

Literary construction of Buddhist sacred places : The Record of Mt. Lu by Chen Shunyu

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LITERARY CONSTRUCTION OF BUDDHIST SACRED PLACES:
THE RECORD OF MT. LU BY CHEN SHUNYU

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Introduction

In this paper I will discuss in an exploratory way the question: how were sacred places in general, and more specifically Buddhist sacred places constructed in medieval China? I will approach this question by first focusing attention on a written account of a sacred mountain. *The Record of Mt. Lu* (*Lushanji* 廬山記, T. 2095: 51. 1025–1052), in five fascicles, was compiled by Chen Shunyu 陳舜愈 (*Songshi*, 30.331.10663–10663) sometime around 1072; here literary essays describing the mountains are combined with collections of verses and inscriptions. I will begin first by looking at *The Record of Mt. Lu* as a literary compilation. How is this text constructed? Who compiled it? Under what circumstances? What were the sources? How was this text to be read? I will then proceed to examine the construction Mt. Lu itself. How is Mt. Lu presented in this text as a “sacred place,” and more specifically as a Buddhist sacred place? Did this construction undergo changes over time? I will distinguish two distinct strategies for presenting Buddhist sacred places in the course of this discussion. I will briefly examine another Buddhist sacred mountain, Mt. Wutai 五臺, in order to highlight the significance of this distinction. The comparison with Mt. Wutai will bring to the fore the tension and dynamism in the construction of Mt. Lu as a Buddhist sacred place in Chen Shunyu’s essay.

(1) The Construction of the Text

The Record of Mt. Lu consists of eight sections. The mountain is described in detail in the first three sections: the first section gives a general description of the natural setting of the peaks and waters, the second section is devoted to the detailed description of the northern part of the mountain, and the third to the southern part. In the detailed description in the second

and third sections, specific locations of Buddhist and Taoist temples, and of all other sites mentioned are designated by specifying the distances and directions between them. Thus, this description amounts to a detailed verbal map, in which the significance of important sites is explained by quotations from inscriptions and other historical and geographical works. The fourth section presents a route which pilgrims might follow to visit the main sites on the mountain. Again the distances between each of the sites along the route are marked carefully. The fifth section gives the biographies of the 18 Worthies of the White Lotus Society. Mt. Lu was widely known as the place where this famous society of Pure Land practise was founded. The sixth section collects verses written on the mountain by early poets. Titles of early inscriptions are listed in the seventh section, and the eighth section reproduces several early inscriptions that were about to be destroyed.

At the end of the third section, after the detailed description of the southern part of the mountain, the compiler Chen Shunyu states,

When I first travelled in Mt. Lu, I asked about histories of the temples on the mountain and about the names of rocks and bodies of water. No one could answer my questions. Even the answers I received were frequently mistaken. Therefore I took hold of the maps and scriptural passages on Jiujiang 九江, records written by others, and investigated dynastic histories. In other cases, I went to the location myself and examined inscriptions and consulted local elders. In this way I compiled *The Record of Mt. Lu*. The inscriptions that were broken or buried, leaving their contents unrecoverable, were excluded. Inscriptions from Tang and earlier, if their dates and locations were clearly specified, were included. Hopefully, this work will serve to supplement the works of historians. (1037b18–25)¹

1 This statement appears to conclude the main text of the *Record of Mt. Lu*. The reference to inscriptions here suggests that lists of inscriptions were appended to this work. References to other bodies of appended material occur elsewhere in first three sections (1028a25, 1029c24). Thus, sections 4 to 8 in the present version of the *Record of Mt. Lu* appear originally to have been intended as appendixes.

The circumstances of the composition of this work are explained further in the two prefaces to this work by Li Chang 李常 (*Songshi*, 31.344.10929–10931) and Liu Huan 劉渙 (*Songshi*, 30.324. 10432–10433). According to Li Chang, in 1072 when Chen Shunyu was exiled to this mountain, he walked around the mountain for sixty days and produced a record that described its natural setting and reproduced inscriptions of Buddhist temples and residences of recluses. A diagram of the mountain was also included. Three years later Li Chang was appointed at Wuxing 吳興; there he saw Chen who asked him to arrange to have the work printed. Chen passed away shortly after this, before the printing of the work took place. Chen Shunyu, Li Chang, and Liu Huan were all prominent officials, whose biographies were included in the Song dynastic history. Chen and Li openly criticized Wang Anshi's 王安石 new policies, that were began to be put in practice in 1068, and both were punished. Chen's exile, mentioned in Li's preface, was the result of this punishment, and Li himself is said to have been demoted and exiled. Chen's compilation of the records of Mt. Lu and Li Chang's printing of the work thus occurred against the background of their worldly careers in eclipse. Though Chen's preface explicitly presents his work as a contribution to historiography, and turning to a study of a famous mountain, on which a great deal has been written, may well have been a familiar gesture from scholar-officials with

Section 7, which lists titles of inscriptions, and section 8, which reproduces some texts of inscriptions about to be destroyed may correspond to the appendix mentioned in 1029c24. The appended biographies of the 18 worthies is mentioned in section 2 (1028a25). In the introductory comments at the beginning of the fifth section, on the biographies of the 18 Worthies, the compiler ("I") states that when he produced this set of biographies, in order to correct the existing biographies of the 18 Worthies at the Donglin temple, he had already completed the "Record of the mountain" (1039a6). Perhaps Chen had already planned to compose such a collection while he was composing the main part of the "Record of the mountain," but only got around to actually doing so after he had completed the first three sections. The reference to an appended collection of verses also appears in section 2 (1029c24). This seems to correspond to section 6 in the present version.

literary interests, it is also tempting to see here a shadow of the larger theme of renunciation.²

The first section of *The Record of Mt. Lu*, entitled “general description of the mountains and waters” consists largely of a number of quotations from a variety of sources. It begins with references to Mt. Lu in such early and well-known works as *Record of the Grand Historian*, *History of the Former Han*, *The Classic of Waterways*, and *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, and explains the name of the mountain by recounting the story about the hut (*lu*) built by recluse Kuang Su 匡俗, who is said to have received instruction from immortals around the time when Shang dynasty was replaced by Zhou (c.1100, B.C.). Though the description in this first section mentions several important locations, some of which are described in further detail later, its language depicting the main features of the mountain is often poetic, and many of the places presented appear to be imaginary.

The style of presentation changes in the second and third sections. The descriptions in section 2 for the northern part of the mountain and in section 3 for the southern part are given in the form of detailed verbal maps. The description begins with the southern Dehua 德化 gate of the city of Jiangzhou 江州. As if the author is walking with the reader, he begins by saying, “After five Chinese miles, we reach the Yanshou 延壽 temple, formerly called Luohan 羅漢 Platform. Another five miles beyond the Yanshou temple, we reach the Shitang 石塘 bridge, where the Lianqi 濂溪 residence of Zhou Dunyi 周惇頤 is located ...”.

