

**THE BIOGRAPHIES OF
EMINENT MONKS**

高僧傳

SHI HuiJiao (Liang Dynasty)

This book is a compilation of the lives of over 500 Buddhist figures from 67 CE to 519 CE. This 14-chapter volume became the widely accepted basis for Chinese Buddhist, historical biography literature from the 6th century onwards. Extending from China's first interactions with Buddhism to the Liang Dynasty, the text of the Biographies of Eminent Monks discusses Buddhist figures that were well known during the time of Shi Huijiao (慧皎) (497-554 CE), the compiler and author.

It is our hope that this new English translation of Shi Huijiao's Biographies of Eminent Monks will make these poignant stories and crucial aspects of Chinese Buddhist history widely available to the English-speaking public, practitioners, and academics. In order to fully grasp the context of these stories, however, it is important to understand why Huijiao made such an effort to compile them.

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THE BIOGRAPHIES OF EMINENT MONKS

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For my parents

Tianshu Yang
Translator

Introduction

The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (高僧傳; *Gaoseng Zhuan*) is a compilation of the lives of over 500 Buddhist figures from 67 CE to 519 CE. This 14-chapter volume became the widely accepted basis for Chinese Buddhist, historical biography literature from the 6th century onwards.² Extending from China's first interactions with Buddhism to the Liang Dynasty, the text of *The Biographies of Eminent Monks* discusses Buddhist figures that were well known during the time of Shi Huijiao (慧皎) (497-554 CE), the compiler and author.

It is our hope that this new English translation of Shi Huijiao's *Biographies of Eminent Monks* will make these poignant stories and crucial aspects of Chinese Buddhist history widely available to the English-speaking public, practitioners, and academics. In order to fully grasp the context of these stories, however, it is important to understand why Huijiao made such an effort to compile them.

There are very few sources of Huijiao's life; what is known is pulled from Sengguo's (僧果) postscript at the end of *The Biographies of Eminent Monks* and the short biography in Daoxuan's (道宣) *Supplement to The Biographies of Eminent Monks* (續高僧傳; *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan*). Huijiao was originally from the district of Shangyu in Kuaiji, an administrative region located to the south of Hangzhou Bay.³ During his early years in the beginning of the sixth century CE, the Kuaiji region became a

1 This English version of *Biographies of Eminent Monks* is translated based on T50, No.2059 高僧傳 (*Gaoseng zhuan* or *Biographies of Eminent Monks*) in *Taishuo Tripitaka* at CBETA (大正藏第50冊 No.2059 高僧傳) supplemented with references from the Song, the Yuan and the Ming versions, as well as 高僧傳 (*Gaoseng zhuan*) redacted, compiled and interpreted by Zhu Hengfu et al., published by People's Publishing House of Shaanxi in 2010.

2 Buswell, "Gaoseng zhuan," 314.

3 Wright, "Biography," 395.

centre for intellectuals and cultural development.¹ Huijiao became well versed in both Confucian and Buddhist texts and their differing literary traditions.² He trained to be a scholar monk and practiced at Jiaxiang Temple on Kuaiji Mountain, where he eventually began work on his *Biographies of Eminent Monks*.³

According to Daoxuan's biography, Huijiao preached consistently during the spring and summer and wrote commentaries during the fall and winter.⁴ He only worked on historical research and compilation for the biographies in his spare time between reading religious texts and attending lectures.⁵ In his postface, Huijiao describes the wide breadth of sources he used to compile this text. He compares the different compilations of biographies prior to his own work, criticizing their "lack of proof" and the fact that they "leave a great deal of information absent."⁶

One of the interesting omissions from his list of biography compilations is Baochang's (寶唱) *Biographies of Famous Monks* (名僧傳; *Mingseng Zhuan*), which is estimated to have been completed between 510 CE and 514 CE, around 30 years before the latest *The Biographies of Eminent Monks* could have been completed (540 CE).⁷ He does, however, denigrate the use of "famous" when referring to Buddhist figures in his postface, opting for the word "eminent" instead.⁸ Scholars have suggested that this was a pointed insult towards Baochang's volume, which would have been circulating at that time; however, the similarities between the figures in both volumes show that Huijiao likely used Baochang's work to compile his own.⁹

1 Wright, "Biography," 395-396.

2 Wang, "Cultural Identities," 33.

3 Wright, "Biography," 397.

4 See Daoxuan, *XGSZ* in T2060, p.62.

5 Wright, "Biography," 397-398.

6 Huijiao, *Biographies*, XIV.458-459.

7 Wang, "Cultural Identities," 47.

8 Huijiao, *Biographies*, XIV.460.

9 Shinohara, "Comparative Perspective," 482.

Huijiao explains that he used oral testimony from elders and historical and geographical works from most of the historical dynasties mentioned throughout *the Biographies of Eminent Monks* to supplement the previously-written hagiographies of Buddhist figures.¹ Although he never directly compares himself to a historian in his postface for *the Biographies of Eminent Monks*, scholars have generally determined that, based on his methods and tone, Huijiao did believe he was a Buddhist historian improving on previous hagiographical works.² This compilation was meant to act as an example for how Buddhist biographies were meant to be written in Huijiao's eyes. He removes the "undeserved compliments and repetition" while focusing on the "abandonment of glory and affection" in the lives of eminent figures.³ With this in mind, it is very likely that Huijiao, having read *the Biographies of Famous Monks*, sought to create a better compilation for posterity.

The text itself, consisting of 14 chapters, has 13 chapters of biographies and a final chapter with Huijiao's postface. The biographies are divided into 10 categories: scriptural translation (1), doctrinal exegesis (2), supernatural powers (3), meditative practice (4), Vinaya exhortation (5), self-immolation (6), scriptural recitation (7), benevolent cause (8), scriptural intoners (9), and recitation guides (10).⁴ Each section ends with a short commentary by Huijiao that ties together the themes of the biographies. This structure used as the basis for later compilations of Chinese Buddhist biographies. Daoxuan's *Supplement to the Biographies of Eminent Monks* and Zanning's (贊寧) *Biographies of Eminent Monks in the Song Dynasty* (宋高僧傳; *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*) were two of the most influential later texts.⁵

The stories in Huijiao's *Biographies of Eminent Monks* demonstrate

1 Huijiao, *Biographies*, XIV. 459.

2 Wang, "Cultural Identities," 47.

3 Huijiao, *Biographies*, XIV. 459-460.

4 Wang, "Cultural Identities," 31-32.

5 Buswell, "Gaoseng zhuan," 314.

the diversity of Buddhist activity and experience across Asia from a Chinese perspective, and they are a crucial source for understanding the early period of Buddhism in China. Huijiao's historical work, although highly influenced by his predecessors, presented a new structure for the compilation of hagiographical and biographical Buddhist literature. This new structure, combined with Huijiao's gathered prose, made it one of the most popular sources of Buddhist hagiography in China, surpassing all previous biographical compilations. Reading the stories and commentaries in this volume will garner a deeper understanding of Buddhist culture in China, including transmission and localization, and what aspects were of high importance during the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

August 1, 2021
Edward Ross
Editor

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Volume I

Scriptural Translation Part A

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1. Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga (Shemoteng) of Baima Temple in Luoyang during the Han Dynasty

Originally from central India, Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga, also known as Shemoteng¹ 攝摩騰, was a dashing Buddhist monk versed in both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna² doctrines. He committed himself to dharma transmission, traveling far and wide. Once, he went to an attached state of India to give a lecture on *The Jin Guangming Jing* 金光明經 (*Suvarṇa-prabhāsōttama-sūtra*) and came across an enemy power's invasion into that state. Shemoteng said, "It is indicated in the sutra that if people preach this sutra, the earth deity will protect them and compel them to live in peace. Since the war has just started, it is the right moment to bring this marvelous effect into play." Thus, he vowed to go to the battlefield and make peace in person. Due of his efforts, the two states developed amicable relations, and Shemoteng achieved instant fame.

One day, during the Yongping³ Period in the Eastern Han Dynasty, Emperor Ming⁴ dreamt of a golden figure flying towards him from

1 Shemoteng was also referred to as Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga in the Indian tradition and written as 迦葉摩騰 in Chinese (Zhu et al 2010).

2 Hinayana, which means lesser vehicle, refers to groups of early Buddhist thought reputed in this way by the Mahayana (great vehicle) tradition at that time, which currently only exist in Theravada traditions.

3 The Yongping Period (57 CE-75 CE) was the reign title of Emperor Ming during the Eastern Han Dynasty. The years in Chinese historical records were normally presented in forms of the ruler's reign period, whose title was given when the emperor or king was enthroned. Emperor Ming only had one reign title for his entire ruling period of 18 years, but some emperors might divide their ruling period by using different reign titles.

4 Emperor Ming, named Liu Zhuang (28 CE-75 CE), was the second

the sky. He then summoned all of the officials to interpret this dream. Fu Yi the Knowledgeable¹ reported, “I have heard of a deity namely Fo² 佛 in the West. Your Majesty might have seen him in the dream.” Emperor Ming agreed with this idea and later sent a delegation to India in search of Buddha-Dharma, which was led by an official³ named Cai Yin and a student at Imperial College named Qin Jing. Cai Yin and his group came across Shemoteng in India and invited him to China. Shemoteng promised to transmit the Dharma. Passing through the deserts, being fearless of hardship and risks, he finally arrived in Luoyang.⁴ Emperor Ming was full of praise and, extending a warm welcome to him, had a vihāra built outside the west gate to accommodate him. This is the origin of śramaṇas in China. The Dharma just began to circulate in China, however, few were converted. Because of this, Shemoteng’s profound comprehension and extensive knowledge did not spread very far; soon he passed away in Luoyang. Reportedly, Shemoteng translated one fascicle of *The Sutra in Forty-two Sections* 四十二章經, which was stored in the 14th room of the imperial library of the Eastern Han. Baima⁵ Temple now stands on the grounds where Shemoteng stayed outside the West Yong Gate of Luoyang. Purportedly, when a foreign king once destroyed Buddhist temples, the only one left standing was Zhaoti Temple. One night following the destruction, a white horse circled the temple and the stūpa, running and neighing wistfully. Someone reported this to the foreign king. The king then aborted his scheme and changed the name of the temple from Zhaoti to Baima. Many temples have been named after this title ever since.

emperor of Eastern Han Dynasty (or Later Han Dynasty).

1 Fu Yi (d. 90 CE) was a Chinese official and writer in the Eastern Han Dynasty.

2 “Fo 佛” is the pronunciation of Buddha in Chinese.

3 Cai Yin was an official in State Council, which was the position of “Langzhong” in Chinese.

4 Luoyang was the capital of the Eastern Han Dynasty between 25 CE-220 CE.

5 Baima translates as “white horse” in Chinese.

2. Gobharana (Zhu Falan) of Baima Temple in Luoyang during the Han Dynasty

From central India as well, Gobharana (Zhu Falan)¹ 竺法蘭, who claimed to have read dozens of thousands of sutra and sastra chapters, was a teacher of Indian scholars. After Cai Yin arrived in their country, Zhu Falan and Shemoteng travelled to China together, since they had the same aspirations for dharma transmission in foreign places. His disciples tried to stop him, but Zhu Falan departed for China in secret. Upon his arrival in Luoyang, Zhu Falan stayed together with Shemoteng and mastered the Chinese language quickly.

It was Zhu Falan who translated the five Buddhist scriptures Cai Yin acquired in the Western Regions:² the Purification in *The Ten Stages* 十地斷結, *The Jataka Stories of the Buddha* 佛本生, *The Oceanic Treasures of the Dharma* 法海藏, *The Buddha's Deeds (Fobenxing)* 佛本行, *The Sutra in Forty-two Sections* 四十二章經. Later, the capital had been moved due to insurgence, and four scriptures were lost, failing to transmit to the south of Yangtze River. Only *The Sutra in Forty-two Sections*, which contains around 2,000 Chinese characters, is still available. This is the earliest extant sutra in China. Cai Yin also painted a picture copying the Shakyamuni Buddha statue in leg-pending posture, which was the fourth opus of King Aśoka's royal sculptor. Once the picture was carried back to Luoyang, Emperor Ming had it copied by painters. He had the copies placed on the Qingliang Terrace and the Xianjie Tomb. Now the old picture is gone.

In addition, when Emperor Wu of the Western Han Dynasty had Kunming Lake excavated, black ashes were unearthed from the

1 Zhu Falan's Indian name was Gobharana or Dharmaratna.

2 There are two definitions for the Western Regions: the narrow one refers to the areas between the west of Yumengguan and Yangguan and the east of Pamir and Balkhash Lake; while the wide one indicates the west of ancient China, including Central Asia and India.

lake bottom. People asked Dongfang Shuo¹ about it; he replied: “I have no idea, go asking a westerner.” Once Zhu Falan arrived in Luoyang, people questioned him about this phenomenon. Zhu Falan answered: “At the end of the last world,² flames were raging, which produced these ashes.” Dongfang Shuo’s words had been proven, thus many believed in Zhu Falan. He passed away in Luoyang in his 60s.

1 Dongfang Shuo was a famous high-ranking official during the Han Dynasty.

2 The last world refers to an ancient Indian Buddhist belief that the world would be exterminated once in dozens of thousands of years. Ancient Indian Cosmology presents a long cycle of creation and destruction that was thought to repeat every hundreds of thousands of years.

3. An Qing of Luoyang during the Han Dynasty

An Qing 安清, whose “style name”¹ was Shigao 世高,² was the son of the Parthian³ King and Queen, making him the crown prince. In his childhood, An Shigao was known for his filial piety and wholesome conduct. Because he was clear about his aspirations and career and keen to learn, An Shigao mastered all disciplines, ranging from foreign canon, astronomy, and cosmology, to iatrology, thaumaturgy, and animal languages. Once, he saw a flight of swallows on his trip and then told his fellow travelers: “The swallows tell me that someone will deliver food to us.” When this really happened an instant later, everyone was astonished. After this, his curious talent was brought to the notice of the public in the Western Regions. Although An Shigao was a layman, he observed the precepts strictly. After the death of the old King, he succeeded to the throne and experienced the full extent of suffering and emptiness. Once the mourning period was complete, An Shigao abdicated the throne in favor of his uncle and entered the monastic order to practice Buddhism. Thoroughly understanding the sūtra-piṭaka,⁴ with a specialization in *Abhidharma* 阿毗曇, he recited and practiced sutras regarding meditation, savoring all of its subtlety. Then he started his journeys of transmission, traveling to various countries and regions. In the beginning of Emperor

1 Ancient Chinese bookmen were given a “style name” for others (especially their contemporaries) to call them, while their “name” was only for use by themselves and their families.

2 An Shigao 安世高 is the name better known by the public. An is his surname in China because he came from the Parthian Empire, which was called An Xi by the Chinese. Using the first word of a foreign person’s country was a common convention for naming foreign personalities in ancient China. Another example is Sogdiana, known as Kang Ju in ancient China, where multiple Śramaṇas originating from that kingdom were surnamed Kang in China, such as Kang Senghui who will be seen in later chapters.

3 The Parthian Empire (c. 247 BCE – 244 CE).

4 The sutra-piṭaka is a collection of Buddhist scriptures relating to the teachings of the Buddha.

Huan's¹ age, An Shigao came to China for the first time and demonstrated great brilliance. When given a slight hint, he could get dawning comprehension; *He also grasp* 安般守意, *The Sutra on the Aggregates, Realms, and Fields* 陰持入經, *The Great and Small "Twelve Meditative Approaches"* 大小十二門, and *The One Hundred and Sixty Chapters* 百六十品 (*Bailiushi Pin*). Earlier, based on the essentials of Buddhist Teachings, the foreign Tripitaka master named Zhonghu (or Saṅgharakṣa) redacted and compiled a twenty-seven-chapter work which An Shigao analyzed and rendered into a Chinese version of seven chapters; it came to be known as *The Sutra of the Path of Stages of Cultivation* 道地經 (*Daodi Jing*). In total, he translated 39 volumes of sutras and sastras; his logic was clear, and the wording was simple and smooth while being neither glozing nor rough, holding the readers spellbound. An Shigao understood all the natures and principles and was able to see through the conditions and karmic effects. He experienced many deeds and miracles that people could not imagine.

An Shigao claimed that he joined the monastic order in his previous life as well. One of his fellow practitioners had strong aversions and was easily angered if the begging for alms from benefactors did not go as he wished. "An Shigao" (of the previous life) advised him against such behaviors, but the latter did not listen. Two decades later, "An Shigao" bid farewell to this dharma friend saying: "I will go to Guangzhou² to unroot a resentment of last life. You grasp the Teaching and cultivate it as well as me; however, your aversion would bring you an ugly form after this life. In the case of my enlightenment, I will free you from suffering." Then, he arrived in Guangzhou whilst rebellion was occurring and met a young man on the road. The latter drew the sword the moment he saw "An Shigao" and said: "I really am meeting you here." "An Shigao" smiled and said: "I owe you a life, so I came from afar

1 Emperor Huan was named Liu Zhi (132 CE-176 CE) and was the tenth emperor of the Eastern Han Dynasty.

2 Guangzhou was close to where Guangzhou is today but not in the exact location.

to give it to you. Your anger is the karmic effect of your last life.” Afterwards, he stretched his neck waiting for the cut of the sword fearlessly. Thus, the bandit killed him, leaving the bystander crowds astonished on the road. Afterwards, his consciousness came to be the Parthian Prince An Shigao of present-day.

Then, An Shigao visited China to preach the Dharma while the Guanluo¹ areas rose in revolt at the end of Emperor Ling’s reign. Because of this, he moved to the south for Buddhist transmission and said that he should pass by Mount Lu to free his old fellow practitioner. He finally arrived at Gongting Lake Temple, a place where the prayers were well responded. Even though different businessmen prayed for opposite wind directions, all boats could sail smoothly through the different currents. Once, a man asked for divine bamboo on the hill and took it without the temple deity’s permission. His boat capsized immediately, and the bamboo that he cut reappeared in its original place. Since then, travelers regarded in awe and venerated this deity from afar.

Over 30 boats and ships came along with An Shigao’s, and the people offered sacrifices to the deity for blessings; then, the deity sent a message: “There is a śramaṇa on one of the boats; please request his presence in the temple.” The travelers were surprised and hence invited An Shigao to the temple. The deity told An Shigao: “You and I used to be fellow practitioners. I frequently practiced charity, but could not restrain my peevishness. In this life, I became the deity of Gongting Temple, governing a thousand square miles. Because of the donations I made, I received all sorts of treasures, but due to my aversion, I am a spirit now. Meeting a dharma brother today, I have mixed feelings. This life cycle of mine will end soon, but my true form is ugly and long; if I perish here, these waters will be polluted. I should end my life in the great marsh to the west of the mountain; there I may then descend into hell. Please hold a Buddhist ritual for me and build a Buddhist stupa using thousands of bolts of silk as well as various other treasures

1 Guanluo refers to the Guanzhong and Luoyang areas in central China.

I gained, so I may be led to the Pure Land in my next life.” An Shigao said: “I came from afar to meet you; why do you not let me see you?” The deity replied: “My form is too ugly to manifest.” An Shigao said: “Never mind. People will not be scared.” Then, the deity came out from behind the shrine in the form of a python so large that people could not see where its tail was. He wriggled to An Shigao’s side, and the latter spoke to him in Sanskrit for a while. The python shed a flood of tears, and soon he disappeared again.

An Shigao took the treasures, said goodbye, embarked on the boat, and set sail with the travelers. The python showed himself once again looking to the west; after the travellers waved at him, he was gone at last. Just in one moment, An Shigao and his companions arrived at Yuzhang,¹ he then built Dong Temple using the deity’s treasures. After An Shigao left Gongting Lake, the deity died. That evening, a young man boarded the boat, knelt down before An Shigao, and, after receiving a mantra and blessing from the latter, disappeared. An Shigao told the other travelers: “That young man was the deity of the temple; he has finally rid himself of that ugly form.” Since then, the temple’s miraculous responses to prayers no longer arose. Later, some people found an extremely long python’s body, which was multiple miles in length, in the marsh to the west of the mountain. This place is now Snake Village in Xunyang Prefecture.²

An Shigao later arrived in Guangzhou, looking for the young man who killed “An Shigao” of his previous life. The “young man” at that time was still alive. An Shigao came to his house and told the man about the killing, its cause-effect, and the conditions from beginning to end. Both were glad that they could meet. An Shigao then said: “I need to go to Kuaiji³ to receive another karmic effect.” The Guangzhou man finally believed that An Shigao had

1 Yuzhang is in today’s Nanchang, Jiangxi Province.

2 Xunyang is in Jiujiang, Jiangxi today.

3 Kuaiji is in today’s Zhejiang Province.

unusual powers, so he provided funds generously and travelled to Kuaiji with him. Once they arrived in Kuaiji, they encountered a fight at the local market. An Shigao was accidentally killed by a strike to his head. Since he saw these consecutive karma effects that were predicted by An Shigao, the man from Guangzhou began his Buddhist cultivation earnestly. He explained the whole story to the local people, who were sad about the death and were convinced by the Buddhist cause-effect principle in past, present, and future lives. An Shigao was a child of a king, so the people of the Western Regions call him Marquis An to this day. Indian people claim that their books are heavenly literature, and their language is the heavenly language. The texts are abstruse and immensely different from the Chinese language. Translation works from long ago contain a great number of mistakes, but An Shigao's doctrinal translation was the best.

Dao'an indicated: "If we could ask questions in front of an ancestor, it would equate with seeing the saints, which is impossible. For people with generations of great virtues, we can only praise and recall their deeds and merits." I¹ have explored and collected various texts and annotations; I have also found some discrepancies in the records regarding An Shigao. In the collation and redaction of different versions, some records could have gone missing; nevertheless, laissez-faire would leave the errors and eventually falsify the truth. Thus, what I will do here is list the different versions and records; this is a compromise but also might be a better way to produce his biography.

In *the Scriptures Catalog* 經錄² by Dao'an, it reads that An Shigao translated over 30 scriptures between the 2nd year of the Jianhe Period during Emperor Huan's reign and the years of the Jianning Period under Emperor Ling. According to *the Supplementary Biography of An Shigao* 安世高別傳, in the late years of Taikang

1 "I" here refers to the author of this book.

2 Also called (Dao) An's Catalog, which is already lost. Some of the contents were absorbed into Seng You's works.

Period¹ during the Jin Dynasty, a monk called Marquis An came to Sangyuan 桑垣.² After he completed the textual translation, An Shigao sealed the documents in a casket at the temple and told the residents to open it in four years. In the late years of the Wu government,³ he came to Yangzhou,⁴ had a case of cargo sold, and bought a slave named Fushan. An Shigao said: “This is my virtuous friend,” and brought him to Yuzhang. After freeing the Gongting Temple deity and building a Buddhist temple and stupa for him, An Shigao was stabbed by Fushan between his ribs and died. Then the people in Sangyuan opened the sealed casket. The writing in the casket read: “The one who follows my religion is a layman named Chen Hui; the one who preaches the Chan scriptures is a bhikṣu named Senghui.”⁵ The day the casket was opened was the four-year anniversary of its sealing.

In addition, *the Jingzhou Records* 荊州記 by Yu Zhongyong depicts the story in the following way. In the early years of the Jin Dynasty, a monk named An Shigao freed the temple deity at Gongting; he then built Baima Temple 白馬寺 with the treasures from the deity at the southeastern corner of Jingzhou city. In *the Records Proclaiming Manifestations* 宣驗記⁶ by Liu Yiqing, the Prince of Kang in the Liu Song Dynasty,⁷ it states that the grand python died in the late Wu Dynasty. In *the Stupas and Temples Records* 塔寺記 by Tanzong, it says that Wagan Temple at Danyang⁸ was built by Huili the śramaṇa during the reign of Emperor Ai in the Jin Dynasty; it was then renovated by a bhikṣu named An Shigao

1 The Taikang Period: 280-289.

2 Sangyuan is a place that is currently unknown.

3 The Wu government refers to the kingdom in the south during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-265).

4 Yangzhou is Nanjing today.

5 Bhikṣu Senghui refers to Kang Senghui.

6 The Records Proclaiming Manifestations is also known as the Collection of Buddhist Miracle Tales.

7 The Liu Song Dynasty refers to the Song regime (420-479) in the Southern Dynasty. Since the emperor's surname was Liu, it was called Liu Song to differentiate from the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

8 Danyang is near Nanjing, Jiangsu province today.

with the treasures left by the deity of Gongting Temple. Since Dao'an had reviewed and collated various sutra translations, his narrative must be correct. From the 2nd year of the Jianhe Period under Emperor Huan until the late years of the Taikang Period in the Jin Dynasty, 130 years passed. An Shigao's life would need to have been extremely long to coincide with the descriptions in *The Supplementary Biography of An Shigao*. However, this is not the truth. Why is that? In the preface made by Kang Senghui for *The Sutra on Mindfulness of Inhalation and Exhalation*, he indicated: "This sutra had been translated by An Shigao and was unknown to the world for a long time. Han Lin of Nanyang,¹ Da Ye of Yingchuan,² and Chen Hui of Kuaiji are three virtuous men, pious and earnest in Buddhist practice. At that time, I requested guidance from them, and then Chen Hui explained the meanings and significance of the sutra while I facilitated the discussions." Kang Senghui died soon after this in the first year of the Taikang Period in the Jin Dynasty. He already noted that this sutra remained unknown long after its translation.

Furthermore, the words in An Shigao's casket explained: "The one who follows my religion is the layman named Chen Hui; the one who preaches the Chan scriptures is the bhikṣu named Senghui." And since *The Sutra on Mindfulness of Inhalation and Exhalation* discusses the way of meditation, it proves that the casket's description is not false. As it shows that the two of them disseminated the religion following his death, how could they both be contemporary of An Shigao himself? Also, *The Supplementary Biography of An Shigao* states that the one who preaches the Chan scriptures is the bhikṣu named Senghui. Since Kang Senghui had died in the first year of the Taikang Period, how is it that An Shigao lived in the late years of the Taikang Period? It is clear that some narratives in *The Supplementary Biography of An Shigao* are self-conflicting. There must have been one book that incorrectly indicated his early years in the Jin Dynasty, and then later authors

1 Nanyang is in Henan Province.

2 Yingchuan is in Henan Province.

claimed other dates, such as the Taikang Period or the end of the Wu government. Consistency in certain parts and contradictions in others led to utter disorder without authentication. Knowing that the placement in the early Jin Dynasty was already mistaken, the description by Tanzong that An Shigao came and built temples in the age of Emperor Ai during the Jin Dynasty would be a further missfire.

4. Lokakṣema of Luoyang during the Han Dynasty

Zhu Foshuo An Xuan Yan Fotiao Zhi Yao Kang Ju Kang Mengxiang

Lokakṣema¹ 支婁迦讖, or Zhi Loujiachen, which was shortened into Zhi Chen, was originally from Yuezhi.² Renowned for his pure and noble conduct, openness, acume, and earnestness in precepts observance, he recited various sutras and vowed to transmit the Dharma. Traveling to Luoyang during the era of Emperor Ling in the Han Dynasty, Zhi Chen translated Sanskrit texts between the Guanghe and Zhongping Periods.³ He completed three sutras first: *The Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* 般若道行, *The pratyutpanna* 般舟, and *The sūraṅgama* 首楞嚴; he then translated a dozen more, including *The Sutra of King Ajātaśatru* 阿闍世王 and *The Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* 寶積. However, accurate information regarding the translators of each sutra was lost to the mists of time. While collating ancient and contemporary texts, Dao'an speculated the translators of those sutras based on the writing styles, claiming: "They seem to be Zhi Chen's works which reflect the meanings of the sutras well without embellishment; he was a genius in knowing how to promote the essence of the Dharma." Zhi Chen's whereabouts thereafter are unknown.

In the same period, Zhu Foshuo 竺佛朔, an India monk, came to Luoyang during the reign of Emperor Ling as well and brought along *The Daoxing Jing* 道行經 (*Sutra of the Path*), translating it from Sanskrit into Chinese. The rendering was intricate, but the key message was maintained despite some lost meanings. He completed the translation of *The pratyutpanna-samādhi* 般舟三昧 in the 2nd

1 Zhi Chen's Sanskrit name is Lokakṣema; in his Chinese name, Zhi Loujiachen 支婁迦讖, the surname Zhi represents his nationality, Yuezhi, and the given name Loujiachen is the transliteration of his Sanskrit name Lokakṣema.

2 The Yuezhi 月支 (Kusana) were an ancient people in western part of China and central Asia.

3 The Guanghe and Zhongping Periods were from 178 CE to 189 CE.

year of the Guanghe¹ Period; in that process, Zhi Chen dictated to Meng Fu and Zhang Lian of Luoyang, Henan, who recorded it in writing.

Contemporary to them, a Parthian layman named An Xuan 安玄, who had a pure nature and a profound, thoughtful mind, was well versed in numerous sutras and studied various disciplines. He travelled to Luoyang for trading in the later years of Emperor Ling's reign and was granted the title of Qi Duwei 騎都尉² for his achievements. An Xuan was a quiet and humble person that constantly considered the Buddhist undertaking as his responsibility. After his arrival in Luoyang, he gradually mastered Chinese and vowed to promote the Dharma, often discussing the creeds with monks. People called him Duwei. An Xuan, together with Yan Fotiao 嚴佛調 the śramaṇa,³ translated *The Ugra(datta) paripṛcchā(sūtra)* 法鏡經: Yan Fotiao heeded An Xuan's dictation and rendered the Sanskrit into Chinese. The joint work fully reflects the subtle meanings of the source sutra. Being faithful, expressive, and elegant, it is considered a model of its kind by posterity. Yan Fotiao was originally from Linhuai,⁴ brilliant, and eager to learn since his adolescence. Contemporaries found the translational excellence of An Shigao, An Xuan, and Yan Fotiao unsurpassable. Yan Fotiao also created *The Shihui* 十慧⁵ (*Chapter of Ten Wisdoms*), which is still circulating. Dao'an indicated the reason Yan Fotiao could render sutras in such a concise and uncluttered manner was that he griped the comprehensive meanings of the entire texts.

1 The second year of the Guanghe Period was 179 CE.

2 Qi Duwei, or "Riding Duwei," was a medium rank officer position in the Han military; some of these titles were conferred as honorary titles (Zhang 2014).

3 Śramaṇa Yan Fotiao was reportedly the first Chinese Buddhist monk. When Buddhism was just introduced to China, the government did not permit local people to be monks (Huang 2015).

4 Linhuai is now near Sihong County, Jiangsu Province.

5 *Shihui Zhangju* 十慧章句.

In addition, during the ages of Emperor Ling and Emperor Xian of the Han Dynasty,¹ there were monks who were famous in the capital city, Luoyang, for their Wisdom studies, namely Zhi Yao 支曜, Kang Ju 康巨, and Kang Mengxiang 康孟詳. Zhi Yao translated *The Chengjundingyi Jing* 成具定意經 (*Sutra on Determination of the Mind*) and *Xiao Benqi* 小本起 (*shorter version nidāna*). Kang Ju translated the Sutra on Questions about *The Affairs of Hell* 問地獄事經, demonstrating the points explicitly without unnecessary embellishment, and Kang Mengxiang translated *The Zhong Benqi* 中本起 (*medium version nidāna*) and *The Cārya-nidāna* 修行本起. Previously, Tanguo the śramaṇa had acquired the Sanskrit sutra in Kapilavastu.² Together with Zhu Dali, Kang Mengxiang translated it into Chinese, and Dao'an commented on this effort, saying: "Mengxiang's language was smooth and beautiful, fully conveying the messages of the source."

1 Emperor Ling (157-189 CE), Emperor Xian (181-234 CE).

2 Kapilavastu, the city where the Buddha was born, is now in Nepal.

5. Dharma-kāla of Luoyang during the Wei Dynasty

Kang Sengkai Tan Di Bo Yan

Dharma-kāla 曇柯迦羅, or Fashi,¹ was from a wealthy family in central India, where the practice of accumulating Brahmanist merits was a tradition. Dharma-kāla demonstrated outstanding intelligence and elegance from an early age; he specialized in the studies of the Four Vedas and could grasp the meanings of texts after a single reading. Skillful in auguries, he claimed to be a master of all literary and ritual knowledge. At the age of 25, he came across a copy of *The Abhidharmahrdaya of Dharmasrī* 法勝毗曇 in a monk's dormitory and scanned through it, but he was unable to grasp the content. Looking into it again, however, Dharma-kāla remained puzzled. Feeling ashamed, he muttered to himself: "I have studied many years, focusing on and mastering non-Buddhist texts, which I can comprehend without a second look or thought. Today, reading Buddhist scriptures gives me an unexpected experience; there must be profound, subtle meanings and significance in it." Then, he took the book and asked for a brief explanation from a monk. Thus, Dharma-kāla began to understand the incomparable vastness of the Buddha's Teachings relative to other books and firmly believed in Karma, which might exert influence over three lives cycling in samsara. He then renounced secular life and joined the monastic order, earnestly learning Mahayana and Hinayana scriptures and the Vinaya texts of various schools.

Constantly traveling, preferring to not attach to a single location, he came to Luoyang during the Jiaping² Period in the Wei Dynasty. At that time, Buddhism had been transmitted to China; nevertheless, the morale was low and unstable. Many monks did not receive the precepts, and different rituals existed for tonsure.³ Dharma-kāla

1 Fashi, meaning "Dharma time" in Chinese, is the interpretation of his Sanskrit name.

2 The Jiaping Period, 249 CE-253 CE, was during the reign of King Qi named Cao Fang.

3 Tonsure is the practice of shaving the scalp when one becomes a monk or nun.

resumed the rules for meals and repentance ritual and deployed a variety of Buddhist activities. The Sangha requested that he translate the Vinaya texts, but Dharma-kāla understood that the immense Vinaya-piṭaka would not be the appropriate documents to use at that time because Buddhism was still premature in China. Thereupon, he translated *The Sengqijiexin* 僧祇戒心 (*The Precept on Mind by the Sangha*), as guidance for the daily observance of monks. He also invited an Indian monk to set regulations and rituals for the Sangha, initiating Vinaya practice in China. His whereabouts afterwards remain unknown.

His contemporary, a foreign śramaṇa named Kang Sengkai 康僧鎧, arrived in Luoyang during the late years of the Jiaping Period and translated *The Yutuo Zhangzhe* 郁陀長者 (*Udraka Rāmaputra*) as well as three other sutras. Also, Tan Di 曇帝, a Parthian śramaṇa who specialized in Vinaya studies, travelled to Luoyang during the Zhengyuan¹ Period in the Wei Dynasty and translated *The Dharmagupta-karman* 曇無德羯磨. Another monk of unknown origin named Bo Yan 帛延, equally intelligent and insightful, translated *The Wuliangqingjingpingdengjue Jing* 無量清淨平等覺經 (*Sutra on the Enlightenment of Immeasurable Purity and Equality*) and five other sutras during the Ganlu² Period in the Wei Dynasty. Afterwards, people failed to keep in contact with him.

1 The Zhengyuan Period: 254 CE-255 CE

2 The Ganlu Period: 256 CE-259 CE

6. Kang Senghui of Jianchu Monastery in Jianye under the Kingdom of Wu during Wei Dynasty Zhi Qian

Kang Senghui's¹ 康僧會 family was originally from Sogdiana² but lived in India for several generations. His father moved to Jiaozhi³ for business. In his teens, he lost his parents and then joined the monastic order after the mourning period. With great aspirations, he was strict with himself, noble, knowledgeable, generous, and made earnest efforts to learn. As a result, he comprehended the Tripitaka, was well-versed in the Six Books⁴ as well as various disciplines including astronomy, and was concise in his reading and writing. At that time, Sun Quan controlled Jiangzuo;⁵ Buddhism had not yet been transmitted into the area. Previously, an upasaka⁶ named Zhi Qian 支謙, styled as Gongming and also called Zhi Yue, who was from Yuezhi, visited China. Dating back further, during the reigns of Emperor Huan and Emperor Ling of the Han Dynasty, Zhi Chen had translated multiple sutras. Zhi Liang followed Zhi Chen for studies, and then Zhi Qian learned from Zhi Chen after Zhi Liang. Versed in sutras and classics, Zhi Qian was expert in various mundane skills, ventured in all kinds of books, and mastered the languages of six countries.⁷ He was tall, slim, dark-skinned, and possessed yellow irises in large whites. His contemporaries would

1 Kang Senghui (d. 280 CE).

2 A kingdom in the Western Regions, called Kang Ju 康居 or Su Te 粟特 in Chinese, disappeared after the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

3 Jiaozhi was a prefecture that covered the Canton and northern Vietnam areas in the Han Dynasty (Liu 2017).

4 Six Books refers to the Confucianist classics.

5 Jiangzuo, or Jiangdong, literally means east of the Yangtze River. It is an area that includes the southern part of Jiangsu Province, the southern part of Anhui Province, and the northern part of Zhejiang Province. At that time, it belonged to the Kingdom of Wu that was governed by Sun Quan.

6 Upasaka, means layman in Sanskrit.

7 The languages of six countries refers to the dialects of ancient China.

say, “Zhi Qian has yellow-colored eyes and is thin in stature, yet he is an intelligent and resourceful person.”

During the state upheaval at the end of Emperor Xian’s reign, Zhi Qian came to the Kingdom of Wu for asylum. Sun Quan heard about his wisdom and invited him to the palace for a meeting. Being pleased with the Buddhist, Sun Quan appointed Zhi Qian as Boshi¹ and tutor of the prince. He trained the prince along with Wei Yao and others. Due to Zhi Qian’s alien birthplace, *The Wuzhi*² 吳誌 did not include him in the stories. Zhi Qian thought to himself that Buddhism started to spread, but most of the scriptures were still in Sanskrit. Since he had familiarized with various dialects, Zhi Qian collected different versions and translated them into Chinese. Between the first year of the Huangwu Period and the Jianxing Period of the Wu government, he translated 49 scriptures, including *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 維摩詰經, *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 大般泥洹經, *the Dharmapada* 法句經, and *the Sutra of the Buddha’s Previous Life* 瑞應本起經. The Buddha’s Teachings were profoundly grasped and interpreted, and his translation was elegant and precise. In addition, he composed a three-section Buddhist song titled *the Chant of Bodhisattva’s joint sentences* 菩薩聯句梵唄 based on *the Sutra of the Meditation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* 無量壽佛經 and *the medium verion nidāna* 中本起經; he also annotated *the Sutra on Fathoming the Origin of Birth and Death* 了本生死經.

At that time, Buddhism had just spread into the Kingdom of Wu, but the cultivation was incomprehensive. Kang Senghui would promote the Dharma and construct monasteries and stupas in the Jiangzuo area; he then travelled eastwards and came to Jianye³ in the 10th year of the Chiwu Period of the Kingdom of Wu. Upon arrival, he built thatched cottages, erected Buddha figures, and preached the Dharma. It was first time that people saw a śramaṇa in

1 Boshi refers to an official with the duties of teaching and counseling for the royal court.

2 Wuzhi, the History of the Kingdom of Wu, was written by Chen Shou in the Jin Dynasty.

3 Jianye, the capital city of the Kingdom of Wu, is Nanjing today.

the Wu area; they only observed his appearance without knowing the teachings and suspected that he was some kind of poser. An official reported to Sun Quan: “A barbarian who claimed himself as a śramaṇa entered into our territory. His behavior and dress are unusual; we should investigate it.” Sun Quan said: “In the old days, Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty dreamt of a deity called Buddha; is this religion the same as that deity’s?” Thus, he summoned Kang Senghui and asked about the purpose and efficacy of Buddhism. Kang Senghui replied: “After the Buddha had entered Nirvana, over a thousand years flew away; the relics of the Buddha are still shining without boundaries. King Aśoka built 84,000 stupas to honor the Buddha’s Saṁās,¹ so as to transmit his Teachings.” Sun Quan thought this was merely a boast and then told Kang Senghui: “If you can bring a Saṁā, I will build a stupa for it; otherwise you will be punished by the law.” The latter asked for seven days to arrange it and told his followers: “This is the moment to decide the rise or decline of the Dharma. If we are not wholeheartedly pious, where should we go then?” Thus, the group of people took their bath, put on clean clothes, and stayed in a vihara room, placing a bronze vase on a table, burning incense, and worshiping the Buddha. Seven days passed, yet they obtained nothing. Requesting to extend another seven days, they still received nothing. Sun Quan saw this as a hoax but specially approved an additional seven days when Kang Senghui applied for another extension. Kang Senghui told his disciples and Dharma friends: “Confucius used to say, ‘Since King Wen² of the Zhou Dynasty died, the classics henceforth depend on me.’ The Dharma miracle should occur, we, however, do not respond to it. In this case, we do not need to be punished by the law; we should await it until our death.” The evening of the 21st day, they still saw nothing and were terrified. At dawn, a clink in the vase was heard; Kang Senghui got up to see. There really was a piece of Relic, which was submitted to Sun Quan in the morning. The entire body of ministers gathered to see it. Five-colored light and

1 Saṁās are cremation relics of the Buddha.

2 King Wen was the founder of the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BCE-256 BCE); he is also known as Duke Zhou.

flame emerged from the vase. Sun Quan poured out the Relic onto a bronze plate, and it amazingly smashed the plate. Sun Quan was shocked, immediately registered profound respect, and admitted it was a rarely auspicious object. Kang Senghui came closer to explain: “The miracle of the Relic does not manifest in only its light; even the fire at the end of kalpa or diamond mallet can not damage it.” Sun Quan ordered a test, and Kang Senghui swore: “The cloud-like Dharma has no boundary, and sentient beings are bathed in its favors. I hope the miracles continue to show the wonderful power.” Then, the Relic was put on an anvil, and a strong soldier hit it with a hammer. While the hammer and the anvil were dented, the Relic was still intact. Sun Quan was deeply amazed and decided to build a stupa for it immediately. Since this was the first temple, it was called Jianchu Temple;¹ the location was called Fotuo Li,² and Buddhism then spread widely in the Jiangzuo area.

When Sun Hao³ succeeded to the throne, the governance became tyrannical and cruel; he ordered the abolishment of excessive temples. Buddhist monasteries were also on the verge of disaster. Sun Hao said: “Why is Buddhism so popular? If the preacher is right, corresponding to the classic teachings, it can be kept; if the temples are merely nominal, however, they deserve to be burned.” All of the officials said: “The Buddha’s power is different from other deities. Kang Senghui showed an auspicious sign, and the founding emperor had temples built. If we exterminate them now, we may regret it someday.” Sun Hao then sent Zhang Yu to interrogate Kang Senghui at the temple. Zhang Yu was eloquent and asked various questions; Kang Senghui answered wisely with brilliant words. From morning to evening, Zhang Yu could not bend Kang Senghui’s will, so he prepared to leave. Kang Senghui said goodbye at the gate. At that moment, someone was offering animal sacrifices next to the temple; Zhang Yu said: “Now that Buddhist Teachings spread widely in the country, why are these people still

1 Jianchu translates as ‘first building.’

2 Fotuo Li means “location of the Buddha” in Chinese.

3 Sun Hao was Sun Quan’s grandson.

superstitious and not changing their behaviors despite being so close to the temple?” Kang Senghui replied: “The deaf can not hear thunder, but this is not because of the weakness of the sound. If a person is sensible, he can respond to Buddhism ten thousand miles away; while logic does not exist in a man, even the liver and gallbladder may stay apart for him.”¹ Zhang Yu returned to the emperor with remarks saying Kang Senghui’s intelligence exceeded his imagination, hoping that the emperor would interview him in person.

Sun Hao then summoned people of virtue into the court and sent a carriage to fetch Kang Senghui. As Kang Senghui sat down, Sun Hao asked: “What is the karma that Buddhism preaches?” Kang Senghui answered: “A wise monarch guides his subjects’ behaviors with filial piety and care, thus the auspicious red raven² and elder star appear; he teaches them to treat beings with kindness and virtue, then the propitious sweet spring and fine seedlings will emerge. Since merit brings fortune, it is the contrary for viciousness. Hence those who commit evildoings in secret would be found and killed by ghosts; those who do wicked things would be found and killed by humans. *The Book of Changes* says: ‘The family that continues to accumulate merit possesses luck.’ *The Book of Songs* records: ‘Prayers for fortune should not be based on tricks.’ Although these are Confucius’ words, Buddhist Teachings stress them as well.” Sun Hao said: “In this case, Duke Zhou and Confucius have made it clear; why would we need Buddhism?” Kang Senghui replied: “What Duke Zhou and Confucius told us shows some immediate facts. As for Buddhism, it covers extremely subtle details. Thus, the wrongdoers will suffer in hell for very long time, while people accumulating merits will live happily in heaven forever. Giving such examples to clearly encourage and forbid

1 Liver and gallbladder refer to an ancient Chinese metaphor which indicates that things which are supposed to be together would fall apart due to stupidity.

2 The red raven (Chi Wu), elder star (Lao Ren Xing), sweet spring (Li Quan), and fine seedlings (Jia Miao) are said to be four auspicious signs for a period of success in ancient China.

different deeds, is it not great?” Sun Hao could not refute his claims at that moment.

After hearing the true Dharma, Sun Hao did not change due to his evil imprint. Later, he ordered a squad of guards to remodel the garden in the rear palace; a few foot-high golden statue was unearthed and was given to Sun Hao. He put it in a filthy place, poured feces on it, and laughed together with his officials about their mischief. Right away, his entire body was swollen, his genitals hurting the most. He cried bitterly. The official of Taishi¹ performed divination and told the emperor that this was due to the offence against the great deity; even sacrifices and prayers at the ancestral temple of imperial family would not help. A maid who venerated the Buddha bowed and said: “Your Majesty, would you go to a Buddhist temple for benediction?” Sun Hao looked up and asked: “Is the great deity the Buddha?” The maid confirmed: “The great deity is the Buddha.” Sun Hao then understood what the maid meant. The maid carried the statue into the hall and placed it respectfully, using fragrant hot water to wash it several dozens of times and burning incense to repent. Sun Hao knocked his head on the pillow, stating his criminal acts, and the pain subsided from time to time. Soon afterwards, he sent people to greet monks in the temple and invited Kang Senghui to preach the Dharma. The latter then came to the palace. Sun Hao asked about the causes of punishment and luck, and Kang Senghui analyzed the essentials for him. Sun Hao was born with cleverness, happy to learn it, and asked to read the precepts for a śramaṇa. Considering the confidentiality of the precepts, Kang Senghui did not think it was right to show him. Then he presented the 135 vows in *the Sutra of the Primary Activities of the Bodhisattvas* 菩薩本業經, which was divided into 250 acts. While walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, the mind should care for sentient beings. Sun Hao perceived the kindness presented by Kang Senghui, and his own meritorious aspiration arose, then asking to take the five precepts.² In ten days, his disease was cured.

1 Taishi 太史 is the ancient title for the official of astronomy and calendar.

2 The five precepts are for laypeople that intend to practice Buddhism at

In response, he had the temple of Kang Senghui renovated and ordered his imperial relatives to follow Buddhism. Kang Senghui thus preached the Dharma in the Wu area. Since Sun Hao's attribute was brutal, he could not understand subtle meanings, so Kang Senghui only used the karma principle to cultivate his mind.

In the fourth month of the fourth year of the Tianjin Period of Wu,¹ Sun Hao surrendered to the Jin Empire. In the ninth month of the lunar calander, Kang Senghui fell ill and passed away. It was the first year of the Taikang Period of Emperor Wu in the Jin Dynasty. During the years of the Xianhe Period under Emperor Cheng's reign in the Jin Dynasty, Su Jun initiated a rebellion and burned the stupa Kang Senghui built. He Chong, an Official of Sikong,² rebuilt it. Zhao You, the General of Pingxi, did not believe in the Dharma and despised the Three Jewels. He entered the temple and told the monks: "I have heard that this stupa illuminates from time to time, but considered it baseless nonsense because I would never believe it. If I can not see the glow with my own eyes, then I will not be convinced." Immediately, the stupa shimmered in five colors and illuminated the halls of the temple. Zhao You was frightened and had goose bumps, starting to believe and revere the Buddha. He built a smaller stupa to the east of the temple, owing to the supreme power of the Buddha and Kang Senghui's efforts. Zhao You also made an image of Kang Senghui, which is still popular today. Sun Zhuo made a eulogy saying: "Kang Senghui is aloof from fame and gain, has meritorious qualities, not attached to secular desires, and achieved great aspirations. In the darkness, he inspired many minds and dispelled countless evildoings. His cultivation was extraordinary, and his accomplishment was outstanding."

Some records note that the one who ordered for the Relic to be hit was not Sun Quan but Sun Hao. When Sun Hao intended to destroy home by abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and alcohol.

1 The fourth year of Tianjian Period was 280 CE.

2 Sikong was an ancient Chinese official title in the production and crafts area.

the temple, the officials advised: “Kang Senghui received the auspiciousness, and the founding emperor established the temple.” I thus think the Relic event should be presented at the time of Sun Quan. Whereupon, some records read: “Sun Quan experienced the miracle of the Relic at Wu Palace.” Yet the test of the Relic may have occurred during Sun Hao’s reign.

7. Vighna of Wuchang in the Kingdom of Wu during the Wei Dynasty Fali Faju

Vighna 維祇難¹ was originally Indian. His family had believed in Zoroastrianism for generations, worshipping holy fire. One time, an Indian śramaṇa of the Hinayana² School with miraculous power passed by Vighna's home at dusk and requested to stay at their house during the night. Since the family venerated other gods and had doubts about the Buddhist monk, they settled him on the ground outside the door. The śramaṇa quietly used the miraculous power to put out the fire at the family's shrine. Hence, the whole family came out of the house and invited the śramaṇa inside to offer to him. The śramaṇa used the power again to light up the fire. Seeing the power much stronger, admiration and belief in Buddhism arose in Vighna's heart. He then renounced worldly possessions and entered the Buddhist order, following this śramaṇa. Learning the Tripitaka and becoming well versed in *the Four Āgama Sūtras* 四阿舍, he spread the Dharma by traveling in different countries, earning great respect from the local peoples.

In the third year of the Huangwu Period under the Wu Kingdom, he came to Wuchang³ with his companion, Zhu Lyuyan, carrying a Sanskrit version of *the Dammaṇapada* 曇鉢經, also known as *the Dharma-phrase Sutra* 法句經. Scholars in Wu invited him to translate it. Vighna did not grasp Chinese yet, but he translated it into Chinese with Zhu Lyuyan. The latter was not skilled at Chinese either, so the version did not completely render the meanings of the sutra. Since they maintained the original expressions of the text, they wrote in simple terminology. At the end of Emperor Hui's reign in the Jin Dynasty, Fali 法立 the śramaṇa translated it again into five fascicles; Faju 法巨 the śramaṇa recorded it in writing with fair literary grace. Fali translated a hundred other short sutras,

1 Vighna was pronounced Weizhinan in Chinese.

2 In ancient Chinese literature, Theravada was often called Hinayana to differentiate between Mahayana, which was popular in the region.

3 Wuchang is located where Wuhan, China is today.

however, due to the social turbulence of the Yongjia Period,¹ most went missing.

¹ The Yongjia Period (307-311) was at the end of Western Jin Dynasty (265-316).

8. Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu) of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Nie Chengyuan Nie Daozhen

Dharmarakṣa is known in China as Zhu Fahu 竺法護.¹ His family originated from Yuezhi, therefore their original surname was a local Yuezhi name, but the family resided in Dunhuang² for several generations. At the age of eight, he joined the monastic order and followed the foreign śramaṇa named Zhu Gaozuo as his master. Reciting ten thousand words of sutras each day, he could memorize them after one reading. His character was perfect and noble; he was cultivating with earnestness, eager to learn, and looking for teachers ten thousand miles afar. Hence, he read all of *the Six Books* and comprehended a wide range of Confucian classics. Although some people slandered him, he did not worry about it.

During Emperor Wu's reign in the Jin Dynasty, when temples and Buddhist images were revered in the capital, the Mahayana sutras only circulated in remote areas. Dharmarakṣa worked diligently and aspired to promote the Dharma. He went to the Western Regions with his master, traveled in multiple countries, and learned the 36 foreign languages and writings used in those countries. He was versed in their pronunciations, lexicons, and rhymes. Dharmarakṣa also brought many Sanskritic classics back to China. On the way from Dunhuang to Chang'an, he translated the texts into Chinese and distributed them. The 165 doctrines he acquired included *the Good Kalpa Sutra* 賢劫經, *the Lotus Sutra* 正法華, and *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* 光贊摩訶般若經. He tirelessly pursued dharma transmission his entire life, translating and writing accordingly. The circulation of sutras in China owed much to Dharmarakṣa's efforts.

1 Zhu Fahu (227-304); Fahu means Dharma protection in Chinese. Monks from India usually surnamed themselves Zhu in China because the old Chinese name for India was Tian Zhu. Zhu Fahu might also be surnamed after his teacher Zhu Gaozuo, who is said to be Indian.

2 Dunhuang 敦煌 was a city in the northwest of China; it is now famous for the Buddhist grottoes.

Dharmarakṣa lived in a remote mountainous area during the late years of Emperor Wu's reign. The creek in the mountain was clear; Dharmarakṣa used the water for his daily washing. Later, some firewood pickers polluted the river, and soon enough it dried up. Dharmarakṣa sighed: "The creek dries up due to people without merit. If the water will not come again, I have to relocate." Upon his words, water gushed out, refilling the creek. This demonstrated the power of his virtue. Thus, Zhi Dun wrote a eulogy for his portrait: "Master Dharmarakṣa was clear and virtuous. By just saying a word in the valley, the spring could emerge and fill up the creek. With powerful influence, as if the great virtue was in his gift, he was free of poisons and provided exemplary deeds." Later, Dharmarakṣa built a temple outside the Qing Gate of Chang'an city and focused on Buddhist cultivation. His merits and reputation spread in all directions. Thousands of disciples converged to follow him.

When Emperor Hui of the Jin Dynasty escaped to the west from rebellions,¹ the Guanzhong² area was in turbulence, and people fled for shelter. Dharmarakṣa and his disciples went down eastwards. Arriving at Mianchi, he fell ill and then passed away at the age of 78. Sun Chuo composed the *Comments on the Sages of the Path* 道賢論, afterwards comparing the Seven Śramaṇas with Indian names and the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove.³ Drawing contrasts between Dharmarakṣa and Shan Tao,⁴ he wrote: "Dharmarakṣa's virtue was admired by the masses, and Shan Tao made metaphysics clear for the public. The two were both meritorious, the same kind of sages." This is also how later generations commented on

1 Rebellions in 304 CE led Emperor Hui to escape to Luoyang. The rebellions refer to the Rebellions of the Eight Princes, which lasted 16 years in the Western Jin Dynasty.

2 Guanzhong was where Central Shaanxi province is today.

3 The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove were seven famous scholars in the Wei and Jin Dynasties who were aloof from social affairs and lived in mountainous areas covered by bamboos to discuss metaphysics.

4 Shan Tao, style name Shan Juyuan, was one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove in the Period of the Wei and Jin Dynasties.

Dharmarakṣa.

During Dharmarakṣa's time, an intelligent and learned layman named Nie Chengyuan 聶承遠 aspired for and was devoted to the Dharma. When Dharmarakṣa translated sutras, he collated several works. When *the Chao riming sanmei jing* 超日明三昧經 was first translated, it had several repetitions in the text. Nie Chengyuan edited and compiled a two-fascicle version that is still circulating today. This was the way he performed translation work. Nie Chengyuan had a son named Nie Daozhen 聶道真, who was versed in Sanskrit as well. The two of them had literary grace and did not limit their work with traditional methods. In addition, other disciples of Dharmarakṣa, including Zhu Fashou, Chen Shilun, Sun Bohu, and Yu Shiya, also collated the scriptures.

Dao'an indicated: "In Dharmarakṣa's works, the thoughts and structures appear clear and orthodox. Although his translation is not eloquent, the meanings were expounded fluently, especially in regard to emptiness. According to Buddhist wisdom, literary grace exerts less importance; artlessness is closer to the truth." This is the comment by Dao'an. Dharmarakṣa lived in Dunhuang and preached the Dharma in neighboring areas, so his name was styled as the "Bodhisattva of Dunhuang" by the public.

9. Bo Yuan of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty Bo Fazu Wei Shidu

Bo Yuan¹ 帛遠, style name Fazu, was originally from a Wan family in Hebei.² His father, Weida, was known for his nobleness and elegance; the prefecture had called on him many times to assume official posts, yet he turned them all down. Bo Fazu initiated his aspirations for the Dharma at a young age, leaving his father to join the monastic order by giving convincing reasons. His father could not alter his mind, so he changed clothes and became a monk. Bo Fazu was talented and matchlessly intelligent, reciting sutras of eight or nine thousand words per day. He studied the subtle and profound meanings of Mahayana scriptures and was also versed in secular classics. He built a vihara in Chang'an, learning and preaching the Dharma. Nearly one thousand monastics and lay people followed him. In the later years of Emperor Hui's reign in the Jin Dynasty, Sima Yong, a high rank official of Taishi and Prince of Hejian who governed Guanzhong area, humbly respected Bo Fazu as his teacher and friend. In his spare time, morning or evening, he discussed Buddhist principles and cultivation with Bo Fazu. At that time, Prince Sima Yong's West Mansion was just built, where many scholars and intelligentsia were invited to stay; they praised the great vision of the prince.

Bo Fazu perceived that uprising and warfare³ were just emerging; he would then go to the Longyou⁴ area quietly to continue his virtuous conduct. In those days, Zhang Fu was appointed as the Prefect of Qinzhou⁵ and was travelling to the post in the same

1 Bo Yuan (c. 256-305 CE).

2 Hebei refers to the area north of the Yellow River, the northern part of Henan province.

3 Warfare here refers to the turmoils at the end of the Western Jin Dynasty.

4 Longyou referred to the area between Longshan Mountain (the southern part of Liupanshan Mountain) and the Yellow River.

5 Qinzhou, or Qin Prefecture (“zhou 州” is prefecture in Chinese), is in Gansu Province today.

area, so Bo Fazu departed with him. Zhang Fu admired Bo Fazu's qualities and celebrated reputation, then the official suggested to the master that he resume secular life and join his team as an advisor. Bo Fazu persisted in staying in the monastic order, offending the Prefect. Previously, a local named Guan Fan discussed metaphysics with Bo Fazu and was unable to support his own ideas; harboring a grudge towards Bo Fazu, he defamed him frequently. While Bo Fazu arrived at Qian County, unexpectedly, he told his disciples: "My adversary will come in a few days." Then, he said farewell to his dharma friends and disciples, sent letters, and distributed sutras, Buddhist statues and images, and all of his belongings to them. On the next day, he visited and talked to Zhang Fu; suddenly, he terribly insulted the Prefect. Consequently, he was arrested; the masses were all shocked and upset. Bo Fazu said: "I came here to finish karma from a previous life. It is not a present-day matter." Then, he called the names of the Buddhas of the ten directions, hoping that the bad karma of his previous life would come to an end and that a happy one could unfold in the future, where they would be virtuous friends without any more killing. He received a punishment of five lashings and died. Zhang Fu heard about the details later and was full of remorse. Earlier, Bo Fazu's preaching had developed such a positive reputation in the Guanlong¹ and Hangu areas that the public respected him as a deity. After this tragedy, people in the Western Regions and central China mourned his death, and passengers shed tears on their journeys. The ethnically-Qiang people's² troop of 5000 cavalymen to the west of Mount Long area planned to welcome Bo Fazu, but they heard of his death halfway there and regretted not coming earlier. They felt angry and wanted to avenge the master's murder. Zhang Fu sent an army to the Mount Long area, and the Qiang cavalry prepared to engage in battle. At this moment, Fu Zheng, an old general who

1 Guanlong refers to the areas of Guanzhong and Longyou.

2 The Qiang ethnic group originally lived in northwest China and exerted important influence in Chinese history; later, they moved to the southwest and have stayed there to this day. Their current language is closer to Tibetan than to Chinese.

used to served Feng Shang, the Governor of Tianshui,¹ killed Zhang Fu out of resentment. Since the Qiang barbarian troop's revenge had been accomplished, they shared the relics of the master and then went back to build stupas seperately.

Zhang Fu, whose style name was Shiwei, was originally from Nanyang and a descendent of Zhang Heng.² He was smart but brutal and stubborn. He killed Feng Shang, the Governor of Tianshui; the masses were shocked and chaos arose. At that moment, Fu Zheng broke in and killed Zhang Fu in the turbulence. Guan Fan also died in the course of his bad actions. Later, a soldier named Li Tong, who had been killed in the battle, recovered and described: "I saw Master Bo Fazu preaching *the Śūraṃgama-sūtra* 首楞嚴經 for Yama, the King of the Hell, in his place and saying, 'I shall go to the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods after completing this dharma talk.' I saw Wang Fu the chief,³ as well. I was also told that it was the Daoist priest named Jigong handcuffed there, making pleas for salvation to Bo Fazu." In the old days, Bo Fazu debated with Wang Fu about what was the right way. Always defeated, Wang Fu bore a grudge and could not help resenting it, so he made *the Classic on Laozi's Lecture to the Barbarians* 老子化胡經⁴ to blaspheme Buddhism. The bad karma generated its terrible effects, and now he regretted his actions on the verge of death. Sun Zhuo contrasted Bo Fazu with Ji Kang⁵ in his *Commentary on the Practice on the Path* 道行論, indicating: "Bo Fazu's decline started with Guan Fan; Ji Kang's disaster was caused by Zhong Hui. Both sages were heroic and generous, did not think of the self, and avoided secular

1 Tianshui, now a city in Gansu province, was in the northwest of China and close to the Western Regions, where neighboring states of medieval China were located.

2 Zhang Heng was a famous official and scientist during the Han Dynasty.

3 Wang Fu was a Daoist priest in the Western Jin Dynasty known for his work: the *Classic on Laozi's Lecture to the Barbarians*.

4 The *Classic on Laozi's Lecture to the Barbarians* was a lost Daoist text said to describe the story that Laozi had gone to the west of China and enlightened barbarians there.

5 Ji Kang was one of the Seven Sages in the Bamboo Grove.

affairs, finding that slighting secular affairs would incur harm. They resembled at this point.”

Bo Fazuo widely read in his spare time and was versed in Chinese and Sanskrit. He used his skill to translate three sutras: *the Vīrya-pāramitā-sūtra* 惟逮, *the Dizi Benqi jing* 弟子本起 (*The Disciples Original Deeds*), and *the Wubuseng* 五部僧 (*The Five Monastic Groups*); he also commented on *the Śūramgama-sūtra* 首楞嚴經. Also, it is said he translated several short sutras, but they were lost in the war. Now even their titles are unknown.

Bo Fazuo 帛法祚, the younger brother of Bo Fazu, enjoyed a great reputation since his youth as well. He was once going to be conferred the title of Boshi, but he turned it down. Bo Fazuo entered the monastic order at the age of 25, understood the Buddhist principles profoundly, and gained his fame in the Guanzhong area. Zhang Guang, the Governor of Liangzhou,¹ forced Bo Fazuo to stop practicing Buddhism after Zhang Fu failed to persuade Bo Fazu to resume secular life and finally killed him. Bo Fazuo reaffirmed his aspiration without fear of death; he was hence killed by Zhang Guang at the age of 57. He made a commentary on *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光般若經 and composed *the Xianzong lun* 賢宗論 (*Commentary on Sages*). Zhang Guang, style name Jingwu, was a native of Jiangxia.² He was later surrounded by Yang Nandi, the ruler of the Di ethnic group from Wudu,³ and died of anger.

During the reign of Emperor Hui in the Jin Dynasty, a layman named Wei Shidu translated two fascicles of *the Wisdom Scripture of Practicing Enlightenment* 道行般若經. Wei Shidu was a native of Ji County in Si Prefecture.⁴ From a poor family, he was content

1 Liangzhou, or Liang Prefecture (“zhou” means prefecture), had a moving locale in its history; it was to the west of the Hanzhong area.

2 Jingxia is now in Hubei province.

3 The Di people, an ancient ethnic group in western China, were from Wudu, which is in Gansu Province today.

4 Ji, this is now Ji County in Henan province.

in poverty and developed his spirituality, bearing the Dharma in his mind. On the day of his death, he washed his body, leaned against a desk, recited over a thousand words of sutras, covered himself with a cloth, and passed away peacefully.

10. Śrīmitra of Jianchu Temple in Jiankang during the Jin Dynasty

Śrīmitra 帛屍梨蜜多羅, or Jiyou¹ in Chinese, was from the Western Regions and known by his contemporaries as “Gaozuo.”² Purportedly, he should have succeeded to the throne since he was the prince, whereas he abdicated in favor of his younger brother, coinciding with Taibo,³ who gave up his position to his brother. Later, he was inspired by a celestial manifestation and joined the monastic order, becoming a śramaṇa. Śrīmitra was born uncommonly bright and noble; facing him, one could feel his aloofness from worldly desires.

In the Yongjia Period of the Jin Dynasty, Śrīmitra came to China while it was being ravaged by wars; he went down to the south of the Yangtse River and stayed at Jianchu Temple. Prime Minister Wang Dao met with the master and was deeply amazed, considering Śrīmitra and him the same kind. Then, because of that remark, Śrīmitra gained sudden fame in the region. Yu Yuangui, an official of Taiwei,⁴ Zhou Boren, an official of Guanglu,⁵ Xie Youxing, an official of Taichang,⁶ and Heng Maolun, an official of Tingwei,⁷ were all famous scholar-officials; after meeting Śrīmitra, they admired him loudly and later frequently discussed with him in harmony. Wang Dao once visited Śrīmitra to ask about the subtle laws; the latter laid them down while talking to the former. Bian Wangzhi, an official of Shangshuling,⁸ also associated nicely with

1 Jiyou 吉友 means “fortunate friend” in Chinese.

2 Gaozuo means “high seat” in Chinese.

3 Taibo was the oldest son of Zhou Taiwang (literally meaning first king of Zhou Dynasty), who was the grandfather of the King Wen of Zhou Dynasty.

4 Taiwei, an official position at that time, was more of an honorary title.

5 Guanglu was an official title at the time for those who were in charge of official sacrifice and royal cuisine.

6 Taichang was an official title at the time for those who were in charge of sacrifice and ritual and education.

7 Tingwei was an official title at the time for those who were in charge of justice.

8 Shangshuling was an official title at the time for those who were in charge

Śrīmitra. When he paid a visit, just a moment later than Wang Dao, Śrīmitra sat tight and formally dressed to receive him. When Śrīmitra was asked about the reason for the differences, he replied: “Mr. Wang behaves in concert with others; Mr. Bian is strict and fond of correcting wrongdoings. That is the reason.” Thus, the scholar-officials all appreciated his insight and thoughtfulness; everyone could get his due. Heng Maolun would compose a eulogy for Śrīmitra, yet he could not complete it after a long period. A man told him: “Śrīmitra deserves to be called excellent and pure.” Heng Maolun thanked him with admiration, thinking this could be a perfect title of the article. Great General Wang Chuzhong in the south heard that officials, such as Wang Dao and Zhou Boren, cherished Śrīmitra and suspected that they did not make the right judgement. However, when meeting with him, Wang Chuzhong was inspired and felt excited, becoming immensely respectful. Zhou Yi, an official of Puye who led the functionary candidate recommendation, met Śrīmitra before he went to the imperial court and said: “If we were in a peaceful age, such talents and sages could be appointed for important duties, then I would have no regrets.” Later, Zhou Yi was killed; Śrīmitra went to see his children in condolence. He recited three sections of Buddhist chants with a sonorous voice, and then he delivered a eulogy of condolence with thousands of words. Loud and clear, his face remaining calm. Henceforth, he burst into tears, mourning wholeheartedly. Afterwards, he took back full command of himself. This was an example of how he controlled his emotions in accordance with the occasion. Wang Dao once told Śrīmitra: “You are one of a kind among foreigners.” Śrīmitra smiled and replied: “If I resembled you all, why should I be here now?” This became a much-told story at that time. With a lofty and simple nature, Śrīmitra did not learn Chinese. His official friends talked to him through interpreters, but he could grasp the meanings before the translation. Everyone was amazed by his unparalleled sense and intelligence.

Śrīmitra mastered mantras, which were highly efficacious.

of critical and confidential affairs of the state.

Originally, mantras did not exist in the Jiangdong area; Śrīmitra translated *the Peacock Sutra* 孔雀王經 and clarified the mantras. He also taught his disciple, Mi Li, a method to chant resonantly that is still popular today. Over 80 years old, Śrīmitra passed away during the Xiankang Period in the Jin Dynasty. The officials and his friends all mourned and shed tears after hearing the news. Heng Xuanwu once met Śrīmitra a long time ago and often praised that his spiritual conditions in later days were even better than those of his earlier days. Wang Min of Langya,¹ who followed Śrīmitra as his teacher, made a eulogy: “*The Spring and Autumn Annals*² 春秋 described people in the Wu and Yue areas³ as lower generations. The author believed that the Central Kingdom arose earlier than the barbarian regions. Is it not due to the differences of rites and customs after the first three dynasties⁴ as well as the greedy and brutal nature of the barbarians? However, from time to time, beautiful flowers blossom in foreign regions; outstanding talents originate abroad as well. Thus, heaven sends sages, but they are not limited to just China or just foreign countries. Since the age of *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, among barbarians, only Jin Ridui⁵ of the Han Dynasty was meritorious. However, his merits merely focused on loyalty and filial piety, generating him a great reputation. Gaozuo (Śrīmitra) had an uncommonly great mind, communicating with friends about spirituality; he was pure and excellent, far exceeding Jin Ridui’s level.”

Since Śrīmitra often practiced austerity to the east of Mount Shizigang,⁶ he was buried there after his death. Emperor Cheng

1 Langya was a county in Shandong province.

2 *The Spring and Autumn Annals* were the official history record of the Lu Kingdom during the Zhou Dynasty.

3 Wu and Yue were ancient kingdoms in the present-day Jiangsu and Zhejiang areas.

4 The first three dynasties indicated the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties, which were widely believed to be the first Chinese dynasties.

5 Jin Ridui was a northern barbarian prince who came and paid allegiance to the Han Dynasty; his family served the Han imperial court for seven generations.

6 Mount Shizizhang is now in the Nanjing area.

of the Jin Dynasty cherished the memory of his virtue and built a stupa and tomb at that place. Later, a monk from the Guanyou¹ area traveled to the capital and constructed a temple with the help of Xie Hun of Chen County.² To memorialize the glories of the old days, they named it Gaozuo Temple.

1 Guanyou was to the west of Tongguan, Shaanxi province.

2 Chen County was in Henan province.

11. Saṃghabhūti of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Buddharakṣa

Saṃghabhūti¹ 僧伽跋澄, or Zhongxian,² was a native of Jibin³. Determined and noble, he searched for and visited famous masters, thoroughly studied the Tripitaka, read diverse classics, and specialized in several sutras. Proficiently reciting *the Abhidharma-vibhāṣā śāstra* 阿毗曇毗婆沙 and comprehending its subtle meanings, he aspired to travel to various places and preach according to the local conditions. In the 17th year of the Jianyuan Period in Fu Jian's⁴ reign, Saṃghabhūti came to the Guangzhong area.

Previously, the Mahayana tradition was not prevalent in central China, but meditation and Abhidhamma were popular. Upon his arrival in Chang'an, the public respected Saṃghabhūti as a great master of the Dharma. Zhao Zheng, Fu Jian's official of Mishulang,⁵ believed in and worshiped the Buddha-Dharma. He heard that foreign Buddhists attached importance to studies of *the Abhidharma-vibhāṣā*, and since Saṃghabhūti had learned the text by heart, he offered presents with respect to the latter four times, making a request to translate the Sanskrit version. Hence, Zhao Zheng gathered other virtuous monks, such as Shi Dao'an, to render the meanings. Saṃghabhūti recited the scripture, Dharmanandi the foreign śramaṇa wrote it down in Sanskrit, Buddharakṣa translated it, and then Minzhi, a śramaṇa of the Former Qin, recorded it in Chinese. The translation was carried out

1 His Sanskrit name is recorded as Saṃghabhadra in some texts.

2 Zhongxian is "appearance of the mass" 眾現 in Chinese.

3 Jibin (Chinese phonetic transcription) or 罽賓 is the way Chinese people in the Han dynasty to call Kaśmira - northeast of Gandhāran whose territory and rulers evolved with time (Lin 2003, Yang 2018), some scholars believe it is in Kashmir today.

4 Fu Jian (338-385) was the Emperor of the Former Qin Dynasty, a barbarian sovereignty in Northern China during the Jin Dynasties.

5 Mishulang refers to the official in charge of imperial documentation and library.

in 19th year of the Jianyuan Period in the bogus Qin Dynasty¹ from early summer to mid-autumn. Originally, Saṃghabhūti carried *the Collection of Buddhisattva Vasumitra's Treaties* 婆須蜜菩薩所集論 with him when he came to China. In the following year, Zhao Zheng requested a translation of it as well. Saṃghabhūti recited the Sanskrit version with Dharmanandi, Saṃghadeva and Fonian,² a śramaṇa of the Former Qin Dynasty, translated it, and Huisong³ wrote it down in Chinese. Dao'an and Fahe proofread the text. Thus, the two texts have been circulated and learned to this day. Saṃghabhūti observed the precepts strictly and withdrew from worldly affairs; monastics in Guangzhong followed him as their role model. Later, his whereabouts remained unknown.

Buddharakṣa 佛圖羅刹, whose original country is unknown, was pure in virtue and cultivation and widely learned in classics. Having traveled around China for a long time, he was proficient in Chinese. His preaching and translations of Sanskrit texts brought significant value to China during the Former Qin Dynasty.

1 The Bogus Qin Dynasty here refers to the Former Qin Dynasty; the author of the book, from an ethnically-Han perspective, believed that the governments formed by the minority groups were unorthodox.

2 Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 was a famous monk in the Jin Dynasty.

3 Huisong, also called Sengsong 僧嵩, was a famous monk in the Northern Wei Dynasty.

12. Dharmanandi of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Zhao Zheng

Dharmanandi 曇摩難提, or Faxi¹ in Chinese, was originally from Tukhara,² free of secular desires since his childhood, and intellectually gifted. Having studied classics, his phenomenal achievements owed to his earnestness. He read through the Tripitaka, specializing in *the Ekottara Āgama* 增壹阿含經. With his extensive knowledge and experience, he earned a great reputation in Tukhara. Dharmanandi traveled across various nations to observe their customs. He often indicated that the key to dharma transmission was to preach to those who had never heard of it. Thus, risking quicksand, he came to Chang'an during the Jianyuan Period in the Former Qin Dynasty.

Since Dharmanandi was versed in a wide range of knowledge and renowned for his cultivation, Fu Jian received him with great respect. Prior to that period, Chinese Buddhist sutras did not include the four Āgamas;³ Zhao Zheng, the Prefect of Wuwei⁴ in Fu Jian's government, intended to ask him to translate them. At that time, Murong Chong⁵ had mounted a vengeful rebellion and attacked Fu Jian; Guangzhong was in turbulence. Zhao Zheng deeply respected the Dharma. Not concerned with his own safety, he invited Dao'an to gather monks versed in Buddhist Teachings and requested that Dharmanandi translate *the Madhyama Āgama* 中阿含經 and *Ekottara Āgama* in addition to the previous texts; including *the Abhidharmasāra* 毗曇心論 and *the Tridharmaka śāstra* 三法度論, it amounted to 160 fascicles in all. Zhu Fonian interpreted, while Huisong wrote it down. From the summer to the spring of the third

1 Faxi 法喜 means "joy of the Dharma" in Chinese.

2 Tukhara was an ancient monarchy in central Asia near Afghanistan.

3 The four Āgamas 四阿含 comprise of the Dīrgha Āgama, the Madhyama Āgama, the Saṃyukta Āgama, and the Ekottara Āgama, which are a sutra collection of early Buddhism.

4 Wuwei is in Gansu today.

5 Murong Chong was a royal family member of the sovereignty of the Former Yan Dynasty 前燕 that had been overthrown by Fu Jian's family.

year, it took almost two years to complete. When Yao Chang's¹ forces approached Guangzhong, fear spread among the public; Dharmanandi bid his farewell and returned to the Western Regions, and no one heard of him afterwards.

At that time, Fu Jian had just been defeated, revolts arose one after the other, barbarian troops ravaged the region, and civilians fled. Owing to Zhao Zheng's great efforts, a majority of the scriptures were translated.

Zhao Zheng 趙正, style name Wenyue, was either from Qingshui, Luoyang² or a native of Jiyin,³ according to some records. He filled the position of Zhuzuolang⁴ at the age of 18 and then successively held the posts of Huangmen Shilang⁵ and Prefect of Wuwei. He had a thin figure, no beard, a wife, and a secondary wife,⁶ but there were no children in his family; some of his contemporaries said he was a eunuch. However, he was intelligent and generous, studying Buddhism as well as other forms of knowledge. Zhao Zheng would advise straightforwardly and did not evade issues.

Fu Jian favored and trusted princess Qinghe and his ethnically-Xianbei⁷ brother during the later years of his reign, slackening his governance. Thus, Zhao Zheng sang a song to advise the monarch: "It has been said that the Mengjin part of the Yellow River turned in 500 miles; the river water had been clear, but who polluted it?" Fu Jian was touched and said: "It was me." Zhao Zheng continued: "A jujube tree in the northern garden that is full of leaves shading

1 Yao Chang was a general of the Former Qin Dynasty who betrayed the monarch during the warfare.

2 Qingshui, Luoyang is in Luoyang, Henan province today.

3 Jiyin Prefecture is in Shandong province today.

4 Zhuzuolang was a functionary post that composed the official historical book.

5 Huangmen Shilang was a communications officer of the emperor.

6 Ancient China was a polygamous society; men could marry and live with multiple wives at the same time.

7 The Xianbei 鮮卑 were a minority group in the north of ancient China.

the ground; although its branches are full of thorns, it produces fruits in the shape of red hearts.” Fu Jian smiled and asked: “Are you this so-called Zhao Zheng?” Records like this presented his sense of humor and intelligence. Later, when Buddhism was popular in Guanzhong, he wanted to join the monastic order, but Fu Jian wanted to keep him and did not approve it. After Fu Jian’s death, Zhao Zheng’s aspiration came true, and he changed his name as Daozheng. He hence made a verse: “Why did the Buddha attain Nirvana so early when he was born so late? Taking refuge in Shakyamuni Buddha today, I follow the Great Path.” He later resided on Mountain Shangluo¹ in seclusion and concentrated on sutra and Vinaya studies. Xi Hui, the Prefect of Yongzhou,² admired Zhao Zheng’s virtue, so he coerced the latter to associate with him. Zhao Zheng died at Xiangyang³ in his 60s.

1 Mount Shangluo is in Shaanxi province.

2 Yongzhou is Xiangfan, Hubei province today.

3 Xiangyang is Xiangfan today.

13. Saṃghadeva of Mount Lu during the Jin Dynasty

Samgharakṣa

Saṃghadeva 僧伽提婆, Zhongtian or Tihe¹ in Chinese due to differing pronunciations, had the original family name of Gautama. He was from Jibin. He entered the monastic order to cultivate himself, searched for wise masters to follow, and became versed in the Tripitaka, specializing in *the Abhidharmasāra* 毗曇心論 and gaining precise insight on it. He often recited *the Tridharmaka śāstra* 三法度 and was amazed, appreciating it day and night and believing this was the kernel of the Dharma. Saṃghadeva had an open mind adept in finding the truth, while his deportments were gentle and polite. He assiduously devoted himself to education and came to Chang'an in the Jianyuan Period during Fu Jian's reign to preach the Dharma.

Earlier, Saṃghabhūti translated *the Collection of Buddhisattva Vasumitra's Treaties* 婆須蜜菩薩所集論. In addition, Dharmanandi rendered two *Āgamas* 阿含, *the Abhidharma* 毗曇, *Guangshuo* 廣說², and *the Tridharmaka śāstr* 三法度論³, among other texts, totaling over one million words. The translation was interrupted by the rebellion of Murong Chong; at that time, barbarian upheaval perturbed the northern areas. Since the translators could not focus on their work, the redaction was incomplete. Some sentences did not show the true meanings, and Dao'an passed away before the errors could be corrected. Later, peace was restored in the Dongshan area. Travelling to Luoyang with Fahe, a śramaṇa of Jizhou,³ Saṃghadeva continuously studied and discussed the previous sutras for four to five years. After staying in China for a much longer time, he became more proficient in Chinese, thus recognizing the mistakes and omissions in previous translations. Fahe regretted the incompleteness of those versions and asked

1 Zhongtian 眾天 and Tihe 提和 mean “Mass deities” and “carrying harmony” respectively in Chinese.

2 Guangshuo means “a detailed commentary” or Vibhāṣā in Sanskrit.

3 Jizhou is in Hebei Province today.

Samghadeva to retranslate *the Abhidharma* 阿毗曇 and *Guangshuo* 廣說. After Yao Xing¹ took the throne, Buddhism flourished again. Fahe entered the Guanzhong area when Samghadeva travelled down to the south of the Yangtse River. Earlier, Master Huiyuan of Mount Lu studied the exquisite doctrines diligently, largely collected Sūtra-piṭaka, and humbly learned from elites by inviting them from afar. When Huiyuan heard of Samghadeva's impending arrival, he warmly received the latter at Mount Lu. During the Taiyuan Period in the Jin Dynasty, Huiyuan requested that Samghadeva translate *the Abhidharmasāra* 毗曇心論 and *Tridharmaka śāstra* 三法度論. Standing on the platform of Prajña,² Samghadeva held the Sanskrit version and uttered the Chinese translation, removing the flashy parts, keeping the solid contents, and making the translation adhere to the original meanings. The relevant texts circulating today are his versions.

In the first year of the Long'an Period in the Jin Dynasty, Samghadeva arrived in the capital city; the royal families and upper class lost no time in inviting him to their homes and paying respect. Wang Xun, a general of the guard from Langya County and titled Marquis Dongting, was honest and insightful, supported and protected the True Dharma, and established a vihara to host Buddhist disciples. Since Samghadeva was in town, Wang Xun invited him to preach the Abhidharma at his place; all the famous monks flocked to listen. Samghadeva understood the doctrines profoundly, so he taught and analyzed with clarity, stressing the Teachings, which pleased all the audiences. At that time, Wang Sengmi³ also sat in the auditorium, and later he preached in a separate room as well. Wang Xun asked Fawang the monk: "How does Sengmi grasp it?" The latter replied: "He learned almost everything. He was just missing some details." This verified the clear and incisive analysis and lecture of Samghadeva, which could

1 Yao Xing 姚興 (366-416) was the second monarch of the Later Qin government.

2 The Platform of Prajña, or platform of Wisdom, was built by Huiyuan at Mount Lu in Jiangxi Province.

3 Wang Sengmi was the younger brother of Wang Xun.

easily inspire listeners. In winter of that year, Wang Xun gathered Shi Huichi, a śramaṇa who was versed in the Teachings, and 40 other learners in the capital, requesting that Saṃghadeva retranslate *the Madhyama Āgama* 中阿含經, among other texts. Saṃgharakṣa, a śramaṇa from Jibin, held the Sanskrit version, while Saṃghadeva translated it into Chinese; the work was completed in the next summer. He translated texts, totaling over one million words, in the Yellow River and Luo River¹ areas. Traveling in China and India, he understood the customs of various countries, easily responded to different situations, and communicated skillfully with a sense of humor. His preaching gained great popularity. Later, his whereabouts were unknown.

1 The Luo River is a tributary of the Yellow River in Shaanxi and Henan.

14. Zhu Fonian of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Fonian¹ 竺佛念, a native of Liangzhou,² renounced the world in his youth and had pure and determined aspirations. Polite and open-minded, he had broad knowledge and insights, widely learned various Buddhist texts, and read other classics as well, especially mastering the meanings of *the Cangjie pian* and *the Erya*.³ At a young age, he traveled to different places for study and observed their diverse customs. Since his family lived in the Xihe⁴ area for generations, he had a good command of that dialect and understood both Chinese and Sanskrit. Although he did not gain a great reputation in doctrinal understanding, Zhu Fonian was famous for his erudition and experiences.

During the Jianyuan Period in Fu Jian's reign, Saṃghabhūti, Dharmanandi, and some others arrived in Chang'an. Zhao Zheng requested that they translate multiple sutras. At that time, none of the elites could write in Chinese, so the masses recommended Zhu Fonian. Thus, Saṃghabhūti held the Sanskrit version, and Zhu Fonian rendered it into Chinese. By virtue of the latter's questions and analysis, the Chinese versions were accurate and easy to understand. In the first month⁵ of the 20th year during the Jianyan Period, Dharmanandi was invited to translate *the Ekottara Āgama* 增壹阿含經 and *the Madhyama Āgama* 中阿含經. Śramaṇas versed in these doctrinal studies were gathered to work on the project, and Zhu Fonian was requested to render it into Chinese. For two years, he carefully worked to complete it. The popularity

1 Zhu Fonian (d. c. 386 CE).

2 Liangzhou is in Wuwei, Gansu Province today.

3 *Cangjie pian* 蒼頡篇 is a spelling book that originated in the Qin Dynasty (221 BCE-207 BCE) after Emperor Qin Shihuang reunified China. *Erya* 爾雅, the first dictionary in China, originated around 2500 years ago. The author listed the two works to indicate that Zhu Fonian was proficient in Chinese linguistics.

4 Xihe is in Shanxi Province.

5 The first month of the lunar calendar; in ancient China, people employed the Chinese lunar calendar.

of the two *Āgamas* relied on Zhu Fonian's efforts in translation and transmission. After An Shigao and Zhi Qian, no one could surpass Zhu Fonian in textual translation. He became the doyen of translators during the ages of Fu Jian and Yao Xing, gaining the utmost respect of monks in Guangzhong. Later, he carried out the translation of *the Sutra of the Diadem of the Primary Activities of the Bodhisattvas* 菩薩瓔珞本業經, *the Shizhu duanjie jing* 十住斷結經 (*Abstention in the Ten Grounds*), *the Sutra of the Appearance of Light* 出曜經, *the Sutra on the Embryo* 胎經, and *the Sutra on the Intermediate State* 中陰經 by himself. While they were still drafts with many ambiguities, unfortunately, Zhu Fonian fell ill and passed away in Chang'an. The four groups of Buddhists,¹ near and far, all mourned him and lamented his loss.

1 The four Buddhist groups: monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.

15. Dharmayaśas of Xin Temple in Jiangling during the Jin Dynasty Zhu Fadu

Dharmayaśas¹ 曇摩耶舍, literally meaning Faming², was a native of Jibin. He was a studious boy and was discovered and trained by Puṇyatāra at the age of 14. When he was grown up, he had great aspiration, competence, and an intellectual giftedness. Dharmayaśas was also well versed in sutras and Vinaya, surpassing the rest. Cultivating the eight dhyānas³ and focusing his mind on the sapta-bodhyanga,⁴ he was hence compared to Buddhahadra. Dharmayaśas frequently traveled across mountains and waters alone, having no fear of wild animals. He contemplated alone, often day and night, sometimes chastizing himself under a tree: “Almost 30 years old without any attainment, how lazy I am!” Dharmayaśas then stopped eating and sleeping for several days and focused on austerity to repent for previous sins. Later, he dreamt of Heavenly King Panthaka, who told him: “Śramaṇas should get to know the world and transmit the Dharma, keeping the deliverance of sentient beings in mind. Why do you observe minor precepts for the liberation of yourself? The dharmas⁵ depend on conditions that mature at certain moments. Forcing yourself to achieve awakening will only lead to no success in your life.” Dharmayaśas was inspired and thought it over, deciding to travel around and preach the Dharma. Hence, he visited famous places and traveled in various countries. He arrived at Guangzhou during the Long’an Period in the Jin Dynasty and stayed in Baisha Temple.

Dharmayaśas was adept at reciting *the Samantapāsālikā* 毗婆沙

1 Dharmayaśas (b. c. 315 CE).

2 Faming 法明 means “Clarity of the Dharma” in Chinese.

3 The eight dhyānas indicate the four meditative states in the realm of form and the four concentrative states of the formless realm.

4 sapta-bodhyanga refers to the seven cultivations used to develop Buddhist wisdom.

5 “Dharma” indicates the Truth or Buddha’s Teaching, while “dharmas” refers to phenomena.

律 ; people thus called him Great Vibhasa.¹ At that time, he was already 85 years old with 85 disciples following him. A laywoman named Zhang Puming asked him about the Dharma; he then expounded *the Fosheng yuanqi jing* 佛生緣起經 (*Sutra on the Origin of the Buddha's Birth*) and translated *the Chamo jing* 差摩經 (*Kṣemavatyāyākaṛaṇa sūtra*) of one fascicle for her. In the years of the Yixi Period, he came to Chang'an, where the throne had been taken by Yao Xing, who deeply believed in Buddhism. Dharmayaśas was treated respectfully upon his arrival. At that time, Dharmagupta 曇摩掘多, the Indian śramaṇa, came to Guanzhong. Since they held the same aspiration, the two of them got along like old friends and translated *the Śāriputrābhidharma* 舍利弗阿毗曇. They started by writing down the Sanskrit version in the 9th year of the Hongshi Period in the Later Qin Dynasty and completed the translation in the 16th year, totaling 22 fascicles. Yao Hong, the Crown Prince of the Later Qin Dynasty, revised the Chinese version, and Daobiao the śramaṇa prefaced the work.

Dharmayaśas later visited the south and arrived in Jiangling. He stayed at Xin Temple and widely transmitted the Chan School; over 300 inspired Buddhists overcame obstacles to attend his lectures. Full of joy, secular people paid respect to the master even though they did not have a strong conviction before they met. Dharmayaśas stated that a teacher and a disciple attained enlightenment and became arahants, but their names were missing from the note. Once, he practiced sitting meditation in a room with the door closed, and suddenly five or six śramaṇas entered the room. In addition, śramaṇas, usually more than one, were seen flying over the tops of trees at his place from time to time. Associating with deities but still working with worldly people, his contemporaries all believed that he had awakened although he did not show it. In the Yuanjia² Period under the Liu Song³ government, Dharmayaśas

1 The Sanskrit word Vibhasa means commentaries and explanations of sutras and Vinaya.

2 The Yuanjia Period: 424-453 CE.

3 The Liu Song Dynasty (420-479 CE) was the first dynasty in the south during the Southern and Northern Dynasties of China.

returned to the Western Regions and lost contact afterwards.

One of Dharmayaśas' disciples, named Zhu Fadu 竺法度, was proficient in both Sanskrit and Chinese and often worked on translation. Originally, he was the son of Zhu Pole 竺婆勒, who settled in Guangzhou and travelled for business back and forth. Having this boy in Nankang,¹ he therefore named his son Nankang but referred to him by the name of Jinjia when he grew up. After he entered the monastery, Fadu came to be his name. At the beginning, Zhu Fadu followed Dharmayaśas, learning sutras and the Dharma from him. Since his master returned to his homeland, Zhu Fadu started different approaches in accord with his own comprehension. He planned to focus resources on transmitting the Hinayana tradition and prohibit the reading of Mahayana doctrines. He solely worshiped Śakyamuni Buddha and did not recognize the Buddhas of the Ten Directions. He practiced begging for alms by using uniform bowls in the Sangha. Zhu Fadu also ordered that bhiksunis should walk hand in hand when they travel and prostrate face to face on the days of repentance. At first, only the bhiksuni named Fahong, the daughter of Yanjun, who was the Prefect of Danyang² in the Liu Song government, and the bhiksuni named Puming, the daughter of Zhang Mu, who was the Prefect of Jiaozhou,³ accepted his teaching. Presently, many bhiksunis like Xuanye and Hongguang still adopt this approach; Bhiksunis to the east of Guangzhong also follow it occasionally.

1 Nankang was a county in Jiangxi Province.

2 Danyang is in Nanjing today.

3 Jiaozhou is Guangzhou today.

Volume II

Scriptural Translation Part B

7 main figures 6 auxiliaries

1. Kumārajīva of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什, also called Tongshou,¹ was a native of India. For generations, his family served as prime ministers; his grandfather, named Daduo 達多, was uncommonly excellent and famous nationwide, and his father, named Kumārāyana, was intelligent and noble. When the moment of succession came close, Kumārāyana dismissed the opportunity and entered the monastic order, traveling eastwards and crossing the Pamirs. After learning about his refusal of the post, the King of Kucha² admired this young man, welcomed him in person at the suburb of the capital city, and invited him to assume the role of national master. At that time, the king had a 20-year-old sister with great talent and wit. She was able to memorize texts after reading them only once and understand words after listening one time. She had red moles on her body, so she should give birth to a son with wisdom based on the doctrinal description. Multiple monarchs asked for matchmaking to marry this princess, but she turned them all down. When she met with Kumārāyana, the princess wanted to marry the latter, so she forced the marriage and became pregnant soon after. During the pregnancy, the future mother felt that her faculty of comprehension greatly increased, doubling that of her previous capacity. She heard that many śramaṇas at Great Oriole Temple³ were virtuous and renowned; some were even enlightened ones. The princess then sat for daily reverence along with noble ladies and Bhiksunis, giving alms and offerings. In addition, Kumārajīva's mother

1 Kumārajīva (344-413), or Tongshou 童壽, literally means “child living.”

2 Kucha, an ancient monarchy in the Western Regions, was an important relay on the Silk Road.

3 The Great Oriole was a temple to the north of Kucha.

suddenly knew how to speak the Indian language and responded to rebukes or questions with subtle inspirations and ideas; everybody was amazed. An arhat named Damoqusha 達摩瞿沙 indicated, “She must be bearing a son of wisdom,” and explained the signs Śāriputra’s mother had while bearing the sage to prove his point. After Kumārajīva was born, the princess forgot the marvelous words she said during the pregnancy. Shortly afterwards, the mother desired to renounce the world as well, although her husband disagreed. She then gave birth to another boy named Pusysdeva. Seeing scattered bones of the dead during a trip outside the city, she sensed the root cause of sufferings, was determined to enter the monastic order, and swore to refrain from eating before tonsure. On the sixth night of her fast, she was completely emaciated and would not last until the dawn broke. Her husband panicked and approved her aspiration, asking someone to tonsure her; at that point, she resumed eating food and initiated her nunhood by receiving precepts the next day. She practiced meditation intently and diligently, obtaining the fruit of Srota-apanna.¹

Following his mother, Kumārajīva entered monastic order at the age of seven, learned sutras from the master, and recited one thousand stanzas per day with each stanza having 32 words, totaling 32,000 words. After his reciting of *the Abhidharma* 毗曇, the teacher expounded the meaning to Kumārajīva; the learner grasped it thoroughly, even all the details. At that time, the Buddhists in Kucha offered to them generously since the mother was the sister of the king, so the mother left the place where people respected them, taking her son with her. At the age of nine, crossing the Sindhus River,² Kumārajīva arrived in Jibin with his mother and met with Vandhudatta,³ the renowned and virtuous master. As the cousin of the king of Jibin, he had gained profound comprehension of the

1 Srota-apanna means “entering the stream,” the first of the four fruits of cultivation in Theravada Buddhism; the following levels are Sakrdagamin (once returner), Anagamin (non-returning), and Arahant.

2 The Sindhus River is the Indus River at present day.

3 Vandhudatta 盤頭達多 was a famous monk that was allegedly the cousin of the King of Jibin; his birth and death years are unknown.

Dharma as well as other knowledge with his uncommon talent; he was also proficient in *the Tripitaka* and *Navânga-śāsana*.¹ From morning until noon, he transcribed one thousand gathas and recited one thousand gathas in the afternoon; consequently, he was well known near and far. Upon Kumārajīva's arrival, the young boy paid respect to and followed Vandhudatta as his master, learning *the Kṣudraka-piṭaka*, *the Madhyama Āgama*, and *the Dīrgha Āgama*, which totalled to four million words. Very often, the master praised the student's intelligence, and those words reached the king's ears. The king invited Kumārajīva to the royal palace and summoned reputed and eloquent practitioners of other religions to challenge him. At the beginning, the priests did not take the young śramaṇa seriously and looked down on him during the debate due to his age. Kumārajīva seized the opportunity to fight back and defeated his opponents by leaving them dumbstruck. The king treated him with more respect, providing him daily with one preserved goose and three decalitres each of the following cereals: round-shaped rice, rice, and flour, and six litres of butter, which were tributes paid by foreign countries. Also, five bhiksus and ten novices were sent to administer and clean the monastery where Kumārajīva stayed as his disciples. This is how Kumārajīva was revered.

When he was 12 years old, his mother took Kumārajīva back to Kucha. All states in the region wanted to grant him noble titles, but he wanted none. At that time, the mother took her son to the northern Mountain in Yuezhi. An arhat saw him and was amazed, telling the mother: "You should take good care of this novice. If he can observe the precepts until the age of 35, he will be able to assume great cause for the Dharma, delivering countless people, as much as Upagupta² did. If his observance of precepts is incomplete, he will not be able to carry out outstanding efforts and will merely be a talented master." In the Kingdom of Khasa,³ Kumārajīva used

1 Navânga-śāsana refers to the nine types of sutras categorized by Mahākāśyapa and the Sangha after the Buddha's nirvana.

2 Upagupta was the great Bhiksu of the fifth generation after the Buddha who reformed the Vinaya system.

3 Khasa was one of the 36 kingdoms in the Western Regions.

to put a Buddhist alms bowl on top of his head and say to himself: “Why is this bowl very light when its size is so big?” Immediately, the bowl became too heavy for him to bear, and he cried out as it fell off his head. His mother asked what happened, and he said: “Your son has a discriminating mind, so the bowl’s weight varies.” Thus, he stayed in Khasa for a year. In that winter, as he recited the Abhidharma, he could understand the subtle meaning of *the Shimen* 十门 (*ten gates*) and *Xiuzhi* 修誌 (*aspiration cultivation*) chapters without any training; he also comprehended the questions in *Liuzu* 六足 (*Six Part Abhidharma*) thoroughly among others. A śramaṇa of the Tripitaka in the kingdom of Xijian 喜見 told the king: “This novice is uncommon. Your Majesty may ask him to preach the Dharma, which will generate two benefits. First, the novices of our country would feel ashamed and work harder; second, the King of Kucha will believe that Kumārajīva grew up in our country, so reverence to him will equate homage to our country. The reverers must come seeking friendship.” The king approved and arranged a great Assembly, inviting Kumārajīva to take the high seat. He expounded *the Dharmacakra-pravartana-sūtra* 轉法輪經. As expected, the King of Kucha sent a high envoy and great gifts to ameliorate relations with Khasa. In his spare time when not preaching, Kumārajīva studied non-Buddhist doctrines. He became versed in the Vedānta,¹ deeply understood lexicology, writing, and eloquence. Kumārajīva also read through the Catur-veda² and Pañca-vidyā³ classics, grasped skills including yin-yang and astrology, and was highly capable of prediction as well as fortune telling. He formed an open-minded and non-punctilious character; practitioners had doubts about his attributes, but he was at ease and never minded such concerns.

Prince Shache 莎車王子 and Prince Canjun 參軍王子 of Yarkand⁴

1 Vedānta refers to the Upanisads, a group of ancient Indian philosophical texts.

2 Catur-veda refers to the four fundamental Brahmin classics.

3 Pañca-vidyā refers to the five non-Buddhist fields of learning and skills in medieval India.

4 Yarkand was a small kingdom near Tarim in the Western Regions

were two brothers that entered monastic order as novices. The big brother's style name was Sūryabhadra. The younger brother's style name was Sūryasoma;¹ he was skilled in many disciplines and focused on the Mahayana tradition to deliver people from suffering, while his big brother learned from various schools, including that of his younger brother. Kumārajīva followed the younger brother as well and forged a deep friendship with him. Once, Sūryasoma expounded *the Anouđa Sutra* 阿耨達經 for him; learning that the five aggregates,² eighteen elements of cognition,³ and the twelve sense bases⁴ were all empty, Kumārajīva wondered and asked: "What's the point of this sutra? It breaks the phenomena." The teacher replied: "The phenomena based on eyes and other sense organs are not real existences." Since the student stuck to the eye faculty, the teacher thereupon indicated the unreal nature of phenomena from this perspective. The duo researched and argued the theories in Mahayana and Hinayana doctrines back and forth; after quite a while, Kumārajīva finally realized the truth and then focused on Mahayana, saying: "I used to study the Hinayana canon, just as how one does not recognize gold and believes in the value of bronze." Hence he asked for more Mahayana teachings and recited *the Madhyamaka-śāstra* 中論, *Śata-śāstra* 百論, and *Dvādaśanikāya-śāstra* 十二門論⁵ among others.

Soon, with his mother, Kumārajīva went to the Kingdom of Wensu⁶ 溫宿 at the north border of Kucha. At that time, a priest of another religion resided there who was famous in the region for his eloquence; beating the drum, he vowed: "I would cut off my head

1 Sūryasoma was a famous Mahayana monk in the Western Regions.

2 Aggregates are known as the Skandhas in Sanskrit.

3 The 18 compositional elements of cognition were the six sense faculties, their six objects, and the six consciousnesses; aṣṭādaśa-dhātavaḥ in Sanskrit.

4 Sense base is skandha-dhātv-āyatana in Sanskrit.

5 *The Madhyamaka-śāstra* 中論, *Śata-śāstra* 百論, and *Dvādaśanikāya-śāstra* 十二門論 were the three treatises of the Madhyamaka School by Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva.

6 Wensu was another kingdom in the Western Regions; it is in Xinjiang, China today.

if someone could defeat me in debates.” When Kumārajīva arrived and questioned him with the two truths,¹ the priest was at a loss for the right answers, so he bowed and took refuge in Buddhism. Thus, Kumārajīva gained a huge reputation in the east of the Pamirs and the south of the Yellow River. The King of Kucha went to Wensu in person to welcome Kumārajīva back to the king’s homeland so as to expound various sutras; the masses far and wide were all respectful, and no one could confront him. The King’s daughter was a nun named Ajieyemodi 阿竭耶末帝 . She read widely and specialized in meditation; it was said that she had obtained the second fruit of Sakrdagamin. She took delight in listening to Dharma talks, thereupon organizing a great Assembly and inviting Kumārajīva to expound Vaipulya² sutras. Kumārajīva explained and analyzed, “All phenomena are of emptiness nature and non-self,” and discerned, “the notions of five aggregates unreal.” Every participant regretted not learning the truth earlier. At the age of 20, Kumārajīva formally took the precepts in the palace and followed Vimalākṣa³ to learn *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律 . After a while, Kumārajīva’s mother left for India, telling King Bai Chun of Kucha: “Your nation is going to decline, so I am leaving.” Upon her arrival in India, she got the third fruit of cultivation. Before she left, the mother told Kumārajīva: “The Mahayana Teachings should be widely spread in China. Their transmission must rely on your effort, but this effort will not bring any benefit. What would you do?” The son replied: “A bodhisattva’s path is to benefit others selflessly. If I can make the Dharma circulate, purging minds of delusion, I will not regret it, even though I have to be tortured by fire.” Then, he stayed at the new monastery in Kucha.

In the old palace by the monastery, Kumārajīva first obtained *the*

1 The two truths refer to the conventional truth and the ultimate truth in Buddhism.

2 Vaipulya, a Sanskrit word written as Fangdeng 方 等 in Chinese, is a category of Mahayana sutras that emphasizes principles of greatness and equality.

3 *Vimalākṣa*, said to be of Kabul, was an expositor of *Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律 , a Vinaya text of the Sarvāstivāda.

Fanguang jing 放光經¹ and read it diligently. As a demon came to cover the texts, the monk could only see the empty bamboo slips;² understanding that was due to a demon, his aspiration was even firmer. The texts recovered after the demon left, and a voice arose: “You are a wise man; why do you need to read this?” Kumārajīva said: “You are just a little demon; go back quickly. My mind is as firm as the earth: it can not be changed.” He stayed in Kucha for two years, widely reading Mahayana discourses and thoroughly comprehending their subtle meanings. The King of Kucha made a golden lion throne for him, placed a cushion from the Roman Empire on it, and asked Kumārajīva to expound the Dharma. Whereas he said: “My teacher remains uninspired by Mahayana Teachings; I would like to go preaching for him first. I cannot stay here.” Soon, his teacher, Vandhudatta, came from afar, and the king asked the senior master then: “Could the patriarch see things from far away?” Vandhudatta replied: “First, I heard that my disciple was inspired by unusual Teachings, and secondly that Your Majesty would promote the Dharma. Thereupon I speeded to come to your esteemed country.” Kumārajīva was happy to have his teacher, which coincided with his will, so he expounded *the Sutra on Virtuous Woman’s Questions*³ 德女問經, mostly indicating that all the phenomena arose dependently on conditions hence unreal. He and his old teacher had not believed this theory before, thus Kumārajīva talked about this sutra first. His teacher asked him: “What unusual character did you see in Mahayana Teachings for you to convert?” Kumārajīva replied: “The Mahayana canon is profound and clear, clarifying that all the dharmas have emptiness nature; while Hinayana is partial and clings to notions and features.” The teacher returned: “It is horrifying that you mention the emptiness of all phenomena. Why do you abandon the reality

1 *Fanguang jing* is the abbreviation of *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, whose translation is attributed to Mokṣala 無叉羅 in the Western Jin Dynasty.

2 Bamboo slips were used to write on and tied together as books in ancient China.

3 *The Sutra on Virtuous Woman’s Questions* is a sutra depicting a virtuous woman asking about Mahayana Teachings.

of phenomena and prefer emptiness? This is like the madman in the past who once asked the rope maker to make a very thin and fine thread of hemp. The rope maker was carefully doing his job and made threads as thin as dust, but the madman still chastised him, saying it was too thick. The craftsman was angry and pointed his finger to the empty sky, then telling the madman: ‘Here is your thin tread.’ The madman asked ‘Why can I not see it?’ The rope maker answered ‘I am very experienced in thread making, and even I can not see it myself due to its fineness; how can you see it?’ The madman rejoiced and handed over a lot of money to compensate the craftsman. Later, the rope maker used this scheme and gained rewards again. Your emptiness theory is just like this.” Kumārajīva cited similar examples to explain the truth. Back and forth for over a month, his efforts gradually began to work on his teacher who marveled out loud: “‘If the teacher can not understand, the disciples will teach him instead,’ today this proverb is proven.” He then respected Kumārajīva as his teacher by saying: “You are my Mahayana teacher, and I am your Hinayana teacher.” People in the Western Regions all admired and paid respect to the prodigy. Each year, when Kumārajīva gave dharma talks, the kings knelt by the high seat and let the preacher step on their shoulders to mount the seat. This is how they respected Kumārajīva.

