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The Temple of the Prince Who Torched His Body and the Making of Mount Wutai

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Abstract

This paper examines the role that the writing and rewriting of the past played in the creation of Mount Wutai (Wutai shan 五臺山) as a sacred Buddhist place. During the seventh century, Mount Wutai emerged as the center of devotion to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Wenshu pusa 文殊菩薩) and, as this study shows, the telling and retelling of stories about the site's early history facilitated this process. Using accounts of one Mount Wutai temple's founding as a case study—the Prince Who Torched His Body Temple (Wangzi shaoshen si 王子燒身寺)—the article draws attention both to the suppleness of the past and the connection between the miraculous and the material in places assigned religious significance.

Keywords:

Wutai shan, Buddhism, Mañjuśrī, Sacred Place, miracle tale

王子燒身寺與五台山的形成

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摘要

本文檢視書寫與改寫在五臺山形成為佛教聖地中所扮演的角色。在七世紀之時，五臺山開始成為文殊菩薩信仰的中心，且如本文所指出，有關該地早期歷史故事的述說與重述促進了這個過程。以五臺山王子燒身寺的創建為例，本文著重在其對傳言的接納性以及靈異事迹與宗教性地方志的關係。

關鍵詞：

五臺山、佛教、文殊、聖地、靈驗記

How do religious communities create sacred territory in new geographical and temporal contexts? One answer to this question, at least insofar as China's Mount Wutai (Wutai shan 五臺山) is concerned, is through writing and rewriting history. In the seventh century, proponents of the mountain cult facilitated its construction as a Buddhist holy place by fashioning an ancient past for the Temple of the Prince Who Torched His Body (Wangzi shaoshen si 王子燒身寺) that stood on its central peak.¹ Transforming a narrative celebrating the power of sūtra recitation into one extolling the efficacy of practice at the site, these men and women produced a powerful founding legend to explain why this monastery and the larger mountain where it was located were worthy objects of veneration.² These examples indicate that, in reshaping Mount Wutai's history, seventh-century Buddhists endeavored to explain the establishment of a Buddhist center dedicated to Mañjuśrī (Wenshu 文殊) far beyond the borders of Śākyamuni's Indian homeland. Weaving together the following narrative about visions, healing, and relics, the compiler of the first gazetteer devoted to Mount Wutai, Huixiang 慧祥 (seventh-century), and his contemporaries manipulated the supple past in ways that appealed to local audiences and distant rulers whose interest in the site contributed to its emergence as a Buddhist place of consequence in the seventh century.³ Unraveling the components brought together to create a story of the founding of the Temple of the Prince Who Torched His Body's—translated here in full—illuminates the malleability of Mount Wutai's past and the creativity of the practitioners who promoted it as a Buddhist place of practice.

Four *li* north from the Dafu Temple is the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple. Previously at this place there was an ancient Aśoka 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

¹ Contemporary texts also refer to this structure as the Stūpa of the Prince Who Torched His Body (Wangzi shaoshen ta 王子燒身塔).

² The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* states that the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple stood nearby the famous Dafu Temple 大孚寺 on the Middle Terrace, T 2098, 51: 1094c. In addition to this pair of constructions, the gazetteer states that the following four temples stood at the site: the Clear and Cool Temple (Qingliang si 清涼寺), the Buddha Light Temple (Foguang Temple 佛光寺), the Sāha Temple (Suopo si 娑婆寺) and the Papaya Temple (Mugua si 木瓜寺).

³ In this regard, records of Mount Wutai exemplify the process of reading and writing history described by Michel Foucault in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.”

Bodhisattva]. Then, in front of the stūpa he burnt his body as an offering. Because of this a temple was established at this place.

This prince had a eunuch-servant Liu Qianzhi 劉謙之. He resented 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 practice the way. An imperial order authorized this.

At this place he recited the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*. He practiced 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 and he composed the *Commentary on the Avataṃsaka sūtra* (*Huayan lun* 華嚴論) in six hundred volumes in which he discussed the sūtra thoroughly from beginning to end. [Liu] reported to the throne. Based on this Gaozu's 高祖 reverence and faith [for the *dharma*] further increased.⁴ Liu gave regular lectures on *Avataṃsaka* [*sūtra*] passages. That time was most prosperous [for the text].⁵

This rendering of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's founding legend appears in Huixiang's seventh century *Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool* (*Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳).⁶ Mount Qingliang 清涼山 (Mount Clear and

⁴ This passage could also indicate that Gaozu's faith in Liu Qianzhi increased.

⁵ T 2098, 51: 1094c

⁶ In attempting to establish the date of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*'s initial compilation it is necessary to rely on evidence internal to the text. A reference to a summer retreat convened at the Sahā Temple (Suopo si 娑婆寺) in the fourth month of the first year of the Tiaolu 調露 reign period (679–680) in the Tang dynasty (618–907) is the latest date mentioned in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* T 2098, 51: 1100a. 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 century. As Jinhua Chen explains, in the late seventh century this temple's name was changed to Huayan Temple 華嚴寺 to commemorate the completion of Śikṣānanda's translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經). Both the scripture's translation and the establishment of this Huayan Temple were carried out under the auspices of Wu Zetian's 武則天 (r. 684–705) patronage. 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—before the re-translation of the sūtra sometime after 699. Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician*, 394.

Cool) is an alternate name for Mount Wutai. The text is the first of three gazetteers about the site compiled before 1164.⁷ Huixiang compiled the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* during the seventh century when these peaks far to the Buddhist holy land's periphery emerged as an object of international devotion. During this period, proponents of the mountain cult asserted that the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī dwelled at the site. This claim, as Tansen Sen has discussed, allowed practitioners to reimagine the territory as a significant Buddhist place. Yet long before this development, as foremost Mount Wutai scholar Raoul Birnbaum has shown, the locale was a place of regional religious significance.⁸ Tradition recorded in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and elsewhere celebrates it as (among other things) a place of “numinous crags and holy valleys” (*lingyue shenxi* 靈嶽神谿), “the purple palace” (*zifu* 紫府), and “an abode of transcendents”⁹. The century in which Huixiang recorded the above story of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's founding, then, constituted a turning point for Mount Wutai-related practice and belief.

The first in a series of texts devoted to the territory, Huixiang's *Gu Qingliang zhuan* is of a much earlier provenance than either Yanyi's 延一 (998?–1072) eleventh-century *Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool* (*Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳) or Zhang Shangying's 張商英 (1043–1122) *Continued Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool* (*Xu Qingliang zhuan* 續清涼傳). In form and content, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* is much closer to Yanyi's text. Both of these earlier compilations bring together a variety of accounts of the site, drawing extensively on inscriptions, sūtras, and local legends. In addition to providing information about religious practice at

⁷ In his article on Zhang Shangyin's *Xu Qingliang zhuan*, Robert Gimello points out that as early as 1164 the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* and the *Xu Qingliang zhuan* circulated together in a Jin 金 edition (1115–1234) with a preface by Yao Xiaoxi 姚孝錫. Gimello offers a full translation of the *Xu Qingliang zhuan* in the following article: Gimello, “Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan,” 89–149.

⁸ See, especially, Birnbaum's “Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords: The Caves of Wu-t'ai Shan” and “The Manifestations of a Monastery: Shen-ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context.”

⁹ T 2098, 51: 1093a. Huixiang quotes from the no-longer extant *Scripture of Transcendents* (*Xianjing* 仙經), which stated “Mount Wutai is called Purple Palace. There are always purple vapors there. Transcendents dwell there” (五臺山名爲紫府，常有紫氣，仙人居之). According to the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* compiler, the *Treatise on Collected Geography* (*Kuodi zhi* 括地志), Li Tai's 李泰 early seventh-century geographical work, held that the mountain was a place of “numinous crags and holy valleys.”

