonances of which were previously discussed), to the *yin / yang* energies associated with these celestial objects (and thus to the indigenous understanding of conception), or even to both. Finally, this episode's concluding line, which expostulates on the significance of these particular omens and extraordinary signs, seems to represent either the results of the mother's consultation with some sort of oneiromancer or an authorial aside by Daoxuan, who was known to have had a deep and abiding interest in the significance of miracles and prodigies. In either case, it is

143 I am following HDC in reading *zhenxi* 枕膝 as an allusion to intimate contact.

144 T. 2060: 531c4–7.

profoundly compatible with the other accounts of oneiromancy discussed in Chapter 1.

As in the case of the swallowing trope described above, oneiric conceptions associated with dreams of “bodily penetration” also possess considerable antiquity in the Chinese context and would almost certainly have summoned up a host of images and associations linking these monks with the early lives of sages, emperors, and other past luminaries. Stephen Owen, in making a case for the antiquity of divine conception imagery, describes the impregnation of Houji's mother in *Shijing* as “treading on the phallic toe-print of the god” – an act that he characterizes as “a magical encounter, but ... also a strangely displaced encounter; there is no meeting of mortal and divine flesh.”¹⁴⁵ That said, given the overt penetration imagery in Zhiyan's mother's dream and its undeniable bodily consequences, it seems that a better parallel would be the common trope of (oneiric) intercourse with deities, of which there are myriad examples in official histories.¹⁴⁶ That said, given the focus on

145 Stephen Owen, “Reproduction in the *Shijing* (Classic of Poetry)” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61:2 (2001): 287–315, 297. As an aside, it is notable that later accounts of this miraculous pregnancy use more overtly sexual language. For instance, the *Song Shu's* account of the birth of King Wen of Zhou [Houji] states:

A concubine of Gaoxin was named Jiang Yuan. One day, while she was assisting him at a sacrifice in the suburbs and prayed for a child, she saw the footsteps of a giant and trod in them. At that very moment, she was pleased as if she had been affected by the way of men; as a consequence, she bore a child. (Translated in Lippiello, 277) Cf., 高辛氏之世妃曰姜嫄，助祭郊禘，見大人迹履之，當時歎如有人道感己，遂有身而生男 (*Song shu*, 764).

146 See, for example, the *Han shu* account of the conception of Han Gaozu: 姓劉氏。母媪嘗息大澤之陂，夢與神遇。是時雷電晦冥，父太公往視，則見交龍於上。已而有娠，遂產高祖 (1). Cf., Homer Dubs' translation:

One day the old dame, his mother, was resting upon the dyke of a large pond when she dreamed that she had a meeting with a supernatural being. At the time there was thunder and lighting, and it became dark. When [Gaozu's] father, the Taigong, came to look for her, he saw a scaly dragon above her. After that she was with child and subsequently gave birth to Gaozu” (Vol. 1, 28).

Likewise, Chen Shiyuan's encyclopedia lists a variety of relevant examples in the chapter on “Gods and Strange Things” (Strassberg, *Wandering Spirits*, 193–194). This trope was evidently sufficiently wide-spread by the early Han that Wang Chong felt it necessary to argue against it, which he did with two different biological arguments:

#1 – “If Yao and Gaozu were really the sons of dragons, their nature as sons out to have been similar to that of their dragon fathers. Dragons can ride on the clouds, and Yao and Gaozu should have done the same” (*Lunheng*, Forke translation, 320) (Cf., 堯、高祖審龍之子，子性類父，龍能乘雲，堯與高祖亦宜能焉 [Lunheng jijie 論衡集解, 74]; #2 – “Of animals with blood males and females pair. When they come together and see one of their own kind, their lust is excited, they wish to satisfy it, and then are able to emit their fluid. Should a stallion see a cow, or a male sparrow a hen, they would not could, because they belong to different species. Now, dragons and men are different species likewise. How then could a dragon be moved by a human being so as to impart its fluid?” (*ibid.*, 321). Cf., 且夫含血之類，相與為牝牡，牝牡之會，皆見同類之物，精感欲動，乃能授施。若夫牡馬見雌牛，

monastic celibacy in medieval China and the asexuality of the Buddhist pantheon (at least outside of the Tantric context), these two accounts, by focusing on the permeability of women's bodies (especially while bathing) and the undeniable phallic quality of Buddhist architecture, seem to represent a profoundly culturally-creative reappropriation of an ancient Sinitic trope.

Buddhist Mothers and Precocious (and/or Precociously Buddhist) Children

Both Buddhist and non-Buddhist accounts of miraculous pregnancy are predicated on the assumption that such origins imply some sort of exalted destiny. While this “destiny” is understood to have guided the entire lifespan of these individuals, such that the entirety of their hagiographies serve as testaments to this presaged exemplarity, many of them also make use of a form of adulatory shorthand to make this case: namely, the “precocious child” trope. As Kinney notes, medieval Chinese sources (both Buddhist and otherwise) do not romanticize (or even seem to value) childhood, seeing it rather as a time of moral and intellectual incapacity.¹⁴⁷ For this reason, the vast majority of the accounts under consideration (i.e., both of the episodes from GSZ and all but two of those from XGSZ [see **Table 2.2**]) take pains to discuss the ways that their respective protagonists were unlike typical children.¹⁴⁸ While there are insufficient examples present in GSZ to draw any firm conclusions, they feature three striking commonalities: first, the language of exemplarity that they use is at least somewhat idiosyncratic, implying that they are engaging with this trope on the level of narrative logic rather than relying on established (or even clichéd) expressions; second, the precociousness of these children is explicitly

雀見雄牝雞，不相與合者，異類故也。今龍與人異類，何能感於人而施氣？ (*ibid.*)

147 As discussed in Kinney, “The Theme of the Precocious Child,” 6 and *passim* (cited above).

148 In this, I concur with Levering's general observation on the role of childhood in the Chinese Buddhist hagiography, In what little they say of childhood, biographers portray their subjects as not having a childhood like that of others. They were not interested in play, or, if interested, they played at Buddhist rituals. Their play always presaged their future interests and showed their precocious insight into Buddhism. In the stories and plays that found a wider audience among ordinary people, future Buddhist saints appear as children, but these children likewise demonstrate a remarkable early commitment to the Buddhist path and behave throughout like small adults (125).

described on only a single axis – maturity and intellectual attainment; third, both children attempt to renounce their status as householders while still below the standard age of ordination, seemingly as result of their precocious maturity.¹⁴⁹ The XGSZ accounts, in contrast, seem to reflect a self-conscious attempt to create a new, hybrid discourse of exemplarity, combining the use of standardized language (shared with, among other genres, official histories) with specific narrative references to the (Buddhistic) excellence of these children on a variety of axes (intellectual, moral, praxical).

These standardized plaudits can be subdivided into two types (at least in the accounts under consideration):¹⁵⁰ catalogues of specific virtues and general claims of extraordinary qualities. In both cases, the narrative logic makes it very clear that the EXEMPLARY CHILD trope is being invoked:

Genealogy and Family History (optional) → Miraculous Conception → Birth → Virtuous Childhood

As some examples of these “specific virtues,” Zhizang was described as “young but [already] wise;”¹⁵¹ Falang as “perfectly pure in filial respect and upstandingly just in resolute conduct;”¹⁵² Zhiyan as possessing “abundant energy, an upright mind, a lofty appearance, and [a tendency to be] respectfully observant;”¹⁵³ Zhikuang as “clever and diligent;”¹⁵⁴ and so forth. Such lists of specific exemplary traits abound in the official histories as well, with some following the same narrative logic outlined above, as in the account of Huangdi 黃帝 from Sima Qian's (司馬遷, d. 86 BCE) *Shiji* 史記: “Born a genius he

149 For an overview of the issue of Chinese ordination age, whether honoured in the breach or the observance, see Levering, as cited above.

150 For future research: while this is an interesting finding, I will be the first to admit that it is entirely provisional, given the relatively small number of biographies assessed. As a future research project, I would be interested in going back through these collections and cataloguing a variety of data-points related to childhood, youth and ordination (including ordination age, status / rank of parents and other relatives, whether they were orphaned at a young age, etc.), as I think that such an overview could provide a valuable perspective on Buddhist families in medieval China.

151 「少而聰敏」(T. 2060: 465c12).

152 「孝敬純備志操貞立」(T. 2060: 477b6–7).

153 「秀氣貞心早形瞻視」(T. 2060: 531c8). Note: I am following the Taishō footnote in reading 早 as 昂.

154 「敏而重行」(T. 2060: 658c1).

could speak when a baby, as a boy he was quick and smart, as a youth simple and earnest, and when grown up intelligent.”¹⁵⁵

The other standard descriptor of exemplarity employed in a variety of XGSZ accounts is a simple oppositional definition, whereby the conduct or character of these superlative children causes their parents to realize that they are outside of the (implicitly denigrated) norm. Some examples include Huiyue, who was “unlike ordinary youths” (T. 2060: 468b); Falang, who “surpassed ordinary youths” (477b); Zhiyan, who was “taken to be unlike other youths” (531c); and a variety of others. All of these are, by definition, usages of the Exemplary Child trope.

As can be seen, the previous cases are all instances where the hagiographies of exemplary Buddhists employed the same narrative logic and even, in some cases, very similar language to the official biographies of sage kings and emperors, thus firmly ensconcing these accounts in the traditional “moral-pragmatic mode” of Chinese historiography.¹⁵⁶ While such cultural continuities most certainly would have played an important role in the acceptance and parseability of these narratives, the gradual mainstreaming of Buddhism¹⁵⁷ – a process that had made great strides by Daoxuan's time – meant that the standard vocabulary of exemplarity could also be augmented with specifically Buddhist ideals and tropes. For instance, the biography of Lingrui describes his mother naturally developing a

155 As per Herbert Allen's translation (278). Cf., *Shiji*: 生而神靈，弱而能言，幼而徇齊，長而敦敏，成而聰明 (1). Similarly, many of the accounts in the *Song shu*'s treatise on auspicious omens follow this same pattern, including standardized language of exemplarity immediately after accounts of miraculous conception. For instance, the biography of Shennong describes him as being “endowed with the virtue of a sage” (Lippiello, 266; cf., 有聖德, *Song shu*, 760). This pattern is repeated in the biographies of Huangdi, Zhuanxu, and Yao (all discussed above). Also see: Kinney, *Representations of Childhood and The Precocious Child*, for a plethora of additional examples.

156 See Li Youzheng, “Modern Theory and Traditional Chinese Historiography,” *NOAG* 167–70 (2000–2001): 181–204.

157 For a good historical overview of the process whereby Buddhism rose to prominence in China, see Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*; Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*.

distaste for the “five pungent roots” while pregnant (a hallmark of Buddhist dietary taboo);¹⁵⁸ this predilection was then transferred to her infant son, who would spontaneously develop a headache after eating these proscribed foods (539c). Likewise, while Zhiyan is described as being innately wise, he also is said to possess equanimity and the capacity to distance himself from feeling love and hate (531c): traits much more in keeping with the ascetic ideals of Buddhist self-cultivation. For a more involved account of this rhetorical move, we return to the biography of Huiyue (慧約, 452–535), whose conception after his mother dreamt of swallowing a golden statue was discussed above.

Even when he built sandcastles as a child,¹⁵⁹ he was different from ordinary children, because he only collected up sand to make Buddha *stupas* and piled stones to make a high seat.¹⁶⁰ When he reached the age of seven, he thereupon asked to begin his studies. He was promptly able to recite the *Classic of Filial Piety* and the *Analects*. [His understanding] extended up to the Histories, which he could spread open, read and understand. South of Huiyue's family home was a fruit orchard, where several local youths would compete to pick fruit, frequently getting injured in the process. Thereafter, [Huiyue] sacrificed [the fruit] he could have attained himself, and began to return empty-handed.

撫塵之歲，有異凡童，惟聚沙為佛塔，疊石為高座。七歲便求入學，即誦孝經、論語，乃至史傳，披文見意。宅南有果園，隣童競採，常以為患，乃捨己所得，空拳而返。

The people of his town made their living through sericulture [lit., “silkworms and mulberry”], which made [Huiyue's heart] ache with compassion and sympathy. As a result, he would not wear fine silks. His uncle¹⁶¹ Li loved hunting, and [in spite of Huiyue's] teaching, in the end, he never changed [his outlook]. [Huiyue] was constantly sighing and saying: “[Even though] the species that fly and scamper are very distant from human beings, how could the feeling of

158 Lingrui's account is also notable for its imprecatory nature, given the subsequent description of blood exploding from all of his facial orifices after his mother attempts to have him recite a Taoist text: a dire warning about the necessity of following through if one has been provided a child through Buddhist practice. This matter is considered above in the chapter on Oneiric Practice. For a discussion of the demonization of these scents / flavours in the apocryphal *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, see James Benn, “Another Look at the Pseudo-*Śūraṅgama Sūtra*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 68:1 (2008): 57–89, 81. Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, offers various additional examples of women from XGSZ and SGSZ of women pregnant with future eminent monks spontaneously rejecting non-Buddhist foods (102).

159 Apparently *fuchen* 撫塵 can refer to making sandcastles (GR), which appears to have become a classical allusion to early childhood.

160 As per the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, *gaozuo* 高座 is “a synonym of dharma seat” (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E9%AB%98%E5%BA%A7>). In both cases, we see the child behaving as an ideal (albeit diminutive) Buddhist patron, symbolically creating loci of ritual veneration and Buddhist teaching.

161 Given that the monk's family name is given as Lou 婁, I'm assuming that this individual must be an uncle (as opposed to being his father).

'loving life and hating death' be any different?" Thereafter, he abstained from eating rank-smelling meats.¹⁶²

鄉土以蠶桑為業，常懷悲惻，由是服縑纈。季父熹畋獵，化終不改；常嘆曰：「飛走之類，去人甚遠，好生惡死，此情何別。」乃絕羶腥。

As can be seen, this account elegantly entwines a variety of tropes that would have been intimately familiar to a literate reader (e.g., physiognomic signs of the infant's superlative character,¹⁶³ a catalogue of virtues, a precocious impulse to learn, and an innate wisdom manifesting in a capacity for engaging with the *literati* canon) with many specifically Buddhist ones. Indeed, just as Lingrui is seen spontaneously rejecting “impure” flavours, even Huiyue's play is described as being innately patterned on the activities of Buddhist patrons and craftspeople (i.e., the construction of Buddhist architecture and articles).¹⁶⁴ More telling, however, is the overt critique that this account mounts against traditional Chinese modes of economic production (both hunting and sericulture), which parallels the incipient discourse of hellish punishments related to these activities that was in the process of being developed in contemporaneous medieval Chinese sources.¹⁶⁵ As such, in the Huiyue account we see a summation of the various creative ways that the traditional language of exemplarity was both inherited by, and modified to fit the rhetorical needs of, the medieval Buddhist community.

162 T. 2060: 468b23-c5, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), 182.

163 For Huiyue's luminous white body at birth and his mother's interpretation of this prodigy, see above (187).

164 In “The Precocious Child in Chinese Buddhism, Levering notes the ubiquity of this “playing at/playing as religious activity” trope in Chinese Buddhist accounts of exemplary children, albeit without citing many substantive examples (see: 125, 142).

165 For medieval developments in Chinese ethics regarding the use of animal products, see John Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism in China” in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics and Religion in Traditional China*, edited by Roel Sterckx, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 186–212, and in particular the discussion of sericulture on 198; Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*. Drawing on a variety of textual sources, Eric M. Greene has recently argued that vegetarianism might have already been a lauded part of Chinese Buddhist praxis by the third or fourth century CE: “A Reassessment of the Early History of Vegetarianism in Chinese Buddhism,” *Asia Major* 29:1 (2016), 1–43.

For the medieval evolution of the Chinese mortuary cosmology: Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994); Stephen F. Teiser, “The Local and the Canonical: Pictures of the Wheel of Rebirth in Gansu and Sichuan,” *Asia Major* (Third Series) 17:1 (2004): 73–122; Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*; Company, ‘Return-from-Death Narratives.’”

Seeming departures from this pattern, which parallel some aspects of the biographies of Tandi and Xuangao from GSZ, can be seen in the biographies of Huiyong 慧勇 (T. 2060: 478a) and Fajing 法京 (556b): the only two accounts that do not explicitly invoke the Exemplary Child trope. That said, though neither one makes explicit use of the sort of “language of exemplarity” detailed above, they instead describe their respective protagonists entering monastic life before reaching the mandated ordination age, thus replacing a metaphorical elision of childhood with a literal one. In this way, the narrative logic is maintained. Moreover, and unlike the GSZ accounts, these two tales feature absolutely no tension or drama related to the children's desire to become monks, seemingly implying that either the public no longer rejected this practice or that oneiric conception narratives were considered such potent evidence of a Buddhist predisposition that they overrode any such objections.

In all of these instances (as well as that of Zhiyi, which will be considered at length below), we can see an overt and systematic melding of Chinese historiographical standards with Buddhist ones. Moreover, the distinction between the accounts of exemplary children found in GSZ and XGSZ is precisely what one would have expected: after the tradition earned imperial approbation and patronage in the Sui and early Tang, it was nowhere near as necessary for Buddhist authors and compilers to defend their ethical standards against literati critiques. Also, with the increasing social prominence of Buddhist temples and institutions in elite Chinese society, the specific practices and values enjoined in these accounts would have been easily recognizable to a culturally literate reader, thus allowing these authors to create a novel, compelling and hybridized model of moral exemplarity, grounded on the seemingly incontrovertible evidence provided by the initial experience [*gan*] of the oneiric conception.

The Account of Zhiyi's Birth and Childhood: A Confluence of Tropes

To explore the two tropes discussed above in a more nuanced and contextualized fashion, we now turn to the XGSZ's biography of Zhiyi 智顓 (538–597), which was largely based on the version composed for imperial consumption by his disciple Guanding 灌頂 (561–632).¹⁶⁶ There are three compelling reasons for so doing: first, this account contains two different instances of the BREACHING MATERNAL BODIES trope, as well a detailed and wide-ranging list of examples (both novel and rote) intended to demonstrate the young Zhiyi's status as an EXEMPLARY CHILD, which means that this biography provides a perfect chance to observe both of the tropes associated with miraculous pregnancy *in situ*; second, given Zhiyi's obvious importance in the development of a “Sinified” Buddhism (and, in particular, the Tiantai school),¹⁶⁷ the rhetorical impetus to lionize the deceased teacher is much clearer: he is, in effect, an exemplary monk among exemplary monks; third, the documentary history for the development of Zhiyi's biography is markedly more transparent than many others, as a number of writings relating to the early years of Tiantai monastery are preserved in the *One Hundred Documents on Guoqing [Temple]* (*Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄 [T. 1934]). A particularly notable aspect of the process whereby Guanding compiled this biography was its dialectical nature: the royal court – who had been generous, long-time patrons of this monastic compound – were convinced, via a process of textual negotiation, to withdraw their support from a nascent cult of Zhiyi's relics in favour of the promulgation of a biography whose catalogue of miraculous happenings served to demonstrate the continued spiritual efficacy of the deceased teacher in the years after his death.¹⁶⁸ As such, the Zhiyi

166 The process of negotiation related to the composition of this text is described at length in Shinohara, “Guanding's Biography of Zhiyi.”

167 For what is still the most detailed overview of Zhiyi's life and philosophy in English, see Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-i (538–597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*, (Bruges: Institut Belge des Hautes Écoles Chinoises, 1963). Also see: Satō Tetsuei, *Tendai Daishi no Kenkyū* 天台大師の研究, (Kyoto: Hyakka'en, 1961).

168 *Ibid.*, 104–111. This example was treated in some detail in the introduction, as it provides eloquent testimony to the social dynamics underlying the collection and dissemination of efficacy narratives.

biography completed by Guanding, which was later excerpted by Daoxuan in XGSZ, represents an ideal example of the sort of historically-situated, polyvocal text that is best approached through the “anthropological” methods detailed in the introduction.¹⁶⁹ While in most cases the particulars of authorial intent, sponsorship, target audiences, and textual discourse communities must be deduced from context clues or by employing specific hermeneutical strategies, the wealth of documents preserved in *Guoqing bolu* actually allow contemporary researchers a relatively unobstructed view into the process whereby this biography was composed. For all of these reasons, Zhiyi's hagiography serves as an excellent cumulative example of the issues that we have been considering up to this point in the chapter.¹⁷⁰

The monk Zhiyi, styled “De'an,” whose secular family was of the Chen clan, was a person of Yingchuan. When the Jin [Dynasty] moved the capital,¹⁷¹ [his family] made their home in Huarong in Jing Province. He was the second son of [Chen] Qizu,¹⁷² imperial escort¹⁷³ and the Duke of Yang¹⁷⁴ under the Liang. His mother, [a woman of] the Xu clan, dreamt of fragrant smoke in five colours,¹⁷⁵ which twisted and coiled its way into her bosom. She wanted to shake it off and dispel it, but she then heard a person speaking [to her,] saying: “[Due to] the causes and conditions¹⁷⁶ of your previous lives, you have been entrusted with the Kingly Way.¹⁷⁷ Since these virtues and merits have naturally reached completion, why would you discard them?”

169 For an excellent example of the utility of this source, see: Shinohara, “Guanding's Biography” (*passim*).

170 For an overview of the contents of the (longer) Guanding version of Zhiyi's biography, see Shinohara, “Guanding's Biography,” 118–119.

171 This is almost certainly a reference to the foundation of the Eastern Jin capital at Jiankang in 317 CE. For a good (albeit brief) overview of this political transition, see Mark Edward Lewis's discussion of “Military Dynasticism in the South” in *China Between Empires*, 62–63.

172 This identification was confirmed in the Dharma Drum's *Buddhist Studies Authority Database*: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A004779>

173 Hucker #4833 gives “Cavalier Attendant” as a translation here, though noting that the usage of this term seems restricted to the Han Dynasty. Another option (seen in Hucker #4834 and #4837) is “Senior Recorder,” though both of these titles feature suffixes following the *sanqi* 散騎.

174 For a description of the bestowal of this rank upon Zhiyi's father, see Satō, *Tendai Daishi no Kenkyū*, 28.

175 I am following Taishō ff. 5 and reading *cai* 采 as *cai* 彩, which makes much more sense. It should be noted that when this episode is quoted in the *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, the variant character (*cai* 彩) is also used: T. 2067: 22b19.

176 See the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* for reading *yinyuan* 因緣 as a Chinese translation of *nidāna*, used in the context of karmic connections with previous lives (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%9B%A0%E7%B7%A3>).

177 As per Funayama Tōru (personal communication), there are some Indian coronation rituals that involve a five-coloured rope and blossoms, which means that the present dream could be an allusion to these practices.

釋智顓，字德安，姓陳氏，潁川人也。有晉遷都，寓居荊州之華容焉。即梁散騎孟陽公起祖之第二子也。母徐氏夢，香煙五彩縈迴在懷，欲拂去之，聞人語曰：「宿世因緣，寄託王道，福德自至，何以去之！」

She also dreamt of swallowing a white rat. [After having] this dream again and again, she felt it strange and had it interpreted.¹⁷⁸ The master said: “It is the sign of a white dragon.” On the night that she gave birth, the room was filled with a penetrating illumination. This brilliance lingered for a few nights before dissipating.

[Everyone] inside and outside [of the family] was very pleased. [They] had filled and displayed the tripod and sacrificial vessels [in an atmosphere of] mutual celebration, but the fire went out and the hot water turned cool; this led to these practices remaining incomplete. Suddenly, there were two monks knocking at the door and saying: “How good! Your son's virtue impelled¹⁷⁹ this. He will surely leave the house[holder's life]!” When they finished speaking, they disappeared. The guests [considered this] extraordinary.

又夢吞白鼠，如是再三，怪而卜之，師曰：「白龍之兆也。」及誕育之夜，室內洞明，信宿之間，其光乃止。內外胥悅，盛陳鼎俎相慶，乃火滅湯冷，為事不成。忽有二僧扣門，曰：「善哉！兒德所熏，必出家矣。」言訖而隱，賓客異焉。隣室憶先靈瑞，呼為王道，言訖而隱，賓客異焉。

People of the neighbouring houses, recalling the earlier supernatural omen, called the child “Kingly Way” (*Wangdao* 王道); additionally, [due to] the later [event's] characteristics, they also called [him] “Brilliant Way” (*Guangdao* 光道), which is the reason that two names and cognomens were established for [Zhiyi] while he was still young; both [of these names] were used to refer to him.

隣室憶先靈瑞，呼為王道，兼用後相，復名光道，故小立二名字，參互稱之。

His eyes had double pupils. His parents tried to hide this fact, but people already knew. While laying down to sleep, he would join his hands; while seated, he always faced west. By the time

178 Literally, “divined” (*bu* 卜).

179 I am following GR in reading *xun* 熏 as influenced or impelled. Conversely, this could also be a reference to the technical Buddhist term for the relationship between karma and consciousness, as per the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, (*xunxi* 熏習):

As clothes which have been exposed to perfume gradually come to take on that same smell, our own activities of word, thought and deed leave an influence on our mind. It is a distinctive Buddhist explanation for how karmic influence is transmitted through the consciousnesses of living beings. In Yogācāra theory, unmanifest karma is sown as a 'seed' 種子 in the *ālaya-vijñāna*. The results of this perfuming are called 'karmic impressions' 習氣 (Skt. *vāsanā*), which again produce new karmas. ([http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?71.xml+id\(%27b718f-7fd2%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?71.xml+id(%27b718f-7fd2%27)))

Given the supernatural character ascribed to the monastic interlocutors, this sort of technical usage is not outside the realm of plausibility.

his first year came,¹⁸⁰ his mouth would not mistakenly eat [foods prohibited by Buddhist dietary restrictions].¹⁸¹ When Zhiyi saw [Buddha] images, he immediately honoured [them], and when he encountered monks, he would always venerate [them].

眼有重瞳，二親藏掩，而人已知。兼以臥便合掌，坐必面西，年一紀來，口不妄噉，見像便禮，逢僧必敬。

When he was seven years of age, he delighted in visiting the *saṃgha-ārāma*. The various monks were astonished by his innate determination. [They] orally transmitted the Universal Doorway Chapter [of the *Lotus Sutra*] to him, and upon first attending to one recitation [of the text], he immediately internalized it. His parents forbade this and did not permit him to recite it again, [causing] him to feel yearningly disappointed. Suddenly and of their own accord, there was a transmission of additional textual passages. Could he have been anything other than a youth whose established virtue [was due to] prior [karmic] activities extending up to the present?¹⁸²

七歲喜往伽藍，諸僧訝其情志。口授普門品，初契一遍即得。二親遏絕，不許更誦，而情懷惆悵。奄忽自然通餘文句。豈非夙植德本業延于今？

Perhaps due to the fact that it was composed as a single textual unit, as opposed to the more piecemeal process of collection, editing, and compilation employed in most other accounts collected in GSZ and XGSZ, this biography's overt engagement with both indigenous Chinese and Buddhist tropes is all the more apparent. Particularly notable is the fact that this account contains two discrete dream conception narratives, both of which employ the (MATERNAL) BODY AS CONTAINER trope, though one uses Buddhist language and imagery, and the other engages directly with indigenous traditions of dream interpretation and discourses of exemplarity. In the first case, Zhiyi's mother is depicted experiencing an oneiric encounter with fragrant five-coloured smoke that is coiling into her body: a polyvalent image whose origins are impossible to parse, given that incenses (and other aromatics) were associated with the ancestor cult, official ritual, Taoist ceremonial **and** Buddhist services by the medieval period.¹⁸³ While

180 Note: both GR and HDC suggest that *yiji* 一紀 can also refer to either a ten or twelve year span. While this is also certainly possible, I would argue that this achievement in self-control would be much less impressive in that context. Also, in my experience, the early portions of biographical sketches are almost always arranged chronologically; as such, it would seem odd to jump forward to describe an experience Zhiyi had at twelve and then back to age seven.

181 Presumably a reference to either overindulging or consuming forbidden foods (such as meat), as described in Kieschnick, "Buddhist Vegetarianism"; Benn, "The Pseudo-Sūramgama Sūtra"; Greene, "Buddhist Vegetarianism."

182 T. 2060: 564a18-b6.

183 For a helpful overview of the origins, development and cultural significance of incense in China, see Joseph Needham,

the five-coloured nature of the smoke could potentially have led a culturally-competent reader to parse this as a Buddhist image,¹⁸⁴ the subsequent pronouncement (by voice whose origins are not described) cements this association through its employment of specifically Buddhist terminology in the course of offering a meta-oreirocritical commentary. In other words, this self-interpreting dream informs Zhiyi's mother that the miraculous conception, which she was currently undergoing via the penetration of numinous smoke, was the result of her previous karmic attainment and was thus a profound blessing. The fact that the author of this tale felt it necessary to include this internal self-commentary implies that they were not convinced that the target audience (i.e., Emperor Yang and the Sui court) would have correctly interpreted this imagery or, conversely, that it would have been implausible for a traditional (i.e., non-Buddhist) dream interpreter to correctly parse it.

This can be contrasted with the second dream account, which is entirely based on “indigenous” imagery and which is thus a non-controversial target for standard oneirocriticism. More specifically, this second dream features the image of Zhiyi's mother swallowing a white rat: a distressing vision that

Science and Civilization in China, Volume 5: Part II, Chemistry and Chemical Technology – Spagyric Discovery and Invention: Magisteries of Gold and Immortality, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 28–134.

Unfortunately, while his account acknowledges the importance of Chinese Buddhism in the development of incense culture, it gives the topic extremely short shrift, saying only “[n]or should the important influence of Buddhism in these developments be overlooked, for the very Sanskrit word for temple (*si*) was *gandhakuṭī*, the house of incense” (134). That said, it is potentially notable that by the Tang Dynasty, the majority of the six most renowned aromatics were imported products might possibly have caused this image to bear slight Buddhist connotations (see 142–143). Charles Benn, in his “thick description” of life in the Tang (*China's Golden Age*), offers several valuable illustrations of the role of incense in the everyday experience of medieval Buddhists (e.g., 63, 91). Jenny F. So discusses the gradual emergence of amber as an aromatic in China, though its popularization was somewhat later than the period currently being investigated: “Scented Trails: Amber as Aromatic in Medieval China,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 23:1 (2013): 85–101. Also see: Silvio Bedini, *The Trail of Time: Time Measurement with Incense in East Asia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

184 For instance, five coloured incense smoke could be read as signifying “five-coloured clouds” (*wuse yun* 五色雲) - an auspicious image that occurs two (additional (?)) times in XGSZ: T. 2060: 505b23 and 668b5. Moreover, the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* notes an association between such clouds and the forty-armed Guanyin (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BA%94%E8%89%B2%E9%9B%B2>), and Mochizuki suggests a similar connection between this image and the thousand-armed Guanyin (1190a). That said, this iconographic form was only just beginning to become popular in the mid-7th century, so it is perhaps too early to have influenced the Guanding biography that served as the basis for the XGSZ account. See Yü, *Kuanyin*, for details on the early development of this iconographic tradition (50–51).

a traditional oneirocritic later describes as a “sign of the white dragon.”¹⁸⁵ Though the link between rats and dragons is somewhat unclear to me,¹⁸⁶ the well-attested connection between dragons and rulership (discussed above) helps explain why the combination of dream interpretation and post-partum miracles led the infant Zhiyi to be nicknamed “Kingly Way” (王道). In addition to the discrete sets of symbols and tropes employed in these two dream narratives, I am further convinced of the author's intention to contrast them by the fact that each employs a different version of the (MATERNAL) BODY AS CONTAINER trope (i.e., “Entering the Bosom” and “Swallowing”), which speaks to the parallel narrative functions of these twinned episodes.

In a similar way, Zhiyi's biography also engages with the standard tropes of precocious childhood, while also speaking to the future monk's innate tendencies toward Buddhist practice and ethics. Intriguingly, the first instance of the latter tendency occurs immediately after the monk's birth and represents another case of the seemingly intentional interplay of these two discourses. First, after the birthing room is filled with miraculous illumination (a pan-Sinitic trope discussed earlier), his family attempts to carry out the necessary celebratory rites, which almost certainly would have

185 Dreams of white dragons are mentioned in the *Taiping yulan's* 太平御覽 chapter on auspicious dreams, which cites the *Songshu's* account of a dream shared between the statesman Liu Muzhi (360–417) and Emperor Wu of the Liu Song (363–422). Therein both men are described seeing a vision of their boat being safeguarded by two white dragons: 又曰：劉穆之嘗夢與宋武帝泛海，遇大風，驚，俯視船下，見二白龍俠船 (1838).

186 See: Marinus Willem de Visser. *The Dragon in China and Japan*, (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1913), for a helpful overview of classical and medieval Chinese sources describing these creatures. Notably, the account from the *Guanzi* (管子, ca. fourth c. BCE) cited therein includes a reference to dragons in water covering themselves “with five colors” (63) – a possible, albeit weak, intertextual linkage between the two dreams. Citing the Song era collection *Dongpo zhilin* (東坡志林), de Visser's discussion of the transformations of dragons includes an account of a white rat seen nosing around a temple's offering altar being interpreted by locals as a disguised dragon (129)! As an aside, it is obviously notable that both rat and dragon are elements of the Chinese zodiac – a coterie of twelve creatures traceable back to Han Dynasty (or earlier), sculptures of which had begun to be employed as tomb guardians by the early medieval period, as discussed in J. Keith Wilson, “Powerful Form and Potent Symbol: The Dragon in Asia,” *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 77:8 (1990): 286–323, 304–305. Though I have been unable to locate any appropriate academic sources on this topic, a variety of popular books and websites note that dragon and rat are among the most compatible of these creatures: a linkage that might have also informed the unnamed oneirocritic described above, if it was of sufficient antiquity.

included offerings of cooked meats, especially given the specific ritual implements described in this account.¹⁸⁷ Their plans are scuttled, however, when the cooking fire is spontaneously extinguished. As in the case of the “self-interpreting” dream discussed above, the author of this account once again obviously feared that their target audience would misinterpret this as a ill-omened event, as they then explicitly describe the appearance (and subsequent disappearance) of miraculous monks, who “read” the incomplete ritual as a sign that the infant would grow up to become an exemplary Buddhist renunciant. Later, and as was the case with Huiyue's construction of “sand *stupas*,” the young Zhiyi is also depicted as a “precociously Buddhist” child, naturally eschewing disallowed foods, honouring monks, and even maintaining his decorum when asleep.¹⁸⁸ Likewise, while innate wisdom and literary ability are common pan-Sinitic tropes, in Zhiyi's case, this manifests itself in his miraculous ability to memorize and recite the *Lotus Sutra* at a young age: an obvious allusion to his later mastery of that text and its place of prominence in the Tiantai method of scriptural exegesis that he would come to champion.

That said, and unlike many of the accounts considered previously, wherein the intertextual employments of the “precocious child” trope consisted merely of the inclusion of general “catalogues

187 At very least, offerings of meat would have been required by the family rituals of the Song Dynasty, as codified by Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200), where the birth of a child (especially a male one) was a matter that necessitated informing the family's ancestors. See: Patricia Buckley Ebrey, trans., *Chu Hsi's "Family Rituals": A Twelfth-Century Chinese Manual for the Performance of Cappings, Weddings, Funerals and Ancestral Rites*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 17–20. For a general overview of the feast as guiding metaphor for Chinese religious sacrifices, see Jordan Paper, *The Spirits Are Drunk*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995).

188 This is likely another reference to Zhiyi's preternatural monastic decorum, given that monks were expected to maintain control of their bodies even when asleep. See, for example, this discussion from the Three Thousand Regulations for Great Bhikṣus (*Dabiqiu sanqian weiyi* 大比丘三千威儀), which specifically mentions the importance of properly positioning the limbs when laying down:

臥有五事：一者當頭首向佛、二者不得臥視佛、三者不得雙[33]申兩足、四者不得向壁臥亦不得伏臥、五者不得豎兩膝更上下足。要當枕手、檢兩足、累兩膝。(T. 1470: 915c24–27)

For a discussion of these issues in both the Indian and Chinese contexts, see: Ann Heirman, “Sleep Well!” (and, in particular, the discussion of sleep practice in Chinese Vinaya digests and summaries [such as the one quoted above], 435–439).

of virtue,” the biography of Zhiyi includes a strikingly specific allusion to the classical Chinese historiographical tradition: namely, the ascription of one of the most distinctive physiognomic signifiers – the double pupils of the legendary sage-king Shun 舜¹⁸⁹ – to a future Buddhist monk. In describing this bold allusion, Shinohara rather blithely opines:

In a manner that reminds us of the biography of the Buddha, Zhiyi's birth and youth are described here in terms of the tension between the secular path of kingship and the spiritual path of Buddhist salvation.¹⁹⁰

While he is definitely correct in this assessment, I would argue that Shinohara under-appreciates the significance of this rhetorical move, as it presents a superlative example of the cultural interplay between Buddhist and indigenous Chinese standards of moral exemplarity, and the process whereby the standards of “Chinese Buddhist” hagiography were established. Specifically, by symbolically casting Zhiyi as a Buddha analogue, caught between his potential destinies as an idealized ruler and ideal spiritual master, it overtly posits a functional equivalence between the princely life of Siddhartha in South Asia and the one described in the classical Chinese histories.¹⁹¹ Rather than being simply “reminiscent” of the Buddha biography, each subsequent episode can be adduced as further evidence of the self-conscious construction of this parallel. Just as the Buddha biography includes a single dream interpreted by a *brahmin* seer as a sign that the young Indian prince could become either a great religious teacher or a *cakravartin*, the Zhiyi account includes two parallel episodes of dream conception, representing the tension between “lay” and “religious” readings of such visions. Moreover, seeming trepidatious about the possibility that the text's readers might not correctly interpret the

189 See, for example, the version of this culture hero's biography preserved in the *Song shu*'s “Treatise on Auspicious Omens” (762–763, 272–274 in Lippiello's translation). See also: Shinohara, “Guanding's Biography of Zhiyi,” 130–131 ff. 3.

190 *Ibid.*, 118.

191 Drawing this sort of symbolic linkage between the Buddha and Zhiyi can be seen as part of Daoxuan's broader attempt to recenter the sacred geography of Chinese Buddhism squarely in China (as opposed to India): a rhetorical goal that is discussed at length in the next chapter.

Buddhist imagery in the first dream, the author rather clumsily has this dream interpret itself, thus creating a perfect parallel to the account of the Buddha's birth (including the presence of two lofty, but mutually incompatible, destinies). Next, and in keeping with the trope of miraculous conception yielding exemplary children, Zhiyi is described possessing the physiognomic signs not of a Buddha, but rather of one of China's most renowned sage rulers:¹⁹² additional proof of the validity of the traditional oneirocritic's reading of the “white rat” dream.¹⁹³ Finally (at least for our purposes), even after Zhiyi's innate wisdom manifests itself in precocious Buddhist piety, culminating in his interest in Buddhist texts, his parents try to forbid him from pursuing a Buddhist education. Unfortunately for them, his subsequent miraculous attainment of additional scriptural wisdom is shown to be as inexorable as Siddhartha's vision of the Four Sights, which in both cases served as the final impetus to leave behind the secular life.

In a social environment where the relationship between the Buddhist clergy and the state was being actively negotiated, especially after the *sangha* began to receive imperial support under the Sui and Tang,¹⁹⁴ it is difficult to overstate the significance of this rhetorical move. Though Buddhism was an undeniably “foreign” religion, accounts like this one suggest that these standards of moral exemplarity were seen to actively trump the ideals propounded by traditional Chinese historiography. While this trend was still nascent in the accounts preserved in GSZ, the various types of miraculous impregnation and exemplary child tropes employed in XGSZ highlight the extent to which becoming a Buddhist monk was being posited as a morally superior alternative to other vocational options.

192 As an aside, it is probably significant that two of the three dream accounts that actively mention children, babies or infants use the term “prince” when describing them (see **Table 2.2** above).

193 This phenomenon, whereby medieval Buddhist narratives implicitly accept the validity of traditional (i.e., non-Buddhist) oneiromancy, is discussed at some length in Chapter Four.

194 As discussed above.

Conclusions

The significance of these intertextual linkages can be better appreciated when one considers the social dynamics of making such references. In considering these issues, I found Mikhail Bakhtin's comments about the polyvocality of languages instructive, as I would argue that similar social dynamics are present in the case of textual traditions as well:

at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form.¹⁹⁵

As such, texts are inherently political, as they represent the attempts of authors and compilers to negotiate the clouds of associations and nuances linked to any particular phrase or construal of events, whether they are engaged in this process consciously or not.

Compiling monastic biographies intended for both lay and monastic audiences, Huijiao and Daoxuan would have been intimately aware of this tension,¹⁹⁶ with intertextual linkages like those mentioned above highlighting the “heteroglot” nature of these tales of oneiric conception. For example, the combination of the **swallowing as conception** trope with explicitly Buddhist imagery (as discussed above) would have been readily interpretable by any culturally competent reader, whether monk or lay patron. That said, and in keeping with the implicitly political nature of such literary productions, the employment of such tropes could also “refunction” them,¹⁹⁷ and thus allow them to operate as a form of

195 Quoted in Allen, 38.

196 As an aside, this pressure is even evidenced by the selection of episodes in these texts, given that mapping every location mentioned in these collections reveals a disproportionate focus on areas adjacent to their respective capitals (Jiakang in GSZ and Chang'an in XGSZ), as I argue in “Mapping Religious Practice in the Eminent Monks: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections” (in press).

197 I am following Huang's understanding of this sort of literary “refunctioning”: a term that he borrows from Russian critical theory and reapplies to his discussion of intertextuality and originality in the Ming novel (49). Martin Weizong Huang, “Dehistoricization and Intertextualization: The Anxiety of Precedents in the Evolution of the Traditional Chinese Novel,” *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 12 (1990): 45–68.

subtle social commentary. For instance, as Kinney notes in her overview of the “precocious child” trope in (non-Buddhist) Chinese literature, these individuals are characterized by a particular, pro-social form of heroic exemplarity, consisting of such attributes as:

the display of peaceful skills rather than violent assertiveness, the performance of deeds which assist society at large rather than those which aggrandize the individual, the passage through an ordeal as a necessary prelude to innovation or enlightenment, the expression of an unconditional respect and love for parents, and the absence of almost all childish traits in the depiction of the hero's childhood.¹⁹⁸

When this same narrative logic is applied in Buddhist sources, a sensitive reader could hardly miss the fact that “traditional” pro-social virtues have been replaced by Buddhist ones, such as abstaining from the five strong flavours or becoming a monk at a young age. More broadly, and given that part of the target audience for these texts consisted of lay patrons (a category that included pious emperors), it is striking that many of these accounts ascribe to Buddhist monks the same sorts of auspicious births that had previously been the sole province of sage rulers and enlightened officials.

While it is impossible to definitively determine the reason(s) that these intertextual references to oneiric conception were so much more common in XGSZ than in GSZ, this disparity suggests a number of intriguing possibilities: first, it could represent a response to contemporaneous anti-Buddhist polemics, such as those that inspired the anti-Buddhist persecutions of the Northern Wei and Zhou dynasties.¹⁹⁹ In particular, these critics often described Buddhist monasticism as an affront to Chinese notions of filiality, given that a Buddhist monk would (at least in theory) have severed connections with

198 Kinney, “The Precocious Child,” 2.

199 Chen, *The Revival of Buddhist Monasticism*, notes that Daoxuan described these persecutions in the (then-popular) idiom of the “decline of dharma,” while also using such historical examples as a rationale for promoting Southern over Northern traditions of Buddhism (20). Given that Daoxuan compiled an entire text (the *Guang hongmi ji* 廣弘明集, T. 2103) for the precise purpose of countervailing such arguments (ibid., 23), it is certainly plausible that his compilation of XGSZ might have been informed (at least in part) by a similar imperative. For a helpful overview of this text, see Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, “*Guang Hongming ji*” in *Early Medieval Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, edited by Cynthia L. Chennault, Keith N. Knapp, Alan J. Berkowitz and Albert E. Dien, (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2015), 95–97.

their secular family. The XGSZ's tales of exemplary children, in contrast, offer evidence that certain exemplary monks owed their very existence to extrahuman phenomena, which would not only negate their debt to familial ancestors, but also provided eloquent testament to the fact that their destinies were, from the moment of conception, bound up with the Buddhist community. Likewise, the refunctioning of the “precocious child” trope also seems to represent Daoxuan's attempt to alleviate this tension.²⁰⁰

Also, in such a context, the intertextual employment of the oneiric conception trope explicitly links the *ganying* framework postulated in pre-Buddhist texts with the provision of religious goods to devoted Buddhists. As such, these accounts could be seen as evidence of the co-opting of a popular religious function (i.e., provision of sons) by Buddhist deities: an interpretation that is given credence by the fact that many of these accounts of auspicious pregnancy overtly begin by stating that the prospective mothers were yearning to be pregnant before being visited by their respective oneiric visions: a topic treated in some detail in the chapter on oneiric practice. More broadly, when considering the matter of the *ganying* framework, we see here another example of the general tendency that has been outlined throughout this project, whereby Daoxuan seems much more comfortable than his predecessor invoking an exclusive version of the stimulus/response idiom with regard to oneiric experiences. Whereas each of Huijiao's examples featured dream events being subsequently vouchsafed by a variety of additional miracles, the great majority of Daoxuan's did not, highlighting his convictions regarding the compelling character of oneiric experiences.²⁰¹ It is, perhaps, no surprise that

200 As noted above, I am in the process of preparing a paper that explores the general issue of ordination age among Buddhist monks in GSZ and XGSZ, wherein I explore the usage of the “oneiric conception” trope as one explanatory framework among many.

201 Lin, *Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, offers a parallel explanation of this disparity, suggesting that later biographical collections are more likely to rely on the trope of prospective monk's leaving the householder's life due to the gradual popularization of the etiological “accumulation of beneficial karma in prior lives” trope (95): a

– in selecting, editing and disseminating accounts that were more in keeping with this fundamental Chinese causal idiom – Daoxuan also engaged in a much more comprehensive way with a variety of other standard Chinese literary tropes of auspicious birth and childhood.

trope which is obviously linked to the sorts of auspicious omens discussed above. I would suggest that my previously outlined observations about the status of dreams as omens in Daoxuan's collection helps to further nuance Lin's observation.

Chapter Three: Dreaming Betwixt and Between Regions

In the earliest centuries in which Buddhist texts, practices, and practitioners were making their way to China, new Chinese converts and their patrons alike could not help but be flummoxed by the extent to which this new religious system was ideologically dependent upon cosmological premises that were utterly alien (and, in some cases, actually antithetical) to traditional Sinitic sensibilities. In this chapter, we will consider some of the ways that the oneiric narratives written, collected, and transmitted by early Buddhist discourse communities helped to resolve these tensions. More specifically, we will outline some of the ways that the ideological landscape changed between Huijiao's period of compilation (early sixth century) and Daoxuan's (mid-seventh century), as represented by the narratives that they opted to include. Both GSZ and XGSZ contain a wealth of oneiric episodes relating to monks (and others) negotiating the (emotional, cultural, and political) boundaries between China and surrounding regions, which provides additional support for my central hypothesis about dreams as foundational, embodied experiences of the liminal. The goal of the present chapter is to explore the primary themes evidenced in these oneiric narratives. While it is, as always, impossible to gauge the literal historicity of any of these episodes, there is no reason to assume that their discourse communities would not have found them plausible. Indeed, the fact that dream experiences can play a variety of roles in the processes of cross-cultural encounter, adjustment, and assimilation is a well attested phenomenon in the psychological and anthropological literatures.¹ That said, before transitioning into a

1 Consider the following: 1) Thomas Gregor, "Content Analysis of Mehinaku Dreams," in *Dreams: A Reader on the Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming*, edited by Kelly Bulkeley, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 133–166. Based on his quantitative analysis of Mehinaku dream reports, Gregor hypothesized that this group exists in a near-constant state of low-level anxiety related to their Brazilian neighbours. Specifically, even though violent interactions between the Mehinaku and Brazilians were extremely rare, *dreams* of such assaults were plentiful, which he argues provides an insight into their mental representations of inter-regional and inter-group tensions; 2) In a fashion that bears marked similarities with topics discussed in both this chapter and the previous discussion of oneiric practice, Yoram Bilu describes contemporary Moroccan Jewish immigrants symbolically relocating the cults of local Moroccan saints (*tsaddiqim*) to sites in Israel based on their oneiric encounters with these figures (85–101); 3) Barbara Tedlock, *A New Anthropology of Dreaming*, drawing on her own experiences as an anthropologist as well as those of colleagues, offers some valuable insights into the gradual process whereby an ethnographer's dream content comes to match their waking life over the course of the fieldwork process, echoing their internal creation of an composite, inter-regional identity (see, in particular, 252–253). 4) Wolfgang Kempf and Elfriede Hermann describe the oneiric practices (especially dream telling) associated with Ngaing initiation rites, whereby local youths reimagine themselves and their

discussion of the ways that the *Eminent Monks* collections employ oneiric episodes to negotiate the tensions between the traditional Chinese imagined geography and the ideological requirements of Buddhism (even in its modified Chinese form), it is first necessary to outline this traditional perspective on culture and nationhood, and to consider the reasons that these views created difficulties for early Chinese Buddhists.

In the traditionalist view, the Chinese state (and the thearch [*di* 帝]² who was both its head and its synecdoche) was the *de facto* center of the universe.³ This spatialized understanding of territory,

communities in light of the hegemonic cultural influence of nearby Australia: “Dreamscapes: Transcending the Local in Initiation Rites among the Ngaing of Papua New Guinea,” in *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific*, edited by Roger Ivar Lohmann, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 61–86. 5) Kelly Bulkeley offers a helpful discussion (including a variety of case studies) of the role of dreams in internalizing and ascribing meaning to “foreign” religious systems and symbols in “Dreaming and Religious Conversion,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*, edited by Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 256–270. In all of these cases, we see the utility of both first- and second-order oneiric practice in navigating the liminal space between regions and cultures – a topic that we will consider at length in the present chapter.

- 2 This conception of ruler as cosmological center of the universe, which corresponds to his status as the inflection point between humanity and heaven, is cogently articulated in the *Analectis'* description of the ideal ruler as Pole Star (2:1, as per Yoshikawa, Vol. 1, 47): 子曰，為政以德，譬如北辰，居其所，而眾星共之。 Cf., Ames and Rosemont: “The Master said: ‘Governing with excellence can be compared to being the North Star: the North Star dwells in its place, and the multitude of stars pay it tribute’” (76). This position was further nuanced when tied back to the omenology and correlative cosmology of early Han weft texts by Dong Zhongshu, as described in Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1985). As an aside, Joachim Gentz notes that the association between Dong and *wuxing* 五行 theory may be somewhat overstated, as it relies on the ascription of texts of dubious provenance to this thinker: “The Past as a Messianic Vision: Historical Thought and Strategies of Sacralization in the Early Gongyang Tradition,” in *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*, edited by Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag and Jörn Rüsen (Leiden : Brill, 2005), 227–254. For the persistence of these views beyond the Han, see Keith N. Knapp, “Heaven and Death According to Huangfu Mi,” 1–31.

For a good overview of the religious and ritual obligations of the Han emperor, see: Marianne Bujard, “State and Local Cults in Han Religion,” in *Early Chinese Religion: Part One – Shang through Han (1250 BCE – 220 AD)*, edited by John Lagerway and Marc Kalinowski, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 777–812; Mark Edward Lewis, *China's Early Empires: Qin and Han*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 185–189. One important ritual enactment of the understanding of space detailed above is seen in the iconic *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, described in Stephen Bokenkamp, “The Feng and Shan Sacrifices” in *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez Jr., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 251–260. The continued salience of this semi-apotheosized understanding of political leadership can be seen contemporary Taiwanese religious practice, as compellingly demonstrated in Stephan Feuchtwang, *Popular Religion in China: The Imperial Metaphor*, (Richmond: Curzon, 2001).

- 3 Though the term *Zhongguo* (the “Middle Kingdom” [中國]) was not yet the Chinese toponym of choice in the historical period under consideration, this term (and various related ones [e.g., *Zhongzhou* 中洲, *Zhongyuan* 中原]) were nonetheless employed to describe the nexuses of Chinese political power and/or cultural dominion, in an explicit

which itself possessed considerably antiquity, was retrojected into the distant mythical past through the tales of Great Yu the Flood-Controller, a culture hero whose hydraulic activities defined the borders of the Chinese state and the relationship of tributary dependence between the periphery and the center.⁴ For the early Chinese, Yu's cosmographic accomplishment was most often represented by the iconic Nine Tripods of Yu – mythical sacrificial vessels that were purported to record the agricultural products (and other natural resources) of the regions located in the eight cardinal directions around the central seat of power. The eight regions were each expected to dispatch these local products to the center as tribute, as thanksgiving offerings honouring the role of the central state in maintaining cosmic order.⁵ As with so many aspects of early Chinese ideology, the collapse of the Han dynasty in the early third century ruptured this cosmological conception, as it cast doubt on (or even invalidated) various aspects of the traditional literati worldview, as it forced these intellectuals to confront the possibility that the cosmos itself was less inherently orderly than their previous imaginings would have allowed.

contrast with the “barbarian” lands on the periphery. As discussed in Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 191–193. For the earliest usages of *zhongguo*, traceable back to the Shang dynasty, see Janine Nicol, *Daoxuan (c. 596–667) and the Creation of a Buddhist Sacred Geography of China: An Examination of the Shijia fangzhi*, (PhD diss., SOAS, 2016), 30–31.

4 This issue is treated at length in Mark Edward Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China*, (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2006), wherein he argues that Great Yu's primary achievement was understood as a cosmographic victory that divided center from periphery through the establishment of the system of tributes (47). For a historical overview of the texts associated with the development of this legend, especially relating to the institution of tribute between center and periphery, see *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas*, translated and with commentary by Richard E. Strassberg, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 3–13. For a detailed diachronic discussion of the sources for and history of this paradigm of Chinese centrality, which traces it from the Shang to the period of disunion following the collapse of the Han, see: Nicol, *Daoxuan and the Creation of a Buddhist Sacred Geography*, 30–52.

5 For example, Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary*, cites an early example of this legend from *Zuo's Narratives to the Spring and Autumn Annals* (ca. 4th c. BCE), 4. Also consider the discussion in Robert Ford Campany, *Strange Writing*, 101–159. On the issue of tribute, Campany argues that:

the tribute system served to emplace peripheral and (from the Han viewpoint) anomalous groups within a centrally determined, hierarchical social – and cosmic – order. To submit tribute was, again from the Han point of view at least, to signal subordination (not necessarily abject submission) to the court. This complex act involved three gestures: periodic homage by the 'barbarian' leader (or his representative), including a gesture of prostration beneath the person of the emperor (or his representative); the sending of hostages, often including the heir apparent, to the Chinese court, where they received instruction in Chinese morality and culture; and the presentation of tribute goods (114).

Whether by design or due to the unpredictable exigencies of textual preservation, this period also saw the rise of *zhiguai* 志怪 (“tales of the strange”) as a literary genre: short compositions that were freed (or at least more free) from the twin pressures of factuality and moralism that had so constrained the authors and compilers of the official dynastic histories (as discussed previously). This development is relevant to the present discussion of cosmology because it represented the first (extant) historical instance wherein authors and compilers could describe events, figures and situations that did not fit comfortably into the centripetally-directed cosmological blueprint of the official histories, ritual manuals, cosmographies, and philosophical texts. This is not to say that the compilers of these collections all rejected the traditional worldview; instead, it is the case that they were free to select episodes that spoke to their own idiosyncratic understandings of individual and state, and that these understandings generally fell somewhere on a continuum between fully traditionalist (centripetal) and anti-traditionalist (centrifugal). Robert Ford Campany's *Strange Writing* eloquently describes the socio-political dynamics inherent in this process of “cosmographic collection”:

We have to deal, in short, with two modes of cosmography, or perhaps a spectrum of modes. At one end – the locative – ultimate value is given to emplacing anomaly and domesticating the other, for these are the acts by which the cultural center is constructed. At the other end of the spectrum – the anti-locative – value is given to the critique of, or even escape from, this emplacement and domestication, for ultimate value is taken to lie elsewhere. At any moment in its history, a cosmographic tradition may tend as a whole toward one or the other end of this spectrum; or, more commonly, some authors (for in urban traditions it is almost always a question of written media) will write from a locative, others from an anti-locative viewpoint. Furthermore, within any society a variety of locative and anti-locative views may be advanced simultaneously, and rival versions of the “center” may thus be advanced – the center of an urban tradition is always constructed and contested.⁶

6 Campany, *Strange Writing*, 14. He also uses the concept of locative social and narrative practices to explore Chinese dream interpretation in his forthcoming book on the topic (“Dream Interpretation,” unpaginated draft). For a discussion of these cosmographic processes in GSZ and XGSZ, as well as an attempt to map the “imagined geography” of these texts, see: Jensen, “Mapping Religious Practice in the Eminent Monks: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections,” (in press).

As such, the authors and compilers of these collections – who ran the gamut from masters of techniques (*fangshi* 方士), literati (*ru* 儒), Taoists, and Buddhists – were thus able to assert their own positions on the authority of the central state: positions that would have been immediately clear and rhetorically meaningful to their respective discourse communities.

This centripetal / centrifugal dynamic, in turn, speaks directly to the challenge faced by medieval Chinese Buddhists (as alluded to above): namely, the most expedient means of balancing the quest for elite patrons (whose political commitments typically led them to emphasize the current Chinese capital as the “locative center” of their cosmographical thinking)⁷ with the socio-historical realities of Buddhism: a religion whose central historical drama had played out hundreds of years previous and thousands of kilometers away. It was not even the case that these early medieval Buddhists needed to strike an appropriate balance between locative and anti-locative commitments; instead, they somehow needed to balance two discrete (and seemingly incommensurate) cosmographies, with two discrete loci of social and religious power (i.e., the Chinese capital and the South Asian sites of the Buddha's birth, life and death). This resulted in the “borderland complex” so ably described by Janine Nicol.⁸ As such, this undeniable, and oft-derided, foreignness represented one of the key impediments to the Chinese acceptance of Buddhism, as it seemed to many medieval

7 This is, of course, something of an overstatement. In particular, and as demonstrated in Campany, *Strange Writing*, some *zhiguai* collections produced in the early medieval period embraced the anti-locative mode, even when compiled by literati and/or members of the ruling class. See, for example, his discussion of *Youming lu*: a text that stresses “naturalness” over “conformity,” in spite of being compiled by one of the nephews of founder of the Song dynasty (75–77). For an overview of the innovative elements of this text's cosmological vision, see Zhang's *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural*, 82–146 and *passim*.