Kumārajīva’s sermons gained wide popularity and a high reputation in the Western Regions and China. At that time, Fu Jian, who was the monarch in Guangzhong of China, was visited by the king of Frontal Cheshi¹ and the younger brother of the Kuchan King. The two of them convinced Fu Jian to conquer the Western Regions so that the region could provide China with the abundant, local products. In the first month of the 13th year² of the Jianyuan Period under Fu Jian’s reign, the official in charge of astrology reported to the emperor: “A star appears on the foreign skyline, indicating that virtuous and wise men should enter China to assist

1 Cheshi 車師, a small sovereignty in the Western Regions, was situated to the west of Dunhuang and divided into two parts, front and rear.

2 The 13th year of the Jianyuan Period was 337 CE.

the governance.” Fu Jian said: “I have heard of Kumārajīva in the Western Regions and Dao’an the monk in Xiangyang, should the wise men not be them?” Then, he directly sent for Kumārajīva in that region. In the second month of the 17th year of the Jianyuan Period, the kings of Shanshan and Frontal Cheshi invited Fu Jian to dispatch troops to the Western Regions. In the ninth month of the next year, the emperor sent General Lyu Guang and General Jiang Fei with an army of 70 thousand alongside the Cheshi Front and Cheshi kings to crusade against Kucha, Wuqi, and the other kingdoms in the Western Regions. At the farewell banquet, Fu Jian told General Lyu Guang: “The emperor governs the nations in accordance with the heavenly rules, thus should cherish living beings. How can I initiate warfare to satisfy my greed for territories? That is in order to look for virtuous talent. I have heard that Kumārajīva in the Western Regions deeply understands the Dharma and comprehends yin and yang, so he is a great teacher for learners. I really want to have this talent. Sages are treasures for a country; if you can conquer Kucha, send him back quickly.” Before Lyu Guang’s troops arrived, Kumārajīva told Bai Chun, the King of Kucha: “The nation’s destiny is falling because a strong enemy emerges; when they come to the capital from the east, you had better treat them with respect. Do not fight with the main forces.” Refusing to listen, Bai Chun rose to the battle but was killed by the invaders; his younger brother, Bai Zhen, was thereupon set to succeed the throne. Seeing the monk as a young man and not recognizing his wisdom, Lyu Guang tested his wordly desires by forcing him to marry the daughter of the Kuchan King. Kumārajīva refused firmly, even used imploring words. Lyu Guang said: “Your monk’s virtue does not exceed your late father, why do you refuse so strongly?” Lyu Guang then forced him to drink wine and locked him up with the princess. Placed under such extreme circumstance, Kumārajīva broke the precept.¹ The general also asked him to ride on a bull or ferocious horse, hoping that he would drop off; the monk withheld resentment and had no complaints until Lyu Guang

1 This refers to the precept regarding refraining from sensual desire, a basic rule for Buddhist monks.

felt shame about his actions and stopped. On the way back to China, Lyu Guang's troop camped at the foot of a mountain once, and had the soldiers lie down. Kumārajīva said: "We cannot camp here because this place will bring us great troubles. We must move up to the hill." Lyu Guang did not follow his advice. At midnight, a deluge of rain poured down, a flood arose, and yards-deep water killed thousands. Lyu Guang was surprised. Kumārajīva told the general: "This is an inauspicious place, we cannot stay here. We should go back quickly; I anticipate that you will find a fortunate locale midway." This time Lyu Guang listened to him. Arriving at Liangzhou, words were received that Fu Jian had been killed by Yao Chang. Lyu Guang's entire army donned mourning dress and moved to the south of Liangzhou city. He claimed to be the King outside Guangzhong, with the reign title Tai'an.

In the first month of the first year of the Tai'an¹ Period, a cyclone hit Guzang.² Kumārajīva predicted: "This wind is evil, revolts will arise but will also cease by themselves." Soon, both Liangqian and Penghuang uprose; however, they each were wiped out quickly. In the second year of the Longfei³ Period, Juqu Nancheng of the Songlushui barbarian tribe from Zhangye⁴ and his cousin, Juqu Mengxun,⁵ rebelled and elected for Duanye, the Prefect of Jiankang, to be the leader. Lyu Guang sent his son of his secondary wife, Lyu Zuan, the Prefect of Qinzhou and Duke of Taiyuan, with an army of 50 thousand to put it down. At that moment, the public believed that Duanye's group was a motley crew and that Lyu Zuan's troop had a powerful reputation, so Lyu Zuan's troop should be able to defeat

1 The first year of Tian'an Period was 386 CE.

2 Guzang 姑臧, which is Wuwei, Gansu province today, used to be the capital city of the Former Liang, Later Liang, Northern Liang, Southern Liang, and Great Liang Dynasties during the so called Sixteen Kingdoms Period (304-439) in Chinese history.

3 The second year of Longfei Period was 397 CE.

4 Zhangye 張掖 is in Gansu province today.

5 Juqu Mengxun (368-433) of the Hun ethnicity was the founder of Northern Liang regime; he followed his cousin and Duan Ye first and then killed them both, being claimed as the Great General.

all the rebels. Lyu Guang then visited Kumārajīva to consult, and the latter said: “According to what I observe, this expedition will not bring back any benefit.” Afterwards, Lyu Zuan was defeated in Heli. Soon Guonun uprose; Lyu Zuan indiscreetly ordered the troops to attack and was defeated again, only managing to escape and return by himself. Once, Zhangzi, an inner court official of talent and elegance to whom Lyu Guang attached importance, was sick. Lyu Guang tried to save him. A foreign priest named Luochoa said: “I am able to cure his illness.” Lyu Guang was glad and gave him a large sum of money. Kumārajīva knew that the priest was dishonest, and then he told Zhangzi: “This priest cannot make it, and that will only bring trouble. It is predestined, but you may have a chance with divination.” He made a knot with ropes of five colors and burned them to ashes, then putting the ashes in water. If the ashes floated up in the shape of ropes, the illness would be incurable. The ashes did float up in the shape of ropes, and shortly afterwards Zhangzi failed the treatment and died. Before too long, Lyu Guang died as well, passing the throne to his son, Lyu Shao. A few days later, Lyu Zuan, the son of the secondary wife, killed Lyu Shao and claimed the throne, naming the year Xianning.¹

In the second year of the Xianning Period, a piglet was born with three heads on one trunk; a dragon emerged from a well in the eastern suburb, coiled in front of the great hall, and disappeared the next morning. Lyu Zuan took them as auspicious signs and renamed the hall Flying Dragon Hall. Soon after, a black dragon flew to the Gate of Dangyang Palace; Lyu Zuan renamed the palace gate from Danyang to Longxing.² Kumārajīva told him: “The hidden dragon and pig spirit emerged recently; the dragons belong to the underworld, and they only appear on special occasions. If they rise frequently, it is a sign of disaster, and some subordinates may become usurpers. Your Highness should pay attention to self-control in regards with responding to heavenly signs. Lyu Zuan did not agree with this opinion, played chess with Kumārajīva,

1 The year of Xianning was 399 CE.

2 Longxing means “rise of dragon” In Chinese.

and killed his chessman saying: “Chop your barbarian head off.” Kumārajīva replied: “You cannot chop barbarian heads, but you will be killed by barbarians.” He said so to remind the monarch, but the latter did not realize it. Lyu Guang had a younger brother named Lyu Bao whose son was named Lyu Chao, nicknamed Barbarian, who actually later killed Lyu Zuan by chopping his head off. Lyu Chao’s brother took the throne. His contemporaries then realized this was what Kumārajīva used to prognosticate.

Kumārajīva stayed in Liangzhou for several years; however, Lyu Guang and his sons did not let him promote the Dharma, so the master kept the teachings to himself. Fu Jian had died; therefore, Kumārajīva was unable to meet him. At that time, Yao Chang was ruling Guanzhong, learned of Kumārajīva’s wonderful reputation, and invited him with respect. The Lyu family did not approve of his moving to Guanzhong due to the concern that his skills would serve Yao Chang. After Yao Chang died, his son Yao Xing succeeded to the crown, and the son sent an envoy that eagerly invited Kumārajīva. In the third month of the third year of the Xinghong Period under Yao Xing’s reign, the roots of different trees in a grand court grew connected, and scallions in Xiaoyao Garden¹ turned into Dahurian angelica.² People believed that these were good signs and that a wise man should come. In the fifth month, Yao Xing sent Shuode, the Duke of Longxi, to suppress Lyu Long who thereupon experienced a disaster. In the ninth month, Lyu Long surrendered; Kumārajīva was finally able to enter Guanzhong and arrived in Chang’an on the 20th of the twelfth month. Yao Xing treated him with the etiquette for a national master to show his respect and favor. Since then, their conversations usually lasted for the entire day, and they studied details tirelessly for the entire year.

Since the Dharma spread to the east in the age of Emperor Ming during the Han Dynasty, after the Wei and the Jin Dynasties, translations of sutras and sastras gradually accumulated. However,

1 Xiaoyao Garden was in the northern part of Chang’an.

2 Dahurian angelica is a plant that can be used as Chinese medicine.

the texts rendered by Zhi Qian and Dharmarakṣa, among others, had an abundance of illogicality and questionable points. Aspiring to preach the Dharma, Yao Xing started to pay homage to the Three Jewels¹ and study doctrines in his boyhood. As Kumārajīva arrived and settled in Chang'an, he was invited to the Ximing Building and Xiaoyao Garden to translate various sutras. The master learned many sutras by heart and thoroughly understood their ultimate meanings. Because of his ability to speak Chinese, the translation and rendering of each sutra went smoothly. While reading the old translation, Kumārajīva found many errors which did not correspond with the Sanskrit origins, because of the translator's misunderstanding. Yao Xing thus had 800 people, including śramaṇas like Seng'e, Sengqian, Faqin, Daoliu, Daoheng, Daobiao, Sengrui, and Sengzhao, work under the guidance of Kumārajīva; he also ordered the translation of *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 大品般若經. Kumārajīva held the Sanskrit version in his hands, while Yao Xing took the old translation to collate. When differences were found between the new translation and the old one, the translation by Kumārajīva was always accurate and convincing. Everyone involved in the project thus was appreciatively joyful. Yao Xing believed that Buddhism was profound and subtle, that wholesome deeds were the right way to cease suffering, and that the Buddhist laws were the right way to rule the world. Hence, he attached importance to the nine divisions of the canon,² practiced meditation in Hinayana ways, and wrote *the Sastra on the Three Lives* 通三世論³ to reveal the principle of cause and effect. Both the nobles and commoners lauded his exaltedness. Yao Xian, the Great General and Duke of Changshan, and Yao Song, the general of the Left Army, were deeply convinced by karma and causality, and repeatedly requested for Kumārajīva to expound the newly translated sutras at the Da Temple in Chang'an.

1 The Three Jewels, indicating the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

2 The nine divisions refer to all Buddhist doctrines here.

3 *Tongsanshi lun* (*The Sastra on the Three Lives*) is transliterated as "The treatise on the cycle of three lives."

Gradually, the great master translated more sutras, including the shorter version of *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 小品般若經, *the Diamond Prajna Paramita* 金剛般若, *the Lotus Sutra* 法華經, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 維摩詰經, *the Sutra of the Questions of Viśeṣa-cinti-brahma* 思益, *the Sutra of the World Upholder* 持世, *the Buddha-garbha* 佛藏, *the bodhisattva-piṭaka* 菩薩藏, *the Sutra of the Deathbed Injunction* 遺教, *the Inaction Bodhi* 菩提無行, *the Heyu* 呵欲 (*Detachment*), *the Mahêśvara* 自在王, *the Contemplation of Causalities* 因緣觀, *the Shorter version of the Sutra of Immeasurable Lives* 小無量壽, *the new bhadra-kalpa* 新賢劫, *the Chan Sutra* 禪經, *the Essences of Chan* 禪法要, *the Sutra on the Descent of Maitreya Buddha and His Enlightenment* 彌勒成佛, *the Sutra on the Descent of Maitreya* 彌勒下生, *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律, *the Ten Recitations Bhikṣu Prâtimokṣasūtra* 十誦戒本, *the Bodhisattva-pratimokṣa* 菩薩戒本, *the Commentaries* 釋論, *the Satyasiddhi-sastra* 成實, *the Ten Stages* 十住, *the Madhyamaka-śāstra* 中論, *the Śata-śāstra* 百論, and *the Dvādaśanikāya-śāstra* 十二門論, totaling over 300 fascicles. The translation could fluently elaborate the subtle meanings of the original texts. At that time, people from near and far who were learned in the Dharma all gathered in Chang'an to study; the great cause, which is still respected and admired today, exerted long-lasting influences.

Zhu Daosheng, a monk of Longguang Monastery in Jiankang who could comprehend details with his intellectual giftedness, would remove linguistic constraints when he was rendering the Dharma. However, since he was afraid of misleading others, he came to Guanzhong to hear Kumārajīva's advice. Huiyuan, a monk of Mount Lu who outstood his peers in Buddhist learning, carried on the transmission of the Dharma and received many questions regarding teachings of remote past. He thus wrote to Kumārajīva for guidance, and their correspondence is included in *the Biography of Huiyuan* 慧遠傳.

A monk named Huirui, who was intelligent and learned, followed

Kumārajīva and observed the translation. The great master explained the literary features of Sanskrit to Huirui, discussing the similarities and differences between it and Chinese by saying: “According to Indian literary customs, they pay great attention to the forms of the texts; rhythms and cadence are particularly put into consideration. When seeking an interview with the king, a eulogy to his virtue is a must; the best rituals of meeting the Buddha contained songs and verses. The gathas in the sutras are all based on this tradition. Translating them from Sanskrit into Chinese removes their pleasing quality; although the meaning remains, the writing style has been changed. It is rather like chewing the dish first, then feeding it to others; not only the taste is gone, but it also makes people feel nauseous. Kumārajīva used to compose verses for a śramaṇa named Fahe, reading: “The mind grew bright virtues, flowing to all directions for countless generations; I am like a phoenix standing on top of a (Chinese) parasol tree, the clear sound can be heard in the heavens.” He made 10 verses in total, each using metaphors like this. Kumārajīva was fond of Mahayana discourses and aspired to spread them widely. He often sighed aloud: “If I wrote an Abhidharma of Mahayana, it would excel Kātyāyana’s¹ works. Now that I am in China, few have profound insight in this field. What shall I expect while I am stuck here?” Then, sadly, he stopped his writing plan, just composing *the Treatise on the True Nature* 实相论 in two fascicles and annotating the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra for Yao Xing. While he composed his works, words flowed spontaneously from his lips, needless of changes. The style was graceful, containing subtle and profound meanings.

Kumārajīva was honest, noble, and filled with uncommon pride. His ability to fit the opportunities for communication and preaching together was unparalleled. He had a character of kindness and generosity, guiding and teaching effectively and tirelessly with his open mind. Yao Xing once told Kumārajīva: “Venerable Master is uncommonly bright and second to none. How can we afford to have no descendent after you?” Thereupon, he called 10 dancing girls

1 Kātyāyana was a Sanskrit grammarian, mathematician, and Vedic priest.

for the monk, forcing him to accept them. The monarch moved Kumārajīva from the temple to an abundantly-supplied mansion. Since then, the great master would have a simile at the beginning of each sermon: A lotus grew from the mud; it was the lotus one should take, not the mud.

When Kumārajīva was still in Kucha, he used to learn Vinaya from Vimalākṣa the Vinaya master. Later, when Vimalākṣa came to Guanzhong, Kumārajīva was very glad and did his best to pay respect to his teacher. The latter did not know about the former's breach of precepts, telling him: "You should have repeated destinies in China, how many disciples do you have now?" Kumārajīva replied: "The precepts are not yet complete in China, but I have rendered most of the new sutras and various sastras. 3000 disciples are following me to learn the Dharma. I, however, have a great deal of bad karma, thus am not qualified to be a teacher." Beidu of Pengcheng¹ learned that Kumārajīva was in Chang'an, sighing: "I parted from this man 300 years ago, but have had no chance to meet him since. Our reunion may have to wait until next life."

Before Kumārajīva passed away, he already felt that his physical problem could not be cured. For that reason, he dictated a mantra three times and asked foreign disciples to recite it in order to save him. However, having no time to do so, he perceived the illness moving to a graver degree. Kumārajīva then fought to say his farewell to the monks: "We gather here for the Dharma, but have not accomplished the objectives; how sad it is that I now have to leave. I think I am fatuous, since I could only do some translation work. Out of the more than 300 fascicles of texts which have been rendered, just the *Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律 needs to be polished, but the essential has already been rendered, so it should be all right. I hope the translated versions will circulate widely in the future. Please, will you all disseminate them? I hereby swear, if the translation works reflect the original meanings well, let my tongue remain intact when my body is burned." He died in Chang'an on

1 Pengcheng is Xuzhou, Jiangsu province today.

the 20th of the eighth month in the eleventh year of the Hongshi Period under the Later Qin government or the fifth year of the Yixi Period under the Jin Dynasty. In accordance with foreign customs, his body was cremated in Xiaoyao Garden. When the fire burned out, his entire body was turned to ashes save his tongue. Later, some foreign śramaṇas said: “The texts Kumārajīva had translated were less than one-tenth of what he mastered.”

Originally, Kumārajīva’s foreign name was partly from the name of his father, which was Kumārāyana, and partly from his mother’s, Jīva. This is the way foreign people create a name. As for the date of his death, different records can be found: either the seventh, eighth, or eleventh year of the Hongshi Period. After some textual study, the seventh and eleventh years might have been clerical errors. However, in *the Catalogues of Translation* 譯經錄, the record of the eleventh year can be found as well. If it is just echoing the three versions, the truth will not be revealed.

2. Puṇyatāra of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Puṇyatāra 弗若多羅, or Gongdehua,¹ was originally from Jibin. He joined the monastic order in his childhood and was famous for his observance of precepts. Versed in Tripitaka, specializing in *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律, he became a great master in foreign countries. It was thus said that he had already attained the orthodox fruit of enlightenment. Puṇyatāra arrived in Guanzhong during the Hongshi Period in the Later Qin government. The monarch, Yao Xing, treated him as an honored guest; Kumārajīva paid great respect to him as well for his exemplary observance of precepts. Prior to his arrival, the Buddhist canon had been translated; Vinaya doctrines, however, had not been disseminated. Hearing of his profound comprehension in this regard, the masses all admired Puṇyatāra. On the 17th of the tenth month in the sixth year of the Hongshi Period,² Yao Xing gathered hundreds of monks learned in the Dharma at Zhong Monastery in Chang'an, invited Puṇyatāra to recite *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya*, and asked Kumārajīva to render it into Chinese. When two-thirds of the translation had been processed, Puṇyatāra fell sick and passed away soon after. The masses desperately grieved and regretted that his death arrived before the work was complete.

1 Gongdehua means “the flower of virtue” in Chinese.

2 The sixth year of the Hongshi Period was 404 CE.

3. Dharmaruci of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Dharmaruci 曇摩流支, or Fale,¹ was a native of the Western Regions. Having entered the monastic order by renouncing worldly life, he was renowned for his specialty in Vinaya texts and traveled to Guanzhong in the fall of the seventh year of the Hongshi Period. Previously, Puṇyatāra recited *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律 for translation, yet he passed away before the work was completed.

Shi Huiyuan of Mount Lu heard about Dharmaruci for his Vinaya studies, sending a letter to befriend him in the hope of better understanding Vinaya and writing: “The flourishing of Buddhism began in the great country of India. Over four hundred years have passed since its transmission in all directions. However, there is a lack of texts in regard to śramaṇas’ conduct and precepts. A learned monk by the name of Puṇyatāra who came from Jibin in the Western Regions recited *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* in Sanskrit, and Master Kumārajīva, who is erudite and well informed, translated it into Chinese. When just over half of the translation work was done, Puṇyatāra passed away unexpectedly. The work had to be halted. The fact that the great cause could not carry on incurred a mixed feeling of sadness and disappointment. I have heard that Your Reverence took this discourse with you and am glad that I can have such wonderful opportunity that must be predestined. To me, the spread of the Dharma depends on the time and the opportunities; thus, should people ask for your help, I believe Your Reverence would be glad to lend a hand. If you could accomplish the translation of this text for the sake of Vinaya learners and expound the wholesome conduct to calibrate their view, initiates of the Dharma will not miss the essences. Those that study the great Teachings will make progress on a daily basis. This is a meritorious and virtuous deed that will be appreciated by humans and heavenly beings. I sincerely look forward to your guidance and help. Details will be presented by the messenger monks visiting you.”

1 Fale means “joy of the Dharma” in Chinese.

Having received the letter from Shi Huiyuan in addition to the invitation from Yao Xing, Dharmaruci fulfilled the translation of *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* together with Kumārajīva. They studied and analyzed the details, making a collation with high standards. Kumārajīva still believed that the text was fussy, but he passed away before it was further ameliorated. While Dharmaruci stayed in the Da Temple in Chang'an, Huiguan wanted to invite him to the capital¹ of the Jin government in the south. The Vinaya Master replied: "You have talents and the canon enough for the cause to deliver sentient beings in the region. I should go to places where the Vinaya has not been introduced." Then, he traveled to other areas; afterwards, his whereabouts became unknown. Some say that he might have died in the Liangzhou area, but it is unconfirmed.

1 The capital of the Jin, Jianye, is Nianjing today.

4. Vimalākṣa of Shijian Temple in Shouchun during the Jin Dynasty

Vimalākṣa¹ 卑摩羅叉, or Wugouyan,² was from Jibin; calm and intelligent in nature with great aspiration, he joined the order and led an austere life to cultivate himself. He first promoted the Vinaya-pikata in Kucha; learners from all directions came to follow his teachings, including Kumārajīva. At the time that Kucha fell,³ he went to Qarasahr.⁴ Soon after, hearing about Kumārajīva's preaching on the Sutra-pitaka, he wanted to circulate the Vinaya-pitaka in China as well. He thus traveled eastwards, crossing through deserts and entering China in spite of the risks, and arrived in Guanzhong in the eighth year of the Hongshi Period under the Later Qin government. Kumārajīva treated him with respect as a teacher; Vimalākṣa was also happy to meet his old student again after a long journey. Following Kumārajīva's death, Vimalākṣa departed to the east of Guanzhong and stayed at Shijian Temple in Shouchun.⁵ Many Vinaya learners gathered there to study the disciplines. The translation of the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya carried out by Kumārajīva contained 58 fascicles, and the last verse described the ritual of granting precepts and rites of various good deeds.⁶ Based on the essential, Vimalākṣa named it *the Verse of Wholesomeness* 善誦. He took this translated version to Shijian Temple and rendered it into 61 fascicles; the last verse was modified into *the Verse of Vinaya* 毗尼誦. Hence, this verse still has two titles today.

Later, Vimalākṣa moved to Jiangling in the south; staying in Xin Temple, he expounded the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya during

1 Vimalākṣa (337-413 CE).

2 Wugouyan means “pure eye” in Chinese.

3 Kucha fell in 383 CE; Fu Jian's troops took Kucha and some other kingdoms in the Western Regions.

4 Qarasahr, or Yanqi 焉耆, is in Xinjiang today.

5 Shouchun is in Shou County, Anhui province today.

6 Deeds to fulfill merit and virtue include the recitation of sutras, homage to the Buddha, preaching, and giving alms to monastics.

the summer retreat. He was fluent in Chinese and skilled at comprehension and adaptation. The great doctrines concerning Suchness enjoyed popularity; learners of the Truth flocked to his place, and the number of those who understood the precepts and disciplines became great as well. The Vinaya-pitaka was widely spread due to Vimalākṣa's efforts. Huiguan of Daochang Temple,¹ who knew the principles profoundly, observed Vimalākṣa's teachings on disciplines and put them into categories and degrees, writing a text of two fascicles and sending it to the capital city, Jianye. Monks and nuns all copied the transcript and studied it. There was a saying at the time: "Vimalākṣa's popular words noted by Huiguan. People in the capital made copies, which raised the price of paper as high as jade." The text by Huiguan is still circulating for learners to follow today. Vimalākṣa adhered to the cultivation of virtue and the predestined course, staying away from worldly clamor. In the winter of the same year, he returned to Shijian Temple in Shouchun and died there at 77. He had blue-colored eyes, hence known by his contemporaries as the Blue-eyed Vinaya Master.

1 Daochang Temple is a famous temple in Jianye, which is Nanjing today.

5. Buddhayaśas of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍, or Jueming¹ in Chinese, was a native of Jibin from a Brahmin family, which was inclined to a non-Buddhist religion for generations. Once, a Buddhist śramaṇa begged for food from his family; his father was annoyed and made people hit the monk. Afterwards, the father's hands and feet kept twitching, so he could not walk or sleep. Asking the wizard, he replied: "Having offended the sage, spirits make this happen to you." Thus inviting the śramaṇa back, the father repented in front of him. The problem ceased accordingly. Thereupon he let 13-year-old Buddhayaśas join the Buddhist order and be this śramaṇa's disciple. Buddhayaśas traveled with his master frequently. One time, they met a tiger in the wilderness. The master wanted to avoid it; however, the disciple said: "The tiger has eaten his fill and will not attack us." Soon, the tiger left without harming them. Continuing onward, they saw some chewed bones, and the master was surprised. By the time Buddhayaśas was 15, he could recite sutras of 20 to 30 thousand words per day. Most monks in the temple spent a great deal of time begging for alms, thus they were left uncultivated. An arhat appreciated Buddhayaśas' intelligence and continuously offered food to him. At the age of 19, he had recited sutras of millions of words, both from Mahayana and Hinayana traditions. This led him to have a simple and conceited character, because he was satisfied with his knowledge and said he could be teacher at such young age, whereupon the monks did not like him. In addition, his elegance and communication skills made the ones who met him jealous. He thus remained a novice until an age close to 30, because no one would ordain him at the age monks usually took precepts. He learned the five fields of ancient Indian learning from his uncle and widely practiced worldly skills. At 27, he was finally accepted to have ordination. In these years, he constantly recited the doctrines, never letting the textbooks leave his hands. When he sat and practiced mindfulness, he regretted that time flew away and that he did not make enough progress. That is how diligently he cultivated.

1 Jueming, in Chinese 覺明, it means "awakening clarity."

Later, he went to the Kingdom of Khaṣal; the king was critically ill, and 3000 monks were invited for assembly rituals. Buddhayaśas was one of them. Dharmaputra, or Fazi,¹ the crown prince at the time, saw Buddhayaśas was dignified and elegant and asked from where he came. Buddhayaśas answered the questions with clear thinking. Hence, the prince was fond of him and invited him to stay in the palace, so he could generously provide him with offerings. Later on, Kumārajīva arrived² in Khaṣal and studied under Buddhayaśas; they highly respected each other. Afterwards, Kumārajīva then returned to Kucha with his mother, while Buddhayaśas stayed. The king soon died, and the crown prince succeeded to the throne. Shortly afterwards, Fu Jian sent Lyu Guang to conquer Kucha; the king of the target country was in great trouble and asked for help from Khaṣal. The King of Khaṣal thus led a troop to rescue his ally and ordered Buddhayaśas to stay to assist the prince entrusting him with his testament. Before the Khaṣal troop arrived, Kucha had already been defeated. When the King of Khaṣal returned, he told Buddhayaśas how Kumārajīva was taken by Lyu Guang. Buddhayaśas lamented: “Although I had been with Kumārajīva for a long time, I never got to know his will. Now that he is suddenly captured, I do not know when we can meet again.” After Buddhayaśas stayed in Khaṣal for over 10 years, he moved eastwards to Kucha and made Buddhism flourish there. At that time, Kumārajīva wrote to him from Guzang,³ asking him to come for meeting. Buddhayaśas thereupon prepared rations for the journey and was about to leave. The Khaṣal people urged him to stay, thus he stayed for another year or so. Later on, he told his disciple: “I want to look for Kumārajīva; we can disguise ourselves and depart at night secretly.” The disciple said: “I am afraid that people will chase after us after dawn, and then we will have to come back again.” Buddhayaśas hence fetched a bowl of water, put some medicine in it, and recited a mantra that was a few dozen

1 Fazi means “child of the Dharma” in Chinese; putra means “child” in Sanskrit.

2 Kumārajīva arrived in the year 355 CE.

3 Guzang is Wuwei, Gansu Province today.

words long. He then had his disciple wash his feet with the water. Immediately they departed under darkness, travelling hundreds of miles by the morning. Buddhayaśas asked his disciple: “What did you feel?” The disciple replied: “I just heard the sound of wind, and the wind dried my eyes.” Again, the master gave the water to the disciple to wash his feet, and they settled for a rest. On the second day, when people in Khaṣal were sent for them, it was too far for them to catch up.

When Buddhayaśas arrived in Guzang, Kumārajīva had already gone to Chang’an. The master heard that Kumārajīva had been forced to marry and to do things against the precepts, lamented loudly: “Kumārajīva is like the finest silk; how could it be put in a thorn bush!” As Kumārajīva learned of Buddhayaśas’ arrival in Guzang, he requested that Yao Xing invite him over, but Yao Xing did not approve. Soon after, Yao Xing asked Kumārajīva to translate scriptures, and the latter said: “The transmission of the Buddha’s Teachings should expound the meanings thoroughly. Though I can recite the canon, I am not versed in the logics and reasons. Only Buddhayaśas in Guzang comprehends the subtle meanings. Please make a decree to invite him to come here and review every word, so that the logics and reasons will not be distorted but be trustworthy in even a thousand years.” This time, Yao Xing listened to the advice and sent for Buddhayaśas with generous presents. However, the invitee did not accept the presents, saying: “Since His Majesty requests my presence, I should take the carriage and go forth. This Danapati¹ is generous and respectful to Buddhists. Yet if he treated me like he treated Kumārajīva, I would not be able to obey.” The envoy returned and passed the words of Buddhayaśas to Yao Xing; the emperor admired his vigilance and once again stated his sincerity. Then Buddhayaśas came to Chang’an. Yao Xing welcomed him in person and built a new mansion for him in Xiaoyao Garden, offering food, clothes, bedding, and medicine, among other things. Nevertheless, Buddhayaśas did not accept anything but a meal per day.

1 Danapati means “great patron” In Sanskrit.

During that time, Kumārajīva had translated *the Sutra on the Ten Stages* 十住經 a month prior but was not sure about the rendering; thereupon he could not confirm it. Upon the arrival of Buddhayaśas, the two of them debated to determine the meanings. Over 3000 monks and laymen were impressed by the precision of the translation and rendering. Buddhayaśas had a red beard and was good at commenting on Vibhāṣā,¹ so his contemporaries called him the “Red Vibhāṣā.” Since Buddhayaśas was Kumārajīva’s teacher, he was also called the “Great Vibhāṣā.” The offerings of clothes, food, bedding, and other things from Buddhists piled up in three rooms, which were never a care for him. Yao Xing later sold these items and built a temple in the south of the city. Buddhayaśas could recite the Dharmagupta Vinaya; Yao Shuang, the inspection supervisor of the Later Qin government, thus asked him to translate it. But Yao Xing doubted that he could memorize it properly, so he tested him by requesting him to recite the Qiang ethnic² medicine classics, which were 50,000 words in length. Two days later, he took the original text and compared it with Buddhayaśas’ dictation. There were no errors at all! Everyone was amazed by his memory. Therefore, *the Four-Part Vinaya* 四分律 of 44 fascicles was translated in the 12th year of the Hongshi Period.³ In addition, *the Dīrghāgama* 長阿含經 was also translated. Zhu Fonian, a monk of Liangzhou, rendered it into Chinese, and Daohan recorded it in writing. When the project was closed in the 15th year of the Hongshi Period, Yao Xing offered 10,000 bolts of cloth and silk to Buddhayaśas, but the latter refused. The emperor also gave Daohan and Zhu Fonian 1000 bolts and then generously rewarded the 500 contributing monks as well.

Later, Buddhayaśas returned to a foreign country. When he acquired a copy of *the Ākāśagarbha-sutra* 虛空藏經 of one fascicle, he sent it to monks in Liangzhou through traders. His whereabouts

1 Vibhāṣā refers to the sastras.

2 Yao Xing was ethnically Qiang.

3 The Hongshi Period: 399-416 CE.

afterwards were unknown.

6. Buddhahadra of Daochang Temple in Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Buddhabhadra¹ 佛馱跋陀羅, or Juexian² in Chinese, was originally surnamed Shakyamuni, a native of Kapilavatus, and an offspring of Amrtodana.³ His grandfather, named Dharmadeva, or Fatian⁴ in Chinese, travelled to northern India for business and settled down there. His father, named Dharmasūrya or Jueri,⁵ passed away at a young age. Buddhahadra became an orphan at the age of three, living with his mother. Then, his mother died when he was five, so his maternal grandfather adopted him. Buddhahadra's paternal uncle learned about his intelligence and pitied his orphanhood, thus taking him in and making him a monk. At the age of 17, Buddhahadra was studying recitation with some classmates. While the tasks took the others a month to accomplish, he could complete them within a day. The teacher marveled aloud: "A day for Buddhahadra equals 30 days for others." After his full ordination, he learned the Buddhist teachings assiduously and read a wide range of classics, understanding many laws and practices.

Buddhabhadra gained fame for his knowledge in meditation and Vinaya. He often traveled to Jibin with his school friend, Sengqiedaduo 僧伽達多. After they were acquainted for many years, although Sengqiedaduo admired his friend's wisdom, he did not really know the latter. At one time, Sengqiedaduo sat meditating in a room with the doors closed; suddenly, he saw Buddhahadra coming in. Surprised, he asked: "Where are you coming from?" Buddhahadra answered: "I just went to Tusita Heaven to salute Maitreya Bodhisattva." It was only then that Sengqiedaduo learned that his friend was a sage and that he was not in the position to measure his friend's power. After that, Sengqiedaduo witnessed

1 Buddhahadra (359-429 CE).

2 Juexian 覺賢 means "wholesomeness of enlightenment" in Chinese.

3 Amrtodana, or Ambrosia King, was the paternal uncle of Shakyamuni Buddha.

4 Fatian means "awakening deity" in Chinese.

5 Jueri means "awakening sun" in Chinese; sūrya means sun in Sanskrit.

his friend's supernatural power again several times and eagerly learned from him; whereupon he knew that Buddhahadra had attained the third fruit of Arhathood: non-returning. Buddhahadra aspired to preach in different directions based on the customs and conditions he observed in various countries. At that time, Zhiyan the Chinese monk came to Jibin; seeing local śramaṇas were pure and clear in mind, he sighed towards the east: "A great number of dharma friends have been looking for Buddha-Dharma yet have not met with a virtuous teacher, so they could not be enlightened." Thereupon, Zhiyan inquired to local people about eminent monks who would be able to spread the Dharma in China. People answered: "A śramaṇa named Buddhahadra was born in Nagarahara, India to a noble family where Buddhism was practiced for generations. He joined the monastic order in his boyhood and comprehended the sutras. He studied under Chan Master Buddhasena in his youth." Buddhasena was in Jibin at the moment and told Zhiyan: "Buddhahadra is the one who can discipline the order and spread the meditation practice."

Zhiyan thus requested him repeatedly with sincerity; Buddhahadra then agreed out of compassion. Thereupon he said farewell to his teachers and disciples and prepared rations for the eastbound trip. Walking for three years and suffering the heat and cold, he crossed the Pamirs and passed through six countries in the southeast. The monarchs admired his dharma transmission endeavor from afar and made offerings to him with homage and generosity. After arriving in Cochin,¹ he followed a grand fleet sailing on the sea. Passing by an islet, Buddhahadra pointed to it saying: "We can have a rest here." The captain replied: "Time is precious to travelers. We are lucky to have wind from the southeast now, so we cannot stop here." Continuing to sail for some 100 miles, the wind veered its direction abruptly, and the vessel was blown back to the islet they just passed by. Then everyone understood why Buddhahadra had suggested staying there and respected him as their teacher, following his instructions. Later on, the tailwind came, and other

1 Cochin is northern Vietnam today.

ships departed, but Buddhahadra said: “Stay still.” The captain then stayed there. The departed ships, however, soon capsized. One night, Buddhahadra suddenly asked everyone to sail, but no one would listen to him. He then cast off and left alone. The rest of the crew was ravaged by pirates afterwards.

Later, Buddhahadra arrived in Donglai Prefecture, Qingzhou.¹ He heard that Kumārajīva was in Chang’an and headed to him. The latter was very glad to meet him; they discussed the truth of all dharmas, the principles, and the laws, learning greatly in many ways. Buddhahadra told Kumārajīva: “Your explanations on the doctrines are in the ordinary scope of reasoning; why did you gain such an honourable reputation?” Kumārajīva answered: “It is merely because I am older in age; the praises may be exaggerations.” Every time that Kumārajīva had questions or doubts, he would go to Buddhahadra for advice.

The contemporary prince, named Yao Hong, would listen to sermons by Buddhahadra and gathered an assembly in his palace, where Kumārajīva and Buddhahadra had a few rounds of discussions. The former asked: “Why would you say that phenomena are empty?” The latter replied: “All material forms are constituted by particles and have no self-existence. Hence the composed, evolving material forms have no independent characters, thus they are eventually empty.” Kumārajīva continued to ask: “Since you explained the emptiness of all phenomena with particles, how could you elucidate the emptiness of particles?” Buddhahadra returned: “Some among the masters here may explain each particle, and that was not my point.” Kumārajīva followed up: “Are the particles that constitute phenomena eternal?” Buddhahadra answered: “Due to each particle, the aggregate of particles is empty; due to the aggregate of the particles, each particle is empty.” The interpreter at that time was Shiyun; he did not understand the words. The monastics and laymen believed Buddhahadra’s idea was that the smallest particles were eternal. A few days later, monks

1 Qingzhou is in Shandong Province.

studying the Teachings in Chang'an requested for Buddhahadra to expound once again; he said: "All dharmas in the universe cannot arise by themselves, but they come to exist dependently on conditions. Because from each particle comes forth aggregates of particles, whereas each particle has no independent existence and is hence empty. How can you say that particles are real and eternal without analyzing each of the particles?" This was the key message of the discussions between Kumārajīva and Buddhahadra during the Assembly.

Yao Xing, the Emperor of the Later Qin Dynasty, paid great attention to Buddhist studies, offering alms for 3000 monks who came in and out at the imperial court to enjoy social contacts. Only Buddhahadra differentiated from the others by pursuing calmness. Later, he told his disciples: "I saw five ocean-going vessels set to sail in my hometown yesterday." The disciples passed the words to the others soon, and the monastics in the Guanzhong area thought the saying was a trick to show off his supernatural power and deceive people.

In addition, Buddhahadra promoted meditation in Chang'an; monks looking for inner peace flocked to him from all directions. However, these people were at diverse states of Buddhist cultivation with various understandings of the Dharma; some among them were shallow ones who would cheat their way down the path. One disciple, who learned to practice mindfulness from a young age, claimed to have attained Anāgāmin, the third stage of Arhathood. Before Buddhahadra could investigate into it, rumors saying the teacher would encounter disaster had already spread. Thereupon, his disciples ran away instantly, climbing over the walls and hiding their names. Within half a day, almost all of his disciples disappeared, yet Buddhahadra did not mind.

At that time, Sengqi and Daoheng, monks who stayed in Guanzhong for a longer time, told him: "The Buddha did not freely tell the facts he saw with his super power, and you told

the others about the five coming vessels without evidence. Plus, your disciples cheated and disapproved of each other. Since you breached the precepts, we should not get along anymore. You have to go immediately.” Buddhabhadra answered: “I am as free-floating as duckweed, staying or leaving is not a question to me. It is a pity that my aspirations have not been accomplished.” Then, he departed at ease with his disciples, Huiguan and 40 others. Those who knew the truth felt sorrowful; over a thousand monastics and laymen came to say goodbye. Yao Xing learned about his departure and told Daoheng with regret: “Buddhabhadra, the Buddhist śramaṇa, came to preach the Dharma, but he has not talked much; it is really a pity. How can we let tens of thousands of people lose the Teachings just because of one mistaken sentence?” Then, he sent for him by decree. Buddhabhadra told the envoy: “I now have been informed of the Emperor’s decree, yet I cannot follow it,” and left at night, heading to Mount Lu.

Huiyuan the monk had heard about Buddhabhadra’s moral reputation for a long time; like meeting an old friend, it was a pleasant surprise for him to know that the grand master was heading to Mount Lu. Huiyuan believed that Buddhabhadra was rejected in Chang’an due to his disciples’ faults. The prediction of five vessels was not different from what the Buddha had prophesied, and it did not breach the precepts. Huiyuan asked his disciple, Tanyi, to send a letter to Yao Xing and monks in Guanzhong area to reconcile the conflict. He also invited Buddhabhadra to translate doctrines in regard to meditation. The latter was not looking for a comfortable life; he stayed in Mount Lu for over a year and left for Jiangling in the south where he really saw foreign vessels. Asking about these five ships, they were truly from India; these were the ones he had seen previously. The people in Jiangling competed to pay homage to Buddhabhadra with offerings. He did not accept any of them, instead holding the bowl for alms and begging from the rich and the poor equally. Yuan Bao in Chen Prefecture was secretary for Emperor Wu¹ of the Liu Song Dynasty at the time. When Emperor

1 Emperor Wu, named Liu Yu (363-422), united the southern part of China and

Wu tried to conquer Liu Yi in the south, Yuan Bao came along and stayed there. Once, Buddhahadra led his disciple Huiguan to beg for alms from Yuan Bao, who did not respect Buddhism, thus treating Huiguan in an irreverent manner. Buddhahadra would leave before he ate his fill. Yuan Bao said: “You do not seem to have enough; why do you not stay for more food?” Buddhahadra replied: “The alms-giver has a limited mind of dana,¹ which exhausted the meal.” Yuan Bao instantly asked attendants to refill the bowls, but the rice cooker was really empty; Yuan Bao felt ashamed. Later he asked Huiguan: “Who was this śramaṇa?” Huiguan told him: “He is a highly cultivated practitioner; his level cannot be understood by ordinary people.” Yuan Bao was amazed and reported this to the Marshal. The latter requested the presence of Buddhahadra, respecting him and providing him a lot of offerings. Before long, the Marshal returned to the capital² and invited Buddhahadra to go there with him, settling the great master in Daochang Temple. Buddhahadra wore simple attire, which was different from Chinese style; he had high expectations and aspirations and comprehended the Dharma profoundly. Master Sengbi in the capital wrote to Baolin the monk: “The Chan master in Daochang Temple has Bodhicitta,³ equal to our talents like Wang Bi⁴ and He Yan.” That is how Buddhahadra was praised by his contemporaries.

Previously, Zhi Faling the monk acquired the first half of the Avatamsaka Sutra, which consisted of 36,000 gathas, and did not translate it. In the 14th year of the Yixi Period, Meng Yi, the secretary of Justice from Wu Prefecture, and Chu Shudu, the General of the Right Army, invited Buddhahadra to translate it. Holding the Sanskrit version, with monks Faye, Huiyi, Huiyan, and 100 others, Buddhahadra rendered this scripture into Chinese.

founded the Liu Song government during the Southern and Northern Dynasties.

1 Dana means “giving and generosity” in Sanskrit.

2 The capital refers to Nanjing, Jiangsu province today.

3 Bodhicitta refers to the mind that strives toward awakening.

4 Wang Bi 王弼 and He Yan 何晏 were famous philosophers in the Wei Dynasty.

That is why there is still an Avatamsaka Hall at Daochang Temple. In addition, Faxian the monk acquired the Sanskrit version of the Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya in the Western Regions. He requested that Buddhahadra translate it into Chinese as well; this story was recorded in the Biography of Faxian. Buddhahadra successively translated *the Guanfo sanmei hai jing* 觀佛三昧海經 (*Sutra on Observing the Buddha's Ocean of Samadhi*) of six fascicles, *Nirvāṇa* 泥洹, and *the Xiuxing fangbian lun* 修行方便論 (*Treatise on the Skillful Means of Cultivation*) among other texts, totaling 15 books, or 117 fascicles. He could expound the subtle meanings and precisely express them. Buddhahadra passed away in the sixth year of the Yuanjia Period at the age of 71.

7. Dharmakṣema in Hexi Area during the Jin Dynasty

Daojin Marquis Anyang Daopu Fasheng Fawei Sengbiao

Dharmakṣema¹ 曇無讖, also known as Tanwuchan or Tanwuchen due to different transliterations from Sanskrit, was originally from central India. Losing his father at six, he was then hired along with his mother to make wool rugs. His mother met with a śramaṇa named Dharmayaśas, in Chinese Faming 法明, who was respected and generously offered to by both monastics and laypeople; out of admiration, the mother made her son a disciple of the monk. When Dharmakṣema was ten years old, he studied mantras together with his classmates and outstood his peers by reciting scriptures of 10,000 words a day. He started with Hinayana Buddhism and the five fields of knowledge; being sharp and eloquent in dharma discussions, no one could challenge him. Later on, he met Chan Master Baitou 白頭 and the two talked over the Dharma; after the collective study, they debated for about 100 days. Although Dharmakṣema constantly asked questions, Chan Master Baitou never gave in. Appreciating the master's subtle principles and laws, Dharmakṣema said: "You have to be in possession of many scriptures, can I have a look?" Instantly, the Chan Master gave him a copy of *the Nirvāṇa Sutra* 涅槃經 written on sheets of bark. As soon as Dharmakṣema read the sutra, he was marveled and inspired. He then started to regret and to feel ashamed that he had such a shallow understanding on the Dharma. Thus, he gathered fellow learners and repented for their previous studies. Since then, he focused on Mahayana tradition. At the age of 20, he was able to recite scriptures of two million words, both from Mahayana and Hinayana. His cousin was good at taming elephants, but he had once killed the white-ear elephant that the king rode on for travel. Hence the king was furious and killed his cousin, ordering: "Anyone who dares to take a look at the tamer's body will be killed, as well as his or her family." Crying loud, Dharmakṣema buried his cousin. The king was enraged at this contempt and ready to kill Dharmakṣema. The young monk said: "Your Majesty killed my

1 Dharmakṣema (385-433 CE).

cousin based on the law, and I buried him because of our relation. There is no violation of the principle. Why are you so annoyed?" The bystanders worried about his life, however, Dharmakṣema was at ease. Amazed by his courage, the king kept the young monk by his side and provided offerings accordingly.

Dharmakṣema was versed in mantras, and it worked every single time, hence he was known as "Great Mantra Master" in the Western Regions. Once he accompanied the king to go into mountains; the king was thirsty but found no water, no sooner Dharmakṣema secretly recited a mantra, and then water gushed out from rocks. He told the king: "Your Majesty's virtue moved devas, they made water come out of rocks." People heard of this story in the neighboring countries and were highly impressed by the virtue of the king. At that time, favorable weathers came at the right time, and the king was very satisfied with Dharmakṣema's super power, providing him with abundant rewards. Later on, the king shifted his focus, and Dharmakṣema believed that it was time to leave before it was too late. Thus, he said farewell to the king and went to Jibin, followed by Guzang, where he stayed in a hostel. Being afraid of losing the scriptures, he slept by putting the books in his pillow. Someone pulled the scriptures out and made them fall on the floor. Dharmakṣema was frightened and thought it was a burglar. It happened three nights in a row. He then heard a voice speaking in the air: "These are our Buddha's scriptures regarding emancipation; how could you use them as pillow?" Dharmakṣema realized his wrongdoing and put them at a high place. That night, thieves came and tried several times to take the scriptures, however they could not move it. The next day, when Dharmakṣema carried the sutras, they did not seem heavy at all. After seeing this, the thieves believed that he was a sage and came to apologize.

Juqu Mengxun, the King of Hexi,¹ took Liangzhou city unlawfully and claimed himself as king. He heard about the reputation of Dharmakṣema and requested his presence, treating him respectfully

1 Hexi is in Gansu Province today.

and generously. Juqu Mengxun always believed in the Buddha; aspiring to transmit the Dharma, he invited Dharmakṣema to translate the scriptures. Nevertheless, the latter thought that he had not studied the local language and that no one could help interpret, so he did not agree right away out of fear of misleading readers. He learned the dialect for three years, and then translated and recorded *the First Section* 初分 of 10 fascicles. At that time, the monks Huisong and Daolang were peerless monastics in the Hexi area. Since Dharmakṣema translated the scriptures, they respected each other; hence, the Indian śramaṇa translated the scripture into Chinese, and Huisong recorded it in writing. Hundreds of monks asked questions; Dharmakṣema answered them one by one, as seamlessly as flowing water. He had a rich lexicon, and his writing style was graceful and precise. Huisong and Daolang therefore invited him to translate more discourses. Thereupon, he successively translated *the Great Collection Sutra* 大集經, *the Mahāmegha-sūtra* 大雲經, *the Compassionate Flower Scripture* 悲華經, *the Bodhisattvabhūmi-sūtra* 地持經, *the Upāsaka-śīla-sūtra* 優婆塞戒經, *the Suvarṇa-prabhāsōttama-sūtra* 金光明經, *the Sutra of the Dragon King of Ocean* 海龍王經, and *the Bodhisattva-pratimokṣa* 菩薩戒本 among other texts, totaling over 600 thousand words.

Dharmakṣema found that the local version of *the Nirvāṇa Sutra* 涅槃經 was incomplete, thereupon returned to his homeland to look for a complete version. He ran into the death of his mother, so he stayed there over a year. Later, he acquired *the Middle Section* 中分 of the sutra in Khotan, brought it to Guzang, and made the translation. He later sent people in search of *the Late Section* 後分, and he then rendered it into 30 fascicles. The translation was started in the third year of the Xuanshi Period¹ of the bogus Northern Liang government and finished on the 23rd of the tenth month in the 10th year of Xuanshi, or the second year of the Yongchu Period of Emperor Wu under Liu Song government. The three sections of *the Nirvāṇa Sutra* 涅槃經 were then completely translated.

1 The Xuanshi Period: 412-428 CE.

Dharmakṣema explained: “The sutra contains 35,000 gathas; the translation here eliminated one million words, and now only about 10,000 gathas are translated.” Once, he told Juqu Mengxun: “Ghosts have come to the villages, there will be disasters.” The latter did not believe him and wanted to verify it in person. Dharmakṣema hence used his super power to let Juqu Mengxun see the disasters; the king was shocked and scared. Dharmakṣema then said: “We shall purify the mind and body by mantra to pay homage to devas and drive away the ghosts.” He recited a mantra for three days and then told Juqu Mengxun: “The ghosts have gone.” People on the border who saw the ghosts said: “Hundreds of ailed ghosts fled.” The safety of the country was guarded due to Dharmakṣema’s efforts. Thereupon Juqu Mengxun became more respectful to him.

In the second year of the Chengxuan Period under the Northern Liang government, Juqu Mengxun crossed the Yellow River and attacked Qifu Mumu,¹ the monarch of Western Qin Dynasty, at Baohan.² Prince Xingguo assumed the position of vanguard in the Northern Liang’s troop, but he was defeated and captured by Qifu Mumu. Soon after, the Qifu family was conquered, and both Qifu Mumu and Xingguo were seized by Helian Ding,³ a third party. Then, Tuyuhun⁴ vanquished Helian Ding, and Prince Xingguo was killed in the battles. Learning this terrible news, Juqu Mengxun was furious. He deduced that the belief in Buddhism did not bring good return to him and wanted to persecute Buddhists by ordering monks under the age of 50 to cease their practice. The stone statue that Juqu Mengxun built for his mother shed tears at that moment. In addition, Dharmakṣema advised by using an analogy; the king finally changed his mind and corrected the act.

1 Qifu Mumu of the Xianbei ethnicity was the last monarch of the Western Qin regime (385-431).

2 Baohan 枹罕, some texts show Fuhan 枹罕, was in Linxia, which is Ningxia today.

3 Helian Ding (d. 432) was the son of Helian Bobo, who was the founder of Helian Xia, one of the governments during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period in China.

4 Tuyuhun (313-663), or Tuhun, was a state established by northern tribes.

At that time, Tuoba Tao, the barbarian Emperor of the Northern Wei government, learned about the thaumaturgical abilities of Dharmakṣema, sent for him, and told Juqu Mengxun through the envoy: “If you do not let him go, the Northern Wei will attack you immediately.” Juqu Mengxun had offered alms to Dharmakṣema for years, hence did not want to lose him. Then, Tuoba Tao sent Li Shun, the minister of rites and Duke of Gaoping, to persuade him, conferring Juqu Mengxun with several titles, including vice minister, governor of Liangzhou, general and commander of the Western Regions, and King of Liang; at the same time, Li Shun delivered this message: “I hear that the master named Dharmakṣema at your place is as erudite as Kumārajīva and as powerful and efficacious as Fo Tucheng.¹ I want to invite him to come preach the Dharma; you should send him by fast horses.” When Juqu Mengxun drank wine with Li Shun on the top of Xinle Gate Tower, he told the latter: “I am an old subordinate of the royal court in the west and did not dare to commit any error; however, His Majesty believed the slanders and forced me to obey. I already requested to keep Dharmakṣema, and now His Majesty has asked me again to send him. Dharmakṣema is my Buddhist teacher; I should die with him. I am old. There is always an end for life; I hence do not fear death.” Li Shun answered: “Your Highness’ loyalty speaks for itself, since you sent your son to serve in the imperial court. His Majesty appreciated Your Highness’ deeds, which is why he conferred you with new titles and rewards. But Your Highness would ruin his long-term virtue, which is as high as mountain, for a mere barbarian monk. Instead of restraining temporary passions, is this the return of the court’s reward? If I were you, I would not feel it worthy. His Majesty’s humble heart is well known by Hongwen.” Hongwen was the envoy representing Juqu Mengxun in the Northern Wei court. Juqu Mengxun said: “You are as eloquent as Su Qin,² whereas the truth differs.” Juqu Mengxun had the dilemma between craving

1 Fo Tucheng 佛圖澄 is written in some texts as Fo Tudeng; see his biography in later sections.

2 Su Qin 蘇秦 (d. 284 BCE) was a famous prime minister in the Warring States Period (475 BCE-221 BCE).

for Dharmakṣema's ability and the threat of the Northern Wei government.

In the third month of the third year of the Yihe Period under the Northern Liang government, Dharmakṣema insisted on going westwards to look for the last part of Nirvāṇa Sutra, which incurred the wrath of Juqu Mengxun who hence planned to kill the master. Yet, apparently, the king prepared food and money to support the travel. On the day of departure, Dharmakṣema shed tears saying goodbye to everyone: "My karma will befall; deities cannot help me this time." Since he had made the vow previously, he would still leave. After his departure, Juqu Mengxun sent an assassin and killed him on his way to the West; Dharmakṣema died at the age of 49. That year was also the tenth year of the Yuanjia Period¹ of the Liu Song government. Near and far, monastics and laymen commiserated the tragedy. Before long, people around Juqu Mengxun could see spirits stabbing him in full daylight. During the fourth month of that year, Juqu Mengxun died of illness.

Earlier, when Dharmakṣema stayed in Guzang, a monk named Daojin 道進 from Zhangye wanted to receive the Bodhisattva precepts² under him. Dharmakṣema told Daojin to repent of his sins first. The latter then repented devoutly for seven days and seven nights. On the eighth day, he went to see the master again, requesting the precepts. Abruptly, Dharmakṣema got angry, and the disciple hence thought: "This may be because of my bad karmas, which obstruct my wholesome cultivation and still need to be eliminated." Later, he practiced hard for three years and achieved samadhi, in which he saw Śākyamuni Buddha and Bodhisattvas ordain for him. That night, a dozen of people who

1 The Yuanjia Period (424-453) was the reign of Emperor Wen of the Liu Song Dynasty.

2 The Bodhisattva precepts, also known as the 'Mahāyāna precepts,' are a practical-oriented revision of the precepts for Mahāyāna necessitated by the differences in approach to practice taken up by Mahāyāna, as contrasted to the detailed and complicated Vinaya that had developed in earlier 'Hīnayāna' Buddhism.

stayed in the same place had the same dream as him. Daojin went to Dharmakṣema to tell him about the dream. Approaching the master, but still a few steps away, Dharmakṣema marveled out loud: “Excellent! Excellent! You have already perceived the precept. I will attest for you.” Right away, he explained the details and differences of the precepts to Daojin. At that time, Daolang was famed in the Guanxi area. During the night when Daojin dreamed about the precept ordination, Daolang also perceived Daojin’s reward in his own dream. Thus, he reduced his ordination years to be the younger Dharma brother of Daojin. Over a thousand people received precepts along with Daojin. The precept codes and rituals handed down from Dharmakṣema are still practiced today. Other records show that *the Bodhisattvabhūmi-sūtra* 菩薩地持經 should be spread to China by a Bodhisattva named Yibole 伊波勒菩薩. Later, the sutra was translated by Dharmakṣema; therefore, the latter might not be a worldly person.

Juqu Jingsheng, the Marquis of Anyang 安陽侯 and cousin of Juqu Mengxun, was extraordinary in memory and comprehension; in addition, he read widely. As Dharmakṣema preached the Dharma, he started to study Buddhism and hence uphold the five precepts. He could dictate the sutras right after reading and believed that a focus on learning and widely reading was important for Bodhisattvas. He once crossed the desert and arrived in Khotan, meeting with the Indian Master Buddhasena at Gomatī Monastery and asking the master about the Dharma. The master practiced Mahayana Buddhism, was highly talented, and able to recite 50,000 gathas. He understood the Dharma profoundly and was thus called the “Lion in Humans” in the Western Regions. Marquis Anyang learned *the Chanmiyao zhibing jing* 禪秘要治病經 (*Sutra on the Esoteric Essences of Disease Cures by Chan*) from him and could recite the Sanskrit version fluently. On his way home, in Gaochang,¹ he acquired two meditation sutras of *Guanshiyin*² 觀世音 and

1 Gaochang is near Turpan, Xinjiang today.

2 Guanshiyin 觀世音, or Avalokiteśvara in Sanskrit, is a major Bodhisattva venerated in East Asia.

Maitreya 彌勒, each being one fascicle. As soon as he returned to Hexi, he translated *the Chanyao jing* 禪要經 (*Sutra on Essences of Chan*) into Chinese. After the Northern Wei regime conquered the Western Liang region, he fled southwards to Liu Song territory, hid his name, remained aloof from worldly affairs, and practiced Buddhism as a layman.

The two sutras that were previously translated by Marquis Anyang, Maitreya and Guanshiyin, were appreciated by Meng Yi, the Prefect of Danyang, who therefore treated the translator well. Huijun, a nun of Zhulin Temple, asked the marquis to translate the Chan Sutra 禪經. Since he had studied the sutra for a long time, he translated five fascicles in 17 days; the writing was smooth. Later, he translated *the Fofubannihuan jing* 佛父般泥洹經 (*Sutra on the Nirvana of the Buddha*) of one fascicle at Dinglin Temple on Mount Zhong.¹ The marquis left his wife and children, never attaching to fame and benefits. He encouraged monks to transmit the Dharma and therefore gained respect and admiration from both monastics and laypeople. He died of illness afterwards.

Later, the sutras translated by Dharmakṣema were spread to Jianye in the years of the Yuanjia Period under the Liu Song government. Huiguan, the Chan master, made the vow to find the last part of the Nirvāṇa Sutra and pleaded for Emperor Wu of the Liu Song Dynasty to sponsor it by sending Daopu 道普 the monk to lead 10 literature clerks to search in the west. Daopu hurt his feet in a ship accident, and they became fatal on their way to Changguang² Prefecture. Before his death, he sighed: “Our country has no luck to get the last part of the sutra.” He was originally from Gaochang; having traveled and preached in various countries of the West Regions, he piously paid homage to the Buddha’s image, bowl, and his footprints. He was versed in Sanskrit and the languages of different countries. His stories are recorded in a separate biography. Later, another monk from Gaochang named Fasheng 法

1 Mount Zhong is in Nanjing today.

2 Changguang is in Laixi, Shandong Province today.

盛 also traveled in foreign countries and wrote a travelogue of four fascicles. Besides them, both Zhu Fawei 竺法維 and Shi Sengbiao 釋僧表 journeyed to India as well.

Volume III

Scriptural Translation Part C

13 main figures 4 auxiliaries

1. Shi Faxian of Xin Temple in Jiangling during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Faxian¹ 釋法顯, with the original surname Gong, was a native of Wuyang, Pingyang.² He had three brothers who died young; his father feared that misfortune would fall on Faxian as well, so he let him join the monastic order as a novice at the age of three. Later, Faxian lived at home for a few years. One time, he was seriously ill and about to die; however, after returning to the monastery, he recovered within three days. After that, he would not go back home again. His mother, who missed her son, thus built a cabin outside their house, so that he could stay in it when passing by them. His father died when Faxian was ten; his uncle asked him to rejoin worldly life since his mother lived alone. Faxian responded: “I took refuge in Buddhism because I intended to be aloof from worldly affairs, not for my father’s reason.” His uncle thought his words made sense and would not force him anymore. Before long, his mother passed away as well. Transcending ordinary people’s emotions, Faxian returned to the temple right after the funeral. He once reaped rice with dozens of school friends; some hungry thieves tried to steal their grains. The other students ran away, while Faxian stayed calm and told the thieves: “If you would take some grains, go ahead, but you suffer from hunger because you have never practiced Dana before.” He returned after saying that. Then, the thieves dropped the rice and left. Hundreds of monks were amazed by Faxian’s deed. After being ordained, he aspired with clear vision and behaved strictly according to the precepts and

1 Shi Faxian (337-422 CE).

2 Pingyang is in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province today.

rites. He always bemoaned the incompleteness of Buddhist sutras and sastras in China, therefore resolving to search for them himself.

In the third year of Long'an Period¹ in the Jin Dynasty, along with school friends named Huijing, Daozheng, Huiying, and Huiwei among others, Faxian left Chang'an and traveled westwards. Across the desert, where birds and animals were all but extinct, they saw nothing but sand, hence it was impossible to know their location. Only by the sun and bones of the dead could they tell the direction. Heat-waves and devil ghosts frequently appeared which led people to death in the desert. Faxian had already given himself to predestiny and moved forward courageously without withdrawal. Soon, they arrived at the Pamirs where snow stayed all year round and evil dragons breathed out poisonous gas. Rain pouring heavily and wind blowing wildly; blended with sand grains, the mountainous path was extremely dangerous with cliffs that towered into the sky. Previously, people had made stone ladders on the mountains; Faxian and his company went over 700 such stone ladders. They also stepped on ropes to cross river valleys over a dozen times. Zhang Qian² and Gan Ying³ in the Han Dynasty had never been to such places. When they crossed a small snow mountain, freezing wind was blowing; Huijing, feeling too cold to move forward, told Faxian: "I am dying. Please continue and do not die here." He then snuffed out. Faxian stroked him and cried: "Your aspiration is not realized. This is fate; what can we do to alter it?" Moving on alone, he crossed the snowy mountain thereby having traveled across over 30 countries.

Close to India, around 15 miles away from Rājagṛha, Faxian came across a temple at dusk. He planned to reach Mount Gṛdhakūṭa⁴ the next morning. Monks in the temple dissuaded him from going:

1 The Long'an Period: 397-406 CE.

2 Zhang Qian 張騫 (164 BCE-114 BCE) was a diplomat, traveler, and pioneer of the Silk Road, who journeyed westwards upon the decree of the Han emperor, arriving in Central Asia, West Asia, and India.

3 Gan Ying was great traveler in the Eastern Han Dynasty.

4 Mount Gṛdhakūṭa, or Vulture Peak, was where the Buddha used to preach.

“The path to the peak is perilous; black lions have come there to eat people several times. You would be unable to arrive at your destination. Faxian replied: “I came from ten thousand miles away for the objective of reaching the Vulture Peak. On my way I encountered unimaginable hardship and danger; no accomplishment was guaranteed. Why should I give up the endeavor of years when I am close to my goal? Although it is dangerous, I am not afraid.” Failing to stop him, the monastics sent two monks to accompany him. When Faxian arrived at the foot of the mount, it was getting dark. They prepared to stay there overnight, yet the two monks returned out of fear. Staying alone, Faxian burned incense and paid homage to the Buddha. He was touched by the remains of the Buddha, like he had seen the Buddha himself. At night, three black lions came and squatted in front of him, looking at him while licking their tongues and wagging their tails. Faxian focused on sutra recitation and mindfulness of the Buddha; the lions lowered their heads to his feet. The master stroked their fur and chanted the mantra, saying: “If you want to hurt me, you will have to wait until the end of my recitation. If you just want to test my devotion, you had better go back soon.” The three lions stayed for a long time and then left.

The next day, Faxian returned from the mount; the path came to an end, and he could only go along a rough track. Walking less than one mile on the track, he saw a practitioner in his 90s with simple and coarse clothes yet an extraordinary countenance. Faxian was impressed by the latter’s nobleness; however, he did not realize his sainthood. Later, he met a young monk and asked: “Who was the elder I just passed by?” The young monk replied: “Buddha’s great disciple Kāśyapa.” Faxian felt regret and returned to chase after him until the entrance of a cave, which was blocked by a huge stone. Faxian could not get in and had to give up with tears in his eyes. He continued his journey and arrived in Sāmkāśya. A white-eared dragon dealt well with the monks of this country and promised to make the harvest a bumper; every year it was efficacious. Monks built a house and offered food to the dragon. Each year, when the

summer retreat concluded, the dragon turned into a small snake with white ears, so the monks could tell that it was the dragon. They put cheese in a bronze bowl and let the snake get in. After they passed the bowl from the front row to the rear, the dragon left. It happened once per year; Faxian thus had seen the dragon in person.

Later on, Faxian came to central India. At South Heavenly King Monastery, next to the Pillar of Aśoka in Pātaliputra, Magadhā, he acquired *the Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya* 摩訶僧祇律, *the Commentary on Sarvāstivādin Vinaya* 薩婆多律抄, *the Saṃyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* 雜阿毗曇心, *the Yanjing* 經, and *the Vaipulya Sutra of Nirvana* 方等泥洹經 with other texts. Faxian dwelt there for three years, studying the Sanskrit language and texts; he also transcribed sutras himself. Faxian then followed traders and got into the State of Lion.¹ Among a dozen fellow travelers, some stopping on the way and others dying, he was the only one that kept on going, which made him sad. Once, he saw a Chinese white fan placed in front of a jade Buddha statue as a tribute by traders; he could not help crying. Faxian stayed in the State of Lion for two years, acquiring *the Mahīśasakavinaya* 彌沙塞律, *the Dīrghāgama-sūtra* 長阿含經, *the Saṃyuktāgama-sūtra* 雜阿含經, *the Kṣudraka-piṭaka* 雜藏, and some other texts which all did not exist in China.

Later, he went back to China with a fleet of traders that had over 200 people on board. They once encountered a storm on the ocean, and everyone was frightened, throwing items into the sea to save the vessels that began to take on water. Worried about the scriptures and the Buddha's images, Faxian recited the name of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin wholeheartedly and took refuge in the Chinese Sangha; the fleet passed through the storm without further harm. 10 days later, they arrived in Yavadvīpa² and stayed there for five months. Faxian went with another fleet to Guangzhou. After about 20 days on the sea, one night, a storm arose; the traders were scared and

1 The State of Lion refers to Sri Lanka.

2 Yavadvīpa refers to Java.

discussed: “We have this trouble because a monk is on board. We shall not wait for death for his reason.” They wanted to leave Faxian on an island. The one sponsoring Faxian reprimanded them: “If you want to put the monk on the island, then put me there too or just kill me. Chinese emperors respect monks; I will tell His Majesty what you do, and he will punish you.” The traders stared at one another and gave up the thought unwillingly. At that time, they ran out of food and freshwater and had to float following the wind. When they reached the shore, looking at the vegetation on the land, Faxian knew that they were in China but was not sure about the exact region. They harbored the ships and found a village where Faxian saw two hunters and asked where they were. The hunters answered: “The southern bank of Laoshan in Changguang¹ Prefecture, Qingzhou.” After returning, the hunters reported this affair to the prefect, Li Yi, who always worshiped the Buddha. He then welcomed them in person as soon as he heard about the monk’s arrival from afar. Therefore, Faxian went back along with the prefect, carrying all the scriptures and Buddhist images.

Before long, Faxian wanted to return southwards; the Prefect of Qingzhou tried to keep the master with him for the winter. The traveler responded: “I threw myself into remoteness and danger, despite the risk of being unable to come back, just in the hope of transmitting the Dharma. My aspiration is not fulfilled, so I cannot stay.” He then went to the capital city. Along with the foreign monk named Buddhahadra, he translated *the Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*, *the Vaitulya Sutra of Nirvana*, and *the Saṃyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra*, among other texts, totaling over one million words. Owing to Faxian’s efforts in translating *the Maha-nirvana-sutra* 大泥洹經, the public thereby benefited from the Teaching in China. A family whose surname was unknown lived near the Zhuque² Gate of the capital, in which Buddhism was practiced, and recited this sutra. The family members stored it with other books as they did not have

1 Changguang is in Laixi, Shandong Province today.

2 Zhuque 朱雀, or Red Bird, is the spirit usually representing the south in ancient China.

a separate scripture room. Later, the house caught fire through the wind, and all their property was burned to ash except for this sutra, which remained completely intact. The incident was widely spread in the capital city. People were astounded by the miracle. The rest of the scriptures that Faxian carried back were, however, not translated.

Faxian moved to Jingzhou afterwards and passed away in Xin Temple at the age of 86. Everyone lamented his demise. His journey in the western countries was recorded in a separate travelogue.

2. Dharmodgata from Huanglong during the Liu Song Dynasty

Dharmodgata 釋曇無竭, or Fayong,¹ had the original surname Li and was a native of Huanglong,² Youzhou.³ He joined the monastic order as a novice in his boyhood and began his ascetic practice from that point. His teacher thought highly of him, especially in scripture recitation and precept observance. After Dharmodgata heard about Faxian and other masters' voyages to the origin of Buddhism, he made the vow to travel to the west. In the first year of the Yongchu Period⁴ in the Liu Song Dynasty, he convened 25 monks with the same aspiration, including Sengmeng and Tanlang. Taking Buddhist instruments such as embroidered umbrellas, they headed westwards from China.

Dharmodgata first arrived in Henan Principality,⁵ then, departing from Haixi⁶ Prefecture, he entered the desert and arrived in Gaochang. Later on, he traveled across Kucha, Khaşal, and other countries, climbed the Pamirs, and crossed the snowy mountains. Thousands of miasmas, ice of ten-thousand miles, and large, deluging rivers obstructed their journey. They built a rope bridge between the east and west peaks, and ten persons passed the river valley together each time. When they reached the other side, they signaled the rest of the group with a beacon. In the case that the successors did not see fire and smoke long after the previous batch departed, they would know that the predecessors had fallen in the river because the wind swayed the rope too much. Walking for three days, they had to cross another huge snowy mountain where the cliffs towered into the sky. No path existed on the cliffs; there were only holes in pairs made by earlier travelers for wooden pegs. Each of them held four pegs and put them in the holes; they pulled

1 Fayong means "Dharma courage" in Chinese.

2 Huanglong is in Chaoyang, Liaoning province today.

3 Youzhou is a regional capital in the Beijing area today.

4 The Yongchu Period: 420-422 CE

5 Henan Principality is in Henan Province today.

6 Haixi is somewhere between Henan and Gansu province.

out the pegs behind first and used their right hands to put the spare pegs in the next holes, holding the handles to move on their steps. After another three days, they arrived at a relatively-flat place and realized that 12 members were missing. Upon their arrival in Jibin, they worshiped the stone bowl used by the Buddha. Dharmodgata then stayed there for a year to study Sanskrit; he also acquired *the Guanshiyin shouji jing* 觀世音受記經 (*Sutra on Avalokiteśvara vyākaraṇa*) in Sanskrit. Later, they continued the journey westwards and arrived at the Indus River, which was called Lion's Mouth by Chinese people. Entering the Kingdom of Yuezhi¹ from the west of the river, they paid homage to the Parietal Relic of the Buddha and venerated the sacred wooden boat in person.

Later on, they reached Shiliu Temple at the south of Mount Dantaloka,² where over 300 monks of three Buddhist Vehicles lived and practiced. Dharmodgata received full ordination in this temple. An Indian monk, named Fotuoduoluo 佛馱多羅 or Juejiu,³ was said to have attained enlightenment. Thereupon, Dharmodgata respected and followed him as his teacher; inviting Zhiding, a Chinese monk, to be his ācārya,⁴ he stayed at the temple for a summer retreat of three months. Continuing on, he later arrived in central India after passing through vast open country where they could only rely on crystal sugar for food. Thirteen departed from the mountain, but only five survived this part of the journey and arrived at the destination. Although they encountered enormous dangers and hardship, Dharmodgata constantly recited *the Guanshiyin jing* 觀世音經 on the way without a moment of pause. Approaching Śrāvastī,⁵ they came across wild elephants; he recited the name of Guanshiyin and prayed quietly. Then, lions came out from the

1 Yuezhi is the kingdom around Peshawar that was established by ethnically-Yuezhi people, who are said to have moved from northern China to central Asia in the second century BCE.

2 Dantaloka is in northern Pakistan today.

3 Juejiu means “awakening salvation” in Chinese.

4 Ācārya means “teacher of precepts” in Sanskrit.

5 Śrāvastī is the location of the Jetavana Grove (Jetavana Anāthapiṇḍada-ārāma), where the Buddha lived and preached the Dharma for many years.

forest, and the elephants ran away. When they crossed the Ganges, a herd of roaring buffaloes rushed towards them and would have hurt them. Dharmodgata prayed for salvation; soon, a giant vulture hovered over and the buffaloes escaped. Again, Dharmodgata and his company were saved. Dharmodgata had experienced many critical moments as such; since his devotion touched the deities and spirits, dangers were turned to safety. Dharmodgata later came to Guangzhou from southern India by ship. They recorded his adventures in a travelogue. The Guanshiyin shouji jing that he translated circulated in the capital city. No one knows his whereabouts afterwards.

3. Buddhajīva of Longguang Temple in Jiankang during the Liu Song Dynasty

Buddhajīva 佛馱仕, or Jueshou,¹ was originally from Jibin. He studied Buddhism under a śramaṇa of the Hinayana tradition that belonged to the Mahīśasaka sect. Buddhajīva specialized in Vinaya texts as well as meditation doctrines. He arrived in Yangzhou in the seventh month of the first year² during the Jingping Period of the Liu Song Dynasty. Previously, Faxian brought *the Mahīśasakavinaya* 彌沙塞律 in Sanskrit that had not been translated before his death. The masses learned that Buddhajīva was versed in this regard, so they invited him to translate it. In the eleventh month of that year, people gathered in Longguang Temple and rendered it into 34 fascicles, titling it *the Five Part Vinaya* 五分律. Buddhajīva held the Sanskrit version, Zhisheng 智勝 the Khotan monk translated it, and both Daosheng, a monk of Longguang Temple, and Huiyuan, a monk of Dong'an Temple, proofread it collectively. Wang Lian, a royal counselor from Langya, sponsored the project, which was completed in the fourth month of the next year. Later on, Buddhajīva selected and transcribed the parts regarding moral precepts for thoughts and karman elaboration from the Mahāsāṃghika canon, which circulated along with the Five Part Vinaya. Afterwards, his whereabouts were unknown.

1 Jueshou 覺壽 means “awakening living” in Chinese.

2 The first year of the Jingping Period was 423 CE.

4. Buddhavarman of Hexi during the Liu Song Dynasty

Buddhavarman 浮陀跋摩, or Juekai,¹ was from the Western Regions. He behaved honestly and nobly, while being uncommonly talented and intelligent since his boyhood. He studied *the Tripitaka* and specialized in *the Vibhāṣā-sāstra* 毗婆沙論, reciting it frequently and upholding it as the guidelines for mind cultivation.

Buddhavarman came to the Western Liang region² in the years of the Yuanjia Period under the Liu Song Dynasty. Earlier, Daotai, a śramaṇa who had peerless insight and had been to every country to the west of Pamir to study and preach, acquired a copy of *the Sanskrit Vibhāṣa* 毗婆沙 of 100 thousand verses. After returning to Guzang, he treated others humbly and waited for the arrival of virtuous masters. Hearing about Buddhavarman's specialty in this field, he invited the westerner to translate the sutra. At that time, Juqu Mengxun had died, and his son Mujian succeeded to the throne. In the fifth year of the Chenghe Period³ under the Northern Liang government or the 14th year of the Yuanjia Period under the Liu Song government, on the 8th of the fourth month⁴ at the Xianyu Palace in Liangzhou, Buddhavarman started to translate. Taidao recorded it while Huisong and Daolang, along with 300 monks learned in the Dharma, compiled and reviewed the translation. The book was completed in 12 years, totaling 100 fascicles. Daoshan the śramaṇa wrote a preface to this work. Soon after, Tuoba Tao sent an army to Guzang, and the Northern Liang Dynasty was defeated and destroyed thereafter. The Buddhist sutras and instruments were damaged heavily. 40 fascicles of this sutra were lost in the battles, and only 60 remained. Buddhavarman then went to the west, and

1 Juekai means “awakening armor” in Chinese.

2 Western Liang, a small state in today's Dunhuang and Jiuquan area, was conquered by Juqu Mengxun.

3 Mujian's official name was Juqu Maoqian; he reigned over the Northern Liang Dynasty during the Chenghe Period (433-439).

4 The eighth day of the fourth month in Chinese lunar calendar is the birthday of the Buddha in Chinese tradition.

people lost contact with him afterwards.

5. Shi Zhiyan of Zhiyuan Temple in the capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Zhiyan¹ 釋智嚴, a native of Western Liangzhou,² joined the monastic order at the age of 20, gaining fame for his assiduity. He wore simple and coarse clothes, always ate vegetarian food, and sat with mindfulness. As his homeland was in poverty, he vowed to learn from virtuous teachers and search for classics to help people. Therefore he traveled to the Western countries and arrived in Jibin, where he entered *the Motiantuoluo Vihara* 摩天陀羅精舍 and studied meditation under Buddhasena. With three years of study, he achieved what others could accomplish in ten years. Buddhasena thought highly of him, as he saw meditation talent in the student. The monastics and laypeople sighed after learning about this: “From now on, China has true Dharma seekers.” Then, they stopped slighting Chinese monks and treated people from afar with respect.

At that time, Buddhahadra the bhiksu was also a great meditation master in Jibin. Shi Zhiyan thus invited him to go eastwards with him and preach in China. Appreciating the former’s sincerity, Buddhahadra went to China with him. They crossed the dangerous deserts and arrived in Guanzhong. Shi Zhiyan accompanied Buddhahadra in dwelling at Da Temple of Chang’an. Soon the monastics rejected the latter for no reason; Shi Zhiyan also separated from him and stayed in a vihara in Shandong Province, focusing on meditation and Buddhist cultivation. In the 13th year of the Yixi Period under the Jin Dynasty, Emperor Wu of the Liu Song government attacked Chang’an and returned with victory, hence passing by Shandong. Wang Hui, the Duke of Shixing, toured Shandong with Emperor Wu and visited the vihara where Zhiyan stayed. He saw three monks sitting on campstools meditating attentively. The monks did not notice Wang Hui’s arrival. The latter thereupon snapped his fingers, and the three monks opened their eyes and closed them right away, not responding to Wang

1 Shi Zhiyan (350 CE-c. 427 CE).

2 Western Liangzhou is close to Zhangye, Gansu Province today.

Hui's questions. Wang Hui was intrigued and asked the local elders who told the duke: "These three monks retreated here in search of enlightenment; they are truly noble and pure masters." Wang Hui reported to Emperor Wu and requested that he invite them to the capital city, but none of the three would go. Wang Hui repeated the request with earnestness, and the other two masters then recommended that Shi Zhiyan go with Wang Hui, who always respected Buddhism and thus provided Shi Zhiyan with due courtesy. Shi Zhiyan came to the capital and stayed in Shixing Temple. However, he was inclined to calmness in his character and wanted to forgo worldly noises. Wang Hui hence built a vihara in the eastern suburb; that is Zhiyuan Temple.

The Sanskrit canonical texts that Shi Zhiyan acquired in the west had not been translated yet. In the fourth year of the Yuanjia Period, together with Baoyun the monk, he translated *the Puyao jing* 普曜經 (*Sutra on the Universal Shine*), *the Guangboyan jing* 廣博嚴淨 (*Sutra of Vastness, Sublime and Purity*), and *the Si tianwang jing* 四天王經 (*Sutra of the Four Heavenly Kings*), among other texts. When Shi Zhiyan dwelt in the temple, he did not accept invitations and basically lived solely on his alms-begging. Both the wise and the slow were impressed by his preaching and virtuous deeds. Once, a man who could see ghosts told others that he had heard ghosts near the temples of the Earth and Corn God, saying: "When Master Yan comes, we should avoid him." This man did not understand what it meant. Shortly, a master arrived, and the man asked his name; the answer was Zhiyan. Then, the man remembered this master and admired him deeply. The wife of Xiao Sihua, a provincial official of Lanling,¹ was ill, constantly seeing ghosts coming towards her thus crying out in fear. They invited Shi Zhiyan to preach the Dharma. As soon as Zhiyan arrived at the parlor, the woman saw the ghosts running away. After he entered the bedroom and expounded the Dharma for the wife, she recovered from her illness. Hence, she received the five precepts, and the entire family of Xiaos revered the Buddha-Dharma since. Shi Zhiyan was

1 Lanling is near Cangshan, Shandong Province today.

clear and detached from desires, giving what he was offered to other people directly. He traveled to many places to preach since childhood, never attaching to anything. He was humble and would not discuss himself; therefore his good deeds could not be all acknowledged and recorded.

When Shi Zhiyan was still a lay Buddhist, he received the five precepts and used to breach the code. Later, he was fully ordained but often wondered if he really obtained the precept essence, worrying about it frequently. After years of insightful meditation, he could not be sure of it, thus he went to India again, looking for answers from virtuous masters. Meeting a Bhiksu of Arhathood, he raised the question that was bothering him. The arhat was not sure either, so he entered samadhi to enquire Maitreya Bodhisattva in Tusita Heaven. The Bodhisattva replied: "Precept obtained." Hearing this news, Shi Zhiyan was greatly delighted. Then, he returned to China on foot, passing away in his sleep in Jibin at the age of 78. In the local practice of Jibin, people were cremated in different places in accordance with their moral levels. Although Shi Zhiyan followed the precepts strictly, he did not achieve the highest level. First, people tried to move his body to the graveyard for ordinary monks, yet it was too heavy to move. Transferring to that of the saints, the body became very light. Zhiyu and Zhiyuan, the disciples of Shi Zhiyan, came to China from the Western Regions to report this omen, they then returned to the foreign country together. Based on this sign, he must have been an awakening monk, but it is not clear if he was fully enlightened.

6. Shi Baoyun of Mount Liuhe during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Baoyun¹ 釋 寶 雲 , family and ethnicity unknown, was purportedly from Liangzhou. He joined the monastic order in his youth, being both assiduous in study and moral in conduct. Aspiring highly and behaving with purity and honesty, Shi Baoyun pursued the Buddha-Dharma devoutly. He was ready to give his life to the great cause, vowing to venerate the Buddha's relics in India and widely search for sutras. Thereupon, he departed for the Western Regions in the first year of the Long'an Period² in the Eastern Jin Dynasty; roughly the same time as Faxian and Zhiyan. He crossed the deserts and snowy mountains, going through all sorts of danger and hardship but never swaying in his determination. Thus, he traveled in Khotan, India, and other countries, worshiped Buddhist miracles, passed through the immense fields in Buddhist countries, heard the celestial drum beating,³ and paid homage to the Buddha's images and footprints several times.

Tirelessly, Shi Baoyun studied Sanskrit abroad and was fluent in all the languages and linguistics in India. Later, he returned to Chang'an, learned meditation from Master Buddhahadra, and advanced his cultivation. Soon, the latter was pushed out of the Guanzhong area by local monastics; his disciples were also blamed, so Shi Baoyun parted from his teacher. At that time, Huiyuan of Mount Lu settled this issue; hence he went together with his teacher to Jiankang, the capital of Liu Song, and stayed in Daochang Temple. The mass in the temple learned about Baoyun's aspiration and experiences of study and preaching in the west, admiring and respecting him very much. Shi Baoyun translated *the Xin wuliangshou jing* 新無量壽經 (*the New Sutra of Immeasurable Lives*), and the other sutras translated at his time

1 Shi Baoyun (376-449).

2 The Long'an Period: 397-401

3 Drum beating indicates the drum in Trayastriṃśa, which makes marvelous sounds when beating.

were mostly reviewed by him. He was proficient in both Chinese and Sanskrit, interpreting with accuracy and precision, thus the public trusted the versions he reviewed. Earlier, Zhu Fonian, a monk from Guanzhong, was good at translation, rendering and transmitting several sutras during the Former Qin and Later Qin Dynasties. While in the Yangtze River area, no one could supercede Shi Baoyun in sutra translation. Therefore, monks who translated and preached Buddhist scriptures, such as monks like Huiguan, had close ties with Shi Baoyun.

Shi Baoyun preferred to live in seclusion to keep his mind pure and calm. Thereupon, he went to the temple at Mount Liuhe and translated *the Buddhacarita* 佛本行贊. Many people who fled from famine lived in the Liuhe area; theft was popular. Shi Baoyun preached the Dharma and educated the local population who later corrected their behaviors; nine out of ten families stopped stealing. Later, Huiguan at Daochang Temple fell ill and died. Shi Baoyun was invited to host the temple, so he had to move back to the capital. After one year at Daochang Temple, he returned to the temple at Mount Liuhe and died there at the age of 74. His voyage in foreign countries was recorded in a separate travelogue.

7. Guṇavarman of Qihuan Temple in the capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Guṇavarman 求那跋摩, or Gongdekai,¹ was from a Ksatriya² family. His ancestors were kings that ruled over Jibin; his grandfather, Haribhadra or Shizixian, was exiled for his frankness. His father, Sanghananda or Zhongxi, hence hid in the mountains. When Guṇavarman was 14 years old, he was intelligent with a wide range of knowledge, deep insight, and high aspirations. Being kind and generous, he admired a code of morality and acted benevolently. Once, his mother wanted to have some meat, so she asked Guṇavarman to hunt wild animals. The latter said: “All sentient beings cherish their lives; those who wish to harm them are not wholesome people.” His words made his mother angry and say: “If you get punished for this, I will suffer in your place.” Later, Guṇavarman deliberately poured hot oil on his hand while he cooked, telling his mother: “Please suffer the pain in my place.” His mother replied: “The pain is in you; how can I replace you to feel it?” The son returned: “The current pain cannot be transferred; how can the sufferings in the three realms of hell, animals, and ghosts be transferred?” The mother thereupon repented and would never kill again. At the age of 18, a fortuneteller told him: “You should be able to rule over a large country as a king. If you are not clinging to the position, you will attain holy fruit of cultivation.” Guṇavarman joined the monastic order, received ordination, and followed Buddhist masters at the age of 20. He comprehended nine divisions of the canon³ and the Four Āgama Sūtras, recited classics of over one million words, profoundly understood Vinaya doctrines, and skillfully applied the meditative essentials. He was hence known as “Tripitaka Master.” When he was 30, the King Jibin died and had no heir. People then made the comments: “Guṇavarman is

1 Guṇavarman (367-431 CE); Gongdekai means “virtuous armor” in Chinese.

2 Ksatriya refers to the second level of the Indian caste system, i.e. political and military rulers.

3 The nine divisions refer to nine of the twelve early Indian classes of sutras 十二部經; this does not include the vaipulyas 方廣, assurances 授記, or proactive utterances 自問自說.

the offspring of the royal family. Intelligent and noble, he should come back to worldly life and succeed to the throne.” Hundreds of ministers and officials requested for him to return. He disapproved it, bid farewell to his teacher, and hid in mountains.

Later, Guṇavarman arrived in the State of Lion, observing local customs and transmitting Buddhism accordingly. Those who knew about the truth believed that he had attained the first fruit of Arhathood. Guṇavarman’s elegant appearance could inspire worldly people; those who saw him all aspired to obtain Bodhicitta. Afterwards, he came to Java. One day before his arrival, the mother of the King of Java dreamed of a śramaṇa on a ship flying towards the country. In the morning, Guṇavarman arrived; thereupon the king’s mother welcomed him with great respect, receiving the five precepts from him as well. The mother also persuaded the king: “Because of the conditions in previous lives, you and I are in the same family as son and mother. I now have taken five precepts; you however do not believe in Buddhism. I am afraid that such conditions will not generate results like our present relation for the future.” Influenced by his mother, the king also received the five precepts; gradually, he also became devout to the Dharma. Before long, foreign troops invaded the border, and the king asked the master: “Based on their military power, the foreign army would insult our country. If we counterattack, numerous lives will be lost. I have taken refuge in Your Reverence, what shall I do?” Guṇavarman replied: “Aggressors should be beaten, as long as compassion is applied, and the thought of killing is not aroused.” Then the king led the army to fight back. After the two sides barely battled, the invaders were defeated and escaped. The King of Java’s foot was hurt by a stray arrow; Guṇavarman had him wash it with water blessed by his mantra. The foot was back to normal on the following day. Hence, the king trusted him deeply, wanting to renounce worldly life and join the monastic order. He told the officials: “I will become a monk; you can choose another person as your virtuous king.” All the subordinates prostrated and begged: “If Your Majesty renounced the world, the civilians will lose their

reliance. Plus, our enemies are powerful; we can only counterattack them by using our advantageous terrain, which is difficult to access. If we lose Your Majesty's benevolence and protection, where should the people go? Your Majesty practices loving kindness, will you not show mercy to sentient beings?" Out of compassion, the King of Java did not want to frustrate them, deciding to stay in the court, but he made three preconditions in exchange. First, all in the country should revere Buddhist monks; second, there should be no more killings in this territory; third, all fortunes in storage should be distributed to the poor and diseased. Being delighted, the officials swore to follow these rules. Thereupon, all people in the country received precepts with the king. The king later built a vihara for Guṇavarman, felling trees in person, but he hurt his toes. Guṇavarman again gave him the miraculous water, and the wound was healed very quickly. Guṇavarman's reputation spread near and far; rulers in neighboring countries heard about him and competed to send for him.

At that time, famous monks, like Huiguan and Huicong, in the capital city of Liu Song greatly admired Guṇavarman's moral conduct, wanting to listen to his teachings in person. They therefore requested for Emperor Wen to invite Guṇavarman to come over to China. Emperor Wen hence issued a decree to the Prefect of Jiaozhou, ordering him to send a ship to welcome the master. Huiguan also sent Fachang, Daochong, Daojun, and others to carry letters for the master and the Javanese King to the country where Guṇavarman was staying, sincerely inviting Guṇavarman to Liu Song to preach the Dharma. The latter believed that the Dharma should spread in all directions, thus already embarking on a trading ship planning to head to a small country. The tailwind blew the ship to Guangzhou; thus he arrived in China. Therefore, he wrote in his verse: "The wind blew me to Liu Song due to the pre-destiny," indicating this part of the story. When Emperor Wen learned about Guṇavarman's arrival in the southern sea area, he issued another decree to local officials to escort the master to the capital.

Guṇavarman took the road by Shixing Prefecture¹ and stayed there for over a year. In the prefecture, a mountain by the name of Hushi towered into the sky and outstood other hills. Guṇavarman renamed it “Vulture” for it looked like Gṛdhra-kūṭa in India to him. He constructed a meditation room outside the temple on the mountain; the distance between the Chan room and the temple made the bell beating inaudible from one to another. But each time the temple bell was struck, he had just arrived at the temple. When it rained, his clothes and shoes never got wet or muddy. Hence, the monks all highly respected him. He drew a painting on the northern wall of the Baoyue Hall in the temple, depicting Rāhula² and Buddha Dīpaṃkara, whose long hair spread on his shoulders. After it was complete, the painting emitted light every night for a long time. Cai Maozhi, the Prefect of Shixing, revered the master often; when the former was dying, Guṇavarman went to see him in person, expounding the Dharma and consoling him. Later, the family members of Cai Maozhi dreamed of his participation in Dharma discussion with monks in the temple. This was a sign that Cai Maozhi followed Guṇavarman’s guidance and entered a good path.

People suffered the threat of tigers at Mount Hushi. Guṇavarman dwelt on the mount; walking the mountainous paths day and night, he met tigers as well. He just touched their heads with his staff, played with the tiger for a while, and then left. Since then, no one was hurt by tigers on the mountain anymore. Seven or eight out of ten in the region took refuge in Buddhism in gratitude for Guṇavarman’s protection.

Once, he was meditating in the Chan room and did not step out for several days. The temple sent a young novice to check on him at his place. The novice saw a white lion climbing up along the pillar and blue lotuses blossoming in the room; thus he was marveled and shouted out, chasing after the white lion. Then everything he

1 Shixing Prefecture is near Shixing, Guangdong Province today.

2 Rāhula was the son of Shakyamuni Buddha, who became an important disciple of the Buddha.

saw was gone. Guṇavarman's superpower and incarnation were as inconceivable as this case.

Later, Emperor Wen ordered Huiguan and the others to invite him once again; therefore, Guṇavarman took a ship and came to the capital in the first month of the eighth year in the Yuanjia Period. Emperor Wen received him with respect and thanked him for his presence. The emperor told him: "I have often wanted to refrain from killing and to have vegetarian food; however, bending to worldly conventions, I could not satisfy my wish. Since Your Reverence came from ten thousand miles afar to preach the Dharma in our country, could you please give me some guidance?" Guṇavarman replied: "Cultivation depends on one's mind instead of other factors; the Dharma relies on oneself, not on others. In addition, monarchs practice differently than ordinary people. For ordinary people, their body is humble, name unknown, and words weak. If they do not refrain from desires and work hard, the cultivation will not work. A monarch's home is under the sun, taking the people as his children. A wholesome word will make everyone happy, while a good policy will let humans and devas be harmonious. By executing penal code but not harming sentient beings and initiating construction without forcing labor, the wind and rain will come at their time and cold and heat will comply with their proper seasons. Crops will grow plenty of grains, and mulberry trees¹ will flourish. As such, the vegetarian meal will be noble, and refraining from killing will be meritorious. Benevolence to sentient beings does not depend on saving the food of half day² or the life of an animal." Emperor Wen leaned forward and amazed loud: "Ordinary people are confused by abstruse principles, and monastics limited by doctrines; those who are confused by abstruse principles see the Dharma as void, while those limited by the doctrines are confined by the texts. What Your Reverence just said is the insight that can really awaken people. Your Reverence

1 Mulberry leaves are silkworm food. Silk production was a pillar industry in ancient China.

2 Food of half day refers to the Theravada tradition's rule that monks do not have food after noon.

is capable of discussing both celestial and human matters.” Thus, the emperor made Guṇavarman stay in Qihuan Temple and offered to him generously. All the nobles and officials paid homage to him as well. Soon, Guṇavarman would expound *the Lotus Sutra* 法華經 and *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* 十地經¹ in the temple. On the day of the opening, officials and nobles filled the roads nearby; the temple was jammed with audiences. At ease, Guṇavarman explained completely and perfectly; although sometimes the listeners had to rely on translator, back and forth, they could understand the essential.

Later, Huiyi from Qihuang Temple invited Guṇavarman to translate *the Wholesome Morality of the Bodhisattvas* 菩薩善戒. Initially, he translated 28 chapters; afterwards, his disciple translated two chapters in his place, hence totalling 30 chapters. Before the transcription was complete, the preface and code of precepts were lost, so there are two versions. The other one is titled *the Wholesome Grounds of the Bodhisattvas* 菩薩善地.

Back in the third year of the Yuanjia Period, Wang Zhongde, the Prefect of Xuzhou, invited a foreign śramaṇa, Īśvara, to translate *the Saṃyuktābhīdharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* 雜阿毗曇心論, which was, however, left unfinished. At this time, he invited Guṇavarman to translate the second half. Guṇavarman completed its 13 fascicles and the previously-translated *Four Part Vinaya* 四分羯磨, *Youposai wujie luelun* 優婆塞五戒略論 (*Commentary on the Five Precepts of Upasaka*), and *Youposai ershierjie* 優婆塞二十二戒 (*The Twenty-two Precepts of Upasaka*), totalling 26 fascicles. All the renderings were precise and just; deviation did not exist between the Chinese and Sanskrit versions.

Huiguo and Jingyin, nuns from Yingfu Temple, collectively inquired to Guṇavarman: “Six years ago, eight nuns from the State of Lion came to the capital city and told us that our nuns

¹ The *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* is a chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* in which the ten grounds of *Bodhisattvas* are articulated.

here started to cultivate without relevant doctrines. How do we ordain monastics and laywomen? It seems to need comprehensive texts.” Guṇavarman answered: “The code is issued for the sake of monastics. Even if it does not comply with the former masters’ detailed practices, the precept essence can be obtained, just as how fondness for the Dharma connects people to the Teaching.” Huiguo and the other nuns were still worried about the short length of their ordination, so they repeatedly requested to be ordained again. Guṇavarman responded: “Your aspiration for wisdom makes me very happy.” As to the foreign nuns, since they had not practiced long enough and were less than 10 persons, thus Guṇavarman asked them to study Chinese first. He would invite laywomen from the Western Regions and foreign nuns to gather for a number greater than 10 so they could have the precept ritual.

During this summer, Guṇavarman stayed at Dinglin Temple. Those who worshiped him picked flowers to decorate the seats in the temple; the flowers on Guṇavarman’s seat were the most beautiful. Everyone revered him deeply. After the summer retreat, he returned to Qihuan Temple. On the 28th of the ninth month, incomplete with his lunch, he stood up and returned to his room. When his disciples entered the room, he had already passed away at the age of 65. His last look was relaxed, just like in meditation. Before his death, he had prepared a lament of 36 lines describing his pre-destiny and his accomplishment of the second fruit of Arhathood. Sealing it by himself, he handed the lament to his disciple Ashaluo 阿沙羅, saying: “After my death, give this to Indian or local śramaṇas to read.” Monastics and laypeople who came to his funeral exceeded a thousand in number; they could all smell a fragrance in the air and see an object, in the shape of snake or dragon about 15 meters long, rising beside the body towards the sky. Nobody could tell what it was. According to foreign customs, his body was to be cremated in front of Nanlin 南林 Vinaya Platform. The monastics gathered there to pile firewood; they then poured fragrant oil on the firewood to cremate the body. Fire of five colors brightened the sky, which turned crystal clear at the moment. Both monastics and

laypeople sighed in grief. Later, a white stupa was built at the place of cremation. The nuns who would be ordained again were too sad to compose themselves, continually looking to the stupa.

When Guṇavarman came to the capital, Emperor Wen wanted to receive Bodhisattva precepts from him. At that time, enemies had just invaded, thus the emperor did not raise the request. Then, Guṇavarman passed soon afterward, and the emperor failed his wish. Out of regret and sorrow, he had Guṇavarman's lament translated as below:

I respectfully pay homage to the Buddhist Three Jewels, as well as the elders of clear precept efficacy. This turbid world occupied by sycophants lacks honesty.

The ignorant do not see the truth but envy the sages. Thus, the sages have to hide their traces.

I, Guṇavarman, approach the end of this life. I will honestly report what I have obtained before I die.

I will not pander for the sake of benefit and fame-gaining but urge the negligent on in learning the Teaching.

The power of the Dharma is the following, virtuous ones, listen carefully: I used to observe a corpse in an open field attentively.

Rotten and swollen flesh with pus and blood, food of worms it became. Focused on this scene, I saw all bodies as the same.

I am clinging to this body, like blind moths fear not fire. Countless forms of such are named as mindfulness of the cadaver.

Giving up other practices, in these woods I just cultivated. One night I was meditating, right view never faded.

The objects constantly demonstrated it; like in a mirror I saw these.
It was as the same as my own, my mind hence stayed in peace.

Then my body became clear and light, pure mind brought delight,
which increased into great joy, non-attachment arose in the bright.

It soon turned into bones of the dead. The joints became loose and
decayed, and the bones gone in vain.

The wisdom of purity is like a torch, to which all dharmas¹ follow.
When I perceived it, my body softened as a water flow.

Expedient practice made my power increase. By the way of right
view on impermanent forms, thoughts like dust specks decreased.

Knowing the reality of the body, why should I crave? For the
feelings arose, like fish longing for bait.

Feelings cause immeasurable torments; my every thought observed
the curb. Learning where it relied, from mind the uneasy monkey
came to disturb.

Karma and its fruits ceased due to the conditions. The mind
perceived various dharmas, which called distinctive characters
cultivation.

To fathom wisdom in mind, I fully cultivated stage by stage. To
discern all dharmas, the mind could be as precise as a gauge.

Seeing moths in the flame, I learned the four bases of mindfulness.
Precept observance complete, I focused the mind on ceasing
causalities.

Suffering like a red-hot sword cut, which derived from craving.
When the craving is removed, omniscience of the three realms and

1 "All dharmas" refers to all kinds of phenomena.

Nirvana is coming.

Burned by the blaze of death, my flesh emaciated. By joy of peace and skillful means, the body again developed.

Marvelous forms of observation arose, tipping point¹ and patience followed. Hence in my mind the Truth rose.

Gradually worldly conditions diminished, while the joy of peace increased. Highest worldly wisdom, it suddenly came to exist.

By stages patience was attained in realizing non-arising dharmas, which is the uncontaminated way. Delusion on phenomena and concepts went away.

In the state of absolute Truth, suffering was replaced by clear. When samadhi was attained, I was far from dirt and close to fair.

Neither to wax nor to wane, pure wisdom is like the moon, abiding peacefully in pure oneness of sooth.

What I say is not empty talk, only the Buddha can attest for me, as the Abhidharma states the five causalities.

True followers cultivate by practice, concepts produce none. Although the doctrines vary, the truth is just one.

Prejudice incurs troubles; tolerance makes peace. My cultivation details are not supposed to teach.

As I fear, with them delusion and arrogance would arise in the world. The forms in my cultivation I have presented in a few words.

¹ Tipping point is the second of the four wholesome roots from which good fruits develop. The four are: 'warmth' 煖位, the 'tipping point' 頂位, 'patience' 忍位, and the 'highest worldly wisdom' 世第壹位.

If you are wise people, you will know the originations. In Malva, I obtained the first fruit of cultivation.

In Mountain Aranya Temple, I practiced aloof from worldly affair. Later in State of Lion, Jieboli was the village I squared.

I achieved the second fruit, which is called Sakṛd-āgāmin. Since then many obstacles stopped my routine.

Seeing my practicing of detachment, people knew I was carefree. Then they cherished it and offered to me.

I saw it as poison and flame, detestation arose. Escaped to the ocean, I stayed in Java cove.

The wind blew me to Liu Song due to the pre-destiny. Thus, I tried best to transmit Dharma for every party.

No real question left to ask, yet the Truth is to obtain. My body is now perishing, as silent as a lamp ceases to sustain.

8. Saṃghavarman of Fengcheng Temple in the capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Saṃghavarman 僧伽跋摩, or Zhongkai,¹ was a native of India. He renounced worldly life in his childhood; with noble and clear deeds, he observed precepts strictly. Saṃghavarman was well versed in Tripitaka and specialized in *the Saṃyuktābhīdharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* 雜心. In the 10th year of the Yuanjia Period,² he came to the capital city, passing through deserts. Saṃghavarman acted in a gentle and disciplined manner; hence monastics and laypeople highly respected him as teacher and called him “Tripitaka Master.”

Earlier, in the first year of the Jingping Period, Xu Sang, the magistrate of Pinglu,³ donated his own house to Buddhism and converted it into a temple, named Pinglu Temple. Later, Huiguan of Daochang Temple invited Saṃghavarman to dwell in this temple, providing abundant offerings to reward his flawless practice. Saṃghavarman and Huiguan built a three-storied stupa that is currently Fengcheng Pagoda. Saṃghavarman preached the Dharma and recited sutras day and night. Thus, monastics gathered there, and the Teachings spread widely. Previously, a Tripitaka Master that was proficient in the code of precepts wanted to confer full ordination once again for Huiguo and the other nuns at Yingfu Temple, but he passed way before the ritual. Soon, a nun named Tiesaluo 铁萨罗 and some other nuns from the State of Lion arrived in the capital. All of them invited Saṃghavarman to be their teacher and to complete what the Tripitaka Master did not finish.

Huiyi of Qihuan Temple was peerless in this circle at the capital; he thought that Saṃghavarman just differentiated himself to attract attention. Thus, he insisted on his own opinion and personally debated with Saṃghavarman multiple times.

1 Zhongkai means “mass armor” in Chinese.

2 The Yuanjia Period (424-453) was the reign of Emperor Wen in the Liu Song Dynasty.

3 Pinglu is near Wenshang, Shandong Province today.

Samghavarman expounded the Dharma clearly and explicitly with just and fair reasons. Since Samghavarman's ideas could well explain themselves, Huiyi hence changed his arrogant attitude, wholeheartedly revering him and asking his disciples, such as Huiji, to follow Samghavarman. Hundreds of monks and nuns received precepts from him. Liu Yikang, Prince of Pengcheng in the Liu Song Dynasty, respected his conduct of precept observance, so he offered a Dana Assembly; monastics and laypeople in the capital flocked there, and the occasion surpassed anything heretofore seen. The previous Tripitaka Master had translated *the Saṃyuktâbhidharma-hṛdaya-sāstra* 雜心 but did not yet refine it. As Samghavarman could comprehend and recite it very well, Huiyi and the other monks therefore invited him to redo the translation in the ninth month of that year. Learned monastics and scholars gathered in Changgan Temple; Baoyun translated Samghavarman's words, and Huiguan recorded in person. The mass studied and reviewed the translation, which was completed in 12 years. Samghavarman later translated *the Mātrkā* 摩得勒伽, *the Fenbie yebao lue* 分別業報略 (*Concise Explanation of Different Karmic Effects*), *the Lue quanfa zhuwang yaoji* 略勸發諸王要偈 (*Nāgārjuna's Suhr̥llekha*), and *the Qing shengsenyu wen* 請聖僧浴文, among other texts.

Samghavarman aspired to preach the Dharma in various places because he did not want to stay in one location. Since the sutra translation was complete, he requested to return to India. Everyone pleaded for him to stay, however they failed. He embarked on a trading ship of the Western Regions, and people lost his whereabouts afterwards.

9. Dharmamitra of Upper Dinglin Temple during the Liu Song Dynasty

Dharmamitra 曇摩蜜多, or Faxiu,¹ was a native of Jibin. When he was seven years old, he looked decorous and pure. Every time he saw Buddhist rituals, he naturally rejoiced; his parents were glad but also amazed, letting him join the monastic order. Many wise and virtuous men stayed in Jibin; Dharmamitra received guidance and teachings from great masters, thereupon he was versed in various sutras, specializing in meditation methods. The insights he obtained were subtle and profound. Dharmamitra was intellectually gifted and prudent, practicing the disciplines and laws straight and evenly. Since his eyebrows connected, he was known as the “Chan Master with Connected-eyebrows”.