In some places the author further calls attention to this close relationship between this verbal description of the place and the actual walk of a pilgrim. For example, after a detailed description of the two prominent Buddhist temples, of Huiyuan 慧遠 and of Huiyong 慧永, and other sites in the neighbourhood, the author summarizes, “After half a day’s travel from Donglin 東林, you will reach Huacheng 化城. The monks there always asks the visitor, ‘Are you going to climb the mountain tomorrow?’ If you go through the Upper Huacheng, the mountain path is very steep and frequently palanquins cannot go through” (1030b5–7). Several passages later, the author recalls his own travel: “In the ninth

2 The biographies of Chen, Li and Liu, however, do not indicate that any of them had particular sympathy with Buddhism or Taoism.

month of 1071 accompanied by several monks I climbed to the top of the Xianglufeng 香鑪峰 peak and had lunch there. We then took the route to Xiangjisi 香積寺 temple. By the time I reached Qixian 棲賢 valley, the sun was beginning to set” (1030b20–22). Some passages later, the author refers to this journey again: “I once visited the Donglinsi 東林寺 and Xilinsi 西林寺 temples in the ninth month. The remaining heat in autumn was such that I could not dispense with my fan. The next day I went up to Dalin 大林. The flowing spring had already frozen. I also visited there in the third month. Blossoms of fruit trees were falling and peonies were about to open up. It was just as Po Juyi (772–846) describes in his poem” (1031a2–5).³

At one basic level this account appears to be a map or a guide for visitors to the mountain. This impression is confirmed by the fact, noted above, that a route for “easy viewing of the mountain for those who walk it” is presented in a separate section, immediately following the detailed description of the northern and southern parts of the mountain. This section is clearly intended as a guide for pilgrimages, and suggests that many have walked the mountain following this or similar routes.

A very large number of sites are mentioned in this description. Most of these sites are temple buildings (*an*), though mountain peaks and other natural features are also listed among them, and still other kinds of sites also appear, such as residences of important personages. In many cases, references to specific sites are followed by explanations, often brief but sometimes very detailed. It must have been these explanations that Chen Shunyu produced from the wide range of sources he mentions in his account of the compilation of this work in the passage cited above. As he notes himself, many of these explanations appear to have been based on inscriptions that existed at each site.⁴

Others were based on a variety of historical and literary collections that circulated independently. All these explanations point to the past. Chen makes only passing references to the presence of monks in *The Record of Mt. Lu*. Thus, in *The Records of Mt. Lu*, as the reader moves from one site

3 In the summer of 1072 a visitor is said to have gone to Guizong 歸宗 temple, saw a miraculous mirror above the temple gate, and reported to Chen Shunyu (1032b17–19).

4 This can be checked again the list in the seventh section (1048a–1051b).

to another, following the detailed verbal map of the mountain and guided by the compiler's actual "pilgrimage," he is constantly reminded of the past. Through this memory of the past the sites that the traveller visits are transformed into monuments.⁵ The natural setting of the mountain becomes an imagined "sacred place."

(2) The Construction of Mt. Lu as a Buddhist Sacred Place

As a heuristic device for examining the construction of Mt. Lu as a sacred place, I will center my discussion around its Buddhist affiliation. In what

- 5 The choice of this concept for the purposes here has been inspired by Wu Hung's discussion of monument and monumentality. Wu Hung defines these concepts as follows: "Here I use the two concepts—*monumentality* and *monument*—to indicate two interrelated levels in my discussion. Both terms derive from the latin word *monumentum*, meaning to remind and to admonish. But in my usage, *monumentality* (defined in Webster's *New International Dictionary* as "monumental state and quality) sustains such functions of a "monument": a physical monument can survive even after it has lost its commemorative and instructive significance. The relationship of monumentality to monument is thus close to that of *content* and *form*. This explains why only an object possessing a definite monumentality is a functional monument. *Monumentality* thus denotes memory, continuity, and political, ethical, or religious obligations to a tradition. This primary meaning underlies a monument's manifold social, political, and ideological significance. As scholars have repeatedly stated, a monument, no matter what shape or material, serves to preserve memory, to structure history, to immortalize a figure, event, or institution, to consolidate a community or a public, to define a center for political gatherings or ritual communication, to relate the living to the dead, and to connect the present with the future. All these concepts are obviously important for any understanding of art and architecture as social and cultural products. But these are nevertheless empty words until they are historically defined. Moreover, even when a particular type of monumentality is defined, it remains an isolated phenomenon until it is linked with other kinds of monumentality into a dynamic historical sequence. I call this sequence a 'history of monumentality'; it reflects the changing notion of memory and history" (Wu Hung 4).

ways does the text stamp a distinctly Buddhist character upon the Buddhist sites in these mountains? Are these ways recognizably different from the ways in which sacred places are affiliated with other religious traditions, such as Daoism? If so, what would explain these differences? Legendary histories of sacred mountains in China go far back into the earliest periods in history. Buddhism, by contrast, is generally recognized as a foreign religion that was brought to China relatively late, during the reign of the emperor Ming of later Han (r. 57–75) according to a widely known legend (though the historicity of this story is itself very doubtful). The broader question for us, then, is how did Buddhist sites, established relatively recently in medieval China on sacred mountains with legendary histories predating Buddhism, acquire their sacred character? How is the sacred character of these sites explained in the literary representations of these sites and mountains?

In many cases Buddhist sites are identified by temples and these temples are associated with specific monks. The Buddhist sites at Mt. Tiantai 天台, for example, are represented as the places where events closely affiliated with Zhiyi's 智顓 (539–98) career took place. Earlier Buddhist sites at Mt. Lu are closely related to Huiyuan's (334–416) stay there. I will begin with a discussion of this relationship as represented in *The Record of Mt. Lu*. This account of Huiyuan's arrival and his temples draws heavily on Huijiao's 慧皎 biography of Huiyuan in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T. 2059: 50.357c–361b; Zürcher, 240–253).

(a) *The Dragon Spring*

When Huiyuan first arrived at the mountain he loved this particular location and wanted to build his hut at this site, but there was no water nearby; he hit the ground with his staff and a spring opened up, and the water from it formed a stream. The story of a rain miracle that Huiyuan performed there follows; at a time of severe drought, by reciting the “Dragon King Scripture” by the pool, as the spring is called here, Huiyuan forced a dragon to go up in the sky and bring down heavy rain. This story is then said to explain why the spring where Huiyuan performed this miracle was called “Dragon Spring” (Longquan 龍泉, 1027a6–10; ref., 50.358a22–28).

Elsewhere in *The Records of Mt. Lu* another story of the arrival of Buddhism is told. An Shigao 安世高, who arrived in at Luoyang around 148 A.D. and translated Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, is said to have later travelled to Mt. Lu and liberated the dragon at Gongting 宮亭 Lake (1025b12, 1027a13 [“Gaoting” 郟亭], 1037a; ref., 50.323b26–c22). The place where the corpse of a great dragon was found was called the Snake Hill (Miyakawa, 94–96). Like this story about An Shigao, the story of Huiyuan at the Dragon Spring may also be read as a story that explains how Buddhism proved effective against a local deity, presumably the dragon in charge of water. An Shigao and after him Huiyuan were missionary monks, who brought the Buddhist teaching from outside to Mt. Lu. I note with interest that in these stories the local deities are closely identified with a part of nature, such as a lake, a hill, or a spring.