8 Nicol, *Daoxuan and the Creation of a Buddhist Sacred Geography*, describes the initial Chinese response to these Indic discourses as follows:

It became clear to the Chinese with the influx of texts finding their way to China during the latter part of the fourth century, that there was much they did not understand about their religion and their place in it. Men like Shi Dao'an 釋道安 (312–385), struggling to make sense of this partial picture, complicated by the simultaneous arrival of texts from competing Buddhist traditions, began to feel that China was not the best place to be for a Buddhist, and it is in his writings that the first traces of the Borderland Complex are to be found (65–68).

commentators that a religious system whose locus of power was situated outside of the “Middle Kingdom” could not help but be inappropriate for a Chinese audience.⁹

Huijiao and Daoxuan's collections both include numerous instances of individuals being ushered through liminal states by dream experiences (e.g., conception to birth, life to death), as well as cases where dreams serve as a liminal space in which encounters between the human and extrahuman realms could occur (as discussed in the Introduction and *passim*). As such, it is perhaps unsurprising that both GSZ and XGSZ also include a variety of oneiric episodes that function to bridge the ideological gap between localizing power in India and China.¹⁰ Moreover, when we consider the cultural sea change that occurred between the (comparative) chaos of the Northern/Southern dynasties period (during which GSZ was compiled) and the reestablishment of a strong, central imperial

9 As discussed in Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*; Ch'en, *The Buddhist Transformation of China and Buddhism in China*; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*. In particular, Nicol, in *Daoxuan and the Creation of a Buddhist Sacred Geography*, offers a helpful overview of one such response to the Buddhist cosmography, drawn from the writings of the literati He Chengtian (何承天, 370–447), which addresses this issue by “doubling down” on traditional Chinese views of the centrality (both geographical and ontological) of his country:

The Chinese and the western tribes are not of the same stuff. In what way? The men of the Central Realms have been endowed with pure and harmonious pneumas, they have within themselves humaneness and embrace the right. Thus, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius, illuminated their nature and taught how to put them into practice. Foreign followers [of the Buddha] received natures which are hard and unbending, lustful, angry and unpleasant. Thus Śākyamuni had to keep them in order with the imposition of the Five Precepts (85–90, 89).

For a variety of Buddhist responses to such discourses, consider the various apologia and polemics included in the *Hongming ji* (T. 2102), many of which were reacting to precisely these sorts of arguments. While such discourses were generally employed to the detriment of Buddhist interests, Kieschnick, in *The Eminent Monk*, makes note of one major exception: namely, in early monastic hagiographies (such as those contained in GSZ), the “foreignness” of immigrant monks, such as Fotucheng, was often seen as both responsible for and emblematic of their posited thaumaturgical powers (86–88). For a discussion of Fotucheng as a Buddhist dream interpreter, see Chapter One.

10 Robert Ford Campany, in *Strange Writing*, offers an eloquent summary of the means by which miracle tales helped to “localize” Buddhism when employed by medieval editors and anthologists like Huijiao and Daoxuan:

Just the inverse of the fangshi and pro-Daoist texts that display the marvels of the peripheral and the esoteric, these texts stress above all the ordinariness of context within which the extraordinary 'manifestations' of their religion unfold. Events occur at named, familiar places and in recent or contemporary times; they involve and are witnessed by named, often independently attested individuals - individuals much like the implied reader in predilection and social station. Presenting the results of the implied author's work of *yan* [confirmation], the texts thus invite the reader to *yan* these reports as well. This overriding concern to display evidentiary responses *occurring in China* mirrors the Buddhist community's characteristic anxiety during this period – its continuing status as a relative outsider, a still-foreign religion striving for widespread acceptance” (323, emphasis in original).

For a general discussion of Daoxuan's rhetorical attempt to “sacralize” China through the use of miracle tale collections, see: Chen, *The Revival of Buddhist Monasticism*, 73–79.

government by the early Tang (the era of XGSZ's composition), it seems reasonable to expect that the dream experiences reported in these two collections would reflect this overall cultural shift.

Dreaming of Foreign Powers: Emperor Ming of Han and the Transmission of Buddhism

Given the medieval Chinese logic of dreams, whereby oneiric connections could be established between sleeping individuals, or even between dreamers and various types of extrahuman beings, these sorts of phantasmagorical links provided a natural narrative device for the transmission of information that would not plausibly have been accessible to the dreamer via standard, discursive means (i.e., dreams as “informatory miracles,” as discussed previously). One paradigmatic example, in which oneiric communication is employed to great rhetorical effect, can be seen in the GSZ biography of Kāśyapa-Mātāṅga (She Moteng 攝摩騰, d. 73 CE), which is not coincidentally the account with which Huijiao opted to begin his collection. It begins by describing the monk's origins as a person of the Middle Indic Kingdom, his excellent personal qualities and his mastery of the scriptures of both the Greater and Lesser Vehicles. The portion of this account relevant to our purposes begins after he departs on a proselytic expedition and manages to broker a peace between two warring Central Asian states, after which point Han Mingdi (漢明帝, r. 58–75) is ascribed the following oneiric experience:¹¹

In the Han [Dynasty's] Yongping era [56–78 CE], Emperor Ming had a night dream of a golden man flying through the sky and alighting. Thereupon, a great assembly of ministers prognosticated about that which [the Thearch] had dreamed. The erudite Fuyi respectfully replied: “I, your servant, have heard of a deity from the Western Lands. He is called 'Buddha.' The subject of your majesty's dream is surely this!”

The thearch, in response to this, promptly dispatched the Gentleman of the Interior¹² Cai Yin, a scholar's apprentice [named] Qin Jing, and others. When the envoys reached India, they sought and inquired after the Buddha's teaching. Yin and the others soon thereafter encountered

11 See: T. 2059: 322c15–20.

12 Hucker #3565 for *langzhong* 郎中.

Kāśyapa-Mātāṅga and immediately requested [that he] return [with them] to the Land of the Han. Kāśyapa-Mātāṅga had vowed to spread [the Buddhist teachings] widely, so he was unafraid of suffering and fatigue and dared to cross the shifting sands until he arrived at Luoyang. Emperor Ming rewarded him generously, establishing a temple for him to live in outside the city's western gate. He was the first *śramaṇa* in Land of the Han.

漢永平中，明皇帝夜夢金人飛空而至，乃大集群臣以占所夢。通人傅毅奉答：「臣聞西域有神，其名曰佛，陛下所夢，將必是乎。」帝以為然，即遣郎中蔡愔，博士弟子秦景等，使往天竺，尋訪佛法。愔等於彼遇見摩騰，乃要還漢地。騰誓志弘通不憚疲苦冒涉流沙至乎雒邑。明帝甚加賞接。於城西門外立精舍以處之。漢地有沙門之始也。¹³

While the status of this episode as a factual account of the historical origins of Buddhism in China has been roundly rejected in twentieth- and twenty-first century scholarship,¹⁴ it remains the case that it was a profoundly popular narrative that came to be cited extensively in early medieval Chinese sources (both among supporters and detractors of the foreign creed). It is for this reason (rather than any misbegotten attempt to employ a “hermeneutic of retrieval”) that we must consider it here.

Specifically, the significance of this account is most easily appreciated when considered in light of the issues of locative and anti-locative discourse introduced above, especially when one takes

13 T. 2059: 322c20–28. Punctuated as per *GSZ* (1992 [2007]), 1. Translated after consulting Henri Maspero's French rendering in “Le Songe et L'Ambassade de L'Empereur Ming: Étude critique des sources,” *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 10 (1910): 95–130, 120 and Robert Shih's translation, *Biographies de Moines Éminents (Kao Seng Tchouan) de Houei-Kiao*, (Louvain: Bibliothèque du Muséon, 1968), 1–2.

14 The most detailed study of the history of this account, which traces the textual linkages between eleven versions of the text and uses these philological clues to speculate on its origins, is still Maspero's “L'Empereur Ming.” Commenting on this episode, Zürcher (relying on the scholarship of Maspero and Tang Yongtong) describes it as a “pious legend,” traceable back to the preface to the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* in the mid-third century, and later developed through a variety of subsequent sources (*Buddhist Conquest of China*, 22). For a detailed overview that links the development of this narrative with then-current understandings of Buddhism, see Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*, 41–51. Though he regards this episode as a legend, Wu Hung nonetheless accepts its rough chronology, arguing that the “worship of the Buddha by the Chu Prince Ying in 65 A.D” (as described in *Hou Hanshu*) should be taken as the first reputable reference to Buddhist practice in China (277 ff. 15): “Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.),” *Artibus Asiae* 47: 3/4 (1986): 263–303 + 305–352. Wu also offers a partial English translation of the original version of this episode from the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* (265). See also the discussion in Robert H. Sharf, “The Scripture in Forty-Two Sections” in *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald J. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 360–371. Though his translation omits the preface, the historical circumstances of the authorship / translation of the text (including issues surrounding the “Emperor Ming dream”) are discussed on 360–361. One counterexample can be seen in Zhang, *Buddhism and Tales of the Supernatural*, who simply mentions this event without any discussion of its historicity (or lack thereof) (62 ff. 4).

account of the *ganying* 感應 paradigm that was so prevalent at this time.¹⁵ First, we know that the Chinese of the early sixth century accepted dreams as one of many auspicious omens, which could be impelled [*gan*] to manifest through moral conduct and, in particular, through the expansively influential moral conduct of a sagely ruler. In this way, the present episode could be read as a preeminent example of this doctrine of moral causality in action, which would have been intertextually reminiscent of the official catalogues of auspicious responses that functioned as testimonials of each dynasty's august rule.¹⁶ This hypothesis is given additional weight when one considers the polemical retelling of this episode in the *History of the Wei* (*Weishu* 魏書, 554 CE), which states that “under the latter Han, a stupid ruler, beguiled by falsehood and pretending to have had a dream, worshipped the demon of the barbarians.”¹⁷ Unless a culturally competent reader would have inherently read an actual dream as a good omen, I can see no persuasive reason that this critical retelling would have made the seemingly odd claim that the Emperor had purposefully fabricated his dream experience. More broadly, another reason for the inclusion of this episode is surely the general plausibility of such accounts to an early medieval reader, given the ubiquity of oneiric practice in the early medieval period (as discussed in Chapter One) and the frequency with which exemplary individuals were described having oneiric encounters in histories, miracle collections and *zhiguai* (as discussed in the Introduction and *passim*).

Secondly, after his dream and its subsequent interpretation, the Emperor is depicted assembling and dispatching a coterie of ambassadors to India in order to seek out and return with Buddhist

15 This historiographical orientation was discussed at some length in the *Introduction*.

16 Described in Lippiello, *Auspicious Omens*; Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*; Knapp, “Heaven and Death according to Huangfu Mi.”

17 Translated by James Ware in “Wei Shou on Buddhism,” *T'oung Pao* Second Series 30:1/2 (1933): 100–181, 40. It should be noted that this is not the position of the author of this treatise; instead, it is the text of an anti-Buddhist edict quoted by Wei Shou, which had originally been circulated to remonstrate with the emperor concerning the utility and moral value of Buddhism (or lack thereof).

teachings: an action that, read in the locative mode, not only credits the Chinese ruler with the importation of Buddhism, but also recasts these Buddhist teachings via the logic of tribute outlined above.¹⁸ That said, while the power in a tributary system resides almost unilaterally with the recipient, it is notable that the emperor's vision *requires* him to send out envoys if he wishes to benefit from the spiritually efficacious being that appeared in his dream. Describing the narrative dynamics of a later telling of this tale, Wendi Adamek cogently describes this quality of the emperor's dream as follows:

the catalytic effect of the image of the Buddha appearing in an emperor's dream depends on its complete otherness. Personal visionary experience of the Buddha is here independent of the Saṅgha and the Dharma, and yet it is not enough. The emperor has had an iconographically correct dream, but he does not have access to its power and is not a Buddhist until images, scripture, and monks arrive from India and he is enabled to "take refuge" through their mediation.¹⁹

Though the GSZ version focuses primarily on the arrival of monks (for rhetorically obvious reasons), this same process of negotiation (between the temporal power of the emperor and the religious authority of foreign monks who can provide exclusive access to heretofore unseen religious goods) is evidenced therein as well.

18 My interpretation here is indebted to Robert Ford Campany, "Buddhism Enters China' in Early Medieval China," in *Old Society, New Belief: Religious Transformation of China and Rome, ca. 1st - 6th Centuries*, edited by Mu-chou Poo, H. A. Drake, and Lisa Raphals, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 13–34. In particular, Campany notes that this importation happens by imperial command. Emperors and their courts saw the management of religion as lying within their purview. That the coming of Buddhism was here imagined as the result of imperial decree reflects the tension between the authority of the imperium and the prerogatives of the monastic community. This tension would continue through much of Chinese Buddhist history, especially in the early medieval period" (17). A similar reading is offered in Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 22. Describing a retelling of this same episode in the late eighth-century Chan text *The Record of the Dharma Jewel through the Ages* (*Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記), Wendi Adamek notes that even though he was initially obligated to rely upon his wise minister to interpret his oneiric vision, only the emperor [had] the power to actualize the prescience of that dream by bringing Buddhism bodily into his realm. Thus, the paradigmatic ideal Buddhist ruler, disseminating the faith through his support of monks and their wonder-working and scripture-translating activities, is made into the 'founding father' of Buddhism in China (22). *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and Its Contexts*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). For a helpful overview of the history and contents of this text, see: Wendi Adamek, "The *Lidai fabao ji* (Record of the Dharma-Jewel through the Ages)" in *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts*, edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 81–106.

19 Adamek, *Mystique of Transmission*, 22.

This assertion too can be granted additional weight when one considers the polemical retellings of this episode.²⁰ First, the version from the *Weishu* (quoted above) stresses that the Buddhist teaching is not befitting the Chinese context: “Since from antiquity the Nine Provinces had been without it, and exaggeration and big talk do not have their roots in man's [true] nature, ignorant rulers and rebellious princes of a degenerate age have been utterly bewildered.”²¹ As can be seen, the anti-Buddhist edict being quoted by Wei Shou, in denigrating Buddhism as a destabilizing force, also does so in light of traditional Chinese cosmographic logic. In this view, the residents of each of the nine provinces were ascribed particular personality traits and physiological types, which were thought to accord with the rituals, music, and other indigenous religious and cultural practices of their regions²² – none of which were compatible with the dangerous foreign belief system of the Buddhists. Likewise, the fifth-century Celestial Masters text known as the *Inner Explanations of the Three Heavens* (*Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經), also retells the Emperor Ming story in the service of a similar cosmographic critique:

His officials interpreted this dream to mean that this was the perfected form of the Buddha, so they sent envoys into the Western Kingdoms to copy and bring back Buddha scriptures. Then [or: because of this] they built Buddha stupas and temples, and so [the Way of Buddha? Buddha stupas and temples?] covered and spread across the Central Kingdom, and the Three Ways intermingled and became confused. As a result, the people became mixed and disordered; those of the Center mingled with outsiders, and each had his own particular object of veneration.²³

20 Such retellings clearly speak to the status of this episode as an “open signifier” in medieval Chinese thought. As an aside, I believe that one of the most striking re-deployments of this ubiquitous narrative can be seen in Fei Changfang's Sui Dynasty catalogue of Buddhist scripture, which retells the story of the (Zhou Dynasty founder) Houji's mother's miraculous pregnancy (as discussed in Chapter Two) while drawing in imagery and tropes from the Emperor Ming account – a rhetorical move that Tanya Storch characterizes as an “apparent 'Buddhisization' of Chinese history” (93). *The History of Chinese Buddhist Bibliography: Censorship and Transformation of the Tripitaka*, (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2014).

21 Ware, 40.

22 For a discussion of this form of “geographical determinism” (or at least particularism) in early China, see Lewis, *Flood Myths*, 43–47.

23 Emended reading from Steven R. Bokenkamp's *Early Daoist Scriptures*, cited in Robert Ford Campany, “On the Very Idea of Religions,” 303–304. Campany, in *Buddhism Enters China*, expands on this discussion, reading this text as an example of the *huahu* (“converting the barbarians”) trope. For an overview of this text (and its later inheritors), see Charles D. Benn, “*Huahu jing* – Scripture of the Conversion of Barbarians” in *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, edited by Fabrizio Pregadio, (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 492–494.

As can be seen, neither of these accounts criticize the Emperor's action for being ineffectual or poorly implemented. Instead, his decision to bring “Buddhism” into the country is seen as an anti-locative form of cosmographic collection, whereby this foreign creed's sheer alien character disrupts the orderly relations between center and periphery. While such readings would obviously have been anathema to Huijiao (and the discourse community who subsequently read and circulated his collection), I believe that the foregoing provides strong evidence that this episode would have been read in cosmographical terms by a contemporary audience, with the only question being whether to interpret it in the locative or anti-locative mode.²⁴

Thus, every aspect of this narrative (such as the emperor's [presumably earned] oneiric experience, his decision to ascribe it with meaning by having it interpreted, and his subsequent dispatching of diplomatic envoys to seek out “Buddhism”)²⁵ serves to reconceptualize the transmission

24 As an aside, I find it interesting that the (largely) positive treatise on Buddhism in *Wei shu* traces the initial transmission of Buddhism to China to a different period, but nonetheless maintains the same narrative logic seen above:

In the period Yuanshou [122–117 BC] of the [emperor] Wu of the Han, Huo Qubing was sent to punish the Xiongnu. Arriving at Gaolan and passing Juyan, he cut off heads and made large captures. When the prince of Hunye killed the prince of Xiuchu and, taking his group of 50,000, came to offer submission, there were obtained golden statues in human form. Since the emperor took them for great divinities, they were set up in the Ganquan palace. The golden statues were all ten odd feet high. No sacrifices were made to them; there was only burning of incense and ceremonial bowing, and that is all. This, then, marks the beginning of the circulation of Buddhism [in China] (Ware, 107–109).

As can be seen, this account parallels the “Emperor Ming” episode in two key respects: first, it describes the appeal of Buddhism in terms of the purported power of the foreign deities, and, second, it ascribes the authority for transmitting Buddhism into China to the Chinese government (albeit in the context of a military operation). For a further discussion of this episode, see: Homer H. Dubs, “The “Golden Man” of Former Han Times,” *T'oung Pao* Second Series 33:1 (1937): 1–14.

25 A testament to the “rhetoricity” of this narrative is the fact that it was differentially employed, based on the requirements of various usage contexts. For instance, the GSZ version cited above, aiming to highlight the importance of eminent monks in the transmission of Buddhism to China, focuses on the fact that the Emperor's emissaries return with a particular monk, who then spreads the dharma widely. The version from the preface to the *Sutra in Forty-Two Sections*, in contrast, focuses on the role of this particular text in the eastward progress of Buddhism:

Being thus informed, the emperor immediately dispatched to the country of the Yuezhi a group of twelve, including the envoy Zhangjian, the Lieutenant General of the Palace Guards Qinjing, and Wangzun, a student of the scholars of the National University, and others. [They] copied and brought back the *Sutra of Forty-two Sections* and kept it in the fourteenth stone [book storage] chamber, where a stupa was built. Thereafter, the Buddhist teachings spread widely and monasteries were built everywhere” (31). *The Sutra of Forty-Two Sections*,” translated by Heng-ching

of Buddhism into China as the logical result of a series of voluntary choices made by a Chinese emperor. Though the motivations for such a rhetorical move may be transparent, given that the text was intended to appeal to elite lay patrons, this episode was nonetheless referenced extensively throughout both the GSZ and its Tang-dynasty sequel. Specifically, in the six commentarial asides from GSZ that reference dreams (i.e., that use the term *meng* 夢), one half are either overt or oblique references to the Emperor Ming episode,²⁶ whereas in the XGSZ's twenty commentarial mentions of dreams, six make use of this temporal marker.²⁷ In both cases, this attests to the salience of this event in the medieval Chinese Buddhist imaginaire. Strikingly, given the frequency with which this episode is cited, most of the examples mentioned above employ it merely as a temporal marker, which signifies the *terminus*

Shih, in *Apocryphal Scriptures*, (Berkeley, CA: BDK America, 2005), 29–41.

Cf., 於是上悟，即遣使者[9]張騫、羽林中郎將秦景博士弟子王遵等十二人，至大月支國寫取佛經四十二章。在第十四石函中登起立塔寺，於是道法流布，處處修立佛寺。(T. 784: 722: a18–21). The version cited by Campany in “Buddhism Enters China” is drawn from the late fifth-century Buddhist miracle tale collection *Signs from the Unseen Realm* (*Mingxiang ji* 冥詳記), whose general rhetorical aim of promoting Buddhism is reflected in the purported outcome of the Chinese expedition:

With this, the emperor dispatched envoys to India. They copied sutras and secured images [of the Buddha] and displayed these in China. From the emperor to the princes and marquises, everyone [at court] venerated and served them (16).

It then goes on to describe some additional specifics, related to some early monks and their role in promoting image veneration practice (*ibid.*, 16–17). For more background and a complete translation of this episode, see Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 68–69. Finally, though it postdates the temporal range of the present study, I find the description of this episode used to open the *Lidai fabao ji* particularly noteworthy, as it essentially synthesizes the various tellings described above, discussing the arrival of both the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* and the earliest monastic visitors to China, but then immediately transitioning into an anachronistic attack on the inchoate Buddhist community by an assembly of almost seven hundred Taoists. Their polemic convinces the Emperor to arrange a thaumaturgical contest between the two religious communities, which concludes much as one would expect (given the provenance of the source) (Adamek, *Mystique of Transmission*, 300–304). That said, one of the most striking aspects of this account is that it invokes the trope of dharma decline *within* the Emperor Ming narrative itself, linking the arrival of Buddhism in China with the soteriologically abject condition of the world:

The Grand Astrologer Fu Yi addressed the emperor, saying, “In the West there is a great Holy One called the Buddha. It was his image [that you saw].” Emperor Ming asked, “How do you know this?” The Grand Astrologer Fu Yi replied, “In the *Zhou shu yiji* it says; ‘The Buddha was born in the *jiayin* year (958 b.c.e.) of the reign of King Zhao, and passed into extinction in the *renshen* year (878 b.c.e.) of King Mu. A thousand years after [his extinction] his teachings will spread to the Han (China). Now that time has come” (302).

We will address the theme of dharma decline in more detail in the latter half of this chapter.

26 See: T. 2059: 345c01, 346a25, 418b19.

27 See: T. 2060: 425b08, 429b12, 456a23.548a20, 635b05, 637b23. While this seems like a markedly reduced usage rate, especially given the disparity in lengths between GSZ and XGSZ, this is almost certainly an artifact of the fact that Daoxuan was generally much more prolix than his predecessor, with XGSZ including more than triple the number of commentarial mentions of dreams in general. I will be discussing this non-narrative usages in an upcoming paper.

ante quem of the transmission of Buddhism to China.²⁸ That said, given the significance of oneiric communication in the medieval Chinese context (in general) and the cosmographic nuances of this narrative (in particular), I would argue that even these simple usages would have summoned a welter of associations and connotations to the minds of culturally competent readers.

Dreaming Between Borders: Oneiric Signs and Their Royal Recipients

Though the “pious fiction” of Emperor Ming's encounter with the Golden Man is the prototypical example of dreams being projected into the liminal space between geographical territories (at least in the context of the *Eminent Monks* collections), it is not the only case wherein an oneiric episode is used to explicate such inter-regional interactions. Specifically, the GSZ contains several other narratives whose structures are near-perfect isomorphisms of this tale, albeit transposed into a variety of other geographical contexts (i.e., stories wherein members of royal families have oneiric interactions with Buddhist figures and then welcome the representatives of the religion into their countries). In addition to their role in retrojecting royal agency into the eastward transmission of Buddhism, however, I would argue that these narratives also helped to valorize the perceived moral and spiritual charisma of the specific monks described therein: a meaningful rhetorical focus, as each of these monks subsequently arrived in China, bringing with them texts, icons, and standards of practice whose putative links to foreign royalty could only have provided them additional prestige and significance.²⁹ Moreover, it is possible that Huijiao may have opted to include such accounts as a goad for his target audience

28 That said, Daoxuan's cosmographic *A Geography of the Śākyas* (Nicol's translation of this text's title, 13) (*Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 [T. 2088]) begins by recontextualizing the Buddha's life in terms of the miraculous omens that it prompted *in China*, as purportedly observed by Zhou Dynasty court astronomers (Nicol, *Daoxuan and the Creation of a Buddhist Sacred Geography*, 252–260) – a theme that is also included in the later *Lidai fabao ji* (as discussed above). As such, it is clear that Daoxuan's rhetorical attempt to valorize Buddhism through reference to the traditional Chinese *ganying* framework is by no means exclusive to XGSZ.

29 This supposition follows the centripetal cosmographic logic of tribute described by Company and Lewis (as outlined above).

(especially lay members of the capital elite), as they demonstrate that oneiric interactions between royalty and Buddhism were by no means the exclusive province of the Chinese state. Though I would not want to overstate the role of Chinese authors / compilers in producing these narratives (especially given that they might have originally been written [or promulgated] in the regions described therein, rather than being *post facto* Sinitic creations), it still seems likely that readers of GSZ would have taken such tales as some combination of confirmatory miracle, interregional “peer pressure,” or even incitement to a spiritual “arms race,” which, in the process, could have served to convince Chinese elites of the practical utility of Buddhism.³⁰ Finally, and in spite of the fact that dreams ascribed to laypeople are significantly more common in the XGSZ (as can be seen in *Appendix One*), it is worth noting that such accounts are entirely absent from the later collection: a seemingly significant distinction that will be explored in the conclusion of this section.

For the first example, we turn to the GSZ biography of the monk Guṇavarman 求那跋摩 (367–431) of Jibin 罽賓.³¹ The episode currently under consideration occurs after the monk's thirtieth

30 The role of Buddhist spiritual technologies as a form “state protection” in the northern dynasties is discussed in Ch'en (1972). For an in-depth analysis of this topic, as it pertains to the apocryphal *Scripture of Humane Kings* (*Renwang jing* 仁王經 [T. 245]), see Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998). For an invaluable overview of the respective positions of each of the early medieval dynasties on Buddhism, see Li Gang, “State Religious Policy,” in *Early Chinese Religion: Part Two – The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, edited by John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 193–274.

31 The exact location referred to the toponym Jibin is not clear. Though the DDB offers “Kashmir” as a basic translation, its entry continues on to say that the term refers to various countries in northwest India and nearby Central Asia. Many of the Indian monks who taught Buddhism in China, especially in the fourth and early fifth centuries, were from Jibin or had studied there, thus the Indian Buddhism in China from this period stemmed in large part from Jibin (Jeffrey Kotyk, *Jibin 罽賓, Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E7%BD%BD%E8%B3%93>). For a discussion of the difficulties locating Jibin and its importance in fourth- and fifth-century Chinese Buddhism that draws extensively from GSZ for evidence, see Shoshin Kuwayama, “Pilgrimage Route Changes and the Decline of Gandhāra” in *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, and Texts*, edited by Pia Brancaccio and Kurt Behrendt, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 107–134. Also, the translation to follow benefited from my consultation of Edouard Chavannes's French rendering, “Guṇavarman (367–431 p. C.),” *T'oung Pao*, Second Series 5:2 (1904): 193–206.

birthday, once he has completed his missionary activities in Sri Lanka (*Shiziguo* 師子國) and has continued on to the kingdom of Shepo.³² Given the foregoing discussion of the royal reception of Buddhism, it should also be noted that, prior to the monk's departure, he had been offered the rulership of Jibin (thanks to his blood ties with the royal house),³³ but had declined it in favour of a life of peripatetic Buddhist preaching – echoing the common Buddhist hagiographical trope, traceable back to the Buddha biography, of the exemplary man whose social contributions could be made via either political or religious activity.³⁴

Thereafter, [Guṇavarman] went on to the country of Shepo, but the night before he first arrived, the king of Shepo's mother had a dream vision of a Master of the Way [*daoshi* 道士] entering the country in a flying boat. The next morning, [this dream] bore fruit with the arrival of Guṇavarman. The king's mother honoured him as a saint and then received the five precepts. His mother, for this reason, exhorted the king, saying: “The [karmic] causes and conditions of our

32 Chavannes identifies *Shepoguo* 闍婆國 with Java or Sumatra, departing from the then-common scholarly consensus that it referred to a region in the Malay peninsula. He notes that this country was also discussed in Faxian's travel journal, wherein it is described as a region where Buddhism was not yet well-established (193–194). Given that the eastward trek of Guṇavarman occurred approximately a decade after that of the Chinese pilgrim, the French Sinologist then accepts the account translated above as more-or-less factual, claiming that the monk's influence over the king's mother eventually led to the conversion of the entire country (*ibid.*). Faxian describes Yepoti as follows: 如是九十許日。乃到一國。名耶婆提。其國外道婆羅門興盛。佛法不足言。(T. 2085: 866, a13–15). Cf., Li Rongxi's translation: “Having voyaged in this manner for about ninety days, they reached a country named Yavadvīpa. In this country the heretical teaching of Brahmanism flourished and there was almost no trace of Buddhism” (211). “The Journey of the Eminent Monk Faxian” in *The Lives of Great Monks and Nuns*, (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research), 163–214. This identification is upheld by both Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010), Vol. 1, 279 ff. 2 and the Dharma Drum Place Authority Database (<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000048202>). This also corresponds well with the then-popular maritime sea route employed by various Buddhist pilgrims during this period.

For a discussion of “maritime Buddhism,” and the challenges it poses to the traditional Silk Road narrative in any discussion of the transmission of Buddhism to China, see: Tansen Sen, “Buddhism and the Maritime Crossings,” in *China and Beyond in the Medieval Period: Cultural Crossings and Inter-Regional Connections*, edited by Dorothy C. Wong and Gustav Heldt (Amherst and Delhi: Cambria Press and Manohar, 2014), 39–62; Tansen Sen, “Maritime Southeast Asia Between South Asia and China to the Sixteenth Century,” *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 2:1 (2014): 31–59. I have also had the privilege of seeing Dr. Lewis Lancaster lecture on this topic, describing both the Atlas of Maritime Buddhism (<http://ecai.org/projects/maritimebuddhism.html>) and the public dissemination of this research via museum installations.

33 This connection is, in fact, noted in the introduction to the future monk's biography, which begins by describing his family's background as the longtime rulers of the region: 「累世為王治在罽賓國」(T. 2059: 340a15–16)

34 In fact, the GSZ account portrays the youth as the recipient of the same sort of physiognomic prophecy bestowed upon the Buddha (regarding a potential future as either a religious or a political leader): 「至年十八相公見而謂曰。君年三十當撫臨大國南面稱尊。若不樂世榮當獲聖果。」(T. 2059: 340a25–27; cf., Chavannes, “Guṇavarman,” 195). For a discussion of the repurposing of this trope in the Chinese context, see the discussion of the oneiric miracles surrounding Zhiyi's miraculous conception and birth in Chapter Two.

prior lives have resulted in [our present births as] mother and son. I have already received the precepts, but you remain an unbeliever. I am afraid that this will result in future births where the current result [i.e., our mother/son connection] will be permanently severed.”

The king was moved by his mother's admonitions, and presently received instruction and took the precepts. As time passed, he was gradually imbued³⁵ [with the Buddhist teaching]³⁶ and he focused his energies with abundant sincerity.³⁷

後至闍婆國，初未至一日，闍婆王母夜夢見一道士飛舶入國，明旦果是跋摩來至，王母敬以聖禮，從受五戒。母因勸王曰：「宿世因緣，得為母子，我已受戒，而汝不信，恐後生之因，永絕今果。」王迫以母勅，即奉命受戒，漸染既久，專精稍篤。

Next, and prior to the monk's departure from Shepo, this account sees him counselling the king on the standards of ethical rulership (for instance, reinforcing the propriety of defensive warfare on compassionate grounds) and effecting a miraculous cure of a wound suffered by his royal patron during a military campaign. The king, in turn, responds by seeking to abandon his secular responsibilities in favour of a monastic life – a change of vocation that his loyal ministers only convince him to abandon by making three vows: first, that the populace would be converted to Buddhism; second, that they would place a moratorium on killing; and, third, that all excess wealth would be distributed to the needy. Thereafter, once the populace was converted, the region's reputation for sanctity, as well as the monk's reputation for wise counsel, redounded far and wide.³⁸

Though this oneiric episode bears some superficial similarities with the account of Han Mingdi's dream discussed above, the implied power dynamics are almost perfectly inverted. Most significantly, this account clearly feels no rhetorical need to assuage the egos of official patrons, as would likely have been the case if it were discussing Chinese rulers, as the royal dreamer therein is

35 Following GR on *jianran* 漸染 as “Être influencé, pénétré graduellement par; subir peu à peu l'influence de; s'imprégner lentement de.”

36 I am following Chavannes here (196).

37 T. 2059: 340, b6–12, punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 106.

38 T. 2059: 340b-c.

clearly cast into an entirely passive role. While both the Chinese monarch and his Shepo counterpart are visited by oneiric manifestations of the numinous power of Buddhism, the imagery of the Sinitic vision implied that the Chinese ruler had received an oneiric stimulus from the Buddha himself, whereas the queen mother of Shepo only perceives a resonant response to the charismatic power of an exemplary monk.³⁹ Likewise, instead of highlighting the agency of the royal dreamer (e.g., by focusing on their role in electing to seek out Buddhist texts, icons or religious practitioners [as seen in the Han Ming Di 漢明帝 account]), her dream is seen to be stimulated by the monk's incipient arrival, thus making her decision to receive him as an “emissary” of the foreign creed entirely passively.⁴⁰ Providing further support of this reading (with its focus on power dynamics), a later section of Guṇavarman's biography sees Emperor Wen of the Liu-Song (劉宋文帝, r. 424-453) coming to hear of the monk's successes in Shepo and opting to send emissaries to request the presence of the monk in *his* capital: a direct structural parallel to the actions of Han Mingdi and a clear contrast to the purely responsive action of the Queen Mother of Shepo.⁴¹ Finally, and in contrast to Emperor Ming, who had immediately recognized the significance of his oneiric revelation, the ruler of Shepo instead needed to be convinced of this fact by his mother, further diminishing his agency in the region's adoption of the foreign creed.⁴²

39 While this oneiric imagery could be a reference to a ubiquitous Buddhist trope (i.e., RELIGIOUS TEACHING AS VEHICLE) (e.g., *dasheng* 大乘), it is notable that the dream account explicitly uses the term “boat” (*bo* 船), especially given that her monastic visitor was about to arrive by sea.

40 I find the language used to describe the Shepo (Javanese?) court in this account fascinating, as the individuals involved (the various ministers and members of the royal house), their behaviours, and the language they employ (e.g., their terms of address, ritualized politeness, and use of specific terminology, such as referring to the citizenry as the “black-headed [ones]” *qianshou* 黔首 [T. 2059: 340b22]) seem entirely consistent with contemporaneous characterizations of the Chinese court bureaucracy. I am curious about the representations of foreign courts (and their political structures) in medieval Chinese narrative sources: a topic that I believe could benefit from additional scholarly attention.

41 See T. 2059: 340c1–5; Chavannes, “Guṇavarman,” 198.

42 The language of karmic linkage used by the Queen to convince her son to accept Buddhism bears strong similarities to that seen in the earliest Chinese Buddhist literature on the filial responsibility of sons to mothers: a trope whose significance was already beginning to be discussed at the time of Huijiao's composition of GSZ. See Cole, *Mothers and Son*, 57–64. Such discourses would almost certainly have been intimately familiar to Huijiao's readership.

For another relevant dream episode, we turn to the biography of the monk Dharmamitra (Tanmomiduo 曇摩蜜多, 356-442) who also hailed from Jibin,⁴³ and who arrived in China in 424 CE after sojourning in various Central Asian kingdoms along the Silk Road. In the present case, the episode in question occurs after the youth's moral exemplarity convinced his family to allow him to leave the householder's life at a young age, which permitted him to study meditation with some of the region's many renowned Buddhist teachers.

From his youth, [Dharmamitra] enjoyed travelling about⁴⁴ and he had vowed to proclaim the [Buddhist] teaching, [so] he passed through various countries and eventually reached Kucha.⁴⁵ A day before he arrived, the king dreamed about a spirit, who made a report to him, saying: “There is a man of great spirit power and virtue who will surely enter your country tomorrow. You should respond [*ying*] by honouring and fêting him.” The next morning, [the king] promptly ordered his perimeter guards that he must be informed immediately if there happened to be an extraordinary man who entered their borders. Soon after, Dharmamitra finally⁴⁶ arrived, and the king personally went out into the countryside to meet him and invite him back to the palace. Immediately thereafter, he received the precepts from the monk, and then exhausted [his stocks] of the “four necessities”⁴⁷ in ritual donation.

Dharmamitra was at ease when he was able to travel [freely], and was not drawn to these generous offerings, so after residing there for several years, he secretly yearned to leave. The spirit once again descended into [the king's] dream to say: “The man of great spirit power and virtue will surely forsake the king and depart.” The king, overcome with dread, was startled awake, and then he and his ministers firmly [attempted to] detain the monk [in Kucha], but there were none who were able to stop him [from departing].⁴⁸

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- 43 The difficulties in locating Jibin in the writings of this period are discussed above. In the present case, Yoshikawa and Funayama identify it as a reference to Gandhara (Vol. 1, 311 ff. 2), as does Shih (140).
- 44 GR notes that the phrase *youfang* 遊方 is most often employed to describe the peripatetic practice of Buddhist monks and Taoist priests.
- 45 This country, situated on the branch of the Silk Road that ran north of the Taklamakan desert (in modern China's Xinjiang province), was an important entrepôt in the overland transmission and transformation of Buddhism. For a helpful overview, see Valerie Hansen's *The Silk Road: A New History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 56–82. For a specific discussion of linguistic issues and matters relating to the royal patronage of Buddhism in the region, see Mariko Namba Walter, “Tokharian Buddhism in Kucha: Buddhism of Indo-European Centum Speakers in Chinese Turkestan before the 10th Century C.E.,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 85 (October 1998): 1–30.
- 46 Given the *ganying* logic on display here, I am tempted to read *guo* 果 as “resultantly,” as I'm sure that this connotation would have been appreciated by a medieval reader.
- 47 “Sishi 四事,” *The Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%9B%9B%E4%BA%8B>: “The four necessities of a monk: clothing 衣服, food 飲食, bedding 臥具, medicine (or herbs) 湯藥.” Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010) silently include this list as part of their translation of the phrase (Vol. 1, 312).
- 48 T. 2059: 324c13–21; punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 121; see also Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010), Vol. 1, 311–312); Shih, *Moines Éminents*, 140–141.

少好遊方，誓志宣化，周歷諸國，遂適龜茲。未至一日，王夢神告王曰：「有大福德人，明當入國，汝應供養。」明旦，即勅外司，若有異人入境，必馳奏聞。俄而，蜜多果至，王自出郊迎，延請入宮，遂從稟戒，盡四事之禮。蜜多安而能遷，不拘利養。居數載，密有去心。神又降夢曰：「福德人捨王去矣。」王惕然驚覺，既而君臣固留，莫之能止。

In terms of its narrative function and implied power dynamics, this dream episode is virtually identical to the previous example, in that both feature a member of the royal family responding to an oneiric stimulus (specifically, the descent of a spirit) generated by the presence of a nearby itinerant monk. Likewise, the role of the royal dreamer is depicted as entirely reactive, with none of his devotional acts (up to and including the receipt of the lay precepts) challenging the cosmographic status quo. In contrast, and in what seems to be an accurate representation of contemporary Buddhist demographics, the king of Kucha seems to be more familiar with the social contract between monks and lay patrons, given that his immediate donation of the “four necessities” upon receipt of the precepts implies that he possessed a stockpile of these articles and that there was a Buddhist community nearby to benefit from this form of alms-giving practice.⁴⁹

As in the previous case, this account is also notable for its coherence with the general format of the oneiric encounters discussed throughout this project. Even though it purports to describe an interaction between a Kuchean ruler and an oneiric interlocutor, every aspect of the episode is congruent with the Chinese dream narratives featured so prominently elsewhere in the *Eminent Monks* collections, including the identity of the oneiric visitor (a spirit [or possibly *deva*] – *shen* 神),⁵⁰ the

49 For the state of Buddhism in Kucha in late 4th / early 5th century Kucha, see Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 56–82; Namba Walter (1998), *passim*.

50 While Chapter One discussed the techniques that were employed in the medieval Chinese context to engender such interactions, the specific subject of oneiric interactions between individuals and extrahuman beings will be discussed at length in Chapter Four, specifically with regard to the (often hostile) interactions between local Chinese deities and Buddhist interlopers. I have noted encounters with unnamed / uncategorized “spirits” are much more common in dreams ascribed to laypeople than monastics, at least in several later *Lotus Sutra* miracle collections (T. 2067 and T. 2068): an observation that is congruent with the possibility that a reasonable percentage of these narratives may have

subordination of the spirit to the human ruler (as suggested by the use of the term 告 to describe the mode in which the spirit addresses the king),⁵¹ and the evidentiary value granted to dreams (here seen as a sufficient cause for dispatching a messenger to visit the country's border). Moreover, and in keeping with my observations about Huijiao's approach to dreams as *ganying* narratives (outlined in the *Introduction*), it is also notable that confirmatory miracles in this account are at least as important as the dreams themselves, as all of the king's most extraordinary religious gestures, such as his self-effacing trip to personally welcome the monk into the country and the extraordinary munificence of his donations, occur only after he discovers that his nocturnal visitor's report had indeed been accurate. Regardless, as in the selection from the Guṇavarman biography discussed above, these similarities suggest that Huijiao (and/or his discourse community) implicitly assumed that the *ganying*-tinged dynamics of oneiric communication were universal, functioning more-or-less consistently regardless of the identity of the dreamer and the region where the dreaming was said to have taken place.⁵²

had their genesis in actual oneiric experiences, given the plausibility of the supposition that laypeople would be less able to identify specific deities than monks. I discuss this matter in a paper that I am currently preparing for publication.

- 51 See SCM for *gao* 告: “1a) report, inform; esp., inferior to superior.” While this term can also refer to making a proclamation, the transitive use of the verb coupled with the context, suggests that the spirit is in the lower status position in this interaction.
- 52 This position is not exclusive to the *Eminent Monks* corpora. In particular, I would argue that it represents one of the most explicit cases of Daoshi's editorial creativity in his compilation of *Fayuan zhulin*, as he consistently juxtaposes Indian Buddhist dream narratives (often drawn from sutra material) with Chinese dream narratives (drawn from hagiographies, *zhiguai* collections, and other sources). More intriguing yet is his explicit labelling of these materials, as Chinese dream narratives (as well as various other types of omens and miraculous occurrences) are included under the heading “Conditions of Stimulus-Response” [*ganying yuan* 感應緣], which thus implies that they are intended to be read as proof-texts for various Buddhist doctrines and practices. I will be discussing this matter in a forthcoming monograph, wherein I analyze all of the nearly 500 instances of *meng* 夢 in *FYZL*. In refining my understanding of this complex text, I have benefited immeasurably from personal communication with Alex Hsu, whose forthcoming dissertation (“Practices of Scriptural Economy: Compiling and Copying a Seventh Century Chinese Buddhist Anthology”) is concerned with the “authorial” quality of Daoshi's editing practice. For a discussion of the collaboration between Daoxuan and Daoshi in the selection of these *ganying* episodes, see Koichi Shinohara, “Changing Roles for Miraculous Images,” 141–188.

While these two episodes are only tangentially tied to China (via the fact that their titular monks eventually arrived in and contributed to the development of Chinese Buddhism), XGSZ contains two further examples that support the cosmographic readings proposed above, as both use standard *ganying* narratives to ascribe stereotypical Chinese dream narratives to dreamers from the Kingdom of Silla: an implicit recentering of the cosmology that is discussed at some length below. That said, the XGSZ contains no other instances of this trope and none at all that lack an immediate connection to Chinese Buddhism or Buddhists. There are a number of potential explanations for this discrepancy: a general decrease in the number of pilgrims travelling from South and Central Asia to China by Daoxuan's time, an increasing sense of autonomy among Chinese Buddhists, a demystification of Indian Buddhism resulting from centuries of contact,⁵³ and/or a realization that Buddhism was sufficiently well established in China that foreign lay exemplars (such as the kings of Shepo and Kucha) were no longer required. Regardless, I believe that this disparity deserves additional attention. More generally, it is clear that the two examples from GSZ cited above and those from XGSZ discussed below, when considered in tandem, demonstrate that the authors and compilers of these tales certainly saw oneiric encounters as a compelling and plausible vector for the propagation of Buddhism between regions, and that these views had evolved between the sixth and seventh centuries.

Dreaming of Orthodoxy: Monastic Anxiety and Its Resolution

As the seemingly immeasurable tide of Buddhist texts (and their associated praxical and iconographic traditions) flowed into China from the second to the seventh centuries, requiring Chinese Buddhist exegetes to spend lifetimes translating, evaluating, typologizing, and commenting upon them, it is no

53 I discuss this possibility in “Mapping Religious Practice in the Eminent Monks: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections” (*in press*) where I chart out the clear increase in specific South and Central Asian toponyms between GSZ and XGSZ and a resultant decrease in general terms for referring to the “Western Regions” or “India.”

wonder that these Buddhist bibliophiles were often distressed by questions relating to doctrinal and praxical orthodoxy. In particular, the exigencies of translating between two languages as phonically, orthographically, and conceptually incommensurate as Chinese and Sanskrit generated particular concern among these monks: anxieties that were rendered all the more salient by the fact that they understood these texts to be heretofore unimagined sources of insight into the cosmological and soteriological underpinnings of human existence. In light of these wholly understandable concerns, questions of epistemology and textual hermeneutics take on a profound (and even existential) significance, as they represent the means by which such tensions could potentially be resolved.⁵⁴ Given the role of dreams in these narratives (which, in turn, represents their role in medieval Chinese society), by this point it is wholly unsurprising that both GSZ and XGSZ contain biographies whose protagonists rely on oneiric communication to assuage their concerns about doctrinal and praxical orthodoxy. Moreover, and in keeping with the hypothesis outlined above, both the form and the content of these purported oneiric revelations shift between the two collections under consideration, with GSZ continuing to situate orthodoxy in India, and XGSZ more likely to authorize Chinese innovations, often by positing direct communication from Buddhist deities.⁵⁵ This not only bypassed India, but also implicitly asserted the autonomy of Chinese Buddhism. While there are few enough data points here that I am loath to ascribe too much significance to them, their compatibility with both my overall hypothesis and with other historical studies⁵⁶ lends this theory additional credence.

54 As an aside, I feel beholden to note that I obviously could have chosen to address other materials here, such as the varying rhetorical uses to which the oneiric image of foreign monks is put in GSZ and XGSZ (e.g., the dreams of “Indian monks” *fanseng* 梵僧 ascribed to Xuangao's mother and Huisi [慧思, 515–577 CE] [T. 2059: 397a8 and T. 2060: 562c15, respectively]).

55 I have already considered the role of such visionary communication (both oneiric and otherwise) in Daoxuan's own religious life at some length in the Introduction and the Oneiric Practice chapter.

56 In the introduction to *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, Robert Sharf offers a particularly cogent distillation of the issues relating to the (often implicit) adoption of Chinese idioms, concepts, and cosmological assumptions in the process of textual translation:

This study is, in part, an argument for treating Chinese Buddhism as the legitimate, if misunderstood, scion of Sinitic culture. Whatever else it may be, Buddhism is the product of Buddhists, and the Buddhist in the case at hand

We begin our brief overview of dreams related to doctrinal concerns with an episode from the biography of the noted monastic literatus, translator and bibliographer Dao'an 道安 (312/314–385),⁵⁷ whose concern about translation errors impelled him to seek confirmation in the oneiric realm:⁵⁸

An frequently annotated the *sūtras*, but he feared that [his interpretations] did not harmonize with the principles [of the sacred texts], so he then pronounced the following vow (*praṇidhāna*). “If what I have explained is not very far from the principles, may I behold an auspicious sign!” He then dreamed that he saw an Indian man of *Dao* who had white hair and long eyebrows, and who spoke to An, saying, “The annotations made to the *sūtras* by you, Sir, are quite in harmony with the principles [of the sacred texts]. As for me, I have not obtained *nirvana* and I live in the Western Regions. I will aid you in diffusing [the doctrine]. From time to time you may make me an offering of food.” Afterwards when the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* 十誦律 arrived, the Reverend [Hui]yuan then recognized that he about whom the *Upādhyāya* (i.e., Dao'an) had dreamed was the [Arhat] Piṇḍola 賓頭盧. Thence they established a seat to make food offerings to him, and everywhere this became the rule.⁵⁹

First, it is notable that the author(s) of this account obviously found this miraculous confirmation so compelling that no further discussion of the great monk's concern with orthodoxy was deemed necessary. Instead, the biography simply goes on to describe his influence on local Buddhist

were Chinese (2).

This argument is continued throughout the book's lengthy second chapter, which offers a nuanced appraisal of the “impact” of the traditional Chinese correlative cosmology on subsequent Buddhist translations (77–133, as discussed above). For a discussion of these issues related to the specifics of China's geographical distance from India, see Shinohara (1998), which explores the process whereby medieval Chinese Buddhists employed narratives about discovering putative Asoka images in China in order to inspire the devotion of local rulers (145–148). For a detailed exploration of the historical process whereby Chinese Buddhists came to define their community in relation to its Indic antecedents through the evolution of discourses associated with Indian patriarchs, see Stuart H. Young, *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015).

57 For an excellent overview of Dao'an's life (including his institutional commitments, interactions with local and imperial governments, and literary output), see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 184–204; see also Tsukamoto, *Brief History of Chinese Buddhism*, 655–756. It should be noted that neither of these extensive surveys devotes any attention to the matter of the dream narrative considered below.

58 See Chapter One for a full discussion of vows and oneiric response.

59 T. 2059: 353b17–23. Translated by Arthur E. Link, “Biography of Shih Tao-an,” *T'oung Pao* Second Series 46 (1958): 1–48, 34–35. For a discussion of the narrative traditions associated with the Piṇḍola (both individually and as one of the Sixteen Arhats), as well as the development of his cult in East Asia, see: John S. Strong, “The Legend of the Lion-Roarer: A Study of the Buddhist Arhat Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja,” *Numen* 26:1 (1979): 50–88. The reuse of this episode in later Chinese Buddhist historiographical writing (specifically, *Fayuan zhulin*) is discussed in Koichi Shinohara, “Daoxuan's Collection of Miracle Stories about 'Supernatural Monks' – *Shen-seng gantong lu*: An Analysis of its Sources,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 3 (1990): 319–379, 349. He also makes note of another episode discussed in *Fayuan zhulin*, wherein a layman encounters a “divine monk,” whom he later realizes was the famed arhat (367 ff. 7). This episode, which Shinohara posits was excerpted from *Mingxiang ji*, is translated in Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 219–220. This episode is also discussed in Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 187.

communities (wherein his rulings on various procedural matters regarding monastic conduct came to be universally accepted), as well as his subsequent practice of Maitreya veneration. It culminates in a catalogue of the various miraculous signs that signified his eventual rebirth in Tuṣita Heaven:⁶⁰ a further testament to the fact that his religious activities had indeed been appropriate. In keeping with the prior hypothesis regarding the standards of authority accepted by the GSZ's discourse community, I would argue that it is no accident this confirmatory communication was delivered by an exemplary monk who describes himself as a resident of the Western Regions [*xiyu* 西域],⁶¹ lending Dao'an's scriptural annotations the imprimatur of authenticity through an oneiric link to India. In addition, we also see that this account accords with the standard model of dream response that characterizes many of the episodes in this collection, as, even though the oneiric experience (implicitly) resolved the titular monk's concerns, the author nonetheless includes an external confirmatory miracle (i.e., the eventual arrival of Indian texts that vouchsafe the character of Dao'an's nocturnal interlocutor), which provides additional support for the veracity of the monk's vision.⁶² The fact that this confirmation was associated with the arrival of Indian Vinaya texts could only have helped to make it more compelling to contemporary readers.

Next, we turn our attention to the matter of prosody and scripture recitation: a practice of especial interest to the literati Buddhists of the Southern dynasties.⁶³ In this arena as well, the GSZ

60 Link, 35–37.

61 As per the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (*xiyu* 西域), “In Buddhist texts, [this term is] usually a reference to India, Central Asia, or Turkestan” (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E8%A5%BF%E5%9F%9F>). For my discussion of the decreasing prevalence of this extremely vague toponym in XGSZ as compared to GSZ, which I postulate is evidence of an increased knowledge of the specifics of South Asian geography, see Jensen, “Mapping the Eminent Monks” (*in press*).

62 As an aside, it should be noted that this trope remained popular in later Buddhist biographies. For instance, the later biography of Xuanzang (which will be discussed below) includes an episode describing the titular monk considering abridging the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā* sutra while translating it, only to be dissuaded by a plethora of distressing oneiric visions. Discussed in Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology*, 398.

63 See, for example, Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*, 313–360. The role of Buddhist practice (and, in

contains three separate accounts that describe the (implicit or explicit) orthopraxical concerns of monastic hymnodists, each of which is associated with an oneiric response. First, we turn our attention to the monk Tanyue (曇籥, dates unknown),⁶⁴ who resided at a capital temple during the reign of Emperor Xiaowu of Jin (晉孝武帝, r. 372–396):

Tanyue was renowned for being endowed with a marvellous voice, and he was especially good at *sūtra* chanting.⁶⁵ He experienced a dream of a heavenly spirit,⁶⁶ who conferred his vocal method. When [Tanyue] awoke, he was for this reason able to “knit together”⁶⁷ a new [system of] vocalizing. His *brahmā* voice’s⁶⁸ pure [qualities] spread out through the four [directions] and

particular, scripture recitation) in the early medieval popularization of Buddhism in China, is discussed in John Lagerway, “Introduction” to *Early Chinese Religion: Part Two – The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, edited by John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1–52. Pi-Yen Chen summarizes Huijiao’s decision to include a chapter on hymnodists in GSZ as follows:

Huijiao first included only eight categories of eminent monks in his *Gaoseng zhuan*, but he later added the masters of *zhuandu* [轉讀] and *changdao* [唱導], reasoning that although these two categories were trivial in terms of doctrinal practices, their ability to enlighten the laity was admirable (3).

梵唄 [*Fanbei*]: *Chinese Buddhist Monastic Chants*, (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2010). For a comparative overview, also see George J. Tanabe, Jr., “Chanting and Liturgy,” in *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert Buswell, (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 137–139.

- 64 The only date reference in this (otherwise unattested) monk’s biography is a sidelong mention of the beginning of Jin Emperor Xiaowu’s reign (372 CE) (晉孝武初, T. 2059: 413c06). Based on this fact, as well as his stated lifespan, the DILA database entry on this figure offers a rather broad range for his possible lifespan: ~332–371 to ~372–417 (<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A002373>).
- 65 Or, more literally, “turning the sūtras” (*zhuandu* 轉讀): a method of sūtra recitation characterized by “turning the pages of the text and briefly chanting the title, along with lines from the beginning, middle, and ending portions” (*Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E8%BD%89%E8%AE%80>). That said, one of the entries in Ding Fubao’s *Dictionary of Buddhist Studies* (drawn from the Lun 論 section of the *Gaoseng zhuan*) also suggests that it is a type of hymnodical chanting that may have been performed using “Indian Sounds”: “高僧傳經師論曰：「詠經則稱為轉讀，歌讚則為梵音。」” If the Ding Fubao reading is accurate, this would provide additional support for the notion that this dream was being read as a linkage to a foreign standard of orthopraxy. This method is also described in Chen, *Buddhist Monastic Chants*: “*zhuandu* emphasizes vocalization, intonation and linguistic flavour. It is used for reciting Buddhist sutras. It does not consist of songs and is largely accompanied by metal or stone percussion instruments” (3).
- 66 *Tianshen* (天神) could also be a more specific reference to the celestial (Indian?) *devas* (*Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%A4%A9%E7%A5%9E>)
- 67 I’m not sure about how to parse the phrase *caizhi* 裁製. The only definitions I found for it as a compound refer to the process of tailoring. Likewise, Yoshikawa and Funayama’s translation (編み出す) also preserves this imagery.
- 68 This seems like an overt reference to one of the “Thirty-Two Marks” of Buddhahood, one of which is “a beautiful voice (大梵音, 梵聲相 (brahma-svara)” (See: “Sanshier xiang 三十二相,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%B8%89%E5%8D%81%E4%BA%8C%E7%9B%B8>). The sudden manifestation of this improved vocal quality seems to serve as testament to the transformative power of the deity’s oneiric instruction. For an overview of the sutra sources associated with the various catalogues of Thirty-Two Marks (as well as a discussion of their links to other such physiognomic catalogues in contemporaneous non-Buddhist sources), see Nathan McGovern, “On the Origins of the 32 Marks of a Great Man,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 39 (2016): 207–247.

echoed back as his vocal chords vibrated⁶⁹ in song.⁷⁰

籥特稟妙聲，善於轉讀。嘗夢天神授其聲法，覺因裁製新聲。梵響清靡四飛却轉，反折還喉疊呀。

Similarly, the biography of the famed monastic hymnodist Sengbian (僧辯, d. 493 CE)⁷¹ not only describes the various ways that his exemplary recitation style earned him renown and produced auspicious responses,⁷² but also includes an episode that links the legitimizing presence of a Buddha with the authority of a secular ruler and patron:

On the nineteenth day of the second month of the seventh year of the [Southern Qi's] Yongming reign period [489 CE], Jingling Wenxuan [the second son of Qi Wudi],⁷³ had a dream that he was in the Buddha's presence chanting a stanza from the *Vimalakīrti sūtra*. This same sound stirred him to wakefulness, and he immediately rose and went to the middle of the Buddha Hall, where he returned to a [recitation] method like the one in his dream, and once again chanted a stanza from the old [version of] the *Vimalakīrti sūtra*.⁷⁴ After learning this fluidly pleasant [mode of] rhyme and voice, [he felt that he had] encountered a method [that should be used] every day. The next morning, he immediately convened a gathering of *śramaṇas* with good voices, including Puzhi from Longguang, Daoxing from Xinan, Hui ren from Duobao, Chaosheng from Tianbao, as well as Sengbian and others. They were assembled in ranks and made to chant.⁷⁵

永明七年二月十九日，司徒竟陵文宣王夢於佛前詠維摩一契。同聲發而覺，即起至佛堂中，還如夢中法，更詠古維摩一契。便覺韻聲流好，著工恒日。明旦即集京師善聲沙門龍光普智，新安道興，多寶慧忍，天保超勝，及僧辯等，集第作聲。

Finally, the biography of the monk Hui ren (who was included in the monastic assembly described above) also makes reference to this same royal patron's dream as the original inspiration for his chanting practice:

69 Or, possibly, “produced staccato syllables”? I think that Yoshikawa and Funayama might be reading this as a description of polyvocal / overtone singing 「屈折しつところころと喉の上を転がる」 (Vol. 4, 328).

70 T. 2059: 413c7–12, punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007], 498, and following the variant character proposed in Taishō footnote and employed by Yoshikawa and Funayama (Vol. 4, 328) (reading *xiang* 嚮 for *xiang* 響).

