TALES OF THE *DIAMOND SUTRA*:

BUDDHISM ON THE GROUND IN MEDIEVAL CHINA

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Abstract

The *Diamond Sutra* is an important Mahāyāna sutra, which remains to this day one of the most influential Buddhist sutras in East Asia. Little is known about why it began to gain widespread popularity in the Tang even though it had been translated two centuries earlier. Extant records, however, indicate that a substantial body of narratives relating to it appeared, circulated, and were compiled in the Tang, reflecting the extent to which it featured in the lives of people in that period.

This study of *Diamond Sutra* tales aims to shed light on the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and the state of Buddhism in medieval China. By broadly contextualizing the sutra and its narratives within their socio-historical milieu, it discusses the ways it was engaged by monastics, how it was given recognition by members of the Tang monarchy, and how the interest of literati might have popularized it. I argue that these developments, when conceived within a web of human interactions, impacted people's knowledge of the sutra and prompted their increasing engagement with it, resulting in the multiplication of religious experiences related to it and the proliferation of *Diamond Sutra* narratives as people shared their experiences. The compilation of these accounts throughout the Tang attests to the strong presence of the *Diamond Sutra* cult. It not only indicates the allure of storytelling as a medium of communication, but also underscores the role played by social relations and interactions in religious culture. This study thus focuses on how people and communities might have conceived of the sutra and devoted themselves to it, and the effects of the cult on medieval Chinese religiosity.

Diamond Sutra tales reveal how the experiences recounted therein were conceived as proofs of the efficacy of the sutra, bearing a particular significance to the protagonists and answering the concerns of medieval Chinese, as illustrated by the major themes, motifs, and ideas of the tales. Geared toward propagating the sutra, the tales determined attitudes, beliefs, and Buddhist practices of medieval Chinese by framing their conception of and engagement with the *Diamond Sutra,* and thus shaped Chinese religiosity. As they bear witness to the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*, these narratives also constitute part of a history of the religious life of people, and of Buddhism on the ground in Tang China.

Additionally, these tales indicate the transition that took place in the religious landscape between Six Dynasties and the Tang, especially how Buddhism evolved and became part of the social fabric of China. Unlike the apologetic concerns of earlier tales, these narratives reflect a period in which Buddhism had permeated medieval Chinese society, and portray lay devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* as empowered practitioners who experienced the efficacy of the sutra and gained access to wonders and powers traditionally associated with the monastic. This lay confidence is discernible from the writings of the tale compilers, who assumed responsibility for propagating Buddhism and articulated their understanding of the religion as they created the lore of the sutra. The empowerment of the laity is further illustrated by the autonomy with which lay Buddhists modified, produced and distributed religious texts of the *Diamond Sutra*, which even prompted the monastic establishment to accommodate itself to the changes they brought about.

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INTRODUCTION

It is said that during the Tang dynasty (618–907), Attendant Gentleman (*shilang* 侍郎) Bo Letian 白樂天, titled Lay Buddhist of Xiangshan (xiangshan jushi 香山居士), once wrote out the *Diamond Sutra* a hundred times for his sick mother, and distributed the copies to different monasteries.[1] After several hundred years, however, only one copy he made survived in a monastery on Mount Dongting 洞庭山 near Lake Tai 太湖 in Wuzhong 吳中 (modern Suzhou, Jiangsu). Surviving turbulent times, this highly treasured copy was handed down from one generation to the next in the monastery until the Jiajing 嘉靖 era (1522–1566) of the Ming dynasty.

In the forty-third year of the Jiajing era (1564), great floods inundated the fields in Wuzhong. The provision of rice fell, resulting in inflation. Consequently, obtaining food became a problem for people in Wuzhong, including the great number of monks in the monastery on Mount Dongting. This was compounded by the fact that the benefactors of the monastery had stopped giving them alms due to difficult times. At their wits' end, a monk of the monastery named Bianwu 辨悟 suggested pawning the copy of the *Diamond Sutra* to Steward Yan, who headed the pawnshop attached to Grand Councilor Wang's residence in Shantang 山塘 (in modern Suzhou, Jiangsu). Thus, they were finally able to obtain rice.

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[1] Letian is the courtesy name (*zi* 字) of Bo Juyi 白居易 (772–846), a famous poet and a

However, when the wife of the Grand Councilor, a pious Buddhist, later found out about the *Diamond Sutra* copy that became the possession of her household, she decided to donate the rice instead and have the sutra returned to the monastery. Just when Steward Yan was going to inform Bianwu to come and retrieve the sutra, he happened upon the monk at Mount Guanyin 觀音山, who was making offering to the bodhisattva. In this way, Bianwu retrieved the sutra.

While traveling on a boat on his way back to the monastery, Bianwu praised the generosity of the Grand Councilor's wife and told the people on board about the sutra. On the persistent request of fellow travelers and pilgrims to view the sutra, Bianwu unwrapped the sutra and placed it on the deck of the boat for them to see. Lo and behold, a gust of wind blew a page of the sutra away before Bianwu could reach it. What was a happy occasion for everyone turned otherwise, especially for Bianwu. Upon reaching the monastery, he handed the abbot the sutra without informing him about the missing page.

On the other hand, when Liu, the new, greedy prefect of Changzhou 常州 (modern Changzhou, Jiangsu) took up his post, he tried to find out about the sutra, which he had previously heard about from a learned recluse. Once, he hinted to several rich men who wanted to bribe him that they should acquire the sutra. Yet, despite their best efforts, they still did not manage to obtain the sutra for him, which made the prefect yearn to possess it even more. Thus, he schemed to obtain the sutra with a plan in which he had a criminal accuse the

monastery of being a lair for keeping his plunder. The prefect then ordered the arrest of the abbot of the monastery and had him imprisoned, and told the monk Bianwu to hand over the *Diamond Sutra* if he wanted to save the abbot. When the prefect finally got hold of the sutra from the monk, he discovered that it was not as magnificent as he thought and was moreover missing the first page. Having found that the sutra was incomplete and thus not worth a huge sum of money, he decided to return it to Bianwu, and he also freed the abbot upon the petition of the women in the abbot's family. It was then that the abbot came to know about the missing page of the *Diamond Sutra* copy. Bianwu recounted to the abbot how the page had blown away on that fateful day when passengers on board the boat asked to see the sutra.

When the abbot and Bianwu were aboard a boat on their way back to their monastery, a storm drove them to take refuge in a place where they saw a flaring flame. Upon reaching the place where the flame originated—a thatched abode—they found an old man who was reciting a sutra and also noticed a piece of paper pasted on the wall, which turned out to be the first page of the *Diamond Sutra* lost in the wind. When the monk inquired about it, the old man explained to them that he was an illiterate fisherman, who after having heard of the Buddhist teaching of karmic retribution from his seniors, set his mind to practicing Buddhism. Because he could not read sutras, he cherished paper whenever he came across it. One day, he saw a flaring flame of fire drop to the ground and discovered a piece of paper, which he then pasted on the wall, and to which he paid homage. Later, a monk saw it, and he taught the old

man to read the whole sutra. The old man thus slowly learned to read and became literate, and was later able to read other sutras.

The abbot and Bianwu then explained to the old man that like him, they saw a flaring flame and followed the light which led them there; thus, they reckoned that the page of the sutra was manifesting its powers so that it could be found and be reunited with the sutra. Bianwu further told the man about the provenance of the sutra copy and what had happened before they came to the place. Bianwu then showed the old man the rest of the sutra. The old man then took the first page of the sutra off the wall and returned it to the monks. They were all amazed at the powers of the sutra, for it did not fall into the hands of the prefect of Changzhou because it was missing the first page, and yet the first page was found, making the sutra whole again.

Following these events, the old man treated them to dinner and lodged them for the night. While asleep, the old man dreamed of Skanda[2] who told him that his sins would be eradicated on account of his protection of the sutra, and he would receive twelve more years of life. With deep gratitude, the old man followed the monks back to the monastery and engaged an artisan to mount the sutra. When the sutra was finally mounted, the old man recited the *Diamond Sutra* with the monks for an entire day and night. Each year, until he turned eighty, he would visit the monastery to recite the sutra; he passed away sitting in the lotus position there.

[2] Known in China as Weituo tian 韋馱天 (Sk. Skanda) is a protective deity of Buddhism, and his images and statues are often found in monasteries. He is also known as the protective deity of sutras, and is often portrayed at the end of sutra copies, as an end-of-scroll illustration (*tuowei hua* 拖尾畫).

1. PROBLEMATICS

The preceding story is found in the *Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 (Slapping the Table in Amazement, Second Collection), a compilation of stories composed and published in 1632 by the celebrated Ming-period writer, Ling Mengchu 凌濛初 (1580–1644).[3] Short vernacular stories like the above from the Song to the Qing periods are referred to as *huaben* 話本 (sometimes *cihua* 詞話 or *xiaoshuo* 小說). It differs from classical Chinese tales in that it is written primarily in colloquial Chinese, interspersed with occasional classical Chinese. Written in over 8,500 characters, this narrative provides an engaging and entertaining account involving the fate of a precious treasure—the only extant calligraphy of the *Diamond Sutra* executed by the famous Tang literatus, Bo Juyi, more than 700 years ago—owned by an unnamed monastery on Mount Dongting.

When this account was written, the art of fiction writing had blossomed, as epitomized by the great Ming novel, *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the West), the fictionalized account of Xuanzang's 玄奘 (602–664) journey to India in search of Buddhist scriptures. In order to capture the attention of its readers, this story uses the uncertain fate of the precious *Diamond Sutra* copy to

[3] The story bears the following title: *Jinxiang ke ben kan jin'gang jing / chuyu seng qiao wan fahui fen* 進香客奔看金剛經 / 出獄僧巧完法會分. This title is somewhat difficult to render into English, and may be loosely translated as "Buddhist pilgrims hurried to view the *Diamond Sutra* / The freed monk fortuitously restores the sutra with the section on the 'Dharma Assembly.'" The account recounted above is based on the annotated version in Xu 1993: 1–18.

promote the development of the plot: taken together, the pawning of the sutra under extremely difficult circumstances, its retrieval due to the piety of the Grand Councilor's wife, the loss of its first page in unforeseen circumstances, the return of the incomplete sutra to the monastery, the scheme by Prefect Liu to possess it, and the sutra's final reunification with the lost first page; all these certainly cause its readers to speculate and anticipate the development of the plot. Further, the story is made more interesting by a variety of characters, with whom the readers, now and then, could undoubtedly readily identify—helpless monastics, a worldly pawnshop manager, pious Buddhists, and corrupt officials. Finally, key elements, such as disasters, dreams, and the power of sacred scripture for self-preservation, heighten the appeal of the story. Unmistakably, the story embodies further qualities of good storytelling than this unlettered reader could identify; if not, the collection that contains this story would not have been hailed as one of the most influential collections of the late Ming period, along with the first collection of the same title published in 1628, and three other collections composed by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646): the *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小說 (Ancient and Contemporary Stories; 1620), *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 (Penetrating Words to Warn the World; 1624), and the *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言 (Enduring Words to Awaken the World; 1627).

Although a fictionalized account based on known facts about Bo Juyi copying sutras and donating them to monasteries, a much abridged version of this story in less than 400 characters was later collected in the *Jin'gang jing*

xin yi lu 金剛經新異錄 (Records of New Marvels of the *Diamond Sutra*)—a few years after the publication of the *Erke paian jingqi*—compiled by the Ming-period lay Buddhist, Wang Qilong 王起隆.[4] During the Qing dynasty, a version of this tale was included in another collection of *Diamond Sutra* narratives, the *Jin'gang jing chiyan ji* 金剛經持驗記 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of Upholding the *Diamond Sutra*).[5] Unlike Ling Mengchu's *huaben* version that includes many more descriptions and details about places, people, and events, these two later accounts are succinct renditions that focus not so much on the art of storytelling, but on conveying, in a direct manner, the power of the *Diamond Sutra* and the spiritual reward received by Yao, the fisherman.

These two Ming-Qing *Diamond Sutra* collections belong to a tradition of Chinese Buddhist tale compilations that can be traced to the fourth century, when the first compilation of Buddhist stories dedicated to the salvific powers of Bodhisattva Guanyin (Sk. Avalokiteśvara) was composed by Xie Fu 謝敷 (fl. late 4th century CE), a Buddhist layman and a close associate of the monk-scholar Zhi Dun 支遁 (314–366), the renowned propagator of Buddhism among the gentry in Jiankang 建康 (modern Nanjing).[6] This collection, the

[4] *Jin'gang jing xinyi lu*, X87.1633: 497a6–23. See Section 1 in Chapter 5 for a discussion of this collection.

[5] *Jin'gang jing chiyan ji*, X87.1635: 552a4–21. See Section 1 in Chapter 5 for a discussion of this collection.

[6] It originally contained more than ten items and was given to a Kuaiji 會稽 (modern Shaoxing 紹興, Zhejiang) scholar-official named Fu Yuan 傅瑗, from whose household it was lost during the sack of Kuaiji in 399. Fu Yuan's son Fu Liang 傅亮 (374–426) rewrote seven of

Guangshiyin yingyan ji 光世音應驗記 (A Record of the Proven Response of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara) was followed by two other collections of Guanyin tales, the *Xu guangshiyin yingyan ji* 續光世音應驗記 (Sequel to A Record of the Proven Response of Guangshiyin) compiled by Zhang Yan 張演 in the early fifth century, and the *Xi guanshiyin yingyan ji* 繫觀世音應驗記 (Further Sequel to A Record of the Proven Response of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara) by Lu Gao 陸杲 (459–532).[7] Research has shown that subsequent compilers of Guanyin tale collections were aware of earlier collections and situated themselves within a distinct tradition of Guanyin tale compilation.[8]

Apart from these three Guanyin collections, the Six Dynasties period (220–589) also saw the advent of several other Buddhist collections. An early compilation, the *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記 (A Record of Proclaimed Proofs), was attributed to Prince Kang of Linchuan, Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444) of the Liu-Song dynasty.[9] Moreover Liu, a noted scholar, was the author of *Shishuo*

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the lost tales from memory and compiled them to form the current seven-item text. See a thorough study in Makita 1970. Also see Wang 1984: 302–3, Gjertson 1989: 16-9, and Campany 1993a. A new annotated version is available in Dong 2002: 1–27.

[7] The second collection contains ten tales in addition to a preface, while the third collection contains sixty-nine tales with a preface. See a thorough study in Makita 1970. Also see Gjertson 1989: 19–20 and 27–28, and Campany 1993a. New annotated versions of these two collections are available in Dong 2002: 28–9.

[8] Kominami 1982: 418–39.

[9] According to Gjertson, this collected was probably lost early because it was only found listed in the bibliographic catalog of the official history of the Sui dynasty. Although only thirty-five quotations of it survived in various later works (available in Lu 1967: 435–45), their contents are varied, with accounts of karmic retribution, wonders, and prodigies related to various aspects of Buddhism. Gjertson 1989: 20–2. According to Campany, one attribution by

xinyu 世說新語 (A New Account of Tales of the World), a famous collection of anecdotes and witty characterizations, and the *Youming lu* 幽明錄 (Records of the Hidden and Visible Worlds), a heterogeneous collection of tales with discernible Buddhist influence.[10] Slightly later, Wang Yanxiu 王延秀, an official of the Jin dynasty, was said to have composed the *Ganying zhuan* 感應傳 (Records of Sympathetic Response), which only survives in two brief quotations, one of which is related to the intervention of Guanyin.[11] At the end of the fifth century, Wang Yan 王琰, a personal acquaintance of Lu Gao, the compiler of the third Guanyin tale collection, wrote the *Mingxiang ji* (A Record of Signs from the Unseen Realm).[12] In the sixth century, Hou Bo composed the *Jingyi ji* 旌異記 (A Record of Manifested Marvels).[13] A collection called *Xiangyi ji* 祥異記 (A Record of Signs and Marvels), of which two tales survive, was known to have been circulated in the sixth century.[14]

This tradition of Buddhist tale compilation continued, and many collections of Buddhist stories appeared later, and by the end of the Tang dynasty (618–907) there was a substantial corpus of indigenous Buddhist tale

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Lu Xun might not be correct. Campany 1996b: 77. A recent article adds three more accounts to the collection. See Zhu 2012.

[10] Campany 1996b: 75–7. For Buddhist representations in *Youming lu*, see Zhang 2007: 163–91. Recovered accounts of this collection are found in Lu 1967: 237–322.

[11] Gjertson 1989: 22–23; Campany 1996b: 81.

[12] An annotated translation of the *Mingxiang ji* is available in Campany 2012, which includes a detailed study of its authorship, themes, and motifs.

[13] Gjertson 1989: 28–31; Campany 1996b: 90. The text of the *Jingyi ji* is available in Lu 1967: 534–43.

[14] Campany 2012: 5.

collections. Among these collections are three extant compilations of *Diamond Sutra* accounts, which attest to the popularity of the *Diamond Sutra* in the Tang.[15] The two Ming-Qing collections—exhibiting continuity in both style and focus—mentioned above were part of this tradition of *Diamond Sutra* tale compilation. Putting aside the truth-value of the tale about Bo Juyi's copy of the *Diamond Sutra*, it is obvious that the compilers of the two *Diamond Sutra* collections adapted it or oral accounts of it to their collections for the express purpose of touting the *sutra*. Despite the apologetic nature of these Buddhist collections and their agenda for propagation and encouraging faith, they have long been considered as part of the literary genre of *zhiguai* 志怪; this is likely due to the fact that the first Buddhist tales were compiled in the Six Dynasties when writings of this genre were in vogue.

1.1 Genre of *Zhiguai*

In modern scholarship, the genre of *zhiguai*—which literally translates as "the recording of the strange"—is used to refer to writings in literary Chinese on the subject of the strange, supernatural, or inexplicable phenomena, which have their origins in early Chinese writings;[16] they were in vogue in early

[15] These tale collections include those dedicated to other sutras (*Lotus* and *Avataṃsaka Sutras*), deities (Dizang), and traditions (Pure Land). Most of these collections will be introduced in detail subsequently in this dissertation.

[16] Early Chinese writings of strange, supernatural, and inexplicable phenomena were already discernible from pre-Han philosophical and historical works, such as the narratives of ghosts and omens in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 (Transmission of Master Zuo), one of the three commentaries on the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals), a chronicle that details important events in the state of Lu from 722–481 BCE. In the *Mozi* 墨子 (Master Mo), a composite philosophical text that bears the name of the Chinese philosopher (c. 470–360

medieval China but continued to be written after that. Their subjects consist of a variety of supernatural, unusual, and extraordinary phenomena related to extra-world places and their inhabitants, deities, immortals, ghosts, spirits, freaks of the natural world, and prodigies. The extant corpus of these writings from the Six Dynasties period consists of thousands of narrative and descriptive writings—often in short, simple classical prose—in more than eighty texts compiled or composed. The term *zhiguai* was not used as a term for this genre perhaps until late Tang or much later.[17] The term has its provenance in the first section of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Master Zhuang), "Xiaoyao you" 逍遙遊 (Free and Easy Wandering), where we find perhaps the first instance of its use to refer to a record of the strange or a recorder of the strange called Qi Xie 齊諧, which is the source of an account of a creature called the *peng* 鵬 and its fantastic flight.[18] This term, however, is used in the titles of a few Six-Dynasties *zhiguai* collections, which might be part of the reason why it was used to refer to this body of literature.

BCE), there is a rumination on ghosts. See Poo 2009b: 238. Of course, the *Zhuangzi* is famous for its fantastic accounts of strange and extraordinary phenomena, creatures, and beings. Other writings, such as the famous corpus of poetry from the southern state of Chu, *Chu ci* 楚辭 (Elegies of Chu), also contain writings on divine beings and immortals. Major 1999: 121–43.

[17] Campany 1996b: 152.

[18] According to Burton Watson's translation of the *Zhuangzi* (1968: 29), the relevant section reads: The Universal Harmony records various wonders, and it says: "When the P'eng journeys to the southern darkness, the waters are roiled for three thousand li. He beats the whirlwind and rises ninety thousand li, setting off on the sixth-month gale" (齊諧者，志怪者也。諧之言曰：「鵬之徙於南冥也，水擊三千里，摶扶搖而上者九萬里，去以六月息者也。」)."

Although *zhiguai* writings have at times been considered as the origin of Chinese fiction writing due to their fantastic contents,[19] it is uncertain how they should be construed in their own context, especially given their varied contents and scope. Voices of their composers and compilers, when discernible from these writings themselves, such as in the form of prefaces or notes, seem to situate themselves within the tradition of historical writing. Therefore, even though the eclectic nature of the corpus of *zhiguai* writings defies generalizations about them, they are by and large considered to be intimately related to modes of historical writings—especially cosmographical writings and historical records of prodigies—and attempts have been made to interpret them based on these relations.[20]

The *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas), often cited as a founding work of this genre, may be considered to be part of the tradition of cosmographical writing as represented by writings such as the *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (Biography of Mu, Son of Heaven).[21] Similar to the tour of inspection conducted by Mu that granted him knowledge and possession of items from distant regions, and, by extension, his rule over the domains, descriptions in the *Shanhai jing* of remote lands and seas, and their strange flora, fauna, and inhabitants determine the structure of the world, and fix the relationship between the center and the periphery; this establishes the power

[19] DeWoskin 1977 and 1983.

[20] This is put forth persuasively in a comprehensive study of this genre by Campany (1996), in which he refers to *zhiguai* as 'strange writing.'

[21] Campany 1996b: 133–7, 112–3.

and control the former assumes over the latter. Similarly, records of prodigies in *zhiguai* collections can be seen as extensions of the records of prodigies kept and included in the official histories of the Han that not only supplemented the usual sources of history, but also served as sources for legitimizing authority or prognosticating the health of the empire.[22]

With a large proportion of *zhiguai* writings composed and compiled in the southern and southeastern parts of China after the Chinese were forced to leave their northern heartland after the disintegration of the Han empire, *zhiguai* accounts, as cosmographical writings, may be read as attempts to order the new 'world'; moreover, they endeavor to include in the structure of the Chinese world unfamiliar parts of China that were once considered remote and alien by bringing under its fold beings and creatures from these unfamiliar regions, such as mountains, seas, and the other realms.[23] As records of prodigies, they continued to amass information of the 'new' world that supplemented official histories. As extensions of branches of historical writing, *zhiguai* writings, however, have a greater scope due to important Six-Dynasties developments in philosophy, indigenous religions, and the growing influence of Buddhism. Despite the fact that their authors intended these stories to be read as history, it is impossible to deny them any creative originality. The popularity of *zhiguai* writings of the Six Dynasties thus reflects

[22] The works of Gan Bao 干寶 (?–336), the Eastern Jin historian, who is also the author of the *zhiguai* work, *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (A Record of the Search for the Supernatural), are described as a supplement to history. See Campany 1996b: 146–50.

[23] For a discussion of the "southern" nature of these writings, see Campany 1996b: 168–79.

a significant literary development situated at the crossroads of traditional historical writings and the creative impulse of fictional writings.

1.2 Chinese Buddhist Tales and *Zhiguai* Writings: Interpretive Issues

Although compilers of Chinese tales may see themselves as compiling factual records of the wonders and responses of Buddhist deities and monastics, they were probably motivated by concerns unrelated to those of cosmographical writings and records of prodigies since they are distinctly apologetic in nature and were directed to illustrate the truth and teachings of Buddhism through wondrous phenomena, such as the promised response of Guanyin, the superiority of Buddhist practice, and the benefits of cultic worship; this also applies to *Diamond Sutra* collections. While the *huaben* account of the above *Diamond Sutra* tale in the second collection of *Erke paian jingqi* may be open to various interpretations due to its richer contents and its inclusion in a secular, heterogeneous story collection, the versions collected in Ming-Qing *Diamond Sutra* collections are straightforward accounts extolling the wonders of the sutra, and we may safely assume that Chinese audiences, then as now, did not find in them anything that is strange, or at least not inexplicable. Neither are they cosmographic in value nor have they much in common with the prodigies related in the *zhiguai* corpus. Moreover, it is inappropriate to assign the same self-understanding to the recorders of *zhiguai* writings and progenitors of Buddhist tales when these accounts seem to differ in their intentionality. It is, therefore, necessary to

reconsider whether such Buddhist tale collections belong to the literary genre of *zhiguai*.

A related issue in respect of their association with *zhiguai* writings is that Chinese Buddhist narratives are also often considered fictional accounts, since *zhiguai* writings are generally thought to be the ancestors of Chinese fiction, which, in itself, is a contentious point.[24] Although this is true insofar as the subject matter and motifs of *zhiguai* writings were appropriated and developed further in later fictional genres, they did not seem to have been considered as fiction in the modern sense by their progenitors within the milieu in which they originated.[25] In any case, this issue warns us against considering indigenous Buddhist stories as belonging to the genre of *zhiguai* and treating them as fictional writings in an unexamined manner, lest we succumb to what Glen Dudbridge called the "tyranny of generic thinking," or the assigning of writings to certain genres or dynastic periods, and "giving legislative force to those categories in reading them."[26] Given the fact that the first indigenous Buddhist tales and compilations were produced in early medieval China when *zhiguai* writings were in vogue and had a superficial resemblance, it is tempting to think of them as belonging to the same class and

[24] On *zhiguai* writings as the ancestors of fiction, see DeWoskin 1977. For the debate on the fictionality of *zhiguai*, see the response of DeWoskin (1983) and Idema (1983) to Mair (1983). There is a tendency among modern Chinese scholars to consider Chinese Buddhist tales as fiction as well when they refer to them as *zhiguai xiaoshuo* 志怪小說, a modern term that translates to "fictional accounts of the strange." See Wang 1984, Lou 1985, and Xue 1995.

[25] Before Campany, Victor Mair had already argued against the conventional wisdom in Western scholarship that the growth of *zhiguai* accounts as the "birth of fiction" in China. See Mair 1983.

[26] Dudbridge 2005: 105.

to question whether the events in them really happened. Moreover, it is challenging for the modern reader to conceive of these indigenous Buddhist tales as bearing any direct relation to the real world, especially when they seem to recount 'strange' and supernatural phenomena—often so alien to modern sensibilities. Indeed, issues of authenticity and fictionality, which cast doubt on their reliability, have proven to be the stumbling blocks for realizing that they could be read as invaluable sources of religio-cultural history. While asking whether the events recounted in them really happened deters engagement with them as historical sources that could provide information on the past, judging them based on the category of fictionality cages them in literary formalism; this, in turn, could lead scholars to lose sight of them as multivalent religious narratives—which, when read in their own terms, could "show how that otherwise lost world saw and treated the lived phenomena of religious experience."[27]

If literary approaches that only focus on particular aspects of *zhiguai* writings, such as their formal features, or take them as self-contained and self-referential aesthetic objects are inadequate for elucidating them, these approaches are even more so with respect to these indigenous Buddhist tales, simply because they are religious tracts born out of oral narratives of the religious experiences of people. While elite exegetes wrote commentaries to transmit Buddhist scriptural knowledge to later generations of monks and scholars, laypeople transmitted their experiences orally, conveying ideas,

[27] Ibid.

beliefs, and teachings across the different social strata of the population through such accounts. By the time these accounts were compiled, they had traveled from person to person and place to place, had been collected, and had undergone substantial editing. The processes of their transmission that led to their final compilation are too complicated to deconstruct given our lack of knowledge of the circumstances of their circulation. Possessing a life of their own within communities of people who shared them, these narratives not only embody information about the religious outlook and practices observed by sizable groups of people across dissimilar backgrounds, but also aspects of daily medieval life. As the essence of individual aspiration and spirituality, social relations and collective imagination, they can be fruitfully explored to reveal that which is not accessible in the usual canonical sources of our study of Buddhism.

2. Research on Chinese Buddhist Tales

In recent decades, efforts directed at the study of alternative sources are beginning to revise our understanding of Chinese Buddhism. These include studies on hagiographies of Buddhist monks, sacred geographies, indigenous sutras, and Buddhist tales compiled in response to Chinese concerns.

In modern times, research on the Buddhist tales of the Six Dynasties has a longer history compared to those in the Tang period. This is probably fueled by the excitement following the discovery in 1943 of three Guanyin collections

in Kyoto's Shōren-in 青蓮院. Long lost in China, these collections were rare extant copies of Guanyin compilations made around the Kamakura period (1185–1333). These collections were first introduced in a 1954 article by Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, which also included the text of the first collection. The texts of all three collections, however, were only made available by Tsukamoto much later in another work published in 1967, with notes by Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, who later published a detailed study and annotation of the collections in 1970. In this publication, Makita also investigated two indigenous sutras that are intimately related to the collections: the *Foshuo guanshiyin sanmei jing* 佛說觀世音三昧經 (Avalokiteśvara Samādhi Sutra Spoken by the Buddha)[28] and the *Gaowang guanshiyin jing* 高王觀世音經 (Avalokiteśvara Sutra of King Gao).[29] The three Guanyin collections were later briefly introduced to the Western world by Donald Gjertson in his 1975 dissertation on the *Mingbao ji*.[30]

In the West, the Guanyin accounts were not studied until more than a decade later when Robert Campany published articles that examined particular aspects of them.[31] Subsequently, a more detailed introduction with the translation of sixteen tales by Campany was included in a collection of

[28] The one-roll *Foshuo guanshiyin sanmei jing* is an indigenous sutra composed in the sixth century. Not collected in any of the canons, it survives in two manuscript fragments and a complete manuscript copy. See Makita 1970: 109–32, and Yü 2001: 106–10.

[29] The *Gaowang guanshiyin jing* is an indigenous sutra written during the Liang dynasty (502–557). Makita 1970: 157–78. According to Chün-fang Yü, there are five versions, one of which is collected in the Taishō canon (T85.2898). Yü 2001: 110–8.

[30] Gjertson 1975.

[31] Campany 1991, 1993, and 1996a.

essays on religions in China. Another study of these collections—together with other Six Dynasties Buddhist tales compilations—was included in Campany's *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*, where Buddhist collections were considered part of the *zhiguai* corpus.[32] At the turn of this century, Chün-fang Yü also devoted a chapter to the role played by these narratives in the domestication of Avalokiteśvara in her comprehensive study of the bodhisattva in China.[33] At around the same time, mainland Chinese scholar Dong Zhiqiao 董志翹 published a new annotation of these three Guanyin collections with reference to newly discovered manuscripts in Japan, calling attention to their linguistic features as fruitful ground for future research.[34]

The next Six Dynasties collection that received considerable attention is the *Mingxiang ji*, but nothing comparable to the scholarly interest generated by Guanyin compilations. Wang Guoliang 王國良 published a study of the *Mingxiang ji*, which included an annotation of the text. In this study, Wang discussed its authorship, transmission, and sources, and briefly analyzed its themes, format and style, as well as deliberating its historical and linguistic value for research.[35] This was followed by a study and translation of the collection last year by Campany, who approaches the collection with fresh perspectives. As products of social memory, tales in the *Mingxiang ji*,

[32] Campany 1996b.

[33] Yü 2001: 151–94.

[34] Dong 2002.

[35] Wang 1999.

Campany argues, provide important information on the religious history of the Six Dynasties period, especially Buddhism's contestation with indigenous traditions as it strove to sink its roots in China. This study echoes some of the views expressed in an important work on Six Dynasties Buddhist stories by Kominami Ichirō 小南一郎, where he delves into the social relations of people who shared, transmitted, and compiled indigenous Buddhist tales, and the relationship between the Buddhist faith and the development of Buddhist narrative writings.[36]

While research in the West on Tang-period Buddhist narratives began early, it did not enjoy as much sustained attention. The first in-depth treatment of Tang Buddhist tales is Donald Gjertson's 1975 dissertation work on the *Mingbao ji*, a study of some fifty-seven Buddhist tales compiled in the middle of the seventh century by Tang Lin 唐臨 (600?–659), a high-level Chinese government official of the Tang dynasty and devout Buddhist layman. When Gjertson worked on the *Mingbao ji* three decades ago, there was no substantial study of Chinese Buddhist tales. In his work, he mentioned that Chinese Buddhist accounts had received little attention from Western scholars because specialists in Buddhism were more preoccupied with the clarification of doctrinal and historical issues than with tale literature, and those who worked in the field of literature focused their inquiries more on secular tales rather than on Buddhist tales.[37] Although the situation has improved since

[36] Kominami 1982.

[37] Gjertson 1985: xiii.

then, there are still not many studies of Chinese Buddhist narratives by scholars working in the field of Chinese literature; most of the publications on Chinese Buddhist tales have been written by scholars of religion. Moreover, in the West, there are disproportionately more studies of Six Dynasties Chinese Buddhist tales than there are of Tang-period Chinese Buddhist ones.

For Tang-period indigenous Buddhist tales, Daniel Stevenson has introduced the Chinese tales of the *Lotus Sutra* in an anthology on Buddhist practice, and translated therein tales in which the wonders of the *Lotus Sutra* are manifested in relation to cultic activities or practices, such as the production of images, acts of sacrificing the body as offering, reading, reciting, and copying the sutra.[38] Zhiru has shown the importance of Buddhist tales in her study of Bodhisattva Dizang (Sk. Kṣitigarbha), as she finds clues in Tang Buddhist narratives to the bodhisattva's dominion in afterlife discourse and practices, which came to characterize much of the cult in subsequent periods.[39] A major publication of Chinese tales of the Tang-period is Glen Dudbridge's 1995 study of the eighth-century *Guangyi ji* 廣異記 (An Extensive Record of Marvels), which was originally a two-roll collection of supernatural tales compiled by Dai Fu 戴孚 (fl. late eighth century).[40] No longer extant, the majority of its tales are recovered mainly from the *Taiping guangji* and some

[38] Stevenson 1995 and 2009. The contents of the 1995 introduction also form part of a 2009 publication in a volume on the *Lotus Sutra* (Stone and Teiser 2009). There is, however, a study by Yoshiko Dykstra (1983) on a Japanese collection of *Lotus Sutra* tales, the *Dai nihonkoku hokke genki* 大日本國法華驗記 (A Record of Proofs of the *Lotus Sutra* in Japan), a work composed sometime between 1040 and 1044 by Chingen 鎮源 (1007?–1044?).

[39] Zhiru 2007: 167–96.

[40] Dudbridge 1995.

from other Song-period collections. The *Guangyi ji*, however, is heterogeneous in nature as it also contains many accounts that are not necessarily Buddhist.

On the other hand, Chinese scholarship has in recent years produced a few notable works on Tang-period tales. Two volumes on Dunhuang tales, which overlap each other in contents, were published recently by Yang Baoyu 楊寶玉 and Zheng Acai 鄭阿財. In *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyan ji yanjiu* 見證與宣傳: 敦煌佛教靈驗記研究 (Testimony and Propagation: Research on Dunhuang Buddhist Tale Collections), a compilation of papers on Dunhuang tale collections he previously published, Zheng discusses the relationship between Buddhist tales and indigenous sutras, and return-from-death experiences and depictions of underworld officials found in them.[41] Yang's *Dunhuang ben fojiao lingyan ji jiaozhu bing yanjiu* 敦煌本佛教靈驗記校注並研究 (Annotations of and Research on Dunhuang Editions of Buddhist Records of Proven Efficacy) includes studies of some collections not found in Zheng's book and also discusses scattered tales not included in any collections.[42] In addition to these volumes, another mainland Chinese scholar, Liu Yading 劉亞丁 has published a volume, the *Fojiao lingyan ji yanjiu–yi Jin Tang wei zhongxin* 佛教靈驗記研究－以晉唐為中心 (Research on Buddhist Records of Proven Efficacy: With a Focus on the Jin to the Tang).[43] This volume, which approaches the topic mainly but not exclusively from the

[41] Zheng 2010.

[42] Yang 2009b.

[43] Liu 2006.

literary perspective, is divided into two parts. The first part discusses general topics related to Buddhist tales, such as relics, Buddhist images, hells, pure lands, and introduces narratives related to the *Diamond* and *Lotus Sutras*, while the second part explores the relationship between Buddhist narratives and Chinese literature, history, and religion.

3. WHY *DIAMOND SUTRA* TALES?

Given the scholarly interest generated by the discovery of the Guanyin collections in Japan and the increasing recognition of the importance of indigenous Buddhist tales, it is surprising that no major research on the *Diamond Sutra* collections has been undertaken except for a few brief introductions. This is all the more baffling given that the earliest extant and also the largest collection of *Diamond Sutra* narratives—originally compiled in early Tang—is also preserved in manuscripts found only in Japan, although its existence was known earlier and a facsimile edition was available in the early twentieth century.[44] Perhaps the fact that this collection is not a new discovery might have acted against scholarly interest in research into it.

In any case, this earliest extant collection, along with two other Tang compilations and other *Diamond Sutra* tales scattered in other Tang and Song works, constitutes an invaluable and substantial body of indigenous writings for better understanding medieval Chinese Buddhism in general and the cult

[44] See Section 3.2.2 in Chapter 1 for an introduction to this collection.

of the *Diamond Sutra* in particular. These extant *Diamond Sutra* tales tell us that a considerable volume of such tales were circulating and being compiled from the seventh century onwards, when the *Diamond Sutra* was gaining widespread popularity in the Tang dynasty. The far-reaching influence of these tales may be easily discerned from the story introduced at the outset and its inclusion in *Diamond Sutra* tale collections that originated in this thousand-year-old tradition of tale compilation that started before the account was recorded. An understanding of the beginnings of this tradition will help us understand its subsequent developments after the Tang dynasty. Moreover, a study of the *Diamond Sutra* tales that were produced and circulated in the Tang period is instructive for understanding the nature of Buddhist tales, since by that time the production of *zhiguai* writings had abated and thus would not affect our study of the *Diamond Sutra* tales.

The *Diamond Sutra* is an important Mahāyāna sutra, which remains to this day one of the most influential Buddhist sutras in East Asia. Although the *Diamond Sutra* was popular in the Tang dynasty, little about why this is the case is known, especially when it had been translated more than two centuries earlier. Furthermore, we do not know what prompted the appearance of the increasing volume and circulation of tales about it. While we may speculate on the contribution made by these tales to its popularity, we do not know how this was achieved or the qualities embodied by these tales which may have contributed to its success. If anything, this considerable volume of narratives is a reflection of the extent to which the sutra featured in the lives of a spectrum

of medieval Chinese people, who observed certain beliefs and practices related to it. Thus, a study of this repository of narratives would not only have much to tell us about how the sutra was singled out among other scriptures as a religious object of devotion at that time, but also about medieval Chinese religiosity.

A cursory perusal of these narratives confirms their apologetic nature and their insistent praise of the *Diamond Sutra,* but further work is needed to understand their implications for the sutra cult and the transformation they might have worked on the religious landscape of medieval China in the beliefs and practices of the lay populace. An exploration of the motivation behind these compilations, what they might have meant to medieval Chinese people, how and why they were significant to them, and how they may most fruitfully be read would facilitate further study on the continued influence of the *Diamond Sutra* and the compilation of its tales in later periods of Chinese history.

4. Methodology and Sources

From its early tendency to emphasize the study of scriptures, doctrine, and history, Buddhist studies has matured into a multi-disciplinary field that admits to increasing attention to various other aspects of Buddhism, such as devotional practices and material culture. Alongside the continued investigation of still-unexplored ancient texts, the field is enriched by

increasing efforts put toward investigating Buddhism within its broader social context and the exploration of the activities of Buddhists other than the elite members of the monastic establishment.

While the early attention on translated Chinese texts might have been motivated less for their own sake than for the light they might cast on Indian Buddhism, significant interest has recently been directed at the ways in which translated Chinese scriptures were treated in their own right, bearing important clues to the process of domestication and Sinicization, instead of merely adulterated stand-ins for the Indic originals. In recent decades, endeavors directed at alternative sources—art-historical materials, manuscripts, hagiographies of Buddhist monks, writings on sacred sites, travel literature, and indigenous Chinese scriptures and narrative literature compiled in response to Chinese concerns—are beginning to revise our understanding of various aspects of Chinese Buddhism.[45] This dissertation joins a growing field of such studies in indigenous Chinese Buddhist writings that illuminate hitherto unknown aspects of medieval Chinese Buddhism.

Given the complexities of religious literature, a single approach is certainly insufficient; thus, approaches from different fields, such as

[45] In addition to works mentioned previously, important studies on indigenous Chinese scriptures include Zürcher 1982, Buswell 1989 and 1990, Teiser 1994, Sharf 2002, and Orzech 2008. Studies on the devotional aspects of Chinese Buddhism include those related to Buddhist deities (Yü 2001; Zhiru 2007), sacred geography (Birnbaum 1986 and 1988, Powell 1987, and Robson 2009), and ritual and popular practices (Teiser 1988b and 1994; Kuo 1994). Notable studies of Buddhist hagiographies include those by Koichi Shinohara (1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994), Arthur Wright (1990), John Kieschnick (1997), and Max Deeg (2005). Study of other aspects, such as its impact on Chinese material culture (Kieschnick 2003) and vernacular literature (Mair 1983 and 1989), as well as its interaction with indigenous traditions (Mollier 2008), has significantly altered our understanding of Chinese Buddhism.

anthropology, critical theory, literary theory, and religious studies, have provided much needed inspiration for this inquiry. The work herein recognizes the complex religious culture in which the tales and their transmission took place, against a wide range of values and experiences, and beliefs and practices, which can be fruitfully explored through a combination of approaches.

This study is primarily interested in how religious knowledge about certain beliefs, objects, or practices was disseminated to laypeople through *Diamond Sutra* tales, and how the people exposed to them came to accept and believe them to be true through experiences, either personal or otherwise, that authenticated that knowledge, enabling them to construct meaning about their religious beliefs and practices in relation to their lives and further sustaining their faith. This research thus focuses on how laypeople conceptualized and practiced Buddhism on the ground, placing emphasis on the ways in which they regarded the *Diamond Sutra*, with due attention paid to the social construction of meaning and an understanding of the "local *episteme*."

By paying special attention to the beliefs and practices of laypeople as revealed in the accounts of the sutra, this study is committed to uncovering aspects of the socio-religious lives of medieval Chinese people. Among other issues, it attempts to answer the following questions: In what areas of China and in which social groups did these tales originate? Who compiled them? How did they gain currency? How widespread were these tales? How did these tales aid in the propagation of the *Diamond Sutra*? What light do they shed on

religious practices connected with the *sutra*, and most importantly, what accounts for the popularity and influence of the *sutra* across the worlds of the cultured elite and the commoner during the time when these tales were compiled?

4.1 A Note on 'Buddhism on the Ground'

As the thrust of my study is to cast light on 'Buddhism on the ground' in medieval China (seventh to the tenth centuries), I would like to explain what I mean by this term. In 1978, Ninian Smart introduced the idea of "religion on the ground" while speaking at the Wingspread Conference on the state of Religious Studies sponsored by the Council on the Study of Religion.[46] "Religion on the ground" was one of Smart's theoretical concerns to expand the repertoire for scholarly engagement with religions to include the study of them as they are lived by ordinary people. This is again touched upon in a later work where Smart explores the concept through examples to develop a sociology of religious knowledge.[47]

As an extension of this idea, Buddhism on the ground is Buddhism as it is construed, believed, and practiced by people who are preoccupied by practical and quotidian concerns, and whose experiences and activities reflect their belief and practice. Although the edifying goal of liberation is kept in view and may feature or be incorporated to a certain degree, there is no pretension that

[46] Hecht and Biondo 2012: xiii.

[47] Smart 1997.

the interest of these people in Buddhism is guided by anything else but realistic, and perhaps immediate concerns with practical affairs that directly impinge on their lives; thus, they are less preoccupied with the theoretical and intellectual aspects of Buddhism than are those people who determine normative Buddhism. While the conceptualization of normative Buddhism might have an effect on Buddhism on the ground, the latter is not as concerned with what might be considered orthodoxy and orthopraxy by the authorities—how certain gatekeepers of the Buddhist tradition enforce conformity to official versions of sanctioned teachings and practices. This, however, does not necessarily mean that orthodoxy and orthopraxy are not important to Buddhism on the ground.

Placing emphasis on the experiential aspects of their lives, Buddhism on the ground recognizes that people often do not make daily decisions and engage in religious activities with reference to what Nāgārjuna or Zongmi might have said; instead, they make decisions or take certain actions based on their heritage, environment (physical and social), the opinions of family, friends, and social relations, and how they perceive themselves within this world, with a blend of emotion and reason. It also recognizes possible inconsistencies and fuzziness between reason and actions played out within individuals or groups of people.

The players of Buddhism on the ground may be monastics, lay Buddhists, or even non-believers, and may include both elite and ordinary members of these groups, who express their views and concerns, or take certain actions

with respect to Buddhism in a variety of situations. Buddhism on the ground may refer to aspects of religious engagement by these people in private (personal practice) as well as public spheres (participation in communal religious events) since they constitute the dimensions in which religious beliefs, motivations, and actions are played out by individuals and groups of people. These spheres are not static but variables in their world as people adapt to new circumstances in life and mutually influence each other.

4.2 Sources

Together with three collections of *Diamond Sutra* tales compiled at the beginning of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, respectively, this study also includes a survey of tales scattered in different works of the Tang and Song periods. Especially important for our purpose is the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (The Extensive Record Compiled During the Taiping Era), the massive Song encyclopedia, which provides many tales not contained in the three collections.[48] Altogether, these collections and tales cover sufficient ground to illuminate developments in Tang China in time and space. Originating from different periods in the Tang, they afford this study a perspective free from treating religious history as a stable narrative, which envisages a constantly changing reality tied to diachronic cultural and social transformations over a period of time. Supplemented by other sources, each collection offers clues to

[48] Compiled under the editorship of Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) and published in 978 under imperial auspices, the *Taiping guangji* is an important source of pre-Song popular literature. It consists of 500 rolls and about 7000 items selected from over three hundred books published between the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) and the early Song.

the synchronic interplay of historical, cultural, and social discourses and trends in a particular period, which gives rise to certain phenomena, allowing for a kind of "thick description" that describes, in this case, religion in action.[49]

No discourse, however factual, allows unrestricted access to reality or expresses the state of affairs as it really is, and *Diamond Sutra* tales are no exception.[50] As products of representation, they do not reflect unmediated reality since they are embedded within a particular context.[51] While they, on the one hand, may reflect broadly an external reality or a trend, as constructs they are "conditioned dharmas," interdependently originating from a web of religious, social, and cultural causes and conditions specific to an age; this points to the difficulty involved in studying them. While the usual historical records, literary works, and canonical sources will provide for broad contextualization, we have to resort to alternative sources, especially those that inform these recorded tales as not merely literary works but religious artifacts. Although they are unfortunately forever lost to us as oral accounts, their "presence" in other kinds of cultural representations can be sought in material culture, especially when religious beliefs and practices encouraged in them are embedded within a web of material practices.[52] If the tales extoll the recitation and copying of the *Diamond Sutra*, then remnants of these acts in the form of

[49] Against the traditional emphasis of formalism in literary studies, New Historicism—having derived inspiration from anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz—emphasizes "culture in action," and the importance of historical consideration in literary analysis. See Veeser 1989: xi.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Rivkin and Ryan 2004: 506.

[52] Veeser 1989: xi.

artifacts should have been produced alongside these tales. Therefore, as this body of oral narratives unfolded in a "dialectic process of production and reception," they do so not merely in the intangible transmission of knowledge, propagation, conversion, believing, or acts of piety, but in the accompanying material culture in which these intangible aspects find their expression and maintain their "presence" long after they were lost to history.[53]

Extra-textual materials, therefore, are employed to verify and balance my account of the *Diamond Sutra* cult and the reality of medieval Chinese religion. In this respect, the importance of Dunhuang, with its huge store of Tang-period extra-canonical and extra-textual artifacts, cannot be overestimated. Just as the cache of Dunhuang manuscripts and the development of the field of Dunhuang studies have fundamentally changed our understanding of Chinese Buddhism and medieval Chinese society, they are invaluable sources to our study for they include a huge amount of materials related to the *Diamond Sutra*. They comprise not only thousands of copies of the sutra, but also records of prayers of sponsors who commissioned the copying of sutras, lecture texts, commentaries, and a variety of newly conceived indigenous texts probably meant to answer specific Chinese concerns or needs. We will explore them for clues as to the expressive acts that gave birth to material practices so as to elucidate the complexities of religio-cultural life in medieval China.

[53] Ibid.

5. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part is a study of *Diamond Sutra* tales in five chapters, and the second part consists of a translation of the three compilations of *Diamond Sutra* narratives. Chapter One situates the project by introducing the sutra, the various compilations of its tales, and related Tang-Song works. Providing a foundation for further discussion, it contextualizes the *Diamond Sutra* within the socio-historical milieu of medieval China through major events and phenomena associated with it, such as its translation, commentaries, and engagements by elite monastics and members of the imperial house; it notes the association with different aspects of Chinese culture: literary, political, and social. The discussion on tale compilations and related works points to the presence of the sutra in the Tang dynasty, especially in the lives of medieval Chinese people, as supported by Dunhuang sources of the widespread devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*.

Chapter Two takes a closer look at the nature of Chinese Buddhist tales by reflecting on the use of 'miracle', a term with distinct connotations in Western religious history, to describe indigenous Buddhist tales. With recourse to Indian and Chinese Buddhist cosmological presuppositions, it suggests that Chinese Buddhist tales are best understood with reference to Chinese correlative cosmology, which has embedded at its core the concept of sympathetic resonance—an idea that influenced medieval Chinese representations of Buddhism and exerted a profound impact on Chinese

Buddhist ontology and soteriology. Produced and circulated for the express purpose of propagating faith, these tales are underpinned by narrative and rhetorical devices that illustrate the wonders and benefits of the *Diamond Sutra* experienced by protagonists that constitute proofs of the efficacy of the sutra. This chapter also reevaluates current understanding of indigenous Buddhist tales as part of the *zhiguai* genre by showing how they differ markedly from *zhiguai* writings in both intent and value. Additionally, it also considers the mechanics of their transmission and how these tales—as social products—are constitutive of the communities in which they evolved.

Chapter Three investigates the major themes through which the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* unfolds, as well as the motifs found in the tales that illuminate the state of Buddhism and the knowledge disseminated through them. Although *Diamond Sutra* tale collections are similar to a number of pre-Tang and Tang Buddhist tale collections in that they promote the cult of a single object of devotion, they distinguish themselves in important ways. This chapter attempts to elucidate, both synchronically and diachronically, the differences between *Diamond Sutra* compilations, and pre-Tang and contemporaneous compilations, and explores what these differences could mean. Given the availability of research on Six Dynasties collections, diachronic shifts in the concerns of medieval Chinese society in the Tang period could be better understood by examining the themes and motifs of *Diamond Sutra* tales vis-à-vis pre-Tang collections, such as the Guanyin and *Mingxiang ji* collections. On the other hand, a comparison with major Tang

collections, such as those related to the *Lotus and Avataṃsaka Sutras* could illuminate the uniqueness of *Diamond Sutra* accounts in the way they answered concerns not taken up by other tales.

Chapter Four is a study of the influence of the *Diamond Sutra* and its tales on medieval Chinese religiosity in three areas. First, by examining the lay orientation of the tales and the thoughts of their compilers, this chapter speculates on the effects of the cult of the sutra on the state of lay Buddhism in Tang, China, and on the role of the laity in shaping the cult by imputing to the sutra with a multivalence best suited to answering a variety of concerns. It highlights the differences of the lay orientation of *Diamond Sutra* tales and that of others. While Six Dynasties stories strive to prove the truth of Buddhist doctrines, sometimes by contesting indigenous tradition, *Diamond Sutra* compilations are concerned with empowering the laity, often with accounts of their access to spiritual powers and wonders made possible by their devotion. The empowerment of the laity is also indicated by the autonomy with which compilers of *Diamond Sutra* tales compiled their collections and their construal of the sutra. Second, through the discourse of death and the afterlife represented in the tales, this chapter reflects on the creation, development, and persuasive use of these accounts as vehicles to disseminate, validate, and promote a belief system, worldview, and ritual practices centering on the *Diamond Sutra* cult. Third, it theorizes the transformations brought about by the interplay of themes and ritual paradigms promoted by these tales, especially through the creation of religious texts that illustrate alternative ways

in which ritual and devotional culture contribute to the imagining of sacred writings and their meanings in Chinese Buddhism. Moreover, it explores the role played by lay Buddhists in instituting changes in beliefs and practices and their negotiation with the monastic establishment, the determiner of normative Buddhist tradition in this respect.

Finally, the last chapter concludes the entire dissertation by returning to the research questions, summarizing the findings and their significance. With reference to the findings, it ponders over the contribution of these tales to the popularity of the *Diamond Sutra* in Tang China, while looking at its manifestations in subsequent periods and in other cultures in East Asia. The influence of the sutra and its tales in the Tang are represented by a few important post-Tang developments, namely the following: further creation of liturgical copies of the *Diamond Sutra* that incorporated its narratives and later their illustrations; the continuation of *Diamond Sutra* tale compilation in China in later periods that extends to the current day; and the production of *Diamond Sutra* tale compilations in Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, and Japan that were fashioned closely after the Chinese model. Finally, the chapter deliberates and speculates on the intrinsic qualities of the *Diamond Sutra* and its reception by medieval Chinese society as well as the effects of this huge cache of *Diamond Sutra* tales on the consciousness of Chinese people.

PART I: STUDY

CHAPTER 1

THE *DIAMOND SUTRA* AND THE TALES IT INSPIRED IN MEDIEVAL CHINA

Although the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā* (Ch. *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing* 金剛般若波羅密經) is popularly known as the *Diamond Sutra*, it is not related to diamonds. *Vajra* (Ch. 金剛 *jin'gang*), in the Buddhist context, generally refers to a mythical weapon, especially one wielded by the god Indra. Shaped like a circular discus or two transverse bolts crossing each other, or in the form of a thunderbolt, the *vajra* is more rightly a weapon capable of cutting the hardest of matter. Thus, perhaps due to its association with the cutting properties of the diamond, "*vajra*" in the title of the scripture is often translated as diamond. In any case, the title of this scripture is better understood as the perfection of wisdom that is capable of shattering all forms of delusion as well as destroying, presumably, all enemies' weapons. However, given the prevalent use of the "*Diamond Sutra*" in modern Buddhist studies, it will be used to refer to the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāparāmitā* hereafter.

The events in the *Diamond Sutra* are said to take place in the Jetavana Monastery (Ch. *Qishu jigudu yuan* 祇樹給孤獨園) in the city of Śrāvastī (Ch. *shewei cheng* 舍衛城), the capital of the state of Kośala, which was one of the biggest cities during the Buddha's time. The sutra begins with the return of the Buddha to the monastery after he had begged for alms in the city and had eaten his midday meal. Following that, Subhūti (Ch. Xuputi 須菩提), one of

the ten major disciples of the Buddha, asked him how bodhisattvas who aspire to supreme and perfect awakening should master their minds. The Buddha's reply to Subhūti forms the rest of the sutra.

The *Diamond Sutra* is classified as belonging to a body of Indian Buddhist literature called the Perfection of Wisdom (Sk. *prajñāpāramitā*; Ch. *bore boluomi[duo]* 般若波羅密[多]), which constitutes a major tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Subhūti, incidentally, is famous for his mastery of the Perfection of Wisdom. However, this classification is not without its problems, and despite being thought of as a concise articulation of the ideas contained within the work, the *Diamond Sutra* does not mention quintessential concepts of the corpus, such as emptiness (Sk. *śūnyatā*; Ch. *kong* 空) and skill-in-means (Sk. *upāya*; Ch. *fangbian* 方便). Little of certainty can be said about its provenance except that it was probably composed in Sanskrit in India and brought to the western regions of China by the end of the fourth century. Undoubtedly, it was an important text in India as attested by various scholarly commentaries, such as those attributed to Vasubandhu (Ch. Shiqin 世親 /Tianqin 天親) and Asaṅga (Ch. Wuzhuo 無著),[54] two learned Indian monks

[54] Translated commentaries of Vasubandhu and Asaṅga can be found in the Taishō canon: (1) *Nengduan jin'gang bore boluomiduo jing lunsong* 能斷金剛般若波羅蜜多經論頌 (Expository Verses of the *Diamond Sutra*; T25.1514), one roll by Asaṅga, Yijing trans., 711 CE. (2) *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing lun* 金剛般若波羅蜜經論 (Treatise on the *Diamond Sutra*; T25.1511), three rolls, by Vasubandhu, Bodhiruci trans., 509 CE. (3) *Nengduan jin'gang bore boluomiduo jing lunshi* 能斷金剛般若波羅蜜多經論釋 (An Explication of the Treatise of the Diamond Sutra; T25.1513), three rolls, by Vasubandhu trans., Yijing trans., 711 CE. (4) *Jin'gang bore lun* 金剛般若論 (Treatise on the *Diamond Sutra*; T25.1510), two rolls, by Asaṅga, Dharmagupta trans., 613 CE; this is the same as Dharmagupta trans., *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing lun* 金剛般若波羅蜜經論, three rolls.

who likely lived in the fourth or fifth century, and the discovery of Sanskrit manuscripts of the text dating from the fifth to the seventh century in different parts of India.[55]

1. The Place of the *Diamond Sutra* in Medieval China

In China, the *Diamond Sutra* was equally important, if not more important than it was in India. After it was translated into Chinese at the very beginning of the fifth century by the celebrated Kuchean monk Kumārajīva (Ch. Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什) in Chang'an (modern Xi'an), the scripture was translated at least five more times over the subsequent three centuries. It has, moreover, inspired more than sixty commentaries by some of the most learned monks in Chinese Buddhist history.[56]

Evidence shows that it took quite a while before the influence of the *Diamond Sutra* could be perceived. In the Six Dynasties period, the *Lotus Sutra*, and to a lesser degree, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (Ch. *Dabo niepan jing* 大般涅槃經), were more influential: the former due to its contents and early inception into the Chinese scene,[57] the latter because of the debate on Buddha-nature engendered by different positions propounded in the earlier

[55] For a recent study of the Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra*, see Harrison and Watanabe 2006.

[56] Its commentators include the later Jin scholar-monk Sengzhao 僧肇 (384–414?), and patriarchs of various traditions, such as Zhiyi 智顗 (539–597), Jizang 吉藏 (549–623), and Zhiyan 智儼 (602–668), as well as Kuiji 窺基 (632–682) and Zongmi 宗密 (780–841).

[57] The *Lotus Sutra* was first translated into Chinese in 286 by Dharmarakṣa (230?–316) as *Zheng fahua jing* 正法華經 (T9.236), with ten chapters in twenty-seven rolls.

and later parts of the text.[58] A survey of three standard biographical collections of eminent monks covering the period from the Six Dynasties to the beginning of the Song Dynasty (960–1276) reveals that the *Diamond Sutra* did not become popular until the Sui-Tang period (581–907). In the respective sections of these collections containing biographies of monks who are well-known for their recitation of scriptures, the *Diamond Sutra* was mentioned only twice in the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks),[59] and twice in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Sequel to the Biographies of Eminent Monks).[60] However, it was mentioned thirteen times in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled During the Song Dynasty), indicating a marked increase in monastic engagement with the *Diamond Sutra* in the Tang.[61] This trend is corroborated by the distribution of dated Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra*: only one

[58] See Liu 1982 and 1984; Kim 1990: 65–6.

[59] Compiled by Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554) and completed in 519, the *Gaoseng zhuan* contains 257 major biographies and 259 subordinate biographies of eminent monks who lived from 67 to 519 (453 years). It has fourteen rolls and its contents are grouped in ten thematic sections, such translators, exegetes, self-immolators, sponsors of religious works, sermonizers, etc. The biographies of monks who were well known for their recitation of scriptures are contained in roll 12. See *Gaoseng zhuan*, T50.2059: 406b14–409a26.

[60] The thirty-roll *Xu gaoseng zhuan* was compiled by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) as a sequel to *Gaoseng zhuan*. It includes the biographies of eminent monks who lived in the period from 519 to 665. Like the *Gaoseng zhuan*, it has ten sections with 414 major biographies and 201 subordinate biographies. The biographies of monks who are known for their recitation of scriptures are contained in roll 28. See *Gaoseng zhuan*, T50.2060: 685c12–691a29.

[61] Compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1002) at imperial behest, the thirty-roll *Song gaoseng zhuan* contains biographies of eminent monks over a period from the Zhenguan era of the Tang (627–649) to 988. There are 533 major biographies and 130 subordinate biographies. For biographies of monks known for their recitation of scriptures, see rolls 24 and 25 of *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T50.2061: 862a20–872c11.

in the sixth century, but nine in the seventh century, and seventeen in the eighth and ninth centuries.[62]

By the eighth century, the *Diamond Sutra* was influential enough to feature in the factional rivalry within the Chan tradition. The *Liuzu tan jing* 六祖壇經 (The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch), composed sometime in the eighth century, is an indigenous scripture written to resolve a conflict in early Chan that had been fomented by Shenhui 神會 (684–758), who carried out a vigorous campaign on behalf of his teacher Huineng's 慧能 (638–713) "Southern school" against the so-called "Northern school" of Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706).[63] In the carefully constructed biography of Huineng, the legendary sixth patriarch of the Chan tradition, embedded in the *Liuzu tan jing*, the *Diamond Sutra* features prominently. Huineng, we are told, was an illiterate woodcutter who became awakened after he heard someone recite the *Diamond Sutra*. Subsequently, Huineng went to the Dongchan Monastery where he met the Fifth Patriarch Hongren 弘忍 (601–674), from whom he received the *Diamond Sutra*. The scripture adds that Hongren "always exhorts both monks and laymen to simply maintain the *Diamond Sutra*, so that one can see the [self]-nature by oneself and achieve buddhahood directly and completely."[64] Even when factional rivalry was no longer an issue, the

[62] Yoshimura, Tsuchihashi and Inoguchi 1958: 245–85.

[63] McRae 2000: xv. Shenxiu, a preeminent figure of the Northern school of Chinese Chan, was considered in some Chan traditions as the sixth patriarch. He was a renowned monastic during his day and was highly regarded by the Empress Wu Zetian.

[64] Ibid.: 18.

Diamond Sutra remained important in the Chan tradition because of the role the *Diamond Sutra* played in the scripture and in Huineng's life.

The *Diamond Sutra* was not only popular among monastics during the Tang period, but was also highly regarded by members of the Tang ruling house. In an important article half a century ago, Fujieda Akira first drew our attention to the existence of some Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Diamond Sutra* that appeared to have been sponsored by the early Tang court in the 670s.[65] When Fujieda wrote his article, only twenty-four such manuscripts were known; to date, more than forty have been identified.[66] Research has shown that these manuscripts were the products of an imperially sponsored sutra-copying project commissioned by Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705) for the posthumous wellbeing of her parents.[67] This was probably prompted by the death of her mother in 670. Indeed, such imperial sponsorship of scripture-copying for the wellbeing of family members is not without precedent. Emperor Taizong 太宗 (599–649) is known to have authorized the copying of Buddhist scriptures for his deceased mother in 632

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[65] Fujieda 1961. The earliest available manuscript of this group of scriptures is S5319, a copy of chapter 3 of the *Lotus Sutra* dated to 26 June 671, and the latest, S3094, a copy of chapter 2 of the *Lotus Sutra* dated to 29 June 677. Ibid.: 651–2. The earliest *Diamond Sutra* copy, S36, dates to 22 June 672, and the latest, B690, dates to 28 December 676. Zhao 2006a: 13.

[66] Ibid.: 11. To be exact, Zhao mentions a total of forty-eight manuscripts. According to Ikeda On's compendium of colophons of ancient manuscript, there are thirty-seven *Lotus Sutra* copies and ten *Diamond Sutra* copies. See Ikeda 1990. In addition to these, Zhao mentions three other *Lotus Sutra* manuscripts: P3788, P4621, and a copy kept in the China Research Center for Cultural Artifacts (Zhongguo wenwu yanjiusuo 中國文物研究所). For the *Diamond Sutra*, he mentions an additional manuscript, S7236.

[67] Zheng Binglin (1992: 7–8) first suggested that the available colophons be attributed to Empress Wu. More recently, Zhao Heping (2006: 1–22) has confirmed this with more evidence.

and 641, and Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (628–683) also sanctioned the copying of sutras in 656 for the recovery of Li Hong, the heir apparent, from an illness.[68] According to the colophons, Empress Wu called for three thousand copies each of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Diamond Sutra*.[69] This staggering undertaking expended substantial resources and involved both government officials as well as monastics. Supervised by an overall controller and his assistant, the scriptures were first copied by scribes, then proofread separately by three proofreaders, and further verified by a group of distinguished monastics before they were mounted on rollers.[70] There is no doubt that the transmission and popularity of the *Diamond Sutra* was boosted by the subsequent distribution of the *Diamond Sutra* copies resulting from this project throughout the country.

Having composed commentaries of the *Xiao jing* 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety) in 722, and the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Classic of the Way and Its Virtues) in 735, Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (685–762) finally wrote a commentary on the *Diamond Sutra* later in 735 and even ordered it to be widely distributed and lectured on by monks.[71] Xuanzong's commentary—based on Kumārajīva's translation of the *Diamond Sutra*—was probably lost by the Song because it was not collected in any Buddhist canons. Nevertheless, some of its content

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[68] Wang 2005: 123.

[69] *Lotus Sutra* manuscripts with colophons include P4621, P2395v, and P3788. Ikeda 1990: 280; Zheng 1992: 7–8; Huang and Wu 1995: 899–900; Zhao 2006a: 2 (P2395v added). *Diamond Sutra* manuscripts with colophon include S7236. Ibid.: 4.

[70] Fujieda 1961: 647–68; Zhao 2006a.

[71] Kieschnick 1997: 120.

was referred to in a subcommentary on the *Diamond Sutra*, preserved in Dunhuang manuscripts, authored by Daoyin 道氤 (668–740).[72] In 1957, the discovery of Xuanzong's commentary among the "stone scriptures" collection of Fangshan was introduced in an article written by Li Yuanbai.[73] Subsequently, an incomplete commentary of the *Diamond Sutra* from Dunhuang manuscript S2068, transcribed and collected in the Taishō canon as *Jin'gang jing xiezhu* 金剛般若經挾註 (An Interlinear Commentary on the *Diamond Sutra*), was identified as being Emperor Xuanzong's commentary.[74] Undoubtedly, the prestige of Xuanzong's commentary must have elevated the position of the *Diamond Sutra*, and the distribution of the commentary and the lectures on it throughout the empire must have further raised people's awareness about the sutra. Although Emperor Xuanzong's commentary—drafted in the same year as his one on the *Daode jing*—might have meant to "convert Buddhism and Daoism into tame instruments of the centralized

[72] The *Yuzhu jin'gang bore boluomi jing xuanyan* 御注金刚般若波罗蜜经宣演 (A Tribute to the Imperial Commentary on the *Diamond Sutra*) is found in three-roll and six-roll versions. There is an incomplete version transcribed and collected in the Taishō canon. See T85.2733: 8c25–52b9. There are eleven Dunhuang manuscripts of it, all incomplete. Because Daoyin cited extensively from scriptures and commentaries, the commentary is an important source of information. According to Fang Guangchang (1995) and Hirai Yūkei (1999: 255–60 and 261–96), it was popular in Dunhuang. Besides this commentary, several other commentaries of the *Diamond Sutra* not collected in Buddhist canons were also discovered among Dunhuang manuscripts.

[73] The project to preserve Buddhist scriptures was first carried out by monk Jingwan 靜琬 (d. 639) during the Daye era (605–617) in Fangshan 房山 (modern Fangshan, Beijing), and continued until the Ming period. The collection contains more than 1,100 Buddhist scriptures. Lin Yuanbai's original article is later collected in Zhang 1977: 82–114. The colophon indicates that the commentary was engraved in 742, and it was simply named *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing zhu* 金剛般若波羅蜜經注 (Commentary on the *Diamond Sutra*).

[74] *Jin'gang jing xiezhu*, T85.2039: 132c18–137c7. Mugitani 2007: second page of preface (no pagination).

government,"[75] it was not the first time such an act was attempted. Emperor Gaozu (566–635) is known to have ordered lectures on these three texts previously.[76]

The imperial recognition given to the *Diamond Sutra* by Emperor Gaozu might have prompted interest in the *Diamond Sutra* and gained for it a following among aristocrats. The Tang scholar Wei Shu 韋述 (d. 757) notes in his *Liangjing xinyji* 兩京新記 (A New Record of the Two Capitals) that there is a stele in the Xingfu Monastery 興福寺 in Chang'an carved with the *Diamond Sutra* written by Helan Minzhi 賀蘭敏之 (642–671), the nephew of Empress Wu, before her sponsorship of copying the sutra.[77] Built by Emperor Taizong for the deceased empress in the eighth year of the Zhenguan era (634), the Xingfu monastery was intimately connected to the royal family and was certainly actively patronized by aristocrats, as indicated by the stele. This is no doubt an avenue in which the *Diamond Sutra* gained publicity and was made known to a greater audience.

Beside the aristocrats, the *Diamond Sutra* was also popular among the literati and the cultured elite. Just as the gentry had played a pivotal role in the propagation of Buddhism in the Six Dynasties period, the literati had probably played an equally important role in popularizing the *Diamond Sutra*. They

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[75] Faure 1997: 77.

[76] *Datang xinyu* 11: 162.

[77] Xin and Du 2006: 65. The back of the stele is carved with texts penned by Emperor Gaozong and Emperor Taizong written in the calligraphic style of Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303–361) by Huairen, a monk of the monastery.

could have first learned about the *Diamond Sutra* through their interaction with monastics, and later became interested in it given the abstraction of the *Diamond Sutra* and the proclivity of the literati to learn about Buddhist doctrines or engage in the intellectual aspects of Buddhism. In addition to its philosophical aspect, it could have also appealed to the literati due to the poetic elegance of Kumārajīva's translation, which is often the only version referred to by them. The *Diamond Sutra* was alluded to in the poems of Tang literati and executed in calligraphy.[78] The prestige of calligraphy art might have contributed to the popularity of the *Diamond Sutra*. Among the Dunhuang manuscripts is a rare stone rubbing of the *Diamond Sutra* written in 824 by the prominent Tang scholar-official, Liu Gongquan 柳公權 (778–865), and carved on a stele.[79] This rubbing is particularly significant because Liu was a renowned master calligrapher.[80] In fact, he was considered along with the famous Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709–785) as one of the two most influential calligraphers of the late Tang, despite being a follower of the latter in calligraphic style. We can easily imagine the extent to which the *Diamond*

[78] For example, Tang poet Gao Shi 高適 (706–765) composed a poem entitled *Tong Mataishou ting jiusi fashi jiang jin'gang jing* 同馬太守聽九思法師講《金剛經》(Listening to Master Jiusi's Lecture on the *Diamond Sutra* with Governor Ma), which describes his experience of listening to a lecture on the *Diamond Sutra*. *Quan Tang shi* 122: 2207. The famous Tang poet, Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772–842) mentions the playing of the lute and the reading of the *Diamond Sutra* in his poem, *Loushi ming* 陋室銘 (Inscription about a Crude Dwelling), while praising the simplicity of his dwelling. *Quan Tang wen* 608: 6145.

[79] According to the colophon on P4503, it was written for Master Luzhun, the Buddhist Registrar for Monasteries Situated Along the Right Avenue of the Capital (*youjie seng luzhun gong* 右街僧錄准), and later engraved by Qiang Yan 強演 and Shao Jianhe 邵建和. For a discussion of the rubbing, see Shi 2010: 62–5.

[80] His biographies are found in the *Jiu Tang shu* (165: 4310–3) and the *Xin Tang shu* (163: 5029–31).

Sutra permeated the life of the laity, especially the educated and the cultured elite, as interested students and connoisseurs of calligraphy sought a copy of Liu's *Diamond Sutra* by making rubbings of it from the stele. Surely, the *Diamond Sutra* was a subject of their conversation, as some of them went on to learn more about it, and engaged with it philosophically and religiously.

Since the Tang, the *Diamond Sutra* has been a favorite Buddhist sutra copied by generations of master calligraphers and literati, engaged in a variety of ways by the cultured elite. The *Diamond Sutra,* however, was certainly not of interest only to the learned. It was very much a part of the life of less erudite laypeople in medieval China. Among the Dunhuang manuscripts, the number of *Diamond Sutra* copies ranks just after those of the *Lotus Sutra*, which comes in seven rolls, and the 600-roll *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (Ch. *Da bore boluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經), despite the fact that the *Diamond Sutra* was a single-roll text.[81] In addition to copies of the *Diamond Sutra*, there are other related items, such as commentaries, lecture texts, tales and tale collections found in the Dunhuang cave. Most of the texts found are handwritten copies since the copying of scripture was an important avenue to accumulate merit. The number of written copies found in Dunhuang illustrates the important place of the *Diamond Sutra* in the medieval culture of scripture-copying. Perhaps the degree of veneration accorded to the *Diamond Sutra* on

[81] Zheng 2010: 55.

the ground is best exemplified by extant manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra* copied by an old man with his blood mixed with ink.[82]

The Dunhuang find also yields a small number of printed copies of the *Diamond Sutra*, and we are fortunate to have a copy that is the world's first printed book with a precise date. Now preserved in the British Library, this copy of the *Diamond Sutra*—numbered Or.8012/P2—was printed with carved wood blocks on seven sheets of fine paper that were pasted together to form a scroll of over five meters.[83] Its frontispiece is an illustration of the Buddha and Subhūti, the Buddha's main interlocutor in the scripture, as well as a host of other beings. This is followed by an invocation to the reciter of the scripture to chant the mantra for purifying the karma of the mouth, the mantra itself, and the names of eight vajra-beings. It concludes with another mantra and the colophon, which states, "Reverently made for universal distribution by Wang Jie on behalf of his two parents on the fifteenth day of the fourth month of the ninth year of the Xiantong era (May 11, 868)."[84] While this printed copy of the *Diamond Sutra* may demonstrate the maturity of Chinese printing technique in the ninth century, more importantly, it illustrates an instance of the *Diamond Sutra* serving as the center where technology, commerce, and religion converged in medieval China. Needless to say, the production of printed copies implies wider distribution of the *Diamond Sutra*.

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[82] Teiser 1994: 121–8. In fact, there are at least two early tales whose protagonists used their blood to copy the *Diamond Sutra*: JYJ40 and JYJ37.

[83] For a detailed introduction to this copy of the *Diamond Sutra*, see Wood and Barnard 2010.

[84] The original reads: "咸通九年四月十五日王玠為二親敬造普施。"

The *Diamond Sutra* certainly occupied an important place among the monastics as we can discern from their increasing use of it as an object of religious practice as well as in the way it features in the *Liuzu tan jing*. Imperial recognition by way of the sponsorship of *Diamond Sutra* copying and Emperor Xuanzong's commentary certainly elevated its position. Liu Gongquan's copy of the *Diamond Sutra* must have facilitated its dissemination, although the people who finally possessed its rubbings might not have been pious Buddhists. Yet it is the thousands of Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra* and related texts that bear testimony to its significance in medieval China. While they hint at the pertinent role played by the *Diamond Sutra* in the life of laypeople, we have to turn to accounts of the *Diamond Sutra* shared by people in the community to understand its propagation and domestication. Many of these accounts are preserved in the tales these people told, which reveal what the *Diamond Sutra* meant to them, how it featured in their lives, and why it was represented in that way.

2. Imagining the Beginnings of the Cult of the *Diamond Sutra*

When considering the beginning of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*, it is interesting to note that although there were monastics who recited the *Diamond Sutra* as early as late fifth century, it had not gained a following among either the monastics or lay Buddhists during the Six Dynasties. Even in Northern China—as recent research made possible by a huge cache of

inscriptions indicates—where religious societies (*yiyi* 義邑) flourished under the guidance of itinerant monks, little trace of religious activities related to the *Diamond Sutra* can be found, although the recitation of sutras was one of the many kinds of religious activities undertaken by people in the North.[85] In his study of the Buddhist activities in Six Dynasties China, Hou Xudong has shown the prevalence of the cults of Śākyamuni, Maitreya, Amitābha, and Avalokiteśvara, and the forms of Buddhist activities related to them, such as the production of images and the copying and recitation of related scriptures.[86] Although it is baffling to find few activities related to the *Diamond Sutra* in the Six Dynasties period, it is worth noting that the prevalence of the above cults was often related to various forms of active promotion by the ruling house, monastic communities, or members of elite circles, such as aristocrats or the literati.

If the famous Six Dynasties poet, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433), and Sengzhao had indeed composed commentaries on the *Diamond Sutra*, they probably did not reach a huge audience or generate much interest in the *Diamond Sutra*.[87] Based on our broad contextualization above and the contour of *Diamond Sutra*-related activities, the popularity of the *Diamond*

[85] Liu 2010: 314–44. Shi Yongyou (2010: 151) notes the existence of an incomplete stele during the Northern Wei (386–534) on which the *Diamond Sutra* was carved, perhaps the earliest such example.

[86] Hou 2010: 1095–168. Apart from these cults, Hou also mentioned other lesser cults, such as those related to relics, Buddha Prabhūtaratna, and Buddha Vairocana.

[87] Li 2005: 179; Ding 2009: 183–201. According to Li, Sengzhao's commentary had been lost, and Xie Lingyun's commentary is now collected as X24.454, which is listed as composed by Sengzhao.

Sutra in the Tang may be ascribed to the conditions brought by the increasing and important engagement of it by the members of the ruling house, cultured elites, and some monastic communities—after it had caught the imagination of some people and was introduced into the scene. It is conceivable that the *Diamond Sutra* was introduced in a web of connections between members of the monastic establishments, literati, and aristocrats. Although the *Diamond Sutra* was not highlighted much in biographies of monastics known for their recitation of scriptures in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, it was mentioned more than ten times in relation to activities such as its translation (1), recitation (5), copying (1), explication (2), commentarial work (2), and so on. These mentions indicate a marked increase in monastic engagement with the *Diamond Sutra* from the Six Dynasties to the early Tang. This humble beginning is corroborated by the discovery of a stele carved with the *Diamond Sutra* found in modern Henei, Henan that was produced during the Eastern Wei dynasty (534–550), as well as the famous *Diamond Sutra* carved on a cliff on Mount Tai in the sixth century,[88] both of which probably led to a greater awareness of and interest in the *Diamond Sutra*.

It is possible that by the end of the Sui dynasty, the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* had gained a sizable following, which was soon boosted by the imperial recognition it received during the inception of the Tang. While no one factor takes precedence over others, the impact of imperial recognition cannot be underestimated because it offered a prestige and authorization not available

[88] On the *Diamond Sutra* on Mount Tai and the Eastern Wei stele, see Shi 2010: 133–5 and 151, respectively.

elsewhere and thus was more likely to trigger further interest in the *Diamond Sutra* throughout the empire. The effects of Emperor Gaozu's recognition in the early seventh century may be seen from reactions within or close to the capital; these include the abovementioned *Diamond Sutra* stele in the Xingfu Monastery, and a carving of the *Diamond Sutra* on the cliff in Luoyang done perhaps at the end of the seventh century.[89] These activities are especially notable because they could have potentially promoted the *Diamond Sutra* to a greater audience given that it was made available in the public sphere. The distribution of the sutras sponsored by Empress Wu should have had similar effects, as it made the *Diamond Sutra* available at different places in the empire, undoubtedly noticed by many people. Her subsequent sponsorship of the copying of the *Diamond Sutra* shows that Empress Wu might have studied the *Diamond Sutra* during her stay in the Ganye Nunnery 感業寺, and knew of its claims about the merit to be gained from copying it.[90] There is also no reason to assume she did not know about the *Diamond Sutra* written by her nephew and carved on the stele in the Xingfu Monastery before her sponsorship. We also cannot assume that such activities went unnoticed by other members of the imperial family, government officials, people from elite circles, as well as many other people connected to them who spread the word about the *Diamond Sutra*.

[89] Shi Yongyou notes that there is at least one other record of the *Diamond Sutra*—other than the one at Mount Tai—carved on a cliff in Luoyang by a person named Xu Haoshu 徐浩書 during the Tang period, specifically during the period 684–705. Ibid.: 135–7.

[90] As a concubine of Emperor Taizong who did not bear him any children, Wu Zhao (the later Empress Wu) was consigned to the Ganye Nunnery, probably an imperial institution, after his death between 649 and 651.

There is no clear-cut answer why the *Diamond Sutra* was first singled out by Emperor Gaozu for lecturing along with the *Xiao jing* and the *Daode jing*, and later for comment by Emperor Xuanzong. This might be related to the fact that the Tang rulers claim to be descendants of Laozi 老子.[91] In 625 and 637, Emperor Taizong proclaimed Daoism as the highest religion, over and above Confucianism and Buddhism. Although the activities of the Tang monarchs with respect to these texts were political acts of pacification, I would like to suggest that the *Diamond Sutra* was perhaps selected as a representative text of Buddhism because it embodies qualities that endear it to the Tang monarchs. Notwithstanding the active promotion of people around the emperors, the *Diamond Sutra* was particularly endearing to the Tang monarchs due to its similarity to the *Daode jing*, the Daoist classic purportedly authored by Laozi, their ancestor.

In terms of length, both have more than five thousand characters. However, more importantly, both the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Daode jing* are marked by abstraction and unique subjects of concern, such as cultivation, the ineffability of language, and the nature of reality. Given the literary quality of the Kumārajīva translation, the abstraction of the *Diamond Sutra* is represented in a manner that facilitates the viewpoint that concentrates on the work's relation to the *Daode jing* rather than on competition. We may note that the famous opening phrase of the *Daode jing*, "The way that can be trodden is not the unchanging way; the name that can be called is not the

[91] Lewis 2009b: 208.

unchanging name"[92] is similar to phrases in the *Diamond Sutra,* such as "[W]hat I speak of as 'all dharmas' are not 'all dharmas'. So one calls them 'all dharmas'" or "to teach a dharma is to teach that there is no dharma that can be taught—that is proper teaching."[93] While they are certainly not the same structurally, they are similar in their use of negatives for the clarification of the nature of reality. In other places, they seem to be similar in an inexplicable way. Consider the passage from the *Daode jing* below:

> Therefore the sage manages affairs without doing anything, and conveys his instructions without the use of speech. All things spring up, and there is not one which declines to show itself; they grow, and there is no claim made for their ownership; they go through their processes, and there is no expectation (of a reward for the results). The work is accomplished, and there is no resting in it (as an achievement). The work is done, but how no one can see; 'Tis this that makes the power not cease to be.[94]

Now consider the following passage from the *Diamond Sutra*:

> The bodhisattvas, the mahāsattvas, should train their minds to think in this way. All living creatures, whether born from eggs or from the womb…whether they have thought, are without thought, or are neither with nor without thought—all these I will cause to pass over into the extinction of the nirvana of no remainder. In this way I will cause an immeasurable, a countless, a boundless number of living creatures to enter extinction. And yet, in truth, no living creature will be enabled to enter extinction…[95]

Both passages concern the ideal persons of their respective traditions and how they relate to the world or themselves, and the outcomes, which are underlain

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[92] Legge 1891: 1 (with modifications).

[93] Watson 2010: 90 (Section 17); 92 (Section 21). The sections referred to here is derived from a popular division of the text of the Diamond Sutra into thirty-two sections; see Section 3.3 of Chapter 5 for a discussion on this.

[94] Legge 1891: 2.

[95] Watson 2010: 79 (Section 3).

by deeper truths. Tenuous as it might be, given the fuzziness of the mind to associate things, it is not impossible that the *Diamond Sutra* was endearing to the Tang monarchs because of its superficial similarities to the Daoist text. Although imperial recognition was of importance to the growing cult of the *Diamond Sutra*, it does not mean that the development of Buddhism played a lesser role, but the former might have been crucial for the explosive growth of the cult.

3. INDIGENOUS TALES OF THE *DIAMOND SUTRA*

During the Six Dynasties period, there was no Buddhist tale collection devoted to any particular scripture although there were three compilations related to Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.[96] By the tenth century, a substantial number of Buddhist tale collections devoted to both Buddhist deities and scriptures was composed, among which were some *Diamond Sutra* tale collections. This attests to the increasing "presence" of the *Diamond Sutra* during the Tang, which is largely related to the exposure it received and the way it was construed in communities.

The importance of the attention given to the *Diamond Sutra* may be seen from the compilation of a substantial number of tales a few decades after Empress Wu's sponsorship of the copying of the *Diamond Sutra*, during which the *Diamond Sutra* was also engraved on the wall in a cave in what is now

[96] See Introduction on the three collections of tales.

Anyue, Sichuan.[97] The continued publicity it received in being displayed in public places certainly contributed to its growing presence in the rest of the Tang period. There are records of the *Diamond Sutra* being carved on stone pillars (*jingchuang* 經幢) produced in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries.[98] Before another compilation of *Diamond Sutra* tales was made in the fourth decade of the ninth century, Liu Gongquan, the master-calligrapher, was said to have inscribed the *Diamond Sutra* with the calligraphic styles of six master calligraphers, which was carved on a stele in the Ximing Monastery 西明寺 in Chang'an.[99]

While it is difficult to unravel the relationship between its exposure and its tales, it is safe to assume the former contributed to people's knowledge of the *Diamond Sutra*, which resulted in them coming to learn about it and undertake religious practices related to it. We may imagine such practices

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[97] This engraving is said to have been done during the Kaiyuan era (713–741). Shi 2010: 150.

[98] Shi (2010: 148–149) mentions the following inscriptions of these stone pillars: (1) An inscription for *Tang Jin'gang jing zunsheng jing er shicuang* 唐金剛經尊勝經二石憧 (Two Stone Pillars of the *Diamond Sutra* and the Sutra of the Sagely and Most Excellent Dhāraṇī in the Tang), made by a government official named Wu Tong 鄔彤 at Henan in 758 CE. (2) Another inscription, entitled *Zezhou cishi huangfushu zao jin'gang jingchuang* 澤州刺使皇甫曙造金剛經憧 (*Diamond Sutra* Pillar Made by Huang Fushu, Prefect of Zezhou), indicates that the stone pillar was produced in the first year of the Kaicheng era (836) by the Regional Chief of Zezhou 澤州 (modern Jincheng, Shanxi). (3) Another inscription reveals that a stone pillar of the *Diamond Sutra* was made by a lay Buddhist named Li Zongfu 李宗伏, which was also made in Zezhou in the third year of the Tianfu era (903).

[99] *Jiu Tang shu* 165: 4312; *Xin Tang shu* 163: 5030. Liu Gongquan was known to have learned the calligraphic style of other masters. The six master calligraphers of preceding periods stated in the histories are Zhong Yao 鐘繇 (151–230) of the late Han, Wang Xizhi of the Jin, and Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641), Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558–638), Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (597–658) and Lu Jianzhi 陸柬之 (585–638) of the early Tang. It is uncertain whether the Dunhuang rubbing was made from the stele in the Ximing Monastery, given the fact that there are other records of the *Diamond Sutra* written by Liu Gongquan that were carved in different times.

taking place in social networks in which people communicated the experiences of their newfound faith or engagement as it spread across the empire. While the cryptic doctrine of the *Diamond Sutra* might appeal to the monastics and cultured elites, it was the promise of merit as a result of transmitting or propagating the scripture that caught the imagination of laypeople. Indeed, a substantial part of the scripture is taken up with passages encouraging its own transmission through acts of keeping, copying, reciting and explaining it to others, and more importantly, the merit gained from such acts.[100] This prominent feature of the *Diamond Sutra* certainly played an integral role in the way it was received among the laity. By encouraging such acts as sources of merit, it provides a way for laypeople to engage the scripture and obtain merit largely defined by the reality of its supplicants. As we shall see later in tales related to the *Diamond Sutra*, merit is defined usually in terms of averting trouble, physical dangers, death, or achieving a longer lifespan, and so on. As accounts of the merit gained from devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* proliferated, they later came to be compiled into tale collections.

[100] See especially *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing*, T8.235: 750c3–6, T8.235: 750c15–8, and T8.235: 751a1–7. The two words often translated as "merit," *fude* 福德 and *gongde* 功德, are cited a total of twenty-six times in ten out of thirty-two popular divisions of the *Diamond Sutra*. See Section 2.2 of Chapter 3 for further discussion of the emphasis placed on the merit to be gained from religious practices related to the *Diamond Sutra*.

3.1 Early Tales of the *Diamond Sutra*

3.1.1 The First Tale?

Although we do not know when exactly the first tales relating to the *Diamond Sutra* were told, the earliest existing tale of the *Diamond Sutra* is one included in a modern recension of a late sixth-century collection of tales called *Jingyi ji* 旌異記 (A Record of Manifested Marvels). This collection of tales was compiled by Hou Bo 侯白 (fl. late sixth century)[101] at the imperial behest of Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 581–604) of the Sui dynasty. Listed in Hou Bo's biographies in the *Sui shu* 隋書 (History of Sui) and *Bei shi* (History of Northern Dynasties) as consisting of fifteen rolls, the text of the *Jingyi ji* was lost during the Song.[102] Only a dozen items from the collection survived: ten items were recovered by Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936)[103] and two items by Wang Guoliang.[104] Based on the recovered tales, it is thought that the *Jingyi ji* is a collection of pro-Buddhist tales.[105]

The third item in Lu Xun's edition is a tale related to the *Diamond Sutra* that was recovered from roll eighty-five of the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (A Pearl Grove in the Garden of Dharma), a seventh-century Buddhist

[101] Hou Bo was known and liked by Emperor Wen, who gave him an official position compiling dynastic history; he died during Emperor Wen's reign. His biography, found in the *Sui shu*, states that he authored a fifteen-roll *Jingyi ji*. *Sui shu* 58: 1421.

[102] *Sui shu* 58: 1421; *Bei shi* 83: 2808.

[103] Included in Lu 1967: 537–43, they are discussed in Uchiyama 1979: 52–4.

[104] Wang 1984: 331.

[105] Campany 1996b: 90.

encyclopedia completed by Daoshi 道世 (d. 683) in 668.[106] This tale, which will be dealt with in greater detail later, is entitled *Jin tinghu shenmiao jingyan* 晉亭湖神廟經驗 (Proof of the Scripture's Efficacy at the Temple of the God of Pavilion Lake During the Jin Dynasty)."[107] As the title implies, the event in the tale is said to take place during the Jin Dynasty (265–420). It recounts how a Brahman priest and his disciple died while attempting to subdue the god of the Pavilion Lake, who was finally subdued by a Buddhist monk who recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Through the conversation between the Buddhist monk and the god, we are told that the previous two priests could not subdue the god because they, unlike the Buddhist monk, were not upholders of the Mahāyāna scriptures.

3.1.2 Tales from the Early Tang

Another early tale related to the *Diamond Sutra* is included in the *Mingbao ji* 冥報記 (A Record of the Hidden [Workings of] Retribution), an early Tang collection of Buddhist tales compiled by Tang Lin 唐臨 (600?–659?), a high government official under the Tang.[108] We do not know the exact

[106] The *Fayuan zhulin* consists of one hundred rolls, with entries selected from various scriptures, treatises, historical and literary works, which are thematically divided into sections. Thus, besides being an important source of ancient knowledge on a great variety of topics, it also provides information of long lost works that have passages and texts preserved in it.

[107] Lu 1967: 538–9; FYZL19. See Appendix 1 for a list of *Diamond Sutra* tales in the *Fayuan zhulin*.

[108] The best study of the *Mingbao ji* in English is Donald Gjertson's (1989) *Miraculous Retribution: A Translation and Study of T'ang Lin's Ming-pao chi*. Lost in China since the Song dynasty, there are four surviving manuscripts of the *Mingbao ji* now preserved in Japan. Gjertson's study discusses the *Mingbao ji* with respect to two manuscripts available for study, the Kōzanji manuscript dated to the Nara period (645–794) held by Kōzan Monastery in Kyoto and the eleventh-century manuscript preserved in the library of Marquis Maeda. Although the

date of its completion, but internal evidence suggests that Tang Lin started to record the tales as early as 645, and completed the collection between 653 and 655.[109] The tales in the *Mingbao ji* are based on personal observations and the accounts of relatives and friends, and they were compiled for the first time by Tang Lin, who tried to confirm them and select the most probable version of different accounts.[110]

The tale in question is in the second roll of two existing manuscripts of the *Mingbao ji* studied by Gjertson.[111] It is a tale about Lady Doulu 豆盧夫人, who was the wife of Duke Chen and the elder sister of the Duke of Kuan of Rui. The incident occurred after she started learning to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. We are told that one evening she had a severe headache and felt discomfort in her limbs. As her condition worsened, she wanted to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. After she sent her maid off looking for light, she saw a light enter her chamber and approach her. Immediately, she was cured of her malaise, and she eventually managed to recite the scripture. This tale seems to have been very popular as it was subsequently included in later *Diamond Sutra* tale collections[112] and important Buddhist works compiled in the early Tang dynasty, such as the *Fayuan zhulin*[113] and the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*

Mingbao ji originally consisted of two rolls, these manuscripts come in three rolls, with fifty-three and fifty-seven tales respectively.

[109] Gjertson 1989: 94–6.

[110] Ibid.: 108.

[111] Tale 28 in roll 2 of the *Mingbao ji* in Gjertson 1989: 213–4.

[112] These collections will be introduced later in this chapter: *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji* (JYJ35) and the *Chisong Jin'gang jing lingyan Gongde ji* (GDJ3).

[113] *Fayuan zhulin* 18, T53.2122: 421c9–22.

集神州三寶感通錄 (A Record of Collected [Accounts] of the Responsive Penetration of the Three Gems in China; hereafter *Gantong lu*).[114]

Another tale of the *Diamond Sutra* is found in the Maeda manuscript of the *Mingbao ji*. This tale relates the experience of a person called Li Siyi 李思一 who suddenly died and was brought to the underworld, where someone had accused him of inflicting harm.[115] As the case reached a stalemate because his alibi could not be established without the presence of an important witness, he was temporarily allowed to return to the human realm, where he repented and accepted the precepts, and also encouraged his family to scan the *Diamond Sutra* five thousand times. Li was later acquitted because his accuser confessed to falsely accusing him, and his alibi was further established by proxies sent by an important witness to testify to his innocence.

It is uncertain whether this story was included in the original *Mingbao ji*, since it is not found in the older Kōzanji manuscript. In any case, it is certainly an early *Diamond Sutra* tale because we can also find versions of it in the *Gantong lu*[116] and *Fayuan zhulin*.[117] The version in the latter work is

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[114] Also known as the *Sanbao gantong ji* 三寶感通記 or simply as *Gantong lu* 感通錄, this three-roll collection was compiled by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) in 664. It records marvelous accounts of the discovery of relics, Buddha statues, and unusual feats of monks that testify to their holiness. A study of this text is included in Lippiello 2001. For the tale, see *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 3, T52.210: 429b18–25.

[115] Tale A in roll 2 of the *Mingbao ji* in Gjertson 1989: 217–9. This tale, attributed to Xiao Yu's collection, is later included in *Jin'gang bore jing jiyanji* (JYJ26).

[116] *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 3, T52.429b5–17. This collection actually contains eleven tales from the *Mingbao ji*. Gjertson 1989: 42, note 162.

[117] *Fayuan zhulin* 91, T53.2122: 958c17–9a1. The *Fayuan zhulin* is said to contain all or part of thirty-eight of the fifty-seven tales in the most complete surviving manuscripts but is thought to have been part of Tang Lin's original compilation. Gjertson 1989: 43, note 164.

attributed to the *Mingbao shiyi* 冥報拾遺 (Gleanings of the Hidden [Workings of] Retributions), another collection of tales compiled in 663 by Lang Yuling 郎餘令 (fl. mid seventh century)[118] as a supplement to the *Mingbao ji*.[119] Although the *Mingbao shiyi* is no longer extant, as many as forty-eight tales attributed to it can be located in various works.[120] Among these tales, there are more than ten that are related to the *Diamond Sutra*.[121]

As shown above, both the *Mingbao ji* and *Mingbao shiyi* are important sources of early *Diamond Sutra* tales that began to appear in increasing numbers from the early Tang. Many of the *Diamond Sutra* stories from these two collections are later collected in the *Fayuan zhulin,* which was composed a few decades later. Based on Daoxuan's attribution, there are eight tales from the *Mingbao ji* and seven from the *Mingbao shiyi* collected in the *Fayuan zhulin*.[122] Apart from the *Fayuan zhulin*, there are four tales related to the

[118] His biographies are found in the *Jiu Tang shu* (189: 4961–2) and the *Xin Tang shu* (199: 5659–60). Lang Yuling's biographies are included in the "Confucian Scholar" section of the two official histories of the Tang. He was a metropolitan graduate (*jinshi* 進士) who was known for his learning and artistic talents. He had once served as a staff member in a princely establishment and as a provincial official. There is no indication of his affiliation with Buddhism.

[119] Gjertson 1989: 34, note 131. The tales attributed to the *Mingbao shiyi* seem to supplement the *Mingbao ji* in two ways: (1) they record tales of karmic retribution not included in Tang Lin's collection, and (2) they add to stories already in the *Mingbao ji*, by describing additional events observed or experienced by people that Tang Lin had discussed previously. Ibid.: 34–5.

[120] Gjertson 1989: 34, note 132.

[121] Out of the ten *Jiyan ji* tales attributed to the *Mingbao shiyi*, six of them—also attributed to the same source—can be found in the *Fayuan zhulin*.

[122] Narratives from the *Mingbao ji* are FYZL4–8, FYZL18 and FYZL21; those from the *Mingbao shiyi* are FYZL9–13, FYZL15, and FYZL22.

Diamond Sutra collected in the *Gantong lu*, and although their sources are not given, they can also be found in the *Mingbao ji* and the *Fayuan zhulin*.[123]

3.2 Early Collections of *Diamond Sutra* Tales

The emergence of the first collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales is a significant event. It indicates that the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* had come of age. First, as a collection solely dedicated to the *Diamond Sutra*, it attests to its importance and presence as an important religious object at that time. Second, the *Diamond Sutra* must have had a considerable following due to the sizable number of accounts related to it in circulation, which could be selected and included in a tale compilation.

3.2.1 The First Collection

The first known collection of *Diamond Sutra* narratives is the *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji* 金剛般若經靈驗記 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*; hereafter *Lingyan ji*). Our knowledge of this collection comes from fourteen tales attributed to it in a later collection, the *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji* (to be discussed in the next section). Both the stories about the god of Pavilion Lake (JYJ35) and Li Siyi (JYJ26) discussed above are attributed to the *Lingyan ji* and enclosed in this later collection, albeit in different versions. No longer available, the *Lingyan ji* is said to have been compiled by Xiao Yu 蕭禹 (575–648), a direct descendant of the royal family of the state of Liang of

[123] The tales about Lady Doulu 豆盧夫人 (FYZL4), Hu Yuangui 狐元軌 (FYZL2), and Zhang Taixuan 張太玄 (FYZL14) are found in the *Fayuan zhulin*, while the one about Li Siyi 李思一 is found in the Maeda manuscript of the *Mingbao ji*. Gjertson 1989: 217.

the Southern Dynasties, who later served as a high official under both the Sui and Tang dynasties.[124] Since Xiao Yu was alive in the beginning of the seventh century, this would place the compilation of the collection in the first-half of the seventh century. The *Lingyan ji,* therefore, was composed slightly before the *Mingbao ji.*

Xiao Yu was well known as a devout Buddhist as shown by other religious and secular writings.[125] He appeared in two tales in the *Mingbao ji.* In the first story, he was said to have donated 500 bolts of silk to the project of carving Buddhist scriptures on stone.[126] The second narrative relates that he was retained and asked by his dying brother, Xiao Jing, to recite the Buddhist scriptures for him.[127] Xiao Yu is also mentioned in the *Liangchu qingzhong yi* 量處輕重儀 (Ritual for Measuring and Handling Light and Heavy Property) as a dedicated Buddhist who always paid obeisance to the Buddha image and recited the scriptures after he finished his official duties.[128]

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[124] Xiao Yu's biographies can be found in the *Jiu Tang shu* (63: 2398–404) and the *Xin Tang shu* (101: 3949–3959). Xiao Yu's father was Emperor Ming of the Later Liang dynasty, a puppet state with its capital at Jiangling 江陵 (modern Hubei), which was sustained first by the Northern Zhou, and then by the Sui, who abolished it in 587. His elder sister was the empress of Emperor Yang 隋煬帝 (r. 605–617) of the Sui dynasty.

[125] A detail account of his relationship with Buddhism is available in Tsukamoto 1975: 378–82.

[126] *Mingbao ji* 1, T51.2082: 789c4–c24. Gjertson has brought our attention to Tsukamoto's 1935 study that points out that the name of the protagonist should not be Shi Zhiyuan 釋智菀, but Shi Jingwan 釋靜琬 (d. 639), the monk who was responsible for commencing the project of preserving Buddhist scriptures on stones. Gjerston 1989: 183.

[127] *Mingbao ji* 2, T51.2082: 791b20–c18.

[128] The two-roll *Liangchu qingzhong yi*, which discusses how property of deceased monastics is handled based on the vinaya, was compiled by Daoxuan in 637. Reference to Xiao Yu was probably added in the revised edition made in 667. For reference to Xiao Yu, see T45.1895: 851c12–3.

Xiao Yu's *Lingyan ji* probably did not circulate widely because it is not listed in standard Chinese bibliographies. The only other mention of the *Lingyan ji* comes from a tale concerning Xiao Yu which is collected in the Song encyclopedia, *Taiping guangji*.[129] It mentions Xiao Yu's authorship of the *Lingyan ji*, and states that it contains eighteen stories. Except for these two references, no other premodern mention of the collection has been located. However, if the above tale of the *Taiping guangji* is to be believed, we do know a fair bit about this collection because fourteen out of eighteen of its tales have survived.

3.2.2 An Early Extant Collection

With the *Lingyan ji* long lost, the earliest extant collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales is the *Jin'gang bore jiyan ji* 金剛般若集驗記 (A Record of Collected Proofs [of the Efficacy] of the *Diamond Sutra*; hereafter *Jiyan ji*). The *Jiyan ji* was composed by Meng Xianzhong 孟獻忠, an adjutant of Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan). Except for his official title, we know nothing about Meng, as no references about him can be found in known historical records. Meng apparently penned the preface of the collection and indicated that he finished the compilation in the sixth year of the Kaiyuan era (718). The *Jiyan ji* most certainly did not circulate widely, and it probably was lost in China soon after its composition. It was not recorded in Chinese bibliographies, and no Chinese record mentioning its name can be found. The

[129] This tale was later included in post-Tang collections of *Diamond Sutra* tales. See chapter 5 for these collections.

closest documentation available is a reference to an early Tang collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales in three rolls by the title of *Jin'gang jing lingyan ji* 金剛經靈驗記 in a preface to a ninth-century collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales.[130] However, it is uncertain whether it refers to the *Jiyan ji*. It is similar to the *Jiyan ji* in the number of rolls it comprises. Yet in name, it might refer to the *Lingyan ji* although Xiao Yu's collection, if it consisted only of eighteen tales, was probably not composed in three rolls.[131]

A few manuscripts of the *Jiyan ji*, two dating to the early Heian period (ninth century), are preserved in Japan (Figure 1).[132] It is not clear exactly when and through what route the *Jiyan ji* was transmitted to Japan. There is no mention of the *Jiyan ji* in the catalogs of items brought back to Japan by Japanese monks who went to Tang China.[133] Nevertheless, the *Jiyan ji* was

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[130] Duan Chengshi's preface to the *Jin'gang jing jiuyi*, XZ87.1630: 467c15. This collection will be introduced later in this chapter.

[131] I disagree with Katsuzaki (1999: 552), who concurs with Imamura (1980) that this collection is Xiao Yu's *Lingyan ji*, and that it consists of three rolls. Given the number of extant tales claimed to derive from the *Lingyan ji* and the tale in the *Taiping guangji* (TPGJ10) about Xiao Yu having compiled a collection with eighteen tales, his collection should only be one roll.

[132] According to Oh, four manuscripts of the *Jiyan ji* are now preserved in Japan: (1) the Kuroita Katsumi 黒板勝美 Manuscript, the first roll of which is missing, and a facsimile edition of which was published by Koten hozon kai 古典保存会 (Association for the Preservation of Classics) in 1934–1935; (2) the Kōzan Monastery 高山寺 Manuscript, which contains the entire *Jiyan ji* text, and whose postscript indicates that it was copied in 1079; (3) the Ishiyama Monastery 石山寺 Manuscript believed to have been copied in the early Heian period; this has only roll one of the *Jiyan ji*; (4) the Kōyasan University 高野山大学 Manuscript: copied in 1705, this edition is based on the Kōzan Monastery Manuscript. The calligraphy of the comments and the text differ. The postscript shows that it was copied a few times. See Oh in Kim and Ch'ae 1973: 478–9. The Kōzan Monastery manuscript is now kept in Nara National Museum. See Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan 1997: 306–307. It seems that there is another manuscript of the *Jiyan ji* kept in the Central Library of the Tenri University, which is listed on the library's website: http://www.tcl.gr.jp/tcl/shitei.html

[133] Oh 1973: 475. Oh also notes that there is a text entitled *Jin'gang jing ganying jue* 金剛經感應訣 in one catalog.

already brought to Japan by the early Heian period, as attested by manuscripts of the *Jiyan ji* and works influenced by the *Jiyan ji* dating to the early Heian period. In fact, the Japanese monk Kyōkai 景戒 (fl. early Heian period, early ninth century) from the Yakushi Monastery in Nara was apparently inspired to compose his *Nihonkoku genpō zen'aku ryōiki* 日本国現報善惡靈異記 (A Record of Numinous Marvels of Present-Life Retribution of Good and Evil in Japan; hereafter *Nihon ryōiki*) in the early ninth century after being exposed to collections of Chinese Buddhist narratives, such as the *Mingbao ji* and the *Jiyan ji*. This can be clearly discerned from his preface to the *Nihon ryōiki*:

> In China, the *Myōhōki* 冥報記 was compiled, and, during the great Tang dynasty, *Hannya kenki* 般若驗記 was written. Since we respect the documents of foreign lands, should we not also believe and stand in awe of the miraculous events in our own land? Having witnessed these events myself, I cannot remain idle. After long meditation on this, I now break my silence. I have recorded the limited information that has come to me in these three volumes called the *Nihonkoku genpō zen'aku ryōiki* for future generations.[134]

The *Hannya kenki* mentioned in the preface definitely refers to the *Jiyan ji*.[135] This is verified by the fact that *Jiyan ji* is the only *Diamond Sutra* tale collection from China found in Japan, and more importantly, the *Nihon ryōiki* alludes to a particular story first told in the *Jiyan ji*. Tale 24 of the middle roll of the *Nihon ryōiki* relates the experience of someone called Iwashima who had an experience similar to Dou Dexuan, the protagonist of a narrative

[134] Nakamura 1973: 101. This passage is taken from the translation of the *Nihon ryōiki* included in Nakamura's study.

[135] I agree with Nakamura (1973: 37, note 160) on this.

contained in the first roll of the *Jiyan ji*.[136] In fact, the tale in *Nihon ryōiki* is very similar to the one about Dou Dexuan, which at the end states, "Just as Tokugen 徳玄 of Tang China escaped the messenger of King Yama owing to the power of the *Hannya kyō* 般若經 (*Diamond Sutra*), so did Iwashima of Japan…"[137] In other places in the story, it is mentioned explicitly that the scripture that Iwashima recited was the *Diamond Sutra*.



Figure 1. First page of the first roll of the *Jin'gang bore jiyan ji* (Jp. *Kongō hannya shugen ki*). Booklet, ink on paper. Heian period, Jōryaku 3 (1079). Nara: Nara National Museum (Important Cultural Property, Accession Number: 1192-0). [Digital image] Available at: http://.narahaku.go.jp [Accessed 4 May 2013].

[136] The tale in *Nihon ryōiki* is entitled "On the Fiends, Messengers of King Yama, Who Canceled Death in Exchange for a Bribe." A translation is available in Nakamura 1973: 192–4. The tale about Dou Dexuan is collected in the *Jiyan ji* (JYJ3).

[137] Nakamura 1973: 194 (with modifications).

At the end of the narrative about Dou Dexuan, Meng recorded that Dou's great grandson related the account to him. An abridged version of this tale is also included in the *Taiping guangji* and indicated as originating from *Baoying ji*. Since the *Baoying ji* was composed in the late ninth century, it is definitely not the source of tale 24 in the *Nihon ryōiki*.[138] Other possible influences of the *Jiyan ji* on the *Nihon ryōiki* can be seen from the preface at the beginning of each of the three rolls of the latter work, a format possibly derived from the former.[139] The *Jiyan ji* continued to exert an influence on the formation of Japanese tale literature throughout the Heian period (794–1185). In the *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (Anthology of Tales of Times Now Past) composed in the late Heian period, there are five accounts that seem to originate from the *Jiyan ji* although their origins were not recorded in the collection.[140]

The *Jiyan ji* is an interesting collection as far as its format is concerned. It is composed of three rolls, each with two sections. The tales are thematically grouped into six sections based on the supplicant's experience with respect to the *Diamond Sutra,* such as being rescued from problems or dangers, achieving a long lifespan, and so on.[141] In addition to an overall preface of the *Jiyan ji* in the first roll, each section begins with a preface and ends with a

[138] The *Baoying ji* will be discussed later in this chapter.

[139] Nakamura 1989: 38.

[140] Oh 1973: 477.

[141] The contents of the *Jiyan ji* and Meng's grouping will be discussed in the next chapter.

praise (*zan* 贊)[142] after the last story of each section. The number of stories is also indicated at the beginning of each section. According to the number stated before each section, the collection should total seventy, but in the Taishō edition, there are seventy-two.[143] Apparently, some narratives were added to the collection at some point when the collection was copied.

For most of the tales, the dates of the events provided by Meng range from the Liang dynasty (502–557) to as late as 717, a year before the collection was completed. Furthermore, Meng tried to indicate the sources of the tales whenever possible; for example, when they were taken from some collections, such as Xiao Yu's *Lingyan ji*, Tang Lin's *Mingbao ji*, and Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi*, their sources were stated at the beginning of them. When tales originated from hearsay, whether they were firsthand or secondhand accounts from relatives and friends, they were noted as such at the end of the tales. Except for twenty-one tales that were not given any sources, the sources of the other fifty-one are given: fourteen works originated from the *Lingyan ji*, one from *Mingbao ji*, ten from the *Mingbao shiyi*, and twenty-five tales from accounts relayed or recorded by someone (see Appendix 2). In three tales, Meng wrote that he personally asked about them.[144] As for those without sources, many of them (sixteen) concern the monk Qingxu 清虛 (698–717),

[142] The *zan* is a short poem, often a eulogy or encomium of someone or a piece of work. It may be considered as a kind of appreciation. They are, in short, compact, allusive verse of four words per line, the summing up of one's contributions to something.

[143] Instead of sixteen tales, Section 4 has eighteen stories. Sections 5 and 6 in roll 3 have twelve and eight, respectively, although they are supposed to have ten each according to the section headings that state the number of tales in each section.

[144] JYJ12, JYJ15, and JYJ30.

whose biography is included in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*.[145] According to his biography, which probably derived from these narratives, he is a native of Zizhou, where Meng was stationed officially. Therefore, it is possible that these tales are firsthand accounts.

The *Jiyan ji* is an important collection for a few reasons. Although Xiao Yu's *Lingyan ji* and Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi* are not extant, the *Jiyan ji* contains many tales from these two collections, thus preserving important information about religious attitudes and practice pertaining to the *Diamond Sutra* in seventh-century China. In addition to having the largest number of *Diamond Sutra* tales, its tales are longer and more complex, and give more details compared to other versions contained in other collections. To the linguist, its tales also provide interesting objects of study because they differ from the more polished versions in other collections in being more oral and colloquial in nature. This is quite apparent when one compares the same tale that appears in both the *Jiyan ji* and the *Taiping guangji*.

3.3 Later Tang Collections and Tales

3.3.1 An Early Ninth-Century Collection

The *Jin'gang jing Jiuyi* 金剛經鳩異 (Collected Marvels of the *Diamond Sutra*; hereafter *Jiuyi*) is a compendium of *Diamond Sutra* tales compiled by the well-known Tang literatus Duan Chengshi (803?–863) in 836. Consisting of twenty-one stories that extoll the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Jiuyi* was most likely

[145] *Song gaoseng zhuan* 25, T50.2061: 867a11–b10.

composed to memorialize his father, Duan Wenchang 段文昌 (773–835), a notable Tang official who had passed away the year before.[146] In his preface to the *Jiuyi*, Duan describes his father's piety and special devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* and relates an experience in which his father was rescued based on his recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*.[147] This is not surprising because Duan Chengshi had an unusually close relationship with his father, and they were not separated except for short periods of time.[148] Moreover, Duan Chengshi himself was probably a devout Buddhist. According to the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Tang), he was particularly interested in Buddhist books.[149] In his preface, he also mentioned attending lectures on commentaries of the *Diamond Sutra*.[150]

Although now included as the seventh roll of the ten-roll sequel to the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (Miscellaneous Morsels from the Southern Slope of Mount You), the *Jiuyi* was probably first composed as a single work and later added together with other works to form the sequel. The *Youyang zazu,* which consists of a twenty-roll first volume and a sequel, is a compilation of a variety

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[146] The biographies of both Duan Wenchang and Duan Chengshi are found in the standard histories of the Tang: *Jiu Tang shu* 167: 436–9, and *Xin Tang shu* 89: 3763–4. For a good biographical sketch of Duan Chengshi in English, refer to Reed 2003: 9–24. See Appendix 3 for a list of tales in this collection.

[147] This experience of Duan Wenchang was recorded as a tale in the section on *Diamond Sutra* tales in the *Taiping guangji* (TPGJ106). See preface of the *Jiuyi* where Duan Chengshi wrote that his father had recited the *Diamond Sutra* more than 100,000 times. *Jin'gang jing Jiuyi*, X87.1630: 467c12.

[148] Reed 2003: 17.

[149] *Jiu Tang shu* 167: 439. It is interesting to note there is no mention at all of any Buddhist affiliation in the *Xin Tang shu*. This is probably due to the editorial censorship of the Song Confucian editors.

[150] *Jin'gang jing Jiuyi*, X87.1630: 467c15–7.

of writings. Written in a smooth narrative style instead of a formal prose style, it covers a wide variety of topics ranging from local and foreign legends, hearsay, reports on natural phenomena, short anecdotes and tales of the wondrous and mundane, to a multitude of notes on such topics as medicinal herbs, perfume, tattoos, and language.[151]

In narrative style, the *Jiuyi* does not differ from the *Youyang zazu* as a whole. Indeed, the *Jiuyi* is certainly well composed, and easier to read when compared with the *Jiyan ji*, which seems more oral and colloquial. However, the *Jiuyi* stands out in the *Youyang zazu* as being thematically consistent as a whole because the other rolls in the *Youyang zazu* are often not so. In the preface of the *Jiuyi*, Duan Chengshi mentioned that he knew about some previous tales of the *Diamond Sutra* and that he had only selected those tales that were so far overlooked to be included in his compilation. It is thus natural that the tales in Duan Chengshi's collection were unknown elsewhere and not collected in previous collections. As for the sources of his tales, they are not usually indicated perhaps because he heard them personally or because the tales had been circulating around for so long that their sources were simply unknown. He did, however, provide sources for five narratives, and the source of one of them was Liu Gongquan, the famous calligrapher.[152] In three tales, he stated that the protagonists were still alive when he wrote the *Jiuyi*.[153] If Duan Chengshi was not rigorous in citing the sources of his tales, he carefully

[151] Reed 2003: 1.

[152] JY1, JY2, JY5, JY11, and JY12 (related by Liu Gongquan).

[153] JY14, JY17 and JY18.

dated the events in the tales. Except for tales 8 and 17, where the dates are not stated, the other tales all bear exact dates.[154] Furthermore, the tales are arranged almost chronologically according to events taking place from the Yongtai era (765–766) to the Taihe era (827–835).[155] Based on these dates, the tales were probably still fresh in the memory of Duan Chengshi's informants or community.

3.3.2 Tales from Dunhuang Manuscripts

Chisong jingang jing lingyan Gongde ji

Among the manuscripts discovered in Mogao cave 17 at Dunhuang are some collections of Buddhist stories. The *Chisong Jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji* 持誦金剛經靈驗功德記 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* and the Merit to be Gained from Upholding and Reciting; hereafter *Gongde ji*) is the only complete collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales found among the Dunhuang manuscripts.[156] The collection, which contains nineteen tales, was the first text among others contained in P2094, a manuscript now kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris (Figure 2). We can also find a modern edition of the collection in the Taishō canon.[157]

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[154] The date of JY17 can be inferred from the date when the Minister of Works Guo Zhao 郭釗 left Shu, which is 830. *Jiu Tang shu* 17b: 539–40; *Xin Tang shu* 180: 5331.

[155] Since the preface is not part of the main tale collection, it may be excused for bearing a date of 801. However, if the date of monk Weigong's passing away in post-Tang sources (895) is to be trusted, it is not chronologically placed. The last two tales, depicting events in the Yongtai (765–766) and Dali (766–779) eras, could have been added later to the collection.

[156] The most extensive study of this collection are Zheng 1995a (reproduced in Zheng 2010: 41–80) and Yang 2009b: 62–83.

[157] The Taishō edition, T85.2743, does not contain the *Diamond Sutra* text that is included in P2094. See Appendix 4 for a list of tales in this collection.

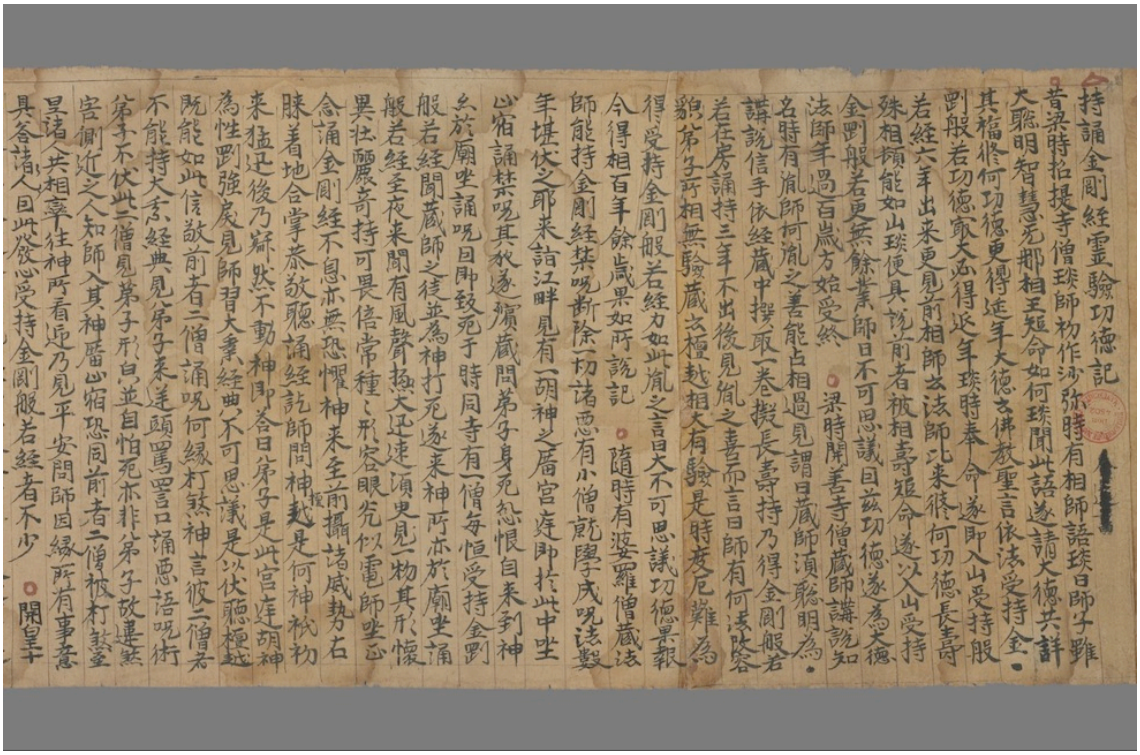


Figure 2. Beginning portion of P2094, the *Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji*. Scroll, ink on paper. Five Dynasties, 908. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France. [Digital image] Available at: http://idp.bl.uk [Accessed 4 May 2013].

P2094 is a scroll over eight meters long. The entire manuscript contains the following texts: (1) the *Gongde ji*. Written below the title of the collection are three faintly visible characters "Fengda shu" 奉達書 (lit. written by Fengda) which seem to have been erased; (2) *Kaiyuan huangdi zan jingang jing gongde* 開元皇帝贊金剛經功德 (The Merit of the Praise for the *Diamond Sutra* by the Emperor of the Kaiyuan Era);[158] (3) *Fengqing bada jin'gang wen* 奉請八大金剛文 (Text of Invitation Extended to the Eight Vajra-beings); (4) *Dashen zhenyan* 大身真言 (Great Body [of the Buddha] Mantra); (5) *Suixin*

[158] Fang 1995: 80. Composed in one roll, this work is said to appear subsequently to Xuanzong's commentary. It is purportedly written to celebrate Xuanzong's commentary.

zhenyan 隨心真言 (Mantra that Accords with the Mind); (6) *Xinzhongxin zhenyan* 心中心真言 (Mantra of the Mind Within the Mind); (7) *Jin'gang erzhou* 金剛兒咒 (Vajrakumāra Dhāraṇī); (8) *Fomu zhou* 佛母咒 (Buddhamātri Dhāraṇī); (9) *Wenshu pusa xinzhong zhengyan* 文殊菩薩心中真言 (Mantra Within the Mind of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī); and (10) the *Diamond Sutra*.[159]

P2094 is an important manuscript with respect to the texts it contains and the way these texts are ordered. The placement of the *Gongde ji* before the *Diamond Sutra* is noteworthy, and hints at the role it plays in the entire manuscript—that perhaps it was used to facilitate the propagation of the *Diamond Sutra*, a topic to be visited later. In fact, there are other examples where a sutra is written with its tales among Dunhuang manuscripts.[160]

The entire tale collection occupies approximately a third of the manuscript. At the end of the final story, there is a dedication. Following that are hymns extolling the *Diamond Sutra*, the invitation text, and the six mantras or dhāraṇīs. At the end of these texts and before the text of the *Diamond Sutra*, there is a colophon that states:

> On the ninth day of the fourth month in the eighth year of the Tianfu era of the Tang, *wuchen* in the sequence of years [11 May 908], the wearer of the common cloth Zhai Fengda wrote *Hymns Extolling the Scripture and A Record of the Verifications and Merit to be Gained*. He added to it and sent it into circulation. He hopes

[159] The calligraphy of the colophons in the manuscript and the texts preceding the *Diamond Sutra*, all written by Zhai, was in a different hand from that of the *Diamond Sutra*. Therefore, it can be inferred that Zhai Fengda did not write this copy of the *Diamond Sutra*.

[160] See for example, P2099.

> that ever after, for believers as well as departed and deceased spirits, including his current parents and people of the whole region, blessings will be the same as spring grasses, and sins be like autumn sprouts. It must certainly come about as everyone convenes a Buddhist service.[161]

From this colophon, we know that the hymns and narrative collection were written by Zhai Fengda, a "wearer of common cloth." This means that Zhai was a commoner and not a government official when he compiled these texts. Recent scholarship has shed much light on the person called Zhai Fengda (fl. 902–966), an active and productive local official whose name has been found in Dunhuang documents and cave inscriptions. The chronology of Zhai's life constructed based on these sources indicates that Zhai was twenty-six when he copied these texts.[162] This early act of devotion was followed by subsequent Buddhist projects of greater scale undertaken by Zhai later in his life. Stephen Teiser's seminal study on the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* has shown that Zhai was a devout Buddhist who sponsored ten feasts and the copying of scriptures between 958 and 960 for the benefit of his deceased wife.[163] Another study by Ning Qiang on the Zhai family cave in Dunhuang discusses Zhai Fengda's sponsorship of a major redecoration and repainting of Dunhuang Cave 220 in the tenth century during the Five Dynasties period.[164]

Perhaps what is of greater interest is the date indicated in the colophon: "the ninth day of the fourth month in the eight year of the Tianfu era of the

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[161] Translation from Teiser 1994: 119. *Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji*, T85.2743: 160a17–20.

[162] Teiser 1994: 242–3.

[163] Ibid.: 102–21.

[164] Ning 2004: 75–81.

Tang, *wuchen* in the sequence of years." This translates to 11 May 908. Teiser has noted a problem with this date as he points out that the Tianfu era had only four years, but merely explains that the "Tianfu era" period was used anachronistically in records as late as 910 at Dunhuang.[165] But it seems unlikely that Zhai would name the era anachronistically here since he was the editor of almost all of the almanacs used at Dunhuang between 926 and 959, and thus was likely particular about such matters as dates and era names.[166]

Zhai Fengda probably had better reasons to use this era name. The Tianfu era, the last era of the reign of Emperor Zhaozong 昭宗 (888–904), had only four years and was succeeded by the Tianyou era on the tenth day of the intercalary fourth month in 904. That year, the rebel Zhu Quanzhong 朱全忠 (852–912) had Emperor Zhaozong killed, and installed Emperor Zhaozong's son as a puppet ruler.[167] The era name then, Tianyou, remained unchanged when the new Emperor Ai (r. 904–907) was enthroned, and only changed to Kaiping when Zhu proclaimed himself sovereign in the Later Liang (907–923), and ruled as Emperor Taizu (r. 907–912).[168] Because Zhu had taken control of the imperial house from the beginning of the Tianyou era, Zhai's use of the Tianfu era can be taken as an act of pledging allegiance to the Tang rule, and for not considering the Tianyou era as a legitimate era in Tang history. This would explain why, even when the Tang dynasty had ended in

[165] Teiser 1994: 119.

