Representing Mount Wutai’s 五台山 Past: A Study of Chinese and Japanese Miracle Tales about the Five Terrace Mountain

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores diverse imaginings of Mount Wutai’s significance put forward between the seventh and fourteenth centuries. It is built around a close reading of five principal miracle tales, various versions of which appear in court memorials, clerical biographies, diaries, statuary sets, temple chronicles, local gazetteers, and inscriptions preserved in China and Japan. Comparing the different portrayals of the mountain in these five primary narratives together with many other miracle tales set at the mountain, this thesis attempts to explain how and for whom the representation of Mount Wutai’s significance worked. The dissertation proposes that during the course of its emergence as the focus of regional, national, and international devotion, the site’s former importance was repeatedly recast in ways that met the needs of changing audiences in Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) China and Heian (794-1185) and Kamakura (1185-1333) Japan.
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To Noel and our family
Chapter One

Introduction

Orientations

Depictions of Mount Wutai’s 五臺山 (literally, the Five Terrace Mountain) importance changed considerably between the seventh and fourteenth centuries. This dissertation traces the contours of that transformation. It is built around a close reading of five principal miracle tales, various versions of which appear in court memorials, clerical biographies, diaries, statuary sets, temple chronicles, local gazetteers, and inscriptions preserved within and far beyond the borders of the mountain’s present-day Shanxi 山西 province home. Comparing the diverse portrayals of the mountain in these five primary narratives together with many other miracle tales set at the mountain, in the following pages I will attempt to explain how and for whom the representation of Mount Wutai’s significance worked. More specifically, I will propose that during the course of its emergence as the focus of regional, national, and international devotion during this period, the site’s former importance was repeatedly recast in ways that met the needs of changing audiences.

Though these accounts constitute but a tiny fraction of the large body of material composed about this place, careful study of the narratives I have collected here nevertheless provides us with a window into the multiple, sometimes competing, ways that groups of people envisioned Mount Wutai. After all, these stories about a handful of individuals who witnessed extraordinary events at the
site are available to us today because the many people who received, retold, and recorded the tales deemed them worthy of attention. Recently, Robert Campany has emphasized the “densely social quality” of the miracle tale genre, writing that the collective nature of these “artifacts of narrative and social memory...is precisely what makes them valuable as material for the history of religions” (Campany 2012, 6, 61). “We may not be able to conclude from these narratives ‘what actually happened’ at the level of events at this or that time and place,” Campany continues, “but we may infer a great deal about what many people believed had happened—and what they wanted others to believe” (Campany 2012, 61). Between the seventh and fourteenth centuries the tales I have assembled here not only reflected and shaped how groups of people envisioned Mount Wutai but the imagining and reimagining of this site, further, afforded those who participated in the process of narrating Mount Wutai’s past an opportunity to articulate and renegotiate their own positions vis-à-vis the wider Buddhist world.

Rather than presenting a comprehensive account of the site’s history, then, in this dissertation I will consider what writing about Mount Wutai’s past achieved in several pre-fifteenth century contexts. I will propose, in short, that the practice facilitated literal and figurative construction. There is, first, a seemingly concrete relationship between these miracle tales and the establishment of physical sites. All but one of the five main stories around which I have structured this dissertation serves as a founding legend for a building erected in Tang China (618-907) or Heian (794-1185) and Kamakura (1185-1333) Japan. The tales of the Wangzi shaoshen
Temple 王子焼身寺 (Temple of the Prince who Torched his Body). Wuzhuo’s entry into the conjured Qingliang Temple 化清凉寺 (Clear and Cool Temple), the Seiryōji’s 清涼寺 (Clear and Cool Temple) creation, and the story of a thirteen-storied pagoda’s completion at Tōnomine 多武峰 each recount miraculous events that purportedly precipitated or attended building projects. Though in actuality these records may long postdate the structures themselves, they nevertheless explain for later audiences what renders a memorial mound or temple the worthy object of patronage and an efficacious place of practice.

The exception here is the story of the three śramaṇas who obtained transcendence (xian 仙) after consuming alcohol in a mountain hollow. This seventh-century narrative is the subject of chapter three. In contrast to the above four tales of “miraculous building” which provide (sometimes retrospectively) a rationale for creating, patronizing, and carrying out practice at particular constructions, this legend provides no obvious material corollary for the events it narrates. Instead the tale about these novices, like other stories of Mount Wutai’s mysterious caverns, celestial palaces and hidden grottos, implies that what renders the mountain an extraordinary place is ordinarily invisible. In the third chapter I will show how these stories initially constituted a counterpoint to accounts celebrating built structures such as the record of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s establishment. In chapter four I will argue that by the ninth century these tales of

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1 This structure is also known as the Wangzi shaoshen ta 王子焼身塔 (Stūpa of the Prince who Torched his Body).
“hidden landscapes” were incorporated into accounts of conjured temples in which they served a new end: the promotion of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī’s (Wenshu pusa, Monju bosatsu 文殊菩薩) veneration at Mount Wutai’s temples.

In addition to facilitating the establishment and maintenance of physical sites, the recounting of Mount Wutai’s past in miracle tales allowed for the creation of connections across time and space. Narrating the territory’s early history served as a means through which local practitioners articulated and re-defined their relationship to the Buddhist world’s shifting center. By constructing the mountain as a holy site first in Tang China and then establishing Mount Wutai replicas in Heian and Kamakura Japan, individuals living far away from Śākyamuni’s homeland represented themselves as standing at the hub of the Buddhist world. In these contexts, the fashioning of a rich history for the Five Terrace Mountain in miracle tales like the ones under study here extended the newfound importance of these locales into the distant past. Anachronistically projecting practices into the mountain’s early history, these miracle tales, moreover, fashioned links between practices and beliefs of a comparatively recent provenance and well-established tradition. Telling and retelling Mount Wutai’s history in this way, these narratives created precedent for, among other things, Mañjuśrī’s veneration at Mount Wutai beginning in the seventh century and the erection of thirteen-storied pagodas in Kamakura Japan. These manipulations of the mountain’s supple past offered a way for practitioners in varied times and places to imagine themselves and their sometimes highly novel activities as operating within the boundaries of longstanding Buddhist tradition.
Scholarly Contexts

In studying differing portrayals of Mount Wutai in four historical contexts—Tang and Song (960-1279) China and Heian and Kamakura Japan—I have read and relied on the extensive body of scholarship about the Shanxi site. In contrast to my dissertation, that emphasizes the mountain’s pan-Asian importance, much of this work focuses on the earliest stages of Mount Wutai’s development as the center of the cult of Mañjuśrī within the borders of the Tang. Studies on the topic can be loosely divided into four sometimes-overlapping groups according to the type of materials around which they are built.

One body of Mount Wutai scholarship deals with the role scriptural sources played in the mountain’s emergence as a sacred center. Following Lamotte (1960), scholars such as Birnbaum (1984, 1986, 2004), Cartelli (2002), and Sen (2003) have underscored the significance of three scriptures to the mountain’s creation as a sacred center. These are Buddhhabhadra’s 佛馱跋陀羅 (fifth century) ca.420 translation of the Avataṃsaka sūtra (Huayan jing 华嚴經), the Mañjuśrī dharma ratnagarbha dhāranī sūtra (Wenshu shili fabaozang tuoluoni jing 文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經) translated into Chinese by Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (672-727), and the Mañjuśrī parinirvāṇa sūtra (Wenshu shili ban niepan jing 文殊師利般涅槃經).

Proponents of the Mañjuśrī cult, the authors of these studies have demonstrated, creatively interpreted this triad of sūtras as predicting the Bodhisattva’s appearance

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2 David Quinter has shown that the Mañjuśrī parinirvāṇa sūtra is not, as the Taishō canon states and Lamotte repeated in his article “Mañjušrī,” the third-century work of Nie Daozhen 聶道真 (c. 280-312). It is a later, perhaps sixth-century, production wrongly attributed to him (Quinter 2010).
at the mountain. In so doing, they provided scriptural authority for the site’s veneration as Mañjuśrī’s realm in the first decades of the Tang period.

Particularly important for understanding Mount Wutai’s initial identification as Mañjuśrī’s dwelling place is the following *Avataṃsaka sūtra* passage, a well-known interpolation that appears in both Buddhhabhadra and Śikṣānanda’s versions of the text. Mount Qingliang 清凉山 (literally, the Clear and Cool Mountain), mentioned in the second line, is an alternate name for Mount Wutai. ³

To the northeast direction there is [a] bodhisattva’s dwelling place. [It is] named Mount Qingliang. In the past the various bodhisattvas permanently abided there. Now there is the bodhisattva named Mañjuśrī. [He] has ten thousand bodhisattvas [and] followers. He permanently teaches the dharma [there] T.278.590(a).⁴

Frequent allusions to this *Avataṃsaka sūtra* passage in the first gazetteer about Mount Wutai, Huixiang’s 慧祥 (seventh-century) *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清凉傳 (*Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool*), indicate that this proposition about the site’s significance accelerated its transformation into the center of Mañjuśrī devotion.⁵

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³ Examining discrepancies between extant versions of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, Étienne Lamotte showed that the allusion to Mount Qingliang is an addition preserved in Chinese but not Tibetan redactions of the text. The discovery calls attention to the role that strategic inclusions and omissions played in the making of Wutai into a Buddhist place of practice (Lamotte 1960). Inserting this reference, the translator and his collaborators, in Tansen Sen’s words, “furnished further justification for those trying to associate Mañjuṣrī’s prophetic abode with Mount Wutai” (Sen 2003, 77).

⁴ Śikṣānanda’s rendering of this passage is nearly identical to this section of Buddhhabhadra’s translation T.279.241(b).

⁵ For instance, references to the sūtra appear in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* record of the layman Tanyun 塔顕 (d. 643) who renounced secular life after practicing at Mount Wutai T.2098.1098(a). The gazetteer asserts that he traveled to the mountain after hearing that it was Mañjuṣrī’s dwelling place, a reference to the above *Avataṃsaka sūtra* passage. The gazetteer also recounts the experiences of the laymen Fang Deyuan 房德元 and Wang Xuanshuang 王玄爽 who purportedly journeyed to the site after seeing the same “Dwelling Places of the Bodhisattvas” chapter of the sūtra T.2098.1099(c); 1100(a).
In later periods two sections of the *Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra* rivaled the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* in importance. In both Song period China and Heian and Kamakura period Japan the first of these was taken to be proof that Mañjuśrī continued to be present in the world following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāṇa. According to the sūtra, the Buddha declared:

Long dwelling in the meditative trance of heroic valor (*śūramgama-samādhi*), four hundred fifty years after my final passing, (Mañjuśrī) will go to a snowy mountain (*xueshan 雪山*) and—for five hundred transcendents (*xianren 仙人*)—he will extensively proclaim the teachings of twelve divisions of the (Mahāyāna) scriptures T.463.480(c).⁶

Originally Buddhist practitioners considered the phrase snowy mountain (*xueshan 雪山*, Sanskrit *himavat*) to be a reference to the Himālayan chain (Sen 2003, 77). In an effort to connect Mañjuśrī to a mountain range at the northern reaches of the Tang, promoters of the Wutai cult, in contrast, came to interpret the phrase as an allusion to Mount Qingliang. In this context, references to the peaks’ cold temperature and barrenness in non-scriptural sources, as Raoul Birnbaum has asserted, confirmed that the territory was indeed the snowy mountain of the *Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra* and the Clear-and-Cool place referenced in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (Birnbaum 1986).

The second *Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra* passage that came to play a key role both within and beyond the borders of the Song deals with the myriad of manifestations in which the Bodhisattva appeared before devotees. It reads:

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⁶ The above translation of the *Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra* is Tansen Sen’s. It appears in his *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade* (Sen 2003, 77).
If sentient beings pay homage and make offerings to Mañjuśrī, then they will always be born in a land where a Buddha is present and be protected by Mañjuśrī...If a person wishes to make offerings in order to produce merit, then Mañjuśrī will transform himself into a poverty-stricken suffering wretch with no means of support and appear before the practitioner T.463.481(a,b).  

The claim that the Bodhisattva appears as a destitute person for the purpose of providing sentient beings with merit making opportunities, together with early records of his appearance in various forms at pre-Song Mount Wutai, became the foundation for distinct Japanese versions of the Bodhisattva cult that I discuss in the fifth and sixth chapters. These include the belief that Mañjuśrī appeared in the archipelago both as the cleric Gyōki 行基 (668-749) and, in Eison's 叡尊 (1201-1290) Shingon Ritsu 真言律 rituals, as hinin 非人 (outcasts).

Just as depictions of Mount Wutai vary considerably according to time and place, visual and textual representations of Mañjuśrī are diverse. The Bodhisattva of Wisdom’s appearance as Sudhana’s guide in the Gandavyūha section of the Avataṃsaka sūtra and his encounter with the wise layman Vimalakīrti are perhaps the best-known of these. Like Mahāyāna literature more broadly, post-eighth-century accounts of the mountain are replete with references to Mañjuśrī’s manifestations astride a lion mount, a topic about which I will say more in chapter four. Text and art frequently depict him in the form of a young prince. He appears, for instance, as “Mañjuśrī Prince of Dharma” 文殊師利法王子 and the “Youth

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7 This is Paul Groner’s rendering of the passage (Groner 2001, 135).

8 In The Pilgrimage of Sudhana, Jan Fontein catalogued the wide variety of art that takes the Gandavyūha sūtra as its focus. On Mañjuśrī’s depiction with Vimalakīrti see Richard Mather’s “Vimalakīrti and Gentry Buddhism.” I discuss both these representations of the Bodhisattva in greater detail below.
Mañjuśrī" 文殊師利童子 in the Mañjuśrī dharma ratnagarbha dhāranī sūtra and the Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sutra T.463.480(c); T.1185.791(c). As the above Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra passage suggests, Buddhist writings, including miracle tales set at Mount Wutai, also hold that devotees encounter the Bodhisattva in disguise as, among other things, a cleric, an elderly layman and a woman. “As a result of new translations of ritual texts and new iconographic forms that entered China in the eighth and ninth centuries,” the period when Mount Wutai emerged as the focus of international devotion, “the parameters of Mañjuśrī’s cult,” Richard D. McBride explains, “began to expand to include that of a mountain god, the personal guardian of the emperor and his family and the spiritual protector of the state, and a cosmic overlord in the esoteric pantheon, where he is revered as a buddha” (McBride 2011, 217). Though a full discussion of this topic remains beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is not hard to imagine that, like the multiple representations of Mount Wutai’s significance, varied depictions of Mañjuśrī served the needs of diverse communities of practitioners between the seventh and fourteenth centuries.

A second body of Wutai-related scholarship takes as its focus vision-tale materials recounting Mañjuśrī’s manifestations before mountain pilgrims. Examples of this scholarship include work by Gimello (1992, 1994), Stevenson (1996), and Birnbaum (1986, 2004). Texts such as Yanyi’s 延一 (998? -1072) Guang Qingliang zhuan 廣清涼傳 (Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool), Zanning’s 賛寧 (919-1001) Song gaoseng zhuan 宋高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks from the

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9 According to Sørensen, during the Tang period when Mount Wutai emerged as the focus of the Bodhisattva cult Mañjuśrī also came to be venerated as an astral deity (Sørensen 2011, 234).
Song), Zhang Shangying's 張商英 (1043-1122) Xu Qingliang zhuàn 續清凉傳 (Continued Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool) and Zhubian's 朱弁 (d. 1144) Taishan ruiying ji 臺山瑞應記 (Record of Auspicious Response at Mount (Wu)tai) are some of the key texts around which this work is built. Studies of these materials have contributed much to our understanding of the way in which accounts of Mañjuśrī's manifestations before Mount Wutai pilgrims created and sustained the mountain’s sacred status, confirming scriptural claims that the mountain was the Bodhisattva’s dwelling place and thus enhancing the sense that the site merited devotional attention in the form of pilgrimage and patronage. Building on this research, my dissertation compares miracle tales found in different Chinese sources and considers how these stories were preserved and used to new ends not only within but also outside of Tang and Song China.

A third aspect of Mount Wutai’s history that continues to receive substantial scholarly attention is the role that individuals, particularly the Tantric master Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705-774), played in the site’s establishment as a holy place. Two of the earliest Western-language publications that examined Amoghavajra’s efforts to generate imperial support for the site are Raoul Birnbaum’s Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī and Raffaello Orlando’s less often-cited dissertation on the Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozhi ji 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集 (The Collected Memorials and edicts pertaining to the preceptor monk Amoghavara, on whom the court of Emperor Daizong (posthumously) bestowed the titles Sikong and the Senior
Master of the Tripiṭaka of Great Discrimination and Broad Wisdom). More recent publications such as Gu Zheng Mei’s 古正美 “Tang Daizong and Amoghavajra’s Mañjuśrī Belief” 唐代宗與不空金剛的文殊信仰 (2006) and Nakata Mie’s 中田美絵 “Mount Wutai Mañjuśrī Belief and Royalty: An Analysis of the Repairs on the Jinge Temple with Regards to Tang Daizong’s Reign” 五台山文殊信仰と王権—唐朝代宗期における金閣寺修築の分析を通じて (2009) attest to the continued interest in the subject, especially the rebuilding of Mount Wutai’s Jinge Temple 金閣寺 (Golden Pavillion Temple) and Amoghavajra’s relationship with Emperor Daizong of the Tang 唐代宗 (r. 762-779). Tansen Sen’s (2003) study of the relationship between Mount Wutai’s development as an object of international pilgrimage and Wu Zetian’s 武則天 (r. 684-705) court and Jinhua Chen’s (2007) account of Master Fazang’s 法藏 (643-712) legacy at the site are other examples of this type of work in which the impact of individual actors in the mountain’s construction as a holy place comes to the fore. I will discuss Chen and Sen’s work more fully in the second and third chapters.

A fourth class of scholarship concentrates on particular poetic and, very often, artistic traditions related to Mount Wutai. Ernesta Marchand (1976) and Dorothy Wong’s (1993) studies of the famous mural in Cave 61 at Qianfo dong 千佛洞, Dunhuang 敦煌 and Maryanne Cartelli’s (2002, 2005-2006,) work on Dunhuang poetic traditions typify this body of scholarship. Wu Peijung’s 巫佩蓉 (2002)

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10 Orlando introduces the Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozhiji and summarizes its contents (Orlando 1981, 38-103).
dissertation on the Monju goson 文殊五尊 five figure statuary sets and paintings and Zhao Lin'en's 趙林恩 (2002) *Wutai shan shige zongji* 五台山诗歌总集 (*Anthology of Mount Wutai Poems*) also fit in here. In contrast to the first category of scholarship I introduced, these studies prioritize non-scriptural materials. With the notable exception of Wu's project, this work, like the bulk of the literature reviewed here, focuses on developments that took place at the Chinese site before the fourteenth century.

While scholarship has revealed much about Mount Wutai’s history during and within the borders of the Tang and Song, it has had less to say about the mountain’s later and larger East Asian significance. Inscriptions, pilgrimage records, statuary and other primary source materials of the type I discuss in this dissertation establish that from an early date the mountain’s importance extended far beyond the borders of its Shanxi home. Scholars of the Mañjuśrī cult, like our counterparts in the larger field of East Asian studies, have conducted our research almost exclusively along “national lines.” This fragmented approach to the study of religion obfuscates the many points of symbiosis between at once distance and intimately connected locales that I emphasize in the fifth and sixth chapters of this dissertation.

Recent scholarship on links between Sui (581-618) and Tang China and pre-Nara, Nara (710-794), and Heian Japan reflect a growing awareness of the need to situate the study of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean religions of the period within their larger East Asian context. Work by Marcus Bingenheimer (2001), Charlotte von Verschuer (1999), Wang Zhenping (2004), and articles from the *Hōryūji reconsidered* volume edited by Dorothy C. Wong with Eric M. Field (2008) are
particularly important here. The present project adopts this type of pan-Asian approach to the Mount Wutai cult. Together with papers published in the most recent issue of the *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* (2011) and work by Eun-so Cho (unpublished), Timothy Barrett (forthcoming), and Wen-shing Chou (2011) it further forms part of an emerging body of literature that takes as its focus the development of Wutai after the Tang period and beyond the borders of the dynasty.

**Project Outline**

This dissertation is organized into five main chapters, each of which takes as its starting point a single narrative. The first of these is the story of the establishment of Wangzi Shaoshen Temple (Temple of the Prince who Torched his Body). This narrative appears in the first of three well-known gazetteers compiled about Mount Wutai before 1164: Huixiang's *Gu Qingliang zhuan*.\(^{11}\) After introducing the gazetteer and calling attention to the highly varied portrayals of Mount Wutai's importance that it contains, in this chapter I examine how this individual legend about the temple's founding took shape. I will argue that a careful reading of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* narrative alongside redactions of the tale preserved in other sources reveals that proponents of the bodhisattva cult fashioned an early history for the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple by appropriating preexisting narratives associated with other times and places into records of the Five Terrace Mountain. I will suggest

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\(^{11}\) Gimello translates Zhang Shangyin's *Xu Qingliang zhuan* in his article "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t’ai Shan." He explains that as early as 1164 the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* together with *Xu Qingliang zhuan* circulated together in a Jin edition (1115-1234) with a preface by Yao Xiaoxi 姚孝錫 (Gimello 1992, 126).
that in this manner the gazetteer creates a dramatic precedent for contemporary Mañjuśrī-focused practice at Mount Wutai. While this story, together with many others in Huixiang’s text, portrays the site as a locale at which transformative visions of the Bodhisattva can be obtained, the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s representations of the mountain, as I will emphasize in chapters two and three, are nevertheless highly varied. It was, in fact, this diversity and the sheer number of extraordinary happenings affiliated with the locale that seem to have most captured Huixiang’s imagination and inspired him to compose the work.

The third chapter of this dissertation concerns one such alternate vision of the mountain’s significance put forward in the Gu Qingliang zhuan story of the three śramaṇas who achieved immortality in a hidden hollow. Like other pre-eighth century tales about celestial palaces, hidden grottos, and lush groves that appear and vanish from the mountain slopes, this narrative suggests that what renders the site an efficacious place of practice is ordinarily concealed from view. Careful study of the tale of the three śramaṇas alongside other stories of immortality and hidden landscapes preserved in the Gu Qingliang zhuan should not only draw attention to a second way in which Mount Wutaï’s importance was asserted at the beginning of the Tang but also ought to shed light on the process by which miracle tales, a highly supple genre, expanded to create and recreate an illustrious past for the site. In this instance, the proliferation of founding legends for an individual temple and the affiliation of that structure with a miracle tale that initially circulated independent of any reference to constructions reinforced the sense that the monasteries at Mount Wutai were worthy recipients of patronage.
The representation of Mount Wutai and that of its chief resident changed in significant ways between the time of the Gu Qingliang zhuan's seventh-century compilation and the eleventh-century when Yanyi composed the Guang Qingliang zhuan. This transformation is the subject of chapter four. I take as my starting point a comparison of the record of Wuzhuo's 无著 (eighth century) entry into the conjured Qingliang Temple and compare this narrative to a collection of four additional Guang Qingliang zhuan narratives with which it is closely related. These are tales about conjured temples (huasi 化寺) that tradition holds Mañjuśrī manifested at Tang period Mount Wutai. In this chapter, I propose that depictions of the mountain and the Bodhisattva in these materials are different from those found in the Gu Qingliang zhuan and other pre-eighth century sources in three important respects. Tales of conjured temples, for instance, introduce the notion that Mañjuśrī is present at Mount Wutai in the era of dharmic decline (mofa 末法 or modai 末代). In chapter four I propose that the depiction of the site and the saint in these later miracle tales reflects a convergence of artistic, scriptural and story tradition during the years coinciding with Mount Wutai’s emergence as the focus of dynasty-wide ritual attention.

Chapter five takes as its focus records of the Japanese cleric Chōnen’s 奇然 (938-1016) journey to Mount Wutai and accounts of his efforts to create a local replica of the Five Terrace Mountain near Heian-kyō 平安京 following his return from Song China. When we compare Chōnen’s positive evaluation of Mount Wutai’s

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12 I say much more about this terminology below on page 117.
importance with the perspectives on the same site found in later records of his life and career, such as his *Tōgoku kōsō den* (Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Eastern Country) and *Honchō kōsō den* (Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan) hagiographies, we can learn a great deal about the way in which imaginings of Mount Wutai’s importance changed in Heian and Kamakura Japan. In this chapter I will highlight the way in which early materials frame the mountain as the center of the international Bodhisattva cult whereas later texts portray Mount Wutai as a hub of Mañjuśrī devotion. I will suggest that the establishment of Japanese holy centers including the Seiryōji, a counterpart to Mount Wutai’s Qingliang Temple, contributed to the sense that Heian Japan constituted a legitimate center of Buddhist practice and belief, rather than a remote backwater on the holy realm’s periphery. One consequence of Buddhism taking root in Japanese soil in this way was that the importance with which Mount Wutai was invested diminished overtime in Japan.

I have chosen to conclude my dissertation with an examination of the story of the seventh-century cleric Jōe’s journey to the Five Terrace Mountain and his construction of a thirteen-storied pagoda upon his return to Japan because it suggests how the cult of Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai were used to new ends in the Kamakura period. In this sixth chapter I will show that Jōe’s hagiography redefined Mount Wutai’s significance in a manner advantageous not only to proponents of the Fujiwara (Nakatomi 中臣) no Kamatari 藤原鎌足 (614-669) cult centered at the Kōfukuji 興福寺 and Tōnonime but also Eison’s Shingon Ritsu movement. As with the *Gu Qingliang zhuan, Guang Qingliang zhuan*, and Chōnen materials that I discuss
in the previous chapters, the *Genkō Shakusho* 元亨釈書 (Buddhist Chronicle of the Genkō Era) and other post-eleventh century records of Jōe’s life and career reimagined Mount Wutai’s importance in a manner that met the needs of contemporary religious practitioners.

With Mount Wutai at the center of my inquiry, in the following pages I examine relationships between the past and the present; reception and representation; the local and the *translocal* contexts of religious practice and belief. How do local religious communities differently interpret and strategically apply received traditions? What does the writing and rewriting of the past accomplish for successive generations of practitioners? What relationship obtains between the creation of local holy place and the fashioning of religious identities that are not territorially bound? These are the types broader questions that orient my exploration of the changing representations of Mount Wutai’s significance in court memorials, clerical biographies, diaries, statuery sets, temple chronicles, local gazetteers, and inscriptions preserved in China and Japan between the seventh and fourteenth-centuries.
Chapter Two

The Wangzi Shaoshen Temple (Temple of the Prince who Torched his Body) and the Making of Mount Wutai

This chapter examines pre-eighth century depictions of Mount Wutai through an analysis of the founding legend of a single site: the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple. This structure is one of a mere six Mount Wutai temples named in the Gu Qingliang zhuan, evidence of the inchoate state of practice at the mountain during this period. Examining how the legend of the temple’s establishment took shape, in this chapter I call attention to one means through which the mountain was transformed into the center of the Mañjuśrī cult. My basic hypothesis is that in the decades leading up to the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s compilation a number of potent religious themes came to be attached to a particular site at Mount Wutai that initially had no specific ties to the Bodhisattva. By the late seventh-century the

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13 Rather than translating all proper nouns into English, in this dissertation I have elected to use the Romanized version of place names, titles, and people for three reasons. First, there are multiple ways to translate a single name into English. The Qingliang si 清凉寺 might, for instance, be rendered Temple of Chill Clarity or Clear and Cool Temple. Differences in translation such as these make working with secondary scholarship confusing because it is sometimes quite difficult to identify the Chinese, Japanese, or Sanskrit term to which an English word refers. Second, the meaning of a number of names, including Dafu si 大孚寺 and Da futu si 大孚圖寺, remain opaque in Chinese and thus cannot be easily translated into English. Finally, many Chinese and Japanese sites share a single name. Mount Wutai’s Qingliang si 清凉寺, for example, has a Japanese counterpart, the Seiryōji 清凉寺. Translated into English they would both be the Clear and Cool Temple and thus not easily distinguished from one another in this dissertation. Thus throughout this dissertation you will find a translation of what the tradition holds to be the earliest version of an object’s name (for instance, Mañjuśrī) followed by its renderings in other languages including Chinese, English, and sometimes Japanese (in this example, Wenshu pusa, Monju bosatsu 文殊菩薩).

14 These are the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple, the Qingliang Temple 清凉寺, the Fuguang Temple 佛光寺, the Suopo Temple 妙婆寺, the Mugua Temple 木瓜寺 and the Dafu Temple 大孚寺. The latter temple was known by a number of names. I discuss problems related to the translation of its name beginning on page 93 below.
structure was celebrated as the place of an Aśoka stūpa, the locale at which an unnamed prince had carried out self-immolation, and a site where visions and healings were obtained. Unraveling the components which form the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s founding legend reveals a genealogy of the structure’s sacrality different than that put forth in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and illuminates how by fashioning rich histories for individual sites at the mountain miracle tales transformed undifferentiated space at the Buddhist world’s periphery into a center redolent with meaning.15

I have organized this chapter into three sections, the first of which introduces the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*’s form, content, and authorship. In this section I stress the polysemic nature of Huixiang’s text, which portrays the specialness of the mountain as founded on multiple grounds. After discussing the gazetteer generally, in part two I examine the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend in detail. I begin by comparing the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* tale of the temple’s establishment with redactions of the narrative found in other sources. A careful reading of the different versions of this single story illuminates one way that Mount Wutai was constructed as a holy place: proponents of the Mañjuśrī cult centered at the mountain created a history for the site by appropriating preexisting narratives associated with other times and places into records of Mount Wutai. In section three I will read the miracle tale of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple alongside other narratives scattered throughout the gazetteer that portray the site as a worthy object of devotion.

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15 I am paraphrasing Yifu Tuan’s language here. In his *Space and place: the perspective of experience*, Tuan writes “[w]hat begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Tuan 1997, 6).
because Mañjuśrī is present there. Many of them, further, extol the efficacy of practice at particular structures atop the mountain peaks and depict individuals responding to the visions they obtain there by erecting stele and building temples and stūpas. In this manner, the story of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple like other narratives with which it is closely affiliated provided a rationale for the creation and maintenance of stele, temples, and memorial mounds at the mountain.

2.1 Huixiang’s *Gu Qingliang zhuan*: The Text and its Contexts

2.1.i The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and the Mountain Gazetteer Genre

The account of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple is one of perhaps thirty miracle tales brought together in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*. This text is the first of three well-known gazetteers about Mount Wutai composed before the twelfth century. The late seventh-century *Gu Qingliang zhuan* is of a much earlier provenance than Yanyi’s eleventh-century *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and Zhang Shangying’s *Xu Qingliang zhuan*. This triad of texts circulated together as early as the end of the twelfth century (Gimello 1994, 567).

The form and content of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* is closer to Yanyi’s text and quite different from the later *Xu Qingliang zhuan*. Huixiang and Yanyi’s compilations bring together a range of accounts of the site, drawing extensively on inscriptions, sūtras, and local legend. In addition to providing information about religious practice at Mount Wutai, Huixiang and Yanyi catalogue a wide variety of material related to the mountain including descriptions of, for example, its proximity to other sites and physical landscape. Zhang Shangying’s *Xu Qingliang zhuan*, in contrast, is a
firsthand account of the scholar-official’s 1087 pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. From an early date Zhubian’s Taishan ruiying ji, a personal record of the place, was appended to Zhang’s text. Zhubian composed the work during the period of his captivity in nearby Datong 大同 during the Jin (1115-1234).

Huixiang appears in the Gu Qingliang zhuan in a way that the author of the subsequent Guang Qingliang zhuan does not and much of the little we know about him comes from the work itself. The compiler states that he went to Mount Wutai in the second year of the Zongzhang 總章 era (668-670) to deposit śarīra T.2098.1099(b). He reports that he met with people in nearby areas, such as Dai prefecture 代州 and Fanshi county 繁峙縣, who had previously witnessed miraculous occurrences at the site T.2098.1098(b); T.2098.1100(c). Though they reveal nothing about his family, place of origin, or status, descriptions of his travels to Mount Wutai and references to meetings with other individuals who visited there such as these indicate that Huixiang was active at the mountain and in its vicinity between 668 and 679 where he venerated Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, and other Buddhist divinities. They also allude to the communal process through which the text took

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16 A full translation of Zhubian’s Taishan ruiying ji appears in Gimello’s “Wu-t’ai Shan during the Early Chin Dynasty” (Gimello 1994, 501-612).

17 The gazetteer is the subject of Chien Ching-ling’s 簡慶齡 “Wutaishan wenshu xinyang de xuanyang: Gu Qingliang zhuan de yanjiu 五臺山文殊信仰的宣揚: 古清涼傳的研究” (Chien, 2010).

18 In the Tang period, Dai prefecture (Daizhou) stood approximately fifty kilometers west of Mount Wutai. Fanshi county (Fanshi xian) was a little more than twenty-five kilometers to the mountain’s northwest (Tan 1996, 46-47).

19 According to Ibuki (1987), Huixiang also compiled the Hongzan fahua zhuan 弘贊法華傳 (Accounts in Dissemination and Praise of the Saddharma puṇḍarīka (sūtra)). If this is correct, it would provide us with additional information about the Gu Qingliang zhuan compiler (Ibuki 1987). This well-known
shape. In addition to including narratives about the mountain preserved in other collections, such as Daoxuan’s 道宣 (596-667) Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu 神州三寶感通錄 (Collected records of the Three Treasure miracles in China) and Daoshi’s 道世 (?-683) Fayuan zhulin 法苑珠林 (Jade Grove of the Dharma Garden), Huixiang incorporated oral traditions about Mount Wutai and his own firsthand accounts of miraculous happenings into the gazetteer.

In attempting to establish the date of the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s initial compilation it is also necessary to rely on evidence internal to the text. A reference to a summer retreat convened at Suopo (Sahā) Temple 婆娑寺 in the fourth month of the first year of the Tiaolu 調露 period (679-680) is the latest date mentioned in the Gu Qingliang zhuan T.2098.1100(a). Based on this we can hypothesize that the monograph postdates 679. The name with which Huixiang refers to an important site, the Dafu Temple 大孚寺, suggests to me that the text predates the eighth-

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20 Prior to the twentieth-century, mountain gazetteers like the Gu Qingliang zhuan were not included in the canons which, therefore, provide little information about their compilation and circulation. Why were gazetteers largely excluded from the canon? In his study of the genre, Marcus Bingenheimer puts forward a two-part explanation. He hypothesizes, first, that monks did not pen many of these gazetteers. This statement applies to the later Guang Qingliang zhuan but not necessarily to the Gu Qingliang zhuan. Bingenheimer asserts, second, that the compilation of the majority of gazetteers post-dates the compilation of the Ming editions of the canon (Bingenheimer 2010, 391).
In the late seventh-century this temple’s name was changed to Huayan Temple (Avatamsaka Temple) to commemorate the completion of Śikṣānanda’s translation of the eponymous Avatamsaka sūtra (Chen 2007, 394). Both the sūtra’s translation and the Huayan Temple’s establishment were carried out under the auspices of Wu Zetian’s patronage (Birnbaum 1986, 125). Huixiang makes no mention of these events. I suspect that he uses the temple’s earlier name because he composed the Gu Qingliang zhuan in or after 679 and before the Avatamsaka sūtra’s re-translation sometime after 699.

The Gu Qingliang zhuan and Guang Qingliang zhuan have affinities with the *zhi* gazetteer genre, the subject of Marcus Bingenheimer’s recent article “Preliminary Research on Chinese Monastic Gazetteers and Studies of Their Bibliography (Zhongguo fosizhi chutan ji shumu yanjiu 中国佛寺志初探及書目研究). While the bulk of the 8500 extant *zhi* published between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries concern administrative divisions such as *zhou* 州 (prefectures), a fraction of these texts are devoted to descriptions of either landscape features or individual institutions (Bingenheimer 2010, 378). Among these, Bingenheimer estimates there are approximately three hundred and fifty *sizhi* 寺志 “temple gazetteers” and *shanzhi* 山志 “mountain gazetteers” (Bingenheimer 2010, 382). One of the earliest texts to include the latter term in its title is a Ming period (1368-1644)

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21 The Dafu Temple frequently appears as a hub of activity and is the setting of multiple miraculous encounters in the Gu Qingliang zhuan. I discuss the site below on pages 73 and 93.

22 In addition to Bingenheimer’s article, Peter K. Bol examines the genre in his “The Rise of Local History: History, Geography, and Culture in the Southern Song and Yuan Wuzhou.”
record of Mount Wutai, the *Qingliang shanzhi* 清凉山志 (Gazetteer of Mount Clear and Cool). Though they both deal with a single place, neither the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* nor the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* include this terminology in their titles. In his overview of Buddhist temple gazetteers, Bingenheimer thus categorizes the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and its Song period counterpart as two of ten *yuanshi fangzhi* 原始方志, “proto-gazetteers,” a term he coins to describe pre-Ming accounts of individual sites that do not include *zhi* in their titles but that “clearly belong to the genre” (Bingenheimer 2010, 391).

The miracle tales that I will discuss in the second and third chapters of this dissertation are scattered throughout the five sections into which Huixiang divided the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*. The first of these is titled “Liming Biaohua 立名標化” (Establishing the Name and Extolling [Miraculous] Transformations). It provides an explanation of the site’s name by linking it to the transforming activities of Mañjuśrī whose dwelling place is this mountain range. It also presents the mountain as the

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23 The *Qingliang shanzhi* is the first of three Ming and Qing (1644-1912) period gazetteers composed about the site. The remaining gazetteers are the *Qingliang shan xin zhi* 清凉山新志 (New Gazetteer of Qingliang shan) and the *Qingding Qingliang shan zhi* 欽定清凉山志 (Imperially Commissioned Gazetteer of Qingliang shan).

24 The presence of the term *zhuan* 傳 in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*'s title suggests its association with a second genre of literature: hagiography. A number of biographical collections were compiled in the years leading up to and following the composition of Huixiang’s monograph. In the second decade of the sixth century, Baochang 寶唱 (fl. 502-after 519?) compiled the first of these: the no longer extant *Mingseng zhuan* 名僧傳 (Biographies of Famous Monks) and the *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 (Biographies of Eminent Nuns). The scholar-monk Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554) compiled the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks) in the sixth-century. A century later Daoxuan wrote the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks). Titling the monograph as he did, Huixiang seems to underscore the role that the presence of eminent figures at the Five Terrace Mountain played in its identification as a holy place. Huixiang devotes the fourth section of the gazetteer into stories about these important individuals and the astonishing happenings that they witnessed at Mount Wutai.
residence of immortals. Huixiang quotes liberally from sūtras and non-Buddhist works to illustrate that Mount Wutai is a uniquely important place because of its inhabitants and the extraordinary occurrences that transpire there. “Fengyu Lishu 封域里數” (Borders and Miles) is the second, short section of the Gu Qingliang zhuan. It describes the mountain’s geographical location in relation to other sites, such as the capital, and introduces each of the five terraces in turn giving their height, proximity to one another, and unusual physical features. As its title “Gujin shengji 古今勝跡” (Ancient and Present Superior Traces) suggests, the lengthy third chapter describes the special landscape features and the extraordinary events that mark Mount Wutai’s peaks as worthy of devotion. The fourth “Youli Gantong 遊禮感通” chapter concerns “Pilgrims who experienced efficacious responses.” In contrast to the “Ancient and Present Superior Traces” chapter which is organized into five subsections each of which concerns one of the mountain’s five peaks, the “Pilgrims who experienced efficacious responses” materials are arranged according to their named and unnamed monastic and lay protagonists. Together these third and fourth chapters form the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s core. Finally, “Zhiliu zashu 支流雜述” (Miscellaneous Accounts of Branches and Tributaries), the fifth chapter, is a miscellanea of four stories related more tangentially to Mount Wutai. Rather than tightly knit around a single subject, the content presented in each of these five sections volleys from topic to topic to the point that at times it appears disconnected.

See Daniel Stevenson’s “A Sacred Peak” in Buddhist Scriptures for a translation of this section of the text.
2.1.ii The Multivocality of Huixiang’s Text

The stories contained in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* do not speak in one voice about the source of Mount Wutai’s significance. Quite the opposite, they put forward a highly eclectic vision of its importance. The gazetteer presents the site as, at once, a realm of unusual flora and fauna, an access point to magnificent territories that are ordinarily hidden from view, and a place at which mysterious strangers appear before individuals of all social statuses only to vanish moments later. The superhuman figures that the text holds populate the territory include immortals, autochthonous deities, and the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī who from time to time appears to unsuspecting practitioners in disguise. Novices practicing in isolation, celebrated rulers, officials, temple residents, lay visitors from nearby cities, and eminent monks from distant lands are among the witnesses to the extraordinary happenings that the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* purports have transpired at the mountain. And, as the following narrative indicates, the perspective on the mountain’s importance advanced in one section of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* is sometimes contradicted in the very next.

The story of śramaṇa Xiangyun’s 祥雲 (sixth century) meeting with a mountain spirit dramatically depicts Mount Wutai, and its famous Jingang Grotto 金刚窟 (Diamond Grotto) in particular, as an autochthonous deity’s home T.2098.1095(a). The narrative appears in the gazetteer’s third section within a lengthy portion that Huixiang devotes to narrating the events and objects that render the Middle Terrace a superior place. The tale is set in the Northern Qi 北齊
The Northern Qi dynasty during its founder Wenxuan’s 文宣 reign (550-559) when, according to the text, the novice took up residence in the Dafu Temple.

One day while wandering alone on the mountain peaks Xiangyun purportedly encountered a group of mysterious figures. The most imposing of these introduced himself saying: “I am the shanshen 山神 (mountain god). I live in the Jingang Grotto” T.2098.1095(a).

The mountain god then escorted the monk to a jewel-decorated palace in which, after reciting the sūtras, Xiangyun drank a numinous medicine (shenling zhi yao 神靈之藥) given to him by the god T.2098.1095(a). As a result, the episode concludes, Xiangyun instantly attained immortality. This portrayal of the mountain as a place populated by mysterious figures that appear and vanish along with the groves, grottoes, and palaces they inhabit accords with the image of Mount Wutai presented in the story of the three śramaṇas who obtained immortality in a mountain hollow and a number of other miracle tales I will discuss in chapter three.

At the same time, the representation of the mountain in the story is very different from the portrayal of the place in the Gu Qingliang zhuan entry that it immediately follows. In contrast to the Xiangyun entry, this passage associates the site with Mañjuśrī:

The Jingang Grotto is where the implements of offering to the buddhas of the three ages are stored. According to the Qihuan tu 祇洹圖 (Diagram of the Jetavana) there is a set of heavenly musical instruments made of seven

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26 Gaozu of the Northern Qi is one of Wenxuan’s 文宣 (529-559) appellations. The Northern Qi founder was also known as Gaoyang 高洋 (Otto 2001, 18). Gaozu is also a posthumous name for Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei 魏孝文 (r. 471-499).

27 Raoul Birnbaum discusses this narrative in his article “Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords: The Caves of Wu-t’ai Shan” (Birnbaum 1989-1990, 122).
jewels in the Jetavana.28 According to the Ling ji 靈跡記 (Record of Miraculous Traces), this set of musical instruments was made by the king of the rākṣas of Laṅkā (Lengqie shan 拢伽山) and it is to be offered to Kāśyapa Buddha. After Kāśyapa Buddha’s extinction, Mañjuśrī will come to dwell in the Jingnag Grotto of Mount Clear and Cool (Qingliang shan Jingang ku 清涼山金剛窟). When Śākyamuni appears in the world, Mañjuśrī will come to the Jetavana. After twelve years he will once again enter the interior of Mount Clear and Cool’s Jingang Grotto. Also there is a silver lute and there are celestials seated atop flowers of the seven jewels playing these lutes. Also there is the Great Vinaya pitaka in silver writing from the time of Kāśyapa Buddha. After the buddha’s extinction, Mañjuśrī will dwell in the Mount Clear and Cool Jingang Grotto T.2098.1095(a).

References to the Jetavana Monastery in Śrāvasti, celestial music, and the twelve-year period following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāṇa suggest this entry’s relationship to the story of Kāśyapa Buddha’s robe. Set in the Jetavana garden during Śākyamuni’s lifetime, the tale describes the Buddha entrusting Mañjuśrī with a robe stūpa (yita 衣塔) that contains Kāśyapa’s robe and the robes of other buddhas in order to safeguard the teachings in the age of dharmic decline.29 According to Daoshi’s

28 As its title indicates, the Illustrated Scripture of Jetavana Monastery in the Śrāvasti Kingdom in Central India (Zhong tianzhu shewei guo qiuyuan si tujing 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經) concerns the famous Śrāvasti monastery that tradition holds Anāthapindīḍa constructed for the Buddha and his disciples (T.1899). Though he never traveled to India, in 667 Daoxuan composed this description of the site’s purported layout, as well as practice there, based on revelations he received toward the end of his life. At this time, the cleric was establishing an ordination platform at Jingye Temple in the Zhongnan 居南 mountains and he obtained a series of visions in which the deity Zhang Qiong 張瓊 imparted teachings to him including the contents of the Illustrated Scripture (Adamek 2007, 129). In his study of the work, Zhihui Tan explains, “Daoxuan’s reconstruction of Jetavana evidently assembles pieces and parts taken from many diverse sources, and was probably never intended only to be a historical record. Even a cursory perusal immediately reveals that the Jetavana Monastery described in the text is a curious amalgam of sinitic and indic motifs, intended more as a blueprint of a utopian Buddhist monastery for the early Tang, than as a faithful reconstruction of the historical site in India” (Tan 2002, 16). Like the stories of conjured temples that I examine in chapter four, this scripture served as a model of and model for temple construction and monastic practice in the Tang.

29 In his article “The Kasaya Robe of the Past Buddha Kasyapa in the Miraculous Instruction Given to the Vinaya Master Daoxuan (596-667),” Koichi Shinohara argues that this legend is a much-expanded version of an earlier story about the disciple Kāśyapa’s robe in Aśoka’s hagiography. The earlier legend, Shinohara suggests, was adapted to suit a new temporal and spatial setting. China in the age of dharmic decline, and, in his words, adopts the “distinctively eschatological theme” of protecting the teachings in this context (Shinohara 2000, 309). A similar accretion process is apparent in the Mount
**Fayuan zhulin** rendering of this tale, Śākyamuni called Mañjuśrī to the Jetavana Monastery from Mount Qingliang Grotto 清涼山窟 in the Country of Cīna 敦煌国 for this purpose T.2122.560(c).\(^{30}\) In a sleight of hand, the Mount Qingliang Grotto of the **Fayuan zhulin** becomes the Jingang Grotto of Mount Qingliang in the mountain gazetteer. Like the **Fayuan zhulin** story of Kāśyapa Buddha's robe with which it is related, the above **Gu Qingliang zhuan** passage depicts Mount Wutai's recesses as Mañjuśrī's dwelling place. Read together with the story of Xiangyun that it precedes, this entry suggests the gazetteer's diversity. Multiple and seemingly incongruent traditions about a single site—here the grotto is both Mañjuśrī's home and the mountain god's dwelling—seem not to have been a source of confusion in these materials but rather a signal of center's immense importance.

Among the narratives Huixiang brought together in the **Gu Qingliang zhuan**, several seem only tangentially related to the site. One of these is the tale of the layman Nie shishi 聶世師 T.2098.1100(b,c). The story begins with an anxious examination candidate who single-mindedly chanted the name of the Buddha. The gazetteer states that Nie Shishi subsequently appeared before him in a dream and announced that the candidate need not worry because he would be appointed the official in Dai County T.2098.1100(b). This turned out to be true and henceforth, according to the text, all Dai County officials worshipped Nie Shishi. Though the tale

\(^{30}\) The belief that Mount Wutai is a place where the dharma is preserved during the period of decline expressed here is not a major element in pre-seventh century sources. The theme became important in later accounts of the site found in texts such as the **Song gaoseng zhuan** and **Guang Qingliang zhuan**. I discuss this topic below on page 165.
mentions that Nie encouraged people to carry out worship at Mount Wutai, the narrative transpires approximately fifty kilometers to its west in Daizhou and mentions neither the Bodhisattva nor specific points at the mountain. Rather than a narrative celebrating the mountain specifically, this is a record about a local deity cult that emphasizes the extraordinary quality of this region generally.

Though at first glance these diverse accounts of Mount Wutai’s importance can appear to be a confusing hodgepodge of traditions, Presenjit Duara’s scholarship suggests that this multiplicity might have been taken as a sign of the site’s potency. Duara’s study considers the varied portrayal of the pan-Chinese deity Guandi who is envisioned in one context as a protector of Buddhist places of practice while appearing in another as the god of wealth or a defender of the Republican State (Duara 1988, 779). Duara stresses that rather than contradicting one another, disparate presentations of Guandi worked in concert to enhance the overall perception of the god’s potency. The term he uses to describe the process by which representations proliferate is “superscription.” The word is intended to emphasize how new imaginings of a symbol’s significance (be it a deity or sacred center) build on but never entirely replace earlier understandings of its importance. Duara takes this continuity beneath various versions of a myth to be the source of its power. In his own words, superscription suggests:

...the presence of a lively arena where rival versions [of a myth] jostle,

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31 凡見道俗。必勸之行善。或隱竊語人曰。令向五臺禮拜

32 Another tale that operates in this manner is the record of the hermit Wangju’s appearance at a ceremonial vegetarian feast sponsored by Wenxiang for the benefit of his mother Lou Zhaojun. At the time of the Northern Qi’s founding, Wenxuan, emperor Gaoyang, posthumously honored this Eastern Wei regent as emperor Gaocheng.
negotiate, and compete for position...[but in which] the obliteration of rival interpretations of a myth [by another version of a myth] is self-defeating because a superscription depends on the symbolic resonances in the arena for its effectiveness (Duara 1988, 780).

In the context of the Guandi cult, different images of Guandi as, for instance, protector of a Buddhist mountain or a newly established state “work” because they retain Guandi’s role as a guardian which they use to different ends. We can imagine that new representations of Mount Wutai operated in a similar fashion. Accumulating one on top of the next, in Huixiang’s Gu Qingliang zhuan these disparate imaginings of its significance resonated together amplifying the sense that the peaks constituted a superior place.

2.2 An Introduction to the

Wangzi Shaoshen Temple Founding Legend

Having examined the diversity of Huixiang’s gazetteer in general, I will now turn to a detailed discussion of a single Gu Qingliang zhuan story that created a vibrant past for this place. This is the tale of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s founding. As its title suggests, the legend recounts the establishment of a structure marking the site of a prince’s auto-cremation. Like the story of Xiangyun’s entry into the Jingang Grotto, this tale appears in the third “Ancient and Present Superior Traces” section of the gazetteer in which Huixiang describes the events and objects that render the Middle Terrace a superior place. I have translated the story in full here.

Four li north from the Dafu Temple is the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple. Previously at this place there was an Aśoka ancient stūpa. In the first year of the Northern Qi (550 CE), the third prince sought out Mañjuśrī at this [site] but, in the end, he did not obtain a vision [of the Bodhisattva]. Then, in front
of the stūpa he burnt his body as an offering. Based on this a temple was established at this place.

This prince had a eunuch-servant Liu Qianzhi. He was grieved at his deformation from castration. Further, moved [by] the affair of the prince’s immolation [Liu Qianzhi] then submitted a memorial [to the throne] asking to enter the mountain to seek the way. An imperial order authorized this.

