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Latter  
Days  
of  
The  
Law



Images of  
Chinese  
Buddhism  
850-1850

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SPENCER MUSEUM OF ART • THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PRESS

*Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850–1850*

Edited by Marsha Weidner

Essays by Patricia Berger, Richard K. Kent, Julia K. Murray,

Marsha Weidner, and Chün-fang Yü

Cover: Artist unknown, *A Loban with Attendant, Causing Dragons to Appear*, The Saint Louis Art Museum.

Calligraphy: Chan Sheng-yao, *Mofa (Latter Days of the Law)*

Designer: Patrick Dooley

Managing Editor: Sally Hayden

Copy editor: Caroline D. Warner

Photographer: Robert Hickerson

Publications Department, Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence KS 66045

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Copublished with the University of Hawaii Press, 2840 Kolowalu St., Honolulu, Hawaii 96822. Phone (808)956-8257, FAX (808)988-6052

First Edition published 1994.

Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

*Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850–1850*/Marsha

Weidner, editor; essays by Patricia Berger . . . [et al.].

pp.

cm.

"Exhibition itinerary: 1994, Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas;

Asian Art Museum, San Francisco"—1 p. verso.

Includes bibliographical references (p. 453) and index.

ISBN 0-8248-1661-7 (cloth) ISBN 0-8248-1662-5 (pbk.)

I. Art. Buddhist—China—Exhibitions. 2. Art. Chinese—Sung-Yüan dynasties,

960–1368—Exhibitions. 3. Art. Chinese—Ming-Ch'ing dynasties, 1368–1912—

Exhibitions. I. Weidner, Marsha Smith. II. Berger, Patricia Ann. III. Helen Foresman

Spencer Museum of Art. IV. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

N8193.C61.38 1994

704.9'48943'09107478165—dc20

94-10842

CIP

#### EXHIBITION ITINERARY

Exhibition organized by Marsha Weidner. Support for the catalogue and exhibition was provided by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency, and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Philadelphia.

August 27–October 9, 1994

Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas

November 30, 1994–January 29, 1995

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

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## *Guanyin:* The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteshvara

*Chiün-fang Yü*

Guanyin, Sound Observer, or Guanshiyin, The One Who Observes the Sounds of the World, is the Chinese name for Avalokiteshvara, the compassionate savior who has been worshiped throughout Buddhist countries (for instance, Tibetan Buddhists believe the Dalai Lama to be an incarnation of this deity). Like buddhas and other bodhisattvas, Guanyin was depicted as a handsome young prince in India, Tibet, Southeast Asia, and China before and during the Tang dynasty. In Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Tibet, Avalokiteshvara was identified with the ruler and was depicted as a majestic "lord of the universe." Guanyin sometimes also sported a moustache, clearly indicating his masculine gender, in ninth- and tenth-century paintings on the frescoes and banners of Dunhuang, the city in northwest China where great stores of Buddhist paintings and texts were preserved. However, the bodhisattva underwent a profound and startling transformation in China during the next several hundred years, and by the sixteenth century Guanyin had become not only completely Chinese but also the much beloved Goddess of Mercy, a nickname coined by the Jesuit missionaries who were impressed by the similarity between her iconography and that of the Madonna. Of all the imported Buddhist deities, Guanyin is the only one who succeeded in becoming a genuine Chinese goddess—so much so that many Chinese, if they are not familiar with Buddhism, are not even aware of her Buddhist origin.

## Canonical Forms of Guanyin

Guanyin's importance in Buddhist scriptures is uncontested. More than eighty Buddhist scriptures are connected with Guanyin, among which the most important and influential ones are the *Lotus Sutra* (*Fabua jing*), the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (*Huayan jing*), the *Shurangama Sutra* (*Lengyan jing*), and the *Heart Sutra*.<sup>1</sup>

Chapter 25 of the *Lotus Sutra*, entitled "Pumen pin" (The Gateway of the Bodhisattva Sound-Observer), depicts Guanyin as a universal savior who can assume any of thirty-three forms, male and female, old and young, in response to the needs of the beings who are to be saved. He saves people from eight kinds of peril: fire, water, shipwreck, murderers, ghosts, prisons, bandits, and lust. He also grants women who desire children either a handsome boy or a beautiful girl.<sup>2</sup> Dharmaraksha translated this chapter separately from the rest of the sutra in 308 and Kumarajiva followed this practice some hundred years later. According to the *Fabua zhuanji*, Juqu Mengxun (r. 401–433), a king of the Northern Liang dynasty, was credited with the promotion of this chapter as an independent scripture. The king believed in Buddhism, and because he suffered from illness he was told to chant the Pumen chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, for "Guanshiyin has a special affinity with people of this land." The king did so and recovered from his illness. From then on this chapter became known as the *Guanyin Sutra* (*Guanshiyin jing*) and circulated as a separate scripture.

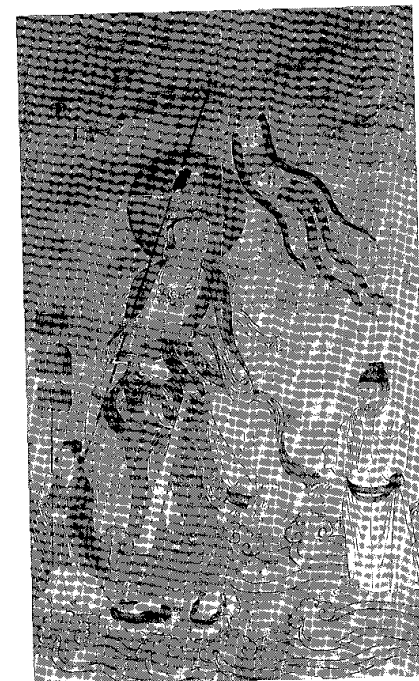
There are 1100 copies of scriptures from Dunhuang related to Guanyin, including 860 copies of the *Lotus Sutra* and 128 copies of the *Guanyin Sutra*. While a few could be dated to before the Sui dynasty (581–618), the majority were copied during the Sui and Tang dynasties, indicating the growing popularity of Guanyin during this time. Moreover, among the murals in the existing 492 caves in Dunhuang, more than 28 are illustrations of this chapter in the *Lotus Sutra*. Guanyin as the savior from perils was also a favorite subject for banners at this site, as illustrated by well-known examples [fig. 47]. They were painted over several hundred years, beginning with the Sui and ending with the Xixia dynasty of 1032 to 1227.<sup>3</sup>

The popularity of Guanyin in the Tang is also indicated by the large number of statues found in the Longmen caves near the capital city of Luoyang. During the years 500 to 530, the first period of intensive rock-cutting there, the leading deities portrayed were Shakyamuni and Maitreya, with Amitabha and Guanyin playing minor roles. This was reversed in the second period of intensive rock-cutting, between 650 and 710, in the early Tang dynasty. Tsukamoto compiled a list giving the total number of dated and undated statues at the site: the most popular was Amitabha, with 222, followed by Guanyin with 197, Shakyamuni, 94, and Maitreya, 62.<sup>4</sup> The statues of Guanyin in both Longmen and Dunhuang, like those of the buddhas and other bodhisattvas, appear masculine and sometimes include a thin moustache. Guanyin usually carries a lotus (an attribute of the form of Avalokiteshvara known as Padmapani) in one hand and a water bottle in the other.

The cult of Guanyin in China has some scriptural basis in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* as well as in the *Lotus Sutra*. The forty *juan* (volume) version of the sutra translated by Prajna between 795 and 810 is particularly important. It is a translation of the *Gandavyuha*, the section of the *Avatam-*



47. From Dunhuang, *Guanyin Savior from Perils*



48. From Dunhuang, *Bodhisattva Guide of Souls*

*saka Sutra* that describes the pilgrimage of the youth Sudhana in search of truth. Guanyin is presented as the twenty-eighth "good friend" visited by Sudhana. Guanyin's home is said to be Mount Potalaka, situated on an island. Sitting on a diamond boulder in a clearing in a luxuriant wooded area, Guanyin preaches the Dharma to Sudhana. In the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, Guanyin is credited with the power to save people from perils similar to those mentioned in the *Lotus Sutra*. A person who calls the name of Guanyin can go without fear into a forest infested with bandits and wild beasts, be freed from fetters and chains, and be saved from drowning in the ocean. Although thrown onto burning coals, a person calling Guanyin's name will not be killed, for the flames will become lotus sprouts in a lake. By the late Tang, artists liked to combine the images of Guanyin found in these two sutras. This is quite common in tenth-century cave murals at Dunhuang.<sup>5</sup>

Guanyin has many "faces," for he is connected with different schools of Buddhism in China, as is attested by the many diverse iconographic representations of this great bodhisattva. Guanyin is one of the three Holy Ones of the Pure Land: he and Dashizhi (S. Mahasthamaprapta) accompany Amitabha Buddha. Guanyin's connection with Amitabha, his spiritual father, is so intimate that the bodhisattva carries a small Amitabha image on his crown. This is very often the single iconographic clue enabling us to identify Guanyin, who may otherwise look no different from other bodhisattvas. The Tiantai master Zhiyi (538–597) speaks of

six forms of Guanyin corresponding to his manifestations in the six realms of rebirth. According to the Pure Land scriptures, if a person calls the name of Amitabha with unswerving faith and undivided concentration, he or she will be met upon death by Guanyin, who will guide the way to the Western Paradise. Known in this role as Bodhisattva Guide of Souls, he can be seen in several Dunhuang paintings as the resplendent savior carrying a banner and followed by a small figure representing the devout donor who was to be reborn in paradise [fig. 48]. On the other hand, both the *Shurangama Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra*, two important scriptures emphasized by Chan practitioners, present Guanyin as the meditator par excellence. Because of the growing importance of the Chan school from the late Tang on, Guanyin came to be seen as the embodiment of wisdom as well as of compassion.

Guanyin is also prominent in the esoteric scriptures that promote the keeping and chanting of *dharani* (incantations). One of the earliest esoteric scriptures centering on Guanyin is the *Dharani Sutra of Invoking Bodhisattva Guanshiyin to Subdue and Eliminate Harmful Poisons* (C. *Qing Guanshiyin Pusa fudu tuoluoni jing*), translated by Zhunanti of the Eastern Jin (317–420). This sutra was singled out for emphasis by the Tiantai master Zhiyi, and another Tiantai master in the Song dynasty, Zunshi, wrote a ritual manual guiding the invocation of, and repentance in front of Guanyin. The sutra opens with an urgent request for help from the Buddha by a delegation of citizens of Vaisali (in India) who suffer from all kinds of horrible diseases caused by the malicious spirits called yaksha. The Buddha tells them to invoke Guanyin by offering him willow branches and pure water, which have the power to purify and to revive. (I believe that this scripture provides the basis for the replacement of the lotus by a willow branch, which forms a distinctive attribute of Guanyin in images at Dunhuang during the Tang and, down the centuries, elsewhere in China [fig. 2, 47; cat. 45, 47, and 50].) Guanyin then appears in front of the Buddha and proceeds to teach the people to chant the *dharani*, which is described as the “six-phrase divine mantra of unsurpassed efficacy, the king of medicine saving people from suffering.” When a person calls the name of Guanyin three times and chants the *dharani*, he or she will be saved from all kinds of disaster. Specifically, the *dharani* can seal the mouths of demons, tigers, wolves, and lions, rendering them harmless; save a person from fire, which will be quenched by rain bestowed by the dragon king; protect a person from starvation, penal punishments, robbers, ferocious animals, poison, and indeed from all possible types of danger; and restore purity to a religious practitioner who has committed ten evil deeds. The *dharani* has particular importance for women, for it can save them from difficult and life-endangering childbirths. If a person is faithful in chanting the *dharani*, he or she will be able to have a vision of Guanyin while alive and, having been thus freed from all sins, will not suffer rebirth in the four woeful realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, and *asura* (angry demigods). The effect of this *dharani* is so powerful that not only will the devotee’s desires be completely fulfilled in this life, she will see the Buddha and never leave his side after death.

In the Northern Zhou dynasty (557–581) more esoteric scriptures about Guanyin were introduced into China. The Guanyin in these scriptures appears not in normal human form, but in tantric forms with many faces and many arms, symbolizing his omnipotent power and his ever-ready willingness to help. One type is Guanyin with eleven heads (S. Ekhadashamukha, C.

