

APPENDIX A

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Stele Text of the "Life of the Great Compassionate One"

The missing words are indicated by ellipses, while a possible reconstruction based on related sources is indicated by brackets.

[Lü Master Tao-hsüan's] pure conduct moved the divine spirit who came to attend him. One day the Master asked the divine spirit, "I have heard that the Mahāsattva Kuan-yin has a special affinity with this land. Of all the places where the Bodhisattva's efficacious traces are manifested, which is the most excellent?" The divine spirit answered, "Kuan-yin's appearances follow no fixed rule, but Hsiang-shan is most excellent because the Bodhisattva left the trace of her flesh-body there." The Master asked, "Where is this Hsiang-shan?" The spirit replied:

Two hundred *li* south of Mt. Sung there stand three hills. The middle one is Hsiang-shan where the Bodhisattva achieved enlightenment. To the northeast of the hill, there was in the past a king whose name was Chuang. His lady was named Pao-te. The king followed heterodox ways and did not respect the Three Treasures. He had no crown prince, only three daughters: the eldest Miao-yen, the second Miao-yin and the youngest Miao-shan. Of these three daughters, two were already married. Only the third [was not married].

[At her birth, fragrance filled the air and light] shone both inside and outside the palace. People throughout the country were astounded, saying that a fire had broken out in the palace. She was born that very evening. At birth she was already clean, without having been washed. Her holy marks were noble and majestic, her body was covered by five-colored auspicious clouds. The peo-

ple all wondered, saying "Could it be that a holy person has appeared in the world?" The king marveled at this and named her "Miao-shan."

When she grew up, her conduct and appearance far transcended the ordinary. [She always wore dirty clothes and did not adorn herself. She would eat only once a day.] When it was not the proper time (i.e., past noontime), she would not eat. In her conversations she always gave people good advice. She would talk about cause and effect, and about everything being impermanent and illusory. In the palace she was called, "Buddha's Heart." All those who listened to her turned to the good. They fasted and practiced the Way without faltering in their resolve. When the king heard this, he said to his wife, "Our young daughter Miao-shan is teaching my ladies-in-waiting to practice the Way in the palace. They have given up adornment and cosmetics." [The king] said to his daughter, "You have now grown up and should obey my instructions. Do not delude and confuse the ladies in the inner palace. Your father has a country to rule and does not like what you are doing. Your mother and I will find a husband for you. From now on you should follow the correct path and do not practice the heterodox way thus corrupting the custom of our country."

When Miao-shan heard what the king said, she smiled and replied, "Royal Father . . . I would never, for the sake of one lifetime of glory, plunge into aeons of misery. I have pondered long on this matter and deeply detest it [marriage]. I want to leave home to practice the Way in order to realize Buddhahood and attain enlightenment. I can then repay the kindness of my parents and save sentient beings from suffering. If you order me to marry, I dare not obey. Father, please understand and pity me." The king told his wife, "Our daughter does not [want to marry. Please talk to her and make her change her mind. The mother then tried to persuade Miao-shan, who answered,] "I will obey Mother's command only if it will prevent three misfortunes." The mother asked, "What are the three misfortunes?" She answered, "The first is this: when people are young, their face is as fair as the jade-like moon, but when they grow old, their hair turns white and their faces are wrinkled; whether walking, resting, sitting, or lying down, they are in every way worse off than when they were young. The second is this: one's limbs are strong and vigorous, one may walk as briskly as if flying through the air, but when one suddenly becomes sick, one lies in bed [without a single pleasure in life. The third is this: a person may have a large group of relatives and be] surrounded by his flesh and blood, but when death comes, even with such close kin as father and son, they cannot take the person's place. If a husband can prevent these three misfortunes, I will marry him. But if he cannot do so, I vow never to marry. People of the world are all mired in these kinds of suffering. If one desires to be free from these sufferings, one must leave the secular world and enter the gate of Buddhism. Only when one prac-

tices religion and obtains its fruit, can one deliver all people from suffering. This is why I have given rise to the thought [for enlightenment. . . .]" [The king became] ever more angry and exiled her to the garden in the back of the palace. Cutting off her food and drink, he ordered everyone in the palace not to go near her. The mother was sad and missed her. She secretly asked a palace maid to take food and drink to Miao-shan. The king said to the queen, "I exiled her to the back garden but she does not seem to fear death. Nor does she eat. Why don't you go with Miao-yen and Miao-yin and persuade her to change her mind? If she does, father and child will meet again. Otherwise. (. . .)"

