Miracles in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: An analysis of Daoxuan's *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (*Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Jewels in China*)

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ABSTRACT

Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667CE) was an influential religious and political figure in early Tang dynasty (618–907) Buddhism. He is best known for his exegetical work in the monastic codes (Skt. *Vinaya;* Ch. *lü* 律), primarily through his seminal commentaries on Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* (Ch. *sifen lü* 四分律) texts. Daoxuan did not, however, only work with the monastic codes. He was also a dedicated Buddhist apologist, a scrupulous cataloguer, and a prolific compiler of biographies as well as Buddhist miracle tales. Later in his life, Daoxuan had many experiences of the miraculous—events that would have informed many of his texts. The scholarly literature on Daoxuan has traditionally explored his influence on the monastic codes in China, often ignoring those recorded miraculous events in his life that might have influenced him. This thesis asks the question: what can we say about Daoxuan's own experience of religious life in China, or of his own religiosity? More broadly, this thesis also asks the question: how did the medieval Chinese cultural context affect Daoxuan's opinions and writing?

The following study endeavours to answer these questions through close analysis of Daoxuan's compilation of miracle tales, the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (*Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Jewels in China*; hereafter *Record of Miracles*) completed in 664, as well as other related sources. By studying the *Record of Miracles*, this thesis will delve into how Daoxuan's interest in the supernormal influenced his work, and from there will extrapolate more far-reaching conclusions regarding the medieval Chinese Buddhist context. Special attention will be directed at Buddhist material culture, namely miraculous objects such as relics and images as well as sacred places such as monasteries and pagodas.

To my family

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I dedicate this thesis to my father who suffered a stroke in 2020, an event that turned his world on its head. He was dreaming of starting his doctoral studies before turning 70, of travelling North America in his van and of changing the world through sustainable urban planning. Although circumstances have changed our journey goes on nonetheless. The world is still full of mysteries and there is so much to see and to learn.

> Hope your road is a long one./May there be many summer mornings when,/with what pleasure, what joy,/you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;/may you stop at Phoenician trading stations/to buy fine things,/mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,/sensual perfume of every kind—/as many sensual perfumes as you can;/and may you visit many Egyptian cities/to learn and go on learning from their scholars.
>
> *Ithaka*, C.P. Cavafy

Abbreviations and Conventions

Where texts are referred to frequently in the footnotes, I adopt the following abbreviations. See bibliography for further details.

Sources

Record of Miracles: *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄

DNL: *Da Tang neidian Lu* 大唐內典錄

GHJ: *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集

GZ: *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳

FZ: *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林

KSL: *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄

LGL: *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄

LGZ: *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳

SF: *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志

SGZ: *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳

XGZ: *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳

Dictionaries, Collections, Journals and Digital Resources

B:	*Supplement to the Dazang jing* (*Dazang jing bubian* 大藏經補編), Lan Jifu 藍吉富, ed., 1985. (Texts are indicated by the text number, followed, when appropriate, by the page, register [a, b, or c], and line number[s]).
BHS:	*Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*. Franklin Edgerton, ed., [1953] 1993.
CBETA:	*Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association*. (http://www.cbeta.org/index.htm).
DDB:	*Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*. Web-based dictionary, A. C. Muller, ed.
DOT:	*A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. Charles Hucker, ed., 1985.
JIABS:	Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.
INALCO:	Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales.
OED:	*Oxford English Dictionary*. Wiener and Simpson, eds., 2004.
PDB:	*Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Robert Buswell and Donald Lopez, eds., 2014.
SHD:	*Soothill-Hodous Dictionary: A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*. William Soothill and Lewis Hodous, eds., 1937.[1]
T:	*Revised version of the canon, compiled during the Taishō era* (*Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經). Takakusu and Watanabe, eds., 1924–1932. (Texts are indicated by the text number, followed, when appropriate, by the page, register [a, b, or c], and line number[s]).
X:	*Revised Supplement to the Manji Edition of the Canon* (*Manji Shinsan Dainippon Zokuzōkyō* 卍新纂大日本續藏經). Watanabe Kōshō 河村孝照, ed., 1975–1989. (Texts are indicated by the text number, followed, when appropriate, by the page, register [a, b, or c], and line number[s]).

[1] The *SHD* is a reference that must be used with care. It was last updated in the 1930s and is altogether incomplete as a reference. That being said, Soothill and Hodous were brilliant lexicographers and their definitions quite insightful. More resources have become available to us in the last decade. Therefore, this thesis never relies solely on the *SHD* for definitions, referring as well to the *DDB*, *BHS*, and the *PDB*. The *SHD* is cited only when the definition is fitting and when the definition provided is cross-referenced with other sources.

Conventions

Ch.	Chinese
Jp.	Japanese
Lat.	Latin
Pal.	Pāli
Skt.	Sanskrit
[…]	Supplement
(…)	Variant

i. The *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 sources are taken from CBETA. Texts are indicated by the text number, followed, when appropriate, by the page, register [a, b, or c], and line number[s]. Volume number is not included.
ii. Chinese official titles follow Hucker 1985 (*DOT*).
iii. Chinese reign years and eras are converted into modern years following the 'Appendix 5: Reign Titles (*nianhao* 年號), Han through Tang' in Kroll 2017.
iv. While modern Chinese and Japanese titles and names may use simplified forms, for the sake of consistency, all Chinese characters are presented in traditional form (*fanti zi* 繁體字).
v. All Japanese and Chinese names, both modern and pre-modern, are given surname first followed by the given name.
vi. Romanisation of Chinese and Japanese follow Hanyu pinyin and Hepburn, respectively.
vii. Romanisation of Sanskrit follows the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration.
viii. Scripture titles that reappear throughout the text will usually be referred to by the English title provided. Non-recurring titles will be referred to in their romanised form.

Introduction: the many faces of Daoxuan

This thesis centres around the life and works of the Buddhist scholar-monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667 CE). He was a master of great renown among his fellow monastics and an influential figure among members of the imperial court in the early Tang dynasty (618-907), playing a central role in debates surrounding the place of the monastic community in relation to secular society. He is best known for his historical works and his exegetical treatises on the codes, primarily through his seminal commentaries on the Four-part monastic regulations (Ch. *Sifen lü* 四分律; Skt. *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*). Daoxuan was a prolific thinker and writer, producing works that went far afield from the proscriptive codes of conduct in the *Vinayas*, composing and compiling texts throughout his religious career that ranged from the exegetical to the apologetic and from the historical to the supernormal. He was a dedicated apologist, a scrupulous cataloguer, and an assiduous compiler of biographies as well as miracle tales.[2]

As a Vinaya specialist, Daoxuan was concerned with issues related to the administration of monasteries and nunneries, to ordination procedures as well as to the rules related to monastic discipline. He was an innovative thinker and, throughout his career, he worked towards the consolidation of monastic law across the various active Buddhist cloisters in not only the Tang dynasty capital at Chang'an where he resided, but for all the monasteries and nunneries of medieval China.[3] His most notable disciplinary work is the *Sifen lü shan fan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 (*The Amended Guidelines of the Four-part Vinaya for Practical Monastic Practice*), one of Daoxuan's earliest treatises on the Four-part monastic regulations. For his

[2] For a list of all the texts attributed to Daoxuan, see Annexe III, table 3.

[3] H. Chen 2007: 2. The term 'medieval' is here used to designate the period between the rule of the Eastern Jin and the rise of the Song (from 316 to 960). The idea that the Tang-Song period (618 to 1127) constitutes the breaking point between the 'medieval' period and the following periods comes from the works of Naitō Konan (1866–1934). For more on Naitō, the Kyoto School of Sinology, and Chinese Historiography, see Pulleyblank 1955; Miyakawa 1955: 535–52; Fogel 2003; Wilkinson 2018: 1–4. For alternative forms of Chinese historical periodisation, see Barrett 1998; Pomeranz 2000.

commentaries and work within the monastic community, he is to this day recognised as the *de facto* founder in China of the Four-part Vinaya School, also known as the South Mountain School (*Nanshan zong* 南山宗).[4]

Ordination, discipline and the miraculous

Throughout Daoxuan's religious career, he concentrated much effort on the consolidation of standardised proceedings for ordination rites, a venture marked before his death in 667 by the inauguration of an ordination platform on Mount Zhongnan 終南山 near Chang'an. The platform and the consolidation of the rites surrounding ordination were, according to Huaiyu Chen, an integral part of Daoxuan's project to rectify fundamental issues within the Chinese monastic order, what he considered to be a lack of discipline among monastics, corruption within the various institutions, and a lack of clarity vis-à-vis questions of monastic property.[5] The inauguration of the platform near the capital was a great success and by promoting ordination rites as well as the construction of ordination platforms, Daoxuan effectively instigated a trend to establish new platforms across the country.[6] While his reformulation of Buddhist ordination rites were generally well received, the design that he drew up for a three-tiered ordination platform, a design that he claimed was the same as the original platform established by the Buddha in India, was contested and ultimately did not become the standard design in China.[7] The problem in this case was not with the design itself but with the source of his inspiration.

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[4] The school takes its alternative name, South Mountain School, from Daoxuan's association to Jingye Monastery 淨業寺 in the Zhongnan mountain range southeast of Chang'an (Ch'en [1964] 1973: 301; S. Weinstein 1973: 271; McRae 2005: 70). In time the school, based in part on Daoxuan's commentaries to the Four-part monastic codes, would come to change East Asian monasticism for good (Heirman 2002: 416). However, to call Daoxuan the *de jure* founder of this school would be anachronistic given that the school was formed after his death (McRae 2005: 70).

[5] H. Chen 2007: 94.

[6] Interestingly, the designs were perhaps transmitted outside of China by figures such as the Vinaya master Jianzhen 鑒真 (Jp. Ganjin; 688–763) who established Japan's first ordination platform during the 750s in Nara. This platform was presumably constructed according to Daoxuan's designs and still exists to this day in its facsimile form at Tōshōdai-ji.

[7] McRae 2005: 84–88.

Daoxuan's contemporaries knew that he had never been to India and that the design had in fact been revealed to him in a vision by supernormal beings.[8] In 704, the pilgrim and Vinaya specialist Yijing 義淨 (635–713), who had visited the sacred places of India from 671 to 695, established an ordination platform at Shaolin Monastery 少林寺 on Mount Song 嵩山 according to his own designs inspired by what he had seen in the West. The monk Yixing 義行 (683-727) later established another platform on Mount Song that would also have been similar to Yijing's platform.[9] It would seem that the trend during the Tang dynasty did not favour the designs of the monk who had first instigated the ordination platform movement. Why did these Vinaya specialists, close contemporaries of Daoxuan and his disciples, not use his designs? Part of the reason for this is informed by the historical context. While he was still alive, Daoxuan only oversaw the inauguration of a single platform, leaving the task of promoting his design to his disciples—disciples who in turn would take on other masters who had their own ideas about the design. Indeed, Daoxuan's platform had to compete with the designs of other Vinaya specialists such as Yijing who claimed to base their own designs on firsthand encounters of architecture and ordination rituals in the West. Therein lies the second reason for the ultimate failure of Daoxuan's own design: the issue of religious authority. His design was inspired by his miraculous encounter with spirits in a vision rather than his travels to India. On the one hand, Daoxuan's ordination platform was never outright dismissed on the grounds that it had been obtained by supernormal means. On the other hand, without directly commenting on the miraculous means by which Daoxuan obtained his designs, Yijing did criticise his colleague's illustration of the ordination platform, stating it did not resemble its western equivalents.[10] Yijing's statements about the platform were tantamount to declaring that Daoxuan did not have the authority to claim his design was the same as the one the Buddha had constructed in Jetavana. For Yijing, as well as for others at the time, proof of Indian origin trumped Daoxuan's supernormal sources.

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[8] *Zhong Tianzhu Shewei guo Qihuan si tujing*: T1899.882c11-13; 895c16-22; *SGZ*: T2061.791a6-8.
[9] McRae 2005: 86 ff.
[10] *Datang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan*: T2066.6a15-16; Cited in A.-C. Z.-H. Tan 2002. On this topic, also see McRae 2005: 85; 88.

The issue of religious authority relating to supernormal phenomena such as Daoxuan's miraculous revelation of the Jetavana ordination platform is one of the central concerns of this thesis. Indeed, this discussion with the spirits regarding the platform was just one of many such miraculous events in Daoxuan's life. Of particular interest in this thesis are the issues of authority related to the many miracles associated to Daoxuan that are mentioned in the literature. This thesis will also show the extent to which this Tang dynasty Vinaya specialist had a pointed interest in issues relating to miracles and religious authority. His interest went beyond his own visions and personal experiences. Indeed, in his compilation works he recorded many accounts related to the manifest powers of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, divine beings, and miraculous objects of China and, in his later years, he showed a marked turn towards the supernormal and tales of the miraculous.

Daoxuan's curiosity vis-à-vis the supernormal was not solely a later phenomenon. He read miracle tales as a youth,[11] and as early as 645 was already dedicating far more space to the biographies of miracle-worker monks in his *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*) than any other major biographical collections before or after it.[12] Looking at his later years, nine out of eleven texts that can be dated to the last five years of his life (663–667) were associated in some way to the supernormal.[13] Among Daoxuan's own latter-day writings, at least two of the eleven texts were revealed to him by celestial beings, namely the aforementioned Jetavana scripture, the *Zhong tianzhu shewei guo qihuan si tujing* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經 (*Illustrated Scripture of Jetavana Monastery in the Śrāvastī Kingdom in Central India*, 667; hereafter *Jetavana Diagram Sutra*), and the *Fuzhu yi* 付囑儀 (*Passing Along of the Meaning*; no longer extant).[14] Two other late texts, the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 (*Vinaya master Daoxuan's Record of Miraculous* [*experiences*]) and the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感

[11] *LGL*: T2107.436a4-8; *LGZ*: T1898.875a23-28.
[12] Shinohara 1988: 128.
[13] For a list of these texts, see Appendix III, tables 3 and 4. Some of these texts are no longer extant or are catalogued without dates, though, considering the parallels with the content of Daoxuan's other latter-day texts, they can possibly be dated to the last decade of his life.
[14] Mentioned in the *SGZ*: T2061.791b22; See Mizuno 1972: 3.

通傳 (*Record of Vinaya* [*Master Daoxuan's*] *Miraculous Encounters*)[15] were recorded interviews that he conducted with supernormal beings with whom he discussed points of doctrine, monastic regulation and historical clarification.

Over the last fifty years, scholars have explored the phenomenon of Daoxuan's late turn to the miraculous and the effect this had on his writings. The views of modern scholars regarding his later works vary. There are those that see his turn to the miraculous as a late 'corruption' of the otherwise sound exegetical and historical works that he composed prior. There are those that study these accounts of the miraculous to gather certain kernels of 'truth' regarding the lived reality of Chinese Buddhists at the time. Again, there are also those who truly believe, for example, that Daoxuan conducted interviews with celestial beings and that these revealed texts constituted holy writ. This was certainly true for many of his contemporaries. This study of Daoxuan is therefore interested in the interplay between scepticism and belief that informed conceptions of the miraculous both during Daoxuan's time, as well as in our contemporary understanding of the supernormal and how we study questions related to the otherworldly. This concentration on miracles and the supernormal is, in turn, tied up in questions related to authenticity and religious authority in Chinese Buddhism.

As scholars of religion, we must question the historical and cultural value of these experiences and these recorded miraculous accounts. Many have dismissed such instances of the miraculous on the grounds that these experiences were not viable sources of information. In the study that follows, such a viewpoint is called the 'rationalist' stance which argues that recorded visions and witness accounts are subjective and imagined, therefore they have no place in scholarship. The eminent Buddhologist Paul Demiéville (1894–1979) claimed that Daoxuan's

[15] The *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* was dated 664, though it was most likely composed in 667. The contents are essentially the same as the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan*. Fujiyoshi argues that the different dating was caused by a confusion among cataloguers between the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* and the *Record of Miracles* which also contains the characters '*gantong lu* 感通錄' in its title and was written in 664 (1992b: 200 ff., 2002: 372 f.). Whether Daoxuan actually authored these revealed texts is difficult to determine, though there are significant topical parallels with texts such as the *Record of Miracles*. As Campany states, if it is an author other than Daoxuan, then this individual must also have been very knowledgeable of the monasteries and monastic communities at that time (Campany 1993a: 15 n. 46).

final works denoted a 'morbid spiritism', leading this European scholar to doubt the worth of studying Daoxuan's later works.[16] Arthur Waley (1889–1966), renowned British translator of Chinese poetry and prose stated—perhaps referring to his Swiss-French colleague—that he 'heard a European scholar dismiss as "crazy" [Xuanzang's 玄奘] friend [Daoxuan], on the ground that he had such a remarkable quantity of visions and set such store by them.'[17] Waley disagreed with his colleague's dismissal of the more mystical elements in medieval Chinese life. Indeed, in defence of Daoxuan's visionary escapades, Waley stated that 'in those days it was considered a mark of the highest sanity and perspicacity to have visions; a sign of craziness to ignore them.'[18] In more recent years, John McRae noted that Daoxuan's visionary experiences were not just instances of 'quaint occultism', but a projection of his cultural environment indicating that there were fellow believers that would have, as Daoxuan did, taken such religious experiences very seriously.[19]

Many others have taken part in this ongoing discussion regarding Daoxuan's relationship to the miraculous. Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 claimed that as Daoxuan grew older, he matured and there was a natural shift in interests from the law to the mystical.[20] Koichi Shinohara studied the political dimension of miracle tales, proposing that Daoxuan's late turn to 'mysticism' was, among other things, politically motivated. Shinohara stated that the act of compiling miracle accounts was, in part, done for the sake of currying favour among the ruling classes during the court debates of the mid-seventh century—a subject we will return to in chapter 3.[21] In his study of Daoxuan and the miraculous, Yamazaki Hiroshi 山崎宏 observed that it was strange how a master of the monastic codes, a religious specialisation traditionally considered to be based in

[16] Cited in Forte 1988: 40. No mention of this is made in any of Demiéville's writings so it must have been something that he said and never wrote.
[17] Waley [1952] 2015: 130. They were contemporaries, exchanging letters on questions related to Chinese poetry, as well as reading and reviewing one another's works (see, for instance, Demiéville 1951b). Although Waley did not pursue an academic career, Demiéville—one of the foremost scholars on Asia of the twentieth century—held Waley in high regard and would have referred to his colleague as the 'Saint Jerome of Chinese Buddhism'.
[18] Waley [1952] 2015: 130.
[19] McRae 2005: 75.
[20] Yanagida 1967: 5.
[21] Shinohara 1991b: 213, 1999: 187–90.

scriptures and 'rational explanations', came to rely so prominently on supernormal inspiration.[22] Yamazaki turned this seeming contradiction on its head, stating that Daoxuan was in fact trying to make the miraculous more 'rational' by associating it to the monastic codes. He argued throughout that there was no inconsistency between revelatory insight and monastic codes given that the revelations were themselves the fruits of proper monastic discipline.[23] This depiction of monastic regulations as solely based in scriptures and rational thinking presents an idealised and misleading view of Buddhism. Yet, for our purposes it also reflects the fascinating tension between Daoxuan's seemingly conflicting roles as both a disciplinarian and a miracle-worker—a tension that, excluding the modern rationalist line of argument, certainly existed during his lifetime as well.

We find recorded in Daoxuan's own works and in his biographies that he had many experiences of the miraculous, either manifesting miracles himself or encountering supernormal phenomena be they derived from divine beings, miraculous objects, or sacred places. Of particular interest to this thesis is his relationship to the miraculous as it is attested to in his expressed views on the power of sacred objects and places, in the accounts of his encounters with supernormal beings, as well as in his revealed texts. Although biographical collections such as the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (*Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*; 988) placed Daoxuan in the social category of the masters of monastic regulations and, indeed, contrary to the view that the monastic regulations were 'rationalistic' and free of superstition, his biography was in fact filled with miraculous elements. It would seem that his contemporaries as well as the later generations of monastics did not see any meaningful contradiction between disciplinary regulations and the miraculous. As we will see throughout this thesis, this hard contrast between Daoxuan the disciplinarian and Daoxuan the mystic is a false projection of rationalist sensibilities on the past.

In his Buddhist encyclopaedia, Daoshi 道世 (d. 683) included excerpts of Daoxuan's revealed texts related to the Buddha's final sermon in a section dedicated to Indian scriptural

[22] Yamazaki 1967: 168.

[23] This argument runs throughout this chapter on the supernormal in Yamazaki's book. For one particular example, see Yamazaki's comments on Huisi's 慧思 text, the *Shou pusa jie yi* 受菩薩戒儀 (1967: 170).

quotations—not the section compiling tales of the miraculous, as one might expect.[24] Daoshi effectively conferred upon Daoxuan's revelations the same authority as he would to translations from original Indian scriptures. In the eighth century, the State Preceptor Huizhong 慧忠 (d. 775) bemoaned the fact that Shenhui's *Platform Address* (*Tanyu* 壇語, c. 720)—in his opinion a spurious text that would confuse rather than help monks—was upstaging Daoxuan's own revealed '*Platform Scripture*' (*Tanjing* 壇經), also known as the *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing* 關中創立戒壇圖經.[25] In the aforementioned *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*, Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) begins the chapter dedicated to the 'masters of monastic regulations' (*lüshi* 律師) with Daoxuan's biography, a place of honour and a good indicator of his standing within the monastic community after his death. Yet, reading Yichu's 義楚 encyclopaedic work, the *Shishi liu tie* 釋氏六帖 (*The Śākya Clan's Six Tablets*; 954) composed three decades prior to the *Song Biographies*, one scholar noted that Daoxuan appeared predominantly in sections related to the miraculous, suggesting that late Tang dynasty monastics did not primarily associate Daoxuan to his role as a master of the monastic codes but might instead have given primacy to his role as a miracle-worker (*gantong* 感通).[26] Daoxuan's role as miracle-worker—or at least a source of revelation—continued into the twelfth century, when other Buddhists reappropriated his revelatory encounters with the spirits, claiming that their version of the story of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva's best known incarnation, Miaoshan 妙善, had in fact already been revealed to Daoxuan in the seventh century.[27]

Maybe, as Yanagida Seizan claimed, Daoxuan pushed his study of monastic regulations to the point where there were questions he could not answer himself without deferring to an otherworldly authority. Maybe, as Demiéville would have it, with age and illness Daoxuan was

[24] Adamek 2006: 128.
[25] *Biyan lu*: T2003, cases 18 and 99; translated in Cleary and Cleary 1977: 115–22; 628–35. For more on this topic, see Yanagida 1985: 406 ff.; Adamek 2006: 133 f.
[26] Yamazaki 1967: 159. For example, Daoxuan is mentioned in a section dedicated to 'The transformation of things by spiritual powers' (*shengtong huawu* 神通化物) under the heading 'Daoxuan communicates with spirits' (*Daoxuan ganshen* 道宣感神) in the *Shishi liu tie* (B79.236a15-237a5).
[27] Goossaert 2022: 42 f.

overtaken by 'morbid spiritism'. Given the paucity of evidence, the embellishment of Daoxuan's biographies through the centuries, as well as the deeply personal nature of such religious experiences, it is difficult to say anything conclusive on the matter. The one undeniable fact is that Daoxuan wrote more about the miraculous later in life. The study of the supernormal in his intellectual life has remained on the periphery of many longer works or has occupied shorter diffused studies.[28] This piece therefore aims to provide a full-length study of the miraculous in his life and, more broadly, in medieval Chinese society.

The overarching objective of this thesis is to provide the reader with a more nuanced understanding of the relationship in Chinese Buddhism between reason and wonder, history and myth, as well as scepticism and imagination. Of particular interest are Daoxuan's miracle tale compilations which record the stories of monks, lay believers, and patrons, as well as sacred places, religious objects, structures, and scriptures. These stories are didactic by nature, teaching of the supremacy of the Buddhist faith by recounting miraculous events related to acts of spreading the Teaching (*hongfa* 弘法) and defending Buddhism in the face of adversity (*hufa* 護法). Specifically, this project will analyse a late work completed by Daoxuan in 664 called the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (*Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Treasures in China*; T2106; hereafter known as the *Record of Miracles*) in three fascicles. This particular text is worth studying not only because it was written near the end of Daoxuan's life, but because he was a learned and well travelled monk who included many personal anecdotes and observations in this text. By studying the *Record of Miracles* this thesis will delve into how Daoxuan's interest in the supernormal influenced his work, and from there will extrapolate more far-reaching conclusions regarding the medieval Chinese Buddhist context.

State of the field

[28] Koichi Shinohara has written many articles on the topic. For more works by Shinohara on the *Record of Miracles*, see 1988, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1998a, 1999.

Daoxuan studies

The majority of scholarship on Daoxuan emphasises his role as a Vinaya master and discussion in the past has often revolved around the topic of how he consolidated and then spread monastic discipline in China.[29] Central to this discourse was the mistaken view that monastic discipline was 'rational' and based in scriptures. Such studies were limited in scope for they presented him as a somewhat unidimensional figure—Daoxuan the disciplinarian—without paying heed to other, perhaps less 'rational', factors that were also present in the monastic regulations (e.g. rituals, belief, religious power, etc.), as well as the many different intellectual dimensions that made up Daoxuan's worldview—Daoxuan the administrator, the virtuoso, the cataloguer, the compiler, the practitioner, and the miracle-worker.[30] McRae speaks to this point, stating that the impression one might get after reading some of the best known modern Chinese Buddhist histories is that Daoxuan was an important figure in a 'minor school', that he was both a disciplinarian and 'a scholiast interested only in historical detail and institutional rectitude, the founder of a generally unsuccessful sectarian entity little given to resonating with deeper religious issues.'[31] Chen Jinhua wrote that Daoxuan's 'image as one of the most important [Vinaya] masters in East Asia has unfortunately obscured his connection to other Buddhist traditions.'[32] He argued against such short-sightedness, claiming that Daoxuan's views were also significantly influenced by his own personal interest in Tiantai Buddhist teachings as well as the many schools of meditation (Ch. *Chan* 禪; Sk. *dhyāna*) that were active at that time in the monasteries of Chang'an.[33] Chen showed that Daoxuan was, in his early career, an active participant in the meditation tradition based out of Chanding Monastery (*Chanding si* 禪定寺) and that he helped shape the meditation tradition both

[29] In his history of Chinese Buddhism, Kenneth Ch'en stated that 'in establishing this [Vinaya] school, Daoxuan wanted to emphasise the fact that Buddhism meant [...] strict adherence to monastic discipline' (Ch'en 1964: 301); Also see Y. Chou 1945: 313; Satō 1986: 67–228; Tang 1999a: 2:184 ff.

[30] For English language studies of Daoxuan and the monastic codes, see A.-C. Z.-H. Tan 2002: 52–71; Heirman 2008, 2020. Regarding Daoxuan's role in the monastic community, see Satō 1986: 67–298; H. Chen 2007: 1–12; Ang 2019: 189–209.

[31] McRae 2005: 70. He is criticising Ch'en 1964: 301; Bareau 1987: 445. McRae's opinions are echoed in the more recent Brill encyclopaedia entry on Daoxuan (Jülch 2019: 648–52)

[32] Jinhua Chen 2002a: 387.

[33] Jinhua Chen 1999: 1 n.4, 2002a: 334.

as a disciple and later as a biographer compiling the accounts of the *dhyāna* specialists in his *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks.* Daoxuan was, indeed, a complex figure whose views were informed not only by the monastic codes that he studied, but also by politics, by regional identity, by the opinions of his fellow monks, by the other Buddhist texts that he studied, as well as by his own faith and practice.

Regarding Daoxuan's place in the study of Chinese social history, his work as a Buddhist historian and cataloguer is so important that one would today be hard-pressed to find a history of pre-Song dynasty Buddhism that does not refer to his writings.[34] Considering that Daoxuan plays such a central role in the field of Chinese Buddhist studies, it is, as Eric Greene puts it, 'imperative that we consider any possible bias on his part.'[35] Because of both the breadth of Daoxuan's religious career as well as his preeminence in the field of Buddhist studies, many different facets of his intellectual life have already been studied. When all these works are put together, the many pieces present Daoxuan's life as an intricate mosaic of varied intellectual pursuits. McRae breaks away from common misrepresentations of the 'rationalism' of monastic regulations in his study of Daoxuan's visionary revelation of the design for the Jetavana ordination platform. In this article, he casts Daoxuan in the mould of both the tradition of monastic discipline as well as the Chinese tradition of religious visionaries.[36] Chen Huaiyu, writing primarily about Daoxuan's ingenuity and drive to consolidate Chinese monastic codes and institutions, dedicated a chapter to the miraculous objects that were central to his life.[37] He argued that Daoxuan used the accounts of the relics of the Buddha and their associated miracle stories in China as a means of unifying and fortifying the Buddhist community. Chen Jinhua studied the place of the Chinese meditation tradition in Daoxuan's practice, concluding that meditation, not regulations, may well have been one of his

[34] For a study that takes Vinaya as a starting point for understanding Daoxuan's interest in history, see Takashi 1961. For another seminal study of Daoxuan's historical works, see Cao Shibang 1999: 101-122;186-192; 232–37; 289–304.
[35] Greene 2008: 103.
[36] McRae 2005: 94 n.3. This study is one of many works that study the effect of Daoxuan's visions on monastery and ordination platform architecture. For more similar scholarship, see Forte 1988: 39–52; A.-C. Z.-H. Tan 2002; P.-P. Ho 1995.
[37] Chen 2007: 57–79.

most defining interests.[38]

Daoxuan's ecumenical outlook allowed him to become a great synthesiser with strong syncretic tendencies.[39] This spirit of synthesis combined with the concerted effort to come to terms with his Buddhist faith was the driving force behind much of the doctrinal innovativeness that would later come to define his works and, more generally, to characterise Sui-Tang Buddhism. With these religious innovations also came questions regarding authority and legitimacy. In the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*A Forest of Pearls From the Dharma Garden*), Daoshi, a contemporary and one of Daoxuan's closest associates at Ximing Monastery 西明寺, claimed that: 'Although the [scriptures revealed to Daoxuan] were transmitted by the *devas*, they are the same as the Buddha's 'Word' (Skt. *buddha-vacana*).'[40] While one might think that such revelations would hinder the authenticity of a teaching, it would seem the reality was, as Nöel Péri put it, that Daoxuan's authority and renown as a disciplinarian could only be further legitimised once they bore the 'seal of celestial revelation'.[41] William Bodiford speaks of Daoxuan's visionary experiences, stating that he:

> […] relied as much on his […] visions of the Buddha as on his scholastic learning. Or, rather, it might be more correct to say that […] 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.[42]

Daoshi's reference to revealed texts and the Buddha's sermons, Péri's mention of authenticating modes of textual production in revelation, as well as Bodiford's reference to the Buddha's presence in visions all effectively allude to a phenomenon found in many premodern—and some modern—religious and political traditions: the phenomenon of legitimising claims by means of the

[38] Jinhua Chen 2002a: 334; 386.
[39] H. Wu 1996: 36.
[40] *FZ*: T2122.354b11.
[41] Péri 1916: 45.
[42] William Bodiford is here summarising the article by John McRae, 'Daoxuan's Vision of Jetavana, The Ordination Platform Movement in Medieval Chinese Buddhism', in the 'Introduction' to the edited volume entitled *Going Forth* (Bodiford 2005: 7). In this citation, I have taken out Bodiford's comment that Daoxuan had 'dreams' of the Buddha. The simple reason is that I have found no instances where anyone, either Daoxuan or his biographers, mention such dreams had by Daoxuan. He had various visions, though never in the realm of dreams.

miraculous.

In theory, doctrinal authority in Buddhism is based on a teaching constituting the Buddha's word. In practice, however, without access to traditional avenues of authentication, Chinese monks such as Daoxuan came to rely on indigenous means of legitimation as well as on the supernormal to resolve their doubts—what Fransiscus Verellen referred to in the Daoist context as 'evidential miracles' (*lingyan* 靈驗).[43] Robin Wagner claimed that in Daoxuan's histories, he often used the religious charisma of eminent monks to provide evidence for the exalted status of Buddhist monks and nuns, as well as to prove the efficacy of Buddhist teachings on Chinese soil. [44] In this way, Daoxuan's stories of supernormal agents and events played an important role in promoting Buddhism in the community and also in the broader process of 'localising' Buddhist doctrine and practice in China.[45] Ōchō Enichi stated that Daoxuan used his visionary experiences to validate his innovations, such as the ordination platform designs that he produced at the end of his life. Because he never travelled to India, Daoxuan had to gather information from those who had the knowledge such as travelling merchants, lay practitioners, and pilgrims. Ōchō claimed that once Daoxuan put together this data, he validated his architectural designs not by citing his sources in the seen realm but by relying on supernormal interlocutors in the unseen realm.[46] Timothy H. Barrett studied Daoxuan's revelation of the Buddha's 'final' sermon, arguing for the necessity and expediency of such a revelation at that time in resolving Daoxuan's doubts regarding the origins of Mahāyāna literature.[47] For Robert Campany, Daoxuan's works advocated a more open and 'cosmic' paradigm because Daoxuan himself had received information from supernormal sources and as a result generally supported more indigenous Buddhist religious culture.[48] Finally, in her doctoral thesis, Janine Nicol analysed Daoxuan's *Shijia fangzhi* 释迦方志 (*Geography of the Śākyas*), painting

[43] Verellen 1992: 218; For a study of supernormal encounters in relation to revelation in Daoism, see Verellen 1998. Also see Nobuyoshi 2005: 17–39.
[44] Wagner 1995: 8.
[45] Yamazaki 1967: 169; 172; Shinohara 1998a, 1999: 182; Campany 2012b: 37–43; Nicol 2016: 272 f.
[46] Ōchō 1941a, 1941b, 1942; Arguments summarised in McRae 2005: 72.
[47] Barrett 2012: 14 f. Other similar works include Shinohara 2000b, 2003, 2012.
[48] Campany 1993a: 13; 20.

the portrait of a monk who not only wished to legitimise his own works, but actively advocated new forms of Buddhism by, among other things, shifting the sacred locus of faith from India to China, thus engineering a new system for determining a new Buddhist sacred locus of legitimacy.[49]

As shown above, Daoxuan's visions and experiences of the supernormal have garnered considerable attention, especially with regard to questions of religious and political legitimacy. This thesis seeks to add to the ongoing discussion on this topic by exploring Daoxuan's compilation of miracle tales, paying particular attention to both his intellectual life as well as his relationship to material culture as they are presented throughout the *Record of Miracles.* Daoxuan will be defined not by his work with the monastic codes, or by his views on meditation and historiography, but on one specific dimension of his worldview: his belief in the miraculous. This study differs from other works on Daoxuan and the miraculous in both length and scope. For all the attention that this topic has attracted, a full-length monograph has yet to be written. Works such as Yamazaki's 1967 study of Daoxuan's life and texts have made great headway in defining the varied supernormal elements in his life.[50] However, the overwhelming majority of Yamazaki's short chapter on the topic revolved around how the supernormal was used to confirm Daoxuan's innovative views on monastic discipline. Moreover, Yamazaki mostly used the *Song Biography of Eminent Monks* and the *Vinaya Master Daoxuan's Record of Miraculous Experiences* as primary references. While other studies have also analysed important sources such as the *Jetavana Diagram Sutra* and the *Geography of the Śākyas*, few have sufficiently delved into the cache of information regarding the supernormal that can be found in the *Record of Miracles*.

The *Record of Miracles*

The *Record of Miracles* is a compilation of miracle tales drawn from literary, epigraphic, and oral sources relating to tales of Buddhism's miraculous efficacy in China from the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE) until the mid-seventh century CE. The majority of the contents in this text revolve around topics relating to religious figures, objects, structures, and scriptures. The structure of the

[49] There is a section in Janine Nicol's thesis specifically on Daoxuan and the miraculous that explores examples in the *Shijia fangzhi* (2016: 270–77). For more on this shift from India to China in Tang Buddhism, see Sen 2003: 55–101.
[50] Other such studies done in Mandarin Chinese include Liu Y. 2011; Wang D. 2018.

text is loosely modelled after the 'Three Jewels' of Buddhism (Ch. *sanbao* 三寶; Skt. *triratna*), classifying narratives according to how they represent the Buddha, the Teaching, and the monastic community.[51]

Regarding the study of the *Record of Miracles*, one need not look much further than the works of Koichi Shinohara. He has done much of the spadework related to the structure and sources of Daoxuan's miracle tale collection, as well as several analytical pieces that offer great insight into the place of miracles in Daoxuan's life as well as in his writings.[52] Moreover, Shinohara's recent translation of the first thirty-four fascicles of the *Forest of Pearls From the Dharma Garden* offers many parallels with the contents of the *Record of Miracles*, though more on that in chapter 2.[53] This thesis is indebted to Shinohara's scholarship and will cite his works extensively throughout.

There are no full translations of the *Record of Miracles* done in any language. The longest translation to date appears in seven volumes edited by Hida Romi 肥田路美 in Japanese that translate and analyse the text up until the first half of the third fascicle.[54] Translated segments of the *Record of Miracles* have, moreover, appeared piecemeal in different English-language works. Because the *Record of Miracles* provides such a wealth of information regarding the religious life and the Buddhist art of medieval China, it is often quoted and has been translated in separate segments in many different works. The two primary works in this regard were authored by Alexander Soper and Tiziana Lipiello. The works of Shinohara from the late eighties into the nineties are also peppered with translated passages drawn from the *Record of Miracles*. Not unlike Hida Romi's work, Soper uses the *Record of Miracles* as a source of literary evidence related to medieval Chinese Buddhist art.[55] In her book on omens and miracles in China, Lippiello uses

[51] As Stephen Teiser put it, the Three Jewels 'did not simply represent a formulaic refuge of faith. In China the "Three Jewels" also referred to the material objects that had value in the Buddhist religion: statues, halls and reliquaries in temples constituted the Jewels of the Buddha; texts and divinatory instruments were Jewels of the Dharma; and temple lands, lodging, and resident farmers constituted "permanent property of the *saṃgha*"' (Teiser 1988a: 66).
[52] Shinohara 1988, 1990, 1991b, 1991a, 1998a.
[53] Shinohara 2019a, 2019b, 2020, 2022.
[54] Hida 2011, 2014, 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2018, 2020.
[55] Soper 1959: 24; 26; 39; 116; 199 ff.

several examples from the *Record of Miracles* to underline the political expediency of these miracle tales and how supernormal powers, or at least the belief in them, were often used by Buddhist and Daoist thaumaturges looking to impress rulers with their supernormal powers and curry political favour among the elite.[56]

No full-length topical study of the *Record of Miracles* has been done as of yet. This thesis will study the *Record of Miracles* as a work representative of Daoxuan's oeuvre, seeking to supplement prior research on Daoxuan's relationship to the supernormal by exploring this Tang dynasty figure's collection of miracle tales as well as his role in the development of Chinese Buddhism.

Methods and miracles

This thesis analyses self-defining elements in the literature relating to the miraculous following what Glen Dudbridge calls the *outer story* and the *inner story*.[57] First, the analysis is directed outward at the wider Chinese intellectual and religious context, applying a 'hermeneutic of Sinification' to help outline the worldviews of Daoxuan and his contemporaries. This *outer story* refers to the objects of study from the outside, defining the contours of the tradition in more general etic terms. One must, however, remain vigilant of the pitfalls associated with such hermeneutic models. The means of interpretation applied in this thesis do not take the 'Buddhist tradition' to be some monolithic foreign entity in China, but instead take 'Chinese Buddhism' to be the sum of its parts, a 'scion of Sinitic culture' made up of individual agents who were culturally Chinese and lived out their beliefs in a Sinitic context.[58] This thesis will explore the extant works about these individuals, or the works they authored, drawing out the emic categories[59] that they used to classify

[56] Lippiello 2001: 177–203.
[57] Dudbridge 1995: 14. These terms were originally borrowed from Kao 1985: 32.
[58] Sharf 2002: 132.
[59] The *OED* 2004 defines the term 'emic' in contrast to 'etic', which it defines as: 'Designating a generalised, nonstructural, objective approach to the study or description of a particular language or culture, typically by an outsider; of, relating to, or involving such an approach'. An emic viewpoint or category would be a perspective that

their day-to-day—or, indeed, their supernormal—experiences.

Second, the analysis will be directed inward, exploring the miracles associated with Daoxuan as well as his own recorded personal experiences of miracles, encounters with the supernormal, and his visions. This *inner story* looks at how his own 'experience' informed his work. These accounts may be gleaned from the biographies or texts associated with Daoxuan, in his compiled miracle tales, as well as in the prefaces and colophons to his texts. Sometimes the *outer story* narratives might post-date Daoxuan if they represent beliefs relevant to him and his time. The *inner story* narratives will usually relate to things that he wrote, or things written soon after his death. Although they have here been separated, the *inner* and *outer* stories in fact dovetail nicely and are by no means mutually exclusive methodological categories.

Buddhist imaginaire

Empirical historical analysis is traditionally guided by five principles: the synthesis of events, fact, impartiality, reliability, and verifiable evidence.[60] When Daoxuan records that a relic manifests *ex nihilo*, or an image flies from its shrine to a faraway mountain, such stories are usually based on eyewitness accounts, prior records, or personal experiences. Therefore, except for the principle of 'synthesising events', miracle tales follow none of the principles of empirical historical analysis mentioned above because these recorded experiences of the supernormal, by nature of their content, are non-factual, inherently biased, unreliable, and unverifiable. Furthermore, because of the supernormal content of these records, they cannot fall within the category of 'empirical evidence' and have therefore often been dismissed by scholars as myths or legends. The task at hand in this present analysis of Daoxuan's miracle tales is therefore socio-historical in nature. What matters is not the factuality of these stories, but that which constitutes their themes and limits as well as what they can tell us about the lives of Buddhist monastics and lay practitioners.[61]

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tries to take into account the viewpoint of the subjects themselves as informed by their historical context as well as other subjective factors that make up an individual's as well as a community's experience.

[60] These five principles are drawn out by Thomas Heffernan who synthesises the historical methods of Edward Gibbon, Jacob Burckhardt, and Hippolyte Delehaye (1988: 57).

[61] A similar argument is made regarding Buddhist hagiography in Kieschnick 1997: 3. For other similar studies on Buddhist biography, see Shinohara 1994; Schober 1997. For representative and relevant works in the field of medieval studies, see P. Brown 1971, 1975: 140, 1983; Heffernan 1988.

Behind every recorded miracle was a web of meanings that conveyed specific information to those that could understand their relevance and importance.[62] A miracle tale relating, for instance, how a lone traveller is saved from danger by reciting the title of the *Lotus Sutra* reads today like an interesting piece of fantasy fiction. The medieval Chinese, however, would not have considered such accounts to be 'fiction' or 'fantasy' and such narratives would have evoked something far more profound and, indeed, more 'real' for its readership. This miracle tale would have, among other things, constituted a 'true' account of the events while simultaneously confirming the apotropaic efficacy of the *Lotus Sutra*—a scripture of great religious significance in medieval China. That these miraculous instances are recognisable to a specific social group at a certain time is what distinguishes the story of a dream encounter with the future Buddha Maitreya from a fleeting thought in the night, a prophetic declaration from a weather announcement, or recorded interviews with divine beings from a televised heart-to-heart on a daytime talk show.

The miraculous instances described by Daoxuan in his *Record of Miracles*, a collection of cases that the French medievalist Jacques Le Goff would have called 'collective images', do not stand outside of time but are subject to the 'vicissitudes of history'.[63] They are discursive and changing, expressed across class divisions as words or as themes, carried along through traditions, through teachings, through community, and through society. Most importantly, these miraculous instances when put together make up a nexus of representations—that is a segment of the *imaginaire* of medieval China—which can be analysed and interpreted as historical patterns and trends (*la longue durée*) to allow insight into the lived reality of those people.

This thesis will apply the aforementioned 'hermeneutic of Sinification', foregoing any reifying conceptions of a 'Buddhist tradition' by taking into account the agency of medieval Chinese actors in producing the myriad sources of meaning that make up their traditions. Daoxuan's experiences as well as his compiled miracle tales both prescribed and reflected the self-

[62] Eric Greene writes about a similar dynamic in medieval Chinese meditative texts. He applies a concept borrowed from Webb Keane called 'semiotic ideology' (Greene 2021: 13). The complexities of semiotics are regrettably beyond the purview of this thesis. For more, see Keane 2003, 2005, 2008, 2018. For a work specifically on the Buddhist theory of semiotics, see Rambelli 2013.

[63] Le Goff [1985] 2013: iii f.; also see Castoriadis 1975: 190–204; 519.

defining elements of the medieval Chinese mindset, allowing him to claim religious legitimacy based in both experiences of the miraculous and visions of supernormal agents. As they appear in the textual evidence, supernormal phenomena allow historians of religion to learn as much about Daoxuan the monk as they might about medieval Chinese Buddhist views on the miraculous. This medieval Chinese *imaginaire*, here represented by selections from Daoxuan's writings, constituted a sizable segment of the collective repertoire from which Buddhist monastics, as well as others from outside the community, drew upon in discourse on—as well as in their conception of—Chinese Buddhism. The value of this information lies not in chronological precision or raw data, but in the texture of perceptions, values and emotions that it provides.

Daoxuan the inspired

In his seminal work on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James (1842–1910) endeavoured to define human nature in terms of 'experience', that is: 'the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.'[64] A close contemporary, Rudolf Otto, held that God was known primarily through the 'creature-feeling' of fear and awe when one is set before the empyrean mystery of the Holy.[65] The primacy of experience for defining the category of 'religion' has since held great sway in fields such as the phenomenology and the psychology of religion, as well as many others.[66] It might seem to many today, however, that exploring 'religious experience', or in this particular case the affective dimension of the *Record of Miracles*, as a way into Daoxuan's psychology would be a fraught endeavour. Indeed, it would be if that were the purpose of this study. In his discussion on the rhetoric of experience, Robert Sharf defines 'experience' as personal events that cannot serve as primary objects of study because of their 'ambiguous epistemological status and essentially indeterminate nature'.[67] Considering that

[64] James [1902] 1916: 32.
[65] Otto [1917] 1959: 10.
[66] For recent studies of the affective dimension in religion, see Schaefer 2015; Patton 2018. For some insights on 'religious experience' in Chinese studies, see Dudbridge 1995; In Buddhist studies, see Gombrich 2004; Greene 2021: 8 ff.; For more on 'experience' in the broader field of religious studies, see Taves 2009, 2012; Webb 2017: s.v. religious experience.
[67] Sharf 1998: 99. Also see other articles by Sharf 1995, 2014.

'experience', characterised by its 'unremitting indeterminacy', is fundamentally subjective, we may question whether experience as well as reports of these experiences can ever truly refer to a 'determinative phenomenal event'.[68] When Daoxuan states, for instance, that he sees a Buddha image emitting a golden halo of light, how are we to determine whether these things truly happened? Many people today would simply say that Daoxuan was mistaken. Perhaps the sun was streaming into the hall at just the right angle, or perhaps Daoxuan had been fasting for too long and was simply seeing things. From a rationalist standpoint, unlike sensory perception and *ordinary* experience where the 'real' existence of the perceived object is assumed, religious experiences are *extraordinary* and cannot be brought back to any determinative reference point. In other words, there is an epistemological difference between saying that you saw a flock of geese up in the sky and saying that you saw the Virgin Mary smiling benevolently at you from the clouds.[69] So, what is to be done with the information provided by these recorded experiences, and what can be said of Daoxuan's experiences of the miraculous?

This thesis takes the recorded miraculous instances in Daoxuan's writings as its objects of study insofar as these accounts provide the contours of the medieval Chinese worldview regarding miracles. That is not to claim, as certain perennial modes of thinking would have it, that by looking at the parts we may suddenly see the pattern and gain insight into the mindset of medieval monks.[70] The hermeneutic applied here is neither rationalist nor overly reductionist so as to dismiss the complex religious and, indeed, personal dimensions that inform the miraculous. Much like the Chinese biographical traditions, the discrepancy between the miracle tale narratives and the religious settings that formed them was not so distinct given that the 'stories [were] already part

[68] Sharf 1998: 110.

[69] Robert Sharf gives the example of 'experiencers', those who claim to have been abducted by aliens. He notes that although there is overlap in the accounts of these 'experiencers', the source of these abduction accounts may not be traced to real events, but to science-fiction movies and books. He concludes, perhaps for effect, that any attempt to signify religious experience will always remain 'well-meaning squirms that get us nowhere' (1998: 110; 113). Eric Greene attempts to overcome this experiential conundrum in his study of early Chan meditation (Greene 2021: 8 ff.).

[70] For some instances of such perennial thinking in the study of religion, see James [1902] 1916; Campbell 1949; Eliade [1954] 1971.

and parcel of religious life as it [was] lived.'[71] The proposed approach therefore places these experiences as squarely as possible within the lived—and recorded—socio-historical contexts that informed their religious as well as cultural meanings.

Bearing this in mind, it is important to note that Daoxuan was only one thinker among many. He was a learned monk with authority both inside and outside his religious community. Yet, it would be misleading to either fit Daoxuan into a monastic archetype or equate his views on the miraculous with those of his contemporaries. He cannot be neatly moulded into a type for he was a living individual with idiosyncrasies of his own. Daoxuan's writings, however, did not emerge from a discursive vacuum, and it can be said that his works represented the 'emergence of the continuation of certain mental structures'.[72] One of the purposes of this thesis is to explore miraculous instances in terms that bring to the forefront their historical, cultural, social, and religious underpinnings—what some call 'explanatory reduction'.[73] Therefore, there are certain motifs that can be drawn from his recorded experiences to help paint a broader picture of the times. Daoxuan is particularly relevant in this context because, although revelation plays a central role in other traditions such as religious Daoism, he is a rare example of an eminent Buddhist monastic that had visions which were then recorded as authoritative religious texts.

Finally, details of his life as they appear in his biographies have been embellished over time to the point where it is difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. The Tang Buddhist *imaginaire*—its history of collective representations—cannot simply be reduced to a list of relevant historical facts given in strict chronological order—what some call 'descriptive reduction'.[74] The supernormal aura that surrounds Daoxuan, insofar as it speaks to his experience of the world as well as how he was viewed by others, is as much a historical fact as his family name, place of birth, date of tonsure, etc. In many later biographical collections, Daoxuan's person was idealised and moulded to that of an exemplar—an 'eminent monk'. In this way, his biography

[71] Campany 2009: 13.
[72] See Bernard Faure's study of the visionary experiences of the Japanese Sōtō monk Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾 (1268–1325) (2000: 3); For more on the theoretical underpinnings of the *imaginaire*, see Castoriadis 1975: 466.
[73] Proudfoot 1985: 197 f.
[74] Proudfoot 1985: 196. Also see Greene 2021: 11.

and his person were invested with a variety of social and religious ideals that reflected the ideals of the community that produced them.[75] Various factors from both inside and outside the tradition come to form an organic whole so that one must marry both history and myth to make up the sum of the parts. Daoxuan was not just a product of the medieval Buddhist Chinese mindset but was an integral part of the whole. He was an extraordinary individual with his own personal quirks as well as his own idiosyncratic understandings of history and the Buddha's teachings. Yet, undergirding his idiosyncrasies are the recurring motifs of an *imaginaire*, so that even if we were to dismiss the historical factuality of the miraculous and the mythical in Daoxuan's biographies and in his works, these 'embellishments' would still remain relevant.[76]

Chapter outline

This thesis is split into two parts. Part 1 is comprised of the first three chapters, offering some necessary historical, social, and textual context for understanding Daoxuan, his *Record of Miracles* and, more broadly, the culture of medieval Chinese Buddhists. Part 2 is comprised of chapters 4 and 5 which make up the analytical segment of this study, elaborating on Daoxuan's view of the miraculous by elaborating on his writing related to Buddhist material culture, especially relics, images, monasteries and pagodas.

Chapter 1 provides a working definition of what this thesis means by 'miracle' and 'supernormal'. Neither the traditions of South Asia nor China have a direct equivalent for the English word 'miracle', therefore a working definition is drawn up in this chapter from the analysis of overlapping meanings between concepts in early Indic languages and ancient Chinese that resemble what we mean in English by 'miracle'. Textual evidence in early South Asian Buddhism shows that although there is an ambivalence in the scriptures towards supernormal powers and miracles, the Buddha and his disciples did not necessarily deny their relevance. As a matter of fact, miracles were an important part of their teaching arsenal. In the Chinese context, miracles were

[75] Kieschnick 1997: 8, 2011.
[76] For a similar comment made in the study of the Japanese monk Keizan, see Faure 2000: 16.

believed to be the effects of 'sympathetic resonance' (*ganying* 感應), manifest responses in Nature to human sincerity and action. When Buddhist teachings began trickling into China, the early miracle-workers were active and effective proselytisers, converting rulers and commoners alike by using supernormal powers to prove the efficacy of their religion. The penultimate section of this chapter will look at Daoxuan's innovations in using the term '*gantong* 感通' as a religious category, arguing that his views on the miraculous were inclusive of far more supernormal phenomena than the categories of the miraculous that existed prior. The final section of chapter 1 provides a working definition for Chinese 'miracles', namely that (1) they are objects of awe; (2) they must be manifestations relevant to this realm; (3) they be witnessed and public; and (4) they must have a proselytising purpose.

Chapter 2 presents a thematic and a structural breakdown of the *Record of Miracles*. These collected miracle tales were not compiled as mere fiction but had an overt proselytising intent. It presented readers, often monastics or literati, with the miraculous causes and results of the Buddha's traces, confirming the faith's religious expediency by exploring Buddhism's antiquity and pedigree in China. The *Record of Miracles* recounts stories relating to the Three Jewels—that is to say Buddha, Dharma, and *saṃgha*—recording the story of Buddhism's transmission to China from the legend of King Aśoka meeting the Buddha in a past life all the way to later events taking place in the Tang dynasty. This chapter also looks at Daoxuan's motivations for compiling the *Record of Miracles*, concluding that they are fivefold: (1) persuasion, (2) proselytisation, (3) appealing to an audience, (4) continuity, and (5) personal experience.

Chapter 3 offers a selected biography of Daoxuan's life, placing his later works into their historical context. It explores events that took place in Daoxuan's life: birth story, early to midlife career, travels, his role in opposing anti-Buddhist sentiment at court, and his latter days. Given that many important autobiographical details are included in the *Record of Miracles*, it will be cited when relevant. Historical information will be drawn from contemporary scholarship on Sui-Tang history. This chapter will not endeavour to present a version of the 'historical

Daoxuan' stripped of all biographical embellishments. For our purposes, his supernormal aura is as important as the 'hard facts' about his life—if such facts may even be discerned from the literary evidence. The finished product will present a more holistic picture of this eminent Tang dynasty monk and his relationship to the religious community, to the political sphere, and to the unseen realm.

Part 2 of this thesis investigates different aspects of Buddhist materiality and constitutes this work's analytical core. Chapter 4 explores the strategies of legitimation present in the *Record of Miracles* that employ religious objects with a focus on relics and images. Most of these narratives describe the manifestations of these objects in China, many of them exhibiting miraculous signs or associations to supernormal events. First, this chapter will give some working definitions for the words 'relic' and 'image' in the medieval Chinese context. The following section looks at the history of these cult objects in China, beginning with the story of King Aśoka's relic distribution. This will be followed by a short study of the history of the finger bone relic at Famen Monastery and its place in imperial ritual. The final section draws heavily on the *Record of Miracles*, presenting the instances in Daoxuan's works where he speaks of his own personal experiences with cult objects. This section explores how relics and images were used to advance Buddhist claims of authority.

Chapter 5 looks at the strategies of legitimation in the *Record of Miracles* that employ religious structures with a focus on monasteries and pagodas. The first section gives a brief introduction to the topic of religious structures and religious space, followed by a section offering working definitions and cultural context for China's monasteries and pagodas. A pagoda is rarely without its relics, just as a monastery is rarely without its images. The primary difference between the objects in Chapter 4 and the structures in Chapter 5 is space and mobility. Chapter 5 puts the emphasis on the rootedness of religious structures and their role in creating sacred 'place'. This chapter then presents those instances in the *Record of Miracles* where Daoxuan speaks of his experiences of different religious structures, especially in relation to Mount Zhongnan near the Tang capital of Chang'an. This section will emphasise Daoxuan's descriptions of sacred space, his visits to monasteries, his exultations of different pagodas, and his recordings of the native

understandings of sacred place in China. Much of this information was gathered by Daoxuan through travel and through interviews, information that had never been considered in its own right until Daoxuan included it in his compilation of miracle tales. The final section will investigate the discovery of religious structures both in the records related to Daoxuan's life and in the *Record of Miracles.*

Part 1

Chapter 1: Miracles and the supernormal

Introduction

The 'miraculous' and the 'supernatural'—or as it will be called in this thesis, 'supernormal'—are two terms that have long occupied theologians, historians, as well as scholars in the interdisciplinary field of religious studies. The French historian Jacques Le Goff claimed that the term 'miracle' in particular had been co-opted by the medieval Christian church in Europe to distinguish proper acts of God from 'magic'—Satan's trickery—and 'marvels'—those unusual events issuing from natural causes that resist explanation.[77] That is to say, according to the medieval church, a miracle is a purely Christian phenomenon defined in contrast to the claims of extraordinary happenings in other traditions. Because of the theistic connotations associated to the term, scholars of South and East Asian religions have debated at length about using words such as 'miracle' to describe anomalous phenomena in non-Christian and non-theistic traditions. However, while many have noted the strong Christian overtone associated to the use of such language in scholarship, the majority of English language works related to so-called miracles—sometimes called anomalies, wonders or marvels in the literature—and the supernatural in South and East Asian religions often borrowed the term 'miracle' regardless. This might be because it is *prima facie* a convenient and flexible English equivalent for similar emic concepts in other traditions.[78] Indeed, this thesis will also use the term 'miracle' and the name 'miracle tales' to designate the narrative accounts of extraordinary phenomena associated to Buddhist people, objects and places. However, this terminology remains problematic and further explanation for why these terms are used must be provided as this chapter looks to unpack what we mean by 'miracle' as well as 'supernatural/supernormal' and why they are relevant for describing such occurrences within the medieval Buddhist world.

[77] Le Goff [1985] 2013: 21. For a recent use of the miracle/marvel paradigms, see Karnes 2015: 358.
[78] C. H. Ho 2017: 1118.

While the term ‘miracle’ today can designate any extraordinary event or thing (the miracle of childbirth, a miraculous sunset, a miracle drug, etc.), its strongest associations are to the *Bible* and to the Christian theological tradition. How can terms such as ‘miracle’ and ‘supernatural’, terms that have strong ties to western intellectual history, be used to describe and translate categories in cultures and times that are so far removed from the history of Christian thought? How could there be *direct* conceptual equivalences in medieval China for Christian understandings of ‘miracles’ that had not yet been translated to the East? Indeed, there were no such one-to-one equivalences between Chinese and Christian understandings of the miraculous until the more recent renderings of the terms ‘*qiji*’ 奇蹟 and ‘*shenji*’ 神蹟 in translations of the *Bible.*[79] When looking at the works of Chinese Buddhist authors, they were influenced by their tradition and by Indian conceptions of the miraculous, relying instead on indigenous terms related to the anomalous and the strange—for instance ‘*ganying*’ 感應 (lit. stimulus and response), ‘*gantong*’ 感通 (lit. stimulus and penetration), ‘s*henli*’ 神力 (lit. spiritual power) and ‘*lingyan*’ 靈驗 (lit. numen and verification). This chapter will show that although there is no direct equivalent for these medieval Chinese terms in English, there are similarities between these concepts that do exist across cultures.

The following sections will explore the concept of the miraculous in the fields of Buddhist and medieval China studies, as well as in the life and thought of Daoxuan. The first section asks: what do we mean by ‘miracle’ in a Christian context? And why exactly is it problematic when studying medieval China? Finally, why do we use an English term to describe such phenomena instead of drawing directly from the sources and using the language therein? Subsequently, there will be a brief study of miracles in South Asian Buddhism that also explores how these miracles

[79] These two terms can be used in modern Chinese to describe all manner of anomalous phenomena, though they do also carry Christian connotations. In the Chinese translation of the King James *Bible*, ‘*qiji*’ is used to render the word ‘wonder’ (*Isaiah*: 8:18; 20:3). The term *shenqi* is used to refer to ‘miracles’ in both the Old and the New Testament (e.g. *Numbers*: 14:22; *Acts*: 2:22). The word *qiji* does, in fact, appear in non-Buddhist medieval literature. For example, in Du You’s 杜佑 *Tongdian* 通典 (completed 801), he notes that although many details about the Western Regions are recorded in the travelogues of Buddhist pilgrims, their accounts were not wholly historical for they emphasised the ‘anomalous and miraculous traces of the Śākya clan’ 釋氏詭異奇跡 (*Tongdian*: 1992: 100.5199).

have been explained in the field of Buddhist studies. The following section will explore indigenous medieval Chinese conceptions of the anomalous and how this influenced the worldview of Buddhist thinkers. There will then be a section on Daoxuan's promotion of the term '*gantong*' 感通 and his place in the broader development of 'miracle' rhetoric in China. Finally, this chapter will offer a working definition for the word 'miracle' that can be used as a broader category for understanding medieval Chinese Buddhist conceptions of the supernormal.

What's in a name?

Beginning in the Enlightenment (17th and 18th century), the so-called 'Age of Reason' in Western Europe, the term 'miracle' was in the Christian tradition defined as an act of God manifest in our world as a supernatural phenomenon, extraordinary events that work contrary to the laws of Nature and the realm of ordinary human experience. Pre-Enlightenment conceptions of the miraculous did not hold that such phenomena broke the laws of Nature per se, only that these occurrences were perceived as extraordinary given our limited understanding of God and Nature.[80] It was not a question of metaphysics but an issue of perspective. Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) says that 'God does these [miracles] in person, in the [marvellous] way in which the Eternal brings about events in time' and that these hidden causes 'bear witness to that faith in which the resurrection of the dead for eternity is proclaimed.'[81] Theologians such as Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) claimed that a miracle was something 'wonderful in itself, […] caused directly by God's power (the most unknown cause) in a way different from that exhibited by the order of natural causes.'[82] Miracles were occurrences that differed from the normal course of events though they were not contrary to Nature. Aquinas even coined the word 'supernatural' as that which is above the laws of Nature, distinguishing the three ways in which Nature could be superseded: there

[80] Mullin 2000: 440; C. Brown 2011: 275; Cited in C. H. Ho 2019: 103.
[81] Augustine of Hippo [c. 400 CE] 1972: 7:251; 253; For Augustine, scripture was a more reliable guide to Christian faith than stories related miracles, which might cause people to grasp on to visible things (Augustine of Hippo [391 CE] 1990: 60). For more on Augustine and the lives of the saints, see Heffernan 1988: 94 f..
[82] Translated in Bartlett 2008: 7 f.

were events 'above nature' (Lat. *supernaturalis*), 'beyond nature', and 'against nature'.[83] It was not until the Enlightenment, beginning with the writings of David Hume (1711–1776), that miracles would be redefined as events that violated the laws of cause and effect.[84] This Enlightenment period characterisation of the miraculous as phenomena that were 'contrary to Nature' came to dominate Western theological and philosophical discourse as it continues to hold sway to varying degrees in modern scholarship as well as in society-at-large.[85]

In his recent monograph on *Diamond Sutra Narratives*, Chiew Hui Ho argues that many scholars in the West continue to frame their explanations of extraordinary phenomena in the Chinese Buddhist context according to conceptions of the 'miraculous' informed by the Western theological and philosophical traditions. In his book, he applies the term 'wonder' when referring to instances of the divine 'intervention of Buddhist deities [and] the efficacy of scriptural devotion.' Ho qualifies this by noting that although the use of terms like 'miracle' allows for dialogue among scholars of religion, they also 'skew representations of the wondrous in non-Western traditions, since such modifications are […] based on a definition steeped in Western religious connotations.'[86] This problem has not gone unnoticed in the past. Scholars interested in South and East Asian religions have been questioning the application of such terms in the field of Buddhist studies for over a century.[87] The term 'miracle' as it is defined in the Christian tradition has been criticised for its limited scope when defining similar phenomena in other traditions. Indeed, as we will see in the following section, the theological stipulation that miracles break the very laws of Nature—that they are supernatural—is not in line with the medieval Chinese worldview vis-à-vis causality. However, just because the term 'miracle' is problematic does not make it wrong or, indeed, misleading. Today, the word 'miracle' is ubiquitous in both academia and popular culture. On its own, it does not really seem to 'skew representations of non-Western

[83] Translated in Bartlett 2008: 8; Freeman 2012: 149.
[84] C. Brown 2011: 282; C. H. Ho 2019: 103 f..
[85] Fiordalis 2008: 3 f.
[86] C. H. Ho 2019: 104 ff..
[87] For a recent example of a similar argument made for the application of the term 'wonder' in Buddhist studies, see article by Gómez 2010: 513.

traditions' because, despite the fact that the works of Hume and similar thinkers inform our present understanding of 'miracles' and the 'supernatural', philosophers and theologians do not hold a monopoly on the meaning of these terms.

In practice, Ho's adoption of an alternative term reads more like a case-specific distinction, the academic contrasting of 'Christian miracles' and 'Buddhist wonders' which muddles matters in a way that, within the broader context of religious studies, is not necessarily conducive to a better understanding of the occurrences that he calls 'wonders'. The term 'wonder' can effectively be used in Ho's specific study of wondrous accounts related to Buddhist scriptures, but it falls short when we consider that the discussion in the broader field of religious studies on such phenomena already uses another term: 'miracle'. Indeed, there are many works on Buddhism written in English where 'miracle' is already consciously—and cautiously—used to describe such phenomena. Ho says that this in itself is the problem, but considering the currency with which the term 'miracle' is used and its mutual intelligibility in religious studies, should we really move away from it in our discussion of the extraordinary in religion?

Ho dedicates a large part of his second chapter to 'miracles' and their place in the Western theological tradition, framing his own definition of 'wonder' in contrast to Christian 'miracles'. His discussion of miracles is perhaps meant to direct the reader's attention to the semantic pitfalls of such a term when describing phenomena in non-Western traditions, though he seems to only substitute one term for another term. Although he argues that the term 'wonder' does not carry any Christian overtones, Ho inevitably encounters the same historical, linguistic and cultural stumbling blocks that he wishes to circumvent. Indeed, as he tries to move away from the word 'miracle' in his monograph, his definition of the term 'wonder' remains inextricably tied to definitions drawn from the Western theological tradition and, ultimately, to miracles.

When choosing between 'miracle', 'wonder' or other words such as 'magic', 'marvel' as well as 'anomaly', it is not the name that matters but that which the term signifies as well as how we analyse and define it while using language that can be understood by a broader audience. In the field of religious studies, it is important to use language and categories that are relevant in the general discussion. To use 'wonder' or 'magic' to describe extraordinary phenomena in Buddhism

means that it becomes a distinct category and that it will have to occupy its own section in relevant encyclopaedias or its own subsection in edited volumes dedicated to extraordinary occurrences in the world's religions. For instance, in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (1908-1921), the 'miracle' section was dedicated wholly to Christian miracles while similar Buddhist concepts were included in the 'Magic' subsection of the chapter.[88] In fact, to avoid any false equivalences with Christian miracles, the concept of Buddhist miracles has often been referred to as 'Buddhist magic'—not 'wonders'—in Western scholarship.[89] The result is that Buddhism, its practices and its doctrines, is simply tucked away in works on the world's religions as an afterthought in the study of the Abrahamic traditions—a problem in its own right because Christian miracles are given priority while Eastern religions are lumped into secondary or tertiary subsections. It is imperative in the study of religions to be aware of these biases and to use language that is mutually intelligible and that is inclusive of all traditions.

The term 'miracle' may have Christian overtones, but there is nothing intrinsic to the word that makes it patently Christian. The semantic dimensions of language are ever shifting and the term 'miracle' did not and will not always be marked out by its Christian connotations. Instead of using words like 'magic' or 'wonder', is it not more helpful to apply categories that are already widely used and that are drawn from broader categories in the study of the world's religions? This thesis argues that within the confines of our language and the seeming incommensurability of concepts from different times and cultures, it is more useful to redefine rather than rebrand an idea. The following chapters will therefore use the most accessible term, namely 'miracle', offering the necessary caveats and explanations in this chapter to justify its application.

The final goal here is to formulate viable working definitions for the terms 'miracle' and 'supernormal' that are in line with how such phenomena would have been perceived at the time in

[88] de La Vallée Poussin 1908; Cited in Fiordalis 2008: 7. The term for 'magic' in China is commonly designated by the term '*fashu*' 法術, which includes supernormal powers such as controlling supernormal entities or one's own vital force (Miura 2008: 116).

[89] Fiordalis 2008: 6, 2011: 381 f. This is also related to the fact that 'magic' has been used as an analytical term in anthropology since the nineteenth century. For a recent working definition of 'Buddhist magic', see Van Schaik 2020: 38–42.

China. Some definition issues arise at the outset when translating key terms—in this case, *ganying* 感應 and *gantong* 感通—from their medieval Chinese context into modern English such as the non-equivalence between terms from different languages and cultures, as well the dangers of unintentionally applying universal categories to translate culturally specific concepts.[90] To avoid such false cultural equivalences, some scholars avoid translating key terms into English and instead use loan words. The prevalence in contemporary speech and writing of Buddhist terms like 'nirvana' and 'karma' are a testament to this, and it is interesting to note how these terms have taken on new dimensions of meaning in everyday life and English usage. The problems of translation are compounded by the fact that words change in their use and meaning at different junctures in time and space. Conceptualisations of the miraculous in the Buddhist context were mutable and unsystematic, so that one would be hard-pressed to find a single representative word—like *nirvāṇa* or *karma*—that could be transliterated into English. Using the romanised form of *gantong* and *ganying*, for instance, would not make sense to anyone except for those who specialise in the study of Chinese Buddhism. Therefore, this chapter seeks to provide what Eugene Nida calls 'dynamic equivalents' for key terms. That is to say that these translations 'reflect the meaning and intent of the source' while taking restricted liberties with the form and message of the original source in favour of the readers' response and understanding.[91] This is possible because the textual evidence attests to a discernible lexical list of terms related to medieval Chinese religious life that accord with what readers today would call 'miracles' and 'supernormal' events.