Mount Wutai, Huixiang and Yanyi catalogue a wide range of materials including, for example, descriptions of its proximity to other sites and the physical landscape. Zhang Shangying's *Xu Qingliang zhuan* is, in contrast, a firsthand account of the scholar-official's 1087 pilgrimage to the mountain. From an early date Zhubian's 朱弁 (d. 1144) *Record of Auspicious Responses at Mount [Wu]tai* (*Taishan ruiying ji* 臺山瑞應記), a personal record of the place compiled during the period of his captivity in nearby Datong 大同 during the Jin 金 (1115–1234), was appended to Zhang's text.¹⁰

The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang zhuan* share affinities with the *zhi* 志 gazetteer genre, the subject of Marcus Bingenheimer's recent "Preliminary Research on Chinese Monastic Gazetteers and Studies of their Bibliography" (*Zhongguo fosizhi chutan ji shumu yanjiu* 中國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 prefectures (*zhou* 州), a fraction of these are devoted to descriptions of either landscape features or individual institutions, including temple gazetteers (*sizhi* 寺志) and mountain gazetteers (*shanzhi* 山志).¹¹ Though about a single place, neither the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* nor the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* include this terminology in their titles, a discrepancy that leads Bingenheimer to categorize them as two of ten "proto-gazetteers" (*yuanshi fangzhi* 原始方志).¹²

¹⁰ Gimello has published a translation of Zhubian's *Taishan ruiying ji*. Gimello, "Wu-t'ai Shan 五臺山 during the Early Chin Dynasty 金朝," 501–612.

¹¹ Bingenheimer estimates there are approximately 350 temple gazetteers and mountain gazetteers. One of the earliest texts to include the latter term in its title is a Ming 明 period (1368–1644) record of Mount Wutai, the *Gazetteer of Mount Clear and Cool* (*Qingliang shanzhi* 清涼山志). Bingenheimer, "Zhongguo fosizhi chutan ji shumu yanjiu," 378, 382; Bol, "The Rise of Local History," 38, 44–5.

¹² Bingenheimer coins the term "proto-gazetteer" to describe pre-Ming accounts of individual sites that do not include *zhi* in their titles but that "clearly belong to the genre." Bingenheimer, "Zhongguo fosizhi chutan ji shumu yanjiu," 391. The *Gazetteer of Mount Clear and Cool* (*Qingliang shanzhi* 清涼山志) is the first text devoted to Mount Wutai that uses the term *shanzhi* in the title. It is the earliest of three Ming and Qing 清 (1644–1911) gazetteers about the site. The remaining gazetteers are the *New Gazetteer of Qingliang shan* (*Qingliang shan xin zhi* 清涼山新志) and the *Imperially Commissioned Gazetteer of Qingliang shan* (*Qingding Qingliang shan zhi* 欽定清涼山志).

The title of Huixiang's text suggests its relationship to another literary genre: hagiography (*zhuan* 傳). In the centuries leading up to and following the

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 Huixiang comes from the gazetteer itself. In the monograph Huixiang states that he went to Mount Wutai in the second year of the Zongzhang 總章 era (668–670) to deposit *śarīra*.¹³ He reports that he met with people of nearby areas, such as Dai prefecture (Daizhou 代州) and Fanshi county (Fanshi xian 繁峙縣), who had previously witnessed miraculous occurrences at the site.¹⁴ Though they reveal nothing about his family, place of origin, or status, these descriptions of his travels to Mount Wutai and meetings with other individuals who visited there suggest that Huixiang was active at the mountain and in its vicinity between 668 and 679.¹⁵ They indicate that relics, central to the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend, formed an important part of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* compiler's religiosity.

The record of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's founding and the other miracle tales at the heart of this paper appear in two of the five chapters into which Huixiang divided the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*. The compiler titled the first of these "Establishing the Name and Extolling [Miraculous] Transformations" (Liming Biaohua 立名標化). Ostensibly an explanation of the site's name, this section of the text presents the mountain as the residence of transcendents and Mañjuśrī's dwelling place. Huixiang quotes liberally from sūtras and non-Buddhist works to illustrate that Mount Wutai is a uniquely important place

composition of Huixiang's text, a number of biographical collections included this term in their titles. These included the *Arrayed Biographies of Immortals* (*Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳) attributed to Liu Xiang 劉向 (ca. 77–6 BCE), Baochang's 寶唱 (fl. 502–after 519?) *Biographies of Eminent Nuns* (*Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳) and the no longer extant *Biographies of Famous Monks* (*Mingseng zhuan* 名僧傳). For a discussion of this genre see Campany's *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, Kathryn Ann Tsai's *Lives of Nuns* and Kieschnick's *The Eminent Monk*.

¹³ T 2098, 51: 1099b.

¹⁴ T 2098, 51: 1098b and 1100c. Dai prefecture (*zhou* 州) stands approximately fifty kilometers apart from Mount Wutai. Fanshi county (*xian* 縣) is approximately twenty-five kilometers from the mountain. Tan 譚, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji*, 46–7.

¹⁵ Ibuki's thesis—that Huixiang also compiled the *Accounts in Dissemination and Praise of the Lotus (sūtra)* (*Hongzan fahua zhuan* 弘贊法華傳)—would, if correct, provide us with additional information about the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* compiler. On this topic see Ibuki's 伊吹 "Tō Sō Ejō ni tsuite 唐僧慧祥について."

because of its inhabitants and the extraordinary occurrences that transpire there. “Borders and Miles” (Fengyu lishu 封域里數) is the second, short section of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*. It gives the mountain’s geographical situation in relation to other sites, such as the capital, and introduces each of the five terraces in turn. The Wangzi Shaoshen Temple foundation record appears in the lengthy “Ancient and Present Superior Traces” (Gujin shengji 古今勝跡) section. As its title suggests, this third chapter describes the special landscape features and narrates the stories of the extraordinary events that the compiler held rendered Mount Wutai’s peaks worthy of devotion. The fourth chapter, “Pilgrims Who Experienced Efficacious Responses” (Youli gantong 遊禮感通), concerns the miracles perceived by pilgrims. In contrast to the third chapter, which has five subsections—one for each of the mountain’s five peaks, in the fourth chapter the 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, “Miscellaneous Accounts of Branches and Tributaries” (Zhiliu zashu 支流雜述), the fifth chapter, is a miscellanea of four stories related more tangentially to Mount Wutai.

The stories contained in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* do not speak in one voice about the source of Mount Wutai’s significance. Rather than being tightly knit around a single subject, the content presented in each of its five chapters volleys from topic to topic to the point that at times it appears disconnected. In some places the position advanced in one section of the gazetteer is contradicted in the next. The story of the novice Xiangyun’s 祥雲 (sixth century) meeting with a mountain spirit in the Adamantine Cavern (Jingang ku 金剛窟) illustrates this point. The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* narrative, as Raoul Birnbaum has pointed out, dramatically depicts Mount Wutai and the cavern in particular as home to a mountain god (*shanshen* 山神).¹⁶ According to the gazetteer, when Xiangyun encountered this deity the mountain god invited him into his jewel-decorated palace where the novice attained transcendence (*xian* 仙) by consuming a mysterious medicine.¹⁷ While this *Gu Qingliang zhuan* legend frames the site as the residence of a mountain god and an access point to hidden landscapes where practitioners achieve transcendence over death, the lines that immediately precede it affiliate the site with Mañjuśrī. Offering a very different rationale for practice at Mount Wutai, the passage asserts that following Śākyamuni’s *parinirvāṇa* the Bodhisattva came to dwell

¹⁶ T 2098, 51: 1095a; Birnbaum, “Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords,” 122.