71 Gang discusses the development of new modes of scripture recitation (such as the one detailed above) as one of the hallmarks of the Qi dynasty's patronage of Buddhism (230–233).

72 T. 2059: 414b. For a brief discussion of his *zhuandu* skill attracting a flock of cranes as auditors, see Chen, *Buddhist Monastic Chants*, 4.

73 See: Yoshikawa and Funayama (Vol. 4, 342 ff. 4).

74 Yoshikawa and Funayama identify this as an earlier translation of the text (Vol. 4, 342 ff. 3).

75 T. 2059: 414b15–20, punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 503.

In the Southern Qi, after Prince Wenxuan (文宣, 460-494) had a stimulus[-response] dream,⁷⁶ he assembled many masters of scriptures. Thereafter, Huiren and the others debated the merits of ancient melodies [lit., sounds, tones], arranging new composition(s) for forty-two stanzas from the *Auspicious Response* [*Sutra*].⁷⁷ Of them, Huiren's was the most superlatively marvellous.⁷⁸

齊文宣感夢之後，集諸經師。乃共忍斟酌舊聲，詮品新異。製瑞應四十二契，忍所得最長妙。

As can be seen, the dream episodes in all of these cases seem to function as informatory miracles, serving as a source for these three monks' recitation practice. Moreover, they each include textual clues suggesting their goal was to engage with discourses of legitimation and orthodoxy: e.g., Tanyue's “*brahmā* voice” (which he developed in the aftermath of his oneiric experience), Sengbian's princely patron's receipt of an “old” recitation method from the Buddha in a dream, and the claim that the monastic hymnodists were basing their new compositions on “ancient melodies” (presumably those revealed in King Wenxuan's *ganying* dream). Given these narrative elements, it seems likely that these episodes were meant to parallel the Dao'an account detailed above, as they all describe Buddhist protagonists whose are engaging in scriptural exegesis and recitation (respectively), in a geographical context bereft of masters who might be able to testify to the propriety of their practice. In all of these cases, oneiric links to India seem to provide the requisite confirmation.⁷⁹

76 I am following Yoshikawa and Funayama here, as their translation includes the entire phrase *ganying* (*ibid*). The specific phrase *ganmeng* (感夢) occurs 102 times in the Taishō Canon, though there is only a single mention in a sutra translation: namely, as a chapter title in Divākara's 7th century translation of the *Fanguang da zhuangyan jing* (Sanskrit: *Lalitavistara*) (T. 187: 569c03) [See DDB on 方廣大莊嚴經]. It would certainly be a worthwhile project to analyze each of these usages, given the centrality of the *ganying* framework within medieval China religio-philosophical works (especially those on cosmology and soteriology) and narrative collections. I discussed my rationale for this suggestion in the Introduction.

77 Yoshikawa and Funayama specifically identify this text as the *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* 太子瑞應本起經 (T. 185) (*ibid*).

78 T. 2059: 414c7–10.

79 This is, of course, one of the major roles played by dreams across religious cultures, as their liminal status is seen as indicative of their potential to provide access to otherwise inaccessible wisdom and insight. This, in turn, transforms dreams into an “authoritative reality” (to borrow a term from Catherine Bell) upon which later religious practice can be based. See: Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 169. For a few examples, consider the following: Mittermaier details the dialectical relationship between a contemporary Egyptian shaykh and his community of followers, wherein the dream visions they share and his interpretations of them produce a mutually reinforcing consensus about the teacher's sanctity:

Dreams and visions prove to the disciples the shaykh's intimate relationship with the Prophet, the *awliyā`* [the saints] and al-Khidr [a 'legendary immortal figure']... The followers, by seeing, telling, and writing their visions, as

That said, and unlike Dao'an, the three hymnodist monks are not necessarily as focused on issues of historical precedent (defined narrowly), given that they are, at least in some cases, seen actively hybridizing revealed recitation methods with traditional textual practice. This seeming disparity must be considered in its historical context. Specifically, Chinese Buddhists of Huijiao's day considered Chinese standards of prosody and hymnody to be poorly adapted to the exigencies of chanting transliterated Sanskrit: a frustration that was only exacerbated by the general failure of exegetes and translators to transmit these Indic methods to China in the first place. These concerns are outlined in detail in Huijiao's concluding commentary (*lun* 論) on the “Hymnodists” chapter of GSZ (from which all three of these accounts were drawn):

Once the Great Doctrine [of the Buddha] flowed eastward, translators of the texts were many, but those who transmitted the sounds were, in effect, few. Truly, this is because the Brahmanical sounds are multiple, while Han words are simple. If one were to use Brahmanical sounds to chant Han words, then the sounds would be clumsy and the gāthās oppressive. If one were to set Han tunes to the chanting of Brahmanical poems, then the rhymes would be deficient and the words excessive. For this reason, the golden words [of the Buddha] had their translations, but the Brahmanical echoes had no transmission.⁸⁰

In this way, this account represents a consistent concern with the inability of Chinese monks to recite in a manner consistent with their Indian antecedents. More significantly, Mair and Mei have convincingly argued that the late fifth-century dream episode detailed above represents the culmination of a conscious process whereby the Southern literati turned to Buddhists for inspiration in the development of new poetic standards:

well as through re-experiencing them by way of the many retellings, actively participate in constructing and upholding the shaykh's saintly status (120).

Likewise, and though I approach his scholarship with a measure of skepticism, due in no small part to his tendency toward perennialist generalization, I would be remiss not to mention Mircea Eliade's exposition of a variety of cultural contexts in which the perceived success of an individual's shamanic initiation was determined based on the content of their dreams: *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974 [1951]), 33–66. Likewise, Chapter One of this dissertation includes a variety of examples of medieval Chinese Buddhists and laypeople seeking and receiving confirmatory oneiric visions.

80 T. 2059: 414c. Translated in Tsukamoto, *A History of Chinese Buddhism*, 327.

Whether it be hagiography or biography, the prince's dream encapsulates the fervent desire to worship the Buddha properly. Significantly, a list of Buddhist works compiled under his patronage includes three items concerning chanting, one of which is entitled “Resolving Difficulties in the Method of Chanting Sutras.” Royal interest and participation in prosodic matters were not just limited to the prince. After the demise of the first generation of pioneers, the pivotal figure Xiao Gang (503–51, Emperor Jianwen), as crown prince during the reign of Emperor Wu of Liang, continued to experiment with tonal prosody. Under a succession of powerful patrons who were both Buddhists and poets, the search for a new prosody became a national passion spanning two dynasties.⁸¹

As such, while these accounts do not describe monks literally importing Sanskrit recitation techniques from India, they do reflect a conscious attempt to create a hybrid Indo-Sinitic recitation style that did justice to Sanskrit standards of prosody and hymnody. In so doing, such narratives also perpetuated the continued assumption that hewing to Indian models was the hallmark of orthopraxy. Given the role of dreams as confirmatory and informatory miracles in medieval Chinese literature (as discussed above), there can be no doubt that Huijiao (and his discourse community) promulgated such accounts as signifiers of success in this endeavour.

For a final example from GSZ, we turn to the account of Huiyan (慧嚴, 363–443): a contemporary of Daosheng and Faxian who was also involved in the translation of the *Nirvana Sutra*. In fact, as we will see presently, it was his attempt to correct and annotate this text that generated his own crisis of orthodoxy (and prompted its oneiric resolution):

When the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* first reached Song lands, its words and phrases were superlatively good. But its chapters had been inexpertly collated numerous times, which made it difficult for a beginner to assemble and memorize. Huiyan, along with Huiguan, Xie Lingyun and others, took up the original text of the *Nirvāṇa [Sutra]* and added chapter titles. The text also emended translation errors or lacunae.⁸² In the beginning, there were a few copies [of their version] in circulation.⁸³

81 Victor H. Mair and Tsu-Lin Mei, “The Sanskrit Origins of Recent Style Prosody,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51:2 (1991): 375–470, 384. Also see: Gang, 232–233.

82 I drew on Yoshikawa and Funayama's Japanese rendering version of this passage (Vol. 3, 59) here: 「文章が直訳に過ぎるところについてもいささか書き改め。。。」

83 These issues are attested in Mark Blum's “Translator's Introduction” to *The Nirvana Sutra (Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra)*:

Huiyan then had a dream vision of a person whose physical appearance was extremely imposing. With a monitory voice, he addressed Huiyan, saying: “The *Nirvāṇa* is the most honoured of sutras. How can you triflingly add [the results of your] deliberations [to it]?”

Huiyan awoke already fearful and immediately assembled his collaborators⁸⁴ once again, hoping to collect the previously [disseminated] texts. At this time, those who knew about this matter all said: “This is probably just⁸⁵ [a result of] your desire to warn and admonish future generations. Supposing that [our activities] were definitively inappropriate, why would you have immediately been given this dream?”⁸⁶

Huiyan considered it to be thus and soon had another dream of the spirit man, who addressed him, saying: “By virtue of your broad propagation of the sutras, you will certainly see the Buddha.” In the twentieth year of the [Liu-]Song Dynasty's Yuanjia reign period (443 CE),⁸⁷ Huiyan suddenly met his end at Dongan Temple. His springs and autumns were eighty-one.⁸⁸

大涅槃經初至宋土，文言致善，而品數疎簡，初學難以措懷。嚴迺共慧觀，謝靈運等依泥洹本加之品目。文有過質，頗亦治改，始有數本流行。嚴迺夢見一人，形狀極偉，厲聲謂嚴曰：『涅槃尊經，何以輕加斟酌。』嚴覺已惕然，迺更集僧，欲收前本。時識者咸云：『此蓋欲誡厲後人耳，若必不應者，何容即時方夢。』嚴以為然。頃之，又夢神人告曰：『君以弘經之力，必當見佛也。』嚴以宋元嘉二十年卒于東安寺。春秋八十有一矣。

This account's concerns with cosmography are spelled out at the beginning of the episode, which explicitly situates the exegetical challenge faced by Huiyan as a result of the transmission of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* to “Song lands” (i.e., China), after which point inexpert textual practice had rendered it increasingly difficult to read and understand. The monk's knowledge of the superlative

Volume I, (Berkeley, CA: BDK America, 2013):

Testimony of the immediate impact of the sutra when it appeared is that although it was well read, many found Dharmakṣema's sentences hard to follow either because of odd syntax or obscure vocabulary. In addition, the chapter divisions were not well thought out, either too long or too short, and therefore not of much use. ... The structural problems in the Dharmakṣema translation coupled with the high interest in the sutra led to a group of scholars re-editing the Dharmakṣema translation into a more accessible text, refashioning some of the sentences into more readable language and using Faxian's chapter divisions. This is Taishō no. 375. In content, this text is very close to the original Dharmakṣema translation, but there were some revisions that have no basis in an Indic text, and there is no evidence that the editors worked with any source material other than the two Chinese translations (xviii).

84 The text literally reads *seng* 僧, but one of the named contributors to the project is a known layman (Xie Lingyun 謝靈運). As a result, I'm not sure how to render the *seng* 僧 in this context.

85 The “just” here is arrived at by reading the concluding *er* 耳 as a dismissive qualifier (following GR).

86 I'm quite tentative about this rendering, though I have tried to follow Yoshikawa and Funayama as carefully as possible (Vol. 3, 59–60).

87 As calculated by Tang Yongtong (263).

88 T. 2059: 368a20-b1. Punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 262–263.

nature of the text, which is not only mentioned at the outset of the account but is also reiterated in his first terrifying dream, clearly motivated both the monk's bibliographic activities and his anxieties about them. For our present purposes, it suffices to note that the employment of paradoxical interpretation by Huiyan's colleagues (as discussed in Chapter One) is clearly intended to be read as appropriate, given that the monk is soon thereafter presented with an additional confirmatory vision. In the context of the present discussion, the most salient point here is that, even though his oneiric interlocutor is not coded as Indic, the goal of Huiyan's project is clearly to produce a Chinese version of a Sanskrit text that to the greatest extent possible maintains the original's exemplary features. His dreams are clearly meant to be read as signs of his success in this endeavour.

For our first example from XGSZ, I believe it might be fruitful to consider a brief episode from the life of the early sixth-century monk Sengmin (僧旻), as it speaks (albeit obliquely) to the issues of cosmography that have occupied us in the present section. Since a full translation of this episode is provided in Chapter One, it would be redundant to repeat it here, so I will instead offer the following brief summary: Sengmin dreamt that Maitreya Buddha appeared to him and taught him how to translate the name of the *bodhi* tree into Chinese. Upon waking, a disciple saw this as an auspicious omen and urged him to circulate it, but the elder monk demurred, drawing on the oneirocritical tradition of the *Zhouli* to argue that the majority of dreams are unreliable.⁸⁹

On a superficial level, Sengmin's oneiric experience appears to be related to the same type of cosmographic issues seen in the GSZ accounts discussed above, as his oneiric visitor's ostensible aim was to provide a language lesson related to an iconographically-significant tree that was not native to

89 T. 2060: 463b.

China. Based on the accounts considered previously, one might expect that the monk would awaken confident in the knowledge that his image veneration practice was appropriate and would then go on to share his newfound knowledge of Buddhist botany with his disciples. Instead, he responds to the dream skeptically, considers it to be devoid of significance, and instructs his disciple not to transmit it. Moreover, in the process of performing this evaluation, he explicitly cites a Chinese tradition of historical oneiromancy as his proof text. I have discussed the oneiromantic logic of this passage in more detail Chapter One, so for our present purposes, it suffices to make two additional observations: 1) it clearly problematizes the standard model of dreams as confirmatory miracles, specifically concerning issues of orthodoxy/orthopraxy; and 2) it shows a monk privileging his Chinese cultural patrimony over Indic wisdom, even when the latter is proffered by a vision of a Buddhist deity. While this is certainly an extreme case, and one that would have likely seemed utterly alien to Huijiao and his early sixth-century discourse community, it serves as an eloquent testimony to the new standards of orthodoxy that had begun to be relied upon by Daoxuan's day.

Next, for a more direct parallel with the material treated above, we consider the following episode from the biography of the famed monastic exegete Huiyuan of Jingying Temple (慧遠, 523–592). In the relevant section, his completion of a commentary elicits an oneiric response:

When his commentary on the Bodhisattvabhūmi[-sūtra] was complete, [Huiyuan] had a dream of ascending to the peak of Mount Sumeru. Looking in all four directions, he expected to see only the ocean's waters. But he also saw a single Buddha image whose body was purple gold at the foot of the jewelled trees. Its head faced north, and its body was laying down covered with dust. Huiyuan initially began to worship it, after first dusting it off, [which caused] everything to be suffused with pure light.

When he awoke, he said: “That which I wrote in my commentary seems like it might be well suited to bring benefit [to people], which is the reason for that auspicious sign.” He also said to himself, “My initial [attempt to] create a Nirvana Sutra commentary is finished, but I haven't yet

dared to base a lecture [on it].” He arose a vow to pray for a sign.

He had a dream vision of making by hand a white silk image of the shapes of the seven buddhas and eight bodhisattvas.⁹⁰ In addition, after standing it up, he also drew and decorated it himself. As soon as that which was drawn at last resembled an icon, everyone in sequence arose and began religious practice. Finally, after the image's decorations were soon to be complete, a person was there [at the image's] side, coming bearing a writing brush. He took Huiyuan's place and finished it.

After awakening, [Huiyuan] thought to himself, saying: “As per this sign, [this image] will be propagated to future generations.” He then broadly distributed it, believing it to be like what he had seen in his dream.⁹¹

嘗製地持疏訖，夢登須彌山頂，四顧周望，但唯海水，又見一佛像身色紫金，在寶樹下北首而臥，體有塵埃，遠初則禮敬，後以衣拂，周遍光淨。覺罷，謂所撰文疏頗有順化之益，故為此徵耳。又自說云：初作涅槃疏訖，未敢依講，發願乞相，夢見自手造素七佛，八菩薩像，形並端峙，還自續飾，所畫既竟，像皆次第起行。末後一像彩畫將了，旁有一人來從索筆，代遠成之。覺後思曰：「此相有流末世之境也。」乃廣開敷之，信如夢矣。

In this case too, a few salient differences with the previous accounts are worthy of consideration. First, though the desire for oneiric confirmation is seen in this episode as well, Huiyuan's monastic vocation differs quite substantially from the GSZ examples considered above. Specifically, instead of being concerned with the accurate transmission of a texts or practices from India to China (or even the adaptation of Sanskrit hymnody to the Chinese language), Huiyuan – as a prolific exegete – is concerned with explicating complex points of Buddhist doctrine to literate Chinese audiences. Though these commentaries were obviously intertextual documents, whose authority and significance were ultimately derived from the texts upon which they were based, it is undeniable that the very notion of creating such metatextual literature depends on a level of confidence in both one's own exegetical

90 This seems to be a reference to the specific list of buddhas and bodhisattvas from the *Sutra of the Great Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spells Spoken by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* (ca. 4th – 5th c. CE). “Qifo bapusa 七佛八菩薩,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%B8%83%E4%BD%9B%E5%85%AB%E8%8F%A9%E8%90%A8>.

91 T. 2060: 492a5–15, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 286.

abilities and in the propriety of such exegetical practice.⁹² This is especially true in Chinese literary culture, where influential commentaries often became incorporated into the texts upon which they were commenting.⁹³

The imagery employed in Huiyuan's first dream vision also speaks to this eastward shift in the locus of sanctity. Though it features the monk climbing the symbolically-significant Mount Sumeru, when he reaches the top, he discovers an image of a recumbent Buddha covered in a film of dust: the standard Buddhist image for the corrupting influence of worldly phenomena.⁹⁴ Thus, it is virtually impossible to imagine a culturally-literate seventh-century reader not interpreting this vision as

92 Consider the following discussion in Stanley Weinstein, “Imperial Patronage in T'ang Buddhism,” in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, edited by Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 265–306:

In general terms, the most distinctive feature of pre-Tang exegesis, when compared to that of the Tang schools, is the conscious effort of the Chinese commentator to interpret a text in a fashion which he believes to be faithful to the original intent of its author. ... We get a very different impression, however, when we read the works of such leading Sui and Tang commentators as Zhiyi and Fazang, who clearly felt themselves to be free to interpret the sutras of their schools on the basis of their own religious experience, often showing no concern whether a particular interpretation was at all feasible from the standpoint of the original text (272).

He goes on to suggest that, in the Sui and Tang contexts, “Indian canonical works, termed 'fundamental scriptures' (*suoyi jing* 所依經), were often little more than pegs to which the patriarchs could attach their own ideas” (ibid.).

93 The central role of Chinese commentaries in the creation of a distinctively Chinese form of Buddhism is discussed throughout Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, and Sharf, *Coming to Terms*. Likewise, Storch notes that one of the more revolutionary elements of Fei Changfang's (admittedly controversial) catalogue of scriptures was that, he included Chinese historical and commentary literature in the same dynastic category as the translated scriptures if they had been produced during the rule of the same dynasty. Changfang thus practically erased the distinction between the translated canon, which had for centuries been perceived to be the true words of the Buddha, and Chinese Buddhist literature, which was not directly associated with the Buddha (99–100).

As an aside, I reference this source with some trepidation, given the well-founded concerns that Antonello Palumbo expressed concerning Storch's research methodology (<https://networks.h-net.org/node/6060/reviews/177715/palumbo-storch-history-chinese-buddhist-bibliography-censorship-and>), though I think her point in this instance is well taken.

94 While the term I translated as “dust” can also be rendered more neutrally as “object,” given the context I think it is appropriate to follow the more critical readings. “Chen 塵,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%A1%B5>:

It also has the senses of stain, blot, dirt, etc. which are used to render Indian Buddhist notions of defilement, pollution (Skt. *rajas*, *pāṃśu*); and affliction (Skt. *upakleśa*)—those things that defile the pure mind. Extending this sense, it is also used to denote worldly, earthly, the world, etc.

While this seems to be a literal description of a (real or hypothetical) dream vision, it seems unlikely that it would not have also impelled medieval Chinese Buddhists to consider the discourse of defiled minds (and, their converse, original enlightenment) that represented one of the key doctrinal developments in East Asian Buddhism, especially given this shared terminology. For a pellucid overview of this topic, see: Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

representing the age of declining dharma (symbolized by the icon of the Buddha's death), wherein even the most holy mountain in Indian Buddhism had become defiled by worldliness. It is only with the intercession of an exemplary Chinese exegete that the brilliance of the Buddha's wisdom could once again be seen.⁹⁵ His second dream, which he perceives after specifically requesting confirmation that it would be appropriate for him to lecture on his Nirvana Sutra commentary (an additional level of critical distance from Indian sources of orthodoxy), offers additional proof that his literary output is indeed a valid contribution to the Buddhist soteriological project. In both of these cases, there is clearly a gulf between the underlying logic of orthodoxy presented in this account and the GSZ accounts considered above, in that a Chinese Buddhist monk's highest possible contribution is no longer simply to accurately transmit Buddhist doctrine, but rather to offer novel exegetical interpretations and preaching that appropriately adapt the Buddha's teaching to its Chinese context.⁹⁶

95 Young, *Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*, provides an eloquent discussion of this dynamic, situating it in reference to the early medieval reimagining of three Indian Buddhist patriarchs (Nāgārjuna, Aśvaghōṣa and Āryadeva). Specifically, he notes that medieval Chinese exegetes tended to stress the temporal gulf between these idealized exegetes and the historical Buddha, as a means of highlighting the parallels between their situations and those of their Chinese inheritors:

Chinese scholar-monks of the time considered it the primary duty of the greatest patriarchs-*cum*-bodhisattvas who lived after the Buddha to compose doctrinal treatises in order to rescue deluded beings and transmit the truth for future generations. Huiyuan, for one, defined *lun* 論 in precisely these terms, as opposed to lesser sorts of writings such as 'interpretive essays' (*yizhang* 義章) that the common rabble composed. In dark times after Śākyamuni's departure, sentient beings ultimately depended on these *lun* in order to achieve liberation. Just as beings at the time of the Buddha were most suited to liberation through the scriptures that he preached, the karmic conditions of beings in the latter age dictated that they would require the sort of doctrinal commentary that the Indian patriarchs offered in their writings" (121–122).

For a discussion of the various formulations of the "decline of the dharma" chronology, see: Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline*, (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1991).

96 Another example of this dynamic can be seen in the XGSZ biography of Tanyan (488a26), whose dream vision of an interaction with Aśvaghōṣa provides him the necessary confidence to write a commentary. See the discussion of this episode in Chapter One for more details. In an intriguing case that I do not have space to discuss in more detail, the monk Mingshun (明舜, 547–606/607) is dissuaded from his pedagogical practice after being informed that his lectures are not true representations of the dharma through the oneiric intercession of an official of the chthonic bureaucracy (T. 2060: 511a). As a point of comparison, Faure's *Visions of Power* also offers a variety of examples of this phenomenon (i.e., the use of oneiric visions to confirm the validity of novel doctrinal / praxical formulations) in the context of medieval Japan (138–139, 227).

As demonstrated above, there are some clear distinctions between the roles and functions served by dreams in GSZ and XGSZ when it comes to questions of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. In particular, while oneiric episodes are cited in both as evidence that the actions of their monastic protagonists should be read as appropriate, the specific situations presented in each differ quite markedly, with those from GSZ being much more likely to reflect a concern with adhering to Indic standards of orthodoxy/praxy, and those in XGSZ more often occurring in the context of anxieties related to the production of new Buddhist materials. As a simple illustration, compare the GSZ's concern with the propriety of preparing a critical edition with the XGSZ's laudatory discussion of composing commentaries. It is certainly possible that this distinction is due in no small part to differences in elite Buddhist practice between the early sixth and mid-seventh centuries, with eminent monks much more likely to be involved in translation activities in the first case (especially given that GSZ compiles biographies dating back to the second-century CE), and commentarial activities in the second. That said, after having reviewed every oneiric narrative in both collections, I was particularly struck by the dearth of such accounts in XGSZ. Given its size, I was expecting to find at least as many relevant examples of the oneiric confirmation of orthodoxy/praxy, but instead I only came across the three accounts mentioned above.⁹⁷

This is not to say that dream episodes relating to monastic anxieties are absent: instead, those that are included are almost unilaterally related to intra-sangha conflicts (e.g., oneiric condemnation of failure to adhere to the standards of propriety) – a theme that is utterly absent from GSZ.⁹⁸ Given the

97 I.e., Huiyuan, Tanyan and Mingshun (see ff. 96, above, for a brief overview of the latter two accounts).

98 See, for example, the accounts of the dissolute monk Sengyuan (僧遠, 531–623), who is berated by an oneiric vision whose admonitions are punctuated the next morning when the monk spontaneously sheds his eyebrows (T. 2060: 649b), and the apostate monk Mingxie (明解, n.d.), who posthumously appears in a monastic colleague's dream to bemoan his own moral lapses and their resultant karmic consequences (T. 2060: 665c). Daoxuan includes both of these accounts in his “Spiritual Resonance” (*gantong* 感通) chapter, as proof-texts for the functioning of the

narrative function served by dreams in these various accounts, and, in particular, the fact that oneiric experiences were employed at the time as testimonials to the moral probity of an individual's actions, the near absence of dream episodes related to issues of orthodoxy in the later collection (and the heretofore unseen use of such episodes to critique the behaviour of specific monks) suggests that Daoxuan was simply responding to a different set of concerns than Huijiao when selecting materials for inclusion in his collection, and that such concerns were no longer as salient.

Dreams and The Shifting “Center of Gravity” of the Medieval Buddhist World

As has been demonstrated above, in the centuries leading up to the compilation of GSZ, India loomed large in the imagination of medieval Chinese Buddhists, to the extent to which its geography, as well as its monks, scriptures, iconographic traditions, and religious artifacts, were seen as both standards and sources of orthodoxy. But it is also clear that, by the mid-seventh century, the residents of the Chinese empire (both monastic and lay) had begun to reconfigure their religious geographies, with indigenous standards of sanctity, modes of religious practice, and lineages of transmission coming to supplant the region's Buddhists' previous reliance on South Asia as the ultimate source of religious truth and legitimation.⁹⁹ This tendency can be seen across various domains, such as an increasing reliance on

stimulus/response framework in the Chinese Buddhist context. This is a surprisingly common trope in XGSZ, as I will be exploring in an upcoming paper. As an aside, these episodes do not seem to fit in with those discussed in Kieschnick's *The Eminent Monk* under the heading of “Meat Eating Wine Drinking Monks,” wherein he argues that such figures were trickster archetypes who served the rhetorical purpose of highlighting the higher consciousness of Buddhist exemplars, who can engage in such activities due to their complete internalization of Buddhist notions of nonduality (51–63). In contrast, these monks are legitimately seen as dissolute, and described facing the consequences of their moral laxity.

Nattier, in *Once Upon a Future Time*, notes that in Indian sources the decline of the dharma is often associated with laxity in monastic discipline (120–126). This assignment of blame is also seen in medieval Chinese sources, in particular those aiming to propound a vision of an abjectly fallen world in the service of an apocalyptic vision. See: Zürcher, “Prince Moonlight”; David Ownby, “Chinese Millenarian Traditions: The Formative Age,” *The American Historical Review* 104:5 (1999): 1513–1530. For a discussion of a short-lived Chinese Buddhist sect that relied heavily on this vision of defiled world where true Buddhist practice was no longer possible, see: Mark Edward Lewis (1990), “The Suppression of the Three Stages Sect: Apocrypha as a Political Issue,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, edited by Robert Buswell, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 207–238.

99 As discussed in Jensen, “Mapping the *Eminent Monks*.”

local (Chinese) commentaries and the ever-expanding corpora of Chinese Buddhist apocrypha: both of which spoke to an increasing comfort with the adaptation of the Buddhist message to its new context of practice.¹⁰⁰ I am certainly not the first to comment on this development. In fact, even in the realm of hagiography, this conclusion was anticipated by Stuart Young in his exemplary study of Chinese retellings of the biographies of several Indian patriarchs, which focuses on the very period covered by the present project. Therein, he argues that the rhetorical functions and employments of these narratives shift markedly from the early fifth to the late eighth centuries, tracking an ever-increasing sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency.¹⁰¹ That said, and continuing the discussion from the previous sections, I would argue that a close reading of the dream narratives relating to inter-regional contact offer a unique perspective on this process of development, as they speak to the types of information and communication that were seen as compelling in the ages of Huijiao and Daoxuan (as well as the many unnamed authors whose work they compiled and repurposed), while also offering further insight into the ways that these compilers understood the liminal gap between India and China.¹⁰²

100 The investigation of these cultural dynamics has been one of the central concerns of Chinese Buddhist studies for the last twenty-five years. See, for example, Buswell's *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*; Sharf's *Coming to Terms*; Storch's *The History of Chinese Buddhist Bibliography*; Young's *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*. The intimations of these developments can be seen in the outline of contemporary research trends ("Expanding the Boundaries of the Study of Chinese Buddhism" [358–360]) in John R. McRae's classical State of the Field article "Buddhism," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54:2 (May, 1995): 354–371.

101 Summarizing his project, Young, *Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*, notes that "the Indian patriarch hagiographies functioned to integrate India into this Chinese dialectic of mutually generative lives and narratives, and as a result, they should be examined in terms of how they deployed Indianness as a repertoire element, merged ostensibly native and foreign models of religious sanctity, and thereby bridged the gap between ancient India and latter-day China" (19).

102 As an aside, one of the only significant examples of this recentering process from GSZ is found in the biography of Huida 慧達, wherein a group of five Indian monks dream of an alleged Aśoka image discovered in China and make the long trek to see it for themselves (T. 2059: 409c). On the cosmographic implications of these images (and the narrative traditions associated with them), see: Shinohara, "Changing Roles for Miraculous Images," 145–148 and *passim*. For an intriguing example that also potentially speaks to Daoxuan's cosmographic agenda, see the XGSZ biography of Huiming (discussed in Chapter Four), which posits that the *ganying* response brought about by the presence of a single exemplary Chinese monk (Huiming) is equivalent to the one that would have been generated by the arrival of one thousand Indian monks (T. 2060: 561a and discussed below: 342–343).

To investigate these issues, I propose a comparison of the superficially parallel accounts of Dharmayaśas (Tanmoyeshe 曇摩耶舍, early fifth century) from GSZ and Xuanzang (玄奘, 602–664) from XGSZ in order to track this process of cosmographical recentering, and to consider the role of oneiric narratives in helping to negotiate this transition. I have selected these two examples because each monk's life story follows a similar trajectory (initial oneiric experience¹⁰³ → travel motivated by sense of religious vocation → sojourn in foreign land (China for Dharmayaśas; India for Xuanzang) → religious activity and acclaim in foreign land → eventual return to country of origin). Given these structural similarities, the various differences between them, and, in particular, the role and function of oneiric episodes in each, becomes all the more remarkable. Moreover, since these accounts differ predictably (i.e., in a manner that corresponds to the overall “re-centering” hypothesis outlined above), they serve as another example of the narrative role of oneiric events in helping Chinese Buddhists to negotiate the shifting understanding of inter-regional liminality that characterized the period between the compilations of GSZ and XGSZ.

Comparison: Dharmayaśas vs. Xuanzang and the Recentering of Chinese Buddhism

To explore this claim, let us first turn to the GSZ account of the life of the renowned Kashmiri translator and meditator Dharmayaśas, and specifically to the putative oneiric experience that is said to have impelled his lengthy and dangerous trek from South Asia to China.

Dharmayaśas, also known as Faming, was a man of Kashmir. [When he was still] young, he [already] enjoyed learning.¹⁰⁴ At fourteen, he came to the attention of Puṇyatāra.¹⁰⁵ He was tall,

103 Note: an initial dream is indeed part of the longer canonical biography of Xuanzang (T. 2053), but it is notably absent from the XGSZ account, as will be considered at length below.

104 This descriptor is obviously an instance of the Exemplary Child trope (discussed in Chapter Two).

105 For a brief biographical sketch of the older monk, Vinaya Master and translator who served as Dharmayaśas' first teacher, see: “Furuoduoluo 弗若多羅,” Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%BC%97%E8%8B%A5%E5%A4%9A%E7%BE%85>. In subsequent years, both men travelled to China and became involved with the prolific translation community in Chang'an, though it is not clear whether

energetic and vivacious, and particularly possessed of preternatural intelligence. He [also] broadly perused the scriptures and rule collections, [thanks to] a sagacity that set him [above] the crowd. He shaped his thoughts [via] the eight *dhyānas*¹⁰⁶ and freed his mind [via] the seven factors of enlightenment.¹⁰⁷ People of the time followed the method of Buddhābhadrā.¹⁰⁸ [In Dharmayaśas'] solitary practice, he visited mountains and swamps, without fleeing jackals and tigers. In these solitary places, he thought deeply, and moved about day and night. Every time he [sat meditating] beneath a tree,¹⁰⁹ he would always engage in self-criticism: “I am already thirty years old, but have not yet reached the fruits [of meditation practice]. What is my failing?” As a result, he [went] day after day without eating and without sleeping, concentrating his energies on achieving suffering, in order to repent for his past transgressions.¹¹⁰

曇摩耶舍，此云法明，罽賓人。少而好學，年十四為弗若多羅所知。長而氣幹高爽，雅有神慧，該覽經律，明悟出群。陶思八禪，遊心七覺，時人方之浮頭婆馱。孤行山澤，

Dharmayaśas personally worked with Kumārajīva there. For details, see Yang Lu, “Narrative and Historicity in the Buddhist Biographies of Early Medieval China: The Case of Kumārajīva,” *Asia Major* Third Series, 17:2 (2004): 1–43, 16 ff. 31.

- 106 As per Paul Swanson, “*bachan* 八禪,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%85%AB%E7%A6%AA>: “The four *dhyāna* stages (四禪 meditative states in the realm of form) plus the four concentrative states of the world of no form.” Though this biography claims that Dharmayaśas was critiqued by a deity for his over-reliance on solitary meditative practice (as will be seen below), it is notable that a goodly portion of his eventual renown in China can be attributed to his popularity as a teacher of meditation. For a brief discussion of Dharmayaśas as a contributor to the popularization of meditation practice in China, see: Jinhua Chen, “From Central Asia to Southern China: The Formation of Identity and Network in the Meditative Traditions of the Fifth–Sixth Century Southern China (420–589),” *Fudan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 7:2 (2014): 171–202, 184–185.
- 107 “*Qi juezhi* 七覺,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?4e.xml+id\(%27b4e03-89ba-652f%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?4e.xml+id(%27b4e03-89ba-652f%27)):
 Also written as 七菩提寶, 七覺分, 七等覺支, 七菩提分, 七事學, and so forth. This list is also found as a subset of other elements of Buddhist practice, such as the seven categories of the *bodhipakṣika dharma* 七科七道品, and the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment 三十七菩提分. Their order and precise terminology can vary depending on the text, but a fairly standard list includes: 擇法 (擇法覺支) correctly evaluating the teaching; discriminating between the true and the false (*dharma-pravicaya-sambodhyāṅga*); 精進 (精進覺支) being unstinting in practice (*vīrya-sambodhyāṅga*); 喜 (喜覺支) rejoicing in the truth; joy, delight (*prīti-sambodhyāṅga*); 輕安 (輕安覺支) attaining pliancy (*praśrabdhi-sambodhyāṅga*); 念 (念覺支) remembering the various states passed through in contemplation; keeping proper awareness in meditation (*smṛti-sambodhyāṅga*); some listings reverse this limb and the seventh. 定 (定覺支) concentrating; (*samādhi-sambodhyāṅga*) 行捨 (捨, 捨覺支) detaching all thoughts from external things (*upekṣā-sambodhyāṅga*).”
- 108 See Yoshikawa and Funayama, Vol. 1, 131 ff. 5, for more details on this monk's life.
- 109 I'm following Yoshikawa and Funayama, Vol. 1, 130 (as well as Taishō footnote #19) in reading *chang* 嘗 as *chang* 常, which is a much better grammatical fit with the subsequent *mei* 每. While it is obviously not provable, this image of a monk sitting beneath a tree engaging in bitter self-recrimination seems to be an inversion of the trope of the Buddha's enlightenment, with the protagonist here feeling frustrated and incapable for failing to embody the model established by his religious forebear.
- 110 This ritual pattern of restricting food and sleep, and concentrating one's energies on confession, is one that is associated with dream incubation in many early medieval sources (e.g., the *Lotus* confession advocated by Zhiyi). If this account is actually preserves a reliable description of Kashmiri Buddhist practice in the late fifth century, this seems to be a relatively early reference to this form of observance. See Chapter One for a lengthy discussion of Buddhist dream incubation rituals.

不避豺虎。獨處思念，動移宵日。嘗於樹下每自剋責；年將三十，尚未得果，何其懈哉！於是累日不寢不食，專精苦到，以悔先罪。

He then had a dream vision of Virūpākṣa Deva King,¹¹¹ who spoke to him, saying: “*Śramaṇas* should be seen broadly promulgating the [Buddhist] teaching, yearning for the universal liberation [of living beings], so why do you adhere to an insignificant activity¹¹² [like] solitary practice, taking it to be [both] good and sufficient? [Attaining the Buddhist] Way depends on myriad causes [and you] still require time to mature; lacking such distinction [but] still insisting on [such practices], [you will] die without attaining enlightenment.”¹¹³

When he awoke, he reflected to himself that he wanted to roam about transmitting the [Buddhist] way. He then passed through [various] famous nations and tread the path through [various] prefectures and countries, initially arriving in Guangzhou¹¹⁴ during the Longan reign period of Jin Andi,¹¹⁵ where he took up residence at White Sand Monastery.¹¹⁶

乃夢見博叉天王語之曰：「沙門當觀方弘化，曠濟為懷，何守小節獨善而已。道假眾緣，復須時熟，非分強求，死而無證。」覺自思惟，欲遊方授道，既而踰歷名邦，履踐郡國。以晉隆安中初達廣州住白沙寺。

In the years following his arrival in China, Dharmayaśas participated in various translation projects and also amassed a large community of disciples, to whom he offered instruction in meditation methods.

111 A full-text search of the Taishō canon reveals that the vast majority of the other uses of *Bocha Tianwang* 博叉天王 either are citations / retellings of this episode from Dharmayaśas' biography or are other mentions of this particular Deva King. Yoshikawa and Funayama's translation concurs with this reading (see: Vol. 1, 131 ff. 8), as does the Dharma Drum Person Authority Database: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A002525>. “Guangmutian 廣目天,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%BB%A3%E7%9B%AE%E5%A4%A9>:

The wide-eyed deva; diversely-eyed, having deformed eyes; an epithet of Śiva, as represented with three eyes, also known as 雜語, 非好報, and 惡眼. One of the four heavenly kings 四天王. He lives in the sky on the western part of Mt. Sumeru 須彌山, and rules over the nāgas 龍 and pūtanās 富單那, protecting the western continent. He possesses the pure divine eye 淨天眼, which allows him to see everywhere. He is usually depicted as having a red body and wearing a helmet.

112 GR has *xiaojie* 小節 as “Petits détails (de la conduite, etc.)”

113 I found Yoshikawa and Funayama's reading here much easier to follow, given the terseness of the original Chinese: 「仏道が成就するには眾縁をたのみとし、また時が熟する必要があるのであって、その分際でもないのに無理に求めたところで、死んでも悟れはしない」(Vol. 1, 130).

114 Though the figurative language employed in this section suggests that the monk had made his voyage on foot (e.g., *lujian* 履踐) (i.e., via the northern Silk Road route employed by many prior monastic travellers), Dharmayaśas' arrival in Guangzhou reveals that he had, in fact, travelled to China by sea. Perhaps this locution was chosen to highlight the parallels between those who employed these two routes (i.e., to implicitly argue that monks arriving by sea were of the same type and were thus worthy of the same respect as those who made the trek on foot)? For a discussion of the increasing importance of the maritime route for the transmission of Buddhism (and specific Indian / Central Asian monks) to China in the 5th century, see Sen, “Maritime Southeast Asia Between South Asia and China,” 46.

115 397–402 CE (GR).

116 T. 2059: 329b16-b27. Cf., Robert Shih's French translation, 57–60.

Though the tradition recorded in GSZ features no additional oneiric responses, it does include a later miraculous episode:

Also at this time, the sight of *śramaṇas* flying [through the air] and coming [to land] at the tops of trees was a regular and not singular occurrence. [He] often interacted with deities, but deigned to live like the benighted laypeople. Although the [People of the] Way [considered] that these signs were not yet fully manifest, people of the time all said that they were the final stage in [achieving] the fruits of sagehood.¹¹⁷

又時見沙門飛來樹端者。往往非一。常交接神明而俯同矇俗。雖道迹未彰。時人咸謂已階聖果。

Given that concerns about religious attainment had motivated the monk's initial departure from his home region (*shangwei deguo* 尚未得果), the description of his attainment of the “fruits of sagehood” (*yi jie shengguo* 已階聖果) in the estimation of his coreligionists seems to serve as a justification for his travels.

In keeping with the previous discussion of the narrative role of dreams in the *Eminent Monks*, it is notable that the Virūpākṣa episode occurs during a profoundly unsettled time in the protagonist's life, during which he was experiencing a profound self-doubt concerning his religious vocation, which seemingly inspired him to employ a Buddhist dream incubation practice in order to seek clarity and guidance. As such, his consequent dream encounter with Virūpākṣa could be described as an *informatory* event,¹¹⁸ as it not only answered his question but also provided him (and thus the narrative) a clear new direction. In contrast, the second miraculous occurrence (the flying monks) only serves a *confirmatory* function: not only does it merely serve as a sign of Dharmayaśas' high level of spiritual attainment, but its significance is ambiguous enough to require a (meta)textual explanation, which is offered in the form of the reported debate between the People of the Way and the general public.

117 T. 2059: 329c13–15.

118 See the Oneiric Practice chapter for my definition of these terms.

In the context of our discussion of the role of dream narratives in transecting the “liminal” boundary between regions in the medieval Chinese Buddhist imaginaire, this episode is instructive for several reasons. First, when one considers Dharmayaśas' original path of practice in comparison with those valorized elsewhere in the GSZ, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the Deva King's critique of the monk's conduct is at least somewhat inconsistent, given that other (Chinese) meditators are lauded for their solitary practice.¹¹⁹ This seeming inconsistency is exacerbated by the fact that the monk continues to practice meditation once he reaches China, and, in fact, provides instruction in meditation methods to a large congregation of disciples once there, implying that his mode of practice was not itself the issue. Given that the issue was neither meditation nor solitary practice as such, it appears (at least through the retrospective lens of the hagiographical imagination) that the monk was simply being encouraged to spread the Buddhist teaching as a more efficacious form of religious activity. This recommendation, in turn, calls to mind the distinction between *śrāvakas* (“voice-hearers”), *pratyekabuddhas* (“solitary buddhas”), and *bodhisattvas* – a soteriological typology that would have been profoundly salient to the Chinese audience for this tale.¹²⁰ The position ascribed to the monk's oneiric interlocutor is in marked contrast to the one associated with the early Chinese

119 See, for example, the biographies of Zhu Sengxian (竺僧顯, 222–322), who was always performing austerities while alone in the mountains and forests 「常獨處山林頭陀人外」 (T. 2059: 395b25–26), and Jingdu (淨度, 389–479), who constantly engaged in seated meditation in the mountains 「常獨處山澤坐禪習誦」 (T. 2059: 398c18–19). In both cases, there is no indication that this should be read as anything other than a laudable form of religious activity. A simple search for “alone” (*du* 獨) in the GSZ's chapter on meditators yields a number of other results as well. For a discussion of mountain practice in China, and, in particular, the oneiric interactions between monks and local deities ascribed to such regions, see Chapter Four. For some background on the sacrality of mountains in Chinese Buddhism, and the practices associated with such sites, see: James Robson, *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue) in Medieval China*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2009); James Robson, “Monastic Spaces and Sacred traces: Facets of Chinese Buddhist Monastic Records,” in *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice*, edited by James A. Benn, Lori Meeks, and James Robson, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 43–64.

120 See, for instance, the discussion in Carl Bielefeldt, “Expedient Devices, the One Vehicle, and the Lifespan of the Buddha,” in *Readings of the Lotus Sutra*, edited by Stephen F. Teiser and Jacqueline I. Stone, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 62–82, which provides an extensive discussion of the *Lotus Sutra*'s claims regarding the inferiority of all paths but the “One Vehicle Practice” described therein.

biographies of the Indian patriarchs (as described by Young): in the latter sources, Chinese readers were encouraged to map themselves onto their Indian antecedents, with the assumption that they too would succeed in continuing the transmission of the Buddha's teaching in an age of declining dharma, just as their idealized South Asian co-religionists had.¹²¹ In light of this disjunction, I would suggest that there are two disparate ways of reading the Deva King's chiding dialogue with Dharmayaśas: first, it could be seen as a perceived evolution in Huijiao's understanding of the soteriological importance of actual physical presence in China;¹²² second, it could be read (following the *Lotus Sutra* and the chronology of dharma decline) as an endorsement of missionary practice over solitary attainment, paralleling the soteriological distinction between *bodhisattvas* and *śrāvakas*, with the monk's final destination being a matter of lesser importance. Given the GSZ's frequent assumptions about the linkage between India and orthodoxy/orthopraxy, I would argue that this second interpretation is more plausible.

If this is the case, it is fitting that neither Dharmayaśas' dream experience nor his subsequent reflection upon it included any reference to the specifics of his subsequent itinerary, nor his ultimate destination, even though this event served the clear narrative purpose of providing the impetus for his missionizing journey. The significance of this elision is unclear: does it imply that China would have been the only obvious destination for a late fourth- / early fifth-century Kashmiri monk seeking to spread to the dharma or that his eventual arrival in China was simply the result of happenstance? The only textual clue relating to Dharmayaśas' missionary destination is the identity of his oneiric visitor:

121 This point is discussed at length in Young, *Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*, which argues that early Chinese hagiographers chose to focus specifically on those traits and activities that idealized Indian monks (e.g., Aśvaghōṣa, Nāgārjuna) would have shared with their Chinese counterparts, as these accounts were subsequently deployed as *exempla* for Chinese monks to emulate, 67–110.

122 Note: I am certainly not making a case that this tendency characterizes the GSZ as a whole, in that I have not performed a close enough reading of the entire corpus to allow for such a generalization. That said, I would argue that the position adopted here might have been seen as shocking (and potentially even borderline unintelligible) to many earlier Buddhist commentators, which makes it worthy of discussion, even if it does not represent a concrete or universal thesis in Huijiao's collection.

Virūpākṣa, the Deva King of the West. As noted above, this deity – a “Buddhicized” version of the Hindu Śiva, transformed into a protector deity – is a rarity in canonical Buddhist texts, with mentions generally restricted to catalogues and ritual texts that provide extensive lists of deities, as well as versions of the present biography, which implies that he was selected (or originally dreamt by Dharmayaśas, if one accepts the historicity of this narrative) for a specific reason. One salient possibility is the fact that Funan 扶南 (a maritime entrepôt located in the southern portions of modern Vietnam / Cambodia), which was found on the sea-route that the monk employed to reach Guangzhou, would have been known to medieval Chinese readers for both its staunch support of Buddhism and the “popularity of the Brahmanical deity Śiva.”¹²³ Depending on how widely this was known and how common Śaivaite worship traditions were outside of the South Asian subcontinent, it is possible that the character of this specific Deva King would have served as a coded reference to Funan to a culturally competent reader. Moreover, since Buddhism was already common there and since the monk had been instructed to spread the Buddhist teaching, the logical implication is that he would have been expected to continue on to the endpoint of such a voyage (i.e., Southern China). If this hypothesis is correct, it further highlights the informatory role of this dream narrative in Dharmayaśas' hagiography.

In all, this account seems compatible with the standard sixth-century conception of the religious “center of gravity” of Buddhism, wherein a Kashmiri monk's solitary religious practice no longer suffices as an avenue for achieving enlightenment, leading him to set out on the proselytizing adventure detailed in the remainder of his hagiography. Whether China is explicitly signalled as the destination of the monk's voyage or not, this account replicates the pattern outlined above, whereby teaching lineages,

123 For a French translation of Nagasena's account of the worship of Śiva (Mahaishvara) in Funan (as well as the emperor's response to his correspondence), see Paul Pelliot, “Le Fou-nan,” *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 3:1 (1903): 248–303, 260–261. For an overview of the role of Funan in the transmission of Buddhism to China, see Sen, “Maritime Southeast Asia Between South Asia and China,” 45–48.

standards of Buddhist practice, and understandings of doctrinal orthodoxy were unidirectionally exported from the (Indian) “cradle of Buddhism” to the (Chinese) periphery, with dream stories being used to help narratively negotiate these liminalities. Given the clearly Indo-centric, locative tendency of this oneiric narrative (as well as the other examples from GSZ adduced above), which firmly situated the locus of religious power outside the bounds of the Chinese state, I could not help but take notice of the utter flouting of these expectations in the XGSZ biography of Xuanzang, as it seems to represent a clear attempt to reposition China in the imaginative geography of medieval Chinese Buddhism.

If my hypothesis about the role of dream narratives in bridging liminal spaces and states is indeed correct, one would expect such episodes to feature heavily in the biography of the Tang Dynasty Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang, given his renowned voyage to India in search of Buddhist texts and icons.¹²⁴ At least in the context of this particular account, my hypothesis is indeed confirmed. For instance, if we turn to the preface written for the monk's account of his travels by Jing Bo 敬播 (an imperial bureaucrat employed by the Secretarial Department under Emperor Tang Taizong 唐太宗 [r. 626–649]),¹²⁵ it explicitly hearkens back to the legend of Emperor Ming's dream, though it subtly recontextualizes it as a commentary on the difficulty of accessing the true profundity of the Buddhist teaching from such a peripheral region:

Emperor Ming of the Han dynasty dreamed of a golden figure with a sun-like halo behind its head, but the divine light of Buddhism was still enshrouded in secret ten thousand *li* away. When Cai Yin was dispatched to the Western Regions in search of the Buddhist religion, he invited Kāśyapa-Mātāṅga to Luoyang with Buddhist scriptures, which were preserved at the

124 For a general overview of Xuanzang's life, see: Alexander L. Mayer, “Xuanzang,” in *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert Buswell, (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 909–910; René Grousset, *In the Footsteps of the Buddha*, translated by Mariette Leon, (London: Routledge, 1932). Also see Xuanzang's autobiographical account of his travels (*Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 [T. 2087]): Li Rongxi, trans., *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, (Moraga, CA: BDK America, 1996).

125 For the history and context for the composition of Xuanzang's record, see Li Rongxi's “Translator's Introduction” to *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*.

Rock Chamber, but these were not as profound as the texts kept in the Nāga Palace in India. The Buddha's image was drawn at the Terrace of Coolness, but it was not as fine as the statue erected at Vulture Peak.¹²⁶

As can be seen, this account ostensibly maintains the significance of Emperor Ming's dream (as discussed above), given that it highlights the role of this event (and, by extension, the Chinese imperial house itself) in the importation of Buddhism, but it does so while explicitly contrasting the qualities of the Buddhist scriptures and icons accessible in China to the purer, deeper, more efficacious versions found in India. This, of course, allows the bureaucrat author to contrast this unfortunate state of affairs with the joint triumph of both Buddhism and the Chinese cultural sphere under the Tang: a rhetorical move that transforms Emperor Taizong into the new Emperor Ming.¹²⁷ Likewise, the late seventh century biography of Xuanzang written by Huili (慧立, b. 615 CE) and Yancong (彦惊, n.d.), the *Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Ci'en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty (Da Tang Daciensi sanzang fashi zhuan 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳, T. 2053)*, begins with two informatory dream narratives: the first, a prophetic vision that appeared to his mother on the occasion of his birth (presaging his eventual travels), and, the second, a dream of travelling to Mount Sumeru ascribed to the monk himself, which occurred in response to his request for an omen on the eve of his great departure.¹²⁸ Given the significance of Xuanzang, and (specifically) his role in transmitting novel

126 Li Rongxi (trans.), 3. For a discussion of this episode as something of an “open signifier” in medieval Chinese Buddhism, see above.

127 This identification is made more explicitly in the following section:

After having travelled for many years, [Xuanzang] returned home and reached Chang'an in the first month of the nineteenth year [of Zhenguan], bringing back six hundred fifty-seven books, which he translated into Chinese by imperial decree. Dharma Master [Xuanzang] personally visited one hundred ten countries and heard information about twenty-eight countries. Some of them are mentioned in the historical records of previous dynasties, while others are known to us for the first time in the present age. All of them are influenced by the spirit of harmony and enjoy the benevolence of Great Tang. They have paid homage and submitted to the authority of the Emperor, beseeching him to dispatch officials to reform their language. They climbed mountainous paths to come to offer tribute, and they were so merrily entertained at the imperial court that they clapped their hands; dressed in the costume of the Tang, they formed into groups (*ibid.*, 4).

128 初法師之生也，母夢法師著白衣西去。母曰：「汝是我子，今欲何去？」答曰：「為求法故去。」此則遊方之先兆也。貞觀三年秋八月，將欲首塗，又求祥瑞。乃夜夢見大海中有蘇迷盧山，四寶所成，極為嚴麗。意欲登山，而洪濤洶湧，又無船楫，不以為懼，乃決意而入。忽見石蓮華涌乎波外，應足而生，却而觀之，隨

Buddhist teachings to China, the rhetorical deployment of dream narratives in these contexts is fully compatible with similar instances of maternal dreams and auspicious dream omens already discussed.

Though it is impossible to know whether these specific oneiric episodes would have been familiar to Daoxuan, given that they were ultimately recorded several decades after the original compilation of XGSZ,¹²⁹ I nonetheless found it notable that his version of the Xuanzang biography lacks most of these oneiric miracles, especially given his general interest in such accounts (as discussed in the *Introduction* and *passim*). Instead, while the XGSZ's account of the monk's travels does feature four narrative uses of *meng*, all four of them are specifically related to the task of bridging the liminal gulf between India and China and, more specifically, with recasting the respective soteriological valuations of these two regions in the imaginations of readers. Though this apparent pattern may simply be a side-effect of the specific circumstances of the monk's peripatetic life, I believe that the various structural and symbolic features of this account makes such a dismissive reading untenable.¹³⁰

足而滅。須臾至山下，又峻峭不可上。試躡身自騰，有搏颺颯至，扶而上昇。到山頂，四望廓然，無復擁礙，喜而寤焉，遂即行矣。時年二十六也。(T. 2053: 222c13–23). See: Li Hung-hsi, trans., *The Life of Hsuan-tsang: The Tripitaka Master of Great Tzu En Monastery*, (Peking: The Chinese Buddhist Association, 1959), 12; Arthur Waley, *The Real Tripitaka and Other Pieces*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952), 16. Note that Waley omits the oneiric conception narrative. Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins*, briefly mentions these dream accounts, but only to suggest that they were *post facto* retrojections that were meant to be interpreted as good omens (323).

In researching this issue, I discovered that Dan Lusthaus delivered an unpublished paper on “Xuanzang’s Dreams” at the *Association for Asian Studies Southeast Regional Conference* in Savannah, GA (1997). As per the handout (accessible at <http://www.safarmer.com/Indo-Eurasian/XZDreams-summary.pdf>), it appears that he considered the twelve dreams events referenced in T. 2053, exploring their narrative function(s) and the insights that they could offer on the hagiographical mentality of the late seventh century. He summarizes some of these conclusions in Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology*, 421 ff. 100. As will be discussed below, I find it notable that all of the dream events that do not comment directly on the relationship between India and China are absent from the XGSZ telling.

129 That said, and as noted in the Introduction, Shinohara, in “Changing Roles for Miraculous Images,” argues that the XGSZ “was first completed by Daoxuan in 645 but expanded later with additional material he prepared before his death in 667” (144). If he is correct, Daoxuan would likely not have had access to the *Biography of the Tripitaka Master of Dacien Temple* (T. 2053), but would have been able to consult Xuanzang's autobiographical account of his voyage (T. 2087). Moreover, as noted by Nicol, Daoxuan travelled to Hongfu monastery in 645 to participate in the production of some early translations of the scriptures assembled during Xuanzang's voyage, which meant that he was likely present during the composition and production of the *Record of the Western Regions* (156–158).

130 Another line of evidence for the plausibility of this reading is offered in Nicol's *Daoxuan and the Creation of A Buddhist Sacred Geography*, which contains a detailed and persuasive analysis of Daoxuan's *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 (T. 2088): an explicitly cosmographic treatise whose rhetorical aims parallel those I am positing here. Moreover, she

In the XGSZ version of Xuanzang's biography, the first instance of *meng* occurs long after the monk's decision to travel westward in search of Buddhist scriptures (in particular, those related to the *Yogācāra* school). Unlike the cases considered previously, it is a second-order case of oneiric practice: a dream narrative shared with the visiting monk upon his arrival at the renowned intellectual center of the traditional Buddhist world, Nālandā University.¹³¹ We pick up the narrative with the Chinese and Indian monks exchanging formulaic pleasantries with one another:

When Xuanzang's panegyric was complete, he was directed to his seat and asked from whence he had come. He replied that he had come from the Country of *Cīna* and that he had come wanting to study the *Yogā[cārabhūmi-śāstra]* and other discourses. Having heard this, [the senior monk and *Yogācāra* master Śīlabhadra]¹³² began to weep and wail, calling on his disciple Buddhahadra to speak on his behalf concerning past matters.

Buddhabhadra said: “The Master has, for the last three years, suffered with an affliction [that feels] like being pricked with knives. He had wanted to stop eating and end his life. He dreamt of a golden coloured man who said: 'You must not reject your physical body. In the past, you had been the king of a country and had caused much harm to living beings. It is your duty to personally repent for [these actions], so what would be achieved by ending your own life? There is a monk from *Cīna* coming here to study and learn. At present, he is already on the road, and in three years, he will arrive here. By bestowing the [Buddhist] *Teaching* upon him, he will once again [allow it] to circulate freely, [which will cause] your sins to be extinguished of themselves. I am Mañjuśrī.¹³³ This is the reason that I have come with this exhortation.' These days, the Master [continues to be] afflicted.”

also offers two compelling examples of Daoxuan (and his contemporaries) explicitly employing dream narratives to transect inter-regional boundaries: first, this text's preface includes a reference to the Yellow Emperor visiting India in a dream. Thus, “providing the birthplace of the Buddha with the legitimacy (from the Chinese perspective) of a place visited by the Yellow Emperor and therefore with a claim to being connected, albeit loosely, to the Chinese cultural sphere” [182]); second, she notes that Daoxuan's close colleague Daoshi cited the canonical series of ten dreams ascribed to an Indian monarch, the ninth of which describes the decline of Buddhism in India as contrasted with the periphery through the image of a pond whose center was turbid but whose edges were clear (248–251). She concludes this section as follows:

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the idea of the decline of the centre as seen in the dream sequences was not utilised by apologists arguing for a bright future for the Dharma in China until Daoxuan and his associates do so (250–251).

Though she does not mention any of the specific episodes I discuss below, I would argue that the following section represents a clear case of this same rhetorical device.