Some might argue that this translation method puts the cart before the horse, taking the English terms 'miracle' and 'supernatural/supernormal' as a starting point to then go looking for their Chinese equivalents. The themes of this thesis were, however, first inspired by the *Record of Miracles* as well as the terminology related to anomalous phenomena that was used in such medieval Chinese texts. Witnesses on the ground experienced something extraordinary, accounts

[90] For a general statement on this in translation theory, see Culler 1975: 21 f.; For more on this with regard to Asian languages, see Gombrich 1997: 165; Campany 2003, 2018.

[91] Nida 1964: 166. Also-called 'idiomatic translation' by Mildred Larson [1984] 1998: 18 f. This thesis strives to stay true to the social reality of medieval China and will preserve some elements that may seem 'alien' to some modern readers. For more on this method, see Venuti 1995: 20.

were transmitted orally and in writing, the authors and compilers of miracle tales were driven to gather as well as comment on these accounts and they were all aware that these stories described events that broke away from everyday phenomena. Considering that people on the ground distinguished these anomalous phenomena from ordinary everyday events, this thesis uses the word 'miracle' as a placeholder term, a word that may be filled in using examples and descriptions from within the tradition. The purpose here is not to discover the outstanding individual property of a word that translates across distinct times, places, and cultures.[92] It is more fruitful in these circumstances to look at what Ludwig Wittgenstein called linguistic 'family resemblances', that is the 'complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing' between the semantic fields of 'miracle' as well as 'supernormal' with their Sinitic lexical counterparts.[93] By studying these at the word level in their historical context while simultaneously pointing out the overlapping features between the languages—so-called language games—we appeal to their conceptual similarities without necessarily misleading the reader with academic jargon, awkward 'translation-ese' or overly general categories.

The supernormal

We noted how the post-Enlightenment Christian understanding of miracles as violations of natural causes has come to colour much of the discourse regarding the miraculous. The issue with this characterisation of the miraculous lies in the difference between Christian and Buddhist views on causality. These miraculous phenomena are often typified as 'supernatural' (beyond nature), a term with some bearing on our understanding of the extraordinary in the world's religions. Therefore, by qualifying the term 'supernatural' in both Christian and the Buddhist systems of thought, we can get a better understanding of these causal systems and the language that is used to describe them.

David Weddle writes that '[a] miracle is an interpreted event, set within a tradition's broader system of beliefs and understood as signifying something about *transcendent* reality'.[94]

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[92] For more on 'lexical meaning' in translation theory, see Zgusta 1971: 67.

[93] Wittgenstein 2009: 36 nn. 67; 66. For more on Wittgenstein and translation, see Gorlée 1994: 97 ff. For similarities between the concepts of 'miracles' in Western and Buddhist discourse, see Fiordalis 2008: 3 ff.

[94] Weddle 2010: xiii; Italics are mine.

David Basinger writes of the 'intentional activity of a *supernatural* being',[95] while Robert Larmer defines 'miracle' as:

> (1) an event which would never have occurred except through the action of a *transcendent* rational agent, (2) an event that has religious significance in the sense that it can reasonably be viewed as furthering *God*'s purposes and (3) an event of such an extraordinary nature that it is either directly perceived as a *supernatural* intervention in the normal order of nature or immediately inferred as such.[96]

According to these definitions, miracles were *supernatural* events predicated on the reality of a first cause—usually God or other *transcendent* beings. Such were the grounds for the hard dichotomy in Christianity between God, the first cause, and Nature, wherein manifest 'miracles' designated the signs or traces of a higher order within Nature.

Bearing this in mind, in Buddhist studies, many considered the notion of 'Buddhist miracles' to be 'strangely hybrid'.[97] Étienne Lamotte was wary of the term 'supernatural' when speaking of the powers of the Buddha and his disciples, opting instead for expressions such as 'miraculous powers'.[98] The French art historian Alfred Foucher wrote that the use of the term 'miracle' in the Indian context would be improper because their emic understanding of miracles always remained this-worldly, never breaching the laws of Nature.[99] André Bareau noted that the 'original Buddhism' of the Nikāyas was not 'religious' insofar as the category of 'religion' presupposed belief in *transcendent* and supernatural agents, while 'original' Buddhist doctrine posited no such thing—a problematic theory in its own right which we will unpack later in this chapter.[100] For Bareau, the Buddhist standpoint was diametrically opposed to the Christian worldview, which was informed by ideas of other-power and divine grace. Bernard Faure notes that the Buddhist tradition does not have 'miracles' in the Christian sense because:

> the Buddhist universe is always governed by laws, no matter how strange these may sometimes seem.

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[95] Basinger 2011: 19; Italics are mine. For another similar definition, see Larmer 2011: 36. For cognitive and evolutionary accounts of the development of supernatural agents in religion, see Guthrie 1993: 3–7; Boyer 2001: 50; Pyysiäinen 2009: 95–136; Riesebrodt 2010: 71–91.

[96] Larmer 2011: 36; Italics are mine.

[97] Kapstein 2001: 4.

[98] Lamotte 1958: 17; 19; 60; 69; 85; 176; 229; 275. The English translation of Lamotte's book opted for 'supernormal', which is the term this thesis will also use.

[99] Foucher 1949: 271; Cited in Fiordalis 2008: 2. A similar statement was made by T. W. Rhys Davids in 1899: 1:272.

[100] Bareau 1963: 279 f.; 285; 299, 1975: 184–87. For a similar argument made almost forty years earlier, see de La Vallée Poussin 1925: 39.

> In a sense, only awakening itself can be termed miraculous, or unconceivable—insofar as it *transcends* all causality.[101]

This ambivalence in Western scholarship towards manifest powers and miracles in Buddhism was founded in Sutras as well as early South Asian ontology, systems that failed to posit a universal cause (e.g. God), only many particular and co-dependent conditions. Analogous Buddhist conceptions of 'transcending' the 'worldly' (Skt. *laukika*; Pal. *lokika*) were not defined in terms of an agent's latent qualities but by their spiritual attainment and the quality of his or her actions in the world. The 'nature of reality' (Skt. *dharmatā*, *tathātā*; Ch. *faxing* 法性) in Buddhism transcends discriminative phenomena and is described as constantly existing in the world. Yet, the 'nature of reality' does not constitute a first cause because that which operates in perpetuity is the very absence of a first cause. That the Buddha could manipulate reality and manifest miracles was because of what has been called the 'principle of equivalence of cosmology and psychology'.[102] The Buddha has *realised*—both understood and made *real*—the basis of the laws of cause and effect which stipulate that phenomena and worldly processes are conditioned *dharmas*, ergo the 'stuff' of the world is mutable and transformable. In this way, the 'super-worldly' (Skt. *lokottara*; Ch. *chushejian* 出世間) is not above Nature but constitutes the very aspects and activities of enlightened beings within this mundane realm of existence.[103] That is to say, the 'super-worldly' and the 'worldly' (Skt. *lokiya*; Ch. *shijian* 世間) describe two modes of perception. Enlightened beings may perceive the world in a way that is unhindered by obstructions, yet they, alongside unenlightened beings, remain active in the worldly realm. Any understanding of the miracles of the Buddha must therefore preclude ideas of God-like 'transcendence'. Buddhas are immanent, although they seem 'transcendent' from a worldly and unenlightened standpoint.[104] Therefore, miracles in the Buddhist context were not 'supernatural', but results of an *all-too-natural* process.

Moving eastward from South Asia to medieval China, supernormal phenomena such as

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[101] Faure 2000: 11; Italics are mine.
[102] Gethin 1998: 119.
[103] *BHS*: [1953] 1993: 2:465. Also see Gombrich 1997: 168; Fiordalis 2008: 5; Gethin 2011: 230.
[104] The Kyoto School philosopher Nishitani Keiji spoke of this phenomenon in terms of 'trans-descendence' (1982: 171). Also see comments in Faure 1991: 104.

omens, wonders, spirits, ghosts, and the like were part and parcel of an organic natural order, a correlative cosmology made up of two interrelated modes of existence: a seen human realm and an unseen otherworldly realm. Although the seen and the unseen were distinct, these two made up the warp and weft of the cosmos so that elements from one realm could manifest in the other in accordance with the mechanisms of *ganying* 感應 (lit. Stimulus-and-response; hereafter known as 'resonance') that were in turn determined by the laws of *yin-yang* and five phases theory.[105] The Song dynasty Buddhist historian and Vinaya master Zanning 贊寧 (919–100) stated that 'an anomaly (*guai* 怪) is that which is outside of human relations.'[106] In fact, anomalous phenomena were those extraordinary manifestations caused by resonance between elements in Nature, in the unseen realm, and/or in the human sphere. A dead ancestor residing in the unseen realm might visit his or her kin in a dream to ask them to perform the proper burial rites, or a grave-robber desecrating tombs might incur the ire of spirits and suffer real consequences in the seen realm. The fact that the non-human world was unseen did not make it less 'real' because to a certain extent the denizens of the unseen realm were considered effective agents in the seen realm. As Raul Birnbaum put it, the medieval Chinese proceeded 'through life, it seems, by walking through a thick soup of spirits.'[107]

In accordance with the prevalent notions of sympathetic resonance in medieval Chinese society, wonders were not believed to be above nature, but to be exceptional signs caused by the cosmic laws of resonance between distinct classes in Nature. Joseph Needham noted that in the Chinese context 'there could be nothing supernatural sensu stricto' because the miraculous was just as much a part of Nature as humans were.[108] Bearing this in mind, to avoid evoking the hard Christian dichotomy between God and Nature, the term 'supernormal'—in the sense of outside the bounds of our normal human experience—will be used to describe such phenomena in the

[105] For more on correlative cosmology and resonance, see J. B. Henderson 1984: 1–53, 2010: 181 f.; Le Blanc 1985: 191–101; Schwartz 1985: 350–82; Graham 1986: 2.
[106] *SGZ*: T2061.855a5-6.
[107] Birnbaum 2012: 113.
[108] Needham 1956: 2:377.

Buddhist context instead of 'supernatural'.

The early South Asian Buddhist context[109]

Buddhist literature is filled with tales of the miracles of the Buddha and his disciples.[110] The legacy of these miracles has left its imprint in South Asian oral and written culture, as well as in Buddhist art and architecture around the world.[111] Perhaps the Buddha's best known wonder was the so-called Miracle of the Pairs in Śrāvastī, where he produced fire from the top half of his body and water from the bottom half before presenting to the audience the sights of the heavens and the hells. After this he left Śrāvastī, ascending up to the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods (Skt. *Trāyastriṃśa*; Pal. *Tāvatiṃsa*).[112] After giving a sermon in the heavens, he descended on a jewelled staircase to alight in the city of Sāṃkāśya. The accounts tell that these miracle acts resulted in the spiritual advancement of the many believers who witnessed them, not to mention that, because of their associations to these miracles, both Śrāvastī and Sāṃkāśya continue to this day to be holy Buddhist centres of pilgrimage.[113]

Although the biographical details related to the Buddha's life as well as his teaching career were filled with such miraculous elements, the scriptures associated with the early tradition attested to a certain ambiguity towards the supernormal.[114] For example, the 'Maha-sila' (Great

[109] South Asian Buddhism refers generally to the Buddhist traditions that formed in the geographical region that is today covered by the nations of South Asia, namely India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka.

[110] Faure 2018 provides an insightful general study of the Buddha's biographical tradition. For examples in the Chinese Buddhist biographical tradition, see Kieschnick 1997: 67–111; Shinohara 1994. For some modern examples, see Tambiah 1984: 81–110; J. L. Taylor 1997; Houtman 1997; Patton 2018: 1–37

[111] To this day, the 'great sites' (Skt. *mahāsthāna*) in India comprise eight places where the Buddha manifested miracles (*PDB*: 2014: s.v. prātihārya). Pilgrims such as Faxian and Xuanzang, who travelled to India in the fifth and seventh centuries, give many accounts of their visits to sacred sites marked by the Buddha and his disciples' miracles (Gethin 2011: 216).

[112] For more on the narratological structure and history of this myth, see Strong 2010.

[113] Gethin 2011: 225 f.

[114] The early tradition here refers to the practices and the texts of 'Nikāya Buddhism', the pre-sectarian as well as the early Buddhist schools. The Mahāyāna movement, on the other hand, with its many revealed texts and its penchant for the phantasmagoric, was not as squeamish when describing miracles. Case in point, the *Lotus Sutra* is filled with miraculous occurrences and supernormal manifestations.

Precepts) section of the Pāli *Brahmajāla Sutta* criticises monastics that perform miracles for the sake of receiving donations, dismissing such behaviour when the text states that 'some ascetics and brahmins wrongly make a living out of *beastly arts* of this kind [i.e. wonders] by eating the food given in faith, but the ascetic Gotama abstains from them'.[115] In the *Kevaṭṭa Sutta*, the Buddha is asked to convert people by displaying his supernormal powers (Pal. *pātihāriya*; Skt. *prātihārya*), to which he replies: 'As I see this risk in the marvels of supernormal powers, I am upset and embarrassed and disgusted by those marvels.'[116] He then expressed his reservations about a second kind of supernormal power, namely the power of prophecy. The Buddha concludes by stating that the true 'miracle' is proper religious instruction.

At face value, these read as a firm rebuke towards the performance of miracles. It was, however, more of a warning. Although many have read these passages in the *Kevaṭṭa Sutta* as a strong plea for rationalism and scepticism coming from the founder himself,[117] the authors of this *Sutta* were in fact not wholly against miracles, but instead qualified and placed 'normal' and 'supernormal' on a spectrum, providing a hierarchical distinction between what this thesis will classify as superior 'Buddhist miracles' and the lesser 'magic', 'marvels', or 'wonders' of other traditions. The *Sutta* criticises those 'marvels' produced by magical powers which may still be questioned by non-believers. On the other hand, the true miracle is not only religious instruction, but the attainment through gradual cultivation practice of the higher knowledges (Pal. *abhiññā*; Skt. *abhijñā*), which also included the realisation of the eight miraculous powers.[118] In the *Kevaṭṭa Sutta*, marvellous powers—'*beastly arts*' such as clairaudience and clairvoyance—as well as the magical arts (Pal. *iddhi*; Skr. *ṛddhi*) make up the category of Buddhist 'marvels', whereas the manifest powers of those who obtain all the higher knowledges constitute 'miracles'.

Insofar as 'miraculous' powers were part and parcel of the category of the higher knowledges, the performance of these miracles was integrated into those actions that led others to

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[115] *Dīghanikāya*: 1.9-12; Translated to English in Gombrich 1997: 175; Italics are mine.
[116] *Dīghanikāya*: 1.211-3; Translated to English in Gombrich 1997: 177.
[117] For a recent example of such interpretations, see the online article by D. Smith 2012.
[118] Gethin 2011: 219; 224; Fiordalis 2012: 100. For a discussion of the higher knowledges, see *PDB*: 2014: s.v. abhijñā; Clough 2010; Pranke 2004.

illumination and salvation. This was also mentioned in the *Cullavagga,* a minor section of the *Mahāvagga* in the Pāli *Vinaya*, when the Buddha criticised the *arhat* Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja who had been coaxed by a non-believer to display his powers of flight. The Buddha stated that marvels used in such circumstances would not inspire faith in those who could not receive it.[119] Central to this issue is the intention with which miracles are made manifest. The miracle must not be done for show, but with missionary expediency. The exemplar of supernormal expediency in early Buddhist literature was Moggallāna (Skt. Maudgalyāyana). One famous story recounts how he knocked monks out of their sloppy habits by shaking their dwelling with nothing but his big toe.[120] This use of supernormal powers was considered expedient and proper given that the purpose was to shock the monks out of their spiritual torpor.

As a teaching aid, miracles were also used polemically to prove the superiority of Buddhist spiritual attainment.[121] One example of this is once again in the *Mahāvagga*, in the tales of how the Buddha established his first ministry. It tells of the conversion at Uruvelā of the Kassapa brothers, three brahmin ascetics, who after testing their superpowers against the powers of the Buddha found themselves overwhelmed by his telepathic prowess.[122] Through confrontation, the Buddha's powers proved to be superior to the brothers' spiritual attainments. As such, accounts relating how Buddhist miracles overcame other non-Buddhist powers was a narrative strategy for imposing the authority and superiority of this budding new religion over other traditions.[123] In fact, in the collections that include Buddhist miracles such as the *Suttas*, the *avadānas,* the *vaṃsas*, the *adbhutas*, and the *Vinayas*, 'all [the miracles] combine in redounding to the glory of the Buddha', so that these miracle accounts all have the cumulative effect of legitimising and proving the greatness of the Buddha and his doctrine.[124]

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[119] Strong 1979a: 71–75; Fiordalis 2011: 385; Gethin 2011: 222.
[120] *Saṃyuttanikāya*: 5.269-271; Cited in Gethin 2011: 222. Maudgalyāyana was one of the Buddha's disciples and was best known for his supernormal powers (Strong 2015: 191 f.).
[121] Granoff 1996: 80.
[122] Gómez 1977: 222.
[123] Fiordalis 2008: 19 f.
[124] Granoff 1996: 88. For excellent studies of the later Mahāyāna tradition in relation to the supernormal, see Gómez

There is, however, no single Buddhist understanding of what constitutes the miraculous. The concepts related to 'miracles' in the South Asian context such as *prātihārya*, *ṛddhi*, and *abhijñā* were mutable, taking on various meanings and serving different purposes depending on the scripture.[125] Although definitions and usage changed, we could conjecture that in South Asian Buddhist rhetoric, the 'miraculous' has three overarching qualities. First, they have to be used for proselytising purposes. Second, they have to be efficacious in converting others. Third, they have to demonstrate the primacy of the Buddha's teachings over other practices.[126] The narrative use of miracles as a rhetorical trope, even if it is only to dismiss the supernormal, reveals nonetheless a general reverence and belief in miracles. Bearing this in mind, when speaking of 'miracles' in the early schools of Buddhism, perhaps the most important point is not that there is an ambivalence towards the miraculous so much as a distrust of false 'miracles'. Such tiered understandings of the miraculous—primacy of Buddhist 'miracles' over other 'marvels', 'wonders', or 'magic'—are particularly relevant to the history of the Buddhist religion. These narratives provide insight into emic conceptions of the miraculous, allowing us to extrapolate on the different ways in which one group at any one point in time might have defined its 'miracles' in opposition to other groups.

Miracles in Buddhist studies

When speaking of the early Buddhist schools, it is for our purposes also important to look at how the word 'miracle' was used—or not used—in Western scholarship. Skimming through the works of some of the most renowned scholars of Buddhism, one quickly realises that the miraculous side of the Buddha's life did not always suit the rationalist sensibilities of those that studied Buddhism as an academic discipline. Until quite late in the twentieth century, many scholars in the West sought to explain away what they considered the tradition's popular elements so as to uncover the historical, philosophical, and the 'original Buddhism' of the Pāli *Suttas*, foundational literature of

1977; Pachow 1987; Faure 1991: 102–11; Harrison 2003. These studies argue against the 'rationalistic' claim that miracles in Mahāyāna *Sutras* were nothing but laudatory passages and that miracles were only a form of literary hyperbole. They argue that miracles in the Mahāyāna scriptures belie a genuine belief in the power of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and that this belief among the believers helped form the tradition.

[125] Fiordalis 2011: 383.

[126] Fiordalis 2008: 73; 214.

the South and Southeast Asian traditions that were said to harken back to the sermons of the Buddha. In this respect, later Mahāyāna texts with their literary penchant for the phantasmagoric as well as their pantheons of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and divine beings, were believed to be steeped in myth and fantasy. For instance, after the founding of the Pāli Text Society by the renowned British Orientalist Thomas William Rhys Davids in 1881, he and his colleagues sought to romanise and translate to English the entire Pāli canon. One of the various motivations for taking on this gargantuan project was the contention that the Pāli canon preserved the remnants of 'classical' or 'original' Buddhism. The writings in this canon were considered closer to the Buddha's original teachings than other canons because, among other things, these scriptures did not include many of the devotional and ritual elements found in later Mahāyāna scriptures.[127] Étienne Lamotte (1903–1983) distinguished the earlier 'rationalistic' schools from the sectarian and 'supernormalistic' literature of the Mahāsāṅghika and the Mahāyāna.128 As to the so-called vulgar ritual practices relating to the worship of the Buddha's relics attested to in early textual and archaeological evidence, the posthumous 'divinisation' of the religion's founder as well as the veneration of the figure and his objects were written off by many as products of a late cult which emerged in reaction to the 'emotional vacuum' and 'dismay' that beset lay believers when he died.129 'Original Buddhism' was considered a non-religious system of belief, while it was often described in Western scholarship as a practical method for obtaining liberation from suffering based in rationality and empiricism.

While the *Suttas*/*Sutras* provided numerous instances of the miraculous in the Buddha's life, scholars such as Lamotte and Bareau often wrote them off as spurious amendments.[130] Many

[127] Stanley J. Tambiah coins the phrase 'Pali Text Society mentality' to designate the linear view in Western scholarship of the degradation of Buddhism from an originally pure philosophical system to a vulgar religion pandering to the masses (Tambiah 1984: 7). This is an unfair characterisation of the Pali Text Society as a whole, though its role, and especially Rhys Davids' role, in perpetuating 'orientalist' views on the Buddha and the development of Buddhism in history has been the object of various studies. For more on this, see Almond 1988: 26; 66 f.; Hallisey 1995: 44–49.
[128] Lamotte 1966: 1:10.
[129] Lamotte 1958: 686 f.; 714. Also see Bareau 1963: 279 f.; 285; 299, 1975: 184–87.
[130] Keith 1923: 26.

also argued that they should be read symbolically to reveal the deeper religious meaning couched within the myths,[131] while others took a rationalist approach, shoring away what they considered the 'absurd and miraculous legends' found in art and literature to present the tradition in its original non-theistic form.[132] The party line was that the historical Buddha rejected miracles, he was rational in his outlook, and his teachings were free of superstitious ideals because they promoted a scientific and analytic approach to experience.[133] The conviction that the Buddha rejected miracles is exemplified by a comment in Rhys Davids' translation of the *Kevatta Sutta* where he claims that the Buddha '[loaths] the practice of [miracles] and that a greater and better wonder than any or all of them is education in the system of self-training which [culminates] in *arahatship*'.[134] Rhys Davids held that legends about the Buddha's life were late compositions meant to accommodate the emerging idea among believers that the founder possessed both omniscience and 'sinlessness'. Such legends included the Buddha's miraculous birth—the fact that 'he had no earthly father; that he descended of his own accord into his mother's womb from his throne in heaven'—which Rhys Davids claimed was narrative evidence fabricated long after the historical Buddha's death to confirm his extraordinary qualities.[135]

The prevalence of miracles recounted in the stories about the Buddha's life did not sit well with some who sought to distinguish historical elements from what they considered later devotional narrative accretions.[136] Many sought to *de*-mythologise Buddhism, presenting the founder as a 'Socratic sage' while simultaneously dismissing 'primitive' elements such as his

[131] For an early example of this, see Senart 1875: 2. For a summary of the 'mythical' explanation of the Buddha's biography, see Lamotte 1947: 37–40. A more recent example of this mythical explanation is in Gethin 1998: 16.
[132] Rhys Davids [1870] 1894: 15 ff. This negative critique of the Buddha's life was later picked up by German Buddhologists (Oldenberg 1881; Hardy 1890).
[133] Lopez 2008: 31.
[134] Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids 1899: 1:272; Cited in Gethin 2011: 223. Lamotte makes a similar statement in his history of Indian Buddhism (1958: 56). Louis Gómez echoes T. W. Rhys Davids' statements, speaking of the Buddha's stance towards miracles as 'rationalistic' (1977: 221).
[135] Rhys Davids [1870] 1894: 182 f. Foucher makes a similar analogy in his *Vie du Buddha* (1949: 29 f.). To give another example, in Bareau's criteria for dating passages in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra*, he takes the divinisation of the Buddha as a sign that it was a later addition to the text (Bareau 1974a: 280 f.; 285 f., 1979: 63).
[136] Émile Senart argues that elements in the Buddha's life originated in the Kṛṣṇa myths (1875: 393); Cited in T. W. Rhys Davids' work, who also dedicated a large section of his book to the 'Legend of the Buddha' ([1870] 1894: 190).

miraculous deeds as frivolous adornments that could only obscure the underlying truth of his life story and of his teachings.[137] In the 1930s, Moriz Winternitz wrote that: 'when we eliminate all legendary and mythical elements from the tradition, the Buddhist texts still afford us a lifelike and very plausible picture of the personality of Gotama and his career as the founder of a religion and as a preacher.'[138] Such reductionist outlines of the historical Buddha's biography sketch out the 'True' facts about his life, namely his 'birth, maturity, renunciation, search, awakening, and liberation, teaching, death'.[139] Siddhārtha Gautama of the Śākya clan (d. c. 400 BCE) was an ordinary human—royal, but not divine—who attained great insight at the age of thirty-five, at which point he decided to preach that which he learned—always by empirical means—to a close group of disciples. The trouble for scholars arose when reconciling ideas about the 'original Buddhism' based in the teachings with the 'vulgar' tradition that they encountered in the scriptures and in the lived tradition, a tradition replete with instances of divinised buddhas and ritual cult to the remains of the saints.[140]

We have noted that the emphasis on Buddhist non-theism and rationality in much of the scholarly literature of the nineteenth and the twentieth century was usually done at the expense of anomalous and miraculous elements within the traditions.[141] Ultimately, modern sensibilities were projected into an idealised past by both scholars as well as practitioners, inadvertently creating a modern 'received tradition' of what Buddhism *ought* to be, thus passing down a rationalist discourse that still emerges in contemporary discussions on Buddhism.[142] In the mid-twentieth

[137] For examples of this kind of thinking, see Thomas [1927] 1931: 211; Snellgrove 1973: 411; For more on the history of Western scholarship with regard to the Buddha's life, see Penner 2009: 123–42; Faure 2018: 45–72.
[138] Winternitz [1933] 1977: 2:600.
[139] Carrithers 2001: 3.
[140] Snellgrove 1973: 411; Schopen 1988b: 154, 1991b: 19; D. Martin 1994: 295; Kinnard 1999: 1–24; R. L. Brown 2006: 206. For more on the 'repression' of the figure of the Buddhist saint from the 'buddhological consciousness', see Ray [1994] 1999: 4 f. For more on the topic of 'primitive' or 'divergent rationalities', see Sharf 1999: 75. For more on the colonial history of Buddhist studies in the West, see Lopez 1995: 2–22.
[141] T. T. Lewis 2000: xiii; Gethin 2001: 10. Also see mention of 'rationalistic' views towards miracles in the *Kevatta sutta* (*Dīghanikāya*) in distinguishing between true and false miracles (Gómez 1977: 221).
[142] Penner 2009: 126. For an example, see Melford Spiro's discussion of the apotropaic and the superstitious in Buddhism (1982: 11–14).

century, scholars began reflecting on these entrenched ideas of 'Buddhist rationalism'[143] and much headway has indeed been made in recent decades studying the tradition's so-called vulgar aspects.[144] As more and more attention is directed towards ritual, practice, material culture, and social history, the idea of early 'original Buddhism' as representing some monolithic and rationalistic tradition is giving way to a more pluralistic view of Buddhism as comprising various schools of thought determined by the agency of Buddhist actors subscribing to various 'Buddhisms' that are all equally viable and relevant. Scriptures are, in a sense, being *re*-mythologised in an effort to better understand their intricacies as well as to shore away certain 'rational' and, indeed, colonial biases within Buddhist studies.[145]

The medieval Chinese context[146]

In the past, westerners studying China—be they scholars, Christian missionaries, or sometimes both—usually emphasised the Confucian classics, equating Confucianism with traditional Chinese culture. The impression was that, in a medieval society otherwise bogged down by superstition, the educated class followed the positivist approach of Confucianism, a secular system that promoted both a practical ethos based in ritual practice as well as a rational scepticism towards all faith-based religious activity.[147] For these modern-era Sinologists, Confucians had for centuries

[143] Lévi 1938: 42; Lamotte 1947: 49; Conze [1951] 1953: 81–85; 103 ff.; 174 ff.
[144] See articles by Strong 1979b; Schopen 1988a, 1988b, 1997b, 1997a, [1987] 1997; Schober 1997.
[145] Collins 1990: 89; Strong 2015: 410. For a recent study of early Pāli scriptures from a folklore studies perspective, see article and book by Shulman 2021a, 2021b.
[146] For more on Chinese periodisation, and the use of the term 'medieval' in the Chinese context, see Wilkinson 2018: 1 ff.
[147] Granet [1922] 1951: 158. Confucianism, or at least the Confucian classics, have long been equated with the culture of traditional China. Seventeenth and eighteenth century discourse in the West regarding Confucius was based on the pro-Confucian writings of Jesuit missionaries such as Matteo Ricci, while Enlightenment thinkers such as G. W. Liebniz praised Confucius as a rationalist (Mungello 1971: 3; Ter Haar 2016; Csikszentmihalyi 2020). In China, Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929) avoided the term 'religion' when speaking of Confucianism because he considered it to be a rationalist tradition (Cited in Ch'ing-k'un Yang 1961: 5). In these instances, the category of 'religion' stipulated a belief in the existence of a God or gods that were active in the seen realm. The consensus at the time was that Confucianism did not have such stipulations and it was therefore believed to be non-theistic and practical in its

steered away from the mystical and the miraculous, both of which were considered superstitious. It is not difficult when reading through the *Analects* today to interpret in it a certain ambivalence towards the miraculous and the supernormal. For instance, there are statements such as 'respect the gods and spirits but keep them at a distance'[148] as well as the 'subjects the Master did not discuss [were] *strange occurrences*, feats of strength, rebellion, the *gods*'.[149] The court historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145–c. 87 BCE) wrote that: 'Men of learning mostly say that ghosts and spirits do not exist, yet say that [irregularities in] things do.'[150] Indeed, there were sceptical 'men of learning' such as the Confucian scholar Wang Chong 王充 (27–c. 100) who, without ever denying the supernormal, had criticised the blind belief in portents and omens.[151] That being said, as Sima Qian stated, there was a tacit acceptance of these 'irregularities' and by the Eastern Han it was in fact Confucian thinkers such as the literatus Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 179–c. 104 BCE) who formulated and synthesised much of the correlative theories that would inform medieval Chinese discourse on the cosmos and the miraculous for millennia to come.[152] There is little doubt that ideas of a unified 'Confucian' front soliciting the dogmatic rejection of the supernormal, even among the intelligentsia, do not reflect a lived reality and the present consensus would hold that gentry and commoner alike all believed to varying degrees in the reality of the supernormal.[153]

The medieval Chinese believed that omens could relate the mandates of Heaven (*tian* 天)

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approach towards ritual, governance, and self-cultivation. Some of the earliest Western Sinologists believed Confucius to be agnostic with no interest in spiritual matters. This stance is exemplified by a marginal note from the renowned British Sinologist James Legge, himself a Christian missionary, stating that Confucius was 'unreligious, unspiritual, and open to the charge of insincerity' (1867: 99). For another equally Christian argument against Confucius' agnosticism, as well as a summary of early rationalist interpretations of Confucius, see Creel 1932: 64; 99.

[148] *Lunyu*: 2016: 6.72; Translated to English in Watson 2007: 45.

[149] *Lunyu*: 2016: 7.86; Translated to English in Watson 2007: 50.

[150] *Shiji*: 1959: 55.2049; Cited and translated in Dudbridge 2013: 58.

[151] Lippiello 2001: 35–40.

[152] The earliest formulation of the *yin-yang* and the five phases theories that informed the mechanics of the miraculous in China is usually attributed to Zou Yan 鄒衍 (ca. 305–240 BCE) (Lippiello 2001: 25–29). To avoid generalisations regarding Han dynasty Confucian thought, Keith Knapp calls the combination of Confucian ethics with correlative thinking: 'Correlative Confucianism'. More on this and on the role of the miraculous in Confucian tales about filial piety, see Knapp 2005: 82–85.

[153] Dudbridge 2013: 59.

through interpretable codes. These mandates manifested in the form of extraordinary signs or anomalous phenomena, usually in response to the sincerity and virtue of a ruler, or perhaps to herald the ascension of a good emperor.[154] For example, looking at the second century Wu Liang shrine stone inscriptions, recorded auguries such as the discovery of intertwining trees or the arrival of birds joined at the wing were interpreted as signs of a ruler's virtue.[155] The meaning of an omen was not always set in stone, nor was it necessarily ascribed any meaning until after the fact. In the tenth century, when Wang Renyu 王仁裕 (880–956) was senior chair of the Hanlin Academy, he listened for ten days to the shuddering notes of a bell as he discussed this strange phenomenon with his colleagues. It was only after the Latter Jin (936–943) emperor moved the capital from Luoyang to Kaifeng 開封 in 937 that this omen was interpreted post-factum by Wang Renyu as a sign of these political developments.[156] Indeed, reporting 'auspicious omens' was always somewhat politically motivated considering that the positive interpretation of signs was a good way to curry favour with the court.[157]

While the supernormal did play a role in the lives of the general populace, it was the gentry that wielded it and ruled with it. During the Tang, before Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 695–705)—the first and only female emperor in China to rule in her own right—took power, the repeated appearance of Venus in the heavens was interpreted as a sign that that a woman would take the throne.[158] Signs and their interpretations were, however, a double-edged sword, and the earthquakes that occurred once she did take power were divined by her political opponents as bad auguries caused by the same phenomenon: a woman's ascension to power.[159] Portents appearing in nature and in dreams were especially sought out by the imperial authorities. They were recorded, compiled, collected, analysed, and publicised so that, from the Han until the Qing dynasty, all

[154] H. Wu 1989: 234–45; Lippiello 2001: 155; Sharf 2002: 97; Balabanova 2014: 356; Lin 2015: 203.
[155] H. Wu 1989: 240 f.; Lippiello 2001: 70 f. For other examples of Confucian miracles associated with filial piety, see Knapp 2005: 82–113.
[156] Dudbridge 2013: 60.
[157] Kieschnick 2022: 118–21
[158] Twitchett and Wechsler 1979: 243.
[159] Rothschild 2015: 108.

dynastic histories would include a chapter of recorded instances of the miraculous, revealing to us how marvels were an important part of the religious as well as the political landscape of medieval China.

The medieval Chinese Buddhist context

By the early Tang dynasty, Buddhist missionaries from South Asia and the Western Regions had already been interacting with locals for nearly five centuries. Philosophies, cosmologies, and different worldviews mixed and mingled throughout this protracted period of intercultural dialogue, profoundly influencing literary, visual, and material culture in China.[160] Formulations of the miraculous were in no way excluded from this process.

Archaeological and literary evidence indicates that the forms of Chinese Buddhist miracles were not so distinct from the indigenous culture of portents and marvels described above. There was no specialised terminology used to designate Buddhist miracles in particular, or transliterations of Indic terms for the miraculous (e.g. *prātihārya* or *ṛddhi*), which the Chinese seemed to translate using blanket terms such as 'spiritual transformation' (*shenbian* 神變) and 'manifestation' (*shixian* 示現).[161] They also used indigenous terms such as 'auspicious response' (*ruiying* 瑞應) and 'resonance' (*ganying* 感應), terminology that designated both traditional Chinese omens and marvels, as well as Buddhist miracles.[162] Although the language used for auguries and Buddhist miracles was somewhat similar, the miracles described in Buddhist tales were qualitatively distinct insofar as they were not *necessarily* considered responses to kingly virtue or social harmony, but were instead associated with devotional acts, *karmic* merit, religious objects, and sacred places.[163] The mechanisms of resonance which were part and parcel of indigenous Chinese modes of correlative thinking had been redefined to fit the needs of Buddhists.

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[160] For some general information on this religious translation process, see paper by Funayama 2019. For a monograph on the influence of India on Chinese material culture, see Kieschnick 2003: 24–280.

[161] Transliteration was used by different translators as we see with key Mahāyāna Buddhist terms such as *nirvāṇa* (*niepan* 涅槃) or the perfection of wisdom (Skt. *prajñāpāramitā*; Ch. *boruo boluo miduo* 般若波羅蜜多). However, both these terms were also translated to Chinese according to their semantic meaning: 'to become a Buddha' (Skt. *anuttarāṃ samyak-saṃbodhi*; Ch. *chengfo* 成佛) and 'wisdom arriving at the other shore' (*zhidao bi'an* 智到彼岸).

[162] Lippiello 2001: 155; C. H. Ho 2017: 1119; Lin 2015: 203.

[163] Lippiello 2001: 155; Campany 2012b: 71.

The language and the goals of local religious groups were adopted by Buddhist authors and translators who incorporated them into their works. This was certainly the case in some of the earliest translations such as the *Poluomen bisi jing* 婆羅門避死經 (*Sutra on the Brahmin's avoiding death*; T131) translated by An Shigao 安世高 (fl. c. 148–190). It tells of a brahmin sage (*xianren* 仙人) who by means of the cultivation of the five higher knowledges (Skt. *abhijñā;* Ch. *shentong* 神通) was able to push back death. This translation used the language of longevity (*wu you si* 無有死) and immortal-hood (*xian* 仙), the highest attainments for religious Daoists, to show Chinese audiences the heights that could be reached through Buddhist religious practice.[164]

In another instance in the *Record of Miracles,* Daoxuan provides the following statement about the concept of 'resonance' (*ganying* 感應), a term that by the Tang dynasty had become ubiquitous across Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature.

> The beneficial presence of the Three Jewels [Buddhism] arrived [in China] long ago. Yet as [rising] faith and persecution compete one with the other, the conditions for *resonance* (or *sympathetic responses*; *ganying* 感應) [arise]. From the Han through to the Tang dynasty, over a period of some 600 years, numinous signs (*lingxiang* 靈相) [appeared] and have spread widely. They can be found in many records. Yet, divine transformations are boundless, and appear in response to the circumstances. Some auspicious omens appear and vanish, inspiring faith for a time. Some signs reveal themselves, leaving traces then seen for 10,000 years. Some have been seen by those of the past, some will manifest for those of the future. They display themselves luminously to practitioners and laypeople; they arouse faith in the deluded as well as the enlightened.
> 夫三寶利見其來久矣。但以信毀相競。故有感應之緣。自漢泊唐年餘六百。肹蠁，群錄可尋。而神化無方，待機而扣。光瑞出沒，開信於一時。景像垂容，陳迹於萬代。或見於既往，或顯於將來。昭彰於道俗，生信於迷悟。165

This passage speaks to one of the primary functions of the miraculous in Chinese Buddhism: serving to prove the efficacy and potency of the Teaching. In this respect, the compound *lingxiang*

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[164] McBride II 2015: 174 f. For more on the appeal of Buddhist longevity practices in China, see Birnbaum 1985: 144 f.

[165] T2106.404a11-404a16; Italics indicate the English translation for *ganying*. For a similar statement, see Shen Yue's 沈約 (441–513) defence of the Buddha's manifest signs in China (*GHJ*: T2103.121c-122a); Translated to English in Mather 1988: 139 f. For more on Shen Yue and prophecy, see recent article by Lippiello 2021. T2106.404a11-404a16; For a similar statement, see Shen Yue's 沈約 (441–513) defence of the Buddha's manifest signs in China (*GHJ*: T2103.121c-122a); Translated to English in Mather 1988: 139 f. For more on Shen Yue and prophecy, see recent article by Lippiello 2021.

靈相 (numinous sign) used in this passage is particularly telling.[166] In his study of textual narratives related to the apotropaic qualities of the *Diamond Sutra*, Ho notes how the miracle accounts related to the *Sutra* were styled as *lingyan* 靈驗 (lit. numen and verification) works. The compilations of these *Diamond Sutra* miracle tales were comprised of accounts describing how humans were rewarded for reading, reciting, or copying the scripture. Ho considers the interaction between the supplicant and the scripture to constitute the instance of resonance (*ganying* 感應) while the manifest miracle (*lingyan* 靈驗) is proof of the efficacy of the scriptures.[167] In the passage above, the *lingxiang* 靈相 events carried the same burden of proof as '*lingyan*' insofar as Daoxuan used the term to designate those instances in the past when supernormal phenomena provided evidence of the efficacy of Buddhism—miracles 'display themselves luminously to practitioners and laypeople; they arouse faith in the deluded as well as the enlightened' 昭彰於道俗，生信於迷悟 .

The mechanisms of resonance in the Buddhist context, moreover, only responded to the proponents of the faith. What was qualitatively different about Buddhist miracles, often referred to as numinous signs (*lingxiang* 靈相), evidential miracles (*lingyan* 靈驗),[168] numinous responses (lingying 靈應), or responding evidence (*yingyan* 應驗), was that through the medium of monks, nuns, lay believers, supernormal agents and sacred objects, these miracles evoked the potency of Buddhist objects, places, and people, as well as invoked the presence of the Buddha, his disciples, the teachings, and the community. The use of a term like 'manifestation' (*shixian* 示現) in these miracle accounts is quite telling because Chinese Buddhists believed that miraculous occurrences were genuine 'manifestations' of the Buddha's presence in China.[169] The public aspect of these events, the witnessing and the recording of supernormal phenomena, is also central to the Buddhist

[166] The character *ling* 靈 has many meanings such as 'spirit', 'efficient' and 'otherworldly/numinous'.
[167] C. H. Ho 2019: 120.
[168] Translation taken from Verellen 1992: 228. Robert Sharf defines *lingyan* as 'miraculous retribution', putting the emphasis on karmic retribution and the inevitability of divine justice (2002: 94).
[169] Campany 1993b: 235 f.

conception of miracles. Miracle accounts were the written proof that these events did in fact happen and that people witnessed and confirmed their truth value. Miracles were 'signs' and 'evidence' for believers and non-believers in the written and oral traditions attesting to the power associated with Buddhist figures, objects and places. This public dimension of the miraculous is implied in the very terminology used to describe it. The 'sign' (*xiang* 相) must be witnessed for it does not exist if no one sees it, hears about it, or records it. The dimension of 'verification' (*yan* 驗) also implies that these miraculous instances act as a precedent based in history and experience. The term '*ganying*' (lit. stimulus and response) implies a relationship of reciprocity between the human realm and the unseen realm. The miracles occur as a result of this relationship which must be witnessed and recorded for later generations.

In his *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*), Daoxuan noted in the treatise at the end of the biographical section dedicated to miracle-workers (*gantong* 感通) that 'without [miracles and miracle-workers], it would be difficult to spread [the Teachings]' 匪此難弘.[170] Buddhist practitioners were from an early date known in China for their supernormal powers, while descriptions of the powers that they gained through practice were central to miracle tales as well as to the Buddhist biographical genre. Miracle narratives were meant to prove the potency of local monastics, religious objects and sacred places, as well as the legitimacy of the teachings that they represented.[171] Miracle-workers, however, were not always cast in a positive light, and by the Tang dynasty many had been accused of charlatanism both inside and outside the tradition.[172] Perhaps stemming from such accusations, there was an ongoing discussion among Chinese Buddhists at the time relating to the expediency of manifesting miraculous powers in public. For example, Daoxuan's *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* recounts the story of Huikan 慧侃, a conscientious miracle-worker. The biography tells how Huikan was greeted at a

[170] *XGZ*: T2060.677b5; Cited in Kieschnick 1997: 95.
[171] For more on the role of monks as miracle-workers in the Buddhist biographical tradition, see Kieschnick 1997: 67–112.
[172] Gernet [1956] 1995: 242.

monastery by his host and asked to manifest his spiritual powers.

> After which he stuck his arm out the window, and it grew ten *zhang* long. He removed the plaque before the Buddha hall at Qixi Monastery, and returned it to the room. He told [master] Si: 'For the benighted people of this world, when they see this [miracle] they will [merely be] shocked. Therefore, I do not [normally] do such things'.
> 即從窓中出臂，長數十丈。解齊熙寺佛殿上額，將還房中。語偲云：世人無遠識。見多驚異。故吾所不為耳。[173]

Huikan's reticence to use his powers is reminiscent of the Buddha's admonishments when Piṇḍola misused his powers, confirming that even in China miracles served a pedagogical purpose and should act as a teaching aid, not a stumbling block. Although Huikan here shows a measure of caution when manifesting his powers, there are countless other instances in the biographical literature and in miracle tales where such restraint was not shown. In fact, often times the more miraculous the occurrence, the more effective it was.

This was especially true when miracle-workers needed to win the court's favour. We see this in the case of Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (233–349 CE), renowned miracle-worker and preacher of northern China. When the Latter Zhao 後趙 ruler Shi Le 石勒 (r. 330–333) first met Fotudeng, he asked: 'What evidential miracle can Buddhism offer?' The text then reads: 'Knowing that Shi Le did not understand profound principles, Fotudeng determined to prove the potency of Buddhism through the use of [miracles]'.[174] Fotudeng, whose biography is the first in the 'divine miracles' (*shenyi* 神異) category of the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*; c. 530), here used his powers to gain the favour of the local ruler.[175] The Sogdian monk Kang Senghui 康僧會 (d. 280) also made relics appear *ex nihilo* in two separate instances to gain the favour of the Wu 吳 court in south China, first under Sun Quan 孫權 (r. 229–252) and later under Sun Hao 孫皓 (r. 264–280).[176] Miracles such as those produced by Fotudeng, Kang Senghui and other such

[173] *XGZ*: T2060.652b24-28.
[174] *GZ*: T2059.383b; Translated to English in Kieschnick 1997: 74. A separate story about Fotudeng's discovery of a pagoda can be found in the *Record of Miracles* (T2106.406a18-26).
[175] *GZ*: T2059.325b24-25.
[176] Kang Senghui made a relic appear before Sun Quan, as recorded in the *Gaoseng zhuan*: T2059.325b11-25; Translated to French in R. Shih 1968: 127. Senghui manifests a similar miracle before Sun Hao in the *Record of Miracles*: T2106.410c1-14; c.f. Lippiello 2001: 183.

miracle-workers were considered divine traces (*shenji* 神迹) and provided proof of the relevance of Buddhism and its proponents in China. As we will see throughout this thesis, Buddhist miracles came to have significant secular import for they could also be interpreted as portents of imperial significance, especially those related to the discovery of relics, to omens produced by Buddhist images, and to miracles manifesting around Buddhist sacred sites. Indeed, miracles, alongside the miracle-workers, religious objects, and holy places that produced them, were a means of obtaining state support as well as a central part of Chinese Buddhist discourse and self-identity.

Daoxuan and '*gantong*'

The accounts of the supernormal in Daoxuan's *Record of Miracles* were compiled as historical instances of the workings of resonance (*ganying* 感應), the dynamic of sympathetic responses between things in both seen and unseen realms. As we have seen, resonance was that which made the gears turn in the mechanism of Chinese correlative cosmology. Ideas of resonance were integral to the very social fabric of Chinese society and, as Buddhist missionaries began travelling through and settling in China, the concept of resonance came to insinuate itself into every aspect of Buddhist doctrine and religious life. Through the centuries, 'resonance' would be adopted and developed by Buddhists so that early Tang authors and compilers, drawing from a plethora of accounts found in miracle tale and biography compilations, could reevaluate the Chinese Buddhist world in terms of 'resonance' as well as, in Daoxuan's case, in terms of *gantong* 感通 (lit. affective penetration). Of particular interest in these final sections is the term '*gantong*', translated throughout this thesis as 'miracle'. It has alternatively been translated as 'miraculous response', 'stimulus and fulfilment', 'spiritual response', 'spiritual resonance', while in the case of Buddhist biographical literature, it is usually equated to 'wonder-working' or 'thaumaturgy'.[177] This thesis

[177] The terms 'miraculous response', 'stimulus and fulfilment', 'spiritual response' in Zürcher 2013: 284; 509; Campany 1993a: 15. Kieschnick refers to '*gantong*' as 'thaumaturgy', 'spiritual response', and 'wonder-workers' (1997: 9; 52). Interestingly, even though Raoul Birnbaum dedicates three pages to the term *gantong*, he does not ever

opts for the term ‘miracle’ because its definition is quite flexible without rendering the term meaningless, and because any two-word compound in English such as ‘miraculous response’ seems unwieldy. We will now explore how Daoxuan’s use of the term ‘*gantong*’ was purposeful and innovative, appearing in the literature as both a religious category and as a blanket term for the miraculous.

The term ‘*gantong*’ is by no means a Chinese Buddhist neologism for it has a long history of usage in China. In fact, Buddhist lexicographers never considered the word, probably because it did not appear in the translated scriptures and therefore had no corresponding Sanskrit.[178] In the subsection dedicated to the *Record of Miracles* in the *Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義 (*Pronunciation and Meaning in the Complete Buddhist Canon*; c. 800), it provided a glossary of translated Sanskrit terms without ever elaborating on the compound ‘*gantong*’.[179] Instead, this patently Sinitic concept would first have been drawn out of the collective cultural repertoire to then be applied during the Six Dynasties period (220–589) and in the Tang dynasty to Buddhist instances of the miraculous. The earliest reference to the two characters ‘*gan*’ and ‘*tong*’ in non-Buddhist literature is in the Later Han dynasty (25–220 CE) ‘Xici’ 繫辭 (Appended Texts) commentaries to the *Zhou yi* 周易 (*Zhou Changes*).

> The changes are without thought and action. They are without movement. [When they are] *stimulated* (*gan* 感), they then *penetrate* (*tong* 通) [to all phenomena and events] beneath the heavens.
> 易无思也，无為也，寂然不動，感而遂通天下之故。[180]

As we will see below, the formula ‘*gan er sui tong* 感而遂通’ was used in Tang and Song dynasty Buddhist texts as a literary nod to the *Changes*. In the *Houhan shu* 後漢書 (*History of the Latter Han*), the characters ‘*gan*’ and ‘*tong*’ appear in the biography of Emperor Xiaozhang 孝章 (r. 75–

translate the term into English (1986: 134 ff.). The terms ‘miraculous response’, ‘stimulus and fulfilment’, ‘spiritual response’ in Zürcher 2013: 284; 509; Campany 1993a: 15. Kieschnick refers to ‘*gantong*’ as ‘thaumaturgy’, ‘spiritual response’, and ‘wonder-workers’ (1997: 9; 52). Interestingly, even though Raoul Birnbaum dedicates three pages to the term *gantong*, he does not ever translate the term into English (1986: 134 ff.).

[178] Birnbaum 1986: 135.

[179] *Yiqie jing yinyi*: T2128.829b26-830a20. The scholar-monk Huilin 慧琳 (737 – 820) compiled the majority of this text, though he also included sections composed by his close contemporary, Xuanying 玄應 (d.u.).

[180] *Zhouyi*: 2006: 370; c.f. Legge 1882: 16:370.

88):

> The *stimulus* (*gan* 感) of the [emperor's] consummate virtue *shone out* (*tong* 通) like spiritual light.
> 至德所感，通於神明。[181]

In the *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論 (*Comments of a Recluse*), the great Han dynasty sceptic Wang Fu 王符 (c. 90–165) wrote that:

> The heavenly way is called extending; The earthly way is called transforming; The human way is called acting. To 'act' is certainly to achieve rare marvels [by means of] *sympathetic connection* (*gantong* 感通) to yin and yang.
> 天道曰施，地道曰化，人道曰為。為者、蓋所謂感通陰陽而致珍異也。[182]

As the excerpts above show, the meaning of '*gan*' and '*tong*' is difficult to pin down. The character '*gan*' in modern Chinese is usually understood in the passive voice as 'to feel'. However, this was not the case in Classical Chinese where it was often understood as something closer to 'rousing, affecting, stimulating'.[183] The juxtaposition of these two characters designates a causal link between humans who, through affect or virtue, stimulate a response from the cosmos (e.g. the heavens, *yin* and *yang*, etc.). The dictionary definition for '*gantong*' reads: 'In ancient times, people believed that one's sincerity could *resonate* (*ganying*) with spirits or external objects.'[184] Paul Kroll's *Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* reads: '*Gantong,* sensible of spiritual emanations that penetrate the earthly realm or that allow one to communicate with higher realms.'[185] Essentially, the concept of '*gantong*' in ancient China, not unlike 'resonance', designated a response in the world brought about by an external stimulus, usually a ruler's virtue or other elements in Nature.

In the passages above drawn from non-Buddhist works, the term '*gantong*' connoted a causal link between agents (e.g. human actors, rulers) and a cosmos that could be stimulated by these agents when their actions resonated with certain cosmic categories (e.g. *yin* and *yang*). However, underpinning these ancient texts was a belief in a cosmos that was otherwise unmoved

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[181] *Houhan shu*: 1965: 3.131; For further analysis of these two passages in relation to *gantong*, see article by Funamoto 1983.
[182] *Qianfu lun*: 1997: 8.365 f.
[183] One ancient dictionary defines it as '"*gan*", to move people's hearts' (*Shuowen jiezi*: 2016: 11.222).
[184] *Gu hanyu da cidian*: 2000: s.v. 感通.
[185] Kroll 2017: s.v. 感

by the activity of human beings. In Buddhist writings, the language for the miraculous no longer addressed the worldly manifestations of a disinterested Heaven (*tian* 天) because terms such as 'resonance' or '*gantong*' had since the Six Dynasties period been ethicised according to *karmic* laws of causation as well as Buddhist standards of cultivation and spiritual attainment. The terms '*gantong*' as well as 'resonance' gained new dimensions of meaning, evoking not only the workings of the *Changes* or the virtue of a ruler, but also the miracles related to the Buddha as well as to practitioners, places, and objects.[186]

These Chinese Buddhist conceptions of the miraculous began to crystallise in the early miracle tale texts of the Six Dynasties period (220–589), especially in the compiled miracle stories of Guanshiyin 觀世音 (Skt. Avalokiteśvara) as well as in the narratives extolling the apotropaic qualities of scriptures such as the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Flower Garland Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra*.[187] Six Dynasties authors and compilers used other designations such as *ganying* 感應, *shentong* 神通 (Skt. *abhijñā*; higher knowledges), *lingyan* 靈驗, and *shenli* 神力 (lit. spiritual power) to describe instances of the miraculous, emboldening believers who read or heard the accounts while simultaneously bolstering the argument in support of Buddhism's relevance in China.

Daoxuan also included these terms in his miracle tales, though it was ultimately his intentional use of the term '*gantong*' that would leave the most profound literary impression. Notable Buddhist figures such as Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518) and Falin 法琳 (572–640) also used the term '*gantong*', though its occurrence in their writings is negligeable.[188] On the other hand, reading through extant Six Dynasties works on the miraculous, other designations were favoured (*ganying*, *lingyan*, etc) while the term '*gantong*' was almost completely unused. A quick scan of

[186] Raoul Birnbaum states that *gantong* refers to extraordinary Buddhist sites, objects, and people (1986: 135).

[187] Suwa T. 2005a: 51, 2005b: 211 f.; 216, 2006. For a full-length study of the socio-historical underpinnings of the miracle tales related to the *Diamond Sutra*, see C. H. Ho 2019. He explores two terms in detail that are closely related to the concept of *gantong*, the terms *lingyan* 靈驗 (lit. numen and verification) and *ganying* 感應 (resonance), in his second chapter, arguing that Buddhist *lingyan* accounts verify (*yan*) the Buddhist import of phenomena 'already accounted for by [indigenous understandings of] *ganying*' (C. H. Ho 2019: 120 ff.).

[188] The term '*gantong*' is used on four occasions in his *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論 (*Treatise on Discerning the Correct*; T2018). Sengyou (445–518) only uses the term twice in his *Hongming ji* 弘明集 (*Collection for the Propagation and Clarification* [*of Buddhism*]; T2102). The term was obviously in use, though it had not been popularised.

the literature during the seventh century, however, reveals that Daoxuan was the first to use the term widely in works related to apologetics, biographies, and miracle tales. The compound '*gantong*' appears in the title of at least two of his texts, the *Record of Miracles* (*gantong lu* 感通錄) and the two versions of his interviews with spirits, the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 and the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄. The term is also used on multiple occasions to describe the miraculous in six of his extant works, most notably the *Record of Miracles*, the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* and the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (*Expanded Collection for the Propagation and Clarification* [*of Buddhism*]).[189] Bearing this in mind, certain questions remain: What was so special about Daoxuan's use of the term '*gantong*'? And, how did the application of the term influence his contemporaries and later Buddhist authors?

Miracle-workers

Daoxuan did not elaborate on why he used '*gantong'* specifically in his writings, making it difficult to piece together a definition using his own words. His meaning is perhaps best understood not in terms of 'why' but 'how' he used it. Nowhere is '*gantong*' used more deliberately than in his *Biographies*, where it was applied as a label for the social category of 'miracle-worker' (*gantong* 感通) monks. Because he does not provide a set definition for the term, Daoxuan's use of *'gantong*' to designate the 'miracle-worker' category is, for our purposes, especially informed by the terminology he is *not* using, and what this terminological shift means for him and for other thinkers.

By the early Tang dynasty, there was already a variety of terms used in both secular and religious literature to address the social category of what we might call 'miracle-workers', 'wonder-workers', 'theurgists' or 'thaumaturges'. For example, until the fifth century, history books from Liu Xin's (46 BCE–23 CE) *Qilüe* 七略 (*Seven Summaries*) to the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Latter Han*) used bibliographic categories such as *fangji* 方技 (methods and

[189] The works are the *Record of Miracle* (*gantong lu* 感通錄), the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 (T1898) and the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 (T2107), as well as the *Shijia shipu* 釋迦氏譜 (T2041), the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (T2050), the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (T2103)

techniques) or *fangshu* 方術 (methods and arts) as groupings for the lives of the *fangshi* 方士 (masters of esoterica), specialists of the occult including diviners, magicians, as well as Daoist and Buddhist adepts. On the other hand, the *shenxian* 神仙 (transcendent) category found in the *Han shu* 漢書 (*History of the Han*) and in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–343) *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (*Traditions of Divine Transcendents*), was used as a heading to the biographies of individuals who practised immortality techniques.[190] As a member of the Chinese intelligentsia, Daoxuan would have been aware of such schemas. He was well versed in the historical classics, both secular as well religious, and by using '*gantong*' to group the lives of miracle-working monks in his *Biographies* he was distinguishing his works from other historiographical traditions.

He also changed the prevailing Buddhist schemas of his time, effectively consolidating all bibliographic categories related to the miraculous as formulated by previous biographers into the '*gantong*' category found in his own *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*. Arguably the first of these Buddhist biographers was Baochang 寶唱 (466–c. 518), author of the *Biographies of Famous Monks* (*Minseng zhuan* 名僧傳; 544, no longer extant) and the *Biographies of Nuns* (*Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳; d.u.).[191] It was Baochang that developed one of the earliest sets of patently Buddhist social categories for eminent monks—although he did not apply it to the lives of the nuns that he composed, as we will see below. His *Biographies of Famous Monks* is no longer extant but the table of contents and most of the biographies were copied and preserved in Japan by the Kegon 華嚴 monk Sōshō 宗性 (1202–1278 CE) while a complete, if somewhat problematic, modern rendering of the table of contents, the *Meisōden shō* 名僧傳抄 (X1523), is preserved in

[190] Csikszentmihalyi 2008: 405. Interestingly, in the third fascicle of the *Record of Miracles* Daoxuan uses the similar assignation *shenseng* 神僧 (holy monks) to describe exceptional monks. The term also appears in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, though not as a title-head, as is the case in the *Record of Miracles*.

[191] Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518) also included biographies in the *shulie zhuan* 述列傳 section of his *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集. However, Sengyou simply provided these biographies in the last three fascicles of his text without categorising the various lives of eminent monks. These accounts would later be categorised by Baochang and then Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554). A catalogue in the *Sui shu* also includes a *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 by Sengyou, though its existence is dubious (A. F. Wright [1954] 1990: 98).

the *Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō* 大日本續藏經 (1975–1989).[192] It is not within the purview of this thesis to cover the contents of Baochang's *Biographies* preserved in Japan, though it is worth noting that the table of contents indicates that the biographies were grouped according to the dominant activities of the monks in question, there were separate chapters for foreigners and for indigenous monks as well as various chapters dedicated to accounts related to the supernormal powers of monastics. Miraculous elements would have been peppered throughout the text and there were at least three categories explicitly dedicated to miracle-working monks, namely *Shentong hongjiao waiguo fashi* 神通弘教外國法師 (Foreign masters who spread the teaching with miracles), *Shen li* 神力 ([Monks with] supernormal powers) and *Gantong kujie* 感通苦節 ([Monks who produced] miracles through their austerities).[193] That being said, Baochang does not elaborate on his choice of categories and it is impossible to further qualify what he meant by '*shentong* 神通', '*shenli* 神力' and '*gantong*'. In his chapter dedicated to foreign masters, he does include in the section heading the term '*shentong*', a translation to Chinese of the Sanskrit word for the 'higher knowledges' (Skt. *abhijñā*), while he uses '*shenli*' and '*gantong*'—both indigenous terms—for the chapters grouping the biographies of Chinese monks. This might show a certain bias towards the place of origin of monks in his use of these terms though the distinction, if there ever was one, is not explicitly mentioned in Baochang's extant works.

Baochang's *Biographies of Nuns* did not follow the same schema, providing instead a chronological breakdown of the lives of notable nuns from the Jin dynasty (266–420) until the Liang dynasty (502–557). Indeed, the term '*shenli*' only appears once in the *Biographies of Nuns*,[194] while the terms '*shentong*' and '*gantong*' are not used at all. Regardless, Severina Balabanova analysed the miraculous in the lives of these nuns through the lens of Baochang's schema as informed by the categories in the table of contents of the *Biographies of Famous Monks*. She superimposed these bibliographic categories on the lives of the nuns, arguing that there were

[192] For more on the various excerpted version of the *Biographies* by Baochang that still exist in Japan, see Lee 2020: 91 ff.
[193] For all title heads and their contents, see X1523. Also see Cao Shibang 1999: 50 f.
[194] *Biqiuni zhuan*: T2063.946a25.

three different kinds of 'miracle' associated to them: '*gantong*', '*shenli*', and *chanshi* 禪師 (meditation masters). Balabanova states that '*gantong*' accounts are comprised of miracles related to dreams, visions, return from death, healing, protection by animals and the recitation of Sutras. The '*shenli*' accounts are comprised of the lives of nuns who obtained supernormal powers through virtue and diligence. The '*chanshi*' accounts related the manifest miracles associated to meditation practices.[195] These are, however, not the categories used in the *Biographies of Nuns* and, although they are useful for making artificial distinctions between the different kinds of miracles in medieval Buddhist China, it would be misleading to read them as emic understandings of the miraculous. That being said, based on what we know about Baochang's oeuvre, we can make the following two statements. First, considering the variance in schemas used in Baochang's biography compilations, we can see that the literary form and structure of Buddhist biography writing was not fully developed at that time. He brought innovation to the Buddhist biographical genre in his *Biographies of Famous Monks* while deferring to chronology and to the structure of the historical classics in his *Biographies of Nuns*. Second, looking at the breadth of these miracle categories—*shentong*, *shenli* and *gantong*—we can observe that miracle-workers were considered a relevant social category by early biographers such as Baochang, although the language used to describe them varied. Indeed, miracle working was at that time still split into several subcategories dependent on the provenance of the monk or nun (foreigner or local) and, perhaps, also the quality of the miracle.

The most influential Liang dynasty Buddhist biography compilation was composed by Baochang's contemporary, the scholar-monk Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554). His *Biographies of Eminent Monks* drew extensively on the works of his contemporaries, though he applied an innovative method and structure to his writing that would set the standard for all later works of that genre. Indeed, whereas little is known about Baochang's choice of terms, Huijiao was very thorough when explaining his reasoning. Most notably for our purposes, one of the social categories in Huijiao's *Liang Biographies* was the grouping of so-called *shenyi* 神異 (lit. divine wonder) monks,

[195] Balabanova 2014: 379; 396; 404.

which was comprised of two chapters dedicated to the lives of miracle-working monks from both China and the West. Huijiao did not make grounpings according to the monk's country of origin, instead selecting the relevant biographies by following more career-specific standards that he set and defined for every social category in his compilation. Regarding the category of miracle-workers, he wrote in the final fascicle to his *Biographies* that:

> The [monks] included in this present work must meet the standard of having obtained *transcendence* (*chaojue* 超絕). The lives of monks who only have a small measure of *resonant power* (*tonggan* 通感) are appended to the end of [the other main] biographies.
> 今之所取，必其製用超絕。及有一分通感，迺編之傳末。[196]

This passage makes it clear that priority was given to the most spiritually advanced adepts (*chaojue* 超絕), while a secondary position was provided for those monks who manifested lesser miracles, those with so-called small measures of 'resonant power' (*yi fen tonggan* 一分通感). Huijiao's conception of miracle working was contingent on the manifest 'resonant power' of the monks and their ability to affect the world through their cultivation practice and their spiritual attainment. Other recorded miracles in the lives of monks that were contingent on the power of external elements such as relics, images, sacred places, supernormal agents and Nature were relegated to a secondary position in the biographies, or they were left out altogether.[197]

Over a century later, Daoxuan's *Tang Biographies* acted as a sequel of sorts in the literary tradition established since the composition of the *Liang Biographies*. However, Huijiao's '*shenyi*' category would prove to be too limiting for Daoxuan's purposes.[198] Indeed, Daoxuan shifted away from the bibliographic categories used by his predecessor, replacing the category of '*shenyi*' with the label '*gantong*' because it could include a wider variety of miraculous phenomena. Suwa Takashige 諏訪隆茂 argued that the semantic difference between '*shenyi*' and '*gantong*' was that the former adopted the active voice, and the latter the passive. '*Shenyi*' designated a monk or a supernormal agent's active participation in the Buddhist project of salvation. On the other hand,

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[196] *GSZ*: T2059.419a16-18. Also cited in Kieschnick 1997: 99.
[197] Kieschnick 1997: 100.
[198] For a more thorough analysis of all the taxonomic changes between the Liang and the Tang *Biographies*, see Cao Shibang 1999: 101–22.

'*gantong*' had to do with miracles related to being saved or asking for salvation.[199] Bernard Faure follows a similar line of reasoning, providing a definition of the term '*gantong*' in contrast to the word for the 'higher knowledges' (*shentong* 神通), which he defines as supernormal skills honed through practice and cultivation (i.e. *shenyi*), while '*gantong*' entails 'no magical activity; it is a manifestation that occurs spontaneously in response to the purity of the monk.'[200] Again, '*gantong*' is described in passive terms. However, in the *Tang Biographies*, Daoxuan's use of the word '*gantong*' was not restricted to the passive voice. Not only did his '*gantong*' chapters include those instances when the actions of monks gave rise to a spontaneous response from Nature and from Buddhist objects and places, but it also addressed those supernormal powers and manifestations that were associated to the actions of monks (*shentong* and *shenyi*).[201]

Daoxuan did not give an explicit reason for the change in terminology. It was the Song dynasty scholar-monk Zanning that commented in the concluding remarks to his own '*gantong*' section of the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (*Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*; 988) that the '*shenyi*' category was too limiting because it could only include the most accomplished sages or the most significant portents while many lesser signs and manifest miracles were not accounted for. Zanning held that the '*gantong*' category established by Daoxuan was more expedient because it was less restricting:

> Certainly, [Daoxuan] retrieved all [the instances of] '[When] *stimulated*, it then *penetrates*'. [The monks] penetrate and attain insight [into] nature, [they] cultivate [themselves] and attain affective involvement. Supernormal powers (*tong*) are the result. So as to examine this pattern of development, all [that is miraculous] is included [in the text].
> 蓋取諸「感而遂通」，通則智性，修則感歟，果乃通也。覈斯理長，無不包括。[202]

According to this passage, the relabelling occurred because '*shenyi*' was too restrictive, while '*gantong*' offered enough semantic range to include all instances related to Buddhist miracles.

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[199] Takashige Suwa then comes to the dubious conclusion that because Daoxuan had a vested interest in the salvation of sentient beings, he therefore changed the category from '*shenyi*' to '*gantong*' (2005b: 211). Also see Kieschnick 1997: 100.
[200] Faure 1991: 104 n. 17. For more on Buddhist spells and magic in the medieval Chinese context, see McBride II 2015: 170 f.
[201] Kieschnick 1997: 100
[202] *SGZ*: T2061.854b22-24.

Borrowing Zanning's argument, Cao Shibang 曹仕邦 states in his study of Chinese Buddhist historiography that the social category '*shenyi*' only included the most highly attained monks, while '*gantong*' could also include those instances where monks were assisted by supernormal agents (*tianshen* 天神) as well as sacred objects and places.[203] If Huijiao only included the choicest miracle-working accounts in his *Biographies*, Daoxuan was showing that, when it comes to proving the efficacy of Buddhist teachings in China, the maxim ought to be 'more is more'. Indeed, it would seem that his presentation of '*gantong*' was meant to be as open as possible so that he might include a plethora of different examples as evidence of the power of Buddhism.

In the '*gantong*' section of his *Biographies*, Daoxuan gave many examples of the powers of Buddhist practitioners and teachings. For example, in one instance Dushun 杜順 crossed a riverbed where all the water miraculously evacuated to clear the way for him. When he returned from his trip, the river began to flow again and filled up.[204] Daoxuan noted that:

> The believers all saw but could not fathom the reason [why this happened]. It was because of [Dushun's] *sympathetic connection* (*gantong* 感通) to the seen and unseen [realms].
> 門徒目覩而不測其然也。所以感通幽顯。205

The '*gantong*' event in this passage represents the resonance between Dushun and his environment. The term '*gantong*' here evokes mysterious and miraculous phenomena that occur for the sake of Buddhist believers. The character '*gan*' 感 speaks not only to how Dushun changed his environment by means of affect, but also to his powers gained through insight into Buddhist truths as well as the accord of his actions with fundamental principles.

Another account in the *Biographies* tells that while Zhineng 智能 was in the mountains partaking in the construction of pagodas, he discovered an ancient stone box that was too heavy for any human to carry. He earnestly prayed for assistance and his sincerity moved supernormal

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[203] Cao Shibang 1999: 108. A similar argument is made in Kieschnick 1997: 100.

[204] Dushun (557–640), also known as Fashun, is the putative founder of the Huayan school. He is particularly well known for his miraculous feats (Kiyotaka 2005). Dushun (557–640), also known as Fashun, is the putative founder of the Huayan school. He is particularly well known for his miraculous feats (Gimello 1976: 66–69; Kiyotaka 2005).