¹⁷ T 2098, 51: 1095a.

in the niche.¹⁸ In compiling the gazetteer, as this example shows, Huixiang brought together narratives forwarding a range of visions of Mount Wutai that worked in concert to enhance its overall prestige.

Generally speaking, *Gu Qingliang zhuan* narratives are of two types. There are tales that, like the record of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's founding, depict the site as Mañjuśrī's residence and there are stories that, like the account of Xiangyun's entry into the Adamantine Cavern, celebrate it as a place of mysterious grottoes and celestial palaces where individuals achieved transcendence. The tale of a blind woman who was healed after praying to the Bodhisattva is representative of the first group of stories. The terse record of a man who obtained immortality by consuming chrysanthemums typifies the second. These narratives provide some sense of the context in which we find the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple foundation record and the approximately twenty-five other *Gu Qingliang zhuan* miracle tales.

The tale of an unnamed blind woman who regained her sight after praying to Mañjuśrī is one of perhaps fifteen gazetteer narratives that affiliate the Bodhisattva with the mountain. The brief account is set at an unspecified location on the mountain's periphery and includes few details about its protagonist. According to Huixiang:

Formerly to the west of Mount Heng (Hengyue 恒岳) and in [Mount] Qingliang's [Mount Wutai's] southeast corner, there was a woman of pure faith who suffered blindness.¹⁹ She often dwelled alone on the mountain.²⁰ Her heart prayed to the saint Mañjuśrī. Day and night she vigorously strove. Her prayers were extremely sincere. She felt the holy (saint's) blessing and regained her sight. Afterwards I do not know where she ended her days.²¹

In addition to foregrounding the mountain's association with Mañjuśrī, the reference to Mount Qingliang in this passage suggests that this territory at the Buddhist holy world's periphery is the very place that scripture predicted the Bodhisattva of Wisdom would come to dwell.

A large body of scholarship on Mount Wutai emphasizes the role that scriptural sources played in its emergence as an object of devotion and

18 T 2098, 51: 1094c–1095a.

19 Please see my “Representing Mount Wutai's Past” for a further discussion of the significance of Mount Wutai's proximity to Mount Heng.

20 I suspect that the character is *du* 獨 and not *chu* 觸.

21 T 2098, 51: 1096b.

pilgrimage. Following Lamotte (1960), scholars such as Birnbaum (1984, 1986, 2004), Cartelli (2002), and Sen (2003) have underscored the significance of three scriptures to this process. These are Buddhahadra's 佛馱跋陀羅 (fifth century) *ca.* 420 translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經), the *Mañjuśrī dharma ratnagarbha dhāraṇī 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).²² Proponents of the Mañjuśrī cult interpreted this triad of sūtras as predicting the Bodhisattva's appearance 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 when redactions of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's origins first come into circulation.

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 Buddhahadra and Śikṣānanda's 實叉難陀 (652–710) versions of the text.²³ The entry reads:

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].²⁴

Allusions to this *Avataṃsaka sūtra* passage in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*'s preface and within a miracle tale indicate that this proposition about the site's significance accelerated its transformation into the center of Mañjuśrī

²² David Quinter has shown that the *Mañjuśrī parinirvāṇa sūtra* is not, as the Taishō canon states and Lamotte repeated in his article “Mañjuśrī,” 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, “Visualizing the *Mañjuśrī parinirvāṇa Sūtra* as a Contemplation Sūtra.”

²³ 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 transforming Mount Wutai from a site of regional significance into an international Buddhist center. Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī.”

²⁴ T 278, 9: 590a. Śikṣānanda's rendering of this passage is nearly identical to this section of Buddhahadra's translation, T 279, 9: 241b.

devotion.²⁵ Accounts of encounters with Mañjuśrī like this one in which the Bodhisattva responds to the sincerity of an individual's prayers put forward a vision of the locale that accords with scriptural tellings of its significance.²⁶

A second body of *Gu Qingliang zhuan* material frames the mountain as the access point to hidden landscapes and an efficacious place for obtaining immortality. The following entry is one of at least nine in the gazetteer that depict the mountain in this way.²⁷ It concerns an unnamed man who, by consuming rare food, transcended death. According to Huixiang:

From the flower garden south, a little more than a half mile (*er li yu* 二里餘), is Mount Indian Transcendent (Fanxian shan 梵仙山), also called Transcendent Flower Mountain (Xianhua shan 仙花山). From this place looking as far as the eye can see there are only mountain forests filled with chrysanthemums, one more beautiful than the other. A tradition says, formerly there was a man who lived on chrysanthemums here and obtained transcendence. This is the reason for the name Indian Transcendent and Transcendent Flower. Recently in the first year of the Linde 麟德 era [664] in the ninth month, the emissaries Yanzen 殷甄 and Wanfu 萬福 were dispatched. They rode their horses toward the mountain in search of chrysanthemums.²⁸

²⁵ References to the sūtra appear, for instance, in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* record of the layman Tanyun 曇韻 (d. 643) who renounced secular life after practicing at Mount Wutai, T 2098, 51: 1098a. The gazetteer asserts that he traveled to the mountain after hearing that it was Mañjuśrī's dwelling place, a reference to the above *Avatamsaka 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" (Pusa zhuchu pin 菩薩住處品) chapter of the sūtra, T 2098, 51: 1099c.

²⁶ Portraying the resoluteness of the blind woman's prayers to Mañjuśrī as the catalyst that precipitates her healing, this *Gu Qingliang zhuan* story shares affinities with the larger miracle tale genre in which a practitioner's earnestness evokes a response by a Buddhist deity. There are different Chinese terms for these miracle tales: sympathetic response (*ganying* 感應), sympathetic power (*gantong* 感通), spiritual efficacy (*lingyan* 靈驗) and spiritual response (*lingying* 靈應). On this body of material see Yü; Sharf; Birnbaum, "The Manifestations of a Monastery."

²⁷ I refer the reader to my "Representing Mount Wutai's Past" for a fuller discussion of these nine narratives.

²⁸ T 2098, 51: 1094c.

The association between longevity and chrysanthemums is not unique to this story. Legends regarding hermits who subsisted by eating this plant circulated widely and, as early as the Han period (206 BCE – 220 CE), the ninth day of the ninth month was celebrated as the Chrysanthemum Festival.²⁹ Huixiang's statement that an emissary had arrived in search of the plant in the ninth month indicates that the narrative still had traction at the time of the gazetteer's compilation.

The claim that Mount Wutai is a dwelling place of transcendents appears in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*'s first chapter. In this well-known section Huixiang relays that in the second year of the Yongjia 永嘉 period (307–313), more than 100 families from Yanmen 雁門 district, approximately fifty kilometers to Mount Wutai's northwest, took refuge in the mountain to escape chaos and did not return but rather dwelled in the wilderness.³⁰ When people searched for their residence, they could not find it and “thus people considered this mountain to indeed be the district of transcendents.”³¹ Huixiang continues, “*The Scripture of Transcendents (Xianjing 仙經)* says ‘Mount Wutai is called Purple Palace (Zifu 紫府) [because] it often has purple vapors. Transcendents dwell there.’”³² As Raoul Birnbaum has discussed, stories of individuals who, like the novice Xiangyun, obtained transcendence at the mountain confirmed Huixiang's claim that the mountain was a “realm of individuals who foiled death.

As these examples suggest, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* presents an eclectic vision of the mountain's significance. While it is tempting to read this diversity as evidence of the historical confluence of autochthonous and Buddhist traditions at Mount Wutai, careful study of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple foundation record indicates that, at least insofar as this structure's origins are concerned, we ought not to take Huixiang's accounts at face value. Examining the version of the narrative preserved in the gazetteer alongside other redactions of the tale reveals that in some instances the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* creates rather than describes the past.