When they came to the back garden, they saw Miao-shan seated in deep meditation, not paying attention to her mother. The lady embraced her and cried aloud, "Ever since you left the palace, my two eyes are almost dried up and my liver and innards are breaking into pieces. How can you be at peace seeing your mother thus? Your father is so troubled by you that he cannot hold audience in the palace, nor take care of state affairs. So he told me to come with Miao-yen and Miao-yin to talk to you. Please think of your father. (. . .)" Miao-shan said, "I am not suffering here. Why are Father and Mother so unhappy? In all the emotional entanglements of this world there is no term of spiritual release. If close kin are united, they must inevitably be sundered and scattered. Even if one stays with one's parents for a hundred years, when death arrives, we still must be parted. Rest at ease, Mother. Luckily you have my two sisters to care for you and there is no need for me. Please go back and tell them that I have no desire to go back on my resolve." Then Miao-yen and Miao-yin said to Miao-shan, "(. . .) Look at those who have left home and become nuns. Who among them is able to shine light, shake the earth, attain Buddhahood, or become a patriarch so that she can repay the kindness above and save all beings below? Isn't it better to get married in accordance with the rites? Why do you worry our parents so?" Miao-shan replied to her two sisters, "You are attached to glory, luxury and conjugal love. You are bound by the pleasures of the moment. But you do not know that pleasure is the cause of pain. (. . .) As daughters, we cannot be excused from attending parents. But can your husbands do it for you? Sisters, each of us has to live her life. Please think it over and take care of yourselves, but do not keep advising me what to do. Realization is right in front of you. There is no use in empty regret. Please persuade Mother to go back to the palace and tell Father that the empty space may have a limit, but my vow is limitless. Whether I live or die is up to Father to decide." Miao-yen and Miao-yin returned to tell. (. . .) The queen further reported to the king, who then became even more enraged.

There was a nun by the name of Hui-chen. The king sent for her and told her, "My youngest daughter Miao-shan does not follow righteousness and pro-

priety but insists on leaving home. There is no way to dissuade her. You people must try to devise a way to persuade her. I will allow my youngest daughter to stay in your convent for seven days to be instructed by you. If she listens to me, I will decorate your [nunnery]. (. . .)" A messenger was dispatched to go with the nun to the back garden. She invited Miao-shan to go to the nunnery. Five hundred nuns came out to welcome her and accompany her to the main hall to burn incense. The next day, the nuns said to Miao-shan, "You were born in the palace and grew up there. Why do you seek loneliness? You had better go back to the palace, which is so much superior to a temple." Miao-shan heard what they said and replied with a smile, "(...) [I want to] save all sentient beings. What you have shown me about the depth of your knowledge is truly pitiable and despicable. If even Buddhist disciples such as yourselves say things like this, no wonder worldly people blame me for what I do. My father, the King, is angry and hateful toward you people and does not allow me to leave the householder's life. Doesn't he have a reason? Don't you know the reason for having a shaved head and wearing a square robe? One who has left the householder's life detests vainglory, luxury (. . .) and sexual love (. . .) [Your behavior, on the other hand,] accords very little with what is demanded of a monastic. The Buddha has left clear instructions: a monastic should give up make-up and adornment, wear rag robes, carry a begging bowl, and sustain herself by begging. How come you people are all interested in luxury, wearing beautiful clothes and behaving in such a bewitching and seductive manner? You entered the gate of Buddhism wantonly, corrupted the pure rules and accepted offerings from the faithful undeservedly. You are monastics in name only and your hearts are not in accordance with the Way!" The nuns had nothing to say when Miao-shan rebuked them thus.

At that time, Hui-chen became worried and told Miao-shan, "The reason why the nuns tried to persuade you just now [to give up the idea of renouncing the world] was because they were following the king's order." She then told Miao-shan about the king's decree as mentioned before and asked her to change her mind so that the nuns could be spared and the nunnery would be safe from disaster. Miao-shan said, "Don't you know [the stories] about Prince Mahāsattva's realization of no-birth as a result of plunging himself off the cliff in order to feed the hungry tigers, and King Śivi's attaining the other shore as a result of cutting his flesh to save a dove? Since you have already left the life of a householder, you should regard this illusory body as impermanent and detestable, and the four great elements as having temporarily come into being but originally non-existent. You should want to be delivered from transmigration in your every thought and seek for release in every moment of consciousness.