At this place he recited the *Avatāmsaka sūtra*. He carried out practice for twenty-one days. [Liu] prayed to see Mañjuśrī and subsequently obtained a mysterious response (*mingying* 妙應). [After this his body] returned to [its] original form [Liu’s male member was restored]. Thereupon [Liu] achieved thorough understanding. Then he composed the *Commentary on the Avatāmsaka sūtra* (*Huayan lun* 華嚴論) in six hundred volumes in which he discussed the sūtra thoroughly from beginning to end. [Liu] once again by means of a memorial to the throne made [these events] known. Based on this Gaozu’s 高祖 reverence and faith [for the dharma] further increased. Everyday [Liu] explained one division of the *Avatāmsaka* [sūtra]. That time was thus one in which [the sūtra] really flourished T.2098.1094(c).

Sixth-century Northern Qi rulers and courtiers figure prominently throughout this three-part *Gu Qingliang zhuan* narrative and, at first glance, this tale of the temple’s beginnings appears to establish that that they played an important role in Mount Wutai’s emergence as the center of Mañjuśrī devotion. According to the gazetteer, an unnamed Northern Qi prince ascended Mount Wutai in search of Mañjuśrī and, when unsuccessful, burnt his body as an offering in front of an Aśoka stūpa there. The eunuch Liu Qianzhi’s male member was miraculously restored when he subsequently journeyed to the site. Finally, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* purports that these events inspired faith in the Northern Qi founder Emperor Wenxuan. A triad of Northern Qi figures, Huixiang’s rendering of the narrative implies, were instrumental in this locale’s transformation from a place on the Middle Terrace venerated because of its association with Aśoka into one
commemorating auto-cremation and connected with Mañjuśrī, visions, and healing in the sixth-century.

But what of the other versions of this miracle tale? How do they frame the significance of this territory and these events? Records of the prince’s auto-cremation and the eunuch’s miraculous healing appear in a wide range of sources spanning a more than thirteen hundred year period. These include Daoxuan’s *Datang Neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (Catalogue of Buddhist Works in the Great Tang) and *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, as well as Daoshi’s *Fayuan zhulin*. Fazang’s *Huayan jing zhuan ji* 华严经传记 (Record of the Avatamsaka sūtra’s Transmission) and his *Huayan jing Tanxuan ji* 华严经探玄记 (Record of the Search for the Profundities of the Avatamsaka sūtra) preserve versions of the tale. The contemporary *Wutai shan Lüyou lifo yi ben tong* 五台山旅游礼佛一本通 (A Pamphlet Guide on Reverencing the Buddha and Travel at Mount Wutai) alludes to these events in conjunction with the present-day version of the structure: the Shouning Temple 勝寧寺. Peng Shaosheng’s 彭绍升 (1740-1796) eighteenth-century *Jushi zhuan* 居士传 (Biographies of Householders) also includes a rendering of the story.

Comparing the legend preserved in Huixiang’s gazetteer with these other redactions of the narrative has much to teach us about the diverse ways in which this structure’s importance was represented in the seventh century, as well as the process through which the territory was constructed as a holy place during this period. In the following pages I will examine each section of the three-part *Gu Qingliang zhuan* tale alongside accounts of the same events preserved in other
sources. I will start with a discussion of the Aśoka stūpa to which the first lines of
the narrative refers (2.2.i), I will then move on to explore traditions about the
Northern Qi prince’s auto-cremation (2.2.ii) before concluding my close reading of
the founding legend with an analysis of accounts of the eunuch’s healing (2.2.iii). My
purpose here is twofold. I intend to highlight, first, how by weaving together diverse
narratives about individual sites at Mount Wutai, the Gu Qingliang zhuan created an
elaborate genealogy of the mountain’s sacrality. I will endeavor, second, to suggest
what the fashioning of a rich past for the site accomplished at the time of the
gazetteer’s compilation. Beginning with an examination of the assertion that this
was the locale of an Aśoka stūpa, I will propose, more specifically, that by tapping
into the well-established tradition of the Mauryan king’s 84,000 stūpas, the Gu
Qingliang zhuan created a connection between Mount Wutai, Aśoka and, through
him, Śākyamuni. Doing so the legend both provided a rationale for the site’s
veneration and fashioned an ancient and local precedent for the relic-campaigns
carried out by seventh-century Chinese rulers.

2.2.i The Aśoka Stūpa

“Four li north from the Dafu Temple is the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple. Previously at this place there was an Aśoka ancient stūpa. In the first year of
the Northern Qi (550 CE), the third prince sought out Maṇjuśrī at this [site]…”

By the time of the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s compilation in the seventh-century,
Aśoka’s hagiography, including the tradition that he established 84,000 stūpas
throughout his realm, was well known in China. An Faqin 安法欽 (d. after 300 CE)
translated the first of two versions of the Aśokāvadāna (Ayuwang zhuan 阿育王傳
The Chronicle of King Aśoka) into Chinese around 300 CE (Chen 2002a, 76). Some of the very same sources that first recorded legends about Mount Wutai—Daoxuan’s Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu and Daoshi’s Fayuan zhulin—also included Aśoka’s hagiography. Records of the model Buddhist king’s patronage and pilgrimage activities, then, would have been well known to Huixiang and his audience when he recounted the story of an unnamed Northern Qi prince who directed his vision-quest on the site of an Aśoka stūpa at Mount Wutai.

In records of the Mauryan king’s life and career, the story of Aśoka establishing 84,000 stūpas is closely related to two other events. The first of these is his purported encounter with Śākyamuni in a previous life. Daoxuan includes the following version of the story in his Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu and John Strong translates an account of the same myth.

...Long ago, the Buddha was traveling and begging for alms. There was a child who was playing on the side of the road. [The child] took some sandy soil as rice dough (mimian 米麪) and contrary [to tradition] sought to use the earth dough as an offering. The Buddha, accordingly, accepted it. [Then] he had his attendants use this mud to smear the Buddha’s abode. They completely covered its southern face. A record says: [Śākyamuni announced] “One hundred years after my extinction, this child will rule Jambudvipa’s skies and earth and the forty districts within. The various sprits will all be his subjects. He will open the eight stūpas containing [my] relics and order the various spirits to make 84,000 stūpas in one day and night” T.2106.404(a).

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33 Two centuries later, Saṃghabhara 僧伽婆羅 (460-?) produced a second version of the text, the Ayuwang jing 阿育王經 (The Scripture of Aśoka) in 512 (Strong 1989, 16).

34 The narrative appears at the beginning of the section devoted to stories about the miraculous happenings associated with relics and stūpas.

35 On this narrative see especially the second chapter “Dirt and Dharma in the Legend of Aśoka” in Strong’s The Legend of Asoka: A Study and Translation of the Asokavadana (1989).
Tradition holds that when the imprisoned cleric Samudra encountered Aśoka and converted him to the dharma, the monk urged the ruler to fulfill the above prophecy. This is the second event connected with the 84,000 stūpas in the ruler’s hagiography. As the passage cited above reveals, the relics Aśoka interred were purportedly the very ones enshrined in the eight drona stūpas immediately following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāṇa. Though not included in Daoxuan’s telling, the Așokāvadāna asserts that Aśoka wanted these relics to be interred simultaneously throughout the realm. He thus enlisted a yaśa to eclipse the sun with his hand so that “all at once the eighty-four thousand dharmarājikās [stūpas] were completed” (Strong 1989, 220).

The tradition of Aśoka’s 84,000 stūpas and the relic cult more generally had already played a vital role in the grounding of Buddhism in its new, Chinese environment prior to the seventh-century.36 Another story preserved in Daoxuan’s Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu, for instance, illustrates the way the expansion of the ruler’s hagiography provided a rationale for the veneration of new territories. According to the text, Aśoka traveled to Mao county 鄱縣 where he deposited śarīra in a stūpa that he built for their protection T.2106.405(a). Then he, together with a group of disciples, venerated the relics. Suddenly, the narrative continues, Aśoka flew into the air. The men tried to cling onto the ruler but lost their grip and tumbled to earth where they transformed into stones. When the Taishou 太守 governor lord Chu 褚府君 had the rocks opened they discovered that their interiors

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36 For a discussion of relics in Buddhism’s Indian and then Chinese context see Sen (2003) and Kieschnick (2003).
resembled monastic robes T.2106.405(a). Mount Wutai was not, as this elaborate *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* story indicates, the sole Chinese locale at which Aśoka was believed to have erected stūpas. Quite the opposite, stories about the Mauryan king’s activities had facilitated creation of Buddhist territory at multiple locations well beyond the borders of the tradition’s homeland.

Significantly, the *Gu Qingliang zhuàn* record of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s founding is the sole redaction of this tale that references a relic mound erected by Aśoka. While no other versions of this story mention the stūpa, the mid-seventh century *Daoxuan lushi gantong lu* does assert that Aśoka erected a memorial mound nearby the Dafu Temple T.2107.437(a). This temple stood on the Middle Terrace close to the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple. Two centuries after Daoxuan composed his miracle tale collection, the Japanese cleric Ennin (794-864) observed an Aśoka stūpa in this area. According to the first-hand account of the monk’s travels in the Tang, the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* (Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law), in the fifth year of the Kaicheng era (840) Ennin saw a two-storied octagonal pagoda nearby the Dafu Temple (DBZ 113: 234).37 “Beneath it is installed a King Aśoka stūpa buried in the ground. They do not let people see it. It is one of the 84,000 stūpas built by King Aśoka” (DBZ 113: 234). It may be that noticing the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s proximity to the Dafu Temple Huixiang surmised that the Northern Qi prince burned his body at that specific site. Whatever the case, the reference to the memorial mound in the first lines of the *Gu

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37 In Ennin’s time this structure was known as the Huayan Temple. This entry is dated the seventh day of the fifth month of the Kaicheng era. The episode appears in Reischauer’s translation of the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* (Reischauer 1955, 235-236).
Qingliang zhuan story illustrates how by drawing on a preexisting traditions—here tales of Aśoka’s 84,000 stūpas—the gazetteer created a rich past for specific sites and the mountain as a whole. Rooting Mount Wutai’s specialness in its connection to the cakravartin king and, through him, Śākyamuni Buddha, the narrative of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s founding provided one rationale for the locale’s veneration.

In addition to facilitating the development of a new sacred center, I suspect that the celebration of Mount Wutai as a place where Aśoka had once been present might have held further significance for seventh-century audiences. In the century prior to (and the years immediately following) the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s compilation, first Emperor Wen of the Sui 隋文帝 (r. 581-604) and then Empress Wu Zetian conducted large-scale relic-distribution campaigns involving relics. Emulating Aśoka, these figures promoted the relic cult as part of their larger attempt to depict themselves as Buddhist monarchs and thus legitimate rulers of the realm. I propose that when examined in this context we can see that the version of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend preserved in Huixiang’s gazetteer provided an ancient, local model for Emperor Wen and Empress Wu’s endeavors.

In the final years of his reign, Emperor Wen spearheaded three large-scale projects in which śarīra were distributed to more than one hundred prefectures throughout the dynasty. These Renshou 仁壽 era (601-604) campaigns, Chen Jinhua explains in Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship, “were a series of deliberately planned, heavily politicized propagandistic events aimed at, among other things, depicting Sui Wendi as a universal ‘Buddhist monarch’ on the model of Aśoka” (Chen
An edict issued by the throne in 601 reveals the extent to which the Mauryan ruler’s hagiography provided an example for Emperor Wen. This document provided instructions for the relic’s installation. It directed the parties commissioned to transport these relics to simultaneously enshrine the objects in thirty identical pagodas erected for this purpose at noon on the fifteenth day of the tenth month in the first year of the Renshou period (Chen 2002a, 54, 58). Synchronizing the relic’s installation, it seems to me, Emperor Wen was imitating the Indian ruler who, as the Aśokāvadāna asserts, enlisted a yaśa’s help in coordinating the 84,000 relic mounds’ completion.

Evidence that Emperor Wen (and his allies) sought to cast him as Aśoka’s Sui period counterpart also appears in miracle tales about the relic-distribution campaigns. In the Sheli gantong ji 舍利感通記 (Account of the [Miraculous] Stimulus and Responses Related to the Relics), Wang Shao 王劭 (d. ca. 610) recounts the ‘auspicious signs’ that purportedly attended the 601, 602 and 604 enshrinement of relics throughout the dynasty (Chen 2002a, 52, 53). The story of mysterious writing unearthed at one site demonstrates, in Chen Jinhua’s words, “[t]he extent to which relic-distribution in the Renshou era was dominated by the image of Aśoka” (Chen 2002a, 76). According to the Sheli gantong ji, in preparation for the relic’s installation the party in Yingzhou 永州 was digging into the earth when suddenly a

38 The parties were comprised of a comprised of a monk “proficient at propagating the Dharma,” two attendants and an official (Chen 2002a, 54, 58).

39 Though this text is no longer extant, fragments of it remain in Daoxuan’s Guang Hongmingji 廣弘明集 (Expanded Collection Spreading (Buddhism’s) Light). Wang compiled these records of ‘auspicious signs’ based on reports submitted by prefectural governments following the enshrinement of the relics in memorial mounds (Chen 2002a, 52-53).
violet light appeared and, moments later, vanished T.2103.217(b,c).\(^{40}\) Looking in the ground they found a text reading “the Buddha Stūpa of the Wheel-turning King” \((Zhuanlunwang fotā 轉輪王佛塔)\) T.2103.217(c).\(^{41}\) Like the timing of the relic installation in 601, this reference to Aśoka, the ‘wheel-turning’ \((cakravartin)\) king, demonstrates the extent to which the Sui ruler’s activities were understood to reproduce Aśoka’s undertaking.

Less than a century after his death Emperor Wen became a model for Empress Wu Zetian’s activities. A distant relative of the Sui founder, Empress Wu had also usurped the throne from a family member and consequently could not rely on the mandate of heaven \((tianming 天命)\) to justify her claim to the throne.\(^{42}\) Likely taking her cue from her Sui predecessor, Chen Jinhua argues, Empress Wu Zetian promoted the relic-cult as part of this larger attempt to present herself as the rightful Buddhist ruler of her realm. A pair of texts that circulated in the first year of the empress’ reign makes this link between the Tang ruler’s promotion of the relic cult and her attempt to cast herself as a wheel-turning monarch explicit.

The first of these is the *Dayun jing Shenhuang Shouji Yishu* 大云經神皇受記義疏 \((Commentary on the Meaning of the Prophecy about the Divine Emperor in the Great Cloud Scripture)\). It is a commentary on the *Dayun jing* 大雲經 \((Great Cloud...\)

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\(^{40}\) Chen discusses this narrative in his *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship* and points out that it is preserved both in Daoxuan’s *Guang Hongming ji* and his *Xu gaoseng zhuàn* (Chen 2002a, 86).

\(^{41}\) This translation is Chen Jinhua’s (Chen 2002a, 76).

\(^{42}\) Chen explains that because the mandate was understood to apply to a ruling family as a whole, neither Emperor Wen of the Sui nor Empress Wu could use it as a justification for their rule because they had usurped the throne from a ruling family member (Chen 2002b, 113).
Scripture, Mahāmegha sūtra) that ten of the empress’ monastic supporters presented to the court in 690, the very same year that she ascended the throne. In 677 relics had been discovered (or, as Chen Jinhua suggests, strategically placed) in Chang’an’s 長安 Guangzhai district 光宅坊 and this text presents Empress Wu’s participation in their distribution the following year as the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. It states:

The Divine Emperor [Wu Zetian] formerly made the grand vow that she would build eight million and forty thousand treasure-pagodas (to enshrine) relics. Thus, to spread the relics obtained in the Guangzhai Quarter to the four continents is to demonstrate the correspondence (between the actuality and prophecy of) spreading the relics to the eight extremities simultaneously. The distribution of these relics was not done through human effort alone, but was accomplished together with the divine power of the eight extremities. This makes manifest the proof (of the prophecy) that those who protect and maintain the True Law will harvest a large number of relics (Chen 2002b, 62).

Thus according to Chen Jinhua, “[t]he story of Empress Wu predicting during one of her previous lives that she would build eight million and forty thousand reliquary pagodas was obviously based on the Aśoka legend that he had 84, 000 supernatural agents build 84, 000 reliquary pagodas all over the world” (Chen 2002b, 62).

The Baoyu jing 寶雨經 (Precious Rain Scripture, Ratnamegha sūtra) also links Empress Wu’s participation in the relic cult with her status as a cakravartin monarch. This sūtra was retranslated by Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (672?-727) in 693 to include a passage predicting a female bodhisattva-cakravartin’s rule (Chen 2007, 43). Jinhua Chen discusses this relic distribution campaign in the second section of his article “Śarīra and Scepter: Empress Wu’s Political Use of Buddhist Relics” (2002) in which it constitutes the topic of a subsection titled “The ‘Discovery’ of the Guangzhai Relics in 677 and Their Distribution in 678” (Chen 2002b, 48-61).
Erecting pagodas and temples constituted one of the ways that, according to the text, this figure would sustain the dharma. In this context, Empress Wu’s distribution of Guangzhai District relics or, more well-known, her participation in the veneration of relics housed at Famen Temple 法門寺 first between 659 and 662 and then in 705 signaled her status as a wheel-turning monarch and formed part of the larger effort to legitimate her rule.

During her reign Empress Wu supported several projects at Mount Wutai, at least one of which involved relics. References to pagodas that she established there appear in Ennin’s ninth-century Nittō guhō junrei gyōki and Yanyi’s eleventh-century mountain gazetteer, the Guang Qingliang zhuan. In the first of these texts, the Japanese cleric reports seeing memorial mounds established by the empress on Mount Wutai’s peaks (DBZ 113: 235). On the twentieth day of the fifth month of the fifth year of the Kaicheng era (840), for example, Ennin states that he ascended the summit of the Middle Terrace atop of which stood three iron pagodas (san tieta 三鐵塔) that were built by Dame Wu (Wupo 武婆) who Ennin clarifies was Empress Zetian (Ze tian huang 則天皇) (DBZ 113: 235). This passage establishes that ninth-century Mount Wutai residents and visitors knew of Wu Zetian’s earlier involvement at the site.

The section of Yanyi’s eleventh-century gazetteer devoted to a discussion of the Qingliang Temple 清涼寺 gives a more detailed account of the ruler’s activities.

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44 This “translation” was produced in 693. In the same year the throne issued a proclamation casting Wu as a fourth rank cakravartin (Chen 2007, 251).

45 Reischauer translates these Nittō guhō junrei gyōki entries (Reischauer 1955, 237-245).
According to the gazetteer, in the second year of the Chang’an 長安 period (702) Wu Youyi 武攸宜—a distant relative of the empress who was then Prince of Jian’an 建安王 and vice prefect 長史 of Bingzhou 井州—petitioned the court to carry out repairs on this temple T.2099.1107(a). Later that same year, Empress Wu commissioned the cleric Degan 德感 (7th-8th centuries) to travel to the mountain where, with a group of more than one thousand lay and ordained individuals, he witnessed a series of marvels including the Bodhisattva’s manifestation T.2099.1107(a,b). When the cleric presented a drawing (tuhua 圖畫) of the wonders he had observed to the throne, the gazetteer continues, the empress rewarded Degan generously T. 2099.1107(a,b). Wu Zetian, the Guang Qingliang zhuan asserts, desired that an image of herself be crafted and then installed at Mount Wutai as an offering to the Bodhisattva T.2099.1107(b). Though this statue was ultimately enshrined in Taiyuan’s 太原 Chongfu Temple 崇福寺 and not the mountain, the gazetteer reports that she sponsored vegetarian feasts at Mount Wutai and also erected stele and established stūpas on its peaks T.2099.1106(b). This Guang Qingliang zhuan entry indicates that Wu Zetian may have erected the pagodas Ennin observed at ninth-century Wutai in the final years of her reign.

46 Chen Jinhua summarizes this entry in his Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician in which he identifies Wu Youyi as the Prince Jian’an and vice prefect of Bingzhou referenced in the Guang Qingliang zhuan (Chen 2007, 150).

47 These included the manifestation of the Buddha in a five-colored cloud, the wafting of fragrant incense, and the Bodhisattva’s appearance wearing a necklace of precious stones T.2099.1107(a).
Before moving on to study the second section of this three-part miracle tale involving the prince’s auto-cremation, let me pause for a moment to clarify why I elected to examine the first lines of the entry alongside Aśoka’s hagiography generally and Emperor Wen and Empress Wu’s relic campaigns. While the claim that the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple was erected at the site of an Aśoka stūpa, as I noted above, appears solely in the Gu Qingliang zhuan redaction of the legend, assertions that multiple other locations in the dynasty were home to memorial mounds established by the Indian ruler were commonplace by the early Tang. Reading the gazetteer together with these legends highlights one means through which Mount Wutai and other sites were constructed as holy centers: the creation of pasts in which Aśoka was present in China. In addition to facilitating the development of new sacred centers beyond the borders of Buddhism’s homeland, stories about the ruler’s endeavors at Mount Wutai might have served another purpose. The reference to an Aśoka stūpa in the first line of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend seems to operate as an early, local model for Emperor Wen and Empress Wu’s relic campaigns, including those directed at Mount Wutai specifically. Careful study of the remaining two sections of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend reveals that this is not the sole instance in which the Gu Qingliang zhuan fashioned rather than described the site’s past. By absorbing preexisting narratives from other times into the lore of Mount Wutai, proponents of the Mañjuśrī cult generated a history for the mountain in which the Bodhisattva figured prominently.
2.2.ii Regarding the Prince’s Auto-Cremation

In the first year of the Northern Qi (550 CE), the third prince sought out Mañjuśrī at this [site] but, in the end, he did not obtain a vision [of the Bodhisattva]. Then, in front of the [Aśoka] stūpa he burnt his body as an offering. Based on this a temple was established at this place.

In addition to representing Mount Wutai as an important place because of its affiliation with Aśoka, this Gu Qingliang zhuan miracle tale celebrates it as the site of a Northern Qi prince’s auto-cremation. Precedent for the practice of self-immolation, as James Benn among others has shown, comes from both within and outside of Buddhist tradition. The sūtras preserve several examples of rulers who, like the unnamed Gu Qingliang zhuan protagonist, undertook this practice. The tale of King Candraprabha, for instance, describes a benevolent king’s willingness to oblige a wicked brāhmaṇa who asked for his head. The well-known story of King Śibi recounts how the ruler fed his eyes—in some versions all of his flesh—to a hawk in order to spare a pigeon.48 These jātaka tales exhort the virtue of dāna (generosity), giving vivid accounts of its performance. They may have provided a context in which the Northern Qi prince’s actions were meaningful to Huixiang’s audience.

A third well-known model for self-immolation that appears in the Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra (Fahua jing 法華經, Lotus Sūtra) supplies an ever closer parallel to the temple founding legend. The text presents the Bodhisattva Medicine King Tathāgata’s (Yaowang Rulai 藥王如來, Tathāgata Bhaiṣajya rāja) auto-cremation as an elaborately prepared offering. The extended discussion of the his preparations

48 On these narratives see Ohnuma (2007) and Benn (2007).
describes Bodhisattva Medicine King scenting his body, drinking perfumed oils, and adorning himself with jewels for twelve thousand years, a lengthy process that rendered his form a fit offering to Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon (Riyuejingmingde 日月淨明德, Candra-vimala-sūrya-prabhāsa-śrī) (Benn 2007, 39). According to the scripture, after collecting Buddha Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon’s śarīra, the Bodhisattva placed them in 84,000 stūpas and then burned his forearms as an offering to the Buddha for 72,000 years. He vowed: “I have thrown away both arms. May I now without fail gain the Buddha’s golden-colored body! If this oath is reality and not vanity, then may both arms be restored as before” (Benn 2007, 61, 73). In an instant, his arms miraculously reappeared. The episode provides a scriptural example for both the Northern Qi prince’s auto-cremation before a stūpa and the affiliation the story makes between the eunuch’s healing and the relic mound, a point to which I will return presently.

Despite similarities between these traditions, the Gu Qingliang zhuan example is distinct from the sūtras in three respects. (1) The sūtras purport to describe events that occurred prior to the Buddha’s final birth while to Huixiang’s audience the Northern Qi period would have constituted a more recent past. (2) Mount Wutai is highlighted in the gazetteer in a way that the sūtras’ locations are not. This point of dissimilarity can be explained, at least in part, by the type of material with which we are working. The miracle tale about the unnamed prince’s auto-cremation appears in a gazetteer celebrating a site’s features and history. In contrast to the place-oriented tale, the scriptures use self-immolation to illustrate either the perfection of a text, the Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra, or a virtue,
generosity, without any ties to a historical or spatial setting. (3) Finally, the unnamed prince’s motivations are very different from those of the sūtra kings. The prince acted alone, spontaneously, and, it seems, out of a sense of having failed. When he did not obtain a vision of Mañjuśrī, the prince, as the Medicine King Tathāgata had done, used his body as an offering to a deity.

Alongside Buddhist scriptures, Chinese history references lay people who torched their bodies. Though in this context laymen and laywomen primarily acted as witnesses, donors, and participants in postmortem cults dedicated to monastic practitioners, in his *Burning for the Buddha* James Benn nevertheless introduces several possible counterparts to the Mount Wutai prince of Huixiang’s *Gu Qingliang zhuan*. These include the tale of an unnamed devotee of the *Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra* found in the *Hongzan fahua zhuan*. As in our *Gu Qingliang zhuan* narrative, the events described in the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* account transpired in the mountains. The protagonist is an unnamed retainer (*buqu 部曲*) of Jiang prince Li Yun 李愔 (d. 675). The attendant’s daughter was the prince’s concubine. According to the text,

> His daughter…told [the Jiang prince Li Yun] of her father’s wish to burn his body. The prince gave his permission. The retainer went to the mountains, bathed, and purified himself and his altar. A month later his daughter ordered some men to gather up her father’s ashes. His body and bones were

49 In some places emperors and princes appear as supporters of the practice who, for example, sponsor the construction of stūpas. In other instances, rulers are show critiquing the practice. Examining these materials, James Benn calls attention to what he sees as a “tension between religious and secular authority” that plays out in the realm of self-immolation. Benn writes:

> ...monks who made offerings of their bodies always posed a potential danger to state control. Quite apart from the fact that the state could hardly be seen to condone or encourage suicide, there was the danger that a heroic monk could become the center of a cult that might threaten political stability or at least draw attention and support away from the emperor.

The Wutai founding legend collapses this tension between state and saṃgha for it is a layperson and member of the ruling family who immolates himself (Benn 2007, 5, 73).
completely consumed, and all that was found was his tongue, still fresh and moist T.2067.26(a) (Benn 2007, 44).

This miracle recalls the famous cleric Kumārajīva's (344-413) hagiography according to which the preservation of his tongue after cremation signaled that his translations were correct T.2059.333(a). In this Hongzan fahua zhuan tale, the same occurrence attests to the efficacy of sūtra recitation and the individual's devotion. Like his Mount Wutai counterpart's remains, the retainer's tongue, further, provided an object around which a devotional cult could form.50

While Chinese Buddhist history includes references to lay as well as monastic self-immolators, it may be that the precedent for the auto-cremation of rulers lies outside Buddhism altogether. The research of Edward H. Schafer (1951) introduces several monarchs and officials remembered for ending drought by ritual burning. One is a Later Han (25-220) official who, after failing to end a drought by exposing his body to the elements, set a fire intended to achieve the same objective. His preparations to burn himself were interrupted by rain.51 In contrast to the extensive literature of monastic self-immolators, there is scant evidence for rulers practicing auto-cremation to end drought. Yet it might be that the story of the Northern Qi prince's self-immolation called to mind autochthonous models of ritual disfiguring of the body studied by Schafer.

50 Records of the Famen Temple reference to an individual who, unable to see the famous relic in a procession, burnt his finger that then instantly became visible to him. Though it postdates the period in which the unnamed prince's auto-cremation purportedly transpired, the account nevertheless provides an intriguing parallel to the Mount Wutai story. Tansen Sen discusses the Famen Temple story in his Buddhism, Diplomacy and Trade (Sen 2003, 71).

51 Schafer is translating from the Hou Han shu 後漢書 here. The subject's name is Liang Fu 諒輔 (Schafer 1951, 139). Alvin P. Cohen's work discusses another postmortem cult to an official deified as a rain-producing god: the Shrine at magistrate Ximen Bao’s (西門豹) tomb that was the object of devotion in the Northern Qi (Cohen 1978, 249).
2.2.iii Relics, Healing and Visions

This prince had a eunuch-servant Liu Qianzhi 刘谦之. He was grieved at his deformation from castration. Further, moved [by] the affair of the prince’s immolation [Liu Qianzhi] then submitted a memorial [to the throne] asking to enter the mountain to seek the way. An imperial order authorized this.

At this place he recited the Avataṃsaka sūtra. He carried out practice for twenty-one days. [Liu] prayed to see Mañjuśrī and subsequently obtained a mysterious response (mingying 冥應). [After this his body] returned to [its] original form [Liu’s male member was restored]. Thereupon [Liu] achieved thorough understanding...That time was thus one in which [the Avataṃsaka sūtra] really flourished T.2098.1094(c).

While the reference to an Aśoka stūpa is unique to the Gu Qingliang zhuan telling of this miracle tale, accounts of the prince’s self-immolation and the restoration of the eunuch’s male member appear in multiple sources. As the charts below illustrate, we can meaningfully divide these records into two categories. The first group (above) affiliates the restoration of Liu Qianzhi’s male organ with the unnamed Northern Qi prince’s auto-cremation. The Gu Qingliang zhuan record falls into this category. The second (below) describes an unnamed eunuch’s miraculous recovery but does not make reference to the mountain. What can this discrepancy teach us about the site’s construction as a holy place in the seventh century? This is the question around which the final section of my study of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend is built. My basic hypothesis is that the difference reveals that a narrative originally celebrating the power of the Avataṃsaka sūtra’s recitation was transformed into a legend illustrating the efficacy of practice at Mount Wutai.

Group One Wangzi Shaoshen Temple Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>COMPILATION</th>
<th>EUNUCH NARRATIVE</th>
<th>PRINCE’S AUTO-CREMATION</th>
<th>NAME LIU QIANZHI</th>
<th>HUAYAN JING</th>
<th>MOUNT WUTAI</th>
<th>TEMPORAL SETTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xu gaozeng zhuan</td>
<td>Before 667</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Northern Qi dynasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huayan jing zhuan ji</td>
<td>Ca. 690</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Qingliang Dahe 大和 era of the Northern Qi dynasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huayan jing Tanxuan ji</td>
<td>Before 712</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>No reference to time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gu Qingliang zhuan</td>
<td>After 679</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>First year of the Northern Qi dynasty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Two Wangzi Shaoshen Temple Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neidian lu</th>
<th>664</th>
<th>√</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>√</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Wei dynasty Dahe 大和 era</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fayuan zhulin</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Wei dynasty Taihe 太和 era 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jushi zhuan</td>
<td>18th century</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Wei dynasty Dahe 大和 era</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I want to begin by introducing the Datang Neidian lu version of the narrative because it typifies the second (red) group of stories and should thus provide some

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52 This Xu gaozeng zhuan narrative appears among several set at Mount Wutai. Though it does not explicitly mention Mount Wutai, its context suggests very clearly this is the location at which the events described transpired.

53 As I discuss below, there was neither a Northern Wei Taihe era nor a Northern Qi Taihe era. It seems likely that the Fayuan zhulin story's temporal setting—the Northern Wei Taihe 太和 era—resulted from an error: Northern Wei Dahe 大和 era was misread as Northern Wei Taihe 太和 era.
sense of the ways in which this material differs from those with which the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* telling is more closely affiliated (shown in blue above). According to Daoxuan’s mid-seventh century text:

In the Dahe 大和 era (477-499) of Wei Gaozu 魏高祖 [Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei] in the Daijing 代京 capital, there was a eunuch-official who was grieved (at having) a eunuch (body). He submitted a memorial to the throne asking permission to enter the mountain to seek the way. An imperial order permitted this. Then he brought the *Avatāṃsaka [sūtra]* and day and night he read it. He worshipped it and performed repentance rituals unceasingly. Before one summer was over at the end of the sixth month, his mustache (beard and whiskers) grew back and he resumed a man’s appearance. When he reported this to the court, the emperor was greatly surprised and respected him. Thereupon the country venerated the *Avatāṃsaka (sūtra)* and, moreover, honored it daily T.2149.339(b).

While detail and emphasis differentiate them one from the next, the *Datang Neidian lu*, *Fayuan zhulin*, and *Jushi zhuan* narratives are, in essence, closely related stories promoting the efficacy of chanting the *Avatāṃsaka sūtra* and depicting the power of miraculous events to inspire faith in the dharma. These versions of the tale are set during Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei’s reign (r. 471-499), rather than the Northern Qi period. The texts emphasize the faith that the restoration of an unnamed eunuch’s male organ inspired in the emperor who, together with his subjects, consequently venerated the *Avatāṃsaka sūtra*. Especially significant to my project, the *Datang Neidian lu*, *Fayuan zhulin* and *Jushi zhuan* make no mention of Mount Wutai and the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple. Rather than promoting the potency of a certain place for practice, these versions of the tale attribute the restoration of the eunuch’s organ to scripture recitation.

In this regard, this group of narratives that mention neither Mount Wutai nor the prince’s auto-cremation seems very different from the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*
account of the temple’s founding and much closer to two types of miracle tales. On the one hand, it forms part of a large body of material promoting the power of particular scriptures to effect extraordinary results. The *Hongzan fahua zhuan* story of a licentious official who relentlessly pursued a nun exemplifies this genre. In this case, the nun was a *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* devotee. Though she constantly rebuffed his advances, the man nevertheless persisted. One night the lustful official went so far as to stay at her abbey. The *Hongzan fahua zhuan* describes the scene:

> His heart, of course, harbored other intentions. But the very instant he sought to find his way to the nun’s quarters, his lower extremities were seized with a burning pain and his male member dropped off. Rivulets of perspiration streamed from his skin, leprous ulcers broke out over his entire body, and his eyebrows, beard, and sideburns all fell out. The office manager grievously recanted, but even after trying a hundred remedies, he still was never completely cured T. 2067.40(a).54

In this case the male protagonist loses, rather than regains, his male member. Consequently, the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* asserts, the official finally desisted. As in the *Datang Neidian lu, Fayuan zhulin*, and *Jushi zhuan* accounts of the eunuch’s healing, the text attributes this outcome to a sūtra’s potency.

> These redactions of our narrative (again those in second chart) also share affinities with didactic tales illustrating karma’s workings. Daoshi’s *Fayuan zhulin*, for instance, preserves a version of the well-known tale of the eunuch and the oxen. It is set in Indian during Kaniṣka’s reign (first, second century). According to Daoshi, one day this eunuch saw more than five hundred oxen about to be gelded and thought to himself: “My former evil karma [led me to] receive a eunuch’s body. Now I should use money to save these oxen [from the same] hardship [I have endured].”

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54 This is Stevenson’s translation (Stevenson 1995, 444).
T.2122.665(a). When he released the oxen his male organ was miraculously restored. Kaniśka, further, rewarded him with a high position, wealth and possessions. The verses appended to the narrative attribute the mysterious response (mingying 冥應) to the effects of good karma produced by benevolence and compassion T.2122.665(a).55

The shorter redactions of the miracle tale such as the Da Tang Neidian lu telling are quite similar to other tales promoting the efficacy of sūtra-recitation and illustrating karma’s working. They are very different from the longer versions of the story including the Gu Qingliang zhuān record of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s founding. I think these points of similarity and difference reveal that the story of the eunuch’s healing initially circulated independent of any reference to Mount Wutai and the prince’s self-immolation. Set in the Wei period at an unnamed mountain, the tale of the restoration of the eunuch’s male member was essentially a narrative extolling the Avataṃsaka sūtra. When it was absorbed into the lore of Mount Wutai in the seventh-century, the story was transformed into one demonstrating the power of visions to heal and illustrating the efficacy of practice at this site.

55 The commentaries, which classify eunuchs (saṇḍa) as one type of paṇḍaka, “sexual deviant,” similarly attribute this physical deformity to past actions. These include, among other things, the way one’s parents performed sexual intercourse and one’s own sexual misconduct in previous lives (Powers 2009, 82-83). Indian Buddhist tradition, according to John Powers, depicts saṇḍa and some forms of paṇḍaka as deficient in desire; paradoxically, rather than viewing this as an advantage on the path to overcoming craving, these materials bar eunuchs from joining the monastic order (Powers 2009, 82-83). In A Bull of Man, Powers hypothesizes that this contradiction reflects the fact that the battle against passions is integral to the monastic path and thus “while monks and nuns are required to maintain total sexual abstinence, they must also have no sexual impairments.”55 In contrast to the commentarial tradition and miracle tales such as this one which link the loss of one’s male member to evil karma, the tales of the eunuch whose male member was restored by Avataṃsaka sūtra recitation do not tell us why he was castrated.
In the *Jushi zhuan* Peng Shaosheng draws attention to another piece of evidence that supports my claim about the manner in which the temple founding legend took shape. Writing about Daoxuan’s version of the eunuch story and its *Huayan jing shu chao* (Commentary on the *Avatāmsaka sūtra*) counterpart in the eighteenth-century, Peng identified an inconsistency that lends credence to the claim that the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* tale is creating rather than describing Mount Wutai’s history. The compiler noted that the elaborate *Huayan jing shu chao* version of the miracle tale is set in the Northern Qi Taihe 太和 era. He wrote:

The [*Huayan jing shu chao*] commentary takes Liu Zhi to be a Northern Qi person. It also relates in error the matter of the third prince’s self-immolation [as an] offering to Mañjuśrī. According to this [Liu Qianzhi] aroused the thought for enlightenment. I submit the fact that in the Northern Qi there was no Taihe 太和 reign title. Moreover, as for the Wei and Qi princes [I] exhausted all examples in the histories. There is no record of self-immolation. In the present situation I relied on the *Neidian lu* and did not accept the version found in (the *Huayan jing shu chao*) (X. 88 1646 190b07-b10).

Peng’s point is that the *Neidian lu* story that I translated above does not mention the self-immolation and that their period in which the *Huayan jing shu chao* version of the story is set—the Taihe 太和 era—does not exist. In light of these facts and unable to find a record of a prince’s auto-cremation in either the Wei or Northern Qi

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56 Though Peng based his evaluation on the comparison of two texts, the *Datang Neidian lu* and *Huayan jing shu chao*, his observations apply equally well to the two groups of stories I compare in the above chart. The *Fayuan zhulin* account is closely related to the *Datang Neidian lu* rendering of the narrative. The *Huayan jing zhuan ji*, *Huayan jing Tanxuan ji*, and *Gu Qingliang zhuan* records are similar to the *Huayan jing shu chao* record.
periods, Peng dismissed the entire episode as a fiction. His finding lends force to my argument that the story of a eunuch’s healing circulated independently of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* in which the narrative was transformed from one promoting the efficacy of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* into a tale celebrating the power of the Bodhisattva and visions obtained at a single site.

Recognizing that the story of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple as it is presented in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* was likely fashioned from a preexisting narrative associated with another place and time, we can nevertheless learn much about Mount Wutai’s representation as a holy place at the end of the seventh-century from the story. The gazetteer attributes the restoration of Liu’s organ not only to the memorial mound erected by Aṣoka but also to a vision of Mañjuśrī he obtained there. The idea that visions of bodhisattvas and buddhas could heal their viewers had a substantial pre-seventh century history. Early miracle tales and scriptures concerning the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara include this theme. For example, the fourth-century *Qing guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluo nizhou jing* 諸觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼呪經 (*Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Invoking Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva to Dissipate Poison and Harm* T. 1043) promises that the Bodhisattva will cure fever, skin disease, swelling and other ailments if practitioners recite *dhāraṇīs*. Early

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57 Though Peng is critical of more elaborate versions of this miracle tale he nevertheless drew from them in compiling his own *Jushi zhuan* account. While the protagonist of both the *Datang Neidian lu* and *Fayuan zhulin* is an unnamed eunuch, for instance, Peng identifies him by name. As we have seen, the name Liu Qianzhi first appears in accounts set at Mount Wutai’s Wangzi Shaoshen Temple in the Northern Qi period.

58 This text’s translation is attributed to Nandi 難提 in the Eastern Jin (317-420) (Yü 2001, 49-53). It records a series of *dhāraṇī* with which Avalokiteśvara purportedly healed Vaiśāli’s sick inhabitants T.1043.35(a).
miracle tales also depict the miraculous healings performed by the Bodhisattva in conjunction with this sūtra. The following record from the sūtra dramatically depicts the miraculous healing performed by Avalokiteśvara. The story concerns the sick monk Fayi who:

...sincerely called on [Avalokiteśvara]. Several days went by like this. One day he took a nap during the daytime and dreamt a monk came to visit him in order to cure him. He cut open [Fayi’s] chest and stomach and washed his intestines, which were all knotted together and looked very dirty. After washing them, the monk stuffed them back into the body and told [Fayi], “your illness is now cured” (Yü 2001, 172-173).

As in all versions of the eunuch tale, recitation also plays a fundamental role in this context. The devotee’s sincerity and the Bodhisattva’s power, these materials imply, bring about recovery when combined with the recitation of a potent text.

Second, the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s rendering of the Liu Qianzhi narrative depicts stūpas as especially potent places for performing self-immolation. This notion would have been familiar to Huixiang’s audience from, among other places, the story of Bodhisattva Medicine King Tathāgata whose arms were restored when he cut them off before 84,000 stūpas. The association the Gu Qingliang zhuan story makes between healing and self-immolation appears not only in the scriptural past but also in premodern Chinese history. The Hongzan fahua zhuan hagiography of the Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra devotee Sengming 僧明(fl. ca. 502-519) purports that a number of miracles attended his auto-cremation. According to the text, Sengming sought Emperor Wu of the Liang’s 梁武帝 (r. 502-549) permission before

59 I discuss this story on page 46 above.
burning himself before a Heavenly Palace of Maitreya 彌勒天宮 that he constructed at Mount Shimen 石門山 (Benn 2007, 73). Miracles followed the cleric’s auto-cremation, including the spontaneous appearance of a pond. The Hongzan fahua zhuan statement that “all those who drank from this pond were cured of their illnesses” suggests the location of the sixth-century monk’s self-immolation developed as the center of a postmortem cult in which auto-cremation was linked to healing. The Gu Qingliang zhuan similarly attributes the miraculous restoration of Liu’s organ to the power of visions obtained at the site of an Aśoka stūpa and the place of a layman’s auto-cremation.

Unraveling the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend reveals a different genealogy for this site than the one put forward in the Gu Qingliang zhuan. The structure was not, as Huixiang’s account implies, transformed from a place venerated because of its association with Aśoka into one commemorating auto-cremation and connected with Mañjuśrī, visions, and healing through the efforts of Northern Qi patrons. Instead, my analysis shows the founding legend to be a fusion of multiple tales. In this instance the gazetteer brings together, first, the account of an unnamed layman’s self-immolation, second, the story of Aśoka’s 84,000 relic mounds, and, finally, the record of an unnamed sixth-century eunuch’s healing. In this process a narrative celebrating the power of sūtra-recitation to effect miraculous ends was transformed into a founding legend asserting the potency of practice at the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple at Mount Wutai where visions of Mañjuśrī

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60 The notion that the remains of holy figures are potent curatives is exclusive neither to the stories of eminent monks nor to Buddhist tradition more generally. Healing properties, for instance, were attributed to the relics of Christian saints. On this topic see Peter Brown’s The cult of the saints: its rise and function in Latin Christianity.
and healing could be achieved. This is but one of many *Gu Qingliang zhuan* stories that celebrate the site’s affiliation with the Bodhisattva and I will now turn from a detailed examination of the temple founding legend to a discussion of some of these records that illustrate one of the principal ways that Mount Wutai’s significance was represented in the beginning years of the Tang.

### 2.3 Envisioning Mount Wutai’s Past Importance

**as a Place where Mañjuśrī is Present**

The record of the restoration of Liu Qianzhi’s male member at the site of the Northern Qi prince’s self-immolation is one of a number of miracle tales in the gazetteer that depict the mountain as a worthy object of devotion because of its longstanding connection with Mañjuśrī. The story of Zhimeng’s 智猛 meeting with Mañjuśrī in the form of an Indian monk, the record of the layman Gao Shoujie’s 高守節 encounter with the Bodhisattva in the guise of a maiden and an unusual cleric, and the tale of a blind woman who regained her sight after praying to the Bodhisattva are three examples of this group of materials T.2098.1096(c); T.2098.1097(a,b); T.20981096(b). These narratives depict the mountain as the place at which practitioners of varied social statuses had long obtained transformative visions of Mañjuśrī. In so doing, the material confirmed scriptural claims that the Bodhisattva resided at the mountain.

### 2.3.i The Tale of the Blind Woman’s Healing

Like the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend, the story of the blind woman who regained her sight represents Mount Wutai as a location where earlier
encounters with the Bodhisattva miraculously restored practitioners to health. The brief account is set in the past at an unspecified location on the mountain’s periphery and includes few details about its protagonist:

Formerly to the west of Mount Heng and in [Mount] Qingliang’s southeast corner, there was a woman of pure faith who suffered blindness. She often dwelled alone on the mountain. Her heart prayed to the saint Mañjuśrī. Day and night she vigorously strove. Her prayers were extremely sincere. She felt the holy (sage’s) blessing and regained her sight. Afterwards I do not know where she ended her days T.2098.1096(b).

In contrast to the vision that restores Liu Qianzhi’s male member, which the Gu Qingliang zhuan attributes to sūtra recitation, in this instance the text affiliates the miraculous appearance with the sincerity of the woman’s prayers.

Both these stories share affinities with the larger miracle tale genre in which a practitioner’s earnestness evokes a response by a Buddhist deity. This body of literature is called by four closely connected terms related to the responses of buddhas and bodhisattvas to the conditions of sentient beings. These are ganying 感應 (sympathetic response), gantong 感通 (sympathetic power), lingyan 灵验 (spiritual efficacy) and lingying 灵应 (spiritual response). As Yü (2001), Sharf (2002), and Birnbaum (1986) among others have shown, this terminology is embedded within an indigenous worldview that envisions the cosmos as entirely interdependent and interconnected. The notion that all things are made of the same stuff (qi 氣) which lies behind the gantong / ganying theory, Yü Chünfang explains, is a foundational concept in Chinese cosmological thinking. It is incorporated into

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61 I suspect that the character is du 獨 and not chu 触.
Chinese miracle tales about Avalokiteśvara in which prayers and calling the Bodhisattva's name operate as the stimulus that, when sincere or truly desperate, triggers the Bodhisattva's response. In the above example, the Gu Qingliang zhuan similarly portrays Mañjuśrī's manifestation as a reaction to the blind woman's earnest sincerity.

Curiously, though the vision of the Bodhisattva constitutes the climax of both this story and the record of Liu Qianzhi’s healing, neither tale provides details about Mañjuśrī's appearance. In fact, the Gu Qingliang zhuan by and large says very little about the Bodhisattva’s form. Elsewhere the gazetteer refers to several images of Mañjuśrī that stood at the mountain but similarly provides scant detail about their appearance. (1) The first of these is a Mañjuśrī image in the easternmost of two stone halls on the Middle Terrace T.2098.1094(a). The text reports only that it was approximately the height of a person and had a counterpart in the western hall: a figure of Maitreya 彌勒. (2) The Gu Qingliang zhuan compiler states that a second depiction of Mañjuśrī could be found together with images of Śākyamuni and Samantabhadra in a stone hall beside the road thirty li to the south of the Middle Terrace T.2098.1095(a). (3) He states that a stūpa on the Eastern Terrace also housed an image of the Bodhisattva T.2098.1095(b). (4) Finally, according to the

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62 The Bodhisattva, Yü reminds her readers, “does not act gratuitously,” but rather is connected to human suppliants through sincerity that is the mechanism of stimulus and response (Yü 2001, 153).

63 The representation of Mañjuśrī and Maitreya in pre-Song visual sources is a subject that requires scholarly attention. I grateful to Chūn-fang Yü and Angela Howard for sharing their knowledge of this topic with me.

64 According to Dorothy Wong, examples of Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra and Śākyamuni appearing together are numerous at eighth-century Dunhuang (Wong 2004, 147).
text the cleric Huize 會隬 (seventh-century) and his party repaired an image of the Bodhisattva in the Dafu Temple’s Eastern Hall T.2098.1098(c).\(^{65}\) In addition to these four images, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* also mentions five images without identifying their subjects.\(^{66}\)

While these references indicate that Mañjuśrī and other Buddhist divinities were represented and found on Mount Wutai in the seventh-century, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* provides no information about their appearance.\(^{67}\) Noticeably absent from the gazetteer is any reference to the Bodhisattva astride his lion mount. This is the form with which later miracle tales found in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, *Song gaoseng zhuan* and other post-eighth century sources most often associate him. While a mid-sixth century stele shows Mañjuśrī on his lion vehicle (*vāhan*), this rendering of the Bodhisattva seems to have become widespread in the eighth century, the period in which the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* first circulated.\(^{68}\)

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\(^{65}\) This could be the image paired with Maitreya and labeled number one in the above paragraph.

\(^{66}\) These are (1) a “holy image” in the Qingliang Temple T.2098.1095(b), (2) an “ancient image” in Xiaowen’s Stone cave 孝文石窟像 T.2098.1095(b), (3) images at the site of Tanluan’s 地藏 practice T.2098.1096(b), (4) an image of a deity’s “true form” (*zhenrong* 真容) that meditation master Yan 儼禅师 installed at the site T.2098.1095(b), and (5) images in the Dafu Temple’s Eastern and Western Halls T.2098.1094(a). The image in the Eastern Hall of the Dafu Temple might be the Bodhisattva image that the cleric Huize and his party repaired in the Eastern Hall of the Dafu Temple T.2098.1098(c).

In addition to these statements about objects installed at Mount Wutai, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* mentions images in several other contexts. It narrates, for example, an encounter Huize and his party had with an animated image of the Buddha in his “true form” (*zhenrong* 真容). The gazetteer also claims that master Puming traveled to Mount Wutai when he heard about the “[Mount] Qingliang auspicious image” T. 2098.1097(c).

\(^{67}\) The cult of Mañjuśrī shares this feature in common with the early Avalokitēśvara miracle tales that, as Yü Chünfang showed, also depict the bodhisattva as a strange light or a monk (Yü 2001, 175-176).

\(^{68}\) A mid-sixth century stele, for instance, shows Śākyamuni beneath a canopy above which Mañjuśrī and Samatābhadrā soar on lion and elephant mounts (C.F.K. 1927, 26). Wei-cheng Lin notes that the Longmen caves preserve somewhat later eighth-century renderings of Mañjuśrī mounted on a lion
Huixiang’s reticence about the Bodhisattva’s outward appearance reflects the still inchoate state of Mañjuśrī iconography during his lifetime.

2.3.ii Mañjuśrī’s Manifestation as a Mysterious Stranger before Zhimeng

In the Gu Qingliang zhuan there is one subgroup of tales that gives ample detail about the Bodhisattva’s form. These are tales recounting the Bodhisattva’s manifestation in the form of a stranger. The terse record of the cleric Zhimeng’s encounter with Mañjuśrī and the story of the layman Gao Shoujie’s meeting with the Bodhisattva in the guise of a maiden and a strange monk are representative of this material.69 Like the tale of the restoration of the blind woman’s sight and Liu Qianzhi’s healing these stories illustrate Mañjuśrī’s intimate connection to the mountain, a notion that finds precedent in the triad of sūtras I discussed in the introduction.