(b) *The Donglinsi temple*

The temple called the Taipingxingguosi 太平興國寺 temple at the time this work was compiled (1027c18) is said to have been originally built in 384 and called Donglinsi; it was abolished in 843 during the Huichang 會昌 persecution of Buddhism, and reinstated in 849; it was given the new name in 977. A brief biography of Huiyuan follows, noting that Huiyuan was a senior disciple of Dao'an 道安 (312–385) and was on his way from the Shangmingsi 上明寺 temple in Jingzhou to Mt. Luofu. Mt. Lu was on the route, and he stayed at the Dragon Spring temple. By then Huiyong was already staying at the Fragrant Valley, and Huiyuan formed a neighbourly relationship with him. Governor Huan Yi 桓伊 (died ca. 392) honoured Huiyuan and established the temple for him. The temple inscription, composed by Li Yong 李邕 (678–747, *Tangshu*, fascicle 79; *Jiu Tangshu*, fascicle 64) and dated 722, is mentioned, along with another by Zhang Youxin 張又新 (*Tangshu*, fascicle 175; *Jiu Tangshu*, fascicle 149) (1028a2; 1048a23–25). Then, a new story about the building of the temple is told.⁶

6 Li Yong's inscription is cited repeatedly elsewhere in *The Record of Mt. Lu* (1027c27; 1048b19–22; ref., 1028b8). The text of this inscription is reproduced in

Huiyuan originally intended to move to Fragrant Hill, where his colleague Huiyong resided. On his way a mountain deity appeared in a dream and requested Huiyuan to reside at a different location near Fragrant Hill. Later in the night, thunder and lightening occurred. The next morning people saw the ground cleared, with white sand and good quality lumber surrounding it. The temple built with these materials was named Shenyun 神運 (“Moved by gods”).⁷ The entry on this temple building concludes with references to plaques and inscriptions.

In this remarkable story missionary monk Huiyuan, on his way to a different destination, is said to have chosen the site of the Donglinsi temple at the request of a local deity. As in the cases of the stories about the Dragon Spring temple and of An Shigao and the Snake Hill reviewed above, the founding of a Buddhist center presupposes a relationship with a local deity. Unlike these earlier stories, however, the site of the Donglinsi itself does not appear to have been marked by distinctive natural features.

According to the entry on Huiyuan in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (358a29–b3) Huiyong informed governor Huan Yi of the lack of space at the place where disciples gathered around Huiyuan, presumably referring to the Dragon Spring temple, and the governor then built a temple at the new site (358b2–3). No exchanges with local deities are mentioned here. In this account the Donglinsi temple is presented as a place where the Terrace of the Buddha’s Shadow (385b8–c3) and a miraculous Aśoka image (358c3–16) are located. Both were brought to the temple by Huiyuan. The Donglinsi temple is presented not as a place where a local deity appeared but as a place where extraordinary Buddhist objects were brought from outside and placed.

The story of the original Buddha’s Shadow in a cave in Nagarahāra mentions numerous miraculous events. Huiyuan is said to have been moved

the *Quan Tangwen*, fascicle 264: 3.2677b–2679a, and *Li Beihai ji*, fascicle 4 (with a copy of the rubbing).

7 This story about the Shenyun hall does not appear in the inscription Li Yong, where the story about the Longquan spring is told in some detail (2678a3–6), but the account of the construction of the new quarter at the “Fragrant Valley,” given in an ornate language, does not mention the dream or the name of the building “Shenyun” (a8–15).

by the story of the Buddha's "shadow" in Nagarahāra, situated in an ancient sage's cave at the place where the Buddha converted a poisonous dragon, and wished to see it. A visiting monk from the Western regions described the image's luminous features, and Huiyuan had a cave built and an artist paint the image in faint colours. The verses he composed are then cited.

Kuwayama Shōshin recently investigated the relationship between the Cave of the Buddha's Shadow in Nagarahāra, situated to the west of Gandhāra, and the Terrace for Buddha's Shadow at Mt. Lu (Kuwayama 1990, 75–90). A long passage describing the origin of the Cave of the Buddha's Shadow in Nagarahāra is found in a scripture called, *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* 觀佛三昧海經 ("The Scripture of the Ocean of Buddha Contemplation Samādhi", fascicle 7, T. 643: 15.679–681c7), attributed to Buddhahadra. In this story of the poisonous dragons in Nagarahāra, Sākyamuni Buddha responded to the request of the king and converted the dragons. As the dragons and other deities requested the Buddha to remain there forever, the Buddha told the dragon king to donate the rock cave. Having told the dragon king that he would remain in the cave for 1,500 years, the Buddha performed 18 miraculous transformations and went inside the rock. He could be seen in the same way as we see our faces in a clear mirror (681a28). The Buddha remained in the cave; sentient beings saw him from a distance, but when they came closer, he was no longer visible. Numerous gods presented offerings to the "shadow" (image); the shadow also preached.

Buddhabhadra's family was originally from Kapilavastu, but his grandfather had moved to Nagarahāra, and Buddhahadra was born there. He studied in Gandhāra on more than one occasion.⁸ Thus, Buddhahadra was well-acquainted with the cult of the Buddha's shadow. The *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* was among the several meditation scriptures he is said to have translated in Mt. Lu at the request of Huiyuan (335b16). He may have had a hand in introducing the long passage on the Cave of the Buddha's Shadow in Nagarahāra into the version of this scripture he translated. Buddhahadra left Mt. Lu in 412 (*Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記

8 Kuwayama demonstrates that "Jibin 罽賓" mentioned in Buddhahadra's biography in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T.1059: 50.334c8) refers to Gandhāra rather than Kashmir.

集, T.2145: 55.104a4); on the first day of the fifth month in the same year (*Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, T. 2103: 52.198b5) the Terrace of the Buddha's Shadow was completed. Kuwayama infers from these dates that Buddhahadra may well have first translated the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* for Huiyuan at Mt. Lu, and then saw to it that a painting based on this scripture was produced there. When the Terrace of the Buddha's Shadow was completed at Mt. Lu, Buddhahadra left the mountain (Kuwayama 1990, 89).⁹

The account of the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* then tells the story of the Aśoka image, discovered by Tao Kan 陶侃. Later, when Tao Kan was reassigned to a new post he sent people to have the image moved there, the image became heavy and the boat on which it was placed sank. When Huiyuan completed building the new temple and prayed for the image, the image became light, and floating freely on the water, came to him.