[205] *XGZ*: T2060.653c25-26; Italics indicate the translation for '*gantong*'. For more on this passage, see Suwa T. 2005a: 47, 2005b: 205 f.; *XGZ*: T2060.653c25-26; Italics indicate the translation for '*gantong*'. For more on this passage, see Suwa T. 2005a: 47, 2005b: 205 f.;

agents in the unseen realm, inciting them to produce a miracle: the appearance of a shining relic.

> By the *far-reaching stimulus penetrating the unseen,* there was a prayer and this *response* [i.e. the relic's appearance] came to be.
> 所謂至感冥通，有祈斯應矣。206

In the face of an immovable object, Zhineng appealed to supernormal agents and was rewarded with the relic that was presumably encased in the container. In this account, there was an active dimension to '*gantong*' when Zhineng requested assistance through prayer. In this case, the character '*tong*' 通, here translated as 'penetrating', evokes insight or spiritual access to something beyond—not above—the immediate boundaries of Nature. It relates both to Zhineng's 'penetrating' insight, as well as the affective 'connection', or 'reciprocity', between the subject and the object of the prayers, namely the supernormal agents.

Both these examples speak to the reciprocal nature of Daoxuan's understanding of '*gantong*'. On the one hand, *gantong* is a passive process wherein a believer causes a reaction from a supernormal agent, a miraculous object, or a sacred place, by means of the believer's own spiritual attainment. On the other hand, '*gantong*' describes an exchange done through prayer, or in some cases meditation, scripture recitation, even dreaming, between a believer and the unseen realm which brings about a timely response.

Daoxuan's terminological and taxonomic innovations would inform not only his own works, but all future Buddhist literature related to the miraculous as well.[207] During his lifetime, however, the term '*gantong*' was still gaining currency. Daoxuan's contemporary and close associate, the Vinaya specialist Daoshi 道世 (d. 668) dedicated two chapters to the miraculous in his Buddhist encyclopaedia, the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*A Forest of Pearls*; 668). These were the '*Shenyi*' chapter and the '*Gantong*' chapter in fascicles 28 and 29, respectively. The '*Shenyi*' chapter was primarily dedicated to accounts of the miraculous in the Buddha's life while the final

[206] *XGZ*: T2060.676a21-22; Italics indicate the translation for '*gantong*'.
[207] Suwa T. 2005a: 47.

section of the chapter provided an itemised list of Chinese miracle tales (*ganying yuan* 感應緣).[208] In the '*Gantong*' section, Daoshi describes how the records of the sacred places in India visited by the pilgrim and translator Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) provided crucial information for the Tang state regarding the Western Regions as well as great insight for believers into holy places, the 'sacred vestiges' (*shenji* 神跡), in the land once inhabited by the Buddha.[209] The term '*gantong*' here seems to insinuate that the detailed records of the holy places of India connected (*tong*) believers to these sacred vestiges through the stimulus (*gan*) of the sacred quality of these places. The fact that Daoxuan's close colleague Daoshi was still using the '*shenyi*' category to describe miracles while using '*gantong*' for very different purposes shows the extent to which Daoxuan was breaking the mould in his works, especially in his *Biographies*. He was consciously discarding '*shenyi*' which was still being used by his close associates to replace it with '*gantong*'

Although the categories in the *Biographies* and in the *Forest of Pearls* were different, Daoshi did use the term '*gantong*' on multiple occasions in his enyclopaedia. In one instance, he used the formulaic sentence drawn from the *Changes* (*gan er sui tong* 感而遂通) to describe the rarefied and exceptional quality of Buddhist miracles. He writes that:

> I have heard: [enlightenment is to be] silently extinguished and unmoving. This is the formless and the ineffable. [However,] when *stimulated* (*gan* 感), it then *penetrates* (*tong* 通) [through all things], so there are names [i.e. language] and there are teachings. Bearing this in mind, it is easier to enter the fires of the trichiliocosm than to hear [even] one verse of four [characters from the Buddha's Teaching]. 蓋聞：寂滅不動。是則無象無言，感而遂通，所以有名有教。是以一四之句難聞，三千之火易入。[210]

Three hundred years later, Zanning echoes these statements about the specifically Buddhist nature of miracles when he writes how Daoist adepts as well as ghosts or spirits can manifest 'anomalous' (*guai* 怪) phenomena; however, it is only Buddhists, because of their association to the true

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[208] *Yuan* 緣 is a translation for the *avadāna* narrative genre which recounts the miraculous deeds of past Buddhist figures. It was often used in Chinese Buddhist texts alongside *ji* 記 and *zhuan* 傳. There are 18 instances (*yan* 驗) in Daoshi's miracle tale section. Whereas the rest of the '*Shenyi*' chapter draws from Sutras, the miracle tale section draws from biography works such as the *Liang* and the *Tang Biographies*, as well as miracle tale collections such as the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記. This chapter is translated to English in Shinohara 2022: 5:3–54.

[209] This chapter is translated to English in Shinohara 2022: 5:55–107

[210] *FZ*: T2122.412a3-5; c.f. Hsu 2018: 162.

Teaching, who may produce miracles, or as he calls them in this passage, 'correct anomalies' (*zhengguai* 正怪).

> Among ordinary sentient beings, we call such [marvellous occurrences] anomalies. Among the [Buddhist] sages, we call these [miracles] *penetrations*, for they *affect* and then *penetrate* [to all things]. 在人情則謂之怪。在諸聖則謂之通，感而遂通。211

As we can see in this passage, anomalous phenomena were assessed by Buddhist Chinese thinkers in terms of hierarchy and degree. Zanning judged that the Buddhist 'anomalies' were the correct (*zheng* 正) and, therefore, superior miracles because—quoting once more from the *Changes*—they '*affect* and then penetrate [to all things]' 感而遂通. Although he wrote many centuries after Daoxuan's time, Zanning's statements about '*guai*', and by association '*gantong*', speak to pre-existing paradigms. Indeed, this was a qualitative distinction that was already being made in some shape or form during the early Tang by thinkers such as Daoxuan and Daoshi.

We have seen that many different terms with various connotations have been used throughout Chinese Buddhist history. The traditions of miracle tale compilation and biographical collection all informed Daoxuan's taxonomic innovations. The most significant innovation brought about by Daoxuan's promotion of the term '*gantong*' was its inclusiveness, which allowed him to attribute all kinds of miracles to Buddhist practitioners, places, and objects. The term '*gantong*' designates many things. It describes the miracles actively produced by believers as well as the miracles that occur as a response to a believer's spiritual attainment or virtue. It also operates within a loose Buddhist 'miracle' hierarchy, working above the marvels, wonders, and anomalies of religious Daoism as well as other extraordinary yet non-Buddhist phenomena and auguries. Miracles (*gantong*) were the 'correct anomalies' (*zhengguai* 真怪) because they were manifestations in the seen realm of the laws of *karma* and of the Buddha himself.

Working definition

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this overview of the miraculous posited that the

211 *SGZ*: T2061.855a12-13 ; c.f. Birnbaum 1986: 136

word ‘miracle’, an English term that carries its own cultural baggage, can be used to designate similar phenomena in a wider cultural context. This chapter was not trying to describe ‘miracles’ in China by uncovering latent ideas about the supernormal, some perennial understanding of ‘miracles’ shared across cultures. We sought instead to provide ‘dynamic equivalents’ for key terms that could communicate to a broad readership the meaning and intent of the sources. Having looked at the miraculous in its various forms in South and East Asia, we can now put forth a working definition based in the conceptual ‘family resemblances’ between the term’s medieval Christian meaning, its modern meaning, and the similar designations found in the Buddhist context, especially in Daoxuan’s work.

As stated at the outset, the medieval Christian sense of the miraculous and the supernatural do not apply to the Chinese Buddhist context. Scholars have therefore struggled to find suitable terminology to address the miraculous in Buddhism. For instance, in Alfred Foucher’s *Vie du Buddha*, he claimed that the word ‘miracle’ could not be used in its ‘full’ Christian sense but only in its broadest sense to designate those ‘manifestations that are outside of the ordinary.’[212] Other terminological alternatives have also presented themselves. Chiew Hui Ho advocated the use of the term ‘wonder’ and Luis Gómez, who stated that he did not have any real issue with the word ‘miracle’, also preferred to err on the side of caution, writing instead about Buddhist ‘wonders and wonder-working […] to move […] discourse away from another word upon which some religious groups claim exclusive rights: “miracles”.’[213] We have seen in this chapter that the use of other terminology such as ‘wonder’ or ‘magic’ is not so much a caution as it is an academic contrivance.

The characteristically Christian definition of ‘miracles’ is exemplified by Richard Swinburne’s statement that ‘miracles’ are those events that carry ‘religious significance’ for they ‘contribute significantly towards a holy divine purpose for the world’.[214] Jacques Le Goff distinguished between miracles (acts of God), magic (acts of Satan), and the marvellous, what he

[212] Foucher 1949: 271.
[213] Gómez 2010: 513. Chiew Hui Ho made a similar argument which was covered in the ‘Miracle: a problematic term?’ section above.
[214] Swinburne 1970: 8.

called the 'neutral supernatural' between divine miracles and diabolical magic.[215] He argued that miracles and magic fell under the purview of the broadly defined category of the 'marvellous'. It was the thirteenth-century Church, however, that attributed religious significance to the term 'miracle' (Lat. *miraculum*), providing such phenomena with a theological seal of authenticity while diverting non-Christian 'magic' (*magicus*) and 'marvels' (*mirabilia*) into the domain of the superstitious.[216]

Therefore, the question remains as to whether the word 'miracle' is really that controversial in a Buddhist context? The original sense of the term, which shares a root word with 'marvel' (*mirabilis*), exhibits no latent Christian meanings. The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that the word 'miracle' comes to English, by way of French, from the Latin word '*miraculum*', comprised of the root word '*mīror*', which means 'to wonder or marvel at', and the derivative suffix '*culum*'.[217] In trying to bridge the gap between Christian and Buddhist understandings of 'miracles', John Kieschnick rids the term of its divine associations, instead referring back to its original meaning as an 'object of wonder'—echoing Foucher's statement about miracles cited above—stating that 'this looser definition proves useful to describe a wide variety of phenomena, including omens and other extraordinary changes in the natural world, acts of the Buddha and his disciples, and supernormal powers acquired through meditation—all common throughout Buddhist literature.'[218]

Taking on its laicised meaning as an 'object of wonder', however, the word 'miracle' becomes no different from the terms 'magic', 'marvel', or 'wonder'. This is perhaps a fitting change considering that, especially in the Chinese context, there was no specific terminology to refer to Buddhist miracles. However, it has been argued in this chapter that instances of the miraculous (*gantong* 感通) in Buddhist literature were considered qualitatively different from other marvels and omens. They were attributed to buddhas and bodhisattvas, or to *karma*, or to the

[215] Le Goff [1985] 2013: xv.
[216] Le Goff [1985] 2013: 21.
[217] See Lewis' *Latin Dictionary* 1956: 1148; *OED*: 2004: s.v. miracle; Glare 1968: 1115.
[218] Kieschnick 2004: s.v. miracle.

pious devotion of believers. Considering that there was conscious self-representation of the Chinese Buddhist community through its miracles and the accounts thereof, it would thus be useful to apply a term in English that points to this. To such a purpose, this thesis will make an—albeit artificial—distinction between Buddhist miracles and other non-Buddhist 'magic', 'marvels', or 'wonders'.

To explain the distinction, this thesis borrows once again from Le Goff's essays on the European medieval *imaginaire.* Le Goff forgoes the study of that which he calls 'miracles' and opts instead for 'marvels' because the definition of a 'miracle' is, by its religious connotation, restrictive. As a social historian, he claimed that the study of Christian 'miracles' in medieval literature was limiting because 'miracles' constituted a selection of the anomalous phenomena that had already been selected by the Church from within the broader field of the 'marvellous'. The Church did this (a) by bringing recorded extraordinary phenomena back to a single cause: God; (b) by regulating these occurrences; determining what makes a miracle a miracle; (c) and by rationalising these events: unpredictable and extraordinary phenomena were changed into orthodoxy on the supernatural.[219] While Buddhist miracles may just as well be described as 'objects of awe', this does not do justice to the very religious sentiments that informed them. Considering the religious nature of Buddhist miracles, this thesis goes against the intent of Le Goff's essays, proposing that the above restrictions imposed on the category of the 'miraculous' by the Christian Church are also useful when considering the Buddhist context. Indeed, Buddhist accounts of the miraculous were sorted and edited from a large selection of witnessed and recorded supernormal phenomena. Much like the Christian Church, Buddhists (a) related miraculous events back to *karmic* conceptions of cause and effect; (b) they distinguished efficacious Buddhist miracles from the false marvels of other traditions; and (c) they explained supernormal phenomena in terms of the faith's efficaciousness in China. Indeed, if Swinburne's definition of a 'miracle' were to be amended to better suit the 'Buddhist miracle' it might read: 'a miracle has *religious significance* for it contributes significantly towards a holy *karmic*—rather than divine—purpose

[219] Le Goff [1985] 2013: 29.

for the world'. Given that anomalous phenomena related to Buddhism did in fact carry religious significance, the term 'miracle' will be used in this thesis to designate specifically Buddhist miracles. The terms 'magic', 'marvel', and 'wonder' will be used to designate all other supernormal phenomena deemed either non-Buddhist or inefficacious towards Buddhist ends.

Now, looking over the above inquiries into both the South Asian and the Chinese traditions, we can state the following about Buddhist miracles: they are 'objects of wonder' that should satisfy the following fourfold religious criteria:

1. First, miracles are products of Buddhist belief. That is to say that Buddhist miracles were believed to, among other things, invoke the Buddha's *real* presence, and belief in the reality of this experience is central to Chinese Buddhist conceptions of the miraculous. Regarding the content of this belief, the miraculous was usually associated with the representatives of the faith, which were the monks and lay believers, as well as the objects and structures such as relics, images, pagodas, and monasteries.
2. Second, miracles provide evidence of Buddhism's efficacy. This can be done in many different ways, and by various agents and objects (e.g. practitioner, non-believer, relic, image, pagoda), though the final result always displays the truth and uniqueness of the Buddha's teaching to other traditions, and sometimes—polemically—over others. In this way, miracles distinguish the 'real' practitioners, cult objects, and religious structures, from the 'false' charlatans and other such tricksters inside and outside the tradition.
3. Third, miracles are public. That is to say, the fact that their appearance is known widely is important. In answer to the question as to whether the proverbial tree falling in the woods with nobody present makes a sound, the Buddhist historian would say: 'No! Not if it fell unwitnessed or if it was not recorded in the histories'. It is important that they are witnessed, that there are witness accounts, or that they are otherwise recorded. Miracles need to be acknowledged either through experience, local lore, or in historical records.
4. Third, miracles must be missionary in intent, while those marvels manifest without proselytising purpose are considered lesser 'magic', 'marvels', or 'wonders'. Missionary intent includes the protective manifestations of buddhas and bodhisattvas, as well as the awe-

inspiring miracles that come forth from relics, images, monasteries, and pagodas.

This thesis uses the term 'miracle' because it speaks to the dimension of '*gantong*' that is central to miracle tales, namely that the narratives described awe-inspiring and religiously significant occurrences. These accounts were, in part, meant to shatter the false sense of comfort and normality in the everyday lives of the audience by presenting events related to Buddhist persons, objects, and places that seemed totally out of the ordinary. That is to say, 'miracle' here also means those supernormal events and powers that draw the witness's attention away from day-to-day experience towards a supernormal reality of religious significance that would otherwise be hidden from view.[220] The term '*gantong*', alongside '*ganying*' 感應 (resonance) and other such terms, represents indigenous Chinese modes of correlative thought that speak to the relationship between 'Natural' phenomena and events in the human realm, as well as a view of causality based in ideas of sympathetic resonance between agents—be they persons, spirits—as well as sacred objects according to their respective cosmic categories.[221] Therefore, for lack of a better equivalent in English, and wishing to avoid using more awkward or clunky language, the term 'miracle' will be used herein.

Finally, as we will see throughout this thesis, miracles were believed to be *karmic* responses or manifestations of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and they were thus considered to have a legitimising function for the people, objects and places associated to them. This is attested to by the very simple fact that they needed to be recorded. We have seen that Daoxuan in particular promoted the dissemination of miracle accounts in his miracle tale compilations and his biographical collections, using terms such as '*gantong*' and 'resonance' as inclusive terminology for the miraculous. Daoxuan's conscious application of the term '*gantong*' shifted away from more limiting understandings of the miraculous that explicitly concentrated on the manifest powers of Buddhist monastics (i.e. *shenyi* 神異). He expanded the category of the miraculous so that other supernormal phenomena associated to sacred objects and holy places might also be included. The

[220] Kieschnick 2004: s.v. Miracle; 541; Teiser and Stone 2009: 34; Campany 2012b: 15 n.58.
[221] J. B. Henderson 1984: 1–54; Hengel 1974; Sharf 2002: 77–133; Shaughnessy 2007: 503–6; Jia 2016. For more on 'miracles', see chapter 2.

following chapters will delve deeper into Daoxuan's religious motivations, fleshing out how such supernormal phenomena were represented in the literature as well as providing a more nuanced understanding of the miraculous in Buddhist China.

Chapter 2: The *Record of Miracles* in its historical context

Introduction

Late in life, Daoxuan left the bustling capital of Chang'an to retire on Mount Zhongnan 終南山, where he continued his religious practice and completed many of his ongoing writing projects. One of his most ambitious works completed in 664 was the *Record of Miracles.* It was neither a work on doctrine nor exegesis but was instead a work of Buddhist narrative literature. Its narrative style represents one of the three main Buddhist narrative 'genres': the miracle tale.[222] The *Record of Miracles* and other miracle tale collections like it were compiled by individuals, both monastics and lay practitioners, who were part of a literary tradition, and this chapter will explore this particular tradition in order to shed some light on the influences as well as the motivations behind the composition of such a text.

This chapter offers at the outset a preliminary description of Daoxuan's *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (*Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Jewels in China*). The following subsections cover the basic structure and content of the *Record of Miracles.* First, some cursory notes are presented on the historical circumstances and the literary traditions that influenced the *Record of Miracles*. These will be followed by a thematic breakdown of the text, as well as a survey of the sources and motivations behind such a compilation project. Finally, there is a look at the *Record of Miracles* in relation to the Chinese Buddhist canon and, more generally, to historiography and ideas of historicity in medieval China.

Cultural and historical background

[222] The miracle tale is closely associated with the Buddhist biography. For more, see Welter 1988; Kieschnick 1997: 10–14; 69, 2022: 3. The other two genres are (a) parables and apologues, as well as (b) travel records (Lagerwey and Martin 2009: 900; Mair and Berezkin 2015). For some differences between the miracle tale genre and Buddhist biography, see Kieschnick 2011: 538; 543 f.

The *Record of Miracles*' place within the Chinese literary tradition

The miracle tale genre (*lingyan* 靈驗; *yingyan* 應驗; or *ganying* 感應) developed from an earlier literary tradition called the tales of anomalies (*zhiguai* 志怪).[223] These tales of anomalies were collections of short pieces related by a common theme, namely supernormal phenomena associated with 'anomalous' (*guai* 怪) persons, objects, places, and events. Although they were rooted in the literary traditions of the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) and the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the anomaly account genre truly came into its own during the Six Dynasties period (220–589).[224] The attitude towards literature during the Han dynasty was predominantly conservative, determining poetics according to patterns in line with ancient literary models. According to these models, history was meant to remain unbiased, while interest in supernormal phenomena was considered 'vulgar' (*su* 俗) and unworthy of note.[225] The anomaly account, however, recorded such so-called vulgar details, be they fantastic scenes of encounters with celestial beings, stories of spirit possession, or accounts of dream voyages to the unseen realms. The rising popularity of anomaly accounts emerged in the wake of the political and moral unease following the fall of the Han dynasty. The ideological hegemony of Han Confucianism dissolved during the chaotic 'period of division' as members of the elite were suddenly confronted with a less secure sense of their world. This gave rise to political dissatisfaction and intellectual ferment which, in turn, promoted ingenuity and innovation as exemplified by the speculative philosophy of so-called Dark Learning (*xuanxue* 玄學) and the breakaway among the literati from ancient literary forms.[226] Most

[223] At the time, these genres were not clearly defined and authors would probably not have used terms like *zhiguai* self-referentially. Although the use of such terms is anachronistic, they do, for the purposes of this thesis, allow us to determine the general parameters that define these traditions. For a discussion on these kinds of text in Western traditions, see the discussion on 'aretology' in Hengel 1974: 1:58–61; J. Z. Smith 1975; Heffernan 1988: 31.

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

[225] Gjertson 1989: 2 f.; Campany 1996: 162; 170.

[226] See Balazs 1964b; Knechtges 2020: 201 ff.; DeWoskin 1977: 21 f. For more on the rise of historical writing during the Six Dynasties period, see Dien 2011: 532.

importantly for our purposes, there was a growing interest among the elite in discussing and writing about the supernormal and the role that humans—as well as other beings—played in both the seen and unseen realms of existence. This intellectual curiosity vis-à-vis the supernormal rapidly developed into the more formalised anomaly account genre as authors sought—sometimes for pleasure and sometimes out of academic interest—to record, compile, and speculate on the origins of extraordinary happenings that were brought about by supernormal agents, objects, and places.

Miracle tales, on the other hand, were didactic stories related to Buddhist figures, objects, and places that described miraculous occurrences brought about by acts of great piety and fervent devotion. The typical miracle tale recounts seemingly normal stories only to then shatter the reader's sense of normality, presenting evidence of awe-inspiring occurrences related to Buddhist people, objects, and places. In this way, the stories present the audience with concrete examples of the workings of *karma*, while simultaneously setting verifiable historical and textual precedents in a bid to prove the religious efficacy of Buddhism in China. The first extant miracle tale collection was a collection of tales compiled in the fourth century related to the salvific powers of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin 觀世音 (Skt. Avalokiteśvara).[227] In time, many different miracle tale collections would be compiled, describing a variety of miraculous occurrences such as the manifest apotropaic qualities of certain scriptures, the auspicious signs produced by religious objects, or the supernormal rainmaking powers of Buddhist monks, to name only three possible themes.

Although the true origins of the miracle tale genre are difficult to determine, there is no doubt that its literary foundation—that which determines style and content—can be traced back to anomaly accounts and, by association, to court histories.[228] In terms of influence, the narrative form of the miracle tale was very close to the biographical accounts included in court histories, a

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

[228] In time Buddhist miracle tales would also come to influence anomaly accounts and the like, as argued in Zhang 2014. For more on court and Buddhist histories, see Kieschnick 2022: 13–16.

genre that was already part and parcel of the literary culture of the medieval Chinese elite.[229] Moreover, miracle tales were stylistically almost indistinguishable from the prosaic anomaly accounts, a genre that had its literary roots firmly set in court historiography. Miracle tale compilers used the schemas found in the court histories to give structure to their own collections. As Kenneth DeWoskin put it with regard to the contrast between anomaly accounts and court histories, aside from the novel interest in the supernormal, the anomaly account writers were putting new wine into old wineskins so that 'new topics were explored and expressed within the old formats.'[230] This was true of miracle tales as well, though they did diverge from histories and anomaly accounts in their emphasis on Buddhist themes. Moreover, miracle tales showed some stylistic similarities to Indian Buddhist narrative literary forms such as birth stories (Skt. *jātakas;* Ch. *bensheng* 本生) and parables (Skt. *avadānas;* Ch. *yinyuan* 因缘), two genres comprised of didactic tales recounting the meritorious—and often heroic—deeds of the Buddha, his past incarnations, and his disciples.[231] However, birth stories and parables were translated relatively late, only reaching Chinese-speaking audiences in the third century.[232] While miracle tales certainly drew inspiration from Indian narrative traditions, there are too many stylistic differences to really speak of a profound influence.

The thematic contours of the miracle tale genre are relatively well defined and may be gleaned from the story of Liu Sahe 劉薩荷 (c. 252–c. 436).[233] According to the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 (*Signs From the Unseen Realm*), Liu Sahe was a foreigner in China who made a living hunting

[229] For more on the Chinese biographical genre, see Beasley, Pulleyblank, and Twitchett 1961.
[230] DeWoskin 1977: 25.
[231] The first *avadānas* and *jātakas* were translated to Chinese between 223 and 253 by the Indo-Scythian Buddhist layman, Zhi Qian 支謙 (fl. c. 240) (Gjertson 1981: 290; Nattier 2008: 133 ff.; Harbsmeier 2012). Campany states that the closest Indian equivalent to miracle tales stylistically were 'ghost stories' (Pal. *Petavatthu*) (Campany 2012b: 2). For discussion and examples of these kinds of *avadāna* and *jātaka* narratives, see Chavannes 1910; Pathak 1966; Warder 1972; Winternitz [1933] 1977: 2:277–94; Tambiah 1984: 21–24; 113 f.; 364; Tatelman 2004; Appleton 2010: 3.
[232] Gjertson 1989: 8.
[233] For more on Liu Sahe, see Chapter 5. Also see Hureau 2020b; Shinohara 1988: 148–77. Liu Sahe's story was first recorded in the *Mingxiang ji*, as seen in Lu Xun's collation of the story from disparate sources ([1911] 1997: 301–4); Translated to English as item 45 in Campany 2012b: 148–52.

game. At thirty years old, he died and had a visionary experience wherein he descended into the Buddhist hell realms. He first encountered the denizens of hell while travelling from one hell realm to another, describing the differences between each one as he went along. He then encountered his great-uncle who was imprisoned and wished to repent for having failed to serve the Buddha while he lived. Finally, Sahe encountered Guanshiyin Bodhisattva, who expounded on the teachings and told him of the inherent merit attached to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutra* and other related scriptures.[234] In the hell realms, he was reprimanded for taking the lives of animals during his time as a hunter and as penance was given the task of seeking out holy relics and pagodas. He came back to life seven days later and took on the Buddhist name Huida 慧達, thereafter setting forth on his ordained mission to discover ancient relics, images, monasteries, and pagodas throughout China. The Buddhist themes mentioned in this story represent literary tropes central to the miracle tale genre. Some of these narrative elements, such as return-from-death narratives or accounts of travels to the hell realms, are also found in anomaly accounts. However, the elements specific to miracle tales are: Buddhist conversion stories, didactic stories describing karmic retribution, accounts of voyages to the Buddhist hell realms (*diyu* 地獄), mention of the merit and protective powers of scriptures, as well as records relating to the auspicious discovery of sacred objects and places such as relics, images, pagodas, and monasteries.[235]

Additionally, central to the composition as well as the popular reception of miracle tales during the fourth century was the growing acceptance more generally in Chinese society of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Miracle tales give many insights into the Sinification process of Buddhism because they depict how Buddhist concepts were translated for Chinese consumption and also how self-identifying Buddhists conceived of themselves and their world.[236] The tales had broad appeal because they did more than address intellectual issues or repeat the doctrinal tenets of Buddhism. Indeed, miracle tales described lay devotion practices and instances of salvation by various means

[234] Campany 2012b: 150 f.
[235] Narrative examples for these themes will be given throughout this thesis. For more on the narrative elements found in the tales of the strange, see A. C. Yu 1987; Y. Yu 1987; Campany 1990, 1991; Poo 1997.
[236] Campany 2012b: 12.

such as Sutra recitation and the cult to images and relics. They offered more attainable representations of salvation, a salvation that could be obtained not only through ascetic rigour and doctrinal understanding, but through faith-based practices as well.[237]

Collections and collectors

Miracle tale collections were not cut from whole cloth. They drew on various sources such as official and private archives, stele and pagoda inscriptions, and witness accounts. Quite often, they also included the recorded experiences of the compilers. Having collected these stories from previously circulating material, compilers would then stitch them together to form a broader narrative. Of the many miracle tale collections mentioned in catalogues, relatively few are still extant today, so that most survive as excerpts or quotations in collectanea such as the *Bian zhenglun* 辯正論 (c. 626), the *Record of Miracles*, the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*A Forest of Pearls from the Dharma Garden*; 668) or later works such as the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (c. 803–863) and the *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記 (978), to name only a few. Although the earliest texts were often collected by lay devotees, it was monastics and literati that preserved them by copying and citing them in their own works. The most complete early effort to collate, edit and cite miracle tales was Daoshi's Buddhist encyclopaedia, the *Forest of Pearls* mentioned above. The *Record of Miracles* represents a similar effort. However, while it predates Daoshi's work by four years and draws upon many of the same sources, Daoxuan's collection is not as comprehensive. It was more limited in scope and its sources were rarely indicated.[238] The *Record of Miracles* is more of a selection of miracle tales, while the *Forest of Pearls* is far more inclusive and the editing far more thorough.

This new Buddhist genre was stylistically based in the Chinese historiographical tradition. Similar to court histories, Buddhist history was also the responsibility of an elite, both religious and secular. Traditionally, the state-sponsored court history as well as the privately written history was the exclusive purview of those select members of the gentry (*shi* 士) commissioned to collect

[237] Gjertson 1989: 13.
[238] Gjertson 1989: 36; Lagerwey and Martin 2009: 906.

historical sources into single and cohesive volumes.[239] This also held true with the compilers of anomaly accounts who were all members of the medieval Chinese elite. They collected tales of the anomalous so as to share them with like-minded individuals out of literary, scholarly, and often genuine curiosity towards all things 'strange'.[240] On the other hand, miracle tales were compiled for reasons of faith by both monastics as well as lay members of the Buddhist community, many of whom would have come from the same gentry families as the authors of court histories and anomaly accounts.

Looking over the list of authors cited in Daoxuan's *Record of Miracles*, the list reads like a *Who's Who* of court life from the Six Dynasties to that of the Tang.[241] For example, Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427), the author of the *Soushen houji* 搜神後記, was the great-grandson of the Jin Commander-in-Chief Tao Kan 陶侃 (259–334) and was himself under the employ of Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369–404), the Regional Inspector of Jingzhou and Jiangzhou. Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), the author of the *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記 and the *Youming lu* 幽明錄, was related to the founder of the Liu-Song dynasty, Liu Yu 劉裕 (363–422), and was himself Prince of Linchuan 臨川. During the Southern Qi 南齊 (480–502), many of those authors whose works were central to Daoxuan's own collection, attended and participated in the literary salons of Xiao Ziliang 萧子良 (460–494), Prince of Jingling 竟陵 and renowned patron of Buddhism.[242] Among the eight companions of Jingling (*jingling ba you* 竟陵八友)—a literary group that included the likes of Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513) and the future founder of the Liang dynasty, Xiao Yan 蕭衍—was Ren Fang 任昉 (460–508), Xiao Ziliang's secretary at the Ministry of Education and the author of the

[239] Regarding the authorship of histories from the Han through to the Six Dynasties, see Balazs 1964a: 135; Dien 2011: 510.

[240] These men—for in medieval China the recording of history was considered the exclusive purview of men—were not all cut from the same cloth, varying in status from the wealthy to the comparatively poor, and from the politically successful to the politically outcast (*hanmen* 寒門). These authors might occupy different governmental posts, while others were historians, bibliographers or academics by trade (Campany 1996: 171–79).

[241] For a list of the known works quoted in the *Record of Miracles*, see Appendix III, table1.

[242] Xiao Ziliang also compiled the *Sanbao ji* 三寶記, a text cited in the *Record of Miracles.* For a major contribution to this topic written in German, see Jansen 2000.

Shuyi ji 述異記.[243] Additionally, it was during one of these literary gatherings that Xiao Ziliang asked the scholar-official Wang Yan 王琰 (b. 454), the author of the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記, to remonstrate with Fan Zhen 范縝 (c.450–c.510) whose arguments against Buddhism as presented in the *Shenmie lun* 神滅論 represented a strong opposing position in the debate regarding the acceptability of Buddhist doctrine and metaphysics in China.[244] Daoxuan also mentions more contemporary compilers, such as Tang Lin 唐臨 (d. c. 660), the author of the *Mingbao ji* 冥報記, who was born of two prominent aristocratic families and would throughout his life occupy many different high-ranking bureaucratic positions concerned with the legal and investigatory aspects of government.[245]

Monastic compilers were similarly high in rank both inside and outside the monastic institution.[246] For example, although very little is known about the personal life of the author of the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554), taking into account his writing style and mastery of the form, he would have come from a wealthy background where they could afford to cultivate such qualities. He resided in Jiaxiang Monastery 嘉祥寺, a wealthy community originally patronised by the Prefect of Kuaiji, for many years, where he would have come into contact with many different members of the southern intelligentsia.[247] The same is true of Daoxuan, who according to his biographies was of excellent stock: the son of the Director of the

[243] Ren Fang in turn was related to another author cited in Daoxuan's *Record of Miracles*: Pei Ziye 裴子野 (469-c.531), the compiler of a collection of monastic biographies that are no longer extant. For more on the eight companions of Jingling, see Knechtges 2010: 1:456 f.
[244] Campany 2012b: 9–12.
[245] Gjertson 1989: 86; For more examples of the relationship between anomaly account as well as miracle tale compilation and gentry status, see Kao 1985: 16 ff.
[246] This is, of course, not always true. For example, Baochang 寶唱 (c. 456–c. 555), compiler of the *Mingseng zhuan*, hailed from a poor family. He started off as a copyist. Although he would eventually be favoured by Emperor Wu of the Liang and he would preside as Head Monk at a Xinan Monastery 新安寺 in the capital for a time, he later fell ill and lost the emperor's good graces, something he would not regain until the completion of the *Mingseng zhuan* in 519 (De Rauw 2005; Hureau 2020a: 44 ff.). Perhaps the best known 'poor' monk is Dao'an 道安 (312–385), who lost everything when he was young so that, when he was still a novice, he had to work in the fields for years before finally getting limited access to scriptures (*GSZ*: T2059.351c3-14).
[247] He was in the same literary circles as the lay Buddhist Wang Manying 王曼穎 and Sengguo 僧果, whose memoirs leave details about Huijiao's latter days (A. F. Wright [1954] 1990).

Ministry of Rites during the Chen dynasty, and a descendant of Qian Rang 錢讓 (89–151), a governor of Guangling 廣陵 during the Han dynasty.[248] Daoxuan was a prominent figure in his religious community and he was certainly comfortable among the elite, serving as Head Monk at Ximing Monastery in the capital, participating in the imperial cult under Emperor Gaozong 高宗, and playing a pivotal role in the ongoing debate at court with regard to whether monks ought to bow before the Emperor and their parents.[249]

Structure and content of the text

The *Record of Miracles* is a collection of 150 itemised miracle tales in three fascicles. Daoxuan began to collect and edit his sources into a single text while he was a Head Monk in the capital at Ximing Monastery 西明寺. We know from the colophon that the *Record of Miracles* was not completed in the capital but at Qinggong Sanctuary 清宮精舍, probably referring to Jingye Monastery 靜業寺 located in the Zhongnan mountain range 終南山 southeast of Chang'an.[250]

[248] *SGZ*: T2061.790b8-10.

[249] There is more on Daoxuan and Famen in Chapter 4. For more on Daoxuan and the debate regarding whether monks should offer obeisance to their parents and to the throne, see S. Weinstein 1987: 32 f.

[250] 'This [*Record of Miracles*] was presented in the first year of the Linde reign period (664), in the sixth month on the twentieth day. It was compiled [and completed] north of Fengyin at the Qinggong Monastery in the Zhongnan mountain range [to the south-west of Chang'an].' (T2106.435a13-14). This colophon mentions an unnamed 'sanctuary' (Skt. *vihāra* Ch. *jingshe* 精舍) in Qinggong 清宮—also written Qingguan 清官 in other texts. In the *Fayuan zhulin*, Daoshi mentions how in 667 Daoxuan sought quietude in a place called 'Qinggong, [the place] formerly known as Jingye Monastery 淨業寺' (*FZ*: T2122.393b17-18). In Zanning's biography of Daoxuan, he mentions that in the last years of the Sui dynasty (613–618) when Daoxuan was staying in Fengde Monastery 豐德寺, he sat in meditation and received a visit from a Dharma-protecting *deva.* The *deva* stated that 'there is a place in Qingguan village 清官村 which was formerly known as Jingye Monastery. The grounds there possess precious [and favorable] conditions. [There] your practice may be completed' (*SGZ*: T2061.790b26-28). In the *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing*, Daoxuan recorded how he set up an ordination platform in Qingguan when he and other monks 'dared to go to the [village at the] southern banks of the two rivers by Lifu in the southernmost outskirts of Chang'an. This village was called Qingguan and the neighborhood was called Zunshan 遵善' (T1892.817b17-20). In the same text, he mentions Jingye Monastery in Qingguan county (T1892.818b15-16). It is therefore likely that Daoxuan used Qinggong (Qingguan) to designate what is better known as Jingye Monastery, which was southeast of Chang'an in Qingguan village 清官村. For a synthesis of the problems presented by the place name Qinggong (or Qingguan), see Ang 2019: 23 n.35.

Daoxuan states that he was unwell at the time, compelling him to hastily complete this work. Although he claims that the text was put together quickly, in reality it was the culmination of decades of collection work, bringing together sources and observations that he had been recording since his early days as a novice. It was completed in a timely fashion by 664, only three years before his death.[251]

Today, the *Record of Miracles* is best known by the title *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (*Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Jewels in China*). It is also often referred to by its abbreviated titles, *Sanbao gantong lu* 三寶感通錄 or *Sanbao gantong zhuan* 三寶感通傳,[252] as well as alternative titles such as *Dongxia sanbao gantong ji* 東夏三寶感通記[253] and *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu* 東夏三寶感通錄.[254] The differences between these titles are (a) the composites used to designate 'China' (i.e. *Shenzhou* and *Dongxia*), (b) the presence of the prefix *ji* 集 (absent in alternative titles), used adverbially to mean 'collected', as well as (c) the presence of different generic suffixes for 'record' (i.e. *lu* 錄, *ji* 記, and *zhuan* 傳). The meaning behind these titles remains the same.[255]

Before moving forward, a word on the title's English translation: *Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Jewels in China.* First, the term *Shenzhou* 神州 (lit. 'divine continent') has many different meanings, though it is here used to designate the Sinitic world.[256]

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[251] T2106.435a13-18.

[252] As seen in Huilin's 慧琳 *Yiqie jing yinyi*: T2128.830a21.

[253] *DNL*: T2149.333a20; *FZ*: T2122.1023c8; In Zhipan's 志磐 (1220–1275) *Fozu tongji* (1269), the biographical segment on Daoxuan mentions the *Sanbao Gantong ji* 三寶感通記 in two instead of three fascicles (T2035.297b12).

[254] The title *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu* is the only version of the title found in an official history (*Xin Tang shu*: 1975: 59.1516). The *Xin Tang shu* was probably referring to the list in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* by Zhisheng 智昇 that also used the title *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu* (*KSL*: T2154.562a3-4). Huilin 慧琳 (737–820) in his *Yiqie jing yinyi* (807) also listed the *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu*. He stated that the older version was in three fascicles, but that by the ninth century it was split into four fascicles (T2128.829b19-832a16).

[255] For a comparison of the different titles, see Appendix III, table 2.

[256] The terms *Shenzhou*, as well as *Shentu* 神土, are used in other texts to designate China as the 'divine continent'. See, for example, Yijing's *Da Tang Xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan*: T2066.1a8. *Shenzhou* was also used to designate China in certain Daoist scriptures such as the Shangqing 上清 text, *Shenzhou qizhuan qibian wutian jing* 神州七轉七變舞

Interestingly, in the alternative—perhaps even the original—title, *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu,* Daoxuan drops the *ji* (collected) character and uses the term *Dongxia* instead of *Shenzhou.* From the Qin dynasty (221 BCE) onward, the term *Dongxia* 東夏 (lit. Eastern Xia) usually designated the eastern part of China.[257] However, Daoxuan does not here take the Sinitic world as the implied central point of reference, replacing China with the land of Buddhism's origin, India. As he states in the preface with regard to the appearance of Buddhist religious objects in China:

> This land [China] is the eastern part of the continent [of Jambudvīpa, which also includes the land where the Buddha attained enlightenment, India],[258] so there is no reason to doubt the appearance of *stūpas* here.
> 此土即洲之東境， 故塔現不足以疑。[259]

Daoxuan is here promoting a transcultural view of geography by placing China according to Buddhist understandings of cosmography. He states that because China is to the east of the continent (*jing* 境; Skt. *dvīpa*), in this instance it is the continent of Jambudvīpa where humans are reborn, therefore it is only natural that ancient pagodas could be discovered and unearthed. The term *Dongxia* is used six times in the *Record of Miracles* to designate China. In the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, '*xia*' means the people from the central realm, namely China. In this case, however, *Dongxia* would perhaps be better rendered in English as the '[Country of Hua]xia in the East',

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天經 (*Scripture of the Divine Continent on the Dance in Heaven in Seven Revolutions and Seven Transformations*). The term *Shenzhou*, or *Shenzhou guo* 神州國, was also used by Daoxuan and other Buddhist authors to translate the Middle Indic form of Vaiṭhadvīpa, a historic city inhabited by the Malla clan, though this was certainly not its intended purpose in Daoxuan's miracle tale collection. Other common names used for China are 'Huaxia' 華夏, 'Zhongxia' 中夏, 'Jiuzhou' 九州, 'Chixian' 赤縣, etc. For more on *Shenzhou* and the different names given to China, see Wang E. [1977] 1995: 447–86; Nicol 2016: 177; Wilkinson 2018: 199 ff. For more on the history of the English-language exonym 'China' and its Sanskrit origin as *Cīna*, see *OED*: 2004: s.v. China; Laufer 1912; Sen 2003: 182 f.; Wade 2009. On the early European exonym 'Seres', see Malinowski 2012.

[257] For instance, the kingdom of the Tangut tribes established in western China during the Song dynasty took on the dynastic title Xixia 西夏 (Western Xia; 1038–1227). The dominion of the Xixia kingdom spread across the provinces of Sha'anxi and Gansu, an area west of the competing Song and Liao states. They were, indeed, self-defined as the Xia of the west vis-à-vis their neighbouring eastern states.

[258] The character *zhou* 洲 most likely alludes to the Indian geographical concept of Jambudvīpa (Ch. *Yanfuti* 閻浮提). In Buddhist cosmology, the realm of desire is split into four island continents (Sk. *catur-dvīpa*; Ch. *sizhou* 四洲). The continent of Jambu is inhabited by terrestrial beings and is so named because the Jambu tree (rose-apple tree; Lat. *syzyygium jambos*) is its most distinctive tree (Basham [1954] 1959: 1:488 f.; Sadakata 1997: 35). For more on Daoxuan's reconceptualisation of Jambudvīpa in the Chinese context, see Nicol 2016: 186–91.

[259] T2106.404a17-404a27.

therefore placing China (*Xia*) to the east (*dong*) of the Buddha's homeland.[260]

The title also includes the 'Three Jewels' (Skt. *triratna,* Ch. *sanbao* 三寶), which are three elements central to Buddhist religious life: the buddhas (*fo* 佛), the teachings (Skt. *Dharma*, Ch. *fa* 法) and the monastic community (Skt. *saṃgha*, Ch. *sengjia* 僧伽). In accordance with these three themes, the *Record of Miracles* recounts stories of buddhas, bodhisattvas, eminent monks, monasteries, pagodas, religious objects, and scriptures in East Asia. It also touches on various themes such as the Buddhist faith, religious conversion, supernormal encounters, and the cult of religious objects as well as karmic retribution. Finally, the term '*gantong*', translated as 'miracle', was covered in chapter 1 and the reader can refer to the previous discussion on the term and its place in the medieval Chinese *imaginaire*.

Thematic breakdown of the *Record of Miracles*

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

The first fascicle recounts the histories of more than twenty relics and pagodas discovered in East Asia—that is to say, modern-day China, Korea, and Japan. The text begins with a preface

[260] For more on Daoxuan's use of the term *Dongxia* as a designation for China, see Nicol 2016: 183 f.

offering a broad history of Buddhism and the Buddhist faith in China, followed by a 'table of contents' ordered chronologically indicating the dynasty, and the general geographical location as well as specific pagoda locations for each item.[261] The selected histories date back to the Western Jin period and onward, although many narratives claim that the hallowed status of these objects and locations go as far back as the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE). Proof of antiquity bestowed status to these religious objects, and miracle tale narratives were meant to persuade the readers of the object's prestige and authenticity. For this reason, just about every item in the first and second fascicle were in some way associated not only with ancient China, but also with the Western Regions and India, the land of Buddhism's origins, as well as with King Aśoka (r. c. 268–c. 232 BCE), a Mauryan king famous for his meritorious deeds as well as for his promotion of Buddhism.

King Aśoka would have ordered celestial beings to distribute and enshrine relics throughout the world. For this pious act, as well as many others, the figure of Aśoka became a centrifugal point of reference in many narratives related to the cult of saints.[262] The records of Aśoka's deeds as they appeared in the *Aśokāvadana* (Ch. *Ayuwang jing* 阿育王經; *Ayuwang zhuan* 阿育王傳), or more localised records such as the *Thūpavaṃsa* in Ceylon, resonated with people throughout Asia.[263] In China, from the Jin dynasty (266–420) onward, varied sources recounted how so-called Aśokan relics, images, and pagodas were discovered or excavated on Chinese soil. In the *Record of Miracles,* Aśoka is present at the periphery of almost every miracle tale. The

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

[262] For more biographical detail on King Aśoka, see Basham 1982; Strong 1989: 3–37; After his cremation, Aśoka also gained the venerable status of a *cakravartin* king. Beginning in the Eastern Jin, his remains were supposedly discovered in China where they promptly became objects of veneration (Schafer 1963: 267; Strong 1994: 172). For more biographical detail on King Aśoka, see Basham 1982; Strong 1989: 3–37; After his cremation, Aśoka also gained the venerable status of a *cakravartin* king. Beginning in the Eastern Jin, his remains were supposedly discovered in China where they promptly became objects of veneration (Schafer 1963: 267; Strong 1994: 172).

[263] The *KSL* (T2154, 55: 1.479a5) also records an earlier translation in one fascicle attributed to the Han dynasty Yuezhi monk Lokakṣema (Ch. Zhi Chen 支讖) called the *Ayuwang taizi fayi huaimu yinyuan jing* 阿育王太子法益壞目因緣經; Also see Tang 1999b: 1:4f.Tang 1999b: 1:4f.; The pious deeds of Aśoka became well known in China during the fourth century, when texts recounting his story were translated. Though these *stūpas* and relics were most likely not authentic Aśokan objects, the narratives in themselves are strong indicators of the rising popularity of relic veneration at that time (Sen 2003: 59; Z. Shi 2014: 85–91Sen 2003: 59; Z. Shi 2014: 85–91).

preface gives brief renderings of well-known stories regarding the Mauryan king, such as his encounter with the Buddha in a past life and his distribution of 84,000 relics and pagodas throughout the world. For the believers who were composing, recording or collating these tales, the association of these objects and places with the Mauryan king served to authenticate the objects' hallowed status as well as legitimise Buddhism's place on Chinese soil.

Following the first collection in the first fascicle, there is a related collection bearing its own title. This separate collection, titled *Zhendan shenzhou fo sheli gantong* 振旦神州佛舍利感通 (Records of Buddha relic miracles in China), has its own preface, a list with short descriptions of miraculous occurrences that took place during the Yuanjia 元嘉 period (424–453) of the Liu-Song dynasty, the Renshou 仁壽 period (601–604) of the Sui, as well as its own concluding remarks.[264] Similar to the collection before it, this section addresses the discovery of Aśokan relics and pagodas in East Asia.

The second fascicle contains accounts of miraculous images related to the buddhas and to King Aśoka. There is a preface and a 'table of contents' itemising fifty stories, followed by the stories themselves and some concluding remarks. The second fascicle generally follows the same themes as the rest of the text, although the miracles that occur are qualitatively different from those recorded in the other sections. Holy images might emit a dazzling light that fills the monastic complex, produce a heavenly fragrance, move from one place to another, move over a surface of water or steal away in the night. The recording of such miracles occurring in the case of other religious objects was relatively common. However, given that images are anthropomorphic representations, they manifest miraculous signs that are characteristically human and that are not attested to in the case of other religious objects—or persons, for that matter. For example, an image may cry when distraught, sweat when anxious, or it may refuse to wear certain articles of clothing. Images in particular held an exalted status among the ruling classes, and the authors of miracle

[264] Shinohara argues that the separate title, preface and concluding remark indicate that Daoxuan would have 'mechanically attached' an entire other collection of miracle tales into this work (1991b: 205). The segment on Renshou (601–604) miracles is a very brief summary of a similar section in the *Guang hongming ji*: T2103.217b2-220a21.

tales usually noted the signs produced by images as auguries of either good or bad fortune for rulers and their dynasties.[265] Regarding the sources used in the second fascicle, twenty-seven of the fifty items were selected and edited by Daoxuan from the Liang dynasty *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, while the rest came from other histories, and pagoda inscriptions, as well as from oral communications given to him.[266]

The third fascicle contains miraculous narratives relating to monasteries and scriptures as well as to holy monks.[267] It contains three sections comprising eighty items in all, with each section containing its own preface and concluding remarks. The preface to the first section is followed by a 'table of contents' and the corresponding stories of the twelve monasteries. This section tells of marvellous stories related to monasteries in China. The sources of this section are unclear, though Daoxuan likely gathered much information from past miracle tale collections as well as inscriptions.[268]

The section on monasteries is followed by two titled collections: the *Ruijing lu* 瑞經錄 (Record of Auspicious Scriptures), and the *Shenseng gantong lu* 神僧感通錄 (Record of Miracles Related to Holy Monks). The former corresponds to the theme of numinous teachings (*lingjiao* 靈教) mentioned above. This section constitutes thirty-eight items and, although each item is named after an individual, the emphasis is not placed on people but on scriptures. Therefore, it relates miraculous occurrences brought about by the recitation, copying, or discovery of scriptures. As for the sources of the *Ruijing lu* section, it draws upon earlier biographical texts such as the *Liang*

[265] For more on the political role of images, see Shinohara 1998a: 136 ff.; Lippiello 2001: 197–203; G. Yang and Anderl 2020.

[266] For more on the sources and structure of this section, as well as the role of Buddha images in the *Record of Miracles*, see Shinohara 1988, 1998a: 143. For a list of all the items in the second fascicle, with parallel passages in other texts, see Shinohara 1991b: 104, 1998a: 176–88. Many of the stories were drawn from the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* composed in 645 and the *Shijia fangzhi* composed in 650. The *Guang hongming ji* contained a preliminary list, containing about nineteen items that corresponded to those in the *Record of Miracles* (*GHJ*: T2103.202a27-203c1). The list in *Guang hongming ji* may well have come from an early list drawn up by Daoxuan for the *Record of Miracles* (Shinohara 1991b: 207 f.).

[267] Shinohara 1990: 203.

[268] The *Shijia fangzhi* (T2088.972c16-973a13) contained a section with references to holy monasteries on Mount Tiantai and Mount Gu that might, according to Shinohara, have been predecessors to the parallel excerpts in the *Record of Miracles* (1991a: 210 f.),

Biographies as well as contemporary miracle tale collections such as Tang Lin's *Mingbao ji* 冥報記 (*Records of Miraculous Retribution*; c. 653).[269] Daoxuan supplemented these older collections with contemporary stories that he most likely gathered from oral sources.[270] This collection was also preserved in his *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (*Great Tang Record of Buddhist Scriptures*), from where he copied it—almost verbatim—into a section titled *Lidai zhongjing yinggan xingjing lu* 歷代眾經應感興敬錄 (Records of Awe-inspiring Miracles About Scriptures that Occurred During Various Dynasties in the Past).[271]

The section on holy monks (*shenseng* 神僧) is made up of thirty items and contains the stories of monks who manifested numinous powers (*lingxiang* 靈相).[272] Although the monks that figure in the *Record of Miracles* have had varied careers as translators, exegetes, and masters of monastic discipline or meditation, they are all related insofar as they can also manifest supernormal powers (i.e. rainmaking, healing, flying, etc). The selected biographies for this last collection came mostly from what was perhaps at that time a complete version of Wang Yan's (520–604) *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記,[273] and was supplemented with biographies from Huijiao's *Biographies.*[274] This section has parallels scattered throughout the *Forest of Pearls*, and was either compiled while referring to a draft of this encyclopaedia or, more likely, by using sources that he shared with Daoshi.[275] Interestingly, unlike the first two fascicles, the third fascicle as a whole does not pay as

[269] Tang Lin (c. 600–659), a Tang dynasty high official and devout lay Buddhist, compiled many orally transmitted miracle tales related to *karmic* retribution in his lifetime (Gjertson 1989; Shinohara 1991b: 104).
[270] Shinohara 1991b: 115.
[271] *GHJ*: T2149.10.338a28-b18; For more, see Shinohara 1991b: 77.
[272] This 'holy monks' social category was similar to the categories found in Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* and Daoxuan's *Xu gaoseng zhuan* that, respectively, used the categories '[figures with] exceptional spiritual [powers]' (*shenyi* 神異) and 'miracle-workers' (*gantong* 感通).
[273] This is a text that today survives mostly as excerpts preserved in the *Fayuan zhulin*. It was only in the twentieth century that it was made whole once more by Lu Xun 魯迅. See Lu [1911] 1997: 276–343; Translated by Campany 2012b.
[274] Shinohara 1990: 320; Many of the textual parallels with the 'holy monks' section as they appear in the *Fayuan zhulin* are found in fascicles 19, 28, 31 and 42. For more on the instances of text reuse between the *Record of Miracles* and the *Fayuan zhulin*, see Appendix IV, table 2. For more elaboration on the relationship between the *Record of Miracles* and the *Fayuan zhulin*, see the concluding remarks in Shinohara 1990: 351.
[275] Shinohara 1990: 378.

much attention to King Aśoka. The emphasis is on supernormal occurrences and how they attest to the sacredness of these religious objects and persons.

Sources, composition and motivation

The *Record of Miracles* is essentially a collection of other biographical and miracle tale collections. As mentioned above, it draws upon prior works such as official histories, stele inscriptions, and miracle tales as well as anomaly account collections. It is also comprised of other ancient Chinese narrative prose works and local legends, as well as recorded oral accounts regarding monks, religious objects, and Buddhist structures.[276] For these reasons, the *Record of Miracles* encompasses a wide variety of topics from ancient myths to contemporary politics, from astrology to topography, from didactic historical anecdotes to contemporary religious polemical discourses, and from medieval philosophy to Buddhist doctrine. The result is that while the text does in principle hold to a central theme, it still reads as a hotchpotch of different works and narrative styles. The disjointed effect sometimes found in the text is a product of the collating and editing process which, by Daoxuan's own admission, was completed with some haste.

Daoxuan's own works and experiences

According to Koichi Shinohara, Daoxuan had for many years been making lists of Buddhist tales and it was these lists and their corresponding sources that developed into the *Record of Miracles*. Indeed, Daoxuan worked on multiple projects throughout his life and it is almost certain that he had been progressively accumulating lists and sources which he later brought together to form the *Record of Miracles*. The text often borrows or expands upon Daoxuan's own works—or at least draws upon similar sources—especially the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (645), the *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 (650), the *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (664) and the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集

[276] For an in-depth survey of the different sources that make up Buddhist biographical sources as well as their relationship to miracle tales, see Shinohara 1988.

(664).[277] It is even possible that at some point in the 660's or earlier, Daoxuan would already have prepared a draft of the *Record of Miracles*.

Daoxuan did not compose his Buddhist history according to the Confucian standards of historical writing, which required that the historian remain unbiased—according to the norms of the time—and that sources be gathered from equally unbiased works. Daoxuan was, first and foremost, a Buddhist monastic and he sourced his miracle tales from varied Buddhist texts—works that spoke so favourably of Buddhism that it would certainly have made a Confucian scholar cringe. Moreover, Daoxuan included much of his own personal research and experience into the narratives.[278] Similar to many miracle tale compilers before him, Daoxuan travelled extensively and gathered supplementary information from his own visits to sacred sites. The miracle tale narratives are often punctuated by his own comments based on personal pilgrimages to hallowed grounds or his viewings of images and relics. Daoxuan's personal accounts read like observations meant to complement—and sometimes correct—past histories. His personal accounts were perhaps meant to fill in the gaps of information omitted in prior works, or they might simply have been intended to confirm with an eyewitness account the veracity of a record, or question the hallowed status of cult objects and sacred places.

In his first-person accounts as they appear in the *Record of Miracles*, one can glean four literary means by which he verifies his objects of study. The first of these means is the author's witness accounts, wherein he recounted his own experiences. The second means of verification is what will here be called ethnographic accounts, wherein Daoxuan visited a locality and studied

[277] The *Guang hongming ji* (T2103.201b24) has a subsection bearing the title '*Luelie datang ywang guta li*' 略列大唐育王古塔歷并佛像經法神瑞迹 (Summary history of the ancient Aśokan pagodas of the Tang dynasty, together with the records of the traces of divine portents left by images and scriptures). This subsection provides short histories of seventeen pagodas. These were all developed in the *Record of Miracles.*

[278] In time, Daoxuan's works were both praised and criticised for their historical value. For example, the Qing bibliophile Yang Shoujing 楊守敬 (1839–1915) praised the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* for its elegance, ranking Daoxuan among the great court historians of the past. However, the Song dynasty monk Huihong 慧洪 (1071–1128) noted that all the histories of monks, including the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, were 'confused and repetitive' (Kieschnick 1997: 12 f.). Modern scholarship continues to negotiate this fuzzy divide between myth and history in the works of medieval Chinese authors. For example, a modern study of Xuanzang's travelogue criticises the pilgrim's 'love of the miraculous', only to then take his eyewitness accounts and his records of local legends as historical facts (Wriggins 1987; First noted in R. L. Brown 1998: 27).

religious life as it is on the ground. The second means is qualitatively similar to the first, though the contents of these narratives are different enough to warrant their own category. The third means of verification is the visionary experience accounts which, though they did not appear in the *Record of Miracles*, may provide us insight into how he confirmed the veracity of stories that he perhaps found dubious. The fourth means is the scholarly correctives inserted into the narrative wherein he questioned the theories of other monastics as well as secular writers. This final point will not be further developed here because these scholarly correctives are only instances where Daoxuan included his opinion in the text and are thus not accounts of his own lived experiences.

First, there are Daoxuan's own witness accounts of miraculous objects and sacred places. Given that he was especially interested in the origins of cult objects as well as their original locations, Daoxuan would in his life record many accounts of his visits to different religious sites. The histories of, for instance, monasteries could often go back centuries. Over time monasteries changed names, or fell into disrepair, or their pagodas and relics were transferred to new locations. Daoxuan was invested in describing this process in detail. We will cover many such instances in chapters 4 and 5. Daoxuan could not have visited all the places mentioned in his text, though such accounts do much to tie narratives about the past to his lived present.

Second, Daoxuan's writings show a comfortable familiarity with regional cultures, and it is attested to in his writings that he did indeed sometimes add his own personal 'ethnographic' observations. In this way, he recorded many locally specific histories and customs, information that would otherwise only have been saved in the memories of the members of those communities. Once again, this will be covered in full in part 2 of this thesis.

Third, although it is never stated explicitly in the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan would also have confirmed the veracity of the miracle tale narratives found in his miracle tale collection through visions and interviews with celestial beings. For example, in his recorded visions Daoxuan asked a spirit about the origins of the Changgan pagoda in Jiankang, as well as the Maoxian pagoda in Kuaiji. The spirit then went into detail about their origins. It first confirmed that the Changgan pagoda was an Aśokan structure and that, when in Yangzhou 揚州, Liu Sahe felt an extraordinary aura that led to the discovery of a votive pagoda at Changgan. The spirit then spoke of the Maoxian

pagoda and its Aśokan origins, as well as the hallowed status of its relics.[279] These visions, recorded around the same time as the *Record of Miracles*, show that Daoxuan himself must have harboured some doubts about the authenticity of some of these stories. With no higher authority on which to rely, visions would have served him as well as the Buddhist community as a seal of authenticity, drawing on the knowledge of beings that were privy to information to which the inhabitants of the seen realm did not have access to.

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

Other works

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

Daoxuan did sometimes explicitly mention his sources, as was the case in the section on

[279] *LGL*: T2107.439a1-12; *LGZ*: T1898.878c10-22; *FZ*: T2122.590b22-c6; Also see Shinohara 1988: 167.

holy monks where he cited at least fourteen sources by other authors and one of his own works, the *Continued Biographies*.[280] A quick glance at the sources used in the *Record of Miracles* reveals that the two primary outside sources used were the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 by Wang Yan 王琰 and the *Liang Biographies* by Huijiao[281]—two foundational texts in the biography and miracle tale tradition.[282] Additionally, Daoxuan was an assiduous recorder of Buddhist history who never failed to read official sources, especially court histories such as the *Wei shu* 魏書 (*History of the Wei*), the *Liang shu* 梁書 (*History of the Liang*), and the *Zhou shu* 周書 (*History of the* [*Northern*] *Zhou*).[283] He also drew upon sources concerned with local history, often referring to geographical works, and gazetteers as well as local records.[284]

Daoxuan did not, however, limit himself to official sources, often citing historical narratives that, in his time, would have been considered historically unsound. One such source is found in his description of an island near Kuaiji (in present-day Zhejiang) where Lord Yan of the Xu kingdom 徐偃王 (fl. 944 BCE)[285] escaped when chased by Lord Mu of the Zhou dynasty 周穆王 (c. 976–c. 922BCE). Daoxuan supplements this fact with a legend about how Lord Mu travelled to the mythical Kunlun Mountain, a story widely attested to in Buddhist apologias, though it was considered an apocryphal tale by Confucian scholars.[286]

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[280] T2106.431a21-25. Also see Chen S. 1992: 1300. For more on Daoxuan's sources, see Appendix III, item 1.

[281] Daoxuan often refers to the *Gaoseng zhuan*, and there is much text reuse with this text in his *Record of Miracles*. He also refers generally to a *Seng zhuan* 僧專 which, it is assumed, usually refers to either the *Gaoseng zhuan* or his own *Xu gaoseng zhuang*—which was heavily based on the *Gaoseng zhuan*. There were also other biographies and sources that Daoxuan referred to usually as *biezhuan* 別傳. In the third fascicle, Daoxuan refers directly to another *Gaoseng zhuan* by Pei Ziye (469–c. 531), no longer extant. For a study of the relationship between the *Gaoseng zhuan* and yet another collection of miracle tales, the *Mingxiang ji*, see Shinohara 1988: 131–46.

[282] Shinohara 1988: 212.

[283] For more on court histories during the Tang, see Twitchett 1992: 3–190.

[284] For example, in the first item Daoxuan cites the *Yudi zhi* 輿地誌 (*Memoirs on Geography*) (T2106.404c10; 404c23; 404c25), *Di ji* 地記 (*Notes on Geography*) (T2106.404c5-6; 404c19), and *Kuaiji ji* 會稽記 (*Notes on Kuaiji*) (T2106.405a2), which included stories such as the Qin emperor's attempted voyage to mythical Penglai.

[285] The Xu 徐 kingdom (Shandong-Jiangsu), realm of the Xurong 徐戎 (Xu barbarians), were supposedly subdued by Zhou forces in 1039 BCE.

[286] T2106.405a9-13. For more on the *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳, see Cheng 1933, 1934; Mathieu 1978; Knechtges and Shih 2010; Shaughnessy 2014. On the *Mu tianzi zhuan* and Buddhist apologetics, see article by Jülch 2010.

The *Record of Miracles* thus constitutes the final product of Daoxuan's attempt to join this patchwork of sources together and to present a complete—and altogether, sympathetic—picture of Sinitic Buddhist history. Regarding the composition of this text, the colophon states that it was completed at the Qinggong Sanctuary, though most of the work was probably conducted at Ximing Monastery in Chang'an at the same time as Daoshi was compiling his own Buddhist encyclopaedia, the *Forest of Pearls* comprising one hundred fascicles.[287] The *Record of Miracles* was a long-term project that would have taken many years—maybe even decades—and a good part of the actual collating work would have been done collaboratively with Daoshi. As a matter of fact, in the colophon to the *Record of Miracles,* Daoxuan even refers the reader to Daoshi's encyclopaedia for more extensive information on the miracle tale records.[288] Shinohara has convincingly argued that Daoxuan's collection was prepared first and that Daoshi would then have used selections from the *Record of Miracles* in his encyclopaedia.[289] These two scholar-monks knew each other from Ximing Monastery in Chang'an and a side-by-side reading of different selections from the two works reveals extensive text reuse.[290] Almost every story told in the *Record of Miracles* is found in some way, shape, or form in the much larger and more comprehensive *Forest of Pearls*. However, the matching selections found in the encyclopaedia were not merely reproduced verbatim but were instead polished renderings of passages taken from the *Record of Miracles*, which sometimes contained mistakes or needed clarification.

Motivations

Daoxuan undertook the long and arduous task of compiling these miracle tales with a variety of motives. Indeed, the process of compiling material from so many sources to create a coherent whole would inevitably have been an edifying process of account selection and discretionary emphasis. Some of these motivations were explicit in his prefatory writings and some were interlaced into the narrative, while other motivations can be inferred from his biographies. What

[287] For more on the *Fayuan zhulin* as a Buddhist encyclopaedia, see Teiser 1985
[288] T2106.435a17-18.
[289] Shinohara 1990: 354, 1991a: 74 f.
[290] *FZ*: T2122.354b16-19. For a look at the text reuse between these two texts, see Appendix IV, table 2.

were monks such as Daoxuan hoping to achieve by composing Buddhist narrative literature? What were his own motivations for composing the *Record of Miracles*? Who was his intended audience? Karl Kao when writing about the motivations behind anomaly account compilations stated that they could be (a) 'explicitly tendentious', (b) 'implicitly tendentious' or (c) 'disinterested'.[291] The question does not arise in the case of miracle tales because the author's Buddhist faith was always explicit, making all miracle tale compilations 'explicitly tendentious'. Although Buddhist writers might claim that their texts were based on historical facts, by no means were these authors objective observers recording facts about the development of the teachings. In this way, each miracle tale represents the delicate interplay between the personal motivations and the historical forces that shaped the tradition. Bearing this in mind, the following explores five related motivations behind the composition of the *Record of Miracles*: (1) persuasion, (2) proselytisation, (3) appealing to an audience, (4) continuity, and (5) personal experience.

Miracle tales were written with the explicit purpose of persuading readers that the contents of the stories were true. Indeed, every story at some point provides evidence (*yan* 驗) of the miraculous efficacy of Buddhist piety and devotional acts. To give an example from the world of anomaly accounts, the biography of Gan Bao 干寶 stated that he compiled his seminal compilation, the *Soushen ji* 搜神記, to bring to light the relevance of the miraculous and its associated 'path of the spirits' (*shendao* 神道).[292] Wang Yan noted in his collection of miracle tales, the *Mingxiang ji*, that he 'collected enough examples to serve as a basis for persuading [readers] to take refuge [in the Buddha's teaching] of their own accord'.[293] Huijiao echoed this statement in his *Biographies*, claiming that: 'for spreading the way and explaining the Teaching, nothing surpasses [the exemplary lives of] eminent monks'.[294] Tang Lin held that because he read texts that 'verified and made clear the recompense of good and evil', he, in turn, was inspired to

[291] Kao 1985: 20. DeWoskin states that these compilers were both 'believers' and 'objective ethnographers' (1977: 38).
[292] The preface to the *Soushen ji* is found in Gan Bao's biography preserved in the *Jin shu* (1974: 82.2151).
[293] Lu [1911] 1997: 277; Translated by Campany 2012b: 66 f. Brackets are mine.
[294] *GZ*: T2059.422c; A. F. Wright [1954] 1990: 75; Kieschnick 1997: 7.

compile the *Mingbao ji.*[295] Daoxuan said something similar, stating that:

> [To appeal to those that harbour doubts,] I have looked through all the ancient accounts, as well as [recorded] those manifest auspicious signs [that I have seen myself] and have thus composed this preface so that those that read it (lit. 'unroll [this scroll]') can know the basis of the Śākyamuni school, such that even in 10,000 years, it will be difficult for [these lessons] to disappear in the dust.
> 所以討尋往傳，及以現祥，故依纘序。庶有披者，識釋門之骨鯁。萬載之後，難可塵沒矣。[296]

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

> [Miracle tales and anomaly accounts] are not to be doubted. How much more so the [recorded] sayings of buddhas and extraordinary people, texts that drive the mind forward, [making us] strong and brave!
> 故非疑慮，況佛，希人之說，心進勇銳之文。[297]

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

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

> Compared to [Buddhism], other religions are like flowing water returning to the great gorge. Similar to celestial bodies encircling the Northern Star, [other religions] long for [that which] surpasses them.
> 餘教方之, 猶群流之歸巨壑, 眾星之[拱]北辰, 悠哉邈矣.[298]

A prevalent motivation was belief and piety for it was, after all, the responsibility of believers to disseminate the teachings.[299] Tang Lin hoped that the evidence of miraculous retribution presented in his collection would persuade non-believers of the universality of *karmic* causality.[300] Daoxuan also expressed a similarly profound commitment to 'spreading the way' of Buddhism.[301] He acknowledged this commitment in the preface to his *Record of Miracles*:

> [Miracles] appeared in the past [and more] will manifest in the future. They display themselves luminously to practitioners and laypeople; they arouse faith in the deluded as well as the enlightened. Therefore, I have gathered the essential facts [about these miracles] and completed this text in three fascicles.

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[295] *Mingbao ji*: T2082.788a25-28; See Gjertson 1989: 118.
[296] T2106.410b3-5.
[297] *LGL*: T2107.436a4-8; *LGZ*: T1898.875a23-28; c.f. also translated to English in Campany 1993a: 17.
[298] *GZ*: T2059.418b14-15; Correction in brackets taken from the version found in the Song dynasty canon; c.f. English translation in A. F. Wright [1954] 1990: 75.
[299] *GZ*: T2059.422c; A. F. Wright [1954] 1990: 75.
[300] *Mingbao ji*: T2082.788a25-28; See Gjertson 1989: 118.
[301] G. Shi 1992; Kieschnick 1997: 7.