Precedent for the Bodhisattva’s appearance in multiple forms comes from the Mañjuśrī parinirvāṇa sūtra. According to this scripture, which I quoted above, Mañjuśrī appears in differing forms, such as that of a destitute person, in accordance with the needs of his devotees. The Daśabhūmika sūtra 十地經 (Shidi jing)—a section of the Avatamsaka sūtra that circulated as an independent text—holds that

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69 So too is the Story of the monk Mingxu 明勗 who met Mañjuśrī in the form of a sick monk T.2098.1096(c). According to the Gu Qingliang, Mingxu came to Mount Wutai where he searched for the Bodhisattva. A strange monk joined him in this endeavor. The pair passed a night in an ancient dwelling where several rustic-looking and ill-mannered monks resided. In the night Mingxu’s companion became violently ill. When Mingxu accompanied him out of the dwelling, the entire scene, including the monk, disappeared. Mingxu realized that he was the sage. He was filled with remorse. Koichi Shinohara examines this narrative in his article “Literary Construction of Buddhist Sacred Places: The Record of Mt. Lu by Chen Shunyu.”
all tenth-stage bodhisattvas share this capacity. Dorothy Wong spells out the implications of the Daśabhūmika sūtra material for the Bodhisattva cult, writing:

...bodhisattvas of the tenth stage possess all the interpenetrating knowledge and mystic powers of buddhas including nirmāṇa (magical transformations) or prātiḥārya (manifestations). Mañjuśrī (a tenth stage bodhisattva) can therefore manifest himself in different forms according to the spiritual ability and needs of sentient beings. Through the revelation of apparitional bodies of Mañjuśrī, which must correspond with devotional acts, the merits of Mañjuśrī may be transferred to suffering beings, who may then be freed from the lower realms (Wong 1993, 32).

This pair of texts frame Mañjuśrī’s varied appearances in much the same way that the sūtras present Śākyamuni Buddha’s divergent teachings: as expressions of fangbian 方便 (skillful teaching, Sanskrit upāya). Like the different and sometimes contradictory teachings the Buddha passed on to his disciples, the many forms Mañjuśrī assumes are explained here as reactions to the varying conditions and needs of his audience. The closest parallel for traditions about Mañjuśrī assuming multiple guises is surely the twenty-fifth chapter of the Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra which claims that Avalokitēśvara appears thirty-three forms to save people from danger and suffering.70 The guises Avalokitēśvara takes include a layman and a monk—the very form in which Mañjuśrī appears before Zhimeng and Gao Shoujie in the following Gu Qingliang zhuan stories.

The terse account of Zhimeng’s mysterious encounter appears in the lengthy Gu Qingliang zhuan subsection concerning the “miraculous responses experienced by pilgrims.” The terse gazetteer entry reads:

... according to another legend, in the time of Yuwen [ruler(s)] of the [Northern] Zhou 宇文周 (557-581), Mañjuśrī transformed into an Indian monk and came to this place saying he was visiting the holy traces 聖迹 and that he desired to reach Mount Qingliang, Mañjuśrī’s dwelling place. At this time master Zhimeng asked about this matter but as soon as he opened [his mouth] to begin to ask suddenly he lost the Indian monk. This seems to be a way to encourage the multitude and cause them to give rise to longing. If one sincerely believes in supernatural powers (abhiññā) how can it be far? T.2098.1096(c).

The Gu Qingliang zhuan entry concerning Zhimeng refers explicitly to Mount Wutai as Mount Qingliang, the site at which the version of the Avataṃsaka sūtra rendered into Chinese by Buddhabhadra in the fifth century predicts Mañjuśrī will dwell following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāṇa. The implication here is that the Indian monk and Mañjuśrī are one and the same figure.

2.3.iii Mañjuśrī’s Manifestation as a Mysterious Stranger before Gao Shoujie

Another Gu Qingliang zhuan tale portrays the Five Terrace Mountain as a place where Mañjuśrī appears to his devotees in multiple forms. This is the tale of Gao Shoujie. Here the protagonist is a layperson rather than a monk. According to the text:

When Gao was fifteen or sixteen years old, he traveled to Dao County and met a monk who was about fifty or sixty. He said his name was Haiyun 海雲. They talked and Haiyun asked Gao, “My son, can you chant sūtras?” and Gao answered that his original mind was sincere. Haiyun then told him to go to Wutai. They arrived at a place that had three thatched huts, enough to

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71 A second redaction of the Zhimeng tale helps clarify the period to which the Gu Qingliang zhuan refers here. It appears in the Daoxuan gantong lu 道宣感通錄 (Vinaya Master Daoxuan's Record of Miraculous Response). According to Daoxuan:

In the time of the Yuwen [clan] of the [Northern] Zhou 宇文周 (557-581), Mañjuśrī changed into an Indian monk. [He] came wandering this earth saying, “I desire to venerate the place Kāśyapa Buddha spoke the dharma. This is the same as Mañjuśrī’s dwelling place called Mount Qingliang T.2107.436(c).

This rendering of the tale suggests, again, the connection between the myth about Kāśyapa Buddha’s robe and the mountain that I discussed above on page 28.
accommodate them. Haiyun told Gao to chant the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*. He [the monk] went out begging for food and clothing to provide for them. There was a foreign monk who often came and chatted with the master [Haiyun] and left at the end of the day. Later Yun asked if Gao recognized who the foreign monk was and Gao said no. Yun then, as if teasing him, said that the foreign monk was Mañjuśrī. Although Gao was told this several times, he did not understand its purport.

Then one day, Gao was suddenly told to go down the mountain to get things from the village. Yun warned him saying, “Women are the root of all evil. They destroy the way of *bodhi* and break down the city of nirvana. When you go down to the world of men, you ought to be cautious.” Gao promised respectfully that he would remember this. With this instruction in mind, Gao descended the mountain. He saw a maiden about fourteen or fifteen of great beauty and dressed in gorgeous clothing. Riding on a white horse, she rushed forward to Gao and, dismounting, she prostrated and begged Gao saying that she was ill and could not control the unruly horse. She asked Gao to save her life. Remembering what his teacher told him, Gao ignored her without looking back. The girl followed him for several *li* and continued begging him with great pity. But Gao was firm in his resolve as before. The girl suddenly disappeared. When Gao returned home and told Haiyun what happened, the master said, “You are truly a heroic man. Nevertheless, she is actually Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. You did not realize this and thought she was teasing you.” T.2098.1097(a,b).

The trope of the trickster Mañjuśrī who appears before devotees who fail to recognize him that appears in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, as well as other pre-eighth century sources, is widespread in later records of the site including the tales of conjured temples I will discuss in chapter four.

Mañjuśrī is not the sole mysterious stranger that Gao Shoujie encountered at Mount Wutai. In addition to the foreign monk and the youthful maiden, both manifestations of the Bodhisattva, the layman also met the aged śramaṇa Haiyun. The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* reveals the figure’s identity at the tale’s conclusion which revolves around the layman’s discussion with the Meditation Master Wolun 臥倫禪師. According to the text, Gao Shoujie sought the master out in the capital at
Haiyun’s request. When he arrived at his place of practice, the master addressed him:

Where are you coming from? [Gao] replied: I have come from Mount Wutai. The master sent me away to become your disciple. Lun said: What was your teacher’s name. [Gao] replied: Haiyun. Lun, gasping with surprise, said: Mount Wutai is Mañjuśrī’s dwelling. The bhikṣu Haiyun is the third great “good friend” to whom the youth Sudhāna prays and worships in the Avataṃsaka sūtra. How could you abandon this saint? In one thousand kalpas and ten thousand eons there is no way to meet [him] once. Why [did you make] this error? T.2098.1097(b).

The lines suggest that Gao Shoujie met and failed to recognize not only Mañjuśrī but also Sāgaramgeha, the third of fifty-three kalyāṇa-mitra (virtuous friends) that Sudhāna meets in the Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra. In addition to implying that Mount Wutai’s peaks are the mythological Mount Qingliang of the Avataṃsaka sūtra, this Gu Qingliang zhuan story depicts the layman Gao Shoujie as a contemporary Sudhana. At this mountain on the Buddhist world’s periphery, the tale suggests, one can follow in the paradigmatic pilgrim’s footsteps visiting Mañjuśrī together with other deities.

Like this story, the tales of Zhimeng, and the blind woman’s healing, the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend recounted Mañjuśrī’s manifestations at

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72 The Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra makes up the final section of the Avataṃsaka sūtra. Because in the Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra Sudhāna meets Mañjuśrī on two occasions, the total number of kalyāṇa-mitra he meets is sometimes said to be fifty-two and other times said to be fifty-three. In The Pilgrimage of Sudhana, Jan Fontein cataloged the wide variety of art that takes the Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra as its focus. The earliest rendering of the Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra may be a ninth or tenth century wall painting at Dunhuang. Though these objects postdate the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s compilation by more than two centuries, they suggest that both the scene in which Mañjuśrī instructs Sudhāna and the youth’s meeting with Sāgaramgeha captured the attention of Huixiang’s successors who depicted these scenes. Portrayals of Sudhāna’s encounter with Sāgaramgeha show a figure emerging from the sea on a lotus. In the Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra Sāgaramgeha tells Sudhāna that he learned from the Tathāgatha after witnessing him surface from the sea on a lotus. In the visual sources, Fontein explains, the scene serves as an “unmistakable clue which reveals the identity of the kalyāṇamitra to anyone familiar with the Gaṇḍavyūha” (Fontein 1967, 3, 23-26). Perhaps in the Gu Qingliang zhuan miracle tale the appearance of the term sea (hai 海) in Haiyun’s name functions in a similar fashion.
Mount Wutai and thus confirmed scriptural claims that it was the Bodhisattva’s dwelling place. The reference to the establishment of a temple in association with the prince’s self-immolation before an Aśoka stūpa, further, provided a (perhaps retrospective) rationale for the construction and patronage of physical sites there. In the concluding section of this chapter I want to read the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple narrative as one of several stories of “visionary building” in the Gu Qingliang zhuan that operated in this way.

**2.4 Visionary Building**

The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* entries concerning Xinzhou 惠州 official Zhang Bei 張備 and Emperor Wen of the Western Wei 魏文帝 (507-551) T.2098.1094(a) are two additional narratives that show their protagonists responding to visions by reshaping their environment. The gazetteer simply states that the first felt the presence of the saint (*gansheng* 感聖)—presumably a reference to Mañjuśrī—while wandering at Mount Wutai and thus “erected this stone tablet” T.2098.1094(a). More than seven hundred people, the text continues, subsequently ascended the mountain with the official Zhang Bei to setup a stele T.2098.1094(a). Tradition holds that a similar miracle also led Emperor Wen of the Western Wei to initiate a building project. The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* purports that after receiving a vision of the sage’s demeanor (*shengyi* 聖儀), perhaps that of Mañjuśrī, the ruler consequently

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73 Huixiang states that a second stele erected by Dizhou governor 梓州 Cui Zhen 崔震 in the Wei period, as well as a stone temple he established, stood nearby the stele commemorating Zhang Bei’s vision on the Middle Terrace T.2098.1094(a).
erected the Da Futu Temple at the site. As with the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple legend, which affiliates the structure’s beginnings with one man’s self-immolation and another’s healing vision, this pair of Gu Qingliang zhuan tales associate visions with construction. And though the accounts may, in fact, postdate the edifices themselves, the stories nevertheless explain for later audiences what renders the structures, and the Middle Terrace atop which they stood, the worthy object of patronage and an efficacious place of practice.

In the opening paragraph of the section entitled, “Ancient and Present Superior Traces” Huixiang reflects on the importance of the establishment and preservation of built structures. There he writes:

Now the [sites I] record[ed] [that bring] followers to truth have sunk into disrepair. This causes me to heave a great sigh. The repair and building of stupas and mausoleums, the making of holy images, these are great undertakings to be praised. These actions [are what] broaden and spread [the dharma]. [Superior traces like these] are second [only] to the [events of] ancient times [that they commemorate] T.2098.1094(a).

Stūpas, mausoleums, and temples are permanent in a way that the miracles they celebrate are not. For this reason, Huixiang asserts, buildings like the Da Futu Temple can expand the impact of ephemeral events—such as Emperor Wen’s vision of the sage—in time and place. Huixiang thus frames repair and construction as second in importance only to the events they recall.

Not only do built structures possess the power to draw individuals to the Buddhist teachings generally but in a number of stories set in the decades immediately preceding the Gu Qingliang zhuan’s compilation their repair prompts

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74 This is another name for the Dafu Temple introduced above. In his Daoxuan lushi gantong lu Daoxuan associates a different pair of emperors with the site’s founding T.2107.437(a,b). I discuss this discrepancy in the next chapter beginning on page 93.
another miraculous response. The record of the cleric Ji’s 基 (632-682) time at the mountain in the Xianheng 咸亨 era (670-674) and accounts of the cleric Huize’s 會 (seventh-century) imperially commissioned visit in the Longshuo 龍朔 era (661-663) both claim that the monks and the parties with which they traveled perceived unusual sights and sounds when they carried out construction and repairs. In the first case, when the famous disciple of the Yogacara master Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664), together with a group of more than five hundred people, repaired an image of Mañjuśrī 75 they “perceived the scent of incense and the sound of a bell” T.2098.1094(a). Similarly, the gazetteer asserts that when the master painter Zhang Gongrong 張公榮 travelling with Huize, the local official Lu Xuanlan 呂玄覽 and others repaired an image of the Buddha on the Middle Terrace and performed the eye opening ceremony, “as soon as he dotted the eye to finish it, [the group] heard the huge sound of a bell” T.2098.1098(b,c). I will return to stories about unusual sites and sounds like these at the conclusion of chapter three. For now, let it suffice to note that the main thrust of these miracle tales accords with Huixiang’s statement about the creation and repair of structures and images, as well as Mount Wutai’s depiction in stories of miraculous buildings including the story of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s founding: temples, stūpas, and statues are the worthy foci of attention because they mark the sites of miraculous happenings and continue to glorify them.

75 This passage may also indicate that the group constructed the structure.
Conclusions

A large body of extant scholarship considers the range of strategies with which Chinese practitioners have responded to the problem of creating new sacred centers at mountains standing on the periphery of the Indian Buddhist world. In his study of Tang period Mount Song 嵩山, for instance, Bernard Faure highlighted how the hagiographies of Chan masters legitimized the development of Buddhist territory. He argued that stories of monks meeting with and pacifying menacing snakes and spirits gave muted expression to Buddhism’s encounter with autochthonous religion at this locale. In her research on miracle tales about Avalokiteśvara, Chün-fang Yū discussed the important role accounts of sacred images and records of the Bodhisattva’s manifestations played in Mount Putuo’s 普陀山 gradual identification as Avalokiteśvara’s mythological Potalaka 補陀落home. Koichi Shinohara’s study of the process by which Mount Lu 廬山 came to be recognized as a Buddhist site showed that in many instances the presence of an extraordinary monk from beyond the mountain or the discovery of a sacred object within its borders helped to establish the center as a Buddhist one. Together these studies identify a range of ways that stories facilitated a site’s creation as holy.

76 Two examples of this type of literature that Faure cites in his study are the legend of Shenxiu’s 神秀 (606?-706) pacification of a huge snake at Mount Yuquan 玉泉山 and the tale of his disciple Puji’s 普寂 (651-739) victory over a scorned-monk-turned-reptile at Mount Song (Faure 1987).

77 See, for instance, Yū’s discussion of the account of Japanese monk Egaku’s 慧鍔 frustrated attempt to take an Avalokiteśvara image to Japan (Yū 2001, 383-384).

78 According to Shinohara, the affiliation of the eminent monk Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416) with particular places at Mount Lu, for example, contributed to the sense that the territory was a distinctly Buddhist one (Shinohara 1999).
More recently, in his work on the southern marchmount, Nanyue 南嶽, James Robson has called attention to the apparent mobility of these sacred places. Reconstructing the mountain’s relocation from Hengshan 衡山 in today’s Hunan 湖南 province northward to Huoshan 霍山 in present-day in Anhui 安徽, Robson argued convincingly that the site’s transposition was a response to political circumstances that rendered the original site inaccessible to the court. His work suggests how by re-placing an ostensibly stable mountain a community rendered a distant locale proximate.

In this chapter we have seen that at least insofar as Mount Wutai is concerned, its past was no more fixed than Mount Heng’s place. Examining multiple redactions of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple narrative revealed that proponents of the mountain cult fashioned Mount Wutai’s history by appropriating preexisting narratives associated with other places and times into Mount Wutai’s lore. In so doing they created a past for the site in which Mañjuśrī figured prominently and that, further, accorded with the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* depictions of its importance. In this context, the writing and rewriting of the past constituted one strategy through

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79 James Robson’s study of Nanyue suggests that the transposition of Nanyue from Hengshan in today’s Hunan province northward to Huoshan in present-day in Anhui entailed the substantial re-focusing of ritual attention during the time of Emperor Wu of the Han 漢武帝 (r. 141-87 BCE). On this matter Robson writes:

> This relocation of Nanyue was but one element in the major changes in rituals such as the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices 封禪 and in the performance of an imperial ritual progress around the empire (xunshou 巡守 or xunxing 巡幸) during Wudi’s reign.

Robson speculates that this dramatic move was a response to the fact that the region in which southern Nanyue (Hengshan) stood had become inaccessible to the court. The territory in which Hengshan stood formed part of the Changsha kingdom and fell outside the scope of central rule. Accessibility issues continued to shape Nanyue’s development when, in the period of division beginning in 317 C.E. the mountain was the sole yue at which southern rulers could carry out ritual observances. The Southern Marchmount remained Huoshan until Emperor Wen of the Sui’s 隋文帝 (r. 581-604) reign when it was re-moved southward (Robson 2009, 59, 61, 67).
which a range of peaks was created as a holy territory when it was imbued with longterm meaning.
Chapter Three

Hidden Landscapes

In this chapter I introduce a group of *Gu Qingliang zhuan* tales that celebrate Mount Wutai as a potent place to become transcendents (xian 神) and an access point to realms that are ordinarily hidden from view. I begin my discussion of this topic with a close reading of the story of three unnamed śramaṇas who achieved immortality after entering a mountain hollow T.2098.1094(b). The narrative typifies a body of material that constituted a counterpoint to eight-century accounts that root the site’s specialness in its association with Mañjuśrī. In contrast to these records that often advocate practice directed toward stūpas, temples and images, the story of the three śramaṇas and other narratives with which it is closely related suggest that what renders the mountain an efficacious place of practice is normally invisible. This exploration illustrates, once again, how miracle tales oftentimes create rather than describe Mount Wutai’s illustrious past.

3.1 The Tale of the Three Śramaṇas

At first glance, the tale of the three novices who obtained transcendence in a mountain hollow appears to be a legend evincing to the early importance of the Dafu Temple and the Middle Terrace on which it stood. Known by a half dozen names in Huixiang’s lifetime, the compiler mentions this site far more often than any other in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, an indication of the structure’s preeminent status during

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80 The temple stood nearby the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple, a flower garden purportedly planted by Emperor Xiaowen of the Wei, and a cluster of stūpas and stele encircling an old stone temple T.2098.1094(a,c).
this period. References to the Dafu Temple appear at the story of the śramaṇas’ beginning and conclusion. Their placement seems to indicate that this is, fundamentally, a legend celebrating the structure. Like the account of Liu Qianzhi’s healing at the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple, Huixiang includes this story in the division of the text devoted to “ancient and present superior traces.” This classification indicates that he understood the extraordinary happenings described here to be the very thing that rendered the building a superior structure marking a miraculous happening, literally a “superior trace.” I translate the narrative in full here.

Formerly at this temple [the Dafu Temple], there were three śramaṇas who heard from the elders that there were divine hermits (lingyin 靈隱) living in the valleys and cliffs. They went searching for them in the hopes of having an encounter. After four or five days when their food was nearly exhausted and they were finding the way back, they stopped to rest under a tree at Yima Cliff 一馬嶺 (One Horse Range). Suddenly they saw a black fat man ascending the range before them. The śramaṇas greeted him with obeisance and called out, “Please bestow us your magical skill, Holy One!” The man addressed them saying, “I will come again tomorrow. You wait for me under the pine tree at the Eastern Mountain. If you see someone enter the cavern, ask him and you will get it.” Then he descended the range and went southward.

The three śramaṇas followed the range and arrived at the Eastern Mountain. They found a big tree. The tree had an opening like a gate. It was dim and dark within. The śramaṇas stood by the tree for a long time. After noon something like a bolt of silk hovered among the clouds and descended before the tree. It turned out to be a heroic looking man (zhangfu 丈夫) whose color was like that of a peach flower. He entered the hollow of the pine. The śramaṇas did not dare enter it. They stared at each other seemingly lost. One said: “Let’s wait at the opening for him to leave and then grab him.” A little time passed and this person started to come out. One śramaṇa quickly embraced him and the other two venerated him and prayed for compassion. The person became extremely angry and scolded them saying, “[You are displaying] delusion and dogged determination. Why are you not releasing me? I will not open my mouth and speak.” The śramaṇa released him and he ascended to the sky and left.

Thereupon the [men] went together westward and returned to the place
where they had met the fat man the day before. Suddenly they saw the fat man ascending the peak. Confronting them, he addressed the śramaṇa saying, “What did he say?” They answered: “He was very angry and spoke no words!” The fat man laughed saying “He lysts after alcohol and came here to drink. You made him angry and he may not return. Go quickly to drink his liquor.” When he had finished speaking, he descended northward. The śramaṇas, following what he had said, entered the cavern. There were stone steps leading straight down perhaps 20 feet. It was level descending north and it was paved with white stones. It was bright like day. There was a silver vessel and a silver plate covered it. Atop was a silver bowl. The alcohol’s fragrant scent was pungent and delicious. Its flavor was not of this world. The śramaṇas drank it. As they barely left the cavern the śramaṇas all became drunk. They felt outside their mouths numerous tiny worms spreading out as thick as the hairs of a horse’s tail. Their countenance was bright and their strength doubled. After they returned to the temple for several days, they suddenly disappeared T.2098.1094(b).

Despite the significance Huixiang places on the affiliation between the Dafu Temple and these extraordinary events, careful study reveals that the connection between them is weak. Evidence internal to the narrative and material from the accounts that immediately precede it in the gazetteer indicate that references to the temple at the beginning and conclusion are later additions to the miracle tale. Rather than a story establishing the longstanding importance of the foremost Mount Wutai temple of the day, there is good reason to believe that this legend initially circulated independent of any references to the Buddhist buildings. In the following pages I will propose that the story of the three novices is the first of three Gu Qingliang zhuan miracle tales that create an early history for the Dafu Temple and, in so doing, provide its seventh-century visitors and residents, as well as distant patrons, with precedent for their practice.

The fact that the narrative’s central events do not take place at the Dafu Temple is the first of two things that suggest to me the connection between the śramaṇa story and the temple is a tenuous one. Though the Dafu Temple is
mentioned in the first and final lines of the entry, the miraculous events around which the tale is built take place at unmarked natural locales on the mountain slopes. Initially the renunciants met a fat, black man beneath a tree at the One Horse Range (Yima ling 一馬嶺). Next, a heroic-looking man appeared before them at another tree on the Eastern Mountain. Finally, the trio consumed otherworldly tasting alcohol within a cavern. Rather than the site of miraculous happenings, this tale depicts the monastery simply as the place from which the religious practitioners departed and to which they returned briefly before they disappeared.

The second indication that the Dafu Temple does not form an integral part of the story is its position on the source of Mount Wutai’s significance. In contrast to the Gu Qingliang zhuan compiler, who emphasizes the mountain’s importance as a place where ordinary people can observe traces of miraculous happenings at stūpas and monasteries, the tale of the śramaṇas suggests that what renders Mount Wutai an extraordinary place is ordinarily invisible. Three elements of the story convey this point. First, the narrative depicts the mountain as a place populated by mysterious figures who vanish as quickly as they make their presence known. Daoxuan makes a similar point in his *fishenzhou sanbao gantong lu* where he writes: “[t]his place is the home of immortals. Frequently there are monks who appear and suddenly are hard to find. Holy traces and divine temples (shensi 神寺) constantly manifest and vanish” T.2106.422(c). Though the strangers and secret landscapes Huixiang describes lack the specifically Buddhist connections of Daoxuan’s monks and monasteries, the manifestation and disappearance of strangers and structures are similarly serendipitous events. The tale of the śramaṇas makes no reference to
an object, or even a specific point within the vast mountain range that can be singled out as the destination of a vision quest to encounter these miraculous beings.

Second, much of this *Gu Qingliang zhuan* story transpires in a place that is usually hidden. Unlike a stūpa or temple that stands atop the mountain's peaks, the cavern into which the heroic man and then the novices disappear is concealed within the heart of one of thousands of trees that stand on the five terraces. References to the white stones that pave the steps of the cavern, fabled food of immortals, and the presence of an *yinweng* 銀甎 (silver jar), an auspicious omen, within the cavern both contribute to the sense that this concealed realm is exceptional in ways that the terraces above are not.81 In contrast to the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend, which depicts stūpas and monasteries as places of visions and healing, this tale implies that what renders the mountain an extraordinary place cannot be seen.

Finally, having encountered mysterious men, entered into the mountain's recesses, and consumed powerful substances that tasted “not of this world,” the śramaṇas disappeared. Attaining immortality, as the description of their experiences in the tree suggests they did, the trio escaped ordinary death. This accomplishment produced no remnants whatsoever. In contrast to the records of stele erected to memorialize pilgrims' experiences or *stūpas* established to hold the remains of religious achievers, stories of immortals like this one are not marked

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81 Liu Xiang 刘向 (ca. 79-6 BCE) references this object in the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙传 (Biographies of Exemplary Immortals).
with physical structures. The implications of this are twofold. Because they do not take place at a single, visible site, the narratives do not, on the one hand, lend themselves to pilgrimage. The narrative thus offers no rationale for the very practice Huixiang seeks to promote in the “superior traces” chapter: walking the peaks to observe the edifices which commemorate extraordinary events of the past. The narratives can, on the other hand, be readily associated with other locations. I suspect that the apparent disconnect between the elaborate tale of immortality and the terse references to the Dafu Temple at the narrative's beginning and end might be the result of this story, initially devoid of references to particular structure, eventually having been affiliated with this one place of practice. This “narrative grounding” would have created a specific location where the events described in the śramaṇa tale might have been commemorated and perhaps even copied. At the same time, references to the Dafu Temple added a Buddhist layer of significance to the narrative and contributed to the sense that the temple was an important locale.

3.2 The Immateriality of Immortality

Having discussed the record of the three novices in some detail, I will now explore two groups of miracle tales with which it is closely related. The first of these are stories portraying the mountain as an access point to realms that are ordinarily hidden from view. The second are narratives about the attainment of immortality. While both types of stories celebrate Mount Wutai as an efficacious place of practice,

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82 This also distinguishes the Gu Qingliang zhuan story from tales about “escape by means of a simulated corpse” (shijie 陋 解) in which transcendents leave behind an object in place of their bodies. Robert Campany (2002) studies Shenxian zhuan 神仙傳 (Traditions of Divine Transcendants) hagiographies featuring shijie. The objects with which immortals purportedly replaced their bodies included a piece of silk and shoes.
they do not advocate the patronage of or pilgrimage to particular structures there. Quite the opposite, as the title of this section is intended to suggest, these records make no mention of material forms—be they relics and stūpas or stele and temples—memorializing the entry into hidden realms and the attainment of transcendence. These accounts, like the story of three novices, propose instead that what renders Mount Wutai an importance place cannot ordinarily be seen there. The first of these is the record of śramaṇa Zhou 周沙門 who saw a mortar and pestle T.2098.1097(a).

3.2.i Tales of Hidden Landscapes: The Story of the Novice Zhou

Like the tale of the three śramaṇas with which I began this chapter, the record about novice Zhou describes a place that appears and then vanishes from the mountaintop. This record appears in the fourth section of the Gu Qingliang zhuan which, as I noted above, is about the experiences of pilgrims.83 In addition to this chronicle, the Xu gaoseng zhuan T.2060.664(c) and Song gaoseng zhuan also mention the monk’s miraculous meeting. Slight variations in terminology that differentiate these accounts one from the next, we will see, suggest how a narrative’s significance could be rewritten to accord with changing understandings of Mount Wutai’s importance.

The Gu Qingliang zhuan account of śramaṇa Zhou prefaces the description of his remarkable experiences at the mountain with details about his early career.

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83 While Huixiang gives priority of place to the cleric Zhou, who he names in the narrative’s title, an earlier redaction of the story preserved in the Xu Gaoseng zhuan T.2060.664(c) features Zhou’s disciple Sengming 僧明. The earlier hagiography refers to the elder master only in passing T.2060.664(c).
According to the text, Zhou was a meditation practitioner who left home at a young age and traveled to famous mountains around the dynasty. Later in life the cleric, accompanied by his disciple meditation master Ming 明禪師, came to Mount Wutai where he served as the Suopo Temple’s abbot, a temple to which the gazetteer attaches a number of miraculous events T.2098.1097(a).84 Yet, while the gazetteer connects the monk and the monastery, the extraordinary occurrences it narrates did not occur at this site but rather transpired at unmarked locales on Mount Wutai’s peaks. According to Huixiang:

[One day Zhou] took Ming to seek the saint’s traces 聖跡. They went toward Mount Hualin 花林山, east of the Eastern Terrace to a famous valley and entered the mountain depths. Suddenly they saw a stone mortar [containing] medicinal ingredients [that appeared] as if they were new. Next to it was a wooden pestle with the scent of medicine T. 2098.1097(a). The strange scene—reminiscent of tales of immortals and techniques for the cultivation of longevity—presages the sudden appearance of two unusual men who led Zhou and Ming to a fantastic, multistoried structure that resembled a celestial palace (tiangong 天宮). It stood amid luxuriant groves, clear springs, and vibrant flowers T.2098.1097(a). Huixiang reports that fourteen or fifteen lay and ordained people dwelled there.

This rendering of the Zhou and meditation master Ming story fits squarely within a body of materials that, like the tale of the three novices, depict Mount Wutai as a place where practitioners gain access to extraordinary realms. Many of these

84 The Gu Qingliang zhuan records a series of miraculous events that coincided with the rainy-retreat’s conclusion at the Suopo Temple in 679 T.2098.1100(a). The gazetteer also associates the monk Puming 普明 who became sick when he violated his precepts and was healed by consuming changsong 長松 with the structure T.2098.1097(c).
reach a crescendo when the astonishing places disappear as the story’s protagonists pass through their gates. In the case of Zhou, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* states that a number of the celestial palace’s inhabitants felt it inappropriate for Ming to be there and instructed the master to accompany his disciple out of the palace T.2098.1097(a). Before they had taken several steps, the entire scene disappeared. The episode concludes with Zhou declaring to his disciple: “Alas, you are not blessed” T.2098.1097(a). The implication here is that the mountain’s hidden recesses are not accessible to all individuals.

A subtle but significant variation in the language used to describe this structure differentiates Huixiang’s version of events from the *Song gaoseng zhuan* retelling. While both the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* and the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* refer to it as a celestial palace, the tenth-century *Song gaoseng zhuan* compiler Zanning describes it as a holy monastery (*shengsi* 聖寺). Zanning writes: “[i]t is said that formerly, the monk Ming entered here⁸⁵ and saw a stone mortar and wood pestle. Afterwards, he entered a holy monastery 聖寺 and observed a vision of the holy worthy 聖賢” T.2061.836(c). This passage appears in the biography of the Tang cleric Wuzhuo who tradition holds entered into conjured temples at Mount Wutai T. 2061.836(c). This terminology refers to a group of temples erected at Mount Wutai to replicate ones the Bodhisattva conjured before Wuzhuo and other devotees in the eighth-

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⁸⁵ Zanning may either be referring here Mount Wutai generally or to the Huayan (Dafu) Temple specifically. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* compiler has just described the cleric Wuzhuo’s encounter with a mysterious stranger in this temple T.2061.836(c).
Stories of conjured temples including Wuzhuo’s *Song gaoseng zhuan* hagiography, as I discuss in chapter four, present Mount Wutai as the place where clerics and officials can access the teachings and obtain visions of Mañjuśrī in the era of *dharmic* decline. Referring to the structure śramaṇa Zhou and his disciple Ming entered as holy monastery, the tale of mysterious landscapes no longer appears as one among many stories of hidden grottos, heavenly palaces, and luscious groves that root the mountain’s specialness in its link to invisible places. Quite the opposite, in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* the account emerges as an early counterpart to the tales of conjured temples that I will show provided founding legends for monasteries erected at Mount Wutai beginning in the eighth-century.

### 3.2.ii Tales of Hidden Landscapes: The Story of the Vanishing Grove

A second *Gu Qingliang zhuan* tale related to these stories concerns an unnamed man’s entry into a flourishing grove T.2098.1095(b). The terse record follows Huixiang’s discussion of the region between Mount Wutai and the Northern Marchmount, Hengyue 恒岳 T.2098.1095(b). The compiler cites an ancient tradition purporting that hermits dwelled in this territory and reports that he often visited the area. Huixiang writes that on one of these occasions he met a man there who told him that long ago a hunter happened upon a lush grove of flowers and fruits in this place but could never again locate it T.2098.1095(b). As with the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* account of śramaṇa Zhou, this story represents Mount Wutai as a place where practitioners gain access to extraordinary realms the specialness of which they

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86 I devote chapter four to a detailed discussion of these accounts. I discuss this term and its translation beginning on page 117 below.
appreciate only after the fact.

In the seventh-century this was a well-established trope. Accounts of territories accessed but then lost would likely have reminded Huixiang and his audience of the legend of the Peach Blossom Spring (Taohua yuan 桃花源), described two centuries earlier by the poet Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427) (Zhang 2005). According to this legend, a fisherman entered this place through a peach grove and mountain cave in the Jin period (265-420). The hitherto isolated and deeply contented community he encountered there purported to be descendants of people who fled the outside world during the tumult of the Qin dynasty (221-207 BCE). The fisherman spent several days there feasting and learning about the residents who had passed four or five centuries in undisturbed peace. After taking his leave, the fisherman, like many of Huixiang’s Gu Qingliang zhuan protagonists, could never again locate the grove, cavern, and settlement. Rather than exclusive to miracle tales about Mount Wutai, the trope of the hidden landscape, then, formed part of Chinese literature more broadly.

The claim Huixiang repeats in conjunction with the account of the grove—that the forty-kilometer expanse separating Mount Wutai from Mount Heng was an longstanding place of practice—may help us to understand why this range of peaks in particular were singled out as Mount Wutai.87 The Gu Qingliang zhuan mentions the area several times. In addition to the unnamed hunter, the gazetteer associates this location with the blind woman whose sight was restored after praying to the

87 Introducing the mountain’s location in the gazetteer’s second chapter, Huixiang also notes its proximity to the Northern Marchmount T. 2098 1093(b).
Bodhisattva. She allegedly dwelled to Mount Heng’s west and in Mount Wutai’s southeast.\(^{88}\) Huixiang also states that the ascetic cleric Tanyun 晏韻 (d. 643) practiced at the Northern Marchmount before arriving at Mount Wutai in the early Tang T.2098.1098(a). These entries invite the question: might Mount Heng’s proximity to the Five Terraced Mountain have contributed to the latter’s emergence as an object of devotion in its own right?

References to Mount Heng in the *Erya* 優雅 (Examples of Refined Usage) and *Zhouli* 周禮 (Rites of Zhou) establish its early importance. Already in the third or second century BCE the *Erya* names Mount Heng. It appears there in one of two conflicting lists of the five sacred marchmounts (*yue* 嶽).\(^{89}\) The earlier *Zhouli* (Rites of Zhou) designates the site as one of the nine garrison (*zhen* 鎮) mountains.\(^{90}\) In his *Power of Place*, James Robson uses these citations to demonstrate the existence of competing pre-Han mountain classification systems.\(^{91}\) These materials thus establish the ancient significance of the mountains near the site venerated as Mount

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\(^{88}\) In consulting the *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 中國歷史地圖集 (The Collected Historical Maps of China) I encountered a puzzle. While Mount Heng and Mount Qingliang/Wutai stand less than 40 kilometers apart, examining the relevant Tang period map it seems to me that Mount Heng’s west and Mount Wutai’s southeast corner cannot refer to the same place. One possibility is that the compiler confused Mount Heng (Hengshan) for Hengzhou here; the latter place stands to Mount Wutai’s southeast (Tan 1996, 48-49).

\(^{89}\) Both lists identify Mount Heng as the Northern Marchmount, whereas Huoshan only appears in the second list where it is designated the Southern Marchmount (Robson 2009, 39-40).

\(^{90}\) The *Zhouli* also mentions Mount Huo, which stands three hundred kilometers to Mount Wutai’s south (Robson 2009, 36-37).

\(^{91}\) The point forms part of Robson’s larger argument that the system of imperium-wide sacred peaks is of a later provenance and was less fixed than scholars once imagined even after their initial Han (206 BCE - 220 CE) formulation (Robson, 2009).
Wutai at the beginning of the Tang.

In attempting to explain Mount Wutai’s emergence as a sacred center, Raoul Birnbaum has emphasized another dimension of its geographical situation. Approximately two hundred kilometers separate the mountain from both Taiyuan 太原 and Datong 大同. In the centuries leading up to and coinciding with its veneration as Mañjuśrī's dwelling place, these cities had close ties to the throne:

Mount Wu-t'ai is located roughly between Ta-tung [Datong], site of the old capital of the fourth-fifth century Wei rulers, and T'ai-yūan [Taiyuan], the ancestral seat of the ruling family of the T'ang. The implications of this location should not be ignored, for it appears that the first royal patron of religious activities there was the late-fifth century ruler Hsiao-wen 孝文 [Xiaowen]...and such activities rose to a special flourishing height under the generous patronage of eighth and ninth century T'ang rulers, most prominently Tai-tsung 代宗 [Daizong] (r. 762-80) (Birnbaum 1986, 121).

While there is good reason to doubt the historicity of Emperor Xiaowen of the Wei’s ties to Mount Wutai, its proximity to the ruling Li family’s place of origin as well as the Northern marchmount, Hengyue, may help us to understand why this range of peaks in particular was singled out as a five-terraced mountain.92 Perhaps as the tale of the hunter’s entry into the mysterious grove seems to suggest, this region had long been a place where individuals practiced in isolation before organized groups of ordained and lay people began to arrive there in the mid-seventh century.93

92 Conflicting accounts of Emperor Xiaowen of the Wei’s role at Mount Wutai call into question the historicity the claim that he was an early patron of the site. As we saw in the study of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple, rulers were assigned roles in the mountain’s past to lend to its importance. I discuss Emperor Xiaowen of the Wei’s purported role at Mount Wutai on page 97 below.

93 See the discussion of Huize and Ji on page 68 above and page 100 below.
2.2.iii Tales of Hidden Landscapes: The Layman from Daizhou

A final Gu Qingliang zhuan story about hidden realms concerns an unnamed layman from Daizhou 代州 who journeyed to the mountain in his twenties T.2098.1098(b).94 According to the text, he met a mysterious cleric who, after being told that the layman was capable of devoting himself to the cultivation of the Way, led him to a dwelling. From outside it appeared to be an ordinary residence but inside it housed more than one hundred monks T.2098.1098(b). The text states:

The layman stayed at the house for over half a year. The monks there mainly lived on medicinal herbs and cakes, which they sometimes supplemented with fruits and vegetables. They lived a pure and frugal existence, much as spiritual beings live. They were sparing in speech.

To the south of the well from which they drew their water, the layman once spotted a plot containing a leafy plant with a single stalk, the leaves of which were as large as those of the lotus plant. When he went to investigate, he found it to be easily reached. Everyday he would go and take half a leaf. When he returned the next day, he would find the leaf completely grown back. At first he considered this to be very strange, but as time went on he ceased to pay particular attention to it. Together with the monks, he would eat the leaves that were taken this way T.2098.1098b13-16).

Eventually the youth decided to return home and the monks did not detain him. However, after he stayed at home for a few days he changed his mind and raced back to Mount Wutai. He found the mountain and valley the same, but he could no longer find the garden, the house, or its inhabitants. He searched everywhere without success. The episode concludes: “the man did not know that (the monks) were saints 聖人 and he has been full of regret and self-blame ever since” T.2098.1098(b). This story was apparently based on the compiler’s eyewitness account, for it says when Huixiang met him, the man was over seventy years old.

94 The translation of this story is based on Daniel Stevenson’s (Stevenson 2004, 84-89).
Like the tale of the three śramaṇa with which I began this chapter, this triad of *Gu Qingliang zhuàn* stories root Mount Wutai’s specialness in its status as an entry point to places ordinarily concealed from view. References to unusual flora in these narratives in many cases suggest to Huixiang’s audience that their protagonists have accessed an extraordinary realm. Several records preserved in the gazetteer depict this rare plant life as a means by which individuals achieve transcendence over death. The account of an unnamed man who obtained immortality at Mount Fanxian 梵仙山 (Indian Immortal)—the first of the stories of transcendence that I will introduce here—is one such tale.

**2.2.iv Tales of Immortality: Mount Fanxian’s Founding**

The following narrative serves as a founding legend for Mount Fanxian, also known as Mount Xianhua 仙花山 (Immortal Flower). According to Huixiang:

From the flower garden [nearby the Dafu Temple] south a little more than two li is Mount Fanxian. It is also called Mount Xianhua. From this place looking as far as the eye can see there are only the plant *lycopodium clavatum* and chrysanthemums. The appearance of the space is brilliant. A tradition says, formerly there was a man. In this place he fed on chrysanthemums and obtained immortality. This is the reason for the name Fanxian (Indian Immortal) and Xianhua (Immortal Flower). Recently in the first year of the Linde麟德 era (664) in the ninth month, the emissaries Yanzhen 殷甄 and Wanfu 萬福 were dispatched. They rode their horses toward the mountain in search of chrysanthemums T.2098.1094(c).

The association between longevity and chrysanthemums is not unique to this story. Legends regarding hermits who subsisted by eating this plant circulated widely and, beginning in the Han period, the ninth day of the ninth month was celebrated as the Chrysanthemum Festival and a medicinal tea made from the plant was served on this occasion (Dusenbury 2004, 215). The mention of a contemporary, Linde era...
emissary that arrived in search of the plant in the ninth month indicates that the Mount Fanxian/Xianhua narrative still had traction in Huixiang’s time. Like the three novices, this unnamed protagonist consumed rare food and in this way transcended death at Mount Wutai.

3.2.iv Tales of Immortality: The Record of the Cleric Puming

The story of the cleric Puming 蘆明 who became sick when he violated his precepts is one of the most dramatic Gu Qingliang zhuan tales T.2098.1097(c). Like the story of Mount Fanxian, the account describes the achievement of immortality. It also depicts food as a means by which to attain this end. In addition to the gazetteer, the account of Puming’s life and career appears in multiple sources. In the following pages I want to suggest that careful study of these materials reveals that this complex tale of immortality was transformed into a more explicitly Buddhist story about Mañjuśrī. The narrative illustrates once again how the writing and rewriting of Mount Wutai’s past served the needs of varied authors and audiences.

The Gu Qingliang zhuan record of Puming’s life and career introduces a varied cast of mysterious figures that the monk met at Mount Wutai. According to the text, the cleric dwelled alone in a niche he excavated to the north of the South Terrace. One day a monk who looked strikingly impressive approached him there. The pair discussed the difficulty of being delivered from samsara and overcoming vexations. When thieves harassed him and tigers draw near to him in the hollow Puming remained indifferent. On both occasions this mysterious monk appeared and praised his resolution saying, “Work hard, work hard!” (nuli nuli 努力努力).
Puming’s practice seems to have been exemplary until a woman approached him asking for help. Though primarily a didactic tale about the deleterious effects of desire and the workings of karma, the episode also reveals something about Mount Wutai. It begins when, on a fiercely cold and windy night, the woman arrived at his abode in search of a warm place to stay. The cleric, moved by her suffering, allowed her to sleep on the floor of his hut:

When they reached the third watch of the night her voice had ceased. Puming stroked her with his hand. She was all cold but somewhat had breath. Fearing she would die, he drew her onto the bed. Ming unfastened his clothing to cover her. And with his foot and hand he warmed her so that she came back to life. He fell asleep but after a few moments he woke up. The woman’s entire body was warm. It was fine and smooth to the touch. Puming’s craving fire arose inside. He gave rise to evil thoughts. He had a desire to touch the woman.\footnote{I remain unsure of how to translate momu, literally to touch the pasture or cow, in the phrase 方欲摩牧. I wonder if nu 女 (woman) was somehow miswritten as mu 牧 here? In this case we would have “desired to touch the woman.”} She had already descended to the floor and when he touched her, she suddenly disappeared. At this, Puming’s whole body became a flood of decay. One hundred holes of pus flowed out [from his body]. His eyebrows and facial hair at once fell off and severe aches and pains penetrated his bones and his heart. An extremely foul smell filled the room and worms and insects infested his room. Since Puming suffered in this way he was grieved and upbraided himself limitless (T.2098.1097(c)).\footnote{This reference to the protagonist’s brows and facial hair falling off (and later reappearing) is strikingly similar to many redactions of the Liu Qianzhi miracle tale. The correspondence has led me to wonder: is another change implied in the Puming story? Might Puming, like Liu, have lost his male member only to have it restored when he took changsong?}

Like the record of the three śramanas and many of the other tales to which I have compared it in this chapter, this account frames Mount Wutai as a site where visitors and residents meet mysterious figures. Devoid any references to Mañjuśrī, this story suggests instead that a variety of unusual humans and non-humans populate the mountain. Moreover their appearance at Mount Wutai is not associated
with a location that is readily identifiable on the five terraces. In this regard the
narratives do not lend themselves to pilgrimage directed at certain regions or
structures on the mountain.

The Puming entry introduces a final figure, a disembodied voice, which heals
the cleric. After suffering for more than two months, the voice called to the cleric
and bestowed a medicinal plant called changsong 長松 which would not only cure
him but transform him into a worldly immortal (suxian 俗仙). The final entry in the
gazetteer includes a description of this substance. The speaker is the elderly Wang
Xianger 王相兒, a purveyor of medicines who Huixiang apparently met in nearby
Fanzhi county 繁峙縣 T.2098.1100(c). According to Wang:

The mountain has a medicine named changsong. One may obtain its root
and eat it. The exterior color is like that of qini 薺苨 [another medicinal
herb]. It is 3 to 5 inches long. Its flavor is slightly bitter. It is not poison. If
one eats it for a long time it will protect and benefit [you]. As for dissolving
various insects’ poison, [consuming] this is most efficacious. Local people
value it and often gather it for emergent use…” T. 2098.1100(c).

Three days after Puming consumed the changsong to which the voice directed him
he was healed. According to the Gu Qingliang zhuan he went to the Suopo Temple,
described these events, and soon thereafter obtained immortality and disappeared.
In this rendering of the cleric’s hagiography, the mountain appears first and
foremost as a locale at which rare substances can be obtained and immortality
achieved.

Comparing the version of this story preserved in Huixiang’s gazetteer with
the writings of the Buddhist historian Daoxuan we can appreciate the way that a

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97 The entry concerning Wang Xianger, which mentions Puming by name, revolves around immortal
medicines (xian yao 仙藥) he discovered at Mount Wutai T.2098.1100(c).
single narrative could be refashioned to serve multiple ends. Daoxuan offers the following rather different account of Puming's life and career in his *Xu gaoseng zhuan*. The entry appears within the much longer hagiography of meditation master Jietuo 解脱, who, according to both the collection of clerical biographies and the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, sought out and encountered Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai T.2060.603(b,c); T.2098.1095(c).98

... Five or six *li* southward from the Suopo Temple on Mount Wutai’s South Terrace Meditation master Puming serenely and in isolation practiced sitting meditation seeking to see Mañjuśrī [from whom he] wished to request a teaching. There was a supernatural person [who appeared] in the air and addressed him saying: “you have no supernatural practices. You may only obtain long life if you eat the medicine growing in front of the Long Life Stūpa (Changsheng kan 長生龕).” Pu[ming] was doubtful and unresolved. Afterwards [the supernatural person] addressed [him] again: the medicine is named *changsong*. Why didn’t you drink it? This medicine isn’t poison. Ming thereupon relying on what [the supernatural person] spoke drank it. After he addressed the monks who practiced together with him, he rose high into the air and flew away. The place is still here. Go to Mount Heng and look closely [you will] see it T.2060.603(c).

Many of the details around which the gazetteer record is built are absent entirely from this *Xu gaoseng zhuan* entry. The text makes no mention of, for instance, the cleric’s encounters with a mysterious monk or a woman in need. The episode revolving around his desire and subsequent sickness does not appear in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*. Rather, in addition to celebrating Mount Wutai as a place where *changsong* and, via its consumption, immortality can be obtained, Daoxuan’s version

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98 The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* claims that Jietuo met the Bodhisattva on several occasions and that one time Mañjuśrī lingered and admonished Jietuo for treating him with special courtesy. According to tradition, when Mañjuśrī next materialized the meditation master therefore did not acknowledge him. Daoxuan also appends a terse record of the meditation master Sengling’s 僧嶺禅師 life and career to Jietuo’s hagiography.
of Puming’s hagiography portrays the site as a locale at which devotees seek out visions of the Bodhisattva and teachings.

Though the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* remains vague about the particularities of Puming’s achievements, I suspect that Puming’s skyward ascent indicates that, as the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* contends, he was transformed into an immortal. Two of Daoxuan’s other works make a different claim about the ends the cleric attained. According to the *Daoxuan lushi gantong lu* and the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, the master’s mummified corpse became an object of devotion at Mount Wutai. The *Xu Qingliang zhuan* claims that Jietuo’s mummified remains (*lingqu* 灵躯)—in which Puming’s hagiography appears—were also preserved in a Mount Wutai cave T.2060.603(c). It maybe that the *Daoxuan lushi gantong lu* and *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* stories of Puming’s corpse were influenced by this better known story about Jietuo.

Interestingly, Huixiang and Daoxuan mention the Suopo Temple at the beginning and conclusion of their accounts in a manner that recalls references to the Dafu Temple in the tale of the three śramaṇas who obtained immortality. In each case, an abrupt reference to the temple follows or precedes a lengthy account of miraculous events that transpire at unmarked points on the mountain slopes. Rather than forming an integral part of the story, I suspect that references to the Suopo Temple may be a later addition that provides a real temple with a layer of legend. The affiliation of the story and site, moreover, creates a specific location where the events described in accounts of Puming’s life can be commemorated and perhaps even copied. Having explored stories about Puming and several other
accounts of immortality, let us turn now to founding legends about the structure to with which the first and final lines of the Gu Qingliang zhuan associate the narrative of the three śramaṇas: the Da Fu/Futu Temple. What might the accounts of this specific site’s establishment reveal about Mount Wutai’s construction as a holy place in the seventh-century?

3.3 The Da Fu/Futu Temple’s Founding Legend

Careful study of legends about the Da Fu Temple’s establishment suggest that its past, too, was the subject of multiple rewritings through which proponents of the mountain cult created an illustrious past for Mount Wutai. The Gu Qingliang zhuan discusses the Dafu Temple’s name and presents a short account of its establishment in the passage that immediately precedes the story about three novices. In this final section, I will compare this account with parallel material preserved in the Daoxuan lushi gantong lu and make the case that both the etymology Huixiang presents for the temple name and the origin tale he recounts are of a later provenance that the structure itself. I will argue that, like the allusion to the Dafu Temple at the beginning and conclusion of the three śramaṇas story, these materials refashion the monastery’s past to create an elaborate history for Mount Wutai and the handful of Buddhist temples that stood there in the early Tang.