Young Dharmamitra wanted to voyage in different places, vowing to transmit the Dharma, whereupon he came to Kucha after traveling though several countries. On the day prior to his arrival, the King of Kucha dreamed of a deity telling him: “A virtuous and auspicious personality will enter your country; you should offer to him.” The king issued a decree to every prefecture that required immediate reports about uncommon persons entering the border. Before long, Dharmamitra arrived. The king welcomed him at the suburb of the capital in person, invited him to the imperial palace, received precepts under him, and generously offered food, clothes, instruments and medicines to him. Dharmamitra aspired to travel around to preach and would not be constrained to one location by material possessions. He thereupon intended to leave. The deity spoke to the king in his dream again: “The fortunate personality is leaving the country.” The king woke up in worries; with all of the courtiers, he tried to persuade the master to stay but failed. Dharmamitra then crossed the deserts and came to Dunhuang. He built a vihara in an open field, planted a thousand wild apple trees, and opened up a large tract of wasteland, in which the stupa,

¹ Dharmamitra (356-442); Faxiu, his name in Chinese, means “Dharma elegance.”

buildings, and ponds were all pure and clean. Later, Dharmamitra traveled to Liangzhou and converted the old halls and mansions into auditorium and temples; students ran in from all directions. Meditation studies flourished.

Dharmamitra always believed that the orthodox royal court was situated to the west of Yangtze River; he aspired to transmit the Dharma in that area. Thereupon, he managed to travel to Sichuan and through the Three Gorges of Yangtze River; he soon arrived in Changsha after a short stay in Jingzhou. He built a Chan pagoda and piously prayed to the Buddha for a Sarīra. A dozen of days later, one piece descended abruptly, bouncing out of the vase and lightening the entire room; the sound was loud and clear. The disciples, monastics, and laypeople were all encouraged and engendered great conviction. Before long, Dharmamitra continued his journey and reached the capital by the river. At the beginning, he stayed in Zhongxing Temple, moving to Qihuan Temple in his later years. Dharmamitra gained fame for his moral conduct since his youth; his exhortations spread in many countries. Thus, upon his arrival in the capital, the entire city was mobilized to pay homage to him, ranging from Empress Yuan¹ of Liu Song to the crown prince and princess. They either sponsored Dana Assemblies in the imperial court or requested discourses in their palaces. Every ten days, a batch of envoys would be sent to greet the master. In Qihuan Temple, Dharmamitra translated *the Meditation Sutra* 禪經, *the Chan yaofa* 禪要法 (*Essential Methods of the Chan*), *Mindfulness on Samantabhadra* 普賢觀, and *Mindfulness on Ākāśagarbha* 虛空藏觀 along with other texts. He often taught meditation methods; some students came from a thousand miles afar to follow his teachings. Hence, near and far, Bhiksus, Bhiksunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas all called him the “Great Chan Master.”

Meng Yi, the Prefect of Kuaiji whose home town was Pingchang, believed in orthodox Buddha-Dharma and regarded homage to the Three Jewels as his duty. He was fond of meditation, thinking

1 Empress Yuan was the Empress of Emperor Wen.

highly of it. When Dharmamitra came to the east of the Qiantang River, Meng Yi requested a journey with the master and built a stupa on top of the mountain in Mao County. In the east, the old tradition was to worship spirits; Dharmamitra changed this custom in the region from the west to the east, converting the people to orthodox Buddhism. Dharmamitra returned to the capital in the tenth year of the Yuanjia Period and stayed in the Lower Dinglin Temple at Mount Zhong. He preferred a peaceful life, enjoying mountains and waters and thinking that Mount Zhong was as great as Mount Song and Mount Hua.¹ Therefore, he regretted that the structure of Lower Dinglin Temple was too close to the mount foot and the creek. Then, he surveyed the terrain, practiced divination for a location, and started the construction of the Upper Temple in the 12th year of the Yuanjia Period. The local scholars and squires donated vehemently. The halls and meditation rooms were built layer upon layer; some monastics came from ten thousand miles afar for study. They recited doctrines diligently; inspired by the master, their belief was strengthened. Chan Master Da of Dinglin Temple was a disciple who obtained magical power. He promoted Dharmamitra's teachings and gained a great reputation. Thus, he preached the teachings widely, which lasted for a long time. The wholesome cause was flourishing without decline; this owed to Dharmamitra's efforts. From the Western Regions to Southern China, he constantly built temples and transmitted the Dharma in all the locales he visited.

Earlier, when Dharmamitra departed from Jibin, a Kapila Deity² escorted him to Kucha. On the way, the deity wanted to return, manifesting his incarnation and telling Dharmamitra: "Your super power can make you alter your shape liberally; you can travel to anywhere as you wish. I will not go with you to the south." He then disappeared. When Dharmamitra arrived in the capital, he drew a painting of the deity. Up to now, the painting still has magical

1 Mount Song and Mount Hua are two of the five great mountains in China, which are Mount Tai in the east, Mount Hua in the west, Mount Heng 恒山 in the north, Mount Song in the middle, and Mount Heng 衡山 in the south.

2 A Kapila Deity is a tutelary god of Buddhist monasteries.

power in terms of sound and image. Devout Buddhists can realize their wish by praying to it. On the 6th day of the seventh month in the 19th year of the Yuanjia Period, Dharmamitra passed away in the Upper Temple at the age of 87. Countless monastics and laypeople came to his funeral weeping bitterly; they cremated him in front of Songxi Temple at Mount Zhong.

10. Shi Zhimeng of the Capital City during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Zhimeng¹ 釋智猛, a native of Xinfeng County,² Jingzhao in Yongzhou, had an uncommon intellectual gift and acted nobly and purely. He joined the monastic order in his youth, practiced Buddhism with concentration and assiduity, and recited the sutras day and night. Each time that he listened to stories told by foreign śramaṇas about the relics and Mahayana doctrines, such as the Vaitulya Sutra, in India, he was always amazed and yearned for them. Shi Zhimeng would imagine that ten thousand miles could be shortened into a few steps and that a thousand years could be traced back. Thus, in the sixth year³ of the Hongshi Period under the Later Qin Dynasty, he gathered 15 persons with the same aspiration, departed from Chang'an, crossed rivers 36 times, and arrived in Liangzhou. Then, they traveled westwards, went through the Yangguan Pass,⁴ and entered the deserts to the west of Dunhuang. They experienced two-fold hardship and danger in comparison to their predecessors. Shi Zhimeng's group traveled through the kingdoms of Shanshan,⁵ Kucha, and Khotan among others, learning the local customs and conditions. They traveled from Khotan to the west for about 1000 kilometers, arrived at Pamir, and climbed it. At this moment, nine persons had quit. The companions continued for another 800 kilometers and reached Baltistan; Zhu Daosong who was on the team unfortunately died there. When Shi Zhimeng tried to cremate his dharma brother's body, the body abruptly disappeared. Shi Zhimeng was surprised and sad; he then struggled to move on. With the four survivors, he crossed snowy mountains and the Indus River and arrived in Jibin, where 500 Arahants frequently journeyed between the city and Anavatapta Lake.⁶ One

1 Shi Zhimeng (d. c. 453 CE).

2 Xinfeng County is a suburb of Xi'an, Shaanxi province today.

3 The third year of Hongshi was 404 CE.

4 Yangguan 陽關 was a border pass of China in ancient times; it is near Dunhuang today.

5 Shanshan is in Turpan, Xinjiang today.

6 Anavatapta Lake is in Xinjiang Today.

virtuous Arhat was very happy with Shi Zhimeng's arrival. While the latter asked him about local customs and circumstances, this Arhat narrated anecdotes and conditions under the sun; all of these are recorded in *Voyage in Foreign Countries* 遊行外國傳 by Shi Zhimeng.

The travelers saw the spittoon of patterned stone left by the Buddha in Khasa¹ and worshiped the Buddha's bowl in Jibin. The bowl was purplish-red and decorated with patterns. Shi Zhimeng offered flowers and incense to the bowl, placing it on his head and praying for it to let him feel the change of its weight if it had super powers. Instantly, the bowl became too heavy for Shi Zhimeng to bear. After putting it back on the table, the weight returned to normal. Shi Zhimeng experienced several of such miracles due to his sincerity towards Buddhism. Continuing to the southwest, they traveled 650 kilometers and arrived in Kapilavastu² Kingdom where they saw the Buddha's teeth, hair, and cranium relics. The footprints of the Buddha were still vivid. Shi Zhimeng also venerated the woods where the Buddha entered Parinirvana. By the Bodhi tree, under which the Buddha conquered the Devil named Mara, he worshiped an entire day, offering a treasured umbrella and cloak to shade the image of the Buddha conquering Mara. From afar, Shi Zhimeng caught sight of various miracles, such as the celestial ladder which the Buddha used to step back down to earth after his sermon in Trayastriṃśa Heaven and the Dragon Pool where Buddhists bathed and paid homage to the Buddha. Later, he came to the ancient capital of King Aśoka,³ where a Brahmin wise man named Luoyuezong 羅闕宗 promoted the Buddha-Dharma; hence Shi Zhimeng was respected and admired by the contemporary king. He built a 10-meter high silver stupa. Seeing Shi Zhimeng coming, he then asked the traveler: "Do you practice Mahayana Buddhism in China?" Shi Zhimeng answered: "Mahayana only." The wise man marveled aloud: "It is rare. Have Bodhisattvas gone

1 Khasa is in Xinjiang today.

2 Kapilavastu is the birthplace of Shakyamuni Buddha.

3 King Aśoka's capital was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Magādha in central India.

there to preach?” Shi Zhimeng acquired copies of *the Sanskrit Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 大泥洹, *the Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya* 僧祇律, and other sutras in Sanskrit. He vowed to make these doctrines circulate and thereupon returned to China.

Shi Zhimeng returned from India in 424 CE; three companions died on the way, and only he and Tanzuan came back together. He translated *the Nirvana Sutra* 泥洹經 in Liangzhou, totaling 20 fascicles. In the 14th year of the Yuanjia Period, he went to Sichuan; in the seventh month of the 16th year, he completed *the Voyage in Foreign Countries* 遊行外國傳, describing details of his journey. He passed away in Chengdu in the last year of Yuanjia.

I analyzed the travelogues of multiple monks who journeyed to the west; there are many differences. The locations of Buddha’s bowl and Cranium Relic vary as well. I therefore speculate that different routes to India exist and that the Relics of the bowl and Cranium changed their locations with time. Thus, the narratives by different people can hardly be consistent.

11. Kālayaśas of Daolin Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty 僧伽達多 Sengqieluoduoduo 僧伽羅多哆

Kālayaśas 薑良耶舍, or Shicheng,¹ was a frank and honest native of the Western Regions that attached to few. He was great at reciting *the Abhidharma* 阿毗曇, widely read in Vinaya texts, and versed in other classics as well. He studied the Tripitaka and specialized in meditation. Kālayaśas sometimes practiced sitting meditation without getting up for seven days. He constantly transmitted the ways to Samadhi in many countries. From thousands of miles away, he crossed deserts and came to the capital. Emperor Wen was marveled and touched by his deeds.

At first, Kālayaśas stayed in the Daolin Vihara at Mount Zhong. Baozhi the monk appreciated his meditation methods; Senghan the monk invited him to translate *the Yaowang yaoshang guan* 藥王藥上觀 (*Visualization of Medicine King*) and *Wuliangshou guan* 無量壽觀 (*Visualization of Immeasurable Lives*). Senghan recorded the translation in person. Since these two sutras were about the secret methods to alter and eliminate distresses and to create the conditions to attain the Pure Land, Kālayaśas weighed his words during the translation and made it circulate in the Liu Song region.

Meng Yi from Pingchang admired the master and offered generously to him. When Meng Yi was in the position of Prefect of Kuaiji, he earnestly invited Kālayaśas to come. The latter, however, did not take the invitation and betook himself to Jiangling to abide. In the 19th year² of the Yuanjia Period, Kālayaśas traveled in the Sichuan area. At each stop, he always preached the Dharma. Meditation gained popularity in the area. Later, he returned to Jiangling and died there at the age of 60.

1 Shicheng, in Chinese, means “time appellation” or “time smartness” in some records.

2 The 19th year of the Yuanjia Period was 442 CE.

At that time, the Indian śramaṇas named Sengqiedaduo 僧伽達多 and Sengqieluoduoduo 僧伽羅多哆 mastered meditation as well. They also came to the Liu Song for Dharma transmission. Once, Sengqiedaduo was practicing sitting meditation in the mountains; it was late and he wanted to give up for the meal. A flock of birds carried fruits to him. Sengqiedaduo thought: “The Buddha accepted the honey provided by a monkey, and so should I.” Then he took the fruits and ate them. In the summer of the 18th year of the Yuanjia Period, he was invited by Liu Yiqing, the Prince of Kang; thus, he built a vihara and dwelt in it, later passing away in Jianye. Sengqieluoduoduo means Zhongji.¹ He arrived in the capital of the Liu Song government in the last year of the Jingping Period. Besides practicing alms begging in worldly communities, he stayed in mountains quietly to cultivate and purify his mind by being aloof from worldly desires. In the 10th year of the Yuanjia Period, he chose the southern slope of Mount Zhong to dwell on, opening the wasteland and building a vihara that is now Songxi Temple.

1 Zhongji means “mass succour” in Chinese.

12. Guṇabhadra of Zhongxing Temple in the capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Anamodi 阿那摩低

Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅, or Gongdexian,¹ was from central India, versed in Mahayana Buddhism, and hence known as “Mahayana.” He was from a Brahmin family, starting his studies on the Five Fields of Learning in his boyhood, and was proficient in astronomy, calligraphy, mathematics, spells, and medicine. As soon as he read *the Saṃyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* 阿毗曇雜心, he was amazed and inspired by the text, engendering a deep reverence for the Buddha-Dharma. His family, however, believed in magic spells for generations, forbidding his contact with Buddhist monks. Therefore, Guṇabhadra escaped from home to look for teachers and dharma friends far away; he was tonsured right away. He studied the Teaching with assiduity. When Guṇabhadra received full ordination, he had already mastered the Tripitaka. He was kind, humble, and respected his teachers with due courtesy. Shortly, he left his teacher of Hinayana and turned to Mahayana. His Mahayana teacher tested him by asking him to randomly pick up books from the scripture box; he took out *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 大品 and *the Avatamsaka Sutra* 華嚴. His teacher was satisfied and praised him, saying: “You do have close connections with Mahayana Buddhism.” Guṇabhadra thereupon started to recite and expound Mahayana doctrines; no one could challenge him. Then, he took Bodhisattva precepts and sent a letter to his parents, persuading them to convert to Buddhism. He said in the letter: “If you still uphold heterodox magic, it will not be helpful, even if I go home. If you take refuge in Buddhism, then we can be together all the time.” His father was touched by his sincerity, gave up heterodoxy, and converted to Buddhism.

Before Guṇabhadra arrived in China, he had been to countries like the State of Lion. No matter where he went, he had patrons who supported and escorted him. He felt that he had connections with

¹ Guṇabhadra (394-468 CE); Gongdexian means “virtue wholesomeness” in Chinese.

the East, and then embarked on an eastward trading ship. On the ocean, the ship stopped due to the absence of wind and exhaustion of freshwater on board. Everyone was scared. Guṇabhadra said to the mass: “Let us recite the names of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions and that of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva together. The Bodhisattva will surely respond.” Thereupon he recited sutras and mantras silently, while he wholeheartedly worshiped and repented. Abruptly, the seasonal wind started with dark clouds coming and pouring rain; everyone was saved. Guṇabhadra touched the Bodhisattva in this way. He arrived in Guangzhou in the 12th year of the Yuanjia Period, the prefect, Julang, reported his arrival to the emperor. So, Emperor Wen sent an envoy to welcome him. When Guṇabhadra approached the capital, the emperor ordered eminent monks, Huiyan and Huiguan, to wait for him at Xinting.¹ Seeing Guṇabhadra’s pure and clear physiognomy, Huiyan and the others all admired and respected him. Although the communication needed interpretation, interaction with him brought great joy to them, as if they had known each other for a long time. Guṇabhadra was first settled in Qihuan Temple, but he was soon invited into the imperial palace for reverence. Yan Yanzhi, a famous, erudite scholar from Langya, visited Guṇabhadra with respect. Following him, scholars and nobles in the capital area and beyond all flocked in to pay homage. Liu Yikang, the Great General of Pengcheng, and Liu Yixuan, the Prince of Nanqiao and Prime Minister, respected Guṇabhadra as their teacher. Later, many monastics invited him to translate sutras; thereupon he gathered numerous learned monks in Qihuan Temple and translated *the Saṃyuktāgama-sūtra* 雜阿含經. Then, in Dong’an Temple, he translated *the Mahābherī-hāraka-parivarta* 法鼓經. Afterwards, he translated *the Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra* 勝鬘經 and *the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* 楞伽經. He had 700 disciples; Baoyun translated, Huiguan recorded, and together they discussed and reviewed several times. The versions well reflected the original meaning of the Teaching. Later, the Prince of Nanqiao was sent to guard Jingzhou; he invited Guṇabhadra to go with him and settled the master in Xin

1 Xinting, a suburb of the capital, is now in the south of Nanjing.

Temple, which was enlarged for this occasion. In the temple, the master translated *King Aśoka* 無憂王, *the Scripture on Past and Present Causes and Effects* 過去現在因果經 of one fascicle, *the Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經 (*Sutra of Immeasurable Lives*) of one fascicle, *the Nirvana Sutra* 泥洹經, *the Sutra of Aṅgulimāla* 央掘魔羅, *the Xiangxu jietuo boluomi liaoyi* 相續解脫菠蘿蜜了義¹, *the Xianzai foming jing* 現在佛名經 (*Sutra of the Names of the Present Buddhas*) of three fascicles, *the Diyi wuxiang lue* 第壹義五相略 (*Concise Explanation of the Five Forms of the Ultimate Truth*), and *the Bajixiang jing* 八吉祥經 (*Sutra on the Eight Types of Auspiciousness*), among other texts. Including the previous translation, these totaled over 100 fascicles, many of which were translated and rendered by his disciple, Fayong. The Prince of Nanqiao requested for him to expound the Avatamsaka Sutra and other texts. Guṇabhadra felt ashamed that he was not proficient in Chinese, repenting day and night to pray for the protection of Bodhisattvas. He then dreamed of a figure in white holding a human head, coming to him and asking: “Why would you worry?” Guṇabhadra told him the reason. That figure answered: “Do not worry anymore.” By saying that, he cut off Guṇabhadra’s head and replaced it with the head in his hand. He then asked the master to turn his head, inquiring: “Does it hurt?” Guṇabhadra said: “No.” Suddenly, the master gained insight and a joyful mood. The next morning, he could speak Chinese fluently and accurately, and thus started the sermon for the Prince of Nanqiao.

In the last year of the Yuanjia Period, the Prince of Nanqiao often had bizarre dreams; to this, Guṇabhadra responded: “Disaster will happen in the capital.” In less than one year, the Yuanxiong² insurgency took place. In the first year of the Xiaojian Period, the Prince of Nanqiao planned to rebel. When Guṇabhadra learned about it, a strained expression showed on his face. Before he

1 Xiangxu jietuo boluomi liaoyi corresponds to the tenth chapter of *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra*.

2 The Yuanxiong insurgency, an imperial court event in the 30th year of the Yuanjia Period (453 CE); first, Emperor Wen would depose the Crown Prince, and Liu Shao was later killed by the crown prince. the latter took the throne.

spoke, the prince asked why he looked worried. In all seriousness, Guṇabhadra urged the prince to give up the plan and pleaded with tears on his face: “If Your Highness really cannot give up as I hoped, I will not go with you.” However, the Prince of Nanqiao believed that the master was trusted by the mass, so he forced Guṇabhadra to go eastwards with him. During the battle at Liangshan,¹ Prince Nanqiao was defeated; the battleship was in a desperate situation and far from the river bank. It seemed that Guṇabhadra could not survive by swimming to the shore. He recited the name of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva devoutly, grabbed a bamboo staff, and jumped in the water, which was knee-deep but rushing. At this moment, a young man in white came up from behind and led the way by holding Guṇabhadra’s hand. Guṇabhadra turned to him and said: “How could you help me cross the river?” Nevertheless, only walking a dozen steps, they already stood on the bank. When Guṇabhadra tried to take off his robe and give it to the young man, he had already disappeared. Suddenly, Guṇabhadra had goose bumps and realized that this was the divine manifestation to save him. Wang Xuanmo, who led the imperial troop to engage in the battle in Liangshan, ordered: “If Guṇabhadra was captured, he should be well treated and sent to the imperial court. Soon, they caught Guṇabhadra; by boat, Wang Xuanmo sent him to the capital, where Emperor Shizu² received him immediately and said: “I have admired you for a long time; it is my luck to meet you today.” Guṇabhadra replied: “I shall be destroyed since I have been tainted. Since Your Majesty meets me today, I hence will revive.” The emperor asked him who else participated in the complot. Guṇabhadra answered: “As a monastic, I shall not partake in military affairs. However, Zhang Chang, Song Lingxiu, and others forced me to come eastwards with the army. I knew there would be trouble, but I did not realize that, due to connections of previous lives, I would be involved in this incident so deeply.” The emperor said: “Do not worry.” Then, he settled the master in the rear hall,

1 Liangshan is in He County, Anhui Province today.

2 Emperor Shizu, Liu Jun (430-464), was the third son of Emperor Wen. He killed the Crown Prince, Liu Shao, who took the throne after murdering his father.

offering clothes, a servant, and a vehicle to him.

Previously, Guṇabhadra lived in Jingzhou for ten years; records were taken for each written message between the Prince of Nanqiao and him. When a scrutiny was conducted on these records, not a single word was about military related issues. The emperor then understood Guṇabhadra was honest and prudent, respecting him even more. Later, during a conversation, the emperor joked: “Do you miss the Prime Minister?” Guṇabhadra responded: “He offered to me for ten years; how can I forget his patronage? I hereby request Your Majesty’s permission to burn incense for him for three years.” Listening to his words, the emperor felt sad as well and approved his request in appreciation of his loyalty. After the construction of Zhongxing Temple was completed, the emperor ordered for Guṇabhadra to move to the new temple, where three rooms were dedicated to him. Once, the emperor hosted a banquet, gathering nobles and courtiers in the East Mansion. He ordered for Guṇabhadra to be summoned. At that time, the latter had not shaved his head lately. Seeing his grey hair in the distance, the emperor told a minister, Xie Zhuang: “‘Mahayana’ is intelligent but old now. Let me test him with some words; he must know our meaning.” When Guṇabhadra came closer, the emperor greeted him and said: “‘Mahayana’ did not fail his original aspiration to come from thousands of miles away. Now, only one thing has its existence.” Guṇabhadra replied instantly: “I traveled all the way here 30 years ago. Your Majesty treats me with great kindness, which made me feel abashed. Now, I am old and lame; only death has its existence.” Emperor Shizu admired his wits, letting him sit next to the throne. Everyone looked at him with respect.

Later on, Guṇabhadra built a temple to the west of Fenghuanglou in Moling.¹ At midnight, someone pushed on the door and cried out all the time, whereas no one could be seen. Monks in the temple constantly had bad dreams. Guṇabhadra thereupon burned incense, recited mantras, and prayed: “You have connections to this location

1 Moling is in Jiangning district, Nanjing today.

in previous lives; I now build the temple here and practice Buddhist repentance rituals. It was also for you. If you would still live here, you should be wholesome guardians; if you do not want to stay, you may go as you wish.” Before long, over ten monks had the same dream on the same night: a thousand odd spirits and ghosts carried luggage and moved away together. The monastics were hence in peace. That is Baita Temple at Taohouzhu today.

In the sixth year of the Daming Period, severe drought hit the country. The imperial court prayed to the gods of land and river, yet there was no response after several months. Emperor Shizu thus invited Guṇabhadra to pray for rains and desperately urged him to make it work; otherwise he would not see the master again. Guṇabhadra replied: “By the divine power of Buddhism and Your Majesty’s prestige, I will make it work. If the rain does not come down, I will never see Your Majesty anymore.” Guṇabhadra then went to the fishing platform at North Lake to burn incense and pray, stopping eating and only reciting Buddhist sutras and mantras in silence. On the following day, around four o’clock in the afternoon, clouds that became thicker and thicker rose in the west. In the evening, a gust of wind blew followed by rains that poured for several days. On the next day, the officials came to the court to celebrate. The emperor requested the presence of Guṇabhadra in the court and offered for him generously.

Starting from childhood, Guṇabhadra was vegetarian his entire life. He often held an incense burner, never stopping for a single day. After each meal, he would feed birds by putting food on both hands. During the reign of Emperor Taizong, the treatment of Guṇabhadra became more preferential. In the fifth month of the fourth year in the Taishi Period, Guṇabhadra felt that his illness was getting worse and that death was coming, bidding farewell to the emperor and officials. On his last day, he stood there and looked into the distance for a long time, saying he saw flowers falling from sky. At noon, he passed away at the age of 75. Emperor Taizong grieved and lamented his death, offering abundantly for his funeral.

Ministers and officials participated in the obsequies. Guṇabhadra was full of honor in and beyond his lifetime.

Another monk named Baoyi, or Anamodi 阿那摩低, whose original surname was Kang, was from Sogdiana.¹ His family lived in India for generations. He came to the capital of the Liu Song Dynasty in the years of the Xiaojian Period² and stayed in Chan rooms at Waguan Temple. He constantly practiced meditation under trees in the temple. Baoyi understood Sutra and Vinaya doctrines, so local people also called him “Tripitaka Master.” He often flipped through hundreds of Bodhi tree leaves that he carried with him, being able to immediately determine good or ill luck. He was skilled in mantra as well. Putting fragrant oil on the palm, he could see the past of a person. Emperor Shizu offered him a two-foot high bronze spittoon, which he put next to his bed. One day it was stolen. Baoyi rolled a cylinder with a straw mat and recited a mantra; three days later, the spittoon came in the cylinder by itself. Nobody knew how it happened. Due to this incident, monastics, near and far, were all amazed and respected him. Crown Prince Wenhui and Prince Wenxuan of the Southern Qi Dynasty and Emperor Taizu³ of the Liang Dynasty all revered him as their teacher. In the last year of the Yongming Period, Baoyi passed away at his abode.

1 Sogdiana was an ancient kingdom in the west of modern-day Uzbekistan; it was known as Kang Ju 康居 in Chinese, thus people from that kingdom were usually surnamed Kang.

2 The Xiaojian Period: 454-456.

3 Emperor Taizu (464-549), or Emperor Wu of Liang, was named Xiao Yan and known as Liang Wudi 梁武帝 in Chinese; he was keen on Buddhism.

13. Guṇavṛddhi of Zhengguan Temple in Jiankang during the Southern Qi Dynasty 僧伽婆羅

Guṇavṛddhi 求那毗地, or Anjin,¹ was originally from central India. He started his pursuit of Buddhism at the age of 20, following Mahayana Master Saṃghasena in India. Reciting sutras diligently, he was intelligent with great memory and familiar with nearly 200 thousand words of Mahayana and Hinayana doctrines. Guṇavṛddhi also studied non-Buddhist classics, understanding the Five Fields of Learning; when he practiced divination, he could get many responses and indications. In the first year of the Jianyuan Period² under the Southern Qi government, he came to the capital and stayed in Vaisali Temple. Guṇavṛddhi held a staff. With a noble look, he was followed by his disciples; both officials and royals vied to invite and pay respect to him.

Earlier, Saṃghasena used to transcribe the important parables in the Sūtra-piṭaka, compiling them into a book with 100 stories to teach beginners. Because he knew it well and understood the meanings, Guṇavṛddhi translated this book into Chinese in the fall of the 10th year in the Yongming Period. The ten fascicles were titled *the Sutra of the 100 Parables* 百喻經. In addition, he translated *the Twelve Links of Dependent Arising* 十二因緣 and *the Sutra of Householder Sudatta* 須達長者經, each in one fascicle. During the Daming Period, the sutra translation almost stopped. When he preached sutras again, the public praised him very much. Guṇavṛddhi was honest and generous, thus people came to follow him from thousands of miles away. For instance, businessmen in the south sea area also reached him to pay respect. Guṇavṛddhi accepted all the offerings and used them to hold Buddhist rituals for the benefits of the patrons. He built Zhengguan Temple on the river side of Qinhuai in Jianye. The halls and pavillions were layer on layer; it was an aesthetically exemplary compound of the time.

1 Guṇavṛddhi (d. 502) was also known as Anjin, which means “peaceful advance” in Chinese.

2 The Jianyuan Period: 479-482 CE.

Guṇavṛddhi passed away in the winter of the second year of the Zhongxing Period at his abode.

In the early years of the Liang Dynasty, Saṃghabhara 僧伽婆羅 was also a learned śramaṇa from a foreign country. He was pious, neat, and good at communication. After his arrival in the capital, he stayed at Zhengguan Temple as well. The emperor treated him with respect and ordered him to translate *the Sutra of Great King Aśoka* 大阿育王經 and *the Treatise on the Way to Attain Deliverance* 解脫道論 at Zhengguan Temple and the Zhanyun Mansion of Shouguang Hall in the imperial palace. Shi Baochang and Yuan Tanyun, among others, recorded it in writing.

Comments

The virtue of translation is too great to be praised enough. When the Tathagata passed away, Kāśyapa,¹ Ānanda,² Madhyântika,³ and the other elders did all that they could to uphold the 80,000 scriptures of the Teaching, transmitting the Dharma to deliver humans and exerting immeasurable virtuous influence. The Supreme Wisdom is still shining like the sun. Later, Kātyāyanīputra, Dharmatrāta, and Dharmasreṣṭhin among other elders composed various treatises after extensively learning distinct doctrines and theories, which were based on the Tripitaka and all written by emulating *the Four Āgamas*. As for Nāgārjuna,⁴ Aśvaghōṣa,⁵ Vasubandhu,⁶ and other dharma masters, they leveraged profound and subtle Vaipulya⁷ classics and summed up the quintessence, which derived from the Prajna Wisdom and the Buddha's essential Teaching.

Although different exhortations came to exist, adapting to diverse capacities of the audiences, the essence had been captured. Therefore, the Three Jewels were able to be spread from one generation to another, and the Dharma Wheel was not interrupted. That is why the 500 years after the Buddha's passing are said to be the period of True Dharma. The divine Teaching covered near and far. A sound or a beam of light could vibrate other territories; a platform or an ambarella was able to bless myriad countries. Though separated by the Pamirs and the Yellow River and

1 Kāśyapa, one of the top ten disciples of the Buddha, was the first patriarch of the Chan (Zen) school.

2 Ānanda, the cousin of Shakyamuni Buddha, served the Buddha as an attendant for 25 years before he became an Arhat. He had a wonderful memory and was able to keep Buddha's sermons in his memory.

3 Madhyântika, a disciple of Ānanda, was sent to preach in Jibin.

4 Nāgārjuna was the founder of the Mahayana Madyamaka School.

5 Aśvaghōṣa was a famous commentator of Mahayana tradition and writer of *the Mahāyāna-Sūtrālamkāra* (Treatise on the Scripture of Adorning the Great Vehicle).

6 Vasubandhu, along with his brother Asanga, formulated the Indian Yogācāra School.

7 Vaipulya, here, refers to Mahayana Teaching.

geographically thousands of miles apart, China and Kapilavastu were as close as a half step in the holy power. What blocked the knowledge and sight transmission was time and opportunity.

When the conditions were about to arise in China, the Teaching came to correspond with local religions and customs; some knew him as Buddha, and some styled him as the great god of the west. Thus, when Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty issued the decree to Liu Ying, the Prince of Chu, he once said: “You recite Daoist classics of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi¹ and revere the Buddha’s kind offering ritual.”² Later, he sent envoys to the Western Regions as he saw a golden figure in his dream.³ Thereupon, Kāśyapa-Mātaṅga and Gobharana arrived in China with Buddha-Dharma. They were not scared off by the dander and hardship of the journey. Carrying the scriptures and travelling alone, they went through mountains touring into the sky and bottomless abysses, stepped on strained ropes to cross river valleys, gave up bodies of the dead, and conquered all obstacles despite critical situations. They first preached the Dharma in the East. Owing to their endeavors, later generations can listen to the doctrines.

Afterwards, An Qing, Zhi Chen, Kang Senghui, Dharmarakṣa, and others were all in the same period, although their years of arrival were not exactly the same. Their common aspiration was to continue their predecessors’ cause and to transmit the Dharma. However, Chinese and foreign ethnic peoples are different; their literature and linguistics were not compatible. It will be difficult to understand the Dharma, if one cannot master the languages of both sides.

1 The Yellow Emperor and Laozi are two figures that are believed to be the origin of the Daoist (or Taoist) School.

2 Buddhism advocates kindness and non-killing; its ritual is different from that of some local beliefs that use sentient beings for sacrifice.

3 It is said that the dream of Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty (28 CE-75 CE) triggered the search for the deity in his dream, hence the pursuit of Buddhism in China.

At that time, Zhi Qian, Nie Chengyuan, Zhu Fonian, Shi Baoyun, Zhu Shulan, Mokṣala, and a number of others were proficient in both Sanskrit and Chinese, performing the translation well. They repeatedly discussed and reviewed until the meanings and wording were completely clear. They rendered it into Chinese based on local pronunciations and tones, and then further embellished the literature. Someone indicated: “In order to translate, one must master different languages and dialects and comprehend the right meaning; then based on the right meaning, render it into the target language.” This is just how they conducted the translation.

Later on, Kumārajīva, who was greatly erudite and comprehended meanings of abstruse texts, traveled in China, understanding multiple dialects. Unsatisfied with the translation of Zhi Chen, Dharmarakṣa, and earlier translators, which he thought were plain and far from perfection, he retranslated Sanskrit texts into Chinese. This explains the different versions we have at present. Although the words vary, the essences are consistent.

At that time, Daosheng, Daorong, Tanying, Sengrui, Huiyan, Huiguan, Daoheng, and Sengzhao, eight śramaṇas in total, could well grasp Kumārajīva’s language and render it in graceful texts. Thus, they assumed the responsibilities to record in writing. As their works were accurate and wonderful, the versions translated in Chang’an are deemed the best ones.

In that period, Yao Xing took the throne and claimed to be emperor, occupying the Chang’an area. He was fond of the Three Jewels and carried forward the Dharma, which made more Buddhist believers come to the region. Numerous Buddhists flocked from all directions, having access to Tripitaka easily. Since Buddhism spread to the East, it reached culmination in that era. Buddhahadra translated the Great Avatamsaka Sutra in Jiangdong, and Dharmakṣema translated the wonderful Nirvana Sutra in Hexi. As for *the four Āgamas, the Five Groups*,¹ the shorter version of

1 The Five Groups refer to the four noble truths, which are subsumed as the

the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra, and *the Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*, the translations by various masters were complied with the original texts and accorded with the Three Seals of the Dharma.¹

Whereas Kumārajīva breached the precepts by marriage, and Buddhahadra was to be rejected; analyzing historical records, they do not reveal the real reasons behind them. Some proclaim that is due to the social ambiance, which was shallow and ostentatious in that period of time. Because of this, the moral standards declined and people were dispirited, hence such experiences. Taking a closer look at them, it was merely a minor indiscretion. Moreover, An Shigao, Dharmakṣema, Bo Fazu, Bo Fazuo, and the others in this period were all proficient in the Teaching and virtuous to benefit sentient beings extensively; however, they did not die in a peaceful manner. It was the karmic effect which cannot be compromised. Thus, Arahants might still have the torment of head piercing, although they eliminated all passions. Bigan,² who provided earnest advice, got killed. This is in the same logic.

Zhu Fadu claimed to follow Hinayana Buddhism, which was distinct in the Tripitaka. He used a bronze bowl to have meals, which violated the precepts, and let nuns prostrate face to face for repentance, which did not exist in relevant ritual norms. Zhu Fadu was born in Nankang; he had never been to India. Later, he met with Dharmayaśas, who was not a Sutra-pitaka Master concentrating on Hinayana Buddhism. He merely wanted to satisfy his desires and thus differentiated himself from others. Nevertheless, tolerant gentlemen did not decline Zhu Fadu; nuns emulated him quickly, preliminarily accepting his teachings. Women are not satisfied with

Path of seeing, and the path of cultivation, making five.

1 The Three Seals of the Dharma are the three principles of Buddhism that distinguish itself from non-Buddhist teachings: all things are impermanent 諸行無常, all things lack inherent existence (non-self) 諸法無我, and that nirvana is perfect quiescence 涅槃寂靜.

2 Bigan, the uncle (or in some records the brother) of King Zhou 紂王, the last king of Shang Dynasty (c. 1600 BCE-c. 1046 BCE); he slew Bigan by taking out his heart after receiving his “offensive” advice.

teachings easily; they tend to change. Learning about cause-effect, they altered their original intention; knowing the thaumaturge, they competed to study it and neglected cultivation. This is said to be their style.

I personally believe that the orthodox texts are immeasurably vast and profound, over 800 million in number; whereas the translation amounts to a mere thousand fascicles, because the deserts block the way to search for the canon in the West. Attaining that goal, one should watch the beacon to cross the valley or step on wooden stakes to climb the cliff. When they returned with the texts, eight or nine out of ten had been lost. It is this hardship and danger which caused it to repeat multiple times; Shi Faxian, Shi Zhimeng, Shi Zhiyan, and Shi Fayong all departed in groups and returned alone. It is a deep sadness. Therefore, we should know that each scripture circulating in our land had been given a new life into it.

Learners just study one text, proclaiming that the wide reading causes confusion. It is an excuse of slackness instead of a wise theory. Why would I say so? If one wants to search for the true meanings of the Dharma and distinguish the right compliance, how can he decide by a single source of evidence without extensive comparison? Such a way of learning will be a waste of efforts that the masters made to translate different versions.

Many Buddhist scriptures are just stored without being read, well like marvelous jewels are merely enshrined instead of used. Is it not regrettable? If one can learn from the schools of Chan and Vinaya, studying the sutras and sastras, although Jetavana Grove¹ is no longer lush, the Teaching will be still flourishing. Even though the śāla trees² changed color, Buddhahood will always manifest. Shakyamuni Buddha's grace in the remote past will be paid, and the translators' merits in the recent age will be returned. In addition,

1 Jetavana Grove was a major location where the Buddha preached the Dharma in central India.

2 Śāla trees were a type of tree under which the Buddha entered Parinirvana.

if future lives can be straightened out, why should we not make the efforts?

Paeon

Praise the myriad dharma gates,¹ preach profound meanings; the five vehicles² of Buddhism are ever lasting. Every aspect is included in the 80,000 teachings. When time and opportunity opened the door, Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty dreamed of divine manifestation; Kāśyapa-Mātāṅga, Gobharana, Zhi Chen, and Kumārajīva arrived, leaving life and death out of consideration. Clouds of kindness send shelter, waters of wisdom flow to the pier;³ at the end of this age, wholesome conditions are about to appear.

1 Dharma gates refer to the ways to learn and practice the Buddha-Dharma to attain enlightenment.

2 The five vehicles include the three vehicles (paths) of Listeners, Solitary Buddha, and Bodhisattva and the human and celestial being vehicles.

3 The pier refers to the Buddhist metaphor for enlightenment, which is getting to the other shore.

Volume IV

Doctrinal Exegesis Part A

14 main figures 22 auxiliaries

1. Zhu Shixing of Luoyang during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Shulan Mokṣala

Zhu Shixing¹ 朱世行, originally from Yingchuan,² was honest and diligent; his conduct was not altered by joy or torment. He was intelligent, talented, and aloof from worldly interests since boyhood; after his tonsure, he concentrated on Buddhist studies.

In the period of Emperor Ling of the Han Dynasty, Zhu Foshuo translated *the Daoxing jing* 道行經 (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*), which is the older translated version of *the Shorter Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 小品經. However, it was too simple to be clear, so people had difficulty understanding it. Zhu Shixing used to expound the *Daoxing jing* in Luoyang, but he found the statements sketchy and defective. He regretted aloud: “This sutra is an important Buddhist text, yet irrationality exists in the Chinese version.” Thus, he vowed to risk his life to search for the original scripture in the West, departing from Yongzhou³ in the fifth year of the Ganlu Period⁴ of the Wei Dynasty and travelling westwards across the deserts. Arriving in Khotan, he acquired a copy of the Sanskrit version of the sutra, which was 90 chapters in total, as he had hoped. He sent his disciple, named Puṇyadarśa or Forao in Chinese, to carry the scripture back to Luoyang. Before Puṇyadarśa left, many Hinayana learners reported this issue to the local king: “Chinese monks want to disturb the orthodox doctrines by using

1 Zhu Shixing (203-282 CE).

2 Yingchuan is in Yuzhou, Henan province today.

3 Yongzhou, later known as Liangzhou, was an area covering part of Qinghai and Gansu provinces.

4 The Ganlu Period: 256-259 CE.

Brahmanic books. Your Majesty is the owner of this land and should prohibit it. Otherwise, the Dharma will be ruined. Later, people in China will think this is Your Majesty's fault since they are poorly informed." The Khotan King thus prevented Puṇyadarśa from leaving. Zhu Shixing felt remorse and requested for the king to test the scripture by burning it with fire. The king approved instantly. Thereupon, firewood was put in front of the palace to burn the book. Zhu Shixing prayed before the flame: "If the Buddha Dharma should be rightly spread in China, the scripture will not be damaged by the fire; if the deities do not protect it, this will be the pre-destiny, and I will have nothing to say." Then, he put the book in the blaze, and the fire went out immediately. The book was intact; not even a word in the book was damaged. Everyone was astounded and admired him because he touched the deities. Thus, Puṇyadarśa was allowed to return to China and sent the scripture to Shuinan Temple at Cangyuan, Chenliu.¹

A layman named Zhu Shulan 竺叔蘭 was originally Indian. His father sought asylum and came to settle in Henan. Zhu Shulan loved to hunt when he was young. In an experience of reviving after a brief death, he understood the law of cause-effect. Since then he changed his behaviors, studied hard, was keen on orthodox Buddhist doctrines, and widely learned various linguistics; he was also proficient in both Chinese and Sanskrit. Mokṣala 無羅叉 the śramaṇa, a learned bhikṣu from the Western Regions, was erudite in ancient classics. He held the Sanskrit version of *the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光般若, while Zhu Shulan translated it into Chinese. The original manuscript was written on parchment and is still kept in Yuzhang.² In the second year of Tai'an Period,³ Zhi Xiaolong transcribed five copies of the scripture and performed the redaction to finalize the Chinese version. Each chapter did not have titles at that time. The old version was on 14 bolts of cloth; Zhu Shulan asked Zhi Xiaolong to copy it into 20

1 Chenliu is in Kaifeng, Henan Province today.

2 Yuzhang is in Jiangxi Province today.

3 The Tai'an Period, 302-303 CE, was the reign of Emperor Hui of the Western Jin Dynasty.

fascicles.

Zhu Shixing passed away in Khotan at the age of 80. He was cremated according to the western customs. When the firewood was burned out, his body was still intact. Everyone was surprised; they then recited mantra and said: “If the master was really enlightened, the body should have been crematable to comply with Buddhist ritual.” His body instantly disintegrated. The mass put his relics in a stupa that was built to memorialize him. Later, his disciple Fayi returned from Khotan to China and reported the events of his funeral in person. Therefore, *the Zhengxiang lun* 正像論 (*The Treatise on the Right Portraits*) by Sun Chuo states: “Zhu Shixing’s body disintegrated in Khotan,” to describe this event.

2. Zhi Xiaolong of Huaiyang during the Jin Dynasty

Zhi Xiaolong 支孝龍, originally from Huaiyang,¹ was elegant, handsome, talented, and great at communication in his childhood. He frequently read and analyzed *the Shorter Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 小品經, believing that this sutra was the essential doctrine of mind functioning. Ruan Zhan of Chenliu, Yu Kai of Yingzhou,² and six others forged friendships with him through their common interests and aspirations. Their contemporaries called them the “Eight Talents.” Someone sneered at him: “Under the great Jin Dynasty, the country is reunited. Why do śramaṇas not keep their hair, take off monastic robes, give up barbarian clothes, and wear silk?” Zhi Xiaolong replied: “Only concentration on practice leads to a carefree life, being independent of worldly noises can foster devotion. As for the tonsure that damages the appearance, you think our style is shameful, and we consider it a glory giving up what you obsess about. Those who have no interest in fortune usually become more fortunate, and those who detach from satisfaction are more satisfied.” This is an example of his wit in debates.

At that time, Zhu Shulan translated *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光經; Zhi Xiaolong was always fond of the theory of forlessness, so he read this sutra. In about ten days he started to expound it. Afterwards, his whereabouts were unknown. Sun Chuo made a eulogy for him: “For simple theories, one can use metaphors; while for great doctrines, it is difficult to explain. Zhi Xiaolong, an outstanding talent, has attained a higher level. People compete to follow his teachings, to emulate him, and to admire him. His popularity is like the fog on top of a fountain and the fragrance of an orchid that spreads afar.”

1 Huaiyang is in Zhoukou, Henan Province today.

2 Yingzhou is in Fuyang, Anhui Province today.

3. Kang Sengyuan of Mount Yuzhang during the Jin Dynasty Kang Fachang Zhi Mindu

Kang Sengyuan 康僧淵, who held origins in the Western Regions, was born in Chang'an. He had an Indian face but spoke Chinese; he had peaceful and straight conduct and high aspirations. Kang Sengyuan could recite *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光經, *the Daoxing jing* 道行經, *the Shorter Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 小品經, and *the Longer Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 大品經 from memory. During the era of Emperor Cheng in the Jin Dynasty, Kang Sengyuan traveled to the south of the Yangtze River along with Kang Fachang 康法暢 and Zhi Mindu 之敏度.

Kang Fachang was also uncommonly talented, being adept at both analysis and discussion of the Teachings. He wrote *the Renwu shiyi lun* 人物始義論 (*Commentary on the Ideologies of the Personalities*) and other texts. Often holding a horsetail whisk while walking on his way, he sometimes stopped for the remainder of the day to discuss with scholars and virtuous men he met. Yu Yuanguai asked him: "Why do you always hold this horsetail whisk in your hand?" Kang Fachang returned: "The incorruptible do not ask for it, and I do not give it to the greedy. Therefore, it is always in my hand."

Zhi Mindu had intellectual giftedness and a great reputation as well. He wrote *the Records of Scripture Translation* 譯經錄, which is still circulating.

Though Kang Sengyuan's virtuous conduct exceeded both Kang Fachang and Zhi Mindu, he was indifferent of worldly desires, begging for alms frequently when people could hardly recognize him. Afterwards, on his way to beg, Kang Sengyuan met with Yin Hao¹ from Chen Prefecture who asked him about profound meanings of the Dharma. The discussion followed by the debates

1 Yin Hao (303-356 CE) was a famous official and literati in the Jin Dynasty.

on the laws in secular books lasted from day until night; Yin Hao could not convince the Buddhist but rather altered his own opinions. Wang Maohong of Langya teased Kang Fayuan about his big nose and deep eye sockets. Kang Sengyuan said: “The nose is the mountain on the face; the eyes pools. If the mountain is not high, miracles will not exist; if the pools are not deep, they will not be clear.” His contemporaries considered this a fabulous answer.

Kang Sengyuan later built a temple at Mount Yuzhang,¹ located dozens of miles away from the town, next to river and peaks, and surrounded by lush trees and bamboos. Eminent monks and celebrities gathered there. He believed the emptiness principle in *the Brahma-viśeṣa-cinti-paripṛcchā* 持心梵天所問經 was subtle and deep, thus focusing on this sutra in his preaching. Learners flocked to his Dharma talks when they were held. Afterwards, he passed away in this temple.

1 Mount Yuzhang is in Longquan, Zhejiang today.

4. Zhu Faya of Gaoyi during the Jin Dynasty Pifu

Tanxiang Tanxi

Zhu Faya 竺法雅 was originally from Hejian¹ and had a prudent and generous deportment. He was learned in non-Buddhist knowledge from his childhood and became proficient in Buddhist teachings after growing up. Local scholars came to him for tuition without exception. At that time, all of his students studied worldly classics instead of Buddhist teachings. Thereupon, Zhu Faya, together with Kang Falang and other monks, compared Buddhist Truth with relevant concepts in Chinese classics so that the students would understand through such examples and analogies. Later, this methodology became known as “Geyi.”² Similarly, Pifu 毗浮, Tanxiang 曇相, and others taught their disciples in this way as well.

Zhu Faya was magnanimous, elegant, and good at communication. He expounded Buddhist Dharma and non-Buddhist classics alternately. Along with Dao’an, Zhu Fatai, and the others, he frequently discussed and analyzed critical points of the Dharma Laws. Later, he built a monastery in Gaoyi³ and taught around one hundred monks without slackness.

Tanxi 曇習, a disciple of Zhu Faya, emulated his master. Being a great communicator as well, he was highly respected by Shi Xuan, the crown prince of the bogus Later Zhao⁴ government.

1 Hejian is in Xian County, Hebei province today.

2 Geyi 格義 is a way of analogy to convey philosophical messages. In Chinese, Ge means compare or measure; Yi means concept or meaning.

3 Gaoyi is in Baixiang, Hebei today.

4 The Later Zhao Dynasty, 319-352 CE, was founded by Shi Le of the Jie ethnicity.

5. Kang Falang of Zhongshan during the Jin Dynasty

Lingshao

Kang Falang 康法朗, originally from Zhongshan,¹ joined the monastic order at a young age and observed the precepts strictly. He used to read the sutras and was touched by the descriptions of the woods with double trees where the Buddha took Parinirvana and the Deer Park in Sarnath where the Buddha preached his very first sermon. He often sighed: “I cannot meet the Great Sage in person; why can I not go visit the holy locales?” Then, he vowed to go to Kapilavastu and pay homage at the holy sites. Kang Falang and four Dharma friends departed from Zhangye, went west, and crossed the deserts. After three days of travel, no more passengers were in sight; they then suddenly saw the ruins of a temple covered with weeds as high as a man. Two moldering rooms occupied by two persons, one in each; neither talked to the other. One was chanting sutras while the other had diarrhea; his body wastes spread all over the room, stinking up the place. Kang Falang told his companions: “Monastics are all brethren for the Dharma makes us close to each other. Since we encounter this situation, how can we leave him?” Kang Falang thus stayed there six days to take care of the patient, washing and nursing him. On the seventh day, the rooms were abruptly full of flowers, smelling fragrant. He then realized that the two persons were deities. One of them told Kang Falang: “The other one in the next room is my teacher who has attained the Stage of No Further Training;² you can seek counsel from him.” Kang Falang hence went to the other deity. The other one said: “You are sincere, should enter the Path, and thus do not have to go to the west. The long journey will not help your cultivation. You should cultivate yourselves, do not miss this great opportunity. Kang Falang’s merits however are still weak and impure; your ultimate wish cannot come true without further experience. You will return

1 Zhongshan is near Zhengding, Hebei Province today.

2 The Stage of No Further Training is reached by an *aśaikṣa* 無學, a practitioner who has completed the practice of structured meditation and other forms of discipline. They are in the last of the four stages 四果 of the *śrāvaka* path.

to China to be a great master.” Whereupon the four stayed there to cultivate, only Kang Falang continued his voyage to the west. He traveled various countries while studying and researching Buddhist sutras and sastras. Afterwards, he returned to Zhongshan, and hundreds of disciples followed him; the lineage continued without interruption. Later, his whereabouts became unknown. Sun Chuo made a eulogy for him: “There is a saying, do not hide jade or deficiency. Kang Falang was bright, but he hid his capacity, was careful all the time, studied the most profound, and preached about subtlety. How was this proven? Walking on frost, one should realize ice will come to be.”¹

Lingshao 令韶, Kang Falang’s disciple, was from a Lyu family in Yanmen.² He was fond of hunting when he was young; later aspiring to be a monk, he followed Kang Falang as his teacher. Lingshao was good at study and reflection, mastering meditation as well. He could enter concentration for several days. Later, he moved to Mount Liuquan and excavated a cave for sitting meditation. After Kang Falang’s death, he made a wooden statue of his teacher and worshiped it day and night. *The Zhengxiang lun* by Sun Chuo reads: “Lyu Shao concentrated in Zhongshan.” That is him.

1 “Walking on frost, one should realize ice will come to be,” is a Chinese saying that describes the ability of prediction by presage.

2 Yanmen is near Dai County, Shanxi Province.

6. Zhu Facheng of Dunhuang during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Faxing Zhu Facun

Zhu Facheng 竺法乘 was of unknown origins. He had outstanding intelligence and insight from his boyhood. Following Dharmarakṣa (or Zhu Fahu) as a novice, his deportment was honest and simple; with great aspirations, the teacher appreciated him very much. At that time, Dharmarakṣa's preaching had gained a huge reputation in the Guanzhong area. A man from a notable family in Chang'an planned to convert in Buddhism. He would, however, test Dharmarakṣa's virtue, going to the master to ask for a loan of 200,000 coins. Before Dharmarakṣa replied, Zhu Facheng, at the age of 13, responded: "The master agreed." When the visitor left, Zhu Facheng said: "I observed this person; he would not need the money, but rather tests your virtue." Dharmarakṣa returned: "I think so as well." The next day, the man came with his clan of around 100 people, asked for the granting of precepts, and apologized for the loan request. After this interlude, the master and the disciple became more famous.

Later, Zhu Facheng went westwards and arrived in Dunhuang, where he built temples and taught disciples tirelessly, leaving his life and death out of consideration. The brutal locals hence forsook heresy and returned to the truth; the barbarians received education, and the Dharma spread to the west of the country. That is his achievement. Afterwards, he passed away at his abode. Sun Chuo compared Zhu Facheng and Wang Rong¹ in *the Daoxian lun* 道顯論 (*The Virtuous on the Path*), it reads: "Both Zhu Facheng and the Marquis of Anfeng had intellectual giftedness from childhood. Although one was monastic and the other secular, their codes of conduct are different, and the approaches they adopted were comparable." Meritorious scholar Ji Yong made a eulogy for Zhu Facheng.

¹ Wang Rong (234-305) was one of the seven Bamboo grove scholars in the Wei and Jin Dynasties; he was entitled the Marquis of Anfeng.

Zhu Faxing 竺法行 and Zhu Facun 竺法存, the school friends of Zhu Facheng, both abided in mountains to cultivate their quality, becoming well-known at that time as well.

7. Zhu Daoqian of Mount Yang in Shandong during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Fayou Zhu Fayun Kang Fashi Zhu Faji

Zhu Daoqian¹ 竺道潛, style name Fashen, was from a Wang family in Langya and was the younger brother of Wang Dun, the Prime Minister and Duke of Wuchangjun of the Jin Dynasty. He renounced worldly life at the age of 18, following Liu Yuanzhen as his teacher. Liu Yuanzhen enjoyed a great reputation of intelligence for a long time, thus Sun Chuo praised him: “Peaceful and humble, patient and aloof, who could really savor these characters? That is our Master Liu. His speeches are gracious, and his appearance inspires the ignorant. His inner world is immense and abundant.” After Zhu Daoqian started his learning under Liu Yuanzhen, he became indifferent of secular glamor, studying the absolute Truth earnestly. His small talks could already deliver messages of the Dharma; hence he gained fame in the Western Jin. In addition, he had an exalted and upright look.

At the age of 24, he expounded *the Lotus Sutra* and *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Since he mulled over them and had a deep understanding, in addition to his excellent verbal expressions, the number of audience members pursuing his lectures and savoring the Dharma often reached 500. In the first year of the Yongjia Period in the Jin Dynasty, Zhu Daoqian came to the south of the Yangtze River to escape the anarchy in the north. In the Jin court, Emperor Yuan of Zhongzong, Emperor Ming of Suzu, Wang Dun, the Prime Minister, and Yu Liang, the Officer of Grand General with the style name Yuangui, all admired his elegance and virtue, associating with him respectfully. In the years of the Jianwu Period² and Taining Period,³ Zhu Daoqian always wore getas⁴ when going to the palace; thanks to his high moral standards for himself, he was known by his contemporaries as a personality of purity.

1 Zhu Daoqian (286 CE-374 CE).

2 The Jianwu Period: 317-318 CE.

3 The Taining Period: 323-326 CE.

4 Getas are wooden slippers.

After the deaths of Emperors Yuan and Ming, Wang Dun and Yu Liang successively passed away as well. Thereupon Zhu Daoqian dwelt on the Shan Mountain in seclusion to avoid the crowd, so the followers that wanted to train under him made a queue at the gate of the mountain. At ease, he preached for over 30 years with either *the Vaipulya Sutras* or *Lao Zi* 老子 and *Zhuang Zi* 莊子. All of the ones who learned under him were versed in both Buddhist Teachings and non-Buddhist classics. Emperor Ai of the Jin Dynasty believed in the Buddha-Dharma, repeatedly sending for him. Zhu Daoqian hence came to the palace temporarily since he could not defy the decree. Then, he expounded the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra at the Dana Assembly the emperor had arranged. The emperor and officials all praised his sermon. At the time, the future Emperor Jianwen was holding the position of Prime Minister; the entire court was convinced that he was virtuous. The future emperor believed that Zhu Daoqian's conduct should be the model for both monastics and laypeople. In addition, the master was respected by the late emperors, so the prime minister treated him with reverence and offered more than defined by previous etiquette. After his succession to the throne, he paid even more homage to the master. Zhu Daoqian used to come across Liu Dan of the Principality of Pei¹ at the palace of Emperor Jianwen. Liu Dan sneered at him, saying: "Why does a monk come to the palace?" Zhu Daoqian answered: "In your eyes, this is a palace; to me, it is a mere thatched cottage." He Chong, the official of Sikong, was noble and pure-minded; he believed in Buddhist discourses and respected Zhu Daoqian as his teacher, inviting the master to hold Buddhist rituals several times.

Though Zhu Daoqian moved from the west to the east along with the imperial court,² he did not enjoy life in the palace. Thereupon he sent a letter of resignation and went back to Mount Yang in

1 The Principality of Pei is in Anhui Province today.

2 The capital of the Western Jin Dynasty moved from Luoyang to Chang'an due to the invasion of northern tribes. In 316 CE, the emperor surrendered in Chang'an, hence the end of the Western Jin Dynasty. Then, the Eastern Jin Dynasty was established in 317 CE with its capital in Jianye.

Shan County¹ to pursue his previous goal. Since then, he lived a carefree life in mountainous areas to pass his time. Zhi Dun sent a messenger to express his willingness to buy Mount Wozhou, which was next to Mount Yang. Zhu Daoqian replied: “If you will come, it is yours. Who had ever heard that Chaofu and Xuyou² would retreat after the purchase of hills?” Later Zhi Dun mentioned Zhu Daoqian in his letter to a Korean monk, saying: “Venerable Master Zhu Fashen,³ the younger brother of Duke Liu from Zhongzhou, strictly follows the noble path and delivers both monastics and laypeople. He used to live in the capital and guide the Buddhist communities; being well versed in Buddha Dharma and non-Buddhist classics, he is a true grand master for Dharma transmission. Afterwards, since the great cause is on track, he built a cottage and settled in mountain area to accommodate his peaceful character. Aloof from worldly noises, he cultivates his pure mind. Presently, he lives in Mount Yang, where his disciples gather and study under him. He expounds the Teachings in nobleness and purity and is surrounded by praises from all directions.”

Zhu Daoqian passed away in his cottage at the age of 89 in the second year of the Kangning Period under the Jin Dynasty. Emperor Xiaowu of Liezong issued a memorial essay: “Master Zhu Fashen comprehended the Dharma profoundly and flawlessly. His knowledge-insight was pure and just. He gave up the glory of the prime minister and put on simple clothes with quiet colors to dwell on remote mountains and practice Buddhism without negligence. At that time, he was expected to spread the Teachings and to free all sentient beings; unfortunately, he departed peacefully. It is genuinely heartbreaking. I hereby offer 100,000 coins for his funeral and order the messengers to deliver it this very night.” Sun Chuo compared Zhu Daoqian with Liu Ling⁴ and made these

1 Shan County is in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province today.

2 Chaofu and Xuyou were two virtuous hermits in ancient China. Emperor Yao wanted to concede the throne to them, but they did not accept.

3 Fashen was Zhu Daoqian’s style name. A style name was given to a learner in ancient China for use by people (especially contemporaries) outside the family.

4 Liu Ling, style name Bolun, was one of the seven sages of the bamboo grove.

comments: “Master Zhu Fashen was honest and reliable with high aspirations; while Liu Ling was unrestrained and considered the universe a small place. Although Liu Ling did worse than Master Zhu Fashen with respect to noble conduct, his mind was as great as the master’s.”

At that time, another monk at Mount Yang by the name of Zhu Fayou 竺法友 was also earnest to research the True Dharma and versed in all kinds of classics. He used to learn the Abhidharma under Zhu Daoqian and was able to recite it from memory after one night of study. Zhu Daoqian told him: “The capability to remember after reading once was praised by people in ancient times. If Shakyamuni Buddha preached the Dharma in the Jin Dynasty, he would definitely choose you to be one of the five hundred Arhats.” Zhu Fayou started to expound sutras at the age of 24; later, he built Tai Temple in the south of Shan County.

Zhu Fayun 竺法蘊 could understand the profound and subtle meanings of the Dharma, specializing particularly on *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Kang Fashi 康法識 was capable of comprehending the Teachings and famous for his calligraphy, both his cursive style and official script style in particular. Once he met with Kang Xin, who claimed that his calligraphy excelled Kang Fashi’s. Thereupon the two respectively copied the same cursive work of Wang Xizhi,¹ the General of Right Army, to determine who was better. However, the copies were stolen and sold on the market; no one could tell the difference between the two copies. Kang Fashi later transcribed many classics that were highly appreciated. Zhu Faj 竺法濟 showed outstanding talent from boyhood and wrote *the Biographies of Aspiring Śramaṇas* 高逸沙門傳. These personalities were all excellent disciples of Zhu Daoqian. Sun Chuo has made eulogies for them; I hereby omit them.

1 Wang Xizhi was the most famous calligrapher in ancient China.

8. Zhi Dun of Mount Wozhou in Shan County during the Jin Dynasty Zhi Faqian Zhu Fayang

Zhi Dun¹ 支遁, style name Daolin, was from a Guan family in Chenliu, some records show he was from Lin County.² He was intelligent, precocial, and gifted with Buddhist qualities since his childhood. Upon his arrival in the capital of the Jin Dynasty, Wang Meng of Taiyuan attached importance to him, saying: “Zhi Dun’s elegance and accuracy are not inferior to Wang Bi.”³ Yin Rong of Chen Prefecture was acquainted with Wei Jie,⁴ highly praising the latter for the purity of his spiritual state and saying that no one could be in the same class as him. After meeting Zhi Dun, Yin Rong was amazed and said that Zhi Dun made him feel like he was seeing Wei Jie again. Zhi Dun’s family followed the Buddhist tradition for generations; he was imprinted with the extraordinary laws from a young age. He retreated at Mount Yuhang; contemplating the chapters of *the Daoxing jing* 道行經 (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) and mulling over the details of *the Huiyin sanmei jing* 慧印三昧經 (*Sutra on the Wisdom-seal Absorption*), he was able to transcend human understating and be inspired by celestial elucidation. Zhi Dun joined the monastic order at the age of 25. In each auditorium, he could well outline and summarize the essences, but he omitted some details. He was hence despised by the conservatives. When Xie An⁵ learned about Zhi Dun’s deeds, he appreciated him greatly and said: “This is like how Jiu Fang Yin selected horses.⁶ The color and gender of the horses have little importance; the speed capacity does.” Celebrated scholars and officials such as Wang Qia, Liu Dan, Yin Hao, Xu

1 Zhi Dun (314-366 CE).

2 Lin County is in Henan province, just like Chenliu.

3 Wang Bi (226-249 CE), style name Fusi, was a famous philosopher, writer, and the founder of the Metaphysic School of the Wei Dynasty.

4 Wei Jie was a contemporary scholar who was fond of metaphysics.

5 Xie An, a famous scholar-official in the Jin Dynasty, was highly intelligent since his childhood but physically weak and prone to illness; he later assumed important posts in the Jin court.

6 The horse selection was a story in *Springs and Autumns of Master Lü* 呂氏春秋.

Xun, Xi Chao, Sun Chuo, Heng Yanbiao, Wang Jingren, He Cidao, Wang Wendu, Xie Changxia, and Yuan Yanbo all became friends with him for unworldly associations.

Once, with Liu Xizhi at Baima Temple, Zhi Dun discussed *the Chapter of Unfettering of Zhuang Zi* 莊子逍遙篇. Liu Xizhi proclaimed: “To comply with one’s nature is unfettered.” Zhi Dun said: “Not so. For instance, the nature of Jie and Zhou¹ is cruelty. If compliance to one’s nature is unfettering, then they should be too.” Thereupon, Zhi Dun made a commentary to this chapter. Numerous Confucianist scholars and those learned in classics all admired and appreciated him. Later, Zhi Dun returned to Wu Prefecture and built Zhishan Temple; shortly after, he would go to Shan Mountain. At that time, Xie An was the Prefect of Wuxing. He wrote to Zhi Dun: “I long to meet you every day, so I calculate the dates to expect your arrival. Learning about your plan to retreat in Shan Mountain to cultivate virtue, I feel disconsolate. Life is a mere process of lodging in this world; glories and joy have become the past. I am now upset and sentimental all the time; the only thing I look forward to is your coming, so I can talk to you and dispel my sadness. Spending time in such a way, one day can be equal to a thousand years. In my prefecture, there are many mountains that are quiet, peaceful, and good for recuperation. Living in this area is alike to staying in Shan Mountain. Yet the way to cure this disease is different. I desperately hope you will consider this predestined connection and fulfill my expectation by meeting me here.” Wang Xizhi was in Kuaiji at the time; he often heard from others the praise to Zhi Dun, but he did not believe it. He said: “This is merely to show off his skills, nothing special.” Afterwards, Zhi Dun returned to Shan Mountain and passed by Kuaiji. Wang Xizhi went to visit him in order to observe his conduct and appearance. During the interview, Wang Xizhi asked: “Can I listen to your comments on *the Chapter of Unfettering*?” Zhi Dun wrote an essay with thousands of words; labelling a brand-new theory, the wit and

¹ Jie and Zhou were the two cruelest tyrants respectively in the Xia Dynasty and the Shang Dynasty.

language were marvelous. Wang Xizhi was too excited to sit down, walking around and keeping this essay in his hands. Wanting to be more acquainted with him, he thus invited Zhi Dun to live in Lingjia Temple.

Soon after, Zhi Dun came to Shan Mountain and built a temple on Mount Wozhou to preach the Dharma. Over one hundred monks followed him to study. Seeing that one of his disciples laxed on his studies, Zhi Dun wrote an article titled *Motto* 座右銘 to encourage him. It reads: “Strive, and strive, as the path to greatness is endless. He lost his spirit. Why else would one stop? In the boundless three realms where sentient beings are blindly fettered, afflictions arise outwardly, and the mind is deluded inwardly. Sentient beings will die for attachment to affection and pursue unreal objects tirelessly. Such life is as tiny as a drip of water. My body is not the real ‘me;’ who could inflict passions on me? A wise man naturally possesses noble conduct as he knows comfort would be dangerous. Hence, he persists in calmness and simplicity, purifying himself in meditation, strictly observing precepts, and practicing subtle principles in an exalted manner. His mind dwells on the noble path. He aspires highly, acts humbly, eliminates what enclouds the mind, and crystalizes the spirit. He cures various diseases, unlocks the function of the mind; recognizes the emptiness of the five aggregates, and discerns the unreality of the four elements. Following the finger metaphors¹ without being obsessed by them, he ceases attachment but does not abandon it. Having savored the ultimate Truth, being able to state it and perceive the subtle metaphysics, he would comply with self-nature and adapt it to worldly occasions. He lets go of the past and clings no more. Urged by the father-like enlightened one, we shall follow and aspire like a young child.” His contemporaries commented that his ability enabled him to accomplish a greater cause of salvation, but they also found that he was aloof from worldly glamour, thus not engaging further, which

1 The finger metaphor was one of the famous metaphors on Buddha-Dharma. It compares the Buddha’s Teaching to a finger pointing to the moon; however, the moon is the goal that practitioners should discover, not the finger itself.

was against the spirit of Mahayana. Zhi Dun hence wrote an article called *the Shimeng Lun* 釋蒙論 (*Explanation to the Ignorant*) to respond to these claims.

Zhi Dun spent his later years at Mount Shicheng,¹ building and dwelling in Xiguang Temple on the mountain. He contemplated in sitting meditation, consuming vegetation and spring water in the valleys and focusing on the indifference of becoming and cessation. In this temple, he commentated on sutras such as *the Great Sutra on Mindfulness of Inhalation and Exhalation* 安般, and *the Catvāri dhyānāni* 四禪. He also wrote *the Jiseyouxuan lun* 即色遊玄論 (*The Treatise on forms and metaphysics*), *the Treatise on the Knowledge the Buddha Would not Argue* 聖不辯知論, *the Daoxingzhigui* 道行旨歸 (*Commentary on Cultivation Conduct*), and *the Xuedaojie* 學道誡 (*Admonition to Practitioners*) among other texts. These works were comparable to those of Aśvaghōṣa and Nāgārjuna, whose contents reflect the Truth and comply with the principle of Suchness. Later on, he came down from the mountain and arrived in Shanyin County² to expound *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 維摩經; he explained the meanings after Xu Xun recited a passage of the sutra.³ When Zhi Dun elucidated a notion, the audiences all said that Xu Xun could not challenge him; when Xu Xun raised a question, they thought Zhi Dun might fail to answer. They questioned and answered each other in turn until the end of the lectures; one could not demolish the other's arguments. The audiences thus grasped Zhi Dun's points, but when they were asked to repeat them, they were only able to clearly define the two-vehicle theory rather than of the three-vehicle theory.

During Emperor Ai's reign, His Majesty sent for Zhi Dun many times, thereupon he came to the capital city. He stayed in Dong'an Temple and expounded *the Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

1 Mount Shicheng, about 10 miles from Mount Wozhou, is in Shaoxing, Zhejiang today.

2 Shanyin County is in the Shaoxing area today.

3 Since the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the preaching of sutras was carried out by two masters: one recited and the other explained the meaning.

Both monastics and laypeople revered him; the entire court admired him as well. Wang Meng of Taiyuan composed an article with sophisticated theory and gracious words. Seeking an interview with Zhi Dun, he presented hundreds of sentences and believed that Zhi Dun would fail to refute them. The latter spoke peacefully: “You and I have been apart for several years, yet your speech has not improved.” Wang Meng left in shame and sighed: “Zhi Dun is really at the same level of Wang Bi and He Yan¹ in the Buddhist circle.” Xi Chao asked Xie An: “How do you compare the speech of Zhi Dun with that of Ji Kang?”² Xie An replied: “Ji Kang will need to progress before he can attain Zhi Dun’s level.” Xi Chao returned: “What about his contrast to Yin Hao?” Xie An said: “In regard to serious debates, Yin Ho might be able to excel Zhi Dun; with respect to probing profound meanings and sources, Yin Hao would fall behind.” Xi Chao later wrote the following words in the letter to a friend: “Master Zhi Dun is capable of understanding subtle and marvelous meanings intuitively. He is indeed the number one meritorious personality in the hundreds of years of Dharma transmission and promotion.”

After nearly three years in the capital, Zhi Dun wanted to return to the mountain in the east. He submitted a note to the emperor and said:

“Before my statement, Zhi Dun first pays homage to Your Majesty. I intend to take the liberty to chant outside the worldly communities, but have yet been unable to follow the sages of the past, thus violating Buddhist Teachings. In accordance with the Buddha-Dharma, one should return to simplicity and the truth, detach from desires to revert to self-nature, be itinerant in wonderful emptiness,

1 He Yan, style name Pingshu (190-249 CE), was a philosopher from a noble family in the Wei Dynasty that married a princess, was fond of the metaphysics of Laozi and Zhuangzi, and wrote the Treatise on the Virtues 道德論.

2 Ji Kang 嵇康 (224-263 CE), style name Shuye, was the leading figure of the seven sages of the bamboo grove; He was a philosopher and writer with unparalleled comprehension in the Daoist School and Confucianism, among others.

persistent in the supreme principles, observant of the disciplines and precepts, and assist in the monarch's governance and education. They should enjoy quietness and self-consistency, carry on deep loving-kindness as well as filial piety, harm not sentient beings as small as worms, bear compassion in mind, guard against unkind acts, be prudent in harmony before the emergence of issues, prevent predestined unwholesomeness, uphold self-control against ego, and engage in high profile noble causes without regret. For these reasons, the virtuous monarchs who assume the responsibility of governing the subjects all admire the Buddhist approach, follow its principles, probe its essence, and adapt its forms. Hence the religion is eternally flourishing, instead of fading after generations. Your Majesty has the heavenly empowered virtue, practices the Buddha-Dharma tirelessly, emulates the holy saints, and even forgets the time to attend court. Your deeds are well like the bell and drum beating in the morning, resonating among the public, and like the breeze blowing nicely, which is our great fortune. I hereby wish Your Majesty has the longevity of the heaven and the earth, transmits the supreme Teachings, exterminates the old slanders, and searches for celestial protection, thereupon be able to avoid muddy roads and ride the great vehicle on a flat path. In such a case, it will be like the spirit of Mount Tai who was not befuddled by Gentleman Ji's worship and then became a deity. Monarchs would not sacrifice without proper rites, which require a round platform; merits then become everlasting. If merit and holiness are followed respectively, humans and deities do not disrupt each other. Monarchs govern the subjects who do not promote kith and kin first, and deities do not only protect those who provide sacrifices. Merits and virtues cover the world, and heavenly beings bless the humans; thereupon the land under heaven will become an auspicious home, and the Jin Dynasty will have a fortunate country. All things comply with the right rules in non-action; all people submit themselves to Your Majesty's governance. Regulations and sentences will be carried out by administrations. One's life is not kept on account of grace but the rewards gained by one's own merits; the death sentence is not the result of anger, but rather punishment is what he deserves.

To advocate for the welfare of the public is to meet the heavenly requirement, using fair measures to satisfy nether codes. That is, ‘why should the sky speak out? The four seasons function well themselves.’¹ Different from worldly fame and gains, I lived in the mountains to the east, had vegetarian food, and washed at the creek, wearing ragged clothes and never thinking of an opportunity to see the imperial palace. Unexpectedly, Your Majesty’s widely spread favor reached my remote thatched cottage; the decree requesting my presence in the capital came repeatedly, which put me in a position of dilemma and confusion. After my arrival, I have been honored by Your Majesty’s interview several times, and treated with politeness and courtesy. Your Majesty kindly seeks advice from me, but I however feel guilty on the ground of being unworthy of this grace. I am unable to provide helpful ideas and resolutions to satisfy your needs, thus unease enclouds my mind, and I often sweat at my seat. At the end of Qin Dynasty, the four elders² were called to the Han Dynasty’s court, and Duan Ganmu served at the Wei Dynasty court;³ those were under specific circumstances and for discussing particular topics. I cannot be compared with those sages due to my absence of virtue. Every move will be against my aspiration. Wandering in the palace and preaching to the monarch will lead to trouble because I have no basis to do so, nor any contribution. On the other hand, time flies, and I frequently sigh aloud. Plus, those with the same aspirations as mine live elsewhere; every time I look to the east, I feel sorry. I hereby plead with Your Majesty to let me return to the mountains; treat birds with the way that suits their nature. That is the best favor. Above reports my true thoughts; I have prepared rations for the journey back home. Please kindly consider my humble request, Your Majesty.”

The emperor instantly approved his request and offered money

1 “The four seasons function themselves,” is quoted from *the Chapter on Yang Huo of Analects of Confucius* 論語 . 陽貨 .

2 The four elders were four senior hermits who had retired in the mountains but went to the Han court to help educate the prince upon the order of the Queen Lyu.

3 Duan Ganmu served the court but refused the noble title.

and abundant gifts to him. The celebrated official and scholars organized a farewell banquet at Zhenglue Pavilion. Cai Xi arrived at the banquet first and thus sat next to Zhi Dun; Xie An arrived right after him. At that moment, Cai Xi had to deal with another matter and left the table for a while; Xie An then moved his seat next to Zhi Dun. When Cai Xi returned, he took the cushion with Xie An still on it and threw it on the floor, yet Xie An did not mind. This is how Zhi Dun was welcomed by the celebrities.

Soon Zhi Dun went back to Shan Mountain and spent the rest of his days in mountainous areas. Once, a man offered a horse to Zhi Dun, the latter was fond of it and kept it for himself. Some contemporaries criticized him; Zhi Dun answered: "I like its elegance. I just have it temporarily." Later, another man sent him a crane. Zhi Dun told the crane: "You are supposed to fly in the sky; you cannot enjoy being a pet." He then set it free. When Zhi Dun was a little boy, he would discuss a biological question: whether eating uncooked chicken eggs should be considered killing. He believed it should not and his teacher could not convince him. Shortly after, the teacher died. One day, Zhi Dun saw his teacher holding an egg and throwing it on the ground. The eggshell broke and a chick came out; in an instant, both the teacher and the chick disappeared. Zhi Dun was hence inspired and only took vegetables as food.

Zhi Dun once passed by Yuyao¹ Valley and stayed in a house there. After leaving, however, he returned to the valley the next morning. People asked him why, and he replied: "Xie An often came here in the old days, staying for over 10 days each time. Now, when I look around, sorrow and longing arise naturally." Later, his sickness turned grave; he then moved back to the house in the valley. He passed away at the age of 53 on the fourth day of the fourth leap month in the lunar calendar during the first year of the Taihe Period in the Jin Dynasty. He was buried directly and the tomb is still in that valley. Some people say he died on Shan Mountain, but it is

1 Yuyao is now in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province.

unprovable. Xi Chao made a eulogy, Yuan Hong wrote the epitaph, and Zhou Tanbao composed memorial speech for him. Sun Chuo, in his *Daoxian lun*, compared Zhi Dun with Xiang Xiu:¹ “Zhi Dun and Xiang Xiu were both learned in *Zhuang Zi* and *Lao Zi*; they lived in different times but had the same aptitude.” In his *Yudao Lun* 喻道論 (*Metaphors on the Path*), Sun Chuo indicated: “Zhi Dun had a clear mind and vision, was physically harmonious, and would not confront the environment. His philosophical theory was pure and rich, just as his spirituality. That is why men rushed to him from afar, and why the stupid could not understand him.” Later on, a gentleman named Dai Kui passed by his tomb, sighing: “Zhi Dun’s preaching still lingers, whereas the trees at his tomb are already lush. I hope his ideas will circulate eternally and do not disappear with his destiny.”

Zhi Dun had a school friend named Zhi Faqian 支法虔 who comprehended the Dharma in an extraordinary way. He passed away prior to Zhi Dun; the latter lamented aloud: “In ancient times, after the death of his trustful friend from Ying, Shi the carpenter would not use his axe anymore;² Yu Boya³ would not play his guqin⁴ after Zhong Ziqi died. Now that I can reckon their feelings, it makes a lot of sense to me. When the friend who could understand me died, there was no one I could talk to any longer. This sadness stuck in my mind, equalling the death of myself.” Thus he wrote an article titled: *Qiewu zhang* 切悟章 (*Chapter of Deep Understanding*), completing it right before his death. Actually,

1 Xiang Xiu (c. 227-272 CE), one of the seven sages of bamboo grove, was a philosopher and writer.

2 The story of Shi the carpenter is quoted from Zhuangzi. A man from Ying (in Hubei Province) got a drop of mortar on his nose; a carpenter named Shi used his axe to cut it off with one stroke. This story reveals the importance of the both sides of an accomplishment: the excellent skill of Shi and the trust of the man from Ying.

3 Yu Boya (387 BCE-299 BCE) was a famous musician who broke his instrument after his friend Zhong Ziqi died because the former believed that only his friend could really understand what he played.

4 A Guqin is a Chinese musical instrument with seven strings, similar to a zither.

he passed away as soon as he put down the pen. The works by Zhi Dun are collected in ten fascicles, which are still popular among the public.

At that time, a man named Zhu Fayang 竺法仰 in the same, eastern region was also renowned for his intelligence. Wang Tan¹ thought highly of him. After his death, the master manifested himself before Wang Tan to encourage his friend to cultivate with diligence.

¹ Wang Tan (330-375) was a famous minister and calligrapher in the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

9. Yu Falan of Shan Mountain during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Faxing Zhi Fayuan Yu Fadao

Yu Falan 於法蘭 was originally from Gaoyang.¹ He had extraordinary talent and conduct since his childhood. He joined the monastic order when he was 15 and cultivated with assiduity from that point. He studied the canonic texts day and night, learned, and searched for the Dharma, constantly in the lead. At the age of 20, he came to be elegant and handsome. Yu Falan was renowned for his Dharma studies in the Sanhe area;² near and far, his fame spread to all directions. By nature, he was fond of the landscapes of mountains, rivers, woods, and springs, so he often dwelt in mountainous areas. At one time, he lived on a mount during the winter. The snow and ice were deep and hard. A tiger appeared in his cottage; Zhu Falan took it easy, and the tiger was meek, staying overnight then going away. The deities and spirits in the mountains frequently listened to his lectures at his place. These are examples of his virtue, which could touch the heavenly and earthly gods.

Later, he heard that the scenery of Shan Mountain in the south was the best in the country. Thereupon he strolled to Dong'ou,³ toured Mount Tu and Mount Sheng in the area, and then settled at the foot of Mount Shicheng in a locale that later became Yuanhua Temple. His contemporaries believed that he was comparable to Yu Liang. Sun Chuo made a comparison between him and Ruan Ji:⁴ “Master Yu Falan abided outside the world; with marvelous and exalted conduct, he could be named the highest in virtuous cultivation. While Ruan Ji was independent of worldly noises, he is thus in the same class as Zhu Falan.” After staying in Shan Mountain for a while, Yu Falan lamented sadly: “Although Buddhism is flourishing now, the canonical texts are still incomplete. If I could hear the complete and perfect Dharma, I would die for it immediately.”

1 Gaoyang is now in Li County, Hebei Province.

2 The Sanhe area refers to Henan and Hebei provinces today.

3 Dong'ou indicates the eastern region of China.

4 Ruan Ji, style name Sizong (210-263), was one of the seven sages of the bamboo grove.

Soon afterward, he departed to the Western Regions in search of rare Teachings. However, he passed away in Xianglin County¹ on his way. Zhi Dun the śramaṇa erected a statue of the master and made a eulogy, saying: “Yu Falan has transcended the worldly level and realized the full awakening. He gracefully dwelt in the wooded, mountainous area so much that a tiger could be tamed by him.” A supplement biography describes: “Yu Falan once moved a dried spring and let water gush out, just as what Zhu Fahu did.” This detail remains unprovable.

Zhu Faxing 竺法興, Zhi Fayuan 支法淵, and Yu Fadao 於法道 had equivalent virtues to Yu Falan. While Zhu Faxing was famous for his wide range of knowledge, Zhi Fayuan was famous for his talent, and Yu Fadao was famous for his profound understanding of the Teachings.

¹ Xianglin County is in Vietnam today.

10. Yu Fakai of Mount Bai in Shan County during the Jin Dynasty Zhu Fawei

Yu Fakai 於法開, whose origins are unknown, followed Master Yu Falan as his teacher. His profound thoughts and insight were unveiled by his commentaries. He specialized in *the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光經 and *the Lotus Sutra* 法華經. He also learned the skills of Jīvaka,¹ becoming proficient in medicine. Once, when he was practicing alms begging, he came to a household where a woman was experiencing difficult labor; multiple physicians were at their wit's end, and the entire family was panicked. Yu Fakai said: "Do not worry." The master of the family was killing a sheep, trying to seek help from heterodox sacrifice. Yu Fakai thereupon asked him to take the meat and make some soup. He had the woman drink it, and then he applied acupuncture based on the woman's situation. Shortly after, the woman gave birth to a child covered by amniotic membrane.

In the fifth year of the Shengping Period² in the Jin Dynasty, Emperor of Xiaozong fell ill. After testing his pulse, Yu Fakai knew that the disease had become incurable. He refused to go to the palace again. Empress Kangxian made an edict that said: "His Majesty merely has an indisposition, however, Yu Fakai stopped at the entrance of the palace when he was called on for pulse testing yesterday. Shirking responsibility out of fear, he should be detained and punished." Soon later, the emperor died, and the master was absolved. Afterwards, he returned to Mount Shicheng in Shan County and continued the construction of Yuanhua Temple. Then, he relocated to Lingjiu Temple on Mount Bai. Yu Fakai often argued about the relationship between forms and emptiness with Zhi Dun. He Mo from Lujiang³ recorded the arguments of Yu Fakai; while Xi Chao of Gaoping made detailed comments on Zhi

1 Jīvaka, a famous physician in India, was a contemporary of Shakyamuni Buddha.

2 The Shengping Period: 357-361.

3 Lujiang is now in Shucheng, Anhui Province.

Dun's points. These are still circulating today.

Yu Fakai had a disciple named Yu Fawei 於法威 who was clear, clever, and witty in communication. Thus, Sun Chuo made a eulogy for the two of them: “*The Book of Changes*¹ 易經 advocates the quality of purity, while *the Book of Songs*² 詩經 praises noble virtue. The quality of purity is like a white horse standing on the ground; noble virtue is like duckweed floating on the water. Yu Fakai and Yu Fawei constantly contemplated without rest, diligently researching with their outstanding intelligence. Thus, they both gained a huge reputation and did not fail in their aspirations.” Yu Fakai used to send Yu Fawei to the capital through Shanyin where Zhi Dun was preaching *the Shorter Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Yu Fakai told Yu Fawei: “Zhi Dun is expounding *the Shorter Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; when you get there, he should be talking about so-and-so.” Then, he prepared dozens of questions to let Yu Fawei challenge Zhi Dun and said: “This chapter was very difficult to explain in the past.” When Yu Fawei arrived at Zhi Dun's auditorium, the lecturer was just elucidating the chapter as Yu Fakai had presumed. Thereupon Yu Fawei debated with Zhi Dun back and forth. Zhi Dun could not prevail; he then spoke aloud: “You really do not have to pass words for other people in such a way.” Thus, spread a saying in Dongshan area: “Zhu Fashen is known for his great vision and generosity, Yu Fakai for his deep insight and contemplation, Zhi Dun for his wit in talks and communication, and Kang Fashi for his notes on annotation.”

During the reign of Emperor Ai, Yu Fakai's presence was requested at the imperial palace by the emperor many times; hence he went to the capital to expound *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. To those who had questions in their studies, he explained patiently. After the lectures, he returned to the Dongshan area.

1 *The Book of Changes* is the first classic text regarding Chinese philosophy and worldview. It starts with the concepts of yin and yang, dating back to about 5000 years ago.

2 *The Book of Songs* is a collection of Chinese verses and songs from the 11th century to the 6th century BCE.

Emperor Ai admired his virtue, offered him a lot of money, cloth, attires, and vehicles, among other gifts. Xie An, Wang Tan, and the others all treated him kindly. Someone used to ask Yu Fakai: “Your Reverence has profound knowledge and insight; honest in nature, why would you bother to practice medicine?” Yu Fakai replied: “Eliminate the diseases of the four demons¹ by practicing the Six Pāramitās² and cure the illness of heat and cold by nursing health; these benefits both oneself and others. Why shall I not do so?” Yu Fakai passed away at the age of 60 in the mountain temple. Sun Chuo made a catalogue of his works and noted: “His talent and eloquence were second to none; promoting Buddhism by practicing medicine, Yu Fakai was one of a kind.”

1 The Four Māra-enemies are the four kinds of māra (demons) that make trouble for sentient beings.

2 The Six Pāramitās, literally meaning six perfections, are the six pure practices of Bodhisattvas that ferry one beyond the sea of mortality to nirvana.

11. Yu Daosui of Dunhuang during the Jin Dynasty

Yu Daosui 於道邃, a native of Dunhuang, was orphaned when he was a little boy and raised by his uncle, so he respected his uncle sincerely. He renounced the world at the age of 16, following Yu Falan as his teacher. Yu Daosui was excellent in his studies, reading a wide range of the Buddhist canon and non-Buddhist classics, becoming proficient in medicinal skills and calligraphy, learning the customs and traditions of various regions, and specializing in eloquence and debate. Master Dharmarakṣa often compared his noble and pure character to ancient sages, predicting that he would be an extraordinary talent if he was predestined for longevity. Yu Daosui went to the south of Yangtze River with his teacher; Xie Fu spoke highly of him. Yu Daosui favored mountains and rivers, woods and lakes, so he toured many famous mountains in the east of the country. He could not care less about the comments made about him by others, nor was he bothered by worldly affairs. Later, he departed with Yu Falan for the Western Regions; unfortunately, he fell ill in Jiaozhi Prefecture and died at 31. Xi Chao drew a picture of him, and Zhi Dun made a eulogy: “He was a marvelous personality of superb capacity with outstanding intelligence, deep insight, and a wide knowledge of the Truth. His nature was as pure as jade; his conduct and speech as graceful as an orchid flower.” Sun Chuo compared Yu Daosui with Ruan Xian;¹ however, some people disagreed with him, saying: “Ruan Xian had the blameworthy act of riding the same horse with a maid; while Yu Daosui’s conduct was impeccable. How can you put them in the same class?” Sun Chuo replied: “Although their conducts varied, their noble aspirations had no difference.” The Yudaolun by Sun Chuo reads: “Recently a śramaṇa in the central region named Zhu Faxing has attracted comments that compare him to Yue Guang;² Yu Daosui in the south is also considered a celebrity by the farsighted.” Those are general opinions at the time, compared to the

1 Ruan Xian was one of the seven sages of bamboo grove.

2 Yue Guang was a famous scholar-official in the Western Jin Dynasty; the highest position he assumed was prime minister.

appreciations within his small circle.

12. Zhu Fachong of Mount Gexian in Shan County during the Jin Dynasty Daobao

Zhu Fachong 竺法崇 was of unknown origins. Joining the monastic order at young age, he was known for his strict observance of precepts. In addition, he was talented and diligent in study, proficient in sutras and mantras, and specialized in the Teachings in the Lotus Sutra. One time, he visited Mount Lu in Xiangzhou¹ and met with a lady that was actually a transformed mountain spirit asking for precepts from him. The spirit then offered his own residence to the master as a temple; shortly afterwards, Zhu Fachong's preaching became prevalent in the Xiangzhou area. Later, he returned to Mount Gexian in Shan County to enjoy the practice of meditation, living in a thatched cottage and drinking spring water. Buddhists in the Dong'ou area rushed to his place. On such occasions, Zhu Fachong acquainted with Kong Chunzhi, a hermit from Lu Kingdom;² they got along well and often spent the entire day together touring, sometimes even forgetting to return at night. They were frank to each other and both considered the other a bosom-friend. Zhu Fachong amazed aloud: "I used to meditate outside the world for more than 30 years; after meeting with him on this mountain, I no longer feel my coming agedness." Later, Kong Chunzhi left, and Zhu Fachong made a verse: "The great righteousness still rests in my mind, yet the hermit is gone, and I cannot find it. Is it a proper description for this friend of mine?" He made *the Commentary on the Lotus Sutra* 法華義疏 in four fascicles and died afterwards on the mountain.

At that time, Shi Daobao 釋道寶 was on Mount Yang; it was in the same region. He was originally from a Wang family in Langya, the younger brother of Wang Dao, the Prime Minister of the Jin Dynasty. Shi Daobao was inspired and thus believed in Buddhism at the age of 20, keeping a distance from worldly fame and gains. His relatives and friends persuaded him to give up, but they all failed.

1 Xiangzhou refers to Changsha, Hunan Province.

2 Lu Kingdom is in Qufu, Shandong Province today.

Then, he prepared fragrant hot water to bath himself and got ready for tonsure, singing at the moment: “How does one know whether a great river of thousands of miles did not originate from a brook?” Shi Daobao later gained a great reputation for his cultivation and studies.

13. Zhu Fayi of Mount Shining during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Fayi¹ 竺法義, who was of unknown origin, once met with Zhu Daoqian at the age of 13 and asked the latter: “Both the virtue of kindness and meritorious benefit are what gentlemen should practice, why did Confucius not talk about them much?”² Zhu Daoqian replied: “Ordinary people can hardly practice the virtue of kindness; that is why Confucius rarely mentions it.” Zhu Daoqian was impressed by the enquirer’s wit at such a young age, so he persuaded him to renounce the world. Thereupon Zhu Fayi started to pursue Buddhist studies under Zhu Daoqian. He was proficient in various sutras, especially the Lotus Sutra. Later, he bid farewell to Zhu Daoqian and left the capital. He presented a great number of lectures on sutras; Wang Dao, Kong Fu, and other notable figures were all inspired by him and thus followed his teachings. In the years of the Xingning Period,³ Zhu Fayi returned to Jiangzuo and stayed at Mount Bao in Shining County,⁴ where over one hundred disciples studied under him constantly. In the second year of the Xian’an Period,⁵ Zhu Fayi suddenly suffered from a stomach ache. He thereby continuously recited the name of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva, and then dreamed of a person breaking his belly to wash his guts. When he woke up, the pain was gone. Fu Liang often mentioned: “When my late father associated with Master Zhu Fayi, he always felt pious and respectful as the master talked about the super power of Guanshiyin.”

In the third year of the Ning kang Period,⁶ Emperor Xiaowu sent for Zhu Fayi, inviting him to preach in the capital. In the fifth year

1 Zhu Fayi (307-380 CE).

2 *The Analects of the Confucius* say: “Confucius seldom spoke of benefits, destiny, or kindness.” There are always different interpretations of this phrase.

3 The Xingning Period, 363-365 CE, was the title of Emperor Ai’s second reign period in the Jin Dynasty.

4 Shining County is near Shangyu, Zhejiang today.

5 The Xian’an Period, 371-372, was the reign of Emperor Jianwen in the Jin Dynasty.

6 The Ning kang Period: 373-375.

of the Taiyuan Period,¹ Zhu Fayi passed away at the age of 74 in the capital city. The emperor bought Xinting Hill² with 100,000 coins to build his tomb as well as a three-tiered stupa. His disciple, Tanshuang, built a monastery named Xinting Temple. Later, when Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu Song Dynasty went down to the south to suppress his enemies, he would stay at this temple. After he ascended the throne, he visited the meditation hall of the temple once again, renaming it Zhongxing Meditation Hall after a renovation. Thus, folk rhymes that were prevalent at the end of the Yuanjia Period said: “Qiantang is the place where the emperor emerged.” Here Qiantang indicated the “Chan Tang,” i.e. Meditation Hall. The old Zhongxing Meditation Hall included a Flying Dragon³ room; this is the Tian’an room today.

1 The Taiyuan Period: 376-396.

2 Xinting Hill is in the south of Nanjing today.

3 Dragons symbolized emperors in ancient China.

14. Zhu Sengdu of Dongguan during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Huichao

Zhu Sengdu 竺僧度, a native of Dongguan,¹ was originally named Wang Xi and had the style name Xuanzong. Although he was from an impoverished family and lost his father in his childhood, he had great talent and noble physiognomy. At the age of 16, he stood out because of his brilliant spirituality and unusual generosity; with a kind and affable nature, he was admired by the neighborhood. Zhu Sengdu lived with his mother and treated her with exemplary filial piety. His family proposed for him to the daughter of Yang Deshen, a gentleman in the same prefecture. The girl, named Tiaohua, was pretty, elegant, and versed in classics. Upon the proposal, Yang's family agreed immediately. However, before the marriage, Tiaohua's mother died abruptly; soon later, her father passed away as well. Zhu Sengdu's mother subsequently died. After experiencing the impermanence of life, he was inspired by the Truth of emptiness and thus renounced the world, changing his name to Sengdu. As an itinerant monk, he traveled far away from worldly noises.

Tiaohua served her mourning period for her parents and thought to herself that a female's duty was to follow her father or older brother when at the home of her maidenhood, to follow her husband after marriage, and to follow her son after the death of her husband; and that there was no reason why she should be allowed to live independently. Thereupon, she wrote to Zhu Sengdu: "The hair and skin of a man are not supposed to be harmed; the sacrifice to the forefathers of the family should not be interrupted." She also attempted to persuade him "to consider complying with the secular code of conduct and to alter his aspirations. At such a flourishing age, you should demonstrate your shiny appearance to accumulate benevolence for your forefathers' spirit in heaven and to accomplish the wishes of human and celestial beings."

1 Dongguan, here, refers to Jyu County, Shandong Province today.

She composed five poems, one reads: “The great path is endless; the sky and the earth eternal. Huge rocks do not disappear; the seeds of the weed are innumerable. The life of men in this world can be likened to wind passing through a window. When the glory is not seized, in dusk all become dismal. The sigh lingers over the river;¹ the sunset is a reminder of a beating clay vessel.² Pleasant sounds can amuse the ears; tastes can make the food enjoyable. Silk clothes are to decorate the body, and by gorgeous hats the head is enkindled. Why should you tonsure yourself, to catch emptiness and let reality go? Do not blame me for my attachment; I merely call your attention to succeeding the ancestors.”

Zhu Sengdu replied with a letter: “Assistance to the monarch merely serves one nation; while Dharma transmission benefits myriad countries. To respect and stay with family members is inferior to the preaching of the Teaching in order to deliver sentient beings in the three realms. Not to harm the hair and skin is a secular saying which originates from shallow views; I however did not accumulate enough merits and virtues to take care of both spheres, thus feel ashamed of myself. Many littles make a mickle; I should start from the smallest things. I now wear a cassock, hold a Buddhist staff, drink spring water, and chant *Prajna* 般若; I would not exchange them even if I were given a prince’s costume, delicacies from land and sea, resonant sound, or shining color. If you and I share the same aspiration, I hope we can attain nirvana together. Yet people’s inclinations vary, well like their very different faces. You are not fond of the Dharma, and I have no interest in secular affairs. Miss Yang, I hereby bid farewell to you, the connection in countless lifetimes is cut off today. Year after year, my time is limited. Men in the monastic path should eliminate glamor and return to simplicity every day, while worldly people need to adapt themselves for the circumstances. You are supposed to love someone that deserves you in your time. Do not bear me in your mind any longer; that

1 Confucius used to sigh over a river: “Time passes like this,” suggesting time was priceless.

2 Zhuangzi used to beat a clay jar (ancient instrument) and sing after his wife died; this reference refers to cheering up after the loss of family members.

will only lead to your own vainness.” He also responded with five poems, one of which reads: “Occasions and conditions never stop changing; time flies quickly. Even huge rocks may disappear, why not countless seeds of the weed. Because the water restlessly flows, the sigh over the river is deep. Have you ever heard the singer of white hair? That hermit was Rong Qi Qi.¹ Cotton clothes are warm; who needs attire to be silky? Clinging to the joy in this life, what if the next cycle is bumpy? Benevolence is accumulated by oneself, why would you say for the sake of my ancestry?” Zhu Sengdu’s firm will touched Tiaohua; hence she also converted to Buddhism. Since then, Zhu Sengdu focused on Buddha Dharma studies, read a wide range of sutras, and wrote *the Pitan zhigui* 毗曇旨歸 (*On the Essential of Abhidharma*), which circulated among the public. Afterwards, his whereabouts became unknown.

His contemporary, Zhu Huichao 竺慧超 in Henei Prefecture,² had paralleled fame in cultivation and studies as Zhu Sengdu. He forged a deep friendship with Zhou Xuzhi, a gentleman of Yanmen, and commented on *the Śrīmālā-sūtra* 勝鬘經.

1 Rong Qi Qi (571-474 BCE) was a famous hermit enjoyed singing by himself.

2 Henei is in Qinyang, Henan Province today.

Volume V

Doctrinal Exegesis Part B

15 main figures 9 auxiliaries

1. Shi Dao'an of Wuji Temple in Changkong during the Jin Dynasty Wang Jia

Shi Dao'an¹ 釋道安 was originally from a Wei family in Fuli County, Changshan.² For generations, his forefathers were honored scholars of Confucianism. Yet he lost his parents at young age, so he was raised by his maternal cousin with the surname of Kong. Shi Dao'an started his studies at seven, could learn texts by heart upon a second reading, which marveled the neighborhood. When he was 12, he joined the monastic order. Dao'an had a great intellectual giftedness, but an ugly face; his master thus did not pay him much attention, sending him to farm and perform miscellaneous work for three years. During this period, Dao'an worked diligently without any resentment; meanwhile, he upheld his aspirations and nature, observed precepts, and was never negligent. After a few years, he requested to learn sutras from his master. The latter gave him a copy of the Sutra of *the Questions of the Son of Pratibhāna* 辯意經, which consists of some 5000 words. Dao'an took it to the field the next day, read during his break, and returned it to the master when he came back to the temple at dusk, asking for other sutras. The master said: "You have not yet read the scripture I gave you yesterday, why do you ask for a new one?" "I can already recite the sutra from yesterday," replied the novice. His master was surprised and did not believe him, but he still gave him *the Chengju guangming jing* 成具光明經 (*Sutra on the Cultivation for Illumination*) of one fascicle that was nearly 10 thousand words long. In a similar manner, Dao'an took it to the field the next day and returned the sutra to the master in the evening. His master

1 Shi Dao'an (314-387 CE).

2 Changshan is near Zhengding, Hebei Province today.

tested him by asking him to repeat it; what amazed him was that the student could recite it without mistaking a single word. Thereupon, the master thought highly of him.

Later on, the master conferred full ordination to Dao'an and allowed him study in different places as he wished. Dao'an came to Yecheng;¹ in a monastery, he met with Fo Tucheng who repeatedly praised the young monk and talked to him for the entire day. The mass slighted him for his look, but Fo Tucheng said: "He is of great capacity; you are far below him." Thereupon Dao'an respected Fo Tucheng as his teacher; he could repeat every one of his teacher's lectures. The mass was unhappy with this and said in private: "We must baffle him next time by asking him difficult questions." Since then, when Dao'an retold the teacher's lectures, they raised various questions to challenge him; Dao'an easily answered them with precision. Their contemporaries made comments, saying: "The monk with dark skin marveled the audiences with his speech."

Afterwards, Dao'an went to Huoze² to hide from the war. Zhu Faji of Dayang³ and Zhi Tanjiang of Bingzhou⁴ commentated on the *Sutra on the Aggregates, Realms, and Fields* 陰持入經; Dao'an studied with them. Shortly afterwards, he stayed with his school friend, Zhu Fatai, at Mount Feilong where Sengxian the śramaṇa and Daohu dwelt. They were glad to meet each other, hence studied together; inspiring thoughts arose constantly. Later, Dao'an built a temple and a stupa on Taihang Mountain; many changed their clothes and followed him to join the monastic order in the Hebei Area. At that time, Lu Xin, the Prefect of Wuyi,⁵ heard of Dao'an's intelligence and insight, sending for him repeatedly until Dao'an had to accept the invitation and come to expound sutras. Finding out that his knowledge and comprehension corresponded to his

1 Yecheng, the capital of the Later Zhao Dynasty (319-352), is in Handan, Hebei Province today.

2 Huoze is now in Yangcheng, Shanxi Province.

3 Dayang is in Shanxi Province today.

4 Bingzhou is near Taiyuan, Shanxi today.

5 Wuyi is in Hebei Province today.

fame, the monastics and laypeople admired and revered him sincerely.

At the age of 45, Dao'an returned to the capital, Yecheng, and stayed in Shoudu Temple, where hundreds of disciples followed him as teacher. He often lectured for them. At that time, Shi Hu¹ had died; Shi Zun, the Prince of Pengcheng, killed Shi Shi and crowned himself as the king. The new king sent a royal envoy, Zhu Changpu, to invite Dao'an to come to Hualin grove, building a mansion and halls for him. Dao'an realized that when the destiny of the Shi family came to an end, their state would decline. He then went westwards to Mount Qiankou. Soon, Ran Min² rose in rebellion; people were suffering and becoming cold to each other. Dao'an told his disciples: "At present, the plagues of locusts rise one after another during severe drought and bandits run amuck; we cannot accomplish anything by staying together, yet it will be dangerous to separate." Thereupon, he led the masses to enter Wangwu Mountain and Nyulin Mountain. Shortly afterwards, they crossed the river to go to Luhun County³ and cultivated in the mountains. Before long, Murong's troops approached Luhun County; Dao'an had to move again and ran southwards to Xiangyang.⁴

Upon arrival in Xinye,⁵ Dao'an told his disciples: "Currently we encounter a vicious time; without relying on the monarch, the Dharma could not be transmitted. However, the spread of the Dharma relies on transmission." The disciples all replied: "We will follow Your Reverence's guidance." Thus, the master sent Fatai to Yangzhou⁶ by saying: "Many gentlemen in that region admire a

1 Shi Hu (295-349) was the adopted son of Shi Le, the founder the Later Zhao regime. Shi Hu dethroned Shi Hong, the son of Shi Le, and became the king of the Later Zhao Dynasty in 334.

2 Ran Min was the adopted son of Shi Hu; he killed Shi Jian and a great number of Shi's clan, making himself the king. He was later killed by the family of Murong.

