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Miracle Tales and the Domestication of Kuan-yin

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Summary

Miracle stories about Kuan-yin began to be compiled in the fourth century and continue to be collected and circulated down to the present day. In this article I discuss how the miracle tale collections served as a medium for the domestication of Kuan-yin by focusing on several questions. First of all, who were the compilers? Is there any difference in the choices made on the selections between a monk compiler and that of a lay person? What is the role of literati as promoters of the belief in Kuan-yin? Second, to whom does Kuan-yin appear and how does the bodhisattva appear: in dreams or in broad daylight? as male or female? monk or lay person? from what dangers does Kuan-yin rescue the believer and what benefits does the bodhisattva bestow? Third, what is the connection between icons, visions and the changing iconography of Kuan-yin? Fourth, how are the collections organized? are the individual stories simply listed one after another without any clear organizational principle? are they categorized to fit a scriptural paradigm and thereby serve to provide evidential proof for the truth of the sutra? and finally, compared to the early collections, do the later collections show marked departures reflecting historical changes effected both by the new developments of the cult and new anxieties and hopes of the believers?

Keywords: 1.Kuan-yin 2.miracle tales 3. “stimulus and response” (kan-ying)

Anyone who visits a temple in Taiwan, Hong Kong and even in Mainland China can often find posters, pamphlets, brochures and books piled on the side tables or stacked on bookshelves along the walls of the main hall. They are printed by lay devotees and are placed there for visitors to browse or take home for later reading. Among the pious literature distributed free in this fashion, many are scriptures, such as the Diamond Sutra, the Heart Sutra, the A-mi-t'o ching (Smaller Sukhavativyuha Sutra) , but the "Universal Gateway" chapter of the Lotus Sutra is by far the favorite. Stories about Kuan-yin's miraculous responses are also found very frequently among them. This is one of the best ways for a true believer to spread the Dharma and to create merit for him/herself at the same time.

The compilation of such stories about Kuan-yin's salvific deeds is not of course a modern phenomenon. It began already in the fourth century. Contemporary stories, like their ancient counterparts, are characterized by their specificity: who experiences the event when and where are usually carefully noted. When we examine the modern stories, they attract our attention by their ability to address our current concerns. Kuan-yin saves devotees more from cancer and car accident, for instance, than from imprisonment and shipwreck as in former times. As the time changes, people begin to have new problems and new fears instead of old ones. Kuan-yin is nevertheless still always ready and capable of rendering help. In thus updating and upgrading the bodhisattva's competence, the stories contribute to the continuing faith of the people in the savior. I argue that this has been the role played by the miracle stories all along. It is through such stories that the Chinese people form a personal connection with Kuan-yin. The stories concretize the knowledge about Kuan-yin provided by the scriptures. They make the sculpted and painted images of Kuan-yin take on living life. Miracle tales teach people about Kuan-yin and validate what the scriptures claim the bodhisattva can do. They also bear a close relationship to the cult of icons. Experiences of miracles often lead to the creation of icons or, conversely, the worship of Kuan-yin images facilitate the experiences. Finally, how a person experiencing the miracle sees Kuan-yin in his/her vision can often be predetermined by the existing iconographies of the bodhisattva or, in another direction, lead to the creating of new ones. There is a circularity between Kuan-

yin, the devotee, and the icon.

I offer a few examples culled from a collection of such stories published in the Buddhist journal Lion's Roar (Shih-tzu hou) , which could serve as one of several sources supplying materials for such devotional literature distributed in the temples, the other sources being traditional compendia, oral accounts, and the compiler's personal experiences.

The first one comes from Mao Ling-yun who was the compiler of the collection. When he read the news in the newspaper Central Daily on October 22, 1974 that a typhoon was moving northwesterly toward Taiwan, he began to chant the name of Kuan-yin with great sincerity and prayed that it would change direction or reduce its

power so that it would not come ashore to create havoc. Sure enough, it began to move toward north and northeast, then suddenly turning directly westward, it left the area. In the meantime, it reduced its power and did not even cause much rain in Taiwan. In recent years, he would pray to Kuan-yin whenever there was a warning for typhoon and everytime it happened like this.

The second story comes from a woman devotee named K'uan-fen Chan Chung who related it to the compiler. Mrs Chung lives in Tai-chung, Taiwan, right across from the International Cinema on Fu-hsing Road. Her third son, Ching-li, was standing in front of the front door one day in the fall of 1953 when he was fifteen years old. A freight truck suddenly veered right in order to avoid hitting the three children playing in the middle of the street and struck him instead. His clothes were caught and he was dragged along by the truck which could not stop right away. He cried out three times, "My mother believes in the Buddha. Kuan-yin Bodhisattva, please come quickly to save me!" The truck came to a stop and fortunately he was not killed. But his left arm was mangled badly. Because sand and pebbles got mixed together with blood and flesh, they could not be taken out. He stayed in the hospital for four days and the arm became black and festered. The doctor told the mother that he would have to amputate the arm in order to save the son's life. She asked the doctor to first cut away the festered part before attempting to amputate the arm. She called on Kuan-yin throughout the operation. When the boy woke up from the anesthesia, he said, "Just now a white-robed doctor carried me to Heaven and made heavenly maidens dance for me. I was very happy." Apparently the White-robed Kuan-yin

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used her skillful means and made him forget his pain. He dreamt three times of Kuan-yin sprinkle pure water with the willow branch onto his damaged arm and he felt immediate coolness. Flesh gradually grew and the arm was healed.

The third story was supplied by the famous woman writer Hsieh Ping-ying who wrote the preface to the collection. She related that she fell and broke her right leg on August 31, 1972 on board the ship sailing for America. Because there was no doctor and no medicine, she spent the entire twenty days chanting the "Universal Gateway" chapter, the Great Compassion Dharani, and Kuan-yin's name to reduce her pain. When she landed in America she was x-rayed in Michigan and New York and her doctors were astonished. Because although the leg was broken and the bones were crushed, it was not infested or even swollen. This was truly a miracle! She added that in the following year, 1973, she went to a two-week retreat at the Golden Mountain Temple in San Francisco. During that time, she became very clear-headed and intelligent. She painted several pictures of the bodhisattva although she did not know how to paint and composed fifteen poems in half an hour although she had not written any poem for several decades.^[1]

When I interviewed pilgrims on P'u-t'o island in March of 1987, one of the questions I asked them was if they knew of any stories about Kuan-yin's response either to their own prayer or somebody else's. Invariably the reply was affirmative. I will just cite two examples from my field notes. A young woman of twenty-four came with her mother, a retired nurse of forty-nine, from Shanghai to fulfill a vow (huan-

yüan) . Two years ago the mother came down with cancer of the intestines. When she was operated, the cancer was very advanced and had spread. So the doctor sewed her up and predicted that she would die soon. Mother prayed to Kuan-yin for a whole year and vowed that if she should

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survive, she would come to P'u-t'o to give thanks. Now two years had passed and she was well. That was why mother and daughter were there.

A fifty year old fisherman from Ning-p'o had come to P'u-t'o six times. He told me that originally he did not believe in Buddhism. But ten years ago, in 1977, his left pinky finger was bitten off by a snake and the whole arm became paralyzed. He went to Shanghai and Beijing for cure but had no success after spending 4000 RMB. His mother then accompanied him to pray to Kuan-yin at the Buddha's Peak (nickname for Hui-chi Monastery situated on the highest point of the island) on P'u-t'o. One month later he had a dream in which he received a shot. It was so piercingly painful that he jumped up in his sleep and woke his wife. Soon after he could move his left arm. Believing that Kuan-yin had saved him, he came in 1979, the first year when P'u-t'o was reopened to the public after the Cultural Revolution. He went up to the Buddha's Peak following the Pilgrim's Path (an uphill path leading from Fa-yü Monastery to Hui-chi Monastery), bowing every three steps to show his thankfulness. He also told me about a miracle which happened to eight fishermen whom he met. Their boat went out with three other boats three years ago. There was a big storm and the other boats capsized drowning more than forty people. They followed a light which appeared in front of them and reached P'u-t'o safely. When they embarked, the light also disappeared. They started coming every year on the 19th day of the 6th month (one of the three holy days of Kuan-yin, the day Kuan-yin achieved enlightenment), making one full prostration after walking every three steps along the Pilgrim's Path.

Miracle Tales and the Theory of kan-ying

I have called these stories "miracle tales", for they do share a common feature with miracles as understood in the Western traditions. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, miracle is "an extraordinary and astonishing happening that is attributed to the presence and action of an ultimate or divine power" (Micropaedia VI: 927c). What happened to the individuals whose stories I have retold would undoubtedly have been viewed by them as nothing but extraordinary and astonishing. They would also attribute them to the divine power of Kuan-yin. The Chinese word for such stories, however, is ling-kan, "efficacious

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response", or ling-ying, "efficacious manifestation", or ying-yen, "evidential manifestation". All these expressions are derived from an indigenous world view which believes that everything in the world is interrelated and interdependent. This belief is called kan-ying which literally means "stimulus and response", or,

“sympathetic resonance”. John Henderson, referring to it as “cosmic resonance”, says, “According to this theory, things of the same category but in different cosmic realms were supposed to affect one another by virtue of a mutual sympathy, to resonate like properly attuned pitchpipes” (1984: 20). The relationship between the devotees and Kuan-yin is built on the theory of Kan-yin: their prayer and calling aloud of Kuan-yin’s name is the initiating stimulus or trigger which, when it is sincere and desperate enough, is answered with Kuan-yin’s response. Kuan-yin does not act gratuitously. Human suppliants are linked to Kuan-yin through sincerity (cheng), for it is through sincerity that the mechanism of stimulus and response is set into motion. Although Avalokitesvara was already known in India as the savior from perils, and Buddhist scriptures proclaim this as a central message, the Chinese compilers of miracle tales nevertheless understood the miraculous workings through this indigenous epistemological lens, just as the persons who themselves experienced the events did.

In order for us to understand why the Chinese see Kuan-yin in this way, it may be helpful to discuss briefly the Chinese views of the universe prior to the introduction of Buddhism into China. The world in which human beings live is called in the Chinese language, “Heaven and Earth” (t’ien-ti). Unlike most other religions, Chinese religion does not have a creator god. On the contrary, as seen in the Book of Changes (I-ching), one of the basic Confucian classics, and a divinatory handbook of great antiquity, “Heaven and Earth”, is the origin of everything, including human beings, in the universe. This creating and sustaining force, otherwise known as Tao or the Way, is seen as good and the highest goal of the human life is to live in conformity to it. There is no God transcendent and separate from the world and there is no heaven outside of the universe to which human beings would want to go for refuge. The Book of Changes contains sixty-four hexagrams which are made up by the eight trigrams. The first and second trigrams, known as ch’ien and k’un, representing the two prime principles of yang

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and yin which constitute the Tao, and Heaven and Earth are the physical representations of these principles.

Although these ideas are datable to the Chou (1111~249 B.C.E.), they received further refinement during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.~220 C.E.), particularly from Tung Chung-shu (c. 179 ~ c. 104 B.C.E.) and his contemporaries. According to them, all living and non-living things in the universe are constituted of ch’i, which has been translated as vital force, material force, or life force. Ch’i refers to yin and yang, and the five phases of wood, fire, earth, metal and water, which evolve from the interaction of the two. This is the worldview shared by all Chinese religions. Such a worldview has been described as “organic, vitalistic, and holistic” and the universe is seen as “a dynamic, ongoing process of continual transformation” (Needham 1969 : 287; Tu 1989 : 72). Because humans share the same substance with the universe, there is the possibility for communication between us and our environment. This belief is implied by the concepts of “mandate of Heaven” (t’ien-ming) and “stimulus and response” (kan-ying).

Mandate of Heaven was originally used by the Chou founders to justify their rebellion against the previous Shang dynasty. According to them, the last two Shang rulers lost their mandate because they were deficient in virtue. The mandate went to the Chou founders because they were virtuous. That is why the Book of History says, "The Mandate of Heaven is not easily preserved. Heaven is hard to depend on. Those who have lost the mandate did so because they could not practice and carry on the reverence and the brilliant virtue of their forefathers" (Chan 1963: 7) . Heaven not only gave and took away mandate, it also sent blessings or warnings before it did so. Thus the Chinese believed in omens and portents, taking them to mean Heaven's responses to the behavior of mankind. By the Han times, "the unity of men and Nature was turned into one of mutual influence, these influences were thought to be exerted through strange phenomena and calamities; Heaven, though not anthropomorphic, was purposive, asserting its will through prodigies and warning to men" (Chan 1963 : 292) . Tung Chung-shu, the architect of Han Confucianism, was a firm believer of such ideas. He said, "When a great ruler is about to arise, auspicious omens first appear; when a ruler is about to be destroyed, there are baleful ones beforehand. Things indeed summon each other, like to like, a dragon bringing rain, a fan driving away

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heat, the place where an army has been being thick with thorns. Things, whether lovely or repulsive, all have an origin" (Needham 1969: 282) . The Han Chinese' interest in observing natural phenomena was in fact related to the ruler's intense obsession with omens. Systematic notation of spots on the sun began in 28 B.C.E. and the first seismograph in the world was invented in 132 C.E. in order to pin-point earthquakes, which were regarded as signs of disorder in nature. Writing on the relationship between Chinese Buddhism and the cosmology of sympathetic resonance, Robert Sharf observes, "From the time of the Han, dynastic histories typically included a chapter entitled 'five phases' which recorded occurrences of 'unusual phenomena' or 'wonders' (kuai) including earthquakes, avalanches, feather-rain, and the birth of two-headed chickens. The principle of kan-ying was invoked to explain moral retribution, ritual efficacy, natural and astronomical cycles, political upheavals and so on. It should not, therefore, be surprising to discover that kan-ying also influenced the Chinese understanding of Buddhist cosmology and practice" (1991 : 187) . I would argue that the fascination with the strange and anomalous which led to the production of the genre called chih-k'uai , or what Robert Campany calls "strange writings", literature during the Six Dynasties was related to this. The compilation of miracle tales, which can be regarded as a sub-genre of this literature and frequently shares data with it, is the application of the native kan-ying theory to Buddhist soteriology.