The argument that the meaning and origin which the Gu Qingliang zhuan assigns the Dafu Temple is of a later provenance than the temple itself is built on three pieces of evidence. The first of these is the relationship between the multiple, alternate names for the temple that Huixiang introduces in the monograph. The compiler writes:
Gradually descending a little more than thirty li [from the stūpas and stele of the Middle Terrace] one arrives at the Da Futu Temple. The temple was originally established by Emperor Wen of the [Western] Wei (507-551). The ruler had wandered and rested (here). He received [a vision of] holy demeanor (shengyi 聖儀). Thus he gave rise to a holy mind. He created this temple. Fu is faith. It is said that since the ruler met extraordinary phenomena, [he] had vast, great faith. Moreover, now one can see to the east and west two halls. The images established survive at that place. [As for] the rest, the verandas, corridors and foundations, still vaguely remain. The Kuodi zhi 括地志 (Treatise on Collected Geography) takes pu 鋪 [vessel, spread out] for fu. The Gaoseng zhuàn takes bu 布 [cloth] for fu. All of these copies are mistaken T.2098.1094(a,b).

Huixiang includes two alternate names for the temple here: Dapu 大鋪 and Dabu 大布. He asserts that these appear in the Kuodi zhi, an early seventh-century geographical work by Li Tai 李泰 extant only in fragments, and Huijiao’s 慧皎 (497-554) Gaoseng zhuàn 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks).99 The characters—meaning great cloth and great vessel—bear no relationship to the etymology of dafu that Huixiang provides. According to the compiler, dafu refers to the “great faith” which Emperor Wen of the Western Wei’s vision inspired and which led the ruler to establish the temple atop the Middle Terrace. Finding no link between dapu, dabu and this story, Huixiang dismisses both as errors preserved in the Kuodi zhi and Gaoseng zhuàn.

Might there be another way to interpret their significance? Dafu, dabu, and dapu are phonetically but not semantically related. One possibility is that the variation could be the consequence of an oral tradition that has been captured in three unrelated textual sources. Though we must keep in mind that the

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99 Quotations from the lost Kuodi zhi were collected by Sun Qingyan 孫星衍 (1753-1818) and appear in the Dainange congshu 岱南閣叢書 (Vogel and Elvin 2010, 508).
pronunciation of these characters changed over time and varied according to place, it is tempting to conclude here that the *Kuodi zhi*, *Gaoseng zhuan*, and *Gu Qingliang zhuan* transcribe the temple name differently because it did not hold any semantic meaning. Instead, the etymology of “*dafu*”—as meaning the ruler’s great faith—is a retrospective creation intended to provide a Buddhist significance to a name that, if it held any specific importance, has been lost to history.

At the same time, it may be that the *futu* of Da Futu Temple meant great stūpa. Though Huixiang uses two names interchangeably to refer to the temple in his text—Dafu Temple 大孚寺 and Da Futu Temple 大孚圖寺—he only addresses the origin of the name Dafu Temple and lets the alternate Da Futu Temple pass without comment. The *futu* 大孚圖 of Da Futu Temple resembles rather closely *futu* 浮圖, a transliteration of Buddha that, like *fotu* 佛圖 and *futu* 浮屠, can also refer to a temple or stūpa (Mochizuki 1958-1963, 4482). According to the gazetteer, numerous ancient stūpas stood atop the Middle Terrace. In the seventh-century people continued to repair and erect them there. Could it be that the *futu* of Da Futu Temple referred to a particularly sizable memorial mound erected at the peak?

There are two additional pieces of evidence that indicate that the name of the temple onto which the story of the three śramaṇas was grafted was itself the subject of re-interpretation. Both are revealed in variation that exists between Huixiang’s entry and the parallel passage in Daoxuan’s *Daoxuan lushi gantong lu*. First, these authors attribute the “great faith” of the temple name to different rulers and credit its founding to these individuals. Second, in the following excerpt Daoxuan gives an
expanded name for the temple: Dafu Lingjiu Temple 大孚靈鷲寺 (Grñdhrakūṭa, Vulture Peak Temple) that does not appear in the monograph:

Now thirty li to the southeast of Mount Wutai's Middle Terrace one can see the Dafu Lingjiu Temple...some say Emperor Ming of the Han established it. [There are] also [people who] say Emperor Xiaowen of the [Northern] Wei made it. How can it be that [there are] two different explanations? [The spirit with whom Daoxuan was talking] answered: The two rulers together made it. Formerly, in the time of King Mu of the Zhou dynasty there was already the Buddha dharma. This mountain was numinous and strange. It was Mañjuśrī's dwelling place. At the center, Zhoumu made a temple and made offerings. Also Aśoka placed a stūpa [here]. At the start of Emperor Ming of the Han's [reign] Kāśyapa Mātaṅga with divine vision also saw there was the stūpa and asked the ruler to establish a temple. The mountain's form is like Grñdhrakūṭa (Vulture Peak). The name Dafu is faith, fuxin 孚信, [meaning] the ruler's faith in the Buddhist principles. Establishing temples exhorts the people. Originally Emperor Xiaowen of the [Northern] Wei's [territory] was not far from the North Terrace. He often came to visit and perform ceremonies. He saw the traces of horses and people on stone clearly visible T.2107.437(a,b).

The name Dafu Lingjiu Temple appears not only in the Daoxuan lushi gantong lu, a work that claims to represent a record of the miraculous instruction Daoxuan received in the final years of his life, but also his Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu. There Daoxuan mentions the temple in a section describing the monk Huize's imperially commissioned journey to Mount Wutai. He states only that an ancient tradition purports that Emperor Ming of the Han (r. 58-75) founded the Dafu Lingjiu Temple T.2106.425(a) and makes no reference to either Emperor Xiaowen or Emperor Wen of the Western Wei.

While we cannot ascertain how well known (or obscure) these legends would have been during Huixiang's lifetime, together they establish that multiple and contradictory legends regarding the Dafu (tu/Lingjiu) Temple circulated in the

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100 I discuss the Huize entry beginning on page 100 below.
seventh-century. According to Daoxuan’s version of events, dafu refers to Emperor Xiaowen’s great faith, not to that of Emperor Wen as Huixiang’s Gu Qingliang zhuan contends. His assertion that the founding of this site occurred in the time of Emperor Ming of the Han, along with references to an Aśoka stūpa and King Mu of Zhou (r. 959-918 BCE) extends the structure’s importance, and with it Buddhism’s presence at the site, far into the ancient past. While these varied accounts of a single site suggest that the writing and rewriting of Mount Wutai’s history constituted one way that the mountain was created as a holy site in the seventh century, they contribute little to our understanding of the part particular patrons took in the actual building process there.

Daoxuan’s entry not only offers founding legends for the site that are distinct from those preserved in Huixiang’s text but he also gives an additional name for the site with its own resonances. He asserts that the mountain where the Dafu Lingjiu Temple stands resembles the Gṛḍhrakūṭaparvata (Vulture Peak). Legend holds that Śākyamuni preached many sūtras at this place. The purported correspondence between the Chinese and Indian locales taps into this deep reservoir of meaning and provides an additional layer of distinctly Buddhist significance to the Mount Wutai site. This accretion of miracle tales results in a single site saturated with significance, a significance that is progressively closer to the one that the Avatamsaka sūtra and Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra envision for Mount Wutai.

The representation of Mount Wutai’s importance in the Gu Qingliang zhuan and contemporary texts is far from uniform. In this chapter I have endeavored to show that while some miracle tales confirmed sūtra claims that this was Mañjuśrī’s
residence, others emphasized its importance as the dwelling place of autochthonous deities and an efficacious place for obtaining immortality. Huixiang himself makes this claim in the gazetteer’s opening lines where he recounts a legend about people who fled to its peaks in the fourth century. Though dominated by references to the Bodhisattva, in this section Huixiang purports that in the second year of the Yongjia 永嘉 era (307-313), more than one hundred families from Yanmen 雁門 district, approximately fifty kilometers to Mount Wutai’s northwest, took refuge in the mountain to escape chaos in their home region. “Scholar officials who have visited the mountain,” Huixiang continued, “occasionally report having distantly spied persons living there. But when they went to seek them out, no one knew where they were. As a result, people consider this mountain to be an abode of immortals” T.2098.1093(a) (Birnbaum 1986, 122). “A Daoist scripture,” writes Huixiang, “says Mount Wutai is called Purple Palace (Zifu 紫府) [because] it often has purple vapors. Immortals dwell there” T.2098.1093(a). Stories of individuals who, like Puming or the three śrāmaṇas, obtained transcendence at the mountain confirmed the claims that Huixiang repeats here in the first line of the gazetteer: transcendents dwell at the mountain. The notion that these earliest inhabitants-turned-immortals had sought shelter in the mountains recalls the story of the Qin period refugees told in the legend of the Peach Blossom Spring. The miracle tales Huixiang brought together in his Gu Qingliang zhuan constitute an extended reply to the question that lies at the text’s core: What renders Mount Wutai a numinous place? The affiliation the story of three śrāmaṇas makes between extraordinary events and a particular structure, though likely a later addition to the tale, suggests that the monastery and,
more broadly, the mountain, merit attention because they mark the place at which astonishing incidents transpired and, presumably, might come to pass again. The narrative in its present form—like the Dafu Temple’s expanding etymology and legends of the monastery’s founding—creates a rich past for a temple that repeatedly appears as a hub of activity in records of the mountain set in the seventh-century.

3.4 Historical Perspectives

Alongside stories set in the past, the Gu Qingliang zhuan includes at least nine tales about miraculous happenings that purportedly transpired at the mountain in the first decades of the Tang. A number of these portray the very same temples mentioned in the stories I have introduced here as centers of religious activity. In contrast to the vast majority of narratives set in periods prior to the seventh-century which feature individual protagonists or groups of two or three people, many of these records of the seventh-century depict groups of lay and ordained people visiting places such as the Da Fu/Futu Temple. These accounts may help us to understand the significance of the miracle tales I have examined in the second

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and third chapters. Accounts set in the beginning of the Tang, on the one hand, portray Mount Wutai as a place to which eminent clerics and officials, accompanied by groups of lay and ordained practitioners, traveled. The ostensibly later stories suggest that Mount Wutai was the object of regional and international devotion in Huixiang’s lifetime. Records of the Dafu Temple’s founding and other narratives about the mountain’s early history, on the other hand, purport to describe Mount Wutai long ago. Might it be that these stories—including the record of Liu Qianzhi’s healing at the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple, legends of the Da Fu/Futu Temple’s founding, and the three śramaṇas story—fashioned pre-Tang counterparts for the practitioners that arrived there in the seventh-century? With this possibility in mind, I want to conclude my discussion of early representations of Mount Wutai’s significance with a triad of Gu Qingliang zhuan stories set in the decades immediately preceding the gazetteer’s compilation.

3.4.i Historical Perspectives:

Huize’s Imperially Commissioned Journey to Mount Wutai and the Story of the Suopo Temple Rainy Retreat

Pre-seventh century records preserve multiple references to the Chang’an monk Huize’s imperially commissioned visit to Mount Wutai. They appear in the Xu gaoseng zhuan T.2060.665(b), in the Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lü T.2106.422(c), and in the Fayuan zhulin T.2122.393(a) and T.2122.596(a). The Gu Qingliang zhuan T.2098.1098(b,c) not only describes Huize’s miraculous encounters in detail but also includes entries concerning two monks he met there: the monk Zhaoyn 昭隱
T.2098.1098(a) and the monk Mingyao 明曜 T.2098.1098(a,b). The number of sources naming Huize suggests that in the decades before Huixiang compiled the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* the traditions associated with him were widely known. I translate Huixiang’s report on Huize in full here but divide it into two sections. The first section of the text describes the monk’s time at Mount Wutai. Huixiang’s reflections on the important role that rulers and their agents play in Buddhism’s development dominate much of the latter third of the record. After discussing both parts of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* record in detail, I will move on to examine an additional pair of miracle tales set at the mountain during this period. These are the record of a rainy retreat convened at the Suopo Temple and the account of the South Asian monk Shijiamiduoluo’s 釋迦蜜多羅 (*Śākyamitra*, d. 569-?) arrival at the site.

In the Tang Longshuo 龍朔 era (661-663) frequently the emperor decreed that Huize of the Huichang Monastery at the Western Capital [Chang’an], together with emperor’s Inner Attendant of In Charge of Fans†† Zhang Xinghong 張行弘 and others, go to Mount Qingliang to examine and visit holy traces 聖迹. Huize and the others respectfully received the wise decree and took an urgent trip to pay homage to [Mount Wutai]. Together with Wutai county official Lu Xuanlan 呂玄覽 and master painter Zhang Gongrong 張公榮, they as a group of more than ten people went together to the top of the Middle Terrace. When they were about one hundred steps from arriving there they saw in the distance a Buddha image just like [the Buddha’s] true form (*zhenrong* 真容). The image waved his hands and feet and repeatedly looked left and right. The nearer to it they came, the more clear the image became. With five steps remaining, suddenly the image disappeared. When they had nearly climbed to the peak but not yet circumambulated it on both sides they smelled fragrance. The fragrance passed over them abundantly. Further, in front of a stūpa they assigned the painter [Zhang Gong]rong to adorn and repair the ancient Buddha image. As soon as he dotted the eye to finish it, [the group] heard the huge sound of a

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†† Zhangshan 掌扇. This is a title of government official, usually there were a lot of people holding fans for the emperor.
bell. Afterward, they wanted to go toward the Western Peak. In the distance they saw in the northwest a monk, wearing black clothes and mounting a white horse, [who] came rushing forward. All of them stood waiting. When he was apart [from them] a distance of fifty steps, suddenly he was not visible. (Hui)ze rejoiced that this rare meeting by chance prompted a more sincere audience with [this holy site]. They also went to the east hall of the Dafu Temple 大孚寺 and repaired an ancient image of Mañjuśrī. They set a fire to burn the grass around the image. The fire [accidentally] flew in a whirlwind and reached distant places. It burned the flower garden. The smoke and blaze was abundant. The garden was about forty-five steps from water. People were dispatched to fetch water. Before they had reached that place a dark cloud arose fifty feet behind and above the hall. Soon after that it rained. Suddenly the fire was completely extinguished. The cloud totally disappeared from its place. No one knew the cause. Thereupon they went to Mount Fanxian. [The emperor's] Inner Attendant Zhang Xinghong again smelled the usual scent T. 2098.1098(b,c).

The miraculous events described in the Gu Qingliang zhuan account of Huize’s pilgrimage reflect Mount Wutai’s extraordinariness. According to Huixiang, during his time at the mountain Huize had six strange experiences. On two occasions the emissary and his companions encountered mysterious figures: an animated, life-sized statue of the Buddha and a monk astride a horse. At three points during their practice the group perceived the scent of incense or heard the tolling of a bell. Finally, when Huize and his attendants mistakenly set fire to grass beside the Dafu Temple, an unusual cloud materialized, extinguished the blaze, and disappeared.

Though encounters with mysterious figures are, as we have already seen, common in Mount Wutai vision tale literature, the Huize story introduces a new form or miraculous occurrence that pervades tales of Mount Wutai set in the Tang. This is the manifestation of a tolling bell, unusual cloud, or incense. A majority of the miracle tales set in the seventh-century mention this phenomenon. In this regard,
the third group of *Gu Qingliang zhuan* miracle tales are closer in content and form to accounts of set at Mount Wutai in later period and preserved in texts such as the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and *Xu Qingliang zhuan*. These later sources explicitly connect these unusual sounds and sights with the Bodhisattva's appearances.

Later works on the mountain frequently describe the Bodhisattva's manifestations there as a ringing bell, mysterious cloud, strange light, or fragrant incense. Describing the Shengzhong Valley 聖鐘谷 (Valley of the Holy Bell) in the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*, the ninth-century Japanese pilgrim Ennin, for example, mentions the tolling of a bell and a group of unusual pebbles that are considered appearances of the sage. He writes that on that:

...from time to time can be heard the tolling of a bell. When it tolls forth, the mountain summits quiver. Tradition has it that this is a manifestation of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī, and this is traditionally called the Shengzhong Valley (Valley of the Holy Bell).

More than ten li due east of the monastery there is a high peak called Baoshi Mountain 宝石山 (Gem Mountain). In (its) grottoes there are many pebbles, all of which manifest a five-colored halo. This too is the result of the sage's provisional manifestation (*huaxian* 化現, *dharmakāya*) (DBZ 113: 243).

As Ennin's comments reveal, the Bodhisattva's manifestations in these forms could and did result in a particular point on the mountain peaks being singled out as an object of devotion in their own right.

In addition to the story of Huize, the detailed description of events that followed a rainy retreat held at the Suopo Temple in the Diaolu 調露 (679-680) era

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103 Reischauer translates this passage in his *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (Reischauer, 1955, 265).
is another record of Tang period Mount Wutai that mentions unusual sites and sounds. According to the gazetteer, the clerics Huizang 惠藏, Hongyan 弘演, Huixun 惠恂, Lingzhi 靈智, Mingyuan 名遠, and Lingyu 靈裕 passed the ninety day rainy retreat at Mount Wutai. Following its conclusion:

...with more than fifty laypeople, [the group] ascended the mountain one after the next. [When] meditation master [Hui]zang 惠藏 and thirty people were about to reach the Middle Terrace they saw together a flock of white cranes. They followed them several li. [When they] reached the terrace summit suddenly [the birds] disappeared. The monks Mingyuan, Lingyu and others with eighteen people initially went toward the East Peak [where they] saw five-colored auspicious cloud... T.2098.1100(a).

Another record of this type is the account of Xuanzang’s disciple Ji who together with more than five hundred people perceived incense and the tolling of a bell in the seventh century.\(^{104}\) While narratives set in earlier periods reference groups of individuals practicing together (such as the three śramaṇas), the crowds of thirty, fifty, or five hundred people with which the Suopo Temple monks, the cleric Huize and the cleric Ji purportedly traveled to Mount Wutai distinguishes these accounts from stories set in earlier periods.\(^{105}\) In contrast to later records of Mount Wutai such as the the Nittō guhō junrei gyōki, the Gu Qingliang zhuan accounts of the observation of unusual sights and sounds at the mountain do not identify these phenomena with the Bodhisattva specifically. In fact, they may have carried a different significance at the time of the texts’ first compilation and circulation.

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\(^{104}\) I discuss this narrative above on page 68.

\(^{105}\) There are scattered references to groups of practitioners at pre-seventh century Mount Wutai in the Gu Qingliang zhuan. The reference that most closely resembles the Shjiamiduoluo and Huize entries concerns a Henzhou custom in which on each of the year’s six fast days fifty people brought incense, flowers, and precious foods to the mountain as offerings to Mañjuśrī and the ten thousand bodhisattvas T.2098.1096(b). According to the compiler, these are the same individuals who constructed a temple at the site of Tanluan’s 見鸞 hermitage T.2098.1096(b).
I suspect the records might have held importance beyond their immediate connection to the inchoate cult of Mañjuśrī centered at Mount Wutai. According to the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, Huize submitted the description of the favorable omens, *jiaxiang* 佳祥, he witnessed at the mountain to the court in the Longshuo 龍朔 era (661-663) T.2098.1098(c). This period narrowly preceded Wu zetian’s 674 usurpation of the throne. “Like others before her,” Eugene Wang writes of Wu Zetian following her assumption of the title emperor, “the new emperor was sensitive to omens, which were construed as manifesting heavenly mandate or disapproving of her realm. She eagerly encouraged reports of auspicious omens” (Wang 2007, 128). Might the strange clouds, bells, incense and birds Huize and his contemporaries purportedly observed at Mount Wutai have been interpreted in the same fashion as the *qilin* 騏驎, deer, or cranes that were taken to be signals of the righteousness of Wu zetian’s reign? According to the *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, in the years following the gazetteer’s compilation the monk Degan was richly rewarded when together with a party of one thousand people he observed miracles at Mount Wutai. I wonder if the empress and her supporters might have taken the visions flocks of cranes and mysterious incense to be signs of the rectitude of her rule.106

In the second half of the Huize entry, Huixiang devotes considerable space to a discussion of imperial patronage, concluding the lengthy passage with a meditation on their import to the dharma’s diffusion:

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106 In this line of argument, the visions of flocks or cranes and mysterious incense that were taken elsewhere as signs of the rectitude of Wu Zetian’s reign in the time of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*’s compilation become signals of Mañjuśrī’s presence at the mountain in later periods. The reinterpretation of the phenomenon’s import, then, forms part of the larger process by which a coherent narrative of Mount Wutai’s importance as the Bodhisattva’s home was articulated.
From the south to the north (of the mountain), everywhere there are ancient traces 古跡. People all search for the famous and virtuous ones both living and dead. [Regardless of] their reputation and virtue, [the signs being] extinct or existing, they all paid homage to [them] by prostrating in person. Since [Hui]ze and the others received the country’s decree and witnessed auspicious phenomena they submitted a report to make everything known [to the throne] and profoundly praised the holy intention. Consequently, [Mount] Qingliang’s holy traces increased its reputation in the capital city and its surrounding domain.

Mañjuśrī’s precious transformations [were] made public on the roads. [This] caused those (sentient beings) who were drowning and lost [in this world] for a long time to know the deep clarity of marvelous things. This also caused those who were dull-witted (and lost) in the labyrinth [of this world] to awaken to the subtlety of the great spaciousness [of this world]. All these are due to the monarch’s power. If the emperor’s [understanding of] the Way does not reach the ultimate profundity and spiritually resonate with it, how could he grant the unusual initiative and reveal the inconceivable superior path? After one thousand years, people will know that this is what the sage emperor aspired to. Further, [Huize] took a map of the mountain and made a screen. He also wrote a brief biography in one scroll. [This book] was broadly circulated in the national capital region T.2098.1098(c).

A major thread running through the Gu Qingliang zhuan is the decisive role records—written or architectural—can play in lengthening the impact of fleeting miraculous occurrences. In this example, the map Huize had printed on a screen functions like the stele Zhang Bei erected to memorialize his vision on the Middle Terrace and the drawing (tuhua 圖畫) Degan submitted to the throne in the Changan 長安 period (701-704): both are instruments of the dharma’s dissemination. According to the compiler, rulers can similarly magnify the effects of miraculous events, sponsoring these commemorative projects and circulating information about the site. It is tempting to speculate that when he declares, “This is

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107 The characters shengzhi 聖旨 might also mean imperial decree.
the monarch’s power,” Huixiang is speaking to Wu Zetian and, if the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*’s compilation predates 683, the ailing Gaozong 高宗 directly.

Upon his return, information about Mount Wutai spread not only via Huize’s memorial to the throne but also through the image he had fashioned. Natasha Heller and Dorothy Wong point out that this *shantu* 山圖 constitutes the first reference to a visual representation of the site and researches have examined later visual representations of the mountain in an attempt to reconstruct the appearance of this object (Forêt and Kaplony 2008, 33). These include an image of the mountain that Tibetans requested from the Tang court in 824 and illustrations of Mount Wutai preserved at Mogao 莫高, Subei 肃北, and Yulin 榆林 in the Dunhuang region. Lin Yunrou’s work on the famous, tenth-century image in Mogao Cave 61 suggests that an intimate relationship existed between visual representations of Mount Wutai and textual descriptions of the place. It is possible that the *shantu* to which the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* refers here similarly complemented Huize’s written account of the mountain.

### 3.4.ii Historical Perspectives: The Story of Cleric Shijiamiduoluo

Like the record of Huize’s imperially commissioned journey and the stories of cleric Ji and the Suopo Temple retreat, the account of the South Asian monk Shijiamiduoluo 釋迦蜜多羅 (*Śākyamitra?*, d. 569-?) also mentions a group of

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108 Lin compared the ten largest of forty-seven temples pictured there with the fifteen structures named in records of Mount Wutai prior to Xuanzong’s 玄宗 reign (r. 712–756). The four that appear on both are the temples that according to the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* have the longest history at the site: the Dafu Lingjiu Temple (Huayan Temple), the Qingliang Temple, The Wangzi (shaoshen) Temple, and the Foguang Temple (Lin 2009, 99).
practitioners who visited major temples at Mount Wutai and witnessed unusual phenomena there. Tradition holds that he arrived at the site in the second year of the Qianfeng 乾封 period (667) T.2098.1098(c). During his time at the mountain the cleric, among things, practiced rigorous asceticism and, after ascending a rocky terrace on hands and knees, he purportedly obtained a vision of a white rabbit and a fox circumambulating a stūpa T.2098.1099(a).¹⁰⁹ According to the text, on one occasion Shijiamiduoluo led fifty people toward the Qingliang Temple and the group:

...suddenly saw a holy monk standing atop a crag. [They] made full prostrations with the five parts of the body touching the ground several times. When they were not far way from reaching [the top of Mount Wutai], then several people heard the sound of a bell and smelled fragrant air. When they arrived five li south of [the top of Mount Wutai] and stopped, then [Shijiamiduoluo] had people make a two-layer earthen altar. Its height was a bit more than a foot. The circumference was about ten feet. They selected and gathered famous flowers and gloriously adorned around the altar. [Shijiamiduoluo] for six periods of day and night circumambulated the altar. Further, in another day, he entered the water to bathe his body several times. Each dawn he had four clean jugs full of clear water. Above he placed several deciliters of polished rice and a half-liter of oxen milk. [Shijiamiduoluo] had the people kneel holding them, on which [Shijiamiduoluo] [carried out] invocations for more than one hundred days. To the people he said: “pour it in all the directions. This is the West (Indian) way of making offerings” T.2098.1099(a).

Like the record of the Suopo Temple rainy retreat and Huize’s imperially-commissioned journey, this Gu Qingliang zhuan entry is set in the mid-seventh

¹⁰⁹ Funerary stones and brick bas-reliefs from the Han period, according to Lihui Yang and Deming An, frequently depict Xiwangmu 西王母, sometimes with Dongwanggong 東王公, surrounded by these creatures:

[Xiwangmu] is often surrounded by Jade Rabbit, a toad, birds, or sometimes a three-legged crow, a deer, a dragon, a nine-tailed fox, and immortal servants with wings. The rabbit (sometimes the immortal servants also) usually is pounding the elixir in a mortar in front of Xiwangmu and Dongwanggong.
Like the mortar and pestle śrāmaṇā Zhou and monk Ming observed or the pine tree and white stone that the three śrāmaṇās found paving its interior, the rabbit and fox were also closely associated with immortality quests (Yang and An 2008, 221).
century and involves a group of practitioners who witness unusual sights and sounds at the mountain.

Tansen Sen’s reading of the significance that the South Asian cleric Shijiamiduoluo’s arrival at Mount Wutai might have held for his contemporaries suggests what the site’s creation as a holy center accomplished in the seventh and eighth centuries more broadly. The record of the monk’s time at Mount Wutai is one of the very earliest references to a foreign visitor to the site.110 In his Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade, Sen argues convincingly that the arrival of foreign monks at the mountain contributed to the sense that Mount Wutai and with it the dynasty stood at the Buddhist world’s center rather than its periphery (Sen 2003, 98). Prior to the creation of a local sacred landscape, seventh century Chinese practitioners, according to the author, understood themselves to be living a great remove from the Buddha’s birthplace, a situation that produced what Antonio Forte termed a “borderland complex” (Sen 2003, 80). “The emergence of Mount Wutai as a famed Buddhist center,” writes Sen, “inspired Indian clergy to travel to China, it seems, not as transmitters of Buddhist doctrines, as had been the case previously, but as pilgrims to a country formerly dismissed as peripheral and an inappropriate dwelling place for the Buddha” (Sen 2003, 86). Mount Wutai’s creation as a pilgrimage center of regional, national, and international importance allowed seventh-century practitioners to transform a borderland into a center of Buddhist

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110 Tansen Sen discusses these references to foreign clerics at Mount Wutai. The gazetteer states that in the Xianheng period (670-674), the monk Juduo (Jiita?) went to the mountain. Following Shijiamiduoluo’s return to the capital, the text reports, two unnamed India monks venerated the Bodhisattva at Mount Wutai in the Yifeng period (676-679). Somewhat later, following the Gu Qingliang zhuàn’s compilation and during the period in which Wu Zetian sat on the throne, an additional three South and Central Asian monks arrived in China including Buddhapāla who I discuss in chapter four (Sen 2003, 79, 98).
devotion. The development, further, facilitated Wu Zetian’s efforts to cast herself as the *cakravartin* ruler of this foremost Buddhist realm.

**Conclusions**

In this context we can understand the writing and rewriting Mount Wutai’s history as a means to project the site’s newfound importance into the distant past. Generating an early history for structures such as the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple and the Dafu Temple, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* implied that the site’s seventh-century significance was not so new. Rather, these miracle tales assert, Mount Wutai possessed a hallowed history. In this way, the representation of Mount Wutai as (among other things) Mañjuśrī’s residence, an access point to hidden realms, a place populated by immortals, and a locale at which mysterious strangers appear only to vanish moments later created early examples for what may have been a recent phenomena: journeying to a mountain within the realm of the Tang empire to observe the traces of a Buddhist deity.

At the same time, stories about Aśoka’s ancient presence at the mountain and the recent manifestation of mysterious phenomena atop its peaks may have carried further significance for Huixiang’s audience. Taking the Indian ruler (and Emperor Wen of the Sui) as her model, in the years leading up to the gazetteer’s compilation Empress Wu had promoted the cult of the relics as part of her larger endeavor to present herself as the legitimate ruler of the realm. As the case of the monk Degan illustrates, the monarch rewarded individuals who reported auspicious signs to the throne—including the manifestation of unusual clouds and Mañjuśrī’s appearance before one thousand people at Mount Wutai several years after the *Gu Qingliang*
zhuan's completion. Creating a vibrant past for Mount Wutai in records such as the legend of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's founding, proponents of the Mañjuśrī cult provided a precedent for the relic-related activities in which the empress was engaged before and during her reign. Celebrating the appearance of unusual clouds, strange bells, mysterious flora and fauna at the mountain, tales of Mount Wutai set during the period coinciding with Empress Wu's rise to power may have, further, been taken as signals of her rule's righteousness. In the centuries following the gazetteer's compilation, as we will see in the following chapter, miracle tales set at Mount Wutai and preserved in texts such as Zanning's Song gaoseng zhuan and Yanyi's Guang Qingliang zhuan assign these phenomena a very different significance.
Chapter Four

Mañjuśrī, Monks, and Mofa:

The Standardization of Mount Wutai’s Representation in the Tang and Song

The representation of Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī changed in significant ways between the time of the Gu Qingliang zhuan's seventh-century compilation and the eleventh-century when Yanyi composed the Guang Qingliang zhuan. Examining a subset of miracle tales preserved in the later gazetteer, stories of huasi (conjured temples), in this chapter I identify three respects in which depictions of the site and the Bodhisattva in these materials differ from those found in the Gu Qingliang zhuan and other pre-eighth century sources:

1. Tales of conjured temples portray Mount Wutai’s significance almost exclusively in terms of its connections to Mañjuśrī and to the Bodhisattva’s Pure Land.

2. Tales of conjured temples associate the Bodhisattva’s presence at Mount Wutai with the era of dharmic decline (mofa or modai).

3. In addition to depicting him in disguise, these later records also give uniform and detailed descriptions of Mañjuśrī’s appearance in an immediately recognizable form mounted on a lion with attendants.

In the following pages I will propose, first, that these three features conform to the depiction of the Bodhisattva and mountain’s importance preserved in the sūtras and visual sources from the eighth, ninth, and tenth-century. The portrayal of the site and the saint in these miracle tales, then, reflects a confluence of artistic, scriptural and narrative traditions. I will suggest, second, that by presenting a number of Mount Wutai’s officially-recognized temples as the earthly counterparts to conjured
monasteries manifested by Mañjuśrī, these stories legitimized the privilege several structures built and sustained by the court enjoyed in the Tang and Song.

I have organized this chapter into six sections. The first of these introduce the materials containing records of conjured temples (4.1) and discuss the term and its translation (4.2). I then move on to examine accounts of the monk Wuzhuo’s 無著 (eighth century) entry into the conjured Qingliang Temple 化清凉寺 (4.3.i) and stories about his encounters at other Mount Wutai sites (4.3.ii). After introducing the stories of another four Tang monk-pilgrims who purportedly entered into conjured temples at the mountain (4.4), I will examine the considerable overlap in the ways that they present Mount Wutai as a holy place (4.5). Finally, in the concluding section of the chapter I will address the broader significance of these stories. I will suggest that tales of conjured temples use the trope of hidden landscapes—familiar from Gu Qingliang zhuan stories about vanishing groves and celestial palaces—to new ends: the promotion of Mañjuśrī’s veneration at court-sponsored temples erected at Mount Wutai (4.6).

4.1 Stories of Conjured Temples: The Sources

Accounts of conjured temples appear in a wide range of materials. In this dissertation I have chosen to focus my discussion on records preserved in the eleventh-century counterpart to Huixiang’s gazetteer: Yanyi’s Guang Qingliang zhuan. The form and content of Yanyi’s text distinguish it from its seventh-century antecedent. The later gazetteer—commissioned by the throne and completed in 1060—is a substantially longer and more organized work than the Gu Qingliang
zhuan. The preface and each of the twenty-three chapters into which Yanyi divided the three-volume gazetteer are tightly knit around individual topics. From the first chapter, titled “the merits of seeing or hearing [about] the birthplace of the Bodhisattva” (Pusa shengdi jianwen gongde 菩薩生地見聞功德), Mañjuśrī takes center stage. While many of the chapters bring together a variety of related narratives—including, for instance, a lengthy chapter on “Traces of the affairs of eminent monks” (Gaode sengshi ji 高德僧事跡) and one about “Monks and laity who advanced the way by abandoning their bodies” (Wangshen xundao sengsu 亡身徇道僧俗)—the Guang Qingliang zhuan’s middle volume includes nine chapters each consisting of a single narrative. These tales are among the best-known stories about Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī occupies a central place in all of them.

One of these nine tales is the legend of Buddhapāla’s (Fotuoboli 佛陀波利) meeting with Mañjuśrī. Like the Guang Qingliang zhuan more broadly, the story portrays the mountain as a place where clerics and officials obtain teachings and visions of the Bodhisattva. In addition to the Guang Qingliang zhuan T.2099.1111(a,b), this account is the subject of a range of visual and textual sources including cave paintings and poetry preserved at Dunhuang, the Song gaoseng zhuan T.2061.717(c), and Ennin’s ninth-century Nittō guhō junrei gyōki (DBZ 113: 237-238). Initially a terse account of Buddhapāla’s meeting with a mysterious stranger appeared in a preface to the Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 (The Scripture of the Superlative Dhāraṇī of the Buddha’s Crown, Skt. Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī T. 967) that is dated 689 CE and was composed by the monk Zhijing 志靜 of
the Dingjue Temple 定觉寺.\textsuperscript{111} As the legend expanded it came to include references to Buddhapāla's entry into the Jingang Grotto accompanied by Mañjuśrī.

Later tradition holds that Buddhapāla arrived at Mount Wutai in 676 where he met but did not recognize Mañjuśrī disguised as an old man. The Bodhisattva instructed him to return to India in order to retrieve a copy of the dhāraṇī sūtra, promising that if he did so Buddhapāla would then meet the Bodhisattva T.2099.1111(b).\textsuperscript{112} After the monk returned to the capital, Chang'an, with the sūtra in 683, the Guang Qingliang zhuan purports that he “again arrived at Mount Wutai. [There, according to] a transmission, he entered the Jingang Grotto and to this day [he] has never left” T.2099.1111(b). Like the tales of conjured temples I discuss below and the Guang Qingliang zhuan more generally, Mañjuśrī figures prominently in this story about a male cleric's experience at Mount Wutai.

The Guang Qingliang zhuan's overall orientation distinguishes it from Huixiang's text. Throughout the Gu Qingliang zhuan, Huixiang pursues an answer to the question “what makes Mount Wutai an extraordinary place?” We can think of the first gazetteer as a “place-focused” work in which the miracle tales offer a highly

\textsuperscript{111} Paul Copp discusses this text and translates the Buddhapāla story in his dissertation “Voice, Dust, Shadow, Stone (Copp 2005, 46-47). Comparing the Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing account of the Buddhapāla story with later versions of the tale, including those recorded on dhāraṇī pillars, Lin Yunrou calls attention to the initial rendering's emphasis on the dhāraṇī's power. Contrasting accounts inscribed on the pillars from before Daizong's reign (r. 763-779) with those produced during and after this time, Lin suggests, further, that as the Buddhapāla legend spread so too did Wutai-faith both of which gained momentum in the late eighth and then ninth centuries (Lin 2009, 105-112, 235-239).

\textsuperscript{112} According to Birnbaum, when reading the story of Buddhapāla's meeting “it is important to note that Mañjuśrī instructed Buddhapa[la] to return with a scripture from the esoteric traditions of Buddhism, for by the late-eighth century—as the cult grew in popularity—Mañjuśrī became closely associated with the Chinese Chen-yen [Zhenyan 真言] school that systematized these teachings” (Birnbaum 1983, 10).
varied account of the mountain’s significance. The *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, in contrast, is a “deity-focused” text that explains the many respects in which Mañjuśrī’s manifestations render the site holy. Comparing gazetteers about Mount Putuo, Chün-fang Yū has observed a similar pattern, noting that while early records of the site emphasized its status as the very place where Buddhist scriptures claimed that Avalokiteśvara dwelled, later gazetteers stressed that this was the locale at which clerics and officials obtained visions of the Bodhisattva. In both contexts descriptions of the bodhisattvas’ manifestations became progressively more elaborate as the site’s holy status became more firmly rooted in its affiliation with the deity.

In addition to the *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, Zanning’s *Song gaoseng zhuan* includes accounts of the extraordinary structures known as conjured temples. References to them are found in poetry and art, as well as Chan encounter dialogues like those found in the *Biyan lu* (Blue Cliff Record), an eleventh-century gongan collection compiled by Xuedou Zhongxian 雪竇重顯 (980-1052) with commentary by Yuanwu Keqin 圜悟克勤 (1063-1135). Qing era materials such as

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113 Though references to this site appear in Song period texts, such as Zhipan’s *志磐* (1220-1275) *Fozu tongji* (Complete Chronicle of the Buddha and Patriarchs), it was not until 1361 that the first monograph about the mountain was compiled. It was penned by Sheng Ximing 盛熙明 (Yū 2001, 374, 384).

114 Some of these records of conjured temples have been studied in isolation by Daniel Stevenson (1995), who translates the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* version of Fazhao’s entry into the conjured Zhulin Temple, and Raoul Birnbaum (1983, 1986), the expert on Tang period Mount Wutai who has written extensively on the Daoyi and Shenying material. In a more recent article, “Light in the Wutai Mountains,” Birnbaum quotes from Yanyi’s entry on Wuzhuo.

115 For example, Xuanben’s “The Eulogy on the Holy Regions” (*Wutai shan shengjian zhuan* 五臺山聖境讚) makes reference to one of the conjured temples. I discuss this poem on page 120 below. A cartouche on the Dunhuang Panorama identifies the “place where a magical golden bridge appeared” that Gimello notes is a possible allusion to the bridge Daoyi observed as he entered the conjured
the *Qingliang shan zhi* 清凉山志 (*The Gazetteer of Mount Qingliang*), the *Qingliang shan xin zhi* 清凉山新志 (*The New Gazetteer of Mount Qingliang*) and the *Qingding Qingliang shan zhi* 欽定清凉山志 (*Imperially Commissioned Gazetteer of Mount Qingliang*) recount tales of the entry of Tang period monks into conjured temples and describe the construction of their earthly counterparts at the mountain.\(^\text{116}\) The number and variety of sources that preserve records of these structures reflects their great importance in the literature about the Five Terrace Mountain.

### 4.2 Conjured Temples: The Terminology

Stories of conjured temples record the experiences of eighth and ninth century monks who purportedly entered into temples that suddenly appeared and vanished at Mount Wutai. Yanyi’s gazetteer asserts that five clerics visited the following six edifices: the conjured Bore (Prajinā) Temple (hua Bore si 化般若寺), the conjured Fahua (Dharma Flower) Cloister (hua Fahua yuan 化法華院), the

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\(^{116}\) The production of this triad of texts, by the palace publishing house between 1661 and 1811, involved the participation of the imperial throne in ways earlier Wutai monographs had not (Chou, 2007). In 1661 the imperial palace sponsored the publication of Zhencheng’s 鎮澄 (1546-1617) *Qingliang shan zhi* edited and prefaced by Awang Laozang 阿王老藏 (1601-1687). In 1701 it produced the *Qingliang shan xin zhi*, a revised version of Zhencheng’s work edited and prefaced by Laozang danba 老藏丹巴 (1632-1684). Finally, in 1785 the palace commissioned the compilation of the *Qingding Qingliang shan zhi*. The text was eventually published in 1811. The Qianlong Emperor not only sponsored the production of the *Qingding Qingliang shan zhi* but also supervised its compilation and authored its preface. The gazetteers were only three among a vast number of Buddhist materials published with imperial funds during this period. They formed part of a larger program of literary production that Gray Tuttle argues convincingly aimed to promote the Qing rulers’ status as great patrons of Buddhism and, in particular, Tibetan forms of Buddhism at Mount Wutai (Tuttle 2011).
The conjured Fusheng (Born of Happiness) Temple (hua Fusheng si 化福生寺), the conjured Jinge (Golden Pavillion) Temple (hua Jinge si 化金閣寺), the conjured Qingliang (Clear and Cool) Temple (hua Qingliang si 化清凉寺), and the conjured Zhulin (Bamboo Forest) Temple (hua Zhulin si 化竹林寺). Accounts of these hidden monasteries played an especially concrete role in the mountain’s development as a holy center; beginning sometime after 716 CE these materials served as models upon which at least four earthly counterparts were constructed on Mount Wutai.

References to the activities of lay and ordained pilgrims and residents at the earthly copies of these conjured temples establish that they have been lively places of practice for a period spanning twelve hundred years. Sources such as the *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozhij* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集 (The Collected Documents Pertaining to Amoghavajra) and Ennin’s *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* indicate that earthly replicas of these conjured temples were sites of activity in the eighth and ninth centuries. Qing dynasty materials concerning Wutai, including Gao Shiqi’s 高士奇 (1644-1703) *Hucong xixun rilu* 庖從西巡日錄 (Daily record of following in the retinue of Kangxi’s Western Tour) and stele inscriptions like those studied by Natalie Köhle confirm that these temples continued to be centers of practice in the seventeenth and

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117 One might also translate this temple’s names as the “conjured Production of Merit Temple.”

118 The focus of Raffaello Orlando’s dissertation is the public life of the Tantric master Bukong as portrayed in the *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng guangzhi sanzang heshang*. This text is a collection of documents pertaining to Bukong compiled by his disciple during the late eighth century reign of Dezong (Orlando 1981). The *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* is the well-known record of the ninth century Japanese monk Ennin’s travel in Tang China. Both works make reference to earthly replicas of the conjured temples extant at Mount Wutai (DBZ 113: 228, 233, 243).
eighteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{119} Today the Jinge Temple, the Zhulin Temple, and the Jingang Grotto-Bore Temple stand somewhat to the periphery of Wutai’s village center, Taihuai 台怀.\textsuperscript{120}

Before moving on to examine records of \textit{huasi}, some discussion of the term and its translation is in order. In the work of modern-day scholars and the writings of their premodern counterparts alike the term \textit{huasi} receives a large number of treatments.\textsuperscript{121} In fact, an examination of accounts of \textit{huasi} and related records of holy monks and monasteries set at Wutai suggest there may have been a certain flexibility in the application of the term. While contemporary scholarship differently translates the same term, vision tales preserved in diverse pre-twelfth century sources refer to the same extraordinary phenomena with different terminology.

\textsuperscript{119} Natalie Köhle’s study of the seventeenth-century record of Kangxi’s Wutai pilgrimage, the \textit{Hucong xixun rilu} (Daily record of following in the retinue of Kangxi’s Western Tour), cites a section of the text dated the twenty first day of the second month in which Gao Shiqi’s mentions the Jinge Temple. A 1714 stele also mentions the Jingang Grotto-Bore Temple. Köhle translates it:

“Every new and full moon the \textit{Qingxiu chanshi} (Ding-ceng-jian-cuo Bstan ‘dzin rgya mtsho) leads the \textit{ge-long} and \textit{ban-di} (ban de, Tibetan Buddhist monks) and all Tibetan and Chinese monks to ascend to (Jingan)ku (Bore si) [Jingang Grotto-Bore Temple] in unison, to reverently offer mystic incantations and make solemn prostrations (fengyan mizhang qiao chi (qin) wu ti)... (Köhle 2008, 88).

\textsuperscript{120} In contrast to Song period materials that distinguish the conjured Bore Temple Wuzhuo perceived from the Diamond Grotto, later sources such as the \textit{Qingding Qingliang shan zhi} and contemporary guidebooks identify the Jingang Grotto-Bore Temple as a single site

\textsuperscript{121} In his study and translation of Yanyi’s \textit{Guang Qingliang zhu}n record of Fazhao’s career and pilgrimage, Daniel Stevenson, for example, describes the monk-pilgrim’s entry into the conjured Zhulin Temple as a “journey-in-spirit to the \textit{magical} Bamboo Grove Monastery” (Stevenson 1995, 208). His frequent references to the visionary nature of this temple and other \textit{huasi} underscore their extraordinary (perhaps supermundane or supernatural) quality. In his article on the \textit{Guang Qingliang zhu}n record of ShenyIng’s Wutai career, Raoul Birnbaum chooses “manifested cloister” to translate the closely related term \textit{huayuan} 化院 (Birnbaum 1986, 129). The monk ShenyIng declares, for example, “I will build a monastery like the \textit{manifested} cloister and live in it for the remainder of my years” T.2099.1113(a). The choice connects \textit{huasi} with other examples of Wutai legend and lore that recount the appearance of extraordinary figures and structures at the mountain, as well as non-Wutai traditions of revelations, epiphanies of divine presence and power.
A comparison of the terminology employed in a *Guang Qingliang zhuan* miracle tale with the language used in a reference to the same episode in a poem by Xuanben 玄本 (9th or 10th century) illustrates this point. These texts use different expressions to refer to the mysterious monastery at Wutai in which tradition holds that the Pure Land patriarch Fazhao 法照 (8th century) encountered Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. The term *huasi* appears in the episode’s title, “the preceptor Fazhao’s 法照 entry into the conjured Zhulin Temple” 法照和尚入化竹林寺 T.2099.1114(a)-1116(a), as well as the titles of the other three narratives with which it is closely related. Xuanben’s roughly contemporary “Eulogy on the Holy Regions of the Five Terrace Mountain” (Wutai shan shengjing zan 五臺山聖境讚) uses other terms. One of a number of poems dealing with Mount Wutai found among the documents at Dunhuang, it reads:

In Mañjuśrī’s burning house, the strange is always numinous,  
The subtle and profound region cannot be named.  
At Vajra [Jingang] Grotto, one always hears the sounds of Sanskrit,  
Towers and terraces manifest everywhere shining.  
Fazhao of Nanliang roamed in the immortal temple (xiansi 仙寺),  
The eminent monk of the Western land entered the conjured city.  
Limitless sages and worthies all dwell in this place,  
Wandering beyond the clouds, good at moral cultivation (Cartelli 2004, 237).

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122 The tenth-century *Song gaoseng zhuan* uses the same terminology T.2061.844(a).

123 Nothing is known about Xuanben. No reference to him appears in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and the *Song gaoseng zhuan* does not contain his biography. Two events enable us to establish the date of “The Eulogy on the Holy Regions” composition. The first of these is the sealing of the Dunhuang caves. This occurred sometime toward the end of the tenth century or at the beginning of the eleventh century. Cartelli states that according to Arthur Waley the latest manuscript, S.4172, is dated 995. Fujieda Akira claims a manuscript in the Oldenburg collection is dated 1002. Xuanben composed the poem no later than the first years of the eleventh century. Second, a reference to the monk Wuran in the eulogy indicates the poem must have been composed after the mid-ninth century when the monk died at the sacred mountain. I discuss Wuran’s biography below (Cartelli 2002, 4, 206, 207).
I discuss this miracle tale further below. Here let it suffice to note the discrepancy in language. Rather than huasi as in the “Eulogy on the Holy Regions of the Five Terrace Mountain,” Xuanben describes the temple that appeared and vanished before Fazhao instead as a xiansi, immortal or immortal’s temple. Before the eleventh-century, a total of at least four terms were used to describe closely related phenomenon. In addition to huasi and xiansi, in chapter three I noted that Zanning employed the expression shengsi 聖寺 (holy temple) in his account of Zhou and Ming’s entry into an otherwise invisible residence at Mount Wutai. In his Jishenzhou sanbao gantong lu, Daoxuan used the term shensi 神寺 (divine temple) to refer to the general case of unusual monasteries appearing on Mount Wutai’s slopes.

In this dissertation I render huasi as conjured temple. My reasoning is twofold. First, the term is intended to suggest something of the illusory quality of the structures themselves. While I will highlight how, on the one hand, records of Mount Wutai emphasize the mountain’s sacred character, the texts preserve, on the other hand, a Wutai-focused discourse that denies the place any type of special status. The perspective, which takes as its starting point śūnyatā, is articulated not only in tales of huasi but also Chan texts such as the Linji lu 至極錄 (Record of Linji).

124 The poet subsequently refers to the extraordinary structure one of Fazhao’s contemporaries, Wuran 無染, entered as a huasi: “Wuran personally experienced a conjured temple [huasi]. / Climbing high, he wandered many times on the extreme summit, / As though riding a divine crane in the void” (Cartelli 2002, 227). This is further evidence that there was some flexibility in the way these terms were employed.

125 Recall that the Gu Qingliang zhuan and Xu Qingliang zhuan records of this narrative refer to the same structure as a celestial palace, tiangong 天宮.

126 I discuss this issue in “Tales of Conjured Temples in Qing period Gazetteers” (2011). The discussion of the term huasi follows my article very closely.
and the *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記 (Record of the Dharma Jewel through the Generations). These materials assert that the structures and by corollary Mount Wutai as a whole are ultimately illusory although made to appear otherwise by Mañjuśrī.127

Translating *huasi* as conjured temple is intended not only to convey something about the temples themselves but also to underscore the role Mañjuśrī plays as an agent of *fangbian* 方便 (*upāya*, skillful means) in these stories. The tales portray the Bodhisattva as a “conjuror” who produces magnificent temples as expedient teaching-tools that disappear as quickly as they materialize on the mountain peaks. A shared theme in these sources, we will see, is the remorse that monks feel when the conjured temples that they have entered vanish and only then do they appreciate the sites’ magnificent quality. In this respect, tales of *huasi* find a parallel in the well-known *Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra* parable of the conjured city, *huacheng* 化城.128 Like the Bodhisattva guide in the parable who produces the fantastic city as a resting place for weary travelers on the road to buddhahood, the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī produces the Five Terrace Mountain as an apparition to meet the needs of devotees as promised in the *Mañjuśrī parinirvāṇa sūtra*.

### 4.3 Records of Wuzhuo’s Entry into Conjured Temples

Tradition associates the monk Wuzhuo with two conjured temples that he purportedly entered at Mount Wutai in the Tang period. These are the conjured

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127 I take up this dimension of the stories beginning on page 128 of this chapter.