- 131 For a helpful overview of the history of Nālandā as an educational institution (albeit one that draws some of its conclusions from the travel record currently under discussion), see: Sukmar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Their Contribution to Indian Culture*, (London: Unwin and Allen, 1962), 328–348.
- 132 For more detail on this Buddhist master (in the context of a different telling of this episode), see Waley, 44–45; Li, *Life of Hsuan-tsang*, 102–104.
- 133 For instance, Waley comments on the link between the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and the *Yogācāra* school (44–45).

[Śīlabhadra,] the True Dharma Treasury,¹³⁴ then asked: “How long have you been on the road?” Xuanzang said, “I left three years ago.” Since it was the same as his dream, [the elder monk] felt mingled sorrow and delight, and thankfully paid homage to [his Chinese visitor].

[Nālandā] monastery, which had a longstanding [tradition of] establishing the dharma, had ten member [monks] tasked with transmitting the Three Baskets, but up to that point there had been a single vacancy [in their ranks].¹³⁵ Thanks to Xuanzang's bearing and reputation, he soon came to occupy this position. Their daily rations [consisted of] superior foodstuffs numbering twenty dishes, [including] a bushel of “grown-up” rice,¹³⁶ betel nuts, cardamom pods,¹³⁷ camphor, flavoured milk, and refined butter,¹³⁸ among other dishes. The four servers and the monastery warden [began the meal] by bearing an image on a palanquin, followed by thirty [more] people. As for the “grown-up rice,” it was [merely] round-grained rice, though [each grain] was the size of black soy bean.¹³⁹ The fragrance of the cooked rice [wafted] one hundred paces, [unique] to this country alone, [where it is] served to kings, all the way down to those who know the [Buddha's] Teaching.¹⁴⁰

奘禮讚訖，並命令坐，問從何來，答「從支那國來，欲學瑜伽等論。」聞已啼泣，召弟子覺賢說已舊事，賢曰：「和上三年前患困如刀刺，欲不食而死，夢金色人曰：『汝勿厭身！往作國王，多害物命，當自悔責，何得自盡！有支那僧來此學問，已在道中，三年應至。以法惠彼，彼復流通，汝罪自滅。吾是曼殊室利，故來相勸。』」和上今損。」正法藏問：「在路幾時？」奘曰：「出三年矣。」既與夢同，悲喜交集。禮謝訖。寺素立法，通三藏者員置十人，由來闕一。以奘風問，便處其位，日給上饌二十盤，大人米一斗，檳榔、豆蔻、龍腦香、乳蘇蜜等，淨人四，婆羅一，行乘象輿，三十人從。大人米者粳米也，大如烏豆，飯香百步，惟此國有，王及知法者預焉。

In certain respects, this episode cleaves to the narrative standards established by previous Chinese accounts of inter-regional interaction (both Buddhist and otherwise), including the cataloguing of

“exotic” foreign goods and practices,¹⁴¹ the Chinese pilgrim's deferential interaction with the elderly

134 A respectful moniker bestowed upon Śīlabhadra (see T. 2060: 451c27).

135 See GR for *que* 闕 as “poste vacant ou occupé par quelqu'un qui n'en est pas titulaire.”

136 This could also be translated as “great man” rice. Perhaps it simply refers to rice that has been aged for a certain span of time?

137 While this rare character is not present in any of my offline dictionaries, including HDC, I managed to find it online here: <https://www.yabla.com/chinese-english-pinyin-dictionary.php?define=%E8%94%BB>.

138 “Sumi 蘇蜜,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E8%98%87%E8%9C%9C>, gives “refined butter” as its base definition, but also suggests “oil and refined honey. (Skt. ghr̥ta, madhu, pāna-rasa)” as a secondary definition... Note: this does not matter much in context, as this is clearly a list of exotic foods, but it would still be interesting to know how to parse this phrase.

139 See GR for *wudou* 烏豆.

140 T. 2060: 452a3–18, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), 111.

141 As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the notion of characterizing a region through a catalogue of local foods and products has considerable antiquity in China. See, for example, Lewis, *Flood Myths*, 30–32, 65–67; Strassberg, *A*

Yogācāra master, and the symbolic “decentering” achieved by referring to the monk's place of origin via the Sanskritic *Cīna* (支那國). But these superficial similarities merely serve to disguise the revolutionary fashion in which this episode employs an informatory dream (and its retelling) to upend the standard medieval Chinese Buddhist perspective on the soteriological subordination of China as a peripheral region.

Given that both Xuanzang's account of his own travels and the monk's XGSZ biography employ Emperor Ming's dream as a framing device,¹⁴² it can be no accident that this episode contains a near-perfect inversion of that tale's perspective on inter-regional religious interaction, with the Indian monastic master cast into the role of the erstwhile Chinese emperor. Specifically, we see Śīlabhadra (who was not only an authority figure at Nālandā University, but who was also said to have been a king in a previous life) dream of a golden man,¹⁴³ who appears in order to reveal religious verities from outside of the monk's sphere of influence. Just as Emperor Ming's dream is shown to have led the Han ruler to recenter his religious geography (necessitating the dispatching of emissaries westward to retrieve teachings and material objects related to the numinous and efficacious foreign deity), the Great Master of Nālandā is overtly informed that his past sins can only be expiated by assisting his Chinese visitor in his mission to bring the Yogācāra revelation back to China. It is noteworthy that Xuanzang's preaching is explicitly described as a means by which the dharma “will once again circulate freely” (*bi*

Chinese Bestiary.

142 See: T. 2087: 867b (discussed above) and T. 2060: 456a.

143 I find it difficult to imagine that this shared oneiric image is mere coincidence, especially given that Xuanzang's later biography posits a rather different oneiric image: 於夜中夢三天人，一黃金色，二琉璃色，三白銀色，形貌端正，儀服輕明，來問和上曰 (T. 2053: 236c25–28). As per Li's rendering:

One night he saw in a dream three heavenly beings, of whom one was golden yellow in colour, one was green and the other one silver white in colour. They had good features and were well-dressed, and they came and asked the teacher: ...” (*Life of Hsuan-tsang*, 103–104).

Given the importance of the Emperor Ming narrative in the *Eminent Monks* literature (as discussed above), I believe that any culturally competent reader (or, in fact, anyone who had simply been attentively reading through these collections) could not help but be struck by the image of a golden man appearing in a dream.

fu liutong 彼復流通), as this obviously implies that the Buddha's teaching had become stagnant (if not moribund) in the land of its inception.

In addition, both episodes are narratively self-contained, as they include both informatory and confirmatory elements: in the first case, Emperor Ming's dream was validated by his advisors, who were able to recognize the Buddha from the ruler's retelling of his oneiric experience, and then re-confirmed when his emissaries succeeded in encountering and returning with Buddhist monks, texts and images; likewise, Śīlabhadra, who had also clearly discussed the matter with his disciples, given that the narration of the Master's dream is delegated to an underling, receives miraculous confirmation when he discovers the precise length of time that his Chinese visitor had been *en route*. For all of these reasons, we can see that this structural parallelism recasts Xuanzang as a new Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga, which accords well with the plaudits and honours bestowed upon him after his arrival. The one striking similarity, which breaks the structural parallel,¹⁴⁴ is the shared geographical focus of their respective missions:

Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga: Indian monk → brings new Indian Buddhist teachings **to China**
Xuanzang: Chinese monk → visits India to bring new Indian Buddhist teachings **to China**

As such, this episode of Xuanzang's biography can be seen as a further step toward “decentering” India in the soteriological geography of medieval Buddhism – a step that the author of the GSZ biography of

144 For an interesting discussion of the structural property of analogies (including preliminary attempts to model this aspect of human cognition through generalized AI algorithms), see Douglas R. Hofstadter's *Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies: Computer Models of the Fundamental Mechanisms of Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 309–358 and *passim*. Obviously, the structural parallel would have been stronger if Xuanzang's primary mission had been to bring Chinese teachings to India. That said, and even though he only did so after returning to China, Xuanzang **was** famously involved in preparing a Sanskrit translation of the Chinese classic *Daodejing* for the edification of South Asian elites: a fact that adds additional structural coherence to the analogy proposed above. See: Paul Pelliot, “Autour d'une traduction sanscrite du *Tao tö king*,” *T'oung Pao* Second Series 13:3 (1912): 351–430; Daniel Boucher, “Translation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature (1000 BCE–900CE)*, edited by Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li, and Xiaofei Tian, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 494–509, 505.

Dharmayaśas was clearly unwilling to take.¹⁴⁵

While the previous episode is suggestive in and of itself, the prospect that Daoxuan was actively engaged in critically reevaluating China's place in the seventh-century religious imaginaire is further supported by the fact that the *only* other dream narrative present in Xuanzang's XGSZ biography is credited with impelling the monk's eventual departure from India. Given Daoxuan's general position on the significance of dreams as numinous signs, as well as the fact that both Xuanzang's own travel record and the later Huili/Yancong biography include numerous additional dream narratives,¹⁴⁶ it is striking that the XGSZ biography elides these episodes by opting instead to only include oneiric visions related to the protagonist's transecting of interregional boundaries (China → India / India → China). In particular, I would argue that this second dream episode reimagines the soteriological status of India by

145 I find Nicol's comments on Daoxuan's involvement with the translation of the *Sutra of the Scriptural Basket of the Great Bodhisattva* 大菩薩藏經 (included in T. 310) particularly salient here:

In the *Da Pusa zangjing* the disadvantages of being born in a borderland are made clear. Daoxuan would have found himself literally holding the brush to write a sentence suggesting that those who disparage the Buddha will find themselves sinking into rebirth in such benighted places as 'the earth prisons (that is, the hells), the animal realm, Yama's domain, or in a borderland among *mleccha* of evil views...'. Having spent time with Xuanzang during the period Bianji was collating the *Xiyu ji*, and, according to the Preface to the Shijia fangzhi possibly involved in the process himself, Daoxuan may have heard Xuanzang recounting the response of the Nālandā monks, and would have realised that they regarded the Chinese as *mleccha*. It is hard to imagine this information being met with disinterested equanimity, but whether this stimulated any particular reaction on the part of Daoxuan is impossible to say with any certainty (159).

While the current discussion is not definitive proof that Daoxuan was indeed responding to such claims, I would argue that his foregrounding of this particular oneiric episode is telling, especially given the implicit perspective on the Nālandā elites contained therein.

146 On the topic of the variety of oneiric visions (and other omens and prodigies) preserved in the extant Xuanzang biographies, Arthur Waley opines (in the conclusion of his biographical sketch of the famed monk):

I think I have made it clear in narrating these episodes that I am only repeating what we are told and do not necessarily accept them as history. But we should be quite wrong to dismiss as monkish fiction all the dreams, visions, and forewarnings in which the tale of his life abounds. Such spiritual happenings were the common background of secular no less than monastic life in those days. I have heard a European scholar dismiss as 'crazy' Tripitaka's friend Daoxuan, on the ground that he had such a remarkable quantity of visions and set such store by them. But in those days it was considered a mark of the highest sanity and perspicacity to have visions; a sign of craziness to ignore them (130).

I cannot help but concur, and hope that the present study offers some insights into exactly how Daoxuan's belief in such visions might have indeed been profoundly sensible, given the doctrinal, praxical and epistemic circumstances in which he was embedded.

actively engaging with the then-popular apocalyptic discourses related to the decline of the dharma (as discussed above):¹⁴⁷

[Xuanzang] then travelled south-east, back to Nālandā, where he paid a visit to Śīlabhadra. Thereafter, he went to Yaṣṭivana¹⁴⁸ Mountain, to the place of Prasenajit,¹⁴⁹ a householder Treatise Master. With this person, who was of the Kshatriya class, he studied his way through the inner and outer [aspects] of the five sciences,¹⁵⁰ [as well as] numerous techniques. He lived among the forest disciples, lecturing on the meaning of the Buddhist scriptures. As for the secular and religious renunciants, [every] day they numbered in the hundreds of individuals. That country's king and other [nobles] all came to observe the rites, to wash his feet, to make food offerings, and to offer him a fief within the city.

Xuanzang then made a study of the “Firm Decision” [section] of the *Consciousness Only* Discourse, [as well as] the *Percept and Object* Discourse, the *Perfection of Fearlessness* Discourse, and others.¹⁵¹ [This project,] from tip to tail [took] two years. One night, he dreamt that, from the inside the temple all the way outward to the forest and village, a fire raged, burning it to ash. He then saw a golden person, who addressed him, saying: “Ten years hence, King Śīlāditya¹⁵² will fall and India will promptly [descend into] chaos. It will be like a fire

147 Drawing on evidence from *Shijia fangzhi* (T. 2088), Nicol suggests that Daoxuan likely did not see himself as dwelling in the age of *mofa*, especially given his tendency to collect and report upon examples of miraculous responses, which of course speaks to the continued efficacy of Buddhist teaching and practice (283–287).

148 HDC notes that this is a translation of the Indian region typically transliterated as *Yisezhi lin* 洩瑟知林. See: “Yisezhi lin 洩瑟知林,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%B4%A9%E7%91%9F%E7%9F%A5%E6%9E%97>:

Forest of the bamboo staff which took root when thrown away by the Brahman who did not believe the Buddha was 16 feet in height; but the more he measured the taller grew the Buddha, hence his chagrin. Name of a forest near Rājagrha. Also translated as 杖林.

149 Or possibly “Jayasena”: “Jayasena/Prasenajit was a Yogācāra master with whom Xuanzang 玄奘 studied during his stay at Nālandā temple” (“Shengjung 勝軍,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%8B%9D%E8%BB%8D>). For an overview of Xuanzang's study with Prasenajit, see Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology*, 408–412.

150 As per “Wuming 五明,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BA%94%E6%98%8E>:

Five fields of learning in medieval India: grammar and linguistics (śabda-vidyā) 聲明; skills and crafts, such as mathematics (śilpakarma-sthāna-vidyā) 工巧明; medicine (cikitsā-vidyā) 醫方明; logic and epistemology (hetu-vidyā) 因明; psychology, self-development and self-understanding (adhyātma-vidyā) 內明, which Monier-Williams calls the ‘knowledge of the supreme spirit, or of ātman,’ the basis of the four Vedas; the Buddhists regard the Tripiṭaka and the 十二部教 as their inner philosophy.

151 These text / chapter titles are part of a longer list recorded in the Huili / Yancong biography. Li, in *Life of Hsuan-tsang*, renders their titles as: “the *Explanatory Treatise on Vijñaptimatrasiddhi Śāstra*, the *Treatise on Doctrinal Theories*, and the *Abhayasiddhi Śāstra*” (149). Conversely, following the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%B1%BA%E6%93%87>), *jueze* 決擇 could be read as a reference to a “section of the Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra.”

152 See “Jieri wang 戒日王,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%88%92%E6%97%A5%E7%8E%8B>:

Śīlāditya (r. circa 606–647). The king of Kanyākubja 曲女城 in Central India in the seventh century. He patronized

doused with water.”

Upon waking, he approached Prasenajit and explained [the dream] to him. Xuanzang's intentions were, at that moment, decided. He made his preparations and departed eastward. By the end of [Tang Gaozong's] Yonghui reign period [656 CE], Śīlāditya had indeed fallen and there was now an array of famines and disasters, just as [Xuanzang had] dreamt it.¹⁵³

便東南還那爛陀，參戒賢已，往杖林山勝軍論師居士所。其人剎利種，學通內外五明數術，依林養徒，講佛經義。道俗歸者，日數百人。諸國王等亦來觀禮，洗足供養，封賞城邑。奘從學唯識決擇論、意義論、成無畏論等，首尾二年。夜夢寺內及外林邑，火燒成灰，見一金人告曰：「却後十年，戒日王崩，印度便亂，當如火蕩。」覺已，向勝軍說之。奘意方決，嚴具東還。及永徽之末，戒日果崩，今並飢荒，如所夢矣。¹⁵⁴

When this passage is read through a geographical lens, two countervailing themes leap to the fore: first, the continued celebration of Xuanzang in the “land of the patriarchs” and the incipient death of Buddhism in the region. In the first case, just as the previous passage saw the Chinese monk greeted with the highest honours and immediately pressed into service in the country's most esteemed center of religious education, this passage too highlights his intellectual and moral capacities, and the extent to which they allowed him to seamlessly integrate into the fabric of Indian Buddhist monastic society. Not only is he depicted as capable of explicating the most recondite of texts, including those of the Consciousness-Only school that impelled his initial voyage, but he also comes to serve as a dharma teacher, and even finds time to master the “Five Sciences.”¹⁵⁵ His intellectual prowess also earns him

Buddhism, and even wrote Buddhist dramas such as the Nagānanda 龍喜記 and the Ratnāvalī 寶珠胸飾. Son of Pratāpāditya and brother of Rājyavardhana. Under the spiritual auspices of Avalokitēśvara, he became king of Kanyākubja CE 606 and conquered India and the Punjab. He was merciful to all creatures, strained drinking water for horses and elephants, was a most liberal patron of Buddhism, re-established the great quinquennial assembly, built many stūpas, showed special favor to Śīlabhadra and Xuanzang 玄奘, and composed the Aṣṭama-hāśrī-caitya-saṃskṛta-stotra 八大靈塔梵讚. He reigned about forty years.

153 T. 2060: 452c14–23; punctuated following XGSZ 2014, 113–114.

154 For a more substantive (and slightly different) version of this episode, see T. 2053 (Li, *Life of Hsuan-tsang*, 149–150).

155 Not only are these intellectual feats frequently ascribed to Indian Buddhist Patriarchs as well, but they also became linked in the medieval Chinese imagination with their purported thaumaturgical prowess, as described in Young's *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*:

Without doubt the most comprehensive medieval Chinese source for spells and talismanic seals devised by this Indian patriarch-cum-local deity was Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Five Sciences*. Set during the reign of King Aśoka, at a time of widespread famine, pestilence, and destitution, this text provided a vast array of thaumaturgical methods for warding off evils, attaining powers and riches, and healing afflictions. This text thus reinscribed earlier narratives of these masters saving the world in dark times, but instead of emphasizing how they dispelled confusion

the respect of the local gentry, whose offer of an estate (a patronage relationship that would have been deeply familiar to Chinese Buddhists at the time)¹⁵⁶ would have certainly served to bind the monk to both that particular ruling family and, more broadly, to that particular region of the Indian subcontinent. As in the previous account, all of these manifestations of sagely wisdom and virtue, and the plaudits that Xuanzang receives for them, serve to implicitly vitiate the previous view of China as a soteriological “borderland,” and, in the process, belie the implied conception of the Sino-Indian relationship as one where the transfer of knowledge, religious goods, and religious professionals was entirely unidirectional. Here, instead, was a Chinese monk who was not only able to follow the example of the Indian Patriarchs in China, but whose qualities were seen as worthy of celebration in the land of the Buddha's birth as well.¹⁵⁷

with their doctrinal treatises, here they employed spell and talismans to eliminate demons, curses, sickness, and poverty. As such, unlike the earlier accounts by Kumārajīva's associates, this text accords with the Six Dynasties eschatologies studied by Michel Strickmann, in which therapeutic and apotropaic remedies were provided to save the world in end times (170).

This text is described in more detail in James Robson, “Signs of Power: Talismanic Writing in Chinese Buddhism,” *History of Religions* 48:2 (2008): 130–169, 147–149.

156 The economics of patronage are described at length in Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), *passim*. Weinstein, in “Imperial Patronage in T'ang Buddhism,” provides a cogent summary of these issues:

Each of the early Tang emperors, in spite of attempts to exercise control over the [Buddhist] church, contributed to the founding of new temples, had sutras chanted at court, arranged for the ordination of monks, heard lectures on scripture, and sponsored masses for the dead. Such acts of piety were, of course, commonplace under the preceding dynasties, the rulers of which were usually devout Buddhists. With the early Tang emperors, however, we get the impression that these public displays of devotion were carried out, not so much to satisfy their own religious yearnings in the direction of Buddhism, as for political expediency (267).

157 Discussing this cosmological recentering in the context of the medieval appropriation of the biographies of the Indian patriarchs, Young, in *Imagining the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*, notes that, in the context of the Mahayana cosmology (featuring its many Buddhas),

the Indian patriarchs not only provided models of Buddhist practice suited to dark times full of dim wits; they also conveyed the apex of Indian truth eastward to help redefine China as a center of Buddhist civilization. ... With these great works of the Indian patriarchs readily available in China, India was no longer the sole locus of profound Buddhist exegesis. Now Chinese scholar-monks also had the means to elucidate the True Dharma and thereby join the ranks of the greatest Buddhist saints across the Sino-Indian divide (115).

It is clear that, in the above account, Xuanzang is being cast as just such a “great saint.”

These general comments about the characterization of Xuanzang may seem somewhat tangential to the thesis of the present chapter, but I would argue that they are essential to properly contextualizing the rhetorical function of the second dream episode within the monk's XGSZ biography. More specifically, this view of Xuanzang as a preeminent teacher whose innate wisdom and perspicacity have earned him renown both in and outside of China serves as an implicit response to several of the key rhetorical questions underlying much medieval Chinese Buddhist writing in all genres: namely, who can be taken as an appropriate teacher in the human world after the *parinirvāṇa* of the historical Buddha? What sort of teachings and practices remain efficacious in a world of dharmic decline?¹⁵⁸ In this context, it seems certain that a culturally competent seventh-century reader could not have helped but read these themes into the present account, which unequivocally counterposes the plaudits accorded to an excellent Chinese teacher with a prophecy of the downfall of Indian Buddhism.

In addition to its relevance to the general theme of dharma decline, the specific language used here to describe Buddhist temples and surrounding regions being overcome in a great conflagration would also likely have evoked the persecution of Buddhism under the Northern Zhou 北周 (574 and 577 CE) for the account's Chinese audience.¹⁵⁹ Given that Xuanzang's biography, as well as his

158 For the development of a distinctly Chinese perspective on the decline of the dharma and its eschatological implications, based on medieval apocryphal literature, see: Zürcher, "Prince Moonlight," 12–22. Similarly, Ownby (1525–1528) outlines some relevant medieval perspectives on the impracticability of the dharma (and, in particular, the monastic dharma) in the Age of Final Dharma, as exemplified in the teachings of the Three Stages Sect. For a discussion of this ideological stance as reflected in medieval iconography, see Young, *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs*, 97–112, for a case study of the sixth-century Cave of Great Perduring Saints, which purports to depict standard Buddhist deities (i.e., buddhas and bodhisattvas) alongside the Indian patriarchs to symbolize the continued protection of the Dharma in an abjectly fallen age.

159 This persecution was discussed in some detail in the previous chapter. For an additional (and rather visceral) linkage between conflagrations and the Northern Zhou persecution, see: James Benn, "Fire and the Sword: Some Connections between Self-immolation and Religious Persecution in the History of Chinese Buddhism," *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses and Representations*, edited by Jacqueline I. Stone and Bryan Cuevas, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 234–65. For an excellent overview, see Shi, *Case Studies of Three Persecutions of Buddhism*, 101–126.

pilgrimage record (which provided some material for it), were both composed at least in part for elite lay patrons, the purported cause of this catastrophe is particularly significant. Consider this target audience when reading the message purported to have been delivered by Xuanzang's dream interlocutor: “Ten years hence, King Śīlāditya will fall and India will promptly [descend into] chaos.” Just as only the most exemplary teachers were able to efficaciously expound the Buddhist message in an age of declining dharma, so too does its continued flourishing depend on the active patronage and intercession of moral kings.¹⁶⁰ More significant yet, at least from the perspective of this target audience, is the fact the downfall of India is not ascribed to any specific calamity or aggressor: instead, it is depicted as a seemingly unavoidable side-effect of the loss of a beneficent royal patron. It is hard to imagine that the significance of such a claim would have been lost on the pro-Buddhist gentry of early Tang China.

In addition to the general significance of the *decline of dharma* imagery in this account, however, it is also vitally important to consider the specific narrative context in which this dream narrative is deployed, as it radically reverses the previously standard soteriological characterization of Sino-Indian relations (as suggested above). Going one step further than the GSZ's account of Dharmayaśas' oneiric imperative to travel to China, which implied that solitary practice in India was less soteriologically efficacious than actively transmitting the dharma eastward, this account sees a revered Chinese patriarch, whose sanctity and wisdom were more than sufficient to earn him renown in the land of the Buddha's birth, being driven from India by a prophecy that Buddhism would soon cease to flourish there. It is difficult to imagine a more overt attempt to invert the conceptual geography of

¹⁶⁰ For instance, Nattier, in *Once Upon a Future Time*, surveys the textual history of the notion of the decline of the dharma, describing “excessive state control” (i.e., the failure to establish proper relations between state and sangha) as one of the inciting causes, drawing largely from the *Sutra for Humane Kings* (128–129).

medieval Chinese Buddhists, given that this account implies that not only are the best Chinese scholars, teachers and exegetes on par with (or even superior to) their Indian counterparts, but that now the socio-political circumstances in China have also outstripped those found in the cradle of Buddhism. It is a bold rhetorical about-face.

The editorial creativity and rhetorical sophistication of Daoxuan's approach to these issues is best appreciated by attending to these two episodes in parallel, especially given the wealth of additional dream narratives that he could have opted to include (as noted above). In keeping with his general employment of oneiric narratives to offer informatory insights into liminal circumstances, it is striking that the only narrative uses of *meng* in the entire biography occur to presage the (literally) boundary-breaking pilgrim monk's entry into and departure from India. In addition, the transecting of this geographical boundary is, in both cases, heralded by the appearance of a “golden man,” which serves throughout both GSZ and XGSZ as a metonym for Emperor Ming's dream (i.e., the prototypical moment of Sino-Indian contact, at least from the standpoint of traditional Chinese Buddhist historiography). Also intriguing is the fact that, in both Śīlabhadra and Xuanzang's dreams, the golden man is depicted using exonyms to describe the specific regions in question: *Cīna* 支那 and *Īndu* 印度, respectively. While this could just be a side-effect of clever composition (or of the fact that these were at one time independently circulating dream narratives), the reference to time in the second episode supports the possibility that this was part of a deliberate rhetorical strategy, intended to bookend Xuanzang's experience in India between two structurally parallel dreams. To wit, even though this account includes a variety of specific temporal references (calculated by reign period, in standard Chinese historiographical style),¹⁶¹ all temporal durations between these two dream episodes is

161 E.g., 大業 (T. 2060: 446c12, 446c25–26); 武德 (T. 2060: 447a14); 貞觀 (T. 2060: 447b25; 454b24).

measured entirely via internal dating (e.g., “three years after he left [China]” [出三年矣, T. 2060: 452a12], “he also stayed there for two years” [又停二年, T. 2060: 452c13]). This makes it all the more striking when the second (and final) dream account in Xuanzang's biography concludes with the authorial insertion translated above, which temporally situates the fall of India via the Chinese imperial dating scheme as occurring at the “end of [Tang Gaozong's] Yonghui reign period [656 CE],”¹⁶² as this form of dating forces the reader to reconceptualize the South Asian historical events depicted therein within the timeline of Chinese history, thus serving as another instance of dream narratives being used to renegotiate soteriological geography.

Sillan Dreams in XGSZ

The use of dream narratives as part of the XGSZ's reconceptualization of China within the soteriological geography of Buddhism is not restricted to the realm of Sino-Indian relations, however, as the later collection also contains two additional instances of dream narratives being used to create religio-praxical bridges: this time between the Tang State and the Korean peninsula.

First, we turn to an account of the birth of the famed Sillan monk Jajang 慈藏 (n.d.).¹⁶³ Though his XGSZ biography¹⁶⁴ does not explicitly include an oneiric event associated with his renowned

162 T. 2060: 452c22. It should be noted that Xuanzang's final preparations to leave India are described in the following several Taishō pages, meaning that the section described above does not fully circumscribe the monk's time in India. That said, dream episode and subsequent the authorial insertion (translated and discussed above) certainly seem to serve as a structural bookend. I would like to look into this further. A good first line of investigation would involve attempting to track down the various sources that Daoxuan drew upon when compiling this account.

163 Note: though his name is also occasionally romanized as “Chajang,” I have silently emended these sources to “Jajang” to avoid confusion. For an example of this confusion in action, DDB has an entry for 慈藏 that romanizes the monk's name as “Chajang,” but whose XGSZ reference directs to the biography of Facheng rather than the monk's own biography. Under the DDB entry for Facheng (法常), in contrast, 慈藏 is rendered as “Jajang.” Fortunately, the *Buddhist Studies Person Authority Database* clarified this confusion by explicitly stating that both these XGSZ accounts are indeed referring to the same figure: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A005844>

164 T. 2060: 639a–640a.

history of interregional travel,¹⁶⁵ I have chosen to discuss it below not only for the sake of completeness but also because another XGSZ account (that of the monk Fachang 法常) does ascribe such a dream vision to his ostensible pupil (as will be discussed presently).¹⁶⁶ Also, given that this account lionizes a renowned monk from the Korean peninsula, it provides additional insights into Daoxuan's approach to the question of China's place in the sacred geography of Buddhism.¹⁶⁷ Therein, we see that this recontextualization process begins at the outset of the account, where discourses of exoticization and explicit references to the Tang Dynasty tribute system serve to contextualize this monk's auspicious birth within the framework of Chinese/Sillan relations:

The monk Jajang, whose secular family was of the Kim clan, was a person of the Domain of Silla. His ancestors were descendants of [the people of] the Three Han (which, in ancient times, were Kim Han, Ma Han, and Byeon Han). By law, they are subordinate to [our empire]; each one has its own chief, as recorded in the Liang [dynasty's] tribute chart. This is the Domain of Silla. The Wei [dynasty] called it “Silu,” [whereas] the Song called it “Xinluo [Silla].” It is the country of origin of the Eastern Yi and the Jin Han [peoples].

Jajang's father's name was Wulin [Ko: Murim], who was an official distinguished by reaching [the rank of] *supan*, which refers to a person of royal roots comparable to the highest rank in the

165 The role of Jajang in the eastward propagation of Buddhism is discussed in Eun-su Cho, “Manifestation of the Buddha's Land in the Here and Now: Relic Installation and Territorial Transformation in Medieval Korea,” in *Images, Relics and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites (Essays in Honour of Professor Koichi Shinohara)*, edited by James A. Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson, (Oakville, On: Mosaic, 2012), 138–163. For an overview of the initial transmission of Buddhism to Korea during the Three Kingdoms Period, which includes a discussion of the contributions of Kim Jajang, see: Hideo Inoue, “The Reception of Buddhism in Korea and Its Impact on Indigenous Culture” in *Introduction of Buddhism to Korea: New Cultural Patterns*, edited by Lewis R. Lancaster and C. S. Yu, translated by Robert Buswell, (Berkeley, Ca: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 29–78.

166 My skeptical tone here is a result of the fact that the XGSZ biography of Jajang does not mention his alleged Chinese preceptor whatsoever, claiming instead that the precepts were bestowed on him in a nocturnal vision of two men from the Heaven of the Thirty-three. According to this version, it is clear Jajang's vision alone is seen to provide him with the impetus (and the authority) to engage in widespread proselytization efforts: 「遂於眠寐見二丈夫曰。卿在幽隱欲為何利。藏曰。惟為利益眾生。乃授藏五戒訖曰。可將此五戒利益眾生。又告藏曰。吾從忉利天來。故授汝戒。因騰空滅。於是出山。一月之間國中士女咸受五戒。」 (T. 2060: 639b6–11). As an aside, it is notable that this is one of the “dream” visions that I initially missed due to my focus on episodes that explicitly include the term [*meng* 夢].

167 That said, Daoxuan is not unilaterally committed to this rhetorical position. For instance, Nicol notes that the supplementary biography of one of Jajang's associates concludes by noting that the existence of such pious foreigners is an instance of “the centre being turbid yet the borders pure” (248). Rather than reading this statement as a unilateral commentary on the moral qualities of these monks (or of the Korean peninsula, for that matter), Nicol makes the compelling argument that this claim should be interpreted in light of Daoxuan's general rhetorical aim of analogically recentering the place of China within the Buddhist soteriological sphere (i.e., Silla is to China as China is to India).

Tang bureaucracy.¹⁶⁸ He had already received a high position. He dutifully considered establishing a household,¹⁶⁹ since he had no descendants. As his longstanding sorrow continuously accumulated, [he began to] habitually rely on Buddhist teachings. He thereupon sought divine protection and broadly requested permission to [make] great alms [offerings].¹⁷⁰ [He also] prayed with him mind set on the Buddha dharma, while also making one thousand [copies] of the *Guanyin [Sutra]*.¹⁷¹

He hoped for the birth of an heir,¹⁷² vowing that, if his descendent reached adulthood, [he] would then give rise to the aspiration for enlightenment for the sake of liberating various types of living beings. An omen from the unseen realm [*ming* 冥] was the clear response [*ying* 應]. [His wife] dreamt of a star falling and entering her bosom. As a result, she suddenly became pregnant, and on the eighth day of the fourth month, she gave birth at an auspicious hour.¹⁷³ Both secular and religious [acquaintances] celebrated this as a rare and beneficent omen.¹⁷⁴

釋慈藏，姓金氏，新羅國人。其先三韓之後也。中古之時，辰韓、馬韓、卞韓率其部屬，各有魁長。案梁貢職圖，其新羅國，魏曰斯盧，宋曰新羅，本東夷辰韓之國矣。藏父名武林，官至蘇判異，(以本王族比唐一品) 既嚮高位，籌議攸歸，而絕無後嗣。幽憂每積，素仰佛理，乃求加護，廣請大捨，祈心佛法，并造千部觀音，希生一息，後若成長，願發道心，度諸生類。冥祥顯應，夢星墜入懷，因即有娠，以四月八日誕載良晨，道俗銜慶希有瑞也。

This account then continues on to characterize the youth born under these auspicious circumstances via a standard instance of the “precocious child” trope, describing his wisdom, lofty bearing, and love of study.¹⁷⁵ As discussed in the chapter on oneiric conceptions, both of the tropes included in this account

168 For a discussion of bureaucratic court ranks in Silla in the context of this biography, see Cho, “Manifestation of the Buddha's Land,” 141.

169 See GR for *gui* 歸 as a term for establishing a household. That said, it states that this usage is more common for young women, so I may be misreading it. He may also simply be discussing returning to his natal region.

170 I'm not totally convinced about my reading here, so I based it on what I read as a grammatical parallelism, wherein these six clauses (of which the marked passage represents numbers three and four) are divided into two groups: the first group (odd numbers) describe the father's situation, and the second (even numbers) describe the religious actions that he undertook in response to the circumstances described by the clauses in group one.

171 I am following XGSZ (2014), 965 in reading this as a reference to the *Guanyin Sutra*.

172 See HDC for *yixi* 一息 (def. #4): *yige zisi* 一个子嗣, wherein one of its textual examples is drawn from the roughly contemporaneous *Jin shu* (晉書, 648 CE).

173 I am reading 晨 as a specific temporal reference (7–9am) (GR).

174 T. 2060: 639a8–17; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), 964–965. For comparison, consider the translation of Jajang's biography included in the twelfth century Korean chronicle *Samguk Yusa* (三國遺事, ca. 1280 CE), whose explicit intertextual reference to XGSZ attests to its compiler's familiarity with Daoxuan's work. Ilyon, *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea*, translated by Tae-Hung Ha and Grafton K. Mintz, (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 298–304. Specifically, after describing Jajang's encounter with a divine monk, the Ha and Mintz translation includes the following note: “Ilyön says that because Jajang at first kept this event to himself, it was not recorded in the Tang *Biographies of Monks*” (300).

175 年過小學，神叡澄蘭，獨拔恒心 (T. 2060: 639a17–18). “Though extremely young, he was learned. His spiritual

(e.g., “fecundation via a celestial object penetrating the maternal body” and “auspicious birth yielding a precocious [/precociously Buddhist] child”) are employed extensively in XGSZ, with an intertextual history linking them, in the minds of culturally literate readers, to the standard accounts of exemplarity preserved in centuries of historical writing (both indigenous Chinese and Buddhist). Thus, in the same way that the XGSZ biography of Xuanzang rhetorically situates the fall of India within Chinese history through the inclusion of a dynastic date reference, this account serves to reimagine the auspicious birth of one of the most eminent and socially significant monastic pilgrims of the Silla dynasty by casting it in a Chinese mode. The parallels are numerous and undeniable, including the type of vow made by his father, the devotional activities that he is depicted performing, the language of the oneiric experience,¹⁷⁶ and the subsequent description of the youth's character. In all cases, and in spite of the exoticization of the future monk's birthplace in the account's introduction,¹⁷⁷ the unavoidable conclusion is that the specifically Chinese model of oneiric conception, up to and including its grounding in the *ganying* framework, is universal. The subordination of the exotic foreign beneath a universalized Chinese cultural pattern can be seen as an instance of “locative” (i.e., centripetal) cosmography, functioning to exalt the authority of the Chinese state. This rhetorical posture would have been both familiar and attractive to the elite lay patrons for whom this collection was compiled (as discussed above).

[nature] was astute, pure and elegant. He was singularly outstanding and steadfast.”

176 As an aside, though it is intriguing to consider the extent to which this account (and, specifically, the language of oneiric conception included therein) would have been the parseable to a Sillan Buddhist, this issue is somewhat outside the scope of the present discussion, given that the XGSZ account was clearly prepared for a Chinese discourse community.

177 I find it notable that the *Samguk Yusa* (cited above), also includes a similarly denigratory assessment of the innate soteriological status of the Korean peninsula – an assessment proffered by the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī in a visionary encounter with Jajang:

Your queen is the incarnation of a *kṣatriya* born in India, and received a prophecy from the Buddha. Her people are not as wild as the Eastern Barbarians but because of the rugged mountains and ugly streams in her kingdom the character of her people is distorted, and so they worship evil spirits, which provokes the wrath of Heaven from time to time. However, the presence of enlightened monks will bring peace to your country, and all shall enjoy the Buddha's teaching from the throne to the plow” (quoted in Cho, “Manifestation of the Buddha's Land,” 146). Cho also argues that this text's rhetorical aim is to highlight the transformative power of the relics that Jajang transported to Silla, which were seen as sufficiently puissant to transform the Korean Odae-san into a simulacrum of the Chinese Mount Wutai, and thus to sanctify the entire region (150–157).

Second, we turn to the account of Fachang (法常, 567–645): a famed exegete and preceptor to the Tang royal family.¹⁷⁸ In order to set the stage for his alleged oneiric interaction with Jajang, we will pick up Fachang's XGSZ biography in the ninth year of Tang emperor Taizong's Zhenguan reign period [635 CE], when the revered monk received an imperial summons to serve as precept master:

As a result, it was immediately decreed that [Fachang] should concurrently fill the position as master¹⁷⁹ of Kongguan monastery, [in the capacity of] senior chair. [While there,] he fostered strong relationships with both [new] visitors and long-time supporters, thanks to his preternatural comprehension of their sentiments. [He offered] far-reaching guidance [through his] dharma instruction, extending and protecting [the Buddhist message] without cease. Throughout this period, those who came to hear [his instruction] numbered in the thousands, [including] Eastern barbarians and Western rustics¹⁸⁰ who were able to overcome the difficulty [of their circumstances] to follow [his teaching] until their learning was complete and they returned to their [respective] countries. All [of these auditors], thanks to the Dharma Craftsman [Fachang], [received] the widespread transmission of the correct teaching, which continues to thrive up to the present day.

The crown prince of Silla, Kim Jajang grew indifferent to wealth and status, rejecting secular [values] and leaving the house[holder's life]. Though far away, [he had] heard [of Fachang] and, with reverent admiration, he thought of bearing witness to his words and instructions. So, he passed through the mountains and navigated the seas, coming from a distance to reach the [Chinese] capital. Thereafter, while on the boat, he dreamt of fixing his eyes on [Fachang's] face. Later on, when he got a good look at [the monk's] appearance, it was exactly like it had been in his dream. His tears flowed copiously, though he was also overjoyed at their meeting.

178 See Michael Radich, “Fachang 法常,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%B3%95%E5%B8%B8>:

During the Zhenguan 貞觀 era (627–649) (of the Tang 唐), he took part in sūtra translations, and resided at Puguangsi 普光寺, which was constructed for him at the behest of Tang Taizong 太宗 [r. 626–649]. During this period he ordained a prince (or princes?) in the bodhisattva precepts. The crown prince of Silla 新羅, Kim Jajang 金慈藏 is also said to have relinquished his throne and come all the way from the Korean peninsula to receive bodhisattva precepts from him.”

179 Likewise, I am following GR in reading zhi 知 as a bureaucratic term.

180 This is a notable turn of phrase, as it seems to have been chosen explicitly to resonate with literati patrons (and others familiar with secular histories). For instance, the phrase *dongfan* 東蕃 is only found six times in the entire Taishō canon, with all instances occurring in XGSZ, whereas a survey of the relevant official histories finds it used once in the *Han shu* 漢書, twice in *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, eight times in the *Wei shu* 魏書, four times in *Song shu* 宋書, six times in *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書, and twice in the *Jin shu* 晉書. Likewise, *xibi* 西鄙 is used slightly more broadly in the Taishō, as its four instances also include one from the fourteenth century *Comprehensive Registry of the Successive Ages of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs* (T. 2036) and one in the *Hongming ji* (T. 2102), whereas it is found thirty-five times in the histories composed up to the Han, as well as once in the *Bei Qi shu* and twice in the *Jin shu*. All full-text searches were conducted via *ctext.org*.

For this reason, he accepted the bodhisattva precepts and exhausted himself in performance of the rites.¹⁸¹

貞觀九年，又奉勅召，入為皇后戒師。因即勅補兼知空觀寺上座，撫接客舊，妙識物心，弘導法化，長鎮不絕。前後預聽者數千，東蕃西鄙，難可勝述，及學成返國，皆為法匠，傳通正教，于今轉盛。

新羅王子金慈藏輕忽貴位，棄俗出家，遠聞虔仰，思覩言令，遂架山航海，遠造京師。乃於船中夢矚顏色，及覩形狀，宛若夢中，悲涕交流，欣其會遇，因從受菩薩戒，盡禮事焉。

After this point, the XGSZ narrative moves on to other events in Fachang's tenure as a capital monk, without returning to his (putative) pilgrim disciple.¹⁸² This account is notable for several reasons: first, and unlike the Sino-Indian interactions with which we were dealing previously, there was no need for Daoxuan (or the author of this account) to engage with the complex and polyvocal perspectives on the challenging issue of Buddhist soteriological geography. As such, the authorial aside describing the effect of Fachang's teaching presumes the standard centripetal geography of traditional literati sources (as discussed in the introduction to this chapter): a parallel made all the stronger by the fact that the home temple of the exemplary Buddhist teacher was located in the symbolic center of the Middle Kingdom – the royal capital. Thus, even though Buddhist teaching and practice had already made significant inroads into the Kingdom of Silla (and had in fact already been adopted by King Jinheung as a legitimation strategy),¹⁸³ the present account utterly ignores these indigenous Korean attempts to refigure their own place within the soteriological geography of Buddhism¹⁸⁴ by casting them as

181 T. 2060: 541a9–24; XGSZ (2014), 519.

182 Given that Fachang is not mentioned whatsoever in the biography of Jajang discussed above (T. 2060: 639a–640a), it seems possible that this account may have been an attempt to add luster to the reputation of a Chinese monastic / capital elite by retrojecting a connection between him and one of the most famous pilgrims of his day. As noted above, neither the XGSZ biography of Jajang nor the more elaborate account in *Samguk Yusa* make any reference to this alleged link with Fachang.

183 More specifically, the Silla kings were particularly drawn to texts describing the role of Buddhism as a technology of state protection, which inspired many to draw analogies between themselves and idealized monarchs of (Indian) antiquity. See: N. M. Pankaj, “The Buddhist Transformation of Silla Kingship: Buddha as a King and King as a Buddha” in *Northern Buddhism in History*, edited by Shankar Thapa, (Kathmandu: Vajra, 2008), 191–217; S. Keel, “Buddhism and Political Power in Korean History,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 1:1 (1978): 9–24.

184 For example, Keel notes that, following the accepted Silla interpretation of the *Sutra that Expounds the Descent of*

“Eastern barbarians” who must overcome their difficult circumstances to learn in China before returning to their parochial homeland with Fachang's “correct teaching.” Jajang's dream, which adheres to the same *stimulus-response* framework explicitly described in so many of the cases treated previously, seems to have been engendered by the man's high profile rejection of his secular life and responsibilities, as well as the effort that he was required to expend in questing after genuine Buddhist instruction.¹⁸⁵ As such, it provides him an informatory vision of his future preceptor, which is then confirmed upon his arrival in the Chinese capital, thus reinforcing a vision of the Tang state (and Chang'an in particular) as the epicentre of the religio-political world.

As an aside, I must acknowledge that, in arguing for the previous points, I am contradicting a well-considered hermeneutical maxim proposed by Robert Buswell: namely, that, when considering the historical activities of “Korean” monks, “we scholars must abandon simplistic nationalist shibboleths and open our scholarship to the expansive vision of their religion that the Buddhists themselves always retained.”¹⁸⁶ While I would certainly agree that this heuristic provides a much needed antidote to the anachronistic tendency of academics to subdivide fields of scholarly inquiry based on the (almost certainly irrelevant) boundaries of contemporary nation-states,¹⁸⁷ I would argue that the present case

*Maitreya Buddha and His Enlightenment (Mile xiasheng chengfo jing 彌勒下生成佛經, T. 454), King Jinheung (r. 540–576) identified himself as “Śanka, the cakravartin (universal monarch) mentioned in the sutra – and [that] the Silla state, by implication was the pure land described there” (14). Similarly, Sun-Ah Choi describes Jajang's establishment of a Mañjuśrī cult on Korea's Mount Odae following an initial visionary experience at China's Mount Wutai, noting that this mountain “thereafter became one of many sacred sites venerated by Koreans as being of the same significance as the Chinese original” (189–190): *Quest for the True Visage: Sacred Images in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Art and the Concept of Zhen*, (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2012); cf., Cho, 147–157.*

185 Indeed, an unstated major premise of this account is the it would not have been possible for the prince to have received the “correct teaching” if he had remained in his homeland: a premise that, while surely appealing to Daoxuan's literati audience, was utterly historically inaccurate (as per the historical overviews cited above).

186 Robert E. Buswell Jr., “Thinking about 'Korean Buddhism': A Continental Perspective” *Journal of Korean Religions* 1:1&2 (2010): 43–55, 53.

187 Fortunately, this notion of Buddhism(s) across borders has been gaining ever increasing traction in Religious Studies scholarship over the last ten to fifteen years. For one example, see John S. Strong, *Buddhisms: An Introduction*, (London: Oneworld, 2015), which posits that this diversity and plurality is a constitutive aspect of the Buddhist tradition.

stands as a pertinent exception. Both the description of a revered member of the Sillan royal family as an “Eastern barbarian” (seen in the XGSZ biography of Fachang) or the exoticizing way that the XGSZ biography of Jajang begins by defining the meaning of “Silla” for a seemingly ignorant audience, it seems obvious that both of these accounts are intended to serve an overtly cosmographic function, especially when considered in light of the discourse community for whom the XGSZ was compiled.¹⁸⁸ The employment of oneiric narratives in each of these cases highlights their utility as metaphorical devices, describing the transecting of liminal boundaries between named geographical entities in a manner that would have been nigh impossible in other terms.

Conclusion

As we have seen, dreams (and, more specifically, the stories told about them) played a central role in the rhetorical construction of the imagined geography of medieval Chinese Buddhism, as represented in the biographical collections compiled by Huijiao and Daoxuan. This is due, in no small part, to both the liminal character of such oneiric visions and to the ubiquity of such accounts within Chinese Buddhism. Han Emperor Ming's dream of a golden man, seen as the prototypical form of such tales due to the frequency with which it was retold (and simply alluded to), can be seen as a preliminary attempt to address the cosmographic challenge of situating China within a Buddhist geography, as it simultaneously stresses the authority and secular power of the Chinese state without denying or downplaying India's role as a unilateral font of sacrality. This perspective is reflected throughout the GSZ accounts discussed above, which either use dream visions to nuance the proper modes of

188 It should be noted that Buswell accurately comments on the fact that the *Eminent Monks* collections are not, themselves, subdivided based on region, but rather by monastic activity (e.g., exegete, meditator), and that statements of lineage and connection (e.g., “disciple of X”) are much more common than those relating to country of origin (52–53). While I agree with the general principle he proposes here, I would argue that it makes cases like the present ones, where the Silla identity of the protagonists is an active topic of discussion, all the more noteworthy.

interaction between political elites and (foreign) monks or to assuage the anxieties of Chinese Buddhists by providing oneiric confirmation that their religious activities were compatible with Indic standards of orthodoxy. In XGSZ, in contrast, Daoxuan continues the cosmographic programme outlined in his *A Geography of the Śākyas* (*Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 [T. 2088]), as has been so ably explored by Nicol, downplaying the concerns with orthodoxy and orthopraxy that were so prevalent in GSZ, and instead valorizing explicitly Chinese innovations. In so doing, he (not so) subtly recenters the soteriological geography of medieval Buddhism squarely within the borders of China. This aim is made explicit in his biographies of Xuanzang and Jajang, as both use dream narratives to mount a frontal assault on the notion of China as a “peripheral” realm. Though the dream episodes discussed above differed less in this case than in the those considered in previous chapters (i.e., those selected by both Huijiao and Daoxuan made extensive use of informatory dreams with subsequent confirmatory miracles), the different rhetorical uses to which they were put highlight the breadth of discursive possibilities associated with the interregional dream trope, as well as its diachronic evolution between the sixth and seventh centuries.

Chapter Four – Dreaming Betwixt and Between: Oneiric Experiences at the Boundaries of the Interpersonal and Inter-religious

As we have seen in the previous chapter, dreams narratives of the sort collected in both *Eminent Monks* collections helped medieval Chinese Buddhists to define (and refine) their evolving perspectives on the relationship between China and other polities by, for instance, helping to shift the “religious center of gravity” away from India and toward their homeland. In addition to this narrative function, however, I would argue that the informatory potential of these tales also allowed them to play an invaluable role in the political and ideological struggles for territory, political influence, and patronage engaged in by sixth- and seventh-century Buddhists, especially against the interests of Taoists and local religionists.¹ As in the previous chapters, in the sections that follow I also attend to distinctions between the expression and frequency of these tropes in the two collections under consideration, as a means of exploring the evolution of medieval perspectives on the oneiric during the period of roughly a century and a half between the compilation of GSZ and XGSZ. These episodes, which bear notable parallels with a plethora of cross-cultural examples,² can be broadly subdivided into four categories, each of

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- 1 For a helpful overview of the macro-level tensions between these groups, as well as their respective interactions with the Tang court, contrast Weinstein's *Buddhism Under the Tang*, with T. H. Barrett, *Taoism Under the Tang: Religion and Empire During the Golden Age of Chinese History*, (London: Wellsweep Press, 1996). For these interactions at the micro-level, drawing evidence from specific instances of textual and praxical borrowings, see: Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008). For the contestation of local sacred spaces, see Robson, *Power of Place*, 220–226 and *passim*; Robson, “Changing Places,” 90–111; James A. Benn, “One Mountain, Two Traditions: Buddhist and Taoist Claims on Zhongnan shan in Medieval Times,” in *Images, Relics and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites (Essays in Honour of Professor Koichi Shinohara)*, edited by James A. Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson, (Oakville, On: Mosaic, 2012), 69–90.
 - 2 For some examples, see the role of oneiric experience in prompting Christian conversion in twentieth century Zambia, as discussed by Hayashida, 79–104 and *passim*. Likewise, Lohmann offers a compelling glimpse into the process whereby traditional dreams are reinterpreted by Christian converts among the Asabano people of Papua New Guinea: “The murderous deeds of witches continued to be witnessed in dreams, but often dreamers construe these images as being shown to them by the Holy Spirit. Thus, characters from Christian mythology have joined the Asabano dreamscape and taken over the role traditionally played by *wobuno* [powerful humanoid spirits]” (196). “Supernatural Encounters of the Asabano in Two Traditions and Three States of Consciousness” in *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific*, edited by Roger Ivar Lohmann. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 189–210. This issue is addressed in further detail in Lohmann's “The Role of Dreams in Religious Enculturation Among the Asabano.” Hsia, in “Dreams and Conversions” (Part One), provides three examples from biographies of Ming Dynasty Chinese converts to Catholicism that include dreams following the classic Chinese “return-from-death” narrative framework (described by Company and Teiser), but wherein the Buddhist / Taoist deities are replaced by their Christian analogues (e.g., King Yama → the Lord of Heaven): 233, 234, 239–240. For a helpful overview of the role of dreams in inspiring (or otherwise facilitating) religious conversions, which considers examples from a variety of cross-cultural contexts, see: Bulkeley, “Dreaming and Religious Conversion,” 256–270. Though not a “conversion” account *per se*, the story of Emperor Ming's dream (discussed at length in the previous

which also offers particular insights into the specific issues that would have faced medieval Chinese Buddhists and which will be discussed in sequence below.

First, I will consider dreams related to conflicts with aggressive extrahuman beings, who were often associated with specific locations. As noted by John Kieschnick, much of the early success of Chinese Buddhism can be attributed to the activities of what he describes as “thaumaturge monks,”³ who derived their spiritual potency from powerful Buddhist magic⁴ and could thus actively compete with other religious professionals (including “spirit mediums” [wu 巫], “masters of techniques” [fangshi 方士], and Taoists, as discussed in the *Introduction*). In this context, the liminal status of dreams, and – in particular – the common cultural assumption that oneiric visions provided a means of communicating with the “unseen realm,” served a valuable rhetorical function in bridging the gap between the visible world of ritual actions and the world of proximate but invisible extrahuman beings who were susceptible to the apotropaic powers of these religious professionals.⁵ One striking commonality between the accounts included in GSZ and XGSZ is that the deities shown to be subjugated by the Buddhist thaumaturges are unilaterally those associated with local cults rather than

chapter) also highlights the narrative utility of dreams incorporating concepts and imagery from other cultural traditions.

3 Described in Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 67–111.

4 For an overview of the role of the understanding of Buddhist spells propounded in GSZ and XGSZ, see Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 82–92. Though many of his specific examples are drawn from a period following the compilation of XGSZ, I nonetheless found Paul Copp's discussion of Chinese Buddhist spells tremendously instructive: *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). Mollier, in *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, offers a perceptive, multi-modal overview of the pervasive fear of sorcery among the medieval Chinese, and the positioning of Buddhist monks and deities as an efficacious line of spiritual defense (55–99). For instance, she surveys a variety of medieval apocrypha, textual colophons, and religious iconography before concluding that “[a]ll these artifacts plainly demonstrate that medieval Buddhism had expressly stigmatized sorcery as one of the major calamities afflicting humanity” (66). In response to a tendency among Western and Japanese scholars to view talismanic writing as the exclusive province of Taoism and popular religion, Robson's “Signs of Power” traces many of these practices back to the medieval period, arguing that “Buddhists in China partook of a wide range of occult practices and employed an arsenal of techniques to repel the harmful and impel the desired” (135).

5 Based on intratextual citations in “Dream Interpretation” (unpaginated draft), it is clear that Company will also be discussing these sorts of communicative dreams in his upcoming book, though I have not had access to this chapter.

those of explicit Taoist provenance, perhaps due to a fear of reprisal if Taoists retook political power.⁶

Second, and in contrast to the previous section, I will explore accounts of peaceable interaction between interloping Buddhists and local extrahuman beings. As detailed in James Robson's *Power of Place*, ownership of and access to Chinese religious sites has almost always been a deeply conflictual issue, with numerous discrete religious communities laying claim to the perceived sanctity of a particular forest, stream or mountain fastness.⁷ Unlike the previous examples, however, the deities in these cases play the role of apotheosized adherents, appearing in the dreams of Buddhist monks as eager disciples (seeking dharma instruction or precept ordination) and patrons (offering lands, structures, and even natural resources to their new Buddhist masters). Unlike the accounts of thaumaturgical combat, whose tellers often seemed intent on demonstrating the charisma and power of specific exemplary monks, accounts of the willing subjugation of gods and spirits often seem to focus as much on geography. As such, they serve not only as testament to the numinous denizens of a specific area, but also as an explicit extrahuman “building permit,” perhaps intended to assuage the concerns of donors related to the displacement of autochthonous deities by comparatively newer Buddhist temples.⁸

6 This could be read as a politically expedient move, especially for Daoxuan, who was writing for a capital elite that was (at least in theory) receptive to Taoism (Barrett, 27–31). Mollier notes that, in contrast with the medieval Buddhist obsession with sorcery, Taoists tended to be more concerned with demonology: a class of malevolent beings whose “omnipresence and enmity were entirely due to the blood sacrifices that they received and that were perpetuated by the common, 'nameless' religion observed by the great majority of Chinese at all levels of society” (66). As such, this focus could be seen as an attempt to present a united front against this common enemy. Moreover, as Terry Kleeman has compellingly argued, these forms of local blood sacrifice were often interpreted by the state as potentially destabilizing, given that they purportedly allowed commoners access to the miraculous efficacy of deities outside the state-sanctioned pantheon: “Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, Reciprocity, and Violence in Traditional China,” *Asia Major*, Third Series, 7:1 (1994): 185–211, 194–197. For the relationship between religious factionalism and the anti-Buddhist persecution of the Northern Zhou (574–577), see Shi, *Case Studies of Three Persecutions of Buddhism*, 101–116.

7 On this topic, I am particular indebted to the contributions of Robson and Benn, as will be discussed in detail below.

8 While this may seem like a flippant characterization, it should be noted that interaction with extrahuman beings in medieval China was often conceptualized via the bureaucratic metaphor. See, for instance, Valerie Hansen's exploration of tomb contracts in *Negotiating Daily Life in Traditional China: How Ordinary People Used Contracts, 600–1400*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 149–188, which explores the use of standardized bureaucratic forms and formulae as a means of ritually “purchasing” one's grave from the denizens of the chthonic realms. For a relevant

Third, I will consider a theme that I was somewhat startled to find included in both collections: namely, episodes that implicitly testify to the oneiromantic abilities of non-Buddhist religious actors (specifically, Taoists and spirit mediums). Though such accounts are employed in a variety of narrative contexts, they are linked by some common rhetorical goals: namely, providing proof of the efficacy of specific Buddhist teachings, the power of specific Buddhist sites and/or the sanctity of specific Buddhist monks. In the service of that end, the suasive power of these accounts, which once again are found in both GSZ and XGSZ, not only assume but actively rely on the target audience's certainty that such non-Buddhist religious professionals have the capacity to interact with the denizens of the extrahuman realm via oneiric communication. The presence of these episodes further refines our understanding of dream world of medieval Chinese Buddhists, as it implies a (once again, somewhat surprising) reciprocity: just as the oneiric realm provides a meeting place where exemplary monks could interact with local deities, so too does it serve to link Taoists and spirit mediums with extrahuman beings seen responding to Buddhist stimuli. This is one more indication of the extent to which a simplistic understanding of inter-religious interaction, especially one that (implicitly) draws inferences from the realm of exclusivist, membership-based traditions,⁹ can lead to confusion in the Chinese case, as such accounts provide clear examples of the non-zero-sum quality of religious activities, and their resultant narratives, in medieval China.

contemporaneous example, see Timothy M. Davis, "Texts for Stabilizing Tombs," in *Early Medieval China: A Sourcebook*, edited by Wendy Swartz, Robert Ford Campany, Yang Lu and Jesse J. C. Choo, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 592–612. In particular, Davis outlines the distinction between "land purchase contracts" (593–594) and the "tomb-stabilizing writs," which only enjoyed common use until approximately 420 CE and which were intended to both symbolize the transition of the decedent into the demesnes of the chthonic gods and to protect the living from any untoward punishments or pollutions (594).