The philosophical explanation for the mutual influence between nature and humans was explained by Tung Chung-shu thus, "Heaven possesses yin and yang and man also possesses yin and yang. When the universe's material force of yin arises, man's material force of yin arises in response. Conversely, when man's material force of yang arises, that of the universe also arises in response" (Needham 1959 : 284) . This provides the foundation for the Chinese belief in the correspondence between

microcosm and macrocosm: a person is a small universe replicating the greater universe without.

Although the Mandate of Heaven was originally used in a political context to justify the change of dynasties, very early on the Confucian thinkers understood it in a much broader sense of moral destiny, moral nature or moral order. Confucius (551~479 B.C.E.) already used it in this sense when he said in the

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Analects, “At fifty I knew the Mandate of Heaven” (2 : 4) , and “The superior man stands in awe of three things. He stands in awe of the Mandate of Heaven, he stands in awe of great men, and he stands in awe of the words of the sages. The inferior man is ignorant of the Mandate of Heaven and does not stand in awe of it” (16 : 8) . Just as a ruler has to be vigilant in cultivating himself in order to keep his mandate to rule, similarly, a morally sensitive person has to cultivate him/herself in order to live in accordance with the Way and in harmony with Nature and other human beings. The Confucian tradition identified Mandate of Heaven with the innate goodness of human nature which was first emphasized by Mencius (c. 372~289 B.C.E.) . Human nature is good because it is bestowed by the Way, and according to the Book of Changes , “What issues from the Way is good and that which realizes it is the individual nature” (Chan 1963 : 266) . To follow our inborn moral nature and cultivate it to its fullest potential should be the goal of humankind. In the Confucian tradition, the spiritual force fueled this self-transformation and self-realization is called “sincerity” (ch’eng) or “humanity” (jen) . Sincerity is the main theme in the Doctrine of the Mean (Chung-yung) a chapter in the Confucian classic Book of Rites. When a person fully develops his/her nature through sincerity, he/she forms a trinity with Heaven and Earth. It is safe to say that this has been the ultimate goal for the Chinese who is educated in the literati tradition. But even for those who were not necessarily so educated, such as women and commoners who also featured in the miracle stories, the belief in the cosmic power of sincerity was universal. The only difference is that this same spiritual force is directed toward making a contact with Kuan-yin, instead of one’s own sagehood.

Buddhist biographers and theologians shared the same fascination with the idea of sympathetic resonance. Miracle stories were collected by both monks and lay people. Popular miracle tale collections served as sources for monastic biographies. Hui-chiao (497~554) wrote the Kao-seng chuan (Biographies of Eminent Monks, T no. 2059) , the earliest surviving work of the genre and devoted one section to wonder-working monks. He was familiar with contemporary miracle tale collections and drew materials from them. He mentioned Hsüan-yen chi (Records in Proclamation of Manifestations) and Ming-hsiang chi (Signs from the Unseen Realm) by title and used twenty stories from them in his work. He

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also stated that he had used the Yu-ming lu (Records of the Hidden and Visible Worlds) by Liu Yi-ch'ing (403~444), who was also the author of the Hsüan-yen chi which is also known as Ming-yen chi (Records of Manifestating the Unseen Realm), the Kan-yin chuan (Records of Responses to Stimuli) by Wang Yen-hsiu (fl. 465~471), the Cheng-ying chuan (Accounts of the Verifies Responses) by Chu Chün-t'ai (5th century), and the Sou-shen lu (Records of the Searching for the Spirits) by Tao Yuan-ming (365~424) (T 50 : 418b~c). Tao-hsüan (596~667), the vinaya master and the author of the Hsu Kao-seng chuan (Continuous Biographies of Eminent Monks, T no. 2060), was a great believer and promoter of miracles. He wrote the (Chi shen-chou san-pao k'an-t'ung lu (Records of Spiritual Resonance Associated with the Three Jewels in China, T no. 2106) in which he compiled miracles wrought by relics, stupas, images, sutras and divine monks. He was also the author of the Tao-hsüan lü-shih k'an-t'ung (Records of Spiritual Resonance of the Vinaya Master Tao-hsüan, T no. 2107) in which he recorded a series of interviews he conducted with spirits. He used the term k'an-t'ung both in these two works and in the biographies to refer to the supernatural events. Tsan-ning (919~1001), the compiler of the massive Sung kao-seng chuan (Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled in the Sung, T no. 2061), followed his usage and entitled the section on monks who experienced miraculous responses with this term. As pointed out by John Kieschnick, the expression k'an-t'ung comes from the "Great Treatise" of the Booh of Changes : "When stimulated, it penetrates." Tao-hsüan and Tsan-ning saw no conflict between the indigenous idea of spiritual or sympathetic resonance and the Buddhist idea of karma. Rather they were complementary to each other (Kieschnick 1997 : 101).

As the cult of Kuan-yin spread in China, there was growing scholastic debate concerning the workings of kan-ying (Fukushima 1979 : 36~49). Since in real life there were plenty of cases in which people were not always successful in eliciting Kuan-yin's response, theological explanation then became necessary. According to Chi-tsang, the bodhisattva both affects and responds. The T'ien-t'ai school uses the image of water and moon to describe the "wonder of affect and response", one of the thirty wonders concerning the invocation of Buddhas. The relationship between the sentient beings and the Buddha is compared to that between water and moon in the Miao-fa lien-hua ching hsüan-i (Mysterious

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Meanings of the Lotus Sutra, T no. 1716) : "Water does not rise, nor does the moon descend. Yet in a single instant, the one moon is manifest in manifold [bodies] of water. [Similarly] Buddhas do not come and sentient beings do not go. The power of the good roots of compassion should be perceived in this way (T 33: 697c)." Robert Sharf summarizes the discussion thus, "The power of beings to affect a response in the Buddha is identified with the power of the impetus or chi, the source of which lies in the karmic accumulation of good deeds. In later exegetical work in China and Japan, the image of the moon on the water becomes the standard illustration of the workings of kan-ying" (1991 : 223). [2] According to Mahayana

Buddhism, all sentient beings are endowed with buddha nature. There is no essential difference separating buddhas and bodhisattvas from ordinary people, the only distinction being that buddhas and bodhisattvas are those who are enlightened whereas ordinary people have not achieved the same realization about the nature of reality. In this regard, there is a congruence between Buddhist ontology and the Chinese indigenous one. Just as humankind can form a trinity with Heaven and Earth, they can also become Buddhas through the experience of enlightenment. Sincerity and good karma are hereby equally emphasized and skillfully harmonized.

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Miracle Tales about Kuan-yin

In 1970 Makita Tairyō published an edited and annotated edition of the three earliest Chinese collections of miracle tales about Kuan-yin (which I shall refer as first, second, and third collection for short). They are: (1) Kuang-shih-yin ying-yen chi (A Record of Kuang-shih-yin's Responsive Manifestations), written from memory by Fu Liang (374~426), based on an earlier work with the same title and written by Hsieh Fu before 399 but lost in that year due to war. It has seven stories. (2) Hsu Kuang-shih-yin ying-yen chi (Continued Records of Kuang-shih-yin's Responsive Manifestations), written by Chang Yen in mid-fifth century. It has ten stories. (3) Hsu Kuang-shih-yin ying-yen chi (More Records of Kuan-shih-yin's Responsive Manifestations), compiled by Lu Kao in 501. It has sixty-nine stories. Although these collections were once well known and famous Buddhist monks referred to them by name, they did not survive as independent works in China.^[3] Individual stories were adopted and incorporated into biographies of eminent monks and encyclopedic collections such as the seventh century Buddhist work Fa-yüan chulin (A Grove of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma, T no.2122) or the tenth century T'ai-ping kuang-chi (Broad-ranging Records Compiled in the Era of Great Peace). The discovery of the 12th century Japanese copy of these lost works and Makita's careful study of them provide us with valuable information about the earliest evidences for the cult of Kuan-yin in China. Donald Gjerston is the first Western scholar who emphasizes the value of Buddhist miracle tales, including the ones contained in these collections, because

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they "were concerned not with intricacies of doctrine or subtleties of speculation, but with the mechanics of popular faith" (1989: xii). Robert Campany has translated a number of stories from the collections and made sophisticated theoretical analysis of them (1991, 1993, 1996a, 1996b). I agree with his suggestion that the initial success of the bodhisattva among the Chinese faithful was his "newness": not only it was the first time in Chinese religion that a deity manifested himself as a "strikingly immediate, concretely salvific, unfailingly responsive presence", but also because he was exotic and unfamiliar. The miracle tales which were compiled from eyewitness oral accounts reported by the faithful would in turn inspire and instill faith in the

bodhisattva among potential readers and listeners. It is through the circular spiral consisting of confirmed devotees, miracle tales and future converts that Kuan-yin was domesticated (1993 : 256~268) .

Before I begin to discuss the stories, let me first say something about the sources which I use. Because of their unique value of being the oldest accounts, I use these three earliest collections as my main sources in discussing miracle tales about Kuan-yin. Other relevant materials I use include some seventy stories from the three biographies of eminent monks and other monastic chronicles. While these sources are dated and cover tales happened before the 10th century, three other miracle tale collections were compiled much later. The first is the Kuan-shih-yin ching-chou chih-yen chi (Record of Manifestations [Resulting] from Recitation of Kuan-shih-yin Sutras and Mantras) compiled by the layman Chou Ke-fu in 1659. The second is the Kuan-yin tz'u-lin chi (Compassionate Grove of Kuan-yin) compiled by the monk Hung-tsan in 1668 and, finally, the Kuan-shih-yin ling-kan lu (Record of Kuan-shi-yin bodhisattva's Efficacious Responses) without an author and published in 1929. Although all three contain stories happened long time ago, and some of which are actually taken from earlier collections, more stories in the later collections happened after the 10th century, particularly in the Ming and Ch'ing. It is curious that no collections compiled prior to the 17th century have survived as independent works. Chou Ke-fu, Hung-tsan, and the anonymous compiler often mentioned the titles of some miracle tale collections as their sources, but these are no longer extant. As we reach the 20th century, compilation and publication of miracle stories became very popular,

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particularly in the 1910s and 20s. During my research in various locations in China and Taiwan, I came across half a dozen such compilations which were published either in Peking or Shanghai with donations by the faithful. I chose the last mentioned one mainly because it is most extensive in its coverage. In the following discussion, when I refer to early collections, I mean the tales edited by Makita Tairyō, and when I refer to later collections, I mean the collections compiled by Chou Ke-fu, Hung-tsan, and the one published in 1923 in Shanghai.

I would like to discuss how the miracle tale collections served as a medium for the domestication of Kuan-yin in this article by focusing on several questions. First of all, who were the compilers? Is there any difference in the choices made on the selections between a monk compiler and that of a lay person? What is the role of literati as promoters of the belief in Kuan-yin? Second, to whom does Kuan-yin appear and how does the bodhisattva appear: in dreams or in broad daylight? as male or female? monk or lay person? from what dangers does Kuan-yin rescue the believer and what benefits does the bodhisattva bestow? Third, what is the connection between icons, visions and the changing iconography of Kuan-yin? Fourth, how are the collections organized? Are the individual stories simply listed one after another without any clear organizational principle? Are they categorized to fit a scriptural paradigm and thereby serve to provide evidential proof for the truth of the sutra? And finally, compared to the early collections, do the later collections show marked departures reflecting historical changes effected both by the new

developments of the cult and new anxieties and hopes of the believers? While it may not always be possible to answer all the questions fully, I would like to have us keep them in mind as we wade through this rich and fascinating material.

I will first talk about the three earliest collections of miracle stories about Kuan-yin. All three compilers came from the gentry-literati class. Since they wrote prefaces for the collections and their biographies are found in standard dynastic histories, it is fairly easy for us to place them socially and spiritually. Fu Liang (374~426), the compiler of the first collection, served as an official under both the Eastern Chin and Sung dynasties, reaching the position of president of the Department of the Affairs of State under the Sung. He came from an influential gentry family and was well known as a scholar of classics (Sung shu 43;

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Nan-shih 15). He related in the preface that his father Fu Yüan was given a copy of an earlier collection containing more than ten tales made by Hsieh Fu. In 399 he escaped from Kuai-chi (present Shao-hsing, Chekiang) when Sun En attacked the city. When he returned, he could no longer find the volume. He then wrote down seven stories based on his memory. Hsieh Fu, the original writer of the lost collection, was a recluse, living in the mountains for more than ten years. He was once offered an official position but refused to accept it (Chin shu 94). He, Fu Yuan and Hsi Ch'ao (336~377), the author of Feng-fa-yao (Essentials of the Dharma), were Buddhist devotees and close personal friends. Thus, Fu Liang, the compiler of the earliest surviving miracle tale collection, was introduced to Buddhism by his father.