或見於既往，或顯於將來。昭彰於道俗，生信於迷悟，故撮舉其要。三卷成部云。[302]

The rest of the preface stated in no uncertain terms that Daoxuan wished to impress on his readers the awe-inspiring power of Buddhism and its proponents. We see in the excerpt above that the *Record of Miracles* is a tribute to Buddhists of the past and also an attempt to inscribe their stories so as to create a new form of religious history, thus bolstering the faith of future believers and perhaps even convincing some non-believers to convert.[303]

A third important motivating factor was the audience. While these texts would first have addressed an audience that was sympathetic to Buddhism, they were also composed with the intention of currying favour among potential patrons. The fates of different religious denominations in China ebbed and flowed according to the support they received from the gentry. While information about who would read texts such as the *Record of Miracles* is scarce, it is safe to assume that monastics certainly read them and that they were also received and read by members of the gentry, some of whom would have occupied government posts.[304] The index of lay believers mentioned in Huijiao's *Biographies* provides an extensive list of important cultural and political figures with many names also appearing in works such as the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (*A New Account of Tales of the World*), a collection of anecdotes filled with the witty repartee of the fifth century southern elite. Arthur Wright took this as proof of Huijiao's intention to naturalise Buddhism in a top-down fashion by having it trickle down into the general culture via the elite classes.[305] In the fourth century, Dao'an 道安 famously addressed his disciples during a time of crisis stating that:

> We are living through an inauspicious period. If we do not rely on the heads of state, then it will be difficult to carry on with our religious affairs.
> 今遭凶年，不依國主，則法事難立。[306]

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

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[302] T2106.404a14-16; 423a. For more on this kind of pious rhetoric in the *Record of Miracles*, see Shinohara 1991b: 213.

[303] For an interesting analysis of pre-Tang Buddhist prefatory writings as well as the explicit evangelical intention of simplifying the vast and complicated Chinese Buddhist corpus, see Hsu 2018: 67–127.

[304] Kieschnick 1997: 7.

[305] A. F. Wright [1954] 1990: 77.

[306] *GZ*: T2059.352a11-12.

> Knowing that the Teaching is without support, [Buddhists] depend on the might of the emperors.
> 知教法之無依，委帝王之有力。[307]

Although Buddhist monks usually steered clear of official government posts, they had no illusions about the useful role that the state played in the dissemination of Buddhism. Daoxuan was certainly no stranger to life at court and on multiple occasions petitioned the state in the name of his faith. He was a prominent monastic figure who was on good terms with members of the gentry, serving as Head Monk at Ximing Monastery in the capital, participating in different facets of the imperial cult under Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683) and even playing a pivotal role in the ongoing debate at court regarding whether monks ought to bow before the emperor and their parents.[308] Dynastic rulers were often mentioned in the *Record of Miracles*, recounting the pious deeds of past emperors such as Emperor Wu of the Liang and Wen of the Sui dynasty, as well as Emperor Gaozong, the emperor in power at the time of compilation. The clearest indication of this text's association with royal patronage is the constant mention of King Aśoka throughout. Aśoka was cast in narrative accounts not only as a great promoter of Buddhism, but also a universal monarch meant to rule over all continents. The repeated mention of Aśoka, a figure often associated with China's emperors, was a reference that the ruling classes would not have missed. Indeed, in both rhetoric and practice, many emperors projected themselves in the likeness of the Mauryan king and Emperor Gaozong even used his own measurements to produce a statue of Aśoka in his image.[309]

Fourth, these biography and miracle tale compilers were partaking in a broader tradition. While these collections sought a certain degree of historical rigour and topical comprehensiveness, authors would never claim that their works were original. On the contrary, the justification for compiling such collections was that they were participating in a larger project, one that resonated

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[307] *SGZ*: T2061.709a14-15; English translation taken from Kieschnick 1997: 8.

[308] During the debate regarding whether monks ought to bow before the Emperor, Daoxuan issued three pleas to members at court. This debate took place around the same time that he was compiling his *Record of Miracles.* Incidentally, the third missive contained many miraculous accounts related to Buddhism, revealing that, among other things, these accounts were used to curry favour with patrons (*GHJ*: T2103.455c-457c; Shinohara 1991b: 213). For more on Daoxuan and the debate regarding whether monks should pay reverence to their parents and to the throne, see chapter 3 as well as S. Weinstein 1987: 32 f.

[309] T2106.407a18-19.

with a historical tradition rooted in an 'exemplary past'.[310] This sense of continuity is reflected in all Buddhist narrative literature, which justifies its existence by mentioning past histories while simultaneously drawing upon other works within the Buddhist narrative literary tradition. Daoxuan was steeped in the tradition of the court histories and of anomaly literature. In the *Record of Miracles*, he either directly quotes or gives short summaries of these texts, claiming that he 'will not relate them in detail' 不備載, instead referring the readers to other collections. In the colophon, Daoxuan even claims that his own collection is lacking certain details, and that what he leaves out may be found in Daoshi's *Forest of Pearls*.

This sense of continuity was also expressed in terms of *karmic* genealogy. In the *Song Biographies*, Zanning claimed that Daoxuan was the reincarnation of Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518) who was similar to Daoxuan not only because he was a master of monastic discipline, but also because, having composed both the *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (*Collected Records About the Translation of the Tripitaka*; c. 516) and the *Shijia pu* 釋迦普 (*The Life of Śakyamuni*), he was a renowned Buddhist cataloguer and historian.[311] The invocation of such a *karmic* link between these two figures would not have been lost on its audience as it further bolstered Daoxuan's role both as a Vinaya specialist and as a historian of the sacred. Such self-referential acts, which simultaneously create and support a 'tradition', went hand in glove with the edifying purpose of collecting miracle tales. This edifying intent was among the motivations behind Huijiao's compilation of the *Biographies*, which he claimed was put together to remedy the deficiencies of past religious and court histories.[312] This same claim would be repeated in all the main Buddhist biographies composed thereafter by Daoxuan, Zanning and Ruxing 如惺 (fl. 1600).[313] Daoxuan was critical and scrupulous in his choice of sources as he sought to sort out the facts from varied narratives, as well as to set down a coherent chronology. In the colophon to his *Record of Miracles*, he pointed

[310] Campany 1996: 101 f.
[311] On the different means for manufacturing religious authority and continuity, such as lineage affiliation, in Chinese Buddhism, see Adamek 2006: 17–55.
[312] *GZ*: T2059.418b; A. F. Wright [1954] 1990: 74 f.; Kieschnick 1997: 6.
[313] Kieschnick 1997: 6.

out the flaws inherent in the biographical genre, with which he was quite familiar, having compiled his own biographical collection in 645. He claimed that biographies were limited by their emphasis on the deeds of outstanding monastic figures.

> During the [Northern] Qi (550–557), the [Northern] Zhou (557–581), the Sui (581–618) and the Tang there were many divine anomalies. The task [of recording these events] halted for one hundred years, [though] those that saw and heard of [them] were numerous. [These miracles] were included in the biographies of monks, so I did not record them in full. I briefly collected miracles [therein] so that it was known that there are outstanding figures within the monastic community.
> 齊、周、隋、唐代有神異。事止百年，見聞不少。備之僧傳，故闕而不載。略述感通之會，知僧中之有人焉。[314]

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

Finally, not only were authors motivated by precedent, but many were also influenced by personal experience. Often, the compilers of anomaly accounts and miracle tales were not inspired by the intrinsic value of stories surrounding the supernormal but by their own experience of its presence. The *Jin shu* 晉書 states that Gan Bao was inspired to collect anomaly accounts because of two events in his life: first, his family found a maid still alive after being entombed in his father's grave for ten years; second, his brother was revived after being dead for several days.[315] In his preface, Wang Yan tells of an image he always held dear and which he had, often by miraculous means, been able to preserve through many trials and tribulations into old age. He said of the image that:

> I have always made offerings to this image, and it will always be the ferry [that carries me across the ocean of *saṃsāra*]. Based on the repeated [miraculous] occurrences [this image has produced, it] has left a deep impression on me. [Therefore], following [the impetus caused by my] encounter with such omens, [I] stitch together [the miracle tales] in this record.
> 像今常自供養，庶必永作津梁。循復其事，有感深懷；沿此徵覿，綴成斯記。[316]

As we have seen, Daoxuan himself also had many experiences of the miraculous. Although

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[314] T2106.435a10-18.

[315] *Jin shu*: 1974: 82.2150. For more, see Kao 1985: 20 n. 32

[316] Lu [1911] 1997: 277; c.f. translated in Campany 2012b: 65. This same preface, as well as a brief account of Wang Yan's life, appears in the *Record of Miracles* (T2106.419a15-b6).

Daoxuan does not explicitly state that these are the reasons why he has collected the *Record of Miracles*, this thesis claims that Daoxuan's experience of the miraculous would have been one of the important motivations for why he compiled so many histories near the end of his life. Unlike some authors who recount their own experiences as grounds for compiling tales of the miraculous, Daoxuan did not mention his own experiences in any of the prefaces in the *Record of Miracles* as the basis for collecting accounts. However, the biography of Daoxuan in the *Song Biographies* is full of stories of his encounters with the miraculous. Daoshi says as much in his partial biography of Daoxuan.[317] Additionally, around the same time that he was compiling the *Record of Miracles*, he would have conducted interviews with celestial beings, which were recorded in the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 (667) and the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 (667). The fact that the miraculous would not have influenced the writing of this text, and indeed all texts during his later years, is difficult to deny. Therefore, personal experience was almost certainly an implicit motivating factor for compiling these stories.

The *Record of Miracles* in the Buddhist tradition

As a piece of Buddhist narrative literature, the *Record of Miracles* represents the converging point of many different interests, be they cultural, historical, religious or personal. Daoxuan had no reservations regarding his motivations for compiling these miracle tales: he considered it his responsibility to record evidence of Buddhism's miraculous efficacy in China. To record this evidence, he relied on both secular and religious works, poring over texts of all kinds and drawing from different literary traditions. This text was also the product of his own experiences, which he recorded and used to further complement his arguments. Bearing this in mind, the following sections will close this chapter by addressing questions related to the value and meaning attached to the *Record of Miracles* in its own cultural context. The first section will address its place in the Chinese Buddhist canon, followed by a final section that will look at the relationship between

[317] Ang 2019: 24–33.

miracle tales and the concept of 'history'.

Canon and canonicity

The *Record of Miracles* is today included in the Sinitic Buddhist canon, one of the largest collections of religious texts ever compiled in the history of the world's religions.[318] This canon is in fact so large, both in terms of the sheer number of scriptures and also the variety and breadth of its content, that it is difficult to understand it as a 'canon' in terms familiar to a Western audience that is more used to the relatively static and closed canons of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.[319] The *Taishō* canon (Jp. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經; 1924–1935), the most recent iteration of the East Asian Buddhist canon, contains 2920 individual works distributed across twenty-six categories. This canon contains a variety of texts classified according to varied categories spanning from sacred works (Skt. *Āgama*; Pal. *Nikāya*; Ch. *Ahan bu* 阿含部; Jp. *Agon-bu*) to apocrypha (Ch. *Yishi* 疑似; Jp. *Giji*), from the doctrine and exegesis on the *Lotus Sutra* to esoteric scriptures and commentaries, and from the doctrine and exegesis on the *Nirvana Sutra* to the monastic codes (Skt. *Vinaya*; Ch. *Lü bu* 律部; Jp. *Ritsu-bu*) and their commentaries.

The *Record of Miracles* and other Buddhist narrative works occupy a special place in this canon. A modern reader noting the miraculous elements so prevalent in the *Record of Miracles* would be inclined to classify the work as a collection of legends or myths. This would have strongly disagreed with the views of medieval Chinese readers and cataloguers. As a collection of collections, the *Record of Miracles* might have been listed in the section dedicated to Buddhist collectanea (Ch. *Shihui bu* 事彙部; Jp. *Jii bu*), where incidentally one can find the *Forest of Pearls*. This was, however, not the case with the *Record of Miracles*. It was instead categorised alongside

[318] The *Record of Miracles* was first included in Daoxuan's own *Datang neidian lu* (664) and would be officially included in the canon (*ruzang* 入藏) in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (730). For more on the development of the Buddhist canon, see de La Vallée Poussin 1905; Przyluski 1926; Collins 1990; Freiberger 2004; On Buddhist conceptions of canonicity, see Davidson 1990; Silk 2015; Zacchetti 2016; On orality and the Buddhist canon, see Drewes 2015; For a history of the Chinese Buddhist canon, see Mizuno 1982; Fang 2006; translated to English in Fang 2015; Also see more general studies on the Chinese Buddhist canon in Lancaster 2012: 232–38; Storch 2015; J. Wu and Chia 2016; Zhanru 2017.

[319] For more on the categories of the Chinese Buddhist canon, see J. Z. Smith 1998: 307; Silk 2015: 6; Zacchetti 2016: 83. Also see Fang 2006: 10; translated to English in Fang 2015.

travelogues, apologues, and biographies as a work of Buddhist history (Ch. *Shichuan bu* 史傳部; Jp. *Fumito tsutō bu*).

The *Taishō* classification did not stray far from its bibliographical predecessors. The Buddhist catalogues of the Tang also classified the *Record of Miracles* among other history-related works. In Daoxuan's own catalogue, the *Da Tang neidian lu* (664), the *Record of Miracles* appeared in an itemised list under the title *Dongxia sanbao gantong ji* 東夏三寶感通記 as a 'record' alongside 'annotations, explanations, eulogies and records' *Zhuzhu* 諸注, *jieyi* 解儀, *zan* 贊, *chuanji* 傳記.[320] In arguably the most important medieval catalogue, the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (730), the *Record of Miracles* was formally included in the Chinese Buddhist canon (*ruzang* 入藏) alongside apologetic treatises as well as other Buddhist historical texts that were considered instrumental in spreading the Buddhist faith.[321] Seventy years later, in the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (800), Yuanzhao's 圓照 (c.718–c. 805) revision of the Kaiyuan period catalogue, the *Record of Miracles* was classified among the 'biographies, annals, compilations and records' (*chuan* 傳, *ji* 記, *ji* 集, *lu* 錄).[322]

This was the case in other catalogues as well as in the print versions of the canon, wherein the *Record of Miracles* was praised as a work that helped to spread and uphold the Buddhist teachings.[323] Although the *Record of Miracles* would certainly have been read as a piece of apologia or for proselytising purposes, this did not mean that it was not considered a piece of historical literature. As we can see from the catalogues, believers, and probably some non-believers as well, consistently agreed that the *Record of Miracles* belonged in the category of

[320] *DNL*: T2149.282b4; The *Record of Miracles* is also included in a larger list of notable works in both the courtly and the religious historiographical traditions (*DNL*: T2149.330a3-333a27). The title *Dongxia sanbao gantong ji* was included in the list of works attributed to Daoxuan in the *Fayuan zhulin* (T2122.1023c8).
[321] *KSL*: T2154.625b9-10.
[322] *Da tang zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*: T2157.1014b18-1015b22.
[323] The *Record of Miracles* was so praised in the Japanese monk Enchin's 円珍 (814–891) *Chishōdaishi shōraimokuroku* 智証大師請来目録 (T2173.1103a6-9). Considering that early canonising catalogues were based on the contents of the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (730), we can assume that, as of the year 730, the *Record of Miracles* was consistently listed as canonic in other catalogues.

Buddhist history.[324]

History and historicity

The general attitude towards miracle tales revolved around the question of their facticity. Today we may ask if miracle tales, with all their miraculous elements and supernormal plot twists, constitute a form of 'history'.[325] What does the reception of these texts as well as the cataloguing norms tell us about medieval Chinese conceptions of history? And what, more broadly speaking, do we mean by 'history'?

The traditional Confucian view was, to put it simply, that the historian ought to describe facts and never fabricate them (*shu er buzuo* 述而不作). The *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 records that the historian ought 'to be able to give a rational account of a matter and keep rigidly to what is true, one has to have an unbiased mind.'[326] That being said, the medieval Chinese worldview was one wherein the supernormal nature of a thing or event did not necessarily rule out its 'reality'. Many court histories not only recorded relevant miracles and auguries, but also included the histories of mythic founders, and legendary sage kings, as well as culture heroes.[327] However, the Confucian stance regarding the miraculous was a sceptical one and we could say that those who claimed to uphold such Confucian historical standards would have taken issue with the style as well as the prevalence of supernormal content found in the miracle tale genre.

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[324] There is an interesting parallel to be made with anomaly accounts. Some anomaly accounts were, until the Song dynasty, included in the *Jin shu* among the histories (*shibu* 史部). It was only later that they were assigned to the fiction section (*xiaoshuo jia* 小說家) of catalogues. That being said, the assignation of anomaly accounts as histories was also criticised by pre-modern historians such as Liu Zhiji 劉知几 of the Tang and Zhao Yi 趙翼 of the Qing (Campany 1996: 13).

[325] Some works that argue for the use of such sources in the study of cultural history are Dudbridge 1995; Campany 1996.

[326] *Wenxin diaolong*: 1962: 4.287; Translation taken from Dien 2011: 531; c.f. H. Liu 1959: 93. For more on the *Wenxin diaolong* and Buddhism, see Mair 2002.

[327] The *Han shu*, for example, lists mythical periods going back 2.5 million years before Confucius to a creator-founder called Pangu 盤古, the creator of heaven and earth. Sima Qian in his *Shi ji* 史記 was more cautious, it would seem, only going as far back as the first of the Five Thearchs, the Yellow Emperor (*huangdi* 皇帝) (Wilkinson 2018: 747; Yang Q. 2010). There is an interesting parallel here with the Greeks, who adopted Clio ('the proclaimer') as the muse for both historians and epic poets. The difference between the historical and the lyrical was, indeed, not so distinct. According to Edgar Forsdyke, the Greeks 'rejected fiction in principle but in practice accepted much fiction as historical fact' (1956: 160).

The tension seen here between 'fact' and 'fabrication' resonates with the longstanding split in Western academia between 'history' and 'myth'. This split is clearly illustrated in the long-since updated second edition of Endymion P. Wilkinson's *Chinese History* (2000), where the chapter on 'Historical Genres' is succeeded by 'Other Primary Sources', the first item being 'Myth and Religion'. Wilkinson said of Chinese myth (*shenhua* 神話) that it constituted the foundations for understanding all cultures insofar as (1) myths spoke to the values and beliefs of a people; (2) they helped in decoding symbols and art motifs; and (3) 'the relationship of myth and history, of fiction and fact, [were] at the heart of our understanding the credibility of the earliest written records.'[328] Traditionally, the academic conversation around history has been one of fact versus fiction, wherein history was the act of recording the 'Truth' or 'ordered discourse' (*logos*), while mythology was the record of a community's self-aggrandising truths and stories (*mythos*).[329] According to this way of thinking, although parts of a miracle tale such as dates and certain recorded events may be historically true, any and all marvellous elements are to be judged as mythological and spurious. However, as is exemplified in Buddhist catalogues, this neat divide between *logos* and *mythos* does not translate very well into the lived—and in this case catalogued—medieval Chinese reality.[330]

It is essential to remember that miracle tales were not an early form of fantasy fiction. Miracle tales were, as Glen Dudbridge said regarding accounts of anomalies, a 'literature of record,

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

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

[330] This was true of court histories such as the *Jin shu* as well as other secular anthologies, where texts such as the *Soushen ji* and the *Mingxiang ji* were, until the Song dynasty, categorised according to the four-category system (*sibu* 四部) among the histories (*shibu* 史部). During the Song, however, miracle tales were catalogued among the works of the 'fictionists' (*xiaoshuo jia* 小說家) and among the records of Masters (*zibu* 子部) (Campany 2012b: 13).

not of fantasy and creative fiction'.[331] In fact, during the early Tang, the concept of 'fiction' did not yet exist and the act of writing was, to a certain extent, always performed for the purpose of recording facts, be they historical, ethical, philosophical or lyrical.[332] Miracle tales were not considered the mere products of an author's imagination and they were accordingly not read as fabricated tales.[333] Unlike the anomaly account which was secular in its outlook, miracle tales were genuinely believed by practitioners to be 'records of confirming evidence, proofs, or signs, or else of responses' validating their beliefs.[334] This is hinted at by the use of certain terms in the many miracle tale collection titles which often included terms such as 'evidence' (*yan* 驗) combined with 'numinous' (*ling* 靈), as well as 'stimulus' (*gan* 感) and 'response' (*ying* 應), speaking to how these stories were meant to record evidential miracles or manifestations of Buddhism's efficacy in China.

Moreover, miracle tales were read as historical evidence in other genres as well, such as Buddhist exegetical texts. In Jizang's 吉藏 (549–623) commentaries on the *Lotus Sutra,* he mentions the power of invoking the Buddha's name (*chengming* 稱名) when facing calamity and fire. Here Jizang cites multiple compilations such as the Guanshiyin Bodhisattva miracle tale collections, as well as Liu Yiqing's *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記 and Wang Yan's *Mingxiang ji*, pushing the burden of proof away from scriptures and onto miracle tales.[335] In turn, miracle tale authors often carefully noted the origins of their narratives as proof that their collections were not make-believe but were instead based on verifiable sources. That being said, miracle tales occupy a nebulous place between myth and history. While they were not necessarily referred to in official histories or

[331] Dudbridge 1995: 16 f. For relevant examples of literary criticism on fantasy in the West, see Rabkin [1976] 2015; Todorov 1973. Kenneth DeWoskin wrote about anomaly accounts and how they 'virtually excluded plausible historical materials from their contents', an opinion held by many, especially Chinese academics writing after Lu Xun. This opinion no longer holds true today (DeWoskin 1977: 22).

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

[333] Lagerwey and Martin 2009: 908; Campany 2009: 11, 2012b: 17.

[334] Campany 1996: 322; For Daoist examples, see Verellen 1992. Andrew Jones argues that even the language used in anomaly accounts, language similar to that used in miracle tales, implies that the contents of the narrative are true (1987: 24).

[335] *Fahua yishu*: T1721.626b5-13; Gjertson 1989: 41.

other secular texts, miracle tales had factual authority within the Buddhist community as well as a limited authority outside.[336] People certainly read the *Record of Miracles* for the sake of enjoyment, yet their reading would have had a more detached quality, as is the case today when one is reading a popular work of non-fiction.

Concluding remarks

The *Record of Miracle*s as well as other miracle tales were written by individuals that partook of a worldview informed both by ideas of *karma* and indigenous conceptions of resonance within Nature. It was, indeed, the seamless merging of both Buddhist and Chinese elements that distinguished miracle tales from other types of indigenous literature, such as anomaly accounts or court histories. Miracle tales were also written with the purpose of persuading believers and non-believers by defining the religious community's place in China, producing a singularly Buddhist historical narrative—a *mythos* or an *imaginaire*—that could bring the audience closer, both spatially and emotionally, to the truths revealed in worlds distinct from their own. It is moot to argue about the historical likelihood of certain events that are recorded in narrative literature such as apologues, hagiographies, miracle tales or travelogues. It was implied in such texts that the needs of preaching came before historical concerns. Indeed, we have drawn out in this chapter the five motivations behind the composition of the *Record of Miracles*: (1) persuasion, (2) proselytisation, (3) appealing to an audience, (4) continuity, and (5) personal experience.

For the reader today, these recorded tales shed much light on religious life, popular Buddhist practices and the general medieval Chinese *zeitgeist*. As we have seen above, the *Record of Miracles* not only grants us insight into the lives and beliefs of early Buddhists, but it may also serve as a rich historical source—regardless of the truth value of the accounts themselves. Although the *Record of Miracles* sometimes reads as an unedited volume, it remains a text of note

[336] Tang Yongtong comes to a similar conclusion about the veracity of the story relating Han Emperor Ming's dream of a golden man (2006: 23).

because it is an early extant gathering of scattered collections of miracle tales and other sources related to miraculous events. Of particular interest to this thesis, Daoxuan often inserted his experiences and opinions into his miracle tale collection, in turn, shedding light on the author's life. For these reasons, the *Record of Miracles* is an important text for the study of Chinese social history, miracle tale literature as well as Daoxuan. Insofar as these stories at once reflect and project Buddhist self-representations, they also come to comprise the *imaginaire*, or the 'collective memory', of these communally shaped traditions.[337]

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

Chapter 3: The monk and his background

Introduction

Daoxuan's 道宣 (596–667) life as it is recounted in the biographical sources presents the modern reader with a Janus-faced figure. He is at once a learned monk and commentator on the monastic codes, a pious pilgrim conversing with celestial beings, as well as an unflinching believer in the religious efficacy of cult objects and sacred places. He is, indeed, part religious disciplinarian and part miracle-worker, two categories that according to present-day rationalist sensibilities do not marry well.[338] This was, however, not such an issue to the medieval Chinese, for whom miracles were objects of awe—not doubt—and who would most likely have interpreted the miracles associated with Daoxuan as the hard-earned results of his practice and piety.

It is in the biographies of eminent monks such as Daoxuan that we can best see the self-reflexive representations of the medieval Buddhist religious community. Monastics were represented and lauded in these biographies for the sake of posterity so that monks and nuns might learn from the actions of past exemplary figures. That is not to say that these stories were believed wholesale and there certainly were many both inside and outside the community that had their reservations about some of the more miraculous elements in these stories. For our purposes, however, we see in Daoxuan's case this push and pull of seeming contradiction between the representations of a disciplinarian and those of a miracle-worker, contradictions that speak to certain religious and social tensions felt even at that time.

There are three monographs on Daoxuan's life which I will summarise here. Fujiyoshi Masumi's *Dōsen den no kenkyū* 道宣伝の研究 (*Study of Daoxuan*) brings together almost twenty years of his own research on the Tang dynasty monk. Fujiyoshi takes a historical approach, first presenting a chronological account of Daoxuan's life, followed by topical studies of selected texts. The last chapters of his monograph emphasise the philological and doctrinal complexities of

[338] If we are to believe Max Weber, the asceticism promoted by monasticism should lead to rationalisation and demythologisation, which is certainly not the case with Daoxuan (Weber [1920] 1946: 321).

Daoxuan's latter-day compositions. These final chapters leave aside many other dimensions of his intellectual life, especially topics related to his interest in the miraculous, which Fujiyoshi's study only glosses over in the eleventh chapter.[339] It remains, however, one of the most thoroughgoing studies done to date. Fifteen years after the publication of this monograph, Wang Yarong published in Mandarin Chinese a second critical study of Daoxuan's life that moved away from Fujiyoshi's philological excursus to include some more experiential details as recorded by others and by Daoxuan.[340] Finally, the recent study by Ang Zou is the first monograph on the life of Daoxuan published in English. This monograph includes many important biographical details translated to English for the first time, as well as long-overdue re-translations of other materials, such as Daoxuan's biography taken from Zanning's *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*.[341] This chapter adds to current works on Daoxuan's life by exploring the specific historical circumstances that would have influenced this Tang dynasty monk's views on the miraculous.

Daoxuan was a prominent master of monastic codes as well as a Buddhist historian, in all composing around twenty-two works still extant today in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 and the *Shinsan dainippon zokuzōkyō* 新纂大日本續藏經.[342] As a master of monastic discipline, he promoted the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* regulations, composing seminal commentaries such as the *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 (*Comment on Practices and Services Not Included in the Four-Part Vinaya*; 626) that unlike other works at the time drew not only on *Vinaya* sources, but on Mahāyāna Sutras as well. As a historian, his approach was both rigorous and innovative. As noted in the first chapter, Daoxuan's *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*) not only added to the history of Chinese Buddhism, but also brought changes to the categorical frameworks used to order the achievements of the different eminent monks therein. Daoxuan's first catalogue, the *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (*Great Tang Record of Buddhist Scriptures*), as well as his collections of apologia, such as the

[339] Fujiyoshi 1986, 1992a, 1992b, 2002.
[340] Wang Y. 2017.
[341] Ang 2019. Another translation of the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography appears in Wagner 1995: 255–68.
[342] For a list of Daoxuan's works, refer to Appendix III, items 3 and 4.

Guang hongming ji 廣弘明集 (*The Expanded Collection for the Propagation and Clarification* [*of Buddhism*]), all built on the works of the great scholiast Sengyou 僧佑 (445–518), setting new taxonomic standards that are still applied in Buddhist literature today.

If we are to believe the biographies, his was the busy life of a virtuoso monk, spending his time studying, travelling, writing, and taking part in court debates. Daoxuan also exhibited a particular interest in the miraculous, both at the personal level and as an object of study. There are various theories surrounding Daoxuan's interest in the miraculous—many of which were summarised in the introduction. Chen Huaiyu wrote that Daoxuan's perception and promotion of miracles went hand-in-hand with his ambition to form a more rooted community. The miraculous married quite well with his motivation to push for the consolidation of Vinaya rules and of ordination rituals.[343] Daoxuan used the authority of miracles, miraculous objects, and sacred places to legitimise many of his own claims regarding various facets of monastic law. It is, however, not within the purview of this work to properly cover this topic and the reader may refer to Chen Huaiyu's monograph for more on Daoxuan's role in consolidating Tang dynasty ordination rites. Of interest here are some 'tentative suggestions' made by Koichi Shinohara in his piece 'Ji Shenzhou Sanbao Gantong-lu: Some Exploratory Notes' regarding the influence of certain historical factors in Daoxuan's life. Shinohara states that the political turbulence of the early Tang had a profound influence on the monk and that circumstances would have pressed him to promote miracles and miracle tales.[344] Daoxuan believed that miracles appeared in response to a disordered world and, according to him, Tang society needed to be set in order. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to follow Shinohara's 'tentative suggestion' and systematically place Daoxuan's keen interest in the miraculous in its historical context.

State and *saṃgha* during the Tang

[343] For the chapter specifically on relics, monasteries, and miracles, see H. Chen 2007: 57–92.
[344] Shinohara 1991b: 213.

It was difficult to be a Buddhist during the early Tang. The Sinitic world had for centuries been split between northern and southern kingdoms, each pole composed of opposing states all vying among themselves for supremacy. Daoxuan lived to be seventy-one (seventy-two *sui*), of which fifty-two years were spent as a monk. Born in the year 596, he lived through the early phases of China's unification beginning with the establishment of the Sui dynasty in 581 under Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 581–604). When Emperor Wen took power and established the northern capital of Daxing cheng 大興城 (later called Chang'an; present-day Xi'an), he sought to consolidate his authority and bring about ideological measures to aid in establishing his symbolic and ritual prescriptions. He wished among other things to establish that he truly held the mandate of Heaven, paving the way for his imperialistic ambitions. Emperor Wen did this, in large part, by marrying Buddhist rhetoric with the language of state and by implementing nationwide projects, many of them in support of Buddhism.[345] Most notable of all the pro-Buddhist projects were the three separate relic distributions of the Renshou 仁壽 era (601–604), when over one hundred pagodas and relics were established throughout the provinces.[346] The national distribution of relics was accompanied by all the pomp and pageantry expected from an imperial project at this scale, leaving a lasting impression on the people and the ecumenical community it promoted. Indeed, such public endorsement assured Emperor Wen a place in the annals of Buddhist history, and Daoxuan, who would have been eight when the project came to an end, praised the accomplishments of the Sui in the *Record of Miracles*:

> Of the kingdoms that erected pagodas, none surpassed the Sui. In the transformations brought about [during the Sui Dynasty], more than one hundred [pagodas were built]. Divine portents were [thus] manifest.
> 然有國興塔，無勝隋代。一化之中，百有餘所，神瑞開發。[347]

Emperor Yang's 煬帝 (r. 604–618) ascension to the throne marked the beginning of the end for the Sui as well as the termination of his father's pro-Buddhist policies. He was much more restrictive of Buddhist monastic and religious life, setting limits on ordination and on the

[345] A. F. Wright 1957: 84.
[346] A. F. Wright 1957: 77–84, 1979: 57–73.
[347] T2106.411b20-24.

institutions.[348] Coming from a Buddhist family, Emperor Yang was not opposed to Buddhism, though the new ruler reverted to Confucian-style governance and education while his support of the faith could only pale in comparison to his father's policies. Beginning in the year 611, the Sui state became progressively weaker for reasons of bad governance as well as mass rebellion across the country. It was in 618, a bit over thirty years after unification, that the Sui was replaced by the Tang which in turn would rule for almost three centuries.[349]

The Sui-Tang was a period of great development internally in the realms of statecraft and taxation, as well as externally in terms of the expansion of a newly arisen Chinese world order driven by Tang cultural influence and military conquest.[350] The Tang ruling family consolidated the unification efforts of their dynastic predecessor, pushing forward as the Sui had in the realms of religious, cultural and intellectual innovation. From a Buddhist standpoint, this was a period of significant advancement both within the monastic community as well as in Chinese society more generally. By the early Tang, Buddhist scriptures and practices had been in China for at least four centuries so that there was a rising acceptance of Buddhist—especially Mahāyāna—teachings, allowing for the further development of infrastructure (e.g. pagodas and monasteries), the promotion of native 'schools' (*zong* 宗), the improvement of normative cataloguing systems, the further consolidation of the monastic codes, as well as the rapid growth in numbers of believers, both lay and monastic.

This was also a period of uncertainty for the community. When the Han empire fell in 220 CE, so did the unflinching belief among the ruling classes in the supremacy of Confucian thought and in the efficacy—both mundane and supramundane—of its rituals. The Six Dynasties was a period marked, among other things, by a rise in the imperial promotion of different systems of thought such as Buddhism and religious Daoism. Yet, this imperial favour proved to be a double-edged sword for the promise of patronage might just as soon turn to persecution. The threat of

[348] Two edicts in 609 and 611 effectively tried to rein in the power of Buddhist institutions through the forced laicisation of monastics and the abolition of religious cloisters near the capital (Xiong 2006: 167 f.).
[349] Xiong 2006: 51–71.
[350] It has also been called the 'Sinosphere', which emerged as the Tang created a system of satellite states which ensured 'exchanges of status, trade and security' (Adshead 2004: 43).

unfavourable policies was always looming, of which the Northern Zhou extirpation of Buddhism (574–577) was a recent reminder to Sui and early Tang Buddhists such as Daoxuan. Throughout his own life, Daoxuan lived under the constant threat of the state's attempts to curtail Buddhist community life. The indecision of the Tang rulers in the face of the rising popularity of Buddhism laid the shaky foundations for the shifting political and religious landscape of the early seventh century. This in turn affected what must have been a deeply felt malaise in the Buddhist community, whose members considered that they were living during the corrupt latter days of the Buddha's Teaching, with many claiming they were in the age of the 'semblance law' (*xiangfa* 像法) or of the 'latter-day law' (*mofa* 末法).[351] These historical factors played a central role in the development of Buddhism during the Tang for it was this political and religious malaise that pushed Buddhist 'schools' towards self-determination, while the call to canonise scriptures during the early Tang was informed by a keen sense among monastics of the precariousness of their situation. It was also this insecurity that inspired the collection of miracle tales so as to promote the significance and sanctity of the *saṃgha* in the eyes of the people and, perhaps more importantly, in the eyes of the emperor.

In tandem with these developments, Buddhists continued to draw from tried-and-true sources of authority in Chinese society: omens and miracles. There are similar parallels in the history of other world religions, such as the rising popularity of the Christian cult of relics when Charlemagne's (r. 800-814) empire dissolved. In this time of disorder in western and central Europe, many institutions came to rely on the numinous powers of their relics so that the Benedictine abbot, Paschasius Radbertus (785–865), mentioned that 'never before have so many great things been done by relics of saints since the beginning of the world, for everywhere saints in this kingdom and those brought here excite each other to song even as cocks at cockcrow'.[352] Writing over a century earlier, Daoxuan stated in his *Record of Miracles*:

> The sacred presence of the Three Jewels arrived in China long ago. Yet, as [rising] faith and persecution compete one with the other, the conditions for instances of stimulus and responses (i.e. miracles) [arise].

[351] For more on the Buddhist prophecy of decline, see Nattier 1991.
[352] Cited in Freeman 2012: 81.

> From the Han to the Tang dynasty, over a period of some 600 years, miraculous signs [appeared] and have spread widely. […] Yet, divine transformations are boundless, and appear in response to the circumstances. […] They display themselves luminously to practitioners and laypeople; they arouse faith in the deluded as well as the enlightened.
> 夫三寶利見其來久矣。但以信毀相競。故有感應之緣。自漢泊唐年餘六百。靈相胥嚮。[…]而神化無方，待機而扣。[…]昭彰於道俗，生信於迷悟。

Much like Radbertus, Daoxuan mentioned how the circumstances—this period when 'faith and persecution compete'—provided the conditions wherein miracles could effectively arise. Indeed, Buddhists relied on supernormal phenomena—and the dissemination of these recorded instances—to bolster their position, using examples of miraculous efficacy as verificatory evidence of the community's relevance.

The following sections paint a general picture of the historical context underpinning Daoxuan's religious career and how this would have influenced him. It looks at Tang emperors in Buddhist history as well as the dramatic changes in imperial policies and their attitudes towards Buddhism during the early Tang. It is important to draw out these details because by exploring the period and its rulers we may better understand the context that informed Daoxuan's own life.

Gaozu

Li Yuan 李淵 (r. 618–626), posthumous title Gaozu 高祖, was a Sui general who in 618, aided by his second son Li Shimin 李世民 the future Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649), wrested power from the crumbling Sui state. In the official histories as well as in the popular imagination, Gaozu's successes are often overshadowed by the accomplishments of his successor, Taizong, an emperor lauded throughout Chinese history as an exemplary ruler.[353] It is in fact Gaozu, however, who by his political acumen and pragmatic administration set in motion the changes in bureaucracy, legislation and religious control that would continue to develop throughout the Tang. Indeed, it was his stance towards China's various religions that would set the tone for the policies adopted by all future Tang rulers, showing favour towards Daoists and Confucians, while singling out Buddhists and setting a political precedent of tacit tolerance for their creeds and their institutions.

[353] Charles P. Fitzgerald's biography of Li Shimin, heavily based on Chinese court histories, takes every opportunity to (eloquently) denigrate Gaozu, casting him as a weak-minded ruler who is wholly dependent on his son (Fitzgerald 1933: 32).

That being said, the ruling Li 李 family were northern gentry that had strong ties to Buddhism, and many family members were practising Buddhists themselves.[354] Therefore, the opinions of pro-Buddhist figures were heard at court, so that the new founder of the Tang dynasty would have known that something as radical as mass persecution was not an effective means of getting what he wanted. Indeed, the downfall of the Northern Zhou was attributed by Buddhists to the persecution of their religion in the 570s—a historical instance Gaozu would have been well aware of.[355]

After ascending to the throne, he did in fact offer generous support: establishing monasteries, producing Buddhist images, and sponsoring vegetarian feasts.[356] For example, he established in Chang'an a monastery in honour of his son Zhiyun 智雲—a Buddhist name—who died in 618 during the struggle against the Sui.[357] Additionally, according to the *Record of Miracles,* a monk by the name of Puxian 普賢 (Skt. *Samantabhadra) sent a memorial informing Gaozu of the dilapidated state of a monastery in Fufeng County near the capital.[358] Emperor Gaozu renamed this location Famen Monastery 法門寺, a name that remains to this day at the monastery in Sha'anxi Province. In around 618, when Li Shimin's forces routed the rival Qinxing 秦興 armies led by Xue Ju 薛舉 (d. 618) out of Fufeng, monks were ordained and Famen Monastery was reopened.[359]

In the second year of Wude (618–619), Xue Ju (d. 618) [Emperor Wu of the short-lived Qinxing dynasty

[354] Tang Yongtong gives the example of Pei Ji 裴寂 (570–632), who on multiple occasions begged the emperor to see reason (quoting from the *Fozu tongji*: T2035.362c27-363a1). Also see A. F. Wright 1951: 46.
[355] A. F. Wright 1951: 45 f.
[356] Gaozu did not wish to destroy the community but he did actively enforce state-level checks and balances with regard to the ordination of monks and nuns. In 620, he also established a more centralised religious authority in the hands of ten government-appointed monks responsible for monastic affairs at the level of the state. They were called the Ten Worthies (*Dade* 大德) (Tang 1982: 10).
[357] There is supposedly a votive stele erected by Gaozu dedicated to accruing merit for Buddhist disciples, his family, and especially his son, Li Shimin, who was ill at the time (*Jiu Tang shu*: 1975: 171.4444 f.). Tang Yongtong takes this as a genuine act of faith (1982: 10), though this inscription may have been manufactured by Li Shimin who would have used it as proof of his father's support after usurping the throne (A. F. Wright 1973: 241 f.).
[358] T2106.406b23-26.
[359] For more on Xue Ju and the scramble for political supremacy at the end of the Sui, see Wechsler 1979: 163.

秦興],[360] gathered an army and prepared to head south. Taizong (r. 626–649) [at that time better known as the Prince of Jin, Li Shimin 李世民,] led his troops [out of Fufeng] to quell these forces. Initially, eighty monks were ordained, though they were not yet assigned a monastery. A monk at Baochang Monastery [in Fufeng County] called Huiye attended to the Fengquan [property]. Because the monks had not been assigned [a monastery], Huiye submitted a memorial to the emperor [asking him] to send them to Famen Monastery. A decree was passed in accordance with this official request, allowing all [eighty monks] to live there. [When they arrived] the monastery had already [been left unattended] for a long time, and had fallen into disrepair

武德二年，薛舉稱兵，將事南。及大宗率師薄伐.初度八十僧，未有住寺。寶昌寺僧惠業掃洒鳳泉。以僧未配，遂奏請住法門。蒙勅依奏，便總住焉。年歲既久，殂落略盡。[361]

Although it was not Li Shimin's campaign that finally defeated Xue Ju's armies,[362] the juxtaposition here of the ordination rites with Li Shimin's skirmishes shows that Famen Monastery was known at that time and to some extent supported by the state.[363] Famen would later become an important centre of imperial Buddhist cult in China, though more on this in the next chapter.

Patronage of Buddhism was not, however, one of Gaozu's priorities, and in Wude 2 (619) he became the first emperor to formally give precedence to religious Daoism over all other schools, proclaiming in a decree that:

> The teachings of Lao[zi] and Kong[zi] originated here [in China]. The teachings of Śākya[muni] emerged later and it is fitting to honour it with the etiquette reserved for a guest. Now, it is Lao[zi] first, Kong[zi] second and the Śākya[muni] school last.
>
> 老教、孔教，此土元基。釋教後興，宜崇客禮。今可老先，次孔，末後釋宗。[364]

This was effectively an inversion of the pro-Buddhist policies of the early Sui. The Sui scholar Li Shiqian 李士謙 stated that: 'Buddhism is like the sun; Daoism is like the moon; Confucianism is like the five stars' 佛，日也；道，月也；儒，五星也,[365] a statement indicating Buddhism's supremacy over Daoism and Confucianism that well encapsulated the prevailing attitude during Emperor Wen's reign. This statement also shows a marked contrast with Gaozu's political stance. Gaozu was, however, hesitant when presented with more concrete anti-Buddhist measures as

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[360] At the end of the Sui dynasty, Xue Ju established and independent regime called the Western Qin 西秦 in Jincheng (present-day Lanzhou in Gansu). He would have died soon after the establishment of the Tang dynasty in 618.

[361] T2106.406b26-c1.

[362] Li Shimin routed the Qinxing forces in Fufeng, but it was not until Xue Ju died of illness as he was trying to take Chang'an that the Qinxing forces, backed by the Eastern Turks, were quashed (Wechsler 1979: 163).

[363] For more on Famen Monastery, see chapter 4.

[364] *Ji gujin fodao lunheng*: T2104.381a22-23; *XGZ*: T2060.634a6-7

[365] *Sui shu*: 1982: 127.1754.

exemplified by the repeated court audiences that he gave to Fu Yi 傅奕 (554−639), the Grand Astrologer at that time, who between the years 621 and 626 urged for the extirpation of Buddhism in seven separate memorials.[366] Fu Yi claimed, among other things, that Buddhism was a barbarian religion and that it was tearing away at the social fabric of Chinese society.[367] Gaozu received these memorials, though he never fully implemented any of Fu Yi's recommended sanctions on the Buddhist community. Fu Yi's views would continue to hold sway at court well into the reign of Gaozu's successor, Taizong. Policies opposing Buddhism were not popular, however, and although the community did not thrive under Gaozu, nor could it be said that they were seriously prosecuted.

Taizong

As testimony to the shifting policies of the Tang towards Buddhism, Gaozu's last decree curtailing the Buddhist community issued in 626 was almost immediately rescinded by his successor Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649) who took power that same year.[368] He continued, however, to give audience to Fu Yi's anti-Buddhist diatribes and, in 631, Taizong broadened the scope of the ongoing debate regarding whether monastics should bow before the emperor to include the query regarding whether they should bow before their parents as well.[369] This was a thorny issue as Buddhists in China, basing themselves in the traditions of India that left holy men unfettered in the face of secular power, had long tried to distinguish the sacred duties of monastics from their worldly obligations. Taizong issued two scathing orders in 637 and in 639, reiterating Gaozu's proclamation that Buddhism was a lesser school, adding that the Li family were in fact descendants of Laozi 老子, personal name Li Er 李耳, claiming that the Tang ruling family descended from the same clan in Longxi 隴西.[370] Zhishi 智實 (601–638) and his accomplice Falin 法琳 (601–

[366] Arthur Wright has broken up Fu Yi's polemics into five lines of argument: economic, political, nationalistic, social psychological, and intellectual. For more on Fu Yi during the Tang, see A. F. Wright 1951; S. Weinstein 1987: 7; Jülch 2016: 24. Also see the biography of Fu Yi in the *Jiu Tang shu*: 1975: 129.2714-2717.
[367] S. Weinstein 1987: 12.
[368] In 626, Gaozu issued the *Shatai fodao zhao* 沙汰佛道詔, an anti-Buddhist edict preserved in the *Jiu Tang shu*: 1975: 1.16 f.; *Quan Tangwen*: 1983: 3.31; *GHJ*: T2103.283a19-b7.
[369] S. Weinstein 1987: 14.
[370] Tang 1982: 14.

640), a renown Buddhist apologist, petitioned the emperor to rescind these unfavourable edicts. Their pleas, regrettably, fell on deaf ears. Zhishi was beaten to death and Falin was accused of treason which led to his untimely death en route to exile.[371]

In the *Record of Miracles,* Daoxuan wrote about the Buddhist works of past emperors such as Emperor Wu of the Liang 梁武帝 (r. 502–549) and Emperor Wen of the Sui, whom he cast as paradigms of virtuous Buddhist kingship. The Tang emperors received no such exultations, although to present them in a bad light would have brought sanctions upon Daoxuan and his fellow monastics. Considering that the *Record of Miracles* was likely compiled with a courtly audience in mind, Daoxuan recorded many notable instances when Tang rulers committed pious deeds and patronised the teachings. Avoiding all mention of anti-Buddhist policies—a topic reserved for his apologetic works such as the *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡 and the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集—the *Record of Miracles* dwelled on the many instances when Taizong acted in the interests of the community. For example, Daoxuan wrote how the emperor conferred official recognition to sacred objects and established important monasteries such as the Hongfu Monastery 弘福寺, which was set up in honour of Taizong's late mother.[372] Under Xuanzang's 玄奘 (fl. 602–664) supervision, this monastery would later in Taizong's life be made into a state-sponsored centre of translation. Xuanzang left China for the Western Regions against state regulation in 629 to return a hero in 645. The Tang emperor treasured Xuanzang for both his erudition as well as his knowledge of the Western Regions. As he tried to take the monk on in an advisory capacity, the emperor's final years would be marked by a growing interest in Buddhism which went hand-in-hand with both his personal respect for Xuanzang and his interest in the information the pilgrim monk had to divulge about the outside world.[373]

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[371] Regarding the debate in 637, especially in relation to Zhishi's martyrdom, see *Fozu tongji*: T2035.364c13-21. Falin's indictment was done at the behest of a Daoist at court by the name of Qing Shiying 秦世英. See the reference to the edict in *Quan Tang wen*: 1983: 6.77; *XGZ*: T2060.638a28-b3; For more on this subject, see A. F. Wright 1973: 258 ff.

[372] Examples of state recognition abound in the *Record of Miracles.* Regarding the origins of Hongfu Monastery, see *FZ*: T2122.1027a18-19; *Tang huiyao*: 1955: 48.845.

[373] *Jiu Tang shu*: 1975: 191.5108 f.; For more on this subject, see S. Weinstein 1987: 24 ff.

Although Taizong's reign could hardly be characterised as amenable to the Buddhist community, he was in the beginning quite supportive. For instance, to commemorate the New Year in 627, he ordered that eminent monks come to the palace for a week-long service.[374] That same year he authorised the mass ordination of monks and nuns. He also converted his father's residence into a nunnery.[375] The following year's Imperial calendar was peppered with memorial services given by Buddhists.[376] The complexity of Taizong's relationship to Buddhism is well exemplified by his connection with the auspicious stone image discovered in Yizhou 宜州 and kept at Daxiang Monastery 大像寺 north of Chang'an. This image was first revered by Emperor Wen of the Sui, who named the complex Xianji Monastery 顯際寺. By the end of the Zhenguan period in the 640s, Taizong repurposed Xianji Monastery as a residence called Yuhua 玉華.

> At the end of the Zhenguan period, the western part of the monastery [grounds] was turned into a mansion called Yuhua [Mansion]. The image, as before, was kept in the garden thirty *li* east of the mansion. Taizong once went to offer [the image] the proper rites, and disliked that it was not [appropriately] adorned. He donated [his own] possessions to decorate [the image].
> 貞觀末寺西置宮，名曰玉華。像仍舊所在宮東三十里苑內。太宗嘗往禮事嫌非華飾。乃捨物莊嚴。永徽年中改宮立寺，還名玉華。[377]

Although he converted the monastery grounds into a residence, the *Record of Miracles* noted that he continued to make great offerings to the image. Xuanzang was also allowed to use this residence as a workstation outside the bustling capital city. At the beginning of Gaozong's reign, the mansion was converted back to a monastery, taking the name Yuhua Monastery 玉華寺.

Ultimately, it can be said that Taizong's support of Buddhism stemmed from his good political sense rather than his religious piety. He gave what was necessary to keep the realm and the court happy, eking out funds according to what was proper and effective, while simultaneously placing restrictions on institutions and monastics that he feared would become corrupt if left unchecked.[378] Still, these constant checks and balances at the state level would have seemed

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[374] *FZ*: T2122.1027a3-5; *Fozu tongji*: T2035.363b8-9.
[375] *Fozu tongji*: T2035.363b9.
[376] *Fozu tongji*: T2035.363b9-10; Daoxuan claims this happened in 630 (*GHJ*: T2103.329c14-15). For more on this subject, see S. Weinstein 1987: 12.
[377] T2106.420c17-20; *FZ*: T2122.390b6-9.
[378] A. F. Wright 1973: 261 ff.

somewhat arbitrary and did nothing to alleviate the sense of precariousness among Buddhists.

Gaozong and Wu Zhao

Li Zhi 李治, posthumous title Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683), continued the policies of tacit acceptance of Buddhism established by his predecessors. He only properly ruled from 649 to 665 given that he was, ten years into his reign, severely hindered by health problems. In 666, it was his wife, Wu Zhao 武曌 (624–705), who effectively took the reins—at least until she ruled in her own right as Emperor Wu Zetian 武則天 of the Zhou 周 (r. 690–705). Wu Zhao was Buddhist and would do much to support her religion in her function as wife to the emperor, then as *de facto* Chief-in-Command, and finally as *de jure* ruler. Daoxuan, however, would not live long enough to witness Wu Zhao's rise to power. Gaozong's reign was marked by shifting policies towards Buddhism, and Daoxuan did not, for example, live to see the edict of 674 when Wu Zhao rescinded the notorious decree giving precedence to Daoism over Buddhism.

During his time in power, Gaozong was not particularly interested in Buddhism, though he continued—perhaps because of the Buddhist queen—to fund religious works. Indeed, it was during Gaozong's reign that Xuanzang's state-sponsored translation of Sanskrit scriptures was most productive. In 656, when Buddhists helped cure his ailing son, Gaozong founded what would become the greatest state monastery of the Tang, a centre of Buddhist learning called Ximing Monastery 西明寺.[379] As we will see below, this monastery would play a central role in Daoxuan's career. Gaozong also took an active interest in the finger bone relic cult at Famen Monastery, an institution honoured by his grandfather Emperor Gaozu ten years earlier. In 660, Gaozong ordered a relic procession from Chang'an to Luoyang. When it was sent back to Famen in 662, the Empress Wu Zhao offered the relic many lavish gifts:

> The empress [Wu Zhao][380] offered 1,000 bolts of her own [silken] bedding and curtains of straight strong silk to [pay for the] production of a silver outer coffin and a gold inner coffin [reliquary] for the

[379] *Tang huiyao*: 1955 48.845; For more on this subject, see X. Wang 2015: 34.

[380] It would undoubtedly have been Wu Zetian (624–705) who gave these offering to the relic in Luoyang. They would have brought the relics to the court in the hopes that it might help Gaozong's condition for it is recorded that he had a stroke in 660 (E. Y. Wang 2005: 88).

relic.[381] There were nine different layers [of metal] and its engraving was marvellous.
皇后捨所寢衣帳直絹一千疋，為舍利造金棺銀槨。數有九重，雕鏤窮奇。[382]

At the same time, a parietal bone of the Buddha that had also been transported from Chang'an and preserved in Luoyang received the equivalent of 4,000 bolts of silk in offerings.[383] In preparation for the procession, the emperor also ordered that a statue of King Aśoka, paragon of Buddhist kingship, be produced and that this image be made according to the emperor's dimensions.

Builders were ordered to make an image in the likeness of Aśoka. It was to be the same height as the emperor. The remaining [funds made from the offering] were used to fix the old *stūpa* at Famen.
令造朕等身阿育王像，餘者修補故塔。[384]

These processions and ceremonies would have instigated profound religious sentiment among members of the ecumenical community while simultaneously serving the designs of the state. Some scholars claim that Gaozong's intentions were not purely political and that he sought out the relic after he had a stroke to draw on the objects therapeutic healing powers.[385] Regrettably, proximity to the relic did not have the desired effect and his health would continue to deteriorate until his death.

In practice, his policies were not so tolerant and in 657 he once again raised the question as to whether Buddhist monastics should respect traditional social norms, doing obeisance to both their parents and to the throne. The problem was further exacerbated in 662 when Gaozong revived this heated debate, a debate that would place Daoxuan centre stage. In the end, like his predecessors, Gaozong's attempt to bring these issues to the fore was quashed by a split court and protests from the Buddhist camp. State support continued to dwindle when, in 664, master Xuanzang, revered and respected by both Taizong and Gaozong, died. The emperor stopped funding all translation projects out of Hongfu Monastery as he turned to Daoism in his ill-health,

[381] The use of terms specific to Han funerary rites such as inner coffin (*guan*) and outer coffin (*guo*) suggested that the relics were being treated as bodies and also showed how the Chinese understood acts of relic veneration and, in this case, burial in the local idiom (E. Y. Wang 2005: 87; Shen 2018: 178); For more on the objects offered by Wu Zetian, see the article by Whitfield 2004. For more on the archeological finds at Famen, see the Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 2007.
[382] T2106.407b16-17.
[383] T2106.407c10-12.
[384] T2106.407a18-19.
[385] E. Y. Wang 2005: 88.

conferring responsibility for state patronage of Buddhism to Wu Zhao.[386]

Daoxuan's biography in broad strokes

Daoxuan lived during an interim period between two eras of pro-Buddhist rule: first, under Emperor Wen of the Sui dynasty and then Emperor Wu Zetian of the Zhou dynasty. The section above illustrated the extent to which those that ruled from the 590s to the 660s felt a certain indifference, if not hostility, towards Buddhism. This era of uncertainty, marked by religious debates and harmful edicts, left a deep impression on Daoxuan who often found himself having to justify—both publicly and in his works—the relevance of Buddhist doctrine and rites in China. It is with this historical context in mind that we now move onto the important events in his life. Therefore, the following sections present Daoxuan from two perspectives. Exploring four significant parts of his life (youth, early career, midlife, later life), the final sections of this chapter will first provide a broad outline of what we know about him—the 'historical Daoxuan'—followed by an investigation of the miraculous elements associated with the different periods of his life.

Beginnings (596–603)

Daoxuan was born in 596, probably in the Sui capital of Daxing 大興, later renamed Chang'an. He was born to the Qian 錢 family and his mother was of the Yao 姚 family, two prominent clans hailing from the region of the lower Yangtze river basin (Jiangnan 江南).[387] According to the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*, Daoxuan was of good stock: descendant of Qian Rang 錢讓 (89–151), Han dynasty Governor of Guangling 廣陵, and Qian Le 錢樂 (fl. 436), Grand Astrologer

[386] Twitchett and Wechsler 1979: 265. For more on Wu Zhao and Buddhism, see Karetzky 2002; Rothschild 2015: 191–227.

[387] Jiangnan region includes parts of Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangsu. Daoxuan's origins differ depending on the sources. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* states that he was from either Dantu 丹徒 in present-day Jiangsu or Changcheng 長城 in present-day Changxing District, Zhejiang. Scholarly consensus today seems to agree with the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, which states that his family hailed from Wuxing 吳興 in present-day Huzhou, Zhejiang. A good argument has been made for his birthplace being Jingzhao 京兆, also known as Chang'an, where his father probably emigrated in the 580s. For more on the issue of Daoxuan's origins, see Kansho 1937: 2; Fujiyoshi 1986: 71, 2002: 37–68; A.-C. Z.-H. Tan 2002: 29 f.; Ang 2019: 99 f.

under Emperor Wen (r. 424–453) of the Liu-Song. He was the son of Qian Shen 錢申, a high official in the Chen court acting as Director at the Ministry of Personnel (*shangshu libu* 尚書吏部).[388] When the Sui defeated the Chen in 589, Daoxuan's family, alongside the families of many other Chen officials, were sent to the new capital in northwest China, a scene poignantly alluded to in the *Record of Miracles*:

> When the Sui had overcome the Chen, the entire kingdom's [Chen ruling elite], heads bared and hands bound, were moved west [to Daxing].
> 及隋滅陳，舉國露首，面縛西遷。[389]

This move to the north took place before he was born, which means that Daoxuan grew up in Daxing. However, because his family came from the south, culturally Daoxuan remained a southerner. The difference between northerners and southerners would shape Daoxuan's outlook as he emphasised the cultural superiority of the south in his works while endeavouring to develop Buddhism in the northern capital.[390]

Regarding the early years, Zanning wrote that Daoxuan was intellectually precocious, that he read broadly and was capable of composing verse by the age of nine. These marks of genius indicate, if anything, that Daoxuan was brought up in a wealthy family that had the means to invest in his education.[391] Other than this, little is known about Daoxuan's early years.

Early Career (604–626)

Daoxuan began his early religious career during the reign of Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty. It was, according to him, a difficult time to be a Buddhist:

> During the late Daye, I received full ordination. At that time, the Buddha's Dharma was obstructed and monasteries were regularly closed. As for transmission of *Vinaya* teachings, there was no fit place to seek out masters. So, I could only rely on texts, knowing nothing of precepts and prohibitions.
> 大業餘曆，蒙受具戒。于時佛法梗塞，寺門常閑。致於律教，無處師尋。但在守文，持犯不

[388] *SGZ*: T2061.790b8-10.
[389] T2106.414c10-11. For more on this subject, see A. F. Wright 1979: 111 f.
[390] H. Chen 2007: 21. The difference between north and south, according to the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, was between the doctrinal teachings (*yixue* 義學) of the south and the meditative methods (*chanfa* 禪法) of the north (T2060.563c29-564a1).
[391] It also represents the biographical *topos* of the precocious child, a mark of virtuosity that appears in the biographies of many eminent monks. For more on the trope of the virtuoso child in Chinese Buddhism, see Levering 2012.

識。[392]

Despite the difficulties faced by Buddhists at the time, he did finally find a master in the capital. He began his religious career in 604 at the age of nine under the tutelage of Huiyun 慧頵 after he received his initial ordination at Riyan Monastery 日嚴寺.[393] He studied with Master Huiyun and he fully ordained in Daye 11 (615), the end of Emperor Yang's effective reign, at age fifteen. [394] The ordination probably took place at Dachanding Monastery 大禪定寺 under the supervision of his Vinaya teacher, Zhishou 智首 (567–635).[395] This was an early fated encounter, for Zhishou was a master of the Four-part *Vinaya*, a tradition that Daoxuan would continue to study and develop for the rest of his life.[396]

With the fall of the Sui in 617/618 came disorder and uncertainty as the newly enthroned Emperor Gaozu ignored the lingering policies that subjected the community to strict measures of control. Daoxuan described the challenge of getting access to teachers and lectures during the early Tang:

> As the Great Tang established rule throughout the world, they were on occasion quite parsimonious [in their support of Buddhism]. Although I wanted to go listen to lectures, I was not free to fulfil this wish [because of government restrictions]. It was not until Wude 4 (621) that I was able to really attend lectures.
> 大唐御世，時遭儉約。乍欲投聽，志不自由。武德四年，方得預聽。[397]

Although he faced many obstacles, he had a place first at Riyan and then at Chongyi Monastery 崇義寺 in the capital, doing the best he could with the resources at hand. He continued studying

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[392] *Sifenlü hanzhu jieben shu*: X714.174c15-16. c.f. translation to English in Jinhua Chen 2002a: 369. *Sifenlü hanzhu jieben shu*: X714.174c15-16. c.f. translation to English in Jinhua Chen 2002a: 369.

[393] According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Daoxuan was tonsured at around the age of seventeen. Some sources say he was tonsured by Huiyun as early as 606, when he was 10.

[394] Fujiyoshi Masumi claims that Daoxuan's aversion to worldly affairs might have been influenced by his father's own political frustrations as his father continued his uneventful political career in Chang'an as an official in name only (Fujiyoshi 1986: 19Fujiyoshi 1986: 19).

[395] For more on the obscure details of Daoxuan's early monastic career, see Jinhua Chen 2002a: 368–75. See argument for Daoxuan's ordination at Chanding Monastery in Jinhua Chen 2002a: 383. For more on the obscure details of Daoxuan's early monastic career, see Jinhua Chen 2002a: 368–75. See argument for Daoxuan's ordination at Chanding Monastery in Jinhua Chen 2002a: 383.

[396] Ang 2019: 115–19. Ang 2019: 115–19.

[397] *Sifenlü hanzhu jieben shu*: X714.174c16-18; c.f. English translation in Jinhua Chen 2002a: 369. *Sifenlü hanzhu jieben shu*: X714.174c16-18; c.f. English translation in Jinhua Chen 2002a: 369.

in Chang'an under Huiyun and Zhishou until the late 620s. It was around 626 that Daoxuan went on the first of his many retreats to Fengde Monastery 豐德寺 at the outskirts of the capital in the Fangchang Valley, Zhongnan mountain range. It is at this mountain retreat that he drafted his seminal commentary on the Four-part *Vinaya*, the *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補缺行事鈔 (*The Amended Guidelines of the Four-part Vinaya for Practical Monastic Practice*).[398] This would be a place of refuge for Daoxuan throughout his life.

Midlife accomplishments (627–662)

Between 627 and 629, Daoxuan travelled in the regions around the capital. In the year 630, he began his travels in earnest, visiting sacred sites and venerable teachers across the country. Indeed, by the end of his life Daoxuan was very well travelled, as he alluded to in the *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (*Great Tang Record of Buddhist Scriptures*):

> [I have been] east and west of the city gates [of Chang'an], north and south of the [Yellow] River. Seeking worthy companions, without fear of suffering these labours.
> 關之東西，河之南北。追訪賢友，無憚苦辛。[399]

Between 630 and 642 he visited many sacred places and gathered much of the information that he would later include in his *Record of Miracles*.[400] The personal additions from his travels make the *Record of Miracles* a singular work in Daoxuan's oeuvre, and these anecdotes constitute a large part of the evidence provided in the two following chapters.

Upon returning to Chang'an in 642, Daoxuan settled once again at Fengde Monastery on Mount Zhongnan, where he continued composing and revising works on the *Vinaya* and history. He left Fengde for one year in 645 when he was recruited to assist in the imperially mandated translation of Indic scriptures brought back by Xuanzang. Daoxuan—who could not read

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[398] Some date this text to 628 (Shinohara 2000a: 360; Jülch 2019: 648), though the colophon says Wude 9 (626). For a chronological breakdown of the texts attributed to Daoxuan, see Appendix III, item 4. Some date this text to 628 (Shinohara 2000a: 360; Jülch 2019: 648), though the colophon says Wude 9 (626). For a chronological breakdown of the texts attributed to Daoxuan, see Appendix III, item 4.

[399] *DNL*: T2149.282b7-8.

[400] The extent of his travels are mentioned in Daoxuan's preface to the *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律含注戒本疏行宗記 (X714.174c24-175a3). For more on this subject, see Shinohara 2000a: 360; Jülch 2019: 648. The extent of his travels are mentioned in Daoxuan's preface to the *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律含注戒本疏行宗記 (X714.174c24-175a3). For more on this subject, see Shinohara 2000a: 360; Jülch 2019: 648.

Sanskrit—joined this translation group as an editor, reading the literary Chinese for the *Da pusa zang jing* 大菩薩藏經 (*Bodhisattva-piṭaka Sutra*),[401] a part of the larger *Ratnakūṭa Sutra* which Xuanzang was asked to retranslate but never completed. These two eminent monks seem to have felt a great deal of respect towards one another. For reasons that remain unclear, however, Daoxuan returned to his hermitage after only one year working in the capital.[402] It was also around this time that he completed the first draft of his great biographical compilation, the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*.[403] He remained on and off at Fengde, composing and editing works for another twelve years.

Tenure at Ximing

During the 650s, Daoxuan returned to Chang'an. In his *Biographies*, he wrote that it was 'a dream' for many monks to join the monasteries based in the capital.[404] In the Tang dynasty, important figures in the religious communities of China were increasingly those that had ties to the court, a role that Daoxuan adopted in 659 when he was appointed Head Monk (*shangzuo* 上座)[405] at the newly established Ximing Monastery 西明寺. Once again, he and Xuanzang crossed paths as the latter was stepping down after a short stint as the Head Monk.[406] This was a position of great prestige and power given that Ximing's imperial affiliation allowed access to sponsorships for Buddhist translation projects as well as the collection of a large library.[407] The library would be of

[401] This text is included in section 12 of Bodhiruci's massive translation of the *Ratnakūṭa Sutra* (T310.195a16-203a21).
[402] For a summary with regards to their relationship, see Ang 2019: 143–48. Based on textual evidence, Wang Yarong claimed that both Daoxuan and Xuanzang held each other in great esteem (2017: 124). Contrary to popular opinion, based on his study of a figure out of Hongfu Monastery called Lingrun 靈潤, Kuramoto Hisanori says Daoxuan and Xuanzang had their reservations (2020: 820 f.). Ang 2019: 143–48. Based on textual evidence, Wang Yarong claimed that both Daoxuan and Xuanzang held each other in great esteem (2017: 124). Contrary to popular opinion, based on his study of a figure out of Hongfu Monastery called Lingrun 靈潤, Kuramoto Hisanori says Daoxuan and Xuanzang had their reservations (2020: 820 f.).
[403] For a chronological breakdown of the texts composed by Daoxuan, see Appendix III, table 4.
[404] *XGZ*: T2060.547b.
[405] For more on the rank of *shangzuo* in medieval China, see Wang Y. 2017: 128; Ang 2019: 71 n. 175.
[406] X. Wang 2015: 36. X. Wang 2015: 36.
[407] For more on the role of monasteries in Tang China, see Ch'en 1976: 212; Assandri 2009: 16. For more specifically on the role of Ximing, see X. Wang 2015: 32; Wang Y. 2017: 131. For more on the Ximing Canon 西明藏, see Zhanru 2017: 187. For more on the role of monasteries in Tang China, see Ch'en 1976: 212; Assandri 2009: 16. For more

great use to Daoxuan, who used Ximing's resources to compile and amend apologetic and historical works such as his *Guang hongming ji* (*Expanded Collection for the Propagation and Clarification* [*of Buddhism*]), the *Record of Miracles*, as well as his *Biographies*, which he would continue editing until his death. He was also working on other *Vinaya* commentaries, such as *Shimen zhangfu yi* 釋門章服儀 (*On Proper Buddhist Attire*) which he completed in 659.[408] In 660, Daoxuan also took part in one of the most important Buddhist religious ceremonies of the early Tang: the Famen Monastery finger bone relic procession from Chang'an to Luoyang, though more on this topic in the next chapter.

It was during Daoxuan's lifetime that Ximing became a great academic and cultic centre, a status it would keep for centuries to come. As the nexus of Buddhist ceremonial and intellectual life, Ximing provided Daoxuan with opportunities to interact and share ideas with many important people in the capital as well as with numerous eminent monks. Perhaps his most important colleague at Ximing was master Daoshi 道世 (d. 683), a fellow Vinaya master who joined at that time. Daoxuan compiled the *Record of Miracles* while Daoshi was working on his own Buddhist encyclopaedia. Indeed, in his biography of Daoxuan, Daoshi wrote of their close association:

> The Vinaya master Daoxuan and I were students together. On our day of ordination, we received the precepts from the same master. Although our practices are different, our compilation methods are one and the same. Whether it is seen or heard, if it is doctrinal or historical, we arrange it all in our records. These are synoptic collections, selected, edited, and sorted into categories, while preserving the teachings to uphold the merits [of Buddhist practice and doctrine].
> 律師是余同學。昇壇之日，同師受業，雖行殊薰莜，好集無二，若見若聞,隨理隨事，捃摭眾記，簡略要集,編錄條章，並存遺法，住持利益也。[409]

The two were aware of their parallel projects, perhaps even working side-by-side sharing sources out of Ximing's library and likely going so far as to borrow from their respective works-in-progress to fill out their own compilations.[410]

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specifically on the role of Ximing, see X. Wang 2015: 32; Wang Y. 2017: 131. For more on the Ximing Canon 西明藏, see Zhanru 2017: 187.

[408] For a chronological breakdown of the texts attributed to Daoxuan, see Appendix III, table 4.

[409] *FZ*: T2122.354b16-19

[410] For more on this subject, see Chapter 2.

Debates under Gaozong

As Head Monk at Ximing, Daoxuan also interacted with the many members of the court that passed through, giving him substantial influence both inside and outside the Buddhist community. These connections would prove important in the wake of Emperor Gaozong's decree proclaiming that monastics ought to publicly revere their parents and their rulers. When the decree was issued in 657, Daoxuan was still residing in the mountains. The first order incited protests in the capital as it reignited the debate regarding the place and the role of monastics in secular society. Once Daoxuan returned to Chang'an, he came to the defence of his faith and in 661 completed his *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡 (*Collection of Critical Evaluations of Buddhism and Daoism from the Past and Present*) where he lay down a Buddhist version of Buddho-Daoist and Chinese religio-political history.