9 The various conceptual pitfalls associated with this form of reification are exhaustively detailed in Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions," (291–294 and *passim*).

Finally, I will outline a variety of episodes where dream revelations are invoked to proscribe activities that contradict Buddhist ethical mores. By invoking experiences of guilt and uncertainty that would surely have resonated with a medieval audience, these accounts highlight the types of cultural negotiations that would have been incumbent upon pious Buddhists who were attempting to balance the ethico-praxical requirements of their religion with the cultural exigencies of daily life in medieval China. Unlike the previous three categories, these oneiric proscriptions are exclusively found in the XGSZ, which I believe serves as a testament to changes in the religious landscape between the sixth and seventh centuries.

A common factor in all of these accounts is a shared ideological commitment to the epistemological significance of oneiric experiences, which must have been a cultural commonplace for the GSZ and XGSZ's discourse communities. Moreover, as the summary outlined above makes clear, this commitment cuts across social and religious hierarchies, with sections one and two treating the dreams of Buddhist monks, section three focusing on dream-related interactions between members of Buddhist discourse communities and non-Buddhist religious professionals (often via oneiromancy), and section four being largely concerned with the oneiric experiences of Buddhist laypeople. Considered in concert, they all help to elucidate the imagined dream-world of medieval China: a world where many of the categorical distinctions drawn by modern scholars (e.g., between sleep and wake; elite and popular; Buddhism, Taoism and local religion) collapse. The fact that these narratives were collected by two literati monks, and that they were intended for an elite audience of literate lay patrons and monastic devotees, belies the (already outdated) notion that this sort of cosmological pluralism

(“syncretism”)¹⁰ was merely the province of unsophisticated “popular” discourse.¹¹ Instead, these narratives serve to underscore the extent to which miraculous responses (in general) and narratives of oneiric encounters (in particular) were seen as unilaterally compelling sources of evidence for the veracity and efficacy of Buddhist belief and practice among medieval Chinese Buddhists.

In terms of metaphor and narrative function, these accounts all hew to the aforementioned tendency of using dream experiences to bridge liminal gaps. In the process of offering readers definitive answers to seemingly intractable questions about how to resolve the tensions between competing religious groups and commitments, these oneiric episodes also shed light on the sorts of metaphorical entailments medieval Chinese readers must have found compelling. Given that it undergirds all of the encounters with spirits, gods and extrahuman monks that will be considered below, one of the most central metaphors in these accounts can be easily schematized as DREAM WORLD → EXTRAHUMAN WORLD. In the medieval Chinese worldview, wherein the denizens of the unseen realm were always in close contact with the human world, accounts such as those treated in this chapter suggest that their nebulous ontological and epistemological status was understood via analogy with the (near) universal bodily experience of encountering the phantasmagoria of dreams. As an extension of this complex metaphor, and in correspondence with the enacted ritual metaphor of POLITICAL POWER → RELIGIOUS POWER (which can be seen in many ritual activities from across the Chinese religious spectrum),¹² these accounts often feature imagery that ascribes the prestige of political power to their

10 As discussed in Fritz Graf’s “Syncretism [Further Considerations],” this term is bound up with a variety of normative assumptions, many of which are tied to the notion of religions as reified wholes (as discussed in Campany, “On the Very Idea of Religions”). See: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., Vol. 13, edited by Lindsay Jones, (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8934–8938. That said, given that my goal above was to highlight the failure of such an interpretive modality, I consider it appropriate to make use of this (obviously problematic) term here.

11 I have already presented my arguments against this position (drawing on Shinohara, Lippiello, Kieschnick, and others) in the Introduction.

12 Feuchtwang’s *The Imperial Metaphor* surveys the continued significance of this view of the extrahuman realm in contemporary Taiwanese religion. A good summary of his position, as it pertains to ritual, can be seen in his summary

Buddhist protagonists, albeit in the oneiric realm. When combined, these metaphors produce narratives wherein monks receive dream visits from local deities, using the language of ritualized imperial communication and social intercourse. In so doing, they cast their Buddhist protagonists as high officials whose station and personal charisma were sufficient to subordinate their extrahuman interlocutors. As such, and regardless of the extent to which any individual narrative represents a historically accurate dream report, the sum total of these episodes provides a singularly useful perspective on the ways that such oneiric narratives (and their multifarious metaphorical entailments) would have helped to shape the worldviews of medieval Chinese Buddhists.

Oneiric Experiences: Thaumaturgical Combat

When considering the role of hagiographies in propagating and popularizing Buddhism in medieval China, the significance of tales of miraculous efficacy and thaumaturgical power cannot be overstated. In this first section, we will see how oneiric episodes related to these topics rely on the two major metaphorical entailments described above (DREAM WORLD → EXTRAHUMAN WORLD and POLITICAL POWER → RELIGIOUS POWER) in constructing an image of Buddhist monks as politically-, ritually- and

of Ahern's research on the topic: "rituals addressing gods are like having access to high and upright officials who respond to our needs as good parents would" (11). One of the clearest manifestations of this belief can be seen in the spirit registers of the Celestial Masters: hierarchically arranged lists of deities upon whom libationers are permitted to contact based on their respective positions within their own religious organization. See: Terry F. Kleeman, *Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), 274–282; Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 60–71. For an application of this logic outside of institutional Taoism, see Hansen, *Negotiating Daily Life*, which describes the employment of standardized bureaucratic language in submitting complaints to the courts of the chthonic bureaucracy (189–221).

These hierarchical understanding of both the extrahuman realm and the humans who interacted with it was not purely symbolic, as noted in Kleeman, "Licentious Cults":

The common people were restricted, at least in theory, to worshipping their ancestors and a clearly demarcated group of worthy dead. Officials had a wider range of deities from whom to draw support in their administrative tasks; the emperor and his court monopolized access to the high deities who formed one of the bases of state power. Any religious activity outside these bounds could legitimately be termed heterodox or licentious and suppressed (196).

For an excellent summary of the specific rituals associated with the state cult during the period in question, see: Chen Shuguo, "State Religious Ceremonies," 53–142.

thaumaturgically-puissant actors, whose demesnes were located, at least in part, in the oneiric realm. Specifically, the various accounts to be considered below describe monks, who, like Chinese suzerains, were seen extending their authority over local gods, spirits, and extrahuman beings through ritual power and personal charisma, and thus pacifying local regions and safeguarding them for Buddhist “colonization.”¹³

For the first instance of oneiric communication in the context of an apotropaic duel with a hostile deity, we turn to the short biography of Bo Sengguang (帛僧光, ca. 285 – ca. 395 CE), the bulk of which consists of just such an encounter.

The background of Bo Sengguang, whom some called Tanguang, is not known. After practicing meditation as a youth, at the beginning of the Yonghe era [c. 345] of the Jin, he travelled to Jiandong, taking up residence at Mount Shicheng in Shan. The people of the mountain said that the area had been devastated by wild animals, brought on by a violent mountain spirit, and that no one had lived there for years. Showing not the least sign of fear, Sengguang hired a man to cut a path for him and, shouldering his staff, proceeded up the mountain. After he had gone several *li* [a measure of distance, approximately a third of a mile], a great storm suddenly burst forth and packs of tigers began to howl. On the southern side of the mountain Sengguang spotted a cave. There he sat in meditation with his palms pressed together, determined to settle in this cave.

By the dawn of the next day the rain had stopped. Sengguang entered the village to beg for food and following day returned to the cave. After three days had passed, the spirit of the mountain appeared to him in a dream. At times the spirit assumed the shape of a tiger and at times the shape of a snake, each coming to haunt Sengguang, but he was not frightened in the least. After three more days, he dreamed again of the mountain spirit, who explained that {it was going to move on to} Mount Hanshi in Zhang'an District. The spirit then offered Sengguang the cave.¹⁴

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- 13 It should be noted that such episodes clearly reveal the rhetorical aims of their Buddhist compilers and that narratives making countervailing claims are also extant. For instance, Robson, in “Changing Places,” cites a variety of cases from “local records that attest to the ways that mountain spirits resisted attempts by Buddhist monks to encroach on their land” (96), and goes on to explore the dialectical process whereby Buddhists co-opted numinous sites associated with Taoist grottoes and local cults, only to have those Buddhist monasteries and temples seized during intermittent imperial persecutions turned over to Taoists, Neo-Confucians, and (in one cited case) a Manichean monastery (100–104).
- 14 From John Kieschnick's translation, “Biography of the Jin Monk Bo Sengguang of Hermit Peak in Shan” in *Buddhist Scriptures*, edited by Donald J. Lopez Jr., (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), 286–288, 286–287. I have amended the translation in one place (indicated in the quotation by curly braces). Whereas Kieschnick translates the line as “After three more days he dreamed again of the mountain spirit, who explained that it had moved there from Mount Hanshi in Zhang'an District” (287), I find Yoshikawa and Funayama's (2010) future tense rendering of it makes more narrative

In this passage, we see the dramatization of a type of territorial conflict that we know from historical sources to have been all too common in the early medieval period:¹⁵ the expansion of the Buddhist sphere of influence into territories that had previously been consigned to the control of local gods.¹⁶ In this case, the monk, empowered by a tradition of distinctively Buddhist praxis, sallies forth into a region that had been terrorized to the point of total depopulation by a bellicose local deity, which the monk then forces into submission through the compelling, osmotic force of his personal charisma. When the monk succeeds and the malign presence is suitably chastened, choosing to exile itself instead of remaining,¹⁷ the account goes on to describe the mountain peak becoming home to a haphazard collection of hermitages that were eventually upgraded into a monastery.¹⁸ From a cosmographic

sense (i.e., given that the spirit was in the process of being displaced by the monk, its prior dwelling-place is narratively irrelevant, whereas its future domicile would have been of profound significance, especially to the residents of the area): 「三日が経って、また夢の中に山神が現れ、章安縣の寒石山に移り住まうこととするから、この石室を譲ってあなたに差し上げると自ら語った。」 (Vol. 4, 34) Cf., 經三日又夢見山神。自言。移往章安縣寒石山住。推室以相奉。(T. 2059: 395c14–15).

- 15 For a case study of the initial Buddhist incursions into the sacred peaks at Nanyue (sites that had traditionally been associated with Taoist practice), see Robson, *Power of Place*, 220–226. Likewise, in “One Mountain, Two Traditions,” Benn makes a similar case about the conflicting Taoist and Buddhist claims on Zhongnan shan: a site near the capital at Chang’an associated in their respective narrative traditions with Yin Xi and the Divine Lord Lao (on the Taoist side) and a lively tradition of reclusion and self-immolation (on the Buddhist), 71–83.
- 16 For a discussion of the perspective that mountains were liminal realms inhabited by a variety of (potentially dangerous) extrahuman beings, see: Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004):

The Chinese, like most cultures, associated lofty mountain peaks with powerful gods who commanded the elemental forces of nature. An older contemporary of Confucius reportedly warned his prince of the dangers of lapses in royal piety in the following words: “The gods of the mountains and rivers inflict calamities of flood, drought, and disease; therefore they must be propitiated with sacrifices; the gods of the sun, moon, stars, and planets cause unseasonable snow, frost, wind, and rain; therefore they must be propitiated with sacrifices.” Through proper worship and sacrifice the ruler could abate the wrath of the gods, but these mountain deities remained fearsome and unapproachable. The most powerful mountain gods, the marchmounts (yue), were believed to exercise sovereign power over their own vast domains (87).

This same point is made in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–343) early 4th century *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, which states:

All mountains, whether large or small, contain gods and powers, and the strength of these divinities is directly proportional to the size of the mountains. To enter the mountains without the proper recipe is to be certain of anxiety or harm. ... Mountains are not to be entered lightly (quoted in Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary*, 16).
- 17 For a list of other GSZ examples of local deities ceding their territory to Buddhist monks, see: Lin, *Chinese Shamans and Shamanism*, 272 ff. 768. What distinguishes the present account is not the character of the interaction, but rather the role of oneiric visions within it.
- 18 See: T. 2059: 395c; Kieschnick (2004), 287. Charleux and Goossaert offer a helpful discussion of the architectural and lexical challenges in differentiating “monasteries” from “temples” in the Chinese context. That said, they offer the following heuristic:

standpoint, this narrative employs the locative mode to reinscribe this space as “Buddhist,” extending the monastic sphere of influence by signalling the subjugation of dangerous peripheral spirits. Given the proximity of this mountain to the Jin (and, subsequently, Liang) capital at Jiankang, and the patronage of the region's monks by capital elites, it should be noted that this narrative shares significant structural similarities with those that had already been employed for centuries to describe the expansion of royal control into outlying areas, signifying a metaphorical parallel between the “civilizing” processes of the Buddhist and imperial elites.¹⁹

In this particular case, and even though Huijiao did not seem to be as convinced as Daoxuan of the evidentiary value of dreams within the *ganying* 感應 framework, this episode is replete with structural parallels suggesting that both dreams and meditation could serve equally well as staging grounds for interactions with extrahuman beings. Specifically, the entire spiritual duel narrated above plays out in a liminal space, characterized by a phantasmagorical interplay between meditation and dream, in which the transecting of the boundaries of the “unseen realm” is paralleled by the breaching of intersubjective boundaries through oneiric encounters. The first *stimulus-response* dyad occurs

the basic distinction is rather clear-cut: monasteries have large conventual quarters arranged around halls for communal practice, whereas temples are made up almost entirely of halls devoted to deities, and retain only marginal space for clerical accommodation (309).

Isabelle Charleux and Vincent Goossaert, “The Physical Buddhist Monastery in China,” in *The Buddhist Monastery: A Cross-Cultural Survey*, edited by Pierre Pichard and François Lagirarde, (Paris: EFEO, 2003), 305–350. Given that this narrative describes the growth a flourishing, resident monastic community, it seems that the former term is justified in this case.

- 19 The issue of the ideological construction of reality through the creation of putative linkages between (imperial) center and periphery was discussed at length in the last chapter. Out of curiosity, I mapped out the distances from Jiankang (N 118 46.680, E 32 3.084) to both the site of Sengguang's spiritual duel (Mount Shicheng [N 120 53.286, E 29 29.277]) and the defeated spirit's new home (Mount Hanshi [N 120 49.244, E 29 4.675]). While the spirit's new home is marginally farther from the capital at Jiankang (280.44 vs. 274.25 km), I think it is more notable that these peaks are described in the narrative as being located in different regions. Given that contemporaneous catalogues of the spiritual denizens of peripheral realms, as contained in various cosmographic collections from the *Shanhai jing* onward, are organized by region, perhaps this present account signifies the relocation of the deity from one circumscribed religio-geographical sphere into another.

almost immediately after the monk's arrival on the mountain, at which point he pays someone to hack²⁰ a path through the vegetation, and then proceeds up to the cave that would eventually become his dwelling. The spirit's (implicit) response is prompt and definitive, with Sengguang immediately encountering a downpour and hearing the threatening cries of ferocious beasts. This first thrust and parry lead directly into monk's second foray, wherein he takes his place in the cave, sets his mind on taking up residence in the spirit's domain, and begins to meditate with his palms joined in supplication.²¹ Seemingly in response, the rain stops the following morning, allowing the monk to venture down to a nearby village on an alms-round: a testament to the deity's impotent inability to prevent the monk's incursion. After three days, during which we can presume that the monk was continuing his ritual campaign against the spirit (the third implied stimulus), the deity responds by appearing to assault him in his dreams, assuming a variety of horrifying zoomorphic forms. When the monk fails to be stirred,²² the chastened deity appears in another dream after three more days to

20 Given the thematic resonances of the story, the violent connotations of *jian* 剪 (which can also include slaying, penetrating and slicing) should not be ignored. Even though the spirit's depredations are catalogued extensively in the previous section, the use of this term implies that the monk is the aggressor (/ liberator) in this situation.

21 While I do not want to read too much into what is obviously a very terse description of a ritual practice, I use the word “supplication” in the above summary advisedly. In particular, I am responding to the final clause of the phrase 仍止其中安禪合掌以為栖神之處 (T. 2059: 395c11), wherein I am reading the *yivei* 以為 causally and where I think that the text's explicit acknowledgement of the monk's goal is significant (i.e., suggesting that the monk “meditated and joined his palms in order to take up residence in the spirit's place”). For this reason, I think that Kieschnick's “determined to settle in this cave” downplays the conflictual aspect of this phrasing. As for the supplicative significance of the monk's hand position, I am basing my reading on the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism's* definition of *hezhang* 合掌 (“gesture of joining one's palms and putting them to the breast as an expression of reverence”), which is the standard Chinese rendering of the *añjali mudrā* (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%90%88%E6%8E%8C>). I highlight this phrase only to note that this is not the standard hand position associated with the practice of meditation, which would accord with the possibility that the monk had made a specific request and was praying for a sign. In this context, the *Chan Essentials* (T. 613), translated in Eric Greene's *Meditation, Repentance and Visionary Experience*, contains a number of contemporaneous references to this bodily posture in the context of ritual supplication (see, for example, 346, 348, 544). For some general background on the symbolism of Buddhist hand signals, see Denise Patry Leidy, “Mudrā and Visual Imagery,” *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert Buswell (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 569–572; E. Dale Saunders, “Symbolic Gestures in Buddhism,” *Artibus Asiae* 21:1 (1958): 47–63.

22 This episode contains obvious parallels with both the Buddha biography and with various Jātaka tales describing the perfection of equanimity. See, for instance, the description of Māra's assault on the Buddha from the Chinese version of Aśvaghōsa's *Buddhacarita* [T. 192], translated by Charles Willemen, (Moraga, CA: BDK America, 2009):

When the multitude of gods of the pure abodes saw that Māra was trying to confuse the Bodhisattva, who was free from desire and without anger, they felt grief and sorrow for him. They all came and saw the Bodhisattva sitting upright, unmoving. Countless Māras surrounded him, and their evil voices moved heaven and earth. The

concede defeat and cede its territory. In terms of its narrative function, this second dream serves as an informatory miracle, providing proof that the monk's ritual campaign had indeed succeeded and thus sanctioning the crowds of prospective Buddhist disciples who then rushed into the wilderness to join the thaumaturge monk. In structural terms, it also highlights the perceived liminal space within which these sorts of encounters were thought to occur, with the spirit employing the same *modus operandi* (e.g., tigers) to assail the monk whether asleep or awake. Moreover, even in a short account like this one, we see that dreams and other forms of visionary practice obviously possessed similar ontological status in the medieval Chinese imagination, given that we see waking practice yield both waking and oneiric results, and dream practice²³ (e.g., the sleeping monk maintaining equanimity in the face of terrifying visions) doing so as well, culminating in the spirit's oneiric surrender and self-exile, with his departure being implicitly confirmed by the newly habitable state of the mountain.²⁴

Bodhisattva was established in quietude. His bright complexion was without any peculiar sign. He was like a lion king, dwelling among the herd of animals. They all sighed, crying out, 'Ha! Ha! Amazing! Wonderful!' But Māra lashed his crowds on, and each presented their awful powers. Again and again they pressed each other on to immediately cause his destruction. Their eyes wide open, they gnashed their teeth. They flew in disarray and leaped wildly about. The Bodhisattva watched in silence, as if he were watching children playing. The Māras became more and more angry, and doubled their fighting strength (96).

For a general discussion of the rhetorical trope of perfecting virtues in the *Jātaka* literature, see Shaw, xxix-xxxii.

- 23 As an aside, and without commenting on the historicity of this particular episode, the practical ability to extend meditative equanimity into dreams is strongly implied by contemporary research into lucid dreaming (see, for instance, Thompson, 141–143, 148–158), as well as the reports of practitioners of Tibetan Buddhist dream yoga (see: Thompson, 167–174; Young, *Dreaming in the Lotus*, 117–128). For instance, the Tibetan master Tsonkhapa's instructions for this form of dream yoga include a reference to the inculcation of an affective state that seems identical to the one ascribed to Sengming in the previous narrative:

Whenever anything of a threatening or traumatic nature occurs in a dream, such as drowning in water or being burned by fire, recognize the dream as a dream and ask yourself, “How can dream water or dream fire possibly harm me?” Make yourself jump or fall into the water or fire in the dream. Examine the water, stones or fire, and remind yourself of how even though that phenomenon appears to the mind, it does not exist in the nature of its appearance. Similarly, all dream phenomena appear to the mind but are empty of an inherently existent self-nature. Meditate on all dream objects in this way (246).

Quoted in Stephen LaBerge, “Lucid Dreaming and the Yoga of the Dream State: A Psychophysiological Perspective,” in *Buddhism and Science: Breaking New Ground*, edited by B. Alan Wallace, [New York: Columbia University Press, 2003], 233–260.

- 24 As an aside, the GSZ account of Fa'an (法安, early fifth century), which also includes rampaging tigers as part of its narrative of spiritual competition between Buddhism and local religion, features the same dynamic described above (i.e., waking and oneiric responses being offered as mutually reinforcing examples of the stimulus/response in action). Therein, the people of Xinyang County (a local community in contemporary Hubei [<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000026598>]) have erected an altar to the God of Soil but nonetheless find their numbers ravaged by tiger attacks. Later, the monk arrives in a town paralyzed by fear, whose inhabitants have all locked themselves into

We see these same two themes (i.e., the efficacy of a monk's mantic techniques and Buddhist sovereignty over a specific site) played out in the GSZ's account of the famed translator Guṇabhadra (Qiunabatuoluo 求那跋陀羅, 394–468) exorcizing a haunted temple:

Later, in the Moling region,²⁵ [Guṇabhadra] had a temple built west of the Phoenix Tower. Every night at midnight, there was a pulling at the door and [a voice] calling out, but no one could be seen. The assembly again and again had unpleasant²⁶ dreams. Guṇabhadra burned incense and

homes in the early evening (reminiscent of the opening scenes of Akira Kurosawa's *Yojimbo*), and proceeds to seat himself beneath a tree in the center of town and to remain in meditation through the night. When a tiger finally appears, the monk calmly provides it dharma instruction, after which point the attacks cease. The townsfolk are so pleased by their deliverance that they convert the old altar into a Buddhist temple and dedicate the yields of nearby fields to its maintenance. When in the process of decorating the new temple, they discover that they lack the necessary verdigris pigment to complete the Buddhist portraiture intended for the hall. At this point, someone (possibly the titular monk) has a dream in which a spirit person informs them that there are copper bells buried beneath their bed. These bells not only provide the necessary verdigris, but are then melted down and reforged into Buddhist images; these images are themselves later credited with miraculous healing powers. (T. 2059: 362c) This episode is also discussed in Robson, “Changing Places,” 95–96.

As can be seen, this account employs both oneiric and waking instances of *ganying* as evidentiary miracles, with no suggestion that one was seen as more plausible / convincing than the other. That said, from a narrative standpoint, it is notable that the dream described here is an informatory miracle, providing information that would have otherwise been inaccessible to the protagonist and which was immediately verified upon the dreamer's return to consciousness. I have not included this account above because the bulk of the conflict between Buddhism and local religion plays out in the waking world, with the tiger attacks serving as indicators of the differential in spiritual potency between the local cult and that possessed by the Buddhist monk.

That said, it is possible that the bell was buried as part of a soil god ritual, in which case the oneiric vision of the “spirit man” could be read as implicit permission to literally refashion its cult objects into Buddhist ones. The trope of local deities actively (and willingly) submitting to Buddhism is discussed below (in section two). One potential line of evidence for this supposition can be drawn from archaeological excavations from Japan's roughly contemporaneous Yayoi period (300 BCE–300 CE) have unearthed numerous cast bronze bells: a technology that was imported from the mainland. One of the prevailing theories concerning their function and ritual use suggests that they were employed as ritual receptacles as part of an agricultural fertility cult, with their decline in popularity by the end of the Yayoi lining up with the evolution of Japanese religion away from the worship of earth-based deities and toward a celestial pantheon. See: Mark J. Hudson, “Rice, Bronze, and Chieftains: An Archaeology of Yayoi Ritual,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 19:2/3 (1992): “Archaeological Approaches to Ritual and Religion in Japan,” 139–189, 153–154. In contrast, Bernard Faure has surveyed a number of contemporaneous narrative examples (drawn from the *Eminent Monks* and elsewhere) wherein monks discover relics after hearing the sounds of subterranean bells tolling, which he suggests could have been read as implying the existence of supernatural monasteries beneath the earth, whose spiritual denizens were merely waiting for an opportunity to revivify the Law on the surface (39–41): “Les Cloches de la Terre: Un Aspect du Culte des Reliques dans le Bouddhisme Chinois,” in *Bouddhisme et Lettrés dans la Chine Médiévale*, edited by Catherine Despeux, (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 25–44. That said, if I follow Faure in ascribing Buddhist significance to this buried bell, I am less certain about how to interpret the spirit's offer, as I cannot imagine Huijiao (or the original teller of this tale) being willing to extend domain over a Buddhist artifact to a local deity. Also, a miraculous Buddhist provenance would problematize Fa'an's decision to metal down and recast the bell.

25 Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010), vol. 1, 344 ff. 1, identifies this region as one adjacent to the capital in Jiankang.

26 Note: the term *yan* 厭 has some peculiar connotation (including connections with concupiscence and an overall weariness with human physicality) (see GR, HDC, SCM). That said, SCM notes that it can also just refer to nightmares.

made an invocation,²⁷ saying: “You, due to your previous lives' karmas, find yourselves here. As for me, I have now constructed this temple where I follow the [Buddhist] Path in [my performance] of confession rituals,²⁸ all for the sake of you and others. If you [wish to] live peacefully here, you will serve as good spirits who will guard the temple, but if you are not able to do so, you all will comply and [leave] this place in peace.”

Before long, the community of householders and monks, which included more than ten people, in the same evening had dream visions of one thousand ghostly beings carrying [their possessions]²⁹ on their backs, moving away and leaving [the temple] behind. The temple assembly subsequently became tranquil. Nowadays, this place has come to be known as White Stupa Temple in Taohouzhū.^{30 31}

後於秣陵界鳳凰樓西起寺，每至夜半，輒有推戶而喚，視之無人，眾屢厭夢，跋陀燒香呪願曰：「汝宿緣在此，我今起寺，行道禮懺，常為汝等。若住者，為護寺善神；若不能住，各隨所安。」既而道俗十餘人，同夕夢見鬼神千數，皆荷擔移去，寺眾遂安。今陶後渚白塔寺，即其處也。

As in the previous account, this episode also testifies to the perceived evidentiary value of dreams in medieval Chinese narratives, with the second dream clearly impelled by the spiritual potency of the monk's exorcistic practice. Also, in keeping with the *Principle of Irrelevance*,³² it is striking that the content of the congregants' nightmares was clearly not deemed worthy of attention by the initial compiler of this account, as this implies that it was not atypical for an early medieval monastic teacher to read this sort of sleep disturbance as evidence of a spectral presence, at least when it occurred in conjunction with eerie waking phenomena.³³ After the famous monk performs a confession ritual and

27 For the challenges defining *zhou* 呪 in the medieval Chinese context, see: McBride, 35–37; Copp, 7–13. Note: I based my decision to treat this as two verbs (recitation and vow) on Yoshikawa and Funayama's rendering (*ibid*).

28 *Lichan* 禮懺, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E7%A6%AE%E6%87%BA>): “worship and repentance. Penitential offering. An abbreviation of 禮拜懺悔. To make obeisance to the Three Treasures 三寶 and repent for one's sins.” For a discussion of the translation of *chan* 懺, see p. 21 ff. 73.

29 While there is no specific mention of possessions here, I think it is a logical extension of the claim that these ghostly beings are carrying something on their backs. This prospect seems commensurate with the early medieval practice of burying the dead with a variety of grave goods, as exhaustively described in Bai Bin, “Religious Beliefs as Reflected in the Funerary Record,” in *Early Chinese Religion: Part Two – The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, edited by John Lagerway and Lü Pengzhi, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 989–1073.

30 For the history and location of this temple, see Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010), 344 ff. 2. See also: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000009133>

31 T. 2059: 344c22–29; punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 133.

32 As outlined in the Introduction.

33 As an aside, I would argue that this lack of detail could lend a measure of credence to the story, given the extensive evidence for “dream telling and interpretation” as oneiric practices in medieval China. Likewise, this can also be read

offers a simple apotropaic vow,³⁴ the success of the exorcism is demonstrated by the shared dream of his congregation, who see the specters voluntarily departing from the temple. As an aside, I found it notable, in the context of our present discussion of dream imagery transecting the boundaries between ideological categories, that these spirits do not appear to be the hungry ghosts of the Buddhist Sixfold Path, but rather spirits depicted in the traditional Chinese mode (due to their ties to a specific geographical location, their ability to interact with the human world [via their embodied, “poltergeist”-like activities], and their ownership of material articles [as indicated by the fact that they are described carrying items away with them (*hedan* 荷擔) during their midnight exodus]).³⁵ As in the previous case, this account also stresses the interpenetration of the waking and dream realms from the standpoint of the *ganying* framework, in that both the haunting and the subsequent success of the monk's exorcism are expressed to readers through examples drawn from each.

Finally, and even though this account does not concern anywhere near as peripheral a location as Sengguang's mountain hermitage, this episode follows the same cosmographic logic, wherein the incursion of Buddhism into a new geographical area angers local spirits, who must then be placated (or otherwise attended to). Unlike Sengguang's silent meditation, however, this account explicitly

as an example of an elliptical dream narrative (as described in Chapter One). For a cross-cultural exploration of this sort of shared oneiric practice, wherein dreams are compared, discussed and (often) reinterpreted a communal setting, see the discussion of intersubjective dreams in Bogzaran and Deslauriers, 119–132.

- 34 As discussed by Kieschnick (1996), the early accounts of thaumaturge monks (i.e., those from *GSZ*) tend to focus much more on the personal charisma of their idealized protagonists than on the specific mantic techniques employed, whereas later ones make more reference to forms of Buddhist ritual practice that would that been known and accessible to medieval Buddhist auditors (84–90). We will see this dynamic play out in action when we turn to the parallel accounts from *XGSZ*.
- 35 For the classic study of the (predominantly) functional and ritual distinctions between the categories of extrahuman beings in the Chinese cosmology, see: Arthur P. Wolf, “Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors,” in *Studies in Chinese Society*, edited by Arthur P. Wolf, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1966), 131–182. For general coverage of ghosts in medieval China, see: Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, 53–66; Poo Mu-chou, “Images and Ritual Treatment of Dangerous Spirits,” in *Early Chinese Religion: Part Two – The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, edited by John Lagerway and Lü Pengzhi, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1075–1094; Cohen, v-vii.

preserves Guṇabhadra's attempt to negotiate with these extrahuman agents, offering them continued lodging in his temple if they agree to behave themselves and accede to the role of “Dharma Protectors.” This, in turn, represents a clear description of an attempt to convert local deities: a pattern of cultural adaptation prominent not only in China, but in every region within the proselytic range of Buddhist teachers.³⁶ Here as well, we see the central role of dream as limens: just as the spirits exist in a dually interstitial state (i.e., at the boundaries between Buddhist and “popular” religion, as well as the human and extrahuman realms), “regular” people (i.e., those lacking the innate spiritual efficacy of an eminent monk) can only perceive them directly in the liminal realm of dreams.

As a final example from GSZ relating to conflictual encounters with the denizens of the unseen realm, we turn to the excitingly folkloric account of the monk Tanchao (曇超, 419–492) and his exorcistic engagement with a flight of unruly dragons whose withholding of life-giving rain is seen threatening a small town.³⁷ In addition to helping reinforce some of the themes introduced above, this episode is also notable for the circumstances under which the heroic monk was commissioned to embark on his quest: namely, his receipt of an impassioned plea from a local deity concerned for the welfare of the region's residents. As such, the present narrative can also be seen as a bridge between

36 This narrative implies a level of self-aware reflexivity on the part of medieval Chinese Buddhists, given that this form of cultural imperialism (i.e., the redefinition of local gods as servitors of Buddhism) has been essential to the success of Buddhism as a missionary religion. For an excellent introduction to this cultural dynamic, see: Fabio Rambelli, “Local Divinities and Buddhism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert Buswell, (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 465–469. For an overview of this phenomenon in medieval China, see: Daniel L. Overmyer, “Buddhism in The Trenches: Attitudes Toward Popular Religion in Chinese Scriptures Found at Tun-Huang,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 50:1 (1990): 197–222. Such narratives continue to be valuable engines of proselytism in contemporary Buddhism. For a contemporary example of the ascription of exorcistic powers to Buddhist saints drawn from a Thai magazine, see: Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets: A Study in Charisma, Hagiography, Sectarianism and Millennial Buddhism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 270.

37 de Visser discusses the history of Chinese Buddhist chanting sutras in response to droughts (28–32). For a contemporary example of the continued association between local Dragon Kings and agricultural productivity (especially with regard to rainfall and drought), see: Chau, *Miraculous Response*, 79–84.

this section's accounts of hostile interactions with local spirits and the benign (and often reverential) ones that will be considered in section two.

[Tanchao] happened to travel to Mt. Lingyin in Qiantang. Every time he practiced meditation, he did not come out of his meditative state for many days. Sometime later he unexpectedly heard the sound of wind and thunder. Suddenly a man holding a tablet appeared in front of him, announcing the appearance of a noble person. Soon another man appeared. He was extremely handsome and accompanied by lines of soldiers decorated with feathers. This man sat down on a low seat and paid his respects to the monk; he then said, “I, your disciple, reside in a place seven miles away. The realm under my responsibility includes this present place. I heard that the dharma master has come here, and for that reason I came here to pay my proper respects. Last winter people at the Fuyang District dug at the foot of Mt. Lu to collect clay for baking tiles and disturbed the ground around the dragons' residence. The dragons were infuriated and decided to stop the rain for 300 days. Today over 100 days have passed. Wells and ponds have dried up; the crops that were planted in the fields are long gone. You, the dharma master, have the spiritual power that reaches the gods. If you plead to put an end to this situation caused by an event in the past, your conduct will surely have cosmic effects. The rain will come and will benefit the multitude of people.”

Tanchao replied, “You, as a patron of the monastic community, have the power to cause clouds to rise and bring down rain. How could I, a monk, do that?” The god said, “Those in my division are capable only of causing clouds to rise. We cannot cause rain to fall. This is why I have made this request.” In the end Tanchao acceded to the request. The god immediately disappeared.

Tanchao then travelled southward and, after five days, reached Mt. Chiting. From a distance he uttered spells for the dragons and preached on the Buddhist teaching. In the evening numerous dragons took on human form and presented themselves to Tanchao to pay respects to him. Tanchao preached further. Consequently, the dragons begged him to allow them to take the Three Refuges. They declared themselves to be dragons. When Tanchao asked them to cause rain to fall, they looked at each other but did not say anything. During the night they came again to Tanchao in a dream and said, “Originally, we were infuriated, and therefore made the oath. You, the dharma master, have guided us to a life of good conduct. We do not dare to disobey your order. At mealtime tomorrow rain will fall.”

The next morning Tanchao went to the Linqiansi or “Facing the Spring” Temple. He sent a man to the District Magistrate, telling him to arrange a boat to be sent out into the Jiang river and the Dragon King Scripture to be recited on that boat. The District Magistrate asked the monk to go out in the boat himself. When he finished reciting the scripture, heavy rain came. Everyone, on every level of society, was satisfied, and the year's harvest was plentiful.³⁸

38 As translated in Shinohara, “Biographies of Eminent Monks in a Comparative Perspective,” 490–491.

Since the parallels between this account and the two previous ones are clear, I will not bother to belabour them here. Instead, I think the most notable aspect of this narrative is its insertion of a Buddhist monk into the extrahuman bureaucracy, wherein specific spirits (and their human intercessors) are assigned particular domains of influence and control (as discussed above). While Shinohara correctly notes that this functions to position the monk at the intersection of the human and extrahuman hierarchies, allowing him to address the presumed supernatural causes of an issue afflicting the human populace,³⁹ I am more intrigued by a number of structural features related to role of oneiric experience therein. First, and in even more explicit terms than the Bo Sengguang account discussed above, both meditation and sleep are portrayed as “communicative” mental states: just as the monk's meditation allows him to receive a vision of the impotent local deity's supplication, so too does his later employment of Buddhist spells and teaching impel the aggrieved dragons to appear to him in a dream and offer to (essentially) become his disciples.⁴⁰ Moreover, the link between these two non-ordinary psychological states is echoed in the language used to describe the two encounters. In the first case, Tanchao's encounter with the god during his meditative vision is largely described in terms of official ritual: for instance, the god's arrival is announced by a spirit herald, he is preceded by an honour guard

39 Shinohara (*ibid.*), *passim*. For example:

Focusing our attention on this basic pattern, which appears to be found frequently in stories about the exercise of supernatural power by Buddhist monks in medieval China, I want to try to speculate about the "function" of these monks, in a way similar to that in which Peter Brown has described the function of "holy men" in Byzantine culture. I would like to suggest that in the Chinese case, the monks might have helped to maintain the social order by providing what was understood to be emergency solutions to the crises that arose from its malfunctioning. Under normal circumstances the virtue of the officials of this world and the power of officials in the other world, that included creatures like dragons, are believed to make certain that everything worked smoothly – for example, that rains came at the appropriate time. Unpredictable occurrences such as drought threaten the society by undermining the credibility of this entire symbolic order (492–493).

40 In particular, the literature on medieval confession rituals highlights the functional equivalence of oneiric and meditative visions in the medieval Chinese perspective (as discussed in Chapter One).

in ceremonial finery,⁴¹ and, finally, his spirit guest is described opting to take “the low seat.”⁴² All of these details serve to portray the monk as a ruler in the process of receiving a subordinate, using terms that would have been unequivocal to any contemporary reader. In the second (albeit briefer) case, the dragons appear to the monk as prospective disciples, inspired by his efficacious teaching to renounce their sinful ways and wishing to receive the Three Refuges.⁴³ Thus, we see another collapsing of metaphorically-resonant dualities, with the hierarchical discourses of lord/vassal and monk/pupil both being mapped onto the relationship between a powerful monk and local extrahuman beings. In this context, whether the monk is being approached by local spirits as a political or religious authority,⁴⁴ it is his ability to interact with them via non-ordinary states of consciousness, and to subsequently report these subjective experiences to his patrons, that transforms such purported interactions into social realities. Finally, and as noted in the discussion of the two previous narratives, the composition of this episode as well seems to have been motivated by cosmographical concerns relating to gradual expansion of the Buddhist sphere of influence in medieval China,⁴⁵ though in this case the encounter

41 I am intrigued by this feathered finery (see GSZ: 羽衛連翩 [T. 2059: 400a14]), as it could be read as either a reference to the “exotic” costumes that would likely have been worn by the retinues of foreign vassals when visiting the capital (in keeping with the cosmographic hypothesis outlined in Chapter Three) or to the winged immortals that were featured so regularly in the iconography of the Han dynasty (see Company, *Making Transcendents*, 49, 83; Leslie V. Wallace, “Betwixt and Between: Depictions of Immortals [Xian] in Eastern Han Tomb Reliefs,” *Ars Orientalis* 41 (2011): 73–101). In the second case, this would obviously serve to narratively subordinate these “Taoistic” figures.

42 The term Shinohara translates as “low seat” is *xiayi* 下席 (400a14) – a term that is ubiquitous in the ritual (*li* 禮) literature, given the symbolic significance of seat placement. See, for example, *Liji* (*Yanyi* 燕義): 君席阼階之上，居主位也；君獨立席上，西面特立，莫敢適之義也 (131). Cf., James Legge (trans.), *The Li Ki: XI-XLVI*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885):

The ruler's mat is placed at the top of the eastern steps - there is the station of the host. The ruler alone goes up and stands on his mat; with his face to the west he stands there by himself - showing that no one presumes to place himself on a par with him (455).

43 As an aside, it should be noted that this account is not entirely clear about which of the interactions between the monk and the dragons represent oneiric interactions. Shinohara's translation elegantly maintains an ambiguity that is also present in the original when he says “During the night they came again to Tanchao in a dream” (491). Cf., 其夜又與超夢云 (T. 2059:400a26). As can be seen, it is unclear how to read this “also” (*you* 又): i.e., did they come to him in a dream in addition to having appeared to him in other contexts or did they also appear to him in a dream on that occasion, having already done so?

44 As noted above, it is almost certainly an oversimplification to characterize “political” and “religious” as any sort of dichotomy in medieval China.

45 This is why Shinohara is inclined to “read the miracle story as a story about the penetration of Buddhism into local

with the (initially) hostile extrahuman beings culminates in their conversion to Buddhism instead of their exile.

In the *Continued Biographies*, in contrast, dream narratives relating to active conflicts between Buddhist monks and local extrahuman beings are almost entirely absent. Specifically, in spite of being more than twice as long, the second text includes only one account comparable to those treated above, drawn from the biography of the monk Huijian (慧簡, 467–557):

[As for] the monk Huijian, it is not known from whence he came. At the beginning of the Liang [ca. 502 CE], he was [already] on the [Buddhist] path. His adherence to the precepts was far-ranging and punctilious, and he was distinguished by his extraordinary bravery.

In the State of Jing, there was a government hall⁴⁶ in the east that previously had three bays exclusively dedicated to *zhai* [practice],⁴⁷ which from the beginning had often been the site of many ghostly, uncanny [happenings]. At this time, Wang Jianwu⁴⁸ was about to take a government post, but there was no one who was able to take up residence [in this eerie hall]. Since Huijian was Lord Wang's preceptor, he was assigned the task of living there, so he personally moved into one of the bays, subsequently settling in [with his Buddhist] scriptures and icons.

Suddenly, he saw a person in black robes with no eyes come out of the wall, and who then immediately leaned toward Huijian over his gateway. At this time, Huijian's eyes were open and his heart-mind fully comprehended [the situation], however his mouth was unable to speak. [So,] he mentally pictured Guanshiyin.⁴⁹ After a time, the ghost said: “It is said that you, sir,

communities outside of major urban centers in South China” (496), and as part of a *sub rosa* narrative that can be read into many such accounts from *GSZ* and *XGSZ* relating to the interactions between local religious communities and Buddhist interlopers (494–497). I believe that the material discussed in this chapter and in Chapter Three helps to provide additional evidence for this hypothesis.

46 This is a tentative rendering, drawing on GR in reading *tingshi* 廳事 as “(anc.) bureau d'un mandarin; (p. ext.) résidence privée (d'un mandarin).”

47 For a discussion of the relationship between *zhai* and oneiric practice in medieval China, see Chapter One.

48 The DILA Buddhist Authority database notes simply that this Wang Jianwu was a historical individual who served as governor of Jing, listing the current account as the only source for biographical information on him (<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A006817>). I have had no luck tracking down any additional references to him, having checked a variety of biographical dictionaries, histories, and other sources, as well as performing a full-text search of the Taishō canon.

49 Phenomenologically, this certainly sounds like a case of sleep paralysis (as it includes many of the standard elements of these experiences, including a vision of looming figure, a sense of being awake, the inability to scream or otherwise vocalize, as well as the sudden and abrupt resumption of the dreamer's control of their body at the conclusion of the experience). See Adler, *Sleep Paralysis*, for a detailed overview of the cross-cultural manifestations of this

have made spiritual progress, which is the reason that I have come to test you. Though your countenance is currently unmoving, I wonder [how you will respond] when I continue to menace you.” In a flash, it went back into the wall. Huijian calmly arose, ritually purified [himself]⁵⁰ and completed his recitation, and then once again fell asleep as usual. In a dream, he was approached by a man, who said: “I, your servant, have resided here several hundred years remaining here since the end of the Han. By nature, I am resolute, so many found me intolerable. You are a good person who sincerely practices purity, so you can tolerate me.”⁵¹ And with that, he vanished.

Huijian lived there for many years. His calm tranquility was as it had been in the beginning. Although others passed through, he was the only one who was able to live there.⁵²

釋慧簡，不知何許人。梁初在道，戒業弘峻，殊奇膽勇。荊州廳事東，先有三間別齋，由來屢多鬼怪。時王建武臨治，猶無有能住者，惟簡是王君門師，專任居之，自住一間，餘安經像。俄見一人黑衣無目，從壁中出，便倚簡門上。時簡目開心了，但口不得語，意念觀世音。良久，鬼曰：「承君精進，故來相試。今神色不動，豈復逼耶？」欵然還入壁中。簡徐起，澡漱禮誦訖，還如常眠寐，夢向人曰：「僕以漢末居此數百年，為性剛直，多所不堪。君誠淨行好人，特相容耳。」於此遂絕。簡住積載，安隱如初，若經他行，猶無有人能住之者。

This story is clearly congruent with many of the features of the dream encounters from the GSZ discussed above, such as the role of dreams as informatory miracles and as sites of contact between the human and extrahuman realms, as well as the implication that such encounters seem to be equally significant (and thus to possess the same evidentiary value) regardless of whether they occurred in wake, meditative concentration, or sleep. In addition, I was struck by the phantasmagorical quality of this apparition, given that it is initially described as a black-robed ghost or demon (*gui* 鬼), whereas when it later approaches the monk in a dream, it is simply described as a man (*ren* 人). A similar dynamic can be seen in the Bo Sengguang and Tanchao episodes outlined above: in the first case, the

phenomenon (8–36) and its underlying physiological and neural correlates (74–93).

50 As noted in Nakamura's *Kosetsu Bukkyōgo Daijiten* (1072c), *zaoshu* 澡漱 can refer to gargling or otherwise washing out the mouth after one has eaten, implying in context that Huijian assumed that his conversation with the ghost had rendered his mouth ritually impure (at least as regards the task of performing scriptural recitation). For a roughly contemporaneous description of this purification practice in the context of *dhāraṇī* recitation, see the Heart Spell of Infallible Lasso (*Bukong judansuo shenzhouxin jing* 不空絹索神呪心經), which was translated by Xuanzang: 食訖澡漱往佛像前。燒沈水香至誠頂禮。專心誦此大神呪心滿八千遍。(T. 1094: 405c6–7).

51 My thanks to James Benn for his assistance with this line of dialogue (personal communication).

52 T. 2060: 646b23-c6; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), 991.

mountain spirit is seen assuming the form of a snake and a tiger during their initial oneiric encounter, and, in the second case, the dragons are depicted assuming human form to speak to the monk – a development that the initial author or later compiler obviously felt was potentially confusing enough to include a line stating that the monk's (seemingly human) oneiric visitors “actually were the dragons.”⁵³ Such episodes, especially coupled with the numerous references to overt dream telling and dream interpretation practice in the *Eminent Monks* (as described in Chapter One), reinforce my supposition that many of them could owe their genesis to specific oneiric experiences, as they seem to reflect that universal human experience of a dream image or location that simultaneously represents two (or more) referents from the dreamer's waking life (i.e., “I saw someone that looked like my aunt, but I knew it was actually my second-grade teacher”). If this supposition is indeed correct, the ascription of Buddhist significance to these ambiguous referents would have been precisely the sort of meaning-making process that would have occurred during dream narrativization, especially if these dreams were being interpreted and retold in consultation with a Buddhist monk or lay disciple.

As an aside, and in keeping with Kieschnick's comments on the evolution of the Chinese understanding of Buddhist monastic thaumaturgy, it is notable that Huijian's response to the incursion of the terrifying apparition differs markedly from those ascribed to the monks in GSZ. Instead of subjugating the spirit through unspecified spells, personalized vows or his own silent charismatic authority (all of which were associated with these wonder-working monks), he instead relies on invoking Guanyin: a praxical path that was both accessible to and popular among both Buddhist monks and lay adherents in the mid-seventh century.⁵⁴ When the ghost returns in the monk's dream to

53 至夜群龍悉化作人。來詣超禮拜。超更說法。因乞三歸。自稱是龍。(T. 2059: 400a23–25)

54 One of the episodes selected by Campany for inclusion in “Earliest Miracles of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin” provides a perfect illustration of the perceived soteriological universalism of these practices to early medieval Buddhists:
A group of a dozen or so people were about to be executed in the eastern marketplace. Only one among them

compliment him, it seems most likely that a culturally-competent reader would have credited this efficacious practice with the monk's ability to retain his equanimity in the face of an eerie assault.

Likewise, though it initially seems to parallel the three GSZ accounts considered above by describing a monk in conflict with a local spirit, this story does not fit neatly into the cosmographic hypothesis discussed above (and considered in some detail by Shinohara). More specifically, not only does it not occur in a peripheral area, but its irenic resolution is also entirely unlike the previous examples. As such, it seems to propose a compromise between the two horns of the “submission / exile” dilemma discussed above. Rather than the ghost either being exorcised (i.e., symbolically banished) or being converted to Buddhism, it instead proposes that the two can comfortably coexist (i.e., a symbolic truce). As such, this suggests that accounts like this one may have served a different rhetorical purpose for Daoxuan than those included in Huijiao's collection. Whereas the three episodes from GSZ all concluded with a focus on the location in question (emphasizing the triumph of Buddhism over specific local cults), this one ends by reiterating the monk's bravery, which was also the trait for which he was lauded in the biography's introduction.

This suggests a possible socio-political interpretation: in the Liang dynasty, the status of Buddhism in Chinese society was still very much in flux, whereas by the Sui and Tang, it was much

respected the dharma, and this man began chanting [the name of] Guanshiyin with perfect sincerity. Another man who was sitting with him asked what he was doing. He replied: 'I have heard that the scriptures of the Buddha's dharma mention a bodhisattva Guanshiyin who saves people from distress. So I am taking refuge in him.' The other man then followed his example (88).

This account concludes with the names of these two men magically disappearing from the execution docket and subsequently escaping during the ensuing chaos; this clearly demonstrates the miraculous efficacy that was attributed to such practices. Also see: Daniel B. Stevenson, “Buddhist Practice and the Lotus Sutra in China,” in *Readings of the Lotus Sutra*, edited by Stephen F. Teiser and Jacqueline I. Stone, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 132–150. For Guanyin-related oneiric practices, see Chapter One.

As an aside, it should be noted that this sort of mental invocation of a known mantra, religious text or prayer is one of the most common folk remedies for sleep paralysis (as discussed in Adler, *Sleep Paralysis*, 23, 28–31).

better established, both in terms of political acceptance and popular support. As Ann Swidler argues in “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,” there is a significant and salient difference between the way that individuals dwelling in settled and unsettled societies employ their respective cultural repertoires. In settled contexts, these cultural “toolboxes” are open-ended and inclusive, reflecting the diversity of opinions and approaches that can be efficaciously employed in such contexts. In unsettled societies, in contrast, individuals tend to reify their socio-political commitments into closed, “ideologized” repertoires, which can then serve as shibboleths of group membership.⁵⁵ In this way, it is perhaps not surprising that the Buddhist narratives produced during the more unsettled centuries leading up to the Liang dynasty seem to present Buddhism as a united, spiritually-efficacious front, extending inexorably into the Chinese hinterlands and subjugating local deities and spirits in its advance, whereas the Tang collection is freer to simply exalt the conspicuous bravery of a single monk. This possibility is rendered all the more plausible by the fact that a subset of XGSZ narratives I reviewed in the course of this research also included descriptions of the conduct of misbehaving monks:⁵⁶ a topic that is completely absent from the GSZ narratives under consideration. I would argue that Daoxuan's decision to include such episodes bespeaks a relative confidence that they would not be employed to unfairly besmirch the entire Buddhist enterprise.

Regardless of this purported distinction, the monks in all of the narratives discussed above are also linked by the affective qualities of restraint, compassion, and equanimity: qualities that were explicitly acknowledged by the authors of three of the four episodes. For instance, Bo Sengguang is described “showing no fear” in response to his initial foray into the haunted hermitage and “not being frightened in the least” by the spirit's oneiric assault, and Huijian is the only one brave enough to reside

55 Swidler, “Culture in Action,” 278–282; Swidler, *Talk of Love*, 89–108.

56 Mentioned in Chapter Three.

in the eerie government hall, with a steely disposition that allows him to “arise calmly” after seeing a terrifying apparition. What is more striking, however, is that all four of the encounters culminate in compassionate, non-aggressive responses from the monks: Bo Sengguang meditates quietly with his hands in a posture of invocation; Guṇabhadra calmly explains that his religious activities, including the construction of the monastery, were performed for the sake of living beings, and he offers his spiritual assailants permission to continue residing there if they volunteer to defend the monastery; Tanchao attempts to convert the drought-causing dragons by preaching the dharma to them; Huijian responds to his nocturnal intruder by continuing his *Lotus Sutra* recitation practice.⁵⁷ These affective and praxical responses are all the more notable when contrasted with the motives implicitly and explicitly ascribed to the spirits themselves. Neither the mountain spirit encountered by Bo Sengguang and nor the ghosts in Guṇabhadra's new monastery have any stipulated rationale for their respective assaults, which essentially transforms their actions into the instinctual defensiveness of an animal whose territory is being encroached upon. As a response to their savage (and seemingly unprovoked) attacks, both narratives conclude with an oneiric vision of their banishment. The dragons in the Tanchao episode, in contrast, were driven to their (admittedly excessive) act of meteorological revenge when local people damaged their home in the process of digging clay for use in crafting roof tiles. Given that Buddhist monasteries and temples would have been of the largest and most ornately-roofed structures in medieval China,⁵⁸ it is possible that this initial offence was caused by construction activities of lay Buddhists, which helps to explain both why Tanchao's aid would have been requested and why the

57 It should be noted that these responses are also compatible with the moral ideals relating to the perfection of equanimity and compassion stressed in the Jātaka tales and beyond (discussed above).

This attitudinal and praxical stance is also evidenced in the tale of Fa'an, outlined in a prior footnote, where the wonder-working monk deals with an epidemic of tiger attacks through meditation and dharma instruction.

58 As noted in Gernet's *Buddhism in Chinese Society*,

the production of bricks and tiles supplied a favourite argument of the partisans of sumptuary regulations, and one they borrowed from Buddhism itself: the earthwork and especially the firing caused the death of worms, ants, and subterranean insects (17).

The current episode could be seen as an active response to such critiques.

dragons are seen to repudiate their previous grievance upon actually hearing the Buddhist message. Finally, the Han Dynasty-era ghost that preys upon Huijian states that he is doing so in order to test the bravery of anyone who seeks to dwell in the government *zhai* hall, implying that all previous religious professionals that he had sent packing lacked the emotional and spiritual resources that Buddhism provided the monk.

This shared dynamic speaks to the contestation of the religious landscape in medieval China, especially in peripheral regions, where Buddhist monks and laypeople were often engaged in temple construction and renovation projects in locations that were already associated with local cults.⁵⁹ By characterizing the monks as a universally benign force, unwilling to respond emotionally even to direct assaults, such accounts symbolically defuse the tension inherent in Buddhist incursions into these regions. Likewise, by transforming the local deities into aggressors, any blame that could be ascribed to local Buddhist congregations and their patrons is expiated. Given the general practice of dream telling in medieval Chinese Buddhism (described in Chapter One), it is entirely plausible that the members of local discourse communities may have initially decided to circulate these narratives in response to the concerns of local religionists relating to the relationship between new Buddhist construction projects and autochthonous deities, as they provided clear evidence of the means by which such conflicts could be resolved.

This hypothesis will be further explored in Section Two, where we will discuss a more common narrative trope in these accounts: local deities who respond to monastic construction projects (and other incursions into their demesnes) by immediately seeking conversion or offering fealty. In many of these

59 Robson, “Changing Places” (*passim*) and Benn, “One Mountain, Two Traditions” (*passim*).

accounts as well, monks employ tales of their oneiric experiences as evidence that local gods have accepted the “eminent domain” of Buddhism. However, unlike the previous cases, many of them also preserve more details concerning the social environment in which these interactions occurred, thus providing additional support for the functional explanation of these “evidentiary miracles” proposed in the previous paragraphs.

Oneiric Experiences: Spirit(ual) Conversion and Patronage

As noted above, we now turn our attention to a variety of cases wherein local deities eschew the territoriality seen previously and instead welcome Buddhists into their home regions, often in the explicit context of providing permission to construct temples or monasteries using previously tabooed local resources. As in the previous section, and in spite of the later collection's considerably greater length, I find it striking that XGSZ contains only one instance of this specific trope, whereas the previous (shorter) collection includes four. If the hypothesis that I proposed in the previous section is indeed correct (i.e., that these narratives had originally served a social function for peripheral Buddhist communities, who used dream telling practice to mitigate concerns over the competing religious claims of preexisting local cults and interloping Buddhists), the decrease in instances of this trope would seem to track with the increasing social prominence of Buddhism under the unified Sui and Tang dynasties, potentially indicating a corresponding decrease in such anxieties by the mid-seventh century. I will explore this hypothesis by considering a related trope: oneiric encounters with, and subsequent conversion of, local gods.