Chang Yen, the compiler of the second collection, served as the grand secretary in the Secretariat of the Heir Apparent under the Sung. He came from an aristocratic background, descending from Chang Liang of the Han, and is mentioned in the biography of his father Chang Mao-tu (Sung shu 53). His family had also been following Buddhism. He was friendly with Pei-tu, a monk famous for his magical powers active in the capital of Chien-kang. His nephew Chang Jun (444~497) wrote a work on the vinaya which was included in the Buddhist polemical work, Hung-ming chi. In the preface to his collection, he mentioned that when he read Fu Liang's accounts, he was greatly moved. Inspired, he gathered together the things he had heard and wrote them down in order to pass them on to those who share the same delight in such stories.

Lu Kao (459~532), the author of the third collection, was related to Chang Yen, who was the first cousin of his maternal grandfather. Like Chang, he also came from an influential gentry family and believed in Buddhism since youth. He served as an adjunct in the service of the director of instruction under the Southern Ch'i as well as an official in the Liang (Liang shu 26; Nan-shih 48). In the dated preface (501) to his collection, he mentions the first two collections by their authors and titles and provides a genealogy of this literature by tracing it to Hsieh. He refers to his effort as "continuation", thus its title. Clearly these three collections were produced by authors belonging to a distinctive social stratum. The authors were

educated Buddhist laymen from distinguished gentry families. They all lived in the Wu area, in present Kiangsu and Chekiang. They moved in

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the same circles and were familiar with each other's work. The most striking feature shared by these stories is the name used for the bodhisattva: Kuang-shih-yin. This is the name used in all the seventeen stories contained in the first and second collections. Four stories out of sixty-nine in the third collection also use this name, while the rest use the more familiar name of Kuan-shih-yin. When we recall that the earliest translation of the Lotus Sutra made by Dharmaraksha in 286 refers to the bodhisattva by this name in the "Universal Gateway" chapter, the reason for their choice makes sense. Being educated Buddhist laymen, they undoubtedly were familiar with the translation and thus followed its usage. However, by the time the third collection was compiled, Kumarajiva's translation was already available and the bodhisattva was called Kuan-shih-yin in this new translation. The miracle stories can thus tell us about the changing popularity of the two versions of the sutra. They also give us an amazing proof of how quickly the "good news" about the bodhisattva's grace proclaimed by the Lotus found willing ears and believing hearts in China. For the first such story, recounted in the first collection and translated below, was dated to the Yüan-k'ang era (291~299). Less than fifteen years after the sutra was translated into Chinese in Ch'ang-an, the bodhisattva's presence was already made known in Loyang. In this particular case the protagonist was said to have an ancestry hailed from the Western Regions which probably refer to India based on his surname of Chu. However, even though he might have known the bodhisattva prior to his move to Loyang, it did not necessarily mean that he became a convert to Kuan-yin outside of China. In fact, when we consider how early the period during which these stories happened (mostly the 5th century) is, it is quite surprising that only six out of the total of eighty-six stories in these three collections are about non-Chinese.

Similarly, contrary to usual assumptions, monks do not dominate these stories either. The three collections contain stories about both monks and lay people. Whereas the first two have almost even numbers for both groups (three monks and four laymen in the first, five monks and five lay people, including one woman in the second), the third collection has more lay people (fifty including five women versus eighteen monks and one nun). In the later collections, the proportion of lay people to monks becomes even greater. While it may be true that initially it

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were foreign monks who introduced the belief in Kuan-yin to the Chinese, the cult certainly did not remain confined within the monastic circles for long.

The first and second collections share another commonality which sets them apart from the third collection. The stories do not follow any organizational principles. They are not grouped together either geographically or historically. There is no specific theme running from one story to the next either, except for the single fact that they all have to do with the protagonist's desperate need for help and Kuan-yin's

speedy aid when called. In the initial period of Kuan-yin worship represented here, the bodhisattva is shown to be able to appear anywhere and everywhere. One does not have to pray to him in a temple or in front of his image. Nor do they have to perform any prescribed ritual in order to receive divine aid. Although the compilers were knowledgeable Buddhist laymen, they were more interested in making known the marvelous efficacy of this new universal savior than educating their readers by linking the stories to any scriptures. The third collection, on the other hand, groups the stories around the promised deliverances performed by Kuan-yin in the “Universal Gateway” chapter of the Lotus Sutra and the Ch’ing Kuan-yin ching which was translated probably in the early fifth century, by 420, barely eighty years before Lu compiled his collection. He first narrated the forty-five stories, arranging them according to the dangers his hero/heroine faced using the categories found in the “Universal Gateway” chapter: three stories about fire, six about water, one about running into rakshas, eight about execution, twenty-two about imprisonment, fourteen about robbers, one about seeking the birth of a son. Then he narrated another fourteen stories under the four types of dangers mentioned in the Ch-ing Kuan-yin ching : five stories about finding the way after being lost, four about returning to one’s native place, three about recovering from serious illnesses, and two about unharmed after encountering ferocious animals. Thus after telling the first three stories, he would say, “The above three stories [confirm] what the ‘Universal Gateway’ says, ‘if you enter the fire, fire cannot burn you.’” Or, “The above four stories [confirm] what the Ch-ing Kuan-yin ching says about returning to one’s native place.”

I will translate the seven stories from the first collection compiled early in the fifth century by Fu Liang and use them as a framework to discuss some important

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issues common to these and related tales.

(1) The first story is about a miraculous escape from fire:

Chu Ch’ang-shu’s ancestors were originally from the Western Regions. They had accumulated much property over generations and were very wealthy. During the Yuan-k’ang era (291~299) of the Chin, he moved to Loyang. He was a devout believer of the Buddha and particularly loved to recite the Kuang-shih-yin Sutra. One day his neighbor’s house caught fire. His own house was made of thatch and was situated down wind. He thought to himself that because the fire was so near, even if they could manage to save some possessions, it would not be much. Remembering what the Kuang-shih-yin Sutra says, “If one encounters fire, one should call single-mindedly [the bodhisattva]”,^[4] he told his family members not to try to carry things out of the house nor to try to put out the fire with water, but just to chant the sutra with sincerity. The fire soon consumed the neighbor’s house. When it reached the fence outside his own house, the wind suddenly turned back and the fire also stopped. Everyone took this to

be an efficacious response. But there were four or five juvenile delinquents living in the neighborhood who ridiculed it, saying that because the wind happened to change directions, there was nothing miraculous about it. They decided to wait for a warm and dry night and then they would burn the house. If it still did not burn, only then would they agree it was a miracle. Sometime later the weather did indeed become very dry and hot and the wind was also blowing hard. The youths secretly got hold of some torches and threw them onto the roof. They did this three times and each time the torches died out. They became very frightened and ran home. The next morning

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they came to Ch'ang-shu's house and told him what had happened the previous night. They begged him for forgiveness. He said to them, "I have no divine power. I just called on Kuang-shih-yin and meditated on him. It must be the protection given by his majestic efficacy. You should repent and believe in him." Everyone in the neighborhood marvelled with amazement about this.^[5]

This is the only story among the seven which credits the chanting of the Kuang-shih-yin sutra (the "Universal Gateway" chapter) as the reason why Chu Ch'ang-shu was spared from the fire. All the other stories, as we shall see, emphasize the calling of the bodhisattva's name. But even in this case, the triggering impetus for the bodhisattva's intervention lies in the devotee's oral chanting as well as mental concentration on him (sung-nien), as it is made clear in his statement to the young trouble makers. We come across the word nien very often in the miracle stories. This is for a very good reason, for nien has the double meanings of vocal invocation and mental meditation at the same time.

(2) This story is about a monk's receiving a new voice:

Monk Po Fa-chiao, a native of Chung-shan (present Ting County, Hopei), was a diligent and devout person. He would like to recite sutras but lacked the voice. He was very unhappy about it. He told his fellow monks, "Kuang-shih-yin can help a person fulfill his wishes in this very life. I will now pray to him with singleness of mind. If my sincerity is weak and cannot move the bodhisattva, my previous sins from bad karma will not be eliminated. I would rather die than living a long life but without a good voice." After saying that he refused to eat and concentrated his mind with utmost sincerity. After three or four days he became weak and his disciples asked him to give up, saying, "One's

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voice, like other endowments, is determined and cannot be changed in one life. You should cherish your health in order to practice the religion.” But he told them not to disturb him because his determination was unshakable. After five or six days he became even weaker and could only breathe. His companions were greatly worried, fearing that he was going to die. On the morning of the seventh day, however, he suddenly opened his eyes and looked happy. He told the disciples that he had received a good response. He asked for water to wash and uttered three gathas. His voice was so loud that it could be heard two to three li away. Villagers were all startled and wondered what strange voice was coming from the temple. When they came to inquire, they realized that this was no other than the voice of the monk. He recited half a million words after this. His voice sounded like a bell and showed no sign of weakness. People at that time all realized that he was a person who had achieved the Way. He was still alive at the end of Shih Hu [r. 334~349, the third emperor of the Latter Chao], when he was over ninety years of age.

This story introduces a theme not identified with the perils mentioned in the sutras. This was the case of a healthy person living a normal life who did not face any life-threatening danger. Moreover, according to the theory of karma, one’s physical endowments, like one’s lifespan and other circumstances, are predetermined and cannot be altered. However, because he wanted to chant the sutras with a beautiful voice which he did not have, he was willing to die in order to get it. He was motivated by a sincere desire to glorify Buddhism and Kuan-yin granted him the wish. Here is an impressive example of how the indigenous ideas of sincerity and sympathetic resonance influenced the Buddhist idea of karma.

It also bears a striking similarity to the even more dramatic story of Gunabhadra found in the Biographies of Eminent Monks. Gunabhadra arrived in Canton in 435 after a dangerous journey from Ceylon when the wind suddenly stopped and the boat was marooned in the ocean. He asked his fellow passengers to concentrate on the buddhas of the ten directions and call on Kuan-

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yin. He himself secretly chanted a dharani sutra, repented to the bodhisattva and worshiped him. Wind rose up and rain began to fall. The boat could then continue to sail. After he arrived in China, he was well received. But because he could not speak Chinese, he had to rely on translators. When he was asked to give lectures on the Hua-yen Sutra by the prime minister, he felt very ashamed because he himself could not speak the language. In the same night, he performed a repentance rite and begged Kuan-yin for help. He then dreamt of a person in white who carried a sword in one hand and a man’s head in the other. The person asked Gunabhadra why he was worried. When told the reason, he told Gunabhadra not to worry. He cut off Gunabhadra’s head and put the head he was holding on the latter instead. The next morning when Gunabhadra woke up, he could speak Chinese perfectly (T 50 : 344b) .

Similar stories, though much less spectacular than the one above, about other monks who gained wisdom or eloquence are found in other monastic collections. Because a monk's reputation was closely related to his ability to either chant sutras or give lectures on sutras, it is understandable why a good voice and an ability to explain Buddhist doctrines would be a highly prized quality in a monk. In the Biographies of Promoters of the Lotus Sutra (Hung-tsan fa-hua chuan, T no. 2067), there is this story about the monk Shih Fa-ch'eng (562~640) who was committed to the chanting of the Lotus Sutra as his vocation. However, at one time he was exhausted both physically and mentally and felt that he had to give up his practice. So he carried out a ritual program of worshipping Kuan-yin and prayed for protection. When he finished the twenty-one day rite, he suddenly saw a giant in white standing in front of the Buddha image. The giant gave him some medicine and asked him to swallow it. After that he became doubly vigorous in body and mind. He could then recite the sutra without stop (T 8 : 37b). The T'ien-t'ai master Tsun-shih (963~1032), who wrote a ritual manual based on the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching and was a great promoter of repentance rites, also figured prominently in the miracle tale tradition. According to the Fo-tsu t'ung-chi (Record of the Lineage of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, T no. 2035) compiled by Chih-p'an around 1260, he was born as a result of his mother's praying to Kuan-yin for a son. She dreamt of a beautiful woman who gave her a pearl to swallow. When he was seven months old, he could already call the name

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of Kuan-yin by following his mother's example. Later in life, he achieved great renown in Chekiang for his extreme austerities. Once when he became ill, he saw Kuan-yin^[6] touching him, pull out several worms from his mouth and pour drops of sweet dew into his mouth from the bodhisattva's fingertips. He recovered and his physical shape also changed. The crown of his head grew more than an inch, his hands came down to below his knees, his voice became as loud as a booming bell and his skin was as fair as white jade (T 49 : 207b).

The dharma master by the name of Hui-tsai (997~1083) lived slightly later than Tsun-shih. He was said to be confused and dull by nature. He chanted the Great Compassion Dharani all his life and hoped to be able to understand Buddhist teachings. One night he suddenly dreamt of an Indian monk who was several meters in height. The monk took off his robe and put it on Hui-tsai, saying, "Hui-tsai, remember me all your life!" The next day when he attended the lecture, he immediately understood what was being said. He achieved a thorough enlightenment (T 49 : 215b~c).