It was, however, not until 662, three years after his appointment at Ximing, that he found himself embroiled in the debates. That year, Gaozong invited his ministers to discuss the content of the edict. A monk by the name of Weixiu 威秀, accompanied by a retinue of fellow monks, went in protest to Penglai Palace and presented a memorial before the court arguing for the independence of the monastic community. When dismissed by the emperor, they rallied behind Daoxuan at Ximing Monastery. Presenting a united front, they categorically refused the stipulations of the decree, while Daoxuan tried to aid their cause by calling on his own allies at court. In his rebuttal of the decree, Daoxuan adopted two lines of argument: first, he argued for the sanctity of the monastic community, listing the pious Chinese emperors of the past while reiterating the *karmic* risk that rulers took when they got in the way of Buddhist affairs; second, Daoxuan claimed that bowing before emperors or parents was against the monastic codes because the scriptures would not allow for monks to bow down to secular powers.[411] As a result of this concerted effort on the Buddhist front, aided in no small part by Daoxuan and his political allies, Gaozong ultimately desisted from passing the edict. The debate would not be repeated during

[411] S. Weinstein 1987: 32 f.; Reinders 2015: 53 ff.; Jülch 2016: 3; Wang Y. 2017: 163 f. For more on this debate, see Reinders 2015: 51–75. S. Weinstein 1987: 32 f.; Reinders 2015: 53 ff.; Jülch 2016: 3; Wang Y. 2017: 163 f. For more on this debate, see Reinders 2015: 51–75.

Daoxuan's lifetime, though this certainly was not the last word on the matter.[412]

Latter days (663–667)

In the year 664, Daoxuan was living at Jingye Monastery 靜業寺 on Mount Zhongnan not far from his old residence at Fengde.[413] It was here in this tranquil setting at the outskirts of Chang'an that he completed many projects including the *Record of Miracles,* his catalogue of Buddhist scriptures (*Datang neidian lu*), and his collection of apologetic materials, the *Expanded Collection*. These works were completed in the wake of recent debates in the capital and themes of Buddhist struggle seemed to be undergirding all of his writings. Although Daoxuan's *Expanded Collection* was meant to be a continuation of Sengyou's own *Collection* (*Hongming ji* 弘明集), the two texts differed greatly in content and polemic style. While the community during Sengyou's time was concerned with Confucian critique, Daoxuan wrote about contemporary issues, namely Buddho-Daoist debates and Daoist favour at court. The *Record of Miracles* also mentioned the urgency of recording miracle stories, hoping to cast the community in a good light in a climate so averse to Buddhism. His latter-day works were, indeed, all products of the times and, according to Daoxuan, times were tough.

On the other hand, there was also the issue of his age and his health. Daoxuan had a history of health issues that began during the early 650s, though from 664 until his death in 667 he was noticeably less active outside of the monastic community at Jingye.[414] He stated in a colophon that in 664, feeling pressed for time because of his declining health—a bout of *fengqi* 風氣 (lit. windy life force), a condition affecting one's life force (*qi*)—he had to work at an accelerated pace in the hopes of completing his projects before dying.[415] He continued to teach and write, so that some of

[412] Although Gaozong allowed that monks and nuns not bow before secular figures, the question of filial piety remained on the table. In 733, Xuanzong 玄宗 decreed that monastics must bow before the emperor, though this edict was rescinded in 761 (Tonami 1988: 44 ff.; Jülch 2016: 3). Although Gaozong allowed that monks and nuns not bow before secular figures, the question of filial piety remained on the table. In 733, Xuanzong 玄宗 decreed that monastics must bow before the emperor, though this edict was rescinded in 761 (Tonami 1988: 44 ff.; Jülch 2016: 3).

[413] T2106.435a13-14.

[414] Wang Y. 2017: 272. Wang Y. 2017: 272.

[415] T2106.435a13-18. This is a condition diagnosed in ancient Chinese medicine. Shinohara suggests that Daoxuan suffered from paralysis brought about by a stroke, though nothing in the text supports this argument (1991b: 2031991b: 203).

his most innovative thinking came out of his later years. First among his innovations was the design of an ordination platform and the promotion of new rites informed by divine revelations into the practices of the early Buddhist community at Jetavana in India. Daoxuan had long lamented Chinese Buddhism's institutional foibles and it would seem that at the end of his life, he had his mind set on resolving the issue of ordination.[416] Therefore, in 667 he had an ordination platform constructed at Jingye according to the dimensions revealed to him in the *Qihuan tu jing* 祇洹圖經 (*Jetavana Diagram Sutra*). From the eighth to the fourteenth day of the second month, he celebrated the establishment of the platform by ordaining twenty-seven monks, perhaps his final official function before passing away soon thereafter.[417] He died in the tenth month of Qianfeng 2 (667), a year that was also marked by yet another important religious experience in his life: his interviews with a group of *devas.*

Miracles in Daoxuan's life

According to Daoxuan's biographies, his life was filled with miracles. Bearing this in mind, the following section provides an outline of the miracles in Daoxuan's life drawn from extant biographical material as well as his own writings—when available. Indeed, the details of Daoxuan's biography are scattered across various sources. These details, often drawn from hagiographical and epigraphic sources, embellished certain aspects of his life given that biographers were often more interested in presenting him as an archetype of the pious and accomplished monk than they were in providing historical bullet points relating to his career. These sources do not read like a modern-day encyclopaedic entry on Daoxuan, succinctly listing historical facts related to family, place of birth, and career.[418] They married historical facts with supernormal elements, seamlessly weaving together the mundane and supramundane aspects of

[416] H. Chen 2007: 2. H. Chen 2007: 2.
[417] *Qihuan tu jing*: T1892.816b20-26.
[418] For modern examples of encyclopaedic entries on Daoxuan, see Shinohara 2000a: s.v. Daoxuan; Jülch 2019: s.v. Daoxuan. For modern examples of encyclopaedic entries on Daoxuan, see Shinohara 2000a: s.v. Daoxuan; Jülch 2019: s.v. Daoxuan.

his being. His biographies come together to make up a rich tapestry, providing the reader with insights not only into Daoxuan the historical figure, but also into the medieval Chinese *imaginaire* vis-à-vis Buddhist monks as well as the supernormal.[419] This section will also tie in the ways by which Daoxuan self-identified with certain miracle accounts as well as how he used the miraculous in different historical circumstances.

Miraculous elements in his early life

The details of Daoxuan's early life are something of a mystery. His own writings as well as the sources about him usually concentrate on his religious career, offering scant information on his childhood. Autobiographical details regarding his early interest in Buddhism appear only once in a postscript to the *Sifenlü hanzhu jieben shu* 四分律含注戒本疏, a sub-commentary to his own commentary on the *Dharmagupta prātimokṣa Sutra.*[420] The earliest dated textual materials related to Daoxuan's life are in the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*Forest of Pearls from the Dharma Garden*; 668) which mostly considered the monk's latter days.[421] Later sources such as the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜組 (*Collection of Miscellanea from Youyang*; c. 860),[422] the *Sifenlü xingshi chaojian zhengji* 四分律行事鈔簡正記 (*Abridged Correct Records from the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*; 895),[423] and the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (*The Extensive Records of the Taiping* [*Xinguo*] *Era*; 978),[424] to name only a few, expanded on—and often embellished—the information circulating about Daoxuan's life, an editing process that came to a head during the Song dynasty in Zanning's 贊寧 biography of Daoxuan in the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monk* completed in 988.[425]

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[419] Poo 1995: 183

[420] This sub-commentary is today preserved in the *Sifenlü hanzhu jieben shu xingzong ji* 四分律含注戒本疏行宗記 by Yuanzhao 元照 (X714.174c13-175a17).

[421] *FZ*: T2122.353c22-354b19.

[422] Composed by Duan Chengshi 段成式. See *Youyang zazu*: 1981: 2.19.

[423] Composed by Jingxiao 景霄. See *Sifenlü chaojian zhengji*: X737.29c13-30c2.

[424] Compilation by Li Fang 李昉. Segment on Daoxuan in the *Taiping guangji*: 1961: 91.604; 393.3138.

[425] Composed by Zanning 贊寧. See *SGZ*: T2108.790b8-791b27. I have listed only a few sources, though there were many biographical texts circulating at the time. For example, in Kaicheng 3 (839), the Japanese pilgrim Ennin 圓仁 (c. 793–864) catalogued the texts he found in Yangzhou. This catalogue, the *Nittō shin motome seikyōme* 入唐新求

The records do indicate that Daoxuan showed an early interest in the miraculous. In the preface to his interviews with celestial beings, he wrote how in his youth he was interested in tales of the supernormal.

> When I was young, I delighted in learning many [different things] from those texts that draw upon [examples of] rare and extraordinary [occurrences]. The *Soushen* [*ji*] investigates the supernormal, [and there are also] the *Mingxiang* [*ji*], the *Mingbao* [*ji*], the *Jingyi* [*ji*] the *Shuyi* [*ji*], tales of anomalies that record the unseen, [I] have read through them all.
> 余少樂多聞希世拔俗之典籍。故《搜神》研神，《冥祥》、《冥報》、《旌異》、《述異》，志怪錄幽，曾經閱之。[426]

Besides his penchant for anomaly accounts, the other biographical details associated with miracles in his early life were related to his ancestry and to his birth story. Just as Siddhārtha Gautama's mother dreamed of a white elephant entering her side, so Daoxuan's mother dreamed that the moon entered her bosom. This was followed by a second dream wherein a foreign monk declared her son's *karmic* relationship to great Chinese masters.[427] These stories showed that, if anything, his Buddhist career was predestined. Evidence in the biographies of the early signs of his spiritual virtuosity was acknowledged not only in his divined association to past masters, but also in his ascribed relationship to semi-mythical ancestors. The *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (*Kaiyuan era Catalogue of the Buddhist Teaching*) claimed that he was a descendant of Peng Zu 彭祖, a sagely ascetic active during the Shang dynasty (c. 1600 BCE–c. 1046 BCE) who declined a post at court to pursue his cultivation practices.[428] Even though these details were almost certainly added to Daoxuan's biography after he died, this association to an ancient sage would have certainly added to his religious pedigree. Moreover, Peng Zu's superhuman self-discipline and longevity (he lived to be over 800 years old) would have been meaningful to the recipients of this biographical tradition, thus adding to the supernormal aura surrounding Daoxuan.

Most interesting, however, are the above-mentioned details of Daoxuan's past lives told

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聖教目錄, included other sources that are no longer extant such as the *Daoxuan xing ji* 道宣行記 and the *Daoxuan lüshi zan* 道宣律師讚 (T2167.1087a8-9). For more on the primary sources related to Daoxuan's life, see Suwa G. 1990; Ang 2019Suwa G. 1990; Ang 2019.

[426] *LGL*: T2107.436a4-8; *LGZ*: T1898.875a23-28.

[427] *SGZ*: T2061.790b12-14.

[428] *KSL*: T2154.562a8-9.

through the account of his conception. He supposedly remained in the womb for twelve lunar months and was born on the Buddha's birthday.[429] According to Zanning, when Daoxuan's mother was pregnant, an Indian monk visited her in a dream. He told her that Daoxuan was the reincarnation of Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518), who in turn had continued the works of the Southern Qi monk Senghu 僧護 (d. c. 506).[430] Daoxuan's association to these monks, two contemporaries who would have been active in southern China during the Liang, was not arbitrary.[431] Huijiao's *Biographies* tell that Senghu of Yinyue Monastery 隱岳寺 [432] on Mount Tiantai in Shan County (present-day Zhejiang) began work on a Maitreya image ten *zhang* tall which he could not complete before his untimely death. Before passing, he pledged that while he himself could not properly finish it, his project would 'bear fruit' (*keguo* 剋果) in another life.[433] The *Liang Biographies* record that when the Liang Prince of Jian'an 建安王, Xiao Wei 蕭偉 (476–533), was ill he dreamed that his salvation depended on this image, after which he requested that Sengyou go retrieve it. Sengyou brought the statue which was later completed in the year Tianjian 15 (516).

Different details related to these stories are given in the *Record of Miracles* that do not suggest any association between Senghu and Sengyou.[434] The *Record of Miracles* omits the role of Senghu, dwelling rather on the story of the wandering monk Tanguang 曇光 (c. 407–c. 477),[435] a pilgrim who settled on Mount Tiantai where he would spend his days sculpting an image of the Buddha. He did not complete this project, and when Sengyou was sent by Xiao Wei to retrieve the

[429] In the East Asian context, the Buddha's birthday was traditionally celebrated on the eighth day of the fourth month of the lunar calendar. Unlike Daoxuan's twelve lunar month gestation, the common period in the lives of all the Buddhas is ten months. Interestingly, long pregnancies seem to be a recurring trope in China. For example, the *Han shu* 漢書 records that the sage Emperor Yao 堯 remained in the womb for fourteen lunar months (1963: 97.3956).

[430] Senghu was a monk active during the Southern Liang. Mentioned in *GZ*: T2059.412a8-413a9. It is traditionally believed that Sengyou was Senghu's reincarnation. This is unlikely, however, considering that the two were contemporaries.

[431] Wang Y. 2017: 12 f..

[432] The *Song gaoseng zhuan* reads Yinyu Monastery 隱嶽寺 (T2061.790b13-14).

[433] *GZ*: T2059.412a17-18.

[434] The *Record of Miracles* does mention another figure called Senghu from Lingshi Monastery 靈石寺 (T2106.420b21-26). He is also mentioned in Sengming's biography (*XGZ*: T2060.693c15-20).

[435] Also mentioned in *GZ*: T2059.416b03.

image, it was the image made by Tanguang that he found—not the one by Senghu. Sengyou was at first disappointed by the unfinished quality of this image. However, during the night a landslide revealed a second more beautiful image of the Buddha embedded in the mountain.[436] The difference between these stories reveals two possibilities. First, Daoxuan, who knew Huijiao's *Biographies* very well, maybe had access to another source when compiling this account. Considering that Daoxuan also mentions a stele inscribed by Liu Xie 劉勰 (c. 465–c. 520) in his *Record of Miracles*, it is safe to assume that his source for this story was the inscription. Second, we see that the association of Senghu, Sengyou, and Daoxuan was a later development that Daoxuan did not make himself.[437]

He did, however, make his relationship with Sengyou explicit. In his interview with a deity on points of doctrine and codes, the supernormal being said:

> Master [Daoxuan], originally during the Liang dynasty, you were admired as a leader, and wrote many works. People of great renown all spoke of your discourses. You resided in Jianchu and Dinglin [Monasteries].
> 師本在梁朝，已為稱首，大有著述。論名人皆聞之，建初，定林，咸其所住。[438]

This is a clear reference to Sengyou who resided at Dinglin Monastery and died at Jianchu Monastery. As monastic figures, Daoxuan and Sengyou would also seem to us an obvious match. They were both Vinaya specialists sharing many of the same religious concerns.[439] For example, Daoxuan's *Guang hongming ji* was a continuation of Sengyou's *Hongming ji* 弘明集, two of the greatest collections of Chinese Buddhist apologia ever written. Unlike the association between Senghu and Sengyou, which was probably a later development of the Daoxuan lore, here the allusion to Sengyou in Daoxuan's divine interviews, the adoption of a similar title for his collection

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[436] T2106.419c16-420a3. This stone image supposedly still exists today in the Nanming mountains of Zhejiang. It goes by the names *Xinchang dafo* 新昌大佛 or *Sansheng shifo* 三生石佛 (Wang Y. 2017: 13).

[437] Senghu of Yinyue Monastery is only mentioned once in Daoxuan's writings in the biography of Fachao 法超 (*XGZ*: T2060.607a8-9). In the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, Senghu is referred to in passing and is completely unrelated to Sengyou's story.

[438] *LGL*: T2107439c26-27.

[439] Shi Guodeng affirms that this association is due to the fact that they both shared the same religious concerns (1992: 16). Robin Wagner suggests that this association reflects Sengyou's influence on Daoxuan (Wagner 1995: 51). On the other hand, Cao Shibang does not believe the association is so clear-cut considering that they both adopted very different *Vinaya* codes (1965: 308).

of apologia, and the common interest of these two monks in the promotion of the monastic codes, reveals that the association to Sengyou was almost certainly made on purpose by Daoxuan.[440]

Miracles in Daoxuan's midlife texts

In the 640s, while Daoxuan was composing his *Biographies*, he allotted a large part of the collection to stalwart promoters of the faith, especially the 'defenders of the Teaching' (*hufa* 護法), the 'miracle-workers' (*gantong* 感通), and the 'self-immolators' (*yishen* 遺身). Many of these stories contained miraculous elements of every stripe—dragons appearing, strange flowers manifesting, self-immolation producing an otherworldly fragrance, and more. Considering the content of these biographies compiled during this period of unfavourable religious policies, it is clear that the narratives included in these three social categories served a purpose: they were meant to bolster the community's claim to a place in Chinese society. This was done by depicting Buddhists in a positive light as they defended their faith by various means, including debate, miracle-working, and self-sacrifice.

From 657 until 662, Daoxuan's anxiety regarding the future of the Buddhist community was further exacerbated by Gaozong's anti-Buddhist policies.[441] He would ultimately take on a more active approach in 662. As Head Monk at Ximing Monastery, he addressed three missives, preserved in his *Expanded Collection*, to members of the court.[442] In his best literary Chinese, Daoxuan pleaded with members of the court to persuade them of the Buddhist position on the issue of bowing before secular authority, emphasising that respect to secular hierarchy in that way would go against his very religion. If this debate was to be a contest of narratives, Daoxuan needed to be a persuasive storyteller. To this purpose, the tone of the third letter addressed to ministers was

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[440] A similar argument is made in Yamazaki 1967: 164 f. For more on Daoxuan in relation to Sengyou, see Fujiyoshi 2002: 3–36; Wang Y. 2017: 12 ff.

[441] Shinohara 1991b: 213.

[442] The missives were the *Shang Yongzhou mu Pei wang lun shamen buying baisu qi* 上雍州牧沛王論沙門不應拜俗啟 (*Letter addressing* [*the son of Gaozong, Li Xian*] *Prince Pei of Yongzhou, an explanatory discussion on why monastics should not bow before secular* [*powers*]), *Shang Rongguo furen Yangshi qinglun shamen buhe baisu qi* 上榮國夫人楊氏請論沙門不合拜俗啟 (*Letter addressing* [*Wu Zhao's mother*] *Lady Rongguo of the Yang clan*, *an explanatory discussion on why bowing to secular* [*powers*] *does not befit monastics*), *Xu fojiao longti shijian zhu zaifu deng zhuang* 序佛教隆替事簡諸宰輔等狀 (*Letter addressing the high ministers briefly elaborating on the vicissitudes of the Buddha's teachings* [*in China*]). See *GHJ*: T2103.284c26-286c9.

more historical, closer to a collection of miracle tales than it was to a formal letter. In the missive, Daoxuan referred to non-Buddhist literature such as the Daoist *Liezi* 列子 (*Master Lie*), remarking how Lord Mu of the Zhou dynasty 周穆王 (c. 976–c. 922 BCE) travelled west and met an extraordinary person (*huaren* 化人), a man that Buddhists claimed was the Buddha's first incarnation (*Fohua zhichu* 佛化之初).[443] There was also mention of stories associated with Emperor Shi of the Qin 秦始皇帝 (r. 221–210 BCE), Emperor Ming of the Han 漢明帝 (r. 57–75), and other important figures of the past. As he wrote these accounts of miracles and prophecies in this third letter, Daoxuan was not only appealing to the ministers' sense of fantasy and wonderment but, by referring to the *Master Lie* and other works such as the *Han shu* 漢書 (*History of the Han*), he was also appealing to their sense of historical precedent as embodied by respected works of literature and venerated histories. The marriage of Chinese tradition with Buddhist mytho-history—which is characteristic of miracle tales—was a narratological legitimation strategy that was also applied to Daoxuan's other ongoing works, such as his *Biographies*, as well as all the historical and apologetic works that followed the debates of 662. Indeed, it has been argued that this period of active debate at court (657–662) during Daoxuan's midlife career influenced his output, especially works from 661 until his death in 667.

The *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡 (*Collection of Critical Evaluations of Buddhism and Daoism from the Past and Present*) composed in 661 in response to Gaozong's policies, was written in a style similar to the third letter addressing the ministers, mixing miracle tales and historical references to make a point.[444] Segments from the *Critical Evaluations* were reused in his later apologetic compilations such as the *Expanded Collection*,[445] while also, to a lesser degree, influencing the *Record of Miracles.* A cursory look at the *Critical Evaluations* and the *Record of Miracles* reveals that Daoxuan must have taken passages from the *Critical*

[443] *GHJ*: T2103.285a25-27.
[444] For more on the *Critical Evaluations*, see Assandri 2009: 15–32.
[445] A quick side-by-side comparison of the two texts shows significant text reuse in: *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* fascicle 1 => *GHJ* fascicles 1, 2, 4, 5; *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* fascicle 2 => *GHJ* fascicle 8, 10; *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* fascicle 3 => *GHJ* fascicles 18, 25.

Evaluations to present them in shortened form in his collection of miracle tales. For example, in the *Critical Evaluations* his extensive use of the apocryphal *Han faben neizhuan* 漢法本內傳 (*Inner Reccords of the Dharma Essentials During the Han*) followed by his account of the monk Kang Senghui 康僧會 meeting Lord Sun Quan of the Wu 吳孫權 are presented summarily in this same narrative order in the *Record of Miracles* item on the Mao pagoda 貿塔 in Kuaiji 會稽.[446] The same is true of his account of the monk Tanshi 曇始 who deflected the blade of his executioner during a Buddhist purge ordered by Emperor Taiwu 太武 of the Northern Wei (r. 423–452).[447] It is important to bear in mind that Daoxuan was working on both this apologetic text and the miracle tale collection simultaneously during this midlife period, while using many of the same sources out of the Ximing Monastery library. It is clear that Daoxuan was influenced by the events that were taking place in the mid-seventh century, if only because circumstances pushed him to spend more time on apologia rather than *Vinaya* exegesis. Considering the higher number of miracle tales in his midlife to latter-day texts, it would therefore seem that in the face of the overwhelming political adversity represented by the debates, Daoxuan was using miracle narratives as a source of authority and that this interest in the supernormal translated to his *Record of Miracles* and to other latter-day works.

A holy tooth

We explored in the previous section how Daoxuan wrote about miracles during his midlife career (627–662), yet this would not be a fitting study of the miraculous in his life without mentioning one of the most important supernormal accounts related to his lore: the story of the holy tooth. His biographies record how during his time at Ximing Monastery he was once walking at night when he suddenly stumbled and fell. He was left unscathed, however, for an invisible figure caught him before he hit the ground.[448] This supernormal being stated that they had been protecting Daoxuan in secret, after which they presented him with a Buddha tooth (*foya* 佛牙), the cult object that

[446] Compare T2106.410b6-17; 410b18-29, to *Ji gujin fodao lunheng*: T2104.363c10-364c16; 364c19-365a24.
[447] Compare T2106.434a22-a26 to *Ji gujin fodao lunheng*: T2104.368a17-b23.
[448] *SGZ*: T2061.791a11-17; *Fozu tongji*: T2035.297a17-18.

would later become most closely associated with Daoxuan. The biography states that the object was a gift from Vaiśravaṇa's son, Nezha 那吒 (Skt. Naṭa),[449] who offered the relic after Daoxuan imparted to him the three refuges and eight precepts.[450] This tooth had particular religious and prophetic significance for it was the tooth originally stolen by mischievous spirits (Skt. *yakṣas*) after the Buddha's cremation. It was retrieved and kept safe in Indra's heavenly realm, where it stayed until Daoxuan's encounter with Nezha.[451] This same tooth relic was later enshrined at a monastery in Chang'an, where its legacy continued both as a relic of the Buddha and as a memento of Daoxuan.[452]

The relic, however, is not mentioned in any of his own writings. A Song dynasty Buddhist history, the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (*Chronicle of the Buddhas and Patriarchs*), notes that only Daoxuan's disciple Wengang 文綱 knew about the relic and that it was translated to the eastern pagoda at Chongsheng Monastery 崇聖寺 after the master's death.[453] In fact, the story of Nezha and the tooth relic appears in none of the early sources and it was most likely added to Daoxuan's life story in later biographies, beginning with Zheng Qi's 鄭綮 (d. 899) *Kaitian chuangxin ji* 開天

[449] Nezha was the eldest son of Vaiśravaṇa and was often depicted with three faces and eight arms (*SHD*: 1937: sv. 'Naṭa').

[450] For the accounts of Daoxuan's encounter with Nezha, see *SGZ*: T2061:791a9-26. Interestingly, in the Song dynasty, they wrote that when Daoxuan was ill in the 650s, Nezha's father, Vaiśravaṇa, visited Daoxuan to offer medical assistance (*Fozu tongji*: T2035.297a14-16). This fact is also, somewhat inexplicably, scrawled on the verso of the manuscript S5598 in the Stein Collection at the British Library. The inscription reads: 'Vaiśravaṇa offered the monk Daoxuan heart recovery pills' 毗沙門天王奉宣和尚補心丸. Mentioned in Wang D. 2018: 55.

[451] For more on the Buddha's teeth relics in China, see the article entitled *Foya gushi* 佛牙故事 in Chen Y. 1982; For more on the different traditions related to this particular tooth relic, see J. Hastings 1924: 659 ff.; Jayawackrima 1971: 34. On the theft of this relic by the two demons, see Demiéville 1974: s.v. Butsuge; Strong 2004b: 187 f., 2021: 45 f.

[452] The tooth relic continued to be venerated after Daoxuan's time and is referred to as 'Daoxuan's Buddha tooth relic' (*Daoxuan foya* 道宣佛牙). According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, upon Daoxuan's death, celestial beings took the relic and offered the tooth to his disciple Wengang 文剛 who placed it at Chongsheng Monastery 崇聖寺 in the capital. In 776 (or 767) Emperor Daizong 代宗 inspected it (*SGZ*: T2061.791a-b; *Fozu tongji*: T2035.379a); Demiéville 1974: s.v. Butsuge; Chen Y. 1982: 391 f. Veneration to the tooth relic was stopped during the Huichang persecution (842–845). In 853, however, it was circulated once more and emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 himself would have gone to visit it at Zhuangyan Monastery 莊嚴寺 (S. Weinstein 1987: 125; 143); A ninth-century account of the annual festival dedicated to the Buddha's tooth by the Japanese pilgrim Ennin is translated in Ch'en [1964] 1973: 266 f. At least five different places across China, Korea and Japan have made claims to Daoxuan's original tooth relic (Strong 2004a: 190; Faure 2000: 162).

[453] *Fozu tongji*: T2035.297a21-22. Also see *Song gaoseng zhuan* for more details (T2061.791a26-27).

傳信記 (*Record of the Kai*[*yuan*] *and Tian*[*bao*] *Eras*) in 890. That being said, this is an important detail in the study of Daoxuan for it shows how religious biographies develop through time, as well as how later generations of Buddhists present eminent monks of the past. In this case, Daoxuan's status as a Buddhist holy man is confirmed by a deity that commends him for his pious lifestyle by presenting him with a holy object. Daoxuan recorded many such tales in his *Record of Miracles* as well as in his *Biographies*, although here he was the subject of this particular miraculous account.

Latter day miracles

A quick count in the *Song Biographies* version of Daoxuan's biography includes at least eighteen supernormal elements.[454] This biography is representative of the Daoxuan lore because it is a later Song dynasty text summarising the information that came before it, as well as being the most cited source on Daoxuan. Of these eighteen miracles in the *Biographies*, four happened between 663 and 667. Proportionately, this is a lot if one considers that Daoxuan lived to be over seventy.[455] It was, moreover, at the end of his life that he completed many other texts related to miracles, such as the *Expanded Collection* and the *Record of Miracles*, two texts where he emphasised the historical necessity of recording miracle tales. Indeed, perhaps because of his own spiritual attainments, or because of bad health and old age, or because of recurring threats to Buddhist institutions posed by the state, it would seem that after Daoxuan left Ximing to live out his remaining days off in the mountains, the miraculous took on a new dimension for him.

In his interviews with deities which he conducted at the end of his life, he received much needed confirmation for certain facts which he could not validate by any other means, while entire scriptures were also passed down to him by celestial beings. Details of these interviews were compiled in the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 (*Vinaya Master Daoxuan's Record of Miraculous* [*experiences*]) and the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 (*Record of Vinaya* [*Master Daoxuan's*] *Miraculous Encounters*). Xuanzang's disciples described Daoxuan's

[454] *SGZ*: T2061.790b8-791b26. For a list of the eighteen miracles associated with Daoxuan in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, see Appendix II, item 3.
[455] See Appendix II, item 3, numbers 13, 14, 15, and 18.

interviews in their master's biography, stating that: 'the *Vinaya* master Daoxuan, Head Monk at Ximing Monastery, had the power to affect spirits' 法師亡後，西明寺上座道宣律師有感神之德.[456] Indeed, Daoxuan was recognised by his contemporaries as a monk who was in touch with unseen forces. Many passages in Daoxuan's collected interviews recount how he spoke with these supernormal interlocutors, thus resolving his own doubts regarding issues of textual authority and Buddhist discipline.[457] He also confirmed the historical accuracy of his writings through divine confirmation. He wrote the following:

> Addressing me the spirit said: 'Regarding your works, the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* and the *Guang hongming ji*, they promote the teachings provided by the sages. The spirits of the dead rejoice, there are none who do not praise your work.'
>
> 告余云：所著文翰，《續高僧傳》、《廣弘明集》，裨助聖化。幽靈隨喜，無不贊悅。[458]

The contents of these records make up more than enough material for a monograph in their own right. For the purposes of this thesis, however, it is interesting that in Daoxuan's case such accounts were considered authoritative by his contemporaries because, as Zanning put it: 'it was not [Dao]xuan that described [many of the miraculous instances associated with him]' 非宣自述也.[459] This statement reads like a variant on the Confucian dictum mentioned in the previous chapter, which holds that 'history must describe facts, not fabricate them' (*shu er buzuo* 述而不作). The difference, of course, is that in Zanning's opinion, revelations from the unseen realm are just as valid as citations drawn from histories, gazetteers, and other such sources. Divine inspiration was, to a certain extent, considered legitimate in its own right. Daoxuan purportedly never sought out this information and Zanning therefore asked 'whether or not these messages were entrusted to the spirits [for Daoxuan]?' 且非寓言於鬼物乎.[460] It is implied in this rhetorical question that the spirits came not because Daoxuan beckoned them, but out of reverence for the old monk, a position

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[456] *Da Tang Da cien si sanzang shi zhuan*: T2053.277b27-28.
[457] Regarding the resolution of doubts through visionary communication with supernatural agents, the case of the Liang dynasty monk Dao'an is also very informative. See *GZ*: T2059.353b18-27; Link 1958: 34 f.
[458] *LGL*: T2107.435b10-13.
[459] *SGZ*: T2061.791b20.
[460] *SGZ*: T2061.791b22.

taken by Daoshi some three centuries earlier when he stated that it was Daoxuan's bad health and pious practice that made the spirits come to his assistance.[461] For his biographers, it was essential to note that self-doubt was not the source of these interviews. The emphasis was placed instead on the fact that Daoxuan did not record even a fraction of the supernormal events associated with him and that the spirits visited him because of his spiritual attainments and religious piety.[462] That is to say, these interviews were considered the product of providence. This was, perhaps, simply a convenient way for his biographers to dismiss the fact that so many of the supernormal details in Daoxuan's later biographies did not appear in his own writings. It does, however, show the modern reader that for Daoxuan, his contemporaries, as well as for later biographers and readers, these events did not constitute fabricated evidence but were believed instead to represent viable sources of authority.

The authority of such miracles and divine communications was quite contentious, a fact that Daoxuan was well aware of. In the foreword to his interviews with celestial beings, he expressed his frustration towards those that simply ignored the history of legitimate revelation and the myriad of recorded Buddhist miracles in China's past:

> And as for those who overlook the signs presented in the literature, they interpret [and dismiss these miracles] because [their thinking is limited to their ideas of] 'principle' (*li*) and they never [took the time to] extensively investigate [the matter]. Well, one cannot [persuade such people] by means of dialogue.
> 且泛文相，以理括之，未曾博觀，不可以語也。[463]

Daoxuan here intimated that only small-minded people could ignore the various recorded instances of revelation and evidentiary miracles. The medieval Chinese were, indeed, not new to the idea of revelation.[464] In the religious Daoist traditions, the Celestial Masters believed that their scriptures

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[461] *FZ*: T2122.353c27-29.

[462] Franciscus Verellen makes a similar argument regarding encounters with divine beings in Daoist hagiographical accounts, noting that in such cases the practitioners never beckon the gods, but they instead move them (*gan* 感) by means of merit (*gong* 功). For more on divine encounters in the various Chinese traditions of revelation, see Verellen 1998; Goossaert 2022: 18 ff.

[463] *LGL*: T2107.436a3-4.

[464] For more on religious inspiration in China, see the typological and historical breakdown of the various Chinese revelation traditions in Goossaert 2022: 1–67. For an example in the Indian tradition, refer to the story of Kṣemedra,

originated from primordial energy (*qi* 氣) and only appeared in scriptural form after the first revelation of the way (*dao* 道) to Zhang Daoling 張道陵 in 142 CE. These texts were uncreated, direct, primordial, and could only be grasped by means of revelation.[465] In the fifth century, the daughter of a government official in the south who went by the name of Nizi 尼子 (lit. young nun) had various visionary experiences and received twenty-one 'Indian' scriptures over a seven-year period.[466] Six hundred years after the Celestial Masters and over a century after Nizi, supernormal beings came and spoke to Daoxuan. Although there are very few instances of other monastic historians of Daoxuan's status recording their visions in this way, his revelations were, nonetheless, part of an ongoing tradition.

We can see in the comments above made by Zanning and Daoshi that by the Tang dynasty, revelation had become a viable source of authority and an acceptable means of transmitting scriptures. This statement, of course, comes with many caveats. Daoxuan had status and erudition, which certainly bolstered the legitimacy of his own visionary experiences. Nizi did not have such social and religious standing while she was alive, and it would take over a century before her revealed texts would be seriously considered by Buddhist scholars. Moreover, as we noted in the passage above, Daoxuan was conscious of the fact that there were many who looked upon such revelations with a sceptical eye. In light of the unfavourable conditions for the Buddhist community discussed in this chapter, we see how Daoxuan had to negotiate this tension between faith and scepticism throughout his life, a tension that came to colour all of his latter-day works. He was a scholar, a miracle-worker, and a 'mystic', facets of his personality that appear in his biographies, in his self-representations, as well as in the narrative content of his works. It may therefore be said that Daoxuan was, during this precarious period in Buddhist history, particularly

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an Indian non-Buddhist poet, who was asked to compile the lives of the Buddha (Skt. *avadāna*) in Granoff 1996: 90. Demiéville also speaks of Maitreya as a recurring source of revelation in the Indian tradition. For more on this subject, see the subsection dedicated to Maitreya and his acts of inspiration (Demiéville 1951a: 380). For more on the Maitreya myth, see Nattier 1988.

[465] Kohn 1995: 51; We also see this in the Shangqing 上清 tradition, wherein the original scriptures were revealed through a visionary medium between the years 364 and 370 (Mollier 2008: 7). For more on the 'revelatory ecology' of early religious Daoism, see Goossaert 2022: 31–39

[466] Zürcher 1982: 166 f.; Fang 2001; S. Liu 2009: 337 f.

interested in the legitimacy of revelation as well as the authority of miraculous phenomena.

A bowl, a robe, and an ordination platform

While Daoxuan's own oeuvre was not the source for many of the stories important to his lore, he did record the visions he had late in life related to some of the Buddha's most treasured monastic implements: the alms bowl and the robe. His revelation of the origins and whereabouts of the Buddha's bowl and of his robe was recorded in the *Yifa zhuchi ganying ji* 遺法主持感應集 (*Record of Miracles on the Preservation of the Teaching Bequeathed* [*by the Buddha*]).[467] Although the original text is no longer extant, fascicle 98 of Daoshi's *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*Forest of Pearls*) preserved Daoxuan's foreword to the *Yifa zhuchi ganying ji* which described his vision of the Buddha's alternative final sermon.[468] The Nikāya tradition holds that Ānanda recited from memory the teachings of the Buddha during the first council at Rājagṛha. Yet, this account did not speak to the origins of the Mahāyāna, a tradition that seventh-century Chinese believers were much more familiar with. Therefore, Daoxuan envisioned a later second council taking place on a more cosmic plane that included the Buddha, the disciples, and a large retinue of bodhisattvas and gods.[469] The basic thrust of the Buddha's alternative sermon pressed upon his audience the impending end times of the Dharma, while recounting the stories of different important cult objects. In this sermon, the Buddha also ordered the distribution of facsimile versions of his alms bowl throughout Jambudvīpa.[470] The story of the Buddha's robe, moreover, is appended to the "Dharma attire" (*fafu* 法服) segment in fascicle 35 of the *Forest of Pearls*.[471] In this account, Daoxuan describes how the Buddha was offered the robe of the past Kaśyapa Buddha and,

[467] Daoshi lists the *Yifa zuchi ganying ji* in seven fascicles among Daoxuan's works (*FZ*: T2122.1023c12).
[468] Shinohara 2003: 69 f. Shinohara 2003: 69 f.
[469] Barrett 2012: 14 f.Barrett 2012: 14 f. Daoxuan was not the only one to imagine alternative 'final sermons'. The Tibetan historians bSod-nams-rtse-mo and Bu-ston, declared that another council took place in the Vimalasvabhāva cave at the same time as the famous first council at Rājagṛha. It was in this cave that Mañjuśrī recited the Mahāyāna *Abhidharma*, Maitreya recited the Mahāyāna *Vinaya* and Vajrapāṇi recited the Mahāyāna *Sutras* (Davidson 1990: 310Davidson 1990: 310).
[470] *FZ*: T2122.1008c26-1009a9; Translated to French in Wang-Toutain 1994: 79 f. Discussion of this alternative sermon in Wang-Toutain 1994: 79 ff.; Shinohara 2003: 77–86. *FZ*: T2122.1008c26-1009a9; Translated to French in Wang-Toutain 1994: 79 f. Discussion of this alternative sermon in Wang-Toutain 1994: 79 ff.; Shinohara 2003: 77–86.
[471] *FZ*: T2122.560a-563b.

preparing to enter *parinirvāṇa*, he offered it to those who would uphold his teaching during the latter days of the Dharma.[472]

In the *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 (*Geography of the Śākyas*), Daoxuan notes that Gautama's bowl was kept in the palace of a Persian king in southwestern Gandhāra.[473] This was confirmed in first-hand accounts from pilgrims such as Faxian 法顯 and Xuanzang 玄奘 who, during their peregrinations to and from India, visited the site containing the hallowed bowl in Puruṣapura (modern day Peshawar).[474] Liu Sahe's 劉薩荷 return-from-death account contradicted their travelogues, however, when the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin prophesied that 'the alms bowl of the Tathāgata will later reach the Han land in the east. If you [Liu Sahe] can establish one act of merit with respect to […] this bowl, you will receive rebirth in the heavens as recompense […].'[475] In this account, the bowl was meant to leave the west and make its way east. Daoxuan aligns himself with this prophecy when he confirms through visionary experience that the Buddha ordered the god Indra to provide replica bowls produced with materials at Mount Sumeru for the future King Aśoka. Daoxuan notes that by Aśoka's orders, celestial beings were to distribute these bowls, Buddhist symbols of discipline and charity, throughout the world.[476]

That bowls and robes were Daoxuan's objects of choice in his vision was not a coincidence. The Buddhist robe as a form of dress effectively set monastics apart from the laity, and faced with

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[472] This part of the sermon is described in Shinohara 2000b: 307–14. This part of the sermon is described in Shinohara 2000b: 307–14.

[473] *SF*: T2088.954c12-17; 968b14-16; Jiantuoluo 健陀邏, as it is called in the *Shijia fangzhi*, most likely designates Jiantuowei 健陀衛 (Gandhāra). The *Shijia fangzhi* also mentions the *Bosi wang guan* 波斯王宮, which means the 'Bosi king's palace'. *Bosi wang* probably designated the 'Persian king' (Wang-Toutain 1994: 65Wang-Toutain 1994: 65).

[474] *Foguo ji*: T2085.858b; In Faxian's account (c. 416), the city is called Fulousha 弗樓沙 (Skt. Puruṣapura), present-day Peshawar in Pakistan. Xuanzang locates the bowl in Bolasi 波剌斯, the Chinese name for Persia during the Sasanian dynasty (224–651). See *Foguo ji*: T2087.879c5-7.

[475] Translation from the *Mingxiang ji* by Campany 2012b: 51. Interestingly, manuscripts at Dunhuang also tell how Liu Sahe travelled to India where, as proof of his discipline and practice, the Buddha's alms bowl appeared to him (Vetch 1981: 144). Translation from the *Mingxiang ji* by Campany 2012b: 51. Interestingly, manuscripts at Dunhuang also tell how Liu Sahe travelled to India where, as proof of his discipline and practice, the Buddha's alms bowl appeared to him (Vetch 1981: 144).

[476] *FZ*: T2122.1008c26-1009a9. Translated to French in Wang-Toutain 1994. *FZ*: T2122.1008c26-1009a9. Translated to French in Wang-Toutain 1994.

this foreign form of attire many Chinese Buddhists were uncertain about proper dress etiquette. Once again, the spirits gave Daoxuan assurances that his proposed standards were correct:

> The spirit spoke: 'Your work entitled [*Shimen*] *zhangfu yi* (*On Proper Buddhist Attire*) has made all the spirits happy. Since the Dharma came east seven hundred years ago, *Vinaya* masters of the south and of the north have not grasped the meaning. […] This is completely wrong. Only you have grasped the meaning.'
> 又曰。所製《章服儀》，靈神咸喜。自法東傳六七百年，南北律師情無此意。[…] 師獨拔此意。[477]

Similarly, the alms bowl was a powerful symbol because it was an object common to all monastics. According to Françoise Wang-Toutain, not only was the specific allusion to the bowl used to authenticate different pagodas and miraculous objects in China, but it was also a reminder of proper monastic discipline. After all, Daoxuan was a master of the codes of law and the alms bowl—like the robe—was a potent reminder of monastic life.[478] Moreover, this revelation of the alms bowl re-envisions past events, taking this object out of the seen realm and into the unseen realm of the god Indra for later redistribution in China. This story conveniently incorporated Aśoka's relic distribution narrative so that the hallowed alms bowl facsimiles could be among the objects distributed by the Mauryan king. In Daoxuan's revealed version of the Buddha's sermon, he described the translation of these sacred objects to China, tracing a continuous and unbroken line of legitimate transmission from the Buddha's time until the Tang. In this way, he projected the imaginary space of his vision upon a real-world map of China's monasteries and pagodas, connecting them and the territory to the synecdochic representations of the life of the Buddha: his robe, his alms bowl, his relics and his images as well as pagodas and monasteries.[479]

One cannot speak about Daoxuan's visions without discussing Jeta's Grove (Jetavana), the second monastery established in India as well as a 'place' of some personal interest to Daoxuan who had visions of this holy site which he tried to emulate in China. The imaginal bowls and robes of his visions were at different times in the sermon associated with the Jetavana Monastery

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[477] *LGL*: T2107.440a9-12.
[478] Wang-Toutain 1994: 79. Wang-Toutain 1994: 79.
[479] Shinohara 2003: 77; Durt 1987: 1224.

ordination platform,[480] a structure which, Daoxuan envisioned and recorded in a separate scripture called the *Jetavana Diagram Sutra*. Daoxuan had effectively received a scripture from divine beings containing the rites and designs for the original ordination platform established at Jetavana in India. Before his death, he constructed an ordination platform (*jietan* 戒壇) at Jingye Monastery done in the style revealed to him in his visions. He imagined Jetavana as the paragon of Indian monastery design, though his depictions of Jetavana represented a sophistication that said more about the history of Chinese monasteries and architecture than it did about the 'dwellings' (Skt. *viharas*) of the Buddha and his disciples.[481] In Daoxuan's Song dynasty biography, Zanning recorded that the *arhat* Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja visited Jingye to pray at the altar and confirmed that Daoxuan had indeed drawn out the correct measurements and designs for the ordination platform.[482]

In the *Jetavana Diagram Sutra*, Daoxuan confirmed that he received the text from a heavenly messenger by the name of Zhang Yu 張嶼 who provided him with a lengthy version of the text, though Daoxuan noted that his version was nothing but a rough outline in two fascicles.[483] Interestingly, this text was listed among Daoxuan's works in the final fascicle of Daoshi's encyclopaedia one year after Daoxuan died.[484] This was done without adding any comments regarding its divine origins. However, while most of Daoxuan's works, including the *Record of Miracles*, were included in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (*Kaiyuan Era Catalogue of the Buddha's Teachings*; 730), a bibliography of great importance in the canonisation process of Buddhist scriptures in China, some of Daoxuan's revealed texts were not included. In Yuanzhao's

[480] In the sermon, it is mentioned that certain cult objects should be taken to the ordination platform in Jetavana Grove (*FZ*: T2122.560c22; 561c27; 589b28; 1008c17).
[481] McRae 2005: 94 n.3. This study is one of many that study the influence of Daoxuan's visions on monastery and ordination platform architecture. For more on this topic, see Forte 1988: 39–52; A.-C. Z.-H. Tan 2002; P.-P. Ho 1995.
[482] *SGZ*: T2061.790c29-791a3.
[483] *Qihuan tujing*: T1899.890a23-28; *FZ*: T2122.354a19-21. In the *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing* Daoxuan mentions that a Northern Qi monk by the name of Lingyu 靈裕 first mentioned the *Qihuan tujing* in his *Sigao* 寺誥 (T1892.812b16-21).
[484] *FZ*: T2122.1023c11. The *Jetavana Diagram Sutra* is also mentioned in an eleventh century catalogue compiled by the Japanese monk Eichō 永超 (*Tōiki dendō mokuroku*: T2183.1156a15).

圓照 eighth-century catalogue, Daoxuan's interviews with spirits as well as his *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing* 關中創立戒壇圖經, both texts with divine origins, were included in the canon (*ruzang* 入藏), while the *Jetavana Diagram Sutra* was not.[485] This well illustrates the fuzzy boundary in medieval China regarding what constituted an authoritative text. In this case, perhaps because the *Jetavana Diagram Sutra* was a revealed text, it was not included in the canon. The reasons for its exclusion are difficult to gauge given that it was never explicitly rejected on those grounds. Then again, in his book *From Religious Ideology to Political Expediency in Early Printing*, Timothy H. Barrett suggested that the transmission of information coming from supernormal sources in China was not particularly surprising considering the ambiguity regarding the origins in India of Buddhist Mahāyāna literature.[486] As we saw with Nizi's revealed texts and Daoxuan's revelations, in practice it was not so problematic that scriptures be obtained with supernormal assistance. The diligent cataloguer could always find a workaround.

Concluding remarks

This chapter examined various accounts of Daoxuan's life, paying particular attention to historical factors and how they tied into his biographical narrative, how they might have affected him, and how they were relevant to his experiences of the miraculous. Tang rule emerged out of a disordered world—a period of transition and a challenging time for all. For seventh-century Buddhists, the difficulties they encountered when faced with the unfavourable policies of the early Tang constituted something of a narrative nexus for defining self-identity, religious life, as well as the Buddhist experience. This chapter argued that these challenges were significant factors in Daoxuan's life and that they had an important effect on the content of his works. Although there were many other factors that would have influenced Daoxuan's religious career, we saw that at the end of his life, his works were not only the culmination of all his studies, but also the products of

[485] *Da Tang Zhenyuan xu Kaiyuan shijiao lu*: T2156.764c29-765a1. For more on the history and content of this catalogue, see Orzech 1998: 198–206.
[486] Barrett 2012: 14.

his trials and tribulations. This is important because it gives us insight into the polemical uses of the supernormal in a disordered world.

During the 660s, with rising pressure against the Buddhist community coming from the emperor's camp, Daoxuan drafted petitions addressing members of the royal family as well as the court, he completed various timely apologetic texts such as the *Critical Evaluations* and the *Expanded Collection* as well as his collection of miracle tales, the *Record of Miracles.* At that time, Daoxuan was not composing philosophical tracts to be read by monks and other intellectuals. He was purposefully filling his texts with examples of the miraculous because recorded miracles constituted important evidence of Buddhism's relevance in China and in the world. He was asking whoever might read or hear his accounts: how can Buddhism be a false teaching if so many miracles are associated to its proponents?

It was also later in Daoxuan's life that he had his visions and received revealed scriptures. It is impossible to determine what exactly instigated these visions. Was it genuine piety and religious practice? Were his visions a reaction to the spiritual battle of attrition the court seemed to be waging with the Buddhist community? Or was it, as some have claimed, simply old age and senility that made him believe he was speaking with spirits? One thing is for certain, his recorded visions were not directed exclusively at doctrinal and legalistic points of contention within the community for in his interviews with the spirits he also discussed points of historical rectitude regarding his miracle tales and his apologetic treatises. This attention to detail vis-à-vis the historical accuracy of his works was, of course, mainly directed at other members of the community, though it also indicates that he was addressing a wider courtly audience that would have been reading his works with a more sceptical eye. Daoxuan tried to resolve the doubts of non-believers regarding Buddhism's relevance and the historical value of their miracle accounts by diligently recording these accounts and, in certain cases, confirming their truth value by means of revelation.

Part 2

Chapter 4: Relics and Images

Introduction

This chapter concentrates on two elements of Buddhist material culture related to saintly figures, examining Buddhist cult objects, namely relics and images, as they are presented in both secular and Buddhist texts. Religious structures such as pagodas and monasteries also fall into the category of Buddhist material culture, though they will be covered in the following chapter. The following chapters will use the term 'cult of saints' which here refers to all miraculous accounts and ritual activities surrounding objects linked to holy figures such as relics, images, and pagodas. The term 'saint' designates those figures whose lives, practices and virtues gave them special religious status. First among them was, of course, Siddhārtha Gautama (d. c. 400 BCE), whose remains became objects of veneration soon after he passed into *parinirvāṇa*.[487] The term 'cult' is used in its most restricted sense, denoting particular forms or systems of religious worship expressed in ceremonies directed towards figures, objects, or structures. In this thesis, the term 'cult' refers almost exclusively to relic, image, and pagoda veneration practices. Relics and images will therefore be referred to as 'cult objects' to emphasise their central place in the Buddhist imaginary as objects of both wonder and worship.[488]

In his article 'On the Allure of Buddhist Relics', Robert Sharf argues that Buddhism's

[487] The category of 'saints' also includes those followers whose teachings and practices raised them to a level of sanctity that inspired reverence and devotion. For more on hagiography and the status of the 'saints' in religious narrative, see P. Brown 1981; Verellen 1987; Kieschnick 1997: 1–15; Ray [1994] 1999: 15–43; Flood 2004: 122–38. Although the term 'saint' may hold certain Christian connotations, it is warranted in this case and has in the past been used in the Chinese Buddhist context. See, for example, Adamek 2006: 270; Young 2015: 15. The category of 'saints' also includes those followers whose teachings and practices raised them to a level of sanctity that inspired reverence and devotion. For more on hagiography and the status of the 'saints' in religious narrative, see P. Brown 1981; Verellen 1987; Kieschnick 1997: 1–15; Ray [1994] 1999: 15–43; Flood 2004: 122–38. Although the term 'saint' may hold certain Christian connotations, it is warranted in this case and has in the past been used in the Chinese Buddhist context. See, for example, Adamek 2006: 270; Young 2015: 15.

[488] For a full list of what Daoxuan might have considered cult objects, see the prayer recorded in *GHJ*: T2103.318b2–c12. Cult objects include corporeal remains, the Buddha's monastic implements, pagodas and images, and more.

spread in China should not be studied as the diffusion of a creed or faith, but is better understood 'in terms of the diffusion of sacred objects'.[489] These hallowed cult objects were endowed with miraculous powers, they answered the prayers of the needy, and piqued the curiosity of those who would otherwise have been left indifferent by the doctrinal complexities of Buddhism.[490] Among the elite, detractors often presented Buddhism as a foreign 'barbarian' religion and, as the teachings gradually became more rooted in Chinese society and culture, proponents of this new creed continued to face challenges every step of the way.[491] Therefore, the narratives preserved in the histories, miracle tales, and apologetic texts deliberately showcased the many miracles produced by sacred objects, acting as literary evidence of Buddhism's relevance in China. These accounts also attest to the fact that these missionaries had recourse to the power and potency of these objects when facing such challenges. For this reason, stories such as those contained in miracle tale collections reveal how the faith was propagated not only by preaching the Dharma and translating scriptures, but also by simultaneously converting people through miraculous works and by convincing them of the supernormal qualities of Buddhist objects.

Relics and images are both essentially similar insofar as they are objects of devotion acting as points of convergence for the rituals and the practices of the faithful. Doctrinally, they are believed to be worldly remnants of the virtue and benevolence of past holy figures—stand-ins for the life and attainments of these exalted individuals. Ontologically, relics and images imply the 'presence' of the saints—they *are* the saints, just as the portrait of Caesar is said to actually *be*

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[489] Sharf 1999: 77. For a contrasting position, see Jan W. de Jong's statement: 'The sacred texts are […] the *conditio sine qua non* for the existence of Buddhism. Buddhism in China depended, above all, on a knowledge of sacred scriptures' (1996: 49).

[490] Kieschnick 1997: 31.

[491] Zürcher [1959] 2007: 255; In medieval China a common criticism against Buddhists was that their beliefs were foreign to Chinese systems of rites and belief. Therefore, I use the term 'barbarian' because, as Zürcher and Yang (1998: 157) note, it is a close approximation to indigenous terms such as '*hu* 胡' or '*fan* 梵' used to designate people, cultures and texts from outside or at the margins of the Sinosphere. Some have argued that such 'Sino-barbarian dichotomies', present in Chinese culture as early as the Western Zhou, persist in the conversation on race in China today (e.g. Dikötter 1992: 30). That being said, while detractors may well have meant for terms such as '*hu*' or '*fan*' to be derogatory, Daniel Boucher argues that, in fact, these terms were more nuanced and not altogether negative in medieval China (Boucher 2000: 23f.).

Caesar.[492] Historically, while different kinds of cult objects may play equally important roles in daily religious life and practice, each class of objects is also distinct one from the other: satisfying different needs, serving different purposes, and occupying different places in the hearts and minds of the faithful. Central to this distinction is the belief that the relic in particular constitutes the 'living' remains of a saint, establishing the relic's place as the axial point of merit-making ideology.[493] As objects of cult they have the power to affect 'social relations, behaviours, and outcomes'. Therefore, Jennifer S. Hughes argues that relics and images are vital and living entities that have 'agentic potency'.[494] Indeed, relics, as well as images, seem to have a will of their own and have many lifelike qualities that we will note throughout this chapter such as moving at will, flying, shaking, walking, bouncing, and more. One would be correct in noting that the cult of the book, usually included in the cult of relics, has a place in this discussion. However, because Daoxuan does not include any first-hand experiences of miracles related to scriptures in his *Record of Miracles*, this chapter will not touch upon the subject.[495] Therefore, the term 'relic' in this thesis designates either corporeal relics, crystalline or pearl-like beads popularly believed to be relics, or 'objects of use' associated with saints such as, for example, an alms bowl or a staff presumed to have been touched or used by the saint.

This chapter will by no means be an exhaustive analysis of the cult of saints in China. What this chapter will do is analyse those historical and cultural conditions related to the cult of saints that concerned Daoxuan. He was a monk of great erudition who read translated Indic texts and adapted Buddhist ideas into the Chinese idiom—without translating the works himself. His was a world at once informed by the experience of Chinese religious and political life, while simultaneously being coloured by his own prolonged literary encounter with the foreign philosophies and rites of Buddhist India. By investigating the literary evidence relating to Daoxuan's experience with cult objects as well as the place they held in both his writing and his

[492] H. Chen 2007: 77; Shen 2018: 172.
[493] Schopen [1987] 1997: 154.
[494] Hughes 2012: 20.
[495] For some preliminary readings related to the cult of the book, see Schopen 1975; Barrett 2018: 1667f.; Faure 2003: 1128–33.

life, this chapter will demonstrate his profound investment and personal interest in the cult of saints. The two first sections of this chapter on 'cult objects' and 'sacred history of cult objects' provide definitions and context to better understand the webs of meaning undergirding a medieval Chinese Buddhist worldview that took as given the efficacy of relics and images as well as the existence of supernormal beings. The following section turns to Daoxuan's interest in relics and images. The subsection titled 'Famen and the Mauryan King' covers the history of Famen Monastery. In scholarship on Famen—as well as in Chinese Buddhist social history more generally—this monastery and its relics are usually associated with the Tang imperial cult, or it is used to paint a portrait of medieval religious life.[496] While Daoxuan is often quoted as a source, his relationship to the monastery and its ceremonies is usually only mentioned in passing.[497] The connection between monk and monastery is important because it draws a common thread between Daoxuan and one of the most potent relics of the early Tang: the Buddha's finger bone. This is an oversight in the study of Famen and, indeed, of Daoxuan that this chapter will remedy.[498] The final subsection titled 'personal experience of cult objects' covers Daoxuan's recorded experiences of relics and images as well as how these might have affected his worldview. The final section will explore Daoxuan's recorded experiences and views towards religious objects, teasing out those details that speak to his role as a proponent of the cult of saints as well as his role as a historiographer of the sacred in China.[499]

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[496] For some other studies of Famen, see S. Weinstein 1987: 37, 46, 58; Li B. 1993; Han 1998; Yang Cengwen 1993; Sharf 2011: 43–51; Shen 2018: 178ff.

[497] For example, in an article by Huang Chi-chiang which includes a summary of Daoxuan's history of Famen, Huang studies the historical shift from the southern imperial veneration of tooth relics to the northern worship of finger relics during the Tang without ever dwelling on Daoxuan's personal involvement in the cult (1998: 501; 506). In another article by Eugene Wang on the Chinese Buddhist intellectual history of 'true body' thought in relation to Famen, he also interprets Daoshi's rendering of a passage in the *Record of Miracles* which, as we will see below, alters Daoxuan's original statement to strip it of its first-person voice (2005: 86). Similarly, Tansen Sen does not elaborate on the matter either, only noting that the *Record of Miracles* describes the object as 'shaped like a small finger' (2014: 35).

[498] Daoxuan's association to Famen is not studied in either of the two monographs dedicated to his life (Fujiyoshi 2002; Ang 2019).

[499] Designating Daoxuan as a 'hagiographer' in these circumstances is not far off the mark. However, hagiography remains limited to the lives of saints and would not include Daoxuan's pointed interest in cult objects. Therefore, I opted for 'historiographer of the sacred'.

Cult objects

Relics

First, a word on English terminology. The term 'relic' comes from Latin by way of the French word '*relique*', which designates the physical remains of, or articles associated with, a saint, martyr, or any other such exalted figure. In its plural form it simply means 'remains', 'remnants', 'something left over'.[500] Relics, however, can be far more than just 'remains'. The Sanskrit equivalent is '*śarīra*', which in the singular means 'body' and in the plural refers to anything left over after death.[501] It is a polysemous term, though it is most often used to designate saintly remains.[502] In the Chinese context, '*śarīra*' is transliterated as '*sheli* 舍利', '*shililuo* 室利羅' and '*sheliluo* 設利羅'. According to Yuanzhao's 元照 (1048–1116) *Sifen lü xingshi chao zichi ji* 四分律行事鈔資持記 (*Aid in Upholding the Vinaya:* [*a commentary on Daoxuan's*] *Sifen lü xingshi chao*), '*śarīra/sheli*' are corporeal remains—either fragmented or whole—such as bones, nails, teeth, or ash, and may designate the mortal remains of a holy or a lay person. Daoxuan provides a more specific definition in the preface to the *Record of Miracles* where he states that he uses the term '*sheli* 舍利' to distinguish the remains of saints from the Chinese term for ordinary corporeal remains (*gushen* 骨身).[503] 'Relics' will therefore in this text designate all remains, be they material or corporeal, of the saints. This definition includes symbolic relics which appear as round crystalline or pearl-like objects of varying sizes.[504] Additionally, there also were 'contact relics' which were those objects that the past buddhas and saints touched (e.g. alms bowl, pilgrim staff, a

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[500] *OED*: 2004 s.v. Relic.

[501] Faure 2003: 1128; Silk 2006: 11; *PDB*: 2014: s.v. śarīra; Another Sanskrit term often translated in English as 'relic' is *Dhatu* (Ch. *Duodu* 馱都) which can mean: constituent part, ingredient, element, primitive part. For more on the term *Dhatu*, see Schopen 1988b: 531.

[502] For more on the polysemy of the term *śarira/sheli*, see Silk 2006: 11; Within the Buddhist tradition, relics are generally split into two modalities: corporeal and textual relics. For an example of this, see *Miaofa lianhua jing wenju* 妙法蓮華經文句 (T1718.110c2–3); The Theravada tradition, moreover, recognises three different kinds of relics: the corporeal remains, the objects Buddha used and the objects which remind believers of him (Tambiah 1984: 158–63; Faure 2002: 26, 2003).

[503] T2106.404a26–27.

[504] Pearls in China represented wealth and beauty, as well as supernormal power (Schafer 1963: 163).

shadow imprint on a rock). Unlike corporeal relics, these objects did not evoke the saint's death but reminded the faithful of the saint's asceticism, compassion and enlightened status.[505]

While the practice of venerating objects was not new to China, the cult of relics was in fact a distinct Buddhist innovation. Accounts of the cult surrounding relics in China appear in most Buddhist as well as court histories dating back to the Six Dynasties (220–589).[506] In Wei Shou's 魏收 (507–552) court history of the Wei period, he dedicates a section of the '*Shilao zhi* 釋老志' (*Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism*) exclusively to relics. He records that the Buddha died and was cremated, leaving behind his 'numinous bones' (*linggu* 靈骨) in many fragments the size of rice pellets. These relics could produce miracles and when struck or burned they were left unscathed. They were also known to miraculously emanate light. Wei Shou noted that they were kept in reliquaries stored away in pagodas (Skt. *stūpa*; Ch. *ta* 塔), which he compared to ancestral temples (*zongmiao* 宗廟). He then recounted how King Aśoka (r. c. 268–c. 232 BCE) took the original relics of the Buddha and ordered 84,000 spirits to establish pagodas and relics throughout the world.[507] Aside from slight divergences in the rendering of this legend, such was the generally accepted narrative about the early transmission of Buddhist relics to China.

For Daoxuan, relics were the synecdochal representations of not only the Buddha but of Buddhism itself, and accounts of their miraculous efficacy vindicated his religion's place in China. This is acknowledged throughout his compilation of miracle tales, for the *Record of Miracles* provided significant accounts of China's most notable relics. In it he wrote that:

> From the Han until the Tang, there was never a moment when [relics] were not appearing [in China]. They were called 'numenous bones' (*linggu*). You cannot obtain them by ordinary means. Only in instances where favourable conditions arise do they appear. Having arrived, they are revered. They

[505] Although Daoxuan also wrote about contact relics, this topic, especially with regards to the Buddha's alms bowl and his robe, will be explored (superficially) in the conclusion. For other relevant studies, see Wang-Toutain 1994; Shinohara 2000b, 2003.

[506] Some have claimed that pictorial depictions found in Horinger would go back as far as the Eastern Han. For more on the mysterious now-vanished relic (*sheli* 猞猁) inscription in the Eastern Han tombs at Horinger and how they are, in fact, unrelated to Buddhism, see article by Kim 2014: 144.

[507] *Wei shu*: 114.3028; Translated to French in Faure 2002: 25f.; c.f. G. Henderson and Hurvitz 1956: 42f. For more on the *Shilao zhi,* see Ware 1933; Interestingly, the *Wei shu* is the earliest official court history to record the story of Aśoka.

> touch men (*shi* 士) of faith and, emitting a divine light, [they] then resonate with the heart-minds [of the faithful]. Sceptics formulate elaborate ideas [about relics]. [To appeal to the sceptics, I have] looked through all the ancient accounts, as well as those manifest auspicious signs [that are recorded and those that I have seen myself], and have thus composed this preface so that those that read [this text] can know that which must be said about the Śākya Gate [i.e. Buddhism]. [This is so] that even in 10,000 years, it will be difficult to destroy [the faith].
> 自漢洎唐，無時不有，既稱靈骨。不可以事求，任緣而擧，止得以敬，及通信之士，擧神光而應心。懷疑之夫，假琢磨而發念，所以討尋往傳，及以現祥，故依纘序。庶有披者，識釋門之骨鯁，萬載之後，難可塵沒矣。[508]

Daoxuan wrote about the power of relics and the necessity of recording their histories. Relics were important because they served the immediate needs of believers by acting as powerful merit-making objects as well as potent healing agents.[509] They also played a key role in medieval Chinese Buddhist life because they were believed to be transtemporal materialisations of the founder himself which was important when justifying Buddhism's 'foreign' presence in the East.[510] Indeed, these relic histories showed that Buddhist objects (i.e. Buddhism) had in fact been in China for centuries.

The foreignness of relics was particularly important. Foreign cult objects were gathered by Chinese pilgrims such as Faxian 法顯 (377–422), Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) and Yijing 義淨 (635–713), who travelled west to learn more about Buddhism as well as to collect sacred images and relics which they later brought back to vindicate the faith of devotees at home. Xuanzang famously returned to China carrying scriptures, images and 'more than a hundred grains of *śarīra*'.[511] Yijing was also said to have brought back many relics and Wukong 悟空, another pilgrim returning to Chang'an in 790, brought back one of the Buddha's teeth obtained from a monastery in Udyāna.[512] According to the biographical tradition, this was one of four teeth relics then kept in the monasteries of Chang'an.

As we saw in the previous chapter, another tooth relic was famously gifted to Daoxuan by

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[508] T2106.410a23–b5.
[509] Kieschnick 2003: 31.
[510] For more on relics as the 'true body' (*zhen shen* 真身) of the Buddha, especially relating to the finger bone at Famen Monastery, see article by E. Y. Wang 2005.
[511] *Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan*: T2053.279a; Translated to English in Li R. 1995: 343.
[512] See Wukong's biography (*SGZ*: T2061.722b26–29); Translated to French by Chavannes and Lévi 1895: 359f.

the deity Nezha.[513] Although due attention cannot here be given to this narrative, suffice it to say that such a divine gift speaks to a broader current in medieval China: the proliferation of homegrown relics with religious authority independent of foreign provenance.[514] Local monastics and laypeople were constantly discovering new relics that competed with their foreign counterparts, occupying a newfound place of preeminence in local religious life and merit-making activities. To confirm Buddhism's relevance in Chinese society, many relics were associated not only to King Aśoka's distribution of cult objects but also to Chinese antiquity.[515] Daoxuan writes that some of the earliest relics might have been discovered during the Zhou dynasty under King Wen 周文王 (c. 1050 BCE):

> Ancient tradition states: 'In the past, King Wen of the [Western] Zhou went to [Mount Tantai 檀臺山 (near Chang'an)] for a hunting trip. He saw a monk at the head of the mountain holding a staff and an alms bowl. He called him but the monk would not come. The lord sought him out, but did not see him when he arrived, even though he could see him [before, when looking] from afar. So, he ordered his subordinates to dig in the place [where he saw the monk]. They dug three *zhang* deep and found a staff and a bowl. King [Wen] returned there to erect a tiled thirteen-tier pagoda.
> 古老傳云，昔周文王於此遊獵。見有沙門執錫持鉢山頭立住，喚下不來。王遣往捉，將至不見。遠看仍在時。乃勅掘所立處，深三丈獲鉢及杖而已。王重之為起甎塔一十三級。[516]

Daoxuan then writes that the ancient foundations of this pagoda—supposedly containing a staff and an alms bowl—would be rediscovered in 661 by a monk called Huigui 惠貴. The origin of the above 'ancient tradition' is impossible to account for given that it probably represents regional lore preserved in the memories of locals that was later recorded by historians (proto-folklorists?) like Daoxuan. In fact, at the end of this item Daoxuan critically analyses his sources, comparing the 'ancient tradition' to information provided by an inscription, concluding that the pagoda probably

[513] For a very informative monograph on Nezha, see Shahar 2015. For Daoxuan's encounter with Nezha, see *SGZ*: T2061.791a9–26. For more on the Buddha's teeth in China, see the chapter dedicated to tooth relics in Chen Y. 1982; For more on the different traditions related to Daoxuan's tooth relic, see J. Hastings 1924: 659 ff.; Jayawackrima 1971: 34; Strong 2004b: 187 ff.
[514] For more generally on the tooth relic, see Chapter 3: 'A holy tooth'.
[515] For some examples of Chinese rulers emulating Aśoka, see Jinhua Chen 2002b: 75f.; Janousch 2016: 255f. Chen Jinhua's 2002 monograph pays particular attention to Emperor Wen of the Sui's relic distribution campaign during the Renshou period.
[516] T2106.409c1–5.

dated back to the Eastern Han (25–220 CE)—not the Zhou.[517] We know now that the Western Zhou predates the Buddha's estimated chronology by around 600 years, making this story all the more unlikely. Regardless of its truth-value, from the standpoint of historiography, in claiming the antiquity of the relics and the pagoda foundations, the presence of the Zhou in this story is meant to confer the prestige of China's revered past onto a pagoda that was, for all intents and purposes, a new structure built in the seventh century.

The rhetorical use of King Wen here represents the narrative strategy of localising Buddhism by recruiting exalted figures from China's past—a recurring *topos* that we will cover in this chapter and the next. This new localised access to sacred relics served the purpose of establishing a Buddhist world centred in China with new sacred spaces drawing on indigenous sources.[518] By compiling and systematising such stories in his *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan was one of the primary authors of China's Buddhist history of the sacred. For a modern readership, we may glean from this text the content and meaning of some of these accounts, which in turn allows for a better understanding of their place in the medieval Chinese *imaginaire*.