[166] Ning 2004: 76.

[167] Davis 2004: xxx.

[168] Ibid.: xxxi.

907, Zhai Fengda still used "the eighth year of the Tianfu era of the Tang" to designate the year 908 as specific to the Tianfu era (*yu tang* 于唐).[169]

Unlike many Dunhuang texts, the *Gongde ji* bears a title, and contains a colophon that provides important information about itself, such as the date it was composed and the name of its sponsor/compiler. The *Gongde ji* is an invaluable collection also because it exists in no other edition than in manuscript P2094. In addition to containing tales that are not found elsewhere,[170] it includes very old tales, including a version of the earliest *Diamond Sutra* story from the *Jingyi ji* mentioned above. Although the dates of events in the narratives of this collection are not indicated most of the time, reference to versions collected elsewhere shows that the dates range from the Liang (502–557) to as late as the Yuanhe era (806–820). Eleven of its nineteen tales have versions in the *Jiyan ji*, and nine out of these eleven first appeared in Xiao Yu's *Lingyan ji*, albeit in abridged versions; while others could be found in the *Jiuyi*, *Jiyan ji*, *Gantong lu*, *Fayuan zhulin*, and the *Mingbao ji*. Even long after the texts of the *Lingyan ji* and *Jiyan ji* had disappeared in China, their stories were probably passed down orally over a long period of time and transmitted over long distances to Dunhuang. This would explain why the tales in the *Gongde ji* are more oral and shorter, with a few—the last three—being brief summaries. As a collection composed in

[169] Yang 2009b: 69–71.

[170] GDJ8, GDJ13 and GDJ14.

Dunhuang, it might tell us about the state of Buddhism at the periphery of the empire.

Other Dunhuang tales

In addition to the *Gongde ji*, tales related to the *Diamond Sutra* were also found in other Dunhuang manuscripts. There are two written on manuscript P4025, which are also included in the *Gongde ji*: one is about Zhu Shiheng (GDJ14) and is written in a rather cursive style on the recto, and the other about Chen Zhao on the verso of the manuscript (GDJ10). We may note that the story about Zhu Shiheng is only found in the *Gongde ji*, thus making it a Dunhuang-only work. The version of the tale about Chen Zhao is found in the *Jiuyi* and nowhere else. Another manuscript S4037 also contains two narratives on its verso, one about Layman Gou and the other about Li Qing (Figure 3). The former, also found in the *Gongde ji* (GDJ11), is an early tale of the *Diamond Sutra* that appeared in seventh-century collections, such as the *Fayuan zhulin* and the *Gantong lu*. The latter work is not found in any collection, including the *Gongde ji*.[171]

In addition, another story in manuscript P3863v has been identified as belonging to the *Diamond Sutra*.[172] In the catalog of manuscripts kept in France, this narrative is entitled *Guangqi sannian jin'gang jing shenyan jishi* 光啓三年金剛經神驗記事 (A Record of Spiritual Proofs related to the *Diamond Sutra* in the Third Year of the Guangqi Era [887]). The existence of other

[171] Zhang 1997: 1064; Ding 1998: 124.

[172] Yang 2009b: 194–5. According to Yang, there are three anecdotes in this manuscript, but it is perhaps more appropriate to consider them as constituting a single tale.

Diamond Sutra works in Dunhuang manuscripts shows that tales related to the *Diamond Sutra* must have been very popular and widely circulated, and they also hint that the *Gongde ji* is probably not an isolated instance of a *Diamond Sutra* collection.

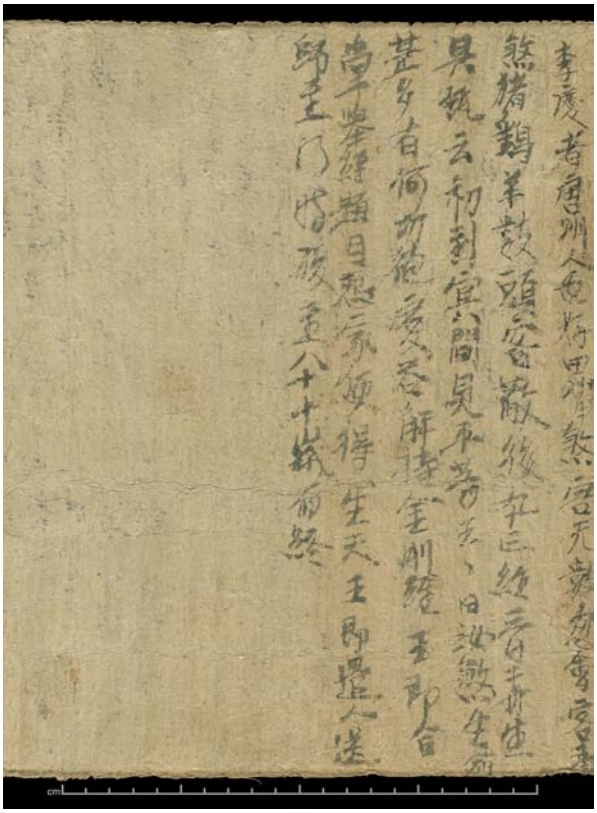


Figure 3. Tale of Li Qin on S4037v. Scroll, ink on paper. Tang/Five Dynasties. London: The British Library. [Digital image] Available at: http://www.idp.bl.uk [Accessed 5 May 2013]

3.3.3 Tales from Other Tang Collections

Besides the above collections, an important source of *Diamond Sutra* tales is the *Taiping guangji*. Many of the items collected in it had long been lost, thus making the *Taiping guangji* a good source to recover lost works. There are a total of ninety-two major categories in the *Taiping guangji*, and most of them are related to the religious and supernatural, such as Buddhist

and Daoist priests, immortals, ghosts, various deities, reincarnation, retribution, and so on. Ten rolls of the *Taiping guangji* are dedicated to narratives related to Buddhist scriptures: seven rolls on the *Diamond Sutra*, one on the *Lotus Sutra*, and two rolls of the *Guanyin Sutra*. A total of 103 stories related to the *Diamond Sutra* are collected in rolls 102–108 (Appendix 5). These tales come from a variety of sources. Apart from the *Mingbao ji* and *Jiuyi* (listed as *Youyang zazu*), fifteen tales are listed in rolls 104 and 105 as originating from a lost collection called the *Guangyi ji* 廣異記 (An Extensive Record of Marvels), and fifty-four works from another lost collection called the *Baoying ji* 報應記 (A Record of Retributions). In addition, there is one tale each from the *Gantong lu*, *Yinhua lu* 因話錄 (Notes from Conversations),[173] *Xuanshi zhi* 宣室志 (Records from the Xuan Chamber),[174] *Jiwen* 紀聞 (A Record of Hearsay),[175] and *Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言 (Trivial Words of the Northern Meng).[176] Among all these sources of *Diamond Sutra* stories, the

[173] The *Yinhua lu* is a collection of short stories written by Zhao Lin 趙璘 (*jinshi* degree 834). The semi-historical stories are arranged in six rolls with five parts, with their titles following the five notes in traditional Chinese music. As Zhao had a great interest in literary quotations related to the higher court officials, the book is of historiographical value.

[174] The *Xuanshi zhi* is composed by Zhang Du 張讀 (fl. mid-ninth century) and is said to derive its name from a story about Emperor Wen of Han (203–157 BCE) who consulted Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–169 BCE) in the Xuan chamber regarding matters of the supernatural world.

[175] A Tang collection of *chuanqi* essays is attributed to Niu Su 牛肅 (fl. early eighth century). The dynastic bibliography in *Xin Tang shu* records a ten-roll *Jiwen* attributed to Niu Su. *Xin Tang shu* 59: 1541. There are a 101 items in the *Taiping guangji* attributed to the *Jiwen*.

[176] The *Beimeng suoyan*, composed by Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 (c. 900–968), is a compilation of notes on politics, institutions, and customs of the Tang-Five Dynasties period. Meng 夢 is an old name of the city of Jiangling in the modern province of Hubei, where the author wrote his book. This work contains reports about the court activities, the private life of officials and commoners, supernatural phenomena, and otherworldly punishments for evil

Guangyi ji and the *Baoying ji* are of particular interest. Not only do they contain a substantial number of *Diamond Sutra* tales, many of them are not mentioned in the collections we have studied thus far.

Guangyi ji

The *Guangyi ji* is a mid-Tang collection of tales compiled by a minor Tang official, Dai Fu 戴孚 (fl. 760–780).[177] Although the collection was lost long ago, the remains of the twenty-roll *Guangyi ji*—some 300 items—have been preserved mostly in the *Taiping guangji*.[178] These works convey accounts of encounters with the unusual, supernatural, other world, and so on. According to Glen Dudbridge, Dai Fu was a direct observer or an informed reporter of many, if not all, incidents recorded in his book. If this is the case, then Dai Fu's observation showed that the *Diamond Sutra* had become very popular by the mid Tang, overshadowing other important Buddhist scriptures. Among the roughly 300 items recovered, twenty-three of them mentioned the *Diamond Sutra*, and fifteen out of these are contained in the section on *Diamond Sutra* tales in the *Taiping guangji*.[179] As for other scriptures, the *Lotus Sutra* is mentioned only four times, the *Guanyin Sutra* two times, the

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deeds in life. Originally in thirty rolls, only twenty are preserved. Although the tale about Ba Nanzai 巴南宰 (TPGJ98) was attributed to *Shuyi ji* 述異記 (A Record of Accounts of Marvels) by the Song editors, it is attributed to the *Beimeng suoyan* in the Ming edition. The compilers of the Qing Imperial Library catalog regarded the *Shuyi ji* as a Tang forgery although it was said to be composed during the Liang dynasty (502–556) because it contained anachronisms. Elman 2005: 43.

[177] Very little is known of Dai Fu, although a study of him, based on the *Taiping guangji*, is available in Dudbridge 1995: 18–47.

[178] Dudbridge 1995: 45.

[179] Tales 19–33, 37, 41, 56, 153, 171 and 188 in ibid.: 175–238.

Jin'guang ming jing 金光明經 (Sk. *Suvarṇaprabhāsôttama-sūtra*) three times, the *Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經 (Sk. *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*) one time, and the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* twice. Most of the *Diamond Sutra* stories attributed to the *Guangyi ji* are not found elsewhere, except for only two tales: one about a person called Du Sine collected in the *Jiyan ji* and the other about Wei Xun found only in the *Jiyan ji* and *Gongde ji*.[180]

Baoying ji

Without the tales in the *Taiping guangji* that are attributed to the *Baoying ji*, we would not have known about the *Baoying ji*, because this collection is no longer extant. Beside these tales in the *Taiping guangji*, a collection by the name of *Baoying ji* is collected in roll 72 of the 120-roll edition of the *Shuofu* 說郛 (The Domain of Texts), a compendium containing abstracts of mainly fictional notes from the earliest times to the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.[181] There are a total of eighteen works in this edition of the *Baoying ji*. However, all of them were already collected in the *Taiping guangji*, although they do not have entirely the same wording. It is uncertain whether the tales in the *Shuofu* were taken from the *Taiping guangji*. If this is the case, why did the editors of the *Shuofu* fail to include the other thirty-six narratives attributed to the *Baoying ji* in the *Taiping guangji*?

Since most of the tales attributed to the *Baoying ji* in the *Taiping guangji* concern the *Diamond Sutra*, and the *Baoying ji* collected in the *Shuofu*

[180] Du Sine: JYJ31 (TPGJ54); Wei Xun: JYJ59 (GDJ17).

[181] The *Shuofu* is compiled by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1329–1410) with a preface dated to 1370.

contains only *Diamond Sutra* stories, it seems that the *Baoying ji* is a collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales. In fact, the *Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目 (General Catalog of Noble Writings) lists a Buddhist tale collection called *Jin'gang jing baoying ji* 金剛經報應記 (A Record of Retributions Concerning the *Diamond Sutra*), composed in three rolls, although the name of the compiler is not given.[182] Wang Guoliang thinks that the compiler/author of the *Baoying ji* should be Lu Qiu 盧求 (fl. mid ninth century).[183] In fact, the editor of the *Song shi* (History of Song) attributes the *Baoying ji* to Lu Qiu,[184] an amendment made probably with reference to the bibliographic section of the *Tong zhi* 通志 (Comprehensive Treatise), which attributes the *Baoying ji* to Lu Yong 盧永.[185] Cheng Yizhong, however, thinks that the compiler of the *Baoying ji* is Wang Gu 王轂 (fl. late ninth century).[186] Because the latest events in the tales took place at the end of the ninth century, it seems more probable that Wang Gu, who was active in the late ninth century, was the composer of the *Baoying ji*. For instance, the event in the story about a

[182] A catalogue of the Song imperial library completed by Northern Song (960–1126) scholar Wang Yaochen 王堯臣 (1003–1058) in 1038. A description of it is given in Teng and Biggerstaff 1971: 18–9.

[183] Wang Guoliang (1979: 45) thinks that the one-roll *Baoying ji* refers to the *Jin'gang jing baoying ji* authored by Lu Qiu. But Lu Qiu's dates are uncertain although we know that he is the son-in-law of Li Ao 李翱 (772–841), and he took the palace examination in 826. Details of his life are included in roll 8 of *Tang shuyan* 唐摭言 (Picked-up Words of the Tang) by Wang Dingbao 王定保 (870–941). Wang 1959: 83–4

[184] *Song shi* 205: 5183.

[185] The *Tong zhi*, completed in 1161, is an alternative arrangement of the official dynastic histories compiled by the Southern Song scholar and state official Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1162). *Tong zhi* 67: 794/3; *Zhongguo xiaoshuo zongmu tiyao* 2005: 60.

[186] Cheng 1981: 78. The dates of Wang Gu are also uncertain, although we know that he took the palace examination in 898.

military officer of Yanzhou (*Yanzhou junjiang* 兗州軍將) is said to have taken place during the Qiangfu era (874–879).[187] In two other narratives, the events are said to have taken place during or after the period of the rebel Qin Zongquan 秦宗權 (d. 889); therefore, the *Baoying ji* must have been composed at the turn of the century.[188]

From the number of works collected in the *Taiping guangji*, it can be inferred that the *Baoying ji* was quite substantial, and thus the records that list it as a three-roll collection are likely correct. If the tales collected in the *Taiping guangji* all belong to the *Baoying ji*, then it is an important collection because about half of its stories (26)—not found anywhere else—were perhaps recorded for the first time by the compiler of the *Baoying ji*.[189] The events in these tales took place in the ninth century; thus these tales were still in active circulation when the collection was compiled at the turn of the century. Again, therefore, these works might be a good source of information about Buddhism in the ninth century.

4. Concluding Remarks

The importance of the *Diamond Sutra* most likely did not go unnoticed in India for long, but in China, it took nearly two centuries after its first

[187] TPGJ100.

[188] TPGJ101 and TPGJ102.

[189] About half of its tales are collected in previous collections: three in the *Jiuyi*, twenty-five in the *Jiyan ji* (three originally from the *Mingbao shiyi*, five from the *Lingyan ji*, and three from the *Gongde ji*).

translation before it caught the imagination of the Chinese people. The question why the *Diamond Sutra* became popular in the Tang dynasty is a difficult one to answer. A preliminary and highly speculative answer perhaps can be sought in a combination of three important factors: time, people, and the sutra itself. Monastic interest, as records indicate, began only from the sixth century onward, which saw further engagement in the Tang dynasty. Its importance in monastic circles can be discerned from the way it featured in the *Luzu tan jing*, the seminal text of the Chan tradition. It also featured prominently in relation to members of the Tang ruling house, including two emperors and the famous Empress Wu. Unlike the strong patronage given to Buddhism by the Sui rulers, the rulers of the Tang dynasty claimed to be descendants of Laozi and gave preferential treatment to Daoism. However, in political acts of pacification, the *Diamond Sutra* was selected for lecture and comment by Tang emperors, which no doubt boosted its status as an important and representative scripture of Buddhism. Notwithstanding the role played by the monastic or lay following, the *Diamond Sutra* was, as stated earlier, also probably singled out among other sutras due to its abstract content and style, which are superficially similar to those of the *Daode jing*—purportedly written by Laozi, the ancestor of the Li clan—which made it appealing to the Tang emperors.

Imperial recognition might have caused people, especially those in elite circles, to take a greater interest in the *Diamond Sutra*. While the motivations of these people will never be known, the increasing publicity received by the

Diamond Sutra made it available to a growing audience and a wider spectrum of the population. Empress Wu's sponsorship of the copying of the *Diamond Sutra*, its subsequent distribution to other parts of the empire, and the part played by aristocrats and literati in publicizing the *Diamond Sutra*—often in the form of steles, stone pillars, and rock engravings displayed in the public sphere—certainly enabled more medieval Chinese people to come in contact with it; this, in time, resulted in people reading, reciting, and copying the sutra—activities highly encouraged in the sutra for obtaining merit. The stable political situation and prosperity of the Tang dynasty also might have in some ways contributed to the rise of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*.

Overall, the rise of the *Diamond Sutra* is certainly related to its inherent qualities. Its self-promotion as a text that, when upheld, read, recited, copied, and explicated, produces an inconceivable amount of merit, offers an unambiguous directive as to how it should be engaged with. Because the nature of merit is not explicated within the *Diamond Sutra*, it is open to interpretation and can be defined by the text's adherents in relation to their circumstances; this enables its adherents to conceive merit in ways that were meaningful to them, such as averting dangers, recovering from illnesses, and prolonging lifespan, thus also making the sutra highly applicable to the average medieval Chinese person. The many copies of Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra*, often written by laypeople, attest to its presence in the religious landscape of China.

The influence of the *Diamond Sutra* in the Tang is supported by the appearance of tales related to the *Diamond Sutra*, a result of growing engagement with the sutra. The earliest known *Diamond Sutra* story dates to the middle of the sixth century, and it was followed by increasing numbers a few decades later. The emergence of the collections of *Diamond Sutra* tales in the Tang is noteworthy because it indicates that the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* had come of age. Again, it also shows that the *Diamond Sutra* must have had a considerable following in order for a sizable number of accounts related to it to be in circulation, so that they could be selected and included in tale collections. The first collection of stories devoted to the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Lingyan ji*, was probably written in the beginning of the seventh century, most likely after Emperor Gaozu ordered lectures on the *Diamond Sutra* to be delivered. *Diamond Sutra* tales can also be found in mid-seventh century collections, such as the *Mingbao ji* and the *Mingbao shiyi*. Moreover, some of them also found their way into collections such as the *Fayuan zhulin* and *Gantong lu*. A few decades after copies of the *Diamond Sutra* sponsored by Empress Wu were distributed throughout the empire, at the beginning of the eighth century, there were many *Diamond Sutra* tales circulating, making it possible to compile the *Jiyan ji*, the largest extant collection.

Narratives of the *Diamond Sutra* continued to be told, circulated, collected, and compiled for the duration of the Tang dynasty. The *Taiping guangji* attributed a substantial number of tales to two lost Tang collections. One of these collections, the *Guangyi ji*, compiled in the middle of the eighth

century, contains more stories about the *Diamond Sutra* than even those of the *Lotus Sutra*. It is estimated that the other collection, the *Baoying ji*, was composed at the end of the ninth century. It is the second largest *Diamond Sutra* tale collection, based on the works attributed to it that are collected in the *Taiping guangji*. In the beginning of the ninth century, Duan Chengshi also compiled a collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales not found in prior collections. Lastly, in the beginning of the tenth century in Dunhuang, a layman composed a collection and placed it in front of a copy of the *Diamond Sutra*, for both the living and the dead.

CHAPTER 2

HERMENEUTICS OF *DIAMOND SUTRA* TALES

In the previous chapter, I introduced and contextualized the *Diamond Sutra* in medieval China, and noted the appearance of a substantial body of tales related to the *Diamond Sutra* when it was beginning to become popular in Tang China. To assess the role played by these stories in the increasing popularity of the *Diamond Sutra* and their effects on medieval Chinese religiosity in terms of beliefs and practices related to the scripture, it is imperative to first understand the nature of this body of narrative literature. This chapter is chiefly concerned with the following question: How should we read and interpret *Diamond Sutra* tales? To answer this question, this chapter begins by examining the modern scholarly understanding of indigenous Chinese Buddhist tales, which the *Diamond Sutra* tales are a part of. Since modern scholars have generally referred to indigenous Buddhist tales as 'miracle tales,' I examine whether this term truly describes *Diamond Sutra* narratives. The Judeo-Christian conception of the miraculous that informs scholarly understanding of the term will be discussed, along with the Buddhist approach to and understanding of the wondrous in India and China, thus highlighting the common ground or any differences between them. Further, I examine how the wondrous events presented in *Diamond Sutra* tales were conceived by their originators and understood by their audiences. This includes a discussion on the general features of the stories, their rhetorical

structure, and their functions as well as their implications. The chapter concludes with a discussion on their transmission, composition, and compilation, such as the people and communities who told and transmitted them, and the compilers who collected and published them.

1. BUDDHIST 'MIRACLE' TALES?

In general, Buddhist works recounting various wonders, whether they originated from the Indian Buddhist tradition or were produced in China, are referred to by modern scholars of Asian studies as 'miracle tales. The application of the term 'miracle' in the Asian context is in need of some discussion, especially since it is "an English term with a Western semantic history grounded mainly in Christian theology and Enlightenment philosophical critique."[190]

Much of the modern conception of a miracle does not seem to be suitable for describing the stories under investigation as 'miracle' tales. There is very little about them that is miraculous in terms of the modern understanding of miracles. In ordinary usage, the term 'miracle' is used very broadly in modern times. It often refers to a highly improbable or extraordinary event with welcome consequences or an outstanding example of something, such as a miracle drug or an economic miracle. Therefore, when considering the usage of the term 'miracle tale', we may begin by noting the etymology of 'miracle.'

[190] Davis 1998: 4.

According to David Weddle, the word 'miracle' "originates in Middle English and enters our vocabulary via Old French from the Latin *miraculum,*" which comes from the root *mirari*, to wonder.[191] A miracle, therefore, may be generally considered as an act or event—extraordinary or unusual enough—that evokes wonder. We may infer that its usage involves a human response to particular acts or events.[192]

The connotations of miracle that are of philosophical and scholarly interest are less subjectively oriented than its modern usages. Discussion of miracle in the intellectual history of the West is often confined to the use to which religion—and in particular, theistic religions, specifically of the Judeo-Christian tradition—puts that word. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, objects of wonder refer to God's will and power as worked through the various marvelous acts of Jesus and the other prophets, which were originally described as prodigies, wonders, powers, or signs.[193] It is interesting to note that these words do not carry the connotation of overriding the natural order, as 'miracle' came to be defined following the Age of Enlightenment.

Since the Enlightenment, almost all major discussions of the miraculous in the context of Western religion are carried out with reference to David Hume's (1711–1776) influential and provocative definition and discussion of

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[191] Weddle 2010: 21.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid. In the New Testament, miraculous acts of Jesus are described as "powers and wonders and signs" (Acts 2:22). The exact words used by the New Testament writers in describing those events are "wonders," or "prodigies" (τερατὰ), "powers" (δυναμεῖς), "signs" (σημεία); and, particularly by St. Paul, "graces of healing" (χαρισματὰ ἰαμάτων) and "effects of powers" (ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων). None of these words seems to carry any entailments about the overriding of a natural order.

the miracle. In his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume offered a two-part definition of miracle: a miracle as a violation of natural law, which is produced "by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent."[194] The first part of the definition puts in precise terms that a miracle is an event that would not have happened in the ordinary course of nature, whose actions, forces, and so on would not be adequate to bring it about. A miracle is thus beyond the workings of nature and perhaps contrary to the laws of nature. The second part ascribes this transgression of nature to an agent, "the Deity," or "some invisible agent." In a way, these two parts constitute two necessary criteria for an act or event to qualify as a miracle, neither of which is a sufficient condition in itself; that is, being a violation of natural law by itself is not enough for an act or event to qualify as a miracle, as it must also be an expression of divine will.

The importance of Hume's discussion of the term 'miracle' in modern Western intellectual discourse is not unknown to scholars of Asian studies. But because the term proves to be so convenient and serves as a general term to refer to similar events and phenomena in Asian religions, it has come to be widely adopted in scholarly as well as non-scholarly circles. Similarly, scholars of Chinese religions or Buddhism have also adopted the term to describe wondrous and marvelous events in various Chinese religious traditions, especially those events whose causes are not easily explicable. However, it is

[194] Quoted in Brown 2011: 282.

interesting to note that their use of the term is often marked by a sense of uneasiness, alluding to the problems of using such a term.

1.1 Uneasiness with the Use of 'Miracle'

When using the term 'miracle' to describe Buddhist tales relating marvelous events and the wondrous intervention of Buddhist deities or the efficacy of scriptural devotion, scholars of Buddhist studies often feel the need to qualify their usage and to explain the term as it was construed in the Western tradition. While introducing "Buddhist miracle tales" in a recent volume on the *Lotus Sutra*, Stephen Teiser and Jacqueline Stone explain,

> Although scholars often use this term, it represents something of a misnomer. "Miracle" in English implies a divine intervention that temporarily suspends the natural order. Stories of the kind referred to here, however, describe events that, while remarkable or even awe-inspiring, are nonetheless presented as instances of a universal—and therefore eminently natural—causal law.[195]

While they acknowledge that the term is a "misnomer" when applied to Buddhist tales, the term is nevertheless adopted in the book. Other scholars, cognizant of this issue, also offer some sort of justification for their use of the term in their works. In her examination of tales related to Bodhisattva Dizang, Zhiru first acknowledges that in Western religious discourse the term "refers to the suspension of the laws of nature or some form of divine intervention in the workings of the cosmos ultimately attributed to the power or grace of the cosmic creator."[196] She then hints at the problem of using the term by pointing

[195] Tesier and Stone 2009: 34.

[196] Zhiru 2007: 168.

out that "Buddhist cosmology stipulates a universe revolving around the paths of rebirth dictated by the rational workings of *karma,* a principle of moral causation," and thus "miraculous" experiences are "in some sense always bound to the principle of moral causation."[197] However, for the lack of a better term, she justifies her usage of the term to refer to tales related to Bodhisattva Dizang by explaining:

> But insofar as the experiences recounted are viewed as extraordinary in the sense of extending beyond daily functions and normal patterns of rationality, it is appropriate to call them "miracle tales." This usage is especially apt for narratives relating uncommon experiences attributed to divine intervention, which results from sincere veneration of a deity.[198]

Thus, while the word was reserved for use in relation to God alone in Western intellectual discourse, it came to refer to acts of intervention carried out by Buddhist deities in the study of Buddhism. What is problematic of the use of 'miracle' in Buddhism as pointed out by these scholars is simply that while miracle is the result of a violation or suspension of natural law, marvelous feats and wondrous events in Buddhism are not. Moreover, while a miracle in the Western context refers specifically to acts of divine will, wondrous events might not necessarily be so in Asian religious traditions.

Early conceptualizations of a miracle in the West in fact did not initially entail the connotation of the violation of the workings of nature although the natural world and its nature are important considerations to theologians as they philosophized about the nature of a miracle. For instance, for St.

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[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid.

Augustine (354–430), a miracle is held not to be contrary to nature, but only to our knowledge of nature.[199] St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), while arguing that miracles "are done by divine agency beyond the order commonly observed in nature," did not assert them to be violations of nature.[200] In the seventeenth century, John Locke (1632–1704) proposed that a miracle is "a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine."[201]

Yet Hume had his reasons for defining a miracle in terms of the violation of the laws of nature. Hume was in fact responding to Christian apologists who were then trying to establish the existence of God by appealing through natural reason and experience. Because Hume was challenging the idea of a natural theology and the task of authenticating alleged revelations by proving that their claims could be supported by miracles, he defines miracle in a way that captures and expresses what most Christians of his time would have meant when they talked about miracles.[202] Hume's definition is of course not without its problems, but it has, since the Enlightenment period, been an important point of departure for subsequent discussions of miracles, thus becoming a source of controversy in Western intellectual history.

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[199] Mullin 2000: 440; Brown 2011: 275

[200] Levin 2011: 291.

[201] Locke 1824.8: 258.

[202] Basinger 2011: 23.

Lately, modern scholars of western and comparative religion have in fact opted to modify the term to allow them to discuss 'miracles' in other religions, especially wondrous events in non-Judeo-Christian traditions.[203] The definition of the term has also been modified in discussions related to non-Western religions. Indeed, the term seems so handy that it is sanctified in an entry in the Encyclopedia of Buddhism, where John Kieschnick, after noting that there are no miracles in the Buddhist tradition according to a strict Christian interpretation of the word, proposes that the term can be put to good use by adopting "a looser definition":

> A looser definition of the term, however, harking back to its original meaning as "object of wonder," allows miracles to be understood as extraordinary events that, because they cannot be explained by ordinary human powers or the everyday functioning of nature, evoke a sense of wonder. This looser definition proves useful to describe a wide variety of phenomena, including omens and other extraordinary changes in the natural world, acts of the Buddha and his disciples, and supernormal powers acquired through meditation—all common throughout Buddhist literature.[204]

Such modifications of the definition of miracle no doubt will prove to be useful in the study and comparison of religions, bridging gaps in different fields and facilitating dialogues among scholars of religion. However, it is not unproblematic. While they may cater both to the Western sense of miracle as well as wondrous phenomena in Asian cultures, they may also skew representation of wondrous and marvelous phenomena in non-Western traditions, since such modified definitions are, after all, based on one steeped

[203] A good example is Weddle 2010.

[204] Kieschnick 2004: 981.

in Western religious connotations. For example, Weddle, in his study of miracles in various religious traditions, allows for a definition that admits divine intervention other than those of God. But Weddle stresses the "transcendent" of a miracle, and applies this definition to Western and non-Western religions alike.[205] This term, however, has specific meanings in the Western religious context, and has been claimed by some to be one of the defining characteristics of the Judeo-Christian tradition, in contradistinction to the concept of immanence that has been claimed to be a defining characteristic of non-Western religions. While this is not a place to delve into a major philosophical discussion of these issues, it suffices to say that Weddle's definition might not only be guilty of obscuring the tension between transcendence and immanence in both Western and non-Western wonders, but also of importing ideas that are not originally part of non-Western religious traditions. If we were to subscribe to his definition, it would preclude a clear understanding of Buddhist tales recounting various wondrous acts and events.

2. Buddhist Wonders and Powers

To highlight the problems of using the term 'miracle' to refer to wondrous events in Buddhism, it is imperative to demonstrate how the Buddhist tradition understands and represents wondrous events and acts. This section

[205] See especially Weddle 2010: 14–8.

first discusses the Indian understanding of wonders and supernormal powers before moving into an account of these concepts in Indian Buddhism, since the latter has inherited substantial influence from the worldview of pre-Buddhist India.

2.1 Indian Cosmology: Wonders and Supernormal Powers

In Western religious discourse, miracles are violations of the normal course of nature and thus belong to the supernatural sphere. To Christians, they occur due to a supernatural agency that specifically refers to God. On the other hand, the Buddhist sense of wondrous events, phenomena, and acts has its basis in an Indian cosmology that consists of multiple realms (*lokas*), each of them inhabited by different types of beings. In this cosmology, the human world is but one of the many worlds. Beings from other realms could at times appear in realms other than their own. Gods, for instance, could appear in the human realm, and their actions could result in phenomena deemed wondrous by humans. The Indian conception of the universe, therefore, admits the relativity of wonders: what appears normal to gods might appear as wondrous to the average human.[206]

The powers that are available to gods are also said to be achievable by human beings who cultivate themselves or utilize different means: sacrifice, austerities, meditation, knowledge, devotion, or rituals. Patañjali's treatise on yogic practice details the spiritual capacities or supernormal powers attainable

[206] Davis 1998: 9ff.

by its practitioners: knowledge of the past and future, understanding the language of all creatures, ability to read minds, capacity to disappear, ability to enter another's body, capacity to glow brilliantly, levitation, and many more.[207] Thus, yogis could strive to acquire the same powers enjoyed by various categories of gods in the divine regions. These powers, again, are not solely the preserve of yogis. They could be acquired by other people through medicine, alchemical means, esoteric arts, austerities, or meditation.[208]

Indian practitioners considered these supernormal powers to be potential human capacities theoretically available to all, rather than special gifts from God or other divinities. While such powers are beyond the reach of most humans too fettered by the concerns of mundane existence to engage in activities that would enable them to achieve these powers, they are nonetheless attainable. Therefore, in the Indian worldview, divine intervention is not necessary for the production of wondrous feats or marvelous events. According to Phyllis Granoff, this is a pan-Indian belief that holds that "any religious practitioner who had reached a certain stage of cultivation possessed supernatural powers or *iddhi*."[209] Hence, the Indian worldview need not ascribe wondrous phenomena to a single source of agency, but instead attests to a variety of possible agents inhabiting the universe, such as gods, heavenly beings, and spiritually advanced humans.

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[207] Gethin 2011: 217.

[208] Granoff 1996: 87. See also Book 3 and 4 of *Yogasūtra* in Woods 1966: 16–9, 21–36, 39–42; 299–300.

[209] Granoff 1996: 81.

2.2 Wonders and Supernormal Powers in Indian Buddhism

Buddhism grew out of a worldview that entertains many possibilities for the wondrous, one which does not view such wonders unambiguously as acts of God or acts invested by God's intervention. In a cosmology of multiple worlds and different realms, wondrous events, such as those connected to the life of the Buddha, need not be "seen as divine purpose intervening in the natural order of things, they are rather part of the profound cosmic order of things (*dhamma-niyāma*)." [210] Therefore, the unusual events that accompanied the Buddha's birth, career, and *parinirvāṇa* can be explained as happening due to the participation of other beings inhabiting this manifold universe.

With respect to the pan-Indian belief in the possibility of acquiring supernormal powers by human beings, the Buddha is said to share many of the powers enjoyed by gods.[211] In fact, some sources explain that the Buddha was born in the human realm, and not in the realm of gods, because his powers would be easily recognizable in the human realm and thus more effective. Had the Buddha been born among the gods with whom he shared so many powers, they would not be impressed by his powers.[212] Consequently, in Buddhist texts, we find acknowledgement of the positive effects of the display of such

[210] Gethin 2011: 229. In a recent article, Fiordalis (2010) argues that the Buddha's life can be considered a continuous act of wonder-working.

[211] Citing the *Divyāvadāna*, Granoff points out that the understanding of the Buddha's miraculous powers as identical to those of the gods was a belief widely held in Buddhism and was not just specific to the Buddhism of the Pāli commentarial texts. Granoff 1996: 80–1.

[212] Sasaki 1992: 9–10; Granoff 1996: 79–80.

powers by the Buddha for the propagation of Buddhism, as people were impressed by them, and thus convinced of the greatness of the Buddhist faith.

The possession of supernormal powers, moreover, is not the preserve of the gods and the Buddha. Granoff points out that the *Prātihārya-sūtra* of the *Divyāvadāna* notes the possession of such powers by Buddhist practitioners as well as those who had practiced religious austerities.[213] Accordingly, it is not surprising that Buddhist texts abound with examples of wondrous feats produced by the Buddha Śākyamuni, his disciples, and other religious adepts. In early Buddhist texts of the Pāli canon, there are many accounts of the Buddha and his followers engaging in contests of supernormal feats with rival ascetics and religious adepts. Thus, apart from propagating the Dharma, supernormal powers are often put to use at times of contest.

The idea that the possession of such powers in Buddhism is considered a byproduct of religious cultivation and certainly as an indicator of one's level of spiritual attainment is widely accepted by various Buddhist traditions, and can be seen in the texts of the Pāli canon as well as Mahāyāna texts. In the Pāli canon, supernormal powers accessible to Buddhist practitioners are often referred to as higher knowledges (*abhiññās*; Sk. *abhijñā*), and there is a well-known class consisting of six higher knowledges: (1) knowledge of the varieties of supernormal power (*iddhi-vidhāñāṇa*), (2) divine ear element

[213] Granoff 1996: 82.

(*dibbasotadhātu*),[214] (3) knowledge comprehending the mind or cognizing the thoughts of others (*cetopariyañāṇa*/*paracittavijānana*), (4) knowledge of recollection of past lives (*pubbenivāsānu-ssatiñāṇa*), (5) divine eye, or knowledge of passing away and rebirth (*dibba-cakkhu/cutūpapātañāṇa*), and (6) knowledge of the destruction of the influential defilements" (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*).[215] In the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*, these higher knowledges are preceded by the Buddhist practitioner's attainment of four progressive meditative states (*jhāna;* Sk. *dhyāna*).[216] They are, therefore, the byproducts of the practice of meditation and may be acquired before full awakening.

The first five higher knowledges are regarded as mundane (*lokiya*) achievements since they are attainable by both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. The latter three, also known separately as the three knowledges (*vijjā;* Sk. *vidyā*), are especially significant in Buddhism, as they are essential to the Buddha's awakening. The Buddha is said to have attained them when he achieved awakening under the Bodhi tree.[217] Of these three knowledges, the last is the most important. Accomplishable only by Buddhists, it is considered to be supramundane and thus distinctively Buddhist. This knowledge sets

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[214] Clough 2012: 418: According to Clough, this is an expansive auditory ability in both extent and depth, enabling its possessor to perceive and understand sounds from different realms and beings.

[215] Ibid.: 410–1. It is the liberating insight (*paññā*; Sk. *prajñā*) that enables the Buddha to realize *nirvāṇa* (P. *nibbāna*).

[216] Ibid.: 416. According to the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*, which contains the *locus classicus* for the presentation of the *abhiññās*, it is upon attaining the fourth *jhāna* that one is able to cultivate the supernormal powers and the other *abhiññās*. *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*, D I 78–83 and II 87–100. For a discussion of this in relation to exegetical tradition, see Gethin 2011: 219–20.

[217] Clough 2012: 423–4; Gethin 2011: 219.

Buddhists apart from non-Buddhists because when a Buddhist gains this knowledge, the first five knowledges he possesses are considered superior to those possessed by non-Buddhists because he is not tainted with "influential defilements" (*āsavas*).[218] As a result, it is said that the sixth higher knowledge "prevents misuse or misinterpretation of the other five higher knowledges."[219]

From the preceding discussion of supernormal powers in the Indian Buddhist tradition, it is clear that Buddhist practitioners were thought to attain supernormal powers in the same way that yogis attained psychic powers. These non-transferable powers attained by Buddhist practitioners are better understood as extraordinary mental and physical abilities consummated through training and practice. Thus, it is obvious that they are not miraculous in the Western sense but are natural insofar as they are byproducts of the natural mental processes that result from the practitioner's mental training.[220] Hence, their importance does not lie in themselves but in the fact that they are indicative of the successful spiritual progress of the practitioner along the path to liberation, particularly meditative attainment. In another scheme in the *Kevaḍḍha-sutta*, the Buddha presents the wondrous in terms of the three wondrous acts (*pāṭihāriya*). Having twice refused Kevaḍḍha's request for a wondrous display of supernormal powers (*iddhi-pāṭhāriya*) to increase the faith of people, the Buddha responds to the third request by explicating the

[218] Ibid.: 411.

[219] Ibid.: 429.

[220] Gómez 1977: 222. Here, Gómez has already proposed the term "wonder," which he reiterated recently in order to "move our discourse away from another word upon which some religious groups claim exclusive rights: 'miracle.'" Gómez 2010: 513.

three wonders of supernormal powers (*iddhi*), mind-reading (*ādesanā*), and instruction (*anusāsani*). The Buddha explains that although the faithful might be impressed by the first two abilities, skeptics might retort by claiming them to be the results of alternative means or practices. On the contrary, because only the Buddha's instruction is unique to Buddhism, and because it leads to liberation, it is the greatest wonder.[221] The Buddha's instruction as the greatest wonder may be understood with reference to our previous discussion that the abilities to perform wondrous feats are not the preserve of Buddhism; moreover, they may not be the necessary and sufficient conditions leading to liberation.

With respect to Buddhist soteriology, the ultimate goal is the attainment of awakening or liberation. Within the scheme of the six knowledges, the possession of the first five, also available to other religious adepts, does not constitute awakening. Rather, it is the sixth higher knowledge that is essential to awakening. However, it is the Buddha's instruction that finally points the way to attaining this higher knowledge and thus true liberation. Wondrous feats, as a result, are subordinate to the Buddha's instruction, and they are often presented as a means to giving instruction and pointing the way to liberation:

> When we consider Buddhist tales of the miraculous more generally, we find that miracles are often presented as some sort of teaching aid: the Buddha's overpowering of fiery dragons by bursting into flames is followed by other miracles that culminate in the conversion of a group of matted-hair ascetics. The trick which prevents the serial killer Aṅgulimāla from catching up with the

[221] Gethin 2011: 223–4. This point is also made in the *Saṅgārava-sutta*. See A III 60.

> Buddha turns out not to be his method of escape, but a way of bringing Aṅgulimāla to a realization … to question his way of life. And Maudgalyāyana's ability to shake a building with his big toe is precisely put to use to return lax monks to their spiritual practice.[222]

When the Buddha's instruction is considered the greatest wonder, the sense of wonder in Buddhism seems to be less about marvelous feats that are external and apparent, and even less about feats that are contrary to nature. Rather, the emphasis seems to shift from the external to the internal, from the physical to the mental: it is more about perceiving reality as it really is on the part of the Buddhist practitioner. Guided by the Buddha's instruction and sustained in practice, the Buddhist practitioner is transformed internally as he or she achieves a higher state of consciousness and truly understands the nature of things. The above examples in the quote illustrate that only the Buddha's instruction effects true wonders that lead the afflicted onto the path of liberation. In line with the aforementioned, the Buddha is often likened to a physician who cures the maladies of humankind, and his teachings offer a cure for the various afflictions in people, afflictions due to the way they perceive the world.

3. Wonders and Efficacy in Indigenous Chinese Buddhist Tales

The idea that supernormal powers are the byproducts of religious cultivation and certainly indicators of one's level of spiritual attainment is also known and acknowledged in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. The list of five or

[222] Gethin 2011: 226.

six supernormal powers are expanded in East Asian canonical literature and reinterpreted in indigenous literature. In some Chinese commentaries, the six supernormal powers are expanded to ten supernormal powers, and with some variations.[223] Although these Indian categories are seldom used in indigenous Buddhist writings, monks of superior attainment, whose accounts are found in hagiographical literature, are often described as possessing supernormal powers—although these powers may differ from traditional categories.[224] The Central Asian monk Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (d. 348) is often cited as an exemplary monastic who possessed supernormal powers and performed wondrous feats to propagate Buddhism. According to his biography in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, he was reputed to be able to produce rain, predict the outcome of battles, and draw water from dried-up streams, among other marvelous feats.[225]

The idea that supernormal powers can be obtained by spiritual cultivation was not new to Chinese people because indigenous religious traditions had already entertained such ideas as the attainment of longevity or immortality through spiritual practice.[226] However, the Chinese

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[223] The list of the "ten penetrations" (*shitong* 十通) and the penetrations themselves are scattered across different commentaries, notably in Chengguan's 澄觀 (738–739) commentaries on the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*. Also, Daehyeon's 大賢 (fl. mid eighth century) commentary to the Brahmā's Net Sutra lists ten supernormal powers. See *Fanwang jing guji ji* 梵網經古跡記, T40.1815: 697c13.

[224] The *Gaoseng zhuan* devoted one roll to wonder-working monks. Such accounts can also be found in the *Fayuan zhulin* and the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, both compiled in the seventh century. The third roll of the latter consists of biographical accounts of monks with supernormal powers. See T52.2106: 423–434. For more information of the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* and its sources, see Shinohara 1991.

[225] Wright 1990: 46–67.

[226] See section 1.2 of chapter 3 for a discussion of this topic.

representations of this idea are not exactly the same as those in Indian sources. John Kieschnick has pointed out that the traditional Indian categories had "little impact on Chinese Buddhist narrative."[227] This may be attributed to the fact that the idea of Buddhist supernormal powers had probably been sinicized according to the need to facilitate the propagation of Buddhism in China. In a recent study of the *Mingxiang ji*, Campany has pointed out that in those tales where there is a contest between Buddhism and Daoism, Buddhist monastics are deliberately described as possessing powers ascribed to seekers of transcendence in early medieval Chinese literature.[228] We may infer that the Buddhist monks are not described as possessing the traditional categories of supernormal powers because the point of those tales was "to deny that transcendents had any supernormal powers that Buddhist monastics lack." This example demonstrates that the Chinese acceptance of Buddhism is not unqualified, and their representations were informed by native ideas and needs.

Many indigenous Chinese Buddhist tales of wonders associate Buddhists with unusual powers, sometimes in scenarios related to the propagation of Buddhism, and at other times, in contestation with adepts of indigenous religious traditions. However, these tales constitute simply one type in

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[227] Kieschnick 1997: 70.

[228] Campany 2012: 38–9; see especially tales 8, 9, 10, and 15. According to Campany, "every tale in which Buddhist or nuns are portrayed as working wonders by virtue of their enhanced powers implicitly positions these holy persons against an indigenous type—the wonder-working transcendent (*xian* 仙), or seeker of transcendence—and the two repertoires of attributed feats match up almost completely. Take cumulatively, these stories in effect deny that transcendents had any paranormal powers that Buddhist monastics lacked."

Gjertson's influential typology of Buddhist 'miracle' tales.[229] According to Gjertson, there are three types of indigenous Buddhist tales. In addition to the above, one kind of tale relates "accounts of divine intervention in times of need," while another illustrates the "efficacy of Buddhist piety." While these two types of tales are not totally unavailable in the Indian tradition, they seem to feature more prominently in Chinese Buddhism. The former is best exemplified by tales of Bodhisattva Guanyin's intervention, while the latter is represented by *Diamond Sutra* narratives. What is common to these two types of stories is that a response, whether through the agency of deities or some other forms of agency, is answerable for overcoming the dire situations confronting the protagonists in the tales. Their prevalence in Chinese Buddhism may be due to the fact that tales of these types are—as some scholars have highlighted—well accounted for by the concept of *ganying* 感應 (lit. stimulus-response) in Chinese cosmology.

3.1 Chinese Cosmology and *Ganying*

Raoul Birnbaum was probably the first scholar to call attention to the adoption of the concept of *ganying* in Chinese Buddhism in his study of

[229] Gjertson 1989: 39. In his study of the *Mingbao ji*, Donald Gjertson classified indigenous Chinese Buddhist tales into three types, one of which is "associated with famous monks or laymen, serving to demonstrate their high spiritual attainments." In a study of auspicious signs, Lippiello (1998: 166) collapses the three types into two: (1) Divine intervention in times of need, such as tales of miracles resulting from the invocation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, and (2) those adapted to Chinese cosmology, attesting to the efficacy of the Buddhist faith, or revealing the high spiritual attainments of monks or pious laymen.

visionary experiences of monastics on Mount Wutai.[230] This was echoed by a number of scholars who also note that *ganying* is prevalent in indigenous writings, especially Buddhist tales.[231] Daniel Stevenson, in his study of the *Lotus Sutra* tales, explains, "Implicit in virtually all of the miracle tales (and, indeed, Chinese Buddhist hagiography as a whole) is the age-old Chinese discursive structure of 'stimulus' (*gan*), 'response' (*ying*), and 'causal impetus or nexus' (*ji* or *jiyuan*)."[232]

The concept of *ganying* has its basis in Chinese cosmology, which is often described as correlative. In this cosmology, Heaven, man, earth, and the myriad things are mutually related, interdependent, and complementary in an integrated, organic universe:

> Such a cosmology is an orderly system of correspondence among various domains of reality in the universe, correlating categories of the human world, such as the human body, behavior, morality, the sociopolitical order, and historical changes, with categories of the cosmos, including time, space, the heavenly bodies, seasonal movement, and natural phenomena.[233]

Also referred to as the *yin-yang-wuxing* cosmology, the universe, which is in a state of continuous flux, is conceived in this cosmology in terms of the cyclic progression or interaction of the five phases (*wuxing* 五行),[234] the binary

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[230] Birnbaum 1986: 134–7.

[231] Sharf 1991: 162–232; Campany 1993: 264–5; Stevenson 1995: 29–30; Campany 1996b: 212, 322–3; Yü 2001: 153–8.

[232] Stevenson 1995: 29.

[233] Wang 2000: 2.

[234] *Wuxing* refers to the five material elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. When applied to cosmology, "it is a system of classification that became predominant over other systems, synthesizing and standardizing the other systems through these five categories…The five cosmic energies exist in constant interaction, conquering and generating one another in circular sequence." Wang 2000: 3; 75–128.

force of *yin-yang* 陰陽,[235] and the primordial vital energy (*qi* 氣) that constitutes the myriad things.[236]

In this universe, according to Joseph Needham, "[t]he harmonious cooperation of all beings arose, not from the orders of a superior authority external to themselves, but from the fact that they were all parts in a hierarchy of wholes forming a cosmic pattern, and what they obeyed were the internal dictates of their own natures."[237] Because human beings and everything in the universe are "parts in a hierarchy of wholes forming a cosmic pattern," they can influence each other. This belief is implied by the concept of *ganying*. According to Robert Sharf, "*[g]anying* is a mode of seemingly spontaneous response (although not in the sense of 'uncaused') natural in a universe conceived holistically in terms of pattern and interdependent order. Resonance is the mechanism through which categorically related but spatially distant phenomena interact."[238] Simply put, the concept of *ganying* may be thus explained: "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 pitch-pipes."[239]

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[235] Sharf 2002: 79; Wang 2000: 6.

[236] Although these ideas can be traced to the Zhou (1111–249 BCE), they received further treatment during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), particularly by the architect of Han Confucianism, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BCE), and his contemporaries. Yü 2001: 154.

[237] Needham 1951: 230.

[238] Sharf 2002: 83.

[239] Henderson 1984: 20.

The concept can be applied to different aspects of human affairs. When employed in the relationship between man and Heaven for the justification of political legitimacy, it was used to explain why the Shang rulers lost the Mandate of Heaven to rule due to their lack of virtue, which was accompanied by omens and signs. These omens and signs, and the eventual demise of the Shang, were interpreted as Heaven's warning and response to the despotic rule of the Shang regime. On the other hand, the triumph of the Zhou rulers was an indication of Heaven's approval, and thus their receipt of the Mandate of Heaven to rule.[240] In this application of the concept of *ganying*, human actions, the stimuli, are believed to have elicited responses from Heaven. Thus, according to Dong Zhongshu,

> 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 heat, the place where an army has been being thick with thorns. Things, whether lovely or repulsive, all have an origin.[241]

When the action of the ruler could invoke a cosmic response, the concept of *ganying* could also be applied to the ordering of the empire and to gauging the strength of governance.[242] This explains the Chinese belief in the significance of omens and portents, taking them to mean Heaven's responses to the

[240] Yü 2001: 154.

[241] Needham 1956: 282. Also cited in Yü 2001: 154.

[242] Brokaw 1991: 29–30.

behavior of a ruler, and the tradition of historical writings during the Han with special focus on the observation of natural phenomena for signs and omens.[243]

Ganying was invoked to explain moral retribution, ritual efficacy, natural and astronomical cycles, political upheavals, and so on. It should not, therefore, be surprising to find that *ganying* also influenced the Chinese understanding of Buddhist cosmology and practice."[244]

3.2 *Ganying* in Chinese Buddhism

The term *ganying* has sometimes been used as an element in the titles of indigenous Buddhist tale collections. For example, one of the earliest collections of Buddhist stories is known as the *Ganying zhuan* 感應傳 (Records of Responses to Stimuli).[245] In fact, the Chinese compound *ganying* also occurs frequently in indigenous Buddhist narratives about the wonders, marvels, and effectiveness of devotion. The term *ganying* is very difficult to translate in English due to its various connotations, and its rich philosophical content and implications. Although variously rendered as "sympathetic

[243] According to Sharf, dynastic histories since the Han "typically included a chapter entitled 'five phases' which recorded occurrences of 'unusual phenomena' or 'wonders' (*guai*) including earthquakes, avalanches, feather-rain, and the birth of two-headed chickens." Sharf 2002: 97.

[244] Sharf 1991: 187.

[245] The *Ganying zhuan*, no longer extant, was compiled by Wang Yanxiu (fl. mid-fifth century CE), who was known to have belonged to an "abstruse learning" (*xuanxue* 玄學) group and served as a ritual specialist in the latter half of the fifth century. Only two brief quotations—but of questionable origin—are said to be found in collectanea. Campany 1996b: 81. In addition to the *Ganying zhuan*, other Taishō and *Xuzang jing* tale collections that bear the term *ganying* in their titles include the *Da fangguang huayan jing ganying zhuan* 華嚴經感應傳 (T51.2074), the *Jin'gang jing ganying zhuan* 金剛經感應傳 (X87.1632), the *Jin'gang jing ganying fenlei jiyao* 金剛經感應分類輯要 (X87.1636), *Huayan jing ganying lüeji* 華嚴經感應略記 (X77.1532), and the *Huayan ganying yuanqi zhuan* 華嚴感應緣起傳 (X77.1533).

resonance," "cosmic resonance," or "stimulus-response," these expressions fail to capture its meanings in any comprehensive manner. The sinograph *gan* may embody two senses. The early use of *gan* in the *Shi jing* 詩經 (*Book of Songs*) implies meanings such as "to sense, feel, touch," and so on. In this sense, it refers to a subjective activity or event, in which the subject is aware of something or experiences something.[246] In the later *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (The Spring and Autumn Annals of Lü) as well as in the etymological dictionary, *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, *gan* is defined as "to move a person's mind/heart" (*gandong renxin* 感動人心也[247] In this sense, *gan* refers to an activity that impresses or impinges on another. When applied to Buddhist tales, *gan,* therefore, could mean the eliciting of a response from the Dharma or the Buddha, or to be aware of or experience a response from the sacred; in most cases, it is both of these senses.

Although these indigenous Buddhist tales cover various topics, such as karmic retribution, spiritually potent Buddhist images, sacred geography, cultic objects, figures and traditions,[248] what is common to all of them is

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[246] Schuessler 2006: 250. Sharf designates this range of meanings "epistemological" insofar as it implies an inner experience, perception, or cognition that may or may not correlate with an event in the external world. Sharf 2002: 120.

[247] Schuessler 2006: 250. Also in Morohashi 4: 1132a. Sharf designates this range of meanings as "ontological" insofar as to *gan* another person is to affect the mind of a being external to oneself. Sharf 2002: 120.

[248] For example *Mingbao ji* places emphasis on karmic retribution, while Daoxuan's *Gantong lu* deals with spiritually powerful monastics as well as potent Buddhist images. Among the most important works on sacred geography are three related to Mount Wutai: Huixiang's 慧祥 (d.u.) *Gu qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 (An Account of Old [Mount] Qingliang; T51.2098), Yanyi's 延一 (d.u.) *Guang qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 (A Comprehensive Account of [Mount] Qingliang; T51.2099), and Zhang Shangying's 張商英 (1043–1121) *Xu qingliang zhuan* 續清涼傳 (Sequel to the Account of [Mount] Qingliang; T51.2100). Sasaki 2009: 203.

ganying, the underlying principle of interaction between the supplicant and the Dharma—the supplicant is said to "stimulate" or "affect" (*gan*) the Buddha, thus eliciting the Buddha's compassionate response (*ying*). Stevenson succinctly explains,

> As the *ganying* metaphor would have it, spiritual "presence" or "manifestation" (*ying*)—whether that presence be construed as the descent of the Buddhas, the arousing of the thought of enlightenment, auspicious omens, miraculous response, even enlightenment itself—is effected by the devotee "coming into sympathetic accord" or "tally" with the hidden sacred order and forged a "causal impetus or nexus" (*ji*, *jiyuan*) that "stimulates" (*gan*) a flow or manifestation of sacred power. Miraculous response, as such, is the function of a communicative interaction between the aspirant and the sacred order…[249]

The earliest expressions of *ganying* in indigenous Buddhist tales can be found in accounts related to Bodhisattva Guanyin, which began to appear during the Six Dynasties period and were compiled into three collections. According to Campany, the Guanyin tales are some of the "clearest narrative embodiments" of *ganying*.[250] In these stories, *ganying* can be applied to explain the wondrous interventions of Guanyin, who never fail to respond to people who call upon him for help. There is no doubt that medieval Chinese people understood the soteriological response of Guanyin to the invocation of supplicants in terms of a special relationship between them that is underpinned by *ganying*. This understanding is clearly illustrated in the

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Tale collections related to Buddhist deities include the Guanyin tale collection introduced earlier as well as collections related to Bodhisattva Dizang 地藏 (Sk. Kṣitigarbha), such as the *Dizang pusa xiang lingyan ji* 地藏菩薩像靈驗記 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of the Images of Bodhisattva Dizang) compiled by a monastic in 989. There are also a few collections of tales related to the Pure Lands.

[249] Stevenson 1995: 429.

[250] Campany 2012: 44.

following conversation between an imprisoned official Dou Chuan and a monk who advised him to see help from Guanyin:

> At that time the monk Zhi Daoshan was in the same camp, and he had previously known Chuan. When he heard of Chuan's imprisonment, he went to the cell to see him, and they spoke through the door. Chuan told Daoshan, "I am entrapped in a disastrous situation, and my lifespan has become a matter of hours. How can I be saved?" Daoshan said, "The method for your salvation is not to be found among humans. Only the Bodhisattva Guangshiyin can save you from mortal danger. If you can wholeheartedly invoke and take refuge in him, there surely will be a response to the stimulus (*ganying*)."[251]

From Daoshan's advice above, the supplicant's invocation of Guanyin can be understood as "the initiating stimulus or trigger that, when it is sincere and desperate enough, is answered by Guanyin's response."[252] According to Campany, "appropriately sincere, intense, and sufficiently repeated acts of conscious devotion and supplication, acting as the stimulus, will elicit strikingly immediate and concrete responses from the Buddha, bodhisattvas, or spirit-beings supplicated."[253]

3.3 Buddhist Persuasion: From *Ganying* to *Lingyan*

Although *ganying* is the underlying principle of the Guanyin tales, the Guanyin collections are styled as *yingyan* 應驗 (lit. response and verification)

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[251] Tale 4 of the *Guangshiyin yingyan ji*, with modification from the translation in Campany 1996a: 94–5.

[252] Yü 2001: 640. This call for help is described in both scriptures and tales as an act of extreme concentration, intense sincerity, and sustained exertion. Campany (1996: 84) has noted that the protagonist in peril is often described as calling on the bodhisattva "wholeheartedly" (*zhixin* 至心) or "single-mindedly" (*yixin* 一心), and so on.

[253] Campany 2012: 32; Campany 1993.

because *ganying* as it is implied in these stories is understood in anthropomorphic terms. Since the relationship recounted in these narratives is one between the Bodhisattva Guanyin and his supplicants, the emphasis is placed on Guanyin's intervention or responsiveness rather than *ganying,* which suggests a more mechanical response. This is apparent from the third collection where the scriptural source is cited at the end of those tales recounting the particular type of intervention, thus showing that the events recounted serve as verification of Guanyin's promise as set forth in the *Lotus Sutra*.

In his discussion of *yingyan* with respect to Buddhist tale literature of the early medieval period, Campany makes the following comment about *yan*:

> *Yan* is essentially a hermeneutic term, denoting a particular function in the evaluation of data. In the juridical field, *yan* means confirming evidence or proof; to *yan* is to take up a claim and, based on an examination of the evidence, find it true. In the divinatory field, *yan* means a "sign," something by which fortunes or the trend of events can be judged, known, or recognized.[254]

When applied to Guanyin tales, *yan* may include the various connotations mentioned above, from which we may derive something common—the element of verification or confirmation. That this connotation of *yan* should inform our understanding of Guanyin is corroborated by an understanding of the context of those tales and what they hope to achieve, or what was intended by their originators when they told them. The Guanyin stories are based on the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, "The Universal Gate of the Bodhisattva Perceiver of World's Sounds," where Bodhisattva Guanyin promises to deliver

[254] Campany 1996b: 322.

people in a variety of difficult situations if they call upon him for help. When their originators—whether they were the protagonists themselves, witnesses, or otherwise—transmitted these purported actual accounts of Guanyin's response to the supplications of people, they were saying that what the *Lotus Sutra* said was indeed true because these responses confirmed or verified the promises Guanyin made. Therefore, when the compilers of Guanyin tales styled them as *yingyan*, they meant them to be understood as responses of Guanyin that confirmed or verified the promises he made, and this of course, entails the truth of the scripture.

The term *yingyan* when it is applied to Guanyin tales may thus be rendered as "verifying responses [of Guanyin]" since *yan* in this context clearly denotes verification, confirmation, and so on. Thus, "verifying responses" may also be understood as signs, proofs, or evidence of Guanyin's fulfillment of his promises, especially in those situations described in the scripture. They show that Guanyin's promises indeed come true. In this case, *ying* encapsulates two layers of meaning: the generic response that reacts to the stimulus as well as Guanyin's responses that serve to verify his promises that finally come true. This may explain why, in modern usage, *yingyan* refers to something that comes true, such as a prediction coming true.[255]

Besides *yingyan*, indigenous Buddhist stories are also often styled as *lingyan* 靈驗 (lit. numen and verification). The two *Diamond Sutra*

[255] For example, "His prophecy has come true" (*ta de yuyan yingyan le* 他的預言應驗了).

collections compiled respectively by Xiao Yu and Zhai Fengda are styled as *lingyan*.[256] Sharing the common denominator "*yan*," the "*yingyan*" of Guanyin narratives and the "*lingyan*" of *Diamond Sutra* tales reveal a common and yet important function of these Buddhist works—that is to verify or prove the truth of Buddhism. More specifically, they also prove the power of the Guanyin and the *Diamond Sutra*. While *ganying* informs the Chinese understanding of Buddhist tales and provides an explanation underlying the workings of events recounted in them, what separates Buddhist tales styled by "*yan*" from other indigenous and pro-Buddhist ones is that the former aims to signal, prove, or verify (*yan*) the truth of those events already accounted for by *ganying*.

Diamond Sutra collections are styled "*lingyan*" for good reasons. As it is implied in *Diamond Sutra* tales, *ganying* is best interpreted in naturalistic terms because the relationship here is not one between a deity (e.g., Guanyin) and his or her supplicants, but rather an inanimate scripture and its supplicants. As a scripture, the *Diamond Sutra* could not respond to supplicants like Guanyin; thus, its responses are not as straightforward as those in Guanyin tales and are conceptualized differently. In Guanyin stories, his interventions and responses are more direct and are theorized as the fulfillment of the promises made in the scripture. As a result, these interventions verify the truth of the scripture as Guanyin's promises 'come true.' On the other hand, how could wondrous events experienced by

[256] Meng Xianzhong probably had the same understanding when he entitled his collection "*jiyan*," which can be understood as the collection of "[*ling*]*yan*."

protagonists in *Diamond Sutra* tales prove the truth of the *Diamond Sutra*, especially when the scripture only promises merit without specifying how its power would be manifested?

How the originators and compilers of *Diamond Sutra* works understand the truth of the *Diamond Sutra* and its claims about merit to be gained from devotion to it, is to be verified as revealed by the term *ling* 靈 (lit. numen; efficacy) used together with *yan* 驗 (lit. verification) to describe the stories. As noted previously, there are two senses of *ganying*: the inducement of a response from the sacred and (2) the experience of the response. The truth of the *Diamond Sutra* is proven by a conceptualization of its responses that underscore the second sense of *ganying*—as an experience of the response of the *Diamond Sutra* that is not merely meaningful, but significantly religious and relevant to the protagonist. This conceptualization thus takes the experience of the protagonist as its point of departure, evaluating how and what the experience of the response means to the supplicant. The term *ling* is pivotal to this notion, as it determines what constitutes a significant and relevant experience that proves the truth of the *Diamond Sutra*.

The term *ling* has many connotations among which include shaman, divinity, felicity, spirit, numen, and most important to us, efficacy.[257] Perhaps, the following example of the usage of *lingyan*, used in an encounter between the monk Fotudeng and the Northern ruler Shi Le 石勒 (274–333), might

[257] *Hanyu dazi dian*: 4082.

demonstrate "efficacy" as the principal meaning of *ling*, and thus help us understand what *lingyan* actually means:

> He [i.e., Shi Le] summoned Fotudeng and enquired, "What miraculous efficacy (*lingyan* 靈驗) does Buddhism have?" Fotudeng knew that Shi Le did not understand profound doctrines and would only be able to regard magic as evidence (*zheng* 徵) [of the power of Buddhism]. Accordingly, he said: "Though the highest teachings are remote [from the general understanding] we can take nearby things as proof (*zheng* 證) [of the efficacy of Buddhism]." Thereupon, he took his begging bowl, filled it with water, burned incense, and said a spell over it. In a moment there sprang up blue lotus flowers whose brightness and color dazzled the eyes. Shi Le was convinced by this…[258]

What is at stake here is the truth of Buddhism. In the above encounter, Shi Le summoned Fotudeng after learning that the latter had said that he would succeed in conquering China and that Fotudeng would be his teacher. To determine the veracity of Fotudeng's words, Shi Le asked him to provide evidence that Buddhism was efficacious. By conjuring up the blue lotus flowers, Fotudeng proved that he had supernormal powers, and demonstrated the efficacy of Buddhism because those powers are the result of Buddhist cultivation.

When applied to *Diamond Sutra* tales, *lingyan* thus refers to the events recounted in the stories as evidence and proofs of the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. Therefore, *lingyan* here is better understood as the "proven efficacy" or the "proofs of the efficacy" of the *Diamond Sutra*. With this understanding, we can better understand why the term *lingyan* came to be used in the area of medicine, where it is used to refer to some cure, medication, or procedure as

[258] With minor modifications to the translation made in Somer 1990: 47–8.

efficacious, or effective.[259] Here, we may ask: In what way is the *Diamond Sutra* considered efficacious? The efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, supported by the internal structure of the tales, is proven by the affirmation and confirmation of the direct relationship between the experience of the protagonist and the truth of the *Diamond Sutra* in terms of the benefits and practical utility of devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*, that is, how efficacious it is with respect to the issues and problems faced by protagonists.

4. *LINGYAN*: PROVING THE EFFICACY OF THE *DIAMOND SUTRA*

From the above discussion, the proven efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* is an important and unique feature of the *Diamond Sutra* accounts. This feature explains why *Diamond Sutra* tales are styled '*lingyan*' since the events recounted in them are conceptualized as proving the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*.

Basically to prove the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* entails proving the truth of the *Diamond Sutra*, i.e., its claims that devotion to it, in terms of receiving, upholding, reading, reciting and copying it, would bring forth immeasurable merit. Because the sutra does not stipulate in what way the merit achieved will be manifested, the truth of the *Diamond Sutra* is conceived of in terms of its proven efficacy in a variety of scenarios, i.e., how efficacious it

[259] For example, "This medication is very efficacious, you will not feel the pain once it is applied [to the wound]" (*zhe yao hen lingyan, mo shang jiu bu teng le* 這藥很靈驗，抹上就不疼了).

is in matters that concern its devotees. The significance of the *Diamond Sutra* stories thus lies in how the wondrous events are conceived by the protagonists to be representative of the efficacy of the sutra, rather than the verification of the responsiveness or promise of a certain deity. *Diamond Sutra* tales are thus better understood as recounting the experiences of devotees who received some sort of numinous (*ling*) response (*ying*), usually in times of need, attesting or proving (*yan*) the efficacy (*ling*) of the sutra elicited (*gan*) by their Buddhist piety.

The efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* is generally based on the idea that "the sutra as embodiment of the eternally abiding dharma was deemed capable of producing the full range of benefits associated with, say, devotion to a given Buddha or bodhisattva."[260] These benefits, often of practical utility, are represented as achieving something positive, such as attaining longevity and good rebirth, or averting something negative, such as misfortune or even death. The scenarios in which the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* is proven through the benefits gained by protagonists—the subject of the next chapter—are representative of the concerns of many medieval Chinese people. When the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* is proven in these scenarios, it is conceived as the result of devotion. In sum, it is this feature that makes the tales effective vehicles for spreading the Dharma and convincing medieval Chinese laypeople of the benefits of belief in and practice of Buddhism.

[260] Stevenson 2009: 135.

4.1 Structure of *Lingyan*

Diamond Sutra tales embody certain rhetorical features and details to demonstrate in what way the experiences of the protagonists demonstrate the efficacy of devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*. These devices are important because they represent the tales in certain ways and thus control how they would be received, as "other possible explanations for the reported events are preemptively discounted in favor of the one the narrative's makers preferred." [261] For example, they could show that the devotion of the protagonist to the *Diamond Sutra* is the only explanation for the benefits gained by protagonists.

Basically, proving the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* involves two major components: (1) authenticating the events in the *Diamond Sutra* accounts as real, actual events, and (2) establishing the causal connection between wondrous events and the *Diamond Sutra*, i.e., devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* is the cause of the wonder. Because the experience of protagonists is subjective, when the connection is established, how devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* works becomes apparent.

4.1.1 Authenticating Actual Events

The people who told the *Diamond Sutra* stories, like those who told other Buddhist tales, were probably cognizant of the fact that there were always skeptics among their listeners and hearers. Therefore, to establish the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* meant establishing the events recounted in the works as

[261] Campany 2012: 16.

having actually taken place, that they were actual events that really occurred. To achieve this, the tales were furnished with rhetorical features that established their authenticity.

In a format that is reminiscent of the biographical accounts in dynastic histories, the compiled *Diamond Sutra* tales, more than any other accounts, are very consistent in stating the following information at the outset: (1) time period during which the event took place; (2) the place where the event took place; (3) detailed information about the protagonists, including, of course, their name, where they come from, their vocation; and (4) sometimes the context of the account, such as a significant event that happened during the period. Below is an example of a *Diamond Sutra* tale that furnished ample information to establish its veracity:

> Wu Sixuan, the Grand Master for Court Audience and Acting Erudite for Supervising Instruction, had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Initially he recited twice every other day. After five or six years, he recited once every other day. In the first year of the Chang'an era (701), while serving as the Magistrate of Mianzhu District in Hanzhou (modern Deyang, Sichuan), his elder brother Siwen contracted some illness and went to the capital for medical treatment. There he put up at the residence of Zhang Qing, the Chief Steward of Medicine Services of the Palace Administration where he received moxibustion and acupuncture treatments…[262]

In addition to providing the name of the protagonist in this case, Wu Sixuan, in his introduction, also provides his title, details of his Buddhist practice, and the time and place in which the event happened. It further provides information about his family as well as social relations. When little information about the protagonist is available, especially when he or she is an

[262] JYJ29.

ordinary person, the veracity of the tales may be fortified by situating the protagonist or event in relation to an identifiable historical person or event. The following tale about a clerk named Gao She is situated at a time when an important figure took office at the place where his encounter unfolds:

> In the winter of the seventh year of the Taihe era (833), Supervising Secretary Mr Li Shi (784–845?) was appointed Adjutant at the headquarters of the Military Commissioner at Taiyuan (in modern Shandong). Clerk Gao She once stayed overnight at the executive bureau…

Li Shi was an important Tang official during the reign of Emperor Wenzong (809–840). His biographies can be found in the official histories of the Tang, where he was credited with stabilizing the political situation after the Ganlu Incident, a failed attempt by the emperor to get rid of powerful eunuchs.[263] The information about Li Shi taking office gives the tale an actual historical referent, which makes it more palpable. In other tales, the protagonists are situated in relation to major historical events. Another story about a soldier named Wang Zhongan begins with the details of a campaign against a rebellion that occurred in the ninth century before mentioning the protagonist:[264]

> In the third year of the Dahe era [of reign of Emperor Wenzong] (829), the rebel Li Tongjie (d. 829) resisted the imperial army at Jingcheng, Cangzhou (modern Cang District, Hubei). The emperor ordered Li You (d. 829) to command the Qide troops to suppress him. Initially when they besieged the city of Dezhou (modern De District, Shandong), it was well protected and could not be captured… At that time, in the yamen of Qizhou (modern Qinan,

[263] See *Jiu Tang shu* 172: 4483–7; *Xin Tang shu* 131: 4512–6.

[264] JY14. See also JY3, where the protagonist Sun Xian is also situated in a rebellion.

> Shandong), there was a section leader, Wang Zhonggan, who was a native of Boye (modern Li County, Hebei)…

In this tale, two notable Tang figures appear in an important historical event, where Li You led an imperial campaign against Li Tongjie, who defied an imperial order and assumed leadership over the Henghai Circuit. Both Li You and Li Tongjie were generals of the Tang dynasty, and their biographies and the details of the event are recorded in the official Tang histories.[265] Undoubtedly, these details must have made the stories highly plausible, when these events were still fresh in the memory of people who lived in that era. By mirroring their accounts on the standard format used for historical writing, the originators or compilers of these works indicate that these tales should be construed as a type of historical writing or record and that the people and events in them are real.

Other features of the narratives that authenticate the events include providing the source of the account, sometimes given at the end of the tale. In other cases, when the source of the tale is not given, information about the 'current' situation of the protagonist is given; he or she is often said to be still living at a certain place while the tale was being compiled,[266] a feature that increases belief in the authenticity of the account, especially when some sources indicate that the protagonists themselves related the account to the compiler. Sometimes, details in the tale also serve to authenticate the event as

[265] For Li Tongjie, see *Jiu Tang shu* 143: 3906–8 and *Xin Tang shu* 213: 5997–8. For Li You, see *Jiu Tang shu* 161: 4226–7 and *Xin Tang shu* 214: 6006–12.

[266] See for example, JY14, JY15, JY17, and JY18.

real. For example, a sore inflicted from a journey to the underworld remains even after the protagonist returned to the human realm.[267]

4.1.2 Establishing the Relationship between Benefits and the *Diamond Sutra*

In addition to confirming the authenticity of the events, what is of greater importance to the *Diamond Sutra* tales is to prove the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* by establishing a necessary causal relationship between the wondrous experience of the protagonist (effect), usually in terms of the experience of wonder or obtaining some benefits, and his or her devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* (cause), i.e., the benefit can only be gained by virtue of the *Diamond Sutra*. When this relationship is not clearly or explicitly stated in the stories, it is often done through what Campany calls a "postconditional" device that limits the effects of the wonder "to the object or areas 'protected' by karmic or devotional provisions."[268] The account below is a fine example of this:

> Shang Xingcong, Magistrate of Anren District in Qiongzhou (in modern Chengdu, Sichuan), had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. For some matters, he was demoted to serve as the Vice Magistrate of Yishui District (in modern Ngawa Watusi Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan). When he reached the boundary of Yizhou (modern Xinyang, Henan), the mountain roads were precipitous and cliffside boardwalks were perilous. While traveling during the night, he suddenly fell off the boardwalk. Halfway down the cliff, he landed on a tree branch as if he was riding on a horse. Thereupon he lost his consciousness.
>
> After a while, he heard the voices of his household members calling him. Only then did he know that he had fallen off the boardwalk. Even then, he was still reciting the *Diamond Sutra* and

[267] JY3.

[268] Campany 1996b: 327. Campany has pointed out that the best examples are those tales that recount how only one sutra or a Buddhist image remained unscathed in a fire, or only those who call on Guanyin for help survive a shipwreck.

> did not stop doing so. After regaining consciousness, the incident was like a dream to him. He was not injured at all.[269]

This is a case in which it seems natural to draw a causal relationship between his being saved and his piety, especially when he was still reciting the *Diamond Sutra* when he fell. Even though neither the narrator nor the protagonist ascribes the benefit of being saved to his piety explicitly, the mention of his piety at the outset and his subsequent recitation seem to prime the audience to assume that Shang Xingcong was saved by nothing other than his devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*.

In most *Diamond Sutra* tales, however, the relationship between piety and benefit is often explicit. To establish this relationship, the works always begin by providing details about the protagonist's piety toward the *Diamond Sutra*. Although details of general Buddhist piety, such as adherence to Buddhist precepts, making offerings to monks, and the personality of the protagonist, may be given, they seem more often than not to be provided in order to enhance the image of the protagonist as a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra*. In some cases, quantitative details of Buddhist piety related to the *Diamond Sutra,* such as the duration of practice undertaken (how many years), the number of times of recitation, or the number of rolls of the sutra copied by the protagonist, are also provided. Often, the protagonists are described as long-time devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* at the outset of the narratives. The purpose of providing such information about the protagonist's piety may be illustrated by the following:

[269] JYJ16.

> Mu Yantong, Administrative Aide to the Region (*zhou*) Head of Huazhou (modern Anyang, Hunan), had recited the *Diamond Sutra* unremittingly all his life. He was first a magistrate of Wulao District (modern Zhengzhou, Henan) under Li Mi. Because rebels were raiding the city and wanted to kill the district magistrate, Tong was very frightened. He thus jumped over the city [wall] and managed to escape. He faced east and fled [until some place where] there was a rocky cliff. Lying more than a hundred *chi* below the tall steep cliff was a mountain stream.
>
> [Coming to a dead end and still] being pursued by rebels flashing their blades, Yantong consequently threw himself off the steep cliff to commit suicide. When he was half way down the cliff, it seemed like there was someone who caught hold of him. When Tong reached the bottom [of the cliff], he in fact ended up sitting on top of a huge rock, thus he managed to survive with no injury whatsoever. Based on its proven efficacy (*lingyan*), [Tong realized that he owed his life] entirely to the power of the *Prajñā*.[270]

By telling the audience that Mu Yantong "had recited the *Diamond Sutra* unremittingly in his entire life," this tale first presents the protagonist as an exemplary devotee of the *Diamond Sutra* over an extended period of time prior to the focal event of the story, where he is in need of the fruit of his practice. The account thus attempts to establish a causal relationship between his practice and the later event, and conditions the audience for what comes later.

For the protagonist to experience the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, the tale next introduces a particular problem or a dire situation confronting the protagonist, one that requires attention. The problems faced are often external in nature, such as in the above story, where Mu Yantong was in a dangerous situation as he was pursued by enemies, a situation that required immediate resolution. Most protagonists, like Mu Yantong, are caught in dire straits

[270] JYJ25 (GDJ6).

which are beyond their control, although in a very few cases, the protagonists are responsible for their problems, such as their violation of Buddhist precepts (e.g., taking of animal life, eating meat, stealing), committing slanderous acts, such as destroying or desecrating sutras, or the karmic result of past misdeeds.

Usually, the resolution of the problem entails obtaining some sort of benefit or experiencing wonders that deliver the protagonists out of those problems. In Mu's case, "someone" caught hold of him and delivered him safely to the ground after he plunged down the cliff. As in many tales, the benefit gained by Mu Yantong is referred back explicitly as a result of prior devotion to the *Diamond Sutra,* as the narrator acknowledges the relationship between devotion and deliverance: "Based on its proven efficacy (*lingyan*), [Tong realized that he owed his life] entirely to the power of the *Prajñā*." Even if this is not mentioned at all, the relationship is later affirmed by Mu Yantong, who recognized that his survival—the benefit gained—was a result of his piety, through his actions after the incident:

> After the rebels left, Tong reached home and wholeheartedly recited and upheld [the *Diamond Sutra*] day and night without stopping. He also persuaded all to read and recite the sutra. Tong managed to live a long life without illness and misfortune. He was always at peace, firm and diligent in his practice.

Often, the protagonists in *Diamond Sutra* works explicitly affirm the relationship between their devotion and the benefits they obtain, as in the following:

> In the past, Wang Chao was serving as the Law Section Administrator of the Tianshui Commandery (modern Tianshui, Gansu) when Xue Ju (d. 618) revolted, and killed soldiers. In due course, he came to kill Wang Chao, but his blade broke into pieces.

> He again had the fighter Song Luo stab Wang Chao with a blade, but it also broke into pieces. Xue Ju thought it strange and asked, "What method do you have?" Wang Chao replied, "When I was young, I upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. It must be the power of the scripture." Xue Ju thereupon released Wang Chao.[271]

The benefit obtained is construed as the result of devotion and the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* by witnesses of the events. For example, when Yang Tiji, the Commissioner-in-chief of Yingshan, went to inspect the town annihilated by a fire, he discovered that one house had survived the fire intact. When he asked the people there, he was told that the fire could not burn the house because it was inhabited by an old person who had always received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*.[272]

The relationship between devotion and piety, and thus the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra,* is not always established with protagonists encountering dire straits in which they could experience the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. In tales where there is no problem, an auspicious sign may appear to indicate the wonder of piety. For example, a pigeon may appear to pay respect to a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra*, or a deer may be drawn to listen to his recitation of the sutra.[273] These signs also demonstrate the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in terms of causal relationships between piety and signs. In any case, it is often the case that benefits, resolutions to problem or auspicious signs, are expected because the audience has been primed to anticipate them to prove the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. The narratives often portray situations such that when

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[271] GDJ13.

[272] JYJ41.

[273] JYJ42 and JYJ46.

the protagonist seeks a solution, it comes in a timely manner. Consequently, when the protagonist is saved from danger, the reader is preconditioned to view it as a natural and inevitable consequence of piety. Whether the causal relationship between piety and benefit is implied or explicitly affirmed by the narrator, protagonist, or witnesses, the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* is proven by experiential events in the stories that are deeply significant in a religious manner and highly relevant to the situation of the protagonist.

4.2 Function of *Lingyan*: Persuasion and Propagation

While accounts in the *Mingxiang ji* take up themes of contestation, pitting Buddhism against Daoism at a time when the former was putting down its roots in China, *Diamond Sutra* tales seem to be more concerned with active propagation and conversion.[274] Thus proving the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* is an important feature of its tales; they show that devotion to the sutra serves a practical function in the lives of medieval Chinese. This is especially so with respect to the *Jiyan ji* and the *Gongde ji*. The former, as discussed previously, consists of tales that are put into different sections illustrating the benefits of the *Diamond Sutra* in different areas. Each section begins with a preface that basically explains and touts the *Diamond Sutra* with respect to the benefits and wondrous events presented in the particular section, and the section concludes with verses of praise. As for the *Gongde ji*, this is apparent from its title as well as the way it was put to use. Affixed to a copy of the

[274] Campany 2010: 38–40.

Diamond Sutra, it was meant to promote the *Diamond Sutra*. These qualities of the collections, as well as the content and features of the tales, show that they are meant for convincing people to uphold the *Diamond Sutra*. Unlike commentarial literature, there is little doctrinal content. Their appeal lies not in their presentation of doctrine or clarification of Buddhist teachings, but in the accounts that its readers and listeners could identify with.

In a way, these *Diamond Sutra* tales are effective, as they appeal to people more on the emotional level with the wondrous events and experiences recounted in them.[275] Apart from rhetorical features that authenticate the events and establish the *Diamond Sutra* as the cause of benefits and wonders, the tales also embody rhetorical features that reinforce their appeal as vehicles for the propagation of the *Diamond Sutra*. As in the above tale about Mu Yantong, in many stories, protagonists—having experienced the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*—are described as multiplying their devotion, becoming more rigorous in their practice, taking up new projects to copy the sutra, or convincing others about Buddhism.[276] Their family members, relatives, friends, and colleagues are sometimes described as converting to Buddhism or becoming more pious, refraining from those activities that are discouraged in the tales, such as killing animals (hunting and fishing), drinking, or meat-eating. In an extreme case, a protagonist was said to even go to the extent of

[275] In her study of the narrative of wonder-working events in the *Mahāvaṃsa*, Kristin Scheible argues that they could be seen as a means to "engender particular emotional responses that in turn incite ethical transformation." Scheible 2010: 435.

[276] See especially JY1, JY3, JYJ1, JYJ7, JYJ23, JYJ25, and JYJ11.

bankrupting his family to copy the sutra and later became a monk.[277] Indeed, a few protagonists became monks after experiencing the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* although these tales are highly lay oriented.[278]

Another aspect that makes the narratives appealing is their description of the reaction of people surrounding the wondrous events, whether they are the witnesses or people who later come to known about them. These people, who might not be Buddhist, are described as reacting with amazement to the wondrous events: gasping in disbelief, looking on in wonder, listening to the accounts admiringly, or just being startled. Sometimes, they are described as extolling the divine power of the *Diamond Sutra*, inquiring about the practices which bring about the event, or they may be portrayed as imitating the protagonist's performance. In the tale below, fellow prisoners imitated Yu Chang's recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* after he was acquitted and released from prison:

> At that time, treacherous officials were in power, and many officials were being framed. Although Yu Chang had retired to the field in the hills, he was subsequently framed by the evil officials because of his relationship with other influential officials to whom he was related by marriage. Despite frequent stays in the prison, still he had no anxieties or worries, and day and night he would recite and read [the *Diamond Sutra*]. He never stopped doing so. Within a few days, he would, as expected, be acquitted. The other prisoners all imitated him. [Their cases] could not each be recounted. People within and without the court were astonished, they all sighed [in admiration] and thought it strange.[279]

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[277] JY3.

[278] Examples include protagonists in JY3, JY9, JY18, TPGJ5, TPGJ49, TPGJ87, and TPGJ103.

[279] JYJ58.

At other times, it was not just imitation; the incident inspires people to actually take up the practices encouraged in the *Diamond Sutra*. In one tale, an entire family is converted to recite the *Diamond Sutra* after its members witnessed how a servant girl in the family recovered from a terminal illness.[280] In another account, a friend of the protagonist was converted after he witnessed the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* through his friend, who survived flogging without injuries. We are told that the witness had no interest in Buddhism previously, but after witnessing the event, "he started to correspond with monks, and personally wrote ten sheets [of the *Diamond Sutra*] daily."[281] In certain cases, the events inspired a sizable number of people. One work relates that after the villagers found out that a monk survived a night in a temple inhabited by a wrathful local deity, they "aspired to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*."[282] Return-from-death experiences of protagonists are among the most influential accounts that could inspire and convert a great number of people, from family members, relatives, friends, and unrelated others, to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*.[283]

By describing the reaction of witnesses and audiences who were inspired to uphold the *Diamond Sutra*, these stories lend credibility to the accounts, especially when they are authenticated by people who are skeptical of the claimed wonders. These skeptics, who may include enemies, officials, and

[280] JYJ4.

[281] JY2.

[282] JYJ35.

[283] See especially JYJ27 and JYJ51.

believers of other religious traditions, are often described first as reacting with disbelief as they investigate the matter that finally authenticates the wonders. The following tale is a good illustration of this feature:

> Cui Wenjian, Adjutant of Fangzhou (modern Yan'an, Shaanxi), had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. The Tibetans then were making great inroads into [the central plain], and Wenjian was caught and being taken to Tibet where he was locked up in a heavily guarded place. He wholeheartedly recited the *Diamond Sutra*, and after three days, his manacle suddenly unfastened by itself without any reason. The manacle unfastened again even after he pressed it down firmly. The Tibetan guard thought that he opened the manacle on his own, and wanted to flog him. Wenjian retorted, "The manacle really opened by itself! I didn't pull it apart!" The enemy asked, "What magic do you have to make the manacle unfasten by itself?" He replied, "Because I uphold the *Diamond Sutra*, it must have happened because of this." The Tibetan said, "I will now lock you again, and if you recite the sutra and the manacle unfastens, I will immediately release you to return to your country. If you recite the sutra and yet the manacle doesn't unfasten, I will kill you." All the Tibetans stood by and watched him recite the sutra. Before his recitation ended, the manacle suddenly unfastened [by itself]. The Tibetans marveled at that. Indeed, as promised previously, he was released.[284]

The authentication certainly gives credibility to the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*; after all, non-believers are not invested in proving the work. Similar to the above tale about Cui Wenjian, in another one, a group of bandits was so impressed by the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* that they in turn offered money to the protagonists they were robbing for the *Diamond Sutra* owned by them. They further promised to stop being bandits and to uphold the *Diamond Sutra*.[285] In yet another narrative, a Manichaean converted to Buddhism when

[284] JYJ9.

[285] TPGJ84.

his wife obtained a good rebirth after the recitation of *Diamond Sutra*.[286] Thus, people who already believed in Buddhism became more convinced of the truth of Buddhism, while non-believers came to believe in Buddhism.

Lastly, a feature often used in the tales for persuasion is the exhortation to believe in the *Diamond Sutra* or to be more rigorous in one's devotion. The contents of the exhortations do not vary much, often encouraging or enjoining the protagonists or those related to believe in Buddhism, improve their moral behavior, and more importantly, to remain assiduous in their devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* and encourage others to do the same. Exhortation may come from the words of a monastic or someone who has helped the protagonist.[287] But often King Yama, who confirms the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, is portrayed as exhorting protagonists to continue their practice before they return to the human realm.[288] Directed usually at the protagonists, and in some case at witnesses, these exhortations are also meant for the audience of these tales.

Besides the experience of the protagonist, the various reactions induced externally in the witnesses of the event, the exhortation in the tales, and the effects of devotion and wonders experienced are sometimes used explicitly as a lesson to people in the tales. For example, a famous monk referred to the wondrous rebirth of a monk to exhort an errant monk who witnessed the event, which helped the latter mend his ways toward Buddhism. However, the

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[286] TPGJ83.

[287] See especially JY19, JYJ23 (GDJ12), JYJ27, and JYJ28.

[288] JY12, JYJ28, JYJ32 (GDJ27), JYJ53 (GDJ4), and TPGJ85.

effects of the proven efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in the actions it prompted in the protagonist and witnesses were also meant to be construed as messages to the audience to engage in Buddhist practice.[289]

5. Social and Collective Nature of *Diamond Sutra* Tales

Although *Diamond Sutra* tales may be similar to parables in that they may put forth certain doctrinal or moral stances, they are in essence different because they aim to prove the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in order to persuade its listeners and readers to believe in it, and to engage in Buddhist practice. Therefore, they are not presented as literary creations, but rather as actual accounts of people who personally experienced the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* mostly in terms of its practical utility in their lives. These oral accounts of the experiences of actual people were transmitted from person to person within communities.

Despite being stories of personal experiences of people, these tales are highly social in character with "collective implications."[290] Often, we may infer from the content of these narratives that their originators are the protagonists themselves who, having undergone the events, personally convey their experiences to people they know. The originators may also include a witness or multiple witnesses of the event. The people who came to be informed of these

[289] JY8.

[290] Campany 2012: 20.

accounts by the protagonists or witnesses in turn transmit these stories to others, who further disseminate those accounts to other people, and so on.

The social character and collective implications of the tales have been pointed out by scholars.[291] Campany, in his study of the *Mingxiang ji*, argues that each work is "a memorate: a second-, third-, or fourth-hand narrative of events portrayed as having happened to someone in particular, and … a narrative that engages issues of sufficient importance to sustain the *interest* of narrative communities across multiple links in the chain of transmission."[292] Similarly, *Diamond Sutra* tales are memorates; they are told and retold by many parties in a web of relationships consisting of different communities. At least thirty-eight tales (out of seventy-two) in the *Jiyan ji*[293] and eight in the *Jiuyi* specifically note their sources—the transmitters—at the end. These sources indicate that the tales were orally transmitted among acquaintances, colleagues, friends, relatives, and members of the family.

Among the people in this web of tale-sharing are the compilers, who were collecting accounts, and finally putting them in written form. The sources indicated in these stories reveal that the compilers, who were both the receivers and transmitters of tales, were members of communities whose tales they collected from fellow members of these communities. For instance, the compiler might have heard of an account from his colleague, a member of a community of professionals he belonged to, or a monastic, a member within

[291] For instance, "Miracle As Social Acts" in Davis 1998: 1–22.

[292] Campany 2012: 17.

[293] Ten of these are derived from the *Mingbao shiyi* and one from the *Mingbao ji*.

his religious community, or perhaps from someone living in his neighborhood. Indeed, internal evidence in tales collected in the *Jiyan ji* and the *Jiuyi* reveal that they were circulating in communities that Meng Xianzhong and Duan Chengshi were clearly members of.[294]

Some works from the *Mingbao shiyi* and the *Mingbao ji* collected in the *Jiyan ji* indicate that they were communicated to Lang Yuling and Tang Lin personally by the protagonists, ones close to them, or witnesses that were part of the communities to which they belonged.[295] The *Jiyan ji* indicates that quite a number of these accounts were transmitted by people whom Meng Xianzhong knew through his official position as Zizhou's adjutant. His colleagues and fellow officials in Zizhou provided him with a few accounts: Cui Shancong, the protagonist and a vice magistrate in Zizhou, related his experience to Meng personally; Yu Ni, a District Defender in Zizhou provided an account of his grandfather, Yu Chang; at least six accounts were provided by his colleagues in Zizhou, including two from his superior, the Prefect of Zizhou, Wei Shenming.[296] Other accounts were probably provided by officials in neighboring establishments whom Meng Xianzhong knew personally.[297] An account was said to be related by Huirong, a Chan master from Lingrui

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[294] As mentioned earlier, tales in the *Gongde ji*, consisting of stories that had circulated for a long time and from other places, do not provide information about their sources.

[295] JYJ2, JY20, JYJ33 (also by others), and JYJ39 (communicated by the protagonist); JYJ55 (both friends and relatives of the protagonist); JYJ57 (colleague; also confirmed locally).

[296] JYJ15 (Cui Shancong), JYJ58 (Yu Ni), JYJ17 (Yu Hui, the brother of Shi Huiyuan of the Chongfu Monastery, who was appointed Revenue Manager of Zizhou); JYJ10 and JYJ11 (Prefect of Zizhou); JYJ 13, JYJ59, and JYJ60 (officials in Zizhou).

[297] JYJ8, JYJ9, JYJ16, JYJ18, JYJ19, and JYJ31.

Monastery in Zizhou, probably a monastic establishment within the locale where he was actively engaged.[298]

The same can be said of those sources available in the *Jiuyi*. The informants of the tales include government officials and monastics with whom Duan Chengshi was probably acquainted, most of them in modern Hubei, where a number of accounts are said to take place.[299] Two narratives in particular were probably communicated by monastics that Duan Chengshi might have known because they hailed from monasteries in Hubei. In one tale, we are told that the protagonists told the Chan master in the Linghua Monastery (in modern Jingzhou, Hubei) about his experience, while the events in two other tales were witnessed by two monks from monasteries in Hubei.[300] In stories with no given sources, sometimes the protagonists are said to be still living at a certain place when the account was told or when the tale was being compiled. It is possible that the compiler heard the account from the protagonist, or he was told the story by an acquaintance who knew the protagonist personally.

Perhaps the following account of the source of a tale regarding Li Qiuyi, the District Defender of Gaoyou district in Yangzhou, may give an idea how these tales were transmitted among people:

> Xue Haiyuan, Senior Subaltern of Yangzhou (modern Yangzhou, Jiangsu) knew that Qiuyi revived [after death]. He called

[298] JYJ51.

[299] JY2, JY4, JY5, JY8, JY10, JY11, JY12, and JY15.

[300] JYJ5 (Chan master in the Linghua Monastery), JY11 (Monk Xingjian of Mount Jing), and JY12 (Monk from Jingzhou).

> upon Li to inquire about underworld matters, and recorded them and sent a memorial to inform the emperor. By virtue of the emperor's kindness, Li was promoted in rank and had bestowed upon him the fifth grade, and was sent to Jiazhou (modern Leshan, Sichuan)… It was hot while he was passing by Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan), [so] he stopped by Yao Dai's pavilion to cool down. He personally related the incident to Dai and also left a handwritten copy [of the *Diamond Sutra*].[301]

This account tells us that a fellow official in Yangzhou obtained the account from the protagonist Li Qiuyi, recorded it, and even sent a memorial informing the Emperor. Further, when Li was passing by Zizhou, where Meng was stationed, he met Yao Dai, a native of Zizhou and also the protagonist of a tale collected in the *Jiyan ji*.[302] Yao Dai was probably inspired to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* given to him by Li, and thus experience the efficacy of *Diamond Sutra* as he replicated the wonders of devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*. Although Meng did not mention that he obtained the account from Yao, we may infer that it could be the case, or someone in Zizhou had transmitted it to Meng after Yao told others about Li's experience.

Thus, while Buddhist canonical writings, such as sutras and commentaries, were translated and lectured on by elite monastics in formal settings, such as imperial sponsorship, translation projects, and public lectureships, Chinese Buddhist tales were often transmitted by ordinary monastics or laypeople in informal settings, such as social gatherings, conversations between friends, acquaintances, colleagues or from someone in the marketplace, and often in less predictable ways. By the time, *Diamond*

[301] JYJ64.

[302] JYJ62.

Sutra tales were compiled, most of them had at least undergone two processes of selection. Often, members of communities came to know of various accounts of wondrous events, but they might not have shared all of these narratives. They also often told tales that were of particular interest to themselves, or ones considered to be meaningful and relevant to their audience. The tales about Li and Yao concern return-from-death experience, which were told for their contents and meaning to the audience, and were later selected for inclusion in the *Jiyan ji*. They were certainly of special interest to Meng, given their high representation in *Jiyan ji*. While Meng might not have obtained Li's account from Yao, or learned about Yao's experience first-hand, he could certainly have learned of their stories from someone in Zizhou, since Yao was a native of Zizhou. Yao could have told Li's and his personal accounts to others who transmitted them until Meng came to know of them.

Tales, therefore, might have been told and retold to varying degrees before they reached the ears of the compilers, who executed another selection process before they compiled their collections. As compilers of *Diamond Sutra* tales prepared to commit the tales they gathered into their collections, they probably sifted through many tales, selecting some while excluding others. Or, they might have heard of different versions of the same tale, from which they might have selected particular versions for inclusion in their collections.[303] This process of selection enabled them to include tales that fit the purport of their collections. The *Diamond Sutra* tales that came down to us through this

[303] Tales with more than one informant include JYJ33, JYJ34, JYJ55, and JYJ55.

process of selection are undoubtedly meaningful and relevant to the people from whom they originated and to whom they were transmitted. The many accounts of devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* who return to life after journeying to the underworld might have certain edifying effects—perhaps emotionally and spiritually—on their listeners, causing them to retell those tales.[304]

Since *Diamond Sutra* tales are geared toward establishing proofs of the efficacy of scripture, we may infer that, apart from being told for the allure of its wonders, they are circulated by a loosely defined community of devotees who treat the act of transmission as another means to "do good work" and to accumulate religious merit. It is thus not far-fetched to imagine the works being circulated by members of this community for propagation purposes—to persuade people to believe in the scripture and devote themselves to it through certain Buddhist practices. As a result, these narratives, having been transmitted among people in a web of social networks and selected for compilation, are not simply accounts of individual experiences, but are both artifacts of collective memory and vehicles for propagating Buddhist piety. This explains why they persist over time and space, and continue to be circulated by later people, most of whom were unknown to the protagonists, witnesses, or initial transmitters of these accounts, which might explain why the *Gongde ji*, at the edge of the Chinese empire about two hundred years later, contains tales that first appeared in the *Jiyan ji*.

[304] *Diamond Sutra* tales of this theme are highly represented in the collections and will be studied closely in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

The importance of the role of the compilers of *Diamond Sutra* tales cannot be overemphasized, not just because they are largely responsible for the preservation of tales culled from disparate sources, but also for the pivotal role they play in their representation of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*. As collections devoted solely to touting the wonders of the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Lingyan ji*, *Jiyan ji*, *Jiuyi,* and *Gongde ji* collectively contain accounts that reveal not merely interesting details about their transmitters and their communities, but more importantly for our purposes, what people think and believe in, and how they engage with Buddhism in general and the *Diamond Sutra* in particular. The *Jiyan ji* compiled by Meng Xianzhong reveals Meng's acknowledgement of his compilation as standing within a tradition of tale compilation. This can be seen by his inclusion of works from the now-lost *Lingyan ji*, the first *Diamond Sutra* tale collection, as well as the *Mingbao ji* and the *Mingbao shiyi*. This is a tradition in which ideas and values of Buddhist piety and devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* are disseminated and promoted via the media of *Diamond Sutra* stories. Being affective, these tales do not merely transmit ideas, but also shape the disposition of their audience so that they too come to recite, read, and copy the *Diamond Sutra*; they are then capable of generating wonders similar to those experienced by protagonists in the tales, as in the above example of Yao who probably came to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* after Li shared his experience and gave him a copy of the sutra. Therefore, the propagation of these *Diamond Sutra* narratives was an avenue to replicate the wonders recounted in the tales as the audience

themselves became protagonists of new tales, generating further accounts of the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. This is clearly illustrated by the *Gongde ji,* affixed to a copy of the *Diamond Sutra*, which serves as an introduction to the *Diamond Sutra* in terms of its wonders and promise of merit. The message is simple: if one devotes oneself like the people in the tales, one can also experience the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* as described therein.

Although the telling of these tales could have served a number of purposes, the authorial intent of *Diamond Sutra* tale compilers—in selecting, editing, and compiling *Diamond Sutra* works—undoubtedly drove the way the *Diamond Sutra* was construed and presented by a growing circle of people—to tout its efficacy and encourage Buddhist practice.[305] Originating from ordinary people, and transmitted, fashioned, and preserved by communities to which the originators belonged, these narratives are "products of collective mentality and collective memory."[306]

6. Conclusion

To determine how we should read and interpret *Diamond Sutra* tales, this chapter begins with the question: what are these narratives? With this, we first examine the scholarly understanding of indigenous Buddhist stories. It is

[305] The telling of tales could have been done for entertainment, given their interesting contents. Gjertson (1989: 98) mentions that Tang Lin heard one of the tales while waiting for the arrival of the emperor. Narratives were probably told on such occasions to pass time, and possibly for some entertainment, although they were recognized as factual.

[306] Campany 2012: 27.

interesting to note that while they are referred to as 'miracle tales,' this reference is marked by uneasiness, especially since scholars of Asian religions are aware that the word 'miracle' is used somewhat differently in Western intellectual discourse. It is indeed difficult to resist using the word 'miracle' when the typology of the wondrous and the terms referring to different types of wonders in native Asian traditions, as seen from our earlier discussion, are so diverse. The word 'miracle' is a convenient term to replace the many terms in Asian religions. Perhaps its use may be condoned to facilitate scholarly discussion, but not without first understanding that the word 'miracle' in the Western context is not equivalent to terms referring to wondrous phenomena in the Asian context.

The conceptions of the wondrous in different traditions naturally differ because they are grounded differently in the cosmology of the traditions. The world according to the cosmology of the Western tradition, derived largely from the Judeo-Christian worldview, is created by God, and governed by the laws put in place by Him. God, however, occasionally intervened in affairs of the world as he worked miracles by suspending the laws of nature. Suspension of laws of nature is understood to reveal the existence of a concerned deity, who, as creator of the world, has the capacity to suspend its laws at will. God, therefore, is transcendental in relation to the world. In the universe of Chinese cosmology, there is no god transcendent and separate from the world and there is no heaven outside of the universe to which human beings would plead for help. The wondrous is underpinned by a correlative cosmology and

powered by *ganying*, a concept that explains wonders as natural responses in a world of interdependent order, where things and people react to each other when certain conditions are fulfilled.[307]

Even though *Diamond Sutra* tales present a wide variety of the wondrous, such as auspicious signs, marvelous feats, and atypical events, they are fundamentally capable of being understood and explained in terms of *ganying* and the Buddhist law of causality. They are telling examples of the underlying *ganying* and law of the universe, manifestations of the karma that is really operative in events the uninformed think of as miracles. For those who see the system, there is no anomaly, nothing really irregular or outside the law of karma. Although *ganying* is the philosophical underpinning of *Diamond Sutra* tales, as well as other indigenous tales, different types of indigenous tales are understood differently depending on the soteriological orientation of the stories. Guanyin tales are understood as accounts relating Guanyin's responses to supplicants, which materialize the promises he made in the *Lotus Sutra*. On the other hand, at least two *Diamond Sutra* tales collections are styled *lingyan*, revealing the fact that they are conceived as accounts proving the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, an important feature of the tales.[308]

An examination of the structure of *Diamond Sutra* stories reveals that they embody rhetorical devices that prove two important points: (1) the events

[307] In this respect, we may note that Chinese-speaking people now still generally refer to Chinese Buddhist tales as *ganying gushi* 感應故事 (story of sympathetic resonance) or *lingyan gushi* (stories of proofs of efficacy), but never as miracle stories (*qiji gushi* 奇蹟故事) in the modern context.

[308] Campany has in fact pointed out that the notion of efficacy (*ling*) is a more relevant indigenous notion than *ganying*. Campany 2012: 31, note 91.

in the tales really happened; and (2) the wondrous responses or benefits gained by protagonists constitute the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. The efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* is proven by establishing a necessary causal relationship between the protagonist's devotion and the wonders experienced or benefits gained, often in their meaning, significance, and relevance to the protagonists. The wonders and benefits are, moreover, conceived as solutions to genuine concerns or problems. This property of the tales is crucial for promoting the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*.

In their consistent structure and the role they play in propagating the *Diamond Sutra*, they clearly differ from Chinese writings that are considered part of the genre of *zhiguai*, to which these tales are also considered to belong. Moreover, the authorial intent of the compilers—in selecting, editing, and compiling them to demonstrate the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*—was undoubtedly important for the transmission of the tales because it drove the way the *Diamond Sutra* was construed and presented by a growing circle of people. As "products of collective mentality and collective memory," *Diamond Sutra* tales were told, fashioned, transmitted, and preserved by communities over time and space. Although these are accounts of the experiences of people, when collected, they are marked by strong intentionality of purpose, and collectively 'crafted' to shape attitudes, beliefs, and Buddhist practices of medieval Chinese society. This understanding, together with the knowledge of their philosophical underpinnings, should thus revise our consideration of these Chinese Buddhist tales as belonging to the *zhiguai* genre.

In a sense, they are in fact better described as ‘minor histories’ of common people, as they are marked by strong intentionality of purpose and were collectively ‘crafted’ to shape attitudes, beliefs, and Buddhist practices of medieval Chinese people. The collective nature of these ‘histories’ and their distribution means that they contain information about attitudes, beliefs, and Buddhist practices that were fairly widespread in Chinese society at the time, thus serving as more important resources for studying the religiosity of medieval China than works authored by individuals. Although we might not be able to know what actually happened in these narratives, we may come to know a fair bit about what people at that time believed had happened, what they wanted others to believe, and what they hoped to achieve by telling and compiling these tales. Embedded in them are assumptions and knowledge shared by the originators, transmitters, and compilers. In short, historical information, shared assumptions, and knowledge can be discerned in the recurring themes of these tales, and the motifs and ideas that shape them—the subjects of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THEMES, MOTIFS, AND IDEAS

Previously, I have argued that *Diamond Sutra* tales are deeply rooted in traditional Chinese cosmology and that the experiences contained in them are based on the Chinese concept of *ganying,* a concept that heavily influenced the medieval Chinese understanding of Buddhism and helped shape Chinese Buddhist ontology and soteriology. This philosophical underpinning allows events in the tales to be perceived as proofs of the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra,* as devotion to it acts as a cause as well as a stimulus that brings forth a desired state of affairs—an effect or response—in an often difficult situation that demonstrates not just how Buddhist practice works to solve real life problems, but also the truth and power of the *Diamond Sutra*. As these narratives were told, collected, and compiled, they came to reflect, encourage, and propagate a particular style of Buddhist engagement, which was related to the *Diamond Sutra*. These tales thus bear witness to the way an increasing number of medieval Chinese people have come to engage with the *Diamond Sutra*, and the formation of its cult, as it was practiced among certain groups of people in Tang China. In order to understand the particular style of Buddhism represented by the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*, this chapter analyzes *Diamond Sutra* stories by studying their prevalent themes and exploring the ideas and motifs they embody, and discusses the characteristics of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*. It deliberates on how the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*

differentiated itself from other cults by comparing their salient features with those of other cultic foci as revealed in pre-Tang and contemporaneous tales, such as the *Mingxiang ji*, and tales of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*.

1. THEMES OF *DIAMOND SUTRA* TALES

Already in the Six Dynasties period, we find tales in the *Xi guanshiyin yingyan ji* grouped into categories based on the nature of Guanyin's intervention, a feature missing in the two earlier collections of Guanyin accounts.[309] Among the three Tang collections of *Diamond Sutra* tales, only the *Jiyan ji* presented its tales in six categories. Meng Xianzhong's categorization—based largely, but not totally, on the experience of the supplicant with respect to the *Diamond Sutra*—is as follows: (1) Rescue and Protection (*jiuhu* 救護), (2) Extension of Lifespan (*yanshou* 延壽), (3) Eradication of Sins (*miezui* 滅罪), (4) Supernatural Power (*shenli* 神力), (5)

[309] The tales are arranged thematically in sequence into eleven categories based on the interventions of Guanyin detailed in the scriptures. Although there is no heading indicating that the ensuing tales belong to a particular category, a short note at the end of the last tale of the category indicates the scriptural basis of the tales in the category. Except for the category of obtaining a son (one tale, 55), the other ten categories are based on the type of assistance requested from and the rescue and protection rendered by Guanyin: rescue from fire (three tales, 1–3), water (six tales, 4–9), demons (one tale, 10), sword (eight tales, 11–18), fetters (twenty-two tales, 19–40), brigands (fourteen tales, 41–54), wild beasts (two tales, 68–69); guidance when lost (five tales, 56–60); transported home from afar (four tales, 61–64); recovery from illness (three tales, 65–67).

Merit (*gongde* 功德), and (6) Responses to Sincerity (*chengying* 誠應).[310] The first three categories enumerate the main types of benefits obtained by devotees of the *Diamond Sutra*, while the latter three typify the wonders of the *Diamond Sutra* in terms of its power, the merit derived from it, and its responses to sincere devotion. The last three categories, however, overlap with the first three since their tales also relate benefits obtained by supplicants. Likewise, tales in the first three categories also contain details about the power of the *Diamond Sutra*, merit derived from devotion to it, and responses elicited by sincere supplication of devotees, albeit having different emphases.

Whatever the merits and problems of this classification, there is no doubt that Meng's classification is of great significance. Unlike the categorization in the *Xi guanshiyin yingyan ji*, which is based on the *loci classici* of Bodhisattva Guanyin,[311] Meng's categorization is largely original. While the categories in *Xi guanshiyin yingyan ji* serve to validate Guanyin's promise to rescue and protect believers in those situations enumerated in the scriptures, Meng's categories—not based on any scriptural sources—reflect how he or the people of his time might have conceptualized the relationship between devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* and its outcome, or more generally, how they might have

[310] Each category of tales constitutes a section (*pian* 篇) that is introduced by a foreword (*xu* 序) and concluded by a praise or paean (*zan* 贊).

[311] In addition to the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* "The Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Perceiver of World's Sounds, the *Qing guanshiyin jing* 請觀世音經 is cited as the scriptural basis of the last four categories. The *Qing guanshiyin jing* refers to *Qing guanshiyin pusa xiafu duhai tuoluonizhou jing* 請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼咒經 (Sutra of Dhāraṇīs for Invoking Avalokiteśvara to Neutralize Poison and Subdue Evil) now collected in T20.1043: 34b–38a. According to Chün-fang Yü, this one-roll scripture was translated in the last years of the Eastern Jin (317–420) by Zhu Nandi 竺難提. See Yü 2001: 49.

conceptualized the dynamics of Buddhist piety. By creating these categories and sorting the tales he collected into them, Meng Xianzhong was certainly responsible for reinforcing such conceptualizations.

In a similar vein, the wonders and 'interventions' of the *Diamond Sutra* as told in all of the *Diamond Sutra* stories surveyed in this study, regardless of whether they were categorized within the compilations to which they belong, may be classified under a few themes based on the experiences of protagonists and the benefits they obtained from their devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*. The fact that they could be classified thematically into a few kinds should not come as a surprise to us given the nature of their emergence and their rhetorical function. Campany has insightfully pointed out that such accounts are socially fashioned within a network of social interactions. Being "shaped by collective expectations and cultural patterns,"[312] they are typified in a few enduring themes that reflect the stock concerns of devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* and the various types of its wonders that are most meaningful to the faithful. Indeed, people repeatedly related tales of certain themes that are pertinent and meaningful to them. Constituting a particular worldview, these wonders are "characterized by shared forms and meanings that are readily recognized, understood, and acted upon."[313] These tales thus came to play an important role in shaping the religio-cultural milieu in which they first appeared.[314]

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[312] Campany 2012: 46–8.

[313] Brown 1998: 35.

[314] This will be elaborated on in Chapter 4.

Another reason for the recurring themes of the narratives is related their rhetorical function.[315] Because *Diamond Sutra* stories were transmitted, compiled, and promulgated to convince their readers about the nature of the benefits and wonders of the *Diamond Sutra*, the repetitive telling of tales of a few themes could leave deeper imprints in the consciousness of their audience, especially when they represent scenarios which were frequently encountered, making them both familiar and vitally important to the listener. Rather than making variant accounts of the same theme stale, it is their familiarity and typicality that left deep impressions on their audience. Hence, the thematic paucity of these tales enables them to be more effective in both defining the parameters within which attention could be concentrated on, as well as in popularizing the *Diamond Sutra* by framing medieval Chinese conceptions of and engagement with it in terms of the religious attitude and practices represented and encouraged therein.

1.1 Rescue and Protection

In extolling the wonders and efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, *Diamond Sutra* tales are similar to Guanyin tales of the Six Dynasties period in that they focus on a single Buddhist entity and aim to show the benefits received from devotion to it. Almost all Guanyin tales feature the theme of rescue and protection, as they recount the intervention of Guanyin in various situations. Although this theme does not dominate the body of narratives in the way it did

[315] Campany 2012: 48.

in accounts related to Guanyin, it is one of the most popular themes of the *Diamond Sutra* tales. Stories of this theme typically relate the experiences of protagonists who received protection or were rescued in various situations. These situations range from those that were not life-threatening, when the wellbeing of protagonists was compromised, to dire straits, where substantial physical harm, injury, or even death seemed inevitable. The causes of these problems or situations varied, ranging from those due to personal judgment to those inflicted by other people, other sentient or insentient beings, forces of nature, and beings from other realms.

The main point of these accounts is that their protagonists were rescued and protected from those situations or troubles by virtue of their devotion to religious practices related to the *Diamond Sutra,* such as upholding, reading, reciting, and copying it. The following *Diamond Sutra* account is a typical example:

> Wei Keqin of Jingzhao (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi) had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Because of a military expedition to Liaodong (modern Liaoyang, Liaoning), he was subsequently lost in Goguryeo. A few years later, he encountered an imperial army that was on a punitive expedition to Liao. Taking advantage of the darkness at night, he wanted to submit to the imperial army. After he went out of the city, all over were Goguryeo villages. It just so happened that the moon was hidden, and he lost his way while traveling. But he later saw something bright like a lamp leading him forward. In a while, he reached the encampment of the imperial army.
>
> [Later] Keqin achieved the post of Palace Attendant. He told all his relatives and friends about this verifying experience [of his practice], and sighed at the inconceivable power of the *Prajñā* (Related by Wei Shenming, Prefect of Zizhou [modern Mianyang, Sichuan]).[316]

[316] JYJ11 (TPGJ14).

As related above, the conspicuous benefits—being rescued in this case—obtained by the protagonist were shown to be the direct result of his devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*. This tale is among the most lucid narrative exemplifications of how the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* was verified through the devotional experiences of protagonists. Although assistance may come in the form of guiding light, oneiric visions, and people like monastics, sometimes the *Diamond Sutra* is described as offering help in a direct manner by taking the brunt on behalf of the protagonists. For example, Zhao An, a commoner who "had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*," was falsely accused of theft. When he was flogged during interrogation, "each time the rod went down on his back, it broke." After his release, he went home and opened the box that contained the *Diamond Sutra*, only to find that "the cord had snapped, the roller had broken, and all the paper was in tatters."[317]

To the common people who were often beset with problems and worries of daily existence, liberation from *saṃsāra* might not have been as crucial as deliverance from life's unpredictability and vicissitudes, which referred to the problems and dangers they were more likely to encounter in daily life events and activities. Indeed, these tales reflect the realities of medieval Chinese people: problems of daily existence, such as illness and disease, and dangers encountered in political intrigues, during travel, civil unrest, and so on. These accounts of experiences of protagonists, who were rescued from all kinds of

[317] JY17 (TPGJ89). See also GDJ8 and TPGJ100. Such tales of the object of devotion taking the brunt on behalf of the devotees are probably more common among the Guanyin tales. Campany 1993: 243–4. On the contrary, the *Diamond Sutra* is often represented as a powerful and indestructible scripture. See Section 1.6 in this chapter.

adversities, were attractive as they offered a way for people in medieval Chinese society to handle their problems or avert troubles. Therefore, it is not surprising that such tales constitute as much as a third or more of all *Diamond Sutra* stories surveyed.[318]

Certainly, religions in medieval China served a variety of purposes. This is indeed so judging from the various kinds of scenarios detailed in narratives of this theme and how faith in the *Diamond Sutra* proved to be useful. To some protagonists, devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* provides general protection against life's unpredictability, such as unforeseen disasters or calamities caused by nature and human agency, as well as problems of a smaller scale, such as illnesses. Quite a number of tales recount protection against dangers while traveling. These scenarios include encountering wild beasts and bandits,[319] dangerous situations or storms while traveling on water,[320] or losing one's way,[321] and being stranded in faraway places.[322] Other protagonists were rescued from dangerous situations related to their professions, such as mutiny and rebellion,[323] imprisonment due to political inquiries at workplaces (civil servants), and being captured by foreign enemies

[318] About fifty-one tales out of the 148 tales surveyed have rescue and protection as their theme. In particular, nearly half of the *Jiuyi* (nine out of twenty-one) and the *Jiyan ji* (twenty-seven out of seventy) accounts have this theme.

[319] JYJ8 (TPGJ29), TPGJ98, and JYJ6.

[320] JYJ18 (TPGJ24), JYJ19 (TPGJ31), TPGJ44, TPGJ47, TPGJ71, JYJ10 (TPGJ80), TPGJ82, TPGJ94, TPGJ99, and JYJ50.

[321] JYJ11 (TPGJ14), TPGJ65 (cf. Preface of the *Jiuyi*), and JYJ15 (GDJ15).

[322] JYJ9 (TPGJ38), JY6 (TPGJ70), and JY20 (TPGJ57).

[323] JY1 (TPGJ58) and TPGJ101.

while on military campaigns (mainly soldiers).[324] In yet other accounts, protagonists are protected from supernatural maladies worked by ghosts and evil spirits, or those caused by blasphemy.[325] Thus, we see faith in the *Diamond Sutra* serving a variety of purposes in different situations, sometimes as an apotropaic remedy, and at other times a prophylactic shield, or a navigational guide.

1.2 Prolongation of Lifespan

Chinese historical records reveal that the Chinese have always had a special interest in longevity, and the attainment of immortality. Bronze inscriptions from the Western Zhou 西周 (1122–771 BCE) period attest to the Chinese preoccupation with longevity, as they indicate that the Zhou people prayed to their ancestors and sometimes Heaven for longevity.[326] This preoccupation with longevity intensified over time and led to the yearning and serious quest for immortality by the ruling class of subsequent periods. During the Warring States 戰國 period (476–221 BCE), princes of various Qi states commissioned maritime expeditions in search of islands presumably inhabited by immortals in order to obtain the secrets of longevity and immortality. This quest intensified under the first Emperor of the Qin and his Han dynasty successors, especially Emperor Wu 漢武帝 (140–87 BCE). In early medieval

[324] JYJ2 (TPGJ7), JYJ1 (TPGJ9), JYJ10 (TPGJ35), TPGJ41, JY21 (TPGJ60), TPGJ101, and JYJ14.

[325] JYJ36 (TPGJ12), JYJ17 (TPGJ30), TPGJ74, TPGJ77, TPGJ88, and JYJ13.

[326] Yü 1964: 87.

China, Daoists, continuing from developments of earlier periods, offered various innovative methods—psychophysical, dietetic, alchemical, or ritual—to nourish and prolong life, or achieve immortality.[327]

To Chinese Buddhists who were concerned with promoting the Dharma, the salvific potential of Buddhism could certainly be harnessed to respond to the Chinese aspiration for good health and longevity. The number of *Diamond Sutra* tales belonging to this theme tells us that the devotees of *Diamond Sutra* who were the originators and transmitters of these tales had responded to this aspiration in their own ways. Therefore, when the devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* set about promoting it, they recounted the power of the scripture in relation to various scenarios where some devotees extended their lifespan and achieved longevity.

Diamond Sutra narratives that tell of protagonists who prolonged their lifespan through their devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* come mainly in two types. The first type, which is also more common, describes return-from-death experiences of protagonists who died and journeyed to the underworld, but were later revived after having had their lifespan prolonged. Because the emphasis of these tales is placed more on the return-from-death experience, they will be considered as belonging to the "return-from-death" theme in the next section, along with other tales that recount such experiences but without involving life prolongation.

[327] This is exemplified by Ge Hong's works. See Lewis 2009a: 200; Campany 2002: 21–31 and 18–97; Harper 1998: 110–47.

In the second type, we have devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* literally living beyond their allotted lifespan or eluding situations that would lead inevitably to death. The idea that people have an allotted lifespan (*ming* 命) has its origins in early China. Variously conceived, this allotted lifespan, it was thought, can be affected by one's actions.[328] In one view, the allocation of lifespan was conceived to be a celestial granary placed at the disposal of each human individual in order to assure his/her survival during his/her earthly sojourn.[329] In the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Classic of Great Peace), there is a concept of the dispossession of the lifespan count (*duosuan* 奪算), which is based on the idea that people have fixed lifespans. When the count is exhausted, death comes.[330] Responding to problems originating from such a notion, devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* is said to be able to alter the allotted lifespan of a person. This is clearly illustrated by the following account:

> In the past, during the Liang dynasty (502–557), when Master Yan of the Zhaoti Monastery began his novitiate, there was a physiognomist who said to Yan, "Young Dharma Master, although you have great intelligence and wisdom, unfortunately your appearance indicates that you have a short lifespan. What do you intend to do?" Hearing these words, he proceeded to invite the great venerables to discuss his fortune, and what kind of merit he should cultivate in order to prolong his lifespan. The great venerables said, "A sagely Buddhist saying has it that the merit gained from receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra* according to the dharma is the greatest; this will definitely prolong your lifespan." Yan then followed their instruction, and immediately ascended the mountain to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*.

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[328] For introduction to the notion of *ming* in early China, see Csikszentmihalyi 2011: 177–90 and Puett 2005.

[329] Mollier 2008: 102.

[330] Lagerwey 2008: 1140.

> After six years, he descended the mountain and once again went to see the physiognomist. The latter asked him, "What merit did you cultivate since? You have the unique appearance of longevity, how could you have achieved this so suddenly?" Yan then told him everything, "When I was previously being physiognomized as having a short lifespan, I proceeded to ascend the mountain. Other than receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra*, I did nothing else." The physiognomist exclaimed, "Unbelievable!" As a result of this merit, Yan consequently became a venerable Dharma master, and lived to more than a hundred years before his life came to an end.[331]

It is clear from the above tale that devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* indeed extended the lifespan of Master Yan, since he mentioned that all he did on the mountain was receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*. This account, together with another in the *Gongde ji*,[332] illustrates how the Buddhists provide a solution to what might seem to be the problem of allotted lifespan, an important aspect of traditional Chinese thought. It is also interesting to note that the story makes use of a divinatory practice with a long history, physiognomy, and its accompanying beliefs to demonstrate the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*.[333]

In some other tales, the prolongation of lifespan is implied as we can see from another story where a protagonist met a man whose family members and neighbors, all longtime devotees of the *Diamond Sutra*, had unusually long lifespans—considering the relative high mortality and short life expectancy rates in the medieval world:

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[331] JYJ21 (GDJ1).

[332] JYJ22 (GDJ2).

[333] On physiognomy in early China, see Csikszentmihaly 2004: 130–41.

> In the first year of the Wansui dengfeng era (696) when Sixuan first traveled to Zhongwei bridge, he saw a very old man who was wearing layers of mourning clothes. Sixuan thought it strange and asked the old man, who replied, "I am now eighty-two years old. I am wearing these clothes for my mother. My mother was a hundred and seven years old and has only recently passed away." Sixuan further asked, "How did you take care of her to for her to gain such longevity?" The person replied, "When my mother was forty-three, someone taught her to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. She recited it twice daily from young until old, and never ceased even temporarily. My mother, in addition to my maternal auntie, as well as [two] neighboring women—altogether four persons—they did the same thing and together received and upheld [the *Diamond Sutra*]. My aunt has already passed away for a year—she lived to a hundred and four. As for the other two persons, each of them now is already more than ninety years old. They are still alive now."[334]

As the concept of allotted lifespan is used to explain why people died, protagonists in other tales who averted death in various situations through their devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* may be taken as instances where their allotted lifespan was prolonged. These tales differ from those that belong to the "rescue and protection" theme discussed above, mainly in terms of the intensity of the situations encountered by protagonists—situations that would have inevitably led to death.[335] This can be seen from cases where protagonists "prolonged" their lifespan by recovering from incurable illnesses or diseases,[336] or evaded capital punishment in the nick of time on the execution ground.[337] In other cases, protagonists survived extremely violent

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[334] JYJ29 (TPGJ36).

[335] This kind of tales is not new and can be found in the *Mingxiang ji*, and Guanyin tale collections.

[336] TPGJ78, JYJ32 (GDJ7), JYJ4, and JYJ7.

[337] TPGJ49, TPGJ102, and JYJ5.

assaults of arrows and blades[338], with a few who actually revived even though they had been killed.[339] In what might indicate new imaginings of the power of the *Diamond Sutra*, some protagonists circumvented summons to the underworld altogether, and thus prolonged their lifespan.[340]

1.3 Return-from-Death Experiences

After Buddhism spread to China, Buddhist views on the afterlife, underworld, and hells were introduced to Chinese society and assimilated into indigenous Chinese beliefs, thus transforming the Chinese belief system of death, the afterlife, and their corollaries.[341] These developments can be discerned from Chinese writings, in particular indigenous Chinese Buddhist narratives. Among these narratives, those belonging to the return-from-death theme, which typically describe experiences of people who died and returned from the otherworld, demonstrate the interplay of indigenous and Buddhist elements as novel views on death and the afterlife came into being.