In the collections of miracle tales compiled in late imperial China, "gaining wisdom" (te-hui) constituted a separate category. Not only monks and nuns, but also ordinary men and women were encouraged to call on Kuan-yin to improve their intellectual abilities. Sheng-yen (1930~), a contemporary Ch'an master of Taipei and New York, delights in telling his audience about how slow witted he was when he worked as a young novice in Jiangsu. He did not understand the lectures,

nor could he learn how to chant. His master told him to do continuous prostrations in front of the Kuan-yin image, chant Kuan-yin's holy name and concentrate on the bodhisattva with single-mindedness. He did so faithfully for six months and one day he suddenly understood everything. When I did my field work in Hangchow and P'u-t'o in 1987, I came across a number of young people who were hoping to pass the examinations to enter high schools or colleges. When asked why did they come to P'u-t'o, they answered that they hoped Kuan-

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yin would grant them intelligence.

Let us return to the stories in the earliest collection of miracle tales.

(3) This story is about deliverance from being killed, or in the vocabulary of the "Universal Gateway", peril by knife (tao-nan) :

After Shih Hu died, Jan Min (d. 352) [7] persecuted non-Chinese. Even Chinese who looked like barbarians were killed. At that time there were three non-Chinese monks in the capital Yeh (in present Hopei) who knew that they were going to die. So they discussed among themselves to figure out a way to escape their predicament. They said to each other that Kuang-shih-yin could save people from perils. So they decided to take refuge in the bodhisattva and recite sutra together to beg him for help. They did so day and night without stop. Several days later, soldiers came to the temple to get them. They surrounded the temple and three came in carrying knives in their hands intending to kill the monks. One monk was hiding behind the wall of the lecture hall which was behind a thicket of trees. When the man came and thrusted out the knife to kill the monk, the knife struck a tree trunk. It became crooked like a hook and could not be taken out. The next person came forward to kill. But his knife broke into two pieces, one piece flying to the sky and the other came back at him. When the last person saw this strange happening, he became frightened and dared not go forward. He threw down his knife and asked, "What divine skill do you have that you cannot be harmed by knives?" To which the monk replied, "I have none." It is just because I heard that the government is killing non-Chinese.

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I feared that I could not escape so I had no choice but turned my heart to Kuang-shih-yin. This must be divine protection." The men hurried back and reported this to Min who pardoned these three monks. Monk Tao-i heard this story himself at Yeh.

This and the following story introduce us to the violent world of the 4th and 5th centuries in which a person could become imprisoned, sentenced for execution, or summarily killed for no other reason than that he happened to be in the wrong place or on the wrong side of a conflict. Although there is only two stories of this nature in the first collection, they would increase enormously in the third collection which includes eight stories about execution and twenty-two about imprisonment. They provide a vivid sociological and psychological template of that period. In fact, a number of the later stories would bear a striking resemblance to the story giving rise to the indigenous sutra King Kao's Kuan-yin Sutra (Kao Wang Kuan-shih-yin ching) .

(4)To Chuan was a native of Ho-nei (present Ju-yang, Honan) . During the years 345~356 he was serving as an official under Kao Ch'ang, the governor of Ping-chou, who was feuding with Lü Hu, the governor of Yi-chou. To was captured by the Lu faction and was thrown into prison together with six or seven compatriots. They were shackled securely and to be executed soon. Monk Chih Tao-shan was in the camp of Lu and he knew To from before. When he heard that the latter was in prison, he came to visit and talked to him through the door. To told the monk that his life was in danger and asked if there was any way that he could be saved. The monk answered that no human method would be of any use but Kuang-shih-yin could save people from danger. If he could concentrate and beg the bodhisattva sincerely, he would suddenly receive a response. To himself had also heard about Kuang-shih-yin. So after this conversation, he started to follow the monk's advice. For three days and nights he took refuge in the bodhisattva with utmost sincerity. He felt the shackles beginning to loosen and when he tried to shake them, suddenly they fell away from his body. He prayed to the

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bodhisattva, "My own shackles have now become loosened by themselves due to your compassionate protection. But I still have several companions and cannot bear to escape by myself. You, Kuan-shih-yin, save universally. Please make them also free." After the prayer he touched the others and each one also became free from the shackles as if someone had cut them loose. So they opened the prison door and left. Even when they walked among the guards, no one noticed them. They scaled the city gate and escaped. About that time the day was dawning. After they walked four or five li they did not dare to go any further because it was daylight. So they hid among tall grasses and fell asleep. Soldiers were sent out to search for them everywhere. They burned bushes and trampled on grasses and searched for them everywhere. But only this small area of land where they hid did not get searched. They escaped and arrived home safely. They became firm believers of Buddhism and showed extraordinary faith

and reverence. Monk Tao-shan later came south and told Hsieh Fu [the original compiler of the collection] about this.

This story is interesting on several accounts. First of all, it was a monk, Shih Tao-shan, who told To Chuan to concentrate his thoughts on Kuang-shih-yin to ask for deliverance and who later related the story to Hsieh Fu who then wrote it down. This was not an isolated incident, but was replicated in other stories. Though not exclusively, monks were often the agents who promoted the faith in Kuan-yin and instructed people about the correct method of showing faith in Kuan-yin. Secondly, all the tales in the first collection emphasize that the mental concentration on, sometimes accompanied by invocation of, the bodhisattva with great sincerity was the key to deliverance. Except for the first story of Chu Ch'ang-shu, there was no mention about chanting the Kuan-yin ching, nor any specification of how many times one must call the name of the bodhisattva before the miracle occurred. This would change in the stories compiled in the third collection. Not only the recitation of the Kuan-yin Sutra was mentioned more frequently, but a specific number, most frequently one thousand times as it was the case of the King Kao's Kuan-yin Sutra, was necessary to trigger a divine

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response from Kuan-yin. For instance, four stories (#27, 34, 35, 36) specify the chanting of the sutra for one thousand times, whereas one story each specifies three hundred (#37) and ten thousand times (#62), and one story (#67) calls for the invocation of the bodhisattva's name one thousand times. The interest in such ritual exactitude probably reflected influences of the various ritual sadhanas mentioned in the esoteric scriptures, for these ritual texts usually specify a specific number of times in the chanting of the dharani, be they 21, 108, 1008, or 1080 times, before it becomes effective. Similarly, I would suggest that "the person in white" who mysteriously appeared in the dreams of Gunabhadra and Fa-ch'eng after they performed rites of repentance might be the esoteric Kuan-yin who is often described as being clothed in white in the same sadhanas. At the same time, it is also important to keep in mind that the term "white-clad" (pai-i) can also have other less esoteric connotations. It can be understood to mean a lay person, in contrast to a monk who is someone wearing black robes. The Chinese followed the Indian usage of referring to a lay person as a person wearing white clothes. A famous example for such usage is the layman Vimalakirti who is the main protagonist in the sutra named after him. That sutra has been one of the favorites among the monks and gentry Buddhists since its translation in the third century and would thus be familiar to the compilers and readers of the miracle tales. Finally, in contrast to the color yellow which symbolizes Taoism in the popular mind, the color white can also indicate that the deity is not Taoist.[8] The

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origin of the term is obscure and cannot be pinpointed to any specific source. Perhaps different persons might have different understandings in accordance with his / her background and education. However, the different connotations of pai-i would all refer to Kuan-yin who, being a bodhisattva, is neither monk nor, of course,

Taoist. In the early period, the white-clothed person who appeared in these tales was unmistakably male, but he would be replaced by the feminine white-robed Kuan-yin in later miracle tale collections.

The next two stories are about deliverance from being drowned or what the Lotus Sutra calls "peril of the water" (shui-nan) .

(5)The river south of Shih-feng (present T'ien-t'ai, Chekiang) has many currents and its banks are steep. It is very winding and also full of rocks. Even during the daytime it is very fearful to travel on it. Lu Shu was originally from Kuang-hsi and now living in Shih-feng. He told me that his father once traveled on the river. When he was some ten li from home, it got dark and the weather suddenly became stormy. The sky became as dark as black lacquer and he could not tell whether he was heading east or west. He thought for sure he would suffer a shipwreck and drown. He turned his mind to Kuang-shih-yin. He called the bodisattva's name and also meditated on him. After a short time, a fire light appeared on the shore as if someone were holding a torch. It shone on the river making everything very clear. He could thus return home. The fire was always guiding the boat, about more than ten steps ahead of it. Lu Shu was friendly with Hsi Ch'ao and the latter told me the story.

Hsi Ch'ao, as we recall, was a friend of the compiler's father and a noted
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scholar of Buddhism. It is a characteristic of all miracle tales that the writer always notes the source of his story whenever possible. If the writer hears the story from somebody, he would provide the person's identity. Even in later compendia, it is usual for the compilers to cite the written sources from which a particular story originated. The chain of transmission guarantees the authenticity of the story.

(6)Hsu Jung was a native of Lang-ya (present Tung-hai, Kiangsu) and often went to Tung-yang (in present Shangtung) . Once when he returned by way of Ting-shan (present Hang County, Chekiang) , because the boatmen were unfamiliar with the river, the boat was sucked into a whirlpool and floundered in the waves. He had no way but called Kuang-shih-yin with concentrated heart. Instantly the boat was lifted up as if by several tens of men. After the boat emerged from the whirlpool, it could sail smoothly. Then it got dark and a storm rose. They lost the direction and the waves became more turbulent. Jung continued to chant the sutra. After a while they saw a fire on top of the mountain. Turning the boat around they followed it and thus arrived at port safely. Once they disembarked, the light also disappeared. All the passengers were surprised, doubting it could be a fire made by human beings. Next day they asked the

local people about the fire on the mountain. They were surprised to hear about it, saying, "With such a big storm yesterday, how could there be a fire? We did not see any." It was then clear that it must be a divine light. Later Jung became the protector-general of Kuai-chi and told Hsieh Liang himself about this story. There was a monk by the name of Chih Tao-yu who traveled on the same boat with him and also saw this miracle. He told me the same thing as that told by Jung.

The last story in the first collection is about a miraculous cure performed by Kuan-yin on the monk Fa-yi (307~380). Curing diseases is one of the new promises found in the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching, but not in the "Universal Gateway" chapter of the Lotus Sutra. In the third collection, three stories are about people

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being cured by the bodhisattva and are offered as validation of Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching. Tale #67, the only dated one, relates that in 446 a monk called Hui-sheng living in present Kiangsu became deaf and dumb as a result of illness. Thinking that there was no medicine capable of curing him, he turned his heart to Kuan-shih-yin totally and called the bodhisattva's name a thousand times. As soon as he finished the number of invocation, he recovered the use of his eyes and ears. Since the sutra was translated only recently, by interpreting these stories in this light, the compiler Lu Kao showed us the speed a new sutra became known among the faithful, particularly those who were educated. By contrast, what happened to Fa-yi was interpreted by Fu Liang differently. Fu chose to use it as a confirmation of the ability of the bodhisattva to appear in different forms, one being that of a monk, as announced in the "Universal Gateway". It may also indicate that the knowledge of the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching was probably not yet available to him.

(7) Monk Fa-yi lived in the mountain and loved to study. He became ill but continued to work hard and the illness got worse. He sincerely called on Kuang-shih-yin. Several days went by like this. One day he took a nap during daytime and dreamt a monk who came to visit him in order to cure him. He cut open Fa-yi'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 Fa-yi, "Your illness is now cured." Upon waking up he felt relieved of illness and returned to his former self. He lived on Mt.Pao in Shih-ning (in present Chekiang) in 372 and my father used to visit him. He liked to tell this story and my father always felt great respect toward him. The sutra says that the bodhisattva can appear in the form of a monk. I believe that what Fa-yi dreamt was a confirmation of this.

Visions of Kuan-yin in the Early Miracle Tales

Although all the tales in the three early collections affirm the unfailing deliverance from different kinds of perils effected by the bodhisattva, very few report the devotees' actual seeing of their savior. In most cases, we are simply

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told that the devotee called Kuan-yin's name with utmost concentration and sincerity, and in response, a miracle occurred. The devotee clearly felt the presence of Kuan-yin and credited him with the deliverance. But she could not tell what the bodhisattva looked like. It is thus very fortunate for us that several tales do report visions of Kuan-yin. They provide important clues as to how Kuan-yin was conceived by the faithful in this early period.