Images

In the *Record of Miracles*—indeed, across Chinese Buddhist literature—the term for 'Buddhist image' is '*xiang* 像', a character that can also mean: 'To outline, depict, delineate, represent, map'.[519] In this thesis, '*xiang*' designates what will hereafter be called 'images', that is depictions of holy figures in all artistic mediums, though the mediums of choice were predominantly sculpture and painting. These images may be figural statues made of varying material such as wood, clay, stone, and copper, as well as drawn depictions done on any variety of drawing or painting surfaces. Relevant here are the popular narratives and myths passed down in written records of miracles produced by images and how these images came to be revered as cult objects within communities of worshippers.[520] The *Record of Miracles* is such a written record with at least fifty separate items

[517] T2106.409c16–22.
[518] For more on this phenomenon in China, see Sen 2003: 55–101.
[519] Behr 2004: 216 f.
[520] Sharf and Sharf 2001: 14; For more on narrative and its relationship to the sacred in the case of Chinese devotional

dedicated to images in the second fascicle, not to mention the images that appear in passing in the other two fascicles. Each item in the second fascicle tells the history of one or sometimes multiple images. Twenty-seven images are attributed to dynasties earlier than the Liang period (502–557) and many items trace the genealogy of certain images up until shortly before Daoxuan finished compiling this work.[521]

Images were widely distributed in China and their accessibility facilitated the widespread diffusion of Buddhist teachings and practices. The role of images in transmitting the faith was indispensable, so that it has even been said that Buddhism entered China 'on the coattails of images'.[522] Figural images, however, were probably not a Buddhist import and non-Buddhist images imbued with supernormal powers, sometimes also known as 'figures' (*ouren* 偶人), appear in textual sources dating back as far as the Eastern Han dynasty.[523] Ritual sacrifice to images of gods or spirits, moreover, appeared in early sources such as the *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義, which mentioned ritual and sacrifice to the image of a god called Controller of Destiny (Siming 司命).[524] That being said, Buddhism in China was popularly associated with its images and was even disparagingly referred to as the 'religion of images' (*xiangjiao* 像教).[525]

practices, see article by Campany 1993b; For more examples of narratives about the miraculous occurrences surrounding images, see Dudbridge 1998.

[521] A thorough study of the second fascicle and the role of images has been done in a lengthy article by Shinohara 1998a.

[522] Tsukamoto 1985: 1:17; Sharf and Sharf 2001: 3; Bronkhorst 2005: 76. It has been argued that in China it was not until the late fifth century that the worship of sacred images was taken to be a singularly Buddhist practice (Greene 2018: 456).

[523] Yu W. 1980: 67–77; For more on the tale of Ding Lan 丁蘭 and the wooden statue of his father as recorded in the Eastern Han collection, the *Ershisi xiao* 二十四孝 (*Twenty-four Filial Exemplars*), see Greene 2018: 474; Barend ter Haar also mentions 'puppets' called 'camphor and willow deities' that came to life when ritual specialists placed the stolen life force of other individuals within them (Ter Haar 2006: 95 ff.).

[524] *Fengsu tongyi*: 8.384; Cited in Greene 2018: 476; For more on Buddhist images in early China and in literary records, see Dien 2007: 391–410.

[525] Daoxuan speaks of the importance of miracles since the 'religion of images' began moving east during the Han dynasty (*GHJ*: T2103.161b10–11). This name, 'religion of images', may have been coined because of Buddhism's emphasis on ritual practice surrounding images, or perhaps because Buddhism was believed to have introduced these foreign objects to China, or because it somehow marked Buddhism out from the rest (Kieschnick 2003: 53). The term '*xiangjiao*' is also tied in with ideas of a semblance age for the Buddhist teachings (*xiangfa* 像法), wherein the Buddha and his teaching could no longer properly manifest in this realm and must thus appear in different guises, such as relics, images, and *stūpas* (Nattier 1991: 66–89; Greene 2018: 457f.).

The story of the production of the Buddha's first likeness provides many insights on how figural images were used and perceived at the time. One version of the story tells that the image was produced in Kauśāmbī at the behest of King Udayana, a contemporary of the Buddha, when he requested that the Buddha's disciple, Maudgalyāyana, supervise the artisans while they fashioned a wooden likeness of Gautama. Upon completion, the image rose up to the heavens to greet the Buddha who responded by paying homage and stating that in the future this image would play an important role.[526] This story of King Udayana's image also occupied an important place in the medieval Chinese Buddhist *imaginaire*. For example, in the record of Xuanzang's travels, he gives a traditional account of its supernormal powers and how it miraculously flew from India to Khotan.[527] Facsimiles of the image later travelled back with him and he again made copies that were later reproduced in China to adorn the Buddhist halls of Chang'an.[528] The 'Udayana Buddha' also appears in the *Record of Miracles.* One story begins with the famous legend of Buddhism's introduction to China when Emperor Ming (r. 58–75) dreamed of a golden man and sent emissaries west. The mission was a success and the emissaries accompanied two missionary monks back to China where they founded the first monastery, Baima Monastery 白馬寺, and installed therein a painted reproduction of King Udayana's image.[529] In this interesting juxtaposition of narratives, the story of Buddhism's origins in China, the arrival of foreign monks, and the establishment of the first monastery, all allude to the legend of the first Buddha image ever produced.

The image is also mentioned in a story related to the pious Emperor Wu of the Liang (r. 502–549) who dreamed of a sandalwood statue and requested the real Udayana image be brought to China from the West. In India, the king said that he could not provide the emissaries with the original, though he had his artisans produce a replica which, when presented to the Chinese

[526] *SF*: T2088.958c14–18. This story is mentioned in Waley 1932: 353; Sharf and Sharf 2001: 14; Shen 2018: 142. For more on the precedent set by the Udayana story, see R. L. Brown 1998: 26–31.
[527] *Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan*: T2053.252a18–20. For more on the King Udayana image in Khotan, see Anderl 2018: 259–66.
[528] *Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan*: T2053.234b21–28; For a monograph on King Udayana, see Adaval 1970. On King Udayana's image in China, see Carter 1990; Wenzel 2011: 275f.; On the Udayana image at the Longmen grottoes, see article by Hamada 2006.
[529] T2106.413c2–8. More in Palumbo 2003.

delegates, had ‘features that were excellent and complete and a light shone from the crown of the image’s head’. Then, as a sign of the power of this replica, a ‘fine rain fell accompanied by an extraordinary fragrance’.[530] It did not bother the medieval Chinese that the religious authority of this image did not come from possession of the original but was instead carried on through facsimile versions. In fact, replication in China was a powerful votive act that did not necessarily take away from the authenticity of either the original or the replicas.[531] The original wooden ‘Udayana image’—if there ever was such a statue—must have decayed long ago and survives to this day through its reproductions, having travelled east where it was replicated first in China and, perhaps most famously, in Japan.[532]

Images were central both to the story of Buddhism’s introduction to China as well as to the continued spread of its teachings and practices. They were not only representations of the Buddha but also strong points of convergence for various economic, technological, ritual, spiritual, and political interests in Chinese society. In turn, images and their miracles bolstered the political interest of people at court, so that those Buddhists who had a say in official matters were always keen to interpret the miracles produced by images as auspicious signs related to potential patrons. Moreover, Buddhist sacred objects were different from other objects insofar as they represented the material culture of societies and traditions foreign to the Chinese believers that venerated them.[533] They therefore acted as a bridge between two radically different times and cultures. By the intervention of images in Chinese history, Buddhism was gradually sinicised one miracle at a time, slowly crystallising into a tradition of its own.

Sacred history of cult objects in China

Notes on Famen Monastery

The following sections sketch out some broad features of the history of Chinese cult objects that

[530] T2106.419b7–c5.
[531] On authenticity, replicas and satisfying aspirations through replicas, see Shen 2018: 2 ff.
[532] For more on the Udayana image at Seiryōji in Kyoto, see G. Henderson and Hurvitz 1956; Shen 2018: 145–49.
[533] Dudbridge 1998: 377.

Daoxuan helped to compose. The product of this historiographical endeavour was the *Record of Miracles*, a selection of miracle stories relating to cult objects, holy places, pious deeds and missionary works in the East.[534] To draw out this sacred history this section will take from the narratives of one place in particular: Famen Monastery 法門寺.

The account of Famen Monastery was one of the primary pagoda and relic histories in the *Record of Miracles*.[535] As we will see below, Daoxuan was personally involved in the cult of saints out of Famen and recorded much on both the monastery, its pagoda, and its cult objects. In its function as one of the religio-political centres of cult near Chang'an, Famen Monastery played a pivotal role in the history of Buddhism during the Tang.[536] Aside from its proximity to the capital, Famen's success was due in large part to the fact that it housed the Buddha's finger bone, one of the few 'true body' (*zhenshen* 真身) relics then preserved in China.[537] The finger bone relic was discovered in the 630s during an excavation of the ancient pagoda foundations. According to the legend, the finger bone would have been one of the many sacred objects disseminated around the world during King Aśoka's great relic distribution. It was an important object of imperial cult throughout the Tang and, as a product of its popularity, the finger bone was also a prominent target for detractors of Buddhism. The most famous critic of the Famen finger bone was the literatus Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) who, in 819, submitted a memorial recommending that the emperor halt the intended ritual procession of the finger bone. Criticising Buddhist processions writ large as unseemly worship of a foreign saint, he stated: 'Now that he [i.e. Buddha] has long been dead, is it fitting that his decayed and rotten bone, his ill-omened and filthy remains, should be allowed to

[534] I write 'the East' because on at least two occasions, Daoxuan mentions Korea and Japan.

[535] More than a dozen pagoda histories recorded in the first fascicle claimed the pagodas contained authentic corporeal relics associated with Aśoka. For more, specifically, on the excavated objects discovered at Famen, see Whitfield 1999.

[536] For more on Famen in Sui-Tang history, see Huang 1998: 493–98; Yang Cengwen 1993; Jinhua Chen 2002b: 118–26; Faure 2003: 1141; E. Y. Wang 2005; Sheng 2016: 179–84; Translated to English in Sheng 2020: 284–94. The pagoda itself collapsed in 1981. In 1984 they decided to rebuild it and it was not until 1987 that they excavated it, at which time they found treasures such as relics and reliquaries there that had remained untouched for 1,100 years (Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 2007).

[537] Other 'true body' relics mentioned in literary sources were at Puguangwang Monastery in Jiangsu and at Wutai in Shanxi (Whitfield 2004: 393).

enter in the forbidden precincts of the Palace?'[538] This strong anti-Buddhist rhetoric, however, would not deter the emperor, and Han Yu was reprimanded for speaking out against the ruling family, losing his position in government as he was ordered away to effectively live out the rest of his days in political exile. The importance of Famen as a site of cult was also noted by the Japanese pilgrim Ennin 圓仁 (c. 793–864) who recorded how five monasteries in the capital housed tooth relics and that three monasteries had finger bones. He went on to note that that while they all received lavish imperial donations, none was so favoured as Famen Monastery.[539]

The account of Famen in the *Record of Miracles* begins with some geographical and historical details. There had been in Fufeng 扶風 (west of present-day Xi'an) a bustling monastic community at what locals called Aśoka Monastery that supposedly dated back to the fourth century. The original site was left in ruins when the monastery complex was razed to the ground during the Zhou persecution of Buddhism (574–577). Daoxuan noted that a monastery and pagoda structure were later erected by Emperor Wen (r. 581–604) of the Sui dynasty near a place called Phoenix Spring, south of Mount Qi 岐山.[540] At the time, Emperor Wen conferred the name Chengshi Monastery 成實寺 on this complex. In his *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan writes that he visited the abandoned Sui pagoda site, which he was distraught to find had become dilapidated and overgrown. The so-called Aśoka Monastery complex was again renovated in 632, at which point multiple relics including the Buddha's finger bone were discovered within its foundations. It was then prophesied that every thirty years miraculous events would occur and the relic would need once more to be taken out. These Famen cult objects manifested many miraculous signs

[538] *Lun Fogu biao*: 30.265; Translated in part by Kieschnick 2003: 46; Translated in whole in Van Norden 2014: 123–26. Square brackets mine.

[539] Sen 2003: 66; For full-length monographs related to Famen Monastery, see Bo 1988; Han 1998; For an archaeological study on the steles discovered there in 1987, see Chen Jingfu 1998: 11 ff.

[540] T2106.406b9–14. This location had an auspicious past going all the way back to the Zhou dynasty. The story goes that a young phoenix went there to drink from the spring. This first section of the history of Famen pagoda constitutes an interesting folk history of the Mount Qi range. It reads more like a gazetteer than a historical entry and brings to light those aspects of that space which would have been significant in the imaginary of those who lived there at that time. This young phoenix also appears in the *Guo yu* 國語: 'At the height of the Zhou dynasty, the young phoenix cried out in the Qishan range' (2006: 1.10 f.).

which were duly recorded throughout the Tang.

The Famen pagoda and its relics were popularly believed to be of Aśokan origin. In practice, claims of Aśokan origin for objects and structures effectively vindicated Buddhist claims to legitimacy by drawing a bridge to an ancient world closer to the life and times of the religion's founder. The authenticity of Famen and its relics, moreover, was vindicated at the state level in 632 by two excavated sixth-century tablets discovered at the same time as the finger bone beneath the pagoda's foundations. Although the *Record of Miracles* noted that the tablets were illegible, their relationship to past dynasties and to Chinese custom confirmed the relative antiquity and imperial importance of the pagoda foundations and the objects contained therein.[541]

Miracles produced by the pagoda as well as the cult objects within inspired awe by different means such as emitting dazzling light, or, perhaps most remarkably, by producing those fearsome peering eyes that glared down from the caisson ceiling scaring away a pious monk named Huiman 惠滿.[542] The relics and other cult objects in Famen could display not only their miraculous qualities but also their therapeutic potency. There are at least two accounts in the *Record of Miracles* of people being cured at Famen Monastery. In one case, an old blind man participating in the relic procession strained his eyes to see the relic until he regained his sight.[543] The case of the faithless Ping Xuansi 憑玄嗣 was particularly interesting because his salvation was the result of his conversion. In the story, he fell ill and went to the hell realm after trying to burn a Buddhist image. Only after returning from death did he heed his family's advice to go to Famen and see the relic, repent for his sins and be cured.[544] These stories of miracles and instant *karma* would have resonated with believers at the time.

Famen Monastery was also the setting for significant religio-political events that took place in 660. By order of the court, the hermit-monk Zhicong 智琮 and others were sent to do

[541] T2106.406c8–13.
[542] T2106.407b7–10.
[543] T2106.406c13–15.
[544] This story is interesting because it presents a narrative on both the therapeutic potency of cult objects as well as the risk of *karmic* retribution if one denigrates them.

observances at the pagoda.[545] When they exhumed the relics, an edict was passed and monks were ordered to carry the finger bone to the eastern capital in Luoyang. There was, moreover, a great confluence of holy relics in the capital at that time as a diplomat to India named Wang Xuance 王玄策 (fl. 648–660) brought what he claimed was the Buddha's parietal bone.[546] Monks escorted the finger bone as well as the parietal bone to Luoyang, carrying the objects in procession to the palace. It was then proclaimed that the finger bone was the Buddha's 'true body' and that the monks in the capital should venerate it.[547] The relics were received with much fanfare and Wu Zhao 武曌 (624–705), who at that time was not yet empress regnant, made lavish offerings of silks and other things as well as an ornate gold and silver reliquary. The parietal bone remained in Luoyang while the finger bone was sent back to Famen where it would be resealed in 662.[548] Famen Monastery was restored in 632 and again in 659, whereafter it became a state-supported shrine for important cult objects. The finger bone was again paraded in 760, 790, 819 and finally 873, receiving lavish gifts all the while from both the court and the people.

Daoxuan and cult objects

Daoxuan promoted Buddhist teachings by various means: consolidating monastic law as well as cataloguing scriptures, compiling histories, and generally participating in the vibrant religious life of the early Tang. As a historian he played an active role in crafting the history of the miraculous in China. As a believer, he also witnessed miracles and much more first-hand—experiences of the miraculous that must have shaped his outlook. The following subsections concentrate on Daoxuan's role as a historian and a believer, narrowing the scope from the analysis given above

[545] T2106.407a7–9. Also mentioned in *GHJ*: T2103.201c12–17; Interesting variation in *FZ*: T2122.586b15–17.
[546] Sen 2014: 38; Wang Xuance is not mentioned in the *Record of Miracles*.
[547] T2106.407b15. From the text it is unclear whether the term 'true body' (*zhenshen* 真身) was meant to designate the parietal or the finger bone. Considering that the finger bone continued to be called a *zhenshen* afterward, and after the reading of these similar passages done by Eugene Wang (2005: 87), I believe the edict meant to indicate that the finger bone, and not the parietal bone, was the 'true body' (T2106.407b10–18).
[548] Daoxuan remarked that the parietal bone stayed in the palace (T2106.407c11–12).

of China's miraculous past to the accounts of Daoxuan's own experiences with cult objects, explaining in what ways he was an active promoter and innovator of the cult of saints.

Famen and the Mauryan King

One question that this chapter poses is: What is Daoxuan's relationship to the so-called true body relic out of Famen? As we have seen above, the finger bone relic was arguably one of the most renowned Buddhist cult objects during the Tang. As a Buddhist monk, and later as a Head Monk, Daoxuan would have been responsible for coordinating ceremonial affairs related to cult objects such as the finger bone around the capital. His association with the relic would have been not only ceremonial, but also historiographical. According to the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*, Daoxuan composed the now lost *Famen wenji* 法門文記 (*Literary Record of Famen*),[549] a text that possibly had parallels with his entry in the *Record of Miracles*. Most notably, while this relic was mentioned in earlier textual and epigraphic sources, it was Daoxuan that provided many of the earliest available detailed descriptions of its public veneration that we can still read today.[550]

There is scanty evidence from the early Tang of Daoxuan's role with regard to the relic, though Song dynasty histories and biographies mention that Wu Zhao ordered him to accompany the relic on its way back to Famen from Luoyang in 662.[551] The historical value of this claim is questionable, though it is safe to say that Daoxuan was no stranger to the imperial cult of saints and at least one scholar states that he was intimately related to relic worship out of Famen.[552] In his critical biography of Daoxuan, Wang Yarong 王亞榮 makes the altogether unconvincing argument that Daoxuan participated fully in the cult at Famen, claiming that he handled the relic

[549] *SGZ*: T2061.790c25–26.
[550] Huang 1998: 504.
[551] *Fozu tongji*: T2035.367b16–17; *SGZ*: T2061.790c24. Although Gaozong was technically in power in 662, after 660 it was Wu Zhao that effectively took control. The *Fozu tongji* records that Daoxuan was ordered (*ming* 命) to return with the finger bone to Famen. In the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Zanning calls Famen Monastery by the name *Wuyou wang si* 無憂王寺 (lit. King of No Sorrow Monastery). According to a stele inscription by Zhang Yu, Famen was renamed *Wuyou wang si* in 710 during Zhongzong's 中宗 reign (*Quan Tang wen*: 516.5246). Kumārajīva (344–413) states that some Buddhist texts use *Wuyou wang* to translate the name of Aśoka (also written *Alunjia* 阿輸伽) (*Dazhi dulun* T1509.147a18). Zanning was thus referring to Famen as Aśoka Monastery, one of its many alternate names.
[552] Sen 2014: 34; Wang Y. 2017: 132; 146.

and even presented it before the masses.[553] While textual evidence indicates that in principle Wang's statement may be true, he does not really support his claim. That being said, there is further proof in the literature that does support the fact that Daoxuan was involved. This section takes Wang's claims as a launching pad, providing a different reading of a key passage in the *Record of Miracles* that allows us to place the scholar-monk at this important religious and political event in early Tang history.

Daoxuan recorded that Zhicong 智琮 and others were officially responsible for the first relic procession of the finger bone from Fufeng to Luoyang in 660.[554] The *Record of Miracles* is filled with stories related to Mount Zhongnan where Famen was based, yet Daoxuan did not write explicitly about his relationship to the monastery, nor did he mention exactly what role he played in the proceedings. As mentioned above, he did, however, mention that he visited the old ruins of the Famen pagoda before its renovation in 632:

> The monastery's name was lost long ago and the monks have long since gone. People in that area are scarce, [the site] is overgrown and the *stūpa* is on the verge of collapse. I have been to see it. Although the circumstances are different from [those that inspired the] poem 'The broomcorn millet hangs heavy', yet one still feels a comparably profound sense of melancholy [at the sight of these ruins].
> 寺名久廢，僧徒化往。人物全希。塔將頹壞。余往觀焉。榛叢彌滿，雖無黍離之實，深切黍離之悲。[555]

Daoxuan here notes his sense of sadness after visiting the dilapidated remains of this ancient sacred site. His personal lamentations aside, there are two reasons why it can be said that he was at the new Famen some thirty years later when the relics were exhibited for official functions in 660. First, the relic procession was a public event. Daoxuan wrote that people from all around the capital went to see the relic, so it would be safe to assume that, as both the newly appointed Head Monk at the imperially affiliated Ximing Monastery and as an earnest believer, Daoxuan would not have missed such an opportunity.[556] Second, there is literary evidence that Daoxuan partook and perhaps even handled the relic. In the *Record of Miracles*, he gives a very detailed description of the

[553] Wang Y. 2017: 146.
[554] For direct mention of Zhicong in relation to the relic procession, see *GHJ*: T2103.201c12–17.
[555] T2106.406b15-17.
[556] He was made Head Monk at Ximing Monastery around 657 (*Fozu tongji*: T2035.367a24–27).

hallowed finger bone:

> The relic's form was like a small finger. Originally, the relic was one *cun* two *fen* in length and it was hollow and perfectly square inside. The outside corners of the relic were the same. The bottom [of the relic] was flat and it was rounded near the top. Both within and without it was bright and pure.
> 其舍利形狀如小指。初骨長寸二分，內孔正方，外楞亦爾。下平上圓，外光淨。[557]

This description of the finger bone is close to the actual finger relics discovered in the Famen pagoda in the 1980s. Indeed, the measurements made recently of the four finger bone relics (3.7 cm and 4.1 cm) match Daoxuan's approximation of 'one *cun* two *fen*'—about 4 cm. Moreover, the description provided in the *Record of Miracles* is like a personal account of an object studied in detail. Daoxuan places himself at the scene when he states that:

> I [could] insert my small finger in the hollow middle and it fit exactly.
> 余內小指於孔中，恰受。[558]

The presence of the first-person pronoun *yu* 余, in combination with the detailed description, reads as though he held the relic.[559] According to Wang's line of argument, this passage was the 'smoking gun' proving that Daoxuan was at Famen in 660.[560] While this passage provides compelling evidence, the language remains ambiguous and the argument needs further support. The proof of the pudding, however, is presented by Daoxuan's close colleague Daoshi 道世, paraphrasing the above passage in his *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*Forest of Pearls*) as follows:

> Putting one's finger into the [relic's hollow middle], [the finger] just fits.
> 以指內孔，恰得受指。[561]

On more than one occasion in his encyclopaedia, Daoshi took Daoxuan's personal accounts and converted them to the third person.[562] Daoshi, who worked closely with Daoxuan, deliberately exchanged *yu* 余 with the co-verb *yi* 以 so that there is little doubt that the word '*yu*' in Daoxuan's

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[557] T2106.407b2–5; *FZ*: T2122.586c19–25.

[558] T2106.407b2–5; I here read *nei* 內, as a verb meaning 'to insert' or 'enter'.

[559] Although relics were usually kept hidden away, it was not necessarily prohibited for people to hold or touch these relics. One instance in the *Record of Miracles* shows how a believer held the finger bone and could feel its weight, though he still could not see it (T2106.407a23–27).

[560] Wang Y. 2017: 146.

[561] *FZ*: T2122.586c22.

[562] For two more examples of Daoshi's editorial exclusion of Daoxuan's voice, see the following instances from the first fascicle of the *Record of Miracles* compared to their *Fayuan zhulin* renditions: T2106.406a5–6; *FZ* T2122.586a12–13; Also see T2106.410a1–2; *FZ* T2122.799a23–24. In the latter, Daoshi edits out the dialogue Daoxuan recorded between himself and a local monk.

text is a personal pronoun. The *Record of Miracles* continues: '[The relic] was held up and presented to the masses' 便得勝戴，以示大眾.[563] In his critical history, Wang described a scene wherein Daoxuan held the relic bone and then presented it to the masses gathered at Famen.[564] Regrettably, provided there is only one textual source placing him there and a second edited source confirming that it was indeed a first-person account, it still seems further evidence would be needed. The one thing that is certain is that the personal pronoun is there on purpose and is not a scribal error. Daoxuan most likely saw and maybe even touched the relic, but the personal pronoun used in the *Record of Miracles* is not hard evidence that he held the relic aloft and presented it to the masses. Finally, the lengthy account given in the *Record of Miracles* of the relic procession is, perhaps most importantly, proof enough of his interest in the finger bone as both a religious object and an object of historical study.[565]

Now, Daoxuan was not only interested in seeing or holding cult objects but also in proving their authenticity. Prevalent in the discourse on authenticity in medieval Chinese Buddhism was the Aśokan origins of cult objects. Nowhere in Daoxuan's writings was this discourse on authenticity more obvious than in the *Record of Miracles* where Aśokan themes constituted a predominant leitmotif, and most items throughout the three fascicles were in some way related to the pagodas, monasteries, and cult objects of Aśoka.[566] This was also true of Famen Monastery which, according to legend, used to bear the name of Aśoka Monastery (*Ayuwang si* 阿育王寺).[567] Aśokan origin narratives are a recurring trope in the *Record of Miracles*, where Daoxuan often includes stories related to the Mauryan king from traditional accounts or local lore to confirm an object's sacred origins. For instance, in one account unrelated to Famen, some monks from the Western Regions 西域 visited Changgan Monastery 長干寺 where they noticed a statue that

[563] T2106.407b5.
[564] Wang Y. 2017: 146.
[565] A similar argument is made in Wang Y. 2017: 132–47.
[566] The items where Aśoka is explicitly mentioned, comprising fifteen items, in the first fascicle are items number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17 and 18. This does not include the other Aśokan items mentioned in the two other fascicles.
[567] T2106.406b18; Famen also contained a statue of Aśoka produced in Emperor Gaozong's likeness (T2106.407a18–19).

seemed familiar to them. They later told the local monks that they had originally obtained this same image, an original Aśokan statue, in India. They recounted how they buried it near the city of Ye 鄴 (probably Jianye; present-day Nanjing) to protect it during a time of political unrest. Later again, the nimbus and pedestal were retrieved from the ocean floor by a pearl diver. At the time, only Gunavarman (367–431)[568] could read the Indic script on the back which recorded that the image was created at the behest of King Aśoka's fourth daughter.[569] Such accounts abound in the *Record of Miracles*.

Daoxuan did more than just refer to the pious king in his compilations but also added to the discourse on authenticity, formulating his own theories about the scale of the distribution of Aśokan cult object. In the *Record of Miracles*, there is mention of the monk Huida 慧達 (also known as Liu Sahe 劉薩荷), who confirmed the location of at least two Aśokan pagodas in Kuaiji (present-day Shaoxin in Zhejiang) and in Pengcheng (present-day Xuzhou in Jiangsu). Daoxuan added to this list, claiming that there was also one in Jiangnan at Changgan Monastery, speculating that there must be more. Drawing from historical records, miracle tales, as well as local lore, he added to Huida's confirmed pagodas stating that, according to scriptures: 'There should be one [Aśokan] pagoda per 100,000 Chinese families.'[570] That did not include cult objects such as images and relics which would have been even more numerous. Considering that Aśoka's objects were distributed according to the number of potential converts, it seemed absurd to Daoxuan that there would only be the two pagodas formally associated with Aśoka. By expanding the scope of the king's cult object distribution, we see how Aśokan origins became one of many useful sources of authority used and developed throughout the *Record of Miracles.* The inclusion of these objects and religious structures in the *Record of Miracles* gave these sacred objects and places a certain

[568] Gunavarnam belonged to the royal house of Kashmir. He would have gone to southern China via Java and was known for his ability to spread the Dharma. His biography may be found in *GZ*: T2059.340a15–b4; Translation of Gunavarnam's biography in Stache-Rosen 1973.
[569] T2106.414b16–17. In his *Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao*, Daoxuan explicitly notes that 'Aśoka's fourth daughter wrote the inscription on the foot of the pedestal' (T1804.133c6–7).
[570] T2106.404c27–405a2; *FZ*: T2122.585b23–27. There are differing calculations in the *Ayuwang zhuan* T2042.102a17–29, and the *Ayuwang jing*, T2043.135a11–21. The various arguments are summarised in Durt 1987: 1227.

degree of recognition. When an object's status was challenged, the mention of the Mauryan king or the appearance of miraculous signs effectively acted as initial confirmation, while Daoxuan's inclusion of these narratives in his works served as a final 'seal of authenticity'. He was cognisant of the fact that writing this history would provide sacred validation for many places and objects, while the act of selecting and recording these miracle narratives attested to Daoxuan's vested interest in the cult of saints. These narratives were also read and copied by many. The *Record of Miracles* figured prominently in Daoshi's Buddhist encyclopaedia and was cited and reused in various other compilations after it. In the end, as an author writing about cult objects and the miraculous, the scope of his *Record of Miracles* and the reach of these stories paid tribute not only to his erudition, but also to his success as a historian of the sacred in China.

Personal experience of cult objects

Daoxuan also had a personal interest in seeking out and viewing cult objects. In his lifelong encounter with these objects, he experienced the miraculous on multiple occasions. Miracles, however, are not always timely, nor do they manifest for everyone. To a certain extent, they only manifest according to expediency, appearing to those of high spiritual attainment or to those that need to see them. Daoxuan was no exception to the rule. In the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (*Expanded Collection*), he mentions the difficulty of encountering the Buddha through his cult objects.

> It is difficult to encounter the Tathāgata's true form relics. [His true form] shines forth as a jewelled vessel brimming with bright virtuous water. As it is with grasping a subtle [point] or seeing a dragon pearl (Skt. *Nāga maṇi*), [if] one does not have saintly merit and a noble spirit, then one cannot encounter such rarities.
> 難遇者乃如來真形舍利。[照]景寶瓶浮光德水。如觀鉤[瑣]似見龍珠，自非聖德威神，無以值斯希有。[571]

In the *Record of Miracles*, he mentions his experience of three sacred cave shrine images in the mountains of Mianshang County, Qinzhou (present-day Shanxi). Oral accounts claimed that these images emitted miraculous light, although when he visited during the 630s he saw no such emanations. This was a phenomenon he attributed to his own level of spiritual attainment.

[571] T2103.209a15–19. Square brackets contain Song dynasty corrections to the text provided by CBETA; c.f. Shen 2018: 186.

> The mountains and the woods are marvellously scenic, and [among] the stone cave Buddha images are many ancient vestiges, although [I could find] no details about their origins and [I] did not see any miraculous signs. So it is that my [mental] hindrances must be substantial.
> 山林勝地。石龕佛像大有古迹，莫委其初，然不覩瑞。故是障[厚]。[572]

Self-cultivation and devotional acts in the presence of cult objects were common practice, and many accounts tell of believers praying thereby making relics manifest *ex nihilo*, or finally seeing objects only once they performed certain practices or penances. In a later rendering of Daoxuan's biography, for example, Zanning records that, at around the age of twenty, Daoxuan did rigorous meditative practice, bringing about the miraculous appearance of a relic.[573] While this may be a later embellishment of Daoxuan's life story, it does provide insight into the belief in and mechanics of the miraculous—namely that miracles only occur for those that are supposed to see them. Daoxuan mentions another experience of the struggle he had viewing a holy image while at Riyan Monastery 日嚴寺.

> Assemblies of monks in the capital regularly came to see [the mysterious emanation at Riyan Monastery]. I lived at this monastery and did not believe it. On multiple occasions, I saw upon the stone a flickering golden light and suspected it was in the likeness of a Buddha image. Yet, of the many eminent and pious monks [I] encountered [who had seen the image], all of their descriptions were different, and they all [spoke of how they could see it] clearly and distinctly. [For them] its features and countenance were never obscure. I was frustrated that I had not seen [what they had]. Then, for seven days I abstained from impure activities and did my penances, after which I went forward to see [the object]. I [first] saw a silver pagoda. Later, I looked at it again and saw a silver Buddha.
> 京邑僧眾常來瞻覩。余住此寺，亦未之信。重以見石中，金光晃晃。疑似佛像耳。仍見名行諸僧互說不同，咸言了了分明。面目相狀，未曾有昧。余慨無所見，又潔齋別懺七日。後依前觀之，見有銀塔。後又觀之，見有銀佛。[574]

At first, he was frustrated that he could not see the emanations. To gain a clearer view of the image, he purified himself by fasting and practising penances. After completing these penances, he saw the object first as a pagoda and then as a Buddha. What is telling here is that he associated, as many of his contemporaries would have, the absence of expected miraculous occurrences not to the objects themselves but to his own shortcomings.

Many of the accounts of China's cult objects described things that were not readily

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[572] T2106.422c6–8. The original reads *yuan* 源. I have taken this alternative reading from the Song, Yuan, and Ming corrections.
[573] *SGZ*: T2061.790b17–19; c.f. Wagner 1995: 256.
[574] T2106.421b14–22; c.f. Wagner 1995: 53.

accessible to anyone. While images could be displayed in their respective monastery halls or in shrines, relics were kept out of sight, often deposited in reliquaries or interred in pagodas, only coming out on special occasions. Relics were often hidden, and their presence at sacred sites mentioned in the *Record of Miracles* was usually confirmed by miraculous signs, historical accounts, or in some cases local belief. Very few relics would actually be taken out and handled by monks, and Daoxuan only mentions seeing two relics in the *Record of Miracles*. First, the above section argued that Daoxuan most likely saw and handled the Buddha's finger bone at Famen Monastery. The second instance was the hallowed relics translated from Riyan Monastery to Chongyi Monastery 崇義寺 in the capital.

In 625 the monks of Riyan Monastery, including Daoxuan, were relocated to Chongyi Monastery. Riyan had been converted into government property, although the pagoda still needed to be excavated.

> Then the pagoda was exhumed and three relics were found: bright, white and large as millet grains. There was also a [finger]nail that was a bit yellowish, and there were about ten white hairs as well as sundry treasures such as beryl and antiquary objects. They [together] filled a large copper box. [We] examined [the box] and there were no curly hairs [which is one of the marks of the Buddha]. There was also this dubious yellow nail that was the size of a normal human nail. It is believed that the nail of the Buddha would be at least two times bigger and bronze in colour. Now, [these hairs and nails] were not so.
> 乃發掘塔下，得舍利三枚，白色光明，大如黍米，并[爪]一枚。少有黃色，并白髮數十餘。有雜寶瑠璃古器等、總以大銅函盛之。檢無螺髮，又疑爪黃而小如人者。尋佛倍人，爪赤銅色。今則不爾。[575]

Although Daoxuan—or anyone for that matter—may never have seen the actual remains of the Buddha, he almost certainly read about them. For example, in the *Guan fo sanmei hai jing* 觀佛三昧海經 (*Sūtra on the ocean-like Samādhi of the contemplation of the Buddha*) it says that the Buddha's hairs were: 'long one *zhang*, two *chi*, and five *cun*. When loose they curled to the right

[575] T2106.406a6–10; *FZ*: T2122.586a10–23; Square brackets contain Song dynasty correction found in CBETA; In the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan uses the first-person pronoun *yu* 余 to indicate his presence at Riyan Monastery. The context, as well as his detailed description and opinions about the place corroborate his presence. In the same passage in *Fayuan zhulin*, Daoshi places Daoxuan in Riyan, addressing him as 'Vinaya master Daoxuan' 道宣律師 (T2122.586a12).

and formed a conch-like [spiral] pattern' 長一丈二尺五寸, 放已右旋還成螽文.[576] This passage was also paraphrased in the *Liang shu* 梁書 (*Liang History*) which described the original excavation by Xiao Yan 蕭衍 (502–549), the Emperor Wu of the Liang, at Changgan Monastery before the relics were translated to Riyan. At the time the hair was described as dark purple (*qinggan* 青紺) while the fingernails were said to be the colour of agarwood (*chenxiang* 沉香), a kind of copperish brown.[577] According to Daoxuan, the hair found at Riyan could not be the Buddha's hair because it was white and straight instead of curly. The nails were small and yellow whereas they should have been larger than normal and brown. Without immediately stating they were fake, Daoxuan was sceptical of their authenticity.[578] The excerpt continues:

> Then, the relics were brought to Chongyi Monastery, placed in the pagoda southwest to the Buddha hall. As it was before [in Changgan Monastery], they were placed in a large stone container. The original engraving, [as well as the stone container holding the relics] were buried in the earth. I questioned southern monks [from Changgan who were active in] the early Sui and they all claimed that the nail and hairs might be from Emperor Wu of the Liang. The [authenticity of these] relics is therefore dubious.
> 乃將至崇義寺佛堂西南塔下。依舊以大石函盛之，本銘覆上，埋于地府。余問隋初南僧，咸曰：「爪髮梁武帝者. 舍利則有疑焉。」[579]

Daoxuan and others then took the relics and interred them at Chongyi. Having seen very few relics himself, only reading descriptions or hearing accounts from travelling pilgrims, Daoxuan remained critical, ultimately claiming that these relics were dubious. This was further confirmed by the southern monks who stated that the relics might have come from Emperor Wu of the Liang. Interestingly, the relics were still ceremonially interred.

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[576] *Foshuo guanfo sanmei*: T643.649a24.

[577] *Liang shu*: 54.790f. The excavation of Changgan is also mentioned in the *Record of Miracles*, though Daoxuan does not give further details about the relics (T2106.405c8–22).

[578] Similar standards are mirrored in an essay on the Buddha's teeth by the twelfth-century scholar Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123–1195) who said: 'The world reveres the Buddha in large measure because of his marvels. They say that Chinese and foreign people grow according to the same principles. Yet relics of teeth and bones are as much as twice the size [of normal teeth and bones]. In addition, unlike desiccated bones, in colour they are red and shiny. If they are not from the Buddha, they would not be so.' Cited and translated in Kieschnick 2003: 46.

[579] This passage is ambiguous in the *Record of Miracles* and could read, as I translated above, as indicating that the nail and hair relics were not only placed there by Emperor Wu but were actually from his body. The *Fayuan zhulin* is much more to the point, stating that the false relics were placed there by Emperor Wu and he kept the authentic relics for himself (T2122.586a19–21). Regardless, the implication was the same: Daoxuan and others doubted the authenticity of these relics.

Overall, it is safe to say that Daoxuan was not only acutely aware of the miraculous quality of cult objects, but he also took the question of authenticity very seriously. Although he was a believer, he still had the wherewithal to judge them as objectively as possible. This was in part motivated by Daoxuan's wish to bolster the authority of Buddhist cult objects by recording their miraculous qualities and compiling as well as rectifying their histories. This was a project he could realise both as a Head Monk in Chang'an and as a Buddhist historian of the sacred. Daoxuan's accounts applied a healthy scepticism to the question of authenticity, neither dismissing such objects nor blindly believing the stories. Ultimately, by writing out these records he was not diminishing the cult of saints but guarding the social and ritual value of these cult objects, ensuring that their significance not decrease in the public eye.

Concluding remarks

The authority of miracles and cult objects was founded on the common belief in an unseen realm revealed through visions, ritual practice, or chance encounters with the supernormal. Such experiences allowed practitioners to negotiate the boundaries between seen and unseen as well as past and present. In the case of the *Record of Miracles*, it described how supernormal elements were always at play in China because the transmission of Buddhism was in fact taking place on two plains: the seen realm of 'local' China and the unseen realm that channelled sacred authority from the West through 'non-localised', or '*utopic*', visions and miracles. The personal experience of seeing miracles or handling cult objects, as well as the transmission of histories or witness accounts about them provided believers with proof that the land of the founder was paradoxically both far away and close at hand. Initially, pilgrims travelled to India to study the teachings and gather Buddhist paraphernalia. However, once Chinese practitioners had these objects in hand or when they began manifesting locally, believers no longer depended on access to India because the Dharma had already ostensibly been '[transferred] to the East'.[580] Moreover, anachronistic claims

[580] Strong and Strong 1995: 24; Strong 2004b: 189.

such as Aśoka's relic distribution, which took place at a time when no one in China had ever even heard of Buddhism, were seriously discussed. This was because the accumulation of both foreign and indigenous cult objects as well as the compilation of their associated miracle tales were part and parcel of the larger process of Buddhism's 'localisation'.[581]

What of the authenticity of these countless cult objects? The success of Buddhist cult objects was not solely reliant on the numinous qualities of the objects themselves but on their presumed antiquity as well. Under the pressing scrutiny of sceptics, the Buddhist practitioner's claim to religious authority was a source of great contention. For Daoxuan to declare, solely on his own authority, the hallowed status of one image over another would be problematic during the best of times. Daoxuan was, therefore, not only interested in the manifest numinous qualities of cult objects, but also in their pedigree. He recorded the histories of cult objects such as the finger bone relic in Famen or the images in Mianshan County as well as their miracles as indicators of holy status for the sake of reinforcing his and the objects' claims to religious legitimacy. Through his preoccupation with pedigree he came, in turn, to play an important role in enhancing it as he compiled and systematised the history of the cult of saints. These records became more than historiographical accounts, they were narrative 'seals of authenticity' that effectively vindicated the cult of objects for those that read or heard these stories.

[581] The terms 'sinicisation' or 'sinification' are also relevant here. Chün-fang Yü also uses the terms 'transformation' and 'domestication' (Yü 2000: 6). More on the 'localisation' of Buddhism, especially in Arakan chronicle literature, see Leider 2009: 358.

Chapter 5: Monasteries and pagodas

Introduction

The interest in and study of holy sites as loci for the sacred has occupied scholars of religion for well over a century. Émile Durkheim and Mircea Eliade, for instance, wrote at length about the origins of sacred 'place', those sites both holy and incorruptible believed to occupy space outside of time itself.[582] Durkheim focused on the inherently social dimension of space,[583] while for Eliade 'place' marked those sites where the 'divine' had manifested, the loci of so-called hierophany where the numenous had torn through the fabric of the 'profane' world to appear in our plane of existence. In the 1980's Jonathan Z. Smith re-examined these theories by applying a more ritual-centred approach to 'place'. He proposed that religious ritual constituted a means of directing attention, a 'process for marking interest' from an ambiguous 'space' to a well defined 'place', and that 'places'—be they sacred groves, holy cities, or the pagodas of East Asia—served as focal points for that ritual intent.[584] According to Smith, no 'place' is inherently sacred. Instead, in line with Durkheimian conceptions of social space, the power of 'place' is bound up in its communal associations which are determined by the people that make up a community, while the role of a 'place' in its respective sacred geography is to act as a marker for that ritual intent. In this way, holy sites are not defined as traces of manifest divinity but as sites where the sacred has been imprinted by humans on nature like a seal pressed upon the landscape to mark an event and authenticate its sacred status.[585]

When Daoxuan's contemporary, the great pilgrim and translator Xuanzang 玄奘 (fl. 602–664), returned from his sixteen-year voyage to Central and South Asia, he was greeted with great

[582] For a longer summary of these theories in relation to the study of 'place' in China, see Robson 2009c: 7. Other seminal works in the study of 'place' include Merlau-Ponty [1962] 1989; Casey 1993; Bhaba 1994; Tuan [1977] 2011.
[583] On the social category of space, see Durkheim [1912] 1915: 488.
[584] J. Z. Smith 1987: 103. Bernard Faure, who sets himself squarely in line with Smith's ideas relating to sacred place, conducts a fascinating 'topo-analysis' of the Chan conversion of local sacred sites associated with serpents in medieval China (Faure 1987).
[585] J. Z. Smith 1987: 17 ff.

fanfare and excitement. Emperor Taizong requested that Xuanzang redact a detailed account of his travels, a text today known as the *Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 (*Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*).[586] Although the travelogue itself was imperially mandated, Xuanzang's travels had not been done at the behest of the emperor. He left in 629 without official authorisation and travelled not as an emissary but as a pilgrim. Xuanzang was interested in the cult of saints and in the holy places of India, noting that 'while passing through these lands filled with the traces of the sages, I paid my respects to the numenous [traces] left behind [by the buddhas.]'[587] In the text itself, the social and geographical commentary regarding the western kingdoms—the content that would have interested the emperor—were an aside to the descriptions of holy sites and recorded accounts of local Buddhist lore. Among other things, Xuanzang described in vivid detail the places that had figured in the lives of the buddhas and other eminent figures.[588] Siddhārtha Gautama's biography, as well as the lives of his disciples and of the past buddhas, had been etched into the very landscape of India, and Xuanzang witnessed and recorded this history for a Chinese audience keen to learn about the West and about Buddhism.

The scriptures and the objects that Xuanzang carried with him to China were coveted by the community as precious artefacts brought from the Buddha's homeland. However, perhaps even more precious were the passages he composed regarding foreign sites of historical and cultic importance for they allowed detailed insight into the very 'place' of Buddhism's origin. The descriptions of these holy sites inspired curiosity and awe in the minds of those who heard and read the stories, drawing attention to the power of 'place' in the West where the buddhas had been active over one millennium earlier.

The investigation in the field of Buddhist studies of sacred space and, by association, the pilgrimage traditions surrounding these holy sites has brought to light crucial information on the religious life and beliefs related to space and place in Asia.[589] Echoing Smith's statements about

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[586] Brose 2021: 75.
[587] *Da Tang Daci'en si Sanzang fashi zhuan*: T2053.261a11-12.
[588] For more on Xuanzang's motivations for travelling to India, see Brose 2021: 1 f.
[589] For a brief history of pilgrimage in the Buddhist world, see Trainor 2004. For some significant works on sacred place and pilgrimage in Buddhist studies, see J. Huntington 1986; Delahoutre 1987; Cook 1994; Huber 2008.

'place', Frederick Asher states that sacred sites are not 'stable entities' representing some sacred past, but are mutable things, often 'imaginative constructs', that change in accordance with the times and the people who offer cult there as well as those who conceive and write about them.[590] This was especially true in China where all of the information about the sacred places of India did not come from firsthand experience but from secondhand sources: accounts provided by foreign missionaries and merchants, the descriptions of sacred places in the scriptures, as well as the travelogues composed by daring Chinese pilgrims like Xuanzang. Bearing this in mind, the present chapter will explore how Daoxuan's *Record of Miracles* represented an account of Buddhism's sacred geography based not only in secondhand information about India but in his own experience and records of a new locus of Buddhist sacrality: the Sinitic world.

Reading over the content of the previous chapter, it could be distilled down to the following question: 'what' did religious objects represent to medieval Chinese Buddhists? This present chapter moves from questions regarding 'what', to concentrate on the question of 'where' was important in medieval China. Religious objects, scriptures, teachings, and cultivation practices were all 'portable' and were effectively carried eastward along the trade routes by merchants and missionaries from the West. Holy sites, on the other hand, such as those in Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, or Kuśinagara were static and inaccessible to the medieval Chinese except through the travelogues composed by daring pilgrims who had made the perilous voyage west. By Daoxuan's time, however, there were already many recognised Buddhist holy sites in China that had their own associations and their own intricate historical narratives.[591] As we will see in this chapter, certain sacred sites in India were even transposed to new spaces in China where they took on a variety of new culturally specific associations and meanings.

The spaces that people considered sacred—the 'where' of this tradition's making and emergence—were central to the reception and the dissemination of Buddhism among the various believers scattered across this vast country. In the *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 Daoxuan states

[590] Asher 2009: 233.
[591] Sen 2003: 101.

regarding the monasteries of China that:

> On China's coastlines and upon this Divine Continent's (*shenzhou*) mountains, there have long been holy monasteries, each one appearing (*ganxian*)[592] differently [to those that see them].
> 震旦海曲，神州諸山。往往聖寺，感見非一。

The antiquity of Buddhism as indicated by the discovery and excavation of ancient sites was a primary concern for authors such as Daoxuan. He wrote extensively about the history of these hallowed spaces, many of which he visited himself. In the process of composing the histories of sites and religious structures, Daoxuan enlisted *arhats*, Indian kings, and Chinese cultural heroes, effectively projecting Buddhism back—often anachronistically—into ancient Chinese history.

Putting the emphasis on space and place, the following sections cover Buddhist material culture related to holy sites and religious structures. This chapter will develop on the topic of Buddhist monasteries and pagodas as they are depicted in the *Record of Miracles* as well as in other relevant passages drawn from Daoxuan's latter-day interviews with spirits. As will be explained throughout this chapter, monasteries and pagodas occupied an important place in the medieval Chinese *imaginaire* as hallowed sites and as structural representations of Buddhist ideals and practices. Indeed, much like relics and images, religious structures were important objects of ritual attention in the cult of saints. The question of Daoxuan's relationship to 'place' and how he wrote about sacred sites will inform much of this discussion. There will be three sections of which the first will provide background information on two sacred structure types: monasteries and pagodas.[593] The second section will give a brief Buddhist history of 'place' in China, giving special attention to the figure of Liu Sahe 劉薩荷 and his role in localising Buddhist sacred geography. The final section will investigate Daoxuan's relationship to 'place' with attention directed at Mount Zhongnan 終南山.

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[592] The compound *ganxian* is usually related to perceiving the supernormal. Daoxuan uses the expression multiple time in his *Continued Biographies*. For example, in Huishao's 慧韶 biography, he enters a meditative state and perceives (*ganxian*) a spirit (T2060.471a8).

[593] The ordination platform was also a structure that played an important role in Daoxuan's life. It is, however, not within the purview of this thesis to dedicate a section to it, though the subject will be broached in the conclusion. For more on Daoxuan and the ordination platform, see McRae 2005: 71.

Sacred places

Monastery compounds

The modern Buddhist monastery or nunnery in East Asia is made up of residences, a pagoda, various halls containing scriptures, relics, and images, and as is often the case, a gift shop. Early Indian Buddhist 'monasteries', however, were not meant to be such sprawling institutions but were instead products of necessity constructed in preparation for the monsoon. At the time of the Buddha, it was the lay practitioners near the urban centres of North India that provided shelter for Gautama and his followers.[594] Later accounts in various *Vinayas* tell that the first 'monastery' was established in Bamboo Grove (Veluvana) outside of Rājagṛha, a gift from King Bimbisāra of Magadha.[595] In reality, it was probably after the Buddha died that monastic retreats were first provided for assemblies of monks who settled in these so-called dwellings (Skt. *vihara*). These 'dwellings' later developed from open courts to large compounds housing entire communities that came to include ancillary structures such as pagodas and ordination platforms.[596] In time the 'dwelling', ideas about 'dwellings', and the rules governing them were brought to China by foreign travellers. Having arrived in China these structures and these concepts took on new localised forms in accordance with the needs and expectations of a people that had a different eye for design and, indeed, a distinct sense of 'place'.

The first 'monastery' structure in China was most likely established in the second century as a Buddhist shrine constructed to house and venerate an image.[597] The early 'dwellings' of China were converted from residences donated to the Buddhist community by wealthy patrons.[598] It was not until Buddhism was adopted in both North and South China during the third and fourth centuries that monastery compounds with Buddha halls and pagodas began to be constructed in

[594] Meister and Steinhardt 1987: 373.
[595] Kieschnick 2003: 189.
[596] Meister and Steinhardt 1987: 373; 375.
[597] Meister and Steinhardt 1987: 376. For a history of 'monastery' nomenclature, comparing the words 'shrine' (*ci* 祠) and 'monastery' (*si* 寺), see Barrett 2009: 11.
[598] Kieschnick 2003: 186.

earnest.[599] Beginning in the Tang dynasty, Chinese monasteries and monastic communities were most often established for merit-making purposes by members of the ruling class. Officially mandated monasteries and their resident monastics served the emperor, offering, among other things, supernormal protection to the ruling family while also enacting propitious rites assuring stability and prosperity in the empire.[600] With regard to architecture and design, early monasteries were essentially converted residences, while the compounds of the Tang developed in line with contemporary city planning where all complexes were placed in wards that were part of a larger grid pattern. In the style of other wards and secular compounds, the Buddhist wards included peripheral structures and a courtyard providing access to all the halls. Indeed, the layout of the lecture halls, Sutra halls, meditation halls, and more were arrayed across the ward in the fashion of an imperial compound. For this reason, converted monasteries were also easily repurposed as residences.[601] Active Chinese monasteries served a variety of secular purposes as well, acting not only as centres of Buddhist learning and ritual practice, but also as granaries, orphanages, treasuries, and much more.[602]

Most important to the purpose of this thesis is the fact that monasteries were considered hallowed sacred sites. The sacredness of a monastery was often determined by the importance and authenticity of the miraculous objects it contained. That is to say, as a 'vessel' for sacred objects such as scriptures, relics, and images, a monastery might gain the status of a hallowed place. As James Robson noted, however, there is much more to the monastery than its usefulness as a 'container'. Some monasteries were built to mark a variety of supernormal phenomena: one monastery might indicate the appearance of an auspicious sign in a particular place, while another might be venerated because it was believed to house local spirits that had converted to Buddhism.[603] They marked 'place', containing within their walls not only sacred objects but also

[599] Sørensen 2019.
[600] Sokolova 2021: 2.
[601] Ledderose 2000: 115; Sokolova 2021: 2 f.
[602] Robson 2009b: 44.
[603] For some examples relating to the latter point, especially as it relates to the Chan monk Shenxiu 神秀 (c. 606-706) converting a spirit in the form of a snake, see Faure 1987: 341.

sacred associations bound up in local memory and recounted in narrative.

Monasteries were therefore tied to daily life and to local memory. For the literatus Yang Xuanzhi 楊衒之, author of the *Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 (*Monasteries of* Luoyang; 547), monasteries and the ruins of monasteries acted as memory repositories, evoking in his mind the riveting events and supernormal phenomena that had happened at those sites in Luoyang.[604] By means of their physical presence—or by their absence when they have been destroyed or otherwise disappeared—monasteries were symbols within a community of a network of stories and beliefs. As markers both within a locality and across the country, monasteries played an essential role in shaping Buddhist conceptions of sacred geography.[605] At the same time, by recording the histories of these monasteries, authors like Yang Xuanzhi and Daoxuan were presenting the experience of these sacred places for all those that read or heard the stories, marrying local lore with Buddhist rhetoric to cement the monastery's relevance in its community and beyond. Believers did not necessarily have the means to travel and visit many of these places—in fact many of the monasteries in the *Record of Miracles* were mystical structures that only appeared to those that passed certain trials of devotion. Indeed, Susan Andrews contends that sacred geographical knowledge is wielded not through material culture *per se*, but 'through the writing and rewriting of history'.[606]

Pagodas

The pagoda (Skt. *stūpas*) has been called the Buddhist structure *par excellence*, appearing in its various forms across the Buddhist world as a 'chief emblem of the Buddhist faith'.[607] Allan Grapard noted that 'one of the earliest aspects of the production of sacred space in India was, perhaps, the construction of *stūpas* [(i.e. pagodas)]'.[608] *Stūpas* are commemorative monuments

[604] Kieschnick 2003: 187.
[605] Robson 2009b: 47.
[606] Andrews 2016: 93.
[607] Foucher 1905: 59; Mitra 1971: 21; Some feel uneasy using the term 'pagoda', which does not appear anywhere in scriptures. However, for the sake of convenience, this thesis will use the terms '*stūpa*' and 'pagoda' interchangeably. For more on the influence of Indian (*bhagavati*), Portuguese (*pagode*), Persian (*butkada*), and Chinese (*bajiaota* 八角塔) terms on the creation of the word 'pagoda', see *OED*: 2004: s.v. pagoda; Considine 2016; Tien and Cohen 2017.
[608] Grapard 2004: 788.

meant to house objects of cult, usually the Buddha's corporeal or symbolic remains.[609] According to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra*, the first *stūpas* were erected when the Buddha's cremated remains were divided and enshrined in eight distinct funerary mounds.[610] Archaeological evidence places the Indian *stūpa*'s architectural origins among the pre-Buddhist funerary mounds of the fourth or third century BCE, evolving further during the early development phase of the cult of relics.[611]

Early examples of pagodas still extant today in India such as the Bharut and Sanchi *stūpas* indicate that they would have been domed monuments adorned at the top by a spire, a parasol with a finial at the pinnacle.[612] Later, Indian *stūpas* grew taller and thinner, and it was this form that was translated to East Asia. Looking through Chinese historical sources, *stūpas* were mentioned as early as the second century CE.[613] The most common term for a *stūpa* was '*ta*' 塔, which the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*Explaining the Unit Characters and Analysing the Compound Characters*), a second-century dictionary, defined as: 'a *futu* (transliteration of the Pa. *thūpa*; Skt. *stūpa*) from the Western Regions' 西域浮屠也.[614] In time, with the slow proliferation of monasteries and pagodas across China, the form of the structures changed from rounded mounds to the multistoried towers of Tang China.[615] By the Tang dynasty, the term '*ta*' became closely

[609] Paul Copp speaks of *stūpas* as 'markers of the body of the Buddha' (2014: 34).

[610] See short entry in Deeg 2011; For more on *stūpas* in the *Vinayas*, see article by Bareau 1962.

[611] Archaeological evidence shows there was a pre-Buddhist practice of erecting mounds over bodily relics (Bareau 1975: 173; Ledderose 1980: 239; Schopen 1991a: 305; Fogelin 2015: 85); Other commemorative structures of similar form (*caitya*) functioned as shrines dedicated to deities or ancestors in south Asia. A proper study of the term *caitya* (or *cetiya*) has yet to be done. In certain sources, such as the Pāli *Vinaya*, *caitya* is coterminous with *stūpa* (Schopen 1991a: 284–88, 1997b: 90).

[612] The original structure of the *stūpas* had strong symbolic meaning, and certain scholars have argued that the very symbolic structure of the *stūpa* could transmit to onlookers the meanings couched within the form regardless of whether they were conscious of it or not (Snodgrass 1985: 9).

[613] For more on the historical origins of the *stūpa*, see Przyluski 1935; Bareau 1962, 1974a: 289–95, 1974b; Bénisti 1960, 1971; de Marco 1987; Schopen [1995] 2004: 361–76; Hawkes and Shimada 2009; for a more cross-religious and art historical study of the *stūpa* in India, see S. Huntington and Huntington 1985.

[614] *Shuowen jiezi*: 2016: 391. See also Tracy Miller's excellent study of the cultural associations between the *ta* 塔 and the Chinese funerary tumulus *fen* 墳, the latter term being a primary point of comparison in the seventh-century Korean monk Woncheuk's 圓測 work regarding pagoda rites (T. Miller 2018: 83 f.).

[615]Meister and Steinhardt 1987: 376. Also see article by Ledderose 1980. For more on the connections between Indic and Sinitic pagodas in relation to the concept of the mountain as a residence for divinities, see T. Miller 2014: 421 ff. For more on Chinese burial practices in relation to pagodas, see T. Miller 2018: 84 f.

associated with the term '*si*' 寺 (monastery) used to designate the monastery complex as a whole including other ancillary structures such as pagodas, lecture halls, and more. As a matter of fact, the *Record of Miracles* often refers to the monastic complex as a 'monastery and pagoda' (*si ta* 寺塔).[616]

Just as monastic complexes adopted the layout of the imperial palace compound, the design of the pagoda was also profoundly influenced by native architecture.[617] Some claim that the Chinese pagoda was influenced by the design of ancient ceremonial halls such as the Luminous Terrace (*mingtang* 明堂).[618] The imperial compound traditionally contained a tower, either incorporated into the hall or in the complex, that was originally used by Han emperors to contact transcendents who were lured down to feed from the dew basin sitting atop the structure. Indeed, even the rounded bowl surrounding the shaft of the spire standing atop many Chinese pagodas was named—as it was with the Luminous Terrace—the dew basin (*lupan* 露盘).[619]

Pagodas in China played a similar social, economic, and religious role as relics and images. In the Buddha's absence, the pagoda was considered the 'real' Buddha manifested not in flesh and blood but in stone and mortar.[620] It also shared similarities with other cult objects insofar as (a) it produced and occupied sacred space, (b) it had liturgical forms applied to its dedicated rituals, and (c) it served the ritual function of invoking the saint's presence. Moreover, similar to relics and images, pagodas were important focal points for devotional practice and acted as centres of imperial ritual where rulers could perform their devotion through donations and construction

[616] Hirakawa 1963: 350. Daoxuan uses the compound '*sita*' twenty-nine times in his *Record of Miracles.*

[617] For more on the imperial influence on the design of pagodas and of the monastery complex, see Ledderose 1980: 242.

[618] Ledderose 1980: 241. For more on the Luminous Terrace and its ancillary structures, see Forte 1988: 96–108; Corradini 1995: 179–82.

[619] Ledderose 1980: 242. The term *lupan* is also used more loosely to designate the spire.

[620] The relic within the pagoda was understood to constitute the 'life' (Skt. *jivita*) of the structure, making the pagoda homologous to the body of the Buddha (Bénisti 1960: 51); On *stūpa* symbolism, see Combaz 1937; Bénisti 1960; Bareau 1974b: 269; Snodgrass 1985: 361 ff.; Fussman 1986; Interestingly, a study of the axial symbolism of *stūpas* associates the prominence of a central axis in the pagoda to the cosmic pillar (Irwin 1980: 12–39).

projects.[621] In contrast to other cult objects, however, the pagoda was larger and less mobile.[622] Like the monastery, it effectively functioned as both a marker of sacred place and as a 'container' where religious objects were kept.[623]

In the *Record of Miracles,* Daoxuan surveyed the auspicious pagodas of China, noting their locations and compiling their histories.[624] Fascicle one in the *Record of Miracles* lists prominent *stūpas* marking the place of interred relics (*sheli biaota* 舍利表塔). He includes over twenty-one items related to the discovery of pagodas and the accounts of their miraculous qualities.[625] In Daoxuan's records, the antiquity of a structure acted as a focal point for his assessment of a pagoda's authenticity. There were cases where pagodas were associated with figures from China's past, though his assessment was usually not grounded in Chinese antiquity but in discernible links to India, especially to King Aśoka. In the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan took the Mauryan king's pious act of relic distribution as a historical precedent, listing the pagodas he believed were associated with King Aśoka to confirm not only that these structures were ancient but that by association to the Mauryan king the Buddhist faith had been present since the halcyon days of the Chinese state, the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE). As we will see in the following sections, however, there were cases where these structures were associated with cultural figures that went even further back in China's past than Aśoka's chronology. Looking at narratives related to monasteries and pagodas in the *Record of Miracles,* the following sections will explore the cult of saints as well as the concept of 'place' in China in relation to narrative as well as in connection to landscape, elaborating on how both monasteries and pagodas constituted important facets of Tang

[621] Fussman 1986: 48.
[622] Ray [1994] 1999: 347.
[623] There were also smaller votive pagodas that served important ritual purposes. For more, see article by Durt, Riboud, and Tung-Hun 1985; They could also be commemorative markers erected in locations related to the life of Śākyamuni or other saints.
[624] A twentieth century iteration of this archaeological survey of extant Aśokan monuments in China was done by the Japanese scholar Murata 1977, 1978; Cited in Durt 1987: 1227.
[625] Information on *stūpas* is also given in Daoxuan's other works. Most significant is the *Guang hongming ji*, where he makes an annotated list of pagodas in China which he later elaborated in the *Record of Miracles.* The *Record of Miracles* adds two new *stūpas* to the list from the *GHJ*: T2103.201b24-202a26; Daoshi's *Fayuan zhulin* also edited and added to Daoxuan's *stūpa* narratives. For more on the place of *stūpas* and other miraculous objects as tools of legitimation during the Northern and Southern dynasties, see Zürcher [1959] 2007: 277–80; Faure 2003: 1136.

Buddhist identity.

Buddhist history of 'place' in China

Despite the subtitle, this section begins not with a Buddhist example but with details on the life of a Daoist transcendent. James Robson concludes his study of the sacred mountain Nanyue 南嶽 in Hunan Province with the story of the Daoist practitioner Wang Lingyu 王靈輿 (d. 512). Wang was an adept of great attainment though it was revealed to him that he would not become a 'feathered transcendent' until he completed his cultivation practice in a suitable 'place'. It was only when he left Mount Lu 廬山 and arrived at Nanyue that the conditions revealed to him by celestial beings were met and he could finally attain sainthood.[626] This account was a confirmation of both the legitimacy of Wang's attainments as well as the primacy of Nanyue as a sacred 'place'. Robson noted that the concept of 'place' in this case was significant insofar as certain sites were believed to be more conducive to positive religious experience, and that different 'places' contributed to different kinds of experience.[627] The scholar-monk Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) and his disciples had no issue with Mount Lu when they settled there in the fifth century,[628] though in the case of Wang Lingyu it simply did not seem to serve his purposes.

In the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan recorded the story of Tanguan 曇光 (c.407–c. 477),[629] a monk who, like Wang Lingyu, initially settled atop the wrong mountain, Mount Zhong 鍾山.

> [He found a] mountain that was lofty and elegant, building himself a small straw hut on one of the peaks. He heard the sound of heavenly music coming from the skies and a voice said: 'This is the Buddha's place, how could you simply plant your vegetable garden here?' [Tan]guan heard this [message] and moved south to Tiantai [Mountain]. Later he made a Buddha image. He spent years [working on it] though in the end, he could not complete it.
> 此山崇麗，乃於峯頂構小草室。空中聞天樂聲曰：此是佛地，如何輒有蔬圃耶。光聞之，南

[626] Robson 2009c: 319.
[627] Robson 2009a: 1356.
[628] For more on Huiyuan and Mount Lu, see Lee 2019. Huiyuan also appears in the *Record of Miracles* when he carries an image of Mañjuśrī into a shrine on Mount Lu (T2106.417b17-19).
[629] Mentioned in *GZ*: T2059.416b03.

移天台。後遂繕造為佛像。積經年稔，終不能成。[630]

Tanguan later settled on Mount Tiantai because spirits revealed to him that Mount Zhong was a 'Buddha-place' which he would only tarnish if he built a hut and tilled the land. Unlike Wang Lingyu's account, there is ultimately no spiritual resolution to Tanguan's story for, once at Tiantai, he simply busied himself until his death by carving an image of the Buddha. It was only later in this narrative, after Tanguan died leaving an incomplete image upon the mountain that another image of the Buddha appeared before the monk Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518). The account describes how the image emerged out of the rock on Mount Tiantai as if to confirm the sacred quality of this place not through religious experience *per se* but through the miraculous discovery of a sacred object from the past. The representation of an image embedded in the cliff suggests to the reader that this mountain in particular must be sacred and that Buddhism—like the image emerging from the rock—must be an integral part of China's landscape—both materially and culturally. These were certainly ideas that authors like Daoxuan were looking to evoke.

The creation of sacred 'place' is not an act of discovery, however, for the making of 'place' is primarily a gradual and social process. The story of Sengyou's discovery of the image on the mountain was only one of many miraculous accounts associated with Tiantai. The mountain's status as a sacred 'place' in the medieval *imaginaire* was in fact the sum of all the lived experiences, the stories, and the Buddhist lore surrounding it. Its supernormal aura was not solely based on the image found in the rock, but was comprised of the many parts in the process of its own making: the act of discovery, the production of lore, the presentation of these stories, the composition and the compilation of the whole, as well as all the other miraculous details that lived on in the records and in people's imaginations. Indeed, the mountain was not itself 'sacred' but was an integral part of the social process of 'place-making' that developed over time, a process informed by the witnessed events and the recorded accounts of local miraculous phenomena.

The evidence of miraculous phenomena via witnessing or hearing/reading the stories of these encounters was central to the Buddhist experience of 'place' in China. In the first fascicle of

[630] T2106.419c19-22.

the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan compiled an item dedicated to 'miscellanea' (*za* 雜) made up of various narratives related to sacred pagodas. One narrative described the travels of an emissary from the state of Wakoku, present-day Japan. The individual travelled to China during the early Tang and, when he was preparing to depart, the monks in the capital asked him about Buddhism in his country.

> [The Chinese monks asked:] '[Buddhist teachings were transmitted from] the valley of obscurity[631] (i.e. India) to your state in the eastern quadrant (Japan). Buddhism [would therefore] have arrived quite late. We do not know [and would like to ask] if Aśoka made it [to your country]?' The emissary answered: 'Written records do not speak of it and do not provide any evidence. To behold [the Buddha's] traces is the proof. What evidence is there? People excavated the earth and they consistently discovered ancient pagodas, finials, and other such suitable traces of the Buddha. Therefore we know that Buddhism has always been [in Japan].'
> 彼國昧谷東隅，佛法晚至。未知已前育王及不。會答云：文字不言，無以承據，驗其事迹，則是所歸。何者，有人開發土地，往往得古塔、露盤，佛諸儀相。故知素有也。[632]

The emissary's statement about Buddhism's place in Wo revolved around the discovery of ancient Buddhist structures and objects associated with King Aśoka. The 'places' related to Buddhist historico-mythical events and the discovery of ancient artefacts had a similar authority for the medieval Chinese.[633] Indeed, the fundamental physicality of 'place' was very important because Buddhist identity and history were intimately associated with sites made sacred by the discovery *in situ* of religious objects and hallowed structures. The example above shows that the emissary confirmed Buddhism's antiquity in the state of Wo by referring to archaeological evidence, concluding that 'Buddhism' had been 'unearthed' in Japan and that the people were therefore witness to its ancient presence. In the previous Mount Tiantai account, the mountain's prestige was bolstered not by Tanguan's visit but by Sengyou's discovery of a sacred image in the bedrock.

These stories drew from a repertoire of Chinese Buddhist cultural references, recurring tropes that appeared in local and historical accounts relating to authenticity. These tropes were also

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[631] That is to say, from the west where the sun sets.

[632] T2106.409b4-11. Also see *FZ*: T2122.588c19-589a1. This passage is also discussed in Kotyk 2021: 367. Kotyk notes that it is possible that this man, perhaps called *Eshō 會承, from Wakoku might have gone on several missions to the Sui and Tang courts during the rule of Jomei Tennō 舒明天皇 (r. 629 – 641).