At first glance, the record of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's founding appears to teach us a great deal about sixth-century Mount Wutai. The narrative seems to establish, first, the structure's significance in the burgeoning Mañjuśrī cult of this period. Like the story of the restoration of a

²⁹ Dusenbury, 215.

³⁰ T 2098, 51: 1093a.

³¹ T 2098, 51: 1093a.

³² T 2098, 51: 1093a.

woman's sight, the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple account attributes miraculous healing to the Buddhist deity's power and implies that the Bodhisattva is present on these peaks. Supplying the built structure with a dramatic origin story, this *Gu Qingliang zhuan* suggests that sixth-century Mount Wutai was a center of Mañjuśrī devotion.

The legend, second, depicts Northern Qi rulers and courtiers as key players in the site's development as a hub of religious practice. These individuals, according to Huixiang, were instrumental in the sixth-century transformation of the Mount Wutai site from a place venerated because of its association with Aśoka into one commemorating auto-cremation and connected with Mañjuśrī, visions, and healing. For a millennium, the material suggests, these peaks held deep Buddhist significance via their connection to the wheel-turning or *cakravartin* king (*zhuanlun wang* 轉輪王) and, through him, Śākyamuni Buddha. Then, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* purports, an unnamed Northern Qi prince ascended Mount Wutai in search of the Bodhisattva and, when unsuccessful, burnt his body as an offering in front of the Aśoka stūpa. The eunuch Liu Qianzhi's testicles were miraculously restored when he journeyed to the site. Finally, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* purports that these events inspired faith in the Northern Qi founder Wenxuan 文宣 (529–559).³³ Taking Huixiang's text at face value, we would conclude that Northern Qi patronage facilitated the formation of Mount Wutai as a place of Mañjuśrī veneration 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 1300 year period. These include Daoxuan's 道宣 (596–667) *Catalogue of Buddhist Works in the Great Tang* (*Datang Neidian lu* 大唐內典錄) and *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳), as well as Daoshi's 道世 (?–683) *Pearl Grove of the Dharma Garden* (*Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林). Fazang's 法藏 (643–712) *Record of the Avatamsaka sūtra's Transmission* (*Huayan jing zhuan ji* 華嚴經傳記) and *Record of the Search for the Profundities of the Avatamsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing Tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記) preserve versions of the tale. Peng Shaosheng's 彭紹升 (1740–1796) eighteenth-century *Biographies of*

³³ Gaozu 高祖 was an appellation for Wenxuan 文宣 (529–559), also known as Gaoyang 高洋, founder of the Northern Qi dynasty. Wei Gaozu 魏高祖 was also a posthumous name for Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei 孝文帝 (r. 471–499).

Householders (*Jushi zhuan* 居士傳) also includes a rendering of the narrative. Comparing multiple redactions of this three-part tale reveals that events the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* compiler claims happened in one period might well have transpired in another.

As the chart below illustrates, these records are of two types. The first group of narratives affiliates the restoration of Liu Qianzhi's testicles with the unnamed Northern Qi prince's auto-cremation. The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* record falls into this category. The second describes an unnamed eunuch's miraculous recovery but does not reference the mountain. What can this discrepancy teach us about the site's construction as a holy place in the seventh century? The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* narrative connecting Mañjuśrī with Mount Wutai and celebrating the effects of practicing there was fashioned out of a story that originally illustrated the power of *Avataṃsaka sūtra* recitation.

Narratives Celebrating the Buddhist Site and Saint

SOURCE	COMPI- LATION	EUNUCH NARRATIVE	PRINCE'S AUTO- CREMATION	NAME LIU QIANZHI	HUAYAN JING	MOUNT WUTAI	TEMPORAL SETTING
<i>Xu Gaoseng zhuan</i> 續高僧傳 T 2060, 50: 665 a–b	Before 667	√	√	√	√	√ ³⁴	Northern Qi dynasty
<i>Huayan jing zhuan ji</i> 華嚴經傳記 T 2073, 51: 1056c	Ca. 690	√	√	√	√	Mount Qingliang	Dahe 大和 era of the Northern Qi dynasty
<i>Huayan jing tanxuan ji</i> 華嚴經探玄記 T 1733, 35: 123a	Before 712	√	X	√	√	√	No reference to time
<i>Gu Qingliang zhuan</i> T 2098, 51: 1094c	After 679	√	√	√	√	√	First year of the Northern Qi dynasty

Narratives Celebrating a Buddhist Scripture's Efficacy

<i>Neidian lu</i> 內典錄 T 2149, 55: 339b	664	√	X	X	√	X	Wei dynasty Dahe 大和 era
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³⁴ This *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* narrative appears among several set at Mount Wutai. Though it does not explicitly mention Mount Wutai, its context suggests very clearly that this is the location at which the events described transpired.

<i>Fayuan zhulin</i> 法苑珠林 T 2122, 53: 418b–c	668	√	X	X	√	X	Wei dynasty Taihe 太和 era ³⁵
<i>Jushi zhuan</i> 居士傳 X 1646, 88: 190b	18 th century	√	X	√	√	X	Wei dynasty Dahe 大和 era

The *Datang Neidian lu* narrative translated below typifies the second group of stories. 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] [r. 471–499], a eunuch-official in the capital, Daijing 代京, 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 *Avatamsaka* [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 regained the marks of a man. When he reported this to the court, the emperor was greatly surprised and respected him. Thereupon the country venerated the *Avatamsaka* [sūtra] and, moreover, honored it daily.³⁶

While detail and emphasis differ, the *Fayuan zhulin*, *Jushi zhuan* and *Datang neidan lu* accounts are closely related stories promoting the efficacy of chanting the *Avatamsaka sūtra* and depicting the power of miraculous events to inspire faith in the dharma. They are all set during the reign of Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei (r. 471–499), rather than the Northern Qi period. The texts emphasize the faith that the restoration of an unnamed eunuch’s testicles inspired in the emperor who, together with his subjects, consequently venerated the *Avatamsaka sūtra*. Especially significant, the *Datang neidan lu*, *Fayuan zhulin* and *Jushi zhuan* make no mention of Mount Wutai and the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple and instead attribute the miracle to the scripture’s power.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ T 2149, 55: 339b.

In this regard, the narratives seem very different from the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* account of the temple's founding and much closer to two other types of miracle tales. First, these accounts form 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. A *Lotus sūtra* devotee, the nun rebuffed the man's constant advances. 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.³⁷

Consequently, the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* asserts, the official finally desisted. Though in this case the male protagonist loses, rather than regains, his male member, as with the *Datang neidian lu*, *Fayuan zhulin*, and *Jushi zhuan* material, this story celebrates a sūtra's potency.

The shorter narratives also share affinities with didactic tales illustrating karma's workings. At least one of these involves a castrated protagonist. Daoshi's seventh-century *Fayuan zhulin* preserves a version of the well-known tale of the eunuch who encounters more than 500 oxen about to be gelded. According to Daoshi, he 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]."³⁸ When he released the oxen his male organ was miraculously restored.³⁹ The verses appended to the narrative attribute the mysterious response (*mingying* 冥應) to the effects of good karma produced by benevolence and compassion.⁴⁰

What significance do these points of similarity and difference have for our understanding of the way that the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple foundation legend took shape? They suggest that records of the eunuch's healing initially

³⁷ T 2067, 51: 40a. This is Stevenson's translation. Stevenson, 444.

³⁸ T 2122, 53: 665a.

³⁹ Kaniṣka, further, rewarded him with a high position, wealth and possessions.