128 Burton Watson uses the term “phantom city” to translate *huacheng* 化城 in his rendering of the *Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra* parable (Watson 1993, 117-142).
Bore Temple and the conjured Qingliang Temple. The *Guang Qingliang zhuan* title of his hagiography—“The record of the preceptor Wuzhuo’s entry into the conjured Bore Temple” (Wuzhuo heshang ru hua Bore si 無著和尚入化般若寺)—reflects the fact that he is more closely associated with the second of these structures, the conjured Bore Temple. All but one record of the monk’s life and career describes the cleric’s encounter with Mañjuśrī in this structure. Accounts of the conjured Qingliang Temple’s manifestation before Wuzhuo, in contrast, appear in three sources. These are Yanyi’s gazetteer, the *Biyan lu* and the *Qingding Qingliang shan zhi.*

Though lesser known, I have elected to begin my examination here with stories of the conjured Qingliang Temple because doing so allows me to compare later portrayals of the site’s importance with depictions of its significance prior to the eighth-century. Among the six conjured temples named in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, the Qingliang Temple alone is mentioned in Huixiang’s texts. The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* identifies the temple as the place where the cleric Shijimiduoluo and two companions observed the manifestation of a “holy monk” T.2098.1099(a) and states that a “holy image” stood at the monastery T.2098.1095(b). According to Huixiang, Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei founded the Qingliang Temple, as well as the Foguang Temple and the Dafu Temple T.2098.1095(b); 1095(c); 1094(a,b). The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* also states that the ruler planted a garden nearby the latter monastery T.2098.1094(a). While as I explained in the previous chapters I suspect that references to the emperor’s activities teach us very little about the

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129 The latter text fuses the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and *Song gaoseng zhuan* accounts while, at the same time, contributing new details about Wuzhuo’s life and career.
structures’ actual construction, these accounts do demonstrate the central role that early records assigned imperial patrons in the mountain’s emergence as a holy destination. Just as the Gu Qingliang zhuan account of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s founding created a pedigree for the monastery in which Northern Qi rulers figure prominently, records of the Dafu Temple, the Foguang Temple, and the Qingliang Temple positioned the court at the center of the site’s history. Noticeably absent from these first accounts is any reference to Mañjuśrī.

In the following pages I will show how the Guang Qingliang zhuan account of Wuzhuo’s entry into the conjured Qingliang Temple re-presented the structure’s importance. Disregarding earlier accounts of its establishment and significance, the gazetteer suggested that the foundation of the temple’s holy status was its association with the Bodhisattva who, though present, often remained invisible to mountain residents and pilgrims. In this way stories of conjured temples including the record of the Qingliang Temple depict Mount Wutai’s importance in a manner that accords with scriptural visions of this place as the sole locale at which Mañjuśrī and the teachings are accessible in the period of dharmic decline.

4.3.i Records of Wuzhuo’s Entry into the Conjured Qingliang Temple

We know very little for certain about the cleric Wuzhuo. Sources present widely divergent pictures of his early life, his monastic education, and his later career. Apart from the fact that tradition affiliates him with Mount Wutai, there is essentially very little we can say for certain about the monk. While the Song gaoseng

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130 See my article “Tales of Huasi 化寺 in Qing Gazetteers” for a detailed analysis of the multiple redactions of Wuzhuo’s hagiography.
zhuan and Guang Qingliang zhuan allege that he arrived at the mountain in 767 CE, the Qingding Qingliang shan zhi, for instance, asserts that he lived in the ninth century. The Song gaoseng zhuan purports that Wuzhuo studied under Chengguan 澄觀 (738-?) in the Tang capital T.2061.836(c). The Guang Qingliang zhuan records, in contrast, that the monk traveled from his home province Wenzhou to Jinling 南陵 where he learned from Niutou Chan master Huizhong 慧忠 (d. 775) T.2099.1111(b).

According to the Qingding Qingliang shanzhi, after temporarily disrobing during the ninth-century persecutions, Wuzhuo studied with Chan master Yanguan 鹽官 (750?-842) during the Dazhong 大中 period (847-859) and then traveled to Mount Wutai. Large discrepancies such as these reveal an astonishing flexibility regarding almost every detail in Wuzhuo’s hagiographies and suggest the possibility that we may be dealing with multiple individuals whose biographies became intertwined between the eighth and nineteenth centuries. That the sole point of convergence between these records is the cleric’s encounter with Mañjuśrī in the conjured Bore Temple demonstrates, moreover, this event’s perceived centrality to his life and monastic career.

In the Guang Qingliang zhuan and the Qingding Qingliang shanzhi Wuzhuo’s meeting with Mañjuśrī in the conjured Qingliang Temple precedes his entry into the conjured Bore Temple. According to Yanyi, after meeting Huizhong in Jingling,

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131 The Qingding Qingliang shan zhi claims that Wuzhuo studied with the Chan master Yanguan in the Dazhong period which began in 847 at which time master Yanguan was no longer alive. Qingding Qingliang shan zhi (Imperially Commissioned Gazetteer of Qingliang shan). Reprinted in Qingliang shan zhi, Qingliang shan xin zhi, Qingding Qingliang shan zhi. Haikou: Hainan Chubanshe Chubanshe, 2001.
Wuzhuo “resolved to seek the great sage at distant Mount [Wu]tai” T.2099.1111(c).
In the fifth month of 767 CE he arrived beneath of the Qingliang Peak (Qingliang ling 清涼嶺) T.2099.1111(c). The monograph asserts that around sunset on that day Wuzhuo suddenly observed a conjured temple T.2099.1111(c). When he knocked on the door, the youth Quzhi—rendered Junti 甲提 elsewhere in the story—answered and asked the head monk for permission to invite Wuzhuo inside.\(^{132}\) The youth is an attendant of Mañjuśrī and his presence at the temple likely indicated to Yanyi’s readers that the abbot was the Bodhisattva, something that Wuzhuo did not realize.

The *Guang Qingliang zhuan* account of the monk’s entry into the conjured Qingliang Temple focuses on Wuzhuo’s discussion with the abbot. Their meandering conversation begins:

[The abbot asked Wuzhuo,] “Where did you come from?” Wuzhuo replied. Then [the abbot] asked: “What is the Buddha-dharma like in that place?”[Wuzhuo] answered: [now is] the time of the Semblance dharma’s conclusion (*xiangji 像季*) and [people practice] the rules and disciplines according to their [limited] abilities T.2099.1111(c).

Though not a major feature of pre-eighth century materials related to Mount Wutai, references to a time of degeneration are common in tales of conjured temples. The exchange continued with Wuzhuo posing the following question:


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\(^{132}\) Junti, written here 韪胝, is written 君提 elsewhere in the monograph T.2099.1112(a). In the *Song gaoseng zhuan* it appears as 均提. These discrepancies, as I proposed in my M.A. thesis, suggest that we may be dealing with an oral tradition subsequently recorded in text.
understand or not?” He answered, “I do not understand.” The abbot said: “Since you do not understand, quickly depart. It is not right for you to stay here for long.” [Then the abbot] had the youth [Quzhi] escort the guest out of the gates. Wuzhuo asked: “What is this temple named?” [Quzhi] answered: “Qingliang Temple”... T.2099.1111(c).

Having led him outside, the boy confirmed that the monk did not understand the statement “before three-three, after three-three.” Wuzhuo turned away and when he looked back the temple and his guide had both vanished. Finding himself alone on the mountain peak he was filled with sorrow. The episode concludes with the monk uttering the following verses:

All around in the realms as many as the sands of the Ganges is the holy Buddhist temple. / Everywhere one can see Mañjuśrī speaking. / As soon as he spoke I do not know what seal he opened. / I turned my head and saw only the old mountain cliff” T.2099.1111(c).

In the subsequent section of this chapter we will see that this is not the sole instance in which the cleric’s lack of understanding resulted in him being unable to enter or asked to leave an extraordinary realm.

Xuedou Zhongxian’s eleventh-century collection of Chan encounter dialogues (gongan 公案), the Biyan lu (Blue Cliff Record), includes a version of these events accompanied by a commentary that similarly frames Wuzhuo’s exchange as a failure. The text, translated by Steven Heine, reads:

Some time after the dialogue, Wu-cho [Wuzhuo] decided to stay on Mount Wu-t’ai and was serving as cook in a monastery. Every day Manjusri appeared above his cauldron of rice, and each time Wu-cho struck him a blow with the bamboo stick used for churning the porridge. But that is like drawing the bow after the thief has already fled. At the right time, when asked "How is the Buddha Dharma being upheld in the South?” he should have hit Manjusri on the spine— that would have accomplished something! T.2033.174(a).133

133 For Heine the gongan represents one of a number that depict the meeting of two forms of Buddhism: a Wutai Buddhism “based on esoteric or Tantric beliefs and the iconoclastic trends of Zen
These remarks suggest that the specialness of the Bodhisattva, like the site where he is purported to dwell, is illusory. In a cosmos characterized by emptiness (śunyata) neither Mount Wutai nor Mañjuśrī nor any site or figure can be a sacred entity worthy of special treatment.

Alongside the notion that the Five Terrace Mountain is significant because of the Bodhisattva’s presence there, tales of conjured temples and texts such as the Linji lu and Lidai fabao ji put forward a Wutai-focused discourse that denied the place any type of special status. These texts take as their starting point “the Mahayana idea of sunyata (void) [which] implies undifferentiated space and is thus deconstructive of sacred geography” (Naquin and Yü 1992, 5). In the Lidai fabao ji, the Baotang 保唐 master Wuzhu 無住 (714-774) presents a similarly critical perspective on pilgrimage practice, sacred place, and Wutai in particular. According to the text:

...some masters and monks of Jiannan wanted to go to (Wu)tai shan to pay obeisance, and they took their leave of the Venerable. The Venerable asked, “Worthies, where are you going?” The monks replied, “To pay respects to Mañjuśrī.” The Venerable said, “Worthies, the Buddha is in body and mind, Mañjuśrī is not far. When deluded thoughts are not produced, this is none other than ‘seeing the Buddha.’ Why take the trouble to go so far?” The masters and monks wanted to leave. The Venerable expounded a gatha for them: “Lost children restlessly dashing like waves, circling the mountain and paying obeisance to a pile of earth. Mañjuśrī is right here, you are climbing the Buddha’s back to search for Amitabha” (Adamek 2007, 274).

contemplation that resisted but could not help but be attracted to the Mount Wu-t’ai brand of religiosity.” In Opening a Mountain, Heine approaches this material primarily as part of his larger examination of the absorption of mythological-supernatural beliefs and rites, as well as fantastic symbols, into the gongan tradition (Heine 2002, 40, 67).
In deconstructing the notion that Wutai or any site for that matter could be a sacred center Wuzhu was not, as Wendi Adamek points out, alone. A similar critique appears in the *Linji lu* where master Linji 正濟 (d. 866-7) decries:

There are some types of students who go off to Mt. Wu-t’ai looking for Manjushri. They’re wrong from the very start! Manjushri isn’t on Mt. Wu-t’ai. Would you like to get to Manjushri? You here in front of my eyes, carrying out your activities, from first to last never changing, wherever you go never doubting—this is the living Manjushri! (Adamek 2007, 274).

The thrust of this argument, Adamek explains “is that it is delusory to locate the Buddha and Dharma outside one’s true nature, the Buddha-body of emptiness” (Adamek 2007, 275). Significantly, she notes, “Wuzhu [like Linji] mocks those who make pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai, at a time when Bukong [Amoghavajra] was involving the state in massive expenditure at this site in order to glorify China as the domain of the [B]odhisattva Mañjuśrī” (Adamek 2007, 119). Śūnyata, then, could be used to forward sectarian ends, here discrediting Amoghavajra’s esoteric Buddhism while extolling Linji and Wuzhu’s Chan. In studying changing depictions of Mount Wutai, these passages together with Wuzhuo’s *Guang Qingliang zhuan* exchange establish that tales of conjured temples simultaneously represented the mountain as a place rendered important by the Bodhisattva’s presence while implying that it was an illusory realm manifested in order to teach sentient beings about emptiness.

Variation between *Gu Qingliang zhuan* records of the Qingliang Temple and the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* account of Wuzhuo’s entry into its conjured counterpart illustrate changes in Mount Wutai’s depiction between the seventh and twelfth centuries. First and foremost, the Bodhisattva of wisdom occupies the central place in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and other Song period texts. Rather than rulers and
officials such as Emperor Xiaowen or the unnamed Northern Qi prince, tales of conjured temples present Mañjuśrī as the catalyst for temple building. Second, in Yanyi’s text Mañjuśrī occupies the role assigned to a range of extraordinary figures in Huixiang’s gazetteer—the unidentified holy monk, fox and rabbit in Shijiamiduoluo’s hagiography, for instance. Third, in tales of conjured temples a familiar Gu Qingliang zhuan trope, the hidden landscape, emerges as the ephemeral temple in which clerics obtain visions of Mañjuśrī.

4.3.ii Records of Wuzhuo’s Other Encounters

In addition to the episode in which Wuzhuo meets Mañjuśrī inside the conjured Qingliang Temple, records of the monk’s life and career assert that he had number of other mysterious encounters at the mountain. First, the Guang Qingliang zhuan includes a story about Wuzhuo’s failure to access the Jingang Grotto. While early materials, as I discussed in chapter two, assert the cavern was, at once, home to a mountain god and the Bodhisattva’s residence, later texts affiliate the niche most closely with the story of Buddhapāla that I introduced at the beginning of this chapter. The Guang Qingliang zhuan holds that an elderly man invited Wuzhuo to enter the cavern’s recesses T. 2099.1112(c). When Wuzhuo hesitated the stranger disappeared into the crevice alone. Suddenly, a group of mysterious purple-clad monks appeared T.2099.1112(c). They told Wuzhuo that ten thousand bodhisattvas were inside listening to Mañjuśrī preach the sūtras T.2099.1112(c). Presumably because Wuzhuo did not accept the initial invitation, when he tried to enter the grotto a moment later he could not fit through the opening. The allusion to the Avatamsaka sūtra claim that the Bodhisattva preaches to a multitude of attendants
implies that the elderly stranger was Mañjuśrī and suggests that the scriptural prediction that Mañjuśrī taught his attendants at Mount Qingliang became tied specifically to the Jingang Grotto.

Many stories of Mañjuśrī’s appearances at Mount Wutai involve figures who recognize what is being offered to them when it is too late. The record of Wuzhuo’s entry into the conjured Bore Temple is one of these. Rather than the Guang Qingliang zhuan version of this episode, I have chosen to cite from the parallel Song gaoseng zhuan passage here because it includes a reference to a Gu Qingliang zhuan narrative that highlights the relationship between tales of conjured temples and earlier stories about the mountain. In Wuzhuo’s Song gaoseng zhuan hagiography, the event follows yet another encounter with a mysterious stranger. According to Zanning, Wuzhuo was in the Huayan Temple when he:

saw an old monk in a rustic hall lying on a bed at the north wall. The old man asked him, “Did you come here from the south?” “You brought some pearls,” he continued and requested to see them. [Wu]zhuo thereupon gave him the pearls. When [Wu]zhuo turned around the monk was no longer there. His mind became agitated and alternated between doubt and joy T.2061.836(c).

The next lines in the Song gaoseng zhuan foreshadow Wuzhuo’s subsequent entry into an extraordinary temple: “in the past the monk Ming¹³⁴ had seen the stone mortar and wooden pestle and afterwards he succeeded in entering a holy monastery and seeing a holy worthy” T.2061.836(c). This allusion to the tale of śramaṇa Zhou and his disciple Ming suggests a connection between stories of

¹³⁴ This cleric’s name might also be rendered Sengming. I have chosen to translate the passage “the monk Ming” because the Gu Qingliang zhuan story of the mortar and pestle identifies śramaṇa Zhou’s 周沙門 disciple as meditation master Ming 明禪師 T.2098.1097(a). I discuss this story on page 79 above.
hidden realms preserved in texts such as the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and accounts of conjured temples. The later tales adapt the trope of the mysterious temples that appear and vanish at Mount Wutai to a different purpose: promoting Mount Wutai as a worthy object of attention because Mañjuśrī dwells there.

Like the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* account of the conjured Qingliang Temple and Wuzhuo’s meeting with Mañjuśrī at the Jingang Grotto, the story of his entry into the conjured Bore Temple ends in disappointment. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* states that he left the Huayan Temple and “went toward the Jingang Grotto, faced inside and paid respect to it. Then he sat down and took a nap” T.2098.836(c). He awoke to find an old man leading an ox. Following a short exchange, the stranger invited him for tea in a nearby temple where they were greeted by the youth Junti 均提. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* continues:

[The boy] led the ox and the men went along into the monastery. [Wu]zhuo saw all the things on the ground were of lapis lazuli and the temple passages and verandas in every case shone of gold. This was not a place created by human hands. The old man squatted on an ivory bed, pointed to a brocade seat and indicated to [Wu]zhuo to sit there. The young boy offered them two cups of tea and they drank facing each other. He lifted a tortoise shell vessel, filled it with koumiss, and gave each man a spoon. When [Wu]zhuo swallowed it had an extraordinary effect: his mind became clear and he remembered past things T.2061.836(c).

Though Wuzhuo seems not to draw any significance from the extraordinary scene, the youth Junti’s presence here, just as in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* record of the conjured Qingliang Temple would undoubtedly have revealed the stranger’s identity to Zanning and Yanyi’s audiences.

Who is eligible to enter Mañjuśrī’s hidden realm? This question lies at the heart of the stories about Wuzhuo. In this instance, the cleric asks to spend the night
at the temple and the mysterious stranger denies his request.\textsuperscript{135} Junti then escorted the cleric out of the temple and past the Jingang Grotto. The narrative continues:

[Wuzhuo] asked the boy, “How come this temple does not have a plaque (\textit{ti’e 题额})? The boy pointed to the Jingang Grotto and asked [Wuzhuo in return, “what is this grotto?” Wuzhuo said, “It has been called the Jingang Grotto from generation to generation.” The boy said, “beneath Jingang (Diamond) what letters are written?” Wuzhuo thought for an instant and said “beneath Jingang Grotto Bore (prajñā) is written.” The boy smiled saying, “the place where you just entered is the Bore (prajñā) Temple” T.2061.837(a).

Junti then shared a \textit{gātha} with Wuzhuo after which “both the youth and the holy monastery disappeared” T. 2061.837(b). The hagiography concludes:

...[Wu]zhuo saw only forest, earth and rocks. Sorrow filled Wuzhuo’s chest. He could not stop his sobs and sighs. He lamented, “The writings and commentaries are like a flute or bell’s dying sounds that remain as only distant echoes in one’s ears.”

He looked carefully where the old man of the mountain had stood and saw white clouds slowly flowing upwards. Not far from the ground they changed into a five-colored rainbow. Above it the great sage was astride a lion surrounded by many bodhisattvas. After the time of taking a meal, a cloud from the east gradually covered the bodhisattva’s face. The image as well as the clouds both disappeared.

[Wu]huo then saw the Fenzhou 汾州 Puti Temple’s 菩提寺 abbot Xiuzheng 修政 with six others. They went together to the front of the grotto and worshipped. Suddenly they heard the mountains and rocks shake and roar with a sound like the crush of thunder. All the monks ran away. For a good while there was silence and nothing could be seen. Wuzhuo subsequently told the story of his encounter and the six men were regretful and blamed themselves for having failed to see the holy visage.

After this, Wuzhuo became a hermit and lived in this mountain until his death. In the Yuanhe era 元和 (806-821) his disciple Wenyi 文一 retroactively recorded this T.2061.837(b).

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\textsuperscript{135} As Junti prepared to escort him from the monastery, the old man spoke the following verses: To purify the mind for one thought moment is \textit{bodhi} / It is better than making \textit{stūpas} of seven jewels numbering as many as the sands in the Ganges / The jeweled \textit{stūpas} ultimately crumble to be dust / Whereas purifying the mind for one thought moment leads to ultimate wisdom” T.2061.837(a).
Records of Wuzhuo’s life and career like this one suggest that an individual’s level of understanding determines his suitability to enter Mount Wutai’s hidden realms. The monk’s failure to make sense of the mysterious stranger’s utterances resulted in his expulsion from the conjured Qingliang Temple. Similarly, in the Guang Qingliang zhuan story when he declined an invitation to enter the niche because he did not realize that Mañjuśrī was present there, Wuzhuo was barred from its interior. Like the protagonists in other tales of conjured temples and post-eighth century miracle tales about the mountain more generally, Wuzhuo failed to appreciate the unique nature of the figures and the sites he encountered until it was too late.

**4.4 Other Records of Conjured Temples**

“The record of the preceptor Wuzhuo’s entry into the conjured Bore Temple” is one of five Guang Qingliang zhuan accounts that represent Mount Wutai as a realm where clerics obtained teachings and visions within monasteries that Mañjuśrī manifested there in the period of dharmic decline. It appears alongside the following triad of closely related and similarly titled entries: “the record of the preceptor Shenying’s entry into the conjured Fahua Cloister” (神英和尚入化法華院) T.2099.1112(c)-1113(a), “the record of the preceptor Daoyi’s entry into the conjured Jinge Temple” (道義和尚入化金閣寺) T.2099.1113(a)-1114(a), and “the record of the preceptor Fazhao’s entry into the conjured Zhulin Temple” (法照
These lengthy tales are found in the gazetteer's second volume and constitute its thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters. A fifth account concerning the Tang monk Wuran’s entry into the conjured Fusheng Temple appears elsewhere in the text T.2099.1116(a-c). Its classification in the section of the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* devoted to self-immolators is a topic to which I will return below. Before addressing the shared depiction of Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī in these materials, I will introduce each of the tales of conjured chronologically according to the year in which Yanyi asserts that they arrived at Mount Wutai.

**4.4.i Records of Shenying’s Entry into the Conjured Fahua Cloister**

The monk Shenying, who arrived at Mount Wutai in 716 CE, is the first monk said to have entered into a conjured temple at the site. According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, Shenying’s family name was Han 韓 and he hailed from Cangzhou 滄州, a large prefecture located on the eastern coast just south of today’s Beijing. Tradition holds that the monk journeyed to Mount Wutai at the suggestion of Chan master Shenhui 神會 (668-760) whom he met at Nanyue, the Southern Marchmount T.2061.843(a); T.2099.1112(c). One day, the monk came

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136 The parallel *Song gaoseng zhuan* records appear in the following sections of the text: Shenying T.2061.843(a,b), Wuzhuo T.2061.836(c)-837(b), Daoyi T.2061.843(c)-844(b), Fazhao T.2061.844(a)-845(b).

137 The parallel *Song gaoseng zhuan* record appears at T.2061.855(c).

138 Regarding the possibility that Shenying met Shenhui, Birnbaum writes that the master: “could indeed have met Shen-ying there in 715 or 716, as suggested by this account. Shen-hui studied with Hui-neng in Kuang-tung from around 708 until 713. Then, following his master’s death, Shen-hui
upon a structure labeled “Fahua Cloister” while he was wandering alone to the west of the Huayan Temple. Once inside, Shenying saw a Prabhūtaratna (many-Jeweled) stūpa (duobao 多寶塔), a Tower of the Benevolent King who protects the Nation (huguo renwang lou 護國仁王樓) and images of Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra and their retinues. As he prepared to leave, Shenying came upon a congregation of monks that Zanning described as being odd (guiyi 謊異) and Yanyi states were being divinely wonderful (shenyi 神異) T.2061.843(a); T.2099.1113(a). As he exited the cloister, Shenying turned back and found that the structure had vanished. The monk wept realizing that the great sage (dasheng 大聖), presumably Mañjuśrī, had manifested the site T.2061.843(a); T.2099.1113(a). Both the gazetteer and Zanning’s text conclude with a description of Shenying’s efforts to establish an earthly counterpart to the conjured structure at Mount Wutai. According to both texts, a stūpa dedicated to Shenying still remained there T.2061.843(b); T.2099.1113(a).

This allusion to Shenying’s relic mound, found in the Guang Qingliang zhuan and Song gaoseng zhuan, suggest that clerics affiliated with conjured temples were recognized during their lives and soon after their deaths. A passage from the The Nittō guhō junrei gyōki may corroborate the miracle tale claim that Shenying’s legacy was important at the site. In the diary, Ennin states that when he entered the Fahua Cloister he saw a portrait of the cleric Shendao 神道 who had spent forty-three years in this cloister and obtained purity of the six senses (liugen qingjing 六

traveled about until settling down in 720 by imperial order at the Lung-hsing ssu in Nanyang” (Birnbaum 1986, 127).
The cleric's affiliation with the Fahua Cloister and the similarity of the names Shenying and Shendao suggest (as Birnbaum and Reischauer conclude) that these monks are one and the same individual.  

References to Wuzhuo in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* entries about other clerics indicate that, like Shenying, he was recognized in the decades after he purportedly met Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai. The description of the cleric Fazhao’s itinerary implies that the monk retraced Wuzhuo’s footsteps there. According to the gazetteer, several days after arriving at the Bore Cloister, Fazhao:

...went together with more than fifty other clerics toward the Jingang Grotto to perform pilgrimage. When they arrived at the place where Wuzhuo had seen the great sage, they sincerely paid reverence and invoked the names of the thirty-five buddhas. They generally worshipped more than ten places. Suddenly he saw at this place everywhere a lapis-lazuli seven jeweled lofty palace inside of which Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra and their retinues were together with Buddha T.2099.1115(a).

During this period, according to the gazetteer, the Huayan master Chengguan resided at the Bore Cloister west of the Huayan Temple. He was composing his commentary on the *Avataṃsaka sutra* T.2099.1120(a). The text states that a special pavilion was constructed for this purpose. When it was completed the monk Wuzhuo of Wenzhou wrote calligraphy on the beam of the pavilion in the style of Wang Xizhi 王羲之 T.2099.1120(b). Like references to Shenying’s *stūpa* and

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139 Birnbaum, following Reischauer, identify this monk as Shenying rather than Shendao (Birnbaum 1986, 126; Reischauer 1955, 265).

140 Wang Xizhi 王義之 (321-379CE) was the inventor of the orthodox form of writing called *kaishu* 碑書 (Mathews 1931, 360). This event, the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* holds, took place prior to the fourth month in the first year of the Xingyuan 興元 period (784). Though neither Wuzhuo’s *Song gaoseng zhuan* hagiography nor the entry devoted to him in Yanyi’s gazetteer mention this event, Zanning’s text purports that Wuzhuo studied under Chengguan in Chang’an prior to arriving at the mountain.
portrait, these passages indicate that Wuzhuo was a person of renown in the eighth and ninth centuries.

4.4.ii Records of Daoyi’s Entry into the Conjured Jinge Temple

Daoyi’s hagiographies revolve around the cleric’s multiple encounters with Mañjuśrī. According to the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and *Song gaoseng zhuan*, he was born in Jiangdong 江東 and arrived at Mount Wutai in 736 CE accompanied by another monk. The pair stopped at the Qingliang Temple. Hoping to find the place where Mañjuśrī dwelt Daoyi wandered the mountain slopes alone. According to the *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, he thought to himself, “[I have] renounced secular life [and become a monk] in the age of the Latter Dharma, [during this time] the wise conceal [their] traces. Only this Mount [Wu]tai is a holy realm (shengjie 聖境)” T.2099.1113(a). According to both the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, as he wandered Daoyi met an old monk (laoseng 老僧) who had a rustic manner and was accompanied by the youth Jueyi 覺一. Zanning describes the encounter:

...[t]he youth called to [Dao]yi and asked him to enter the monastery to the east to drink tea. Thereupon they entered the monastery and worshipped at the halls. [Daoyi] saw a great pavilion with a height of three stories and nine bays wide all together. It was gold colored and it shone brightly in his eyes. The old monk sent [Dao]yi away to return in the morning because the mountain was cold and it was difficult to dwell there. When the monk-pilgrim took one hundred steps and turned to look, the only thing he saw was a mountain grove. Thereupon he knew this was a conjured temple 化寺 T.2061.843(c).

In the gazetteer rendering, prior to entering the conjured Jinge Temple, Daoyi had another encounter with this old monk astride an elephant T.2099.1113(a,b). Though
neither text explicitly identifies the stranger, the Guang Qingliang zhuan regularly refers to the figure as the “great sage” (dasheng 大聖), one of Mañjuśrī’s appellations T.2099.1113(c). The gazetteer entry concludes with the statement that Daoyi returned to Chang’an where he reported these experiences to the throne and records that in the first year of the Dali era (766) construction began on the monastery under Taizong’s 太宗 (r. 626-649) patronage. The Song gaoseng zhuan gives a more detailed account of the building project that ends with the statement that upon its completion Amoghavajra received an appointment there T.2061.844(a). I discuss the Jinge Temple’s construction in the final section of this chapter.

4.4.iii Records of Fazhao’s Entry into the Conjured Zhulin Temple

Tradition holds that a series of visions precipitated Fazhao’s journey to Mount Wutai. In 767, three years before he arrived there, the Zhulin Temple and the Foguang Temple appeared in his gruel bowl. Sometime later, the Huayan Temple manifested in Fazhao’s dish. In 769 the people of Hengzhou observed Amitābha Buddha, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra with their attendants above his place of practice. An old man then appeared before the cleric and encouraged him to journey to Mount Wutai. According to both the Song gaoseng zhuan and the Guang Qingliang zhuan, when Fazhao arrived at Mount Wutai the scene was just as it had appeared in his gruel bowl.

141 At this time the ruler was Daizong 代宗 (762-779) and not, as the text purports, Taizong.
Like Daoyi, Wuzhuo, and Shengying before him, Fazhao happened upon a conjured temple at Mount Wutai while he was walking alone. Tradition holds that when he set out from the Foguang Temple in pursuit of a strange light that had appeared before him, Fazhao met two youths, Sudhana 善財 and Nānda 難陀, who led him through a golden gate and into a splendid monastery. A golden billboard identified the place as “The Great Sage’s Zhulin Temple 大聖竹林之寺” T.2099.1114(b). Once inside the monk met Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra with their retinues. The cleric inquired as to what form of practice best suited the latter era of the dharma (modai). According to the Song gaoseng zhuan, Mañjuśrī replied that the remembrance of the Buddha’s name, nianfo 念佛, was most appropriate for the period T.2061.844(b). The counterpart to this scene in the Guang Qingliang zhuan, though lengthier, is built around the same issue: how does one practice in the latter era? T.2099.1114(b,c). Fazhao then toured the temple’s extensive grounds and ate fruits in a marvelous grove before returning to reverence the bodhisattvas. As he prostrated before them, the entire scene vanished.

According to tradition, this was not the monk’s sole encounter with Mañjuśrī. As I mentioned above, records of Fazhao’s life and career purport that Buddhapāla appeared before Fazhao at the Jingang Grotto and led him into the cavern where he met Mañjuśrī. Several years later in 777, the cleric went with a group to the East Terrace where the Bodhisattva appeared astride a blue lion. A reference to the

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142 Sudhana appears as Mañjuśrī’s disciple in the Avatamsaka sūtra in which he is Mañjuśrī’s disciple. The significance of Nānda here is more opaque. As I discuss below, a six-statue set preserved in Japan does include both figures with Mañjuśrī and three other attendants.
Zhulin Temple in the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* establishes that an earthly replica of the conjured version Fazhao visited stood at Mount Wutai when Ennin arrived there in the mid-ninth century (DBZ 113: 232). In 2009 when I visited the temple, portraits of both Ennin and Fazhao were displayed at the monastery.

### 4.4.iv Records of Wuran’s Entry into the Conjured Fusheng Temple

Finally, tradition holds that the monk Wuran entered a sixth conjured temple: the conjured Fusheng Temple T.2099.1116(a-c). Zanning and Yanyi classify Wuran’s hagiography differently than they do other tales of conjured temples. In the gazetteer, Wuzhuo, Daoyi, Shenying, and Fazhao’s stories constitute individual chapters that appear together with five other records of Maṇjuśrī’s manifestations in the middle volume of the text. In the *Song gaoseng zhuan* Zanning put these four biographies together in the *gantong* 感通 “miraculous response” section, one of ten divisions into which he, following the example of his predecessors Huijiao and Daoxuan, divided the text. As I discussed in chapter two, the title refers to the response of buddhas and bodhisattvas to the conditions of sentient beings. Writing about Shenying’s hagiography, Birnbaum explains that the monks grouped together under the heading *gantong* were “valued in medieval China not only as saintly persons, but also as living confirmations of the vibrant reality for which the various scriptures have been born” (Birnbaum 1986, 137). Viewed from this angle, tales of conjured temples not only explain the type of place Mount Wutai is but they further

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143 Ennin states that Fazhao practiced the samādhi of the rememberance of the Buddha’s name (nianfo sanmei 念佛三昧) here (DBZ 113:232).

144 The later *Qinding Qingliang shan zhi* classifies this same group of biographies under the related heading *linggan* 灵感 “spiritual response.”
suggest the sort of relationship the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī has with his devotees. Records of conjured temples assert Mañjuśrī responded to the mountain-pilgrims’ devotion by opening ordinarily inaccessible realms to them. The monks in turn became vehicles through which the dharma was amplified when their hagiography was transmitted and the replicas of the temples they observed were constructed at the site.

Though the Song gaoseng zhuan and Guang Qingliang zhuan claim that Wuran—like Daoyi, Fazhao, Shenying, and Wuzhuo—entered into a conjured temple, his hagiography appears in the section of these texts devoted to self-immolators. In the Song gaoseng zhuan, Zanning classifies Wuran’s biography in the yishen 遺身 group, a term referring to “[those who] abandoned their body.” Yanyi places the record of his life in the chapter on “Monks and Laity who abandoned their bodies for the way” (wangshen xundao sengsu 亡身徇道僧俗) where it is the first of several biographies about self-immolators, some of whom, like Wuran, ended their lives by torching their bodies. The classification of Wuran’s story suggests that he was better remembered for the manner of his death rather than events that purportedly transpired earlier in his career.

Tradition holds that before coming to Mount Wutai in the seventh year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 era (785-805), Wuran knew of the Avataṃsaka sūtra claim that Mañjuśrī dwelled at Mount Qingliang and was familiar with the tale of Buddhapāla’s entry into the Jingang Grotto T.2099.1116(a,b); T.2061.855(c). When he arrived at the mountain, the cleric stopped at the Shanzhu Pavilion Cloister (Shanzhu geyuan
善住閣院) from which he set out eastward of the Middle Terrace. There he suddenly came upon a temple with a placard reading “Fusheng” 福生 T.2099.1116(b); T.2061.855(c). Inside Wuran saw approximately ten thousand Indian monks and among them was Mañjuśrī in the form of a monk T.2099.1116(b); T.2061.855(c). The Bodhisattva told Wuran that he had karmic affinities with the mountain and instructed him to make offerings to sentient beings there. Then the conjured temple and Indian monks disappeared. Wuran followed the Bodhisattva’s instruction and for every one million individuals he fed Wuran marked the feat by burning one of his fingers. In the Kaicheng 開成 era (836-840), Wuran addressed the monastic assembly before departing. With the help of a disciple, Wuran immolated himself in the night. His remains were interred in a stūpa south of Mount Wutai’s Mount Fanxian 梵仙 (Indian Immortal).

Allusions to the Buddhapāla legend in Wuran and Fazhao’s hagiographies like references to the Avataṃsaka sūtra in these materials demonstrate how earlier accounts of Mount Wutai determined later visitors’ itineraries and shaped their expectations about the site. Like Wuzhuo and Buddhapāla before them, Fazhao and Wuran travelled to the Jingang Grotto to observe the traces of Mañjuśrī’s presence at Mount Wutai, perhaps hoping to obtain a vision of the Bodhisattva or gain entry to the niche’s hidden recesses as their predecessors had done. The stūpa to which the final lines of Wuran’s hagiographies refer indicate that his remains may have become an object of devotion on the Middle Terrace. Like the Gu Qingliang zhuan record of the hunter who obtained transcendence by consuming chrysanthemums
at Mount Fanxian, the account of Wuran’s miraculous encounter with Mañjuśrī and his auto-cremation contributed to the sense that this site merited ritual attention.

4.5 Mount Wutai’s Portrayal in Tales of Conjured Temples

While content and emphasis differentiate them one from the next, *Guang Qingliang zhuan* tales of conjured temples share at least three points in common. The first of these is the notion that Mount Wutai is a significant place because it is a portal to Mañjuśrī’s Pure Land where teachings and visions of the Bodhisattva can be obtained. Second, these records recount Mañjuśrī’s manifestations in a form entirely absent from pre-eighth century accounts of the site. In addition to accounts of the Bodhisattva’s appearance in disguise, familiar from the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and other early texts, tales of conjured temples describe encounters with the Bodhisattva astride a lion and with a retinue. Finally, tales of conjured temples associate Mount Wutai’s importance with the era of dharmic decline framing the site as the sole locale at which individuals can obtain visions and teachings in the period following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāna. After examining each of these topics individually, in the final section of this chapter I will move on to suggest their significance to our understanding of how and for whom representations of the mountain’s importance may have “worked” in the Tang and Song dynasties.

4.5.i Mount Wutai in Tales of Conjured Temples:

Mañjuśrī’s Pure Land

Like the story of Buddhapāla and the Jingang Grotto to which several of these records refer, tales of conjured temples narrate the entry of individual cleric’s into
spectacular realms that are ordinarily hidden from view. The records describe the extraordinary quality of these places in great detail and abound with references to rare jewels, especially lapis lazuli and gold. The Song gaoseng zhuan biography of Daoyi, for example, states that the conjured pavilion he observed was three stories high and measured nine bays, was gold in color and glittered and glistened in the monk’s eyes T.2061.843(c). Yanyi and Zanning write that Shenying saw, among other things, a Tower of the Benevolent King who protects the Nation adorned with jade images, a many-jeweled stūpa, and a four storied Virtue and Merits gate (gonde men 功德門) that seemed to be the work of the divine (shengong 神工) T.2061.843(a); T.2099.1112(c). The Song gaoseng zhuan makes a similar claim about the Bore Temple’s construction: “[Wu]zhuo saw all the things on the ground were of lapis lazuli and the temple passages and verandas in every case shone of gold. This was not a place created by human hands” T.2061.836(c). References to magnificent jewels and the structures’ golden color like these bring the temples’ splendor to the fore. They suggest, moreover, an overlap between stories of the Five Terrace Mountain and scriptural as well as visual portrayals of Mañjuśrī’s Pure Land.

To audiences familiar with Buddhist scripture, these descriptions of conjured temples may have recalled depictions of the Bodhisattva’s Pure Land that associate him with the seven jewels 七寶 (sapta-ratna), especially lapis lazuli 琉璃 (vaiḍūrya) and gold. The Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra, for example, frequently mentions these precious materials. The sūtra begins by describing an orb of light that became a seven-storied gold terrace when it reached Mañjuśrī’s abode. His house, according
to the text, subsequently: “was naturally transformed into five hundred lotus flowers with seven jewels, as round as carriage wheels, with silvery white stems, leaves of yellow gold, corollas of emerald and sapphire, and stamens of real pearls in a variety of colors” (Cartelli 2002, 40-41). Elsewhere Śākyamuni describes the Bodhisattva’s birth to Bhadrapāla in the following way: “his room transformed into a lotus flower, and he issued from the right flank of his mother. His body was the color of purple gold...[a] seven-jeweled parasol accompanied him, shielding his head” (Cartelli 2002, 42). The sūtra also purports that Mañjuśrī changed himself into an image made of lapis lazuli and claims that:

[w]hoever thinks diligently of the image of Wenshu [Mañjuśrī], and thinks of the Dharma of the image of Wenshu, will think foremost of the image of lapis lazuli. Whoever thinks of the image of lapis lazuli will become as I have described above [they will do away with sins, be continually reborn in the buddha families, and be protected by the Bodhisattva] (Cartelli 2002, 44).

This symmetry between a scriptural source and the depiction of Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai in a narrative is the first of many I will identify in this chapter.

One name for Mañjuśrī’s Pure Land is the Golden-hued Pure Land (jinse shijie 金色世界). While multiple references to the conjured temples’ golden color in stories of conjured temples imply that Wuzhuo and his clerical contemporaries gained access to this realm at Mount Wutai, the Song gaoseng zhuan biography of Fazhao draws this connection explicitly. According to Zanning, one day while he was practicing alone a mysterious old man materialized before Fazhao and addressed him as follows: “you previously made a vow to go to the golden-hued realm to make venerative offerings to the great sage. Why have you now not gone?” T.2061.844(a). Fazhao had earlier made a vow to visit Mount Wutai and the implication here is that
the mountain and the Pure Land are one and the same place. In the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*, the ninth-century cleric Ennin, further, states “this [site] is Mount Qingliang, the Golden-hued Pure Land (ciji qingliang shan jinse shijie 此即清凉山金色世界)” (DBZ 113: 228). References to the golden gate at the conjured Zhulin Temple’s entryway and the temple’s golden floors, bridge, and name plaque in the hagiography indicate that when he finally visited the mountain Fazhao entered into Mañjuśrī’s golden-hued realm T.2099.1114(b); T.2061.844(b). The golden pavilion Daoyi observed and the golden floors of the conjured Bore Temple Wuzhuo entered convey the same point.

It is not only scripture and story that suggest a link between the mountain and the Bodhisattva’s Pure Land. Visual sources also make this point. A second name for Mañjuśrī’s territory or Buddha field (*fotu 像土, buddhaksetra*), as Dorothy Wong explains in her study of the Mount Wutai mural in Dunhuang Cave 61, is the Blue Lapis Lazuli World (*Qing liuli shijie 青琉璃世界*) (Wong 1994, 33). This appellation appears on the mid-tenth century mural above the central peak, near the Jinge Temple and Qingliang Temple. The inscription implies, again, that the site is “a cosmos in which a buddha, or a bodhisattva of the tenth stage (in this case Mañjuśrī), exerts his spiritual influence and preaches to sentient beings (Wong 1994, 33). References to lapis lazuli in tales of conjured temples operate in the same fashion.

The establishment of earthly counterparts to the extraordinary temples of gold and lapis lazuli that Wuzhuo and other clerics entered at the mountain, then, served as the means by which this Pure Land, initially observed by a few individuals,
became visible to all Mount Wutai pilgrims. Attention to architectural design in the stories, such as the following record of Shenying’s time at the mountain, is best understood in the context of this later development. According to the *Guang Qingliang zhuang*:

there was a triple-gate thirteen bays wide, and within the gate-building there were two side quarters, including a lodging for traveling officials and a hall for religious practice, also having (images of) Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and their retinue. Outside the triple-gate, there was a diagram showing the lineage-relationships of the ten (principal) temples of Mount Wu-t’ai T.2099.1113(a) (Birnbaum 1986, 128-129).145

Detailed descriptions such as this one, which abound in Song period records of conjured temples, confirmed that earthly structures replicated the buildings Mañjuśrī manifested before the monks.146

**4.5.ii Mount Wutai in Tales of Conjured Temples:**

**Representations of Mañjuśrī**

Descriptions of the Bodhisattva in accounts of conjured temples also reveal similarities between the stories and art. Like the *Gu Qingliang zhuang*, which depicted Mañjuśrī’s manifestations as a cleric and a maiden, accounts of conjured temples recount the Bodhisattva’s appearance in disguise. All but one tale describes Mañjuśrī’s in the form of an elderly stranger or a monk. According to both the *Guang Qingliang zhuang* and the *Song gaoseng zhuang*, Daoyi met an old monk (*laoseng* 老僧)

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145 I wonder, might these have been the same ten temples that were repaired at Emperor Taizong’s behest in 980? I discuss this event on page 163 below.

146 These details are, as I discuss in “Tales of Conjured Temples in Qing period Gazetteers,” noticeably absent from Qing gazetteers. Perhaps this is because the *Song gaoseng zhuang* and *Guang Qingliang zhuang* descriptions of the site’s layout no longer matched the versions of the Zhulin, Jinge, and Jingang Grotto-Bore Temples that stood at Qing period Wutai.
with a rustic manner on the mountain. Though neither text names the cleric, the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* regularly refers to the figure as the “great sage,” one of Mañjuśrī’s appellations T.2099.1113(c). Tradition holds that Wuran and Wuzhuo also met the Bodhisattva in the guise of mysterious monk. In Wuran’s case Mañjuśrī appeared in the conjured Fusheng Temple surrounded by thousand of other Indian clerics T.2061.856(a); T.2099.1116(b). As for Wuzhuo, the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* holds that he met four elderly strangers. Context implies that at least some of these figures were Mañjuśrī. When he was dismissed from the conjured Bore Temple, for instance, the Bodhisattva appeared astride his lion in a white cloud and surrounded by ten thousand attendants at the very place where the cleric had initially met the man with ox T. 2099.1112(b).

Accounts of Fazhao and Shenying’s miraculous meetings are more ambiguous. The *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and *Song gaoseng zhuan* assert that before Fazhao arrived at the mountain an aged man appeared in his place of practice and encouraged him to journey to the site T.2061.844(a). The gazetteer and *Song gaoseng zhuan* do not clarify the relationship between this mysterious stranger and Mañjuśrī who Fazhao subsequently meets in an immediately recognizable form within the conjured Zhulin Temple. The record of Shenying is still more opaque. Inside the conjured Fahua Cloister the monk saw statues of Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and their retinues T.2061.843(a); T.2099.1113(a). As he prepared

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147 These are the conjured Qingliang Temple’s abbot, the aged stranger who Wuzhuo met in the Huayan Temple, the old man leading an ox who invited him into the conjured Bore Temple, and the old man who invited Wuzhuo into the Jingang Grotto.
to leave the place, he saw a group of mysterious monks T.2061.843(a); T.2099.1113(a). Shenying thus suspected he was in a conjured realm (huajing 化境).

Significantly, Huixiang’s *Gu Qingliang zhuàn* does not describe Mañjuśrī in an immediately recognizable form. The sources say very little about the way the Bodhisattva looks but often state that he rides a lion and is accompanied by attendants. Recounting Shenying’s experience in the Fahua Cloister, we read only that the Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra statues were fashioned from jade T.2061.843(a); T.2099.1113(a). In Wuzhuo’s hagiography the Bodhisattva rode a lion above a five-colored rainbow that developed out of the clouds. He appeared together with multiple bodhisattvas T.2061.837(b). Describing the scene that manifested above Fazhao's place of practice in 769 CE, the *Song gaoseng zhuàn* reports only that the people of Hengzhou observed Amitābha Buddha, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra together with their retinues there T.2061.844(a). Fazhao’s hagiographies also state that within the conjured temple Mañjuśrī sat on the west and Samantabhadra on the east T.2061.844(b); T.2099.1114(b). They further claim that

...on the thirteenth day of the ninth month of the twelfth year in the Dali era (777), [Fa]zhao with eight disciples saw four white lights at the East Terrace. Then there was a strange, dense cloud. [When] the cloud opened they saw a five colored light cover it. Inside the light there was a round halo of red [surrounding] Mañjuśrī riding a blue haired lion. The many people all saw this clearly. Then the dispersing clouds slightly dropped snow and the perfect five-colored light filled the mountain valley T.2061.845(a).

Tradition holds that Wuran and Daoyi only met Mañjuśrī in disguise.

A half century ago, Étienne Lamotte described the Bodhisattva’s “standard form” in the following terms:
Il apparaît sous la forme d’un bodhisattva religieux, coiffé du pañcāciraka, composé de cinq mèches de cheveux ou d’une tiare à cinq pointes, ce qui lui vaut le titre de Pañcācīra. Il tient dans la main droite le glaive (khadga) qui tranche toute ignorance, et dans la main gauche le livre (pustaka) qui recèle toute connaissance. Il a le lion (simha) pour siege et pour monture. L’épithète que les texts bouddhiques lui attribuent le plus souvent est celle de Kumarabhuta “Jeune homme” ou “Prince royal” (Lamotte 1960, 2).

Images of the Bodhisattva astride his lion—perhaps in the manner that Lamotte describes here—are commonplace both in ninth, tenth, and eleventh-century records of Mount Wutai and art from this period.148

Similarities between the visual representations of Mañjuśrī that I introduced in chapter two and the Bodhisattva’s portrayal in tales of conjured temples suggest to me that story traditions preserved in the Guang Qingliang zhuan and Song gaoseng zhuan were in conversation with these visual materials.149 The reference to the blue lion on which the Bodhisattva appears in Fazhao’s hagiography, for instance, recalls the early Tang image of Mañjuśrī with Samantabhadra preserved in Dunhuang cave 331. Allusions to the clouds beneath the Bodhisattva in records of Wuzhuo’s life and career suggest a scene similar to the one portrayed in Dunhuang cave 172. Tenth century woodblock prints showing the Bodhisattva on a lion with attendants, studied by Wong (1994) and Lin (2009) among others, establish that this depiction was well known beyond the mountain’s borders at the beginning of

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148 Mahāyāna literature is replete with references to Mañjuśrī’s manifestations in the form of a young prince. The Mañjuśrī dharma ratnagarbha dhāranī sūtra and the Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra, for instance, call the Bodhisattva “Mañjuśrī Prince of Dharma” T.463.480(c) and the “Youth Mañjuśrī” 文殊师利童子 T.1185.791(c). Yet I know of no references to the Bodhisattva’s appearance astride a lion and with two or four attendants in these early sūtras.

149 See a discussion of this topic above on page 61.
the Song period. It is Ennin’s *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* that indicates this representation of Mañjuśrī appeared at Mount Wutai before 840.

The first detailed description of a Mañjuśrī statue at Mount Wutai appears in an entry Ennin composed about the Huayan Temple (DBZ 113: 233). In it the Japanese monk recounts the story of an image’s origins. According to Ennin, there was an artisan who endeavored on six occasions to create a representation of the Bodhisattva but every time the object cracked just before completion. On his seventh attempt the artist prayed that if the Bodhisattva were dissatisfied with the image he would appear. “He opened his eyes and saw Mañjuśrī riding on a gold-colored lion manifest before him. After a while (Mañjuśrī) mounted on a cloud of five colors, rose into the air and flew away” (DBZ 113: 233).150 When the artisan created an image that corresponded to the vision the final product at last remained whole.

This *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* record indicates not only that depictions of the Bodhisattva astride his lion were extant at ninth-century Mount Wutai but it also suggests that this was one of multiple renderings of the Bodhisattva in circulation during this period.151 The story implies that among these possibilities, the form in which Mañjuśrī appeared to the Huayan Temple artisan was the one in which he himself wished to be portrayed. It is tempting to speculate that this narrative, and

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150 Reischauer translates this passage slightly differently (Reischauer 1955, 233).

151 Following his return to Japan, Ennin commissioned the creation of images of Mañjuśrī astride his lion and accompanied by attendants that, Pei-jung Wu argues, are related to the somewhat later Dunhuang paintings of Mañjuśrī with a lion. Pei-jung Wu dates these Dunhuang images to the Five Dynasties (907-960) period or the Song. According to Wu’s dissertation, small-scale illustrations of Mount Wutai legends in the painting’s lower sections and references to the mountain in captions indicate its relationship to the famous site (Wu 2002, 84).
the community in which it circulated, is actively promoting this particular rendering of the Bodhisattva astride his lion vis-à-vis other imaginings of the deity.\textsuperscript{152}

The heading under which the story appears in the eleventh-century Guang Qingliang zhuan redaction of the tale lends credence to this claim. It is titled “Ansheng’s sculpturing of the Bodhisattva’s True Form” 安生塑真容菩薩 T.2099.1110(a). The term “true form” (zhenrong 眞容) implies that the Mañjuśrī statue that the Huayan Temple artist (here named Ansheng) produced is accurate in a manner that alternate images of the Bodhisattva are not.\textsuperscript{153} Significantly, the later version of the tale gives it a monastic cast that is not a component of the Nittō guhō junrei gyōki telling. The Guang Qingliang zhuan credits the monk Fayun 法雲, rather than the artisan, with conceiving of and directing the statue’s production. This difference is characteristic of the gazetteer as a whole, which is dominated by clerics.

References to the Bodhisattva’s “true form”—almost entirely absent from the Gu Qingliang zhuan—invite the question: what other depictions of Mañjuśrī were extant during this period?\textsuperscript{154} One possibility is that the Bodhisattva’s appearance as an elderly stranger was the subject of art as well as stories. Scriptural precedent for this vision of Mañjuśrī, as I discussed in chapter two, appears in the Mañjuśrī

\textsuperscript{152} I am grateful to Dr. Patricia Berger for suggesting this interpretation to me.