Return-from-death experiences have been recorded in early Chinese historical records: the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han) reports what might possibly be the two earliest cases.[342] In the Six Dynasties period, more accounts of this theme were collected in *zhiguai* collections, such

[338] TPGJ59, TPGJ62 and GDJ8.

[339] TPGJ75, JYJ14 (TPGJ73), TPGJ87, TPGJ100, and TPGJ103.

[340] JYJ2 (TPGJ7), TPGJ76, and JY9 (TPGJ81).

[341] This will be discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to the impact of the attitudes and beliefs encouraged in *Diamond Sutra* tales.

[342] See Campany 1990: 94–5.

as the *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (A Record of the Search for the Supernatural),[343] the *Youming lu* 幽明錄 (Records of Hidden and Visible Worlds),[344] and the *Shuyi ji* 述異記 (A Record of Reported Marvels).[345] Such beliefs about the possibility of returning to life after death later came to be used cleverly by Buddhists, in scholastic works and tale narratives, against detractors who did not subscribe to Buddhist ideas, such as karmic retribution and rebirth. In the *Mingxiang ji*, these ideas were put to good use to prove the truth of Buddhism, as Buddhist doctrines and conception of hells were introduced and woven together with indigenous ideas of the afterworld to construct a rich and structured topography of the afterworld that came to supersede indigenous conceptions.

In early Chinese thought, notions of the afterworld are vague, and the divide between this world and the afterworld was not as distinct as in other cultures.[346] But the idea of an afterworld operated by a bureaucracy—which was later incorporated into accounts of the underworld in Chinese Buddhist

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[343] A collection of Chinese tales showing Buddhist influence compiled by Gan Bao. See Campany 1996b: 55–62. See DeWoskin and Crump 1996 for an English translation of the *Soushen ji*.

[344] Another collection compiled by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), the Prince of Linchuan 臨川. It contains one of the most representative tales of the return-from-death theme about a person called Zhao Tai. See Campany 1996b: 75–7. Though not specifically Buddhist, stories of Buddhist persuasion are found in this collection. For example, item 264 in the *Youming lu* (Lu 1967: 320) cited by Campany 1995: 353.

[345] A collection compiled by Zu Chongzhi 祖沖之 (429–500 CE) introduced in Campany 1996b: 83–84. For a discussion of works of this theme in these collections, see Campany 1990 and 1995.

[346] From about the eighth century BC on, the term Yellow Springs (*huangquan* 黃泉), referring to a dark and miserable place beneath the earth, began to be used in historical and literary writings to denote the home of the dead. In another record, "Summons of the Soul," one of the Elegies of Chu, mentions the Capital of Darkness (*youdu* 幽都). See Yü 1987: 382.

tales—is an early one, dating to as early as the Shang period.[347] By the Han dynasty, Mount Tai (Taishan 泰山) in Shandong ruled over by the Lord of Mount Tai (Taishan fujun 泰山府君) and assisted by a bureaucracy, increasingly became the destination for the dead; although there were other notions of the afterworld, all explicated the afterworld as subterranean and governed by a bureaucracy.[348] These places were, however, not featured as places where reward or punishment was meted out.[349] By the third century, people believed that the Lord of Mount Tai administered the afterworld, and the dead returned to Mount Tai. In this way, Taishan was personified as the afterlife deity controlling the destiny of people, while Mount Tai became a place where ghosts were governed.[350] As time wore on, the idea of post-mortem punishment also found its way into the Han belief about the afterlife. The *Taiping jing* of the second century CE has vivid descriptions of the

[347] There was an idea of a "heavenly court" that might have been a destination reserved only for the kings and lords as early as the Shang period. Ibid.: 382. Evidence shows the belief in an otherworldly bureaucracy during the Warring States. In probably the earliest account, dated to 269 BCE, a person revived three years later after his superior filed a plaint to the afterworld official. The presence of an afterworld bureaucracy modeled after the human realm is indicated by documents in the tomb about communication between human and afterworld officials about the newly deceased. See Harper 1994: 13–28. Other corresponding bureaucratic systems are found in the *Huainan zi,* which describes the heavens as constituting different places and territories inhabited and staffed by different heavenly beings. Chen 2009: 81. By the second century BCE, there was already a vivid conception of a heavenly world and an underworld, and their structures. Yü 1987: 382. Later in popular Han culture, the notion of a government in heaven overseeing human activities developed, and in the *Taiping jing* (second century CE), there is mention of heavenly institutions that have names borrowed from Han governmental organizations. Ibid.: 382–3.

[348] For a discussion of the emergence of Mount Taishan as the pre-eminent afterworld destination, see Ibid.: 386–94.

[349] For studies of Mount Tai, see Chavannes 1910, Sakai 1937, and Ono Shihei 1963. Another destination of the dead during or after the Han is the Fengdu 酆都. See Chenivesse 1997 and Mollier 2008: 183.

[350] Yü 1987: 389.

administration of justice in the underworld.[351] These beliefs would prove to be useful for Chinese Buddhists in their construction of the 'Buddhist' afterlife, where heavens and hells are conceived as sites of afterlife reward and punishment. This will become more pronounced later with the introduction of Buddhist karmic retribution and hells.

From the very beginning of the arrival of Buddhism, the idea of Buddhist hells did not totally replace indigenous ideas of the afterlife, as is indicated by some early translation of Buddhist sutras, where concepts or terms from indigenous afterlife belief were appropriated to facilitate the introduction of Buddhism and its doctrines of karmic retribution into China.[352] But gradually, beginning with those *zhiguai* collections mentioned above, and especially in indigenous Buddhist tale collections composed by pious laymen, the influence of Buddhist views of the afterlife and the otherworld unfolded.[353]The earliest Buddhist stories relating return-from-death experience and introducing the new topographical features of the underworld were collected in the late fifth-century collection, the *Mingxiang ji*.[354] In this collection, we find elaborate accounts of protagonists who went to the underworld and detailed

[351] Ibid.: 390.

[352] For example, the *Foshuo fenbie shan'e suoqi jing* 佛說善惡所起經 (Sutra Preached by the Buddha On Distinguishing the Origins of Good and Evil), thought to be translated by the Parthian monk An Shigao 安世高 (second century CE), uses 'Taishan' to denote hell. See T17.729: 516 and 518. See also Yü 1987: 394.

[353] Campany 1990.

[354] According to Campany, there are eighteen tales with this theme in the *Mingxiang ji*. See list in Campany 2012: 263.

descriptions of hells—which asserts the survival of the soul after death and the presence of the underworld.[355]

Tales of this theme continued to be collected in other indigenous Buddhist narratives, such as the *Fayuan zhulin*, the *Mingbao ji*, and other texts. By the time *Diamond Sutra* tales were collected, the topography of this underworld had been generally accepted and refined. Among *Diamond Sutra* tales, a huge proportion of them—about one-fifth—are of the return-from-death theme, indicating that Buddhist ideas of the afterlife, underworld, and hells had penetrated the community of people who devoted themselves to the *Diamond Sutra*, if not a wider spectrum of Chinese society. *Diamond Sutra* tales of this theme are among some of the most important in our study, often containing valuable information regarding Buddhism, especially how ordinary people practiced it with regard to the *Diamond Sutra*.[356] More importantly, these accounts about return-from-death experiences and the hells now serve a different purpose. Instead of validating Buddhist doctrines and introducing a Sinicized Buddhist underworld—which were taken as self-evident—these stories verify the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. These validations usually take the following form: protagonists whose souls were summoned to the

[355] Opposition was prevalent in early medieval period to Buddhist ideas, such as karmic retribution and rebirth. Buddhist, both lay and monastic, responded to convince their detractors in different ways, some wrote scholastic works while others told narratives. Buddhist tale collections were mostly the result of such efforts. Although it is probably more appropriate to refer to the survival of consciousness in the Buddhist context, I have used the word "soul" to reflect a more popular Chinese understanding. Please see Park 2012 for a discussion of this topic.

[356] For an in-depth discussion on these tales, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

underworld after they died later returned to life due to the merit obtained from having upheld the *Diamond Sutra* while alive:

> Before she was married, Wang Conggui's younger sister, a member of the Chanling village in Gongan (present-day Gongan, Hubei), always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. In the Zhenyuan era (785–805), she suddenly died of illness. She had already been buried for three days when her family came to the cemetery again. They heard moaning sounds from within her burial mound. Thereupon, they opened the mound and looked inside. Indeed, she was still alive. They sent her back by carriage, and after a few days, she could speak. She related that when she first arrived at the underworld, the underworld officials released her to return to the human realm because she had upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. Wang Conggui could do carpentry work, and was always doing some work at Linghua Monastery in Gongan. The Chan master of the monastery, Shuzhong had once encountered Conggui who told him about it.[357]

Although it is not stated in the above tale, the reason why Conggui's sister was brought to the underworld is probably because her allotted lifespan had expired. As she was released to return to life because of her devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*, the narrative clearly demonstrates the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in the underworld. In some of these tales, the number of years by which people's lifespans were prolonged is indicated.[358]

Not all return-from-death stories involve characters whose lifespan had expired, sometimes protagonist could be summoned to the underworld for other reasons and later returned to life. One frequent reason is due to the fallibility of the underworld bureaucracy where some protagonists were

[357] JY5 (TPGJ69).

[358] JYJ53 (18 years), TPGJ42 (30 years), JYJ7 (18 years; GDJ10), GDJ9 (10 years), JY4 (10 years; TPGJ68), JY12 (30 years; TPGJ85), TPGJ46 (15 years), and TPGJ 48 (20 years).

brought to the underworld by mistake.[359] Protagonists could also be brought to the underworld when they were needed to serve as witnesses in underworld trials.[360] In some accounts, protagonists were brought to the underworld because they were legally charged by underworld beings.[361] Whatever the reason, the ultimate aim of these tales was to have protagonists serve as witnesses to the benefits of devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* and its efficacy in the underworld so that they could convey what they saw to people in the human realm. Often exhorted to devote themselves more vigorously to the *Diamond Sutra*, there is no doubt that the protagonists were also expected to exhort the living to do the same.

1.4 Good Death and Rebirth

The first and the last of the four sufferings, birth and death, conceived normally as the two ends of a person's life, are "emblematic of the whole samsaric process."[362] As the last event to occur in a person's life, death puts a stop to all of the person's attachment to the world but also serves as a gateway to another birth, and thus another existence. This process will go on *ad infinitum* as long as the causes and conditions of samsaric existence—craving and ignorance—remain.

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[359] JYJ53 (GDJ4, TPGJ3), JYJ27 (TPGJ8), TPGJ27, TPGJ96, TPGJ97, and FYZL2. For a discussion of this indigenous trope, see Campany 1990: 108–109.

[360] JY3 (TPGJ67), JY7 (GDJ10, and TPGJ72).

[361] JYJ64 (TPGJ33) and JY18 (TPGJ92; animals), JYJ26.

[362] Cuevas and Stone 2007: 1.

Because death serves as a gateway to another life, the quality of one's death will have an effect on the next life. Therefore, in Buddhism, the last moment of life is said to determine the transition to the next state of existence, and thus a good death is an indicator of a favorable rebirth.[363] Reflected together with the concern for a good death is that for attaining a good rebirth in the cycle of birth and death. Among *Diamond Sutra* tales, more than half a dozen belong to the theme that extols the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* for achieving a good death or rebirth.[364] In these narratives, devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*, whether by upholding, reciting, or copying it, would be rewarded eventually at the end of one's life if one had been steadfast in one's devotion.

In *Diamond Sutra* tales, indications of a good death or rebirth include the posture and circumstance in which the protagonist passes away. Often, it is preceded by a sublime state of departure characterized by one or more of the following features: a foreknowledge of one's impending end, a serene state of mind, and/or exceptional composure, often in meditative postures.[365] Indicative of the quality of a practitioner's death, and thus his/her rebirth, these features tacitly imply that the protagonist is bound for a good rebirth.

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[363] See Shinohara 2007: 105–33. Shinohara, while discussing Daoxuan's instructions for deathbed practices, notes the importance of one's final thoughts for securing good rebirth as one of the two major themes (the other emphasizes the need to relinquish attachments at the time of death).

[364] JYJ58 (TPGJ34), TPGJ83, JYJ34 (TPGJ21), JYJ61 (TPGJ63), JY8 (TPGJ79), TPGJ52, JYJ57, JYJ55, and JYJ32 (GDJ7).

[365] In the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, the Buddha is said to know of his death three months before it took place.

Canonical sources, such as the biographies of eminent monks, often depict monks who passed away in postures and circumstances which indicate not just their spiritual attainment, but also the fact that they have achieved good deaths. The following tale about Sengche, collected in the *Mingbao ji*, epitomizes what it meant to have a good death—including the ability to predict one's death, which became part of the identity of eminent monks:

> In the first month of the second year of the Yonghui period (651), he [Sengche] suddenly gathered together all of his followers and told them that he was about to die. Then seating himself upright on his cord couch, he closed his eyes and did not move. At that time, from a clear cloudless sky, blossoms began to fall like snow, around the leaves on the trees all turned white as if they were covered with a fine white powder. After three days they returned to normal color, but Sengche had already come to his end.[366]

Besides passing away in a meditative position, Sengche's death is also accompanied by auspicious signs, marking the significance of the event. In some cases, a good death may also indicate that the monastic is destined for a desirable rebirth in heaven or is headed to the pure lands, where heavenly beings appear to welcome the dying monastic.[367] This motif is traditionally associated with monastics, particularly eminent monks, although their descriptions may vary from case to case. Thus, it is significant to find in *Diamond Sutra* tales lay Buddhists—portrayed as advanced Buddhist practitioners—accomplishing good rebirths in similar fashions, as illustrated by the following account:

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[366] This is the third tale in roll 1 of the *Mingbao ji*. Translation taken from Gjertson 1989: 162 (words in Wade-Giles changed to *pinyin*).

[367] Birnbaum 2007: 175–07; Kieschnick 1997: 5 and 73. See also JY8 (TPGJ79) and GDJ7.

> Xue Yan, Adjutant of Ezhou (modern Wuhan, Hubei), had received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra* with pure faith and steadfastness. When he passed away, he was more than seventy years old. [At that time,] there were beings who rode in the air to welcome him with banners and parasols, and music. His wife saw that he left with the beings with banners and parasols…From afar, his wife called out to him in the air. He floated like riding on the clouds and gradually went further and further up. The [accompanying] fragrance did not dissipate. All in his family smelled it. Soon after that, he passed away. This also is an inconceivable matter.[368]

The above tale explicitly mentions that Xue Yan was bound for the heaven or pure land since he was welcome by beings at death—a motif that subsequently became popular in Buddhist paintings—who presumably accompanied them to the heavens or pure lands. Although there are no such descriptions in some tales, the protagonists were given a prophecy that they would be reborn in the Pure Land.[369]

Besides tales illustrating a good death achieved by protagonists due to their own efforts, there are tales about protagonists achieving a good death or rebirth not through their own efforts but with the help of others.[370] Some stories describe protagonists who had fallen into unwholesome realms of existence after death, achieving better rebirths by seeking the help of others. An interesting narrative relates two pigeon chicks in a monastery attaining rebirth as human beings for having merely heard the recitation of the

[368] JYJ61 (TPGJ63). See also JYJ58 (TPGJ34) and JYJ60 (TPGJ32).

[369] In Tale 122, the protagonist received a prophecy that he would be reborn in the Pure Land.

[370] JYJ34 (TPGJ21), JYJ27 (TPGJ8), TPGJ83, and JYJ57.

Diamond Sutra by a monk.[371] Another tale paints the plight of a servant girl who died but was not able to be reborn. Instead, she suffered the terrible effects of the sins she committed while alive—eating meat in the monastery and having a crab killed to obtain medication for her sore. She appeared to her siblings, requesting them to make merit on her behalf by offering her clothes to the monastery, and had a monastic recite the *Diamond Sutra* for her to end her suffering and to achieve speedy rebirth, and after the recitation, she achieved rebirth.[372] In these tales, the concept of merit-transfer is invoked to make it possible for others to transfer merit to people who were incapable of achieving good rebirths through their own efforts. Although merit transfer usually takes place between close kin in *Diamond Sutra* tales, it is also possible between people who are not related by blood.[373] These tales are significant because they indicate that better rebirths can still be achieved posthumously.

1.5 Spiritual Powers and Auspicious Signs

When Buddhism was first introduced into China, there was already a variety of thriving practices related to indigenous cults and mantic arts catering to the needs of the Chinese, and their practitioners were said to be capable of feats, such as foretelling future events, healing, so on.[374] In face of

[371] JYJ57.

[372] JYJ34 (TPGJ21).

[373] JYJ53 (GDj4, TPGJ3), and TPGJ 43.

[374] See Harper 2010: 37–80; Smith 2008: 249–50.

these rivals, we can imagine that Buddhist monastics, when contesting for patronage and the spread of the religion, had to demonstrate that they too were capable of similar if not better feats. There are indeed accounts of Buddhist monastics displaying marvelous feats in order to show the superiority of Buddhism in their initial efforts to plant the Buddhist religion in Chinese soil, and these are over the course of time collected in biographical compilations, such as the *Gaoseng zhuan*, as well as in Buddhist story collections.

In his biography, the Central Asian monastic Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (?–349) is described as being capable of predicting the outcome of battles, which greatly helped his patron, the northern ruler Shi Le 石勒 (274–333), thus exerting a great impact on the spread of Buddhism in northern China.[375] Not only were Buddhist monastics portrayed as matching practitioners of mantic arts, they were also positioned against Daoist transcendents (*xian* 仙) and described as possessing similar capabilities as their Daoist counterparts, as shown in a recent study of the *Mingxiang ji*.[376] Additionally, Buddhists also contested local cults. In the *Jingyi ji*, an early Buddhist tale compilation of the Six Dynasties, a Buddhist monastic subdued what seems to be the deity of a local cult, the god of Lake Gongting with his recitation of the *Diamond*

[375] Kieschnick 1997: 73–4. As discussed in the previous chapter, the marvelous feats displayed by Buddhist monastics are doctrinally underpinned by the Buddhist theory of cultivation; they are the byproducts of supernatural powers acquired through Buddhist practices. Therefore, even Fotudeng's ability to predict future events—an important repertoire of Chinese mantic arts—can be explained by traditional models of supernatural powers acquired through Buddhist practice.

[376] Campany 2012: 38–9.

Sutra.[377] This contestation continued even in the Tang as we find two accounts where the monk Qingxu conquered local deities or spirits.[378] In one of the stories, he was requested by monks at the now famous Shaolin Monastery, who heard of Qingxu's previous success, to subdue a local spirit occupying a hall in the monastery. The narrative informs the audience of Qingxu's contest with the deity in the following manner:

> When the first watch was coming to an end, the god then came. It made a din at the eastern corner of the Buddha hall as if tossing a dozen tiles. The sound shook in the air. The monk then lighted the torch and emerged to take a look. It was quiet and nothing could be seen. His body hair all stood up. Immediately he recited the spell of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara and circumambulated the Buddha hall once. Inside the hall, [he heard something that] resembled the sounds of water buffalos fighting. The images [in the hall] also shook and moved. Having recited the spell seven times, the sound became more intense, and escalated to roars that vibrated in the valleys and moved the mountains. He then went to the front of the Buddha hall, stood upright and pondered. Although he wanted to, he dared not enter it. Suddenly he pondered deeper again: "Why couldn't I subdue it here?" Calming his mind, he then entered. The sound became even louder. The lamp in the hall still had not been extinguished. Since the spell has no efficacy (*yan*), he then recited the *Diamond Sutra*. After he recited it once, the sound gradually diminished. After he recited it three times, the sound came to a stop. At daybreak, everything was calm and tranquil. One should know that the power of the [perfection of] wisdom [sutra] is inconceivable.[379]

The central focus of this tale, like others of the same theme, is on the feats and spiritual powers of *Diamond Sutra* practitioners. Marvelous feats and supernormal powers displayed by Buddhists—as discussed previously—are

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[377] See later section "Superiority of the *Diamond Sutra*."

[378] JYJ47 and JYJ48. The former tale mentions the subjugation of the god of Lake Gongting, thus indicating that the lore was well-known and had circulated for a long time.

[379] JYJ48.

doctrinally underpinned by Buddhist cultivation; they are the byproducts of Buddhist practices. In the above case, Qingxu was capable of subduing the spirit because of his recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*. If a practitioner of the *Diamond Sutra* can subjugate wrathful local deities, he/she is certainly capable of taming wild beasts, as related by the following account:

> There was a novice monk (skt. *śrāmaṇera*) Daoyin in Shishou District (present-day Shishou, Hubei) who always upheld and recited the *Diamond Sutra*. In the beginning of the Baoli era (825–827), he once went out and was returning at night when he suddenly encountered a tiger on the way. It roared and leaped before him. The novice monk knew that he would not escape, thus he shut his eyes and sat down. All he could do was to silently recite the scripture, while in his heart hoping for some form of rescue. The tiger then lay down on the grass and kept watch on him. By dawn, when villagers started to appear, the tiger then left. [Afterward] when the novice monk looked at the place on which the tiger crouched, the spot was awash with drool.[380]

Not only can the practitioners of the *Diamond Sutra* tame animals, the power of their practice is acknowledged by animals. In one story, a pigeon paid respect to Qingxu,[381] while in the other two, practitioners attracted animals to listen to their recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*.[382] These phenomena—especially the appearance of deer—can be taken as auspicious signs attesting to the power and depth of the Buddhist practitioner's cultivation.[383] Besides animals, one narrative relates the appearance of plants,[384] and possibly beings from other realms as some stories tell of unaccountable sources of light and

[380] JY13 (TPGJ86).

[381] JYJ46.

[382] JYJ62 (TPGJ39), JYJ42.

[383] Deer, a symbol of prosperity and longevity in Chinese culture, is the most common animal to appear in Buddhist tales of this theme.

[384] JYJ40 (TPGJ17).

fragrance.[385] In other accounts, the power of protagonists extends beyond just eliciting auspicious signs from the natural world; they are even capable of influencing or manipulating nature, such as bringing forth rain or stopping rain.[386]

Sometimes, the power of practitioners comes in the form of some manifestations, such as light emitting forth from their bodies, something that is reminiscent of the qualities of higher beings.[387] Such a power is not limited to the monastics, as in the following account:

> In the past, Wang Chao was serving as the Law Section Administrator of the Tianshui Commandery (modern Tianshui, Gansu) when Xue Jue (d. 618) revolted, and killed soldiers. In due course, he came to kill Wang Chao, but his blade broke into pieces. He again had the fighter Song Luo stab Wang Chao with a blade, but it also broke into pieces. Xue Ju thought it strange and asked, "What method do you have? Wang Chao replied, "When I was young, I upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. It must be the power of the sutra." Xue Ju thereupon released Wang Chao. Chao was terrified, and he entered a lavatory to hide, and recited the sutra there. Light shone from within the lavatory. The rebels traced the light, and came to the lavatory. There they saw someone and asked, "Who are you?" The person in the lavatory replied, "I am the Wang Chao who did not die from being stabbed by blades." The rebels said, "You don't have to hide. All the soldiers know about you. You just go home." With this, he was able to avert the misfortune.[388]

[385] Light: JYJ52 (GDJ18, TPGJ61), JYJ31 (TPGJ54), JYJ20 (GDJ19, TPGJ20), TPGJ41, JYJ14, and JYJ4. Torchlight: TPGJ47 and TPGJ65 (also in preface of *Jiuyi*). JYJ11 (TPGJ14: something bright). Fragrance: JYJ1 (TPGJ9), JYJ37 (TPGJ19), JYJ60 (TPGJ32), JYJ58 (TPGJ34), and JYJ61 (TPGJ63). For a discussion of fragrance and presence of deity, see Campany 1993: 241–2.

[386] JYJ72 (TPGJ40), JYJ49, JYJ65, JYJ66, JYJ67, JYJ68, JYJ70, and JYJ71.

[387] TPGJ76, TPGJ77 (from mouth), TPGJ56, TPGJ99, and GDJ13. It is uncertain how much this is influenced by indigenous tropes, but we may note that such is a quality of transcendents, a tradition that has a long history. See Pregadio 2006: 71–2.

[388] TPGJ99.

Not only was Wang Chao unassailable, he was also able to emit light when he recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Instead of the display of powers derived from upholding the sutra, other accounts related how the spiritual powers of protagonists could extend beyond the realm of their existence and affect beings from other realms. For instance, they could attract beings from other dimensions to their recitation session, ghost and demons,[389] and even liberate or save beings suffering in the underworld.[390]

Despite the lack of the use of traditional Indic categories discussed in the previous chapter (such as the Three Knowledges or the Six Superpowers), the relationship between devotional practice related to the *Diamond Sutra* and the spiritual powers attained is clear in these *Diamond Sutra* tales. In any case, the basic point of accounts of this theme is no different from others: to illustrate the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* and promote devotional practices related to it. As these narratives illustrate, the byproducts of practice—manifestation of auspicious signs and the powers attained—often prove to be useful to protagonists in different situations. Nevertheless, what is worth noting in the case of *Diamond Sutra* tales is that although spiritual powers are almost always associated with the monastics, the stories of this theme are not confined to monastics; lay devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* are also portrayed as attaining certain spiritual powers through prolonged periods of assiduous practice.

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[389] JYJ29 (TPGJ36), JYJ63, and JYJ13 (ghostly fire).

[390] TPGJ43, TPGJ46, and JYJ43. This is often related to tales having the return-from-death theme.

1.6 Intrinsic Power of the *Diamond Sutra*

The themes discussed thus far focus mainly on the benefits or powers attained through devotional practices related to the *Diamond Sutra*. However, apart from tales that illustrate the practices of reciting and copying the *Diamond Sutra* as powerful religious acts with conspicuous benefits, some stories represent the *Diamond Sutra* as an inviolable sacred object. It is interesting to note that while in some accounts of the rescue and protection theme, manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra* actually took the brunt of an attack or assault, as protagonists were delivered from injury or harm,[391] other tales focus on the *Diamond Sutra* as an inviolable sacred text seemingly imbued with innate power of its own. *Diamond Sutra* tales of this theme often tell of various circumstances in which manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra* could not be burned or destroyed. Prior to these *Diamond Sutra* accounts, two tales in the *Mingxiang ji* about purported events during the Jin period (304–439) relate how copies of Buddhist sutras—the *Larger Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* and the *Śūraṃgama-sūtra,* respectively—survived fires.[392]

If the Buddha is considered to be embodied in his teachings in some sense, then the theoretical basis of such narratives may rest on the power attributed to Buddhist sutras derived from their status as the physical

[391] Early examples of this are usually associated with Guanyin. See tale 7 of the *Xuanyan ji*; tales 13 and 14 in the *Xi guanshiyin yingyan ji*, and tale 8 of the *Jingyi ji*. Examples of *Diamond Sutra* stories include JY17 (TPG89), GDJ08, and TPGJ100.

[392] See accounts 21 and 36 translated in Campany 2012: 110–1 and 136.

embodiments of the Buddha's teachings.[393] In the *Diamond Sutra*, the power of the sutra is expressed in terms of its sanctification of the place in which it is placed:

> Subhūti, whatever the place may be, if this sutra is there, then all the heavenly beings, human beings and *asuras* in the world should offer alms to it. You should know that such a spot is like a stupa, where all should reverently bow in obeisance, should circle it and shower it with flowers and incense.[394]

Being the embodiment of the Buddha, the sutra represents the Buddha and his powers and is a sacred object imbued with its own power. In biographies of eminent Chinese monks, monastics are as concerned about the power of the sutras themselves as they are with their doctrinal or philosophical purport.[395] In *Diamond Sutra* accounts, this concern for and awareness of the power of the *Diamond Sutra* are apparent in some tales, which may also explain why copies of the *Diamond Sutra*—and of course, this applies to other sutras—are treated by some protagonists with respect and even venerated ritually. The power of a Buddhist scripture, as some narratives show, is intimately related to the process of its reproduction, the way it is treated, and the faith of its believers. In a tale collected in the *Mingbao ji*, a copy of the *Lotus Sutra*, which was carefully copied by a scribe and venerated by a nun, appeared as just papers without any contents to an arrogant monk.[396] Thus, besides being

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[393] Harrison has pointed out that the Buddha is in some sense embodied in the Dharma he taught (Harrison 1992: 50). Containing the Dharma taught by the Buddha, sutras are thus considered to be intrinsically powerful because "they represent an ultimate presence of the Buddha and his supernatural powers." Hartmann 2008: 102.

[394] Watson 2010: 88 (Section 15).

[395] Kieschnick 1997: 90.

[396] Tale 4 in the first roll of the *Mingbao ji*; see Gjertson 1989: 162–3.

represented as being inviolable, the power of the Buddhist scripture is represented in other ways. In this example, the text of the *Lotus Sutra* 'chooses' not to be visible to arrogant monastics devoid of humility and sincere faith.

In *Diamond Sutra* tales, the power of the *Diamond Sutra* is represented as manifesting in various ways and serving different purposes. One story relates that a copy of the scripture emitted light and led the protagonist to safety.[397] Two tales describe conversion experiences prompted by the *Diamond Sutra*. The first explains how a husband who was hostile to his wife's devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* was converted when the sutra, which he tossed into the fire, did not burn.[398] The second describes how a hunter was led to the *Diamond Sutra* in a cave and came to uphold it.[399] The following account, which gained wide currency over a long period of time, portrays the power of the *Diamond Sutra* even though it was invisible to mortal eyes:

> Layman Gou took delight in doing good and focused on reciting and upholding the *Diamond Sutra*. In a village northwest of Xinfan District (modern Chengdu, Sichuan), he aspired to copy the *Diamond Sutra* for the heavenly deities by writing it in the air with a brush. That spot on which he copied the scripture would not get wet whenever it rained. Ignorant of this at first, villagers who grazed their cows there repeatedly took shelter from the rain at that spot. Later there was a foreign monk who passed by and saw that, he then told the villagers, "This is a scriptural platform, and there is a scripture in the air. During days of vegetarian feast, there frequently

[397] This tale is collected in roll 10 of the *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, T51.2067: 46c15–47c12. It tells of a monastic by the name of Shi Xuanji 釋玄際 who employed someone to copy scripture. When two rolls were copied, light was emitted from the inkstone; when the third roll was copied, the roll emitted light.

[398] GDJ14.

[399] TPGJ45.

> appeared a transformed jeweled canopy." This platform is thirty *li* northwest of the county town. It is still there.[400]

In this tale, the power of the *Diamond Sutra* is conveyed in the fact that the spot where the *Diamond Sutra* was executed actually became sanctified and could not become wet at all even when it rained. Reminiscent of the above passage of the *Diamond Sutra*, this tale gives expression to the excerpt with a concrete illustration of its power, thus enabling medieval Chinese people to visualize its power. The preservation of this tale in manuscripts of different languages and in different places indicates the popularity of concrete representation of its abstract ideas.

The power of the *Diamond Sutra* is expressed in other ways. In another tale, the tongue of the protagonists was sanctified and could not be injured by virtue of the fact that he had recited the *Diamond Sutra*.[401] Such a representation of the power of the *Diamond Sutra* might be related to the centrality of scriptures in the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. Some Mahāyāna sutras assert that their presence sanctifies the place where they are taught or present.[402] In the case of the *Diamond Sutra*, this is so since it asserts: "Wherever this sutra is present, so is the Buddha or his revered disciple." Therefore, the basis of tales of this theme is underpinned by the self-assertions of the *Diamond Sutra* regarding its powers, how it should be

[400] GDJ11 (TPGJ4).

[401] JYJ56 (TPGJ23).

[402] Gregory Schopen has argued for the existence of the cult of book, which contested with the cult of relics, and could have produced new sites of practice. Schopen 2005: 43–52.

ritually observed through various acts, and the inconceivable merit such acts could bring.

The originators of tales of this theme portrayed the *Diamond Sutra* as being numinous and imbued with intrinsic power of its own. Besides strengthening the position of the *Diamond Sutra*, they also indirectly introduced new ways in which the *Diamond Sutra* was conceptualized and thus treated ritually. This can be discerned from evidence that medieval Chinese society also worshipped the *Diamond Sutra* just as they worshipped a deity.[403] Just as medieval Chinese people paid respect to Buddha images or monastics, they also came to pay respect to the *Diamond Sutra*.

2. Motifs and Ideas in *Diamond Sutra* Tales

Apart from classifying *Diamond Sutra* tales into different themes, their nature—and thus their impact on the religious landscape of medieval China—can also be explored by examining the ideas and motifs found in them. This section discusses three broad categories of ideas and motifs found in *Diamond Sutra* accounts. Like other stories, they contain conceptualizations and motifs that pertain to Buddhism in general, such as those related to its doctrines, religious prescriptions, and practices. These ideas and motifs, while informing us of the state of Buddhism then, may also reflect the broader socio-religious context. Another category of ideas and motifs pertains specifically to the

[403] See JY15, JY20, TPGJ39, TPGJ55, TPGJ71, TPGJ84, TPGJ90, and TPGJ101.

Diamond Sutra, for example, the kind of practices related to the *Diamond Sutra* and how people conceived it. Although some of these may pertain to Buddhism in general, they are taken up in the tales in ways that are more pertinent to the *Diamond Sutra*. The last category is related to the narrative strategy of the *Diamond Sutra*, for example, how dreams are often used as a medium of communication in the tales.

2.1 Karmic Retribution and Rebirth

It is just as fallacious to assume that filial piety is a unique concern of Chinese Buddhism as it is to think that the concept of retribution is of only Indian origin.[404] Pre-Buddhist notions of retribution were not completely unknown in early China.[405] These notions of retribution, all referred to by the graph *bao* 報 (lit. to reciprocate; to revenge; to recompense; to repay), do not entail the concept of karma or rebirth. Scholars have generally proposed two notions of retribution in pre-Buddhist China: ethical retribution and divine retribution.[406] The former, referring to retribution as an ethical concept, is found in pre-Qin texts, and was the basis for human relations in China from the Han onwards.[407] The concept of divine retribution, which appeared as early as the Western Zhou, refers to heaven's response to human actions with

[404] For example, Wang 1988: 161 and Zhou 1986: 91.

[405] See Gjertson 1989: 122–124 for his discussion of Chinese notions of retribution in pre-Han writings.

[406] Karl Kao purports two types of retribution: ethical and divine. Kao 1989: 115–138. Patrick Hanan, in his discussion of vernacular short stories, differentiates human and heavenly retributions. Hanan 1981: 105–6

[407] Yang 1969b: 3–23; Kao 1989: 120–1.

reward or punishment.[408] Another notion of retribution can be added to the above two: demonic retribution.[409] This idea, which probably has its basis in ancient beliefs of the spirit of the deceased, refers to retribution exacted by spirits and demons who requite human behavior. Later historical writings often represent demonic retribution with an avenging ghost of the deceased who died an unjust death and thus sought to redress wrong or to take revenge for injustice.[410]

Already in Chinese notions of retribution, human behavior in the ethical and supramundane spheres could be judged by other people, heaven, ghosts, and demons—agents who also exact retribution on people. In Buddhism, mental, verbal, and physical actions (karma) have their consequences according to an impersonal law of causality. Karmic retribution, consequently, is exacted without an agent who both passes judgment and exacts retribution on the person who carried out the actions. Hence, Buddhism could explain adequately how karmic retribution is received by a person, and not by one's family members or descendants arbitrarily.[411] Buddhist karma retribution thus seems more attractive when compared to the indigenous concept of *chengfu* 承負 "inherited burden," mentioned in the *Taiping jing* 太平經

[408] Zhang 2007: 105. Zhang cites passages from the *Shang shu* and *Laozi*, which indicate that heaven sends down calamities to punish evildoers and that man's actions do not escape heaven's all-encompassing jurisdiction.

[409] Zhang 2007: 106–8. Zhang introduces the concept of demonic retribution, which according to him was noticeable in early sources.

[410] Ibid.: 106–7.

[411] See Hendrischke 1991, Qing 1994, 2: 324–6, Tsuchiya 2002, and Strickmann 2002: 39–50.

(Classic of Great Peace), which holds that the consequences of the bad deeds of one's ancestors would bear on their progeny.

Tightly integrated with the theory of rebirth, Buddhist karmic retribution functions on the premise that there is continuity between the past, present, and future. Therefore, it could also explain how human actions in the past could determine the present and how present actions could affect the future, especially when there is a lack of an agent exacting retribution.[412]

With the introduction of Buddhism in China, the Buddhist concept of karmic retribution was assimilated into the Chinese system of thought, together with the concept of rebirth, which is an indispensable part of karmic retribution. Though it came to exert far-reaching effects on Chinese culture, its adoption and assimilation—along with other elements of Buddhism—was not without resistance.[413] Even in the fifth-century, there was a need to clarify and justify Buddhist practices and doctrines. For example, tales in the *Mingxiang ji* attempt to clarify and validate these concepts as part of its overall project of establishing the existence of the soul after death.[414] Even in the *Mingbao ji*, composed in the early years of the Tang dynasty, Tang Lin sought to convince

[412] Jan 1986: 48.

[413] Buddhist writings document the disapproval of non-Buddhists regarding Buddhist practices and doctrines. For example, the well-known apologetic essay, *Mouzi Iihuo lun* 牟子理惑論 (Treatise for the Removal of Doubts by Master Mou, T52.2102: 3c27–4a13) presented some of these disapprovals.

[414] See Campany 2012: 7ff. and Wang 1999: 2–5 for the debate on the immortality of the soul and the reasons for Wang Yan's compilation of the *Mingxiang ji*.

people of—among other things—the existence of karmic retribution, and justified it with tales he compiled from various sources.[415]

Karmic retribution remains an important motif in *Diamond Sutra* tales, often related to the benefits derived from devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*.[416] However, there seems to be no need to explain and justify karmic retribution, as *Diamond Sutra* accounts indicate that it had been widely accepted when the stories were told. Deployed in various ways, karmic retribution often serves as the substructure of most narratives, as well as the basis on which the efficacy of *Diamond Sutra* devotion was experienced. In those of return-from-death and good afterlife themes, both of which presume integration of Buddhist karmic retribution and rebirth, it is especially prominent.[417] In tales of other themes, karmic retribution functions more subtly in the background to better flesh out the central messages or morals, whether or not they are associated specifically with the *Diamond Sutra*.

In the tales, karmic retribution illustrates either explicitly or implicitly the positive or negative consequences of one's deeds with respect to the *Diamond Sutra*. Unlike Six Dynasties narratives where karmic retribution is

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[415] In Tang Lin's preface to the *Mingbao ji*, he wrote that people were not sure whether karmic retribution existed. Seeing the *Mingbao ji* as one in a succession of works geared toward the same goal, he further said that he composed the *Mingbao ji* because he admired the various earlier Buddhist tale collections that "verified and made clear [the recompense] of good and evil and exhorted and admonished [people] of the future." Gjertson 1989: 156–7.

[416] Sometimes, this is illustrated by the bad consequences sustained by people who are hostile to devotees of the *Diamond Sutra*. For example, in JYJ6, robbers who assaulted and robbed the protagonist, a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra*, later lost their way and were caught.

[417] For instance, JYJ51 (TPGJ; sharp contrast between good and evil deeds), TPGJ83 (rebirth as snake), JYJ34 (TPGJ21; extreme suffering as a ghost), and JYJ58 (TPGJ34; testimony of human working in the underworld).

invoked to illustrate the grave consequences of slanderous or disrespectful actions toward Buddhism, the emphasis of *Diamond Sutra* stories is placed on the expiation of negative effects of karmic retribution. It is difficult to determine the influence of the *Diamond Sutra* on such representations since its formulation of the expiation of negative karma differs from these accounts. The related portion of the *Diamond Sutra* text reads:

> Furthermore, Subhūti, when good men and good women accept, uphold, read and recite this sutra, if they should be treated by others with derision and contempt, it is because in a past existence they created bad karma that would cause them to be reborn into an evil path. But because now in this existence they are treated by others with contempt, that bad karma from a past existence will be wiped out. Hence, they will attain supreme and perfect enlightenment.[418]

According to the above, people who had created bad karma were later reborn in situations in which their bad karma was eradicated after they had sustained the negative effects of their bad karmic deeds. In *Diamond Sutra* tales, however, instances of the eradication of negative karma—often direct and conspicuous—are formulated somewhat differently, often demonstrating the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. For example, a protagonist became dumb after he destroyed the *Diamond Sutra* that his fellow villager was copying. But he later recovered when he repented and learned to recite the *Diamond Sutra* in his heart.[419] Moreover, a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra* avoided punishment in the underworld despite his love for consuming meat.[420] Perhaps, the only

[418] Watson 2010: 88 (Section 16).

[419] TPGJ88.

[420] JY3. See Chapter 4 for discussion.

cases that came close to the above formulation of the *Diamond Sutra* are the following two cases: (1) a hunter suddenly transformed into a tiger but later reverted to human form when he encountered a monk who recited the *Diamond Sutra*,[421] and (2) a protagonist was ordered by King Yama to swallow nails, and had his limbs and crown nailed for slaughtering and eating animals. He was, however, released to return to the human realm for having recited the *Diamond Sutra*.[422] In both cases, the protagonists found themselves in unwelcome situations for having created negative karma, and both seem to have had their bad karma expiated by sustaining its effects. In these stories, as in many others, karmic retribution is often invoked in relation to general Buddhist injunctions against unwholesome behavior; in the above case—an injunction against killing—the thrust is more on the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in expiating the negative effects of karmic retribution than on the need to suffer those effects, even when the negative retribution is of considerable proportions.[423]

2.2 Merit and Merit-Transfer

In Buddhism, merit (*gongde* 功德; Sk. *puṇya*) is the positive result of good, intentional human actions. It can be understood as karmic virtue that could be earned through moral or ritual actions, accumulated over time. In mainstream Buddhist texts, merit accrues from moral actions, such as

[421] TPGJ5.

[422] JYJ54.

[423] See JYJ34.

adhering to Buddhist precepts or giving to the saṅgha.[424] While moral and ethical actions continue to be central to merit-making, Mahāyāna scriptures suggest new ways of making merit. For instance, devotion and ritual actions, such as upholding, reading, reciting, explicating, and copying—highly touted in Mahāyāna sutras, such as the *Lotus Sutra* and *Diamond Sutra*—are said to bring about magnificent merit and benefits without limit or measure.[425] Thus, the notion of merit later came to encapsulate devotional and ritual actions, such as the abovementioned, as a means of attaining even greater merit. The *Diamond Sutra* is represented as a 'field of merit,' where the fruits of merit can be 'grown' and 'harvested' by devotees through acts of Buddhist 'cultivation,' such as upholding, reciting, and copying the *Diamond Sutra*.

The importance of merit cannot be overemphasized in the *Diamond Sutra*. Intimately connected to the doctrine of karmic retribution, the motif of merit is especially prominent in these tales. The notion of merit in the *Diamond Sutra*, however, is invoked in a different way from its scriptural source, where it often features as a way to spiritual wellbeing and advancement. In the *Diamond Sutra* itself, merit is mentioned often in conjunction with spiritual edification, such as mastering one's mind and

[424] Giving (Sk. *dāna*) is closely related to merit. It is the first of ten auspicious deeds that produces merit. Harvey 1990: 198. In Indian tale literature, the concept of merit is represented in Jātaka stories that relate how people benefit from their virtues and suffer from their vices.

[425] For a discussion of merit in Chinese culture, see Kieschnick 2003: 157–64.

knowing reality, as we can see from Subhūti's reaction to the preaching of the Buddha:[426]

> How rare and wonderful, World-Honored One, is the way in which you expound this most profound sutra. From times past, I have gained the eyes of wisdom, but I have never heard you expound a sutra such as this. World-Honored One, if there are persons who hear this sutra and embrace it with the purity of a believing mind, then they will come to understand the true form of reality. One should know, then that such persons will acquire the foremost, the most wonderful blessing [i.e., merit]. World-Honored One, this true form is not a form at all. Therefore the Thus Come One expounds it, calling it the true form.[427]

Despite the fact that the above is situated in a discourse concerning the spiritual quest, merit is represented by the benefits of devotion and the impact of the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* on daily existence in the tales.[428] The conceptualization of practical and conspicuous benefits gained as merit may have their origins in certain passages of the *Diamond Sutra* that mention the boundless merit to be attained from certain practices in relation to the sutra:

> Subhūti, in times to come, if there are good men and good women who can accept, uphold, read, and recite this sutra, then the Thus Come One, through his buddha wisdom, will know and recognize all of them. He will see them all and all of them will attain blessings [merit] boundless and beyond measure.[429]
>
> If there are persons who can accept, uphold, read and recite it and expound it widely for the sake of others, the Thus Come One will recognize all such persons, he will see all such persons and they will

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[426] This is apparent from Conze's discussion of the *Diamond Sutra*. See Conze 2001.

[427] Watson 2010: 86 (Section 14). Watson has translated *gongde* here as "blessings."

[428] An example of the continuity of this emphasis on merit and practical benefits, and over a geographical area, is demonstrated in Reader 1998, where he deals with religion in modern Japan.

[429] Watson 2010: 87 (Section 14).

> all attain blessings [i.e., merit] that are boundless and beyond measure, that are unimaginable, indescribable.[430]

While there is a little description about the contents of the merit that can be gained, the inconceivable extent of it is described in comparative terms that further magnify its quantities:

> But if, in a latter age, there is a person who can receive, uphold, read and recite this sutra, the blessings that person receives will be more than a hundred times the blessings [i.e., merit] I received by paying alms to all those buddhas. Those blessings [i.e., merit] will be a thousand, ten thousand, a million times greater, greater than it is even possible for numbers to be calculated or analogies to be expressed.[431]

> Subhūti, suppose a bodhisattva were to fill as many worlds as there are sands in the Ganges with the seven treasures and offer them as alms. And suppose there were a person who understood that all dharmas are without a self and thus were able to carry out the *pāramitā* of forbearance. The blessings [i.e., merit] gained by this person would exceed those of the bodhisattva just described.[432]

Even a four-line verse from the *Diamond Sutra*, when upheld, can generate an inconceivable amount of merit:

> Subhūti, suppose a person were to gather together the seven treasures in an amount equal to all the Mount Sumerus, king of mountains, that exist in the thousand-millionfold world and offer them as alms. And suppose that another person took this Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, or even just one four-line verse from it, accepted, upheld, read, recited, and taught it to others. The good fortune [*fude* 福德; merit] gained by the former person would not amount to one part in a hundred of that gained by the latter. That gained by the latter could not be measured in hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, or millions: it would be beyond the possibility of numbers to be calculated or analogies to be expressed.[433]

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[430] Ibid.: 88 (Section 15).

[431] Ibid.: 89 (Section 16).

[432] Ibid.: 95 (Section 28).

[433] Ibid.: 93 (Section 24).

Because merit gained by upholding, reciting, and copying the *Diamond Sutra* as presented in these passages is so great, it might have inspired medieval Chinese to construe merit in a way that would enable them to overcome dire straits that seem impossible to overcome or give them the flexibility to construe it in whatever manner that was most helpful to them.[434] It could have also encouraged the accumulation of merit—implied so often in *Diamond Sutra* tales—through consistent devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*. Merit gathered from religious practice hence functions very much like spiritual credits that can be stored over time. It was often helpful when the protagonists needed them most, especially when used to offset disasters and misfortune. In many tales, protagonists were delivered out of dire straits without invoking the *Diamond Sutra*, and narrative devices, such as the authorial voice or the protagonist's proclamation, announce that these benefits accrued from merit accumulated through prolonged devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* undertaken prior to those events. For instance, this is illustrated by a story involving a wrongly punished man who emerged unharmed after he was flogged. In a conversation with his friend, he confided that he had finally experienced the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* after reciting it for forty years.[435] This tale clearly indicates that his past efforts had yielded fruit as the amassed merit of his past recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* offset the suffering he was to

[434] Although it is highlighted prominently in return-from-death tales (see below), merit is construed in terms of the appearance of auspicious signs and attainment of supernormal powers (JYJ1 [TPGJ9]), attaining good death and rebirth (JYJ34 [TPGJ21], JYJ57, JYJ55, and JYJ61 [TPGJ63]), prolonging lifespan (JYJ21 [GDJ1] and GDJ2), and protection received (JYJ58 [TPGJ34], GDJ6 [JYJ25], and TPGJ12).

[435] JYJ2 (TPGJ66).

experience in a most timely manner. The importance of gained merit is also well illustrated by *Diamond Sutra* return-from-death accounts, where the protagonists escaped death because they had cultivated and accumulated such great merit.[436]

In other tales, the merit obtained not only rescued protagonists from dire straits, but also lessened the karmic burden of those close to them when protagonists applied their merit to others. In these tales, the idea of merit-transfer is invoked, which may be likened to an economic transaction, where merit, like credit, can be transferred from one ledger to another.[437] A supporting account describes how a tower guard, captured by a Tibetan troop and brought to Tibet, managed to return home safely due to the steadfast devotion of his mother to the *Diamond Sutra*.[438] While the traditional concept of 'inherited burden' posits that offspring will suffer the consequences of their ancestors' bad deeds, Buddhism, in turn, offers a solution to help the deceased who created negative karma through the concept of merit transfer. This is illustrated in tales where the deceased were freed from afterlife woes as their sins and lack of merit were offset by merit transferred to them by their living

[436] The term *gongde* is mentioned explicitly in JYJ3 (TPGJ25), JYJ23 (GDJ12, TPGJ28), JYJ24 (GDJ5), [JYJ26 just mentioned], JYJ27 (TPGJ8), JYJ28 (TPGJ13), JYJ32 (GDJ7), JYJ53 (GDJ4), JYJ54 (TPGJ2), JYJ56 (TPGJ23), JYJ58 (TPGJ34), JYJ64 (TPGJ33), JY5 (TPGJ69), JY7 (GDJ10, TPGJ72), JY12 (TPGJ85), JY18 (TPGJ92), TPGJ42, TPGJ43, TPGJ51, and TPGJ97. Although the term *gongde* is not mentioned in JYJ59 (TPGJ53) and JYJ62 (TPGJ39), these stories are collected in the section on merit.

[437] This concept is available in mainstream Buddhism. In the *Questions of Milinda,* Nāgasena argues that only the merits of good deeds can be transferred to others; the results of evil deeds cannot. Many rituals close with a section on the transfer of merit to all sentient beings and to ancestors. See also Gombrich 2006: 125–8, where he discusses the concept of merit transfer in relation to mortuary rituals in Theravāda Buddhism. For the economic implications of merit and merit-transfer, see Shirkey 2008: 78.

[438] JY20. Also see TPGJ71.

kin.[439] These tales are also the clearest example of merit-transfer as a pivotal component in achieving postmortem wellbeing for deceased kin, particularly those destined for unwholesome afterlives in the three realms of existence.[440] In a tale, even underworld officials are able to receive merit from the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* by a protagonist unrelated to them.[441] Needless to say, the transfer of merit obtained can also be applied in the human realm.

Although monastics were clearly engaged by laypeople to function as agents administering the transfer of merit and receiving donations for their services,[442] merit-transfer between laypeople also took place without the ritual intervention of monastics in some *Diamond Sutra* tales.[443] Such cases provided a basis for laypeople, especially those without the resources for formal monastic rituals, to make merit on behalf of others and transfer merit by personally reciting or copying the *Diamond Sutra*. They may also be viewed as adjustments made, in favor of the laity, to empower them to chart their own destinies and change those of their loved ones through personal efforts. All in all, *Diamond Sutra* tales emphasize that karmic retribution, merit, and merit-

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[439] See JYJ34 (TPGJ21), JYJ23 (TPGJ28), JYJ62 (TPGJ39), TPGJ75, and TPGJ83.

[440] Rebirth in the evil three realms, of animals (Ch. *chusheng* 畜生; Sk. *tiryak*), ghosts (Ch. *egui* 餓鬼Sk. *preta*), and hell beings (Ch. *diyu* 地獄; Sk. *naraka*), is regarded as terribly unfortunate. A good rebirth, according to Buddhism, occurs in one of the three higher realms of gods (Ch. *tian* 天; Sk. *deva*), demigods (Ch. *axiuluo* 阿修羅; Sk. *asura*), and human beings (Ch. *ren* 人; Sk. *manuṣya*).

[441] JY9 (TPGJ81).

[442] See JYJ34 (TPGJ21), TPGJ75, and TPGJ83. On the belief in merit and merit-transfer as a cornerstone for sustaining the clergy and their monasteries, see Fogelin 2006: 44 and Brook 1993: 30.

[443] JYJ33 (TPGJ15), JYJ51 (TPGJ22), JYJ23 (TPGJ28), JYJ20 (TPGJ57), TPGJ71, JY9 (TPGJ81), and TPGJ82.

transfer comprise a cogent system in which moral and ritual actions produce merit and benefits, and devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* enables Buddhists to earn them through their efforts and share the fruits of their virtues with both the living and the dead.

2.3 Buddhist Precepts and Ethics

Some of the notable ideas in *Diamond Sutra* tales are related to Buddhist precepts, whether they pertain to monastics or laypeople. Frequent references to some members of the five precepts (Sk. *pañcasīla*) are made in *Diamond Sutra* stories. As the most basic moral prescriptions in Buddhism, the five precepts address the moral obligations of all Buddhists and stipulate abstinence from five activities, namely, (1) taking life, (2) stealing, (3) sexual misconduct, (4) lying, and (5) consuming intoxicants.[444] Of these five precepts, the first and the last are mentioned most frequently in *Diamond Sutra* tales.

The injunction against killing, particularly the killing of animals, is a prominent motif found in quite a number of tales that belong to the return-from-death theme.[445] In these cases, protagonists were summoned to the underworld often because animals—previously killed by them—pressed charges against them and sought justice through the underworld legal

[444] For a succinct discussion of the five precepts, see Gethin 1998: 170–3.

[445] JYJ54 (TPGJ2), TPGJ5, GDJ5 (TPGJ11), JYJ34 (TPGJ21), TPGJ26, JYJ23 (GDJ12, TPGJ28), JYJ62 (TPGJ39), TPGJ42, TPGJ45, TPGJ46, JY3 (TPGJ67), JY7 (GDJ10, TPGJ72), TPGJ74, TPGJ76, JYJ24, and JYJ26.

system.[446] Such scenarios, probably based on the injunction against killing, not only validate karmic retribution but also discourage the killing of animals. In one account, the protagonist witnessed the horrible karmic retribution of someone who received the body of a tortoise with many heads. When he returned to the human realm and told his people what he saw in the underworld, his people—many of whom were hunters—aspired to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* and stop hunting.[447]

Of course, this motif is also found in *Diamond Sutra* tales of other themes. In an interesting story illustrating the retribution of killing, a tiger hunter was transformed into a tiger and had the opportunity to experience what it felt like to be hunted.[448] Another tale relates the suffering of the tormented soul of a woman who previously had a crab killed for medicinal purposes.[449] In yet another narrative, a character died prematurely for having killed and eaten a snake.[450] Moreover, one account, which demonstrates the intrinsic power of the *Diamond Sutra*, relates how a hunter who serendipitously found a roll of the *Diamond Sutra* gave up hunting, thus putting a stop to committing further sins.[451] More often than not, the injunction against killing is expressed in the form of abstinence from meat-

[446] JYJ54 (TPGJ2), TPGJ26, JYJ64 (TPGJ33), JYJ62 (TPGJ39), TPGJ46, JY18 (TPGJ92), JYJ26, and JY7 (GDJ10, TPGJ72).

[447] JYJ24 (GDJ5).

[448] TPGJ 5.

[449] JYJ34 (TPGJ21).

[450] TPGJ76.

[451] TPGJ45.

eating or converting to vegetarianism, undoubtedly a corollary of the first precept. Found frequently in *Diamond Sutra* tales, this motif is also often featured with the injunction against killing.

Vegetarianism, not enforced within the early Indian monastic community, was not a standard practice of Buddhism in India.[452] Acceptance of the first precept did not prohibit monastics from accepting and eating meat offered to them by laypeople as long as it did not originate from animals slaughtered expressly for their sake.[453] Though not a required practice of monastics, much less of laypeople, in India and early medieval China, vegetarianism later came to be required practice for Chinese monastics and became an essential part of their identity.[454] It also became widespread among lay Buddhists by late medieval China, albeit in varying degrees.[455] Already in early medieval China (in the fourth and fifth centuries), tales indicating a move toward vegetarianism can be found in the *Mingxiang ji*, with a few of them reflecting apparent unease with meat-eating; for example, one describes a protagonist who adopted a vegetarian diet when he was just a teenager.[456] These tales indicate the early stages of development toward abstinence from

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[452] Mather 1981: 421.

[453] Zürcher 2007: 165. Zürcher refers to this norm as it is recorded in *Xi Chao's Essentials in Upholding the Dharma*.

[454] For a discussion of vegetarianism in Chinese Buddhism, see Kieschnick 1997: 24–7 and Kieschnick 2010: 186–212. It is noteworthy that vegetarianism was an important part of Indian culture given its association with ritual purity. See Williams 2008: 315.

[455] In a recent article, Valerie Lavoix attempts to show that it might have been the lay Buddhists in China who took the lead in this. Lavoix 2002: 103–4.

[456] Tale 25 of the *Mingxiang ji* translated in Campany 2012: 119–20.

meat-eating among Buddhists, where stances on stricter norms of vegetarianism were being negotiated.[457]

The injunction against consuming intoxicants, often referred to in the form of teetotalism, is almost always mentioned with vegetarianism.[458] Their frequent mention in *Diamond Sutra* tales indicates that they were encouraged and might have been widely practiced by at least devotees of the *Diamond Sutra*. Together with vegetarianism, teetotalism was encouraged in *Diamond Sutra* stories, as it was probably considered a characteristic of exemplary *Diamond Sutra* devotees, who were also often vegetarians.[459] A number of protagonists were said to have adopted vegetarianism and teetotalism after they experienced the power and benefits of the *Diamond Sutra*.[460] On the contrary, indulgence in alcohol and meat was discouraged, as can be seen from its association with violent people or those who committed unwholesome acts, such as slanders of Buddhism.[461] Some tales discourage their consumption with warnings and examples of their negative karmic retribution.[462] One story even implied that the calligraphy of a copier of the *Diamond Sutra* was defiled

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[457] Ibid.: 6.

[458] GDJ11 (TPGJ4), JYJ27 (TPGJ8), JYJ56 (TPGJ23), TPGJ26, JY1 (TPGJ58), TPGJ76, JY15 (TPGJ90), JY16 (TPGJ91; *hun* 葷), JYJ43, and FYZL20. Only meat is mentioned: JYJ34 (TPGJ21), JYJ23 (GDJ12, TPGJ28; *hun*), TPGJ48 (*hun*), TPGJ49 (*hun*), JYJ52 (GDJ18, TPGJ61; *hun*), TPGJ48, TPGJ49, JY20 (TPGJ57), JY3 (TPGJ67), TPGJ74, JY16 (TPGJ91; *hun*), JY19 (TPGJ95), and JYJ26. Only alcohol is mentioned: JY8 (TPGJ79).

[459] TPGJ49, JY15 (TPGJ90), JY16 (TPGJ91), and TPGJ26.

[460] See JYJ56 (TPGJ23), TPGJ48, JY1 (TPGJ58), and TPGJ76.

[461] TPGJ42.

[462] JYJ34 (TPGJ21; eating meat in monastery), JYJ62 (TPGJ39), JY3 (TPGJ67), JY7 (GDJ10, TPGJ72), TPGJ74 (become blind), and TPGJ76.

because he consumed meat.[463] Even engagement in activities related to alcohol and meat was mentioned disapprovingly.[464]

Apart from the injunctions against killing and the consumption of meat and alcohol, the injunction against stealing, which is related to the second precept, can also be found in the *Diamond Sutra*. In one account, a protagonist was punished in the underworld for having stolen and eaten fruits from a monastery.[465] Stealing is mentioned in another narrative that illustrates the power of the *Diamond Sutra*. In this tale, a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra* was to be executed for stealing a horse, which he needed badly to travel to see his father. Due to the power of his practice, the executioner was not able to kill him.[466]

While Buddhist injunctions, such as the above, feature in many *Diamond Sutra* tales and abstinence from meat-eating and alcohol-drinking is encouraged, devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* is shown as a way to overcome the karmic consequences brought about by unwholesome acts although it is often implied that rigorous devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* also tend to adhere to the general Buddhist precepts against unwholesome behavior.

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[463] FYZL2. In the *Mingbao ji*, there is a tale about importance of ritual purity when copying the *Lotus Sutra*, and its implied relationship to the power of the scripture. Gjertson 1989: 162–3.

[464] JYJ43 (*zhijiu mairou* 治酒買肉: to trade in alcohol and meat).

[465] JYJ56 (TPGJ23).

[466] TPGJ49.

2.4 Buddhist Acts and Practices

Besides adhering to Buddhist injunctions against killing, stealing, and consuming alcohol, and the practice of vegetarianism, other generic forms of Buddhist practices—not necessarily specific to the *Diamond Sutra*—are often mentioned in *Diamond Sutra* tales.

The recitation and copying of scriptures are common forms of Buddhist practice undertaken by protagonists in Buddhist tales. Although *Diamond Sutra* narratives encourage the recitation and copying of the *Diamond Sutra*, they also mention protagonists who recited or copied other scriptures in addition to the *Diamond Sutra* as part of their routine. Among these scriptures, the *Lotus Sutra* is mentioned most frequently.[467] Besides the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*,[468] the *Heart Sutra*,[469] the *Vimalakirtī-nirdeśa*,[470] the *Suvarṇaprabhāsôttama-sūtra*,[471] the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*,[472]

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[467] JYJ27 (TPGJ8), JYJ28 (TPGJ13), JYJ62 (TPGJ39), JY18 (TPGJ92), FYZL2, and FYZL20 (?).

[468] JYJ62 (TPGJ39), and FYZL20 (?). Commonly known as the *Yaoshi jing* 藥師經 or *Yaoshi benyuan jing* 藥師本願經, the full title of this sutra is *Yaoshi liuliguang rulai benyuan gongdejing* 藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經 (Sutra of the Original Vows and Merit of the Tathāgata Master of Medicine of the Lapis Light). This one-roll sutra was translated by Xuanzang in 650. See T14.450: 404–409. For a modern study of this sutra, see Birnbaum 1979.

[469] JYJ37 (TPGJ19), and JYJ13). What is mentioned here as the *Boreduo xinjing* 般若多心經 should refer to what is known now as the Heart Sutra, which according to Fukui Funimasa, was known as the *Duo xinjing* 多心經 during the Tang. Nattier 1992: 193–4. According to Nattier, the Heart Sutra is an indigenous Chinese text composed by Xuanzang. See Fukui Fumimasa 1987 and 2000 for a comprehensive study of this sutra.

[470] Tale 39. Commonly known as *Weimo jing* 維摩經 in Chinese, and well received by laypeople in China, the sutra centers around the lay Bodhisattva Vimalakīrti and his exposition of the doctrines of non-duality and emptiness. See Demiéville 1962 and Mather 1968 for its reception in China. For a philosophical study of this sutra, see Hashimoto 1966.

[471] JY18 (TPGJ92). Commonly known the *Jin'guang ming jing* 金光明經 (Sutra of Golden Radiance), this important Mahāyāna sutra was probably compiled in northern India or

the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*,[473] and a scripture called *Suiyuan wangsheng jing* 隨願往生經 (Sutra of Rebirth According to One's Wishes)[474] are also mentioned. In addition to the recitation and copying of scriptures, the practice of recollecting the Buddha and his qualities mentally (Skt. *buddhānusmṛtī*; Ch. *nianfo* 念佛) is mentioned in a few stories.[475] However, it is not certain whether they are mentioned with reference to a particular Buddha (*bie nianfo* 別念佛) or to Buddhas in general (*tong nianfo* 同念佛).[476]

Since *Diamond Sutra* tales mainly aim to extoll devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*, it is not surprising to find that protagonists in many tales made a vow or

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Central Asia between the first and third centuries CE. It has a complex history of transmission in China as can be seen from various widely different Chinese versions of the sutra. Together with the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Renwang jing* 仁王經 (Sutra for Humane Kings; T8.245 and T8.246), it is worshipped for state-protection by rulers. For a study and translation of this sutra, see Emmerick 1979.

[472] JYJ63. Known as the *Lengqie jing* 楞伽經 in Chinese, the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* is an influential Mahāyāna sutra in East Asia, containing discussions on Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha theories. Important studies of this scripture include Suzuki 1932 and Tokiwa 2003.

[473] FYZL2.

[474] JYJ37 (TPGJ19). Possibly an indigenous scripture on the topic of rebirth, this might refer to roll 11 of the *Foshuo guanding jing* 佛說灌頂經 (T21.1331), which is entitled *Foshuo guanding suiyuan wangsheng shifang jingtu jing* 佛說灌頂隨願往生十方淨土經.

[475] JYJ54, JYJ27 (TPGJ8), JYJ20 (GDJ19), JY15 (GDJ15), and JYJ44.

[476] These two concepts can be found in the *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (Great Cessation and Contemplation; T46.1911.129c8). The term *nianfo* in *Diamond Sutra* tales probably refers to the recollection of the Buddha. The term *songjing* 誦經 is almost always used to refer to the recitation of scripture while the character *nian* (n. thought; v. think, remember) almost always precedes the noun *fo* (Buddha). The Chinese character *nian* probably took on the meaning of "to recite" in the late Tang since it is only in JYJ15 (GDJ15) that we find that *nian* used before *fo* (i.e., *nianfo*) as well as before the *Jin'gang jing* (i.e., *nian jin'gang jing*: to recite the Diamond Sutra). The change in the meaning of *nian* is well attested in *Diamond Sutra* tales collected in the *Taiping guangji*, where *nian* could be used interchangeably with *song* (recite), or in some instances, replaced *song*.

resolution, or aspired (*fayuan* 發願; *faxin* 發心)[477] to devote themselves to the *Diamond Sutra*.[478] Vows are common Buddhist acts of determination often undertaken by people before they commit themselves to some form of Buddhist practice. Indeed, dedicated religious practice is not an easy feat, and requires intentness and tenacity to last. In *Diamond Sutra* tales, such resolution may take place in times of need or under normal circumstances. In most cases, lay protagonists resolved to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* clearly for personal reasons or so-called mundane gains. However, there are exceptions. For instance, a lay protagonist vowed to not only uphold the *Diamond Sutra*, but also to comprehend and exhort others to do the same,[479] while the monastic, Qingxu, vowed to recite the *Diamond Sutra* for the salvation of suffering beings in the three evil paths.[480]

Some protagonists and people in *Diamond Sutra* tales were said to repent before or after they experienced the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*.[481] Repentance, often directed to the Buddha or Buddhist deities, is a practice for expressing remorse for past unwholesome behaviors, for dealing with negative karma, and for avoiding the karmic consequences of unwholesome actions.

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[477] Traditionally related to the vow of bodhisattvas and Buddhas to arouse the aspiration for awakening, it means save all sentient beings. Williams 2008: 218ff. It came to be expanded semantically to include the aspiration to believe in Buddhism, to uphold a scripture, or to gain rebirth in the Pure Land.

[478] JYJ53 (GDJ4), JYJ27 (TPGJ8), GDJ5 (TPGJ11), JYJ51 (TPGJ22), JYJ17 (TPGJ30), JYJ29 (TPGJ36), JYJ62 (TPGJ39, TPGJ46, JYJ22 (GDJ2), JYJ35 (GDJ3), JYJ32 (GDJ7), JYJ7, JYJ24, JYJ26, JYJ30, JYJ42, JYJ45, JYJ49, JYJ67, and FYZL20.

[479] JYJ26.

[480] JYJ42.

[481] JYJ54 (TPGJ2), JYJ28 (TPGJ13), TPGJ56, TPGJ88, TPGJ97, GDJ14, JYJ26, JYJ46, and FYZL20.

Almost all, if not all, instances of repentance undertaken by protagonists in *Diamond Sutra* tales are done with respect to past misdeeds. It is unclear whether repentance as it is mentioned in the accounts involved any of its technical senses, which entail certain methods and procedures.[482] Although there were Diamond-Sutra repentance rites during the Tang, found recorded in Dunhuang manuscripts, they might have been reserved for special occasions.[483]

Another motif in *Diamond Sutra* tales, though not well described, is the practice of *zhai* 齋.[484] Related to ritual purification, *zhai* generally refers to some sort of religious abstinence.[485] Its connotations may be gleaned from the different ways it is used in the stories. Although it often refers to the observance of (dietary) abstinence,[486] vegetarian meal/feast or diet,[487] it also

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[482] Various programs of repentance rite have been developed since the fifth century. Robson 2012: 82. One of the earliest and most well-known of such programs was devised by the Tiantai Patriarch, Zhiyi, in relation to the *Lotus Sutra*. See Stevenson 2009: 142–143. See Kuo 1994 for a study of Buddhist repentance practices from the fifth to the tenth century. There are in fact repentance rites related to the *Diamond Sutra* that were developed later.

[483] Collected in volume 7 of the *Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻 (Buddhist Texts Not Included in the Tripiṭaka) are two recensions of the *Jin'gang wuli* 金剛五禮 (Five Rites of the *Diamond Sutra*; W7.59a and 59b) and the *Jin'gang li* 金剛禮 (Rites of the *Diamond Sutra*; W7.60). For a study of the former, see Wang 1998: 201–34.

[484] JYJ53 (GDJ4, TPGJ3), GDJ11 (TPGJ4), JYJ27 (TPGJ8), JYJ28 (TPGJ13), TPGJ49, TPGJ55, JYJ61 (TPGJ63), JY7 (GDJ10, TPGJ72), JY15 (TPGJ90), JY18 (TPGJ92), JYJ14, and JYJ57.

[485] The difference senses of *zhai* include the following: (1) to purify the mind is called *zhai* (abstinence; to purify as by fasting, or abstaining; religious or abstinential duties); (2) to abstain from transgression (*guofei* 過非) of the body is called *jie* 戒 (precept, command, prohibition, discipline; morality); (3) *zhaijie* 齋戒, rules of purification, or abstinence, such as the eight prohibitions. When related to food, *zhaishi* 齋食 refers to the midday meal of monastics. To subscribe to the precept of not consuming food after midday is called to uphold *zhai* (*chizhai* 持齋). Later, *zhai* came to mean the food offered during Buddhist events, assemblies and ceremonies. The Buddhist ceremony in which food is offered is called *zhaihui* 齋會.

[486] JYJ53 (GDJ4), JYJ27 (TPGJ8), and JYJ28 (TPGJ13).

refers to different types of Buddhist observance or ceremonies carried out for a variety of purposes which involve abstinence or vegetarian food.[488] Well described in the *Mingxiang ji*, *zhai* never featured prominently in *Diamond Sutra* tales. Nevertheless, it is portrayed in a positive light if it is ever represented as a supplementary practice in addition to devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*. The lack of descriptions of *zhai* in the *Diamond Sutra* accounts may indicate that it had become a common activity in Tang China, or perhaps, it was not a major part of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*.[489]

Apart from the above practices, self-immolation[490] and asceticism are also attested in *Diamond Sutra* tales. In one of them, the monk Qingxu is said to resort to burning his finger when his attempts to call forth rain proved unsuccessful.[491] In another story, the Dharma Master Qixuan is said to practice asceticism in his youth although there is no description of his practice.[492]

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[487] JYJ61 (TPGJ63), JY7 (GDJ10, TPGJ72), JY18 (TPGJ92), and JYJ14.

[488] GDJ11 (TPGJ4), TPGJ49, TPGJ55, JYJ57. *Zhai* is better described in pre-Tang tales, such as those in the *Mingxiang ji*. It might involve a gathering of both laypeople and monastics with ritual meals, attendant instruction, and scripture recitation. It is often described as taking place in a special hall in the lay home although it is known to be held in monasteries. Even though *zhai* was performed on certain days of the month and at certain times each year, it was also performed when the need arose, sometimes for observing special events (recent conversions), supplicating for the recovery of patients, fulfilling vow or expressing gratitude, or for overcoming natural disasters, such as extreme drought. See Campany 2012: 51–55.

[489] The sizable amount of *zhai* text in Dunhuang might have indicated its prevalence as part of the Buddhist cult shared by different cults. See Wang 2008.

[490] See Benn 2007.

[491] JYJ49.

[492] JYJ55.

2.5 Practices Related to the *Diamond Sutra*

While some might question the clear distinction between 'high' and 'low' cultures as exemplified by Buddhist commentarial literature and indigenous narratives, respectively, and question interpretive strategies that cast Buddhist narratives as devoid of philosophical content and thus belonging to 'low' culture, the fact is that we find almost no philosophical content of the *Diamond Sutra* in the tales surveyed. Reference to *Diamond Sutra* content, if any, is made in passing, and is too general to be examined philosophically.[493] This lack of doctrinal content is not surprising given the affective nature of these tales, their targeted audience, and the way in which they were intended to be read.

On the other hand, *Diamond Sutra* accounts contain more details on devotional practices. General Buddhist practices found in them, which are discussed in the previous section, only play a supplementary role and are not the main practices encouraged in the tales. The main encouraged practices given the nature of the stories apparently have the *Diamond Sutra* as their main object of engagement. Four main acts of practice—to uphold, read, recite, and copy the *Diamond Sutra*—are encouraged in the *Diamond Sutra*.[494] Since

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[493] JY21 (TPGJ60) is a rare example of such a mention. A bamboo strip with a verse from the *Diamond Sutra* suddenly appeared to the protagonist who was wrongfully imprisoned. The verse from the *Diamond Sutra* states, "One should give up the dharma, not to mention non-dharma." Other examples include tales that mention self-referential statements in the *Diamond Sutra* touting the great amount of merit to be gained from various acts of devotion.

[494] These are four of the five kinds of acts (*wuzhong xing* 五種行), a traditional category based on chapter ten of the *Lotus Sutra*, "On the Dharma Masters" (*fashi pin* 法師品), where there are descriptions of the five kinds of dharma masters who (1) uphold (*shouchi* 受持), (2) read (*du* 讀), (3) recite (*song* 誦), (4) expound (*jieshuo* 解說), and (5) copy (*shuxie* 書

religious practices provide structure through which practitioners supplicate, repent, give offerings, and transfer merit to others, there is no doubt that such practices in the narratives fulfill such a purpose. In addition, they also give shape to abstract doctrines, moral values, and individual concerns, while serving as avenues for protagonists to obtain benefits and merit.

The first of the five acts, to uphold a scripture, entails, in a narrow sense, accepting and believing in it, and to continuing to do so into the future. However, in a more general sense, this term may have a broader semantic range: to keep a scripture in one's possession, to commit a scripture to memory and be mindful of its teachings, to devote oneself to a scripture, and so on.[495] Next, the reading and recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* often appear together.[496] Although they are similar in some sense, they differ fundamentally. Recitation, the act of intoning a scripture—whether aloud or silently—from memory, is a common practice for transforming the doctrinal and moral ideals of a scripture into experience. It is, therefore, a means for practitioners to engage with the scripture experientially, through which they express their concerns, and achieve religious identities.[497] This is particularly important for laypeople—especially the less educated—who might lack the

寫) the *Lotus Sutra*. These are also found in the *Diamond Sutra* although reading, reciting, and copying appear more frequently than the others.

[495] For an excellent discussion of the term, see Teiser 1994: 140–4.

[496] The terms *dusong* 讀誦 and *songdu* 誦讀 are used in the following tales: JYJ53 (GDJ4, TPGJ3), GDJ11 (TPGJ4), JYJ25 (GDJ6, TPGJ6), JYJ27 (TPGJ8), JYJ36 (TPGJ12), JYJ28 (TPGJ13), JYJ23 (GDJ12, TPGJ28), JY4 (TPGJ68), TPGJ71, JY12 (TPGJ85), TPGJ94, JYJ22 (GDJ2), JYJ32 (GDJ7), JYJ24, JYJ55, JYJ1 (TPGJ; *songdu*), JYJ58 (TPGJ34; *songdu*), and JYJ72 (TPGJ42).

[497] Jan 1977: 289–99.

knowledge needed to fully understand the *Diamond Sutra*. Although the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* was highly encouraged for practitioners to obtain benefits and merit, it probably also enabled them to experience the truth of the text in an alternative way.

Although *Gaoseng zhuan* accounts often remark that monastics understood the scriptures they read, it is less certain what might have constituted the practice of reading the *Diamond Sutra* as it is mentioned in some *Diamond Sutra* tales.[498] With regard to laypeople, the *Diamond Sutra* could certainly be read carefully for its meaning, but they might have also read it without paying particular attention to the meaning of the scripture. In any case, recitation—less about understanding the contents of the scripture—is clearly superior to reading the scripture. This is illustrated and clarified by a tale in which one monk who recited the *Diamond Sutra* received a better reception than another who read it.[499] The superiority of recitation over reading reflected in this story indicates the value attached to it by medieval Chinese Buddhists, and perhaps also the importance of engaging the *Diamond Sutra* experientially rather than intellectually. While the words of scriptures have meanings, recitation may produce sounds that cannot be recognized as a

[498] The character *du* 讀 is used in the following tales: TPGJ51, TPGJ62, JY2 (TPGJ66), JY7 (GDJ10, TPGJ72), TPGJ75, TPGJ77, JY12 (TPGJ85), JY17 (TPGJ89), JY16 (TPGJ91), TPGJ99, TPGJ100, TPGJ101, TPGJ103, JYJ22 (GDJ2), and GDJ8. Although the *Diamond Sutra* was read primarily as a regular practice over an extended period of time, it might have served and been read as spells for quick solutions in some situations, as proposed by Kieschnick (1997: 90).

[499] In the subplot of TPGJ42, two monks appeared to demonstrate the power of the *Diamond Sutra*. The one who recited the *Diamond Sutra* was given a golden seat, while the other who read was given a silver seat. They were also carried away but in different clouds.

regular spoken language, and be regarded as a ritual language unto itself. Since the value of recitation lies in its sounds and experience rather than meaning, the reciter, by focusing on the recitation and the rhythm of recitation, is untroubled by the question of meaning, and is thus able to experience the truth of the scripture.[500]

Some *Diamond Sutra* accounts mention the practice of *zhuandu* 轉讀, which literally means to turn and read a scripture.[501] It is also uncertain whether this term has the same meaning, as it is usually used when referring to the recitation of extremely long scriptures, such as the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, where only the title, and lines from the beginning, middle, and ending portions of each roll are intoned.[502] This practice, undoubtedly determined by the length of the scripture, is probably based on the belief that to intone the scripture in this way equals intoning every character of the scripture, which is usually referred to as *zhendu* 真讀, which literally means to truly read a scripture. When applied to the *Diamond Sutra*, *zhuandu* might have referred to the recitation of the title of the *Diamond Sutra*, and some lines from its beginning, middle and ending portions, or certain pertinent portions of the sutra.

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[500] Jan 1977: 300.

[501] The term *zhuandu* is used in the following tales: JYJ27 (TPGJ8), JYJ17 (TPGJ30), TPGJ75, JYJ32 (GDJ7), JYJ24, and JYJ26.

[502] Hartmann 2008: 103. Noticing the incomplete text found in amulets of the Bamiyan, Hartman points out that "it is not the philological completeness of the text that brings about the desired effects of protection. Texts may be incomplete and still represent the whole of the Dharma."

Although reciting or reading the entire *Diamond Sutra* was assumed in most tales, some indicate that only parts of the sutra were read or recited. In one tale, the protagonist was told that he could get rid of his suffering if he recited a four-line verse (*siju ji* 四句偈) of the *Diamond Sutra*.[503] In another, the protagonist managed to escape from captivity even though he could only intone the title (*jingti* 經題) of the *Diamond Sutra*.[504] Just as the partial reading of recitation could evoke the power of the sutra, chanting its title or a four-line verse—when understood as a consummation of scripture—bears the power of the entire scripture.[505] This is similar to calling the name of Guanyin, which evokes all his powers.

Although mindfulness is not mentioned in relation to the above practices in *Diamond Sutra* tales, it is entailed in these practices in different degrees. For most of the Tang, the Chinese term *nian*, which was often used in relation to the recollection of the Buddha and his qualities, seems to be used less technically by lay Buddhists to refer to focusing one's mind on the Buddha or a religious object of devotion, as discernible from its use in the *Diamond Sutra*. However, in narratives collected in early tenth-century collections or later ones, such as the *Taiping guangji*, *nian* came to be used synonymously with

[503] TPGJ78. It is uncertain to what the four-line verse here refers. However, given the potency of the *Diamond Sutra*, this may refer to any such verse in it. An idea of this nature probably has its origins in sections 8, 11, and 24 of a popular division of the *Diamond Sutra*, which touts the extent of its power even if a four-phrased verse is read, recited, copied, or taught to others.

[504] JY6 (TPGJ70).

[505] For example, Zhiyi is said to have considered the title of the *Lotus Sutra* as containing its essence in his *magmum opus*, the *Fahua xuanyi* 法華玄義 (The Profound Meaning of the *Lotus Sutra*; T33.1716). About two-thirds of the text is devoted to discussing the implications of the title of the Lotus. Chappell 1993: 184 and Payne 1998: 138.

song (to intone).[506] This linguistic development might reflect increasing awareness of the fact that a proper state of mindfulness is essential to the act of recitation. Indeed, since the quality of mind that distinguishes recitation from other oral functions, such as speaking, the potency of recitation in producing the desired results depends on the reciter's state of mind, in addition to the power of the scripture.

In addition to mental and oral acts of devotion, *Diamond Sutra* accounts also encourage the copying of the sutra as a bodily act of reverence as well as a means to propagate the scripture to a wider audience. Although not found therein, it is possible that there was some form of ritual for copying the *Diamond Sutra* to ensure its potency. A tale collected in the *Mingbao ji* relates the elaborate procedure observed by the copyist while copying the *Lotus Sutra*. The procedure, executed in a clean room, requires the copyist to take his bath and perfume his clothing before the actual copying. While copying the sutra, the copyist is supposed to exhale through a bamboo tube. Although most copying of sutra probably was not carried out in such detail, this account gives us an idea that the copying of sutra was not as easy a task, and was done with greater effort and religious fervor than we can imagine. As a practice that requires considerable effort, it was certainly carried out even under unfavorable conditions. One account describes a person taking up the practice of copying the *Diamond Sutra* after witnessing its efficacy. He was described

[506] In fact, by the Song period when the *Taiping guangji* was compiled, *nian* was used in place of song in tales where song was used previously. With the influence of the vernacular, we also find *niansong* and *songnian* to refer to the recitation of scripture.

as copying the sutra in midsummer despite perspiring profusely.[507] The thousands of Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra* attest to the extent of the enjoinment contained in the sutra to copy itself, and how the concept of merit might have shaped the material world.[508] Many manuscripts were probably copied by scribes engaged by the less educated, who might have thought of that as responding to the *Diamond Sutra*'s claims that there is merit to be gained from causing others to copy it. The cost of copying the *Diamond Sutra* might have contributed to its popularity. Dunhuang manuscripts indicate that thirty strings of cash (*shidiao* 三十弔) are required for copying the forty-roll *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, ten for the seven-roll *Lotus Sutra*, and one for the one-roll *Sutra of Medicine King*.[509] Since the *Diamond Sutra* is comparable to the last in length, it was certainly more affordable to ordinary people.

It is interesting to note that while four of the five acts—upholding, reading, reciting, and copying—are mentioned frequently in the tales, the practice of explication (*jieshuo* 解說) is almost never mentioned in the *Diamond Sutra* tales. This is certainly not surprising given that the purpose of these tales is to show the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* through "devotional" practices. Or perhaps, these stories were meant to be a kind of explication. This, however, is probably related to the lay orientation of these narratives, which are mostly accounts of experiences of laypeople told and compiled by

[507] JY2.

[508] Kieschnick 2003: 157.

[509] Li 1992: 522.

laypeople—people who were not so well equipped doctrinally and philosophically to explicate on the subtleties of the *Diamond Sutra*. In place of explicating the *Diamond Sutra*, the tales promote teaching and encouraging others to engage in the abovementioned practices, which might count as meritorious practices themselves since they not only enable more people to experience the benefits of reciting and copying the *Diamond Sutra*, but also enable the propagators to accumulate merit.

2.6 Superiority of the *Diamond Sutra*

Although the *Diamond Sutra*, like some Mahāyāna scriptures, dwells on the extent of the merit the faithful could obtain by various devotional acts related to it, and claimed for itself many other powers, it did not claim to be the foremost Mahāyāna scripture. This claim, however, was made through the protagonists in some *Diamond Sutra* tales. In a few of them, the *Diamond Sutra* was elevated to what amounts to the most preeminent of all Buddhist scriptures. By the time the first compilation of *Diamond Sutra* narratives made its appearance, it had come to represent the entire perfection of wisdom corpus. This is apparent from the fact that it was often referred to as the "(perfection of) wisdom scripture" (*bore jing* 般若經) or simply as "(perfection of) wisdom" (*bore* 般若) in many accounts.

Some *Diamond Sutra* tales claim that the *sutra* is the most powerful of all Buddhist scriptures, capable of generating the greatest merit, and thus

deserves to be treated with utmost respect.[510] More importantly, the superiority of the *Diamond Sutra* is cast in a discourse of comparison in which (1) other religions, (2) indigenous Chinese religions and mantic arts, and (3) other Buddhist scriptures, spells, or mantras are shown to be inefficacious, while the powers of the *Diamond Sutra* and the merit generated by devotion to it prove too great for any obstacle or problem. The *Diamond Sutra,* therefore, was often praised and extolled; its upholders and practitioners were accorded salutation and respected as a result. On occasions, protagonists were requested to recite the *Diamond Sutra* by influential beings in the threefold world, such as King Yama and the Dragon King.[511]

On the first level of comparison, the *Diamond Sutra* is proven to be more powerful than foreign religious traditions. In one tale, a Manichaean was converted to Buddhism when he personally witnessed the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in delivering his reincarnated wife from her suffering as a snake.[512] In another, Buddhism was shown to be superior to Brahmanism when a local Chinese deity—who defied attempts by both a Brahmin priest and his disciple to subdue him—was finally vanquished by a Buddhist monk who recited the *Diamond Sutra*. In the tale, the local deity, the god of Lake Gongting, contrasted the attitude of the Brahmin priests and the Buddhist

[510] See Section 2.1.4 in Chapter 4.

[511] Invitation to recite by King Yama: JYJ53 (GDJ4), JYJ23 (GDJ12), JY12 (TPGJ85), and GDJ9; invitation to recite by the Dragon King: TPGJ64.

[512] TPGJ83.

monk, and suggested that he was overwhelmed by the compassionate power of the Mahāyāna, which is represented by the *Diamond Sutra*:

> The monk sat upright and properly recited the sutra, not ceasing for an instant. He did not feel afraid, and nothing seemed to frighten him. The god saw his peaceful appearance, and quieting his many awesome powers, came before the master, knelt on his right knee, clasped his hands together, and made reverence [to the monk].
>
> After the god had heard the sutra, the monk asked, "What sort of spirit are you, benefactor? You were at first so ferocious and are now so agreeable."
>
> The god replied, "Because I, your disciple, had evil karma, such is my repayment: I am the god of this lake. But I believe and respect you very much, Master."
>
> The monk asked, "If you, god, believe and respect, what was the idea of killing the two previous monks?"
>
> He replied, "The reason for the deaths of the two previous monks was that they were unable to uphold the Mahāyāna scriptures and they intoned spells with angry hearts. When they saw me, your disciple, coming, they cursed me in advance, intoning evil words in their desire to make me submit. But I would not, and upon seeing my evil appearance, the two monks died naturally of their own fright. It was not that I purposely killed them."[513]

The above tale pits the *Diamond Sutra* against a number of "opponents." It not only shows the superiority of the *Diamond Sutra* over other religious traditions, but also indicates its superiority over indigenous and local cults represented here by the god of Lake Gongting.[514] The subjugation of local gods, as presented by the stories, did not seem to be an unusual affair. An example of the subjugation of a local spirit is already given above about Qingxu, whose assistance was enlisted by monks of the Shaolin Monastery. We may recall that when his recitation of the spell of the Eleven-headed

[513] JYJ35 (GDJ3, FYZL19). This is a translation of the *Fayuan zhulin* account by Gjertson (1989: 29–30).

[514] The triumph of Buddhism over the god of Lake Gongting has its origins in earlier accounts. See Miyakawa 1979: 83–102.

Avalokiteśvara proved ineffective against the local god, Qingxu recited the *Diamond Sutra*, which finally subdued the god. Such tales make use of the lore of indigenous gods or spirits to illustrate the superiority of the *Diamond Sutra* over them, and in the case of Qingxu, the *Diamond Sutra* was shown to be more efficacious in doing so. By triumphing over local indigenous gods, which were often feared or even worshipped by local people, Buddhism not only assimilated these deities into its fold, but also used these tales to convert indigenous populations to Buddhism.[515]

Not only is the *Diamond Sutra* superior to indigenous religious traditions, it is also superior to indigenous mantic arts, which medieval Chinese Buddhists did not deny. Buddhists also did not hesitate to engage in religious contestations with practitioners of mantic arts, who sometimes confirmed Buddhist assertions.[516] When the protagonist of a tale sought the help of a practitioner of mantic arts to revive his deceased wife, the latter recommended the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*.[517] In another account, a spiritual medium could "see" and confirm that ghosts would disperse upon the appearance of a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra*.[518] In two other stories, practitioners of mantic arts prognosticated the short lifespan of characters who defied the results of prognostication and thus fate by prolonging their lifespan through extensive and lengthy retreats of intense recitation of the

[515] See tale 24 of the *Mingxiang ji* (Campany 2012: 117–8) and tale 13 of the *Mingbao ji* (Gjertson 1989: 188–90) for instances of Buddhism domesticating local demons or deities.

[516] Such instances are also found in the *Mingxiang ji*. Campany 2012: 59.

[517] TPGJ75.

[518] JYJ29 (TPGJ36).

Diamond Sutra.[519] In yet another tale, the practitioners of mantic arts were not able to heal a critically ill monk who finally recovered through his recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*.[520]

In *Diamond Sutra* tales, there are mentions of the copying and recitation of other scriptures—especially the *Lotus Sutra*—together with the *Diamond Sutra*, as well as the good recompense of such acts. But the *Diamond Sutra* was also compared to other scriptures and shown to be superior to them. In one story, the protagonist was asked to make merit for the animals he had killed. When he offered to copy the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Jin'guangming jing* for them, they in turn asked him to have the *Diamond Sutra* copied instead.[521] Both the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Jin'guangming jing* were influential and popular scriptures during the Tang, as attested by the large number of Dunhuang manuscripts of both scriptures. It is thus possible that this was a conscious effort on the part of devotees to pit the *Diamond Sutra* against rival scriptures. Therefore, besides reflecting the competition engendered by devotees of different scriptures, they reveal the influence and popularity of these scriptures in medieval China. In an interesting account collected in the *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, the *Diamond Sutra* was even implied to be superior to the *Lotus Sutra*.[522]

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[519] JYJ21 (GDJ1) and JYJ22 (GDJ2).

[520] JYJ30.

[521] JY18 (TPGJ92).

[522] See note Section 3 for an introduction of this collection. The tale is collected in roll 6 of the collection, T51.2067: 29c25–30a5. King Yama asked the Monk Shi Huidu 釋慧度 what scriptures he recited. He first replied that he recited the *Lotus Sutra*. When the king asked him whether he recited other scriptures, he replied that he also recited the Diamond—to which the

Finally, the *Diamond Sutra* is also shown to be superior to other Buddhist practices, such as those related to Tantric Buddhism, which was imported into China during the Tang. We see this in the aforementioned tales of Qingxu, in which both the spells of the Fiery-Headed Vajra-being and the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara are shown to be ineffective in subduing local spirits.[523]

2.7 Agency of the *Diamond Sutra*

Together with tales related to the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*, *Diamond Sutra* narratives are unique in their attribution of extraordinary intervention not to deities but to scriptures. In these scriptures, we find self-assertions and descriptions about their responsiveness to followers who assiduously uphold, read, and recite them. In this aspect, *Diamond Sutra* stories are different from their Guanyin counterparts since Guanyin is the agent who actively responds to the calls of supplicants for help, often appearing in different human forms, an idea based on the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, where Bodhisattva Guanyin promises to take different forms to deliver supplicants from their problems. Often, Guanyin's interventions are direct and personally executed. On the other hand, there are a few *Diamond Sutra* tales, with a similar—but somewhat different—motif,

King commented that the merit of reciting it was inconceivable—and the protagonist prolonged his life for twenty-four years. This is an interesting tale since it presents the superiority of the *Diamond Sutra* over *Lotus Sutra* in a collection devoted to the latter. See the introduction to this collection in Section 3.

[523] JYJ48.

where the *Diamond Sutra* is said to appear serendipitously to 'rescue' protagonists; for example:

> During the Yuanhe era (806–820), when Minister of Works Yan Shou was in Jiangling (modern Jingzhou, Hubei), Wang Mian was the Commander of the Cenyang Garrison (in modern Hunan). [Wang Mian] always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. [Once,] he was ordered to return to the prefecture to investigate some matter. On his way back, when he reached Zhatan (modern Zigui, Hubei), his boat broke up, and five men were drowned together. Just as Wang Mian entered the water, it seemed like someone handed him a bamboo pole. [Holding on to it, he] bobbed up and down in the current and ended up at Xialao Garrison (modern Yiling, Hubei) [where he] went ashore without perishing. When he looked at what he was holding in his hand, it was the *Diamond*. From Zhatan to Xialao Garrison, it is more than 300 *li*![524]

Although a copy of the *Diamond Sutra* appears to come to the rescue of Yan Shou, still this differs from Guanyin's intervention, which is more often than not personally executed and is thus direct.[525] The above representation of the *Diamond Sutra* is similar to the representation in some tales featuring the rescuing and protective power of the *sutra*, where it takes the brunt on behalf of the protagonists to prevent harm or injury. Such representations of the *Diamond Sutra* differ from the representations found in some *Diamond Sutra* tales that feature the *sutra* as a sacred, inviolable, and indestructible scripture with intrinsic power. But rarely is the *Diamond Sutra* represented as a volitional agent that appears to save the protagonists. Rather, in many *Diamond Sutra* accounts, the salvific power of the *Diamond Sutra* is executed by and manifested in terms of proxies, through which the sutra's work is done,

[524] JY10 (TPGJ80). Also see TPGJ71 and TPGJ82.

[525] We do find at least two cases where Guanyin's intervention is indirect: tales 13 and 14 of the *Xi guanshiyin yingyan ji*.

its responsiveness, potency, and efficacy experienced, and thus proven. In such stories, the *Diamond Sutra* 'responds' to supplicants in an indirect way through proxies, such as bodhisattvas, Buddhist deities, monks, mysterious persons, natural objects, animals, strange voices, and even invisible forces. *Diamond Sutra* tales are full of such proxies, which function to carry out works to relieve characters from suffering and problems. In the following tale, many proxies come to the rescue of the protagonists:

> At twenty, Zhitong was enlisted into the Qingde Superprefecture Guardsmen. He was well known in the military group ordered to attack the white barbarians (*baiman*). Between his hometown and the land of the white barbarians, there were more than ten thousand li. While on the road, he kept up his ritual observances and recitations day and night without fail. When they reached the borders of the Southern Barbarians (*nanman*), the government army was defeated in battle and the soldiers were fleeing…[Just as] Zhitong was panicking and had no way out of the situation, five persons, all of them riding mares, appeared unexpectedly and surrounded Tong. One of them went up to Tong and told him, "Do not be afraid, do not be frightened! You have fully cultivated merit. We have surrounded you, so you cannot be harmed." They traveled for more than seven li until they reached a pagoda. They then entered it to hide themselves. The barbarians subsequently returned to their camp.
>
> [While Tong was in the pagoda,] two monks suddenly came to Tong and said, "Dānapati, you have recited the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra*, and have worshipped and recollected all the Buddhas, this is inconceivable! We have also been sent to rescue you. The five persons who rode on mares and surrounded you previously are all the manifestations of the power of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Diamond Sutra*. Similarly, we are here to rescue you, and to prevent your enemy from harming you. Cultivate well good deeds, recite and uphold sutras, and do not become negligent. All protective deities and kings will constantly offer their protection to you." Having said these words, they then soared into the sky.
>
> Tong passed through the day without taking food, and was extremely hungry. In a moment, two children brought a bowl of cooked rice together with pickled vegetable and cakes. They gave them to Tong. When Tong finished eating, they told him, "Diligently cultivate merit and recite the *Prajñā Sutra*. Do not be negligent or

> stop doing so." After saying that, they soared straight into the sky…Later, the barbarians were defeated, and the government soldiers were released to return home. Tong singlemindedly recited and upheld the *Lotus* and *Prajñā* sutras without daring to be negligent.[526]

In three different situations, three different groups of people came to offer assistance to Zhitong. The two monks who later appeared to offer protection told Zhitong that they were there to offer protection like the five mysterious people who rescued him earlier. Since they explained that the five people were "all the manifestations of the power of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Diamond Sutra*," they too must be the same. Doubtlessly, the children who offered Zhitong food were the proxies of the sutras. It is noteworthy that these proxies exhort Zhitong to maintain his practice, just as the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Diamond Sutra* urge those practices.

The world described in *Diamond Sutra* tales is the threefold world envisioned in Buddhist scriptures as inhabited by many different types of beings and deities who act as the proxies of the *Diamond Sutra* to carry out activities on its behalf. Among these proxies of the sutra, monastics are the most common, and they include both Chinese and foreign monks.[527] They were in most cases unrelated to the protagonists, although there were cases where they were acquaintances. Monastics feature prominently as proxies of the *Diamond Sutra* probably because they were often considered to possess awesome spiritual powers due to their religious vocation. In *Diamond Sutra*

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[526] JYJ28.

[527] Foreign monk: JYJ1 (TPGJ9) and JYJ28 (TPGJ13).

narratives, they appeared in a variety of scenarios and places, such as in dreams, phantasmagorical visions, daily life, and underworld. Although their roles vary in the stories, they mostly appeared to offer assistance to protagonists, which accounts for the fact that they appeared most frequently in tales of the rescue and protection theme. Often, they offered assistance by giving much needed advice or instruction to protagonists or teaching and encouraging them to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. In some tales, especially those with the return-from-death theme, they offered help by interceding on behalf of protagonists, testifying to their religious rigor or moral character,[528] or guiding them back safely to the human realm.[529] In yet others, they appeared in the subplot of the narratives to affirm the efficacy or demonstrate the superiority of the *Diamond Sutra*.[530]

In some tales, Buddhist figures and deities appeared as proxies, especially those who are particularly related to the *Diamond Sutra*. In at least two of them, vajra-beings (*jin'gang* 金剛), who came to be associated with the *Diamond Sutra* in the Tang, appeared to offer assistance to the protagonists.[531] Although they are not mentioned in the *Diamond Sutra*, their names and even images were affixed to Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra*, as

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[528] Return-from-Death theme: JY3 (TPGJ67; Dizang), TPGJ26, TPGJ97, JYJ27 (TPGJ8), and TPGJ51. Non-Return-from-Death theme: JYJ5 (instruction), JYJ7 (healing), TPGJ78 (teach to recite and offer medicine), TPGJ59 (offer medicine in dream), JYJ1 (TPGJ9; dream), JYJ28 (TPGJ13), JYJ36 (TPGJ12), JYJ12 (GDJ16; voice of monk), TPGJ74, JYJ18 (TPGJ24), TPGJ5, TPGJ64, JYJ2 (TPGJ7; dream), and TPGJ88 (Subhūti).

[529] TPGJ88.

[530] GDJ11 (TPGJ4), JYJ24 (RFD; reborn in Heaven), TPGJ96 (Subhūti), GDJ5 (TPGJ11; ascend to Heaven), and TPGJ42.

[531] JY1 (TPGJ58), TPGJ93, and TPGJ102. See Section 3.4 in Chapter 4.

Chinese Buddhists prayed to them for blessings and protection.[532] In one tale, four vajra-beings helped a character defend a city under siege;[533] while in another, eight vajra-beings appeared in a dream to intercede on behalf on a protagonist.[534] In addition to vajra-beings, Subhūti, the Buddha's main interlocutor in the *Diamond Sutra*, also appeared as a proxy in two tales.[535] In the first tale, Subhūti appeared as an ordinary monk in a monastery who healed a repentant protagonist who was suffering the effects of his slander of the *Diamond Sutra*. In the second one, Subhūti interceded for a character in the underworld. Besides deities and monastics related to the *Diamond Sutra*, Bodhisattva Dizang—who came to be featured as Lord of the Underworld in subsequent Buddhist writings—appeared in an account where he offered advice to a protagonist who was embroiled in an underworld trial.[536]

Apart from the above, human beings and animals also served as proxies of the *Diamond Sutra* in some tales.[537] Even inanimate objects, such as a bamboo pole and strip, straw, and ingot served as proxies to prove the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*.[538] Moreover, there were other less easily identified proxies that offered assistance to protagonists and delivered them out of dire

[532] Hirai 1999: 261–96.

[533] TPGJ93.

[534] TPGJ102.

[535] TPGJ88 and TPGJ96.

[536] JY3 (TPGJ67). This tale is about Liang Chongyi, a general of the Tang who died in 781. Thus, already in the eighth century, Dizang had made his entry into the underworld where he would become more prominent.

[537] Humans: JYJ28 (TPGJ13) and TPGJ71; Dog: TPGJ77 and JY16 (TPGJ91); sheep: JYJ23 (GDJ12, TPGJ28); tiger: JYJ12 (GDJ16).

[538] TPGJ60 (bamboo strip), JY10 (TPGJ80; bamboo pole), TPGJ71 (straw), and JY6 (TPGJ70; ingot).

situations. They are variously described as strange voices,[539] invisible forces,[540] mysterious beings,[541] and unidentified sources of light.[542]

2.8 Dreams and Visions

In the biographies of the Buddha and other important Buddhist figures, dreams figure prominently. Dreams and visionary experiences in Buddhism, like those in other religions and cultures, are said to convey important messages. Consequently, they often prompt events in the actual world; examples of such events include transmission and revelation of teachings, formation of cults, establishment of monasteries, discovery of relics, production of images, and so on.[543] Thus they are important subjects of inquiry in Buddhism.[544]

Visionary experiences, whether waking, oneiric or meditative, were important in the inception and development of Mahāyāna Buddhism.[545] Similarly, in indigenous Chinese narratives, motifs of dreams and visions abound and play a crucial role. Already in the *Mingxiang ji*, we find the

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[539] JYJ5, JYJ6, and FYZL14.

[540] JYJ25 (TPGJ6), TPGJ55, and JY2 (TPGJ66).

[541] JYJ28 (TPGJ13), JY14 (TPGJ73), TPGJ103, JYJ15 (GDJ15), and JYJ71.

[542] JYJ11 (TPGJ14), JYJ20 (GDJ19, TPGJ20), TPGJ56, JYJ15 (GDJ15), and JYJ14.

[543] For example, the building of Anle monastery due to Huishou's dream (Zürcher 2007: 150), discovery of relics (Kieschnick 2003: 34), and statute (Falcone: 2012: 155–6).

[544] For studies of dreams in Buddhism, see Sumegi 2008: 55–7 and Young 1999: 43–54. Mayer 2004 mentions that the second-century Vibhāṣā classifies dreams in five types. According to Strickmann (1988: 38), the Samantapasadika, a commentary of the Vinaya translated into Chinese in 489, classifies dreams into four categories.

[545] The production of early Mahāyāna sutras was deeply related to meditative practices and their resulting visionary experiences. See Harrison 2003.

religious world reflected and shaped by stories therein, as one in which oneiric and visionary experiences are considered channels of communication to the hidden realms of spirits, ghosts, bodhisattvas, heavens, Pure Lands, and purgatories.[546] In many *Diamond Sutra* tales, dreams and visions are important and legitimate media of communication through which proxies of the *Diamond Sutra* sometimes responded to the protagonists, validating the power of the *sutra*. It is common to read in these accounts how characters, in dreams or phantasmagorical visions, are consoled, healed, given accurate predictions, warnings and instructions, or given solutions to their problems.[547]

What is interesting about dreams and visions in the *Diamond Sutra* tales is that they are not mental and internal to the protagonists, but actual realms in which real contact with other beings take place. In the below tale, the dream was another dimension of reality in which real things happened:

> Wu Kejiu was a native of Yue. In the fifteenth year of Yuanhe era (820), he came and lived in Chang'an. He was a believer of Manicheaism, and his wife was also one too. More than a year later, his wife suddenly died. After three years, she appeared in his dream and told her husband, "Because of my evil views, I have become a snake [trapped] under the stupa at the Huangzibei (in modern Xi'an, Shaanxi). I would die tomorrow at daybreak. I wish that you invite monks to intone the *Diamond Sutra* there. I want to be spared of sufferings." Being in a dream, Wu did not believe [what was happening], and scolded her. His wife was enraged and spat on his face. Startled, he woke up. His face was swollen and unbearably painful.
>
> The wife next appeared in the dream of her elder brother-in-law and said, "Obtain the dragon's tongue herb from the garden, pound it, and spread it over [my husband's face,] and he will recover

[546] Campany 2012: 58–9. Strickmann 1988: 31ff.

[547] JYJ54 (TPGJ2), JYJ2 (TPGJ7), JYJ1 (TPGJ9), JYJ36 (TPGJ12), JYJ18 (TPGJ24), JYJ17 (TPGJ30), TPGJ59, JY14 (TPGJ73), TPGJ74, TPGJ83, JY19 (TPGJ95), TPGJ102, JYJ12 (GDJ16), JY11, JYJ7, JYJ43, JYJ47, JYJ57, and JYJ70.

> immediately. When Wu's brother woke up, he hurriedly obtained the herb and gave it to his younger brother. Soon Wu recovered. The next morning, together the brothers went to invite monks to intone the *Diamond Sutra*. [While the monks were intoning the *Diamond Sutra*,] a huge snake suddenly emerged from the stupa. It raised its head and looked around. When the turning [of the *Diamond Sutra*] ended, it perished. Kejiu took refuge in the Buddha, and has always upheld the scripture [since]. From the *Baoying ji*.[548]

In this tale, the dream of Wu Kejiu was no less real than the realm which he inhabited; if not, he would not have been injured by the spitting of his wife. Although it is uncertain that such a representation of dreams as actual sites of communication is influenced by canonical Buddhist literature, there were Buddhist authors who had expressed their belief that dreams could be more real than a conscious state and that they represent "an intermediate state, between this world (seen as illusory) and the invisible world (which alone is truly 'real')."[549]

The motif of dreams is an interesting one in these tales, informing us about the changes that had taken place in the Chinese conception of dreams, especially with regard to how they come about, what functions they serve, and how they are interpreted. In any period, dreams are generally thought of as a nexus of communication between people of this world and other realms, which are direct sometimes, and indirect at other times.[550] Dreams were certainly an important part of Chinese culture, taken seriously by imperial administration,

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[548] TPGJ83.

[549] Strickmann 1988: 39.

[550] Direct forms of communication include the appearance of deceased family members or relatives making demands, such as proper burial, or providing the living with helpful messages or frightening warnings. As signs subject to varied interpretations, dreams were deciphered by specialists or according to books on dream interpretation as early as Pre-Han texts indicate. Ong 1988: 47–54.

and widely discussed by intellectuals and religious adepts.[551] Ancient records of dreams, specialized dream-books used for the interpretation of dreams, and the use of dreams as diagnostic tools for illness in medical literature attest to the role played by dreams in traditional Chinese culture. However, dreams and visions in *Diamond Sutra* tales seem to offer more than foretelling the future, diagnosing illnesses, or simply serving as mediums of communication. By presenting dreams and visions as a dimension in which actual events take place and an expressive reality unto itself, the distinction between the real world and the world of dreams and visions collapses.[552]

While *Diamond Sutra* tales utilize a trope close to the Chinese heart, it also introduces a new perspective about it. Often, they seem to imply that the visions and dreams are beyond rudimentary mental activities, but states grounded in the piety of those protagonists. These states are arguably produced by their devotional practices just as visions are produced by meditative practices. Just as the latter was meant for spiritual edification, these dreams were meant for daily deliverance. While they might not replicate traditional understanding, they are nevertheless evoked by a personal connection protagonists forged with their object of devotion. The dreams and visions of protagonists in *Diamond Sutra* tales are highly reminiscent of some waking and meditative visions in Mahāyāna Buddhism, where meditators

[551] See Wagner 1988 for a treatment of dreams by the rulers. For a sketch of the Chinese history of dreams and the variety of approaches to dreams, see Bulkeley 2008: 50–78.

[552] Tanabe 2003.

encounter Buddhas, bodhisattva or Buddhist deities.[553] Although dreams can be an obstacle to liberation in some cases, these *Diamond Sutra* narratives show dreams to be similar to visions or alternative dimensions in which real communication, events, and liberation take place.

3. What Can the Tales Tell Us about the Cult of the *Diamond Sutra*?

Diamond Sutra tales represent the various aspects of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* through an assortment of ideas, values, activities, and routines that set them and their ideas apart from other pre-Tang tales, as well as contemporaneous tales related to other scriptures or deities. *Diamond Sutra* stories, however, differ from others not simply because they represent a particular style of Buddhism that promoted the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*, but also because they are products of a different time with peculiar issues to address and needs to fulfill. The changes that took place in the religious landscape from the Six Dynasties to the Tang dynasty may be studied by examining the representations given in these tales of beliefs, attitudes, and practices as revealed by their themes, motifs, and ideas, and comparing these to those of pre-Tang tales. This not only indicates the transformations over time within the socio-religious milieu, but also shows the differences between *Diamond Sutra* narratives and earlier accounts, and more importantly, what

[553] Unlike mainstream Buddhism, Harrison draws our attention to Mahāyāna's interest in dreams, their interpretation, and significance. See Harrison (2003: 136–7) for his introduction to dream signs put forth in the *Āryasvapnanirdeśa*, an early Mahāyāna sutra.

set the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* apart from other cults. Synchronically, they can be compared with other contemporaneous tales that circulated and were compiled roughly in the same period. The above discussion uncovers those characteristics of *Diamond Sutra* tales that are particularly informative about the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and situates it within the socio-historical environment of various religious expressions.

Both Guanyin and *Diamond Sutra* tales are representative of the respective periods during which they were circulated and compiled. This accounts for the fact that they are found in many other compilations in those periods. Many Guanyin accounts are also collected in the Six Dynasties narrative collections, while *Diamond Sutra* stories are found in other Tang compilations, such as the *Fayuan zhulin*, the *Guangyi ji*, and the *Baoying ji*. Revolving around a single object of veneration, they are largely about the benefits obtained by those who invoked Guanyin or recited the *Diamond Sutra*. But Guanyin tales—with their descriptions of the saving powers of the bodhisattva in different situations and his transformations into different personae to save people—are based mostly on its *locus classicus*, in the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. On the contrary, *Diamond Sutra* accounts were probably inspired by passages in the *Diamond Sutra* that promote its own transmission with the promise of merit, encourage certain practices related to it, and espouse its sanctity.

In some ways, *Diamond Sutra* tales seem to derive from Guanyin ones, especially those that describe protagonists being protected in and rescued

from dire situations, which is the principal theme of Guanyin stories.[554] With the exception of Guanyin granting offspring to supplicants, almost all scenarios of protection and rescue in Guanyin accounts can be found in *Diamond Sutra* tales. But as our study of the themes of *Diamond Sutra* tales shows, the areas in which devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* proved useful had diversified by the time they were told. Perhaps the most important difference—also discussed above—between them is their objects of devotion. As the object of devotion for Guanyin tales is the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, who promises to deliver sincere supplicants from trouble, the agency of rescue and protection is none other than Guanyin himself, even though he might manifest himself in different ways to rescue the protagonists. On the contrary, devotion as represented in *Diamond Sutra* narratives is directed at the *Diamond Sutra*, a powerful, yet inanimate scripture. The agency of rescue and protection in this case is not as direct as that of Guanyin, as assistance obtained by the steadfast practice of devotees often comes in the forms of proxies that carried out the necessary salvific work on behalf on the *Diamond Sutra*.

The difference in the object of devotion in Guanyin and *Diamond Sutra* tales also means that they are treated in a different manner religiously, and the practices related to them thus differ accordingly. For instance, the *Mingxiang ji* contains accounts of the fashioning and ritual veneration of images of the Buddha and of bodhisattvas, suggesting that such an activity was a major aspect of Buddhist devotion in the circles from which these stories

[554] Martine 2009: 905. Martin thinks that the unstable socio-political situation at the time was favorable to the Guanyin cult and the proliferation of its tales.

originated.[555] This is not a major aspect in *Diamond Sutra* tales, where four of the five acts of treating a scripture—upholding, reading, reciting, and copying—were emphasized. These are the practices—as collaborated by material artifacts and other writings—that set the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* apart from the Guanyin cult, and probably played a pertinent role in promoting the subsequent worship of scriptures, which became prevalent in Tang China.[556]

If *Diamond Sutra* tales differ from Guanyin ones in such important aspects, needless to say, they also differ greatly from narrative collections that are not restricted to particular objects of devotion, and are thus more heterogenous in nature. Extant tales from such collections compiled in the *Xuanyan ji*, the *Ganying zhuan*, the *Mingxiang ji*, and the *Xingyi ji* not only point to the varied nature of these compilations, but also show that they are very different in orientation, in part due to the need to address issues peculiar to their times when they were told and compiled.[557] An important recent study of the *Mingxiang ji*—which now survives in more than a hundred tales—by Robert Campany reveals that its basic orientation was determined by some

[555] Campany 2012: 56–8. This is confirmed by a study of epigraphical records of the Six Dynasties period by Hou Xudong (2010).

[556] Liu 2007: 233–4. According to Liu, Buddhist activities tended to take the form of abstinence assembly, recitation, and copying of scripture in the late Tang.

[557] The content of the thirty-five surviving tales of the *Xuanyan ji* suggest it was more varied. Although quite a few of these tales concern Guanyin, the *Xuanyan ji* also has other stories describing karmic retribution for good or evil actions, and prodigies and marvels related to other aspects of Buddhism. Gjerston 1989: 20–2. Tales in the *Mingxiang ji* vary in length and structure from very short and simple narratives to others that are comparatively long and intricate, and like those in the *Xuanyan ji*, they are not limited to those concerning Guanyin, but contain numerous and diverse themes. See Campany 2012.

significant issues that were pertinent to the socio-religious milieu at the time of its compilation. As Buddhism was sinking its roots into China, there was a need to convince people of its validity, to pit itself against indigenous rivals and deflect the attacks of its detractors who raised objections to its fundamental doctrines and practices. Seeking to answer to these needs, stories in the *Mingxiang ji* are tinted by an apologetic quality common to tales of that period, which is discernible from its concerns with the following issues: (1) the authentic origins of Buddhism and Buddhist practices, (2) clarifying and justifying certain Buddhist concepts or doctrines, and (3) proving that Buddhist practitioners did not lack any of the spiritual powers of their Daoist counterparts.[558]

Because the *Mingxiang ji* demonstrates a process in which Buddhism was being actively domesticated and Sinicized during the Six Dynasties period, it is common to find Buddhist tales of the period being deployed for self-assertion, clarification of Buddhist concepts and theories, or to work out some issues. Quite a number of accounts in the *Mingxiang ji* "seem concerned to show that the terms in which Buddhism was practiced in China were authentic—that is, true to putative Indic originals."[559] The *Mingxiang ji* also included some important tales that justified the survival of the soul after death since it was compiled during the height of the debate regarding the survival of the soul after death. The clarification of Buddhist doctrines can also be found

[558] Ibid.: 38–43, 55–6, 59, and 61–2.

[559] Ibid.: 61.

in the *Xuanyan ji*, compiled in early fourth century, which seems to be preoccupied with clarifying the notion of karmic retribution and "the way in which retribution is made appropriate to the action."[560] Also found in Six Dynasties Buddhist tale collections were issues taken up in earlier tale collections and subsequently reworked in later narrative collections as Chinese Buddhists grappled with them. For instance, the idea of non-killing and the high value placed on all living beings are reworked in relation to vegetarianism or the abstinence from meat in the *Mingxiang ji*.[561] Finally, in response to the challenge of the Daoists who claimed that their adepts possessed some unusual spiritual powers, we find descriptions of Buddhist practitioners that seemed to mirror their Daoist counterparts in uncanny ways.

When commenting on the Buddhism that is represented by accounts in the *Mingxiang ji*, Campany notes that "the Buddhism of the miracle tales gives even greater weight to sin and its punishment than it does to the eventual path-related benefits of amassing karma." Indeed, non-believers are sometimes portrayed as suffering for their disbeliefs. Moreover, he also notes that the tone in which they were told is not one of assurance but anxiety.[562] In fact, *Diamond Sutra* tales are marked by a sense of confidence and optimism not perceivable in earlier collections, even the *Mingbao ji*. They are not so

[560] Gjerston 1989: 20. See the tale about Sun Hao 孫浩 (242–284) from the *Xuanyan ji* translated by Gjertson (1989: 20–21). The emphasis on clarification of Buddhist doctrine can also be perceived in what remains of the *Ganying zhuan*. See the tale on Zhang Yi 張逸 in Gjertson 1989: 23.

[561] Campany 2012: 59–61.

[562] Ibid.: 33–4.

much concerned about validating Buddhism than with demonstrating the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. Instead of placing emphasis on sins and punishments, the tales invariably end with the deliverance of protagonists from dire straits and the attainment of the merit and benefits. When we survey *Diamond Sutra* stories, the apologetic quality of tales from the Six Dynasties collections mentioned above is generally missing in them, hinting that the concerns that produced those tales were no longer important. Instead, they reflect a socio-religious milieu in which Buddhism had gained a firm foothold and was well domesticated. By the Tang, there was no need to clarify certain Buddhist concepts, to justify the survival of the soul after death, or to prove the authenticity of Chinese Buddhism, concerns that mark the incipient developments of Chinese Buddhism. At least, these are not the concerns reflected in *Diamond Sutra* tales.

Comparison of *Diamond Sutra* narratives and their collections with other Tang Buddhist tales and their collections may uncover why the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and its stories flourished among the people. Although research has shown that the *Mingbao ji* exerted considerable influence in refining the topography of the underworld and the writing of Buddhist tale literature, its reach among the common people cannot compare to *Diamond Sutra* tale collections simply because it was not meant to actively propagate a particular cult but to convince people of the validity of karmic retribution.[563] In fact, some of its tales are not specifically about Buddhism, as they illustrate the

[563] Chen 2009: 123–44.

general principles of retribution from the perspective of people who might not be Buddhist.[564] Although the major similarity between *Diamond Sutra* tales and those related to the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* is that they are all dedicated to scriptures and extoll their efficacy, accounts related to the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*, however, do not emphasize the potency of these sutras in those areas that feature prominently in *Diamond Sutra* tales.

According to Sueki Fumihiko, faith in the *Lotus Sutra* became prevalent in the Tang although its twenty-fifth chapter on Bodhisattva Guanyin had circulated independently and gained a following in the Six Dynasties.[565] This is attested by two works, both compiled during the early decades of the eighth century on the transmission of the *Lotus Sutra,* which collected a substantial number of tales related to the *Lotus Sutra*: the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 弘贊法華傳 (A Chronicle for Widely Extolling the *Lotus Sutra*; T51.2067) by Huixiang 惠詳,[566] and the *Fahua zhuanji* 法華傳記 (A Record of the Transmission of the *Lotus Sutra*; T51.2068) by Sengxiang 僧詳.[567] Similarly,

[564] See tales 14, 35, and 43 translated in Gjertson 1980.

[565] Sueki 2002: 431. Although Sueki points out that the *Mingbao ji* collected a dozen tales related to the *Lotus Sutra*, the influence of the *Lotus Sutra* is discernible in the Six Dynasties.

[566] Composed in 10 rolls, the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* chronicles the transmission of the *Lotus Sutra* from the Eastern Jin 東晉 (316–420) to the Tang with accounts categorized into eight types: images, translation, explication, meditation, self-immolation, and the recitation, reading, and copying of the *Lotus Sutra*. For a brief introduction, see Stevenson 1995 and 2009.

[567] The ten-roll *Fahua jing zhuanji* was compiled later than the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* since the latest date recorded in this work is 716 (T51.2068: 84b22). The collection is divided into 12 chapters. The first six chapters are dedicated to data on the transmission of the *Lotus*

the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* (Ch. *Huayan jing* 華嚴經) also became popular in the Tang, largely due to the promotion and charisma of Fazang 法藏 (643–712), who promoted the scripture. In fact, Fazang had compiled a work on the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* entitled *Huayan jing zhuanji* 華嚴經傳記 (A Record of the Transmission of the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*; T51.2073) that collects a substantial number of tales related to the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*.[568] In addition, accounts related to the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* are also collected in the *Huayan jing ganying zhuan* 華嚴經感應傳 (A Chronicle of the Sympathetic Response of the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*; T51.2074). Based on the original work of Fazang's disciple, the eighth-century monk Huiying 惠英, this work was edited and published in 783 by the lay Buddhist Hu Youzhen 胡幽貞.

Except for the last work, tales of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* are collected in the first three compilations, which mainly aim to chronicle the history of these scriptures. This is apparent from the fact that they contain other writings and records that pertain to the transmission of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*, which form substantial portions of

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Sutra, such as philological details of the text, its translations, the various traditions it inspired, its treatises and commentaries, prefaces written to works related to it. Tales of the *Lotus Sutra* are collected mainly in the last 6 chapters, which conveyed the wondrous experiences related to the *Lotus Sutra* derived from explicating, reciting, reading, copying, and hearing the *Lotus Sutra*, and making offering to it.

[568] Although his disciple edited the text, most of this five-roll work was probably completed by Fazang before he passed away in 712. Zhiru 2007: 333. Like the *Lotus Sutra* collections, this work chronicles the transmission and practice of the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*. The first four chapters are concerned with the philology of its various texts, their transmission and translation, and the tradition they inspired. The last five chapters are concerned with practices related to the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*, such as its explication, recitation, reading, copying, and so on. The last chapter is related to miscellaneous matters.

these collections. Moreover, unlike *Diamond Sutra* tale collections, they were composed by monastics, and the protagonists of their tales are predominantly monastics.[569] Thus, their narratives are based mostly on the experiences of monastics, and mainly demonstrate the powers of these scriptures in terms of the spiritual prowess of the monastics, instead of the benefits attained by laypeople. Therefore, they do not bear directly on the realities of laypeople as we see in the *Diamond Sutra* tales. As a result, injunctions to venerate these scriptures found in these narratives are mostly implicit, greatly contrasting with those related to the *Diamond Sutra,* which are explicit and repetitive, and emphasized to a degree quite unlike anything else found in the tales of other sutras. Moreover, the injunctions of *Diamond Sutra* stories are closely tied to an overriding concern to show its potency and efficacy in solving practical matters of daily life and existential problems of life and death, as they pertain to the laity. This is contrasted by the major themes of *Lotus Sutra* tales. Although they share the themes of the *Diamond Sutra*, many of their stories are of themes related rebirth in the heavens or Pure Lands, the spiritual attainments of monastics and the auspicious signs they call forth, as well as their interactions with Buddhist deities, such as Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, or Avalokiteśvara. A major trope of the *Lotus Sutra* narratives is the survival of the tongues of monastics who recite the *Lotus Sutra* long after their death, attesting to its derived sanctity. In a way, *Lotus Sutra* tales thus differ from *Diamond Sutra* ones in that they reflect a more monastic orientation in their

[569] See Sueki 2002: 434, which compares the numbers of laypeople and monastics between *Lotus Sutra* collections and the *Huayan jing zhuanji*.

concerns with the more edifying goals of Buddhism. In similar ways, *Avataṃsaka Sutra* tales also reflect such an orientation since most of their accounts are related to wonders associated with monastic practitioners.

4. Concluding Remarks

The *Diamond Sutra* has often been considered in relation to the cult of the book, an idea put forward by Gregory Schopen almost four decades ago.[570] Schopen argued that the veneration of Buddhist scriptures, and therefore the cult of the book, was instrumental in the development of early Mahāyāna Buddhism because early Mahāyānists were reacting to the cult of relics with its veneration of stupas. Schopen's argument for this idea is based primarily on a close reading of a group of Mahāyāna passages, two of which are found in the *Diamond Sutra*. Recent research has seriously called into question Schopen's idea of the book of cult in India.

In China, there is no doubt about the existence of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra,* as it unfolds with our study of its growing presence from the Tang onward. In our study of the theme and motifs of a substantial body of *Diamond Sutra* tales, the *Diamond Sutra* cult rightly emerges as a cult of the book in its own right, as the sutra's claim of the prospect of an inconceivable amount of merit to be obtained—from upholding, reading, reciting, explicating, or copying it—is given concrete expressions that prompted a cult

[570] Schopen 1975.

that venerated the sutra by promoting practices carried out with great fervor by medieval Chinese society.