⁴⁰ T 2122, 53: 665a. On representations of eunuchs (*saṅḍa*) in Indian Buddhist tradition, see John Powers's *A Bull of a Man*.

circulated independent of any reference to Mount Wutai and the prince's self-immolation. The tale about the restoration of the eunuch's male member recorded in Daoxuan's *Neidian lu* and Daoshi's *Fayuan zhulin* was essentially a narrative extolling the *Avatamsaka sūtra*. Proponents of the Wutai cult subsequently grafted it onto the lore of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple, changing the story from one celebrating a text into one framing Mount Wutai as a place of healing visions.

Peng Shaosheng's comments in the *Jushi zhuan* support this interpretation. Comparing the *Neidian lu* version of the eunuch story and its *Commentary on the Avatamsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing shu chao* 華嚴經疏鈔) counterpart, Peng noted the following:⁴¹

The [*Huayan jing shu chao*] commentary takes Liu [Qian]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*).⁴²

As Peng observes here, the *Huayan jing shu chao* and *Neidian lu* versions of the miracle tale are set in different periods. This discrepancy suggests that the *Neidian lu* and *Fayuan zhulin* redactions of the narrative are historically accurate in a way that the lengthier versions of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's founding legend are not.

The *Huayan jing shu chao* and the *Huayan jing zhuan ji* supply further evidence that the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* created rather than described history. The texts purport that the events they recount transpired in the Northern Qi Taihe 太和 period. As Peng Shaosheng notes, there was no Northern Qi era of this name. Yet there was a similarly named Dahe 大和 era (477–499) in the

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² X 1646, 88: 190b.

Northern Wei (386–534), the period in which the *Neidian lu* record is set. Though the reason for the story's recreation as a Northern Qi narrative remains opaque to me, the inconsistency offers further evidence of the suppleness of Mount Wutai's past. In light of this discrepancy and unable to find a record of a prince's auto-cremation in either the Wei or Northern Qi periods, Peng dismissed the entire episode as a fiction.⁴³

Though likely fashioned from a preexisting narrative associated with a different place and time, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* narrative of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's founding nevertheless reveals much about Mount Wutai's seventh-century construction as a sacred territory. It suggests, first, the role that extraordinary remains played in the making of religious places. The gazetteer attributes the restoration of Liu's testicles both to the memorial mound erected by Aśoka and a vision of Mañjuśrī Liu obtained there.

Buddhist scripture preserves a number of well-known accounts of self-immolation that may have provided a context in which the Northern Qi prince's actions were meaningful to Huixiang's audience. The tale of King Candrababha, for instance, describes a benevolent king's willingness to oblige a wicked *brāhmaṇa* who asked for his head.⁴⁴ The famous 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. These *jātaka* tales, as James Benn explains, exhort the virtue of *dāna* (generosity), giving vivid accounts of its performance, and supplied precedent for the practice of self-immolation by ordained and, less often, lay practitioners in China and elsewhere.

The *Lotus Sūtra* (*Fahua jing* 法華經, *Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra*) account of Bodhisattva Medicine King (Yaowang pusa 藥王菩薩, Bhaiṣajyarāja) supplies the closest scriptural parallel to the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* founding legend. On the one hand, the text, as James Benn points out, presents auto-cremation as an elaborately prepared offering.⁴⁵ The extended discussion of his preparations describes Bodhisattva Medicine King scenting his body, drinking perfumed oils, and adorning himself with jewels for 12,000 years, a lengthy process that rendered his form a fit offering to the Buddha

⁴³ 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 the charts above show, the name Liu Qianzhi first appears in accounts set at Mount Wutai's Wangzi Shaoshen Temple in the Northern Qi period.

⁴⁴ On these narratives see Ohnuma and Benn.

⁴⁵ Benn, 39.

Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon (Riyuejingmingde 日月淨明德, Candra-vimala-sūrya-prabhāsa-śrī). The scripture, on the other hand, associates relics (those of Buddha Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon) with the restoration of the devotee's limbs. The *Lotus Sūtra* purports that after collecting the Buddha'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."⁴⁶ In an instant, his arms miraculously reappeared. The episode provides a scriptural example for both the Northern Qi prince's auto-cremation before a relic mound and the affiliation the story makes between the eunuch's healing and a stūpa, 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 *Lotus 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.

In addition to Buddhist scriptures, Chinese history includes references to individuals who torched their bodies. These include figures whose remains, like those of the Northern Qi prince, came to be affiliated with healing. In *Burning for the Buddha*, for instance, James Benn discusses traditions about sixth-century cleric and *Lotus sūtra* devotee Sengming 僧明 (fl. ca. 502–519), who received permission from Emperor Wu of the Liang 梁武帝 (r. 502–549) to burn himself before a Celestial Palace of Maitreya (Mile tiangong 彌勒天

⁴⁶ T 262, 9: 54a. This translation appears in Benn's work. Benn, 61.

宮) that the cleric had onstructed at Mount Shimen (Shimen shan 石門山).⁴⁷ According to the *Hongzan fahua zhuan*:

[H]is body was completely reduced to ashes; all that remained was one finger-nail (*jia* 甲). When the burning was over, the ground surrounding the rock to a radius of four or five feet (*chi* 尺) sank, thus forming a pond. Two or three days later, flowers bloomed there; bright and luxuriant, they were unmatched in beauty. All those who drank from this pond were cured of their illnesses...Now there is a stūpa that marks this, [its inscription] completely describes the story in detail.⁴⁸

The relationship between relics and cures suggested in these materials offers a parallel for the story of the restoration of Liu Qianzhi's testicles set out in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and related texts.⁴⁹

Though in this context laymen and laywomen primarily acted as witnesses, donors, and participants in postmortem cults dedicated to monastic practitioners, Benn discusses several householders who engaged in this practice.⁵⁰ These include the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* record of an unnamed retainer (*buqu* 部曲) and *Lotus sūtra* devotee whose tongue remained “fresh and moist” after he burnt his body in the mountains.⁵¹ Like the Northern Qi

⁴⁷ T 2067, 51: 24b. James Benn examines this narrative. Benn, 73.

⁴⁸ T 2067, 51: 24c. The translation of this passage is James Benn's. Benn, 73.

⁴⁹ 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 whose remains similarly emerged as the foci of devotional activities. On this topic see Peter Brown.

⁵⁰ In some places the records portray emperors and princes as supporters of the practice who, for example, sponsor the construction of stūpas. In other instances, rulers appear as critics of 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 saṅgha, for it is a layperson and member of the ruling family who immolates himself. Benn, 5 and 73.

⁵¹ T 2067, 51: 26a. This miracle recalls the famous cleric Kumārajīva's 鳩摩羅什 (344–413) hagiography according to which the preservation of his tongue after

Prince's remains, the retainer's tongue provided an object around which a devotional cult could form.⁵²

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 introduces several monarchs and officials remembered for ending drought by ritual burning.⁵³ Though in contrast to the extensive literature of monastic self-immolators, there is scant evidence for rulers practicing auto-cremation to end drought, it may nevertheless 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.

The Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend is but one of many *Gu Qingliang zhuan* entries that root Mount Wutai's specialness in its affiliation with relics and stūpas. Huixiang states, for example, that atop the Eastern Terrace there was a stūpa of piled stones eighteen or twenty meters high within which stood a statue of Mañjuśrī.⁵⁴ Scattered on the Central Plateau's summit, he writes, were more than ten small stone stūpas, a number of which were in a state of disrepair.⁵⁵ The compiler references extraordinary happenings related to memorial mounds. He records that when the South Asian monk Shijiamiduoluo 釋迦蜜多羅 (Śākyamitra?, d. 569–?) traveled to the site in the second year of the Qianfeng 乾封 period (667), he witnessed a

cremation signaled that his translations were correct, T 2059, 50: 333a. The translation is James Benn's. Benn, 44.

⁵² Records of the Famen Temple make reference to an individual who, unable to see the famous relic in a procession, burnt his finger and was subsequently able to see the object. Though it postdates the period in which the unnamed Northern Qi 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. Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy and Trade*, 71.