Shiyimian), another is Guanyin holding a lasso (S. Amoghapasha, C. Bukong Quansuo). Two more tantric forms of Guanyin—Guanyin holding the Dharma wheel and the wish-granting jewel (S. Chintamanichakra, C. Ruyilun) and Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin (S. Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra, C. Qianshou Qianyan)—were introduced into China during the Tang dynasty by means of translations of other texts done by Bodhiruci and the great tantric master Amoghavajra. Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin, known as Dabei (Great Compassionate One), is the esoteric form best known among the Chinese, and his cult has remained one of the most enduring. In these texts Guanyin promises freedom from fifteen fearful conditions of death leading to unfavorable rebirth and enjoyment of fifteen favorable conditions of good death to the devotee who chants the *dharani* faithfully. On a more exalted level, Guanyin teaches the devotee to make ten vows, the fulfillment of which the bodhisattva will vouchsafe: speedy understanding of all Dharma, early attainment of the eye of wisdom, speedy deliverance of all sentient beings, early attainment of skillful means, speedy sailing on the boat of wisdom, quick crossing over the ocean of suffering, attainment of the way of discipline and *samadhi* (unified consciousness), climbing the mountain of nirvana, arriving at the home of non-action, and finally, realizing the Body of Truth. Guanyin likewise vows that he will never become a buddha if a devotee, in spite of keeping and chanting the *dharani*, should be reborn in the three evil realms, fail to achieve rebirth in the lands of the buddhas, or suffer any disappointment or frustration in this life. The *dharani* known as the “Great Compassion Dharani” (C. Dabei zhou) has continued to enjoy great popularity through the centuries. Many miracles resulting from its recitation have been disseminated and collected. These miracles and those connected with the chanting of the *Guanyin Sutra* (the Pumen chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*) constitute two major sources in the voluminous literature in this genre of Guanyin miracle tales. Because these scriptures promise both worldly and spiritual benefits, it is understandable that they met with popular acceptance. Guanyin with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes was indeed a favorite subject for donors and artists at Dunhuang [fig. 49] and throughout China.



49. From Dunhuang, Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin



## The Development of New Guanyin Images in China

All of the Guanyin images discussed above derived from Buddhist canonical sources and shared common iconographic elements with images of Avalokiteshvara in other Buddhist traditions. The Chinese, however, also created new Guanyin images bearing distinctive indigenous characteristics.

It is in the images from Dunhuang that one first comes across the Water and Moon Guanyin (C. *Shuiyue Guanyin*), a type much favored by Chan and literati painters after the Song dynasty, as in the painting from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art [cat. 45].<sup>6</sup> Unlike the other forms of Guanyin discussed above, this form apparently has no uncontested scriptural foundation, even though the title *Shuiyue Guanyin jing* (Water and Moon Guanyin Sutra) is found among the Dunhuang scriptures.<sup>7</sup> We may regard this Water and Moon Guanyin at Dunhuang as the beginning of the Chinese transformation of Avalokiteshvara.

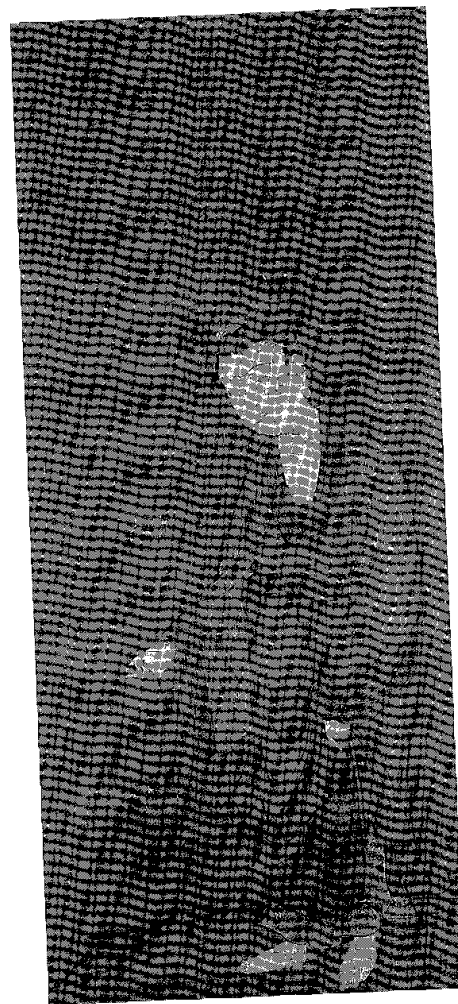
The earliest dated Water and Moon Guanyin was done in 943 and appears on the lower register of a larger painting of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin on a silk banner in the Musée Guimet [fig. 49]. Holding a willow branch in the right hand and a water bottle in the left, the bodhisattva sits on a rock surrounded by water, in the relaxed posture known as royal ease. Lotus flowers grow from the water in abundance, and the bodhisattva rests his left foot on one of them. There is also a luxuriant bamboo grove behind him. The surroundings suggest that the location is Potalaka, the sacred island home of Guanyin. Although Potalaka was believed to be situated somewhere in the ocean south of India, by this time it had become identified by the Chinese with Mount Putuo, an island offshore from Zhejiang province.<sup>8</sup> The most distinctive feature of this new iconography is undoubtedly the large nimbus resembling a full moon, which envelops the bodhisattva. The Water and Moon Guanyin was a popular subject for Dunhuang painters. The 1982 complete catalogue of the contents of the caves in Dunhuang identifies fifteen wall paintings of the Water and Moon Guanyin, six of which were done in the tenth century; the others date from the eleventh to the thirteenth century. The genesis of this iconography, however, should probably be dated to the eighth and ninth centuries, and painters played a decisive role in the creation of this image. Zhang Yanyuan, for instance, mentioned in his *Record of Famous Painters of Successive Dynasties* (preface 847) that in the eighth century Zhou Fang painted a Water and Moon Guanyin who was encircled by a full moon and surrounded by a bamboo grove, a setting very similar to the one mentioned above. The painting did not survive, but it could well have served as the prototype for later painters and sculptors who made this new type of Guanyin popular in Sichuan and Dunhuang. It was also the basis for the White-robed Guanyin, another Chinese form of the bodhisattva, which became increasingly popular during and after the Song dynasty.<sup>9</sup>

The moon and water clearly symbolize the empty and illusory nature of phenomena. For instance, the *Commentary to the Great Prajnaparamita Sutra* (C. *Dazhidu lun*) says, "One may search for it [phenomenon] everywhere but one cannot obtain it. Like illusion or echo, all phenomena are like the moon in the water. As soon as one sees it, it disappears." The Buddhist master Yongjia Xuanjue (665–713) writes this couplet in his *Song of Enlightenment* (*Zhengdao ge*), "To see the image in a mirror is not difficult. How can one grasp the moon in the water?" The Tang poet Bai Juyi (772–846) expresses the same sentiment in an eulogy to a painting of the Water and Moon

Guanyin: "Appearing above the pure and translucent water, emerging from the empty white light, once the image is seen by the viewer, ten thousand causes and conditions all become empty." However, although the moon and water, or the reflection of the moon in water, were familiar Buddhist metaphors for the transitory and unsubstantial nature of things in the world, there is no scriptural basis for linking Guanyin with these metaphors. It is here that we can see the bold creativity of Chinese artists, for they took these Buddhist ideas and expressed them through the traditional medium of Chinese painting.

Recently, Yamamoto Yoko convincingly argued that the iconography of Water and Moon Guanyin should be viewed as a Chinese creation based on indigenous concepts of sages, retired gentlemen, and immortals, rather than on Indian prototypes. Bamboo (later replaced by pine, as in the Nelson-Atkins Museum's painting of Water and Moon Guanyin, cat. 45) and waterfalls are typical features of Chinese landscape, but have no relationship to India. Similarly, the relaxed pose of Guanyin, either leaning against a rock or tree or clasping a knee, derives from earlier secular paintings depicting retirement and nobility, but cannot be traced to Buddhist scriptural descriptions.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, canonical scriptures have very limited use in helping us identify the origins of the various images of Guanyin popular in China. For like the Water and Moon Guanyin, the several chief types—Guanyin with the Fish Basket [fig. 50; cat. 49], Guanyin of the South Sea (Putuo; cat. 47 and 48), White-robed Guanyin [cat. 49], Child-giving Guanyin [cat. 46], and Guanyin as Old Woman [cat. 49]—were all Chinese creations based on sources outside the canon. These Chinese transformations of the scriptural Avalokiteshvara are all feminine forms of Guanyin and the reason for this gender change likewise cannot be traced in canonical Buddhist scriptures. From the perspective of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy, since the ultimate reality represented by the enlightened buddhas and bodhisattvas transcends all dichotomies, we cannot apply the characteristics of male or female, old or young, one or many, to these beings. In the light



50. Guanyin with a Fish Basket

of emptiness of all phenomena (S. *shunyata*), such distinctions pertain only to the realm of ignorance. (Orthodox Chinese Buddhist monks, adhering to this view, have continued to deny that Guanyin is a feminine deity, ignoring overwhelming literary and artistic evidence to the contrary.) For this reason, canonical Buddhist scriptures can be used as evidence for the importance of Guanyin in China and East Asia, but they cannot provide the necessary information for the gender change. We must therefore search elsewhere for its explanation. I believe that accounts of visions of pilgrims and the faithful, miracle tales, indigenous scriptures, novels, and popular texts known as “precious volumes” (C. *baojuan*), which even today are chanted to illiterate audiences, all played important roles in effecting these transformations.

Historically speaking, the growing popularity of the cult of Guanyin was attested not only by art, but also by the production of indigenous scriptures and miracle collections, beginning in the Six Dynasties period (222–589).<sup>11</sup> One notable feature of these miracle tales is that they mention images of Guanyin. The earliest and the most famous indigenous scripture promoting the worship of Guanyin, the *Guanshiyin Sutra Promoted by Emperor Gao* (C. *Gao Wang Guanshiyin jing*) was composed in the sixth century, a chaotic and desperate age. It was closely linked with a miracle-working image. According to the *Record of Lineages of Buddhas and Patriarchs* (C. *Fozu tongji*), a man by the name of Sun Jingde was guarding the northern frontier from 535 to 537. He was a faithful devotee to Guanyin and kept a golden image of the bodhisattva, to which he offered daily worship. He was wrongly imprisoned and was sentenced to death. After praying to Guanyin fervently one night, Sun dreamed of a monk who promised to save him from death if Sun would chant a thousand recitations of the sutra that the monk would dictate. But Sun had only chanted it nine hundred times when he was taken out of prison to be executed. He managed to finish the last one hundred recitations just as he arrived at the execution grounds. When he was struck with the executioner's blade, he was miraculously unharmed, but the blade broke into three pieces. Twice a new knife was produced, but the same thing happened. When this was reported to the king, Gao Huan, he pardoned Sun and promoted the sutra. When Sun looked at his statue of Guanyin, he saw three impressions on its neck that looked as if they were made by a knife.<sup>12</sup> An inscription dated 1095 that appears below the deity in an incised relief of the Water and Moon Guanyin [fig. 51] contains some key passages from this indigenous scripture. The selected passages were intended to be chanted as a talisman for averting bad fortune.<sup>13</sup>

Some miracle tales tell of a devotee seeing Guanyin in a vision and then proceeding to have a painting created according to what was seen. For instance, in one such miracle tale we read that a man by the name of Guo Xuazhi was implicated in a plot in 408 and was wrongly imprisoned. He prayed to Guanyin single-mindedly. One evening just before he fell asleep, he saw Guanyin, who appeared to him in person. Brilliant light filled the cell. Later he received a pardon and after he was released from prison, he commissioned a painting based on what he saw and built a shrine to house it.<sup>14</sup> In this cryptic story, we are not told what Guanyin looked like in the painting, but fortunately, such information is often provided in reports of sightings of Guanyin given by grateful pilgrims to the holy sites connected with the bodhisattva.