The fact that these tales fall invariably into just a few themes reflects the few broad areas of concern of medieval Chinese people, to whom the *Diamond Sutra* was particularly pertinent and meaningful. Responding to indigenous beliefs on the lifespan of earthly existence and afterlife and referring to indigenous practices, such as the various kinds of mantic arts, *Diamond Sutra* tales illustrate the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* through benefitting devotees by providing protection and rescue in times of need, healing illnesses, prolonging lifespans, achieving a good rebirth, attaining a favorable audience with King Yama, making a safe return to life from the underworld, and even attaining spiritual powers. Their themes set them apart from other tales and collections composed in praise of other deities or scriptures, and thus the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* is set apart from other cults. For instance, four out of the six themes of these tales concern death and the afterlife, implying that the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* was most significantly engaged by medieval Chinese society in relation to such concerns, and certainly an aspect of the cult that could have significantly impacted medieval Chinese religiosity—a topic to be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

The cult of the *Diamond Sutra* can also be uncovered from a repertoire of motifs and ideas that reflect beliefs, attitudes, and practices related to the *Diamond Sutra*, as they helped shaped the cult by disseminating knowledge about how it was conceived or should be conceived or practiced. Our analysis

of these motifs and ideas indicates a transformation that took place in the religious landscape from the Six Dynasties to the Tang period. The absence of certain concerns, such as the clarification of Buddhist beliefs, doctrines, and practices, and the need to prove its authenticity, shows that Buddhism had made considerable inroads into China and was accepted by a substantial part of the Chinese population. This is further supported by the lack of the apologetic nature and anxiety—expressed through instances of punishment due to disbelief—that characterized Six Dynasties Buddhist narratives. Neither can we discern intense contestation between the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and indigenous and other Buddhist cults. Replacing these concerns of earlier tales is a discernible confidence in the power and efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, conveyed by motifs in the accounts that deliver new representations and conceptions of its power, relevance, and utility in the lives of ordinary people. With the judicious use of indigenous tropes and established Buddhist beliefs and practices, the tales give concrete expression to the sutra's power and superiority, and the merit to be gained from practices related to it. Not only do they suggest how the *Diamond Sutra* could respond to the needs of people, they also translate its abstractions into tangible ways in which people could engage it.

CHAPTER 4

DIAMOND SUTRA TALES AND CHINESE RELIGIOSITY IN TANG CHINA

The body of *Diamond Sutra* tales, as we have them now, retains some ideas and motifs already present in early stories, while introducing new ideas and motifs, and acquiring new features—undoubtedly a natural development since they are products of a different time. The previous chapter illustrates similarities and differences between these narratives, as reflected through the major themes and motifs from early Buddhist tales, such as Guanyin accounts. It also explores the uniqueness of *Diamond Sutra* tales with respect to major and important collections of the Six Dynasties period, especially the *Mingxiang ji*. The goal in pointing out their differences is to document and highlight the changes in religious concerns and realities between pre-Tang and Tang periods, and illustrate how *Diamond Sutra* tales reflect a socio-religious milieu in which Buddhism had gained a firm foothold. Beside pre-Tang stories, the author has also briefly compared *Diamond Sutra* narratives with contemporaneous tales related to the *Lotus* and *Avataṃsaka Sutras*. These other stories are similar to the *Diamond Sutra* in that they also extoll Buddhist scriptures and affirm self-assertions of these Mahāyāna sutras as potent and responsive agents, thereby encouraging their veneration. Despite this similarity, important differences lie between them, thus highlighting the uniqueness of *Diamond Sutra* tales and their pivotal influence on medieval Chinese society and religiosity.

This chapter aims to explore the impact of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* on medieval Chinese religiosity by examining its transformation of religious beliefs and practices, in relation to concurrent developments in Tang China. I look at three aspects of the *Diamond Sutra* cult as they are reflected in its tales. First, since compilers and protagonists of these tale collections are lay Buddhists, I discuss the state of lay Buddhism in Tang China by examining how the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and its stories could have impacted lay religiosity, and are in turn affected by it. The chapter begins by examining how the lay orientation of the *Diamond Sutra* tales differs from others, how laypeople are represented as cult participants, and how the compilers of these collections understood their role. Second, the chapter focuses on the impact of the *Diamond Sutra* on beliefs and practices related to death and the afterlife, since many of its tales bear related themes. Finally, it looks at the effects on the beliefs and practices of medieval Chinese society in this area through corroborating evidence, particularly the Dunhuang manuscripts.

1. LAY BUDDHISM AND THE *DIAMOND SUTRA*

The themes of *Diamond Sutra* tales, as discussed previously, may not coincide with our overall conception of Buddhism, especially when most of them concern obtaining benefits or resolving worldly problems pertaining to ordinary medieval Chinese people and give scant attention to abstract goals of attaining awakening or liberation from the incessant cycle of birth and death.

The lay orientation of indigenous Buddhist tale collections has long been noted. All Buddhist tale collections of the Six Dynasties period were composed or compiled by laypeople. Although not all Tang-period Buddhist tale collections were compiled by the laity, the *Diamond Sutra* tale collections surveyed in this dissertation were all compiled by laypeople.[571] Moreover, the sources of their tales—whenever they are provided—are mostly laypeople. As accounts that were filtered through the lens of the laity and selected by lay compilers, these tales inevitably reflect the concerns of lay medieval Chinese, which were intimately related to the reality of the particular socio-historical milieu. Furthermore, they are more specifically about lay Buddhists—not just laypeople—who were devotees of the *Diamond Sutra*, and their primary concern is to show the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* through their experiences. Thus, as collections compiled by lay Buddhists for the laity, they promulgated the various benefits—obtained mostly by lay protagonists—that also mattered to the masses of prospective devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* spread across the social strata of medieval China.

[571] Beside collections devoted to the *Lotus* and the *Avataṃsaka Sutras* mentioned previously, Tang-period collections related to the Pure Land tradition, such as the following, were composed by monastics: (1) *Wangsheng jingtu zhuan* 往生淨土傳 (Accounts of Rebirth in the Pure Land; no longer extant) composed by the monk Feixi 飛錫 (fl. eighth century). See Liu 2000: 448; (2) *Wangsheng xifang jingtu ruiying zhuan* 往生西方淨土瑞應傳 (Accounts of Auspicious Responses Verifying Rebirth in the Pure Land; T51.2070) compiled by the monk Wenshen 文諗 (d.u.) and his disciple Shaokang 少康(d. 805), and supplemented later by monk Taoxia in Five Dynasties Period (907–960). Even the *Dizang pusa xiang lingyan ji* was compiled by the monk Changjin 常謹 (d.u.). See Zhiru 2007: 25, 177.

1.1 Extent and Nature of Lay Orientation

While the lay orientation of indigenous tale collections is an important feature common to pre-Tang and Tang collections, the difference between *Diamond Sutra* collections and others is a matter of the extent and nature of lay orientation. No Six Dynasties collection consists of as high a proportion of lay protagonists as the *Diamond Sutra* collections. Even major pre-Tang collections, such as those related to Guanyin and the *Mingxiang ji*, that contain a substantial number of non-monastic protagonists—less than three-quarters and more than two-thirds, respectively—could not measure up to the proportion of lay protagonists in *Diamond Sutra* tales.[572] Out of about one hundred and thirty protagonists of the *Diamond Sutra* tales, almost ninety percent of them are laypeople.[573] Only early Tang collections like the *Mingbao ji* and those not devoted to the *Lotus Sutra* or the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* have a comparable proportion of lay protagonists.

The lay orientation of tales, however, is not merely reflected by the proportion of lay protagonists. One of the major features of *Diamond Sutra*

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572 As discussed briefly at the end of the previous chapter, not all non-monastic protagonists are lay Buddhists in Guanyin tale collections and the *Mingxiang ji*. At times, information is given regarding the religious affiliations of protagonists. While some accounts are explicitly about non-Buddhists, others are related to protagonists who are antagonistic to Buddhism. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether the protagonists in tales of these collections are lay Buddhists because no information is provided. The approximate proportions of non-monastics in the three Guanyin tale collections are as follows: 4 out of 7 in the *Guangshiyin yingyan ji* (57%), 7 out of 10 in the *Xu guangshiyin yingyan ji* (70%), and 49 out of 69 in the *Xi guanshiyin yingyanji* (70%). Therefore about two-thirds of all Guanyin and *Mingxiang ji* (87 out of 129 [67.4%]) tales are related to laypeople.

573 This takes into consideration all the human protagonists in the three *Diamond Sutra* tale collections as well as tales scattered in other works such as the *Taiping guangji*. The monk Qingxu, who appeared in several tales in the *Jiyan ji*, is considered a single protagonist. However, even if we considered otherwise, the proportion of lay protagonists is about three quarters.

tales is the primacy of not simply laypeople, but lay Buddhists, who were its devotees. The extensive lay orientation of the accounts concentrates on the experiences of practicing Buddhists who illustrate its greatness and efficacy. These accounts taken together constitute, in a sense, the history of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and lay Buddhism in medieval China, just as the narratives in dynastic histories or biographical accounts of eminent Chinese monks constitute the history of a particular dynasty or Chinese monasticism. The following tale illustrates the extent of the lay orientation of the *Diamond Sutra*:

> Zhang Xuansu, District Magistrate of Huangmei District in Qizhou (modern Huangang, Hubei), had already received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra* when he was twenty. Every time when there was a catastrophe or someone fell ill at home, straightaway he would wholeheartedly pray, and there would then be propitious assistance and numinous interventions, and everything would go well. When he was more than seventy, he contracted an illness in the former city settlement more than ten *li* east of the city of Luoyang. When he was about to die, he saw fragrant flowers and [beings with] banners and parasols coming down from the sky. Happily, he put his palms together. He then took a bath and dressed up. Everyone in his family detected a fragrance that did not dissipate for several days.[574]

Although a brief account, the tale above notifies the reader that Zhang Xuansu started to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* when he was young. While there are no details of events in his life, we are told that throughout his life, he overcame various difficulties through his devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*. This brief history of Zhang Xuansu in relation to the *Diamond Sutra* ends with a description (also seen in some other *Diamond Sutra* tales) of his death, an

[574] JYJ60 (TPGJ32).

event marked by auspicious signs, thus befitting a pious devotee of the sutra. The message here is simple: Zhang Xuansu was protected throughout his life for his devotion, and the final reward of his steadfast faith was a sublime death. The appearance of "fragrant flowers and [beings with] banners and parasols coming down from the sky" implies that he was headed for a good rebirth. The tale focuses on the pivotal role that devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* played in the life of laypeople. What is subtly emphasized here is Zhang Xuansu's piety, his continued persistence in times of difficulties, and how his piety bore eventual fruits.

Like the above narrative, most *Diamond Sutra* tales mention the piety of the protagonists as they establish a relationship between their Buddhist practice and the subsequent experience of the wonder or efficacy of the *sutra*. About eighty percent of all *Diamond Sutra* stories indicate that their protagonists had a long-standing commitment to the sutra, a feature shared among the three tale collections. More than half of the accounts in each collection state that their protagonists were pious devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* long before the occurrence of the events in which the power of the *sutra* was felt. The tale below serves to illustrate how enduring devotion and the experience of wonder characterize these stories while their protagonists face various problems:

> In the Tang, Yuan Chu, a native of Jiujiang (modern Jiujiang, Jiangxi), sold firewood in the city. He was seventy years old, and had always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. [One] evening, when he was returning to Jiangbei, a great storm arose in midstream. Fellow travelers were all drowned, except for Chu who floated on the water, and drifted to the southern bank. The fleet of boats anchoring there

> all belonged to big merchants. Spotting light of a few *chi* emitting from Chu's back, they thought that he was an auspicious person. In such a way, Chu survived. The merchants vied to give him clothes, and furthermore invited and treated him to meals. Having conversed with him, they gradually became familiar, and came to know that he was an elder of [a certain] village. They took the occasion to ask about the origin of the light [emitting from his back]. Yuan Chu said, "I have been reading the *Diamond Sutra* for fifty years; what was on my back was the sutra." He was always spared from the various misfortunes he had encountered thus far. Therefore he knew that it must be due to the power of the sutra. From the *Baoying ji*.[575]

While the tale relates how Yuan Chu was rescued from a shipwreck, the piety found in Zhang Xuansu is also present in Yuan Chu, who was rescued owing to his reading of the *Diamond Sutra* for half a century. The lay orientation of the stories is unique in that it is represented by experiences of lay Buddhists who consciously engaged in some form of Buddhist practice related to the *Diamond Sutra* over an extended period of time during which they experienced the fruits of their devotion; examples of these fruits include obtaining some benefits, averting dangers, or merely having their lives 'protected'—matters that were important and meaningful to them.

1.2 Roles of Laypeople and Monastics

Diamond Sutra tale collections further differ from other earlier collections in the composition of lay Buddhist protagonists and the role played by monastic protagonists in their tales. Although Guanyin collections have high proportions of lay protagonists, the sources of Guanyin accounts are

[575] TPGJ99.

usually monastics.[576] Moreover, the composition of lay protagonists in Guanyin compilations includes lay Buddhists, laypeople with unknown religious affiliation, and non-believers.[577] At times, it is implied that the protagonists are lay Buddhists and thus possibly devotees of Guanyin; but many Guanyin tales, unlike *Diamond Sutra* ones, are silent about the religious affiliation of these laypeople prior to the event which drove them to seek his help. Often, protagonists are portrayed as resorting to the saving powers of Guanyin in the nick of time when there was no other way out of the situation, or someone reminded them of Guanyin on the spot, or they recalled having heard of Guanyin previously.[578] In the following tale, a monastic named Zhi Daoshan advised his acquaintance Dou Zhuan, who was imprisoned for being implicated in a political intrigue, to seek the help of Guanyin:

> Chuan asked Daoshan, "I am entrapped in dire straits, and I am running out of time. Is there a way for you to save me?" Daoshan replied, "I cannot see how you can get out of this through human ways. Only the bodhisattva Guangshiyin can save you from this crisis. If you can wholeheartedly take refuge in him, you will definitely elicit a response from him." Zhuan had previously heard of Guangshiyin, and having heard Daoshan's words, he focused his mind on recollection for three days.[579]

Although Dou Chuan might have been a believer, he had certainly not taken refuge in Bodhisattva Guanyin before. When he "focused his mind on

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[576] Campany 1996a: 85.

[577] Protagonists who might have been lay Buddhists or non-believers consist of more than one-fifth (19 out 86 tales) of all protagonists in the three Guanyin collections.

[578] See tales 4 and 6 (lay Buddhists?) in the *Guangshiyin yingyan ji*; tales 4, 8, and 10 (lay Buddhists?) and tale 3 (non-believer) in the *Xu guangshiyin yingyan ji*; tales 4, 5, 10, 32, 35, 52, 55, 65, and 66 (lay Buddhists?) and 3, 31, 38, and 68 (non-believers) in the *Xi guanshiyin yingyan ji*.

[579] I have relied on the translation in Campany 1996a: 94–95. Tale 4 of the *Guangshiyin yingyan ji*, Dong 2002: 16.

recollection," he might have just pleaded to the bodhisattva to come to his rescue. In some early Guanyin accounts, the protagonists are merely described as calling for Guanyin's help, just as people would call for someone in times of need, as can be seen from the following example:

> Han Dang, a native of Pingyuan (modern Shandong Province), was once crossing the Hutuo River when the boat he was riding on sank in midstream. He called out the name of Guangshiyin (稱光世音). Shortly, he saw a white creature, shaped like a dragon, in the water. The current stopped and the wind subsided. The water reached only up to his knees, so he was able shortly to reach the sandy bank and was thus saved.[580]

The impression given by these Guanyin tales is that protagonists who supplicated Guanyin for help at the eleventh hour might not necessarily have been practicing Buddhists or Buddhist at all. Although their sincere and intense supplication stimulated prompt and much needed assistance in time of need, they are somehow different from the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* in a similar situation.

The *Mingxiang ji*, on the other hand, features a high proportion of lay protagonists with diverse profiles. Like Guanyin tale collections, they include lay Buddhists, people of unknown religious affiliation, and non-believers, such as Daoists. More importantly, they also include detractors of Buddhism. It is interesting to note that a high proportion of tales with non-Buddhist protagonists are related to a major theme in the *Mingxiang ji*: the contestation between Buddhism and indigenous religious traditions. These accounts are not about the beneficial experiences of lay devotion but rather about the

[580] With slight modification to the translation in Campany 1996a: 89–90.

superiority of Buddhism as illustrated by protagonists who suffered 'retribution' for their disbelief and slander of Buddhism, and in a few cases, were later won over by Buddhism.

Another major difference is the role played by monastics in these collections. Monastics, in general, play a crucial role in *Mingxiang ji* accounts, even though they may not be the protagonists. Their importance can be seen from their frequent portrayal as recipients of offerings and their ceremonial role in abstinence (*zhai*) gatherings. In narratives with the 'contestation' theme, they are portrayed as trumping indigenous adepts with spiritual attainments. Of greater interest, perhaps, is what Campany calls the spirit-monks who appear in the *Mingxiang ji*. Often, they are depicted as representing the truth of Buddhism or personifying the powers of Buddhism in various ways.[581] Presented as equaling and surpassing Daoist transcendents in spiritual attainment, they are offered as a Buddhist alternative. When portrayed as representing the truth of Buddhism, they appear to offer a crucial test of lay piety, for instance:

> Jin-era Minister of Works He Chong 何充 (202–346), styled Cidao 次道, was a native of Lujiang. From his youth he believed in the Dharma and was very disciplined in his practice of mental cultivation. He habitually placed in his abstinence hall an empty seat covered by a mat and a floral canopy decorated with jewels. He kept it set up for many years, and several spirit-anomalies occurred. Later on one occasion there was [in this hall] a large gathering of monks and laypersons, very crowded. Among the monks sitting in order [of seniority] was one whose face and robe were filthy, his apparent level of spiritual attainment very base. This monk emerged

[581] See discussion of the spirit-monks in Campany 2012: 54–6, and their appearance in tales 11, 12, 16, 19, 20, 25, 27, 39, 43, 66(?), 76, 87(?), 90, 95, 98, 101, 102, 104, 108, 109, and 113.

> from the assembly, climbed up onto the seat, joined his palms together and simply remained silent. He said nothing. The entire hall full of people were shocked and thought he must be deranged. Chong, too, was uneasy, his embarrassment showing in his face. When the midday meal was taken, this monk ate on the high seat. When the meal was concluded, he picked up his alms bowl and left the hall. On his way out he looked at Chong and said, "To what end have you been exerting yourself so vigorously in the practice?" He then tossed his bowl into the air, and he and it rose up and away into the sky. Chong and the other laypersons and monastics present hurried behind to look at him. He gave off a beautiful, bright radiance that dazzled the eyes, then disappeared from view. Those chasing after the strange monk were all regretful, and for days afterward they prostrated themselves and made confession.[582]

In this tale, we find one of the few cases of exemplary lay practice collected in the *Mingxiang ji*. Although it might imply that there is a connection between his rigorous practice and the occurrence of "spirit-anomalies," the story seems to question the quality of his practice because He Chong, despite his practice, was not able to recognize the presence of the spirit-monk, who in turn questioned him, "To what end have you been exerting yourself so vigorously in the practice?" Additionally, this is an instance where the role played by monastics is considerably more important, even though the protagonist in this case is a lay Buddhist. In this respect, the lay orientation of the *Mingxiang ji* is different from that of the *Diamond Sutra* tales, where monastics usually play a secondary role or are just part of the solutions to the problems faced by protagonists:

> Liu Jian, assistant prefect of Xingzhou (modern Xingtai, Hebei), was appointed Directorate of Qiyang Palace at Fufeng [Commandery] (modern Baoji, Shaanxi) at the end of the Sui dynasty. Previously, he was arbitrarily implicated by the Li Mi-

[582] Tale 16 of the *Mingxiang ji*; translation, without footnotes, from Campany 2012: 102–3.

> Wang [Shichong] affair. While being detained at the Court of Judicial Review, he constantly recited the *Diamond Sutra*. [Once,] he suddenly fell asleep before he could recite the last two leaves of the *Diamond Sutra*. In his dream, he saw a Brahman monk who told him, "If *dānapati* quickly finished reciting the sutra, you would get out of here." Jian woke with a start. Day and night, he diligently recited [the *Diamond Sutra*], not daring to slacken or rest. Two more days passed. By noon [on the third] day, an imperial order was suddenly passed down to pardon him and summoned him to the imperial court. Jian was thereupon released by the grace of his Majesty.[583]

The dream in this tale serves as a medium in which an important message is conveyed to the protagonist, and the Brahman monk merely facilitates the process in which the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* was experienced by Liu Jian, who was eventually pardoned. Therefore, not only do monastics appear less often in *Diamond Sutra* accounts, they usually do not play as central a role as those in early collections, especially the *Mingxiang ji*.

When considering early Tang Buddhist tale collections, it is probably not coincidental that the *Mingbao ji* and *Mingbao shiyi* have higher proportions of lay protagonists than Six Dynasties collections since Buddhism had by then sunk its roots in China, and thus had reached more people.[584] However, because the purport of these compilations was to illustrate the reality of karmic retribution, the experiences of lay protagonists—Buddhist or not—are

[583] JYJ1. See also GDJ5 (JYJ24; monastic illustrates the efficacy of devotion), JY15 (administration of precepts), JY2 (correspondence with monk), JYJ1 (monastic in dream reminds protagonist to finish recitation), JYJ7 (monk said he would heal him on account of his recitation), JYJ18 (monk said he would offer help on account of his recitation), JYJ23 (monk presents the *Diamond Sutra*), JYJ26 (monks clarified matters), JYJ27 (two monks offered help), JYJ28 (two monks as agents of the *Diamond Sutra*), JYJ36 (monk in dream tells protagonist to recite the *Diamond Sutra*), JYJ39 (dead monk unscarred by fire), and JYJ64 (monks invited to intone the *Diamond Sutra*).

[584] In the *Mingbao ji*, there are a handful of anti-Buddhists (Tales 31, 33, 50, and D), and more than a dozen of laypeople with uncertain religious affiliation. More than half of fifty-seven protagonists are lay Buddhists. Numeration of tales follows Gjertson 1989.

geared toward authenticating karmic retribution, rather than the devotion of the protagonists or their experience of benefits. For instance, the following narrative highlights the consequence of backsliding in faith:

> Zhou Shantong of Chang'an used to be very poor and needy. He and his wife worked as servants in several of the capital city's monasteries, and were encouraged by the monks and nuns to repent, worship the Buddha, and accept the precepts. Thereafter, whenever they had dealings in the marketplace they earned a profit. It gradually increased until they had more than one hundred thousand cash, and they bought a house in the Huaiyuan ward to live in. They had only one daughter and no sons.
>
> The husband and wife buried four crockery urns of cash beneath the main hall…They also bought lots of clothing and other articles, which they stored away in wardrobes. After they had become wealthy, the goodness in their hearts subsided little by little, and they regretted accepting the precepts. One morning they unexpectedly noticed the sash of a robe hanging from the side of a wardrobe. They then unlocked it to look inside, but there was nothing there but an empty wardrobe. His daughter had recently gotten married, and he suspected that she had stolen the things. The daughter sobbed and cried and proclaimed her innocence, but was not believed.
>
> Shantong's wife said to him, "You should open and check the urns of cash!" Shantong dug away the earth and opened the seals, which were still as before. But when he looked inside the urns there was nothing there, not even a single cash. Husband and wife both cried in astonishment, and realized that it was retribution for their actions. They were poor once again…[585]

While hinting at the connection between the Buddhist faith of the protagonists and their subsequent wealth, this tale—like others in these two collections—concentrates on the retribution for their miserly ways and their loss of faith.[586]

The other major collections[587] of the Tang period are those related to the *Lotus* and *Avataṃsaka Sutra*s. As previously discussed, they were not

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[585] Translation, with modification, from Ibid.: 219–20.

[586] See also the following *Mingbao ji* tales: 10, 11, B, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37–46, 49, 51, and C.

[587] Their status as Buddhist tale collections is disputable; see Section 3 of Chapter 3.

compiled by laypeople, but by monastics in the eighth century, and consist of a much lower proportion of lay protagonists. The two chronicles of the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* and *Fahua jing zhuanji,* have sections dedicated to tales related to specialists of the *Lotus Sutra* who undertook the reading, recitation, and copying of the sutra. In the former, only about one third of the protagonists are laypeople, while only a quarter in the latter are laypeople. On the other hand, the two *Avataṃsaka Sutra* chronicles, the *Huayan jing zhuanji* and the *Huayan jing ganying zhuan*, are even less lay-oriented since only a tenth of the protagonists in the former are laypeople, while only a quarter of the two dozen protagonists in the latter are laypeople. With the overwhelming representation of monastics, these collections are clearly the least lay-oriented of all compilations.

In summary, despite being compiled by laypeople and having high proportions of lay protagonists, pre-Tang collections are not comparable to the lay orientation of *Diamond Sutra* collections. The nature of their lay orientation differs in the religious affiliation of lay protagonists and the role played by them and monastics in their accounts. While both Guanyin compilations and the *Mingxiang ji* collections contain many accounts of laypeople who might not be Buddhists, *Diamond Sutra* collections contain accounts of lay protagonists who are often described as devotees of the sutra. Many monastics who appear in the *Mingxiang ji* tales often play integral roles although they might not be the protagonists. On the other hand, monastics appear less often in *Diamond Sutra* tales; if they do appear, they are not

central but are instead mentioned in passing or merely serve as proxies through which the efficacy of the sutra is proven. When compared to early Tang collections, *Diamond Sutra* collections are also substantially more lay-oriented because of their emphasis on the experience of pious lay Buddhists, who take the center stage, as they illustrate and extoll the sutra's efficacy. While there is a trend of increasing lay orientation from pre-Tang to Tang Buddhist collections, the narratives of the *Lotus* and *Avataṃsaka Sutras* do not reflect such a trend, which is largely due to the fact that they were compiled by monastics.

1.3 Empowerment of Laity: Access to Wonders and Powers

It is not an overstatement to say that the Buddhist practice of *Diamond Sutra* devotees is never less than exemplary, given the details provided in the tales about the extent and intensity of the steadfastness of devotees. Often, these exemplary practices are accompanied by access to the wonders of the *Diamond Sutra*, and the acquisition of spiritual powers, an aspect that further set these narratives apart from others.

In his discussion of indigenous Buddhist literature of the Six Dynasties period, Campany perceptively notes that "there is in Buddhist texts a leveling of the playing field when it comes to the abilities of adepts versus those of ordinary persons; these texts seem to open the terrain of wonders to anyone willing to undertake fervent Buddhist devotional practice…"[588] Campany's

[588] Campany 1996b: 331.

point is especially apt when applied to *Diamond Sutra* narratives, which document in greater detail the extent of lay relationships with Buddhism, the intense piety of lay Buddhists, and their access to the wonders and powers of devotion.

Among the major themes of *Diamond Sutra* narratives is one that showcases the attainment of certain spiritual powers by practitioners of the sutra. Of particular note among accounts that bear this theme are those related to the monk Qingxu, a wonder-working monastic, whose experiences were collected in the *Jiyan ji*. He was portrayed as possessing the powers to tame animals, to subdue spirits and demons, liberate hell beings, to control the natural elements, and even to restore incinerated fingers. Examples of wonder-working monastics like Qingxu were not uncommon in Buddhist writings, which portray them as capable of various wonders and marvelous feats. What is of particular interest about *Diamond Sutra* narratives, however, are the accounts of lay Buddhists who possessed supernormal powers, powers that were traditionally associated with monastics.

In *Diamond Sutra* stories, the ability to emit light is a common supernormal power possessed by its lay devotees.[589] We may recall the protagonist, Wang Chao, who could not be injured by blades and emitted light when he recited the *Diamond Sutra*, as well as Yuan Chu—the long-time devotee of the *Diamond Sutra* mentioned above, whose back emitted light after a shipwreck, thus enabling people to rescue him. Similarly, the ability to

[589] For more details, see TPGJ99, TPGJ77, and JYJ52.

tame beasts and subdue local spirits is not the province of the monastics in *Diamond Sutra* tales. Lay protagonists in *Diamond Sutra* narratives are also capable of such feats. In the *Jiyan ji*, Wang Lingwang, a district magistrate and a devotee of the sutra, was able to tame a tiger with his recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*:

> Wang Lingwang, Magistrate of Qiao District in Bozhou (modern Haozhou, Anhui) often claimed that he could recite the *Diamond Sutra* when he was eight years old, and that he had always received and upheld it without remiss. When he first turned twenty, he traveled to Linxi District in Qiongzhou, Jiannan Circuit (modern Chengdu, Sichuan). While traversing the steep and precipitous mountainous path, he suddenly encountered a fierce beast. Lingwang was extremely frightened, and had no other way out of the situation. Immediately, he recited the *Prajñā Sutra*. The tiger stopped its advance, and paced around. By the time he had completed two or three recitations, the tiger had slobbered a few *sheng* of saliva and then left dragging its tail.[590]

In another tale originally collected in the *Baoying ji*, the protagonist, Yu Lihui, was advised by a monk to recite the *Diamond Sutra*, which would presumably help him pass the imperial examination. The account takes an interesting twist when he instead gained the ability to emit light and repel spirits, which saved him from fox spirits:

> Yu Lihui attempted the *jinshi* examination in the eighth year of the Yuanhe era (813) of the Tang. Having failed the examinations, he was on his way home when a monk advised him thus, "Young man, if you want to quickly pass the examination, why don't you read the *Diamond Sutra*." Thereupon he [started] reciting it a few dozen times daily.
>
> When he came to Wangqiao, he spent the night there. While he was taking a stroll under the moon, a beautiful girl approached and talked to him. He was thereupon tempted and led away by her. After traveling more than ten li, they came to a village lodging which was clamorous with happy laughter. He was led into a hall where he

[590] JYJ8. For other examples, see JYJ62, JYJ63, JYJ29, and JYJ23.

> saw five or six people, all of them young women. Worried that they were evil spirits, he silently recited the scripture. Suddenly a marvelous light emitted from his mouth, and all the young women shook in terror and escaped, as he just smelled a gamy stench. [That place] was probably a den of the fox [spirits] for thistles and brambles were everywhere. Dumbfounded, he did not know what he should do. Suddenly, there was a white dog whose color was even whiter than the snow. It seemed to be guiding Lihui on. The light that was emitting from his mouth lighted up the road. In hesitant steps, he arrived at where he was originally. Later, he recited [the *Diamond Sutra*] a few dozen thousand times. From the *Baoying ji*.[591]

In early Buddhist narratives, monastics were also often described as capable of calling forth auspicious signs that verified their spiritual attainments, such as the case of Fotudeng mentioned previously. In the *Diamond Sutra*, lay protagonists also called forth auspicious signs. In the following tale, the lay protagonist was able to do so through his copying of the sutra:

> Li Qianguan, a native of Longxi (in modern Tianshui, Gansu), now lives in Zhengzhou (modern Zhengzhou, Henan). In the fifth year of the Mingqing era (660), while mourning his father's death, he pricked [his finger to draw] blood to copy a roll each of the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra*, and two rolls of the *Suiyuan wangsheng jing*. Once, he went out and was about to enter his room after taking a bath, when he suddenly smelled an unusual fragrance in the garden. It was an intensely rich aroma. His neighbors all had also smelled it. None [who smelled it] did not sigh in admiration.[592]

Besides the above account in which practitioners have a certain influence over natural phenomena, a few accounts portray lay Buddhists as having mastery over the natural world, such as the ability to influence the weather. Previously, I gave the example of the monk Qingxu who was capable of such feats. Since

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[591] TPGJ77.

[592] JYJ37. See also JYJ40.

this ability is often associated with monastics of exceptional spiritual attainment, the portrayal of lay *Diamond Sutra* devotees who are capable of such feats is very unusual. In a *Jiyan ji* account, the lay Buddhist, Lü Wenzhan, is a skilled wonder-worker who was tasked by the local government to alter adverse weather conditions on several occasions:

> In the third year of the Kaiyuan era (715), there was a severe drought in midsummer. The plants and trees were desiccated. Prefect Liu Yuan ordered him (Lü Wenzhan) to recite the *Diamond Sutra* one time with all his heart. Before he finished reciting, the marshes were soaked with rain water. Far and near, everyone had sufficient water. In spring that year, prolonged raining impeded and caused damage to silk and wheat production. Administrative Aide Wei Yuezi again ordered Wenzhan to recite the sutra, and immediately the weather became fair.
>
> In the seventh month of the fourth year of the Kaiyuan era (716), there was a severe drought in Dangzhou (modern Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan). Aide Liu Xiaozhong again ordered him to pray for rain. From the *wushi* period (11am–1pm or noontime) until the *shenshi* period (3–5pm), fine rain descended briefly. By the first night, the sky had cleared up. Then in front of the courtyard, he wholeheartedly vowed to recite the *Prajñā* one [time]. Before his recitation finished, the rain had moistened the ground everywhere. People of high and low stations all had enough water.
>
> The twenty[-second] day in the fifth year of the Kaiyuan era (717) happened to be a day of gloomy rain. On account of the fact that the next day would already be the twenty-third day, and if the rain did not [stop], it was feared that the sutra monastery [would be flooded]. Prefect Liu Yuan thereupon ordered Wenzhan to recite the *Prajñā*. He wholeheartedly prayed for fair weather. He appealed to the sutra, and immediately it stopped raining. By the twenty-third day, the sky was very clear. Such is the power of the *Prajñā*, its response is like [spiritual intervention].[593]

While the monk Qingxu restored his incinerated fingers, Lü Wenzhan grew his teeth back after they fell out:

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[593] JYJ72.

> Lü Wenzhan, Vice Magistrate of Langzhong [District] in Langzhou (modern Nanchong, Sichuan) had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. [Having recited] more than thirty thousand times, [he received] proof of the efficacy (*lingyan*) [of the *Diamond Sutra*] which was like divine [intervention]. About six or seven years ago, one of his teeth dropped out for no reason. With deep sincerity, he vowed [to be more rigorous in his recitation]. His tooth then gradually grew back. Now it had begun to grow to more than half [the length of the original tooth]. On the second day of the fifth year of the Kaiyuan era (717), again another tooth dropped out for no reason. As before, he vowed [to be more rigorous in his recitation], and his tooth thereupon grew back again. To have one's teeth grow back when one is old, all these are also due to spiritual assistance.[594]

These striking examples—almost non-existent in other tale collections—of lay devotees of the sutra possessing spiritual powers traditionally associated with monastics constitute a unique feature of *Diamond Sutra* collections. They also remind us of a similar development reflected in *Mingxiang ji* accounts, where Buddhist monastics are portrayed as having powers and qualities that were traditionally associated with Daoist adepts. As Campany has argued, by pitting Buddhist monastics against Daoist adepts, and portraying them as equaling or trumping their Daoist counterparts, those tales extolled Buddhism and enabled it to gain ground against Daoist traditions. While the portrayal of lay Buddhists in such a light might not indicate any rivalry between laypeople and monastics, they offer important information on the laicization of Buddhism in Tang, China, just as the accounts in the *Mingxiang ji* shed light on the religious reality of the Six Dynasties period.

Indeed, no confrontation between laypeople and monastics is discernible in *Diamond Sutra* narratives because these spiritually advanced lay Buddhists

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[594] Ibid.

are never portrayed in comparison to monastics. Since *Diamond Sutra* tales reflect how lay Buddhists engaged with Buddhism, tales of this theme offer representations of the relationship between lay practitioners and the sutra through the belief that the attainment of these spiritual powers is possible through "fervent Buddhist devotional practice." In order for such ideas to take shape and be articulated through these tales, the development of lay Buddhism must have arrived at a stage where lay Buddhists were sufficiently empowered by their practice to conceive of such possibilities. With their consistent representation of exemplary lay practice and the resultant benefits as well as the attainment of spiritual powers, it can be argued that these tales inculcated in their audience not just the importance of consistent religious practice, but also promoted self-empowerment. They further indicate that when these tales appeared, Buddhism was well domesticated, and that lay Buddhists were confident of their belief and practice, and saw themselves as playing a more important role in the religion. The proliferation of these tales is not only the result of the increasing numbers of lay Buddhists and their exchanges of wonders experienced and witnessed, but more importantly, the result of lay Buddhists taking upon themselves the task to propagate the religion, a role also traditionally associated with monastics.

1.4 Buddhist Piety of Lay Compilers

In addition to their protagonists, the lay orientation of *Diamond Sutra* narratives—and also the state of lay Buddhism in Tang China—can be explored

with respect to their compilers, who were all lay Buddhists. The piety and religiosity of the compilers of *Diamond Sutra* collections are discernible from their writings found in the form of prefaces or introductions embedded within their compilations. These writings, which often include details about their religious life and the motivations behind their collections, may also shed light on their understanding of Buddhism, thus providing an alternative view of Buddhism, one that is not available from the high-flown commentaries and treatises of the monastic elites.

Fu Liang, the reconstructor of the first Guanyin compilation, explained that he reconstructed the collection "to delight people of the same faith."[595] In the preface of the second collection, Zhang Yan told us that he compiled his collection as a sequel to the first collection "so as to transmit to all who share the same interest."[596] While it seems that the motivation of Fu and Zhang was primarily to share their tales with fellow Buddhists, Lu Gao, the compiler of the third Guanyin tale collection, expressed his desire "to let the marvels of Guanyin be transmitted to the world, and be widely known by the common people who will come to believe in him."[597] This motivation to spread the Buddhist faith and to encourage conversion is also expressed by Wang Yan in his preface to the *Mingxiang ji*: "I have collected here enough examples to serve as a basis for persuading [the reader] to take refuge of his own

[595] Dong 2002: 1.

[596] Dong 2002: 28.

[597] Ibid.: 59.

accord."[598] In a similar vein, Meng Xianzhong, in his preface to the *Jiyan ji*, states,

> He who sees a wise man, thinks of emulating him; he who learns about righteousness, becomes valorous. Like the gentleman who polishes the jade or the guest who safeguarded the sword, like Zhou Chu's encounter with [Lu] Shiheng (261–303) that eternally eradicated the three evils; like Zhongyou's encounter with Xuanfu (i.e., Confucius), which then instanced the four subjects. Is benevolence faraway? He who desires it has it. Although this compilation of tales is not enough to extend and glorify the sagely teachings (i.e., Buddhism), it promulgates the Mahāyāna. Bequeathed to later generations of our offspring, may it encourage them to have the same aspirations [in their devotion].[599]

By claiming that his collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales promulgates the Mahāyāna, he was equating the *Diamond Sutra* with Mahāyāna Buddhism. Furthermore, by mentioning historical instances of people emulating the wise, he hoped that people of later generations would emulate the protagonists in the tales in their devotion so that they could also experience the same wonders described in the accounts. Thus, Meng went a step further in not just spreading the dharma, but also persuading fellow laypeople to practice like the protagonists in his stories.

Moreover, as later compilers of Guanyin tales situated themselves within a tradition of Guanyin tale compilation, Duan Chengshi was aware that he was partaking in a tradition of tale compilation when he mentioned a three-roll *Jin'gang jing lingyan ji* 金剛經靈驗記 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*), which most likely referred to Meng's collection. It is a

[598] Campany 2012: 66–7.

[599] *Jin'gang bore jing Jiyan ji*, X87.1629: 449b1–4.

tradition in which the *Diamond Sutra* is lauded, and its practices encouraged. As Duan Chengshi wrote: "Every day, I recite and copy [the *Diamond Sutra*]. Hoping to promulgate the greatness of the scripture, and to complete its form for circulation, I assembled scattered [accounts related to the *Diamond Sutra*] so as to supplement what is lacking in Buddhism. I called this compilation the *Jin'gang jing jiuyi*."[600]

Although Zhai Fengda later became an active patron of Buddhism and engaged in a variety of Buddhist activities, the colophon to his compilation of *Diamond Sutra* tales indicates his piety with regard to the sutra as a young man, as he conceived of the sutra in such superlative terms:

> With the above accounts proving [the efficacy of] the *Diamond Sutra*, instead of causing someone to make offering with the seven jewels of the thousand-millionfold world, he should transmit and pass down the fact that the merit of this sutra is the greatest. If someone copies the *Diamond Sutra*, receives, upholds, reads and recites it, and causes others to copy, transmit and propagate it, the person is like a lamp that lights up hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, or millions of lamps [causing] all the dark realms to be illuminated indefinitely. If someone can copy this text on the walls of monasteries, the person's merit will be immeasurable, boundless, and inconceivable.[601]

From the writings of these compilers of *Diamond Sutra* tales, we further discern the difference between the lay orientation of their compilations from others. It is clear that they all stress the importance of not just belief in the *Diamond Sutra,* but the practice related to it. This is apparent when Meng compared emulating the wise in the Confucian tradition to emulating the

[600] *Jin'gang jing jiuyi*, X87.1630: 467c18–19.

[601] *Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji*, T85.2743: 159a21–26.

protagonists in the tales in actions. For Duan Chengshi, he voiced his wish for the *Jiuyi* "to promulgate the greatness of the scripture of his practice and compilation" after he mentioned that he recited and copied the sutra daily. As for Zhai Fengda, he made an analogy between the person who conducted the various practices related to the *Diamond Sutra* and "a lamp that lights up hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, or millions of lamps [causing] all the dark realms to be illuminated indefinitely." It is clear that he was not merely encouraging people to believe in the sutra, but to put their devotion into action through those practices that are encouraged in the tales, practices that would bring about similar wonders recounted in the stories.

1.4.1 Xiao Yu and the *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*

Although we do not have access to Xiao Yu's collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales, which is no longer extant, the *Taiping guangji* contains a narrative that shed lights on his motivation to compile his collection. This account, originally collected in the *Baoying ji*, relates how Xiao Yu was inspired to compile his collection after an experience in which he was spared the consequences of the wrath of Emperor Yang of the Sui, through his devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* when he was imprisoned:

> [When the court] discussed the attack of Goguryeo (c. 2nd century BCE–668), [Xiao Yu's stance] was not in accord with the [Emperor's] intent. The Emperor was greatly angered. [Thus Xiao Yu] was imprisoned together with Heruo Bi (544–607) and Gao Jiong (d. 607). In accordance to the law, Xiao Yu was imprisoned. In eight days he recited the *Diamond Sutra* seven hundred times. The day after [the eighth], his fetters and handcuffs suddenly fell off by themselves. The guard turned pale, and put them on again.
>
> When Yu, Heruo and Gao were tried before the court, only Yu was pardoned [while] the other two persons were heavily punished.

> Because of that, [Xiao Yu] wrote down eighteen instances of the proven efficacy of the perfection of wisdom sutra (i.e., *Diamond Sutra*), and constructed a bejeweled pagoda to house the sutra…[602]

As a descendant of the famous Xiao clan, whose members were known for their Buddhist piety, Xiao Yu had been a Buddhist long before the event in this tale happened. While there is no way to ascertain whether he recited the sutra seven hundred times, such a portrayal must have some sort of basis to be penned down and be credible.[603] For example, the account of an encounter between Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (464–549)—perhaps the most prominent member of the Xiao clan, who is also well-known as a "Buddhist" emperor—and Bodhidharma was retrospectively created due to the emperor's piety and active patronage of Buddhism. Therefore, to attribute Xiao Yu's intense devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* as the cause for his being spared for going against Emperor Yang, Xiao Yu must have been known as an extremely pious lay Buddhist.

An interesting account—in the *Liangchu qingzhong yi*—about Xiao Yu, the compiler of the first ever *Diamond Sutra* tale collection gives the following information about his practice:

> Also, Xiao Yu was the Vice Director of the Department of State of the Great Tang [Dynasty]. When he finished his official duties, he would enter the *jingyuan* 靜院 (lit. tranquil or quiet cloister). Donning the *sanfayi* 三法衣 (lit. three dharma robes), he would pay obeisance to the Buddha, read and recite sutras. He did this

[602] TPGJ10.

[603] If Xiao Yu intoned the *Diamond Sutra*, he probably did it in the manner of *zhuandu*, as he recited only parts of the sutra each time.

> regularly. After he passed away, his robes were sent to the Jinliang Monastery, where a brief Buddhist ceremony was held for him.[604]

This account describes Xiao Yu as a devoted Buddhist who often dedicated himself to Buddhist practice after his official duties, and offers us a rare glimpse of the kind of religious activities he engaged in privately. Although there is no mention of the *Diamond Sutra*, we may assume that it was probably one of the sutras he recited in the *jingyuan,* a family hall for religious practice.

Such accounts provide invaluable details about the religious activities of lay Buddhists in medieval China. In his *Jiuyi*, Duan Chengshi gave the following information about the daily routine of Zhang Qiqiu, who survived a mutiny owing to his devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*: "Every morning, he would change into new clothes, and holding the scripture before the image [of the Buddha], he would recite the *Diamond Sutra* fifteen times. He continued doing this for several decades unremittingly."[605] This account not only provides details of his daily religious routine, the number of times he recited the sutra and accompanying practices, but also gives us a better understanding of the religious commitment of lay Buddhists at that time.

In another account collected in the *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, Emperor Taizong bestowed on Xiao Yu a copy of the *Mahaprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* written by the famed Northern Zhou calligrapher Wang Bao 王褒 (d.u.) and a

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[604] *Liangchu qingzhong yi*, T45.1895: 851c12–14.

[605] JY1.

set of *kāṣāya* (Ch. *jiasha* 袈裟).[606] This account is also recorded in the *Jiu Tang shu*, where in addition to the two items mentioned above, Xiao Yu was also given an embroidered tapestry of the Buddha with an image of Xiao Yu on the side.[607] Since information about Buddhism is rarely recorded in dynastic histories, this record—besides indicating that Xiao Yu was well-known as a pious Buddhist—is perhaps indicative of the state of lay piety and Buddhism in Tang China. Such descriptions attest to the rigor and strong commitment in lay Buddhist practice, and also depict an atmosphere in which lay Buddhism was actively asserted.

The *Jiu Tang shu* also provides an interesting piece of information regarding the *kāṣāya* given to Xiao Yu, by adding that it was meant to be "a robe for lecturing and recitation."[608] The bestowal of the *kāṣāya* in the first place is already a peculiar point since *kāṣāya* refers to sacerdotal robes meant for monastics, which generally refers to the three types of monastic robes worn by ordained monastics on different occasions.[609] These three robes are as follows: (1) the *sengqieli* 僧伽梨 (Sk. *saṃghāṭī*), an "assembly" robe that is worn by the monastic when seeking alms, entering the imperial palace, or

606 *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 3, T51.2067: 19c15.

607 *Jiu Tang shu* 63: 2402.

608 Ibid.

609 The *kāṣāya* in the East Asian context symbolically represents the Indian robes prescribed for monks in Chinese translations of the Indian *vinaya* texts, but they do not have the same or practical function as the original garment. See Kyūma 1967, Kieschnick 2003: 87–100, and Dien 2007: 388–91.

giving lectures;[610] (2) the *yuduoluoseng* 鬱多羅僧 (Sk. *uttarāsaṅga*), an outer seven-panel robe that is worn during worship or lecture sessions;[611] and (3) the *antuohui* 安陀會 (Sk. *antar-vāsa*), an inner garment usually worn to perform menial tasks or when sleeping.[612] Since Xiao Yu was not a monastic, Emperor Taizong's bestowal of a set of *kāṣāya* to Xiao Yu is of great significance. It seems to imply an elevated status of the laity.

Further, it also implies that Xiao Yu also lectured on sutras, or conducted sutra lectures. Regarding the donning of *kāṣāya* for the recitation of sutras, the *Liangchu qingzhong yi* account above mentions that Xiao Yu actually wore the "*sanfayi*" in order to "pay obeisance to the Buddha, read and recite sutras." The term "*sanfayi*" (lit. three dharma robes) here is certainly used as a general term for sacerdotal robes and refers to the *kāṣāya*. Although it is uncertain whether the "*sanfayi*"—in this case probably the *yuduoluoseng*—worn by Xiao Yu was a part of the set of *kāṣāya* bestowed by Emperor Taizong or it also included the *sengqie yi* meant to be worn for lecturing on sutras, it is certainly

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[610] The *sengqieli* is the largest of the three robes that monks receive upon ordination. The term originated as a Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit *saṃghāṭī* or 'full dress robe.' The *saṃghāṭī* was worn when soliciting alms, dealing with the laity, and attending large public gatherings of the *saṃgha*. Also written as *sengqieli* 僧伽黎, *naqieli* 衲伽梨, *sengqiezhi* 僧伽胝. Because it is made up of nine or twenty-five pieces of cloth, it is also called the nine-panel robe (*jiutiao yi* 九條衣) or twenty-five panel robe (*ershiwutiao yi* 二十五條衣).

[611] Also written as *yuluoluosengqie* 鬱多羅僧伽 in Chinese, the *uttarāsaṅga* is an upper or outer robe worn mainly for events in the monastery. It is also known as the seven-panel robe (*qitiao yi* 七條衣) since it is made of seven panels.

[612] The *antuohui*, an inner garment, is also called working robe or the five-panel robe (*wuliaoyi* 五條衣). Also transliterated as *andanposha* 安憺婆沙, *andaposuo* 安呾婆娑, *anduoposha* 安多婆娑, *antuoluobasa* 安陀羅跋薩, *anduohui* 安多會, and so on, it is translated into Chinese as *neiyi* 內衣, *liyi* 裏衣, *zuoyi* 作衣, *zuowuyi* 作務衣, *zhonguyi* 中宿衣, *zhongzhaoyi* 中著衣.

unusual for a layperson to possess a set of *kāṣāya*, not to mention to wear them for reciting sutras and lecturing on them.

With regard to the explication of sutras, the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* mentions that Xiao Yu lectured on a commentary of the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Fahua yiji* 法華義記 (A Record of the Meanings of the *Lotus Sutra*), to his sons and nieces.[613] It is thus possible that Xiao Yu might have actually worn the *kāṣāya* (more specifically, the *sengqieli*) given to him by Emperor Taizong for this purpose. The explication of or lecture on sutras by lay Buddhists might not have been uncommon in the Tang because there is also mention of a *Diamond Sutra* devotee who lectured on the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* in the *Jiyan ji*: "There was a certain Yang Jian who was a native of Tongquan District in Zizhou (modern Suining, Sichuan). He thoroughly comprehended the *Laṇkāvatāra-sūtra*, and often lectured on it in Shu. He had also always recited the *Diamond Sutra*."[614] In addition, Duan Chengshi in fact mentioned in his preface to the *Jiuyi* that he was ordered by his father "to receive, uphold and explicate the *Diamond Sutra*."

If Xiao Yu, Yang Jian, and Duan Chengshi did indeed lecture on or explicate sutras—an activity that was previously the province of the monastics—then we may assume that Tang-period lay Buddhists were sufficiently confident of their understanding and rendition of Buddhist sutras to expound on them. In fact, Xiao Yu was said to have even composed a

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[613] *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 3, T51.2067: 19c16–17.

[614] JYJ63.

subcommentary of Fayuan's commentary of the *Lotus Sutra*. We are told that when he completed it, he dreamed of the Treasure Tower of Buddha Prabhūtaratna hanging in the sky.[615] These accounts about Xiao Yu not only illustrate his stature as a lay Buddhist, but also reveal the state of lay Buddhism in Tang China.

1.4.2 Meng Xianzhong and the *Jiyan ji*

If Xiao Yu's piety, as reflected in the details of his practice, the regard he received as a lay Buddhist, and his Buddhist scholarship, is indicative of the state of lay Buddhism in early Tang, China, the extent of lay piety as depicted in *Diamond Sutra* tales comes as no surprise. Not only did lay Buddhists take on greater rigor in their practice, but they also assumed greater confidence in their understanding and interpretation of Buddhism, which they began to put forth. This, in fact, is illustrated by Meng Xianzhong in his preface to the *Jiyan ji*, which begins with an explication of *prajñā*—an important concept in relation to the *Diamond Sutra*:

> *Prajñā* is the mother of the wisdom of all Buddhas. It is the quintessence of the unsurpassed path, the springhead of the Dharma ocean. It is the actual secret storehouse of the Tathāgata. When words are spoken, the path is severed; when the mind functions, the abode is destroyed. Being beyond name and form as well as the elements and fields of cognitive experience, it is said to cognize and yet not grasp. It is free from seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing. Discriminating cognition grasps it, yet it is far beyond that…[616]

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[615] *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 3, T51.2067: 19c17.

[616] *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji*, X87.1629: 449a9–11.

The above passage contrasts sharply with the prefaces of the three collections of Guanyin tales as well as that of the *Mingxiang ji*. The tone of the prefaces of these collections is quite personal. Both Zhang Yan and Lu Gao mentioned details about themselves, such as having taken up faith when they were young and being personally impressed by the marvels of Guanyin to compile their own collections. Likewise, Wang Yan recounted in great length his relationship with a small votive Guanyin image given to him by a monk when he was young, a relationship which eventually inspired him to compile the *Mingxiang ji*. But Meng Xianzhong's preface makes no mention of himself or his personal experience of the wonders or efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. Following the above passage, he continues his preface in a style reminiscent of doctrinal discourse with laudatory prose on the *Prajñā* and its protective wonders, allusion to the concept of *ganying* with his mention of the well-known metaphor of the bell, and lastly, his exhortation to the reader to emulate the protagonists in the tales:

> ...For those who investigate its wonders, [wherever] they act are sites of the [Buddhist] path; for those who comprehend its principle, their undertakings constitute the affairs of the Buddha. It extends into the twelve classics and the eighty-four thousand teachings, and equals the competing brilliance of the three *chen*. Relying on the light of wisdom, one attains the same luminosity. It is likened to the rivaling gallopers of the thoroughfare entering the true vehicle and tracking together.
>
> [With] only quietude and tranquility, elicitation thus penetrates... If one is sincere, there is definitely a response. He who has one thought of pure faith, who receives and upholds the four-line verse, his good fortune is as immeasurable and boundless as the dharma world...it can cause the asura army to trace the sound and flee far, and the cavalry of Māra to tremble in disarray and hastily retreat. Whether they are wild beasts with hook-like claws or saw-like fangs, whether they are overpowering blades or lethal

> weapons, [they cannot harm the faithful]; whether there are titanic waves or intense fires, the faithful tames the waves and puts out the blaze. His indomitable force causes [even] fumes to solidify. Poison cannot harm him. When he implores, clouds gather. No blade can hurt him.
>
> Sentient beings surely should thrive when they come into contact with members of the same kind. This is just like the great bell that resonates because it is hollow, without being hit, it does not toll…Now I take the proofs of its efficacy, especially those marvelous traces that are especially outstanding, so as to herald that which is transmitted by this classic sutra and were received by the ears and eyes, put them together to constitute a three-roll tale collection, divided into six sections.
>
> He who sees a wise man, thinks of emulating him; he who learns about righteousness, becomes valorous…[617]

Meng Xianzhong's preface not only reflects his piety toward the *Diamond Sutra*, but also sets the tone for his compilation and reveals how his compilation was meant to be taken. Based on its relatively technical introduction to the *Prajñā* when compared to other prefaces, an abstract concept that underlies the *Diamond Sutra*, Meng Xianzhong at least demonstrates considerable knowledge of Buddhist doctrine not found in other prefaces of pre-Tang collections, except perhaps the preface of the *Mingbao ji* in which Tang Lin explicates the three kinds of karmic retribution.[618]

He might have construed of his collection as a Buddhist work emulating the works composed by monastics, given the structure he gave to his collection as mentioned previously. Moreover, each of the six sections of his collection is preceded by a shorter introduction in an eclectic style, where he introduces the theme with reference to works and personalities of antiquity, treating them as

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[617] Ibid.: 449a13–b1.

[618] See translation in Gjertson 1989: 156.

if they were part of Buddhism or as testifying to the truth of Buddhism. For instance:

> In the ancient past, Nüwa ascended the throne and severed [the limbs of] the tortoise to repair [the wall of] heaven. Yiyi drew his bow and shot down [sun-]birds, and the [nine] suns fell. [There are such wonders as] riding the two dragons of Xia Hou [Qi] on the jade terrace, and galloping on the bank of Lake Jasper on King Mu's steeds. Immortal Lord [Ge] could stay underwater and spit flames, and [Zuo] Yuanfang could conceal himself and divide his form. It goes without saying that [although] such are [the powers of] the Daoists, none certainly equals [that of the Buddhists]. Before the opening of the [Treasure Tower], the Buddha moved the heavenly beings and humans to another realm; without getting up from his seat, [Vimalakīrti] shows Jambudvīpa the Wondrous Joy [World]. Such sagely feats are awe-inspiring, thus it is called "without gain"! Therefore to trace its superb wonders, [I have put forth similar accounts to produce] a section on the "Divine Power" [of the *Diamond Sutra*].[619]

While it is not surprising to find Meng Xianzhong—a mid-level government official with the education and training befitting a man of his position—alluding to accounts of heroes, sages, and famous figures from the Confucian and Daoist traditions, it is worth noting how he situated his compilation within the larger Sinitic tradition by using such resources to create something new, in this case the lore of a Buddhist sutra. By drawing from traditional resources steeped in ancient writings, Meng Xianzhong also provided a practical strategy for reading his compilation by introducing the new through the old. Thus, Meng Xianzhong's writings were more than mere rhetoric, as they exhibit an awareness of a larger Sinitic tradition within which he attempted to situate his collection by intertwining the "new tradition" of wonders with tribute made to

[619] *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji*, X87.1629: 457c17–458a4.

figures in writings of the past. In addition to traditional sources, he also drew from earlier Buddhist tale collections, such as the *Lingyan ji* and the *Mingbao shiyi* to supplement the accounts he had collected from other sources that were being produced at the time when he was compiling his collection.

Besides the preface to the entire collection and his introduction to each of the six sections, Meng Xianzhong also penned 'praises' at the end of all sections, lauding the wonders recounted. They tend to be poetic, and are worded in religious and reverential tones with references to common motifs of Buddhism, such as the following praise at the end of the section on "Rescue and Protection":

> In the gate of meditative wisdom and on the road of Bodhi, there are no [unwholesome] actions or [selfish] gains, but only rescue and protection. [All in the] three realms take refuge [in it], and [beings of the] four types of births awaken to it; all afflicted by suffering are forever liberated by riding on it.[620]

From Meng Xianzhong's organization of his collection into sections based on the benefits received by protagonists, to the nature of the preface, introduction, and praises found interspersed within the collection, the devout nature of the *Jiyan ji* is apparent, and it certainly reflects clearly the piety with which Meng Xianzhong composed his collection. Equally important is the fact that his collection reflects a lay autonomy—which was coming into being—in the production of Buddhist literature, and a confidence in putting forth individual construal or particular interpretation of the religion, which became more pronounced later.

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[620] Ibid.: 452c15–16.

1.4.3 Duan Chengshi and the *Jiuyi*

If the title of the *Jiuyi* compiled by Duan Chengshi does not reflect the common thrust of its accounts as proving the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, it certainly reflects his literary taste and interest. By using *yi* 異 to describe the tales collected in the *Jiuyi*, Duan Chengshi was probably capitalizing on its literary qualities and multivalence—because it connotes extraordinariness, uniqueness, marvels, wonders, and so on—than the more philosophical or religious "*lingyan*" used by other compilers. It also reflects Duan Chengshi's interest in unusual phenomena, wondrous things, and marvels, which characterized the *Youyang zazu*, for which he is most well-remembered. Notwithstanding Duan Chengshi's deviation in the naming of his collection, tales in the *Jiuyi* do not differ from those in other collections, as they prove the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* through the experiences of their protagonists.

Unlike Meng Xianzhong, who did not share any details about himself or his experience with respect to the *Diamond Sutra*, Duan Chengshi's preface to the *Jiuyi* was personal in tone, revealing details of himself, and his father, to whom the collection might have been dedicated, as it was compiled a year after the elder Duan passed away. Thus, it is not surprising that Duan Chengshi began his preface by sharing his father's experience of being protected from a series of precarious events, owing to his devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*:

> In the seventh year of the Zhenyuan era (801), my late father [Duan Wenchang], responding to an appointment by Wei Gao, Prince of Nankang, entered Shu (modern Sichuan) from Jingzhou (modern Jingzhou, Hubei). In his old age, Wei, framed and implicated by the traitor Liu Pi 劉闢 (d. 806), was made the District Defender of Lingchi District (modern Jianyang, Sichuan).

> Soon Wei died. The traitor Liu Pi became Capital Liaison Representative. Having received the news, my late father, who did not get along with Liu Pi formerly, left the district in the middle of the night. When he came to the eastern gate of the city, Liu Pi had given forth notice prohibiting all district officials from leaving the district. That night a cold wind blew. When he was turning back at two *li* out of the city wall, he saw two fire torches on two sides of the path, and they were leading him a hundred steps ahead. Initially he thought that they were district functionaries who had come to welcome him. However he thought it strange that they did not vary in their distance and height. When he was about to reach the district wall, only then did they extinguish. Having reached the seat of the district, he asked the district functionaries, [but] they knew nothing about the prefectural notice.
>
> At that time, my late father had recited the *Diamond Sutra* for five or six years without neglecting his recitation for even a day. He truly believed that utmost sincerity surely was a stimulus (*gan*). [Since] if there is a stimulus, there must be a response (*ying*), the torches that previously appeared are the traces [of the response] of the sutra.[621]

According to Duan Chengshi, his father attributed his safety in an uncertain political climate to his devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* because he seemed to construe the lights that guided him on his way back to the district seat as "traces [of the response] of the sutra." On another occasion, Duan Chengshi mentions that his father was assured of his safety by a voice when it seemed that he would be implicated in yet another political event:

> …my late father was reciting the scripture late into the night, and fell asleep without realizing it. The doors of his room were all closed. Suddenly, he woke up, and heard someone open the door and enter the room. [The person] repeatedly said, "Do not be afraid." It was like the sound of something being thrown on the table and cracked. Startled, the words still lingered in his ears when he was getting up. When he turned to look around him, the functionaries and servants were all asleep. Taking hold of a candlestick, he searched around. Initially, he saw nothing. The door that was shut was already opened…My late father had received and

[621] *Jin'gang jing jiuyi*, X87.1630: 467b22–c6.

> upheld this scripture more than a hundred thousand times, and its proven responses to matters were remarkable.[622]

Apparently, the event was taken as an indication that the elder Duan would be safe. It is well-known that Duan Chengshi was very close to his father, and the account of his father's experience, which constitutes most of his preface, clearly illustrates this. Despite being part of the preface, this account was later collected as a tale in the *Taiping guangji*.[623]

The influence of the elder Duan can also be discerned later when Duan Chengshi mentions his own religious practice. While this contrasts with the preface to the *Jiyan ji,* which does not contain any direct information about Meng Xianzhong's practice, their motivations are the same: to transmit the wonders to others and to encourage pious practices like those in the narratives. Toward the end of the preface, Duan Chengshi attributed his religious undertaking to the influence of his father:

> I was formerly ordered to uphold, recite and explicate the three-roll *Jin'gang jing lingyan ji* 金剛經靈驗記 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*) [624] that originated since the inception of the Tang dynasty, Chengshi [I] thus should follow the order of my late father to receive, uphold and explicate the *Diamond Sutra*.[625]

The above passage indicates Duan Chengshi's access to a *Diamond Sutra* collection, which probably refers to Meng Xianzhong's collection. He further mentioned that he had indeed recited and copied the *Diamond Sutra* daily as

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[622] Ibid.: 467c9–13.

[623] TPGJ65.

[624] This refers to the collection compiled by Meng Xianzhong.

[625] *Jin'gang jing jiuyi*, X87.1630: 467c9–14–15.

his father had instructed him to do. What is of greater interest, however, is that he also mentioned having attended commentarial lectures on the *Diamond Sutra* on three occasions:

> In the second year of the Taihe era (828), I listened once to [the lecture of] the *Pingxiao yuzhu* 平消御注 (Imperial Commentary of Pingxiao) by the monk Xijian of Yangzhou 揚州 (modern Yangzhou, Jiangsu). In the sixth year (832), I listened once to [the lecture of] the *Dayun shu* 大雲疏 (Great Cloud Commentary) by the monk Jingzhuo of Jingzhou (modern Jingzhou, Hubei). In the first year of the Kaicheng era (836), I listened once to [the lecture of] the *Qinglong shu* 青龍疏 (Blue Dragon Commentary) by Dharma Master Huaichu of Chang'an. Everyday, I recite and copy [the *Diamond Sutra*].[626]

The above information about Duan Chengshi is of interest to us because it prompts us to reconsider how Buddhism was construed by laypeople. Although Duan Chengshi undertook devotional activities, such as the recitation and copying of the sutra, he also took part in more 'intellectual' activities, such as attending lectures on the various commentaries of the *Diamond Sutra*, which were probably doctrinal in nature. Additionally, Duan Chengshi also mentioned that he was told to explicate (*jiangjie*) a collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales as well as the *Diamond Sutra* itself. We must assume that what is meant by "explicate" here means two different activities given the nature of the texts. With respect to a tale collection, to "explicate" probably refers to telling other people about its tales and explaining to them in a way that encourages belief in the *Diamond Sutra* and related practices. However, to "explicate" a scripture as philosophical as the *Diamond Sutra* might mean

[626] Ibid.: 467c15–18.

explaining the finer doctrinal points of the sutra. The former case does not involve any clarification of doctrinal details since *Diamond Sutra* tales, in general, do not concern the doctrinal contents of the sutra.

Of course, there is certainly no conflict between these two kinds of activities; they are not mutually exclusive. There is no reason to assume a literatus of Duan Chengshi's calibre did not have a good grasp of the more doctrinal and philosophical aspects of the *Diamond Sutra*. What is interesting is the fact that we have details of him engaging in scholastic as well as devotional activities and practices. This is an instance that shows that lay Buddhists like Duan Chengshi might have conceived of their understanding of a sutra from the intellectual, experiential, and devotional aspects. These aspects complement each other and inform their holistic understanding of a Buddhist sutra, with one catering to the mind and the other to the heart. Duan Chengshi was certainly not an armchair Buddhist. Like Meng Xianzhong, Duan Chengshi was actively partaking in the enterprise of creating lore for the *Diamond Sutra* as well as enriching the repository of Buddhist narrative literature. Like Meng Xianzhong, he was conscious that his work was situated within a tradition of tale compilation, and this is apparent as he mentioned: "I assembled scattered [accounts related to the *Diamond Sutra*] so as to supplement what is lacking in Buddhism. I called this compilation the *Jin'gang jing jiuyi* (Collected Marvels of the *Diamond Sutra*)."[627]

[627] Ibid.: 467c18–19.

1.4.4 Zhai Fengda and the *Gongde ji*

Given the varied nature of Buddhist works undertaken by Duan Chengshi, it might not be always accurate to describe lay Buddhists in medieval China—be they protagonists or compilers of tales—as simply devotional, especially when we lack information about the other types of religious activities they might also have participated in, which may provide us with a different picture of them. In the case of Zhai Fengda, we are fortunate to have records of him participating in different religious activities. Apart from Zhai's production of P2094, which includes the *Gongde ji*, when he was young, Stephen Teiser—with reference to his sponsorship of ten feasts for the posthumous well-being of his deceased wife—pointed out that Zhai relied heavily on Buddhism to deal with old age and death later in life. In the public sphere, Zhai also sponsored murals in Dunhuang caves. While Ning Qiang pointed to the political nature of this sponsorship, it is simplistic to disregard other motivations he might have for such projects. In any case, Zhai Fengda was a strong patron of Buddhist works.

From what we can discern from his writings interspersed in P2094 and the thoughts revealed therein, Zhai Fengda disclosed a certain level of piety. For instance, he voiced his hope that his collection of tales would "transmit and pass down the fact that the merit of this sutra is the greatest." As mentioned previously, he also lauded the goodness of the act of propagating the *Diamond Sutra* and likened the person who does so to a lamp that causes "all the dark realms to be illuminated indefinitely." Although he did not copy

the sutra that he attached at the end of P2094, he had caused others to copy it by commissioning it, which was equally meritorious. It is noteworthy that while Zhai Fengda extolled the practices related to the *Diamond Sutra*, he also thought that the transmission of *Diamond Sutra* tales would bring about religious merit as well: "If someone can copy this text on the walls of monasteries, the person's merit will be immeasurable, boundless, and inconceivable." While it is uncertain whether this might have prompted him to compile and copy the *Gongde ji*, Zhai probably considered it meritorious to copy the tales because their transmission to a wider lay audience who visited monasteries would also propagate the *Diamond Sutra*.

Although Zhai Fengda did not mention whether he actually copied the sutra or recited it, his composition of P2094 was meant for the pious act of transmitting the *Diamond Sutra* to others. In addition to his wish to spread the greatness of the sutra through his tale compilation, Zhai Fengda also dedicated P2094—which he was sending out for circulation—to the well-being of "believers as well as departed and deceased spirits, including his current parents and people of the whole region..."[628] Thus, he hoped that people beyond his family and the human realm would be able to enjoy the benefits of his pious efforts.

In addition to the *Gongde ji*, Zhai had also copied and attached to P2094 hymns extolling Emperor Xuanzong's composition of a commentary on the *Diamond Sutra,* which explicitly serves to "glorify and lend greater authority"

[628] Teiser 1994: 119. *Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji*, T85.2743: 160a17–20.

to the sutra.[629] This no doubt further boosts the stature of the *Diamond Sutra*, which Zhai Fengda certainly hoped to spread to a wider audience. Like the other compilers, Zhai Fengda was also encouraging engagement with the sutra; this is apparent from the various texts that made up P2094: While the *Gongde ji* and the hymns serve to advertise the *Diamond Sutra*, the text of the *sutra* was actually preceded by an invocation text of the eight vajra-beings, descriptions of their functions, six mantras, and another hymn—in addition to the colophons interspersed in the entire text. The inclusion of an invocation text, hymns, and mantras implies a liturgical agenda, and indicates that the manuscript was meant to be treated ritually. The entire manuscript therefore serves as an example of the autonomy lay Buddhists had in the spread of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* through the production of religious texts.[630] What is really unique about P2094 is that the entire manuscript—not just the tale collection—was actually entitled *Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji* (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* and the Merit to be Gained from Upholding and Reciting It). We will explore this text in detail later in this chapter.

[629] *Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji*, T85.2743: 159a27–c9. The *Kaiyuan huangdi zan jin'gang jing gongde* is also known simply as the *Jin'gang jing zan* 金剛經讚 (Hymns of the *Diamond Sutra*). "Kaiyuan Huangdi" is another referent for Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang. Apart from P2094, it is found among other Dunhuang manuscripts, such as S5464, P2721, P3645, BD07720 (identified simply as *Jin'gang jing zanwen* 金剛經讚文), and Dx296. See Wang 2002: 84–6.

[630] This point will be taken up later in Section 3 of this chapter. Such a development is related to liturgical use of the *Diamond Sutra*, which perhaps was influenced by practices in Sichuan.

2. THE *DIAMOND SUTRA*, DEATH, AND THE AFTERLIFE

By the Tang, the extensive development and patronage of Buddhism had burgeoned so much that the rise of the laity and its empowerment through the *Diamond Sutra* tales did not threaten the monastic community; this fact probably attests to the confidence of the religion as a whole, the power of monasticism, as well as the symbiotic relationship between the laity and the monastic community that contributed to the flourishing of Buddhism. The emergence of the laity is related to their increased participation in Buddhism as a result of the trickling down of Buddhist knowledge from the literate to the less literate, who were probably linked to Tang-period Buddhist monasteries, which played a major role in the transmission of Buddhist knowledge.

If pre-Tang Buddhist writings indicate the beginning of a trend whereby the wondrous was made accessible to lay Buddhists, the Tang period, as shown by *Diamond Sutra* tales, represents the apogee of such a trend in medieval China. Apart from the various points mentioned in preceding sections, the empowerment of the laity was closely related to beliefs and practices related to death and the afterlife. The cult of the *Diamond Sutra*, in conjunction with the empowerment of the laity, also capitalized on the potential of the Buddhist approaches to death, either through the ideal of liberation from *saṃsāra* or through claims of beneficial effects in the dying process and afterlife through Buddhist practice. Intimately related to the acquisition of spiritual powers, the mastery of death and the afterlife by the laity—whose piety and merit are

proven through these tales—is also conveyed and propagated by *Diamond Sutra* accounts.

In our discussion of the themes found in the stories, the major concern is death and the afterlife. While many tales of the 'rescue and protection' theme are tangentially related to death and the afterlife, tales of themes like 'prolonging lifespan,' 'good death and rebirth,' and 'return-from-death experiences' directly reflect such concerns and the role played by the sutra in addressing them. Among these themes, the return-from-death theme is of particular importance, as it is the most prevalent. These tales, which consists of some of the longest in the collections, not only have a lot to tell about lay religiosity, but also shape and validate Chinese Buddhist soteriology and cosmology, thus impacting beliefs and practices related to the afterlife.

2.1 Return-from-Death Experiences in *Diamond Sutra* Tales

The uniqueness of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* can be fleshed out by examining its tales with the return-from-death theme, as they generally differ from those from other collections. More specifically, return-from-death *Diamond Sutra* narratives shed light on how people conceptualized the sutra in relation to death and the afterlife, and the ways in which devotion to the *sutra* could benefit devotees in this respect. In addition, they have several important functions, one of which is of particular importance: the authentication of the power and efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. The following discussion not only explores the strategy in which the efficacy of the *Diamond*

Sutra is authenticated, it also examines how these tales contributed to its status as an 'afterlife' sutra par excellence in the Tang period.

2.1.1 Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*: Proofs from the Underworld

In an early Tang tale, a person named Wei Min, who was mistakenly summoned to the Underworld, recalled the potency of the *Diamond Sutra* in the underworld:

> In the first year of the Zhenguan era (627), Suizhou native Wei Min passed away for three days. [He was brought to the underworld where] his misdeeds were announced before the king. Min immediately pleaded that he was not due to die. The king searched the register to investigate [his claim], and indeed what Min said was not wrong. The king reprimanded the emissary who brought Min there, "For what reason did you mistakenly bring him here?" The king had the emissary given fifty strokes of the rod, and immediately released Min to return back to life. He dispatched someone to send Min out and indicated to him the original road he took.
>
> Having reached home, he immediately revived. His parents and family dependents asked him, "You were dead for three days, and now you revived. What is the matter?" Min told them everything in detail. [According to him,] he was being summoned [to the underworld] with more than ten people. A big monk among them was first brought before the king. When the king saw the monk, he first asked, "May I ask, for your entire life, what merit did you cultivate?" The monk replied to the king, "I have only recited the *Diamond Sutra* all my life." Having heard these words, the king paid respect to him by putting his palms together, and praised the monk, "Wonderful! Wonderful! The Dharma Master has received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. You should be reborn in a heaven, for what reason were you brought here?" Before the king could finish speaking, heavenly deities with fragrant flowers came to welcome the master and took him away…[631]

In this return-from-death experience, although Wei Min was mistakenly summoned to the underworld, his role in the narrative is to serve as a witness to the potency of the *Diamond Sutra*, which is demonstrated by the monk who

[631] JYJ24.

was shown to have been reborn in a heaven for his devotion to the sutra. King Yama's affirmation of the power of the *sutra* is significant because King Yama is the lord of the underworld. Moreover, having witnessed the power of the *Diamond Sutra* as providing a soteriological advantage to the monk, we are further told that Wei Min went in search of a copy of the *Diamond Sutra,* which he upheld assiduously:

> …Upon reaching home, he then immediately awakened. He recalled the words exchanged in the underworld, and also his having seen the monk allowed to ascend to heaven for having read and recited the *Diamond Sutra* while alive.
>
> He then went in search [of the *Diamond Sutra*] in various monasteries until he saw a monk who said, "I have the sutra." Having heard this, Min paid his respects and supplicated, "If I could obtain the sutra, I will not begrudge my life." That monk then gave him the one roll of the *Diamond Sutra*. Day and night, Min intoned it, and soon he was able to recite it. Day and night, he assiduously and diligently recited and upheld it without negligence.[632]

Furthermore, the tale continues that Wei Min also told others about his experience:

> Once, he told the people of Suizhou about his encounter. He further related the story of the monk who passed away along with himself, and how he was led before the king, and managed to be reborn in heaven for having recited the Mahāyāna *Diamond Sutra* [when he was alive]. He also related Yu Xin's evil deeds and his retribution. Most people of Suizhou were barbarians who killed and hunted for a living; those who did evil were many. Having heard Min talking about his story, each and every one aspired to the Buddhist way. They did not dare kill living beings and hunt animals, and together they read the *Diamond Sutra* day and night without discarding it.[633]

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[632] Ibid.

[633] Ibid.

To further confirm the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, the tale ends with Wei Min being told by King Yama how his devotion to the sutra had benefitted him—that he had his lifespan prolonged and was destined for the Pure Land:

> On the fifteen day of the fourth month, someone who rode a white horse suddenly came before Min and said, "The day when I took you [to the underworld,] I checked the register which indicated that you [still] have two years of lifespan. Thus I let you return home. Because you received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra* ten thousand times and have also converted all to cultivate merit, and to read and recite the *Prajñā* continuously, with such good deeds, you have prolonged your lifespan. When your lifespan expires at ninety, you will definitely be born in the pure land.[634]

For non-believers, demonstration of the power of the *Diamond Sutra* is important to convince them to believe in it. We can see the technique by which this is superbly done in the above tale: through King Yama's proclamation, the monk's ascent to Heaven, as well as Wei Min's receipt of the prophecy that he would be reborn in the Pure Land for his devotion. In another story, the power of the *Diamond Sutra* is again witnessed by a lay protagonist, a District Magistrate by the name of Li Xu, and demonstrated by two monks who presumably died and came to King Yama:

> Before the minor official reached the buildings, two monks came before the hall. The king asked the masters what practice they had. One of them replied that he always recited the *Diamond Sutra*, and the other replied that he always read the *Diamond Sutra*. The king rose, putting his palms together, and said, "I beseech you masters to ascend the steps." Behind the king's throne were two high seats; the right seat was in gold and the left was in silver. The king invited the monk who recited the *Diamond Sutra* to sit on the golden seat and the monk who read the *Diamond Sutra* to sit on the silver one. After they sat down, they started to recite and read the sutra. The king put his palms together and listened to them. When they finished reading and reciting, suddenly a five-colored cloud

[634] Ibid.

> came before the monk seated on the golden seat, and a purple cloud before the one seated on the silver seat. The monks rode on the clouds and flew away. They gradually disappeared into the air. The king regarded the people below the steps and said, "Did you see the two monks? Both of them have ascended to heaven."[635]

The reaction of King Yama after the two monks left, in reply to his query, is worth noting. Having informed King Yama that they read and recited the *Diamond Sutra*, King Yama rose from his seat and paid respects to the two monks by "putting his palms together," and imploring them to climb the steps, where he prepared seats for them to read and recite the *Diamond Sutra*. Moreover, King Yama actually "put his palms together, and listened to them." Their ascent to a heaven or Pure Land is also proclaimed by King Yama after they were carried away by clouds.

2.1.2 Devotees of *Diamond Sutra* As Worthy of Respect

The protagonists of the above two tales are laypeople; in fact, they are non-believers. For non-believers, the examples of monks and the proclamation of King Yama to demonstrate the power of the *Diamond Sutra* might have been more convincing. Monastics are good examples because they are exemplars of Buddhist practice and their ascent is persuasive. But still the protagonists are laypeople, and as we have discussed, because these tales are geared toward the laity, the role played by the protagonists is huge; the demonstration by monastics only serves as a subplot in the entire narrative. Of

[635] TPGJ42.

course, there are tales of monastics who entered the underworld and returned, but they are not the focus of *Diamond Sutra* collections.[636]

On the other hand, most of the return-from-death tales are about lay protagonists who are devotees of the *Diamond Sutra*. They too, like monastics, are also accorded respect by King Yama when the latter knew that they had upheld the *sutra*. In the tale below, a lay Buddhist named Murong Wence who started upholding the *Diamond Sutra* when he was seventeen was accorded respect by King Yama:

> The king asked him, "For your whole life, what good deeds have you done?" Ce then reported, "For my whole life, I had only recited the *Diamond Sutra* and eight-roll Lotus. For the *Prajñā*, I intone it during the day and at night. I also upheld the precept of abstinence without stopping for even a day. Having heard this, the king put his palms together and paid respect to Ce and praised him, "Your merit is very profound!" He instructed the official in charge to carefully check the register [to make sure] Ce was not brought there by mistake. The clerk checked the case and informed the king that Ce was not due to die. The king then released Ce to return home.[637]

Not only did the king accord him respect, he also explicitly said that the merit for upholding the *Diamond Sutra* is profound. Furthermore, it was Murong Wence's devotion that cast doubt on his summons to the underworld, for King Yama must have thought that a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra* with profound merit could not be summoned so early. In another tale, it is interesting to note that the lay protagonist Dou Dexuan was also accorded respect even though he had only recently started upholding the *Diamond Sutra* under the advice of a

[636] For example, JY12.

[637] JYJ27 (TPGJ8).

ghost sent to summon him to the underworld, because Dou did the ghost some favors.[638]

2.1.3 Salvific Powers of the *Diamond Sutra* and Its Devotees

In quite a number of return-from-death tales, the lay protagonists were requested by King Yama or some underworld official to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. Take for example the following story about an event that took place during the Kaiyuan era (713–741). A certain Mr Lu was summoned to the underworld, and while he was being led to see the King, he met his cousin who was serving as the Censor-in-Chief of the underworld. His cousin requested that he recite the *Diamond Sutra*:

> After they entered the city, the minor official was about to bring Lu to see the king when they passed by an office. He asked what office it was, to which the minor official replied it was the office of the Censor-in-Chief. He further asked about the surname and name of the official of the office. [The minor official] answered: His surname is Li and his first name Mou. Lu was pleasantly surprised and told the minor official, "He is my cousin." He that had the minor official informed the Censor-in-Chief about his arrival. In a moment, [the Censor-in-Chief] came out, and they were very happy to see each other. They talked about the past. [The Censor-in-Chief] invited him into his office and they sat down to talk. The Censor-in-Chief said, "Young cousin, your recitation brought a lot of merit by virtue of the fact that the *Diamond Sutra* is the essence of the sage's teachings. It is indeed profound and of inconceivable merit [to recite it].....If my young cousin could once preach the dharma, all those who witness it would ascend to a heaven, and thereupon achieve high station in their lives." He ordered Lu to ascend the seat and recite the *Diamond Sutra*. Already some people in the net had freed themselves from misery. When he recited half of the sutra, all emerged from the ground; they were either majestically dressed or

[638] JYJ3 (TPGJ25). He saw someone dressed in purple descended the steps and saluted him, "You have great merit. Your time has yet to come, please immediately go back." When he exited the gate, he fell into a pit and then woke up.

> riding in a carriage and on the clouds. When he finished the recitation, those people had all been reincarnated.[639]

Here, the reason is given as to why the person who recites the *Diamond Sutra* will have a lot of merit: Because the *Diamond Sutra* epitomizes the Buddha Dharma, Lu's recitation of it benefits others and demonstrates its efficacy. By illustrating how the *Diamond Sutra* could alleviate the suffering of the beings in hells, the account also gives an idea of how powerful the *Diamond Sutra* was, as we are told that just when Lu was ordered to ascend to the seat to recite the sutra, already some of the hell beings were freed from suffering, while all "emerged from the ground" when he had recited half of the sutra, and they were "either majestically dressed or riding in a carriage and on clouds." By the time he finished his recitation, all of them had been reincarnated. After this, the tales continues, he had an audience with the underworld king:

> And then, he entered [the palace] and had an audience with the king. The king addressed him as "Dharma Master" and accorded him utmost respect. The king said, "You are greatly inconceivable. I have measured it and your lifespan is not exhausted yet." He sighed in admiration at Lu's merit of recitation, and at once ordered the former minor official to send him back [to the human realm].[640]

While Lu was accorded respect by the underworld king, it is unusual for the king to address him as "Dharma Master," a title reserved for an accomplished monastic. The king praised him as "inconceivable," and further confirmed that he was not due to die. The tale ends with the king gasping at the merit of Lu's recitation.

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[639] TPGJ43.

[640] Ibid.

Such *Diamond Sutra* tales may be interpreted in two ways: while they attest to the power of the *Diamond Sutra* and its efficacy in the underworld, they can also be read as tales which present devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* as not just worthy of respect by virtue of their practice, but also spiritually powerful individuals capable even of liberating the suffering beings in hells. In another tale, Liu Hongjian—having probably fled North following the An-Shi Rebellion—met a monk in the South who instructed him to recite the *Diamond Sutra*.[641] When he was brought to the underworld, the monk he met earlier was there to testify that Liu was indeed his disciple who had upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, and thus had "great merits and powers." Having heard this, the underworld king requested that Liu recite the sutra. When he finished his recitation, "he could not see anyone but just the empty quiet hall." Presumably, the underworld beings who heard his recitation had already being reincarnated.

Perhaps due to the salvific powers of the *sutra* and the spiritual attainments of its practitioners, its recitation is an auspicious event in the underworld. In a narrative about a practitioner called Yao Dai, when the person who interrogated him found out that Yao upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, he remarked that "[t]o hear the name [of the sutra] was a highly auspicious [matter]." In another story, Chen De, a practitioner who "had always had copying sutras as his vocation," saw a dais in the underworld that was

[641] TPGJ51.

specifically constructed for Chen Wenjian, an accomplished lay practitioner of the *Diamond Sutra*:

> Chen De, a native of Tongshan District (in modern Deyang, Sichuan), had always had copying sutras as his vocation. Suddenly he fell sick with rashes and was being summoned by an underworld emissary [to the underworld]. [When he was there,] he saw a dais constructed in the underworld. De asked, "What platform is this?" The underworld emissary replied, "This is a *Prajñā* dais. Because Chen Wenjian is coming here, we built this platform to receive him." De, who [later] returned [to the human realm and] revived, related the entirety of the matter [to others]. People from near and far heard and knew about it, and vied to uphold the *Prajñā*.[642]

Not only does the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* in the underworld benefit underworld beings, recitation carried out in the human realm is similarly effective. In a tale, we have King Yama releasing hell beings on account of the monk Qingxu's recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* in the human realm, an event confirmed by Qingxu himself. We are told that as Qingxu was reciting the *Diamond Sutra* on Mount Sanzong in Qizhou on one occasion, he went into a state "unlike a dream and yet like a dream" which brought him to a place where he met King Yama, who told him that he would release hell beings owing to his recitation:

> He (Qingxu) said to the king, "There is a traveling monk (referring to himself) who recited the *Diamond Sutra* for the suffering beings of the three [evil] paths. Does the king know about it? When will the great king release the sentient beings who are suffering in hell?" The king replied to the master, "I, your disciple knew this beforehand. At noon tomorrow, I will release for the master's sake those who are less sinful." [643]

[642] JYJ51.

[643] JYJ43.

Here, King Yama refers humbly to himself as the disciple of Qingxu probably because the latter was a practitioner of the *Diamond Sutra*, and further confirms that he would release hell beings for his sake. Qingxu later confirmed King Yama's words when he encountered the released hell beings who came to thank him for saving them:

> …suddenly he saw uncountable people outside the western gate of the city. They were entering the city. There are many females and fewer males. Many were wearing mourning garment of hemp and few with auspicious clothing. They came before the monk, and each and every one of them paid their respects to him, "Thank you master for rescuing us." The monk replied, "We have never met, how have I rescued you?"
>
> There were three Liao slaves at the rear, and they also came forward to pay their respects, "Thank you master for saving us, your disciples." The monk asked, "Whose children are you? You look pale and very haggard. Where do you all come from? Your garments are all new, why is this so?" They replied, "We are the household members of Xuanzong Temple. We do not know how much we robbed from the Guan family grain and traded [illegally] in alcohol and meat. We were investigated by King Yama for the past five years, and had not drunk a drop of fluid. These garments were produced while we were alive, and we only first wore them after we died. When we were being investigated, our garments were stripped from our bodies and hung at the treetop at Naihe [bridge]. That is why they remain new." After they finished speaking, they took their leave. Such is the proof of the efficacy [of the *Diamond Sutra*].[644]

The implication of this tale is that the recitation and copying of the *Diamond Sutra* in the human realm can also intervene soteriologically in the fate of those who had died over a period of time, as the salvific powers of the *Diamond Sutra* and its devotees are described as transcending the human-underworld divide. Another tale relates the story of four underworld officials who obtained part of the merit produced from the recitation of the *Diamond*

[644] Ibid.

Sutra by a protagonist called Dong Jinchao. Because of this, when they were supposed to summon Dong Jinchao to the underworld, they summoned instead his neighbor who was "of the same surname and age" in place of Dong, so that they may continue to receive the merit produced by Dong.[645] The recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* is not just sought by members of the underworld, but in other realms as well. In a later tale from the *Baoying ji*, the protagonist, Ren Zixin, was invited to recite the *Diamond Sutra* in the Dragon Palace where he was told to "ascend the dais to recite the *Diamond Sutra*," and was awarded "a dozen precious jewels" after his recitation.[646]

Diamond Sutra narratives also represent devotees as powerful individuals who can delay their summons to the underworld when they recite the *Diamond Sutra*. This is exactly what happened to Wang Tuo, the protagonist of a tale collected in the *Jiyan ji*:

> During the Sui dynasty, Wang Tuo, a native of Qinzhou (modern Tianshui, Gansu) served as a military officer in the Soaring Hawk Garrison. Because of illness, he was retrenched from the post… At home, he searched for the Mahāyāna *Diamond Sutra*. During the Daye era (605–618), when the upheaval first stabilized, he searched but could not find the sutra. Later, a monk presented him with a roll of this *Prajñā Sutra*. [Since then,] he read the sutra five times daily. It had been three years since, and [now] he could read and recite it smoothly.
>
> Tuo later fell ill [again.] From afar he saw twenty-two ghosts come together to visit him. Tuo immediately recited the *Diamond Sutra*. [As such,] those ghosts distanced themselves from Tuo for more than a hundred paces, and did not dare to come nearer. The ghosts said to Tuo, "You! Stop reciting the sutra! You can't get away!" Tuo restrained himself and stopped reciting, and the ghosts came to Tuo's side…

[645] JY9.

[646] TPGJ64.

> Later a ghost riding on a horse came to report, "As for the person who previously recited the sutra, the king has ordered his release for six days." …Six days had already passed, [but due to] the power of reciting the sutra, Tuo was no longer being summoned. In the middle of the night, a person called out to him from the sky to which Tuo responded from afar. The person said, "Because you now read and recite the *Diamond Sutra*, the merit of this is immense. The king has ordered that you be let off. You will live to ninety years old." [After that, Tuo] conscientiously and diligently cultivated merit by reciting the sutra even more assiduously, without daring to be lax or negligent.[647]

Wang Tuo is described as repelling the ghosts with his recitation when they came to summon him. Although King Yama postponed his summons for six days, he was eventually let off and had his lifespan prolonged because the merit of his recitation was immense. A similar example is found in the case of Wei Xun, who was eventually not summoned because "protective deities safeguarded and surrounded him."[648] In another tale, the protagonist, Yu Wanying, was on his way to the underworld when he saw a man in the dark whose body was emitting light. It turned out that the man was reciting the *Diamond Sutra*. As Yu Wanying kept close to the man, the underworld emissaries who were escorting him did not dare to go near him and lost him eventually. The man gave him a copy of the *Diamond Sutra* and suggested that he recite it. After reciting it, Yu Wanying returned the sutra to the man and revived.[649]

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[647] JYJ23.

[648] JYJ59.

[649] TPGJ76.

2.1.4 The *Diamond Sutra* as the Foremost Sutra in the Underworld

We may recall the tale about Master Sengyan of the Zhaoti Monastery who was told by a fortune teller he would have a short lifespan, but when he sought advice to prolong his lifespan was assured that "the merit gained from receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra* according to the dharma is the greatest," and thus would prolong his life.[650] His recitation of the sutra was later confirmed by the physiognomist to have prolonged his lifespan, and he lived beyond his nineties. This tale gives an instance of how the *Diamond Sutra* was conceptualized or how those who related the tale hoped their audience would see it as a scripture that could generate the greatest merit to prolong lifespan.

Similarly, the *Diamond Sutra* is also considered the greatest Mahāyāna sutra in an account collected in the *Gongde ji*, where a mysterious person—perhaps an envoy of the underworld—appeared to the ailing monastic Fazang of the Baoshi Monastery, and recommended that Fazang produce the *Diamond Sutra*:

> In the fourth month of the second year of the Wude era (619), Zang fell ill and after twenty days, he saw a person clad in green on the high pavilion, holding a roll of scripture in his hands. The person said, "Dharma Master Zang, all the merit you have produced until now is wonderful and good, except that you have made a little

[650] GDJ1. Indeed, this conceptualization of the *Diamond Sutra* was influential enough for the trope to be appropriated in a later *Lotus Sutra* tale about the disciple of the monk Zhizang who was the protagonist of an early *Diamond Sutra* tale. Like Sengyan, Zhizang also prolonged his lifespan by reciting the *Diamond Sutra*. But in the *Lotus Sutra* story, his disciple—whose lifespan was supposed to expire at eighteen—was said to be able to prolong his lifespan to eighty years because he recited a *gāthā* from the *Lotus Sutra*. Moreover, Zhizang was made to admit that his disciple's recitation was more efficacious than the five years he "ascetically" upheld the *Diamond Sutra* for prolonging his life. See *Fahua zhuanji* 6, T51.2068: 73a18–b5.

> use of the property of the three treasures, and the resultant sins have yet to be eliminated. In my hand is the *Diamond Sutra*, the foremost Mahāyāna sutra. If you were to personally make one roll, then all your sins would be totally eliminated."[651]

It is uncertain whether Fazang's vision of the mysterious person should be construed as an oneiric vision. However, the person implied that Fazang was ill because he had made use of the property of the monastery for his own gain, and that the production of the *Diamond Sutra* would produce the merit necessary for him to recover from his illness. What is important here for our purpose is that the *Diamond Sutra* is up to the task because it is the "foremost Mahāyāna sutra." In response to the advice, Fazang said that he would not only produce the *Diamond Sutra* but also exhort others to do the same:

> Having heard this instruction, Zang replied, "If my illness heals, I aspire resolutely to produce a hundred copies of the *Diamond Sutra*. I, your disciple, must admit that although I have cultivated merit for my entire life, I have actually never copied the *Diamond Sutra*. Now that the Buddhas and bodhisattvas appeared, I have learnt and awakened, and would definitely not be negligent. I have only three robes and an alms bowl, and when I bare my right shoulder, I will try my best to exhort my revered fellow monks, disciples and acquaintances repeatedly on what I, your disciple, have come to know personally and take up the role to produce the *Diamond Sutra*."[652]

The tale ends with Fazang recovering from his illness, his confirmation of the truth of the words of the mysterious person, and the affirmation of the *Diamond Sutra* as the greatest Mahāyāna sutra:

> After several days, he could get up. According to his vow, he straightaway produced the "Bhagavat in Śrāvastī."[653] Having

[651] GDJ7.

[652] Ibid.

[653] This refers to Bodhiruci's translation of the *Diamond Sutra*.

> finished copying the first batch of the sutra, he further distributed them to others so that they would circulate them that they might be read and recited. He deeply knew that the mighty power of the Mahāyāna scripture, the *Diamond Sutra*, was the greatest, and inconceivable. Unusual affairs have their conditions; one who passes down and exhorts others to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* would obtain retribution and immeasurable merit.[654]

This tale is a fine example of the growing popularity of the *Diamond Sutra*, as it was being touted as the greatest Mahāyāna sutra because there was no emphasis on the *Diamond Sutra* in an earlier version of the tale that was collected in the *Jiyan ji*. However, this does not mean that this is a later idea because such descriptions can be found in the *Jiyan ji*. This example merely shows that because of how the *Diamond Sutra* was described, as tales like the above one circulated, it became ingrained in the consciousness of the teller who might have added this description in a subconscious manner. In fact, this is demonstrated in Zhai Fengda's colophon to his collection when he states that "the merit of this sutra is the greatest."

The two examples above are actually intimately related to the way the *Diamond Sutra* is being described in tales of the return-from-death theme. Besides, they are related to the theme of prolonging lifespan, which is often reflected in the experiences of protagonists who prolong their lives in the underworld by virtue of their devotion to the *Diamond Sutra*. In addition, such return-from-death *Diamond Sutra* stories reveal how the originators of these accounts conceived of the *Diamond Sutra* and wanted others to think of it as possessing the most exalted status among Mahāyāna sutras. In this

[654] GDJ7.

regard, we may recall that the underworld Censor-in-Chief—who requested Mr Lu to recite the *Diamond Sutra* for the beings in the hell—termed it the "essence of the sage's teaching."

In the underworld, to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* is considered the greatest merit. There are a few tales that shed light on how exalted the *Diamond Sutra* was in the underworld based on the fact that it could generate the greatest merit. One of them is collected in the *Jiyan ji* that recounts the return-from-death experience of a protagonist named Zhao Wenchang, an aide in the Court of the Imperial Treasury. The event was said to take place in the Kaihuang era of the Sui dynasty (591). Since Meng Xianzhong indicated that the source of this narrative was Xiao Yu's *Lingyan ji*, this tale must have circulated in the decades following its first telling and came to be compiled in the beginning of the seventh century. Below is an account of Wenchang's conversation with King Yama:

> The king asked Chang, "Throughout your entire life, what good deeds did you do? Chang replied, "My family was poor throughout my life, and I did not have excess merit. I single-mindedly recited solely the *Diamond Sutra*. When the king heard these words, he put his palms together, paid respect to [Chang], and praised him saying, "Wonderful! Wonderful! [Since] you received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, your merit is great and inconceivable (*gongde shen da, buke siyi* 功德甚大， 不可思議)."[655] The king said to the official who brought Chang there, "You had better investigate and check that you did not bring him here by mistake." [After checking,] the clerk who was in charge of the case informed the king, "He has indeed been wrongly brought here. This person still has a total of more than twenty years [of lifespan]." Having heard these words, the king personally checked that there was no mistake, and then he

[655] In another version of the same tale collection in the *Gongde ji* (GDJ4), it is "The merit obtained from receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra* is the greatest. It is unfathomable."

> said to Chang, "Go with the official to the [sutra] repository and bring the *Diamond Sutra* here."[656]

As in the previous tale, King Yama paid respects to Chang given his steadfastness to the *Diamond Sutra*, and also praised the unfathomable merit he received from his devotion. Because he was a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra*, it cast doubt on whether his lifespan had actually expired, for how is it possible for someone with such merit to die so soon? Indeed, a review confirmed that he was mistakenly brought there. Further, with the intention of asking Chang to recite the *Diamond Sutra*, King Yama had Chang fetch the sutra from the scriptorium:

> [The king] then sent someone to lead Chang there. [Together] they traveled in the southwest direction for about five or six *li* until they reached the place where the sutras were stored. He saw a building of a few dozen *jian*. The building was extremely beautiful, and it was full of sutra scrolls with golden rollers and precious wrappings. They were augustly adorned and ornately decorated beyond description. Chang then single-mindedly put his palms together, and closing his eyes, he randomly picked a scroll with a size that seemed like the *Diamond Sutra* [scroll] he formerly used for recitation. Its title was "The Supreme [Sutra] for [Cultivating] the Greatest Merit (*gongde zui wei diyi* 功德最為第一)." Chang, afraid that it might not be the *Prajñā*, pleaded with the official to allow him to swap it. The official did not allow it. Chang then unrolled the sutra and saw that it was indeed the *Diamond Sutra*.[657]

The fact that Chang managed to select the *Diamond Sutra* was not coincidental; it is implied that there is an underworld copy of the *Diamond Sutra* upheld by the practitioner in the human realm. What is most interesting is it is known by a different name in the underworld: *The Supreme [Sutra] for*

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[656] JYJ53.

[657] Ibid.

[Cultivating] the Greatest Merit. It is a name that clearly states what it really is and reveals the reason for its exalted status in the underworld. The tale continues and relates the following:

> [After that, Wenchang] was brought before the king. The king ordered someone to hold the sutra in the West and Chang to stand in the East. The king commanded an official to bring a seven-jeweled chair and had Chang sit on it facing west to recite the sutra. Overall, he was able to recite the sutra smoothly. At that time, the king taught Chang how to return home, and also he reminded him, "Continue to receive and uphold this sutra with humility, and do not be negligent or stop doing so." He also ordered Chang to encourage all people to read and recite the sutra. The king again ordered someone to lead Chang out through the southern gate.[658]

Noteworthy here are the words of King Yama. Not only was Chang exhorted to continue his devotion, but he was also ordered by King Yama to "encourage all people to read and recite the sutra." These words are also meant for the audience of the tales.

In one narrative, a district defender named Li Qiuyi was brought to the underworld because he was accused by the animals he killed.[659] During his interrogation in the underworld, the king asked him: "For your entire life until now, what good deeds have you done? Did you recite and uphold the supreme and greatest sutra (*zuisheng diyi jing* 最勝第一經)?" It is interesting that this question anticipates Li's subsequent reply to the king since we know later that the king was referring to the *Diamond Sutra*. In any case, Li told the king that he had not cultivated merit in his life but was fond of hunting. However, he also recalled having once produced a copy of the *Diamond Sutra*. As with

[658] Ibid.

[659] JYJ64.

other tales, the king, having heard that, paid his respects to Li by putting his palms together and asked him to ascend the steps. The king—knowing that Li was not aware of the greatness of the *Diamond Sutra*—then told him that the *Diamond Sutra* is called *The Supreme Sutra for [Cultivating] the Greatest Merit* (*zuisheng diyi gongde jing* 最勝第一功德經) in the underworld. In another tale that involves animals pressing charges against the protagonist, the superlative status of the *Diamond Sutra* as an 'afterlife' sutra par excellence is implied with a comparison with two other popular sutras in medieval China. The account tells of Wang Han, a peasant, who was brought to the underworld—even though he was not due to die yet—because he was accused of causing the death of a cow and two dogs.[660] When he offered to copy the *Lotus Sutra* and *Suvarṇaprabhāsôttama-sūtra* for them, they rejected his offer and instead requested that he "uphold the *Diamond Sutra* seven times daily" for them. Moreover, the power and influence of the *Diamond Sutra* over the *Lotus Sutra* is interestingly related by a tale collected in the *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, where King Yama was depicted as more impressed when the protagonist, the monk Shi Huidu, mentioned that he recited the *Diamond* and *Lotus Sutras*:

> The king asked Du, "What [good] deeds do you have? Du replied, "I recite the *Lotus Sutra*." The king was awed and snapped his fingers. He further asked, "What other sutra do you recite?" Du replied, "The *Diamond Sutra*." The king was even more awed with respect. He had the golden chair brought out, where he sat down with Du, and requested that he recite [the *Diamond Sutra*].[661]

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[660] JY18.

[661] *Hongzan fahua zhuan* 6: T51.2067: 29c25–30a5.

This conceptualization of the *Diamond Sutra* as the afterlife sutra par excellence was certainly noticed by compilers of the later *Fahua zhuanji,* as we found a tale that sought to appropriate this trope for the *Lotus Sutra*. One of the stories relates an account about the monk Qinghui who was purportedly a disciple of Qingxu. With a similar storyline to the one about Qingxu mentioned earlier, Qinghui recited the *Lotus Sutra* for suffering beings of the three paths. Just when he was troubled by not receiving any proof of the efficacy of his recitation, he dreamed of a journey to the underworld where the king told him that he had released all suffering beings—regardless of the gravity of their wrongdoings—on account of his recitation.[662]

While the trope of an afterlife sutra par excellence was appropriated, the many illustrations of the power of the *Diamond Sutra* in the underworld had probably sealed its reputation as such when the above *Lotus Sutra* tales appeared. For instance, the power of the *Diamond Sutra* is demonstrated in a vivid and dramatic account witnessed by a soldier, Sun Xian, during his sojourn in the underworld:

> Before Liang Chongyi (d. 781) resisted the military force in Xiangzhou (modern Xiangfan, Hubei), a minor commander, Sun Xian, suddenly died but after two nights unexpectedly revived. Sun Xian had dreamed that he went to a place resembling a king's palace, where the protocol and security were very strict…Xian also said he saw a man being interrogated repeatedly regarding his wrongdoings and good deeds. The man had always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, but he also liked to eat meat. On his left, there were a thousand rolls of scriptures, and on his right, there was meat piled like a mountain. Because the amount of meat was more than the amount of scriptures, the man was about to be heavily punished. Suddenly, a spark of fire flew from within the heap of scriptures

[662] *Fahua zhuanji* 6, T51.2068: 74c28–75a27.

> toward the mountain of meat, and within a short moment, consumed it completely. The man thereupon walked through the air and left.[663]

Because the man whom Sun Xian saw upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, his sins, represented by the "meat piled like a mountain" was destroyed by a spark of fire issued forth by the scriptures, which we are told, were less than the amount of meat (i.e., sins).[664] It is such animated illustrations of the merit and power of the *Diamond Sutra* that established it as the undisputed afterlife sutra in medieval China.

Concluding Remarks

Diamond Sutra tales of the return-from-death theme are some of the most important tales in the collections. They are unique in that they serve to validate and authenticate the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*—what people claim it was capable of—from a different perspective, that of the underworld. Introduced long before the Tang, the accounts of such themes had gained acceptance such that the originators of *Diamond Sutra* tales used it to provide proofs of the efficacy of the sutra, often through King Yama, whose respect for and words of praise of the sutra and their practitioners conferred greater authority and credibility than the testimonies of human beings. This authentication from the underworld of a sutra that wields great influence in the human realm is one of the innovations of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*. The authentication, in addition, is often affirmed by the protagonists

[663] JY3.

[664] In JY6, the *Diamond Sutra* is so powerful that the mere chanting of its title is sufficient to deliver the protagonist out of danger.

themselves, witnesses, or narrators of the tales. Furthermore, the message to persuade the readers of the stories to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* was put into the mouth of King Yama or the protagonists, whose exhortations would have seemed more compelling than one related under less unusual circumstances.

2.2 Afterlife Beliefs and Practices

Besides conveying the knowledge that the *Diamond Sutra* is hailed in the underworld for being the foremost scripture for producing the greatest merit, return-from-death tales also relate that this is disseminated to other people in the human realm after the protagonists revived. In one account, when the protagonist Zhao Wenruo told King Yama that he had upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, the king told him that that is "the greatest and supreme merit" (*zuida diyi gongde* 最大第一功德). When he revived, he further "received and upheld the *Prajñā* assiduously and diligently without remiss. Whenever he met his relatives and friends, he would persuade all to receive and uphold the sutra."[665] Besides protagonists who revived to convey the message, one tale relates how Zhang Jiayou, a deceased former devotee of the *Diamond Sutra*, returned to the human world to convey the message. Zhang appears to his friend Lao, who told the account, and said that Zhang appeared to him and told him that his recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* had helped him stay out of trouble in the underworld. Further, Zhang informed Lao that he himself is due

[665] JYJ54.

for a good rebirth, and urged Lao to recite the *Diamond Sutra*, as well as to tell his own brother to do the same.[666]

These tales convey how such messages about the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* were transmitted or claimed to have been transmitted. Whether it was through protagonists who related their encounters in the underworld, the dead who returned from the underworld, or other people—their close ones, friends and acquaintances—who were recipients of such messages, the circulation of such accounts undoubtedly established it as the most efficacious afterlife sutra in medieval China. The consistent practice of reciting and copying the *Diamond Sutra* touted in these tales in preparation of death, for averting an early death, or being given a favorable audience with the underworld king was certainly widely carried out by medieval Chinese society as corroborated by other sources.

Stephen Teiser, in his study of the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*, discussed the *Diamond Sutra* copies—found among the Dunhuang manuscript cache—made by an old man in his eighties.[667] The eight extant Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra* copied by this old man indicate that they were produced between 905 and 907. The earliest manuscript was copied when he was eighty-two years old, and the last when he was eighty-four. In three of them, the old man states that they were written with ink mixed with his blood. Although it might not be apparent from his dedications written in

[666] GYJ29 (TPGJ52).

[667] Teiser 1994: 121–8. See also Appendix 12 (Teiser 1994: 244) for a list of manuscripts copied by the old man.

some of the copies, the old man was most likely focused on preparing for his own demise by producing those manuscripts. In most of his dedications, he had stated that his main intention was for the copies to be transmitted to "believers" and "people of believing hearts."[668] Because the *Diamond Sutra* emphasizes the inconceivable merit to be obtained by propagating the sutra and lauds these practices in the underworld, the old man's copying of the *Diamond Sutra* and his intention to transmit it are certainly acts that would bring forth merit much needed for the day of reckoning in the underworld. If the production of a single copy of the *Diamond Sutra* by Li Qiuyi was praiseworthy and meritorious enough for him to avert an early death, how much more so would be the production of multiple copies by this old man? His focus on preparing for a good afterlife can also be discerned by the fact that he subsequently copied the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*, which was gaining prominence as an important afterlife sutra on the ground at the beginning of the tenth century.[669] This old man probably knew that the *Diamond Sutra* was an efficacious afterlife sutra, perhaps just like the way people in the tales came to known of it.

Medieval Chinese people who came to be acquainted with this identity of the *Diamond Sutra* certainly did not recite or copy it only for themselves.

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[668] S5444: "He wrote this sutra with his own hand for transmission to believers" (手寫此經，流傳信士); S5965 and BD08909: "handwritten for transmission" (手寫流傳"); S5669: "He wrote this *Diamond Sutra* for transmission to people of believing hearts" (寫此金經流專信心人); P2876a: "He wrote this scripture with his own hand for propagation to all of the believers in Sha Prefecture" (手寫此經，流布沙州一切信士).

[669] There are three copies of the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* found in Dunhuang written by the same old man: San535, BD01226, and S4530.

Additionally, return-from-death and visitation-by-the-dead accounts were not the only sources that informed medieval Chinese society of the efficacy of the sutra in the underworld. *Diamond Sutra* narratives also provide alternative avenues in which its status in the underworld is known as they introduce beliefs related to the underworld and its mechanism. The tale below implies that Yu Chang, a Tang official, probably came to know about the status of the *Diamond Sutra* in the underworld because he was recruited to work part-time there. The tale also relates how he applied himself to the devotional practice of the *Diamond Sutra* when his wife passed away:

> In the past, Yu Chang, adjutant of Qingzhou (modern Qingyang, Gansu), served as an office manager in Jingfu (modern Jingzhou, Hebei; superprefecture). Everyday after the first watch, he would gasp for breath and became weak and exhausted. His whole body would break out in sweat. By daybreak when the rooster started to crow, he would no longer experience those afflictions. He just felt frail physically and distressed mentally. People around him thought it strange and asked what was happening to him. He remained tight-lipped and did not reply. His wife, Madam Liu, asked to call for the physician, [but] he did not allow her to do so. His wife therefore secretly asked him about the reason for this. He replied, "I am not ill at all. It is just that I labored during the day to solve office matters and at night I have to preside over underworld matters. That's all!" His wife therefore inquired about underworld matters, but he just said, "Good and bad retribution are all like shadows and echoes." He said no more than that. When his wife probed further, he did not answer anymore. However, whenever something was about to happen, he would know all of it beforehand. He was actually primed by hidden forces. Still he did not explicitly talk about them. He did not disclose those things even to his siblings, wife, and children. Every five or six years, he would feel those grueling afflictions.
>
> Later, when he was mourning his wife, Lady Longcheng, he recited the *Diamond Sutra*, and as such he no longer served as an underworld official. Thus his maxim was: "Among all the sutras, this sutra is supreme in terms of its meritorious powers." (*ci yu zhujing zhong, fuli wei zui* 此於諸經中，福力為最) Thereupon he

> ordered his children and grandchildren to uphold and recite the sutra.[670]

Although there are Six Dynasties accounts of living persons—who later died—taking up positions in the underworld, the motif of a living person who worked part-time in the underworld was probably introduced in the Tang. Such tales indicate the divide between the human realm and the underworld was more porous than people might have conceived. As a part-time official in the underworld, it is implicit in the tale that Yu Chang knew the workings of the underworld, and thus also the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* there. It is noteworthy that Yu Chang was relieved of his underworld duty—no doubt, an unwelcome one, and perhaps one imposed by previous wrongdoings—owing to his recitation of the sutra although it was meant for his deceased wife. Such representations are apt for conveying the extent of the meritorious power of the sutra. In the tale, Yu Chang probably realized that the potency of the sutra 'worked' for his wife as well as relieving him of his underworld duties, as he concluded that the *Diamond Sutra* contained ultimate merit.

In two other tales, devotional practices related to the *Diamond Sutra* were carried out by protagonists for their deceased parents as they mourned their deaths. Both of these tales were originally collected in the *Mingbao shiyi*, and they feature events happening in the beginning of the Tang dynasty. In the first tale, Li Qiangguan, while mourning his father's death, "pricked [his fingers to draw] blood to copy a roll each of the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Heart*

[670] JYJ58.

Sutra, and two rolls of the *Suiyuan wangsheng jing*." Although[671] there is no description of the posthumous fate of his father, Li Qiangguan—as well as the reader—was assured that the merit obtained from such an act would be delivered to his deceased father by "an unusual fragrance in the garden," an auspicious sign signifying the presence of divine beings. In another story, Qiao Qing's filial and pious act was also followed by an auspicious sign:

> Previously a rectifier at the Court of Judicial Review and an Adjutant of Henei (modern Qiaozuo, Henan), Qiao Qing was pure and sincere, and had excellent conduct. During the Yonghui era (650–655), he was made a Revenue Manager of Yangzhou (in modern Yangzhou, Jiangsu). [After] his mother passed away, he went into mourning, and became emaciated as a result. He pricked his chest to draw blood to copy one roll of the *Diamond Sutra*. Soon after, two *lingzhi* mushrooms emerged beside the hut [in which he stayed for mourning]. After nine days, they grew one *chi* and eight *cun*. They had green stripes and vermilion tops. Each day, they secreted one *sheng* of juice. Bystanders who consumed it said that it tasted sweet like honey. After being drawn, they secreted again. This happened four times.[672]

These two tales are important in several aspects. They indicate that the tradition of blood writing probably started long before the old man in Dunhuang produced copies of the *Diamond Sutra* with his blood.[673] The purported potency of sutras copied with blood has been discussed elsewhere, but such instances are not surprising when the posthumous fate of loved ones was involved. In addition to the details on copying the *Diamond Sutra*, these

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[671] JYJ37.

[672] JYJ40. An early instance of recitation of sutra while mourning for one's parent can be found in tale 15 of the *Mingbao ji* (Gjertson 1989: 192–3).

[673] In the colophons of P2876b, S5451 and S5669, the old man in his eighties indicated that he had used blood to copy the *Diamond Sutra*. Blood writing is also attested in other Dunhuang manuscripts, for instance S0276vb (*Dunhuang yishu suoyin xinbian* 2000: 9a). For discussions on the practice of blood writing, see Zhang 1975: 224–230 and Kieschnick 2000, and Yu 2012: 37–61.

tales also provide information on how Buddhist practice was incorporated in the afterlife practices of medieval Chinese people. The tale about Qiao Qing describes an instance in which the copying of the sutra was incorporated into the traditional practice of mourning for one's parent at the gravesite—probably for a period of three years. We can only imagine the appeal of such tales for they combine the time-honored practice of filial mourning with exemplary devotional Buddhist piety. This practice is just a step away from the practice advocated by the composer and advocate of the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*, which combines the seven Sevens memorial rites[674] derived from Buddhism and the traditional mortuary practice of a three-year mourning period.[675] In any case, the copying of the *Diamond Sutra* was a practice engaged in by medieval Chinese society—among a number of reasons—for the posthumous well-being of their deceased family members. We find dedications appended to Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra,* which were expressly copied for such a purpose. Not only were they written for the elderly dead, but some were written for the young who died premature deaths. Among the Dunhuang manuscripts, three were written for deceased offspring.[676]

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[674] They are seven memorial rites conducted for the well-being of the deceased. They are based on the belief in an intermediate existence, a period which begins at death and ends when the deceased is reborn. The opportunity for rebirth presents itself when the karmic conditions are right after seven days. If rebirth is not achieved, the being has to wait for another opportunity seven days later. This could repeat six times, up to a period of forty-nine days, thus the name "seven Sevens." The memorial rites are held every seven days so as to facilitate the rebirth of the deceased. See Teiser 1994: 23–4; Cuevas 2007: 303–4.

[675] Miranda Brown points out that although the chief mourner was supposed to observe a three-year mourning period, this period is "open to debate and interpretation." Moreover, it is not strictly observed by all. See Brown 2007:13.

[676] Shanghai Library ms. 26 (for deceased son; dated 707); P2031 (for deceased son; 712); S2564 (for deceased daughter; c. eighth century).

In some stories, practices related to the *Diamond Sutra* are emphasized in scenarios in which they play a decisive role in tipping the situation to the advantage of the deceased. The recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* by friends and relatives for a family member, whose fate in the underworld was uncertain, was enlisted in a tale about a protagonist named Li Siyi, who was brought to the underworld because he was denounced by pigs and sheep for killing them. When his trial was in a deadlock due to insufficient evidence, he was allowed to return to the human realm, after which he enlisted the help of his intimates:

> Not long after he returned home, Siyi was once again summoned [to the underworld]. Before leaving, he repented and took the precepts under Dharma Master Xuantong of Qingjing Monastery. He widely exhorted his friends, family members and relatives to intone the *Diamond Sutra* five thousand times both for those sentient beings who died as victims of injustice and for those who could not intone the sutra by themselves. Having said these words, he then passed away.[677]

The concept of merit-transfer is again invoked here when Li Siyi asked those close to him to intone the *Diamond Sutra*. But what is important is that he did not ask them to intone for him but rather for those who were less fortunate or did not have the capacity to do so. Although he might have had the animals in mind, this shows a more nuanced understanding of merit-transfer, as the devotion of merit acquired by oneself due to works of supererogation facilitated the salvation of others, rather than a linear transfer of merit involving just two parties. While it is implied that the devotional actions of friends and family and the merit obtained as a result would somehow help him out of his brush with death, Li was finally 'acquitted' when the animals that

[677] JYJ26.

previously denounced him came forward to testify to his innocence after he "resolved to comprehend the meaning of the *Prajñā Sutra* [so as to] exhort others to acquire knowledge about it." His acquittal here was due not simply to reciting the sutra for the animals, but to an edifying resolve—in tune with the message of the *Diamond Sutra*—to propagate it, which is inconceivably meritorious. Primacy is given to acting in accord to the sutra, and the merit thus obtained would naturally resolve the dire straits faced by the protagonists.

While the indigenous concept of *chengfu*—discussed in Chapter 2—postulates the inheritance of sins by offspring due to the wrongdoings of ancestors, the Buddhist concept of merit-transfer must have appealed to medieval Chinese people since merit could still be created for those who could not make merit or amends for their wrongdoings for some reason. Some *Diamond Sutra* tales reflect the belief that if someone was seriously ill, his/her spirit could have made a trip to the underworld to be judged. During this period, if merit could be created for that person, he/she could prolong his/her lifespan. This is illustrated by a number of tales, one of which relates the experience of Yao Dai, the protagonist who encountered the spirit of a fellow villager in the underworld when he was returning to the human realm:

> When Dai first entered [the place], he did not see anyone on guard in front of the hall and the gates. But when he was leaving the place, he saw a few thousand people on both sides of the hall…Among them, there was someone with a broken waist and an exposed head. He told Dai to quickly go away, and that that was not the place to talk. Dai looked back and saw that the person was actually Zhang Xian, a fellow villager who lived beside Dai's hamlet. He had been ill for many years, suffering from a condition in which

> he could not consume fluid through his mouth. People from his hometown who saw him all thought that his was a matter of definite death. His wife, children and relatives had all prepared a coffin [for him]. [Later,] after Yao Dai regained consciousness, he told Zhang Xian's children to copy the [*Diamond*] *Sutra* for him, and within ten days, his condition improved, and he was released [from the underworld].[678]

Because Yao Dai informed Zhang Xian's family to copy the *Diamond Sutra* for him, Zhang Xian was able to recover from his illness and thus prolong his lifespan. Indeed, the *Diamond Sutra*, as discussed, was often featured in tales in which protagonists prolonged their life due to their devotion. According to a story collected in the *Guangyi ji*, the *Diamond Sutra* is also known as the *Sutra for Prolonging Lifespan* (*Yanming jing* 延命經) in the underworld.[679] The protagonist of the tale, Zhang Mou, an administrative assistant at the Censorate, encountered a ghost who was on a mission to summon him. Because the ghost was indebted to Zhang Mou for letting him board the boat and offering him food, the ghost agreed to delay the summons by one day, and told Zhang that if he could intone the *Sutra for Prolonging Lifespan* a thousand times, he would be able to prolong his lifespan. Because Zhang did not know the sutra, the ghost told him that the *Sutra for Prolonging Lifespan* was known as the *Diamond Sutra* in the human realm. When Zhang asked the ghost how he could possibly accomplish that in a day, the ghost suggested that

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[678] JYJ62.

[679] Tale 37 in Dudbridge 1995. See also TPGJ112. Note the similarity with JYJ3. This tale is collected in post-Tang collections: *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan zhuan* 2, X87.1634: 512a13–b19 and *Jin'gang ganying gushi fenlei jiyao*, X87.1636: 558b13–c1 (as *Xuming jing* 續命經; Sutra for Prolong Lifespan). It is also known as the sutra for prolonging lifespan a different account in *Jin'gang jing chiyan ji* 3, X87.1635:542c2–12. See Section 1 of Chapter 5 for an introduction to these collections.

as long as it is intoned by human beings that would do. Thus, Zhang gathered people together, and they intoned the *Diamond Sutra* a thousand times before the ghost appeared again to inform him that he had been spared.

Perhaps what is most striking about the *Diamond Sutra* as an afterlife sutra is its power to save deceased who are suffering for the wrongdoings they had committed while alive. This idea is represented in the account about Zhao Wenchang. When Zhao was returning to the human realm, he met the famous Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou, who was suffering in hell, and who begged Zhao to help him:

> [While on his way out,] Chang saw Emperor Wu [of Northern Zhou] who was incarcerated inside the eastern chamber of the gate… Emperor Wu said to Chang, "You are my former subject. You may return home, and on my behalf, convey fully to the Sui Emperor that all my sins have been settled, with the exception of my persecution of Buddhism that has yet to be resolved… You, go back and quickly beg Emperor Wen of the Sui Dynasty on my behalf for a little merit." …After three days, his illness gradually improved. He fully presented a memorial to Emperor Wen of the Sui. The emperor then issued an imperial order to have all monasteries within the country hold a fast for Emperor Wu for three days and recite the *Diamond Sutra*…[680]

By portraying Emperor Wu asking Zhao to have merit produced on his behalf, and the Sui Emperor's order for a three-day fast and the recitation of the sutra, the message of this tale is that the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* would produce merit needed by Emperor Wu to end his suffering in hell. In a story first collected in the *Mingbao shiyi*, the merit obtained from copying the sutra and its transference to the deceased was able to give the sinful dead a chance for a better rebirth:

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[680] JYJ53.

> In the first year of the Longshuo era (661), in Luozhou's (modern, Luoyang, Henan) Jingfu Monastery, a servant girl, Ren Wuniang, died in Bhikṣunī Xiuxing's room. Xiuxing erected a *lingzuo* for [her]. In the middle of the night more than a month later, Ren's elder and younger sisters, and younger brother suddenly heard sounds of moaning coming from the spiritual seat (*lingzuo*). Initially her younger brother was very frightened. Later he asked her [what happened] to which she replied, "When I was alive, I ate meat in the monastery. Because I had done that, I am suffering great pain. There are sores on my body…
>
> She again said to her elder sister, "When I was a small child, I contracted a disease. Thereupon a crab was killed to obtain its juice, which was applied to my sores so that I could recover. Now I have entered the Hell of Knife Forest. I can see seven broken knives in my flesh. May my elder sister be compassionate and save me from all these by making merit [for me]. I know this must be difficult for you, my elder sister. Having died, I cannot help myself. I have nothing but my personal clothes. They are of no use to a dead person. Now they are still not damaged. I request that you take and use them." Before her elder sister could reply, she said, "I will go bring them myself." After some time, she again said, "I have brought the clothes here; they are now on the bier." Her elder sister took a look at them, and they were indeed the clothes she was buried with.
>
> Her elder sister thereupon sent them to the Jingtu monastery, where Master Baoxian was. Her elder sister asked the master to copy the *Diamond Sutra* [for Wuniang]. Each time after one roll was copied, Wuniang reported that one knife was taken out of her. When all seven rolls were copied, she said that the seven knives had all been taken out of her and she would soon be reborn owing to the good created on her behalf. She bade a tearful farewell to her elder sister and younger brother and then departed.[681]

This tale clearly illustrates that merit obtained from copying the *Diamond Sutra* was transferred to Ren Wuniang who was able to be reborn. In a narrative collected in the *Taiping guangji*, the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* is capable of appeasing the vengeful dead, in addition to reviving the newly dead.[682] Therein, the daughter of Li Yuanyi, an adjutant of Raozhou,

[681] JYJ34.

[682] TPGJ75.

suddenly died. Her spirit later appeared to her husband, Yan Ne, requesting him to seek the help of an indigenous religious adept. The adept disclosed to Yan Ne that the killer of his wife was General Wang, who was buried under a pillar in Li's residence, and that Yan Ne's wife could be revived if he copied the *Diamond Sutra* for the general and had monks recite it. Yan Ne obeyed, and his wife revived. Not only did they rebury the remains of the general, we are told that Li Yuanyi also "copied a hundred rolls of the sutra as offering to those lonesome dead in the underworld."