In this account of the founding of the Donglinsi temple, in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, the emphasis is on the presence of the Buddha that Huiyuan brought to the temple. As soon as the temple building was completed, Huiyuan had a visiting foreign monk describe the Buddha's "shadow" in Nagarahāra and had it reproduced at Mt. Lu; he also miraculously brought the Aśoka image to the temple. Though the natural beauty surrounding the temple is mentioned, what made this temple extraordinary was what was brought there from outside. Donglinsi is here presented as a Buddhist sacred place by means of a rhetorical strategy very different from that used in presenting the Dragon Spring temple. In the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* this latter site is described in words similar to those in *The Records of Mt. Lu*.

In *The Record of Mt. Lu*, the story of the miraculous construction of the Shenyun Hall, summarized above, is followed by the account of the destruction of this building during the Huichang persecution; the temple was rebuilt in the Dazhong 大中 period (847–860). The Aśoka image is here explicitly identified as a Mañjuśrī image, which is said first to have been housed at the Shenyun Hall, but was later moved to a special pavilion built for it on the White Lotus Pond. This pond, situated behind the

9 Zürcher also commented on the role of Buddhahadra in the construction of the Terrace of the Buddha's Shadow at Mt. Lu (224, 225).

Shenyun hall, was an artificial pond that Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433) is said to have created, filled with white lotus, with a terrace where he translated the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*.¹⁰

The White Lotus Pavilion, situated at the old site of this terrace, is also said to have been the place Huiyuan, Huiyong, and other monks and laymen, are said to have formed the famous White Lotus Society.¹¹ *The Record of Mt. Lu* tells the story of Tao Kan's image, following the account in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, except for one detail about the separate discovery of its halo. This account is followed by the account of the later disappearance of the image (to be discussed in detail below).

The presentation of the Donglinsi temple in *The Record of Mt. Lu* continues further with stories about the carriage the usurper Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369–404) left at Donglinsi in the course of his flight; an elaborate story, based on several inscriptions, traces the history of the Scripture Hall (1028b22; 1048c6–10; 1049a27–b6). The reference to Bo Juyi's 白居易 hut, situated in the Northeast corner of the temple is followed by the story of the collection of Huiyuan's writings he compiled, called *Kuangshan ji* 匡山集. Beyond this hut is the place where two springs appear among rocks. Above this site is a relic *stūpa*, built by Buddhahadra (359–429), who had brought three pieces of Śākyamuni's relics to Mt. Lu. Among the sites mentioned in the remaining passages devoted to the Donglinsi are the ancient ordination platform and Huiyuan's grave (*stūpa*). The location of the Terrace of the Buddha's Shadow is given separately (1029c10–23), with an extended list of a variety of objects stored in the temple that then existed at the site of the Terrace (1029c23–1030a10).

In this presentation of the Donglinsi temple in *The Record of Mt. Lu*, the list of sacred objects brought from outside is expanded: some are distinctively Buddhist, for example, the relics brought by Buddhahadra, Kumārajīva's water bottle and other objects said to have been kept at the

10 This refers to the compilation of the 36 fascicle version of the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* (T. 375) in which Xie Lingyun participated.

11 As noted above, Chen Shunyu included a separate section presenting the biographies of these 18 people in *The Record of Mt. Lu* (1039a–1042b). In the account in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* the story of the White Lotus Society, with an explicit reference to the Amitāyus image at the [Donglinsi] temple, appears as a separate topic from that of Aśoka image (358c18–359a20).

temple at the Terrace of the Buddha's shadow; others are not, for example the imperial carriage that Huan Xuan left at the mountain.

In the *Record of Mt. Lu* the two Buddhist sacred places affiliated with Huiyuan at Mt. Lu are constructed in different ways. Whereas the story of the Dragon Spring centers around a natural feature of the location, the account of the Donglinsi temple highlights objects brought from outside, such as the miraculous images, Buddhist scriptures, the relics of the Buddha. The White Lotus pond, where Huiyuan formed the famous Pure Land society, is characteristically an artificial pond, and not a natural feature of the location. Two distinct strategies may have been adopted in establishing Mt. Lu as a Buddhist sacred place centering around the figure of Huiyuan. These strategies may have more generally characterized the construction of many other Buddhist sacred sites in medieval China. The strategy that relies on features of the natural setting, such as mountain peaks, bodies of water, unusual rocks and trees, would have drawn freely from local legends around these sites. Many stories of local deities closely associated with these unusual features of nature probably predated the arrival of Buddhist missionary monks. The rhetoric of Buddhist sacred places that followed this strategy would have harmonized easily with the non-Buddhist rhetoric of holy mountains in medieval China.

The strategy that highlights the visit of foreign monks and distinctively Buddhist sacred objects brought from outside must have been inspired by the account of Buddhist India given by foreign monks. Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, such as Faxian 法顯 (339?–420?) and Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), also described the numerous Buddhist sites that they visited in India and Central Asia by reporting on relics and images that were worshipped there.

Early Buddhist historians in medieval China were keenly interested in the stories about Aśoka *stūpas*, assumed to have been built in China, under the assumption that China was a part of Aśoka's universal reign, and to have been miraculously rediscovered later. They also preserved stories about Aśoka images that came to China. These stories were later collected by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) and Daoshi 道世 (dates unknown) in the seventh century. I suspect that this tradition of Aśoka *stūpa*'s and Aśoka images must have been driven in part by the effort to construct Buddhist sacred places in China.

Distinctly Buddhist cultic objects, such as relics, images, objects said to have been used by Śākyamuni, were characteristically portable. Over the years they were brought to a number of Buddhist sites in India and Central Asia and worshipped (Kuwayama 1987, 311; 1990, 89; Shinohara 1998). The sites in China where these Buddhist sacred objects had been brought and worshipped became Chinese Buddhist sacred places.

The miracle story of the founding of the Donglinsi temple in *The Record of Mt. Lu* suggests that it was the wish of the local mountain deity to have the missionary monk Huiyuan stay at the mountain and construct a sacred place there. The construction relies heavily on many objects brought from outside with little ties to specific natural features of the site. This story might have been an attempt to situate the basic strategy for constructing the Buddhist sacred site at Mt. Lu, as we see it most uncompromisingly in Huiyuan's biography in the *Biography of Eminent Monks*, in the larger context of the presentation of Mt. Lu as a sacred mountain. A comparison with a similar story of the construction of a Daoist shrine may throw further light on the significance of this story.

(c) *The Shrine of Great Peace (Taipingguan)*

The description of the Shrine of Great Peace 太平觀, which is said to have been originally called "Shrine of the Perfected Lord, the Messenger from Nine Heavens," begins with a quotation from the "Records of the Extraordinary" (*Luyiji* 錄異記), compiled by Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933) (*Daozang*, 327/591; vol. 18, 302b–303a). On the 21st day of the eighth month of 726, the Tang emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756), known for his Daoist sympathies, had a dream. Numerous immortals, riding chariots and horses, filled the sky. A deity, wearing a golden crown and red robe and riding a chariot, came down and greeted the Emperor, saying, "I am the Investigator from the Ninth Heaven who travels in the human world [to report on good and evil deeds]. I wish to build a lower palace in the northwestern part of Mt. Lu. Necessary material has been gathered and the foundation is laid. All that is left is for you actually to build it." The Emperor immediately sent a messenger to the northwestern part of the mountain. The foundation was indeed there, just as expected. Overnight a large quantity of huge pieces of wood miraculously arrived.