As the story about Fa-yi (#7) shows, Kuan-yin appeared in his dream as a monk. In fact, when the bodhisattva did appear to his devotee in human form, he usually appeared as a monk. Two stories (#7, #9) in the second collection and four stories in the third collection (#21, #23, #24, #62) identify Kuan-yin as a monk. While Kuan-yin appears to the protagonists in the first five stories in their dreams and saves them from imprisonment, he interacts with the devotees in their waking state in the last one. The story relates how in 462 when P'eng-ch'eng (in present Kiangsu) fell, a man by the name of Han Mu-chih fled and in the confusion lost his son who was kidnapped. Being a pious Buddhist, Han vowed to chant the Kuang-shih-yin sutra ten thousand times in the hope of getting the son back. He also invited monks to his home for a vegetarian feast whenever he finished one thousand recitations. But no response occurred after he had already recited the sutra for six or seven thousand times. He interpreted this as a lack of sincerity on his part. So he redoubled his effort and began to recite the sutra day and night without keeping track of the number. In the meantime, his son was sold as a slave to someone in Yi-chou (in present Szechwan). One day when the son was laboring alone in the field, he suddenly saw a monk who came to him and asked if he was Han Mu-chih's son. Surprised, he answered yes. The monk then asked him if he would like to see his father again. To which the son again answered yes, but asked how was that possible? The monk replied that because the father had been most persistent in pressing him, he had now decided to bring the son home. The monk then told the boy to hold tight onto the corner of his cassock. When the son did so, he felt being lifted up and carried off by someone. Soon they arrived outside the door of the father's new residence which the son did not recognize. The monk stayed outside but ordered the boy to go in and see if anyone was at home. When the son went inside, he saw his father sitting there reciting the sutra. The father and son were overjoyed

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in seeing each other. When the son told the father the holy personage who brought him home was outside, the father rushed out to thank him. But the monk was nowhere to be seen.

In one of the stories (#21), not only did the bodhisattva appear as a monk to a Mr. Hsia in his dream and freed him from imprisonment in 411, but told him that he was Kuan-shih-yin. However, because Hsia was apparently ignorant of Buddhism, he thought that "Kuan-shih-yin" was the name of a real monk. Only when he asked some monks whom he met after his successful escape where could he find the monk by the name of Kuan-shih-yin was he told that it was the bodhisattva. He then had a golden image made and wore it around his neck, became a vegetarian, and converted to Buddhism. In these stories which identify Kuan-yin as a monk, no description is provided about his physical characteristics. We are not told how old he was or what he looked like. Only in one instance (tale #9 of the second collection), is he described as smiling and eight Chinese feet (chih) tall. However, a story found in Tao-hsuan's Hsü kao-seng chuan does describe Kuan-yin with a telling detail which hints at the close link between existing iconography and visionary experiences.

When the monk Hung-man was still living in the secular world, he suffered from paralysis on both his feet when he was fifteen. He constantly chanted the Kuan-shih-yin Sutra for three years. One day he suddenly saw a monk holding a water bottle stand in front of him. When he asked the monk, "Where are you from?" The monk answered, "Because you constantly call me, that is why I have come." Man then bowed down and asked, "What evil karma did your disciple accumulate from previous lives that I should suffer this paralysis?" The monk answered, "Because in your past life you captured and bound living beings, that is why you are now reaping its evil consequences. Close your eyes and I shall cure you." When he did as instructed, he felt a nail of six or seven inches being pulled from each of his knee. By the time he opened his eyes to thank the monk, the latter was gone. He got up and could walk normally as before. He then realized that the monk was Kuan-yin and he vowed never to get married (T 50 : 663a) .

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Indian and Chinese images of Kuan-yin indeed usually show him as holding a water bottle (kundikha, ts'o-p'ing) . Just as existing iconography might predispose how a devotee saw Kuan-yin in his vision, scriptural description of the bodhisattva could have played a similar role. Kuan-yin is connected strongly with light symbolism in the scriptures. It is therefore not surprising that next to seeing Kuan-yin as a monk, the bodhisattva was experienced as brilliant light. Thus, tale # 5 in the second collection tells us that monk Tao-t'ai dreamt someone telling him that he would die at forty-two. When he reached that age, he became seriously ill. He donated all his possessions in order to seek blessing. A friend told him that according to the sutra [the Kuang-shih-yin ching] , to call the name of Kuang-shih-yin once would equal the merit resulting from making offerings to sixty-two billion bodhisattvas. Therefore he should turn his heart to Kuang-shih-yin with sincerity and he would be able to increase his lifespan despite the unfortunate dream prediction. Tao-tai

believed him and concentrated his mind on the bodhisattva day and night for four days. On the fourth night he was sitting on the bed which was shielded by a curtain. He suddenly saw Kuang-shih-yin come in from outside. The bodhisattva whose legs and feet were covered with golden light, said to him, "Are you calling me?" But when he pushed aside the curtain, he could not see anyone. Covered with perspiration, he felt refreshed and his illness went away. He told this story to people when he was already forty-four years old. Tale # 19 and tale # 61 in the third collection also report the bodhisattva appearing as shining light. Tale # 19 is about a man by the name of K'ai Hu who was imprisoned and sentenced to die. He recited the Kuang-shih-yin sutra with concentrated mind for three days and nights. Then in the middle of the third night, he saw the bodhisattva sending out brilliant light. The shackles broke by themselves and the jail door, illuminated by the light, opened to let him out. The light shone in front of him leading the way. After more than twenty li the light disappeared and he had by then reached safety. Tale # 61 tells the miraculous experience of a man by the name of Pan Tao-hsiu who became a soldier when he was in his twenties in 410. But he got separated from the army, became lost, and was sold as a slave. Wandering far from home, he constantly thought of Kuan-shih-yin and hoped to see the bodhisattva in his dream. One day he found himself alone in a mountain, he suddenly saw the true

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form of Kuang-shih-yin [notice the bodhisattva being called by both names in this story] full of light which was so brilliant that the entire mountain turned golden in color. He hastily bowed and prostrated in front of the bodhisattva. When the light disappeared, he found himself back in his native village. Following familiar roads, he returned to his home to the great amazement of everyone.

When Pan was said to have seen the bodhisattva in his "true form", what does it mean? What was the true form of Kuan-yin? The story leaves it unexplained, but I suggest that it refers to the form of the bodhisattva as depicted in contemporary iconography.^[9] Images of Kuan-yin often figure in the miracle tales. They were worshiped as icons. They were created to give thanks to the bodhisattva after the devotee was saved from danger. Sculpted images stood as substitutes to receive the blows from the executioner's knife on behalf of the worshiper. Sometimes they were carried on the body or worn in the hair by the devotees as talismen. But they also influenced the contents of the devotees' visionary experiences which, in turn, sometimes led to the creation of new iconographies.

Icons, Miracles, and Iconographies

Buddhist art, like all religious art, is intimately connected with the spiritual lives of the faithful. Sculpted and painted images of Kuan-yin are first and foremost icons, although they can of course be appreciated as beautiful objects of art. I will first discuss the close relationship between the devotees and icons of Kuan-yin revealed in some early miracle tales and then link the new forms of Kuan-yin appearing in devotees' visions of the bodhisattva contained in some later tales to the development of new iconographies. Art and miracle tales served as effective media in the domestication and transformation of Kuan-yin. As the foreign Avalokiteshvara

increasingly became intertwined with the lives of Chinese men and women, the bodhisattva was gradually changed into the Chinese Kuan-

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yin.

Let us recall the story of Sun Ching-te, the hero of the origin myth of the famous indigenous King Kao's Kuan-yin sutra. As related by Tao-hsuan, Sun worshiped an icon of Kuan-yin which he kept in his room. When he managed to finish chanting the sutra revealed to him in a dream one thousand times before his beheading, the executioner's knife broke into three sections. Although the executioner changed the knife three times, the same thing happened. When Sun was pardoned and returned to his room, he saw three cuts made by a knife on the neck of the Kuan-yin image. The implication is clearly that the icon bore the blows of the knife, thus sparing Sun. This was supposed to have happened to Sun during 534~537. Two stories in the third collection report identical happenings. Tale #13 which is dated describes a miracle which happened more than one hundred and fifty years earlier than that of Sun. It tells the story of someone from P'eng-ch'eng who, during 376~395, was wrongly accused of being a robber and sentenced to die. He worshiped Kuan-yin and always wore a golden image of the bodhisattva inside his knotted hair behind his neck. When he was led out to be killed, he concentrated his thoughts even more firmly on Kuan-yin. When the executioner's knife struck his neck, there was a metallic sound and the knife broke. Although three times another knife was substituted, no harm could be done to him. Everyone was astonished and he was questioned by the official in charge. He answered that he had no special magic except that he worshiped Kuan-yin and wore the image on his neck. When they loosened his hair and examined the image, there were three cuts on its neck. Tale #14 is very similar, except it is about someone living in Szechwan who wore the icon hidden inside a sandal wood portable shrine. He was caught in a hand-to-hand combat and was struck on his neck. He heard a metallic sound but did not feel any pain. When he escaped from the melee, he took out the portable shrine which looked intact. But when he opened it and looked at the icon, he saw that it bore several cuts clearly made by the enemy's knife.

Instead of going to a temple to worship Kuan-yin, these early devotees carried the icons on their bodies as talismen. Since they were worn inside the hair, or on top of the crown (as we read in the following story), they must by necessity be small and light. Indeed, some tiny gilt bronze images of Kuan-yin,

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some measuring only 2 cm or so, have survived and can be seen in museums. Art historians usually take them to be votive images made by humble people who could not afford larger ones. But seen in the light of such miracle tales, could the reason why they were made so small was because they were used for such purposes? On the other hand, an icon was sometimes created for such devotional use as a result of miraculous deliverance. For instance, tale #17 tells the story of Nan-kung Tzu-ao who lived in Shensi during the fourth century. His native city was sacked and many

residents were killed. Knowing that he was going to die, Tzu-ao put all his faith in Kuan-yin. When his turn came to be executed, for some reason the executioners suddenly became too tired to raise their hands. Surprised, the official asked him what he could do. Without knowing why, he answered that he was good at making saddles and was thus pardoned. When he returned home, he had a small Kuan-yin icon made. He put it inside a sandalwood portable shrine and always wore it on top of his head.

A very interesting story about a Buddhist devotee and his personal image of Kuan-yin has been preserved. In the preface to the Signs from the Unseen Realm, a work familiar to Lu Kao, the compiler of the third collection, Wang Yen related his own intimate relationship with a votive icon of Kuan-yin which was first given to him by his refuge master when Wang was living in Chiao-chih (present Vietnam) as a child. He described it as being finely made, resembling the ones created in the Yüan-chia era (424~453). Although he was very young, he worshiped it with his younger brother diligently. Later when they returned to the capital, the family home had to be renovated and there was no proper place to keep the image. So it was taken to a temple for temporary safekeeping. However, at that time ordinary people were engaged in making coins privately and many gilt bronze images got stolen and melt down because of this. Several months after the icon was sent to the temple, one day when he was sleeping during the daytime he had a dream in which he saw the icon by his side. Curious about what the dreamt meant, he decided to go to the temple although it was already getting dark and took the icon home. In the same evening, more than ten images were removed forcibly from the temple by robbers. After that the icon shone brightly at night, illuminating the ground about three feet in radius around it. This happened in the fall of 463. In 471 he moved to Wu-yi (in

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present Anhui) and befriended a monk from the Monastery of Many Treasures located in the capital. He asked the monk to install the Kuan-yin image in that temple temporarily. They then had to go separate ways and several years went by and he did not think of the image. But in 478 he met the monk again and was reminded by the latter that the image was still in the temple. When he went to the capital, he visited the abbot of the temple and asked for the image kept there. But the abbot told him that no such image was there. He was very disappointed and felt great sadness over losing the image. In the same night he had a dream in which a man told him that the image was indeed still in the temple but the abbot had forgotten about it. Still in the dream, the man took him back to the temple and opened the door to the main hall. He saw clearly his own image nestled among many small images in the eastern section of the hall. The next morning he went back to the temple and told the abbot about his dream. When the abbot led him to the hall and opened it, they found the image indeed in the eastern section of the hall. He took the image back. That was the 13th day of the 7th month in 479. Wang Yen concluded this amazing story by saying that he had worshiped it ever since (Lu Hsun 1973 : 563~564).

The kind of relationship which Wang Yen had with his personal icon may be difficult for a modern reader to appreciate, though not to his contemporaries as he shared it

with them in the preface. Twice he found a safe home for it in a temple so that it would not be disturbed by the rebuilding of his home or the uncertainties of travel. From the matter of fact way Wang Yen related the story, Buddhist images were apparently either donated to temples or put there for temporary residence by the faithful in the 5th century, just as it is still sometimes done today. The icon sent him warnings or directions through dreams. He regarded the icon as the embodiment of the bodhisattva. Their relationship went through many vicissitudes, covering a period of some twenty years. When a devotee enjoyed such an intimate rapport with the icon, it is then possible to imagine that when he had a vision of Kuan-yin either in a dream or in a waking state, he would be most likely see the bodhisattva in the form as depicted by contemporary iconography. During the second half of the 5th century, Kuan-yin became a favorite subject for gilt bronzes. The earliest surviving gilt bronze Kuan-yin inscribed with the date of the 30th year of Yüan-chia (453) is at the

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Freer Gallery. The bodhisattva holds a lotus in his right hand and a bottle in the left hand. He is bejewelled, with a dhoti draped from waist to knees, a cape covering the shoulders and forming an X in front of the body, and a long billowing stole contouring the figure as if blown by winds (Howard forthcoming: 88 ~ 90). Might the icon worshiped and beloved by Wang Yen be something similar to this?

Although visions and images of Kuan-yin feature prominently in the miracle tales as we have seen, specific identification between the appearances of the bodhisattva and the form of the image is surprising scarce. Could it be that the linkage was so obvious that the compilers did not think it necessary to mention it? Aside from the case of Pan Tao-hsiu who was said to have seen the "true form" of the bodhisattva as depicted in contemporary iconography related above, I have come across only another case making a similar specification. This was the story of the monk Hsuan-chi (639 ~ 706) found in the Biographies of Promoters of the Lotus Sutra. His extraordinary visionary experiences were all resulted from the recitation of the Lotus Sutra.