Sometimes, religious adepts of indigenous traditions are roped in to attest to the power of Buddhism. In this tale, the religious adept did not offer an indigenous formula to Yan Ne's problem, but the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* for the general who was obviously a vengeful ghost whose body was probably left uninterred under the Li residence. Because the residence was built on the spot where the general lay, the general had taken its residents as his 'enemy' or 'debtor' for trampling on his uninterred remains. Therefore copies of the *Diamond Sutra* bearing dedications to "enemies and creditors" may refer not only to beings from human realms, but also to those in other realms as well. For example, the colophon of a certain Linghu Mou appended to his copy of the *Diamond Sutra*—probably written in the eighth century—states: "For the dragon king, the ghost king of effecting illness (*xingbing guiwang* 行病鬼王), enemies and creditors."[683] Since the dragon king and the

[683] S1746 (金剛般若經令狐某題記: 為龍王，行病鬼王，怨家債主。) The dragon king is mentioned a few times in *Diamond Sutra* tales, often as the object of supplication for rain (JYJ49, 65, and 68), and once, when a protagonist was invited to the dragon palace to recite

ghost kings hail from other realms, Linghu Mou might have in mind enemies and creditors from other realms, especially the ghosts of the dead. In any case, the copying and recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* was meant to create merit for the general to be reborn and therefore appeased, while at the same time revive Yan Ne's wife. By adding that Li Yuanyi also copied the *Diamond Sutra* for the dead in the underworld, the tale emphasizes that such an act and the merit obtained can also benefit people who are not related by blood. We may recall that Zhai Fengda copied the *Diamond Sutra* for "believers as well as departed and deceased spirits, including his current parents and people of the whole region."

The notion of merit-transfer widens the field to which the devotional practices of the *Diamond Sutra* can be applied. Thus, we find copies of the sutra dedicated to various people and causes, which are similar to Zhai Fengda's copy. Copies of the sutra can be produced for oneself, but they are often dedicated to the immediate family of the copier, especially the parents.[684] It is also noteworthy that these dedications are often also made to ancestors of the past seven generations. For example, a colophon to a copy of the sutra dated to 723 states: "For seven generations of deceased forebears, my parents, all beings in the dharmadhātu, I respectfully copied one roll of the *Diamond*

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the *Diamond Sutra* (TPGJ64). The ghost king of effecting illnesses appears in a *Taiping Guanji* tale visiting a protagonist who was ill (TPGJ97). Another colophon that mentions "enemies and creditors" is found appended to S5450, which was probably copied in the beginning of the tenth century: "On behalf of all enemies and creditors, for all those who have made the *saṃghārāma* impure, and so that all heavy sins may be wiped away." (為一切怨家債主，所有污泥伽藍，一切重罪，悉得消滅。) Translation from Teiser 1994: 135.

[684] S87, Shanghai Museum ms. 19 (3323; dated 714), BD06968 (Beijing翔68; dated 723), S2824, Gansu Provincial Museum ms. 18, Or.8210/P2, and P2094.

Sutra, and vow to read and chant Amitābha seven times to be spared from all entanglements, and for all to similarly enjoy this fortune."[685] This indicates that as medieval Chinese society turned to Buddhism, it still retained traditional afterlife beliefs.[686] By subscribing to the Buddhist concept of merit-transfer to benefit the deceased separated temporally and spatially, such dedications show that medieval Chinese people believed that their ancestors for the past seven generations could still benefit from their pious acts before they entered the realm of undifferentiated ancestors.[687] The belief that the power of the Buddhist faith reaches the past seven generations of ancestors is already present in sutras translated in the Six Dynasties, such as the *Fo shuo yulanpen jing* 佛說盂蘭盆經 (Sutra of the *Avalambana* Spoken by the Buddha; T16.685) and the *Fo shuo baoen feng pen jing* 佛說報恩奉盆經 (Sutra on Offering Bowls to Repay Kindness; T16.686).[688] The main difference between the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and the cult of the Ghost Festival—which is based on these two sutras—is the role played by monastics. While the *Diamond Sutra* cult as gathered from these tales shows little monastic

[685] BD06968: "為七代先亡及所父母一切法界眾生，敬寫金剛經一卷，願讀唸阿彌陀七遍，俱免盖纏，咸同此福。"

[686] S2824 (c. tenth century; 上為七代父母、下及妻女、並大地蠢動眾生、悉願離苦解脫、拾邪歸正。皆發菩提心、常聞佛法。). Other similar dedications are found appended to the following manuscript: S87 (700): "For the Golden Wheel, Sagely Divine Emperor, seven generations of forebears, and all young and elderly in the family" (為金輪空繩皇帝及七世父母合家大小). Shanghai Museum ms. 19: "For the sagely master, seven generations of forebears, all relatives, and beings in the dharmadhātu" (為聖主、七代父母、及諸親、法界眾生。).

[687] McRae 2003: 147.

[688] Teiser 1996: 51.

participation, the monastic is pivotal to the Ghost Festival.[689] The bulk of dedications found appended to *Diamond Sutra* copies made by laypeople corroborated the widespread lay practice of reciting and copying the *Diamond Sutra* as represented in its tales.

The dedications made for ancestors and the deceased also indicate concerns beyond the family, for they are dedicated to beings in the six paths and four births,[690] and even sentient beings of the dharmadhātu.[691] An interesting colophon probably dated to the tenth century states the following beneficiaries of the *Diamond Sutra* copy:

> Reverently copied by the Buddhist disciple Wang Chao, firstly, on behalf of his parents of seven previous incarnations, and secondly, for the benefit of his [deceased] wife and daughter, as well as the wriggling and moving creatures of the whole earth, praying that all living things may obtain release from suffering and emancipation from the body, reject the false and return to the true, all acquire profound intelligence and constantly hear the Law of Buddha.[692]

Of note here is the mention of "wriggling creatures of the great earth" (*dadi chundong zhongsheng* 大地蠢動眾生). There is a possibility that the dedicator might have been a peasant, whose plowing of the land would inadvertently killed "wriggling creatures." It is uncertain whether the injunction against killing was well-taken, or if people who made such dedications were mindful of

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[689] For the role of the monastic in the Ghost Festival, see Teiser 1996.

[690] *Diamond Sutra* Manuscript in Lin Xiongguang 林熊光 collection (Ikeda 1990: 202).

[691] *Diamond Sutra* manuscript discovered in Kucha (colophon 688 in Ikeda 1990: 249) from Ōtani Niraku Villa Collection 大谷家二樂莊, S3686, Shanghai Museum ms. 19, BD06968.

[692] S2824 (佛弟子王超敬寫，上為七代父母下及妻女，拜大地蠢勤眾生，悉願離苦解脫，捨邪歸正，皆發菩提心，常聞佛聞法。)

accounts of animals pressing charges against their killers in the underworld. However, it is possible that the latter might have had some effects on the consciousness of medieval Chinese society. In a dedication of the *Diamond Sutra* preceding the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*, the commissioner states: "Presented so that the spirit of an old plowing ox may be reborn in the Pure Land. When Maitreya descends to be born on earth, may we together hear the Sage's Law in the first assembly."[693] Notwithstanding the possibility that this is, as Teiser put forth, an instance of compassion for animals, it is also likely that the dedicator—having heard of those underworld accounts—might have wanted to avoid the fate of being denounced by animals in the underworld after they died.[694] This is especially so when we do not know in what circumstance the ox had perished. Thus, the posthumous animal well-being sought here would also translate to posthumous well-being for oneself.

Like the above dedication, a few others also express a more edifying aspiration for liberating suffering beings, correct awakening, and attaining rebirth in the pure lands.[695] As introduced earlier, there are a few *Diamond*

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693 S5544, translated in Teiser 1994: 136.

694 Teiser 1994: 137.

695 Academia Sinica, Bo Shinian Library Collection (中央研究院傅斯年圖書館藏) ms. 188078–79 (清信優婆□□氏奉為記身敬寫，金剛般若願□□生淨土。); Gansu Provincial Museum ms. 18 (see Ikeda 1990: 561; 奉為父母，及願事官清吉，福祿日新，應災障總願消除，父母眷屬、兄弟姐妹合宅萬福，冤家債主並願棄。此功德往生兩方。日常受持。); manuscript in Lin Xiongguang 林熊光 collection (Ikeda 1990: 202; 為父母造金剛般若經兩卷。今得成，敬報鴻慈。普願六道四生，具燈正覺。); *Diamond Sutra* manuscript in the Dunhuang Mo Zhenrou 敦煌寞真柔 collection (Ikeda 1990: 210; 總章二年二月八日，弟子令狐石住，為父長口患病，發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提□，為父母寫金剛般若經二部。 伏願十方大地，三千大千世界諸佛及諸大菩薩,諸天賢聖善神王，七世師長父母，含靈□□□□一切□□□□，所有書寫一字公口，願住父百病消除，無諸災□□□。); S2824 (Ikeda 1990: 511; 上為七代父母，下及妻女，並大地蠢動眾生，悉願離苦解脫，拾邪歸正。皆發菩提心，常聞佛法。)

Sutra accounts about protagonists who attained rebirth in the heaven or pure land. In fact, Yu Chang—whom we mentioned earlier as an example of someone who recited the *Diamond Sutra* as he mourned for his deceased wife—is described as being bound for the pure land at the end of his life:

> When he was eighty-four years old, he unexpectedly fell sick. When he was on the verge of dying, still he recited the sutra without stop. On the day when they placed cotton in his nostrils and mouth, his facial expression was cheerful. In a while, there was a delightful fragrance that filled the whole room. Such misty fragrance had never been detected before in previous generations. Yu Chang himself said that there were transformed beings who came to welcome him and he would go to the pure realm in the west. He then bade farewell to his friends and relatives, and after doing so, he expired.[696]

In addition to tales such as the above which describe protagonists achieving a good death indicative of a favorable rebirth, a few protagonists were given a prophecy by King Yama that they "would definitely be reborn in the pure land" after they passed away.[697] Despite featuring in dedications and *Diamond Sutra* stories, the pure land as a religious goal does not feature as much as it does in *Lotus Sutra* tales.[698] If anything, the *Diamond Sutra* was associated more with the underworld than with pure lands and heavens, and its authority as the afterlife sutra par excellence in the underworld may be discerned from its association with the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* in Dunhuang manuscripts.

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[696] JYJ58 (TPGJ34).

[697] JYJ24, and JYJ28.

[698] As mentioned in Chapter 2, rebirth in the pure land or heavens is a major theme of *Lotus Sutra* tale collections, such as the *Hongzan fahua zhuan* and the *Fahua zhuanji*. For discussions of the pure lands in relation to the *Lotus Sutra*, see Wang 2005: 264–70, 382–5.

3. THE CULT OF THE *DIAMOND SUTRA*: RELIGIOUS INNOVATIONS

Diamond Sutra narratives reveal that the *Diamond Sutra* was intimately associated with death and the afterlife in early Tang or perhaps even before that. The proportion of tales with return-from-death, good death and rebirth, and prolonging lifespan themes demonstrates that the devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* were carving out a niche for the *sutra* as the afterlife sutra par excellence, potent and effective for ensuring good death and rebirth; moreover, it was especially crucial for a favorable audience with King Yama, resulting in a longer lifespan, the rectification of a mistaken summons, and the privilege to tour the hells. This character of the sutra is corroborated by the proportion of dedications appended to its copies made for the express purpose of a good death and afterlife.

3.1 The *Diamond Sutra* and the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*[699]

Stephen Teiser notes that some copies of the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* are preceded by the *Diamond Sutra*, and points out that it was "not a random copy of the Diamond sūtra."[700] He also alerts us to studies done by Hirai Yūkei

[699] There are a few variants for the title of the text that bears the abbreviated English name, *Scripture on the Ten Kings*, made known by Teiser's 1994 book. The title of a long recension of the text—based on a particular variant—translated by Teiser is given as *The Sutra Spoken by the Buddha to the Four Orders on the Prophecy Given to King Yama Raja Concerning the Sevens of Life to Be Cultivated in Preparation for Rebirth in the Pure Land*. Teiser 1994: 197. I have followed Teiser's translation here to refer to the same text. See Teiser 1994: 271–287 for the various names of the text.

[700] According to Teiser, they are probably seven exempla of the *Diamond Sutra* being bound with the Scripture on the Ten Kings: S5450, S5544, S5585, P5580, Dx143, Dx931, San262. See Appendix 10 of Teiser 1994: 239.

and others, which show that Dunhuang manuscripts contain *Diamond Sutra* texts of different variations, and that "outside of Ch'ang-an, the Diamond sūtra was not a single, standard text." A few features of the Chinese text of the *Diamond Sutra* bound together with the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* are of particular significance. Although it is based on the Chinese translation made by Kumārajīva in 402, it differs in having several features not found in earlier texts of the *Diamond Sutra*. This copy—and others that claimed to be based on a copy printed in Xichuan (modern Chengdu, Sichuan)—contains an additional sixty-character subsection. The text is divided into thirty-two sections with subheadings, and it closes with a series of three mantras (*zhenyan* 真言).

Teiser thinks that the two sutras were not accidentally bound together and further refers to an explanation by Hirai Yūkei on the transmission of the *Diamond Sutra* which, he believes, provides an answer to why the two texts were bound together:

> The Sanskrit original, at least as far as surviving manuscripts from India are concerned, does not have the style of the Chinese text of the scripture, in which such elements as the scene illustrating the preaching of the Law, the dhāraṇī, and the names of the eight Vajras occur before and after the main text of the scripture. Of course the text in this form does not exist in the Taishō canon, nor does it appear in very many Tun-huang manuscripts. Thus, in the process of the circulation of the scripture, this particular guise was added for purposes of recitation (or copying), and the format of this popular edition took shape.[701]

[701] This explanation is given in Hirai 1984: 24, and translated in Teiser 1994: 97.

Hirai's explanation may be taken to explain—to a certain extent—how certain *Diamond Sutra* copies at the end of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth century acquired those accretions but cannot explain why the two sutras were bound together. The pairing of the sutras for ease of recitation and—by Teiser's speculation—as "an essential part of a religious service" is highly plausible. But such an explanation may generally explain a similar pairing of sutras for particular religious services, that is, if we know what kind of services they were used for. However, the question is: why the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*? This is a pertinent question especially when Teiser admits that there is very little in common between the two texts in their contents.

Indeed, the two sutras are certainly not "associated merely by scribal caprice." Although it must have eluded most scholars, it is apparent from our above study of the *Diamond Sutra* as an important afterlife sutra that the pairing of the two sutras is due to the fact that they were afterlife scriptures. They are attached together because they share a similar function—to benefit the deceased. The fact that they are bound together in booklet form—a format conducive to recitation—makes it highly plausible that they were used for recitation on particular occasions. By the time they were attached, the *Diamond Sutra* had long been known and enjoyed an exalted status as a superlative sutra, but more importantly, it was the afterlife sutra par excellence. Just as the *Gongde ji* was placed before the *Diamond Sutra* in P2094 to offer proof of its efficacy and potency, the placement of the *Diamond*

Sutra—an established afterlife sutra—at the beginning of the booklet might have been intended to lend credence to the 'newcomer,' the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*.

Although Teiser has proposed that the booklets could have been produced by "a scriptorium in a Buddhist temple" and were used by monks in religious services,[702] it remains uncertain whether they were used by monastics, laypeople, or commercial religious service providers. Given the state of lay involvement in Buddhism by the time these booklets were produced, it is not impossible that they were produced and used by laypeople or lay Buddhist associations. But they were certainly used regularly, a fact discernible from the condition of the booklets. Taking this into consideration, we may understand why the division of the *Diamond Sutra* into thirty-two sections with subheadings was probably added to facilitate memorization and thus recitation. Hirai's explanation, however, is not sufficient to account for the addition of the eight vajra-beings, the mantras, and the additional sixty-character subsection in some copies of the *Diamond Sutra*. Below we will explore why, when, and how these accretions might have come about, and whether they suggest the *Diamond Sutra* was treated differently following these changes.

[702] Teiser 1994: 98.

3.2 Additional *Gāthā* from the Underworld Bureau

When we examine the *Diamond Sutra* text that precedes the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* in Dunhuang manuscripts S5450 (d.u.), S5544 (911?), and S5646 (969), an additional sixty characters with the subheading, "Additional Sixty-Character *Gāthā* from the Underworld Bureau (*jia mingsi ji liushi zi* 加冥司偈六十字)," is included in them. This subsection is also included in copies of the *Diamond Sutra* produced by the old man in his eighties mentioned earlier[703] and other copies of the same period (figure 4).[704] Most of these *Diamond Sutra* copies[705] claimed to be based on the "true printed edition of the Guo Family of Xichuan (*xichuan guojia zhenyin ben* 西川過家真印本).[706] It is also worth noting that in producing P2094, Zhai Fengda also added the section headings (*fenshu* 分數), mantras (*zhenyan* 真言), the "missing section" (*yilou fen* 遺漏分) to his copy of the *Diamond Sutra* based on an edition of the *Diamond Sutra* printed in Xichuan.[707] Although the subheading of this section in Zhai's copy of the *Diamond Sutra* is different—"Additional Sixty-Characters of the Missing Section" (遺漏分添六十字 *yilou fen tian liushi*

[703] Manuscripts S5534 (dated 905), S5444 (905), S5451 (906), and P2876 (906).

[704] Manuscripts S6726 (926), BD07982 (=Beijing文82; d.u.).

[705] I am not able to ascertain this detail—recorded at the end of the text—in BD07982 because it is incomplete. It is also not stated in S5646, which also differs in four characters. See discussion below.

[706] Although this detail is slightly different in S5450 ("printed edition of Xichuan") and S5544 ("true printed edition of the Ge 戈 Family of Xichuan"), they probably refer to the same source.

[707] *Gongde ji*, T85.2743: 160a18.

zi)—the sixty characters added are the same as those found in the other copies. The sixty characters are:

> At that time the venerable Subhūti said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the living beings of a future age preach the dharma of this sutra, will they give rise to a believing mind? The Buddha said, "Subhūti, these are not living beings, and they are not not living beings. Why? Subhūti, living beings—the Thus Come One teaches that they are not living beings. These are called living beings."
> 爾時，慧命須菩提白佛言：「世尊！頗有眾生，於未來世，說是經法，生信心不？」佛言：「須菩提！彼非眾生，非不眾生。何以故？須菩提！眾生者，如來說非眾生，是名眾生。」

This section is different from the corresponding section in the edition of the *Diamond Sutra* translated by Kumārajīva (T8.235) now collected in the Taishō canon, which has the following sixty-two characters:

> At that time the venerable Subhūti said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if the living beings of a future age hear the preaching of this dharma, will they give rise to a believing mind?" The Buddha said, "Subhūti, these are not living beings, and they are not not living beings. Why? Subhūti, living beings, living beings—the Thus Come One teaches that they are not living beings. These are called living beings."
> 爾時，慧命須菩提白佛言：「世尊！頗有眾生，於未來世，聞說是法，生信心不？」佛言：「須菩提！彼非眾生，非不眾生。何以故？須菩提！眾生、眾生者，如來說非眾生，是名眾生。」[708]

While Zhai's copy has the phrase, "preach the dharma of this sutra (*shuo shi jingfa* 說是經法)," the Taishō version has "hear the preaching of this dharma (*wen shuo shi fa* 聞說是法)." In addition, the Taishō version repeats the noun, "living beings (*zhongsheng* 眾生)." Semantically, the Taishō version is more coherent since Subhūti is asking the Buddha whether the living beings of a

[708] *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing,* T8.235: 751c16–19.

future age will believe in the dharma if they hear it preached.[709] There is no doubt that the sixty-two characters in T8.235 were adopted from Bodhiruci's Chinese translation[710] since the exact section is found only in the latter.[711] Neither the sixty-two characters in the Taishō edition nor the "sixty-character *gāthā*"[712] found in Dunhuang manuscripts is part of the original Kumārajīva translation of the *Diamond Sutra*, a fact attested by early Dunhuang manuscripts and the Fangshan carved copies of the *Diamond Sutra* translated by Kumārajīva.[713]

[709] According to Paul Harrison (forthcoming), texts with the phrase "preach the dharma of this sutra" might have originated from another indic recension of the sutra.

[710] Bodhiruci's translation is collected in the Taishō canon as T8.236a.

[711] The said sixty-two characters are found in Bodhiruci's translation in the Taishō canon, T8.236a: 756a16–17. Moreover, only Bodhiruci's translation uses the term *huiming* 慧命 as an honorific term before Subhūti's name.

[712] Although this sixty-character portion is technically not a *gāthā*, the "sixty-character *gāthā*" is used here to refer to the "additional sixty-character *gāthā* from the underworld bureau."

[713] See for example, S87 (dated 700), and P3278 (676). See Bodhiruci's translation in *Fangshan shijing* 1: 88–95, and Kumārajīva's translation in *Fangshan shijing* 2: 400–1; ibid. 3: 337–8.

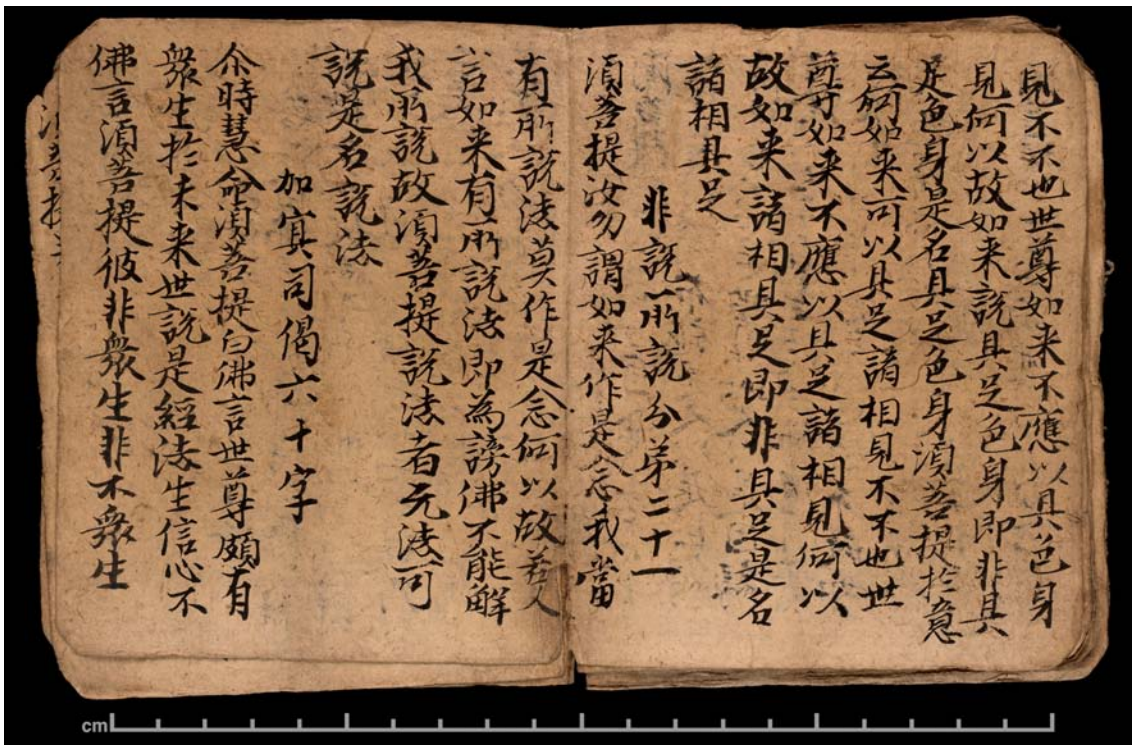


Figure 4. The "Additional Sixty-Character *Gāthā* from the Underworld Bureau" in S5451, a *Diamond Sutra* copy made by the old man in his eighties. Booklet (butterfly), ink on paper. Tang, 906. London: The British Library. [Digital image] Available at: http://idp.bl.uk [Accessed 25 May 2013].

Regarding the provenance of the "sixty-character *gāthā*" added in Dunhuang copies, P2133, the only extant sutra lecture text of the *Diamond Sutra*, explains, "These sixty characters were obtained from a stele by a Haozhou monk who returned from the underworld."[714] There is in fact a *Diamond Sutra* tale collected in the *Gongde ji*, which provides more details

[714] P2133 (此六十字自豪州入[冥]僧遝(=還)魂後，於石碑上得之也。). Although the title of P2133 is missing, it is identified as a sutra lecture text of the *Diamond Sutra*, and commonly known as the *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing jiangjing wen* 金剛般若波羅蜜經講經文 (Lecture Text of the *Diamond Sutra*). It is dated to 920, the sixth year of the Zhenming era [of the reign of Emperor Mo of the Latter Liang 後梁末帝 of the Five Dynasties period, a date given in the manuscript itself.

about the provenance of the missing characters mentioned in the sutra lecture text:

> In the past, the monk Lingyou (733?–832?) of Wenguo Monastery in Chang'an suddenly passed away for seven days, during which time he met King Yama.[715] The king asked the monk, "When you were alive, what scriptural practice did you have?" Lingyou replied, "I upheld the *Diamond Sutra*." The king thereupon put his palms together and asked him to recite [the *Diamond Sutra*]. Within a short period of time, he finished reciting [the *Diamond Sutra*]. The king again asked the monk, "Although you are able to recite the scripture, haven't you missed a *gāthā* of it?" Lingyou replied to the king, " I just recited according to [my] copy [of the *Diamond Sutra*]. I do not know which *gāthā*[716] is missing." The king said, "[Although] your lifespan has already expired, I will further grant you ten years to live. This scripture has a true copy on the stele in the west of the city of Haozhou (modern Chuzhou, Anhui). Let it be transmitted to all under Heaven." [After that,] the monk came back to life, and related everything [to others].[717]

In this narrative, King Yama informed the monk Lingyou that the *Diamond Sutra* he recited was missing one *gāthā*, and directed him to retrieve the complete edition from a stele in Haozhou. According to this account, the "missing *gāthā*" referred to by King Yama was indeed the "additional sixty-character *gāthā* from the underworld bureau" in *Diamond Sutra* copies made in the early tenth century mentioned earlier and the "missing section" added by Zhai Fengda to his copy of the *Diamond Sutra*. This tale, the earliest extant account on the sixty-characters, is probably an attempt to provide justification

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[715] Translates literally as "impartial king," *pingdeng wang* 平等王 is another name for King Yama since he is supposed to be an impartial or just judge. Although the name also refers to the eighth king in the later scheme of the Underworld Ten Kings popular at the end of Tang, it is apparent that it refers to King Yama here.

[716] An abbreviation of the transliterations of the Sanskrit *gāthā* (*jita* 偈他 or *jiatuo* 伽陀), *ji* 偈 refers to the poetic verses of scriptures, as opposed to the prose portion. These poetic verses are metrical hymn or chant, often of 4, 5, or 7 words to a line.

[717] GDJ9.

for the addition of those characters to the *Diamond Sutra* text translated by Kumārajīva. Another version of this story is found in the biography of the monk Lingyou collected in the *Song gaoseng zhuan,* which was compiled later in the tenth century.[718] Although neither of the above accounts provide the year in which the event occurred, the latter account identifies the place in which the 'true copy' of the *Diamond Sutra* was found: the Zhongli Monastery 鍾離寺 in Haozhou.[719] Nevertheless, the latter account does not tell us more than what we already knew about the monk Lingyou, whose account—despite residing so far from the capital—was carried to Dunhuang.

Interestingly, more information becomes available in later sources. For instance, the year in which the event purportedly happened—the second year of the Changqing era 長慶二年 (822)—was provided in a later version of the same tale collected in the *Jin'gang jing ganying zhuan* 金剛經感應傳 (Chronicles of the Sympathetic Response of the *Diamond Sutra*), a collection of *Diamond Sutra* narratives compiled probably at the end of the twelfth century.[720] If this date is to be believed, then the addition of the "missing *gāthā*" must have taken place in 822 or after. In any case, the stone rubbing of the *Diamond Sutra* copy executed by Liu Gongquan in 824 did not have the sixty-characters, and there are no divisions with subheadings. There were,

[718] *Song gaoseng zhuan* 25: T50.2061: 869a29–b14.

[719] The only information we have about this monastery comes from a poem by Tang poem Zhang Hu 張祜 (c. 792–c. 853) about it collected in the *Quan Tang shi* 510. Li 2006: 149.

[720] *Jin'gang jing ganying zhuan*, X87.1632: 487c21–488a7. One tale relates events taking place as late as the first year of the Chunxi era (1174).

however, an additional sixty characters in Or.8210/P2, the earliest printed *Diamond Sutra*—based on Kumārajīva's translation—to bear a date. But this portion differs from the "*gāthā* from the underworld bureau" in four characters: Instead of "preach the dharma of this sutra (*shuo shi jingfa* 說是經法)," it has "hear the preaching of this dharma (*wen shuo shi fa* 聞說是法)." These sixty characters are, in fact, the same as those in Bodhiruci's translation, except that the repeated noun, "living beings (*zhongsheng* 眾生)" is omitted. Unlike the other Dunhuang copies, Or.8210/P2 does not have any divisions and subheadings although it has a mantra at the beginning and the end of the text. It is thus based on a different edition. Incidentally, the sixty-character section in Or.8210/P2 can also be found in a manuscript produced in 969, S5646, which further complicates the matter. There is no indication that this booklet copy is based on the Xichuan edition, but the variant sixty-character portion has the same heading as the others.

It is difficult to determine the actual sources of these two versions of the sixty-character "missing *gāthā*" or "*gāthā* from the underworld bureau." It is not implausible that they were modifications based on the section found in Bodhiruci's translation. However, there are many possibilities than this given the fact that sutras were memorized and transmitted orally in medieval times. It is uncertain whether they could have been based on other translated texts of the *Diamond Sutra* not known to us and when the first addition took place. Based on available materials, it did not happen in any noticeable manner until after 822, if we were to trust this date, with the first instance found in

Or.8210/P2. But the popularization of the sixty-characters as the "missing *gāthā*" notified by King Yama probably did not happen until the latter part of the ninth century when it was widely accepted, and thus carved onto woodblock and printed; this resulted in the Xichuan model edition, the foundation of the copies produced at the beginning of the tenth century.

If we cannot unravel the provenance of the "missing *gāthā*," we can certainly make a few important observations offered by its inclusion—whichever versions—in the texts of the *Diamond Sutra* translated by Kumārajīva. Already in the sixth and seventh centuries—perhaps even earlier, writings of elite monastics, such as Jizang 吉藏 (549–623) and Kuiji 窺基 (632–682) indicate their awareness of this "missing *gāthā*" found in other translations, most notably Bodhiruci's translation since it was very close to Kumārajīva's translation.[721] But with the popularization of the *Diamond Sutra* and the role played by laypeople in its cult, it was not long before laypeople came to know about the "missing *gāthā*." It is not difficult to imagine laypeople discussing its absence in the text of the sutra, which they fervently upheld, and their concerns for the efficacy of the sutra due to the "missing *gāthā*." It was just a matter of time before the sixty characters were introduced into Kumārajīva's translation, which was the standard text used then. Although the details or process concerning the introduction of the sixty characters are buried in history, the motivation behind this addition to Kumārajīva's translation could have been fueled by widespread lay concerns.

[721] Gu 2007: 376–7.

It is not surprising that the sixty characters are included in Or.8210/P2, a dated printed edition of the *Diamond Sutra*, as well as in the "true printed edition of the Guo Family of Xichuan." The need to carve the sutra text on woodblock for printing could have had an effect on the "consummation" and "codification" of the text. While monastic exegetes—long aware of the "missing *gāthā*"—did not make Kumārajīva's translation "whole" by adding the sixty-two characters from Bodhiruci's translation for salient reasons, laypeople might not be so bound by the weight of tradition to make necessary changes. After all, Bodhiruci's translation was also legitimately the *Buddhavacana*.[722] The addition of a section that was thought to be missing might not be something contrary to the religious mores of laypeople as it was to the monastics who shouldered the responsibilities of safeguarding the Buddhist tradition. It is thus possible that this insertion was intended to make the text more complete, and also to have a version not disputed by a purported missing portion, especially when the printing of sutras became viable. When lay Buddhists, who came to know about the "missing *gāthā*," decided to commission the printing of the *Diamond Sutra*, they had to decide whether the "missing" portion would be included in their printed copy. Thus, the printing of sutras might have prompted a process of codifying the text of the *Diamond Sutra*, where the resolution to insert the section was made. Therefore, the tale about the monk Lingyou might have served to justify the

[722] Given that they were marked by only minor discrepancies, there is a strong connection between the variants of this sixty-character "*gāthā*" and the corresponding sixty-two characters in Bodhiruci's translation. The former could have been adapted from the latter.

insertion and hence facilitate the codification of the *Diamond Sutra* text while absolving the related parties from being accused of forgery.

The propagators of Buddhism, and new religious developments, were aware of the importance of narrative literature and their use. Being oral in nature, tales could disseminate new information over space and time to a large audience. Regardless of its authenticity, the account of the monk Lingyou was certainly used by both laypeople and monastics alike to account for changes made to Kumārajīva's translation. Although there is no conclusive evidence, the insertion of the sixty-character "missing *gāthā*" found in Dunhuang manuscripts probably owes more to the activities of laypeople than monastics. This is indicated by the existence of the less coherent variant of the "missing *gāthā*," and the difference in what the monastics considered to be the "missing" portion of the text. Writings of monastics reveal that they understood the "missing" portion as referring to the sixty-two characters in Bodhiruci's translation. For example, the *Jin'gang jing jieyi* 金剛經解義 (Deciphering the Meanings of the *Diamond Sutra*)—a commentary ascribed to Huineng but probably composed in the Song period—quotes the sixty-two characters from Bodhiruci's translation and explains that it was the monk Lingyou who added them to the *Diamond Sutra*.[723] By the Song, the "missing" portion was certainly understood as the sixty-two characters derived from Bodhiruci's translation as indicated by other commentaries, such as the three-roll *Jin'gang jing zhu* 金剛經註 (Commentary on the *Diamond Sutra*) by the

[723] *Jin'gang jing jieyi* 2, X24.459: 529c22–a2.

monk Daochuan 道川 (early twelfth century)[724] and the two-roll *Jin'gang jing caiwei* 金剛經采微 (Selected Subtleties of the *Diamond Sutra*) by Tanying 曇應 (late twelfth century).[725]

This became the standard view in subsequent periods, when lay authorship of commentaries became common. The Ming layman Zeng Fengyi 曾鳳儀 (fl. ca. 1600), in his *Jin'gang jing zongtong* 金剛經宗通 (A General Guide to the Tradition of the *Diamond Sutra*), refers to the section from Bodhiruci's translation as the "missing" portion mentioned in the tale about the monk Lingyou.[726] When elucidating the same portion, the Qing layman Chen Cunwu 陳存吾 explains in his *Jin'gang jing chanshuo* 金剛經闡說 (An Explication of the *Diamond Sutra*):

> The sixty-two characters beginning with "At that time the venerable Subhūti" are not found in the translation made during the Qin (Kumārajīva's translation). Only the translation made during the Wei (Bodhiruci's translation) has them. During the time of the Emperor Muzong of the Tang, the monk Lingyou from Chang'an entered the underworld to recite the [*Diamond*] *Sutra*, which lacked this section…Lingyou prolonged his lifespan by ten years, and was ordered to go to the Zhongli Monastery in Haozhou to seek the complete text on a stele so as to include the [missing section in the current text].[727]

The understanding that the missing portion refers to the sixty-two characters in Bodhiruci's translation probably began much earlier. Already, some copies

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[724] On Daochuan, see *Jiatai pudeng lu* 嘉泰普燈錄, X79.1559: 396c18–397a7. *Jin'gang jing zhu* 3, X24.461: 559b5–7 (same wording as *Jin'gang jing jieyi*).

[725] On Tanying, see Li 2001: 1006. *Jin'gang jing caiwei* 2, X24.464: 626c14–18.

[726] *Jin'gang jing zongtong* 6, X25.471: 32b24–c5.

[727] *Jin'gang jing chanshuo* 2, X25.508: 875b8–17.

of the *Diamond Sutra* from the Song period onward have sixty-two characters instead of sixty characters. If laypeople indeed introduced the "missing *gāthā*" into Kumārajīva's translation, monastics might have relented by "officially" admitting the sixty-two characters into Kumārajīva's translation. In any case, we can imagine the influence of Kumārajīva translation in medieval China: they would have rather introduced changes to it than accept Bodhiruci's translation.

3.3 Thirty-Two Divisions of the *Diamond Sutra*

The *Diamond Sutra* copy included in P2094 was probably made prior to Zhai Fengda's compilation of the *Gongde ji*. If it was a new copy made in 908 when Zhai compiled P2094, there was no need to add the subheadings and mantras to it. Zhai could have produced a copy complete with the "missing section," subheadings, and mantras, since the Xichuan edition was then available for his reference. In any case, the Xichuan printed edition of the *Diamond Sutra* was divided into thirty-two sections with subheadings, and all manuscripts that were copied based on it also have the same divisions.

The first mention of the provenance of the thirty-two divisions is found in the *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing zhujie* 金剛般若波羅蜜經註解 (An Annotation of the *Diamond Sutra*) composed by Zongle 宗泐 (1318–1390) and Ruqi 如玘 (1320–1385) during the Ming period. This commentary notes that the thirty-two division version of the *Diamond Sutra* was transmitted among people after having been devised by the crown prince Zhaoming

(*zhaoming taizi* 昭明太子; 501–531) of the Liang.[728] It further states that this practice of division was not adopted since they are not part of the original translation of the sutra. Prince Zhaoming was certainly not the progenitor of the thirty-two divisions of the sutra because no evidence of such a practice can be found in earlier (before the ninth century) Dunhuang copies of the sutra. Such a practice is only discernible in those Dunhuang copies that were copied based on the Xichuan edition, which was produced in the late ninth century or the very beginning of the tenth century. In short, it was thus not practiced until the late Tang. However, the claim that Prince Zhaoming was the progenitor of such a practice probably started a long time before the *Jin'gang boluomi jing zhujie* was composed—an information probably spread by the real progenitor or progenitors who sought to popularize the division by giving it more credence.

The choice of Prince Zhaoming as the progenitor of the thirty-two divisions may offer some grounds to speculate on the identity of the actual progenitor(s). Prince Zhaoming was the son of Emperor Wu of Liang, an ardent supporter of Buddhism. Also known as Xiao Tong 蕭統, he is best remembered as the composer of *Wen xuan* 文選 (Selections of Literature), one of the earliest and most influential anthologies of poetry and literature. Little is recorded about his Buddhist faith although it is certain that he was sympathetic to Buddhism through the influence of his father. Therefore, it does not seem like a bad conclusion to attribute the practice of the thirty-two

[728] *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing zhujie*, T33.1703: 228b2.

divisions to Prince Zhaoming, a member of a clan of passionate supporters of Buddhism—of which Xiao Yu, mentioned earlier, was also a member. It seems that there was *Diamond Sutra* lore related to members of the Xiao clan. In fact, Emperor Wu (464–549) was said to have invited Fu Xi 傅翕 (497–569) on the recommendation of the monk Baozhi 寶誌 (418–514) to the court to explicate the *Diamond Sutra*, at which time Fu Xi sang forty-nine songs to eulogize and elucidate the sutra. This account was given to explain the provenance of another important work—found among Dunhuang manuscripts—that is related to the *Diamond Sutra* entitled *Liangchao fudashi song jin'gang jing* 梁朝傅大士頌金剛經 (The Odes on the *Diamond Sutra* by Mahāsattva Fu of the Liang Dynasty) based on Kumārajīva's translation of the *Diamond Sutra* with thirty-two divisions.[729]

Whether it is Emperor Wu, Prince Zhaoming, Xiao Yu, or Fu Xi, the shadows of lay Buddhists loom large in the lore of the *Diamond Sutra*; this huge lay representation points to the unprecedented role played by laypeople in the practice of Buddhism, and their autonomy from monastic endorsement as they propagated the cult of the *sutra* on the ground. The thirty-two divisions of the *sutra* certainly did not gain much acceptance by members of the monastic community, as shown by the rejection of the authors of the *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing zhujie*, and the dismissal by the compilers of the

[729] Dunhuang manuscripts S1846, S3373, P2286, P2756, P2997, P3094, and P3325. For studies related to this text, see Hirai 1999: 255–260, Mierkamal 2006, Wang 2010a, Wang 2010b, and Yakup 2010. Zhang 2000 offers a detailed study of this texts and related recensions.

Buddhist canons.[730] It is highly plausible that the division was first suggested by a lay Buddhist. While the 'monastic' provenance of the "missing *gāthā*" might have facilitated its acceptance and eventual inclusion in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Diamond Sutra*, the lay provenance of the thirty-two divisions—regardless of their merits or demerits—might account for the general disapproval among monastics. After all, unlike the sixty-two characters that are part of Bodhiruci's translation, the subheadings introduced by the divisions were not originally a part of Kumārajīva's translation, but were believed to be the creation of a lay Buddhist. It is thus unimaginable for the monastic censors of canon compilation projects to include the words of a lay Buddhist into a text preached by the Buddha.

The division of the *Diamond Sutra* into thirty-two sections could have been introduced as an aid to delivery, reference, explanation, and memorization. As more and more people were initiated into the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*, the need to deliver, teach, and explain the sutra in smaller portions arose. The divisions, moreover, certainly make memorization easier to the lesser educated and illiterate. While some longer sections might remain

[730] When we examine the writings of monastics and laymen collected in the Taishō canon, the monastic are generally skeptical about the division. See for example the view of the Qing monk Chenjiu 成鷲 (1637–1722) in his *Jin'gang jing zhishuo* 金剛直說 (X25.496), especially X25.496: 566b16–19. Another Qing monk Xingqi 性起 (d. 1798) also expressed his disapproval in his *Jin'gang jing fayan xuanpan chao* 金剛經法眼懸判疏鈔 1, X25.499: 634c22–635a6. This is contrasted by the general approval of such a division shown by Qing laymen. While pointing out the possible demerit of such a division, the Qing laymen Shi Chengjin 石成金 (b. 1659/1660) thinks that it provides an order that aids memory and delivery. See *Jin'gang jing shizhu* 金剛經石注, X25.497:581c8–13. Another Qing lay Buddhist, Xu Fa 徐發, also went to great length to explain its merits. See *Jin'gang jing yingshuo* 金剛經郢說, X25.488: 287b23–288a1.

challenging to some even after the division, they are certainly short enough for memorization. The subheadings for the sections could serve as mnemonic devices, as they give hints to the contents of the particular section as well as the order of the sections within the entire text since they are numbered. While we do not know who introduced the division, it is likely that it was done based on necessity brought about by increased lay engagement, as we do not find such division in sutras of similar lengths. The informal division of the sutra into smaller sections for learning purposes might have started long before the thirty-two divisions were introduced.

Regarding how the *Diamond Sutra* was divided into these sections, we may note that the sutra itself was basically a conversation between the Buddha and Subhūti dwelling on different topics. Therefore, its inherent structure was amenable to some sort of division. Already in imperially sponsored copies of the *Diamond Sutra*s, there were divisions without subheadings since the text does not run continuously like some other texts (figure 5). This is also the case for Or.8210/P2[731] and many other Dunhuang manuscripts. It is thus not impossible that the person who formally introduced the divisions had consulted such copies, especially those imperially sponsored in the seventh century, which were distributed throughout the empire. Meticulously copied by the best scribes, checked, and proofread by multiple parties, they could have served as reliable prototypes, especially when there is little difference

[731] In additional to the breaks between different parts of the text, the entire text seems to be divided into six big sections, with a small numeral written in front of each of them. See Or.8210/P2.

between the "Zhaoming divisions" and the divisions found in them. It just takes someone to give the sections subheadings, and the division is complete.

Since Or.8210/P2 does not have thirty-two divisions and subheadings and those copies with section subheadings—based on the Xichuan edition—were only copied at the beginning of the tenth century, the Xichuan printed copy could have been created at the latest by the end of the ninth century or the beginning of the tenth century. In all probability, the need to codify and make 'complete' the text of the *Diamond Sutra* and its division is intimately related to the increasing popularity of the *Diamond Sutra* as a sutra recited by lay individuals or groups in different occasions. Although the division did not meet with much approval from monastics, its long lasting influence can be discerned from modern copies with divisions printed for free distribution and widely perused by modern lay Buddhists.

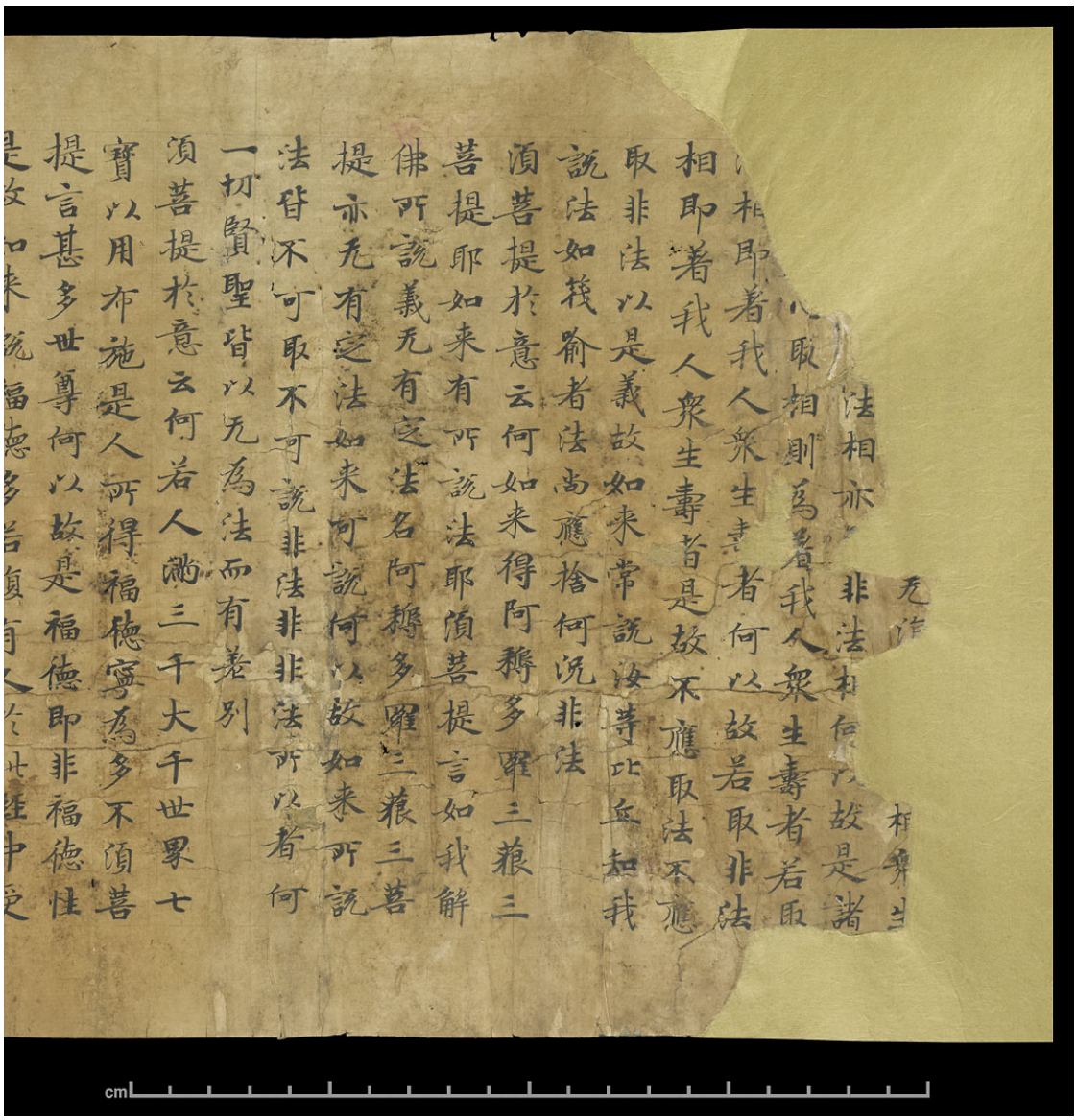


Figure 5. An example of text division (Sections 6, 7, and 8) in S36, one of the *Diamond Sutra* copies sponsored by Empress Wu. Scroll, ink on paper. Tang, 676. London: The British Library. [Digital image] Available at: http://www.idp.bl.uk [Accessed 25 May 2013].

3.4 The Eight Vajra-beings and Mantras in *Diamond Sutra* Texts

From Zhai Fengda's colophon to his copy of the *Diamond Sutra*, we know that the Xichuan printed edition of the *Diamond Sutra* he referred to had three features that are not present in the original *Diamond Sutra* text: (1)

the "missing *gāthā*," (2) the thirty-two divisions and subheadings, and (3) the mantras. Although the colophons to the *Diamond Sutra* texts copied by the old man in his eighties indicate that they were based on the printed copy of the Guo Family of Xichuan,[732] we cannot conclude that this Xichuan edition is the same as the one mentioned by Zhai Fengda because Zhai's copy has six mantras, while the copies made by the old man have only three. Of course, it is possible that Zhai Fengda might have added the last three mantras from other sources in addition to the mantras he copied from the Xichuan edition.[733] Since the thirty-two divisions and subheadings are found in copies with the eight vajra-beings and at least three mantras, this suggests they could have come about in relation to these other accretions. But since Or.8210/P2 and P2265 (d.u.) contain the eight vajra-beings but without divisions, it is likely that the addition of the eight vajra-beings might have preceded the formal divisions of the text.

In P2094, Zhai Fengda had copied an instruction to invoke the eight vajra-beings at the end of the tale collection, before the names and descriptions of the eight vajra-beings, which precede the six mantras.[734] It is uncertain whether this instruction is also based on the Xichuan copy since

[732] S5534, S5444, S5965, S5451, P2876a, and BD8909.

[733] In addition to the three usual mantras found in most copies (大身真言, 隨心真言, 心中心真言), P2094 also contains three other mantras or spells: Jin'gang erzhou 金剛兒咒 (Vajra-kumāra Dhāraṇī), (8) Fomu zhou 佛母咒 (Buddha-mātri Dhāraṇī), (9) Wenshu pusa xinzhong zhengyan 文殊菩薩心中真言 (Mantra Within the Mind of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī).

[734] *Gongde ji*, T85.2743: 159c10–12: "Whoever wishes to intone the *Diamond Sutra*, he/she must first invoke the names of the eight vajra-beings, gives forth a most sincere mind, and then intone the sutra. These eight vajra-beings will come on their own and always protect the person who upholds the sutra" (凡欲轉念《金剛般若波羅蜜經》者，先須啟請「八大金剛」名字，發至誠心，然後轉念經，此「八金剛」自來常當擁護持經之人。).

Zhai Fengda did not mention it although it is also found in other early ten-century copies based on the Guo family edition. The only difference being that the instruction is written after the names, descriptions, or pictures of the eight vajra-beings in these copies. Thus, P2094 and these other copies all have the "missing *gāthā*," thirty-two divisions with subheadings—at least the names of the eight vajra-beings—an instruction to invoke the eight vajra-beings, and three mantras at the end of the sutra text.

Although the sutra text of Or.8210/P2 is preceded by the names of the eight Vajra-beings, there is no instruction to invoke them. Instead, Or.8210/P2 begins with an instruction to recite the mantra to purify verbal karma (*jing kouye zhenyan* 淨口業真言), which precedes the names of the eight vajra-beings.[735] Furthermore, it has only one of the three mantras at the end of the sutra text, namely the *dasheng zhenyan*. We may note that this mantra also crept into Kumārajīva's translation collected in the Taishō canon. In any case, we may thus conclude that by 868 when Or.8210/P2 was printed, mantras and the eight vajra-beings had already been incorporated into the texts of the *Diamond Sutra*. It is apparent that the text of Or.8210/P2 was based on a different edition of the *Diamond Sutra*. Because it includes a slightly different sixty-character portion and no overt divisions in the text, it is possible that the "missing" portion was added to *Diamond Sutra* texts before the thirty-two divisions were formally introduced. As the text of Or.8210/P2 begins with the

[735] After the frontispiece of depicting Śākyamuni and Subhūti, the sutra begins with the following instruction: "Whoever wishes to read this sutra, he should first recite the mantra of purifying verbal karma ten times" (凡欲讀經先念淨口業真言十遍。).

instruction to purify verbal karma, this clearly shows that the *Diamond Sutra* was printed for distribution to people to read or recite. In addition, Or.8210/P2 may indicate that the eight vajra-beings and mantras were introduced contemporaneously, perhaps sometime in the middle of the ninth century, since *Diamond Sutra* copies made in the late eighth and early ninth centuries do not contain such features.[736] This could be an indication of the absorption of notable developments of Buddhism—represented by these accretions—in the heartland with which Dunhuang resumed its communication after Tibetan control of the Dunhuang region ended in the middle of the ninth century.

The addition of the names of the eight vajra-beings and two mantras in Or.8210/P2 indicates the beginning of a process of embedding the *Diamond Sutra* in an esoteric format meant for liturgical use. By the tenth century, the *Diamond Sutra* text had acquired more accretions: a few more mantras, instruction to invoke the eight vajra-beings, a ritual invocation text (*qiqing wen* 啓請文), and hymns (*fanyin* 梵音). This version seems to represent a more stable liturgical format. This not only testifies to the influence of the esoteric tradition, but also indicates an increasing demand for such liturgical texts brought about by changes in Buddhist practice.

When Zhai Fengda compiled P2094 in 908, he did not merely provide the names of the eight vajra-beings as was the case in Or.8210/P2, he also gave descriptions of their functions in the invocation text of the eight vajra-beings:

[736] For example, S3485 (dated 789), and P4504, a rubbing of the *Diamond Sutra* copied by Liu Gongquan in 824.

> First, I respectfully invite the Green Vajra-being Who Removes Disasters (*qingchu jin'gang* 青除災金剛), who is capable of eradicating karmic disasters and calamities of all living beings, and causes them to be destroyed. He is in charge of the ocean.
>
> Second, I respectfully invite the Vajra-being Who Neutralizes Poisons (*bidu jin'gang* 辟毒金剛), who is capable of removing the suffering of sickness and the hot poison (*redu* 熱毒) of all living beings. He is in charge of removing devastating poisons....[737]

As is obvious from these descriptions, the eight vajra-beings serve to offer protection to the person who upholds the *Diamond Sutra* in various aspects. With reference to the various benefits and wonders recounted in *Diamond Sutra* tales, these vajra-beings are clearly the personification of the functions of the sutra. The inspiration for such a development could perhaps be traced to some *Diamond Sutra* tales. Already in a few of them, Buddhist deities and vajra-beings made their appearance as proxies of the *Diamond Sutra* who offered protagonists help in time of need. In at least two narratives, vajra-beings (*jin'gang* 金剛) come to the rescue of protagonists in danger. In an account collected in the *Jiuyi*, when the protagonist Zhang Qiqiu's residence was under siege by rebels, two armored beings came to his rescue. Below is a description of the situation:

> At that time, the soldiers at the base heard that there was a military coup, they charged in with their weapons. When they reached the front of the small hall, they saw more than ten persons standing motionless in the garden, with their hands hanging down by their sides and mouths wide open. They had thrown their weapons on the ground. Those who came to the rescue thereupon captured and tied them up.
>
> Five or six of the rebels were struck dumb and could not speak, while the rest of them began to give a full account of what had happened: When they were going to charge into the hall, they

[737] *Gongde ji*, T85.2743: 159c13–28.

> suddenly saw two armored warriors who were a few *zhang* in height. With angry eyes, these armored men shouted at them. Initially, they seemed to be struck by evil.[738]

In this account, which purportedly happened in the Yongtai era (765–766) and was recorded in the early ninth century by Duan Chengshi, the figures who came to the rescue of the protagonists were simply described as "armored warriors." But in another *Taiping guangji* story that originated from the *Xuanshi zhi* composed in the middle of the ninth century, the rescuers were unambiguously identified as "vajra-beings." This tale recounts the experience of Ning Mian, a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra* who was defending the city of Feihu (modern Baoding, Hebei) from rebels, when vajra-beings came to his rescue in the nick of time:

> The people of the city of Feihu panicked and were restless. They said to Ning Mian, "The army of Ji[men] is mighty and cannot be rivaled…We would like to abandon the city and escape…We could not bear to have our parents and siblings die under the rebels' blades….[As] he (Ning Mian) was agonizing over this and could not decide what plan to adopt, his spy suddenly reported to him, "The rebel [army] has been crushed…Mian immediately ascended the city wall to take a look…he saw rebel soldiers fleeing and countless others fallen as if there was a huge troop striking them from behind. Elated, Mian [ordered] the city gates opened and permitted his soldiers to pursue the rebels. They captured a few dozen rebel soldiers …and interrogated them. They said, "Last evening, we saw from afar four huge figures on the city wall. They were more than two *zhang* in height. Gallant and fearsome, they had angry eyes, huge mouths, bared chests, and were holding swords." Seeing them, the Jimen people wretchedly burst into a sweat and trembling, fled. How could they have the will to fight? Mian realized that the huge figures were actually vajra-beings (*jin'gang*). (*Xuanshi zhi* by Zhang Du [fl. middle of ninth century onward])[739]

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[738] JY1.

[739] TPGJ93.

While the above tales identifies the four huge figures who came as vajra-beings, another tale from the *Baoying ji*—composed in the late ninth century—mentions the eight vajra-beings. This tale tells of a "practitioner from Caizhou" (*caizhou xingzhe* 蔡州行者) who was caught for being a spy and was to be executed.[740] However, something would always happen to prevent his execution each time he was about to be killed. As a result, he was spared death and ordered to be a monk and beg for alms needed for the construction of a new monastery. When the monastery was completed, Song Wen, his captor, dreamed of the eight vajra-beings (*ba jin'gang* 八金剛) who interceded on behalf of the "practitioner from Caizhou"—who later came to be known as the vajra-monk (*jin'gang heshang* 金剛和尚)—to have him released.

These tales may indicate a process in which vajra-beings were slowly introduced as personifications of the functions of the *Diamond Sutra* and then came to be included in the liturgical text. The association between the *Vajracchedikā* and the Vajra-beings seems natural since they are related to the "vajra," a descriptive denominator attached to their names. Such a personification provides people a way to imagine the powers of the *Diamond Sutra* in physical form. Or, perhaps they represent the imagination of people to envision the powers of the *Diamond Sutra* in anthropomorphic terms. The same can be said for the latter introduction of the four bodhisattvas of the esoteric tradition in Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra*—for instance, S5499—who all bear names beginning with "*Jin'gang* 金剛 (*vajra*)."

[740] TPGJ102.

These four bodhisattvas are identified as the following: (1) *Jin'gang juan pusa* 金剛眷菩薩 (Bodhisattva Dṛḍhabhārya, (2) *Jin'gang suo pusa* 金剛索菩薩 (Bodhisattva Vajrapāśa), (3) *Jin'gang ai pusa* 金剛愛菩薩 (Bodhisattva Vajrarāga), and (4) *Jin'gang yu pusa* 金剛語菩薩 (Bodhisattva Vajrabhāṣa).

While not much information can be found about the eight Vajra-beings, the names of the four bodhisattvas can be found in the ten-roll *Dasheng liqu liu boluomiduo jing* 大乘理趣六波羅蜜多經 (Sutra of the Six *Pāramitās* of the Mahāyāna), which was translated in 788 by Prajñā 般若 (734–?).[741] In this sutra, it is said that thirty-three Vajra-Bodhisattvas (*jin'gang pusa*) congregated and together vowed to protect the sutra as well as to offer protection to and honor the person who upholds the sutra, just as they would Vairocana. Since these thirty-three Vajra-bodhisattvas vow to protect and support this perfection of wisdom sutra and its practitioners, the four Vajra-bodhisattvas are probably appropriated as representatives who would also protect the *Diamond Sutra*—which also belongs to the perfection of wisdom corpus—and its adherents.

Hirai Yūkei has suggested that the these liturgical accretions to the text of the *Diamond Sutra* may have taken place in the period between the late eighth century to the mid-ninth century when Tibet controlled the Dunhuang region.[742] Notwithstanding this possibility, the fact that these accretions can only be found in manuscripts dated after late ninth century may indicate

[741] *Dasheng liqu boluomiduo jing*, T8.261: 872c4–15.

[742] Hirai 1984: 17.

otherwise. Despite the possible influence of the Tibetan Tantric tradition during the Tibetan Occupation (ca. 766–848), esoteric elements—based on current research—were first found in Or.8210/P2, which was printed in 868, which is after the end of the Tibetan occupation. Moreover, those early tenth-century copies, which are based on the Xichuan edition, were printed in Chengdu, Sichuan, an area outside of Tibetan control. Why is this so?

The production of a printed edition of the *Diamond Sutra* in Xichuan that became a model on which other copies were based is not inconceivable. Sichuan might not have been as important as Chang'an in the early Tang, but the retreat of Tang emperors—during periods of political upheaval—into Sichuan certainly brought about an influx of monastics, government officials, people of all professions, and technologies from the capital.[743] These events in all likelihood contributed to the rise of Sichuan as a formidable cultural center. Therefore, the development and flourishing of printing in Sichuan is not surprising. Records show that printing technology was in place in Sichuan as early as the late eighth century,[744] and was widespread in the ninth. Certainly,

[743] During the An-Shi Rebellion (755–763), Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756) fled Chang'an for Shu (modern Sichuan) in 756. More than a century later, the Tang Emperor Xizong (r. 874–888) fled to Shu to escape during the Huangchao Uprising (*huangchao qiyi* 黃巢起义; 875–884).

[744] According to Tsien, the printing of calendars by private families was already popular in Sichuan by the beginning of the ninth century. This prompted Feng Su 馮宿 (767–836), the military commissioner of Dongchuan (in modern Sichuan), to present a memorial to the emperor in 835 to ban privately printed calendars, which were available for sale even prior to the issuance of official calendars by the government. Tsien 1985: 151. Emperor Wenzong 文宗 (809–840) indeed decreed that local authorities should ban the private printing of such works. Seo 2003: 14. In 883, another Tang official Liu Pin 柳玭 (f. late ninth century), who fled with Emperor Xizong to Sichuan, reported that he saw printed books on astrology, divination, geomancy, and so on, some of which were poorly printed. Tsien 1985: 151–52.

printing was also employed in the production of Buddhist texts. There was mention of two dictionaries which were produced by "Xichuan printers" (*xichuan yinzi* 西川印子) in *Shin shosha shōrai hōmontō mokuroku* 新書寫請來法門等目録 a catalog of texts and items compiled by the Japanese monk, Shūei 宗叡 (809–884) in 865.[745] A tale collected in roll 16 of the *Taiping Guangji* mentions a monk by the name of Yifu 義孚, who went to Xichuan to copy sutras.[746] This evidence not only indicates that Xichuan had the best editions of Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts, but also its place as an important center for printing at that time.

The presence of esoteric elements in the Xichuan printed edition of the *Diamond Sutra* is understandable since according to Henrik Sørensen, esoteric Buddhism began to flourish in Sichuan in the ninth century, particularly after the Huichang Suppression (845–846).[747] Recent scholarship has indicated that esoteric Buddhism—associated primarily with the famous disciple of Amoghavajra, Huiguo 惠果 (746–805)—was already introduced

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[745] *Shin shosha shōrai hōmontō mokuroku*, T55.2174a: 1111b28–29: "Five-roll *Tang Yun* produced by Xichuan printers" (*Xichuan yinzi tangyun yibu wujuan* 西川印子唐韻一部五卷) / "Thirty-roll *Yupian* produced by the same printer" (*tong yinzi yupian yibu sanshijuan* 同印子玉篇一部三十卷). This is mentioned in Tsien 1985: 153–154.

[746] TPGJ116, 1961: 841. This tale is mistakenly ascribed to the *Mingbao ji*. The Ming edition of the *Taiping guangji* states that it is from the *Beimeng suoyan*, which is more likely since this work was produced during the Five Dynasties period. According to the tale, the monk Yifu was originally from Qingshe 青社 (modern Weifang, Shandong), and he was a resident of the Longxing 龍興 Monastery in Jiangling 江陵 (modern Jingzhou, Hubei). He was given money to go Xichuan to copy sutras. However, instead of copying sutras himself, he bought sutras stolen from the monastic establishment and kept the money for himself. Later, he fell sick and died a terrible death. Those from his monastery who did the same thing were afraid that they would end up like Yifu, they thus gave up the wealth and cultivated merit.

[747] Sørensen 2011: 394.

into Jiangnan at the end of the eighth century.[748] The incorporation of the esoteric elements is plausible since the kind of esoteric Buddhism that thrived in Sichuan from that time onwards was part and parcel of the mainstream Buddhist tradition.[749] The implication is that specialists of esoteric Buddhist rituals and related practices probably did not operate outside traditional Buddhist domains. This could explain why esoteric elements were introduced into a popular sutra, such as the *Diamond Sutra*, as a more ritualized program was conceived for its use, one which culminated in a more elaborate format over time as indicated by early tenth-century copies.

As to the adoption of the Xichuan edition as a standard by Dunhuang copyists of the *Diamond Sutra*, we may recall that three decades ago, Victor Mair had already pointed to the connection between Sichuan and Dunhuang:

> The discovery at Tun-huang of a significant number of texts that originated in the Szechwan area is proof that there was a developed intercourse between these two westernmost parts of China during the T'ang period. The partially Szechwanese orientation of Tun-huang culture can be demonstrated by examination of certain manuscripts…
>
> References to Szechwan are also frequent in the random groups of practice characters which are found scattered over the Tun-huang manuscripts…
>
> Recognition of the Tun-huang-Szechwan region as an area of cultural coherence may help in the solution of certain problems in the history of art and literature…[750]

Mair proposes treating the Dunhuang-Sichuan region as "an area of cultural coherence" because he noticed that a majority of Dunhuang manuscripts

[748] Orzech 2011: 315–36.

[749] Sørensen 2011: 395.

[750] Mair 1989: 7–8. This connection was first pointed out in 1983: 24–6.

represent a region he called a "cultural catchment basin" that roughly comprises the eastern part of Gansu, central Shaanxi, and the northern part of Sichuan. As a region of "cultural coherence," the normalization of exchanges between Sichuan and Dunhuang after the end of the Tibetan occupation of the region in the middle of the ninth century could have seen—among others thing—an influx of religious ideas, texts, and artifacts.[751]

3.5 Liturgical Texts of the *Diamond Sutra*: Religious Innovation and Lay Participation

By the tenth century, most of the liturgical elements that characterized the modern liturgical text of the *Diamond Sutra* were in place, attesting to the far-reaching influence of religious innovations in the Tang.[752] In the *Diamond Sutra* manuscript, for example, S5646 produced in 969, in addition to the three mantras at the end, the following accretions preceding the *Diamond Sutra* text are made: (1) *Diamond Sutra* invocation text (*Jin'gang jing qiqing wen* 金剛經啓請文), (2) mantra for purifying verbal karma, (3) mantra for making universal offering to Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (*Xukongzang pusa pugongyang zhenyan* 虛空藏菩薩普供養真言), (4) the "*yunhe*" hymn (*yunhe fan* 云何梵),[753] (5) images of the four bodhisattvas, (6) images of the eight

[751] Chen 1974: 79-84. It is worth nothing that about one-fifth of the tales are related to Sichuan in one way or another.

[752] See Appendix 6 on the liturgical elements in a modern edition of the *Diamond Sutra* text.

[753] The *fan* 梵 of the term is an abbreviation of *fanbai* 梵唄, which is traditionally a song or verse praising the virtues of the Buddha. The name of this hymn "*yunhe*," which literally means "how"or "what," might have been inspired by the *Diamond Sutra*, in which the

vajra-beings, and (7) votive text (*fayuan wen* 發願文) (Figures 6–9). In an incomplete extant edition printed in 949/950, the mantra for pacifying the earth (*an tudi zhenyan* 安土地真言) is printed before the mantra for purifying verbal karma.

While there is no conclusive evidence of the influence of laypeople on these developments, we may speculate on the role played by them. The absence of monastic involvement is conspicuous in the materials we have discussed so far. Of note is Or.8210/P2, the first dated *Diamond Sutra* printed copy, which was commissioned by a layman, containing two mantras and sixty additional characters. The sixty-character portion of Or.8210/P2 differs from the corresponding portion found in Bodhiruci's translation in that it omitted a two-character repeated noun. Equally important is the "true edition of the Guo family of Xichuan" on which other early tenth-century copies are based. Again, it did not hail from any monastery but the family of a lay Buddhist. This edition contains at least three features not found in the original *Diamond Sutra* text, two of which—the "sixty-character *gāthā*" and thirty divisions with subheadings—feature in later commentarial literature. The "sixty-character *gāthā* from the underworld bureau" of the Xichuan edition differs from the sixty characters of Or.8210/P2 in four characters. Although the actual basis of this "missing *gāthā*"—which varies slightly from Bodhiruci's sixty-two

term was used throughout the Buddha's conversation with Subhūti. A tentative translation of the hymn is as follows: "How do I obtain longevity and the indestructible vajra-like body? / Also, by what causes and conditions do I obtain great unrelenting power? / How do I gain perfection and arrive at the other shore with this sutra? / I wish the Buddha would disclose these subtle secrets and preach them widely for sentient beings!"

characters—is unknown, its provenance is accounted for by the return-from-death experience of the monk Lingyou from the distant Haozhou. This account was certainly circulated to justify the insertion of the "missing *gāthā*" into the Xichuan edition, and became so well-known that monastics also resorted to this account to explain the later insertion of Bodhiruci's sixty-two characters into Kumārajīva's translation.

The initial insertion of the sixty characters might have been initiated by lay Buddhists whose increasing numbers and participation sought to make 'complete' the Kumārajīva text—by then the paramount object of their devotion—when they noticed that it was missing in some portion found in another text, probably a variant Bodhiruci translation. This might have involved some monastic participation but not at a high level; if not, there would be no need to justify it with a narrative account. But we cannot rule out the possibility of lay Buddhists taking things into their own hands. In the commentary, *Jin'gang jing jieyi*, probably composed in the Song, the *Diamond Sutra* tale about Lingyou was cited to explain the "missing *gāthā*," which is not the sixty characters found in the Xichuan edition but the corresponding sixty-two characters found in Bodhiruci's translation. This series of developments might have prompted the monastic community to formally introduce Bodhiruci's sixty-two characters—which are equally

legitimate—into Kumārajīva's translation. Hence, we find the *Diamond Sutra* texts copied from the Song onward all contain these sixty-two characters.[754]

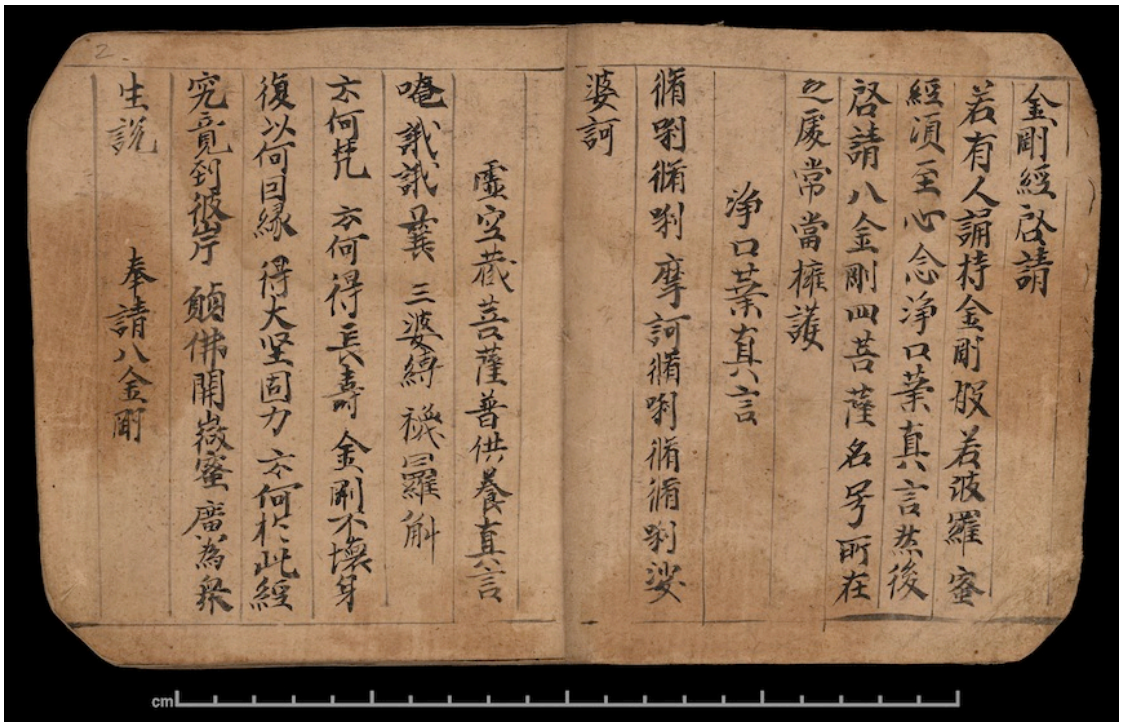


Figure 6. First two pages of S5646: (1) *Diamond Sutra* invocation text, (2) mantra for purifying verbal karma, (3) mantra for making universal offering to Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha, and (4) the "*yunhe*" hymn.

754 Examples include *Diamond Sutra* copied by famous literati: (1) Northern Song copy by Huang Tingjian 黃庭坚 (rubbing) dated to the second year of the Yuanfeng era (1079). (2) Southern Song copies made by Zhang Jizhi 張即之 (1186–1263) in the sixth year of the Chunyou era (1246) and in the first year of the Baoyou era (1253). (3) Yuan copies made by Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322) in the fifth (1301) and ninth year (1309) of Dade era and in the fifth year of the Yanyou era (1318); two of them are rubbings. (4) A Ming copy by Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636) in the twentieth year of the Wanli era (1592); and an extant rubbing dated to the thirty-second year of the Kangxi reign (1693).



Figure 7. Third and fourth pages of S5646: The Four Bodhisattvas.



Figure 8. Fifth and sixth pages of S5646: The first four of the eight Vajra-beings.

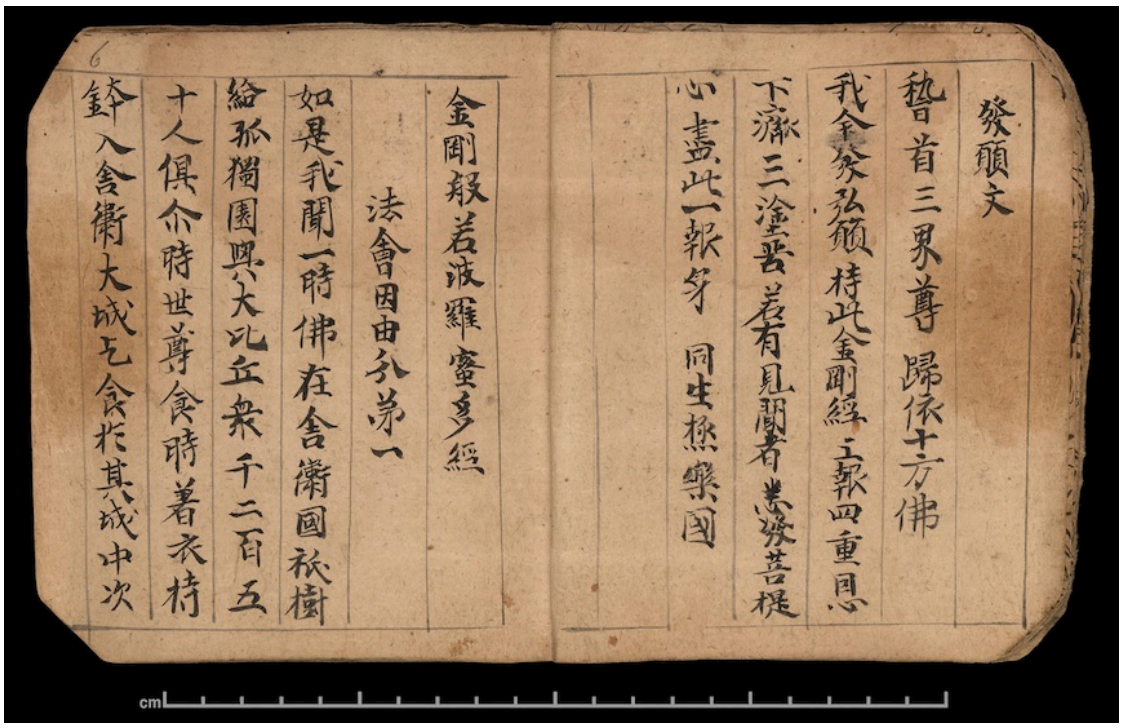


Figure 9. Ninth and tenth pages of S5646: The votive text and the first section of the *Diamond Sutra*. S5646. Scroll, ink on paper. Song, 969. London: British Library. [Digital image] Available at: http://www.idp.bl.uk [Accessed 25 May 2013].

4. Conclusion

The lay orientation of *Diamond Sutra* tales differs from that of other tales in its extent and nature. Not only do they consist of a higher proportion of laypeople, but most of their protagonists are lay Buddhists who experience the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* through devoted and consistent practice over an extended period. In a sense, they constitute the history of the *Diamond Sutra* cult through the experiences of its devotees. These accounts are further distinguished from others by the roles played by laypeople and monastics. While monastics play a greater role in Six Dynasties tales as well as Tang ones

of the *Lotus* and *Avataṃsaka Sutras*, in *Diamond Sutra* stories, monastics play a less pivotal role in which they are usually part of the solution to the protagonists' problems, often serving as proxies of the sutra. On the other hand, laypeople are depicted as empowered Buddhist practitioners who receive benefits from their devotion and experience the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*. The empowerment of the laity, rarely found in early tales, is represented in their access to wonders and powers traditionally associated with monastics, the exemplars of Buddhist practice and learning. This might indicate a newfound confidence of the laity in the Tang period. By the Tang, Buddhism had gained a strong presence in China not only in its establishment of monastic communities through the empire, but in its reach, especially to a fast growing lay audience, among whom are the compilers of *Diamond Sutra* narratives. With their collections, these compilers were beginning to take upon themselves the task of propagating Buddhism, a task also formerly associated with monastics. They did not merely spread the teaching of Buddhism through their collections, but aimed to encourage the exemplary practices related in the stories. Situating themselves within a tradition of tale compilation, they also saw themselves as legitimate heirs of the Dharma, as they strove to enrich the repository of Buddhist literature through their collections, while audaciously displaying their understanding of Buddhism.

The autonomy of the laity in the production and distribution of Buddhist literature is clearly illustrated by P2094, a manuscript produced by a lay Buddhist, and entitled, *A Record of the Proven Efficacy of the Diamond Sutra*

and the Merit to be Gained from Upholding and Reciting It. This religious work not only embodies a lay agenda for propagation as indicated by the collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales placed at the beginning of the manuscript, but displays an independent and non-traditional assemblage of texts and mantras from a variety of sources. P2094 is not an isolated example of such a development. A liturgical version of the *Diamond Sutra* also attached to the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* was probably meant for services related to death and the afterlife, since the *Diamond Sutra*, as its tales reveal, was the afterlife sutra *par excellence* in medieval China. Like Or.8210/P2, the earliest extant printed edition of the *Diamond Sutra* that was commissioned by a member of the laity, this version of the *sutra* is based on an edition printed by the Guo Family of Xichuan. Whether this Xichuan version was privately commissioned by the Guo family or printed by the Guo printing house, its lay provenance is noteworthy and should alert us to the role played by the laity in the propagation of the *Diamond Sutra* cult.

The accretions—the sixty-character "missing *gāthā*," thirty-two divisions, mantras, eight Vajra-beings, and invocation texts—found in the Xichuan edition and later editions of the *Diamond Sutra* could have come about over a period of time, possibly related to developments in Sichuan. The advent of this liturgical version of the *Diamond Sutra* text proves to have far-reaching influence as indicated by modern editions of the liturgical text of the *Diamond Sutra*, which include most of these accretions, printed and distributed freely for "making good conditions." While this edition differs greatly from the

original text of the *Diamond Sutra* translated by Kumārajīva, the latter was 'adulterated' by developments that resulted in the liturgical text: The Taishō text of the *Diamond Sutra* translated by Kumārajīva has an additional sixty-two characters as well as a mantra at the end, which were not originally part of it. Medieval monastics knew of the discrepancy between the translations made by Kumārajīva and Bodhiruci in that the former lacks the sixty-two characters found in the latter; these sixty-two characters were added to Kumārajīva's translation only in the Song period, after a "missing *gāthā*" of sixty characters was added to those editions mentioned earlier that are all associated with the laity. This "missing *gāthā*" of sixty-characters purportedly has its origin in a return-from-death experience of a monastic who was informed by King Yama to retrieve a true version that presumably contained the "missing *gāthā*." Although the protagonist of this tale is a monastic, the role of the laity in the introduction of this missing *gāthā*" cannot be ruled out totally, since the laity—probably concerned with the efficacy of an 'incomplete' text—was less bound by tradition to fill in the "missing *gāthā,*" which they thought was there originally but was omitted for some reason. In any case, the proliferation of copies of the edition with sixty-characters could have prompted the monastic establishment to consider the addition of Bodhiruci's sixty-two characters, which is certainly of greater legitimacy than the "underworld *gāthā*," to Kumārajīva's translation. If this is really so, then it is an instance in which lay Buddhist activities on the ground brought about bottom-up change in an aspect of Buddhism that was the province of the monastic establishment.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS ON THE *DIAMOND SUTRA* CULT, ITS TALES, AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN EAST ASIA

This study of *Diamond Sutra* tales aims to shed light on the state of Buddhism in medieval China. To provide a foundation for my inquiry, this dissertation begins with an introduction to the sutra and its tales in medieval China. Furnishing a sense of its presence in the Tang, it broadly contextualizes the sutra within its socio-historical milieu, pointing to the ways it was engaged and employed by monastics, especially in the Chan tradition, how it was given recognition by members of the Tang ruling house, and how the interest of literati might have popularized it. These disparate developments at different points in time—and usually in elite circles—might not account satisfactorily for the sudden popularity of the *Diamond Sutra* in the Tang or tell us much about how it was conceived on the ground; however, they offer some background knowledge for us to speculate, extrapolate, and explain how they might have contributed to its popularity, and how medieval Chinese society might have encountered and increasingly engaged it. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how these developments would not have impacted people's knowledge of the sutra and brought about increasing engagement with it. Its initial popularity among a small group of people, whether monastics, literati, or members of the imperial family, might be due to a combination of factors, which include the unique qualities of the *Diamond Sutra*, the proclivities of its advocates, and the conditions of the particular period of time. Its abstraction might have

gained for it a following in the monastic community who shared with learned laypeople their enthusiasm about it, which further trickled down to other people, and so on. Its superficial resemblance to the *Daode jing*, the seminal classic of the Tang clan, might have endeared it to the Tang monarchs, who singled it out for lecture and comment even though they were political acts of pacification. The sutra's self-proclamation of the inconceivable merit to be gained from its reproduction might have been conceived as ideal for the posthumous repose of dear deceased ones and thus induced sponsorship for its reproduction. When we put these 'serendipitous' events together within a web of interaction, it is not difficult to understand that the *Diamond Sutra* became popular due to the force of its own karma. There is no reason to assume that information about these activities, which took place in monasteries, palaces, academies, and government offices, was not shared, reproduced, or transmitted from person to person and place to place, in ways that we will never unravel. Thus, these significant events could have been the fountainheads of how people in the marketplace, remote villages, and 'barbarian' regions got to know the *Diamond Sutra*. What follows after is just a matter of our imagination, and the accounts told by *Diamond Sutra* tales.

In this context, the proliferation of *Diamond Sutra* tales and their compilation may be understood to arise from the increasing exposure the *Diamond Sutra* received in various places—as corroborated by records of how it was displayed publicly—which informed people about the sutra and prompted them to engage in its practices. The appearance of the first tale of

the *Diamond Sutra* in the early sixth century suggests a lapse or an 'incubation' period between its advent and the time it caught the imagination of its first advocates, but the compilation of *Diamond Sutra* tales in successive periods of the Tang dynasty attests to a strong fervor for the sutra, a result of increased engagement and the multiplication of religious experiences related to it. This is corroborated by phenomenal developments in the religious, artistic, and material cultures of this period related to the *Diamond Sutra*, such as literati works, Dunhuang murals and Dunhuang manuscripts of its texts, and newly conceived religious works inspired by it. The fact that *Diamond Sutra* tales stand out among these phenomena not only indicates the allure of storytelling as a medium of communication, but underscores the role played by social relations and interactions in religious culture.

If *Diamond Sutra* tales are the result of the sutra's exponential exposure to people and growing communities of devotees, they provide information about the people and communities that devoted themselves to the sutra, and told and exchanged accounts of their devotional experience, and the socio-historical milieu in which they were located. To derive such information, the question then arises: how should these accounts be read and interpreted? Unless we understand the nature of these tales, we cannot assess the role they played in the increasing popularity of the *Diamond Sutra*, and their effects on medieval Chinese religiosity. There is no doubt that the modern scholarly rendition of indigenous Chinese Buddhist tales as 'miracle tales' is problematic. As a means to facilitate scholarly dialogue between different

religious traditions, the word ‘miracle’ is often conveniently employed to replace the many terms in Asian religions that may refer to wondrous, religiously significant, and marvelous events. But ‘miracle’, a word shaped by the Judeo-Christian conception of the miraculous, is not only inadequate, but also inaccurate for understanding these indigenous Buddhist accounts. The world according to the cosmology of the Western tradition, derived largely from the Judeo-Christian worldview, is created by God, and governed by the laws put in place by Him, which He may occasionally suspend when He brings about miracles. Miracles thus reveal the existence of a concerned deity, who as creator of the world is transcendent in relation to it, has the capacity to suspend its laws at will. On the other hand, the typology of the wondrous, and the terms referring to varieties of wonders in native Asian traditions are so diverse that they embody meanings absent in the Western conception of a miracle. In the universe of Indian and Chinese cosmologies, there is no God transcendent and separate from the world, and there is no heaven outside of the universe to which human beings would plead for help. In the Chinese case, the wondrous is underpinned by a correlative cosmology and powered by *ganying*, a concept that explains wonders as natural responses in a world of interdependent order, where homologous things and people react and call forth each other when certain conditions are fulfilled. *Diamond Sutra* tales present a wide variety of wondrous phenomena, such as auspicious signs, marvelous feats, and atypical events, that are fundamentally underpinned by *ganying,* and their manifestation could also be explained by the operation of

the Buddhist law of causality, which assumes an intricate web of karmic connections and human will. Therefore, for those who discern the underlying mechanics of the system, there is nothing that is really irregular or outside the law of nature. Although *ganying* is the philosophical underpinning of *Diamond Sutra* narratives, as well as other indigenous Buddhist tales, *Diamond Sutra* collections are often styled *lingyan*, which indicates a particular soteriological orientation in which the tales are conceptualized by their compilers as proofs of the efficacy of the sutra. This tells us how these accounts and the experiences recounted therein were conceived within the context in which they originated.

The wondrous events in *Diamond Sutra* tales were conceived by their originators and compilers, and understood by their audience, as the proven efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* by means of a particular narrative structure and certain literary and rhetorical features that couched them in a specific manner that made them liable for such interpretation. Often, *Diamond Sutra* stories embody rhetorical devices that aim to prove two important points: (1) events in the tales really happened, and (2) wondrous responses or benefits gained by protagonists constitute the efficacy of the sutra. The efficacy of the sutra is proven by establishing a necessary causal relationship—whether explicit or implicit—between the protagonists' devotion and the wonders experienced or benefits gained. The wonders and benefits bear a particular meaning and significance for the protagonists, and are relevant because they are solutions to genuine concerns or problems of the medieval Chinese in the accounts. In this

sense, these accounts clearly differ from *zhiguai* writings since they are delivered in a way that is structurally consistent for achieving the unitary goal of propagating the *Diamond Sutra* through the experiences of the protagonists; they are certainly marked by strong intentionality of purpose, and collectively "crafted" to shape attitudes, beliefs, and Buddhist practices of medieval Chinese people. Furthermore, because this is done through the experience of protagonists, whose biographical details were often provided, these tales—certainly not accounts of anomaly—are perhaps better understood as records of a kind of history of Buddhism on the ground or the collective memory of the religious life of medieval Chinese people. Viewing them in such a way, they are formative constituents of the religious landscape of a particular socio-historical milieu.

The major themes, motifs, and ideas of the tales not only reflect the concerns of medieval Chinese, but also indicate the areas in which the *Diamond Sutra* appears to be most relevant to them. The fact that *Diamond Sutra* accounts could be classified thematically into a few kinds is congruent with the nature of their emergence, and their rhetorical functions. Because these narratives are fashioned within a web of social interactions, and "shaped by collective expectations and cultural patterns," these few enduring themes reflect the stock concerns of devotees of the *Diamond Sutra* and the particular types of its wonders that were most consequential to medieval Chinese people. Indeed, people repeatedly relate tales of certain themes that are pertinent and meaningful to them, and these tales thus come to play a crucial role in shaping

the socio-historical milieu in which they appear and circulate. Given the function of these accounts to convince listeners and readers of the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, the repetitive telling of tales of a few themes leaves deeper imprints in the consciousness of their audience, especially when they represent familiar scenarios that were frequently encountered by them or people around them. Instead of making variant accounts of the same theme stale, thematic paucity capitalizes on their familiarity and typicality to deliver greater impact on their audience by focusing their attention on the most relevant scenarios. Not only is this more effective in popularizing the sutra, it frames the medieval Chinese conception of and engagement with the sutra in terms of the religious attitude and practices represented and encouraged in the tales. This allows the accounts to shape the religiosity of medieval Chinese society and bear witness to the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* as it was practiced among certain groups of people.

The themes of *Diamond Sutra* tales indicate the transition taking place in the religious landscape between Six Dynasties and Tang China, especially how Buddhism evolved and was accepted by Chinese people. Although a major theme to which many *Diamond Sutra* tales belong is the rescue and protection obtained from devotion to the sutra, four out of the six themes are intimately related to death. This signals a 'niche' area in which the cult of the sutra played an important part in medieval Chinese religiosity, especially in its status as the afterlife sutra *par excellence*. Other themes reveal innovative responses to the Chinese concern for longevity, increasing empowerment of the laity, as well as

new conceptions of the powers of the *Diamond Sutra*. Similarly, motifs and ideas in the narratives also provide information about how Buddhism evolved and the new developments in religious practices of medieval Chinese people. Although these tales contain pre-existing ideas and motifs related to Buddhism in general that were already present in pre-Tang stories, they also contain new ideas and motifs related to the emergence of the *Diamond Sutra* cult. They indicate that some Buddhist ideas, doctrines, and related practices—karmic retribution and rebirth, vegetarianism, engagement in abstinence practices, the adherence to precepts—had taken root and were widely accepted by the Tang. However, unique to *Diamond Sutra* tales is the emphasis placed on some accepted ideas—for example, the transfer of merit and some forms of religious engagement and practices, such as the reading, recitation, and copying of the *Diamond Sutra*—centering around the sacred scripture, which flourished among other practices and cults related to other sutras in the Tang. The fervor for such practices is corroborated by material sources, such as those found in the Dunhuang discovery. *Diamond Sutra* accounts also feature other narrative devices that are informed by indigenous and Buddhist resources, for example, the use of the motifs of dreams and visions to demonstrate the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*, which made these tales highly effective in their proselytizing efforts.

Comparisons of their themes and motifs with those of earlier and contemporaneous tales devoted to other deities and sutras reveal the uniqueness of *Diamond Sutra* stories, as well as synchronic and diachronic

developments of the cult. Above all, the self-promotion of the sutra regarding its own transmission through acts of devotion as well as the accompanying merit and benefits are also championed in *Diamond Sutra* tales through certain motifs and ideas, signaling the emergence of the cult of sacred scripture in medieval China. In Guanyin tales, which are based fundamentally on the promises made by the bodhisattva in the *Lotus Sutra*, the agency of rescue and protection is direct, often in one of Guanyin's transformations. *Diamond Sutra* narratives, however, often represent the indirect agency of rescue and protection of the sutra—a powerful, and yet inanimate scripture—with the idea of proxies carrying out salvific work on its behalf. While the cult of Guanyin may include the fashioning of Guanyin images and their worship, the practices encouraged in *Diamond Sutra* tales are principally those advocated in the sutra itself and grounded in the cult of the sutra. Unlike other earlier tale collections that are not restricted to particular objects of devotion—and thus heterogeneous in nature—such as the *Xuanyan ji*, the *Ganying zhuan*, the *Mingxiang ji*, and the *Jingyi ji*, *Diamond Sutra* tales seem standard in form, and focused and unitary in purpose. The *Mingxiang ji* was concerned with various issues, for example, defending Buddhism against its detractors, and it is tinted by an apologetic quality not found in *Diamond Sutra* tales. Like many tales in other collections of this period when Buddhism was being actively domesticated and sinicized, many of its tales are deployed for self-assertion, and the clarification and validation of Buddhist concepts and doctrines. Additionally, *Mingxiang ji* tales also responded to the challenge of

Daoists, who claimed for their adepts unusual spiritual powers, with their versions of Buddhist practitioners who are portrayed as trumping their Daoist counterparts. Such features are generally absent in *Diamond Sutra* tales, hinting that the concerns that produced these narratives were no longer important when *Diamond Sutra* accounts were told. *Diamond Sutra* stories, instead, reflect a socio-religious milieu in which Buddhism had gained a firm foothold and become widely accepted. Even when compared with other contemporaneous tales, such as those of the *Lotus* and *Avataṃsaka Sutras* compiled in the Tang, they differ substantially in orientation and substance. Although they are all dedicated to sutras and extoll their efficacy, the self-assertions, exhortations, and injunctions for veneration of the cult of the book as represented in *Diamond Sutra* tales are emphasized, in relation to the laity, to a degree quite unlike anything else found in these contemporaneous accounts.

Diamond Sutra narratives are fundamentally grounded in the experiences of lay Buddhists and demonstrate the sutra's practical utility and efficacy in relation to their lives, bearing directly on the reality they faced, solving daily issues, and tackling existential problems of life and death. The lay orientation of the tales differs from that of others in its extent and nature. *Diamond Sutra* narratives not only consist of a higher proportion of laypeople, but most of their protagonists are lay Buddhists who experience the efficacy of the sutra through devoted and consistent practice over an extended period of time. These accounts also distinguish themselves through their portrayal of the

roles played by laypeople and monastics in them: contrary to the important role played by monastics in Six Dynasties tales as well as in other Tang-period accounts, monastics play a less pivotal role in *Diamond Sutra* tales, often appearing merely as proxies of the sutra assisting the protagonists in times of need. Laypeople, in contrast, are depicted as empowered Buddhist practitioners who receive benefits and experience the efficacy of the sutra for their devotion. Rarely found in early stories, the empowerment of the laity—a key feature in *Diamond Sutra* tales—is recounted in their access to wonders and powers traditionally associated with monastics, the exemplars of Buddhist practice and learning. The degree of confidence of the laity illustrated in these accounts is a good indicator of the influence that the sutra had on community members, among whom were the compilers of *Diamond Sutra* tales. The empowerment of lay Buddhists can also be detected in the writings of these compilers, who consciously took upon themselves the task of propagating Buddhism, a task also formerly associated with monastics. They did not merely aim to spread the teachings of Buddhism through their collections, but to also encourage the exemplary practices described in the stories. Situating themselves within a tradition of tale compilation, they also saw themselves as legitimate heirs of the Dharma, as they strove to enrich the repository of Buddhist literature through their collections, while audaciously displaying their understanding of Buddhism.

The empowerment of the laity is confirmed by their autonomy in producing and distributing Buddhist literature in this period. The earliest

printed book to bear a date, a copy of the *Diamond Sutra* commissioned by a lay Buddhist and printed in 868, shows signs of liturgical accretions, probably of lay provenance. Besides the *Lingyan ji*, the *Jiyan ji* and the *Jiuyi*, lay autonomy in the production of Buddhist texts is best illustrated by the Dunhuang compilation of *Diamond Sutra* tales made by the lay Buddhist, Zhai Fengda, which clearly embodies a lay agenda for propagating the sutra. Collections like these are not the only lay attempts at creating religious texts. At the end of the Tang in Dunhuang, a liturgical text of the *Diamond Sutra* was gaining popularity, suggesting new conceptualizations of the sutra and its use. Copies of this liturgical version of the *Diamond Sutra* are found attached to several copies of the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*, which together were probably meant to be used during funerary services. This pairing of the scriptures not only corroborated the strong representation of the *Diamond Sutra* as the afterlife sutra *par excellence* found in its tales, but also demonstrates alternative ways in which scriptures were conceived and treated ritually.

Probably developed by laypeople to meet the need of the widespread use of the *Diamond Sutra*, this liturgical version was the basis on which modern editions—still widely used today—evolved. Its far-reaching influence can also be discerned in the changes it triggered in the original text of the *Diamond Sutra*. The Taishō̄ text of the *Diamond Sutra* translated by Kumārajīva has an additional sixty-two characters as well as a mantra appended at the end, which were not part of it originally. In fact, the sutra came to include these sixty-two

characters from the Song onward, probably due to the popularity of the liturgical version of the sutra that included a sixty-character "missing *gāthā*"; according to a *Diamond Sutra* tale, its origin lies in a return-from-death experience of a monastic who was instructed by King Yama to retrieve a true version that presumably contained the "missing *gāthā*." The proliferation of copies of the liturgical version with sixty characters could have prompted the monastic establishment to solve a textual 'problem' of the *Diamond Sutra* by adding a similar section of sixty-two characters from Bodhiruci's translation—certainly of greater legitimacy than one of questionable provenance—to Kumārajīva's translation. If this is really the case, then this is an instance in which lay activities had brought about an upward change in an aspect of Buddhism that was the province of the monastic establishment. This is, moreover, a great example of the kind of influence narratives could have on the writing of commentarial literature, as later commentators of the *Diamond Sutra* often resorted to the return-from-death experience of the Monk Lingyou to account for the addition of the sixty-two characters to the text of the *Diamond Sutra*.

The cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and the boost it received from its tales did not just stop at the liturgical version of the *Diamond Sutra*. In Dunhuang, other religious texts related to the *Diamond Sutra* were being produced. In addition to Zhai Fengda's collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales, P2094 also contains a hymn that praises the merit of Emperor Xuanzong's composition of

a commentary of the sutra.[755] This hymn belongs to a new genre of religious works related to the sutra that emerged during the Tang, which principally lauds the various aspects of the *Diamond Sutra* cult. Among the Dunhuang manuscript cache are a considerable number of works known collectively as *Jin'gang jing zan* 金剛經讚 (Hymns of the *Diamond Sutra*), which come in different recensions. Recent scholarship has shown that this literature of *Diamond Sutra* hymns evolved over time and can be classified into three different groups chronologically.[756] This literature might have started simply as hymns extolling the sutra, but later came to be inserted in the liturgical text of the sutra to form more substantial texts of *Diamond Sutra* hymns. Apart from this literature, there is also a text (or a tale?) by the name of *Jin'gang jing zuan* 佛說金剛經纂 (A Compilation of the *Diamond Sutra* Spoken by the Buddha), in which a woman who died met King Yama, who told her about a text named after the tale.[757]

[755] Also found in P2721 and in a lost fragment introduced in Fu 2001. According to Fu, it could have first been conceived between 722 and 755 as part of a seat-settling text (*yazuo wen* 押座文). Fu 2001: 285.

[756] Collected in the *Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻 (Buddhist Texts Not Included in the Tripiṭaka) are three editions of the first period (W9.73a, b, c), two editions of the second period (W9.73d, e), and three versions of the third period (W9.73f, g, h). These editions are made by Dazhao 達照, who also did a detailed study of this literature, see Dazhao 2002. Zhang Yong (2000: 255–301) also provides an in-depth discussion of the Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Liangchao fudashi song jin'gang jing*. See Yakup 2010 for a study of this text in Uighur.

[757] Collected in W1.12, this account is translated in Shi 2010: 27–8.

1. POST-TANG CHINA

Apart from the Dunhuang materials, the influence of the *Diamond Sutra* in the Tang on monastics and laypeople is also apparent in notable works—both Buddhist and secular—of the Tang and Song periods. A cursory perusal of the *Tangdai muzhi huibian* 唐代墓誌彙編 (A Compendium of Tang-period Tomb Epitaphs) shows that the *Diamond Sutra* is mentioned more often than the *Lotus* and *Avataṃsaka Sutras* as an object of religious devotion.[758] The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* and *Song gaoseng zhuan*, biographical sources of Tang monastics, indicate a marked increase in monastic engagement in practices related to the *Diamond Sutra*. By the Song, the reach of the *Diamond Sutra* in the secular sphere is discernible from the *Taiping guangji*, which collected more tales from the *Diamond Sutra* than Buddhist ones devoted to other deities or sutras. There are seven rolls (102–108) in the *Diamond Sutra* compilation, compared to only one roll (109) of *Lotus Sutra* tales, and two rolls of Guanyin tales (110 and 111). Their inclusion in a secular collectanea is significant, as it illustrates that they must have been very popular outside Buddhist communities to be known and considered for compilation in the *Taiping guangji*, one of the four great works of the Song era. Besides the *Taiping guangji*, *Diamond Sutra* tales are included in other secular collections, for example, two *Diamond Sutra* tales in roll two of the *Chunzhu*

[758] Zhou 1992.

jiwen 春渚紀聞 (News from the Water's Edge on a Spring Day) composed by He Wei 何薳 (1077–1145) of the Northern Song (1127–1276).[759]

The *Diamond Sutra* remained influential after the Tang, given its importance in the Chan tradition, which increasingly became the mainstay of Chinese Buddhism. The tradition of *Diamond Sutra* tale compilation continued in the Song, with the advent of a notable collection called the *Jin'gang jing ganying zhuan* 金剛經感應傳 (A Chronicle of the Sympathetic Responses of the *Diamond Sutra*) in one roll.[760] Nothing is known about the compiler of this collection or its provenance. It is, however, collected in the Ming-period *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典 (The Great Canon of the Yongle Era) as the *Jin'gang jing gangying shiji* 金剛經感應事蹟 (Traces of the Sympathetic Responses? of the *Diamond Sutra*).[761] In modern times, it was first collected in the *Manji dainihon zokuzōkyō* 卍大日本續藏經 (Kyoto Supplement to the Manji Edition of the Canon Compiled in Japan) put together at the beginning

[759] The *Chunzhu jiwen* is a heterogeneous literary work on various topics, such as literature, music, historical personalities, and so on. The first tale concerns a person called Shen Ergong 沈二公 who dreamed of a monk telling him that someone by the name of Li Li 李立 would come to kill him because of a wrong he inflicted on Li in his past life. The monk suggested that he submit to Li when he came. When Li came, Shen asked whether he was Li Li. Li was surprised and asked him how Shen knew his name. Shen told him about his dream. When Li saw a *Diamond Sutra* copy on the table and asked Shen about it, he came to know that Shen had been a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra* for twenty years. Li told Shen that he had also recited the *Diamond Sutr*a for five years, and decided to spare Shen since vengeance begets vengeance. Tale 2 is about Qiangtang 錢塘, a devotee of the *Diamond Sutra* for twenty years, who could not be hurt by bandits. *Chunzu jiwen* 2: 21–2.

[760] *Jin'gang jing ganying zhuan*, X87.1632.

[761] Zheng 2010: 75. *Yongle dadian* 7543: 3598–3604. The *Yongle dadian* was an encyclopedia commissioned by Emperor Yongle 永樂帝 (r. 1404–1424) of the Ming dynasty. Completed in 1408, it incorporated more than 8000 works from ancient times to early Ming dynasty, and runs to 22,937 rolls.

of last century.[762] Not collected in any Chinese works, this collection—probably compiled in the Song—was most likely lost in China after the Ming but preserved in some Japanese monastic establishment to be included in the Manji edition of the canon, the standard reference for post-Tang Buddhist works. There are forty tales in this collection, and even though some of the later tales bear no information on dates, we can safely assume that they are arranged chronologically since the collection begins with a tale with events taking place in the Liang period, followed by three in the Sui period, and so on.[763] There are a total of eighteen narratives with events taking place in the Tang—seven of which are found nowhere else—and eighteen stories with events taking place in the Song.[764] Despite being a Song compilation, the fact that the majority of its tales are based on Tang events again points to the influence of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* in the Tang. Since many of the new Tang tales and Song tales relate events taking place or mention places in Eastern China, predominantly those in modern Jiangsu and Zhejiang, this collection was probably compiled near the eastern coastal area.[765] It might have been brought to Japan sometime in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries

[762] Consisting of 750 volumes in 150 cases, this supplement canon was edited by Maeda Eun 前田慧雲 and Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, and published by Zōkyō shoin in the period 1905–1912. The *Jin'gang jing ganying zhuan* is collected in case 149. It is now collected the revised edition, the *Manji shinsan dainihon zokuzōkyō* 卍新纂大日本續藏經 as X87.1632.

[763] The thirtieth tale in this collection is the last tale that bears a date: the first year of the Chunxi 淳熙 era (1174). See *Jin'gang jing ganyin zhuan*, X87.1632: 491b14.

[764] Tang tales no found elsewhere include tales 9, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, and 20. The event in tale 23 is said to have taken place in the Zhenghe 政和 era (1111–1118), one of eras of the Northern Song, instead of the Tang (唐政和) as indicated in the tale. Song tales include tales 23–40.

[765] Accounts that mention places in Jiangsu include tales 9, 23, 28, 30, 31, and 32; those that mention places in Zhejiang include 24, 26, 27, 39, and 40.

either by Japanese monks who went to China or Chinese monks who immigrated to Japan.

Judging from the number of extant commentaries of the *Diamond Sutra* composed during the Ming-Qing period (1328–1912), the sutra remained a very important one. There are more than forty commentaries—quite a number of them composed by lay Buddhists—collected in modern editions of the Buddhist canon. Furthermore, *Diamond Sutra* tales are found in secular works, which often serve as sources of Ming-Qing compilations. The Ming dynasty (1328–1644) might have been a period of renewed vitality for the cult of the *Diamond Sutra*, judging from the number of stories from this period. A notable collection of forty *Diamond Sutra* tales, the one-roll *Jin'gang xinyi lu* 金剛新異錄 (Records of New Marvels of the *Diamond Sutra*; X87.1633), was compiled by a lay Buddhist by the name of Wang Qilong 王起隆, about whom we know nothing. Based on its tales, this collection was probably compiled during the last years of the Ming dynasty. It was first collected in the Jiaxing canon 嘉興藏 of the Ming-Qing period.[766] In his collection, Wang Qilong refers to himself as the Zaisheng lay Buddhist 載生居士 of Xiushui 秀水 (modern Jiaxing, Zhejiang). In the preface to the collection, Wang Qilong explained that he compiled his collection to provide people of his time accounts specific to the Ming period, which would be close to their heart, and

[766] Work on the Jiaxing canon began at the end of the Ming dynasty in 1579 in Mount Wutai, but the first edition was only printed in 1677 in Mount Jing. Thus, it is also known as the Jingshan canon (*Jingshan zang* 徑山藏). Because Lengyan Monastery in Jiaxing was its distribution center, it came to be known as the Jiaxing canon. Grant 2009: 12. It is now collected in J19.B40.

thus would inspire them to give rise to the heart of goodness (*shanxin* 善心). The tales in this collection are arranged chronologically, beginning with one from the Hongzhi 弘治 era (1488–1505), and ending with a tale about an event in the Chongzhen 崇禎 era (1636). Although most of the themes therein can be found in previous collections, two new themes of this collection are the benefits of bearing a son and passing examinations.[767] There is also a stronger emphasis in some narratives on the possibility of going to the Pure Lands after death. As in previous collections, most of the protagonists are laypeople.[768] It seems that most of the tales were personally communicated to Wang himself in some way or other;[769] while others were obtained from written sources, including a few secular writings.[770]

In Qing-period (1644–1912) *Diamond Sutra* tale collections, we find more tales gathered from secular sources. In early Qing times, a lay Buddhist by the name of Zhou Kefu 周克復 (fl. mid seventeenth century), a native of

[767] The theme of obtaining sons is first found in Guanyin tales; see tale 55 of *Xi guanshiyin yingyan ji*, and tales 70 and 103 of the *Mingxiang ji*. The theme of passing civil service examinations is due to heavy reliance on such examinations for the recruitment of officials in the Ming dynasty, and thus reflects the response of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* to the concerns of aspiring government officials. For an introduction to the Chinese civil service examination, see Miyazaki 1976. For information regarding Ming-period examinations, see Elman 2000: 66–124. A recent volume by De Weerdt (2007) concentrates on the Song period when the system began to flourish.

[768] Twenty-five protagonists out of thirty are laypeople.

[769] Out of forty protagonists, twenty-eight of them are laypeople.

[770] There is one tale from *Xiangxheng zhi* 相城志 (by unknown author), another from *Tiruozhai xuji* 惕若齋續集 by Guan Dongming 管東溟 (1536–1608), and two tales from *Jinyucheng xuji* 巾馭乘續集 by Tang Yizhi 唐宜之 (fl. first half of seventeenth century). Both Guan Dongming and Tang Yizhi were Ming government officials.

Jingxi 荊溪 (modern Wuxi, Jiangsu),[771] compiled a collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales, with quite a number of them originating from secular sources, such as prefaces, gazetteers, and story collections.[772] This not only indicates that the *Diamond Sutra* was a common fixture in various places, but also indicates that its tales were no longer the province of Buddhist writings, and might have been construed and written as fiction in some cases. Of course, when they were included in collections devoted exclusively to the *Diamond Sutra*, their factuality was probably never meant to be questioned. In any case, this two-roll collection, the *Jin'gang jing chiyan ji* 金剛經持驗記 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of Upholding the *Diamond Sutra*; X87.1635), was compiled in 1658 by Zhou Kefu, and it contains 153 tales.[773] From his preface, Zhou Kefu mentions previous collections of *Diamond Sutra* tales, such as the *Jiuyi*, the *Taiping guangji* as well as Wang Qilong's collection. Zhou Kefu structured his collection chronologically, with the first roll devoted to tales

[771] *Jin'gang jing chiyan ji*, X87.1635: 527c10. Beside this collection, Zhou Kefu also compiled other Buddhist tale collections: *Fahua chiyan ji* 法華經持驗紀 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of Upholding the *Lotus Sutra*; X78.1541), *Guanyin jing chiyan ji* 觀音經持驗紀 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of Upholding the *Avalokiteśvara Sutra*; X78.1542), *Huayan jing chiyan ji* 華嚴經持驗紀 (A Record of the Proven Efficacy of Upholding the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*; X77.1534), and *Jingtu chenzhong* 淨土晨鐘 (The Sound of the Morning Tolling Bell in the Pure Land; X62.1172).

[772] For examples, *Huguang tongzhi* 湖廣通志 (two tales), *Jingzhou zhi* 荊州志 (one tale), *Yang yuan zhengyan* 楊媛徵驗 (one tale), *Jingyucheng xuji* 巾馭乘續集 (nine tales), *Lingshan shengji* 靈山勝蹟 (one tale), *Xiangcheng zhi* 相城志 (one tale), *Mingyuan zaisheng zhuan* 明遠再生傳 (one tale), *Huisheng ji* 回生紀 (one tale), *Bicheng* 筆乘 (one tale), *Lingying si jishi* 靈隱寺紀事 (one tale), *Zhejiang xu douming ji* 浙江徐斗明記 (one tale), *Mao qizong zixu* 冒起宗自敘 (one tale), and *Wang youyi zixu* 王有義自敘 (one tale).

[773] The date of this compilation is not stated in the preface of this collection but is stated in his collection of Guanyin tales. See *Guanyin jing chiyan ji*, X78.1542: 91c4 (戊戌秋。予輯金剛持驗。).

from Six Dynasties to the end of the Tang period, and the second roll to tales from the Song to the Qing. It is, however, interesting to note that within each period, accounts are arranged in the following order: male lay Buddhists, female lay Buddhists, monks, and nuns. Of the seventy-two tales in roll one, there are sixty-one Tang tales, eight Sui, and one each from the Wei and Liang periods. In roll two, there are sixteen Song tales, one from the Yuan, fifty-eight from the Ming, and four from the Qing.

What is unique about Zhou's collection is that it might have been meant as a religious text for practice, as suggested by its other contents. In the beginning of the collection following the table of contents are the liturgical components like those present in early tenth-century Dunhuang copies of the *Diamond Sutra*. The *Diamond Sutra* invitation text, followed by (1) the mantra for purifying verbal karma, (2) the mantra for purifying the *dharmadhātu*, (3) invitation of the eight vajra-beings, (4) invitation to the four bodhisattvas, (5) a votive text, and finally, (6) verses for the commencement of recitation, are collectively referred to by Zhou as the rites for recitation (*nianjing yishi* 念經儀式). Although no text of the *Diamond Sutra* follows this, we may assume that the devotee then proceeds to recite the *sutra*. In any case, following these components is Zhou Kefu's introduction to the collection, followed by a note exhorting the reader to propagate the sutra, and eight explanatory points penned by Zhou Kefu's son, Zhou Shi 周石, on the

translation of the *Diamond Sutra*, the origin of the thirty-two divisions of the text, other details of the sutra, and the tale collection.[774]

Another Qing collection, the *Jin'gang jing ganying gushi fenlei jiyao* 金剛經感應故事分類輯要 (A Compendium of the Classified Stories of the Sympathetic Response of the *Diamond Sutra*; X87.1636) was compiled in 1761 by Wang Zesheng 王澤泩 (fl. mid eighteenth century) of Penglai 蓬萊 (modern Shandong). Although it is uncertain whether Wang Zesheng had access to Zhou Kefu's collection, most of its forty-eight tales were already collected in the latter's collection. In his preface, Wang Zesheng lauded the *Diamond Sutra* as the essence of Mahāyāna and its inconceivable merit and mentions the need to propagate it in every era. As a confirmation of the popularity of the *Diamond Sutra*, he mentioned that there were no less than thousands of accounts of wonders of the sutra, and because it was difficult to remember them all, he had collected the fifty most representative tales.[775] His collection is divided into eighteen fine categories, most of which can be classified under the general categories discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation. His classification may indicate the changing perception of the sutra and the benefits that it brings. The most represented themes are return-from-death experience and rebirth in the pure lands. Again, Tang-period tales,

774 Although the heading indicates that there are eight explanatory points (*fanli baze* 反例八則), there are in fact only seven. *Jin'gang jing chiyan ji*, X87.1635: 537b4–c2.

775 There are in fact only forty-eight stories in his collection.

with twenty-four accounts, constitute the majority of them, followed by fourteen Ming-period accounts.

2. KOREA AND JAPAN

Around the time when Zhou Kefu (1658) and Wang Zesheng (1761) were compiling their collections, monastics in Japan were also compiling *Diamond Sutra* tale collections. The three-roll *Kongō hannya kyō reiken den* 金剛般若経霊験伝 (Chronicles of the Proven Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*) now found in the *Zokuzōkyō* (X87.1634) was compiled by the Japanese monastic, Jōei 浄慧 in the fifth year of the Jōkyō 貞享 era (1688) in the Edo period (1603–1686). Although Jōei notes that there were Japanese accounts of the *Diamond Sutra* scattered in various sources, his compilation was devoted to Chinese versions. This collection contains 107 tales, with the majority of them from the Tang-period, most of which can be found in the *Taiping guangji*, with a few of the post-Tang tales found in Zhou Kefu's collection.[776] There are also a few tales from later collections, such as the *Shan'an zalu* 山庵雜錄 (Miscellaneous Records from a Hermitage in the Mountains; X87.1616), a two-roll work edited by the Ming-period monk Wuwen 無慍 (1309–1386) during the Hongwu era (1368–1398),[777] and the *Wangsheng ji* 往生集 (A Collection of Accounts of

[776] Tales 3 and 19 in roll one and tales 8 and 22 in roll three.

[777] Tales 4, 5, 6, and 7 in roll three.

Rebirth; T51.2071), a three-roll collection compiled by the Ming-period monk Zhu Hong 袾宏 (1535–1615) of accounts of people who purportedly gained rebirth in the Pure Lands.[778]

Just a few years after Wang Zesheng compiled his collection, a Japanese monk by the name of Jijū 慈周 (1734–1801) compiled a three-roll collection called the *Kongō hannya kyō zuiō hen* 金剛般若經瑞応編 (A Compilation of the Auspicious Responses?? of the *Diamond Sutra*) during the Edo period.[779] This collection was carved and printed in 1771, and again in 1880. It bears a preface dated to 1764 written by a person called Ganpō Menzan 頑方面山 who lived in the Taiun-ken 堆雲軒 of the Kennin Monastery 建仁寺, as well as prefatory words by Jijū dated to 1770. There are a total of 178 tales, out of which—more than half—ninety-five of them are Tang. There is evidence that Jijū had access to Zhou Kefu's collection since it contains explanatory notes found in Zhou's collection originally penned by Zhou's son. According to Katsuzaki, there are illustrations in each roll of this collection.[780]

Although Katsuzaki did not give details about the illustration in the *Kongō hannya kyō zuiō hen*, they are probably depictions of the contents of its tales, as shown by a Chinese collection now preserved in Ryūkoku University—the *Jin'gang jing xin jing ganying tushuo* 金剛經・心經感應圖說 (An

[778] Tales 28–30 in roll three.

[779] This collection is introduced in Katsuzaki 1999: 557–558.

[780] Ibid.: 558.

Illustration of the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra*).[781] This collection contains tales related to these two sutras, which contain pictures. Published in a one-volume book format, the books bears a three-page foreword by Qing literatus Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 (1733–1818) of Beiping (modern Beijing), dated to the tenth day of the tenth month of the fifty-fifth year of the Qianlong era (1790). In addition, there is another two-page foreword by Zhu Xuceng 朱続曾 of Moling 秣陵 (modern Nanjing, Jiangsu), dated to beginning of the second month of the third year of the Jiaqing era (1798). The collection begins with a preface by the composer, which states that it was composed by Yehe Qingling 葉河慶齡 in the fifteenth day of the fifty-fifth year (1790). The Ryūkoku University copy is among 1000 copies reprinted in the fourth month of the eleventh year of the Daoguang 道光 era (1832). The first thirty-four pages consist of the ritual procedure for recitation, like those found in Zhou Kefu's collection and early tenth-century Dunhuang copies. Following that is the text of the *Diamond Sutra*, which is again followed by ritual items to conclude the recitation. The collection ends with a version of the *Heart Sutra*

[781] My description is based on Katsuzaki's account. Records of similar collections are found elsewhere: (1) Worldcat: A one-volume *Xin jing, Jin'gang jing ganying tushuo* 心經·金剛經感應圖說, compiled by Nalan Xiaofeng 納蘭曉楓. The imprint date, available in the preface, is the fifty-fifth year of the reign of Qianlong (1790). Available at: <http://www.worldcat.org/title/xin-jing-jin-gang-jing-gan-ying-tu-shuo/oclc/70118568> [Accessed 26 May 2013] (2) Japan National Database of Chinese Books: *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing yijuan fu bore boluomiduoxin jing fu ganying tushuo* 金剛般若波羅密經一卷 坿般若波羅密多心經 坿感應圖說. The description states that the *Diamond Sutra* is the version translated by Kumārajīva and the *Heart Sutra* was the version translated by Xuanzang. The entire collection, in two volumes, bears a preface dated 1798 when it was published. Available at: <http://kanji.zinbun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/kanseki> [Accessed 26 May 2013]. Another copy of this collection is now preserved in the special Kaiage collection (no. 特 7802 of the old collection of Tanaka Kenrō 田中乾郎舊藏) in the Tokyo Metropolitan Library (東京都立中央図書館). Available at: < http://www.library.metro.tokyo.jp/Default.aspx> [Accessed 26 May 2013].

般若心経 purportedly translated by Xuanzang 玄奘. Following the *Heart Sutra* are illustrations of the tales of the *Diamond* and *Heart Sutras* made in 1790. Each account is illustrated with a picture on the page facing the narrative. There are thirty-two *Diamond Sutra* tales and three from the *Heart Sutra*. The publication ends with an extolment of the publication and a list of names of the people who donated to publish the collection, which probably refers to the publication by Zhu Xuceng.[782] Although I have no access to the copy at Ryūkoku University, pictures of a copy on an online auction site give some clues as to how it looks (Figure 10).



Figure 10. *Jin'gang jing xin jing ganying tushuo* 金剛經・心經感應圖說, 1 volume. Booklet (butterfly), ink on paper. Fifty-fifth year of the Qianlong era, 1790. [Digital Image] Available at: http://www.kongfz.com [Accessed 14 March 2013].

[782] The above description of the collection is based on Katsuzaki 1999: 554–5.

The production of illustrated accounts of *Diamond Sutra* tales certainly originates long before the Qing dynasty. The Waseda University Library has preserved a rare printed copy of the *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing bianxiang* 金剛般若波羅蜜経変相 (Jp. *kongo han'nya haramitsukyo henso*; Transformation Tableaux of the *Diamond Sutra*), which not only has illustrations of each of the twelve tales contained in it, but also illustrations of the *Diamond Sutra*. The colophon at the end of the copy states that it is a printed edition of the Gwangheung Monastery 廣興寺 at Mount Hakga 鶴駕山 in the locality of Andong 安東 of the Gyeongsangdo 慶尚道 (modern Daegu city 大邱市). It is printed on the fourth year of the Longqing era (1570) during the reign of the Longqing Emperor of the Ming (aka Emperor Muzong; r. 1567–1572). Since the unified Korea during the Joseon 朝鮮 period was a tributary state of the Ming empire, this accounts for the use of Ming era dating. A seal of the Daizen Monastery 大善寺 is printed behind the cover, but it is uncertain which monastery it refers to since there are a few monasteries in Japan by this time that bear the same name.

The booklet comprises a total of forty-eight printed pages. The first two pages comprise a frontispiece similar to the one on Or.8210/P2. Starting from the third page to the forty-fifth page, the pages are divided into two rows. The top of the third page is an illustration of the protective function of the sutra, while below are three mantras: mantras for purifying verbal karma, for pacifying the land, and for making universal offerings. From the fourth page

until the ninth page (six pages), each row is divided into two (yielding twelve sections). The top section is illustrated with the eight vajra-beings and the four bodhisattvas, and the bottom section is occupied by twelve Tang tales and their illustrations. On top of the tenth page are two illustrations, and the bottom are occupied by the votive text and the "*yunhe*" hymn. Beginning with the tenth page until forty-fourth page, there are illustrations and explanatory notes on top and the text of the *Diamond Sutra* below, which has thirty-two subheadings (Figure 11).



Figure 11. *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing bianxiang* 金剛般若波羅蜜経変相, 1 volume. Booklet (butterfly), ink on paper. Longqing era, 1570. Tokyo: Waseda University Library (Call number: ノ丶05 03703). [Digital image] Available at: http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/index.html [Accessed 22 April 2012]

A similar copy in accordion format produced during the Joseon period (1392–1897) is now in the Matsumoto Collection 松本文庫 of the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University. On its cover is the title, *Joseon pan Geumgang gyeong* 朝鮮版金剛經 (Joseon Edition of the *Diamond Sutra*; Figure 12). Although an equivalent of the last four and a half pages of the 1570-version are missing, this copy probably originates from an earlier edition since it has the same carving, except in poorer quality.



Figure 12. *Joseon pan geumgang gyeong* 朝鮮版金剛般經, 1 volume. Booklet (accordion), ink on paper. Joseon period (1392–1897). Kyoto: Institute for Research in Humanities (Matsumoto Collection), Kyoto University. [Digital image] Available at: http://kanji.zinbun.kyoto-u.ac.jp [Accessed 30 March 2011]

In a study of the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* in Korea, Cho Soonhyang also discusses another printed illustrated copy of the sutra, which is now preserved in the Seongam Archive of Classical Literature (Seongam goseo bakmulgwan

誠庵古書博物館) in Seoul. According to Cho, this edition, which she calls the *Goryeo pan dohoe geumgang gyeong* 高麗板圖繪金剛經 (Goryeo Illustrated Edition of the *Diamond Sutra*; Figure 13) is dated to the twelfth year of King Gongmin 恭愍王 (twenty-third year of the Zhizheng 至正 era; 1363), and carved in Nanwon 南原 (modern Nanwon).[783] Similar to the above, this copy is also produced in the accordion format, and its contents are arranged in the same way. The names of the scribe (Sinji 信之), illustrator (Beopgye 法戒), carvers (Sinmyeong 信明 and Beopgong 法空), and the two government officials who supervised the project (Seol Sadeok 薛師德 and Kim Yeonggi 金英起) as well as the sponsors of the publication are provided at the end of the copy.[784] In addition to these copies, Cho also mentions the existence of an illustrated copy of the Song-period *Jin'gang jing ganying zhuan* privately owned. Although there are forty tales in this collection, Cho mentions that there are only thirty-eight illustrations, out of which she has listed the contents of nine accounts and their illustrations.[785] According to her, this collection—meticulously illustrated with fine details not available in other editions—probably dates to the eighteen century because its carving is very similar to an illustrated copy of the Ryongju Monastery 龍珠寺 edition of the *Bumo eunjung gyeong byeonsang do* 父母恩重經變相圖 (Ch. *Fumu enzhong jing*

[783] Cho 1981: 29.

[784] Ibid. The Cultural Heritage Administrator of Korea website specifies that it measures 27.2 cm in length and 10.8 cm in width.