As the many halls were built, these proved sufficient. Some say that these pieces of wood were harvested by the ruling deity of Jiujiang river for the purpose of the palace construction. They had sunk to the bottom of the Yi 溢 river, but floated up to the surface at that time. Red clay and other coloured materials were gathered on the ground to the north of the shrine, and the building was beautifully decorated with them. When the shrine was completed, over 500 supernatural beings appeared at the ferry at Jianchang 建昌, dressed as Daoist priests, saying, "We came to pay homage at the messenger's shrine." A picture of the deity [who had appeared as the messenger earlier] was placed on a wall.

According to some, the Emperor told his attendants about his dream, but they did not believe him. Suddenly, a deity came down and stood in the court yard. The Emperor ordered the famous painter Wu Daozi 吳道子 quickly to sketch him. The image in the shrine is a copy of that sketch.¹²

This story of the founding of the Shrine of Great Peace is also a story of outsiders coming to Mt. Lu. The outsider is first of all the deity, the Perfected Lord, the Messenger from Nine Heavens, or the Investigator from the Ninth Heaven, who appeared to Emperor Xuanzong, and then the Emperor and his officials who came to Mt. Lu from the capital city and built this shrine. But this is not a story about missionaries bringing a foreign religion to Mt. Lu.

12 Here Chen Shunyu is quoting from another source without naming it. This story is also told in the entry on the original "miracle", in the *Lushan Taipingxingguogong Caifang zhenjun shishi* 廬山太平興國宮採訪真君事實, compiled in 1154, *Daozang*, 1006–1007/1286: 55.180b–181a. Ref., 182ab (Boltz 1987, 81–83). Chen Shunyu also mentions at this point the inscription by Li Bin, also preserved in the same work in the *Daozang*, 212b–214b (also *Quan Tangwen*, fascicle 373, vol. 4, pp. 5792–3794). I have not been able to identify the two other inscriptions mentioned here (also in 1048a14–19). The *Lushan Taipingxingguogong Caifang zhenjun shishi* reproduces a story about Zhang Huaiwu, the subject of an inscription mentioned by Chen (236b). This story attributed to a work called *Zhang Linguan ji*, might ultimately have been based on the inscription mentioned by Chen.

The passage on the Shrine of Great Peace is immediately followed by a story of “Liu Yue’s 劉越 rock” (1027c6–15).¹³ Recluse Kuang Su, who lived a long time ago in a hut on the mountain, was frequently visited by a young boy, whose name was Liu Yue. The boy invited Su to come to his house, saying that he lived in the rock, about two feet tall, at the foot of the mountain. He told Su to knock on the rock. When Su came to the location, he saw only a rock, but no building. When he knocked on it, the rock opened up and he was greeted by immortals. It was the entrance to the residence of immortals. Chen Shunyu then cites Huiyuan’s “Brief Record of Mt. Lu,” which mentions that Kuang Su had been instructed by immortals, and notes that this must have been the place where the instruction occurred.¹⁴ In one tradition, mentioned earlier in the *Record of Mt. Lu*, Mt. Lu was named after the hut (*lu*) that Kuang Su had built high up in the mountain (1025a21, ref., 1030a16–19).

The two sites, one of the Shrine of Great Peace and the other of Liu Yue’s rock, located side by side, might originally have been one “sacred place”. The site marked by a natural rock commemorates an ancient event in which the first recluse who entered Mt. Lu is said to have encountered immortals. The rock is the entrance to the realm of immortals. The second story explains the origin of a shrine building, which houses an image of a deity. The construction of the building had occurred relatively recently, under a famous Tang emperor. I am tempted to speculate that this massive shrine building might have replaced the rock as the place where immortals appear. The rock is said to have been placed at the gate of the shrine. Perhaps the newly established shrine stood for the realm of immortals, for which the rock originally served as the gate. In this way the sacred place, marked by a natural object, became an imperially sanctioned shrine.

Thus, in the case of the Daoist Shrine of Great Peace, the realm of immortals, the rock that marks the entrance to it, and the shrine built later

13 In the *Lushan Taipingxingguogong Caifang zhenjun shishi*, the same story about Liu Yue is told (207b–208a) about Master Kang 康 of Zhou rather than about the recluse Kuang Su. Master Kang, accompanied by his seven brothers, is said to have been engaged in the quest for immortality. The site of the rock is similarly said to have been near the gate of the shrine. The source of the story is given as *Liuxianshi ji* 劉賢石記, or “The record of the immortal Liu’s rock.”

14 Another quotation from Huiyuan’s *Lushanji* is mentioned in Forte 1995, 20–21.

by a Tang emperor are located in the same sacred place. By contrast, the place where Huiyuan first settled down at Mt. Lu, marked by a feature of the natural setting, or the Dragon Spring, was at some distance from the Donglinsi temple, where he came to reside permanently. The realm from which Huiyuan's Donglinsi temple drew its sanctity was also located outside of the mountain and outside of China, in India where the Buddha lived and king Aśoka ruled. The relationship between Huiyuan and Mt. Lu and its local deity, highlighted in the miracle stories about the Dragon Spring, appears deliberately separated from this presentation of the Donglinsi temple with its connection with India. This comparison between the Daoist shrine of Great Peace and the stories about the sacred places closely associated with Huiyuan on Mt. Lu suggests that the stories about the Dragon Spring, which focused on a feature of the natural setting at Mt. Lu, was based on a rhetorical strategy typically used in describing Daoist sites, but here are employed to construct a Buddhist sacred place.¹⁵ The stories about Donglinsi temple, as seen more clearly in the entry on Huiyuan in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, employed a fundamentally different rhetorical strategy. The story in *The Record of Mt. Lu* where the mountain deity is said to have requested Huiyuan to build a temple and assisted him by miraculously providing construction material might thus have been a later attempt to assimilate this different rhetorical strategy into the larger context of a more familiar rhetoric of the sacred space at Mt. Lu. Over time this assimilation appears to have progressed further at Mt. Lu, but another distinctively Buddhist strategy for constructing sacred places played an important role in this evolution.

15 The strategy of presenting Daoist sacred sites by referring to features of the natural setting at Mt. Lu, is also seen in descriptions of other Daoist sites. For example, Jianjiguan temple is the former residence of Lu Xiuqing (406–77), a prominent Daoist figure. The description of this site, framed around Lu's biography, focuses again on natural features, such as the rock which served as his altar (*xian sheng jiaoshi*, 1033c7), the stone bell that this master used (*xiansheng shiqing*, 1033c12), the well that Lu used for his alchemical work. A huge rock, on which more than ten people could sit, is said to have been the place where the famous recluse Tao Qian 陶潛 is said to have drunk wine without restraint ("the rock of drunkenness", 1032ab).