When he first began to recite the Lotus Sutra and completed 2000 times, he dreamt of entering a large hall. The hall was surrounded by golden mountains on its four walls. Light shone brightly. There were niches in all the mountains and all the niches enshrined Kuan-yin. He prostrated and circumambulated and was full of emotion. He then saw a crystal vase containing a relic. When he tried to take it, he suddenly woke up. When he finished chanting the sutra 5000 times, he was resting in the daytime but suddenly fell into a trance in which he saw several hundred sandalwood niches all enshrining Kuan-yin. He touched the niches with his hands and they came toward him. He also saw innumerable golden pearls flowing downward from the sky. They were brilliant and lovely. When he opened his mouth and swallowed them, he felt joy all over. After a duration of about two meals, he woke up and had no sense of hunger. From then on he was full of ease in mind and body and became even more

diligent in his effort. He recited the sutra five times each twenty-four hours. When he finished chanting it 9000 times, a strange

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bird suddenly flew from the outside and came to rest in his bosom. After staying there seven days and nights, it flew away. Then he dreamt of a person of seven or eight chih in height. His appearance was comely and dignified, looking the same way as the usual images. From the waist down, the bodhisattva was beautifully adorned with colorful ornaments. Hsüan-chi prostrated with happiness and addressed Kuan-yin Bodhisattva by name. He approached and touched the feet of Kuan-yin, calling him the Great Compassionate One. Kuan-yin touched the crown of his head several times. He lifted up his hands and drank the milk [flowing from the fingertips of Kuan-yin ?] . He woke with a start (T 50 : 46c~47a) .

In the three separate visions of Kuan-yin described above, images of the bodhisattvas appeared in the first two, while in the last one Kuan-yin appeared in person. In his dream the monk saw multitude of Kuan-yin images enshrined within niches. To enclose Buddhist images within niches was very common in the sculpture complexes at Yün-kang, Lung-men and elsewhere. It was such a common practice that this kind of images were called “images in niches” (k’an-hsiang) in Szechwan. The mention of niches on mountains could refer to such cliff sculptures in these places. When Kuan-yin finally appeared in his dream, he could immediately recognize the bodhisattva because Kuan-yin looked exactly as the images popular at that time. Kuan-yin was usually depicted as beautifully adorned with jewels and ornate surface ornaments in Northern Chou and Sui sculptures, such as the specimen held at Museum of Fine Art in Boston. Moreover, since the statues were often taller than a real person, the height of eight chih would be a rather accurate measure. What Hsuan-chi reported as seeing in the trance could thus be an accurate description of a contemporary Kuan-yin statue. We can take this as an example of how a person’s familiarity with contemporary iconography could predispose him to see the bodhisattva in a certain way in his visionary experiences. On the other hand, there were also indications that what a person saw in a vision provided the basis for how Kuan-yin was depicted iconographically. For instance, Wang Yen included the following story about a man named Kuo Hsüan-chih in his Record of the Unseen

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Realm. Kuo, a native of T’ai-yüan as imprisoned in 408. He prayed to Kuan-shih-yin and had a vision of the bodhisattva at night. He was later pardoned and released. He then “painted an image of the bodhisattva based on what he saw and established a shrine for religious practice” (Lu Hsun 1973 : 601) .

In the pre-10th century miracle stories that we have examined, when Kuan-yin appeared in person in the devotees’ dreams, he appeared either as a monk, a person wearing white,^[10] a person about eight Chinese feet (chih) in height, or a person

bearing close resemblance to an image. None was feminine. However, when we examine the miracle tales in later collections, we find a striking new change. Although the bodhisattva continued to appear in the forms just mentioned, Kuan-yin increasingly also appeared as a woman. Starting in the 10th century, we begin to read tales in which Kuan-yin appeared as a woman in white, then a woman carrying a fish-basket, and finally in the Ch'ing, increasingly as an old woman. These forms correspond to the White-robed Kuan-yin, Fish-basket Kuan-yin and Old Mother Kuan-yin. They are indigenous forms of the

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bodhisattva created after the 10th century. These new and feminine forms of Kuan-yin did not follow scriptural traditions, but were indebted to indigenous sutras, legends and miracle tales. It cannot be coincidental that Kuan-yin appeared in feminine forms from the 10th century onward just as the bodhisattva was also depicted in a similar way. Although I cannot offer specific evidence, I suggest that the early feminine forms of Kuan-yin might be created based on someone's vision. He could either paint the image himself, like Kuo mentioned above, or have a painter do it following his own description. But once a feminine image of Kuan-yin became available, more people would naturally come to see the bodhisattva in this way whether in their dreams or in their conceptions.

The earliest example of the White-robed Kuan-yin with a clearly feminine appearance is represented by the two images of the bodhisattva gracing the entrance to the Yenhsia Grotto in Hangchow which Angela Howard dated to the 940s (Howard 1985 : 11) . Indeed, the rulers of the Wu Yüeh Kingdom were great patrons of the Kuan-yin cult. According to the Gazetteer of Upper T'ien-chu Monastery (Hang-chou Shang T'ien-chu chih) , before Ch'ien Liu (851~932) , the founder of the Wu Yüeh Kingdom, came to power, he dreamt of a woman in white who promised to protect him and his descendents if he was compassionate and did not kill like the others. She told him that he could find her on Mt. T'ien-chu in Hangchow twenty years later. After he became the king, he dreamt of the same woman who asked for a place to stay and in return, she would agree to be the patron deity of his kingdom. When he discovered that only one monastery on Mt. T'ien-chu housed an image of White-robed Kuan-yin, he gave patronage to it and established it as the T'ien-chu k'an-ching-yüan (Cloister for Reading Scriptures at T'ien-chu) , the former name for Upper T'ien-chu Monastery, which became one of the most important pilgrimage centers for Kuan-yin worship (STCC 1980 : 31) . The monastery underwent a major revival in 939 under the monk Tao-i who discovered a piece of marvelous wood lying in the stream from which a bright light shone. He took the wood to the local artisan K'ung to carve an image of Kuan-yin. But when K'ung cut the wood open, he found a "spontaneously formed" image of Kuan-yin inside the wood. Attracted by its beauty, he decided to keep it for himself and carved another one for Tao-i. However, forewarned by a person in white in his dream, Tao-i succeeded in getting

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back this miraculous image (STCC 1980 : 29) . Although we are not told what the image looked like, we can assume that it was a feminine looking White-robed Kuan-yin. Not only did the bodhisattva appear in such a form in Ch'ien Liu's dream mentioned earlier, she also manifested as a woman wearing white garment in the story connected with the Sung statesman Tseng Kung-liang (990~1078) . In 1042 Tseng returned to his native home in Ch'üan-chou to attend his mother's funeral. A monk by the name Yüan-ta was a fellow passenger in his boat. When they arrived in Hangchow, they decided to go to the Upper T'ien-chu Monastery to worship Kuan-yin. As they entered the temple, they were greeted by a woman wearing white garment who told them, "When Mr. Tseng is fifty-seven years old, you will serve in the Secretariat-Chancellery and the reverend elder will also receive the title of a great master." After saying so, she disappeared. When the predicted time arrived, Tseng was indeed appointed a Grand Councillor and the monk was also given the title of great master because of his friendship with Tseng (T 49 : 411c) .

I have cited these examples in order to show the connection between the new iconography of the White-robed Kuan-yin and the gender change of the "person in white". References to such images and the lady in white began to appear in the 10th century. The iconography of White-robed Kuan-yin was probably derived from the Water-Moon Kuan-yin which was the first indigenous iconography created in China. Although there are a number of similarities between these two types of iconography, Water-Moon Kuan-yin is nevertheless masculine or asexual, whereas the White-robed Kuan-yin is distinctively feminine. It is very puzzling that in all the miracle accounts that I have perused, I have not come across any reference to a vision of the Water-Moon Kuan-yin. Could it be the case that because the figure of "white-clad person" had already become such a fixed topos in miracle tale genre by the 10th century that the new iconography of Water-Moon Kuan-yin was seen through its lense? And as reports of people's seeing the lady in white became disseminated, the Water-Moon Kuan-yin was transformed into the White-robed Kuan-yin? Let us now turn to the later miracle tale collections and discuss their characteristics before concluding this article.

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Distinctive Characteristics of Later Miracle Tale Collections

All the three later miracle tale collections begin with excerpts from sutras glorifying Kuan-yin. I think this arrangement serves two purposes. First, the compilers want the reader to see the sutras and miracle tales as integrally related to each other. The teachings of the sutras illuminate the miracles, and the miracles in turn validate the scriptural teachings. Second, the collection is supposed to function as a self-contained anthology which instructs and enlightens the reader about the salvific nature and record of Kuan-yin. Even if the reader has no prior exposure to Buddhism, the compilers hope to instill in the reader a basic understanding and, more importantly, an incipient faith in the bodhisattva after s/he reads the selected sutra excerpts and the

stories. The collections were compiled for pedagogical and prostelizing purposes. By examining the sutras selected for inclusion in the collections, we can get a sense about what constituted a Kuan-yin catechism for the compilers.

Chou Ke-fu, who compiled the Manifestations [Resulting] from Recitation of Kuan-shih-yin Sutras and Mantras in 1659, was a layman. He stated in his preface that he had already compiled collections of miracle tales resulting from the recitation of the Diamond Sutra, the Pure Land Sutras, Lotus Sutra, and Hua-yen Sutra. He dedicated himself to doing this task because he believed that the merit from making donation of the Dharma (fa-shih) was measureless. Undoubtedly because he had already compiled separate miracle tale collections for the other sutras, in the present collection he had included only the Sutra of Great Compassion Dharani (the Ch'ien-shou ching) translated by Amoghavajra, the indigenous sutra Dharani Sutra of the Five Mudras of the Great Compassionate White-robed One, an eulogy of Kuan-yin written by the Sung Ch'an master Ta-hui (1088~1163), and two short critical essays dispelling common misunderstanding about Kuan-yin written by the Ming Pure Land master Chu-hung (1535~1615). He included 118 miracle stories arranged chronologically, covering the periods from Chin to Ch'ing. Seventy persons lived before the Sung, while forty-eight after. Of these people, 27 were monks, consisting about one quarter of the total. Among the lay people, he included four emperors: Emperor Wen of Sung (r. 424~453), Wen-tsung of T'ang (r. 826~840), Emperor Li (r. 961~975) of Southern

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T'ang, and Emperor Yung-lo (r. 1402~1424) of Ming, twelve women (one of them being the legendary Ma-lang-fu or Wife of Mr Ma, but no nun), statemen Fan Chung-yen and Shih Hao of the Sung, but also an anonymous Ming cripple from Shangtung. But contrast, the Compassionate Grove of Kuan-yin which was compiled by the monk Hung-tsan in 1668, devoted more space to monks. Of the 150 stories, eighty-one were about monastics (including five nuns), and the rest lay people, the two being almost of equal proportion. He included seventy-one people who lived before the Sung and eighty-four after, thus giving equal weight to more recent times. The sutra excerpts chosen for inclusion at the beginning of the collection are also more extensive and scholastic. They are: Chih-i's commentary on the "Universal Gateway" chapter included in his Mysterious Meaning of Kuan-yin (Kuan-yin hsüan-i), the Karandhapundarika Sutra, the Sutra of Kuan-shih-yin Bodhisattva's Receiving Prediction, the Sutra of Great Compassion Dharani, the "Universal Gateway" chapter, the Surangama Sutra, the Hua-yen Sutra, the Visualization of the Buddha Amitayus Sutra, the Elven-headed Divine Dharani Heart Sutra, Karandhavyuha Sutra, and finally, the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching. Like Chou, Hung-tsan also included five tales about pious emperors. However, the choices were not identical, his being Wen-tsung of the T'ang, Jen-tsung (r. 1022~1063), Ying-tsung (r. 1063~1066), Hsiao-tsung (r. 1162~1188) and Li-tsung (r. 1225~1264), all of the Sung. The intense interest in noting the Buddhist sympathies among the rulers and literati-officials is a characteristic of Buddhist chronicles such as the Fo-tsu t'ung-chi, the Li-tai fo-tsu t'ung-tsai (Comprehensive Record of Buddhas

and Patriarchs in Successive Generations, T no. 2036) , the Shih-shih chi-ku lüeh (Brief Compilation of Buddhist History, T no. 2037) and the Shih-shih chi-ku lüeh hsü-chi (Continuation of the Brief Compilation of Buddhist History, T no. 2038) among others. In fact, these served as some of the original sources for the two compilers who also used monks' biographies, earlier miracle tale collections and other secular sources.

Since these two collections were compiled by two contemporaries who were a lay Buddhist and a monk respectively, it will be interesting to compare the stories they selected and see if there are significant differences because of their status. However, except for the two I have already noted, namely, the monk compiler included more sutras and more monastics, I cannot find other striking differences.