Why do you fear death and love life? Don't you know that attachment to this dirty and smelly leather bag [body] is an obstacle? (. . .) You want to escape death by obeying the king's wishes. But be at ease. When I achieve enlightenment, I will save you from transmigration. Do not worry."

When the nuns heard this, they discussed among themselves, saying that because Miao-shan grew up in the palace, she did not know the difficulties of ordinary life outside the palace but thought leaving the world was a happy thing. So now she should be made to feel the pain and humiliation of hard manual labor so that she would know fear and thus repent. They told Miao-shan, "If you want to be a monastic, you (. . .) [should] labor earlier than everyone else and work in the kitchen. You must work at chores no one else is capable of doing. There are no vegetables in the vegetable garden, but you must serve food in a timely fashion without fail." Miao-shan went to the vegetable garden and seeing how few vegetables there were, she became worried about the next day, not knowing how to get food to serve the nuns. But just when she was thinking thus, the dragon spirit of the temple came to her help and with divine assistance (. . .) She served the nuns without a problem. (. . .) Obtaining water was very difficult and Miao-shan was troubled. But a spring appeared miraculously on the left side of the kitchen. The water from the spring was very sweet. Hui-chen then knew that Miao-shan was not an ordinary person, for she could move the dragon spirit to help her. So she reported this to the king who became greatly angered and said to his attendants, "My youngest daughter has practiced the heterodox way for a long time. I put her in a nunnery but she used magic to delude the people and insult me (. . .)"

[When the envoy arrived,] Miao-shan obeyed the royal command and said to the community of nuns, "Retire at once, all of you. I am to suffer execution." Miao-shan then came out [to meet] her death. At the moment when she was about to receive the blade, the mountain-god of Lung-shan (Dragon Mountain), who knew that Miao-shan, the bodhisattva of great power, was on the point of fulfilling her spiritual destiny and delivering the multitude of living beings, realized that her evil royal father was wrongly about to behead her, and used his divine powers to produce (. . .) dark, violent wind, thunder and lightning. He snatched away Miao-shan and set her down at the foot of the mountain. The envoy, no longer knowing where Miao-shan was, rushed in haste to report to the king.

The king, again shocked and enraged, sent off five hundred soldiers to behead the entire community of nuns and burn all their buildings. His lady and the royal family all wept bitterly, saying that Miao-shan was already dead and beyond hope of rescue. The king said to his lady, "(...) Do not grieve. This young

girl was no kin of mine. She must have been some demon who was born into my family. I have managed to get rid of the demon: that is cause for great delight!"

Now that she had been snatched away by divine power to the foot of Lung-shan, Miao-shan looked around and found no one there. Then with slow steps she climbed the mountain. Suddenly she noticed a foul, reeking smell, and thought to herself: "The mountain forests are secluded and quiet: where does this smell come from?" The mountain god took the form of an old man and met Miao-shan with the words, "Kind one, where do you want to go?" Miao-shan said, "I wish to go up into this mountain to practice religion." The old man said, "This mountain is the abode of creatures with scales and shells, feathers and fur. It is no place for you to practice your cultivation, kind one." Miao-shan asked, "What is the name of this mountain?" He said, "It is Lung-shan. Dragons live on this mountain, hence it is named after them." "What about the range to the west of here?" He answered, "That too is an abode of dragons, and for that reason it is called Lesser Lung-shan. Only between the two mountains there is a small ridge named Hsiang-shan. That place is pure and clean, a fit place for you to pursue your cultivation, kind one." Miao-shan said, "Who are you, that you are showing me the place to live?" The old man answered, "Your disciple is not a man, but the god of this mountain. You, kind one, are going to fulfill your spiritual destiny, and I, your disciple, have sworn to protect and keep you." With these words he vanished.

Miao-shan went to Hsiang-shan, climbed to the summit, and looked around. It was peaceful, without any trace of man, and she said to herself, "This is the place where I shall transform my karma." So she went to the summit and built a shelter for practicing her religious cultivation. She dressed in grasses, ate from trees, and no one knew (. . .) for three whole years.