[633] Speaking to ancient Chinese conceptions of 'place' such as the systems formed in geomancy, John K. Wright describes this appreciation for the natural world as a form of 'geopiety' (Cited in Robson 2009b: 48).

used in accounts related to cult objects and, as we noted in the previous chapter, they could refer to either localised historical figures or to Indian heritage. Anxiety regarding the history of Buddhism's transmission and its overall relevance in China led authors to appeal both to the local and the trans-cultural events that made up the Buddhist experience in the East. As we will see in a later section, the localised accounts usually revolved around the Zhou dynasty as Buddhists appropriated cultural heroes such as Lord Mu of the Zhou 周穆王 (also known as Mu Tianzi 穆天子) and Duke Mu of the Qin 秦穆公. For obvious reasons, the secular histories never mention the ties between these native figures and Buddhism, while historians such as Daoxuan projected Buddhism into China's past by associating various religious sites and objects to these figures, effectively branding their faith as something patently Chinese.

Accounts that related to Indian heritage usually referred to King Aśoka, to the Buddha and his disciples, as well as to the buddhas of the past. It was believed that the Buddha's disciples were active participants in the history of the faith's spread to China. The scriptures state that before dying, the Buddha asked his most trusted disciples to remain in *samsara* to protect the teachings, passages that the Chinese took to mean that his disciples, the *arhats*, were still active. In the *Da aluohan Nantimiduoluo suo shuo fa zhuji* 大阿羅漢難提蜜多羅所說法住記 (*Record on the Abiding of the Law, Explained by the Great Arhat Nandimitra*) translated by Xuanzang in 654, Nandimitra listed sixteen *arhats* who remained in this world. The text claimed that the *arhats* were meant to protect the Dharma beginning in the eon when people's lifespans lasted 60,000 years up until a period of great calamity when people would only live for 10 years. The *arhats* would then go into hiding until calamity passed, after which they would return to the world until the eon when people's lives would increase once more to 70,000 years. At that time, the *arhats* would use their supernormal powers to gather all the Buddha's relics in one pagoda, doing a final act of obeisance to the founder, after which they themselves would attain enlightenment and the Dharma would be extinguished.[634] A passage in the preface to the third fascicle of the *Record of Miracles* reads like

[634] Translated to French in Lévi and Chavannes 1916: 12 f.; Translated to English in de Vissier 1923: 61. In a note at

a pastiche of the literature related to *arhats*:

> The spread of the Dharma within the three continents[635] was made possible by the merit of [*arhats* such as] Piṇḍola[-bhāradvāja].[636] When people lived to be 60,000 [years of age], the virtuous teachings were provided by the *arhats.*[637] [At this time] there are holy monks [e.g. mysterious monkish apparitions, *arhats*, etc.] and holy monasteries, while [auspicious] signs are displayed in the mountains and at sea [i.e. everywhere], such as fragrant smells and the ringing of bells. These things are manifest in the unseen and seen realms.
> 致使三洲聞道，終顯賓頭之功。六萬遐齡，教資羅漢之德。神僧聖寺，陳祥山海之間。香氣[9]鍾聲。相顯幽明之際。[638]

This passage juxtaposes the presence of *arhats* in China with the occurrence of supernormal phenomena related to sacred monasteries inhabited by 'holy monks' in the mountains—a detail that is recorded in none of the translated texts related to the cult of *arhats*. The suggestion is that the mysterious sounding of bells or the encounter with mystical monks and monasteries were possible because of the great *arhats* of India.

The stories related to 'holy monks' were, indeed, a nod to the sages of the past, suggesting that these monks were in fact among the *arhats* that remained after the Buddha's death and that they were living in hidden monasteries peppered across the sacred mountains of China. It was a

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the end of item 12 in the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan provides a somewhat garbled summary of this sequence. He notes that ninety-nine million *arhats* would remain, that they would attain enlightenment when lives would span up to 70,000 years and that the future Buddha Maitreya would arrive when people's lives would span up to 80,000 years (T2106.426a13-18).

635 There are four continents, so the three continents mentioned in this excerpt must be the east, west, and south, excluding the northern continent, Uttarakuru. The inhabitant of Uttarakuru are believed to be elegant and unselfish, though they cannot comprehend the Teaching. The continent we inhabit is to the land of the south, Jambudvīpa.

636 Piṇḍola is one of the Buddha's disciples. In the tradition he is associated with the protection and spread of the Teaching. For more on Piṇḍola in Buddhist literature, see articles by Strong 1979a; Scheid 2019: 532 f..

637 Daoxuan is alluding in this passage of the *Record of Miracles* to the disciples of the Buddha who were charged with protecting his dispensation until the advent of the next Buddha, Maitreya. The term *shenseng* 神僧 used in the text was a blanket term for all extraordinary monks including the legendary disciples of the Buddha that were believed to still be active in the world. For the earliest references in Chinese translated scriptures to the four principal disciples (Mahākāśyapa, Piṇḍola, Rāhula, and Kauṇḍinya) and the Buddha's request that they wait before attaining liberation, see *foshuo mile xiasheng jing* 佛說彌勒下生經: T453.422b13-21; *Zengyi ahan jing* 增壹阿含經 T125.789a3-7; for instances listing Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Subhūti, and Mahākāśyapa, see *Shelifo wen jing* 舍利弗問經 T1465.902a22-25. Another list included Piṇḍola, Kundadhāna, Panthaka, and Vakula (de Vissier 1923: 62). By mentioning Piṇḍola, we might deduce that Daoxuan was referring to a passage in the *Da aluohan Nantimiduoluo suo shuo fa zhuji* 大阿羅漢難提蜜多羅所說法住記 translated in 654 by Xuanzang which listed Piṇḍola as the first of sixteen *arhats* responsible for the protection and the propagation of the Teaching (T2030.13a3-18). Daoxuan provides a rendering of the passage related to the above excerpt in his *Shijia shipu* 釋迦氏譜 (T2041.98b28-c18).

638 T2106.423a21-23.

common trope in the literature of the time that in moments of angst and self-doubt a supernormal being—a holy monk, a spirit, or perhaps a Daoist sage—might appear either in a dream, in a state of meditative concentration, or in the seen realm to help relieve those doubts. Wang Lingyu left Mount Lu for Nanyue when divine beings entreated him to go,[639] the biography of Dao'an 道安 (314–386) recounts how he was visited by Piṇḍola in a dream[640] and Faxian 法顯 (338–424) notes in his travelogue that monks who visited Mahākāśyapa's cave in India had their questions answered by 'holy monks' who disappeared once their doubts had been resolved.[641] Interestingly, the tropes related to mysterious monasteries constitute an inversion of the 'holy monk' motif. Whereas mysterious monks may visit you in times of doubt, it is only when one holds fast to their convictions and their faith that they are allowed to visit the divine monasteries of the holy men and women of the mountains.

Daoxuan's rendition of the famous 'Stone Bridge at Tiantai 天台石橋' account is a good representation of these two tropes. The account tells of a monk during the Eastern Jin (317–420) called Bo Daoyou 帛道猷, better known as Zhu Tanyou 竺曇猷 as he is so named in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*,[642] who travelled to Mount Tiantai to meet the sages. While trekking in the mountains, he came upon a deep chasm and a long stone bridge 'one *chi* wide with moss that covered the sides [making it slippery]'.[643] Bo Daoyou also noticed a large rock on the west end of the bridge blocking his passage.

> At night he rested on the east side of the bridge where he heard sound coming from the monasteries on the west side. There was the sound of chimes and the sound of Sutra recitation! [This provided him with the] conviction to continue [his voyage], making him [eager and] uneasy all night long.
> 夜宿梁東。便聞西寺磬聲經唄唱薩。勇意相續通夕不安。[644]

A disembodied voice addressed Bo Daoyou assuring him that he need not attempt the perilous

[639] Robson 2009c: 144.
[640] *GZ*: T2059.353b18-27; Link 1958: 34 f..
[641] *Foguo ji*: T2085.864a3-4; Translated to French in Drège 2013: 61.
[642] The story of Daoyou is also recounted in the *Gaoseng zhuan* (T2059.396a19-b3). Translated to English in Fong 1958: 15 f.
[643] T2106.423b16.
[644] T2106.423b17-19.

crossing because he would regardless be joining them in ten years' time. He was unmoved by this attempt to send him away and stayed at the east end of the bridge in a makeshift hut for many years. One day he looked across and noticed that the large rock was no longer there. Through practice and patience, his 'trial of devotion', he had moved the boulder that blocked his path—the allegorical obstacle described by Wen Fong as the 'guarded borders between this world and the next'.[645] Daoyou was greeted on the other side by 'holy monks' (*shenseng* 神僧) who invited him to join them for a meal. Having eaten, they told him that it was still not his time, after which he was asked to leave. He continued to live on the mountain and passed away during the Taiyuan 太元 reign period (376–396). The *Record of Miracles* states that people later found his mummified corpse which was 'green in colour and he sat up erect as though alive', a sign of sainthood and a new relic marking the very 'place' of his awakening.[646] It is implied in the text that he had finally gone to join the 'holy monks' across the bridge.

The area around this bridge in Tiantai (near present-day Ningbo) later became the famous seat of the cult of the five hundred *arhats* that so excited the imagination of authors and artists in China and Japan from the Song dynasty onward.[647] It was the subject of many narrative accounts as well as art pieces, such as the painting 'Rock Bridge at Mount Tiantai', a panel produced by the twelfth century painter Zhou Jichang 周季常 that is presently preserved at the Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art, Washington.[648] The appeal of this bridge was noted by the likes of Eisai 榮西 (1141–1215), a Japanese Zen master, who visited Tiantai in the mid-twelfth century.[649] Many centuries later, the British missionary Reverend Joseph Edkins (1823–1905) wrote that the area 'seemed a home for supernatural beings. It is they that cause the unusual appearances of nature.'[650] This area was also of religious significance given that this mountain was the eponymous base of

[645] Fong 1958: 17.
[646] T2106.423b25.
[647] For more on the significance of the stone bridge as well as the cult of *arhats* on visual culture, see de Vissier 1923: 36 f.; Fong 1958.
[648] For more, see Fong 1958 or refer to the Smithsonian's website (https://asia.si.edu/object/F1907.139/).
[649] de Vissier 1923: 37.
[650] Edkins [1880] 2003: 177.

the Tiantai school during the Sui, as well as a sacred centre for the cult of *arhats* in the Song dynasty. There is, indeed, still to this day a bronze shrine at the end of the bridge dedicated to the five hundred *arhats*.[651]

This account of the rock bridge as it appeared in Huijiao's *Biographies* and in Daoxuan's *Record of Miracles* did not explicitly mention *arhats* (*luohan* 羅漢; *yinggong* 應供; lit. worthy of offerings). The early account as recorded by Huijiao—later reused in part by Daoxuan—designated the inhabitants of the monastery in terms such as 'holy monks' (*shenseng*) or *dedaozhe* 得道者 (lit. he who obtained the path), an expression borrowing from Daoism. They made no direct mention of the Buddha's disciples. It would therefore seem that Huijiao based his account on local lore and that, even in Daoxuan's time, a developed cult of the *arhats* had not yet formed on Mount Tiantai. That being said, Daoxuan was certainly aware of the literature related to the cult of *arhats* considering that many of the relevant texts were already in circulation during the fourth century and others were translated by Xuanzang in the seventh century. The proof is that Daoxuan included many passages related to the cult of *arhats* in his own works.[652] Although the cult of *arhats* was certainly present as early as the sixth century, it is in the life of Pu'an 普岸 (770–843) in the *Song Biographies* that we find the earliest reference to a cult dedicated to the five hundred *arhats* on Mount Tiantai, indicating that the cult of *arhats* was properly established by the late Tang dynasty and that Mount Tiantai was one of its primary bases.[653]

Finally, according to Jonathan Z. Smith, 'place' is marked as sacred by a people and a culture. Before being the object of ritual attention, 'place' must be discovered and sacredness must be confirmed through the manifestation of the site's special qualities—or, at least, there must have been a popular story that confirmed its sacred status. As we have seen in this section, 'places' were not inherently sacred for there always needed to be an event or a witness account that confirmed

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[651] Joo 2007.

[652] In another passage, Daoxuan mentions the *arhats* and the various eons (T2106.426a13-18). Again, in the second preface to the third fascicle, Daoxuan quotes from the *Ru dacheng lun* 入大乘論 (T1634), noting that the Buddha left the arhats with the duty of spreading the Teaching (T2106.431a5-11). Also see the reference in the *Shijia shipu* (T2041.98b28-c18).

[653] *SGZ*: T2061.880b21-28.

that ‘this is the place’. The following section sketches out some broad features of the history of Chinese sacred ‘place’ that Daoxuan helped to compose. To draw out this sacred history, the next section will take accounts in the *Record of Miracles* related to the life of a northerner by the name of Liu Sahe 劉薩荷 and the sites he discovered. Subsequently, this chapter will elaborate on Mount Zhongnan’s role in Daoxuan’s life and, more broadly, the place of mountains in the Medieval Chinese *imaginaire*.

Liu Sahe

Liu Sahe was a northerner, possibly of Southern Xiongnu descent, who settled in Cizhou (present-day Shanxi) during the Jin dynasty (260–420). He initially made a living as a hunter, though after a near-death experience and a visit to the Buddhist hells he renounced his livelihood to ordain as a monk, taking on the monastic name Huida 慧達.[654] The account of Sahe’s life, a narrative presented in piecemeal fashion throughout the *Record of Miracles*, tells us that during his near-death experience he was instructed to seek out Aśokan ruins in China.[655] This narrative is of particular interest because, throughout the account of this quest, he relies on signs, auguries, and other supernormal means as he surveys, excavates and preserves these cult objects and religious structures.

There are many source texts related to Liu Sahe that are available to us today. Of all the extant materials, however, it is the *Record of Miracles* that provides the ‘most comprehensive account of this figure’s life, pilgrimage and cultic reception after his death.’[656] This section will elaborate on how this religious figure was important to Daoxuan, who re-envisioned and often dramatised the events in Sahe’s life, developing on a narrative tradition that had by Daoxuan’s

[654] For a brief summary of the biography of Liu Sahe/Huida, see Hureau 2020b; Vetch 1981; For more on Liu Sahe and representations of hell, see Teiser 1988b: 444 f.; On return-from-death narratives in medieval China, see article by Campany 1990.

[655] T2106.404b; See the longer account of Sahe’s voyage to hell in the *Mingxiang ji*: [1911] 1997: 301–4; Translated in Campany 2012b: 148–52. For the various textual references to Liu Sahe in the *Record of Miracles*, see the T2106.404b (Kuaiji Mao *stūpa*); 405b (Changgan Monastery stūpa and relics); 406a (Linzi Aśoka Monastery image and *stūpa* finial); 434c (Cizhou Anren Monastery, review of Liu Sahe’s religious career).

[656] For more on the different versions and recensions of this texts, see Vetch 1984: 137–40; Liu Y. 2003; Campany 2012b: 153.

time already existed for centuries. Not including the preface, the *Record of Miracles* begins and ends with the story of Liu Sahe. The sites attributed to Sahe's expeditions where he discovered objects and ruins are particularly important for our purposes given that these places served as landmarks—both literally and figuratively—for Buddhist authors when defining the boundaries of China's sacred geography

Liu Sahe, if such a man ever did exist, was a traveller and a seeker. The account of Sahe's life did not revolve around conversion, pedagogy, liturgy, or practice, but instead described a monk driven by the single-minded purpose of uncovering ancient Buddhist artefacts. Indeed, he is most succinctly described by Daoxuan as a monk 'seeking out ancient pagodas in places unknown'[657]—the Chinese spiritual archaeologist *par excellence*—and his recorded exploits provided Buddhist historians with sought after physical evidence related to the early transmission of Buddhism. Additionally, for the modern reader these exploits and how they are described in the literature offer many insights into Chinese Buddhist conceptions of 'place' and history.

The supernormal means by which Sahe came to discover religious artefacts were numerous. This quest was from the outset given to him by a supernormal being in the unseen realm. A bodhisattva, possibly Guanshiyin 觀世音, received him in the hell realm and provided him with the locations of various Aśokan ruins. Having returned to the seen realm, these artefacts and places then manifested signs which Liu Sahe could seek out and interpret. For instance, Daoxuan recorded the following account:

> In the middle of the night, [Sahe] suddenly heard a bell chiming beneath the ground. He thus [planted a] sharp stick [into the ground like a] post as a reminder of [the sound's] location. Within three days, a [votive] pagoda containing a relic emerged from the ground [there]. This numinous pagoda's form and adornment was dark-green, and looked like stone—though in reality it was not stone. It measured one *chi* and four *cun* in height and was seven *cun* wide.
> 忽於中夜聞土下鍾聲。即迂記其處，刻木為剎。三日間，忽有寶塔及舍利從地踊出。靈塔相

[657] T2106.405b23. Also see *FZ*: T2122.516c; 585a; 919b-920b; *Liang shu*: 1973: 54.791; *Nan shi*: 1975: 78.1955 f. Some stories in the *Record of Miracles* related to Liu Sahe and his quest for sacred objects include T2106.413c23-414a14 (Wujun, the floating stone images and Aśokan pagodas); 414a26-c18 (Changgan Monastery and the image produced by Aśoka for his daughter. For more on Liu Sahe, see the biography of Liu Xue 劉薛, another name for Liu Sahe, in *Taiping guangji*: 2013: 368.3013. Translation and analysis of the original biography in the *Mingxiang ji*, see item 45 in Campany 2012b: 148–54; 148 n. 412; For French translation and more on Liu Sahe iconography, see Vetch 1981, 1984; H. Wu 1996; For all relevant references to Liu Sahe in the Dunhuang manuscripts, see Chen Z. 1973.

狀青色似石而非石。高一尺四寸，方七寸。[658]

In this excerpt Sahe hears the sound of a bell and consequently discovers a miniature votive *stūpa*.[659] Other such artefacts and 'places' were discovered in Wujun 吳郡 (Jiangsu), Luoyang 落陽 (Henan), Linzi 臨淄 (Shandong), Jianye 建業 (Jiangsu, present-day Nanjing), Maoyin 鄮陰 (Zhejiang), as well as Yizhou 益州 (Sichuan, present-day Chengdu). He also discovered the foundations of a full-sized pagoda in Kuaiji 會稽, Jiangsu Province, at Changgan Monastery 長干寺. In the latter case, Sahe was guided by a light to the foundations of a pagoda containing relics as well as a hair and a fingernail of the Buddha.[660] He discovered these things by interpreting auspicious signs and using the inscrutable spiritual tools of sacred archaeological land surveying. The supernormal nature of these discoveries was crucial for confirming the authenticity of such religious sites. From a narrative standpoint, Sahe's authority as well as the authenticity of the discovered objects were further bolstered by invoking his return-from-death vision as well as the latent Aśokan associations to these places. The final seal of authenticity was placed upon the sites themselves when the stories were compiled and became part of the shared culture of all those that read, heard, and collected these stories.

In the earlier account preserved in Huijiao's *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, the presentation of Liu Sahe's life revolved around his expeditions in the south of China. In Daoxuan's *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*, he picks up where Huijiao left off, quoting a—perhaps fabricated—stele that projects Liu Sahe's exploits into the future. The stele offered a prophecy stating that, while facing a mountain in the Yu Valley, Liu Sahe predicted that after his death an image of the Buddha would emerge from the mountainside. The stele recorded his prophecy: 'Should [the statue's] wondrous appearance be complete [and not missing any parts], then people will be content and the world will be peaceful. However, if some part of the statue is missing then the world will be in turmoil and people will suffer.'[661] As is often the case in miracle narratives, in

[658] T2106.404b19-c3.
[659] For more on Chinese votive *stūpas*, see Durt, Riboud, and Tung-Hun 1985.
[660] T2106.405b24-c2; For more on Liu Sahe and the discovery of images, see Rao 1987.
[661] T2106.417c9-12; *XGZ*: T2060.644c25-645a3; *FZ*: T2122.387a8-12; Translated in H. Wu 1996: 35.

time the prophecy did come true. The so-called Fanhe image 番禾瑞像 emerged from the mountain in Zhengguan 1 (520) though it was missing its head which was interpreted as a sign of Buddhism's decline during the Northern Wei—a period marked by the attempted extirpation of the Buddhist community under Emperor Taiwu. The image's head was later discovered and reunited with its base, after which many manifest auspicious signs appeared. However, in Baoding 1 (561), the head fell once more which was retroactively interpreted as an omen presaging the calamities that ensued in the following decade during the Northern Zhou persecution of Buddhism (574–577).[662]

According to the above-mentioned stele dedicated to Sahe's memory composed by a Liu-Song dynasty (420–479) monk called Dao'an, Liu Sahe fell to his death in Seven *Li* Stone Gorge (*Qili shijian* 七里石澗), shattering all his bones upon impact. His disciples found the mangled corpse, threaded the fragmented bones and placed them upon the extended hands of a Buddhist image. Interestingly, after his death Sahe became a saint in the Fanhe District. His relics and images were venerated for their apotropaic efficacy during periods of difficulty and strife, powers not unlike those attributed to the Fanhe image.[663]

Daoxuan had a particular interest in Liu Sahe and three of his compilations, the *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 (*Geography of the Śākyas*), the *Continued Biography of Eminent Monks,* and the *Record of Miracles*, all added to Sahe's already well-developed biography. In the *Record of Miracles,* Daoxuan described how, after Sahe's death, his remains became objects of cult. In fact, Daoxuan travelled twice to Cizhou 慈州 (present-day Linfen in Shanxi) where he visited a shrine dedicated to Liu Sahe, then venerated as a local saint. Daoxuan had an almost anthropological interest in the rituals surrounding the cult of Sahe, whom the people called the 'Revived Sage He' (*Su He sheng* 蘇何聖), and his likeness which the locals called the 'Barbarian Master Buddha' (*Hushi fo* 胡師佛).[664] Daoxuan writes:

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[662] T2106.417c6-26.
[663] T2106.435a6-9.
[664] Shinohara 1988: 173 f.

> In that rustic village [the images] were erected in every Buddha Hall. The image was called '*Hu fo*' (the 'foreign Buddha'). Today in Anren Monastery shrine the standing image is fully adorned. The local prayer customs vary greatly.
> 故今彼俗村，村佛堂無不立。像名胡佛也。今安仁寺廟立像極嚴。土俗乞願萃者不一。[665]

He paid particular attention to the annual image procession and the religious rituals related to this festival:

> I myself have heard [these facts], and went to visit the place in [Zhenguan 貞觀] 2 (628), [666] studied the [miraculous] traces from first to last until [the facts about the cult of Liu Sahe] were exhausted.
> 余素聞之。親往二年，周遊訪迹，始末斯盡。[667]

In his account of Sahe's life and death, Daoxuan gives a thorough and scholarly explanation for the origins of the distinct practices revolving around the cult of the beatified Liu Sahe, his objects, and the writings attributed to him. Daoxuan notes the supernormal powers associated with the image and how this bolstered the cult:

> In the first month of every year, [the image] is paraded through the village in a palanquin. It stays or goes of its own [volition]. This is not the work of men. If [the image] wants to go out of the village then two men may bear it [easily]. [The image's] brow is relaxed and it has a happy countenance. [This is a sign that] for one year death in the village will be minimal. If [the image] does not wish to move, ten men cannot move it. It then has a furrowed brow and bears a pained expression. [This is a sign that] this year there will certainly be calamity. Thus, commoners to this day have the custom of treating [the image] like nobility, believing it to be a manifestation of Guanshiyin.
> 每年正月輿巡村落，去住自在。不惟人功。欲往彼村兩人可舉。額文則開顏色和悅。其村一歲死衰則少。不欲去者十人不移。額文則合色[＊]貌憂慘。其村一歲必有災障。故俗至今常以為候俗亦以為觀世音者假形化俗。[668]

Although he hailed from the capital, Daoxuan did not betray any 'high-church' tendencies when describing this local cult. By today's standards, his observations seem quite objective, never belittling the practices. Indeed, he even seemed to have a broader interest in recording the stories and practices associated with local cults. In a similar instance, he writes in his *Continued Biographies* of a visit to the mummified remains of a local saint called Daoxiu 道休 near Chang'an. He describes with great curiosity the leathery skin and glacial stare of this mummified

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[665] T2106.434c19-21.
[666] The actual date is unclear in the text. The Zhenguan era is a likely candidate because this was the period when Daoxuan went travelling across China.
[667] T2106.434c27-28.
[668] T2106.434c21-26. Daoxuan originally took some notes on this in his *Geography of the Śākyas* which he elaborated in the *Record of Miracles* (*SF*: T2088.972b14-18.).

relic preserved in a little village.[669] Most interesting is how the instances of Liu Sahe's exploits in the *Record of Miracles* give the reader a glimpse into Daoxuan's compilation style, showing how he incorporated first-hand accounts into his records. In this account as well as in many others, Daoxuan used written sources as well as more contemporary information discovered 'in the field', thus adding to the growing tradition around Sahe.[670]

On the one hand, the example of Sahe is one of the many recorded cases related to the excavation and the discovery of ancient structures and religious objects on Chinese soil. Indeed, The underlying association between Sahe and King Aśoka lent antiquity and authority to the discovered sites, to Sahe himself, and to the excavated artefacts, while the act of developing these associations in writing further cemented their relevance. Liu Sahe's account perfectly encapsulates what Hubert Durt referred to as a form of '*archaeologia sacra*', that is 'sacred archaeology'.[671] Indeed, his story confirmed that with the right—spiritual—toolkit, one could discover the ancient remains of Mauryan pagodas or monasteries, effectively bridging the temporal and spatial gap between ancient India and imperial China through archaeology. On the other hand, Liu Sahe as he is described in the stele is not the spiritual archaeologist described in the miracle tales but the apotheosised saint whose legend—and perilous death—marked the very landscape of northern Shanxi. Daoxuan's lasting contribution to the lore is in his local survey of Sahe's cult which presents a visionary who left his discovered artefacts, his prophecy, as well as his own hallowed remains for future generations—the spiritual archaeologist transforming through death into the objects of cult that he once sought out.[672]

Daoxuan and sacred place

Daoxuan's interest in 'place' manifested as an interest in the history of sacred sites as well as

[669] *XGZ*: T2060.684b15-18. Translated in Benn 2007: 97.
[670] Shinohara 1988: 174.
[671] Durt 1987. Durt 1987.
[672] H. Wu 1996: 35.

religious structures such as monasteries and pagodas. The decade between 630 and 640 were formative years in Daoxuan's life during which he travelled extensively to visit masters as well as holy sites across China. Considering the information provided in his accounts, it would seem he must have kept records and details of his observations while visiting sacred sites that he often inserted into his writings. This was especially true of his *Record of Miracles.* Many of the examples given throughout this thesis were in fact drawn from the comments that Daoxuan provided regarding his own experiences of holy objects and hallowed places.

In Daoxuan's miracle tales, the monasteries, pagodas, and the objects that they contained were part and parcel of the Buddhist proselytising project. Many of the structures that Daoxuan described had antique pedigrees or supernormal associations. Their physical presence in the world provided archaeological evidence that Buddhism was not a new religion in China but an ancient, almost providential, part of the cultural landscape. In the preface to the *Qihuan tujing* 祇洹圖經 (*Jetavana Diagram Sutra*) he writes:

> The foundations of the monasteries and pagodas [of China] originated long ago. Since this present 'good eon' began and all buddhas announced their [imminent] enlightenment, they have guided the four forms of birth[673] and led the three kinds of saints[674] to illumination, guided the five vehicles[675] and initiated them in the one ultimate [Teaching].
> 夫寺塔之基，其源遠矣。自賢劫創啟，諸佛告成。引四生而開三聖，引五乘而會一極。[676]

The mention above of the 'good eon' (*xianjie* 賢劫; Skt. *Bhadra-kalpa*) refers to our present era which is led spiritually by the sixteen *arhats*. In this passage, we see that the mytho-history of the Buddhist proselytising project went hand in glove with the history of its institutions, the 'foundations of the monasteries and pagodas'. The experiences people had of these hallowed structures were central to their encounter with Buddhism, and the lore as well as the stories of

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[673] The four forms of birth are viviparous, oviparous, water-born and metamorphic, or bor through transformation (*huasheng* 化生) (*SHD*: 1937 s.v. 四生).

[674] In this case, *sansheng* probably means the three different kinds of saints: *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *bodhisattva* (*SHD*: 1937 s.v. 三衍)

[675] The five vehicles constitute rebirth among men, rebirth among the gods, rebirth among *śrāvakas*, rebirth among *pratyekabuddh*as, and rebirth among *bodhisattvas*.

[676] *Zhong tianzhu sheweiguo zhihuan situ jing*: T1899.882c14-15; c.f. H. Chen 2007: 57.

these places in turn occupied an important place in the collective memory of the medieval Chinese. Holy sites effectively acted like boundary markers placed upon the landscape, providing the contours of the faith's borders of influence in China's sacred geography.

In the process of compiling the accounts related to many of these monasteries, pagodas and other miraculous objects, Daoxuan often went to visit them, and the *Record of Miracles* is full of his personal observations on the conditions of these sites. [677] As we saw in chapter 4, for instance, he recorded his visit to the abandoned Famen pagoda which he found in ruins.[678] Adopting a traditional literary idiom, he compared his grief at visiting the ruined remains of the ancient pagoda in Fufeng to a romanticised account in the poem 'The Broomcorn Millet Hangs' (*shuli* 黍離) [679] of a visit to the ruins of the Zhou capital.[680] This account is particularly revealing because it represents both Daoxuan's mastery of the Chinese literary idiom as well as his capacity to use this idiom to bolster the sacredness and pedigree of the Famen ruins.

In another instance, Daoxuan visited the Fugan Monastery 福感寺 and Dashi pagoda 大石塔 in Yizhou (present-day Chengdu). The legend tells that supernormal beings sent by King Aśoka gathered the eponymous large stones (*dashi*) from the neighbouring mountains to build foundations for the monastery and pagoda. This became an important centre in the area for rainmaking ceremonies as well as other rites to stave off natural disaster. Daoxuan notes:

> In times of drought and flood, when officials prepare for rainmaking ceremonies, they do so before this pagoda. When one prays there is a response. It manifests 'many signs', therefore it is alternatively

[677] There are at least five examples in the first fascicle of the *Record of Miracles*, including the one developed in the paragraph above, where Daoxuan inserts himself into the text and speaks of visits to different sacred with the express purpose of seeing them. For instance, see T2106.408a3-5; 408a18-20; 409a4-6; 410a1-2. Other instances arise in the first fascicle, but they are often circumstantial. See example of Riyan monastery in the text below.

[678] T2106.406b14-17; For more on Daoxuan's relationship to Famen, see chapter 4. We see a similar example when Daoxuan describes the masterful construction of the Chaohua Monastery's foundations. Though a literal reading would miss the point, he does complement the pagoda by saying: 'if it was not a pagoda manifested by the *cakravartin* king, or a product of divine intervention, who could have laid these foundations?' (T2106.408c6-9).

[679] Daoxuan here uses the term *shuli* 黍離 (the broomcorn millet hangs) to evoke a poem by the same name in the *Shi jing* 詩經 (*Book of Odes*). A lesser preface of Kong Yingda's commentary to the *Book of Odes*, the *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義, explains that this poem laments the subjugation and downfall of the Zhou capital 宗周 (1999: 4.252).

[680] For more on this idiom, refer to the footnote in the translated excerpt above. One is reminded of Percy B. Shelley's poem 'Ozymandias' that tells of the remains of the king's ruined statue in the desert, which stands as a testament to time's supremacy over all human endeavour (1977: 103).

called ‘Fugan’ pagoda. I have once been there and confirm that it is as they say.
旱滂年官人祈雨必於此塔，祈而有應。特有感徵，故又名福感。余曾至焉，誠如所述。[681]

Another account tells how a man on inspection duty in the region just north of Chang’an during the Northern Zhou dynasty (557–581) followed a light to discover a large image of the Buddha. He later found the image’s base at the foot of the otherwise barren hill which he and some villagers reattached to the image. Later this image was presumably kept in the monastery built on those grounds that came to be known as Yuhua Monastery 玉華寺, a secluded haven outside of the bustling capital where Xuanzang famously resided while completing his translation work. Daoxuan was curious about the origin story of this Buddha image, travelling to the place where they allegedly discovered it. He writes:

I went to go see the place [where the image was excavated] and saw that no one lived there and there were no large stones and no iron ore. How else could [the image] have appeared there but by the supernormal means used by King Aśoka [to distribute relics far and wide]. This place has therefore not been changed during the Tang.
討尋其本處非人住。又無大石及以鐵礦。豈非育王之神力所降感乎。大唐因之不改。[682]

According to Daoxuan this was a site touched by Aśoka, making it hallowed ground. His curiosity regarding the origins of this image and the barren hill where it appeared, however, were not satisfied by his visit. He would later elaborate on the original monastery ground’s true origins in a vision. He writes in his interviews with the spirits:

I asked [the spirit]: ‘Regarding the unearthed image at Xianji Monastery [which includes Yuhua] in Fangzhou: when was it made?’ The spirit answered: ‘That image was produced at the time of Duke Mu of the Qin (r. 659–621 BCE). The place where the image was discovered was where Lord Mu of the Zhou (r. c. 976–c. 922 BCE) had [previously] constructed a monastery. After the Buddha passed away, Aśoka’s fourth daughter constructed an image and a pagoda, sending them as offerings [to the monastery]. At that time [in the Zhou kingdom] there was a ‘non-returner’ residing [at this monastery]. The Qin minister You Yu held this individual in high esteem. In the past, during the time of the Kāśyapa Buddha, there was also a monastery erected [at the place where the image was excavated]. It was this novice, [the ‘non-returner’], that later reconstructed Xianji Monastery. Basing themselves on its original name, [during the Sui dynasty] they [put ‘Xianji’] on the plaque in front of the monastery.
又問：《坊州顯際寺山出古像者，何代所立。》 答云： 《像是秦穆公所造，像出是周穆王造寺處也。佛去世後，育王第四女又造像塔，於此供養。于時此寺有一三果人住中，秦相由余

[681] T2106.408a18-20.
[682] T2106.420c15-17.

所奉敬。往者迦葉佛時，亦於此立寺。是彼沙彌顯際造也。仍其本名，以為寺額。》[683]

The image had remained buried by the original monastery grounds on the hill and then it was moved to Xianji/Yuhua Monastery. The subject of 'place' informs this exchange between Daoxuan and his celestial interlocutor, while the spirit's answers provide a virtual smorgasbord of medieval Chinese rationales relating to Buddhist 'place'. Indeed, the spirit's answers make for an interesting case study of the various cultural references used by monks like Daoxuan to confirm the legitimacy of such hallowed places. One particular legitimation strategy used in the above passage was the appeal to visionary experience and revelation. The contents of this revelation in turn read almost like a list of culturally accepted narrative legitimation strategies. We note first the claim that Lord Mu as well as Duke Mu, two exalted figures of China's past, supported Buddhism. The spirit then alludes to the fact that novice monks (*shami* 沙彌) were active in China in the ninth century BCE. The reference to Aśoka seems to have also been forcefully wedged into this revelation in the form of an image and a votive pagoda produced at the behest of the Mauryan king's daughter. The passage is ambiguous and it is unclear exactly how these objects are related to the monastery in China, though the appeal to Aśoka effectively acts as yet another bid for authenticity. Finally, perhaps the most extravagant claim is that the first iteration of that monastery was founded by Kāśyapa—the Buddha that lived prior to Siddhārtha Gautama, founder of Buddhism.

We see in the spirit's answer an interesting shift away from a narrative driven by Indian origin to one interested in localised prestige. The spirit first claims that the place where the 'image was excavated' (*xiangchu* 像出) was the base of a monastery founded by Lord Mu of the Zhou in the ninth century before our common era. This is over half a millennium earlier than Daoxuan's claim in the *Record of Miracles* that this site was a product of Aśoka's great relic and pagoda distribution. That being said, the other details related to Kāśyapa Buddha and Aśoka are secondary to the Chinese origins of the monastery. Indeed, even the monk, a 'person who has attained the third fruit' (*sanguo ren* 三果人) and presumably a westerner, is qualified by his relationship to a historical Chinese figure, namely Lord Mu's vassal You Yu 由余 whom the passage notes held

[683] T2106.405c24-26.

the novice in high esteem.

Daoxuan was effectively putting the accent on locality in his miracle tales, ascribing the same pedigree to accounts of the Chinese encounter with Buddhism as he did to Indian origin stories. In the *Record of Miracles*, Buddhism was presented as an integral part of Chinese landscape and culture, and monasteries as well as pagodas were archaeological proof of this. There was, moreover, a hierarchy of sacredness based on antiquity among the structures that he described. For example, Changgan Monastery was associated with Aśoka and, according to Daoxuan, its ruins were still in Jiangning 江寧 (present-day Nanjing). By the early Tang the complex had been abandoned, the lot was overgrown and left to the wild beasts that now protected it. While Daoxuan was residing at Chongyi Monastery 崇義寺 in the capital, they excavated the relics in the south and brought them to Chongyi. He witnessed the interment of the relics at Chongyi, noting that his monastery was newly established making it less prestigious than Changgan. Daoxuan does, however, state that by means of relic translation some prestige from the southern monastery had been moved north to the new monastery in Chang'an.

> The ancient *stūpa* in Jiangnan [Changgan Monastery] produced marvels. The [marvels at Chongyi Monastery] do not manifest as much [as at Changgan Monastery]. This is why I record the two cases of Changgan and Chongyi. As the years and months go by, later generations may not know the details [about Changgan]. Therefore, I have put together this record to present [the details of] their affinity.
> 然江南古塔猶有神異。崇義所流，蓋蔑如也。故兩述之矣。但年歲綿遠，後人莫測。略編斯紀，以顯厥緣云。[684]

He recorded the details of the ancient Aśokan pagoda in Changgan because of its impressive manifest miracles, while those occurrences that took place at Chongyi, which he noted were fewer in number, were possible because of the prestige ritually transferred from the southern monastery. Shinohara argued that the cultural divide between north and south played an important role in the development of the cult of miraculous objects and structures. Buddhist religious culture flourished much later in the north than it did in the south, so that northern Buddhists and institutions effectively had to prove their mettle. It was thus crucial for authors such as Daoxuan to 'illustrate dramatically the importance of a new temple as the miraculously chosen home of an especially

[684] T2106.406a14-17; For a different reading of this passage, see Huang 1998: 495.

powerful [cult object.]'[685] Therefore, Daoxuan had to confirm the relevance of Chongyi by emphasising that prestige, through the ritualised translation of cult objects, had been transferred from the hallowed site at Changgan to the new 'place' in the capital. Locality was, indeed, an important factor in settling the miraculous nature of 'place' and cult objects, especially when that locality was associated with an important figure such as Aśoka or past Chinese cultural heroes. By localising and recording these events in this way, Daoxuan was actively bolstering the prestige of China's many monasteries and pagodas.

Zhongnan Mountain range

The Zhongnan mountain range 終南山, just fifty kilometres southeast of present-day Xi'an, is part of a larger chain of mountains known as the Qinling 秦嶺 mountain ranges, or the Southern Mountains 南山. This range sprawling from the southeastern border to the heart of present-day Shaanxi has long been considered holy by Daoists and Buddhists alike. Indeed, its place in Chinese mytho-history alone made it a fixture among the recognised sacred mountains of China. Daoxuan also incorporates these legends into the *Record of Miracles* when he alludes to the traditional account of the Great Flood which led to the creation of the Qinling ranges, also known as Taiyi 太一, by the Great Spirit (*juling daren* 巨靈大人) Qin Honghai:

> In the past, the Taiyi ranges were unbroken, reaching [all the way to] Mount Wangwu in the Taihang mountains (on the borders of present-day Hebei and Shanxi). [During the Great Flood] the Bailu river led to a body of water called Shaohai [a 'lesser sea'].[686] The Great Spirit Qin Honghai worried that the waters [of the Yellow River would become] coarse, so he grabbed on to Mount Taihua [also known as Mount Hua] with his left palm and trampled [the base of] Mount Zhongtiao with his right foot. The Taiyi mountain range was thus broken up and the water came forth from the ground with the mountains ascending alongside it. The range still bears its original name [of Taiyi].[687]
> 昔太一未分，山連太行王屋。白鹿河水停於此川，號為少海，及巨靈大人秦洪海者，患水浩蕩，以左掌托太華，右足蹋中條。太一為之裂，河通地出山遂高顯，仍本號焉。[688]

[685] Shinohara 1998b: 163.

[686] The *Fayuan zhulin* calls it Mountain Sea (*Shanhai* 山海), which would make more sense in this context. I have, for reasons of consistency, decided to keep the original.

[687] Tradition claims that Mount Hua was originally one whole mountain blocking the Yellow River. The god of the Yellow River, here called the Great Spirit 巨靈, split the mountain with his hands and kicked the base loose, allowing a rift in the rock letting the water through (Knechtges and Mair 2005: 210 n.12).

[688] T2106.425b8-12. For more on the Great Flood, the Great Yu, and the founding of the Xia dynasty, see Birrell 1993: 146 ff.; L. Yang 2008: 74.

Daoxuan also quotes from a famous poem by Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139), the 'Rhapsody on the Western Capital',[689] which reads:

> [In this place the Giant Spirit, exerting great force,] reached high with his hands and kicked far with his legs, thereby allowing the winding Yellow River to flow through.
> 高掌遠蹠，以流河曲者，是也。[690]

In the medieval Chinese *imaginaire*, Zhongnan was a mountain shrouded in legend and mystery, a 'place' that belonged as much to the people's geographical understanding as it did to their cultural appreciation of the landscape's origins.

Throughout his life, Daoxuan would spend much time on Zhongnan and he knew the mountain well, showing great erudition with regard to its geography, its mythology and its ancient landmarks. In his account of Famen Monastery, for instance, he dedicates a large part of the narrative to a neighbouring water source called Phoenix Spring (*fengquan* 鳳泉):

> [Phoenix] Spring is about twenty *li* northwest [of the pagoda]. It is on the south side of Qi Mountain, and is prominent as it stands at a great height. [Tradition holds that] during the reign of Emperor Wen of the Zhou, the young phoenix sang on Mount Qi.[691] This [spring] is the place of which I speak. The young phoenix drank of the water [from the spring]. Therefore, it is called Phoenix Spring. Also, flying south it alighted on the north side of the Zhongnan [mountain] range. For this reason, at the foot of Weinan Mountain, there is also a Phoenix Spring (*fengquan*). The place we today call Fengzhou, was, in ancient times, Hechi Prefecture. Accounts regarding this phoenix are countless.
> 泉在岐山之陽，極高顯。即周文時，鸑鷟鳴於岐山，斯地是也。飲此泉水故號鳳泉。又南飛，至終南之陰。故渭南山下亦有鳳泉。又西南飛，越山至于河池。今所謂鳳州，古河池郡是也。不可窮鳳之始末。[692]

Although the spring itself had no relationship to Buddhist saints or persons, he provided background information regarding traditional and local lore associated with this site. This was done, of course, with a certain Buddhist flair. After providing the general lore related to the area

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[689] This rhapsody in honour of Chang'an was one of two such works, of which the second honoured Luoyang, the eastern capital during the Han dynasty. These rhapsodies were composed in emulation of Ban Gu's *Liangdu fu* 兩都賦. For more on Zhang Heng, see Knechtges and Mair 2005; de Crespigny 2007: 1049 ff.

[690] T2106.425b12-13. Translation taken from Knechtges and Mair 2005: 191. For a similar myth related to the Nanyue peaks, see Robson 2009c: 98.

[691] This is an allusion to the Zhou dynasty, supposed halcyon days of Chinese culture. This passage most likely refers to a similar passage in the *Guo yu* 國語: 'At the height of the Zhou dynasty, the phoenix [used to] sing in the Qishan [range]' (2006: 1.10f.).

[692] T2106.406b9-14.

(origins of Mount Qi, ancient association to a phoenix) he noted the pagoda's proximity to the spring in an obvious bid to further bolster the Buddhist structure's legitimacy and importance.

There were many such structures and spaces with meaning anchored in myth found across the Zhongnan range. This mountain was not the exclusive stomping ground of mythical creatures and Buddhists for the sprawling range and its lore was shared by members of various religious denominations. For Daoists, the Han valley pass 涵谷 on the eastern edge of the Zhongnan range was believed to be the site where Laozi, who was leaving his homeland to travel west and beyond, transmitted the *Daode jing* 道德經 to the guardian of the pass, Yin Xi 尹喜.[693] For this reason, Zhongnan became an important Daoist area dedicated to the imperial cult. Such stories and myths proliferated in and around Zhongnan so that in time this mountain came to be inhabited by many monastics, literati recluses, and Daoist hermits, a phenomenon that remains true to this day.[694]

Zhongnan became an important mountain not only because of its associations to the miraculous, or because of the monasteries and temples built upon it, or the revered hermits—Daoists, Buddhists, and others—that lived there, but also because of its proximity to the capital. Even the cultic standing of the Han Valley, purported site where Laozi transmitted his great Daoist classic, paled in comparison to the Daoist Louguan Temple 樓觀 which was also on Mount Zhongnan at a location that was more accessible from the capital. Additionally, in Tang political culture Zhongnan was considered a launching pad for those hoping to lead fruitful careers in officialdom.[695] It was common practice for members of the intelligentsia to leave public life, becoming 'mountain hermits' for a time—an acceptable practice in medieval Chinese politics—while simultaneously benefiting from the public visibility afforded by Zhongnan's proximity to the city. In fact, so many literati and functionaries used the mountain as a stepping-stone for their

[693] The early biographies of Laozi, such as the one that appears in the *Shiji* 史記, do not mention the name of the location where Laozi encountered Yin Xi. However, by the later Han the site of the text's transmission had retroactively been located in Taolin 桃林 in the easter quadrant of Zhongnan (Benn 2012: 71).

[694] For a modern-day representation of the mountain recluses of Zhongnan, see the movie by Edward A. Burger called 'Amongst White Clouds' (2005).

[695] Benn 2012: 71. This same phenomenon has also been studied in relation to fourth-century China officialdom when, it has been argued, the refusal of government appointment as well as the public act of becoming a mountain recluse were seen as behaviour that bolstered moral authority, rather than diminish it (Holcombe 1989: 93 f.).

political careers that reclusion there was referred to by some as a 'shortcut to public life'. James Benn therefore noted that 'the sacredness of Zhongnan shan was not so much dependent on it being a remote and mysterious site as it was on it being a nearby and well-publicised one.'[696]

As sites of both wonder and danger, mountains played important roles in Chinese religious belief and imperial ritual.[697] People built monasteries on Mount Zhongnan—as well as other ritual and official structures—according to loose 'blueprints' informed by pre-existing local understandings of the sacred. That being said, there was variance in the conceptualisation of sacred geography among the different traditions. In Daoist accounts, for instance, this was the very 'place' where Laozi was divinised as Lord Lao—a case not of human endeavour but of apotheosis. To authors like Daoxuan, however, this was a holy mountain at a very human scale and he accordingly provided many accounts related to individual monks or laypeople and their encounters of the mystical pagodas, monasteries, and monastics of that region. For instance, he records the following account of Zhulin Monastery 竹林寺 on Mount Zhongnan.

> South of the Ziwu pass (in Zhongnan mountain range south of Chang'an) in the great Qinling mountain range, there was Zhulin Monastery. In the early Zhenguan period, there were men walking on the mountain gathering honey. [They] heard a bell ring and went to [the source of the sound]. There [they discovered] two temple halls with people living inside. There must have been two *qing* (hectares) of tall bamboo forest around it. He cut two stalks of bamboo and filled them with honey, of which there was around two *dou*. Two people then carried [the bamboo stalks filled with honey] down to the path across the great Qin garrison where they told the sentinels everything [they had seen]. The distance from the bamboo [grove] to this [garrison] was around fifty *li*. The garrison officer wanted to use this tall bamboo and was determined to forcefully appropriate some. Relying on what he had been told, [the garrison officer] sent people to investigate. They went through a ravine filled with small bamboo stalks and arrived at the foot of a steep bank. [They found] a chain around three *zhang* long. The sentinels followed the links [of the chain] arriving at a large prison. Above it were two large predators upon the bank that tilted down their heads [menacingly] and roared [at them]. The people were scared and doubled back. Later, ten people were sent to seek out [the grove], but there was torrential rain and they returned. The monk Senggui of Wuzhen Monastery in Lantian had lived in the mountains in his youth. He heard [of this grove] and went to the ravine of small bamboo. He climbed to the north and saw the peak, then lost his way and had to return. He always believed the story [of this lost monastery] to be true. This Zhulin Monastery was [presumably] around fifty *li* from the [Ziwu] pass.
> 子午關南大秦嶺竹林寺者。貞觀初採蜜人山行，聞鍾聲尋而至焉。寺舍二間，有人住處。傍

[696] Benn 2012: 68.

[697] For a more comprehensive study of mountains in Chinese culture, see the book on Mount Nanyue by Robson 2009c.

大竹林可有二頃。其人斷二節竹以盛汁蜜，可得五斗許。兩人負下尋路而至大秦戍，具告防人。竹林至此可十五里，戍主利其大竹，將往伐取。遣人依言往覓。過小竹谷達于崖下，有鐵鎖長三丈許。防人曳鎖掣之大牢。上有二大虫，據崖頭向下大呼。其人怖急返走。又將十人重尋值大洪雨便返。藍田悟真寺僧歸真。少小山栖聞之，便往至小竹谷。北上望崖失道而歸，常以為言真云。此竹林至關，可十五許里。[698]

In another instance, a woodcutter encountered a holy monk in the Zhe Valley of Mount Zhongnan. The mysterious monk asked the woodcutter to help him carry a package to a monastery called Zonglü Monastery, east of Juming in the valley. Upon arrival, the woodcutter was given a boon by a resident monk on the condition that he never reveal the secret of their encounter to anyone. The monk provided that every day the woodcutter would find rice cakes hidden away for him and his wife near his worksite. When the woodcutter made the mistake of telling his wife where the rice cakes came from, he suddenly lost his voice and remained mute until just before his death when he once again encountered monks from the monastery who finally released him. The story continues.

> Today, those that enter the mountain and approach the vicinity of the crest at Juming always hear the sound of bells. They also see holy monks. Recently, a monk heard the bell and saw another [mysterious] monk entering the valley. He thought that perhaps [this monk] was from Zonglü Monastery and asked: 'Worthy one! Are you a monk from Zonglü Monastery?' [This monk] answered: 'I am, do you desire to follow this Worthy One?' To which the first monk answered: 'Let us go together.' [Walking along, the first monk] could only hear the whistling of the wind in his ear and fretful thoughts arose. He wondered: 'How [can I be sure] he is a Sage? He might bring me deep into the mountain to make me trip [and die].' As these doubts arose in his mind, the monk [from Zonglü Monastery] who was walking ahead disappeared. The first monk regretted [that he had doubted the other monk]. [Afterwards] he returned to the mouth of this valley three times in as many days, after which he became a hermit, building a sanctuary where he could wait for the [monks from Zonglü Monastery]. The sanctuary is still there, though we do not know what happened to the monk.
>
> 今入山者，至炬明額側，常聞鍾聲，亦往往見異僧。近有一僧聞之，遇見入谷(–)[699]僧。疑是楖櫚寺。問云: "大德不是楖櫚寺僧不。"曰： "是。欲隨大德去得不。"曰："可相隨來。"但聞耳邊颼颼風聲,至急心思惟曰: "此何必是聖。或入深山躓頓我[1]也。"竊生念時前僧便失。懊恨之甚。返迴三日方達谷口。乃於避世堡立精舍以候之。精舍見在。其僧不知所終。[700]

Such accounts describe a mountain shrouded in mystery that is inhabited by holy monks residing in monasteries that are not of this world. The monks disappear almost as soon as they appear, while

[698] T2106.425b24-c6. This item also appears in the *FZ*: T2122.596c16-27.

[699] Reading after Song corrections. Deleted redundant *jian* 見.

[700] This story also appears in *FZ*: T2122.597a9-24.

the monasteries entice travellers with the distant ringing of bells, materialising only for those with the resolve and the spiritual attainments to obtain them—as we saw in the account of Bo Daoyou on Mount Tiantai as well as the monk on Zhongnan who built a sanctuary to await the sages. Zhongnan was presented as the abode of the sages who resided in a realm accessible only to those with faith and resolve.

Although these accounts take place in the seen realm, Daoxuan did sometimes leave China for the 'non-localised' realms of the Buddhist cosmos by including various narratives in his *Record of Miracles* related to superhuman figures of the Buddhist pantheon such as bodhisattvas and *arhats*. That being said, in his narratives he always described the encounter with the unseen realm from the perspective of the human agents. He was, after all, writing a history and not a treatise on Buddhist cosmology. As mentioned in a previous section, the Buddha's disciples were believed to still be active in this world, preaching and protecting the teachings as ordered by their master before his death. Indeed, the reference above to 'sages' (*sheng* 聖), another word for a person who is enlightened or an *arhat* (*yinggong* 應供; *luohan* 羅漢), may well have been drawing on this belief. In an earlier work, the *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志, Daoxuan claimed Zhongnan was inhabited by the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. He interpreted a scriptural passage in the translated *Flower Garland Sutra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經)[701] related to Mañjuśrī's abode on a mountain by the name of Mount Qingliang 清涼山, noting that the bodhisattva gave a sermon to five hundred enlightened beings on none other than Mount Zhongnan.[702] In this instance, Daoxuan was effectively changing, or to use Jonathan Z. Smith's terminology 'transposing',[703] Mañjuśrī's holy abode in India to a new one in China. This 'transposition' to Zhongnan would, however, later be altered and the *Record of Miracles* provided a more conventional interpretation of the passage out of the *Flower Garland*

[701] See *Huayan jing*: T279.241b20-23.
[702] *SF*: T2088.970b24-29. I am indebted to Janine Nicol for pointing out this discrepancy to me and for sharing with me an early version of her contribution to the volume *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* (2022). For more on Daoxuan, Mañjuśrī and Zhongnan, see Nicol 2022: 210 f. For more on the process in medieval China of transposing sacred place to a new locale, what James Robson calls the process of 'appropriative mythic history', see Robson 2009c: 103.
[703] J. Z. Smith 1999; cited in Robson 2009a: 1358.

Sutra, namely that Mañjuśrī did not reside on Zhongnan but on Mount Wutai 五台山.[704]

In another instance Daoxuan recorded that the Buddha's disciple Mahākāśyapa resided in a hidden cave somewhere on Zhongnan.[705] Mahākāśyapa was known in East Asian Buddhism as foremost among the Buddha's disciples. He was also, in one iteration of the cult of *arhats*, the head of the five hundred sages active in our world. There was already a cave in India associated with Mahākāśyapa on Mount Kukkutapāda (*jizu shan* 雞足山), as described in Faxian's 法顯 (338–424) travelogue. Faxian recounted that the Buddha's disciple was still sitting there in meditative equipoise waiting for the arrival of the future Buddha Maitreya in the final age of the Dharma.[706] In the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan did not at first directly allude to the presence of Mahākāśyapa on Zhongnan as he recounted the story of how a mysterious cache of ancient religious objects were discovered by a group of woodcutters in a cave in the Ku Valley. In the same account, he mentions that it was believed the future Buddha Maitreya would appear in the new era to preach at Zhongnan, an indirect reference to Mahākāśyapa, the 'placeholder' *arhat* waiting for the future Buddha.[707] It was in fact in his recorded visions that Daoxuan confirmed the association between Zhongnan and Mahākāśyapa, for it was Daoxuan's celestial interlocutor who confirmed that the cave temple as well as the objects therein belonged to the *arhat*.[708] By means of his vision, Daoxuan 'transposed' the recorded location of Mahākāśyapa's seat in India to a mysterious mountain cave on Zhongnan. In the narrative, the cave conveniently disappeared when people went looking for it once more, finding only a forest filled with calabash gourds—second namesake of the Ku Valley, also known as the Calabash Valley (*hulu gu* 葫蘆谷). Such stories would certainly have added to the mystique and allure of the place, though there is no other

[704] For more on Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī, see Birnbaum 1986, 1989; Stevenson 1996; Lin 2014; W.-S. Chou 2018; Andrews, Chen, and Kuan 2020.
[705] Benn 2012: 75. See *LGZ*: T1898.878b28-c1; *LGL*: T2107.438c17-27; *FZ*: T2122.394c28-395a13.
[706] *Foguo ji*: T2085.863c27-864a1.
[707] T2106.426a12; T2122.597a25-b4.
[708] *LGL*: T2107.438c17-27; *LGZ*: T1898.878b28-c1; *FZ*: T2122.397a3-4. The *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* and the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* refer to Dacang in the Ku Valley, Mount Zhongnan (*Nanshan Kugu Dacang* 南山庫谷大藏), while the *Fayuan zhulin* and the *Record of Miracles* have the name Tiancang 天藏.

evidence from the Tang onward that Mount Zhongnan was popularly believed to be the seat of the Buddha's disciple, or indeed the future site of Maitreya's final sermon. Regardless, in Daoxuan's account, the presence of these mysterious artefacts and structures on Zhongnan implied that these holy places predated King Aśoka's relic distribution, further bolstering the Buddhist claim to antiquity and authenticity on Zhongnan.

In the *Record of Miracles*, four of the twelve items related to holy monasteries took place at Zhongnan. Drawing from his immense knowledge of the mountain and its history, Daoxuan was retrofitting elements of Buddhist myth onto the geography of this place, claiming the residence of bodhisattvas, the appearance of mysterious monks, the discovery of ancient structures as well as religious objects which he proposed would have belonged to disciples from the time of the Buddha. Benn wrote that unlike the providential Daoist accounts of Laozi's departure and later apotheosis as Lord Lao on Zhongnan, Buddhist authors defined the sacred on Zhongnan as human affairs unfolding on the backdrop of 'the most heroic dramas of the Mahāyāna literature adapted to local tastes and resources.'[709] We have seen in this section how Daoxuan's accounts teased apart the cultural layers of this 'place' to present a core that was at once Chinese and Buddhist: the hallowed mountain where the ancient phoenix, symbol of imperial China, had once rested; the home of sages with supernormal powers; and finally the abode of Mahākāśyapa who awaits the arrival of Maitreya, harbinger of the Dharma's extinction.[710]

Daoxuan travelled extensively during his lifetime, though the two places where he spent the most time were Chang'an and Zhongnan. He spent much of his monastic career there and it was on Mount Zhongnan that he died. The mountain was his sanctuary away from the bustling capital and he completed many of his works while residing either at Baiquan Monastery 白泉寺, also known as Fengde Monastery 豐德寺, and Jingye Monastery 靜業寺.[711] This was also, so to speak, Daoxuan's own sacred 'place'. In his Song dynasty biography, Zanning records an encounter between Daoxuan and a spirit on Zhongnan who suggests that Daoxuan seek out Jingye

[709] Benn 2012: 75.
[710] For more on Maitreya and the latter days of the Dharma in Tang China, see Sen 2003: 86 f.
[711] Wang Y. 2017: 45.

Monastery near the village of Qingguan 清官村 so that he might complete his practice.[712] Just as the Daoist Wang Lingyu could only attain immortality on Mount Nanyue, Mount Zhongnan was prophesied as the site of Daoxuan's own spiritual completion. Zhongnan was also the 'place' where he had his visionary encounter with the spirits who not only answered his nagging questions, but also revealed entire scripture to him, as well as information on the teachings, monastic discipline and rites of ordination. He died at Jingye Monastery which remains an active community to this day with a pagoda they claim contains Daoxuan's relics. It would seem that, much like the northerner Liu Sahe before him, when Daoxuan died he became yet another object of veneration among the myriad cult objects that he had devoted his life to listing and promoting, marking the landscape of the mountain where he spent most of his years with a final physical monument dedicated to his memory.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has explored Daoxuan's interest in sacred space and in the social as well as historical construction of 'place'. We noted that Daoxuan had a particular affinity for Mount Zhongnan, his home for many years where he would read, write, and practise in this peaceful haven away from the bustling capital of Chang'an. This mountain range was especially important for it was revealed to him that Mount Zhongnan could provide him with the ideal environment to complete his cultivation practice. Daoxuan was clearly invested not only in Mount Zhongnan but in all the known holy Buddhist sites of China. His portrayals of sacred place described the spaces themselves—the geography, the flora, the fauna, the landmarks, the structures—and their respective lore as they related to antiquity as well as to the experience of the sacred. The accounts of the monasteries and pagodas related to Liu Sahe recount how he used his powers of spiritual intuition to divine the location of these ancient Aśokan ruins. In another instance, Daoxuan drew on the scriptures to describe the ancient power of Mahākāśyapa and the *arhats* who still resided in

[712] T2061.790b27-28.

monasteries hidden away in the mountains. The sacred quality of these places was inextricably tied to the events that served as evidence of their power and importance. For Daoxuan these places acted as bridges between the seen and the unseen realm, drawing their power from supernormal agents such as the *arhats* that were still active in the world and on the miracles that had manifested in the past and left traces of their power imprinted on the landscape.

The points of convergence for many of these miracles were the structures devoted to the Buddhist faith: monasteries and pagodas. One of the main functions of monasteries and pagoda was to serve as vessels to house and honour relics and images. As such, the localised and static nature of religious structures made them fixed sacred points that drew in believers and pilgrims from all around.[713] Monasteries and pagodas were central objects of reverence, serving the religious and devotional purposes of monks and lay people alike.[714] Taking into account the portents these structures exhibited, rulers often constructed or restored pagodas and monasteries for both devotional and political purposes, thus further marking the Chinese landscape with Buddhist centres of cult. These structures were in many ways the commemorative landmarks that helped to chart the sacred map of Buddhist China. Indeed, the discovery of cult objects or ancient Aśokan pagodas helped legitimise claims to an imagined history of religious exchange between ancient China and Buddhist India. The *topos* of Aśokan relic distribution ultimately served this purpose as a flexible narrative employing relics, images, monasteries as well as pagodas, allowing for Chinese believers to go beyond the spatiotemporal boundaries between their present localised existence to an alternate non-localised Buddhist reality. At the same time, China's cultural heroes were also being enlisted in the Buddhist proselytising project as authors such as Daoxuan cast their faith back into mythology and into the annals of Chinese history.

In his book *To Take Place*, Jonathan Z. Smith reflects on the medieval Christian experience of the holy city of Jerusalem that, because of 'schism and conquest', had become inaccessible to

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[713] Ray [1994] 1999: 324.

[714] Bareau 1962: 249; Hirakawa 1963: 57–106; 338; Durt 1983: 1223–41; Snodgrass 1985; Deeg 2011; Interestingly, s*tūpas* later came to occupy roles that early Buddhists would certainly not have expected in their time. For example, *stūpas* were often used in China for geomantic purposes. Indeed, the form of the *stūpa* structure was considered an effective 'stabiliser' in certain landscapes (Kieschnick 2003: 44, n. 63).

pilgrims and other Christian travellers. He argued that during this period, the experience of 'Jerusalem' left the realm of spatial experience to be transformed into a temporal encounter with the city through narratives that were passed on in church throughout the year. He said that it was 'through an orderly progression through the Christian year, by encountering the *loci* of appropriate Scripture […] that memorialisation occurred.'[715] By the Tang dynasty, China had seen its fair share of war, and the Buddhist community had weathered many persecutions and attacks on their institutions. The structures that they built were only as resistant as the materials that made them up. Daoxuan lamented the ephemeral nature of man-made constructions and, on more than one occasion in the *Record of Miracles,* described the overgrown and unkempt sites of ancient Buddhist ruins. This experience informs yet another important aspect of 'place', namely that a place is often outlived by its stories. Ancient Aśokan pagodas or mystical monasteries were known by their accounts as presented in texts, maps, or in some ruined vestiges left behind.[716] The majority of people in China would never have travelled to the places described in Daoxuan's miracle tales, only knowing about certain local sites because of these recorded accounts. As James Robson put it with regard to the Buddhist 'colonisation' of China: '[Buddhacisation] both involved the conversion of time (history) as much as it did a focus on space and the hearts and minds of the people.' As such, the narratives regarding cult objects and structures compiled by Daoxuan spoke both to the local history of secular China as well as to a non-localised (*utopic*) and universal history of Buddhism that went 'beyond the secular historian's grasp'.[717] In this sense, Daoxuan, as both a traveller and a scholiast, was tracing out the boundaries in his miracle tale compilation of those 'places' where the seen realm met with the unseen realm, defining as best as he could the Buddhist sacred geography of the Tang for all the amateurs and historians that followed him.

[715] J. Z. Smith 1987: 117.
[716] Robson 2009c: 90.
[717] Kieschnick 2003: 33 f.

Conclusion

Summary

In this conclusion, I will summarise the arguments made throughout this thesis regarding Daoxuan's personal and narrative encounter with the miraculous. This thesis has argued how the *Record of Miracles* was Daoxuan's ode to the Buddhist miracles of China's past and how his own encounters with the supernormal affected his views on history, authenticity and place. Part 1 of this thesis was comprised of three chapters related to the socio-historical context that influenced the composition of the *Record of Miracles*. These were descriptive chapters surveying some terminology used in the study of Chinese Buddhism, the important textual traditions that informed Daoxuan's writings, as well as the key historical—and mythological—events that defined this Tang monk and his times.

Chapter 1 explored the language that we use in religious studies to speak about supernormal phenomena and its importance and relevance in the study of Eastern religions. We looked at the problem of translating emic medieval Chinese understandings of the miraculous into English, focusing on one problematic term in Buddhist studies: 'miracle'. This thesis argues that although the term 'miracle' carries certain Christian connotations, it remains the most inclusive term designating such supernormal occurrences because (a) it is a flexible term that can carry more than one meaning and (b) it is the most mutually intelligible word to designate such phenomena in the field of religious studies. We then developed on the category of the miracle-worker (*gantong* 感通) in Daoxuan's biographical writing. This category was part of a long-standing tradition of historical writing and bibliographic categories, and we saw that Daoxuan's miracle-worker category was the most inclusive, allowing him to add accounts in his *Biographies* related not only to the most highly attained monks, but also to those monks that acted as conduits for the miraculous through their interactions with sacred objects and holy places. Finally, we offered a working definition for Chinese 'miracles', namely that (1) they were objects of awe; (2) they must be

manifestations relevant to this realm; (3) they must be witnessed and public; and (4) they had a proselytising purpose.

Chapter 2 explored the themes, the structure, and the historical background of the *Record of Miracles*. We saw that the *Record of Miracles* was a piece of Buddhist narrative literature written in the style of the Chinese court histories and the tales of the anomalous. Similar to the textual traditions that inspired it, the *Record of Miracles* had both a historical and a didactic intent. It described the historical development of the Three Jewels in China while simultaneously affirming, for those that read and heard these accounts, that Buddhist figures, objects, and places were endowed with miraculous and sometimes salvific powers. Although we may well read the *Record of Miracles* as fiction today, the miracle accounts contained in this collection were at the time interpreted as viable retellings of the history of the Buddhist faith in China. From the perspective of social history, we explored the various personal and religious motivations that informed the composition of such a text. We noted that Daoxuan's motivations for compiling the *Record of Miracles* were fivefold: (1) persuasion, (2) proselytisation, (3) appealing to an audience, (4) continuity, and (5) personal experience. Bearing these motivations in mind, chapter 2 explored how the *Record of Miracles* and its author used miracle narratives to envision China as a new sacred locus for the Buddhist teachings.

Chapter 3 explored the historical circumstances that influenced Daoxuan during his later years as he explored the realm of the miraculous in his writing and in his life. We concentrated on the unfavourable policies directed at Buddhist institutions from the Sui dynasty until the end of Daoxuan's life in 667. We showed how the debates at court in 662 regarding whether monks ought to bow before secular authority left a particularly deep impression on Daoxuan. Chapter 3 elaborated on how miracle narratives were an important rhetorical tool for authors such as Daoxuan who used these stories as historical evidence of the validity of their religion. Finally, this chapter provided a portrait not only of the 'historical Daoxuan'—the figure in history stripped of all his miraculous adornments—but also of the 'mystical Daoxuan' as he is described in the biographies—the virtuoso monk who produced wonders and spoke with spirits. The details of the *mythos* surrounding Daoxuan and how it was transmitted and received reveal to us that there were

in fact blurred distinctions during the medieval period between history and myth, discipline and mysticism, and reason and imagination.

Part 2 of this thesis applied a topical and analytical approach, drawing from themes found in the *Record of Miracles* to paint a more complete picture of Daoxuan and his times. These chapters investigated the different aspects of Buddhist materiality in the *Record of Miracles*, concentrating on miraculous objects and sacred places, to draw some conclusions about the nature of religious authority in Tang dynasty Buddhism.

Chapter 4 explored Buddhist materiality in the form of relics and images. We noted that the history of these objects as recounted in the *Record of Miracles* was part and parcel of the medieval Chinese *imaginaire* vis-à-vis the development and success of Buddhism on Chinese soil. This chapter concentrated on Daoxuan's personal relationship with the relic cult out of Famen monastery as well as with other important relics and images such as the miraculous objects brought to Riyan Monastery in the Tang capital from Changgan Monastery in the south. Daoxuan drew on his personal experiences of miraculous objects as well as his profound knowledge of their history to create an authoritative account in the *Record of Miracles* of all the recorded supernormal phenomena manifested by relics and images in China. He often referred to certain narrative tropes such as the story of King Aśoka's relic distribution as a form of validation for the relevance of the historical accounts that he provided in his collection. We also saw that he relied on his own authority as an eminent monk to confirm the truth value of his accounts by referring to his own personal experiences of certain relics and images that he would have encountered either in Chang'an or during his travels to the various holy sites of China.

Chapter 5 explored medieval Chinese Buddhist conceptions of sacred place, concentrating on Daoxuan's accounts of the monasteries and pagodas of China. First, we noted that the sacred quality of a place is comprised of the 'imaginative constructs' built around it by people. A place only becomes holy when ritual attention is directed towards it and when the lore about the place's special qualities is transmitted to others through oral and written accounts. In this way, the *Record of Miracles* was an important work endeavouring to create these webs of sacred meaning around selected places by recounting the miraculous events and details associated with these places.

Daoxuan framed the *topos* of the sacred in China according to the ascribed antiquity and the import of selected spaces in the grand project of promoting Buddhism. For instance, the *Record of Miracles* recounts how Liu Sahe was given the task of seeking out the ancient and forgotten Buddhist ruins from the time of Aśoka (c. 268–c. 232 BCE). The text also suggests that the Buddha's disciples, the *arhats*, were still active in China in secret mountain monasteries accessible only to highly attained monastics. Other accounts recounted how sacred Buddhist monasteries and pagodas had existed in the East since the time of ancient Chinese rulers such as King Mu of the Zhou (976–922 BCE). Through the discovery of these structures by individuals such as Liu Sahe, the antiquity of Buddhism in China could be confirmed. In Chapter 5 we also noted that Daoxuan had a particular affinity for Mount Zhongnan, an important sacred mountain in its own right where he lived and practised for many years. Indeed, most of the accounts in the *Record of Miracles* were dedicated to sites on Mount Zhongnan. This was not only because of his familiarity with the mountain and its sacred places, but also because this was the place revealed to him by spirits, the very 'place' where he would obtain final awakening.