⁵³ One is a Later Han 後漢 (25–220) official whose plans to end a drought by setting himself on fire were interrupted by rain. The subject of this narrative is the Later Han official Liang Fu 諒輔. 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. Edward Schafer, 139; Alvin P. Cohen, 249.

⁵⁴ T 2098, 51: 1095b.

⁵⁵ T 2098, 51: 1094a.

white rabbit and fox circumambulating a stūpa.⁵⁶ Huixiang described mysterious clouds that appeared when, with a large party, he enshrined relics in a stūpa on the Central Plateau in the second year of the Zongzhang 總章 era (668–670).⁵⁷ At the end of the seventh century, Mount Wutai visitors and residents understood themselves to be in a territory rendered extraordinary by the powerful remains of Śākyamuni and other religious achievers enshrined there. Though surely a case study for the ways that Chinese practitioners promoted sites as distinctly Buddhist through their connection to a deity, the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend is equally an example of the role the relic cult played in the making of new religious territory.

Alongside the substantial body of material celebrating the power of relics, the idea that visions of bodhisattvas and buddhas could heal their viewers had a significant pre-seventh-century history. Early miracle tales and scriptures concerning the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara include this theme. For example, the fourth-century *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Invoking Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva to Dissipate Poison and Harm* (*Qing guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluo nizhou jing* 請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼呪經) promises that the Bodhisattva will cure fever, skin disease, swelling and other ailments if practitioners recite *dhāraṇīs*.⁵⁸ Early miracle tales also depict the miraculous healings performed by the Bodhisattva.⁵⁹ The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳) record of the cleric Zhu Fayi 竺法義 (fourth century), for instance, recounts how when he fell ill the monk chanted Avalokiteśvara's name.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ T 2098, 51: 1099a. 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.

The rabbit and fox were also closely associated with immortality quests. Yang and An, 221.

⁵⁷ T 2098, 51: 1099b.

⁵⁸ This text's translation is attributed to Nandi 難提 in the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317–420). It records a series of *dhāraṇī* with which Avalokiteśvara purportedly healed Vaiśālī's sick inhabitants, T 1043, 20: 35a. Yü, 49–53.

⁵⁹ Yü, 172–73.

⁶⁰ T 2059, 50: 350c. In *The Eminent Monk* John Kieschnick discusses the *Gaoseng zhuan* record of Zhu Fayi's life and career. In *Kuan-yin*, Chün-fang Yü examines the *Qing Guanshiyin jing* 請觀世音經 version of the miracle tale. Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 103; Yü, 172–73.

According to the text, Zhu Fayi subsequently had a dream in which a man appeared, opened his stomach, and washed his intestines. When he awoke the cleric was healed. The implication here is that the male stranger was a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara. As in the *Gu Qingling zhuan* record of the restoration of the blind woman's sight and all versions of the eunuch tale, recitation plays a fundamental role in this context. The devotee's sincerity together with the bodhisattva's power, these materials imply, bring about recovery when combined with the recitation of a potent text.

The multiple *Gu Qingliang zhuan* references to healing and long life obtained on the mountain indicate that the connection between the site and the search for well-being played an important role in its textual construction as a sacred place. Like the narrative of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's establishment and the account of the restoration of the blind woman's site, the terse entry about the man who overcame death after eating chrysanthemums and the record of the 100 families assumed to have become transcendents after fleeing to the mountain put forward this vision of the locale's significance. So too does the story of cleric Puming 普明 (d.u.) who became sick when he violated his precepts but was healed by consuming a medicinal plant called *changsong* 長松 at Mount Wutai.⁶¹ The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* description of the apothecary Wang Xiang'er 王相兒 (seventh century)—which references Puming—suggests that individuals in the region considered Wutai a realm of curatives.

As in the case of relics, Huixiang relied on his firsthand knowledge of this topic when compiling the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*. He reports having met elderly Wang in nearby Fanzhi county 繁峙縣 where Wang sold medicines next to the Jingyun Temple 景雲寺. According to the text, on one occasion when Wang was collecting curatives in Mount Wutai's Great Cypress Valley, a pair of hands emerged from a stone and greeted him in a gesture of reverence. The presumably astonished Wang discovered what appeared to be medicine on the rock's far side. He cut it, wrapped it, placed it in his pouch, and set off for home where he intended to prepare it. Exiting the valley, Wang began to suspect he was carrying transcendent medicine (*xian yao* 仙藥). When he opened the sack to investigate, it was too late. The bag was empty. Wang had missed his opportunity to eat *changsong*. Huixiang describes the substance in the following way:

⁶¹ T 2098, 51: 1097c.

...One may obtain its root and eat it. The exterior color is like that of *qini* 薺芎 [another medicinal herb]. It is three to five 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...⁶²

Here Mount Wutai appears, first and foremost, as a locale where rare flora can be obtained and transcendence over death achieved. While, as this example shows, the connection between Mount Wutai and healing set out in later records of the restoration of eunuch Liu Qianzhi's testicles would have been familiar to *Gu Qingliang zhuan* audiences from the region, the notion that Mañjuśrī resided at the mountain where he might restore individuals to health put forward in the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend constituted a major reimagining of the territory's significance.

What was at stake in reframing the mountain's importance in this way? The transformation of a narrative extolling sūtra recitation into one describing the power of a place and a deity to effect healing achieved at least three ends in seventh-century China. First and foremost, appropriating a preexisting narrative associated with another time and place into Mount Wutai lore supplied contemporary Mañjuśrī devotion with an early precedent at the site. Though today the notion that Mount Wutai—like Mount Emei 峨眉山, Mount Jiuhua 九華山, and Mount Putuo 普陀山—is a bodhisattva's realm (*daochang* 道場) is well-established, in the early Tang seeking the vision of Mañjuśrī constituted a comparatively novel practice. Creating an early history for the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple in which individuals traveled from court to the mountain to encounter the deity, Huixiang and his contemporaries framed themselves and their innovative activities as part of a long-standing tradition.

In *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, Tansen Sen considers the significance of Mount Wutai's construction as a Buddhist holy site for seventh-century individuals and communities. He argues convincingly that the emergence of Mount Wutai as an object of pan-Asian devotion had implications for the way that local Chinese practitioners understood their situation vis-à-vis the wider Buddhist world. Prior to the creation of a local sacred landscape, according to Sen, Chinese practitioners understood themselves to be living a great remove from the Buddha's birthplace, a

⁶² T 2098, 51: 1100c.

situation that, following Antonino Forte, he terms a “borderland complex.”⁶³ “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.”⁶⁴ Mount Wutai’s creation as a pilgrimage center of regional, national, and international importance allowed seventh-century practitioners to change a borderland into a Buddhist center.⁶⁵ The writing and rewriting of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple’s past extended the site’s newfound importance as Mañjuśrī’s dwelling place and a hub of the Buddhist world into the Northern Qi period and, further, to the time of Aśoka.

In addition to providing the novel practice of venerating a bodhisattva in situ with an early precedent, the foundation record supplied models for imperial patronage of Mount Wutai. In addition to Emperor Wenxuan of the Northern Qi, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* is replete with references to the involvement of Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei 魏孝文 (467–499) at the site. According to the gazetteer, Emperor Xiaowen founded the Qingliang Temple 清涼寺, as well as the Foguang Temple 佛光寺 and the Dafu Temple 大孚寺.⁶⁶ Huixiang also states that he planted a garden nearby the latter monastery.⁶⁷ Entries of this type framed the site as the worthy focus of imperial attention during the very same period in which ruler Tang Gaozong 唐高宗 (r. 650–683) and his consort Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 684–705) who subsequently assumed the throne started to be involved there.