It seems to me that it was really only when Guanyin became associated with certain sites and people began to make pilgrimages to these places that the cult of Guanyin really took root in



51. Water and Moon Guanyin

China. The establishment of the earliest site did not predate the Sui dynasty, while the majority of sites for Guanyin pilgrimage were established in the Song. Miracles gave rise to the establishment of these cultic and pilgrimage centers and the traditions connected with them. They firmly anchored Guanyin to these sites, and in the process, provided Guanyin with an indigenous life history and iconography.

In studying the history of how Mount Putuo, off the coast of Zhejiang, came to be identified as the scriptural Potalaka, I became aware of the intimate relationship between pilgrims' visions of Guanyin and artistic depictions of the deity. I have come to the conclusion that what a pilgrim saw in a vision could be the basis for a new iconography, and conversely, how the deity was depicted in contemporary iconography might also predispose and condition how pilgrims would perceive Guanyin in their visions.

All editions of Putuo chronicles relate the following in the opening section of their chapters on miracles. During the Northern Song, in 1080, Wang Shunfeng was sent as an emissary to the three states of Korea. When the party reached Putuo they suddenly ran into a fierce storm. A big turtle came underneath the boat and made it impossible to move. The situation was extremely dangerous. Wang became greatly frightened and, kneeling down and facing the Cave of Tidal Sound, he prayed to Guanyin. All of a sudden he saw a brilliant golden light. Guanyin, wearing glittering pearl necklaces, emerged from the cave and manifested *in the form of the full moon* (italics are

the author's). What Wang saw in his vision was surely the Water and Moon Guanyin, an iconography that had recently gained popularity.

Around this time, pilgrims also began to see Guanyin as a feminine deity. Shi Hao, supervisor of salt, came to the island in 1148. Guanyin appeared in the Cave of Tidal Sound, illuminating it with great brilliance. Shi could see the deity's eyes and eyebrows clearly, and he described her teeth being "as white as jade," indicating her female gender unambiguously.

From the twelfth century on, Guanyin increasingly appeared to pilgrims as White-robed Guanyin. She also began to be accompanied, first by the boy Sudhana (Shancai) [cat. 47–50 and 78] and later by the Dragon Princess (Longnü) as well. Both figures are typically connected with Guanyin of the South Sea, the form of Guanyin associated with Putuo. There are many examples of miracles in which Guanyin appeared on the island with these attendants. According to one, in 1266 Grand Marshal Fan, who suffered from eye disease, sent his son to pray in front of the Cave of Tidal Sound. The grand marshal recovered when he washed his eyes with the spring water that the son gathered from the cave and brought home. When the son was sent back to the cave to offer thanks to Guanyin, he saw her wearing a white robe and accompanied by Sudhana. Ten years later, in 1276, General Halaye came to worship at the cave. When he did not see anything, he took out his bow and shot an arrow into the cave. He boarded the boat to go back, but suddenly the ocean was filled with water lilies. Much frightened and regretting his behavior, he went back to the cave in repentance. After a while he saw the White-robed Guanyin gracefully walk by, accompanied by Sudhana. As a result of this vision, *he had an image made and erected a hall for Guanyin above the cave* (italics are the author's). And finally, it is reported that, in 1355, one Liu Renben was returning from his duty as the supervisor of the circuit granary transport when he came to Putuo, where he too had a vision of Guanyin at the cave. He described the appearance of Guanyin "the same as that painted in pictures."<sup>15</sup> It is not impossible that those pictures were like some in this exhibition.

## The Chinese Feminine Forms of Guanyin

Several sources contributed to the creation of the feminine images of Guanyin, a number of examples of which are included in the exhibition. Although these sources can sometimes be traced to Buddhist scriptures, they definitely represent Chinese adaptations and modifications of Buddhist ideas. More importantly, they contain core values, such as filial piety and feminine chastity, that are central to the Chinese cultural tradition. These feminine forms of Guanyin were advertised by miracle tales and pilgrims' reports and made familiar through literary and artistic media until they finally became widely diffused throughout Chinese society. These forms of Guanyin began with distinctive identities and close connections with particular localities. But as Guanyin was perceived as a completely feminine deity by the fifteenth century, these forms were often intermingled and superimposed on each other.

## Princess Miaoshan

Princess Miaoshan (Wondrously Kind One) is by far the best known of all the feminine forms of Guanyin. Her story was most likely used originally to explain the iconography of the Indian Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin, which was bizarre and incomprehensible to ordinary Chinese worshipers. The legend of Miaoshan and its relationship with the pilgrimage center Xiangshan in Henan has received much scholarly attention.<sup>16</sup> Xiangshan Monastery was situated on a mountain two hundred *li* south of Mount Song and a few miles to the southeast of Baofeng county, in Ruzhou, Henan. Attached to the monastery was the Dabei pagoda, which housed an image of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin, the Great Compassionate One.

As noted earlier, in the Tang, following the introduction of esoteric forms of Guanyin, images of this type became very popular. Many of these images were claimed to have a divine origin, that is, to have been created by the bodhisattva personally. Li Chi (1059–1109), the author of *Huapin* (On Paintings), compared Guanyin in the Dabei pagoda to two other Dabei images that he had also seen. The one housed in the Tianxian Monastery, a nunnery in Dongjin, Xiangyang, was also made "by a human manifestation of the Great Compassionate One." In the Wude era (618–628), when the nuns wanted to have an image of Dabei Guanyin painted on the wall of the main hall, they looked for a good artist. A couple with a young girl came to answer the call, and the girl who posed for the painting was believed to be a manifestation of Guanyin.<sup>17</sup>

The image in Xiangshan Monastery was unique, however, for Guanyin was believed not only to have created an image, but also to have lived an embodied life there. As Dudbridge has convincingly argued, the cult at Xiangshan began with the joint promotion of a local official and the abbot of the temple in 1100. Jiang Zhiqi (1031–1104) served as the prefect at Ruzhou briefly and met Huaizhou, the abbot of Xiangshan Monastery, early in 1100. The abbot gave Jiang a book called *Life of the Dabei Bodhisattva of Xiangshan*, containing answers supposedly given by a divine spirit to the questions put forward by the famous Lü school master Daoxuan (596–667) of Mount Zhongnan. The book, in turn, was brought to the abbot by a mysterious monk who came to Xiangshan as a pilgrim. The book tells the story of how Guanyin appeared as Miaoshan, the third daughter of the mythical King Miaozhuang. She practiced Buddhism and refused to marry. When her father became sick, she gave her arms and eyes to cure him. She manifested in the form of a thousand hands and a thousand eyes to her parents, reverted to her original form, and died. Her stupa (together with the image made by her?) soon became the object of an annual pilgrimage that takes place in the second month of the year.

Jiang Zhiqi wrote the story of Miaoshan–Guanyin based on what he was told and had the famous calligrapher Cai Jing pen it for a stele. Jiang did not stay in Ruzhou long. Less than three years after his transfer to Ruzhou, Jiang served as the prefect of Hangzhou from November 1102 to October 1103. It is highly likely, as Dudbridge argues, that Jiang brought this story from Henan to Hangzhou. In the Upper Tianzhu Monastery in Hangzhou there once stood a two-stone stele that may have read, "Life of All-Compassionate One, Re-erected" (the first half of the stele was destroyed and is not preserved in the extant rubbings). This stele was erected in 1104



and repeated the story of Guanyin as Princess Miaoshan.<sup>18</sup> By then, the Upper Tianzhu Monastery had already been an important Guanyin pilgrimage center for over a century. Before the coming of Jiang, this story was probably not known in Hangzhou. But once this legend reached Hangzhou, it became closely connected with the Upper Tianzhu, for the popular version of this legend, as elaborated in the *Xiangshan baojuan* (The Precious Volume of Xiangshan), was supposedly revealed to a monk of that temple named Puming. It may be that this story took such deep root at the Upper Tianzhu because the form of Guanyin already worshiped there was that of the feminine White-robed Guanyin.

The preface of *Xiangshan baojuan*, the earliest extant version of which is dated 1773, states that Puming was visited by another monk on September 17, 1103, and was instructed to write down the story of Guanyin for the sake of universal salvation. He wrote the text based on what the visitor told him and then had a vision of Guanyin carrying the vase of pure water and the green willow branch. Sometime later, a female great being (C. *nidashi*) gave the text to Baofeng, who was staying in retreat on Mount Lu, and told him to disseminate it among people who were spiritually too immature to practice Chan.<sup>19</sup>

The popular text of *Xiangshan baojuan* provides many details about the life of Miaoshan-Guanyin not found in earlier versions of the story. By this account, Miaoshan was born in the nineteenth day of the second month (thus, the source for the celebration of the "birthday" of Guanyin observed by lay devotees and on the monastic calendar). She kept a vegetarian diet and, when she became a young woman, refused to get married. This so angered her father that he first imprisoned her in the imperial garden and then sent her to do hard labor under the bidding of the nuns at the Baique (White Sparrow) Monastery. When she still would not relent, her father had the monastery burned down, killing the five hundred nuns. Failing to have Miaoshan burned to death, the king sentenced her to die by strangulation. But she was carried by a mountain spirit to the Forest of Corpses. While her body lay lifeless there, the bodhisattva Dizang (S. *Kshitigarbha*) conducted her spirit on a tour of hells, where she preached a sermon to the beings imprisoned there and released them right away.<sup>20</sup> Fearing that the hells would soon be emptied of their denizens, Lord Yama, the king of the hells, let her go back to the world of the living. Miaoshan then went to Xiangshan, some three thousand miles away, and practiced religion for nine years. By then, caught up by his evil karma, her father the king developed a terrible disease that no doctor could cure. Miaoshan took the disguise of a monk and came to visit her father. She predicted that only a medicine made of the eyes and hands of one who was without hatred could cure him and then directed the king's servants to look for the Great Immortal (Daxian, a term sometimes applied to Buddhist monks in medieval hagiography) at Xiangshan. When they came, she cut off her arms and gouged out her eyes for them to take back to her father. The king indeed became well after taking the medicine, and decided to go offer thanks to his savior. When the royal party arrived, first the queen and then the king recognized the eyeless and armless immortal to be no other than their own daughter. The king was so moved that he immediately became converted to Buddhism. He made a loud wish that Miaoshan should be restored to *quanshou quanyan* ("fully handed and fully eyed"), whereupon the immortal announced that she was actually Guanyin. She then appeared in her true form: wearing a crown of pearls on her head and necklaces around her

body, she held a vase of pure water and willow branches in her hands and stood on a golden, thousand-petaled lotus. (This contrasts sharply with her form as described in the earlier epiphany, when she appeared as the Thousand-eyed and Thousand-handed Dabai Guanyin.)

The *Xiangshan baojuan* mentions the Purple Bamboo Grove and a parrot, topological and iconographic indicators connected with Potalaka, the island home of Guanyin. It implies that Xiangshan is Putuo when it states, "Pure Guanyin of the Limitless Light has come to this land especially to save all sentient beings. Hiding in retirement on Putuo for a very long time and unknown to men, her name began to appear only in the Tang dynasty."<sup>21</sup>

## Guanyin of the South Sea

The *Nanhai Guanyin quanzhuan* (Complete Biography of Guanyin of the South Sea), a sixteenth-century, reworked version of the *Xiangshan baojuan*, makes an explicit identification between Xiangshan and Putuo, which was becoming a major national and international pilgrimage center of Guanyin worship. It also provided a folk explanation, in place of a canonical one, for the triad composed of Guanyin and her two attendants Sudhana and Dragon Princess, which began to be represented in art in the twelfth century.<sup>22</sup> In Buddhist scriptures, Guanyin has a relationship with either Sudhana (Shancai) or Dragon Princess (Longnü), but not with both at the same time. Sudhana is the young pilgrim of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* who visits fifty-three teachers in order to learn the Buddha Dharma. The canonical sources for Dragon Princess may be found in the esoteric texts that state that Guanyin went to the Dragon King's palace to reveal the *dharaṇī*; in gratitude, Dragon King's daughter presents Guanyin with a precious jewel of unparalleled worth.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, because of the great popularity of the *Lotus Sutra*, she may have her origin in this scripture, although she does not have anything directly to do with Guanyin there.<sup>24</sup> I believe that these two attendants are the Buddhist counterparts of the Daoist Golden Boy (Jintong) and the Jade Girl (Yunü), who had been depicted as the attendants of the Jade Emperor since the Tang.