\textsuperscript{153} According to the gazetteer, this image was subsequently installed in a Zhenrong Mu Cloister 眞容目院 on the Huayan Temple grounds T.2099.1110(a).

\textsuperscript{154} One of the few Gu Qingliang zhuan records that uses the term “true form” (zhenrong 眞容) concerns meditation master Yan 儘禪師. The gazetteer purports that he installed an image of a deity’s “true form” at the site but says nothing about the figure’s appearance T. 2098.1095(b).
parinirvāna sūtra. The text claims that the Bodhisattva assumes multiple forms in response to his devotee’s differing needs and capacities. Documents preserved in the Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozhi ji indicate that the Tantric master Amoghavajra endeavored to have images of the Bodhisattva in the guise of a monk installed throughout the dynasty. In 769 he petitioned the Tang court to have Mañjuśrī statues enshrined in all temple refectories. This practice represented a major break with tradition in which images of the arhat Piṇḍola bhāradvāja’s 賓頭盧頗羅堕 (Bintuolu poluoduo) were customarily placed in dining halls. The move formed part of Amoghavajra’s larger attempt to promote the Mount Wutai Bodhisattva cult and esoteric Buddhism more generally. The Nittō guhō junrei gyōki establishes that Amoghavajra’s project was carried out in at least some contexts: it includes a well-known passage in which Ennin expresses surprise when he sees the Bodhisattva rather than the arhat installed in a monastery (DBZ 113: 231). It may be that stories of the Bodhisattva’s manifestation before the Huayan Temple artisan claimed for renderings of the Bodhisattva astride his lion primacy over alternate depictions of this type.

Another story of Mañjuśrī’s manifestation at Mount Wutai suggests interactions between miracle tales about Mount Wutai and visual representations of the Bodhisattva in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. It is the well-known story of Mañjuśrī’s appearance at a vegetarian feast. Like tales of conjured temples and the account of the artisan’s vision of the Bodhisattva, this miracle tale appears

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155 Fazang’s 法藏 (643-712) commentary on the Fanwang jing 梵網經 (Brahma net sūtra) indicates that Mahāyāna temples already installed Mañjuśrī in the refectory in the eighth century (Yifa 2002, 71).
the *Guang Qingliang zhuan*'s second volume in which it constitutes the eighth chapter. The narrative revolves around a poor woman who attends a vegetarian feast convened at the Dafu Lingjiu (Huayan) Temple sometime after the mid-sixth century. According to Yanyi, she arrived there with two children and followed by a dog (T. 2099 1109b27-c02). After obtaining food for herself, the children, and the dog, the woman then asked a monk for a portion to feed her unborn child. The monk in charge of the food refused, exclaiming, “You unwearyingly seek the monastics’ food! If the [child in your] belly is not yet born, why are you getting food [for it]?” T.2099.1109(c). The text continues,

> When the destitute woman was scolded she left the ground and instantly transformed her body into Mañjuśrī’s form. The dog was the lion. The children were Sudhana and the King Khotan. A five colored cloud and mist clouded over pervading the sky T.2099.1109(c).

After pronouncing a *gātha*, the Bodhisattva disappeared leaving the assembled people distraught. A stūpa commemorating these events was established and, henceforth, the noble and rich were not distinguished from the poor and base at Mount Wutai.

Comparing this *Guang Qingliang zhuan* rendering with an earlier *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* account of the tale illustrates how, once again, records of Mount Wutai’s past were adapted in ways that conformed to later depictions of the saint and site’s importance. The *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* is different from the eleventh-century text in two respects. The first of these reflects the central role that the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and contemporary texts assign male clerics. While the eleventh-century gazetteer purports that a monk conducted the feast, the protagonist in Ennin’s
ninth-century diary is an unnamed temple patron (shizhu 施主) (DBZ 113: 240-241). As I noted above, the Guang Qingliang zhuan story of the Bodhisattva’s appearance to the artisan similarly attributes the statue’s construction to a cleric (rather than the artisan who occupied center stage in the Japanese monk’s diary). In contrast to earlier sources that feature protagonists of all social statuses, male monastics dominate tales of conjured temples and the Guang Qingliang zhuan more broadly. Second, as Peijung Wu has noted, the Nittō guhō junrei gyōki mentions neither the dog nor the children (Wu 2002, 105-107).

The different characters that appear in the Guang Qingliang zhuan and Nittō guhō junrei gyōki versions of this tale reflect changes in iconography. Beginning in the eighth century the Bodhisattva came to be depicted as one of a triad of figures showing Mañjuśrī astride a lion and flanked by a child and a groom. Mount Wutai’s Nanchan Temple 南禪寺, built in 782 CE, and the Foguang Temple 佛光寺, erected in 857 CE, house statuary sets of this type(Wu 2002, 90-91). A tenth-century mural in Dunhuang Cave 220 and woodblock prints from this period and found at Dunhuang, as well as a print sealed inside the famous Seiryōji Śākyamuni’s statue in 983 also portray the Bodhisattva in this way (Wu 2002, 96-97). With the possible exception of the Nanchan Temple images, all these examples post-date Ennin’s arrival at Mount Wutai, as well as the version of the Huayan Temple miracle tale that he repeats in his diary. In fact, it was not until the eleventh-century in the Guang Qingliang zhuan story from which I quoted above that these attendants were
explicitly identified as Sudhana and Yutianwang, the King of Khotan. The appearance of three figures (rather than the pregnant woman alone) in the Guang Qingliang zhuang redaction of the tale alerts us to the interplay between visual representations of the saint and textual accounts of the mountain's past that took place between the ninth and eleventh centuries during which time the cast of characters in a well-known story expanded in accordance with changes in iconography.

4.5.iii Mount Wutai in Tales of Conjured Temples:

The Era of Dharmic Decline

While descriptions of the Bodhisattva in tales of conjured temples conform to his portrayal in art, multiple references to the present era being one of dharmic decline reflect interaction between the sūtras and stories about Mount Wutai. Though the notion that following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāna access to the fruits of practice diminishes in stages has roots in the sixth century, the Gu Qingliang zhuang and other pre-eighth century accounts of the site make but only one allusion to Mount Wutai’s importance in this period. In contrast, tales of conjured temples are frequently set in the era. In the Guang Qingliang zhuang record of Wuzhuo’s entry into the conjured Qingliang Temple, for example, the cleric tells the disguised Bodhisattva that because it is the second era of the dharma’s decline (xiangji 像季)

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156 While the Bodhisattva’s affiliation with Sudhana finds scriptural precedent in the Avatamsaka sūtra, the King of Khotan’s association with Mañjuśrī remains obscure. Peijung Wu hypothesizes that the bodhisattva’s veneration in Khotan might explain his representation here (Wu 2002, 107).

157 The term mofa 末法 appears in the Nanyue si da chanshi li shiyuan wen 南嶽思大禪師立誓願文 attributed to Nanyue Huisi 南嶽慧思 (515-77) T.1933.786(c) (Tsiang 1996, 254). The Gu Qingliang zhuang reference appears in conjunction with stories about Kāśyapa Buddha to which I refer above on page 28.
people practice the *vinaya* (law) and *śīla* (ethics) according to their [presumably limited] abilities T.2099.1111(c). According to the gazetteer, when Daoyi first wandered on Mount Wutai’s slopes he considered the obstacles associated with having renounced the secular life in the age of the latter *dharma* T.2099.1113(a). The *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang zhuan* records of Fazhao’s life and career depict the monk asking Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra how one best practices in this period T.2061.844(b); T.2099.1114(b,c).

The sixth-century *Mañjuśrī parinirvāṇa sūtra* and the *Mañjuśrī dharma ratnagarbha dhāranī sūtra* translated into Chinese by Bodhiruci connect the Bodhisattva’s appearance at Mount Wutai to the period following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāṇa. The first text does not mention *mofa* or *modai* specifically but does have Śākyamuni announcing, “four hundred fifty years after my final passing, (Mañjuśrī) will go to a snowy mountain and—for five hundred transcendents—he will extensively proclaim the teachings of twelve divisions of the (Mahāyāna) scriptures T.463.480(c) (Sen 2003, 77). The *Mañjuśrī dharma ratnagarbha dhāranī sūtra* situates Mañjuśrī’s appearance at a five-peaked mountain in northeastern Mahā Čīna (Great China) with a “woesome age” (*eshi zhi shi* 惡世之時) and purports that the Bodhisattva’s *dhāraṇī* is suited to practice in the final age (*houmoshi* 後末世) when the Buddha’s teachings disappear as evil teachings prevail and humans face all form of calamity T.1185.791(c). The notion that Mañjuśrī dwells at the mountain in a period after Śākyamuni’s parinirvāṇa and during a woesome age may have given rise to the position put forward in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and *Song gaoseng zhuan* that Mount Wutai is the locale at which the Bodhisattva makes
teachings and visions available during the period of *mofa* or *modai*, a major theme in records of conjured temples.

### 4.6 Historical perspectives

There is considerable overlap in the way that tales of conjured temples depict Mount Wutai’s significance. In the previous pages I have attempted to establish that the portrayal of the mountain as an access point to Mañjuśrī’s Pure Land where the teachings can be obtained in the period of *dharmic* decline accords with scriptural visions of the site and saint. I have endeavored, at the same time, to tease out links between visual depictions of Mañjuśrī and the Bodhisattva’s representation together with his lion-mount and attendants in tales of conjured temples. In the final section of this chapter I want to suggest what significance these stories, as well as the sūtras and art with which they are related, may have carried beginning in the eighth-century when replicas of conjured temples were first erected at the mountain. During this period, the majority of these structures were recognized with official plaques signaling their status as imperially-sponsored temples, a designation about which I will say more presently. In the following pages I will propose that stories asserting that a number of officially-recognized temples are also the counterparts of conjured structures manifested by Mañjuśrī legitimatized their privileged status vis-à-vis unrecognized monasteries.

#### 4.6.i Imperial Patronage of Conjured Temples at Mount Wutai

A memorial that the Tantric master Amoghavajra submitted to the throne before 776, when read alongside Ennin’s *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*, reveals that
counterparts to half of the conjured temples described in Yanyi's gazetteer were the object of court patronage beginning during Emperor Xuanzong's 玄宗 (r. 712-756) reign. While the former text names five temples Emperor Xuanzang recognized with official plaques in the mid-Tang, the latter text establishes that the Bore Cloister was one of twelve or fifteen lesser structures that stood on the Huayan Temple's grounds. In light of the Japanese monk's observations, we can read statements about the Huayan Temple as applying to the Bore Temple as well.

The following passage comes from a memorial that Amoghavajra presented to the throne in an attempt to garner funds for the Jinge Temple's completion. It is preserved in the *Daizongchao zeng sikong daban zheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozhiji* (The Collected Documents Pertaining to Amoghavajra) compiled by Amoghavajra's disciple during Dezong's 德宗 (r. 779-805) late eighth-century reign. In the following section of the lengthy text, Amoghavajra mentions the monk Daoyi, his entry into the conjured Jinge Temple and plaques that designated temples as officially-sponsored places of practice:

> As for the temple (mentioned) above [the Jinge Temple], the sage of yore (Emperor Xuanzang) inscribed an official plaque for it [yet it remains] incomplete. [This temple] was based on a temple that was Mañjuśrī's holy trace (*Wenshu shengji si* 文殊聖迹寺) that the Quzhou monk Daoyi saw when he arrived at Mount [Wu]tai in the twenty-fourth year of the Kaiyuan 開元 era (736). It was called the Jinge Cloister (Jinge yuan 金閣院). It had thirteen halls to accommodate the saṃgha. It is said that they numbered ten thousand. The towers, buildings, and gates were made of fine gold. [Daoyi] immediately submitted a drawing [of the structure] to the inner palace. Everyone under heaven wanted to see the Jinge Temple completed. Who

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158 In one version of the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* Ennin states that the Huayan Temple has twelve cloisters (DBZ 113: 232). He mentions the Bore Cloister 般若院 in the same entry (DBZ 113: 233). A second version of the text reports that the temple had fifteen cloisters (DBZ 113:230).
among the people doesn’t wish this?...Now at the numinous mountain (lingshan 靈山), Wutai, there are five temples with plaques. [These are the Qingliang, Huayan, Fougou, and Yuhua 玉華 Temples. [Construction on these] four temples was completed previously. Only the Jinge Temple, [just] this one [structure], is not yet complete T.2120.834(a).]

In his study of the Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng guanzhi sanzang heshang biaozhiji, Raffaello Orlando pointed out the ambiguity of this passage, noting that “it is not clear from the context of the memorial whether this monastery was built up from the remnants of a previously existing one, or whether it was built entirely from the start on the basis of a vision which Ch’an Master Tao-i had experienced when he had visited Mount Wu-t’ai during the reign of Hsüan-tsung.” There is good reason to favor the latter interpretation. In 766 CE Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 763-779)

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159 I have relied on Orlando’s translation here but have made changes to his rendering (Orlando 1981, 57-59).

160 Orlando highlights, in particularly, the ambiguity of both jian 见, and the phrase Wenshu shengyi si 文殊聖迹寺. Regarding the latter he explains, “it may mean that the site of the monastery was regarded as sacred because of some miraculous event connected with Mañjuśrī which had taken place there; it might also mean that some sacred relic was found there” (Orlando 1981, 57). In addition to Orlando’s hypothesis that if such a grand monastery stood at Mount Wutai then pre-736 sources would have mentioned it, there are at least two additional reasons to favor the latter interpretation. The reference to the Jinge Cloister’s ten thousand residents and the similarity between the phrase shengyi si 聖迹寺 and shengsi 聖寺 suggest to me that this passage refers specifically to the legend of Daoyi’s entry into a temple Mañjuśrī manifested at Mount Wutai. Rather than mere hyperbole, I think the statement that ten thousand people dwelled in the temple Daoyi observed is an allusion to the Avatāraśaka sūtra. Stories about another conjured temple include a nearly identical statement: the Song gaoseng zhuan and Guang Qingliang zhuang claim that the ninth-century monk Wuran encountered ten thousand monks within the conjured Fusheng Temple T.206 1.855(c); T.209 9.1116(b). I suspect that in the memorial and the hagiographies the presence of these figures confirmed that Daoyi entered into Mañjuśrī’s realm at Mount Wutai where, the Avatāraśaka sūtra claims, the Bodhisattva is present preaching to ten thousand attendants. Second, though this is the sole use of the phrase Wenshu shengyi si 文殊聖迹寺 with which I am familiar, there was considerable flexibility in the terminology with which Bukong’s forerunners and successors referred to the miraculous temples that appeared and vanished from Mount Wutai’s slopes. Shengyi si is quite close to shengsi 聖寺, a term with which Daoxuan referred to mysterious temples in his Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu. Alternately, the binom shengji 聖迹, holy trace, frequently appears in both Huixiang and Yanyi’s gazetteers and the phrase Wenshu shengji si could indicate the temple into which Daoyi entered was a holy trace of Mañjuśrī’s presence at the site.
approved Amoghavajra’s request. This document establishes that less than five years before Wuzhuo and then Fazhao entered conjured temples at Mount Wutai construction on the earthly counterpart to the Jinge Cloister in which Daoyi had met the Bodhisattva and ten thousand attendants was completed with imperial funds. It indicates, further, that four temples believed to replicate conjured structures—the Jinge Temple, Qingliang Temple, and Huayan Temple on the grounds of which would later stand the Bore Cloister—possessed official plaques. This object marked the monasteries as imperially-sponsored structures.

Kenneth Ch’en discusses the distinction between government or imperially-sponsored monasteries and their non-recognized counterparts in his “The Role of Buddhist Monasteries in T’ang Society.” He describes the first category of temples in the following manner:

[recognized or national temples were]...created by imperial edict and located all over the empire...The national monasteries were accorded preeminent status in their respective communities; they were inhabited by highly educated monks, the elite in the monastic community; and they were supported by funds from the imperial treasury (Ch’en 1976, 212).

Elsewhere Ch’en explains the circumstances of monasteries not recognized by the state writing that they:

...did not enjoy the preferred status of the recognized institutions. They were usually village temples, private hermitages, shrines, or sanctuaries, inhabited by monks who were ordained privately; they had little or no landed property or industrial installations to speak of. They were often the first ones to feel the blows of any movement directed against Buddhism (Ch’en 1964, 273).

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161 Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 763-779) approved the memorial on the second day of the fifth month in the first year of the Yongtai 永泰 era (766).
In the mid-Tang period, the temples that Amoghavajra named in his memorial had a special relationship to the throne and consequently enjoyed a privileged status vis-à-vis other non-recognized monasteries. Two centuries later in 980 four of these structures were among the ten temples repaired at emperor Taizong’s behest (Wang 1994, 76). These were the Zhulin, Jinge, Huayan and the Fahua Temple, now listed separately but which Ennin suggested had stood on the Dali Fahua Temple 大曆法華寺 grounds in 840 (DBZ 113: 243). Taizong also ordered repairs on the Zhenrong 真容, the Shouning 寿寧, the Xingguo 興國, the Mimi 秘密, the Lingjing 靈鏡, and the Daxian 大賢 Temples.

4.6.ii Stories about the Imperial Patronage of Temples

Tales of conjured temples make reference to the very type of plaques that Amoghavajra stated Emperor Xuanzong gave to five Mount Wutai temples. According to the Song gaoseng zhuan and Guang Qingliang zhuan, Wuran noticed a plaque (額) reading Fusheng 福生 outside the temple in which he met Mañjuśrī T.2061.855(c); T.2099.1116(b). Tradition holds that Fazhao saw a golden plaque before the Zhulin Temple stating “The Great Sage’s Zhulin Temple” T.2061.844(b); T.2099.1114(b). Similarly, Shenying purportedly saw a sign before the conjured Fahua Cloister giving its name T.2061.843(a); T.2099.1112(c). Finally, records of Wuzhuo’s life and career state that the cleric notice the Bore Temple was not

162 In 980 Emperor Taizong of the Tang also ordered Zhang Tingxun 張廷訓 to have a gold and copper statue of the Bodhisattva constructed. Wang Zhenping notes this occurred one year after Taizong’s conquest of the Beihan 北漢 (951-979). In the same year, Taizong sent Zhangrenzan 張仁贊 to Chengdu 成都 to make an image of Puxian 普賢 from copper and gold and renovate five temples at Emei shan 峨眉山 (Wang 1994, 76).
marked with a plate giving the site’s name T.2061.837(a). Though they make reference to the inscribed tablets marking temples as government or national monasteries, stories of conjured temples seem to suggest that the structure’s significance derives in large part from their intimate affiliation with Mañjuśrī. The notion that the Bodhisattva manifested a number of the temples before clerics at the mountain contributes to the sense that they are worthy of the imperial support they received in the form of goods, cash, and feasts.

Stories about ephemeral temples are not exclusive to Mount Wutai. In his “The story of the Zhulin monastery: biography, miracle story, and sacred places” Koichi Shinohara studies the record of an immortal or immortal’s temple (xiansi 仙寺) that a cleric entered at Mount Gu 鼓山 found in Daoxuan’s earlier Xu gaoseng zhuan. In contrast to the complementary relationship that seems to obtain between conjured temples and government-supported monasteries in the Mount Wutai context, this account of the Northern Qi monk Yuantong’s 圆通 life and career favorably compares the transcendent Zhulin Temple 竹林寺 to official monasteries, guansi 官寺 T.2060.647(c)-649(a). According to the biography, the monk entered the Zhulin Temple at the suggestion of an aged mysterious monk he encountered while wandering the mountain slopes. Once inside he met the old master who addressed him saying:

You reside in a government monastery 官寺. It is hard to give up the generous support you receive there. How could you lower yourself to our level? There is nothing in this monastery to see T.2060.648(b) (Shinohara,

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163 Daoxuan includes a second version of the story in his Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu T.2106.424(a,b).
The abbot allowed Yuantong to remain in the monastery for one night but told him if he wanted to stay there permanently he would need to have his name removed from the government temple's registry. The next day when Yuantong left, presumably to do just that, the place disappeared leaving the monk alone on the mountain peaks. No trace whatsoever remained of the Zhulin Temple. Like the conjured versions of temples that Wuzhuo and his contemporaries entered at Mount Wutai, the transcendent Zhulin Temple is an extraordinary place. Yet the abbot’s question to Yuantong seems to imply that even within its precincts an individual accustomed to the luxuries afforded monks who reside in state-sponsored temples sustained by the emperor’s “generous support” would remain unsatisfied. In contrast to the apparently harmonious relationship between ephemeral and worldly structures in the Guang Qingliang zhuan and Song gaoseng zhuan miracle tales, this Xu gaoseng zhuan story seems to favorably evaluate the transcendent structure next to which government sponsored sites are merely earthly complements to the “real thing.”

**Conclusions**

In this chapter I have endeavored to demonstrate that by the time of the Guang Qingliang zhuan’s compilation Mount Wutai’s importance was largely rooted in its connection to Mañjuśrī. In contrast to its seventh-century antecedent, which put forward a highly eclectic vision of the site’s significance, the eleventh-century gazetteer portrays the Bodhisattva’s presence as rendering the mountain worthy of devotion. In addition to tales of conjured temples, the records of Buddhapāla’s entry into the Jingang Grotto, Mañjuśrī’s manifestations as a pregnant woman at a
vegetarian feast and his appearance before the Huayan Temple artisan depict Mount Wutai as the place where clerics obtain visions and teachings. Frequent references to the current era being that of dharmic decline and the Bodhisattva’s portrayal astride a lion with attendants further differentiate the *Guang Qingliang zhuan, Song gaoseng zhuan*, and other post-eighth century sources from the first miracle tales about this place. The later representations of Mount Wutai’s significance reflect, in part, the convergence of artistic, sūtra, and story traditions between the seventh and eleventh centuries.

Variation between the record of the miraculous vision that attended a Huayan Temple statue’s creation and close study of the account of Wuzhuo’s entry into the conjured Qingliang Temple show that, in some instances, the mountain’s past was refashioned in accordance with this dominant understanding of Mount Wutai. In the first instance, the cleric Fayun replaced an unnamed lay artisan whom the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* initially credits with producing a statue of the Bodhisattva’s “true form.” In the second, Mañjuśrī assumes the role that the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* assigned court patrons. Rather than the Emperor Xiaowen, tales of conjured temples present the Bodhisattva as the catalyst for construction. In these later stories the grottos, celestial palaces, and other hidden landscapes of Huixiang’s gazetteer emerge as ephemeral temples that root the specialness Mount Wutai buildings in their affiliation with Mañjuśrī. In many instances the monasteries said to replicate conjured temples were the very ones that received imperial support in the Tang and Song dynasties and the stories I have examined in this chapter seem to offer a rationale for the privilege they enjoyed vis-à-vis non-recognized monasteries.
Up to this point in the dissertation I have focused my discussion on representations of Mount Wutai’s importance within the borders of China during the Tang and Song dynasties. Following Tansen Sen, I have attempted to show how the mountain’s construction as the hub of Bodhisattva veneration enabled practitioners originally situated on the Buddhist world’s periphery to create a sacred landscape in which Mount Wutai was the holy center. I have endeavored to stress, in particular, the role that the writing and refashioning of the mountain’s past played in this process. In the next two chapters I will turn my attention eastward to Heian and Kamakura Japan. Taking as my starting point two additional stories of miraculous building and Mount Wutai that circulated in tenth and thirteenth-century Japan I will attempt to show what the representation of Mount Wutai’s early importance accomplished for practitioners in this at once distant and intimately connected locale.
Chapter Five

Mount Wutai’s Depiction as the Object of International Pilgrimage

In the mounds of red dirt appears Seiryō 清涼
The rare sandalwood is bound and hidden.
How many wanderers search for the auspicious image?
Not knowing that the whole realm is true fragrance.\(^{164}\)

The above lines draw to a close the *Tōgoku kōsō den* 東國高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Eastern Country) biography of the monk Chōnen 奘然 (938-1016). A tenth-century pilgrim to Mount Wutai, Chōnen is best remembered for the marvelous statue that he brought back to Heian, Japan from Song, China. Tradition holds that this *Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō* 清涼寺釋迦如來像 is a replica of the very first Śākyamuni image that was fashioned during the Buddha’s lifetime.\(^{165}\) Chōnen is associated with both the statue and the founding of the Seiryōji 清涼寺 where it has stood for nearly one thousand years.

A testament to this site’s lasting popularity, I have chosen to begin with Kōsen Shōton’s 高泉性潡 (1633 – 1695) seventeenth-century poem for another

\(^{164}\) 紅塵堆裡現清涼 / 希世稀種日鎖藏 / 多少遊人覓瑞像 / 不知遍界是真香

\(^{165}\) The Udāyana story first appeared in the *Zuo fo xingxiang jing* 作佛形像經 (Scripture on the Production of Buddha Images T.692), a Chinese translation of an unknown Sanskrit text that Robert Sharf dates to the late Han (25-220 C.E.) or sometime soon thereafter (Sharf 1996). The earliest telling of the story details the Buddha’s responses to Udāyana’s questions about image making. The longer version of the story appears in the *Ekottarāgama* (T.125). It is the one most familiar today. It describes how Udāyana, longing for the Buddha while he is away preaching, commissioned artisans to make a sandalwood image of Śākyamuni.
reason: the allusion embedded in its first line introduces the triad of places with which this chapter is concerned. Most immediately, the poem refers to the Seiryōji which stands at Mount Atago’s foot on the northwestern reaches of today’s Kyōto. Seiryō, or Qingliang, is also an epithet for Mount Wutai in modern-day Shanxi province and the name of the Qingliang Temple, various versions of which have stood at the Five-Terrace Mountain since the early seventh-century. Rather than a simple overlap of names, in this chapter I demonstrate that the Seiryōji represented the culmination of Chōnen’s efforts to create a Japanese counterpart to Mount Wutai near Heian-kyō following his return from China in 986.

Studying records of Chōnen’s journey to Mount Wutai and accounts of his post-pilgrimage career has much to teach us about the way in which imaginings of Mount Wutai’s importance changed in Heian and Kamakura Japan. It reveals how the practice of envisioning Mount Wutai’s significance enabled Japanese Buddhists to create a local landscape and in doing so transform their understanding of Japan’s geographical and temporal situation vis-à-vis the wider Buddhist world. In the following pages I will compare Chōnen’s evaluation of Mount Wutai’s importance with the perspectives that later compilers of his hagiography expressed about this place. In contrast to early materials that frame the mountain as the center of the international Mañjuśrī cult, later texts depict Mount Wutai as a hub of Mañjuśrī devotion. Turning to a study of the cleric’s post-pilgrimage endeavors I will then call

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166 According to the text, Tōgoku Kōsōden compiler Kōsen Shōton penned this poem following a visit to the Seiryōji. The fact that the material does not appear in Kokan Shiren’s 虎関師練 (1278–1346) Genkō Shakusho 元亨釋書 (Buddhist Compilation of the Genkō era)—on which much of the Tōgoku Kōsōden is based—lends some credibility to the claim.
attention to the role that the replication of continental forms played in creating a Japanese sacred landscape. In this chapter I will highlight the way in which the establishment of Japanese holy sites including the Seiryōji contributed to the sense that Heian Japan constituted a legitimate center of Buddhist practice and belief, rather than a remote backwater on the holy realm’s periphery. I will suggest that a consequence of Buddhism’s taking root in Japanese soil in this way was that the importance with which Mount Wutai was originally invested diminished over time.

5.1 Mount Wutai: An International Pilgrimage Destination

Records of Chōnen’s journey to the Song and references to his post-pilgrimage career appear in a broad range of sources. These include Kokan Shiren’s 虎關師練 (1278-1346) Genkō Shakusho 元亨釈書 (Buddhist Chronicle of the Genkō Era) and Shiban’s 師蠻 (1626-1710) Honchō kōsō den 本朝高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan). Jūmei’s 十明 (tenth century) Jōsan hoshiki 盛算法師記 (Record of Dharma Master Jōsan) and Kōen’s 皇圓 (? – 1169) Fusō ryakki 扶桑略記 (A Brief History of Japan) constitute important source for our knowledge of the cleric. References to Chōnen and other monk-pilgrims to the Tang and Song appear in waka poetry compiled by Izuru Niimura 新村出 at the turn of the last century. The Seiryōji engi 清涼寺緣起 (Origin History of Seiryōji) discusses the cleric, as do the Seiryōji monjō 清涼寺文書 (Records of Seiryōji) and several Tōdaiji 東大寺 records. In addition to these materials, documents discovered

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167 The Nyūtō shokkaden kō 入唐諸家傳考 (Investigation on the Biographies of the Clerics who Entered Tang China) also preserves fragments of his tenth-century travel diary.
within the cavity of the famous *Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō* (The Seiryō Temple Sculpture of Śākyamuni Tathāgata) itself allow us to construct a much fuller picture of the significance Chōnen and his contemporaries might have assigned to his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai and to the building projects he initiated upon his return.\(^{168}\)

Generally speaking, these sources present Chōnen’s Mount Wutai journey as the fulfillment of a desire that developed near the beginning of his career (Wang 1994, 65). At a young age Chōnen, who was a member of the Hata clan, became a disciple of Kanri (894-974) at Tōji 東寺 before studying with Gengō 元果 (911-995) at the Ishiyamadera 石山寺 in Ōtsu.\(^{169}\) Under these masters he learned Sanron 三論 and the esoteric methods 密法.\(^{170}\) The *Honchō kōsō den* states that during this period the monk “often spoke of climbing Mount Wutai and venerating Mañjuśrī’s manifested body 現身 [before] crossing through China to India to reverence Śākya’s traces.”\(^{171}\) The account sealed within the *Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō* more than six centuries earlier makes a similar claim about the cleric’s ambitions. It purports that:

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\(^{168}\) These materials are the topic of Tsukamoto Zenryū’s 塚本善隆 “Saga Seiryōji Shakazō Fuzōhin no Shūkyōshiteki ishiki 塔峨清凉寺釈迦像封蔵品の宗教史的意義” (The Significance of the goods sealed within the Saga Seiryōji Śākyamuni statue for the history of Religions). They are also the focus of Henderson and Hurvitz’s article.

\(^{169}\) Only the *Honchō kōsō den* gives Kanri’s name 観理 (894-974). The *Honchō kōsō den* identifies Tōdaiji 東大寺, rather than Tōji 東寺, as his place of practice (DBZ 103: 365). So too does the *Tōgoku kōsō den* (DBZ 104: 72) and the *Genkō Shakusho* (DBZ 101: 325). Sources including the *Honchō Kōsōden* identify Chōnen as a member of the Fujiwara 藤原 family (DBZ 103: 365). He was, in fact, part of the Hata clan (Wang 1994, 65).

\(^{170}\) In addition to the *Genkō Shakusho*, the *Tōgoku Kōsō den* and *Honchō kōsō den* accounts includes these details in the telling of the cleric’s life.

\(^{171}\) The following appears in the *Honchō kōsō den*: 常謂登五臺山拜文殊之現身渡中天竺禮釋迦之遺跡
[Chōnen] wished to repay the virtue of labor, he wished to repay the kindness of milk and water. Ere yet he perceived the truths of pain and emptiness, in vain did he scratch his skin and bones. For here were the superb precinct of Wu-t'ai and the famed mount of T’ien-t’ai; though one might transmit the record of them and sing their praises, yet the sea that separated him from them is wide. Ever from afar did he think on them, and resolve and pray to look worshipfully upon them (Henderson and Hurvitz 1955, 49).

In this Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō document, as in the Honchō kōsō den, Chōnen's journey to Mount Wutai appears as the culmination of his early career.

While both the Honchō kōsō den and Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō materials present Mount Wutai as a worthy object of devotional attention, the variation between them suggest that their compilers differently understood both the site’s importance and Japan’s situation vis-à-vis the wider Buddhist world. The Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō document composed by Chōnen’s disciple Jōsan just prior to their 986 departure from the Song, stresses the distance between the mountain and the monk’s homeland. Introducing the motif of repaying the kindness of one’s parents (baoen 報恩), the text also portrays Mount Wutai as a center of Buddhist filial piety. Chōnen made the same connection in a document he circulated to generate support for his travels several years earlier.\(^{172}\) In 982 he remarked:

Only Śākyamuni can thoroughly understand the complicated feelings in my heart. My sixty-year-old aging mother is still alive. Towards her I am deeply grateful and I feel compelled to pay my debt of gratitude. If I leave her for China, I would fail to fulfill my filial piety; if I stayed with her, I would never be able to fulfill my long-cherished wish [to worship the statue of Mañjuśrī]. At first, I let this deep inner conflict beset me. But eventually I disclosed my anxiety to my mother. Instead of showing resentment towards my leaving

(DBZ 103: 365).

\(^{172}\) On Buddhist views of filial piety see Alan Cole’s Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism.
for China, she encouraged me to embark on the pilgrimage (Wang 1994, 67-68).

Like the celibate monastic life more broadly, pilgrimage posed a problem for the performance of one’s filial obligation to care for one’s living parents and provide them with descendants to carryout ancestral offerings long after their deaths. This presentation of Chōnen’s Mount Wutai journey resolves the conflict. While again emphasizing “the difficulty in reaching China” and the author’s resolution to nevertheless “cross the vast sea and climb the high mountains to reach China,” the 982 text like the Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō record stresses the mountain’s status as a site where one could repay the debt to one’s parents, presumably through the accumulation of merit (Wang 1994, 67).

The Honchō kōsō den depiction of Mount Wutai’s significance reflects a later historical context in which a particular model of the Buddhist realm dominated discussions of the country’s geographical and religious situation. This is the triple-nation, sangoku 三国, paradigm. Though this term is used in the ninth century, according to Mark Blum the vision that India, China, and Japan constituted the holy world became widespread in the Kamakura era (Blum 2006, 32-33). Regarding the model’s appeal, Blum writes:

173 In Wang Zhenping’s view Chōnen’s portrayal of his journey as a personal endeavor was a façade intended to mask the monk’s larger ambition of founding a center for Śākyamuni devotion near the capital (Wang 1994).

174 Significantly, the Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō document depicts Chōnen’s actual itinerary as the fulfillment of his long held aspiration. In the months immediately preceding its compilation, Chōnen and his party traveled, first, to Mount Tiantai before, then, ascending Mount Wutai. Mount Tiantai stands nearby the Taizhou port through which Japanese monks entered and exited Japan and a number of Chōnen’s predecessors and successors journeyed there. They, like Chōnen, visited the traces of figures such as Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597) and the Tang legends Hanshan 寒山 and Shide 拾得.
...the triple-nation model worked for a number of reasons, but most obviously because India and China were well established centers of religious authority, because they represented two easily identifiable language groups that were both revered in Japan, and because in this formula Japan is placed on an equal footing of authority, exclusive of all other Buddhist nations (Blum 2006, 32).

“The triple-nation frame,” Blum adds, offered “a way for Japan to reach beyond China to touch India directly, a land with which it had no direction contact” (Blum 2006, 33). This sangoku model—which in Blum's words resolved “Japan's real issue [which was] trying to justify its Buddhist tradition vis-à-vis China (and perhaps Korea)—lies behind the Honchō kōsō den depiction of Mount Wutai as one stop on the cleric's journey through China to India (Blum 2006, 33). In contrast to the tenth century accounts that stress the archipelago’s distance from Mount Wutai and thus the devotion Chōnen displayed by making the pilgrimage, the Honchō kōsō den presents his homeland as the eastern part of a tripartite Buddhist world.

These tenth century depictions of Japan's relationship to Mount Wutai and by corollary China recall the seventh century Chinese understanding of its position in relation to India as characterized by Tansen Sen. Like the Chinese clergy who understood themselves to be living a great remove from the Buddha's birthplace, Chōnen and Jōsan emphasized their distance from a newer center: China's Mount Wutai. The interpretation of China's situation, that Sen, following Antonio Forte terms a “borderland complex,” created space for innovation (Sen 2003, 80). The remoteness of Tang China gave rise to the conviction that other revelations, in this case Mañjuśrī's manifestations at Mount Wutai, rendered the realm a holy place in its own right. In Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade, Tansen Sen argues convincingly that Wu Zetian drew on this reimagining of Mount Wutai and with it the dynasty as
standing at the Buddhist world’s center rather than its periphery in presenting herself as the cakravartin wheel-turning monarch (Sen 2003, 98). Three centuries later, Chōnen employed the truth or trope of Japan’s isolation from its western neighbors to signal his devotion as an individual who undertook this arduous journey. In this way he lent credibility to his post-pilgrimage claim to be a worthy innovator of Buddhist tradition. At least insofar as these examples are concerned, it seems to me that the borderland complex was as much an interpretive move that forwarded individual ambitions as it was a response to the actual geographical location of a kingdom relative to the rest of the Buddhist world.175

When Chōnen arrived at Mount Wutai in the tenth-century, the site had been the object of Japanese veneration and pilgrimage for several hundred years.176 Between the early eighth and mid-ninth centuries, the monks Gembō, Gyōga, Reisen 靈仙,177 Ennin, Enchin, and Shūei 宗叡 (809–884) traveled there.178 Many of these figures returned to Japan with personal knowledge of the site, as well as written

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175 Wang Zhenping argues that mappō thinking informed Chōnen’s vision of the importance of his pilgrimage. I am not convinced that this is a major element in the records of the cleric’s life and career.

176 It was not until 983 that Chōnen departed for the Song. While waka poetry and the Honchō kōsō den attribute this delay to Chōnen’s mother who purportedly disagreed with her son’s plans, other evidence suggests that his monastic contemporaries opposed the pilgrimage. See Wang Zhenping’s writing on the latter explanation for the delay.

177 The Nittō guhō junrei gyōki makes reference to the monk Reisen’s 靈仙 (8th to 9th century) time at Mount Wutai (DBZ 113:231, 234).

178 According to the Genkō Shakushō, Shūei entered the Tang in the third year of the Jōgan 貞観 era where he visited Mount Wutai as well as Mount Tiantai (DBZ 101:174, 175).
records detailing its significance. Accounts like Ennin’s well-known *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* must, on the one hand, have supplied models for pilgrims like Chōnen and a number of his counterparts who carried travel records of earlier clerics with them on their Tang and Song journeys. On the other hand, reports of the substantial patronage the site received might have shaped perceptions of the role of rulers. In the decades leading up to and coinciding with Gembō and Gyōga’s Tang journeys, Mount Wutai was the object of substantial patronage.

According to Ichirō Hori, though neither Saichō nor Kūkai traveled to Mount Wutai, it nevertheless provided a model for the form of Buddhism they advocated at the Heian court. The mountain, for instance, figures prominently in a memorial that the latter monk submitted to the throne in 816. Attempting to generate imperial support for the creation of a Shingon mountain center at Mount Kōya 高野山, Kūkai wrote:

Buddha Śakya-muni loved to live in secluded high mountains and the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Kannon or Kwan-in) usually appear on the isolated summit or lonely peninsula. In China also, the temples and seminaries in the mountains such as Mount Wu-tai-shan or the so-called Mount Tien-shan are now flourishing and the real tradition of Buddhism is

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179 When Gembō, the first Japanese pilgrim to Mount Wutai, returned to Japan he carried with him not only a personal knowledge of the place but also five thousand *juan of sūtras* and śāstra. The five thousand *juan of sūtras* and śāstra are thought to have been the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 compiled by Zhisheng 智昇 in 730 (Bingenheimer 2001, 109). If this was the case, then we have evidence here that texts with a close relationship to Mount Wutai entered Japan by 735. The *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* mentions Daoxuan’s 道宣 (596-667) *Jishenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通録 (Record of Miraculous Responses to the Three Treasures in China) at T.55.652(a). It both refers to the *Foding zunshen tuoluoni jing* T.2154.564(a) and includes a version of the Buddhapāla legend T.2154.565(a).

180 Hori Ichirō writes: “[t]he two founders of the Tendai and Shingon schools in the beginning of the Heian Period, Saichō and Kūkai respectively, insisted on the necessity and importance of the so-called mountain-Buddhism which they said was directly modeled after the monastery system in Mount Wu-tai-shan...” (Hori 1958, 152).
upheld and carried on there. In Japan, however unfortunately, on the high mountains and in dense forest there are few real priests who practice religious austerities and meditations ... [a]ccording to the Buddhist sūtras, a place of flat ground on a steep mountain-side is the best place to practice the meditation (Hori 1958, 152).

In the decades just prior to Kūkai’s arrival in Chang’an, Amoghavajra, as I discussed in chapter four, had successfully solicited substantial imperial support for Mount Wutai building projects and practice as part of a larger effort to spread esoteric Buddhism. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that when he applied to found a center of imperially-sponsored Shingon practice at Mount Kōya, Kūkai took Wutai as his model. The unfavorable comparison he draws between Japan, with its dearth of clerics who practice on mountains and China where genuine Buddhism thrives at Mount Wutai and Mount Tiantai typifies the Heian version of the “borderland complex.” As with the Chōnen example, this passage appears to be less a neutral description and more an instance in which the mapping out of Japan’s situation provided a rational for religious innovation. In this case, Kūkai justifies the establishment of a Shingon mountain center at Mount Koya.

Records of the extraordinary happenings that attended Chōnen’s visit to Mount Wutai recall earlier miracle tales about the site. According to the biography found within the *Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō*, when Chōnen arrived at the mountain, he stopped at the Pusa Zhenrong Cloister 菩薩真容院 (Cloister of the Boddhisattva’s True Visage) on the grounds of the Huayan Temple. This is the place where, according to the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and Ennin’s *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*, Mañjuśrī appeared to an artisan allowing him to fashion an exact depiction of the
Bodhisattva. Like his predecessor, Chōnen witnessed a miracle in this cloister: “...the top of the Bodhisattva’s right side miraculously emitted a white ray, which in the passage of time did not dispel. Monks and laymen, three hundred in number, came, and they all saw it” (Wang 1994, 51). Presumably the statue in question here was the very one about which Ennin wrote in his travel diary one hundred and fifty years earlier.

Chōnen’s other visions also share much in common with earlier accounts of Mount Wutai. In addition to the Huayan Temple’s Pusa Zhenrong Cloister, the cleric visited the Jingang Grotto before ascending the East, Middle, West, and South Terraces. According to the Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō biography, Chōnen and his party were met with snow and hail “as big as chicken’s eggs” when they first climbed the East Terrace (Henderson and Hurvitz 1955, 51). Like references to the mountain’s barren peaks and bitter winds preserved in other sources, this description confirmed that the mountain was, indeed, the “Clear and Cool Mountain” (Qingliang shan) of the Avataṃsaka sūtra and snowy mountain of the Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra (Henderson and Hurvitz 1955, 51). References to a five-colored cloud, unusual birds and holy lights Chōnen later witnessed atop Mount Wutai similarly signaled that this was an extraordinary realm.

Like this remarkable flora and fauna, the figure Chōnen subsequently encountered is familiar from literature about the site. According to the text:

On the fifteenth day, at dawn, on the Eastern Terrace, he saw an old man, about eighty years of age, his beard and temples both white, wearing a purple robe and a three-peaked hat, with boots on and carrying a rosary in his hand. Attended by two men, he walked round the Dragon Pond. Both

181 I discuss these narratives elsewhere in the dissertation on page 152.
attendants were of age about twenty. One, wearing green garments and having a turban wrapped around his head, held a censer in his hand. One, wearing white garments and having a turban wrapped around his head, held a staff in his hand. They turned about and vanished, and none knew where they were (Henderson and Hurvitz 1955, 51).

Though the text does not explicitly identify the aged stranger, we can imagine it to be Mañjuśrī who, according to tales of conjured temples preserved in the roughly contemporaneous Song gaoseng zhuan and the somewhat later Guang Qingliang zhuan, frequently appeared in this form at Mount Wutai.

Though particular features of the stranger’s appearance such as this distinguish the Chōnen entry from the records of Mañjuśrī’s manifestations I examined above, these materials also include references to pairs of attendants accompanying the Bodhisattva. Accounts of the cleric Fazhao’s entry into the conjured Zhulin Temple mention two youths—Sudhana and Nānda—who led the cleric into the splendid monastery where he met Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra T.2061.844(b).\textsuperscript{182}

Visual sources also offer parallels for Chōnen’s vision of the Bodhisattva accompanied by attendants. These include the statue-sets depicting Mañjuśrī astride a lion and accompanied by a child and a groom to which I referred in chapter four.\textsuperscript{183} A woodblock print of Mañjuśrī astride his lion-mount with a child and groom found within the sandalwood Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō that Chōnen commissioned in 985 indicates that he was familiar with this rendering of the Bodhisattva (Wu 2002, 87).

\textsuperscript{182} I discuss this tale in chapter four on page 139.

\textsuperscript{183} Some scholars propose that either Ennin or Chōnen introduced the pentads to Japan. Wu argues convincingly that Chinese materials provide the foundations of the Monju goson (Wu 2002, 74, 79, 81-88, 100).
Peijung Wu explains that these three figure groupings were affiliated with esoteric practices involving the Five-syllable 五字文殊 and Eight-syllable Mañjuśrī Mantras 八字文殊 promoted by Amoghavajra in the eighth-century (Wu 2002, 100). Woodblock prints preserved at Dunhuang, for instance, show the Bodhisattva with two attendants and, in the accompanying inscription, connect the Bodhisattva with Mount Wutai and praise his dhāraṇī (Wong 1994). The Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō print specifically endorses the recitation of the Five-syllable Mañjuśrī Mantra, which is perhaps further evidence that Chōnen was familiar with this ritual form (Wu 2002, 88).

Later tradition also connects Chōnen with depictions of the Bodhisattva accompanied by multiple attendants. The most famous of these are the five-figure Monju goson 文殊五尊 sets in which Mañjuśrī has four assistants.184 The Ryōjin Hishō 梁塵秘抄 (Treasured Selections of Superb Songs),185 a twelfth-century imayō (songs) collection, connects Chōnen with a six-figure statuary set that includes both Nānda and Sudhana. The poem credits the cleric with introducing these figures to Japan:

By whom has (the image) of Monju been brought back? It was Chōnen hijiri who brought it back! Those who accompanied (Monju) were Utenō (King Udayana), Taishō rōjin (the saintly old man), Zenzai dōji (Sudhana), Buddhapari (Buddhapāla), and, further, the sixteen rakan (Sk. arhat) and various heavenly beings (Wu 2002, 85, 86).

Representations of the Bodhisattva varied considerably during Chōnen’s lifetime.

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184 The Monju goson 文殊五尊 are also known also as the Godaisan Monju 五臺山文殊 or the Tokai Monju 渡海文殊. I discuss these five figure sets centered on the Bodhisattva in the next chapter.

185 Yung-Hee Kim (1994) translates the title in this way.
The thirteenth century Asabashō 阿娑縛抄 (Anthology of A, Sa and Va), for instance, asserts that this group of statues was differently configured with six attendants including the youth Nānda (Nanta dōji 難陀童子) (Wu 2002, 88). According to Peijung Wu, the diversity among five, six, and seven figures sets stems in part from the fact that “there is no scriptural basis for the combination of Monju and the four specific attendants which constitute the Monju Pentad; rather, this configuration resulted from an amalgamation of different traditions related to Monju” (Wu 2002, 88). Varied visual and textual portrayals of Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai like these shaped Chōnen’s expectations about the mountain and were in turn shaped by descriptions of his encounter with a stranger accompanied by a pair of attendants there.

In addition to his journey to Mount Wutai, accounts of Chōnen’s time in the Song typically discuss two further events: the cleric’s meeting with Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997) and his commissioning of a Śākyamuni statue to replicate the one purportedly created at King Udāyana’s behest. The first of these events takes priority of place in a number of Chōnen’s biographies including the Honchō kōsō den, Tōgoku Kōsōden, and Zenrin Kokuhōki 善隣國宝記 (Records of National Papers of Great Value Exchanged with Friendly Neighboring Nations). The Honchō kōsō den, for instance, states that the emperor awarded Chōnen the purple robe and gave him a set of the printed canon with which to return to Japan. The Tōgoku Kōsōden provides a similar itinerary. These records devote one line to his time at Mount Wutai, noting that Chōnen reverenced Mañjuśrī there with imperial permission.
The related *Zenrin Kokuhōki* entry makes no mention of the five-terrace mountain whatsoever. It states:

The monk Chōnen went to China. This was the 8th year of Dapingxingguo 大平興國, in the reign of (Song) Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997). He at last was able to pay his respects to the copy of the image (of Nyorai originally) made by Udayana at the Qishen[g]yuan 啓聖院 monastery in the capital of Bian 汴 (Kaifeng 開封), situated opposite the Xihuamen 西華門 gate of the palace. He hired a Buddhist artist, a certain Zhang Rong 張榮, and had him carve a copy of the image. Emperor Taizong gave (Chōnen an audience) and asked him about the genealogy of our emperors and the reign-periods. Chōnen provided a detailed answer. The (Chinese) officials hailed him and granted him a purple monk’s robe. Chōnen returned to Japan in the 3rd year of Yongxi 雍熙 (986), sailing with the Taizhou 台州 merchant Zheng Rende 鄭仁德. In the 1st year of Eien 永延 (987), (he reached the capital of Heian). The copy of the image made by Udayana is now in Seiryō(ji) 清涼寺 in Saga 嵐峨 (in the western outskirts of the capital) (von Verschuer 1999, 29).

Three factors explain the prominent place the cleric’s imperial audience occupies in these materials vis-à-vis his Wutai pilgrimage. The first of these relate to the type of sources with which we are dealing and the changing role that monks played in Sino-Japanese relations during Chōnen’s lifetime.

The importance that Chinese court records, as well as Japanese materials assign Chōnen’s meeting with Taizong reflects the vital role that clerics played in diplomacy after 838 CE. This was the year that Japan stopped sending official embassies to the Tang court. The practice had begun in the seventh century after which time official delegations had regularly traveled between Japan, China, and the Korean peninsula. The envoys formed part of the Nara and Heian courts’ strategy to establish special diplomatic status among the more than sixty tributary states of the Tang. The emissaries constituted a major vehicle for the import and exchange of
literature, foreign goods, scientific knowledge and technology. The first Japanese visitors to Mount Wutai—Gembō and Gyōga—were two among perhaps two or three hundred *gakumonsō* (student-monks) who traveled to the Sui, Tang, and Song alongside as many as 4500 envoys, students, doctors, artisans, and individuals of other status before the middle of the ninth century.

When this avenue of exchange disappeared, Chōnen and his contemporaries emerged as rare conduits of information about the Song’s eastern neighbor. The court thus received the monks as important visitors. In Chōnen’s case, Emperor Taizong not only honored him with the purple robe and a printed copy of the Tripitaka but also sponsored his journey to Mount Wutai. The lengthy record of Chōnen’s audience that appears in the *Song shi* (History of the Song) includes detailed information regarding his homeland. For example, the text purports that when Taizong “learned [from Chōnen] that the throne of Japan had come down in a single lineal succession and that the Court offices were all hereditary” he commented:

They are just insular barbarians; yet their dynasty is everlasting and the Court offices are handed down in unbroken succession. This is indeed the way of antiquity. Since the disorders at the end of the T’ang, the domain of

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186 In the ninth century, according to von Verschuer, the sea (as opposed to land) became an increasingly important vehicle for trade. At this time, the court and wealthy Heian nobles began to import aromatics used for perfume, incense, dyeing, and medicine; precious silks and ceramics, giving Chinese merchants gold, rice or plain woven silk in exchange for these. “In some instances,” von Verschuer writes, “they [Chinese merchants] imported from Japan mercury, sulfur, paper, and pearls” (von Verschuer 1999, 6).


188 The monks travelled as private citizens aboard merchant ships.
our country has been split up...It is our solicitude that the successors of our state ministers shall come into the fiefs of their fathers, generation and after generation (Tsunoda 1951, 55).