Records of cleric Huize’s 會曠 (seventh century) journey to Mount Wutai provide evidence of the rulers’ activity at the mountain. Huixiang’s text is one of many sources from the period that describe the extraordinary events that purportedly transpired during Huize’s Longshuo 龍朔 era (661–663) expedition. Instructed by the throne to investigate holy traces (*shengji* 聖迹),

⁶³ Sen, 80.

⁶⁴ Sen, 86.

⁶⁵ The development, Sen also points out, also facilitated Wu Zetian’s efforts to cast herself as the *cakravartin* ruler of this foremost Buddhist realm.

⁶⁶ T 2098, 51: 1095b–c and 1094a. In the seventh century, the Dafu Temple was known by a number of names. These included the Da futu Temple 大孚圖寺 and the Dafu Lingjiu Temple 大孚靈鷲寺. In the late seventh century this temple’s name was changed to Huayan Temple 華嚴寺 (Avatamsaka Temple) to commemorate the completion of Śikṣānanda’s translation of the eponymous *Avatamsaka sūtra*. Chen, 2007, 394.

⁶⁷ T 2098, 51: 1094a.

the monk and his party encountered an animated statue and heard the tolling of a mysterious bell. The *Gu Qingliang zhuan* states that the party visited locales including both the Dafu Temple, very close to which stood the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple and an Aśoka stūpa, and Mount Fanxian where a man obtained transcendence by eating chrysanthemums. Upon his return to the capital, Huize submitted a report of the favorable omens (*jiexiang* 佳祥) he witnessed and circulated a map of the mountain. The holy traces recorded therein, according to the gazetteer, “increased [Mount Wutai’s] reputation in the capital city and surrounding domain.”⁶⁸ The references to Mount Fanxian and the Dafu Temple in accounts of Huize’s journey indicate that Tang Gaozong and Wu Zetian would likely have been familiar with Mount Wutai’s association with longevity and healing, as well as the traditions related to Aśoka.

The reference to Aśoka’s activities at Mount Wutai in the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend, like the description of the Northern Qi court’s involvement there, facilitated the site’s construction as a sacred place by providing a model for court patronage of the place. Though the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* record of the temple’s origins is the sole version of the tale that references a relic mound established by the Mauryan king, other sources claim that an Aśoka stūpa stood in this area of Mount Wutai. The mid-seventh-century *Record of Miraculous Instruction Given to Vinaya Master Daoxuan* (*Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄) asserts that Aśoka erected a memorial mound near the Dafu Temple.⁶⁹ In his firsthand account of his travels in the Tang, the *Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (*Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記), Japanese cleric Ennin 圓仁 (794–864) reports seeing a two-storied octagonal pagoda near the Dafu Temple.⁷⁰

Long before Mount Wutai’s emergence as an international hub of Buddhist practice, the legend 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,

⁶⁸ T 2098, 51: 1098c.

⁶⁹ T 2107, 52: 437a.

⁷⁰ “Beneath it,” Ennin wrote, “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). By this time the structure was known as the Huayan Temple. This entry is dated the seventh day of the fifth month of the Kaicheng 開成 era (840). The episode appears in Reischauer’s translation of the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*. Reischauer, 235–36.

Chinese environment.⁷¹ Aśoka's hagiography had been translated into Chinese in the fourth and sixth centuries and the stories about the ruler's activities had facilitated the creation of Buddhist sacred sites at multiple locations well beyond the borders of the tradition's homeland.⁷² Rooting Mount Wutai's specialness in its connection to the wheel-turning king and Śākyamuni's relics, the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend provided a rationale for the locale's veneration. Weaving together preexisting traditions about a eunuch's healing, the power of sūtra recitation, Aśoka's 84,000 memorial mounds, and Mañjuśrī's manifestations, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* compiler or the narrators on whom he relied created a Northern Qi tale that defined Mount Wutai's significance in distinctly Buddhist terms.

In addition to promoting the mountain as a worthy object of devotion, the celebration of the site's relationship with Aśoka may have had 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 and then Empress Wu Zetian conducted large-scale relic-distribution campaigns. Emulating Aśoka, Chen Jinhua has shown us, 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. In the final years of his reign, for example, Emperor Wen spearheaded three large-scale projects in which *śārīrā* were distributed to more than 100 prefectures throughout the dynasty. These were, Chen explains, "deliberately planned, heavily politicized propagandistic events aimed at, among other things, depicting Sui Wendi as a universal 'Buddhist monarch' on the model of Aśoka."⁷³ Less than a century after his death, Emperor Wen became a model for Empress Wu Zetian, who also promoted the relic-cult as part of a larger attempt to present herself as a legitimate Buddhist ruler of the realm.⁷⁴

⁷¹ For a discussion of relics in Buddhism's Indian and then Chinese context see Sen; Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*.

⁷² An Faqin 安法欽 (d. after 300 CE) translated the first of two versions of the *Aśokāvadāna* into Chinese around 300 CE: *The Chronicle of King Aśoka* (*Ayuwang zhuan* 阿育王傳). Two centuries later, in 512 CE, Saṅghabhara (Sengjiapoluo 僧伽婆羅) (460–?) produced a second version of the text, the *Scripture of Aśoka* (*Ayuwang jing* 阿育王經). Strong, 16. Chen, *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship*, 76.

⁷³ Chen, *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship*, 86.

⁷⁴ On this topic see Chen Jinhua's "Śārīra and Scepter: Empress Wu's Political Use of Buddhist Relics."

Significantly, Empress Wu supported several projects at Mount Wutai, at least one of which involved relics.

Ennin's ninth-century *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* and Yanyi's eleventh-century *Guang Qingliang zhuan* establish that at least by the ninth century, Mount Wutai residents and visitors believed that Wu Zetian had been active at the site. On the twentieth day of the fifth month of the fifth year of the Kaicheng 開成 era (840), for example, Ennin states that he ascended the summit of the Middle Terrace atop of which stood three iron pagodas (*santieta* 三鐵塔). These structures were built by Dame Wu (Wupo 武婆) or, Ennin clarifies, Empress Zetian (Ze tian huang 則天皇).⁷⁵ Two centuries later in his discussion of the Qingliang Temple 清涼寺, Yanyi states that 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 (*jian'an wang* 建安王) and vice prefect (*changsi* 長史) of Bingzhou 并州—petitioned the court to carry out repairs on this temple.⁷⁶ Later that same year, Empress Wu commissioned the cleric Degan 德感 (seventh-eighth centuries) to travel to the mountain where, with a group of more than 1,000 lay and ordained individuals, he witnessed a series of marvels including the Bodhisattva's manifestation.⁷⁷ 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.⁷⁸ The gazetteer reports that she also sponsored vegetarian feasts at Mount Wutai and erected stele and stūpas there.⁷⁹ This *Guang Qingliang zhuan* material indicates that Wu Zetian may have erected the pagodas Ennin observed in the ninth century. Examined against this backdrop, the version of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend preserved in Huixiang's text appears not only to construct a Northern Qi precedent for Mañjuśrī veneration at Mount Wutai but also provides an ancient, local model for Emperor Wen and Emperor Wu's endeavors.

Finally, associating Mount Wutai with healing, the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend framed the site's significance in a way that would

⁷⁵ DBZ 113: 235.

⁷⁶ T 2099, 51: 1107a. 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. Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician*, 150.

⁷⁷ T 2099, 51: 1107a–b. 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, 51: 1107a.

⁷⁸ T 2099, 51: 1107a–b.