The author of the *Complete Biography* shows equal freedom in treating other Buddhist materials in the last part of the work, where the entire royal family undergoes apotheosis. The Jade Emperor, the supreme deity of Daoism and popular religion, bestowed titles on the three princesses, all of whom were transformed into bodhisattvas. Miaoshan was named "the Efficacious Guanyin of Great Loving Kindness and Compassion Who Saves People from Suffering and Hardships" and was appointed to be the mistress of the Putuo Rock of the South Sea in perpetuity. The two older sisters were identified with the famous and revered bodhisattvas Wenshu (S. *Mañjuśrī*) and Puxian (S. *Samantabhadra*), and were given Mount Wutai to rule. They were given two beasts, the Green Lion and the White Elephant, as mounts, for these beasts had earlier escaped from their posts as guardians of Shakyamuni's palace and tried to ravish the two sisters, who were saved by Miaoshan-Guanyin in the nick of time. This strange addition may represent an attempt to explain a new grouping of these three bodhisattvas (the Three Great Beings) that had become increasingly popular since the Song. The late Tang sculpture at Dazu, in Sichuan, seems to provide the earliest example, with Guanyin (of a thousand hands and thousand eyes) standing

in the middle, flanked by Manjushri and Samantabhadra (the more common grouping of them has Vairochana Buddha in the middle instead of Guanyin, in a triad called the Three Holy Ones of Huayan).<sup>25</sup> But from the Ming on, the icons of the Three Great Beings seem to have been enshrined in temples together more and more often. When this triad became popular, Guanyin was also accompanied by an animal mount. Called *hou*, the animal resembles a cross between a tiger and a lion. As one can see in examples in the exhibition, the animal on which the Child-giving Guanyin rides looks rather like a lion [cat. 46], but the animal crouching in front of the White-robed Guanyin in the handscroll Sixteen Lohans [cat. 54], on the other hand, hardly resembles a lion.

When Xiangshan became identified with the pilgrimage center Putuo, Guanyin of the South Sea began to be perceived as completely feminine, like Princess Miaoshan. Miaoshan is a feminine manifestation of Guanyin, but there is no iconography derived from it. Rather, the story of Miaoshan explained the Thousand-handed Guanyin. When Putuo became identified as the spiritual home of Miaoshan, however, Guanyin of Putuo (South Sea) began to be depicted as a feminine deity. She usually sits on a rock with bamboo behind her, or circled by a full moon. She either carries a vase with willow branches in her hand, or such a vase is placed by her side, these two attributes having by now coalesced so that the willows are set in the vase. She is attended by a boy and a girl. She can also be depicted as riding on waves or standing on top of a big fish. Finally, a white parrot is invariably seen hovering on the upper right side of her, carrying prayer beads in its mouth. The Chinese opera *Heavenly Maiden Sprinkles Flowers* (*Tiannü sanhua*) conveniently summarizes this iconography of Guanyin as she sings:

Putuo Palace  
Full-moon face of Guanyin  
Shancai and Lungnü stand on either side  
White parrot  
Pure vase  
Water of sweet dew and willow  
Universally saving mankind from suffering.

Guanyin is called Nanhai Guanyin (Guanyin of the South Sea) in *Xiyou ji* (*Journey to the West*), the celebrated sixteenth-century novel. It has been suggested that Wu Chengen, the author, probably visited Putuo, which had become a very popular pilgrimage site by the late Ming and a place frequently visited by writers and literati, for he provided detailed descriptions of the island in no less than nine places in the novel (chapters 17, 22, 26, 42, 49, 57, and 58).

In the sixteenth century, after a long period of neglect, Putuo reemerged as a major pilgrimage center under the patronage of the Ming emperor Wanli and his mother, Empress-dowager Li.<sup>26</sup> The island continued to enjoy royal patronage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries under the Qing emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong. It is therefore not by accident that the iconography of Nanhai Guanyin eventually triumphed over other forms of Guanyin during those centuries. In the reestablishment of the sacred site, local officials and able abbots collaborated closely. New texts of the "precious volumes" genre appeared during this time that may have

been created in order to popularize Putuo, as the creation of the new iconography for Guanyin also did. But popular texts can also serve as an index of the new-found fame of the island. Among these, two are devoted to the stories of Guanyin's attendants: the *Shancai Longnü baojuan* is about the boy and the girl. The white parrot, on the other hand, is the protagonist of the *Yingge baojuan*.

I read one edition of the former and two, one printed and the other hand-copied, of the *Yingge baojuan* when I was in mainland China in 1987. None are dated. The *Shancai Lungnü baojuan* tells the story of how Guanyin recruited her two attendants and the white parrot. Sudhana was now the son of a prime minister named Chen, who lived in the ninth century. He was already fifty but still had no son, so he and his wife went to Putuo to ask Nanhai Dashi (Great Being of the South Sea) for a son. Knowing that he was not destined to have a son, Guanyin granted him the Boy Who Attracts Wealth (Zhaocai Tongzi), an attending fairy serving under the Heavenly Official Who Bestows Blessings (Cifu Tianguan), so that the father could benefit from the future enlightenment of the boy. The child showed his spiritual leaning early on and the father allowed him to study under an immortal who was no other than Huanglong Zhenren (True Man of the Yellow Dragon), a "close friend" of Miaoshan-Guanyin and a major character in the *True Scripture of Guanyin's Original Vow to Save and Transform Men* (C. *Guanyin jidu benyuan zhen jing*), a seventeenth-century sectarian scripture connected with the Way of the Former Heaven (Xiantian Dao).<sup>27</sup>

In the *Shancai Lungnü baojuan*, Guanyin asked the immortal to appear at the cave near the boy's home and to become his master, and she gave the boy the Dharma name Sudhana. Three years passed and the boy did well, without going home even once. In order to test him, the master told him to take care of the cave while he went away visiting friends. Since this was the eve of the father's sixtieth birthday, Sudhana, who was feeling very lonely, decided to go home for a visit. But even before he left the mountain, he was trapped by a snake demon who cried for help with a girl's voice. After Sudhana released her, she reverted to the form of a huge python and decided to eat him, having been starved for eighteen years. After much discussion as to whether people return favor with favor or with ingratitude, calling the famous philosopher Zhuangzi as witness, among others, Guanyin saved Sudhana and tricked the snake demon into crawling back into the small bottle that had originally imprisoned her. She then put the snake in the Cave of Tidal Waves (one of two famous caves on Putuo where pilgrims would go to seek visions of Guanyin) and told her to purge herself of the poison in her heart. This she did in seven years, transforming herself into Dragon Princess and the poisonous heart into the night-illuminating pearl, which she offered to Guanyin. In the meantime, Guanyin had also recruited the white parrot.

The scriptural source for the parrot is undoubtedly the *Smaller Pure Land Sutra* (S. *Sukhavativyūha*, C. *Amituo jing*), the Pure Land sutra that describes the Pure Land as inhabited by parrots, the mythical *kalvinka*, and other rare birds, which are there for the benefit of those who achieve rebirth in that happy land. Like the source of Sudhana, the parrot's origin also received a folk treatment. The parrot was the chief protagonist of the *Yingge* (or *Ying'er*) *baojuan*, (Precious Volume of the Parrot, [or of the Parrot's Son]), which was obviously known to the author of the *Shancai Lungnü baojuan*. The father of the parrot had died and his mother was also deathly ill. She wanted to eat cherries that only grew in the Eastern Land (China). Having been warned of the evil disposition of the people in that land, the filial parrot nevertheless flew there to get the cherries. He

was captured by hunters who, upon discovering that he could speak human language, sold him to a rich landlord. The parrot proceeded to give sermons, and as a result the hunters who caught him gave up their profession and many people became converted to Buddhism. But the rich man was hard-hearted and refused to release him. One day, Bodhidharma came and suggested a way of escape: the parrot was to pretend to be dead. When the rich man saw him looking lifeless, he threw the parrot on the ground.<sup>28</sup> The parrot flew home to his mother, who had died in the meantime. When the parrot discovered this, he fainted away in grief. Guanyin, moved by his filial piety, came and revived the parrot by using the willow branch to sprinkle him with the pure water that she kept in the vase. Guanyin also helped the parrot's parents achieve a good rebirth, and in gratitude, the parrot asked to accompany Guanyin always.

The *Shancai Longnü baojuan* condensed the *Yingge baojuan* into a couple of pages and concluded,

The bodhisattva stands on the head of the big fish and Sudhana stands on lotuses. They sail slowly toward the Purple Bamboo Grove [a famous site on the southern shore of Putuo near the first temple dedicated to Guanyin]. One also sees the white parrot carrying prayer beads in its mouth and flying forward to meet the bodhisattva. This picture has been handed down even to this day.

It was indeed possible that the author was looking at a picture of this as he wrote, for, as I mentioned earlier, there are extant specimens of this iconography dated to the twelfth century. With the increasing fame of Putuo after the sixteenth century, Guanyin of the South Sea also became even more popular than before.

## Guanyin As Seductress

If Princess Miaoshan is a symbol of virginal chastity, Yulan Guanyin (Guanyin with a Fish Basket, fig. 50, cat. 49) is a feminine image of Guanyin of greater complexity. She often is known by the name Mr. Ma's Wife (Malangfu). Her story can be briefly summarized: During the Tang dynasty, when Buddhism enjoyed great popularity in China, people living in the eastern part of Shaanxi loved to hunt and had no interest in Buddhism. In 809 or (817) a beautiful young woman came and told people that she would marry any man who could memorize the Pumen chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* in one night. The next morning, twenty men passed the test. Saying that she could not marry them all, she asked them to memorize the *Diamond Sutra* (or, in some versions, the *Prajnaparamita Sutra*). More than ten could do so the next morning, so she asked them to memorize the *Lotus Sutra* in three days. This time, only Mr. Ma succeeded. So he made wedding preparations and invited her to come to his house. Upon arrival, she claimed to feel ill and asked to be allowed to rest in another room. Before the wedding guests departed, she suddenly died. In a short while, the body rotted and had to be buried in a hurry. Several days later, an old monk wearing a purple robe came and asked Ma to show him the tomb. The monk opened it and touched the corpse with his staff. The flesh had already disintegrated, exposing bones linked together by a gold chain. Like *sharira* (relics), bones linked by a golden chain were considered vis-

ible signs of a holy person, specifically of a bodhisattva. The monk told the assembled onlookers that the omen was a manifestation of a great sage, who came in order to save them from their evil karma. After washing the bones in the water, he picked them up and carried them on his staff and ascended into the sky. Many people living in that region became converted to Buddhism.<sup>29</sup>

In the early versions of the story, the woman was not explicitly identified as a manifestation of Guanyin. There was also no mention of the fish basket. Neither was the region where the miracle occurred given a name. All these details were added in the succeeding centuries, and, as her cult developed, these became common knowledge and were represented by stock expressions. For instance, when the Chan master Fengxue Yanzhao (887–973) of Ruzhou was asked by a monk, "What is the pure Dharmakaya?", he answered, "Mr. Ma's Wife of Golden Sand Beach (Jinshatan)."<sup>30</sup> Huang Tingjian (1045–1105) also used the phrase "chained bones on Golden Sand Beach" in his poem written in 1088. During the Song and Yuan, from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, many Chan masters used this figure in their poems. The woman was now firmly identified as Guanyin. She was called either Mr. Ma's Wife or Guanyin with the Fish Basket (Yulan Guanyin). She was called Yulan Guanyin because she came to Golden Sand Beach as a fish-monger, carrying a basket of fish on her arm. During the same period, she also became a favorite subject in paintings. Many paintings entitled either Mr. Ma's Wife or Guanyin with the Fish Basket have survived. Song Lian (1310–1381) wrote a eulogy to a portrait of Yulan Guanyin (Yulan Guanyin Xiangzan) in which he gave her "biography" its mature form.<sup>31</sup>

Both in paintings and in Chan poems, Guanyin with the Fish Basket was described as young, beautiful, and sexually alluring. Unlike Miaoshan, she promised marriage and sex. But like Miaoshan, she remained a virgin. She first offered sexual favors, but then denied gratification. She used sexual desire as skillful means, a teaching device to help people reach goodness. However, there is strong evidence that she did not simply remain a sexual tease, but in fact she, or originally another woman somewhat like her whose identity later became blurred with Mr. Ma's Wife, engaged in sexual activities in order to carry out the mission of salvation. Known simply as the Woman of Yanzhou, this woman lived in eastern Shaanxi during the Dali era (766–779), several decades earlier than the time of Mr. Ma's Wife. She had sex with any man who asked for it. But whoever had sex with her was said to become free from sexual desire forever.<sup>32</sup> She died at the age of twenty-four as a dissolute woman of ill repute, and was buried without ceremony in a common grave by the roadside. A foreign monk from the western regions later came and, offering incense, paid respect to her at her grave. When asked by disgusted villagers why he should bother with this husbandless woman of loose virtue, he told them that she acted out of compassion. He predicted that her bones would be found to be chained together, and when her grave was opened, the bones of her entire body were indeed linked together like a chain. The two stories are clearly variations on the same theme: sexuality, either offered outright, or first promised and then later withheld, can serve as a powerful tool of spiritual transformation. This is of course not a novel idea, but is documented in many Mahayana scriptures, both exoteric and esoteric.