3 Luhun is in Song County, Henan Province today.

4 Xiangyang is now in Xiangfan, Hubei Province.

5 Xinye is in Henan Province today.

6 Yangzhou is in Nanjing today.

graceful life. Fahe should go to Sichuan, the mountains and waters would facilitate cultivation.” Dao’an then continued this journey to cross the river with Huiyuan and about 400 other people. When traveling one night, thunder showers poured down; they marched under the lightening. At that moment, reaching a family and seeing two posts for horses and a foraging bag with a capacity of one hundred liters hanging in between them, Dao’an called out “Lin Baisheng.” The host of the family came out surprised, because his name was exactly Lin Baisheng; saying the master was a sage, he thereupon received them with respect. Some disciples asked how the master knew the host’s name. Dao’an replied: “Two wooden 木 posts made Lin 林, and the bag of hundred liters indicated Baisheng.”¹

Upon Dao’an’s arrival in Xiangyang, he restarted his lectures on the Dharma. Buddhist scriptures had been translated a long time prior, yet errors existed in the old versions, which led to the misunderstanding and eclipsing of the profound doctrines. These defects turned the common practice of sermons into the recitation of the sutras and explanation of their general idea. Dao’an had read a wide range of classics and was able to expound subtle and profound meanings by using different sources. The commentaries he wrote for *the Wisdom Scripture of Practicing Enlightenment* 般若道行, *the Secret Teachings Sutra* 密跡, *the Great Sutra on Mindfulness of Inhalation and Exhalation* 安般, and other sutras revealed more comprehensive meanings than previous texts while analyzing the difficult points for understanding, totaling 22 fascicles. The literature was logical, easy to understand, smooth, and precise. The Truth was finally unveiled. The works that could reach this level started to emerge from Dao’an. Since the Han Dynasty, Buddhist texts transmitting to China, particularly from the Wei Dynasty to the Jin Dynasty, gradually became more abundant; however the names of those who spread the sutras remained unknown and later generations failed to find their origins and times. Dao’an hence

1 Lin Baisheng; in Chinese characters, two characters for wood 木 make a Lin 林 (i.e. woods, forest), and Baisheng 百升 means hundred 百 liters 升.

catalogued a great compilation of scriptures, marking the time and transliteration of each text and commenting on the new and old versions; this text was *the Catalogue of Sutras* 經錄. By virtue of his efforts, Buddhist learners could study with reliable evidence. Monastics and laypeople ran to Xiangyang from all directions to learn from Dao'an. Huan Langzi, the General of Zhengxi,¹ oversaw Jiangling at that time and invited Dao'an to come stay in Jiangling. When Zhu Xu ruled the troops in Xiangyang, he asked the master to return to Xiangyang. Due to the small size of Baima Temple, Dao'an built another monastery named Tanxi Temple in the land of Zhang Yin of Qinghe. Notable families and gentlemen all sponsored the construction, thus a five stories stupa and 400 rooms were built. Yang Hongzhong, the Prefect of Liangzhou, delivered copper weighing over 10 thousand pounds and planned to cast a plate for receiving amrita. Dao'an told the prefect: "Fatai was already going to cast the plate. I would like to melt the copper to make a statue of the Buddha. What do you think?" Yang Hongzhong happily agreed with this idea. Thereupon, by fundraiser and dana, a shining, solemn, 16-foot high statue was constructed. Dao'an's great vow had been fulfilled. He thus told everyone: "I have no regrets, even if I die tonight."

Fu Jian sent a special envoy to deliver a 7-foot high, foreign, gilt statue in leaning posture, and one of each of these items: a gold sitting statue, a rosary Maitreya statue, an embroidered image of gold thread, and a knitted image. When the lecture on sutras was held, the images would be exhibited and decorated with streamers, glittering rosaries, burning incense, lamps, and flowers; at the sight of this, all those who stepped into the hall revered with piousness. A bronze statue that was a foreign offering but in a strange shape was not paid homage sincerely by the masses. Dao'an said: "This image is excellent; only the hair bun is imperfect." Then he asked his disciples to recast the bun with fire. After the improvement, the statue was shining and lit the entire hall. Looking closely at the bun, it contained a piece of śarīra; hence, the mass felt guilty and

1 Zhengxi means "conquering the west" in Chinese.

admired the master. Dao'an said then: "Since this statue contains a holy sign, it is unnecessary to redo." Thus no one proposed to recast it anymore. Wise men indicated that Dao'an knew the existence of the Buddhist relic from the beginning; by this means he unveiled it to everyone.

At that time, Xi Zaochi¹ of Xiangyang was known for his unparalleled eloquence. Before Dao'an's arrival, he had already heard of the master and wrote to Dao'an for goodwill: "Your Reverence practices in the right path and understands inner harmony, thus your kind exhortations emit to the public, benefiting both monastics and laypeople. Since the Buddha Dharma has spread to the east for over 400 years, it has become the belief of many people, even those among diligent kings. However, Chinese traditional teachings have circulated prior to that; ordinary people could not grasp all the essences when shifting to the new faith. Recently, Buddhism is flourishing in an unprecedented manner, as what the proverb says, when great Dharma is about to arise, eminent bhikšus should descend. Your Reverence is the role model in this circle, preaching widely; monks in this area all look forward to your teachings. If Your Reverence could come eastwards to our locale, shine in this land, mount on the high seat decorated with seven kinds of treasures, demonstrate the light of wisdom, shed amrita to the grass, and plant sandalwood trees on the river banks, thereby the great religion of Tathagata will be revered in the present day, and the profound and subtle laws will inspire the new generation." The rest of the lengthy letter is omitted.

When Xi Zaochi learned about the arrival of Dao'an, he requested an interview right away. Sitting down, he presented himself as "Xi Zaochi of the four seas²." Dao'an replied: "Shi Dao'an of the entire sky." Their contemporaries all believed this was a perfect antithetical couplet.³ Later, Xi Zaochi sent 10 pears during a

1 Xi Zaochi was a writer and official in the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

2 The four seas refer to a Chinese idiom that says: "Heroes feel at home within the four seas."

3 Couplets were a popular literary form in ancient China that consisted of

meal of the mass. Shi Dao'an randomly cut and distributed them in person, and everyone got a piece, each neither more nor less. Xi Chao of Gaoping sent ten thousand liters of rice and a letter of several pages to show his respect. Dao'an replied: "Your offer of ten thousand liters of rice reminds me of the inspirational saying, 'Life must rely on food and clothes and is thus full of afflictions.'" In a letter Xi Zaochi wrote to Xie An, he said: "I have seen Shi Dao'an; he is really an extraordinary śramaṇa. Hundreds of disciples follow him, and he tirelessly lectured them all together. They did not have the super powers to amaze the public, nor privileged positions to govern the mean persons. The master and his disciples however practice seriously, respect each other, and stay together in harmony to the extent I have never seen before. Dao'an has a simple mind, is erudite, widely learned in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics, a master of yin and yang, and perfectly comprehends the subtle meanings of the Dharma. Regarding the Truth, he is comparable to Yu Falan and Yu Fadao. It is a real pity that you could not see him in person. Dao'an also expressed his willingness to meet and discuss with you." These are some examples of how contemporary elites admire him.

Dao'an abided in Xiangyang for 15 years and preached *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光般若經 twice each year without interruption. Emperor Xiaowu of the Jin Dynasty learned about his virtue and sent an envoy to salute him with this message in a decree: "Master Dao'an's virtue and morality are exemplary; he has wide knowledge-insight and a great mind, strictly observing the precepts and diligently teaching the public with excellent accomplishment. He not only leads in the current age, but also guides future generations. His remuneration should be at the level of a prince and provided by the district in which he dwells." At the same time, Fu Jian was aware of Dao'an's fame and always mentioned: "Shi Dao'an in Xiangyang is supernatural; I want to acquire him to assist my cause." Later, he sent Fu Pi to

two sentences with symmetric aesthetics that could be imbedded in poems or composed independently.

attack Xiangyang and obtained Dao'an and Zhuxu. Fu Jian then told Quan Yi, the official of Puye: "I attacked Xiangyang with a troop of 100 thousand soldiers, just to obtain one and a half persons." Quan Yi asked: "Who are they?" Fu Jian answered: "Master Dao'an is the one; Xi Zaochi is the half." After Dao'an arrived in Chang'an, he stayed in Wuchong Temple, where thousands of monks lived. Hence, he preached the Dharma with great effort. Previously, monks in the Wei and Jin Dynasties followed their teacher's surnames, which were diverse. Dao'an thought that Shakyamuni Buddha was the greatest master in the Buddhist family. He thus made the first syllable of Shakyamuni, Shi, the surname for all monastics. In the Ekottara Āgama that was acquired later, it says: "After the four rivers join the ocean, their names are no longer mentioned, and once the ones of four castes join the monastic order, they are all in Shakyamuni's family." Since the rule set by Dao'an coincided with this sutra, it has become universally accepted and everlasting.

Dao'an was good at writing and versed in non-Buddhist classics as well. In Chang'an city, a great number of youths from notable families followed him for poem and prose composition, thereby gaining their fame. At that time, a big tripod, whose volume was 27 Hu,¹ was acquired at Lantian County.² Nobody could understand the inscription on it. When the antique was shown to Dao'an, the master said: "These characters are in ancient seal style; it reads the tripod was cast by Duke Xiang³ of Lu Kingdom." He then converted the words into official script style. Someone tried to sell a bronze tripod on the market; it was round in shape with a partition in it. Removing the partition, the volume was 10 liters; lowering it, the volume was 1 liter. When raising the partition one-tenth of a liter, on the other side of the partition, a Yue⁴ was formed with a volume of one-twentieth of a liter, which sounded like copper

1 Hu 斛 is an ancient unit of volume that was more often used for cereals; it was equal to 100 liters before the Song Dynasty (960-1279). After the Song, it was changed to 50 liters.

2 Lantian is a part of Chang'an.

3 Duke Xiang (575-542 BCE).

4 A yue was musical instrument in ancient China that was like a bell.

bell. Inscriptions were made on the body. Fu Jian asked the master about it, and Dao'an answered: "This is a utensil that Wang Mang¹ proclaimed as a tool of Shun's period.² On the day Wang Mang took the throne, he unified the national measurement units by sending these utensils to the four directions of the country." These examples showed how erudite Dao'an was. Thus, Fu Jian issued a decree that all scholars should consult Dao'an if they had questions in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist fields. A saying became popular in the capital: "If you do not follow Dao'an as your teacher for research, the commentary you compose would not be convincing."

Previously, Fu Jian suffered turbulence caused by the Shi family of the Later Zhao Dynasty; however, at that time, society regained wealth and temporary peace under Fu Jian's government. The territory reached the oceans to the east, to the west Kucha was annexed, to the south Xiangyang was included, and to the north it reached the great deserts. Only the area of Jianye was still independent. Each time Fu Jian discussed with his officials, he repeatedly expressed his willingness to conquer that corner, making the Emperor of the Jin Dynasty his official of Puye³ and Xie An his official of Shizhong.⁴ Fu Rong, the younger brother of Fu Jian and Duke of Pingyang, tried to stop him with officials like Shi Yue and Yuan Sha, but they failed to change his mind. Believing that Dao'an was the one that Fu Jian trusted they therefore requested to Dao'an: "His Majesty intends to attack the southeast, would you not say a word for the sentient beings?" One day, Fu Jian toured Dongyuan Garden and ordered Dao'an to ride on the same coach with him. Quan Yi, the official of Puye, dissuaded: "I heard that the Emperor should be accompanied by the official of Shizhong; Dao'an is a monk who harmed his hair and skin. How could he sit

1 Wang Mang (45 BCE-23 CE) was the nephew of Empress Xiaoyuan in the Western Han Dynasty; he took the throne in the decline of the Western Han authority, which incurred a civil war. He later died in upheavals.

2 Shun 舜 (c. 2128- c. 2025 BCE) was a tribal leader in the remote ages of China that was considered an exemplary ruler.

3 Puye was an official equivalent to vice prime minister at that time.

4 An official of Shizhong was an advisor to the emperor.

with Your Majesty?” Fu Jian exploded with anger, saying: “Master Dao’an is in possession of virtues that all the populations should revere. Even if I were given a country in exchange for him, I would not agree. Providing the seat on my couch would not promote his morality enough.” He hence ordered the official of Puye to help Dao’an mount the chariot. Shortly afterwards, Fu Jian looked back at Dao’an and told him: “I want to go tour the area of Wu and Yue,¹ hunt with great troops, have outings at Kuaiji, and enjoy the ocean. Would that not be bliss?” Dao’an replied: “Your Majesty should comply with heavenly will and govern the empire accordingly; Your Majesty is in possession of the tributary wealth from eight states and a seat located in the centre to control the seas in four directions. Under such circumstances, Your Majesty had better be mindful and employ the non-action approach,² and then Your Majesty will be as excellent as Yao and Shun in the remote ages. Now, Your Majesty would occupy a piece of inferior land with troops of a million soldiers. In addition, dampness and vicious smog are heavy in the south-eastern area where Yao and Shun did not go in ancient times and from where Qinshihuang, the first emperor of Qin Dynasty, never returned. To my knowledge, it is not worthy. The Duke of Pingyang from the imperial family and Shi Yue, who is in an important position, would not think it is feasible. I am just a humble monk; surely Your Majesty would not listen to me. Whereas I receive Your Majesty’s trust and honor, must exhaust my honest advice.” Fu Jian returned: “It is not because the lands and populations of my territory are insufficient. I want to test the heavenly will and determine on which side fate dwells. Complying with the seasons to hunt is seen in the historical records. According to your statement, there are no records in regards to the emperors’ visits in all directions and to observe local customs, is there?” Dao’an answered: “If Your Majesty insists on these actions, please go to stay in Luoyang first with the military forces, accumulate

1 Wu and Yue, where the Jin governments were located, are Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces today.

2 The non-action approach refers to the Daoist School’s advocacy for following the natural course of events, and it is also a piece of advice from Laozi to the monarchs.

power, and show deterrence. Summon them to surrender; it would not be late to attack them if they do not subdue themselves.” Fu Jian did not take this advice and sent Fu Rong, the Duke of Pingyang, as vanguard to depart with a crack army of 250 thousand soldiers, himself leading an infantry and cavalry of 600 thousand to follow. When the enemies arrived, the Jin army battled with the troops led by Xie Shi, the General of Zhenglu, and Xie Xuan, the Governor of Xuzhou. Consequently, the vanguards of Fu Jian’s army encountered a debacle to the west of Mount Bagong; the troops of the Jin army chased after their enemies for 15 kilometers, and the dead bodies pillowed each other. Fu Rong was killed in the battle, and Fu Jian ran back alone, as what Dao’an presumed.

Dao’an wrote commentaries on various classics frequently. Out of concern for inaccurate comments, he made this vow: “If what I state cannot explain the subtle laws in the right way, please let me meet with virtuous and auspicious men to learn.” Whereupon he dreamed of a foreign śramaṇa with white hair and long eyebrows, telling him: “The commentaries you made correspond well with the Dharma. I am not ready to enter nirvana, living in the Western Regions. I shall help you transmit the Teaching, and you could often offer food for me.” Later, *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* spread to China, Master Huiyuan then realized that the one his teacher dreamed of was Piṇḍola.¹ Thus, Dao’an erected a statue for the arhat and offered food to him, and this gradually became a regular ritual. Since Dao’an was respectable to everyone and knowledgeable in the Tripitaka, he made a code of conduct as well as Buddhist rules for monks and nuns. They could be summarized in three aspects: first, the rules and disciplines for the offering of incense, seat arrangement, and sutra lectures; second, daily cultivation, food and beverage taking, and time-informing; third, the procedure of pośadha² for repentance. All the Buddhist temples in the country applied these regulations.

1 Piṇḍola was one of the 16 Arhats who vowed to stay in this world to protect the true Dharma.

2 A Pośadha is a precept meeting during which the Prâtimokṣa-sūtra is recited and monastics confess their sins.

With some disciples, including Dayu, Dao'an often prayed in front of a Maitreya Statue to be reborn in Tusita Heaven. On the 27th day of the first month in the 21st year of the Jianyuan Period under the Former Qin government, a strange-looking monk with a grotesque physiognomy abruptly requested a stay in the temple. Because of the crowded rooms, he was arranged to stay in the lecture hall. At the time the rector of the temple was on duty in the hall, he saw the strange monk in and out through the window crack, reporting to Dao'an immediately. Greatly surprised, the latter saluted the stranger and asked about the purpose of his visit. The stranger replied: "I have come for you." Dao'an returned: "I retrospect myself and think I am full of sins; I cannot be delivered easily." The monk said: "Very possible. You need to, however, take a bath, and your wish will come true." Then, he showed the way to bathe. Dao'an asked about the location of his next life, and the stranger waved to the north-western sky as if he cleared away the clouds; the clouds really broke and then a marvelous scene of Tusita Heaven could be seen. That night, dozens of people saw the scene as well. Later, Dao'an prepared bathing necessities and saw an unusual child along with the dozens of kids that came to play in the temple. Shortly afterwards, Dao'an took his bath and realized that it was a divine manifestation. On the eighth day of the second month in that year, Dao'an told everyone: "I should go." After the Buddhist meal, he passed away without any indisposition. He was buried in Wuji Temple in that town. That was in the 10th year of Taiyuan Period in the Jin Dynasty.

Before Dao'an's death, a hermit named Wang Jia 王嘉 went to pay tribute to him; Dao'an said: "The world is degrading, and humans will suffer more; would you go with me?" Wang Jia replied: "What Your Reverence says is indeed true, however please go first; I have a debt to repay, and thus cannot go with Your Reverence." When Yao Chang took Chang'an, Wang Jia deliberately stayed in town. At that time, the struggle between Fu Deng and Yao Chang had lasted for long time; Yao Chang thus asked Wang Jia: "Can I

have Fu Deng?” Wang Jia replied: “Get a little.” Yao Chang was angry: “Have or have not; what do you mean by ‘little’?” He then had Wang Jia beheaded. This was what Wang Jia mentioned about repaying a debt. After Yao Chang’s death, his son, Yao Xing, killed Fu Deng in the end.

Wang Jia, style name Zinian, was originally from Luoyang and had a grotesque look which was like a piece of his face was missing. He was humorous, liked telling jokes, and never ate worldly food, instead taking the pure “air.” People worshiped him and went to him asking about their luck. Wang Jia answered questions using funny words to tease the audiences; his predictions in verses were hard to understand, but were mostly proven correct afterwards. Previously, he recruited disciples in Jiamei Valley, and Fu Jian sent for him through an official of Dahonglu.¹ Wang Jie declined. When Fu Jian planned to attack the south, he sent an envoy to ask for the fortune. Wang Jia did not say a word, got on the envoy’s horse, and pretended to run eastwards; after a few hundred steps, he lost his hat and shoes, threw his clothes, and came back, simulating Fu Jian’s failure in Shouchun. This is how prophetic he was. On the day Yao Chang killed Wang Jia, someone saw Wang Jia standing on the ridge of fields, leaving a letter to Yao Chang. Dao’an got along with sages like what these cases show.

Formerly, Dao’an heard that Kumārajīva was in the Western Regions and wanted to discuss the Dharma with him. He always persuaded Fu Jian to invite Kumārajīva to come over. The latter heard about Dao’an as a sage in the east and looked forward to meeting him as well. When Dao’an was born, a two-centimeter wide piece of annular skin on his left arm could be moved up and down but could not be removed. Thus, people called him the “Bodhisattva with hand mark.” 16 years after the death of Dao’an, Kumārajīva arrived in Chang’an and being unable to meet Dao’an made him deeply saddened.

¹ Dahonglu was the post in charge of official rites.

Because Dao'an was fond of classics and vowed to transmit the Dharma, he invited foreign śramaṇas like Saṃghadeva, Dharmanandi and Saṃghabhūti to translate scriptures that were over a million words long. He often discussed and determined the rendering and transliteration with Shi Fahe, reviewing the meanings in detail. The newly translated versions were hence accurate. Sun Chuo wrote *the Treatises on Eminent and Virtuous Śramaṇas* 名德沙門論目 in which Dao'an is described as follows: "Shi Dao'an was erudite and knowledgeable; he deeply comprehended the concepts and meanings of the classics." He also made a eulogy for Dao'an: "A broad view regarding the inanimate and a guide for humans, the unlimited erudition of Dao'an made him a master of both aspects. His fame spread out of Guanzhong and reached the ocean. Though his body is gone like grass, his spirit stays with us."

Other records show: "There was a Zhu Dao'an in Hebei, as famous as Shi Dao'an. It was Zhu Dao'an to whom Xi Zaochi wrote the letter instead of Shi Dao'an." Dao'an originally studied under a master with the surname of Zhu. He changed his surname to Shi afterwards. People found two surnames and believed they were different people; that is completely wrong.

2. Shi Fahe of Puban during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Fahe¹ 釋法和, originally from Xingyang,² was a school friend of Dao'an at young age and known for his modesty and thoughtfulness. He was good at marking the outlines as well as comprehending and solving subtle questions. Because of the Shi family's rebellion, he went with disciples to Sichuan where people admired and came to pay tribute to him. After hearing of the fall of Xiangyang, he entered the Guanzhong area and abided in Pingyang Temple. Later, he held assemblies at Jinyu Valley and used to climb up to mountain crests and look into distant scenery with Dao'an. After the outlook, Shi Fahe sighed out of sadness: "This mountain is extremely high; many people come for tourism. However, when death befalls, who knows where they will be reborn." Dao'an said: "If a master can uphold his mind, why would he worry about the next life? In the case that the mind of true wisdom does not arise, that will be pathetic." Later, Shi Fahe and Dao'an reviewed the newly translated scriptures; they discussed and revised the rendering together. Soon, on the invitation of Yao Xu,³ a Prince of the Later Qin Dynasty, he went to preach the Dharma in Puban.⁴ Shortly afterwards, he told his disciples: "Worldly entanglements engender a lot of afflictions, too many sufferings and fetters." Thereupon he dressed up, walked around the Buddha statue, prostrated to the Buddha, then sat back on his seat, put clothes on his head, and died quietly at the age of 80.

1 Shi Fahe (c. 323-c. 402 CE).

2 Xingyang is in Henan today.

3 Yao Xu was the uncle of Yao Xing.

4 Puban is now in Yongji, Shanxi Province.

3. Zhu Senglang of Kunlun Hill in Mount Tai during the Jin Dynasty Zhi Sengdun

Zhu Senglang 竺僧朗 was originally from Chang'an. He traveled many places in his youth, studied Buddha-Dharma in Chang'an, and then focused on dharma talk after returning from Guanzhong. On invitation, he used to go to an event with a few companions and abruptly told the others half way: "It seems that someone is stealing the clothes you left in the monastery." Then, the group went back and caught a thief who was pilfering. Thanks to Zhu Senglang's prophecy, the loss was avoided. Zhu Senglang constantly had vegetarian food and wore cotton clothes, aspiring to be aloof from the world. In the first year of the Huangshi Period¹ during the bogus Former Qin Dynasty, he relocated to Mount Tai, where he became acquainted with Zhang Zhong the hermit;² they often toured the mountains together. Zhang Zhong later went to the capital upon the request of Fu Jian; he however died at Mount Huayin on his way to Chang'an. Later, Zhu Senglang built another vihara at Jinyu Valley on Kunlun Hill which is precipitous and located to the northwest of Mount Tai; creeks winded down and marvelous rocks stood in the valley. Zhu Senglang combined the rooms with the picturesque scenery; it had over ten halls and rooms in total. Around 100 people gathered to stay there for the fame of the master and the site where he taught them tirelessly.

Fu Jian 苻堅, the monarch of the Former Qin Dynasty sent for him after hearing about his virtues. Later, Fu Jian rectified the religious organizations but issued a separate decree, saying: "The precept observance of Master Zhu Senglang is as clear as ice; his disciples are excellent. Kunlun Hill is thus exempt from this inspection." During the Later Qin Dynasty, Yao Xing respected him as well. Murong De, the monarch of the Southern Yan Dynasty, admired his

1 The Huangshi Period (351-354) was the reign of Fu Jian 苻建 (317-355), first monarch of the Former Qin Dynasty. Later, his nephew, Fu Jian 苻堅 (338-385), took the throne from his paternal cousin's hands after his uncle died.

2 Zhang Zhong, a famous hermit during the Former Qin Dynasty, declined Fu Jian's 苻堅 invitation to take official posts in the royal court.

virtuous deeds and granted him the tax of two counties. This is how people revered him.

Previously, people in the mountain area suffered from tigers; travelers had to take swords or knives with them and come to the area in groups. After Zhu Senglang moved to this valley, the tigers all subdued themselves. Monastics and worldly people could travel day and night without obstacles. Thereupon the populace all praised aloud, and the locals still call Jinyu Valley as Master Senglang Valley. No matter how many, the master could know the number of people who would consult with him one day prior to their arrival, and hence asked his disciples to prepare the food accordingly; it was accurate every time. The mass was marveled by his wonderful power. Afterwards, Zhu Senglang passed away on the mountain at the age of 85.

At that time, Zhi Sengdun 支僧敦 was also in the Mount Tai area. He was a native of Jizhou,¹ became an itinerant monk in the Shaanxi and Gansu areas in his youth, and later stayed in the Hunan and Hubei areas. He deeply comprehended the Mahayana doctrines, and was versed in Hinayana meditation methods. At present, his book, *the Renwu shiyi lun* 人物始義論 (*Commentary on the Ideologies of Personalities*), is still circulating.

1 Jizhou includes the Hebei, Beijing, and Liaoning areas today.

4. Zhu Fatai of Waguan Temple in the Capital during the Jin Dynasty Tanyi Tan'er

Zhu Fatai¹ 竺法汰, a native of Dongguan, was school friend of Dao'an at a young age. Although his talent and eloquence were inferior to the latter, his physiognomy and figure were better. When Zhu Fatai went to Xinye with Dao'an to escape the warfare, Dao'an split the group and sent Zhu Fatai to preach the Dharma in the capital of the Eastern Jin government. Then, Zhu Fatai bid farewell to Dao'an: "You set a wonderful example in the northwest; I now go to the southeast to preach and make the Dharma circulate. Let us say goodbye here and focus on our vows respectively. Sometime later, may we reunite in the Pure Land." Thereupon the two shed tears and parted. Zhu Fatai and his disciples, including Tanyi 曇壹 and Tan'er 曇二, totaling around 40 people, went eastwards through the Mian River.² Due to the sickness of Fatai, they stopped at Yangkou. At that time Huan Wen governed Jingzhou; he dispatched envoys to visit Zhu Fatai and treat his illness. Dao'an also sent Huiyuan to convey salutations to him. As soon as Zhu Fatai felt better, he requested an interview with Huan Wen. Planning to have a long conversation with the master, Huan Wen met other visitors first and did not receive Zhu Fatai at once. As the master was not fully recovered, he could not sit for long time; Zhu Fatai walked through the parlor to take his cart. Before leaving, he spoke to Huan Wen: "I begin to cough; sorry for leaving now. I will visit you later." Huan Wen chased after him, while the cart had left.

Zhu Fatai was 1.85 meters high with a noble look and stature, modest, and reserved. His speech was as fragrant as an orchid. His contemporary, Daoheng the monk, was also talented, insisted on the theory of Mindlessness, and promoted it in the Jingzhou area. Zhu Fatai said: "That is heresy which should be eliminated." Therefore, he summoned monks and let his disciple, Tanyi, challenge this theory. Tanyi quoted classics and analyzed with reason, refuting it in

1 Zhu Fatai (320-387).

2 The Mian River is in Shaanxi Province.

many ways. Daoheng however, relying on his eloquence, explained with lame arguments and would not give up. Soon it turned dark, and the debate had to be continued on the next day. On the second day, Huiyuan attended and questioned Daoheng. The latter felt it difficult to defend his “Mindlessness” and started to look nervous, putting his hands on the table and not being able to reply instantly. Huiyuan said: “The mind is neither quick nor slow; why should you conceive?” The audience laughed. The Mindlessness theory has fallen into obscurity since.

Upon arrival in the capital of the Jin Dynasty, Zhu Fatai abided at Waguan Temple. Emperor Jianwen of Taizong highly respected him and invited him to preach *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. On the opening day, when the title of the sutra was to be explicated, the emperor came in person; the nobles and officials were all present at the assembly. Extraordinarily relaxed, Zhu Fatai expounded the sutra in such a way that attracted monastics, laypeople, gentlemen, and ladies to flock to listen because they had already heard of this famous figure. As for the disciples in the Wu area coming to seek advice, they made a long line of over 1000.

The location of Waguan Temple was originally the tomb of Shanwan from Henei, later being converted into a workshop to make pottery. In the Xingning Period during the Jin Dynasty, Huili the monk pleaded for the renovation and building of a monastery, since there was merely a hall and stupa at that time. After Zhu Fatai moved in, the temple was enlarged by the addition of more halls, rooms, and gates which fitted to the terrain. Sima Zong, a gentleman of a notable family from Runan, whose house was next to the temple, caused the temple gate collapse because he damaged the foundation of the temple. Zhu Fatai, however, did not mind at all. Sima Zong thus was touched and felt guilty, coming to apologize. Zhu Fatai met him when reclining as if there was no one else.

Many celebrities admired the master deeply, including Wang Qia, the General of Zhonglingjun, Sima Xun, the Prince of Dongting, and Xie An, the Assistant to the Emperor. A few days before his death, Zhu Fatai already knew what would befall him, then telling his disciples: “I’m leaving.” He passed away in the 12th year of the Taiyuan Period during the Jin Dynasty at the age of 68. Emperor Wu of Liezong issued a decree: “Master Zhu Fatai spread the Dharma to the eight directions, which will benefit later generations. Now he suddenly passed away; I am in deepest grievance and offer 100 thousand coins for his funeral.” Sun Chuo made a eulogy: “Grieving wind blew through the mountain woods; sad sounds resonant in the valley. Elegant Fatai did not fail his high reputation.”

His disciples Tanyi and Tan’er were both versed in doctrines and learned in *Laozi* and *the Book of Changes* as well. Their nobleness and aspiration were as famous as Huiyuan. Tan’er died early, which made Zhu Fatai feel remorseful. The master cried out: “This is really a loss for heaven.”¹ His commentaries and letters to Xi Chao on Mindlessness are circulating today. Some people say that Fatai is Dao’an’s disciple; this is incorrect.

1 “A loss for heaven,” is the phrase Confucius spoke when he lost one of his best students namely Yanhui.

5. Shi Sengguang of Mount Feilong during the Jin Dynasty Daohu

Shi Sengguang 釋 僧 光 was a native of Jizhou and disciple of Master Yuan from Changshan. He had honest and virtuous characteristics. When he was a young novice, he used to meet with Dao'an in a hostel. At that time, Dao'an had not been granted full ordination; the two of them frankly discussed their aspirations and inspired each other. To bid farewell, they said: "If we could grow up, let us not forget to have a tour together once again." After Shi Sengguang took precepts, he studied earnestly and was versed in Tripitaka. Due to the Shi family's rebellion, he hid in Mount Feilong, sat and walked to meditate, and rejoiced at Samadhi. Later, Dao'an came to visit him, and the friends were happy that their wish from back in their novice time came true. They discussed the sutras and analyzed the sastras, gaining a lot of new insights. Dao'an said: "Many of the analogy methods that the old virtuous men adopted have flaws." Shi Sengguang replied: "Just to compare and analyze, why should we reproach the old virtuous?" Dao'an returned: "To propagate the Dharma, one should make the sermon just and appropriate; to beat the Dharma drum and teach, the predecessors and successors should be equal." Later, Shi Sengguang traveled southwards with Zhu Fatai to transmit the Dharma in the Jin Dynasty's territory. Afterwards, he returned to Xiangyang and died of illness.

At that time, a monk named Daohu 道 護 was also from Jizhou, firmly observed precepts, and was greatly intelligent. He dwelt in Mount Feilong as well. When he met Dao'an, they both shared the idea: "Although abiding in equanimity and being aloof from worldly affairs, one should keep the aspiration to make the Dharma thrive. How could he be complacent in the mountain and stop turning the Dharma Wheel? One ought to repay the grace of the Buddha by making the efforts of his capacity." The masses all appreciated this point of view, and they all preached the Dharma accordingly. Daohu's whereabouts became unknown afterwards.

6. Zhu Sengfu of Shangming Temple in Jingzhou during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Sengfu 竺僧輔 was originally from Yecheng. Since his childhood, he strictly observed the precepts, aspired high, and studied with assiduity. Versed in various sastras and learned in sutras, he was famous in the areas of the Luo River and Yi River; people in Yecheng all revered him. During the famines in the Western Jin Dynasty, Zhu Sengfu, Dao'an, and other monks dwelt in mountains, researched and discussed the doctrines, and comprehended the subtle meanings. Later, he abided at Shangming Temple in Jingzhou, cultivating himself with vegetarian food and simple clothes, repenting and paying homage piously and diligently, and vowing to be reborn in Tusita Heaven to salute Maitreya. Admiring his virtue, Sima Chen, the Prince of Langya who assumed the post of governor of Jingzhou at the time, invited the master to be his precept teacher. The Sima family treated him with high respect. One day before his death, Zhu Sengfu abruptly said: "I am leaving tomorrow." On the next day, rare fragrance filled the room, voices of chanting resonated, and over ten thousand monastics and laypeople came to bid him farewell. In the afternoon, Zhu Sengfu passed away, living to the age of 60. Afterwards, he was buried in the temple; the Sangha erected a stupa for him.

7. Zhu Sengfu of Wagan Temple in the Capital during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Sengfu 竺僧敷 was of unknown origins. He was versed in various sutras, specializing in *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光經 and *the Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 道行波若. In the late years of the Western Jin Dynasty, social turbulences rose one after another. Zhu Sengfu moved to the east of the Yangtze River and stayed at Wagan Temple in the capital of Jin government, where he preached frequently; people in Jianye all admired him for his virtue. His contemporary, Daosong, who lived in the same temple and had similar talent in Dharma insight, mentioned the former in a letter to Dao'an: "Master Zhu Sengfu studies every detail; his exhortations were wonderful and much higher than our level." At that time, those who believed heresy all proclaimed that the mind had its form yet was different from other existences.¹ These people were eloquent and slandered the others. Zhu Sengfu wrote *the Shenwuxing lun* 神無形論 (*Treatise on Formless Mind*), arguing based on the logic: "Anything with form must come to an end; an end means finiteness," hence pointing out: "As the mind has no limit, thus it has no form." The debaters refuted other theories but could not convince each other. Zhu Sengfu's idea was self-explanatory and thereby able to carry conviction. Later, he wrote commentaries on the *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

Afterwards, he passed away in the temple in his 70s. Zhu Fatai wrote to Dao'an: "Recalling the interactions with Master Zhu Sengfu, it is as vivid as if they happened yesterday. He however has departed for many years. The way we discussed still emerges in my mind from time to time. I planned to describe his elegance to you, yet he left forever before I did so. The sorrow is too deep to

1 In the early phase of Buddhism in China, especially during the Jin Dynasty, the form of mind was a focus of philosophical debates. This is because the concepts of subject of consciousness, spirit, and form had already been rooted among people in Chinese metaphysics. It was believed that the subject of consciousness had form, which was reflected by the forms of all the other things.

wane. His excellence in metaphysical research and comprehension will be difficult to come across again.” Zhu Fatai mentioned Zhu Sengfu’s metaphysical theories several times in the letter to Dao’an. Nevertheless, in my research I did not find any written trace. It will be really sad if they are gone to history.

8. Shi Tanyi of Changsha Temple in Jingzhou during the Jin Dynasty Sengwei

Shi Tanyi 釋曇翼, was originally surnamed Yao, ethnically Qiang, and purportedly from Jizhou. He joined the order at 16 and followed Dao'an as his teacher. Shi Tanyi was known for his Vinaya studies, versed in Tripitaka, and hence respected by his school friends. When he traveled in Shu Prefecture,¹ Mao Qu, the prefect, arranged a lunch and served him in person out of admiration. Seeing Shi Tanyi pick out a paddy grain from the rice and eat it first, the prefect's respect arose higher, and he believed the master would not fail his trust or offering. Later, Mao Qu offered him 100 thousand-liters of rice, and Shi Tanyi distributed them to those in need.

When Shi Tanyi stayed at Tanxi Temple with Dao'an, Teng Hanzi, the Governor of Changsha, wanted to donate his residence in Jiangling² to build a temple, requesting for Dao'an to find an abbot. Dao'an thus told Shi Tanyi: "The populace of Jing and Chu³ started to revere the Buddha-Dharma; you are the best one to teach in the region." Shi Tanyi hence went southwards and built a temple; that temple is Changsha Temple. Later, Fu Pi⁴ went down to attack Xiangyang; the people in Jiangling escaped to Shangming at the south of the Yangtze River. Thereupon, Shi Tanyi built a temple at the south bank. After the invaders were wiped out, he moved back to Jiangling and repaired Changsha Temple. Through pious prayer, he obtained a holy relic and put it in a golden vase on the altar. Shi Tanyi prostrated to the śarīra and supplicated: "If the relic is really the Buddha's relic, as solid as diamond, may it glow." At midnight, five-colored light was seen to rise from the vase, illuminating the hall. The mass was marveled and believed that the master had touched the deity. If Pūraṇa-kāśyapa⁵ saw this scene, he would be

1 Shu is in Sichuan Province today.

2 Jiangling was another name for Jingzhou, which was the regional center of Jing Prefecture.

3 Jing and Chu are Hubei and Hunan provinces today.

4 Fu Pi was a son of Fu Jian 符堅 and his secondary wife.

5 Pūraṇa-kāśyapa was one of the six major non-Buddhist philosophers in India

converted to Buddhism.

Shi Tanyi once came to Jun Mountain in Baling¹ to log timbers. The mountain is noted as a holy mountain of Dongting in *the Classic of Mountains and Rivers* 山海經², according to which it is connected with Mount Bao at Lake Tai³ in Wu Prefecture through a cave on top of the mountain. Since this is a supramundane place, people are scared of it. Leading a group, Shi Tanyi went to the mountain; they encountered dozens of white snakes coiled on the path to stop them. The master returned to the place where they lodged, worshiped, and sincerely prayed to the deity of the mountain: “I come here to log timbers for monastery construction and wish for you to accomplish this benevolence with us.” That night, he dreamed of a deity telling him: “If Your Master need timbers for Buddhist use, I would commend and join the dana. However, do not let people log for other purposes.” On the next day, the path was clear. They then started to log, timbers flowing down through the creek. Whereas some in the group wanted to make personal benefit out of the timbers and cut more than the plan. Returning to the temple, the timbers that the temple needed had arrived, while the extra part was confiscated by officials. This is how Shi Tanyi moved deities.

The master always regretted that there were insufficient Buddha statues despite the completion of the temple construction and adequate Sangha. The statues made by King Aśoka were well responsive to prayers scattered in all directions, yet no one knew where they were. Thereupon Shi Tanyi prayed for this in front of the shrine of the Buddha. On the eighth day of the second month in 19th year⁴ of the Taiyuan Period under the Jin Dynasty, a Buddha statue made its appearance to the north of the city, solemn and

at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha.

1 Baling is in Yueyang, Hunan today.

2 *The Classic of Mountains and Rivers* was an ancient Chinese geographic book depicting the geography and legendary creatures in remote ages; it was purportedly written in the Warring State Period (475-221 BCE).

3 Lake Tai is in Jiangsu Province.

4 The 19th year of Taiyuan Period was 394 CE.

bright. Monks from Baima Temple went to fetch it first; however, they could not move it. Shi Tanyi then went to prostrate, telling the mass: “This is a statue made by King Aśoka now being sent to Changsha Temple. Then he asked three disciples to carry the statue, which immediately turned light, they thus returned to their temple. Monastics and laypeople rushed to worship it; the vehicles and horses jammed on the road. Later, the Kushan Chan Master Sengqientuo 僧伽難陀 came to pay homage at Changsha Temple from Shu Prefecture and saw Sanskrit letters in the halo of the statue, saying: “This is made by King Aśoka, when did you get it?” Hearing his words, the mass knew that Shi Tanyi was telling the truth. The master passed away at 82; on the day he departed, the halo of the statue was gone. People hence said Shi Tanyi could interact with it.

At that time, Sengwei 僧 衛, a śramaṇa, was also at Changsha Temple; he was famous for his Buddhist studies and thus respected by Yin Zhongkan.¹ Sengwei specialized in *the Sutra on the Ten Stages* 十住經 and made a commentary for it.

1 Yin Zhongkan, from a noble family, used to be Prefect of Jingzhou.

9. Shi Fayu of Changsha Temple in Jingzhou during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Fayu 釋法遇 was of unknown origins. In his childhood, he studied with assiduity, was versed in classics, but acted unruly without any concern for others. Later, he met with Dao'an and instantly turned convicted and tamed. He then got tonsured and joined the order, respecting Dao'an as his teacher. Bathed in the Dharma, Shi Fayu changed his behaviors and became modest. Hearing of his story, Ruanbao, the Prefect of Yiyang,¹ wanted to become Dharma-friends with him, writing him letters and constantly offering for him.

Subsequent to the fall of Xiangyang, Shi Fayu moved southwards and lived at Changsha Temple in Jiangling to preach various sutras to an audience of over 400. At that time, a monk did not offer incense in the evening devotions due to his wine drinking; Shi Fayu punished him but did not drive him away. When Dao'an learned about this issue, he sealed a twig of chaste tree in a bamboo container and sent it to the master. Opening it, Shi Fayu found the twig, and he then said: "This is because of the drinking monk; I did not punish him enough. Master Dao'an was worried and sent this twig to me." Thereupon, he asked the rector to gather the Sangha by beating the drum, putting the bamboo container on the incense altar. After burning incense, he stood up, walked to the front, worshiped the container, and then prostrated on the floor, ordering the rector to beat him three times with the twig before putting the twig back in the container. He blamed himself with tears on his face. The monastics in the area were all impressed; many vowed to be more diligent in their cultivation. Later, he wrote to Dao'an: "I am merely a humble monk without clear insight and unable to lead the Sangha. Your Reverence resides remotely and still expressed your concerns; my fault is indeed heavy." Shi Fayu died in Jiangling at the age of 60.

¹ Yiyang is in Xinyang, Henan today.

10. Shi Tanhui of Shangming Temple in Jingzhou during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Tanhui¹ 釋曇徽, a native of Henei, wanted to join the monastic order and follow Dao'an when he was 12. Dao'an admired his noble look and made him learn to read. In two to three years, he was versed in sutras and history. At the age of 16, Dao'an allowed him to be tonsured. Since then, he focused on Buddha-Dharma and probed subtle meanings. Before 30 years old, he was able to preach the Teachings. Though his aspiration and studies were uncommonly superb, he gained his fame from his modesty and thoughtfulness. Later, he came to Xiangyang with Dao'an; when Fu Pi attacked the city, he moved to Jingzhou and stayed at Shangming Temple. Every time he preached the Dharma, monastics and laypeople rushed to attend his lectures. Grateful to Dao'an for his teachings, he drew a portrait of his teacher to revere. Therefore, gentlemen and ladies in the Jiangling area also paid homage to the west, which was the direction of Dao'an's abode. Once, someone asked him: "Compared to Your Reverence, what do you think about Master Dao'an's insight and cultivation?" Shi Tanhui replied: "Master Dao'an's internal insight and cultivation are immeasurable, not to mention his external connections which had been proven marvelous. I am just a drop of water; how can it compare with the river and ocean?"

Shi Tanhui died in the 20th year of the Taiyuan Period under the Jin Dynasty. On his last day, he did not have any indisposition, had meal in the dining hall, and bid farewell to the mass. He then returned to his room, reclined on his right side, and passed away at the age of 73. His works include *the Liben lun* 立本論 (*Treatise on Establishing the Foundations*) of nine chapters and *the Liushi zhigui* 六識旨歸 (*On the Six Consciousness*) of twelve verses, which are both still circulating.

1 Shi Tanhui (323-359).

11. Shi Daoli of Mount Fuzhou in Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Daoli 釋道立 was of unknown origins. He joined the monastic order in his childhood, followed Dao'an as his teacher, and specialized in *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Because some classics of the Daoist School, such as *The Book of Changes*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Laozi*, correspond with certain subtle Buddhist doctrines, he hence paid attention to these works as well. He was bright, calm, and aloof from worldly affairs. Later, he accompanied Dao'an to enter the Guanzhong area and retired in Mount Fuzhou for meditation. He stayed alone in a cave, did not accept offerings, and practiced samadhi without getting up for seven days; he experienced this cycle many times. Later, he came out of the mountain abruptly, gathered the mass, and preached *the Longer Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. When he was asked about this change, he answered: "I can only stay until this fall; I wanted to make a rough summary of my studies." A few days after the conclusion of the summer retreat,¹ he passed away peacefully. His contemporaries said that he knew his destiny.

1 Chinese monks take summer retreats over three months for collective studies and cultivation until the 16th of the seventh lunar month each year. This tradition is derived from the regulations set by the Shakyamuni Buddha, yet the period distinct to that in India is due to the difference of climate.

12. Shi Tanjie of Changsha Temple during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Tanjie 釋曇戒, also named Huijing, was originally surnamed Zhuo and a native of Nanyang.¹ He was the younger brother of Zhuo Qian, the Magistrate of Zaoyang² in the Jin government. Living an impoverished life, he focused on the study of classics, widely reading ancient books. Later, he heard that a famous monk, Yu Fadao, was going to hold a lecture on *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; he borrowed a robe to attend. Hence, he was inspired by Buddhist doctrines and joined the monastic order, following Dao'an as his teacher. Thereupon, he was versed in Tripitaka and recited sutras of over 500 thousand words. Constantly, he prostrated before the Buddha statue more than 500 times per day. Because of his profound Buddhist insights, the Prince of Lin'an of the Jin Dynasty treated him as a friend and highly respected him. When he was seriously ill, he continuously recited the name of Maitreya Buddha. His disciple, Zhisheng, who waited on him, asked why he would not be reborn in the Western World of Bliss. He replied: "The Grand Master, some other Dharma friends, and I, eight of us in total, had an appointment to meet in Tusita Heaven. Now the Grand Master and Daoyuan have gone there, but I am not yet able, thus I aspire to go there too." After his words, a light shed on his body, his face became gracious, and he passed away at that moment, living to the age of 70. Shortly afterwards, he was buried on the right side of Dao'an's tomb.

1 Nanyang is in Henan province today.

2 Zaoyang is in Hubei Province today.

13. Zhu Fakuang Mount Qianqing during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Fakuang¹ 竺法曠 was originally from a Yi family in Xiapi² that later relocated to Wuxing in the south. He lost his parents when he was a little boy; he was known for his filial piety to his foster mother. He farmed by himself to support his family that was in poverty. After the death of his mother, he followed the due courtesy for the funeral and served a three-year mourning period. Thereupon, he joined the monastic order and respected Zhu Tanyin the śramaṇa as his teacher. The latter had great talent and virtue; Zhu Fakuang revered him deeply and diligently learned from him until he received full ordination. He observed the precepts strictly and stood out in the mass. His consistent deportment reflected his focus on the Buddhist cause and his noble quality. Once when Zhu Tanyin was critically ill, Zhu Fakuang prostrated and prayed to the Buddha for seven days and nights. On the seventh day, he suddenly saw five-colored light shine on Zhu Tanyin's door, and the latter felt someone was stroking him; he then recovered.

Later, Zhu Fakuang said goodbye to his teacher and traveled many remote areas. During his voyages, he widely collected classics and important works. When he returned, he abided in a stone cave at Mount Qianqing. He believed that the Lotus Sutra was the essential of the three Buddhist Vehicles and that *the Sutra of the Immeasurable Lives* was the bridge leading to the Pure Land. Thus, he constantly recited these two sutras. If an audience came, he would expound for them; when staying alone, he recited by himself. When Xie An was the Prefect of Wuxing, he visited the master to pay respect. Because the coach could not get to the master's place through the valleys and hills, Xie An had to climb the mountain on foot to reach him.

Emperor Jianwen of the Jin Dynasty sent Qu Anyuan, the Prefect of

1 Zhu Fakuang (327-402).

2 Xiapi is now in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province.

Tangyi, to salute Zhu Fakuang and seek counsel on the appearance of the evil star as an unlucky astronomical sign, asking the master to make efforts to exterminate potential disasters. Zhu Fakuang responded to the imperial decree: “In ancient times, Duke Jing of Song Kingdom¹ did a great number of benevolences for the populace; the evil star still appeared. After Your Majesty succeeded to the throne, governance is clear and just, and society is stable and harmonious. However, the country’s responsibilities lie on the shoulders of one person; there are a lot of duties to oversee. Your Majesty attends to a myriad of affairs daily; it is inevitable to have slips. Due to their national importance, every decision has great impact. A minor error may cause grave consequences. Thereupon, Your Majesty needs to apply meritorious governance to avoid any celestial punishment. I am merely a monk without insight, yet would do my best to support Your Majesty. What I fear is that I do not have the capability.” Thus, he set an assembly and practiced repentance ritual with his disciples. Shortly afterwards, the evil star disappeared.

In the Xingning Period during the Jin Dynasty, Zhu Fakuang traveled eastwards to Shanyin, visited Dayu’s² tomb, and toured the scenic sites. Later, he came to Lake Gu at Mount Ruoye³ and planned to abide in this location that was far from worldly noise for cultivation. Xi Chao and Xie Qingxu also arrived; they built thatched cottages together on the lakeside. At that time, an epidemic swept through the east of the country. Zhu Fakuang used to learn the Repentance Ritual of Compassion and was versed in benediction mantras, so he walked from village to village to save the populace in their misery. Afterwards, he arrived at Changyuan Temple. When the villagers were in trouble, very often his prayers could help them. One who was able to see ghosts said: when Zhu Fakuang traveled, he had dozens of entourages of deities and ghosts

1 Duke Jing (d. 469 BCE) was the ruler of Song Kingdom during the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BCE-476 BCE).

2 Dayu, or Yu the Great, was a tribal leader who led people to fight the great flood during the legendary Xia Dynasty in the remote ages of China.

3 Mount Ruoye is near Shaoxing, Zhejiang.

to protect him. A monk by the name of Zhu Daolin cast a statue of Amitabha Buddha, and Zhu Fakuang led Buddhists to build a hall to house the statue. Purportedly, after the timbers were felled, they could not be shipped because the water was too shallow in the river due to drought. By reciting mantras, Zhu Fakuang made a flood rush in the riverbed. After Emperor Xiaowu of the Jin Dynasty heard of his virtue and super power, he requested the master's presence in the capital. He revered Zhu Fakuang as his teacher and settled him in Changgan Temple. The master passed away in the first year of the Yuanxing Period at the age of 76. Gu Kaizhi,¹ the Advisor to the Emperor, made a eulogy for him.

¹ Gu Kaizhi (348-409) was a famous literati and painter in the Jin Dynasty.

14. Zhu Daoyi of Dongshan Temple at Huqiu Hill during the Jin Dynasty Bo Daoyou Daobao

Zhu Daoyi¹ 竺道壹 was originally from a Lu family in Wu Prefecture. He joined the monastic order at a young age, and his character was honest and noble. Although he had a rich knowledge in Buddhism, he hid this intelligence and insight in daily practice, and it was known by no one. Only after a long association could one understand his uncommon qualities and power. Sima Xun, the Prince of Langya, and his brother respected the master as their teacher. In the Taihe Period during the Jin Dynasty, he came to the capital city, dwelt in Wagan Temple, and studied the Buddha-Dharma under Zhu Fatai. A few years later, he had insightful understanding in the doctrines, and his lectures marveled the entire city. Zhu Fatai had a disciple named Tanyi, also uncommonly talented and elegant, that observed the precepts strictly. Their contemporaries called Tanyi the Big Yi and Daoyi the Little Yi. The lineage could succeed with virtue and fame, which was admired by the public and by Emperor Jianwen as well.

After the deaths of Emperor Jianwen and Master Zhu Fatai, Zhu Daoyi left the capital and returned to his hometown, Wu to the east, and abided on Huqiu Hill. Those who followed his lectures in the capital pleaded for him to stay, however they failed to change his mind; then they requested for the Prefect of Danyang to bring the master back to the capital. Zhu Daoyi told the prefect: “I have heard that the administrations would apply a great methodology to govern the country and to protect the people; kind people who are indifferent of worldly affairs would then be able to pursue their aspirations. During the ages of Yao and Shun, society prospered; nevertheless they did not chase after hermits, asking them to give up their preference. If a vast nation wanted to subdue foreign ethnic groups, the government would wait instead of invading. The light of the Jin court illuminates remote areas, kindness covers the land under heaven, and the royal family reveres the Buddha-Dharma,

¹ Zhu Daoyi (c. 329-c. 399).

which makes Buddhism flourish in the Central Empire. Thereupon, foreign people come to this great country in rough clothes, holding Buddhist staffs to widely preach the Dharma, despite having to travel thousands of miles. They are able to give up secular attachment, abandon material desires, purify their minds, and rid themselves of the passions. For a long time, some practitioners with deep cultivation would hide their names but just deliver sentient beings. They would not stay in one location. From the east to the west, the transmission of the Dharma should be the critical matter to carry on. Although the daily works are puzzled by worldly affairs, those who have good eyes could identify the long-term missions. If you ask monastics to attach to a locale and register in a household manner, the itinerant monks can only admire the hayday of the Jin and will not perform actions, those who voyage frequently will be gone. This policy will result in unfavorable conditions to the society and damage the fame of His Majesty. In addition, remote people do not know how to deal with the court; hermits do not connect with the palaces. I hope you would inspect my fault of leaving the capital with consideration of the above before summoning people like me.”

His contemporary, Bo Daoyou 帛道猷, a monk at Mount Ruoye, who was originally from a Feng family in Shanyin, gained fame for his essays since the youth. He was honest in nature and fond of mountains and waters; his pursuit of a carefree life was presented in his poems. People commented that his words reflected a style similar to Zhuangzi, when the philosopher toured at Haoshang.¹ Bo Daoyou once met Zhu Daoyi in a lecture. Later, the former wrote to the latter: “I live a carefree life and focus on reading Confucian classics and Buddhist sutras. When the external incurs poetic feelings, I write them down. I climb up to the hills to collect herbal medicine and take medicine to cure diseases. I enjoy this

1 The tour at Haoshang is quoted from Zhuangzi, in which it states that Zhuangzi and Huizi toured Haoshang together and had a famous debate on a fish's feelings. Looking at the fish in the pool, Zhuangzi said: “how happy they are.” Huizi refuted: “You are not a fish; how can you know they are happy?” Zhuangzi returned: “You are not me, how do you know I do not understand fish?”

life very much. The only regret is that I cannot live together with Your Reverence. Therefore, I compose a poem to share with you: ‘The mountains extend thousands of miles; slender woods stand around the ferry quay. Clouds shade the remote hills; wind blows hard on the hazel trees. The thatched cottage is empty, while rooster’s crow reminds of the attendee. Walk on the winding path at ease; everywhere left firewood can be seen. I realize that after a hundred generations, here still is a populace living in peace.’” After receiving this letter, Zhu Daoyi wanted to get acquainted with him as well, hence moved eastwards to live in seclusion with Bo Daoyou in the mountains, enjoying the studies and recitation of sutras. Shortly afterwards, Sima Hui, the Prince of Langya, built Jiayang Temple in the west of the town and requested Zhu Daoyi to assume the abbot position, due to his virtue and fame. Zhu Daoyi donated robes and other necessities to the temple; he also made a thousand Buddha images carved on golden leaves. Since Zhu Daoyi was versed in Buddhist doctrines and non-Buddhist classics as well as virtuous and strictly observant of precepts, bhiksus and bhiksunis of all directions respected and followed him. He thus was known as the General Rector of the Nine Prefectures.¹ Later, when he visited Huqiu Hill, he unexpectedly fell ill during the Long’an Period and passed away at the age of 71. Thereupon he was buried at the south end of the hill. Sun Chuo made a eulogy for him: “Using vivid speech to spread the Law of cause-effect, Master Zhu Daoyi was noble and profound. A garden in spring time, fragrant and beloved, all should thank the efforts of the gardener.”

Daobao 道寶, the disciple of Zhu Daoyi, was from a Zhang family in Wu Prefecture. He was intelligent, eloquent, and good at Dharma talks. Zhang Pengzu and Wang Xiuyan established a deep friendship with him.

1 The General Rector of the Nine Prefectures refers to national monastic head.

15. Shi Huiqian of Jiaxiang Temple in Shanyin during the Jin Dynasty Jingyan

Shi Huiqian¹ 釋慧虔, from a Huangfu family in Beidi,² joined the monastic order in his boyhood. He observed the precepts strictly with firm aspirations. He abided in Mount Lu for over ten years; both monastics and laypeople who vowed to follow the Noble path would come to seek interview and pay tribute to him. Later, he was determined to preach the sutras recently translated by Kumārajīva. Because Master Shi Huiyuan was at Mount Lu expounding the Dharma, which could satisfy the locals, Shi Huiqian thereupon moved eastwards to the Wu and Yue areas to transmit the Teaching. In the first year of the Yixi Period³ under the Jin Dynasty, he arrived at Jiaxiang Temple in Shanyin, where he practiced asceticism and led the mass by exemplary observance of the precepts. He transcribed all the new versions of sutras and lectured on them. After five years of hard work, he fell ill and was aware that this life was about to end. Thus, he prayed to Guanshiyin Bodhisattva to be reborn in the Pure Land.

In the northern temple at Shanyin, a bhiksuni named Jingyan 淨𣵵 was virtuous and observant of precepts all along. One day, she dreamed of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva coming into the town through the west gate. The Bodhisattva looked pure and marvelous with illumination that could be likened to the sun and moon. The holy umbrellas and streamers were decorated with seven treasures. The bhiksuni bowed to the Bodhisattva, asking: “May I have the honor to know where the Bodhisattva will go?” He replied: “To welcome Master Shi Huiqian at Jiaxiang Temple.” That was why the ornaments were there. At that time, the master was in critical condition; however, his appearance relaxed, as if he would recover. Suddenly, the disciple who waited on the master smelt a rare fragrance that lingered for a long time. Shi Huiqian was able to

1 Shi Huiqian (d. 410 CE).

2 Beidi is between Gansu and Ningxia today.

3 The Yixi Period: 405-419.

know when he would depart, and Guanshiyin Bodhisattva appeared in his solemn incarnation. These two incidents coincided; the monastics and laypeople who heard of or saw them in person all deeply admired them.

Volume VI

Doctrinal Exegesis Part C

13 main figures 14 auxiliaries

1. Shi Huiyuan of Mount Lu during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Huiyuan¹ 釋慧遠 was originally from a Jia family in Loufan, Yanmen. He was earnest in reading, and his character was as pure as jade. At the age of 13, he came with his maternal uncle, Linghu, to study in the Xuchang and Luoyang areas, hence becoming a young student. He read all the six categories of Confucian classics and was good at *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi*.² In addition, he was generous, magnanimous, and uncommonly intelligent. Both experienced Confucianists and young talents admired him for his knowledge and insight. When he was 21, he planned to travel to the east of Yangtze River to study with Fan Xuanzi³ in seclusion. Shi Huiyuan, however, failed because the road to the south was obstructed by wars after the death of Shi Hu.

At that time, Dao'an presided over the temple at Mount Heng⁴ in the Taihang Mountains and transmitted the Dharma, gaining a high reputation. Thereupon Shi Huiyuan went to seek refuge. In their first meeting, respect and admiration to Dao'an arose in Huiyuan. He was convinced that Dao'an was the real master he had been seeking. Later, he was inspired by Dao'an's preaching on *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, thus sighing aloud: "The nine Chinese schools of thought, including Confucianism and Daoism, are all chaff." Whereupon he and his brother Huichi got tonsured,

1 Shi Huiyuan (334-417).

2 Laozi had an alternative title which is better known: The Classic of the Dao and the Virtue. Laozi is considered the originator of the Daoist (or Taoist) School.

3 Fan Xuanzi was a famous Confucian scholar who declined an official offer several times and focused on studies and education.

4 Mount Heng is in Shanxi province today.

followed Dao'an as their teacher, and joined the monastic order to devote themselves to Buddhism.

In the Sangha, Huiyuan surpassed his peers; he would grasp the doctrines in a systematic manner, aspiring to propagate the Dharma. To accomplish his goals, he recited the sutras and researched their meanings, carefully observing the precepts day and night. Due to poverty, Huiyuan and Huichi often wore tattered clothes on their trips, yet the two brothers took care of each other, studying and cultivating together. Tanyi the śramaṇa often provided financial aid to them for their Buddhist rituals. When Dao'an heard of this news, he was glad and said: "Virtuous ones know who the real talents are." Dependent on the intelligence and karmic effects of previous lives, Huiyuan vowed to reach high and far. Therefore, he was pure, clear, witty, and inspirational. Dao'an admired aloud: "To transmit the Dharma and make it flourish in China, this cause will rely on Huiyuan."

At the age of 24, Huiyuan started to step on the stage and preach the Dharma. Once, a participant consulted him about the concept of "true reality." As Huiyuan explained patiently, the man became more confused and asked follow-up questions to probe the meaning. Thereupon Huiyuan quoted similar concepts and descriptions in *Zhuangzi*, comparing them with Buddhist ones to elucidate; through this analogical method, the questioner finally understood. Since then, Dao'an specially approved Huiyuan to read and leverage the knowledge of non-Buddhist schools in dharma talks. Shi Fayu and Shi Tanhui were both Dao'an's disciples, being elegant and brilliant with wonderful talent and aspiration. They respected and admired Huiyuan as well. Later, Huiyuan followed Dao'an to Fancheng¹ and the Mian River areas in the south.

In the ninth year of the Jianyuan Period under the bogus Former Qin government, the troops led by Fu Pi attacked Xiangyang. At that time, Dao'an was preaching the Dharma in town as requested

¹ Fancheng is now in Xiangyang, Hubei.

by Zhu Xu, the general of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, hence unable to leave before the battles. Thereupon he asked his disciples to scatter themselves, choosing their destinations as they wished. Bidding farewell, Dao'an exhorted each disciple kindly, but he kept quiet before Huiyuan. The latter felt unsure and knelt down in front of the teacher, asking: "Your Reverence neither enjoins nor encourages me; this makes me nervous. Am I unteachable, hence why Your Reverence treats me differently?" Dao'an replied: "Shall I still worry about people like you?" Huiyuan went southwards to Jingzhou with dozens of brethren. Upon arrival, they stayed in Shangming Temple. Later, Huiyuan wanted to go to Mount Luofu¹ in Guangdong. On the way, he enjoyed the scenery and quietness of Mount Lu. Believing it was an extraordinary location to cultivate in peace, he thus settled at Longquan Vihara on the mountain.

The place where Huiyuan abided was far away from a water source, hence inconvenient for daily life. He knocked the ground with his Buddhist staff, saying: "If this should be the place of my cultivation, may spring water gush out from the barren ground." Right after his words, clear water spouted from the earth and soon formed a creek. Later, drought occurred in Xunyang;² Huiyuan came to the creek and piously recited *the Oceanic Dragon Sutra* 海龍王經. Suddenly, a giant dragon leaped out of the water towards the sky. Shortly after, it poured down rainwater. The rainfall ensured the harvest of the Xunyang area that year. People called the vihara where Huiyuan abided Longquan,³ hence the vihara's name.

Huiyong, a śramaṇa, already lived at Xilin Temple on Mount Lu at that time; he was Dao'an's student as well, hence a school friend of Huiyuan. Huiyong invited Huiyuan to live with him and told Huan Yin, the Prefect of Jiangzhou:⁴ "Master Shi Huiyuan is preaching the Dharma; a great number of disciples following him now and there are more to come. My current abode is small and not enough

1 Mount Luofu is in Boluo, Guangdong Province.

2 Xunyang is in Jiangxi Province, where Mount Lu is situated.

3 Longquan means "Dragon Spring" in Chinese.

4 Jiangzhou is now in Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province.

to host them. Could you please give me some advice?” Huan Yin thereupon built a new monastery in the east of Mount Lu for Huiyuan, naming it Donglin Temple. Huiyuan enlarged it by adding rooms and halls according to the terrain and scenery. Xianglu Hill was behind it, and waterfall was nearby; the foundation was made of stones, pine trees were planted around, clear spring water winded by, and white clouds lingered in the rooms. In the temple, he also arranged a dormitory for the Sangha where trees reached the sky, incense smoke floated, and the cobblestone path was covered by moss. Those who had been there in person would feel refreshed and energetic; worldly passions seemed to wash away and respect arose from their hearts.

Huiyuan heard of the Buddha’s shadow, an image that the Buddha left in the stone chamber of an ancient deity when delivering the evil dragon to the south of Nagarahāra City in Yuezhi Kingdom, Northern India. It was thousands of miles away; he thus sighed with regret that he could not go to pay tribute to it because of the distance. Coincidentally, at that time, two śramaṇas from the Western Regions arrived and described the Buddha’s shadow to him. According to their depiction, he built a stone room behind the creek and in front of the hill, drew the Buddha image, and enshrined it in the room. To accomplish the stone chamber, he elaborated with extreme efforts. It was exquisitely constructed. Surrounded by fog and mist, it was dimly discernable; the Buddha’s shadow was painted in light color, implying the emptiness law. Huiyuan made inscriptions for it:

Endless and formless Buddha image, unspeakably marvelous and subtle;

The Dharma combined with body, the image on the wall beyond physical.

The sun illuminates on the stone, the light is reflected into the room,
In the darkness the shadow is not hidden, inside the door the image looms.

To pay homage and pray devotedly, it will respond instantly,

The blessings come in various ways, indeed peacefully and invisibly. (Verse I)

The infinite and unlimited universe does not motivate sentient beings,

Drawing the portrait lightly, in clouds and mist the image pins.

The image of the shadow is small, yet it shows the authoritative presence.

A ray of light from the white hair,¹ day and night it stands.

Sincere vows reach the Buddha, replies will be sent to the devoted.

The voice of the Buddha spread in the valley, which can be heard by the connected.

Then inspirations may arise upon request, not only for the past merited. (Verse II)

Homage can be quickly forgotten, no need for discernment and consciousness.

The three lights become homogeneous,² all phenomena turn colorless.

The courtyard and halls immersed in mist, the way back could be abandoned.

Insights dwell in equanimity, by assiduity enlightenment will be attained.

The breeze of the Pure Land is far away, the worldly conditions are expedient.

If the Buddha did not preach the Dharma, who would receive the doctrine? (Verse III)

The rare voice transmitted from remote regions, now kindly present in the east.

Admiration rises after listening to it; the perfect Teachings are to keep.

The brush left marvelous works; the image is light and simple.

1 A ray of light from the tuft of white hair between the eyebrows refers to one of the Buddha's 32 characteristic features according to Lotus Sutra.

2 The three lights refer to the sun, the moon, and the stars; this phrase implies the "non-discrimination" or "formlessness" principle.

Using the colors and shades, the image sets off clouds and sun glow.
The vivid face as if the Buddha is speaking, telling us the subtlest meaning.

Wonderful guidance to broaden our horizon, we find the way by his leading.

Between the dusk and the dawn, mist lingers in the stone chamber.
Well like the image steps down, and the Buddha comes to appear.
(Verse IV)

Painting and drawing exquisitely, for what reasons is this effort?
We contemplate and listen to it, thereupon reflect on our behavior.
The multiple worldly rituals may cultivate monastic practitioners.
Eliminate the passions and afflictions by drinking the clear water.
Keep a simple mind; wisdom of perfection is what we look forward.
Memorize at night and be mindful of the Pure Land in daytime.
Meditate on the image until death, which leads to the Paradise forever. (Verse V)

Earlier, when Tao Kan¹ from Xunyang guarded Guangzhou, a fisherman had seen a divine light beam glowing every night. Ten days later, it became stronger, which fascinated the fisherman. He reported this phenomenon to Tao Kan. The latter came to see it in person and realized that the light was emitted by a statue of King Aśoka. Thereupon he carried it back and delivered it to Hanxi Temple in Wuchang² for reverence. Once, Sengzhen, the abbot of Hanxi Temple, went to Xiakou.³ At night, he dreamed of the temple destroyed in a fire, only the Aśoka statue survived. After he woke up, he rushed to the temple and found out the temple had been burned out. Fortunately, the Aśoka statue was intact. Afterwards, Tao Kan was transferred to another location; he heard of the marvelous power of the statue, thus dispatched envoys to fetch it back. When the statue was carried on the boat by dozens

1 Tao Kan was a general in the Jin government who had guarded in Wuchang as governor.

2 Wuchang was in Hubei Province.

3 Xiakou was near Wuchang, but now both Wuchang and Xiakou belong to the city of Wuhan.

of men, the boat sank to the bottom of the river. These people were frightened and went back empty-handed. Therefore, a folk rhyme regarding Tao Kan circulated in the Hubei and Hunan areas: “Tao Kan prevails by military power, while the king’s statue has supernatural force. Like the clouds and the mud, one is in the sky, and the other is on earth. The deities accept sincerity; martial rules would not change their course.”

After Huiyuan built the temple, he prayed piously for a statue of King Aśoka. The statue flew to Mount Lu by itself, like a piece of cloud. Hence Huiyuan was known for his power, which had been predicted in the folk rhyme. Since then, led by Huiyuan, the Sangha cultivated day and night; the Dharma of Shakyamuni Buddha revived in the Mount Lu area. Shortly afterwards, numerous people who followed the precepts strictly and cultivated with inner peace flocked to Huiyuan on Mount Lu, including Liu Yimin¹ of Pengcheng, Lei Cizong of Yuzhang, Zhou Xuzhi of Yanmen, Bi Yingzhi of Xincui, Zong Bing of Nanyang, Zhang Caimin, and Zhang Jishuo. They all dwelt there in seclusion to study under Huiyuan, aloof from worldly fame and gains. Thus, Huiyuan gathered everyone in front of the image of Amitabha Buddha to make the vow to be reborn in the Pure Land of Western Paradise. He asked Liu Yimin to draft the oath as the following:

“On the 28th of the seventh month in the year of the Tiger,² inspired by divine revelation, Master Shi Huiyuan is deeply touched and aspires piously. He hereby invites the Dharma brethren who cultivate with pure mind and common aspirations, 123 persons in total, to gather in the north of Mount Lu, in front of the Amitabha Buddha statue on the Prajna Platform of the Vihara. He leads the mass to offer the Buddha with flowers, pay homage devoutly, and take this solemn oath: All present in this Assembly understand the Buddhist Law of dependent origination well and bear the causality

1 Liu Yimin, a native of Pengcheng (Xuzhou today), was famous hermit in the Jin Dynasty.

2 The year of the Tiger was 402 CE. The tiger is one of the twelve animal signs that represent the years in the twelve-year cycle respectively.

of three lives in mind. Because of the vicissitude of worldly lives, the cause-effect of good and evil will be inevitable. Discerning the fall of criminals, one should be aware of the pressing force of impermanence. Observing the three karmic effects,¹ one will realize that bad karma is hardly saved. Knowing this reason, all virtuous brethren should guard against evil at night and diligently practice in the daytime, in the hope of being delivered from suffering by the Buddha. The deities can only be communicated with through inspirations, instead of looking for the traces. If sincerity arises, the telepathic power will be reachable. However, when one lacks a goal, he would be negligent and fail to find the ferry to the other shore of emancipation. Today, we are fortunate to have common aspirations, wholeheartedly wishing to be reborn in the Western Paradise, thus write the essay to state our conviction to the divine. As the signs manifested in the dream, with glowing colorful clouds and celestial mist, it is a hundredfold more joyful than rebirth in Sramana. The effects arise according to the laws, not human maneuvers. This assembly ritual is indeed inspired by the divine and encouraged by the deities; why should we not concentrate on oneness? Nevertheless, the conditions and capacity of everyone varies. In the morning, we make the same vow; at night, the results are diverse, which segregates us. Brotherly affection turns to sadness and regrets. We dress up and hereby make the solemn, equal oath in the temple collectively; with connected hearts, we share the same aspirations, to renounce worldly attachment, reach equanimity, and go to the Pure Land together. If someone among us outstands and gets to the World of Bliss first, he will not enjoy the celestial conditions himself and forget his other brethren. Since we cultivate together, advanced or behind, all should take care of each other, make progress in a joint manner, and walk together on the path towards the Western Paradise. Further, we purify our minds and meditate on the great image of the Buddha, turning back to self-nature and mindful of the Pure Land. Our karmic

1 Huiyuan's *On the Three Karmic Effects* 三報論 states: "the karmic effects may manifest in three periods of time: in the current life, in the next life, and in the lives after the next one."

consciousness refreshed by new causes, and bodies altered by the devotion. Therefore, after the rebirth in the lotus flowers rooted in the seven treasured pool, we will be able to chant under jade trees, wear clothes made of clouds, and travel to the eight corners of the universe, where fragrant breeze blowing eternally. The body will become more peaceful without worries of insecurity; the mind will transcend the Sramana and be carefree. Keep distance from rebirth cycles; though the heavenly palace is magnificent, we do not fetter ourselves in it.¹ Instead, we would deliver sentient beings and guide newcomers to reach the Pure Land. To explore in the path, is it not a noble cause?”

Huiyuan had a serious look and dignified conduct, awe-inspiring for all those who attended assemblies and saw him. A śramaṇa came to Mount Lu with a bamboo *ruyi*² as a gift to Huiyuan; he stayed in the temple for two days, however dared not to present it to the master, then putting it on the seat of Huiyuan before leaving quietly. Master Huiyi, who had a strong and fearless personality, visited Mount Lu and told Huibao, a disciple of Huiyuan: “You are just mediocre, frightened by his deportment, and worship him blindly; I will show you how to deal with him.” In the mountain temple, Huiyuan was expounding *the Lotus Sutra*; each time Huiyi would ask a question, he trembled, sweated with fear, and did not say a word in the end. After the lecture, he came out of the auditorium and told Huibao: “His Reverence’s dignity is terrifying.” These are examples of how Huiyuan naturally made people submit.

Once, Yin Zhongkan³ went to Jingzhou through Mount Lu, thus

1 In Buddhism, the six realms of the rebirth cycle (Sramana) are heavenly beings, humans, asuras, animals, ghosts, hell beings. Here, the heavenly palace refers to the first one, which is still in the Sramana and may go to any of the six in the next life, depending on karma. The Western Paradise of Pure Land is the realm created by Amitabha Buddha; sentient beings who get there can rid the cycle.

2 A *ruyi* is an S-shaped ornamental object, usually made of jade or bamboo, that is a symbol of good luck.

3 Yin Zhongkan, a famous official-scholar in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, was from a notable family, assuming governor positions in different locations.

paying tribute to the master. They tirelessly immersed in discussion about the essential of *the Book of Changes* by the creek in northern hill, disregarding the time that flew. Later, the official told others: “His wide range of knowledge, deep insight, and conviction for the religion are unparalleled.”

Wang Mi, an official of Situ,¹ Wang Mo, an officer of Hujun,² and other officials all admired Huiyuan’s virtue and learning, respecting him as students to their teacher. In his letter to Huiyuan, Wang Mi said: “I am only forty, however as old as if in my 60s.” Huiyuan replied: “Ancient people preferred an inch of shadow³ over a ten-inch jade disc. Therefore, we know they did not pursue longevity. Your body can act freely without indisposition, and your mind is nurtured by the Buddha-Dharma. According to ancient people’s standard, why is long life admirable? I think you have already known the justification. Cited here, I just thank you for your goodwill of the letter.”

When Lu Xun⁴ occupied Jiangzhou city, he betook to Mount Lu, paying tribute to the master. Huiyuan used to study with Lun Xun’s father, Lu Gu, thus was happy to have an interview with him. Lu Xun thereby dispatched envoys to salute Huiyuan twice a day. Someone in the Sangha advised Huiyuan: “Lu Xun is a traitor to the country. Frequent association with him may bring you trouble.” Huiyuan answered: “The Buddha-Dharma advocates equality, to treat everyone without discrimination. This is a well-known principle. Do not worry.” When Liu Yu, the Grand General who later became Emperor Wu of the Liu Song Dynasty, fought with Lu Xun at that time, he pitched camp at Sangwei.⁵ His subordinates

1 Situ was equivalent to a Finance Minister.

2 The position of Hujun was an officer in the royal guard.

3 A Chinese metaphor refers to the course of time in which the shadow under the sun moves an inch, meaning a short but valuable time.

4 Lu Xun, a general and governor in the Eastern Jin Dynasty from a noble family, used to gain honor and titles for his military service to the Jin government. Later, he tried to replace the emperor by attacking the Jin government’s troops, however he failed and finally killed himself in 411 CE.

5 Sangwei, in Susong, Anhui Province, is close to Jiangxi Province, where

told Liu Yu: “Master Huiyuan presides in Mount Lu and has good relations with Lu Xun; we shall take precaution against him.” Liu Yu replied: “Master Huiyuan is aloof from worldly affairs, and he has no discrimination to secular people; you do not have to suspect.” Thus, he dispatched envoys to deliver a letter, money, and cereals to pay respect to the master. Thereupon, near and far, people were impressed by Huiyuan’s brilliant insight.

Previously, the sutras transmitted to the south of Yangtze River were insufficient; many had not yet reached this region. People in the south had never heard of meditation methods. Vinaya texts were also rare, and the precept rules were incomplete. Huiyuan regretted the lack of the doctrines and sent his disciples, including Fajing and Faling, to search for sutras in remote areas. They traveled across deserts and snowy mountains, returning in a year with Sanskrit sutras and bringing about their translation and transmission.

Before that, Dao’an, in the Guanzhong area, had invited Dharmanandi to translate *the Abhidharmahṛdaya* 阿毗曇心論. Nevertheless, Dharmanandi had not mastered the Chinese language at that moment, so unclarity and inconsistency existed in the translation. Later, Saṃghadeva the Kushan śramaṇa, who had widely read the sutras and sastras, arrived at Xunyang in the 16th year of the Taiyuan Period in the Jin Dynasty. Huiyuan invited him to retranslate *the Abhidharmahṛdaya* and *the Tridharmaka śāstra* 三法度論. Since then, studies on the Abhidharma and Tridharmaka Sastra flourished. Huiyuan composed a preface for both translations to provide guidance to learners, which further promoted the learning.

Huiyuan cultivated diligently, concentrating on Dharma transmission. Every time he met with guests from the Western Regions, he would seek counsel. As soon as he heard that Kumārajīva arrived in Guanzhong, he dispatched messengers to send regards and his willingness to establish connections. In the

Mount Lu is located.

letter, he said:

“Greetings from Huiyuan. I received the letter of General Yao¹ in the last year and thank you for your salutation. Your Reverence had been in foreign countries and has now come to China. Earlier, I heard and admired your excellence, but I had no means to pay my tribute due to the distance blocking postal communication, which was a pity. Recently, I am convinced that we would have an opportunity for our association, as I have obtained your address and learned that you carried Dharma treasures to China. I naturally long for a meeting with you, more than nine times a day; however, I can only keep this joy in mind and imagine your elegance, which would not really help. From time to time, I stand by the roadside and stretch my head to look into the distance until my legs numb. They often say that virtuous friends from all directions gather in your lecture hall, which makes me feel an appreciative joy. Although I can merely pay attention to your sermons from afar, we have common aspirations. I have not had the chance to learn under you, nor be inspired by your insight about the great Teaching, yet look forward to it every single day. When sandalwood is planted in a place, everything around it is perfumed; when the maṇi-jewel² glows bright light, other treasures will gather next to it. Thus, teaching and learning are well like departing empty-handed and returning fully-loaded. Actually, the Buddha-Dharma advocates formlessness; ordinary sensibility should not apply to it. In addition, the real talents, who are able to expound the Dharma, do not do it in exchange for merit; those who make friends out of kindness would promote kindness instead of holding back the loving circle. If one can make the Dharma Wheel keep rolling on the Noble Eightfold Path and the voice of Three Jewels continue to resound, then Purna³ will have successors, and Nagarjuna will not be unparalleled in virtue. My messenger is now leaving for your esteemed monastery

1 General Yao refers to Yao Song, General of the Left Army; he was the younger brother of Yao Xing, who was the monarch of the Later Qin Dynasty.

2 Maṇi-jewel refers to a wish granting jewel in Buddhist texts.

3 Purna was one of the top ten disciples of the Buddha; he was number one in dharma talk.

to pay my respect; I hereby enclose a cassock for Your Reverence to wear during your lectures on the high seat, plus a water filter bag¹ which is a tool for Dharma transmission.”

Kumārajīva replied in his letter:

“Greetings from Kumārajīva. We have not had the opportunity to talk in person, and the language difference impeded the communication between us, thus I am unable to receive your goodwill. After reading your letter, I am grateful for your salutation, witnessed your virtue, and learned about your cause; although a mere sight, I could imagine the circumstances. In sutras, it says that Bodhisattvas of Dharma Protection will appear in the east. How exciting! Virtuous men with great aspirations will make contributions. The prediction in the sutras will be deployed and accomplished by Your Reverence. To transmit the Dharma, one should be in possession of five qualities: fortune, morality, erudition, eloquence, and great wisdom. In the case of possession of the five, the Dharma cause will flourish; otherwise, doubt and hindrance will arise. Now Your Reverence can dispose the five qualities, I therefore send this letter with my best wishes and respect. However, this letter has been translated, can barely express my whole intention, and just conveys my rough idea. I appreciate your kindness in offering me the cassock and asking for me to wear it on the occasion of lectures. I will follow your advice. The only regret is that I do not deserve this precious gift, so I feel ashamed. I hereby send you a copper, double-mouth jar for bathing, which can be used as a Dharma tool. Meanwhile, I also enclose a verse for you:

‘As worldly pleasure has been detached, is the mind nurtured by wholesomeness? If concentration is realized, will it lead to true formlessness? In absolute emptiness, the mind has nothing for

1 Monks used a bag to filter water to avoid killing sentient beings when humans drink. This has been a tradition since the Buddha’s age. Tools of the Dharma here refer to the tools and instruments that facilitate monastic life and comply with Buddhist precepts. The below mentioned jar for bathing is in the same category.

enjoyment. If rejoicing at the wisdom of meditative concentration, it reveals attachment to us. All the delusions are unreal, and they do not stay in mind. What Your Reverence has attained, please enlighten me with the essence of this kind.”

Huiyuan then returned with a letter:

“It is getting cold now; I hope you are doing well. Last month, Master Kang Fashi came over thus I learned that you would return to your homeland. This news made me sorrowful. Earlier, people said you were preparing to translate multiple sutras, in fear of interrupting you, I refrained myself from asking for your tutorial. If Kang Fashi’s words were true, it is natural that the public would feel melancholy. Now I list a few dozen sketchy questions to seek your advice; I hope you could answer one or two at your convenience. These questions are not from the most difficult or subtle sections, but I still like to hear your exhortations. In the meantime, I enclose a verse for Your Reverence: ‘Where is the origin of the mind? It stays motionless between becoming and ceasing. When a minute examination is involved in a moving state, the mountain may be collapsing.¹ The illusive thoughts get the chance to step in; the emptiness principle will become a question. Karmic effects have no host, and enlightenment takes generations. If awakened sages hide them at the time, who will make the law clear? Regarding the question in your letter, I hope I can answer in my later years.’”

Afterwards, a śramaṇa named Puṇyatāra arrived in Guanzhong, reciting Sanskrit version of *Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律: Kumārajīva translated it during his recitation. Nevertheless, the śramaṇa passed away after he recited two third of the text. Huiyuan thus deeply lamented its incompleteness. As soon as he heard about Dharmaruci’s arrival in the land of the Later Qin Dynasty, Huiyuan sent his disciple, Tanyong, to deliver a letter to the foreign monk, inviting him to translate the rest of *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya*.

1 In Buddhism, changes in the physical world depend on the mind.

Thereupon the text came to be complete. The full version acquired in the Eastern Jin territory is circulating today. Thanks to Huiyuan's efforts, the marvelous texts from the Western Regions and exquisite translations converged in the eastern area.

Foreign monks all talked about the Mahayana practitioners in China; when they arrived in the country, they would burn incense and pay homage towards the direction of Mount Lu in the east, believing that its divine power was unconceivable.

Earlier in China, infinite Nirvana did not exist; instead, the thoughts of longevity and immortality were popular. On this issue, Huiyuan sighed: "The Buddha is supreme, the ultimate reality, and is thus eternally constant. How can it be finite?" Therefore, he wrote *the Treatise on the Dharma Nature* 法性論, which states: "The ultimate truth has the nature of consistency; obtaining this nature relies on the comprehension of the ultimate substance." When Kumārajīva read this treatise, he praised it, saying: "Although sutras are not originally from China, local thoughts can be perfectly combined with the Dharma, which is wonderful."

Yao Xing, the Monarch of Later Qin Dynasty admired Huiyuan's fame and virtue, appreciated his talent and insights, sent a letter to the master to pay tribute, and constantly dispatched gifts and messages to Huiyuan. One time, he offered a tributary item from Kucha, a piece of silk work knitted with images of Buddhist tales, to the abbot to show his respect. Later, he ordered Yao Song to provide his Buddha statue made of gems and jewels to Huiyuan. *The Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra* 大智度論 was just translated, and Yao Xing sent a copy to Huiyuan as well with a letter saying: "The translation of *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra* has recently been completed. Since this is Nagarjuna's work, an origin of Mahayana theory, it deserves a great preface. However, the monks here all graciously declined; no one dares to draft it. I believe Your Reverence is able to accomplish this endeavor to inspire future learners."

Huiyuan replied in his letter:

“You would let me compose the preface for *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra* to summarize the author’s principles. However, it is said to contain big objects, so a small bag is insufficient; if the well is deep, a short rope cannot reach the water. When I read the book, I feel my capacity is inferior to understand the subtle principles, and thus I am ashamed of being unable to fill your need. In addition, my reading has been interrupted by my illness. When continuing, the former contents become blurred, so much so that I have to restart from the beginning. Therefore, it takes a long time. Because I do not want to fail your expectations, I will just make a sketchy outline. The sophisticated commentary should rely on more gifted ones.”

Those are examples about how people respected the master. Huiyuan said: Due to the length of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra*, beginners could hardly figure out the essence and find the way to understand it. Thus, he excerpted its major phrases, rendered them into a 20-fascicle work, and made a preface for it, revealing the profound meanings with graceful language, which could yield the same result by doing half the work.

Later, Governor Huan Xuan¹ went to attack Yin Zhongkan in Jingzhou; passing by Mount Lu, he invited Huiyuan down to Hu Creek to have an interview. Huiyuan excused himself due to his illness and did not descend from the mountain; Huan Xuan then climbed up to meet him. His assistants told the governor: “Yin Zhongkan used to visit Huiyuan before, so you should not respect him.” Huan Xuan replied: “It does not make sense. Yin Zhongkan is a dead man, and he does not know anything.” Seeing Huiyuan, Huan Xuan naturally paid homage to Huiyuan from a distance.

¹ Huan Xuan (369-404) was a nobleman and general in the Jin Dynasty. During the Wei and Jin Dynasties, warlords fought in different regions of China, so many places descended into anarchic states.

Huan Xuan asked: “It says ‘Do not harm,’¹ why would you shave your head?” Huiyuan answered: “This is for standing straight and practicing in the right way.” Huan Xuan had prepared a few questions to challenge the master; however, receiving the first answer in an eloquent manner, he did not raise the others. He told the master that he was on his way to attack Yin Zhongkan; Huiyuan did not respond. Then, the governor asked explicitly: “What do you think?” “I hope you remain steady, so does Yin Zhongkan,” replied the master. After returning from the mountain, Huan Xuan told the others: “Huiyuan is really a sage that I have never met before.” Later, with the obedience of the emperor acting as a deterrent, Huan Xuan repeatedly requested Huiyuan to join his force, sending letters to provide many reasons to persuade the master to leave Mount Lu and assume an official position. Huiyuan firmly declined without any room for negotiation. His determination, which was as strong as red rocks, could not be bent.

Shortly afterwards, Huan Xuan intended to rectify the religion, ordering his subordinates: “Śramaṇas who can expound sutras, explicate the Dharma, or observe the precepts are talents for Buddhist transmission. Those without these qualities should be sent back to worldly life. However, only Mount Lu, the virtuous abode, should not be included in the inspection.” Huiyuan sent a letter to Huan Xuan, saying: “Because foul members blended in the Sangha, Buddhism has been severely damaged. Every time I see these turbid people, anger arises in me; in the meantime, I have deep concerns that these monastics will lead to a catastrophe of the religion. Learning about your efforts to disentangle the monastic order, I think we share the same idea. The Jing River and Wei River² are distinct because the clear and the muddy are separate;

1 “Do not harm,” is quoted from the Confucian work, the Classic of Filial Piety. According to which the body, including hair and skin, are given by the parents and supposed to be well taken care of; this is the first step to respect one’s parents.

2 A Chinese idiom says that people or substances with distinct natures would not mingle. The Jing River’s clear water and the Wei River’s muddy water converge near Chang’an (Xi’an today), yet the stream appears in two distinct

while bent things should be adjusted by straight objects. As stated in *the Analects of Confucius*: ‘To raise the straight may correct the wrongs,’ thus the unkind have to leave as they cannot stay anymore. Since this policy has been carried out, that proves your comprehension of the two principles; the way for the fake ones will be cut off. Straight-minded monastics will not be disrespected anymore. Thereupon, Buddhism and the country can flourish, and the Three Jewels will revive.” Hence the master made suggestions to improve the rules of Huan Xuan, and the latter approved it.

Formerly, when Emperor Cheng¹ was still young, Yu Bing served as his assistant and tutor. Yu Bing believed that monks should follow the worldly rule to pay respect to the emperors.² Whereas He Chong, the Prime Minister, Chu Yu, an Official of Puye, Zhuge Hui, and other officials opposed him, raising a petition that monks should not pay homage to the emperors. The court then delegated this issue to the officials to discuss. The officials all took the side of He Chong. Whereas the subordinates of Yu Bing refuted based on their superior’s opinion; no agreement had been reached.

When Huan Xuan resided in Gushu,³ he wanted to lay down the rule that all the monks should pay homage to the emperors. He thereby wrote to Huiyuan: “It is inappropriate that śramaṇas do not pay homage to the emperor, and it is against logic as well. This is an important matter that should be made right. I recently wrote letters to eight ministers, and now I will show you this letter. You may explain if you do not think monks should pay homage to the emperors. We would follow your idea in the case that you have convincing points to support it. Please explicate by giving one or two concrete instances to exempt the monks from the courtesy. I believe Your Reverence is able to dispel everyone’s doubt.”

colors after the convergence.

1 Emperor Cheng, Sima Yan (321-342), became the third emperor of the Eastern Jin Dynasty at the age of four.

2 Respect to the emperors here refers to kneeling down to the emperor.

3 Gushu is in Dangtu County, Anhui Province today.

Huiyuan replied in his letter: “What does śramaṇa mean? It refers to those who inspire people’s wisdom, let the populace know the ignorance of the world, and demonstrate the path to transcend worldly matters and realize the Truth. By means of detaching from everything and self, they can attain the final goal with the people. This endeavor provides the noble ones with good examples, so as to learn and make the pure-minded ones savor the source of purity. Although this great ideal has not been realized, one can find the trace of it by looking at the unworldly life of śramaṇas, and hence have wonderful inspiration. In addition, the cassock that the śramaṇas wear is not an official costume for the imperial courtesy, and the utensils that śramaṇas use do not comply with imperial court’s requirements. Śramaṇas are outside worldly affairs and are thus not supposed to follow worldly courtesy to pay homage to the emperors.”

Though Huan Xuan insisted on his opinion and would feel ashamed in following a monk’s advice, after reading Huiyuan’s letter, he started to hesitate. Before long, he took the throne and made a decree: “The Buddha-Dharma is infinitely vast, and worldly people cannot entirely understand it. According to the śramaṇas behaviors, they respect the emperors. Now that I am in the position, I would like to promote the quality of modesty; monks do not need to pay homage to emperors anymore.”

Huiyuan thus wrote *On Śramaṇas not Paying Homage to Monarchs* 沙門不敬王者論, which consists of five chapters. The first one entitled “Within the World,” states: “Those who obey imperial laws are the populace complying with secular learning and culture; reason and logic regulate the secular world, and people behave in accordance with the regulations. Thereupon they have an instinctive love towards the family and courtesy to the ruler. Homage has its roots, hence comes into the didactics.” The second chapter entitled “Renunciation of the World” indicates: “Monastics escape from worldly affairs to pursue their aspirations, altering their customs to obtain the Teachings. Since the change, their code of attire is

different from worldly ones. Renouncing the world leads to noble conduct. The virtuous hence are able to save the secular from the stream of rebirth cycles and uproot their suffering from continuous calamities. For longer vision, they point to the ferry of liberation through the three vehicles; for short goals, they present the human and celestial paths. If a man can be developed to the state of whole virtue, such Teachings will bring harmony and honor to both his relatives and all sentient beings. Without royal positions, the monastics can assist imperial governance and help the populace in their lives. Therefore, internally, the abnormality with the family is not against filial piety, externally, the lack of homage to the monarchs does not mean disrespect.” The third chapter entitled “To Seek the Truth Instead of the Traditions” proclaims: Those who seek the origin and truth do not bother their consciousness with life; while those who transcend secular affairs are not hindered in their lives by sensibility. Without the hindrance of sensibility for life, rebirth can cease; when not bothering the consciousness with lives, the consciousness can stay calm. The ultimate calmness is called Nirvana. Thus, the śramaṇas have equality with monarchs in courtesy by carrying on noble cause; without noble titles, yet they get the honor.” The fourth chapter entitled “Dual Responsiveness does not exist in Ultimate Substance” says: “Tathagata and Duke Zhou,¹ or Confucius, have different origins and perspectives; their principles interacted in latency, and their ultimate goals are identical. Thereupon, it is said that their methods vary; the paths converge in the end. ‘Not responding to both’ derives from the rule that a substance cannot be receptive of two natures.”² Chapter five entitled “The Form Ends yet the Consciousness Continues” points out: “Consciousness may go in different directions.” This is a briefing on the treatise of Huiyuan.

When Huan Xuan was defeated and escaped to the west, Emperor

1 Duke Zhou, known as a politician and philosopher, assisted his older brother King Zhouwu, the founder of the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BCE-256 BCE) and his nephew, to govern the country.

2 Not responding to both here refers to how monks cannot be officials at the same time (Zhu et al 2010).

An of the Jin Dynasty returned to the capital from Jiangling. He Wuji, Assistant of the Emperor, advised Huiyuan to wait for the emperor midway. The master excused himself due to illness and did not follow the advice. On the contrary, the emperor dispatched envoys to pay tribute to the master. In a letter to the emperor, Huiyuan said: “Greetings from Huiyuan. In the spring of the third month in the Chinese lunar calendar, the weather is nice. I wish Your Majesty health and good dietary conditions. Previously, I had serious disease, but now it worsens as I am getting older. I am deeply grateful for your nice care, which I do not deserve. However, Your Majesty’s grace will be remembered. It would be my great honor to meet you in person, yet my indisposition does not allow for my trip for the interview. It is an unspeakable pity.” Emperor An thus responded with a decree: “Your greetings of spring warmth has been received, and I learned about your illness. I am sorry to hear that. Last month I departed from Jiangling; the journey took twofold time than normal due to the bad condition of the road. I expected to meet with you but failed due to Your Master abiding in mountain woods, the disease as well. There is no further issue to discuss, which makes me feel more regretful.”

Xie Lingyun¹ of Chen Prefecture was condescending out of self-confidence; few could be appreciated by him. However, he immediately became respectful and admired the master when he met with Huiyuan. The master deeply understood the Buddhist doctrines and was versed in non-Buddhist classics; his disciples all carried on his style. When Huiyuan preached *the Sutra on Being in Mourning* 服喪經, Lei Cizong,² Zong Bing,³ and other students followed the lecture attentively with the sutra in their hands.

1 Xie Lingyun (385-433), the Duke of Kangle, was a famous poet and writer in the Jin Dynasty; he assumed different positions and was later killed by the emperor of the Liu Song government.

2 Lei Cizong (386-448), a philosopher and educator, was proficient in Buddhism and Confucianism.

3 Zong Bing (375-443) was a painter and lay Buddhist associated with Huiyuan. The authorities invited him to assume posts several times, however he declined them all.

Later, Lei Cizong wrote a commentary on *the Sutra on Being in Mourning*, crediting himself as the author. Zong Bing hence laughed at him: “Formerly, we both listened to the lecture of Master Huiyuan on this sutra, will you put your name on the book now?” Huiyuan’s disciples included monastics and lay Buddhists. There were numerous cases like Lei Cizong.

In seclusion, Huiyuan dwelt on Mount Lu for more than 30 years; once he arrived in the mountain, he never returned to the secular world. Every time he saw off guests, he would stop at the Hu Creek. He started to take medicine at the beginning of the eighth month in 12th year of the Yixi Period in the Jin Dynasty; on the sixth of the month, he was in critical condition and felt extremely tired. The virtuous around him all suggested that he take the medicine wine, he refused; then they proposed rice soup, and he would not take it either. At last, they pleaded with him to drink some water blended with honey, and he asked the precept master to check if this complied with the code. Before the result had been found out, he passed away at the age of 83. His disciples cried out as if they had lost their own parents. Monastics and laypeople flocked to the funeral. Huiyuan presumed the feelings that people might have towards him and set the rule of a seven-day mourning period, asking his disciples to put his body in the pine woods for people to pay respect. After seven days, his body was buried by disciples. Ruan Kan, the Prefect of Xunyang, built a tomb at the west hill. Xie Lingyun drafted the inscription, recording his virtue. Zong Bing of Nanyang erected a stele in front of the temple.

Huiyuan was a good writer; his literature was elegant and pure. When he expounded the sutras, he made the contents concise and clear. In addition, his look and figure were neat and noble. People drew his portrait and enshrined it in the temple for the worshipers from near and far to pay homage. Huiyuan’s works, in forms of commentaries, prefaces, inscriptions, eulogies, poems, and letters, had been collected and compiled into ten fascicles, over 50 works in total. Now they are highly valued by the public.

2. Shi Huichi of Longyuan Temple in Shu during the Jin Dynasty Huiyan Senggong Daohong Tanlan

Shi Huichi¹ 釋慧持, the younger brother of Huiyuan, was quiet in nature, was indifferent of worldly attractions, and held great aspirations. He started to learn to read at the age of 14; the knowledge he acquired per day was tenfold compared to the others. Great at literature and history, he also had clever hands and good sense. At the age of 18, he joined the monastic order and studied under Dao'an with his brother, Huiyuan. He widely learned sutras and became versed in the Tripitaka. When Dao'an dispatched his disciples in Xiangyang and let Huiyuan go southwards, Huichi traveled along with his older brother. He was 1.85 meters in height, elegant, and handsome. He often wore straw sandals; his robe reached his shins. At Mount Lu, the 3000 monastics that came and went were all smart and neat, however Huichi was the foremost in demeanor.

Huichi had an aunt who was a nun by the monastic name of Daoyi that lived in Jiangxia.² She heard that dharma talks were prospering in the capital, thus wanted to visit. Huichi accompanied her to the capital and stayed in Dong'an Temple. Wang Xun³ from Langya was staying there; an officer of imperial guards attached importance to him. At that time, a śramaṇa from the Western Regions named Saṃgharakṣa was an expert in the recitation of *the Four Āgamas*, Wang Xun therefore requested that he translate *the Madhyama Āgama* 中阿含; Huichi proofread and revised the Chinese version. Later, he returned to Mount Lu.

Shortly afterwards, Fan Ning, the Prefect of Yuzhang, invited him to preach the Lotus Sutra and Abhidharma; audiences from hundreds of miles away in the four directions came to listen. Wang

1 Shi Huichi (337-412).

2 Jiangxia is in Yunmeng, Hubei province today.

3 Wang Xun (350-401), style name Yuanlin, was an official and calligrapher in the Jin Dynasty and known for his calligraphic work, *Boyuantie* 伯遠帖.

Xun wrote to Fan Ning asking: “Comparing Master Huiyuan and Master Huichi, which one you think greater?” Fan Ning replied: “They are indeed brothers; it is hard to tell who is better.” Wang Xun returned: “The older brother cannot be found easily, let alone the extraordinary younger brother.” Wang Gong from Langya, the Prefect of Yanzhou,¹ wrote to Sengjian the śramaṇa saying: “What about the moral quality of the brothers Huiyuan and Huichi?” Sengjian answered: “Huiyuan and Huichi are brothers, both with good demeanor, and likely enlightened.” Kumārajīva admired Huichi in Guanzhong and communicated with him through letters, they hence associated as dharma friends.

Huichi heard that the land was fertile and that people were rich in the Chengdu area;² he wanted to preach the Dharma in that region, and to visit Mount Emei³ and Mount Min. In the third year of the Long’an Period in the Jin Dynasty, he said goodbye to his brother and prepared to leave for Shu Prefecture. Huiyuan tried his best to keep him but failed, thus sighing: “People in this world love to gather, however you would part. What is the reason?” Huichi was sad as well and replied: “If we enjoy the worldly affections, are entangled by desires, and cannot bear to separate, we would not have to renounce the world. Now we pursue the Truth and detach from the desires; the objective is to reunite in the Western Paradise.” Thus, the two brothers bid farewell in silence with tears streaming down their faces.

When Huichi stopped in Jingzhou for a rest, the prefect, Yin Zhongkan, was glad and treated him with great respect. At that time, Huan Xuan was in town as well. Although the latter studied Buddhism, he did not gain a deep understanding. However, he adored Huichi’s unparalleled knowledge and insight, marvelling aloud that the master was second to none of past and present

1 Yanzhou is in Shandong today.

2 Chengdu, the center of Shu, is now the provincial capital of Sichuan.

3 Mount Emei is situated In Sichuan province; with beautiful scenery, it is one of the four holy mountains for Chinese Buddhists, known as the site for Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

talents. He thus would make friends with him. Huichi had concerns about his quality and did not agree. Yin Zhongkan and Huan Xuan persistently asked him to stay, yet Huichi would not change his mind. Before leaving, he wrote a letter to Huan Xuan: “By this trip I intended to dwell in Mount Emei and then visit the Western Regions across the deserts. It is hard to alter the original plan, so I hereby bid farewell to you, pack my bags and betake myself.” After reading the letter, Huan Xuan was despondent and knew he could not change it. After arriving in Shu Prefecture, Huichi stayed in the Longyuan Vihara to widely propagate the Dharma. He connected with people from all directions; audiences who sought virtuous teachings came to him in groups. The prefect, Mao Qu, appreciated him as well.

At that time, Huiyan 慧巖 the monk and Senggong 僧恭 were already in Sichuan; they were well accepted by the locals. When Huichi arrived, people admired him greatly and considered being able to listen to his lectures in the auditorium an honor, calling it stepping in the dragon’s gate.¹ Master Senggong was talented since his early youth, later assuming the Monastic Head² position in Shu Prefecture. Master Huiyan was versed in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics; he was appreciated by Mao Qu. Afterwards, Jiao Zong, a local of Shu, killed Mao Qu in battles and enthroned himself as King of Chengdu. Thereupon, Jiao Zong called for an assembly of all monks, forcing Master Huiyan to preside. Left with no choice, Huiyan had to attend. Mao Qu, who was just defeated and died, was a patron of Huiyan’s Buddhist cause; hence, Huiyan was sad and showed it on his face during the assembly. Jiao Zong thus bore a grudge against him and finally murdered the master. The entire city panicked; horror shrouded monastics and lay Buddhists. After the incident, Huichi hid at Zhong Temple in Pi County.³

1 The temple where Huichi lived was named Longyuan, which literally means the dragon pond, thus people used the metaphor of stepping in the dragon gate for attending the lectures.

2 The Monastic Head was the official leader of local Buddhist monastics; the mechanism originated from the Later Qin government (384-417).

3 Pi County was a suburb of Chengdu.

Daofu, a nephew of Jiao Zong, was fiendish. He once passed by Zhong Temple after a battle and abruptly entered in with the bloodstained army. The monks were all frightened and ran away. At that moment, Huichi was washing in front of the dormitory as usual. When Daofu passed by, the master continued his washing in calmness. On the contrary, Daofu felt guilty and sweated. After leaving the temple, he told his assistants: “The great are really different from the ordinary.” Later, the upheaval subsided in the region, and Huichi returned to Longyuan Temple. He expounded *the Liturgical Script for Repentance Rite* 齋懺文 in the temple, becoming older and more diligent. He passed away in the temple in the eighth year of the Yixi Period at the age of 76. Before his death, he enjoined the mass to observe the precepts by telling them: “In Buddhist sutras, the precept is likened to the flat earth. Wholesomeness will arise from it. When you walk, stand, sit, and recline, you should be mindful of it.” He handed the sutras and classics in the east rooms down to his disciple Daohong 道泓; the Vinaya texts in the west rooms went to Tanlan 曇蘭. Daohong was pure and witty; while Tanlan had deep insights, they both inherited the lineage of the master.

3. Shi Huiyong of Mount Lu during the Jin Dynasty

Sengrong

Shi Huiyong¹ 釋慧永, originally from a Po family in Henei, joined the monastic order at the age of 12, followed Zhu Tanxian the śramaṇa as his teacher, and later studied under Master Dao'an. He once made an agreement with Huiyuan to build a monastery on Mount Luofu. As Huiyuan stayed with Dao'an at the teacher's request, Shi Huiyong wanted to depart to the destination first by crossing Wuling.² When passing by Xunyang, he was persistently persuaded to stay by a local named Tao Fan. Thus, he temporarily stayed at Xilin Temple on Mount Lu. Gradually, his disciples assembled there. Then, Huiyuan built a temple on Mount Lu as well. Thereupon, he finally settled on the mountain.

Shi Huiyong was pure, honest, natural, and peaceful. He was detached from desires and observed the precepts strictly; he smiled when speaking, being humble and thoughtful. Shi Huiyong was immersed in the classics and highly eloquent; he ate vegetarian food and wore cotton clothes all along. Building a thatched cottage on the hill, he would abide in it when practicing meditation. People passing by the cottage could smell a rare fragrance. A tiger always stayed in Shi Huiyong's room, which made people scared; hence the host let the tiger go to the woods. When the guests left, the tiger returned of its own accord, crouching in the room again.

Once, the master went out to the town and returned late. When he passed by the Wu Bridge, the head of the guards was drunk and had the horse block the road to stop Shi Huiyong. It was getting dark. The master pointed his Buddhist staff at the horse in the distance; the horse recoiled and ran away, thereupon the officer fell on the ground. Shi Huiyong helped him get up, comforted him, and walked him back to their camp. He thus got sick and went to the

1 Shi Huiyong (332-414).

2 Wuling was the watershed between the Yangtze River system and the Pearl River system.

temple to apologize to the master the next day. Shi Huiyong said: “It was not my intention; I am afraid it was the precept guardian deity who did it.” Learning about this incident, many monastics and laypeople flocked to the master to pay respect.

Later, He Wuji, the General of Zhennan, came to guard Xunyang and called for a meeting at Hu Creek, inviting Huiyong and Huiyuan as well. Huiyuan had a high reputation for a long time; his capability was extraordinary, and over one hundred people in decent dress and appearance came with him. They talked with eloquence and drew a lot of attention. While Huiyong quietly came alone, wearing a simple Buddhist robe and straw sandals while holding a staff and almsbowl. He was relaxed, calm, pure, and humble. More people actually preferred his simplicity. Huiyuan admired very few people; however, he respected Shi Huiyong’s virtuous deeds. He was humble in front of the latter and believed that he could accumulate merits in this way.

Huiyong cultivated with assiduity, expecting to be reborn in the Western Paradise. He was critically ill in the tenth year of the Yixi Period and was in perilous condition. He thus observed the precepts strictly, practicing harder. Although he suffered from the sickness, nice and smiling expressions still stayed on his face. Shortly afterwards, he suddenly arranged his clothes, joined his palms, asked for his shoes, and wanted to get up, as if he saw something. The mass asked him out of curiosity. He answered: “The Buddha has arrived.” After these words, he passed away at the age of 83. At that time, monastics and ordinary people on the mountain all smelled a rare fragrance; it lingered for seven days.