⁷⁹ T 2099, 51: 1107b.

have been legible to local audiences and may, further, have facilitated its identification as a worthy object of imperial patronage. Traditions celebrating mountains as places of luminous caverns and potent flora where transcendence could be obtained, as Raoul Birnbaum and Mary Anne Cartelli among others have pointed out, were well known in the centuries before the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*'s compilation.⁸⁰ For seventh-century audiences, records of the chrysanthemums on Mount Wutai's Indian Transcendent Peak or the story of Wang Xiang'er discovering curatives in its recesses might have brought to mind accounts of other immortal realms, such as fabled Penglai 蓬萊 and Kunlun 崑崙山, the legend of the Peach Blossom Spring (Taohua yuan 桃花源), and the hagiographies of transcendents like those compiled by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343). And, though obtaining long life or immortality and being restored to health are by no means synonymous, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* record of Puming—in which the root *changsong* both healed the cleric and led to him obtaining transcendence—suggests the close relationship between the two. Huixiang's claim that ginseng (*rensan* 仁參), cotton rose (*dahuang* 大黃) and the more than 100 other medicines could be found at Mount Wutai, like dramatic stories of healing and transcendence would have then—as they do now—attracted the attention of local and distant audiences, including the emperor himself.⁸¹

Scholarship has rightly emphasized the significant role that the mountain's association with Mañjuśrī played in its emergence as the foremost sacred site in Tang China. This connection, as Sen and Birnbaum among others have pointed out, attracted powerful patrons including Tang Gaozong and Wu Zetian, who lavished support on this site because its flourishing enhanced the renown of the region from which their families hailed and enhanced the sense that they were *cakravartin* rulers of singularly central Buddhist realms. References to Huize's imperially-commissioned journey to Mount Wutai and the subsequent arrival of the emissaries Yanzhen and Wanfu in search of chrysanthemums in 664, suggest that Emperor Gaozong and Emperor Wu's interest in this place may also have been related to its prominence as a place of healing.

Beginning in 657, Emperor Gaozong's poor health had prevented his full participation at court and he thus sought out remedies of all types.⁸²

⁸⁰ Birnbaum, "Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords"; Cartelli, *The Five-Colored Clouds of Mount Wutai Poems from Dunhuang*.

⁸¹ T 2098, 51: 1100c.

⁸² Sen, 73 and 93.

According to Tansen Sen in his study of the rulers' relationship with Buddhism, this included the use of relics believed to possess therapeutic powers and the assistance of doctors specializing in longevity.⁸³ One of these figures was the Brahmin physician Lokāditya (Lujiayiduo 盧迦逸多), whose connections with a second foreign longevity specialist—Shijiamiduoluo 釋迦蜜多羅 (Śākyamitra?, d. 569–?)—Chen Jinhua teases out in *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician*. When Śākyamitra travelled to Mount Wutai with imperial support in 667, Chen tells us, he may have been in search of saltpeter, a substance valued for its alchemical properties.⁸⁴ Mount Wutai's longstanding reputation as a realm of immortals and a place where curatives might be obtained attracted local apothecaries like Wang Xiang'er and foreign physicians like Śākyamitra to its peaks. Might not the mountain's connection to well-being have also prompted the Tang rulers to deploy representatives there in 663 and 664? While initially accounts like that of the man who gained transcendence by consuming chrysanthemums may have been familiar locally, the stories and image circulated by emissary Huize in the middle of Tang Gaozong's reign publicized the territory's relationship to well-being at court and throughout the dynasty. It may be that this dimension of the locale's significance, as much as its affiliation with Mañjuśrī and relics, drew Emperor Gaozong and Wu Zetian's attention to Mount Wutai.

Unraveling the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple foundation record reveals a different genealogy for this locale 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, this legend 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 tale 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 legend asserting the potency of practice at Mount Wutai's Wangzi Shaoshen Temple. The writing and rewriting of the past, this study shows, constituted one means through which territories were constructed as holy centers. And, careful study of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and related texts reveals, this was not an anomaly. Quite the opposite, the first collections

⁸³ Sen, 75.

⁸⁴ Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Physician*, 383.

devoted to this place contain multiple examples of Mount Wutai's history being refashioned to suit contemporary purposes.⁸⁵

A large body of scholarship considers other strategies with which Chinese practitioners responded to the problem of constructing new sacred sites at mountains standing on the Indian Buddhist world's periphery. In his study of Tang period Mount Song 嵩山, for instance, Bernard Faure highlighted how the hagiographies of Chan masters legitimized the creation of Buddhist territory.⁸⁶ He demonstrated 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 Avalokiteśvara miracle tales, Chün-fang Yü highlighted the important role accounts of sacred objects and records of the bodhisattva's manifestations played in Mount Putuo's (Putuo shan 普陀山) gradual identification as the bodhisattva's mythological Potalaka (Butuoluo 補陀落) home.⁸⁷ Koichi Shinohara's study of the process by which Mount Lu (Lushan 廬山) came to be identified 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 there helped to establish the center as a Buddhist one.⁸⁸

More recently, in his study of the Southern Sacred Peak, Nanyue 南嶽, James Robson has called attention to the apparent mobility of holy 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

⁸⁵ *Gu Qingliang zhuan* examples of this practice include stories of the Dafu si 大孚寺 or Da futu si's 大孚圖寺 origins and the record of the three novices who achieved immortality after entering a mountain hollow, T 2098, 51: 1094b. In "Tales of Huasi 化寺 in Qing Gazetteers," I examine several cases in which Mount Wutai's Tang (618–907) history was refashioned to meet the needs of Qing (1644–1912) audiences.

⁸⁶ Faure introduces the legend of Shenxiu's 神秀 (606?–706) pacification of a huge snake at Mount Yuquan 玉泉山 and his disciple Puji's 普寂 (651–739) victory over a scorned-monk-turned-reptile at Mount Song as examples of this type of literature. See Bernard Faure's "Space and Place in Chinese Religious Traditions."

⁸⁷ See, for instance, Yü's discussion of the account of Japanese monk Egaku's 慧鑿 frustrated attempt to take an Avalokiteśvara image to Japan. Yü, 383–84.

⁸⁸ 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. See Shinohara's "Literary Construction of Buddhist Sacred Places."

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.⁸⁹ His work suggests how by re-placing an ostensibly stable mountain, a community rendered one distant locale proximate. At least insofar as the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple founding legend is concerned, Mount Wutai's past was no more fixed than the Southern Sacred Peak's place.

Examining multiple redactions of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple narrative suggests that proponents of the mountain cult constructed an early history for Mount Wutai by appropriating preexisting narratives associated with other places and times into its lore. Writing and rewriting of the structure's past, seventh-century practitioners extended the site's newfound importance as Mañjuśrī's dwelling place and a hub of the Buddhist world into the Northern Qi period and, further, to the time of Aśoka. Tapping into the well-established tradition of the Mauryan king's 84,000 stūpas, these individuals provided an ancient and local precedent for the relic-campaigns carried out by seventh-century Chinese rulers. Celebrating the site of a prince's auto-cremation as a place of healing, Huixiang and his contemporaries framed the territory's significance in a way that would have been understandable to local audiences and may, further, have facilitated its identification as a worthy object of imperial patronage. Manipulating the past, the case of the Wangzi Shaoshen Temple's supple history shows, constituted a powerful means for creating precedent and new religious territory.

⁸⁹ Robson, *Power of Place*, 59, 61, 67.

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Abbreviations

- DBZ = Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho, Bussho Kankōkai 大日本佛教全書 (Complete Works of Japanese Buddhism). Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai 佛書刊行會, Meiji 明治 45–Taishō 大正 11 (1912–1922).
- T = Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku henshū 渡邊海旭編輯. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932. 100 vols.
- X = Wan zi xuzang jing 卍字續藏經 (Taiwan: Xinwenfeng chubangongsi, 1968–1970), a reprint of the Dainihon zokuzōkyō 大日本續藏經 150 vols., ed. Nankano Tatsue. Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin, 1905–1912.

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