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In fact, there are a number of common features shared by these two collections. First of all, both include the story of Sun Ching-te, the man who received the indigenous King Kao's Kuan-yin Sutra. In addition to Sun, Chou also included the story of Lü Ching-yü and Hung-tsan the story of Wang Hsüan-mo. Both these two men were originally identified as the recipients of the revealed sutra. There is therefore no discernable difference in the two compilers' attitude toward this famous indigenous scripture. Secondly, both include the story of Ma-lang-fu (Wife of Mr Ma) who, also known as Kuan-yin with a fish-basket (Yü-lan Kuan-yin), is one of the famous feminine manifestation of the bodhisattva. Both relate the story of a beautiful woman fish-seller who came to Shensi in 817. Attracted by her beauty, many young men proposed to marry her. She said that she would marry the man who could memorize the "Universal Gateway" chapter in one night. The next morning twenty men passed the test. She told them that since she could marry only one of them, she had to increase the difficulty. This time she would marry the man who could memorize the Diamond Sutra in one night. The next day, ten people passed the test. Again she had to raise the requirement and asked them to memorize the entire Lotus Sutra in three days. This time only the young man by the name of Ma succeeded. On the wedding day, however, she took ill and as soon as the wedding ceremony was completed, she died and the body immediately started to rot. After she was buried, a foreign monk came to pay her respect and told Ma and the townspeople that she was actually the bodhisattva. Ma-lang-fu would be called Fish-basket Kuan-yin in later periods. She would become a favorite subject for paintings and poems written by Ch'an monks, not to mention her appearance in plays, novels and precious volumes. More relevant to our concern with the close connection between miracle tales and iconography, she would be canonized as one of thirty-three forms of Kuan-yin in Sino-Japanese art after the Sung. While it is sometimes the case that orthodox Buddhist monks would not recognize the fact that Kuan-yin appeared as a woman, such as Chu-hung's criticism of the legend of Princess Miao-shan as a creation of "vulgar monks", we do not see this in the present case. Hung-tsan the monk and Chou Ke-fu the layman apparently shared the same view that Kuan-yin had manifested as this clever and beautiful fish-seller.

Third, both collections include stories of emperors who either experienced
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the bodhisattva's efficacious responses or served as protectors of the faith. Interestingly, all of the stories have something to do with Kuan-yin icons. Since I have emphasized the role icons played in the miracle tales and suggested that there was a dialectic relationship between the two media, it will be interesting to examine some of these stories for further proofs for my argument.

The story about Emperor Wen-tsung of the T'ang is included in both collections as well as in the Buddhist chronicles Fo-tsu t'ung-chi, Li-tai fo-tsu t'ung-tsai, and Shih-shih chi-ku lüeh. The emperor loved to eat clams and his officials stationed along the coastal areas would regularly sent clams as tribute adding to the burdens of fishermen. One day in 831 the chef, as usual, was preparing clams for the emperor. But on that occasion the clam was an extraordinarily large one and no matter how he tried, he could not open it. The emperor was informed of this strange event. When he offered incense and pray to it, the clam opened by itself, revealing a fine image of the bodhisattva inside. The emperor had it enshrined within a sandalwood case lined with damask and sent it to Hsing-shan Monastery for the monks to worship. He asked the court officials for an explanation of this miracle. They suggested to send for the Ch'an master Wei-cheng[11] of Mt Chung-nan near Ch'ang-an. Wei-cheng told the emperor that no response was without a cause and the miracle was inspired by the emperor's believing heart. He then told the emperor about the scriptural teaching that the bodhisattva would appear in a form in accordance with the need of the devotee in order to teach him. The emperor asked, "I have now seen the form of the bodhisattva, but I have not heard the teaching." To which the Ch'an master asked, "When you witnessed this, do you think it is usual or unusual? Do you believe or not believe?" The emperor answered yes to both questions and the master said, "Now you have already heard the teaching." Satisfied, the emperor

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ordered Kuan-yin images to be set up in all the temples in the realm (Kuan-yin tz'ulin chi 478.) A story similar to this one is found in the Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng (Synthesis of Books and Illustrations of Ancient and Modern Times) except that it happened to Emperor Wen of Sui (r. 581~604). As a result of the miracle, the emperor stopped eating clams (497 : 36a). In the I -chien chi (Record of the Listener), written by the Sung writer Hung Mai, however, we find yet another version of the same story. This time it happened to a man by the name of Yü Chi of Li-shui (in present Kiangsu). During the Hsuan-ho era (1119~1125) he traveled on the River Huai which produced a lot of clams. Whenever the boatmen bought the clams for food, he would pay them and then released the clams into the water. One day the boatmen obtained a heavy basketful of clams and were going to cook them. Yü tried to redeem them with twice the purchase price but was refused. When the clams were put into the pot, suddenly a big noise came out of the pot. In the meantime, bright light followed. The boatmen were greatly frightened. When they looked carefully, they saw a huge opened clam, revealing an image of Kuan-yin between the shells. The bodhisattva was surrounded by two bamboo

plants which looked alive. The crown, clothes, necklaces and bamboo leaves were formed by fine pearls. He told the boatmen to repent their sins and call on Buddha's name. He took the shells back home with him (I : 293) .

Of the different versions of the story, it seems to me that the last one is probably the most plausible. It is highly unlikely that the story originated with Emperor Wen-tsung. For as Stanley Weinstein tells us, Wen-tsung was hostile toward Buddhism and promulgated an edict to purge the sangha in 835, four years after his supposed conversion as suggested by the story (1987 : 111) . However, the historicity of the story is not the point under discussion. I am more interested in pointing out the link between miracle tales and iconographies of Kuan-yin. Just as the Fish-basket Kuan-yin is traced to the story about Mr. Ma's wife, this story is the origin myth for the "Clam-dwelling" Kuan-yin, another one of the thirty-three forms of the bodhisattva popular in China and Japan.

Hung-tsan included two more stories about emperors and Kuan-yin icons, copying almost verbatim from the Fo-tsu t'ung-chi, as he did with the story cited above. Emperor Jen-tsung wore a jade crown on which there was an image of

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Kuan-yin. In 1023 his attendants asked him to wear something else because it was very heavy. He declined, saying, "All the officials who bow to me are men of talent and virtue. I really do not dare to receive their veneration. But because of the hierarchical distinction between the ruler and subjects, there is no way around it. However, when I wear this crown, they would be worshiping the bodhisattva instead of me" (Kuan-yin tz'u-lin chi 490) . This story reminds us of the devotee's wearing Kuan-yin icon either on the head or behind the neck in the earlier collections. It also reminds us of the iconographical convention of depicting Kuan-yin with Amitabha in the crown, which must have been very familiar to people living in the Sung. The last story is about Li-tsung who in 1241 dreamt of Kuan-yin sitting among bamboos and rocks. He ordered a stele carved with the image together with an eulogy written by himself. He added the adjective "of broad and extensive efficacious responses" (kuang-ta ling-kan) to the title of Kuan-yin.[12] The stone stele was bestowed on the Upper T'ien-chu Monastery in Hangchow (kuang-yin tz'u-lin chi 490~1) . By the 13th century, the new iconography of Kuan-yin sitting among a natural surrounding of rocks and bamboo grove was already well-established, the earliest prototype being the Water-Moon Kuan-yin created in the 10th century. This is another example of how the prevailing Kuan-yin iconography could predispose how the emperor saw the bodhisattva in his dream. On the other hand, an image made of Kuan-yin in such fashion by the order of the emperor would undoubtedly lend prestige to the same iconography and promote its popularity.

I want to turn now to the last miracle tale collection published in 1929. This is a huge work compared to the ones discussed so far. Consisted of two volumes of 234 and 167 tales each, it has altogether 401 tales. In contrast to the previous collections, it includes more stories which took place after the Sung, particularly in the Ming and Ch'ing, while those of T'ang and before occupying only one sixth of the total. It also includes far more stories about lay people, only fifty-two being monastics (four

nuns) . This could be because the anonymous compiler was a lay
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person himself.[13] Like Chou Ke-fu, the lay Buddhist compiler we discussed before, the present compiler also includes an indigenous sutra, the Kuan-shi-yin san-meï ching (Sutra of Kuan-shi-yin's Samadhi) , in his scriptural excerpts in the beginning of his work. The other sutras included are: the Karandhapandarika Sutra, the Surangama Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, the Huayen Sutra, the Great Compassion Dharani Sutra, and the "Six-character Mantra" (Om Mani Padme Hum) from the Karandhavyuha Sutra.

The collection follows a thematic format. The compiler arranges the stories under ten categories, each one category is further subdivided into more minute and specific divisions. While we can discern a rough chronological order, there is, however, considerable skipping through dynasties from one part of the collection to another. In this regard, it differs from the previous two Ch'ing collections which followed a strict chronological order, modelled undoubtedly upon the Buddhist chronicles and lives of eminent monks. In linking groups of stories to either perils avoided and blessings granted, the compiler wants to validate and verify the scriptural teachings about Kuan-yin. Although much more voluminous than the collection of Lu Kao compiled in 501, the modern collection does share the same organizational principle.

The miracle tales are recorded under 31 categories which are subsumed under
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ten general categories. I will list them with the number of tales in parenthesis.

I · Relief from various diseases (49) : i. eye diseases (8) ; ii. foot diseases (6); iii. throat diseases (2) ; iv. leprosy (3) ; v. possession (3) ; skin diseases (5) ; vi. stomach and intestine diseases (6) ; vii. fever (2) ; viii. epilepsy (1) ; ix. madness (1) ; x. smallpox (12).

II · Rescue from water and fire (42) : i. water (33) ; ii. fire (9).

III · Rescue from imprisonment and other dangers (55) : i. from prison (19) ; ii. from other dangers (36).

IV · Obtaining sons and blessings (58) : i. obtaining sons (42) ; ii. obtaining other blessings (16).

V · Obtaining wisdom, lengthening lifespan and resurrection (30) : i. obtaining wisdom (8) ; ii. extension of lifespan (4) ; iii. resurrection from death (18).

VI · Reward of filial piety and good rebirth (30) : i. parents' recovery due to children's filial piety (7) ; ii. rebirth in Pure Land (19) ; iii. rebirth in heaven (3) ; iv. non-retrogression (1).

VII · Karmic retribution (43) : i. immediate karmic retribution in life (8) ; ii. meeting King Yama (1) ; iii. making manifest evil karma (23) ; iv. rewarding repentance (11).

VIII · Manifesting divine presence through marvels (54) : i. by transformations (7, examples including Wife of Mr. Ma and the clam) ; ii. by efficacious anomalies (23) ; iii. by supernormal powers (6) ; iv. by subduing demons (18).

IX · Manifesting divine presence through overcoming natural disasters (10) : i. draught (3) ; ii. rainfall (6) ; iii. driving away locusts (1).

X · Manifesting divine presence through light, visions, protection, and instruction (30) : i. light (7) ; ii. visions (14) ; iii. protections (5) ; iv. quelling rebellions (3) ; v. instruction (1) .

When we compare the kinds of miracles recorded in this collection with those in the earlier collections, several differences immediately become noticeable. First of all, while some miracles were never or seldom mentioned in the earlier collections, they become very prominent in this one. One example is praying to Kuan-yin for sons. Although the “Universal Gateway” chapter proclaims that Kuan-yin can enable couples to have sons or daughters, this is not at all an important theme in the early miracle tale collections. As we have seen, dangers

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of imprisonment and execution or perils from drowning and fire are more frequent themes. Only Lu Kao included one story of someone named Tai who prayed to have a son. He vowed to the monks that only if the son could be born on the 8th day of the 4th month (birthday of the Buddha), would he consider it to be an auspicious response. A son was indeed born to him on that day and he named it Kuan-shih-yin (#55). The two Ch’ing collections, not surprisingly, included more stories about obtaining sons. There are twelve in Chou’s collection and thirteen in Hung-tsan’s, with three identical stories included in both. Interesting, while Chou only included one story about a monk being born as a result of his mother’s prayer to Kuan-yin, Hung-tsan, on the other hand, included seven stories of monks born in this fashion, again reflecting his obvious interest in monastics. In the modern collection, however, forty-two stories are about obtaining sons, by far the most numerous single subcategory among all. Could this be a reflection of the increasing anxiety about maintaining the lineage structure after the Sung? Could this also be a response to the newly available indigenous sutras helping people to achieve this goal? Many of these stories made specific references to the White-robed Kuan-yin Sutra (a simplified title for Five Mudra Dharani of the Great Compassionate White-robed One Sutra). Some of them also stated explicitly that when the baby was born, he was “doubly wrapped in white caul” (pai-i ch’ung-pao), a sure sign that this was a gift from the White-robed Kuan-yin. Incidentally, this alerts us to the fact that miracle tales and indigenous scriptures shared the same intellectual and religious discourses. Like the relationship between miracle tales and iconography, there was also the same dialectical and reinforcing relationship between these two media.

Instead of less frequent, some types of miracles included here are not found in earlier collections at all. This again reflected social, technological, and moral changes. I have in mind two examples. One is the increased awareness of and interest in the different types of diseases from which Kuan-yin could save the devotees. Therefore, instead of simply noting that the bodhisattva saved one from illness, we are told the specific kinds of diseases. While none appeared in any of the previous collection, twelve cases of smallpox were found in this one, all of which happened in the Ch'ing. Might the increased attention to the variety of diseases be a reflection of the sophistication of medical knowledge which was

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made available through the writing and publication of medical texts in the late imperial time? Another example is provided by the stories about filial sons, daughters or daughters-in-law who would secretly cut off a piece of the flesh from their thighs or arms and served it as medicine to cure their hopelessly ill parents or parents-in-law. This practice, known as "curing parents by cutting the thigh" (ke-ku liao-chin), became quite widespread in Ming and Ch'ing. I have argued elsewhere that we can take this as a case of how Confucian values transformed the cult of Kuan-yin (Yü 1997). The inclusion of stories with this theme clearly reflects this new religious practice in late imperial China.