Despite the different approaches used in these two parts, there are certain thematic threads that run throughout the entirety of the thesis. To conclude this study, the following will elaborate on four of the themes that tie together the entirety of this piece. The headings read as follows: (1) Daoxuan and the unseen realm; (2) Scepticism towards the cult of saints; (3) Daoxuan the scholar; and (4) Rhetoric of presence/absence.

Daoxuan and the unseen realm

To make some summary statements on Daoxuan's relation to the miraculous, it is useful to look at the case of the fifth-century nun Nizi 尼子 (lit. young nun) mentioned earlier in this thesis. In 499, Nizi, an eight-year-old girl from a wealthy educated family near Jiankang (present-day Nanjing), had the first of her many encounters with the spirit world.[718] She died at the young age

[718] Biography provided in the *GSZ*: T2060.426a3-b12.

of fifteen but not before ordaining as a nun at Green Park Nunnery 青園寺, taking on the monastic name Sengfa 僧法. The second half of her short life, a seven-year period between the first of her visions and her death, were her most inspired years. In this time, twenty-one scriptures comprising fifty-five *juan* were revealed to her, all of which she recited (*songchu* 誦出) while in an altered state of consciousness as others recorded her revelations. Her visionary experiences of the unseen realm would come to incite quite some controversy in the Buddhist community. The fascination with Nizi among contemporary and later commentators was one of cautious interest and pointed scepticism. Her revealed texts were widely circulated in the community, presenting certain members of the Buddhist elite—self-proclaimed bulwarks of tradition—with a dilemma vis-à-vis questions of orthodoxy. The issues with revelation revolved around the canonical value and doctrinal impact of revealed texts based not in Indian scripture but in visions of an unseen realm. Although these scriptures are no longer extant today, the names of the texts as well as the circumstances around their production are included in various catalogues from the fifth century onward. Discussion in the various Buddhist catalogues that record details related to Nizi, her revealed texts, and indigenous scriptures more generally, considered the nature and the validity of these texts as sources of religious authority. Opinions varied, though Daoxuan wrote long after Nizi had died that her revelations were in fact legitimate.

Her revealed scriptures were initially dismissed as spurious texts and it would take over one hundred years before they were seriously reconsidered in Fei Zhangfang's 費長房 controversial and highly polemical catalogue, the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 (*Record of the Three Treasures Across Successive Generations*). Many have noted that this bibliographical source should be used with caution,[719] though for our purposes Fei Zhangfang's application of a rather ingenious rhetorical device to validate Nizi's scriptures is quite informative. He claimed that Nizi's inspired works were not the products of 'divine revelation' (*shenshou* 神授) but were instead

[719] Kazuo Okabe explored the dubiousness of Fei's catalogue on the grounds that it was compiled by imperial decree and that Fei was driven by political motivations. First, because Fei was particularly hostile towards Daoist teachings, he was not above twisting historical facts to bolster up Buddhism. Second, to emphasise the antiquity of Buddhism in China, he falsely assigned translators and dates to many texts that were until then unknown (1980: 6 f.).

Indian scriptures that she learned in a past life and brought back to mind during her visionary experiences.[720] According to this logic, her revelations were products of her *karma* and still technically came from original Indian sources.

In the case of Daoxuan who compiled his own catalogue in 664, the *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (*Great Tang Record of Buddhist Scriptures*), he seemed somewhat ambivalent towards the role that the supernormal could play in codifying the scriptures. Sometimes he confirmed the legitimacy of miracles, and at other times he spoke out against it. However, whereas many earlier catalogues considered Nizi's works to be apocryphal, Daoxuan chose to include the texts recited by Nizi in his catalogue, leaving a biographical note similar to the one left by Fei.[721] Though one might conclude that Daoxuan simply took from Fei and that the inclusion of these supposedly apocryphal texts was circumstantial, I would argue—indeed, this whole thesis has argued—that Daoxuan's own views regarding the supernormal would have made it so that he agreed, or at least sympathised, with the codification of such texts alongside other works of Buddhist holy writ.[722]

In the preface to the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄, Daoxuan reiterated the fact that Nizi's visionary experiences constituted an instance of past *karmic* conditions informing authoritative revelation. At that time, he read some of Nizi's scriptures, noting that '[we know for a fact] there are instances [of legitimate revelation] when one's past *karmic* conditions are amenable [to such experiences]' 猶有斯事，往緣有幸.[723] The proof of the pudding for Daoxuan, however, was in his own encounter with supernormal beings in 667. He followed his statement on Nizi in his records with his own experience:

> Recently, at the end of the second month this year (667), I had repeated encounters with celestial beings who [spoke with me] as though I had met them before.
> 近以今年二月末，數感天人，有若曾面。[724]

[720] *Lidai sanbao ji*: T2034.96c. For further details and comments, see Tokuno 1990: 45.
[721] *DNL*: T2149.264b.
[722] Liu Yuanru makes a similar argument in 2011: 145.
[723] *LGL*: T874b27-28; *LGZ*: T1898.874b27-28.
[724] *LGL*: T1898.874b28; *LGZ*: T1898.874b28

In his preface, Daoxuan uses Nizi as a touchstone example to confirm the validity of his own visions. His affinity for Nizi also comes through in his catalogue. In the *Da Tang neidian lu*, the bibliographic taxonomy related to spurious texts was different from the model provided by earlier catalogues. Daoxuan effectively omitted or reclassified as translations nearly half of the texts that earlier catalogues classified as 'dubious' (*yihuo* 疑惑) indigenous texts, a clear sign that opinions had shifted in the seventh century and that Daoxuan fundamentally supported this change.

Although Nizi's revealed texts are no longer extant, they were officially validated in medieval Chinese catalogues on the grounds that they were learned texts from one of her past lives.[725] The texts continued to be distributed after her death, as attested to by the fact that Daoxuan claimed in the late seventh century to have seen and maybe even read them. Overall, the example of Nizi and her revelations speak to the shifting paradigms of authority at that time. Robert Campany distinguished between 'open' and 'closed' paradigms in Chinese Buddhist catalogues and historiography. According to the first paradigm, the authority of the teachings would have centred around a sacred locus outside of China, so that many bibliographers based their ideas of scriptural authenticity on foreign provenance. As such, these early cataloguers conceived of a 'closed' proto-canon which excluded, to the best of their efforts, those texts which they considered indigenous to China. The second paradigm was cosmic in scale so that external confirmation of the foreign provenance of scriptures no longer constituted direct evidence that a text represented the *ipsissima verba* of the Buddha, for his 'word' could also come from other 'non-localised' sources that might manifest in China in the visions of figures like Nizi and Daoxuan.[726]

Daoxuan was negotiating this same blurry divide between the seen and the unseen realm in his miracle tale collection. We noted in chapter 2 how the *Record of Miracles* itself fell into the nebulous category of Buddhist history—a form of fact-based history teetering on the edge of folklore and myth—in many of the catalogues and later canons. As we have seen in this thesis, however, while 'myth' and 'history' might seem to us today like two irreconcilable categories, this

[725] Campany 1993a: 20.
[726] Barrett 2012: 29 f.

was not the case for the medieval Chinese.

Scepticism towards the cult of saints

The steady stream of revealed scriptures and other indigenous texts at this time were a symptom, so to speak, of the Buddhist faith's localisation process in China, not the root cause. This thesis has shown that the development and transmission of Buddhism in China was determined in large part by the dissemination and the reception of its sacred objects and structures. These were the relics, icons, pagodas and monasteries that still predominantly represent Buddhist material culture to this day. From the Six Dynasties period (220–589) onward, pagodas and monasteries were established widely while religious objects were transported from the Western Regions by merchants, emissaries, missionaries, as well as daring pilgrims. These objects were also created locally. They were either believed to materialise *ex nihilo* or they were discovered through prophecy, vision and sometimes pure happenstance. In this way, China was quickly filled with myriads of local Buddhist sacred objects and places of worship, while their prevalence throughout Chinese history ebbed and flowed with the tides of religious and political favour. As diplomatic gifts or as foreign curios offered to rulers, officials, as well as the general public, these miraculous objects came to play a central role in spreading and consolidating Sinitic Buddhism.[727] Once obtained these objects might be housed in pagodas or monasteries at the most extravagant of palatial complexes or in the humblest of village shrines where they were kept and venerated for their sacred status, apotropaic qualities and therapeutic powers.

Chapter 1 explored how the medieval Chinese believed to varying degrees in the power of cult objects and sacred places, though that was not to say that claims to the miraculous were believed outright and that they did not draw ire from sceptics and detractors. In miracle tale narratives, scepticism was often the initial response to a miraculous event. A good illustration of

[727] The exchange of religious objects continued into the Song, but it never reached the same heights as it did in the earlier periods. In the eleventh century, Sino-Indian relations shifted more towards trade rather the exchange of Buddhist paraphernalia, seen especially between the seventh and the tenth century (Sen 2003: 3).

this is in the famous legend of the Sogdian monk, Kang Senghui 康僧會 (d. 280). The story takes place in the court of Sun Hao 孫皓, king of Wu 吳, described in Buddhist histories as an irreverent and tyrannical ruler who sought to eradicate Buddhism. To save his community, Kang Senghui endeavoured to demonstrate before the king the efficacy of Buddhist cultivation practices. He gathered a group of monks together to meditate and manifest a miracle. Senghui spoke to the monks: 'The Buddha left us relics that still exist to this day. There was proof [of his presence] in the past, why would there not be [proof of his manifest powers] now?' 佛留舍利止在今時。前已有驗，今豈欺哉.[728] They prayed for three long days according to the account in the *Record of Miracles*. As Sun Hao was pressuring Senghui under pain of death to manifest a miracle, a relic finally appeared. Sun Hao was duly impressed, if not a little annoyed that it had taken so long, though he was not yet satisfied. He first had to test the relic, so he had it placed on an anvil and ordered his men to strike it with a hammer. Miraculously, the relic was left unscathed while both the anvil and the hammer were rent asunder.[729]

Accounts of such tests are common in Buddhist historiography. However, even the alleged indestructibility of relics, a characteristic attributed to cult objects throughout the Buddhist world, was cause for doubt.[730] A later encyclopaedic work by the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) naturalist and scholar Li Shizhen 李時珍 associated tapir (*mo* 貘) bones with false corporeal relics, stating that: '[the tapirs] teeth and bones are extremely strong. If one attempts to break them with a blade or an axe, the metal breaks. Nor can they be destroyed by fire. Some pretend that they are the teeth or bones of the Buddha in order to deceive the vulgar.'[731] Such scepticism was probably a reaction

[728] T2106.410c7-8.
[729] T2106.410c1-14; c.f. Lippiello 2001: 183.
[730] Durt 1987: 1229.
[731] *Bencao gangmu*: 2016: 51.1447; Translated in Kieschnick 2003: 47; This may have been a genuine observation on the part of Li Shizhen. It is no secret that monks did fashion relics out of stone, wood and animal or human bones as replicas of alleged Indian originals. During the Christian Reformation, Luther and Calvin had similar doubts about the relics of martyrs. In John Calvin's 1844 treatise, the '*Inventory of Relics*', he argued that 'it [was] impossible to have the bones of any martyr without running the risk of worshipping the bones of some thief or robber, or, it may be, the bones of a dog, or a horse, or an ass' ([1543] 1958: 341). Interestingly, the personal objects of important figures of the Reformation such as Calvin and Luther later became treasured objects of cult, as we see in the case of 'Luther's flea',

to the fact that sacred objects seemed to be rapidly growing in number. During the Liang dynasty (502–557), the discovery of new, often dubious, miraculous objects was on the rise so that, surprised by the sheer number of relics being reported, the pious Emperor Wu asked: 'How could all these [relics] be from the Dharma body [Buddha's body]?'[732]

Other claims to authenticity were proven not through tests, but by the witness of miraculous manifestations. Such witness accounts make up many of the narratives in the *Record of Miracles*: the facsimile version of King Udayana's image emitting a halo of light, the Famen finger bone curing the sick, the distant ringing of bells from mysterious monasteries on Mount Zhongnan, the manifest miracles at Chongyi Monastery after the relics were translated there from the south, to mention only a few instances covered throughout this work. In chapters 4 and 5 we noted that even though Daoxuan had a vested interest in promoting the authenticity of these objects and these places, he maintained a critical stance, discerning those that were 'real' and those that were perhaps 'fake'.

As the cult of saints continued to grow in popularity from the Eastern Jin dynasty onward, so its detractors continued to feel justified in voicing their grievances. One point of contention was the seeming contradiction between the act of worshipping objects as well as places and the Buddhist teachings on impermanence given that the veneration of objects seemed like a strong emotional attachment to and desire for 'things'.[733] Additionally, for many people the lavish offerings made to the Buddha as well as the pious displays of religious fervour sometimes seemed excessive. The effervescent ambiance during processions accompanied by the acts of extreme penance caught the attention of many critics such as the Tang dynasty literatus Su E 蘇鶚, who

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which was discovered at the Altenburg archive. It could be precisely dated to the 5th of April 1525 as it was preserved between the pages of Luther's handwritten manuscript (Roper 2015: 330).

[732] Recorded in Wang Shao's *Sheli ganying ji* 舍利感應記, *FZ*: T2122.602c13; c.f. Faure 2003: 1154.

[733] The problem lies in the difficult marriage of both a doctrine that proposes cultivated detachment from impermanent 'things' and devotional practices mediated by sacred 'things' that are believed to instantiate the saint's presence (Kinnard 1999: 25–44); For more on Buddhist critiques of the material world and the relationship of Chinese Buddhists to sacred objects, see Kieschnick 2003: 2–23; For later Japanese Zen iconoclastic reactions to the cult of saints, see Faure 1991: 143–47. Indeed, Pāli *Mahāparinibbāṇa Sutta* recounts how the Buddha told Ānanda not to trouble himself with relic veneration (*śarīra-puja*) because it was up to the 'wise nobles, wise brahmans and wise householders' to perform such rites. See the *Dīghanikāya*: 2.141; Cited in Trainor 1997: 53.

wrote about the procession of none other than the Famen finger bone relic.

> A soldier cut off his left arm before the [relic]. As he held [his arm] in his other hand, he made full prostrations with every step [in the direction of the relic]. His blood continued to flow and covered the ground. Those who crawled on their elbows and knees, those who gnawed at their fingers or cut their hair were numerous.
> 時有軍卒斷左臂於佛前，以手執之，一步一禮，血流滿地。至於肘行膝步，齧指截髮，不可算數。[734]

During these processions, people would often reach states of religious ecstasy, outward expressions of fervour which would certainly have grated at the sensibilities of the Confucian elite. Believers might wail in the relic's presence, pull out their hair, beat their chests, burn their limbs, or maim themselves by any other means. Such conduct was considered by some to be tearing at the very social fabric of Chinese society. As mentioned before, Han Yu 韓愈 submitted a memorial asking the emperor to halt the intended ritual procession of the finger bone in 819. The procession prevailed, however, and in a curious twist of fate Han Yu was reprimanded by Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 806–820) for *lèse majesté* and sent many thousands of *li* away from the capital to serve as a prefect in Chaozhou 潮州.

The authenticity of these sacred objects and places was important, and it is crucial to note that the medieval Chinese had standards of authenticity that most likely would not match what we might call 'authentic' today—that is, 'having the stated or reputed origin, provenance, or creator'.[735] In chapters 4 and 5 we saw that facsimiles of sacred objects were acceptable, and transposition of holy places was common practice. Replication was, indeed, the norm. Su E and Han Yu took issue with the fact that the 'true body' relic was the bone of a foreigner. They did not even question the claim that it was in fact the Buddha's finger bone. The faithful also did not believe that 'authentic' relics needed to be the *real* remains brought from India.[736] In the *Record*

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[734] *Duyang zabian*: 1985: fascicle 3; Translated in Ch'en 1964: 281 f.; Faure 2003: 1147; For more on self-mortification in the Buddhist tradition, see the article by Durt 2000.
[735] *OED*: 2004: s.v. authentic.
[736] Specific to the case of the Famen relics, monks even produced replicas which they called 'shadow bones' 影骨 and 'shiny bones' 金骨, while the 'real' relic remained the original finger bone, the 'true body' 真身, presumably the prototype for the replicas. The medieval Chinese conception of 'authenticity' was flexible. They had few qualms with regard to replication and the local origins of a cult object would not have taken away from its hallowed status (Shen 2018: 8; 181 f.).

of Miracles, Daoxuan wrote about the 'true body' (*zhenshen* 真身) in docetic terms, claiming that the term '*zhenshen*' designated the intangible 'Dharma body' (*fashen* 法身) and that no material 'thing' could completely embody the Buddha or his teachings.[737] In this context, the finger bone's attributed 'authenticity' resided in the minds of those that believed in it. We have seen throughout this thesis that what constituted 'authenticity' was the relic's apparent power, feeding into the belief among the faithful that it was in fact sacred. The association to the Buddha's life or his real body—that is the remains of his body cremated near Kuśinagara—was secondary, while the evocation of the 'true body' as the Buddha's teaching—a concept more in line with docetic formulations of the Buddha's presence in the world—was emphasised.

Daoxuan the scholar

In the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan was analysing the historical relevance of miraculous objects and sacred places in terms that both justified his faith and validated the place of Buddhist miracles in the medieval Chinese *imaginaire*. The following will therefore provide some summary observations on Daoxuan's cautious scepticism towards the claims of his own tradition. Chapters 2 and 3 provided background on the *Record of Miracles* and on Daoxuan's life, observing that he was a careful scholar of Buddhist monastic discipline and history with a vested interest in promoting his community. His miracle tales were directed at an audience that would have been sympathetic towards his works, though that was not to say that Daoxuan simply listed these accounts as though they were irrefutable facts. He was discerning in his choice of examples and he provided extensive analysis of the facts when he believed the basis for certain accounts was dubious. This thesis has shown that not only was Daoxuan invested in promoting as well as studying sacred objects and places, but he also cast a critical light on his sources and on the beliefs underpinning them.[738]

[737] T2106.410b; Also mentioned in Daoxuan's *GHJ*: T2103.174c.
[738] For more on the Buddhist standards of historiography, see Kieschnick 2022: 58 f.

Daoxuan's *Record of Miracles* was very much the product of his desire to promote Buddhism and he was certainly not invested in revising or changing the party line regarding the history of Buddhist objects and places in China. His scholastic approach was pragmatic and often inclusive of varied sources even when those sources contradicted the stories themselves. In many instances, he questioned why the evidence in the real world seemed to be at such a disparity with the information provided by the scriptures. He was, for example, optimistic that more Aśokan ruins and objects were still buried away waiting to be excavated. Knowing the legend of the Mauryan king all too well, he wondered why of the 84,000 cult objects and pagodas that were distributed, so few seemed to have been discovered. These were questions that had no answers, only the promise of further discovery and exploration in the future.

Daoxuan was also very conscious of the criticisms that were directed at his tradition. He therefore drew from the various sources that were available to him in monastic libraries such as court histories, gazetteers, and local accounts, as well as on his 'field trips' to the holy places of China to compare and contrast with the data found in other relevant Buddhist sources such as miracle tales, scriptures, as well as the memories and opinions of fellow members of the Tang Buddhist community. His critical approach to history did not diminish the authority of the objects and places that he described, but only presented the reader, be they believers or detractors, with all the information so that they might draw their own conclusions. His *Record of Miracles* was meant to persuade, not to preach. For example, in chapter 4 there was an instance where he wrote about the pagoda foundations associated with King Wen of the Zhou (c. 1050 BCE) near Chang'an. Although Daoxuan had, in principle, no issue with a chronology that dated the founding of Buddhism back to the halcyon days of the Chinese empire, he still compared this account to other epigraphic evidence, concluding that the original dating was wrong and that the pagoda probably dated back to the Eastern Han (25–220). While residing at Riyan Monastery in the capital, he also questioned the origins of the relics that had been transferred from Changgan Monastery in the south. His analysis of their authenticity was twofold. First, he compared the hair and the fingernail of the Buddha at Chongyi to the same relics described in scriptures as well as in court histories. The exhumed hair was white and straight although it should have been dark and curly, while the

fingernail had neither the correct size nor colour to be the Buddha's. Second, he asked some southern monks, perhaps past residents at Changgan, and they confirmed that it was believed the relics that were translated to Chongyi were not the Buddha's but were instead the hair and fingernail of Emperor Wu of the Liang who had, during his reign, exhumed these relics so as to pay homage to them.

Later critics such as Han Yu expounded on the negative effects of the cult of the saints on Chinese society. Such vitriolic criticism rarely bothered with questions of authenticity. Daoxuan, on the other hand, took the question of authenticity to heart and, although he was a believer, he still had the wherewithal to assess these things as objectively as possible within the limits of the historical standards at the time. This was because Daoxuan wished to bolster the religious authority of cult objects and places by helping to establish certain standards for determining the 'real' from the 'fake'. Buddhism and its institutions had both its apologists and its detractors, though in this cacophony of opinions, Daoxuan's voice rang clear in support of sacred objects and places as he showcased them in his miracle tale compilation to contemporaries as well as future generations of Buddhists. He could implement this as both a Head Monk in Chang'an as well as in his role as a prominent author of historical works. By setting these standards of authenticity, he was guarding the social and ritual worth of religious objects and places, ensuring that their value not decrease in the eyes of the public.

Rhetoric of presence/absence

The discussion on scepticism and authenticity in this conclusion draws on another theme present throughout this thesis. In the *Record of Miracles*, there is a constant tension in the narratives between what could be called a 'rhetoric of presence' and a 'rhetoric of absence'. Siddhārtha Gautama died in a foreign land and in a very different time to the Tang Chinese. These were facts that nobody could ignore, Daoxuan least of all. The Buddha was, by all accounts, absent, yet there was the belief among medieval Chinese Buddhists in the ritual power of invocation associated with objects and places—'things' that could stand in provisionally for the Buddha. Every thirty

years miracles manifested at Famen to indicate it was time to do obeisance at the monastery and parade the finger relic; Liu Sahe sought out auspicious signs to guide him in his quest for Aśokan objects and places; Kang Senghui prayed for a miracle while Sun Hao threatened to have all members of the community in southern China executed. Undergirding these accounts are the mechanisms of the sacred in China: the resonance between supernormal and human agents, the expediency of manifest Buddhist forces in the world, the efficacy of genuine intention and practice.

Miracles might direct you, but to truly bear witness is a completely different story. The Buddha, for Daoxuan, was 'present' in his associated objects and places, but the authentic experience of the founder's wisdom and benevolence—his 'true body'—be it through cult objects, holy sites, or visionary experiences, was a difficult and rare thing to behold. Yet it was the overall absence of the Buddha's manifest signs, the rarified nature of the miraculous, that confirmed its worth. Chapter 1 explained the cultural associations underpinning Daoxuan's ideas relating to the miraculous. Buddhist miracles were not only related to *karma*, but also to indigenous causal understandings of the resonance (*gantong* 感通; *ganying* 感應) between Buddhist people, objects, and places with their environment. As we saw in chapter 2, Daoxuan dedicated the *Record of Miracles* to the compilation and promotion of those experiences of 'resonance' featuring the manifest presence of the Buddha in China, while he simultaneously lamented the scarcity of notable miracles, signs and prophecies in his time.

The narratives related to sacred objects and places encapsulate aspects of both synchrony and diachrony in the teachings of the past, present, and future buddhas. These narratives take place in the past, in the present, and in the future, with the described objects and places acting as conduits for truths that harken back to the Buddha's life and sermons not as fact-based information but as 'monuments' to these imagined events.[739] Chapter 4 analysed the place of relics and images in medieval Chinese society, noting that their associated miracles were almost exclusively the products of expediency or the results of cultivation practices and spiritual attainments. On the one hand, that means that miracles are in the eyes of the beholder, asking: 'did it inspire in you a

[739] Faure 2018: 87; Citing Foucault 1969: 14 f.

profound sense of awe?' On the other hand, Daoxuan claimed that not everyone was privy to the 'truth' of the teachings and not everyone could see the manifest miracles, himself included. These two points are not mutually exclusive for they represent the discourse on experience that informs miracle tales as a genre of literature. These accounts tell the reader two things: First, that one can only know a miracle if they believe or if they have seen it; Second, if you did not see the miracle it is because you were not meant to see it. Such discourse established 'the experience of miracles' as a rhetorical placeholder for the miracles themselves—which Daoxuan confirmed were rare, indeed—allowing monastics like Daoxuan a certain degree of deniability vis-à-vis objects or places not manifesting the expected signs. If he didn't see, for instance, the numinous light emitted by the images in the mountains of Mianshang County, it wasn't because these images had never emitted light but because of his own shortcomings. His own cautious study of the holy objects and places of China was ultimately tempered by faith-based inductive reasoning that confirmed the Buddha's presence even in the absence of signs or portents.

Chapter 5 drew parallels with the previous chapter, examining the social and religious dimensions of monasteries and pagodas. Similarly, in relationship to sacred place, the sought-after 'hard evidence' of a mystical monastery's existence or the proof that a certain place was associated with ancient history was often missing, only to be confirmed in oral accounts or visions. The 'holy monks' that provided assistance left without a trace as soon as they were no longer needed, and the mystical monasteries disappeared the moment doubts arose in the seeker's mind, never to be found again. That being said, Daoxuan described the miraculous in these places not to promote their inherent qualities, but to confirm the extraordinary nature of their occurrence in a world no longer blessed by the presence of the Buddha. The 'rhetoric of presence' and the 'rhetoric of absence' were two sides of the same coin, both emphasising the preciousness of these events, evoking a strong sense of appreciation for the fact that Daoxuan, and others like him, could still witness these things in their lifetimes.

Finally, the production of sacred objects and 'places' was not established by manifest miracles but came instead from the narrative reimagining of these things from a perspective that assumed the power and efficacy of Buddhist agents such as 'holy monks', bodhisattvas, and things

such as relics, images, pagodas and monasteries. The received narratives, whether they were transmitted orally or in writing, were vital in determining the authenticity of objects and places. The process of authentication was achieved, in part, through the composition, compilation and dissemination of the histories. This was very much the motivation informing Daoxuan's compilation of the *Record of Miracles.* He set the narrative foundations for belief in the antiquity and efficaciousness of the objects and places he selected in his compilation so that, acting as a historiographer of the sacred, these accounts could later constitute seals of authenticity for generations to come. He played an active part in determining the authenticity of these sacred objects and places, separating the wheat from the chaff[740] by assessing those things that he heard or read about as well as those he saw in person. The *Record of Miracles* did just this, for in it he selected which objects and places were authentic and, by exclusion, which were dubious. I must stress that in his role as a historiographer of the sacred, Daoxuan rarely strayed far from his analytical—though patently Buddhist—historical method. However, we see for example in Daoxuan's recorded vision of the Buddha's final sermon and distribution of the alms bowls that he went beyond the traditional historian's task of putting down recorded facts. He, indeed, played an active role in producing his own new localised narratives. Moreover, it is impossible to know whether stories related to Daoxuan were true or false, though for our purposes the truth value of these stories is secondary. The narratives themselves provide great insight because they cast a light on the *mythos* that Daoxuan himself was helping to create. During the early Tang, there was an important shift in the medieval Chinese Buddhist worldview from reverence towards the hallowed lands of the founder to a newly found appreciation for indigenous sacred objects and places. Daoxuan was helping to bridge the gap between the past and the present—absence and presence—as well as between the West and China, by meshing the stories of Buddhist sacred objects and places into the very fabric of Chinese culture and history. He was drawing a map of the relics, images, and sites onto a new map of Buddhist China, practising a form of sacred historiography

[740] Alternatively, there is a Chinese *chengyu* 成語 that puts it quite nicely: 'to tear out the weeds and keep the flowers' 去蕪存菁.

as he recorded these accounts while himself embracing as well as expounding on his more universal understanding of the East's place in the Buddhist world.

Appendices

Appendix I

Value of relevant measures, weights and money during the Tang

Measures are given in ascending order. All measurements are approximate. Measurements of length (*changdu* 長度) as well as value of monies and textiles after Tan W. 1994; Gernet [1956] 1995: 314 ff.; Kroll 2017; Wilkinson 2018. Approximate prices given in square brackets.

Weights and Measures:

Weight

Liang 兩	40 g
Jin 斤	640 g

Linear Measurements

Fen 分	35 mm or 1/10 *cun*
Cun 寸	3 cm or 10 *fen*
Chi 尺	30 cm or 10 *cun*, most basic standard of linear measurement.
Bu 步	1.39 m or 5 *chi*
Zhang 丈	3 m or 10 *chi*
Li 里	500 m or 360 *bu*
Mu 畝	240 square double paces (*bu* 步)
Qing 頃	100 *mu* 畝, 1 hectare, 10,000 square metres

Standard Length of Cloth[741]

Duan 端 (length)	1.8 x 50 *chi* or 6 *zhang* piece of hemp.

[741] Tang Dynasty economy was based on a dual coin-textile standard. Textiles such as silk, hemp and ramie were the *de facto* currency during the Tang because, among other reasons, there was an insufficiency of coins (Peng 1994: 271; Von Glahn 2016: 187).

Pi 匹 (bolt)	1.8 x 40 *chi* cloth of silk. [The worth of silk varied depending on area and fiscal policy. For example, under Taizong (r. 627–650), silk prices shifted radically from 1 *pi*=1 *dou* of grain, to 1 *pi*= 100 *dou* (10 *hu*)].[742]
Capacity	
Chao 抄	10 *cuo* (pinch)
Shao 勺	10 *chao*
Ge 合	10 *shao*
Sheng 升 (peck)	10 *ge*
Dou 斗 (pint)	10 *sheng* or about 6 liters [1 *dou* of wheat=32 or 37 *qian* (in Dunhuang, yr. 745)]
Fu 釜	4 *dou*
Hu 斛 (bushel)	10 *dou* or about 60 l
Copper Currency Unit	
Wen 文	1 *qian*
Qian 錢 (coin)	Tang Copper currency, worth varied.
Guan 貫 (String of cash)	1,000 *qian*

[742] Tan Wenxi 1994: 109; in Dunhuang, pieces of silk usually measured either 2 x 23-26 *chi* or 2 x 37-40 *chi* piece of silk. [In the year 745, 1 *juan* of Hunan silk was worth 465 coins]. More prices in table drawn up by Gernet 1995: 315.

Appendix II
Item 1. The Dynasties: from Xia to Song with Some Important Buddhist Dates[743]

Legend:

v=Indicates that the period is included in the time period without a marker above it.

卍=Indicates the dates are related to Buddhist history.

♚=Indicates the names of rulers.

Only main dynasties are in '**bold**' font.

Pre-Qin: The Three Dynasties

	BCE
Xia 更 dynasty	c. 21st–16th century
Shang 商 dynasty	c. 1600–1045
Early Shang (*Erligang* 二里崗 period)	c. 16th–14th century
Yin Shang 殷商 (*Anyangxi* 安陽西 period)	14th century–1045
Zhou 周dynasty	1045–256
Western Zhou 西周dynasty	1045–771
卍 Earliest East Asian date given for the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*	949
Eastern Zhou 東周dynasty	770–256
v *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn)	770–476
v *Zhanguo* 戰國 (Warring States）	475–221
v Liuguo 六國 (Six Kingdoms）	403–221
卍Historical Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*	c. 400
卍Reign of King Aśoka	c. 268–c. 232

[743] After Wilkinson 2000: 10 ff., 2018: 5; Kroll 2017: 644–53; The so-called Historical Buddha's dates are from Cousins 1996: 63.

Dynasties of Imperial China from the Qin to the Song

	BCE
Qin 秦dynasty	221–206
	CE
Han 漢dynasty	202 BCE–220 CE
Former Han 前漢 (also-called Western Han) dynasty	202 BCE–23 CE
v Xin 新 (reign of Wang Mang 王莽)	9–23
Later Han 後漢 (also-called Eastern Han) dynasty	25–220
卍 Han Mingdi's dream	c. 64
卍 An Shigao settles in Luoyang and begins translation	148
Wei, Jin, Nan Bei Chao 魏晉南北朝 (Wei, Jin, North and South Dynasties)	220–589
Sanguo 三國 (Three Kingdoms)	220–280
v Wei 魏 (known as Cao Wei 曹魏	220–265
v Han 漢 (known as Shu Han 蜀漢）	221–263
v Wu 吳 (known as Sun Wu 孫吳）	222–280
卍 First relic manifest in China when Kang Senghui 康僧會 converted the Wu ruler, Sun Quan 孫權	248
Jin 晉dynasty	265–420
v Western Jin 西晉	265–316
v Eastern Jin 東晉	317–420
卍 Possible dates for Liu Sahe 劉薩荷	c. 373–c. 435
卍 Kumārajīva settles in Chang'an	402–413
Six Dynasties 六朝	222–589
Sixteen Kingdoms 十六國	304–439
Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北朝	420–589
Southern Dynasties 南朝	420–589
v Liu Song 劉宋	420–479
v Qi 齊	479–502
v Liang 梁	502–557
♚Wudi 武帝	r. 502–549
v Chen 陳	557–589
Northern Dynasties 北朝	386–581

v Northern Wei 北魏		386–534
卍 Northern Wei persecution of Buddhism	♚Taiwudi 太武帝	446–452
v Eastern Wei 東魏		534–550
v Western Wei 西魏		535–556
v Northern Qi 北齊		550–577
v Northern Zhou 北周		557–581
卍 Northern Zhou persecution of Buddhism	♚Wudi 武帝	574–577
Sui 隋dynasty		581–618
Emperor names	Reign titles (*nian hao*年號)	
♚ Wendi文帝	Kaihuang 開皇	581–600
卍 *Birth of Daoxuan*道宣		596–667
	Renshou 仁壽	601–604
卍 Birth of Xuanzang玄奘		602–664
♚ Yangdi煬帝	Daye 大業	604–617
♚ Gongdi恭帝	Yining 義寧	617–618
Tang 唐 dynasty		618–907
Emperor names	Reign titles (*nian hao* 年號)	
♚ Gaozu高祖	Wude 武德	618–627
♚ Taizong太宗	Zhenguan 貞觀	626–650
♚ Gaozong高宗	Yonghui 永徽	650–656
	Xianqing 顯慶	656–661
	Longshuo 龍朔	661–664
	Linde 麟德	664–666
	Qianfeng 乾封	666–668
卍 Death of Xuanzang 玄奘		d. 664
卍 *Death of Daoxuan* 道宣		d. 667
	Zongzhang 總章	668–670
	Xianheng 咸亨	670–674
	Shangyuan 上元	674–676
	Yifeng 儀鳳	676–679
	Tiaolu 調露	679–680
	Yonglong 永隆	680
	Kaiyao 開耀	681

	Yongchun 永淳	682
	Hongdao 弘道	683
卍 Death of Daoshi道世		d. 683
♛ Zhongzong中宗	Sisheng 嗣聖	684
♛ Ruizong睿宗	Wenming 文明	684
	Guangzhai 光宅	684
	Chuigong 垂供	685–689
	Yongchang 永昌	689
	Zaichu 載初	689
Zhou 周 interregnum	♛ Empress Wu Zetian 武則天	690–705
Restored Tang dynasty		705–907
卍 Huichang會昌 persecution of Buddhism	♛ Wuzong 武宗	841–845
卍 Huang Chao rebellion and attack on Buddhism	♛ Huang Chao 黃巢	881–884
Wudai Shiguo 五代十國		902–979
(The Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms)		
Five Dynasties 五代 (North China)		907–960
v Later Liang後梁		907–923
v Later Tang後唐		923–936
v Later Jin後晉		936–946
v Later Han後漢		947–950
v Later zhou後周		951–960
卍 Later Zhou persecution of Buddhism	♛ Shizong世宗	955
Ten Kingdoms 十國 (South China)		902–979
v Southern Wu 南吳		902–937
v Wuyue 吳越		907–978
v Southern Tang 南唐		937–975
v Southern Chu 南楚		927–951
v Greater Min 大閩		909–945
v Former Shu 前蜀		907–925
v Later Shu 後蜀		934–965
v Jingnan 荊南		924–963
v Southern Han 南漢		917–971
v Northern Han 北漢		951–979

Song 宋 dynasty	960–1279

Item 2. Chronological Biography of Daoxuan

Following the chronology (*nianpu* 年譜) of Daoxuan's life offered at the end of Wang Y. 2017: 277–85, with some additions from A.-C. Z.-H. Tan 2002: 355–57.

596	□ Daoxuan is born in Daxingcheng 大興城. According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, Daoxuan's family name is Qian 錢, a family that hails from Wuxing 吳興 in present-day Zhejiang. His father's name was Shen 申, the Minister of Personnel under the Chen. His mother was from the Yao 姚 clan.
	□ Emperor Wen of the Sui proclaims that Hongzun 洪遵 (528–608) will be made Head of Monastic Regulations (*Jianglü zhongzhu* 講律眾住). He expounds before the gathered disciples at Chongjing Monastery on the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*. This changed the standards for monastic law in the capital from the Mahāsāṃghika to the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya.
600	□ Four years old. Master Huiyun is called to the capital to reside in Riyan Monastery. When the Prince of Jing pacified the Chen (589), he invited Buddhist worthies to come to the capital and reside at Riyan Monastery. He specialised in the *Satyasiddhi-śāstra* and the *Lotus Sutra* scriptures. After he arrived in the capital, he turned more to Mahāyāna works.
601	□ Five years old. On the third day of the sixth month of the Renshou era, Emperor Wen ordered the distribution and establishment of relic pagodas throughout the country, vowing to practise diligently, making offerings to the Buddha-Dharma for the people so as to accrue merit for all.
602	□ Six years old. Vinaya master Zhishou and Zhimin 智旻 arrive in the capital where they reside at Chanding Monastery 禅定寺. Zhishou would later become Daoxuan's master
605	□ Nine years old. Daoxuan entered Riyan Monastery and became Huiyun's disciple. Riyan was established in one of Emperor Yan's residences. The majority of the monks living there came from the south after the fall of the Chen.
606	□ Ten years old. Daoxuan receives his tonsure from Huiyun (some sources say he was tonsured in 612).
608	□ Twelve years old. Master Hongzun dies at Daxingshan Monastery at the age of 79. Zhishou takes his position as Head of Monastic Regulations.
611	□ Fifteen years old. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* says that: 'At fifteen, Daoxuan forsook the vulgar, and practised reciting all the scriptures'.
615	□ Nineteen years old. Daoxuan received the full precepts under Zhishou and began studying the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya.
619	□ Twenty-three years old. The pilgrim monk Xuanzang and company left Chang'an.

621–624	Fu Yi 傅奕 presents a series of anti-Buddhist proclamations
624	□ Twenty-eight years old. Riyan Monastery is closed. Huiyun, Daoxuan and ten others are moved to Chongyi Monastery in the Changshou Ward. This is also when Daoxuan begins spending time on Mount Zhongnan, where he would practise and write.
	□ Emperor Gaozu visit Zhongnan to pay his respects at the Laozi Temple. Fu Yi requests to the court that Buddhists be extirpated.
625	□ Twenty-nine years old. Zhicang 智藏 of Fengde Monastery dies at the age of 85. Huaisu 懷素 is born in Chang'an.
626	□ Thirty-years old. Daoxuan resides in Fengde Monastery. In the sixth month of Wude 9, he writes the *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 and the *Sifen lü shepini yi chao* 四分律拾毗尼義鈔.
	□ Gaozu proclaimed that priority would be given to Daoism and not Buddhism. He proclaimed that some monks and nuns be defrocked, monastery numbers be diminished and that for every three monasteries there should be two Daoist temples. The edict also read that in every other province, there should only be one monastery. The incident at Xuanwu Gate took place, Taizong wrested power from his father, and nothing came of Gaozu's proclamation.
627	□ Thirty one years old. Daoxuan went travelling to see religious life as well as sacred places across the country.
629	□ Thirty-three years old. It was decreed that translation workshops would begin working in earnest. Zhishou was ordered to help translate.
630	□ Thirty-four years old. Daoxuan continued his travels, coming to and from Chang'an to visit sites and meet with masters. He visited the areas of Jin, Wei, Jianghuai, and as far as Shu (Sichuan). He even went to Wei Prefecture where he met the *Vinaya* Master Fali 法礪.
631	□ Thirty-five years old. The Emperor ordered that the stone image of Chongyi Monastery be brought to the Imperial Palace for offerings. It was ordered that the Famen Monastery finger bone be brought out and presented to the people.
	Decree ordering that Buddhist and Daoist clergy render homage to their parents and the emperor. Order later rescinded in 633.
634	□ Thirty-eight years old. Daoxuan wrote the *Sifenlü shanbu suiji jiemo* 四分律刪補隨機羯磨, *Sifenlü biqiu hanzhu jieben* 四分律比丘含注戒本, *Sifenlü hanzhu benshu* 四分律含注戒本疏, and the *Jiaocheng xinxue bique xing hulü yi* 教誡新學比丘行護律儀.
	□ *Vinaya* Master Zhishou becomes Head Monk at Hongfu Monastery 弘福寺.
635	□ Thirty-nine years old. Daoxuan composes *Suiji jiemo shu* 隨機羯磨疏.

	□ Zhishou dies at the age of sixty-nine years old. In his honour, the state gave the Buddhist church ten *mu* of cultivated land in Longshouyuan, the capital's western suburb, three hundred earth mounds were made in the county. One thousand cypress were planted, Fang Xuanling, Du Zhenglun and other high dignitaries all went to pay their respects.
	□ Vinaya Master Xuanwan 玄琬 exhorted the court to stop killing living beings. Taizong proclaimed that from the third month to the fifth month all killing would be stopped.
	□ Vinaya Master Fali died in Riguang Monastery in Yecheng.
636	□ Forty years old. Daoxuan's future disciple, Wengang, is born in Changan.
637	□ Forty-one years old. Daoxuan composes the *Biqiuni hanzhu jieben* 比丘尼含注戒本 and *Liangchu qingzhong yi* 量處輕重儀.
641	□ Forty-six years old. Taizong offers his recently decease mother a commemorative vegetarian feast at Hongfu Monastery, composes a *yuanwen*, taking on the title 'Boddhisattva Emperor Ordained Disciple'.
645	□ Forty-nine years old. Composes *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, completes B*iqiuni chao* 比丘尼鈔.
	Xuanzang returns to China from his travels to the Western Regions. Daoxuan joins Xuanzang's translation workshops as an 'editor composer'.
646	□ Fifty years old. Amends *Suiji jiemo* 隨機羯磨 and the *shu* 疏.
	Daoxuan returns to Zhongnan Mountain and stays there for twelve years.
	□ Huaisu follows Xuanzang and becomes a monk.
650	□ Fifty-four years old. Daoxuan composes the *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 and amends the *Jiaocheng xinxue bique xing hulü yi* 教誡新學比丘行護律儀.
	Daoxuan suffers from heart issues at Fengde Monastery.
651	□ Fifty-five years old. Daoxuan amends *Hanzhu jieben* 含注戒本 and the *shu* 疏.
655	□ Fifty-nine years old. Gaozong loses his wife and takes Wu Zetian as his new queen.
656	Emperor Gaozong decreed the construction of Ximing Monastery
657	□ Sixty-one years old. Daoxuan continues his residence at Mount Zhongnan.
	Gaozong decrees that monks need to pay respect to their parents and to the emperor.

658	□ Sixty-two years old. Ximing Monastery is completed, and the court requests that Daoxuan be made Head Monk, Shentai is made Senior Monk, Huaisu is made Rector. The masters in the capital ordained one hundred and fifty disciples that all lived in the monastery.
659	□ Sixty-three years old. Daoxuan composed the *Shimen zhangfu yi* 釋門章服儀.
	□ Gaozong ordered the excavation of the Famen relics. The finger bone was brought to the palace.
660	□ Sixty-four years old. The finger bone was sent to Luoyang. Xuanzang in Yuhua Monastery 玉華寺 started translating the *Dabore jing* 大般若經.
661	□ Sixty-five years old. Daoxuan composed the *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡 and the *Shimen guijing yi* 釋門歸敬儀.
662	□ Sixty-six years old. Daoxuan accompanies the finger bone relic from Luoyang to Famen Monastery.
	□ In Longshuo 2, on the fifth day of the fourth month, a proclamation declared that monks had to bow to their secular lords. Daoxuan drafted the '*Shang Yongzhou Mupei wang lun shamen bu ying baisu qi*' 上雍州牧沛王輪沙門不應拜俗啟, the '*Shang Rongguo furen Yangshi qinglun shamen buhe baisu qi*' 上榮國夫人楊氏請論沙門不合拜俗啟, and the '*Xu fojiao longti shijian zhuzai pudeng zhuang*' 序佛教隆替事間諸宰輔等狀. Daoxuan and others went in person to protest.
	In the sixth month, on the eighth day, the proclamation was rescinded.
664	□ Sixty-eight years old. Living in Jingye Monastery in the Zhongnan Mountains, Daoxuan amends the *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡. Composes the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, ***Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄**, *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄.
	Xuanzang dies at Yuhua Monastery 玉華寺, and is buried at Bailüyuan. All officially sanctioned translation stops.
665	□ Sixty-nine years old. Daoxuan adds the final biographical entries to the *Xu gaoseng zhuan.*
667	□ Seventy-one years old. He again amends the *Hanzhu jieben* as well as its notes (*shu* 疏). He composes the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄, the *Guanzhong chuanli jietan tu jing* 關中創立戒壇圖經 and *Zhong tianzhu sheweiguo qihuansi tu jing* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經.
	In Qianfeng 2, on the eighth day in the second month, over twenty monks participated in the establishment of an ordination platform at Jingye Monastery. In the fourth month, monks received ordination.

	Shijiamiduoluo, an Indian monk from Daputi Monastery, visited Jingye Monastery.
	On the third day of the tenth month of Qianfeng 2, Daoxuan passed away.

Item 3. Miraculous events in Daoxuan's life according to the *Song gaoseng zhuan*

1. After conception, Daoxuan's mother dreamed that the moon entered her side.[744]
2. A foreign monk appears in another dream and states that Daoxuan is a reincarnation of the Liang dynasty *Vinaya* master Sengyou 僧佑 (445–518).[745]
3. Daoxuan spent twelve lunar months in the womb and was born on the Buddha's birthday.[746]
4. At 20 years old, Daoxuan used his powers of concentration and a relic appeared.[747]
5. In the Zhongnan mountain range 終南山 near Chang'an, he was assisted by *devas* to make a spring surge forth during a drought.[748] They established a monastery there called Baiquan Monastery 白泉寺, or Clear Spring Monastery.
6. Daoxuan tamed many wild beasts.[749]
7. Strange flowers bloomed, and unusual grass grew in his presence.[750]
8. After moving from Chongyi Monastery to Fengde Monastery, a Dharma-protecting guardian visited him to recommend he go settle near Qingguan village in the Zhongnan mountain range, also known as Jingye Monastery.[751]
9. After the revelation from the Dharma-protecting guardian, dragons came in human form to pay homage to Daoxuan. A disciple gave them an improper look and, in their anger, they poisoned a well.[752]
10. Dragons also offered Daoxuan baskets of rare flowers and fruits that did not come from this world,[753]
11. Because of his high spiritual attainment, Daoxuan could divine the intentions of his followers and teach in accordance with their needs. These intentions are referred to euphemistically as 'hidden affairs' (*yinshi* 陰事), perhaps a reference to lewd thoughts.[754]
12. Daoxuan is visited by an old man who reveals himself to be the dragon of Kunming Lake 昆明池. The lake was dry because of a drought so the dragon asked for assistance. Daoxuan admitted that he could not help the dragon, though he referred him to the retired scholar and

[744] *SGZ*: T2061.790b12.
[745] *Ibid*: 790b12-14.
[746] *Ibid*: *90b14*-15.
[747] *Ibid*: T2061.790b18-19.
[748] *Ibid*: T2061.790b23-25.
[749] *Ibid*: T2061.790b25.
[750] *Ibid*: T2061.790b25-26.
[751] *Ibid*: T2061.790b27-28.
[752] *Ibid*: T2061.790b29-c2.
[753] *Ibid*: T2061.790c3-6.
[754] *Ibid*: T2061.790c6-8.

master physician, Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (d.u.).[755]

13. While at Jingye Monastery in the Zhongnan mountain range, he established an ordination platform. As a result, a foreign monk with long white eyebrows, later identified as the *arhat* Piṇḍola, came to the monastery to pray at the altar.[756]
14. In Qianfeng 2 (667), Daoxuan had an exchange with celestial beings about the *Vinaya* teachings. They blamed the faults in the Chinese *Vinaya* on bad translation, offering Daoxuan amendments.[757]
15. Other *devas* revealed two scriptures to Daoxuan.[758]
16. During the Zhenguan era, Daoxuan was residing at Ximing Monastery. He fell while walking, but was caught by a celestial youth, Nezha, who stated that he had been secretly attending Daoxuan in his daily activities.[759]
17. Daoxuan asked Nezha for a gift from the Western Regions. Nezha offered him a Buddha tooth relic.[760]
18. At the end of Daoxuan's life, a *deva* paid homage to the sick *Vinaya* master, stating that he will be reborn in Tuṣita heaven with Maitreya.[761]

[755] *SGZ*: T2061.790c8-22.
[756] *Ibid*: T2061.790c29-791a1.
[757] *Ibid*: T2061.791a3-6.
[758] *Ibid*: T2061.791a6-8.
[759] *Ibid*: T2061.791a9-13.
[760] *Ibid*: T2061.791a11-17.
[761] *Ibid*: T2061.791a9-11.

Appendix III

Table 1. Cursory list of the sources used in the *Record of Miracles*

Many different sources were used to compose the *Record of Miracles*. The following is a cursory list of the texts that Daoxuan would have used as references.[762] For more information on some of the texts mentioned below, refer to Knechtges 2010; Knechtges and Chang 2014a, 2014b. The majority of the references in this table are pulled from the third fascicle of the *Record of Miracles* (T2106.431a21-25). The rest are drawn from citations throughout the text.

Name	**Text**
Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, attribution, also known as Tao Yuanliang 陶元亮 and Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427)	*Soushen houji* 搜神後記, also titled *Xu Soushen ji* 續搜神記 and *Soushen lu* 搜神錄
Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444). However, Daoxuan writes it Liu Du 劉度, and also refers to Liu Yiqing just below the first entry as the Lord of Linchuan 臨川王	*Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記 *Youming Lu* 幽明錄, also known as *You ming ji* 幽明記
Gu Yewang 顧野王 (519–581)	*Yu di zhi* 輿地志, cited by Daoxuan as *Yu di zhi* 輿地誌 or simply *Di zhi* 地誌
Tang Lin 唐臨 (d. c.660)	*Mingbao ji* 冥報記 (c. 653)
Wang Yan 王琰 (c. 454–c. 510)	*Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 (c. 490),[763] also-called the *Mingxiang zhuan* 冥祥傳
Wang Jin 王巾(c. 406–c.506)	*Sengshi* 僧史
Xiao Ziliang 蕭子良 (460–494)	*Sanbao ji* 三寶記

[762] Chen S. 1992: 1300.
[763] Campany 2012a: 4.

Pei Ziye 裴子野 (469–c.531)	*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, also-called the *Shamen zhuan* 沙門傳 as well as the *Zhongseng zhuan* 眾僧傳
Baochang 寶唱 (c. 456–c. 555)	*Mingseng zhuan* 名僧傳
Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554)	*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (c. 530)[764]
Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) Zhu Juntai 朱君台	*Xu gaosengzhuan* 續高僧傳 (645) *Guanghong mingji* 廣弘明集 (664) *Weiying zhuan* 徵應傳, no longer extant but mentioned in the last fascicle of the *GZ*: T2059.418c2
Yu Xiaojing 虞孝敬, Record Keeper to Emperor Yuan 元帝 of the Liang dynasty(r. 552–555)	*Neidian boyao* 內典博要
Xiao Gan 蕭綱 (503–551), Crown Prince, text compiled at his court.	*Fabao Lianbi* 法寶聯璧 (534)
Ren Fang 任昉(460–508)	*Shuyi ji* 述異記, cited as the *Shuyi zhi* 述異誌 in the *Record of Miracles.* The *Shuyi ji* would have been part of a larger treatise geographical treatise comprised of 252 *juan* called the *Di ji* 地記, which Daoxuan also quotes.

[764] A. F. Wright [1954] 1990: 88 f.

Hou Junsu 侯君素, also known as Hou Bo 侯白 of the Sui dynasty (581–617)	*Jingyi ji* 旌異記
Daoshi 道世 (d. 683)	*Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (668)

Table 2. The difference between the titles given to the *Record of Miracles* in different catalogs.

Characters				Pinyin	Source
集	神州	三寶感通	錄	**Ji** *Shenzhou* Sanbao Gantong Lu	*Taishō* and others
		三寶感通	錄	Sanbao Gantong Lu	Abbreviated title
		三寶感通	傳	Sanbao Gantong **Zhuan**	*Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義: T2128.830a21
	東夏	三寶感通	記	***Dongxia*** Sanbao Gantong **Ji**	*DNL*: T2149.333a20; *FZ*: T2122.1023c8; *Fozu tongji*: T2035.297b12.
	東夏	三寶感通	錄	***Dongxi***a Sanbao Gantong Lu	KSL: T2154.562a3-4; YJY: T2128.829b19-832a16.

Table 3. Texts attributed to Daoxuan

There are 24 texts in all attributed to Daoxuan. 20 appear in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (T). 3 texts, excluding sub-commentaries, are found exclusively in the *Dainippon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經 (X). 2 texts, no longer extant, are mentioned in the *Fayuan zhuli*n 法苑珠林 and in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. The **bold text** indicates that the text is related to miracles, both **bold and underlined** indicates the text was revealed to Daoxuan. This list is in part based on a similar list drawn up in A.-C. Z.-H. Tan 2002: 358 ff.

Texts attributed to Daoxuan Total: 24	**Texts dated to the last ten years of Daoxuan's life (664-667). Total: 11**
1. *Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 (626 CE); T1804 2. *Sifenlü shepini yi chao* 四分律拾毗尼義鈔 (c. 626 CE); X747 3. *Sifenlü biqiu hanzhu jieben* 四分律比丘含注戒本 (634 CE); T1806 4. *Sifenlü shanbu suiji jiemo* 四分律刪補隨機羯磨 (634–649 CE); T1808 5. *Jiaocheng xinxue bique xing hulü yi* 教誡新學比丘行護律儀 (634 CE); T1897. 6. *Liangchu qingzhong yi* 量處輕重儀 (637 CE); T1895 7. *Sifen biqiuni chao* 四分比丘尼鈔 (642 CE); X724. 8. *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (645 CE); T2060 9. *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 (650 CE); T2088 10. *Shimen zhangfu yi* 釋門章服儀 (659 CE); T1894 11. *Shimen guijing yi* 釋門歸敬儀 (661 CE); T1896 12. *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡 (c. 661 CE); T2104 13. *Guanghong ming ji* 廣弘明集 (664 CE); T2103 14. *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感	1. *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (664CE); T2149, K1057 2. *Xu da Tang neidian lu* 續大唐內典錄 (664 CE); T2150, K1061 3. ***Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (664 CE); T2106, K1069** 4. ***Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (664CE); T2103, K1081** 5. ***Shijia shipu* 釋迦氏譜 (665 CE); T2041, K1049** 6. ***Zhong tianzhu sheweiguo zhihuansi tujing* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經 (667 CE); T1899** 7. ***Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 (667 CE); T2107, K1070** 8. ***Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 (667 CE); T1898** 9. ***Guanzhong chuanli jietan tu jing* 關中創立戒壇圖經 (667 CE); T1892** 10. ***Yifa zhuchi ganying* 遺法住持感應 No longer extant (Recorded in *FZ*: T2122.1023c12)** 11. ***Fuzhu yi* 付囑儀; No longer extant (Recorded in *SGZ*:T2061.791b22)**

通錄 (664 CE); T2106 15. *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (664 CE); T2149 16. *Xu da Tang neidian lu* 續大唐內典錄 (664 CE) T2150 17. *Shijia shipu* 釋迦氏譜 (665CE); T2041, K1049 18. *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 (667 CE); T2107 19. *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 (667 CE); T1898 20. *Zhong tianzhu sheweiguo qihuansi tu jing* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經 (667 CE); T1899 21. *Guanzhong chuanli jietan tu jing* 關中創立戒壇圖經 (667 CE); T1892 22. *Jingxin jieguan fa* 淨心戒觀法(c. 667CE); T1893 23. *Yifa zhuchi ganying* 遺法住持感應; No longer extant, mentioned in *FZ*: T2122.1023c12 24. *Fuzhu yi* 付囑儀； No longer extant, mentioned in *SGZ*: T2061.791b22.[765]	

[765] Mizuno 1972: 3.

Table 4. Chronological breakdown of the texts attributed to Daoxuan[766]

Date (CE)	Text	Reference
624		
	➢ *Shimen jiseng guidu tu jing* 釋門集僧軌度圖經; No longer extant	Mentioned in *Xinbian zhu zongjiao zang zong mulu* 新編諸宗教藏總録: T2184.1174b29.
626		
	➢ *Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔	T1804
627		
	➢ *Sifenlü she pini yi chao* 四分律拾毗尼義鈔	X747
634		
	➢ *Sifenlü biqiu hanzhu jieben* 四分律比丘含注戒本 ➢ *Jiaocheng xinxue bique xing hulü yi* 教誡新學比丘行護律儀 ➢ *Sifenlü shanbu suiji jiemo* 四分律刪補隨機羯磨	T1806 T1808 T1897
635		
	➢ *Sifenlü shanbu suiji jiemo shu* 四分律刪補隨機羯磨疏	X728
637		
	➢ *Liangchu qingzhong yi* 量處輕重儀	T1895
642		
	➢ *Sifen biqiuni chao* 四分比丘尼鈔	X724
645		
	➢ *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳	T2060

[766] The asterisk (*) symbol indicates that the title appeared in the list above (Table 3) in different form. A footnote will give context.

647		
	➢ *Sifenlü shanding seng jieben* 四分律刪定僧戒本; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Yiyuan yi bian* 芝園遺編: X1104.649a6.
650		
	➢ *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 ➢ *Jiaojie xinxue biqiuxing hulü yi* 教誡新學比丘行護律儀	T2088 T1897
651		
	➢ *Sifenlü hanzhu jieben shu* 四分律含注戒本疏 [767] ➢ *Sifenlü shanding ni jieben* 四分律刪定尼戒本; No longer extant.	X714 Mentioned in *Yiyuan yi bian* 芝園遺編: X1104.649a14.
659		
	➢ *Shimen zhangfu yi* 釋門章服儀 ➢ *Huseng wuzhi* 護僧物制; No longer extant. ➢ *Jiao sushi shezhai yi* 教俗士設齋儀; No longer extant. ➢ *Liushi lifo chanhui yi* 六時禮佛懺悔儀; No longer extant.	T1894 Mentioned in *Yiyuan yi bian* 芝園遺編: X1104.649b9 Mentioned in *Yiyuan yi bian* 芝園遺編: X1104.649b13. Mentioned in *Yiyuan yi bian* 芝園遺編: X1104.650a24.
661 CE		
	➢ *Shimen guijing yi* 釋門歸敬儀 ➢ *Ji gujin fodao lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡	T1896 T2104
664 CE		
	➢ *Guanghong ming ji* 廣弘明集 ➢ *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄	T2103 T2106

[767] Date given in Fujiyoshi 1992a: 40.

	➢ *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄	T2149
	➢ *Xu da Tang neidian lu* 續大唐內典錄	T2150
665 CE		
	➢ *Shijia shipu* 釋迦氏譜	T2041
667 CE		
	➢ *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 [768]	T2107
	➢ **Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳	T1898
	➢ *Zhong tianzhu sheweiguo qihuansi tu jing* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經	T1899
	➢ *Guanzhong chuanli jietan tu jing* 關中創立戒壇圖經	T1892
	➢ *Jingxin jieguan fa* 淨心戒觀法	T1893
	➢ *Fuzhu yi* 付囑儀; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *SGZ*: T2061.791b22.[769]
	➢ *Jingchu gao* 淨厨誥; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Yiyuan yi bian* 芝園遺編: X1104.649b7.
Dates Unknown	➢	
	➢ *Pini zuochi xushi* 毗尼作持續釋	X730
	➢ *Yifa zhuchi ganying* 遺法住持感應; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *FZ*: T2122.1023c12.
	➢ *Hu sanbao wu yi* 護三寶物儀; No longer extant	Mentioned in the *Yiyuan yi bian* 芝園遺編: X1104.649a21.
	➢ *Ji fojing liushi xingdao yi* 集佛經六時行道儀; No longer extant.	Mentioned in the *Yiyuan yi bian* 芝園遺編: X1104.650b2

[768] This text was dated 664, though it most likely was composed in 667. The content is essentially the same as the L*üxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳. Fujiyoshi argues that the different dating was caused by a confusion between the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* and the *Record of Miracles* which was written in 664 (1992b: 200 ff.).
[769] Mizuno 1972: 3.

	➢ *Lü san dabu* 律三大部; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Tiantai mingmu leiju chao* 天台名目類聚鈔: D8903.19a4.
	➢ *Qingzhong caiying ji* 輕重采英記; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Xinbian zhu zongjiao zang zong mulu* 新編諸宗教藏總録: T2184.1174b22.
	➢ *Sifen jieben chao* ➢ 四分戒本鈔; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Lüzong zhangshu* 律宗章疏: T2182.1145a24.
	➢ *Sifenlü chao* 四分律抄; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Dongyu chuandeng mulu* 東域傳燈目錄: T2183.1155b7.
	➢ *Sifenlü chao kejian* 四分律抄料簡; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Dongyu chuandeng mulu* 東域傳燈目錄: T2183.1155b8.
	➢ *Sifenlü jianxing yaochao* 四分律見行要鈔; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Xinbian zhu zongjiao zang zong mulu* 新編諸宗教藏總録: T2184.1174a4.
	➢ *Sifenlü xingshi luechao* 四分律行事略鈔; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Xinbian zhu zongjiao zang zong mulu* 新編諸宗教藏總録: T2184.1174a6.
	➢ *Sifenlü pini jianxing yaochao* 四分律毘尼見行鈔; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Xinbian zhu zongjiao zang zong mulu* 新編諸宗教藏總録: T2184.1174a5.
	➢ *Shimen hufa yi* 釋門護法儀; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐内典錄: T2149.282a21.
	➢ *Shimen wangwu qingzhong yi* 釋門亡物輕重儀; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐内典錄: T2149.282a18.
	➢ *Yi juan jiemo shu* 一卷羯磨疏; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Lüzong zhangshu* 律宗章疏: T2182.1145b2.
	➢ *Hou ji xu gaoseng zhuan* 後集續高僧傳; No longer extant.	See Mizuno 1972: 2; 4.
	➢ *Famen wenji* 法門文記; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *SGZ*: T2061.790c25-26.

	➢ *Shengji jianzai tuzan* 聖迹見在圖贊; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Da tang neidian lu* 大唐内典錄: T2149.282a23.
	➢ *Fohua dongjian tuzan* 佛化東漸圖贊; No longer extant.	Mentioned in *Da tang neidian lu* 大唐内典錄: T2149.282a24.
	➢ *Ximing si tuzan* 西明寺圖讚	Fujiyoshi claims this entry appeared in a japanese catalogue titled *Nihon koku kenzaisho mokuroku* 日本国見在書目錄 (1992a: 46).

Appendix IV

The following are two similarity comparisons between (table 1.) the *Guanghong mingji* 廣弘明集 T2103 and (table 2.) the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 T2122 with the *Record of Miracles*. Similarity is determined by analysing text reuse **(***regex***)** by matching strings of 8 characters (n-grams) between chapters in the two texts. A result of 0 means there are no matching strings of 8 characters, while any figure over 0.00002 is significant. This analysis was done using Donald Sturgeon's 'Text Tool' on the Chinese Text Project (Ctext) website (https://ctext.org/).

Table 1. Text reuse comparison for the *Ji shenzhou sanbao ganton lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 and the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集

f.		1 感通錄卷上	2 感通錄卷中	3 感通錄卷下
1	廣弘明集	0.0000141	0.00000745	0
2	廣弘明集	0.00000559	0	0
3	廣弘明集	0	0	0
4	廣弘明集	0	0	0.00000581
5	廣弘明集	0	0	0
6	廣弘明集	0	0	0
7	廣弘明集	0	0	0
8	廣弘明集	0	0	0
9	廣弘明集	0	0	0
10	廣弘明集	0	0	0

11	廣弘明集	0	0	0
12	廣弘明集	0	0	0
13	廣弘明集	0	0	0
14	廣弘明集	0	0	0
15	廣弘明集	0.0000397	0.0000263	0
16	廣弘明集	0	0	0
17	廣弘明集	0.0000437	0	0
18	廣弘明集	0	0	0
19	廣弘明集	0	0	0
20	廣弘明集	0	0	0
21	廣弘明集	0	0	0
22	廣弘明集	0	0	0
23	廣弘明集	0	0	0
24	廣弘明集	0	0	0
25	廣弘明集	0	0	0
26	廣弘明集	0	0	0
27	廣弘明集	0.0000022	0	0

28	廣弘明集	0	0	0
29	廣弘明集	0	0	0
30	廣弘明集	0	0	0

Analysis

Text reuse is not particularly significant between these two texts. We see that fascicle 1 of the *Record of Miracles* borrows from *Guanghong ming ji*: 15 and 17. To a lesser extent, fascicle 2 of the *Record of Miracles* borrows from *Guanghong ming ji* 15.

Table 2. Text reuse (*regex*) comparison for the *Ji shenzhou sanbao ganton lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 and the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林

		1 感通錄卷上	2 感通錄卷中	3 感通錄卷下
1	法苑珠林	0	0	0
2	法苑珠林	0	0	0
3	法苑珠林	0	0	0
4	法苑珠林	0	0	0
5	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000233
6	法苑珠林	0	0	0
7	法苑珠林	0	0	0
8	法苑珠林	0	0	0
9	法苑珠林	0	0	0.00000134
10	法苑珠林	0	0	0
11	法苑珠林	0	0	0
12	法苑珠林	0	0.0000015	0
13	法苑珠林	0	0.000114	0
14	法苑珠林	0	0.000094	0.0000099
15	法苑珠林	0	0.0000656	0
16	法苑珠林	0	0.0000121	0.0000226
17	法苑珠林	0	0.0000424	0.0000211
18	法苑珠林	0.00000193	0	0.0000777
19	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000586
20	法苑珠林	0	0	0.000013
21	法苑珠林	0	0	0
22	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000448
23	法苑珠林	0	0	0
24	法苑珠林	0	0	0.00000435
25	法苑珠林	0	0	0
26	法苑珠林	0	0	0
27	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000505

28	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000144
29	法苑珠林	0	0	0
30	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000397
31	法苑珠林	0	0.000024	0
32	法苑珠林	0.00000767	0	0.0000539
33	法苑珠林	0	0	0.00000806
34	法苑珠林	0	0	0
35	法苑珠林	0	0.0000267	0.0000108
36	法苑珠林	0.0000412	0.00000152	0.00000588
37	法苑珠林	0	0	0
38	法苑珠林	0.000103	0	0.00000526
39	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000848
40	法苑珠林	0.000097	0	0
41	法苑珠林	0	0	0
42	法苑珠林	0	0	0.000017
43	法苑珠林	0	0	0
44	法苑珠林	0	0	0
45	法苑珠林	0	0	0
46	法苑珠林	0	0	0.00000151
47	法苑珠林	0	0	0
48	法苑珠林	0	0	0
49	法苑珠林	0	0	0
50	法苑珠林	0	0	0
51	法苑珠林	0	0	0
52	法苑珠林	0	0	0
53	法苑珠林	0	0	0
54	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000416
55	法苑珠林	0.00000705	0.00000427	0.00000478
56	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000102
57	法苑珠林	0	0	0
58	法苑珠林	0	0	0
59	法苑珠林	0	0	0
60	法苑珠林	0	0	0

61	法苑珠林	0	0	0.00000165
62	法苑珠林	0	0	0
63	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000268
64	法苑珠林	0	0	0
65	法苑珠林	0	0.00000173	0.0000348
66	法苑珠林	0	0	0
67	法苑珠林	0.0000625	0	0
68	法苑珠林	0	0	0
69	法苑珠林	0	0	0
70	法苑珠林	0	0	0
71	法苑珠林	0	0	0
72	法苑珠林	0	0	0
73	法苑珠林	0	0	0
74	法苑珠林	0	0	0
75	法苑珠林	0	0	0
76	法苑珠林	0	0	0
77	法苑珠林	0	0	0
78	法苑珠林	0	0	0
79	法苑珠林	0	0	0
80	法苑珠林	0	0	0
81	法苑珠林	0	0	0
82	法苑珠林	0	0	0
83	法苑珠林	0	0	0
84	法苑珠林	0	0	0
85	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000119
86	法苑珠林	0	0	0
87	法苑珠林	0	0	0
88	法苑珠林	0	0	0
89	法苑珠林	0	0	0
90	法苑珠林	0	0	0
91	法苑珠林	0	0.0000523	0.000045
92	法苑珠林	0	0	0
93	法苑珠林	0	0	0

94	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000353
95	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000454
96	法苑珠林	0	0	0
97	法苑珠林	0	0	0.0000067
98	法苑珠林	0	0	0
99	法苑珠林	0	0	0
100	法苑珠林	0.00000161	0	0.0000404

Analysis

Looking at this table, we can see that the first fascicle of the *Record of Miracles* was copied most extensively by Daoshi in the *FZ* in fascicles 38 and 40, and less extensively in fascicles 36 and 67. The second fascicle of the *Record of Miracles* appears most prominently in *FZ*, fascicles 13 and 14, as well as less extensively in 15, 17, 31, 35 and 91. The third fascicle of the *Record of Miracles* appears most extensively in *FZ* fascicle 39, and less extensively in 5, 18, 19, 22,27, 32, 39, 54, 65, 91, 94, 95, and 100.

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