In the same period, Shi Daorong 僧融, who was also on Mount Lu, observed the precepts seriously; he had the ability to communicate with deities and spirits as well as to subdue demons and ghosts.

4. Shi Sengji of Mount Lu during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Sengji 釋 僧 濟 was of unknown origins. In the years of the Taiyuan Period¹ in the Jin Dynasty, he arrived at Mount Lu and studied under Master Huiyuan. He was versed in both Mahayana and Hinayana scriptures, as well as non-Buddhist classics and divination books; he frequently reviewed and practiced them in his mind, and thus deeply understood the essences. Right after his 30th birthday, he went to town to hold dharma talks, becoming a grand master. Huiyuan mentioned him several times: “Who can propagate the Dharma with me, he may be the one.”

Later, while staying in the mountain for a short period of time, he was critically ill. He wished to ascend to the Western Paradise, thereupon contemplating the image of Amitabha Buddha. Huiyuan gave him a candle and told him: “You can focus on recuperation and make the best use of your time.” Shi Sengji held the candle, leaned on the table, stopped thinking, and calmed his mind down. He also invited brethren to gather in his place at night; they read *the Sutra of the Immeasurable Lives* for him. During the fifth watch² in the morning, he passed the candle to his school friends and let them continuously pass it one by one. He lay down and dreamed that he was holding a candle walking in the void and that Amitabha Buddha put him on the Buddha’s palm, travelling to the worlds in ten directions. When he woke up, he told his dream to his dharma friends who were taking care of him. He had a mixed feeling of happiness and sadness, realizing the emptiness nature of the four great elements and the sufferings. On the second night, he asked for his shoes and stood up, as if he saw something. Shortly after, he lay down again. His face became more harmonious, and he told the ones next to him: “I am leaving.” Then, he turned his body, reclined

1 The Taiyuan Period: 376-396.

2 The fifth watch was between 3 to 5 am. Ancient Chinese people divided the night time into five watches. The first watch was from 19:00-21:00, the second from 21:00-23:00, the third from 23:00-1:00, the fourth from 1:00-3:00, and the fifth from 3:00-5:00 am. Watchmen would patrol regularly in each watch.

on his right side, and stopped breathing at the age of 45.

5. Shi Fa'an of Xinyang during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Fa'an 釋法安, or Ciqin, was of unknown origins and a disciple of Master Huiyuan. He was good at precept observance, preaching the Dharma, and meditation; he had the special skills to educate the ignorant and to correct the wrong.

During the Yixi Period¹ in the Jin Dynasty, people in Xinyang County² were plagued by a tiger. The temple of the Earth's God had been built under a tree in the county. Hundreds of residents and villagers lived nearby; however one or two would be killed by the tiger each night. Once, Shi Fa'an came to the county and wanted to lodge in the village. The locals closed their doors early in fear of the tiger. Shi Fa'an thus came to the tree of the Earth temple and meditated under it all night long. At almost daybreak, he heard the tiger approaching with a man in his mouth and dropping the body to the north of the tree. Seeing Shi Fa'an, the tiger seemed startled then joyful, jumping to crouch in front of the master. Shi Fa'an expounded precepts for the beast and it stayed still. After a while, the tiger left. In the morning, the villagers chased the tiger to the tree and found Shi Fa'an; totally surprised, they called him a deity. Thereupon he was known in this county. Scholars and officials worshiped him. The tiger calamity had ended. Thus, they converted the temple into a Buddhist monastery, persuading Shi Fa'an to host it. The fields next to it were all donated to Buddhism.

Later, Shi Fa'an wanted to draw pictures and needed copper rust for the green color; however, he could not find any. One night, he dreamed of a figure approaching his bed and saying: "Two bronze bells are underneath." Waking up, he dug in the ground and really found two bells. Using the rust, he made the picture. Afterwards, one bell was sent to Master Huiyuan for the casting of his Buddha statue; the other was borrowed and kept by Xiong Wuhuan, the

1 The Yixi Period: 405-419.

2 Xinyang County is in Jingshan, Hubei.

Prefect of Wuchang. Later, Shi Fa'an's whereabouts became unknown.

6. Shi Tanyong of Mount Lu during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Tanyong 釋曇邕 was originally from a Yang family in Guanzhong. In his youth, he assumed the post of assistant general in the bogus government of Former Qin Dynasty. He was 1.85 meters high, strong, and brave. In the eighth year of the Taiyuan Period under the Jin government, he followed Fu Jian in the eastward expedition and was defeated by Jin troops. Returning to Chang'an, he joined the Order of Master Shi Dao'an. After the master's death,¹ he went southwards to Mount Lu, respecting Huiyuan as his teacher. Tirelessly, he studied both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics, aspiring to propagate the Dharma. Later, Huiyuan dispatched him to Guanzhong to deliver letters to Kumārajīva. He worked as a messenger for over ten years, responding to celebrities and famous figures with witty words and convincing them wisely and firmly. He could always accomplish the tasks given by Huiyuan.

Master Sengjian at Daochang Temple in the capital invited him to return to Yangzhou on account of his virtue and insight. Shi Tanyong did not go because Huiyuan was in his later years. However, among Huiyuan's disciples there were arrogant ones; Huiyuan worried that Shi Tanyong would not get along with those monks, sending the latter out of the temple with an excuse. Shi Tanyong left the monastery without grudge, building a thatched cottage in the southwest of the mountain and practicing meditation with his disciple Tanguo.

Once, Tanguo dreamed of the deity of the mountain asking for Five Precepts. Tanguo replied: "My teacher is here; you may follow his instruction." Shortly after, Tanyong saw an elegant man in thin clothes, accompanied by about 20 people, asking for the granting of the Five Precepts. Shi Tanyong had learned about Tanguo's dream, thus knew that these people were deities. He preached the Dharma and granted the precepts for them. The deity offered a foreign spoon and chopsticks to him, paid homage, bid farewell, and then

¹ The death of Dao'an in was in 385 CE.

disappeared. On the day Huiyuan was departing, Tanyong went to the bed of his master, cried out in grief, and stamped his feet; his sentiment was from the depth of his heart. Afterwards, he left for Jingzhou and died in Zhulin Temple.

7. Shi Daozu of Tai Temple in Wu during the Jin Dynasty

Huiyao Tanshun Tanshen Fayou Daoheng Daoshou

Shi Daozu 釋道祖¹, a native of Wu,² joined the monastic order at a young age and followed Zhi Faji of Tai Temple as his teacher. He demonstrated great talent since his childhood, studying diligently. Later, along with Sengqian, Daoliu, and others who shared the same aspiration, he arrived at Mount Lu, where they received ordination together and stayed for seven years. In the mountain, they cultivated in the ways that best suited them, gaining new insights every day. Master Huiyuan said often: Shi Daozu and the others have a high capacity for learning; if all his disciples were like them, he would worry no more about the transmission of Dharma. Some, including Sengqian and Daoliu, died at 28. Huiyuan sadly uttered: “They were all virtuous and intelligent; just in their prime and gaining progress each day. However, they left with such wonderful talent. What a grief!” Daoliu was compiling the catalogue of sutras, yet did not finish. Shi Daozu continued and completed the work, which is circulating today. Later, Shi Daozu went to Waguan Temple in the capital to expound the Dharma. Huan Xuan went to listen frequently. He told others: “Daozu is really a promising youth; he has surpassed Master Huiyuan and just needs to improve his elegance and erudition.” When Huan Xuan assisted the governing of the country and intended to launch the policy to order monks to pay homage to the emperors, Daozu returned to Tai Temple in Wu Prefecture. Shortly after, Huan Xuan took the throne and issued a decree ordering the prefect to send Daozu to the capital. The monk did not obey it by excuse of illness. Hence, he was aloof from worldly communication, preaching the Dharma all the time. He passed away in the first year of the Yuanxi Period in the Jin Dynasty at the age of 72.

Huiyuan’s disciple, Huiyao 慧要, comprehended the doctrines and Vinaya, was intelligent, and especially good at crafts. At that time,

1 Shi Daozu (347-419).

2 Wu is in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province.

there lacked the means to keep time in the mountains, so he made a structure in the shape of a lotus with twelve leaves in the fountain. Pushed by the water flow, it could determine the hours¹ as accurate as the sundial. He also made a wooden eagle that could fly for a few hundred feet.

Tanshun 曇順 and Tanshen 曇詵 were also disciples of Huiyuan, known for their understanding of the doctrines. Tanshun was a native of Huanglong,² first following Master Kumārajīva as his teacher in his early youth, and later studying under Huiyuan. He took vegetarian food and conducted virtuous deeds. When Liu Zun,³ the southern barbarian general, established Zhulin Temple in Jiangling, he invited Tanshun to assume the abbot position. Thereupon, Huiyuan approved him to go there. Tanshen was elegant and pure as well; he commentated on *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 維摩詰經 and wrote *the Commentary on Poverty and Prosperity* 窮通論 among other texts.

Fayou 法幽, Daoheng 道恒, and Daoshou 道授 were among over 100 well known people: some understood the profound meanings of sutras, some upheld righteousness in various situations, some observed the precepts strictly, and some gained insights in meditation. They were all known at the time, and their Dharma cause is inherited up to now.

1 In ancient China, a day was divided into twelve sections; one section equals two hours.

2 Huanglong was in Liaoning Province.

3 Liu Zun was a cousin of Liu Yu, who was the founder of the Liu Song government which succeeded the Jin Dynasty.

8. Shi Senglue of Da Temple in Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty Hongjue

Shi Senglue 釋僧晷¹, originally surnamed Fu, was from Niyang² in the north and the oldest son of Fu Xia, an official of Langzhongling³ for the Prince of Hejian⁴ in the Jin government. He renounced the world in his early youth, stayed at Da Temple in Chang'an, and followed Master Hongjue 弘覺 as his teacher, who was a Buddhist Patriarch in his time. Senglue first learned from him, and later traveled to the Qing, Si, Fan and Mian areas.⁵ He was versed in the six categories of Confucian classics and the Tripitaka, observed the precepts strictly, and thus possessed the capability for dharma transmission. Yao Chang and Yao Xing admired his virtue and fame for a long time and always appreciated his learning. When the Yao family occupied Guanzhong, they respected Shi Senglue more deeply. Since Yao Xing believed in the Three Jewels, he promoted the Dharma widely, organized dana assemblies, and burned incense, which made half of the households renounce the world to follow the Teachings.

After Kumārajīva entered the Guanzhong area, a growing number of śramaṇas from afar gathered at his place. Numerous monks and nuns mingled, which led to precepts breach caused by certain monastics' unwholesome conduct. Yao Xing said: "Laypeople and novices have not practiced patience with rigor; how could they not do wrong? If they do not repent after committing wrongdoings, their faults will accumulate. Hence there should be a monastic head to manage all the monastics and save the reputation of the religion." He thus issued a decree: "Since the Dharma migrated to

1 Shi Senglue (c. 344-c. 416).

2 Niyang is in Tongchuan, Shaanxi Province today.

3 The position of Langzhongling was the chief of staff for the emperor or king.

4 In the Jin Dynasty, the princes were allocated a territory (kingdom) that was the same as their title name.

5 Qing, Qingzhou was in Linyi, Shandong; Si, Sizhou was Luoyang, Henan; Fan was near Jiyuan, Henan; Mian was near Liuba, Shaanxi. These four places belonged to the Former and Later Qin Dynasties.

the east, it has begun to flourish now. The number of monks and nuns are becoming great, thereupon a head is needed to lead and manage them, to preach the precepts from foreign countries, and to prevent religious decline. Master Senglue, who gained excellent learning since his youth and holds noble character and prestige at the present, can assume this position of national monastic head. Master Sengqian, who is proficient in both meditation and wisdom, can assume the post of rector of affairs; Faqin and Huibin can both be in charge of monastic registration. They will be equipped with vehicles and assistance.”

The position of Senglue was paid to the level of Shizhong,¹ with goat carts for decree communications and two runners for each vehicle. Sengqian and the others were also well treated. They worked attentively and thriftily, fully meeting expectations. The five groups of monastics² hence followed the precepts and practiced without slackness in every moment of the day. In the seventh year of the Hongshi Period under the Later Qin government, the imperial court ordered to add 30 personal guardian attendants and 30 laypeople assistants to help Senglue. The monastic head position originated from there. At that time, he would walk rather than using the vehicle for himself, providing the service to the elderly and the diseased. All those who got an official salary frequently offered the money to others in the Order. Even though he was aged and weak, Senglue expounded the Dharma and precepts, motivating the monastics tirelessly. In the last year of the Hongshi Period, he passed away in Da Temple in Chang’an at the age of 73.

1 The Shizhong was an advisor to the emperors in ancient China whose rank had altered with time; in the Jin Dynasty, it was roughly equal to Vice-Prime Minister.

2 The five groups of monastics refer to Bhikṣu, Bhikṣuṇī, śikṣamāṇā, śrāmaṇera, and śrāmaṇerikā (Buddhist monks, nuns, female precept learners, male novices, and female novices).

9. Shi Daorong of Prefecture Pengcheng during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Daorong 釋道融, a native of Linlyu in Ji Prefecture,¹ joined the monastic order at 12. His master was fond of his intelligence and look, letting him study non-Buddhist knowledge first. He thus went to the village to borrow *the Analects of Confucius*. After getting the book, he did not take the book back to the monastery; instead, standing there, he completed the reading and was able to recite the book by memory. When he returned, his master borrowed a copy and held it in his hands to check Shi Daorong's recitation; it was accurate without a slip of a word. By then, his master figured out that he was a prodigy and allowed him to study in the places he wished. At the age of 30, Shi Daorong became full of wit and knowledge with unparalleled insights, having learned both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics by heart. He heard about Kumārajīva in Guanzhong, and hence went there to seek counsel. After the interview with him, Kumārajīva believed that he was an extraordinary talent and told Yao Xing: "Yesterday I met with Master Daorong, who is an intelligent Buddhist talent." Yao Xing then sent for him; after the meeting, the monarch was marveled as well. He highly respected him and invited him to enter in Xiaoyao Garden to participate in sutras compilation and revision. Daorong asked Kumārajīva to translate *the Bodhisattva-pratimokṣa* 菩薩戒本, which is popular today. Later, Kumārajīva translated *the Madhyamaka-sāstra* 中論; when he just fulfilled two fascicles, Daorong was already able to expound it, elucidate the meanings, and predict the essence of the entire book. Afterwards, Kumārajīva asked Daorong to expound *the New Lotus Sutra*. Listening to his sermon, Kumārajīva admired aloud: "The prosperity of the Dharma will rely on Daorong."

Soon afterwards, a Brahmin in Sri Lanka, patriarch of their religion, was eloquent and knowledgeable. Having read nine in ten of the books in the west and being able to recite most of them, he heard

1 Ji Prefecture is present day Ji County, Henan.

of Kumārajīva's efforts to propagate Buddhism in Guanzhong, and then told his disciples: "How can we sit here and see Shakyamuni's Teachings spreading in China without promoting our orthodox religion?" Thereupon, he came to Chang'an by riding on a camel and carried his books with him. Yao Xing was amazed by his strange appearance. The Brahmin reported to the ruler: "The ultimate Truth has no fixed form; it depends on the facts. Now I want to challenge the bhiksus in Guanzhong by having a debate; the winner should transmit his doctrines." Yao Xing approved. At that moment, the Buddhist monks of Guanzhong looked at each other and did not have the confidence to win in the competition. Kumārajīva thereby told Shi Daorong: "This heterodox priest is uncommonly intelligent; he will outplay in the debate. To make the supreme Dharma lose in the hands of my disciples, it is truly sad. If the Brahmin wins, the Buddha-Dharma Wheel will stop rolling like the axle shaft of the cart is broken. Can we allow it to happen? You are the key to this debate." Daorong was confident that he had the capability; however he had not read all the Brahmanic books. Thus, he let someone list the books that the Brahmin had read; after reading once, he memorized them all. Shortly, the date was set. On that day, Yao Xing was present in person; ministers and officials all gathered at the palace gate, and all the monastics in Guanzhong came to attend regardless of the distance. Daorong and the Brahmin priest challenged each other with the tricky questions they prepared. The Buddhist master talked with eloquence and wit, answering questions sharply; the competitor was inferior. The priest knew he landed in a passive position, however was still praising himself for his erudition. Then Daorong spoke out the titles of the books the rival had read, and then the catalogue of Chinese classics which were three times more than that of the challenger. Kumārajīva hence sneered at the priest: "You do not seem to have heard of the wide and profound learning of China, otherwise you would not have come from your country far away." The Brahmin was regretful and ashamed, touched his forehead on Daorong's feet to pay respect, and left in ten days. The revival of Dharma owed to Daorong's merits.

Daorong later arrived in Pengcheng and often held consecutive sermons to preach the Dharma; over a thousand listeners came to follow him. The number of his disciples who constantly stayed with him reached 300. He preferred tranquility, keeping a distance from bustling places; instead, he would read in scripture buildings and research the profound meanings. He devoted his life to dharma transmission and passed away in Pengcheng at 74, leaving his commentaries on *the Lotus Sutra*, *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *the Golden Light Sutra* 金光明經, *the Daśabhūmika-sūtra* 十地經, and *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* for posterity.

10. Shi Tanying of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Tanying¹ 釋曇影 was purportedly from the north, but the specific country is unknown. He had a quiet and modest nature; he did not like association but did enjoy studies in seclusion. With a prudent attitude and slow actions, he was quick-witted; a contrast existed between his inner aptitude and appearance. He could expound *the Lotus Sutra and Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* 光贊般若經; each sermon attracted over a thousand monastics and laypeople.

Later, Tanying came to Guanzhong and was welcomed by Yao Xing with a ceremonious reception. When Kumārajīva arrived in Chang'an, Tanying went to follow him as his teacher. The teacher told Yao Xing: "Yesterday I met with Master Tanying, he is also an exemplary monastic talent in the country." Yao Xing thus invited him to Xiaoyao Garden to assist Kumārajīva in the translation of sutras. As the first version of *the Satyasiddhi-sāstra* 成實論's translation was complete, the questions and answers in the book were simultaneous. Tanying disliked its fragmentary structure, thus rendering it into five sections. Upon completion, he showed it to Kumārajīva; the teacher said: "Very good! I am glad to have it in this way." Later, the teacher translated a new version of *the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*² 妙法蓮華經. Since Tanying was versed in the old version, he mulled over the new one and wrote *the Commentary on Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* in four fascicles. In addition, he commentated on the Madhyamaka-sāstra. Afterwards, he lived in seclusion in the mountains to cultivate his virtue, transcending worldly affairs and accumulating benevolence. The older he was, the harder he cultivated. In the Yixi Period, he passed away at 70.

1 Shi Tanying (c. 342-c. 411).

2 Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra is the complete Sanskrit title of the Lotus Sutra.

11. Shi Sengrui of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Sengkai

Shi Sengrui 釋僧睿 was originally from Changle in Wei Prefecture¹ and wanted to renounce the world in his early youth. At 18, his dream came true, joining the Order and following Master Sengxian as his teacher. He was humble and reserved, studying tirelessly. When he was 22, he was proficient in both sutras and sastras. Once, when listening to a lecture on *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光經 by Master Senglang, he asked profound questions to the lecturer to probe the meanings. Shi Senglang and Master Sengxian were dharma friends with different understandings. The lecturer told Sengxian: “The questions Sengrui raised were quite difficult, so much that I cannot think it through after reflection. He is a good disciple of yours.”

At the age of 24, he visited famous countries and held dharma talks at each stop, by which people in large numbers understood the Teachings and followed him as their teacher. He used to sigh with regret: “Although the number of sutras is still small, they are sufficient for comprehending the law of cause-effect. However, meditation methodology has not been spread, which cannot set my mind at rest.” Later, Kumārajīva came to Guanzhong; Sengrui invited him to translate *the Manual of the Meditative Essentials* 禪法要 of three fascicles. This text was also known as *the Bodhisattva's Chan* 菩薩禪; the first section is written by Kumārajīva, the last section by Aśvaghōṣa, and the works of multiple foreign sages fill in between. After acquiring it, Sengrui practiced in accordance with the book day and night. He thus mastered the five approaches of meditation² and could enter six

1 Wei Prefecture is near Anyang, Henan today.

2 The five approaches of meditation, for those who have a propensity toward craving, focus the mind on the contemplation of impurity. For those who have a propensity toward anger, focus the mind on the contemplation of loving-kindness. For those who have a propensity toward folly, focus the mind on the contemplation of causes and conditions. For those who have a propensity toward arrogance, focus the mind on worldly discrimination. For those who have a

kinds of concentration effectively.¹ Yao Song, the official of Situ in the bogus Later Qin government, highly respected Sengrui. Yao Xing used to ask his younger brother, Yao Song: “What do you think of Master Sengrui?” The latter replied: “Master Sengrui can be likened to the pine and cypress trees in the Ye and Wei areas.”² Thus, Yao Xing issued a decree to summon Sengrui. The officials gathered to look up to his elegant bearing as well. The maser was honest, polite, and spoke in style. Yao Xing admired him and instantly offered a salary, servants, and a vehicle. Later, Yao Xing told his younger brother: “He is a role model for the country, not only the pine tree in the Ye and Wei areas.” Therefore, his fame spread widely; numerous people from near and far came to follow him.

Shi Sengrui participated in the rendering and revision of the sutras translated by Kumārajīva. Previously, in *the Chapter Assurance of Future Enlightenment of Lotus Sutra* translated by Dharmarakṣa, a sentence was rendered in Chinese as: “The deva sees the human, the human sees the deva.” When Kumārajīva retranslated the Lotus Sutra, he made the comment: “This rendering is faithful to the origin, however it lacks literary grace.” Sengrui responded: “Is it possible to say, ‘the deva and the human make a connection and see each other’?” Kumārajīva was happy with this idea, saying: “Exactly, good job!” This is an example of Sengrui’s unparalleled understanding. Later, Kumārajīva completed the translation of *the Satyasiddhi-śāstra* 成實論, and then asked Sengrui to expound it. He told Sengrui: “The discussions in the book contain seven implicit points against the Abhidharma; if you are able to explain them without asking me, then you can be called elite.” When Sengrui held the lecture, he elucidated the seven arguments without looking for help from the grand master; the points were well

propensity toward discursive thinking, focus the mind on mindful breathing (DDB 2019).

1 The six kinds of concentration derive from the purity of the six sense faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind (Zhu et al 2010).

2 The hometown of Sengrui is located in the Ye and Wei areas. Pine and cypress trees are a symbol of noble quality in China because they are evergreen.

introduced, corresponding with the text. Kumārajīva praised: “How lucky I am to translate Buddhist sutras together with you. I will not have regret in this life.” Sengrui himself wrote prefaces for *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* 大智度論, *the Dvādaśanikāya-śāstra* 十二門論, *the Madhyamaka-śāstra*, *the longer and shorter versions of Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *the Lotus Sutra*, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, *the Sutra of the Questions of Viśeṣa-cinti-brahma* 思益經, and *the Meditative Sutra of the Sovereign* 自在王禪經; they are still circulating in the world.

Originally, Shi Sengrui was prudent and serious in his conduct; the propagation of the Dharma became his constant cause. As he intended to be reborn in the Western Paradise, he dared not stand or sit with his back to the west. Later, when he knew his life was coming to an end, he abruptly summoned the mass to bid farewell and told them: “I vowed to have my rebirth in the Western Paradise. From my point of view, it might be possible; however, I still have doubt about that. My body, speech, and mind may have committed bad deeds; I thereby wish the Buddha would mercifully guide me and enable me to be an eternal dharma student.” Then, he went back to his room to take a bath, burning incense and paying homage. Returning to his seat and facing west with joined palms, he passed away at 67. On that day, the mass saw five-colored fragrant smoke arise from his room.

Sengkai 僧楷 the śramaṇa, a contemporary and school friend of Master Sengrui, was also renowned.

12. Shi Daoheng of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Daobiao

Shi Daoheng¹ 釋道恒 was originally from Lantian.² One day, when he was 9 years old, he played by the road; Zhang Zhong, a hermit, saw him and made these comments: “This kid has an extraordinary look. In the future, if he stays in the world, he would hold an important position to assist the emperor in great accomplishment; if he renounces the world, he would be able to widely transmit the Buddha-Dharma. It is a pity that I am too old to see the day come.” As a young child, Daoheng lost his parents and was known for his filial piety to his step-mother. They lived in grinding poverty, struggling for their food; Daoheng made his living and provided for his step-mother by selling his paintings. However, he was fond of Buddhist texts, studying though day and night. When he was 20, his step mother died. He mourned for her and followed the due courtesy, completing all the funeral rituals and procedure. After the mourning period, he joined the monastic order. With sharp intelligence, Daoheng enjoyed the study of Buddhist doctrines and was proficient in multiple areas, covering Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics. Kumārajīva greatly appreciated him, asking him to render and review the translated sutras.

Daobiao 道標, a school friend of Daoheng, was also a gifted monastic, bearing a similar reputation to Daoheng. Yao Xing, the monarch of the Later Qin government admired the elegance and talent of the two masters. Believed that they had the ability to help govern the country, Yao Xing ordered Prime Minister Yao Xian to urge Daoheng and Daobiao to resume worldly life and assist in the royal cause. He also sent a letter to the two masters: “Your virtues are indeed respectable. I desperately need talents for governing the country, and thus ordered Prime Minister Yao Xian to take away your religious robe and invite you to help administer the country. Actually, as long as you bear the religion in mind, it does not matter

1 Shi Daoheng (346-417).

2 Lantian is in Shaanxi province.

if you wear white or black.¹ I hope you will not refuse in the name of devotion to Buddhism.”

Daoheng and Daobiao replied: “We had the honor to read the decree on the 28th of last month, ordering to confiscation of our Buddhist robes. After receiving this decree, we felt deeply sad and completely lost. We had little knowledge and slow minds; still learning the Buddhist Teachings, we vowed to die wearing the Buddhist clothes. In addition, we only studied the Buddhist canon and know nothing about worldly affairs. Even if we resume worldly life, it will not help with anything; thus we would lose our opportunities to learn the Dharma in vain, for we are unable to do much for the imperial court. Previously, Emperor Guangwu of the Eastern Han Dynasty could satisfy Yan Ziling’s wish² to live in seclusion; Emperor Wen of the Wei allowed Guan Ning³ to pursue his goal. These monarchs could refrain from their noble wills and enable the commoners to realize their humble aspirations. Your Majesty is a wonderful lord who governs in accordance with great rules, propagating the Three Jewels. We plead with Your Majesty to kindly let us pursue our little wish, like nature taking its course.”

Yao Xing then wrote to Masters Kumārajīva and Shi Senglu: “It has been a few dozen of days since we parted; I think of you frequently. It is getting warm; I hope you are doing well. A small group of rebels rose in revolt in the remote area; I have not dealt with it, so a feeling of unease arose in me. Recently, a lot of matters need to be handled, and I am in need of talents. I have written to Daoheng and Daobiao to ask them to take off the robe of an arhat, to follow a Bodhisattva’s path to deliver sentient beings.⁴

1 Wearing white refers to laypeople, while wearing black refers to monastics.

2 Yan Ziling, or Yan Guang, was a school friend of Emperor Guangwu (named Liu Xiu), the founder of the Eastern Han Dynasty. The latter invited him to assume the position of imperial advisor; the former, however, did not take it and went on retreat by the Fuchun River in Zhejiang.

3 Guan Ning (158-241 CE) declined the invitations of Emperor Wen (named Cao Pi) for important positions twice.

4 Yao Xing cited Arhat to refer to the Theravada tradition, which focuses on cultivation, and Bodhisattva to refer to Mahayana tradition, which advocates

Cultivation can be accomplished anywhere. I hope Your Reverences could help persuade them.”

Kumārajīva and Senglue replied: “We have heard that the heaven cultivates people in a certain way, and then people can follow their courses; the way includes governing with virtues. Therefore, the wise monarchs all knew that the nature of everything should be respected, or it would be difficult to manage; multiple points can be learned from the precedents. Yao allowed Xu You to stay in mountains, and Marquis Wen of the Kingdom of Wei¹ respected his teacher’s, Gan Mu’s, decision to live in seclusion. Emperor Gaozu of the Western Han Dynasty let the four gray-haired hermits return to Mount Zhongnan, and Huang Shudu² could refuse the vehicle sent for him by the administrations of the Eastern Han Dynasty. This was because they understood that letting the sages follow their will is equal to having their support. Actually, Daoheng and Daobiao have not completed their virtue cultivation, where the key is to observe the precepts. They still need a little more time to study the Buddha-Dharma, then they will be able to transmit the Teaching, research the doctrines, inspire the youth, and assist in the merits of education. Please, Your Majesty, continue your kind style and allow them to accomplish their humble will.”

Afterwards, Yao Xing issued several decrees to order them to resume worldly life; however, the entire country supported the masters after learning the news. Then the monarch had to give up. Daoheng sighed: “As the ancients said, ‘what increases my wealth will decrease my spirituality; what provides me fame will kill me.’” He hence escaped to remote mountains, lived in seclusion in the woods, ate vegetarian food, practiced meditation, and stayed away from worldly affairs. In the 13th year of the Yixi Period, he passed

salvation of sentient beings, thus more involved in worldly life; many Bodhisattvas manifest in the appearance of laypeople.

1 Marquis Wen of the Wei (472-396 BCE) was a powerful monarch during the Warring States Period in China.

2 Huang Xian, style name Shudu (75-122 CE), was a famous scholar in the Han Dynasty.

away in his thatched cottage at 72.

Daoheng wrote *the Explanation of Arguments* 釋駁論 and *the Hundred Lines of Admonition* 百行箴; while Daobiao composed *the preface to the Śāriputrâbhidharma* 舍利弗毗曇序 and *the Diaowangqiao wen* 吊王喬文 (*The Eulogy to Wang Qiao*); these works are all circulating today.

13. Shi Sengzhao of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Sengzhao¹ 釋僧肇, originally from an impoverished family in the Chang'an area, worked as a copyist, reading a wide range of classics and historic books during his transcription. He was fond of metaphysics and subtle doctrines, constantly guiding himself with the mottos of Laozi and Zhuangzi. He was marveled by Laozi's *Classic of the Virtue and the Path* 道德經, saying: "It is beautiful, however, will not be perfect in the case of guiding one's spirituality and searching for transcendence." Later, he found the old version of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 維摩詰經; full of joy, he worshiped this book. After a thorough reading, he said: "My heart finally finds its home." He thus renounced worldly life. In his studies, Sengzhao was versed in the Tripitaka, specializing in Mahayana doctrines. At the age of 20, he was already famous in the Guanzhong area. Those who attached to fame suspected his reputation at such a young age; some carried rations and came from hundreds of miles away to seek debates with him. Sengzhao was not only intelligent and able to comprehend profound theories; he was also communicative. He could always seize the opportunity to triumph over his challengers. At that time, scholars and elites in the capital and outside the Guanzhong area all admired his wits; the ones who were not convinced would eventually be defeated by his eloquence.

Later, Kumārajīva arrived in Guzang. Sengzhao traveled a long way to meet him and followed him as his teacher. The grand master was highly satisfied by the student's talent. When Kumārajīva went to Chang'an, Sengzhao returned to his hometown with his teacher. Yao Xing ordered Sengzhao and Sengrui to enter Xiaoyao Garden to help render the translations. Sengzhao believed that the texts to translate were long after the Buddha's time, and that there were many errors and slips in the versions; the previous explanations mingled with faults. After learning under Kumārajīva, he had a better understanding of the sutras, as he frequently consulted his teacher. Thereupon, when Kumārajīva completed the translation

1 Shi Sengzhao (384-414).

of the *Longer Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 大品經, the student wrote *the Treatise on Prajñā Without Knowing* 般若無知論 in about 2000 words, handing it in to his teacher for review. Kumārajīva greatly praised his work and said: “My understanding of the sutra is as good as yours; however, my mastery of the language pales beside yours. I should learn from you.”

At that moment, Liu Yimin, a hermit at Mount Lu, read this article and commented with admiration: “I did not expect any talent at He Yan’s level among the monastics.” He thus handed in the treatise to Master Huiyuan. After reading, the latter banged his palm on the table, uttering: “Such a great article never existed before!” Then, the master discussed the contents with Liu Yimin and communicated with Sengzhao through letters.

Liu Yimin sent a letter to Sengzhao: “I recently learned of your great reputation; respect arises towards you although I’m in remote mountains. The end of the year is around the corner, and the weather is cold; how are you doing? Communication is hindered by distance, which makes me think of you more often. As your disciple, I am a sick commoner in the countryside; I hope Your Reverence and the Sangha are well. How are the foreign masters? At the end of last summer, I read your work which is graceful and clear, appropriately elaborating the profound essential. Your Reverence inductively reasoned the Teachings with solid evidence and summed up your points at the end. Reading repeatedly, I am fond of it and unwilling to put down the book. It can be well likened to a wonderful ocean of Mahayana with great aspirations and unparalleled, seamless excellence. Nevertheless, I regret that I could not grasp all the significances due to my stupidity; I want to hereby consult you about a few questions that are listed separately. I look forward to your reply at your convenience.”

Sengzhao wrote back:

“It is a pity that I have not met with you. Thank you for your

goodwill. After receiving your letter and questions, I mulled over and felt happy like we were talking in person. Now that autumn is coming and cold wind starts to blow, are you doing well? I have slight indispositions, while the masses are well. Master Kumārajīva is doing great. The ruler of the (Later) Qin Dynasty¹ is a natural follower of Buddhism, uncommonly gifted, devoted to the dharma transmission, and worships the Three Jewels. This brought many eminent monks from great countries; hence the Teaching of Vulture Peak² arrived in our land. Master Zhi Faling³ went on an expedition, made the bridge between the present and the past, and acquired over 200 Mahayana sutras in the Western Regions. Master Kumārajīva translates the new sutras at Da Temple. The treasures of the Dharma are deep and wide; we can learn new insights every day. The Chan Master⁴ teaches meditation at Waguan Temple, and hundreds of disciples follow and practice day and night in a serious and cheerful ambiance. The Tripitaka Master⁵ translates Vinaya texts, and the rendering is exquisite and faithful to the origin. The Vibhasa Master⁶ dictates *the Śāriputrābhidharma* at Shiyang Temple. Although it has not been translated, which is a matter of time, I have already heard about some fantastic ideas from it. I feel honored and humbled to catch up with these wonderful opportunities in this life; I have no regrets, even though I could not be present at the Grand Assembly held by the Buddha at Jetavana Vihara. My only sorrow is that I am unable to participate in conferences with good dharma friends like you. Since you generously praised my work, I thus mention the aforesaid endeavors. Your questions are profound and difficult to answer. Actually, my points did not concern the principles, and

1 The ruler here refers to Yao Xing.

2 The Teaching of Vulture Peak refers to the Buddha-Dharma. Vulture Peak was one of the major locations where the Buddha expounded the doctrines.

3 Zhi Faling, see the Biography of Huiyuan, was sent by Huiyuan with Fajing to search for sutras.

4 The Chan Master refers to Buddhahadra 佛馱跋陀羅 ; see the section on Scriptural Translation.

5 The Tripitaka Master refers to Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 : see the section on Scriptural Translation.

6 The Vibhasa Master means Dharmayaśas 曇摩耶舍 : see the section on Translation of Scriptures.

I am inarticulate in writing. In addition, the deep meanings are unspeakable in words as language may bring distortion. Being garrulous with ideas jumping in my mind, I do not really know what I would say.”

Sengzhao later wrote *The Emptiness of the Unreal* 不真空論 and *The Immutability of Things* 物不遷論, commentated on the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and composed prefaces for multiple sutras and sastras, which are circulating in the country. After the death of Kumārajīva, Sengzhao recalled his communication details with the master, cherished the memory, and wrote *The Namelessness of Nirvāṇa* 涅槃無名論. It says:

“Nirvana with remainder and Nirvana without remainder can be found in the sutras. Nirvana, in Chinese, is rendered as non-action or extinction. Non-action indicates that this state is based on nothingness and equanimity that transcend all marvelous actions; while extinction means eternally eliminating the sufferings and delivering the four currents.¹ This is the place for the mirror² and the abode of unspeakableness.³ The Nirvanas with or without remainder are mere concepts, alternate ways to describe abiding in seclusion or in society that I previously explained. Being a way of practice, Nirvana exists in a void, thus cannot be obtained by form or name; it is subtle and invisible, hence cannot be sensed by the mind that craves. It arises by transcending all the dharmas, eternal and infinite in the void. Following it, one fails to find its trace; trying to catch it, one cannot see its appearance. The six realms of the rebirth cycle do not include it; its body will not be touched by force. Dimly discernible, it seems to be both staying and going; five types of eyes⁴ cannot see how it looks, and two

1 The four currents of cognition, desire, becoming, and ignorance that bind sentient beings in the rebirth cycle refer to the unenlightened ones.

2 In Mahayana tradition, all dharmas (phenomena) are unreal, like images in a mirror due to their impermanence, hence their emptiness nature.

3 This is the state that is unspeakable in ordinary terms.

4 In *the Diamond Sutra*, the Tathagata has the eyes of human, deva, wisdom, Dharma, and Buddha.

ears cannot hear its sound. Vast and hazy, who can catch sight of and understand it? It is actually everywhere, above the level of existence and emptiness. Therefore, languages fail to describe it, as they lead to false direction. Those who think they know it are ignorant, those who think they are in possession of it deviate from its nature, and those who deny it damage its essence. That is why Shakyamuni Buddha shut himself off in a room in Magadha,¹ why Vimalakīrti kept quiet in Kapilavastu,² why Subhuti admitted that the True Dharma couldn't be expressed,³ and why Indra and Brahma would not listen to the Dharma but spread heavenly flowers.⁴ Those instances demonstrate that Nirvana can only be obtained through spirituality, thus they shut their mouths. Does it mean it is unthinkable? No, however the reasoning is unspeakable. According to the Nirvāṇa Sutra, 'The ones that have really obtained liberation are beyond words. Extinction leads to eternal equanimity, out of both a beginning and an end. Darkness, lightness, coldness, and warmth are all gone. They are in a clear void, needless of name and corroboration. In *the Madhyamaka-śāstra*, it states, 'Nirvana is neither substance nor emptiness in nature; languages become useless in depicting it, and it is extinct when the mind searches for it.'⁵ However, sutras and sastras have listed it; is it illusory? In fact, if this so-called emptiness exists, it will be uncatchable; should what is called unreal existence come to be, it will not be

1 According to the 禪 Chan (or Zen) School, Shakyamuni Buddha secluded himself right after obtaining enlightenment, as he found that the true doctrines could not be encapsulated in words. Later, devas came to plead with the Buddha for a sermon, then the Buddha started his lectures.

2 In the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra, when Bodhisattva Manjusri asked Vimalakīrti: "What is the non-dual Dharma gate for Bodhisattvas?," the latter kept quiet. The Bodhisattva praised him, saying: "Excellent, the true answer is unspeakable."

3 In the Diamond Sutra, Subhuti summarized: "The Dharma that the Tathagata expounds cannot be clung to nor expressed."

4 Indra is the God of the Realm of Desire, and Brahma is the God of the Realm of Form; both are protectors of Buddhism, leading devas to spread flowers during the Buddha's lectures. In the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra, they say they would not listen to the Teachings of the listener's vehicle and the Pratyekabuddhas vehicle; they would only listen to the Dharma for the Bodhisattvas (Mahayana).

5 "Nirvana is neither..." See (T45n1859).

non-existent for its unobtainability. Why? From the perspective of existence, the five aggregates will perish eternally; from the angle of emptiness, spirituality continues. Since spirituality is continuous, it will float in the pure void, preserving the unity of mind; as the five aggregates become eternally extinct, all sufferings and their causes are destroyed. All sufferings and their causes are destroyed; thereupon this state is connected to Suchness. Preserving the unity of mind with spirituality that is not functioning, the ultimate function constantly exists; connected to Suchness, the ultimate function will never alter in the mutations. Because of the mutations, it cannot be existent, yet cannot be empty due to the constant ultimate function. Therefore, existence and emptiness are indistinct internally, and the appellation of them will mislead externally. Whereupon, to the ordinary, sight and acoustics cannot reach it; the four directions of the void seem mixed up. Actually, it is tranquil, empty, indifferent, and harmonious. It is a home for sentient beings in the nine realms¹ to return, a place where sages gather, a mysterious state, and an abstruse dimension. If we would define the divine domain with the notions of existence and emptiness, it will engender a great blunder.” He continued with 19 chapters to elucidate the doctrines in thousands of words, which are omitted here.

After the completion of this treatise, Sengzhao reported to Yao Xing: “I heard, ‘If heaven gets the Way, it will be clear; if the earth gets the Way, it will be tranquil; if the monarch gets the Way, he can well govern the country.’² Your Majesty is wise and just; your methods comply with the divine principles and universal course, as Your Majesty knows all laws and rules. This is the reason why Your Majesty is able to easily handle ten thousand affairs a day and able to promote the Dharma all the time, becoming a support for sentient beings and writing exemplary articles for subjects to follow. The king is one of the four great factors in the universe.³

1 Sentient beings in the nine realms refer to all sentient beings but Buddhas.

2 “If heaven gets the Way...” is quoted from *the Classic of The Virtues and the Path* 道德經 by Laozi.

3 The four great factors in the universe, according to *the Classic of The Virtues*

The Way of Nirvana unifies the three Vehicles of Buddhism and collects all of the essences of Mahayana, which are mysterious, abstruse, invisible, and inaudible, that the ordinary cannot conceive. I am merely a humble monastic who can stay at the school¹ in comfort thanks to the imperial grace, hence studied under Master Kumārajīva for over ten years. Although sutras cover different meanings and principles, my first focus was Nirvana. With limited capability in comprehension, after several teachings of my master, I still have questions and doubts. The only thing I can do is work harder. I seem to have obtained some learning in regard to this topic; yet, before the approval of masters, I dare not make my own judgement. Unfortunately, Master Kumārajīva has passed away, and I lost my teacher to consult, which has become a great regret. Your Majesty has unparalleled intelligence and understands Master Kumārajīva the best, seeing the trace of Nirvana and being able to define its scope. Thereupon, Your Majesty can revive the mystery of the religion to inspire the ordinary. Once, I was lucky to get the chance to read your reply to Yao Song; Marquis Ancheng's questions regarding 'The essence of the ultimate'² explain the namelessness aspect of Nirvana in depth. Now I compose this article, the Namelessness of Nirvāṇa comprised in 19 chapters, to elucidate the inconceivable Nirvana. I merely try to state my understanding but do not really understand your holy meanings in this field. It is just a student's exercise, and I hope to get Your Majesty's guidance. If my points are relevant, I hope Your Majesty could keep it. Should deviations exist, I plead with Your Majesty to correct me." Yao Xing replied with sincere sentiment, appreciated the work, and ordered that it be copied for his sons and nephews to study, which proved the importance he attached to it. In the tenth year of the Yixi Period during the Jin Dynasty, Sengzhao passed away in Chang'an at 31.

and the Path 道德經, are the Way (or Path), heaven, earth, and the king.

1 The school refers to Xiaoyao Garden, where the sutra translations took place.

2 This is quoted from *The Letter in Answer to Marquis Ancheng Yao Song* 答安成侯姚嵩書

Volume VII

Doctrinal Exegesis Part D

32 main figures 45 auxiliaries

1. Zhu Daosheng of Longguang Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Baolin Fabao Huisheng

Zhu Daosheng¹ 竺道生 was originally from a Wei family of Julu² that resided in Pengcheng. Several in the clan came forth to be officials; his father used to assume the post of Magistrate in Guangqi County³ and was known as a kind gentleman in the neighborhood. Daosheng was smart since his boyhood, being as intellectually gifted as heavenly beings. His father knew that his son was a prodigy, loving him deeply. Later, Daosheng met with Zhu Fatai the śramaṇa, whereupon he renounced worldly life and took refuge in Buddhism, learning under the śramaṇa. In cultivation, he had a special talent and unique angle for studies. Analyzing the doctrines, he could understand on his own. Thus, at the age of 15, he was able to hold lectures, make speeches, and answer questions with clear logic and a loud voice. Even the experienced monks and famous scholars would concede in debate with him.

At the age of full ordination,⁴ he became mature, witty, pure, and elegant. At that time, he entered Mount Lu for the first time, staying in seclusion for seven years to pursue his aspiration. He believed that wisdom was the key in searching for the Right Way, hence widely read the sutras, analyzed the sastras, and would follow the Dharma to travel thousands of miles, never feeling tired or distressed. Later, he went to Chang'an with Huirui and Huiyan to study under Kumārajīva, becoming known as an uncommon talent

1 Zhu Daosheng (d. 434).

2 Julu is near Pingxiang, Hebei province today.

3 Guangqi was near County Pei, Jiangsu.

4 The minimum age of full ordination was 20 years old.

by the monks in the Guanzhong area. Afterwards, he returned to the capital, Jiankang,¹ and abided in Qingyuan Temple, which was originally built by Madame Chu,² Empress Gongsu of the Jin Dynasty. The location used to be a vegetable garden and was hence named Qingyuan.³ As Daosheng was a great master at the time, he was invited to stay there. Emperor Wen of Taizu⁴ of the Liu Song Dynasty highly admired him. Once, the emperor held a banquet; Emperor Wen and the ministers had their meal on the mat.⁵ After quite a while, the officials suspected that it was getting late. The emperor said: “The sun is just in the middle.”⁶ Daosheng instantly responded: “The sun is shining in the sky, and His Majesty says it is noon; how come it is not?” He then took his bowl and ate. Thereupon, the mass followed him and praised his wit. Wang Hong,⁷ Fan Tai,⁸ and Yan Yanzhi⁹ all respected his virtue and intelligence, following him as their teacher to consult about

1 Jiankan, or Jianye, Yangzhou, is Nanjing today; it was the capital of the Eastern Jin government. Jiankang was the capital of four successive governments (the (Liu) Song, the Qi, the Liang, and the Chen Dynasties) during the Southern Dynasties Period (420-589), which followed the Eastern Jin Dynasty after it had perished.

2 Chu refers to the empress' maiden (family) name.

3 Qingyuan means “green garden” in Chinese.

4 Taizu was a title that was granted after Emperor Wen's death; known as Miaohao 廟號, it literally means “name of the temple (for sacrifice).” Likewise, emperors also received Shihao 諡號, meaning “posthumous title,” such as “Wen,” which is also a name granted to the deceased to praise their virtues. The emperor's original name, Liu Yilong in this case, became a taboo after his enthronement.

5 Before the stool was introduced into China, during the Jin Dynasty, people sat on mats, which was popular until the Tang Dynasty.

6 “Sun in the middle,” implies the reign was in its prime.

7 Wang Hong, style name Wang Xiuyuan, was the son of Wang Xun, a noble in the Jin Dynasty. Wang Hong was gifted and studied hard, assuming several positions in the Jin Dynasty. He later became prime minister of the Liu Song government, however got demoted afterwards.

8 Fan Tai, style name Fan Bolun, was the son of Fan Ning, who was the Prefect of Yuzhang. He assumed different posts with increasing responsibilities in the Jin Dynasty, also becoming an official in the Liu Song and known as an official-scholar.

9 Yan Yanzhi, style name Yan Yannian, assumed the prefect position in multiple locations and was a renowned writer.

Buddhism.

After extensive studies and analysis, Daosheng realized that the true Dharma should be beyond words. He was marveled aloud, saying: “The symbols which aim to help understand the connotation are to be forgotten after grasping the meanings; the words which are used to explain the laws should be abandoned after getting the essences. Since the sutras spread to the east, translators have had their limitations; while readers followed the literal meanings, it is rare to see perfect and harmonious interpretation. The right method can be likened to fishing without being limited by the fish trap; people with such views can discuss the Dharma.” Thereupon, Daosheng reviewed the ultimate and conventional Truths, researched cause-effect law, and then proposed his points of view: “Taking no merits, Buddhahood can be attained through sudden enlightenment.”¹ He wrote *the Treatise on the Two Truths* 二諦論, *the Treatise on the Substance of Buddhahood* 佛性當有論, *the Formlessness of Dharmakaya* 法身無色論, *the Treatise on Buddha without Pure Land* 佛無淨土論, and *In Correspondence with Conditions* 應有緣論, which covered old proclamations and introduced new ideas. The conservatives thus held a grudge and criticisms arose in succession. In addition, *the Nirvana Sutra* 泥洹 of six fascicles was brought to Jiankang; Daosheng thoroughly studied and analyzed the text, announcing his findings such as: “Icchantika² still has the potential of Buddhahood,” which disaccorded with common belief. At that time, *the larger version of Nirvana Sutra* 大本涅槃 had not been spread; his views were original and unique among the followers of the old school.³ Therefore, the conservatives rebuked his points as heterodoxy; he was surrounded by sneers and laughter

1 Daosheng implies that the monks should not consider merits and returns because what they practiced was emptiness in nature. The viewpoint of sudden enlightenment provided an important support for the later development of the Chan School in the Tang Dynasty.

2 Icchantika is generally understood as a person who is not capable of attaining the Buddhist goal of enlightenment because of his or her fundamental sins.

3 The old school here refers to the theory in the old version of *the Nirvana Sutra*.

and required to repent in front of the mass. Daosheng stood up among the monastics, saying: “If my views are against the sutra, please punish me with severe illness. If they are not in discord with the truth, I wish I could die on a high seat of lecture.” After these words, he left and traveled in remote areas.

He went to Huqiu Hill in Wu Prefecture and attracted hundreds of students within ten days. During that summer, thunder struck the great hall at Qingyuan Temple, and a dragon rose into the sky, leaving its shadow on the west wall. Therefore, the monastery’s name was changed to Longguang¹ Temple. People sighed: “The dragon has gone, and Daosheng wants to leave now.” Shortly afterwards, he left for Mount Lu and disappeared in the woods; the masses in the mountain all respected him.

Later, the larger version of the Nirvana Sutra spread to Nanjing, and it really stated that “Icchantika still has Buddha nature,” corresponding with Daosheng’s idea. Daosheng also received this sutra and instantly started to preach it. On Gengzi Day in the 11th month of the 11th year during the Yuanjia Period of the Liu Song Dynasty, he mounted the high seat at the Vihara on Mount Lu. With a bright complexion and a loud, clear voice, he expounded the sutra, explicating the principles and meanings a few times; those attending the sermon were all inspired and joyful. When the lecture approached its conclusion, the audience saw the hairs on the horsetail whisk that the lecturer held dropping quickly. He then sat tight, leaned on the table, and passed away. His face did not change color, just like he was in meditation. The monastics and laypeople were all shocked, tears bursting from their eyes. Feeling shameful and regretful, the monastics in the capital were hence convinced by Daosheng’s theories because his predictions were proved by the sutra and supernatural powers. After his death, Zhu Daosheng was buried on Mount Lu.

Previously, the reputations of Daosheng, Huirui, Huiyan, and

1 Longguang means “dragon light” In Chinese.

Huiguan were at the same level. People made the following comments: “Daosheng and Huirui are gifted talents, and their insights derive from themselves; Huiyan and Huiguan are good learners, accumulating knowledge like a pond reserving water; Huiyi is fortunate, meritorious, and able to get help and promotion easily. Daoyuan kept quiet and is hence unknown to the public.” Only Daosheng and Huirui belonged to the type of natural prodigy, therefore outstood their peers.

Earlier, Shi Sengzhao commentated on *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* in Guanzhong, which was widely appreciated and studied by the public. Later, Daosheng further elucidated the profound meaning of this sutra and wrote multiple commentaries and transcriptions for the newly translated sutras that were highly valued in the world.

Wang Wei¹ compared Daosheng with Guo Linzong,² writing a biography for him to propagate his virtue. Daosheng’s contemporaries accepted the concepts of “Ichchantika with Buddha nature” proclaimed by him as he obtained proof; his ideas of “sudden enlightenment” and “Taking no merits” also became widely recognized principles. Once, Emperor Taizong of the Liu Song Dynasty tried to retell the concept of sudden enlightenment; śramaṇas like Sengbi challenged it. The emperor said: “If I could make Daosheng return to this world, I would not be stumped by your questions.”

Later, Baolin 寶林, a śramaṇa who had studied in Chang’an, stayed at Longguang Temple, followed and preached Daosheng’s ideology, and was known as the “Monk Traveling in Metaphysics” at that time. He wrote *the Note on Nirvana* 涅槃記 and commentated on texts like *the Sastra on Different Sects* 異宗論 and *Call to Arms against Mara* 檄摩文. Fabao 法寶 was Baolin’s disciple; being versed in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics, he wrote *the*

1 Wang Wei (415-453), the Nephew of Wang Hong, was a famous scholar.

2 Guo Tai, style name Linzong (128-169 CE), was a famous scholar in the Eastern Han Dynasty and received an unjust verdict for political reasons. After he was released, he focused on teaching in his hometown.

Treatise on the Vajra of Advanced Mind 金剛後心論 and also preached Daosheng's theories. Afterwards, a monk named Huisheng 慧生 stayed in Longguang Temple. He kept a vegetarian diet, was proficient in various sutras, and good at calligraphy, especially in cursive and official script styles. Since he had the character of “生 sheng” in his name, just as Daosheng did, they were of the same temple; his contemporaries called them “Big Sheng” and “Little Sheng.”

2. Shi Huirui of Wuyi Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huirui¹ 釋慧睿, originally from Jizhou, joined the monastic order in his childhood. Frequently travelling and studying in various regions, he observed the precepts strictly. Once, he was itinerating at the western border of Shu Prefecture, got captured by bandits, and was forced to herd sheep. A trader who believed in Buddhism saw him and felt surprised. Suspecting that this was a monk, he consulted Huirui about sutra meanings; the latter replied perfectly. The trader thus bought his way out of bondage. After his release, Shi Huirui put on dyed clothes² and studied diligently. He voyaged in many countries and reached southern India during his travels. While there, he widely learned languages, linguistics, and semantics, becoming an expert in the local languages. Later, he returned to China and stayed at Mount Lu. Shortly after, he went to Guanzhong and followed Kumārajīva as his teacher. Afterwards, he moved to the capital, Jiankang, and abided in Wuyi Temple, where he expounded several sutras, combining his understanding of the Dharma and universal principles.

Liu Yikang, the Grand General and Prince of Pengcheng during the Liu Song Dynasty, repeatedly requested for the master to be his precept teacher; Huirui finally agreed. The prince invited him to grant precepts at the prince's residence, and Huirui said: "I have heard 'come to study' instead of 'go to teach.'" Liu Yikang felt ashamed, entered the temple to receive the precept ritual, and observed the rules piously. Thereafter, he provided a mink coat for the master; Huirui did not put it on, but he used it as a mat. The prince secretly ordered his assistant to buy it back, offering 300,000. Huirui said: "Although this is not what I shall wear, since it was given by the prince, I have to use it."

1 Shi Huirui (c. 354-c. 438).

2 Dyed clothes refer to the gowns for Buddhist monastics. Traditionally, monks should wear clothes that were made of old cloth of various colors that had been dyed based on monastic requirements.

Xie Lingyun of Chen Prefecture believed in Buddhism, comprehended foreign languages, and had wide range of knowledge. He consulted Huirui about the characters in the sutras for both their pronunciation and meaning. Xie Lingyun later compiled *the Instructions on the Fourteen Tones* 十四音訓敘; providing it as a tool for translation, he clearly listed and compared Sanskrit and Chinese. Shi Huirui passed away in the Yuanjia Period of the Liu Song Dynasty at the age of 85.

3. Shi Huiyan of Dong'an Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Fazhi

Shi Huiyan¹ 釋 慧 嚴 was from a Fan family in Yuzhou.² At the age of 12, he became a school student and read a wide range of Confucian books. At 16, he renounced the world and was proficient in Buddhist doctrines. When he was 30, he had already read all the classics, preached the Dharma in different places, and was renowned in the four directions. When he heard of the arrival of Kumārajīva in Guanzhong, he went to study under him, learning the authentic pronunciations and meanings of the languages that brought him in contact with new ideas. Later, he returned to the capital and stayed in Dong'an Temple. Emperor Gaozu³ of the Liu Song Dynasty appreciated his knowledge; when he intended to attack Chang'an, he invited Huiyan to go on expedition with him. The master said: "Your Majesty goes to suppress the criminals and pacify the people. I am out of worldly affairs, and hence afraid that I cannot follow you." The emperor requested repeatedly, and then the master agreed. After Emperor Wen of the Liu Song Dynasty succeeded to the throne, he had a closer relationship with Huiyan; every time he met with the master, the emperor would consult about the Buddha-Dharma.

Originally, Emperor Wen was not keen on the Dharma. In the 12th year of Yuanjia Period, Xiao Mo, the Prefect of the capital city, sent a report to the emperor, pleading with the latter to issue a decree to regulate monastery and Buddha statue construction. The emperor thus discussed this matter with advisors like He Shangzhi and Yang Xuanbao, the Assistant Minister of Personnel. He told He Shangzhi: "I did not read much in my childhood and am now too busy to do so, thus I am unfamiliar with the law of cause-effect in the three lives. The reason I dare not reject Buddhism is that you elites all

1 Shi Huiyan (363-443).

2 Yuzhou was in Henan Province.

3 Emperor Gaozu, also known as Emperor Wu and Liu Yu, was the founder of the Liu Song Dynasty.

believe in it. Fan Tai and Xie Lingyun often say that the essential of the six classics¹ is about how to govern the country. Yet, in search of inspiration and spirituality, how can one not rely on Buddhist sutras as their guide. I recently read Yan Yanzhi's *Explanation on the Nature* 推達性論 and Zong Bing's *On the Difficulty of White and Black* 難白黑論, which are gracefully composed with clear Buddhist notions and principles, lighting people's mind. If the entire country follows this religion, I will be able to enjoy peace and prosperity. A few days ago, Xiao Mo requested to issue a decree; I have not completed it, but now I give the draft to you for revision. It should punish ostentation and encourage those who transmit the Dharma.”

He Shangzhi replied: “The majority of living beings do not believe in Buddhism. Although I am trying, being mediocre and ignorant, I fear that I would encumber Dharma transmission with my slow mind. Now, I dare not take the huge responsibility of evaluation. If I were as great as the sages of previous generations, I would not fail to live up to the decree. It has been a long time since the capital has been in the central region,² thus the circumstances at that time cannot be easily revealed. After moving to the south of the Yangtze River, Wang Dao, Zhou Yi, Yu Liang, Wang Meng, Xie Shang, Xi Chao, Wang Tanzhi, Wang Gong, Wang Mi, Guo Wen, Xie Fu, Dai Kui, Xu Xun, the He brothers, Chong and Zhun, the Wang brothers, Xun and Min, Fan Wang, Sun Chuo, Zhang Xuan, and Yin Yi were all high ranking officials, or rather virtuous examples; they fathomed out the profound meanings of divine and human lives or stayed aloof from worldly affairs. They took refuge in Buddhism and studied the Dharma diligently. Comparably, śramaṇas like Yu Falan, Dharmarakṣa, Yu Fakai, Zhu Daoqian, Kang Sengyuan, Zhi Dun, Zhu Fachong and Yu Daosui practiced the Dharma with their minds and held the power that humans could not measure. In recent years, the number is even greater. If we review foreign and local

1 The six classics refer to the Confucian classics.

2 Capital in the central region refers to the Western Jin Dynasty (226-316), which established the capital in Luoyang; the Eastern Jin Dynasty's (317-420) capital was in Jiangkang (Nanjing today) to the south of the Yangtze River.

virtuous sages and talents back to the Han and Wei Dynasties, it would be countless. Master Huiyuan once said: ‘Buddhist Teaching is almighty. Although joining the Sangha forms the foundation of the religion, supporting the education and deliverance of worldly people remains critical as well.’ I believe that his words contain reasons. Why? If every household can observe the precepts, the country would not need criminal law. Thus, after Fo Tucheng arrived in the Later Zhao Period, tyrants such as Shi Hu and Shi Le restrained themselves from cruelty; as the Lingguang Stupa shone, Fu Jian 符健 reduced his savage acts. Therefore, it is evident that the divine path may contribute to civilization. Xiao Mo’s report is not wrong. Nevertheless, the factor that ruins the monastics and laypeople is the unwholesome monks and nuns who are difficult to identify and pick out based on their appearance. Though the construction of temples and statues requires a lot, it aims at blessings, hence is necessary and hard to stop. I have mulled over it these past days and did not produce any satisfactory ideas. Today, Your Majesty gives clear instruction; it is truly a steady measure.”

Yang Xuanbao reported: “This issue relates to the foundation of human-divine relations, so the subordinates should not be involved. From my point of view, the Qin and Chu governments¹ only considered strengthening their armies, and Wu Kingdom² exhausted their wits to annex other states. They would not learn from Buddhism.”

Emperor Wen said: “You are right; Buddhism is not a tool for war.”

He Shangzhi returned: “If everyone respected seclusion, then soldiers would not have the desire to fight; if people cherished the virtue of kindness, the morale of the troops would sink. Having the aspiration to invade, as Wu Kingdom did, the Path of Yao and

1 Qin and Chu were two major conflicting states during the Warring State Period (475-221 BCE) in China.

2 The Kingdom of Wu was one of the three states in the Three Kingdoms Period (222-280 CE); it made Jianye (Nanjing today) their capital. Since then, the city started to prosper, and it was later renamed as Jiankang in the Jin Dynasty.

Shun¹ would not be followed, not only that of Buddhism.”

Emperor Wen replied in joy: “The Buddhist religion gets you, as Confucius got Zilu,² who could not bear to hear vicious words.” Henceforth, the emperor established his faith in Buddhism, starting to read sutras. When he met with monks, such as Huiyan and Huiguan, he would discuss the Dharma with them.

At that time, Yan Yanzhi wrote *the View of Separate Consciousness* 離識觀 and *On the Discernment* 論檢; Emperor Wen asked Huiyan to debate with the author on the two essays. After observing the discussion for an entire day, the emperor smiled and said: “You are as eloquent as Zhi Dun and Xu Xun.” Later, Huiyan composed *the Treatise on the Absence of Becoming and Cessation* 無生滅論 and *Concise Commentary on Laozi* 老子略註 among other texts. He Chengtian of Donghai,³ who was known for his erudition, questioned Huiyan: “What calendar did the Buddhist country use.” Huiyan answered: “On the day of summer solstice, no shadow will be seen at noon in India; it is called sky central. In the five fundamental elements,⁴ they adore earth. Their favorable color is yellow, five is their lucky number, eight inches equal to a foot, and their 10 taels make our 12 taels. Their new year starts in our third month.” Then, they continued the discussion in detail about the measurement of solar terms, eclipses, and the methods to survey shadows of light. Based on the calculation of the movements of celestial bodies, the system was logical; He Chengtian then had nothing to challenge. Later, a foreigner from the State of Poli⁵ came

1 Yao and Shun, tribal leaders, were known as kind and virtuous rulers in the prehistory of China, acting as excellent examples for monarchs in ancient China.

2 Zhong You, style name Zilu (542-480 BCE), was a famous student of Confucius that was known for his honesty and bravery.

3 He Chengtian (370-447) was a philosopher and astronomer who assumed various official positions; being an atheist, he was one of the major opponents of Buddhism at the time. Donghai is a county in Shandong Province today.

4 In Chinese philosophy, all substances are composed of five fundamental elements: metal, wood, water, fire, and earth; In India, the four big elements are earth, water, fire, and air.

5 婆利國 State of Poli was the ancient Chinese name for a part of Indonesia,

to China; his description accorded with what Huiyan said. Emperor Wen thereupon nominated Huiyan as the National Monastic Head.

When *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 大涅槃經 spread to the Liu Song Dynasty's territory, the translation was beautiful, yet the catalogue and sections were done poorly, which made it so beginners could barely understand it. Huiyan, together with Huiguan and Xie Lingyun, broke it into chapters based on the Nirvana Sutra of six fascicles translated by Faxian, adding a title to each chapter. They also polished the parts that were too blunt. Then, different versions started to circulate. One day, Huiyan dreamed of a strong figure asking him: "Why would you modify the holy *Nirvana Sutra*?" Waking up in shock, he summoned the mass and wanted to take back the revised version. Some wise people said: "This may just be a sign to warn the posterity. If this was meant for your revision, why have you not dreamed of this figure until now?" Huiyan thought these words were convincing. Soon, he dreamed again of this figure, who told him: "According to the efforts you have made in the transmission of the sutra, you will surely see the Buddha."

Huiyan died in the 20th year of the Yuanjia Period at Dong'an Temple at the age of 81. Emperor Wen issued a decree, saying: "Master Huiyan had profound knowledge and insight; he was a great patriarch of dharma transmission. Suddenly, we lost him, which deeply saddens me. I hereby offer 50 thousand coins and 50 bolts of cloth for his funeral."

Fazhi 法智, Huiyan's disciple, was gifted since his childhood. At 24, he went to Jiangling, where he came across the dharma talk of Zhu Faya. Fazhi then asked to the lecturer a few questions that embarrassed Faya as he was unable to answer them and stuck between the two fires of answering or not. Finally, he had to look around and say: "This young man is eloquent and has chapters on his tongue." Fazhi smiled and replied: "I just came to be elegant."¹

which is near Bali Island today.

1 In Zhu Faya's name, Ya means elegance. Here, Fazhi was teasing the lecturer.

Fazhi's name then became known across the capital and Wu Prefecture areas. He was proficient in *the Satyasiddhi-śāstra* and *the longer and shorter versions of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

4. Shi Huiguan of Daochang Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengfu Faye

Shi Huiguan¹ 釋慧觀, from a Cui family in Qinghe,² was known for his erudition at the age of 10. He renounced the world at 20 and studied in various locations, later coming to Mount Lu and following Huiyuan as his teacher. When he heard that Master Kumārajīva arrived in Guanzhong, he went from the south up to the north to learn from the master. Shi Huiguan widely researched and verified different theories and schools, discerning the old and new versions. He had an elegant appearance with profound insight. His contemporaries would say that Daosheng and Daorong were the leading ones in the clarity and coherence of the doctrines; Huiguan and Sengzhao were the best in precision and depth of the studies. He finished *the Introduction to the Essentials of Lotus Sutra* 法華宗要序 and sent it to Kumārajīva. The latter said: “Virtuous man, this is excellently elucidated. Although you are in your youth, you should travel to the south of the Yangtze River, as you can propagate the Dharma skillfully.”

After Kumārajīva’s death, Shi Huiguan went down to Jingzhou. Sima Xiuzhi, the general of the prefecture, treated him with great respect and built Gaoli Temple for him to promote the Dharma, which made half of the population in the Jing and Chu areas return to the Right Way. When Liu Yu, Emperor Wu of the Liu Song Dynasty, attacked Sima Xiuzhi, he met with Huiguan in Jiangling. The emperor always admired the master, so he asked him to get acquainted with the Western Zhonglang General,³ who later became Emperor Wen. Shortly afterwards, Huiguan arrived in the capital and abided at Daochang Temple. Since Huiguan was proficient in Buddhist doctrines, versed in *the Classic of the Virtue and the Path* 道德經 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子, and well comprehended *the*

1 Shi Huiguan (c. 368-c. 438).

2 Qinghe was close to Linqing, Shandong.

3 General Zhonglang refers to four generals in the Wei and Jin Dynasties who guarded the forts in the four directions.

Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya 十誦律, he could combine the essences of various schools. Thus, numerous people sought to consult him about the Dharma everyday. On the third day of the third month¹ in the first year of the Yuanjia Period, the emperor went to the curving stream banquet on a carriage and ordered Huiguan to compose a poem alongside the ministers. Among the attendees, Huiguan was the first to make his poem, which was clear, graceful, and well-suited for the occasion. Wang Sengda² of Langya and He Shangzhi of Lujiang³ saluted him and made dharma friends with the master.

Shi Huiguan passed away during the Yuanjia Period at 71. His works included *On the Differentiation of the Sects* 辨宗論, *the Treatise on Notions of Sudden and Gradual Enlightenment* 論頓悟漸悟義, *the Preface of the Ten Analogies* 十喻序, and the prefaces to multiple sutras, which are still circulating in the public.

Sengfu 僧馥, originally from Liquan,⁴ focused on doctrines and commentated on *the Śrīmālā-sūtra* 勝鬘經. Faye 法業, originally from Chang'an, specialized in *the longer and shorter versions of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *the Saṃyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya-sāstra* 雜阿毗曇心論. The late Princess Jinling⁵ built Nanlin Temple for him, and it was where he stayed for the rest of his days.

1 A folk festival of Shangsi in the Wei and Jin Periods was celebrated on the third day of the third month of the Chinese lunar calendar, on which people sat by the curving stream to drink and make poems. They would float a cup of wine on the water, and as the stream was curving and winding, the cup might stop at any point. The one who sat closest to the stopped cup should drink it to dispel bad luck.

2 Wang Sengda, a relative of the emperor, was a writer and a general in the Liu Song government.

3 He Shangzhi, a relative of the royal family of the Jin Dynasty, used to serve in the troop of Liu Yu, who later became Emperor Wu of Liu Song; afterwards, he assumed different positions in the Liu Song government. Lujiang is in Anhui Province today.

4 Liquan was in Shaanxi Province.

5 Princess Jinling, the daughter of Emperor Xiaowu of the Jin Dynasty, married Xie Hun, a writer and poet.

5. Shi Huiyi of Qihuan Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengrui

Shi Huiyi¹ 釋慧義, originally surnamed Liang, was from Beidi Prefecture. He joined the monastic order at a young age; he had an outstanding and elegant appearance and high aspirations. First, he traveled between Pengcheng and Song County² and became versed in sutras; later, he went to the capital, Jiankang, and said: “Facheng, a śramaṇa in Jizhou, told his disciple on his deathbed: ‘The Deity of Mount Song once said that a General named Liu in the Jiangdong area would succeed to the throne by the blessing of the god, and the deity would offer 32 pieces of jade discs and a gold ingot as a token.’” Then, he went to seek an interview with Liu Yu, the King of Song. The King told Huiyi: “This unusual, auspicious omen can only be found and obtained by unusual men. If Your Reverence does not look for it in person, no one will find it.” After these words, Huiyi had to make the trip. He went to Mount Song in the seventh month of the 13th year of the Yixi Period in the Jin Dynasty, finding nothing after the first search. He then burned incense and prayed piously. On the seventh night, he dreamed of an elder with a long beard that held a staff and guided him to a cliff, saying: “under this rock.” Huiyi searched the entire mountain on the second day and found a place identical to the locale in his dream. Under the stone altar of the temple, he discovered 32 differently-sized jade discs and a gold ingot. The detail of this auspicious sign was recorded in *the History of Song* 宋史. When Huiyi returned to the capital, the King of Song rewarded him generously. By the time Liu Yu ascended to the throne, Huiyi was paid even greater courtesy.

In the first year of the Yongchu Period in the Liu Song Dynasty, Fan Tai, the General of Cavalry, built Qihuan Temple. He believed that Huiyi possessed the virtue that everyone expected, so he invited him to manage the monastery and host the inauguration. Convinced by Fan Tai’s devotion, Huiyi provided advice in regard to the rituals

1 Shi Huiyi (372-444).

2 Song County was close to Taihe, Anhui.

and regulations. Their contemporaries analogized Huiyi to Śāriputra and Fan Tai to Anāthapiṇḍada, therefore called the temple Qihuan,¹ which is carried over up to now. Later, eminent monks from the Western Regions that came to China often chose this temple for rest, sutra translation, or meditation training.

In the first year of the Yuanjia Period, Xu Xianzhi and Tan Daoji, ministers in the Liu Song government, controlled state affairs. Fan Tai felt indignant and openly blamed it on them; Xu Xianzhi thus held a grudge. People who heard about this matter worried that something untoward might happen to Fan Tai, and the general himself had concerns as well. Thereupon, he consulted Huiyi about how to remain safe. Huiyi said: “Keep being loyal and obedient to your superior. The relations between the superior and subordinate will be close; what worries would you have?” He then suggested that Fan Tai donate the grove of 60 mu² to the temple to accumulate merits for blessing. Fan Tai followed this idea and enjoyed his natural life span without any accident.

After the death of Fan Tai, Fan Yan, the third son of Fan Tai, proclaimed that Huiyi took advantage of their family’s difficult time to persuade his father into donating the grove; he felt regretful towards the act and asked to have the land back. Huiyi presented the donation document to the public to ensure a correct understanding of the fact; he then moved to Wuyi Temple and stayed with Huirui. He died in the 21st year of the Yuanjia Period in Wuyi Temple at the age of 73.

Soon after Huiyi’s death, Fan Yan died as well. Fan Ye, Fan Yan’s younger brother, was later involved in Kong Xixian’s rebellion plot;³ the entire Fan clan then collapsed.

1 Qihuan was a shortened Chinese transliteration of Jetavana Anāthapiṇḍada-ārāma.

2 Mu is a Chinese unit of area that was equal to 0.07 hectares.

3 Kong Xixian was a talented but unsuccessful official in the Liu Song Dynasty; he later supported Prince Liu Yikang to take the throne from his brother, Emperor Wen, and failed.

Afterwards, Shi Sengrui 僧睿, a monk at Qihuan Temple who was versed in the Three Treatises:¹ *the Madhyamaka-śāstra* 中論, *the Dvādaśanikāya-śāstra* 十二門論 and *the Śata-śāstra* 百論, received the veneration of Emperor Wen.

1 These were the three major treatises of the Madhyamaka School.

6. Shi Daoyuan of Pengcheng Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Huilin

Shi Daoyuan 釋道淵 was surnamed Kou and from unknown origins. He joined the monastic order at Dong'an Temple in the capital. Observing the precepts strictly since his youth, he studied doctrines with assiduity after he was grown up. He was versed in sutras, sastras, and Sāṃkhya.¹ However, he stayed low key and was hence unknown by the public. Later, he preached the Dharma at Dong'an Temple, analyzed the doctrines, and elucidated subtle meanings, melting the long-time-accumulated ice of doubt. Thus, the disciples changed their views towards him and sincerely followed him to study. Daoyuan later moved to Pengcheng Temple; being confident that he would act as an excellent example for the mass, Emperor Wen nominated him as the abbot. He passed away at 78 in the temple he abided.

Huilin 慧琳, Daoyuan's disciple, was originally from a Liu family in Qin Prefecture.² He was proficient in various sutras, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Laozi*, as well as both communicative and humorous. Also good at writing, his works fill 10 fascicles; while he had proud and unconventional characteristics, he often praised himself. Daoyuan used to send him to Fu Liang's³ residence, after Huilin sat down, Daoyuan arrived, but the disciple did not stand up to salute his teacher. Daoyuan showed his anger on the face; Fu Liang thus punished Huilin by caning him 20 strokes. Emperor Xiaowu admired Huilin, and when the latter was introduced in the interview, the emperor often provided chair for him. Yan Yanzhi then mocked the monk, making the emperor unhappy. Huilin later wrote *the Treatise on the White and Black* 白黑論, which had conflicts with Buddhist doctrines. He Chengtian, the Prefect

1 Sāṃkhya, an Indian, Brahmanistic philosophical sect founded by Kapila, which was a proponent of the four non-Buddhist views of causation.

2 Qin Prefecture is near Liuhe, Jiangsu today.

3 Fu Liang, style name Fu Jiyou (374-426), was a famous writer and official during the Jin and Liu Song Dynasties; he drafted many decrees for Emperor Wu but was later killed by Emperor Wen.

of Hengyang,¹ was close with Huilin, composing *the Treatise on Attaining the Nature* 達性論 to support him and slander Buddhism. Yan Yanzhi and Zong Bing refuted the two treatises, each of them writing articles of ten thousand words. Later, Huilin was banished to Jiaozhou for defaming his religion. It was said that Daoyuan once saw a comet,² saying that it should be Huilin.

1 Hengyang is in Hunan Province.

2 A comet was considered a bad omen in ancient China.

7. Shi Sengbi of Pengcheng Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Sengbi¹ 釋僧弼, from Wu Prefecture, had a modest, simple nature and honest conduct. He used to travel to Chang'an with Tangan of Longguang Temple and study under Kumārajīva. He cherished the opportunity, learning and reflecting diligently. Kumārajīva thought highly of him and let him participate in sutra translation. Later, he visited several renowned lands, learning their local traditions and customs. Some monasteries invited him to assume the abbot position, but he said: "The Dharma has not been widely spread; honesty and propriety are waning. My concentration and wisdom have not been perfected; thus, I cannot take the role of a virtuous example. In addition, I shall preach the Dharma according to needs and conditions, how can I stay in one temple?" Afterwards, he traveled to Chudu,² abided there over 10 years, and patiently expounded the sutras and precepts, educating people to the south of the Yangtze River. Juqu Mengxun, the King of Hexi, heard about him and sent gifts through envoys many times. Later, he arrived in the capital, Jiangkang, and stayed at Pengcheng Temple. Emperor Wen admired and respected him, frequently requesting his Dharma talks. He passed away in the 19th year of the Yuanjia Period at 78.

1 Shi Sengbi (365-442).

2 Chudu was near Jiangling, Hubei.

8. Shi Huijing of Dong'e during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huijing¹ 釋慧靜, originally from a Wang family in Dong'e,² traveled in the Yi River and Luo River areas³ in his youth; he later travelled in the Xuzhou and Yanzhou areas. He had dark skin and clear insight. At that time, a śramaṇa held dharma talks in Luoyang; he was as famous as Huijing for his understanding of the Teachings. His ears were uncommonly big, thus, their contemporaries said: "The one with big ears in Luoyang, the one with skin as black as ink in Dong'e. One's questions can always find answers from them, and the answers are all satisfactory." Huijing was calm and pure with great insight and reflection. His lectures would always attract over a thousand audience members, coming from all directions of the country. He expounded *the Lotus Sutra* and *the Longer and Shorter versions of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; he commentated on *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* and *the Sutra of the Questions of Viśeṣa-cinti-brahma* 思益經. He also wrote *the Concise Treatise on Nirvana* 涅槃略記, *the Introduction to the Longer Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 大品旨歸, and *the Treatise on the Destiny* 達命論. All of these texts were circulating in the north and did not spread to the south of the Yangtze River. He died during the Yuanjia Period in his 60s.

1 Shi Huijing (c. 378-c. 438).

2 Dong'e was close to Guyang, Shandong.

3 Yi and Luo indicate the Henan area.

9. Shi Sengbao of Qihuan Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Fahe

Shi Sengbao¹ 釋僧苞, a native of Chang'an, used to study under Master Kumārajīva in his youth. During the Yongchu Period of the Liu Song Dynasty, he traveled to Beixu,² abided at Huangshan Vihara, and learned from Masters Huijing and Huiding. Once, he organized a 21-day Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Dana Assembly. On the seventh day of the Assembly, white swans flew over and stayed in front of the statue of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, flying away after the incense burning ritual at noon. At dusk on the 21st day, four men in yellow walked around the stupa then disappeared abruptly. Sengbao aspired to follow Buddhism and observed the precepts from young age; these auspicious omens reinforced his conviction. He thus recited sutras of over ten thousand words every day, often prostrating to the Buddha statue hundreds of times.

Later, he moved to the capital, Jiankang, and came across a lecture at Qihuan Temple, where numerous monastics and laypeople gathered. Unknown to anyone because he had just arrived, he wore shabby clothes with dust on his face and sat on a donkey saddle outside the temple, listening to the dharma talk. The lecturer gave a question to the audience, and Sengbao wanted to answer. The speaker asked: "Venerable guest, what is your name?" The newcomer replied: "My name is Bao." The lecturer followed up: "To cover what?"³ Sengbao answered: "The lecturer can be covered as well." The dialogue continued back and forth; Sengbao's words were all as witty as sages of previous generations. The master could not win the debate, so he stepped down from the pulpit. After listening to the conversation, Wang Xuan and Fan Tai discussed the Dharma with Sengbao; being charmed by the latter's intelligence, they invited him to live in Qihuan Temple and expound multiple sutras for the deliverance of people. Xie Lingyun

1 Shi Sengbao (d. c. 438).

2 Beixu is near Xuzhou, Jiangsu today.

3 Bao in Chinese means "cover or contain."

of Chen Prefecture came to seek an interview after hearing of him. When Xie Lingyun saw Sengbao's appearance and bearing, he was marveled by the master. Someone asked Sengbao: "What kind of person is Mr. Xie?" Sengbao said: "Lingyun has high talent but low wisdom, which may incur fatal trouble."¹

Sengbao once saw six prisoners on the road; he hence explained the Buddhist principles to them and persuaded them to chant the name of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. These prisoners were at a critical moment, so they chanted with sincerity. Shortly afterwards, the guard was drunk, and the prisoners managed to escape. Sengbao passed away during the Yuanjia Period of the Liu Song Dynasty.

At that time, a śramaṇa named Shi Fahe 釋法和 stayed in Waguan Temple. He was versed in Sāṃkhya, gaining a huge reputation. Emperor Wu of the Liu Song Dynasty appreciated his talent and nominated him as the monastic leader.

1 Xie Lingyun later was killed by the emperor. See the Biography of Shi Huiyuan.

10. Shi Sengquan of Fangxian Temple in Yuhang during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Sengquan 釋僧詮 was originally from a Zhang family in Haiyang,¹ Liaoxi. In his early youth, he traveled in the Yan and Qi areas,² widely studying non-Buddhist classics. At 20, he joined the monastic order. Then, he gradually mastered the Tripitaka and came to be the grand master among learners in the north. Later, he crossed the Yangtze River, arrived in the capital, and held lectures to expound the Dharma in the south. Zhang Gong of Wu Prefecture invited him to preach in the Wu area; people in Suzhou all venerated and followed him for his virtue. He abided at Xianju Temple at first, later moving to Huqiu Hill. Earlier, Sengquan made a 16-foot gilded Buddha statue in Huanglong; in the Wu area, he cast a gilded, half-length Buddha statue and put it in Dong Temple at the hill.

The master had great loving-kindness, often helping needy people while enjoying a simple life without any savings. Later, Meng Yi built Fangxian Temple in Yuhang³ and invited Sengquan to abide in it. At the new monastery, the master led the Sangha to diligently cultivate both meditation and devotion rituals. Due to his extreme assiduity, he lost his sight. Afterwards, he worked even harder, continuing his lectures. Zhang Chang,⁴ Zhang Fu⁵ of Wu Prefecture, Dai Yong, and Dai Bo of Qiao Prefecture⁶ associated with him out of admiration for his virtue, respecting him as their teacher.

Sengquan once traveled to Lin'an County⁷ and stayed at the

1 Haiyang was close to Luan County, Hebei.

2 Yan and Qi refer to Hebei and Shandong provinces.

3 Yuhang County now belongs to Hangzhou, Zhejiang.

4 Zhang Chang, style name Shaowei (407-457), was an official and Buddhist writer.

5 Zhang Fu, Zhang Chang's nephew, was known for his filial piety and assumed the Prince's advisor position.

6 Qiao Prefecture was in Bozhou, Anhui.

7 Lin'an was in the west of Hangzhou, Zhejiang.

residence of Dong Gongcao, a devoted lay Buddhist. Shortly after he came to Dong's home, Sengquan became critically ill. He constantly saw the statue he cast appearing on the west wall and young deities coming to wait on him. One night, his disciple dreamed of a sedan held by several figures. He asked "Where are you going;" they replied, "To welcome Master Sengquan." The next morning, the master was found dead. The Magistrate of Lin'an County buried him on the right side of the tomb of Guo Wen at Mount Baitu, imitating the historic story that described Liang Hong¹ being buried close to Yao Li.² Wang Yu, an Officer Tejin,³ and gentleman Dai Lu inscribed the epitaph on the memorial tablet at his tomb. Tang Sixian composed the inscription; Zhang Fu made the eulogy.

1 Liang Hong, a hermit in the Eastern Han Dynasty, was erudite and honest. His wife, Meng Guang, treated him with respect; the story of the couple has been passed down through ages.

2 Yao Li, a famous assassin in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BCE), was assigned by He Lyu, the new king of Wu Kingdom, to assassinate Prince Qingji, the son of the old king. To gain the trust of the prince, the new king cut off the assassin's right hand and killed his wife. Yao Li escaped to Wei Kingdom, where Prince Qingji was preparing to take back the throne from He Lyu; finally, Yao Li found the chance to kill the prince and then committed suicide.

3 Tejin was an honorary title for high rank officers.

11. Shi Tanjian of Xin Temple in Jiangling during the Liu Song Dynasty

Daohai Huikan Huigong Tanhong
Daoguang 道廣 Daoguang 道光

Shi Tanjian 釋曇鑒 was originally from a Zhao family in Jizhou. Renouncing worldly life in his early youth, he followed Zhu Daozu as his teacher, had vegetarian diet, wore simple cotton clothes, and observed the precepts strictly. He studied various sutras and was also versed in Sāṃkhya. Hearing about Kumārajīva in Guanzhong, he went to learn from him. The Grand Master often mentioned that Tanjian could memorize after listening once. Later, he traveled in different places to propagate the Dharma. When he arrived in Jingzhou, he stayed at Xin Temple. At the age of 60, he still worked with assiduity and pure conduct. He aspired to be reborn in the Western Paradise so that he may look up at the Amitabha Buddha. Afterwards, Sengji, his disciple, said goodbye to him before going to Shangming;¹ Tanjian told him: “It is good for you to go, but we may not see each other again.” Then, he explained and handed over everything to the disciple. In the evening, he sincerely discussed the impermanence law with the elders in the Sangha. That night, the elders returned to their rooms, and Tanjian walked alone in the corridor. At midnight, a novice, Sengyuan, proposed that he go back to his room. Tanjian said: “You may go to sleep; do not come back again.” In the morning, his disciple, Huiyan, saluted him as usual. He found him sitting tight with his palms joined together, yet there was no response. Coming closer to look, he found that the master had already died. His body was soft, utterly fragrant, and clean. Then, Huiyan put his body down and buried him accordingly. In that year, he was 70.

Zhang Bian of Wu Prefecture wrote a biography and eulogy for him, praising him: “As fragrant as luxuriant freesia and as pure as jade, the chaste master never polluted himself, shining like the star in early evening and flourishing like branches in late spring. He did not leave us; his consciousness is just traveling to other lands.”

1 Shangming was near Songzi, Hubei Province.

At that time, Shi Daohai 釋道海 in Jiangling, Shi Huikan 釋惠龕 in Beizhou, Shi Huigong 釋慧恭 in Dongzhou, Shi Tanhong 釋曇泓 in Huainan, Shi Daoguang 釋道廣 at Mount Dongyuan, and Shi Daoguang 釋道光 in Hongnong all wished for rebirth in the Western Paradise. They each demonstrated auspicious omens at their deaths.

12. Shi Hui'an of Lingyun Temple at Mount Lu during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Hui'an¹ 釋惠安 was of unknown origins. Taking vegetarian food and observing precepts with rigor, he was versed in doctrines and good at dharma talk, being particularly famous for his specialty of Vinaya. He recited sutras of over 300 thousand words and abided in Lingyun Temple at Mount Lu, where the disciples who admired his learning and came from afar gathered. Often with a staff, he said that it was offered by a śramaṇa from the Western Regions. The staff was shining, fragrant, and carved with Sanskrit that no one knew how it read. Later, when he met with Kumārajīva in Guanzhong with the staff in his hands, the latter was surprised and said: “Oh, so the staff is here.” He translated the Sanskrit: “Originally born in the grove of sāla,² then in the south turbulence and heresies arise. Later, the religion revives because of Kumārajīva.” Afterwards, Hui'an gave it to a foreign monk, Boshana 波沙那, who finally returned it to the Western Regions. Shi Hui'an died in the Yuanjia Period of the Liu Song Dynasty in the mountain temple.

1 Shi Hui'an (d. c. 438).

2 The grove of sāla refers to the place where Śakyamuni Buddha entered Parinirvana.

13. Shi Tanwucheng of Zhong Temple in Huainan during the Liu Song Dynasty Tanjiong

Shi Tanwucheng¹ 釋曇無成 was originally from a Ma family in Fufeng.² His family later moved to Huanglong to escape from calamity. He renounced worldly life at 13 and practiced the Dharma with pure conduct. Thanks to his extraordinary insight and intelligence, he was already good at debate before full ordination. Hearing about Kumārajīva in Guanzhong, he went to follow him. Meeting him, Kumārajīva asked: “Why did you, novice, come a long way?” He replied: “To listen to the Dharma.” The grand master thus thought highly of him. Then, he concentrated on doctrinal studies; his wisdom grew rapidly. Yao Xing told Tanwucheng: “Ma Jichang³ was widely versed in classics and proud of himself in his time; Your Reverence should not follow his style.” Tanwucheng replied: “I would subdue the pride of my mind with the Dharma; the purpose of my studies is to correct mistakes.” Yao Xing was marveled and offered to him generously. When the Yao Family declined, Guanzhong was in turmoil; Tanwucheng moved to Huainan⁴ and abided at Zhong Temple. He preached *the Nirvana Sutra* and *the Longer Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* alternately; Tanwucheng was followed by over 200 people. He once discussed the true characteristics with Yan Yanzhi and He Shangzhi over the course of an entire night; then he wrote *the Treatise on the True Characteristics* 實相論 and *the Treatise on Gradual Wisdom* 明漸論. Shi Tanwucheng died in the Yuanjia Period of the Liu Song Dynasty at the age of 64.

Tanjiong 曇囧 was also in Zhong Temple at the time, enjoying

1 Shi Tanwucheng (c. 375-c. 438).

2 Fufeng was near Baoji, Shaanxi Province.

3 Ma Rong (79-166 CE), style name Jichang, was a famous Confucianist and economist in the Han Dynasty, assuming positions such as Prefect of Nanjun. Over a thousand students followed him to study, among whom came Zhang Xuan the economist. When Ma Rong held lectures, he would have musical accompaniment behind him.

4 Huainan was in Anhui Province.

a paralleled reputation to Tanwucheng. He was appreciated and respected by Liu Yiqing, Prince Kang of Linchuan in the Liu Song Dynasty.

14. Shi Senghan of Lingwei Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Daohan

Shi Senghan 釋僧含 was of unknown origins. He was studious from his childhood, focusing on classics, history, astronomy and mathematics; he was versed in Buddhist doctrine and Sāṃkhya when he was grown up. He specialized in *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 大涅槃經, constantly expounding this sutra. In the seventh year of the Yuanjia Period, Tao Zhongzu, the Prefect of Xinxing,¹ built Lingwei Temple and invited him to abide in it out of admiration for his virtuous conduct. Senghan encouraged the mass to observe the precepts, to purify the mind, and to refrain from unwholesome deeds of the body, speech and mind. Later, he traveled westwards to Liyang² to transmit the Dharma. Numerous monastics and laypeople in the Jiangdong area followed his lectures.

Ren Han of Pengcheng wrote *the Treatise on Non-existence of Three Lives* 無三世論; Senghan thus composed *the Treatise on Non-extinct Consciousness* 神不滅論 to refute it, reestablishing the faith in Buddha-Dharma for those who doubted it after reading Ren Han's article. Later, he wrote *On the Holy Wisdom of Perfection* 聖智圓鑒論, *the Treatise on Non-arising* 無生論, *On the Dharmakaya* 法身論, *On the Karma* 業報論, and *the General Commentary on Lotus Sutra* 法華宗論, which are circulating today. Shortly afterwards, he traveled to Jiujiang and widely propagated the Dharma. Yan Jun of Langya, the staff officer of the Southern Zhonglang General stationed in Xunyang,³ got along with Senghan; they would always talk during the entire day when they met each other. Senghan used to covertly tell Yan Jun: "If the divination is correct, upheaval will arise in the capital. The true dragon⁴ should be the prince leading your troop. Please keep

1 Xinxing was in Yi County, Shanxi Province.

2 Liyang was in Anhui Province.

3 Xunyang is the old name of Jiujiang.

4 The dragon was a symbol of the emperor in China.

it to yourself.” Soon after, the Yuanxiong incident¹ occurred; the Southern Zhonglang General suppressed the rebellion and became a flying dragon, meaning Emperor Shizu, just as Senghan said. Afterwards, while being healthy and sound, Senghan abruptly bid farewell to the mass. The next morning, he passed away. His contemporaries believed that he knew people’s destiny.

At that time, Shi Daohan 釋道含 was proficient in Buddhist learning and doctrine, writing *the Ten Chapters on the Deviations* 釋異十論.

1 The Yuanxiong incident refers to the following historical event: in the 30th year of the Yuanjia (453) Period, Liu Shao, the oldest son of Emperor Wen, conspired against his father; Liu Jun, the third son of the emperor and the Southern Zhonglang General, suppressed the rebellion and took the throne. He was titled Emperor Xiaowu of Shizu of the Liu Song Dynasty.

15. Shi Sengche of Pipa Temple in Jiangling during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengzhuang

Shi Sengche¹ 釋僧徹 was originally from a Wang family in Jinyang, Taiyuan.² Orphaned in childhood, he lived with his brother in Xiangyang. At the age of 16, Sengche went to Mount Lu to visit Master Huiyuan. At first sight, Huiyuan detected the uncommon characteristics in the youth and then asked him: “Do you intend to join the monastic order?” Sengche answered: “Being aloof from the worldly affairs is my wish. The education will rely on the grand master.” Huiyuan said: “If you join the Order, you should be able to enter the Dharma gate of Mattābhaya³.” Thus, Sengche got tonsured and followed Huiyuan as teacher, studied all the sutras, focused on *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 般若經. Beside doctrinal studies, he practiced writing, could smoothly complete verses and essays without getting stuck. He used to climb on a pine tree on the southern peak to yell, thereupon breeze blew to him from far away and birds echoed, which formed a supramundane scene. After returned, he consulted Huiyuan: “The precepts prohibit making string instruments, playing music and dancing. Can I sing and yell?” Huiyuan replied: “From the perspective of limiting distraction, they are forbidden too.” Then, Sengche stopped doing them.

At the age of 24, Huiyuan asked him to expound *shorter version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Originally, people didn’t have interest in him, however, when he stepped on the pulpit and clearly explicated the theme and the meanings, the audience was amazed. Afterwards, Huiyuan told the young master: “The challengers have spared no efforts just now, you could still well defend yourself and defeat them. Being the first time on the high seat, it was rare.” Since then, the disciples of Huiyuan treated the youth with respect. After the death of Huiyuan, Sengche traveled southwards and arrived in

1 Shi Sengche (383-452).

2 Jinyang is now Taiyuan, Shanxi.

3 Mattābhaya is a Sanskrit word of fearlessness which refers to fearlessly expounding (the Dharma) like a lion’s roar.

Jingzhou Prefecture, stayed at Wucheng Temple in Jiangling. Liu Yikang, the Prince of Pengcheng, and Xiao Sihua, the General of Yitong, followed him to take precepts. When they invited Sengche, the nobles would arrange his food in person during the banquet. Sengche passed away in the 29th year of Yuanjia Period at 70. Liu Yixuan, the Prince of Nanqiao and Prefect of Jingzhou built the tomb for him.

At the time, Shi Sengzhuang 釋 僧 莊 at Shangming Temple in Jingzhou was versed in *Nirvana Sutra* and *Sāṃkhya*. In the first year of Emperor Xiaowu's reign during Liu Song Dynasty, the emperor issued a decree to request his presence in the capital, yet he didn't go by the excuse of illness.

16. Shi Tandi of Huqiu Hill in Wu during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Tandi¹ 釋曇諦 was originally surnamed Kang. His ancestors migrated from Sogdiana to central China during the reign of Emperor Ling in the Han Dynasty. At the end of Emperor Xian's age in the Eastern Han Dynasty, China turned into a state of chaos, thus the family moved to Wuxing, Tandi's father, named Tan Rong, used to assume the position of Prefect Assistant in Jizhou. His mother, whose maiden surname was Huang, one day dreamed of a monk calling her "Mother;" the monk left a horsetail whisk and a pair of iron paper weights as she took an afternoon nap. Waking up, she found the two items were still there. She then was pregnant and gave birth to Tandi. At the age of five, Tandi's mother showed the whisk and the paper weights to Tandi, and the boy said: "These were given by the King of Qin." His mother asked: "Where did you store them after receiving them?" Tandi replied: "I forgot."

At the age of 10, Tandi joined the monastic order, yet he followed no one as his teacher. He had Buddhist insight in his inherent nature. Later, he came to the Fanyi and Dengyi areas² with his father, where he met with Shi Senglue, a monk of Guanzhong, thereupon directly calling the latter by name. Senglue asked him: "Why do you, kid, call a senior monk by his name?" Tandi replied: "Just now I called someone with the same name as yours; he used to be my novice before. Once, he collected vegetables for monks and got hurt by a boar. I just remembered this event and his name slipped out of my mouth." Senglue was actually a disciple of Master Hongjue, used to collect vegetable for the Sangha, and was injured by a boar. At that time, he could not recall the said incident and went to visit Tandi's father. The father told to the master the stories about Tandi's birth and showed him the two items. Senglue then understood and burst into tears, saying: "He is my late teacher, Master Hongjue. He used to preach *the Lotus Sutra* for Yao Chang,

1 Shi Tandi (347-411).

2 Fanyi and Dengyi are in Henan Province today.

the monarch of the Later Qin government. I was an assistant for the lecture, so I witnessed the gift offering by Yao Chang. I did not expect these items are here. Now I remember that Master Hongjue died on the day when Yao Chang presented the two items. I also remember the past accident when I gathered vegetables; I deeply cherish the memory of my late teacher.”

In his later studies, Tandi could memorize sutras after one reading. Then, he went to Qiu Temple at Huqiu Hill, where he expounded *the Book of Rites* 禮記, *the Book of Changes* 易經, and *the Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋 seven times. He also lectured on *the Lotus Sutra*, *the longer version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, and *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 15 times. He was proficient in writing; his works were compiled in six fascicles, which are circulated by the public. Fond of mountain woods and spring water, he returned to Wuxing afterwards, abided in seclusion at Mount Guzhang Kunlun for over 20 years, and died in his 60s.

17. Shi Sengdao of Shijian Temple in Shouchun during the Liu Song Dynasty 僧因 Sengyin 僧音 Sengwei

Shi Sengdao 釋僧導 was originally from Chang'an. He renounced the world at 10 and followed his master to study the discourses. The master taught him *the Avalokitesvara Sutra* 觀世音經; he asked: "How many fascicles make up the text?" The master wanted to test him, saying: "Just this one." Sengdao returned: "I heard 'at that time, Akṣayamati,' thus there should be something before that time." Greatly joyful, the master gave him a copy of the Lotus Sutra. Then, he read it during the night and roughly understood the meanings. When the lamp-oil was burned out, he collected some firewood for light.

At the age of 18, Sengdao continuously increased his erudition. He had a strong figure and was powerful, intelligent, and elegant. When Shi Sengrui met Sengdao, he believed the latter was an extraordinary person, then asking: "What is your aspiration with the Dharma?" Sengdao replied: "I just wanted to be your lecture assistant." Sengrui returned: "You have the capacity to become a grand master for thousands of people; how can you satisfy yourself by just being a junior master that asks questions in my lectures?" After full ordination, Sengdao deepened his knowledge and insight, comprehending subtle meanings about meditation, sutras, Vinaya, and sastras. Yao Xing adored him out of admiration for his virtue; when visiting the monastery, he sometimes took Sengdao to the palace with him on the same sedan. By the time Kumārajīva translated various sutras and sastras, he participated in the rendering as well. Being naturally intelligent, when the grand masters gathered in Guanzhong, he thus systematically collected classics and combined the essences of the Ultimate Truth and Conventional Truth, writing *the Commentary on the Satyasiddhi-śāstra* 成實論義疏, *the Commentary on the Three Treatises* 三論義疏, and *the Treatise on Two Truths of Emptiness and Existence* 空、有二諦論.

Later, Liu Yu, Emperor Gaozu of the Liu Song¹ Dynasty, attacked Chang'an, captured the monarch of the Later Qin Dynasty, and occupied Guanzhong. He had heard of Sengdao's name before, thus invited the master for an interview in which he told Sengdao: "I have been looking forward to meeting Your Reverence for a long time, so why would you stay in a foreign country?" The master replied: "Your Highness conquered this foreign country and acquired all lands under heaven; the bells of your carriage resonant between the Yellow River and Luoshui River. At this moment of celebration, is it not good for our meeting?" When Emperor Gaozu returned to the east, he left his son Liu Yizhen, the Duke of Guiyang, to guard Guanzhong. To bid farewell, he told Sengdao: "My son is young; please take care of him as he guards here." Afterwards, driven by the Hu Xia's troops of Helian Bobo,² Liu Yizhen escaped to the south of Guanzhong and was defeated on the way. The ugly barbarian cavalry chased after him, almost catching up; Sengdao led hundreds of disciples, blocking their way and telling the cavalymen: "Duke Liu left his child to me, so I will let go of him with my life. Do not chase him anymore." The troop were frightened by his appearance and returned. Thereupon, Liu Yizhen ran away in the brushes and met Duan Hong, the general of his main force. He slipped from the grip of the death, and it was because of Sengdao. Appreciating his help, Emperor of Gaozu asked his sons and nephews to follow Sengdao as their teacher. Later, Sengdao built a monastery in Shouchun, which is now Dongshan Temple. He frequently expounded the Dharma in the temple, which was followed by over a thousand people. During the persecution of Buddhism,³ hundreds of monks escaped to his place, and Sengdao

1 Liu Yu, at that time, was still a general under the government of the Jin Dynasty; he later took the throne and founded the Liu Song Dynasty.

2 Helian Bobo 赫連勃勃 (381-425) was originally the son of a Hun tribal leader; He was the founder and tyrant of the state of the Hu Xia regime. He first gained trust through Yao Xing, the monarch of the Later Qin Dynasty, being nominated as the general to guard the north; thereupon, he grew his military force in the northwest and waited for his chance to take Chang'an. When Liu Yizhen, the second son of Liu Yu, guarded the city, Helian Bobo believed that the opportunity had emerged, so he attacked Liu Yizhen.

3 The persecution of Buddhism refers to the incident in 466 when Tuoba Tao

provided food and clothes to all of them. To those who died at the hands of the barbarians, he burned incense and held memorial rituals, in which he shed tears out of sadness. When Emperor Xiaowu was enthroned, he sent envoys to invite Sengdao, and then the master went to the capital, staying in Zhongxing Temple. Emperor Xiaowu stepped down from his carriage to welcome the master upon his arrival. Thinking of the royal family's tragedy,¹ the turmoil, and the recently set up state, he felt deeply saddened. The emperor was choked with sobs as well; he then requested that the master preach *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* at Waguan Temple. The emperor attended the lecture in person, and the ministers all joined the audiences. Sengdao ascended the high seat and said: "Long ago, the Buddha was born in a palace and demonstrated Parinirvana at Śālavana. A thousand years have passed since then, and the honest and unsophisticated style has gone. Now, social morale has degenerated, the monasteries have turned into rubble, and the dharma halls have become waste. Ninety-five heresies² proclaim the villain as noble; sentient beings consider the burning house³ as the Pure Land. Who could see that the holy Sage is weeping and the Bodhisattvas are grieved." After these words, his eyes filled with tears. The audiences felt sad as well. Sengdao then told Emperor Xiaowu: "The most powerful one to protect temples and monks is the monarch. If Your Majesty vows to offer the Four Immeasurable Minds⁴ at this difficult time, then the rubble will become a celestial palace." The emperor repeatedly affirmed: "Yes, excellent." The

(408-452), Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei Dynasty, repeatedly issued edicts to destroy Buddhist monasteries and execute monks and nuns. Almost all the monks in Chang'an were killed (Xiao 502).

1 Liu Shao, the oldest son of Emperor Wen, killed his father and took the throne, however he perished very soon after. Whereupon, Liu Jun, the third son of Emperor Wen, became the next ruler: Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu Song regime.

2 About 95 heterodox religions existed in Shakyamuni Buddha's time; thus, it had become a term for all heresies.

3 The burning house is a Buddhist metaphor for the lives in the endless cycle of rebirth.

4 The Four Immeasurable Minds are used to help deliver all sentient beings with loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity.

audience recovered joy. Later, Sengdao returned to Shouchun and passed away in Shijian Temple at 96.

At that time, Sengyin 僧因 was a śramaṇa and also an eminent monk, second only to Sengdao. When he was asked: “Who is more powerful, Your Reverence or Master Sengdao?” He replied: “Both Sengdao and I followed Kumārajīva as our teacher. Borrowing the terms of Confucius, Sengdao has entered the internal room, and I am in the lecture hall.”¹

Sengdao had disciples that were all versed in the Satyasiddhi-śāstra, including Sengyin 僧音 and Sengwei 僧威.

1 Quoted from The Analects of Confucius, the internal room refers to entering the teacher’s room to study the essential.

18. Shi Daowang of Wudan Temple in Shu Prefecture during the Liu Song Dynasty Puming Daoyin

Shi Daowang¹ 釋道汪 was originally from a Pan family in Changle.² He lived in the capital with his paternal uncle, went to follow Master Huiyuan, and joined the monastic order at 13. Studying sutras and Vinaya, he focused on *the Nirvana Sutra* and had vegetarian diet for dozens of years. Once, he traveled to Liangzhou and was surrounded by a group of Qiang people, losing his almsbowl and robe. Daowang and his disciples concentrated on recitation of Avalokitesvara's name. After a while, mist covered them and put them out of sight of the bandits, so they were able to escape. Later, he heard that Master Xuangao in Hejian had profound understanding in meditation and wisdom, so he decided to follow him. Midway to his destination, he encountered the turbulence of Tuyuhun,³ thus could not reach there. He hence changed his destination to Chengdu.

Fei Wenyuan⁴ was a gentleman that studied Buddhism under Daowang. He built a monastery at the capital city's northwest corner of the Prefecture,⁵ named Qihuan, where Daowang transmitted the Dharma for people in the Ba and Shu areas, making him famous in the imperial court and the public. Shen Tan, the Prefect of Liangzhou, was an old friend of the master. He sent a letter to invite Daowang; hence the latter would go to see him and stayed there. Fei Wenyuan reported to Prefect Zhang Yue: "Master Daowang has clear insight and knowledge. His virtuous conduct is as firm as pine and cypress trees: he has distinctive characteristics. Recently, I heard that the Prefect of Liangzhou invites him, and

1 Shi Daowang (d. 465).

2 Changle was near Gaoqing, Shangdong.

3 Tuyuhun, a northern minority group, was attacked by the Northern Wei Dynasty in 445; the group hence migrated westwards to Khotan and Jibin, returning to their homeland in the next year (Zhu et al 2010).