First, we turn to a prototypical instance of this trope from the GSZ biography of Tanyi (曇翼, ca. 330–ca. 410): a non-Han monk of the Qiang 羌 tribe,⁶⁰ who was a former student of Dao'an 道安 (312/314–385) and acquaintance of Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416), and who eventually came to serve as the “abbot of the important Changsha 長沙 monastery at Jiangling [江陵].”⁶¹ Therein we see a confluence of issues that have already been discussed in this and previous chapters, including oneiric responses to Buddhist confession rituals, dreams as informatory miracles, and concerns relating to inter-religious interaction. The episode in question is found approximately halfway through the monk's biography, after he has been tasked by Dao'an with the proselytic mission of preaching to the residents of the state of Chu 楚.⁶² This task, which included the construction of new temples, was certainly aided by the monk's reputation for spiritual efficacy, as demonstrated through miracles that included the miraculous multiplication of alms rice⁶³ and the summoning of Buddhist relics.⁶⁴

Afterwards, Tanyi went into Baling 巴陵 to harvest lumber from Mount Jun 君山.⁶⁵ The *Classic of Mountains and Seas* refers to this place as Mount Dongting. At the top of the mountain, there is a cave that leads to Mount Bao in the State of Wu.⁶⁶ [Since] this mountain was completely

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- 60 SCM (Qiang 羌): “The ancient name for proto-Tibetan peoples who migrated south from the Kokonor region.” In *Buddhist Conquest*, Zürcher simply identifies him as being “of 'Tibetan' origin” (199). See GSZ: 釋曇翼。姓姚。羌人也 (T. 2059: 355c2)
- 61 See Zürcher for a description of Tanyi's practice community in Jiangling (199). His connection to Huiyuan (as well as Dao'an) is mentioned in the subsequent appendix: a heavily annotated translation of the GSZ biography of Huiyuan (240).
- 62 See: 安謂翼曰。荆楚士庶始欲師宗。成其化者非爾而誰 (T. 2059: 355c9–11). Yoshikawa and Funayama identify Jingchu 荆楚 as the area in the middle of the course of the Yangtze river (「長江中流の地域」) (Vol. 2, 167 ff. 3).
- 63 See: T. 2059: 355c4–7; Yoshikawa and Funayama, Vol. 2, 165–166.
- 64 See: T. 2059: 355c14–18; Yoshikawa and Funayama, Vol. 2, 166.
- 65 Based on the coordinates assigned via Dharma Drum's mapping project, this mountain (<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000029295>) is approximately one hundred kilometers from Jiangling (<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000027768>) (i.e., the site from which Tanyi departed). Great circle distance calculated via scripts found at: <http://www.movable-type.co.uk/scripts/latlong.html>. For more information, see Yoshikawa and Funayama, Vol. 2, 169 ff. 1.
- 66 If there Dharma Drum annotations are correct, the uncanny passage between this second mountain (<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000010052>) and Mount Jun links two sites separated by more than 800 km (once again, calculated via <http://www.movable-type.co.uk/scripts/latlong.html>). This geographically impossible co-location, as well as the reference to its inclusion in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* itself (the significance of which was in Chapter Three), would have certainly served to reinforce the eerie, liminal nature of this site.

numinous and uncanny, people found it extremely unsettling. When Tanyi and his followers entered the mountain, they encountered ten white snakes on the road, laying there blocking the cart track that [they would have used] to advance. When Tanyi had returned to where he was staying, he made a request of the mountain's numinous [denizens] from a distance, via his performance of a ritual confession,⁶⁷ thereby addressing the spirits, [saying]: “As for [my plan] to harvest some trees to make a temple, it is my sincere wish that we will mutually find it beneficial.”

That night, he immediately had a dream vision of a spirit person who addressed him, saying: “Dharma Teacher, the fact that [we] are essential to the Three Treasures is particularly delightful [to us]. It is just that [you] must not permit any other people to carelessly chop down that which is here.” The next day, upon setting out again, the roadway was totally clear and [Tanyi] was able to harvest the [required] wood, flowingly bearing it back down alongside the road,⁶⁸ though some of the woodsmen inevitably snuck away to secretly pilfer [trees for themselves]. Upon returning to the site of the temple, and once Tanyi's lumber was finished being milled, all [of the trees] that had been secretly chopped down by others were confiscated for use in building the hall. The monk's sincere response [*gan*] was like this.⁶⁹

後入巴陵君山伐木，山海經所謂洞庭山也。山上有穴，通吳之苞山。山既靈異，人甚憚之，翼率人入山，路值白蛇數十，臥遮行轍，翼退還所住，遙請山靈為其禮懺。乃謂神曰：「吾造寺伐材，幸願共為功德。」夜即夢見神人告翼曰：「法師既為三寶須用，特相隨喜，但莫令餘人妄有所伐。」明日更往，路甚清夷，於是伐木，沿流而下，其中伐人不免私竊。還至寺上，翼材已畢，餘人所私之者，悉為官所取。其誠感如此。

In terms of its setting (and the religio-political dynamics underlying it), this account bears numerous similarities to those considered previously, as it concerns the literal incursion of a party of monastics and foresters into a secluded mountain copse with a well-publicized reputation for its numinous character. Indeed, the explicit reference to the *Shanhai jing* – a text whose primary purpose was to

67 Yoshikawa and Funayama render 禮懺 as 禮拜懺悔 (Vol. 2, 169), which seems to imply a specific religious ritual. This accords with the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism's* definition of “*lichen* 禮懺,” <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E7%A6%AE%E6%87%BA>: “Worship and repentance. Penitential offering. An abbreviation of 禮拜懺悔. To make obeisance to the Three Treasures 三寶 and repent for one's sins.”

68 It is possible that this describes the monk literally floating the logs down a river or stream, which could describe an attempt to harvest it surreptitiously without relying on the aid of untrustworthy woodsmen (in accordance with the mountain spirit's wishes). It could perhaps also be used to describe bearing the wood down from the mountain “fire-brigade” style (i.e., person-to-person, via a long human chain), which would simultaneously have hidden the source of the wood from the untrustworthy woodsmen and made sure that each participant was forced to stand in place (and thus be unable to sneak away to cut additional wood for themselves). In either case, it seems likely that the monk's implicitly apotropaic presence meant that the spirit was not concerned about the woodsmen stealthily returning on their own in the aftermath of this particular expedition.

69 T. 2059: 355c19–28.

define the spectral denizens of various regions and the rituals that were their due⁷⁰ – provides substantial support to the cosmographic hypothesis outlined above, in that it suggests that such issues were of central importance to the author(s)/compiler(s) of this tale. That said, in contrast to the episodes associated with Bo Sengguang, Fa'an, Huijiao and Tanchao described above, wherein Buddhist monks are depicted as heroic figures, arriving to address the preexisting threat posed by a local spirit, this account casts Tanyi as the instigator, given that it is his logging expedition that prompts the initial (non-oneiric) response from the deity, in the form of a roadblock of uncanny white snakes.

When considering the narrative function of this episode, the fact that a Buddhist monk prompted the hostile encounter requires an even more exculpatory explanation than those employed above. This is provided via the informatory miracle of the monk's oneiric communication with the spirits of the region, through which he is not only informed that they are ecstatic about being of service to the “Three Treasures” (implying their familiarity with basic Buddhist terminology and their implicit endorsement of the monk's building project), but that they had only been motivated to block his path by a concern that unscrupulous woodsmen might use the allotted lumber for purposes *other than* Tanyi's construction project.

From the standpoint of the traditional stimulus-response framework, the baleful omen of the white snakes would almost certainly have been interpreted as a representation of the mountain spirits' displeasure and thus as a sign that it was incumbent upon the group to abandon their current endeavour.⁷¹ In fact, in keeping with the hypothesis proposed above, it is certainly plausible that the

70 As discussed in Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary*, 2–12.

71 See the introduction for an extensive discussion of the “readability” of the cosmos and the role of omens in early medieval Chinese life.

foregoing ill omen could have prompted questions within Tanyi's community, or at least within the minds of later Buddhists who wrote and compiled this account, regarding the respective spiritual potencies of the mountain deities and their Buddhist counterparts: questions that could only be answered through direct communication with the spirits (a task that would obviously fall upon a spiritually-potent monastic protagonist). That said, the single most notable aspect of the present account is that Tanyi is depicted establishing a numinous channel of communication by explicitly performing a ritual confession,⁷² stating the message intended for his spiritual interlocutors, and then awaiting an oneiric response. A full-text search of the Taishō canon supports my intuition that this represents a profoundly creative reimagining of a Buddhist ritual procedure, as it reveals no further instances of this confession ritual being employed to interact with explicitly non-Buddhist extrahuman beings.⁷³ As such, while it would be unwise to draw too strong a conclusion from this single episode, it nonetheless suggests two conclusions about the medieval Buddhist perspective on the oneiric realm and

72 The role of confession rituals in Chinese Buddhist dream incubation is considered at some length in Chapter One.

73 I used CBETA's boolean search functionality to perform a proximity search (*lichan* 禮懺 + *shen* 神) through the entire canon, which returns all instances of these characters occurring within twenty places of each other. This of course yielded a variety of false positives, the majority of which did not even fit the pattern (as they related to cases where the *shen* 神 preceded the *lichan* 禮懺). Among the remainder, a relatively common theme related to descriptions of this ritual yielding [*gan*] a response in the form of numinous light (e.g., T. 2059: 412c24–25; T. 2060: 515c17–18), as well as a variety of quotations from the Guṇabhadra biography translated above (wherein he notes, in his dialogue with the haunting spectres, that his performance of the confession rite was for their benefit and then requests that they behave as “good spirits”). Though the Song GSZ does include one instance of a discussion with a spirit, the confession ritual is employed in the context of requesting divine permission to receive precepts (a standard usage) rather than to invoke a response from the (non-Buddhist) extrahuman realm (T. 2061: 876b24–25). The only other potentially relevant usage is found in a mid-Tang apocryphon preserved in the Taishō volume of “doubtful” scriptures that appropriates the Taoist “rite of the celestial kitchens” by couching it in Buddhist language (as discussed in Mollier, 23–54). The relevant section describes a specific procedure that potentially links the invocation of gods with ritual confession, though here too the goal of directly communicating with these extrahuman beings is not discussed:

All good male and female disciples who want to practice this Method of the Three Kitchens must first succeed in controlling and purifying their hearts; they must burn the finest incense and **secretly recite the names of the aforementioned divinities, perform rites of contrition**, and pray to obtain protection and support. These rites of the Kitchens should be repeated forty-nine times (translated by Mollier, 34 [emphasis added]).

「密念前件厨神名字。作禮懺悔乞祐助。」(T. 2894: 1414b15–16)

Of all the examples considered here, this one seems to provide the clearest evidence of the confession rite being performed for the intercession of deities that are not explicitly associated with the Buddhist pantheon, though even here there is no suggestion that the goal is to open a communicative channel with them. Regardless, it does suggest that usage context for these confession rites was much larger than a cursory examination of the literature would suggest.

its relationship with Buddhist ritualism: first, and as already extensively discussed, the dream world was clearly imagined as a liminal realm where contact with the panoply of Chinese extrahuman beings was possible; and, second, that the efficacy of Buddhist dream rites was not restricted to “Buddhist” deities. We will return to such forms of “inter-religious” interaction in Section Three.

The theme of local deities peaceably acquiescing to the authority of exemplary Buddhists is echoed in two additional accounts from GSZ: namely, those of Tanyong 曇邕 (d.u.) and Huishou 慧受, each of which deals with a different subset of the issues treated above. The first case begins with Tanyong, a former disciple of Huiyuan who continued to reside on Mount Lu 廬山 despite being expelled by his teacher,⁷⁴ engaging in renunciant meditation alongside his remaining disciple Tanguo 曇果 (d.u.). The disciple then had an unbidden interaction with a spirit supplicant:

There was one time that Tanguo had a dream vision of a mountain spirit who sought to receive the five precepts. Tanguo said: “My teacher lives in this house. You could visit [him] and to ask about receiving [the precepts].”

A short time later, Tanyong saw a person wearing simple garments and headgear, but whose bearing was lofty; he, along with his twenty followers, asked to receive the five precepts. Tanyong knew from Tanguo's previous dream that these were mountain spirits. Thereupon, he expounded the dharma and conferred the precepts. The spirit's donation⁷⁵ was a spoon in the foreign [style].⁷⁶ [The spirits then] performed obeisances [for the monk], stated that they were going to take their leave and, in an instant, they could no longer be seen.

When the day of Huiyuan's impending demise arrived, Tanyong rushed to attend to him, crying out as he rushed [thither], with pain as vast as the heavens. Later on, he lived in Jingzhou, meeting his end at Zhulin monastery.⁷⁷

74 See Zürcher (210).

75 The *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism's* entry for *chen* 嚧 notes that it is used to transliterate *dakṣiṇā* (alms). See: “*Dachen* 達嚧,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E9%81%94%E5%9A%AB>: “Transliteration of the Sanskrit, meaning donation, gift or fee. Offerings made to Buddhist monks; carrying the same meaning as 布施.”

76 As per Yoshikawa and Funayama's translation (2010): 「山神は外国のスプーンを布施し...」 (Vol. 2, 261). This could also just be a more general reference to “foreign utensils.”

77 T. 2059: 362c26–363a4.

嘗於一時，果夢見山神求受五戒，果曰：「家師在此，可往諮受。」後少時，邕見一人著單衣帽，風姿端雅，從者二十許人，請受五戒。邕以果先夢，知是山神，乃為說法授戒。神嚙以外國匕筋，禮拜辭別，儻忽不見。至遠臨亡之日，奔赴號踊，痛深天屬。後往荊州，卒於竹林寺。

In terms of its overarching structure, this episode is quite similar to the one discussed previously, given they both share a narrative focus on oneiric encounters with mountain deities that are overtly sympathetic to the religious programmes of their Buddhist interlocutors. And, as in the previous case, it is obvious that this account's suasive power would have been utterly dependent upon being told, retold and disseminated by a discourse community for whom oneiric experiences represented both a reliable source of information about the extrahuman world and a vector whereby stimulus/response interactions could manifest themselves. Also, the image of an emissary of a deity arriving in a dream to schedule an interview with a monastic master by contacting his subordinate certainly speaks to the POLITICAL POWER → RELIGIOUS POWER trope that we have seen in many of the accounts treated above. Likewise, and in keeping with the discussion of dream telling and dream interpretation in the Oneiric Practice chapter, the text's matter-of-fact way of describing Tanyong's knowledge of the identity of his mysterious visitors (i.e., “Tanyong knew from Tanguo's previous dream that these were mountain spirits”) strongly implies that, to a medieval audience, it would have been utterly unsurprising that a monastic master would play the role of dream interpreter for his disciples, given that the disciple's implicit dream telling is neither elaborated nor treated as notable.⁷⁸

That said, unlike many of the accounts treated previously, there is a marked difference related to its context that renders it worthy of independent discussion. Unlike the previous accounts of monks

⁷⁸ This interpretation follows the *Principle of Irrelevance*, as outlined in the *Introduction*. This also speaks to the role of preceptors and masters as oneiromancers in medieval Chinese Buddhist monastic communities, as discussed in Chapter One.

initially trespassing into the domains of territorial deities, here we see a semi-exiled monk continuing to dwell in reclusion upon Mount Lu: a site that had been associated with Buddhist practice since at least 367 CE (i.e., a number of decades prior to the events described above).⁷⁹ In this context, the significance of the purported oneiric contact is substantially altered, especially when considered in light of the fact that Huijiao opted to include in Tanyong's biography in his collection – an inclusion that implies that the monastic compiler considered him to be “eminent” and which contradicts Tanyong's renowned teacher's dismissal of his former disciple.⁸⁰ As such, this oneiric episode could be read as an implicit critique of an established Buddhist master, given that it describes a lordly assembly of mountain deities successfully discerning the moral probity of their desired preceptor, in spite of his dismissal by Huiyuan. The ordering of the episodes in this account lends further credence to this reading, as the monk's exile is immediately followed by the account translated above, which then leads directly into the rather pitiable scene of Tanyong rushing to his former master's side upon hearing of his declining health, implying that any animosity between the two men was purely one-sided. Moreover, given that Tanyong and Tanguo appear to have been dwelling in reclusion together,⁸¹ the younger monk would have been the only plausible source for this account (provided that it was not the product of later hagiographical imagination): in either case, the motivation to salvage Tanyong's reputation would likely have been the same. As such, this reading sheds additional light on the rhetorical utility of dream narratives for medieval Chinese Buddhists, given that it proffers a case where the moral judgment of a

79 While the events depicted above are not explicitly dated in the body of the text, the fact that they are immediately followed by the account of Huiyuan's death (which occurred in 412 CE) and that Tanyong is explicitly described racing to the side of his former master, implies that the two had not reconciled and that he was continuing to live in seclusion on Mount Lu until that point. Thus, though we do not know when this dream experience was purported to have happened, it would have been some time between Tanyong becoming Huiyuan's disciple (386 CE) and his former master's death twenty-six years later, thus implying that a Buddhist community of some sort had existed on Mount Lu for between twenty to forty-five years by that point. See: Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 208–10.

80 Zürcher shares this assessment, describing Tanyong as an “unfortunate” whose loyal service to the monastic community was rewarded by being “dispelled by Huiyuan on account of some small offense” (*ibid.*, 210).

81 乃於山之西南營立茅宇。與弟子曇果。澄思禪門。(T. 2059: 362c25–26)

group of mountain deities can trump that of an esteemed Buddhist patriarch. This is also consistent with the overall rhetorical goal of GSZ posited above, whereby accounts are intended to present a unified, laudatory front for the Buddhist *sangha*, and within which the sort of squabbles mentioned above have no place.

Next, we turn to the case of Huishou (慧受, d.u.): a monk who dwelt in the Jin capital at Jiankang. His account also shares a variety of notable themes with those considered previously (e.g., monastic construction projects and patronage, the support of such construction projects by the denizens of the extrahuman realm, and the use of oneiric communication to express such support), but it does so in a radically different context. Specifically, this account concerns the dynamics of patronage, and the sorts of concerns and anxieties that would have been attendant upon seeking the support of local elites. As such, it presents a case of dream telling being employed to resolve such tensions.

Shi Huishou was a person of Anle, who in the middle of the Jin dynasty's Xingning reign period (363–365 CE) wandered to the capital (Jiankang).⁸² He maintained a vegetarian diet, performed austerities, and constantly cultivated meritorious activity. He happened to pass through Wang Tanzhi's⁸³ garden.⁸⁴ That night, he subsequently dreamt of establishing a temple in the middle of the garden. [This dream] recurred several more times. Shou wanted to approach Wang in order to entreat him for the space to establish a one-bay [temple], but since he had not yet dared say a word [to him], he first approached Songqi, the overseer of the garden,⁸⁵ and spoke of the matter with him. Songqi said: “As for the Wang family's garden, I'm afraid it [may] not be what you have envisioned.” Shou said: “If this [dream] was a genuine stimulus [*gan*], how [could I experience] the sorrow of not achieving [my goal]?”⁸⁶ Thereupon, he approached Wang and told him about this matter. Wang was very pleased and promptly allowed it.

82 Dates as per Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010), Vol. 4, 273.

83 An administrator described at some length in the *Book of Jin*. See: Yoshikawa and Funayama, 274–275 ff. 2.

84 For the role of gardens in medieval China, see Benn, *Daily Life in Traditional China*, 68–69, 91–96; Lewis, *China Between Empires*, 23–26, 212–213. Lewis also offers a helpful description of the gardens of Jiankang (*ibid.*, 94–100).

85 Yoshikawa and Funayama render this job title as 園田の管理人 (274).

86 This could also simply be a reference to “sincere feelings.” My reading is motivated by the consistent through-line stimulus-response events throughout the entire story, wherein every plot development is both presaged and vouchsafed by *ganying* evidence (oneiric and otherwise).

At first, [he] established a small, one-room structure, but every evening he repeatedly had a dream vision of an azure dragon coming from the southern direction and transforming into a central pillar for the temple.⁸⁷ Shou brought along a *śrāmaṇera* to verify [his vision] and went to Xinting River⁸⁸ to look into the matter. He thereupon saw a single tall tree floating down the river toward him. Shou said, “this must certainly be that which I have seen,” and he hired labourers to drag it up [to the garden]. They stood it up as a temple pole, supporting a[n additional] storey.⁸⁹ Lay people and monastics came together, all sighing in admiration of this spiritual prodigy.

Wang Tanzhi then gave away his garden as [grounds for] a monastery, and because it was the name of Huishou's hometown, they called it Anle Monastery. In the east was the dwelling of Wang Ya of Danyangyin; in the west was the home of Liu Dou, the governor⁹⁰ of Dongyan; and in the south was the home of Fanning, the governor of Yuzhang: each of them in turn donated [their homes] for the sake of completing this monastery. Afterwards, there were *śramaṇas* such as Daojing [道靖], Daojing [道敬] and others, who have further adorned it, and at present it is esteemed for its elegance.⁹¹

釋慧受，安樂人。晉興寧中，來遊京師。蔬食苦行，常修福業。嘗行過王坦之園，夜輒夢於園中立寺，如此數過。受欲就王乞立一間屋處，未敢發言，且向守園客松期說之。期云：「王家之園，恐非所圖也。」受曰：「若令誠感，何憂不得？」即詣王陳之，王大喜，即以許焉。初立一小屋，每夕復夢見一青龍從南方來，化為剎柱。受將沙彌試至新亭江尋覓，乃見一長木隨流來下。受曰：「必是吾所見者也。」於是雇人牽上，豎立為剎，架以一層。道俗競集，咸歎神異。坦之即捨園為寺，以受本鄉為名，號曰安樂寺。

87 This appears to be a reference to the central pillar of a pagoda-style temple, around which the various floors are built and which emerges from the peak of the structure to be topped with the “sign of the wheel” (*xianlun* 相輪). HDC has “佛教語. 指塔頂的相輪” for *chazhu* 剎柱 and Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010) render this compound as *xinzhu* 心柱. Also see Mochizuki's entry on temples for an overview of this term, which includes several helpful diagrams (Vol. 4, 3836). Finally, and drawing in part on this account, Tak Pui Sze offers a detailed overview of the role of so-called “stūpa poles” in medieval Buddhist architecture – both as inexpensive alternatives to full temples and as the architectural center point around which these structures were constructed. See: Chapter 2 of Tak Pui Sze, *Stūpas in Medieval China: Symbols of the Buddha, Sacred Buildings, or Tombs?*, (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2012), and especially 142–162.

88 Or, possibly, “the river at Xinting.” An area around fifteen kilometers southwest of the capital at Jiankang. Based on my reading of the map, it appears that the course of the river here would indeed have carried a floating object up from the south (on its way to the ocean). See: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000008868>. See also: Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010), Vol. 4, 275 ff. 3.

89 Sze translates these two lines as:

Every evening he repeatedly dreamt of a green dragon's coming from the south and transforming itself into a stūpa pole (*chazhu* 剎柱). Hence, he led some novices to the Xinting river to search for it. They unexpectedly saw a long piece of timber coming down the river. [Hui]shou said, “It must be what I saw in the dream.” Therefore, he hired some people to draw it out [of the river], and put it up as a *cha*, with a tiered structure added (146 ff. 153).

Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010) read this final clause as a description of using the center pole to support a roof: 「その上に、一層の屋根を架けた」 (Vol. 4, 275).

90 Hucker #6221.

91 T. 2059: 410b11–25; GSZ (1992 [2007]), 481–482. Sze also provides a detailed prose summary of this narrative (151–152).

東有丹陽尹王雅宅，西有東燕太守劉鬪宅，南有豫章太守范寧宅，並施以成寺。後有沙門道靖，道敬等，更加修飾，于今崇麗焉。

In broad structural terms, the present account differs from some of those discussed previously, in that Huishou's entire biography represents a single narrative unit: with the exception of the first two sentences (which provide a scant measure of biographical context), the remainder is entirely concerned with the establishment of Anle monastery, lavishing particular attention upon the dialectical relationship between miraculous omens and the patronage of local elites.⁹² Reading this account as a microcosm of medieval Chinese patronage relationships, we can see the fundamental role played by dreams in brokering the exchange of religious goods for economic ones,⁹³ as they provide an informatory means for discerning the “will” of the unseen realm, whether conceptualized as relating to the idiosyncratic preferences of particular extrahuman beings or a generalized religio-moral order. Even if we bracket the discussion of the historicity of Huishou's oneiric experiences, we can still see how they represent incremental progress toward large-scale patronage of this Buddhist institution. In fact, the major function of each discrete oneiric episode is to systematically reverse the causal arrow in the

92 As discussed in the Introduction and *passim*.

93 While I follow Dan Ariely, Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky and others in rejecting the “rational choice” model of economics, which fallaciously presumes that human beings reliably act so as to maximize utility (variously defined), I nonetheless see some value in an economic approach to religion that is not grounded in these faulty assumptions. In particular, it is clear that the “religious goods” provided by religious professionals (e.g., ritual performance, personalized religious instruction, the prestige associated with the public sponsorship of projects, positive emotional states associated with religious teachings and practice) had (and continue to have) economic value, given that individuals spent (and continue to spend) often lavish amounts of time and money on them. For an overview, see: Rodney Stark, “The Economics of Religion,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, edited by Robert A. Segal, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 47–68. For a particularly evocative description of such economic interactions (albeit one drawn from the context of Heian Japan), see Allan G. Grapard, “The Economics of Ritual Power,” in *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, edited by Mark Teeuwen and John Breen, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 68–94, wherein he notes:

ritual's relation to the state was connected to consumption; this feature is apparent in all the texts and examples, but also in the phenomenon of the ritual festivity aptly analysed by Bataille. I would submit that economic factors are a central part of all rituals, and that one might engage in studies of the economy of gesture (from obeisance to dance and agonistic contests), of the economy of preparation of materials, of the economy of exchange (of material stuff against hopes for. say. good crops, but also of social exchange), of the economy of speech, of the economy of time and space, of the economy of signification and memory, of the economy of calculations that sustain oracular practice and divinatory acts, of the economy of food, and last but not least, of a general economy of power (90).

I would argue that his observations also resonate in the medieval Chinese context.

story, which is very similar to the role of the miracles (including oneiric ones) in the accounts considered previously in this chapter: to wit, if we imagine this account with the dreams removed, it is still entirely cogent, but the monk becomes the unilateral cause of each stage in the temple expansion process. The following retelling helps to make this point:

The monk Huishou wanted to build a temple but lacked both the site and the financial wherewithal to do so. Afraid to approach a powerful local official directly, he first made his proposal to the garden overseer, and eventually received permission to construct a small dwelling there. Later, desiring to expand this dwelling into a full monastery, the monk provided his own *stūpa* pole and erected it. As the site continued to become more elaborately decorated and ornate, not only did the original patron support the construction of the full monastery, but a variety of prominent local families also donated their lands and residences to the expanding monastic complex.

In contrast with this speculative reconstruction, the narrative from GSZ consistently places its monastic protagonist in a reactive role, which renders moot any discussion of his motives. Even if this project succeeded in providing Huishou with prestige, local influence, and a beautiful dwelling place in the midst of a sumptuous garden, these results are characterized as secondary concerns, given that he is depicted as an individual who consistently (and appropriately) responded to his auspicious oneiric visions. This is surely why the account takes pains to mention that these dreams occurred to the monk repeatedly,⁹⁴ as it implies that both the initial construction project and its expansion were supernaturally sanctioned.

Likewise, I would argue that this account provides an intriguing glimpse into an ongoing conversation between the monk and his patron(s) in Jiankang, as the descriptions of the monk's recurring dreams, as well as the monk's explicit mention of them as an “authentic stimulus” (*chenggan*

94 For the significance of recurring dreams in traditional Chinese oneiromancy, see Fodde-Reguer, 46–47. For a discussion of the significance ascribed to recurring dreams in a cross-cultural context, see: Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 55, 108, 149–150, 220.

誠感) and his concern with verifying his second dream by bringing in an outside witness, all seem to testify to his negotiations with potential patrons. This reading is reinforced by the incremental manner in which the monastic compound was built. Moreover, given that this was not a new type of religious building in the Jiankang area,⁹⁵ the only explanation for the text's description of laypeople and monks visiting the temple and marvelling at a “miraculous occurrence” is that Huishou's dream and its subsequent verification were known to his co-religionists and were seen as auspicious events.

Another intriguing aspect of this narrative, and one that helps tie it back to the other examples considered in this section, is the content of the monk's second dream experience. Just as the accounts of Tanyi and Tanguo's oneiric interactions with mountain spirits served to authorize a monastic construction project and to rehabilitate the moral character of a (semi-)disgraced monk (respectively), the dragon in Huishou's dream can be read as an explicit sign that the local denizens of the extrahuman realm were in support of the expansion of Anle monastery. It thus serves an explicitly cosmographic function by describing the miraculous transmission of the “dragon *qua* log” from the periphery into the capital, thus investing the temple's *stūpa* pole with the charisma of the numinous wilderness, while also engaging in the logic of tribute (as discussed above).⁹⁶ Given that elite patrons of the era often failed to appreciate the Buddhist symbolism of these structures, and typically incorporated them into their religious practice in rather heterodox ways,⁹⁷ it is easy to see how an explicit association between the

95 See: Sze (154).

96 See the discussions of the cosmographic logic of tribute and the numinous qualities of the wilderness in Chapter Three for details.

97 As per Sze:

Although many of [the *stūpas* built in Luoyang and Jiankang] were furnished with components according to the specification of stupas stated in Buddhist texts, the symbolic meanings of these components did not attract the attention of the elite, or at least not to the extent that historians were aware of, and hence these components were generally deemed to be decorative elements only. Apparently, the elite members in China at that time did not understand *stūpas* in the same way as that narrated in the texts, or did not in a way consistent with them. They incorporated their local immortality belief in their understanding of these buildings, so they used the terms from the belief to name the wheels of stupas, constructed them in the form of locally-styled lofty towers, ascended them at

literal center of the temple and an azure dragon could have helped to inspire Wang Tanzhi, and other powerful local elites, to make their respective donations. For all of the reasons adduced above, this account serves as a potent testament to both the religious and economic significance of dream telling in medieval Chinese Buddhism.

We can conclude this exploration of the role of oneiric narratives in presenting (and negotiating) the relationships between Buddhists and local deities by turning to the single relevant account from XGSZ. As in Section One, I find it notable that this theme is so seemingly underrepresented in the later (and larger) collection, and would suggest that this might indicate an evolution in the interests and concerns of medieval Chinese Buddhists.⁹⁸ That said, this account, drawn from the rather lengthy biography of the early Tiantai monk Zhixi 智晞 (557–628),⁹⁹ is akin to the three episodes discussed previously, as it too speaks to the anxieties surrounding temple building projects (especially those that involved incursions into peripheral wilderness areas), as well as to the perceived relationships between Buddhists and local deities. We pick up this account early in Zhixi's career, after he has been counselled

will, and associated them with dynastic (or their personal) prosperity and decline. In a way this was not very different from how Emperor Wu of the Han treated his imperial buildings and devices that he set up for his immortality quest. The ruling elite members considered stupas they built as their private edifices parading their secular status. Sometimes they regarded the construction of them as a means of gaining merit for themselves and their families (163).

In spite of this critical assessment, I would argue that the foregoing account (and, in particular, its oneiric invocation of indigenous beliefs relating to dragons) stands as a testament to the Buddhist establishment actively making concessions to elite patterns of religiosity in their attempt to secure donations.

- 98 It is obviously also possible that this seeming tendency is a mere statistical artifact of the small samples sizes under consideration. For instance, perhaps encounters between individuals and “non-Buddhist” extrahuman beings are just as common in XGSZ as in GSZ, but they occur outside of the oneiric arena (a hypothesis that I would be interested in exploring at a future date). That said, even if this was the case, I would still be curious why these purported dream encounters seemed to decline in importance between the early sixth and mid-seventh centuries, especially given Daoxuan's demonstrably greater interest in dreams as sources of miraculous response.
- 99 Mentioned in Shinohara, “Guanding's Biography of Zhiyi,” as the famed monk's attendant at the time of his death (125). Thereafter, he became the manager of the imperially-sponsored Xiuchansi (“Monastery for the Practice of Meditation”) on Mount Tiantai. See: Linda Penkower, “In the Beginning... Guanding (561–632) and the Creation of Early Tiantai,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 23:2 (2000): 245–296, 272–274.

by Zhiyi to take up meditation at Folong¹⁰⁰ (a mountain peak in the Tiantai range):¹⁰¹

When taking breaks from their quiet sitting, [the monastic community at Mount Folong] time and again made plans¹⁰² for the construction of a *saṃgha-ārāma*. The temple halls and monks' quarters were all in good order, but they had not yet begun construction on the scripture platform,¹⁰³ and wanted to complete the building project.

At Xinglu Ridge, there were precipitous mountains and cliffs, and forests whose trees were exceptional, so it is natural that the gods and earth spirits [there possessed] enormous spiritual efficacy. From ancient times to the present, there were none who dared to gaze upon its crags and bluffs, much less to climb up and fell its trees.

At this time, the assembly discussed the matter, saying: “Now we have laid out the scripture platform and have already made offerings to the dharma treasure. [Since] the only thing we [truly] revere is the essence of the [*Dharma*] Lotus, wouldn't it be rash to stop now?¹⁰⁴ This Xianglu Ridge has tamarisk and cypress trees whose essential qualities are superior. Perhaps we can obtain both of them in order to [allow us to] fully make offerings.”¹⁰⁵

At the completion of their discourse, they went to discuss the matter with Zhixi, describing the previous conversation in great detail. After a long while, he replied, saying: “The mountain spirits preserve [these woods], so we cannot construct another [monastic structure]”¹⁰⁶ No one dared to do or say [anything] and they each returned to their respective places.

That very night, [Zhixi] dreamt of a person bearing a missive that said: “As for Xianglu Ridge's tamarisk and cypress, every single one will be donated in order to provide for [the construction of] your sutra platform.”

100 As per *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, “folong 佛隴,” <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BD%9B%E9%9A%B4>. See also: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000014664>.

101 See: T. 2060: 568a-b.

102 I am not entirely sure about the compound *zhihui* 指搗, though HDC notes that it is equivalent to *zhihui* 指揮. I wonder if it is possible that I should be reading this more literally, as a reference to sketching the plan out with a finger (e.g., in the sand).

103 HDC defines *jingtai* 經臺 as 用於誦佛經的平台, drawing on an example from the Liu-Song era painter and poet Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433 CE). Likewise, as part of its discussion of scripture chests, Mochizuki cites an example of an ordinance from the 10th century Japanese law code *Engi Shiki* 延喜式 requiring the construction of such structures for the recitation of the *Humane Kings Sutra* (569a). The date range between the usages implies the continued significance of such structures throughout the medieval period. For an excellent overview of recent archaeological research into the remains of medieval Chinese Buddhist monasteries, which highlights the central role played by rammed earth platforms in contemporaneous construction practice, see: Liqun He, *Buddhist State Monasteries in Early Medieval China and their Impact on East Asia* (PhD diss., Heidelberg University, 2013), 29–60. Though there is no explicit discussion of *sutra* platforms, it is certainly possible that some of the as-yet-unidentified archaeological remains described therein might have corresponded to such structures.

104 I am not happy with this reading, but am unsure how to improve it. It is obviously based on the fact that they are Tiantai monks who wish to have the best possible materials for the construction of a site for textual practice.

105 As in the previous case, I am not overly taken with this reading, where I am assuming that the monks in question feel like their lack of an appropriate sutra platform is preventing them from fully actualizing their offerings.

106 I.e., the scripture platform. That said, this could also be read as “We should not be too hasty” (as per HDC and GR).

Having just experienced [*gan*] this revelation from the unseen [realm], he promptly formulated a plan, apportioning the provisions and tools, subdividing the workers and craftsmen [into teams], [in preparation for] entering the mountain to fell its trees. An attendant¹⁰⁷ conferred with him, saying: “Yesterday, you did not permit this, but today you [approve of going] to take them?”

He replied, saying: “Yesterday, [the suggestion] came from others; today, it comes from me. If we only take [those that can be obtained] without causing suffering, then we will certainly not be in error.”

Following this directive, they went to harvest [those trees]. Even though the tamarisk and cypress trees only grew in dangerous places, they managed to obtain them all without encountering the least difficulty.¹⁰⁸

宴坐之暇，時復指搗，創造伽藍，殿堂房舍，悉皆嚴整，惟經臺未構，始欲就工。有香鑪峯山巖峻嶮，林木秀異，然彼神祇，巨有靈驗，自古已來無敢視其峯崖，況有登踐而採伐者。時眾議曰：「今既營經臺，供養法寶，惟尚精華，豈可率爾而已。其香鑪峯檉柏，木中精勝，可共取之，以充供養。」論詳既訖，往諮於晞，具陳上事，良久答云：「山神護惜，不可造次。」無敢重言，各還所在。爾夜夢人送疏云：「香鑪峯檉柏樹，盡皆捨給經臺。」既感冥示，即便搗略，營辦食具，分部人工，入山採伐。侍者諮曰：「昨日不許，今那取之？」答曰：「昨由他，今由我，但取無苦，必不相誤。」從旨往取。檉柏之樹，惟嶮而生，並皆取得，一無留難。

As we can see, this account also employs an oneiric narrative to forward the same sort of cosmographic argument seen in the GSZ episodes discussed previously, using the centripetally-directed, locative mode to subordinate the spiritually potent denizens of a peripheral mountain region (whose power is attested to by the superlative and uncanny qualities of the landscape and its flora) to the centralized power of the Buddhist *sangha*. One slight divergence from some of the accounts treated previously is that the center discussed here (i.e., the locus of authority and order against which the peripheral regions are defined) is a Buddhist site at some remove from the capital, rather than imperial capital itself: a rhetorical recentering of the Buddhist socio-cosmology that would surely have been much easier to

107 “Shizhe 侍者,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BE%8D%E8%80%85>:

A page; a priest's servant; an acolyte. A monk who attends on the head monk. Literally 'person' 者 who 'waits on' or 'attends' 侍. A servant or attendant to an abbot, former abbot, or other senior monk; often a younger monk who is a personal disciple.

108 T. 2060: 582b4–18; punctuation following XGSZ (2014), vol. 2, 708.

parse once Buddhism had become enshrined as a state religion in the Sui. That said, given the extensive imperial patronage bestowed upon the Buddhist residents of Mount Tiantai,¹⁰⁹ even this recentering of the cosmos on the mountain could be seen as an implicit endorsement of the reigning social order, given that the material support of the mountain gods (as attested to by the miraculous raw materials that they are said to have donated) lends additional spiritual gravitas the Buddhist mountain itself. In turn, extolling the purported numinous power of the monasteries at Tiantai obviously would have lent additional religio-spiritual authority to those elite capital families (up to and including the emperor's) whose patronage relationships implicitly placed the Buddhist monastery within the imperial ambit. As Shinohara has convincingly demonstrated, the surviving textual records related to this Buddhist monastic complex speak to a dialectical relationship between its residents and their patrons, with the latter group occasionally requesting proof of their client's spiritual efficacy in the form of miraculous response narratives:¹¹⁰ a thoroughly plausible rationale for the composition of the present account.

Here as well, we see an oneiric episode employed directly in a variety of (implicit and explicit) negotiations, both within the Buddhist community on Mount Folang and with other communities as well. First, and most overtly, we see this dream narrative employed to resolve intra-communal tensions within the *sangha*, as the mountain deities' oneiric endorsement of the monastic construction project serves both to assuage Zhixi's initial concern about the propriety of harvesting lumber from such a numinous peak and to explain away his seemingly inconsistent position on this issue. Given the fact that the sort of disagreement preserved in this account (i.e., a peevish underling calling a monastic superior to task for a perceived inconsistency) does not cast the Buddhist community in the best possible light, it seems likely that it represents a reliable record of a monastic debate (or at least one

109 See: Penkower, 72; Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage in T'ang Buddhism," 280–283; Hurvitz, 139–161.

110 See: Shinohara, "Guanding's Biography of Zhiyi," 100–106.

that would have been imminently plausible to the discourse community for whom this hagiographical text was intended).¹¹¹ In the process, it also provides one more data point in the picture we are gradually assembling of the ways that dream experiences were employed in the conduct of everyday life by providing a clear example of such a vision being cited in an argument as a sufficient excuse for radically revising a particular Buddhist community's plans.¹¹²

Also, it is possible that the wording employed in this account might reveal an attempt to address a critique levelled at the monastery for their use of Xianglu Ridge's natural resources. Specifically, in addition to this episode's consistent references to the specific types of wood employed in the construction project, the emissary of the mountain deities explicitly gives the monks permission to chop down “every single tree” from the site. While this is by no means definitive proof, I could easily see a narrative like the present one being circulated in response to a local critique of monastic overreach, as it essentially explains away any degree of deforestation by recasting it as the gods' voluntary donation of construction materials. That said, while we do have contemporaneous records of elites critiquing the material excesses of monastic communities,¹¹³ in the absence of specific criticisms of the present building project, the foregoing supposition remains speculative.

111 Here, I am employing the *Principle of Embarrassment* (as outlined in the introduction).

112 This is in keeping with the discussion of medieval Chinese “dream telling” in Chapter One.

113 Such excesses are documented in Gernet, 15–18. Likewise, *Hongming ji* contains a variety of these critiques (excerpted for the polemical use of their Buddhist interlocutors), such as the following example from the anti-Buddhist “Discourse on the Extinction of the Spirit”:

[Buddhism] causes soldiers to lose courage in military affairs, officials to absent themselves from government offices, [stores of] grain to be used up because of people's laziness, and commodities to be exhausted because of construction projects. Therefore [Buddhist monks] are thieves and robbers. [Nevertheless,] voices praising the Buddha's excellence are still powerful. This is all because of [Buddhism]. This tendency continues without stopping, and the harm goes on limitlessly (Ziegler [trans.], Vol. 2, 62).

Cf., 至使兵挫於行間。吏空於官府。粟罄於惰游。貨殫於土木。所以姦宄佛勝頌聲尚權。惟此之故也。其流莫已其病無垠 (T. 2102: 57b24–27).

Finally, and most significantly, this account represents another instance of interactions between Buddhist monks and local deities being described using imagery and idioms related to political intercourse, with the oneiric realm representing the locus of such interactions. As in the prior accounts of oneiric interactions between monks and local deities, wherein the subordination of the extrahuman agents was coded using language and imagery drawn from the realm of political ritual, here Zhixi receives his oneiric response from “a person bearing a missive” (*ren songshu* 人送疏), employing a term that explicitly denotes a detailed or itemized recommendation prepared by an inferior for a ruler.¹¹⁴ Likewise, the entire mode of interaction underlying this episode, wherein the denizens of a peripheral area make a gift of the distinctive local products of their region, is entirely consistent with the locative logic of tribute discussed above, emphasizing both the cosmographic function of this episode, as well as its reliance on the POLITICAL POWER → RELIGIOUS POWER metaphor.

As seen throughout the examples listed in this section, the medieval Buddhist hagiographical collections under consideration adopted a specific and distinctive perspective on idealized Buddhist monks: one which characterized them as religious professionals whose numinous efficacy was linked, at least in part, to their ability to interact with the denizens of the extrahuman realm through their dreams. Moreover, it is especially striking that many of these tales of miraculous response employ language and imagery related to kingship and courtly ritual, given the extent to which the ritual vocabularies available to Chinese wonder-workers (both Buddhist and otherwise) also drew upon the metaphor of bureaucratic rulership. Intriguingly, while the reported dreams of exemplary monks were often employed to testify to the will of local deities (as seen above), both the GSZ and XGSZ display a

114 SCM: “(2) arrange or set out item-by-item in writing. a) submission of advice to the ruler, recommendation.” GR: “Rapport destiné au trône” (a report intended for the throne).

willingness to accept confirmatory evidence from outside the *sangha* as well. In the next section, we will explore the ways that dreams associated with non-Buddhist religious professionals (e.g., Taoists, spirit mediums) could also be deployed for their evidentiary value, and, in the process, shed light on the types of interactions between (competing?) religious professionals and their lay followers that would have seemed plausible and compelling to sixth- and seventh-century Chinese Buddhists.

Non-Buddhist Oneiromancers in Buddhist Hagiographies

Given the explicitly proselytic goals of medieval hagiographies (and the *Eminent Monks* collections in particular), the wide variety of oneiric omens and communications described previously are entirely to be expected, especially given Huijiao and Daoxuan's convictions regarding the compelling qualities of such narratives. Indeed, this just reinforces the extent to which these collections relied upon (and spoke to) pan-Sinitic perspectives on miraculous response. In this context, the narratives we will consider in the current section seem (at least superficially) to present a bit of a puzzle, as they each rely on the assumption that oneiromantic ability was not the exclusive purview of Buddhist monks, but rather that such skills and techniques were also accessible to other types of religious professionals. That said, these accounts employ a similar narrative logic to that seen previously, whereby oneiric experiences were seen as direct avenues for communication with the unseen realm; this, in turn, meant that such dreams, regardless of the individuals to whom they appeared, could serve as testaments to the will of extrahuman beings and, thus, to the power of Buddhist thaumaturges over them. As such, the fact that such episodes are cited without comment by both Huijiao and Daoxuan implies that convictions regarding the oneiromantic powers of non-Buddhist religious professionals were a cultural commonplace, and that it was more expedient to use such narratives to further their proselytic goals

than to perform the much more challenging task of attempting to downplay or deny the efficacy of these figures and techniques.

To begin our discussion of this topic, we turn to the GSZ biography of Fadu 法度 (d.u.), which provides a natural bridge between the current section and the material discussed in Section Two, as it includes both the discussion of a monk's master/disciple relationship with a mountain god and a credulous account of a dream ascribed to a non-Buddhist religious practitioner (in this case, a *wu* 巫 “spirit medium”).¹¹⁵ As an aside, this biography also serves as a quintessential example of the fallacy of employing a “hermeneutic of retrieval” when engaging with medieval Chinese hagiographical sources. Though this Fadu was a relatively noteworthy monk in the late fifth century, having helped to disseminate Buddhism to the Korean peninsula by instructing monks who were visiting from the kingdom of Koguryō¹¹⁶ and to popularize the cult of Amitayus through both his personal practice and

115 In a recent theoretical article on the subject of the term *wu* 巫, Thomas Michael, after reviewing the compendious debates on the terminological issues related to “shamans” and “shamanism,” nonetheless makes a pragmatic argument for the utility of the term in the early Chinese context:

Relying on a general category, in this case a geographical one, in order to organize potentially similar kinds of representations of séance events, I suggest that there is no easy way out of using the term 'shaman' to comparatively label these culturally distinct shaman figures named above, and the term 'shamanism' as a geographical and theoretical category that allows us to organize certain representations cohering around séance events shared cross-culturally that indicate direct communication between human beings and bodiless beings for the benefit of the community. In a sense, since the application of the term shamanism has become embedded in our way of speaking, it is probably too late to coin new terms such as *angakutism*, *payeism*, or *wuism*. Doing away with the singular and essentialized notion of 'the shaman' while recognizing differences among even local shamans within each cultural area can allow us a more reflective space in which to use a geographical conception of the category of shamanism for both organizational and comparative purposes (663–664).

Thomas Michael, “Shamanism Theory and the Early Chinese Wu,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 83:3 (2015): 649–696. While I acknowledge the common use of the term “shaman” within both popular culture and religious studies discourse, I nonetheless feel that its use conceals as much as it reveals about medieval Chinese religion in practice, which is my rationale for eschewing its use in favour of the more neutral (or at least less “baggage-laden”) “spirit medium.” In this, I am concurring with Gilles Boileau's detailed structural analysis of the relevant similarities and differences between early Chinese *wu* and Siberian shamans, which in the end forced him “to conclude that it is better for now not to use the term 'shaman' as a translation for the Chinese 'wu’” (378).

116 Specifically, Fadu is listed as one of a community of emigres who travelled to South China with a knowledge of Sanlun doctrine, who thus helped to popularize it among visiting monks from the Korean peninsula. See: John Jorgensen, “Koguryō Buddhism: Pacifist Religion in a Multi-ethnic Warrior Kingdom,” in *Global Korea: Old and New (Proceedings of The Sixth Biennial Conference Korean Studies Association of Australasia)*, edited by Duk-Soo Park, (Sydney: Korean Studies Association of Australasia, 2009), 479–498, 494. Accessed online at:

his engagement with lay donors,¹¹⁷ a sizable percentage of his GSZ biography is instead devoted to the monk's conversion of a specific mountain spirit and the results of this purported activity on the local religious landscape.¹¹⁸ While his socio-political impact were obviously significant, it appears that the narrative outlined below, with its compelling account of a local deity acceding to the authority of a spiritually potent monk, were deemed by Huijiao to possess greater proselytic significance.

For the purposes of the present discussion, we are picking up this narrative after the monk has already adopted the practice of austerities and taken up a life of reclusion on Mount She,¹¹⁹ in a mountain cloister that had previously been the dwelling place of a (now deceased) Taoist:¹²⁰

After he had lived there for a year or so, he unexpectedly heard the sounds of people, horses, and battle drums, and then there suddenly appeared a person holding a name card that said “Jinchang,”¹²¹ which he passed to Fadu. With Fadu [standing] before him, and in spite of his extremely noble appearance and that of his formidable cortege, [the spirit] paid his respects. When finished, he then said:¹²² “I, your servant, have been the ruler of this mountain for more

https://koreanstudiesaa.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/global_korea_proceedings_479-498_jorgensen.pdf

- 117 For an excellent and detailed study of Fadu's role in the popularization of early Pure Land practice in medieval China, see Wei LIN, “Devotion to Amitāyus Pure Land: An Iconographic Study of Cave 19 at Qixiashan, China,” *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 33 (2001): 116–34. Particularly noteworthy are the translations of donative inscriptions that describe the monk's impact upon specific lay donors, who were thereupon inspired to sponsor carvings related to the Buddha Amitayus (122–123), and the treatment of the monk's commitment to Pure Land teaching based on material from *Gaoseng zhuan* and *Fayuan zhulin* (126–127).
- 118 This is surely why Wang Mei-shu includes the present account in a catalogue of GSZ episodes that are described as reminiscent of *zhiguai*, thanks to their representations of “ghosts and magic” (62). The brief summary of Fadu's biography that follows states that he “lived as a solitary monk in Mount Nie (聶), [and that] the god of the mountain became his follower and presented with him a large sum of money, Joss sticks and candles, and also cured his illness” (*ibid.*). *Cultural identities as reflected in the literature of the Northern and Southern dynasties period (4th–6th centuries A.D.)*, (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2007).
- 119 The Dharma Drum Place Authority Database identifies this as peak in the vicinity of modern day Nanjing: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000009023>. It should be noted that I am making an educated guess as to the pronunciation of the mountain's name, as it is written with an obscure character that was not present in any of the dictionaries that I consulted, combining the characters for “mountain” and “whisper” (山+聶). As such, I am employing the pronunciation of *she* 攝 (i.e., one of the alternate names listed in the DILA database). This also happens to be the pronunciation employed in Lin, “Devotion to Amitāyus' Pure Land,” 122.
- 120 As described in the GSZ: 「先有道士欲以寺地為館。住者輒死。及後為寺。猶多恐動。自度居之群妖皆息。」 (T. 2059: 380b19–21). As can be seen, the next line attests to the monk's thaumaturgical credentials, given his ability to suppress uncanny occurrences by his mere presence.
- 121 A known historical figure from the state of Chu, described in the *Shiji* (1725). See Yoshikawa and Funayama, Vol. 3, 252 ff. 1, for a helpful overview of the various sources in which this figure is mentioned.
- 122 For an alternate reading, Yoshikawa and Funayama have Fadu offering his respects prior to the deity's speech: 「法度

than seven hundred years. The Way of the Spirits has its own laws and nothing has been able to [caused me to] transgress [it]. As for those who took up residence here previously, if they were not honest and genuine, they would resultantly become afflicted with a deadly disease, which became their destiny. [But if] the Dharma Teacher's Way and Virtue¹²³ is something that [I] can rely on, [I will] make respectful donations to support [your religious activities] and also aspire to receive the five precepts,¹²⁴ always attending to the [karmic] conditions to come.”¹²⁵

Fadu said: “The Ways of humans and gods differ, so there is no opportunity for them to accommodate each other. Even [the way that your] benefactors have offered bloody food as sacrifice for generations; this is strongly prohibited by the five precepts.”

Jinchang said: “So, for me to prepare to become your disciple, it is imperative that I first forswear killing.” And with that, he took his leave. The next morning, Fadu saw a person bearing ten thousand cash, incense and lamps,¹²⁶ a pocket-knife,¹²⁷ and a missive, which said: “Your servant Jinchang's offerings.” When the fifteenth day of the month arrived, Fadu convened an assembly¹²⁸ to which Jinchang also came, and everyone there did obeisance,

が招き入れると、斬尚の姿はとても優雅であり、お付きの者も厳めしい。」 (Vol. 3, 251).

123 I find the phrase “Dharma teacher's way and virtue (Fashi daode 法師道德)” to be an interesting choice of words, given its potential association with the *Daodejing* 道德經.

124 “Wujie 五戒,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BA%94%E6%88%92>:

The minimal set of moral restrictions to be observed by Buddhist householder-practitioners. They are: not killing 不殺生; not stealing 不偷盜; no debauchery 不邪淫; 不妄語 no false speech; 不飲酒 no consumption of alcohol. These are binding on laity, male and female, as well as on monks and nuns. The observance of these five ensures rebirth in the human realm.

As such, this amounts to the god offering to become a Buddhist layman.

125 I am following GR here for *laiyuan* 來緣: “(Bouddh.) Cause qui fructifiera dans une vie future.”

126 On the topic of incense, see Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism*, 277–278. Likewise, Schafer begins his classic study of the topic of Tang aromatics as follows:

It is worth saying again that in the medieval world of the Far East there was little clear-cut distinction among drugs, spices, perfumes, and incenses – that is, among substances which nourish the body and those which nourish the spirit, those which attract a lover and those which attract a divinity. In this chapter we are concerned with those substances whose most important feature was their odour, whether this appealed primarily to man or to god (155). Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).

I would suggest that this correspondence between the interpersonal and divine/human applications of such scents is rendered especially salient when the aromatic substance is characterized as a gift **from a god**. For details on the signification of the character *zhu* 燭 in medieval Chinese sources, see Albert Dien, “Lighting in the Six Dynasties Period,” *Early Medieval China* 13–14:1 (2007): 1–32. Specifically, he argues that,

the general term for lighting, *zhu* 燭, has no word in common usage in English: perhaps 'luminant' comes closest. A lamp might be lit by a candle-shaped wick (*zhu*) implanted on a pricket or lumination could be derived from a simple wick floating in oil; when lamps ceased appearing with a pricket at the center of the bowls, it may be assumed that references to *zhu*, whatever its material had come to be what we consider to be some sort of candle (1).

127 “Daozi 刀子,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%88%80%E5%AD%90>: “pocket-knife. One of the eighteen things that a monk should carry in the performance of his duties.”

128 HDC (*shehui* 設會) has “做佛事,舉行法會.”

followed the [Buddhist] path,¹²⁹ received the precepts, and left.

A spirit medium from Mount She's shrine had a dream of the spirit [i.e., Jinchang] who addressed him, saying: “I have just received the precepts from Dharma Master Fadu. [Thus,] in your sacrifices [to me], you must not permit the slaughter [of animals].” From then on, the shrine restricted itself to the use of vegetables and preserved fruit¹³⁰ for its sacrifices,¹³¹ ceasing [its offerings of meat].¹³²

Fadu once felt [his body] move [involuntarily], which disturbed his sleep as he [fell] to the ground. He saw Jinchang coming from outside. He rubbed¹³³ the monk's head and feet with his hands, and left. Shortly thereafter, he returned, bearing a lapis lazuli bowl. In it, there was a liquid, which he offered to Fadu. Its taste was sweet and cool. That which had caused the monk suffering was quickly brought to an end. His portentous stimuli¹³⁴ [*gan*] were like this.¹³⁵

住經歲許，忽聞人馬鼓角之聲，俄見一人持名紙通度曰靳尚。度前之，尚形甚都雅，羽衛亦嚴，致敬已，乃言：「弟子王有此山七百餘年，神道有法，物不得干。前諸栖託，或非真正，故死病繼之，亦其命也。法師道德所歸，謹捨以奉給，并願受五戒，永結來緣。」度曰：「人神道殊，無容相屈。且檀越血食世祀，此最五戒所禁。」尚曰：「若備門徒，輒先去殺。」於是辭去。明旦，度見一人送錢一萬，香燭刀子，疏云：「弟子靳尚奉供。」至月十五日，度為設會，尚又來，同眾禮拜，行道受戒而去。[山*聶]山廟巫夢神告曰：「吾已受戒於度法師，祠祀勿得殺戮。」由是廟用薦止菜脯而已。度嘗動散寢於地，見尚從外而來，以手摩頭足而去。頃之復來，持一琉璃甌，甌中如水以奉度，味甘而冷，度所苦即間，其徵感若此。

In addition to providing vital context for the oneiric experience that followed, the initial section of this episode (relating to the monk's interaction with the mountain deity that eventually became his disciple)

129 GR (*xingdao* 行道): “Suivre la voie du Budha. Tourner (en procession) autour d'une statue du Bouddha, en ayant celle-ci à sa droite.”

130 SCM (*fu* 脯): “preserved fruit or melon.”

131 “*Jian* 薦,” *CJKV-English Dictionary*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-cjkve.pl?q=%E8%96%A6>: “a sacrifice in which no animal was offered.”

132 Yoshikawa and Funayama follow the more common definition of *fu* 脯 (SCM: “salted dried meat, usually in strips”), translating this passage as a reference to the offerings being restricted to vegetables and dried meat: 「かくして廟に用いる供え物はただ野菜と乾肉だけとなった。」 (Vol. 3, 252).

133 “Rub” is possibly too literal a reading of *mo* 摩, which is often used in the context of the reverently laying of hands (often by apparitions of buddhas and bodhisattvas).

134 While it would be more tempting to read this *gan* 感 as simply describing the monk's “feelings” or “experience,” I would argue that the explicit use of the term *zheng* 徵 (which is most often employed in the context of signs or omens) supports my reading of it as a reference to the *ganying* framework that links the monk and his spirit disciple. In contrast, Yoshikawa and Funayama read this as a reference to the monk's pure feeling: cf., 「そのまざまざとした感心はかくの通りであった。」 (Vol. 3, 252).

135 T. 2059: 380b21-c8; punctuation as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 331.

was also included because it eloquently reinforces many of the themes considered in the previous section. Just as in the biographies of Tanguo and Zhixi, the author of this account also draws heavily on the language and imagery of elite social intercourse when describing the interactions between the mountain ascetic and his extrahuman devotee, including the announcement of the visitor's presence via name-card,¹³⁶ his accompaniment by an awe-inspiring retinue, the “missive” that accompanied the spirit's offering to the monk,¹³⁷ and even the patronage relationship that eventually developed between them.¹³⁸ As can be seen, there are a variety of undeniable points of commonality between this encounter and the oneiric interactions described in Section Two, with the only salient difference being that Fadu's was alleged to have taken place in the waking world. This suggests that, just as visions seen in dreams and in meditation were considered to be equally compelling forms of evidence,¹³⁹ the mode of interaction whereby exemplary monks could communicate with the residents of the extrahuman realm did not differ substantially between sleep and wake, at least according to the narrative conventions of medieval Chinese hagiography.

Just as the accounts of temple construction considered above seem to preserve debates within the medieval Buddhist community related to the propriety of expanding into territories previously seen as the domains of mountain spirits, the present account similarly captures a very specific moment of inter-religious interaction. Therein, the renunciant monk Fadu (who had already displaced a Taoist who had previously laid claim to the site) and the local spirit medium (who operated the deity's shrine) can be seen publicly negotiating their positions relative to the cult of Jinchang. On one hand, the monk is

136 For instance, Benn, in *Daily Life in Traditional China*, discusses the requirement that strangers begin official visits with the presentation of name-cards (74).

137 This term is discussed in detail above, in the section on Zhixi's oneiric encounter with a mountain god.

138 This was, in fact, a relatively common trope in medieval Chinese Buddhist hagiography. See Lin, *Chinese Shamans and Shamanism*, for a list of examples drawn from GSZ (including the case of Fadu), 269–270.