Meanwhile her father the king sickened with *kāmalā* [jaundice] on account of his sinful karma. It spread all over his skin and body, and he found no rest in sleep. The best doctors throughout the land were unable to heal him. His lady and the royal family were in anxiety morning and night about him.

One day a strange monk stood in front of the inner palace, saying, "I have a divine remedy that can heal the king's sickness." When the king's attendants heard these words they hastily reported them to the king, and he on hearing them summoned the monk into the inner palace. The monk addressed him, "I, poor man of religion, have medicine to cure the king's sickness." The king said, "What medicine do you have that can cure my disease?" The monk said, "I have a prescription that requires the use of two major medical ingredients." The king asked what, and the monk replied, "This medicine can be made by obtaining the arms and eyes of one without anger." The king said, " . . . do not speak so

frivolously. If I take someone's arms and eyes, will they not be angry?" The monk said, "Such a one does exist in your land." The king asked where the person was now, and the monk replied, "In the southwest of your dominion is a mountain named Hsiang-shan. On its summit is a hermit practicing religious cultivation with signal merit, though none knows of it. This person has no anger." The king said, "How can I get her arms and eyes?" The monk said, "No-one else can seek them: they are available only to you, the king. In the past the hermit had a close affinity with you. If you obtain her arms and eyes, this sickness of yours can be cured instantly, without any doubt."

When the king heard this, he burned incense and offered this prayer: "If my terrible sickness can really be cured, may I receive this hermit's own arms and eyes bestowed without stint or grudge." His prayer completed, he commanded an envoy to go, bearing incense, up into the mountain. When the envoy arrived he saw, inside a thatched hermitage, a hermit whose body was stately and impressive, sitting there cross-legged. He burned fine incense and announced the royal command: "The king of the land has suffered the *kāmalā* sickness for three years up until now. The great physicians, the wonder drugs of all the land are all unable to cure him. A monk has presented a [remedy]: by using the arms and eyes of one without anger a medicine can be made up. And now, with our deepest respects, we have heard that you, holy hermit, practice religion with signal merit, and so we believe that you must also be without anger. We venture to beg you for your arms and eyes to cure the king's sickness."

The envoy bowed twice, and Miao-shan reflected: "My father the king showed disrespect to the Three Treasures, he persecuted and suppressed Buddhism, he burned monastic buildings, he executed a community [of nuns]. He invited the retribution of this sickness. With my arms and eyes I shall save the king in his distress." Having conceived this idea she said to the envoy, "It must be your king's refusal to believe in the Three Treasures that has caused him to suffer this evil malady. I shall give my arms and eyes to provide medicine for him. My one desire is that the remedy will be a match for the ailment and will drive out the king's disease. The king must direct his mind towards enlightenment and commit himself to the Three Treasures: then he will achieve recovery."

With these words she gouged out both her eyes with a knife, then told the envoy to sever her two arms. At that moment the whole mountain shook, and from the sky came a voice commending her: "Rare, how rare! She is able to save all living beings, to do things impossible in this world!"

The envoy was terrified, but the hermit said, "Have no fear. Take my arms and eyes back to the king, and remember what I have said." The envoy accepted them and returned to report to the king.

When the king received the arms and eyes he felt a deep shame. He told the monk to blend the medicine, then he [took] it. Before ten days were out he recovered completely from his sickness. The king and his lady, his kin, his officials, and all down to the very subjects of his realm, began to rejoice. The king sent for the monk to give him offerings of thanks, saying: "No one but you, [Master], could save us from that terrible sickness." The monk said, "It was not my power. How could you have recovered without the hermit's arms and eyes? You should go up the mountain to offer thanks to the hermit." With these words he vanished.

The king was astounded. He brought his palms together and said, "So slight a condition as mine has moved a holy monk to come and save me!" And then he commanded his attendants: "Tomorrow I shall go to visit Hsiang-shan and make offerings of thanks to the hermit."

The next day the king with his lady, his two daughters and the palace retinue, had carriages prepared, set out from the walled city and reached Hsiang-shan. [Reaching] the hermitage, they lavishly laid out the finest offerings. The king burned incense and offered thanks with the words: "When I suffered that foul disease I could not possibly have recovered without your arms and eyes, hermit. Today, therefore, I have personally come with my closest kin to visit the mountains and offer thanks to you."