(d) The cult of Mañjuśrī at Mt. Lu

Among the cultic objects that Huiyuan brought to the Donglinsi temple is the miraculous image, said to have been originally produced in India by king Aśoka, and discovered in China by Tao Kan. Chen Shunyu's account of this image ends with an unusual closing episode. In the course of the persecution of Buddhism during the Huichang period (841–846) the Donglinsi temple was destroyed. Two monks carried this image on their backs and hid it at the Fengding 峰頂 peak near Jinxiu valley. Later, when the temple was rebuilt, the monks returned to fetch the image, but they could not find it. Each of the two monks suspected that the other had hidden it elsewhere. Suddenly, they saw a halo of auspicious colours appear in the sky. Even today visitors who climb to the top of the Fengding peak see miraculous light around the Buddha's Hand cave and Heavenly Pond (1028b10–14).

In a later passage describing the Fengding and other sites nearby, Chen Shunyu refers to the Zhibi 擲筆 (“Throwing Down the Pen”) peak, where Huiyuan is said to have completed his commentary on the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, and notes that one of the peaks in this area is called Mañjuśrī Terrace, where the ancient Mañjuśrī image is said to have been hidden (1031a7–8).¹⁶ One mile from the Zhibi peak is the Buddha's Hand Cliff, with a huge cave which can accommodate 100 people. On its side is a flowing spring, that forms a stream on a gutter carved on the rock. A huge piece of rock on top of the cliff is shaped like a hand. This is said to be the reason why the cliff is called by that name. Three miles from this cliff is the Heavenly Pond. Mañjuśrī Hut also exists nearby, where records of miraculous sightings of Mañjuśrī are kept (1031a19). In this passage Chen Shunyu notes that Mt. Wutai is famous for the miraculous vision of Mañjuśrī; the vision takes the form of a *tūla*-cotton cloud, surrounded by a five-colour halo, in which images of the bodhisattva [Mañjuśrī] and his lion appear. According to Chen, however, in recent years, since the Huangyou 皇祐 (1049–1054) and Zhiping 至平 (1064–1067) periods, the

16 The passage on the Fengding peak, situated near the Xianglufeng peak, begins with a story about the rock where the scriptures were hidden during the Huichang persecution (1030b14–17).

sighting of Mañjuśrī had been more frequent at Mt. Lu, with its ancient legend about a Mañjuśrī image, than at Mt. Wutai (1031a16–20).

In one passage in the *Jade Garden in the Dharma Forest*, or *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林, an encyclopedic anthology of scriptural passages and miracle stories compiled by Daoshi in 668, a story of a monk Huize's 會曠 visits to Mt. Wutai appears. Huize first went there in 661 under the imperial order to repair temples and *stūpas* there. In the following year, again under imperial order, Huize returned to Mt. Wutai: “Accompanied by the official of the Wutai District and over twenty others, Huize went immediately up the central terrace and saw a stone image on the cliff move its body and wave its hand. When they reached place where the image was, all there was was a stone. Desolate, the monk accused himself for his failure to see the True Body [of the bodhisattva]. He remained disconsolate for a long time. He made the workers repair the two *stūpas* and the image of Mañjuśrī [which he had found on his first visit, 53.393a15] ... This mountain range forms a 300 *li* square. The southeastern stretch reaches to Mt. Heng. The Northwestern stretch goes to the Heavenly Pond.” (T.2122: 53.393b4–14).¹⁷

Although Chen Shunyu gives a somewhat different explanation for the name Buddha's Hand Cliff, I suspect that the story of monk Huize's visit to Mt. Wutai lies behind this name of the cliff and the name of the pond nearby (“Heavenly Pond”) at Mt. Lu. In Chen Shunyu's account of the Buddha's Hand Cliff and surrounding areas, this part of Mt. Lu is identified with this earlier account of Mt. Wutai. The Aśoka image that was hidden at the Mañjuśrī Terrace at Mt. Lu is similarly identified with the mysterious Mañjuśrī image on Mt. Wutai—the stone image on the terrace that waved its hand from a distance, but turned out to be a piece of stone when Huize came closer, was the mysterious Mañjuśrī, which was also no different from the Mañjuśrī image that he repaired.¹⁸

17 Another version of this story appears in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, T. 2098: 51.1098bc). Huize's vision is also mentioned in the entry on Shaoyin in the same collection (1098a21–23).

18 The supplementary collection of Mt. Qingliang, compiled in the 11th century, shortly before the compilation of the *Record of Mt. Lu*, tells the story of a vision in which the Buddha's hand appeared inside a cloud of five colours. A large

This passage about the Buddha's Hand Cliff at Mt. Lu suggests that by the time Chen Shunyu's essay was written the cult of Mañjuśrī had become important on this mountain. The story of Tao Kan's image was widely known in medieval China (Shinohara 1992: 180–200). The earlier records emphasized its Aśokan origin.¹⁹ The image is identified possibly for the first time as an image of Mañjuśrī in Daoxuan's miracle story collection, dated 664 (T. 2106: 52.413a22; 417b4, 7–8); the verse cited from Li Yong's inscription for the Donglinsi temple, dated 722, also mentions Mañjuśrī, presumably referring to this image (2678a18–b1; 1028b9). This identification is followed in Chen Shunyu's account. The cult of Aśoka images appears here to have been assimilated into to the cult of Mañjuśrī, more typically associated with Mt. Wutai.

The interest in Mañjuśrī at Mt. Lu eventually led to the claim that Mt. Lu rather than Mt. Wutai was the sacred Buddhist place where the miraculous sighting of Mañjuśrī occurred most frequently. Thus, in this brief passage, as in the case of Mt. Wutai, it is the presence of Mañjuśrī that makes Mt. Lu a distinctively Buddhist sacred place. In the account of Huize's visits Mt. Wutai is described as a mysterious realm where extraordinary visions occur. The next step in my investigation is to examine the significance of this development by reviewing how Mt. Wutai itself was constructed as a Buddhist sacred place in China by the presence there of Mañjuśrī.

(e) *Mt. Wutai and the cult of Mañjuśrī: Huixiang's Gu Qingliang zhuan*

Mt. Wutai as the domain of Mañjuśrī is presented in three well-known works, a Tang monk Huixiang's 慧祥 *Ancient Records of Mt. Qingliang* 古清涼傳 (T.2098), *Expanded Records of Mt. Qingliang*, compiled by

monk, of purple golden colour, and a bodhisattva, wearing a necklace, were seen. A painting of this vision was presented to the court (T. 2099: 51.1107a25–29).

19 A verse on Mañjuśrī, attributed to Zhi Daolin 支道林 (314–66), in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, fascicle 3 (T. 2099: 51.1124c–112b), which mentions both the Shenyun hall (1125a13) and king Aśoka (a29), is anachronistic, since the Shenyun hall was built in 384.