Following his return to Japan, Chônen’s disciple Kiin 喜因 traveled to the Song with a memorial for the throne. This document, together with a record of cleric’s tribute, also appears in the Song shi (Tsunoda 1951, 56-57). ⑧⁹

Issues of self-representation provide a second way to understand the significant place the cleric’s meeting with Taizong occupies in this body of material. During Chônen’s lifetime encounters between foreign clerics and courtiers might have inspired both parties to rethink the relative position of Song China and Heian Japan in the Buddhist world. In sources compiled long after Chônen’s death his hagiography continued to serve as a vehicle through which compilers and readers articulated and reflected on what it meant to be a monastic and a person dwelling at the eastern reaches of the Buddhist world. Depicting monks as powerful agents of the court, the Honchô kōsō den, Tōgoku kōsōden, and Zenrin Kokuhōki presented members of the clergy as loyal subjects and worthy objects of patronage. Describing the affairs of Uda’s 宇多天皇 (r. 887-897) court as the object of Song interest and admiration—which the Song shi seems to suggest they were in actuality—these renderings of Chônen’s life and career allowed clerics to present themselves as influential figures working for the benefit of a major Buddhist country.

Finally the development of Japan’s sacred landscape helps to explain why in later versions of his hagiography Chônen’s court encounter eclipses Mount Wutai.

⑧⁹ On this document see Yamaguchi Osamu’s 山口修 “Chônen no Nissô to Jôhôbun 嵐然の入宋と上表文” (On the memorial presented by Chônen to the Song Throne.”
During the Heian period (794-1185) a number of locales in Japan emerged as places of pilgrimage in their own right. These included, for instance, the Kumano 熊野 and Yoshino 吉野 sites (Moerman 2005). As the Tōgoku Kōsōden poem with which I began this chapter indicates, the sandalwood Śākyamuni image with which Chōnen returned to Heian Japan became the object of a lively devotional cult. The object retained its allure in the seventeenth-century. It seems likely that records of the cleric’s Song journey penned centuries after his death foreground Chōnen’s court audience and his commissioning of this statue because these events rather than his Mount Wutai visions had come to define his legacy. In the centuries following his death the Seiryōji remained an active hub of Buddhist practice in an expanding network of Japanese sacred sites.

Chōnen’s commissioning of the Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō statue is the third and final episode emphasized in accounts of his Song journey. Legend holds that the sandalwood icon replicated one fashioned during the Buddha’s lifetime at King Udāyana’s behest.190 According to tradition, the Kauśāmbī ruler had the statue carved to comfort him while the Buddha was absent preaching the dharma to his mother in Trayāstirīmśa Heaven.191 The legend signals the role that statuary, like relics or texts, played in bridging temporal and spatial gaps that separate Buddhists from the Buddha. The replication of the Śākyamuni icon, moreover, connected

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190 See page 169 for a discussion of this image.

191 The question of when the first images of Śākyamuni were crafted remains a matter of scholarly debate. While Buddhist legends like this one hold that statues were fashioned during Śākyamuni’s lifetime, it is likely that their origins lie in first century northwestern India (Strong 1995, 39).
Buddhists of different regions in a pan-Asian network of centers at which practitioners reproduced and reverenced the image.

Multiple versions of this statue, replicas of Udāyana’s replica, were already extant in the seventh century. In the Da Tang Xiyuji 大唐西域記 (Records of Travels to Western Lands), the seventh century pilgrim Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664) mentions two versions of the statue which were the objects of independent but related devotional traditions in India. When he returned to Chang’an in 645, Xuanzang carried with him seven statues including a replica of the Udāyana image. According to the Da Ci’en si sanzang fashi zhuan 大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (The biography of the Great Ci’en Temple Tripiṭaka Master) by Xuanzang’s disciple Huili 慧立 (615-?):

the authorities fearing that people [might] trade [tread] on one another, order[ed] them to stay still, burn incense, and scatter flowers where they [were] standing. The whole congregation witness[ed] a colored cloud in the sky that [seemed] to float over the scriptures and the gold, silver, and sandal wood images as if it [they were] welcoming the holy objects. It is indeed [the most splendid event since the death of the Buddha (Chanda 2007, 116).

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192 The Xiyu ji (T.2087), the travel record of Xuanzang’s seventeen-year journey to India, was written at the request of the emperor in 646. It contains the following entry related to the Udāyana statue:

In the city (i.e. Kauśāmbī), within an old palace, there is a large vihāra about sixty feet high; in it is a figure of Buddha carved out of sandal-wood, above which is a stone canopy. It is the work of the king U-to-yen-na (Udāyana)...The princes of various countries have used their power to carry off the statue, but although many men have tried, not all the number could move it. They therefore worship copies of it, and they pretend that the likeness is a true one, and this is the original of all such figures.
Xuanzang takes the Kauśāmbī version as the original.
The translation is Samuel Beal’s (1906) and appears in Benjamin Rowland Jr.’s “A Note on the Invention of the Buddha Image.”

193 These statues with which Xuanzang returned depicted: (1) the Buddha giving his first sermon at Sarnath, (2) the Udāyana statue (3) the Buddha descending from heaven at Sankasya, (4) the Buddha preaching the Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra at Vulture Peak, (5) an “imitation of the Buddha’s shadow left in the caves at Nagarahara,” (6) a replica resembling the image of the Buddha Turning the Wheel of the Law at Sarnath (7) the Buddha in Vasali (Wriggins 2004, 188).
The fervor that attended Xuanzang’s return to Chang’an reflects the allure of foreign objects and suggests the interest the foreign travel generated in this period. A similar scene marked Chōnen’s return from the Song in 987.

Donald McCallum explains the enthusiastic reception that the Udāyana statue received in terms of its association with the imperial throne (McCallum 1996, 54). The statue’s founding legend establishes its connections with rulership. The object’s eventful tenth century history suggests that these links persisted in the Chinese context. When Chōnen arrived in the Song in 983 C.E. a version of the statue stood on the grounds of the Imperial Palace in the Zifu Temple 滋福寺 (Wang 1994, 74).

When he ascended the throne in 976 C.E. Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997) had ordered the statue moved to this location from the Kaibao si 開寶寺 in Bianjing 汴京. Earlier in the tenth century the Southern Tang 南唐 rulers (937-975) had the image taken to its previous home, the Changxian Temple 長先寺 in Jinling 金陵 (Wang 1994, 74). According to McCallum these preexisting affiliations between the throne and the figure would have enhanced its prestige in Heian Japan.

Records of Chōnen’s life and career do not agree on the place of the replica’s fashioning. The Hōncho kōsōden, for instance, states that Chōnen returned to court

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194 The following information is found in Jūmei’s 十明 (10th century) Jōsan hoshiki 盛算法師記.

195 In 980 Tang Taizong ordered repairs on the following ten Wutai temples: the Zhenrong 真容, the Huayan 華嚴, the Shouning 壽寧, the Xingguo 興國, the Zhulin 竹林, the Jinge 金閣, the Mimi 秘密, the Lingjing 靈鏡, the Fahua 法華, and the Daxian 大賢. He also ordered Zhang Tingxun 張廷訓 to have a gold and copper statue of the Bodhisattva constructed. Wang Zhenping notes this occurred one year after Taizong’s conquest of the Beihan 北漢 (951-979). In the same year, Taizong sent Zhangrenzan 張仁贊 to Chengdu 成都 to make a Puxian 普賢 of copper and gold and renovate five temples at Emei shan 峨眉山 (Wang 1994, 76).
following his Mount Wutai journey after which time he had the image fashioned in the Northern Song capital Bian 汴都 (today’s Kaifeng).\(^{196}\) The Tōgoku Kōsōden purports that the image was carved at the same place.\(^{197}\) Both texts credit Buddhist-image maker Zhangrong 佛工張榮 with the statue’s creation. The discovery of documents within the statue itself convinced most scholars that Taizhou and not Bian was the site of its production (Wang 1994, 85). The names Zhang Yanjiao 張延皎 and Zhang Yanxi 張延蹊 appear with the statue and it is they who likely completed the carving on September 5, 985 (Wang 1994, 84). In July 986, Chōnen’s party set sail for Japan with the replica arriving in Kyūshū on August 9, 986.\(^{198}\)

Accounts of Chōnen’s Song journey, like those dealing with his post-pilgrimage career that I will discuss presently, both reflected and shaped the way that Mount Wutai’s importance was understood in premodern Japan. Materials composed during the cleric’s lifetime convey the mountain’s significance as the place where Mañjuśrī is present. They emphasize Japan’s distance from the site. The documents discovered within the Seiryōji shaka nyōrai zō and those Chōnen circulated in 982 suggest the necessity of pilgrimage for bridging spatial gaps between Japan and China, the center of the Buddhist world. The creation of a local sacred landscape including the temple erected to house the Śākyamuni statue had

\(^{196}\) The text reads: 再回帝都求印本大藏經亦詔有司給之。然又往汴都西華門外。啓聖禪院拜優塡王弟二栴檀模像乃命佛工張榮模刻 (DBZ 103: 365).

\(^{197}\) 永觀元年入大宋。當太宗太平興國八年也。巡禮勝地。歷観明師至汴都西華門外 啓聖禪院禮優塡王弟二旃檀模像乃命佛工張榮模刻太宗皇帝詔問日城世系國祚然奏對詳悉帝稱嘆 賜紫方袍辭上五夘。禮文殊 (DBZ 104: 73).

\(^{198}\) The party traveled to Japan aboard the merchant Zheng Rende’s 鄭仁德 boat.
implications for the way in which Mount Wutai’s significance was understood. In the following pages I will introduce the contours of these transformations, which I suggest lie behind the diminished importance with which later texts such as the Tōgoku Kōsōden and Honchō Kōsōden invested Mount Wutai.

5.2 Replicating Replicas:
Chōnen’s Post-Pilgrimage Career

The enthusiastic reception Chōnen received when he returned to the Heian capital in 987 recalls Xuanzang’s homecoming three centuries earlier. The Song shi purports that after setting sail from Taizhou:

[Chōnen] reached the outlying regions of his native land in the middle of autumn. By the next spring he came again to his old village [Heian kyō]. Monks and laymen awaited him with cheers; dukes and earls welcomed him with adoration (Tsunoda 1955, 57).

Though initially the Yamashiro authorities refused to coordinate a procession for the cleric’s party, Chōnen’s Fujiwara patrons seem to have intervened on his behalf and eventually Yamashiro, Kawachi, and Settsu laborers joined together in a grand parade that conveyed Chōnen’s party to Heian-kyō.199 The lengthy Honchō kōsōden version of Chōnen’s hagiography reports that the emperor commissioned Gagaku ryō 雅樂寮 (Music Bureau) musicians to join the elaborate procession.200 People of high and low status, the text continues, crowded around Chōnen’s party as it

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199 The Tōgoku Kōsōden passage reads: 得大藏經五千四十八卷及十六羅漢像 (DBZ 104: 73). Wang Zhenping discusses this setback, noting that Chōnen responded to the Yamashiro authorities by appealing to Fujiwara Kaneie 藤原兼家 (929-990) and Sanesuke 藤原実資 (957-1046) for assistance organizing a reception for his party. These men supported Chōnen’s journey to the Song. Fujiwara Kaneie was Fujiwara no Michinaga’s father (Wang 1994, 86).

travelled to the Rendaiji 蓮台寺 in northern Kyōto. The Śākyamuni statue together with images of the sixteen arhats and the 5048 fascicles canon were put on display here.

Following quickly on the heels of his return to the capital, Chōnen initiated a campaign to create a Japanese Wutai at which to enshrine the Śākyamuni image. Among the documents discovered within the statue itself is a vow to uphold and spread the dharma that Chōnen cosigned with a fellow Tōdaiji 東大寺 monk Gizō 義逍 (tenth century). It suggests much about his pre-pilgrimage ambitions.\footnote{The full text of this oath appears in Tsukamoto Zenryū’s 塚本善隆 “Seiryōji Shakazō Fuzō no Tōdaiji Chōnen no Shuin Risseisho 清凉寺釈迦像封蔵の東大寺奝然の手印立誓書.”} The oath, written in 972, establishes that long before he departed for China in 983, Chōnen had already “selected a spot on Mount Atago 愛宕山, where, with hearts united and strength joined, [he would] build a monastery and raise up the law left behind by Śākya” (Henderson and Hurvitz 1956, 47). We will see in the final chapter that the connection between Śākyamuni-veneration, the Mañjuśrī cult and Mount Wutai that this vow introduces here is not exclusive to Chōnen’s project.

Though prior to his 983 departure Chōnen publicly explained his motivations as highly personal, the 972 vow indicates that he longed to create a place of Buddhist practice in the mountains. It may well be that Chōnen was attracted to Mount Wutai, at least in part, because of its reputation as the focus of imperial patronage. The introduction of information about Mount Wutai to Nara Japan coincided with its eighth-century emergence as the object of Wu Zetian, Xuanzong, and Daizong’s support. Chōnen’s predecessors seem thus to have taken the locale as
a model for their mountain-based Buddhist practice. In this regard, Chōnen’s project seems to follow Kūkai and Saichō’s lead.202

A petition submitted to the throne in 987 confirms that Chōnen attempted to put his earlier plan into action. The monk requested, first, that a Dai Seiryō Temple 大清涼寺 be erected atop Atago and, second, that the mountain’s name be changed to Godai san, the Japanese rendering of Wutai shan.203 Chōnen endeavored, further, to have an ordination platform erected there (Wang 1994, 88-89). The latter move represented a direct challenge to the authority of the eight “schools” to which the prerogative to initiate clerics had belonged since 835.204 It seems likely that Chōnen’s efforts to see Atago recognized as a local Wutai failed because the creation of a mountain center with an ordination platform would have rendered him, and the Sangakushū 三学宗 (“School of the Three Studies”) school he sought to found, a genuine rival to Enryakuji and its counterparts.205

In 991 Chōnen’s application to

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202 It is possible, moreover, that the type of link Chōnen sought to establish between a Japanese place and Mount Wutai might already have existed at Mount Atago. Located in the northwest of present-day Kyoto, the mountain was initially a site of local belief and practice. With Buddhism’s introduction to Japan, it emerged as a Buddhist cultic center at which, according Anne-Marie Bouchy, the Monju hihō (secret rites of Mañjuśrī) was performed for the benefit of the realm beginning in the Heian period. Its five principal monasteries, which stood for Mount Atago as a whole, Bouchy continues, “considered themselves to be patterned after the ones on Wu-t’ai shan...in China.” These were the Hakuunji, Gachirinji, Nichirinji, Dembōji, and Jingoji. During the early Heian period Atago was also one of seven mountains on which the rites of Yakushi keka (rite of repentance of Yakushi) were performed” (Bouchy 1987, 258-260).

203 Chōnen attempted to establish himself as the head of his Sangakushū, the curriculum of which he divided into the discipline, meditation, and wisdom. The cleric also requested permission to promote the teachings of Daruma (Bodhidharma). Neither school flourished (Wang 1994, 88-89).

204 In Jōwa 2 (835), Shingon was added to the list of seven “schools” with the authority to ordain monks and nuns. These were Hossō and Sanron (both Kusha and Jōjitsu schools), Kegon, Ritsu, and Tendai (Swanson 2006, 157).

205 Wang Zhenping attributes this failure to two factors. The second was the cleric overestimating Hata influence at court (Wang 1994, 88).
erect a Japanese Mount Wutai was rejected and after this time the sources are silent about his activities.\(^{206}\)

Though ultimately Chōnen’s efforts to see Atago recognized as a local Wutai failed, in 1022, six years after his death, the Udāyana image found a permanent home. That year Chōnen’s disciple Jōsan 頼算 presented Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長 (966-1027), the most powerful courtier of the day, with the Tripiṭaka Chōnen obtained in the Song. Fujiwara Michinaga’s father, Fujiwara Kaneie, had supported the cleric’s Song journey and had aided the cleric in arranging the grand procession marking his return from the Song. Most likely due to Michinaga’s influence, the following year the court granted Jōsan permission to enshrine the Udāyana statue at the Seikaji 棲霞寺 (Wang 1994, 88-89). Significantly, at that time the temple was renamed the Seiryōji, the Japanese rendering of Qingliang Temple.

5.3 Family Matters:

**Chōnen’s Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai-Focused Endeavors**

While inter-sectarian rivalries can explain Chōnen’s failure to establish an ordination platform at Mount Wutai, family ties between the cleric and the Hata and Fujiwara clan may clarify the monk’s interest in the Atago region, as well as Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī. Chōnen’s decision to concentrate his building efforts on Mount Atago was related at least in part to the region’s strong ties with his clan: the Hata, an immigrant kinship group from the Korean peninsula. “Mount Atago and its adjacent lands,” Wang Zhenping explains, “were a stronghold of the Hata clan, to

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\(^{206}\) In the same year his tenure as Tōdaiji’s abbot ended.
which Chônen's family belonged. Chônen obviously counted on fellow clansmen to support his project” (Wang 1994, 87). In addition to the longstanding links between the Hata and this region that Wang discusses, I suspect that lineal bonds between the Hata and the Fujiwara 藤原 and the links of both these families to the cult of Mañjuśrī may help us to understand why Chônen focused his endeavors on this particular locale. It is to the topic of “family matters” that I now turn.

Connections between the Hata and the cult of Mañjuśrī long predate Chônen’s Mount Wutai pilgrimage. An examination of sources concerning the eighth-century monk Gyôki 行基 (668-749) suggests that members of the kinship group were involved in the development of a distinctly Japanese form of Mañjuśrī devotion focused on the cleric. The earliest references to Gyôki appear in the Shoku Nihongi 続日本紀 (late eighth century) and the Nihon ryôiki 日本靈異記 (early ninth century). The texts present him as a traveling priest, builder, and a bodhisattva. The Shoku Nihongi, for example, states:

Gyôki was constantly on the road, and wherever he stopped, he erected temples and practice halls. Within the inner provinces alone, there were forty-nine sites that he worked on. The roads that he helped construct can also be found in various locations.207 Descriptions of Gyôki’s teaching also emphasize the diverse makeup of his audiences. The well-known Nihon ryôiki tale in which he chastises a woman for oiling her hair with boar fat, for example, takes place during one of Gyôki’s sermons at which both monks and lay people are present (Augustine 2005, 131). A second

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207 Similarly, the Nihon ryôiki references Gyôki’s role in engineering projects such bridge and canal construction. Both texts, moreover, connect these types of activities to the monk’s preaching work (Augustine 2005, 125-126).
entry on Gyōki in the same collection begins: “[t]he venerable Master Gyōki constructed a port and dug a canal along the Naniwa river. Monks, lay people, nobles and commoners gathered to hear Gyōki preach the teachings of the dharma” (Augustine 2005, 131).

Based on references such as these ones, Michael Como argues that Gyōki and his followers formed part of an early Buddhist begging and itinerancy tradition. In his *Shōtoku: Ethnicity, Ritual, and Violence in the Japanese Buddhist Tradition* Como proposes that while Gyōki’s movement was widespread during the period, it was nevertheless “an alternative form of Buddhism in which the definition of the clergy and its relationship to the lay community were understood in terms radically different from those propagated by the Nara court” (Como 2008, 112). For Como, this opposition between Gyōki’s popular and geographically diffuse work and the court-focused Buddhism carried out by officially-ordained monks in Nara helps to explain the court’s initially negative appraisal of Gyōki’s practice and teaching. According to Paul Groner, these building and repair activities account at least partially for the subsequent identification of Gyōki as the compassionate Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Groner 2001, 134). In this line of interpretation Gyōki’s building and social welfare projects fulfilled the *Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra* prediction that the Bodhisattva would take on multiple forms, including that of a monk, to provide devotees with a field of merit.

As early as the ninth century, written records identify the monk as an incarnation of Mañjuśrī. While the *Shoku Nihongi* states only that “People called Gyōki ‘bodhisattva,’ because of his miraculous powers,” the somewhat later *Nihon
ryōiki's declares: "Gyōki is indeed the Japanese incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī," who nevertheless, "normally disguised himself as an ascetic" (Augustine 2005, 124, 131). The tradition to which the passage alludes resonates strongly with Guang Qingliang zhuan, as well as Gu Qingliang zhuan stories of Mañjuśrī’s manifestations at Mount Wutai in the guise of a monk that I discussed in the second and fourth chapters.

What happened in the seventy-five years between the Shoku Nihongi's compilation and the Nihon ryōiki's composition that might explain Gyōki's identification as Mañjuśrī? In “Ancient Japan’s bodhisattvas and the masses” 日本古代の菩薩と民衆, Yoshida Yasuo 吉田靖雄 (1998) proposes that there is a relationship between the Nihon ryōiki identification of the cleric as Mañjuśrī and the circulation of information about Mount Wutai in Japan. He suggests that prior to the Nihon ryōiki's completion, the Kōfukuji 興福寺 monk Gyōga 行賀 (729-803) returned from Tang China with news of Amoghavajra’s efforts to see the Jinge (Golden) Temple adorned with magnificent gold tiles at Wutai (Yoshida 1988, 107). The construction of an earthly counterpart to the conjured te Mañjuśrī's golden-hued Pure Land visible to all Mount Wutai visitors.

Another Nihon ryōiki story, Yoshida argues, appears to incorporate the tradition of the golden Mount Wutai into Heian traditions about the itinerant monk Gyōki. This is the Nihon ryōiki tale of Lord Ōtomo no Yasunoko no muraji's 大伴室栖野古連 return from death.\(^{208}\) In a passage that might just as easily be taken from the

\(^{208}\) The Nihon ryōiki makes a similar set of claims in its record of the Hossō monk Chikō who was punished in hell for not recognizing that Gyōki was a manifestation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. It
accounts of Tang monks’ Wutai pilgrimages I introduced in the fourth chapter, the
*Nihon ryōiki* describes the scene that Yasunoko encountered while wandering in the
realm of the dead. He observed:

...a golden mountain which dazzled my eyes as I approached it. There the
late Prince Regent Shōtoku was waiting for me and we climbed to the
summit together. A full-fledged monk was standing on the top of the golden
mountain. Bowing to the prince, he said, ‘I have come from the Palace of the
East...’ He had the prince recite three times, ‘Homage to the Bodhisattva of
Miraculous Power’ and retired (Nakamura 1997, 114).

Most relevant to this dissertation is an explanatory note appended to the tale. In it
the author proposes that the monk-bodhisattva Yasunoko meets “corresponds to
the Bodhisattva Monjushiri...the golden mountain is identified with Wu-t’ai shan in
China, while the “palace of the East” means Japan...” (Augustine 2005, 114). “The
Most Venerable Gyō[k]i,” the episode concludes, “is an incarnation of Bodhisattva
Monjushiri” (Augustine 2005, 115). The dead Yasunoko, it seems, visited a version
of Mañjuśrī's golden-hued Pure Land.209

References to Hata men and women in records of Gyōki’s life and career
indicate that members of Chōnen’s lineage participated in Mañjuśrī veneration long
before he applied to create a local counterpart to Mount Wutai nearby the Heian
capital. The early twelfth-century *Gyōki Bosatsuden* (The Biography of

claims that “[o]n the surface [Gyōki]...seemed like any other Buddhist monk, but he actually hid the
virtues of the bodhisattva within.” The text, further, asserts that Chikō harbored resentment towards
him. Like the Lord Ōtomo no Yasunoko no muraji tale, the Chikō episode takes place after the monk’s
death. It similarly associates Gyōki with a golden pavilion in which, Yama’s attendants explain, the
“famous personage known throughout Japan for his wisdom is going to be reborn” (Augustine 2005,
127-128).

209 Later tradition would come to see Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子 (574-622) as an incarnation of the
patriarch Huisi 慧思 (515-577). Like traditions of “miraculous reversal,” the identification of
historical figures as heroic deities in the Kamakura period seems to reflect the new sense that Japan
forms a central part of the Buddhist world. My discussion of these tales of “miraculous reversals”
begins below on page 202.
the Bodhisattva Gyōki) and Izumi no Kochi’s late twelfth-century *Gyōki nenpu* (The Chronological Biography of Gyōki), moreover, situate Gyōki’s preaching and building work in Yamashiro, the Hata stronghold where Atago stands. These facts led Michael Como to propose that the Hata, along with other immigrant kinship groups named in the Gyōki stories, were key supporters and participants in the Gyōki cult. Como’s hypothesis has intriguing implications for our understanding of Chōnen’s post-pilgrimage career. It seems plausible that the cleric’s efforts to establish a Wutai in the Hata heartland can be read as a continuation of his lineage’s longstanding links to Mañjuśrī through Gyōki. Historical connections between the Hata and Bodhisattva veneration explain Chōnen’s conviction that a project devoted to Mañjuśrī would be successful at Atago.

Lineal affiliations between the Hata and Fujiwara further complicate this situation. From the seventh-century the marriage of Hata women to Fujiwara men cemented ties between two of the most powerful families at court. In his study of the ways that continental rites of purification and exorcism shaped the Nara religious landscape, Como delineates how unions like the one between Hata no Asamoto’s daughter and Fujiwara no Umakai’s 藤原宇合 (694-737) son, for example, represented an avenue through which this immigrant kinship group exerted influence at court (Como 2009, 16). In this instance the child in question, Fujiwara no Tanetsugu (737-785), served as an advisor to Emperor Kammu 桓武天皇 (737-806) and was instrumental in the capital’s relocation from Nara to Yamashiro (Como 2009, 16). The court’s new location set it amid the very same Hata clan
deities and shrines beside which Chōnen sought to erect a Japanese counterpart to Mount Wutai.

Pre-tenth century “marriage politics” through which the Hata and Fujiwara achieved influence at court meant that Chōnen counted among his distant relations including Fujiwara Michinaga and Fujiwara Kaneie (Como 2009, 16, 17). Long before these men assisted Jōsan in establishing the Seiryōji and supported Chōnen’s pilgrimage, the Fujiwara clan had ties to the cult of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai. Japan’s first Mount Wutai pilgrims, Gembō and Gyōga, for instance, were Kōfukuji residents. The clan ujidera was established following Fujiwara (Nakatomi 中臣) no Kamatari’s藤原鎌足 (614-669) death in 699. Beginning in the eighth century knowledge about Mount Wutai was preserved there.

When the first Japanese Mount Wutai pilgrim, Gembō, returned from the Tang in 735 he brought with him not only personal knowledge of the Five Terrace Mountain but also five thousand *juan* of *sūtras* and *śāstra* which he stored in the Kōfukuji.²¹⁰ A number of these texts, such as Daoxuan’s *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, concerned the mountain. In his capacity as trusted advisor to Emperor Shōmu and Queen Consort Kōmyō (701-760) after 737 we can speculate that Gembō shared information about Mount Wutai with Nara courtiers.²¹¹ We know that he exerted

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²¹⁰ See my discussion of this matter on page 177.

²¹¹ Early in his career Gembō had studied with Hossō master Gien 譯淵 (d. 728), a student of Chihō (d.u.), a Silla monk and Hossō master. Gien served as *sōjō* (administrator of priests). In 736 Shōmu granted Gembō 10 *cho* of land, revenue from 100 households, and eight lay followers’ services. In 737 the monk was appointed *sōjō*, a position in which he served until he became entangled in court rivalries. Perhaps because of the relationship he formed in the Tang with Kibi no Makibi, Gembō allied himself the Kibi and Tachibana clans and was banished in 740. Grappard (1992) and Groner (2002) discuss this history.
considerable influence at court—under his auspices the rulers established the office of naidōjō 内道場, a counterpart to the Tang office which placed Buddhist clerics in the palace.²¹² In addition to the Kōfukuji, Gembō had connections to the Fujiwara clan through his relationship with Queen Consort Kōmyō. The daughter of Fujiwara no Fuhito 藤原不比等 and Fujiwara no Kamatari’s granddaughter, Queen Consort Kōmyō became the “de facto leader of the Fujiwara” after the death of Fujiwara no Fuhito’s four sons. (Como 2008, 175).

Several decades later the Kōfukuji monk Gyōga 行賀 (729-803) returned from Mount Wutai. It was Gyōga’s account of Mount Wutai building projects, you will recall, that Yoshida Yasuo argued set the stage for Gyōki’s Nihon ryōki identification as Mañjuśrī. In 791 the cleric was appointed Kōfukuji’s bettō (abbot) and in 796 he assumed a position in the sōgō 僧綱 clerical administration (Adolphson 2000, 49). During the Hossō cleric’s tenure in this position the Kōfukuji became the sole location at which the Yuima’e 維摩會, dedicated to Vimalakīrti, was performed annually (Adolphson 2000, 50). This move seems to anticipate the veneration of Fujiwara no Kamatari as Vimalakīrti, Mañjuśrī’s wise lay companion later on, a topic to which I will return in the next chapter.

Before moving on to consider the implication of Chōnen’s replication for the vision of Mount Wutai’s importance in Heian Japan, let me take a step back in order to clarify why I have addressed the associations between the Fujiwara, Hata, Mount

²¹² Gembō acted as court chaplain (naigubu sō). According to Ross Bender, this represented the first time “a Buddhist party became an influential political force at court.” Gembō may also have been a force behind the creation of the Kokubunji 国分二時 system through which the court officially established, sponsored, and monitored monasteries across the archipelago (Bender 1980, 133).
Wutai, and devotion to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī here. In this exploration of the divergent ends to which Mount Wutai legend was used in East Asia, lineage, it seems to me, goes rather a long way in answering the question why did Chōnen replicate this site at this point in time. Members of the Hata clan and the closely related Fujiwara kinship group were longtime patrons of Mount Wutai pilgrims and participants in the Mañjuśrī cult. Members of the Hata lineage, as Michael Como has shown, actively supported Gyōki. The Kōfukuji and the first Fujiwara imperial consort acted as conduits for the dissemination of information about Mount Wutai in Japan. As we will see in next chapter, in the centuries following Chōnen’s death, new visions of the role that the early Fujiwaras played in the Bodhisattva cult emerged. These re-tellings of the past manipulated Mount Wutai history to create precedent for thirteenth-century Fujiwara practices such as patronage of the Bodhisattva cult and the veneration of Fujiwara no Kamatari as Vimalakīrti.

Examining Chōnen’s lineage connections thus allows us to better understand the process by which a network of Wutai sites, including the Seiryōji, was created and sustained in East Asia and calls attention to the ways in which family matters ultimately informed how, where, and when replicas were replicated.

5.4 Miraculous Reversals

The practice of replicating holy originals did not end with the establishment of the Seiryōji and the installation of the Śākyamuni statue there. Rather, like the image fashioned at King Udayana’s behest, which by the time of Xuanzang’s westward pilgrimage had numerous Indian copies, the statue with which Chōnen returned from the Song became the object of its own replication tradition. Beginning
in the eleventh century this continuation of continental practice, the subject of Donald McCallum’s research, tied together temples across the archipelago. Several of these, such as the Byōdōji 平等寺 and Saidaiji 西大寺, had special connections to the Mañjuśrī cult and to the Fujiwara family. The production and reverencing of images at these locales, which I discuss in chapter six, provided ongoing opportunities for merriment and merit-making of the type that Chōnen’s return to the capital occasioned in 987. In 1249, for example, the monk Kennin 賢任 solicited donations from 180 worshippers to make the Saidaiji replica which was carried from the Seiryōji to the Saidaiji in a grand procession (McCallum 1996, 57). As Kōsen Shōton’s poem evinces, icon-centered activity continued at the Seiryōji into the seventeenth-century.

A miracle tale about the Seiryōji’s central icon that is somewhat earlier than Kōsen Shōton’s writing suggests much about the consequences that replication and relocation practices had for later understandings of Mount Wutai’s importance. The legend concerns the provenance of the Udāyana image with which Chōnen returned from the Song. It appears in the late twelfth-century Hōbutsu shū 宝物集 (Collection of Treasures), as well as the early sixteenth-century Seiryōji engi (A History of Seiryōji) and Seiryōji engi emaki (Narrative Scroll of Seiryōji’s History) (Horton 2007, 28). These materials reveal a major shift in the understanding of the

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213 The Byōdōji 平等寺, which houses a replica of the Udāyana image from 1213, was founded in 1052 by Fujiwara Yorimichi 藤原顕通 (990-1074), son of Fujiwara Michinaga, on the grounds of a clan villa. The Saidai Temple 西大寺, initially erected by Kōmyō’s daughter Empress Kōken, was restored under the Fujiwara monk Eison’s 敬尊 (1201-1290) auspices and became a center for the Mañjuśrī-focused practices of his Shingon Ritsu movement. I discuss these developments in chapter six.
relationship between not only the statue and its East Asian replicas but also Japan and the larger Buddhist world.

Rather than replication, this legend deals with a miraculous reversal through which the “original” Udāyana icon came to be found in Japan. According to the earliest rendering, the night before Chōnen’s departure from the Song the Śākyamuni statue appeared to him in a dream and announced its desire to go to Japan. “[T]he image,” Sarah Horton explains, “was, for all intents and purposes, the Buddha himself” and thus Chōnen complied with his wishes and secretly transported the Indian figure with him to Heian Japan (Horton 2007, 28). The illustrated scroll develops the story; it shows the Śākyamuni images switching places without either Chōnen’s knowledge or his assistance. In both iterations the narrative implies that the icon with which Chōnen returned to Japan and that is housed at the Seiryōji is the very one crafted at the behest of Udāyana during Śākyamuni’s lifetime.

A second name by which the Śākyamuni statue is known—“the Sculpture Transmitted Across Three Countries” Sangoku denrai zō 三國傳來像—alludes to its international history (Henderson and Hurvitz 1956, 6). The eastward path that the object followed from India through China to Japan, according to the earliest accounts, mirrored Buddhism’s own trajectory through time and space. With each reproduction, we can imagine, the figure’s correspondence to Śākyamuni’s form diminished. With each transmission, Chōnen and his contemporaries must have realized, practitioners stood further from the Buddha’s homeland. Later tales of the Udāyana image, beginning with Taira no Yasunori’s 平康頼 (twelfth century)
Hōbutsushū 宝物集 (A Collection of Treasures), reverse this situation. The narratives suggest that Śākyamuni’s true likeness, if not the Buddha himself, is present in Japan. The renderings that remain in China and India, the texts imply, are mere imitations of the “real thing.” Not only do these sources rewrite the relationship between the Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō and its continental counterparts but the stories reconfigure the relationship between the three components of the sangoku paradigm. Rather than becoming diluted as it moved eastward, these retellings of the Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō’s origins imply that Buddhist teachings and practices are preserved only in Japan. Contemporary versions of Gyōki’s hagiography make a related claim about the relationship between Japan and its western neighbors. The eleventh century Gyōki Bosatsuuden suggests not only that the cleric is Mañjuśrī but also asserts that Japan is his new home. The episode concerns an encounter between the south Indian cleric Bodhisena 菩提僊那 (704-760) and Gyōki. In 733 Bodhisena arrived in Nara, Japan after traveling to Tang China where he had visited Mount Wutai. Two decades later he, together with Gyōki, participated in the construction of the Tōdaiji’s central image, presiding over the eye-opening ceremony. The Gyōki Bosatsuuden offers the following account of the clerics’ initial eighth-century encounter. According to the text, when the Indian monk arrived on the shores of Japan he observed Gyōki at a distance. Bodhisena then exclaimed: “I have ventured from Kapilavastu / To meet the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī / Who resides in Japan” (Augustine 2005, 136). The implication here is that the Bodhisattva, like the Udāyana statue, is present in Japan. One can infer that Mount Wutai consequently no longer retains its sacred character rooted in the Bodhisattva’s presence there
because Mañjuśrī has permanently departed from the Five Terraced Mountain to spread the dharma in Japan.

Elsewhere the *Gyōki Bosatsuden* echoes this claim. It pronounces that “[a]s for the Bodhisattva Gyōki, he was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī who resided in the Qingli[an]g mountains. In order to spread the dharma to the masses below, Gyōki left his lotus seat and entered his mother’s womb” (Augustine 2005, 134). Much like sūtra predictions were important to the emerging cult of Wutai in the Tang, these *Gyōki Bosatsuden* materials and legends about the *Seiryōji shaka nyōrai zō* image could be interpreted by Buddhists as a proof that the Bodhisattva and the Buddha had a special and exclusive relationship to a new place. The center of Buddhist belief and practice, the *Gyōki Bosatsuden* stories imply, has radically shifted. Though China had once been home to Mañjuśrī and the Udāyana icon, the Bodhisattva and the very first depiction of Śākyamuni are present in Japan.

**Conclusions**

Depictions of Mount Wutai’s significance vary considerably according to time and place. Imagining its importance, as this *Gyōki Bosatsuden* example shows, served as one means through which Buddhists considered and articulated their relationship to the wider holy world. In this case, the eleventh-century text claims that Mañjuśrī no longer dwells at the Five Terrace Mountain but rather has come to preach the dharma in Heian Japan as Gyōki. Disputing the Bodhisattva’s connection to the Chinese site, this tale, like the *Hōbutsu shū* and *Seiryōji engi* retellings of the Udāyana statue’s origins reconfigure the relationship between the tripartite Buddhist realm.
As the comparison of Chônen’s hagiography indicates, Japanese sources do not put forward a single vision of Mount Wutai. A century before the Gyôki Bosatsuuden’s compilation, Chônen and his biographer Jôsan presented Mount Wutai as the place where visions of Mañjuśrî could be obtained. The document that Chônen circulated to generate support for Song journey in 982 and the record sealed within the Seiryôji shaka nyôrai zô several years later present the mountain as the worthy object of international pilgrimage at which one’s filial obligations could be fulfilled. Japan’s remoteness from Mount Wutai, as well as Mount Tiantai, comes to the fore in these accounts which were penned during roughly the same period as the Song gaoseng zhuan and Guang Qingliang zhuan tales of conjured temples around which I built chapter four.

The gradual lessening of Mount Wutai’s significance in records of Chônen’s life and career reflects the changing circumstances of their audience. In the centuries following the cleric’s death, Japan developed its own sacred landscape that included the Seiryôji. The 972 vow Chônen cosigned with the monk Gizô and a petition that he submitted to the throne in 987 suggest that he envisioned the site as a local counterpart to Mount Wutai and a place at which to renew devotion to Śâkyamuni. Kôsen Shôton’s seventeenth-century poem, with which I began this chapter, establishes the lasting popularity of this center and the dominant role that the Buddha image, and not the site’s Mount Wutai connections, played in defining this temple. The comparatively terse treatment that Mount Wutai receives in the Tôgoku kôsô den, Honchô kôsô den, and Zenrin Kokuhôki at least partially reflects the
expansion of a domestic holy landscape. This development rendered Japan a Buddhist center in its own right.

The emergence of a local Mañjuśrī cult also had implications for the way in which Mount Wutai’s importance was imagined in the centuries following Chōnen’s pilgrimage. The Gyōki Bosatsuden and the Nihon ryōiki stories of the Bodhisattva’s manifestations as the itinerant preacher suggest that visions of Mañjuśrī were available in Japan. Claims that the Seiryōji and, as we will see in the next chapter, a pagoda erected at Tōnomine held a special relationship to Mount Wutai structures contributed to the sense that one could gaze on mountain’s landscape in Japan. In this context, the necessity of pilgrimage to China’s Mount Wutai diminished. It is thus that we find the site gradually being framed not as the international center of the Mañjuśrī cult and the Buddhist world but rather as a hub at which Mañjuśrī’s manifestations confirmed the truth of the Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra claim that the Bodhisattva appeared in human form to provide his devotees with a field of merit. In the sixth chapter of this dissertation I will examine the story of Jōe’s legendary Mount Wutai journey and post-pilgrimage building project to suggest how this vision of Mount Wutai as one locale in a multi-centered network of sites where visions of Mañjuśrī could be obtained developed in the Kamakura period.
Chapter Six

The Portrayal of Mount Wutai as one Hub

in a Multi-Centered Network of Sites Connected to Mañjuśrī

Records of the seventh-century cleric Jōe’s 定慧 (643?-665, 714?) life and career preserve a second story of Mount Wutai’s replication in Japan. This is the account of the miraculous occurrences that attended the construction of a thirteen-story pagoda atop Mount Tōnomine 多武峰. According to tradition, this structure was a counterpart to Mount Wutai’s Baochi Cloister 寶池院 (Jeweled Lake Cloister) erected by Jōe to satisfy the wishes of his deceased father Fujiwara no Kamatari. The narrative appears in Seiin’s 静胤 (c. 1197) twelfth-century Tōnomine ryakki 多武峰略記 (A Brief History of Mount Tōnomine) and the Tōnomine engi 多武峰縁起 (The Origin of Mount Tōnomine) compiled by Ichijō Kanera 一条兼良 (1402-1481). Kokan Shiren’s 虎関師練 (1278-1346) early fourteenth-century Genkō Shakusho 元亨釈書 (Buddhist Chronicle of the Genkō Era), Shiban’s 師範 (1626-1710) Honchō kōsō den 本朝高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan) and Kōsen Shōton’s 高泉性潡 (1633－1695) Tōgoku kōsō den 東國高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Eastern Country) also recount these events. Significantly, however, the earliest records of the monk’s life and career mention neither the Five Terrace Mount nor Tōnomine. What can the vast expansion of Jōe’s hagiography teach us about Mount Wutai’s construction as a holy place? In this chapter I will pursue an answer to this question.
Though almost certainly the stuff of legend and not fact, records of Jōe’s journey to Mount Wutai and his post-pilgrimage building career nevertheless have much to teach us about the ends to which the cult of Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai were used in Kamakura Japan. In this chapter I will suggest that careful study of the multiple redactions of this story illustrates the way in which the past operated as space for creating precedent during this period. I will propose that Jōe’s hagiography, first, redefined Mount Wutai’s former significance in a manner advantageous to proponents of the Fujiwara no Kamatari cult centered at the Kōfukuji and Tōnonime. Constructing an elaborate connection between the first Fujiwara and Mount Wutai, I will show that Jōe’s hagiography validated Kamatari’s twelfth-century veneration as Vimalakīrti by framing his association with Mañjuśrī as an ancient one. Second, I will demonstrate how by anachronistically projecting the practice of erecting thirteen-level pagodas into the mountain’s history, the accounts supplied Shingon Ritsu building practices with a storied past at the Five Terrace Mountain. Depicting the territory as a site among many at which the Bodhisattva had taken on human form in order to provide his devotees with a field of merit, these hagiographies, further, contributed to the belief that Mañjuśrī appeared in the archipelago both as the cleric Gyōki and, in Eison’s Shingon Ritsu rituals, as hinin 非人 (outcasts, literally “non-persons”) because he had already done so at Mount Wutai for centuries. In these ways, later records of Jōe’s life and career fashioned continental counterparts for practices current at the time of the Tōnomine ryakki and Genkō Shakusho’s compilation.
As with the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, and Chōnen materials that I have discussed in the previous chapters, these later accounts of Jōe’s life and career envisioned Mount Wutai’s importance in a manner that met the needs of contemporary religious practitioners. In the concluding section of this chapter I will draw connections between these previous examples and the presentation of the mountain as one site among many at which the Bodhisattva has taken on human form in later versions of Jōe’s hagiography. After comparing the Kamakura portrayal of Mount Wutai as a hub of devotion to Mañjuśrī in an imagined network of sites with representations of the mountain as the regional, national, and international center of Bodhisattva veneration, in the dissertation’s conclusion I will return to the orienting question of my project: how has the writing and rewriting of Mount Wutai’s history allowed local audiences to define and rethink their relationship to the wider Buddhist world?

### 6.1 Jōe’s Expanding Hagiography

Accounts of Jōe’s life and career appear in a number of sources. These include the *Nihongi* 日本記 (Chronicle of Japan), also known as the *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, an early eighth-century chronicle of the archipelago’s history. The *Tōshi Kaden* 藤氏家伝 (Biographies of the Fujiwara Family), a mid eighth-century family history of the Fujiwara compiled by Fujiwara Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂 (704-764) between 761 and 763 also references Jōe (Ooms 2009, 280). His hagiography appears in two works about Tōnomine 多武峰, literally the “Many Warriors Peak,” which stands to the south of today’s Nara. These are Seiin’s twelfth-century *Tōnomine ryakki* and the
fifteenth-century Tōnomine engi by Ichijō Kanera. Three collections of clerical biographies—the Genkō Shakusho, Honchō kōsō den, and Tōgoku kōsō den—also include records of Jōe's life and career. The Zenrin Kokuhōki (Records of National Papers of Great Value Exchanged with Friendly Neighboring Nations), a record of Japan's diplomatic history completed by the Zen monk Zuikei Shūhō 善隣国宝記 (1391-1473) in 1470, references his departure for and return from Tang China.

The sources agree that Jōe traveled to the Tang aboard a ship that departed in 653. The early eighth-century Nihongi mentions the cleric's journey in two passages. The first of these reads:

4th year, Summer, 5th month, 12th day [653]. There were sent to the Great Thang [Tang], as Chief Ambassador, Kishi no Nagani, of Upper Shōsen rank, as Associate Ambassador, Kishi no Koma (also called Ito) of Upper Shō-otsu rank, as Student Priests, Dōgen, Dōtsuu, Dōkwō, Yese, Gakushō, Benshō, Yeshō, Sōnin, Chisò, Dōshō, Jōye (Jōe was the eldest son of Oho-omi of the Middle), Adachi (Adachi was the son of Nakatomi no Kome no Muraji and Dōkwan. Dōkwan was the son of Kudara, Kasuga no Ahata no Omi) as students, Kusuri, Kose no Omi son of Toyotari no Omi, and Okina, Hi no Muraji (son of Madama)...(XXV 54, Aston 1972, 242-244).

The statement that the cleric was “the eldest son of Oho-omi” is reference to the Naidaijin 内大臣 (minister) Nakatomi (Fujiwara) no Kamatari (Ashton 1972, 242-244). Beyond this genealogical detail, the Nihongi tells us very little about the monk's life and career.

The second Nihongi entry in which the monk's name appears is quite similar to the first. It states that

Iki no Hakatoko says: "The student-priest Emyō died in China; Chisò died at sea; Chikoku died at sea; Chisō returned in a Silla ship in the year Kaoye Tora [690]; Gakushō died in China; Gitsū died at sea; Jōe returned in the year Kinoto Ushi [665] in the ship of Liu Degao; Myōi; Hōshō and the students Okina, Hi no Muraji and Kō Ōgon twelve persons in all, with Kan
Chikō and Cho Ganhō, who were half Japan birth, came back this year along with the envoys (Aston 1972, 246).

The earliest account of Jōe’s life and career depicts him as one cleric among the perhaps two or three hundred gakumonsō 学問僧 (student-monks) who traveled to Sui and Tang before 838 (Bingenheimer 2001, 13). Noticeably absent from the record is any mention of Mount Wutai or the pagoda which the cleric purportedly erected at Tōnomine.

Jōe’s hagiography expanded considerably between the time of the Nihongi’s compilation and the end of the twelfth-century. The following pair of Tōnomine ryakki accounts illustrates this point. The first appears toward the engi’s (origin history) beginning in the section concerning stūpas (tōba 塔婆). The first lines of the record announce that the thirteen-story pagoda at the mountain is the stūpa of the Baochi Cloister transported from Mount Wutai (DBZ 118: 498). According to the text, the cleric gathered the materials for its construction while in the Tang. Yet because the ship he boarded to return home was extremely cramped, the Tōnomine ryakki continues, the monk was forced to abandon some of the timber and tiles. After returning to Japan Jōe started construction at Tōnomine. Regrettably, he had

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214 In light of these references to other members of the 653 envoy it is tempting to speculate that Jōe may have had some familiarity with the inchoate cult of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai. The cleric Dōshō 道昭 (629-700) for instance, counted the itinerant preacher Gyōki among his students and may have learned about Mount Wutai while studying in Chang'an between 653 and 660. Dōshō’s hagiography appears in the first section of the Genkō Shakusho devoted to clerics that transmitted knowledge (DBZ 113: 143-144).

215 Though this entry does not mention Jōe by name, elsewhere the text associates him with the events it describes (Tōnomine ryakki DBZ 118: 486).

216 The entry reads: 件塔移清涼山寶池院塔
only enough materials to create a twelve (rather than thirteen) level pagoda. “At midnight” on the day that Jōe made this discovery, the text states, “there was lightning and terrifying thunder, there was a great rain and great wind. Then suddenly the skies cleared. The following morning [the monk] saw [the pagoda] where timber and tiles had accumulated. The shape and color were indistinguishable [from the first twelve-stories he had made]. [Jōe],” the entry concludes, “knew that they had flown to that place” (DBZ 118 498).\textsuperscript{217} As this example illustrates, records of the cleric's life and career expanded considerably between the eighth and twelfth centuries and came to focus on a miraculous building project that the purportedly initiated at Tōnomine.

The notion that a structure—or an entire mountain—came to Japan from elsewhere in the Buddhist world is not unique to this Tōnomine ryakki account. In his “Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness,” Allan Grapard calls attention to the role that the trope of the flying mountain played in the creation of a Japanese sacred landscape. Grapard cites three examples of this phenomenon, including the tradition purporting that Mount Ōmine 大峰山 is Grīdhakūṭa (Vulture Peak) that arrived in Japan amid thunder and tremors on the nineteenth day of the eighth moon of the third year in the Sōchō era (538) (Grapard 1982, 218). In his Daoxuan lushi gantong lù, as I discussed in the third chapter, Daoxuan made a similar claim about Mount Wutai’s relationship to these peaks at which Śākyamuni purportedly

\textsuperscript{217}The entry states: 夜半雷電霹靂。大雨大風。忽然天晴。明朝見之。材瓦積重。形色無異。知飛來也。
preached many sūtras T.2107.437(a,b).\textsuperscript{218} The practice of assigning local sites a foreign origin, as Grapard explains, increased their prestige. Together with the assertion that it was a replica of Mount Wutai’s Baochi Cloister, the claim that the materials for the thirteen-storied pagoda’s completion miraculously flew from China enhanced the sense that Tōnomine was a significant place.\textsuperscript{219}

Another Tōnomine ryakki entry deals with Jōe. It is founded in the section of the text devoted to Tōnomine’s topography (chikei 地形) and revolves around an encounter between the cleric and his father Fujiwara no Kamatari. According to the text, on one occasion Fujiwara no Kamatari appeared before Jōe in a dream. The Tōnomine ryakki asserts that the Fujiwara founder made the following statement about Tōnomine, an alternate name for which was Tammiko 談岑:

The Tammiko mountains in Washū 和州 are a luminous and auspicious 獨絕 site. To the east, in Takayama at Ise, the Great kami Amaterasu protects Japan. To the west, on Mount Kongō, Hōki Bosatsu benefits living beings by expounding the dharma. To the south, on Mount Kimpu, the Avatar Zaō is awaiting the coming of Maitreyā. To the north, on Mount Ōmiwa, the hypostasis of the Tathāgata leads people to salvation. At the center is Tōnomine, location of the marvelous cavern of the Immortals. How could that site differ from Mount Wu-t’ai in China? Should you place my tomb there, my descendants shall rise to superior ranks (DBZ 118: 485).\textsuperscript{220}

Here, once again, the Tōnomine ryakki roots the locale’s specialness in its relationship with Mount Wutai. Comparing Tōnomine with other sites, the text,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{218} I discuss this tradition beginning on page 95 above.
\item \textsuperscript{219} A final statement about the structure further adds to its specialness, as well as its association with the Chinese mountain. According to the Tōnomine ryakki a statue of Mañjuśrī stood in the pagoda’s interior. The Genkō shakusho and Tōgoku kōsō den repeat this claim. (DBZ 104: 9; GSS 101: 238).
\item \textsuperscript{220} The above is Grapard’s rendering of the following passage (Grapard 1993, 237-238):
\end{itemize}
further, claims for the mountain a significance equal to that of Ise 伊勢 or Mount Kinpu 金峯山 and seems to suggest that the first Fujiwara’s importance rivals that of Amaterasu or Hōki Bosatsu 法喜菩薩 (Dharmogata) who, according to Śikṣānanda’s rendering of the Avataṃsaka sūtra, expounded the dharma at Kongō san 金剛山 (Diamond Mountain) T.279.241(b). Kamatari’s relationship to this place is a topic to which I will return presently.