A bodhisattva in the enlightened state, which is characterized by the realization of non-duality, can engage in all kinds of "evil" activities while remaining in *samadhi*. This is why Vimalakirti entered brothels and cabarets, and indeed enacted the five deadly sins yet was not

tainted by them.<sup>33</sup> In fact, "the Maras who play the devil in the innumerable universes of the ten directions are all bodhisattvas dwelling in the inconceivable liberation, who are playing the devil in order to develop living beings through their skill in liberative technique."<sup>34</sup> In the *Gandavyuha* section of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, known as "Entering the Realm of Reality," Vasumitra, one of the guides, tells the young pilgrim Sudhana that she teaches all men who come to her full of passion in such a way that they become free of passion. Without discrimination, she will offer whatever they want in order to satisfy their desire and, in doing so, she enables them to become dispassionate. Thus, some reach dispassion as soon as they see her, others do so by talking with her, or holding her hand, or staying with her, or gazing at her, or embracing her, or kissing her.<sup>35</sup>

The legends of Mr. Ma's Wife, Guanyin with the Fish Basket, and the Woman of Yanzhou bear many traces of Buddhist sources. Ordinary Chinese people, however, come to know these stories primarily through folk literature, which has produced several *baojuan* centering on this figure. During my research in mainland China in 1986–1987, I came across five texts dealing with this theme: *Yulan baojuan* (Precious Volume of the Fish Basket); *Tilan juan* (Lifting the Basket Volume); *Maiyu baojuan* (Precious Volume of Selling Fish); *Xigua baojuan* (Precious Volume of the Watermelon); and *Guanyin Miaoshan baojuan* (Precious Volume of Guanyin-Miaoshan). Their composition must postdate that of the Miaoshan story *Xiangshan baojuan*, for some important biographical details of the heroine (such as birthday, age, and being the third daughter) were based on the life story of Miaoshan. It is interesting to note that despite considerable variation in details, all five present the heroine as offering marriage as a bait, but not consummating it in sexual activity. Clearly, while the story of Mr. Ma's Wife, or Guanyin with the Fish Basket, has been retained, that of the Woman of Yanzhou has been dropped. This is undoubtedly due to the latter's overly tantric flavor. With the decline of tantric Buddhism in China after the Tang and the increasing influence of the moralistic puritanism of Neo-Confucianism from the Song on, it is not surprising that this story, with its explicit mention of sex and the unconventional transposition of values (prostitute equals bodhisattva) proved too shocking for general consumption.

The first *baojuan* set the story in the Song, correctly reflecting the time when this cult first gained popularity. The place where Golden Sand Beach was located, however, was changed from Shaanxi to Jiangsu, namely Haimen (east of present Nantong), renowned for its wealth in salt and fish. The change of locale is significant, for it clearly indicates that it was in Jiangsu and Zhejiang that this *baojuan*, like many others, had its origin. It also indicates that it was in this coastal region that this cult eventually took root. In this version Guanyin first appeared as an old woman fish-monger. It was only after she failed to attract anyone's attention in this disguise that she changed into a beautiful young maiden. The characterization of Guanyin as being old and poor began after the Song, and she was called Guanyin Laomu (Guanyin as Old Woman or Old Mother) from the Ming on. This was probably due to the influence of sectarian religions whose patron deity was the Unbegotten Old Mother (Wusheng Laomu). Another text of uncertain date, *The Precious Volume about Guanyin's Conversion of the Twelve Enlightened Ones* (C. *Guanyin Shier yuanjue baojuan*), tells the story of how Guanyin led twelve persons, both men and women, some good and some bad, into enlightenment. Guanyin took the disguises of a monk and a beautiful young woman, but also of a poor old beggar woman.<sup>36</sup> There are not many paintings of Guanyin as old, although

the last of the five forms of Guanyin drawn by Ding Yunpeng [cat. 49] is one of the exceptions. In that painting she appears as an old and rather stern woman wearing a white robe and peering from behind a cape.

The other precious volumes, while retaining the main plot of the story, showed considerable freedom in changing some details to reflect local traditions. A common concern in all of them was to supply a reasonable explanation for the iconography of Guanyin with the Fish Basket and to account for the figure's great popularity in the area where the texts circulated.

The themes of fish and fish basket, however, were not present in all the precious volumes dealing with the image of Guanyin as a seductress. The *Guanyin Miaoshan baojuan* and the *Precious Volume of the Watermelon*, for instance, did not present the heroine as a fish-monger. On the other hand, both texts made a strong point about the fact that she was a young widow wearing white, the color of mourning and also the color of White-robed Guanyin, whose cult became very important after the tenth century (see below). In these texts, the myths and images of White-robed Guanyin were superimposed on those of Mr. Ma's Wife, Guanyin with the Fish Basket. This is a good example of the composite nature of religious precious volumes written in more recent times, in which the authors exercised great freedom in combining different traditions. It is also, incidentally, a characteristic feature of some of the paintings of Guanyin included in the exhibition, a point that will be returned to at the end of the essay.

### White-robed Guanyin

The last major image of Guanyin to be discussed is the White-robed (Baiyi) Guanyin [cat. 49]. In the opinion of the author, we should consider the Child-Giving Guanyin a variant of this iconography. The origin of White-robed Guanyin has long been a topic of scholarly debate. Some, such as H. Maspero and Kenneth Ch'en, see her as the tantric goddess Pandaravasini ("clad in white") and also as the Chinese form of White Tara, the chief female consort of Avalokitesvara and an important goddess in Tibetan Buddhism. After her introduction into China in the Tang, according to this view, she was further transformed into a fertility goddess: because Pandaravasini belongs to the mandala of the *garbhadhatu*, the World of the Womb Treasury (or Womb-Matrix), Chinese popular religion appropriated her from Buddhism and, taking the word 'womb' literally, turned her into a goddess who grants children, and thus, into Child-giving Guanyin.<sup>37</sup>

Recently Rolf A. Stein disagreed with the above interpretation and convincingly showed that Baiyi (Pandaravasini) should not be confused with White Tara.<sup>38</sup> He has two main points of argument. First, White-robed Guanyin was first mentioned in a tantric *dhāraṇī* collection transcribed in the sixth century rather than in the eighth-century texts mentioned by Maspero.<sup>39</sup> Thus this figure was introduced earlier, and not from Tibet, as was the case with White Tara. As in all tantric texts that are intended for visualization, the appearance of the deity is clearly described in the sixth-century text. The figure, whose sex is not specified, wears white garments and sits on a lotus, with one hand holding a lotus (not a willow branch), while the other hand grasps a vase.

The hair is combed upward. This tantric sutra probably served as the canonical basis for this new iconography of Guanyin. Literary references to White-robed Guanyin paintings dating from the Tang to the Song exist, but they never described the exact form, so there is no way of knowing to what extent the iconographic canon laid down in this sutra was followed.

Stein's second, and more important, argument is that in the tantric scriptures translated in the Tang dealing with the "mothers" or female counterparts of buddhas (C. *fomu*),<sup>40</sup> Baiyi (Pandaravasini) is mentioned together with Tara, but is distinct from the latter. She is the mother of the lotus clan whose head is Avalokiteshvara. She is called White Residence (C. Baichu) because she lives in a white, pure lotus. Baiyi should also be distinguished from the White-bodied One (C. Baishen) who, together with Tara and others, surrounds Amoghapasha Avalokiteshvara sitting on Mount Potalaka. In some texts, Baiyi is described as sitting on a lotus, but holding a lasso in her lowered left hand and the *Prajnaparamita Sutra* in her raised right hand, which is very different from the earlier meditating Baiyi holding a lotus and a vase. To make matters even more complicated, in the Womb Treasury (or Matrix) mandala, three deities—White Residence, White Body, and Great Bright White Body (Daming Baishen)—who are located in the court of Guanyin, are all clad in white and thus can all be called Baiyi. White is the symbol for the mind of enlightenment, which gives birth to all buddhas and bodhisattvas. That is why the female deities of the lotus clan who are housed in the court of Guanyin are mostly white in color, for they are the mothers of buddhas and bodhisattvas.<sup>41</sup>

The problem of the relationship between the Chinese White-robed Guanyin and Buddhist canonical literature is admittedly a thorny one. Her popularity in sculpture, painting, poetry, and other media has been unsurpassed since the tenth century. As an unmistakably feminine deity, she is always depicted wearing a long, flowing white cape, whose hood sometimes covers her head. Gu Yanwu (1613–1682), the Qing scholar of philosophy and textual study, observed,

Among the deities who enjoy the offerings of incense in the temples and monasteries under heaven, none can compete with Guanyin. The Great Being has many forms of transformation. But people in the world mostly worship that of the White-robed One. According to the *Liao shi* (History of Liao Dynasty [907–1125]), White-robed Guanyin lives in Mt. Changbai [Perpetually White Mountain, in present Jilin province], which is more than a thousand *li* southeast of Mt. Leng [Cold Mountain]. On that mountain, birds and beasts are all white, and no one dares to harm them. Thus we know that White-robed Guanyin has been worshiped for a very long time."<sup>42</sup>

Other sources, some of which are discussed below, also point to the tenth century as the beginning for the cult of White-robed Guanyin. Even if she was originally introduced into China through tantric ritual texts, her eventual success in China was due to a group of indigenous scriptures that promoted her as a goddess capable of granting children. Her iconography was sinicized and eventually, like Miaoshan and the interwoven figures of Mr. Ma's wife and Guanyin with the Fish Basket, she was provided with a very Chinese biography in her own precious volume, the *Miaoying baojuan*.

Several White-robed Guanyin paintings were attributed to the Tang artist Wu Daozi [cat. 7], and as a genre this type of painting has sometimes been connected with the Song painter Li Gonglin and the *baimiao* line-drawing technique favored by his school.<sup>43</sup> While the attribution to Wu Daozi is not always reliable, dated sculptures of White-robed Guanyin in Sichuan go back to the tenth century. The inscription by the side of Guanyin in Great Buddha Temple of Meishan, for instance, stated that the White-robed Guanyin was carved in 936.<sup>44</sup>

Another source identifying the rise of White-robed Guanyin in the tenth century is the founding myths of monasteries and convents dedicated to her. For instance, before he came to the throne, Qian Liu (851–932), the founder of the Wu Yue kingdom, dreamt of a woman in white who promised to protect him and his descendants if he was compassionate. She told him that he would be able to find her on Mount Tianzhu in Hangzhou twenty years later. After he became king, he dreamt of the same woman, who asked for a place to stay and in return offered to be the patron deity of his kingdom. When he discovered that only one monastery on Mount Tianzhu housed an image of White-robed Guanyin, he gave his patronage to it and established it as the Tianzhu Kajingyuan. It was later renamed the Upper Tianzhu Monastery and became one of the most important pilgrimage centers for Guanyin worship.<sup>45</sup>

Similar stories accounted for the founding of other temples. Typically, Guanyin either appeared to someone in a dream or as an unusual statue. A temple was then built to worship her, miracles happened, and fame of the efficacy of the image spread. When there were many miracles, and much fame became attached to it, the temple would then grow into a pilgrimage center, as was the case with Xiangshan in Henan, Upper Tianzhu in Hangzhou, and, finally, Putuo. Pilgrimage, in turn, would perpetuate the fame and spread the miracles, thus attracting even more pilgrims to the site. In the growth of the cult of Guanyin, the feminine White-robed Guanyin was definitely very noteworthy during these several centuries.