[785] Ibid.: 32.

bianxiang tu; Transformation Tableaux of the Sutra of the Profound Debt of Gratitude Owed to Parents) dating to 1796.[786]

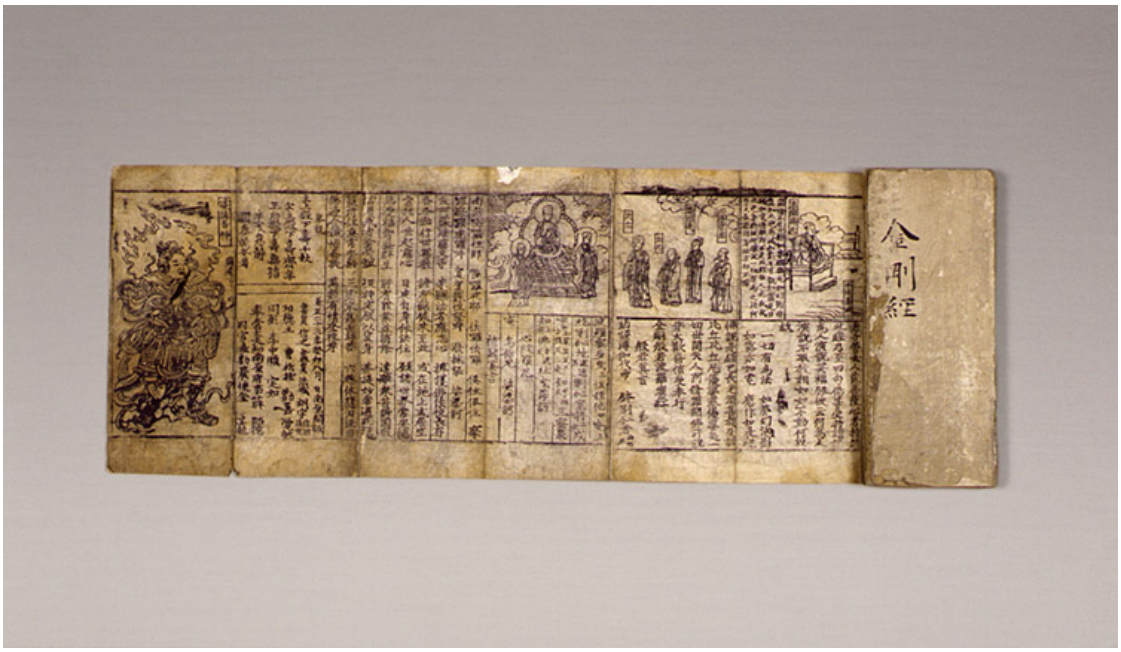


Figure 13. *Geumgang gyeong*, 1 volume. Booklet (accordion), ink on paper (woodcut print). Goryeo period, 1362. Seoul: Seongam Archive of Classical Literature (Treasure 696). [Digital Image] Available at: http://jikimi.cha.go.kr [Accessed 8 April 2013]

It is possible that illustrated copies of the *Diamond Sutra* that combine the liturgical text of the sutra and its tales probably originated earlier. A copy similar to those mentioned above—but apparently printed from distinctively different carving—appears in a Chinese online auction site that listed it as a Song-period printed copy (Figure 14). Although we have no way of authenticating this claim, we cannot rule out the possibility that it is a Song copy, especially given the development of printing in the Song; therefore, it is

[786] Ibid.

certainly not far-fetched that this development took place in the Song. In this regard, P2094 is indeed a very important manuscript since it already prefigures the illustrated versions of the liturgical text of the *Diamond Sutra* and its tales. Once again, it indicates the inventiveness of Tang culture, which produced developments in religious and material cultures that had far-reaching effects on East Asian cultures. It is also interesting to note that the adoption of Chinese collections of *Diamond Sutra* tales and the compilation of Chinese *Diamond Sutra* tales in Korea and Japan might indicate that people and the religious communities in these countries in pre-modern times might not have been as divided as they are now, as they might have viewed themselves as sharing a common Sinitic Buddhist culture.



Figure 14. *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing*, 1 volume. Booklet (accordion), ink on paper. Song period (?). Beijing: Beijing debao guoji paimai youxian gongsi @ Beijing debao Arts Auction, November 2007. [Digital Image] Available at: http://www.kongfz.com [Accessed 12 November 2012].

3. TIBET, MONGOLIA, AND CENTRAL ASIA

Apart from East Asia, the *Diamond Sutra* was also very popular in other parts of the Asia continent, such as Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, and even in Central Asia. The *Diamond Sutra* was highly regarded in the Tangut Empire (1038–1227) as attested by many printed copies of the sutra, both in the Chinese and Tangut scripts, found in Khara-Khoto (Ch. Heishui cheng 黑水城), the Tangut empire capital. Many of these copies are now preserved in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.[787] Most of these copies are of the liturgical edition of the *Diamond Sutra* that is divided into thirty-two sections and has ritual elements, such as invitation texts and mantras at the beginning and the end of the text. This affirms the influence of the developments made in the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* during the Tang period and the effects, even if indirect, of *Diamond Sutra* tales that were part of this development.

In Tibet, the Himalayan area, and Mongolia, the *Diamond Sutra* was popular, as represented by a well-known narrative collection. A modern edition of this collection known as the *Rdo rje gcod pa'i phan yon źes bya ba bźugs so* (The Benefits of the *Vajracchedikā*) was published in 1972. The

[787] Du and Yu 2012. See also the first six volumes of the *Ecang heshui cheng wenxian* 俄藏黑水城文献 (Heishuicheng Manuscripts Collected in Russia). Published by the Shanghai Publisher of Ancient Books, thirteen volumes of this series have been published so far although there will be twenty-four volumes in total. The first six volumes include Chinese manuscripts, most of which are Buddhist. The next eight volumes collect Tangut secular literature, including translated Chinese works. The last ten volumes will contain Tangut Buddhist literature.

popularity of this collection is attested by the many extant copies collected in various institutions. For example, among more than fifty listings related to the *Diamond Sutra* in the Nepal National Archives, twenty of them are for this collection.[788] The provenance of this collection, however, is uncertain, but like most other Tibetan copies preserved in different parts of the world, it contains fifteen tales. Most of these accounts are similar to or contain motifs from Chinese *Diamond Sutra* stories, especially those from the *Gongde ji*. Thus, it is almost certain that the Chinese tales or even collections were transmitted to Tibet and the Himalayan region.

As expected, the themes of these tales do not differ from those of the Chinese *Diamond Sutra* tales. The most common themes are those related to death and the afterlife. The first tale of the collection bears the theme of the extension of lifespan as it relates how a monastic prolonged his lifespan by reciting the *Diamond Sutra* after a physiognomist told him that he would have a short lifespan. This tale has the same storyline as the first two accounts in the *Gongde ji*. There are four tales each related to the themes of achieving good death or rebirth[789] and return-from-death experience.[790] Reminiscent of the tale about Ren Wuniang collected in the *Jiyan ji* (JYJ34), Tale 12 of this collection is about a woman who appears to her parents, asking them to recite the *Diamond Sutra* to relieve her of suffering resulting from having killed sheep when she was alive. Most of the return-from-death tales are also very

[788] Schaeffer 2004: 199, note 48.

[789] Tales 7, 12, 14, and 15.

[790] Tales 4, 5, 8, and 11.

similar to the Chinese versions.[791] Out of the four tales that belong to the theme of rescue and protection,[792] tale 10, which relates how a protagonist who threw himself down a ravine was saved by a deity, is almost identical to one tale (GDJ6) contained in the *Gongde ji*. The remaining two tales that demonstrate the powers of the *Diamond Sutra* and its practitioners (Tales 2 and 13) are two of the most popular stories with long histories. Tale 2 which describes a monastic who subdues a local god, whom others fail to subdue, is an adaption of the first *Diamond Sutra* tale known, the account that took place at the temple of the God of the Pavilion Lake during the Jin dynasty. Finally, tale 13, about a boy who writes the *Diamond Sutra* in the sky, is an adaptation of the tale about Layman Gou, the scholar.[793] As discussed earlier, this tale appeared in numerous Chinese collections since the Tang dynasty, and is apparently well known even in Central Asia, where Uighur manuscripts of this tale have been found.

The Tibetan collection of *Diamond Sutra* was translated into Mongolian as early as the sixteenth century, and "appeared in numerous manuscript versions."[794] The Mongols probably did not encounter the *Diamond Sutra* until the fourteenth century,[795] but when they did, the sutra quickly became popular in Mongolia and was translated from Tibetan no less than five

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[791] Tales 11 (expanded version of S4037), 4 (GDJ05), 8 (GDJ04 and JY06), and 11 (S4037).

[792] Tales 3, 6, 9, and 10.

[793] An English translation from the Tibetan is available in Schaeffer 2009: 147. Also found in S4037.

[794] Wallace 2010: 209–10.

[795] Ibid.: 209.

times.[796] Although we have little information about the transmission of the Tibetan collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales, we may assume that it was intimately tied to the transmission and popularity of the *Diamond Sutra*; the fame of the sutra was boosted in part by a decree by Emperor Kangxi (1661–1771), who ordered all Mongolian households to keep a copy of the sutra along with other Buddhist texts.[797] It is interesting to note, however, that the collection of tales, known as *Včir-iyar oγtaluγč i-yin ači tusa-yin nomlaγsan sudur* (The Sutra that Explains the Benefits of the *Vajracchedikā*), was taken to be a scripture or a kind of commentarial literature of the *Diamond Sutra* in Mongolia, suggesting the different ways texts can be conceptualized in different cultures.[798]

The extent of its proliferation may be gauged by a listing in the catalog of the archives of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which has at least fifteenth copies of this Mongolian collection. Out of these fifteen copies, one has thirteen tales, twelve

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[796] According to Sazykin, the manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra* in the institute's collection "exceed the quantity of all others." Sazkyin 2000: 9b. Three versions of the Mongolian *Diamond Sutra* were introduced in Poppe 1971. A fifth translation was introduced in Sazykin 1999.

On the proliferation of the printed edition and manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra*, see Sazykin 2000: 9b–10a. According to Sazykin, there are more than seventy manuscripts in the Mongolian collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies; and in the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Language and Literature in Ulaanbaatar, there are eighty Oirat manuscripts in Zaya pandita "clear script."

[797] Wallace 2010: 209. According to Wallace, the Diamond Sutra, together with the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-sūtra* and the *Āryāpāramitāyurjñāna-sūtra,* could be found in almost every household in Mongolia. In her essay, Wallace argues that the *Diamond Sutra* was treated like a deity.

[798] Sazykin translation its title as *Commentaries that Explain the Value of the Diamond Sutra*. Sazkyin 2000: 9a. Similarly, Wallace refers to them as commentaries. See Wallace 2010: 209.

copies have fifteen stories each, and two other copies have twenty-two accounts each. According to Vesna Wallace, copies of these different versions can also be found in the State Central Library in Ulaanbaatar and the Royal Library in Copenhagen.[799] There is even an Oirat version of this collection.[800]

The fifteen-tale version undoubtedly originates from the Tibetan version, while the version with twenty-two narratives is a new, extended Mongolian version containing additional stories. According to Sazykin, this version—probably produced in the later part of the nineteenth century[801]—contains only six new tales, with the original fifth tale split into two tales.[802] As an example of the reverse transmission of Buddhist texts, this longer Mongolian version was later introduced into Tibet when it was translated into Tibetan by the Qalqa Qambo Lama Jamyan Garbo (1861–1917).[803] An interesting Mongolian parallel to the illustrated Chinese *Diamond Sutra* is found in the Ernst Collection at Switzerland, where an illustrated longer Mongolian tale collection on the benefits of reciting the *Diamond Sutra* is kept. Probably composed at the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century, this illustrates the far-reaching and enduring influence of the Chinese tradition of *Diamond Sutra* tale collections.

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[799] Wallace 2010: 209

[800] An Oirat version of the text is published in Sazykin 1997: 139–60.

[801] Sazykin 1986: 70–4; cited in Kollmar-Paulenz 2010: no pagination.

[802] Sazykin and Videnija 2004: 18; cited in Kollmar-Paulenz 2010.

[803] Kollmar-Paulenz 2010.

4. Conclusion

Highly indebted to its Tang heritage, subsequent manifestations of the *Diamond Sutra* in China and other parts of Asia are unmistakably significant and innovative, and have certainly widened the presence of the *Diamond Sutra* in different parts of Asia. Although they are religious in nature, illustrated copies of the *Diamond Sutra* and its tales might have served a variety of purposes besides being read and recited by devotees. It is not difficult to imagine that they were used as 'textbooks' to teach the illiterate to read the sutra and its tales. We may recall that Yao, the fisherman was taught to read the *sutra*—even though he was illiterate—by a monk. The thirty-two divisions of the text have made it less onerous to memorize the sutra in a piecemeal manner. The illustrations could serve the same purposes of illustrations in a modern textbook: to entice the reader to read it, to help the readers relate to the *Diamond Sutra* and visualize its abstraction, or serve as mnemonic aids for memorization for the illiterate or less educated.

The production of a sutra with highly abstract contents in a physical form which embodies such visual contents may tell us why *Diamond Sutra* tales were more popular than other tales and survived in greater numbers. These stories might have come about and throve because of the abstraction of the *Diamond Sutra*. While the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* details Guanyin's promises to come to the rescue of those who call his name and the various transformations he may assume to fulfill those promises, there was

nothing like this in the *Diamond Sutra* that details how its devotees would be rescued or could gain merit promised by the sutra. Therefore, one of the most important functions of *Diamond Sutra* tales is to concretize the ways in which it could benefit its devotees and to help people visualize specifically how the inconceivable merit promised in the sutra will be delivered, in what way the place that it is preached or worshipped will be sanctified, or how the effects of past unwholesome deeds will be eradicated. This could explain the rhetorical function of these tales to prove the efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in its practical utility, and the employment of various narrative strategies—dreams, visions, proxies, and so on—toward these ends. The few typical themes of Tang *Diamond Sutra* tales thus were the result of 'natural selection,' for they were the ones that were most representative of the efficacy of the *sutra* in areas that medieval Chinese were most invested. Hence, in a way, it might not be correct to say that these tales are totally divorced from the contents of the *Diamond Sutra*, as they made it more accessible to the populace through its suggestions for engagement and more amenable for them to relate to some of its ideas. If they were modeled after Indian *Avadāna* tales that are "concerned primarily to illustrate the power of service and devotion in advancing practitioners on a long-range, multi-lifetime path,"[804] they might not have been appealing to ordinary medieval Chinese people; yet, they were not: devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* brought solutions when they were needed the most, and it never took more than a lifetime for those who strove to achieve a good rebirth.

[804] Campany 2012: 33–4.

While medieval monastics mull over the canonicity of some indigenous sutras for inclusion in catalogs of Buddhist scriptures, tale collections were never part of that consideration, for they were clearly not in the class of what is considered Buddhist scripture. They were nevertheless a form of Buddhist writing that possessed a certain legitimacy in the eyes of lay Buddhists, who probably considered them to be supplemental sutras, commentaries, and subcommentaries in a holistic program of Buddhist study. Duan Chengshi, who compiled the *Jiuyi*, clearly did not see his compilation as situated outside this Buddhist program, for he had striven to learn about the *Diamond Sutra* by reading and reciting it, by attending lectures on its commentaries, as well as compiling his collection so that it would "supplement what is lacking in Buddhism" and "promulgate the greatness of the scripture." This points to the unique perspective of lay Buddhists; after all, they are not the professionals, they lead very different lives, and they certainly had different views about different aspects of Buddhism that might not be apparent even though they might have been schooled by monastics. In a sense, the tales are a sort of 'experiential' reading of the *Diamond Sutra* by ordinary laypeople, one that opens up the vista of the sutra not found in traditional commentarial literature. There is thus a need to consider the perspective of laypeople in our study of Buddhism, which has so far been lacking in modern scholarship although we have come to include other less 'doctrinal' aspects in our study. Apart from the compilers of *Diamond Sutra* tales, the involvement of the laity in the production of Buddhist texts and the changes they had brought about as

illustrated by Dunhuang manuscripts of Buddhist texts further highlight the need to include the lay perspective on other aspects of Buddhism, such as their attitude toward and role in the production of indigenous Buddhist texts.

Although *Diamond Sutra* tales might have been told as accounts of actual events, it is difficult to deny that they could have other functions apart from the propagation of Buddhism or the promotion of the *Diamond Sutra*. They were certainly retold in various occasions for different reasons, which may include being retold to entertain an audience. Although compiled versions of tales are codified, their oral versions are susceptible to unpredictable change in form as well as directed to fulfill purposes different from those originally intended. If a tale is told for the purpose of entertainment, its veracity is of no importance even though it could be an account of an actual event. It might be more important to modify it—since its truth-value is not a concern—to heighten its entertainment value, the account hence could technically become more fictitious. The most famous such case is Xuanzang's journey to India—an actual event—on which the highly fantastic *Xiyou ji* was based. There is, however, a reverse case in which a fictitious account came to be taken as an actual event. We may recall the Ming-period *Diamond Sutra* tale regarding the vicissitude surrounding a copy of the *sutra* written by the famed Tang literatus and official, Bo Juyi, a story that was clearly conceived as a piece of fiction and was certainly one of high entertainment value. By the time this narrative came to be collected in the *Erke paian jingqi*, three of the four great Chinese classical novels had been written, all of them based on some historical events.

Although conceived as a piece of fiction, this *Diamond Sutra* tale was collected in the *Jin'gang jing xinyi lu*, a collection that was not meant as a work of fiction by its compiler, but a collection of accounts of real experiences of people. Ming period society might have known of the account in Ling Mengchu's collection; nevertheless, it is apparent that Wang Qilong did not think it was problematic to include the account in his collection. This may tell us about the flexible attitude people had toward matters such as fictionality and factuality; additionally, it may also reveal how conceived tales or accounts might be related to how they were construed by compilers and the types of work they were collected in.

Because *Diamond Sutra* narratives could also have been told for a variety of purposes, such as for entertainment, moral edification, and so on, their fictionality valence could toggle between two values or slide on a fictionality scale depending on the intentionality of the teller, the construal of the listener, or the situation in which they were told. Even when told as actual accounts, they could also entertain, fire imagination, and provide inspiration for the development of literary and artistic creation through their impact on medieval Chinese consciousness. Although it is difficult to assess the impact the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* and its tales had on Chinese culture, I would like to suggest that apart from their importance to the religious life of medieval Chinese people, they were part of an environment that facilitated the birth of Chinese fictional and dramatic writings. Thirty-years ago, Victor Mair suggested that the massive introduction of Indian thought, in particular the

concept of illusion (*māyā*), through Buddhism had culminated in a "narrative revolution" that gave birth to self-consciously conceived fictional and dramatic narratives in Tang, China.[805] But if Buddhism was already sinicized when it was rendered into the native tongue[806] and in form and substance amenable to Chinese sensitivity, how was it possible for the Indian idea of illusion to be introduced through Chinese Buddhism so as to bring about a "narrative revolution"? I would still like to propose that *Diamond Sutra* tales—not modeled after Indian precedents but specific to Chinese concerns—did play a role in the development of self-conscious fiction when they encouraged devotional acts related to the *Diamond Sutra*, an Indic sutra that was made accessible in elegant literary Chinese to medieval Chinese society.

Emphasizing Buddhism as the conduit in which the concept of illusion was conveyed and internalized by the Chinese, Mair cited nine similes of the illusory nature of all dharmas from the *Fangguang bore jing* 放光般若經 (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) that illustrate the illusory nature of life: magical illusion (*huan* 幻; Sk. *māyā*), dream (*meng* 夢; Sk. *svapna*), echo (*xiang* 嚮; Sk. *pratiśrutka*), shining [reflected] image (*guang* 光; Sk. *pratibhāsa*), shadow (*ying* 影; Sk. *chāyā*), metamorphosis (*hua* 化; Sk. *nirmāṇa*), bubble in the water (*shuizhong pao* 水中泡; Sk. *budbuda*), image in the mirror (*jingzhongxiang* 鏡中像; Sk. *pratibimba*), mirage

[805] Mair 1983.

[806] Sharf 2002: 19.

(*reshiyan* 熱時炎; Sk. *marīci*), and reflection of the moon in the water (*shuizhongyue* 水中月; Sk. *[u]dakacandra*).[807] In fact, another series of nine similes on the nature of conditioned dharmas is found in the *Diamond Sutra*—in translations other than Kumārajīva's: "All conditioned dharmas are like stars (*xing* 星; Sk. *tārā*), objects behind screen (*yi* 翳; Sk. *timira*), fire of the lamp (*deng* 燈; Sk. *dipā*), magical illusions (*huan* 幻), dew (*lu* 露; Sk. *avaśyāya*), bubbles (*pao* 泡), dreams (*meng* 夢), lightning (*dian* 電; Sk. *vidyut*), clouds (*yun* 雲; Sk. *abhra*)—this is how they should be considered."[808] Despite being listed in all other translations, it was the six similes in Kumārajīva's translation that had the greatest influence on Chinese people. In his translation, the six similes, which appear at the end of the text read: "All conditioned dharmas are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows, like dew, and like lightning—in this way should you view them."[809] Although the nine similes appeared in other Indic texts, no one knows whether there were only six similes in the text that Kumārajīva used to translate the *Diamond Sutra*, or whether Kumārajīva abridged the phrase. Nevertheless, Xuanzang

[807] Mair 1983: 13. This list came from Mair's article, and I followed his translation for all of the terms. The impact of these similes is negligible given the fact that *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* was certainly not as popular as the *Diamond Sutra* in medieval China.

[808] *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing*, T8.236a: 757a7–8=*Fo shuo nengduan jin'gang bore boluomiduo jing*, T8.239: 775b22–23 (一切有為法，如星、翳、燈、幻、露、泡、夢、電、雲，應作如是觀。). It is phrased differently in T8.237 and T8.238. Instead of "stars" (*xing* 星), Paramātha's translation (T8.237) has "darkness" (*an* 暗).

[809] *Jin'gang bore boluomi jing*, T8.235: 752b28–29 (一切有為法，如夢、幻、泡、影，如露亦如電，應作如是觀。).

considered them missing items.[810] In any case, the conciseness of the six similes of Kumārajīva's translation heightens the poetic aestheticism of the phrase that came to be loved by Chinese literati and alluded to in their writings, and appreciated by many others.[811]

If the concept of illusion, so crucial to the development of fiction in Tang China, is premised upon certain philosophical presuppositions about the nature of reality, then the cult of the *Diamond Sutra* could certainly have contributed to the birth of fiction. Despite the tension between devotion to the *Diamond Sutra* for its practical utility in worldly existence and its edifying teachings of mastering the mind and discerning the true nature of reality, the subliminal effects of the recitation of the *sutra* on the nature of life should have worked their way through the consciousness of the multitude of people who recited it. Did it ever cross the minds of those who recited the *Diamond Sutra* that although their worldly existences and problems were substantial and no less real, their worldly existences were just an ephemeral—and thus illusory—part of life, especially when this idea was intoned each and every time the *Diamond Sutra* was recited? Even when the *Diamond Sutra* and its promised merit were understood in Chinese terms, it is difficult to deny that medieval Chinese devotees were not constantly being reminded and coming to the philosophical presupposition about the conditional and thus illusionary nature of their reality by virtue of the physical act of *sutra* recitation. The

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[810] *Datang dacien si sanzang fashi zhuan* 7, T50.2053: 259a23–24 (九喻阙三).

[811] For example, *Wang Anshi quanji* 6: 53. See also Sun 2010: 1308; Chen 2007: 49–51; Zhang 2007: 134; Guo 2006: 159, 238.

extensive effect of this is that Tang Chinese society came to see and engage the world with the lens of the two truths, relative and absolute, especially in the fictional genres of literature and the arts where these concepts found their greatest expressions.

Part II: TRANSLATION

Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji
金剛般若經集驗記
(A Record of Collected Proofs of the Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*)
Roll One (with preface)

Composed by

Meng Xianzhong 孟獻忠
Adjutant of Zizhou 梓州司馬

Prajñā is the mother of the wisdom of all Buddhas. It is the quintessence of the unsurpassed path, the springhead of the Dharma ocean. It is the actual secret storehouse of the Tathāgata. When words are spoken, the path is severed; when the mind functions, the abode is destroyed.[812] Being beyond name and form as well as the elements and fields of cognitive experience, it is said to cognize and yet not grasp. It is free from seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing. Discriminating cognition grasps it, yet it is far beyond that.

Without [unwholesome] action and [selfish] gain, it thus perfects its merit; it does not abide or pollute, thus it consummates its wisdom. For those who investigate its wonders, [wherever] they act are sites of the [Buddhist] path; for those who comprehend its principles, their undertakings constitute the work of the Buddha. It extends into the twelve classics[813] and

[812] These verses come from the *Dazhidu lun* 大智度論 (Sk. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*; Great Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom). This 100-roll treatise was purportedly composed around the third century by Nāgārjuna and translated by Kumārajīva. *Dazhidu lun*, T25.509: 448b5–8.

[813] There are at least four possibilities here; it may refer to: (1) The *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals), which records the affairs of the twelve dukes. (2) The six Chinese classics (*Shi*, *Shu*, *Li*, Yue, *Yi* and *Chunqiu*) and the books of omens appended to them. (3) The twelve Confucian classics (*Yi, Shi, Shu, Zhouli, Yili, Liji, Zuo zhuan, Gongyang zhuan, Guliang*

the eighty-four thousand teachings,[814] and equals the competing brilliance of the three *chen*.[815] Relying on the light of wisdom, one attains the same luminosity. It is likened to the rivaling gallopers of the thoroughfare entering the true vehicle and tracking together.

[With] only quietude and tranquility, stimulus thus penetrates.[816] What is there to consider, what is there to think? If one is sincere, there is definitely a response. He who has one thought of pure faith, and receives and upholds the four-line verse, his good fortunate is as immeasurable and boundless as the dharma world. If the fruit does not bear, it does not perish; the ultimate is the same as the empty sky. Thus, it can cause the *asura* army to flee far upon tracing its sound, and the cavalry of Māra[817] to tremble in disarray and hastily retreat.

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zhuan, Lunyu, Xiao jing, and Erya). (4) The twelve divisions of Buddhist canon or twelve styles/genres in which Buddhist teachings are presented (s*hierbu jing* 十二部經). I have taken it to refer to the Chinese classics because if *Prajñā* is universal, it is also present in the Chinese classics.

[814] Also known as *bawan siqian famen* 八萬四千法門 (Sk. *catur-aṣītyā dharma-skandha-sahasraiḥ*), this term is often used to refer to all the teachings that the Buddha expounded upon in his lifetime to save all beings from eighty-four thousand afflictions.

[815] The *san chen* 三辰 refers to sun, moon, stars, or the Great Dipper.

[816] This is related to our discussion about *ganying* in Chapter 2. I would suggest two senses of the character, *tong* 通 (lit. to penetrate; to go through). It may refer to the penetrating responses from the spiritual realms to the earthly realms by Buddhas and bodhisattvas who are moved to respond by the sincerity (stimulus) of the practitioner and work wonders through different means. On the other hand, supernormal powers are also translated as *gantong* 感通 in the sense that these powers are spiritual penetration; therefore, *tong* refers to the ability of the practitioner to penetrate, reach, or communicate with the spirit realms beyond the normal boundaries of the senses. Thus, in this sense, it is the practitioner who does the penetrating.

[817] Here, *boxun* 波旬 is a transliteration of the Sanskrit *pāpīyās*, which means murderer, evil one, or the devil that terminates goodness. It generally refers to Māra, the devil king, who tried to prevent the Buddha from attaining awakening under the Bodhi tree and

Whether wild beasts with hook-like claws and saw-like fangs, or overpowering blades and lethal weapons, [they cannot harm the faithful];[818] be they titanic waves or intense fires, the faithful tame the waves and put out the blaze. His indomitable force causes [even] fumes to solidify and renders poison ineffective. When he implores, clouds gather, and no blade can hurt him.

Sentient beings surely thrive when they come into contact with members of the same kind. This is just like the great bell that resonates because it is hollow, without being hit, it does not toll. When the clear mirror hangs high, whatever comes before it is seen as it is;[819] one thus knows that the inconspicuous and the conspicuous mutually supplement each other. The myriad things are as a result reverent and sincere, Indra and Brahma protect and sustain it, and the hundred deities serve and safeguard it. Now I take the proofs of its efficacy, especially those marvelous traces that are especially outstanding, so as to herald that which is transmitted by this classic sutra and was received by the ears and eyes, and put them together to constitute a three-roll tale collection, divided into six sections.

He who sees a wise man, thinks of emulating him; he who learns about righteousness, becomes valorous. Like the gentlemen who polishes the jade

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from preaching Buddhist teachings. He is also identified as the devil king of the highest heaven in the realm of desire, the sixth heaven.

[818] This phrase originates from the *Wudu fu* 吳都賦 (Rhapsody of Wudu) by the Jin-period literatus, Zuo Si 左思 (250–305). Referring to dangerous situations, the original reads: "莫不岨鋭挫芒，拉捽摧藏。" *Wen Xuan* 5: 224.

[819] In Buddhism, *ming jing gao xuan* 明鏡高懸 is used to describe the undefiled state of the mind. Later, it came to mean just and impartial judgment of officials in legal matters.

or the guest who safeguarded the sword,[820] like Zhou Chu's encounter with [Lu] Shiheng (261–303)[821] that eternally eradicated the three evils and like Zhongyou's[822] encounter with Xuanfu (Confucius), which then instanced the four subjects.[823] Is benevolence far away? He who desires it has it. Although this compilation of tales is not enough to extend and glorify the sagely teachings (Buddhism), it promulgates the Mahāyāna. Bequeathed to later generations of our offspring, may it encourage them to have the same aspirations [in their devotion]. Completed compilation on the eighth day of the fourth month in the sixth year of the Kaiyuan era of the Great Tang Dynasty, the fifty-fifth year of the sexagenary cycle.

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[820] I have not been able to identify the origins of these phrases.

[821] Zhou Chu 周處 (236–299?), son of Zhou Fang 周魴, military general of Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdom period, was a famous general of the Jin dynasty. Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303), style name Shiheng 士衡, was a writer and literary critic of Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. He was a direct descendent of the founders of Eastern Wu, the son of the general Lu Kang 陸抗 (226–274) and grandson of Lu Xun 陸遜 (183–245), both notable generals of the state of Eastern Wu (229–280). This refers to Zhou Chu seeking out the Lu Ji and his brother Lu Yun to learn from them, a "popular" account found in the *Jin shu* (History of Jin) and the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A New Account of the Tales of the World).

[822] Zhong You 仲由 (542–480 BCE) was a disciple of Confucius. His courtesy names were Zilu 子路 and Jilu 季路.

[823] This refers to the four Confucian subjects or capabilities: virtuous conduct (*dexing* 德行), oratorical skills (*yanyu* 言語), political affairs (*zhengshi* 政事), and literary accomplishment (*wenxue* 文學)

Section 1: Rescue and Protection
(Foreword with nineteen accounts)

In the past, Lu Zhonglian had a friendly chat and the Qin army retreated by itself.[824] When [Duan]gan Mu sequestered himself, the sovereign of the state of Wei secured peace.[825] Having heard of Zheng Xuan's name, all the ruffians did not enter [the territory].[826] In awe of the influence of [Jiang] Taigong, the goddess [of the Eastern Ocean] was mournful.[827] This is all the

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[824] Lu Zhonglian 魯仲連 (305–245 BCE) was a well-known political advisor during the Warring States period (5th century–221 BCE). This phrase probably refers to Lu's part in the failed attempt by the Qin army in its attack of the Zhao 趙 capital, Handan, after the latter was defeated at Changping (modern Gaoping, Shanxi). At that time, when Zhao was besieged, Lu came to know that Xinyuan Yan 新垣衍, an advisor of the state of Wei 魏 who tried to persuade King Xiaocheng of Zhao 孝成王 (r. 265–245) to support the King of Qin in conquering the other states. Lu asked to meet Xinyuan and changed the latter's mind. When the Qin army knew about this, they retreated fifty *li*. Later, the army of Wei defeated the Qin army. See *Shiji* 83: 2459–2463.

[825] Duangan Mu 段干木 was a famous recluse of the state of Wei during the Warring States period. His mentor was Confucius' disciple Zixia 子夏, and among his friends was the Chinese philosopher Tian Zifang 田子方. The Marquis Wen of Wei 魏文侯 (r. 424–387) revered Duangan. When Qin planned a military campaign against Wei, Sima Yu 司馬庾, a grandee of Qin, warned that it was foolhardy to attack a sovereign who so revered the wisdom of Duangan. As a result, Qin did not attack the state of Wei. See the *Huainan zi* translated by Liu and Major 2010: 772; *Huainan honglie jijie* 19: 636-637; *Shiji* 44: 1839.

[826] Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), courtesy name Kangcheng, was an influential Confucian scholar of the late Han period (206 BCE–8 CE). The phrase here probably refers to a record in the *Hou Han shu* about his encounter with the Yellow Turban army while he was on his way back to Gaomi: "They (Yellow Turbans) all paid obeisance to Xuan when they saw him, and they had an agreement not to enter the district territory." *Hou Han shu* 80: 1209. The district of Gaomi was said to be intact from Yellow Turban disturbance due to the presence of Zheng Xuan.

[827] This refers to an account related to Jiang Taigong 姜太公 recorded in the *Bowu zhi* 博物志 (Records of Many Things) composed during the Western Jin (265–316) by Jin official and poet, Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300), which consists of accounts of a wide variety of topics ranging from inexplicable phenomena and marvelous and fantastical events, to reports of geography, historical figures, plants, animals, goddess, immortals, and so on. Jiang Taigong is a popular name of Lü Shang (also Jiang Ziya 姜子牙 and Jiang Shang 姜尚), the ancient military strategist who helped King Wen 周文王 (r. 1099–1050?) and King Wu 周武王 (r. 1046–1043?) of the Zhou Dynasty overthrow the Shang Dynasty. The account has it that King Wu dreamed of a lady crying and was told, upon asking, that she was the spirit of the Eastern Ocean who was married to the son of the spirit of the Western Ocean. She was crying because she was not able to travel because Jiang Taigong was "blocking" her way. Since she was always

more so for the predecessor of the originator of phenomena[828] and the mother of the dharma king. The three insights[829] and the eightfold correct path[830] are formed by relying on meditation; the nine vexations[831] and six fetters[832]

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accompanied by a great rainstorm, she dared not travel pass the place under Jiang's district in fear of hurting Jiang's reputation. King Wu summoned Jiang to him (thus allowing her to pass), and there was indeed rainstorm in Jiang's district for three days and three nights. See translation of *Bowu zhi*, Greatrex 1987: 127–128.

[828] *xiangdi zhi xian* 象帝之先 appears in Chapter 4 of the *Daode jing*. The original reads: "道冲，而用之或不盈。渊兮，似万物之宗。挫其锐，解其纷，和其光，同其尘。湛兮似或存。吾不知孰子，象帝之先。" Judging from its various translations, the meaning of the term is uncertain: (1) "it resembles the predecessor of God" (Mair), (2) "It images the forefather of God" (Lau), (3) "It seems to have existed before the Lord" (Chan), (4) "It is before the emperor of signs" (Hansen), and (5) "It might appear to have been before God" (Legge).

[829] The *sanming* 三明 (lit. three brightness) refers to the three kinds of awareness, which are among the six supernormal powers: (1) the power of divine vision (*tianyan tong* 天眼通), (2) the power of the knowledge of previous existences (*suming tong* 宿命通), and (3) the power of the extinction of defilement (*loujin tong* 漏盡通). See the discussion of supernormal powers in Indian Buddhism in Chapter 2.

[830] The term *bazheng* 八正 is an abbreviation of *bazheng dao* 八正道, the eightfold path (Sk. *āryāstāṅga-mārga*) taught by the Buddha for the cessation of suffering and the attainment of liberation. The eight elements of the path are as follows: (1) right view, (2) right thinking (thought, intent, aspiration), (3) right speech (avoid falsehood, slander, verbal abuse, and idle talk), (3) right action (abstaining from all wrong deeds such as killing, stealing, and so on.), (5) right livelihood, (6) right endeavor (progress in the pursuit of liberation), (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right meditation.

[831] Also known as *jiunan* 九難, *jiuheng* 九橫, *jiuzuibao* 九罪報, and *jiue* 九厄, this term refers to the nine great ordeals that Śākyamuni is said to have undergone. They are listed in the *Dazhi du lun* 大智度論 (Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom) and other sources: (1) A group of Brahmans instigated a beautiful woman named Sundarī to spread rumors about having an affair with the Buddha. (2) Brahmans mocked the Buddha when he was offered rotten gruel by a maidservant. (3) King Ajita invited Śākyamuni and five hundred disciples to his kingdom but neglected to make them any offerings, causing them to survive on horse fodder for ninety days. (4) Many members of the Śākya clan were killed by King Virūḍhaka of Kośala. (5) A king in a Brahman city forbade the people to make offerings or listen to the Buddha. (6) A Brahman woman tied a bowl to her belly under her robe and claimed that she was made pregnant by the Buddha. (7) The Buddha's toe was injured by a boulder dropped by Devadatta from the Vulture Peak. (8) Once, the Buddha was assailed by cold wind for eight days around the time of the winter solstice. (9) Drunken elephants were let loose by King Ajātaśatru among the Buddha and his disciples. See *Dazhidu lun*, T25.1509: 121c9–15.

[832] It is uncertain what these six fetters (*liu chan* 六纏) refer to although the eight fetters or entanglements are mentioned in Buddhist writings: shame (*can* 慚), guilt (*kui* 愧), envy (*ji* 嫉), meanness (*qian* 慳), being unregretful (*wu hui* 無悔), indolent (*mian* 眠), restlessness (*diaoju* 掉擧), and stupor (*hunchen* 惛沈). *Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論, T1579.30: 314c16.

are eradicated due to it. Without name and form, it is thus complete with myriad virtues; without clinging and [unwholesome] action, it is thus imbued with all merit. If one upholds or recites it, it protects the land and its people. It does not burn when tossed into a strong fire, it is not inundated by layers of waves. The power of *Prajñā* is that great; that is why I put the section on "Rescue and Protection" first [in this collection].

JYJ1: Liu Jian 柳儉[833]

Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji* states: Liu Jian, assistant prefect[834] of Xingzhou (modern Xingtai, Hebei), was appointed Directorate of Qiyang Palace[835] at Fufeng [Commandery] (modern Baoji, Shaanxi) at the end of the Sui dynasty. Previously, he was arbitrarily implicated by the Li Mi-Wang [Shichong] affair.[836] While being detained at the Court of Judicial Review, he constantly recited the *Diamond Sutra*. [Once,] he suddenly fell asleep before he could recite the last two leaves of the *Diamond Sutra*. In his dream, he saw

[833] X87.1629: 449b14–23. Also: FYZL5, TPGJ9.

[834] From Han on, *zhizhong* 治中 erratically used as a title for 2nd- or 3rd-level executive officials, i.e., Vice … or Assistant…, in territorial units, such as commanderies (*jun* 郡) or regions (*zhou* 州), and most commonly in the territorial administrations where dynastic capitals were located, under governors or metropolitan governors. In translating official titles, I have relied heavily on Hucker 1985.

[835] This designates a palace directorate who takes charge of the maintenance and management of the palace and its compound. See Hucker 3050 and 4022 (numbers refer to the entry numbers of official titles).

[836] Li here refers to Li Mi 李密 (582–619), courtesy name Xuansui 玄邃, pseudonym Liu Zhiyuan 劉智遠, the leader of a rebel movement against the rule of the Sui Dynasty; Wang here refers to Wang Shichong 王世充 (d. 621), courtesy name Xingman 行滿, a general of the Sui Dynasty. The "Li Mi-Wang [Shichong] affair" probably refers to a battle in 618 between forces led by these two men where the former's forces were crushed by the latter.

a Brahman monk who told him, "If *dānapati*[837] quickly finished reciting the sutra, you would get out of here." Jian woke with a start. Day and night, he diligently recited [the *Diamond Sutra*], not daring to slacken or rest. Two more days passed. By noon [on the third] day, an imperial order was suddenly passed down to pardon him and summon him to the imperial court. Jian was thereupon released by the grace of his Majesty.

On a subsequent occasion, when Jian was reciting the *Diamond Sutra* outside his room, he suddenly detected an unusual and delightful fragrance at the third watch. Jian got up in search of [the origin of] the fragrance. [But] there was no burning spot around. He took this as a proof of the power of the merit obtained from reciting the *Diamond Sutra*. From then onward, he became even more reverent [toward the *Diamond Sutra*]. Day and night, [Jian recited the *Diamond Sutra*] rigorously and diligently, not daring to be remiss about [his recitation]. Up to now, he has already mindfully recited the *Diamond Sutra* more than five thousand times without interruption.

JYJ2: Du Zhiliang 杜之亮[838]

Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi* states: During the Renshou era (601–604), Du Zhiliang of Jingzhao (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi) was serving as an

[837] In the Chinese text, *tanyue* 檀越 is a general term used to refer to patrons or benefactors of Buddhism, almsgivers, or believers who support the monastic order through different means.

[838] X87.1629: 449b24–c7. Also: TPGJ7.

administrator[839] in the establishment of [Yang] Liang, the Prince of Han[840] when the latter raised an army and revolted in Bingzhou (modern Taiyuan, Shanxi).[841] After Yang Liang's defeat, Zhiliang, his colleagues, and their subordinates were all caught and imprisoned. Fearing that his mother would grieve over him, Zhiliang cried day and night.

Suddenly, he saw in his dream a *śramaṇa* who said to him, "If you could just recite the *Diamond Sutra*, you could overcome this misfortune." When the day broke, he requested the sutra to recite it; at times other than sleeping and eating, he did not once stop reciting it even briefly. Before long, the person in charge came to lead the prisoners away for execution. Zhiliang was among those prisoners. Whoever's name was called would die. After the names had been called, Zhiliang's name was not called out. This happened three times. The person in charge and his subordinates were all flogged. Fortunately, they were soon pardoned.

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[839] The *canjunshi* 參軍事 is an official designation originating from the late Eastern Han for someone who was an adviser on military matters in Cao Cao's camp. It came to be used as a title of aides to regional authorities and those in the princely establishment. Sometimes, it is translated as aide-de-camp. See Hucker 6876.

[840] Yang Liang 楊諒, courtesy name Dezhang 德章, was an imperial prince of the Sui Dynasty. He was a son of Emperor Wen and his Empress. During his father's reign, he controlled the region north of the Yellow River, but after his father's death in 604, he rose against his brother Emperor Yang, but was soon defeated by Emperor Yang's general Yang Su and forced to surrender. He was reduced to a commoner rank and imprisoned for the rest of his life. *Sui shu* 45: 1243–1244.

[841] Bingzhou 并州 is known as Taiyuan during the Tang Dynasty.

During the Mingqing era (656–661),[842] he passed away in Huangzhou (modern Wuhan, Hubei). (Lang Yuling and Zhiliang are fellows from the same hometown. They knew each other beforehand.)

JYJ3: Dou Dexuan 竇德玄[843]

In the first year of the Linde era (664), Dou Dexuan (598–666),[844] Chief Minister of the Court of the Imperial Clan, was sent to Yangzhou to investigate some matter. While crossing the Huai River,[845] he saw someone on the bank after his boat had left the bank a few dozen paces. The person, who was carrying a small bag in his hand, looked extremely wretched. The sun, moreover, was about to set, and there were no more boats. Dexuan, having sympathy for the person, ordered the boat to return to the shore and called out to that person to board the boat and cross the river together.

When they reached midstream, Xuan started to eat and, he also gave food to that person. Even after they crossed the river, that person did not stop following behind [Xuan's] horse. After traveling for perhaps a few li, Xuan asked him, "Who are you?" [That person] replied, "I am a ghost. The king has

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[842] This is also known as the Xianqing 顯慶 era, during the reign of Emperor Gaozong (628–683).

[843] X87.1629: 449c8–450a15. Also: TPGJ25.

[844] Formally, Baron of Gong of Julu (*julu gongnan* 鉅鹿恭男), Dou Dexuan was an official of the Tang Dynasty who served as the Grand Councilor (*zaixiang* 宰相) during the reign of Emperor Gaozong (628–683). His biography can be found in *Xin Tang shu* 92 and *Zizhi tongjian* 201. Here, *tan* 彈 is probably his given name and Dexuan his courtesy name. See JYJ12, a tale about his offspring.

[845] The Huai River is the principal east-west river that runs parallel to the Yellow River to the north and the Yangzi River to the south. Originating in south Henan, it flows east across Anhui into Jiangsu before emptying into the Yellow Sea.

ordered me to come to Yangzhou to summon the official Dou. Xuan asked, "What is the personal name of official Dou?" The ghost replied, "He is named Dexuan." Xuan immediately begged the ghost who was sent to summon him about what expedient he could do to be spared. The ghost replied, "I am greatly indebted to you, sir, for giving me food. For your sake, sir, I will first leave [for the time being]. When you have recited the *Diamond Sutra* a thousand times, I will then come to inform you [about the outcome]."

For a month after he reached Yangzhou, Xuan recited the sutra daily until the number was sufficient. That ghost then came and said, "You have recited the sutra a sufficient number of times. Great! Finally, you have to follow me to see the king." Thereafter, Xuan retreated to his room, and then he stopped breathing. One night passed before he started to revive. [He recounted the following:] First, he followed the ghost until they reached a place with a tall gate with rows of lances like the big gates of prefectural seats. The ghost said to him, "My benefactor, please stay here for the time being. I have to first report to the king." The ghost then entered first. Behind the protective screen, Xuan heard the king say to the ghost from afar: "You have made a plan for him." Thereupon, [the king ordered] to give the ghost thirty strokes of the lash. The ghost then came out and bared himself to Xuan saying, "I have suffered the rod for you." He then led Xuan in. He saw someone dressed in purple descend the steps and saluted him, "You have great merit. Your time has yet to come; please immediately go back." When he exited the gate, he fell into a pit and then woke up.

[Later,] the ghost came to him again. When he saw Xuan, he demanded food and paper money. Xuan immediately gave him food and paper money. The ghost said, “You still have a problem. You need to dispatch a priest to submit a document. The karmic retribution that would cause your death has been eliminated by your recitation of the sutra, but you need to submit the document. I will come to inform you regarding this.” Xuan then invited a priest to submit the document. The ghost then came and said, “Your submission did not pass through because there were wrongly written characters [in the document]. You have to submit the document again.” [After Xuan corrected it,] the ghost again said, “There is still a wrong character.” Xuan immediately examined it himself. As expected, there was indeed a wrong character. He immediately had it corrected and ordered the document to be resubmitted. The ghost said, “This time it will go through, and there will not be any trouble.

[Before the ghost left,] Dexuan questioned the ghost about his prospective career, salary, and lifespan. The ghost replied, “Sir, after your current post as Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Clan, you will next serve as Director of Palace Administration; following that, you will serve as Censor-in-Chief; next, you will serve as Supervisor of the Household Administration of the Heir Apparent; next, you will serve as Grand Executive Attendant/Assistant of the Ministry of Revenue and the Ministry’s Census Bureau; and finally, you will serve as the Left Chancellor. You will live to sixty-four.” [After saying this,] the ghost then disappeared.

Xuan's subsequent career was just as the ghost had said. At that time, the priest gathered and recorded this incident, and titled it "The Record of Official Dou's Submission of Document." When Xuan reported this matter to the emperor, he was ordered to relate it to all the officials by imperial decree. Each of the officials was ordered to recite the *Diamond Sutra* (Dexuan's great grandson Dou Ti related the entire matter as he was passing by Zizhou. I recorded it.)

JYJ4: Servant Girl in the Household of You Xun 游珣[846]

You Xun of Guangping (modern Sichuan, Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture) was a meticulous and righteous person. During the Jiushi era (700), he served as a Revenue Section Administrator in Guizhou (modern Guilin, Guangxi). [In his household,] there was a servant girl who had for a few years been weakened and reduced to bones by illness. When Xun finished his term and was returning to Hongzhou (modern Nanchang, Jiangxi), the girl's illness gradually worsened. Xun and his wife Madam Song planned and said, "Since it is a terrible illness, I am afraid it will be infectious. She definitely seems incurable; let's abandon her in the water." A common saying has it that benefit comes later. They then carried the girl out. The girl said, "For my whole life, I have read the *Diamond Sutra*; may I request to read the *Diamond Sutra* just once in master's Buddha Hall? [If I could do that,] I

[846] X87.1629: 450a16–b4. This tale is found only in the *Jiyan ji*.

would close my eyes without regrets." When Xun and his wife heard her words, their tears instantly flowed down.

In the Buddha hall, the girl managed to pick the sutra. As her condition worsened, she herself could not see things, and her mouth could not utter words. Xun and his wife, the master, and others read the sutra several times on her behalf. In a short moment, the girl could open her eyes and use her hands to point at the sutra. She seemed to indicate that she wanted to read the sutra aloud. When they gave her the sutra, she actually could not read it aloud. She used her eyes to look at the sutra and recited the sutra in her heart. Shortly, light shone forth brightly in the Buddha hall, and light also shone from the sutra container. Everyone was startled and surprised at that. Suddenly, the girl perspired on her forehead and face. Shortly, her whole body was perspiring. She then fell asleep, and her suffering was all gone after one night. Within ten days, she recovered her former health. From then onward, everyone in the entire household recited the sutra (Personally known by Zhang Sunkai, former chief recorder of Anxi District in Dingzhou (modern Baoding, Hebei), who told me everything.)

JYJ5: Wang Chongyi 王崇一[847]

Wang Chongyi, former Magistrate of Pingqiang District in Jiazhou (modern Leshan, Sichuan), had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. During the Yongchang era (689), he was summoned to the Court of Judicial Review

[847] X87.1629: 450b5–18. This tale is found only in the *Jiyan ji*.

because he was implicated by a relative in some affairs. After being sentenced to capital punishment, he was detained in the Court of Judicial Review at the capital before execution. [Still,] Chongyi constantly recited the sutra without stopping. Further, Chongyi was also sued by his maid Zhenru in the eastern capital (i.e., Luoyang). Censor Zheng Siqi was sent to the capital to get Chongyi by imperial order and ordered to escort Chongyi to the eastern capital for investigation.

When they traveled to a place more than ten *li* east of Shanzhou (modern Sanmenxia, Henan), they suddenly encountered a monk who stood in their way and said to Chongyi, "Please dismount from the horse for a while and pay respect to the four directions." The Censor did not permit it. The monk said, "What harm is there in letting him dismount the horse to pay respect to the four directions?" The Censor then allowed Chongyi to dismount the horse. When he finished paying respect to the four directions, they could no longer see the monk. The Censor was fearful and thought the monk freakish.

They went on, arriving at the border of Luozhou (modern Luoyang, Henan). When he was lying in the hall of the relay station at night, Chongyi suddenly heard a voice informing him as follows: "Zhenru's charge is greatly beneficial for prolonging your lifespan." The Censor, who also heard the same thing, considered that a strange apparition.

When they reached Luozhou, the Censor reported the entire matter to His Majesty. His Majesty was very startled and then called for Chongyi to personally interrogate him: "When you were on the road, for what reasons was

there such an evil creature?" Chongyi replied, "I really do not know." His Majesty thereupon put Chongyi's case on hold and ordered the matter to be carefully examined. In less than ten days, Chongyi met with an imperial amnesty thereby sparing him from the death penalty. He passed away as the magistrate of Pingqiang District at eighty-seven. (Like the previous account, this is recorded by Zhang Sunkai, former chief recorder of Anxi District in Dingzhou [modern Baoding, Hebei]).

JYJ6: Ren Huan 任環[848]

Ren Huan, former Revenue Manager of Dingzhou (modern Baoding, Hebei), had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Once he went to Luoyang (modern Luoyang, Henan)[849] on official business. On his way back, he brought a load of fine silk. When he was traveling on the road at night, he suddenly encountered a group of bandits who came to rob him. Together, they killed Huan's slave. Still they held on to their knives and clubs, and went after Huan. Being in grave danger, Huan immediately dodged behind a tree to escape from them. The bandits went after Ren Huan and haphazardly hacked at him. They actually did not hit him, but only managed to hack at the tree. The bandits [finally] caught hold of him and took him elsewhere. They thought it strange and were indignant about it, and further hacked at him a few times

[848] X87.1629: 450b19–c7. This tale is found only in the *Jiyan ji*.

[849] In the Chinese text, *luo* 洛 can refer to Luozhou 洛州 or Luoyang 洛陽. I have taken it to mean Luoyang because the verb associated with it in this case is *ru* 入, meaning "to enter," which is often used with important places or capitals.

and hit him with clubs countless times. He was completely uninjured. He thereupon feigned death. Thinking that he had really died, the bandits thus dispersed and left.

[After they left,] Ren Huan immediately got up. He traveled slowly as he looked out for the bandits. The bandits did not travel beyond more than three or four *li* away, and could not get out of the area. Ren Huan, still following them, hid among the thicket, and heard the bandits' conversation: "Previously, there was no water here, now suddenly there is water flowing everywhere. This is heaven's calamity on us!" One bandit said, "When I was killing the rich man just now, I heard someone's voice from nowhere saying, 'Don't kill the rich man. This person has always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. He is a very good person.'" All the bandits were startled at the same time. Everyone said that they had also heard all these words. Together, they raised their hands and snapped their fingers [in assent] and sighed in disbelief for a long time.

Soon, the day gradually brightened, and the bandits [still] could not get away together. Before long, they were found and arrested by prefectural and district officers. Ren Huan searched for his belongings and managed to get them back. (Like the previous account, this is recorded by Zhang Sunkai, former chief recorder of Anxi District in Dingzhou [modern Baoding, Hebei]).

JYJ7: Wang Changyan 王昌言[850]

Wang Changyan was a native of Wannian District in Jingzhao (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi). In the first year of the Jiushi era (700), Changyan was working as an appraiser in the pawnshop of his cousin Yang Xiyan in Chongren ward.[851] Because he had a fistula that circled his neck and even extended to his chest, he would groan in pain and could not do his job.

He afterward resolved to recite the *Diamond Sutra*, and ever since he started reciting it, he never stopped even once. His sore was painful beyond description. When he was lying down at night, he suddenly saw a monk who used his staff to press on him, saying, "Because you uphold the sutra, I will heal you." He was startled by that and without realizing it he shouted. A few other people in the same hall immediately woke up and together they took a look at Changyan. They saw liquid was oozing out of all his sores. It was like liquid from small beans and measured more than one *sheng*. Because of this one encounter, his fistula was completely healed.

Later, he concentrated on receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra*, always reciting it without ceasing. He passed away at sixty-nine in the first year of the Chang'an era (701). (Related by his cousin, Yang Xiyan).

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[850] X87.1629: 450c8–16. This tale is found only in the *Jiyan ji*.

[851] Within the walled city of Chang'an were distinct areas drawn for different purposes, such as palaces, central administration buildings, marketplaces, and more than a hundred residential wards called *fang* 坊. The Chongren fang 崇仁坊 (Chongren ward) is a residential ward in the north of the eastern half of the Chang'an city, just diagonally (northeast) across the street from the western marketplace.

JYJ8: Wang Lingwang 王令望[852]

Wang Lingwang, Magistrate of Qiao District in Bozhou (modern Haozhou, Anhui) often claimed that he could recite the *Diamond Sutra* when he was eight years old,[853] and that he had always received and upheld it without remiss. When he first turned twenty, he traveled to Linxi District in Qiongzhou, Jiannan Circuit (modern Chengdu, Sichuan). While traversing the steep and precipitous mountainous path, he suddenly encountered a fierce beast. Lingwang was extremely frightened and had no other way out of the situation. Immediately, he recited the *Prajñā Sutra*. The tiger stopped its advance and paced around. By the time he had completed two or three recitations, the tiger had slobbered a few *sheng* of saliva and then left dragging its tail.

[Later,] Lingwang also served as the Vice Prefect[854] of Anzhou (modern Xiaogan, Hubei). Once, a thunderstorm suddenly erupted when he was sending tax grain[855] to Yangzijin[856] (modern Yangzhou, Jiangshu). At that

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[852] X87.1629: 450c17–24. Also: TPGJ29.

[853] Although I have translated the age of protagonists of the tales into Western terms ("years old"), its must be noted that in China, as in other East Asian countries, the age of people (*sui* 歲) is counted from conception, and thus newborns are considered one year of age (yi sui 一歲).

[854] In the Chinese text, *bangzuo* 邦佐 is an archaic unofficial reference to the Vice Prefect.

[855] Tang taxation policy implemented a "Grain-Corvée-Textile" taxation system (*zuyongtiao fa* 租庸調法), under which the Tang ministry of revenue (*hubu* 戶部) had three sources of tax revenue. In taxable households (*kehu* 課戶), every adult pay a grain tax (*zu* 租) of two *dan* 石 of grain annually, a textile tax (*diao* 調) of certain amount of silk or hemp cloth, and corvée exemption tax (*yong* 庸) in exchange for the standard labor service duty of twenty days annually. See Twitchett 1963.

[856] Also known as Yangzidu 楊子渡, this is a ferry terminal.

time, there were more than five hundred boats carrying tax grain bobbing across the river. By daybreak, most of the boats had been sunk. All along Lingwang recited the *Diamond Sutra* without ceasing. It was as if there was divine assistance owing to which only his boat was completely intact. (Related by Wang Qian, Director of Bureau of Merit Titles).

JYJ9: Cui Wenjian 崔文簡[857]

Cui Wenjian, Adjutant of Fangzhou (modern Yan'an, Shaanxi), had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. The Tibetans then were making great inroads into [the central plain], and Wenjian was caught and taken to Tibet where he was locked up in a heavily guarded place. He wholeheartedly recited the *Diamond Sutra*, and after three days, his manacle suddenly unfastened by itself without any reason. The manacle unfastened again even after he pressed it down firmly. The Tibetan guard thought that he had opened the manacle on his own and wanted to flog him. Wenjian retorted, "The manacle really opened by itself! I didn't pull it apart!" The enemy asked, "What magic do you have to make the manacle unfasten by itself?" He replied, "Because I uphold the *Diamond Sutra*, it must have happened because of this." The Tibetan said, "I will now lock you again, and if you recite the sutra and the manacle unfastens, I will immediately release you to return to your country. If you recite the sutra and yet the manacle doesn't unfasten, I will kill you." All the Tibetans stood by and watched him recite the sutra. Before his recitation ended, the manacle

[857] X87.1629: 450a1–9. Also: TPGJ38.

suddenly unfastened [by itself]. The Tibetans marveled at that. Indeed, as promised previously, he was released (related by Zhang Sui, Director of Granaries of Luozhou).

JYJ10: Pei Xuanli 裴宣禮[858]

Pei Xuanli of Hedong (modern Yongji, Shanxi) was once implicated by the Vice Director in the Ministry of Revenue. At the beginning of the Jiushi era (700), there were incidentally many major criminal cases. Among the investigations, many were being newly convened. Officials administering the investigation employed harsh methods [of interrogation]. Once people were put through the interrogation, the "five poisons"[859] were all used on them. Among ten persons on whom they were used, not even one remained intact (i.e., unharmed, unhurt).

Xuanli had deep and correct faith, and had recited the *Diamond Sutra* since he was young. Whenever he recited wholeheartedly, the cangue broke off. At that time, the chief investigating officer Hou Ju became stricter [in his investigation]. He did not believe in Xuanli's words, and thought the latter loosened the cangue by himself. He reported to the judge about this and urged that Xuanli be severely dealt with. But the judge in turn ordered Xuanli to recite the sutra. When Xuanli had recited half a roll of the sutra, the cangue

[858] X87.1629: 451a10–6. Also: TPGJ35.

[859] The *wudu* 五毒 (lit. five poisons) refers to five types of apparatus used for torturing people under interrogation to make them confess their crimes. The five apparatus are whip (*bian* 鞭), hammer (*chui* 捶), torch (*zhuo* 灼), stamp (*hui* 徽), and rope (*mo* 纆).

silently disintegrated. Due to this divine experience, Xuanli subsequently managed to clear himself (related by Wei Shenming, Adjutant of Zizhou).

JYJ11: Wei Keqin 韋克勤[860]

Wei Keqin of Jingzhao (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi)[861] had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Because of a military expedition to Liaodong (modern Liaoyang, Liaoning), he was subsequently lost in Goguryeo[862] A few years later, he encountered an imperial army that was on a punitive expedition to Liao. Taking advantage of the darkness at night, he wanted to submit to the imperial army. After he went out of the city, all over were Kokuryŏ villages. It just so happened that the moon was hidden, and he lost his way while traveling. But he later saw something bright like a lamp leading him forward. In a while, he reached the encampment of the imperial army.

[Later] Keqin achieved the post of Palace Attendant. He told all his relatives and friends about this verifying experience [of his practice] and gasped at the inconceivable power of the *Prajñā* (related by Wei Shenming, Prefect of Zizhou [modern Mianyang, Sichuan]).

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[860] JYJ11: 451a17–22. Also: TPGJ14. The name of the protagonist given in the Chinese text is Wei Li Keqin 韋利克勤. If Li 利 is his given name, Keqin 克勤 is probably his courtesy name. I have followed the *Taiping guangji,* which gives the name of the protagonist as Wei Keqin.

[861] This is a commandery during the Sui Dynasty that was later made a superprefecture (*fu* 府) in the Tang.

[862] Although the Chinese text states Gaoli 高麗, since this collection of tales was compiled before the establishment of the Goryeo Empire in the Korean peninsula, Gaoli here must refer to the ancient empire of Goguryeo 高句麗 (37 BCE–668 CE) and its territory.

JYJ12: Tang Yan 唐晏[863]

Tang Yan, a native of Qi District in Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan), had upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. Since he started reciting the sutra, he had never stopped doing so even once. In the first year of the Chang'an era (701), [due to some incident] he escaped and stayed at Anyue District in Puzhou (modern Ziyang, Sichuan). After twelve years, he came to be on good terms with Yao Quan, a rich and powerful local, and a dozen families. By the second year of the Kaiyuan era (714), he encountered the former magistrate of Qi District Dou Jieshen, courtesy name Nanshi, who came from Langzhou (modern Nanchong, Sichuan) after being demoted to serve as Puzhou's Supernumerary Administrator on account of being implicated by his ancestor, Huaizhen.[864] [Dou] was intimate with Prefect Cui Congsu, who thereupon installed him as the Magistrate of Anyue District. Yan thought that Shi was the descendent of the former participant in the deliberations about court policy;[865] they thus devised a plan for Shi to superintend the non-native censor register

[863] X87.1629: 451a23–c3. Also: GDJ16. Found also in roll 112 of the *Taiping guangji* with no mention of the *Diamond Sutra*, and its source is given as the *Baoying ji*.

[864] Dou Huaizhen 竇懷貞 (d. 713), courtesy name Congyi 從一, was a Tang official. It is worth noting that he was the son of Dou Dexuan, the protagonists in JYJ3. He held important positions in the Tang court, had contact with members of the imperial family, and was said to be an adviser to Princess Taiping 太平公主 (d. 713). The implication mentioned in this tale refers to his role in a plot by Princess Taiping to rebel against Emperor Xuanzong. He committed suicide when the emperor came to know about the failed plot. *Jiu Tang shu* 183 and *Xin Tang shu* 109.

[865] This is a tentative translation since I have not been able to determine what the Chinese title (*benbu langjun canyi* 本部郎君參議) means.

(*kehu*)[866] of the rich and powerful local families. Because of that, hatred arose [between Yan and these families].

In the third year of the Kaiyuan era (715), Liu Fei, the Prefect of Yazhou (modern Ya'an, Sichuan) was demoted to be Prefect of Puzhou. He subsequently heard from the local rich and powerful people, who were secretly plotting the downfall of Yan, that Yan was a runaway. [Meanwhile,] Yan would constantly dream of a religious adept every night, who repeatedly urged him, "Why not return? Why not return?" [All this while, Yan] did not know that the rich and powerful people were secretly seeking to harm him. Fortunately, thanks to the District Office Manager Ting Renxu, who came to inform him [about their scheme], Yan fled to Wang Xiao's old manor in Fangyi District, Suizhou (modern Suining, Sichuan) and hid there. [That place was] more than eighty *li* away from Puzhou.

On the twenty-third day of the twelfth month, Prefect Liu dispatched the legislator, Wang Min, who led ten subordinates, to Xiao's old manor to capture Yan. Behind the manor, there was only a bamboo grove surrounded by cultivated land and no other vegetation. Yan was terrified and escaped into the bamboo grove. He withdrew and leaned on a tree and the only thing he did was recite the *Diamond Sutra* continuously without ceasing. The ten subordinates crisscrossed the bamboo grove and searched for Yan repeatedly among the trees, and yet did not see Yan. They then withdrew and returned.

[866] In contrast to *zhuhu* 主户 (household register of people who lived in a place for generations), *kehu* 客戶 is the household register of people who originated from other places. It is not a unified social stratum but includes landowners, farmers, merchants, and so on.

[After that,] Yan next escaped to Zhang Xirun's house in the city of Suizhou and stayed there.

Again in the first month of the fourth year of the Kaiyuan era (716), Prefect Liu again sent Pukang District (modern Ziyang, Sichuan) Office Manager Zhang Guan to bring a letter to entrust Aide Wei Boliang to capture Yan. Again, it so happened that Yan's host Zhang Xirun, the Left Scribe, returned and told Yan, "Today, Pukang District Office Manager Zhang Guan handed Prefect Liu's letter to the Aide; I don't know what it's about." Having heard these words, Yan concealed his alarm. That night he dreamed of a tiger wanting to eat him. Startled, Yan suddenly woke and sat up. He saw a deity king standing on the floor at the corner of the wall at the head of his bed. When he took another look in bed, the deity had disappeared within a short time. At the third watch of that night, he then fled.

On the seventh day of the first month, he reached Tongquan District (modern Suining, Sichuan) and stayed there for ten days. As expected, he received a letter from Master Zhang Xirun [that states:] "Yesterday, the seventh, at dawn, Aide Wei sent men to my house to apprehend you. Fortunately, you knew about it. By all means, travel safely."

Eventually, Yan reached his hometown and managed to [stay alive] until today. All this is due to the protection of the divine power of *Prajñā*. In such a manner, Yan had a place to go, and his former trouble was settled. Later, he saw a snake appear to pass by although it was then the middle of winter. He repeatedly encountered the snake. Since he started reciting the

sutra, he had never once caught an illness even when he entered a house where someone was ill. (Xiangzhong was then serving as Adjutant of Zizhou. He personally asked that person.)

JYJ13: Guo Shouqiong 郭守瓊[867]

At that time, Guo Shouqiong, a native of Zhengping District in Jiangzhou (modern Yuncheng, Shanxi), was serving as a steward at the Court of State Ceremonial. Once when he returned to his hometown, he visited someone a few dozen *li* from home. It was getting dark, and only then did he say that he was returning home. That day happened to be overcast, and moreover it was drizzling.

Since old it was said that the left side of the road [home] already had many graves, and ghostly fires appeared before vehicles to beguile travelers into burial mounds or to fall into ravines, causing them to be scared out of their wits. That night, the moon was moreover fully concealed. Shouqiong was very frightened and had no other way out of the situation. Initially, he saw the ghost fires within a distance of a few dozen li. There were sometimes ten and at other time twenty fires. Hastily, he moved forward, only riding a horse, having not brought anyone along with him.

From old, he had recited *Diamond Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra*.[868] He thereupon recited them in a defensive voice, and the fires dispersed. Looking

[867] X87.1629: 451c4–12. This tales appears only in the *Jiyan ji*.

[868] I have taken *bore duo xin jing* 般若多心經 here to refer to the *Diamond* and *Heart Sutras* although the *Diamond Sutra* may be construed as the essence of the Perfection of

far, he saw that they had distanced. Since he saw that the fires were far away, he stopped his recitation for a while. But in a moment, the ghostly fires gathered again. Like before, he again recited the sutra, and the fires gradually distanced themselves from him. He thus knew that the power of prajñā penetrated both the non-human and human realms. (At that time, Guo [Shou]qiong, like me, was an Administrative Assistant of field encampment. Guo [Shou]qiong personally told me this.)

JYJ14: Shi Shenyan 釋神晏[869]

Liu was the lay surname of Shi Shenyan, a monk of Fuhui Monastery in Xuanwu District, Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan). In the first year of the Wangsui tongtian era (696), he was falsely accused by a fellow native Feng Zhiti for stopping by someone's house and stealing a vessel, a golden peg, among other things. He thereupon escaped to Luzhou (modern Luzhou, Sichuan) to evade the authorities. Once, he encountered Chen Xingzhen of Zizhou's Dayun Monastery, who was lecturing in Luzhou (Luzhou, Sichuan). Having known about the armed robbery committed openly, he had Zhang She, the adjutant of this prefecture, dispatch a document to Zizhou to summon Xingzhen. Zizhou dispatched Zhang Lan, the most respected clan leader, to

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Wisdom corpus. As we can see from other tales, *bore* 般若 is simply used to refer to the *Diamond Sutra*. Moreover, according to Fukui Fumimasa, the *Heart Sutra* was known as the *Duo xin jing* 多心經 during the Tang. Nattier 1992: 193–4.

[869] X87.1629: 451c13–452a11. This tale only appears in the *Jiyan ji*.

Luzhou to secretly capture him; thus, he was incarcerated in a district in Luzhou.

Shenyan from old had recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Day and night, he diligently recited the sutra for more than forty days until the twenty-seventh day of the fifth month when the prison was bright at night just like it was during the day. The prisoners were alarmed and frightened, and thought that there was a fire coming. The door that was secured with a lock and nailed metal plates suddenly cracked as if someone had used an axe to split it open. As the crack sounded, they broke down. The handcuffs, which originally had no place where it could have been opened, dropped off by themselves. They hit the pillar, and the lock broke into a few pieces.

The Vice Magistrate of Luzhou, Che Xun was very angry with the jailors. They further called for the blacksmith and carpenter to once again fortify the locks and cuffs. And by daylight, [Che Xun] sent for the jailors and each of them was given thirty strokes. [Che Xun] further had the nailed plates of the prisons fortified. Shenyan was worried and frightened. He wholeheartedly recited the sutra. Before mid-morning, the locks and cuffs fell to pieces just as they had before. [From this incident,] Che Xun changed his mind [and in turn] respected [Shenyan] and believed [in the latter's innocence]. He increased his veneration [for Shenyan] and offered him vegetarian food daily. Shenyan was grateful for encountering such solicitous attention. All in the prefecture heard [of Che Xun's treatment of Shenyan and everyone] and vied to give drinks and food [to Shenyan].

And [later, Shenyan was] sent back here [i.e., Zizhou]…[870]Shengzhou (modern Ordos, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region). He was convinced by the dharma. [Shenyan was then] assigned to the Baochuang Monastery in Shengzhou. Overjoyed by having such divine experience, Shenyan recited [the *Diamond Sutra*] without being remiss. It happened to be the fifteenth day of the second month in the first year of the Shenlong era (661) when Shenyan was allowed to return to this prefecture (i.e., Zizhou). By now, he had returned to the laity. (Xianzhong personally asked him. Shenyan related all about the flow of events. Shenyan was then thirty-eight years old.)

JYJ15: Cui Shanchong 崔善沖[871]

Cui Shanchong of Boling (known as Dingzhou in Tang; modern Baoding, Hebei) served as the vice magistrate of Tongshan District, Zizhou (modern Deyang, Sichuan) in the first year of the Xiantian era (712). He had always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. At that time, there were rebels among the barbarian tribe in Yaozhou (modern Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan) and Junzhou (modern Xianning, Hubei). Li Zhigu, the Investigating Censor, appointed Shanchong as administrative assistant. Since he was stationed in the military encampment, Shancong stayed at the border of Junzhou.

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[870] I am not sure how the original "*shi shi duan yi qing* 使司斷移卿" should be parsed.

[871] X87.1629: 452a12–21. Also: GDJ15: 158a2–6. JYJ15 is longer and more detailed than GDJ15. Although a similar account about Cui Shanchong is also found in roll 112 of the *Taiping guangji*, but there is no mention of the *Diamond Sutra*, and its source is given as the *Baoying ji*.

Zhigu was determined to be effective [in his dealing with the rebels]. He thereupon offered amnesty to the leaders of the barbarian tribe. After having them surrender, he killed them. Due to this matter, the barbarian tribe thereupon all revolted to take revenge. Together, they killed Zhigu.

Shanchong immediately fled, not knowing where to go. Together, with more than twenty men, Shancong escaped. They sped off and became lost. It had been one day and one night, and they did not know their way. From afar, they saw a fire that they estimated to be more than ten li away. They thought that there would be people and home [from where the fire came from]; thus, they planned to seek refuge and food there. When dawn arrived, they were still traveling but had yet to reach their destination. They finally reached the road leading to Kunming District (modern Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan) and managed to take refuge in the district capital. It is surely the protection of the divine power [of the *Diamond Sutra*] that ever secretly guided and saved them from that ordeal. It is truly the unseen help [of the *Diamond Sutra*] (personally related by Cui Shanchong when Xianzhong served as adjutant of Zizhou).

JYJ16: Shang Xingcong 尚行琮[872]

Shang Xingcong, Magistrate of Anren District in Qiongzhou (in modern Chengdu, Sichuan), had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. For some matters, he was demoted to serve as the Vice Magistrate of Yishui District (in modern

[872] X87.1629: 452a22–b3. This tale only appears in the *Jiyan ji*.

Ngawa Watusi Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan). When he reached the boundary of Yizhou (modern Xinyang, Henan), the mountain roads were precipitous and cliffside boardwalks were perilous. While traveling during the night, he suddenly fell off the boardwalk. Halfway down the cliff, he landed on a tree branch as if he was riding on a horse. Thereupon, he lost his consciousness.

After a while, he heard the voices of his household members calling him. Only then did he know that he had fallen off the boardwalk. Even then, he was still reciting the *Diamond Sutra* and did not stop doing so. After regaining consciousness, the incident was like a dream to him. He was not injured at all (Related by Hu Yanzuo, Revenue Manager of Qiongzhou).

JYJ17: Madam Wang, Wife of Chen Hui 陳惠妻王氏[873]

Madam Wang, wife of Chen Hui, former Renshou District Defender in Lingzhou (modern Meishan, Sichuan), is a native of Jingzhao (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi). In the beginning, when Madam Wang was still unmarried, she was courted by her cousin Chu Jing who wanted to marry her. [However,] Madam Wang's parents would not allow her to marry Chu. Chu used to say, "If you do not marry me and be my wife, I will not let you off even should I become a ghost."

Later, she married Chen Hui. A few years later, Chu Jing passed away. Madam Wang followed her husband to Renshou District [when he was posted

[873] X87.1629: 452b4–14. Also: TPGJ30.

there]. Every night, after falling asleep, she would dream of Jing coming to ask for her hand in marriage just like when he was alive. Following that, she discovered she was pregnant.

After seventeen months, her body gradually became heavy, but she did not give birth. She did not know what to make of it and thought that it was a ghostly pregnancy. She thereupon entered the Buddha hall and took the *Diamond Sutra*. With a sincere heart, she supplicated and intoned the sutra. Every time when she intoned the sutra, she sincerely resolved the following: If I am really pregnant, I hope for an early and safe delivery; and if it is a ghostly pregnancy, it must quickly be terminated.

Due to the power of her recitation, she gradually felt that her body was becoming lighter. The ghost fetus that she was carrying then dissipated by itself. From then onward, she intoned the *Diamond Sutra* with greater vigor and zeal. She thereupon constantly received and upheld it, and has not stopped doing so even now. (Yu Hui, the brother of Chongfu Monastery monk Shi Huiyuan at that time, was appointed Revenue Manager of Zizhou. He therefore came here. He had personally witnessed the incident and thus recorded all of it.)

JYJ18: Xiang Renzhe 向仁悊[874]

Xiang Renzhe, District Defender of Zhuyang District, Guozhou (modern Sanmenxia, Henan), was a native of Henei (modern Jiaozuo, Henan). During

[874] X87.1629: 452b15–22. Also: TPGJ24.

the Longshuo era (661–663), he transported rice from Yunxuan[875] to Liaodong (modern Shenyang, Liaoning). They came to the ocean, and encountered a severe storm midway. Their boat was damaged, and they were shrouded in darkness and became lost.

Renzhe had previously recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Day and night, he recited wholeheartedly without stopping. He roughly remembered having recited more than three hundred times. Suddenly, it was as if he was sleeping, and then there was a monk who said, "Because you recited the sutra, I will let you and others reach the shore tomorrow." In a moment, it brightened, and the reflection of the sun appeared on the water, and from afar he saw a branch that looked like a horsewhip. His recitation of the sutra quickened. Thereupon, they soon reached the shore. There were more than sixty people on the same boat altogether, and yet they did not lose anyone while most of the other boats had drifted away or sank. Isn't this the power of *Prajñā*? (Related by Zhi Sijing, Magistrate of [Bai]ren District in Xingzhou [modern Xingtai, Hebei])

JYJ19: He Heng 何濛[876]

He Heng, Magistrate of Wude District in Huaizhou (in modern Jiaozuo, Henan), had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. In the second year of the Tianshou era (691), he entered Luo[zhou] (modern Luoyang, Henan) on vacation. In the eighth month, he was on his way back to the district with nine

[875] I cannot locate the place by the name Yunzun 雲玄 that is given in the text.

[876] X87.1629: 452b23–c14. Also: TPGJ31.

donkeys and horses, and a total of ten people. When he reached Heyang [District] (in modern Jiaozuo, Henan), it was exactly then that the water began rising, and the bridge broke. Travelers were all using boats to cross the river.

At that time, Chen Qianfu, District Defender of Pingxiang District in Xingzhou (in modern Xingtai, Hebei), also reached that pier (*shuici*). It was then mid-autumn, and the moon had appeared after sunset. Soldiers who had finished their terms were returning home. People were all yearning to go home. They surged forward, vying to get on [the boat].

The two masters He and Chen together also boarded the boat. Mr Chen, afraid that the boat would be too heavy, left behind his clothing and belongings. Because Master He had many mounts, he thereupon got on the boat. After moving not more than ten or twenty paces [from the pier], the boat sank. Heng thought to himself: I have received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra* all my life; how could there be no proof [of its efficacy] today?

When Heng initially boarded the boat, he was afraid the boat would rock; he thereupon grabbed the rope of a load. Once he went under water, he went straight down and down. At that time, Heng also had a nephew who boarded the boat before him. When the boat overturned, his nephew managed to get on top of the hull. The turbulent current was crashing the bank. Reeds hanging down from the middle of the high bank extended to the water.

Heng, who was carried along by the waves, caught hold of the roots of reeds and wavered back and forth in the waves. The capsized boat floated straight toward Heng. His nephew hauled Heng up. Having been drenched by

the water, the rope had tightened. Since his hand was caught by the rope, it was difficult to get it off, [and so when he got out of the water,] the load also followed him out of the water. The rest of his party tossed about in the water, with some of them having a lesser encounter. [Heng] checked and found no casualty among them. There were more than eighty duty soldiers just now, but only one survived. This must be [due to] the good cause of [receiving and upholding] the *Prajñā*, which secretly rescued and protected Heng [and his party]. (Related by Chen Qiangfu, Xingzhou's Pingxiang District Defender)

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Praise: In the gate of meditative wisdom and on the road of Bodhi, there are no [unwholesome] actions and [selfish] gains, but only rescue and protection. [All in the] three realms[877] take refuge [in it], and [beings of the] four types of births[878] are awakened to it; all afflicted by suffering are forever liberated by riding on it.

[877] These refer to the realms in which sentient beings repeat their cycle of rebirth: (1) Desire realm (Ch. *yu jie* 欲界; Sk. *kāma-dhātu*), (2) Form realm (Ch. *se jie* 色界; Sk. *rūpa-dhātu*), and (3) Formless realm (Ch. *wuse jie* 無色界; Sk. *ārūpya-dhātu*).

[878] The four types of birth are the four ways in which sentient beings are born into the three realms and six destinies: (1) oviparous birth (Ch. *luansheng* 卵生; Sk. *aṇḍaja-yoni*), (2) viviparous birth (Ch. *taisheng* 胎生; Sk. *jarāyujā-yoni*), (3) birth from moisture (Ch. *shisheng* 濕生; Sk. *saṃsvedajā-yoni*), and (4) birth from transformation or metamorphosis (Ch. *huasheng* 化生; Sk. *upapādukā-yoni*).

Section 2: Prolonging Lifespan (Foreword with twelve accounts)

He who accumulates goodness will have excess felicity, [while] he who accumulates evil will have further misfortune.[879] Li Er (i.e., Laozi) enters the realm of deep mystery in old age, and Peng Keng[880] toured the gates of all wonders in longevity. How much more accomplished is the person who does not go and come, and truly transcends the three times?[881] How could he who does not arise nor perish be just a thousand years? If one could receive and uphold the four-line verse [of the *Diamond Sutra*] with a thought-moment of pure faith, his lifespan would be tantamount to accumulated grains of dust and *kalpas*, and yet not considered excessive. Immeasurable and boundless, it is equivalent in length to the empty sky and together with it lasts forever. I have gathered auspicious signs [of the *Diamond Sutra*] and those who were capable of experiencing [its power] to constitute the section on "Prolonging Lifespan."

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[879] This phrase comes from the writings of monk Shi Faming 釋法明. The original reads: "積善餘慶，積惡余殃，雖新新生滅，交臂代謝，善惡之業，不得不受。" This, however, seems to originate from the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes): "積善之家，必有餘慶；積不善之家，必有餘殃。"

[880] Peng Keng here refers to Peng Zu 彭祖, a legendary immortal, the great shaman Wu Xian 武咸. He is a legendary person in antiquity who purportedly lived to over eight hundred years in the Yin Dynasty (1900–1066 BCE) because he was said to be left out of the death register in heaven. Regarded as an immortal in Daoism and a symbol of longevity, he is said to influence the pursuit of preservation of life, longevity, and elixirs. See Wong 2007.

[881] The three times (*sanji* 三際) generally refers to the past, present, and future.

JYJ20: Wife of Master Chen, Lady Doulu 陳公大夫人豆盧氏[882]

Tang Lin's *Mingbao ji* states: Lady Doulu, the first wife of the Duke of Chen was the elder sister of Duke Kuan of Rui (d. 650).[883] She believed in doing good and recited the *Diamond Sutra*. She had not yet finished the roll [since] there was a sheet that she could not learn thoroughly for a long time.

Later that day, at dusk, she suddenly had a headache, and her four limbs felt uncomfortable. That night, she went to bed and felt that her condition had worsened. She thought to herself that if she were to die, she would not be able to finish reciting the sutra. [Thus] she wanted to get up to recite, but the candles in her chamber had already been put out. She then got up and ordered her maid to light the candles. After a while, the maid returned [to say that] there was no fire in the kitchen. Lady Doulu told her to open the gate and go to the servant quarter to get it, but there was none there either.

Lady Doulu became increasingly upset, when suddenly she saw a candle lit by itself in the courtyard. It came up the steps and entered her chamber and stopped in front of her bed. It was more than three *chi* off the floor, but there was no one holding it. It was as bright as daylight. Lady Doulu was amazed and got up. Her headache moreover was cured. She then took the sutra and recited

[882] X87.1629: 453a5–16. Also: tale 28 in the *Mingbao ji* (Gjertson 1989), FYZL4, GDJ19, TPGJ20. My translation of this tale here is based largely on Gjertson's translation of the *Mingbao ji* version of this tale (tale 28) found in Gjertson 1989: 213–4.

[883] Duke Kuan of Rui was a nephew of Emperor Wen of the Sui dynasty, and had served in several high offices under the Tang. His name can be found in the *Xin Tang shu zaixiang shixi biao yinde* 新唐宰相世系表引得 (Genealogical Tables of the Families of Chief Ministers According to the New Tang History; *Xin Tang shu* 74b: 3179). He is also mentioned in the biographies of his grandson Doulu Qinwang 豆盧欽望 (d. 709) in *Jiu Tang shu* 90: 2921–2922 and *Xin Tang shu* 114: 4203–4204). For additional information, see Gjertson 1989: 227.

it. After a while someone in the house managed to get fire by striking flints, and when he entered her chamber with a lit candle, the light that had been there went out.

That night she finished reciting the sutra, and thereafter it became her usual practice to recite it five times daily. Later, when the Duke of Rui was about to die, Lady Doulu went to visit him. The duke said to her, "Elder sister, because of the good you have gained from reciting the sutra, you will live to a hundred years and be reborn in a good place."

Lady Doulu is still alive and healthy; she is eighty years old. (She personally told this story to Tang Lin's sister-in-law.)

JYJ21: Master Sengyan 僧琰師[884]

Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji* states: During the Sui Dynasty,[885] when Master Sengyan of the Zhaoti Monastery first began his novitiate, a physiognomist told him, "Young Dharma Master, you have great intelligence and wisdom; unfortunately, your lifespan as indicated by your appearance is utterly short." Having heard these words, he went on to consult the great venerables of the monastery regarding what merit he should cultivate in order to prolong his lifespan. The great venerables discussed it among

[884] X87.1629: 453a17–b1. Also: FYZL16, GDJ1. It is uncertain who Sengyan really is; there are, however, two possibilities based on extant records: (1) Huiyan (d.u.), a monk of the Zhaoti Monastery in the Southern Dynasties period (*Tangseng suoyin*: 10). He is mentioned the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography of Shi Sengqian 釋僧遷 (465–523; T50.2060: 476a1.) (2) Dharma Master Yan (d.u.), who is mentioned in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography of Shi Zhituo 釋智脫 (541–607; T50.2060: 499b2.)

[885] In GDJ1, the event in the tale took place during the Liang dynasty.

themselves, [and concluded that] according to the teachings of the Tathāgāta, the merit derived from receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra* is the greatest; if Yan could receive and uphold it according to the Dharma, he definitely would be able to prolong his lifespan. Yan henceforth followed their instruction and ascended the mountain to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*.

After five years,[886] he descended the mountain and once again went to see the physiognomist, who asked him, "Dharma Master, what merit did you cultivate since to obtain such a unique appearance of longevity? How could it be possible so suddenly?" Yan said him that when he was previously being physiognomized to be of short lifespan, he ascended the mountain to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra* and did nothing else. As a result of this merit, Yan consequently became a great venerable Dharma Master and lived beyond ninety years.[887]

JYJ22: Master Nizang 尼藏師[888]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also states: In the Sui Dynasty,[889] Master Nizang of the Kaishan Monastery (modern Nanjing, Jiangsu) started to lecture [on Buddhism] as a youth.[890] His name was known far and wide. At that time, there was a certain He Yinzhi who said to him, "Although you are a dharma master, you are utterly wanting in longevity."

[886] According to the GDJ1, he spent five years in the mountains.

[887] According to the GDJ1, he lived beyond a hundred years.

When Zang heard that, he was alarmed and frightened. He subsequently stopped lecturing.

With sincere resolution, he randomly picked a roll of sutra in the sutra repository, aspiring to focus on receiving and upholding it. He managed to pick the *Diamond Sutra*. Thereupon, he read and recited it in his room for three years without leaving.

Later, he purposely sought out Yinzhi and asked him to physiognomize him once more. Yinzhi asked, "Is it because what I physiognomized has no verification, or is it because the master's appearance has changed?" Zang said, "What you physiognomized had great verification, but the efficacious response of the Buddha Dharma is inconceivable."[891] The master told him all about what he did. [Yinzhi] said to him, "You can no longer be physiognomized." The master lived to more than ninety years old, indeed just as Yinzhi had said.

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[888] JYJ22: 453b2–8. Also: FYZL17 and GDJ2. Master Nizang is identified as Zhizang 智藏 (458–522) in FYZL12. However, the account in the FYZL17 and GDJ2 took place in the Liang dynasty. We may assume that Xiao Yu made a mistake here. The Master Zang of this account (Master Nizang 尼藏師 in *Jiyan ji*) probably refers to monk Zhizang (458–522). His biography, included in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (T50.2060: 465c–467c), mentions that he prolonged his life. According to Chen, monk Zhizang initiated the practice of receiving, upholding, reading, and reciting the *Diamond Sutra* in the South. See Chen 2007: 35–36. A very popular account, it is also collected in collection devoted to the *Lotus Sutra*, for example, Seng Xiang's *Fahua jing zhuan*. Yang 2009: 35.

[889] According to the GDJ2, the event took place in the Liang dynasty.

[890] The Kaishan Monastery mentioned here probably refers to the one in Jiangsu that was established during the Liang dynasty. When monk Baozhi 寶誌 (418–514) passed away, a five-level pagoda was built for Baozhi, and the site expanded to become the Kaishan Monastery complex. Zhang 2012: 11. After the establishment of the Kaishan Monastery, Emperor Wu installed Zhizang as the resident monk of the monastery.

[891] According to his biography, he was physiognomized as having a short lifespan at twenty-nine. He was told that he would live to thirty-one. But a voice from nowhere told him that his lifespan had doubled when he was thirty-one due to his recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*. I suppose this was how he knew that what was physiognomized previously was true. T50.2020: 466a23–b06.

JYJ23: Wang Tuo 王陀[892]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also states: During the Sui dynasty, Wang Tuo, a native of Qinzhou (modern Tianshui, Gansu), served as a military officer in the Soaring Hawk Garrison. Because of illness, he was retrenched from the post. At home, he searched for the Mahāyāna *Diamond Sutra*. During the Daye era (605–618), when the upheaval first stabilized, he searched but could not find the sutra. Later, a monk presented him a roll of this *Prajñā Sutra*. [Since then,] he has read the sutra five times daily. It has been three years since, and [now] he can read and recite it smoothly.

Tuo later fell ill [again.] From afar, he saw twenty-two ghosts come together to visit him. Tuo immediately recited the *Diamond Sutra*. [As such,] those ghosts distanced themselves from Tuo for more than a hundred paces and did not dare to come nearer. The ghosts said to Tuo, "You! Stop reciting the sutra! You can't get away!" Tuo restrained himself and stopped reciting, and the ghosts came to Tuo's side. Among the ghosts, there was one whose face was extremely ugly, and he said, "I am the Commander-in-Chief." He first sent two ghosts to cover one route and had the rest cover the other ten routes. [Next] he had the emissaries each bring forth captives within a short period of time.

Tuo then thought to himself: "Is this how I should end up?!" The people brought forth by the ghosts were tied up, and each of them was sent to the place of the king."

[892] X87.1629: 453b9–c7. Also: GDJ12, TPGJ28.

Later, a ghost riding on a horse came to report, “As for the person who previously recited the sutra, the king has order to release him for six days.” Tuo was then in a stupor and was about to cease breathing. Having heard the ghost emissary come to hold them back and tell them to release him, he was awakened as a result, and his breathing returned to normal. Because of this, Tuo became even more earnest and sincere, and recited the *Diamond Sutra* day and night without ceasing.

Six days had already passed, [but due to] the power of reciting the sutra, Tuo was no longer being summoned. In the middle of one night, a person called out to him from the sky to which Tuo responded from afar. The person said, “Because you now read and recite the *Diamond Sutra*, the merit of this is immense. The king has ordered that you be let off. You will live to ninety years old.” [After that, Tuo] conscientiously and diligently cultivated merits by reciting the sutra even more assiduously, without daring to be lax and negligent.

Later Tuo’s elder brother fell ill and consequently passed away. After more than a day, he saw his elder brother, and they had a conversation. His brother told Tuo, “Recite the *Diamond Sutra* conscientiously for my sake; save me from the suffering of hell.” Before he could finish speaking, someone pushed his elder brother into hell. Tuo was extremely frightened and ran back. [On his way back,] six sheep blocked Tuo’s way and did not allow him to pass through. Tuo then recited the *Diamond Sutra* to the sheep, and they then

gradually became small. When he finished reciting the sutra, the sheep had altogether entered the ground. Thereupon, he was able to get past.

[When he got back,] he immediately recited the *Prajñā Sutra* five thousand times for his elder brother to save him from the sufferings of hell. [For the rest of his life,] Tuo recited and upheld the sutra day and night without negligence. He furthermore persuaded and converted all people to recite the *Prajñā Sutra* together. Because he recited and upheld [the *Diamond Sutra*], Tuo was able to prolong his lifespan.

JYJ24: Wei Min 魏旻[893]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also states: In the first year of the Zhenguan era (627), Suizhou native Wei Min passed away for three days. [He was brought to the underworld where] his misdeeds were announced before the king. Min immediately pleaded that he was not due to die. The king searched the register to investigate [his claim], and indeed what Min said was not wrong. The king reprimanded the emissary who brought Min there, "For what reason did you mistakenly bring him here?" The king had the emissary given fifty strokes of the rod and immediately released Min to return back to life. He dispatched someone to send Min out and indicated to him the original road he took.

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[893] X87.1629: 453c8–454a20. This account, featuring the protagonist Wei Min, can only be found in the *Jiyan ji*. However, it is important to note that similar accounts are found in FYZL6 and TPGJ11 featuring a different protagonist by the name Zhao Wenxin 趙文信, who was also from Suizhou. Although the source for the FYZL6 account is the *Mingbao ji*, this account cannot be found in it. The *Gongde ji* version merely identifies the protagonist as a native of Suizhou without providing his name. See GDJ5.

Having reached home, he immediately revived. His parents and family dependents asked him, "You were dead for three days, and now you revived. What is the matter?" Min told them everything in detail. [According to him,] he was being summoned [to the underworld] with more than ten people. A big monk among them was first brought before the king. When the king saw the monk, he first asked, "May I ask, for your entire life, what merit did you cultivate?" The monk replied the king, "I have only recited the *Diamond Sutra* all my life." Having heard these words, the king paid respect to him by putting his palms together, and he praised the monk. "Wonderful! Wonderful! Dharma Master received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*; you should get to be reborn in heaven; for what reason are you brought here?" Before the king could finish speaking, heavenly deities with fragrant flowers came to welcome the master and took him away.

[Next,] the king asked Min, "For all your life, what merit did you cultivate?" Min reported to the king, "I have never read or recited [any Buddhist] sutras all my life. I have only read the writings and collected essays of Yu Xin."[894] The king said to Min, "Do you recognize Yu Xin? He is a great evildoer." Again Min said, "Although I read his essays, I do not know Yu Xin." The king then dispatched someone to lead him to Yu Xin's place, where [upon reaching] he saw a big tortoise with one body and many heads. The person

[894] Yu Xin 庾信 (513–581), courtesy name Zishan 子山, was a native of Xinye 新野 (modern Nanyang, Henan). He was a poet of the Liang during the later Six Dynasties period, he was well-known for his poem *Ai jiangnan fu* 哀江南賦 (Lament for the South Rhapsody) (*Zhou shu* 41; *Bei shi* 83), which he composed in Chang'an, where he was held for the rest of his life after the fall of the Liang. On Yu Xin, see Wu 2008: 175–184.

who led him there said, “This is Yu Xin.” After he walked back more than ten steps, he saw a person approach him: “I am Yu Xin. Because when I was alive, I liked to compose essays; sometimes, I quoted from [Buddhist] sutras and committed slander. For this, I am now undergoing great punishment. The tortoise with multiple heads you saw just now was my body.”

When he returned before the king, the king said to the emissary, “Have you brought him to see Yu Xin?” The emissary replied, “He has already seen [Yu Xin], who has been punished with the body of a tortoise and is undergoing great suffering.” The king said [Min], “I will release you to return home. Do not slander Mahāyāna sutras; diligently cultivate good deeds.” The king dispatched someone to send him out of the place. Upon reaching home, he then immediately awakened. He recalled the words exchanged in the underworld and also his having seen the monk who got to ascend to heaven for having read and recited the *Diamond Sutra* while alive.

He then went in search [of the *Diamond Sutra*] in various monasteries until he met a monk who said, “I have the sutra.” Having heard this, Min paid his respect and supplicated, “If I could obtain the sutra, I would not begrudge my life.” That monk then gave him the one roll of the *Diamond Sutra*. Day and night, Min intoned it, and soon he was able to recite it. Day and night, he assiduously and diligently recited and upheld it without negligence.

Once, he told the people of Suizhou about his encounter. He further related about the monk who passed away along with himself, and how he was led before the king and managed to be reborn in heaven for having recited the

Mahāyāna *Diamond Sutra* [when he was alive]. He also related Yu Xin's evil deeds and his retribution. Most people of Suizhou were barbarians[895] who killed and hunted for a living; those who did evil were many. Having heard Min talking about his story, each and every one aspired to the Buddhist way. They did not dare kill living beings and hunt animals, and together, they read the *Diamond Sutra* day and night without discarding it.

On the fifteen day of the fourth month, someone who rode a white horse suddenly came before Min and said, "The day when I took you [to the underworld,] I checked the register which indicated that you [still] have two years of lifespan; thus, I let you return home. Because you received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra* ten thousand times and have also converted all to cultivate merit and to read and recite the *Prajñā* without stopping, with such good deeds, you have prolonged your lifespan. When your lifespan expires at ninety, you will definitely be born in the pure land."

JYJ25: Mu Yantong 睦彦通[896]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also states: Mu Yantong, Administrative Aide to the Region Head of Huazhou (modern Anyang, Hunan), had recited the *Diamond Sutra* unremittingly his entire life. He was first a magistrate of Wulao District (modern Zhengzhou, Henan) under Li Mi. Because rebels were raiding the city and wanted to kill the district magistrate,

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[895] The term *yiliao* 夷獠 is used in the text, which generally refers people of the various ethnic groups in Southwestern China.

[896] X87.1629: 454a21–b4. Also: GDJ6 and TPGJ6.

Tong was very frightened. He thus jumped over the city [wall] and managed to escape. He faced east and fled [until some place where] there was a rocky cliff. Lying more than a hundred *chi*[897] below the tall, steep cliff was a mountain stream.

[Coming to a dead end and still] being pursued by rebels flashing their blades, Yantong consequently threw himself off the steep cliff to commit suicide. When he was half way down the cliff, it seemed like there was someone who caught hold of him. When Tong reached the bottom [of the cliff], he in fact ended up sitting on top of a huge rock; thus, he managed to survive with no injury whatsoever. Based on its proven efficacy, [Tong realized that he owed his life] entirely to the power of *Prajñā*.

After the rebels left, Tong reached home and wholeheartedly recited and upheld [the *Diamond Sutra*] day and night without stopping. He also persuaded all to read and recite the sutra. Tong managed to live a long life without illness and misfortune. He was always at peace, firm and diligent in his practice.

[897] In GDJ6, it was more than a hundred *zhang*.

JYJ26: Li Siyi 李思一[898]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also states: In the twentieth year of the Zhenguan era (646), at the *chou* period (1–3a.m.) of the eighth day of the first month, Li Siyi, Assistant at the Imperial Ancestral Temple, fell ill and before long lost his voice. He passed away in the twilight of the thirteenth day. Thereafter, he was being investigated by the underworld official who said Siyi slaughtered pigs and sheep when he was nineteen. Siyi denied the accusation: "I really didn't slaughter them."

The underground official then summoned the slaughtered pigs and sheep to crosscheck Siyi's testimony. Upon cross-examining them, it was found that the times and dates when those animals were consumed did not correspond at all. [The official] again gave instruction to the officer-in-charge to investigate the matter thoroughly, and it was then found that on the day when the animals were slaughtered, Siyi was listening to Dharma Master Huimin's lecture on the Nirvana Sutra in Huangzhou (modern Wuhan, Hubei). However, Dharma Master Min had passed away and was reborn in the World of [the Buddha]

[898] X87.1629: 454b5–c5. Also: There is also an account on Li Siyi in the *Fayuan zhulin* (T53.2122: 958c17–959a1.), which cites the *Mingbao shiyi* 冥報拾遺 as its source although the account makes no mention of the *Diamond Sutra*. A shorter version of this tale is recorded in the *Sanbao gantong lu* (T52.2106: 429b5–17.). Another account is found in roll two of one of the manuscripts studied by Gjertson (tale A); see Gjertson 1989: 217–9. Although the *Jiyan ji* states that the *Lingyan ji* as the source of this tale, Tang Lin, the author of the *Mingbao ji* version, mentioned that he had previously heard of it, and that Li Daoyu, the president of the Supreme Court of Justice, sent an emissary to visit monk Xuantong to record it. We may assume that this tale was popular among the imperial officials. Li Siyi was a distant relative of the Tang imperial family, and his name is recorded in the Genealogical table of the Imperial Family in *Xin Tang shu* 70a: 1988. Gjertson 1989: 228, note 1 of Tale A.

Golden Grain.[899] Since he was outside the three realms, there was no way to summon him to verify this. Siyi was released to go back home.

Before long after he returned home, Siyi was once again summoned [to the underworld]. Before leaving, he repented and took the precepts under Dharma Master Xuantong of Qingjing Monastery. He widely exhorted his friends, family members, and relatives to intone the *Diamond Sutra* five thousand times both for those sentient beings who died as victims of injustice and those who could not intone the sutra by themselves. Having said these words, he then passed away.

The emissary brought Siyi to an underworld place. Siyi thereupon very truthfully said, "I now aspire to receive and uphold the *Prajñā Sutra*." The underworld official said, "Now, your aspiration is extremely profound, wonderfully, and inconceivable." In a while, they saw a person holding a sutra scroll. The person said to Siyi, "This is the *Diamond Sutra*." Siyi asked to unroll the sutra scroll and saw that its title was not different from the *Prajñā* of the contemporary human world. There and then, he closed his eyes and resolved to comprehend the meaning of the *Prajñā Sutra* [so as to] exhort others to acquire knowledge about it.

Suddenly, he heard someone say, "You have now resolved and made a great vow. Now the pigs and sheep who accused you have come to testify to [your innocence]." [Thereupon, the animals appeared and] altogether said, "Actually, our lives ended by themselves, and we were reborn in evil paths. We

[899] This is a title of Vimalakīrti in a previous incarnation. See *Weimo jing xuanshu* 維摩經玄疏, T38.1777: 546c12.

were not actually killed by Siyi. Because we had no merit, we used money to bribe the clerk and falsely accused a good person, hoping to buy time. In truth, we have unjustly implicated him." [In this way,] the underworld official managed to obtain a confession from the animals.

In addition, Dharma Master Min who was in the World of the Buddha Golden Grain dispatched two monks to come before the underworld official [to clarify the matter]. Having seen the two monks, [the underworld official] paid his respect with trepidation. The monks said to the underworld official, "Siyi has recited and upheld the *Diamond Sutra* with undisturbed single-mindedness. Yet you accused him of taking lives and also said that he was misleading. Dharma Master Min in the World of the Buddha Golden Grain thus dispatched us to come and save him." The underworld official followed the order and immediately ordered Siyi to return to life. After the two monks had sent Siyi back to his house, they then rose into the sky and left.

After Siyi revived, he immediately invited the venerables of all monasteries to intone the *Diamond Sutra* five thousand times. Siyi recited and upheld the *Prajñā* day and night without ceasing, and thus managed to prolong his lifespan.

JYJ27: Murong Wence 慕容文策[900]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also states: Murong Wence, a native of Shanggui District in Qinzhou (modern Tianshui, Gansu), started to

[900] X87.1629: 454c6–455a24. Also: TPGJ8.

recite the *Diamond Sutra* when he was seventeen. He observed the precept of abstinence (*zhaijie*)[901] without fail. In the evening of the fourth month in the seventh year of the Daye era (611) of the Sui Dynasty, two ghosts suddenly came before his bed holding official documents in their hands. They said to him, "The king has sent us here to bring you to him." Wence instantly became very frightened and left with the emissaries.

He was brought to a big city with imposing (movable) wooden watchtowers and six layers of city walls. When they passed through the first and second gates, it was extremely bright. [Next] they came the third gate, which was more than four li from the previous gate; it was pitch-black everywhere. He could not even see the path, and the emissaries led him through. When they passed through the fifth and sixth gates, again it was extremely bright. Three *li* from the gates, there were palace chambers and halls, with soldiers holding rods and staying on guard on four sides; it was just like and not different from contemporary imperial palaces. The king was seated in the palace hall. All the people brought there—men and women, monks and nuns, Daoist priests and priestesses, and the people from six foreign tribes—could not be counted. Ce was at the back. The clerk called his name, and he came forth.

The king asked each and every one about their good deeds when alive. Those who proved to have merit were to stand on the west side and those without merit were to stand on the east side. Finally, the clerk called Ce's

[901] See Section 2.3 in Chapter 3 for a discussion on abstinence (*zhai*).

name. The king asked him, “For your whole life, what good deeds have you done?” Ce then reported, “For my whole life, I had only recited the *Diamond Sutra* and eight-roll Lotus. For the prajñā, I intone it during the day and at night. I also upheld the precept of abstinence without stopping for even a day. Having heard this, the king put his palms together and paid respect to Ce and praised him, “Your merit is very profound!” He instructed the official in charge to carefully check the register [to make sure] Ce was not brought there by mistake. The clerk checked the case and informed the king that Ce was not due to die. The king then released Ce to return home.

For the time being, the king sent Ce to stand on the west side. Before he went, a novice monk of probably fifteen or sixteen holding a bright torch in his hand passed by in front of Ce. Following behind him was another novice monk who also held a bright torch and was passing by when Ce caught hold of his cassock to hold him back. [Ce pleaded with them], “Masters, please save me, your disciple. The emissaries have mistakenly brought me here. Owing to the king’s compassion, he checked the register and decided to release me to return [to the human realm]. I do not know where to go. I hope you masters will have compassion on me and save and protect me, your disciple. Please show me the path by which I came here.”

The two monks said to Ce, “*Dānapati* has upheld the *Prajñā Sutra*, and intoned Mahāyāna sutras, [and also] you were very firm in your observance of the precept of abstinence; thus, we have come to rescue you.” The masters said, “We hold bright torches in front, *dānapati* just follow behind us.” They

had to exit the gates of the six layers of city wall to get out. While exiting the two extremely dark gates, the two monks held torches in their hands, and it was as if the sun had risen; it was bright, and everything was visible. [Finally,] they got out of the gates of the six layers of city wall.

The two monks then said to Ce, "*Dānapati*, do you know where the hells are?" Ce replied, "I don't know." The two novice monks then raised their hands and pointed to a corner west of the city, where there was another big city four *li* away. "That is the city of hells." The two novice monks said, "We will bring dānapati to that city to take a look." Ce followed the masters to the city, which had a towering city wall. They entered the city gate. There was iron net hanging down everywhere, and four *rākṣasas* (luocha)[902] holding iron forks in their hands attending on the left and the right. The two monks said, "This is the gate of the underground prison through which all evildoers assigned to the hells must pass."

They then took Ce through the gate. Having traveled probably for two hundred steps, they saw a river of ashes. In it, the bodies of all the people who were undergoing suffering were submerged in the river, only their heads could be seen. One hundred, thousand, ten thousand, hundred million fiery fires scorchingly burned these evildoers who moaned in such great pain that it could not be totally conveyed in words. Furthermore, all over the four sides

[902] The Chinese term *luocha* 羅剎 is a transliteration of the Sanskrit term *rākṣasa*, a demon-like figure who originated from ancient Indic works, such as the *Rāmāyana*. Said to reside in the heavenly realms, they are described as having the ability to seduce common mortals and consume them. They appear in many Mahāyāna sutras as protectors of Buddhism after having been converted to it.

were iron beds and sword trees. There were four prison guards holding iron forks in their hands, moving along the bank. Their shouting was very frightening.

The two monks said, “The eighteen hells are all in this city.” Having seen all these, Ce was very frightened in his heart. He could only resort to recollecting the Buddha and persistently reciting the *Prajñā* in his heart without ceasing. The two monks then brought Ce out of the city gate until they reached the place where the original path by which Ce came to the underworld was located. [However,] there were five paths that were close to each other there, and Ce had no idea which path would lead to his house. When the two monks were bidding farewell to Ce and leaving, Ce made obeisance to them and pleaded, “Among the five paths, I wonder which one I, your disciple, should take. Master, please have compassion on me and indicate to me the path that I should take.”

The two monks then led him onto the middle path and traveled for probably ten li or so where there was big gate blocking their way. They could not pass through it. The two monks used their staffs to open it and then said to Ce, “Work hard and diligently cultivate merit, recite the *Prajñā Sutra*, and do not ever be negligent. You will definitely live a long life.” Ce parted with the masters and reached home. [His spirit went] into his body and he woke up. His parents, relatives and friends were all fearful. With composure, he calmed

them and related his encounter (*yinyuan*)[903] and that he was fortunate to be released to return home [due to] the power of merit. Those who heard what Ce related were overjoyed and composed. With this merit obtained from reciting the sutra and observing the precept of abstinence, Ce converted everyone. Each of them resolved to read and recite the *Prajñā Sutra*. They did so without stopping for even a day, and with ever more rigor, they too managed to live long lives.

JYJ28: Yuan Zhitong 袁志通[904]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also states: Before turning twenty, Yuan Zhitong, a native of Longcheng District in Tianshui Commandery (modern Tianshui, Gansu), had long observed the precept of abstinence. He read and recited the *Lotus Sutra*, *Diamond Sutra*, and other sutras, and repented six times daily without missing a day. At twenty, Zhitong was enlisted into the Qingde Superprefecture Guardsmen. He was well-known in the military group decreed to attack the White barbarians (*baiman*).[905] Between

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[903] In general, *yin* 因 (Sk. hetu) refers to the main cause of something, a phenomenon, or an event, while *yuan* 緣 (Sk. *pratyaya*) refers to the indirect cause which aids the main cause in producing that particular thing, phenomenon, or event. Put together, *yinyuan* implies the causal conditions that bring about something, a phenomenon, or an event. The term has also been used to translate *nidāna* (historical narratives), one of the traditional twelve genres of Buddhist composition. In this instance in the tale, it denotes the event or encounter undergone by the protagonist.

[904] X87.1629: 455b1–c22. Also: TPGJ13.

[905] Together with *wuman* 烏蠻 (lit. Black barbarian), *baiman* 白蠻 (lit. White barbarian) refers to a subgroup of non-Han people originating from parts of modern Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan. Harrell 2001: 84. In an important work on Yunnan written by Fan Chuo 樊綽 in 864, known as the *Man shu* 蠻書 (or *Yunnan zhi* 雲南志), the White barbarians were said to be inhabiting the Western Cuan (modern Honghe and Hani

his hometown and the land of the White barbarians, there were more than ten thousand li. While on the road, he kept up his ritual observances and recitations day and night without fail. When they reached the borders of the Southern barbarians (*nanman*),[906] the government army was defeated in battle, and the soldiers fled. At that time, there were more than a hundred fellow guardsmen who did not know where to take refuge, with most of them injured or killed.

[Just as] Zhitong was panicking and had no way out of the situation, five persons, all of them riding mares, appeared unexpectedly and surrounded Tong. One of them went up to Tong and told him, "Do not be afraid; do not be frightened! You have fully cultivated merit. We have surrounded you, so you cannot be harmed." They traveled for more than seven li until they reached a pagoda (*tamiao*). They then entered it to hide themselves. The barbarians subsequently returned to their camp.

[While Tong was in the pagoda,] two monks suddenly came to Tong and said, "*Dānapati*, you have recited the *Diamond Sutra* and the Lotus Sutra, and have worshipped and recollected all the Buddhas; this is inconceivable! We are also sent to rescue you. The five persons who rode on mares and surrounded you previously are all the manifestation of the power of the *Lotus Sutra* and

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Autonomous Prefecture), while Black barbarians inhabited in Eastern Cuan (modern Bijie, Guizhou). Fang 1984: 194–204; Wijeyewardene 1996: 28.

[906] Already in the *Shiji*, the people of southwestern China were referred to as Southwestern barbarians (*xinan yi* 西南夷). *Shiji* 116: 2991ff. Nanman here is used as a general term to refer to non-Han peoples of the southwestern regions of the China (parts of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan, which include the White barbarians mentioned earlier. The term, however, was also used to refer to people inhabiting the other southern regions such as modern-day Guangxi, Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and Hunan. Harrell 1995: 124.

the *Diamond Sutra*. Similarly, we are here to rescue you and to prevent your enemy from harming you. Cultivate well good deeds, recite and upheld sutras, and do not become negligent. All protective deities and kings will constantly offer their protection to you." Having said these words, they then soared into the sky.

Tong passed through the day without taking food and was extremely hungry. In a moment, two children brought a bowl of cooked rice together with pickled vegetable and cakes. They gave them to Tong. When Tong finished eating, they told him, "Diligently cultivate merit and recite the *Prajñā Sutra*. Do not be negligent or stop doing so." After saying that, they soared straight into the sky. Tong shed tears and wept sadly. Deep in his heart, he repented. Since Tong joined the great army, he had fought frequently in battles but was never injured even the slightest bit. Based on this encounter, [he understood that] all must be due to the power of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Prajñā Sutra*. Later, the barbarians were defeated, and the government soldiers were released to return home. Tong single-mindedly recited and upheld the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Prajñā Sutra* without daring to be negligent.

It also states: on the twenty-eighth day of the first month in the eighth year of the Zhenguan era (634), [Yuan Zhitong] fell sick, and his life ended on the evening of the eighth day of the second month. He was thereupon brought before the king. There were many people who were going before the king to be judged (lit. read). Tong was standing at the back. When the clerk called out someone's name, [the person would come forth and] the king would then ask

about the person's good and bad deeds, and he or she would be assigned to places accordingly.

Finally, Tong was being called forth to go before the king, who asked Tong what good deeds he had done when he was alive. Tong immediately reported to the king, "For all my life, I have recited and upheld the *Diamond*, *Lotus* and other sutras, constantly observed the precept of abstinence, and worshipped the Buddha six times daily." Having heard this, the king immediately put his palms together and paid respect to Tong and praised him, "Wonderful! Wonderful! The merit of this person is inconceivable." The king asked the emissary about the date that Tong was supposed to be taken, and according to what register was he brought there. He ordered the official in charge to carefully check the documents [to ensure that] he was not brought there unjustly. The official in charge opened [records of] the heavenly bureau to check and reported thus, "This person has six more years of lifespan, and he died before his time was up."

The king therefore personally investigated the case, and indeed [what the official said] was not wrong. The king told his left and right attendants to bring a bench and a table there. Immediately, they brought a golden bench and jade table from the south wing and laid them before the king who then ordered to have them placed in the western part of the hall. After being spread with various carpets and cushions, the kind ordered Tong to mount the bench to recite the sutra. Tong thus recited one roll each of the *Prajñā* and the *Lotus*. His recitation of both sutras was smooth and effortless. The king again ordered

the clerk to get the sutras Tong recited from the [sutra] repository[907] and the register of his cultivated merit.

Tong and the clerk thereupon traveled to the western wing to get [them]. After traveling for about two li, there was a huge sutra repository that contained all merit register accounts. [The building] was beautifully adorned with all seven treasures. The emissary took a roll of sutra from the middle of the bottom [section]. It had about ten sheets, and was entitled, "Register of Merit Produced by Yuan Zhitong."

They then brought it before the king for inspection. It is noted therein that Tong had recited the *Prajñā Sutra* ten thousand times, and his merit for worshipping the Buddhas and observing the precept of abstinence was recorded in it. The king said to the emissary, "The merit produced by Tong is very, very profound. Take him on a tour to the hells, so that he knows their horrors."

The emissary followed the order and guided Tong out of the city. They traveled northwest for probably more than five li until they reached a big city with watchtowers that would repel enemies and iron nets hanging down. At the gate, there were four prison guards with heads like *rākṣasas* and long and big bodies, holding iron forks in their hands and standing on the left and the right. On both sides of the gates, there were two bronze dogs with mouths spewing molten bronze that flowed into the prison compound and was sprayed

[907] There are also mentions of sutra repository in other tales. What is implied here is that in the underworld sutra repository, there will also be an identical twin copy of the sutra for devotees to use for recitation in the human world.

at the evildoers. All who came to receive punishment entered this door. The eighteen levels of hells were all in this city. Having seen that the hells were like that, Tong's body and heart trembled with fear, and he could do nothing to calm himself.

[After the tour,] Tong was led to the king. Tong told the king that he had finished seeing the hells. The king said to Tong, "Today you have completely seen the reward of evil and good deeds. Be diligent and ever rigorous [in your practice], read and recite [the sutras] and do not stop doing so. Now you still have six years of lifespan, I will release you to return home. Do not give rise to a regressing heart and fall into evil paths, or no one would save you. You must read and recite this sutra of the bodhi of non-retrogression. I will release you to live a long life. Your life will end when you are old, and you will definitely be born in the pure land."

JYJ29: Wu Sixuan 吳思玄[908]

Wu Sixuan, the Grand Master for Court Audience and Acting Erudite for Supervising Instruction, had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Initially, he recited twice every other day. After five or six years, he recited once every other day. In the first year of the Chang'an era (701), while serving as the Magistrate of Mianzhu District in Hanzhou (in modern Deyang, Sichuan), his elder brother, Siwen, contracted some illness and went to the capital for medical treatment. There, he was put up at the residence of Zhang Qing, the

[908] X87.1629: 455c23–456a15. Also: TPGJ36.

Chief Steward of Medicine Services of the Palace Administration, where he received moxibustion and acupuncture treatments.

[While receiving treatment,] he suddenly had an attack, and his condition became critical. Zhang Qing gathered various thaumaturges [in the hope of curing him through alternative means]. At that time there was a certain Chu Xier from Wuzhou (modern Tongren area, Guizhou)[909] who was especially skilled in seeing ghosts. He prayed for Wen in the courtyard of Qing's residence. At that time, there were a few government officials.[910] Sixuan was put up at another place for the night. Someone reported to him that his brother had an attack, so he rushed to visit his brother. When he first reached the courtyard of Qing's residence, he also prayed like the others. He had never known Chu before. Chu thereupon asked [someone], "Do you know who this official is? Deities and ghosts who saw him all scattered." Having heard this, Sixuan became doubly rigorous and energetic in his recitation of the sutra. Within a day or two, his elder brother recovered from his illness.

In the first year of the Wansui dengfeng era (696) when Sixuan first traveled to Zhongwei bridge,[911] he saw a very old man who was wearing layers of mourning clothes. Sixuan thought it strange and asked the old man, who replied, "I am now eighty-two years old. I am wearing these clothes for my

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[909] It was renamed Sizhou 思州 in 630

[910] *feiguan* 緋官. The character *fei* 緋 denotes a kind of red color, which is the color of robes worn by Tang government officials of ranks four and five.

[911] This is one of the bridges on the Wei River near Chang'an in Han–Tang times. The central Wei bridge was built south of Xianyang 咸陽 in the Qin. In 636, it was moved east to north of Xi'an, Shaanxi.

mother. My mother was a hundred and seven years old and had only recently passed away." Sixuan further asked, "How did you care for her so that she gained such longevity?" The person replied, "When my mother was forty-three, someone taught her to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. She recited it twice daily from young until old and had never before ceased even temporarily. My mother, in addition to my maternal auntie as well as [two] neighboring women—altogether four persons—they did the same thing and together received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. My aunt has already been passed away for a year—she lived to a hundred and four. As for the other two persons, each of them now is already more than ninety years old. They are still alive now." (Wu Sixuan who personally recorded this)

JYJ30: Monk Shi Dezun 僧釋德遵[912]

Monk Shi Dezun of the Dayun Monastery in Shenzhou (modern Xinyang, Henan) is a native of Yiyang District (in modern Xinyang, Henan). When he was fifty-one or fifty-two years old, he contracted some illness and was at the point of death. He was lacking in energy. At that time, there was Zhang Zhaochang, who was well-versed in the *Yinyang* arts, and Zhang Ze, who was extremely knowledgeable in the art of medicine. After prognosticating his lifespan and destiny, Zhaochang thought that was an unlucky period [for Dezun]. Ze examined his pulse and treated him, but his condition was beyond medical treatment.

[912] X87.1629: 456a16–b2. This tale only appears in the *Jiyan ji*.

He thereupon prayed and vowed to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. With whatever little strength he could muster in that condition, he recited the sutra ten times daily. His sincere heart was earnest to the extreme that he touched both the dead and the living. Leaning on a rush cushion, he exerted himself fully. Without regard to day and night, he recited and upheld the sutra. Within ten days, he gradually felt better. As the four seasons passed by, he had recovered fully from his illness.

In the third year of the Chang'an era (703), when Xianzhong served as a Revenue Manager in Shenzhou (modern Xinyang, Henan), this monk was still alive. He had just passed seventy years old. Whenever I saw him, he would personally relate his life story. People gasped in admiration at his longevity.

After the incident, Dezun always make reciting the *Prajñā* his vocation. He had by then known the power of Mahāyāna, which is beyond those who practice the mantic arts. It must be none other than pure faith that penetrates the divine, and reaches the core of emptiness and the wondrous wisdom. That which should rise will rise, for then only could diligence move them.

JYJ31: Du Sine 杜思訥[913]

Du Sine was a native of the southern part of the city of Jingzhao [Superprefecture] (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi). He served as the District Defender of Tongdi District in Luzhou (modern Changzhi, Shanxi). After his term ended, he turned seventy. He contracted a wasting disease (*shoubing*). With each

[913] X87.1629: 456b3–10. Also: TPGJ54.

passing day, he became gaunter. Famous doctors of that time all regarded his condition to be a difficult one to treat. Despite additional medication and treatment, he did not recover.

At that time Quan Guan was posted to serve as Personnel Manager of Hanzhou (modern Deyang, Sichuan). While [Quan Guan] was about to leave, Sine bade farewell him in a sorrowful tone, "Although this is a separation in life, it has become a final farewell due to death." However, with a long cherished wish and correct faith, he evoked profound sincerity and thereupon told Guan, "Only by aspiring to recite the *Diamond Sutra* will I hope to live on." He thereupon resolved to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. Having done so for less than a month's time, he gradually felt he was recovering. With uttermost sincerely, he fully exhorted others, and time and again he saw a bright light. Later Guan went to the capital, by then Ne had totally recovered. He silently pondered the inconceivability of the power of good fortune. (Related by Quan [Ling]guan, Personnel Manager of Hanzhou)

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Praise: Reverence to all sages who embody the three perduring [dharmas].[914] The perduring dharmas endure for a period as immeasurable and limitless as

[914] In Buddhism, one's physical body, life, and wealth are considered to be the three non-perduring dharmas (*san bu jian fa* 三不堅法). *Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律, T22.1425.323c27. However, in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, there is mentioned that one should see the five desires as impermanent, and seek the foundation of goodness in body, life, and wealth, thereby cultivating perduring dharmas (*jian fa*). *Weimojie suoshuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, T14.475: 543a16. According to Sengzhao's commentary of the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, the three perduring dharmas are achieved when someone practices the way by forgetting the body and life, giving up one's wealth, and getting rid of one's possessions. By doing so, the person would definitely achieve an unrestricted body, boundless life and inexhaustible wealth. These three would not be destroyed even when burned by fires of heaven and earth, and they would not be

it takes to completely deposit not just millions, but rather billions of grains of dust at the rate of one grain of dust per *kalpa*. They neither arise nor perish; they endure beyond generations and years.

Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji
Roll One

exhausted even if the *kalpas* should come to an end. *Zhu weimojie jing* 注維摩詰經, T38.1775: 365c18–21.

Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji
Roll Two

Section 3: Eradication of Sins
(Foreword with three accounts)

The three realms are unreal and deceptive; they are created by the one mind.[915] When the mind is discriminating; all become completely nefarious. [When] the mind terminates the arising of consciousness,[916] then myriad things all are rectified. The mind is neither inside nor outside, it is also not in between;[917] When the mind is defiled, then sins all arise; when the mind is pure, sins are all eradicated; disaster or fortune is not brought about by things, [but] defilements and purity surely resides in the mind. Thus the superior person forgets his mind, he sees appearances and yet not appearances; the accomplished person contemplates them as being the same and awakens to non-form and non-emptiness. Thus the *bhikṣu* who violated the *vinaya* may suddenly eradicate his doubts and regrets; the bodhisattva who violated the precepts may reenter the sagely dimension. That being the case, the formation of karma is due to the mind; [therefore] the eradication of

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[915] This is an idea often associated with—but not limited to—the Yogācāra tradition and found in related texts; for instance, the *Weishi lun* 唯識論 (Sk. *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-śāstra*) states: "三界虛妄但是一心作故。" T31.1588: 64b22.

[916] In Buddhism, *panyuan* 攀緣 (Sk. *ālambana*), which literally means "to clamber upon conditions," refers to the arising of consciousness due to its contact with the external world, that is, the mental function of cognizing objects.

[917] This idea can be found in the *Pusa yingluo jing* 菩薩瓔珞經 (*Sutra of the Necklaces for the Bodhisattvas*), which states: "夫泥洹心亦不在內亦不在外。亦復不在兩中間。" T16.656: 80a29–b1.

sins is due to the mind. Attempting to widen the road to attaining universal virtues, I hereby put forth a section on the "Eradication of Sins."

JYJ32: Monk Fazang 僧法藏[918]

Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore lingyan ji* states: Fazang, a monk of Baoshi Monastery in Fuzhou (modern Yan'an, Shaanxi), was immaculate in his adherence to the precepts, and he extensively carried out compassionate deeds.[919] In the thirteenth year of the Kaihuang era (593) of the Sui Dynasty, he built a monastery in Weichuan city, Luojiao District (modern Fu District, Shaanxi). Among other facilities, there was a monk dormitory of more than twenty *jian*. The Buddha hall, lecture hall, and other rooms were three *kou*, all with seven bars and six beams. Built in bricks and tiles, they were beautifully furnished. There was an image of one *zhang* and six *chi,* and a total of four paintings, each adorned with eleven subjects in an inconceivable manner. Among other things, the monastery was also furnished with a stone image of Avalokiteśvara elevated by a gilded bronze edifice and a folding screen of a thousand Buddhas.

An imperial order of the fifth year of the Daye era (609) decreed that all Buddhist images in the Buddha halls at all localities were to be transferred to

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[918] X87.1629: 456c5–457a15. Also: FYZL1, GDJ7. Although the FYZL1 cites the *Mingbao ji* as the source of this account, the tale is not found in the manuscripts studied by Gjertson. In the FYZL1, Fazang passed away after copying a hundred copies of the *Diamond Sutra*, but the version here included a return-from-death experience.