139 As discussed in Chapter One.

described gradually cultivating a close patronage relationship with the god, culminating in his organization of a standard precept recitation ceremony, at which he alleges that the god was present and had received the Five Precepts.¹⁴⁰ This ritual action derives particular significance when considered in light of the purported dialogue between the monk and the spirit on the topic of the differences between the *dao* of humans and gods, as it represents the logical endpoint of this discussion: namely, the god's gradual acceptance of the Buddhist precept against killing. This, in turn, clearly subordinates the deity to the religio-moral order represented by the monk.¹⁴¹

On the other hand, even though the deity comes to be reinterpreted as one of the monk's lay patrons, there is no suggestion that the worship activities of the deity's local cult would (or even should) be proscribed. Specifically, even though the shrine transitions to vegetarian sacrifices in deference to the god's newfound Buddhist ethical commitments, these ritual observances (and the spirit medium's involvement with them) ostensibly continue. Moreover, while the god's rejection of blood sacrifice indeed serves as testament to the efficacy of Buddhist precepts, this account **in no way** denigrates the mantic power of the spirit medium or the confirmatory power of oneiric signs. In fact, this narrative only makes sense if the local religious professional is perceived as an efficacious spiritual actor, who is actually able to attune himself to the “signs from the unseen realm” that he is able to receive in dreams: in other words, the god's actual receipt of the precepts is only verified if the reader takes the power of the spirit medium seriously.¹⁴² In this way, the present account serves to highlight the

140 This is a very interesting claim. In the narrative sources considered above, we have already seen a number of other instances of the granting of the lay precepts to extrahuman beings, though the present account offers a bit more detail relating to what this ritual actually might have looked like in practice. For the opposition between Buddhist precepts and Chinese local religions, see Lin, *Chinese Shamans and Shamanism*, 265–278.

141 In this way, the present episode could also be considered in light of the issues of cosmographic logic discussed above, as all of the same arguments apply here as well.

142 Drawing on his incisive analysis of the *Mingxiangji*, Robert Ford Campany notes that this text frequently invokes the visionary abilities of spirit mediums as a means of legitimating Buddhist doctrines and practices, suggesting an uneasy peace between the two groups based on the functional distinctions between their respective practices:

extent to which any tidy theory about the conflictual relationship between reified religious “traditions” (“Buddhism,” “Taoism,” “spirit mediumship” [or worse, “shamanism”]) in medieval China cannot help but be an oversimplification.¹⁴³ We will consider a variety of related examples below.

When considering the role of the dream experiences discussed in Section Two, I proposed that they can be read as responses to (and reflections of) ongoing public debates in the communities described therein. Such a reading can be equally instructive in the present case, as it very plausibly sheds light on the kind of inter-religious interactions that would have occurred whenever Buddhist monks introduced practices such as the five precepts to new communities. Indeed, irrespective of whether there was indeed a “spirit medium of Mount She” (or indeed whether there was a deity of Mount She who had decided to accept the Five Lay Precepts), it is quite possible that this oneiric narrative represents a socially efficacious response to a crisis of conscience among the area's religionists. Specifically, the conversion of the local deity (and the implicit acceptance of this conversion by the spirit medium who reported the dream) could be seen as a way of adapting a local

From the point of view of the style of Buddhism reflected in the miracle tales, spirit-mediums' ability to peer into the unseen world performed a different function than karma and the system of merit: it was essentially diagnostic. Mediums did not typically offer the means to solve the problems they diagnosed (except via sacrifice, which *is* targeted for criticism in the tales), so their ability could be dovetailed to the Buddhist assemblage of karma and merit transfer, which provided solutions to the problems “seen” by mediums. And, from a narratological and rhetorical point of view, mediums' ability could be coopted as a legitimating frame, similar in function to the return-from-death narrative, the dream narrative, and the narrative pattern of a ghost's, spirit's, or deity's appearance. “Religious Repertoires and Contestation,” (140).

For an analysis of the specific *Mingxiangji* accounts associated with spirit-mediums, see 129–130. Similar rhetorical concerns are clearly also evident in the *Eminent Monks* accounts considered in this section.

143 That said, I am also not arguing that there was any lack of acrimony between these groups (and their representatives). Lin, *Chinese Shamans and Shamanism*, offers a helpful overview of these social dynamics (which is particularly salient in the context of the present examples):

[U]nlike religious Taoism, the major concern of the Buddhists was not to avoid being linked with shamanism but to convert the great majority of the populace who had adhered to shamanism. In a word, the incentive for the Buddhists to denounce shamans and shamanism was to win the competition for supporters and replace the shamans' dominant position in the Chinese religious marketplace (263).

That said, Lin also cites a variety of examples of Buddhist monks actively desecrating the ritual sites of these spirit mediums, highlighting the occasionally contestual nature of these interactions (267–268).

cult to the modified ethical standards of the community, while simultaneously recasting these adaptations as the will of the deity. This hypothesized “crisis of conscience” is especially plausible given the widespread popularization of vegetarianism among medieval Chinese Buddhists (both lay and monastic).¹⁴⁴

For some additional examples of dream narratives whose status as informatory miracles rests upon the perceived mantic powers of non-Buddhist religious professionals, we turn to the accounts of Zhixing (智興, 588–632) and Huiming (慧命, 531–568) from XGSZ: one of which centers on a spirit medium and the other on a renunciant Taoist. While Zhixing himself is primarily known for his association with the Vinaya school (where he served as Daoxuan's teacher),¹⁴⁵ the relevant dream episode is actually credited to the sister-in-law of an otherwise unremarkable monk named Sanguo (三果, d.u.), who is not mentioned elsewhere in the hagiographical literature.¹⁴⁶ After the monk's elder brother succumbed to an illness while travelling in the course of his official duties, he was condemned to hell, but nonetheless managed to appear in a dream¹⁴⁷ to his widow, who was at that point still

144 Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism,” 193–205; Greene, “Early History of Chinese Buddhist Vegetarianism,” 30–41. For a detailed exploration of the process whereby restrictions on the consumption of meat gradually came to be enshrined in a 637 Tang law code providing rules for the Buddhist *sangha* and the Taoist clergy, see: Ann Heirman and Tom De Rauw, “Offenders, Sinners and Criminals: The Consumption of Forbidden Food,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 59:1 (2006): 57–83.

145 See: XGSZ 695c. “Zhishou 智首,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%99%BA%E9%A6%96>:

(567–635) Sui period 隋代 monk, originally from Anding 安定 (present-day Gansu 甘肅), secular name Huangfu 皇甫. He entered the Buddhist order as a youth under the tutelage of Zhimin 智旻 of Yunmensi 雲門寺 in Touxiang 投相 province, becoming fully ordained at age 22. Despite this ordainment, he was not confident that he had truly embodied the essence of the precepts, and thus sought confirmation by praying at a stūpa, where he received a vision that satisfied him. He then studied the Vinaya under Daohong 道洪, where he was said to be the top of several hundred students, and he began to give lectures on the Vinaya before he was 30 years of age. ... In 627 Prabhākaramitra 波羅頗迦羅蜜多羅 came from India translating many texts into Chinese, and he regularly consulted Zhishou regarding the Vinaya texts. He passed away at the age of 69, leaving behind such noted disciples as Daoxuan 道宣, Daoshi 道世, Huiman 慧滿, Daoxing 道興, and Zhixing 智興.

146 See: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A011506>.

147 Please note the terminology used here to discuss the deceased man's oneiric communication: 忽通夢其妻曰 (T. 2060:

unaware of the misfortune that had befallen her husband. In her dream, the deceased man informed his wife that he had been freed from his dire fate when the famed monk Zhixing rang the temple bell on the first day of the month, as its peals resonated into the earth prisons for the benefit of those incarcerated there. As such, he requested that his former wife donate several bolts of silk to the monk to thank him for his intercession.¹⁴⁸

The alarming dream caused her to be roused from her slumber, but, among the people to whom she first explained it, there was initially no one who believed her. After the dream repeated several more times, she then consulted various male and female spirit mediums, whose explanations were all as previously stated. Ten days later, the bad news finally reached [her] and it was exactly the same as what she had dreamt.¹⁴⁹

As in the GSZ account discussed above, the stimulus/response dyad depicted here only functions if its audience accepts the socio-religious role of spirit mediums as dream interpreters in medieval Chinese society. The fact that it was indeed meant to be read as a miracle can be determined based on a number of its specific features: first, the widow clearly recognizes that such a dream must be significant, even when her peers deny it; second, her decision to consult various mediums implies a measure of implicit skepticism on her part, paralleling that of the implied audience; third, the identical interpretations offered by the mediums serve to reinforce both the status of the dream as a true vision and the capacity of these religious professionals to deliver true and consistent dream interpretations; fourth, this account culminates in a definitive proof, whereby dream and reality are described as identical (*tong* 同). As

695c5). Specifically, *tongmeng* 通夢 is sufficiently ubiquitous to warrant a definition in GR: “Apparaître dans un rêve à qn pour lui dire (ou demander).”

148 See: T. 2060: 695c2–10. Though it relies on a slightly different version of this story, this episode is cited by Myōe 明惠 (1173–1232), the famed Kamakura monk and auto-oneirocritic, in his commentarial “Recommending Faith in the Sand of the *Mantra of Light*,” which he uses to justify bell-related practice for the benefit of one of his patrons. See: Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, for a discussion (129–131) and a translation of the relevant section (236–237). As an aside, the Zhixing episode, whereby the numinous power of a holy bell permeates the earth for the benefit of those currently imprisoned beneath, is said to be one of four tales often mentioned in Japanese temple bell inscriptions. See: Miriam Levering, “Are Friendship Bonshō Bells Buddhist Symbols? The Case of Oak Ridge,” *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies – Third Series* 5 (Fall 2003): 163–178.

149 從睡驚覺，怪夢所由，與人共說，初無信者。尋又重夢，及諸巫覡咸陳前說，經十餘日，凶問奄至，恰與夢同。(T. 2060: 695c10–13; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), Vol. 3, 1215). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Myōe's discussion of this episode elides the involvement of the spirit mediums (Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 236–237).

such, this episode's miraculous qualities both rely on and reinforce the putative power of spirit mediums as oneiromancers, albeit in the service of Daoxuan's proselytic ends.¹⁵⁰

Just as acceptance of the miraculous episode in the previous account relies on an unquestioning assumption of the oneirocritical *bona fides* of Chinese spirit mediums, the XGSZ's biography of the monk Huiming 慧命 (ca. 531–568)¹⁵¹ also includes an episode that relies on the reader making a similar assumption about a Taoist renunciant. In particular, this Taoist, who is described as an efficacious spiritual practitioner in his own right, is depicted having a “dream-like vision,” which convinces him of the sanctity of the itinerant monk and inspires him to provide him material support:

[Huiming] travelled from Xiangmian, where he [had taken part in] the renowned assembly of those who had travelled [up to] a thousand *li* to revere and dedicate their heart/minds to the great meditation masters Enguang and Xianlu, and then departed from there. Afterwards, he wandered in the Xiancheng¹⁵² Mountains, reaching the homeland of the ancient transcendent Song 松.¹⁵³

Previously, there had been a Daoist named Mengshou¹⁵⁴ who had lived there in seclusion for

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- 150 As such, this episode is a paradigmatic example of the “cosmographic rhetoric” and narrative logic of Buddhist miracle tales, as outlined in Campany's *Strange Writing*, 324–329. On the “cooptation” of the visionary powers of spirit mediums in early Chinese Buddhist miracle tales, see: Campany, “Religious Repertoires and Contestation,” 129–130.
- 151 Huiming was a famous ascetic and Chan practitioner in the mid-sixth century. Kieschnick, in *The Eminent Monk*, includes him in his discussion of heroically ascetic monks (who he describes generally as “elusive and strangely frightening” figures who “appear in the Biographies as ascetics among ascetics, marginals among marginals”), noting Huiming's reputation as a homeless wanderer dedicated to religious practice (35). For a helpful precis of his biography, see Jinhua Chen, “From Central Asia to Southern China,” 198 ff. 82. On the topic of meditation practice, an item of correspondence between the monk and one of his disciples is preserved in the *Guang hongming ji*, as discussed in Eric Greene, “Another Look at Early “Chan”: Daoxuan, Bodhidharma, and the Three Levels Movement,” *T'oung Pao*, Second Series 94: 1/3 (2008): 49–114, 66 ff. 46. See also: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A004594>.
- 152 A peak northeast of Chang'an in contemporary Henan. See: <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000024689>.
- 153 This is possibly a reference to the mythological Master Redpine [Chisong 赤松], which accords well with the fact that the following paragraph demonstrates that Huiming was indeed sojourning in territories that had previously been associated with Taoist practice. That said, the geographies do not seem to line up. For instance, Robert Ford Campany's *To Live As Long As Heaven and Earth* identifies Goldflower Mountain (i.e., the site of Redpine's original religious instruction) in Ge Hong's *Traditions of Divine Transcendents* as being situated in Zhejiang (around a thousand kilometers from the peak described in the previous footnote), 310. That said, it is certainly also possible that this was a reference to a local seeker of immortality (of the sort treated in Campany's *Making Transcendents*) rather than this famed mythological forebear. As an aside, Campany has also suggested that this transcendent's single-character name seems peculiar, perhaps due to a scribal error or omitted character (personal communication).
- 154 Chen notes that this Taoist figure is “otherwise unknown” (“From Central Asia to Southern China,” 198 ff. 82).

many years, praying that his heart/mind would return to rectitude.¹⁵⁵ To guarantee the realization of his aspiration, he gave up his residence, supplying it for the construction of a Buddhist temple *stūpa*.¹⁵⁶ [One day] at dusk, when Huiming had not yet reached the mountain, Mengshou suddenly, in a muddled fashion¹⁵⁷ that was like a dream, had a great vision of the gods of heaven and earth arrayed in defensive formation [along] the sides of the hall. When he regained consciousness, he was startled and delighted; he climbed up a crag, but his expectations were thwarted, as [he thought] he was going to observe enough Indian [Buddhist] travellers to fill a forest. Thereafter, it was Huiming who arrived.

[Mengshou] rushed forward and paid his respects. He promptly donated his [former] residence, in order to [establish] Shanguang Temple, whose devotional activities were extremely frequent, bringing together myriad followers.¹⁵⁸

行自襄沔，聞恩光，先路二大禪師，千里來儀，投心者眾，乃往從之。後遊仙城山，即古松仙之本地也。先有道士孟壽者幽栖積歲，祈心返正，必果所願，捨所居館充建寺塔。及命未至山夕，壽忽恍焉如夢，大見神祇嚴衛館側，至覺驚喜，登巖悵望，遂覩梵旅盈林，乃命至也。趨而禮謁，即捨所住為善光寺焉，供事駢羅，眾侶咸會。

I will be the first to note that the present account represents something of an edge case, given that it does not explicitly describe an oneiric experience. That said, I was convinced to include it by the fact that it nonetheless contains the following elements: 1) it occurred in the evening; 2) it was explicitly characterized as a muddled or fuzzy-headed state that was “like a dream;” 3) it was a state in which detailed phantasmagorical imagery arose unbidden; 4) the imagery (deities arrayed in a temple) is entirely consistent with the content of many other dream visions included in these collections; and, 5) once the experience ceased, the Taoist renunciant is described “regaining consciousness.” While all of these traits are entirely consistent with hypnagogic hallucination,¹⁵⁹ it is not necessary to ascribe a

155 For the role of the *xin* 心 in early Taoist cultivation practice, see Roth, 126. In general, this entire passage evokes the putative goal attaining “the physical vitality and psychological well-being that comes from having the entire human organism function spontaneously according to inherent patterns or 'natural guidelines' (*li*)” (*ibid.*, 127).

156 Given the events that followed, it seems likely that Mengshou had made this offer proactively (i.e., that he was still currently dwelling there but had vowed to turn over his dwelling if he succeeded in achieving his religious goal).

157 I am following SCM here in reading *yan* 焉 as an adverbial suffix.

158 T. 2060: 561a21-a27; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 2, 611–12.

159 See Mavromatis for a detailed overview of the somato-sensory (14–52) and cognitive/affective (53–80) characteristics of hypnagogia. In particular, it is notable that hypnagogic hallucinations frequently arise unbidden, especially among sleep deprived subjects (107–108), and that the imagery seen therein is characterized by its simultaneous vividness and a frequent lack of narrative coherence (27–33). As Mavromatis argues, citing Silberer:

when the following two conditions were present, a) drowsiness and b) an effort to think, an autosymbolic phenomenon made its appearance, that is, 'a hallucinatory experience which puts forth “autosymbolically”, as it

particular phenomenological category to this experience, as the foregoing similarities with other accounts present in these sources imply that a culturally competent reader would surely have grouped this episode with those considered previously. This is especially true for contemporaneous monastic readers, whose praxis traditions at times involved granting similar ontological status to various visionary experiences (from meditations, to dreams, to reveries).¹⁶⁰

Just as the accounts considered previously problematize any simplistic understanding of the relationship between Buddhists and spirit mediums in medieval China, so too does this one suggest that the lines of demarcation between medieval Buddhists and Taoists are far less clearly-defined than a survey of the polemical literature would suggest. First, and in keeping with some of the accounts considered previously, we see a noted Buddhist renunciant establishing (and/or expanding upon) his reputation for sanctity by roaming through peripheral areas previously associated with specific Taoist transcendents.¹⁶¹ Second, we see a Taoist practitioner who, wishing to achieve a specific religious goal, vows to make a (sizable) donation to the Buddhist sangha if he is successful: this claim implies that a typical medieval reader, who likely would have been acquainted with at least one Taoist, would have found it believable that such a religious professional would have made a “Buddhist” vow if he thought that it would be spiritually efficacious.¹⁶² Next, and in a manner that is narratively treated as a *ganying*

were, an adequate symbol for what is thought (or felt) at a given instant (56).

Without overstating the case, the foregoing description seems to map fairly precisely onto the phenomenological elements of Mengshou's experience as described. Also see: Flanagan, 56, 92 ff. 3.

160 As discussed in the Oneiric Practice chapter.

161 On the tendency of Chinese Buddhists to congregate in and potentially usurp sacred sites that had previously been associated with Taoists, see: Robson, “Monastic Spaces and Sacred Traces,” *passim*; Robson, *Power of Place*, 213-318. That said, the conclusion of *Power of Place* forcefully makes the case that studies focused on specific geographical places (such as the Southern Sacred Peak) offer a helpful corrective to the tendency to view religious traditions (such as “Buddhism” or “Taoism”) as discrete, hermetically-sealed wholes, as they demonstrate the sheer variety of interactions between specific individuals and communities associated with these traditions (*ibid.*, 319-327). The tale of the Taoist Mengshou discussed above is a case in point.

162 For a discussion of the relationship between dreams and vows in medieval Chinese Buddhism, see the Oneiric Practice chapter.

response to this vow, the Taoist is spontaneously treated to a vision of his (former) residence flanked by local deities, who thus seem to have been recruited to serve as Dharma Protectors, which echoes the imperialist model of Buddhist proselytism described previously. In keeping with the discussion of the manner in which Daoxuan's collection helped to shift the religious center of gravity of early Tang Buddhism (as seen in Chapter Three), the Taoist awakens with an apparent assumption that the only religious force that would have sufficed to generate such a profound visionary response was a large delegation of Indian monks, which explains his initial surprise upon seeing only Huiming. This serves as an implicit (but rhetorically unequivocal) claim about the numinous quality of this single Chinese Buddhist exemplar, characterizing his exemplarity as exponentially greater than that of an entire congregation of foreign monastics. Finally, and in response to this vision, the Taoist is depicted gladly honouring his covenant by giving away his house for use as a Buddhist monastery – an act that clearly demonstrates Mengshou's subordination.¹⁶³

The narrative logic employed in this episode is identical to that seen in the cases of spirit mediums considered above: for this story to function as a miraculous testimonial to the numinous power of an eminent monk, the religious activities of the renunciant Taoist must be seen as a viable source of spiritual resonance. Moreover, and as previously seen, there seems to be no particular distinction (at least in terms of evidentiary value) between such a vision when ascribed to a Buddhist monk or to a Taoist renunciant. As in the previous cases, it is obviously necessary to acknowledge that this text was promulgated by a group with a pointed ideological agenda, so it is clearly unwise to draw

163 For an extensive discussion of the making of vows in the context of oneiric practice, see Chapter One. From my perspective, the preeminent account of this type concerns Li Wujie 李五戒 (d.u.), who vows to burn off his own arm as an offering to commemorate the completion of a Buddhist icon. Unaware of that the casting process had concluded, he was visited in a dream by this golden figure, at which point he immediately apologizes and makes the offering as promised (T. 2060: 699a).

too many historical conclusions from it. That said, it at least provides a valuable perspective on the “ecumenical” quality of this discourse community's views relating to the accessibility and significance of oneiric communication, at least when such communications can be employed to Buddhist ends.

In addition to the cases discussed above, which implicate non-Buddhist religious actors in the *ganying* framework, both the GSZ and XGSZ also contain accounts of exemplary Buddhists (and their praxis traditions) provoking oneiric visions in (often hostile) local elites: another narrative application of dreams as a mode of transecting the boundaries between individuals. While I will be the first to acknowledge that there are too few episodes here to draw any firm conclusions, the extent to which they are congruent with the examples considered above has convinced me that it is an issue worthy of consideration.

We will begin by turning our attention to an example from XGSZ's biography of Falin 法懷 (466–557),¹⁶⁴ as its simple narrative structure and cast of characters clearly elucidate the connections it is positing between medieval Chinese Buddhism and oneiromancy. This account concerns a monastic protagonist known for his excellence in meditation, as well as his tendency to spend his idle time reciting the *Lotus Sutra*, *Vimalakīrti*, and the *Great Treatise*, and whose exemplary practice is seen yielding a variety of miraculous results.¹⁶⁵ We are considering it here as a clear, and somewhat irreverent, example of the potentially contentious relations between local officials and the *sangha* in the

164 Falin (法懷) (466–557) is not to be mistaken for the much more famous Falin 法琳 (572–640), author of the polemical *Bianzheng lun*. See: “Falin 法琳,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%B3%95%E7%90%B3>; <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/?fromInner=A005913>.

165 In the context of our discussion of the cosmographically “civilizing” effect of monastic practice, I find the discussion of Falin's very presence to be quite telling, as it states that by taking up residence in an area, the monk naturally quells all of the local beasts, mountain spirits and demons. This description concludes with the simile that his practice so thoroughly pacifies the the peripheral mountain region that it is “like being within a village” (!): 榛林猛獸之宅。幽深魑魅之巖。栖息無為如在邑里 (T. 2060: 556c7–9).

medieval period, and the ways that dream experiences could be drawn upon to resolve these tensions:

Long ago, [Falin] came from the Dai Marchmount¹⁶⁶ and was en route to Xuzhou when he encountered a district magistrate who asked him to produce a government-issued certificate;¹⁶⁷ Falin was always carrying a scroll-case containing the *Dharma Lotus*, so he replied, saying: “In this scroll-case, you will find my travel documents.” When [the magistrate] checked but didn't see them, he angrily said: “This text contains no travel [行 *xing*] document. Why did you say that it did?” [Falin] replied: “This scripture [records] the traces of various Buddhas' activities [行 *xing*],¹⁶⁸ and [we] mendicants proceed by practicing [行 *xing*] it, returning to the source by reverting [our attention to] this text.¹⁶⁹ Thus, it is my travel [行 *xing*] document.”

The magistrate raged without cease and [had Falin] locked up for seven days without food, [during which time the monk] recited the [*Lotus*] *Sutra*, his voice never wavering. The magistrate experienced [*gan*] unwholesome dreams, and immediately paid homage to the monk and rued his transgressions. Thereafter, [Falin] took up residence on Mount Mo, taking the stilling of his thoughts as his true vocation. Thereafter, he took his seat and met his end amongst the crags. His years were sixty-two.¹⁷⁰

昔從岱岳，路出徐州，遇一縣令，問以公驗；懷常齋法華一函，乃答云：「此函中有行文。」檢覓不見，令怒曰：「本無行文。何言有耶？」答曰：「此經是諸佛所行之跡，貧道履而行之，還源返本，即我之行文也。」令瞋不歇，閉之七日不食，誦經聲不輟。令感惡夢，便頂禮悔過。後栖默山，以禪靜為正業，遂坐卒巖中，年六十二。

At its most basic level, the magistrate's decision to free his (admittedly impertinent) monastic prisoner only makes narrative sense if he had interpreted the experience [*gan*] of his nightmares as a miraculous response [*ganying*] to either the monk's textual practice, his own infraction, or both. Moreover, and regardless of whether an actual administrator under the Northern Wei would have been cognizant of the

Lotus Sutra, the readership of XGSZ would have been intimately aware of the textual practices

166 Another term for Mount Tai (GR [*Taiyue* 岱岳]; <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000021580>). For a discussion of the history of the term *yue* 岳, as well as an overview of the classification system for Chinese sacred mountains, see Robson, *Power of Place*, 25–32.

167 See HDC for *gongyan* 公驗 as a descriptor for various types of official documentation issued by imperial bureaucrats. For a brief discussion of Chinese travel documents in the Tang Dynasty, see Benn, *Daily Life in Traditional China*, 184, 192–93. Joseph Needham notes that the implementation of a passport system can be traced back to the Warring States period, where it was one of the many bureaucratic innovations promulgated in the State of Qin (97). *Science and Civilization in China: Vol. 1 – Introductory Orientations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954).

168 My translation here obviously sacrifices the pun the monk is making on *xing* 行 (“travel” vs. “activity”).

169 This is another pun: *huanyuan* 還源 and *fanben* 返本 can both be read as renderings of “return to the source,” since 本 can refer to either the “origin / root” or a text. See: “*huanyuan* 還源,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E9%82%84%E6%BA%90>.

170 T. 2060: 556c9–16; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 2, 587.

associated with the text, as well as their purported efficacy.¹⁷¹ More specifically, it should be noted that the scripture itself makes reference to protecting devotees (and, specifically, those who chant it) from bad dreams and other assaults, as can be seen in the following brief excerpt:

Sticks and swords cannot hurt them,
And poison cannot harm them.
If people slander them
Those slanderers' mouths will be sealed up. [...]
If they dream they see only subtle things.
They see the Tathāgatas seated on lion seats,
Teaching the Dharma to the assembly
Of monks surrounding them.¹⁷²

Given that medieval holding cells were often found in the same structures as magistrate's offices,¹⁷³ one can imagine this government official attempting to go about his duties while hearing his prisoner ceaselessly reciting a text attesting to its bearer's protection from nightmares, false imprisonment, slander, and other dangers of travel, as well as the dire consequences that would befall anyone who impeded his proselytic activities. Whether this reflects a specific historical occurrence or a plausible fiction concocted by medieval hagiographers, it remains the case that it describes an imperial official cowed into releasing a Buddhist prisoner due to his fear of the magical powers of a monk's textual practice, and that this concern was deemed sufficiently sensible as to require no further comment.¹⁷⁴

171 See: Stevenson, "Buddhist Practice and the Lotus Sutra in China," 138–143. Likewise, Campany's "Earliest Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin" contains a variety of references to *Lotus Sutra*-related practice functioning to free practitioners from imprisonment (86–87, 94–95 [tales #1, 15, 16]).

172 *The Lotus Sutra*, translated from the Chinese of Kumārajīva by Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama, (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), 205. Cf., 刀杖不加，毒不能害，若人惡罵，口則閉塞 (...) 若於夢中，但見妙事。見諸如來，坐師子座，諸比丘眾，圍繞說法。(T. 262:39b17–22). While the seven day duration of Falin's imprisonment could simply have been a rhetorically compelling duration, it is perhaps notable that this same section of the Lotus Sutra also mentions "seeking the path for seven days" (*ibid.*, 207 [cf., 求道過七日 (T. 262: 39c11)]), though it could also be related to the seven-day confession practices mentioned in Chapter One.

173 See Benn, *Daily Life in Traditional China*, 198–201. Though his sources were substantially later than the Tang dynasty, I have to admit that my imaginal vision of this episode (and, in particular, the conditions under which the monk was imprisoned) was also informed by the historical preface to Robert van Gulik's translation of *The Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee (Dee Goong An)*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1976), i–xxiii.

174 This interpretation follows the *Principle of Irrelevance* (as outlined in the Introduction).

The GSZ's biography of Xuangao 玄高 (402–444)¹⁷⁵ contains an even more elaborate account of Buddhist dream magic, going so far as to explicitly discuss the monk's purported powers. As in the previous case, it also takes place in the Northern Wei Dynasty, highlighting the potent link between the thaumaturgical powers ascribed to eminent Buddhists and the political fortunes of the religion during this period. The following account picks up near the end of the monk's storied career, after he had already studied with several Indian masters,¹⁷⁶ taught and practiced meditation upon a mountain previously associated with Taoist transcendents (with the attendant miraculous responses), and also ministered to various elites:

Meanwhile, Tuoba Tao of the Wei had seized power and occupied Pingcheng and was invading the kingdom of Liang. The uncle of Tao, Du Chao, Prince of Yangping invited Xuangao to the Wei capital Pingcheng. There Xuangao spread the Tao [i.e., the Buddhist Way] far and wide. The crown prince Tuoba Huang revered him and served him with devotion as a disciple would his preceptor. Because the prince had once been maligned [by his enemies], he was held suspect by his father. He asked Xuangao for advice: “The charges against me are baseless. How can I extract myself?” Xuangao instructed him to observe the *Golden Light* fast [lit., *zhai*] and sincerely confess his transgressions for seven days. [He did.] Consequently in a dream Tuoba Tao saw his grandfather and father holding swords in majestic regalia; they inquired: “Why do you believe in the rumor-mongers and suspect the loyalty of your own son?” Tao woke up suddenly. He summoned his ministers and related the dream to them. They replied: “The crown prince is blameless. The truth is as revealed by the commands sent down with the royal spirits.” Thereafter Tao no longer suspected the crown prince, all thanks to the power of Xuangao's sincere vow.¹⁷⁷

Considering this episode in light of the material already covered in this chapter, a few general points spring immediately to the foreground. For instance, we once again see the *ganying* framework being invoked to explicate encounters in the oneiric realm, demonstrating that just as gods, ghosts, and local spirits could be impelled to appear in dreams by Buddhist practice, the same was true of deceased ancestors.¹⁷⁸ Also, and as mentioned in the Oneiric Practice chapter, medieval audiences were clearly

175 For a more thorough discussion of this figure, see the account of his birth in the Oneiric Conception chapter.

176 On the link between Indian teachers and perceived thaumaturgical powers (a position commonly espoused in *GSZ*), see Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 82–87.

177 Translated by Lai in “The Century of the Holy Man,” 155. Cf., T. 2059: 397c4–13.

178 As noted above, this is in keeping with Wolf's supposition regarding the distinction between these types of beings as a

well aware of the second-order oneiric practices of dream-telling and dream-interpretation, such that a ruler immediately awakening from a monitory nightmare to discuss the matter with his advisors was seen as a natural enough activity that it required no further comment.¹⁷⁹ Also notable is the fact that this account clearly casts Tuoba Tao's dream experience as an informatory miracle providing unimpeachable insights into the concerns of his deceased ancestors, whose contents (once interpreted) were sufficient to radically alter the father's perspective on his son, the unfairly maligned crown prince.

More specifically, when considering the role of ritual practice in this account (which we must, given the putative role of the *Golden Light zhai*¹⁸⁰ in engendering the Tuoba lord's oneiric experience), I would argue that the present account preserves evidence of a pivotal transition in the medieval Chinese understanding of Buddhist ritual. Whereas earlier views of Buddhist thaumaturgy essentially followed an *ex opere operantis* model, whereby miraculous effects could be credited to the personal charisma of particular exemplary actors (often of Indian / Central Asian descent or with a direct, lineal connection to a non-Chinese master), later accounts, following the gradual popularization of Buddhist textual practice (and other such rituals) entailed a transition to an *ex opere operato* view, whereby the practices

largely functional one, as outlined in “Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors” (see, for example, 146). While counterexamples to this approach can certainly be proffered (e.g., Shahar and Weller's notion of “unruly gods”), narratives like those considered in the current chapter suggest that, at a certain level and from the storytelling standpoint, medieval Chinese storytellers tended to approach all of these beings as if they were part of a single ontological category, with resulting commonalities in inferences and metaphorical entailments (as discussed in Boyer, 71–72).

179 As per the *Principle of Irrelevance* (described in the *Introduction*).

180 Yoshikawa and Funayama (2010) note that this certainly refers to the confession ritual outlined in the Dharmakṣema (曇無讖) translation of the *Golden Light Sutra* (T. 663), Vol. 4, 63 ff. 4. Intriguingly, the third chapter of this text begins by describing the sleep of the bodhisattva Ruciraketu, who dreams of a golden drum whose resonant tones explicate a confessional rite, which he later intones upon waking (the contents of which provide the remainder of the text of the “Chapter on Confession”): “the Bodhisattva Ruciraketu made the respectful gesture with his hands towards the Lord and uttered those confessional verses that he had heard in the middle of his sleep from the sounds of the drum” (9). R. E. Emmerick, *The Sutra of Golden Light*, (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1992). Cf., 却坐一面敬心合掌，瞻仰尊顏[5]目不暫捨，以其夢中所見金鼓及懺悔偈，向如來說 (T. 663: 336b20–22). For the link between *zhai* practice and dreams, see Chapter One.

themselves were sources of efficacy.¹⁸¹

For example, in the XGSZ's account of the *Lotus Sutra* reciter Falin (translated above), culturally competent readers would almost certainly have ascribed the administrator's nightmares to the monk's textual practice, rather than to his unique personal charisma, due to their familiarity with the logic and *ganying* claims associated with Buddhist praxis (in general) and this text (in particular). In contrast, the present account seems to split the difference: on one hand, we see a ritual pattern replicated frequently in both GSZ and XGSZ (seven day confession ritual → oneiric response), which would seem to credit the ritual itself as the stimulus;¹⁸² but, on the other, and as if to explicitly argue for the “great man” (*ex opere operantis*) model, this excerpt concludes by stating that Xuangao's sincerity was the cause [*gan*] of the supernatural response.¹⁸³

181 Lai's primary argument posits that the execution of Xuangao represents the collapse of the previously regnant “great man” model of Buddhist exemplarity that shaped the official acceptance of Buddhism during the earlier years of the Northern / Southern dynasties period (fourth to fifth century CE):

The holy man had such preeminence in this period in part because the full Buddhist institution was not yet in place. Once the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha had objective embodiments, the holy man tended to recede into the background. He who had helped to build them would also then defer to their authority. For the moment though, the holy man as personal preceptor to ruler and people might help to hold the community together. This social drama began with Fotucheng in 316 in the North. It came to an end in 439 when the North was united under the rule of the Tuoba Wei. The death of the monk Xuangao in the Buddhist persecution of 444 only underlined it more” (144).

Note: the terminology I employ above is obviously drawn from discussions of the Catholic sacraments, whose spiritual efficacy was (according to orthodox theological) thought to reside in the rites themselves rather than the individual moral charisma of the individual priest. As described in: Daniel Kennedy, “Sacraments,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912). Accessed online at: <http://newadvent.org/cathen/13295a.htm>. While this dogma allowed the reintegration of religious professionals who may have fallen away from the Church (e.g., denying their faith instead of accepting martyrdom), it also opened the door for a mantic interpretation of these rites: see, for example, E. G. Weltin, “The Concept of Ex-Opere-Operato Efficacy in the Fathers as an Evidence of Magic in Early Christianity,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 4:2/3 (1960): 74–100.

182 As discussed in Chapter One.

183 蓋高誠感之力也 (T. 2059: 397c13 [**emphasis added**]). The notion of a monk's spiritual power impelling an oneiric vision in another person is not without precedent in GSZ, though I believe this is the only case where the recipient is initially hostile to the monk's interests. For another example (with very similar wording), consider the case of one of Guṇavarman's lay patrons, after he set up a religious community in South China:

Cai Maozhi, the governor of Shixing, deeply admired and paid homage [to Guṇavarman]. Later, when he neared death, Guṇavarman came in person to check on him, expound the dharma, and offer him consolation. Later, a member [of the governor's] household had a dream vision of Maozhi inside of a Buddhist temple, among the congregation of monks discussing the dharma. The true reason was the power of Guṇavarman's exemplary instruction.

始興太守蔡茂之，深加敬仰，後茂之將死，跋摩躬自往視，說法安慰，後家人夢見茂之在寺中，與眾僧講

Unfortunately for Xuangao, his intervention on behalf of the Tuoba heir earned the displeasure of some political rivals, including a court literatus and a Celestial Master. Their subsequent attempt to conspire against the politically active monk can be seen in the next section of the biography. This section immediately follows a lengthy quotation from one of Tuoba Tao's edicts, wherein the ruler explicitly speaks out in favour of the moral and political necessity of unimpeded dynastic succession,¹⁸⁴ seemingly motivated by the oneiric experience described above. The episode continues as follows:

[The prime minister] Cui Hao and the [Taoist] Heavenly Master Kou [Qianzhi] had won the imperial favor from Tuoba Tao before. Now they worried that if and when the crown prince Huang was to ascend the throne, they would lose all their influence. With malice they memorialized and alleged that in that affair [of the dream], the crown prince plotted against the ruler; with the help of Xuangao, he had engineered the magical appearance of the imperial ancestors in his majesty's dream. If such machination is not eradicated, they charged, it would result in immeasurable harm. Enraged, Tuoba Tao ordered the immediate arrest of Xuangao. Prior to this Xuangao had secretly told his disciples, "The Buddha dharma will soon decline. Master [Hui-]Chong and I will be the first to suffer the consequence." At the time, those who heard that duly grieved. Huichong, a monk from Liangzhou, was then the personal preceptor to Han Wande, the Imperial Secretary of the Wei state. Second in virtue only to Xuangao he too came under suspicion. In the ninth month of the fifth year of the Taiping [Chenjun] era [444], Xuangao and Huichong were arrested and imprisoned. On the fifteenth day of the same month they were executed at the eastern corner of the capital Pingcheng. Xuangao was forty-three.¹⁸⁵

Given that GSZ is by no means an unbiased source, we obviously cannot draw any conclusions about the two men depicted herein (nor can we generalize about the attitudes of the literati and Taoists of the Northern Wei towards Buddhism). For our purposes, however, the most notable aspect of Cui and Kou's accusation is that their critique hinges on our monastic protagonist's thaumaturgical control over the ruler's dreams. In this way, it can be read as the obverse of the three accounts with which we began

法，實由跋摩化導之力也 (T. 2059: 340c18–21 [**emphasis added**], punctuated following GSZ (1992 [2007]), 107).

Cf., Chavannes, "Guṇavarman," 193–206. Even though the Guṇavarman account does not explicitly invoke the *ganying* framework, the similarity in both usage and narrative content is unequivocal.

184 This edict concludes as follows (in Lai's translation):

So hence let the crown prince be the head of the myriad departments, administer all affairs of state, appoint the righteous, and promote or demote according to merit. As Confucius says: "The young deserve our respect, for who is to tell they would not do better than we?" (156).

185 *Ibid.* Cf., T. 2059: 397c26–398a7.

this section: in those cases, Buddhist exemplars are seen causing spiritual resonances in the dreams of non-Buddhist religious professionals (spirit mediums and Taoist renunciants), thus providing evidence of the spiritual potency of Buddhism, while also endorsing the unstated assumption that these other professionals were also capable of engaging in epistemologically-reliable oneiric practice. Instead, the present case sees two representatives of other religio-political interests criticizing the activity of an influential monk, but doing so in a fashion that affirms the efficacy of his (malign) oneiric magic, claiming that “it is only Xuangao's employment of Buddhist techniques that impelled the former emperors to descend into [Tuoba Tao's] dream.”¹⁸⁶ As such, this accusation parallels those proffered in the famed “*gu* panic” of the Latter Han dynasty, as both centered on charges that a prospective heir had nefariously employed “sorcery” to further their own ambitions.¹⁸⁷ As in that case, this episode also culminates in a wave of executions, definitively demonstrating a pervasive fear of religious professionals perceived to possess privileged access to powers beyond the typical human ken, or at least those who were willing to employ their powers in a manner that was not necessarily consistent with the interests of the state.

In all of these cases, we have seen additional evidence of the claim that these medieval Chinese sources employed the DREAM WORLD → EXTRAHUMAN WORLD metaphor as part of their understanding of the role and function of dreams in religious life. This metaphorical entailment implies that extrahuman beings could be encountered in dreams, and that, as a result, religious professionals of all stripes had the capacity to experience (and sometimes even impel) epistemologically-reliable oneiric visions. Even though accepting the numinous efficacy of other religionists seems contrary to Huijiao

186 My translation of 「但修高公道術、故令先帝降夢」 (T. 2059: 397c28).

187 As described in H. Y. Feng and J. K. Shryock, “The Black Magic in China Known as 'ku,’” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 55:1 (1935): 1–30; Michael Loewe, “The Case of Witchcraft in 91 BC: Its Historical Setting and Effect on Han Dynastic History,” *Asia Major* 15:2 (1970): 159–196.

and Daoxuan's stated rhetorical goals, the fact that they opted to employ the visions of spirits mediums and Taoists as evidentiary miracles speaks quite unequivocally to the extent to which such powers were ascribed to all Chinese religious professionals, even among readerships with prior ideological commitments to Buddhism.

Oneiric Critiques of Indigenous Religious and Cultural Practices

We now turn our attention to a final way that Huijiao and Daoxuan employ the “dreams as informatory miracle” trope, considering examples where the laws of moral causality cause [*gan*] such visions to appear in response to the behavioural lapses of human actors. We have already considered this theme at some length in the previous chapter, wherein we saw such oneiric visions appearing in response to monastic anxieties regarding proper Buddhist practice, as informed by then current concerns about the decline of dharma and the position of China on the soteriological periphery. Just as that chapter saw Daoxuan making cosmographic claims about China that might have seemed shocking to his sixth-century predecessor, so too do we now concern ourselves with a theme that is exclusively present in the seventh-century *Continued Biographies*: the use of dream narratives to critique indigenous Chinese cultural practices. As suggested in Chapter Three, Daoxuan's willingness to include such narratives implies that his discourse community possessed enough self-confidence that they did not require the more unilaterally positive portrayal of the *sangha* seen in the GSZ episodes considered herein.

In particular, I am curious about accounts that list dreams as either inciting incidents for behavioural change or as the resolution to waking experiences with negative emotions (such as guilt or existential dread).¹⁸⁸ This accords with the general shift in the narrative function of such experiences

188 Specifically, while the GSZ does contain a small number of accounts of dreams related to individuals behaving badly or feeling remorse, these few narratives all describe their protagonists coming to realize the error of their ways through waking encounters that culminate in some form of confession and behavioural modification, with the dreams occurring

described in previous chapters, wherein Daoxuan (and the authors of the tales preserved in XGSZ) are much more likely to treat oneiric visions themselves as miraculous responses, as opposed to the more standard GSZ position, in which additional miraculous confirmations were typically included. In this context, dreams experiences were ideally suited to the task of addressing the unwelcome realization that various aspects of the traditional culture of Chinese elites (e.g., participating in hunting parties, enjoying wine and other intoxicants, and consuming meat) were incompatible with the moral commitments of a pious layperson: surely a common experience in Daoxuan's time.

I would hypothesize that the lack of dreams narratives fulfilling this function in GSZ could be credited to a cultural difference between the eras of GSZ and XGSZ, a disparity between the editorial agendas of Huijiao and Daoxuan, or (most likely) both. Specifically, in the first case, the fact that Chinese Buddhist ethics were better understood and more widely accepted by the time of the compilation of XGSZ makes it entirely plausible that individual dreamers would have had a sufficient understanding of this ethical framework as to be caused to feel guilt by their perceived moral failings (or at least that their discourse communities would have found such stories to be meaningful and salient). Likewise, in the second case, it seems likely that Huijiao and the earlier Chinese Buddhist authors who recognized that their tradition's political fortune was still uncertain would have been much

in the aftermath, as a confirmation of the propriety of their newfound ethical framework. For example, consider the following discussion of a lay patron's crisis of conscience from the biography of the monk Sengzong (in GSZ): “The crown prince Wenhui [of the Southern Qi] planned to expiate his sins in order to become a follower [of Sengzong's]. He experienced [*gan*] a communicative dream, which surely rectified his thoughts and [permitted him] to take refuge [in the Buddhist teaching].” 文惠太子將欲以罪擯徒遂。通夢有感。於是改意歸焉。 T. 2059: 379c27–28, punctuated as per GSZ (1992 [2007]), 327–328, cf., Yoshikawa and Funayama, Vol. 3, 242. I followed Yoshikawa and Funayama (as well as DDB) in reading *gui* 歸 as a reference to religious conversion (see: 「夢の中に感心があり、かくして考えを改めて帰依した」 (*ibid.*)).

As can be seen, this account features a positive, responsive dream experience, whose seemingly narrative function is to indicate that the prince's penitence was sufficient as to allow him to take up the lay precepts (or otherwise participate in a Buddhist congregation). This is entirely commensurate with accounts of dreams incubated via confession rites (as we have discussed in Chapter One), which would have been consistent with the prince's desire for expiation). This is manifestly distinct from the accounts of dream-inspired fear and guilt that frequently occur in XGSZ.

more circumspect about criticizing the cultural practices of their lay patrons, whereas the mainstreaming of Buddhism by the Sui and early Tang would have made such critiques less unpalatable. This second hypothesis is given additional weight by the fact that XGSZ contains many more examples of oneiric experiences associated with monks behaving badly:¹⁸⁹ a logical side-effect of collecting narratives for a sympathetic audience versus an audience whose continuing support was more contingent. In either case, I would argue that the lack of such oneiric episodes in GSZ seems to speak fairly unequivocally to an evolving understanding of the place of Buddhism within Chinese society, and the role of dreams therein, between the sixth- and seventh-centuries.

For our first example of a layperson driven to abandon indigenous standards of behaviour in conjunction with an oneiric experience, I have selected an account that offers some valuable insights into the complex socio-dynamics of patron-client relationships in the early Tang, especially in cases where the donor's enthusiasm outstrips their comprehension (or acceptance) of Buddhist ethical mores. It concerns the interaction between a well-intentioned but misguided lay patron and the monk Xuanjian 玄鑿 (553–645), who, as an exemplary youth,¹⁹⁰ spontaneously forswore the consumption of meat, wine and pungent herbs: in other words, naturally coming to adopt the diet associated with monastic regulations as a result of his inherent inclination toward purity.¹⁹¹ This represents the beginning of the monk's lifelong “temperance crusade,” as reflected at various points in his biography, where he is seen preaching against the dangerous effects of alcohol to his lay followers. For example, Xuanjian's

189 This issue is mentioned briefly in the discussion of monastic orthodoxy in Chapter Three. I intend to investigate this matter in a future paper.

190 See Chapter Two for a discussion of this trope in medieval Chinese Buddhist hagiographies.

191 While the account does not specify the age at which this spontaneous moral transformation is said to have occurred, it occurs as part of its initial paean to the future monk's virtue, prior to its first temporal reference (which relates to an event that took place in his nineteenth year). As such, it seem entirely plausible that it was intended as part of a description of his youthful exemplarity: 天性仁慈志樂清潔。酒肉葷辛自然厭離。(T. 2060: 542a4–5).

reputation as a strict and sanctimonious teetotaler was so widespread that simply hearing that the monk was nearby caused a group of secular gentlemen to break up their drinking party and flee.¹⁹² While his advocacy of the moral dangers of intoxication is generally seen to have earned him the approbation of his community (as will be seen below), it also led him into conflict with an elite lay devotee.

Based on [the episode involving the drinking party], the seven assemblies [i.e., the entire Buddhist community]¹⁹³ revered and honoured him for the weight of his severe austerity, as well as his pure rectitude; but then he redoubled his commitment to pure conduct. Many times when there were construction projects involving various artisans and craftsmen, people of good families who would sometimes send [gifts of] wine and food. But Xuanjian would say: “As for our current project, it must be conducted according to the dharma. It would be better not to build it, [in accordance with] the principle of abstaining from alcohol [than to build it by breaking this principle].”¹⁹⁴ Complying [with him], they would immediately stop [making such gifts].

One time, Qinghua monastery was planning the construction of a Buddha hall.¹⁹⁵ The populace of the [nearby] regions all made offerings to support the construction. In Zezhou [County], there was an office head named Zhangsun Yi, whose [understanding of] propriety was naive, but who was inclined toward deferential faith.¹⁹⁶ He heard about the employment of a great number of artisans, so he sent two cartloads of wine to be delivered to them. At this time, Xuanjian was overseeing the construction project when he saw these things [being delivered]. He then smashed the wine vessels, scattered the pieces on the ground, and made a pronouncement,

192 故諸俗士聚集醺飲。聞鑿來至並即奔散」(T. 2060: 542 a17–18)

193 See “*qizhong* 七眾,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=seven groups \(of Buddhist disciples\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=seven%20groups%20of%20Buddhist%20disciples). *bhikṣu*, 比丘 (monks); *bhikṣuṇī* 比丘尼 (nuns); monks who are not of age (*śrāmaṇera* 沙彌); nuns not yet of age *śrāmaṇerikā* 沙彌尼. In the case of women, there is a special category of nuns who are in between the older and the younger group, who are called *śikṣamāṇā* 式叉摩那. The first two groups keep the full set of the Buddhist precepts; the two groups of lay practitioners are only required to keep the five precepts (*wujie* 五戒). The *śikṣamāṇās* receive the six rules 六法 and the *śrāmaṇeras* and *śrāmaṇerikās* receive the ten precepts 十戒; *upāsaka* 優婆塞 (male lay practitioners); *upāsikā* 優婆夷 (female lay practitioners).”

194 I realize that my reading requires a rather lengthy implied clause, but I think that this sentence makes the most sense if interpreted as the first half of a counterfactual conditional whose apodosis (the “then” clause) is clear enough as to have been left unstated. Given the monk’s stalwart opposition to alcohol, it seems totally reasonable to assume that, by his moral reckoning, the moral “bonus” of a monastic construction project would not be sufficient to counteract the “malus” of consuming alcohol. For a detailed overview of the philosophical issues involved in this form of counterfactual reasoning, see a helpful paper delivered by Dorothy Edgington at NYU in 2001, “The Content of Counterfactuals and their Role in Explanation or The Benefit of Hindsight,” (accessed online at: <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/courses/content/papers/edgington.pdf>).

195 See “*fodian* 佛殿,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E4%BD%9B%E6%AE%BF>: “The main hall of a monastery, where images of buddhas and great bodhisattvas are enshrined, and where Buddhist adherents come to pay obeisance.” For a helpful overview of the standard architectural features of a Buddha Hall, see Charleux and Goossaert, 325–326. For a detailed study documenting the architecture of a famous Chinese monastery’s Buddha hall, (including a wealth of useful diagrams), see Lin Wei-cheng, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China’s Mount Wutai*, (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2014).

196 Or, possibly, “faith in the [power of] offerings” (which might make better sense in context).

saying: “As for our merits and virtues, it would be better not to complete them, stopping [our construction project] rather than using these things that contravene the [Buddhist] Law!”¹⁹⁷

When Yi heard this, he became very angry and by the next day, his vexation only increased.¹⁹⁸ That night, he had a dream of a man confronting him bearing a sword. Just then, he was immediately frightened awake, and [due to] this event ended up repenting [his previous anger]. Also, the region encountered plague *pneumas* and those who died were not few. So, they all sincerely prayed for their lives. Xuanjian, in light of their confessions, ordered them to cut out all wine and meat [from their diets]. The sick became well again and [the people of] the time greatly esteemed him.¹⁹⁹

由是七眾尊虔，敬其嚴厲，重其清貞，數有繕造，工匠繁多，豪族之人或遺酒食，鑒云：「吾今所營，必令如法，乍可不造，理無飲酒。」遂即止之。時清化寺修營佛殿，合境民庶同供崇建。澤州官長長孫義素頗奉信，聞役工匠，其數甚眾，乃送酒兩，輿以致之。鑒時檢校營造，見有此事，又破酒器狼籍地上，告云：「吾之功德，乍可不成，終不用此非法物也。」義聞大怒，明欲加惱，夜夢有人以刀臨之，既忽警寤，即事歸懺。又遇疫氣，死亡非一，皆投心乞命，鑒為之懺悔，令斷酒肉，病者痊復，時大重之。

While a naive reading of the Chinese Buddhist precepts²⁰⁰ would lead one to assume that Buddhist monks (and even pious laypeople) rejected the consumption of alcoholic beverages, considering Buddhist law in a post-Schopen world naturally leads to the opposite interpretation: namely, that these precepts were propounded (and monastic exemplars like Xuanjian were valorized) precisely because

197 Similar counterfactual reasoning to what was seen above, with the same implication regarding the moral rewards/punishments of making Buddhist donations vs. breaking the precepts by consuming wine.

198 I'm not quite sure how to render *yu* 欲, but I am following SCM in reading it in the context of passions in general, rather than a specific desire / vow.

199 T. 2060: 542a18-b1, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 2, 523–524.

200 For a contemporaneous example, consider the relevant section on Five Precepts from the Eastern Jin thinker Xi Chao's commentary on the Buddhist doctrine and practice, *Essentials for Believing in the Dharma (Fengfa yao 奉法要)* (ca. 370 CE): “(5) not to drink wine, nor to use wine as a gift, and always [firmly to persist in this to the end of one's life]. If the wine is used as a medicine, the dosage must be weighed, the main point being that it must not provoke drunkenness. Drunkenness is accompanied by thirty-six evils, and the scriptural teachings prohibit it most strictly.” (translated in Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 164). The *Dazhidulun* outlines these thirty-six detriments of indulgence in alcohol, which run the gamut from the practical: #2) “Drink is the door to all illnesses,” 6) “Drink ruins knowledge,” 9) “He tells people all his secrets,” 11) “Physical strength progressively diminishes”; to the ethical: 4) “the drunkard is not ashamed of being seen naked,” 14) “He does not respect monastics,” 21) “he mixes in the intrigues of evil people,” 23) “he becomes an immoral person”; and even to the soteriological: 32) “He is far from nirvana,” 33) “He plants the causes and conditions for madness,” 34) “at the destruction of the body at the end of his life, he falls into the bad destinies, into hell” (641–642). Étienne Lamotte (trans.), *The Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom of Nāgārjuna (Mahaprajnaparamitasāstra)*, Composed by the Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna and translated by the Tripiṭakadharmacārya Kumārajīva, Vol. II., (translated from the French by Gelongma Karma Migme Chodron and accessed online at: <http://read.84000.co/resources/Indian%20Buddhist%20Classics/Lamotte%2C%20%20Vol%202.%20Maha-prajnaparamita-sastra-%20by%20Nagarjuna%20%28english%20translation%29.pdf>).

medieval Chinese monastics and laypeople typically fell short of these ideals.²⁰¹ Indeed, the central role of alcohol in the elite culture of the medieval period is extraordinarily well-documented, given that the vast majority of feast and festivals centered around wine-fuelled contests of poetic improvisation and recitation, and other such activities.²⁰² More broadly, the transient sense of transcendence that could be found at the bottom of a cup of wine served as a frequent literary trope for the Southern gentry, who were also among the first to embrace the abstruse doctrines and recondite cosmologies of Buddhism.²⁰³ Given this cultural context, many early Chinese Buddhist converts (both lay and monastic) took part in medieval drinking culture, albeit with occasional push-back from critics (both within and outside of the Buddhist community).²⁰⁴ As such, in the same way that Robert Ford Campany has argued that the specialized cuisines of early medieval transcendence-seekers were “cultural repertoires” that allowed their users to define themselves in opposition to the cultural mainstream,²⁰⁵ so too was the rejection of

201 For one example from a lifetime of incisive scholarship, see Gregory Schopen, “Doing Business for the Lord: Lending on Interest and Written Loan Contracts in the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114:4 (1994): 527–554, which offers a clear overview of the various ways that monastic business dealings clearly and definitively contradict the “rules” against Indian Buddhist monks owning property, touching money and otherwise engaging in commerce. This is also consistent with the *Principle of Counterargument* (as discussed in the introduction).

202 See, for example, Lewis, *China Between Empires*, (19, ff. 23); Charles Benn, *Daily Life in Traditional China*, 141–147. François Martin's article on this topic provides an example that speaks directly to the types of cultural negotiation with which we are concerned, as it analyzes the literary output of a late fifth / early sixth century literati soiree convened on the evening of a Buddhist feast day (*zhai*), whose participants all seem to have been challenged to extemporize poems on Buddhist themes. “Literary Games and Religious Practice at the End of the Six Dynasties: The Baguanzahi Poems By Xiao Gang and His Followers,” *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, edited by Zongqi Cai, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 222–236. Likewise, translating from the late 8th century *Classic of Tea* 茶經, James Benn notes that one of the arguments employed by “Mr. Alcohol” (in an attempt to best “Mr. Tea” in a debate) relates to the centrality of alcohol in both the religious ceremonials and social practices of antiquity. See: James Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015), 47–49.

203 For a brief discussion of the acceptance of Buddhism among Southern “pure conversation” (*qingtan* 清談) adepts, especially focusing on the consumption of alcohol among fourth century Buddhist translators and exegetes, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 78–79.

204 For example, Benn's *Tea in China* draws on the extensive corpora of ledgers, regulations and other ephemera collected in the library caves of Dunhuang to highlight the extent to which regular alcohol consumption seemed to be the rule rather than the exception among monks and laypeople in this out-of-the-way outpost (57–59). Also see: Martin, 233. For a discussion of antinomian “meat eating, wine drinking” monks in the medieval period, and the logics of “higher morality” used to justify their conduct, see: Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 51–63.

205 One compelling example adduced therein is that the avoidance of grains represented a conscious decision to opt out of both the stereotypical understandings of civilization (which centered on agricultural production) and the traditional economies of ritual sacrifice (7–24). Robert Ford Campany, “The Meanings of Cuisines of Transcendence in Late

wine an overtly contrarian act, rife with socio-political implications. We see this in the preamble to the present account, where the abstemious monk's reputation alone leads “secular scholars” (*sushi* 俗士) (i.e., the elite constituency upon whom the inchoate Chinese Buddhist movement relied for patronage) to flee their drinking party. Rather than being characterized as a dangerous rupture with potential patrons, Xuanjian's biography instead relies on this episode to cement his reputation for purity among the lay and monastic congregations.

This dynamic continues with the monk's blatant rejection of his (surely well-meaning) lay follower's donation of wine for the construction crew involved in a new building project, which is an especially conspicuous stance given that there is no reason to assume that each craftsman and artisan hired for the project would have themselves been Buddhist. That said, the two didactic speeches ascribed to Xuanjian in this account lay bare his moral rationale: namely, that it is preferable for Buddhist structures to go unbuilt and projects to go unfinished than for any *adharmic* activity to be associated with them.