White-robed Guanyin's presence was prominent in miracle tales dated to this period as well. Hong Mai (1123–1202), in his huge collection of strange tales, the *Yijian zhi*, reported several anecdotes about Guanyin's efficacy. In one, an old village woman suffered from an ache in her arm that did not seem to improve even after she consulted doctors. One night she dreamt of a woman in white who told her, "I also suffer from the same problem. If you will cure my arm ache, I will do the same for you." When asked where she lived, the figure in white said the western corridor of Chongning Monastery. The next day the old woman went into the city and told her dream to the monk Zhongdao, who was in charge of the western dormitory of the monastery. He immediately realized that the person in the dream must be Guanyin, for he had an image of White-robed Guanyin in his room, and during a renovation project, the arm of the image had been accidentally damaged. He led the woman into the room and she paid obeisance to the image, which indeed had a damaged arm. She paid workers to repair the image, and when Guanyin's arm was restored the woman also recovered from her arm pain. Hong Mai was told this story by Wu Jie, a native of Huzhou.<sup>46</sup>

The above examples can serve as an episodic history of the increasing popularity of the cult of White-robed Guanyin after the tenth century. There could very well be a link between this cult and Pandaravasini of the tantric texts. But we have no clear evidence of that, for the Chinese



White-robed Guanyin shows no connection with tantric rituals. Except for the mantras, there is also nothing esoteric about the texts glorifying this deity. She seems to have developed quite independently of Tara, Cundi, and other tantric deities, even if she originally had some relationship with them. I am convinced that her cult was due to a group of indigenous texts, which present her primarily as the goddess with child-granting efficacy. In this capacity, White-robed Guanyin is a fertility goddess who nevertheless is devoid of sexuality. She gives children to others, but she is never a mother. To borrow a distinction from Karen Horney, she is thus a figure of motherliness, but not of motherhood.<sup>47</sup>

These indigenous texts are generically called *Baiyi Guanyin jing*, or *zhou* (Sutra or Mantra of White-robed Guanyin). They are very short, but invariably contain mantras. The chanting and memorization of these texts are believed to be unfailingly efficacious. The most famous among them is the *Baiyi Guanyin* (or *Dashi*) *shenzhou* (The Divine Mantra of White-robed Guanyin, or Great Being).<sup>48</sup> It was already in use in the eleventh century, and is still being printed widely and distributed free of charge by the faithful in the present day. Another popular text, *Guanyin shiju jing* (Guanyin Sutra in Ten Phrases), was sometimes combined with the former and is known by several different names, such as *Guanyin mengshou* (transmitted in dream) *jing*, *Guanyin baosheng* (preserving life) *jing*, or *Guanyin jiusheng* (saving life) *jing*. This text can also be dated to the eleventh century.<sup>49</sup> Both texts are supposed to have been transmitted by White-robed Guanyin to her devotees. While the chanting of these texts is believed to bring the devotee relief from all kinds of suffering, they are not specifically concerned with fertility.

The power to grant children, particularly sons, is attributed to another text, which, again, goes by several different names, but most commonly *Baiyi Dashi* (or *Baiyi Guanyin*) *wu yinxin tuoluoni jing* (The Dharani Sutra of White-robed Guanyin's Heart of Five Seals). Thirty-five copies of this scripture were kept in the rare book section of the Library of Chinese Buddhist Cultural Artifacts (C. Zhonghua Fojiao Wenwu Tushuguan), located at the Fayuan Monastery in Beijing, where I made a careful study of them in the fall of 1986. They were printed during the Ming, the earliest one in 1428, and the majority during the Wanli period, around 1600. Like the other texts in this collection,<sup>50</sup> they were printed and distributed free of charge by donors who wanted to bear witness to Guanyin's efficacy and to promote her cult. The quality and quantity of the printed texts varied greatly, depending on the economic ability of the donor. But in all cases the donors provided accounts of miracles that happened to others as well as to themselves. Since most of these miracle accounts have not yet found their way into standard collections, these short texts are a valuable source for historians.

The chanting of this White-robed Guanyin *dharani* would lead to the miraculous arrival of long-awaited baby boy who would be delivered in a peculiar manner, according to the miracle accounts. The earliest testimony of this was traced to the Tang, which also served as an explanation for the origin of this text:

During the Tang dynasty there was a gentry-scholar who lived in Hengyang [in present Hunan province]. He was quite advanced in age but still had no heir. In his effort to secure a son, he went everywhere and prayed for divine help. One

day he suddenly met an old monk who gave him the *Baiyi Guanyin jing* (The White-robed Guanyin Sutra). The monk told him that this sutra was taught by the Buddha and that whoever chanted it would obtain the fulfillment of all his heart's desires. If he wanted to have a son, he would receive a son of much wisdom and the baby would be born with the miracle of being doubly wrapped in white placenta (C. *baiyi chongbao*).<sup>51</sup> After this he and his wife chanted the scripture with sincerity. In several years they had three sons, who were all born in the manner described by the monk [*baiyi chongbao*]. When the governor of Hengyang heard this, he paid for the printing and distributing of the scripture, in order to secure a son. In less than one year, a son was born to the governor.<sup>52</sup>

Miracles attributed to this scripture were reported during the six hundred years between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries. Literati living in the late Ming, during the sixteenth century, apparently gave the cult a new boost, which may explain the sudden outpouring of printings of the text during that period.

Several characteristics of the miracle accounts attached to this scripture are noteworthy. First, while some of the events were dated to the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, the majority seem to be concentrated in the Ming, and especially in the late Ming. Thus, it appears that it was during the years 1400 to 1600 that the cult of White-robed Guanyin as the giver of heirs became firmly established in China. Second, the woodblock print of Guanyin forming the frontispiece of the text usually depicts her holding a baby boy on her lap. This is the classical iconography of Child-giving Guanyin, represented most frequently by the *blanc de chine* porcelain and ivory figures produced in Fujian during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The resemblance between the iconography of Child-giving Guanyin and the Madonna and Child has been widely noted. It is interesting to note that this particular iconography of the Virgin became popular in parts of Europe during the same two centuries.<sup>53</sup> Fujian, like Guangdong, was a coastal province that was visited by Christian missionaries as early as the thirteenth century, and on a larger scale beginning in the sixteenth century. Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Spanish traders and missionaries brought sculpture from both Spain and northern Europe to China and the Philippines. They also commissioned Chinese craftsmen to carve Christian images, most frequently the Virgin and Child. The artisans were natives of Fujian, coming predominately from Zhangzhou, Fuzhou, and Quanzhou, the same cities that produced the images of Child-giving Guanyin. Since the same artistic communities produced these religious images, it is not surprising that the Madonnas looked somewhat Chinese and the Guanyin looked almost "Gothic."<sup>54</sup> The power to grant children is mentioned as one of the many powers of Guanyin in the Pumen chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. However, prior to the Ming, the depiction of Guanyin, even in feminine forms, seldom included a male child held either in her arms or placed on her lap. The religious basis for this iconography came from Buddhist scriptures, but its artistic rendering may have been influenced by the iconography of the Virgin.

A third characteristic of the miracle accounts is that they provided the names and birthplaces of the donors. Donors coming from She county and Huizhou (in present Anhui province)

predominated. This is not surprising, for Huizhou merchants were noted for their wealth. The cult was not restricted to this region, but Huizhou appears to be overrepresented because more of its natives could afford to print the text. An interesting fact is that among the personal names provided for the wives of the donors, seventeen contained the character *miao*, as in Miaoshan.<sup>55</sup> This character *miao* appears to have been a favorite Dharma name given to Buddhist laywomen. Perhaps pious Buddhist women were given names containing this word because of Miaoshan's fame. It would seem that, just as many Christian girls were given the name Mary or Maria, Chinese girls from Buddhist families were given the name Miaoshan or something similar to it.

*Miaoying baojuan* is a text devoted to the biography of White-robed Guanyin. As the title of this precious scroll indicates, the heroine's name was Miaoying. The undated copy I read at the Zhejiang Provincial Library was printed by Yao Wenhai Bookstore in Shanghai. Fu Xihua reported that there were four editions in existence, the earliest one dated 1860. The text was also known as *Baiyi baojuan* (Precious Volume of White-robed Guanyin) and *Baiyi chengzheng baojuan* (Precious Volume of White-robed Guanyin's Realization of Enlightenment). The story shows an obvious debt to *Xiangshan baojuan*, but also shares some common thematic features with the other popular precious scrolls discussed above.

According to the story, which took place in Luoyang during the reign of Taizong (r. 976–96) of the Song, Mr. Xu was forty years old when he became father to Miaoying, his only child. She began to keep a vegetarian diet at seven, and when older, spent her time chanting the *Lotus Sutra*. The parents were looking forward to having a son-in-law, but she announced that she did not want to get married. Echoing Miaoshan's sentiments, Miaoying told her parents that marriage and children would increase one's karmic burden and tie one to more suffering. But her parents secretly betrothed her to Wang Chengzu, the only son of a member of the local gentry, and made plans with Wang's family to carry out the wedding. Her parents tricked Miaoying into going out to view the display at the Lantern Festival. Once out, she was abducted by two hundred men sent by the Wang family, who had been waiting in ambush for her. She prayed to heaven and moved the Buddha (called Lingshan Jiaozhu, the Teaching Master of Vulture Peak), who dispatched heavenly kings, guardians, and deities of thunder, wind, and rain to create a hurricane and, in the confusion, to spirit Miaoying to White Cloud Mountain (Baiyun shan). When the storm subsided, the abductors discovered that like the bride in the *Precious Volume of the Fish Basket*, or the *Precious Volume of the Watermelon*, she had mysteriously disappeared, leaving behind a copy of the *Lotus Sutra* near the doorway.

Miaoying's parents charged Wang with murder. He was imprisoned and subjected to torture; unable to bear it, he made a false confession to the murder charge. Because of this tragedy, Wang came to realize the capriciousness of life and began to chant the name of the Buddha in prison. He also vowed to become a Buddhist devotee if he were released and allowed to go home. When the emperor celebrated his sixtieth birthday, he carried out a general amnesty and commuted Wang's sentence to military exile to a remote place. Wang made the journey to exile accompanied by two jailers. One night when they were in the mountains, they heard the sound of a temple's wooden fish-shaped gong. They eventually found Miaoying, who had been practicing spiritual training there all this time. After she told Wang what had happened, he decided to

become her disciple and practice Buddhism too. She administered the three refuges and gave him the five precepts. When the two jailers returned home and spread the news, the couple's parents, the governor, and eighteen other people all decided to go to her, whom they called the Great Immortal, the same title given to Miaoshan. The party listened to her sermons and chanted the Buddha's name together. Finally, in an unspecified year, on the third day of the first month, she "ascended to heaven in broad daylight, and became the White-robed Great Being Who Saves Beings from Sorrow and Suffering (C. Baiyi Dashi Jiuku Jiunan)."