Yanyi 延一 in 1060 as a supplement to Huixiang's earlier work (T.2099), and the *Further Records of Mt. Qingliang* compiled by Zhang Shangying 張商英 (1043–1122)(T. 2100, Gimello 1992). Huixiang's work on Mt. Wutai, or the Mountain of Five Terraces (or flat peaks), begins with a quotation from the *Huayan Scripture*: "The place where bodhisattvas dwell in the Northeastern direction is called Mt. Qingliang 清涼. In the past bodhisattvas always resided there. The bodhisattva who dwells there now is called Mañjuśrī [He is attended by] ten thousand bodhisattvas, and constantly preaches to them" (51: 1092c22–24; ref., T. 278: 9. 590a3–5, T. 279:10. 241b20–23).²⁰ In the original scripture this statement appears as words spoken by a bodhisattva in the Buddha's presence, following an extended sermon by the Buddha. These words are thus presented as words approved by the Buddha himself. Commenting on this passage Huixiang notes that Mt. Qingliang, or Mt. Wutai, is unique among all sacred mountains and other sacred places in China in that it alone is explicitly mentioned in a Buddhist scripture, and thus its sanctity can be traced back to the Buddha himself.²¹

If the Buddha himself is believed to have spoken, if only indirectly, of Mt. Qingliang/Wutai as the place where bodhisattva Mañjuśrī lived, then this mountain was a sacred place in a very different sense from other Buddhist sacred places in medieval China. It would not have been sacred objects, such as relics and images, which had been brought recently from outside, that made the place sacred; its sanctity must have been more deeply embedded in the place itself. The strategies in constructing Buddhist sacred places, one emphasizing the sacred character of the place itself, often focusing on a specific natural feature, such as a spring or a rock, and the other emphasizing the sanctity of Buddhist cultic objects recently brought from outside, cannot be as clearly differentiated in such a place. Mañjuśrī's presence going back to the remote past of the Buddha's preaching in this world, had made Mt. Wutai a distinctly Buddhist sacred place to begin with. As more recent Buddhists, who had learned about

20 This work (T.2098) mentions the date of 679 (1100a8) and was probably compiled sometime after this date.

21 The reference to the mountain with five peaks in a country called Great Chenna in the *Wenshu pusa xian baozang tuoluoni jing* (T. 1185A, 20: 791c12–13; ref., 51:1103b29) appears also to refer to Mt. Wutai.

Mañjuśrī's presence there through reading a newly translated scripture, go up the mountain, they might encounter this bodhisattva who had domesticated the place over a very long time. Natural features of the mountain would now reflect his presence. This basic characteristic of Mt. Wutai's construction as a Buddhist sacred place explains why so many of the stories recorded in Huixiang's work, and its later supplements, center around miraculous encounters with otherworldly beings, sometimes clearly identified as Mañjuśrī. Otherworldly beings often appear in Chinese stories about sacred mountains, for example as mountain deities and immortals. Stories of miraculous encounters at Mt. Wutai appear to have drawn freely from this familiar tradition.²² Let me illustrate this with a few examples. The following story appears in a passage describing the ancient Dafutusi temple, established by emperor Xiaowen 孝文 of Northern Wei dynasty (r.471–499).

At one time three novice monks lived in this temple. Having heard stories about miraculous occurrences, they decided to go into the rocky valleys, seeking encounters with otherworldly beings. After four or five days their provisions were exhausted and they looked for the way to return. They came to a large mountain range, and when they were resting under a tree, they suddenly saw a fat black person climbing along the steepest part of the range. The monks greeted him respectfully and said, "Holy One, please teach us your magical technique." The man said, "I will come back tomorrow. You should wait under the pine tree on the Eastern Mountain. If you see someone go inside the hole, you should ask him. You will get what you are seeking." Having said this, the man went down the mountain range and disappeared in the southern direction.

22 In the story about the dragon of Gongting, or Kung-t'ing, Lake in the *Record of Mt. Lu*, the dragon confesses to An Shigao that in his previous life he had been An Shigao's fellow student monk, and that because he was prone to anger by nature, he was reborn in this inferior form (1027a15). Here the theme of an encounter with a local deity is also appropriated for a Buddhist story. But the local deity is given a negative value; he had received a painful rebirth and is happy to be released from it by a Buddhist missionary monk. I am again interested to note that the story is told in connection with a lake, a prominent natural feature of Mt. Lu.

The monks looked around the mountain range. When they came to the Eastern Mountain, they saw a large tree. There was an opening that looked like a doorway in the trunk of this tree. As they looked down inside, it was dark and seemed to go very far. As the monks stood by the side of the tree, the sun passed the highest point, and then suddenly from among the clouds something that looked like a piece of silk brocade came down and dropped in front of the tree. It was a man, with untied hair standing high and with skin of the colour of a peach flower. He went into the hole. The monks did not dare to come close; they were dazed and looked at each other. One of them said, "Let's wait at the hole and when he comes out, we will grab him." After a while the man came out. One monk embraced him tightly, while the others worshipped him, requesting help. The man was furious and yelled at them, "Fools! Let me go. I never open my mouth [to explain]." The monks released him, and the man flew away.

The monks then went back westward to the place where they had encountered the fat man. Suddenly they saw him, again going up the mountain range. He said to the monks, "What did he say?" The monks replied, "He was furious and did not say anything." The fat man laughed and said, "He came to drink the wine. You bothered him, so he got mad. Be careful not to run into him again. Quickly go get his wine and drink it." Having said this, he went down in the northern direction.

As they were told, the monks went into the hole. Stone steps went straight down for a few meters and then a flat passage led northward. The entire hole was covered with white rock, and light as bright as day light filled it. There was a silver jar, covered with a silver plate. On top of it was a silver bowl. This wine was very flavorful and tasty, with a different taste from wine in this world. The monks drank it and could hardly get out of the hole. They were completely drunk. When they sobered up, they all had minute insects on the outside of their mouths, that looked like the numerous insects flying around a horse's tail. The monks' skin looked fresh and they were filled with energy. Several days after they returned to the temple, the monks disappeared (51.1094abc).

In this story Mt. Wutai is presented as a supernatural realm, where immortals live in hidden spaces. As a story told about the central Buddhist temple in this mountain its message appears to be that the temple was situated in this extraordinary place. It is noteworthy, then, that this account draws freely from a Daoist story of flying immortals and their wine/elixir.

This probably was a more natural rhetorical strategy for presenting a sacred place in medieval China. Here again the sacred place is marked by a reference to specific features of the natural setting, such as a hole in the trunk of a massive tree.