This article provides an overview of miracle tales about Kuan-yin, an important and enduring genre of literature in Chinese Buddhism. I begin by discussing the earliest surviving miracle tale collections written in the 5th-6th centuries, translating the seven tales from the very first of the collections, and end by contrasting them with the later collections compiled in Ch'ing and modern times. My main argument is that miracle tales have served as a powerful medium in transforming and domesticating Kuan-yin. Because the stories related real people's encounters with the bodhisattva in specific times and places and under critical circumstances, Kuan-yin was no longer the mythical figure mentioned in the sutras, but rather became what Robert Campany calls a "real presence".

I believe that images and paintings of Kuan-yin have played a decisive role in shaping the devotees' visions of the bodhisattva. At the same time, I argue that artistic creations should also be seen in the context of ritual and religious devotion. They were intended to serve as icons. I am particularly interested in tracing the changing visions of Kuan-yin contained in the tales, for I believe that they provide us with important clues to the bodhisattva's new identities in China. While Kuan-yin never appeared as a woman in the early tales, we do find that the bodhisattva appeared in several feminine forms in the stories after the Sung. This is not surprising, for it was during the same period that feminine forms of Kuan-yin were created by artists. The intimate connection between art and religious experience is therefore further confirmed by these evidences. It is perhaps appropriate to repeat what Hu Ying-lin (1551~1602), scholar and bibliophile, had to say on this subject. In the preface to a collection of fifty-three

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forms of Kuan-yin together with eulogies entitled Eulogies to the Fifty three Compassionate Manifestations of the Great Being Kuan-yin (Kuan-yin Ta-shih tz'u-jung wu-shih-san hsien-hsiang tsan) that he compiled, he first pointed out that all statues and paintings of Kuan-yin made in his time depicted the bodhisattva as a woman. He then said that all bodhisattvas, not only Kuan-yin but also Manjusri and Samanthabhadra, were dignified and good-looking. But to have Kuan-yin wearing women's clothing was indeed something not done before. He cited examples from earlier miracle tales (some we have examined) to show that Kuan-yin always appeared in the form of a monk. He also cited the famous Sung work, The Catalogue of Paintings Compiled in the Hsüan-ho Era (Hsüan-ho hua-p'u), to show that all the renowned T'ang and Sung painters did not depict Kuan-yin as being dressed in women's clothing. He then offered two explanations for Kuan-yin's sexual transformation. First, because the scriptural teaching about Kuan-yin's manifestations and because Kuan-yin was most frequently worshiped by women, somehow most of the manifestations gradually took on feminine forms. Second and more to the point, "because all the Kuan-yin images nowadays are in the form of a woman, people no longer dream of the bodhisattva as a man. Since people no longer see Kuan-yin appear in a male form in their dreams, they come to think that the bodhisattva is really a woman. But dream is produced by the mind and verified by the eye. Since the bodhisattva seen by the eye and thought by the mind is not male, Kuan-yin naturally manifests as a female in the dreams" (1980 : 1a, 2a) .

Miracle tales about Kuan-yin provide strong evidence to my thesis that Kuan-yin has been worshiped in China by both monastics and lay, men and women. In fact, the cult cuts across all social classes. As we have seen, miracle tale collections were compiled by both monks and literati. The collections included stories about people from diverse walks of life who, for a brief moment, experienced the salvific encounter with Kuan-yin and their lives were subsequently transformed in a profound way. Buddhist sutras glorifying Kuan-yin received verification from such tales. Scriptural teachings were no longer doctrinal and abstract, but became practical and concrete through the living testimonies of real men and women. At the same time, through their tales about their dreams or visions of Kuan-yin, the devotees helped to make the bodhisattva

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take on increasingly Chinese manifestations. Kuan-yin was in the process transformed and domesticated.

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觀音靈驗故事

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提要

觀音靈驗故事的收集及編纂早在魏晉南北朝（公元四世紀）就已開始，一直到今天，還不斷進行。個人認為靈驗記乃是推進觀音信仰的重要媒介之一。本文更提出一個理論：靈驗記也在觀音中國化上，發生了重要的作用。本文在說明以上兩個假設時，提出並解答如下的幾個問題：第一，歷代靈驗記的編纂者為何人？出家與在家的編者在他們取材時，是否有所不同？士大夫在推廣觀音信仰上曾扮演何種角色？第二，觀音向何人示現及以何種型態示現？在夢中或在平常狀態？男相或女相？僧相或居士相？觀音救人於何種患難，施信徒何種利益？第三，在觀音像及造像學上，它們跟靈驗故事中描寫的靈異經驗，有無關係？有何種關係？第四，靈驗記的組織原則是什麼？是根據某個經典的有關觀音威力的模式嗎？還是故事與故事之間並沒有明顯的關係？第四，編纂於清代的靈驗記跟早期編纂的靈驗記有什麼不同？於此不同中那些反映了觀音信仰本身的發展，那些則反映了歷史及社會因素產生的新的憂慮及希望？

關鍵詞：1.觀音 2.靈驗記 3.感應

[1] All three stories are taken from *Lion's Roar*. The first two from Vol. 14, Nos. 1 & 2 (1975) . p. 24 and p. 25, and the last one from No. 4 (1975) , p. 20. Nuns from Fo-kuang Shan Buddhist Seminary, Kao-hsiung, Taiwan, where I gave an intensive summer course on Chinese Buddhism in the summer of 1995 brought the journal to my attention. Miracle stories about Kuan-yin are very popular among the nuns and monks that I have come into contact both in Taiwan and Mainland China.

[2] However, as I read a similar passage in the Kuan-yin hsüan-i (Mysterious Meaning of the Kuan-yin Sutra, T no. 1726) , water and moon are used as metaphors to illustrate the "middle way", namely, they are neither ultimately real nor entirely illusory. Chih-i used the water and moon metaphor in a different sense. He compared the interpretations of "Kuan-shih-yin" from the four perspectives of the Pitaka teaching (tsang-chiao) , common teaching (t'ung-chiao) , separate teaching (p'ien-chiao) and perfect teaching (yüan-chiao) . He said, "The perfect teaching correctly illuminates the middle way and stays away from the two extremes. It teaches neither emptiness nor temporariness, neither the inner nor the outer. It views the sentient beings of the ten dharma realms as reflections in the mirror, moon in the water , neither inside nor outside [the mind] . They cannot be said to exist, nor can they be said not to exist. They are not ultimately real, yet the threefold truth is perfectly contained therein. Neither prior nor posterior, they are found in the One Mind (T 34:886b, italics mine) .

[3] Chih-i (538~597) mentions both the collection by Hsieh Fu and that of Lu Kao by name in his Kuan-yin i-shu (Commentary on the Meaning of the Kuan-yin Sutra , T 34: 923c) . He then retells a number of stories from Hsieh Fu's collection as reconstructed by Fu Liang, starting with that of Chu Ch'ang-shu's house being saved from fire as a result of his calling on Kuan-yin. Chi-tsang (549~623) also mentions the collection by Hsieh in his Fa-hua i-shu (Commentary on the Meaning of the Lotus Sutra, T 34: 626b) (Makita 1970: 7) . T'ang Lin, the 7th century author of *Ming-pao chi* (Records of miraculous retribution) also refers to these collections by name in his preface (Gjertson 1989: 156) .

[4] As pointed out by Makita, although the idea of the bodhisattva's power to save people from difficulties is found in the sutra, the exact words of this sentence, however, are not found in Dharmaraksha's translation of the Lotus Sutra (Cheng Fa-hua ching , T 9: 128c) . So Fu Liang, the compiler, was taking some liberty here in his eagerness to lend the story with some scriptural justification (Makita 1970: 79) .

[5] Campany translated this story as well as #4 and #7 and numbered them Tale 10, Tale 15, and Tale 8 respectively in his "The Earliest Tales of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin" (1996: 82~96) . I consulted his translations in making mine, which differ from his in some places.

[6] Another source, the *Lien-tsung pao-chien* (Precious Mirror of the Lotus School, T no. 1973) compiled by P'u-tu in 1305, refers to the bodhisattva specifically as

the “White-robed Kuan-yin”. By the 10th century, Kuan-yin began to appear in this form, which gradually became feminized and increasingly popular.

[7] Jan Min was himself Chinese. He was the son of Jan Chan, the adopted son of Shih Hu, the third emperor of the Latter Chao. After Shih Hu died, Jan Min rebelled against Shih Hu’s son, the new emperor, and killed him in 350. He assumed the throne himself and renamed the dynasty the great Wei. Following the advice of a Taoist, he killed indiscriminately all the non-Chinese in the country. This story was an eyewitness account of the massive killing carried out in the capital Yeh (Chin shu 107; Makita 1970: 81).

[8] Stanley Weinstien pointed out that one of the underlying causes for Emperor Wu-tsung’s persecution against Buddhism starting in 842 was the fear instilled in him by an obscure apocryphal work called the K’ung-tzu shu (Discourses of Confucius) which predicted that after eighteen generations an emperor “in black robes” would take over the country. He, like the populace in general, associated black robes with the Buddhist clergy (1987: 125). The emperor was a firm believer in Taoist art of immortality. In the same year, when the seven Taoist priests failed to become immortals after ingesting the elixir on the Terrace for Viewing the Immortals, their explanation to Wu-tsung was “as long as Buddhism continued to be practiced alongside Taoism, the color black, which was associated with Buddhism, would predominate, thus obstructing the path to immortality, presumably by overwhelming the weaker color of yellow which signified the Taoist religion in popular mind” (1987: 129). In the Tao-chiao ling-yen chi (Efficacious Manifestations in Taoism), a collection of miracle tales compiled by Tu Kuang-t’ing (850~933), “yellow-clad persons” sometimes appeared in visions and dreams just as the Buddhist “white-clad person” did. See, for example, the story in Cheng-t’ung Tao-tsang 38: 30352.

[9] This is not my conjecture but can be proved by checking the version of the same story as recorded by Wang Yen in the sixth century Ming-hsiang chi. After Pan is said to see the “true form” of the bodhisattva, the text adds, “just like the popular images seen at present time” (Lu Hsun 1973: 599).

[10] Sometimes “the person in white” is not explicitly identified as Kuan-yin. But the implication is so obvious that this is not necessary. I take this as an indirect, yet convincing, evidence that Kuan-yin was perceived in this fashion from the 5th century on. Tao-hsuan, for instance, tells this story about a white-clad person saving images, included under the section on miraculous images in his Chi shen-chou san-pao k’ang-t’ung lu: During the k’ai-huang era (581~600) of the Sui, the main Buddha hall of the Hsing-huang Temple in Chiang-chou (in present Honan) was burned down. Inside there were statues of the Buddha and two bodhisattvas. They were made from the molds created by T’ai Yung, the son of the celebrated artisan T’ai K’uei (d. 396). The statues were large, all measuring 16 chih. Although they suffered from the fire, the bodies measuring about 5~6 chih survived and the golden color remained intact. They were moved to the White Horse Temple. In 651 a thief tried to steal the copper by chiselling away the surfaces of the images. He was about to climb out of the window when he was seized by the wrist and could not move. The

next morning he was caught by the monks who questioned him why he was there. He answered that because “a person in white” who was inside the room seized his arms, he could not escape (T 52: 421a) .

[11] He was a native of Ping-yüan (in present Shansi) and lived in retirement on Mt. Chung-nan in his later years during the reign of Emperor Wu-tsung (840~846) , foreseeing the pending persecution. After he died, forty-nine relics were discovered and a stupa was constructed to house them. He belonged to the lineage of the Ch’an master P’u-chi (d. 739) , who received the transmission from Shen-hsiu (600~706) , leader of the Northern Ch’an School (Shih-shih chi-ku-lüeh , T 49: 836c) .

[12] Emperor Hsiao-tsung (r. 1163~1188) had already praised Kuan-yin by bestowing the same title on the bodhisattva. See Hang-chou Shang-t’ien-chuchih 1980: 33.

[13] In the postscript to the collection, there is a brief history about its previous two printings in which two monks were involved. The writer of the postscript is identified only as “Society for the Promotion of Buddhism”, but no individual name. It says that in 1911 monk Tsan-chi of Chen-yü Temple in Jen-an, Chekiang, discovered the collection (not compiled) . He received donation to have it printed. But because he could not print enough copies, not many people got to read it. Later, Master Hua-chih of the Chieh-chu Temple in Shao-hsing, Chekiang, chanced upon it and, impressed by its broad coverage, decided to have it reissued and carried out a major campaign for funds. So two monks were involved in promoting the work. A third monk, Master Yin-kuang (1861~1940) , was identified as the person who verified its contents. Although it received much promotion from monks, the compiler might still be a lay person. Monk authors, in general, do not remain anonymous. The contents of the collection, as I indicate in the text, also seem to reflect more lay concerns.