## Conclusion

Much space in this essay has been devoted to describing the contents of several precious volumes because I believe they offer important clues to our reading of the feminine forms of Guanyin in later Chinese art. These popular texts show some familiarity with Buddhist scriptural sources, but they rarely adhere to the original allusions faithfully. They boldly combine different elements in creating an indigenous version of the story. For instance, as indicated above, Sudhana, the Dragon Princess, and the white parrot, the three companions of Guanyin of the South Sea, can be traced to the *Avatamsaka*, the *Lotus* (or the esoteric sutras glorifying the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin), and the *Smaller Pure Land* sutras respectively. Like the precious volumes, later paintings also combine subjects that originally were totally unrelated, such as Guanyin and the lohans [cat. 53]. Precious volumes, moreover, form a self-contained tradition. Late compositions show familiarity with earlier ones, repeating and embellishing salient features of the latter. We can also detect this in the pictures of Guanyin. A totally secular depiction of the Child-giving Guanyin [cat. 69], for instance, retains key attributes of other Guanyin iconographies: the bamboo grove, the white parrot, and the pure vase and willow branch held in the baby girl's hand.<sup>56</sup>

How did the various feminine forms of Guanyin come about? Miracles and pilgrimage traditions probably provided the initial impetus. Art and literature then promoted and popularized them. I suggest that each major form of the feminine Guanyin was originally anchored in one specific place, connected with one life story, and depicted with one type of iconography. For instance, Princess Miaoshan was originally worshiped in Henan, Mr. Ma's Wife (or Guanyin of the Fish Basket) in Shaanxi, White-robed Guanyin in Hangzhou, and Guanyin of the South Sea on Putuo Island. In this way Guanyin, originally a foreign, male deity, was transformed into a female savior with distinctive Chinese identities. While each one may originally have had her own cult, not all these cults have survived. Princess Miaoshan and Mr. Ma's Wife do not have separate cults, but White-robed Guanyin and Guanyin of the South Sea do, although they are intermingled. Moreover, as Putuo developed into the Chinese Potalaka and emerged as the national and international center for Guanyin worship in the Ming, Guanyin of the South Sea also absorbed the images of Guanyin as Miaoshan, the fish-monger, and the White-robed One. When we examine the miracle tales connected with Putuo, it is possible to detect the simultaneous appearance of these different images of Guanyin. Similarly, when we examine the iconography of Guanyin of the South Sea, traces of the other images of Guanyin can also be found in juxtaposition. One image

does not obliterate the other images, but through the process of "superscription,"<sup>57</sup> Guanyin of the South Sea succeeded in maintaining her identity yet at the same time was enriched by the mythical lores of all the other images. All of these views of Guanyin, though different and even contradictory taken by themselves, mutually authenticate each other and reinforce Guanyin's efficacy (*ling*) in the eyes of her devotees.<sup>58</sup>

Now that we have seen *how* Guanyin was transformed into a feminine deity and what forms she has taken, I will offer some tentative answer to the question *why* Guanyin became the Chinese "Goddess of Mercy." First of all, despite the Mahayana Buddhist emphasis on nonduality, there is a strong and venerable tradition of personifying Prajnaparamita (Perfection of Wisdom), one of the most important virtues, as a feminine deity. A long hymn to the Perfection of Wisdom, the *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita* (The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines), which is one of the earliest Mahayana Buddhist scriptures and dates to the first century B.C.E., praises her in this way: "In her we may find refuge. . . . She brings light to the blind. . . . She leads those who have gone astray to the right path. She is omniscient; without beginning or end is Perfect Wisdom. . . . She is the mother of the bodhisattvas."<sup>59</sup> Since Guanyin is a bodhisattva representing both compassion and wisdom (The *Heart Sutra*, the shortest version of the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures, is, after all, preached by Guanyin in deep *samadhi*), Guanyin, like Perfection of Wisdom, is eminently suitable for personification as a goddess. But this, unfortunately, cannot answer the question why Avalokiteshvara did not undergo any sexual transformation in other Buddhist countries outside China, Korea, and Japan.

The fact that these feminine forms of Guanyin appeared primarily during the Song dynasty, on the other hand, may be a significant clue. One development in popular religion during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the appearance of new local deities, as Valerie Hansen shows in her book *Changing Gods in Medieval China*. These deities, like the ones in earlier periods, were men and women apotheosized into gods and goddesses after death. Unlike earlier such deities, however, when they were alive, they were ordinary men and women of humble birth. Their claim to divinity was based solely on their *ling* (efficacy), which they manifested through miracles. The feminine forms of Guanyin share many similarities with these new deities. Guanyin's human manifestations (except for Princess Miaoshan) lived ordinary, if not obscure, lives before their apotheoses. The original universal bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara had to fit the mold of Chinese religious sensibility by taking on Chinese identities before she could succeed as the most popular Buddhist "deity" in China.

It is clear that when Guanyin took on human (and Chinese) identities, she achieved a widespread national following. In this respect, I think that the popularity of Guanyin should finally be viewed together with the appearance of other female deities during the same time span. Some of them, such as Queen of Heaven (C. Tianhou, more familiarly known as Mazu), Goddess of the Azure Cloud (C. Bixia Yuanjun), and Eternal Mother (C. Wusheng Laomu) also had close bonds with different localities in their genesis, but eventually came to enjoy a regional and even national cultic following. All of them claimed either a mother-daughter relationship to Guanyin or to be incarnations of Guanyin. Why did these goddesses come to dominate the medieval Chinese religious landscape and continue to do so today? This is a large and complex

question. Until we know much more than we do now about the other goddesses, this question may not be readily answered. The indigenization and feminization of Avalokiteshvara into Guanyin, however, certainly played a key role in the rise of goddesses' cults in late imperial China.

#### NOTES

1. Gōtō Daiyō, *Kannon bosatsu no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1958), 283–88; C. N. Tay, "Kuan-yin: The Cult of Half Asia," *History of Religions* 16, no. 2 (1976):152–70.
2. Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, 311–13.
3. Sun Xiushen, "Dunhuang bihua zhong de Fahua jing Guanyin pumen pin tantao," *Silu luntan* (March 1987):61–62.
4. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, 171–72.
5. Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana*, 78.
6. Wang Huimin, "Dunhuang Shuiyue Guanyin xiang," *Dunhuang Studies* 1 (1987):31–38.
7. Shi Pingding, "Dunhuang suibi zhisan—yijian wanzheng de shehui fengsushi ziliao," *Dunhuang Studies* 2 (1987):34–37. At the end of Pelliot 2055, there is a list of ten titles of scriptures that Qu Fengda, who lived in the 8th century, had recited for the benefit of his wife, born Ma, on the 7th day, the 100th day, the 1st anniversary, and the 3rd anniversary of her death. *Shuiyue Guanyin jing* was recited on the second 7th death day; *Dunhuang baozang*, ed. Huang Yongwu (Taipei: Xinwenfeng Bookstore, 1981), 113:287. The hand-written text of this scripture is only one page. It is contained in no. 4532 of Ancient Handwritten Copies held in the Tianjin Art Museum. Shi Pingding mentioned this text in her article, but she did not read the text. Following her reference, I located the text in August 1987 and copied it. Despite the name, it mainly contains passages from the "Great Compassion Mantra." There is nothing in the text that provides a justification for the iconography of Water and Moon Guanyin.
8. I discuss the processes through which Putuo Island became identified and then developed into the Chinese Potalaka in the chapter entitled "P'u-t'o Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka," in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, Naquin and Yü, eds., 190–245.
9. Angela Howard, "The Creation of the Chinese White-robed Kuan-yin," paper delivered at the Amer-

ican Academy of Religion Conference, November 18, 1990, New Orleans.

10. Yamamoto Yōko, "The Formation of the Moon and Water Kuan-yin Image," *Biijutsushi* 38, no. 1 (March 1989):28–37.

11. Makita Tairyō, *Rokuchō koyui Kanzeon okenki no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1970).

12. This is but one version of the story. Other sources credit the same miracle to another man by the name of Lu Jin (d. 542). There is also some disagreement concerning the exact identity of the sutra. Several indigenous scriptures were believed to be transmitted by Guanyin to devotees in dreams. Some sources say that both Lu and Sun received the *Guanshiyin Sutra Promoted by Emperor Gao*. But other sources claim that the sutra Sun received was actually the *Guanyin Sutra Which Saves Lives*. Makita Tairyō discusses some of the issues in his *Rokuchō koyui Kanzeon okenki no kenkyū*, 272–87.

13. The donor claimed that this was a copy of a painting done by the famous Tang painter Wu Daozi. I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Angela Howard, who alerted me to the existence of this relief and provided its identification.

14. *Guanyin cilin ji*, Hongzan comp., 2, 460b; in *Sida Pusa shengde congshu*, Huimen comp., 2 (Taiwan: Mile chubanshe, 1980).

15. Yü, "P'u-t'o Shan," 216–221.

16. Rolf A. Stein, "Avalokitesvara/Kouan-yin, un exemple de transformation d'un dieu en déesse," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 2 (1986):17–77; Glen Dudbridge, "Miao-shan on Stone," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42, no. 2 (December, 1982):589–614; Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miao-shan*; Zenryū Tsukamoto, "Kinai Shina daishu no nyoshin Kannon shinko," in *Essays on Indian and Buddhist Studies in Honor of Professor Yamaguchi* (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1955), 262–80.

17. Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miao-shan*, 16; Zenryū Tsukamoto, "Kinai Shina daishu no nyoshin Kannon shinko," 269.