[919] Fazang's biography is collected in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T50.2061: 882b21–c2. According to his biography, he is from Baotai 寶臺 Monastery. Therefore, the name of his monastery Baoshi si 實室寺 could be a scribal error.

the great monasteries in prefectural capitals. They were all to be restored and repaired at once.

Fazang also produced a Buddhist canon and had already written more than eight hundred rolls of sutras. He had produced lengths of papers and copied the sutras in the Yueai Monastery at the capital. The sandalwood rollers of the sutra scrolls were exquisite.

In the intercalary fifth month of the second year of the Wude era (619), Fazang fell ill and was in critical condition. After more than twenty days, he saw a person in the pavilion, who was clad in black with resplendent clothing and accessories. Holding a roll of sutra in his hands, he said to Fazang, "For all your life, you have created great merit; your meritorious deeds are all wonderful. But you have made use of the property of the three treasures, and [as a result] you have [also] immeasurable sins. What I am holding is the *Diamond Sutra*. If you could produce a roll of it by yourself and recite and uphold it wholeheartedly, all your sins that resulted from your use of the property of the three treasures in your whole life will be eradicated."

Zang immediately responded to the voice: "If I had my sins eradicated and also my illness healed, I would strongly resolve to inscribe a hundred copies of the *Diamond Sutra* respectfully, and recite and uphold it without giving up." He further said, "Although I had produced merit, I have never inscribed the *Diamond Sutra* in my whole life. The Buddhas have awakened me. I would completely discard the only three robes I possess, my alms bowl,

and other belongings. I would warn the great venerables [against using the properties of the three treasures]."

Knowing that he had a serious illness, he left his last words for his disciples, relatives, and close friends: "On my behalf, produce a hundred copies of the *Diamond Sutra*, fifty copies each of Bodhiruci's and Kumārajīva's translations.[920] Having copied and adorned them, distribute them to all monks and laypeople to read and recite. The mighty power of the *Prajñā* is inconceivable, it saves all sentient beings." After saying these words, Zang passed away.

When [Fazang] was brought to the place of the [underworld] king, he was questioned thoroughly: "What good deeds have you done in your life?" Zang then explained, "I have constructed Buddhist images, inscribed a hundred copies of the *Diamond Sutra* and given them freely to all people to intone, and I have also copied eight hundred rolls of other sutras. Day and night I recited and upheld the *Prajñā*; never once did I give up doing so." Having heard this, the king said, "The merit produced by the master is extremely immense and inconceivable!"

The king then dispatched an emissary to the repository to bring the merit register (*gongde bu*). When it was brought before the king, the king personally opened and checked it, and the records all tallied with what Master

[920] Both *shepoticheng* 舍婆提城 and *sheweiguo* 舍衛國 are transliterations of Śrāvastī, where the events in the *Diamond Sutra* took place. The former was used in Bodhiruci's translation of the *Diamond Sutra,* while Kumārajīva used the latter. Therefore, these terms are also used to refer to Bodhiruci's and Kumārajīva's translations of the *Diamond Sutra,* respectively.

Zang had said, without a single mistake. The king said, "Master, you have constructed monasteries, Buddhist images, inscribed sutras, and recited and upheld the *Prajñā*. Your merit is complete and inconceivable. I will release the master to the monastery to convert all people to recite and uphold the *Prajñā* and thoroughly cultivate all merit. Do not become negligent in doing so." The master acquired a long lifespan, and when his life ended later, he was born in the pure lands of the ten directions.

JYJ33: Shen Jiahui 沈嘉會[921]

Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi* states: The previous Editing Clerk,[922] that is Shen Jiahui of Wuxing (modern Huzhou, Zhejiang),[923] was exiled to Lanzhou (modern Lanzhou, Gansu) for some wrongdoing during the reign of Emperor Taizong (626/627–649). Ever since he came to Lanzhou, he often thought of his hometown. Later, he prayed daily to be able to return to his hometown by worshipping the Buddha as well as paying obeisance to Mount Tai.

After more than two hundred days, in the middle of the night on the third day of the tenth month of the sixth year of the Yonghui era (655), he suddenly saw two boys. Graceful in their demeanor, [the boys] wore beautiful clothes and fine silk trousers, and colorful clothing and accessories. They

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[921] X87.1629: 457a16–b20. Also: TPGJ15.

[922] This is a post related to editorial work in the Secretariat of the Heir Apparent (*chunfang* 春坊), or in the Academy of Scholarly Worthies (*jixian dian shuyuan* 集賢殿書院). See Hucker 741.

[923] Name of a commandery-level unit; it is also known as Huzhou 湖州 in the Tang.

announced, “We are the sons of the Lord of Mount Tai (*taishan fujun*).[924] The lord is beholden to Mister for worshipping him [every] morning and evening. Therefore, he dispatched us to fetch you [to him]. You need to travel with us there immediately.” Jiahui said, “It is more than three thousand *li* from here to Mount Tai. Since the distance is far, is it possible to reach there?” The boys answered, “Mister, you just should shut your eyes; we ourselves have horses.”

Jiahui then followed their instructions, and in a while, they reached there. He saw a palace with passageways lined with rooms, one that resembled those of the human world. He was led in to meet the lord, who was delighted to meet him. In a while, he was ushered into a secret chamber where they sat facing each other and had a conversation which left no stone unturned.

The lord said to him, “A crime committed by a person may not have an effect when he is alive, but the underworld official cannot overlook it after he dies. However, if he could recite the *Diamond Sutra* daily, he would greatly eradicate his sin.” He further said, “Previously, there was a lord who was apprehended by the heavenly bureau for corruption.” Jiahui inquired and came to know that the family name of the current lord was Liu, but he dared not ask his personal name. After that meeting, the lord played dice games with Jiahui every evening, and he also had dishes and delicacies prepared for them.

[924] The Lord of Mount Tai is a deity in charge of the afterlife administration in the unseen world (*ming jie* 冥界). Mount Tai is traditionally considered the destination for the dead, and later came to feature more as a site for the judgment and punishment of the dead. The Lord of Mount Tai is later worshipped under the title Emperor of the Eastern Peak. See Katz 2009: 32.

[Once while] going to the toilet, Jiahui saw Murong Rengui, Magistrate of Guzang District (modern Wuwei, Gansu) at the eastern part of the small hall. The latter was seated [holding] an audience tablet (*hu*).[925] Jiahui called and asked him [what happened] to which he replied, "I do not know what the matter was. It has been more than sixty days since I was summoned here by the lord."

When Jiahui returned [from the toilet], he talked to the lord about Murong Rengui. The lord ordered to have Rengui brought forth and said to the latter, "In your district, there was a woman Ah Zhao, who was killed in the name of some law by the corrupted District Defender. This old woman came and lodged a complaint against the District Defender. It followed that you, Mister Magistrate,[926] were simply mistakenly summoned here, nothing more!" There was a pail in front of the lord's courtyard, and in it was stored some water. The lord ordered Rengui to wash his face [with the water] and then granted him food.

After Rengui had finished eating, the lord said, "I would like to send my son to take the magistrate home since I am afraid that you might be harrassed by the ruffians." He then personally ordered one of his sons to escort Rengui home. After the lord had seven rounds of dice games [with Jiahui], his son

[925] Also known as a petition tablet (*zhouban* 奏板), the *hu* 笏 is usually made of bamboo. It is used as a medium of official communication between officials and the emperor, and is slightly tapered at one end, where short messages can be written and presented to the emperor. Officials when received in audience by the emperor hold it in front of their chest. Tsien 2011: 24.

[926] In the text, the term *mingfu* 明府, a term used in the Han, is an archaic term for magistrate.

then returned and said that he had taken the magistrate home. The lord's son also said, "Magistrate Murong did not dare to sit in the big hall; he is now put up in the small room east of the hall [at his residence]."

[Later,] Jiahui asked to take leave of the lord. The lord let him go back. [When he returned home,] Jiahui told the prefecture and district officials all about his encounter. The prefecture officials initially did not believe him. The Chief Administrator[927] of Lanzhou Zhao Chiman thus ordered someone to visit Rengui [about the incident] in Guzang. Rengui said, "Since the ninth month of the previous year, I had illness of the wind, and my hands and legs were vexingly painful. I thereupon had them cauterized in more than thirty spots. My family members felt that I was in a trance. By the beginning of the eleventh month, I had recovered." Counting the number of days I was in that state and the number of days I was at Mount Tai, they did indeed tally. The matter regarding the District Defender beating Ah Zhao to death was all exactly recorded. The District Defender soon fell sick and within ten days, he died.

Initially, when Jiahui had his audience with the lord, his family members only felt that he was simply mentally senescent. Thus, they recited the *Diamond Sutra* daily and did so as a regular activity. Soon [Jiahui] returned to his hometown. Until now, he is still here. (Related by Qiu Zhenming: Yuling later saw Jiahui, and what he said was the same.)

[927] A leading administrative officer found in different units of administrations, such as prefectures, commanderies, and princely establishments.

JYJ34: Ren Wuniang 任五娘[928]

[Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi*] also states: In the first year of the Longshuo era (661) in Luozhou's (modern, Luoyang, Henan)[929] Jingfu Monastery, a servant girl, Ren Wuniang, died in Bhikṣunī Xiuxing's room. Xiuxing erected a *lingzuo* for [her]. In the middle of the night more than a month later, Ren's elder and younger sisters, and younger brother suddenly heard sounds of moaning coming from the spirit seat (*lingzuo*).[930] Initially, her younger brother was very frightened. Later, he asked her to which she replied, "When I was alive, I ate meat in the monastery. Because I had done that, I am suffering great pain. There are sores on my body. I am afraid it will soil the bed. Please bring more ashes and put them on top of the bed."

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[928] X87.1629: 457b22–c13. Also: FYZL22, and TPGJ21.

[929] In the first year of the Kaiyuan era (713), its name changed to *Henan fu* 河南府.

[930] The *lingzuo* 靈座 literally means numinous seat. According to Bokenkamp, it is a wooden structure hung with balls of rice and covered with the name pennon of the deceased; it serves as "a resting place and site of food offerings for the *hun* during the handling of the corpse and interment." (Bokenkamp 2007: 78.) In his *Sima shi shuyi* 司馬氏書儀 (1936.5: 54), Sima Guang provides the ritual instruction for the setting up of a *lingzuo* for the deceased: "Set up a clothes rack to the south of the corpse and cover it with a *pa* 帕; place a table and chair in front of it, and place the *hunbo* 魂帛 (made of knotted white silk) on the chair; set an incense burner, a cup with wine, and food on the table—this is the 'spirit seat' [*lingzuo*]." The *hunbo* is to be buried at the funeral. Zeitlin 2007: 245, note 119. In Zhu Xi's *Jiali* 家禮 (Family Rituals), which relied heavily on Sima Guang's *Sima shi shuyi*, Zhu Xi also gave instruction for the mortuary procedures to be followed after someone died. According to him, immediately after death, servants of the deceased are to remove the deceased's clothing, take it up to the roof, face north and pray: "[Name of deceased], come back!" three times. After doing so, the coffin is prepared, the body of the deceased cleaned, and cooked rice and coins are placed in the mouth (*fanhan* 飯含). After that, the *lingzuo* is set for the soul of the deceased, and a figure made of silk is made to be possessed by its spirit; this is called the *hunbo* 魂帛. The corpse is than wrapped in cloth (*xiaolian* 小斂 and *dalian* 大斂) and placed in the coffin. During the period when the coffin remains situated in the home, the *hunbo* spirit cloth is the embodiment of the deceased, which sits on the *lingzuo* during the day and is put to rest at night in the *lingchuang* 靈床. See Ebrey 1991 (Chu Hsi's *Family Rituals*): 77–8. Therefore, it would seem that the *lingzuo* is akin to an altar set up for the soul or spirit to anchor itself.

Her younger brother followed her instructions, and after putting ashes on the bed, he saw that there was a lot of thick blood there. She said to the younger brother, "I am worried that you cannot make [your own] clothes. You often wear ragged garments. You should bring some cloth here, and I will make you clothes and socks." Her younger brother put some cloth on the spirit bed (*lingchuang*).[931] After one night, the clothes and socks were made.

She again said to the elder sister, "When I was a small child, I contracted a disease. Thereupon, a crab was killed to obtain its juice, which was applied to my sores so that I could recover. Now I have entered the Hell of Knife Forest. I can see seven broken knives in my flesh. May my elder sister be compassionate and save me from all these by making merit [for me]. I know this must be difficult for you, my elder sister. Having died, I cannot help myself. I have nothing but my personal clothes. They are of no use to a dead person. Now, they are still undamaged. I request that you take and use them." Before her elder sister could reply, she said, "I will go bring them myself." After some time, she again said, "I have brought the clothes here; they are now on the bier." Her elder sister took a look at them, and they were indeed the clothes she was buried with.

Her elder sister thereupon sent them to the Jingtu monastery, where Master Baoxian was. Her elder sister asked the master to copy the *Diamond Sutra*. Each time after one roll was copied, Wuniang reported that one knife was taken out of her. When all seven rolls were copied, she said that the seven

[931] See note above.

knives had all been taken out of her and she would soon be reborn owing to the good created on her behalf. She bade a tearful farewell to her elder sister and younger brother and then departed (related by Shen Xuanfa of Wuxing [modern Huzhou, Zhejiang]: it is the same as the account by monk Zhizhen of Jingtu Monastery [modern Luoyang, Henan].)

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Praise: Sentient beings[932] are called mortals; those without attachment[933] are sages. Only with the rise and fall of unwholesomeness, is the mind defiled or cleansed accordingly. With correct thoughts, one lets go [of attachment], and thereupon, the nefarious becomes correct; the six fetters[934] and the nine vexations[935] together return to the real nature.

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[932] *youqing* 有情 generally refers to a sentient being. However, we may read *youqing* as having a distorted feeling here since *qing* is often used with a negative connotation to indicate the mistakenly emotive and discriminating consciousness manifested by unenlightened sentient beings, in contrast to the Buddha, who lacks discrimination and mistaken emotion.

[933] The character *ai* 愛 in *wu'ai* 無愛 (without attachment) is used to translate a few Indic Buddhist terms and has a range of meanings. It could mean love or affection (Sk. *kāma*), craving (Sk. *trṣṇā*), attachment or longing (Sk. *anurodha*).

[934] I am not certain whether there is a scribal error here since the category of entanglements (*chan* 纏) comes in either eight or ten. Generally, *chan* may be understood as afflictions that "bind" one, and hinder one from achieving liberation. The *Yogācārabhūmi* mentions eight: (1) lack of conscience (*wu can* 無慚), (2) lack of shame (*wu hui* 無愧), (3) slackness (*hunchen* 惛沈), (4) drowsiness (*shuimian* 睡眠), (5) flightiness (*diaoju* 掉擧), (6) unwholesome actions (*ezuo* 惡作), (7) jealousy (*jidu* 嫉妒), (8) parsimony (*qianlin* 慳悋). *Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論, T30.1579: 314c16–7. According to the *Abhidharmakośa-śāstra*, in the *Abhidharma-mahā-vibhāṣā-śāstra*, wrath (*fen* 忿) and hypocrisy (*fu* 覆) are added to the above eight, thus forming the ten entanglements (*shi chan*). *Apidamo jushe lun* 阿毗達摩俱舍論, T29.1558: 109b23.

[935] See note 831.

Section 4: Divine Power (Foreword with sixteen accounts)[936]

In the ancient past, Nüwa ascended the throne and severed [the limbs of] the tortoise to repair [the wall of] heaven.[937] Yiyi drew his bow and shot down [sun-]birds, and the [nine] suns fell.[938] [There are such wonders as] riding the two dragons of Xia Hou [Qi] on the jade terrace, and galloping on

936 There are in fact eighteen accounts in this section.

937 Wahuang 媧皇 (lit. Emperor Wa) in the text refers to Nüwa, a goddess in ancient Chinese mythology best known for creating mankind. In Chapter 2 "Tianwen" (Asking Heaven) of *Chu ci* (Songs of Chu, c. 340–278 BCE), she is said to mold figures from yellow earth and bestow them life and the ability to bear children. She is also well known for repairing the wall of heaven and replacing the pillar holding heaven when a catastrophic battle caused them to collapse. The most popular version of the mythology has Nüwa cutting off the legs of a giant tortoise, which she used to replace the fallen pillar and repair the wall of heaven using stones of seven different colors. This account probably first appeared in Roll 5, "Tangwen pian" 湯問篇 (Section on Questions of Tang Section) in Roll 5 of the *Liezi* (c. 475–221 BCE), where Nüwa was described as repairing the original imperfect heaven using five-colored stones, and cutting the limbs off a tortoise to use as struts to hold up the sky. *Liezi jishi* 5:147. This well-known myth can also be found, albeit with some variations, in many works, such as in Chapter 6 "Lanming xun" 覽冥訓 (Peering at the Obscure) of the *Huainan zi* (c. 179–122 BCE), which tells that in remote antiquity, the four poles of the Universe collapsed and the world descended into chaos; the heaven was no longer able to cover everything, and the earth was no longer able to support itself; fires burned wild and waters flooded the land; fierce beasts ate common people, and ferocious birds attacked the old and the weak. So Nüwa tempered the five-colored stones to mend the heavens, cut off the feet of the great turtle to support the four poles, killed the black dragon to help the earth, and gathered the ash of reed to stop the flood. In a variation of this tale, the four corners of the sky collapsed and the world with its nine regions split open. See Major 2010: 223–6. For a scholarly treatment of this myth, see Allan 1991.

938 Yiyi 夷羿 here refers to Houyi 后羿, a mythological Chinese figure who is often portrayed as a god of archery descending from heaven to aid humankind, and sometimes as the chief of the Youqiong tribe during the reign of King Tai Kang of Xia Dynasty. His wife is Chang'e, a famed deity who resides in the moon. In Chinese mythology, the sun is sometimes symbolized by a three-legged bird, called a Sun-bird. There were ten of these Sun-birds, all of whom are the offspring of Dijun, God of the Eastern Heaven. Then, ten Sun-birds resided in a mulberry tree in the eastern sea; each day one of them would travel around the world in a carriage, driven by Xihe, the Mother of the Suns. Folklore held that at around 2170 BCE, the Sun-birds grew tired of the routine and decided that to rise all at the same time would bring catastrophic consequences. The emperor of China Yao pleaded for divine intervention from Dijun, who sent Houyi, the God of Archery, to teach the Sun-birds a lesson. Despite the original intention to stop them from their misdeed, Houyi ended up shooting nine of them down before he was stopped by Yao because shooting any more would plunge the world into darkness. See Allan 1991: 30–1.

the bank of Lake Jasper on King Mu's steeds.[939] Immortal Lord [Ge] could stay under water and spit flames,[940] and [Zuo] Yuanfang could conceal himself and multiply his form.[941] It goes without saying that [although] such are [the powers of] the Daoists, none certainly equals [that of the Buddhists]. Before the opening of the [Treasure Tower], the Buddha moved the heavenly beings and humans to other realms;[942] without getting up from his seat,

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[939] Meng Xianzhong might have in mind Wang Rong's 王融 (467–493) "*Sanyue sanri qushui shi xu*" 三月三日曲水詩序 (Preface for the Poems Composed at the Winding Waterway on the Third Day of the Third Month), which mentions the two mythical episodes together: "至如夏后两龙，载驱璿臺之上； 穆满八骏，如舞瑶水之阴。" *Wenxuan* 46: 2056. The first episode was about the purported second sovereign of the Xia Dynasty, Xia Hou Qi 夏后啓 who rode on two dragons. See Strassberg 2002: 168–169. The second episode is the encounter between King Mu of the Zhou 周穆王 and the Queen Mother of the West 西王母. The former set out on a trip with his eight steeds to the far western regions of his empire, where he encountered the latter on Mount Kunlun by the bank of Lake Jasper. *Liezi jishi* 3: 98. For a discussion, see Knapp 1997: 190–1.

[940] This is a reference to Ge Xuan 葛玄 (164–244), who was considered the granduncle of the famous Daoist, Ge Hong 葛洪 (284–363), and a resident of Danyang in the state of Eastern Wu during the period of the Three Kingdoms (220–280). Ge Hong called him Ge Xianggong, which translates as "Immortal Lord," and wrote about him in his *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (The Master Who Embraces the Unhewn). Ge Xuan was said to have encountered Zuo Ci (see following note) and obtained mythological scriptures from the latter. Ge Xuan was reputed to be able to stay submerged in water for a long period of time due to his master of "embryonic breathing," and his legendary faculty to manipulate the wind, rain, and rivers (Bokenkamp 2008: 444–445). He was also well-known for being able to spit flames (Campany 2002: 154) and stay under water for long periods (Ibid.: 152, note 69; 401).

[941] Also known as Zuo Yuanfang 左元放, Zuo Ci 左慈 is a legendary personage of the late Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms period. He is said to have existed before the collapse of the Han Dynasty, and lived to the age of 300. He learned magical arts and the path of longevity from the Daoist sage Feng Heng 封衡, and eventually passed his arts to Ge Xuan (see earlier note). The phrase in the *Jiyan ji* mentions his ability to conceal himself and divide his bodily forms. There is a famous episode related to this: when Cao Cao tried to execute Zuo, he escaped by walking through walls. When it was reported that Zuo was sighted at the marketplace, everyone there became identical to Zuo in appearance. When Cao Cao and his men went after him on the mountaintop, Zuo concealed himself among a flock of sheep. When Cao said that he had no intention of killing him, a goat stood on his hind legs and spoke. When Cao's men went after it, all the sheep turned to goats and stood on their hind legs and spoke like humans. Zuo was never found. See Campany 2002: 279–82.

[942] This refers to the episode in Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra*. With the emergence of Prabhūratna's treasure tower emerged and the arrival of a multitude of Buddhas and their retinue, the Buddha moved heavenly beings and humans to other regions to create more space for the Buddhas. *Miaofa lianhua jing*, T9.262: 32b16–34b22.

[Vimalakīrti] shows [beings in] Jambudvīpa the Wondrous Joy [World].[943] Such sagely feats are awe-inspiring; thus, it is called "without gain"! Therefore, to trace its superb wonders, [I have put forth similar accounts to produce] a section on the "Divine Power" [of the *Diamond Sutra*].

JYJ35: Brahman Master Fazang 羅門師法藏[944]

Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji* states: During the Liang period,[945] there was a Brahman monk called Fazang who could use scriptural spells to avert evils. There was a junior monk who learnt the art of casting spells for a few years. He considered himself to have mastered the art and [could] competently subdue demons.

[Once,] they traveled together and came to a riverbank. Thereupon, they sought shelter for the night in the temple of the god of Lake Gongting.[946] That night, the disciple recited various hostile spells, and the temple god thus came to kill him. When Zang heard that his disciple had died, he was enraged, and personally came to the hall of the temple of the god. He stayed there for the night and cast spells, and as a result, he also ended up dead.

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943 This refers to an episode in Chapter 12 of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* in which Vimalakīrti manifests Abhirati to the audience in Jambudvīpa. See *Weimojie suoshuo jing*, T14.475: 555b19–555b29.

944 X87.1629: 458a5–22. Also: FYZL19 and GDJ3. Technically, the story is not about Dharma Master Zang but the unnamed Buddhist monk who managed to subdue the local deity. The translation here is based heavily on Gjerston's translation of the account recorded in the *Fayuan zhulin*. Gjertson 1989: 29–30.

945 In GDJ3, the event is said to take place during the Sui dynasty, while FYZL19 records that the event took place during the Jin period.

946 On the lore of the god of Lake Gongting, see Miyakawa 1979: 83–101, and Bian 2008.

At that time, there was a monk from the same monastery who upheld the *Diamond Sutra* frequently. Having heard that both Master Zang and his disciple were killed by the god, he intentionally came to temple of the god. On a seat, he recited the *prajñā* sutra. In the middle of the night, he heard the sounds of wind, very huge and swift. In a moment, he saw a huge person whose bodily shape was bizarre, exceptional, and fearsome. It took different appearances, and its eyes flashed like lightning. The master sat upright, and with correct thoughts, he recited the sutra without ceasing, without being afraid.

Calming its awesome powers, the god came before him. Kneeling down with its right knee on the ground, it put its palms together to pay respect to [the monk], and listened to the recitation of sutra. When his recitation ended, the master asked the god, "What god are you, *Dānapati*? You were initially ferocious and fast but became calm later." The god replied, "I, your disciple, am the god of Lake Gongting. I am by nature uncompromising and violent. Seeing the master reciting and practicing the Mahāyāna sutra, the merit of which is greatly inconceivable, I therefore submitted and listened to your recitation." The master asked, "*Dānapati* since you are able to be so faithful and respectful, why did you kill the previous two monks who recited spells?" The god replied, "Those monks were not able to recite and uphold Mahāyāna sutras. When your disciple entered the temple, they willfully came forward and cursed at me. They directed evil words to subdue your disciple. Those two

monks saw the appearance of your disciple and died out of fear by themselves. It was not my intention to kill those *bhikṣus*."

People knew that the master had entered the temple of the god for the night, and were afraid that he would be killed like the previous two monks. When morning came, they led each other to the temple to find out what had happened. When everyone saw that the master was still safe and well, they were greatly overjoyed. They inquired of the master and came to know everything. Because of this, everyone aspired to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*.

JYJ36: Liu Bi 劉弼[947]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also [states]: In the first year of the Zhenguan era (627), Liu Bi, Vice Magistrate of Yilong District in Fengzhou (modern Nanchong, Sichuan), previously served as a District Defender in Jiangnan.[948] Suddenly, there was a bird cawing on the tree in front of Bi's house. The people said, "This is a very evil bird. Whatever house this bird goes to, it will definitely kill the head of the family." Having heard this, Bi was extremely frightened. He brooded about it but had no way [to deal with the bird]. At night, he dreamed of a monk who ordered him to read the *Diamond Sutra* one hundred times. [After, he did so,] the protective deity

947 X87.1629: 458a23–b3. Also: FYZL7, TPGJ12.

948 Jiangnan 江南 refers to the area south of the Yangzi River 揚子江. During the Tang period, there were fifteen administrative regions called circuits (*dao* 道). Jiangnan was divided into two circuits, East and West Jiangnan Circuit (*Jiangnan dongxi dao* 江南東西道).

came to uproot the tree from his house, and tossed it onto the big alleyway. Indeed, there is no other answer to the incident. So great is the power of the *Prajñā*!

JYJ37: Li Qianguan 李虔觀[949]

Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi* states: Li Qianguan, a native of Longxi (in modern Tianshui, Gansu), now lives in Zhengzhou (modern Zhengzhou, Henan). In the fifth year of Mingqing era (660), while mourning his father's death, he pricked [his finger to draw] blood to copy a roll each of the *Diamond Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra*, and two rolls of the *Suiyuan wangsheng jing*.[950] Once, he went out and was about to enter his room after taking a bath, he suddenly smelled an unusual fragrance in the garden. It was an intensely rich aroma. His neighbors all had also smelled it. None [who smelled it] did not gasp in admiration. (Yuling, once while passing by Zhengzhou saw his relative, who told Yuling what he was told by his friend.)

JYJ38: Hermitage in Jiyi District, Caozhou 曹州濟陰縣精舍[951]

[Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi*] also states: There was a hermitage (*jingshe*) in the village twenty *li* west of Jiyin District in Caozhou (in modern

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[949] X87.1629: 458b4–8. Also: FYZL11, and TPGJ19.

[950] This refers to the *Foshuo guanding suiyuan wangsheng shifang jingtu jing* 佛說灌頂隨願往生淨土經 (also known as the *Puguang pusa jing*). It is collected as roll 11 of the *Foshuo guanding jing* 佛說灌頂經 (T21.1331), which was purportedly translated by Śrīmitra (Ch. Bo Shilimiduoluo 帛屍梨蜜多羅; d. ca. 343) during the Eastern Jin.

[951] X87.1629: 458b9–12. Also: FYZL12.

Heze, Shandong). In the winter, of the tenth month, of the second year of the Longshuo era (662), a wild fire suddenly flared up and burned very fiercely. It then came to the hermitage and engulfed it including the thatched quarters of the monks. Only a single roll of the *Diamond Sutra* remains intact like it was before (related by Dai Yuanhui, administrator of Caozhou).

JYJ39: Sun Shou 孫壽[952]

[Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi*] also states: During the Mingqing years (656–661), Sun Shou, a native of Pingzhou (in modern Qinhuangdao, Hebei) was hunting at the seashore when he saw a wild fire blazing. The vegetation was all wiped out totally, except for a thicket of luxuriant bushes that was not scorched. He suspected that there was an animal in the thicket of bushes. Thereupon, he tried to set it on fire, and unexpectedly it could not light up. Shou thought that was very strange, and then entered [the thicket of] bushes to find out [the reason]. Only then did he see a single copy of the *Diamond Sutra* in its case. Beside it, he also saw a dead monk whose countenance [remained] unchanged. The fire did not spread and burn [to this place]. It must all be due to this. (Sun Shou personally saw and related it.)

[952] X87.1629: 458b13–7. Also: FYZL10, and TPGJ18.

JYJ40: Qiao Qing 喬卿[953]

[Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi*] also states: Previously a rectifier[954] at the Court of Judicial Review[955] and an Adjutant of Henei (modern Qiaozuo, Henan), Qiao Qing was pure and sincere and had excellent conduct. During the Yonghui era (650–655), he was made a Revenue Manager[956] of Yangzhou (in modern Yangzhou, Jiangsu).[957] [After] his mother passed away, he went into mourning and became emaciated as a result. He pricked his chest to draw blood to copy one roll of the *Diamond Sutra*. Soon after, two *lingzhi* mushrooms emerged beside the hut [in which he stayed for mourning].[958] After nine days, they grew one *chi* and eight *cun*.[959] They had green stipes and vermilion tops. Each day, they secreted one *sheng*[960] of juice. Bystanders who consumed it said that it tasted sweet like honey. After being drawn, they

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953 X87.1629: 458b18–23. Also: FYZL9, and TPGJ17.

954 Sizhi 司直, Rectifier: An official in the Court of Judicial Review (see the next note).

955 *Dali* 大理, in all three texts, refers to *dali si* 大理寺, the Court of Judicial Review, an important central government agency responsible for reviewing reports of judicial proceedings at all levels of territorial administration. A Chief Minister headed the Court was headed by a Chief Minister, followed by Vice Ministers and Assistant Ministers who supervised two bureaus of Courts of Review, prefixed Left and Right; the court had functional differences or divided the empire geographically into two jurisdictions, staffed with such officials as Rectifiers (*sizhi* 司直) and Case Reviewers (*pingshih* 評事).

956 *Hucao* 戶曹 in the *Jiyan ji* but *sihucao* 司戶曹 in the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記. This term may be encountered as an archaic official reference to the Ministry of Revenue (*hupu* 戶部) or to the Ministry's Headquarters Bureau (also *hupu* 戶部). Probably *sihu* (司戶; lit. in charge of revenue), Revenue Manager, is a prefix commonly attached to the titles of Administrators (*canjunshi* 參軍事) and lesser personnel of Revenue Sections (*hucao* 戶曹) in units of territorial administration.

957 Also written as Yangzhou 楊州.

958 According to the rituals, a bereaved son was supposed to live in a thatched hut built for the three-year mourning term instead of living at home as usual.

959 Both *chi* and *cun* are measures of length. One *chi* is approximately one foot, while one *cun* is approximately one inch.

960 A measure of volume, approximately 1.8 liters.

secreted again. This happened four times. (A few colleagues of Qiao Qing told him, who in turn told his son all about it.).

JYJ41: Yang Tiji 楊體幾[961]

Yang Tiji, Superior Grand Master of the Palace,[962] is a native of Jingzhao [superprefecture] (in modern Xi'an, Shaanxi). In the first year of Daji (=Taiji) era (712), he served as the chief administrator of Raozhou (modern Shangrao, Jiangxi), and by imperial order also served as the Commissioner-in-chief of Yingshan (in modern Shangrao, Jiangxi), who supervised the mining of silver. At the cave where he oversaw the mining of silver, ten thousand workmen were employed.

The local people all lived around the area that constituted the town of Zhang. In that town, there was not a single tile-roofed house, all of them were constructed out of woven bamboo mats and connected by covered walkways. One night, one of the houses suddenly caught fire. All the houses in the town were burned completely without any left, with the exception of a house in the center [of the city] that the fire did not burn. Tiji went and inspected the house and asked why that was so. [He was told that] because there was an old person in the house who had always received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*; [by

[961] X87.1629: 458b24–c6. Also: TPGJ37. The account is not about Yang Tiji but the old man of the Yingshan. Yang Tiji witnessed the event.

[962] Written *da zhongdafu* 大中大夫 in the text, but most probably *tai zhongdafa* 太中大夫. It is a prestigious title (*sanguan* 散官) for civil officials of rank 4b1 in the Tang.

virtue of] the power of *Prajñā*, the fire could not burn [the house]. Without exception, everyone in the entire prefecture was amazed.

JYJ42: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[963]

The secular surname of Shi Qingxu of Huiyi Monastery 惠義寺[964] in Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan) was Tang. He was by nature pugnacious. Since youth, he recited the *Diamond Sutra*. In the beginning of the tenth month of the first year of the Wansui tongtian era (696), in Mount Sanzong, north of the Lingyan Monastery in Qizhou (modern Jinan, Shandong), [Qingxu] made a vow deep in his heart to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra* for the sake of the suffering beings of the three [evil] paths.[965] [He] prayed that all sentient beings would quickly part with their sufferings and be liberated. [He recited the *Diamond Sutra*] from the third day of the tenth month until the sixth day [during which] seven deer suddenly came to listen to his recitation of the sutra. When it was time for Qingxu to recite the sutra, they would come, prostrate, and listen [to his recitation]. When his recitation

[963] X87.1629: 458c7–12. This is the first account, among others about the monk Shi Qingxu, to appear in the *Jiyan ji*. Qingxu's biography is collected in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T50.2061: 867a11–b10. Quite a number of the events recounted in his biographies are found in the accounts in the *Jiyan ji* although they probably originated from others sources. Although the sources of the accounts in the *Jiyan ji* are not given, given the fact that Qingxu was also based in Zizhou where Meng Xianzhong was stationed, it is not farfetched that they might have been acquainted, or least Meng had personally heard about or witnessed some of the events.

[964] Also written as Huiyi si 慧義寺. See JYJ62.

[965] The *santu* 三途 is also known as *sanedao* 三惡道 (three evil paths) or *sanequ* 三惡趣 (three evil destinies). These terms refer to three unfortunate forms of birth: hell-denizen (*diyu* 地獄), hungry ghost (*egui* 餓鬼), and animal (*chusheng* 畜生).

finished, they would then leave. When his overall recitation came to an end, they did not come again.

JYJ43: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[966]

At sunset on the twenty-third day of the tenth month of the first year of the Wanxui tongtian era (696), the monk Qingxu was sitting upright and reciting the sutra in the vicinity of Lingyan Monastery at Mount Sanzong in Qizhou (modern Jinan, Shandong). Suddenly, [in a state] unlike a dream and yet like a dream, he thereupon could not see the houses, buildings, and natural terrain of the place he inhabited, but only a city that resembled the city of Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan). The monk (Qingxu) entered the city from the east gate, [and proceeded] until he reached a bridge where he saw a shopkeeper who was a native of Shandong.[967] After that, he went out of the west gate of the city for about five or six *li*. Again, he saw a city to the left of the road. The city was about five *li* in width and length. The monk walked along the road until he reached the east gate of the city. The gate could only let one person through. The monk asked the gatekeeper (*zhuomenzhe*), "Do you know when the great king will release the beings suffering in hell?"

[966] X87.1629: 458c13–459a19.

[967] Shandong 山東 (lit. east of the mountain) refers to area east of Yaoshan 崤山 or Huashan 華山, especially the Yellow River drainage area.

The person replied, “At noon yesterday, a Chan master from Lingyan Monastery[968] in Qizhou, who held a staff in his hand and who was over seventy years old, came to visit the king. He said to the king, ‘There is a traveling monk who recited the *Diamond Sutra* for the suffering beings of the three [evil] paths. Does the king know about it? When will the great king release the sentient beings who are suffering in hell?’ The king replied to the master, ‘I, your disciple, knew this beforehand. At noon tomorrow, I will release for the master’s sake those who are less sinful.’”

The gatekeeper told the monk, “Master, leave immediately. Please leave and do not speak anymore.” The monk thereupon went back in the west gate. When he came before the gate of a relay station, he saw a melon the size of a bowl. He broke it into two pieces. The monk ate one piece, and there was still one piece left. He went to the place of the shopkeeper he met previously, and the shopkeeper asked the monk where he obtained the melon and requested to eat it. That person took the melon and ate it, and in his mouth he said, “There is such nice melon in the tenth month.”

Before he could finish speaking, suddenly he saw uncountable people outside the western gate of the city. They were entering the city. There were many females and fewer males. There were many wearing mourning garment of hemp and a few with auspicious clothing. They came before the monk, and each and every one of them paid their respects to him: “Thank you master for

[968] The Lingyan Monastery 靈巖寺 is said to be constructed during the Eastern Jin. Since the Tang period, it has been considered one of the four famous monasteries, along with the Guoqing Monastery 國清寺 in Zhejiang, the Qixia Monastery 棲霞寺 in Nanjing, and the Yuquan Monastery 玉泉寺 in Hubei. See *Tiantai shan fangwai zhi*: 763.

rescuing us." The monk replied, "We have never met; how have I rescued you?"

There were three Liao slaves at the rear, and they also came forward to pay their respects, "Thank you master for saving us, your disciples." The monk asked, "Whose children are you? You looked pale and very haggard. Where do you all come from? Your garments are all new; why is this so?" They replied, "We are the household members of Xuanzong Temple.[969] We do not know how much grain we had robbed from the Guan family and traded [illegally] for alcohol and meat. We were investigated by King Yama for the past five years and had not drunk a drop of fluid. These garments were produced while we were alive, and we only first wore them after we died. When we were being investigated, our garments were stripped from our bodies and hung at the treetop at Naihe [bridge].[970] That is why they remain new." After they finished speaking, they took their leave. Such is the proof of the efficacy [of the *Diamond Sutra*].

JYJ44: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[971]

On the twenty-third day of the eleventh month in the first year of the Wansui tongtian era (696), Qingxu was at Mount Sanzhong in Qizhou

[969] See JYJ62, where there is mention of a Daoist priest from Xuanzong Temple.

[970] This refers to the Naihe qiao (Naihe Bridge), a well-known place in the underworld landscape. Of indigenous Chinese origin, it is believed that the souls of the deceased have to cross this bridge under which flows the Blood River (*xue hechi* 血河池). It is believed that those who had done evil would not be able to cross the bridge and would fall into the Blood River to suffer. See Xu 1994: 651.

[971] X87.1629: 459a20–b5.

(modern Jinan, Shandong). In the evening, an easterly suddenly sprang up. From afar, Qingxu saw a wild fire burning the mountain about more than ten *li* away. By the time he entered samādhi, the fire was approaching gradually and was about a hundred paces away from where the monk was sitting. The monk was alarmed in his heart, [and started] to recite the sutra and intone [the name of the] Buddha as well as recite the mantra of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara.[972] When the fire had come to about fifty steps from the hut where [the monk] lived, the wind suddenly blew in the opposite direction, and the fire thereupon died out. At the first watch of the night, the fire suddenly rekindled. The monk attempted to beat the fire out by using a broom, and the fire stopped burning. Less than ten paces from the hut, the fire died out.

Within ten paces from the house, the grasses were leveled with the eaves. Still there was a thicket of not more than a few *chi* from the ridge of the house. By that time, the thicket and grasses were altogether being burnt into ashes. Only the hut where he slept was spared from the fire. The eaves on the eastern and northern sides of the house were both consumed by the fire. He believed and knew that the power of *Prajñā* was inconceivable.

[972] The term *shiyimian* 十一面 is an abbreviation of *shiyimian guanyin* 十一面觀音, the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, one of the six types of Avalokiteśvara. The time when the *Jiyan ji* was compiled was also a time when esoteric Buddhism was concertedly introduced into China. There are a few extant versions of the *Shiyimian guanshiyin shenzhou xin jing* 十一面觀世音神咒心經 (*Sutra of the Spiritual Mantra of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara* collected in Taisho: T20.1070, and T20.1071. Qingxu's biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* also mentions his recitation of the mantra of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara.

JYJ45: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[973]

In the second month of the first year of [Wansui] dengfeng era (696), the monk Qingxu came to Mount Tulai.[974] Usually, before he could recite the sutra twice, his lower spine would become so painful that that he could hardly bear it. The monk thereupon made a vow before the image of the Buddha: "Tonight, your disciple will sit in the lotus position and recite the *Diamond Sutra* for all sentient beings. I will definitely complete [reciting it] five times before I take a rest. Even if my pain feels like I am being stabbed, I must still complete the [required] number [of times of recitation]. [I will do it] even if this kills me."

When he recited for the third time, the joints of his bones felt like they were being dismantled. When he recited the fourth time, there were things fighting in the Buddha hall. It sounded like a fierce fight between a water buffalo and a tiger. The Buddha hall also shook. When he recited the fifth time and was halfway through, his pain was gone. He looked around, and it was bright and penetratingly clear. He could neither see the Buddha hall nor the lecture hall. He only felt that he was sitting upright in the air with the great earth flat and even, and without high or low. And when his companion came to call him, he could only hear the call but could not see him. [Only when] his

973 X87.1629: 459b6–15.

974 I cannot locate a mountain with this name although there are mountains with similar names, such as Qulai shan 岨崍山 (also known as Culai shan 徂徠山, Longlai shan 龍徠山, Duolai shan 駄來山; in modern Tai'an, Shandong). It is possible that *tulai shan* 徒來山 here is a scribal error here.

companion dragged his hand to pull him up, did he then began to wake up. The divine power of *Prajñā* is called "without gain."

JYJ46: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[975]

During the period of harvest, in the eighth month of the first year of the Shengli era (698), the monk Qingxu was at that time in Yuzhou (modern Zhumadian, Henan; commandery-level). He went to the Fawang Monastery for worship and saw that the Sheli Pagoda contained the Buddhist canon.[976] On top of the pagoda, there were no opening. A flock of doves had entered [the compound of] the Sheli pagoda. When they saw the monk enter the pagoda [compound] to worship, they dispersed in a moment. After the monk finished praying and repenting, he went inside the pagoda gate and sat down. One pigeon flew down from nowhere and went straight into the monk's bosom. It passed through his left and right shoulders, and then flew away after circling—from top to bottom—his head three times. Even a bird understood, respected, and upheld the sutra. This is rare even among humans. How encouraging!

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975 X87.1629: 459b16–21.

976 The Fawang Monastery 法王寺 (lit. dharma king monastery) probably refers to the one at the southern foot of Mount Taishi (modern Dengfeng, Henan). It is said that the monastery was built in the fourteenth year of Emperor Ming of the Han (71 CE). It was renamed Huguo Monastery 護國寺 by Emperor Ming of the Wei. In the Sui period, a pagoda housing relics (Sk. *śarīra*), or perhaps a Sheli (lit.) pagoda was built, and the monastery was renamed Sheli Monastery. It was refurbished and renamed a few times subsequently, and in the Qingli era (1041–1048) of Emperor Renzong (1010–1063) of the Northern Song, it was renamed as the Great Fawang Monastery at Mount Song (Songshan da fawang si 嵩山大法王寺).

JYJ47: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[977]

In the intercalary fourth month of the third year of the Chang'an era (703), the monk Qingxu went to Mount [Zhong]nan Mountains[978] in Lantian District (in modern Xi'an, Shaanxi) and had his summer retreat in Wuzhen Monastery. The meditation cloister at the upper precinct of the monastery was old and no spring water [could be drawn there]. Everyone had to get water from the mountain stream, which was more than ten *li* there and back. The monks of the meditation cloister thought it laborious [to do so].

The Huayan Dharma Master Kangzang had a discussion with the three directors[979] of the monastery [regarding the situation], and they requested [Qingxu] to pray for a spring. The monk (Qingxu) said to them, "This [request for] water is a difficult matter." They said, "Master, since you are having your summer retreat here, [by] resolving to recite [sutra] and pray [for the spring] on behalf of the monastery, you are not neglecting your cultivation of the way. We hope that you will not decline our commission." Since he could hardly go

977 X87.1629: 459b22–460a2.

978 The Zhongnan Mountains 終南山 are also known as Taiyi Mountains 太乙山 or Zhounan Mountains 周南山. They are a branch of the Qin Mountain Ranges (Qinling 秦嶺) located in modern Shaanxi, south of Xi'an, extending from Wugong County 武功縣 in the east to Lantian County 藍田縣. The Zhongnan Mountains had been very popular among religious adepts, and they feature often in Buddhist writings. Because Zhongnan Mountains lies south of Guangzhong, they are also known as the Southern Mountains (Nanshan 南山).

979 The *sangang* 三綱 refers to the three principal administrative heads or directors of a monastery: (1) the president of the monastery (Ch. *shangzuo* 上座; Sk. *sthavira*), (2) the abbot who is in charge of the operation of the monastery (Ch. *sizhu* 寺主; Sk. *vihārasvāmin*), and the rector, the head monk who directs the monks (Ch. *weina* 維那 or 羯磨陀那; Sk. *karmadāna*). Sometimes, the abbot is head of the monastery, and the operation of the monastery is handled by the director of affairs (Ch. *zhishi* 知事). *Sangang* could also refer to other sets of three positions: (1) president, (2) abbot, and (3) director of worship (Ch. *dianzuo* 典座; Sk. *vihārapāla*).

against their wishes, he intended to look for a secluded place to recite [the sutra so as to pray for a spring].

The upper and lower precincts of the meditation cloisters were all full of people, with the exception of the Maitreya Pavilion between them that was closed and permanently locked. No one dared to open it. Since the monk saw that it was closed, he called for the labor steward [980] to negotiate with him to have the pavilion opened [so as to] to recite [sutra] in it.

The hosts together with guest monks and others told the monk (Qingxu), "Do not go into the pavilion. There is a black snake in it that is as thick as an alms bowl and two *zhang* in length. It always protects the pavilion. We are afraid that it will harm you, master." The monk replied, "There was a god of Lake Gongting in Jiangnan[981] that was a few *li* long, and it could transform itself at will. It was also a snake that could deliver sudden rains and whirling winds. Yet it was reduced to submission, not to mention such a small one. What more can be said?!"

The monk then asked for the key and opened the door. Holding a torch, he went straightaway into the pavilion. He could not see anything but only smelled the gamy odor of the snake. With right mindfulness, he lighted incense and entreated, "Your disciple heard that the great-body being is

[980] The labor steward (*zhisui* 直歲) is one of six stewards of monastic bureaucracy in charge of the practical affairs of the monastery. The mention of labor steward here indicates that the bureaucratic system of Tang monastic institutions was already very developed, and subordinate positions, such as the labor steward, and other stewards of monastic affairs, were already present before the Song. Although it might not be representative of Tang labor stewardship, a list of the duties of a labor steward can be found in the Yuan-period monastic code, *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 勅修百丈清規, T48.2025: 1132c19–24.

[981] See note on Jiangnan in JYJ36.

guarding and protecting this pavilion. Could you be a sage of the past, or a mountain dragon, or some other deity? Today, your disciple came into this chamber with a single mind to recite [the sutra] so as to pray for a spring for the meditation cloister at the upper precinct [of the monastery]. I kindly pray that all gods will offer their protection. Please do not cause me to be frightened. Listen to my recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* and grant your disciple a small spring to provide for the meditation cloister at the upper precinct."

He then recited wholeheartedly through three days and three nights straight. He did not close his eyes (i.e., did not sleep at all). In the eyes of his heart (i.e., his mind), he saw three women to the northwest of the Maitreya Pavilion. Halfway up the mountain, they were digging the ground with knives. Suddenly, they disappeared. At daybreak, he headed northwest. Coming near to a mountain stream, he shut his eyes and recited the *Prajñā Sutra*. He saw a stream of water emerging from the place dug by the knives of the women. It passed by in front of the monk.

After fifteen days, the stream of water could always be seen flowing calmly. [The monk] had yet to believe [that he had succeeded], so he still recited without stopping. Two more days passed, and it gradually became obvious. The monk then moved to the place where he saw the women digging with knives and recited there. When he shut his eyes, he again saw water flow out from behind. Three more days passed, and the monk thereupon took his staff and dug at the spot to have a look. He shoved away the woods and the

leaves and saw wet ground as big as a two-*zhang* washbasin. He used a hoe to dig it and then saw a stream of water [flowing out from the spot] that thereupon became a pit that could accommodate even a turning stone. He further recited the sutra five times wholeheartedly. The water in the pit had without him knowing become full. He channeled the water to the meditation garden and provided it for the use of everyone. One should know that the sagely will not fail to have a response; his stimulus will definitely be communicated. Believe in the power of *Prajñā*! This is called "without gain."

JYJ48: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[982]

At the end of the third month of the fourth year of the Chang'an era (704), the monk Qingxu went to Shaolin Monastery at Mount Shaoshi (modern Zhengzhou, Henan) for a summer retreat. The meditation cloister of the monastery is located in the west, and to the north of the cloister, there was a Buddha hall up on the mountain. However, both the masters and their disciples did not dare go there at nightfall. There was a *vinaya* master who went there to recite the *vinaya* at nightfall, and he heard these words in the air: "Master, quickly leave this place. If you are slow at leaving, I will harm you, Master." When the second watch ended and he still could not get out, he was slashed and punctured beneath his ribs by the god with a knife. He then quickly descended the mountain and returned [to where he came from]. By noon the next day, the *vinaya* master had already lost his life.

[982] X87.1629: 460a3–b12.

Before half a year passed, there was young master who specialized in the divine spell of the Fiery-headed Vajra-being.[983] Together, with the assembly of disciples, they tested the power of his spell. The young master then conducted a ritual and cast a spell on a tree [causing] all its branches to bundle together and bend.

Having seen that his spell was numinously efficacious, the assembly then had a discussion with the young master: "There is an old hall in the upper precinct. No one had dared stay there overnight before. Since the master upholds the divine spell, do you dare to spend the night there reciting [the sutra? spells?]?" The young master replied, "I have been to places where even gods who were ten thousand times more powerful were subdued; this small little one is hardly worth a mention." The young master then solemnly held the incense stove and proceeded there to recite the spells in order to subdue that god with the power of his spells. That night, the god thereupon revealed its body. [The god] caught hold of his legs and tossed him into the mountain stream below. He lost his voice for seven days, and half a year since then, he had been in low spirits.

The venerables of the Shaolin [Monastery] received news that when Qingxu was at the capital, he requested for a spring and also subdued a huge snake in Wuzhen Monastery. In both cases, he had divine experiences.

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[983] The Fiery-headed Vajra-being (*huotou jin'gang* 火頭金剛) is one of the luminous kings (*mingwang* 明王) in the Buddhist pantheon. The *mingwang* or *rājas* are fierce spirits that constitute a class of deities in esoteric Buddhism. As protective deities of Buddhism, they are the manifestations of Vairocana's wrath against evil spirits. The Fiery-headed Vajra-being is also known as Ucchuṣma (Ch. Wucusemo 烏芻瑟摩). He presides over the cesspool and is described both as 'unclean' and 'fire-headed'; he is credited with purifying the unclean.

Therefore, they said to the monk (i.e., Qingxu), “Master has great efficacious responses from upholding the sutra. We invite Master to conduct a small ceremony. We will inform the assembly of this matter.” [Qingxu] replied, “Great virtuous ones, what ceremony do you want to send Qingxu to conduct?” The assembly of monks together said, “There is a Buddha hall in the upper precinct, where no one has ever dared stay for a night. Can the Master spend the night there alone reciting [sutra]?” The monk replied, “That is the place of three generations of honored guests and abbots. It is indeed a place empowered by masters and monks. Why not?” The monk then prepared incense and oil and went there to recite [sutra]. For two nights and three days, nothing happened.

The monks asked the monk of the meditation cloister, “Yesterday…the monk had already been in his room for six days. Still we have not seen him come out. Where has he gone to?” The meditation cloister monk replied, “He is now staying in the Buddha hall at the upper precinct and reciting sutra there.” The great virtuous ones ordered to quickly call him out lest he be beaten and killed by the god. The big assembly came to the place and together they called to the monk: “Master, [please] come out!” The monk (Qingxu) replied, “There is nothing to be anxious about.” All in the assembly said, “Master, you are no different from common mortals; we are the same. Why you want to seek your own harm here?” [He] replied, “I do not fear anything. Great virtuous ones, you just go back.”

When the first watch was coming to an end, the god then came, and made a din at the eastern corner of the Buddha hall. Like the tossing of many dozen of tiles, the sound made by the god shook the air. The monk then lit the torch and emerged to take a look. It was quiet and nothing could be seen. His body hair all stood up. Immediately, he recited the spell of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara and circumambulated the Buddha hall once. Inside the hall, [he heard something that] resembled the sounds of water buffalos fighting. The images [in the hall] also shook and moved. Having recited the spell seven times, the sound became more intense, and escalated to roars that vibrated in the valleys and moved the mountains. He then went to the front of the Buddha hall, stood upright, and pondered. Although he wanted to, he dared not enter it. Suddenly, he pondered deeper again: "Why couldn't I subdue it here?" Calming his mind, he then entered. The sound became even louder. The lamp in the hall still had not extinguished. Since the spell has no efficacy, he then recited the *Diamond Sutra*. After he recited it once, the sound gradually diminished. After he recited three times, the sound came to a stop. At daybreak, everything was calm and tranquil. One should know that the power of [perfection of] wisdom [sutra] is inconceivable.

JYJ49: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[984]

In the eleventh day of the twelfth month of the second year of Shenlong era (706), Qizhou's (modern Jinan, Shandong) tripitaka master Yijing and

[984] X87.1629: 460b13–461a2.

Acarya Jing presented a memorial to have Qingxu enter the inner palace to pray for snow. Although they had a little snowfall on the twenty-seventh day, it was insufficient. The edict addressed to Qingxu asked, "Although the [result of] the master's prayer was not entirely satisfactory, would the master like to choose which monastery to reside in?" The monk was frustrated with himself that [the result] of his prayer did not satisfy the emperor's intention that he thereupon replied to the imperial order thus, "Actually, I am not pleased."

The venerables and others all blanched at Qingxu's response to the edict. Since the master has transgressed the heavenly might [of the emperor], he will then be punished (*fufa:* lit. serve the law). The next edict states, "If you could obtain rain and snow, then I would bestow upon the master two hundred bolts of multicolored silk and also confer a fifth grade ranking to the master as well as appoint you as one of the directors (*gangwei*)[985] of Jianfu Monastery. What do you think, master? Are you [still] not pleased?" He replied, "I am fortunate to be favored by heavenly kindness, and to be ordered to pray for rain and snow. Personally, it is regrettable that I neither fulfilled your heavenly expectation above nor the people's hope below. Such are my uninformed sincerity and fruitless earnestness; I could not fulfill your majesty's expectations. Day and night, I am fearful and could only await my

[985] According to the section on the teachings and precepts of mentor and disciples in roll 6 of the *Yichu Liutie* (also known as *Shishi liutie* 釋氏六帖 or *Shishi zuanyao liutie* 釋氏纂要六帖), a Buddhist encyclopedia written by the Five Dynasties period (907–960) monk Yichu 義楚, *gangwei* refers to any of the three directors of the monastery (see note of JYJ47). Thus *sangang* during the Five Dynasties period was called *gangwei*.

penalty. Because I have opprobriously received heavenly kindness, thus I am not delighted."

The imperial order states: "I shall let the master go outside to recite the sutra. You still have to pray [for rain and snow]. Should you suddenly obtain rain and snow, you have to immediately send an official document to inform me." In response, [Qingxu] then presented a memorial saying: "If it does not rain or snow this time, I will then burn my finger(s) for [the sake] of all sentient beings." Another imperial order came down: "I summon the master here to make offerings. How can I send for the master here to suffer? Also, your body was given by your parents, how can you harm it? The master certainly must not have any mishap."

Having finished eating, [Qingxu] took leave of the emperor and left. He then went to Huigu at Longjiu (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi) in Zhongnan mountains to pray for rain and snow. Although it snowed again, it was still not satisfactory. He further shifted to Suoqu village and recited the *Diamond Sutra* in the Anle Buddha hall there. After seven days, he obtained a little snowfall and was still not satisfied. He thereupon vowed to burn two of his fingers. After one day and one night, before his finger finished burning, clouds suddenly gathered from the four directions, and a mixture of rain and snow fell down.

Everyone was astonished and thought it strange. Two days passed before it stopped snowing. Ordinarily, folks and elders of the village repeatedly send documents and want to present memorials to the emperor. Furthermore,

in Jianfu Monastery, they discussed with the Tripitaka Master: “Yesterday, at the southern part of the city, Qingxu burned two fingers to pray for rain and snow for the world. Everyone saw that two of his finger joints were incinerated. The bone ashes now still exist. This morning, when the village people, both young and old, wanted to apply medication for [Qingxu], the two fingers had grown back just like they were before.

The Tripitaka Master thereupon said, “This matter is hard to believe; it is not close to human affairs. That man is an ordinary monk and has not reached the state of arhatship. How it is possible that his fingers grew back after having been incinerated? Unless he is already of the rank of the sagely, there is no such thing.” He then said to the village people and its elders to quickly return. When the prefecture and district [officials] were informed [of this incident], they thought it nothing but an evil hoax that would bring harm instead of benefit. They rebuked the old man (Qingxu) for not only flaunting deceptively to ordinary people, but also impudently deceiving the emperor.

Having heard this, the other monks became even more unbelieving of [Qingxu]. The monk (Qingxu), seeing that everyone was beginning to slander him, then entered the ritual space and cordially entreated all Buddhas from the ten directions and all sages: “For the sentient beings of the world, I, your disciple, burned my fingers to pray for snow. I am grateful to the dragon kings and others who responded immediately to deliver snow and for restoring your disciple’s incinerated fingers from ashes. [Now] everyone began to slander [me] and not be strengthened in pure faith; they misled the other four

assemblies to fall into hells. Your disciple now further vows to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. I pray that the grown fingers will fall off again in two days."

By the second day, he recited [the *Diamond Sutra*] even more diligently, and his two restored fingers joints fell off after they grew back. Having seen that, the people again started to slander [him]: "The master had burned his finger at that time when he prayed for snow, [they were restored, but] now they are falling off!" The monk then informed the people, "For the time being, I am going south of the city to the place where I previously prayed for snow. I will recuperate there. When you send for me, my fingers will have grown back again. I wonder whether this will prove the efficacy of my act?" The people together said, "The master seems to have become insane; he often says malicious words."

He then went south of the city to recuperate. He recited [the sutra] without ceasing, and in fifteen days, one and a half finger joints grew back again, and even the fingernail emerged. Whoever saw that, none were unamazed. Everyone said, "This is also not surprising; this religious adept (*daoren*) uses sorcery." One should know that the power of *prajñā* power is unknowable to people of the two vehicles. When common mortals hear about it, all are capable of giving rise to slander.

JYJ50: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[986]

In the second year of the Jinglong era (708), Qingxu first returned to his hometown. By the evening of the twenty-ninth day of the first year of the Taiji era (712), the water of the eastern river overflowed. At that time, the monk (i.e., Qingxu) was stopping by at Huiyi Monastery. The water of the river went straight into the monastery. The monks themselves were packing up their clothes and belongings.

There was a small pavilion in the monk's quarter, where all their clothes and belongings were gathered and kept upstairs. [Qingxu] then lit the lamp and sat cross-legged; single-mindedly, he recited the *Diamond Sutra* with correct intention. After some time, he heard the sound of water entering the room. He took the torch, and had a look, and there was not a single drop of water whatsoever. The other buildings were flooded by water. He is not the only monk who witnessed the event. It was related by many that the mighty power of *Prajñā* stopped the calamity.

JYJ51: Chen Wenjian 陳文建[987]

Chen Wenjian was a native of Qi District in Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan). He was decorated with the title of Commandant of Cavalry.[988] Daily, he would always recite the *Diamond Sutra* in the main hall on the prefecture

[986] X87.1629: 461a3–9.

[987] X87.1629: 461a10–8. Also: TPGJ22.

[988] According to Hucker (606), this is a merit title (*xun* 勳) awarded to government personnel of ranks 5a and 5b in the Tang period.

city gate. He vowed, for sake of his parents, grandparents and others, to recite [the *Diamond Sutra*] a total of eighty-four thousand times. Not long after, he finished reciting. [Once when] Prefect Yuan Shanying was being summoned to the capital for some matters. He ordered Wenjian to recite the *Diamond Sutra* a total of five thousand times. Jian immediately recited for him, and by the time Shanying reached the capital, he was cleared of all implications.

Chen De, a native of Tongshan District (in modern Deyang, Sichuan), had always had copying sutras as his vocation. Suddenly, he fell sick with rashes (*bingzhen*)[989] and was being summoned by an underworld emissary [to the underworld]. [When he was there,] he saw a platform constructed in the underworld. De asked, "What platform is this?" The underworld emissary replied, "This is a *Prajñā* dais. Because Chen Wenjian is coming here, we built this platform to receive him." De, who [later] returned [to the human realm and] revived, related the entirety of the matter [to others]. People from near and far heard and knew about it, and vied to uphold the *Prajñā* (related by Chan master Huirong of Lingrui Monastery in Niutoushan [in Mianyang, Sichuan]).

[989] The characters given in the text, *bingzhen* 病疹, which can be interpreted to mean falling sick or having a disease because *zhen* also means sickness or disease. However, if *bing* is taken as a verb to mean to fall sick, then *zhen* may be taken to mean a rash or measles although it is uncertain whether *zhen* specifically means measles. Since the commentary to Qing-period *Yizong jinjian* 醫宗金鑒 (Golden Mirror of the Medical Tradition) mentions different types of *zhen*, it might not mean measles at all. See *Yizong jinjian* 59: 681.

JYJ52: Bei Tingguang 孛廷光[990]

Bei Tingguang of Zhao Commandery (in modern Shijiazhuang, Hebei) was an adjutant of Dezhou (in modern Dezhou, Shandong). He deeply believed in the teachings of causality (lit. cause and effect). He greatly upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, and whenever he saw it, it always had a ring of light around it. If his recitations were slightly more diligent, the light gradually became bigger; if his recitations were brief, the light would be small. Thus, he knew that the hidden response of the *Prajñā* was elicited by extreme sincerity.

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Praise: How great is its mighty power! It is inconceivable! The Lotus could support the dharma seat; the mustard seed could encapsulate Mount Sumeru. The earth is shaken by supernormal powers;[991] heaven opens the supernal/sacred pond. It is neither by samādhi nor wisdom that this is achieved.

[990] X87.1629: 461a19–21. Also: GDJ18, and TPGJ61.

[991] *shenzu* 神足 here refers to supernormal power of unimpeded bodily action, one of the six supernormal powers (previously discussed in Chapter 2) acquired and possessed by someone who had gone through the fourth degree of meditation). I have construed *shenzu*, the first in the list, to mean supernormal powers in general.

Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji
Roll Three

Section 5: Merit
(Foreword with ten accounts)[992]

Perfect merit is not merit: to act and yet not govern. The superior virtue is not virtue: to be accomplished and yet not entrenched. Thus, [through] the nine concentrations and four meditations,[993] one enters that which has no entrance; through the three [levels of apprehension of] emptiness[994] and the six perfections,[995] one practices that which has nothing to be practiced. It

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[992] There are actually twelve accounts.

[993] *jiuding sichan* 九定四禪. Also known as the Four Meditations and the Nine Concentrations, it is constituted by four meditations and eight concentrations (*shichan bading* 四禪八定) and the concentration of total extinction (*miejing ding* 滅盡定; Sk. *nirodha-samāpatti*). The four meditations (Sk. *catur-dhyāna*), also known as *sichan ding* 四禪定 or *sijing ding* 四靜定, refer to the four *dhyānas* on the form realm (*se jie* 色界), the four progressively subtle stages of meditation, which lead one out from the desire realm (*yu jie* 欲界) into rebirth in the four meditation heavens (*sichan tian* 四禪天). The eights concentrations are the four meditations on the form realm and the four concentrations on the formless realms (*wuse jie* 無色界). *Mohe zhiguan*, T46.1911.117b10. The nine concentrations, which are made up of the eight concentrations and the concentration of total extinction, are also known as the nine graduated concentrations (*jiucidi* ding 九次第定) since the practitioner progresses through the four meditations, the four concentrations on the formless realms, and then the concentration of total extinction. The concentration of total extinction is one of the six states of mental inactivity, an extremely deep concentration state where sensory and discriminative mental function, including thinking consciousness, is completely extinguished. It is a state that is only accessible by Buddhist practitioners.

[994] *sankong* 三空. There are various schemes of "three emptiness." For example, the *Jin'gang sanmei jing* 金剛三昧經 (Sk. Vajrasamādhi-sūtra) mentions the emptiness of marks, the emptiness of emptiness, and emptiness of that which is empty (T9.273.369b15). When applied to the practice of giving (*dāna*), they are the emptiness of the giver, the receiver, and that which is given. In his commentary to the *Diamond Sutra*, *Jin'gang jing shoulun zuanyao* 金剛經疏論纂要 (roll 1) and *Jin'gang jing zuan yaokan dingji* 金剛經纂要刊定記 (roll 1), there is mention of the emptiness of self, emptiness of dharmas, and emptiness of emptiness.

[995] Also known as the six *pāramitās*, the *liudu* 六度 are six forms of practice that enable the practitioner to achieve liberation from the cycle of birth and death. They are: (1) charity (Sk. *dāna*; Ch. *bushi* 布施), (2) morality (Sk. *śila*; Ch. *chijie* 持戒), (3) forbearance (Sk. *kṣānti*; Ch. *renru* 忍辱), (4) effort (Sk. *vīrya*; Ch. *jingjin* 精進), (5) meditation (Sk. *dhyāna*; Ch. *chanding* 禪定), and (6) wisdom (Sk. *prajñā*; Ch. *zhihui* 智慧).

is extensive and yet without boundaries, it has neither form nor name; it is undefiled and it does not abide.[996] Even bodies [as numerous as] accumulated sands of the Ganges cannot equal the virtues of a four-line verse.[997] Its divine merit and sagely virtue are so great! For this reason, I include a section on the "Merit" [of the *Diamond Sutra*] in order to persuade others [of its greatness].

JYJ53: Zhao Wenchang 趙文昌[998]

Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji* states: In the eleventh year of the Kaihuang era (591) of the Sui dynasty, Zhao Wenchang, an aide in the Court for the Imperial Treasury (*taifu cheng*),[999] died. Because there was a

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[996] In the original text, the term *buzhu* 不住 (lit. non-abiding) is used to refer to a condition of objective phenomena that remain not more than a moment, the state of non-abiding as the only viable condition for the mind. This is one of the important messages of the *Diamond Sutra*.

[997] This refers to the following portion in the *Diamond Sutra* (T8.235.750a23): "須菩提！若有善男子、善女人，以恒河沙等身命布施；若復有人，於此經中，乃至受持四句偈等，為他人說，其福甚多。" Watson's translation of it (Watson 2012: 85) is as follows: "Subhūti, suppose there were good men and good women who gave their bodies and lives as a form of almsgiving for as many times as there are sands in the Ganges. Much greater would be the good fortune gained by a person who accepted and upheld one four-line verse of this sutra and taught it to others!"

[998] X87.1629: 461b12–c18. Also: FYZL18, GDJ4, and TPGJ3.

[999] *Taifu* 太府 here refers to *Taifu si* 太府寺 (Hucker 6165), Court of the Imperial Treasury, a government office headed by a chief minister in charge of managing the government non-grain receipts and disbursements. *Cheng* 丞 (Hucker 457) is a common term for aides, or officials in all eras, in many types of agencies, at virtually every level of rank. The *cheng* was almost invariably at a secondary or tertiary level of authority of importance. His rank was normally in the middle or lower ranges of the hierarchy. His role was normally that of an administrative assistant to the head of an agency, but his function may at times be better suggested by renderings, such as Assistant Director, Assistant Magistrate, or so on. Normally *cheng* occurs as the final character in a title, preceded by the name of an agency or by a phrase suggesting a specialized function. Thus, in this case, Zhao Wenchang was an aide in the Court of the Imperial Treasury.

little warmth on his chest, Chang's family members did not yet dare to encoffin his body at that time.

[Chang was in fact] brought to the place of King Yama. The king asked Chang, "Throughout your entire life, what good deeds did you do? Chang replied to the king, "My family was poor throughout my life, and I did not have excess merit. I single-mindedly recited solely the *Diamond Sutra*." When the king heard these words, he put his palms together, paid respect to [Chang], and praised, "Wonderful! Wonderful! [Since] you received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, your merit is great and inconceivable." The king said to the official who took brought Chang there, "You had better investigate and check that you did not bring him here by mistake." [After checking,] the clerk who was in charge of the case informed the king, "He has indeed been wrongly brought here. This person still has a total of more than twenty years [of lifespan]." Having heard these words, the king personally checked that there was no mistake, and then he said to Chang, "Go with the official to the [sutra] repository and bring the *Diamond Sutra* here."

[The king] then sent someone to lead Chang there. [Together] they traveled in the southwest direction for about five or six *li* until they reached the place where the sutras were stored. He saw a building of a few dozen *jian*. The building was extremely beautiful, and it was full of sutra scrolls with golden rollers and precious wrappings. They were augustly adorned and ornately decorated beyond description. Chang then single-mindedly put his palms together, and closing his eyes, he randomly picked a scroll of sutra with a size

that seemed like the *Diamond Sutra* [scroll] he formerly used for recitation. Its title was "The Supreme [Sutra] for [Cultivating] the Greatest Merit." Chang, afraid that it might not be the *Prajñā*, pleaded with the official to allow him to swap it. The official did not allow it. Chang then unrolled the sutra and saw that it was indeed the *Diamond Sutra*.

[After that, Wenchang] was brought before the king. The king ordered someone to hold the sutra in the West and Chang to stand in the East. The king commanded an official to bring a seven-jeweled chair and had Chang sit on it facing west to recite the sutra. Overall, he was able to recite the sutra smoothly. At that time, the king showed Chang how to return home, and also he reminded him, "Continue to receive and uphold this sutra with humility and do not be negligent or stop doing so." He also ordered Chang to convert all people to read and recite the sutra. The king again ordered someone to lead Chang out through the southern gate.

[While on his way out,] Chang saw Emperor Wu [of Northern Zhou][1000] who was incarcerated inside the eastern chamber of the gate. [The emperor] called Chang, "You are my countryman. Come here for a moment, I need to talk to you." Chang followed what he said, and paid his respect to Emperor Wu again. Emperor Wu asked him, "Do you recognize me?" Chang said, "Your

[1000] Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou 北周武帝 (543–578) was the third emperor of the Northern Zhou dynasty. He is well-known for launching massive persecutions of Buddhism in 574 and 577. These persecutions, together with the Buddhist persecutions of Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei 北魏太武帝 (408–452) in 446 and Emperor Wuzong of Tang 唐武宗 (814–846) in 845, are known as the disasters of the three Wu (*sanwu zhi huo* 三武之禍) in the history of Chinese Buddhism.

official in the past served as the imperial bodyguard[1001] of your Majesty." Emperor Wu said to Chang, "You are my former subject. You may return home, and on my behalf, convey fully to the Sui Emperor that all my sins have been settled, with the exception of my persecution of Buddhism that has yet to be resolved. At that time, Wei Yuansong[1002] caused me to persecute Buddhism. Because Yuansong until now cannot be summoned here, therefore, the matter is not over yet." Chang asked Emperor Wu, "Where is Yuansong? [Why] can't he be summoned?" Emperor Wu said, "That Yuansong is a person outside the three realms. [That territory] is not under the jurisdiction of King Yama; [thus] he cannot be summoned. You, go back and quickly beg Emperor Wen of Sui Dynasty[1003] on my behalf for a little merit."

[After his encounter with Emperor Wu,] Chang traveled for a little while and exited the southern gate. There, he saw someone's hair sticking out of a pile of shit. Chang asked his guide, "What is this?" His guide replied, "This is Bo Qi,[1004] the General of the state of Qin. He wrongfully condemned Zhao

[1001] *suwei* 宿衛 is one of many terms used throughout imperial history for military units or personnel serving as the Imperial Bodyguard. See Hucker 5854.

[1002] Wei Yuansong 衛元嵩 (d.u.), a court official, was known for his role in the persecution of Buddhism during the Northern Zhou period. Wei was once a Buddhist monk but later returned to lay life. In 567, Wei submitted a memorial to Emperor Wu (r. 561–578) calling for the abolishment of Buddhism. In 574 and 577, Emperor Wu ordered to have Buddhist sutras and images destroyed and Buddhist monastics returned to late life. See Xu 1980: 245–276.

[1003] Emperor Wen—personal name Yang Jian 楊堅 (541–604)—is first emperor of the Sui dynasty, which he founded in 589 after defeating the Chen Dynasty China in 589.

[1004] Bo Qi 白起 (d. 257 BC) was an outstanding military general of the state of Qin during the Warring States period. His biography can be found in *Shiji* 73.

soldiers into pits.[1005] His incarceration here has not finished." [When] Chang returned home, he revived. After three days, his illness gradually improved. He fully presented a memorial to Emperor Wen of Sui. The emperor then issued an imperial order to have all monasteries within the country hold fast for Emperor Wu for three days and recite the *Diamond Sutra*. This incident was recorded in the history of Sui by imperial order.

JYJ54: Zhao Wenruo 趙文若[1006]

[Xiao Yu's *Jin'gang bore jing lingyan ji*] also states: During the Sui Dynasty, Zhao Wenruo, a native of Yongzhou (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi), passed away and revived after seven days. When his family members wanted to encoffin his body, one of his legs twitched; thus, they did not do so. He then managed to revive. Wenruo recounted that after he died, he [was brought to] see King Yama. [The king] asked Ruo, "When you were alive, what good things did you do?" Ruo replied, "I received and upheld the classic *Diamond Sutra*." The king exclaimed, "Wonderful! Wonderful! This is the greatest and supreme merit. Although you cultivated good fortune, for the time being, I should show you the place where punishments are received [for bad deeds]."

[The king] then ordered someone to lead Ruo to go north for about ten paces until they reach a wall with a hole. There was someone on the other side

[1005] Probably refers to the Battle of Changping (260 BC), where Bo Qi defeated the Zhao army led by Zhao Kuo 趙括 (d. 260). It was said more than 400,000 Zhao soldiers, including Shangdang people, were buried alive under Bo Qi's order. See *Shiji* 72 and *Shiji* 43.

[1006] X87.1629: 461c19–462a16. Also: FYZL21, and TPGJ2.

of the wall who extended his hand through the hole and grabbed Ruo. Ruo was pulled through the hole with extremely great hardship. Outside the wall, he saw a great hell with hot liquid in cauldrons and furnaces [full of] ashes, knife-mountains, dagger trees, bronze pillars, metal beds, and sinners undergoing inconceivable sufferings. Later, there were chicken gizzards, pigs, sheep, swans, ducks, and others of their kind following Ruo, asking him to repay them their former lives. Ruo said, "I do not owe you your lives."

The chickens and other animals reported, "You had in the past in a certain year, month, place, together with people from a certain prefecture dissected our heads and limbs, and each of you ate them." Wenruo, having heard what was said and testified by the animals, began to realize that they were not untrue and also remembered the places where they were killed and eaten in the past. He could only recollect the Buddha and single-mindedly repent his wrongdoings. The pigs, sheep, chickens, and ducks did not dare say anymore. The person who led Ruo brought him back to the king's place and reported to the king, "He has seen the place where punishments are received." At that time, the king gave Wenruo one bowl of iron nails and ordered him to eat them. The king also used five long nails and nailed them on Wenruo's crown, hands and legs. Having completed doing so, he ordered the release of Ruo.

Ever since Ruo revived, he had been having headaches and all his limbs were in pain. The places that hurt gradually improved. From that time onward, Ruo received and upheld the *Prajñā* assiduously and diligently without remiss.

Whenever he met his relatives and friends, he would persuade all to receive and uphold the sutra. Later when Ruo was on official business, he came to a relay station and temporarily lay down for a rest in the hall. In a state akin to falling asleep, he dreamt that he saw a woman in blue who hurriedly came to tell him, "Save me! Save me!" Ruo suddenly woke up startled, and then called for the relay stationmaster and asked, "Are you killing some animal for my sake?" The stationmaster said, "Actually I was just going to kill a lamb for mister." Ruo asked, "What color is it?" The stationmaster replied, "It's a black ewe lamb," Wenruo ordered the master to quickly release the lamb and not kill it, and he offered a price to buy the lamb directly from him so as to release it to prolong its life. If it were not for the receiving and upholding of the *Diamond Sutra*, extreme sincerity would not elicit such a response.

JYJ55: Dharma Master Qixuan 栖玄法師[1007]

Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi* states: Dharma Master Qixuan of Puguang Monastery[1008] engaged in ascetic practices when he was young. He had always made the recitation of the *Diamond Sutra* his vocation. In winter of the eleventh month of the second year of the Longshuo era (662), he sat upright and passed away in the monastery. His body remained still in a dignified

[1007] X87.1629: 462a17–22.

[1008] Located east of the South Gate of the Banzheng Ward in Chang'an city, the Puguang Monastery 普光寺 was established by Crown Prince Li Chengqian 李承乾 (619?–645) in the fifth year of the Zhenguan era (631) of the reign of Tang Emperor Taizong. In the first year of the Shenlong era (705), it was renamed Zhongxing Monastery 中興寺, and then Longxing Monastery 龍興寺. Li 2006: 25; *Tang huiyao* 48: 5.

manner. When the Son of Heaven heard of it, he lauded Qixuan and decreed thus, "Monk Qixuan of the Puguang Monastery was virtuous in his actions and unadulterated in his cultivation. Both the religious and the secular highly respected him. He suddenly passed away in the sitting position. As a pillar of the Buddhist community, I deem it appropriate to have him respectfully buried with a funeral worthy of a third grade official." Thus, he was given a funeral accompanied by an ensemble of musicians. Men and women of the whole city [gathered to] watch the funeral procession as they would in a marketplace. (Yuling was then at capital, he met all the venerables and Qixian's relatives and friends who told him [the account].)

JYJ56: Gao Chun 高純[1009]

[Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi*] also states: Standby Guard[1010] Gao Chun is the son of Prefect Biaoren and the grandson of Duke Ying of Qi, Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs[1011] during the Sui dynasty. In the second year of Longshuo era (662) in Chang'an, when he went out of the

[1009] X87.1629: 462a23–b16. Also: TPGJ23.

[1010] *yiwei* 翊衛 (Hucker 3029) is a common name for a military unit at the dynastic capital. Cf. *shier wei* 十二衛 (Twelve Guards; Hucker 5242), *bo qi* 百騎 (Hundred Cavaliers; Hucker 4720) and *san wei* 三衛 (Three Guards; Hucker 4929).

[1011] The post of *puye* 僕射 was initiated during the Han as Vice Director of the Later Han Imperial Secretariat (*shangshu tai* 尚書臺), thereafter of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu sheng* 尚書省), in both cases under a Director. During the Six Dynasties period, the appointment of Left and Right Vice Directors (*shangshu zuo/you puye* 尚書左右僕射) became the norm practice (rank 2b in Tang and 1b in Song). During the Tang and Song, the post of director was usually vacant in deference to the fact that the Emperor Taizong once served as the Director of the Department of State Affairs. Thus, the Vice Directors were in fact joint heads of the Department. See Hucker 4836.

Shunyi gate,[1012] he suddenly encountered two ghosts, each riding a horse. They said to him, "The king ordered us to summon you." They said that they are living people, but Gao did not believe them; thus, he whipped his horse and eluded them.

The two ghosts also gave chase and caught him. They ordered him to ride along with them. When they reached the gate of Puguang Monastery, he waited as the two ghosts talked to each other: "Don't let him enter the monastery, if he enters the monastery, we might not be able to get him." Therefore, they went off [without entering the monastery]. Still holding on to Chun, they moved west and again reached Kaishan and Huichang monasteries,[1013] respectively. Again as before, they did not enter both monasteries.

Gao had an elder brother who left home to become a monk in Huadu Monastery;[1014] [thus] he expressed his desire to go there. When they reached the gate of the monastery, the ghosts again did not permit him to enter. Thus, they seized Chun, and the latter instead gave the ghosts a punch. This made

[1012] The Western Gate of the city of Chang'an, Tang capital.

[1013] I am not able to find any details about the Kaishan Monastery 開善寺 mentioned here that was also located in Chang'an city although there was at least one Kaishan Monastery in modern Jiangsu at the time when the event in the tale took place. Huichang Monastery 會昌寺 is located at the southwestern corner of the Jincheng Ward. Formerly, the residence of Sui dynasty official He Ruoyi 賀若誼, but it was converted to Huichang Monastery in the first year of the Wude era (618). Xu 1996: 205; *Tang huiyao* 48: 4.

[1014] The Huadu Monastery 化度寺 is located east of the South Gate of the Yining Ward along the Zhuque Street. In the third year of the Kiahuang era (583), the Sui Left Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs, Gao Ying 高熲 offered his residence as a monastery and named it Zhenji Monastery 真寂寺. Note that the protagonist Gao Chun is the grandson of Gao Ying. Therefore, it is also not surprising that Gao Chun's brother was a monk in a monastery established by his grandfather. In the second year of the Wude era (619), it was renamed as Huadu Monastery. Li 2006: 15, 3.

the ghosts very angry, and they dragged Chun down from the horse. As a result, Chun immediately passed out. [Just then,] a monk at the gate of the Monastery saw [Chun] fall off from the horse by himself, with no one by his side. He then carried [Chun] into his elder brother's room. After a night, he regained consciousness.

After regaining his consciousness, Chun personally related all that had happened. He said that he was being led to see King [Yama after he lost consciousness]. During the meeting, the king said, "This person came here without having expired." He then ordered to have Chun returned to life. Because Chun had previously defamed Buddhist monks, the king sent someone to cut his tongue. But his tongue grew a few *cun* [after being cut], and there was no injury at all. People asked him why his tongue grew and there was no injury on it. He answered, "Because I had previously recited the *Diamond Sutra*; that was why they could not damage it." After a night, it was over.

Later again, he moved his hand toward his mouth as if swallowing something. After a while, a red line appeared below his collar, which then flowed into his stomach. Thereafter, he became stiff and fell down, giving off a cry before he passed out. This happened four times daily. People asked him for the reason, and he replied that he was made to swallow iron balls because he had stolen and eaten the fruits of a monastery when he was small. All these came to an end after twenty days. After that, he practiced [Buddhism], and until now, he did not drink alcohol or eat meat. (Yuling personally heard this when he was at the capital to take the imperial examinations.)

JYJ57: Old Monk of Shibi Monastery 石壁寺老僧[1015]

[Lang Yuling's *Mingbao shiyi*] also states: In Shibi Monastery in Bingzhou (modern Taiyuan, Shaanxi; known as Taiyuan in the Tang), there was an old monk who was assiduous in his religious practice and made meditation and recitation his vocation. At the end of the Zhenguan era (627–649), a pigeon nested on top of the pillar of his lodging and was rearing two chicks. Whenever the monk had extra food, he would go up to the nest to feed them. Although the pigeon chicks gradually grew, their wings were not formed completely when they both attempted to fly. They therefore fell onto the floor and died. The monk collected and buried both of them.

Ten days later, the monk suddenly dreamed of the two little chicks at night. They said to him, "Because of some previous wrongdoings, we were reborn in the bodies of pigeons. Since birth, we had heard the dharma master recite the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Diamond Sutra*. Because we had heard this wonderful dharma, we will receive human bodies in our next lives. We are now in a family in a village more than ten *li* from this monastery. We will be reincarnated as males and will be born in ten months' time."

When the time came, the monk then went visit the family. When he reached the village, he discovered that a woman in the family had given birth to twins, and was having a vegetarian feast to celebrate them having turned one-month old. The monk called them "pigeon chicks" and both infants responded with acknowledgements. Later, after a year, they both began to

[1015] X87.1629: 462b17–c2. Also: FYZL15.

speak. (Jia Zhizhong, previously Bingzhou's Erudite[1016] who served as Revenue Manager[1017] in Xizhou (modern Linfen, Shaanxi) told this story to Yuling. When Yuling visited Bingzhou later, it was claimed to be an actual event there as well.)

JYJ58: Yu Chang 于昶[1018]

In the past, Yu Chang, adjutant of Qingzhou (modern Qingyang, Gansu), served as an office manager[1019] in Jingfu (modern Jingzhou, Hebei; superprefecture). Every day after the first watch, he would gasp for breath and became weak and exhausted. His whole body would break out in sweat. By daybreak when the rooster started to crow, he would have no more of those afflictions. He just felt frail physically and distressed mentally. People around him thought it strange and asked what was happening to him. He remained tight-lipped and did not reply to them. His wife Madam Liu asked to call for the physician, [but] he did not allow her to do so. His wife therefore secretly

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[1016] An Erudite (*boshi* 博士) is a learned court official of special, broad skill and extensive knowledge about the past and present. According to Hucker (4746), the Erudite, throughout imperial history, is a member of the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichang* 太常). He was ranked 6, 7b1 in the Tang. Since Jia Zhizhong is mentioned as an Erudite of Bingzhou, he was probably an Erudite in a school in Bingzhou. The practice of appointing Erudites in schools at Region/Prefecture and Commandery levels resumed in limited ways at the Prefecture during the Tang.

[1017] According Hucker (5643), the Revenue Manager (*shihu* 司戶) is a prefix commonly attached to the titles of Administrators (*canjun shi* 參軍事) and lesser personnel of Revenue Sections (*hucao* 户曹) in units of territorial administration.

[1018] X87.1629: 462c3–22. Also: TPGJ34.

[1019] *lushi* 錄事. Hucker (3856) states that one or more of this post was found in many agencies, both in the central government and in units of local administration: sometimes ranked from 7a to 9b, sometimes unranked. The title was most extensively used in Tang-Song periods.

asked him about the reason. He replied, “I am not ill at all. It is just that I labored during the day to solve office matters, and at night I have to preside over underworld matters. That’s all!” His wife therefore inquired about underworld matters, but he just said, “Good and bad retributions are all like shadows and echoes.” He said no more than that. When his wife probed further, but he did not answer anymore. However, whenever some things were about to happen, he would know all of them beforehand. He was actually primed by hidden forces. Still he did not explicitly talk to them. He did not disclose those things even to his siblings, wife, and children. Every five or six years, he would feel those grueling afflictions.

Later, when he was mourning his wife, Lady Longcheng[?], he recited the *Diamond Sutra*, and as such, he no longer served as an underworld official. Thus, his maxim was: “Among all the sutras, this sutra is supreme in terms of its meritorious powers.” Thereupon, he ordered his children and grandchildren to uphold and recite the sutra. Before his official career came to an end, he claimed to be ill [and requested to retire] to return to the field. At that time, the Left Minister Su Liangsi,[1020] Right Minister Wei Daijia,[1021] and Great General Li Chongxuan were intimately related to him by marriage. They had tried to invite him to rejoin government service. [But] he firmly rejected [their offers].

[1020] Su Liangsi 蘇良嗣 (606–690), formally the Duke of Wen 溫公, was an official of the Tang dynasty, serving as chancellor during the first reign of Emperor Ruizong 唐睿宗 (662–716). *Jiu Tang shu* 75, *Xin Tang shu* 103, *Zizhi tongjian* 203, 204.

[1021] Wei Daijia 韋待價 (d. 689?) was a general and official of the Tang dynasty, serving as chancellor during the first reign of Emperor Ruizong.

At that time, treacherous officials were in power, and many officials were being framed. Although Yu Chang had retired to the field in the hills, he was subsequently framed by the evil officials because of his relationship with other influential officials to whom he was related by marriage. Despite frequent stays in the prison, still he had no anxieties or worries, and day and night he would recite and read [the *Diamond Sutra*]. He never stopped doing so. Within a few days, he would, as expected, be acquitted. The other prisoners all imitated him. [Their cases] could not each be recounted. People within and outside the court were astonished; they all gasped [in admiration] and thought it strange.

When he was eighty-four years old, he unexpectedly fell sick. When he was on the verge of dying, still he recited the sutra without stopping. On the day when they placed cotton in his nostrils and mouth, his facial expression was cheery. In a while, there was a delightful fragrance that filled the whole room. Such misty fragrance had never before been detected in previous generations. Yu Chang himself said that there were transformed beings[1022] who came to welcome him and he would go to the pure realm in the west. He then bade farewell to his close ones and relatives, and after doing so, he expired. (Personally related by his grandson, Yu Ni, Defender of Qi District in Zizhou.)

[1022] The transformed beings (Ch. *huaren* 化人; Sk. *nirmitaka*) here refers to beings who manifest themselves through supernatural powers. Usually, they are Buddhas, bodhisattvas or other deities or beings who manifest themselves in forms according to the purpose of their appearance. One of the five types of beings preaches the Dharma; the others are the Buddha, his disciples, immortals, and heavenly beings. *Dazhidu lun* 2, T25.1509: 66b5–6.

JYJ59: Wei Xun 魏恂[1023]

During the reign of [Tang Emperor] Zhongzong (r. 684, 705-710), someone died in the capital and revived after a few days. He related that he was being interrogated by an underworld official. In a moment came a summoner whom the underworld official blamed for failing to summon someone he was tasked to do so. When the underworld official was about to cane the summoner, the latter protested and complained, "General Wei Xun has received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra* and has always recited it without stopping. The protective deities have safeguarded him and surrounded him on all sides. There was no way I could get him, and I really did not let him off." The underworld official thereupon had the testimony of the summoner checked, and it was as the summoner said. As a result, they gave up summoning Wei Xun and praised him unanimously.

Wei Xun was a native of Julu (in modern Xingtai, Hebei). His father had esteemed virtue, and was clean-handed and frugal. He enjoyed learning tirelessly and was especially accomplished in the explication of the classics and also the recitation and upholding of this sutra (i.e., *Diamond Sutra*). During the Tianshou era (690–692), he ended his career as Mentor of the Left Secretariat of the Heir Apparent.[1024] His son Xun inherited his father's work by entering government service and took up the post of administrator at

[1023] X87.1629: 462c23–463a11. Also: GDJ17, and TPGJ53.

[1024] *zuo shuzi* 左庶子. In the Han, the *taizi shuzi* 太子庶子 was a mentoring official in the crown prince's entourage. In the Tang, they are known as *zuo* (left) and *you* (right) *shuzi*, the heads of one of the two (Left and Right) Secretariats of Heir Apparent (*zuoyou chunfang* 左右春坊—also known as Spring Offices) in charge of crown prince affairs.

Bozhuo (modern Liaocheng, Shandong). It was at this time that the Prince of Langya rebelled and when Liu Shou feigned as the Vice Commandant and ordered [his troops] to resist the government army. Xun was loyal to the imperial house and was roused to action, as he turned his back on betrayal and submitted to imperial authority. He hid in the day and traveled by night. By not resorting to well-trodden roads, he thereupon managed to reach the capital. On the day the emperor summoned and had an audience with [Xun], he was bestowed a fifth grade ranking, and the former adjutant of Bozhou was dismissed [from his post]. [The emperor] then ordered [Xun] to attack and suppress Bozhou.

[Later,] he was summoned into the palace and transferred to become the Chief Steward of the Clothing Service[1025]. By imperial order, he often went to different parts of the empire and continually put into practice his literary and martial skills.

At the beginning of the Shenglong era (705–707), he was promoted three more grades and appointed the General-in-Chief of the Right Palace Gate Guard[1026] and [later] left that post as Prefect of Muzhou (modern Hangzhou, Zhejiang). Having failed in some official matters, he was [later] demoted to

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[1025] *shangyi fengyu* 尚衣奉御. According to Hucker (5004), from the Tang to the Yuan, the Clothing Service (*shangyi ju* 尚衣局), one of the six services (*ju* 局), was in charge of the clothing and other items required by the Emperor for his public appearances. During the Tang and Song periods, it was headed by two Chief Stewards (*fengyu* 奉御), rank 5a or 5b.

[1026] *you jianmen jiangjun* 右監門將軍. The Palace Gate Guard (*jianmen wei* 監門衛) is one of the units in the group of Sixteen Guards (*shiliu wei* 十六衛), which was in charge of the defense of the imperial palace, especially for monitoring the comings and goings of authorized personnel and commodities. There are two of them (Left and Right), each headed by a General-in-Chief (*da jiangjun* 大將軍), rank 3a1 in Tang. See Hucker 847.

Administrative Aide[1027] of Xuzhou (modern Xuzhou, Jiangsu). (Related by Zheng Shugou, Manager of Requisitioned Labor[1028] of Zizhou)

JYJ60: Zhang Xuansu 張玄素[1029]

Zhang Xuansu, District Magistrate of Huangmei District in Qizhou (modern Huangang, Hubei), had already begun receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra* when he was twenty. Every time when there was a catastrophe or someone fell ill at home, straightaway he would wholeheartedly pray, and there would then be propitious assistance and numinous interventions, and everything would go well. When he was more than seventy, he contracted an illness in the former city settlement more than ten *li* east of the city of Luoyang. When he was about to die, he saw fragrant flowers and [beings with] banners and parasols coming down from the sky. Happily, he put his palms together. He then took a bath and dressed up. Everyone in his family detected a fragrance that did not dissipate for several days. (Related by Liu Jun, former magistrate of Tongquan district, Zizhou [modern Suining, Sichuan])

[1027] The *biejia* 別駕 (Hucker 4623) are administrative aide to the heads of regions (*zhou*) and commanderies (*jun*). In Tang and Song periods, they are administrative aides in prefectures (*zhou*). They rank 4b2, 5a2, and 5a1 in Tang.

[1028] *sishi* 司士. During Tang-Song, the Manager of Requisitioner Labor (Hucker 5761) is prefixed to the titles of Administrators (*canjun shi*) and lesser personnel of Levied Service (*shicao* 士曹) in units of territorial administration.

[1029] X87.1629: 463a12–6. Also: TPGJ32.

JYJ61: Xue Yan 薛嚴[1030]

Xue Yan, Adjutant of Ezhou (modern Wuhan, Hubei), had received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra* with pure faith and steadfastness. By the time he passed away, he was more than seventy years old. [At that time,] there were beings who rode in the air to welcome him with banners and parasols, and music. His wife saw him leaving with the beings with banners and parasols. Confined to the bed due to illness, he was in extremis. From afar, his wife called out to him in the air. He floated as if riding on the clouds and gradually went further and further up. The [accompanying] fragrance did not evanesce, and everyone in his family detected it. Soon after that, he passed away. This is also an inconceivable matter. (Like the previous account, this is also related by Liu Jun.)

JYJ62: Yao Dai 姚待[1031]

Yao Dai, a native of Qi District in Zizhou, [had always] recited the *Diamond Sutra*. When he was mourning for his deceased parents in the fourth year of the Chang'an era (704), he vowed to personally copy the four great sutras: one set each of the *Lotus* [*Sutra*] and the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, ten rolls of the *Sutra of the Master of Medicine,* and a hundred rolls of the *Diamond Sutra*. When he had finished copying the other sutras, and had copied [up to] fourteen rolls of the *Diamond Sutra*, a deer entered [his room] by pushing

[1030] X87.1629: 463a17–21. Also: TPGJ63.

[1031] X87.1629: 463a22–464a5. Also: TPGJ39.

open the door at noon [one day]. It went before the seat, and raised its head to lick the table. After licking the table, it then lay below the seat. There were five or six dogs in the house. Upon seeing the deer, they wagged their tails and did not dare to bark. Yao Dai got down from his seat and embraced it, and it was not even afraid. [When Yao Dai] received the three refuges[1032] on its behalf, it pranced around [and then] bowed (lit. bent its limbs). When released, it did not run off.

During the Xiantian era (712–713), the sutras were all completely copied. All of them were wrapped up and were about to be encased when Li Huinu, a butcher suddenly came [to Yao Dai] for no reason. He stood before the table and pointed at the sutras and smiled. [Then] he put his palms together and stood there, [indicating that] he wanted to have a sutra. The butcher was mute and deaf, and both his eyes were red. He indulged in alcohol and was a nasty guy. There were few such people. The sutras that were copied had rollers installed with lapis lazuli, except for the *Diamond Sutra* copies that were furnished with plain sandalwood. However, he selected [one with] a plain roller. This indicated that he had some form of karmic connection with the *Prajñā*. Dai thereupon wrapped it with white paper and encased it in a lacquered case. The knife held in the butcher's hand was placed horizontally on top of the sutra case. The butcher smiled and sped off. Once he left, he never appeared again, and [no one] knew where he went.

[1032] The three refuges (Ch. *sangui* 三歸; Sk. *triśaraṇa*, or *śaraṇa-gamana*) are three "surrenders" or "entrustments" to the Three Treasures of Buddhism (*sanbao* 三寶), that is, the Buddha (*fo* 佛), the Dharma (*fa* 法), and the Saṅgha (*seng* 僧).

In the fourth year of the Kaiyuan era (716), Zhu Fayin, an old wise and dignified daoist priest of the Xuanzong Temple, went to Meizhou (modern Meishan, Sichuan; commandery-level) to lecture. He returned after a period of a year. At that time, along with more than twenty academicians in his hometown, [Yao Dai] made a courteous call on him. Their friend Wang Zhao and Cao Fu ordered a houseboy to kill a sheep and use a bag to contain its meat. After the meat was cooked, [even though Dai] knew in his heart about the kill, he could not resist his hunger and ate it. It was estimated that he ate not more than four or five slices of meat. After one day, at sunset, suddenly his stomach became hot and his head painful, and his limbs felt like were they were being dissected at their joints.

By dusk, he was completely consumed by serious illness. He heard voices calling “Yao Dai” from outside the gate. Although in his heart he did not want to go out to take a look, unconsciously his body had already gone out. Dai asked what was the matter. The emissary, who was clad in yellow, seemed like a prefect holding a knife. When the calling and conversation ended, they then set off. There was a creek outside the gate of Dai’s residence. [However,] he did not see the creek when he was setting off but saw a broad leveled road lined with trees on both sides.

After traveling for at least three or four *li*, he saw a big city that was called Zizhou city. There were imposing buildings on both sides of the road that had white walls and vermillion pillars; they were all very beautiful. Dai then asked the emissary whether that was not Zizhou city, [but] the emissary

did not utter a word. The city had five layers of gate, each with gate-houses on both sides. Their doors faced each other, and there were inscriptions on every door in what might seem to be the seal script. He did not recognize those words. Although there were many gates, none had keepers, and all the streets and alleys were also without people. The emissary [and Dai] entered the five layers of gates and came to a big hall with tall structures lining the corridor. Both the hall and doors were not guarded by anyone. When they were outside the screen wall, he spied a person inside the hall. The person was clad in purple, and he was a quite huge in build, with handsome features, and seemed to be below thirty years of age. The emissary reported to him, "Yao Dai has been brought here."

Dai entered [the hall] and paid his respect [to the person] from a distance. With angry eyes and a strict voice, the person said, "For what reason did you corral so many people and kill them in a pristine place and eat them?" [Dai] thought about it but did not know what it was all about. Just by seeing the person's anger and the fieriness in both his eyes and mouth, [Dai] panicked and was frightened. Not knowing how to make amends, he then explained himself, "I have always only uphold the sutra and have never killed anyone; moreover I did not eat human flesh." The person then asked, "What sutra do you uphold?" He replied, "I uphold the *Diamond Sutra*." Having heard Yao Dai say that, the person was delighted and smiled. To hear the name [of the sutra] was a great auspicious [matter].

Suddenly [he noticed that] there was a person beside him who was clad in yellow. One could not see his limbs, [but] he [seemed to be] holding something that resembled a drum stick about two *chi* in length and a total of eight *ji*. That person spoke in a high pitch, "Why did you eat meat in Priest Zhu's room?" [Hearing that,] he no longer dared to cover up anymore and admitted to actually eating [meat]. He was asked how much he ate, and he replied that he had eaten five or six slices of meat. The person clad in purple turned and looked back at the person clad in yellow. That person said, "He ate four *liang* and eight *zhu*."[1033] Then, he shoved his book and brush into his ears, and from a distance, one could hear him saying, "The matter is not due to his original intention; release him for the time being and let him go. Let's wait until the day when Cao Fu comes, and we will interrogate him further."

The person who was clad in purple said, "[Go to] the Buddha hall of the Dayun Monastery, and quickly cultivate [merit] and seek relief in [spiritual] attainment there!" Dai responded affirmatively and walked out for probably five or six paces [when he saw] someone in the western corner of the hall who was in a cangue and handcuffs, and four nailed metal plates. They wanted to inquire of Yao Dai about this person in the hall. They called Yao Dai. The personnel evaluation official on duty returned, [but] he did not address Dai's name. [When Yao Dai took a closer] look at the person in cangue, he was actually the butcher, Li Huinu. The person clad in purple asked, "Is it true that this person (Li Huinu) read the *Diamond Sutra*?" [Yao Dai] replied, "It's true."

[1033] The *liang* 兩 (tael or Chinese ounce) is a unit of measurement probably weighting about fifty grams or less. The *zhu* 銖 is one twenty-fourth of a *liang*.

After having answered, Dai looked back, but he only saw an empty cangue on the floor but did not see the butcher.

When Dai first entered [the place], he did not see anyone on guard in front of the hall and the gates. But when he was leaving the place, he saw a few thousand people on both sides of the hall. They were clad in vermillion, purple, yellow, and green, and were standing in their respective positions. There were also many women among them. Some were shouldering cangues and bearing shackles, while others had their hands tied behind their backs. There were also some people with muzzles on their mouths. Then, from among the multitude, Dai spotted the father of his son/daughter-in-law Zhang Kai who was also among them. Although he had a small cangue without metal plates, he kowtowed [and pleaded] to be sent home to produce sutras. [However,] he could not speak much, as he was shoved forward by someone who restrained him and did not allow him [to plead].

Among them, there was someone with a broken waist and an exposed head. He told Dai to quickly go away, and that that was not the place to talk. Dai looked back and saw that the person was actually Zhang Xian, a fellow villager who lived beside Dai's hamlet. He had been ill for many years, suffering from a condition in which he could not consume fluid through his mouth. People from his hometown who saw him all thought that his was a matter of definite death. His wife, children, and relatives had all prepared a coffin [for him]. [Later,] after Yao Dai regained consciousness, he told Zhang

Xian's children to copy the [*Diamond*] *Sutra* for him, and within ten days, his condition improved, and he was released [from the underworld].

When Yao Dai came outside the screen wall, there were people at all the gates who solemnly lined up in place holding knifes, spears, bows, and arrows. The gatekeeper did not let Dai out. Dai's father came from the eastern part of the hall and called out, "My son was not involved in anything and has obtained release. Why do you block his way and not release him?" The gatekeeper ordered Dai to extend his arms to show him. He then had Dai roll up his sleeves to reveal his arms. Having shown the gatekeeper, Dai was then able to get out. One day had already passed when he regained consciousness.

JYJ63: Yang Jian 楊簡[1034]

There was a certain Yang Jian who was a native of Tongquan District in Zizhou (modern Suining, Sichuan). He thoroughly comprehended the *Laṇkāvatāra Sutra*, and often lectured it in Shu (geographical region which includes modern Sichuan and its surrounding area). He had also always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Once, he was traveling in Feiwu (modern Deyang, Sichuan) when the day was turning dark. There were many fierce beasts on the road, and everyone was afraid of them. As Jian recited the sutra in his mouth, his legs were taking quick steps. He encountered a clairvoyant who [initially] thought it strange that ghosts were fleeing away as if they were fearful of something. Later, when he saw that Yang Jian was reciting the sutra as he

[1034] X87.1629: 464a6–10.

traveled, [he realized that] the ghosts were panic-stricken due to the power of the sutra. He thus knew that wherever it (*Diamond Sutra*) was being "preached," that place was protected by the Buddhas.

JYJ64: Li Qiuyi 李丘一[1035]

Li Qiuyi, District Defender of Gaoyou District in Yangzhou, passed away on the twenty-ninth day of the second month in the first year of the Wansui tongtian era (696). He died of a serious illness. Initially, when he died, two persons came to summon him. [One of them] said, "My family name is Duan." He did not mention his personal name but told him directly that King [Yama] had summoned him and would not allow him to stay any longer. At that time, there were more than five hundred people who were also summoned. The males were all in cangues, and the females were all tied at the back. They were altogether being driven forward. Having traveled a few *li*, someone clad in red, riding a white horse and whose hands were holding bows and arrows, shouted in a high-pitched voice, "Qiuyi is difficult to summon; why not fetter him?"

Qiuyi then referred to emissary Duan, "My grandfather is of fifth grade ranking and is an official. It is not appropriate to fetter me." Before he finished speaking, suddenly his entire body was being fettered without him knowing the reason. He further traveled for more than ten *li* and saw ten great locust trees, and below each of them was a horse stable. He then asked emissary Duan, "What place is this?" [Emissary Duan] replied, "This is the place of the

[1035] X87.1629: 464a11–c15. Also: TPGJ33.

Great Deity of the Five Destinies,[1036] who records the situations in the human realm. We are resting the horses here."

When Qiuyi heard that, only then did he know that he had died. He was being goaded to move forward. Subsequently, they reached the gate to the king's place. He saw a person who was holding a case, and whose countenance was one of impatience. [That person] said to emissary Duan, "The king sent you to summon people; why are you so late?" Emissary Duan did not dare say anything further and then put Qiuyi in the charge of the case master and said, "This person's family name is Jiao, and his personal name is Ce. He is the original case master of you, mister; you may follow him to see the king."

Jiao Ce then led him to see the king. When the king saw Qiuyi came, he said angrily and reproachingly, "Li Shiyan gathered his relatives and tribes, and killed others. He took that for enjoyment and delight, and did not know regret and shame." What was being called "Shiyan" was actually Qiuyi's minor personal/courtesy name. In a moment, he saw animals that he had killed, and they all spoke in a human voice, "Now that you have summoned our foe here, we wonder if the great king could punish him for us."

[1036] The Great Deity of the Five Destinies (*wudao dashen* 五道大神) is also known as the General of the Five Destinies (*wudao jiangjun* 五道將軍) or the Underworld Official of the Five Destinies (*wudao mingguan* 五道冥官), an official in the retinue of the ten underworld kings. The *wudao jiangjun* is said to be an assistant to the Daoist god, the Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak (i.e., Mount Tai) (*Taishan dongyue dadi* 泰山東嶽大帝), who is the mountain god who is also in charge of overseeing the life and death of mortal beings on earth. See Ma 2000: 39–42. He later on became a deity in the retinue of the ten Kings of the underworld courts who assists in maintaining the records of life and death. By the time the scheme of the Ten Kings had gained currency, he was said to rule a particular court in the underworld. See Teiser 1988: 173. In the *Mingbao ji*, we find related figures, such as the spirit records of five paths (*lu wudao shen* 錄五道神).

Jiao then went forward and consulted the king, “Li Shiyan is not due to die yet. It is because those animals that were killed by him wanted to reincarnate somewhere quickly that they have him summoned and testified.” The king personally asked him, “For your entire life until now, what good deeds have you done? Did you recite and uphold the supreme and greatest sutra?” Qiuyi remembered that he did not make any merit while he was alive and had only hunted.[1037] Suddenly, he remembered that he had in the past produced one roll of the *Diamond Sutra*. Having heard that it was the *Diamond Sutra*, the king then got up and put his palms together and called Shiyan to ascend the steps. In the underworld, the *Prajñā Sutra* is called “The Supreme Sutra for [Cultivating] the Greatest Merit.”

[The king] said to the animals, “All of you, withdraw for a moment.” He then called forth Jiao Ce and permitted him to lead [Qiuyi] to the scriptorium to take a look and testify [what the latter said]. There was a place at the side of the king’s hall that seemed to be without boundary, and inside it was a hall that was adorned by the seven treasures. [Jiao Ce] ordered Qiuyi to go up to the hall and from among the sutras take a roll of sutra. [Qiuyi did so, and] when he opened it to take a look, it was indeed the sutra that he had copied. He further checked a piece of memorandum on inviting monastics where it mentioned that Qiuyi had copied the sutra. [Qiuyi] asked Chief Jiao, “When I was alive, I had repeatedly produce merit, why could it only be seen at two spots?” [Jiao replied,] “Mister, as an official, you illegally took bribes, and

[1037] The original reads: “唯放鷹犬。” This literally means “only release eagles and dogs.”

bullied and oppressed the poor and weak. That is not a clean thing. The merit that was cultivated will provide for the original cultivator, and it does not defy official matters."

He was led back to see the king who asked whether it was true that that was the sutra he had copied. [The king told him that he] could call forth the animals and [Qiuyi could] apologize to them with good words. [The king] however allowed Qiuyi to produce sutras for the animals. When the matter ended, the concerned parties did not stay there. In a short period, the slaughtered animals came before the king all at the same time. The king sent Qiuyi to produce the *Prajñā Sutra* for them. After he finished speaking, the animals altogether dispersed. The king said, "This merit will be without limits." The king said to Jiao Ce that he could immediately release Li to return home and not make him stay longer.

[Jiao Ce] sent him out of city gate and repeatedly held Qiuyi's hands [as he said], "Jiao Ce has done his best for you …." Qiuyi agreed to give Ce three hundred strings of cash: "I only have this much at home, if I have [more], I truly wouldn't dare to be stingy." Ce told Qiuyi, "Even if you gave me ten thousand strings, eventually it would be of no use. I beg mister to produce twenty sets of *Prajñā Sutra* for Ce." Qiuyi then immediately promised to do so. [Ce] also said, "Although Ce is an underworld official, I am undergoing extreme hardship. If I do not have meritorious help, it is difficult for me to reincarnate. Mister [please] conscientiously copy the sutra for me, and please do not hold back Ce's path for reincarnation."

They thereupon moved farther on, and Ce indicated a place [to Qiuyi] that looked down and saw that it was not only deep but also dark. [Qiuyi] refused to enter it. Ce pushed him down the dark pit. Alarmed and afraid, when Li opened his eyes, he was actually inside the coffin. He was trapped and could not speak for a long time. He heard cries of men and women. With a faint voice he uttered, "Do not cry. I am alive now."

Qiuyi's younger brother-in-law Dugu Yin, Administrator of Tingzhou (modern Nanjing, Jiangsu), knew that they were burying the coffin on the fourth day of the third month; therefore, he purposely came to see the burial. Although they heard voices [from inside the coffin], he did not allow [them] to open the coffin to take a look. He said that it could be the ghost of the resurrected corpse and also did not allow them to go near it. [Qiuyi's] sons and daughters did not heed their uncle's words, and they thereupon opened the coffin. Qiuyi could move his body feebly to get out of the coffin. For three days, he related all that happened in the underworld. By the eighth day of the third month, everyone in the household discarded their clothes and belongings and all their grain-money.[1038] They invited monks to intone the *Diamond Sutra* and produced a hundred rolls [of the *Diamond Sutra*] for all who held a grudge. Qiuyi was to copy twenty rolls [of the *Diamond Sutra*] for Chief Jiao but had not done so yet.

One night, someone knocked on the door and said that he was Jiao Ce. Qiuyi immediately ordered someone to reply him, "I am now copying [the

[1038] In addition to the salary Tang-period officials received, they are sometimes paid in terms of food or grain, and this is called grain-money (*liaoqian* 料錢).

sutra], and it is about to be completed. I definitely will not betray you. Why can't you bear [a little longer before] coming here again?" Ce said, "Please inform Aide Li that there is no other matter. Owing to the gentleman's producing the sutra for me, I have already been released for reincarnation. That's why I have come to bid you farewell."

Xue Haiyuan, Senior Subaltern[1039] of Yangzhou (modern Yangzhou, Jiangsu) knew that Qiuyi revived [after death]. He called upon Li to inquire about underworld matters, and recorded them and sent a memorial to inform the emperor. By virtue of the emperor's kindness, he was promoted in rank and bestowed the fifth grade. He was sent to Jiazhou (modern Leshan, Sichuan) to take up the post of mounted courier.[1040] It was hot while he was passing by Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan), [so] he stopped by Yao Dai's pavilion to cool down. He personally related the incident to Dai and also left a handwritten copy [of the *Diamond Sutra*].

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Praise: Hail to the Great Sage, in whom the wondrous wisdom inheres. Without a [discursive] mind, there is response; without [discursive] thought, it penetrates. It is not exhausted by the existent, nor does it abide in emptiness. Whatever one might think and deliberate, there will be attainment and merit.

[1039] According to Hucker (153), *changli* 長吏 is a generic term for higher-ranking subofficial functionaries (*li* 吏). However, the term may also be used to refer to equivalent senior officials.

[1040] This is a tentative translation since the original text might be corrupted. The original reads: "遣於嘉州道招尉[招討?]乘驛。"

Section 6: Response to Sincerity (Foreword with ten accounts)[1041]

In the past, Duke Jing of Song (517–472 BCE) caused the star to change its position,[1042] Duke Luyang (d.u.) reversed the course of the sun,[1043] Meng Zong (d. 271) pulled out bamboo shoots in the beginning of winter,[1044] Liu Yin (fl. ca. 300) picked violets in the season of frost.[1045] Clouds already gathered

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[1041] There are actually eight accounts.

[1042] This refers to a story about Duke Jing of Song 宋景公 during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), which first appeared in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (The Annals of Mr Lü [Buwei]). Once, the Duke came to know that Mars was Heart in the zodiacal constellation, the astronomical equivalent of the earthly realm of Song. Because this was an inauspicious portent signaling an impending disaster, the duke summoned his astrologer to discuss the ways to avert the disaster. The duke was offered three solutions (to transfer the baleful influence to (1) his ministers, (2) the common people, and (3) his crops, all of which he rejected. The duke's humaneness and selfless stance to bear the brunt of the disaster was said to cause Mars to change its position by moving through three constellations, thus helping the duke avert the disaster. See Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 165-66. The account is also recorded in Major, et al., 2010: 215.

[1043] Duke Luyang 魯陽公 was "a vassal of the state of Chu 楚, the grandson of King Ping of Chu (r. 528–516 BCE) and son of Master of Horse Ziqi." This refers to a legend about the duke in roll 6 of the *Huainan zi*: When the duke's battle with the state of Han was becoming more intense as dusk draws near, he "raised his halberd and waved it, and the sun reverse [its course] for him by three lunar lodges." Major, et al., 2010: 215.

[1044] This refers to a story about Meng Zong 孟宗, an official of the Three Kingdom period (220–280), who fulfilled his mother's wish to eat bamboo shoots when they were not available at a time when winter was coming. It is said after lamenting in a bamboo grove, bamboo shoots sprouted from the ground. This tale was cited from *Chuguo xianxian zhuan* 楚國先賢傳 (Biographies of Former Worthies of the State of Chu) in *Sanguo zhi* (Accounts of the Three Kingdoms), 48.1169. This account is mentioned in Knapp 2005: 94. Later literature, such as *Ershisi xiao* 二十四孝 (Twenty-Four Filial Examples) added details saying that his mother was sick and the bamboo shoots broke out of the ground because his cry moved the heavens. See for example, DuBois 2011: 48.

[1045] This refers to an account about Liu Yin, an exemplar of filial piety from the Jin 晉 period (265–420). In the midst of winter, his great grandmother did not eat her fill for ten days, as she wanted to eat violets (also known as *jinjin cai*; viola verecunda), a plant not available in winter. When Liu Yin came to know about it, he was very upset that he could not provide her with what she wanted and searched for the plant in the cold. He called out to the Emperor of Heaven and the Lord of the Earth to take pity on him, and after doing so, a voice told him to stop crying. He then saw violets growing on the ground, which he took some for his great grandmother. See Knapp in Chan and Tan 2004: 51 (account translated therein). The original account is found in *Jinshu* 88: 2288. The moral of the story is one about filial piety and how it could elicit a response from heaven and earth. As Knapp has pointed out, the

before Zhuliang could finish his words;[1046] rain moistened wherever Jingshan's carriage traveled.[1047] It thus goes without saying that there will definitely be a response to sincerity when there is no [discursive] feeling and no [discursive] mind; without [unwholesome] action and [yearning for personal] gain, stimulus will penetrate. [With] the compassion of practicing non-attachment, profound benevolence is in harmony everywhere; [with] the wisdom of guiding the ignorant, the sagely and virtuous preside over the remote realms. Virtues that do not extend far are inadequate; how could they only extend to the three realms? Brightness without darkness is not illuminating; it is not limited to the ten directions.[1048] Thus, I continue and end this collection with a section on "Responses to Sincerity" [brought forth by the *Diamond Sutra*].

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search for food that is difficult to obtain by filial offspring in difficult situations is a common motif in Chinese literature related to filial piety. Knapp 2004: 50.

[1046] Although we find the Liliang 礼良 provided in the *Xuzangjing* text of the *Jiyan ji*, this is probably a scribal error. The person most probably referred to in this preface is Zhu Liang 祝良 (fl. ca 120–140) (also known as Shaoqing 邵卿 or Shaoping 邵平), a government official of the Later Han. Intelligent and learned, he was said to be honest and fair, and was known for his military ability. The *Hou Han shu* mentioned an episode in which he prayed for rain during a period of drought when the emperor's prayer proved to be unsuccessful. It was said that Zhu Liang exposed himself to the fierce sun and asked to take all punishment upon himself. Within a few hours, clouds had gathered and good rain fell. See *Hou Han shu* 6: 268; 86/76: 2837–39, 51/41: 1691. de Crespigny 2007: 1163.

[1047] Jingshan 景山 (or Jishan 季山) here refers to Boli Song 百里嵩 (d.u), an official of the latter Han. There was a *Hou Han shu* account of him that mentions that during a period of drought, wherever he went rain fell; thus, he was able to alleviate the suffering caused by the drought in various places. de Crespigny 2007: 27.

[1048] The ten directions are the nadir, zenith, and the eight points of the compass.

JYJ65: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[1049]

The secular family name of the monk Qingxu of Huiyi Monastery[1050] in Zizhou is Tang. In the sixth month of the first year of the Shengli era (698), there happened to be a severe drought in Yuzhou (modern Zhumadian, Henan). Officials and the common people prayed [for rain] to no avail. The people were in a state of anxiety, and none of them knew what the future held. The monk entered the meditation cloister and before the Buddha [statue], he supplicated wholeheartedly: "I pray that all Buddhas would be greatly compassionate and dragon kings gladdened to grant us sweet rain and give relief to the people. By noon tomorrow, I, your disciple, will recite the *Diamond Sutra* for the dragon kings a hundred times. I pray that at noon, you will quickly rain down sweet rain." By noon the next day, when his recitation of the sutra had ended, rain poured down from heaven. The aqueducts were overflowed; plains and lowlands were widely moistened. There was an abundance of nourished marshes. Such is the proof of the efficacy [of the *Diamond Sutra*].

JYJ66: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[1051]

In the fifth month of the second year of the Shengli era (699), Qingxu was having his summer retreat in Changle Monastery 常樂寺 in Mount

[1049] X87.1629: 464c23–465a5.

[1050] Huiyi si 慧義寺 is also written as 惠義寺. See JYJ42.

[1051] X87.1629: 465a6–11.

Changle, which was in Tongbai District, Tangzhou (modern Nanyang, Henan). There again, he encountered a drought. The five grains had withered. The aborigines beat the drums and burned the mountain in order to pray for rain. They pleaded for rain for ten days, but there was not the slightest response. Thereupon, they brought mud water into the monastery intending to pour it onto all the monks. The monk [Qingxu] said, "*Dānapatis*, do not soil and wet the masters and their disciples; your humble monk, I, will pray for rain for *dānapatis*. There will be sufficient rain by tomorrow." From noon of the twentieth day of the fifth month, he entered the ritual space to recite the *Prajñā Sutra*. By noon the next day, rain descended from the sky. In a while, it was already sufficient. All places, high and low, were widely moistened.

JYJ67: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[1052]

There happened to be a drought in the fifth month of the second year of Dazu (702?).[1053] By imperial order, [monk Qingxu] was dispatched to the prefectures and districts to pray for rain. Together with twenty monastics from the capital, he prayed [for rain], but they did not obtain even a drop of rain. The monk Qingxu thereupon went to Fengguo Monastery to see Master Fuli and discussed with the latter about praying for rain. Fuli, thereupon, asked the monk (i.e., Qingxu), "With what method do you intend to pray for rain?" [Qingxu] replied, "I intend to pray for rain by wholeheartedly reciting the

[1052] X87.1629: 465a12–b8.

[1053] This is probably a scribal error since the Dazu 大足 era during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian lasted barely a year (701).

mantra of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara and the *Diamond Sutra*. [Fuli] asked, "In how many days can you get sufficient rain?" [Qingxu] replied, "In three days and three nights, I will definitely get sufficient rain."

Fuli was piqued and said, "I will spare you seven days to pray for rain. If it does not rain in seven days, I will send you to be tied and hanged along with Xue Jichang,[1054] and make you a ghost by starving you to death." When the monk heard these words, impetus increased in his heart, and he replied to Fuli, "By noon tomorrow, rain fall will not be sufficient, yet. It must take a full three days before the rain is sufficient for all." The monk then entered the ritual space and recited wholeheartedly. By noon the next day, rain indeed fell at least four or five *cun*. But the weather changed, and it was becoming fair.

Fuli's disciple Yuanji said to Qingxu, "By tomorrow, it will be a full three days. Now there is no cloud to be seen within ten *li*, I wonder what Master will take as proof [of your spiritual prowess]." [Qingxu] replied, "There is no need to worry. The rain will definitely be sufficient in three days." By dusk the next day, there was still no cloud in the sky. Qingxu wholeheartedly and sincerely vowed. Afraid that his prayer would not even be slightly efficacious, he supplicated again to the great bodhisattvas, arhats, sagely monks, and all disciples of sagely monks of the ten directions: "Today, I single-mindedly pray for rain for all people. If by this evening the rain is still not enough, I, your disciple, will discard my life here for the sake of the people."

[1054] Xue Jichang: 薛季昶 (d. 706), a native of Longmen in Jiangzhou (modern Liancheng, Shanxi), was a government official during Empress Wu Zetian's reign. His biography can be found in *Jiu Tang shu* 185a.

Thereupon with utmost sincerity, he recited the *Diamond Sutra* wholeheartedly. When the second watch was coming to an end, the rain thereupon poured down. By daybreak, there was more than one *chi*. Within a circumference of five hundred *li*, the sweet rain was all sufficient. The mighty power [of the *Diamond Sutra*] was truly so awe-inspiring. From then onward, [whenever] he prayed for rain, he would go to Fengguo Monastery for his summer retreat. In the eleventh and twelfth months, there was no rain and snow at all. The *vinaya* Master Huaisheng again sent for Qingxu to pray for rain. [Qingxu] single-mindedly recited the *Diamond Sutra*, and on the third day, he owed it again to the heaven above for letting snow fall down. The proof of the efficacy [of the *Diamond Sutra*] is like this.

JYJ68: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[1055]

In the third year of the Chang'an era (703), Qingxu had his summer retreat at Wuzhen Monastery[1056] (modern Xi'an, Shaanxi). He finished the retreat on the twelfth day of the seventh month, and temporarily entered the city. He went to Zisheng Monastery[1057] and stayed there. On the first day of

[1055] X87.1629: 465b9–c3 (僧清虛)

[1056] Situated in the Zhongnan mountains, nine kilometers east of Liantian county, the origin of Wuzhen Monastery 悟真寺 may be traced to the works of monk Jingye 淨業 (a disciple of the famous monk, Huiyuan 慧遠 of the Jingying Monastery) during the Kaihuang era (581–600) of the Sui. It is also called the Zhulin Monastery 竹林寺. *Foguang da cidian* 1988: 4112.

[1057] Situated in the Chongren Ward 崇仁坊 in Chang'an city, this site for the Zisheng Monastery 資聖寺 was formerly the residence of Defender-in-Chief Zhangsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (594–659), the Duke of Zhao 趙公. It was established as a nunnery first for the posthumous well-being of his sister, Empress Wende 文德皇后 (601–636). In the fourth year of the Xianheng era (673), it was converted to a monastery. In the seventh month of the third year of

the eighth month, there was heavy rain that did not stop until the fifth day of the month. Rice and wheat quickly became expensive. Carriages and horses could not get through [the road]. The people were hard-pressed and anxious, as they did not know what to make of their livelihood.

On the fifth night, the monk forgot to sleep and eat. At dawn, he solemnly held the incense burner and thereupon entered the Buddha hall. He wanted to supplicate [before the Buddha?] and to recite the *Prajñā* in order to stop the rain. Several monks came to the hall to take a look, and they said to the monk, "Master, what do you intend to do?" [Qingxu replied,] "I want to recite the [*Diamond*] *Sutra* to stop the rain." The monks all said, "How could it be stopped by you? How arrogant and pretentious!" The monk replied, "This is indeed something that is difficult to believe. I will bet master two strings [of cash] against one string [that it will rain]." One after another, they put limits on the time [frame within which Qingxu was allowed to pray for rain, and decided that] he would not labor beyond dark. All the monks said, "If you could stop the rain by the time the day gets dark, we would gladly lose to you a string of cash.

Qingxu replied, "When I recite a full ten times, the rain will stop. When I recite fifteen times, I will then send the clouds high [into the sky]. When I recite twenty times, I will send the sun rising. When I finish twenty-five times, clouds in the four directions will disperse. When I recited thirty times, I will

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the Chang'an era (703), it was razed to the ground by fire. However, a few sutras were found intact, which was considered a marvelous event that attracted huge donations needed to rebuild the monastery. Li 2006: 41; *Tang huiyao* 48: 6; *Shaanxi tongzhi* 28: 33; Xu 1996: 86.

have gotten rid of all the clouds." Having heard those words, the monks were about to take away the monk's clothes and blanket, "Since he has spoken such lies, we will first take away the things he is going to owe us. Since he said such words, he is no longer capable of self-awareness."