4 Fei Wenyuan was once invited to assume an official position however refused; thus, the original Chinese version used "the invitee Fei Wenyuan."

5 The capital city of the prefecture here refers to Chengdu.

you have agreed with his leaving. People in the prefecture are discussing that we shall not let him go. Our prefecture is in a remote area, and over ten thousand monks and nuns rely on his teachings about meditation and precepts. How can we lose him like waters lose pearls and mountains lose jade? I plead with you to keep him for the sake of secular people and the four groups of Buddhists.” Thereupon Zhang Yue sincerely urged the master to stay, and the latter finally gave up his plan to migrate. When Zhang Yue went to the capital, he reported the virtue of Daowang to Emperor Xiaowu. The emperor then issued a decree to invite him to be the abbot of Zhongxing Temple. Daowang asked Zhang Yue to refuse it by the excuse of illness, thereafter he obtained an exemption. Then, the master stopped preaching and social activities by excusing himself for sickness.

Later, Liu Sikao assumed the position of Prefect of Yizhou;¹ he wanted to organize a grand assembly; inviting Daowang to expound the Dharma, the master approved. Someone asked: “Your Reverence vowed to live in seclusion, so why would you tarnish your conduct?” Daowang replied: “Prefect Liu believes in Buddhism and will transmit the Dharma, why should I refuse to do this little favor?”

Previously, people in the gorge saw light on the precipice at night. In the Daming Period,² Liu Sikao invited Daowang to build a monastery at the location of the light. Daowang hence had a Buddhist image carved on the cliff and built the temple rooms at the steep locale. The passengers all prayed and worshiped; pure faith arose in them. Later, Wang Jingmao invited the master to preside at Wudan Temple, where Daowang thus encouraged the masses to observe the precepts. The monastics and laypeople all followed his instructions. In the first year of the Songshi Period, Shi Daowang passed away in the temple he abided. Following his will, his body

1 Yizhou, or Yi Prefecture, was the old name for the Ba and Shu areas, i.e. Sichuan today.

2 The Daming Period: 457-464.

was cremated. Liu Sikao erected a stupa for him by the right side of Wudan Temple's gate. In the first year of the Jinghe Period,¹ Xiao Huikai² came to guard Chengdu; hearing of Daowang's deeds, he wanted to discuss the Dharma with the master, but learned about his death on the way to his new post. The official therefore felt deeply sorrowful, saying: "What a pity, I cannot meet him anymore. Kong Wenju's following of Zheng Kangcheng³ cannot be likened to my pursuit of this master."

At that time, in Shu Prefecture, Shi Puming 釋普明 at Jiangyang Temple and Shi Daoyin 釋道闇 at Changle Temple were both virtuous monks that strictly observed the precepts. Puming had a vegetarian diet, recited the sutras, diligently observed the precepts, and obtained supernatural power. Daoyin was eloquent and versed in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics; Zhang Yu⁴ of Wu Prefecture followed him as his precept teacher.

1 The Jinghe Period (465) was one year long.

2 Xiao Huikai (423-471), an official in the Liu Song Dynasty, used to be the secretary for Emperor Wen; he then took several positions in various locations.

3 Kong Wenju is the style name of Kong Rong (153-208), a Confucianist who was fond of metaphysics and studied under Zhang Xuan (127-201), style name Kangcheng, a famous philosopher and economist in the Eastern Han Dynasty.

4 Zhang Yu (377-442) was from an official family; he assumed different positions in the Liu Song Dynasty. He used to be the Prefect of Yizhou.

19. Shi Huijing of Mount Tianzhu in Shanyin during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huijing¹ 釋慧靜 was originally from a Shao family in Yuhang, Wuxing. While he lived in reduced circumstances, he kept good conduct and assiduity. He was good looking and elegant. In his early practice, he went to Mount Lu and then the capital, Jiankang, for study; he was proficient in Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics, focusing on *the Nirvana Sutra*. At first, he abided at Yecheng Temple; Yan Yanzhi and He Shangzhi admired his virtue and elegance. Yan Yanzhi praised: “Only Huijing can be likened to the Jade of Mount Jing.”² When Yan Jun, son of Yan Yanzhi, went to guard Dongzhou, he invited Huijing to go with him, staying at the temple on Mount Tianzhu.³ During the Daming years of Emperor Xiaowu, he moved to Fahua Platform in Shan County, later living in Mount Dongmao and travelling around to transmit the Dharma. After he was 50 years old, his cultivation became even stricter. He died in the Taishi Period of the Liu Song Dynasty at 58. His works had been compiled into ten fascicles.

1 Shi Huijing (c. 411-c. 468).

2 Mount Jing, in Hubei Province, was where, purportedly, the most famous piece of jade in ancient China, named Heshibi, was uncovered.

3 Mount Tianzhu was in Anhui Province.

20. Shi Famin of Mount Lu in Changsha during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengzong

Shi Famin 釋法潛, whose origins were in the north, began his interest in Buddha-Dharma at a young age and aspired to study the sutras. At 18, he renounced the world and traveled in different prefectures and regions to observe local customs and savor the doctrines. He was versed in *the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, Sāṃkhya, various sutras, and Vinaya texts. Later, he abided at Wuceng Temple in Jiangxia Prefecture.¹ At that time, Sengcheng the śramaṇa built a stupa in Jiangling, and Xie Hui, the Prefect of Jingzhou, wanted to demolish the construction. Hearing of this news, Famin went to dissuade the prefect from doing it, however Xie Hui did not listen. Thereupon, Famin moved to Mount Lu in Changsha to live in seclusion; he has not left the mountain since. Leading his guardians, Xie Hui came to the master's temple. He offered the troop meat and wine in great quantity, ordering them to beat the drum and cut off the head of the Buddhist statue. Instantly, clouds and mist came over, it turned dark, and a sandstorm hit them. Xie Hui was frightened, escaping from the temple. Later, Xie Hui was executed for his rebellion plot. His subordinates, Ding Fachang and Shi Sengshuang, grew malignant sores all over their bodies; the rest of the troop was all killed as well. Thus, Shi Famin wrote *the Treatise on the Presented Power* 顯驗論 to explain the karma. He also commentated on *the Sutra on the Path of Stages of Cultivation* 大道地經. He died on the mountain at 83. His disciple, Sengdao, erected a stele to praise his virtue.

At that time, Sengzong 僧宗 at Linghua Temple in Shixing Prefecture² widely studied sutras and sastras, writing *the Treatise on Dharma Nature* 法性 and *the Treatise on Bodhi Nature* 覺性.

1 Jiangxia is now in the eastern part of Hubei Province.

2 Shixing was near Shaoguan, Guangdong.

21. Shi Daoliang of Duobao Temple to the North of the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Jinglin Huilong

Shi Daoliang¹ 釋道亮 was of unknown origins. He lived at Duobao Temple to the north of the capital, Jiankang; he had extraordinary intelligence, insight, and an elegant look. Honest and serious, he would offend others at times, thus had to repent in the masses. In the last year of the Yuanjia Period, he was exiled to Guangdong; his contemporaries sneered at him as he lacked the sense of self-protection. Daoliang said: “The law of karma is not altered by human efforts.” Thereupon, he traveled to the south, day and night, with his companions. Arriving in Guangzhou, twelve disciples, such as Zhilin, followed him. They stayed in the south for six years and expounded the Dharma to the locals in the Guangdong area. In the Daming Period, he returned to the capital, widely preached the Teachings, and wrote *the Commentary on the Satyasiddhi-sāstra* 成實論義疏 of eight fascicles. In the years of the Shitai Period in the Liu Song Dynasty, he died at 69.

At that time, Jinglin 靜林 and Huilong 慧隆 also resided at Duobao Temple. Jinglin was versed in *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and admired by Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu Song Dynasty. Huilong was proficient in various sutras and Sāṃkhya, observing the precepts strictly and thus connecting with the divine power. When he had a heart problem, a spirit sent him medicine at night, telling him that it was sent by the Magistrate of Moling.² After Huilong took the bowl, the spirit disappeared; drinking the medicine soup, his pain dissolved.

1 Shi Daoliang (c. 400-c. 468).

2 Molin is in Nanjing today.

22. Shi Fanmin of Danyang during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengyue

Shi Fanmin 釋梵敏, from a Li family in Hedong,¹ traveled in the Guanzhong and Longshan areas to study in his early youth. When he was grown up, he went to the Pengcheng and Sizhou² areas, comprehending both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics. He expounded *the Lotus Sutra* and *Satyasiddhi-śāstra* multiple times, writing the preface for *the Essentials of Encyclopedia* 要義百科, which summarized the essences of the book in mere one fascicle. It clearly stated the theme and was paid great attention by his contemporaries. Later, Shi Fanmin died in Danyang³ in his 70s.

At that time, Shi Sengyue 僧籥, who was originally from Shangdang,⁴ was proficient in the Nirvana Sutra and respected by Zhang Chang.

1 Hedong is in Xia County, Shanxi Province today.

2 Sizhou is in Suqian, Jiangsu today.

3 This refers to Danyang County, Jiangsu.

4 Shangdang was in Zhilu, Shanxi Province.

23. Shi Daowen of Zhongxing Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Sengqing Huiding
Sengsong

Shi Daowen¹ 釋道濫 was from a Huangfu family in Chaona,² Anding and a son of Huangfu Mi,³ a gentleman in the Jin Dynasty. He was fond of music and writing, being known for his filial piety. At the age of 16, he went to Mount Lu and followed Master Huiyuan to learn Buddhism. Later, he traveled to Chang'an and studied under Kumārajīva. In the Yuanjia Period, he arrived in Xiangyang and stayed at Tanxi Temple. Versed in both Mahayana sutras and the Sāṃkhya, he was widely followed by the Buddhists in the Fanzhou and Mianzhou⁴ areas for doctrinal studies. At that moment, Zhang Shang of Wu Prefecture went to guard Xiangyang and was accompanied by his son, Zhang Fu. After the son listened to Daowen's sermon, his father asked: "What do you think of Daowen?" Zhang Fu replied: "His explanation on doctrines is precise, but his Buddhist aspiration is hard to detect." Zhang Shao went to seek an interview and thereupon learned and admired his insight and elegance. Later, Zhang Shao instigated the master: "If you return to worldly life, I will hire you as my assistant." Daowen answered: "Your Patron⁵ is attracting me with fetters." On that day, he left for Jiangling. Zhang Shao failed to catch up with him and felt sad.

In the first year of the Xiaojian Period,⁶ the emperor issued a decree to request Daowen's presence at Zhongxing Temple in the capital.

1 Shi Daowen (c. 397-c. 465).

2 Chaona was in Guyuan, Ningxia.

3 Huangfu Mi, a famous scholar during the Wei and Jin Dynasties, was invited to assume an official position but he refused, then the Emperor Wu of the Western Jin Dynasty offered him a carriage of books.

4 Fanzhou and Mianzhou here refer to the Hubei area.

5 Your Patron was the way monks referred to laypeople with respect in conversation, signifying that they were meritorious sponsors for the dharma cause.

6 The Xiaojian Period: 454-456.

In the years of the Daming Period, the emperor nominated him as monastic head of the capital. On the eighth of the tenth lunar month in the fourth year of the Daming Period, Empress Dowager Luzhao completed the statue of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, holding a Dana Assembly and banquet for over 200 monks in the Meditation Hall of Zhongxing Temple, which was well planned with all the participant names on the list. At that moment, the monastery had been renovated, and guardians checked at the entrance. Suddenly, a monk who came late took his seat in the hall by himself. He was handsome and elegant; everybody noticed him. He had a conversation with the patron of the Dana Assembly for nearly a hundred words then disappeared. Enquiring the guardians, they did not see anyone come in and out. The mass then realized that this figure was a deity.

Since Daowen was the monastic head at the time, he thereupon composed an essay to record this incident. He wrote: “The Empress Dowager is wise and modest; her great mind connected with celestial beings. She purifies her thoughts at the clean monastic venue and contemplates the Pure Buddha Land, which is well known in the imperial palace and spread to heaven. Recently, she brought forth a new idea, molding the Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’ statue, with a vivid appearance and marvelous craftsmanship, to celebrate the age of national peace and order. All kinds of treasures have been used; a celestial piece of art is presented. The Assembly and Dana banquet she patronized were held on the eighth of this month. With limited participation, all the attendees had been listed and guided to their seats as planned; there were no extra seats or persons. About halfway through the recitation, close to the noon, an unusual monk with exalted conduct and a handsome look sat inside. All the attendees were amazed; however, no one knew him. The Dana Assembly host asked him: ‘May I know Your Reverence’s name?’ He replied: ‘My name is Huiming.’ ‘In which monastery do you abide?’ He answered: ‘From Tian’an.’ During the conversation, he suddenly disappeared. The entire assembly was surprised; everyone thought about it seriously and believed that it was an

auspicious omen in full daylight. The manifestation was clear, showing the deity in front of the host. It is said that sincere devotion can connect the human with the divine, reverse the sun's trajectory, and move the earth. Continuing to purify the mind can make a rock crack and spring water spout out; let alone the emperor's generosity to the world and kind governance to the country. The heaven that corresponds to the emperor learns the kindness of the ruler on the earth. In order to praise the virtue of His Majesty's governance, he manifested this wonderful, subtle body and attended the event in the meditation hall, where royal family was present. Because the emperor's kindness and brightness shine in four directions, like the sun and the moon, thus he claimed his name, Huiming;¹ as the emperor's reign granted by the heaven features prosperity, stability, and infinitude, he therefore answered Tian'an² as his monastery. This was because the foundation of the reign is eternal, the government and religion are combined, and all the people are happy and peaceful. I hereby record this event and keep it in the county to present the heavenly manifestation and blessing." Here, "county" should refer to "prefecture."

At that time, Long Lingfu, the Prefect of the Capital, reported this event to the emperor, who thus issued a decree to change the name of the mediation hall to Tian'an Temple, echoing the auspicious omen.

Later, Daowen expounded the sutras several times; learners lined up to attend his lectures. He always guided his disciples with patience and diligence; multiple divine manifestations took place again. The emperor was joyful and offered him 500 thousand coins. It was said: "The emperor patronizes with money, and Master Daowen leads by virtuous conduct; the Heaven is touched, and deities descend to bless." Daowen passed away in the first year of the Taishi Period at 69.

1 In Chinese, Huiming 惠明 means "kindness and brightness."

2 In Chinese, Tian'an 天安 refers to "heavenly peace."

In that age, Sengqing 僧慶, Huiding 惠定, and Sengsong 僧嵩 at Zhongxing Temple were all famous for their doctrinal studies. Sengqing was good at the Three Treatises¹ and known as a grand master. Huiding specialized in *the Nirvana Sutra* and *Abhidharma*, holding dharma talks multiple times; Sengsong was versed in Sāṃkhya but turned bigoted in his later years, proclaiming that the Buddha should not live eternally. Before his death, his tongue had rotted.

1 The three important śāstras refer to *the Madhyamaka-śāstra* 中論 and *the Dvādaśanikāya-śāstra* 十二門論 by Nāgārjuna 龍樹 and *the Śata-śāstra* 百論 by his disciple, Āryadeva 提婆.

24. Shi Tanbin of Zhuangyan Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Tanji Tanzong

Shi Tanbin¹ 釋曇斌, from a Su family in Nanyang,² renounced the world at ten years old and followed Daoweī as his teacher. In the beginning, he lived at Xin Temple in Jiangling, learning meditation. He studied with his heart but could not comprehend everything. One night, he dreamed of a deity telling him: “Your questions will be solved when you travel and study in different places.” Thus, he took his staff and gown and started his learning journey. Arriving in the capital, Jiankang, first, he then went to Wu Prefecture, where Sengye was teaching *the Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律. Listening to the lecture, Tanbin deepened his understanding. Later, he returned to the capital, studied the Nirvana Sutra under Master Jinglin, and then traveled to Wu again, following Fazhen of Xiaoyao Temple to research *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 泥洹經 and *the Śrīmālā-sūtra* 勝鬘經. Afterwards, he learned *the Avatamsaka Sutra* 華嚴經 and *Samyuktābhīdharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* 雜心論 under Faye of Nanlin. After studying under various teachers, he learned different viewpoints and theories; moreover he pondered the meanings to fathom the subtlety. Finally, he was able to bring together different proclamations and to master doctrines of all schools. He thereupon returned to the Fanzhou and Dengzhou areas,³ opening Dharma lectures which attracted elites to attend from four directions.

In the first year of the Xiaojian Period, the emperor ordered Wang Xuanmo⁴ to sponsor Tanbin’s travel to the capital. He abided at Xin’an Temple first, expounding *the shorter version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 小品般若經, *the Daśabhūmikāsūtra-śāstra* 十地論, and the notions of gradual and sudden

1 Shi Tanbin (c. 409-c. 475).

2 Nanyang is in Henan now.

3 The Fanzhou and Dengzhou areas are between Henan and Hubei province now.

4 Wang Xuanmo, style name Wang Yande (388-468), assumed the prefect position in various locations.

enlightenment. At that time, those who were obsessed by debates argued aggressively, Tanbin however could not be defeated. Yuan Can¹ of Chen Prefecture enjoyed a good reputation and popular confidence. Admiring Tanbin's knowledge, he sent his regards to the master through his assistant. Once, he wanted to test Tanbin with a different point of view but could not demolish the master's argument. Thereupon, Yuan Can went to meet Tanbin in person. He persuaded the master multiple times to present himself before the emperor. Tanbin replied: "I am aloof from worldly affairs; how can I associate with the emperor?" Yuan Can thus thought highly of him. Later, he invited Tanbin to be the teacher of his mother.² Liu Jingsu, the Prince Jianping of the Liu Song Dynasty, consulted the master about precepts as well. Tanbing died in Zhuangyan Temple during the Yuanhui Period at 67.

At that time, Tanji 曇濟 and Tanzong 曇宗 also stayed at Zhuangyan Temple; they were known for their learning and talent. Tanji composed *the Treatise on the Seven Schools* 七家論; Tanzong wrote *the Catalogue of Sutras* 經目 and *the Forest of Sāṃkhya* 數林.

1 Yuan Can, style name Yuan Jingqian, was known for his knowledge and virtue; he assumed minister and general positions. When he guarded Fort Shitoucheng in Nanjing, he learned that Xiao Daocheng (the founder of Southern Qi government, i.e. Emperor Gao of the Qi) would rebel; he planned to catch the traitor, however failed and was killed.

2 In ancient times, laypeople would invite trusted monks to be their precept teachers and offered to them accordingly.

25. Shi Huiliang of Heyuan Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huiliang¹ 釋慧亮, originally named Dong Xianliang, was a disciple of Mater Huijing of Dong'e. He gained a reputation in his youth, being known as little master while Huijing was called great master by their contemporaries. Although his age and experience were inferior to those of Huijing, he inherited the virtuous conduct of the great master. Later, Huiliang built a monastery in Linzi,² where he preached *the Lotus Sutra*, *the longer and shorter versions of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, and *the Daśabhūmikāsūtra-śāstra*. Immeasurable audiences came to follow his lectures, even though they were from hundreds of miles away. Later, Huiliang went to the south of the Yangtze River and abided at Heyuan Temple. Yan Yanzhi and Zhang Xu admired his virtue, saying: "When Dao'an and Zhu Fatai expounded the Dharma, their words were as fragrant as lotus flowers; those of Tanbin and Huiliang are as resonant as a beating drum. Metaphysical talks have revived from decline." In the first year of the Taishi Period,³ a great Assembly was held in Zhuangyan Temple; a thousand masters and abbots requested to participate. The emperor nominated Tanbin and Huiliang as lecturers; among the great masters, no one dared challenge them. Passing away during the Yuanhui Period at 63, Huiliang's work, *the Treatise on the Mystery of Metaphysics* 玄通論, is still circulating.

1 Shi Huiliang (c. 413-c. 475).

2 Linzi was in Zibo, Shandong.

3 The Taishi Period: 465-471.

26. Shi Sengjing of Lower Dinglin Temple during the Liu Song Dynasty Tanlong

Shi Sengjing¹ 釋僧鏡 was from a Jiao family in Longxi,² later moving to Wu Prefecture. He scorned money, enjoyed donation, and was known for his filial piety. He lived in poverty; when his mother died, the prefect offered him 5000 coins, but he politely declined. Then, he dug the earth and planted pine and cypress trees with his bare hands. He built a thatched cottage next to the tomb and stayed there for three years to mourn his mother. After the mourning period, he renounced the world and abided at Huashan Temple in Wu County. Later, he went to the Guanzhong and Longshan areas to look for teachers for his studies, returning after several years. Staying in the capital, he expounded the sutras and sastras. Out of admiration for his virtue, Xu Zhanzhi from Donghai,³ an official of Sikong, invited him to be the precept teacher for his family.

Afterwards, Sengjing returned to Suzhou and focused on the role of chief preacher in the region. Daoliu, a śramaṇa at Tai Temple, needed a leave of one year, and then Sengjing went eastwards to Xushan Temple in Shangyu cover that area; over a hundred disciples moved with him. His preaching benefited the Wu areas, and his reputation spread to the capital. Xie Lingyun of Chen Prefecture sent salutations to him. When Emperor Xiaowu of Shizu in the Liu Song Dynasty learned about this conduct, he issued a decree to request his presence in the capital and request that he abide at Lower Dinglin Temple.⁴ He thus held Assemblies frequently, where the virtuous could gather. His works included *the Commentary on Lotus Sutra* 法華義疏, *the Commentary on Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 泥洹義疏, and *the Treatise on Abhidharma*

1 Shi Sengjing (c. 409-c. 479).

2 Longxi is in Gansu Province today.

3 Donghai is in Tancheng, Shandong now. Xu Zhanzhi was the grandson of Princess of Kuaiji, the oldest daughter of Liu Yu (founder of Liu Song Dynasty); he assumed multiple official positions.

4 Dinglin Temple consisted of two parts that were known as Upper Dinglin and Lower Dinglin; the latter was bigger.

毗曇玄論, which distinguished doctrines by categories with clear order. He passed away in the Yuanhui Period at 67.

Previously, Tanlong 曇隆, a monk, abided at Xushan Temple in Shangyu; he was good at dharma talk since his youth and observed the precepts strictly in his later years. Xie Lingyun also respected him, often touring Mount Shan with the master. After his death, Xie Lingyun wrote a eulogy for him.

27. Shi Sengjin of Linggen Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Tandu Xuanyun

Shi Sengjin¹ 釋僧瑾, from a Zhu family in the Principality of Pei,² was the fourth son of a hermit named Zhu Jian. In his youth, he was versed in *Zhuangzi*, *Laozi*,³ *the Book of Songs*, and *the Book of Rites*. When travelling to Guangling,⁴ he met with Master Tanyin and admired the latter at first sight, then following him as his teacher. He studied Buddhist sutras and widely read the Tripitaka. Later, he went to the capital; at Longguang Temple he was acquainted with Zhu Daosheng, under whom he learned the Dharma as well. Originally, he stayed at Yecheng Temple. Emperor Xiaowu requested that he be the precept teacher for the Prince of Xiangdong. He insisted to decline with the excuse of his indisposition, yet this was disapproved by the emperor. Then, the Prince was required the granting of the five precepts and treated Sengjin with favorable courtesy.

Previously, Zhibin the śramaṇa held the position of Monastic Head on behalf of Tanyue. Zhibin enjoyed popular confidence for his virtuous conduct; he was proficient in the Three Treatises, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, *the Sutra of the Questions of Viśeṣacinti-brahma*, *the Book of Songs*, *Laozhi*, and *Zhuangzi*, among other texts. Later, the rebellion of Yijia⁵ broke out; Zhibin was set up and slandered to have worked for the bogus Yijia government, thereupon exiled to Jiaozhou. After the Prince of Xiangdong succeeded to the throne as Emperor Ming, Sengjin was nominated as National Monastic Head and offered a dharma musical band,

1 Shi Sengjin (c. 397-c. 475).

2 Pei is in Anhui Province today.

3 Laozi here refers to *the Classic of The Virtue and the Path* 道德經.

4 Guangling refers to Yangzhou, Jiangsu today.

5 The rebellion in the year of Yijia, which was the reign title for Liu Zixun, the third son of Emperor Xiaowu, took place when he took the throne from Liu Ziye, his oldest brother and a brutal tyrant. Finally, the 11th son of Emperor Wen, Prince of Xiangdong, who was the uncle of the confronting brothers, won the throne and became Emperor Ming after a series of plots and battles.

20 assistants, a monthly salary of 30 thousand coins, four yearly bonuses, servants, and a carriage. All the officials transferred to provincial posts were requested to bid farewell to Sengjin; the tributary gifts from foreign countries would also be shared with the master. The importance attached to Sengjin by the emperor was unparalleled; however, the master had no interest in fortune, so he donated all the money and treasures to support the dharma cause, building Linggen and Lingji temples to house those who practiced meditation and wisdom.

In the later years of Emperor Ming's reign, the emperor applied many taboos. The doctrinal translation regarding Nirvana and extinction were paused. Words relating to death, calamity, and funeral were not supposed to be brought up to the emperor. Seven or eight out of ten that breached this regulation would be executed. Sengjin often reminded the emperor to correct such policies, which made the emperor become estranged from him. At that time, Zhou Yong¹ of Runan held the premier position; thus, Sengjin told the minister: "His Majesty behaves unlike a human ruler; advising with worldly reasons will not help, yet the subtle doctrines should be told later. The best way to persuade him is with the bad karmic effects in the three lives. If Your Patron could find a moment to talk to His Majesty, you may use this idea." Later, Emperor Ming suffered from gout; treated with acupuncture, he felt pained and distressed. Then, he called Zhou Yong and Yin Hong to tell him ghost stories that would distract from his suffering. Zhou Yong thereupon prepared himself by reading *the Dammaṇḍa* 法句經 and *the Damamūka-nidāna-sūtra* 賢愚經. He told the cause-effect stories to the emperor, who was then surprised and stuttered: "If karmic effects come in this way, it would be scary." Since then, the criminals who breached the prohibitions could save their lives. Sengjin accomplished this change thanks to his delegation to the right person.

¹ Zhou Yong was a prominent lay Buddhist and official in the Liu Song and Southern Qi Dynasties.

Sengjin passed away in the Yuanhui Period¹ at 79.

Afterwards, Tandu 曇 度 the śramaṇa assumed the position of Monastic Head. He was a native of Langya and versed in the Tripitaka, *Spring and Autumn Annuals*, *Zhuangzi*, *Laozi*, and *the Book of Changes*, among other texts. Both Emperor Xiaowu and Emperor Ming appreciated his work. After the young emperor² succeeded to the throne, the regulations and courtesy were violated. Tandu knew well the timing for advice or for refraining himself; he hence did not break the emperor's limitation. He abided at Xin'an Temple, where Shi Xuanyun 釋 玄 運 also stayed. The latter was proficient in Mahayana and Hinayana doctrines; Zhang Yong and Zhang Rong³ used to consult him about the Dharma in his lecture hall.

1 The Yuanhui Period: 473-477.

2 The young emperor refers to Liu Yu 劉 昱 (463-477), the oldest son of Emperor Ming; he succeeded to the throne at 9 and became the eighth emperor of the Liu Song Dynasty. Known for his cruelty, he was killed by officials after 5 years on the throne.

3 Zhang Yong was the uncle of Zhang Rong; both were famous official-scholars at the time. Zhang Chang (see the Biography of Shi Sengquan) was Zhang Rong's father.

28. Shi Daomeng of Xinghuang Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Daojian Huiluan Huifu
Sengxun Daoming

Shi Daomeng¹ 釋道猛, a native of Xiliangzhou,² traveled in the Yan and Zhao areas³ to learn local customs in his youth. Later, he stayed in Shouchun, studied with assiduity, and fathomed out the subtle doctrines, becoming proficient in the Tripitaka, *the navāṅga-sāsana* 九部經, and the greater and shorter Sāṃkhya; he specialized in the Satyasiddhi-śāstra. He expounded the Dharma in the Jianghuai area;⁴ learners lined up to consult him. In the 26th year of the Yuanjia Period, he traveled eastwards to the capital and stayed at Dong'an Temple, where he continued his lectures. When Emperor Ming was still the Prince of Xiangdong, he deeply admired the master. After the prince ascended the throne, His Majesty treated Daomeng with more veneration, offering him 300 thousand coins as a present. During the first year of the Taishi Period,⁵ the emperor established a temple outside Jianyang Gate. Daomeng was nominated as Monastic Head. The emperor said: "People can transmit the Dharma, and the Dharma relies on people to preach it. Now that we have Your Reverence, not only can sentient beings be benefited, but also the imperial court will be honored; it is part of the efforts to revive the empire." That was the origin of the temple's name of Xinghuang.⁶ As the construction was completed, by the request of the emperor, Daomeng expounded *the Satyasiddhi-śāstra* in the temple. On the opening day of the lecture, in which the theme of the serial lectures would be explicated, the emperor came in person and was followed by the officials and nobles; learners from the four directions participated in the event. Daomeng was at ease,

1 Shi Daomeng (411-475).

2 Xiliangzhou, or West Liangzhou, is near Zhangye, Gansu today.

3 Yan and Zhao here refer to the area in present day Hebei.

4 Jianghuai was the area between the Huai River and the northern bank of the Yangtze River.

5 The Taishi Period (465-471) was the first of the two titles during Emperor Ming's reign.

6 Xinghuang means "reviving the empire or emperor's reign" In Chinese.

elucidating nicely and precisely. The emperor repeatedly praised his sermon and issued a decree: “Since Master Daomeng widely delivers sentient beings as an honored guest of mine, he should be entitled a monthly salary of 30 thousand, plus four assistants, 20 registration secretaries, one carriage, and one sedan. He is permitted to take this sedan to the imperial court to attend official events.” Daomeng donated all this money and treasure to needy people or used it to build temples. In the third year of the Yuanhui Period, Daomeng passed away in Dong’an Temple at 65.

Later, Daojian 道堅, Huiluan 慧鸞, Huifu 慧敷, Sengxun 僧訓, and Daoming 道明 also abided at Xinghuang Temple. They enjoyed a resembling reputation in doctrinal studies.

29. Shi Chaojin of Lingjia Temple in Shanyin during the Liu Song Dynasty Tanji Daoping

Shi Chaojin¹ 釋超進 was from a Zhuaxu family in Chang'an. He aspired to study diligently, learning various sutras in his early youth. He had modest and intelligent characteristics, strictly observed the precepts, and thus gained a reputation in Guanzhong before the age of 30. At that time, Hu Xia's Bobo Helian captured Chang'an, halting Buddhist activities in the area; Chaojin thereupon went eastwards and stayed in the capital, Jiankang. He opened dharma talks to expound the doctrines. Soon after, he moved to Suzhou, where he continued his dharma transmission efforts. At that time, Meng Yi of Pingchang assumed the position of Prefect in Kuaiji; having heard of the master for long time, he invited Chaojin to his place. Meng Yi settled him at Lingjia Temple in Shanyin.² Then, the master constantly preached the Dharma in the east of Zhejiang. Monks, nuns, and laypeople in the area sowed Buddhist seeds in their mind by following his teachings.

After he was requested by the emperor, Chaojin went to the capital to expound *the Mahābherīhāraka-parivarta* 大法鼓經 during the Taishi Period. Shortly afterwards, he returned to Kuaiji, continuing his propagation of the Dharma. Believing that *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* explained all the Buddhist principles well, he researched this sutra in detail, and then expounded it several times. When a Dana Assembly was held, he was an essential invitee. If Chaojin had another engagement on that day, the patrons would change the date to accommodate his schedule. Afterwards, when Chaojin became senior and weak with feet problems, he hardly participated in the Assemblies; the patrons would offer food to his room and consider this act as the accumulation of merit. Chaojin was fond of sutras, but diligent reading made him lose his sight in his later years; even then, he asked disciples to chant the Nirvana Sutra for him, once in every ten days, which demonstrated his true love for the discourses.

1 Shi Chaojin (c. 382-c. 475).

2 Shanyin is now in Shaoxing, Zhejiang.

In the Yuanhui Period, Chaojin passed away at 94.

At that time, Master Tanji 曇機 who was originally surnamed Zhao, was also a native of Chang'an. During the turmoil in Guanzhong, he moved down to the southeast. Enjoying the scenery, he came to Kuaiji city. Proficient in *the Lotus Sutra* and *Abhidharma*, the level of respect he gained was comparable to that of Chaojin. Wang Kun of Langya, the prefect, invited him to the west of Kuaiji city. He abided at Jiexiang Temple, which was established by Wang Hui, the grandfather of Wang Kun.

Shi Daoping 道憑 was also an excellent, contemporary monk to them; however, being too stubborn, he was known by few.

30. Shi Fayao of Xiaoshan Temple in Wuxing during the Liu Song Dynasty Tanyao

Shi Fayao¹ 釋法瑤 was from a Yang family in Hedong. Studious in his youth, he would travel thousands of miles to follow great teachers for learning. In the Jingping Period of the Liu Song Dynasty, he came to the Yanzhou and Yuzhou areas,² thoroughly read various sutras, and familiarized himself with non-Buddhist classics as well. Later, he followed Master Huijing's lectures; the audiences often asked him to repeat what the lecturer taught. Huijing sighed: "I am inferior to him." Fayao crossed the Yangtze River in the Yuanjia Period. Shen Yanzhi of Wuxing deeply admired him and invited him to abide at Xiaoshan Temple in Wukang, Wuxing, where Fayao spent 19 years in total. Except for Buddhist rituals, he would not leave the monastery. In Wukang, he held lectures each year, and learners in the Wu area flocked to listen. He wrote commentaries for *the Nirvana Sutra*, *the Lotus Sutra*, *the longer version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, and *the Śrīmālā-sūtra*, among other texts. In the sixth year of the Daming Period, the emperor ordered the Prefect of Wu to send Fayao to the capital. He stayed at Xin'an Temple with Daoyou to expound gradual and sudden enlightenment in a convincing manner. Upon his arrival, he started his lecture; the emperor came in person, stepped down from the carriage to listen to his sermon, and was followed by all the officials. In his later years, Fayao kept a vegetarian diet and strictly observed the precepts, being venerated by both monastics and laypeople. He passed away during the Yuanhui Period at 76.

At that time, Tanyao 曇瑤 was in Songxi Prefecture,³ versed in *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 淨名經, *the Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* 十住論, *Laozi*, and *Zhuangzi*, good at calligraphy in the cursive and official-script styles, and respected by the Prince Xuanjian of

1 Shi Fayao (c. 400-c. 475).

2 Yanzhou and Yuzhou refer to the Shandong and Henan areas.

3 Songxi is near Gaoyao, Guangdong today.

Jianping.¹

31. Shi Daoyou of Xin'an Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Daoci Huizheng Jueshi

Shi Daoyou² 釋道猷 was a native of Wu Prefecture. Originally, he was Master Zhu Daosheng's disciple; following his teacher, he came to Mount Lu. After the death of his teacher, he lived in seclusion on the mountain in Linchuan Prefecture.³ Reading the newly translated *Śrīmālā-sūtra*, he held the scripture and sighed: "My late master had shared the same idea as this sutra; however, time did not wait, his teaching was prior to the publication of this sutra. It is regrettable." Thus, he wrote a commentary on *the Śrīmālā-sūtra* to promote the late master's instruction, which consisted of five fascicles with fussy details that hindered its spread. Emperor Wen wrote to Huiguan, asking: "Who can master the doctrine of sudden enlightenment?" The latter replied: "Daoyou, Master Daosheng's disciple." Then, the emperor ordered the Prefect of Linchuan to send Daoyou to the capital. In Jiankang, Daoyou was invited to the palace; learned monastics were widely summoned to listen to Daoyou's lecture on sudden enlightenment. At that moment, the argumentative ones debated with the lecturer. As Daoyou inherited the lineage of his teacher and pondered over the doctrine for years, he was always able to vanquish his challengers. The emperor thumped the table and praised aloud. When Emperor Xiaowu succeeded to the throne, His Majesty venerated the master more deeply and moved him to Xin'an Temple as abbot; he made the remark multiple times: "Master Daosheng advocated to reflect on one's nature by non-attachment; while Master Daoyou propagates direct awakening like riding on a horse. These are masters guiding to enlightenment; they are well deserving of their reputation." Daoyou passed away during the Yuanhui Period at 71.

1 The Prince of Jianping, Liu Hong, was the seventh son of Emperor Wen, fond of literature, and died of illness at 25.

2 Shi Daoyou (c. 405-c. 475).

3 Linchuan was in Jiangxi Province.

Afterwards, Daoci 道慈, a śramaṇa of Yuzhou, was versed in *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* and *the Lotus Sutra*, preaching the thoughts of Daoyou. He revised the master's commentary on *the Śrīmālā-sūtra* and rendered it into two fascicles, which is presently circulating. Contemporarily, Huizheng 慧整 of Duobao Temple and Jueshi 覺世 of Changle Temple gained fame similar to Daoci. Huizheng was proficient in the Three Treatises, hence respected by learners as a patriarch; Jueshi was versed in *the longer version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *the Nirvana Sutra*. He founded the theory of “non-empty and unreal concepts.”

32. Shi Huitong of Yecheng Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huitong¹ 釋慧通 was from a Liu family in the Principality of Pei. He was open-minded, elegant, and profound since his youth. When he abided at Yecheng Temple, each time he swung the horsetail whisk to start the dharma lecture, the audience would rush in and jam the street. Xu Zhanzhi of Donghai and Yuan Can of Chen Prefecture venerated him as their teacher and friend. Emperor Xiaowu deeply admired him, ordering the Prince of Hailing and the little Prince of Jianping to befriend the master. Yuan Can showed his *Treatise on the Pleasant Appearance* 蘧顏論 to Huitong. The latter questioned and discussed with the author, which became articles that circulate among the public. Huitong composed commentaries on *the longer version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *the Śrīmālā-sūtra*, *the Saṃyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra*, and *the Abhidharma*. He also wrote *the Treatise to Denounce the Concepts of Barbarian and Chinese* 駁夷夏論, *the Treatise on Dharma Nature* 法性論, and *the Note on Divinatory Symbols of Yi* 爻象記, which all circulate at present. Huitong died during the Shengming Period at 63.

1 Shi Huitong (c. 413-c. 475).

Volume VIII

Doctrinal Exegesis Part E

27 main figures 75 auxiliaries

1. Shi Sengyuan of Jizhou in the Bogus Wei Government during the Southern Qi Dynasty Huiji Daodeng

Shi Sengyuan¹ 釋 僧 淵 was originally from a Zhao family in Yingchuan.² He was the offspring of Zhao Yan, an official of Sikong in the Northern Wei government. Fond of reading, he focused on Buddhist doctrines; first, he traveled to Xuzhou, stayed at Baita Temple, and followed Sengsong to study *the Satyasiddhi-sāstra* and *Abhidharma*. Within three years, he achieved the level that others required ten years to attain; then, his insight and intelligence became well known. Sengyuan had a strong figure; his waist was about ten times larger than the circle made by his thumbs and index fingers on both hands. He had extraordinary elegance and insight. Liu Yinzhi the Hermit offered the mount he abided in to the master to build his vihara.

Tandu, Huiji 慧 記 , and Daodeng 道 登 all followed Sengyuan to study the Dharma. Huiji was versed in Sāṃkhya; while Daodeng was proficient in *the Nirvana Sutra* and *Lotus Sutra*. They were all respected by Yuan Hong,³ the monarch of the Northern Wei

1 Shi Sengyuan (414-481).

2 Yingchuan is Yuzhou, Henan today.

3 Yuan Hong, Emperor Xiaowen (467-499) of the Northern Wei government, was an important ruler in the history of the Northern Dynasty; he was originally named Tuoba Hong and from the ethnicity of Xianbei in the north. The capital of Xianbei was in Datong; to Sinicize the government, he moved the capital down to Luoyang, the center of Chinese culture at the time. The Chinese author considered the non-minority government of the Southern Dynasty in Jiankang (i.e. Nanjing, literally denoting southern capital) was the authentic government, thus prefixed “bogus” to the northern ones.

government, hence were famous in the country.

Sengyuan died at 68 in the fifth year of the Taihe Period during the reign of Emperor Xiaowen of the bogus Northern Wei Dynasty, the third year of the Jianyuan Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty.¹

¹ The Southern Qi, or Nan Qi (479-502), was the second government in the Southern Dynasty when China was basically divided into two parts. The founder, Xiao Daocheng, was a general in the Liu Song regime, later taking the throne and becoming Emperor Gao of the Qi Dynasty; as there were multiple governments named after Qi in Chinese history, this one is thus called the Southern Qi by historians.

2. Shi Tandu in the Bogus Wei Government during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Tandu¹ 釋曇度 was originally from a Cai family in Jiangling. He had a respectful and serious conduct from a young age; he was known for his precept observance. Intelligent and witty, he was uncommonly insightful. Later, he went to the capital, Jiankang, for study, learning *the Nirvana Sutra*, *the Lotus Sutra*, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and *the Longer Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. By fathoming their subtlety, he understood the meanings beyond the words. Despite his foot problems, he traveled to Xuzhou, followed Master Sengyuan to research *the Satyasiddhi-śāstra*, and became proficient with it thus being known as the expert on this text. Yuan Hong, the monarch of the Northern Wei Dynasty, heard of his deeds and then venerated him, inviting him to the north through envoy. Upon his arrival in Pingcheng,² he widely preached the Dharma. Yuan Hong listened to his lectures in respect and prepared food in person for the master. Thereupon, Tandu stayed in the bogus capital, transmitting the Dharma and delivering people; over a thousand disciples came a long way to follow him. He wrote *the Commentary on the Great Satyasiddhi-śāstra* 成實論大義疏 of eight fascicles, which is circulating in the north.

1 Shi Tandu (d. 489).

2 Pingcheng, the capital of the Northern Wei government at the time, is in Datong, Shanxi today.

3. Shi Daohui of Zhuangyan Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Xuanqu Sengda

Shi Daohui¹ 釋道慧 was from a Wang family of Yuyao² living in Jianye. He joined the monastic order at 11 and followed Sengyuan at Lingyao Temple. At the age of 14, he got the opportunity to read *the Collection of Huiyuan* 慧遠集 and regretted that he was born too late to meet the master. Afterwards, he went over a thousand li³ up the stream with his friend Zhishun to worship the master's site. Daohui thus abided at Xi Temple on Mount Lu. After staying on the mountain for three years, he returned to the capital; at that moment, Wang Huo⁴ held discussions with a multitude of learned śramaṇas about the "Three Marks."⁵ Only 17, the young monk raised various questions to Wang Huo that contained profound and subtle meanings and were stated in a logical way; the attendees were amazed.

Later, Daohui learned under Masters Daomeng and Tanbin. Daomeng expound *the Satyasiddhi-śāstra*, while Zhang Rong challenged him with difficult follow-up questions; Daomeng had to excuse himself by means of illness to evade the debate, letting Daohui answer. Seeing the latter was a young monk, Zhang Rong hence scorned him. Daohui seized this chance to beat the challenger with rational points; back and forth in the argument, Daohui easily defeated Zhang Rong. Daohui was proficient in Mahayana doctrines and Sāṃkhya; he continuously held lectures that attracted a lot of followers. He sorted the doctrines in accordance with their categories, arranging them in good order. Chu Cheng and Xie

1 Shi Daohui (451-481).

2 Yuyao was in Zhejiang Province.

3 Li is a Chinese unit of length that is equivalent to 415 meters in ancient China and 500 meters in present day.

4 Wang Huo, originally named Wang Yu 王彧 (413-472), was a high ranking official in the Liu Song government; his given name, Yu 彧, was same as that of Liu Yu 劉彧 (Emperor Ming). After the later succeeded to the throne, like the people, Wang Yu had to change his name to avoid repetition with the emperor; he was hence called Wang Huo 王彧 from that point forward (Tang 1996).

5 The three marks of arising, abiding, and ceasing.

Chaozong, who were celebrated official-scholars at the time, both admired and appreciated him.

As his mother was reaching a senior age, Daohui intended to save a sum of money by salary for her retirement; he then moved to Zhuangyan Temple. Cherishing his aspiration, his mother joined the monastic order as a nun, donated the house for merit accumulation, and abided closed to Daohui. Daohui died in the third year of the Jianyuan Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty at 31. On his deathbed, he had his horsetail whisk fetched and gave it to his friend Zhishun. The latter said in grief: “People like him cannot live to 40, what a pity!” Thereupon, he put the whisk in Daohui’s coffin. Daohui was buried at the south side of Mount Zhong. Xie Chaozong of Chen Prefecture erected a stele with an inscription for him.

At that time, Xuanqu 玄趣 and Sengda 僧達, who also abided at Zhuangyan Temple, gained fame for their doctrinal comprehension. Xuanqu was versed in various sutras and non-Buddhist classics, being particularly good at dharma talks with great charm. Sengda had grey hairs at young age, becoming known as “Sengda of White Head.” He also understood multiple sutras and mastered discussion well. Later, he was exiled to Changsha for his stubbornness.

4. Shi Sengzhong of Zhongxing Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Tanchen Tanqian

Sengbiao Sengzui Minda Sengbao

Shi Sengzhong¹ 釋僧鐘 was from a Sun family in Lu Prefecture.² Joining the monastic order at 16, he contented himself with the ragged conditions and devoted himself to the Dharma. He once came to Shouchun, and Master Sengdao considered him a rare talent. Wang Ye of Qiao Prefecture³ respected his virtue and offered him the four necessities.⁴ Later, Wang Ye invited Sengzhong to expound *the Śata-śāstra*; Sengdao went to listen and made this comment: “It is true that the younger generation will surpass the older.” Sengzhong was versed in *the Satyasiddhi-śāstra*, the Three Treatises, *the Nirvana Sutra*, and *the Daśabhūmikāsūtra-śāstra*. Afterwards, he traveled southwards to the capital and abided at Zhongxing Temple.

In the first year of the Yongming⁵ Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, Li Daogu, the envoy of the Northern Wei government, came to the temple with an invitation for Sengzhong; Emperor Ming of the Southern Qi Dynasty knew about the master’s virtue and fame, thus ordering Sengzhong to have a discussion with the envoy first. Sengzhong carried on the conversation back and forth for a long time without any impropriety. At that moment, it was shortly after the noon; Li Daogu asked: “Why do you not eat?” Sengzhong replied: “The traditional Buddhist rule requires abstaining from food after noon.” The envoy returned: “What does ‘voice-hearer’⁶ mean?” The master then answered: “Those who were delivered by hearing the voice are called voice-hearers.”

1 Shi Sengzhong (430-489).

2 Lu was in the Qufu area, Shandong Province.

3 Qiao refers to present-day Bo County, Anhui.

4 The four necessities are a Buddhist term referring to food, clothes, beddings, and medicine for monks.

5 The Yongming Period: 483-489.

6 “Voice-hearer” (Śrāvaka) is a Sanskrit term that refers to those who attained enlightenment by hearing the Buddha’s lectures.

These answers later became renowned among his contemporaries. Henceforth, when Sengzhong preached the Dharma, people flocked to listen. Crown Prince Wenhui and Prince Wenxuan of Jingling¹ invited him to lecture several times.

At that time, Tanchen 曇 讖 , Tanqian 曇 遷 , Sengbiao 僧 表 , Sengzui 僧 最 , Minda 敏 達 , and Sengbao 僧 寶 enjoyed as much popularity as Sengzhong. They were versed in different sutras and venerated by Prince Wenxuan, who invited them to preach the Teachings in rotation.

¹ Prince Wenhui and Prince Wenxuan were the oldest and second-oldest sons of Xiao Ze, Emperor Wu of the Southern Qi regime.

5. Shi Daosheng of Tianbao Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Daosheng¹ 釋道盛, from a Zhu family in Pei Prefecture, joined the monastic order to study the Dharma at a young age; he was versed in *the Nirvana Sutra*, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and *the Book of Changes*. Originally, he abided in Xiangzhou.² Emperor Ming of the Liu Song Dynasty heard of his fame and ordered his presence in the capital; Daosheng thus came to stay at Pengcheng Temple. Upon their first meeting, Xie Chaozong revered him as his teacher. Daosheng thereupon wrote articles on *the Treatise on Connections* 述交論 and *the Treatise on the Absence of Origin of Birth and Death* 生死本無源論. Later, Daosheng moved to Tianbao Temple. Emperor Gao of the Southern Qi Dynasty issued a decree to replace the Monastic Head, Tandu, with Daosheng. Shen Wenji³ of Danyang believed in Daoism and rejected Buddhism; he proposed to establish the Monastic Bureau to register monks and nuns, aiming to reduce their number. Daosheng managed it well and defused the situation. Afterwards, Shen Wenji purposely held an Assembly in Tianbao Temple, requesting that Lu Xiujing⁴ debate with Daosheng. Daosheng's argument had advantage over that of the Daoist priest. The Buddhist master presented with vigor, sneered at, and refuted his rival. Lu Xiujing failed to explain himself, leaving in embarrassment. Daosheng died in his 60s, during the Yongming Period of the Southern Qi Dynasty.

1 Shi Daosheng (c. 428-c. 488).

2 Xiangzhou was near Changsha, Hunan.

3 Shen Wenji, style name Shen Boda, was an important official in the Liu Song and Southern Qi Dynasties; he was finally killed by Xiao Baojuan, the last emperor of the Southern Qi Dynasty.

4 Lu Xiujing (406-477), style name Yuande, was a famous Daoist priest that was fond of literature.

6. Shi Hongchong of Xianggong Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Faxian

Shi Hongchong¹ 釋弘充, a native of Liangzhou, had high aspirations in his youth, was versed in *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi*, and understood sutras and Vinaya texts. During the Daming Period, he came to the south of Yangtze River and abided at Duobao Temple. He was good at communication and debate, subduing many senior learners with his questions. Later, he held dharma talks himself, and debates arose during the lectures. Hongchong had clear understanding of the doctrines and gifted eloquence, so his explanations featured precision and insight. When he expounded *the Lotus Sutra* and *Daśabhūmikasūtra-śāstra*, all the seats were occupied. Liu Yigong, the Prince of Jiangxia and an official of Taizai² in the Liu Song government, venerated him deeply. Emperor Ming of the Liu Song Dynasty built Xianggong Temple and invited him to be the abbot. He then moved into the new temple.

At that time, a bhikṣu named Faxian 法鮮 abided at Xianggong as well. He was intelligent and reflective, enjoying the same popularity as Hongchong. Hongchong died at 73 during the Yongming Period of the Southern Qi Dynasty after he commentated on *the Sutra of Mañjuśrī's Questions* 文殊問菩薩經 and *the Śūraṅgama-samādhi* 首楞嚴.

1 Shi Hongchong (c. 417-c. 488).

2 Taizai was the position in charge of national rites at the time.

7. Shi Zhilin of Gaochang Prefecture during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Zhilin¹ 釋智林 was a native of Gaochang.² When he renounced the world, he first followed Daoliang as his teacher. Although he was young, he enjoyed doctrinal studies and traveled to Chang'an, Jiangzhou,³ and Yuzhou. Reading various classics, he specialized in *the Saṃyuktâbhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* 雜心論. After Daoliang was exiled to the south, his 12 disciples all followed him to Guangdong. Zhilin thus abided in Fanyu, preaching in the cape area. In the first year of Emperor Ming's reign in the Liu Song Dynasty, the emperor issued a decree to the local official to sponsor Zhilin's trip back to the capital. Zhilin then abided in Lingji Temple, where he continuously expounded the Dharma; people flocked to listen. Zhilin explicated the differences between the Two Truths in the Three Treatises School.

At that time, Zhou Yong wrote *the Treatise on the Three Theses* 三宗論, which echoed his theory. Zhilin was delighted and wrote to Zhou Yong: "I recently heard that Your Patron elucidated a new thought about the Two Truths, explained the Three Treatises' dialectical rubric, and differentiated from the traditional interpretation. Although I have a slow mind, I would say that your idea is the right one, because, other than that, the logic cannot work. I suggest you writing them down. Now, through word of mouth, I heard that you have finished the treatise, Congratulations! I am thrilled at this great accomplishment. However, it is said that you are afraid of the divergence with the mainstream and would not publish it, although the work is complete. Learning this, I feel sad. This thought is not mentioned for the first time, but it was put forward 67 years ago. It is too profound to be spread. When I was 20, I understood this viewpoint, often proclaiming that one could attain enlightenment through this principle. I bore this joy in mind

1 Shi Zhilin (409-487).

2 Gaochang (or Qarakhoja) is in Xinjiang today.

3 Jiangzhou is In Jiangxi today.

yet had no one to share it with. At my young age in Chang'an, I met with the seniors, and many of them said that eminent monks in Guanzhong understood this theory. Nevertheless, when monastics gathered, those who could comprehend it were few. This point of view transcended and conflicted with ordinary logic; a small number of youth would listen and accept it, so no one spread it to the south. I have been holding lectures for over 40 years, expounding the Dharma in different places because of audience support. The other theories I preached have been well accepted and noted, but this one is understood by neither the monastics nor the laypeople. This concern has become an indisposition and, consequently, an illness in me. Now I am old and sick, going back to the west¹ soon. My only regret is this theory that would disappear afterwards. Your Patron has great talent to create this explanation as a lay Buddhist. Unexpectedly, I heard of your work and feel greatly joyful, which is hard to express. I highly recommend that you explicate this theory to hand down the dharma lamp, from generation to generation. This is the most virtuous merit, superior than donating the kingdom or your wife and sons to the Buddha and the Sangha. Since you are fortunately having this thought, it is better to transmit it to accommodate those who can appreciate it. Modesty does not apply to explaining the doctrines. How could you lose this principle to just follow the traditional ideas of others? If your treatise has been completed, and you stop the publication, I am afraid it is because you have a concern for other people's comments, which has become the biggest hindrance. These words are from the depths of my heart, not informal or jesting. I would like to request a copy of the book for myself to bring to the west and spread it. I still have a little time, so I want to pay you a visit and fetch the treatise. I look forward to discussing this profound theory with you." Because of Zhou Yong's treatise, the theory of Three Themes remains today.

Zhilin was 1.85 meters high and as pure and clean as jade. When he held lectures, his speech was as fluent as a stream. Later, he returned

1 Going back to the west implies returning to his hometown.

to Gaochang, died at 79 in the fifth year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty. His works included *the Treatise on the Two Truths* 二諦論, *the Note on the Saṃyuktâbhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* 毗曇雜心記, *the Commentaries on Madhyamaka-śāstra* 中論, and *the Dvādaśanikāya-śāstra* 十二門論.

8. Shi Fayuan of Linggen Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Fa'ai Fachang Zhixing

Shi Fayuan¹ 釋法瑗, from a Xin family in Longxi,² was the offspring of Xin Pi.³ His oldest brother, Xin Yuanming, assumed the grand minister position in the bogus Northern Wei government; his second-most older brother, Fa'ai 法愛, was also a śramaṇa; he understood various sutras, sastras, and the Sāṃkhya, was state master for the tribal monarch of Ruirui,⁴ and offered the taxes of three thousand households. In his youth, Fayuan was open, generous, elegant, and extraordinary. He once met someone poor and suffering from the cold on the road, thus taking off his own clothes and giving them to him. After he joined the monastic order, he first followed Zhu Huikai, a śramaṇa in Liangzhou, as his teacher. Huikai had virtuous and supernatural power. People said that he had obtained the first fruit of cultivation. Huikai told Fayuan: "You have such talent and must be able to uphold the dharma transmission in the future. You should study widely; do not focus on your own practice." Thus, he bid farewell to the teacher and traveled in different regions, via the Yan and Zhao areas to the north of Luo River. In that period, barbarian bandits ran in the north, and upheavals occurred successively in the Guanzhong and Longxi areas. Fearless of the dangers, Fayuan traveled in these areas to study the Dharma without slackness.

In the 15th year of the Yuanjia Period, he returned to Liangzhou, and then went to Chengdu; later coming to Jianye, he followed Huiguan as his teacher at Daochang Temple. Devoted to Mahayana Buddhism, he learned Sāṃkhya and non-Buddhist classics as well. Afterwards, he went to Mount Lu to savor meditation, discerning

1 Shi Fayuan (409-489).

2 Longxi was in Gansu Province.

3 Xin Pi, an important official in the Wei Dynasty, used to be an assistant to the prime minister.

4 Ruirui, a regime of northern tribes, had its government seated in the Dunhuang area; both the Northern Dynasty and Southern Dynasty of China had contact with it, which was annihilated by the Huns in 560.

the five approaches to meditation¹ and the three insights.² Later, Yu Dengzhi, the Prefect of Jiangzhou, invited him to come out of the mountains to preach the Dharma. Afterwards, Emperor Wen of the Liu Song Dynasty looked for masters who could expound Master Zhu Daosheng's sudden enlightenment thought, thus ordering his presence in the capital to revive sudden enlightenment theory in the Liu Song region. After hearing the explication, He Shangzhi sighed: "People often say that the subtle ideas perished after the death of Master Daosheng. Today, I could listen to the supramundane talks, as if heaven did not let go of his thought." Emperor Wen issued a decree requesting that Fayuan be the five-precept teacher for Liu Shuo, the Prince Mu of Nanping.³ When Emperor Xiaowu succeeded to the throne, he ordered Fayuan to associate with Liu Zishang, the Prince of Xiyang.⁴ The master insisted in declining by the excuse of illness and later received an exemption. Afterwards, Fayuan built a thatched cottage and thus abided on Mount Fang,⁵ where he commented on *the Śrīmālā-sūtra* and *Sublime Sustainer Sutra* 微密持經. In addition to the dharma talks, he also expounded *the Book of Filial Piety* 孝經 and *the Classic of Mourning* 服喪經. Once, Prefect Wang Jingwen went to seek advice when the master was preaching about the Classic of Mourning. After a few rounds of conversation with the master, the prefect left with excellent remarks. Later, Emperor Ming constructed Xianggong Temple and intended to widely preach the Dharma. He issued a decree to select prominent monks, inviting Fayuan to assume the Monastic Head position. The emperor came to dharma lectures in person and was followed by the ministers and nobles, which marveled the audiences. Later, Prince Huiwen of the Southern Qi Dynasty invited him to abide in Linggen Temple, so the master moved to

1 The five approaches of meditation are to be mindful of breath, impurity, kindness, conditions, or Buddha's name.

2 The three insights are the unreality of dharmas, aggregates, and concepts.

3 Liu Shuo, the fourth son of Emperor Wen, partook in the crown prince's coup and got killed at the age of 23.

4 Liu Zishang, the second son of Emperor Xiaowu, was conferred the title of Prince of Xiyang at 6; he was killed by his brother at 16.

5 Mount Fang was in the suburb of Nanjing.

the new place. Wang Jian, the official of Taiwei,¹ chose his friends strictly to refrain from confounding association; he treated Fayuan as his teacher and sent regards through letters. Fayuan passed away at 81 in the seventh year of the Yongming Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty.

At that time, Fachang 法常 and Zhixing 智興 at Linggen Temple were both versed in sutras and often held dharma talks. Fachang was extremely eloquent; learners of his time were all in awe of him because he was stubborn and unwilling to follow the conventions.

¹ Taiwei was equivalent to prime minister at the time.

9. Shi Xuanchang of Mount Qihou in Shu Prefecture during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Xuanchang¹ 釋玄暢 was from a Zhao family in Jincheng,² Hexi. In his childhood, his family was exterminated by the Huns, when he was about to be killed, the barbarian general stopped it, saying: “This boy’s eyes are illuminating; he is not a worldly child.” The general then saved his life and sent him to join the monastic order in Liangzhou. His original name was Huizhi; he later met with Xuangao and followed him as his teacher. Xuangao found out that this disciple was extraordinary, thus discussed every monastic issue with him. Then, the novice changed his name to Xuanchang. When Barbarians persecuted Buddhism, all the śramaṇas were killed, only Xuanchang escaped. On the 17th day of the intercalary fifth month in the Chinese lunar calendar during the 22nd year of the Yuanjia Period, he departed Pingcheng through Dai Prefecture³ and Shanggu.⁴ Continuing eastwards, he went to Taihang; then, once he reached Youzhou⁵ and Jizhou, he turned southwards and soon arrived at Mengjin.⁶ The only things he possessed were a twig of willow and a handful of scallion leaves. The barbarian cavalymen chased after him, but, when they came close, the young monk waved his twig, and sandstorms hit the area, turning it dark. Men and horses could not move forward. Shortly after, the sandstorm passed, and the cavalry caught up again. He threw himself in the river; using the scallion leaves as snorkels to swim, he soon arrived in Yangzhou.⁷

Xuanchang comprehended sutras and Vinaya texts, obtained insights in meditation, and answered well with his divinations.

1 Shi Xuanchang (416-484).

2 Jincheng is near Lanzhou today.

3 Dai was in Gaoyang, Hebei.

4 Shanggu was near Huailai, Hebei.

5 Youzhou is in present day Beijing area.

6 Mengjin was an ancient ferry-place of the Yellow River in Henan.

7 Yangzhou here refers to Nanjing today; present day Yangzhou was named Guangling in ancient times.

Learned in worldly classics, he was skillful in the majority of crafts as well. Originally, since *the Avatamsaka Sutra* was a huge sutra with vast and subtle meanings, no one could expound it. Xuanchang thus focused on this sutra, analyzed and compared the sentences and words to fathom out the significance and meanings, and then expounded it for others. His notes have been handed down till present day; it was Xuanchang who started the preaching of this sutra. He was also versed in the Three Treatises and respected as a patriarch of this school. Emperor Wen of the Liu Song government venerated him deeply, inviting him to be the Crown Prince's teacher. He repeatedly declined this honor. His disciples told him: "Your Reverence wants to transmit the Dharma and deliver sentient beings. Today, the emperor has invited you, and the Crown Prince is ready to revere you by preparing gifts. If the monarch propagates Buddhism, the entire country will follow. Now you refuse with pride, is this an act of the śrāvaka's vehicle?"¹ Xuanchang replied: "The Teachings can be taught to wise men, not the secular ones." When the Taichu incident² occurred, his disciples understood why the master did not want the role. Since then, Xuanchang moved to Jingzhou and abided at Changsha Temple. Once, the śramaṇas wanted to publish *the Samādhi-sūtra on Liberation through Mindfulness of the Buddha* 念佛三昧經 with money from donation; Xuanchang collated the text and rendered it in an elegant, sincere style. His palms could emit fragrance or drip water, which fascinated everyone. At the end of the Liu Song Dynasty, he traveled to Chengdu by boat. First, he abided at Dashi Temple and drew 16 portraits, including Vajra esoteric images. In the third year of the Shengming Period, he had a tour to the west and visited Min Mountain. Then, he found Mount Qihou at the border of Guangyang County in the north of Min Mountain Prefecture and aspired to spend the rest of his days there. Dependent on the terrain, he built a thatched cottage. His disciple, Faqi, saw deities in fine green clothes riding on horses and moving around the mountain,

1 Śrāvaka's vehicle refers to the listeners of Buddha's lectures who focus on self-liberation.

2 The Taichu incident was a coup by the Crown Prince Liu Xun that arose and failed in 453.

indicating that it was a place to erect the stupa. On the 23rd of the fourth month in the first year of the Jianyuan Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, they broke the ground for the temple and the stupa, naming it Qixing.¹ It was the very time when Emperor Taizu of the Southern Qi Dynasty was enthroned. The heavenly timing and human affairs coincided despite being thousands of miles apart.

At that time, Fu Yan, the Prefect of Yizhou, was seated in Chengdu. He admired Xuanchang's virtuous conduct and revered him as his teacher. After the accomplishment of the new temple, Xuanchang wrote to Fu Yan, saying: "I have stayed in this world for many years; now I am old, weak with illness, and tired of worldly noise. Thus, I abide in the remote mountains in the east of Guangyang, a thousand feet away from the county town. The mountain ridges wind and wriggle. There are four creeks in the valley, and the five peaks stand one next to another, holding the town. This site enjoys the views of three directions, with the mountains in the back and multiple rivers in the distance. I began the construction of the monastery and stupa on the 23rd of the fourth month of last year. Last winter, I came here and learned that it was the date His Majesty ascended the throne as well. I heard that when a person's path is consistent with that of the universe, auspicious omens will appear. If the virtue of people complies with that of heaven and earth, the divine authority will be present. That is why the river graph and the letter of Luo² signified the prosperity of the Zhou Dynasty; the holy stone³ demonstrated the arising of the Jin Dynasty. Now this mountain's divinity is proved by the Emperor of the Qi Dynasty. You work so hard for the country that the omens of the state's destiny manifested here. Keeping your aspiration in mind, how can

1 Qixing means "prosperity of Qi" In Chinese.

2 The river graph and letter of Luo originated from the Book of Changes; multiple interpretations have been given for them, and here it refers to the signs of the arising of a dynasty or government. A river graph is a mysterious drawing which is believed to contain the messages of the universe. The letter of Luo is considered the origin of the Hongfan Chapter in the Book of Documents.

3 Stones with auspicious patterns were found at the end the Wei Dynasty and interpreted as the sign for the rise of the Jin Dynasty.

you miss these important matters? I hereby made *the Eulogy of Mountains* 山赞 to reveal my thoughts: ‘Towering Mount Qi was born from the Nether World. Holding auspiciousness, it bears the name of the new dynasty. The foundation is solid on which white clouds flow, ridges wind, and rosy clouds shine. A monastery was planned to be built on it after the survey of terrain. On the day the ground was broken, a dragon flew to the throne. The Truths coincided in a twofold way; the four seas are pure and clean. The longevity of the reign has been told by the mountain.’”

The prefect then reported it to the imperial court. The Emperor issued a decree to allocate a hundred peasant households to Xuanchang as his salary. Xiao Yi, the Prince of Yuzhang and General Piaoqi of the Southern Qi government, was in the position of Prefect of Jingzhou at that time, so he invited Xuanchang to his place. The tribal leader of Tuyuhun¹ in Henan also sent hundreds of cavalymen to invite him. When they arrived at Min Mountain, Xuanchang had gone to Jingzhou. While Emperor Wu of the Southern Qi Dynasty succeeded to the throne, Xiao Ziliang, the Prince of Wenxuan, and an official named Situ left Jiangling for the capital. Xiao Changmao, the Prince of Wenhui, sent for Xuanchang; and the emperor repeatedly issued decrees to request his presence in the capital at the same time. Xuanchang declined by reason of illness, but this was rejected, so he went to the capital by boat. He fell ill on the way. Upon his arrival, the entire city flocked to look up to him, which jammed the roads. Abiding at Linggen Temple, he passed away soon after at the age of 69. On the 16th day of the 11th month in the 2nd year of the Yongming Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, he was buried in front of Dulong Hill at Mount Zhong in the capital. Xiao Ying, the Prince Xian of Linchuan, erected a stele for him; Zhou Yong of Runan made the inscription.

1 Tuyuhun (313-663), a minority regime in northwestern China, was also known as Henan Kingdom, which means the kingdom to the south of the Yellow River.

10. Shi Sengyuan of Upper Dinglin Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Daoping Faling Huitai

Shi Sengyuan¹ 釋 僧 遠 was from a Huang family in Chonghe, Bohai.² His ancestors, originally named Huangfu in Beidi Prefecture, later moved to a costal area to escape from calamity, deleting the character “fu” from the family name. Sengyuan was fond of Buddhism in his childhood, wanting to renounce the world at 16. His parents did not allow it. Thus, he recited sutras and kept a vegetarian diet, being studious day and night. At 18, he finally joined the monastic order. In that period, the śramaṇa named Daoping 道憑 had a great talent and enjoyed the highest popularity in the prefecture. Sengyuan studied under him and became versed in Sāṃkhya and both Mahayana and Hinayana doctrines. During the Daming Period of the Liu Song Dynasty, Sengyuan crossed the Yangtze River, arrived in Jiangkang, and abided at Pengcheng Temple. During the Shengming Period,³ he built a vihara at Mount Niuluo in Xiao Danyang and named it Longyuan.

At 31, Sengyuan started to preach the Dharma at Sunqin Temple in Qingzhou. His speech was clear and smooth; his look was noble and elegant. Admiration naturally arose in the audiences. Wang Sengda of Langya was known for his talent at the time; hearing about the master, he invited Sengyuan to abide at Zhongzao Temple. Sengyuan constantly helped the needy ones and never kept any wealth for himself. A bhikṣu named Xuanshao often offered gold pieces to him, but he always declined. Once, he passed by Qingyuan; hearing that pestilence was raging through the area, he visited the patients out of compassion. Seeing the corpses and patients laying together, the others did not dare come close to them; he thus stayed and took care of these people and their families, begging for alms for them. Liu Ziluan, the Prince Xiaojing of

1 Shi Sengyuan (414-484).

2 Bohai is in Tianjin area today.

3 The Shengming Period (477-479) was the reign of Liu Huai, the last emperor of the Liu Song Dynasty.

Xin'an, built Xin'an Temple for Empress Yin, his late mother, and ordered for prominent monks to be recruited from three prefectures. Sengyuan, Fayao of Xiaoshan Temple, and Xianliang of Nanjian were requested; they recommended that Sengyuan be the head.

In the ninth month of the sixth year of the Daming Period, the official of Yousi¹ reported to the emperor: "It is said that building big rooms and compounds was originally not meant to pursue extensive residences but to house a large family; kneeling down and prostrating are not only for respect but also for the demonstration of the senses of propriety, justice, honesty, and honor, connecting people of the country. Thus, although Confucius and Legalists² deviate from each other, and the Ming School and Mo School³ diverge, they all advocate for filial piety and obedience to the monarch. Only Buddhism came from a foreign country; its doctrines are mysterious and subtle, requiring people to follow the texts instead of the governmental rules. This trend has recently become severe. Transcending the laws and being condescending, it has lost the original wholesome thought. In fact, Buddha-Dharma propagates cultivation through modesty, simplicity, loyalty, and devotion. The bhikṣu named Sadā-paribhūta⁴ greeted everyone; Maudgalyāyana the śramaṇa always revered elders. Why do people need to kneel down to the four groups of Buddhists that do not pay respect to their parents? They venerate their elder monks, but why do they stand still in front of the emperor? This question had been raised in the Xiankang Period⁵ and revisited during the Yuanxing

1 Yousi was the title for the position of assistant minister of Personnel.

2 Legalism is a philosophical school that appeared in the Warring States Period; different from the mercy and kindness of Confucius, it emphasizes regulations for ruling. The representative figure is Han Fei (280-233 BCE).

3 The Ming School and Mo School are also Chinese philosophical ideologies that originated in the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 BCE). The former advocates concepts and debates. The latter promotes universal love, non-violence, and self-discipline; represented by Mo Di, or Mozi, it is considered a branch of the Daoist School by some scholars.

4 Sadā-paribhūta was an incarnation of the Buddha as a monk who constantly greeted the people he met.

5 The Xiankang Period (335-342) was the second reign period of Emperor

Period.¹ However, yielding to the opponents, the right rites were not followed. Nowadays, rightness has been established, people in all walks of life restrain themselves, deities provide auspicious treasures, and heavenly beings report for duty. Nevertheless, in the capital, some migrant people do not submit to the emperor; in front of the great hall, some guests resist performing due courtesy, which causes some worry about regulations that could be implemented in the future. After discussions with officials, we propose that śramaṇas should humbly pay homage to the emperor when they are received. Following the rites, the court can be in order, and governance will be long lasting.” Though the emperor believed in Buddhism, he instantly issued an approval to this report out of pride.

Sengyuan sighed: “I am a tonsured śramaṇa that renounced the world to seek the truth; nothing relates to the emperor.” Then, he excused himself by reason of illness and moved to Upper Dinglin Temple. During the Jinghe Period, the rites that monks should pay homage to the emperor were abolished again.

When Emperor Ming of the Liu Song Dynasty succeeded to the throne, he wanted to invite Sengyuan to be his teacher, yet could not get his agreement. Since then, the hermits who hid in the mountains and the recluses who transcended worldly affairs came to pay respect to Sengyuan. He Dian² of Mount Lu, Zhou Yong of Runan, Ming Sengshao of Qi Prefecture, Wu Bao of Puyang, and Zhang Rong of Wu Prefecture all venerated him sought advice in regard to precepts. Later, Liu Jingsu, the Prince of Jianping, repeatedly and sincerely invited Sengyuan to abide at Xiyuan Temple, saying it was originally built by his late father. The master, however, still stayed on that mountain.

Cheng in the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

1 The Yuanxing Period (402-403) was the second reign period of Emperor An in the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

2 He Dian, the grandson of He Shangzhi, was a hermit in the Jin and Liu Song Dynasties; he refused to assume an official position.

When Emperor Taizu of the Southern Qi Dynasty received the crown that was abdicated by the last Liu Song emperor, he sent for Sengyuan. The latter said that he was too old and sick to get up from the bed and refused the request for his presence. Emperor Taizu then decided to visit him on the mountain; approaching his room, the large sedan could not pass. Emperor Taizu wanted to meet Sengyuan, yet the master did not move to welcome the emperor. Taizu asked people to enquire about his health, then left. Sengyuan expressed his contempt for this gesture. When Sengyuan fell ill, the Prince of Wenhui and the Prince of Wenxuan sent regards, which were in the proper form of courtesy for teachers, and visited him several times. Nobles and ministers constantly came to pay respect to him.

Sengyuan had a vegetarian diet for over 50 years and lived in seclusion for more than 20 years. He studied the doctrines and contemplated outside worldly affairs, aloof from the secular noise. In Upper Dinglin Temple, he passed away at 71 in the first month of the second year in the Yongming Period of the Southern Qi Dynasty. Emperor Wu wrote to Faxian the śramaṇa, saying: “I, as his disciple, just learned about the impermanence of Master Sengyuan¹ during the night. The master must have left for a good realm that produces multiple benefits for him, so I do not feel sad for him. One or two masters who did not think from this perspective will see an auspicious omen in their dreams. Now, in your meritorious ritual for him, if you need anything, feel free to let me know.” Prince Jingling of Wenxuan wrote as well: “Venerable Sengyuan was a grand master of our time. He held high aspirations, living in seclusion on the mountain as an example, so his disciples in four directions could learn from him. I, as his disciple, am ignorant; receiving his teaching, I want to dispel my afflictions under his guidance. Unexpectedly, he was ill and departed to another world, I am thus in unbearable grief. His perfect deeds are rare to see. I will not leave his tomb mixed with those of other monks. Thereupon, find a piece of land to build a temple and erect a stele for him, in

1 Impermanence here refers to the death of Sengyuan.

order to mark his uncommon virtue.” He then constructed a bomb for Sengyuan in the south of the mountain and erected a stone tablet to eulogize the master’s wholesome deeds. Wang Jian of Langya, an Official of Taiwei, composed the inscription.

At that time, Faling 法令, Huitai 慧泰 at Upper Dinglin Temple were both good at dharma talks and enjoyed a great fame after Sengyuan.

11. Shi Senghui of Zhulin Temple in Jingzhou during the Southern Qi Dynasty Tanshun Huichang Sengxiu

Shi Senghui¹ 釋 僧 慧 was from a Huangfu family in Chaona, Anding² and the offspring of a gentleman named Huangfu Mi. His ancestors migrated to Xiangyang to escape from calamity and assumed official positions for generations. Senghui joined the monastic order in his early youth, abided at Zhulin Temple in Jingzhou, and studied under Tanshun 曇 順, a disciple of Huiyuan in Mount Lu who enjoyed a great reputation. From his master, Senghui learned doctrines with assiduity. At the age of 25, he was able to expound *the Nirvana Sutra*, *Lotus Sutra*, *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*, *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and *Samyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra*. He had an extraordinary memory; needless of assistant, he could elucidate the sentences and passages smoothly. He was also versed in *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi*, so western learners studied under him. Senghui associated with Zong Bing, a gentleman of Nanyang, and Liu Qiu. Zong Bing sighed: “The Dharma Wheel is ceaseless in Western China because of Master Senghui.” Zhang Chang of Wu Prefecture voyaged to the west, and visited Senghui, requesting to befriend him. At the beginning of the Southern Qi Dynasty, Senghui was nominated as Monastic Head of Jingzhou by the emperor. He was elegant in nature and led the monastics to benefit sentient beings, thus gaining fame near and far. In his later years, when he was slowing up, he often took a sedan to dharma lectures, known as the “baldhead official” by the audiences. Xuanchang was his contemporary; they were hence called “The two elites in black gowns.” Senghui passed away at 79 in the fourth year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty.

Later, Shi Huichang 慧 敞 aspired highly and purely; filling the position of monastic head after Senghui, he managed the monastics effectively. Sengxiu 僧 岫, the disciple of Senghui, was famous

1 Shi Senghui (408-486).

2 Anding Prefecture is in Ningxia today.

for his doctrinal comprehension; he later died of a blood-related disease caused by hard work.

12. Shi Sengrou of Upper Dinglin Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Hongcheng Sengba Huixi

Shi Sengrou¹ 釋 僧 柔 was from a Tao family in Danyang.² He was honest, pure, and in possession of monastic virtue since his childhood. At the age of nine, he traveled with his uncle to study. From an impoverished family, it was difficult for him to fill his stomach, even with coarse food, yet he held firm aspirations that were not altered by poverty. Later, he joined the monastic order and studied under Hongcheng 弘 稱, who was originally surnamed Lyu and a native of Luoyang. The teacher was proficient in sutras and sastras, having enjoyed popularity for a long time. Following Hongcheng, Sengrou studied Vinaya texts and discerned meditation; he was also versed in Mahayana and Hinayana sutras, grasping their origins and meanings. In his 20s, he stepped onto the stage to expound the Dharma, and prominent attendees respected him as their teacher. Later, he traveled to the east; in Kuaiji, he saw a recruitment poster from Master Huiji for a lecturer at the town gate, thus he preached during the summer retreat. Then, he would go to Lingjiu Temple at Mount Bai in Shan County. On the night before his arrival, a śramaṇa named Sengxu dreamed of many deities all over the mountain, holding colorful flags and wearing white armor. Sengxu asked for the reason, and they answered: “The master should come, so we are welcoming him.” On the next day, Sengrou arrived; the Sangha cleaned up the monastery, and the master wanted to stay in this temple for the rest of his life. He transmitted the Dharma and taught the masses; numerous audiences came to follow him.

At critical points, such as the beginning of Emperor of Taizu’s cause to create the Southern Qi Dynasty and the date when Emperor of Shizu succeeded to the throne, monasteries were built, and learned masters were requested for their presence. Known as a virtuous elder, invitation letters came to Sengrou each year. The Prince of

1 Shi Sengrou (431-494).

2 Danyang is in Nanjing today.

Wenxuan, along with other princes, repeatedly invited him, thus Sengrou came to the capital and stayed at Dinglin Temple. Being the lecturer of the temple, he drew human and celestial attention and appreciation from all directions. Princes Wenhui and Wenxuan wanted to follow him as their teacher, and Sengrou accepted them without hesitation.

Sengrou aspired to be reborn in the Pure Land; every time he meditated on the Western Paradise, he frowned and joined his palms. During his last day, he did not have any pain; he just told his disciples: "I should go now." Then, he put a mat on the ground, faced the west piously, and passed away. It happened in the first year of the Yanxing Period; he lived to 64 and was buried at the south of the mountain.

Sengyou the śramaṇa, a young monk that abided with Sengrou on the mountain for many years, was inspired by the master, learning the Dharma early. After Sengrou's death, he erected a stele for the master. Liu Xie of Dongguan wrote the inscription.

Sengshao, a disciple of Sengrou, was virtuous and versed in the doctrines. At that time, Sengba 僧拔 and Huixi 慧熙 at Shanci Vihara on Mount Zhong were both young and uncommonly talented, gaining great reputations. They died before their dharma cause matured. Sengba wrote *the Seven Profound Discussions* 七玄論; it is still circulating.

13. Shi Huiji of Mount Fahua in Shanyin during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Sengxing Huixu Daohui Huiyong
Huishen Fahong

Shi Huiji¹ 釋 慧 基 was from a Lyu family in Qiantang, Wu Prefecture. He was elegant, good looking, and uncommonly intelligent since his childhood. He first followed Master Huiyi of Qihuan Temple as his teacher. Appreciative of his noble look, Huiyi reported to Emperor Wen of the Liu Song Dynasty to approve Huiji's joining in the Order when he was 15. During the interview with Emperor Wen, the youth spoke fluently with wit, thus the emperor was satisfied and set a Dana Assembly for his renunciation at Qihuan Temple. On that day, the emperor, along with officials, came in person. Since then, Huiji made the vow of dharma studies, learning diligently. Studying from dawn to dusk, he understood various sutras. Later, Master Saṃghavarman from the Western Regions came to the Liu Song territory to transmit meditation skills and Vinaya. Huiyi ordered Huiji to study closely under him. At 20, after he received ordination in Caizhou², Saṃghavarman told Huiji: "You will be the dharma chief in the south in the future; now, you do not have to stay in the capital for too long." Hence, he traveled in different places to follow lectures and visit many teachers. He was versed in the shorter version of *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *the Lotus Sutra*, *the Sutra of the Questions of Viśeṣa-cinti-brahma*, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, *the Diamond Sutra*, and *the Śrīmālā-sūtra*. He had grasped their profound meanings and fathomed their subtlety. His mastery of the doctrines excelled over previous sages.

Huiyi, Huiji's teacher, was known for the best virtuous conduct and doctrinal learning in the capital area, officials and commoners venerated and offered to him in great quantity. Huiyi was confident that Huiji had excellent virtue and let the young monk live with him. After Huiyi's death, the wealth accumulated up to a million.

1 Shi Huiji (412-496).

2 Caizhou is in Henan today.

Based on the law, Huiji could have half of it, yet he donated it all for merit accumulation. Only taking simple clothes and an old almsbowl, he returned to Qiantang in the east and stayed at Xianming Temple. Shortly afterwards, he went to Kuaiji and abided at Fahua Temple in Shanyin; learners came to him to consult about the Dharma. Thereupon, he traveled in the Wu area; preaching the Discourses, over a thousand people followed him. Later, Emperor Ming of the Liu Song Dynasty sent for him, but he excused himself by reason of illness and declined. During the Yuanhui Period,¹ his presence was requested again; he then crossed the Zheshui River² yet returned halfway due to illness. Therefore, he built Baolin Vihara at Mount Gui in Kuaiji town. During the construction, Huiji participated in the labor work by carrying the bricks and instructing the arrangement. The structure was ingeniously established along the hill ridge and slope. The vihara was originally built in three stories; however, as the workers were slow-witted, the building was struck by lightning. Huiji then made renovations and perfected the layout. He once saw Samantabhadra Bodhisattva in his dreams and invited the great being to be a monk in the temple. Thus, he made a sculpture of the bodhisattva as well as his white elephant with six tusks and held a 21-day Dana and Repentance Assembly. At that moment, officials and commoners came along, continuously offering treasures. Afterwards, Zhou Yong came to Shan County and invited Huiji to preach the Dharma. Zhou Yong was learned in Buddhism and understood various doctrines. After interviews with Huiji, his comprehension of the Teachings improved significantly. Both Liu Huang and Zhang Rong revered the master as their teacher, following his instructions. The Prince of Wenxuan admired his virtue, sent regards, and sought consult about the Lotus Sutra through letters. Huiji thereupon wrote *the Commentary on Lotus Sutra* 法華義疏 of three fascicles. He later composed *the Preface of Instructions to Disciples* 門訓義序 to categorize the instructions into 33 sections, concisely explaining the meanings and elucidating

1 The Yuanhui Period (473-477) was the reign of Liu Yu 劉昱, who was dethroned for his brutality.

2 The Zheshui River is also known as the Qiantang River.

notions of emptiness and existence; he then commentated on *the Sutra of the Deathbed Injunction* 遺教經 . All three are circulating today.

Huiji's virtue benefited the Wu area, and he was known in the entire country. The emperor nominated him as the Monastic Head in charge of ten cities. This was the start of the Monastic Head system in Eastern China. He thus preached the Dharma in peace, inspiring the monastics' wisdom. Five groups of Buddhists followed him from four directions. Huiji was strict, nice, pure, and serious. The monastics all feared him. He passed away at 85 in the third year of the Jianwu Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty.

Previously, when Huiji was ill in bed, his disciple dreamt that there were several Indian Monks sitting around the master. Asking them where they came from, they said: "From the Mahayana state to welcome Master Huiji." A few days later, the master died and was thus buried at the south side of Mount Fahua. He Yin¹ of Lujiang wrote an inscription at Baolin Temple to remember his virtue.

Huiji's disciples, Sengxing 僧行 , Huixu 慧旭 , Daohui 道恢 , were all versed in doctrinal studies, preaching the Dharma successively. They developed their own students to inherit the lineage. Later, Huiliang the śramaṇa took over the monastic head position. After the death of Huiliang, a śramaṇa named Huiyong 慧永 filled the position. He was elegant and pure, strictly practicing virtuous conduct. Familiar with various sutras, he expounded the Dharma in his period. Then, Huishen 慧深 , a śramaṇa who was Huiji's disciple, assumed this post; together with his school friend, Fahong 法洪 , they were known for their pure observance of precepts. After Huishen, Tanxing, a śramaṇa that had a prudent and laudable manner, was nominated as the head.

1 He Yin, style name Ziji, was the grandson of He Shangzhi and the younger brother of He Dian the hermit. He was a learned scholar, assumed different official positions, and later lived in seclusion.

14. Shi Huici of Xie Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Sengbao Sengzhi Fazhen Sengxiang
Sengmeng Fabao Huiyuan

Shi Huici¹ 釋 慧 次 was from a Yin family in Jizhou. He first followed Zhiqin as his teacher after he joined the monastic order, later meeting with Shi Faqian of Xuzhou, who was well known for his Buddhist learnings. Zhiqin entrusted Huici to Faqian, then Huici moved southwards to Jingkou² with his new teacher, abiding at Zhulin Temple. At 15, he returned to Pengcheng with the master. Although he was young, he studied diligently without slackness. He had a clear mind, profound insight, and uncommon intelligence. At the age 18, he was known in Xuzhou for his understanding of sutras and sastras. After he received full ordination, he deepened his comprehension of Buddhist doctrines and virtuous practices, preaching *the Satyasiddhi-śāstra* and the Three Treatises multiple times. During the Daming Period, he arrived in the capital and stayed at Xie Temple. It was not until the period where the Southern Qi Dynasty alternated with the Liu Song Dynasty that the number of his followers grew significantly. Then, many monastics and laypeople flocked to each of his lectures. Śramaṇas named Zhizang, Sengmin, and Fayun were young and talented; they followed Huici to study the Dharma. Prince Wenhui and Prince Wenxuan treated him as their teacher, offering food, clothes, bedding, and medicine to him. In the eighth year of the Yongming Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, Huici expounded *the Śata-śāstra*; when he was explicating *the Chapter Breaking Affliction* 破 塵 品, he abruptly passed away at the age of 57.

At that time, Sengbao 僧寶, Sengzhi 僧智 at Xie Temple, Fazhen 法珍, Sengxiang 僧響, Fabao 法寶, and Huiyuan 慧淵 at Changle Temple were all monastic talents, enjoying great popularity.

1 Shi Huici (434-490).

2 Jingkou is in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu today.

15. Shi Huilong of Heyuan Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Zhidan Sengbian
Sengxian Daohui Fadu

Shi Huilong¹ 釋慧隆 was from a Cheng family in Yangping.² He lived a financially precarious life in his childhood, yet studied by himself without a teacher or friends. At the age of 23, he finally renounced the world, focused on doctrinal studies for over ten years, and comprehended various sutras. In the Taishi Period of the Liu Song Dynasty, he went to the capital and stayed at Heyuan Temple. Huilong could understand the texts beyond their words and was good at discussion. He was able to seize opportunities and defeat debaters. Emperor Ming invited him to preach *the Satyasiddhiśāstra* at Xianggong Temple; over 800 people participated in his lecture. Later, nobles and ministers frequently requested for his dharma talks, and he explained the previously-existing unclear points well, creating the notions of “true nature” and “elimination of affliction.” Zhou Yong of Runan said after meeting him: “Master Huilong is honest and elegant, akin to pine trees and bamboo covered under frost.” He died at 62 in the eighth year of the Yongming Period.

At that time, Shi Zhidan 智誕 in Jiangxi was versed in sutras and sastras, enjoying the same fame as Huilong did on both sides of the Yangtze River. At Heyuan Temple, Sengbian 僧辯, Sengxian 僧賢, Daohui 道慧, and Fadu 法度 studied the doctrines with assiduity and had laudable reputations.

1 Shi Huilong (429-490).

2 Yangping is in Daming, Hebei today.

16. Shi Sengzong of Taichang Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Tanzhun Fashen Fazhen
Huiling Faxian Fazui Sengjing Daowen Sengxian

Shi Sengzong¹ 釋僧宗 was originally from a Yan family in Fengyi,² Yongzhou; his great grandfather moved the family to Qin Prefecture because of calamity. At nine, he followed Master Fayuan to learn the Dharma. Later, he studied under Masters Tanbin and Zhu Faji, becoming proficient in *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, *the Śrīmālā-sūtra*, and *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*. Every time he held lecture, nearly a thousand audience members came to listen. He was eloquent, good at debate, and adaptive to situations. With a bold character, he acted based on what he believed was right, thus received criticism from conservatives. Crown Prince Wenhui wanted to issue punishment by exiling him; however, due to a manifestation in his dream, he changed his mind. Yuan Hong, the monarch of the Northern Wei government, heard of his virtue from afar and wrote to invite him several times; asking him to expound the Dharma, yet Emperor of Shizu of the Southern Qi Dynasty did not approve his departure. Sengzong preached *the Nirvana Sutra*, *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* and *Śrīmālā-sūtra* nearly a hundred times. He built Taichang Temple with followers' donations and henceforth abided there. In the third year of the Jianwu Period, he died at 59.

Previously, Master Tanzhun 曇準, from the north, heard of Sengzong's talent in preaching the Nirvana Sutra, thus traveled southwards to attend. However, the circumstances were different between the north and the south; people's thoughts differentiated as well. Tanzhun expounded with modification and became popular among northern people. He abided at Xianggong Temple, where Fashen 法身 and Fazhen 法真 lived; they were all prominent monks during that period.

At that time, Huiling 慧令, Faxian 法仙, Fazui 法最 at Anle

1 Shi Sengzong (438-496).

2 Fengyi was in Gaoling, Shaanxi.

Temple, Sengjing 僧敬, Daowen 道文, and Sengxian 僧賢 at Tianzhu Temple were good at Sāṃkhya and famous in the capital.

17. Shi Fa'an of Zhong Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Huiguang Jingyi Guangzan
Huitao Daozong

Shi Fa'an¹ 釋法安 was from a Bi family in Dongping and the offspring of Bi Gui, an inspection official during the Wei Dynasty. Joining the monastic order at seven, Fa'an followed Huiguang 慧光 of Baima Temple as his teacher. Huiguang was intelligent and versed in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics from his youth and insightful of doctrines. When Fa'an was a young boy, he displayed unparalleled intelligence. Zhang Yong would recruit excellent learners; when he invited Tanbin to preach the Dharma, he asked the master: "Are there any young talents in the capital?" Tanbin replied: "The novices named Daohui, Fa'an, Sengba and Huixi." Zhang Yong hence interviewed them, requesting that Daohui explain the Nirvana Sutra and Fa'an introduce Buddha Nature. At ease, they both expounded thoroughly. Zhang Yong asked their age, Daohui replied 19 and Dao'an 18. Zhang Yong thus appreciated aloud: "In the past, Zhu Bo² of Fufeng was able to read the poems on the wall and known as a prodigy. Now you two novices could be called young doctrinal experts." Thereupon, they gained fame in the capital and beyond. At the age of 30, Fa'an started to focus on dharma preaching.

When Wang Sengqian³ assumed the position of Prefect of Xiangzhou, he asked Fa'an to go with him. Later, Fa'an moved southwards and arrived in Panyu;⁴ at that moment, a local master was expounding the Nirvana Sutra. Fa'an asked several questions; the lecturer could not answer confidently thus conceded the seat. Fa'an stayed there for two months, holding dharma talks

1 Shi Fa'an (454-498).

2 Zhu Bo, style name Shuyang, was an official in the Eastern Han Dynasty and known for his intelligence since his boyhood.

3 Wang Sengqian was the grandson of Wang Xun; akin to his grandfather, he was also good at calligraphy and assumed various official positions in the Liu Song government.

4 Panyu was in Guangzhou.

successively. During the Yongming Period, he returned to the capital and abided at Zhong Temple, where he alternately preached *the Nirvana Sutra*, *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, *Daśabhūmikasūtra-śāstra*, and *Satyasiddhi-śāstra*. Prince Wenxuan, Zhang Rong, He Yin, Liu Hui, and Liu Huan all made dharma friends with him out of respect for his doctrinal learning. Fa'an died at 45 in the first year of the Yongtai Period at Zhong Temple. He had written *the Commentary on Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, *the Commentary on Daśabhūmikasūtra-śāstra*, and *the Biographies of Monks* 僧傳, totaling five fascicles.

At that time, Jingyi 敬遺, Guangzan 光贊, Huitao 慧韜 at Lingji Temple, and Daozong 道宗 at Waguan Temple were all prominent monks and admired by leaners.

18. Shi Sengyin of Zhongxing Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Huilong

Shi Sengyin¹ 釋 僧 印 was from a Zhu family in Shouchun. He was prudent and reflective in his childhood, studying hard and contenting himself with an austere life. He started his studies by traveling to Pengcheng and learning the Three Treatises under Tandu, who was famous and attracted many followers from four directions at that time. Sengyin discerned Tandu's teachings and fathomed their subtlety.

Later, Sengyin moved to Mount Lu and followed Huilong 慧 龍 to learn *the Lotus Sutra*. Huilong was also a prominent monk in that period, being known for his understanding and preaching of the Lotus Sutra. Sengyin conducted research of the sutra from a different perspective, generating new ideas. Henceforth, he went eastwards to the capital and abided at Zhongxing Temple, where he analyzed *the Nirvana Sutra* as well as other sutras. During the Daming Period of the Liu Song Dynasty, He Dian gathered monks for a grand Assembly, inviting Sengyin as a lecturer; over 700 audience members listened to his preaching. Prince Wenxuan and Xu Xiaosi of Donghai admired his doctrinal learning and conduct, constantly consulting him about the Dharma.

Sengyin observed the precepts strictly; he had nice, serious, tolerant, and peaceful characteristics. During the dharma talks, argumentative ones tried to challenge him with their sneers, but he never minded. Although he learned various sutras, Sengyin was known for his elucidation of *the Lotus Sutra*, which he had expounded 250 times. He died at 65 in the first year of the Yongyuan Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty.

1 Shi Sengyin (435-499).

19. Shi Fadu of Mount Nie in Langya during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Fashao Senglang Huikai Fakai Sengshao

Shi Fadu¹ 釋法度, a native of Huanglong, joined the monastic order at young age, studying in multiple places in the north. He learned various sutras and was known for his austere observance of precepts. At the end of the Liu Song Dynasty, he traveled to the capital. Ming Sengshao, a hermit from Qi Prefecture,² transcended worldly affairs and lived in seclusion at Mount Nie in Langya.³ Admiring Fadu's purity and honesty, he treated him as his teacher and friend. Before the hermit died, he donated the place and built Xixia Vihara, inviting Fadu to abide in it. Earlier, Daoist priests wanted to build an abbey at this location; however, the people who moved in all later died. When it was converted into a Buddhist temple, people were suspicious and fearful. Since Fadu lived there, the demons stopped making troubles.

About a year after Fadu moved in, one day, the noises of people, horses, and drum beating were heard on the mountain. A figure holding a name card told Fadu that the guest's name was Jin Shang. The master came forth and saw an exalted and noble person followed by guards of honor in good shape arriving at his temple. Jin Shang saluted the master and said: "As your disciple, I have been the king on this mountain for over 700 years; divine laws cannot be disrupted by humans. The previous ones who tried to stay here were not real deities, thus died of illness. That was their fate. Your Reverence has the noble Path and virtues; I want to offer to you and take five precepts under you, so that we forge an eternal meritorious condition." Fadu said: "Human and celestial beings are different, so please do not force me to accept your request.

1 Shi Fadu (437-500).

2 Qi Prefecture is in Shandong Province today.

3 Originally, Langya was in Shandong Province; after the Jin government lost their territory in central China, the government titled some southern locales after their old names in the north. Here, it refers to a suburb of Nanjing; Mount Nie should be the old name of Mount Xixia.

Your patron would take flesh from sacrifice; this is not allowed by the five precepts.” Jin Shang returned: “If you accept me as your disciple, I will abstain from killing immediately.” Thus, he said goodbye and left. The next morning, Fadu met a person who delivered ten thousand coins, incense, candles, and joss papers¹ as well as a note that said: “Offered by your disciple Jin Shang.” On the 15th day of the month, Fadu therefore held an Assembly for him. Jin Shang came again with his attendants, venerated Fadu, participated in the ritual, and received the five precepts before leaving.

The priest of the mountain deity temple thereupon had a dream in which the deity told him: “I have received five precepts; from now on, you should not kill for sacrifice anymore.” Since then, the priest offered vegetables.

Once, Fadu fell ill and lay on the ground. He saw Jin Shang come from outside, touch his hands and feet, and then leave. Shortly afterwards, he returned and handed some water contained in a glass vase to the master; it tasted sweet and cold. After taking it, Fadu’s pain disappeared instantly. This was the return of the master’s virtue.

At that time, a śramaṇa named Fashao 法紹 practiced austerity and enjoyed the same reputation as Fadu, yet his doctrinal comprehension was higher than Fadu; and they were known as “the two sages on the northern mountain.” Fashao was originally from Baxi.² Zhou Yong of Runan invited the master to the east when he was visiting Chengdu, arranging for him to live at Shanci Vihara. Xiao Ziliang, Prince Jingling of the Southern Qi Dynasty, and Xiao Yaoguang, Prince Shi’an respected Fadu and Fashao as their teachers, offering the four necessities to them. Fadu made the vow to be reborn in the Western Paradise, thus focusing on *the Sutra of*

1 Joss paper, or paper coins, is paper cut in a coin shape to be burned as a sacrifice for the ancestors and ghosts.

2 Baxi is in Sichuan today.

Immeasurable Lives 無量壽經 and expounding it many times. He died at 64 in the second year of the Yongyuan Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty.

His disciple, Senglang 僧朗, inherited Fadu's lineage and managed this temple thereafter. Senglang was a native of Liaodong¹ and fond of comprehensive learning and reflection. He could preach numerous sutras and Vinaya texts, specializing in the Avatamsaka Sutra and the Three Treatises. The current emperor² admired him greatly and ordered multiple doctrinal learners to study under him at the mountain.

At that time, Huikai 慧開 at Pengcheng Temple had high intelligence and aspiration since his childhood. He gained his fame in his youth, starting to hold dharma talks at 30.

Fakai 法開 in Yuhang was also pure, elegant, and good at doctrinal discussion. He went to the capital and stayed at Changang Temple. Sengshao 僧紹 was also at that temple; they were both famous masters.

1 Liaodong was in Liaoning Province.

2 The current emperor refers to Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty, who ruled in the author's age.

20. Shi Zhixiu of Yecheng Temple in the Capital during the Liang Dynasty Sengruo Sengxuan Daocheng

Shi Zhixiu¹ 釋智秀, originally from a Qiu family in Chang'an, later migrated to Jianye. He was intelligent and aspired to renounce the world since his boyhood. His parents did not approve this desire out of love for him; instead, they made an offer to a girl's family behind his back. Close to the wedding date, Zhixiu escaped from the family, went to Lingyao Temple at Mount Jiang, and got tonsured. After full ordination, his virtuous conduct became firmer. He visited various teachers and analyzed the new and old versions of doctrines. Zhixiu was thus versed in Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism and proficient in Sāṃkhya, specializing in the longer and shorter versions of *the Nirvana Sutra*, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. When he held dharma talks, the princes and nobles frequently welcomed him in person, and listeners flocked to listen. He was brilliant and serious with profound insight. His works were subtle, elucidating different views. During the first year of the Tianjian Period² in the Liang Dynasty, he passed away at 63. His funeral was attended by monastics and lay Buddhists that jammed the streets. The ceremony honored his virtue, since so many nobles and commoners were saddened by his loss.

Contemporarily, Sengruo 僧若 and Daocheng 道乘 in Yecheng Temple were both known for their virtue. Sengruo's younger brother, Sengxuan 僧璿, was versed in Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics; while Sengruo recited the Lotus Sutra and was good at calligraphy in both cursive and official-script styles. Sengruo later assumed the position of Monastic Head in Wu Prefecture. Daocheng was also intelligent, specializing in *Abhidharma*.

1 Shi Zhixiu (c. 440-c. 502).

2 The Tianjian Period (502-519) was the first reign title of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty.

21. Shi Huiqiu of Jingzhou during the Liang Dynasty

Shi Huiqiu¹ 釋慧球 was originally surnamed Ma and from an official family in Fufeng. Joining the monastic order at 16, he abided at Zhulin Temple in Jingzhou, followed Daoxin as his teacher, and observed the precepts strictly. Later, he moved to Mount Lu in Xiangzhou and focused on meditation. Shortly afterwards, he went to the capital with a school friend, Huidu, to learn the classics, then moving to Pengcheng to study *the Satyasiddhi-sāstra* under Sengyuan. At the age of 32, he returned to Jingzhou to transmit the Dharma. He continuously held lectures, which gathered numerous disciples, thus gaining the greatest popularity in the Jing and Chu areas. Because of his efforts, doctrinal-learning monks in Western China could match those in the capital. In the first year of the Zhongxing Period, he was nominated as the Monastic Head in Jingzhou to manage the monastics, hence was celebrated in the country. Huiqiu died in the third year of the Tianjian Period at 74. He made it known that his will was to put his body under pine trees,² which was not followed because his disciples did not have the heart to do it.

1 Shi Huiqiu (431-504).

2 Putting the body under pine trees was to donate it to the birds and worms.

22. Shi Sengsheng of Lingyao Temple in the Capital during the Liang Dynasty Faxin Zhichang Fajiong Senghu Sengshao

Shi Sengsheng¹ 釋僧盛 was from a He family in Jianye. He was smart and talented since his childhood; in addition, he studied hard with high aspirations, thus mastering the Sāṃkhya and various sutras. Seen as outstanding for his dharma talks in his time, he was also versed in non-Buddhist classics; thereupon the Confucians did not dare challenge him. Students in public schools would even threaten their teachers in the name of Sengsheng. He died during the Tianjian Period at Lingyao Temple in his 50s.

At that time, Faxin 法欣 at Songxi Temple, Zhichang 智敞 and Fajiong 法囧 at Yanxian Temple, and Senghu 僧護 and Sengshao 僧韶 at Jianyuan Temple enjoyed the same level of reputation for their virtue. Faxin and Zhichang were versed in sutras and sastras; Fajiong focused on Vinaya, while Sengshao and Senghu were known for their mastery of *Abhidharma*.

1 Shi Sengsheng (c. 460-c. 510).

23. Shi Zhishun of Mount Yunmen Temple in Shanyin during the Liang Dynasty

Shi Zhishun¹ 釋智順 was originally from a Xu family in Linyi,² Langya. He joined the monastic order at 15 and followed Zhidu as teacher at Yanxian Temple in Mount Zhong. Intelligent since his youth, he had uncommonly high aspirations. Although he was young, he had mastered many disciplines. After full ordination, he observed the precepts without fault, studying various sutras and focusing on *the Nirvana Sutra* and *Satyasiddhi-śāstra*. When he held dharma talks, hundreds of audience members flocked to listen. He made an improper plan and failed once, yet his virtue was stainless. Prince Jingling of Wenxuan in the Southern Qi government venerated him deeply, building Yecheng Temple for him to abide. Xu Xiaosi, an official of Sikong, respected his conduct and doctrinal understanding, following him as his teacher. When Emperor Donghun behaved improperly,³ Xu Xiaosi was executed, but his son, Xu Kun, escaped. Zhishun stepped forward bravely and saved Xu Kun's life. Later, the son wanted to reward the master with huge wealth, yet Zhishun did not take any of it. A thief once came into the temple to steal but was caught by monks; Zhishun let the thief stay in his room overnight and then let him go, after giving him money and silk in addition to advice. This incident showed Zhishun's loving-kindness in the depths of his heart. Later, he visited Yu's tomb in the east; abiding at Yunmen Vihara, dharma talks revived after his arrival in the area to the east of Yangtze River.

Zhishun was modest, calm, polite, and prudent. He had the appearance and figure of a celestial being, with pure and exalted

1 Shi Zhishun (447-507).

2 Linyi is in Shandong Province today.

3 Emperor Donghun, Xiao Baojuan, was the second son of Emperor Ming in the Southern Qi Dynasty. He succeeded to the throne in the first year of the Yongtai Period (498-501); however, he was bloodthirsty by nature, killing and torturing a multitude of people, including officials. He was finally killed by ministers in the third year of his reign.

behaviors and conduct. Thus, when officials and commoners paid homage to him, they naturally were in awe and venerated him. He passed away at the mountain temple during the sixth year of the Tianjian Period, at the age of 61.

When Zhishun was seriously ill and unable to have food for several days, he suddenly asked for vegetarian food one day. Considering he had not eaten for many days, his disciple, Tanhe, secretly put other ingredients in the rice and made a soup for the master. Zhishun spat it out after taking a mouthful of it, asking for clean water to rinse his mouth. He then told his disciple: “Leave Yunmen Temple and do not ever come back.” He followed the precepts strictly and lived an austere life with patience. This was merely an example. On his last day, some people smelled a rare fragrance in his room; some saw celestial flowers and umbrellas. Zhishun made his will that his body should be put in the pine woods and donated to the birds and worms. His disciples did not want to see such a scene, thus did not follow it. He was finally buried by the temple. A stone tablet was erected by his disciples to memorialize his virtue. Yuan Ang of Chen Prefecture made the inscription, and Shi Huiju of Fahua Temple wrote the epitaph for him. Zhishun’s works, such as *the Praise of Dharma Ritual* 法事贊, *the Reception of Precepts* 受戒, and *Dharma Transmission* 弘法, are still circulating.

24. Shi Baoliang of Lingwei Temple in the Capital during the Liang Dynasty Daoming Sengcheng Sengbao

Shi Baoliang¹ 釋寶亮, originally surnamed Xu, was from a noble family in Dongguan. After the Jin government perished, they moved to Xuan County, Donglai.² Baoliang joined the monastic order at 12 and followed Master Daoming 道明 of Qing Prefecture as his teacher, who was versed in Buddhist doctrines and famous in his time. Baoliang studied with assiduity and could grasp all that the master taught. After full ordination, he wanted to experience different customs and preach the Dharma in various places. However, he was reluctant to part from his hometown, where his parents were still living, because he wanted to repay their love. Daoming told him: “Śramaṇas renounce family life to transmit the Dharma and benefit sentient beings. How can we attach to worldly affection and stop spreading the Discourses?” Baoliang was thus inspired and started his wandering.