When the king with his lady and palace maidens all moved forward to gaze upon the hermit who was without arms or eyes, they were moved to sorrowful thoughts, because the hermit's physical impairment was brought about by [the king]. His lady made a minute examination, gazed at the hermit's physical characteristics, and said to the king, "When I look at the hermit's shape and appearance, she seems very like our daughter." And with these words she found herself choking back tears and lamentations.

The hermit suddenly spoke, "My lady mother! Do not cast your mind back to Miao-shan: I am she. When the king my father suffered his foul disease, your child offered up her arms and eyes to repay the king's love."

Hearing these words, the king and his lady embraced her with loud weeping, stirring heaven and earth with their grief. He said, "My evil ways have caused my daughter to lose her arms and eyes and [endure] this suffering. I am going to lick my child's two eyes with my tongue and join on her two arms, and desire the gods and spirits of heaven and earth to make my child's withered eyes to grow again, her severed arms once more to be whole!"

As soon as the king had expressed this resolve, but before his mouth had touched her eyes, Miao-shan was suddenly not to be found. At that moment heaven and earth shook, radiance blazed forth, auspicious clouds enclosed all around, divine musicians began to play. [And then] the All-Compassionate

Kuan-yin of the Thousand Arms and Thousand Eyes appeared, solemn and majestic in form, radiant with dazzling light, lofty and magnificent, like the moon amid the stars.

When the king with his lady and palace maidens beheld the form of the Bodhisattva, they rose and struck themselves, beat their breasts with loud lament, and raised their voices in repentance: "We your disciples, with our mortal sight, failed to recognize the Holy One. Evil karma has obstructed our minds. We pray you to extend your saving protection to absolve our earlier misdeeds. From this time on we shall turn towards the Three Treasures, we shall rebuild Buddhist monasteries. We pray you, Bodhisattva, in your great compassion, to return to your original body and permit us to make offerings."

In a moment the hermit returned to her original person, with her arms and eyes quite intact. She sat cross-legged, brought her palms together, and with great solemnity passed away, as though entering into meditation.

The king and his lady burned incense and made a vow: "We your disciples will [provide] an offering of fragrant wood, will commit your holy body to the funeral pyre, and, when we return to the palace, will raise a stūpa and make offerings to it in perpetuity." Having made his vow, the king surrounded the transcendent body with all kinds of pure incense, cast flames upon it and burned it. When the fragrant fuel was consumed the transcendent body loomed there still, and could not be moved. The king made another vow: "It must be that the Bodhisattva will not depart [from] this place, and wishes to cause all living beings to see and hear, and make offerings." Having said these words, the king and his lady together lifted the body and immediately [at their touch] it rose lightly.

The king then reverently erected a precious shrine with the Bodhisattva's true body inside, and outside he built a precious stūpa. In all solemnity he buried her on the summit of the mountain, beneath the site of her hermitage. And there on the mountain, with court and kin, he watched and protected her day and night without sleeping.

At length he returned to his capital. He rebuilt Buddhist monasteries, increased the ordination of monks and nuns, and paid reverence to the Three Treasures. He drew resources from his private treasury and built a pagoda with thirteen stages up on Hsiang-shan, to cover the true body of the Bodhisattva.

[The divine spirit said]: "Master, you have asked me, your disciple, about the holy traces of the Bodhisattva, and I have given a brief account of the broad essentials. As for the Bodhisattva's secret incarnations, these are not known to me."

The Vinaya Master again asked, "What is the present state of the precious stūpa on Hsiang-shan?"

The divine spirit said, "The stūpa has long been abandoned. Now [there remains only] the pagoda, and few know of it. The traces left on earth by a holy one prosper and decay in their due time. Only after three hundred years will a revival occur."

Now that his questions were finished the Vinaya Master brought his palms together and uttered these words of praise: "How great is the spiritual power of the Mahāsattva Kuan-yin! Were it not for the fullness of the Bodhisattva's vow, these signs could not have been revealed. If the living beings of that land had not brought their karmic conditions to maturity, they could not have attracted this response. How mighty, this merit without measure! It cannot be conceived!"

He told his disciple I-ch'ang to set this story down in writing on the fifteenth day of the second summer month in the second year of Sheng-li [April 20, 699].

Written in the third month of the third year of Yüan-fu [May, 1100].

Set up in the seventh month of the first year of Chih-ta [August, 1308] by monks of the Public Ch'an Monastery of the Great Universal Gateway on Hsiang-shan.