The monk then entered the ritual space and recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Just when he finished reciting the *Diamond Sutra* ten times, the rain had stopped. By the fifteenth time, the clouds went high. By the twentieth time, the sun rose. Having seen these, the monks thought it a little unusual, and all were also astonished and startled. By the twenty-fifth time, the clouds in the four directions had dispersed completely all at once. All the monks lost their voice shouting together. By the thirtieth time, he had gotten rid of the clouds completely. The monks got up all at once and wanted to tie the monk (Qingxu), saying, "You must be the Sāgara dragon king.[1058] You could make the weather fair as well as make it rain." Among them, there was someone who explained why Qingxu succeeded, before] the anger and ridicule began to subside. How wonderful! The mighty powers of the *Prajñā* cannot be described by words. Fools who heard of the way definitely would laugh at the matter.

[1058] The *suojieluo longwang* 娑竭[羅]龍王 (Sk. *sāgara-nāga-rāja*) is one of the eight great dragon kings of the ocean. His name is derived from the ocean he presides over. He is particularly associated with rainfall and has been the object of worship for praying for rainfall. He is also said to be one among the twenty-eight-member retinue of the thousand-arm Avalokiteśvara. His body is red and white in color; his left hand holds a red dragon, while his right hand a saber. His daughter is the famed eight-year-old who appears in the *Lotus Sutra*. See the *Longwang jing* 海龍王經, *Fo wei longwang suoshuo fayin jing* 佛為海龍王說法印經, *Fo wei suoqieluo longwang suoshuo dasheng jing* 佛為娑伽羅龍王所說大乘經 and others are considered Buddhist teachings expounded for the dragon king. See *Chang ahan jing* 19 (On Dragons and Birds), *Qishi jing* 5, *Fahua wenju* 2b, and *Huayan jingshu* 5.

JYJ69: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[1059]

In the tenth month of the third year of the Chang'an era (703) the Empress (i.e., Wu Zetian) came to [Luoyang].[1060] At the end of the eleventh month, Qingxu went to Zhongxiang Monastery[1061] and stayed there. From the tenth month to [the eleventh][1062] month, there was no snow. The monks of Zhongxiang Monastery requested Qingxu to pray for snow. The monk then entered the ritual space and single-mindedly recited the *Diamond Sutra*. He set a three-day limit to [obtain] sufficient snow. When he had recited for a full three-day period, it snowed [heavily] for one day and one night. Far and near, everyone had sufficient snow. This is again a proof of the efficacy of the *Prajñā* sutra.

[1059] X87.1629: 465c4–8.

[1060] Two characters most probably referring to name of the place is missing in the text, but based on Qingxu's location, we may infer that the emperor went to a palace in Luoyang. See note below.

[1061] Although there is also a Zhongxiang Monastery 眾香寺 in Fenzhou 汾州 (modern Liancheng, Shanxi), we are not certain whether it existed at the time of this account. However, we have more information about the Zhongxiang Monastery located in the Ningren Ward 寧仁坊 of Luoyang city (modern Luoyang, Henan). It was established in the seventh year of the Zhenguan era (633) and was renamed Zhongxing Monastery 中興寺 in the first year of the Shenlong era (705). *Tang Huiyao* 48: 7; Li 2006: 61. Unless the emperor is said to go to a particular place for a certain purpose, there is no reason to think that he went to Shanxi. Thus, it is more reasonable to assume that he went to the eastern capital in Luoyang, where Qingxu was at that time.

[1062] There are four missing characters in the text. We may infer that it did not snow until the eleventh month when Qingxu, who stayed in the Zhongxiang Monastery until the end of the same month, prayed for snow when he was still in residence in the Monastery.

JYJ70: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[1063]

In the eleventh month of the fourth year of the Chang'an era (704), Duke Benping presented a memorial to have Qingxu enter the inner palace to recite [sutras] for the Great Sagely Heavenly Empress[1064] who had contracted illness of the wind. The Empress asked him, "Master, are you a resident monastery monk or an itinerant monk?" Thereupon, he replied, "I am a resident monastery monk." The princess and palace servant said to the monk, "Master, you have deceived Her Majesty; you greatly deserve a penalty. We will let master go out for the time being." The monk himself regretted his facile deed of answering the Empress wrongly. He then entered the ritual space. Having requested for a spot, he [sat down and] recited solely the *Diamond Sutra* for one day and one night. [While asleep,] he dreamed that he saw two monks going to the meditation cloister of the Zhongxiang Monastery, and asking the host, "Has Master Qingxu already established his reputation? Has his name been installed in the ritual section of the monastic register?"[1065] The host replied, "We would like to but have not yet done so." The monk said to Qingxu, "We will install master's name when the sun sets (*rixi* 日西)."

And in the tenth month of the third year of the Shenglong era (707), the emperor came to Chang'an. In the twelfth month, there was no rain or snow at

[1063] X87.1629: 465c9–20.

[1064] The Dasheng tianhou 大聖天后 is a posthumous title of Empress Wu Zetian used in the period 710–712. The use of this title indicates the account was told after the empress had passed away in 705.

[1065] The *cibu sengji* 祠部僧籍 is probably an alternative rendering of *gongzhang* 供帳 or *sengzhang* 僧帳, the Tang register, or census of monks and nuns, supplied to the government every three years.

all. Tripiṭaka Master and Ācārya Yangjun of Qizhou (modern Jinan, Shandong) presented a memorial for the monk to enter the inner palace to recite sutra for fourteen days. With accord to [the movement of] the heavenly stars (astronomical calculations?), the emperor[1066] thereupon sent for Qingxu and permitted him to choose whichever monastery he wished to reside in. What is meant by "when the sun sets" (*rixi*) refers to the empress' return to the west (*xigui*).[1067] There is no wish that does not come to fruition with the divine power of the *Prajñā*.

JYJ71: Monk Qingxu 僧清虛[1068]

Last year, the first year of the Shenglong era (705), Zhao Yanxi, Rectifier of Omissions of the Left,[1069] presented a memorial to send for Qingxu to enter the palace to pray for rain. Three nights after he entered [the palace], he was being deceived by an attendant monk.[1070] That monk [told

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[1066] This refers to Emperor Zhongzong 唐中宗 (656–710; r. 684, 705–710).

[1067] This is probably a euphemism referring to the passing away of Empress Wu. Indeed after she passed away, according to the account, he was invited to reside in whatever monastery he chose. This probably means that his name was installed or included in the monastic register by then; thus, the prophecy he received in his dream came true.

[1068] X87.1629: 465c21–a466a5. Note that there is no mention of the *Diamond Sutra*.

[1069] The *buque* 補闕 is a position instituted in the Tang. The holder of the position serves to remonstrate with the emperor and offer him advice should he deviate from time-honored tradition or regulations. He checks the documents issued by the emperor and proposes corrections if necessary. Four posts were set up in 685, two attached to the Chancellery (*menxia sheng* 門下省) and two to the Secretariat (*zhongshu sheng* 中書省); the two are prefixed Left and Right. Later, there were twelve *buque* divided equally between the Chancellery and the Secretariat. They ranked 7b1. See Hucker 4777.

[1070] Here, *gongfeng seng* 供奉僧 probably refers to the post of *nei gongfeng* 內供奉 (also known as *neigong* 內供, *gongfeng* 供奉), a title for the monk who resides and serves at the monastery in the imperial palace. First instituted in the first year of the Zhide era (756) by Emperor Xiaozong 唐肅宗 (r. 756–762) who installed the monk Yuanjiao 元皎 as attendant

him],[1071] "There is good spot up at the [?]cheng[1072] Hall where you can set up a ritual space." The monk did not understand, [but] he thereupon entered [...][1073] six monks let the master out of the place to pray [for rain]. Having gone out, he went to Wangchun Palace in the Zhongnan mountains, where there was a Maitreya Pavilion[1074] in which he would pray for rain.

Once he had entered the ritual space, the clouds gathered and then dispersed. By the third day, he felt extremely tired[1075] and thus went to the mountain stream to fetch some water to wash his face. As he laid down and closed his eyes, he saw [???][1076] who was holding a staff and hitting the monk's head saying, "Master, you came to the stream in order [to fetch water]; why are you laying on the ground? You should [try?] harder!"[1077] The monk (Qingxu) then got up[1078] and returned to the pavilion. Wholeheartedly, he recited the sutra and by sunset, clouds gathered from the four directions, and not more than a thought-moment, it then began to rain heavily. It rained straight until next morning, and [thus] the rain was sufficient for all.

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monk in the palace. See *Da Song seng shilüe* 大宋僧史略, T54.2126.250a5–20. But the mention of attendant monk in the palace here indicates that there were already such posts before the Zhide era.

[1071] One missing character in the text: "其僧□[=>曰]。"

[1072] One missing character in the text: "□城殿上，好安道場處。"

[1073] Three missing characters in the text: "遂即進□□□六僧放阿師出外祈請。"

[1074] One missing character in the text: "有□[=>座]彌勒閣。"

[1075] One missing character in the text: "□覺疲極。"

[1076] Three missing characters in the text: "見一給□□□把杖打其僧頭。"

[1077] One missing character in the text: "努力強□。"

[1078] One missing character in the text: "□[=>其]僧即起。"

JYJ72: Lü Wenzhan 呂文展[1079]

Lü Wenzhan, Vice Magistrate of Langzhong [District] in Langzhou (modern Nanchong, Sichuan) had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. [Having recited] more than thirty thousand times, [he received] proofs of the efficacy [of the *Diamond Sutra*], which were like divine [interventions]. About six or seven years ago, one of his teeth fell out for no reason. With deep sincerity, he vowed [to be more rigorous in his recitation]. His tooth then gradually grew back. Now it had begun to grow to more than half [the length of the original tooth]. On the second day of the fifth year of the Kaiyuan era (717), again another tooth fell out for no reason. As before, he vowed [to be more rigorous in his recitation], and his tooth thereupon further grew back again. To have one's teeth grow back when one is old, all these are also due to spiritual assistance.

In the third year of the Kaiyuan era (715), there was a severe drought in midsummer. The plants and trees were desiccated. Prefect Liu Yuan ordered him (Lü Wenzhan) to recite the *Diamond Sutra* one time with all his heart. Before he finished reciting, the marshes were soaked with rainwater. Far and near, everyone had sufficient water. In spring that year, prolonged raining impeded and caused damage to silk and wheat production. Administrative Aide Wei Yuezi again ordered Wenzhan to recite the sutra, and immediately the weather became fair.

[1079] X87.1629: 465a6–21. Also: TPGJ40.

In the seventh month of the fourth year of the Kaiyuan era (716), there was a severe drought in Dangzhou (modern Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan). Aide Liu Xiaozhong again ordered him to pray for rain. From *wushi* period (11am–1pm or noontime) until *shenshi* period (3–5pm), fine rain descended briefly. By the first night, the sky had cleared up. Then, in front of the courtyard, he wholeheartedly vowed to recite the *Prajñā* [*Sutra*] one [time].[1080] Before his recitation finished, the rain had moistened everywhere. People of high and low stations all had enough water.

The twenty[-second] day in the fifth year of the Kaiyuan era (717)[1081] happened to be a day of gloomy rain. On account of the fact that the next day would already be the twenty-third day, and if the rain did not [stop], it was feared that the sutra monastery [would be flooded].[1082] Prefect Liu Yuan thereupon ordered Wenzhan to recite the *Prajñā* [*Sutra*]. He wholeheartedly prayed for fair weather. He appealed to the [*Prajñā*] *Sutra*,[1083] and immediately it stopped raining. By the twenty-third day, the sky was very clear. Such is the power of the *Prajñā*; its response is like [spiritual intervention].

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[1080] There is one missing character in the text: 念誦般若一□[=>遍]。

[1081] One missing character in the text: "開元五年正月二十□[=>二]日。" Since the next day would be the twenty-third, the previous day should be the twenty-second.

[1082] There is at least one missing character in the text here: "若雨不□[=>停]□[=>，]恐經寺亢旱。" The two characters *kanghan* 亢旱, meaning severe drought, could be a scribal error given the fact that they have appeared several times by this point. Since it would have rained for two consecutive days, what was feared should be a flood (*fanlan* 氾濫) instead of a drought.

[1083] There are two missing characters in the text: "啟□□[=>般若]經。"

Praise: The origin of the path is the one dharma; its trace consists of three bodies.[1084] Its influence extends far, and its virtues are utterly true. Forget the mind and be sagely; think not discursively and be spiritual. Only with sincerity and earnestness does response match the stimulus.

Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji
Roll Three (end)

[1084] The three bodies (Ch. *sanshen* ; Sk. *trikāya*) here refer to threefold body or nature of a Buddha. They are as follows: (1) Dharma body (Sk. *dharmakāya*; Ch. *fashen* 法身), the result of the Buddha realization of reality; (2) Reward body (Sk. *sambhogakāya*; Ch. *baoshen* 報身), a body attained due to the Buddha's spiritual practice; and (3) Transformation body (Sk. *nirmāṇakāya*; Ch. *huashen* 化身), one which the Buddha manifests in accordance to the need to teach sentient beings.

Jin'gang jing jiuyi
金剛經鳩異
(Collected Marvels of the *Diamond Sutra*)[1085]

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Preface

In the seventh year of the Zhenyuan era (801), my late father [Duan Wenchang],[1086] responding to an appointment by Wei Gao, Prince of Nankang,[1087] entered Shu (modern Sichuan) from Jingzhou (modern Jingzhou, Hubei). In his old age, Wei, framed and implicated by the traitor Liu Pi (d. 806),[1088] was made the District Defender of Lingchi District (modern Jianyang, Sichuan). Soon after Wei died. The traitor Liu Pi became the Capital

[1085] Given the unreliability of punctuation in the *Xuzangjing* text (X87.1630), I have also referred to Fang Nansheng's (1981: 265–271) punctuated version of the *Jiuyi* in his edition of the *Youyang zazu*. In addition, I have also referred to Imamura Yoshio's Japanese translation (vol. 5.1981: 73–103). It is noteworthy that one major difference between the version collected in *Xuzangjing* and the *Youyang zazu* version is that accounts in the latter do not indicate the sources.

[1086] Duan Wenchang 段文昌 (773–835), courtesy name Moqing 墨卿, alternate name Jingchu 景初, formally the Duke of Zouping 鄒平公, was an official of the Tang dynasty serving as a chancellor during the reign of Muzong 穆宗 (r. 820–824). His biographies are included in *Jiu Tang shu* 167, *Xin Tang shu* 89, *Zizhi tongjian* 237, 241, 242, and 244.

[1087] Wei Gao 韋皋 (745–805), courtesy name Chengwu 城武, formally Prince Zhongwu 忠武 of Nankang 南康, was a general of the Tang dynasty. He was a long-time (785–805) military governor of Xichuan Circuit (headquartered in modern Chengdu, Sichuan) who was well-known for his campaigns against Tibet and his reopening of relations between Tang and the Kingdom of Nanzhao.

[1088] Liu Pi 劉闢, courtesy name Taichu 太初, was an official of the Tang dynasty. During the reign of Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (778–820, r. 805–820), he resisted imperial authority at Xichuan Circuit and was defeated by imperial forces commanded by Gao Chongwen 高崇文 (746–809). Liu was later executed. His biographies can be found in *Jiu Tang shu* 140, *Xin Tang shu* 158, and *Zizhi tongjian* 236 and 237.

Liaison Representative.[1089] Having received the news, my late father, who had not got along with Liu Pi formerly, left the district in the middle of the night. When he came to the eastern gate of the city, Liu Pi had given forth notice prohibiting all district officials from leaving the district. That night, cold wind blew. When he was turning back at two *li* out of the city wall, he saw two fire torches on either side of the path leading him a hundred steps ahead. Initially, he thought that they were district functionaries who had come to welcome him. However, he thought it strange that they did not approach him or vary in their distance and height. When he was about to reach the district wall, only then did they extinguish. Having reached the seat of the district, he asked the district functionaries, [but] they knew nothing about the prefectural notice.

At that time, my late father had recited the *Diamond Sutra* for five or six years without neglecting his recitation for even a day. He truly believed that utmost sincerity surely was a stimulus (*gan*). [Since] if there is a stimulus, there must be a response (*ying*), the torches that previously appeared are the traces [of the response] of the sutra.

Later Liu Pi's rebellious inclination was gradually exposed. By decree, Yuan Zi (739–818) was installed as the Military Commissioner.[1090] My uncle twice removed, who joined the army when he was young, was in charge of

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[1089] Also known as *liuhou shi* 留後使 (lit. an agent left behind, a deputy), the *liuhou* 留後, during the Tang–Song, was an agent in the dynastic capital charged with maintaining communication between the central government and his superior in a territorial base, such as a prince or military commissioner (*jiedushi* 節度使). See Hucker 3790.

[1090] Yuan Zi 袁滋, courtesy name Deshen 德深, was an official and general of the Tang dynasty. He served briefly as chancellor during the reign of Emperors Shunzong 順宗 (761–806; r. 805) and Xianzong. Details of Yuan Zi can be found in *Jiu Tang shu* 185, *Xin Tang shu* 151, and *Zizhi tongjian* 235, 236, 239.

matters of the Left Encampment. Afraid that the disaster would reach him, he together with the Army-supervising Commissioner[1091] conceived of a plot making use of words written on silk in a wax ball to conspire against Yuan Zi. In no time, their plan was discovered, and they were all decimated. At that time, the traitors thought that my late father knew about the plan.

[On one occasion,] my late father was reciting the scripture late into the night when he fell asleep without realizing it. The doors of his room were all closed. Suddenly, he woke up and heard someone opening the door and entering the room. [The person] repeatedly said, "Do not be afraid." The words crashed like something being thrown on the table and cracked with sounds. Startled, the words still lingered in his ears when he was getting up. When he turned to look around him, the functionaries and servants were all asleep. Taking hold of a candlestick, he searched around. Initially, he saw nothing. The door that had been shut was open.

My late father had received and upheld this scripture more than a hundred thousand times, and its proven responses to matters were remarkable. I recently observed that since the Jin (265–420) and [Liu] Song periods (420–479), from time to time people wrote biographical records to clarify these things. Moreover, I was formerly ordered to uphold, recite, and explicate the three-roll *Jin'gang jing lingyan ji* 金剛經靈驗記 (A Record of

[1091] Given the context, *jianjun* 監軍 here is probably an abbreviation of *jianjun shi* 監軍使, a representative of the central government dispatched in attempts to control semiautonomous, regional military commissioners. See Hucker 815.

the Proofs of the Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra*)[1092] that originated since the inception of the Tang dynasty; Chengshi [I] should follow the order of my late father to receive, uphold and explicate the *Diamond Sutra*. In the second year of the Taihe era (828), I listened once to [the lecture on] the *Pingxiao yuzhu* 平消御注 (Pingxiao Imperial Commentary)[1093] by the monk Xijian 栖簡 of Yangzhou (modern Yangzhou, Jiangsu). In the sixth year (832), I listen once to [the lecture on] the *Dayun shu* 大雲疏 (Great Cloud Commentary)[1094] by the monk Jingzhuo 靖奢 of Jingzhou (modern Jingzhou, Hubei). In the first year of the Kaicheng era (836), I listen once to [the lecture on] the *Qinglong shu* 青龍疏 (Blue Dragon Commentary)[1095] by Dharma Master Huaichu 懷楚 of

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[1092] This refers to the collection compiled by Meng Xianzhong.

[1093] This probably refers to Emperor Xuanzong's commentary of the *Diamond Sutra* since it is described as an imperial commentary (*yuzhu* 御注).

[1094] According to the *Chisō daishi shōrai mokuroku* 智證大師請來目錄 (Catalog of Items Brought Back by Great Master Chishō; T55.2173), amongst the items acquired by the Tendai monastic Enchin 円珍 (814–891) is a three-roll commentary known as the *Dayun jin'gang bore jingshu* 大雲金剛般若經疏 (Great Cloud Commentary of the *Diamond Sutra*). Also in the *Tōiki dentō mokuroku* 東域伝燈目録 (Catalog of [Works] Transmitting the Light [of the Dharma] to the Eastern Region; T55.2183) compiled by Kōfukuji 興福寺 monk Eichō 永超 (1014–1095), there is a three-roll *Diamond Sutra* commentary recorded by monk Yuan Hui 圓暉 (fl. eighth century) of the Dayun Monastery 大雲寺. A biography of him can be found in *Song gaoseng zhuan* T50.2061. See Imamura 1981: 78. Therefore, the Dayun work should refer to a commentary of the *Diamond Sutra* produced by a monk from the Dayun Monastery.

[1095] This probably refers to a two-roll commentary composed by Daoyin 道氤 (668–740) called *Yuzhu jin'gang bore boluomi jing xuanyan* 御注金剛般若波羅蜜經宣演 (A Tribute to the Imperial Commentary of the *Diamond Sutra*). This commentary is noted in both the *Chisō daishi shōrai mokuroku* and the *Tōiki dentō mokuroku*, with the latter indicating that it was composed by Daoyin. The former added the characters *qinglong* 青龍 (blue dragon) to the entry. Daoyin was a monastic of the Qinglong Monastery at the capital (Chang'an). According to his biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* (T50.2061: 735), there was a huge turnout when he lectured his commentary of the *Diamond Sutra*. However, this commentary now survives in incomplete fragments: T85, S1389, S2671, S2738, BD01319v, P2084, P2113, P2173, P2182, P2330, and P3080. Hirai 1973: 505–573.

Chang'an. Everyday, I recite and copy [the *Diamond Sutra*]. Hoping to promulgate the greatness of the scripture, and to complete its form for circulation, I assembled scattered [accounts related to the *Diamond Sutra*] so as to supplement what is lacking in Buddhism. I called this compilation the *Jin'gang jing jiuyi*.

JY1: Zhang Qiqiu 張齊丘[1096]

[Zhang] Qiqiu (fl. eighth century), the late father of Minister Duke[1097] Zhang Yi (d. 783),[1098] was a firm believer in Buddhism. Every morning, he would change into new clothes, and holding the scripture before the image [of the Buddha], he would recite the *Diamond Sutra* fifteen times. He had continued doing this for several decades unremittingly.

In the beginning of the Yongtai era (765–766), he was the Military Commissioner of Shuofang (modern Yinchuan, Ningxia). In his office, there was a minor commander who committed some wrongdoing and was afraid that it might be exposed. Thus, he incited a few hundred military personnel, and together they decided on a scheme to rebel.

While Qiqiu was walking in the small hall after he finished his work one day, a few dozen soldiers flashing their blades stomped in suddenly. Qiqiu,

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[1096] X87.1630: 467c20–468a8. Also: TPGJ58.

[1097] *xianggong* 相公 is a unofficial reference throughout Chinese history to an important executive official in the central government; in the Tang, it refers to the Grand Councilor (*zaixiang* 宰相). See Hucker 2331.

[1098] Zhang Yi 張鎰 (d. 783), courtesy names Jiquan 季權 and Gongdu 公度, was an official of the Tang Dynasty, who served as a Grand Councilor during the reign of Emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805). His biography is found in *Jiu Tang shu* 125 and *Xin Tang shu* 152.

with only his serfs around him, quickly headed for the gates. After running across the small hall a couple of steps, he turned and looked back but saw no one. He suspected that they could be ghostly things. When he was about to reach the door, his wife, daughter, and servant girl again called out to him to get out of the door and shouted, “There are two armored men on top of the hall!”

At that time, the soldiers at the base heard that there was a military coup; they charged in with their weapons. When they reached the front of the small hall, they saw more than ten persons standing motionless in the garden, with their hands hanging down by their sides and mouths wide open. They had thrown their weapons on the ground. Those who came to the rescue thereupon captured and tied them up.

Five or six of the rebels were struck dumb and could not speak, while the rest of them began to give a full account of what had happened: When they were going to charge into the hall, they suddenly saw two armored men who were a few *zhang* in height. With angry eyes, these armored men shouted at them. Initially, they seemed to be struck by evil. When Qiqiu heard that, he consequently stopped consuming alcohol and meat. Zhang Fengxiang,[1099] my family’s manservant, is the husband of Lu Mai’s aunt. Lu Mai told me this.

[1099] Duan Chengshi seems to imply that Zhang Fengxiang 張鳳翔 is probably related to the Zhangs since he was the source of the account.

JY2: Inspector Wang Mou 虞候王某[1100]

When Liu Yihuai (751–799)[1101] was at Bianzhou, Han Hong (765–823)[1102] was the Right Wing Inspector. Wang Mou was then the Left Wing Inspector, and he was on good terms with Hong. Someone told [Liu Yihuai] that these two persons were taking a military stance that would be detrimental to Liu. Enraged, Liu and he summoned both of them and reprimanded them. Hong was Liu's nephew,[1103] and because he threw himself to the ground, kowtowed, and pleaded to Liu fervently, Liu's anger somewhat abated [and Hong was spared]. Mr Wang, on the other hand, was an old man. His thighs were trembling [out of fear], and he could not [find words to] plead for himself. Liu berated him and had him held down and flogged thirty strokes of the rod. At that time, the newly-made red rods were a few *cun* in diameter, and they were further hardened by tough paint. When left standing, the rod would not fall. Five or six strokes of the rods would be enough to kill [anybody]. Han thought that Wang would surely die.

[1100] X87.1630: 468a9–22. Also: TPGJ66, but the *Yinhua lu* is given as the source here.

[1101] Liu Yihuai 劉逸淮 is also known as Quanliang 全諒, a name bestowed by the Tang court. He was the son of Liu Kenu 劉客奴, who was given the name of Zhengchen 正臣 (lit. correct official) for his support of the court during the An Lushan Rebellion. Due to his father, Liu Yihuai became an administrative aide. Later, he became the military commissioner of Xuanwu 宣武 Circuit (headquartered in modern Kaifeng, Henan) and was given the name Qiangliang for quelling the uprising of the Xuanwu army. His biography is found in *Jiu Tang shu* 145 and *Xin Tang shu* 151.

[1102] Formally Duke Yin of Xu 許隱公, Han Hong 韓弘 was a general of the Tang who served as Grand Councilor during the reigns of Emperor Xianzong 唐憲宗 (r. 805–820) and Emperor Muzong 唐穆宗 (r. 820–824). See *Jiu Tang shu* 156 and *Xin Tang shu* 158.

[1103] This could be a mistake. According to historical records, Han Hong's maternal uncle is Liu Xuanzuo 劉玄佐 (729–792). When Xuanzuo was appointed as a military commissioner in the beginning of the Jianzhong era (780–783), he employed Liu Yihuai as a company commander.

At dusk, Han Hong went to Wang's house and thought it strange that there was no sound of crying. He supposed that perhaps Wang's family members were afraid and thus did not dare to cry. He inquired of the gatekeeper, and was told, "My master is fine." Han had all along been close to Wang, and he thereupon went into Wang's bedroom to inquire about him. Wang told him, "I have been reading the *Diamond Sutra* for forty years, but only now have I experienced its power." He further said, "I remember that initially when I was being held down, I saw a huge hand resembling a winnower cover my back all at once." Next, he bared himself to show Han that there were no marks of flogging at all.

Han previously had no interest in Buddhism, but because of this incident, he started to correspond with monks and personally wrote ten sheets [of scripture] daily, which then accumulated and were estimated to number a few hundred rolls [of scriptures]. Later, when he was serving at the Palace Secretariat, an official censor visited him regarding some matters in midsummer. Han was in the midst of copying a scripture despite perspiring profusely. The censor thought it strange and inquired. Han then told him all about Wang's experience. When I worked at Jixian Academy,[1104] Attendant-in-ordinary Liu Gongquan (778–865)[1105] told me this.

[1104] *Jixian* 集仙 is probably another term for the *Jixian yuan* 集賢院 (Jixian Academy), which is also known as the *Jixian dian shuyuan* 集賢殿書院 (Academy at the Hall of Gathered Scholarly Worthies). Staffed by academicians (*xueshi* 學士) and other literati, the academy compiled academic works sponsored by the court.

[1105] Liu Gongquan 柳公權 was one of the most famous Tang calligraphers. The highest post he held was Tang president of the Board of Works. See *Jiu Tang shu* 165 and *Xin Tang shu* 163.

JY3: Sun Xian 孫咸[1106]

Before Liang Chongyi (d. 781)[1107] resisted the military force in Xiangzhou (modern Xiangfan, Hubei), a minor commander, Sun Xian, suddenly died but after two nights unexpectedly revived.

Sun Xian had dreamed that he went to a place resembling a king's palace, where the protocol and security were very strict. There, an official led him to testify on behalf of a monk. The dharma name of the monk was Huaixiu 懷秀, and he had died the year before. When he was alive, Huaixiu severely transgressed the precepts. Because when he entered the underworld, he had no good deeds that could be recorded, he cheated by saying, "I had always enjoined Sun Xian to copy the Lotus Sutra." Xian was then summoned to testify [whether what Huaixiu said was true.] Xian at first did not acknowledge [the monk's claim], but the monk remained adamant about it. After some time, the matter was still unresolved. Suddenly, he saw a monk called "Honorable Dizang" who told him, "If you confess, then you will naturally be protected." Xian then followed his words, and as a result, he got off without any trouble.

He also related that while he was being cross-examined, he saw a foreign king who came from outside with a few hundred guards. The king of the underworld descended and together they ascended to the dais. Not long after they sat down, the foreign king was carried off by a strong wind. Xian also

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[1106] X87.1630: 468a23–b18. Also: TPGJ67.

[1107] Liang Chongyi 梁崇義 (?–781) was a general of the Tang Dynasty who rebelled against the imperial government during the reign of Emperor Daizong 唐代宗 (r. 762–779). His biography can be found in *Jiu Tang shu* 121 and *Xin Tang shu* 224.

said he saw a man being interrogated repeatedly regarding his wrongdoings and good deeds. The man had always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*, but he also liked to eat meat. On his left, there were a thousand rolls of scriptures, and on his right, there was meat piled like a mountain. Because the amount of meat was more than the amount of scriptures, the man was about to be heavily punished. Suddenly, a spark of fire from within the heap of scriptures flew toward the mountain of meat, and within a short moment, consumed it completely. The man thereupon walked through the air and left.

Xian asked Dizang, "To what place did the wind carry the foreign king who appeared earlier?" Dizang replied, "That king should enter the Avici Hell.[1108] The wind just now was the wind of karma." Dizang then took the occasion to lead Xian to take a look at the hells. When they reached the gates, smokes and flames were flaring violently, they sounded like winds and thunders. [Xian] was afraid and did not dare look. Just before returning, the bubbling foam from a cauldron liquid landed on Xian's left thigh; the pain was so great that it seemed to penetrate his very heart and marrow. Dizang then ordered an official to escort Xian back [to the human realm] and forbade him to speak of matters pertaining to the underworld.

Xian then returned to life as if waking up from a dream. His wife and children were surrounding him and crying. One day had passed. After the incident, he bankrupted his family by copying [many] scriptures. As a result,

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[1108] *wujian* 無間 is an abbreviation of *wujian diyu* 無間地獄, literally, the hell without interval between periods of torture. In the most common scheme of Buddhist hell, eight hells are located, one on top of another, underneath the continent of Jambudvīpa. The Avīci hell is the lowest hell in this scheme.

he asked to become a monk. The spot on his thigh where the foam landed in his dream became a sore that did not heal for the rest of his life.

JY4: Monk Zhideng 僧智燈[1109]

During the Zhenyuan era (785–805), monk Zhideng of Tianchong Monastery in Jingzhou (modern Jingzhou, Hubei) had always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. He caught a disease and died. When his disciples checked [Zhideng's] hands and feet, they were still warm; thus, they did not immediately encoffin him. After seven days, he unexpectedly revived, and related the following: initially, he saw someone resembling an underworld king who, on account of Zhideng's recitation of the scripture, put his palms together and descended the steps [to welcome him]. The king went on to ask some questions, and then said, "I will let you ascend to the human realm for ten more years. When you are alive, strive to gain deliverance out of the cycle of life and death." The king also asked him, "The monks in the human realm take Job's tears[1110] and medicine after midday. This is against the original teaching." [Zhi]deng reported, "There are rules in the *vinaya* on the dos and don'ts of this.[1111] Why is that so?" The king said, "These rules were added by

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[1109] X87.1630: 468b17–23. Also: TPGJ68.

[1110] Known scientifically as Coix lacryma-jobi, *yiyiren* 薏苡仁 or *yiyi* 薏苡 is also called Coixseeds, Tear Grass, adlay, or adlai. It is a source of food, and it is also used with other herbs in traditional Chinese medicine.

[1111] This probably refers to *vinaya* rules providing for exceptions. Although the consumption of food after noon is prohibited by the *vinaya*, consumption of food at an "improper" time is justified by referring to it as "medicine." See Yifa 2002: 248, note 28.

later people; they do not accord with the Buddha's intent." Now in Jingzhou, there are no monks who take medicine after midday.[1112]

JY5: Wang Conggui's Younger Sister 王從貴妹[1113]

Before she was married, Wang Conggui's younger sister, a member of the Chanling village in Gongan (modern Gongan, Hubei), had always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. In the Zhenyuan era (785–805), she suddenly died of illness. She had already been buried for three days when her family came to the cemetery again. They heard moaning sounds from within her burial mound. Thereupon, they opened the mound and looked inside. Indeed, she was still alive. They sent her back by carriage, and after a few days, she could speak. She related that when she first arrived at the underworld, the underworld officials released her to return to the human realm because she had upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. Wang Conggui could do carpentry work and had done some construction work at Linghua Monastery in Gongan. The Chan master of the monastery, Shuzhong, whom Conggui often met, told him about it.

[1112] This tale implies that it was a practice—at least in Jingzhou—undertaken by monastics at that time. This tale then makes reference to monastic laxity and also serves as an instance to rectify the malpractice through the words of King Yama.

[1113] X87.1630: 468b24–c5. Also: TPGJ69.

JY6: Left Encampment Section Leader 左營伍伯[1114]

When Wei Gao, Prince of Nankang[1115] was protecting Shu (modern Sichuan), there was a *wu* leader[1116] in the Left Encampment who learned to recite the *Diamond Sutra* with his fellow[1117] soldiers in the Xishan[1118] field headquarters. Being dimwitted, he could only memorize the title of the scripture on the initial day. That night while he was out of the stronghold gathering firewood, he was captured by Tibetan cavalry.

After traveling for more than a hundred *li*, the Tibetan troop stopped. The sky had not yet brightened. They threw him on the ground and tied his hair to a peg/low post and covered him with camel rug. He slept there. He recited only the title of the scripture. Suddenly, he saw a golden ingot emitting light, which stopped before him. He tried to raise his head and move his body, and his bonds all dropped off. Next, he stealthily rose and followed the golden ingot and escaped. He traveled for not more than ten *li* before daybreak, and before realizing it, he reached home. His home was located in the eastern market of the super-prefecture. His wife and children initially suspected that he was a ghost. He told them everything that happened. Five or six days after he reached home, the military camp officer reported his desertion. Initially,

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[1114] X87.1630: 468c6–14. Also: TPGJ70.

[1115] See earlier note in the preface. He was the military governor of the Xichuan Circuit from 785 to 805.

[1116] *wubo* 伍伯 is a leader of a military unit of five soldiers (*wu* 伍).

[1117] *huozu* 火卒 is a military unit of ten soldiers (*huo* 火). The *huo* unit is probably made up of two *wu* units.

[1118] In medieval China, this refers to a mountain west of Chengdu; also known as Mount Xueling 雪嶺.

Wei did not believe his account. However, on account of the fact that there was no difference between the day he supposedly deserted the army and the day he reached home, he was pardoned.

JY7: Chen Zhao 陳昭[1119]

In the beginning of the Yuanhe era (806–820), Chen Zhao, a clerk in Hanzhou (modern Guanghan, Sichuan), once fell ill and saw a person clad in yellow clothes come before his bed and say, "Judge Zhao summons you." Chen Zhao asked for the reason, to which the person replied, "I came from the hidden realm. You are required to be the witness to what Liu Pi (d. 806)[1120] and Dou Xuan testify."

Chen Zhao had the person sit down. In a while, another person came, his hands holding something like a placenta. The official who came earlier reproached the later for being late. The latter official replied, "[I am late] because of this. I was waiting for the butcher to cut it open." Then, he laughed and said to Chen Zhao, "Mister, don't be afraid. In order to get the vital energy (*qi* 氣) of a living person, I need to obtain a pig placenta. You may face east and lie down."

Chen Zhao followed his instruction, and without realizing it had already followed the two officials off. The journey was smooth and after traveling for

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[1119] X87.1630: 468c15–469a18. Also: GDJ10 and TPGJ72.

[1120] See note of the preface. An official of the Tang, who resisted imperial authority at Xichuan Circuit (headquartered in modern Chengdu, Sichuan), was defeated by the imperial army by Gao Chongwen and executed. His biography is collected in *Jiu Tang shu* 140 and *Xin Tang shu* 158.

probably more than ten *li*, they reached a city gate that was as big as a superprefecture city, with armored soldiers guarding its gates. They entered it and saw a person with an astoundingly angry countenance. He was Judge Zhao.

[Judge Zhao] said to Chen Zhao, "When Liu Pi attacked Dongchuan (modern Shantai, Sichuan), Dou Xuan seized forty-seven cows and sent them to Zizhou (modern Mianyang, Sichuan), claiming that he slaughtered them according to Pi's order. However, Pi said that he did not issue an official order previously. Now you being the clerk should know the truth of the matter." Before Chen Zhao could testify, from next door he heard Dou Xuan call out asking whether Chen Zhao was already there, and he also asked about the well-being of his elder and younger brothers, wife, and children. Chen Zhao then sought an audience with [Dou Xuan]. The underworld official said, "Mister Dou's appearance and countenance are extremely ugly; he does not wish to see you."

Chen Zhao then thoroughly clarified that the slaughtering of the cows was indeed based on Minister Liu's informal order; it was not based on an official document. The paper [on which the informal order was written] was rough in surface, and it is now on the shelf of a room in Hanzhou. [Judge Zhao] immediately ordered his official to take Chen Zhao to Hanzhou to retrieve it.

[When they reached there,] the door was locked, and [they had to resort to] entering it through a hole. When the fake order arrived, Pi had no words

[to defend himself]. Judge Zhao said to Chen Zhao, “You yourself have one misdeed, do you know? Among the cows slaughtered by Dou Xuan, you took one of them.” Before Chen Zhao could reply, Judge Zhao said, “This place is not like the human realm. You cannot get by with falsehood.” In a while, there appeared a soldier pulling a cow until he reached Chen Zhao who immediately became frightened and begged to be saved.

Judge Zhao ordered the investigator to check and decide on the following penalty: one hundred strokes over a period of fifty days. Judge Zhao then asked Chen Zhao, “What merit do you have?” Chen Zhao immediately related that he had organized vegetarian feasts for some people and made Buddhist images. Judge Zhao said, “These will be the conditions of your next life.” Chen Zhao also said, “I had once intoned the *Diamond Sutra* when I was at my cousin’s place.” Judge Zhao said, “You may put your palms together and pray to it.” Chen Zhao followed the order. In a moment, a yellow-cover scripture box by itself dropped down from the sky towards the front of Chen Zhao. He took it and saw that it was indeed the copy his cousin borrowed. There was a charred spot on it that was still there. [Judge Zhao] further ordered him to put his palms together. The scripture immediately disappeared. Judge Zhao said, “This is enough to pardon you.” He then released Chen Zhao to return, and again ordered Chen Zhao to go to an official called *Shenglu* 生祿 (lit. life and fortune) to check his lifespan. The official reported, “Chen Zhao’s original name was written Zhao 釗, which is the character for “gold” written with the radical for “knife” on the right. It was

changed to Zhao 昭 in a particular year. You have eighteen more years [to live].” Having heard that, Zhao was depressed. Judge Zhao laughed and said, “A period of eighteen years is a great gain, take it as a joyous matter. Why aren’t you happy?” Judge Zhao then ordered an official to send Chen Zhao off. About halfway, they saw a horse obstructing their road. The official said, “This originally belongs to you. You may ride it.” He immediately rode it on the spot and revived. [By then,] he had already been dead for one and a half days.

JY8: Monk Weigong 僧惟恭[1121]

For more than thirty years, the monk Weigong of Faxing Monastery in Jingzhou (modern Jingzhou, Hubei) recited the *Diamond Sutra* fifty times daily.[1122] Because he did not abide by monastic regulations, enjoyed drinking alcohol, and caused many troubles, he was despised by other monastics. Later, he fell ill and was about to die.

In the same monastery, there was a monk Lingkui whose behavior was similar to that of Weigong. Together, they were considered to be the two menaces of the monastery. For some reason, he went out, when he was one *li* from the monastery, he met five or six people. They were young and handsome

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[1121] X87.1630: 469a19–b4. Also: TPGJ79.

[1122] The biography of the monk Weigong can be found in roll 25 of the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T50.2061: 869b16–27. The text in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* differs from that in the *Jiuyi,* but the content is basically the same. Additionally, another biography of his is found in the three-roll *Jingtu wangsheng zhuan* 淨土往生傳 (Tradition of Rebirth in the Pure Land; T51.2071) composed by monk Jiezhu 戒珠 (985–1077). Given that it is a work devoted to the Pure Land tradition, the *Diamond Sutra* is not mentioned in this biography. This reflects a subsequent use of the tale first written down by Duan Chengshi in a different manner. This account is also collected in the second roll of *Wangsheng ji* 往生集 (A Collection of Rebirth Accounts; T51.2072)—on the rebirth of evil people—composed by 株宏 in the Ming period.

and wore bright neat clothes, each of them holding a musical instrument like Kuchean musicians. They asked Lingkui, “May we know where Venerable Weigong is?” Lingkui then told them Weigong’s whereabouts and suspected that they were making offerings in the monastery.

At night, he returned to the monastery and heard the sounds of the bell. Weigong had already passed away. He took the opportunity to tell the others what he saw earlier on. That day, everyone in the monastery had heard the strains of stringed and woodwind instruments, and yet no musicians entered the monastery. At that time, a famous monk said, “Weigong must have been reborn in the eastern Buddha Land[1123] by means of the power of the scripture. He furthermore used his experience to exhort Lingkui.” Lingkui had a deep realization and mended his ways toward Buddhism.[1124]

JY9: Dong Jinchao 董進朝[1125]

Dong Jinchao entered the army during the Yuanhe era (806–820). When he was in the army initially, he had night duty on the eastern city tower. One evening when the moon was bright, he suddenly saw four persons clad in yellow coming from the East. They gathered below the city [tower] and mentioned his name. Judging from the situation, they seemed to be there to search and arrest him. Incidentally, they were discussing this among

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[1123] *budong* 不動 here probably refers to Buddha Akṣobhya who is also known as *budong rulai* 不動如來.

[1124] Buddhism is also known as the black-robed order (*zimen* 緇門).

[1125] X87.1630: 469b5–15. Also: TPG81.

themselves, “Dong Jinchao always upholds the *Diamond Sutra*, and uses one portion of the merit obtained to bless and protect us, the underworld officials. Our lot has long been indebted to his kindness. How could we bring ourselves to kill him? We have to take another person’s life unjustly to replace him. If this person goes elsewhere, we would have no one to rely on anymore.” One of them said, “There is someone who lived opposite Dong Jinchao, and he is of the same surname and age, and the limit of his lifespan is equivalent [to that of Dong Jingchao], we can take him to replace [Dong].” After saying that, they suddenly disappeared. Jinchao was startled and thought it unusual.

When the day became bright, he heard cries[1126] from the family living opposite him. He asked them what happened. The parents of the deceased said, “My son suddenly died last night.” Jinchao was struck and cried, telling them what actually happened. He then made arrangements for the funeral. Subsequently, he provided for the parents of the deceased. Later, he became a monk, taking Huitong as his dharma name, and stayed at Tang’an Monastery at Xingyuan (modern Hanzhong, Shaanxi). (At first, Lu Qizhi thought this account suspicious, but later a well-informed person told him, “People of equivalent lifespan may die unjustly.” His doubts were cleared up.)

[1126] *fuhun sheng* 復魂聲, literally the sound of reviving the soul (*fuhun*).

JY10: Wang Mian 王沔[1127]

During the Yuanhe era (806–820), when Minister of Works Yan Shou[1128] (764–822) was in Jiangling (modern Jingzhou, Hubei), Wang Mian was the Commander of the Cenyang Garrison (modern Gongan, Hubei).[1129] [Wang Mian] had always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. [Once,] he was appointed to investigate some matter in Guizhou (modern Yichang, Hubei). On his way back, when he reached Zhatan (modern Zigui, Hubei),[1130] his boat broke up, and five men were drowned together. Just as Wang Mian entered the water, it seemed like someone handed him a bamboo pole. [Holding on to it, he] bobbed up and down in the current and ended up at Xialao Garrison (modern Yiling, Hubei) [where he] went ashore without perishing. When he looked at what he was holding in his hand, it was the *Diamond Sutra*. From Zhatan to Xialao Garrison, it is more than 300 *li*![1131]

[1127] X87.1630: 469b16–21. Also: TPGJ80.

[1128] Yan Shou 嚴綬 (746–822), the Minister of Works (*sikong* 司空), is a native of Shu 蜀 (modern Sichuan). Yan Shou passed the imperial examination in the Dali 大曆 era (766–779), and went on to hold different posts in the Tang bureaucracy, such as Minister of Works, Left Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu pushe* 尚書右僕射), Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅), Military Commissioner (*jiedushi* 節度使), so on. He is mentioned in the biography of Emperor Xianzong in the *Jiu Tang shu*.

[1129] Formerly established as Cenyang 涔陽 District in the southern Yazhou 崖州 (in modern Henan) in the beginning of Tianbao 天寶 era (742–756), but shortly thereafter abrogated as Cenyang Garrison.

[1130] More commonly written as 吒灘, it is a dangerous spot on the river in the administrative region of Guizhou 歸州 (modern Zigui, Hubei)

[1131] A measure of distance, approximately one-fifth or one-third of a mile.

JY11: Monk Huizong 僧會宗[1132]

In the beginning of the Changqing era (821–824), monk Huizong of Gongan District (modern Jingzhou, Hubei), whose surname was Cai, often contracted *gu* poison.[1133] He fell sick and was so emaciated that his bones stood out. He thereupon aspired to recite the *Diamond Sutra* as he waited for his end to come. When he had recited it fifty times, he had a dream during the day that someone made him open his mouth and drew out more than ten strands of hair from his throat. That night he had another dream that he vomited out a huge earthworm of more than one elbow in length. As a result, he consequently recovered from his sickness. Monk Xingjian of Mount Jing[1134] saw this.

JY12: Monk Fazheng 僧法正[1135]

Fazheng, a monk of Prajñā Cloister of the Kaiyuan Monastery in Jiangling (modern Jingzhou, Hubei), upheld the *Diamond Sutra* twenty one times daily. In the beginning of the Changqing era (821–824), he died of an illness. When he reached the underworld bureau, he saw someone like a king

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[1132] X87.1630: 469b22–c2. Interestingly, this tale is not found in the *Taiping guangji* as well as other Tang collections.

[1133] The *gu* 蠱 poison is said to be generated when venomous insects and reptiles in a vessel are annihilated by an ultimate survivor, which is considered the most poisonous as it embodies all the toxins of the others. Mollier 2008: 55, citing Obringer 1997: 225–63.

[1134] Probably refers to Mount Jing in modern Nanzhang county, the western part of Hubei province, southeast of the famous Mount Wudang and on the west bank the Han River, the largest tributary of the Yangtze River.

[1135] X87.1630: 469c3–11. Also: TPGJ85. The biography of monk Fazheng is collected in roll 25 of the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T50.2061: 867c28–868a17.

who asked him, “Master, for all your life, what merit did you make?” He replied, “I have always recited the *Diamond Sutra*.” He was then courteously led up to the hall and made to ascend the embroidered seat to recite the scripture seven times. The attendants and guards all put their palms together, and below the steps all interrogation and discussion ceased as everyone listened to his recitation.

After he had finished the recitation, the king later sent for an official to lead him back [to the human realm]. The king descended the steps to send him off, saying, “Your Reverence will have thirty more years in the human realm, do not neglect your reading and recitation [of the scripture].” After that, he followed the official and traveled for a few dozen li until they reached a huge pit. The official thereupon brought him near the pit and from behind pushed him down into it. He felt like falling in the air. [When he revived,] he had already passed away for seven days; only his face was not cold. Now Fazheng is still alive and more than eighty years old. Jingzhou monk Changjing personally witnessed the incident.

JY13: Novice Monk Daoyin 沙彌道蔭[1136]

There was a novice monk (Sk. *śrāmaṇera*) Daoyin in Shishou District (modern Shishou, Hubei) who always upheld and recited the *Diamond Sutra*. In the beginning of the Baoli era (825–827), he once went out and was returning at night when he suddenly encountered a tiger on the way. It roared

[1136] X87.1630: 469c12–6. Also: TPGJ86.

and leaped before him. The novice monk knew that he could not escape; thus, he shut his eyes and sat down. All he could do was to silently recite the scripture, while in his heart hoping for some form of rescue. The tiger then laid down on the grass and kept watch on him. By dawn, when villagers started to appear, the tiger then left. [Afterward] when the novice monk looked at the place on which the tiger crouched, the spot was awash with drool.

JY14: Wang Zhonggan 王忠幹[1137]

In the third year of the Dahe era [of reign of Emperor Wenzong] (829), the rebel Li Tongjie (d. 829)[1138] resisted the imperial army at Jingcheng, Cangzhou (modern Cang District, Hubei).[1139] The emperor ordered Li You (d. 829)[1140] to command the Qide troops to suppress him. Initially, when they besieged the city of Dezhou (modern De District, Shandong), it was well protected and could not be captured. They attacked it again the next day. From

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[1137] X87.1630: 469c17–470a9. Also: TPGJ73.

[1138] Li Tongjie 李同捷 (d. 829) was a general of the Tang Dynasty. His biography is contained in *Jiu Tang shu* 143 and *Xin Tang shu* 213. After his father, Li Quanlüe 李全略, died, Lee Tongjie attempted to assume leadership over Henghai Circuit, of which his father was the military commissioner. The event recounted happened at the end of an imperial campaign against him, before his surrender and subsequent execution.

[1139] *Cangjing* 滄景: Cang refers to Cangzhou, and Jing refers to Jingcheng Commandery.

[1140] Li You 李祐 was a general of the Tang Dynasty. His biography is found in *Jiu Tang shu* 161 and *Xin Tang shu*214. In the imperial campaign against Li Tongjie, a number of generals were sent as military commissioners to take over Henghai Circuit, but they either died or were removed, and thus were not successful in retrieving Henghai Circuit. After Fu Liangbi died on the way, Li You was appointed the military commissioner of Henghai. The event in this tale refers to Li You's attack on the city of Dezhou, one of the Henghai prefectures.

the period between *mao* (5–7am) to *wei* (1–3pm), eight or nine out of ten soldiers were injured. Still, they could not take it down.

At that time, in the yamen in Qizhou's (modern Qinan, Shandong), there was section leader,[1141] Wang Zhonggan who was a native of Boye (modern Li County, Hebei). He always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. He had done that altogether for more than twenty years, without missing a day. That day, Zhonggan ascended the siege ladder, and when he was about to reach the parapet of the city wall, his body was shot so many times that he looked like a hedgehog. He was hit by a timber[1142] and fell down. His comrades hauled the goats and horses out of the city, and left him at the bank of the moat. Since it became dark, Li You ordered the soldiers to retreat. At that time, arrows from the top of the city wall were coming down like rain. As his comrades were extremely preoccupied, they forgot to retrieve Zhonggan's body.

Zhonggan [by then] had died. As if in a dream, he came to the wilderness and encountered a great river. He wanted to cross the river but had no means to do so; thus, looking up into the sky, he cried violently. Suddenly, he heard someone's voice. Zhongan saw a person of more than one zhang in height whom he suspected was a divine being and took the opportunity to beg him to indicate to him the road back to the encampment. That person said, "Don't be afraid. I will enable you to cross this river." Zhonggan paid his respect to him. He bowed and before he raised his head, the divine being

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[1141] Unable to locate any information about the official title, *bajiangguan* 八將官, I assume that a soldier of this position is probably in charge of eight other subordinates.

[1142] *leimu* 檑木 are heavy timbers dropped on besiegers from above.

tossed him by his waist into midair. Only after a long time did he land on the ground. Suddenly, like waking from a dream, he heard the announcement of the second watch from atop the rebel's city wall. Initially, he did not remember having crossed the river or knowing about his injuries. Only when he raised his hand to rub his face and found blood smeared on his eyebrows and eyelashes, did he realize that he was injured. He then got up and forced himself to move. He walked for more than a hundred steps but fell down. Again, he saw the person he met earlier holding a blade and shouting at him, "Get up! Get up!" Zhonggan was startled and frightened and ran for more than one *li*. When he sat down to take a rest, only then did he hear the sounds of roaring and applause from his own troop. Subsequently, he reached his own camp, and questioned his comrades. It was then that he learnt that he had died in the moat, which was the river he crossed in the dream. Zhonggan is still in the Qide troop.

JY15: He Zhen's Wife 何軫妻[1143]

Madam Liu, wife of He Zhen who worked as a peddler, had abstained from alcohol and meat since her youth. She had always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. [In her daily routine,] she would first light and offer incense before the [Buddha's] image and prayed that her lifespan would end at forty-five, that she would not be confused just before her death, and that she would know her death date beforehand. By the winter of the fourth year of the Taihe era (830),

[1143] X87.1630: 470a10–7. Also: TPGJ90.

she would turn forty-five. She parted with all her property and accouterments by giving them as offerings to monks. When about to enter her forty-fifth year, she went around bidding farewell to her close ones and friends. He Zhen thought that she was too distressed by her illness, and did not believe in her. On the eve of her birthday, she made a request to the monks to administer the precepts to her. Going into a retreat, she took a bath and changed her clothes, and stayed alone in a room. Sitting cross-legged, she recited the scripture at the top of her voice. When it was time to check on her[?], the room was quiet. Her children lined up outside the room and entered to see her. By then, she had already passed away. Her forehead was so hot that it burned the hands. Zhen arranged for a Buddhist funeral ceremony for her. Her stupa is now at Jingzhou's northern outer city wall.

JY16: Wang Yin 王殷[1144]

Wang Yin, a soldier of the Left Encampment in Shu (modern Sichuan), had always read the *Diamond Sutra* and did not eat meat nor drink alcohol. Wang served as a treasurer of Bounties Establishment,[1145] where he managed to avoid death on four occasions when he was wrongly implicated by others. He got off in these cases for having no criminal intent.

[1144] X87.1630: 470a18–24. Also: TPGJ91. This tale can also be found in roll two of the *Xuanshi zhi,* but the protagonist is identified only as a gatekeeper or janitor (*hunzhe* 閽者) of Guo Zhao. Zhang Du (ca. 840–890) is a contemporary of Duan Chengshi, so it is not surprising that Zhang knew this account.

[1145] The meaning of *shangshe kuzi* 賞設庫子 is unclear since to *shangshe* 賞設 is to reward a victorious army with bounties (*kaoshang* 犒赏). The term *kuzi* 庫子 generally refers to the keeper of some storehouse or treasury. Therefore, the term *shangshe kuzi* could probably refer to a store man or treasurer of an agency that rewarded armies with bounties.

By the fourth year of the Taihe era (830), Minister of Works Guo Zhao (d. 831)[1146] was safeguarding Shu. Guo was by nature strict and impatient, and any small matter that did not go as he intended would cost the lives of all who were involved. On one occasion, Wang Yin presented some brocaded patterned silk to Guo, who disliked its poor quality and flimsiness; Guo ordered Wang to bare his back and wanted to kill him. However, Guo had a Tibetan dog that followed him all the time and would bite, and all non-household members who encountered it would be bitten by it; this dog suddenly barked a few times, got up, and jumped on to Wang Yin's back. When Guo attempted to drive it away, it just would not let go. Guo thought it unusual, and his anger was thereupon assuaged.

JY17: Zhao An 趙安[1147]

In the year when Minister of Works Guo [Zhao] (d. 831) left Shu (modern Sichuan),[1148] there was a commoner Zhao An, who had always recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Once when he was traveling in the wilderness, he saw a piece of garment left by the side of a tomb. [Zhao] An thought that it did

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[1146] Guo Zhao 郭釗 was the son of Guo Ai 郭曖 (739–787) and the grandson of Guo Ziyi 郭子儀 (697–781), one of the most famous generals of the Tang period who was instrumental in quelling the An Lushan Rebellion. His mother is Princess Shengping 昇平, the fourth daughter of Emperor Daizong; hence, he is Emperor Daizong's grandson as well. Information on him can be found in *Jiu Tang shu* 17b, *Jiu Tang shu* 120, and *Xin Tang shu* 137.

[1147] X87.1630: 470b1–8. Also: TPGJ89, but the source given is the *Baoying ji*.

[1148] In the fourth year of the Taihe era (830), Guo Zhao, citing failing health, requested a successor. In the tenth month, Li Deyu 李德裕 (787–850) took over the military commissionership of Xichuan Circuit. In the twelfth month of the same year (January 831), he passed away.

not belong to anyone and thereupon took it home. When he reached home, he told his wife about it. However, his neighbor [who came to know of it] straightaway informed the authority that Zhao had stolen something. [As a result,] Zhao An was apprehended and sent to the district [constabulary]. The constable, infuriated that Zhao An did not admit to the accusation, resorted to using big clamping rods[1149] to press his shins. They broke into three pieces. Later, the constable ordered to have him flogged on the back. But each time the rod went down on his back, it broke. The constable thought that Zhao An had some [magical] techniques and asked him [why that happened], to which he replied that he only recited the *Diamond Sutra*.

They then reported this to Guo Zhao, who also thought it unusual and thus pardoned him. When Zhao An returned home, his wife said, "One day, I heard several cracking sounds from within your scripture box. I was frightened and did not dare to open it." [Zhao] An then quickly opened it to take a look. He saw that the cord had snapped, the roller had broken, and all the paper was in tatters. [Zhao] An is still alive now.

JY18: Wang Han 王翰[1150]

In the fifth year of the Taihe era (831), Wang Han, a peasant of Shifang District in Hanzhou (modern Shifang, Sichuan), was always [doing business?]

[1149] The *daguan* 大關 is an instrument used for punishment during interrogation in imperial China. It consists of two rods made to torture the accused into confessing or admitting their crimes by clamping the limbs.

[1150] X87.1630: 470b9–19. Also: TPGJ92.

at the market. Each day, he would go after a small profit. He suddenly died, but revived after three days. He said that there were sixteen persons being summoned together to the underworld, with fifteen of them distributed to other places while Han alone was brought to one bureau. There, he saw a young man clad in a green garment who claimed to be his nephew, serving as an attendant to underworld officials. He then led Wang to see the investigating clerk, whom he said was his elder brother, but their appearances were completely different from each other. His elder brother said, "A cow that died a wrongful death is pressing charges against you for killing it unjustly when you burned a cultivated field. You have also previously sold bamboo to a dog killer to make a *konghou*[1151] that was used to kill two dogs. Those dogs are also pressing charges against you. Your name is at present not on the register of those to die; you may be pardoned. What merits would you make for them?" Han [replied that he] wanted to offer a vegetarian feast and copy the *Lotus Sutra* and *Jin'guangming jing* for them.[1152] They all rejected the offer, instead they requested saying, "Please uphold the *Diamond Sutra* seven times daily for us." His elder brother happily said, "That's enough." He then revived. Later, he gave up his job and became a monk. Now he still lives in the Shifang District.

[1151] The *konghou* 箜篌 is an ancient, plucked-string, Chinese musical instrument. See Cui 1996.

[1152] The *Suvarṇaprabhāsôttama-sūtra* had been translated three times by the Tang period. This scripture was highly popular as can be seen from the huge number of Dunhuang manuscripts.

JY19: Gao She 高涉[1153]

In the winter of the seventh year of the Taihe era (833), Supervising Secretary Mr Li Shi (fl. first half of ninth century)[1154] was appointed Adjutant at the headquarters of the Military Commissioner at Taiyuan (in modern Shandong). Clerk Gao She once stayed overnight at the executive bureau.[1155] By the time when gongs and drums sounded, he paid a visit to the neighboring room. Suddenly, he encountered a person of more than six *chi* in height who shouted, "The Adjutant summons you." Gao She immediately set off. As he was a little slow, the person pushed him from behind, and he unconsciously moved north. After traveling for about a dozen li, he came to the wilderness, gradually entered a valley, and later ascended a mountain. When they reached the summit, they looked all around and saw that the village houses were all beneath their sight.

Later, they reached some official institution, where his summoner called out, "Gao She has been brought here." Many of the people there were clad in official dress. The person in-charge of the case seemed to resemble Director Cui Xingxin who judged, "Follow the official to testify."

[1153] X87.1630: 470b20–c15. Also: TPGJ95.

[1154] Li Shi 李石, courtesy name Zhongyu 中玉, was formally the Count of Longxi 隴西伯, an official of the Tang dynasty during the reign of Emperor Wenzong (809–840). He was credited with stabilizing the political situation after the Ganlu Incident, a failed attempt by the emperor to get rid of the powerful eunuchs. His biography is collected in *Jiu Tang shu* 172 and *Xin Tang shu* 131.

[1155] The *shiyuan* 使院 is a governmental institution that keeps affairs running during the absence of the Military Commissioner.

He was again led out until they reached one place with a few hundred people sitting in the open air mingling with pigs and sheep. He was brought before a person who was (Gao) She's (younger sister's husband) brother-in-law Du Ze, who in turn asked him, "When you first became a clerk, you had a welcome party, and sent me to buy four sheep, do you remember? Now I am being held responsible for that and am undergoing extreme suffering." (Gao) She quickly replied, "At that time, I made you buy meat, not sheep." Ze thereupon had no words [to answer him]. Because of this, he saw the sheep standing like a man and gnawing Ze.

In a while, he was being led to another place. All of a sudden, he saw another place with open shelves and square pillars on which were nailed big metal rings. There were a few hundred people all holding knives. They used rope to tie people's head, and led them into the rings in which they were cut and ripped apart. Gao She was terrified and ran out of the place. He could only recite the *Diamond Sutra*.

Suddenly, he encountered an old acquaintance, Yang Yan, who told him, "During the time of Minister Li Shuo,[1156] the rebel Li Yingdao was flogged to death by the rod for banditry. He had already been reborn in various places for thirty years. Now that I talk about matters of the past, do you still remember them?" (Gao) She replied negatively given that he was too young then to know those matters. He again encountered an old friend, Clerk Duan

[1156] Li Shuo 李說 (740–800?) was the son of Li Yu 李遇 (d. 791), a Vice Censor-in-Chief during the Tianbao era (742–756). His ancestor, Li Shentong 李神通 (577–630), the Prince of Huai'an, was a cousin of Tang Emperor Gaozu. Information on Li Shuo can be found in *Jiu Tang shu* 146.

Yi, who was the sworn brother of Gao She. Meeting Gao She, he said, "Previously you recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Have you forgotten about it? What you have just seen is not yet the most torturous place. Be diligent in cultivating good karma. Now that you get to return, this is owing to the power of the scripture." Thereafter, he was escorted until he reached home. It was like a dream. He had already died for one night. The spot that he was pushed was bruised for a few days.

JY20: A Beacon Tower Guard of Fengzhou 豐州烽子[1157]

In the beginning of the Yongtai era (765–766), a beacon tower guard[1158] of Fengzhou (in modern Inner Mongolia) went out after sunset and was captured and taken by the Tanguts to Xibo (modern Lhasa, Tibet) to rear horses. The Tibetan general ordered holes to be made in his shoulder bones so as to have them tied by leather rope. He was assigned to take care of a few hundred horses.

After half a year, the number of horses doubled. The Tibetan general rewarded him with a few hundred sheep hides, and he moved to live closer to [the general's] tent. The king[1159] liked the beacon tower guard's working ability and thus ordered him to be by his side holding the big banner. Whenever there

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[1157] X87.1630: 470c16–471a6. Also: TPGJ57.

[1158] The term *fengzi* 烽子 refers to a soldier guarding the signal fire beacon tower (*fenghuo tai* 烽火臺).

[1159] *zanpu zi* 贊普子, also known as *zanpu* 贊普, *zanfu* 贊府, *zanbu* 贊逋, is a title of a Tibetan ruler.

was left over meat and cheese, the king would give them to the beacon tower guard.

The beacon tower guard lived there for another half a year. On one occasion when he was given cheese and meat, the beacon tower guard cried pitifully and did not eat them. The Tibetan king asked him why to which he replied, “I have an old mother whom I frequently dream of.” The king was quite kind, and after hearing that he was upset, at night, he summoned the beacon tower guard to his tent and said to him, “The Tibetan laws are strict. There is no precedent for releasing captives. I will give you two powerful horses, and I will let you off to return via a certain route. Do not tell others it is me [who released you].”

When the beacon tower guard received the horses, he rode them extremely hard, and both horses died of exhaustion. Thereafter, he would hide during the day and travel during the night. A few days later, his feet were injured by splinters, and he collapsed on the rocks in shallow water. Suddenly, there was a gust of wind blowing and something passed by with a rustling sound before him. He seized upon it and used it to wrap his feet. After a while, his legs were no long painful. When he tried to get up, he could walk like before. He arrived at the borders of Fengzhou after only two nights.

When he returned home, his mother was still living there. She was sad and happy at the same time, and said, “After I lost you, I did nothing but recite the *Diamond Sutra*. Except when I was asleep and eating, I was not remiss about it so that I could pray to see you again. Now I have indeed fulfilled the

vow." She thereby took out the scripture. [But] its stitching had broken, and there were a few pages missing. She did not know what happened to it. His son then told her about injuring his feet in the water rocks. His mother had him unwrap his feet to let her take a look at them. The wrapping around the injury was actually a few pages of the scripture, and the injury moreover had healed.

JY21: Wang Xiaolian 王孝廉[1160]

During the Dali era (766–779), in Taiyuan [District] (modern Jinyuan, Shandong) a horse thief falsely accused a certain Wang Xiaolian of being his accomplice. They interrogated him with torture for ten days during which he suffered greatly, and he was forced to confess. The investigating officer suspected he was wronged. Before his sentence was meted out, he did nothing but recite the *Diamond Sutra* in a very sorrowful voice days on end.

One day, a bamboo of two sections suddenly dropped into his prison cell. It swirled and came before him. Other convicts vied to obtain it. The prison guard thought that it concealed a dagger and broke it to see what was inside. There were two columns of words saying: "The idea of a dharma must be cast aside, to say nothing of the idea of what is not a dharma."[1161] The penmanship of the words was superb. The thief began to feel remorseful and admitted fully to implicating Wang due to a hidden grudge.

[1160] X87.1630: 471a7–15. Also: TPGJ60.

[1161] This is a phrase from the *Diamond Sutra*, T8.235: 749b11.

Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji
持誦金剛經靈驗功德記
(A Record of the Proven Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* and the Merit to be Gained from Upholding and Reciting It)[1162]

Compiled by
Zhai Fengda 翟奉達

GDJ1: Master Sengyan 僧琰師[1163]

In the past, during the Liang dynasty (502–557), when Master Sengyan of the Zhaoti Monastery began his novitiate, there was a physiognomist who said to him, "Master,[1164] although you have great intelligence and wisdom, unfortunately your appearance indicates that you have a short lifespan. What do you intend to do?" Hearing these words, he proceeded to invite the great venerables to discuss his fortune. [Sengyan asked,] "What kind of merit should I cultivate in order to prolong my lifespan?" The great venerables[1165] said, "A sagely Buddhist saying has it that the merit gained from receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra* according to the dharma is the greatest, and thus would definitely prolong your lifespan." Sengyan then followed their instruction and immediately ascended the mountain to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*.

[1162] This collection of *Diamond Sutra* tales is collected in the Taishō canon: T85.2743156c24–160a20. I have referred to a punctuated version by Zheng Acai (2010: 44–51) and another annotated version by Yang Baoyu (2009: 244–257).

[1163] T85.2743: 156c26–a6. Also: JYJ21, and FYZL16.

[1164] What is translated here as "master" is *shizi* 師子 in the manuscript. I take *zi* to be a suffix that indicates respect for the person addressed.

[1165] The term *dade* 大德 is often used to refer to elder monks of great virtue.

After six years, he descended the mountain and once again went to see the physiognomist. The latter asked him, "What merit have you cultivated since? You have the unique appearance of longevity, how could you have achieved this so suddenly?" Yan then told him everything, "When I was previously being physiognomized as having a short lifespan, I proceeded to ascend the mountain, where I did nothing but receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*." The physiognomist exclaimed, "Unbelievable!" As a result of this merit, Yan consequently became a great venerable Dharma master and lived to more than a hundred years before his life came to an end.

GDJ2: Master Sengzang 僧藏師[1166]

During the Liang dynasty, Kaishan Monastery monk Master Zhizang was famous for his lectures. At that time, there was a physiognomist,[1167] He Yinzi, who was skilled in reading faces.[1168] He happened to pass by and saw Zang, and told him, "Master Zang, although you are brilliant in your lectures, [you are totally wanting in longevity]."[1169] [When Zang heard that, he was

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[1166] T85.2743: 157a7–14. Also: JYJ22, and FYZL17. The Master Sengzang of this account (or Master Nizang 尼藏師 in the *Jiyan ji*) refers to the monk Zhizang (458–522). His biography is included in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T50.2060: 465c–467c. According to Chen Huaiyu, the monk Zhizang initiated the practice of receiving, upholding, reading, and reciting the *Diamond Sutra* in the South. See Chen 2007: 35–6.

[1167] With reference to other versions, the original *yinshi* 胤師 is an obvious scribal error due to subsequent characters.

[1168] In the *Fayuan zhulin* and *Xu gaoseng zhuan* accounts, it was an old woman who physiognomized the monk Zhizang.

[1169] The remaining words of He Yinzhi are missing. In the *Jiyan ji* version, we have "雖作法師，全無年壽。"

alarmed and frightened. He subsequently stopped lecturing.][1170] [When] he randomly picked a roll of scripture from the scriptural repository, intending to constantly receive and uphold it, he managed to pick the *Diamond Sutra*.

Zang stayed in his room to recite and uphold the sutra without leaving for three years. Later, he saw Yinzhi, who was happy to see him and said, "Master, what method do you have to change your countenance? What I, your disciple, prognosticated has no verification." Zang said, "*Dānapati*'s prognostication has great verification. I am able to overcome disaster this time all because I received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. Such is the power of the scripture." Yinzhi said, "This is an unbelievable merit and retribution. Now you have obtained the appearance of one who will live to more than a hundred years old." Indeed, it turned out as he foretold.

GDJ3: Brahman Monk, Dharma Master Zang 婆羅僧藏法師[1171]

During the Sui dynasty, there was a Brahman monk, Dharma Master Zang, who could use the restraining spell of the *Diamond Sutra*[1172] to eliminate all evils. There was a junior monk who studied under him and

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[1170] The missing text here is reconstructed with reference to JYJ22: "藏聞惶懼，遂廢講說。"

[1171] T85.2743: 157a15–b8. Also: JYJ35, and FYZL19. Technically, the account is not about Dharma Master Zang but the unnamed Buddhist monk who managed to subdue the local deity. As with JYJ35, I have referred to Donald Gjertson's translation for my translation here. Gjertson 1989: 29–30. The event is said to have taken place in the Jin period according to the *Fayuan zhulin* account, while according to the *Jiyan ji* account, it took place in the Liang period.

[1172] The term *Jin'gang jing jin zhou* 金剛經禁咒 is not found other versions. The *Fayuan zhulin* simply uses *zhou* 咒 (spell), while the *Jiyan ji* version has *jing zhou* 經咒 (sutra spell?).

mastered the art of casting spells. For several years, this junior monk greatly subdued various evils. [Once] this junior monk came to a riverbank and saw a temple of the god of Lake Gongting.[1173] Immediately, he sat in the temple. Spending the night there, the junior monk recited the restraining spell. This offense of his subsequently led to his death. When Zang heard of his disciple's death, he was enraged, and personally came to the temple of the god. Like his disciple, he sat in the temple and recited spells, and due to that, he immediately met his death.

At that time, there was a monk from the same monastery who had constantly received and upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. Having heard that both Master Zang and his disciple were struck dead by the god, he thereafter came to the god's place. He also sat in the temple and recited the *Diamond Sutra*. When night came, he heard loud and rapid sounds of wind. In a moment, he saw a creature whose shape was strange, magnificent and unique. It was fearsome and out of the ordinary. Displaying various forms and countenances, its eyes flashed like lightning. The master sat down and steadfastly recited the *Diamond Sutra* without rest. He was not frightened at all.

The god came before him. Reabsorbing its various awesome powers, it knelt down with its right knee on the ground and paid respect to the monk by putting its palms together. It listened to the scripture recitation until it ended. The master asked the god, "What god are you, *dānapati*? You were initially

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[1173] I have emended "saw the temple of a foreign god" (*jian yi hu shen zhi miao gongting* 見一胡神之廟) according to JYJ35 as well as the god's self-introduction below. See note to JYJ35 on the lore of the god of Lake Gongting.

ferocious but became calm and did not move later." The god then replied, "I, your disciple, am the god of Lake Gongting. I am by nature unyielding and violent. Seeing the master practice the Mahāyāna scripture, I thought it inconceivable and thus calmed down and listened." The monk asked, "*Dānapati*, since you are able to be so respectful and faithful, for what reasons did you kill the previous two monks who recited spells?" The god replied, "The other two monks were not able to uphold Mahāyāna scripture[s]. When they saw your disciple come, they turned on me and cursed me, and in their mouth recited evil words and magic spells. [Thus,] your disciple did not submit to them. Those two monks saw the form and appearance of your disciple, and both by themselves died out of fear; their deaths were not due to any purposeful violation and killing on the part of your disciple."

The people nearby knew that the master entered that god temple to stay for the night, and were afraid that, like the previous two monks, he had been struck dead. When it was morning, they went to the temple of the god to take a look. But they saw that it was calm and peaceful. They asked the master why that was so, and he replied in detail about what happened. Not a few among them as a result aspired to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*.

GDJ4: Zhao Wenchang 趙文昌[1174]

In the eleventh year of the Kaihuang era (591), Zhao Wenchang, Court of the Palace Revenues Aide, passed away. Because his chest was still warm,[1175]

[1174] T85.2743: 157b9–c6. Also: JYJ53, FYZL18, and TPGJ3.

Chang's family members did not yet dare to encoffin his body. Chang was in fact brought to King Yama. The king asked Chang, "Since your birth, what good deeds have you done?" Chang replied, "I have no other merit than the constant recitation of the *Diamond Sutra*." Having heard this, the king put his palms together and paid his respects to [Chang]. He praised Chang, "Wonderful! The merit obtained from receiving and upholding the *Diamond Sutra* is the greatest. It is unfathomable."

The king then said to the captor, "You'd better investigate this case again. Did you not bring him here by mistake?" The captor replied, "He is indeed brought here by mistake." Having heard that, the king said to Chang, "You may go into the repository of scriptures and bring the *Diamond Sutra* here." He ordered someone to guide Chang in the southwest direction until they reached the repository of scriptures. What he saw there was a huge building of more than a dozen *jian*, extremely beautiful, and full of scriptures inside, all with golden rollers and precious wrappings, and lavishly and ornately decorated beyond words of description.

Chang thereupon with a single mind closed his eyes and said, "The Sutra of the Greatest Merit." [He then randomly picked a scroll of scripture.][1176] Chang was afraid that the scripture was not [*Vajracchedikā-*

[1175] In the manuscript, the unintelligible phrase "*wei yi shang yuan*" 唯一尚煖 is given as the reason why the family of Zhao Wenchang did not dare encoffin his body. The phrase can be understood as *wei xin shang nuan* 唯心尚煖 (lit. only the heart is still warm), given the fact that the phrase is used in similar situations in other *Diamond Sutra* tales in the *Taiping guangji*. See TPGJ27, TPGJ96, and TPGJ97.

[1176] This sentence, which is missing in the *Gongde ji*, has been added here based on the accounts in the *Fayuan zhulin* (一心合掌閉目信手抽取一卷) and the *Jiyan ji* (信手抽得一卷).

]*prajñā*[*parāmitā*], thus he begged the official to let him exchange it for another scripture, but the official did not allow him to do so. Chang then unrolled the scripture to take a look, and it was indeed the *Diamond Sutra*.

Chang was brought back to the king, who ordered someone to hold the scripture in the west and Chang to recite the *Diamond Sutra* once standing in the east. All went well and the king then released Chang to return to the human realm. The king made Chang promise that he would receive and uphold the scripture, and be earnest and not neglect or forget about it.

Once again, the king ordered someone to guide Chang. When he was escorted out the gate, he saw Emperor Wu of the Zhou who was incarcerated in the eastern chamber of the gate. Emperor Wu called out to him, "You are my countryman. Come here for a while, I need to talk to you." Chang then went to see Emperor Wu to whom he repeatedly paid his respects. Emperor Wu asked him, "Do you recognize me?" Chang said, "Your official in the past had served as the imperial bodyguard of your Majesty." Emperor Wu was elated and said, "You are my former subject. You can return home and, on my behalf, convey to the current Emperor that my sins are all settled, with only the exception of my persecution of Buddhism that is yet to be settled. At that time, because of the malicious words of Wei Yuansong,[1177] I now had no choice but to be incarcerated here, without knowing when this will expire." Chang asked

[1177] Wei Yuansong (d.u.) was known for his role in the persecution of Buddhism during the Northern Zhou period. Wei was once a Buddhist monk but later returned to lay life. In 567, Wei submitted a memorial to Emperor Wu (r. 561–578) calling for the abolishment of Buddhism. In 574 and 577, Emperor Wu ordered to have Buddhist sutras and images destroyed and Buddhist monastics returned to lay life. See Xu 1980: 245–76.

[Emperor Wu, "Where is Yuansong? Why can't he be summoned by the king."][1178] Emperor Wu said,] "Yuansong is a person outside the three realms,[1179] not [within the territory] under King Yama's jurisdiction. Due to this, he could not be summoned. You go home and beg the current emperor for a little merit on my behalf, and save me from this suffering. Only then can I dare hope that this suffering will end."

Chang returned home and revived, and it had been five days since he died. He gradually recovered from his illness. He presented a memorial relating all that happened to Emperor Wen of Sui, who after learning about that, issued a decree to have monastics of all monasteries within his domain uphold *zhai* (vegetarian feast; abstinence), practice the way, and recite the *Diamond Sutra* continuously for Emperor Wu of Zhou. The imperial order was committed to historical records.[1180]

[1178] Missing text added based on accounts in the *Fayuan zhulin* (昌問元嵩何處去。王追不得。) and the *Jiyan ji* (昌問武帝。元嵩何處。追不可得。).

[1179] The *san jie* 三界 (Sk. *trailokya*) refer to the three realms in which sentient beings repeat their cycle of rebirth: (1) Desire realm (Ch. *yu jie* 欲界; Sk. *kāma-dhātu*), (2) Form realm (Ch. *se jie* 色界; Sk. *rūpa-dhātu*), and (3) Formless realm (Ch. *wuse jie* 無色界; Sk. *ārūpya-dhātu*).

[1180] To my knowledge, there is no mention of this in the *Sui shu* although there is a repentance text of Emperor Wen of Sui that contains related contents.

GDJ5: The Man from Suizhou 遂州人[1181]

There was someone in Suizhou who died in the first year of Zhenguan era (627) but revived after three days. This is what he related. Initially when he died, he was covered and rushed off together with a few companions to the place of King Yama. Among them, there was a monk whom the king saw and first called out to, "Come forward, Master. What merit have you cultivated in your entire life?" The master replied, "I only recite the *Diamond Sutra*." Having heard that, the king immediately rose and put his palms together, and praised him, "Wonderful! Since you uphold the *Diamond Sutra*, you should get to ascend to heaven. For what reason are you wrongly brought here?" Before the king could finish speaking, he saw heavenly clothed [ones] descend and lead the master up to the heaven.

The king returned to his seat. Next, he asked the man from Suizhou, "And you, what good retribution have you made from the past until now?" The man from Suizhou replied, "Among the classics I read in my entire life, I enjoy learning the writings of Yu Xin[1182] and the recorded compilations of various philosophers. Recently, I have learned to recite the *Diamond Sutra* but have not yet mastered it." The king said, "Would you recognize the great wrongdoer (Yu Xin) if you saw him?" The man from Suizhou replied, "Although I have read Yu Xin's writings, I actually do not know him."

[1181] T85.2743: 157c7–26. Also: JYJ24, FYZL6, and TPGJ11. The accounts in the *Fayuan zhulin* and the *Taiping guangji* identify the Suizhou native as Zhao Wenxin 趙文信. The length of the *Gongde ji* version is comparable to the *Fayuan zhulin* and *Taiping guangji* versions, but it is just half the length of the *Jiyan ji* one.

[1182] For information regarding Yu Xin, see the note on him in JYJ24.

The king then sent for the wretched man to be displayed. They then saw a big tortoise with one body but several heads. People said that this was Yu Xin. The tortoise left for a short period of time, during which the king said, "This person is learning to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. Let's have him released." [Next] came someone who said, "I am Yu Xin. When I was alive, I liked to quote from various scriptures and use them to compose my writings. I have slandered and defamed sutra texts. Now, I am receiving punitive retribution, which is the penalty of assuming the look of the tortoise you saw earlier."

With this, [the man from Suizhou] revived and related this incident. Everyone was sad about it; they all knew that it was true. In the land of the Suizhou man, many people hunted for living creatures and destroyed lives for food. At that time, Suizhou people all realized that to eliminate the cause of killing and doing harm [to living beings], one must aspire to receive and uphold the *Diamond Sutra*, to have faith in it, and to venerate it.

GDJ6: Qi Yantong 畦彥通[1183]

Qi Yantong of Weizhou (modern Longxi, Gansu) had always recited the *Diamond Sutra* his whole life. Previously, he served as Wulao District magistrate under Li Mi (582–618). Because rebels broke into the city and were searching for him, as they wanted to kill him, Yantong was frightened and panicked. He immediately climbed over the city wall and headed east, and

[1183] T85.2743: 157c27–158a6. Also: JYJ25 and TPGJ6. The family name of the protagonist here is Qi 畦, while the *Jiyan ji* and *Taiping guangji* versions give Mu 睦 as the family name.

committed suicide by jumping into a creek in the valley. The gorge was deep and steep, over a few hundred *zhang*. As he was coming down in the air, it was like someone had caught hold of him, and without realizing it, he had reached the bottom. He landed safely on a huge rock. Calmly, he sat upright for a long time before getting up without any injury. Yantong himself thought it strange and was very happy as well as frightened, and could not stop sighing in relief. From then onward, he himself knew of the mighty power of the great venerable *Diamond Sutra*. Truly knowing the great magnitude of the power of the scripture and the inconceivable merit [obtained from upholding it], he increased his faith in and veneration of it, and assiduously received and upheld the scripture, not daring to take it lightly and arrogantly. He always obtained good recompense and had immeasurable fortune.

GDJ7: Monk Fazang 僧法藏[1184]

Fazang (ca. fl. 600), a monk of Fuzhou's (modern Fu District, Shaanxi) Baoshi Monastery, was rigorous in his adherence of the precepts, and by nature straightforward. In the thirteenth year of the Kaihuang era (593), he built a monastery in Louchuan city, Luojiao District (modern Fu District, Shaanxi). There were a monastic lodging of more than twenty *jian* and a Buddha hall with three entrances constructed side by side. It had gorgeous bricks and tiles, and a colorfully decorated, exquisite roof. There was a Buddha statue of one *zhang* and six *chi*, different categories of deities, each with eleven

[1184] T85.2743: 158a7–29. Also: JYJ32 and FYZL1.

members. There was a life-size stone image of Avalokiteśvara and a thousand or so folding screen images.

When the monastery had to be relocated during the Daye (605–618) years, the images were ordered to be relocated to monasteries in the prefectures and cities, where they would be enshrined. Those that were broken or damaged would be repaired. All these tasks were accomplished and furthermore a complete canon was reproduced. Eight hundred rolls of scriptures were copied and lengthy papers were separately produced, and in Yueai Monastery in the capital, there was an order for copying scriptures, which would all have rollers made of sandalwood, and wonderfully adorned.

In the fourth month of the second year of the Wude era (619), Zang fell ill and after twenty days, he saw a person clad in green on the high pavilion, holding a roll of scripture in his hands. The person said, "Dharma Master Zang, all the merit you have produced until now is wonderful and good, except that you have made a little use of the property of the three treasures and the resultant sins are yet to be eliminated. In my hand is the *Diamond Sutra*, the foremost Mahāyāna scripture. If you were to personally make one roll, then all your sins would be totally eliminated."

Having heard this instruction, Zang replied, "If my illness heals, I aspire resolutely to produce a hundred copies of the *Diamond Sutra*. I, your disciple, must admit that although I have cultivated merit for my entire life, I have actually never copied the *Diamond Sutra*. Now that the Buddhas and bodhisattvas appeared, I have learnt and awakened, and will definitely not be

negligent. Your disciple has only three robes and an alms bowl, and when I bare my right shoulder, I will try my best to exhort my revered fellow monks, disciples, and acquaintances repeatedly on what your disciple has come to know personally, and take up the role of producing the *Diamond Sutra*."

After several days, he could get up. According to his vow, he straightaway produced the "Bhagavat in Śrāvastī."[1185] Having finished copying the first batch of the sutra, he further distributed them to others so that they would be passed down and be read and recited. He deeply knew that the mighty power of the Mahāyāna scripture, the *Diamond Sutra*, was the greatest and inconceivable. Unusual affairs have their conditions: one who passes down and exhorts others to uphold the *Diamond Sutra* will obtain recompense and immeasurable merit.

GDJ8: Monk Lingji 僧靈寂[1186]

During the Sui Dynasty, there was a monk Lingji who had two disciples. One day, the master suddenly sent for his disciples to come before him. [He said to them,] "I have heard that in Mt Wutai there is the great Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Whenever people visit and pay their respects to him, he manifests his appearance and countenance, and leads ordinary people [to the way]. Wouldn't it be good idea for the three of us to go there and pay our respects?"

[1185] Here, *pojiasuo* 婆伽娑 in the manuscript should read *pojiapo* 婆伽婆, a transliteration of the Sanskrit *bhagavat* that is used in Bodhiruci's translation of the *Diamond Sutra* (T8.236a). Therefore this probably means that the copy of the *Diamond Sutra* is made based on Bodhiruci's translation.

[1186] T85.2743: 158b1–20. This account is unique to the *Gongde ji*.

He brought along two donkeys, one carrying two hundred bolts of raw silk that he dispatched his disciples to drive, and another he rode himself. Straightaway, they set off.

The master for his whole life only upheld the *Diamond Sutra* and had no other vocation. From among [the sutras in] seven trunks, he had only brought along this sutra. They traveled for a few months. Once, they stopped for a break. They let the donkeys graze on the grassland. The master then took a rest on a felt that he spread under a tree. When the master was asleep, his two disciples talked, "Let's devise a plan to kill the monk. Each of us takes one hundred bolts of silk and a donkey, and we enter the capital to tour and indulge ourselves. Isn't that a lifetime's joy?"

Having thought of that, they decided to do it. One of the disciples took a knife and aimed at his master's waist and stabbed it. Having already stabbed the master three times to the extent that blood would have flowed out, the fourth stab missed the master like each of the other stabs. [The other disciple] tried to grab the knife but could not, and his hands also could not separated from the blade of the knife.[1187]

It seemed like a period of time for two meals before the master woke up and saw his disciples on their knees, with both hands lifting a knife. There was silence, and there was no exchange between them. Then, the monk asked, "Why did both of you have evil intentions?" His disciples both kneeled forward and related all about their original intentions. The monk acknowledged their

[1187] This is a tentative translation since the original text (已下三刀，至於血下，第四刀便乃各著空中，取刀不得，平（=手）亦不離刀上。) might be corrupted.

transgression. He then searched for the [sutra] case to get the sutra, intending to read it. [When he opened the case, he saw] three knife cuts at the midsection of the sutra that went right through the roller. When the monk showed others his waist, there were only three red lines. The knife could not injure him because it could not penetrate the few layers of clothing. Is this not due to the power of the *Diamond Sutra*?

GDJ9: Monk Lingyou 僧靈幽[1188]

In the past, the monk Lingyou (733?–832?) of Wenguo Monastery in Chang'an suddenly passed away for seven days, during which he met King Yama.[1189] The king asked the monk, "When you were alive, what scriptural practice did you have?" Lingyou replied, "I upheld the *Diamond Sutra*." The king thereupon put his palms together and requested him to recite [the *Diamond Sutra*]. Within a short period of time, Lingyou finished reciting [the *Diamond Sutra*]. The king again asked the monk, "Although you are able to

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[1188] T85.2743: 158b21–27. This account is not found in other Tang collections. Lingyou's biography can be found in the twenty-fifth roll of *Song gaoseng zhuan* (T50.2061: 869a29–b14). It does not furnish much information about him, but the same tale is recounted there. This account is mentioned in Huineng's and Hong Lian's commentaries of the *Diamond Sutra*. According to the *Jin'gang jing yangu* 金剛經演古 (Ancient Explications on the *Diamond Sutra*; X25.495), a commentary composed by monk Jiyan of the Qing period, monk Lingyou's return-from-death experience took place in the second year of the Changqing era (822). Since monk Lingyou is said to have prolonged his lifespan by ten years, he thus died sometime in 832. This is an important tale that serves to explain the addition of 62 characters to Kumārajīva's translation of the *Diamond Sutra*. This is first noted in modern scholarship by Hirano Kenshō (1978: 289) with reference to Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Diamond Sutra*. See also Gu 2007: 372–3.

[1189] *pingdeng wang* 平等王 (lit. impartial king) is another name for King Yama since he is supposed to be an impartial or just judge. Although the name also refers to the eighth king in the scheme of the Underworld Ten Kings popular at the end of Tang, it is apparent that it refers to King Yama here.

recite the scripture, haven't you missed a *gāthā* of it?" Lingyou replied to the king, "I just recited according to [my] copy [of the *Diamond Sutra*]. I do not know which *gāthā*[1190] is missing." The king said, "[Although] your lifespan has already expired, I will further grant you ten years to live. This scripture has a true copy on the stele in the west of the city of Haozhou (modern Chuzhou, Anhui). Let it be transmitted to all under Heaven." [After that,] the monk came back to life, and related everything [to others].

GDJ10: Chen Zhao 陳昭[1191]

Chen Zhao, a clerk in Hanzhou (modern Guanghan, Sichuan), died and revived after two days. He related the entirety of his experience: Initially, when he reached the underworld, the Judge asked him, "You worked for Minister Liu and killed forty-seven cows. Own up! Why did you take one of the cows?" Zhao lied that he didn't do it. In a while, a person came forth who claimed to be the official who escorted the cows. Zhao immediately knew that he could not lie anymore, and thereupon consulted the Judge on how he could avoid the penalty. The Judge asked, "When you were alive, what merit did you have?" Zhao answered, "I always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*." Before he could finish

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[1190] *ji* 偈, an abbreviation of the transliterations of the Sanskrit *gāthā* (*jita* 偈他 or *jiatuo* 伽陀). It refers to the poetic verses of scriptures, as opposed to the prose portion. These poetic verses are metrical hymn or chant, often of 4, 5, or 7 words to a line.

[1191] T85.2743: 158b28–c5. The story of Chen Zhao is also scribbled on the verso of P4025 in cursive hand and varies from JYJ (158b28.1–c511). Also in more detailed versions: JY7, and TPGJ72. This *Gongde ji* version is a mere summary of the accounts in the *Jiuyi* and the *Taiping guangji*.

speaking, the scripture fell from the air. He thereupon was released and returned to life and lived for eighteen more years.

GDJ11: Layman Gou 苟居士[1192]

Layman Gou took delight in doing good and focused on reciting and upholding the *Diamond Sutra*. In a village northwest of Xinfan District (modern Chengdu, Sichuan), he aspired to copy the *Diamond Sutra* for heavenly deities by writing it in the air with a brush. That spot on which he copied the scripture would not get wet whenever it rained. Ignorant of this at first, villagers who grazed their cows there repeatedly took shelter from the rain at that spot. Later, when there was a foreign monk who passed by and saw that, he told the villagers, "This is a scriptural platform, and there is a scripture in the air. During days of vegetarian feast, there frequently appears an ornamental jeweled canopy." This platform is thirty *li* northwest of the district town. It is still there.

GDJ12: Wang Tuo 王陀[1193]

In the past, Wang Tuo had killed countless times in his entire life. He later aspired to focus on upholding the *Diamond Sutra* ten thousand times.

[1192] T85.2743: 158c6–11. Also: FYZL3, and TPGJ4. This tale first appeared sometime in the middle of the seventh century; it is collected in Daoxuan's *Da tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (664; T55.2149) and *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* (664; T52.2106). Later, it was collected in many other works, such as the *Fayuan zhulin* (T52.2122: 421b25–c8). The tale traveled to the northwestern China, and Central Asia. There is even a Uighur version, see Zieme 1999: 276–288. For a list of compilations in which this tale is collected, see Shao 2012: 72–76.

[1193] T85.2743: 158c12–7. Also: JYJ23 and TPGJ28.

When he had recited the sutra five thousand times, suddenly one day at midday he saw a few dozen ghosts approach him and say to him, "The king has issued an official notice to summon you. Stop upholding the scripture for the time being." Tuo immediately stopped reciting and followed those ghosts. Later on, a ghost emissary came riding on a horse and conveyed an order to the ghosts: "The king has decreed that this upholder of the sutra be released for the time being." Wang Tuo was thereupon pardoned from death and lived to ninety-eight before passing away.

GDJ13: Wang Chao 王綽[1194]

In the past, Wang Chao was serving as the Law Section Administrator of the Tianshui Commandery (modern Tianshui, Gansu) when Xue Ju[1195] (d. 618) revolted, and killed soldiers. In due course, he came to kill Wang Chao, but his blade broke into pieces. He again had the fighter Song Luo stab Wang Chao with a blade, but it also broke into pieces. Xue Ju thought it strange and asked, "What method do you have?" Wang Chao replied, "When I was young, I upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. It must be the power of the scripture. Xue Ju thereupon released Wang Chao. Chao was very terrified, so he entered a lavatory to hide and recited the scripture there. Light shone from within the lavatory. The rebels traced the light and came to the lavatory. There they saw

[1194] T85.2743: 158c18–25. This tale is not found in other Tang collections.

[1195] Formally Emperor Wu 武皇帝, the founding emperor of a short-lived state of Qin at the end of the Sui Dynasty, had his state eventually destroyed by the Tang Dynasty. He rose against Sui rule in 617 and soon controlled modern eastern Gansu, but while he had some successes against Tang forces, he was not able to push forward to the Tang capital Chang'an before he died of an illness.

someone and asked, “Who are you?” The person in the lavatory replied, “I am the Wang Chao who did not die from being stabbed by blades.” The rebels said, “You don’t have to hide. All the soldiers know about that. You just go home.” With this, he was able to avert the misfortune.

GDJ14: Zhu Shiheng 朱士衡[1196]

In the past, there was a certain Zhu Shiheng who was by nature brutish and evil, and he did not respect the three treasures.[1197] He was the left vice director of the state of Liang. His wife always took delight in doing good and specialized in upholding the *Diamond Sutra*. When her husband was not at home, she would properly uphold the *Diamond Sutra*. Later, her husband returned from outside and saw his wife [upholding the *Diamond Sutra*]. He then snatched the *Diamond Sutra* from his wife’s hands and tossed it into the fire. However, when the scripture entered the fire, it extinguished, and the scripture furthermore was not damaged. Thereafter, both husband and wife retrieved the scripture scroll and repented before the image of the Buddha.

[1196] T85.2743: 158c16–a1. This story, with a little variation in words, is scribbled on the recto of P4025.

[1197] The three treasures refer to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Buddhist monastic community.

GDJ15: Cui Shangchong 崔善沖[1198]

In the past, when Cui Shanchong was an administrative assistant in Xizhou (modern Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan), he encountered an uprising during which the prefect was killed. Shanchong, leading more than twenty men equipped with bows and swords, fled to take shelter in the city of Kunming (modern Yanyuan, Sichuan). When night came, they did not know their way and where they were. Shanchong told the soldiers, "Recite [the name of the] Buddha with all your heart." Chong himself recited the *Diamond Sutra*. Giving free rein to their horses, they proceeded forward. Suddenly, they saw a fire torch in front leading them forward. They traveled for a few li before the fire went out and there was no light. Eventually, they managed to reach Kunming city. All this was due to the power of the scripture.

GDJ16: Tang Yan 唐晏[1199]

In the past, Tang Yan was an official in the Qi District, Zizhou (modern Santai County, Sichuan). He always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. Because he was remiss in some affairs, he resigned from his office. When he came to the Suizhou (modern Suining, Sichuan) road, the former District in which he worked, people went out to capture him. Yan heard someone's voice in the air

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[1198] T85.2743: 158a2–6. Also: JYJ15. An entry on Cui Shanchong is collected in the *Taiping guang* (roll 112; source: *Baoying ji*), but it merely mentions that Cui "single-mindedly recited the sutra" (*yi xin nian jing* 一心念經).

[1199] T85.2743: 158a7–11. Also: a detailed version JYJ12. An entry on Tang Yan is collected just after the entry on Cui Shanchong in *Taiping guangji* (roll 112; source: *Baoying ji*). Again, there is no mention of the *Diamond Sutra*.

saying, “Tang Yan, Hurry! Hurry!” Yan thereupon raised his head and saw that there was a foreign monk. Yan then hid behind a tree and recited the scripture wholeheartedly. A dozen or so of his pursuers were in front of the tree but could not see him. He then managed to escape from the ordeal.

GDJ17: Wei Xu 魏昫[1200]

Wei Xu was a native of Qin.[1201] He always upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. Underworld officials tried to summon him three times but failed. The king sent an official to inform him that he would be spared for the time being.

GDJ18: Li Yan 李延[1202]

Li Yan was a native of Nanyang Commandery (modern Dengzhou, Henan).[1203] He served as a District Defender in Dezhou (modern Ling County, Shandong). For all his life, he upheld the *Diamond Sutra*. Whenever he upheld the scripture, divine light would appear.

[1200] T85.2743: 158a12–3. Also: JYJ59, and TPGJ53. A different name, Wei Xun 魏恂, is given the *Jiyan ji* and the *Taiping guangji*. In the latter account, he is said to be the son of a certain Shangde 尚德 who served as the Left Secretariat of the Heir Apparent.

[1201] It is not certain whether this refers to Qinzhou (modern Taian County, Gansu).

[1202] T85.2743: 158a14–5. Also: JYJ52, and TPGJ61. Essentially the same account, as the protagonist is named Bei Tingguang 孛廷光 in the *Jiyan ji* and Li Tingguang 李廷光 in the *Taiping guangji*.

[1203] In the *Jiyan ji*, he is identified as a native of Zhao Commandery (modern Zhao County, Hebei). Both Nanyang and Zhao commanderies are Sui designations.

GDJ19: Madam Dou 竇氏[1204]

In the past, when Madam Dou had a headache at night, she ordered her maid to bring fire from the kitchen. The maid said there was none. Suddenly, she saw a fire torch before the step. She then ascended the steps, and it was like the sun in the day. The mistress' headache then healed. Do not practice without a sincere heart. This was all due to the power derived from constantly upholding the *Diamond Sutra*.

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Further, there are other upholders of the *Diamond Sutra* who had obtained proofs [of its efficacy], [but] I shall not mention all of them since that would make the text too long.

With the above accounts proving [the efficacy of] the *Diamond Sutra*, instead of causing someone to make an offering with the seven treasures of the thousand-millionfold world, he/she should transmit and pass down the fact that merit of this sutra is the greatest. If someone copies the *Diamond Sutra*, receives, upholds, reads, and recites it, and causes others to copy, transmit, and propagate it, the person is like a lamp that lights up hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, or millions of lamps [causing] all the dark realms to be illuminated indefinitely. If someone can copy this text on the walls of monasteries, the person's merit will be immeasurable, boundless, and inconceivable.

[1204] T85.2743: 158a16–8. Also: JYJ20, FYZL4, and TPGJ20.

Appendix 1: *Diamond Sutra* Tales in the *Fayuan zhulin*

Tale No.	T53.2122	Protagonist	Source Given	Also as
FYZL1	420b2–19	Shi Fazang, Sui Monk 隋沙門釋法藏	冥報記	JYJ32, GDJ7
FYZL2	421a27–b10	Linghu Gui of Longzhou 隆州令狐元軌	三寶感通記	-
FYZL3	421b25–c8	Mr Xun, Xizhou Student 益州書生荀氏	三寶感通記	GDJ11, TPGJ4
FYZL4	421c9–24	Lady Doulu 豆盧夫人	冥報記	JYJ20, GDJ19, TPGJ20
FYZL5	422a1–10	Liu Jian, Adjutant of Xingzhou 邢州司馬柳儉	冥報記	JYJ1, TPGJ9
FYZL6	422a11–b1	Zhao Wenxin, Suizhou Native 趙文信遂州人趙文信	冥報記	GDJ5, TPGJ11
FYZL7	422b2–16	Liu Bi, Fengzhou District Defender 蓬州縣丞劉弼	冥報記	JYJ36, TPGJ12
FYZL8	422b17–22	Lu Huaisu, Wu Commandery Native 吳郡人陸懷素	冥報記	TPGJ16
FYZL9	422b23–9	Sima Qiaoqing of Henei 河內司馬喬卿	冥報拾遺	JYJ40, TPGJ17
FYZL10	422c1–7	Sun Shou, Pingzhou Native 平州人孫壽孫壽	冥報拾遺	JYJ39, TPGJ18
FYZL11	422c8–18	Li Qian of Zhengzhou 鄭州李虔	冥報拾遺	JYJ37, TPGJ19
FYZL12	422c14–8	Proof of the Scripture's Efficacy at Jiyin District, Caozhou 曹州濟陰縣經驗	冥報拾遺	JYJ38

FYZL13	578a11–21	Prefect Ren Yifang 刺史任義方	冥報拾遺	-
FYZL14	586a01–4	Zhang Taixuan, Ex-Official of Kuaiji 會稽處士張太玄	-	-
FYZL15	665c3–14	Monk of Shibi Monastery in Bingzhou 并州石壁寺僧	冥報拾遺	JYJ57
FYZL16	761a1–12	Shi Yan, Liang Monk 梁沙門釋琰	梁高僧傳	JYJ21, GDJ1
FYZL17	761a13–29	Shi Zhizang, Liang Monk 梁沙門釋智藏	梁高僧傳	JYJ22, GDJ2
FYZL18	875c14–876a24	Zhao Wenchang 趙文昌	冥報記	JYJ53, GDJ4, TPGJ3
FYZL19	909b28–c23	Proof of the Scripture's Efficacy at the Temple of the God of Pavilion Lake 亭湖神廟經驗	-	JYJ35, GDJ3
FYZL20	911a21–912a27	Madam Xiao, Wife of Board of Revenue Official 司元大夫妻蕭氏	-	-
FYZL21	979a8–b8	Zhao Wenruo of the Sui 隋趙文若	-	JYJ54, TPGJ2
FYZL22	980c6–24	Ren Wuniang 任五娘	-	JYJ34, TPGJ21

Appendix 2: Tales of the *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji*

Tale No.	X87.1629	Protagonist	Source Given	Also as:
JYJ1	449b14–23	Liu Jian 柳儉	金剛般若經靈驗記	FYZL5, TPGJ9
JYJ2	449b24–c7	Du Zhiliang 杜之亮	冥報拾遺	TPGJ7
JYJ3	449c8–450a15	Dou Dexuan 竇德玄	-	TPGJ25
JYJ4	450a16–b4	Girl in You Xun's 游珣 Household	-	-
JYJ5	450b5–18	Wang Chongyi 王崇一	-	-
JYJ6	450b19–c7	Ren Huan 任環	-	-
JYJ7	450c8–16	Wang Changyan 王昌言	-	-
JYJ8	450c17–24	Wang Lingwang 王令望	-	TPGJ29
JYJ9	450a1–9	Cui Wenjian 崔文簡	-	TPGJ38
JYJ10	451a10–6	Pei Xuanli 裴宣禮	-	TPGJ35
JYJ11	451a17–22	Wei Keqin 韋克勤	-	TPGJ14
JYJ12	451a23–c3	Tang Yan 唐晏	-	GDJ16
JYJ13	451c4–12	Guo Shouqiong 郭守瓊	-	-
JYJ14	451c13–452a11	Shi Shenyan 釋神晏	-	-
JYJ15	452a12–21	Cui Shanchong 崔善沖	-	GDJ15
JYJ16	452a22–b3	Shang Xingcong 尚行琮	-	-
JYJ17	452b4–14	Madam Wang, Chen Hui's Wife 陳惠妻王氏	-	TPGJ30
JYJ18	452b15–22	Xiang Renzhe 向仁悊	-	TPGJ24

JYJ19	452b23–c14	He Hong 何澋	-	TPGJ31
JYJ20	453a5–16	Lady Doulu 豆盧夫人	冥報記	FYZL4, GDJ19, TPGJ20
JYJ21	453a17–b1	Master Sengyan 僧琰師	金剛般若經靈驗記	FYZL16, GDJ1
JYJ22	453b2–8	Master Nizang 尼藏師	金剛般若經靈驗記	FYZL17, GDJ2
JYJ23	453b9–c7	Wang Tuo 王陀 (idem. 陁)	金剛般若經靈驗記	GDJ12, TPGJ28
JYJ24	453c8–454a20	Wei Min 魏旻	金剛般若經靈驗記	-
JYJ25	454a21–b4	Mu Yantong 睦彥通	金剛般若經靈驗記	GDJ6, TPGJ6
JYJ26	454b5–c5	Li Siyi 李思一	金剛般若經靈驗記	-
JYJ27	454c6–455a24	Murong Wence 慕容文策	金剛般若經靈驗記	TPGJ8
JYJ28	455b1–c22	Yuan Zhitong 袁志通	金剛般若經靈驗記	TPGJ13
JYJ29	455c23–456a15	Wu Sixuan 吳思玄	-	TPGJ36
JYJ30	456a16–b2	Monk Shi Dezun 僧釋德遵	-	
JYJ31	456b3–10	Du Sine 杜思訥	-	TPGJ54
JYJ32	456c5–457a15	Monk Fazang 僧法藏	金剛般若經靈驗記	FYZL1, GDJ7
JYJ33	457a16–b20	Shen Jiahui 沈嘉會	冥報拾遺	TPGJ15
JYJ34	457b22–c13	Ren Wuniang 任五娘	冥報拾遺	FYZL22, TPGJ21
JYJ35	458a5–22	Brahman Master Fazang 羅門師法藏	金剛般若經靈驗記	FYZL19, GDJ3
JYJ36	458a23–b3	Liu Bi 劉弼	金剛般若經靈驗記	FYZL7, TPGJ12
JYJ37	458b4–8	Li Qianguan 李虔觀	冥報拾遺	FYZL11, TPGJ19

JYJ38	458b9–12	Hermitage in Jiyin District 濟陰縣精舍	冥報拾遺	FYZL12
JYJ39	458b13–7	Sun Shou 孫壽	冥報拾遺	FYZL10, TPGJ18
JYJ40	458b18–23	Qiao Qing 喬卿	冥報拾遺	FYZL9, TPGJ17
JYJ41	458b24–c6	Yang Tiji 楊體幾	-	TPGJ37
JYJ42	458c7–12	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ43	458c13–459a19	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ44	459a20–b5	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ45	459b6–15	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ46	459b16–21	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ47	459b22–460a2	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ48	460a3–b12	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ49	460b13–461a2	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ50	461a3–9	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ51	461a10–8	Chen Wenjian 陳文建	-	TPGJ22
JYJ52	461a19–21	Bei Tingguang 孛廷光	-	GDJ18, TPGJ61
JYJ53	461b12–c18	Zhao Wenchang 趙文昌	金剛般若經靈驗記	FYZL18, GDJ4, TPGJ3
JYJ54	461c19–462a16	Zhao Wenruo 趙文若	金剛般若經靈驗記	FYZL21, TPGJ2
JYJ55	462a17–22	Dharma Master Qixuan 栖玄法師	冥報拾遺	-
JYJ56	462a23–b16	Gao Chun 高純	冥報拾遺	TPGJ23
JYJ57	462b17–c2	Old Monk of Shibi Monastery 石壁寺老僧	冥報拾遺	FYZL15

JYJ58	462c3–22	Yu Chang 于昶	-	TPGJ34
JYJ59	462c23–463a11	Wei Xun 魏恂	-	GDJ17, TPGJ53
JYJ60	463a12–6	Zhang Xuansu 張玄素	-	TPGJ32
JYJ61	463a17–21	Xue Yan 薛嚴	-	TPGJ63
JYJ62	463a22–464a5	Yao Dai 姚待	-	TPGJ39
JYJ63	464a6–10	Yang Jian 楊簡	-	-
JYJ64	464a11–c15	Li Qiuyi 李丘一	-	TPGJ33
JYJ65	464c23–465a5	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ66	465a6–11	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ67	465a12–b8	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ68	465b9–c3	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ69	465c4–8	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ70	465c9–20	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ71	465c21–a466a5	Monk Qingxu 僧清虛	-	-
JYJ72	465a6–21	Lü Wenzhan 呂文展	-	TPGJ40

Appendix 3: Tales of the *Jin'gang jing jiuyi*

Tale No.	X87.1630	Protagonist	Also as:
JY1	467c20–468a8	Zhang Qiqiu 張齊丘	TPGJ58
JY2	468a9–22	Inspector Wang Mou 虞候王某	TPGJ66
JY3	468a23–b18	Sun Xian 孫咸	TPGJ67
JY4	468b17–23	Monk Zhideng 僧智燈	TPGJ68
JY5	468b24–c5	Wang Conggui's Younger Sister 王從貴妹	TPGJ69
JY6	468c6–14	Left Encampment Section Leader 左營伍伯	TPGJ70
JY7	468c15–469a18	Chen Zhao 陳昭	GDJ10, TPGJ72
JY8	469a19–b4	Monk Weigong 僧惟恭	TPGJ79
JY9	469b5–15	Dong Jinchao 董進朝	TPGJ81
JY10	469b16–21	Wang Mian 王沔	TPGJ80
JY11	469b22–c2	Monk Huizong 僧會宗	-
JY12	469c3–11	Monk Fazheng 僧法正	TPGJ85
JY13	469c12–6	Novice Monk Daoyin 沙彌道蔭	TPGJ86
JY14	469c17–470a9	Wang Zhonggan 王忠幹	TPGJ73
JY15	470a10–7	He Zhen's Wife 何軫妻	TPGJ90
JY16	470a18–24	Wang Yin 王殷	TPGJ91
JY17	470b1–8	Zhao An 趙安	TPGJ89
JY18	470b9–19	Wang Han 王翰	TPGJ92
JY19	470b20–c15	Gao She 高涉	TPGJ95

JY20	470c16–471a6	A Beacon Tower Guard of Fengzhou 豐州烽子	TPGJ57
JY21	471a7–15	Wang Xiaolian 王孝廉	TPGJ60

Appendix 4: Tales of the *Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji*

Tale No.	T85.2743	Protagonist	Also as
GDJ1	156c26–a6	Master Sengyan 僧琰師	FYZL16, JYJ21
GDJ2	157a7–14	Master Sengzang 僧藏師	FYZL17, JYJ22
GDJ3	157a15–b8	Brahman Monk, Dharma Master Zang 婆羅僧藏法師	FYZL19, JYJ35
GDJ4	157b9–c6	Zhao Wenchang 趙文昌	FYZL18, JYJ53, TPGJ3
GDJ5	157c7–26	The Man from Suizhou 遂州人	FYZL6, TPGJ11
GDJ6	157c27–158a6	Qi Yantong 畦彥通	JYJ25, TPGJ6
GDJ7	158a7–29	Monk Fazang 僧法藏	FYZL1, JYJ32
GDJ8	158b1–20	Monk Lingji 僧靈寂	-
GDJ9	158b21–27	Monk Lingyou 僧靈幽	-
GDJ10	158b28–c5	Chen Zhao 陳昭	JY7, TPGJ72
GDJ11	158c6–11	Layman Gou 苟居士	FYZL3, TPGJ4
GDJ12	158c12–7	Wang Tuo 王陀 (idem. 陁)	JYJ23, TPGJ28
GDJ13	158c18–25	Wang Chao 王綽	-
GDJ14	158c16–a1	Zhu Shiheng 朱士衡	-
GDJ15	158a2–6	Cui Shanchong 崔善沖	JYJ15
GDJ16	158a7–11	Tang Yan 唐晏	JYJ12
GDJ17	158a12–3	Wei Xu 魏昫	JYJ59, TPGJ53

GDJ18	158a14–5	Li Yan 李延	JYJ52, TPGJ61
GDJ19	158a16–8	Madam Dou 竇氏	FYZL4, JYJ20, TPGJ20

Appendix 5: Diamond Sutra Tales in *Taiping guangji*, rolls 102–108

Tale No.	*Taiping Guangji*	Protagonist	Source Given	Also as:
TPGJ1	102: 684	Lu Jingyu 盧景裕	報應記	-
TPGJ2	102: 684–5	Zhao Wenruo 趙文若	報應記	FYZL21, JYJ54
TPGJ3	102: 684–5	Zhao Wenchang 趙文昌	法苑珠林	FYZL18, JYJ53, GDJ4
TPGJ4	102: 686	Student from Xinfan District 新繁縣書生	三寶感通錄	FYZL3, GDJ11
TPGJ5	102: 686	Kuai Wu'an 蒯武安	報應記	-
TPGJ6	102: 687	Mu Yantong 睦彥通	報應記	JYJ25, GDJ06
TPGJ7	102: 687	Du Zhiliang 杜之亮	報應記	JYJ2
TPGJ8	102: 687–8	Murong Wence 慕容文策	報應記	JYJ27
TPGJ9	102: 688	Liu Jian 柳儉	法苑珠林	FYZL5, JYJ1
TPGJ10	102: 688	Xiao Yu 蕭瑀	報應記	-
TPGJ11	102: 689	Zhao Wenxin 趙文信	法苑珠林	FYZL6, GDJ5
TPGJ12	102: 689–90	Liu Bi 劉弼	法苑珠林	FYZL18, JYJ36
TPGJ13	102: 690	Yuan Zhitong 袁志通	報應記	JYJ28
TPGJ14	102: 690	Wei Keqin 韋克勤	報應記	JYJ11
TPGJ15	102: 690–1	Shen Jiahui 沈嘉會	報應記	JYJ33
TPGJ16	102: 691	Lu Huaisu 陸懷素	冥報記	FYZL8
TPGJ17	103: 692	Sima Qiaoqing 司馬喬卿	法苑珠林	FYZL9, JYJ40
TPGJ18	103: 692	Sun Shou 孫壽	法苑珠林	FYZL10, JYJ39
TPGJ19	103: 693	Li Guan 李觀	法苑珠林	FYZL11, JYJ37

TPGJ20	103: 693	Lady Doulu 豆盧夫人	法苑珠林	FYZL4, JYJ20, GDJ19
TPGJ21	103: 693–4	Nun Xiuxing 尼修行	冥報記	FYZL22, JYJ34.
TPGJ22	103: 694	Chen Wenda 陳文達	法苑珠林 (?)	JYJ51
TPGJ23	103: 694–5	Gao Zhi 高紙	報應記	JYJ56
TPGJ24	103: 695	Bai Renzhe 白仁晢	報應記	JYJ18
TPGJ25	103: 695–6	Dou Dexuan 竇德玄	報應記	JYJ3
TPGJ26	103: 696	Song Yilun 宋義倫	報應記	-
TPGJ27	103: 697	Li Gang 李岡	報應記	-
TPGJ28	103: 697	Wang Tuo 王陀 (idem. 陁)	報應記	JYJ23, GDJ12
TPGJ29	103: 697–8	Wang Lingwang 王令望	報應記	JYJ8
TPGJ30	103: 698	Madam Wang, Chen Hui's Wife 陳惠妻王氏	報應記	JYJ17
TPGJ31	103: 698	He Hong 何澴	報應記	JYJ19
TPGJ32	103: 698	Zhang Xuansu 張玄素	報應記	JYJ60
TPGJ33	103: 699	Li Qiuyi 李丘一	報應記	JYJ64
TPGJ34	104: 700	Yu Chang 于昶	報應記	JYJ58
TPGJ35	104: 700	Pei Xuanli 裴宣禮	報應記	JYJ10
TPGJ36	104: 701	Wu Sixuan 吳思玄	報應記	JYJ29
TPGJ37	104: 701	Old Man of Mount Yin 銀山老人	報應記	JYJ41
TPGJ38	104: 701–2	Cui Wenjian 崔文簡	報應記	JYJ9
TPGJ39	104: 702	Yao Dai 姚待	報應記	JYJ62

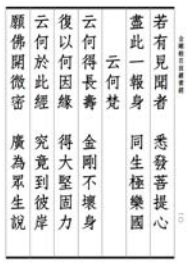
TPGJ40	104: 702	Lü Wenzhan 呂文展	報應記	JYJ72
TPGJ41	104: 702	A Convict of Chang'an District 長安縣繫囚	廣異記	-
TPGJ42	104: 703–4	Li Xu 李虛	紀聞	-
TPGJ43	104: 704–5	Mr Lu 盧氏	廣異記	-
TPGJ44	104: 705–6	Chen Libin 陳利賓	廣異記	-
TPGJ45	104: 706	Wang Hong 王宏	廣異記	-
TPGJ46	104: 706	Mr Tian 田氏	廣異記	-
TPGJ47	105: 707	Li Weiyan 李惟燕	廣異記	-
TPGJ48	105: 708	Sun Ming 孫明	廣異記	-
TPGJ49	105: 708–9	Master Sandao 三刀師	廣異記	-
TPGJ50	105: 709	Song Cenjun 宋叅軍	廣異記	-
TPGJ51	105: 709–10	Liu Hongjian 劉鴻漸	廣異記	-
TPGJ52	105: 710–1	Zhang Jiayou 張嘉猷	廣異記	-
TPGJ53	105: 711	Wei Xu 魏恂	廣異記	JYJ59, GDJ17
TPGJ54	105: 711	Du Sine 杜思訥	廣異記	JYJ31
TPGJ55	105: 711–2	Abbot of Longxing Monastery 龍興寺主	廣異記	-
TPGJ56	105: 712	Chen Zhe 陳哲	廣異記	-
TPGJ57	105: 712–3	A Beacon Tower Guard of Fengzhou 豐州烽子	酉陽雜俎	JY20
TPGJ58	105: 713	Zhang Yi 張鎰	酉陽雜俎	JY1
TPGJ59	105: 713	Cui Ning 崔寧	報應記	-

TPGJ60	106: 714	Xiaolian of Taiyuan 太原孝廉	酉陽雜俎	JY21
TPGJ61	106: 714	Li Tingguang 李廷光	報應記	JYJ52, GDJ18
TPGJ62	106: 714–5	Lu Kangcheng 陸康成	報應記	-
TPGJ63	106: 715	Xue Yan 薛嚴	報應記	JYJ61
TPGJ64	106: 715	Ren Zixin 任自信	報應記	-
TPGJ65	106: 716	Duan Wenchang 段文昌	酉陽雜俎	JYJ Preface
TPGJ66	106: 716–7	Liu Yihuai 劉逸淮	因話錄	JY2
TPGJ67	106: 717	Sun Xian 孫咸	酉陽雜俎	JY3
TPGJ68	106: 718	Monk Zhideng 僧智燈	酉陽雜俎	JY4
TPGJ69	106: 718	Madam Wang 王氏	酉陽雜俎	JY5
TPGJ70	106: 718–9	Left Encampment Section Leader 左營 伍伯	酉陽雜俎	JY6
TPGJ71	106: 719–20	Song Kan 宋衍	報應記	-
TPGJ72	106: 720–1	Chen Zhao 陳昭	酉陽雜俎	JY7, GDJ10
TPGJ73	107: 722–3	Wang Zhonggan 王忠幹	酉陽雜俎	JY14
TPGJ74	107: 723	Wang Cheng 王俜	報應記	-
TPGJ75	107: 723–4	Li Yuanyi 李元一	報應記	-
TPGJ76	107: 724	Yu Wanying 魚萬盈	報應記	-
TPGJ77	107: 724–5	Yu Lihui 于李回	報應記	-
TPGJ78	107: 725	Qiang Boda 強伯達	報應記	-
TPGJ79	107: 725–6	Monk Weigong 僧惟恭	酉陽雜俎	JY8

TPGJ80	107: 726	Wang Mian 王沔	酉陽雜俎	JY10
TPGJ81	107: 726	Dong Jinchao 董進朝	報應記	JY9
TPGJ82	107: 726–7	Kang Zhongqi 康仲戚	報應記	-
TPGJ83	107: 727	Wu Kejiu 吳可久	報應記	-
TPGJ84	107: 727	Jia Xingli 玾行立	報應記	-
TPGJ85	107: 728	Monk Fazheng 僧法正	酉陽雜俎	JY12
TPGJ86	107: 728	Novice Monk Daoyin 沙彌道蔭	酉陽雜俎	JY13
TPGJ87	107: 728	Old Man He 何老	報應記	-
TPGJ88	107: 729	Gou Longyi 勾龍義	報應記	-
TPGJ89	107: 729	Zhao An 趙安	報應記	JY17
TPGJ90	108: 730	He Zhen 何軫	酉陽雜俎	JY15
TPGJ91	108: 730–1	Wang Yin 王殷	酉陽雜俎	JY16
TPGJ92	108: 731	Wang Han 王翰	酉陽雜俎	JY18
TPGJ93	108: 731–2	Ning Mian 甯勉	宣室志	-
TPGJ94	108: 732	Ni Qin 倪勤	報應記	-
TPGJ95	108: 732–3	Gao She 高涉	酉陽雜俎	JY19
TPGJ96	108: 733	Zheng 張政	報應記	-
TPGJ97	108: 734	Li Ju 李琚	報應記	-
TPGJ98	108: 735	Ba Nanzai 巴南宰	述異記/ 明:北夢瑣言	-
TPGJ99	108: 735	Yuan Chu 元初	報應記	-
TPGJ100	108: 735–6	General of Yanzhou 兗州軍將	報應記	-

TPGJ101	108: 736	Younger Brother of Yang Fugong 楊復恭弟	報應記	-
TPGJ102	108: 736–7	Practitioner of Caizhou 蔡州行者	報應記	-
TPGJ103	108: 737	Overseas Trader 販海客	報應記	-

Appendix 6: Liturgical Elements in a Modern Edition of the *Diamond Sutra*

The Buddha Education Foundation (*Fotuo jiaoyu jijin hui* 佛陀教育基金會) *Diamond Sutra* Edition Available at: http://www.budaedu.org/	**Description**	**Found in**
	Invocation of the Diamond Sutra 1. Offering Praise with incense (*xiangzan* 香讚)	-
	2. Mantra for Purifying Verbal Karma (*jing kou zhenyan* 淨口真言)	T8.235, Or8210/P2, S1846,
 	4. Mantra for Purifying the Three Karma (*jing sanye zhenyan* 淨三業真言) 5. Mantra for Pacifying the Earth (*an tudi zhenyan* 安土地真言) 6. Mantra for Making Universal Offering (*pu gongyang zhenyan* 普供養真言)	- P4516 S5646: as Mantra for Making Universal Offering to the Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (*Xukongzang pusa gongyang zhenyan* 虛空藏菩薩普供養真言)
 	7. Invitation to the Eight Vajra-beings (*fengqing bada jin'gang* 奉請八大金剛) 8. Invitation to the Four Bodhisattvas (*fengqing sida pusa* 奉請四大菩薩) 9. Votive Text (*fayuan wen* 發願文; *qiqing wen* 啓請文)	Pr8210/P2, P2094, P2876 (images), P4096 (images), P4098 (images), S5443, S5444, S5646 (images), S5669 (images) S5499, S5646 (images) P2876, S5444, S5646, S5699
 	10. The *Yunhe* Hymn (*yunhe fan* 云何梵) 11. The Gāthā for Opening the Sutra (*kaijing ji* 開經偈)	Second half: P2094, P4516 Full hymn: P4096, S4944 (?), S5646 -

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I. Abbreviations

BD	Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang in the National Library of China
Ch.	Chinese language
DNBZ	*Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書
Dx	Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St Petersburg, Russia
FYZL	*Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林
GDJ	*Chisong jin'gang jing lingyan gongde ji* 持誦金剛經靈驗功德記
Jp.	Japanese language
J	*Jiaxing dazing jing* 嘉興大藏經
JY	*Jin'gang jing jiuyi* 金剛經鳩異
JYJ	*Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji* 金剛般若經集驗記
P	Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Pelliot Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
P.	Pali language
S	Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Stein Collection, British Library, London
Sk.	Sanskrit language
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經
TPGJ	Diamond Sutra tale from the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, rolls 102–108
Tb.	Tibetan language
W	*Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻
X	*Xinbian wanzi xuzang jing* 新編卍字續藏經

Romanization: Citation of Chinese titles is in *pinyin*. Scriptures in the Chinese Buddhist canon are cited in the following fashion: Canon.volume number.scripture number (e.g. T8.235=Taishō, volume 8, scripture no. 235).

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