18. Dudbridge, "Miao-shan on Stone," 591–93.
19. Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miao-shan*, 45.
20. The pairing of Dizang and Guanyin here is a reflection of a popular motif in art. They were already depicted as a pair by Dunhuang artists during the Tang and this motif became even more pronounced among the sculptures in Beishan, Dazu, Sichuan, during the Song; Angela Howard, "The Creation of the Chinese White-robed Kuan-yin." Both bodhisattvas are considered saviors of beings in hell. The canonical source for Dizang's cult is the *Great Expansive Sutra of the Ten Wheels*, translated by 450, but his cult took place in the late Tang. Even though Guanyin has long been identified as a savior for beings in all kinds of difficulties, including hell, in the scriptures surveyed above, a new and powerful source for Guanyin's role as savior of hell-bound beings is provided by the *Karandavyūha*, translated by Tianxizai during the Song from a Tibetan copy dated between the 6th and the 10th c. Guanyin descends to Avichi hell, and by sprinkling droplets of ambrosia with his fingers, he saves the beings in hell from unbearable heat and leads them to the Pure Land (T. 1050:47–74).
21. *Xiangshan baojuan* 2, 56b.
22. Three dated groups of the triad are found in Dazu, Sichuan: no. 6 at Shimenshan, dated 1141; no. 8 at Beida, dated 1148; and no. 136 at Beishan, dated 1142–1146. (*Dazu shike yanjiu*, Sichuan: Sichuan Academy of Social Science Press, 1984, 544, 435, 395–396). A beautiful set of the triad cast in gilt bronze appears as no. 104 in *The Crucible of Compassion and Wisdom, Special Exhibition Catalog of the Buddhist Bronzes from the Nitta Group Collection at the National Palace Museum* (Taipei, National Palace Museum, 1987), 200. It is dated to the 13th c. Cat. no. 102 shows Guanyin sitting on a rock with a vase on the left and parrot perched on the right. The parrot is another iconographic indicator for Guanyin of the South Sea. This is also dated the 13th c.
23. T. 1057, 1092.
24. Longnü appears in ch. 12, "Devadatta," of the *Lotus Sutra*, as an eight year old. Manjusri predicted that she would attain enlightenment, but Bodhisattva Wisdom Accumulation and Shariputra doubted it. In response, the dragon girl held up a precious gem and offered it to the Buddha. She asked if the offering and accepting of the gem were quick or not, and the doubters answered in the affirmative. She then said that she could achieve buddhahood in an even shorter time than this. "In the space of an instant" she transformed herself into a man and achieved buddhahood. Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, 199–201.
25. This is no. 10 of the Yingbanbo group of sculptures; *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 452.
26. Yü, "P'u-t'o Shan," 209–13.
27. Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miao-shan*, 69–73.
28. Among the tableau of didactic sculptures at the Great Buddha Creek at Baodingshan, Dazu, under the scene depicting Prince Kshanti gouging out his eyes in order to cure his father's illness, there is a scene showing a parrot carrying a grain of rice in its mouth. The inscription next to it quotes from the *Zabazang jing* (T. 203) and makes it clear that this is one of the Jataka tales. The future Buddha was a filial parrot who used to carry grains of rice from the field of a farmer who once made the vow of sharing his harvest with all sentient beings. When the farmer saw the parrot doing this he got angry and captured him. But when the parrot reminded him of his own vow, he relented and let him go (*Dazu shike yanjiu*, 272, Cf. T. 203, 4:449a). In another *jataka* tale (T. 152), the parrot escaped from his captor by feigning death, which is reminiscent of the advice given by Bodhidharma. (This is the 62nd item in the *Liu jidu jing*, T. 152, 4:34a). I cite these examples for I think it is possible to show that these stories found in the Buddhist scriptures may have served as sources for the *baojuan* of folk traditions. As with the stories about the parrot, the story of Prince Kshanti's eye-gouging may have served as the inspiration for Miaoshan's similar actions.
29. The story, with minor variations, is found in many standard Buddhist historical records. Three are dated to the Song: Xuxiu, *Longxing biannian tonglun*, juan 22; Zhiban, *Fozu tongji*, juan 41; and Zongxiao, *Fahua jing xianyinglu*, second juan. These versions were followed by later compilations. Two are from the Ming: Juean, *Shishi jigū lu*, juan 3; and Liaoyuan, *Fahua lingyan chuan*, second juan. One Qing source is Zhou Kefu's *Guanyin jing zhiyan ji*, first juan, in *Wanzi xuecong jing*, 134 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1977).
30. Mizuho Sawada, "Yuiran Kannon," *Tenri daigaku gakubu* 30 (1959):40; Stein, "Avalokitesvara/Kouan-yin," 54.
31. Song Lian, *Song Xueshi wenji*, juan 51, quoted in Sawada, 38.
32. These are the words used by the Song writer Ye Dinggui in the *Hailu suisi ji*, juan 13. *Taiping guangji*, juan 101, gives the same story, omitting the last sentence. Echoes of the former sentiment are found in many poems written by Chan monks in the Song. A Song work, *Conglin shengshi*, says, "The painting called 'Bodhisattva of the Golden Sand Beach' has an Indian monk carrying a staff with a skeleton on his shoulder while looking back at Mr. Ma's Wife behind him. There are many eulogies on this type of painting. But the one that I like best is written by Siming Daochuan. It goes like this: She looks at everyone equally with compassion. She entices people and draws them to her with desire. One knocks out a wedge with another wedge and fights one type of poison with another type of poison. While the thirty-two responses are found in completion in the 'Pumen' chapter this one is paralleled by none." *Wanzi Xuzang jing*, juan 148, quoted in Sawada, 39–43.
33. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti*, 21, 64.
34. Ibid., 54. As Stein points out, this is related to the Mahayana theme of transformation through reversals, which bears the technical name *zhuan* (*ashraya-paravrtti*). He cites the examples found in the *Fanwang jing* (*Sutra of Indra's Net*, T. 1484): a bodhisattva using the great power of *upaya* (skillful means) can "turn a pure country into an evil country and an evil country into a land of wonder and happiness; turn good into evil and vice versa; form into nonform and vice versa; man into woman and vice versa; the six realms of rebirth into no six-realms of rebirth and vice versa; and even turn the four great elements of earth, water, fire and wind into no earth, water, fire and wind" (1001b–c). Stein also cites the old version of the *Shurangama Sutra* (T. 645), in which Mara, the Fisherman who must be tamed, was contrasted with the bodhisattva, who was "Uncontaminated-by-activity-in-Mara's-domain" ("Avalokitesvara/Kouan-yin," 29–30). In all these cases, a bodhisattva deconstructs the ordinary reality held by unenlightened people, and by turning everything upside down, shocks them into a new vision. In the words of Thurman, like the great magician Vimalakirti, Chan masters and tantric *mahāsiddha* (great masters) also delighted in using these "liberative techniques."
35. Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, vol. 3, 148. The Chinese translation ends with kissing, but the Sanskrit original, which is retained in the Tibetan translation, goes on to mention sexual intercourse, which would be the logical conclusion of the foregoing progression. The omission was probably due to the translator's consideration for the Chinese Confucian sensibility. I owe this observation to Professor Masatoshi Nagatomi.
36. The version I read belonged to the private collection of Professor Wu Xiaoling of Beijing and was printed in 1938. Fu Xihua had a copy printed in 1909 by Yihuatang of Shanghai. See Fou Xi-Houa, *Catalogue des pao-kuan* (Université de Paris, Centre d'études sinologiques de Peking, 1951), 8.
37. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, 342.
38. Stein, "Avalokitesvara/Kouan-yin," 27–37.
39. T. 1336.
40. T. 901, 1092, 1796.
41. Shinko Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daifiten*, 10 vols. (Tokyo, 1955–63; reprint ed., Taipei: Horizon Publishing Co., 1977), 1875.
42. Gu Yanwu, *Guzhong suibi*, quoted in *Guanyin jingzhou linggan huibian*, Ji Qicha, comp. (Shanghai: Jiangsu Number Two Prison, 1928).
43. James Cahill, *Sōgen-ga: 12th–14th Century Chinese Painting as Collected and Appreciated in Japan, Catalogue of March 31, 1982–June 27, 1982 Exhibition at University Art Museum* (Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1982), 8; *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, 84.
44. Other examples of Baiyi Guanyin, all later, are no. 118 niche (dated 1116) and no. 136 niche (dated 1142–46) of Beishan (*Dazu shike yanjiu*, 174, 395–96, 408). Buddhist sculptures in Sichuan provide very important information about iconographic styles. Because of the good condition of preservation of many inscriptions, they also serve as excellent sources for our understanding of the cultic and devotional aspects of Sichuan Buddhism. For instance, the complex of Vairocana Grotto (Piludong) in Anyue, created during the end of the Tang and the beginning of the Song under the direction of the tantric patriarch Liu Benzun (844–907), lists the names of donors. Many of the donors were women, several of whom were named Miaoshan: Miaoshan, the wife of Wang; Miaoshan, the wife of Liu; Miaoshan, the wife of Gong (*Dazu shike yanjiu*, 173). One cannot help but be struck by the choice of this name. Was Miaoshan a common name and these pious women just happened to be named such, or did the name become popular among devout Buddhist women because of the fame of the legend of Princess Miaoshan? I suspect that the latter was the case. Miaoshan was frequently the name of women donors who printed texts in the Ming in order to

broadcast the efficacy of Baiyi Guanyin (see later part of the paper).

45. Hangzhou, *Shang Tianzhu zhi*, 31.

46. Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi*, 1:88.

47. Karen Horney, "The Distrust between the Sexes," in *Feminine Psychology*, ed. with an introduction by Harold Kelman (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), 327–40.

48. The text contains these five mantralike phrases: Gods in heaven, god on earth, people depart from disasters, disasters depart from the body, all evils are reduced to dust (*tian luo shen, di luo shen, ren li nan, nan li shen, yijie zaiyang hua wei zhen*). The compiler of *Guanyin lingyi ji* says, "I once read Wang Gong's [fl. 1048–1104] *Wenjian jin lu* [Record of things heard and seen recently], which records this story: Zhu Daocheng's wife Wang daily chanted the 'Heart Mantra of Guanyin in Ten Sentences' [*Shijiu Guanyin xin zhou*, a variant title for the *Guanyin shijiu jing*]. When she was forty-nine she became very sick. In semi-consciousness, she saw a person in green who told her that there were nineteen words missing from the sutra she chanted, and that if she added these words she could live long. The figure then told Wang the five phrases. Wang woke up and recovered from her illness. She lived to be seventy-nine years old. From this episode, we know that these five phrases were already known to people who lived in the Northern Song" (*Guanshiyin Pusa lingyi ji*, 14b).

49. The origin of the text has always been traced to a dream, for which reason it is also called "Sutra Transmitted in a Dream." According to the *Fozu tong ji* (ca. 1260), the wife of Long Xuemei lost her eyesight during the Jiayou era (1056–1063) of the Northern Song. She was advised to go to the Upper Tianzhu Monastery [in Hangzhou] to pray. One evening she dreamt of a person in white (*baiyi ren*) who taught her how to chant the *Guanyin Sutra in Ten Phrases*. She did this conscientiously, and regained sight in both eyes. According to the *Taiping guangji*, quoted in *Zhaxiang shi Congchao* (juan 13), Wang Yuanmo of Taiyuan (around 438) disobeyed orders when he was on a campaign to the north and was sentenced by military law to die. He dreamt of a person who told him that if he could chant the *Guanyin Sutra* a thousand times, he would be saved. The person then taught Wang these ten phrases. When Wang was about to be beheaded, the knife suddenly broke into three pieces. *Guanshiyin Pusa lingyi ji*, 14b–15a.

50. There are several hundred copies of texts, both Buddhist and Daoist, in the collection. About one hundred of these center around Guanyin. Aside from the *Baiyi wu yinxin tuoluoni jing*, there are the chapter "Pumen pin" from the *Lotus Sutra*, *Fodingxin tuoluoni jing* (The *dharaṇī* of the heart of Buddha-ushnisha sutra), *Fodingxin liaobing juichan fang jing* (The Buddha-ushnisha sutra of recipes that cure diseases and save women from difficult childbirth), *Fodingxin jiuman shenyan jing* (The Buddha-ushnisha sutra of divine efficacy that saves people from difficulties), and *Guanyin jiuku jing* (The Guanyin sutra that saves people from suffering). All of them contain a picture of Guanyin on the frontispiece, depicted either as White-robed Guanyin or Guanyin of the South Sea, and dedicatory paragraphs with the donor's name, birthplace, the date, the number of copies printed, and the reason for this act, and they end with a picture of Weituo, the protector of Buddhist monasteries. According to Zhou Shaoliang, the curator, and the son of the famous Buddhist scholar Zhou Shujia, there were many such pamphletlike scriptures kept at Fayuan Monastery before the Cultural Revolution. All of them went up in a big bonfire in the courtyard of the monastery. Since 1979, Zhou, a book collector himself, has started to rebuild the collection. The texts now in the collection were either purchased from, or donated by, lay believers who managed to save them from confiscation.

51. This phrase is very ambiguous and difficult to understand. *Baiyi* can refer to White-robed Guanyin, but it may also refer to the color of the placenta (*taiyi*). From the context, this phrase definitely describes the appearance of the baby. The baby should somehow look white and this peculiarity made him a gift from White-robed Guanyin. Medical literature has reported that in rare cases "the membranes remain intact until the time of delivery of the infant. If by chance the membranes remain intact until completion of delivery, the fetus is born surrounded by them, and the portion covering his head is sometimes referred to as the caul" (Jack A. Pritchard and Paul C. Macdonald, *Williams Obstetrics*, 16th ed. [New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts], 386); the caul appears white in color. I owe this information to Dr. Mary B. Jones of the University of Texas Health Sciences Center.

52. Zhou Kefu, *Guanyin jing zhiyan ji in Wanzi xuzang jing*, vol. 134, 969.

53. "G. and M. Vovelle, who have catalogued the altars dedicated to the souls in purgatory for Provence as a whole, have outlined the following evolution: between

1650 and 1730, the Virgin as a mediatrix was replaced by the Virgin with the Child, and the intercessors tended to disappear; after 1730 the theme of the Madonna and Child receded, while images of Christ and the eternal Father became more prevalent. From my vantage point of the very early eighteenth century, I can confirm these changes." M. H. Froeschle-Chopard, "The Iconography of the Sacred Universe in the Eighteenth Century: Chapels and Churches in the Dioceses of Vence and Grasse," in *Ritual, Religion and the Sacred, Selections from the Annales Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, vol. 7, Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, eds., Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum, trans. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 167.

54. William Watson, ed., *Chinese Ivories from the Shang to the Qing*, Catalogue to the Exhibition organized by the Oriental Ceramic Society jointly with the British Museum, May 24 to August 19, 1984 (London: The Oriental Ceramic Society, 1984), 41.

55. These are: Miaoqing (1265); Miaoling (1274); Miaozen (1342); Miaoan, Miao Guang (1452); Miao Yu (1436); Miao Yuan (1441); Miao Gui (1455); Miao Hui (1444 and 1445); Miao Shan (144); Miao Jing (1457); Miao Lian (1418); Miao Zheng, Miao Hai, Miao Zong, Miao Rong (all in the Ming).

56. This is the only instance of Guanyin holding a baby girl that I have ever seen. The baby is definitely a girl because the picture is entitled *Bright Pearl Enters the Palm* and "bright pearl" is always used to refer to a girl.

57. Prasenjit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47/4 (9188):778–95.

58. P. Steven Sangren's work on the social construction of *ling* can be consulted for a theoretical analysis of such processes in Chinese religion. See his *History and Magical Power in Chinese Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

59. De Bary, *The Buddhist Tradition*, 104.