A century after the Tōnomine ryakki’s compilation, Kokan Shiren included the following biography of Jōe in his Genkō shakusho. The account of the monk’s life and career appears in the “kanjin” 感進 section, which Marilyn Ury translates “zeal in (obtaining) supernatural response” (Ury 1970, 130). Like the gantong division of the Song gaoseng zhuan, the subjects introduced in this section of the Genkō shakusho are miracle workers. According to Kokan Shiren:

During [Jōe’s] stay in China the prime-minister [Fujiwara no Kamatari] had died. [Jōe] asked his younger brother Fuhito: “Where is our ancestor buried?” He was answered: “At the Ai mountains 阿威山 in Sesshū 撮州.” Thereupon Jōe said: “Our ancestor once told me secretly: ‘The Tammiko mountains in Washū 和州 are a luminous and auspicious 灵勝 site, not inferior to the Wutai mountains in [the Tang]. If I would be buried there, it would be of great advantage for my children and grandchildren.’ (Jōe continued): When I resided in the [Wu]tai mountains (sic) I dreamed I was in Tammiko and our ancestor told me: ’I have already ascended to heaven. If you start a temple in this place and practice Buddhism, I will descend again and protect it forever after.’ This was in the second watch of the 16th night of the 4th month in 669.” When Fuhito heard this, he cried and said: “This was just the night when our ancestor died. The master’s dream was not empty.”

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221 The Fo xue da ci dian 佛學大辭典 identifies Hōki Bosatsu 法喜菩薩 as a variation of Hōki Bosatsu 法起菩薩 and Hōki Bosatsu 法喜菩薩 (Ding 1969, 1408). Just as Mount Wutai came to be celebrated s Mount Qingliang of the Avataṃsaka sūtra, earthly counterparts to Hōki Bosatsu’s Mount Kongō were identified on the Korean peninsula and in Japan (McBride 2008, 132-133).
Then Jōe and his followers went up the Ai Mountain, took the remains (of Kamatari) and buried them at Tammiko. Thereupon they erected a 13-storeyed pagoda 三十層塔. The material for the building Jōe had already selected and prepared while in China. When he came back he brought it along by boat. But the boat was too small, so the material for one of the storeys couldn't fit in. The pagoda was designed after the pagoda at the Baochi Cloister 寶池院 in the Wutai mountains. But when they erected it, it only had twelve stories and Jōe regretted that he left one behind in China and the construction could not be finished. One night then, there was a thunderstorm with lightning bolts flashing through the sky and the mountain trembling. And the next morning in the first light, there lay the needed material, as if flown from afar. There was neither too much of it, nor too little. The people in Bokuyashū 僕射州 were all deeply moved. An image of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī was carved and put in the pagoda. Jōe died in the seventh year of Wado (AD 714) (DBZ 101: 238).

Examining the terse Nihongi record of Jōe's life and career alongside longer versions found in the Tōnomine ryakki and Genkō shakusho reveals how considerably the cleric's hagiography developed in the centuries following his death. Initially identified only as a son of Fujiwara no Kamatari and portrayed as one cleric among many who voyaged to the Tang, the monk appears in later texts as a Mount Wutai pilgrim and the founder of an important place of practice. In the following pages I want to suggest that the expansion of Jōe's hagiography—in particular his later affiliation with Mount Wutai—suggests three things about the religious landscapes of China and Japan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Most immediately, the tradition placing Jōe at the Five Terrace Mountain in the mid-seventh century indicates the continued importance of the Chinese site in the Heian and Kamakura periods.

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222 The above follows very closely Bingenheimer’s translation (Bingenheimer 2001, 117-118).
6.2 Jōe’s Hagiography and
the Fujiwara no Kamatari Ancestral Cult

Before exploring the significance of the episode affiliating Jōe with Mount Wutai, it is necessary to step back and explain why scholars take the link to be a fabrication. First, as we saw above, the earliest version of his hagiography makes no mention of the mountain. Rather, like the construction of the thirteen-storied pagoda, the reference to Mount Wutai first appears in the twelfth-century. Second, similarities between the Jōe materials and the record of the Silla (668-938) monk Chajang (590-658) in Iryon’s (1206-1289) Samguk Yusa (History and Legends of the Three Kingdoms) led Marcus Bingenheimer to conclude that the texts come from a common source and that they thus ought to be read as legend rather than history (Bingenheimer 2001). I will say more about the Chajang materials below. Here my purpose is merely to explain that in all likelihood Jōe never traveled to Mount Wutai. What then are we to make of the story placing him, together with Fujiwara no Kamatari, at the site?

First and foremost, the development of this narrative suggests that in the Heian and Kamakura period Mount Wutai’s reputation was so great that legends associating it with clerics who had not actually traveled there came into circulation. In addition to Jōe, accounts of the Heian cleric Jakushō (962-1034), born Ōe no Sadamoto 大江の定基, constructed links between the monk and Mount Wutai. Though in all likelihood Jakushō never journeyed to the site, the late Heian Konjaku

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223 The narrative is the subject of Eun-su Cho’s “Manifestation of the Buddha’s Land in the Here and Now.”
Monogatarishū 今昔物語集 (A Collection of Tales Long Ago) and the early thirteenth-century Uji Shūi Monogatari 宇治拾遺物語 (A Collection of Tales from Uji) assert that he witnessed Mañjuśrī’s appearance in the guise of a suffering woman there (Borgen 2003). The tale, which is very similar to the story of the Bodhisattva’s manifestation as a pregnant woman at a ceremonial vegetarian feast that I introduced in chapter four, purports that:

...Jakushō also made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. There he performed various acts designed to bring religious benefit, such as having water heated to provide a bath for the community of monks. When the monks had gathered at that time to enjoy a communal meal, a very dirty-looking woman, carrying a child and accompanied by a dog, appeared in front of Jakushō. Because the woman was covered with unspeakably ugly sores, the others in the group, seeing her, were repulsed and tried to drive her away. But Jakushō, restraining them, gave the woman her helping of the food and prepared to send her off.

The woman said, “My body is covered with sores that are almost too much to endure. I’ve come so I can bathe in the water. Please let me receive a little benefit from the hot water!” The others, hearing this, drove her back, so she was forced to withdraw to a distance. Nevertheless, she managed to steal into the bathhouse, where, holding the child and accompanied by the dog, she splashed about in the hot water.

When the others heard what she was doing, they cried, “Drive her out!” But when they looked in the bathhouse, she had disappeared as though by magic. They were startled and mystified by this, but when they emerged from the bathhouse and looked around, they saw a purple cloud gleaming and rising beyond the eaves. “It must have been Manjusri, who changed into the shape of a woman and appeared here!” they exclaimed. Weeping tears of regret, they bowed to the ground in obeisance, but by that time it was too late (Borgen 2003, 105).224

The late fifteenth or early sixteenth century nō play Shakkyō 石橋 (Stone Bridge) also places Jakushō at Mount Wutai. There, it asserts, he saw the eponymous stone

224 A translation of this material also appears in Kelsey (1975).
bridge leading to the Bodhisattva’s Pure Land (Borgen 2003, 105). In his study of
the drama, Robert Borgen points out that this narrow pass was located at Mount
Tiantai 天台山, rather than Mount Wutai. In both instances, the re-location of
Jakushō’s hagiography like the retelling of Jōe’s life and career reflects Mount Wutai’
prestige.

Second, later records of Jōe’s post-pilgrimage career suggest a relationship
between Japan and the wider Buddhist world that is similar to the one put forward
in the roughly contemporary stories with which I concluded the previous chapter.
Like the Gyōki Bosatsuuden claim that Mañjuśrī no longer dwells at Mount Wutai but
rather has come to preach the dharma in Heian Japan as Gyōki or the Hōbutsu shū
and Seiryōji engi assertions that the “original” Udāyana statue stands on the Seiryōji
temple grounds, this retelling of Jōe’s hagiography purports that a Japanese locale
has a special relationship to a holy “original.” In this instance, a miracle involving
building supplies enables the cleric and his followers to create an exact replica of the
Baochi Cloister in Yamato province. Pilgrimage to Mount Wutai is less pressing, the
narrative implies, because looking at the thirteen-storied pagoda atop Tōnomine
one can obtain a glimpse of its structures in Japan.

Historical developments at Mount Tōnomine and Kōfukuji offer us a third
way to understand the expansion of the cleric’s hagiography. While legend and
history blend together in these records, the association it dramatically depicts
between Fujiwara no Kamatari and Tōnomine was well established by the time of
the Tōnomine ryakki’s compilation. The Fujiwara clan’s affiliations with Mount
Wutai, as I discussed in the previous chapter, were established in the eighth-century
when the Fujiwara *ujidera* (clan temple) served as limen through which knowledge about the holy site was transmitted to Japan. Connections between the clan and Mount Wutai’s chief resident were strengthened when in 802 under the monk Gyōga’s 行賀 (729-803) auspices the Kōfukuji became the sole location at which the Yuima’e 维摩会 was performed annually. The Yuima’e was a six-day *hōe* (dharma gathering) dedicated to Vimalakīrti, the Bodhisattva’s lay companion.

The *Kōfukuji engi* 興福寺縁起 (The Origin History of Kōfukuji) includes a tale explaining the ritual’s relationship to the temple which links the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* and healing. According to the text:

The Prime Minister Fujiwara no Kamatari humbly spoke a Great Vow dedicated to the Peace and Quiet of the Imperial House and the Eternity of the State and started this assembly (Yuima-e) for the first time. Soon afterwards, the Prime Minister was overcome by illness. In order for him to recover, a meditation nun from Kudara named Hōmyō 法明 (Faming) told the Prime Minister: ‘I practice the Great Vehicle and there is a sūtra called the Vimalakīrti in which a chapter on illness is included. I will read and recite it for you and maybe you will recover from your illness.’ Before she had even finished one chapter, the illness of the Prime Minister settled. At that time, the Prime Minister bowed his head, folded his hands and spoke: ‘Continuous life cycles return in accordance with the teachings of the Great Vehicle. The meditation nun will become lecturer and lecture on the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* incessantly for a period of three days.’ In the period after Fujiwara no Kamatari, the ritual was discontinued. This was in Keiun 2 (705), the year of the Wood Snake, in the seventh month of autumn” (DNB 119: 321-322).

In “The Power of Ritual” Mikaël Bauer argued convincingly that sectarian rivalry (and not the patriarch’s healing) likely explains why a ritual built around the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* came to be so important at the Kōfukuji (Bauer 2011). For my

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225 See the discussion of this topic in chapter five beginning on page 199.

226 This translation is Bauer’s (Bauer 2011, 23).
purposes the story indicates that in the ninth century when the courtier Fujiwara Yoshiyo 藤原良世 (823–900) compiled the *engi*, Fujiwara no Kamatari’s affiliation with Vimalakīrti was celebrated in a dramatic narrative about healing. Three centuries later temple practitioners at Kōfukuji venerated Kamatari as an incarnation of Vimalakīrti.227

At Tōnomine practices involving Kamatari took on a distinct form. In his *The Protocol of the Gods*, Allan Grapard explains how, according to tradition, Kamatari not only signaled his presence at Tōnomine through natural phenomena such as earthquakes but also predicted events through cracks that appeared on his effigy that was installed in the shrine-temple multiplex there.228 While the first evidence of Kamatari’s identification as Vimalakīrti’s avatar is from 1158, by placing him, in visionary form, together with Jōe at Mount Wutai, the *Genkō Shakusho* creates a precedent for the Fujiwara forefather’s association with Mañjuśrī during the patriarch’s lifetime rather than following his death via the Kōfukuji. Furthermore, by depicting Kamatari expressing a desire to be buried atop Tōnomine, the text anachronistically projects the peaks’ importance back to Jōe and Fuhito’s time.229 In

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227 In 1158 the Kōfukuji issued a document making this association (Grapard 1984, 254).

228 In his *The Protocol of the Gods*, Grapard quotes extensively from prognostications preserved in the early seventeenth-century *Tōnomine Haretuki* 多武峰破裂記 (Chronicle of the Cracks at Tōnomine). The *Tōnomine Haretuki* proposes that a northward flowing light that appeared at the mountain in 1711, for instance, may have forecast a fire in the palace the next day (Grapard 1992, 237-238, 241).

229 The *Tōnomine ryakki* also suggests the official’s links to this place are ancient. Yet the connection it proposes to Mount Wutai is less direct. The earlier text states that Kamatari wished to be entombed at the mountain, “the location of the marvelous cavern of the Immortals. How could that site differ from Mount Wu-t’ai in China,” he asks Jōe, before promising high rank to his descendents so long as the cleric acts according to his wishes (Grapard 1992, 238).
this way, a ritual of a more recent provenance received an ancient, continental pedigree.

### 6.3 Jōe’s Hagiography and the Shingon Ritsu Movement

#### 6.3.i The Thirteen-Storied Pagoda

As I mentioned above, the Genkō Shakusho entry about Jōe’s Mount Wutai experiences finds a close parallel in Iryon’s Samguk Yusa record of the Silla monk Chajang’s journey to Tang Mount Wutai and its identically named Korean counterpart Mount Odae 五臺山 (Bingenheimer 2001). According to the text, Chajang travelled to the Five Terrace Mountain where he met Mañjuśrī. On one occasion the Bodhisattva purportedly appeared before Chajang as a strange monk. Mañjuśrī addressed him saying “On Mount Odae on the border of Myōngju 滄州, northeast of your country, is the constant dwelling place of ten thousand Mañjuśrīs” T.2039.998(c).\(^{230}\) Just before the mysterious stranger vanished he instructed Chajang to go see Mount Odae. Tradition preserved in the Samguk Yusa claims, further, that when Chajang returned to Silla he erected a nine-storied pagoda at Hwangnyongsa 皇龍寺 (Temple of the Illustrious Dragon) that would guarantee Silla’s military success over its nine neighbors T.2039.990(c). In Bingenheimer’s view, this structure serves as “a monument to the idea of ‘Buddhism for the protection of the state (gokoku bukkyō 護国仏教) in which “Buddhist building”

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\(^{230}\) According to the legend, a dragon dwelling in the Taihe pond 太和池 identified the mysterious stranger explicitly as Mañjuśrī and ordered Chajang to build a monastery and stūpa. This translation appears in the Sourcebook of Korean Civilization (Lee and Baker 1993, 27).
functions a mechanism through which to ensure the state’s welfare (Bingenheimer 2001, 119).

While similarities between the *Samguk Yusa* and Jōe’s hagiography are of interest to Bingenheimer insofar as they reveal the narratives’ common provenance, it is a subtle difference between the Chajang and Jōe tales that is most germane to my discussion of the ways in which stories asserting Mount Wutai’s importance were manipulated to serve the needs of new audiences.\(^\text{231}\) The design of the pagoda to which *Genkō Shakusho* and *Tōnomine ryakki* entries refer is a thirteen-storied tower. The *Samguk Yusa* account, in contrast, mentions Chajang’s connection to a nine-tiered building. The Tōnomine pagoda’s construction implies a link between the Jōe material and the Shingon Ritsu movement absent from the related *Samguk Yusa* tale.

As its name suggests, the Shingon Ritsu 真言律学校 brought together elements of Shingon 真言 (True word) esoteric Buddhism and the Ritsu 律 (Vinaya) sect.\(^\text{232}\) The origins of the movement lie in the second year of the Katei 嘉禎 era (1236) when, according to the *Genkō Shakusho*, the cleric Eison 敦尊 (1201-1290), together with three likeminded practitioners, took the three sets of

\(^\text{231}\)Comparing the *Samguk Yusa* and *Genkō Shakusho* records, Bingenheimer remarks: “Both [Jōe and Chajang] find and plan for their pagoda while traveling in the Wutai mountains, their discovery and erection of the pagoda is connected to a lake and to Monju. Moreover both monks lived at approximately the same time and Jōe is said to have returned [to Japan] in a Silla ship.” Based on these correspondences the author concludes that the narratives emerge from a common source and thus relegates the Jōe record to the realm of hagiography (Bingenheimer 2001, 119).

\(^\text{232}\)Though its beginnings lie in the thirteenth-century with the cleric Eison, it was not until the sixteenth-century that the term Shingon Ritsu was used to describe the movement which combined (Groner 2001, 230).
Mahāyāna precepts through self-ordination (DBZ 101: 297). The hagiography portrays this as a response to Eison’s distress at his contemporaries’ failure to adhere to the precepts (DBZ 101: 297).233 His radical break with tradition enabled the cleric to establish a new ordination lineage centered at the Saidaiji.234 After taking up residence in and restoring the Saidaiji in 1238 Eison and his followers created a network of temples and traveled extensively teaching, fundraising, spearheading construction projects, and carrying out large-scale lay ordinations that brought together people of different social statuses and sex. In her “‘Vows for the Masses,” Lori Meeks credits much of Eison’s success to his readiness to incorporate people of multiple backgrounds into his movement.235 Eison’s Genkō Shakusho biography appears in the short section of the text devoted to individuals who illuminated the precepts (明戒). Yet while accounts of the cleric’s life and career

233 The passage reads: 尊常痛律幢之摧圮。嘉禎二年與同志者四人依大乘三聚通受法自誓受戒。

234 The self-ordination represented a radical break with temple tradition that accepted self-ordination in the bodhisattva precepts (bosatsukai 菩薩戒) alone. On this topic see Blum (2002) and Groner (2001). According to his autobiography, the Kongō bushi kanjin gakushōki 金剛佛子感身學正記 (Record of how the adamantine child of the Buddha (Eison) physically responded to the Buddha and studied the correct doctrine), the cleric undertook took the full set of precepts for monks through self-ordination at the recently restored Tōdaiji 東大寺 with fellow practitioners Kakujō 觉盛 (1194-1249), Ensei 圓晴 (1180-1241), and Ugon 有厳 (1186-1275). The Tōdaiji, together with the Gangōji and Chikurinji in Ikoma, had recently been restored under Enshō’s 圓照 direction.

235 Meeks writes:

The successful expansion of Eison’s Saidaiji Vinaya movement is surely attributable to his innovative uses of the precepts. Eison used the precepts not only to bestow merit upon laypeople, but also as a way of integrating a diverse range of people — elite and non-elite, educated and uneducated, cosmopolitan and provincial — into the membership of his order. At the top, the popularity of his precept-conferral ceremonies enabled him to win the political and economic support of court and warrior elites who simply wanted to partake in the merit of receiving the precepts. On the ground, however, the ceremonies enabled his group to incorporate ordinary laypeople. Through the rites of precept conferral, Eison established powerful links between local lay communities and his Saidaiji-based monastic order (Meeks 2009, 40).
like this one, as Paul Groner has noted, emphasize his efforts to revitalize the
discipline, the cleric wrote extensively on religious ceremonies and, as I will discuss
in more detail below, regularly conducted esoteric Buddhist rituals some of which
centered on images of Mañjuśrī (Groner 2001, 115).

Shimpei Matsuoka takes up the relationship between thirteen-storied pagodas and Eison’s Shingon Ritsu movement in his study of the nō Ama 海女 and the Sanshū Shiru Dōjō engi 讚州志度道場縁起 (The Origin History of Shido Temple in Sanuki Province) on which it is based. Ama’s protagonist is the cleric Jōe’s brother, Fujiwara no Fuhito. It is his lover, the eponymous diver (ama), who observes the thirteen-storied pagoda with which Matsuoka is interested. In addition to the many-tiered towers, two further points of similarity connect Jōe’s later hagiographies to the drama. The narratives both deal with Fujiwara no Kamatari’s immediate descendants and both concern plans to memorialize the deceased patriarch. I will briefly outline Ama’s plot here before moving on to discuss what this overlap suggests about the Shingon Ritsu movement’s intertwining with the Fujiwara clan, Mañjuśrī and Gyōki.

We can divide Ama’s story line into three sections, the first which concerns
the loss of the wish fulfilling jewel (nyoi hōshu 如意宝珠). The second revolves
around the quest to reclaim the object and is followed by the dénouement. Briefly, in
the drama and engi Kamatari’s daughter was Tang Gaozu’s 唐高祖 (618-626) consort and it is she who introduces the jewel into the story. Learning of her father’s

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236 Royall Tyler also translates sections of this engi in his “The True History of Shido Temple.”

237 The Sanshū Shiru Dōjō engi also identifies this object as an "every-facing jewel" 真向珠.
death, the empress attempted to send the object to the Kōfukuji as a memorial. A storm forced the captain transporting the gem to throw it overboard as he approached Fusazaki Bay 房前浦. Fujiwara no Fuhito, Kamatari’s son and Jōe’s brother, thus journeyed to the shore in search of the object. There he met the diver with whom he conceived Fujiwara no Fusazaki. Following Fusazaki’s birth, the diver agreed to recover the jewel for Fuhito so long as he recognized their child as his heir. The diver found the gem in a dragon god’s palace within a “thirteen-storey crystal pagoda, thirty feet high” before which “Dragon maidens offer flowers ceaselessly, day and night.”

Though she eventually succeeded in reclaiming the object, she was attacked by the dragon and died shortly after resurfacing. Soon thereafter Fuhito emplaced the jewel in a Śākyamuni statue he commissioned to memorialize Fujiwara no Kamatari at the Kōfukuji and the diver was reborn as a dragon who guarded over the Fujiwara ujidera in a nearby pond. The narrative concludes with Fusazaki visiting his mother’s grave at the age of thirteen accompanied by the twenty-six year old Gyōki. Fujiwara no Fusazaki built a temple and commissioned the construction of one thousand pagodas along the shoreline to commemorate his mother. He also arranged to have eight lectures on the Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra performed.

The objects activites common to Jōe’s hagiography and the engi / nô tale—thirteen-storied pagodas and memorial rites—occupied an important position in Shingon Ritsu history. In his study of Ama, Shimpei Matsuoka ties the first of these to the Shingon Ritsu movement’s building practices and social makeup. According to

238 The Sanshū Shiru Dōjō engi translation is Tyler’s (Tyler 2007, 64-65).
the author, Eison’s followers erected these structures as the movement expanded into the Inland Sea region (Seto naikai 瀬戸内海), the very area where Fusazaki Bay stands. He asserts that these pagodas signified the salvation of hinin (outcasts), including people whose livelihood depended on the sea (Matsuoka unpublished, 10, 12). Significantly, the very first locale at which Eison and his disciples established a thirteen-tiered pagoda was the Hannyaji 般若寺. On a number of occasions the group conducted Mañjuśrī-focused rituals in which outcasts played a fundamental role at the Hannyaji.

Erecting thirteen-storied pagodas seems to have formed part of the larger Shingon Ritsu ritual program that also involved the creation, dedication, and reverencing of statues in conjunction with mass lay ordinations and fundraising projects. These images included five figure sets depicting Mañjuśrī alongside four attendants. As I discussed in chapter five, these Monju goson 文殊五尊 pentads gave visual expression to stories of Mañjuśrī’s Tang manifestations at Mount Wutai. They set Mañjuśrī on his lion alongside Buddhapāla an old man (perhaps a manifestation of the Bodhisattva), the King of Khotan, and Sudhana. In 1267 and 1269, Eison and his followers installed Mañjuśrī statues at the Hannyaji in rituals that brought

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239 Erecting thirteen-tiered stone pagodas is, according to Matsuoka, an adaptation of Jōkei’s 貞慶 (1155-1213) practice which entailed establishing wooden thirteen-storied structures. The stonemason with whom Eison and his followers worked, Igyōmatsu, according to Matsuoka also participated in the Tōdaiji’s reconstruction. In addition to Matsuoka, James L. Ford discusses this topic in his “Jōkei and the Rhetoric of "Other-Power" and "Easy Practice" in Medieval Japanese Buddhism.”

240 This category of persons emerged as a distinct group in the tenth or eleventh century (Andreeva 2006, 356).

241 The Hannyaji structure was erected in 1253 (Matsuoka, 8).
together lay and ordained men and women of all social strata in the production of images.

The ceremonies Eison and his followers conducted to make and venerate Mañjuśrī statues simultaneously provided participant-donors with opportunities to make merit and encounter the Bodhisattva. It was Eison's plan, David Quinter explains in his study of the cleric's efforts at the Hannyaji, “that the monks and other donors participating in the ceremony would actually see the ‘living Mañjuśrī’ (shōjin Monju 生身文殊) (Quinter 2007, 438, 441). Examining a pair of devotional texts, ganmon 願文, that the group emplaced in the Hannyaji statues in 1267 and 1269 Quinter argued convincingly that the Bodhisattva was understood to be present both in the image as well as in the form of the gathered hinin.\(^ {242} \) Beginning in the tenth or eleventh century, hinin very often lived together in separate and specially established facilities at religious complexes where their ability to deal with pollution, and thus perform labor and participate in mortuary rites, made them a valuable asset (Andreeva 2006, 356, 358). From a Buddhist perspective, Anna Andreeva tells us:

...these people had accumulated so much evil karma that they were subject to retribution not only in future lives, but also during their lifetime. However, despite their socially inferior position, hinin were also considered [by Eison and his followers] reincarnations of the [B]odhisattva Mañjuśrī (Andreeva 2006, 356, 357).

\(^{242}\) On the statuary-related practices of Eison and his followers see Matsuo Kenji 松尾剛次 (1998). These ganmon are the Hannyaji Monju engi 般若寺文殊緣起 (1267) and the Hannyaji Monju bosatsu zō zōryū ganmon 般若寺文殊菩薩造立願文 (1269) (Quinter 2007, 441).
This vision of Mañjuśrī shares much in common with stories of the Bodhisattva’s appearances in human guise at Mount Wutai such as the tale of his manifestations as a pregnant woman at the vegetarian feast.

Shingon Ritsu practices involving hinin found scriptural inspiration in the Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra assertion claim that the Bodhisattva takes on the form of a poor beggar and, in this way, creates a field of merit, fukuden 福田, for devotees. According to the sūtra:

If a sentient being pays homage and makes offerings to Mañjuśrī, then that person will always be born in a land where a Buddha is present and be protected by Mañjuśrī...If a person wishes to make offerings in order to produce merit, then Mañjuśrī will transform himself into a poverty-stricken suffering wretch with no means of support and appear before the practitioner T.463.481(a,b).243

This declaration, Paul Groner explains, established a scripturally sanctioned space in which “alms to the poor could be viewed as offerings made to Mañjuśrī himself” (Groner 2001, 134-135).

This scriptural representation of Mañjuśrī and his ritual role in Eison’s movement resonates with depictions of the Bodhisattva familiar from sūtras and stories discussed elsewhere in this dissertation. Like Mañjuśrī in the Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra, the layman Vimalakīrti, for instance, skillfully manifests sickness for the benefit of other sentient beings.244 Tales of Mañjuśrī’s manifestations in disguise at Mount Wutai, including the story of his appearance as an elderly stranger

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243 This is Groner’s rendering of the passage (Groner 2001, 135).

244 I am grateful to Dr. Michael Como for pointing out the apparent affinity between Eison’s hinin centered practices and the narrative of Mañjuśrī and Vimalakīrti’s encounter in the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra.
before Buddhapāla and, especially, the Gu Qingliang zhuan story of his appearance as a sick monk to the cleric Mingxu accord with this portrayal of the Bodhisattva. Records of the cleric Gyōki’s itinerant preaching and building projects involving men and women of all social strata also fit comfortably in this context.

Significantly, when we read the Hannyaji Monju engi (Origin History of the Hannyaji Mañjuśrī Statue) we find Eison making some of these very same associations. The Hannyaji Monju engi connects Mañjuśrī-centered practices at the Nara-area temple with narratives with Gyōki and narratives about Mount Wutai of today’s Shanxi province. Written by Eison and his followers in 1267 and sealed within the cavity of a Mañjuśrī statue they enshrined at the Hannyaji, the text reads:

...on one occasion he [Mañjuśrī] manifested himself as an old man and lamented the evil deeds of monastics and lay in the Land of the Han (China). He thus ordered a Western Country śramaṇa to transmit the (Butchō) Sonshō (daranikyō) to Cīnasthāna (China). On another occasion he manifested himself as an Indian monk and grieved over the sentient beings of the ten directions who lacked the Dharma. He thus urged the Meditation Master of Mount Hêng (Hui-ssu) to entrust his rebirth to the Country of the Sun (Japan). Another time, he manifested himself as a starving man and revealed the inner attainment of the Prince of the Upper Palace (likely a reference to Shōtoku). On still another occasion, he manifested himself as Gyōki and assisted emperor Shōmu’s external activity. Such transformations are countless; they were undertaken to extinguish the transgressions of sentient beings and induce the initial awakening of the aspiration to seek enlightenment (Quinter 2007, 462, 463).

This passage forms part of the first section of the engi in which Eison celebrates the bodhisattva, “the birth-mother of equal-and-perfect awakening” (Quinter 2007, 462, 463).

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245 I discuss this material in chapter two on page 62.

246 See Kanbayashi Naoko’s 上林直子 “Eison no Gyōki shinkō 叡尊の行基信仰” (Eison’s Gyōki belief) for a further examination of the connections between Eison and the Nara period cleric.

247 This is a reference to the Buddhapāla legend that I discuss in chapter four beginning on page 114.
After enumerating the many ways that sentient beings remain trapped in samsara in section two, the final part of the text portrays precept conferral, statue-making and construction as a means to escape the realm of suffering. According to the *Hannyaji Monju engi* Mañjuśrī takes on multiple forms—including that of an elderly stranger—to “extinguish the transgression of sentient beings and induce the initial awakening of the aspiration to seek enlightenment” (Quinter 2007, 463). The text suggests that Eison and his followers understood the creation of thirteen-storied pagodas and Mañjuśrī images to be a Kamakura counterpart to the Bodhisattva’s efforts at Tang period Mount Wutai and elsewhere in the Buddhist world.\footnote{The references to Huisi 慧思 (515-577), Shōtoku 聖徳太子 (574-622), and Shōmu 聖武天皇 (701-756) suggest, further, that the tradition of Mañjuśrī’s manifestations in human form is more varied and complicated than the present chapter implies. A *Konjaku Monogatarishū* 今昔物語集 (A Collection of Tales Long Ago) story about the cleric Jakushō 寂昭 (962-1034), for instance, indicates that Gyōki was not the sole Japanese monk identified as Mañjuśrī. The late Heian period text purports that people also held Risshi 律師 (preceptor) Shohan 清範 (d. 999) to be an incarnation of the Bodhisattva. The text purports that Shohan and Jakushō’s friendship began long before they took tonsure. Perhaps as a mark of their closeness, Shonan gave Jakushō his rosary. When Jakushō arrived at the Song court in 1003 he met the recently deceased Shonan reborn as a young prince who addressed him in Japanese saying “I gave you [those] beads which you have been cherishing for a long time.” The episode continues: Jakushō remembered that people used to call his friend Shohan an incarnation of Bodhisattva Monju since he was cultivating people’s piety by his skilful preaching. Now convinced that Shohan was the incarnation of Monju, the overwhelmed Jakushō shed tears and bowed in prayer towards the direction where the little prince disappeared. This narrative is significant to my study insofar as it demonstrates that there was considerable flexibility in the application of these stories about the Bodhisattva’s manifestations in human form (Dykstra 199802003, 53).}

6.3.ii Shingon Ritsu Memorial Rites

How did Eison’s precept revival movement become intertwined with Mañjuśrī veneration? The answer to this question sheds light on the association between the thirteen-storied pagodas and memorial rites in Jōe’s hagiography.
Studying Mañjuśrī’s place in Shingon Ritsu, David Quinter has called attention to the interests of Eison’s disciple Ninshō 忍性 (1217-1303). This cleric undertook practices focused on Mañjuśrī at sites associated with the cleric Gyōki. According to the *Genkō shakusho*, for instance, Ninshō had a large Mañjuśrī image fashioned (DBZ 101: 298). This object stood at the Hannyaji during Koken Shiren’s lifetime (DBZ 101:298). Before becoming Eison’s disciple in 1239, the monk’s practice included the contemplation of Mañjuśrī and recitation of the five-syllable Mañjuśrī dhāraṇī 五字文殊, praised on the woodblock print of the Bodhisattva and four attendants sealed within Chōnen’s *Seiryōji Shaka nyūrai zō*, and contemplation of the Bodhisattva (Quinter 2007b, 68). Ninshō carried out these endeavors at the Ikoma Chikurinji 生駒竹林寺 (Ikoma Bamboo Forest Temple). Significantly, during the period when Ninshō began travelling to the temple, Gyōki’s relics were purportedly rediscovered at the site.

The thirteenth-century *Ikomayama chikurinji engi* 生駒竹林寺縁記 (The Origin of the Chikurin Temple of Mount Ikoma) details these happenings. It was compiled by Jakumetsu 寂滅 (d.u.) in the Buryaku 文歴 (1234-1235) era. The text states that in the second year of the Tenpuku era 天福 (1233-1234) Gyōki appeared before the monk Keion 慶恩 (d.u.) in a series of visions (DBZ 119: 13). Gyōki’s manifestations eventually compelled the monk Keion to unearth his grave on the temple grounds. These events sparked resurgence in interest in Gyōki not only at

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249 On Ninshō see also Nakamura Hajime 中村元 (1964).
the Ikoma Chikurinji but also at the Tōdaiji where commemorative services were held for the cleric in 1259, 1261, and 1263 (Augustine 2005, 116). Based on details such as these, David Quinter credits Ninshō and not Eison with incorporating Mañjuśrī veneration to the Shingon Ritsu movement and energetically leading its followers in public works activities (doboku jigyō 土木事業) of the type with which the Shoku Nihongi and the Nihon ryōiki associate Gyōki.

The initial impulse that precipitated Ninshō’s Bodhisattva veneration and building projects clarifies the significance of the episode with which Ama concludes and may suggest why Mañjuśrī is linked with memorial rites in the drama and Jōe’s later hagiographies. According to the Genkō shakusho, at the start of the Kangen 寛元 era (1243-1247) Ninshō conducted rituals for the benefit of his deceased mother (DBZ 101: 298). The following passage from the Kongō busshi kanjin gakushōki 金剛佛子感身學正記 (The Record of the Adamantine Son of the Buddha’s Learning the Correct after Experiencing Efficacious Responses) ties Ninshō’s endeavors to accumulate merit necessary to achieve his deceased mother’s liberation to Mañjuśrī. The text purports that Ninshō addresses Eison saying:

“...for the thirteenth anniversary of my mother’s death, I will compose seven pictures of Mañjuśrī and enshrine them at seven (hinin) communities in this province, and on the twenty-fifth day of each month have this jewel-name chanted incessantly from morning until night. I shall send the generated merit to the place where my departed mother has been reborn and effect the supreme cause for her liberation (Quinter 2007b, 58, 59, 92).

250 I reference this text above on page 225.
In a passage that echoes Chōnen’s stated motivations for journeying to Mount Wutai, Ninshō elsewhere in the text reiterates that this practice will enable him to “fulfill [his] original vow to repay [his] mother’s kindness and express [his] gratitude for her virtue” (Quinter 2007b, 58-59).

In 1244 Ninshō fulfilled his vow. On the twenty-sixth day of the second month, Eison joined the cleric in commemorating the thirteenth-year anniversary of his mother’s death. While both Jōe’s later hagiographies and narratives about his brother Fujiwara no Fuhito and the diver woman deal with the issue of memorializing Fujiwara no Kamatari, the nō concludes with a reference to Fusazaki honoring his mother on this very occasion. The cleric Gyōki, one model for Ninshō’s public works projects, appears together with Fujiwara no Fusazaki in the drama. Like the thirteen-storied pagoda, these references suggest the wider Shingon Ritsu context to which the drama, the temple engi, and the hagiography were addressed.

Intriguingly, two of the temples that figure prominently here—the Hannyaji and Ikoma Chikurinji—share their names with Mount Wutai structures. Like the Qingliang Temple, a counterpart to Chōnen’s Seiryōji, the Bore Temple 般若寺 and the Zhulin Temple 竹林寺, as I discussed in chapter four, were purportedly earthly versions of the conjured structures into which monks entered in the mid-eighth

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251 The Bodhisattva’s affiliation with motherhood and women more broadly finds precedent in the epithet “Mother of Awakening” 覺母 (juemu, kakumo) and his depiction in gaitōe 蓋襠衣 (women’s garments) beginning in the Tang (Quinter 2007b, 97). The Gu Qingliang zhuan tale of the Bodhisattvas appearance before Gao Shoujie and the well-known Nittō guhō junrei gyōki account of in which Mañjuśrī takes on the form of a pregnant woman at a vegetarian feast also promote this vision of the Bodhisattva.

252 The pair carried out an assembly for seven Yamato hinin communities the previous day (Quinter 2008, 46).
century. As the reference to Gyōki in the *Hannyaji Monju engi* and the *Ikoma Chikurinji engi* indicate, both sites had links to Mañjuśrī through his purported manifestation as the itinerant Nara-period cleric. The Hannyaji and the Ikoma Chikurinji, moreover, both housed Mañjuśrī pentads that gave visual expression to Mount Wutai legend. These points of overlap suggest that naming may have constituted a further way in which Chōnen’s later contemporaries established connections between Japanese locales and continental Mañjuśrī veneration.

A final feature of the Shingon Ritsu movement casts light on the significance that Mañjuśrī’s worship held for Eison and his followers: it is the relationship between practice and time. Like the Hossō master Jōkei 貞慶 (1155-1213) from whom he received the precepts, Eison understood himself to be living in the era of dharmic decline. The *Beihua jing* 悲華經 (Compassionate Flower Scripture), a sūtra important not only to Eison but also Chōnen, clarifies how they viewed Śākyamuni’s significance in this period. The text presents Śākyamuni in a past life vowing to be born in the world of defilement (*edo 禪土*) with the power to aid

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253 Today the Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺, founded by Ganjin, houses the objects initially found at the Ikoma Chikurinji. Tradition holds that Gyōki had relationships to a number of Chikurinji across the archipelago. These include a Chikurinji in Hiroshima and the Kōchi Chikurinji. The latter Shingon temple houses an earlier, Heian period version of the Mañjuśrī pentad (Wu 2002, 76-77).

254 Jōkei developed the recitation of Śākyamuni’s name (*Shaka nenbutsu 釈迦念仏*) as a counter to the recitation of Amida’s name that Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212) promoted as a response to the obstacles that practice during *mappō* entailed (Groner 2001, 121).

255 Eison alludes to this text in several vows (*ganmon*). It was installed both in his portrait sculpture and the Seiryōji Udayāna statue. It is thus that we know of its importance to these figures (Groner 2001, 121).
sentient beings in the mappō period.\textsuperscript{256} The \textit{Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra} and the \textit{Mañjuśrī dharma ratnagarbha dhāranī sūtra}, as I discussed in chapter four, similarly associate Mañjuśrī’s manifestations with a specific temporal location: the period following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāṇa to which, according to the latter text, the Bodhisattva’s dhāraṇī is ideally suited.\textsuperscript{257}

Like stories of the Bodhisattva’s manifestation in conjured temples, Shingon Ritsu practices in which hinin participated as “living Mañjuśrī,” confirmed scriptural predictions that visions of Mañjuśrī and his teachings would continue to be available following Śākyamuni’s parinirvāṇa. Yet while \textit{Guang Qingliang zhuan} and \textit{Song gaoseng zhuan} stories of these extraordinary structures present Mount Wutai as the place of utmost importance in this period, Eison’s hinin-related rituals and Jōe’s \textit{Genkō Shakusho} and \textit{Tōnomine ryakki} hagiographies imply that the mountain is only one site among many at which the Bodhisattva has taken on human form. In the Kamakura, the allusions Eison and his followers made to Mañjuśrī’s appearance as an elderly stranger in votive inscriptions (\textit{ganmon}) and depictions of him as a youth astride his lion-mound that Shingon Ritsu practitioners sponsored at the Hannyaji and other temples illustrated the Bodhisattva’s ongoing importance in latter age of the teachings. In this context, textual and visual accounts of the Bodhisattva’s Mount Wutai manifestations served as proof that Mañjuśrī might take on human form in multiple locales as he did in hinin-focused Shingon Ritsu ritual.

\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{256} In light of the \textit{Beihua jing} claims, Groner explains, “[m]onks such as Jōkei and Eison, “could argue that Śākyamuni was the appropriate Buddha for their time, allowing them to compete with Pure Land groups focusing on Amida.” According to Groner, the Taishō canon version of the \textit{Beihua jing} does not include a number of these vows (Groner 2001, 121-122).
\item \textsuperscript{257} I discuss the passage T.1185.791(b,c) in chapter four beginning page 159.
\end{enumerate}
Conclusions

The rewriting of Jōe’s hagiography to include a reference to Mount Wutai and the construction of a counterpart to the Baochi Cloister provided precedent for two practices that were current at the time of the Genkō Shakushō and Tōnomine ryakki’s compilation. First, the episode projected Tonōmine’s importance back to the time of Jōe and Fuhito and fashioned an early link between Fujiwara no Kamatari and Mañjuśrī that rendered his twelfth-century identification as Vimalakīrti less astonishing. Second, the hagiography includes an element intimately associated with Eison’s Shingon Ritsu movement: the thirteen-tiered pagoda. Projecting the practice of erecting thirteen-storied pagodas into Mount Wutai’s distant past, the Jōe entry, like the Ama and engi tale, intensified the Shingon Ritsu structure’s association with Mañjuśrī via his earthly dwelling place. In this way the stories created an ancient, continental provenance for a Shingon Ritsu practice with historical roots in the twelfth century.

Creating elaborate connections between the first Fujiwaras and Mount Wutai and extending the practice of erecting thirteen-tied pagodas into the mountain’s ancient past in this way, the Genkō Shakushō story recalls the Gu Qingliang zhuan narrative of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple around which the second chapter of this dissertation built. Careful study of that Gu Qingliang zhuan tale revealed that proponents of the Bodhisattva cult fashioned an early history for the temple and, with it, the veneration of the site as Mañjuśrī’s dwelling place by bringing together, first, the record of an unnamed sixth-century eunuch’s healing, second, the account of an unnamed layman’s self-immolation and, finally, the story of Aśoka’s 84, 000
relic mounds. Like the Kamakura period rendering of Jōe’s life and career, the seventh-century Mount Wutai gazetteer cobbled together early Mount Wutai history from legends associated with other times and places in order to create a dramatic precedent for contemporary Mañjuśrī-focused practice.

The portrayal of Mount Wutai as the place where Mañjuśrī is present in the Gu Qingliang zhuan and Guang Qingliang zhuan differentiates these texts from Jōe’s hagiography. The Genkō Shakushō and other post eleventh-century accounts of the monk’s life and career assert that miracle tales involving Mañjuśrī and glimpses of Mount Wutai can be obtained at the thirteen-stories pagoda at Mount Tōnomine. In this regard the account finds closer parallel in the narratives with which I concluded the fifth chapter. These are the Hōbutsu shū tale of the original Udāyana image’s transportation to Heian Japan and the Gyōki Bosatsuden assertion that Mañjuśrī departed from Mount Qingliang to preach the dharma in Nara Japan. Like these examples, Jōe’s Genkō Shakushō hagiography simultaneously elevates the importance of a local site while diminishing the necessity of pilgrimage to China’s Mount Wutai.

In a manner very similar to records of Chônen’s Song journey and post-pilgrimage building career, the Jōe legend grounded the holiness of a Japanese site in its purported correspondence to a Mount Wutai structure. The Genkō Shakushō alleges that, like the Seiryōji, the thirteen-storied pagoda Jōe and his followers erected at Tōnomine had a Mount Wutai counterpart, the Baochi Cloister. As the Udāyana statue’s continued importance at the Seiryōji and the flourishing of divination practices related to Fujiwara no Kamatarî’s effigy at Tōnomine indicate,
these Japanese structures did not by any means function as exact replicas of Wutai originals but rather took on a distinctly local coloration. In Kamakura Japan, the Wutai “replica” purportedly created by the Nara period monk contributed to the sense that the center of a founder cult was the worthy object of devotion because it had long been a place of practice and possessed a famous continental counterpart.
Chapter Seven

Re-Presenting Mount Wutai's Past

In this dissertation I have explored diverse imaginings of Mount Wutai’s significance put forward between the seventh and fourteenth centuries. During this period, five peaks on the Buddhist world’s periphery were transformed from sites of regional religious activity into a center of devotion to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and an entity of pan-Asian importance. In this process the mountain’s eminently supple history was repeatedly written and recast in ways that met the needs of changing audiences. In this project I have endeavored to explain how and for whom the presentation and re-presentation of the Mount Wutai’s early significance worked.

Investigating this topic, I have examined the site’s construction as a holy place both within and well beyond the borders of its present day Shanxi province home. References to the arrival of foreign monks including Shijiamiduoluo and Buddhapāla in the seventh-century establish that from an early date Mount Wutai was an international pilgrimage destination and source of teachings and texts. The study of materials connected with the clerics Jōe and Chōnen revealed that beginning in the tenth-century the mountain served as a template for the creation of sacred place outside of China. While in this dissertation I have confined my exploration of this topic to a pair of Heian and Kamakura examples, the practice of linking structures outside the Tang or Song to Wutai “originals” was not restricted to Japan. Today Mount Wutai counterparts stand in, among other places, Nepal, Korea, and Canada. Calling attention to the role that replication played in the growth
in scale and geographic reach of the Wutai world, this study underscores the value of examining local traditions in their larger East Asian context.

The range of visual and textual sources around which I have built my analysis include local gazetteers, clerical biographies, temple chronicles, court memorials, diaries, statuary sets, and inscriptions. The study of these different materials has brought to light, on the one hand, Mount Wutai’s ubiquity in seventh to fourteenth century sources. It has highlighted, on the other hand, to the multiple, fluid, sometimes-competing ways that the mountain has been imagined in different times and places. Records of the site have portrayed it as, among other things, the dwelling place of immortals, Mañjuśrī’s Pure Land, a realm that is ultimately devoid of any special significance, the sole location at which the teachings can be accessed in the period of dharmic decline, one site in a network of locales at which the Bodhisattva has taken on human form, a distant locale where individuals could repay their debt to their parents.

These highly varied representations of the mountain’s past are the product of a complex intertwining of local and translocal traditions. In each of the five main chapters into which I divided the dissertation I have attempted to highlight some of the social, political, and cultural forces that shaped how Mount Wutai’s former importance was presented in particular temporal and spatial settings. In the second and third chapters, for instance, I read references to an Aśoka stūpa on the Middle Terrace and stories of the manifestation of mysterious sounds and sights before early Tang pilgrims in Huixiang’s gazetteer against the backdrop of Emperor Wen of the Sui and Empress Wu Zetian’s efforts to depict themselves as legitimate rulers.
Approached in this fashion, we are able to appreciate that narratives celebrating the mountain as a place where practitioners perceived mysterious phenomena might have been taken not only as indications of this territory’s specialness but also signs of a ruler’s righteousness. Examined in the context of the gazetteer’s initial compilation, references to relic mounds erected by Aśoka in the Gu Qingliang zhuan emerge both as a means of extending the mountain’s newfound importance into the distant past and providing local models for relic campaigns of the type conducted by the seventh-century Sui and Tang monarchs.

In chapter four we saw how stories about visionary building carried a somewhat different significance beginning in the mid-eighth century. At this time, Emperor Xuanzong bestowed plaques on five Mount Wutai temples thus marking them as officially-recognized structures. Traditions recorded in Amoghavajra’s memorial to Emperor Daizong of the Tang, Ennin’s Nittō guhō junrei gyōki and, later, Zanning’s collection of clerical biographies and Yanyi’s gazetteer reveal that the majority of these structures were believed to be earthly counterparts to monasteries that Mañjuśrī manifested at Mount Wutai. Portraying the mountain as the access point to the Bodhisattva’s Pure Land where visions and teachings could be obtained in the era of dharmic decline, these tales of conjured temples explained why a handful of temples among many at the site were worthy of the privileged status they continued to enjoy during Emperor Taizong of the Song’s reign when they were among the ten structures repaired with imperial funds.

Comparing depictions of Mount Wutai in Chōnen’s hagiography revealed a relationship between the Chinese site’s portrayal and the development of a Japanese
religious landscape. The earliest versions of Chōnen’s life and career, including those he authored, stressed the mountain’s remoteness and represented it as the place Mañjuśrī was present and one’s debts to one’s parents could be repaid. This portrayal of the territory implied that Chōnen was both a filial son and highly devoted pilgrim and during the monk’s lifetime and in the decades following his death this imagining of the monk and mountain must surely have assisted the cleric and his disciples in generating support for his pilgrimage and building career. Mount Wutai’s importance diminishes considerably in later versions of Chōnen’s hagiography including those contained in the Tōgoku kōsō den and Honchō kōsō den. One explanation for this change is the emergence of a network of Japanese sacred sites including Chōnen’s Seiryōji. Westward pilgrimage to territories including Mount Wutai was a less pressing concern when, as the stories of “miraculous reverals” I examined in chapter five explain, the original Udāyana image and Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī were present in the archipelago. Here the formation of a local sacred landscape shaped how a translocal entity, Mount Wutai, was imagined.

In a similar fashion, references to a thirteen-storied pagoda in post-eleventh century accounts of Jōe’s life and career and stories about his Mount Wutai meeting with Fujiwara no Kamatari used the mountain’s distant past to address immediate concerns. As we saw in chapter six, these episodes simulataneouly reinforced the first Fujiwara’s association with Mañjuśrī while creating a continental model for Shingon Ritsu building practices. In this context, miracle tales about early Mount Wutai defined the site’s significance in ways advantageous to a contemporary audience. In this case proponents of devotional cults at Kōfukuji and Tōnomine, as
well as Eison, Ninshō and their followers found precedent for their innovative practices in Mount Wutai’s ever-changing past.

The writing and refashioning of Mount Wutai’s past, as these examples illustrate, facilitated construction of multiple kinds between the seventh and fourteenth centuries. Most concretely, this practice provided a rationale (sometimes retrospectively) for the establishment and maintenance of physical sites. The establishment of edifices—Mount Wutai’s Wangzi Shaoshen Temple or Tōnomine’s thirteen-storied pagoda—gave rise, in turn, to the emergence of sacred landscapes. As Mount Wutai’s construction in China and its replication in Japan demonstrate, the development of new devotional centers has implications for the ways that local practitioners imagine their relationship to the wider religious community. First in Tang China and then in Heian Japan we saw how the rewriting of Mount Wutai’s past, for instance, include Aṣoka’s building projects or the cleric Jōe’s endeavors contributed to the sense that a place originally on the holy world’s periphery constituted an important center. In addition to offering a space in which relationships between particular locales and the wider Buddhist realm might be negotiated, Mount Wutai’s history was also used to give innovative practices an ancient, continental pedigree. Activities as diverse (and in their own time novel) as pilgrimage to see a bodhisattva in residence atop five peaks far north of the capital or the veneration of hinin as manifestations of Mañjuśrī found precedents in stories set at early Mount Wutai.

A complex interlacing of local and translocal traditions gave rise to the multiple Mount Wutais examined in this study. Examining the single site’s many
pasts has provided a lens through which to see, on the one hand, how local concerns informed the way a translocal entity's significance was received and defined. Investigating a specific site in its larger East Asian context, at the same time, has called attention to the way that religious objects of pan-Buddhist importance, such as Mount Wutai, simultaneously allowed for the creation of local narratives in which successive generations of practitioners have articulated and redefined their relationship to each other and the wider Buddhist world.
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