A section of Huixiang's work (section 4 in fascicle 2) is devoted to pilgrims and their miraculous encounters.²³ Frequently, these pilgrims are explicitly said to have come to Mt. Wutai in search of an encounter with Mañjuśrī (Mingxu 明勗, 1096c17; Puming 普明, 1097c2 [for Mañjuśrī image]; Tanyun 曇韻, 1098a9–10; Mingyao 明曜, 1098a29; Śākyamitra, 1098c20–21). Monk Mingxu, for example, who lived in Dingzhou under the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577) heard that Mañjuśrī lived at Mt. Wutai and traveled there. Paying attention to nothing else, he looked for Mañjuśrī, and after several days he encountered a strange monk. This monk looked just like him, carrying provisions and a staff, and said that he was looking for Mañjuśrī. When they saw each other, Mingxu paid respect to this strange monk, and the monk also paid respect to him. They said to each other, "Great sage, great sage, please lead me to salvation." They said this simultaneously, and stopped in embarrassment. Then they asked each other about his origin, and each told the other where he resided. Mingxu then had no doubt [about the stated identify of the other], and was delighted to have a companion. After they climbed together for three days, they arrived at the Eastern Terrace. There was an old building in the southeastern corner. Several monks were there; their behaviour was unsophisticated. They looked like rustics. Since the strange monk did not even show respect to them, Mingxu also treated them with contempt. Having exchanged greetings, the two monks decided to spend the night there. In the middle of the night the strange monk became violently ill. He had pains that were unbearable and he soiled his bed. The bad smell was unrelenting. The monk only said, "I am very sick." He kept repeating this endlessly. Mingxu said to him that they should leave the mountain. But as they started to leave, after a hundred or so steps, suddenly both the residence and the strange monk disappeared. Mingxu then realized who this "holy man" really was, and deploring his stupidity, collapsed wailing and moaning loudly. Almost at the point of dying, he called for the monk from the depths of his heart, but the monk was nowhere to be seen.

23 The story about Huize discussed above is taken from this section.

After he returned to his home temple, Mingxu described his experience to a famous monk. The learned monk said, “The words ‘I am very sick’ that the strange monk uttered refer to your [spiritual] sickness. If you remember this, you will most certainly be able to achieve salvation.” Mingxu is said to have honoured this instruction and died at the age 70 in his own temple. Everytime he recalled this experience, he would shed tears (1096c–1097a).

The strange monk whose identity Mingxu realized only after he had disappeared was of course Mañjuśrī. Just as people encountered Daoist immortals unexpectedly deep in sacred mountains, monks and laymen encountered Mañjuśrī at Mt. Wutai. I see here an example in which the familiar rhetorical strategy, generally associated with the Daoist quest for immortality, is appropriated for the construction of a distinctly Buddhist sacred place. Again, it is the unusual status of Mt. Wutai as a place where Mañjuśrī is explicitly said to reside in an important scripture that made this a particularly attractive strategy for Mt. Wutai. In this story the site of the building where other supernatural beings lived is largely an imaginary place, though its general location is given as a part of the Eastern Terrace. No unusual natural feature is mentioned as a mark of the site.

In another story monk Huizang 惠藏 of the Baima temple in the capital city of Luoyang and several other prominent monks are said to have been spending the summer retreat at the Suoposi 娑婆寺 temple in the year 679. After the retreat ended, monks and lay people, altogether over fifty people, climbed the terraces of Mt. Wutai. When meditation master Huizang, along with 30 people, reached the Middle Terrace, they all saw a flock of white cranes accompany them for several miles. When they reached the peak of the terrace, the cranes disappeared suddenly. Monks Mingyuan 名遠 and Lingyu 靈裕, and others, altogether eighteen people, first headed toward the Eastern Terrace, and saw an auspicious cloud of five colours. Huixun 惠恂 got there later and also saw it. When Mingyuan got to the point sixty odd steps to the southeast of the Buddha’s *stūpa* on the Middle Terrace, he saw the auspicious light of miscellaneous colours, shaped like a Buddha image. The light reached about ten meters. As the man walked here and there, the light followed him. The monk worshiped the light more than twenty times, and then the light gradually began to fade. At a spot thirty odd steps to the south of the Taihua 太華 pond monk Lingzhi 靈智 saw a light as bright as the sun, about ten meters in dia-

meter; millions of different colours in subtle and indescribable combinations formed the shapes of many monks in different positions inside the light. It was like a clear mirror. Lingzhi and others were astonished and not knowing what to do fell down and worshipped it most earnestly. After a while the light disappeared. Furthermore, while Lingzhi and others were seeing the light, three monks burned incense on top of their heads and on their arms in front of a *stūpa*, presenting parts of their bodies as offerings. People then saw the light on the eastern side [of the pond?]. Huizang and others roamed around for about seven days before they began the return journey (1100a).

In this story the encounter with Mañjuśrī takes the form of a miraculous vision. The vision is identified as a cloud seen from the Eastern Terrace, the bright light, shaped like the Buddha image near the Buddha's *stūpa* in the Middle Terrace, and another light, as bright as the sun, with complex images inside it, seen near the Taihua pond. The vision is localized by references to specific sites, though, except for the Taihua pond, these sites again are not marked by distinctive natural features. References to repeated sightings, in different parts of the mountain, suggest that the local setting of the miraculous vision is Mt. Wutai as a whole, and not a specific and clearly marked spot on the mountain.

As I have noted above, Chen Shunyu's *Record of Mt. Lu* makes the claim that miraculous visions associated with Mañjuśrī has been obtained more frequently at Mt. Lu than at Mt. Wutai, which had long been renowned for such visions. The vision attributed to Mt. Wutai in this passage in *The Record of Mt. Lu* undoubtedly refers to the kind of vision mentioned in the story of Huizang above.

3. Concluding comment

The examination of *The Record of Mt. Lu* above suggests that different strategies were at work in different stages in constructing Mt. Lu as a Buddhist sacred site. First as Buddhism was brought to the mountain by Huiyuan, it was the presence of this extraordinary missionary monk that turned Mt. Lu into a Buddhist site. Although this process involved negotiating a relationship with local deities, the primary emphasis was on bringing distinctly Buddhist sacred objects from outside the mountain, thus

establishing the presence of the Buddha and his teaching in this site. Over time the foreign character of these objects may have become blurred. Mt. Lu became a more inherently Buddhist site, adopting a strategy that is typically found in the account of Mt. Wutai. The famous Aśoka image that miraculously responded to Huiyuan's prayer to come to Mt. Lu was over time transformed into Mañjuśrī who lives on the mountain, in the same way this bodhisattva is said to reside at Mt. Wutai, and appears frequently as miraculous light.

There exists an inherent tension between the two strategies for constructing sacred sites as detected in the earlier stories about the Dragon Spring and the Donglinsi temple. In the story about the Dragon Spring Mt. Lu is a place filled with extraordinary natural features marking passages with supernatural realms, while in the story about the Donglinsi temple, a Buddhist missionary monk brings a new teaching and creates a new kind of sacred space on the mountain. This tension has disappeared in the account of Mt. Lu as a place where Mañjuśrī appears, even more frequently than at Mt. Wutai. By the time Chen Shunyu's work was compiled, Mt. Lu too has become a place like Mt. Wutai, where Buddhism was perceived no longer as a foreign religion imported from outside China but rather as a teaching deeply grounded in the location.

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