At 21, he arrived in the capital, Jiankang, and abided at Zhongxing Temple. Yuan Can was marveled by the master upon his first meeting with him; later, in his letter to Daoming, he said: “I often meet with Master Baoliang, who is absolutely unusual. Every time he preaches the Dharma, the words are fresh and inspiring. Imperceptibly, it is already approaching the end of the year. In ancient times, the pearls produced in Hepu³ were used by people in the Kingdom of Wei to light carriages. The Jade of Heshi was originally in Handan;⁴ the King of the State of Qin wanted to use it to beautify his kingdom. The treasure of the country should be shared with everyone, not just kept in one place.” Thereupon, the reputation of Baoliang became well known. When his parents died, he was unable to return to the north because of a roadblock, he thus stopped preaching and meditated in his room with the

1 Shi Baoliang (444-509).

2 Donglai was in Ye County, Shandong.

3 Hepu was in Haikang, Guangdong.

4 Handan was in Hebei.

door closed. Prince Jingling of Wenxuan came to his residence in person, inviting him for dharma talks, so he had to attend. The prince welcomed him with distinguished courtesy and made an accord with him to have his preaching on four Mahayana sutras. Later, Baoliang moved to Lingwei Temple, where he continued to expound various sutras, becoming highly popular in the capital. He preached *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 48 times, *the Satyasiddhi-śāstra* 14 times, *the Śrīmālā-sūtra* 42 times, and *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 20 times. He preached the longer and shorter versions of *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* six times each, and *the Lotus Sutra*, *the Daśabhūmikāsūtra-śāstra*, *the Book on Upāsaka Precepts* 優婆塞戒, *the Sutra of Immeasurable Lives*, *the Śūraṅgama-samādhi*, *the Sutra of the Deathbed Injunction*, and *the Sutra on the Birth of Maitreya* 彌勒下生經 around 10 times each. Over 3000 monastics and laypeople followed him, hundreds constantly seeking him out for consult.

Baoliang was frank, honest, elegant, and strong. As he held lectures, witty and insightful words continuously flowed out in the discussions. Argumentative people, or those with doubts, came to his lectures; after listening to the master's elucidation, they would renew their minds and forget their old ideas.

When the current emperor ascended the throne, he worshiped Buddhism and invited Baoliang for an interview on account of his virtuous reputation. Baoliang was candid, calling himself a monk instead of a subordinate; this did not please the emperor, yet Baoliang's inspirational speech convinced and impressed His Majesty. At the beginning of the eighth year in the Tianjian Period, the emperor ordered Baoliang to compose a commentary for *the Nirvana Sutra*; the latter wrote over 100 thousand words. The emperor then made a preface for it, saying:

“Without language, the words cannot be transmitted, yet the language can diminish the unspeakable subtlety. After repeatedly speaking, it should not be discussed anymore; however, in the event

of no discussion, various views would arise. Thus, Tathagata was born in the world out of a compassionate vow, adapting himself to deliver sentient beings by loving kindness, laying out the Teachings without writing, and ignoring mental characteristics to reach the Path. This was to differentiate beautiful stone from jade and separate the River Jing and River Wei. He prepared an antidote to stop the six heterodoxies and the four delusions,¹ guided people from the eight false paths² to the right ones, indicated the mistakes of worldly knowledge, and refuted the heretical words. He inspired the aspiration of dharma pursuit, made the eyes open to see the Truth, and saved sentient beings from harm in the fiery house and from drowning in oceanic waves. Thereupon, the rains of the Dharma fall so as to enable burned seeds to sprout in our mind; the sunrise ends the dark night. In the sutra, Kāśyapa, who had discerned plenty of questions, spoke with honest words. Although the two karmic effects of dana practice were expounded at the beginning³ and the five wisdoms of Samadhi⁴ listed in later chapters, Kāśyapa still had thirty-four questions to probe from different angles and arguments, incurring answers by skillful means to dispel doubts. To summarize, the sutra elucidated in two ways, Buddha nature is the original source in oneself. Nirvana shows the ultimate destination, it is no cause nor effect, no arising nor cessation; its doctrines exceed all sutras and prevent misunderstandings. It cannot be detected because it is emptiness in nature, while it has immeasurable marvelous dharma doors due to its subtlety. Without equally great wisdom and virtue, comprehension cannot arise; like golden walls and jade rooms, how can one break into it? Now, Shi Baoliang, a śramaṇa of Qing Prefecture who has frank and honest characteristics and uncommon insights, which are grounded on his assiduous studies

1 In the Buddha's age, there were generally six heresies, which are cited in the Nirvana Sutra. Ordinary people believed that life had four features: permanence, joy, self, and purity, which are taught as illusory by Buddhism.

2 The eight false paths refer to the opposite of the eightfold path.

3 In the beginning of *the Nirvana Sutra*, it explains the two karmic effects of practicing dana (giving); this theory is one of the themes in the sutra.

4 The five wisdoms in Samadhi, or five benefits of Samadhi, are: 1. no need for food, 2. no errors, 3. mental and physical purity, 4. cause and effect are both joyful, and 5. constant mindfulness.

and training since his childhood, is in possession of great patience for long term practice. At a senior age, he reinforces his faith and continues with virtuous conduct. He realizes the truth in the lead, expounding the Dharma diligently. His followers all venerate and rely on him. On the eighth of the fifth month in the eighth year of the Tianjian Period, I requested for Shi Baoliang to compose *the Commentary on Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, and he completed it on the 20th day of the ninth month of that year, explicating the profound and subtle meanings and promoting the Noble Path. Doubts are dispelled, and the doctrines are well explained; the logic and reasons are clearly stated. I will definitely read it when I have the time, so now I just make some notes to mark it.”

Baoliang’s virtuous conduct attracted countless offerings, yet he did not attach to wealth, donating them all for benevolence. After his death, he did not have any property left in his room. On the fourth day of the tenth month in the eighth year of the Tianjian Period, he passed away in Lingwei Temple at 66. He was buried at the south side of Mount Zhong with a stele erected in front of the tomb. Zhou Xingsi¹ of Chen Prefecture and Gao Shuang of Guangling wrote inscriptions on both sides of the stele. His disciple, Fayun, erected a stone tablet in the temple as well; Prince Wenxuan drew his portrait and hung it in Puhong Temple to honor him.

At that time, Sengcheg 僧成 at Gaozuo Temple and Sengbao 僧寶 at Kuangye Temple were also prominent monks. Sengbao was versed in the Three Metaphysic Classics of the Book of Changes, Laozi, and Zhuangzi, hence admired by the nobles.

1 Zhou Xingsi, a scholar and official in the Liang Dynasty, was appreciated by Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty.

25. Shi Fatong of Upper Dinglin Temple during the Liang Dynasty Zhijin

Shi Fatong¹ 釋法通 was from a Chu family in Yangzhai,² Henan; Chu Lue, General Andong and Yangzhou Chief Guardian of the Jin government, was his great grandfather of eight generations prior. In his noble family, virtue and honesty had been passed down from generation to generation. Fatong displayed extraordinary talent and intelligence from his childhood, renounced worldly life at 11, studied Tripitaka, and focused on Mahayana doctrines. He specialized in *the longer version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *the Lotus Sutra*. Before the age of 30, he started dharma talks; students flocked to listen, even from hundreds of miles away. Later, he came to the capital and abided at Zhuangyan Temple, afterwards moving to Upper Dinglin Temple. Living in seclusion and aloof from secular affairs, he could only be motivated by dharma research and practice. People heard about his deeds and crowded the temple rooms. Prince Wenxuan of Jingling and Prince Wenxian, who was in the position of Prime Minister, admired his virtue and arrived at his place to pay homage in person. Xie Ju of Chen Prefecture, Lu Gao of Wu Prefecture, and Zhang Xiaoxiu of Xunyang came together and took precepts from him. Over 7000 disciples, including both monastics and laypeople, studied under him. He abided in retreat at Mount Zhong for more than 30 years, practicing sitting meditation and repentance diligently.

On the 10th of the sixth month in the 11th year of the Tianjian Period, he experienced discomfort, then telling his disciples: “I can only live to the 20th of the tenth month.” On the 14th of the tenth month, he saw two laypeople holding white horsetail whisks come to his bedside; they then left one by one. On the 17th, he suddenly said: “Your Patron does not know me, where are you from?” His disciple Tanzhi asked him what he meant. He said: “A person in red clothes, wearing a kerchief and holding the bottom of a wooden box is

1 Shi Fatong (443-512).

2 Yangzhai was in Yu County, Henan.

at my bedside.” On the 20th, he saw two lines of Buddha statues coming towards him; he thus joined his palms and worshiped them for a longtime. His attendants smelled a rare fragrance but could not find the origin. Fatong told the cause of it to Huimi, who shared the same ideal with the former. On the 21st, he asked for perfumed hot water to have a bath, paying homage to the Buddha before lying down again; with his hands crossed on his chest, he passed away at noon at the age of 70. He was buried to the south of the temple. His disciple, Jingshen, erected a stele at the side of the tomb, Xie Ju of Chen Prefecture and Xiao Ziyun of Lanling¹ carved inscriptions on both sides of the tablet.

At that time, a novice named Zhijin 智進 at Upper Dinglin Temple, who was originally a eunuch, had a strong and pure belief. He thus joined the monastic order, following faithful observance of precepts. He once made an austere voyage to Dongshan. One day, he stayed under a tree at night; a tiger came and touched his head. Seeing him sitting tight, the tiger knelt down to him and left. Since then, every time he traveled and sat alone, he could see a dark horse by his side, protecting him.

1 Lanling was in Linyi, Shandong.

26. Shi Huiji of Zhaoti Temple in the Capital during the Liang Dynasty

Shi Huiji¹ 釋慧集 was from a Qian family in Qian County, Wuxing. At 18, he joined the monastic order at Mount Lelin in Kuaiji, following Master Faji as his teacher to learn the Dharma. Being honest and sparing in words, he studied day and night without slackness. Later, he went to the capital and abided at Zhaoti Temple, where he learned from all the renowned masters. While there, he analyzed and brought together doctrines of different schools and comprehended the Tripitaka, especially Mahayana texts. He widely studied *the Abhidharma-mahā-vibhāṣā-śāstra* 大毗婆沙, *Samyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* 雜心, and *Skandha* 犍度. By discussing and exploring, he understood the real meanings. Thereupon, he was the best learner of Abhidharma in his time. Overcoming all the difficulties and questions, students in the country needed to learn from him. Each lecture would attract a thousand audience members. Sengmin and Fayun were also famous monks, they still consulted with him. The current emperor appreciated him greatly, frequently inviting him to hold dharma talks. He returned to Wucheng² in the 14th year of the Tianjian Period, dying of illness at 60. His work, *Commentary on Abhidharma* 毗曇大義疏, is still circulating.

1 Shi Huiji (456-515).

2 Wucheng is in Wuxing, Zhejiang today.

27. Shi Tanfei of Fahuatai in Shan County during the Liang Dynasty Fazang Mingqing

Shi Tanfei¹ 釋曇斐 was from a Wang family in Shan County, Kuaiji. He renounced worldly life at young age and studied under Master Huiji. Intelligent and witty, he could comprehend the classics quickly, was versed in Mahayana sutras, and widely read *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, Confucian works, and *the Book of Mozi* 墨子. Later, he visited various masters in different locations, gaining a complete understanding of sutras and sastras. He abided at Fahuatai Temple in Shan County, constantly preaching the Dharma; disciples lined up to learn from him. Tanfei was honest, generous, pure, and profound. Specializing in the shorter version of *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, his exhortations were unique in his time; in addition, he was eloquent and expressive, hence his lectures drew a great deal of attention. Xiao Yuanjian, the Prince Xiao of Hengyang in the Liang regime, and He Yin, a hermit of Lujiang, both paid respect to him and invited him to expound the Dharma at their places. Zhang Rong of Wu Prefecture, Zhou Yong of Runan, and his son Zhou She befriended him to exchange ideas. During the 17th year of the Tianjian Period, Tanfei passed away in the temple at 76. His works are still popular now. As he commanded high respect in Jiangdong, he was nominated as the Monastic Head for ten cities. However, after the decree had been issued, and before he received it, he had departed. The local monks and nuns felt deeply sorry.

Fazang 法藏, a śramaṇa at Nanyan Temple in the same county, was known for his faithful observance of precepts. He frequently freed captive animals and made a multitude of Buddhist images. Contemporary with Tanfei, Mingqing 明慶, a bhikṣu in Yuyao County, was also famous. With an original surname of Zheng, he observed the precepts strictly and studied the doctrines with assiduity. At first, he learned from Master Yan, later following Hongbao as his teacher. His lectures and conduct enjoyed great popularity in the southeast of the country.

1 Shi Tanfei (443-518).

Comments

The highest principle lies in silence; the ultimate marvel rests with cessation. Because of cessation, mental volition stops, and due to silence, it becomes unspeakable. As words do not reflect the truth, language hurts the genuine connotation; thoughts come up, hence ideas distort reality. For this reason, *Vimalakīrti* held his tongue in his residence, and Shakyamuni Buddha kept silent before the double śāla trees. They knew that the ultimate Truth was extremely profound and beyond description. However, sentient beings live in illusory dreams, distant from the reality; who can inspire the ignorant without teachings? Thus, dependent on marvelous power and incarnations, the Buddha responded to various secular queries and took Nirvana to demonstrate the divine force, borrowing subtle language to show the way and relying on the image to pass on the Truth. Thereupon, it is said that the weapons are ominous but used after all alternatives are exhausted; words are unreal yet stated when there is no other choice. That is why the Buddha started with the Four Noble Truths at the Deer Park and concluded with the metaphor of the perfect three dots¹ in the Crane Woods.² In between, over 800 million words had been spread. Continuously carried to the east by elephants and infinitely stored in the dragon palace,³ the purpose was to catch the hare with a net and rope or to point to the moon with a finger. After seeing the moon, the finger can be ignored; when the hare is captured, the net should be forgotten, well like what the sutra says: “Follow the meaning, not the words.” Nevertheless, those who stick to the teachings say that the essentials of the Dharma lie in the texts; those who stick to the

1 In the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha used the shape of a Sanskrit letter i (in Chinese 伊) which is composed by three dots to illustrate the relation of the Dharma body, Prajna, and liberation: more than one (dot) but in one (letter/ Nirvana).

2 Purportedly, white flowers of the trees bloomed when the Buddha took Nirvana; therefore, the forest is also called the crane woods for its white color, same as a crane, at the moment the Buddha departed.

3 It is said that Nāgārjuna, the precursor of Mahayana Buddhism, had seen innumerable scriptures in the dragon palace.

images only recognize that the Buddha should be 16 feet high. This is incredible.

Thus, to argue with dignity and widely preach the Dharma, one should fathom the profound and subtle connotation beyond the texts. Who else can demonstrate the Path and inspire joy other than masters? Therefore, in search of sutras, Zhu Shixing traveled to Khotan and made the vow of ceasing the fire, which finally established Prajna Discourses in the east and transmitted the wisdom of formlessness to China at the end of Han Dynasty. After him, Zhu Faqian, Zhi Dun, Yu Falan, and Yu Fakai successively held exalted aspirations, practiced pure conduct, and propagated the Dharma with great merit and virtue. Among the sages, Shi Dao'an studied under Grand Master Fo Tucheng then handed the teachings down to his disciple, Shi Huiyuan. These three generations fostered numerous talents that observed the precepts faithfully and gained doctrinal insights. Thanks to them, the afterglow of wisdom relit after shining for a thousand years; the fragrance that spread to posterity perfumed the land of Jambudvīpa again. Because of their efforts, the source they made is still spouting water. Master Huiyuan limited his scope within Hu Creek; while Master Dao'an returned to the Former Qin region and talked to the monarch in the same carriage. It seems that their behaviors differentiated with the noble path, as it was understood by ordinary people. However, speech or silence, action or stagnance, it should only depend on the conditions. The four senior, grey-haired hermits went to the Han court to support the government, because it would benefit the country. Qu Yuan¹ bid farewell to the State of Chu, for one should retreat if the ideal cannot be shared. The sutra says: "One needs to have the confidence of the king and the presence of the elders by his side if he wishes to promote the Dharma." Although Dao'an sat in a sedan with the monarch, he persuaded him to save the commoners.

¹ Qu Yuan (c. 340-278 BCE) was a Chinese poet and official that lived in the State of Chu during the Warring States Period; he was known for his patriotism. He was, later in his life, exiled by the king and finally committed suicide by throwing himself in the Miluo River; boatmen rushed to save him but failed. This is the origin of the Dragon Boat Festival.

Therefore, he could finally touch heavenly beings, who echoed his presage.

Following them, Tanyi and Fayu gained a reputation in the Jingzhou area; Huichi and Huiyong were prestigious at Mount Lu. Daorong, Daoheng, Tanying, and Sengzhao demonstrated virtue in Guanzhong, and Zhu Daosheng, Huirui, Xuanchang, and Sengyuan led the way in Jianye. Tandu and Sengyuan excelled in the west of the Yangtze River, while Chaojin and Huiji promoted the Dharma in Zhedong.¹ Though successors replaced their predecessors, the teachings and doctrines cohered and continued. Thereupon, Buddhism has been prospering in China for nearly 500 years; the merit and virtue are truly admirable.

Paean

The Buddha's figure is distant and vague, while in the east the waves of the Dharma are driving ahead. Without these Buddhist sages, who could save the fearful? Faqian and Dao'an are akin to gems, Huiyuan and Huirui like rings of jade. They pondered and discerned as if engraving a fine sculpture, washing off the dust to make people forsake the bad. When light-colored clothes are dyed dark,² the sail to Buddhahood has just been set.

1 Zhedong refers to the eastern Zhejiang area.

2 Dying clothes into a dark colour was a metaphor for joining the monastic order because monks wore black or dark colored clothes.

Volume IX

Supernatural Powers Part A

4 main figures 1 auxiliary

1. Zhu Fo Tucheng of Zhong Temple in Yecheng during the Jin Dynasty Daojin

Zhu Fo Tucheng¹ 竺佛圖澄, originally surnamed Bo, was a native of the Western Regions. He joined the monastic order at a young age. Concentrating on learning and practice, he was able to recite sutras of millions of words and good at doctrinal elucidation. Although he did not study local Confucian and historical works, he could echo the Chinese theories in his discussions with local scholars; regarding complex questions, no one could exceed him during that age. He used to say: “If I went back to Jibin to follow great masters, people in the Western Regions would call me awakened.” During the fourth year of the Yongjia Period in the Jin Dynasty, he came to Luoyang and aspired to widely promote the Dharma. He had the capability to use mantras to influence ghosts and spirits. If he blended sesame oil and blusher on his palm, his hand could vividly show what happened hundreds of miles away, those who took a vegetarian diet could see it as well. Without fail, he was also able to predict future events by listening to the ringing of bells. He planned to establish a temple in Luoyang; however Liu Yao² invaded the city, which threw the capital into turmoil. Fo Tucheng’s plan was abandoned, thus he mingled with the commoners to wait for opportunities.

At that time, Shi Le³ settled his troops at Gepo⁴ and took innumerable lives; many śramaṇas were killed. Out of compassion,

1 Zhu Fo Tucheng (232-348).

2 Liu Yao (d. 329), style name Yongming, was a Hun ethnically and the founder of the Former Zhao Dynasty (304-329).

3 Shi Le (274-333), style name Shilong, was ethnically Qiang and the founder of the Later Zhao Dynasty (319-351).

4 Gepo was in Xincai, Henan.

Fo Tucheng wanted to convert Shi Le. Thus, he came to the gate of the troops' camps. General Guo Heilue¹ believed in Buddhism; Fo Tucheng thus went to his home. The general received the five precepts under Fo Tucheng and venerated him as his teacher. Later, following Shi Le, Guo Heilue fought in different places and could always correctly predict the outcome of battles. Shi Le was curious and asked him: "I did not find any outstanding wits in you, why could you foresee the results?" Guo Heilue replied: "This is because you have a mighty force; spirits help you in secret. A śramaṇa who has extraordinary wisdom and divination said that you would unite China; he wants to agree to be your advisor. All my predictions were actually his words." Shi Le was happy to hear it, sighing in excitement: "This is a blessing of the deities." Thereupon, he interviewed the master and asked: "What can the Buddha-Dharma do?" Fo Tucheng knew that he did not understand any doctrine and decided to subdue him with supernatural powers. Thus, the master replied: "The Buddha-Dharma can do things high and great, as well as simple and vivid." Then, he fetched a bowl of water, burned incense, and chanted mantra. After a while, a blue lotus grew from the bowl, glowing with a marvelous light. Shi Le was convinced. Taking this occasion, Fo Tucheng advised: "When kings demonstrate their virtue to cultivate the country, the four supramundane animals² will appear as auspicious omens. If rulers govern improperly and erroneously, the comet will pass through the sky. These divine signs constantly arise in accordance with good or bad deeds to admonish humans." Shi Le was satisfied with the master. Henceforth, nine out of ten people who were originally going to be killed were saved thanks to the master's advice. Therefore, the majority of barbarians and Chinese in central China believed in Buddhism. In addition, Fo Tucheng cured many who had chronic diseases, saving numerous lives; and countless people unknowingly benefited from his help.

1 Guo Heiluo, a trusted general in Shi Le's troops, followed Shi Le to establish the state.

2 The four supramundane animals refer to Kylin, Phoenix, Turtle, and Dragon.

During Shi Le's return to Hebei from Gepo, he passed by Fangtou,¹ where the head of the locals planned to attack their camps at night. Fo Tucheng told Guo Heilue: "Enemies will arrive soon; you may let the Grand General know." It happened precisely as the presage explained. Since they were prepared, the raid was unsuccessful. Still wanting to test the master, Shi Le once wore armor and sat tight holding a knife; he then sent his assistant to tell Fo Tucheng: "The Grand General is gone tonight." When the envoy had just met the master, Fo Tucheng spoke first, saying: "It is peaceful without enemies, why does the general wear armor?" Since then, Shi Le venerated him deeply. Later, holding a grudge, Shi Le wanted to kill monks and teach a lesson to Fo Tucheng. The master hid at Guo Heilue's house and told his disciples: "If the messengers of the grand general come to ask where I am, tell them that you do not know." The messengers came searching, failed to find a trace of the master, and reported to the grand general. Shi Le was surprised, saying: "I had ill-will towards the saint, so he has abandoned me." He could not fall asleep that whole night because of his longing to see Fo Tucheng again. The master knew that Shi Le lamented, so he visited him in the next morning. Shi Le asked: "Why did you leave last night?" Fo Tucheng replied: "You held a grudge against me, so I evaded you last night. Today, you changed your mind, I thus could come back." Shi Le laughed: "You misunderstood me."

The source for the moat of the capital in Xiang Principality² was situated under Weiwanqi, five li to the northwest. It had dried up. Shi Le asked Fo Tucheng: "How do we get water?" The master replied: "Now, you should order the dragon." Shi Le's style name was Shilong;³ he thought that the master was teasing him, so he said: "I am asking you because the dragon could not generate water." Fo Tucheng returned: "I am serious, not joking. A divine dragon must dwell in the source of springs and waters. If you issue a decree, water will flow." Then, the master and his disciples,

1 Fanguo was near Ji County, Henan.

2 Xiang Principality is now in Xingtai, Hebei Province; Shi Le also established the capital of his monarchy here.

3 Shi Le's style name, Shilong, means worldly dragon.

including Fashou, came to the source, which had been exhausted for a long time. The cracks on the riverbed were akin to ruts. Seeing such a scene, the disciples suspected and feared that they could hardly get any water. Fo Tucheng sat on a campstool, burned Benzoin incense, and chanted a mantra of hundreds of words. After he repeated the rituals for three days, water trickles started to flow. A small, half-foot long dragon appeared along the water; the monks all went closer to see it. Fo Tucheng said: “The dragon is poisonous, do not get close.” Shortly afterwards, the water stream got stronger, and, finally, the moat was full.

One day, while Fo Tucheng sat at ease, he sighed: “In two days, a youth will disturb this place.” Actually, a man named Xue He of Xiang Principality had two spoiled, young boys. They insulted a barbarian slave that was ethnically Xianbei; he was furious and killed the younger brother with a knife. Then, he held the older brother hostage in the room, putting the knife in front of his chest. If anyone entered the room, he would kill him. He told Xue He: “Send me to my homeland, and I will release your son, otherwise we will both die here.” The family was frightened, and many neighbors went to see what was happening. Shi Le went to inspect in person, and told Xue He: “Sending the slave back in order to save your son sounds good; however, if such a settlement becomes a precedent, it will cause trouble in the future. Relax. Laws must rule in the nation.” Then, he ordered the capture of the slave, and the latter killed both the boy and himself.

Duan Bo¹ of the Xianbei ethnicity attacked Shi Le with vast armies that scared the latter, thus Shi Le consulted the master. Fo Tucheng said: “Yesterday, the bells in the temple told, ‘Duan Bo should be caught at breakfast time tomorrow.’” Shi Le mounted the city wall and could not see the end of the troops. With a pale face, he said: “The armies blanket the land, where stands the chance we can catch

1 Duan Bo was a Xianbei tribal leader that allied with a Chinese minister of the Jin government named Wang Xun; Duan Bo wanted to fight for the throne and attacked Shi Le in 312. He was later defeated by Shi Le and joined the latter’s force.

Duan Bo? The master just wants to console me.” Then, he sent General Kui’an to ask Fo Tucheng again. The master replied: “Duan Bo has been captured.” At that moment, Shi Le’s ambush troops to the north of the city launched an attack, just encountering Duan Bo and arresting him. Fo Tucheng persuaded Shi Le into releasing Duan Bo and sending him back home. Shi Le followed this advice. Later, Duan Bo joined Shi Le’s force.

At that time, Liu Zai¹ died; his paternal cousin, Liu Yao, took the bogus throne and claimed it as the first year of the Guangchu Period, marking the establishment of the Former Zhao Dynasty. In the eighth year of Guangchu, Liu Yue, Liu Yao’s cousin and the bogus Prince Zhongshan, attacked Shi Le with his troops. Shi Le sent Shi Hu² to lead the defense with infantry and cavalry. After several fierce campaigns, Liu Yue was defeated and retreated to Shiliangwu. Shi Hu then besieged his enemies with robust camps. At that moment, Fo Tucheng moved from Guan Temple to Zhong Temple. Upon entering Zhong Temple, the master sighed: “Poor Liu Yue.” His disciple Fazuo asked the master why he said that. Fo Tucheng explained: “Yesterday, around 10pm, Liu Yue was captured.” His words were later proved correct. During the 11th year of the Guangchu Period, Liu Yao led troops to attack Luoyang. Shi Le wanted to fight in person, but his advisors and assistants all dissuaded him. Shi Le then visited Fo Tucheng; the master said: “The sound of Xianglun Temple’s bell says: ‘Xiuzhi Tiligang, Pugu Qutudang.’ This is in the language of the Qiang ethnicity. Xiuzhi means army, Tiligang means out, Pugu refers to Liu Yao, and Qutudang means catch. The bell is saying that Liu Yao will be captured if you take action.” A secretary named Xu Guang believed the master, and then repeatedly persuaded Shi Le into attack. Shi Le thus left his oldest son, Shi Hong, along with Fo Tucheng, to

1 Liu Zai was the founder of the Kingdom of Han in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period (304-439), where a multitude of small monarchs arose and perished parallel to the Jin Dynasty.

2 Shi Hu (295-349) was adopted by Shi Le’s father and thus was considered Shi Le’s younger brother. Afterwards, he became the monarch of the Later Zhao Dynasty, which, however, did not last long due to his brutality.

guard the capital in Xiang Principality, leading infantry and cavalry to reach Luoyang. Upon engagement, Liu Yao was defeated. His horse was drowned in water; he was caught by Shi Kan and then sent to Shi Le. At that time, Fo Tucheng put powder on his palm and observed the battle through his hand. He saw on his palm that a person in the crowd was arrested and tied up with red rope. Fo Tucheng then informed Shi Hong. It was the same moment that Liu Yao was captured. After his victory, Shi Le enthroned himself as Emperor of the Later Zhao Dynasty, renaming the year as Jianping; it was the fifth year of Emperor Cheng during the Jin Dynasty.

After Shi Le crowned himself, he relied on Fo Tucheng more faithfully. At that time, Shi Cong conspired against Shi Le; during that year, Fo Tucheng warned Shi Le: “Pests hide in scallions¹ this year, having them will make people sick. You should order the people to not eat scallions.” Shi Le then issued a decree to forbid the public from eating scallions. In the eighth month of that year, Shi Cong escaped. After surviving this event, Shi Le venerated the master even more piously. He wanted to consult the master about everything and conferred him the title of “Grand Master.”

Shi Hu had a son named Shi Bin; he was later sent to Shi Le to be his son. Shi Le was fond of this boy who, however, suddenly died of illness. Two days later, Shi Le said: “I heard that Bian Que² cured the dead prince of the Kingdom of Guo during the Spring and Autumn Period. The Grand Master is the deity in our country; go to seek help from him quickly. He must be able to bring benediction.” Fo Tucheng came with a willow twig. By chanting a mantra, he saved Shi Bin. The boy could sit up right away, recovering shortly afterwards. Since then, Shi Le’s young boys were all sent to live in the Buddhist temple. Every year on the eighth day in the fourth month, Shi Le would come to the temple to bath the Buddha statue³

1 Scallion is “cong” in Chinese, the same character as Shi Cong’s given name.

2 Bian Que (407-310 BCE), a famous doctor; the Classic on the Difficulties 难经 was a medical classic that is attributed to him.

3 In Chinese Buddhism, Shakyamuni Buddha’s birthday falls on the 8th day of the fourth month in the Chinese lunar calendar. On that day, Buddhists go to

and pray for his sons.

In the fourth month of the fourth year in the Jianping Period,¹ on a breezeless day, a bell on the Buddhist pagoda made strange sounds. Fo Tucheng told to the mass: “The sound said: ‘A great funeral will occur in our country this year.’” In the seventh month of that year, Shi Le died. Shi Hong, his son, succeeded to the throne.

Shortly after, Shi Hu dethroned Shi Hong and crowned himself emperor, moving the capital to Yecheng² and changing the name of the year to Jianwu. Shi Hu worshiped Fo Tucheng with more ceremonious courtesy. He issued a decree: “The Grand Master is the great treasure of our country, yet he does not accept honorary titles, salaried positions, or noble ranks, how can we honor his virtue? From now on, he should be supplied with silk clothes and a sedan with sculptures. On the occasions of meeting in the court, when the Grand Master arrives, officials below the rank of imperial advisor should help him step down from the sedan; the crown prince and ministers are supposed to support him to step into the great hall. At this moment, the master of ceremonies will pronounce ‘Grand Master,’ and then everyone should stand up to pay respect.” Shi Hu ordered Li Nong, an official of Sikong: “You should go to greet the Grand Master twice a day, in the morning and evening; the crown prince and ministers should visit him every five days, representing my veneration.”

Fo Tucheng was abiding at Zhong Temple in Yecheng, once sending his disciple, Fachang, to the old capital in Xiang Principality to the north. Another disciple, Fazuo, was returning from that town, so they met and stayed at Liangji town overnight, talking about their master during the night and leaving in opposite directions the next morning. Upon Fazuo’s arrival at the temple, he came to salute the master. Fo Tucheng smiled at the disciple and said: “Did you and

temple to participate in a Buddha-bathing ritual and pay homage to the Buddha.

1 The fourth year of the Jianping Period was 333 CE.

2 Yecheng was in Linzhang, Hebei.

Fachang talk about your master last night? There is a saying from the ancestors, ‘If you promised to respect someone, do not change your attitude when behind their back; if you vowed to be careful, do not neglect it when you are staying alone.’ Do you not know that being behind someone’s back or alone casts the real significance of respect and caution?” Fazuo was totally shocked and regretted what he did. Thereupon, people in the country all said: “Do not let evil ideas arise in your mind, or the Grand Master will know it.” When in his presence, no one dared spit, blow their nose, or relieve themselves in his direction.

At that time, Crown Prince Shi Sui’s two sons were in the old capital of Xiang. Fo Tucheng told the prince: “Little Ami¹ is sick; you should let someone bring him back.” Thereupon, the prince sent an envoy to see the son; sure enough, he was sick. Yin Tang, a renowned doctor and a foreign śramaṇa, worked to cure him, yet Fo Tucheng told his disciple, Faya: “Even the Buddha could not save him from this disease, let alone those ones.” Three days later, the son was dead.

Later, Shi Sui indulged himself with alcohol and wanted to take the throne from his father. He told his eunuch: “The monk can know the plan with his supernatural power. Tomorrow, we should kill him when he comes.” On the 15th of every month, Fo Tucheng would meet with Shi Hu in the palace. He told his disciple, Senghui: “Last night deities told me, ‘If you go to the palace tomorrow, do not visit anyone on your way back.’ If I am going to visit someone, stop me.” Fo Tucheng presented himself before Shi Hu as usual, meeting Shi Sui as well. The latter invited the master to his residence repeatedly. Fo Tucheng intended to step into the prince’s south palace; as requested, Senghui pulled the master’s robe at that moment, thus Fo Tucheng said: “I have something to deal with.” Before sitting down, he stood up. Shi Sui failed to urge the master to stay; the murder was a near miss. Returning to the temple, the master sighed: “The crown prince has completed the preparations for his rebellion.

1 Ami was the nickname of the boy.

They intend to carry out the plan; I really am biting my tongue.” On an occasion, he implied the upcoming trouble to Shi Hu, however the latter did not get it. Soon after, the incident took place; Shi Hu then realized what the master had meant.

When Guo Heilue led troops to attack the Qiang people to the north of Chang’an, he was trapped by an enemy ambush. At that moment, Fo Tucheng was sitting in the hall with his disciple, Fachang, beside him. The master’s face suddenly turned pale, saying: “Sir Guo is in danger now.” Fachang let all the monks chant a mantra for him; Fo Tucheng recited as well. Shortly afterwards, he said: “Break towards the southeast, it will make you survive; all other directions lead to dead-ends.” Then, he chanted the mantra and made vows again. Before long, he said: “Released.” In a month, Guo Heilue returned and said that when he was surrounded by the Qiang army, he moved to the southeast to break out. Someone in his army gave him a horse, saying: “You ride on my horse, and I ride yours. No matter if it works or not, let us try it.” Riding on the horse, Guo Heilue escaped from the enemies. Reckoning the time, it was the moment when Fo Tucheng chanted mantras with the Sangha.

Shi Bin, Shi Hu’s son and bogus Official of Sima,¹ was appointed as the Prefect of Youzhou to guard the Ji area.² He joined the local gangsters and committed all manners of evil. Fo Tucheng warned Shi Hu: “Last night, the deity told me, ‘Recall the horses quickly, or they will all rot in autumn.’” Shi Hu did not understand what the master meant and ordered for the return of all the horses. In autumn, someone reported what Shi Bin did to Shi Hu; the latter called back his son and planned to whip him 300 times as a penalty, executing Shi Bin’s mother, Lady Qi. Taking his bow and arrows, the monarch went to inspect the whipping in person. Finding that the soldiers did it with mercy, he thus killed 500 soldiers by himself. Fo Tucheng advised: “One cannot indulge his mind;

1 Sima 司馬, the position Shi Bin filled, was composed of two Chinese characters: the second is ma, which is “horse” in Chinese.

2 Ji is now in the Beijing area.

the lost lives cannot be brought back. According to the rites, an emperor should not kill in person, as it would damage his virtuous reputation among the people. Why would an emperor kill people in person?" Shi Hu then stopped killing by himself.

Later, the Jin Dynasty attacked the Huai River and Si River areas; towns in the Longbei¹ area were troubled by Jin troops. Three corners of the country reported emergencies, and everyone was disquieted. In anger, Shi Hu said: "I have been following Buddhism and offering to monks, however, invaders still come to me. Why is my homage to the Buddha not working?" The next morning, Fo Tucheng requested an interview with Shi Hu. The latter asked this question to the master. Fo Tucheng thus consulted: "Your Majesty used to be a great trader in one of your previous lives. Then, during a grand Assembly in a Jibin temple, 60 Arhats were present. I, in a humble position, was there too. An enlightened one told me, 'This patron will transform into a rooster after death and then will become a king during the Jin Dynasty.' Now that Your Majesty is already a king, is it not your good luck? On battlefields, victory and defeat are normal. Why should you hold a grudge, slander the Three Jewels, and let evil thoughts arise during the night?" Shi Hu was convinced and knelt down to show his remorse.

Once, Shi Hu asked Fo Tucheng: "What is Buddha-Dharma?" The master told him: "The Dharma is to restrain from killing." Shi Hu returned: "I am the ruler of a country. I will not be able to hold the ground without punishment and killing. Since, I breach the Buddhist principles by killing, can I benefit from it, even if I worship the Buddha?" Fo Tucheng replied: "The monarchs who follow Buddhism should worship and venerate the Buddha in their mind, promote the Three Jewels, and abstain from brutality and harming innocent people. As for the evil brigands who cannot be changed by education, they should be killed and punished as they commit crimes, but you should only punish and kill those who deserve it. If one acts cruelly without restraint, killing the innocent,

1 Longbei is in northern Gansu Province today.

even though he offers to the Buddha all his wealth, he would not get rid of the bad karmic effects. Please, Your Majesty, control your mind and generate wholesome thoughts that can benefit all people. In this way, the Buddha will bless you, and your merit and governance will last forever.” Although Shi Hu could not fully follow Fo Tucheng’s words, the teaching did exert positive influence on him.

Zhang Liang, Zhang Li, and other ministers in Shi Hu’s government were wealthy and followed Buddhism. Respectfully, they built big stupas. Fo Tucheng told them: “Belief in Buddhism requires detachment from desire and defilement; loving kindness is the key. Your Patrons worship the Dharma, yet keep greed and stinginess in mind by hunting and extorting money excessively. Such acts will incur bad karma in the current life, how can you accumulate merits?” Afterwards, Zhang Li and the others were killed.

At that time, a severe drought hit the region from the first month to the sixth month of that year. Shi Hu sent the crown prince to hold a prayer ritual for rain at Xifukou in Linzhang. Heaven did not respond after a long time. Shi Hu ordered Fo Tucheng to go there in person; instantly, two white dragons descended at the temple. A downpour then arrived on that day, covering thousands of square miles. People cultivated a great harvest that year. Originally, the uncivilized people in the northwest did not believe in the Dharma; learning about the master’s power, they all paid homage remotely and were converted to Buddhism without preaching.

Once, Fo Tucheng sent his disciple to purchase incense in the Western Regions. After his departure, Fo Tucheng told the other disciples: “I saw, in the palm of my hand, that the incense buyer was robbed in a certain place and is dying.” Thus, he burned incense and prayed for him. When the disciple returned, he reported to his master: “I was robbed in a certain place on a certain day; at the moment I was about to be killed, the gangsters suddenly smelled a fragrance and said, ‘Reinforcements are coming.’ Then

they escaped.”

In an effort to repair old stupas in Linzhang, Shi Hu needed a dew collection plate.¹ Fo Tucheng said: “In the town of Linzi,² there is a dew collection plate and Buddha statue under the stupa of King Aśoka. Trees are flourishing in the area. You may have people uncover it.” The master also drew a plan for the search. Relying on his words, they really found the plate and statue. Shi Hu always wanted to attack the Kingdom of Yan. Fo Tucheng told him: “Yan’s fate is not ending, it would be very hard to conquer.” The ruler sent troops many times but failed repeatedly; it was only then that he believed the master.

Since Fo Tucheng’s teachings came to be popular and the majority of the people paid homage to the Buddha and built temples, many joined the monastic order. Real monks blended with false ones, leading to disciplinary breaches happening often. Shi Hu issued a decree, asking the advisory committee: “The Buddha is called the World Honored One, and is venerated by the state. Should commoners without noble titles participate in Buddhist rituals? Śramaṇas ought to be pure, exalted, and diligent in their practice; it is only then that they can become sages. Now, there are too many śramaṇas in the country, among whom hide the criminals that avoid military and civil services; they are not real monks. We shall implement inspections and an approval process.” The advisor, Wang Du, reported: “The sacrifices of kings for heaven and earth in the suburb are recorded in sacrifice ritual books, and the local immortals should be worshiped. However, the Buddha originated from the Western Regions; he is a foreign deity whose virtue does not cover local people. Thus, the monarchs and Chinese people should not worship him. Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty dreamt of the deity and started the spread of the Dharma. People in the Western Regions could establish monasteries in town, yet

1 A plate, usually in copper, is a utensil for collecting dew in ancient China. One of the purposes of the dew water was to make Chinese medicine or immortal pills.

2 Linzi was in Shandong Province.

Chinese people were not permitted to join the Buddhist order. The government of the Wei Dynasty followed this practice. Nowadays, as designated by heaven, the Great Zhao Dynasty governs the country and should follow the old rules, drawing a distinct line between Chinese and foreign people, separating the humans and celestials, and having different regulations for the internal and the external. Sacrifice rituals and Chinese traditional costumes are not supposed to be irregular. The state should make a rule that people of the Zhao should follow traditional sacrifice rituals and be forbidden to worship and burn incense in temples; this will be in effect for ministers, nobles, and commoners. Those who break the law will be punished as if performing illegal sacrifices. Locals in the Zhao territory who have joined the Buddhist order should resume secular life and wear local costumes.” Wang Bo, the chief of the bogus advisory committee approved this report. Shi Hu replied in his decree: “Wang Du said, ‘The Buddha is a foreign god, so the monarchs and Chinese should not worship him.’ I was born in a border area and appointed by heaven; now I am governing China. As for sacrifice, it should follow the original tradition. The Buddha is a foreign deity; this is exactly why I should venerate him. National regulations need to be propagated from the top down and serve as eternal rules. If there is no flaw, why shall we replace them with previous ones? All who would renounce illegal sacrifices and worship the Buddha could join the monastic order; we will respect their aspirations.” Henceforth, those who breached the precepts acted more recklessly.

Normally, big tortoises did not exist in the Yellow River. Once, someone caught one unexpectedly and presented it to Shi Hu. After seeing it, Fo Tucheng sighed: “Huan Wen will soon fall in the river.” Later Huan Wen’s¹ destiny was truly as what Fo Tucheng had said.

¹ Huan Wen (312-373), style name Yuanzi, was a high ranking official and military expert in the Eastern Jin Dynasty; he played an important role in the confrontations between the Jin regime and the governments in the north.

At that time, a wanderer in Wei County always wore a short, sackcloth gown and begged for food in the county town; no one knew his origin. People called him “Short gown in sackcloth.” His speech was amazing but acts mad. When he was given rice, he would not eat but scatter it on the road, saying he was feeding the heavenly horses. The Magistrate of Zhaoxing County arrested him and sent him to Shi Hu. Before he came, Fo Tucheng told the monarch: “On a certain day, an extraordinary man will be sent to you. Please do not kill him.” On that day, “Short gown in sackcloth” really arrived. When Shi Hu talked with him, his words did not sound peculiar at all; there was just one thing that Shi Hu did not understand, he said: “Your Majesty will end up under a pillar.” Thus, the monarch ordered for him to be dispatched to Fo Tucheng. “Short gown in sackcloth” told the master: “We once met during the years of the Guanghe Period¹ under Emperor Ling’s reign in the Han Dynasty. Time flies, and over a hundred years have passed. Here is our reunion. The western minorities that govern by destiny will end their time soon. The fire from the west will perish in central China, and the borders will not be maintained. After dispelling the western rulers, do not stop virtuous deeds. The tree has several branches, and it will take time to enroot here. When will the wholesome age arrive so that we can enjoy auspiciousness?” Fo Tucheng replied: “The heavenly cycles repeat; when bad luck ceases, blessings arise. At this point, misfortune will not last for much longer; a tremendous change will take place soon. Pure “yang”² is emerging in the northeast and about to burst; no one can hold it. Although the profound doctrines exist in the world, they will decline if the foundation is not laid strongly. I have stayed in this world for a long time, encountering numerous troubles and wars; I will soon ascend to the heaven, and meet you in the void space.” The two talked all day long, people could not understand what they said. Someone eavesdropped on their conversation and wrote out a few words based on what was speculated that they discussed, potentially about things that would happen in the hundreds of years

1 The Guanghe Period: 178-184.

2 “Yang,” here refers to the yang in “yin and yang;” it is the positive power.

to come. Shi Hu then sent the wanderer back to where he came from by postal horse. After exiting the town, he got off the horse and said that he could walk, adding: “I want to visit someone and go there by myself; we can meet on the bridge at Hekou.” When the envoy arrived at the bridge, “Short gown in sackcloth” was already there. Reckoning his speed, he must have flown.

A disciple of Fo Tucheng named Daojin 道進 was versed in Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics, hence Shi Hu paid attention to him. They once talked about hermits; Shi Hu told Daojin: “Yang Ke, a subject of mine, declined my request of his presence for over ten years, thus I went to see him, and he was lying in bed arrogantly. Although I am not virtuous enough, I rule the country, so wherever I go, people welcome me with cheers. Yes, I cannot make stones and trees bow to me, but should a commoner be allowed to be condescending to me? In ancient times, when Taigong¹ came to Qi, he first killed Huashi the hermit, who would not listen to him. Taigong was known as a sage, so he should not be wrong in handling this matter.” Daojin replied: “In the old days, Shun offered preferential treatment to Boyi the hermit;² Yu sought an interview with Bocheng the hermit.³ Marquis Wei paid respect to the Hermit named Duan Ganmu, and the people of the Han Dynasty praised Zhou Dang.⁴ Guan Ning declined the call

1 Jiang Taigong (c. 1156-c. 1017 BCE), better known as Jiang Ziya, was a legendary figure who helped establish the Zhou Dynasty by defeating the Shang Dynasty. He was then conferred the title of Marquis and the fief of Qi in present day Shandong Province.

2 It is said that Boyi was an awakened hermit; Shun was a legendary ruler in Chinese prehistory.

3 Yu was the founder of the Xia Dynasty (c. 2070-c. 1600 BCE), purportedly the first dynasty of China; this is why China is also called Hua Xia by Chinese people. Hua refers to blossom, and Xia refers the first dynasty. Bocheng Zigao was a legendary hermit who inspired Yu in regard to the way of governance.

4 Zhou Dang, style name Bokuang, was a hermit in the Han Dynasty who was born in a wealthy family, but both of his parents died when he was very young. He was hence raised by his relatives, who encroached on the properties of his family; when he grew up, he took back the fortunes by suing his relatives, then giving all the money to needy people. Later, he refused the request of the emperor to be an official.

of the Cao Family.¹ Huangfu² did not serve the Jin Dynasty. The two saints and four monarchs³ appreciated the hermits' virtue of transcending the world, which encouraged the purification of the mind and warned greedy people. I hope Your Majesty would follow the virtue of Shun and Yu; do not imitate Taigong's punishment. Your Majesty's every act will be noted, so how could you allow the absence of hermits in Zhao's historic records?" Shi Hu was satisfied with Daojin's words, and then sent Yang Ke the hermit back, ordering an arrangement that the taxes of ten families would be offered to him. Later, Qinzhou Prefecture⁴ descended into revolt. Yang Ke's disciple carried him by cow cart, escaping to the west; unfortunately, the hermit was killed by the barbarian armies.

Shi Hu once had a nap and dreamt of a flock of sheep coming from the northeast carrying fish. After waking up, he visited Fo Tucheng for advice. Fo Tucheng said: "This is a bad sign. The Xianbei⁵ people will invade and rule central China." Afterwards, the Murong family of Xianbei people founded a state with their capital in Yecheng. Fo Tucheng often stayed with Shi Hu in the great hall of the palace. Once, Fo Tucheng was abruptly frightened, saying: "Youzhou is on fire." He hastened to get some wine poured. After quite a while, the master smiled: "It is alright." Shi Hu sent envoys to check out in that prefecture, and people reported: "On that day, flames burned from four town gates. At this moment, dark clouds came from southwest; a sudden downpour put out the fire, and the

1 Guan Ning (158-241) was a famous hermit in the Wei Dynasty. Being the offspring of an official, he turned down the call of Cao Pi, the emperor at the time.

2 Huangfu Mi (215-282) was a famous hermit and scholar in the Jin Dynasty.

3 The two saints refer to Shun and Yu; the four monarchs mean the emperors and rulers in the abovementioned cases.

4 Qinzhou was in Gansu Province.

5 Xianbei, an ancient nationality in China, founded the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) in the north, which was the first northern dynasty during the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589). After the Jin Dynasty ended, China was basically divided into northern and southern parts and occupied by various governments. In Chinese 鮮卑, the first character of Xianbei, 鮮, is composed of 魚 (fish) and 羊 (sheep); this hence explains Shi Hu's dream of sheep carrying fish.

rain smelt alcoholic.”

In the seventh month of the 14th year of the Jianwu Period, the two sons of Shi Hu, Crown Prince Shi Xuan and his younger brother Shi Tao, both plotted to kill the other. Once, Shi Xuan came to the monastery and sat beside Fo Tucheng. Bells on the stupa rang, and the master asked: “Do you understand what the bells want to tell us? They say, ‘the barbarian son is failing his precepts.’” Shi Xuan was pale with fear, asking: “Why would you say this?” Fo Tucheng replied: “I am a barbarian monk who could not abide secluded in the mountains; I instead wear quality robes. Is it not failing the precepts?” Shi Tao arrived later; Fo Tucheng gazed at him for a long time. Shi Tao was scared and asked why; the master replied: “Since I saw blood on your body, I hence kept looking.” In the eighth month of that year, Fo Tucheng told his 10 disciples to live in another room, and the master temporarily moved into the east building. Shi Hu and his Queen, Lady Du, came to visit the master; Fo Tucheng told them: “Currently, thieves have arrived. A bloody incident will happen between the west of the stupa and the east of his building within ten days. Please be careful, and do not go to the east of this building.” The Queen said: “Your Venerable is too senior; where are the thieves?” Fo Tucheng spoke in another way: “What the six senses perceive are thieves. I am old and thus muddled, but I do hope the young people are not.” He stopped by using a metaphor. Two days later, Shi Xuan dispatched his people to the temple and killed Shi Tao in an attempt to attract his father to mourn Shi Tao at the temple, killing the monarch in the process. Shi Hu avoided the murder upon him as the master had provided a hint earlier. After the tragedy, Shi Hu captured Shi Xuan. The master advised: “As he is Your Majesty’s son, why would you put him to capital punishment? If you are merciful to him, he will be able to live for another 60 years. If you have to kill him, he will turn into a jinx and destroy the palace in Yecheng.” Shi Hu would not listen; he directed that Shi Xuan’s jaw be pierced with iron chains, Shi Xuan should then be pulled onto the pyre and burned. The monarch ordered the killing of over 300 officials under Shi Xuan, tearing

their bodies asunder with five carts and throwing the flesh into the Zhang River. After the incident, Fo Tucheng asked his disciples to return to their original rooms.

One month later, an evil horse spirit with a burning tail and hair rushed into the Zhongyang Gate, then appearing at the Xianyang Gate. Dashing to the east palace, he could not get in; he thus turned to the northeast and ran until he was out of sight. When Fo Tucheng heard of it, he sighed: "The disaster is coming." In the eleventh month of that year, Shi Hu was entertaining officials in the front hall of Taiwu. The master regretted aloud: "Thistles and thorns have grown in the great hall that will tear people's clothes." Shi Hu hence ordered the removal of the slates of the hall, thorns were really seen. After returning to the temple, the master, while looking at the Buddha statue, said: "I cannot dignify you; it is truly remorseful." Then, he asked: "Could it be in three years?" Replying to himself: "No." He asked again: "Two years? One year? 100 days? One month?" Then replying to himself again: "No." Hence, he stopped speaking. Fo Tucheng entered his room and told his disciple Fazuo: "Turmoil will gradually deploy during this year, and the Shi family will perish in the next year; I will die before the revolt happens." Right away, he sent someone to bid farewell to Shi Hu, saying: "Vicissitude is the norm; things are impermanent. The physical body cannot stay eternally. Mine is just as illusory as light and may be gone at any time. Now that my time is ending, I thank you for your generosity. I hereby report it." Shi Hu was saddened, saying: "I did not hear that the venerable was sick; why would he suddenly die?" Thereupon, he came to the temple to see the master. Fo Tucheng said: "From birth to death, this is the constant law set for humans. As for the length of the life, it depends on the karma of previous lives and cannot be changed. Men in this world should pursue morality and virtue. Virtuous conduct lies on Buddhist practice without slackness. If the karma is pure, death is the same as living. Altering the rules to prolong my life would not suit my will. There is still one thing I regret. Your Majesty is devoted to Buddhism without stinginess and builds monasteries

that are magnificent. These merits deserve good karmic effects. Nevertheless, Your Majesty prefers hard measures and abuses the use of cruel punishment. Visibly, it is against the Dharma; invisibly, it breaks the rules of the underworld. If you do not repent and make quick changes, you will not get the blessing of the Buddha. Should you contemplate modestly, change your mentalities, and benefit the people, the state may last longer; both secular people and Buddhists celebrate your governance and rely on it. Even if they die for you, they will not have regrets.” Shi Hu sobbed sadly. Knowing that the master was dying, the monarch started to build the tomb for him. On the 2nd day of the twelfth month of that year, Fo Tucheng passed away at the Palace Temple in Yecheng at the age of 117. That was the fourth year of the Yonghe Period under Emperor Mu of the Jin Dynasty. All the officials and commoners were saddened; people of the entire country cried in grief. He was buried at Zimo to the west of Linzhang in the graveyard built by Shi Hu.

Soon later, Liang Du¹ rebelled. In the following year, Shi Hu died. Seizing this opportunity, Ran Min² took the throne and recklessly committed killings. Shi’s family hence had been purged. Ran Min’s nickname was “thorny boy.” That was why Fo Tucheng had mentioned thorns in the palace.

To the left of Fo Tucheng’s nipple, there was a hole with a perimeter of four to five inches, which led to his guts. Sometimes, his intestines might flow out from it; he would then plug it up with cotton. When he wanted to read in the evening, he pulled out the cotton, and the entire room would be lit up. On the days of dana assemblies, he would come to the riverside, take out his intestines for washing, and then put them back.

1 After the execution of Shi Xuan, Shi Hu exiled the guardians and armies of the crown prince to Liangzhou. Liang Du was a team leader who convened the exiled armies to fight back against Shi Hu. After fierce battles, the rebels failed; however, the foundation of Shi Hu’s government had been rocked.

2 Ran Min, style name Yongzeng, was originally from Neihuang, Henan and of Chinese nationality. He was the adopted grandson of Shi Hu and became a major general in his grandfather’s military force.

Fo Tucheng was 1.85 meters in height, with an exalted and elegant appearance. He comprehended the most profound sutras and non-Buddhist classics. During dharma talks, he only explained the essences, which made the audiences understand the whole meanings of the texts. Loving sentient beings, he saved them from suffering. When the Shi family oppressed people cruelly, only Fo Tucheng could provide advice that benefited people's daily life without their awareness. Dozens of monks, including Zhu Fotiao and Subhuti, came from places thousands of miles away, such as India and Sogdiana, to study under him, after passing through the drift sands. Shi Dao'an of Fanmian and Zhu Faya of Zhongshan both crossed Guanzhong and the Yellow River to listen to his lectures, becoming experts in subtle Buddhist principles and laws. Fo Tucheng said himself that the place where he was born was over ninety thousand li away from Yecheng. He also said that he stayed in the Buddhist order for 109 years; during this period, he abstained from food after lunch and never drank, having neither desire nor demand. Hundreds of disciples constantly followed him, and the total number of his disciples during his lifetime almost reached 10 thousand. In the prefectures he had traveled to, 893 monasteries had been built. His merit and virtue in regard to dharma transmission were unprecedented.

When Shi Hu buried Fo Tucheng, he put the master's bowl and Buddhist staff in the coffin. Later, Ran Min took the throne of the Later Zhao Dynasty and opened Fo Tucheng's coffin, only finding the bowl and staff; his body was gone. Some said that people saw the master in Liusha¹ during the month he died. Shi Hu suspected that the master did not die, not finding his body either after opening his coffin. Afterwards, Murong Jun² arrived in Yecheng and abided in Shi Hu's palace. Every night, he dreamt of a tiger³ biting his shoulders. He believed that was due to Shi Hu's ghost, then offering

1 Liusha is in Xinjiang today.

2 Murong Jun (319-360), of the Xianbei ethnicity, was the founder of the Former Yan Dynasty (352-370), after destroying Ran Min.

3 Shi Hu's given name, Hu, means "tiger" in Chinese.

a reward to find Shi Hu's body. Shortly afterwards, the body was uncovered under the Dongming Building, which was stiff but not rotten yet. Murong Jun stepped on Shi Hu's body and cursed: "You dead barbarian, how dare you frighten me, a living emperor! While you built this palace, even your son wanted to kill you, let alone others." The tyrant abused Shi Hu's body by beating and damaging it; he then threw it into Zhang River. The body stopped floating by a bridge pillar. Later, Wang Meng, the Grand General of the Former Qin Dynasty,¹ pulled the body out of the water and buried it. This was the "pillar" prediction of "Short gown in sackcloth." When Fu Jian attacked Yecheng, Murong Wei, the son of Murong Jun, was captured by Guo Shenhu,² the Grand General of Fu Jian. Actually, this was the premonition of the tiger bite in Murong Jun's dream.

In *the Record of Zhao* 趙記, Tian Rong³ said: "A few years before Fo Tucheng died, he built a bomb for himself." Since Fo Tucheng knew that his bomb would be reopened and that his body would not be there, why would he build a tomb for himself before his death? It might be a mistake by Tian Rong.

Fo Tucheng was sometimes called Fo Tudeng because of different Sanskrit pronunciations.

1 Wang Meng, style name Jinglue, was a famous general and strategist in the Jin Dynasty.

2 Guo Shenhu's given name, Shenhu, means "divine tiger."

3 Tian Rong was the author of *the Record of Zhao*.

2. Shan Daokai of Mount Luofu during the Jin Dynasty

Shan Daokai¹ 單道開 was originally from a Meng family in Dunhuang. He lived in seclusion since his youth, reciting sutras of 400 thousand words. Abandoning cereal foods, he merely took cypress seeds. As cypress seeds were rare, he also ate rosin of pine trees. Later, he ingested small cobblestones, a couple of pieces at a time, once every few days; sometimes he also took a bit of ginger or pepper. After seven years with such a diet, he came to be fearless of cold and heat. During the winter, he barely needed clothes; in summer, he just felt warm and did not sleep at night. Originally, 10 school friends agreed upon this diet, but ten years later, some died and some quit; only Daokai continued and accomplished what he had set out to do. The Prefect of Fuling² sent people and a horse to invite him. Daokai said that he could walk, and then arrived within a day, which was over a distance of 300 li. When the spirits of the mountains tested him by presenting in ferocious shapes, Daokai was not fearful of it. In the 12th year of the Jianwu Period during Shi Hu's reign in the Later Zhao Dynasty, Daokai went from Xiping³ to Nan'an,⁴ travelling 700 li per day. In Nan'an, he tonsured a 14-year old boy as a novice and taught him the Dharma; the latter could walk at Daokai's speed.

At that time, the official of Taishi in charge of calendar and astronomy during the Later Zhao government reported to Shi Hu: "A deity star appears in the sky, so there should be a sage entering into Zhao's territory." Shi Hu thus ordered a search for unusual people in all prefectures; any findings were to be reported to the imperial court immediately. In the eleventh month of that year, the Prefect of Qinzhou reported and sent Daokai to Yecheng. At first, Daokai lived in Fachen Temple in the west of the city, later moving

1 Shan Daokai (c. 261-c. 361).

2 Fuling was in Qianjiang, Anhui.

3 Xiping was between Qinghai and Gansu Provinces.

4 Nan'an was near Leshan, Sichuan Province.

to Zhaode Temple in Linzhang. In the hall, he built a pagoda of several stories, eight to nine feet high, and within which he knitted a meditation room with grass, whose space measured one cubic meter. Then, he frequently meditated in the room. Shi Hu offered to him generously; however, Daokai donated all the offerings to others. In his time, many consulted him about becoming immortal. Daokai did not reply to their questions but spoke a verse: “I practice patience against all sufferings; renouncement is for the benefit of sentient beings. To save the world, one should learn this knowledge, which may lead to purification. Cereals are hard to grow in remote mountains, thus I abandoned normal food. I am not an immortal seeker, so please do not spread false information.”

Daokai knew how to cure eye diseases. At that time, Shi Tao, the Prince Qin of the Later Zhao Dynasty, invited him to treat his eyes. After putting medicines on, it hurt a little; Shi Tao was scared, but was finally cured. Fo Tucheng said: “This practitioner comes to observe the vicissitude of the country; if he leaves, disaster will arrive.” In the first year of the Taining Period¹ under Shi Hu’s reign, Daokai and his disciple traveled southwards to Xuchang. Then, Shi Hu’s sons tried to kill each other, and the capital, Yecheng, descended into chaos. In the third year of the Shengping Period, Daokai arrived in Jianye of the Eastern Jin government; he soon moved to Nanhai and then Mount Luofu.² Daokai lived in a thatched cottage in the mountains, aloof from the worldly affairs. He died in his mountainous cottage at an age over 100. Before his death, he asked his disciples to put his body in a stone cave, and his disciples followed his will.

In the north, a man named Kang Hong once heard Daokai’s disciples talking about the master’s supernatural speed for travel and deeply admired him. When this man assumed an official position in Nanhai, he paid a visit to the master, then studying

1 The Taining Period was the second reign title of Shi Hu; it lasted for one year (349).

2 Nanhai and Mount Luofu are in Guangdong Province.

under him respectfully and thoroughly. Hence, he made a eulogy for Daokai: “Renouncing the world, this man abandoned secular affairs. He follows Hinayana Buddhism externally and has an empty mind internally. The divine signs appeared and his stage was close to perfection. Eating mushrooms and flowers, he wanders among rocks and creeks.” In the first year of the Xingning Period during the Jin Dynasty, Yuan Hong of Chen Prefecture assumed the post of Prefect Nanhai. Along with Yingshu, his younger brother, and Zhi Fafang the śramaṇa, the prefect climbed Mount Luofu. Coming close to the stone cave, they saw that Daokai’s body and incense burner were still there. Yuan Hong said: “The master practiced in a unique way, and his body is like a cicada shell.” Then, he made a eulogy: “When the person is noble, divine power will be conferred. Virtues never stay alone. The man in remote mountains attracted elites as followers. His carefree style was akin to immortals. Now, we tour here, see a shoe left in the woods, and tell the story of a thousand years.” Later, śramaṇas, including Sengjing and Daojian, wanted to climb Mount Luofu as well but failed to reach the crest.

3. Zhu Fotiao of Mount Chang during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Fotiao 竺佛調, original surname unknown, was reported by some records as a native of India. Following Fo Tucheng as his teacher, he abided at the temple on Mount Chang¹ for years. Being honest and simple, he restrained from chatter; his contemporaries all admired him. On Mount Chang, two brothers who followed Buddhism lived 100 li away from the temple. Once, the older brother's wife was seriously ill; the man then carried his wife to the temple's perimeter to have medical treatment for her, since he respected Zhu Fotiao as his teacher and often studied under the master day and night. On the second day, Zhu Fotiao abruptly appeared at their home. The younger brother asked about his sister-in-law and brother; the master replied: "The patient is almost recovered, and your brother is fine." After Zhu Fotiao left, the young man rode a horse to the temple and met his brother. When the younger brother narrated the visit of the master, his big brother was surprised, saying: "The master did not leave the temple this morning. How could you see him?" The brothers paused and came to Zhu Fotiao for an answer; the latter smiled but did not reply. Both brothers were amazed.

From time to time, Zhu Fotiao lived in the depths of the mountains for a year or a half, only taking a couple dozens of liters of rice. When he returned, the remainder of the rice was found. Someone used to follow the master in the mountains, walking dozens of miles. It was dark and snowy, so Zhu Fotiao entered the stone cave of a tiger to stay. When the tiger returned, it laid down next to the master. Zhu Fotiao told the tiger: "I am sorry to occupy your place; what shall we do?" Then, the tiger lapped over the ears and went down the hill. The follower who saw all this was shocked. Later, Zhu Fotiao announced the date of his death; people came from near and far to see him. The master said: "The existence of heaven and earth is long, but still has an end. Not to mention humans,

¹ Mount Chang, also known as Mount Heng, is between Hebei and Shanxi Provinces.

how can we seek eternity? If we can clean up the three poisons of greed, hatred and delusion, focusing on the purification of the mind, although our physical forms separate between life and death, the minds will stay connected.” The mass cried sadly and pleaded for him to stay. Zhu Fotiao replied: “Life or death is our destiny, how can we plead for it?” Hence, he returned to his room and sat tight; putting a piece of clothing on his head, he passed away.

A few years later, eight lay disciples of Zhu Fotiao went to fell trees at the western peak. They suddenly saw their master in colorful clothes sitting up on a rock at ease. Having a pleasant surprise, they paid homage to the master and said: “Your Reverence has come here.” Zhu Fotiao replied: “I am always here.” He then asked about some old acquaintances and left after a long discussion. The eight disciples put aside their work and rushed back to tell this news to their dharma friends. No one could verify it, thus they opened Zhu Fotiao’s coffin and only found his clothes and shoes.

In some records, this Zhu Fotiao translated *the Sutra of the Dharma Mirror* 法鏡經 (*Ugra(datta)pariprcchā(sūtra)*) and *the Chapter of Ten Wisdoms* 十慧. However, in Dao’an’s *Scriptures Catalogue*, it says that *the Sutra of the Dharma Mirror* and *Chapter of Ten Wisdoms* were translated by śramaṇas named Yan Fotiao and An Xuan in the years of the Guanghe Period during the reign of Emperor Ling of the Han Dynasty. These words had been compiled in *the Stories of Scriptures Translation* 譯經傳. But this Fotiao was living in the Eastern Jin Dynasty. It is wrong to make the judgement that they are the same person after seeing the same name.

4. Qiyu of Luoyang during the Jin Dynasty

Qiyu 耆 域 , a native of India, travelled between China and foreign countries without a fixed abode. He was elegant and marvelous, while willful and ignorant of traditions. With uncertain whereabouts, no one really knew him. From India to Funan,¹ through various sea shores, he arrived in Jiaozhou and Guangzhou; supernatural phenomena occurred during his voyage in those areas. Upon his arrival in Xiangyang, he planned to take a ferry to cross the river. The boatman saw his ragged gown of Indian śramaṇas and looked down upon him, not allowing him to embark. When the boat reached the other bank, Qiyu had arrived there. Walking on his way, he met two tigers which lapped over the ears and hung down their tails. The master patted the tigers' heads, and the tigers walked off the road and away. Numerous people on both sides of the river followed to see this marvel.

In the later years of Emperor Hui's reign during the Western Jin Dynasty, Qiyu came to Luoyang; the local monks all venerated him, and the master received them in barbarian posture² without expression. Sometimes, he would tell people about their previous lives. He said that Zhi Fayuan transformed from a goat, and that Zhu Faxing came to this life from a human. He also criticized the gorgeous dresses of local monks which were against the Buddhist disciplines that required clothes to be simple and plain. When he saw the palace in Luoyang, he said: "This palace is similar to that of the Heaven of the Thirty-three gods, yet one is natural, and the other is artificial." Qiyu told Qishemi the śramaṇa: "The craftsman who built the Palace in Luoyang was from the Heaven of the Thirty-three gods; after the construction, he returned to that heaven. 1500 tools were left under the tiles." Some contemporaries also said that the craftsman had put the tools under the tiles and that he was killed after the construction had been completed.

1 Funan, an ancient state in the Indo-China Peninsula, had close ties with China.

2 Barbarian posture is sitting with legs crossed.

When Teng Yongwen, the Prefect of Hengyang, was in Luoyang, he stayed at Manshui Temple. Having an illness for years, his two feet were huddled, thus he could not stand up or walk. Qiyu went to see him and asked: "Would you like to be cured?" So, he fetched a cup of clear water and a willow twig. Soaking the twig in the water, he swung the twig towards Teng Yongwen while chanting a mantra. Doing this procedure three times, he then held the prefect's knees with his hands and asked him to stand up. Immediately, Teng Yongwen could walk as normal.

At that time, several dozens of bodhi trees at Manshui Temple died. Qiyu asked Teng Yongwen how long ago these trees had died. Teng Yongwen said: "Quite a few years." Qiyu chanted mantra right away, just like what he did for the prefect. In an instant, the trees sprouted new leaves and began to flourish.

A man was dying of sickness during the summer. Qiyu put a container on the patient's belly and wrapped the man with white cloth; chanting mantra and prayers of thousands of words, an odor could be smelled in the room at once. Then, the patient voiced: "I am alive." Qiyu had the cloth removed; mud of several liters in the container gave off an unbearable stench. Afterwards, the patient recovered.

When revolt arose in Luoyang, Qiyu bid farewell and intended to return to India. A śramaṇa named Zhu Faxing in Luoyang was an excellent monk. His contemporaries compared him with Le Ling.¹ Zhu Faxing invited Qiyu and said: "Your Reverence is awakened; please give some advice as the last admonition for me." Qiyu replied: "Alright, please convene the mass so that I can talk to everyone." When the mass gathered, Qiyu mounted the high seat and said: "Keep your mouth, body, and mind under control; do not commit any unwholesome acts. Practice all virtuous deeds. Cultivating in this way leads to liberation." Then, he shut

1 Le Ling (d. 304), also known as Le Guang, was a famous philosopher and official in the Western Jin Dynasty.

his mouth. Zhu Faxing asked again: "Please lecture us with some principles we have never heard. This verse is known by eight-year old children. This is not what we expected from an awakened monk." Qiyu smiled and said: "Although eight-year old children can recite it, they cannot achieve it at the age of 100. What is the benefit of reciting it then? Everyone venerates awakened ones, but people do not practice themselves to discern and learn from their own experiences. How sad! My verse is short, and those who practice it will benefit from it for a long time." After these words, he left. Hundreds of people invited him to have a meal before his departure; he accepted them all. On the next day, Qiyu attended meals in five hundred houses. At first, everyone thought the master only came to their banquet, but after checking with others, they realized that he ensured his presence in all places by splitting himself.

On the day that Qiyu departed, monks came to see him off at the town to the south of the river. Qiyu walked slowly; however, the others could hardly catch up. Then, he drew a line on the road with his staff, saying: "Let us say goodbye here." Someone came from Chang'an to Luoyang and later claimed to have seen him at a temple in Chang'an that day. A trader named Hu Shideng met him in Liusha at the dusk on the same day. Reckoning the time, Qiyu had traveled over 9000 li when they met. His whereabouts were unknown after his return to the Western Regions.

Volume X

Supernatural Powers Part B

16 main figures 11 auxiliaries

1. Jiantuole of Mount Panchi in Luoyang during the Jin Dynasty

Jiantuole 健陀勒, originally from the Western Regions, had stayed in Luoyang for years. The mass respected his virtuous conduct but did not really know him. Later, he told the monks: “The foundation of an old temple on Mount Panchi to the southeast of Luoyang still exists. We may renovate it.” The mass did not believe him, so they then followed him to a place on the mountain where the terrain was plain. Jiantuole indicated: “This is the foundation of the temple.” Hence, people dug for it and really found a stone foundation. Jiantuole pointed out the locations for the lecture hall, dormitory, and other buildings, which had been proven correct. The mass was amazed and thereupon built the temple, naming Jiantuole the abbot.

The temple was over a hundred li away from Luoyang, but, every day, Jiantuole went for lunch at the temple in Luoyang. At dusk, he begged for a bowl of oil for the lamp in his temple and then returned to Mount Panchi. Keeping it as a routine, he was never tardy. A man who walked fast followed Jiantuole to see how he did it, however he failed to catch up with him, even though the follower ran until he was drenched in sweat. Jiantuole asked the man to hold his robe, and then the follower could hear the wind but did not need to exert effort anymore. Shortly, they arrived at the mountain temple. Afterwards, Jiantuole’s whereabouts were unknown.

2. He Luojie of Mount Louzhi in Luoyang during the Jin Dynasty

He Luojie¹ 訶羅竭 was originally from Lanyang.² Joining the monastic order in his youth, he recited sutras of two million words. Being modest and calm, he observed the precepts strictly and had an elegant manner and handsome look. He often practiced asceticism by walking and staying in mountains. In the ninth year of the Taikang Period under Emperor Wu of the Jin Dynasty, he arrived in Luoyang and temporarily abided in the town. At that time, a plague broke out, and many died of disease; Luojie did his best to cure them, hence eight or nine out of ten recovered. Walking westwards, he practiced sitting meditation in a stone cave at Mount Louzhi. The cave was located far from a water source. Some wanted to drill a well for him. Luojie said: “Thank you but please do not bother.” Then, with his left foot, he trampled the western wall of the cave and made a hole which was as deep as a finger. As soon as he pulled out his foot, water that tasted sweet and mellow continuously spouted from the hole. Drinking it could quench thirst and cure diseases.

In the eighth year of the Yuankang Period, Luojie sat tight and died. His disciples cremated him based on the tradition in his home country. The flame burned several days, but his body was still intact; his disciples then moved his body in the cave. In the Xianhe Period³ during the Jin Dynasty, a native of the Western Regions named Zhu Ding with the style name Anshi, went to Luojie’s country and saw his body sitting straight for over 30 years. Afterwards, Zhu Ding arrived in the capital,⁴ spreading what he saw to the monastics and laypeople.

1 He Luojie (d. 298).

2 Lanyang is an unknown location.

3 The Xianhe Period (326-334) was under the reign of Emperor Cheng during the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

4 The capital had been moved from Luoyang to Jianye at that time.

3. Zhu Fahui of Xiangyang during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Fahui¹ 竺法慧, originally from Guanzhong, observed the precepts strictly. Entering into Mount Song, he followed Futumi as his teacher. In the first year of the Jianyuan Period during Emperor Kang's reign in the Jin Dynasty, he arrived in Xiangyang and abided at Yangshuzi Temple. He did not accept special invitations for food but would rather take alms. When he practiced alms begging, he always took a campstool with him. Coming across an open and plain place, he would unfold the campstool and sit on it. While it rained, he covered himself with an oilskin; when the rain stopped, people could only see the campstool without a trace of Fahui. In the case that someone asked for him, before the question was completed, Fahui would reappear on the campstool. Fahui told his disciple, Fazhao, several times: "You broke one leg of a chicken in your previous life; the karmic effect will display soon." Shortly after, the disciple was hit and got a perpetual foot disease. Later, he told his disciple: "An old man in Xinye² is dying; I will deliver him." As the master was walking on a footpath in the field, he saw an old man tilling the field with farm cattle. Fahui asked for the bullock from the old man, but the latter refused; then the master took reign of the bullock directly. The old man was frightened and gave it to Fahui. Chanting mantra and prayers for the old man, the master led the ox for a walk of seven steps, then returning it to the old man, who died a few days later.

When Yu Zhigong,³ the General Zhengxi, who did not believe in Buddhism, guarded Xiangyang, he heard of Fahui's uncommon deeds and envied his power. Fahui told his disciples: "My foe of previous lives has come to seek me. Please urge your dharma friends and relatives to accumulate merits." Two days later, Fahui was killed by Yu Zhigong at the age of 58. Before death, he told the

1 Zhu Fahui (c. 287-c. 344).

2 Xinye was in Henan Province.

3 Yu Yi, style name Zhigong, was the younger brother of Yu Liang.

mass: “Three days after my death, there will be a torrential rain.”
On that day, the downpour ravaged the area; with water ponding as deep as ten feet at the town gate, many people drowned.

4. An Huize of Dashi Temple in Luoyang during the Jin Dynasty Kang Huichi

An Huize 安 慧 則 was of unknown origins. In his childhood, he was impatient but had extraordinary skills, being good at both discussion and calligraphy in formal script. In the years of the Yongjia Period during the Western Jin Dynasty, a disease epidemic broke out; Huize prayed day and night to get the cure from heaven for the suffering people. One day, he went out of the temple and saw a stone in the shape of a vase; he guessed that it was an unusual object. Picking it up, he found holy water in it; the patients recovered after drinking it. Later, abiding at Dashi Temple in Luoyang, he transcribed *the longer version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* with a thin writing brush on fine silk. The characters were as small as red beans but clear and distinct. He made a dozen copies and gave one to Lady Humu, the wife of Zhou Song¹ of Runan, to worship. Humu kept this transcript with her when she moved to the south of the Yangtse River. Afterwards, her residence was hit by fire; escaping hastily, she did not have the time to fetch the sutra and felt deeply regretful. When the fire burned out, she found the transcript in the ashes; even the scroll and the color remained intact. The eye witnesses were all converted from heresy into Buddhism. This copy of the sutra is now kept by the abbess of Jianjing Covent in the capital.

At that time, Kang Huichi 康慧持 in Luoyang also had supernatural powers.

¹ Zhou Song (d. 324), style name Zhongzhi, was the younger brother of Zhou Yi and versed in Buddhist doctrines.

5. Shegong of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Shegong¹ 涉公 was originally from the Western Regions. He was tranquil in nature, taking the air as food without eating cereals. He could travel 500 li per day. When he predicted things, it was always true, as if he talked about his palm print. During the 12th year of the Jianyuan Period under Fu Jian's reign, he arrived in Chang'an. He was able to secretly request for divine dragons to descend. In the case of drought, Fu Jian often invited him to pray to the dragon. Shortly afterwards, the dragon would come into his bowl, and torrential rain would arrive. Fu Jian and multiple ministers had seen what happened in the bowl and were all amazed by this miracle. Fu Jian respected him as a national deity; nobles and commoners worshiped him by prostrating to him. Since his arrival in Chang'an, people did not have to worry about drought and heatwaves.

In the 12th month of the 16th year in the Jianyuan Period, Shegong died without any illness. Fu Jian cried sadly. Seven days after his death, Fu Jian believed that this was unusual and reopened Shegong's coffin to check; his body was gone, and only the shroud left. During the 17th year of the Jianyuan Period, from the first to the sixth month, it did not rain a drop. Fu Jian reduced his diet, showing his sincerity to heaven.² In the seventh month, it finally rained. Fu Jian told Zhu Rong, his adviser: "If Shegong was still here, I would not be bothered by the matters in the clouds. He was really a great saint." Zhu Rong replied: "He had the power to exert influence in the underworld, it is an unprecedented skill."

1 Shegong (d. 380) is an honorary address, similar to Sir She.

2 In ancient China, emperors practiced asceticism in different ways to pray for blessings and accumulate merits when natural disasters happened.

6. Shi Tanhuo of Xiping during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Tanhuo 釋曇霍 was of unknown origins. He practiced asceticism strictly and ate vegetarian food. Constantly abiding in a graveyard or under trees, he converted people with his supernatural powers. At that time, Tufa Lilugu¹ of the Xianbei ethnicity occupied Xiping, enthroning himself and naming his reign the Jianhe Period. During the 11th month of the 2nd year in the Jianhe Period, Tanhuo came to Xiping from Henan. Holding a Buddhist staff, he requested for people to prostrate toward the staff, saying: “This is the Prajna eye, worshiping it may lead to enlightenment.” When people offered clothes to him, he accepted them but threw them on the ground or in the river shortly after. Then, the clothes would return to the donors without any dirt. Tanhuo walked as fast as the wind, when strong ones tried to catch up with him, they always failed; in addition, he could accurately prophesize people’s fortune and life span. If someone hid his staff, he would close his eyes for a while and then would be able to point out its location. Due to his supernatural powers, numerous people were converted to Buddhism. Liluhu’s younger brother, named Noutan, was appointed as General Cheji and had the bogus government’s power in his hands. With a suspicious nature, the general killed many people. Tanhuo often advised Noutan: “You should practice kindness and virtuous conduct; it will provide a better chance for your next life.” Noutan replied: “My ancestors worshiped heaven, earth, famous mountains, and great rivers. Should I alter my faith now, I fear it would be against my ancestors’ instruction. If you can abstain from food for seven days and still maintain a normal complexion, that may prove the divine power of Buddhism, and I will believe it.” Thus, he had the master guarded for seven days. Tanhuo did not show any sign of thirst or hunger. Noutan sent a śramaṇa named Zhixing to secretly provide bread to Tanhuo; the master said: “Have I ever cheated others? Will you let me cheat the monarch?” Noutan was totally surprised and hence respected and offered to the master

¹ Tufa Lilugu (d. 402) 禿發利鹿孤 was the monarch of the Southern Liang 南涼 government during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period in China.

generously; finally, he was converted to Buddhism. Thereupon he refrained from killing and promoted virtue. Benefiting from Tanhuo, the public called him “Grand Master.” When he appeared on the streets, people would crowd around to pay homage to him. Noutan had a daughter who fell seriously ill, thus summoning Tanhuo to save her. The master said: “Life and death are destiny; even the saints cannot change it. How can I prolong her life? I can only know the time.” But Noutan insisted. At that moment, the rear gate of the palace was closed. Tanhuo said: “Hurry up; open the rear gate. If the door is open, she can live, otherwise she will die.” Noutan ordered the opening of the door, but the daughter had died before the gate was opened.

During the third year of the Yixi Period in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, Noutan was defeated by Helian Bobo; warfare ravaged the Southern Liang’s territory, and Shi Tanhuo was missing since then.

7. Shizong of Mount Long in Shangyu during the Jin Dynasty

Shizong 史宗 was of unknown origins. He constantly wore linen clothes, hence was known as the “Linen Clothes Monk.” Having multiple skin ulcers and an unstable temperament, he often walked on the dam made of white dirt in Guangling, pulling the rope of a boat and singing to amuse himself. When he received offerings, he would instantly give them to others. He did not have a fixed abode, sometimes hiding and sometimes appearing. At that time, Tan Zhi of Gaoping assumed the position of Prefect of Jiangdu. Hearing of his name, the prefect requested Shizong’s presence. The monk was witty and clear in communication, erudite regarding history, and eloquent about metaphysics and Confucianism. He made a verse: “Suffering will not end if desire exists; without craving, troubles will cease. It is better to be a man of empty mind, pulling a rope and wearing dark clothes. Floating in this world, do not get the boat fixed. Then, one can stop clinging to secular affairs and aspire to abide on marvelous peaks.” Tan Zhi then understood that he was extraordinary and thus sent him back to where he was. He offered 20 bolts of cloth to him; however, Shizong gave them all to beggars.

Later, a Daoist priest, whose name was unknown, always carried a staff and a box with him. He once visited the Magistrate of Haiyan¹ at dusk, asking: “If I travel for a few days and want to borrow someone from you. Will you agree?” The magistrate replied: “As you wish.” Thus, the priest chose an ugly duck-tending boy wearing worn clothes and left with him. Very soon, they arrived at the top of a mountain, where a cottage was located. Three priests stayed in it. Meeting the visiting priest, they chatted with excitement. The boy could not understand what they talked about. At noon, the priest asked for food for the boy and got a small bowl of congee that looked like cooked Ay Tsao,² which appeased the hunger. When it

1 Haiyan was in Zhejiang Province.

2 Ay Tsao is a Chinese medical herb that looks like mugwort.

was getting dark, the priest said goodbye and wanted to return. At this moment, someone in the room asked: “Do you know where Shizong is? When will his period of exile end?” The priest replied: “Shizong is on the white dirt dam; calculating the time, his exile should be over soon.” Thereupon, the man in the room wrote a letter, saying: “Please deliver this note to him.” The priest gave the letter to the little boy. At dawn, they returned to the county town and met with the magistrate; the priest requested: “I would like to stay at your place for a few days.” The magistrate replied: “Very well!” He then asked: “What is in the box?” “Just letters,” replied the priest.

The priest slept in the official hall, putting the box and staff at his bedside. The magistrate wanted to take a look and made someone steal the box. The priest already knew this, so he suspended the box and the staff high and then lay down underneath them, which made the theft impossible. Shortly after, the priest told the magistrate: “I planned to stay here for some time, but you would always steal my belongings, so I leave now.” The magistrate summoned the boy who had traveled with the priest and asked about the trip. The boy said that the priest asked him to hold his staff. Traveling like flying, he seemed to have heard the waves under them. The boy added: The letter that was to be delivered was still in his pocket. The magistrate opened and read it, but he could not understand it. Then, he had the letter copied and resealed. He asked a man to accompany the boy to deliver the letter to Shizong at the white dirt dam. The latter opened the envelope and was surprised, asking: “How did you get a letter from the priest in Penglai?”¹ Later, Shizong moved to Wuhui² in the south. Passing by a fishery, he saw fishermen catching fish relentlessly. Shizong then took a bath in the upper reaches, hence the shoals of fish scattered. This was an example of how did he saved lives.

1 The Penglai were legendary islands in the East China Sea where immortals live, according to Chinese mythology.

2 Wuhui was in Zhejiang Province.

Afterwards, Shizong abided at Da Temple on Mount Long in Shangyu County. He was good at lecturing on *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi*; he was also versed in *the Analects of Confucius* and *the Book of Filial Piety*. Nevertheless, he was humble and stayed low key; the public did not know him. Xie Shou of Kuaiji, Wei Maizhi, and Fangzhi were erudite, and they all respected Shizong as their teacher. Later, the monk who lived with Shizong heard him talking to someone during the night, much of the conversation relating to matters on the Penglai Islands. The next morning, Shizong was missing. Tao Yuanming¹ composed *The Note of Meeting Three Unusual Masters at White Dirt Dam* 記白土埭遇三異法師; Shizong is one of them. Someone said that when a trader was traveling on the sea, he saw a monk on an isolated island who requested that a letter be delivered to Shizong. The trader put the letter in the cabin; his companion wanted to take a look, but the envelope stuck on the floor and could not be picked up. Arriving at the white dirt dam, the letter flew by itself to Shizong, who caught it and left.

¹ Tao Yuanming (365-427) was a famous poet and hermit during the Eastern Jin and Liu Song Dynasties.

8. Beidu in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Seng Quzha Zhang Nu

Beidu's 杯度 original name is unknown. He often crossed rivers in a wooden cup, hence his nickname.¹ He first appeared in Jizhou; paying little attention to details, he had extraordinary powers, and his origin fascinated the public. He once stayed with a family in the north where a golden statue was stored. One day, Beidu stole the statue. When the master of the house found out, he ran out of the house and saw Beidu walking slowly at the front. The host then chased after him on a horse but did not catch him. Beidu came to the Mengjin ferry place and put a wooden cup in the river; the cup floated on the water and carried him towards the other side. Needless of wind or rowing, the cup moved fast; he shortly reached the other shore. Afterwards, he arrived in the capital, Jiankang. Looking like he was in his 40s, he wore ragged clothes that barely covered his body, speaking and acting in a moody manner. Sometimes, he took a bath by breaking the ice of a river; sometimes, he climbed up the mountain wearing wooden slippers. Other times, he came to the market alone, only taking a reed hassock² with him.

When he came to Yanxian Temple the first time, the abbot, Fayi, allocated him to an auxiliary room. Later, Beidu wanted to go to Guazhou;³ coming to the river side, he wanted to board the boat but was told that the boatman would not carry him. Beidu hence crossed his feet, stood in the cup, and recited mantras while looking around. The cup floated by itself and reached the northern bank on a straight path. Then, he walked towards Guangling. In a village on his way, a Li family was holding an eight precepts event.⁴ Beidu did not know the master of the family but entered the precept hall

1 Beidu means “cross the river by cup” in Chinese.

2 A round shaped hassock made of reeds with a lid; objects can be put inside.

3 Both Guazhou and Guangling refer to Yangzhou today.

4 The eight precepts (Sanskrit: *aṣṭāṅga-sīla*) is a list of precepts that are observed by lay devotees on observance days and festivals, where only one meal will be served within the day.

and sat down, putting the reed hassock under the hall steps. People disliked his ugly appearance thus did not respect him. Master Li wanted to move the hassock aside, since it blocked the way; several people could not lift it. After Beidu had his meal, he took it with him and smiled, saying: "The four heavenly kings had a good time at the Li family's event." At that moment, a man saw four boys of a few inches long with lovely looks and bright clothes staying in the hassock; he then followed Beidu to check it out but lost him. Three days later, Beidu was seen sitting under lush trees on the western side of the village. Master Li knelt down to pay homage to him and invited the monk to his house, offering board and lodging to him. Beidu did not only eat vegetarian food, eating meat, drinking wine, and having pungent vegetables¹ without any difference from ordinary people. When people offered to him, he might or might not accept.

Liu Boxing of Pei Principality, the Prefect of Yanzhou, sent an envoy to invite Beidu. Carrying the hassock, the latter went to Yanzhou. The prefect asked his subordinates to show him the hassock, but a dozen of people could not move it. Liu Boxing came to look in person, finding scruffy clothes and a wooden cup in it. Later, Beidu returned to the Li family, staying over 30 days. One day in the morning, he suddenly said: "I want to acquire a Buddhist gown; I will handle it before noon." Then, he left but did not come back before dusk. The entire village smelled a rare fragrance, and people suspected that it was due to him; hence, they looked for him everywhere. He was found dead, lying on a ragged gown under the northern rock. Before his head and behind his feet, lotus flowers were blossoming and sending forth an extreme fragrance, yet the flowers withered after one night. The villagers buried him. A few days later, someone came from the north, saying that he had seen Beidu walking towards Pengcheng carrying the hassock. Thereupon, people opened his coffin and only found his shoes.

¹ Five vegetables that have strong smells are prohibited for Buddhist practitioners; they are garlic, onions, scallions, chives, and leeks.

Upon Beidu's arrival in Pengcheng, he met a commoner named Huang Xin who deeply believed in Buddhism. As soon as Huang Xin saw Beidu, he paid homage to the monk and invited him to his home, which was shabby and needy. They could merely have wheat grains as food. However, Beidu had them like dessert. After staying a half a year, one day, he told Huang Xin: "Go get 36 reed hassocks. I need them." The host replied: "I only have 10 at home, and I am too poor to buy more." Beidu said: "Just search thoroughly, and you will have them." Following the instruction, Huang Xin really found 36 hassocks and put them in the yard. Although the number was met, many of them were broken. When Huang Xin checked them again, they all became brand new. Beidu sealed the hassocks then asked the host to reopen them; surprisingly, they were filled with money, nearly a million in total. Some insightful ones said that the money was collected by Beidu in different places in many incarnations and taken back to Huang Xin. The host got the money because of his own merits. Staying another year, Beidu then intended to leave; Huang Xing prepared some food for him. The next morning, the food was there but the monk was gone.

A month later, Beidu returned to the capital. At that time, Zhu Wenshu lived at the lakeside. He followed the Dharma since his youth, and Beidu went to his home several times. Zhu Wenshu told Beidu: "As your disciple, I want to renounce the world, and I hope you can tonsure me. If I could join a good monastic order, I would like to be your dharma friend." Beidu did not reply. Zhu Wenshu said with joy: "The Buddha-Dharma stays in peace; you have tacitly permitted."

Later, Beidu traveled to Wu Prefecture to the east. On the way, he saw a man fishing with a hook, hence he asked for fish. The man gave him a dead one. Beidu held the fish in his hands back and forth and then threw it in the water; the fish revived and swam away. Shortly, he saw another man fishing with a net. Again, he asked for fish; this man did not give him anything but scolded him with anger. Beidu picked up two cobblestones and threw them in

the water. In an instant, two buffaloes fought in the water and tore the net to bits. Then, the buffalo disappeared, and so did Beidu. Afterwards, the monk came to the Songjiang River;¹ putting a lid up-side-down in the water and riding on it, he crossed the river. He passed through Kuaiji, Shan County and climbed up Mount Tiantai; a few months later, he returned to the capital.

At that time, a foreign śramaṇa named Seng Quzha 僧佉咤 abided at Changgan Temple in the capital. Another visiting monk named Seng Wu shared a room with Seng Quzha. At night, Seng Wu saw Seng Quzha lifting the temple into the sky, entering the clouds, and then putting it down. Seng Wu did not disclose it, just deeply admiring his roommate.

Another man named Zhang Nu 張奴 was their contemporary; no one knew his origin or saw him eat, yet Zhang Nu was always joyful, wearing thin clothes all year long. One time, when Seng Quzha walked on the street, he met Zhang Nu, who was smiling at him. Seng Quzha said: “I saw Cai Tun in the east, asked Ma Sheng questions in the south, and met Wang Nian in the north; I am going to look for Beidu but meet you here.” Zhang Nu thus wrote a poem on a locust tree: “In the boundless and indistinct universe, the truth is lit in clarity. Why do the ignorant suffer for their stupidity? The land of bliss is ahead but few know they are going, yet the painful path is crowded with the silly. Holding the aspiration of cypress and pine trees, do not be afraid of gale and frost. Easily walking out of purple clouds and singing beyond the sky, an empty mind can transcend forms and see its destiny. The sunlight of the Dharma will shine on Empress Han; the starry glow of the Teachings will pass to Prince Yin.² Hiding ourselves in various places, you and I are

1 The Songjiang River is near present-day Shanghai.

2 Prince Yin, named Li Dan (662-716), later became the fifth emperor, Ruizong, of the Tang Dynasty (618-709). His mother, Wu Zetian, snatched away the throne from him and came to be the only female emperor in China; she was a great advocate of Buddhism and made the religion flourish. It is speculated that the Empress Han (漢後 or Chinese Empress) in the poem meant her. Afterwards, Li Dan's son, Li Longji, took back power from the Wu family and became

not immortal. Watching sentient beings migrating in the cycle of rebirth, I feel sorry for these people. Just making a verse to describe the tip of my insights, how can I pour them all out?”

Seng Quzha said: “Earlier, I saw you meditating in a mountainous cave and sitting for a hundred years, practicing great compassion in mind and mindfulness of the skeleton.”¹ Then, he made a eulogy: “The constantly changing world brings gain and loss. Willing to make heavenly and worldly beings full of joy, only this sage foresees their destiny. Discerning that forms are as unstable as bubbles, he sees shadows change as fast as lightning. Considering fame and luxury as fetters, he despises rank and title. Seeing the forms and knowing their emptiness nature, he scorns phenomena for their impermanence. Renouncing existence, he abandons habits and attachment. Shading under green branches, he sits on a cushion of white straw. Farming for food and clothes himself, he drinks spring water in the mountains. Practicing both wisdom and concentration, he is in touch with the Suchness. Loving kindness and compassion increasing, he deeply contemplates without tiredness.” Thereupon, they bid farewell to each other. Afterwards, no one saw the two figures again. Purportedly, bringing Seng Wu with him, Seng Quzha went to Mount Heng in the south and did not return. Later, Zhang Nu met with Beidu and had a long conversation that people could not understand. Beidu stayed in the capital for some time but was untraceable; when people wanted to invite him, he might or might

Emperor Xuanzong; however, he devoutly followed Daoism. In the late Tang Dynasty, Buddhism was persecuted by Emperor Wuzong; it was the last and most devastating purge among the three major persecutions of that religion in Chinese history. It is conjectured that Zhang Nu might want to unveil the vicissitude of Buddhism in his poetry; Empress Han and Prince Yin might refer to the early Tang Dynasty (There was another Prince Yin in Chinese history, but he was before the establishment of Han Dynasty (202 BCE) and prior to the spread of Buddhism in China; he is hence irrelevant to the context here). The Buddhist prosperity in the early Tang Dynasty occurred a hundred years after Shi Huijiao (497-554), the author’s age, and over two hundred years after Beidu’s time in the Liu Song Dynasty.

1 Practicing great compassion and mindfulness of the skeleton refers to compassion meditation and impurity meditation, which were Buddhist ways to cultivate compassion and renouncement.

not accept it.

At that time, a Chen family in Nanzhou¹ was wealthy. Beidu went to their house and was treated with due courtesy. Hearing that Beidu was seen in the capital, the father and sons of the family did not believe it, thus they went to the capital in a group of five to verify. They really saw a Beidu, who had the same figure and look as the one at their home. The Father Chen offered this Beidu in the capital a box of sweat ginger, a knife, incense, and a handkerchief. This Beidu then ate the sweat ginger and put the rest on his lap. Trying to figure out if this is the same one as at their family home, two brothers stayed with this Beidu, and the other three went back home to check. The Beidu at home behaved as normal and also had incense and a knife on his lap, yet they were surprised that he had not eaten the sweet ginger. The Beidu at home explained: “The knife is blunt and needs to be sharpened.” When the two brothers returned home, they said that the Beidu in the capital had gone to Lingjiu Temple. Abruptly, the Beidu at the Chens asked for yellow paper for writing, yet the characters he wrote were invisible; thus, the two sides of the paper were blank. Master Chen asked: “What, Venerable, are you writing?” Beidu did not reply, so the Chen’s felt in the dark.

At that time, Zhu Lingqi of Wu Prefecture returned from Korea; encountering a storm, the ship drifted on the ocean for nine days and arrived at an island where high mountains extended. To collect firewood, they entered the mountains and found human tracks. Zhu Lingqi walked down the path to beg for food with a few people. After a dozen li, they heard the sound of a Buddhist hand bell and saw the smoke of incense, thus they collectively recited the name of the Buddha and paid homage towards that direction. After a while, in front of them, a temple that was magnificent, sublime, and decorated with seven kinds of treasures appeared. A dozen monks were there, not moving as if they were stone figures. Zhu Lingqi’s group worshiped accordingly. When they quickly walked

1 Nanzhou was in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu.

a few steps away, they could hear voices chanting; they looked at the monks again, and they were still stone figures. Zhu Lingqi and his companions said: "They are saint monks, so we cannot see them due to our sins." Therefore, they repented piously. Continuing to walk ahead, they saw real people who had prepared food for them. The dishes were tasty and different from worldly ones. After the meal, Zhu Lingqi and the group paid homage to these people and prayed to be able to return home rapidly. A monk said: "This place is 200 thousand li away from the capital; as long as you are sincere, you do not have to worry." He then asked Zhu Lingqi: "Do you know a monk named Beidu?" "Yes," replied the voyager. The monk pointed to the northern wall where they put a bag, a staff, and a bowl, saying: "Those objects belong to Beidu; on your return, please give the bowl to him." He wrote a letter and put in an envelope; also giving a green bamboo stick to Zhu Lingqi, he told him: "Just put the stick in front of your ship, close your cabin, and stay inside. Without any effort, you will return home quickly." After bidding farewell, the monk sent a novice to see them off at the entrance, who told them: "Go along this way. It is seven li to your ship; do not go through the path you came." Following the instructions and turning to the west, Zhu Lingqi found the ship after walking about seven li. They did as the monk told them and heard the ship passing above the trees on the mountains, without any sight of water. Three days later, the ship stopped at the Qinhuai River in the capital, Jiankang, and the bamboo stick was gone. Then, the ship reached the Zhuque Gate through the river. They saw Beidu riding on the rail of a big boat, whipping the boat and saying: "Horse, horse, why do not you move." Many bystanders were watching. Zhu Lingqi stood on the ship and paid homage to Beidu; the latter then came up and received the letter and bowl. After reading the message, whose letters could not be recognized by the others, Beidu laughed out loud, saying: "Now they let me go back!" He took the bowl and threw it up to the clouds and then caught it, saying: "I have not seen this bowl for four thousand years."

Beidu abided at Yanxian Temple with Fayi most of the time. As

he received the extraordinary bowl, a multitude of people came to the temple to take a look. Some said: “Zhu Lingqi’s ship drifted to a barren mountain; a monk came to them saying: ‘I am Venerable Beidu’s disciple. Previously, I died at Yecheng Temple in the capital, holding his bowl. Now please return it to my teacher. Just ask someone to stand in front on the ship, holding the bowl, and another one to operate the rudder straight. The ship will go home smoothly.’ As he said, everyone was saved.”

On the day when the Beidu in the capital rode on the big boat, the Beidu in Nanzhou went out from the Chen family home in the morning and did not return in the evening. The next morning, Master Chen saw six characters on their door: “In this meritorious family descended sage.” These characters could be marginally recognized. Since then, the Beidu in Nanzhou disappeared.

The Beidu in the capital was still commuting between the town and mountains, frequently reciting mantra to help people. At that time, Yu Chang’s maid stole some objects and ran away. The family looked everywhere but could not find her. Then they came to Beidu to seek advice. Beidu told them: “That maid has died in the empty tomb by the riverside in the inner town.” When the Yu family went to check, they really found her body.

Kong Ningzi, who was the official of Huangmen Shilang,¹ got diarrhea in the office and sent a messenger to invite Beidu. After chanting a mantra, Beidu said: “It is difficult to cure the disease; I have seen four ghosts whose bodies were chopped.” Kong Ningzi cried, saying: “Formerly, when Sun En² rose in revolt, the insurgent soldiers broke into our house; my parents and uncle were killed brutally.” Shortly afterwards, Kong Ningzi died.

1 Huangmen Shilang was a title for a secretary of the emperor.

2 Sun En, style name Lingxiu, was a Daoist priest in the Eastern Jin Dynasty; he later became the leader of an insurgent army and fought with the Jin government in eastern coastal areas. In the end, he failed and killed himself by jumping into the sea.

Qi Xie's wife, Lady Humu, also fell sick, and the doctors could do nothing to help her. The family held a dana banquet for monks, during which a monk named Seng Cong advised them to invite Beidu to save her. After the latter arrived, he just recited the mantra once, and the patient recovered. Qi Xie thus prostrated in front of Beidu and followed him as his teacher; he made a biography for him that described his supernatural powers, which were similar to the aforementioned contents.

During the ninth month of the third year in the Yuanjia Period,¹ Beidu bid farewell to Qi Xie and went to the east. He gave Qi Xie ten thousand coins and objects, requesting that the latter hold dana banquets for him then left. Beidu got diarrhea and died when he passed by Chishan Lake.² Directly afterwards, Qi Xie arranged his funeral, carried his body back to Jianye, and buried him at Mount Fuzhou. In the fourth year of the Yuanjia Period, a man of Wuxing named Shao Xin who followed the Buddha-Dharma devoutly got typhoid, and no one dared to give him treatment. He thus cried and prayed to Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. Suddenly, a monk came to him; claiming to be a disciple of Beidu, he said: "Do not worry; my teacher will come to treat you soon." The patient replied, "But Master Beidu has died. How could he come?" The monk returned: "It is not difficult." Then, he brought out one-tenth of a liter of medical powder from his pocket and asked for the patient to take it; the patient recovered instantly.

Another man, named Du Seng'ai, lived under the southern hill and used to wait on Beidu. His son was seriously ill, thus the man thought of Beidu, wishing the master could recite the mantra for his son. The next day, Beidu visited in normal behavior and recited mantra for the son, who was then healed.

On the eighth day of the third month in the fifth year of the Yuanjia Period, Beidu came to Qi Xie's home again, which was witnessed

1 The third year of the Yuanjia Period was 427 CE.

2 Chishan Lake is between Nanjing and Zhenjiang.

by Lyu Daohui, Wenren Dazhi, Du Tianqi, and Shui Qiuxi. They were all frightened, got up, and worshiped Beidu. The latter said: "This is a perilous year; you all should accumulate merits. Master Fayi is virtuous; you can go to his place and help renovate the old temple to dispel disasters." Shortly, a monk called him from above; Beidu bid them farewell, saying: "I shall go to the Jiaozhou and Guangzhou areas; I will not come back again." Qi Xie and the others saw him off with attentive courtesy, yet he vanished from then onwards. Some said they saw him, but it is unprovable, so it should not be kept in the record.

9. Shi Tanshi of Chang'an in the Bogus Wei Government during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Tanshi 釋曇始 was a native of Guanzhong; after his renouncement of the world, multiple marvelous deeds happened. At the end of the Taiwu Period¹ during Emperor Xiaowu's reign in the Jin Dynasty, taking several dozens of sutras and Vinaya texts, he went to preach the Dharma in Liaodong. He promoted the doctrines of the three Vehicles and made the observance of precepts the foundation. Thanks to Tanshi, Korean people started to listen to the Dharma. During the first year of the Yixi Period, he returned to Guanzhong and held dharma talks in the Chang'an area. His feet were fairer than his face, and when he walked in muddy fields with bare feet, they did not get stained. He was hence known as the "White-Footed Monk" by the public.

At that time, Wang Hu of Chang'an, whose uncle had died many years prior, suddenly saw his uncle coming back. The uncle brought Wang Hu to tour each corner of hell to demonstrate the law of cause-effect. Then, Wang Hu bid farewell, and the uncle said: "Since you have seen the karmic effects, you should follow the White-Footed Monk." Wang Hu searched for the monk based on his uncle's description; he only found that Tanshi's feet were fairer than his face, then respecting him as his teacher.

During the last year of the Jin Dynasty, Helian Bobo of the Huns in the north captured Guanzhong, killing innumerable people. Tanshi was arrested at that time, yet the weapons could not harm him. Helian Bobo was amazed and ordered the pardoning of all śramaṇas.

Thus, Tanshi escaped into the mountains and waters, practicing asceticism. Later, Tuoba Tao conquered Chang'an and abused his power in the Guanzhong and Luoyang region. Cui Hao of Boling²

1 The Taiwu Period: 376-396.

2 Cui Hao (381-450) was an important politician and strategist in the early

learned heretical skills in his youth, harboring suspicion towards Buddhism. Since he assumed the bogus prime minister position, Tuoba Tao trusted and relied on him. With the help of Kou the heavenly master,¹ Cui Hao persuaded Tuoba Tao into issuing a decree to ban Buddhism by telling the tyrant that Buddhism could not help but hurt the people. Bewitched by their words, Tuoba Tao persecuted the Buddha-Dharma in the seventh year of the Taiping Zhenjun Period,² dispatching armies to burn and loot Buddhist monasteries. He also issued a decree to stop the religious practice of all monks and nuns in his territory. The escaped ones would be caught and executed. Thus, in the Northern Wei's territory, śramaṇas were extinct. Tanshi stayed in an inaccessible area that the troops could not reach.

In the last year of the Taiping Zhenjun Period, Tanshi knew that Tuoba Tao was dying; holding a staff, he abruptly appeared in front of the palace gate on New Year's Day. This was reported to the ruler: "A monk whose feet are fairer than his face entered in the gate." Tuoba Tao ordered his execution, yet the soldiers could not hurt the monk. Then, they reported the development to the emperor. Tuoba Tao was furious and tried to kill Tanshi with his own sword in person. However, the monk's body did not have any other change than a thread-like mark when it was cut by the sword. Tuoba Tao ordered for Tanshi to be fed to the tigers in the northern garden. The tigers crouched and did not dare approach the monk. When they tried to put the heavenly master close to the cage, the tigers roared.