All of these themes come together in the layman's distressing dream, which occurs (plausibly enough) after he spends several days in full ire upon hearing that Xuanjian not only rejected his donation of two cartloads of wine, but also disposed of it and publicly denounced the immorality of such gifts. As in many of the other cases considered in this chapter, it seems unproblematic to suggest that, whether or not this particular layman had this particular dream, the narrative as a whole was written (if invented) or included (if historical) because it reflected social tensions that would have been recognizable to the members of the discourse community that circulated this collection. Moreover, I

Classical and Early Medieval China,” *T'oung Pao*, Second Series 91:1/3 (2005): 1–57,

would argue that this particular layman's dream would have been read by the XGSZ's audience as a case of implicit dream telling (and likely dream interpretation). Specifically, the only way for a monastic hagiographer to have had access to this narrative would have been through the layman's direct or indirect relating of this episode to a member of the Buddhist monastic community. Even if this particular episode was an utter fabrication, the number of references to dream telling and dream interpretation in the text indicate that such practices were utterly commonplace at the time, and would thus have been read as a plausible source for this narrative.

As for the admittedly more contentious claim that this represents a case of implicit Buddhist dream interpretation, I find the following features of the episode suggestive: first, a man purportedly has a dream vision whose imagery (i.e., being menaced by a sword-wielding man) is in no way canonically Buddhist, but who nonetheless ascribes its cause to his ongoing feelings of pique toward a specific monk;²⁰⁶ second, the dream is described as terrifying enough to cause him to be startled awake – a circumstance that is very plausibly correlated with seeking out an oneirocritical opinion; third, his subsequent response is contrition (*chan* 懺) – an emotional state firmly linked to oneiric experience in medieval Chinese Buddhism (as discussed in Chapter One); finally, we know that anger was routinely denounced by contemporaneous Chinese Buddhist teachers as a source of karmic ill, potentially leading to one's rebirth in the hellish “pool of the fire of anger” instead of the Pure Land²⁰⁷ – a dreadful destiny that would certainly account for the layman's desire for expiation. As an aside, offering an additional

206 For a discussion of the role of culturally-transmitted systems of dream interpretation in shaping “manifest dream content,” see Tuzin, “The Breath of a Ghost” (560–561), as discussed in the Introduction.

207 See: Eugene Y. Wang, “Pure Land Art” in *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert Buswell, (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 693–698, for a description of a some contemporaneous icons that included this element (694), which most certainly would have been used as part of the moral instruction of the laity. For a discussion of this phenomenon in the context of the chthonic realm, see Teiser's *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, which describes the performative usage of the titular text by storyteller monks, who employed it alongside distressing pictorial representations of the various hells when instructing lay audiences (e.g., 37–40).

vector of verification for the miraculous response (or, possibly, to explicate the fact that Xuanjian's dictum against the consumption of alcohol was eventually adopted by the entire region), the account also concludes with a secondary stimulus/response dyad, whereby a subset of the local society fell victim to an epidemic, only to be cured via the monk's intercessions – a macrocosmic event echoing the narrative function of Zhangsun's dream experience: an example of the “parallel miracle” described in the *Introduction*. As can be seen, this account represents a clear case of Buddhist ethics trumping traditional social mores and overriding the wishes of a specific patron, with the oneiric episode serving as a means to address and overcome these tensions.

For our second example, we will consider two episodes related to the rejection of hunting: an activity that not only provided its practitioners with a valuable source of sustenance, but that was also a favoured pastime of medieval elites.²⁰⁸ The first is drawn from the middle of the monastic career of Huixuan (慧暉, 515–589): a skilled exegete and orator of the Chen dynasty, whose intellectual acumen eventually earned him official recognition, first as superintendent of monks in the capital region (*dasengdu* 大僧都) and finally as director of monks (*dasengzheng* 大僧正) (ca. 583 CE).²⁰⁹ His official service is of note here as it provides a plausible avenue whereby the dreamer in question, an individual in the employ of the Chen house, might have come to know the monk (whether directly or by reputation).

The Chen dynasty's Head of the Palace Guard,²¹⁰ [a man named] Renzhong, served as a commander-in-chief²¹¹ [in spite of] his youth. He had refined tastes and hunting was his

208 See Benn, *Daily Life in Traditional China*, 171–172.

209 See his biography in the *Fo Guang Dictionary* [佛光大辭典查詢] (7597) for more details.

210 Hucker #3754: "at times a sinecure for a court favourite, at times actively in charge of the palace guard" (314)

211 Neither *jiangshuai* 將帥 (nor *jiangshi* 將師 [following Taishō 494c ff. 22]) are present in Hucker. Another possible rendering is “scholar commander-in-chief” (“commandant en chef lettré” (GR)), which might well fit, provided that the previous title referred to a sinecure position.

[preferred] leisure activity, but²¹² the karmic seeds [he] planted [in prior lifetimes] were excellent, so a good opportunity was about to appear. In the kitchen, the animals that had been both captured and slaughtered [during the hunt]²¹³ all began to emit an uncanny luminescence. He saw this and it astounded him, secretly causing him to feel worry and fear. That night, he dreamt of a strange man coming and calling for him, saying: “If you request a lecture from [the monk of] Dong'an, then that which you have seen is certainly no cause for anxiety.”

Immediately upon waking, he rose up and danced for joy. His rabbit-catching nets and hunting arrows were gathered up and simultaneously burned to ash. What's more, he spent [the next] two summers at official lectures [on Buddhist topics]. Because of his repentance, he received and bore two sutras, and received the precept of non-killing. Since the traces of numinous efficacy are truly manifold, only the tiniest fraction²¹⁴ have yet been discussed.²¹⁵

陳領軍將軍任忠，少為將帥，雅好畋遊。然宿植勝因，善機將發，庖厨饗餼，悉放奇光。覩而怪之，竊懷憂懼，夜夢異人來謂己曰：「如請東安講，則所見必當無憂。」既而覺悟，歡喜踊躍，置罟罾繳，一時焚燼。仍屈兩夏於府講說，因此懺悔，承持二經，受不殺戒。故靈迹寔繁，未陳萬一。

As in the previous section's repudiation of alcoholic libations (even when proffered by lay patrons), the present account too explicitly concerns a point of potential friction between medieval Buddhist mores and those of secular elites, given that hunting was both a preferred means of pleasurable social networking and a source for tribute animals to be offered to the throne.²¹⁶

In this episode, we see the layman's emotional state (in this case, “worry and fear”) precipitating the oneiric response, which serves the narrative function of informatory miracle, impelling him to participate in public Buddhist praxis as the solution to his concerns and as the appropriate reaction to the uncanny sight he had previously beheld. The layman's immediate response upon waking further

212 Following GR (def. 7) in reading *ran* 然 as a contrastive particle.

213 GR and HDC both note that *yongxi* 饗餼 refers to the animals ritually offered as tribute to one's guests or social superiors.

214 Literally, one ten-thousandth.

215 T. 2060: 494, c6–13; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 306–307.

216 As discussed by Benn (above). On the history, use and function of imperial hunting parks, see: Edward H. Schafer, “Hunting Parks and Animal Enclosures in Ancient China,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 11:3 (Oct., 1968): 318–343. See, in particular, Schafer's discussion of the tendency toward a moralistic rejection of wholesale slaughter by the Tang, which he attributes to the influence of both Taoist and Buddhist ethics (339–341).

highlights the positioning of this narrative at an ethico-cultural fault-line in medieval Chinese society: even though the reported content of the dream utterance simply stated that attending Huixuan's lectures would expiate the malign omen of the glowing offerings, Renzhong not only takes the dream as a positive sign, but then immediately proceeds to destroy all of the paraphernalia associated with his previous hunting practice. This implies one of three (or more) possible scenarios: 1) he already had general knowledge about the Buddhist proscription on ending life (and hunting in particular), which prompted his initial anxiety; 2) he had previously heard Huixuan lecture on this topic (which is plausible, given the monk's close connection to the Chen ruling house); or, 3) in the time between his uncanny sighting and his oneiric vision that night, he discussed the matter with a Buddhist associate, who may have informed him to be prepared for an informatory oneiric vision. In any case, the man is depicted immediately rejecting his hunting practice upon waking. The fact that this abrupt behavioural about-face is given no further consideration strongly implies that this response would have been coherent and sensible to a medieval Chinese Buddhist reader.²¹⁷ This in turn reinforces both the role of dreams as informatory miracles in the medieval *ganying* framework and the extent to which the Buddhist critique of hunting was known and understood by the laity.

The third example, which describes one vector through which laypeople may have encountered moral dicta related to the ending of life, is drawn from the XGSZ biography of Huiyue (慧約, 452–535) – a monk whose oneiric conception and subsequent exemplary childhood are discussed in Chapter Two. After his biography expositis a variety of episodes that bespeak his inherent morality and innate connection to Buddhism (e.g., his innate compassion for living beings and his habit of building sand stupas instead of sand castles), it then specifically treats the issue of preying upon animals, when it

217 Following the *Principle of Irrelevance* (described in the *Introduction*).

describes the child's distressed response to an elder relative's hunting practice, with Huiyue constantly sighing and saying: “[Even though] the species that fly and scamper are very distant from human beings, how could the feeling of 'loving life and hating death' be any different?”²¹⁸ Though the youth thereafter abstained from eating “rank-smelling meats,”²¹⁹ his entreaties failed to move his uncle.

Immediately thereafter, his recalcitrant relative is visited by a distressing oneiric vision:

His uncle thereupon avoided [his nephew's criticism] in another village, where he wantonly went about slaughtering and massacring [animals].²²⁰ [The uncle] dreamt of a red-clad official, armed with a halberd-spear, who called out to him, saying: “You have spent all day ending life. Even with a bodhisattva's teaching, you are still unable to stop. I'm coming quickly and once I [arrive], I will kill you.”

[The uncle] arose drenched in sweat. The next morning, he promptly destroyed all of his hunting supplies and profoundly reformed his previous erroneous ways. [Later on,] Huiyue returned to the place where his uncle often used to hunt and saw ten head of elk and deer. Such an increase can thereby occur, if a person repents their faults.²²¹

叔父遂避於他里，恣行勦戮，夢赤衣使者手持矛戟謂曰：「汝終日殺生，菩薩教化，又不能止，促來就死。」驚覺汗流，詰旦便毀諸獵具，深改前咎。約復至常所獵處，見麋鹿數十頭騰倚隨之，若有愧謝者。

As in the account of the Chen dynasty official discussed previously, here too we see a single oneiric experience characterized as sufficient grounds to destroy a (likely costly) array of hunting equipment, symbolically and practically marking the moment at which these men could no longer participate in this popular and culturally-significant activity. Whereas in the previous case it was necessary to speculate as to means by which the official had come into contact with Buddhist views of hunting, here we see Huiyue's uncle being held morally accountable by his preternaturally exemplary nephew, who is

218 Once again highlighting this youth's sagacity, this seems to be a reference to the Zhuangzi's claim that the “True Man of Ancient times knew notion of loving life, knew nothing of hating death.” (Watson [trans.], 42). Sharf, in *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, notes a similar usage in the late eighth century *Treasure Store Treatise* (*Baozang lun* 寶藏論, T. 1857), 227.

219 季父意畋獵化終不改。常嘆曰。飛走之類去人甚遠。好生惡死此情何別。乃絕羶腥」(T. 2060: 468c3–5).

220 Even though the term *jiaolu* 勦戮 seems to have connotations related to the wanton killing of human beings (see: SCM, GR), the narrative effects of Huiyue's action (i.e., the conservation of some of the region's fauna) clearly demonstrates that this phrase is being employed metaphorically.

221 T. 2060: 465c5–10; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 182.

seen using language and concepts that would have been deeply familiar to any medieval reader versed in the ongoing debates about vegetarianism (and other mainstays of practical Buddhist ethics). Thereafter, the uncle's bellicose oneiric visitor accuses him of ignoring his nephew's moral instructions and proceeds to threaten him in a fashion that speaks to the medieval development of a composite form of ethical calculus. On one hand, the uncle's culpability was tied to intentionality (i.e., the fact that he had indeed received proper instruction and knew the error of his ways); on the other, his transgression was not going to be punished in the grand sweep of karmic time, but rather via the immediate intercession of a spiritual official, following traditional Chinese views of instantaneous moral recompense. Moreover, the oneiric image of a red-robed, halberd-wielding official is, of course, entirely consistent with the medieval Chinese vision of a bureaucratic afterlife (with Buddhist characteristics), which by the seventh-century had become clearly elaborated through indigenous scriptures, Buddhist artwork, and popular narratives.²²² When one considers the fact that the terrifying imagery of various Buddhist hells was part of the medieval zeitgeist, wherein offenders are depicted being dismembered, flayed, and otherwise transformed into living, suffering meat by such officials, it is impossible for a reader, whether medieval Chinese or modern, not to identify (and empathize with) the uncle's physiological response to his horrifying dream.²²³ As such, while this episode uses an oneiric stimulus as a means of justifying its protagonist's eschewing of an important facet of elite Chinese culture, it does so while emphasizing the transformative potential of such ethical choices through its coda, where a direct causal link is drawn between the uncle's moral transformation and the fulsome

222 For the medieval development of Chinese hells (both pictographic and ideological), see: Teiser, *The Ghost Festival*, 168–190; *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, 1–6, 11–15, 31–48; Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*, 33–38.

223 As Flanagan, Bogzaran and Deslauriers, and others suggest, and as outlined in the introduction, dream experiences seem to emerge from the densely interconnected, metaphor-generative structure of the human brain. Since we can see that the uncle had already been chided for his participation in hunting activities, and that he obviously took these criticisms seriously enough that he subsequently sought to avoid them by travelling to a different town before his next excursion, it is clear that the prerequisites for a “guilt dream” are all present. Though this is no proof of the historicity of the present episode, it does lend it some plausibility (as well as speaking to the psychological insights of its author(s), if it was indeed a hagiographical invention).

generation of new life in the area.

Finally, I would like to conclude with an episode whose bold, polemical criticism of indigenous Chinese thinking is particularly blatant, and which employs both *ganying* theory and the medieval understanding of dreams in a novel fashion. For this example, we return to the biography of the monastic lecturer and administrator Huixuan, whose interaction with a member of the Chen dynasty's imperial apparatus was described above. In order to capture the feeling of discombobulation that I imagine this account would have engendered in a seventh-century literati reader, I have included the full introduction to his biography in the translation that follows, as it begins with an entirely stereotypical description of the youth's exemplary character,²²⁴ up to and including the traditional subjects that he chose to study. This only serves to highlight the author's rhetorical *jujitsu* when it then begins to denigrate these indigenous Chinese religio-philosophical traditions.

The monk Huixuan's family was of the Zhou clan, with their ancestral home originally in Runan. After the fall of the Han, they fled the region to Jiangzuo. They established a residence there uneventfully, and spent many generations there. Now, by virtue of their flourishing [fortunes,] they are people of Yangxian. His grandfather, Shao, served as the head of the crown prince's guard under the Qi dynasty.²²⁵ His father, Fu, served as commandant of Changshui under the Liang. He happily resided in humble circumstances, without seeking fame or recognition. He wandered freely to the end of his years, alternating between farming and government service.

Huixuan had penetrating wisdom that [seemed to] come from the unseen realm and was an upstanding and committed youth. He penetratingly investigated the Six Classics, summarizing and passing through their significant points. He [also] upheld the practical instruction²²⁶ that he learned from his family. There was nothing he did not excel at.

When he was eighteen, he heaved a deep sigh and lamentingly said: “I adhere faithfully to [the teachings of] [the Duke of] Zhou and Kongzi, taking benevolence and righteousness as being of primary importance. I submit my heart/mind to [the teachings of] the Yellow Emperor

224 For an in-depth discussion of the “exemplary child” trope as it relates to accounts of oneiric conception, see Chapter Two.

225 See GR for *dianzhong jiangjun* 殿中將軍 as a title.

226 Or, perhaps, “habits” or (more literally) “constantly studied” (*changxi* 常習).

and Laozi, taking the void and the non-existent as that which is precious. But [every] coming and going, birth and death, and [even] inhalation and exhalation²²⁷ is defiling.²²⁸ What's more, [thanks to] this region's confounding practices,²²⁹ there is no vital way to escape from this world.” Having just given rise to this exceedingly rare resolution, it then stimulated [*gan*] an extraordinary response [*ying*].

He [then] had a dream vision of a stupa with a multi-tiered, five-storey [construction].²³⁰ Coloured²³¹ images decorated it. Since it was far away, it [was obviously] very tall. For this reason, he did obeisance and then vowed to ascend the stupa. In the space of a few moments, he suddenly found himself on top, at the wheel-shaped summit [of the pagoda]. At this moment, his body and mind were suffused with a sense of joy the likes of which he had never experienced before.²³²

As a result, he then made his way to Jingyi, then on to Zhufang, where he encountered Master Xu at Zhulin Monastery. Their sincere mutual admiration provided [Huixuan] with the support to leave the house[holder's life] by [receiving the] Ten Precepts from his monastic teacher.²³³

釋慧暉，姓周氏，其先家本汝南，漢末分崩，避地江左，小震是宅，多歷年世，今為義

227 This could also be simply another binome indicating a cyclical phenomenon (“entering and exiting”), but I feel that it lacks rhetorical force when interpreted in that way.

228 “Chenlao 塵勞,” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%A1%B5%E5%8B%9E>: “Affliction that fatigues the mind. The pollution of the mind that causes it to continue transmigrating through life and death.”

229 Given that the youth was allegedly unfamiliar with Buddhist doctrine at this point, it feels like it would be an overreach to translate *leiye* 累業 as “enfettering karma,” though it is obviously the notion that would have sprung to the mind of a culturally competent reader in Daoxuan's discourse community.

230 This architectural style was quite popular by the time of Daoxuan's compilation of XGSZ. For example, the *Record of Buddhist Monasteries of Luoyang* (written around a century earlier) includes a description of the famed Yaoguang 瑤光 nunnery who devotional architecture sounds quite similar to the one described here: “[In the nunnery] there was a five-storied stupa that rose five hundred Chinese feet from the ground. Its “immortals’ palms (*xianzhang* 仙掌)” soared into the sky; its bells hung high above the clouds (*yunbiao*). The dexterity of workmanship matched that of the Yongning monastery” (Wang's translation of *Luoyang qielan ji jiaoshi*, 48; cf., 有五層浮圖一所，去地五十丈。仙掌凌虛，鐸垂雲表 [T. 2092: 1003a13-14]; This passage is discussed in Sze, 88). More striking, given the fact that our titular monk ended his life at a monastery in Suzhou (cf., T. 2060: 492b14; <http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/?fromInner=PL000000011244>), it is quite suggestive that Wang Huan 王奘 (434-493), the governor of the area, spent eleven years saving up to build a monumental, five-storeyed stupa in a monastery that his great-great-grandfather had built one hundred years earlier (*ibid.*, 144–145). This is significant, because it implies that the five-storeyed stupa would have been an architectural form that was intimately familiar to the monks who would have compiled the first biographical notices of Huixuan's death (i.e., his monastic brethren at Xuzhou's Central Monastery).

Note: this should not be read as an utter rejection of the possibility that the monk had indeed experienced a transformative oneiric encounter with a Buddhist structure, but rather that it is very plausible that details drawn from his later life would have been incorporated into the account, either by the monk himself or his later monastic biographers. This is entirely consistent with the contemporary understanding of memory discussed previously.

231 I am following ff.10 in reading *bian / cai* 采 as *cai* 彩.

232 For a discussion of the the significance often ascribed to dreams of flight (and their resultant transformative power), see: Bulkeley, *Big Dreams*, 196–203. He also considers a variety of cross-cultural examples in *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, 19 and *passim*.

233 T. 2060: 494a24-b8, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 305–306.

興陽羨人也。祖韶，齊殿中將軍，父覆，梁長水校尉，並偃仰衡門，不求聞達，優遊卒歲，易農而仕。

暉穎悟冥來，挺操童幼，鑽求六經，略通大義，蓋家教之常習，非其好也。年十八，乃喟然歎曰：「服膺周、孔，以仁義為先；歸心黃、老，以虛無為貴。而往來生死，出入塵勞，乃域中之累業，非出世之要道也。」既發希有之志，仍感非常之應，夢見一塔，累級五層，晝采莊嚴，迢然峻峙。因而禮拜，願昇此塔，少選之頃，俄上相輪，當時身心快樂，未曾有也。於是將遊京邑，途次朱方，遇竹林寺詡法師，雅相嗟賞，乃依止出家，為十戒和上。

As we can see, the first two paragraphs of the translation above are utterly stereotypical in their adherence to Chinese historiographical standards, linking the (future) monk to a specific region, highlighting the official achievements and moral virtues of his progenitors, and invoking the “exemplary child” trope to describe his capacious intellect, filiality, and engagement with the literati canon. Then, in a stunning rhetorical about-face, which echoes the Buddha's rejection of his own cultural patrimony, the youth spontaneously comes to the realization that neither the literati nor the Huang-Lao traditions provide an adequate response to the existential challenges of embodied existence. Then, as if to redouble the rhetorical punch of this claim, and thus to contrast it with other critiques of indigenous Chinese thought seen in the XGSZ,²³⁴ the account then makes the explicitly causal claim

234 For some other such critiques found in biographies that have been considered elsewhere in the present project, please consider the following:

- 1) The XGSZ biography of the monk Zhenguan presents another case of a youth mastering the literati canon (as well as official histories and Taoist texts [specifically, the *Heshang gong* 河上公 commentary on the *Laozi* 老子]) before rejecting them in favour of the study and recitation of Buddhist texts (cf., T. 2060: 702a);
- 2) The biography of Huiyue, considered both above and in the chapter on miraculous pregnancy, includes the following brief ganying episode, which occurs immediately after the youth's uncle finally gives up hunting in the aftermath of a nightmarish vision. “[Huiyue's] household was one of left-handed and perverse [practice], [so he] did not have the experience of seeing a Buddhist temple; [his] generation was one that venerated [the teachings] of Huang-Lao, [so he had] not yet heard the Buddha Dharma. But [thanks to] the conditioning of previous lives and stimuli [*gan*] from the unseen realm, his heart-mind accumulated a [desire to] flee the secular world. He suddenly met a monk, from whom he requested the superlative teaching. The monk then gestured eastward with his finger, saying: 'In Yan, Buddhism [lit., “Buddhist things / activities”] has become extremely popular.' And with that he could not longer be seen, which is how Huiyue knew he was a spirit man. So, when he reached his twelfth year, his began to sojourn in Yan.” 所居僻左，不嘗見寺，世崇黃老，未聞佛法。而宿習冥感，心存離俗，忽值一僧，訪以至教，彼乃舉手東指云：「剡中佛事甚盛。」因乃不見，方悟神人。至年十二，始遊于剡 (T. 2060: 465c10–14; punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 1, 182). As can be seen, in Huiyue's case as well, the circumstances of his childhood home (i.e., adherence to Huang-Lao teaching rather than the Buddhist alternative) are critiqued, but the *ganying* response seems to be credited to his desire to depart from the householder's life (which was itself impelled by his karmic conditioning and the influence of the unseen realm), rather than to a philosophical revelation;

that the youth's realization itself provided the stimulus [*gan*] that provoked a response [*ying*] in the form of an oneiric vision.²³⁵ This realization, combined with the suasive power of the youth's exhilarating flying dream,²³⁶ is cast as a sufficient condition for embarking upon a voyage that culminates in his receipt of the full monastic precepts. Thus, Huixuan's biography can be seen as the logical narrative endpoint of the sorts of polemical discourses that were already well-established by the early Tang, whereby Buddhist literati monks (and their lay followers) not only defended their tradition against nativist critiques, but actually asserted its superiority: a rhetorical move that is achieved here by ascribing numinous efficacy to the process of philosophical speculation itself. Likewise, given the monk's eventual service to the Chen state, his mastery of the literati canon would likely have served as both a source of legitimation and as a practical tool in his rhetorical kit, given his renown as a lecturer. Regardless of the historical particulars of Huixuan's life, however, for our present purposes, it is merely necessary to reiterate the fact that, within the expanded view of *ganying* proposed by Daoxuan, a feeling of existential malaise resulting from philosophical disillusionment is here depicted as a stimulus

3) Third, and most physically unsettling in terms of the “body horror” that it employs to make this rhetorical point, we can turn to the biography of Lingrui (who is also discussed in the chapter on miraculous conception). After a pregnancy in which the future monk's mother became spontaneously averse to the flavours of the “five pungent roots” (a moralistic dietary preference that she passed on to her child), his parents later introduce him to a Taoist practitioner, which yields the following distressing results: “When he was eight, his parents went to meet a Daoist, who ordered [their son] to peripatetically recite some worthless phrases. Suddenly, blood poured from his facial orifices and he was unable to complete the recitation. As they returned home, entering their fields, they suddenly encountered the Dharma Teacher Zhisheng, who then said: 'The members of your household revere the Tao, but [your child] personally desires to revere the Buddha.'” The young lad then follows the dharma teacher, leaves the householder's life, becomes a *śrāmaṇera* and practices the recitation of Buddhist texts: a task at which he (unsurprisingly) excels. 八歲，二親將至道士所，令誦步虛詞，便面孔血出，遂不得誦。還家入田，遇見智勝法師，便曰：「家門奉道，自欲奉佛。」隨師出家，即將往益州勝業寺為沙彌，一夏之中，大品暗通。(T. 2060: 539c17–21, punctuated as per XGSZ (2014), vol. 2, 514–515). Here, the stimulus condition in the *ganying* dyad seems to be the attempt by Lingrui's parents to encourage their exemplary (and frankly miraculous) son to perform non-Buddhist religious activities, in spite of an oneiric pregnancy experience that seemed create a potent bond between the infant and the Buddhist community.

235 Note: I obviously cannot make this claim for all of the *ganying* narratives in the two collections under consideration, but it is certainly the case that there are no other accounts that explicitly suggest that a philosophical realization alone can serve as a stimulus for an oneiric vision. In a future study, I would like to systematically explore Daoxuan's perspective on the *ganying* framework, if for no other reason than to explore my intuition that characterizing a philosophical revelation as a numinous stimulus was an idiosyncratic rhetorical move.

236 For a cross-cultural exploration of the positive valence ascribed to such oneiric visions, see Bulkeley, *Big Dreams*, 177–194.

(*gan*), with his oneiric engagement with unquestionable Buddhist verities being characterized as the “response” (*ying*). As in many cases treated elsewhere in the present study, this clearly presumes the epistemological validity of oneiric experiences, not merely as confirmatory miracles but as informatory guides to new truths about life, the universe, and everything.

In all of these cases, we see oneiric events at the nexus of a complex negotiation between Buddhist ethics and the standards of indigenous Chinese religious thought and practice. Unlike the dream experiences reported in GSZ, the majority of which are associated with monastic dreamers and which unilaterally lack the sorts of critiques seen in this section, we can see these specific narratives from XGSZ as emblematic of a broader pattern in medieval Buddhist apologetics, which had moved beyond initial attempts to demonstrate compatibility with Chinese cultural standards and social mores, to the more self-assured posture of willingness to critique these standards when they fell short of Buddhist ideals. This process is, of course, part and parcel of the recentering of the medieval Buddhist worldview on China (as described in the previous chapter).

As such, each of these narratives represents a very specific moment in the development of Chinese Buddhism, whereby available cultural repertoires were being adapted to serve the needs of this increasingly self-assured religious community. The downside of this development, however, is that it clearly created cleavages between the most pious Buddhist adherents (both lay and monastic) and their less committed friends, relatives, and associates: tensions that remain subtextual in some of the accounts treated above but that come to the fore in others. As if to further inflame these tensions, the medieval period also saw an increase in popular preaching, including didactic instruction in Buddhist morality through illustrated diagrams of hells and their attendant tortures, which would have surely

increased the suasive quality of these moralistic lectures.²³⁷ Thus, whether the guilt, fear, and uncertainty we see in these various episodes can be credited to moralistic critiques of friends, colleagues and local Buddhist clergy, or to the knowledge of the hells and their tortures that was becoming increasingly diffused into the Chinese zeitgeist, each of the examples treated above helps to outline the various ways that oneiric experiences and oneiric practice were deployed to resolve these concerns.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored four related types of dream narratives, each of which helped to illuminate the complex and contentious issue of inter-religious interaction in sixth- and seventh-century China, as well as Huijiao and Daoxuan's diverse (and at times divergent) responses to these social realities. As noted above, I posit that the disparity between the overall number of tales of both aggressive and submissive encounters between local deities and Buddhist monks, which were more common in GSZ than its (much longer) successor, could be read as indicating that the compiler of the earlier collection had a greater rhetorical stake in proving the miraculous efficacy of Buddhist exemplars, as well as in justifying Buddhist incursions into territories previously associated with other religious groups. This claim is bolstered by the fact that the XGSZ dream accounts include a related theme that was utterly absent from GSZ: namely, the use of dream narratives to critique indigenous social mores and religio-philosophical traditions. While I will be the first to acknowledge the relatively small sample size of narratives considered herein, these two observations map seamlessly onto various

237 For an account of the development of such imagery, the earliest examples of which can be traced back to the sixth century, see Stephen F. Teiser (1988), "'Having Once Died and Returned to Life': Representations of Hell in Medieval China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48:2, 433–464, 437–439. As mentioned above, the *zhiguai* tradition (and especially the accounts of individuals who died and returned to life contained therein) would also have played a key role in this development.

known developments in the historical development of Chinese Buddhism, from the vociferous contestation of sacred space in the early medieval period to the gradual “mainstreaming” of Buddhist ideals and ethics by the Sui and Tang. As such, it is perhaps not surprising that the primary liminal boundary we see transected in the first collection is the one between Buddhists and the local denizens of the extrahuman realm, whereas in the second Daoxuan seems at least as interested in using oneiric visions to explore the boundaries between the lay and monastic communities, as well as between the conduct of actual and idealized Buddhists. As in the previous chapters, the liminal status of dream visions, as well as the implicit and explicit practices of monastic dream interpretation and dream telling, were key factors in the ability of Huijiao and Daoxuan to achieve their respective rhetorical ends.

In addition, I could not help but notice that both collections included oneiric episodes that see Buddhist monks exercising control over local extrahuman beings, wherein their power was conceptualized using the same metaphors of political rulership and subordination seen in other forms of Chinese religious ritual and practice. In these accounts, the oneiric realm (as liminal space *par excellence*) served as the phantasmagorical audience chamber wherein these “monks *qua* rulers” could receive (subordinated) deities, who were often depicted making obeisance, paying tribute, and/or voluntarily seeking conversion or ordination. This impression is reinforced when one considers the several cases adduced above wherein the domain of Buddhist monks over oneiric phenomena is further demonstrated through their ability to spawn nightmares in the minds of antagonists. By representing some early examples of the imperial metaphor, as articulated in medieval Buddhist texts that were widely read and disseminated, we can see that such usages represented foundational ways of construing

religious power and influence.²³⁸ Thus, in addition to the literal “dream kings” venerated in some corners of medieval China (as described in Chapter One), it appears that some exemplary Chinese monks were also imagined as claimants to that throne.

Finally, the foregoing claims should not be read as suggesting that either Huijiao or Daoxuan considered oneiric practice (and, in particular, oneiromancy and dream magic), to be the exclusive domain of exemplary monks, given that both collections include the ascription of epistemically-valid visionary dreams to both Taoists and spirit mediums as well. While these visions clearly spoke to Buddhist rhetorical concerns, as they clearly lionized the power of monastic protagonists over the denizens of the extrahuman realm, their inclusion bespeaks a somewhat ecumenical understanding of dreams, in which any puissant religious actor could truly encounter ghosts, gods, and spirits. As such, and as demonstrated throughout the present study, the very liminality of reported dream experiences again proves to be central to their rhetorical utility, whether employed to justify monastic incursions into pristine wilderness, to underwrite the commandeering of gardens for the construction of monasteries, or even to criticize the failures of lay congregations to live up to idealized behavioural standards.

238 I am contrasting this view with Feuchtwang's construal of the “imperial metaphor” in contemporary Taiwanese folk religion, within which Buddhists occur primarily as “bit players,” enacting rituals more typically associated with “popular” deities (see, for example, 126–131).

Conclusion / For Future Research

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche offers the following meditation on the subjective “reality” of oneiric experiences:

What we experience in dreams – assuming that we experience it often – belongs in the end just as much to the overall economy of our soul as anything experienced “actually”: we are richer or poorer on account of it, have one need more or less, and finally are led a little by the habits of our dreams even in broad daylight and in the most cheerful moments of our wide-awake spirit.

Suppose someone has flown often in his dreams and finally, as soon as he dreams, he is conscious of his power and art of flight as if it were his privilege, also his characteristic and enviable happiness. He believes himself capable of realizing every kind of arc and angle simply with the lightest impulse; he knows the feeling of a certain divine frivolity, an “upward” without tension and constraint, a “downward” without condescension and humiliation – without *gravity*! How could a human being who had had such dream experiences and dream habits fail to find that the word “happiness” had a different color and definition in his waking life, too?¹

If nothing else, I would posit that the present dissertation serves to explore the various ways that medieval Chinese Buddhists understood this “overall economy of the soul,” based on the dream narratives that they considered worth sharing and the oneiric practices that they considered worth performing. Moreover, and given the myriad ways that oneiric experiences cast shadows across waking life,² I would argue that any description of the quotidian lives of medieval Chinese Buddhists that neglects to account for such experiences is by nature an incomplete one, as it would ignore the panoply of issues brought up by the present study: links between confession, *zhai* practice, and verificatory dreams; the role of monks as dream interpreters; the “Buddhization” of the indigenous “exemplary child trope” via accounts of oneiric conception; and an understanding of exemplary monks that casts them as *de facto* rulers over oneiric realms, allowing them to exert their politico-thaumaturgical authority over ghosts, spirits, and local deities (among many other topics). Likewise,

- 1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, translated and with commentary by Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 106. This perspective is clearly commensurate with Bulkeley's description of the transformative power of the “flying” dreams (which he groups in as a sub-type of the “Mystical” dream) (196–203). It is also a perfect converse of Flanagan's challenging suggestion that human beings are culpable for our immoral actions in dreams, at least to the extent to which we are in control of the “inputs” that we opt to engage with during our waking lives (179–183).
- 2 This clause (about dreams “casting shadows across waking life”) clearly betrays a fact about my own psychological make-up: namely, that in my case nightmares (and, worse, night terrors) vastly outnumber any form of pleasant oneiric experience. Feel free to substitute in the phrase “... the residual aura of pleasant oneiric experiences illumine one's waking life ...” if it is more applicable.

the salience of dreams as prototypical experiences of liminality seems to have led both compilers to include dream narratives associated with a variety of “betwixt and between” experiences. Whether these episodes corresponded to “actual” dream experiences is beside the point: it is clear that the language of dreams, deployed in these contexts, was meaning-generative and affectively compelling for the Buddhist discourse communities that circulated these stories in medieval China.

That said, given the fact that GSZ and XGSZ were compiled within approximately a century and a half of each other, the foregoing analysis also allowed for some conclusions to be drawn about the diachronic development of Buddhism between the sixth and seventh centuries, as well as the differing editorial agendas of Huijiao and Daoxuan. For instance, when considering the topic of oneiric practice, the greater number of accounts describing dreams associated with confession rituals, *zhai*, and Guanyin devotion in XGSZ, seem to suggest that achieving “informatory dreams” had become a more central goal of Chinese Buddhist practice by the seventh century, likely due to the influence of Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* and other praxis manuals. Likewise, the enormous proportional increase in the number of oneiric conception narratives in XGSZ as compared to GSZ suggests some profound shifts in Chinese Buddhist understandings of monasticism, exemplarity or both. In a similar fashion, the types of inter-regional dreams included in both collections allow us to speculate on various developments in the Chinese Buddhist self-conception, with many of these narratives in Daoxuan's collection serving to demonstrate that seventh-century Buddhists had already begun to recenter their worldview, no longer unilaterally relying on Indian monks and texts as unquestioned arbiters of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. This tendency was only exacerbated by their increased likelihood to view dream experiences as sufficient verifications of the veracity of new beliefs and practices. More generally, I would argue that the variance in the proportion of dream episode that are linked to other forms of miraculous

confirmation (with XGSZ having far more “informatory” miracles than GSZ), speaks to Daoxuan's personal experiences as a visionary dreamer, with his “economy of the soul” having been irrevocably altered thereby. We cannot know whether Huijiao lacked such experiences himself, but his more generic approach to telling dream stories suggests that this might be so.

More broadly, I believe that I have also achieved some success in demonstrating the breadth of specific insights into the experience of sixth- and seventh-century Chinese Buddhists that can be drawn by engaging with the theories and insights of other social scientific disciplines, and, in particular, cognitive science and anthropology. Moreover, unlike the “trendy” uses of theoretical modalities from mathematics, economics, or continental philosophy during the 1990s and early 2000s, which seem in turn to have spawned a generation of “theory averse” Buddhist Studies scholars, my own decision to engage with such materials emerged directly and incontrovertibly from the subject matter itself. As Maurice Bloch argued (and as quoted in the Introduction), opting not to engage with such materials when studying an embodied phenomenon (such as sleep, affect, food practice, or spirit possession) is not some form of laudable methodological neutrality; it is instead a decision, whether conscious or otherwise, to privilege untested naive theories over tested ones. In the present case, thinking about dreams, regardless of the cultural context, involves making innumerable assumptions about the nature and function of causality, human minds, and the semiotic processes through which we derive meaning from the world. While I would never deny the cultural situatedness of all of these domains, I think it would be equally short-sighted to ignore the extent to which our neural and somatic systems constrain them. In this context, and methodologically speaking, I often found that my engagement with both cross-cultural and psychological material served a vital function throughout the research and writing process. While my indebtedness to this research is superficially obvious in the analytical sections, I

also found many opportunities to make use of this background knowledge when preparing many of the translations included herein. Possessing a fairly detailed picture of a variety of dream cultures (ancient and modern, from every inhabited continent), as well as the neurological and neurochemical processes that characterize the sleep cycle, provided me with an additional line of verification when translating sections from GSZ and XGSZ. Specifically, in addition to attending to specific word choices and potential intertextual links (i.e., the standard tools of philology), knowing that a narrative's phenomenological description bore striking similarities to standard accounts of sleep paralysis or that a specific instance of dream telling mirrored those seen in ethnographies of the Toraja people served as a valuable yardstick of the prior plausibility of my renderings.

Also, to my knowledge, this dissertation represents the first monograph-length treatment of a specific dream culture to draw extensively from conceptual metaphor theory. Not only did employing this theory provide a much more plausible grounding for any sort of comparative insight (for the reasons detailed in the Introduction and Chapter One), but it also encouraged me to purposefully eschew any form of Freudian interpretation: one of the most invisible (and thus pernicious) “folk theories” of dreams and dream interpretation for any Western scholar, given the ubiquity of Freudian terminology and concepts in popular understandings of the oneiric. One advantage of this approach is that it led me to develop a specific, testable hypothesis about the status of dreams as a source domain for thinking about other forms of liminal experience. While the foregoing chapters have clearly demonstrated the extent to which dream stories allowed Huijiao and Daoxuan to make sense of a variety of liminal states, and even though there is evidence that the creation of such links is not exclusive to medieval China (as discussed throughout), this topic has not (to my knowledge) been explored experimentally. One simple design, which I am sure could be improved substantially in

collaboration with a colleague in psychology, would be to compile a list of liminal experiences (e.g., moving to a new city, participating in various rites of passage, suffering a sudden and serious illness) and then enjoining a randomly selected cohort of experimental subjects to describe one such experience. A second group would be asked to describe a memorable dream. Ideally, such experiments would be carried out in as broad a range of cultural and linguistic contexts as possible, and their results would be evaluated via discourse analysis (focusing on the use of similes and metaphors). If my hypothesis is correct outside of the context of medieval China, one would not only expect that “dream” would frequently be employed as a source domain when describing other liminal phenomena, but also that the metaphors used to describe oneiric experiences would be of a lower order (i.e., more closely tied to specific embodied experiences) than those employed to conceptualize other liminal states. I would obviously be fascinated to discover whether (or the extent to which) the pattern that I adduced in the *Eminent Monks* corpus would indeed be demonstrated in any other cultural context(s). If it is, which I expect would be the case, I think that this would provide a potent justification for using this same approach in exploring collections of dream reports from other cultural contexts.

For Future Research

The hypothetical experiment proposed in the previous paragraph is, of course, but one of the various projects that I found myself inspired to pursue during the course of the present research. First, and most saliently, I am in the process of preparing a monograph on the rhetorical uses of the term *meng* 夢 in the *Eminent Monks*, focusing on chapter introductions, editorial asides and other commentarial uses. This project, which represents an outgrowth of the research that I presented to the Kyoto Asian Studies Group in 2015, serves as a useful companion to the present research and was only excluded due to

considerations of space. Also, given that such commentarial material is much more common in the later collection, this research proved to be something of an awkward fit, given the comparative focus of this dissertation. That said, many of the contentions proposed above (and specifically those about Daoxuan's position on the reliability and significance of dream narratives) are echoed in this material.

Second, I am in the process of preparing a monograph on all of the uses of the term 夢 in Daoshi's encyclopedic *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 [T. 2122], which will allow me to shed additional light on the medieval Chinese Buddhist understanding of dreams. Some preliminary observations include the fact that Daoshi seemed committed to a somewhat idiosyncratic typology of sleep, for example, differentiating between drowsiness (*shui* 睡) and sleep (*mian* 眠).³ Likewise, given that Daoxuan seems to have been involved in selecting miraculous episodes for inclusion in the text's *ganying* sections, which Daoshi utilized to demonstrate the applicability of Buddhist concepts in the Chinese cultural context, I am fascinated by the cases where FYZL citations differ from those in the received version of XGSZ. I believe that such instances are surely worthy of detailed philological investigation.

Third, my work on the Oneiric Conception chapter inspired a general interest in the ordination ages of medieval Chinese monks. In particular, and as outlined in Chapter Two, it seems possible that the oneiric experiences reported therein might have been used to posit a necessary (karmic?) linkage between infants and the Buddhist *sangha*: a rhetorical maneuver that could have been employed to allow families to forestall any potential criticism of their decision to place an underage child into monastic care. My current research revealed that the mothers of many future monks associated with oneiric conception narratives were widows and that many of their children were accepted as novices

3 As discussed in T. 2122: 533c9–11

prior to reaching capping age, but in order to confirm this intuition, it will be necessary to tabulate the ordination ages of each monk and the marital status of each mother in GSZ and XGSZ. My hypothesis is that the monks associated with oneiric conception narratives will have been younger (on average) than their brethren and that a greater proportion of their mothers will have been widowed.

I also intend to re-analyze all of the dream episodes in GSZ and XGSZ in strict accordance with the coding system proposed by Hall and van de Castle, as doing so will allow me to investigate a number of related questions. For instance, and in keeping with two hypotheses proposed above,⁴ I would expect that both collections would have markedly different affective characteristics. Specifically, I posit that Huijiao, who generally employed dreams as simple signs of efficacy, was much less likely to include oneiric episodes associated with negative emotions. In contrast, Daoxuan, who was not only more committed to the revelatory power of dreams, but who was also writing for an audience that seemed more likely to engage in oneiric practice, would likely have included accounts that ran the entire emotional spectrum, as even such “negative” dreams could still serve a verificatory purpose. My prior study of the dream episodes in two medieval *Lotus Sutra* miracle collections (*Hongzan fahua zhuan* [T. 2067] and *Fahua zhuanji* [T. 2068]) has convinced me of the potential utility of this method in the case of the *Eminent Monks* as well.

I believe that each of these projects will represent an incremental development in the disciplinary conversation on dreams in medieval Chinese Buddhism. I am very much looking forward to continuing this vital and fascinating work.

⁴ I.e., hypothesis #1: Daoxuan was more “religiously musical” than his predecessor when it came to dreams and #2: Daoxuan's audience included more monastics and/or committed Buddhist laity, and thus needed to expend less effort simply extolling the virtues of Buddhism.

Appendix: *Chart of Dream (meng 夢) Episodes in GSZ and XGSZ*

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation? ¹	Specified Oneiric Practice ²	Discussed in...
<i>Gaoseng zhuan</i> 高僧傳 (T. 2059)					
322c21	Emperor Ming of Han 漢明帝	Inter-regional / Inter-religious	N	N	CH3
325b10	The King of Wu 吳	Inter-regional / Inter-religious	N	N	CH3
329b23	Dharmayaśas 曇摩耶舍	Inter-regional	N	Y? (confession)	CH3
336c24	Ten disciples of Dharmakṣema 曇無讖	Ordination	Y	N (response to confirmatory vision)	CH2
336c29	Daolang 道朗	Ordination	N	N	CH1
340b07	The Queen Mother of Shepo 闍婆	Inter-regional / Inter-religious	Y	N	CH3
340c20	Lay devotee	Sickness and death	N ³	N	
342c14	King of Kucha	Inter-regional	Y	N	CH3
342c19	King of Kucha	Inter-regional	Y	N	CH3
344b12	Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅	Inter-regional	Y	Y (prays to Guanyin)	CH1
344b18	Local ruler	NA	Y	N	CH1
344c24	Assembly at Guṇabhadra's temple	Buddhism and local religion	N	N	CH4
344c27	Assembly at Guṇabhadra's temple	Buddhism and local religion	Y	N	CH4
350c24	Fayi 法義	Illness	Y	Y (prayer to Guanyin)	CH1

- 1 While I will be the first to acknowledge that this is an analytically suspect category, given its vagueness, I have tried to apply it as consistently as possible. For instance, I consistently counted the following as “Confirmations”: events in waking life matching those previously seen in dreams, shared dreams, accurate oneiromancy, oneiric cures, cases of subsequent miracles attesting to dream content (e.g., omens of an auspicious birth or death [such as marvelous scents or illumination] following an oneiric conception or oneiric prediction of rebirth in the Pure Land). I have supplied additional detail in edge cases.
- 2 See Chapter One for a discussion of sought dreams. By “specified oneiric practice,” I am referring to the question of whether the dream is credited (explicitly or by narrative logic) to a specific ritual modality or practice.
- 3 This could be seen as an instance of a parallel miracle. Just as Guṇavarman's spiritual potency impelled a vision related to a dying disciple, so to does it dispel the tigers that had been terrorizing the region.

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
353b19 353b22 ⁴	Dao'an 道安	Inter-regional	Y	Y (prays for sign)	CH1,3
355c24	Tanyi 曇翼	Buddhism and local religion	Y	Y (confession ceremony)	CH1,4
357c03	Nun Jingyan 淨嚴	Death	Y	N	
358c07	Sengzhen 僧珍	Inter-regional	Y	N	
362b21	Sengji 僧濟	Death	N	Y? (deathbed practice)	
362c11	Fa'an 法安	Buddhism and local religion	Y	N	CH4
362c27 363a01	Tanguo 曇果	Buddhism and local religion	Y	N	CH4
368a24 368a27	Huiyan 慧嚴	Inter-regional (orthodoxy)	Y? (Second dream appears to confirm first)	N	CH2,3
368a28	Huiyan 慧嚴	Inter-regional (orthodoxy)	N	N	CH2,3
368c11 368c13	Huiyi 慧義	Secular / religious authority	Y	Y? (seven-day incense burning practice)	
369c24	Falang 法朗	Death	Y? (Master dies the following morning, as per dream)	N	
370c26	Mother of Tandi 曇諦	Birth	Y	N	CH2
373a18	Tanbin 曇斌	Cenobitic / eremitic life	N	N	
378c13	Sengxu 僧緒	Death	Y? (Master dies the following morning, as per dream)	N	
379a26	Huiji 慧基	NA	N	N	CH1
379c28	Crown prince Xiao Zhangmao 蕭長懋	NA	N	N	CH1
380c04	Spirit medium of Mount She	Buddhism and local religion	N	N	CH4

4 In cases with two (or more) line numbers, these other references are simply nominal references to the previous dream.

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
386b01	Shi Hu 石虎	NA	Y	N	CH1
387a17	Murong Jun 慕容俊	Dynastic succession	Y	N	
395c13 395c14	Bo Sengguang 帛僧光	Buddhism and local religion	Y? (local mountain becomes safe for habitation after oneiric encounter)	N	CH4
397a07	Mother of Xuangao 玄高	Birth	Y	Y? (daughter's vow)	CH2
397c09	Tuoba Tao 拓拔燾	NA	N	Y (zhai)	CH1,4
400a26	Tanchao 曇超	Buddhism and local religion	Y	N	CH4
405b27	Xiaowu Di of Liu-Song 宋孝武帝	Death	N (dream as parallel omen)	N	
407c25	Huiguo 慧果	Death and rebirth	N	N	
409c10	Five foreign monks	Inter-regional	Y	N	CH3
410b12	Huishou 慧受	Buddhism and local religion	Y? (Temple matches his dream vision)	N	CH4
410b17	Huishou 慧受	Buddhism and local religion	Y	N	CH4
410c25	Senghong 僧洪	Freedom and imprisonment / Death	Y (miraculous intercession by Guanyin)	Y (Guanyin practice)	CH1
411c08	Lay disciple	NA	N	N	CH1
412a21	Magistrate Luxian 陸咸	NA	Y	N	CH1
412b04	Huicheng 慧逞	NA	Y	N	
413c08	Tanyue 曇籥	Inter-regional (orthopraxy)	Y? (learns new chanting method in dream)	N	CH3
414b16	Prince Wenxuan 宣王	Inter-regional (orthopraxy) Lay / monastic	Y? (learns new chanting method in dream)	N	CH3

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
414c08	Prince Wenxuan 宣王	Inter-regional (orthopraxy) Lay / monastic	N	N	CH3
<i>Xu gaoseng zhuan</i> 續高僧傳 (T. 2059)					
433a09	Narêndrayāsas 那連提黎耶舍	NA	N	Y	CH1
437a14	Yancong 彥琮	Lay / monastic	N	N	CH1
438a08	Yancong 彥琮	Death	N	N	CH1
452a07	Śīlabhadra	Inter-regional	Y	N	CH3
452c19 452c23	Xuanzang 玄奘	Inter-regional	Y	N	CH3
463b11	Daochao 道超	NA	N	N	
463b15	Sengmin 僧旻	Inter-regional	N	N? (Logical connective links practice with subsequent dream)	CH1
465a10	Lay disciple Yuan Ang 袁昂	Lay / monastic	N	N	CH1
465c10	Mother of Zhizang 智藏	Birth	Y? (Exemplary child trope as evidence of portentous conception)	N	CH2
467b14	Zhizang 智藏	Death	N (parallel miracles)	N	
468b06	Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝	Lay / monastic	N	Y (zhai)	CH1
468b23	Mother of Huiyue 慧約	Birth	Y	N	CH2
468c06	Uncle of Huiyue 慧約	Buddhism and local religion	N	N	CH4
469c04	Huiyue 慧約	Lay / monastic	N	N	
469c26	Huiyue 慧約	Death	Y	N	CH1
470c24	Huishao 慧韶	NA	N	N	CH1

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
477b04	Mother of Falang 法朗	Birth	Y? (Exemplary child trope as evidence of portentous conception)	N	CH2
477c22	Lay devotee Du Facang 杜法粲	Death	Y	N	
478a24	Mother of Huiyong 慧勇	Birth	N	N	CH2
479a20	Baoqiong 寶瓊	NA	N	N	
479b17	Baoqiong 寶瓊	Death	N? (Death does not follow immediately. No omens.)	Y (zhai)	CH1
479c25	Daolin 道林	NA	N	N	
487c05	A disciple of Tanyan 曇衍	Death	N	N	
488a26	Tanyan 曇延	Inter-regional (orthodoxy)	N	Y (prayer)	CH1,3
492a05	Huiyuan 慧遠	Inter-regional (orthodoxy)	N	N	CH1,3
492a10	Huiyuan 慧遠	Inter-regional (orthodoxy)	N	Y (prays for sign)	CH1,3
49a15	Huiyuan 慧遠	NA	Y	N	
494b04	Huixuan 慧暉	Buddhism and local religion (orthodoxy)	N	N	CH4
494c09	Layman Renzhong 任忠	Buddhism and local religion (orthodoxy)	N	N	CH4
499b23	Zhituo 智脫	NA	N	N	
507c03	Fajun 法均	Inter-regional	Y	N	
511a06	Mingshun 明舜	Change of pedagogical focus	N	N	CH1
512c07	Baogong 保恭	Ordination	Y	N	
530a06	Daughters of lay disciple Fanchuo 樊綽	Death	Y	N	

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
530b11	Zhikuan 志寬	Death	Y	N	
531c04	Mother of Zhiyan 智琰	Birth	Y	N	CH2
537a06	Huileng 慧稜	Doctrinal dispute	N	N	
537a11	Huileng 慧稜	NA	N	N	
537a14	Dharma Master Chang 昶法師	Death	N	N	
537a19	Huileng 慧稜	Death	Y	N	
539c14	Mother of Lingrui 靈睿	Birth	Y	Y (zhai)	CH2,4
540a09	Lingrui 靈睿	Death	Y	N	
541a16	Jajang 慈藏	Inter-regional + ordination	Y	N	CH3
542a27	Zhangsun Yi 長孫義	Buddhism and local religion	N (parallel omen)	N	CH4
542c29	Xuanhui 玄會	NA	N	N	CH1
543a15	Xingdeng 行等	NA	N (parallel omen)	N	CH1
547a12	Fayu 法御	NA	N	N	CH1
550c28	Daozhen 道珍	Human world and Pure Land	N	Y (Amitabha visualization)	CH1
551a09	Fakui 道珍	Intra-communal	Y	N	
552c11	Huiman 慧滿	NA	N (parallel omen)	N	Intro, CH1
553c11	Sengchou 僧稠	Purification practice	N	Y (ten days of meditation)	
555c05	Prince Jin-an 晉安王	Lay and monastic	N (parallel omen)	N	CH1
556b16	Mother of Fajing 法京	Birth	N	N	CH2
556b17	Mother of Fajing 法京	Birth	N	N	CH2
556b19	Fajing 法京	Death and Rebirth	Y	N	

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
556b26	Fatai 法泰	Death	Y	N	
556c14	Falin 法懷	Lay and monastic	N	N	CH4
559c19	Mother of Xinxing 信行	Birth	Y	Y (prayer)	CH2
561a11	Huiming 慧命	Childhood and adulthood (Ordination)	N	N	CH1
561a24	Taoist Mengshou 道士孟壽	Buddhism and Taoism	Y	N	CH4
561b11	Huiming 慧命	Death	N (parallel omens)	N	
562c07	Huisi 慧思	Childhood and adulthood (Ordination)	N	N	
562c15 562c19	Huisi 慧思	NA	N	N	
562c21	Huisi 慧思	NA	N	N	
562c23	Huisi 慧思	NA	N (parallel omens)	N	
564a20	Mother of Zhiyi 智顓	Birth	Y	N	CH2
564a22	Mother of Zhiyi 智顓	Birth	Y	N	CH2
564c17 564c19	Zhiyi 智顓	Inter-Regional	Y	N	CH1
565c26	Zhiyi 智顓	Lay and monastic	N	N	CH1
568a12	Emperor Yang of Sui 隋煬帝	Lay and monastic	N	N	CH1
572a04	Tanqian 曇遷	Sickness and health	Y	Y? (relying on Three Treasures, instead of medical treatment)	
574a23	Unnamed member of Tanqian's congregation 曇遷	Death	N	N	CH1

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
574a27	Unnamed monk in Tanqian's congregation 曇遷	Death	N	Y (praying for a sign)	CH1
582b13	Zhixi 智晞	Buddhism and local religion	N? (Able to harvest wood safely)	N	CH4
583a20	Zhiman 智滿	Initiation (precepts)	N	Y (<i>Fangdeng</i> repentance)	
585b19	Zhizao 智皞	Sickness / health	Y	Y (ten days of meditation)	CH1
595a19	Shiyu 世瑜	Ignorance / Knowledge	Y? (monk develops greater wisdom after oneiric instruction)	N	
599c28	Faxian 法顯	NA	N	N	
600a03	Faxian 法顯	Death	N (parallel omens)	N	
600b13	Huixian 惠仙	Death	Y? (Date of death predicted in dream)	N	
609b08	Mother of Zhiwen 智文	Birth	Y	N	CH2
609c23	Zhiwen 智文	NA	N	N	
612b16	Huizhu 慧主	Ordination	Y	N	CH1
636a07	Zhishi 智實	Death	N	N	
639a16	Mother of Jajang 慈藏	Birth	Y	Y (Guanyin devotion)	CH1,2,3
643b01	Zhiqin 智勤	Reclusion / social engagement	N	N? (Requests of lay and monastic devotees cause dream)	CH1
645b01	Daotai 道泰	Sickness / health	N? (dreams that his life will end at 42, but Guanyin practice is credited with extending it)	N	
645b29	Unnamed lay follower of Sengrong 僧融	Imprisonment / Freedom	Y	Y (Guanyin practice)	

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
646c02	Huijian 慧簡	Buddhism and local religion	Y	Y (Guanyin practice)	CH4
649b23	Sengyuan 僧遠	Sin / Expiation	Y	N	CH3
649b29	Sengyuan 僧遠	Sin / Expiation	N	Y (confession)	CH3
658b29	Zhikuang 智曠	Birth	Y	N	CH2
660c12	Daoyou 道幽	Death	Y	N	
662b06	Huiyao 慧耀	Death	Y	N	Intro
665c13 665c15	Mingxie 明解	Death	N	N	CH3
665c15	Mingxie 明解	Death	Y	N	CH3
678a27	Emperor Wu of Qi 齊武帝	Center / Periphery	Y	N	CH1
680a22	Huizheng 慧勝	Sickness / health	Y	N	
689a01	Facheng 法誠	Purification	N	Y (Lotus Samādhi)	
689a29	Facheng 法誠	NA	Y	N	
692b15	Layman Wu Cangying 吳蒼鷹	NA	N? (dream itself as evidence)	N	
693a01	Layman Sun Jingde 孫敬德	Imprisonment / Freedom	Y	Y (swears an oath)	CH1
693c24	Members of Senghu's 僧護 congregation	Human / extrahuman	Y	N	
693c26	Unnamed thief	Human / extrahuman	N	N	
694c01	Senghuang 僧晃	(Self-)Ordination	N	N	
695c05	Unnamed laywoman	Buddhism and local religion	Y	N	CH4
696b03	Daoji 道積	NA	N	N	CH1
699a07	Lay devotee Li Wujie 李五戒	NA	Y	Y? (vow)	CH1

Taishō page #	Dreamer	Liminality	Confirmation?	Specified Oneiric Practice	Discussed in...
702a03	Zhenguan 真觀	Ordination	N	N	Intro, CH4
702a10	Zhenguan 真觀	NA	N	Y (Credit for dream response ascribed to Lotus Sutra recitation)	
702c16	Zhenguan 真觀	Sickness / Health, Death	N? (Except if the prediction of sickness is seen as miraculous)	N	CH1
702c18	Zhenguan 真觀	Death	N	N	CH1
702c27	Zhenguan 真觀	Death	N (parallel miracles)	N	CH1

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