Until then, Tuoba Tao understood that the prestige of Buddhism far exceeded Daoism. Right away, he invited Tanshi to the imperial hall, paid homage to the monk's feet, and repented his evil deeds. Tanshi hence started to expound the Dharma and explicated the

Northern Wei Dynasty.

1 Kou Qianzhi claimed to have become immortal through a branch of Daoism, namely Tianshi Dao, which represented the founder of Daoism in the world.

2 In 446, the first among the three major persecutions of Buddhism in Chinese history took place. Tuoba Tao was titled Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei Dynasty; it was thus known as the Taiwu persecution of Buddhism.

cause-effect law. Deeply remorseful and frightened, the emperor fell ill. Both Cui Hao and Kou got malignant diseases. Holding a grudge for their temptation to persecute Buddhism, Tuoba Tao killed everyone in Cui and Kou's families and clans, announcing that the country should restore the belief in Buddhism. Soon after, Tuoba Tao died, and his grandson Tuoba Jun succeeded to the throne. Henceforth, the Buddha-Dharma has been widely transmitted to present day. Afterwards, Tanshi's whereabouts were unknown.

10. Shi Falang of Gaochang during the Liu Song Dynasty Zhizheng

Shi Falang 釋法朗, a native of Gaochang,¹ practiced asceticism and observed the precepts diligently from his youth; he also demonstrated many marvelous signs. He was humble and hid his virtuous deeds; no one could estimate his stage of enlightenment. Falang's teacher, Shi Fajin, was a prominent śramaṇa as well. Fajin once sat in a room with the door closed; suddenly seeing Falang in front of him, he asked from which entrance the disciple came. "From the keyhole of the door," replied the disciple. Fajin said: "You came along with the visiting monks from afar. It is noon now, and I want to prepare lunch for you." Hence Fajin prepared the food for them, but only the sound of spoons and bowls could be heard, without any sign of working people. Earlier, Huiyuan of Mount Lu gave a Buddhist gown to Fajin; then the latter wanted to present it to Falang as a gift. The disciple said: "The mass has gone; I will get it on another day." Later, a kitchen monk came to Fajin to fetch the gown, and the master gave it to him right away. Afterwards, Fajin asked the kitchen monks if anyone took it, but no one admitted it. He hence realized that the saint monk came for the gown himself in a different incarnation."

During the persecution in the Northern Wei Dynasty, Falang went to Kucha. The King of Kucha once requested to the grand meditation master: "If any awakened monk comes to our country, please inform me so that I can offer to him." When Falang arrived in Kucha, the grand master reported to the king; thereupon the king treated the visitor with the highest courtesy, which was protocol for the saints. Later, Falang passed away in Kucha. On the day of the cremation, Falang's eyebrows spouted out two springs towards the sky. Everyone was amazed by this wonder, thus building a stupa for his relics. When people from the Western Regions came to the north of China, they all talked about this news.

¹ Gaocheng is in Xinjia today; it used to be an important city and venue for scriptural translation in ancient China.

At that time, a śramaṇa named Zhizheng 智 整 also observed precepts and asceticism strictly, showing extraordinary deeds. Yang Nandang the patron venerated him. Later, he moved to a stone cave in Hanxia Mountain¹ and disappeared since then.

¹ Hanxia Mountain is In Xihe, Gansu.

11. Shao Shuo of Tongyun Temple on Mount Min during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shao Shuo¹ 邵碩, a native of Shikang², had the original surname of Shao and given name of Shuo. Without a fixed abode, he sometimes he behaved like a madman; he had a big mouth and ugly look. Children liked to chase and tease him. He liked to drink his fill with people at bars. By nature, he was fond of the Dharma; every time he saw the Buddhist images, he had to worship and praise it, shedding tears sorrowfully. Shao Shuo had three sons and two daughters; the biggest boy renounced the world. While Shao Shuo joined the monastic order in the early Liu Song Dynasty; calling himself Shuo Gong,³ he did not distinguish day and night for his travels and work. Touring all the counties in Yizhou Prefecture, he went to the southern barbarian areas and persuaded people into good deeds by joking about what happened spontaneously. Entering in a family home, if he slept on the floor, death would strike this family; if he begged for a fine mat, the child would die. Local people believed in his predictions as omens. On the eighth day of the fourth month, a Buddhist parade was held in Chengdu; Shao Shuo played as a lion and crawled on the ground. The same day, people saw him crawling as lion in Pi County as well. Then, the locals realized that Shao Shuo incarnated in different places.

Xiao Huikai and Liu Mengming, Prefects of Yizhou, respected him. Liu Mengming dressed his two secondary wives with men's clothes and tested Shao Shuo, saying: "How about I give these two persons to you as your assistants?" Shao Shuo liked to speak in rhyming verse, so he then responded: "I would rather beg for wine and drink myself slow than compete with a husband that is old." On the next day, Shao Shuo unexpectedly wore a cloth hat to meet Liu Mengming. Shortly after, the latter died. Formerly, Shen Zhongyu, Liu Mengming's assistant, wanted to modify the criminal

1 Shao Shuo (d. 473).

2 Shikang, in Sichuan today.

3 Shuo Gong means Master Shuo or Sir Shuo.

law by aggravating the punishment of caning and whipping. Shao Shuo told him: "Loud lamentation will increase since this change. If you eliminate caning and whipping, you will be able to assume the position of prefect in the future." Shen Zhongyu listened to the monk and made the change accordingly. After the death of Liu Mengming, Shen Zhongyu was promoted to the position.

On the 1st day of the ninth month in the first year of the Yuanhui Period during the Liu Song Dynasty, Shao Shuo died at Tongyun Temple on Mount Min. On his deathbed, he told a monk, Fajin: "Hurry up, tie my shoes on my feet and put my body in the open." Fajin did accordingly, putting his body in the rear yard of the temple. Two days later, his body vanished. Soon, someone from Pi County came to Fajin and told the monk: "One night, I saw Shuo Gong walking on the street, only wearing one shoe. He mumbled: 'Young guys are not reliable, so I lost one of my shoes.'" Fajin was shocked, immediately checking with the novice who handled this matter. The novice answered: "When I was about to send him to the backyard, the shoe on his right foot was lost because I did not fasten it well due to my fear." Shao Shuo's whereabouts were mysterious, and no one could guess where he was; later, he completely disappeared.

12. Shi Hui'an of Pipa Temple in Jiangling during the Liu Song Dynasty Senglan Fawei

Shi Hui'an 釋 慧 安 , origins unknown, was captured in his childhood and became a slave of someone in Jingzhou. The host liked him very much because he worked diligently. At the age of 18, he was allowed to join the monastic order, abiding at Pipa Temple. The mass scorned him for his mediocre look and manner. When he was a novice, the monks in the order sat in a row, and Shi Hui'an was often requested to serve water for everyone. Holding an empty bottle, from the head to the end, the water never exhausted, which amazed the mass. After his full ordination, he showed more of his power. Once, he wanted to practice poṣadha with his school friend, Huiji, in the hall on a moonless night at the end of the month.¹ The door was locked; Hui'an held Huiji's hand and entered through the door crack. They left in the same manner. Huiji was too shocked to speak. Later, Hui'an and Huiji met underneath a stupa; Hui'an told his school friend: "I am going to have a long voyage, so I have to bid farewell to you today." Immediately, deities, maidens of musical band, and fragrant flowers were seen filling the sky. Huiji was frightened and scared, not being able to say a word. Hui'an continued: "Please do not ever talk about my deeds, or you will incur trouble for yourself. You can only talk to a layman in the southwest who is a newly awakened bodhisattva about this." Thereupon, he said goodbye and left. Along with traders, he traveled to Hunan and Sichuan. On the way, he got serious diarrhea and then told the owner of the boat: "My life is ending. Please put me on the bank; I do not need a coffin for I will give my body to birds and worms after my death." The trader followed his will, putting him on the river bank. That night, the trader saw flame rising from Hui'an's body. Feeling curious and scared, he moved closer to look and found the master dead. However, when the trader arrived at eastern Hunan, he found that Hui'an had already been

¹ Poṣadha is a precept discussion organized in a Sangha every 15 days on the 15th and 29th or 30th in a lunar month to preach the precepts and repent for their breaches.

there and disappeared in an instant.

Later, Huiji came to Zhiqi Temple to visit Liu Qiu, a hermit of Nanyang, telling him all about Hui'an's deeds. Liu Qiu thus paid homage to Hui'an remotely and told Huiji: "He is an awakened one that has entered the flame Samadhi."¹

At that time, Senglan 僧覽 and Fawei 法衛 in Sichuan demonstrated supernatural powers as well; their contemporaries conjectured that they had achieved awakening.

1 The flame samādhi, also styled as the fourth dhyāna, is a meditative absorption in which bright flames come forth from one's body, and the body is immolated.

13. Shi Fakui the Novice of Zhiyuan Temple in the Capital during Southern Qi Dynasty Fakai

Shi Fakui¹ 釋法匱 was from a Ruan family in Wuxing. Renouncing the world in his childhood, he followed Fakai 法楷 at Zhiyuan Temple as his teacher. Fakai was erudite and good at sutras and history. Wang Huan and Wang Su of Langya respected him as their teacher as well. With quiet and humble characteristics, Fakui did not talk much or get involved in dispute, observing the precepts naturally and diligently. He could recite *the Lotus Sutra* by heart. In the Sangha, a senior master named Chensheng was sick; Fakui waited on him carefully. When the senior master died, the novice arranged his funeral with due courtesy. Accumulating the offerings he got during assemblies, he built a Buddhist statue. After the statue was completed, he organized an assembly to open the eyes of the statue.²

His relatives lived at a big market in the capital. One morning, Fakui went to his relatives' home and then to Dinglin Temple, before returning to Zhiyuan Temple. Later, people in the three places double checked his itinerary and realized that they all saw him having lunch in their place; he was actually attending all three meals at the same time. That night, he returned to his room and died quietly. His body was soft and fragrant with his fingers counting two. The mass realized that he had attained the second fruit of sakṛd-āgāmin.³ However, he was merely a novice at the time. His marvelous deeds were reported to Emperor Wu of the Southern Qi Dynasty, so the emperor attended the temple in person, providing a banquet for the monks in the assembly. Crown Prince Wenhui and Prince Wenxuan paid homage to Fakui in his room and arranged his funeral. The public crowded the temple, donating money and

1 Shi Fakui (d. 489).

2 Opening the eyes of the statue refers to inauguration.

3 Sakṛd-āgāmin is the Sanskrit referring to a once-returner, the second fruit of Arhat cultivation.

materials. Using the money, the Sangha built Zhiyuan Stupa. This happened in the seventh year of the Yongming Period.¹

¹ The Yongming Period (483-493) was the reign of Emperor Wu, who was named Xiao Ze, the second emperor of the Southern Qi Dynasty.

14. Shi Senghui of Jingzhou during the Southern Qi Dynasty Huiyuan

Shi Senghui¹ 釋僧慧, originally surnamed Liu, had unknown origins but abided in Jingzhou for dozens of years. After Liu Qiu, a hermit of Nanyang, established Zhiqi Temple, Shi Senghui was invited to be the abbot. His contemporaries saw him living in the same place over 50 years, yet he did not turn old. He acted in a casual manner and did not care about dignity. When he visited the diseased, if he was unhappy or stared at a patient that one would die; when he was joyful, that patient would recover. People believed in his signs. Those who did not have a connection with him would try to find a way to seek advice from him. He once came to the river side and asked for a ferry, but the ferry keeper told him that the boat was too small to let him board. Soon, he was seen on the other side of the river, which amazed people on both banks. Zhi Tian of Zhongshan and Ju Tan of Nanping both invited him to a dana meal on the same date. Senghui attended both at the same time. Later, the two families found out that he split himself in two.

During the Yongming Period, Senghui was invited to Jiankang by Crown Prince Wenhui; he went to the capital and met with Baozhi on his way. Baozhi touched his back and only said three words: “Red dragon’s son.” When Senghui returned to Jingzhou, he saw Liu Jingrui, the secretary of General Zhengxi; he suddenly held the latter’s hand and cried. A few days later, Liu Jingrui was killed by the prefect. Later, Sengrui came to the south of Xiangzhou town and claimed that there were stone tablets under the earth at a specific spot. To test his words, people dug there and really uncovered two tablets. His whereabouts were unknown afterwards. Some said that he died in Jiangling during the seventh year of the Yongyuan Period.

At that time, another prominent monk at Changsha Temple in Jiangling named Shi Huiyuan 釋慧遠 was originally Huiyin the

1 Shi Senghui (d. c. 500).

śramaṇa's slave. Huiyin discovered his belief in Buddhism then tonsured him. Huiyuan practiced pratyutpanna-samādhi¹ and got supernatural powers after a few years of cultivation. He was able to attend different meetings at the same time and predict the vicissitude of the world.

1 Pratyutpanna-samādhi is the samadhi in which the buddhas of the ten directions are seen as clearly as the stars at night.

15. Shi Huitong of Shouchun during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Huitong 釋慧通, origins unknown, appeared in Shouchun during the Yuanjia Period in the Liu Song Dynasty. Wearing old clothes, he did not have fixed abode. Visiting the villages and alleys, he ate food like ordinary people. Proclaiming himself as Officer Sanqi Zheng,¹ he often predicted future affairs that would later be proved correct. A man named Senggui, who was originally from the suburb of Jiangling, did business in Shouchun. Once, he wanted to go back to his hometown and met Huitong on the way. Huitong asked him to bring some objects to Jiangling. At that moment, Senggui was carrying heavy luggage and thus refused the request. Huitong just put his objects on Senggui's shoulder pole, but Senggui did not feel the burden increase. Marching a few miles with Senggui, Huitong said goodbye and left. Before leaving, he told Senggui: "I have an older sister in Jiangling, a nun named Huixu at Sanceng Temple. Please send a message to her that I will visit her." After these words, he disappeared. Senggui took a look at his shoulder pole, and the objects of Huitong were gone as well.

After Senggui arrived in Jiangling, he found Huixu and passed the message of Huitong to her. Nevertheless, Huixu replied that she did not have such a brother and had no idea why he would say this. Thus, she came to Shouchun herself, trying to find Huitong but failing to find him. Afterwards, when Huitong visited Jiangling, Huixu had died. Huitong entered in his sister's room and asked about Huixu in detail. When he passed by the tombs, he would know the surname of the deceased and the death date. If asked about the information by the relatives of the departed, Huitong's words were all correct. Sometimes, Huitong could know who had committed theft or robbery, stating the details of their offenses. Hence, the thieves would alter their path or escape when they saw Huitong in the distance. Once, he saw a man at the ferry place; surprisingly, he hit the man with his staff, saying: "Hurry up. Sail

1 Sanqi was the position of emperor's cavalry guardian; Zheng is a surname.

back home to see what happened.” When the man arrived at home, his house had been burned to the ground.

In the first year of the Yongyuan Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, Huitong made an unexpected visit to Ren Yang, his acquaintance, asking for wine and saying: “I’m leaving for a long trip now. We will not meet again. I come to appreciate you and want to give you some advice. You should accumulate merits by focusing on wholesome deeds.” After drinking, he moved himself next to the wall and lay down. Looking closely, he was dead. Dozens of days later, someone saw Huitong at the market and chased after and talked to him; the conversation lasted for a while, and then he disappeared.

16. Shi Baozhi of the Capital during the Liang Dynasty

Daoxiang Senglang

Shi Baozhi¹ 釋保誌 was originally from a Zhu family in Jincheng. Renouncing the world in his childhood, he abided at Daolin Temple in the capital and followed Sengjian the śramaṇa as his master to practice Chan. During the first year of the Taishi Period, his attributes suddenly turned eccentric, developing an irregular schedule for work and meals. He had hairs that were a few inches long. He often walked on streets with bare feet, holding a staff with scissors, a mirror, and one or two bolts of cloth hanging on top. During the Jianyuan Period, his super powers gradually began to show. He could survive without developing a starving look after many days of abstaining from food. His words sounded like nonsense when meeting the ears but made sense afterwards. Sometimes, he composed poems, which were proved correct, as if they were prophecy. Nobles and commoners in the capital all worshiped him.

Emperor Wu of the Southern Qi Dynasty reprimanded his bewitching the public, putting him into prison in Jiankang. However, the next morning, he was seen walking on the streets. Going to check in the ward, he was still sitting in the cell. He told the guard: “There are two carts coming with food contained in golden bowls outside the gate; you may go to fetch them.” Indeed, they were sent by the Crown Prince Wenhui of the Southern Qi Dynasty and Xiao Ziliang, the Prince Jingling. Lyu Wenxian, the Prefect of Jiankang, reported this incident to Emperor Wu; the latter hence invited Baozhi into the palace, abiding in the rear hall. Subsequently, an internal banquet was offered, and Baozhi participated with other attendees. Later, it was reported that the master attended a gathering with seven monks on Jingyang Hill. The emperor was angry and ordered an inspection to see if he was gone. The guarding officer reported: “Baozhi is in the palace all the time; he was just now daubing Chinese ink on his body.”

1 Shi Baozhi (418-514).

At that time, Faxian, the Monastic Head, wanted to give Baozhi a piece of clothing, so he sent an envoy to search for him at Longguang Temple and Jibin Temple. Both temples replied: "He stayed here last night but left this morning." They also went to Li Houbo's house, which Baozhi frequented. Li Houbo said: "Yesterday, Baozhi practiced here; he just went bed in the morning and has not woken up yet." The envoy reported this to the Monastic Head, and the latter realized that Baozhi split and stayed in three locations overnight.

Once, Baozhi walked on a cold winter day with a bare back in the open air. Baoliang the śramaṇa wanted to give him a robe; before he told Baozhi, the latter took the robe and left. Sometimes, he would ask people for raw fish slices. When people prepared them for him, he ate his fill and left; later, the fish was found swimming as normal in the basin.

Later, Baozhi empowered Emperor Wu to see Emperor Gao¹ suffering the stabs of an awl and cuts of a knife in hell; as a result, the son abandoned the punishments of knife and awl.

Hu Xie, the imperial guardian of the Southern Qi Dynasty, was afflicted with an illness and invited Baozhi to cure him. Baozhi replied on paper: "Going out tomorrow." The next day, he did not come to Hu Xie's residence, and Hu Xie died. His body was carried out. Then, people realized that the words of "going out" meant Hu Xie's body.

Following Chen Xianda, the Grand General of Taiwei, Yin Qizhi, the assistant General of Sima under the Grand General, intended to go to guard Jiangzhou, bidding farewell to Baozhi. The master painted a tree with crows on its branches, saying: "In emergency,

¹ Emperor Gao of the Southern Qi Dynasty, named Xiao Daocheng, was the father of Emperor Wu.

you could climb on it.” Later, Chen Xianda betrayed¹ the emperor and ordered Yin Qizhi to guard Jiangzhou. After Chen Xianda failed, Yin Qizhi was chased by the governmental cavalry when he escaped to Mount Lu. Seeing a tree that had crows sitting on the branches, just like the painting made by Baozhi, he climbed on it; the birds did not fly away. The troops saw the birds, believed no one on the tree, and returned. Yin Qizhi thus survived.

Sang Yan, a cavalryman of the Southern Qi Dynasty, plotted treason and went to seek advice from Baozhi. The latter saw him in the distance and walked away, speaking loudly: “Besiege the city, plan rebellion, get beheaded and have your chest opened.” Less than ten days later, the insurgence took place; Sang Yan was defeated and captured when running to Zhufang.² He was really beheaded and opened at the chest.

Xiao Hui, the Prince of Boyang Zhonglie, once invited Baozhi to meet him in his residence. During the interview, Baozhi suddenly asked people to find fruits of the chaste tree³ and put them on the door. No one understood the reason. Shortly, the prince was nominated as the Prefect of Jingzhou. This was just an example of the master’s prophecies.

Baozhi often stayed at Xinghuang and Jingming Temples. When the current emperor exercised control of his power,⁴ he respected Baozhi deeply; yet his residence had forbidden Baozhi from entering during the Southern Qi Dynasty. After the emperor was

1 Chen Xianda (427-500) was a famous general and military leader in the Southern Qi Dynasty. When Xiao Baojuan succeeded to the throne as emperor, he abused his power with brutality and indulgence. Chen Xianda did not want to stay in the capital, so he moved to the position in Jiangxi Province; afterwards, he fought against the emperor but was slaughtered. The emperor was killed by courtiers a year later.

2 Zhufang is in Jiangsu today.

3 The chaste tree, in Chinese, is pronounced: “Jing” tree; Jingzhou was implied by Baozhi.

4 The emperor of the author’s time, Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty, took the throne from the Southern Qi Dynasty in 502.

crowned, he issued a decree: “Although Master Shi Baozhi abides in this world, his spirit travels in the invisible realms and attains great calmness. Water and fire cannot encroach him; snakes and tigers are unable to harm him. As for his comprehension of Buddhist doctrines, it is above the śrāvaka vehicle; his renouncement surpasses immortal hermits. How can we confine his behaviors with the standards for ordinary people? From now on, he is granted free admission to the imperial palace.” Since then, Baozhi came to the palace often.

During the winter of the fifth year in the Tianjian Period, prayer ceremonies for rain had been held repeatedly, but they did not work. One day, Baozhi reported to the emperor: “I, Baozhi, am still sick and have requested leave from the officials before. If I do not report the truth to Your Majesty, the officials would be punished by caning. I hereby propose to expound the Śrīmālā-sūtra and pray for rain in Guanghua Hall.” Right away, the emperor requested that Fayun the śramaṇa preach the sutra. After the preaching was complete, it heavily snowed at night. Baozhi said: “We need a basin of water. Put a knife on it.” Soon, a rainfall arrived, and the precipitation satisfied the region.

The emperor once asked Baozhi: “As Your disciple, I have not dispelled distress and delusion; how can I deal with that?” Baozhi replied: “Twelve.” The knowledgeable ones thought it meant that the cure for delusion was the Twelve Factors of Dependent Origination. The emperor asked again: “What is the meaning of twelve?” Baozhi answered: “The meaning stays in the writing of the water clock.”¹ The knowledgeable ones thought that meant writing during the twelve time periods.” The emperor returned: “How can I calm my mind so as to practice?” The master replied: “Restrain in peace and joy.” The knowledgeable ones thought that “restrain” meant stop and be calm and that in peace and joy arose calmness.

1 In ancient times, a water clock used the flow of water to measure time.

Later, Fayun held a dharma talk on *the Lotus Sutra* at Hualin Temple. When he expounded: “If the black wind,” Baozhi questioned whether the wind existed or not. The lecturer replied: “According to conventional truth, the wind exists, while in the light of the ultimate truth, it is empty.” Baozhi argued with Fayun back and forth for three or four rounds; he then smiled, saying: “If the ‘substance’ is unreal, it would be inscrutable.” Baozhi’s words were sometimes cryptic, like in these examples.

A man named Chen Zhenglu worshiped Baozhi piously with his family members. Baozhi manifested his real form, which looked akin to a shining bodhisattva.

Baozhi was known by the public for over 40 years; innumerable people, male and female, venerated him. During the winter of the 13th year in the Tianjian Period,¹ he told the others in the rear hall: “The bodhisattva is leaving.” Within ten days, he passed away without any disease. His body was soft and fragrant with a cheerful look. Before his death, he lit a candle and gave it to Wu Qing, the rear hall keeper, who immediately reported it to the emperor. The latter sighed: “The Grand Master no longer stays; is he suggesting something with the candle?” The emperor then organized his funeral with the highest courtesy, burying him at Dulongfu in Mount Zhong and building a vihara next to his tomb. By the emperor’s decree, Lu Chui² composed a eulogy, which was put in the master’s tomb; Wang Yun made the inscription erected in front of the temple. His portraits were made and placed in various places.

Earlier, when Baozhi started to demonstrate his super powers, he was in his 50s to 60s. Until his death, his appearance did not change. No one could guess his age. A man named Xu Jiedao, living to the north of Jiuritai in the capital, claimed that he was Baozhi’s cousin on the maternal uncle side and that he was four

1 The Tianjian Period (502-519) was the first reign title for Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty.

2 Lu Chui and Wang Yun were both famous writers in the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

years younger than the master. At Baozhi's death, this cousin was 97.

At the beginning of the Liang Dynasty, Daoxiang 道香 and Senglang 僧朗 in Shu Prefecture had supernatural powers too.

Comments:

Aiming at constraining from conceit, super power is used to deliver sentient beings, which can resolve worldly disputes and destroy arrogance and evil drive. As for bodhisattvas who step on flying wheels and bring divine instruments to subdue demons and spirits, they leverage skillful means in order to inspire wholesome thoughts and correct wrongdoings. Presenting the Buddhist capability of shaking mountains and reaching the clouds, people will know that bodhisattvas hide in the world. Once it is understood that ultimate governance relates to unintentional manner, yin and yang will then be in harmony. Since the ruling degradation of Emperor Hui in the Western Jin Dynasty, Emperor Huai and Emperor Min were captured, bandits and invaders ravaged central China, and barbarians rose in sequential revolts. Liu Yuan and Liu Yao usurped power by killing relentlessly, which were followed by Shi Le and Shi Hu, who enthroned themselves and committed massacres. The nation and prefectures hence dissolved and their people were butchered.

Compassionate for those suffering in the emerging warfare, Master Fo Tucheng's heart ached when he saw the endless cruel tortures. Thus, he educated people at Gepo with his super power, prophesied the future while traveling between the Xiang and Yecheng Principalities, recited mantra to help the dying Later Zhao Dynasty, and used incense to eliminate danger. Listening to the stupa bells and looking at the display on his palm, he could determine the results a thousand miles away. Finally, the two Shi's bowed their heads. Coming from the desert and nurturing sentient beings in central China, his virtue was unparalleled. Afterwards, Zhu Fotiao,

Qiyu, Shegong, Beidu, and others either hid their capacities, mingled with the ignorant seculars, demonstrated their supernatural powers to inspire millions of people, revived after death, or escaped from a buried coffin. Being marvelous and mysterious, people cannot imagine or speculate them. Based on different principles and classics, they showed various skills and means. As for Liu An¹ and Li Tuo,² historical records depict their evil skills for rebellion, but biographies of immortals show that they had become deities. The value of principles lies on compliance with the noble path, while the interest in realities derives from the salvation of people. Therefore, those who understand adaptability behave abnormally but comply with the path, using skillful means to accomplish great causes. However, for the previously recorded deeds, we are clueless about their details and reasons. They might be the dharma body's incarnations or the manifestations of deities. If they have one skill above ordinary people, then they should be named eminent. Such as how Huize's sincere prayer made the stone vase of divine water that cured the fatal disease appear, how Shizong passed by fisheries and saved the lives of fish, how Tanshi could not be hurt by a sword, which revived the Dharma, and how Baozhi split his body and attended different temples, which convinced the emperor. Although the honour was conferred to them, they did not attach to it; worldly affairs included them, yet they did not lose their true nature. Therefore, they were collected in previous records and books. If one praises himself for his magical skills, bewitches the country and time, claims to fly after taking divine medicine, claims longevity after eating ganoderma,³ or promotes that one becomes immortal, that all his relatives go heaven, that snakes and wild geese do not die, and that a tortoise spirit lives a thousand years,

1 Liu An (179-122 BCE), the nephew of Emperor Wen of the Western Han Dynasty, gathered magicians and was killed after somebody reported his plot of treason, which is written in *the Historical Records* by Sima Qian; however, in *the Records of Immortals* by Gehong the priest, he is described as a good immortal.

2 Li Tuo, a Daoist priest in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, was executed in Jiankang for his evil skills.

3 Ganoderma was a kind of mushroom and Chinese medicine that was said to be immortal vegetation in ancient China.

how can these be called supernatural powers?

Paean

The earth needs water to be moisturized; metal needs fire to be forged. Tyrants should have assistance and education, so the image of authority can be shown to them. Fo Tucheng shone in the Xiang Principality, and Shan Daokai taught in Zizhou. The two generations of eminent monks benefited the four directions. Without a reliance on them, how could the lives of people be put under protection?

Volume XI

Meditative Practice

21 main figures 11 auxiliaries

1. Zhu Sengxian of Jiangzuo during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Sengxian 竺僧顯 was originally from a Fu family in Beidi.¹ Observing the precepts faithfully and assiduously, he took vegetarian food and recited sutras, pursuing meditation as his focus of cultivation. He frequently stayed alone in mountain woods, practicing wandering asceticism outside the world. Sometimes, he entered Samadhi for days without a complexion of hunger. At that time, Liu Yao assaulted Luoyang, the western capital of the Jin government,² leading to the collapse of the Western Jin Dynasty. Sengxian thus traveled to the south in the later years of the Daxing Period,³ toured the renowned mountains, and continued his cultivation. Later, he endured a chronic disease that did not mend. Thereupon, he wished for himself to be reborn in the Western Paradise so eagerly that he saw the true manifestation of Amitabha Buddha; after emitting light to his body, all Sengxian's pains were gone. That night, he got up from bed and took a bath, narrating what he saw to his companions and attendants; in addition, he reiterated the cause and effect law with precise and profound language. The next morning, he died in sitting posture. A rare fragrance lingered for more than ten days in his room.

1 Beidi is in Ningxia today.

2 Liu Yao, the monarch of the Former Zhao government, attacked Luoyang in 311, which forced the Jin government to move southwards and set their new capital in Jianye (Nanjing today). It was then known as the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

3 The Daxing Period (318-321) was the reign of Emperor Yuan in the Eastern Jin Dynasty.

2. Bo Sengguang of Mount Yinyue in Shan County during the Jin Dynasty

Bo Sengguang¹ 帛 僧 光 was also known as Tanguang and had unknown origins. He practiced meditation since his youth. In the first year of the Yonghe Period during the Jin Dynasty, he came to the east of Yangtze River and arrived at Mount Shitou in Shan County. The locals said that there have not been human traces in that area for a long time due to the encroachment of ferocious animals and mountain spirits. Sengguang hired someone to shave his head; then, holding his staff, he walked into the depopulated zone. Entering the mountain for a couple of miles, a torrential downpour hit, and the roar of tigers resonated in the valleys. Sengguang saw a stone cave in the south slope of the hill and then stepped into it; joining his palms, he practiced sitting meditation in the cave. The rain dissipated at daybreak on the next day. He went to the village to beg for alms in the morning and returned to the cave at dusk. Three days later, he dreamt of a mountain deity, in the forms of a tiger or a snake, coming to terrify him. Sengguang did not know fear of them. Another three days passed, and he dreamt of the mountain deity again; he told Sengguang that he would offer this cave to the master by moving himself to Hanshi Mountain in Zhang'an County. Later, Sengguang collected firewood and connected a water source, becoming venerated by both monastics and laypeople. Those who were fascinated by Chan came to learn from him, hence building thatched cottages next to the cave; these cottages gradually formed a vihara named Yinyue.

Every time Sengguang entered Samadhi, he remained seated for seven days without getting up; he stayed in the mountain for 53 years, living to the age of 110. In the last year of the Taiyuan Period during the Jin Dynasty, he put a piece of clothing on his head and died while sitting peacefully. The mass all thought that he entered into Samadhi as usual, yet were curious why he did not get up after seven days. Coming to see him together, they found his complexion

1 Bo Sengguang (c. 287-c. 396).

normal but without breath. Although his consciousness had left, the body did not decay. During the second year of the Xiaojian Period¹ in the Liu Song Dynasty, Guo Hong assumed the position of magistrate in Shan County and came to the mount to pay homage. When he tried to touch the chest of the body with a *ruyi*,² a gust of wind blew off the clothes on the body, and only the bones remained. Guo Hong felt guilty and scared; he put the bones in the cave and sealed the entrance with bricks and mud, making a portrait for the master that is extant today.

1 The Xiaojian Period (454-456) was under Liu Jun, Emperor Xiaowu's reign.

2 A *ruyi* is an S-shaped ornamental object, usually made of jade, that is a symbol of auspiciousness.

3. Zhu Tanyou of Mount Chicheng in Shifeng during the Jin Dynasty Huikai Huizhen

Zhu Tanyou¹ 竺曇猷, or Fayou, was originally from Dunhuang. He practiced asceticism in his early youth and learned meditation. Later, he arrived in the south of the Yangtze River and abided at Mount Shicheng in Shan County, practicing alms begging and sitting meditation. Once, he went to beg for food from a family that cultivated venomous insects.² When Tanyou recited the vows and mantra before eating, a centipede jumped out from the food, but Tanyou finished the food quickly as if nothing happened. Later, he moved into a stone cave at Mount Chicheng in Shifeng County³ to practice sitting meditation. One day, dozens of ferocious tigers crouched in front of him; the latter continued to recite the sutra in a normal manner. A tiger fell asleep; Tanyou hit its head with a *ruyi*, saying: “Why do you not listen to the sutra?” Shortly, the tigers all left. Soon after, pythons came out. The big one’s perimeter measured over ten times the circle made by the thumbs and the index fingers of two hands; stretching its head to look at Tanyou for a long time, it then went away. The next day, a spirit manifested in front of Tanyou, saying: “Your Reverence has great virtue and dignity; come to live in this mount, and, as your disciple, I would offer this cave to you.” Tanyou replied: “I am fortunate to meet you while practicing in the mountain. Why can we not share this place?” The deity returned: “I am actually open, but my subordinates have not been civilized by the Dharma; it is hard to manage them. They might hurt guests. Humans and deities have different paths, thus I am leaving.” Tanyou asked: “What deity are you? You have lived here for a long time; where are you going now?” The deity replied: “I am the son of Emperor Xia;⁴ I have lived here for more than 2000 years. Mount Hanshi is in my maternal uncle’s territory, and I

1 Zhu Tanyou (d. c. 396).

2 Venomous insects were cultivated for the purposes of maiming and assassination.

3 Shifeng, in Tiantai County today, is where Mount Tiantai, a patriarchic mountain of the Chinese Chan Tiantai School, is located.

4 Emperor Xia refers to Yu, the founder of the legendary Xia Dynasty.

plan to live with him.” After these words, the deity returned to his temple on the other side of the hill. Before leaving, the spirit came again to say goodbye, offering three boxes of incense. He then went on a cloud ride with the accompaniment of drum beating and bugle calls.

On Chicheng Mountain, there were separate rock peaks dotting to the sky, standing among the clouds. Tanyou gripped the rocks as ladders, sitting on the top in peace; he also connected bamboo canes to carry water to support daily necessity. More than ten Chan learners used to call on him. Attaching to his reputation, Wang Xizhi paid him a visit; looking at the soaring peaks, he sent his regards to the master and returned. The rocks at Mount Chicheng, the waterfall on Mount Tiantai, and Ling Creek on Mount Siming are located in the same mountain range. The cliffs on Mount Tiantai reached the clouds, and the summits pierced the sky. A common saying states: “A wonderful vihara on top, that is only for awakened ones to stay.” Although a stone bridge stretched across the valley leading to the top, it was blocked by stone rubble; in addition, the moss made it slippery. Since ancient times, no one had reached the other side of the bridge. Tanyou came to the stone bridge and heard a voice in the sky saying: “I know you are sincere and honest; you cannot cross it today but in ten years.” Tanyou felt sad and stayed at the site overnight; he heard the chant of *poṣadha* on the way. In the morning, he wanted to try again, but a man with white, silvery eyebrows and hair asked him where he was going. Tanyou told him his intention. The elderly one said: “You only possess an ordinary body; how can you cross it? I am the deity of this hill thus am telling you the truth.” Then, Tanyou returned. On his way back, he passed by a stone cave and entered for a rest. On his entrance, fog and clouds suddenly surged, turning the place in dark; loud sounds resonated in the cave. Tanyou stayed with his effortless grace. The next morning, a man with thin clothes and a headcloth came, saying: “This cave is my abode; I went out yesterday, and the turbulence in the cave bothered you. I am sorry for that.” Tanyou replied: “If this is your home, I return it to you now.” The

deity returned: “I have moved my domicile, so you can stay here.” Tanyou thus stayed in that locale for a while.

Tanyou always regretted that he could not pass the bridge. Later, after several days of eating a vegetarian diet, he went to the bridge again and saw that a hole opened in the stone piled on the bridge. Then, he crossed the bridge. After walking for some time, he reached a vihara with a celestial monk, just as what the old legend narrated. They burned incense and had lunch together. After the meal, the celestial monk told Tanyou: “You cannot stay here now; in ten years, you will naturally come again.” Then, Tanyou departed; looking back to the stones after crossing the bridge again, they had restored to the way they were.

During the Taiyuan Period¹ in the Jin Dynasty, an evil star appeared in the sky. The emperor issued a decree to the public, ordering all the virtuous śramaṇas to diligently follow the Buddhist rituals and diet, so as to expel the evil star through repentance. Tanyou prayed piously; the morning of the sixth day, a boy in grey cloth came to confess, saying: “I am sorry for troubling you; the star will disappear tonight.” Some said that it was Bo Sengguang who expelled the star, but it is unconfirmed.

During the last year of the Taiyuan Period, Tanyou died in the stone cave; his body sat in his usual posture and turned green. During the Yixi Period, Shen Shibiao the Hermit climbed up the mount and saw the master’s unrotten body. After him, when other people wanted to go have a look, the clouds and fog sealed the stone cave and prevented their attempts.

At that time, Huikai 慧開, Huizhen 慧真, and others were skillful at Chan practice. They entered Mount Lingmi in Yuyao, building their rooms and shrines respectively, which are all extant today.

1 The Taiyuan Period: 376-396.

4. Shi Huiwei of Chang'an during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Huiwei 釋慧暉, of unknown origins, abided at Da Temple in Chang'an. He observed the precepts faithfully, often staying in valleys to practice meditation and concentration. Once, a headless ghost came to him; Huiwei faced it calmly, saying: "You do not have a head, so you will not have headaches, how lucky!" The ghost then disappeared. Shortly, the ghost turned into a figure with four limbs and no belly. The master said: "You do not have belly, so you will not have gut troubles, what a pleasure!" Soon, it turned to other forms, and Huiwei made comments accordingly.

Later, in winter time, it was snowing. A woman in colorful clothes who had a graceful and dignified manner and a pretty look came to Huiwei, begging to stay overnight. She told the master: "You are virtuous; the god sends me to reward you." She then talked about sensual desires to tempt Huiwei. However, the latter was not moved because he had firm aspirations; he told the woman: "My heart is as tranquil as dead embers, so do not test me with your flesh anymore." The woman thus flew away but still looked back and sighed: "The oceans may dry up, Mount Sumeru may collapse, and this venerated sage has a firmer will." During the third year of the Long'an Period¹ in the Jin Dynasty, Huiwei and Faxian went to the Western Regions; his whereabouts were unknown afterwards.

1 The third year of the Long'an Period was 399.

5. Shi Xianhu of Yanxing Temple in Guanghan during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Xianhu¹ 釋賢護, from a Sun family in Liangzhou, came to abide at Yanxing Temple in Guanghan.² He practiced meditation and observed the precepts strictly without a slight breach. He died in the fifth year of the Long'an Period during the Jin Dynasty. Before his death, a five-colored glow emitted from his mouth, lighting the entire monastery. Following his will, his disciples cremated his body, which burned to ashes save for a finger. Then, they buried it under the stupa.

1 Shi Xianhu (d. 401).

2 Guanghan is in Sichuan Province today.

6. Zhi Tanlan of Mount Chicheng in Shifeng during the Jin Dynasty

Zhi Tanlan¹ 支曇蘭, a native of Qingzhou, enjoyed vegetarian food and meditation from his youth. He could recite sutras of 300 thousand words. During the Taiyuan Period of the Jin Dynasty, he traveled to Shan County; resting at Mount Chicheng, he found a location supplied with wood and spring water, thus settling down. A few days later, a man of several meters high asked Tanlan to go away, and an oddly-shaped beast came to scare him. Seeing Tanlan take it easy, they hence knelt down, saying: “King Zhuqi is my maternal uncle; we are now going to live with him at Mount Weixiang and offer this place to you.” Three years passed. One day, vehicles and horses were heard in the background; subordinates and attendants seen full of the hills. Soon, a man wearing a headcloth, who claimed himself King Zhuqi, came to Tanlan; followed by 23 figures that were his wife and children, everyone in the family was good-looking, decorous, and had proper stature, outstripping humans. After arriving at Tanlan’s abode and offering greetings, Tanlan asked them where they dwell. King Zhuqi answered: “We live at Mount Weixiang in Anle County. Admiring Your Reverence’s virtuous deeds for a long time, I come to you with my whole family today to plead for the granting of precepts.” Tanlan granted the precepts to them right away. After the ceremony, King Zhuqi offered ten thousand coins and two bottles of honey to the master, then bidding him farewell. When they returned, the music of pipes was heard, resonating in the valleys. Over ten disciples who studied meditation under Tanlan witnessed the event in person. During the Yuanxi Period of the Jin Dynasty, Tanlan died on the mountain at 83.

1 Zhi Tanlan (c. 338-c. 420).

7. Shi Faxu of Mount Shishi in Shu Prefecture during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Faxu 釋法緒, originally from a Hun family in Gaochang, had pure and virtuous conduct, maintaining a vegetarian diet and meditative studies. Later, he entered Shu Prefecture and practiced wandering asceticism¹ in the valleys of the Liujiazhong area. Tigers and other wild animals would not hurt him. He recited *the Lotus Sutra*, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, *the Suvarṇa-prabhāsōttama-sūtra* 金光明經, and other text; frequently staying in stone caves, he meditated while reciting the discourses. He died in a cave during the summer time, and his body did not stink after seven days. The incense to his left, which could be seen from several square miles away at night, burned out ten days later. Villagers thus built a stupa on top of his body.

¹ Wandering asceticism is a kind of bitter cultivation for Buddhist monastics; a practitioner could be referred to as a mendicant Buddhist monk.

8. Shi Xuangao of Pingcheng in the Bogus Northern Wei during the Liu Song Dynasty Huichong Tanyao

Shi Xuangao¹ 釋玄高, originally having the surname Wei and the given name Lingyu, was from Wannian,² Fengyi. His mother's maiden surname was Kou, and she initially followed another religion. After she married into the Wei family, their firstborn child was a girl; she was the older sister of Xuangao. His sister naturally believed in Buddhism and prayed that her mother and everyone else in the family would follow the Buddha-Dharma instead of heresy. During the third year of the Hongshi Period under the Later Qin government, the mother dreamed of an Indian monk strewing flowers in the room; she later felt her pregnancy. On the eighth of the second month in the fourth year of the Hongshi Period, she gave birth to a boy; that night, a rare fragrance spread around the house, and a wonderful glow reflected on the walls until the next morning. Because of these auspicious signs, his mother named him Lingyu.³ His contemporaries admired him and called him Shigao.⁴

At 12, he wanted to leave his parents and enter the mountains for seclusion, yet the plan was not approved. Once, a young scholar stayed at Xuangao's family home, uttering that he intended to go to live in seclusion at Mount Zhongchang, Xuangao's parents entrusted their son to his care. That evening, the entire village bid farewell to the young boy. The next morning, villagers came to see Xuangao off; his parents felt curious and said: "You all came last night and come again today." The villagers replied: "We did not know that he was leaving last night, so how could we have come?" Therefore, the parents knew that those who came the night before were deities.

Upon arrival at the mountain, Xuangao wanted to renounce the

1 Shi Xuangao (402-444).

2 Wannian was to the north of present-day Lintong, Shaanxi Province.

3 Lingyu means "cultivation of spirit" in Chinese.

4 Shigao means "outstanding in the world" in Chinese.

world, but the monk in the mountainous temple did not agree, saying: “Without your parents’ approval, I cannot tonsure you.” Xuangao thus returned home and pleaded to join the monastic order. After 20 days of negotiation, he got his wish, altering his path in the secular world and changing his name to Xuangao. With gifted intelligence, he could study and grasp the points very easily. At the age of 15, he had started to expound the Dharma for the mass on the mountain. After full ordination, he focused on meditation and precepts. Hearing the news that Chan Master Buddhahadra intended to preach the Dharma at Shiyang Temple, Xuangao went to Chang’an and followed him as his teacher. The young monk mastered the meditation essentials within ten days. Buddhahadra extolled: “Very well! You are a true disciple of the Buddha as you can grasp the profound meanings and the gist of meditation.” Thus, the Chan master dismissed the teacher’s role for Xuangao out of modesty.

Holding the staff, Xuangao went to the Kingdom of Western Qin and abided at Mount Maiji.¹ Over a hundred Buddhist learners stayed at the mountain; they respected Xuangao’s instruction and learned meditation from him. A śramaṇa from Chang’an named Shi Tanhong was prominent in the Western Qin region, dwelling on this mountain as well. After meeting with Xuangao, Tanhong befriended the youth as they shared the same aspiration. At that time, Qifu Chipan² was controlling the Longxi³ region; his territory neighbored the Northern Liang Kingdom in the west. A foreign Chan master named Tanwupi entered this kingdom, receiving disciples and teaching them meditative methods. However, Samadhi was profound and subtle; few monks in Longxi could grasp the skill. Xuangao wanted to lead by example, thus he venerated Tanwupi as his teacher and learned from him. Within ten days, Tanwupi started to consult Xuangao instead. At that time, two apparent monks to the south of the Yellow River gripped the power of the bogus

1 Mount Maiji, near Tianshui, Gansu, is famous for its Buddhist grottoes.

2 Qifu Chipan was the third monarch of the Western Qin Kingdom (385-431), one of the kingdoms during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period in China.

3 Longxi was to the west of Mount Long (Liupan Mountain today).

prime minister. They acted outrageously and envied the learner monks. Tanwupi thus returned to the country of Śākya to the west. The two monks slandered Xuangao in front of Prince Man, the son of Qifu Chipan, saying that he intended to gather disciples and engender a catastrophe in the state. Prince Man believed their calumny and wanted to harm the master. His father did not approve but still exiled Xuangao to Mount Linyangtang to the north of the Yellow River. According to an old saying, this mountain was the abode of immortals. Taking it easy, Xuangao led three hundred disciples to live in the cottages at the mount, and his meditation and wisdom improved significantly. His sincerity touched the spirits, so many supernatural events happened; for instance, the inverted bell could ring without a strike, fragrance came from nowhere, deities constantly toured in the area, wild animals were subdued, and plagues of locusts ceased. Among Xuangao's disciples, over a hundred were practicing the six aspects of meditation.¹ A disciple named Xuanshao, native of Longxi, Qinzhou, had attained Samadhi and gained supernatural power. Water, which was sweet, clear, and different from the ordinary kind, could flow out of his fingers; he offered the water to Xuangao for his washing. Every time he obtained a heavenly blossom fragrance, he would offer it to the Three Jewels. Eleven persons had similar powers as he did. Xuanshao, who later entered Mount Tangshu, passed away by leaving his skin like a cicada.

Previously, Master Tanhong of Chang'an migrated to Shu Prefecture, delivering people in Chengdu. Admiring his fame, Qifu Chipan sent for him. As Tanhong had heard of Xuangao's exile and wanted to clear Xuangao's name, he thus went to report for duty by traveling through the difficult and dangerous paths. He finally arrived in the south of the Yellow River; after courtesy rituals, he told the king: "Since Your Majesty has deep insight and far vision, why did you abandon the sage? I have come to you after a voyage

¹ The six aspects of meditation refer to the methodology discussed in *the Treatise of Six Aspects of Meditation Instruction* attributed to Asaṅga and Vasubandhu.

of thousands of miles, just for this piece of advice.”

The king and the prince felt ashamed, thus sending for Xuangao and humbly asking him to come back. Out of compassion for sentient beings, the latter returned and bore no grudge. When he was leaving the mountain, a gale broke the trees and crumbled the rocks, blocking the road. Xuangao recited mantra and vows, saying: “I want to promote the Dharma; how can I stay in only one locale?” Thereupon, the wind fell, and the road reopened; the master traveled back to the kingdom. The king and the public were waiting for him by the streets; both monastics and laypeople venerated him, and Xuangao was appointed National Master.

When he completed his dharma transmission in the south of the Yellow River, he entered the territory of the Northern Liang. Juqu Mengxun, the king, treated him with ceremonious courtesy, gathering the elites to listen to Xuangao’s dharma talk. At that time, Fanhui Sengyin from Xihai¹ followed Xuangao to study; however, he had a narrow mind, contented himself with the mere knowledge that he had gained, and claimed his Arhathood and the grasp of all the marvels of the Chan School. Covertly, Xuangao made Fanhui Sengyin enter into Samadhi and let him view different dharma gates expounded by various Buddhas in the immeasurable worlds in the ten directions. The monk spent the entire summer trying to fathom what he saw in that concentration, but he failed to understand it. Then, he knew the infinity of meditation, feeling remorseful and fearful.

At that time, Tuoba Tao of the Northern Wei Dynasty, who was seated in Pingcheng, attacked Northern Liang. Du Chao, the Prince of Yangping and the maternal uncle of Tuoba Tao, invited Xuangao to the bogus capital with him. As soon as he arrived in Pingcheng, the master widely taught meditation. Tuoba Huang, the bogus crown prince, respected Xuangao as his teacher; later, the prince was slandered and mistrusted by his father, then asking

1 Xihai is in Inner Mongolia, China today.

his teacher: “I have been wronged without grounds. How can I solve this problem?” Xuangao let him hold a Jinguangming Dana Assembly¹ in order to sincerely repent for seven days. Tuoba Tao thus dreamed of his grandfather and father with swords in their hands, questioning him as to why he would listen to calumny and harbor suspicion towards the crown prince. The king woke up in a fright, summoning the officials to share the dream. The ministers all said: “Since this is a sign shown by the imperial spirits, the crown prince should be innocent.” Henceforth, Tuoba Tao dispelled any doubt about the crown prince because of Xuangao’s super power. The king issued a decree:

“Blessed by the forefathers, I want to carry forward the territory and the foundation of the country, enabling their flourishing for numerous generations. Although our military power is widely known, our literal teachings are not developed; it is not the peaceful way to govern. At present, the situation is settled and carefree; the civilians enjoy prosperity, so it is the right time to lay down the institution as eternal rules. Yin and yang alternate, and the four seasons arrive in turn. Therefore, a father passes down the force to his son and nominates sages to watch over his son. The older generation can then retire; in this way, the state may last forever. This is a constant regulation from ancient times. The meritorious statesmen who have been working diligently for a long time should return to their families; with noble titles and rewards to enjoy life and provide advice, they do not need to handle routine work. Now, I order the crown prince to govern daily work and manage the officials. Sages and virtuous men should be recommended to supply the talent pool. Promotion and demotion will be administered by him. As Confucius said, ‘A youth is to be regarded with respect.’ Who can predict that those to come are inferior to the current ones?” Thereupon, the country submitted to the crown prince, and reports for the crown prince were changed to the format meant for emperors.

¹ The Jinguangming Dana Assembly was based on the rituals in *the Jinguangming Sutra (Suvarṇa-prabhāsōttama-sūtra)*.

At that time, Cui Hao and Heavenly Master Kou had obtained the trust of Tuoba Tao. They feared that they would lose their power when the crown prince succeeded to the throne. Thus, they conveyed slanderous messages to the emperor: “The crown prince did have a plot against you; it was Xuangao who used his magic power to make you dream of the late emperors that dissolved the trace of treason. If you keep him, he will turn into a great disaster.” After hearing this, Tuoba Tao flew into a rage, immediately ordering the arrest of the master.

Formerly, Xuangao told his disciples in secret: “The Buddha-Dharma will decline, but Master Huichong 慧崇 and I will be murdered first.” All those who heard this news thus felt sorrowful. At that time, a śramaṇa of Liangzhou named Shi Huichong was the teacher of Wei Wande, a minister in the bogus Northern Wei government; since this master’s virtue was second to Xuangao, he was also envied. During the ninth month of the fifth year in the Taiping Zhenjun Period, Xuangao and Huichong were both detained. On the 15th in that month, Xuangao was killed in the northeastern corner of Pingcheng at the age of 43. That was the 21st year of the Yuanjia Period in the Liu Song Dynasty.

The night when Xuangao was killed, his disciples were unaware of this tragedy. At midnight, they suddenly saw a light circle the stupa where Xuangao used to live three times; it then moved to the meditation cave. A voice in the light said: “I have died.” The disciples hence learned about their master’s death and cried out loud. They carried the body to the southern suburb, washed him, and buried him, meanwhile arranging for the funeral of Huichong in another location. The Buddhists and secular people were all frightened and saddened.

Xuanchang, a disciple of Xuangao, abided in Yunzhong,¹ which was six hundred li away from the Northern Wei’s capital, at that

1 Yunzhong is in Yuanping, Shanxi today.

time. That morning, someone suddenly told him about the incident and provided him a horse for the six-hundred-li trip. The same night, he arrived in the capital, finding his teacher dead. Hence, he cried with his school friends, saying: “Now that the Dharma is perishing, will it revive? If yes, please, Your Reverence, sit up for a moment. You have outstanding virtue and must be able to show us a sign.” After these words, Xuangao’s eyes opened halfway, and his countenance returned to a nice expression. His whole body sweated and emitted a fragrant smell. Shortly after, the master sat up, telling his disciples: “The Dharma adapts to changes while delivering sentient beings, flourishing or declining depending on conditions. The apparent vicissitude will not alter its principles. You will have the same fate as mine; only Xuanchang could escape to the south. After your death, the Dharma will become more thriving. You should well cultivate your mind; do not give up midway.” After these words, he fell down and died. The next day, people carried his coffin to another location for cremation, yet governmental regulations did not permit it, hence he was buried. The monastics and laypeople mourned him with tears on their face.

Fada, a śramaṇa who was the Monastic Head in the bogus government, admired Xuangao for a long time, yet did not listen to his teachings. Abruptly hearing of the death of the master, he cried, saying: “The saint had passed away; who can we rely on?” He stopped eating for days and uttered loudly: “If Saint Xuangao is here, why do you not demonstrate yourself?” Xuangao flew down from the sky accordingly, and Fada prostrated to him, pleading for salvation. Xuangao told him: “You have grave sins, so it is hard to save you. From now on, you should just follow Mahayana rituals to repent; your sins may then mitigate.” Fada said: “If it is still possible to remove my bad karma, I hope you will help me then.” Xuangao returned: “I will remember everyone, including you.” Fada asked: “Where have you and Master Huichong been reborn?” Xuangao replied: “I vowed to be reborn in this evil world to protect sentient beings, thus I have returned to the Jambudvīpa world; while Huichong prayed for tranquility and is now in the Western

Paradise.” Fada questioned again: “May I know which fruit you have obtained?” Xuangao answered: “Some of my disciples know it.” After these words, he disappeared. Fada interviewed Xuangao’s disciples in secret, and they all answered: “He attained the Bodhisattva of Tolerance.”¹

In the seventh year of the Taiping Zhenjun Period of the bogus Wei government, Tuoba Tao persecuted Buddhism, just as what Xuangao prophesied.

At that time, Juqu Mujian was in power in the Kingdom of Northern Liang, where a śramaṇa named Tanyao 曇曜 was known for his meditation; Zhang Tan, the bogus prime minister, followed him as his teacher.

1 A Bodhisattva of tolerance is a kind of bodhisattva who can give up their throne, wife, head and eyes, or skin and bones for delivering sentient beings; this is based on the stories of the past lives of the Buddha and his disciples.

9. Shi Sengzhou of Mount Han in Chang'an during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengliang

Shi Sengzhou 釋僧周 was of unknown origins. He had lofty and aloof attributes, high aspirations, and virtuous conduct; quietly evading the world, no one really knew him. Frequently, he practiced wandering asceticism and sitting meditation on Mount Song. When the Northern Wei government wanted to carry out Buddhist persecution, Sengzhou had foreseen the events and told his disciples: “Catastrophe is falling.” He then led a team of several dozen to escape into Mount Han, which was located 400 li to the southwest of Chang'an and cut off by the valleys and rivers; it was a place that the troops could not reach. Hence, they settled in that place. Shortly afterwards, the massacre started;¹ those who did not evade it all died. Later, the emperor regretted his actions and killed Cui Hao and his family; henceforth the Buddha-Dharma was promoted again. When Tuoba Jian, the bogus Prince of Yongchang,² guarded Chang'an, following the decree to rebuild monasteries, he looked for monks everywhere. Hearing that virtuous and erudite monks could be found on Mount Han, the Prince of Yongchang sent an envoy to invite Sengzhou. The latter excused himself because of his age and illness, but he asked his disciple, Sengliang 僧亮, to go with the envoy. Later, Sengzhou was dying, so he told his disciples: “I am leaving.” That night, people saw flames rising behind Sengzhou's campstool, burning his body; it was quenched three days later. The flames leaped into the sky, yet his room was intact. Afterwards, his disciples collected his remains and built a stupa for them.

Sengliang, the disciple of Sengzhou, was originally from a Li family in Chang'an, studying under Sengzhou. Earlier, the Prince of Yongchang searched for monks, but no one dared to respond. They said that the Dharma was just restored and that the future

1 The Northern Wei persecution started in 446.

2 Tuoba Jian, the half-brother of Tuoba Tao, was brave and skillful in battle, but he died of a sudden disease.

was uncertain. Sengliang made the comments: “The destiny of the Dharma depends on people; the future is in our hands. If I get killed, I will face it. If the cause can be accomplished, the revival of the Path would be foreseeable.” Thereupon, he went to Chang’an with the envoy. Before his arrival, the Prince of Yongchang and the public in Chang’an cleaned the streets for him. The prince welcomed the master on the street in person and saluted to him. Sengliang explained karmic law to the public by using simple but precise language, which was warm and sincere. The listeners had mixed feelings of joy and sadness; they could hardly restrain themselves due to their excitement. Thus, Sengliang renovated temples and reestablished the Sangha. The renaissance of Buddhism in the Guanzhong area owed to Sengliang’s efforts.

10. Shi Huitong of Taihou Temple in Chang'an during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huitong 釋 慧 通 was a native of Guanzhong. He abided at Taihou Temple in Chang'an at a young age; maintaining a vegetarian diet. He chanted mantras and recited *Ekôttarâgama-sûtra* 增壹阿含經. Initiating his meditation learning under Huishao, a Chan Master of Liangzhou, Huitong practiced and mastered various meditative methods. He made the vow to be reborn in the Western Pure Land and dwell in the Buddhist world eternally. Once when he was in concentration, he had an ailment and saw a figure with a dignified appearance walking towards him, saying: "The good moment is coming." Shortly, the illumination of Amitabha Buddha shone on him; Huitong woke up from the dhyāna,¹ told his school friends about what he experienced, and then died at 59. A rare fragrance lingered in his room for three days.

1 Dhyāna is the state of concentration.

11. Shi Jingdu of Yuhang during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Jingdu 釋淨度 was originally from Yuhang, Wuxing. He was fond of hunting in his youth; he once shot a pregnant deer and led to its abortion. Although the female deer suffered from the wound, it was still trying to lick the fetus. Jingdu was thus touched and inspired; breaking the arrows, he joined the monastic order and took vegetarian food from that point forward. Reciting sutras of over 300 thousand words, he often abided alone in mountain and lake areas, practicing sitting meditation and reciting sutras; on the occasions of Assemblies in town, he would light nine lamps and stay up all night. Such routines for cultivation lasted many years. One day, he told his disciple: “I will take a bath with fragrant water today, preach the Discourses of thousands of chapters, and exhort the karmic and rebirth laws.” After these words, he died abruptly. At this moment, perfumed smoke pervaded from the sky; music of drums and pipes resonated. Dozens of his disciples and dharma friends witnessed the omens.

12. Shi Sengcong of Mount Pubu in Shifeng County during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Sengcong 釋僧從 was of unknown origins. He had a quiet and modest nature, abiding in seclusion at Mount Pubu in Shifeng County. Studying both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics and practicing the five approaches to meditation, he ate no cereals but did eat dates and chestnuts. Being a centenarian, he was physically robust, recited sutras, and followed daily rituals without slackness. Chu Boyu the hermit¹ associated with him; very often, they lost track of time when discussing metaphysical questions. Afterwards, Sengcong died in the mountain.

¹ Chu Boyu, style-name Yuanqu, escaped from his family on his wedding day, lived on Mount Pubu for over 30 years, and turned down the emperor's invitation. Kong Zhigui the famous writer in the Southern Qi Dynasty was his student. He died in 479 at the age of 86.

13. Shi Facheng of Guanghan during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Facheng 釋法成 was originally from Liangzhou. He renounced the world at 16, studying and mastering various sutras and Vinaya texts. Abandoning cereals, he merely took the rosin of pine trees as food. Abiding in a stone cave, he focused on meditation practice. During the Yuanjia Period, Huaisu, the Prince of Donghai, was assigned to guard Baxi Prefecture.¹ Due to his reputation, the prince sent for Facheng and invited him to meet in Fucheng.² The master expounded the precepts during the summer retreat and returned to his abode after the mission was completed. Passing by Guanghan, he lectured meditative methodology. Later, he had an indisposition and told the mass that he was dying. Facheng constantly recited *the Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* 寶積經, hence he chanted by himself at this moment. After a half fascicle, he felt short of breath, then asking others to help him read it. When the sutra was recited once, he passed away with his palms joined. A dozen of attendants, who took care of the master, all saw a dark red horse carrying a golden coffin leap skywards and disappeared.

1 Baxi was in Sichuan Province.

2 Fucheng is close to Santai, Sichuan today.

14. Shi Huilan of Zhongxing Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huilan¹ 釋 慧 覽 was originally from a Cheng family in Jiuquan;² in his youth, he was known along with Shi Xuangao for his meditation and mindfulness. He visited the Western Regions and worshiped the Buddha's almsbowl; in Jibin, he learned the essentials of Chan from a bhikṣu named Dharma who once reached Tuṣita Heaven and received Bodhisattva precepts from Maitreya Bodhisattva and then taught Huilan the precepts. The Chinese monk later came to Khotan, granted the precepts to monks from all directions, and henceforth returned to China. When Huilan passed by the south of the Yellow River on his way home, Prince Qiong of Muyan from the Kingdom of Tuyuhun sent an envoy with funds to him out of respect for his virtue and knowledge, asking him to build Zuojun Temple in Shu Prefecture. Thus, Huilan abided in the monastery. Later, he moved to Tiangong Temple in Luofu. Emperor Wen of the Liu Song Dynasty invited him to the capital and arranged his abode at Dinglin Temple in Mount Zhong. During the reign of Emperor Xiaowu, Zhongxing Temple was constructed, and Huilan was assigned to the new temple. The Chan monks in the capital all followed him for study. Shen Yan of Wuxing and Meng Yi of Pingchang admired his virtue and built a Chan room for him in the monastery. He passed away in the Daming Period during the Liu Song Dynasty in his 60s.

1 Shi Huilan (c. 400-c. 460).

2 Jiuquan was in Gansu Province.

15. Shi Faqi of Changsha Temple in Jingzhou during the Liu Song Dynasty Daoguo

Shi Faqi 釋法期 was originally from a Xiang family in Pi County, Shu Prefecture. He lost his parents in his childhood, so he respected his big brother as his father. At 14, he joined the monastic order, learning Chan from Zhimeng and studying insightfulness with Falin of Lingqi Temple. After grasping the meditative skills of Zhimeng, he met with Xuanchang and followed him to further develop his cultivation. When Xuanchang traveled to Jiangling, Faqi accompanied the master. Out of the ten dharmas that are the subjects of meditation, he mastered nine; only the *siṃha-vijṛmbhita-samādhi*¹ still needed to be accomplished. Xuanchang admired aloud: “I used to voyage westwards to Liusha, northwards to the desert of Youzhou, eastwards to the tomb of the Great Yu, and southwards to Mount Heng and Luofu. Among all I have met, Faqi has unparalleled talent in meditation.”

Later, Faqi died in Changsha Temple at the age of 62. At the moment of his death, a divine glow shone on his body, which was fragrant and clean.

At that time, Shi Daoguo 釋道果 at Longhua Temple in Shu Prefecture was known for his meditative achievement as well.

1 *Siṃha-vijṛmbhita-samādhi* refers to the lion-like, strenuous Samadhi; the powerful influence of this samādhi is compared with the dignity and strength of a lion.

16. Shi Daofa of Chengdu during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Daofa¹ 釋道法 was from a Cao family in Dunhuang. After renouncing the world, he focused on meditation and mantras. Later, he traveled to Chengdu; Wang Xiuzhi and Fei Kengzhi invited him to assume the abbot position for Xingle and Xiangji Temples. He adopted adaptive measures to manage and instruct the mass; in addition, he constantly practiced begging for alms and declined invitations for banquets. He often shared what he received from almsgiving to birds and worms; at night, he took off his shirt and sat in the open air to feed mosquitos and horseflies, which became a habit for many years. Later, he entered concentration, seeing that Maitreya spotlighted the karmic effects of the three inferior realms with his illumination. Thereupon, Daofa strengthened his belief and kept sitting without lying down for rest. In the second year of Yuanhui Period, he died in concentration; at that moment, sitting on the campstool, he had a merciful complexion as usual.

1 Shi Daofa (d. 474).

17. Shi Puheng of Anle Temple in Shu Prefecture during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Puheng¹ 釋普恒 was originally from a Guo family in Chengdu, Shu Prefecture. When he was a young boy, he could frequently see saint monks preaching the Dharma in the sunlight. He narrated what he saw to his family, but no one believed him. Later, he repeatedly pleaded to join the monastic order and got to stay at Anle Temple. He stayed in a separate room and did not associate with other monks; learning meditation quietly, he easily entered and returned from concentration. He became acquainted with Vinaya Master Tao of Shu Prefecture, telling him that he could enter flame Samadhi, where lights shone down from eyebrows to his heart. In the illumination, he saw various dharma forms as well as the karma in his previous lives. During the third year of the Shengming Period in the Liu Song Dynasty, Puheng died at the age of 78.

A month before his death, he suddenly bid farewell to his family and friends without a sliver of sadness, so people thought he was joking. When the day approached, he got an ailment; only a lay servant took care of him. The next morning, he died while sitting straight. The servant did not understand what happened; trying to lay him down, he failed. Then, monks found out about his death and asked to restore his sitting posture. Curiously, three fingers of Puheng were bent, but the rest remained straight. When people tried to straighten his hands, the three fingers followed the movement yet bent back again shortly afterwards.

When he was alive, Puheng had clean skin, which turned fairer after his death. The mass cremated his body following the ritual for awakened monks. Once the firewood was lit, five-colored smoke arose; it was accompanied by a rare fragrance. Therefore, Wang Xuanzai, the general of Yi Prefecture, made a eulogy for the master: “Supreme enlightenment abandons forms; the essential lies on non-attachment to sentiments. Concentrating on cultivation in Buddhist

1 Shi Puheng (402-479).

viharas will save ten thousand years in the rebirth cycle. With full confidence, the master entered into Samadhi, where he met with the Saint in the west. The marvels that he experienced exceeded the three realms, and he attained the fourth Dhyāna stage. Secular people are uneven, yet true nature is constantly shining. Hiding his capacity and biding his time, he acted as an example for the people in our region.”

18. Shi Sengshen of Lingjiu Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Sengqian Chaozhi Fada
Huisheng

Shi Sengshen¹ 釋僧審, from a Wang family in Qi County,² Taiyuan, was the offspring of a General Piaoqi surnamed Shen in the Jin Dynasty. From his grandfather's time, the family migrated to Qiao Prefecture.³ Sengshen renounced the world in his youth and abided at Shijian Temple in Shouchun, reciting *the Lotus Sutra* and *the Sutra of the Concentration of Heroic Progress* 首楞嚴三昧經, among other texts. He constantly proclaimed that wisdom could only be obtained through meditation, and he focused on Chan practice. Learning that Dharmamitra's method was prevalent in the capital, he crossed the Yangzi River and abided at Lingyao Temple, studying diligently and comprehending subtle connotations. Once, a group of bandits kidnapped him and dragged him into a mountain; Sengshen was sitting tight, and the robbers took off their coats to donate it to him. Then, he expounded the Dharma to the bandits, who were sweating in shame. They left after paying homage to the master. Huigao of Lingjiu Temple followed Sengshen as his teacher for learning meditation, inviting the master to his monastery after building a Chan room for him. Later, he moved to Xixuan Temple at the invitation of Zhang Zhen of Qinghe.⁴ Crown Prince Wenhui and Prince Wenxuan venerated him deeply; Fu Yan and Xiao Chifu⁵ consulted him for advice as well. One day, Wang Jingze⁶ looked for Sengshen in his room; seeing him in Samadhi, he thus withdrew from the Chan room, making the remark: "This is a saint monk." Thus, he donated 100 thousand liters of rice to the master and requested refuge in the Three Jewels from him. During the eighth

1 Shi Sengshen (416-490).

2 Qi County was in Shanxi Province.

3 Qiao Prefecture is in Bo County, Anhui today.

4 Qinghe is in Shandong Province today.

5 Xiao Chifu was a relative of Emperor Gao in the Southern Qi Dynasty; he assumed several military positions in the Liu Song and Southern Qi governments.

6 Wang Jingze was the son of a witch; he later became a famous general during the Liu Song and Southern Qi Dynasties.

year of the Yongming Period, Sengshen died at 75.

At that time, Sengqian 僧謙, Chaozhi 超誌, Fada 法達, and Huisheng 慧勝 all practiced meditation and demonstrated divine signs.

19. Shi Fawu of Mount Fan in Wuchang during the Southern Qi Dynasty Daoji

Shi Fawu¹ 釋法悟 was a native of Qi Prefecture. His family lived on growing mulberry leaves, and he had six sons who had grown up. At the age of 50, his wife died; the entire family was immersed in sadness. The father and six sons then joined monastic order. They traveled southwards to Wuchang² after crossing mountains and rivers. Satisfied with the southern side of Mount Fan as suitable conditions for cultivation, which was, at one time, the retreat location of a hermit named Guo Changxiang, thus they intended to settle down there. Ruan Hui of Chenliu, the Prefect of Wuchang, was amazed by their story, constructing a road and cottages for them. Fawu rejected rice but had wheat grains for food; he only took one meal per day. Reciting *the longer and shorter versions of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *the Lotus Sutra*, he constantly practiced wandering asceticism the whole day. He passed between mountains and waters without fear of ferocious animals. Sometimes, he practiced sitting meditation under trees and did not get up for days. During the seventh year of the Yongming Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, Fawu died on the mountain at 79.

Later, Daoji the śramaṇa inherited Fawu's methods. At present, people in Wuchang call the temple in which Daoji used to abide "Toutuo³ Temple."

1 Shi Fawu (411-489).

2 Wuchang was in Wuhan, Hubei.

3 Toutuo means "mendicant Buddhist monk" In Chinese.

20. Shi Tanchao of Mount Lingyin in Qiantang during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Tanchao¹ 釋曇超 was from a Zhang family in Qinghe. Standing at 1.85 meters high, he had a remarkable appearance and conduct. Taking vegetarian food and coarse clothes, he only had one meal each day at noon. Originally, he abided at Longhua Temple in the capital, Jiangkang. During the last year of the Yuanjia Period, he traveled southwards to Shixing Prefecture,² touring various mountains and waters. While he stayed under trees overnight, tigers and rhinoceroses would not hurt him. During the Daming Period, he returned to the capital. After Emperor Taizu of the Southern Qi Dynasty took the throne, he was assigned to Liaodong to promote meditation skills. Staying in the north for two years, he widely preached the Dharma. In the last year of the Jianyuan Period, he came back; shortly afterwards, he moved to Mount Lingyin in Qiantang.³

Every time Tanchao entered Samadhi, he sat for days. Once, he heard a tempest and thunder while in concentration, seeing a man approaching him with a hu⁴ in his hands, claiming that he was Chen Tong of the Townlet of Yan. Soon, another man with an exalted appearance arrived, who was followed by numerous guardians. He paid homage to the master and said: “As Your disciple, I live seven li away and take care of this area. Since Your Reverence dwells here, I thus come to salute you. People in Fuyang County excavated dirt in the mountains to make bricks and damaged the dragons’ abode; this offended all the dragons, who vowed to stop the rain for 300 days. By now, over a hundred days have passed; the wells and the ponds have dried up, and the farmlands do not produce anything. Since your virtue can touch divine power, if you could lower yourself to beg for rain, it will definitely work because of

1 Shi Tanchao (419-492).

2 Shixing is in Guangdong today.

3 Qiantang is in Hangzhou today.

4 A hu 笏 is a tablet of bamboo, jade, or ivory that is held by officials before their breast when they are received in audience by the emperor.

your sincerity and virtue; sentient beings will be saved. That is such a merit!” Tanchao replied: “To generate clouds and rain is your Patron’s job. How can I accomplish it?” The deity returned: “My subordinates and I only know how to make clouds, we do not know about rain. That is why I come to you.” The master agreed, and then the deity disappeared. Tanchao marched southwards for five days and arrived at Mount Chiting, remotely reciting the mantras and preaching the Dharma to the dragons. When the night fell, the dragons were incarnated into human forms, coming to the master to pay respect. Tanchao continued to expound the Discourses. The audience requested to take refuge in the Three Jewels, claiming themselves dragons. The master thus asked them to produce rain. They looked at one another in silence. That night, Tanchao dreamed of the dragons telling him: “Originally, we were angry and swore to punish the people. Since Your Reverence guides us to the right path, we dare not disobey. Tomorrow at dusk, it will rain.” The next morning, Tanchao went to Linquan Temple and sent people to tell the magistrate to prepare boats for monks to recite *the Ocean-nāga Sutra* 海龍王經 in the middle of the river. The magistrate hence requested for monks to sail to Shishou.¹ As soon as the sutra recitation was complete, torrential rain poured down, which satisfied all needs; a good harvest was received that year.

Tanchao passed away during the tenth year of the Yongming Period at the age 74.

1 Shishou is in Hubei Province today.

21. Shi Huiming of Mount Chicheng in Shifeng during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Huiming¹ 釋 慧 明 was originally from a Kang family in Sogdiana; his grandfather moved the family to Dongwu to evade calamity. Huiming joined the monastic order in his adolescence and abided at Dong'an Temple. During the Jianyuan Period of the Southern Qi Dynasty, along with some śramaṇas, he climbed up Mount Chicheng and saw Master Tanyou's body that was still unrotten in the stone cave, yet the meditation room was deserted; no one practiced Tanyou's methods in that location any longer. Henceforth, he hired people to renovate the road and cottages; he also built the statues of the reclining Buddha and Master Tanyou. Huiming then focused on meditation and recitation, wanting to spend the rest of his days in this place by practicing asceticism. Later, in concentration, he met a goddess who claimed that she was Nana Lyu and that she was constantly protecting him. Sometimes, white monkeys, white deer, white snakes, and white tigers played in front of the vihara, behaving docile and friendly.

Prince Wenxuan of Jingling heard of Huiming's deeds and repeatedly sent for him out of admiration. The master thus went to the capital for a while. Upon his arrival at Prince Wenxuan's residence, the prince venerated him as his teacher. Shortly after, Huiming returned to the mountain. The prince pleaded for him to stay but failed; he then offered money and materials for him.

During the late years of the Jianwu Period, he died in the mountain at 73.

Comments

What is called Chan refers to all marvelous phenomena, through which all dharmas are able to connect with each other and all circumstances can be observed. To observe the dharmas dependent

¹ Shi Huiming (c. 427-c. 496).

on the conditions, equanimity entails clarity. It is well like a deep pond, only if the tide ceases, will the fish and cobbles be seen through the clear water. When the water of the mind is limpid, all dharmas can be reflected without concealment. In Laozi, it says: “The heavy serve as the root for the light, while the calm can master the impetuous.” Whereupon, the light should depend on the heavy, and impulsive acts find solutions in peace. In *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*, it indicates: “To analogize it with taking medicine, one should temporarily suspend their household duties and calm down their body, only resuming their duties afterwards. In the same logic, meditation is the medicine to develop wisdom. After taking it and gaining the power, one should return and deliver sentient beings.” This is the reason why the four sublime states of mind¹ and the six supernatural powers² arise in meditation; the eight bases³ and the ten stages of bodhisattvas can be accomplished with the help of concentration. Thus, the function of meditation is tremendous!

Since the Buddha-Dharma spread eastwards, the teachings of Chan methodology came as well. Preconditioned through the translation of meditation sutras by An Shigao and Dharmarakṣa, monks, such as Sengguang and Tanyou, followed the texts to practice their mind and accomplished great achievement. Hence, they could produce joy in the internal and subdue demons in the external, driving away the ghosts in the mountains and receiving deities on the cliffs. After Zhiyan the śramaṇa arrived in the Western Regions in person, he invited the Jibin Chan Master Buddhahadra to impart meditation skills in China. Xuangao, Xuanshao, and others learned the rituals and processes from the foreign teacher, mastered entering and exiting concentration by counting and observing the breath, entered

1 The four sublime states of mind refer to loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity.

2 The six supernatural powers indicate the skill of magic operations, divine hearing, the ability to read the minds of others, the memory of previous lives, divine eyes, and the capability to destroy impurity.

3 The eight bases refer to the eight victorious bases for overcoming desires.

Samadhi and returned through reflection and equanimity.¹ They were followed by Sengzhou, Jingdu, Faqi, and Huiming.

One obvious effect of meditation is obtaining super powers that enable three thousand worlds to hide in one pore and the four oceans to solidify into a trifle of butter. It also allows one to pass through a stone wall without hindrance and lift the mass steadily. Even secular spells and ordinary celestial skills can stop waves and rains and burn the country with flames; even though Xuangao sat up after death, and Daofa passed away in sitting posture, it did not surprise anyone. However, Udraka Rāmaputra² was enraged by beasts and Ekasiṅga Isi³ was seduced by the obscene beauty of Śāntā; as they lost the control of their mind, they yielded to their desires. They are merely akin to the light of a glowworm, incomparable to the illumination of meditation which is like sunshine and moonlight.

Paean

Dhyāna is peaceful and mysterious; Samadhi profound and abyssal. Through the path of contemplation, wisdom is reachable. By the five approaches of meditation, one can rid themselves of evil and obtain the nine superior dhyāna labels.⁴ Experiencing the oceans drying up, the rocks decaying, or the rearrangement of phenomena at all, how can such abundant virtuous deeds not move people?

1 Reflection and equanimity refer to the last two of the six excellent approaches for practicing meditation which are: first, to count one's breaths while doing meditation to prevent distraction 數息門, second, to breathe naturally while meditating 隨息門, third, to stop discriminatory thinking 止門, forth, to contemplate a specific subject clearly 觀門, fifth, to perceive one's own mind as unreal 還門, and sixth, to realize that there is no basis for illusion 淨門.

2 Udraka Rāmaputra was an unorthodox deity in *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*.

3 Ekasiṅga Isi was a unicorn deity in *the Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* who, seduced by the obscene beauty of Śāntā, broke his power.

4 The nine superior dhyāna labels refer to the nine high level states of dhyāna, starting from self-nature dhyāna until the ninth, the clear-purity dhyāna.

Vinaya Exhortation

13 main figures 9 auxiliaries

1. Shi Huiyou of Jiangling during the Liu Song Dynasty

Zhu Huiyou 釋慧猷 was a native of Jiangzuo. He renounced the world in his youth, abiding at Xin Temple in Jiangling and taking vegetarian food. He observed the precepts strictly and had honest and straight characteristics. After full ordination, he focused on and mastered the precepts. At that time, Vinaya Master Vimalākṣa from the Western Regions arrived in Jiangling, widely promoting Vinaya texts. Huiyou followed him to study. After contemplating for some time, he fathomed the significance of *the Ten Recitations Vinaya* 十誦律,¹ thus he continuously expounded the text. Vinaya masters in the Jingzhou area all learned from him. Later, he died in Jiangling. His works included *the Commentary on the Ten Recitations Vinaya* 十誦律疏 of eight fascicles.

1 *The Ten Recitations Vinaya* was the Vinaya text for Sarvāstivāda.

2. Shi Sengye of Xianju Temple in Wu Prefecture during the Liu Song Dynasty Huixian

Shi Sengye¹ 釋僧業 was originally from a Wang family in Henei.² When he was a young boy, he was smart and knowledgeable in various classics. Later, he traveled to Chang'an and followed Kumārajīva as his teacher. Viewing the newly translated *Ten Recitations Vinaya*, he thus focused on this text. Naturally, he understood the profound meanings, so Kumārajīva praised him: "He is the Upāli of present day."³

As warfare ravaged the Guanzhong area, he escaped to the capital, Jiankang. Building Xianju Temple, Zhang Shao of Wu Prefecture invited him to Suzhou out of admiration for his precept observance. The temple enjoyed an open view and peaceful environment; it was surrounded by a long river. Sengye stayed at the temple, expounding the Dharma and teaching without slackness. The learners in the Wu, Wuxing, and Danyang areas all crowded to follow his lectures. Focusing on Chan as well, every time he sat down for meditation, rare fragrances filled the room. Those close to him were able to sense it and were marveled by his super ability.

Previously, when Kumārajīva abided in Guanzhong before translating *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*, he translated *the Pratimokṣa*. The larger version of the Ten Recitations Vinaya was not translated until Dharmaruci arrived in the Former Qin Dynasty's territory. The Pratimokṣa and the larger version shared the same essentials, but the differences derived from the expressional vocabulary. Henceforth, monks followed the larger version. Today, the two texts are both in use. During the 18th year of the Yuanjia Period, Sengye passed away in Wuzhong at 75.

1 Shi Sengye (367-441).

2 Henei was in Qinyang, Henan Province.

3 Upāli, one of the Buddha's major disciples, focused on precept practice and supervision of the Sangha in the Buddha's time.

Huixian 慧先, a disciple of Sengye, inherited the lineage and expounded the texts several times.

3. Shi Huixun of Changle Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huixun¹ 釋慧詢 was from a Zhao family in Zhao Prefecture.² He started maintaining a vegetarian diet and asceticism in his adolescence. Traveling to Chang'an, he followed Kumārajīva to study. Comprehending sutras and sastras, he was particularly proficient in *the Ten Recitations Vinaya* and *Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*.³ Thereupon, he compiled disciplines which adapted to the ancient texts and contemporary circumstances. In the first year of the Yongchu Period during the Liu Song Dynasty, he moved to Guangling and widely preached the Vinaya. During the Yuanjia Period, he came to the capital and abided at Daochang Temple. Huiguan, a monk in that temple, was versed in *the Ten Recitations Vinaya* as well. Considering Huixun's virtuous and exemplary conduct, he requested that the newcomer stay in another monastery. Thus, Huixun moved to Changle Temple. During the second year of the Daming Period, Huixun died in his abode at the age of 84.

1 Shi Huixun (375-458).

2 Zhao Prefecture was in Handan, Hebei.

3 *The Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya* was the Vinaya text for Mahāsāṃghika.

4. Shi Sengqu of Zhuangyan Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Daobiao

Shi Sengqu 釋 僧 璩 was from a Zhu family in Wu Prefecture. He joined the monastic order to follow Sengye as his teacher. Mastering numerous sutras, he specialized in *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*; also being versed in history, he wrote numerous essays. Originally, he abided at Huqiu Hill in Wu Prefecture. Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu Song government admired his virtue, requesting his presence in the capital; he appointed him as Monastic Head and Director of the Sangha, asking him to dwell at Zhong Temple. At that time, a śramaṇa named Sengding claimed his anāgāmin fruit of cultivation. Sengqu summoned the mass and asked Sengding to demonstrate his super power. The latter responded: “This may breach the disciplines, so it is better not to do so.” Sengqu explained that four reasons listed in the Vinaya texts required the manifestation of the super power these were; first, to dispel doubts, second, to destroy evil view, third, to eliminate arrogance, and forth, to demonstrate virtue. Thus, Sengding’s lie was exposed, and he was exiled from the Sangha. Triggered by this incident, Sengqu composed *the Admonition on the Mass* 訓 眾 論 to exhort for posterity. He was proficient in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics, observing the precepts flawlessly. Monastics and laypeople flocked to follow him. Emperor Shao of the Liu Song Dynasty gave him permission to grant the five precepts to people. Liu Zishang, the Prince of Yuzhang, respected him as a dharma friend; Yuan Can and Zhang Fu associated with him like old friends.

Sengqu later moved to Zhuangyan Temple and passed away in that abode at 58. He wrote *the Essential of Śrīmālā-simha-nāda-sūtra* 勝鬘經文旨 and *the Critical Matters for Monks and Nuns* 僧尼要事 of two fascicles, which are still circulating.

At that time, Vinaya Master Daobiao 道 表 was frank and honest while maintaining virtuous conduct. Emperor Ming of the Liu Song

government requested that Prince Jinxi follow him for precept observance.

5. Shi Daoyan of Pengcheng Prefecture during the Liu Song Dynasty Huiyao

Shi Daoyan 釋道儼 was a native of Xiaohuang,¹ Yongqiu. Observing the precepts strictly, he studied the four Vinaya texts² with assiduity, bringing together their contents and significance. Because of the difference between the pronunciations of Sanskrit and Chinese, the translation and rendering of these precept texts displayed incoherence after they spread eastwards. In an effort to provide a tool to posterity, Daoyan composed *the Commentary on the Right Understanding of the Four Vinaya Texts* 決正四部毗尼論 to explain their essentials. Later, he traveled to Pengcheng, preached the Vinaya-pitaka, and passed away in that city at 75.

At that time, Shi Huiyao 釋慧曜 at Xixuan Temple was versed in the Ten Recitations Vinaya as well.

1 Xiaohuang is near Kaifeng today.

2 The four Vinaya texts refer to *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*, *the Four Part Vinaya*, *the Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*, and *the Five-Part Vinaya*.

6. Shi Sengyin of Jiangling during the Liu Song Dynasty Chengju

Shi Sengyin 釋僧隱 was from a Li family in Longxi,¹ Qinzhou Prefecture. He was born in a family followed the Buddha-Dharma; joining the monastic order at the age of eight, he was able to temporarily eat vegetarian meals for a long period. When he was 12, he altered to a vegetarian diet completely. After full ordination, Sengyin observed the precepts more faithfully. He constantly studied Vinaya texts, mastered the subtle meanings of *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*, and chanted *the Lotus Sutra* and *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*. Hearing of Master Xuangao of Xiliang's proficiency in both meditation and wisdom, Sengyin went to follow him; he thus learned all the essences of meditation and comprehended Vinaya texts. After the death of Master Xuangao,² Sengyin traveled to Ba and Shu Prefectures and concentrated on dharma transmission. Shortly after, he moved eastwards to Jiangling and abided at Pipa Temple, following Huiche as his teacher, who was renowned and widely influential among his contemporaries. With a short period of research, Sengyin gained a grasp of sutras and Vinaya texts; his knowledge and insight regarding meditation and wisdom benefited people in the Hunan and Hubei areas. Both Liu Xiuruo, the Prince of Baling and Prefect of Jingzhou, and Liu Jingsu, the Prince of Jianping, followed his lectures on meditation in his Chan room, knelling down to pay respect to him.

Later, Sengyin fell ill for a short time; once, he inquired to his attendant: "Is it noon now?" The attendant replied: "Yes." Thus, the master asked for water to rinse his mouth, dying at 80 with an easy complexion.

At that time, Vinaya Master Chengju 成具 at Shangming Temple in Jiangling was also proficient in *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*, the

1 Longxi is in Gansu today.

2 The death of Xuangao was in 444.

Samyuktâbhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra and *the Abhidharma*, among other texts.

7. Shi Daofang of Guanghan during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Daofang 釋道房 was from a Zhang family in Wucheng, Guanghan. His observance of precepts was pure and strict. He mastered the Vinaya texts in his youth, abiding at Changle Temple in Guanghan. Every time he burned incense to pay homage to the Buddha, the smoke went straight to the top of the Buddha statue. He frequently exhorted his disciples to replace their evil deeds with wholesome ones. For those who did not change, Daofang would shed tears for them. He died in the temple at 120.

8. Shi Daoying of Xianxin Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Huiyou

Shi Daoying¹ 釋道營 was of unknown origins. He first studied meditation at Lingyao Temple and later followed the Vinaya masters Huiguan and Huixun to learn precept texts, specializing in *the Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*. He recited *the Lotus Sutra* and *Suvarṇa-prabhāsōttama-sūtra* 金光明經, observed precepts diligently, and kept a vegetarian diet. Daohui of Zhuangyan Temple and Zhixiu of Yecheng Temple followed him as their teacher and role model in the observance of precepts. Zhang Yong invited him to Wu Prefecture; later, Cai Xingzong requested for him to abide in Shangyu. After Zhang Yong built Xianxin Temple at Louhuyuan in the capital, he invited Daoying to the new monastery. His frequent lectures attracted a lot of disciples. During the second year of the Shengming Period, he died at the age of 83.

Contemporarily, Shi Huiyou 釋慧佑, who was a native of Dantu,² renounced the world at 30. He practiced asceticism and focused on Vinaya research. Later, he traveled eastwards to expound *the Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*. Xiao Ziliang, the Prince of Jingling in the Southern Qi government, sent for him, thus he came to abide at Xianxin Temple as well.

1 Shi Daoying (396-478).

2 Dantu was in Jiangsu Province.

9. Shi Zhidao of Lingyao Temple on Mount Zhong during the Southern Qi Dynasty Chaodu

Shi Zhidao¹ 釋誌道, from a Ren family in Henei, was gifted with gentle and prudent characteristics. Renouncing the world at 17, he abided at Lingyao Temple, took vegetarian food, and remained aloof from secular desires. Except for the six necessities,² he kept nothing, yet he studied and mastered the Tripitaka, specializing in Vinaya. Out of admiration for his virtue, He Shangzhi venerated him and invited Zhidao to dwell at Falun Temple, which he built. Previously, the Northern Wei government persecuted Buddhism; it henceforth repromoted the Dharma, but percept ordination was discontinued. Zhidao vowed to make the Vinaya popular again, sparing no efforts. Thus, along with a dozen companions, he went to Hulao;³ while there, he gathered monks from Luo, Qin, Yong, Huan and Yu Prefectures, expounding precepts, discipline, and the ordination rituals. Because of Zhidao, the monks in the bogus Northern Wei territory could have full ordination. Later, Zhidao returned to the capital. When Wang Huan went to guard Xiang Prefecture, he took the master with him. During the second year of the Yongming Period, Zhidao passed away in Xiang Prefecture at 73.

At that time, Chaodu 超 度 at Waguan Temple in the capital was proficient in *the Ten Recitations Vinaya* and *the Four Part Vinaya*, so he wrote *the Precept Cases* 律例 of seven fascicles.

1 Shi Zhidao (412-484).

2 The six necessities for monks are: three pieces of clothes, a bowl, clothing for sleep, and a water filter bag.

3 Hulao was in Henan.

10. Shi Faying of Duobao Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Huiwen

Shi Faying¹ 釋法穎 was from a Suo family in Dunhuang. At 13, he joined the monastic order, followed Faxiang as his teacher at Gongfu Temple in Liangzhou, and was known, along with his school friend Fali, for Vinaya studies. After Faying started his studies, he could remember and understand a teaching after only hearing it once, needless of questions. He mastered Vinaya, widely reading sutras and sastras as well. During the last year of the Yuanjia Period, he went to the capital and abided at Xinting Temple. Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu Song Dynasty reformed this temple after returning to the south, nominating Faying as the Monastic Head for his virtue and learning. Later, the master resigned and went to Duobao Temple, constantly practicing meditation in the Chan room and holding lectures on Vinaya texts. When Emperor Gao of the Southern Qi Dynasty took the throne, Faying was appointed as Monastic Head again and provided with rewards than were double the ordinary remuneration. The master donated the money to construct Buddhist statues, print scriptures, and buy medicines that were stored in Changgan Temple. During the fourth year of the Jianyuan Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, he died at 67. He wrote *the Ten Recitations Prātimokṣasūtra Texts* 十誦戒本 and *Karman* 羯磨.

At that time, Vinaya Master Huiwen 慧文 at Tianbao Temple was versed in various Vinaya texts as well; he was venerated by Wang Huan of Langya.

1 Shi Faying (416-482).

11. Shi Falin of Lingjian Temple in Shu Prefecture during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Falin¹ 釋法琳 was from a Le family in Linqiong,² Jinyuan. He renounced the world at a young age and abided at Pei Temple in Shu Prefecture. Fond of Vinaya texts, he devoted himself to the study of *the Then Recitations Vinaya*, always regretting that prominent teachers could hardly be found in the Shu area. Soon after, Master Sengyin arrived in Sichuan; Falin hence learned from him assiduously day and night. When Sengyin returned to Jingzhou, the hardworking student followed the master to study for a few more years. Then returning to Shu Prefecture, Falin dwelt in Lingjian Temple; the monks and nuns in this region all respected him as their teacher.

Falin wished to be reborn in the Western Paradise, constantly reciting *the Sutra of Immeasurable Lives* and *the Chapter of the Universal Gate of Avalokitêsvara Bodhisattva* 觀音經. Every time he recited the sutras, a good-looking and lofty śramaṇa stayed by his side. During the second year of the Jianwu Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, he fell ill and reposed in bed; concentrating on the Western Paradise, he paid homage, and repented ceaselessly. He caught sight of numerous saints gathering before him and told his disciples what he saw. After telling his disciples to cremate him, he joined his palms and died. The disciples thus put firewood at an intersection named Xinfan and cremated the body. The flames rose towards to the sky and were not quenched after three days. Collecting the master's ashes and bones, they built a stupa by that intersection to store them.

1 Shi Falin (d. 495).

2 Linqiong was in Qionglai, Sichuan.

12. Shi Zhicheng of Anle Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Cong Chao

Shi Zhicheng¹ 釋智稱, from a Pei family in Wenxi, Hedong,² was the offspring of Pei Hui, the Prefect of Jizhou in the Wei Dynasty. His forefathers migrated to Jingkou to evade calamity and settled down. Since his childhood, Zhicheng was generous and fond of martial arts and horsemanship. At the age of 17, he followed Wang Xuanmo and Shen Tan to attack Xianyun³ in the north. Every time his knife was stained by blood, pity arose in his mind, and he felt guilty. Finally, he repented: “Doing harm to others does not meet the wishes of virtuous men.” After the battles had finished, he retired from the army. Once, he accidentally read *the Sutra of the Buddha’s Previous Life as a Prince* 瑞應經 and came to realize that a life had merely one hundred years; the state and the cities held no importance. Thus, he went to the Chan Vihara in Nanjian to follow Master Zong, pleading to receive the five precepts. At that time, Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu Song Dynasty invited Chan Master Yin from Yi Prefecture to the capital for veneration; Zhicheng then decided to take refuge in the Chan master who hence warmly accepted him. When Yin returned to the Wen River,⁴ Zhicheng accompanied the master upstream and joined the monastic order at the age of 36 in Pei Temple of Shu Prefecture, respecting Yin as his teacher. Focusing on Vinaya texts, he deeply comprehended *the Ten Recitations Vinaya* and chanted *the shorter version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

Later, he traveled eastwards to Jiangling, following Sengyin and Chengju as teachers to study Chan and Vinaya. During the turbulence of the Yijia Period, he moved to the capital, where he came across Master Faying’s preaching on Vinaya texts at Xinghuang Temple. Zhicheng’s questions hit home and led to

1 Shi Zhicheng (430-501).

2 Hedong is in Shanxi Province today.

3 Xianyun was a minority group in the Shaanxi and Gansu areas.

4 The Wen River is known as the Min River today.

the revelation of the truth, which amazed the audience. Faxian of Dinglin Temple met with Zhicheng at that lecture; after hearing his logical questions and consultations, he brought Zhicheng back to Dinglin. Henceforth, the latter reviewed and recited *the shorter version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and studied the Vinaya texts. Later, Shi Sengzhi of Bao'an Temple in Yuhang invited him to return to his hometown and preach on *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*. Xiyun Temple invited him to be abbot, and Zhicheng accepted the commission. Soon after, he regulated the rules and disciplines. Then, he returned to the capital; Prince Wenxuan invited him to expound the precepts, and hundreds of monastics held the texts to follow his lecture.

Since his renunciation of the world, he was aloof from secular affairs; declining festival and mourning events, he sought no worldly association with people. Every time calamity happened, he followed the precepts and restrained from grief, cultivating diligently to a higher degree in order to achieve his goal. Huishi, a śramaṇa of Zhufang Temple, invited him to deliver dharma talks in his hometown; old friends and fellows all came to salute him. To fulfill his filial duty to the elders in his family and clan, he thus sincerely advised them to practice Buddhism. When he left, his fellow townsmen cried and pleaded for him to stay, yet he had made up his mind. Returned to the capital, he abided at Anle Temple. Turning the dharma wheel, he expounded the longer version of the Ten Recitations Vinaya over 30 times. During the third year of the Yongyuan Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, Zhicheng passed away at the age of 72. He wrote *the Commentary on the Ten Recitations Vinaya* 十誦義記 of eight fascicles, which is popular in public. His disciples, including Sengbian, erected a stupa at Anle Temple to memorialize him.

Zhicheng's disciples, Cong 聰 and Chao 超, were versed in Vinaya and venerated by learners.

13. Shi Sengyou of Jianchu Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Sengyou¹ 釋僧佑 was originally from a Yu family in Xiapi,² Pengcheng. His father migrated to the capital, Jianye. When Sengyou was a young boy, he once came to Jianchu Temple to pay homage; enjoying the monastic environment, he did not want to go back home. His parents respected his aspiration and let him join the monastic order; he followed Master Sengfan as his teacher. At the age of 14, his family secretly sought a wife for him; after learning about this effort, Sengyou escaped to Dinglin Temple and learned from Master Fada, who observed the precepts faithfully and had come to be a pillar of Buddhism. Sengyou venerated him deeply and studied with assiduity. After full ordination, his observance of precepts became firmer and purer. Later, he studied under Faying the śramaṇa, a renowned master in the Vinaya School. Sengyou spared no efforts in research, regardless of day or night. Thereupon, he profoundly understood the Vinaya texts, exceeding the previous sages. When Prince Wenxuan of Jingling in the Southern Qi government invited him to expound the Vinaya, seven to eight hundred attendees crowded the lectures. During the Yongming Period, the emperor requested that he go to Wu Prefecture in order to select monastics from the five groups of Buddhists and preach *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*. He particularly explained the ritual for precept reception to the audience. All the money and objects he received were donated to Dinglin and Jianchu temples for renovation; they were also used to organize Dana Assemblies and banquets and to print scriptures, sutra collations, and sutra editions. The flourishing of temple activities and dharma talks were because of him.

Sengyou was intelligent and skillful in design. When craftsmen followed his designs, the measurements worked perfectly. Therefore, he was invited to design and plan the great statues at

1 Shi Sengyou (445-518).

2 Xiapi is in Xuzhou, Jiangsu today.

Guangzhai Temple and Mount She and the stone Buddha statue in Shan County. The current emperor venerated him with ceremonious courtesy and consulted him about all the questions and doubts relating to monastics. In his senior age, Sengyou was less mobile; the emperor allowed his sedan to enter into the palace. Sengyou also granted precepts to the empresses and princesses, which proved the emperor's trust and respect for the master.

Zhizang of Kaishan Temple and Huikuo of Fayin Temple respected him as their teacher because of their admiration for his virtue. Xiao Hong, the Prince of Linchuan in Liang government, Wang Wei of Nanping, Yuan Ang, an official of Yitong¹ from Chen Prefecture, Princess Yongkangding, and Lady Ding, a consort, all followed him as their precept master, generously offering to him. His monastic and lay disciples added up to over eleven thousand.

On the 26th in the fifth month of the 17th year during the Tianjian Period, he passed away in Jianchu Temple at 74 and was buried to the west of Kaishan Road, where the old graveyard of Dinglin Temple was located. His disciple, Zhengdu, erected a stele to immortalize him; Liu Xie² of Dongguan wrote the inscription.

Formerly, after Sengyou collected sutras, he had people transcribe them; he also composed *the Compilation of Notes on the Translation of the Tripitaka* 三藏記, *the Note in the Dharma Garden* 法苑記, *the Note of the World* 世界記, *the Genealogy of Śākyamuni* 釋迦譜, and *the Hongming ji* 弘明集 (*Collection of Wisdom Transmission*), which are all circulating in the world.

Comments

The rites derive from the loosening of loyalty and faith; similarly,

1 Yitong was an honorary official title; multiple personages were conferred this in the Southern and Northern Dynasties.

2 Liu Xie (c. 465-c. 520), a famous literary critic, composed *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* 文心雕龍.

the precepts arise to prevent unwholesomeness. For this reason, chapters of disciplines are dependent on the conditions and possible breaches. Having entered Parinirvana under the śāla-trees, the Buddha completed and perfected his deeds in the human realm. Since the World Honored One departed near the Golden River,¹ Kāśyapa carried on the great endeavor and requested that Venerable Upāli the Vinaya Master dictate the Vinaya-pitaka. Holding ivory fans, Upāli thus recited the Buddha's words eighty times; thereupon the Vinaya texts had been recorded on leaves, which are known as *the Eighty Recitations Vinaya*. Henceforth, the five Arhats, Kāśyapa, Ānanda, Madhyântika, Śaṅavāsa, and Upagupta, successively became the patriarchs for five generations of the religion. During the period of Upagupta, King Aśoka, who was seated in Pāṭaliputra,² treated the Buddhism with prejudice. Being a despotic tyrant, he ruled the country with an iron fist; out of suspiciousness, he adopted a brutal attitude towards the monks, burning scriptures and decimating the awakened ones. Afterwards, he changed his mind and repented for his wrongdoings, gathering Arhats and collecting Tripitaka. Hence, the monks recited their teachers' discourses respectively, forming the five Vinaya schools based on different approaches. The five Vinaya texts weighed from distinct perspectives and laid down various disciplines, allowing and prohibiting behaviors with slight differences. These discrepancies reflected the Tathagata's adaptability to all circumstances and alternatives, to the variety of human characters and capacities, or to the eras and territories. It might be the case that one behavior was approved at a certain location and prohibited in another; one might also be forbidden for certain people but approved for the others. Although the five patriarchs abstracted the precepts from the Buddha's Teachings, they placed divergent accents accordingly. Thus, the length of the texts varied, and the catalogues differed from one another; yet following them for cultivation would lead to awakening. Therefore, at the time of

1 Golden River refers to the Hiranyavatī River near Kuśinagara, where the Buddha entered Parinirvana.

2 Pāṭaliputra was the capital of the Mauryan Dynasty, in which Aśoka was the third king.

the Buddha, as King Bimbisāra¹ dreamed of the piece of broken cloth, the Buddha prophesied that the general sutras and Vinaya texts would derive into five schools. In *the Mahāsaṃnipata-sūtra* 大集經, the Buddha indicated: “After my Nirvana, the Dharma will be divided into five sects. The one that inverts the exegesis and conceals the Dharma is named Dharmaguptaka, or the Dharmaguptakah School; The one that reads non-Buddhist books and believes in the real substance of the three lives of past, present and future, is argumentative, and preaches the permanence of the Dharma and that people of all classes should be eligible for precepts is Sarvāstivāda, or the Sarvāstivādah School; the cheerful one that expounds that all dharmas have no-self is named the Kāśyapīyah School; the one that stresses self without mentioning emptiness is the Vātsīputrīya School; while the one who widely reads all the texts of the five sects is the Mahāsāṃghika School. For virtuous men, although these five schools have distinct names, it does not hinder their understanding of the Dharma and Parinirvana.” In addition, *the Sutra of the Questions of Mañjuśrī* 文殊師利問經 states: “After a hundred years of my nirvana, two schools will rise; one is Mahāsāṃghika, and the other Mahasangha.² The first one will have elders and young monks holding Bodhisattva Assemblies and producing a Vinaya text; afterwards, seven sects will be derived from this school. The second, Sthaviravāda, will merely have elders who recite the Vinaya texts. This school will divide into 11 sects.” Thus, the sutra says: “I hereby predict that the 18 sects and the two schools are all from the Mahayana; there will be no right or wrong between them.” *The Biography of Aśoka* also mentioned 18 sects, due to the variety of understandings and viewpoints; the names were slightly different from the abovementioned ones. Hence, the five schools were fundamental; within the 200 years following the Buddha’s nirvana, four sects came from Sarvāstivāda, Mahāsāsakah

1 King Bimbisāra was the king of Magadha during the Buddha’s time, who dreamed that a bolt of cloth broke into 18 pieces; he hence consulted the Buddha about its meaning. The Buddha replied that the Sangha would be divided into 18 sects in the future.

2 Mahasangha may be an error in the original text; in the sutra, it actually says Mahāsāṃghika and Sthaviravāda.

derived one, Kāśyapīyah generated two. Mahāsāṃghika derived six sects. In 400 years after the Nirvana, Dharmaguptah was divided into 5 sects. Some sections only referred to five patriarchs leading the ideology, while in certain parts of the scriptures, we can see 18 or 20 sects, which compose the full list.

Since Buddhism spread eastwards, all five of the Vinaya sects were introduced into China. The transmission process originated from the Sanskrit dictation of the Ten Recitations Vinaya by Puṇyatāra; Kumārajīva rendered it into Chinese. Unfortunately, Puṇyatāra passed away before the completion of the project. Afterwards, Dharmaruci recited the rest and Kumārajīva thus finished the translation. The text of the Dharmaguptah Vinaya School, which was translated by Buddhayaśas, came to be *the Four Part Vinaya*. Faxian acquired the Sanskrit texts of the Mahāsāṃghika and Mahīśāsakah schools; Buddhahadra translated *the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya*, and Buddhajīva rendered the Mahīśāsakah text, which is now *the Five Part Vinaya*. The Sanskrit Kāśyapīyah text is said to have been dictated in China, yet no one translated it; *the Samantapāsādikā* 善見, *Sarvāstivāda-nikāya-vinaya-māṭṛkā* 摩得勒伽, and *Sutra on the Causes and Conditions of Vinaya* 戒因緣 actually all pertain to branches of that Vinaya school. Though *the five Vinaya* texts were transmitted to China, *the Ten Recitations Vinaya* is the most popular one. Vinaya Master Vimalākṣa, a colossus in the Western Regions, arrived in Guanzhong then traveled to Jingzhou, promoting *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*; these spectacular events were recorded in *the Zong lu* 宗錄 (Record of Schools). Tanyou personally learned from him, and Sengye inherited and upheld this lineage; Sengqu, Daoyan, Sengyin, and Sengrong all disseminated Tanyou's teachings, which prevailed in the Liu Song Dynasty. They expounded in accordance with their understanding without further research and development. Later, Vinaya Master Zhicheng fathomed the profound meaning of the Vinaya text and explicated it with a new ideology and structure, which was welcomed in the Southern Qi and Liang Dynasties; learners are still advocating and transcribing it.

The wisdom that derives from concentration is based on the precepts; thus precepts, meditation, and wisdom form the steps of learning. That is why the precepts are essential for monastics, just as how the rites are preconditions for secular people. As what *the Book of Rites* 禮記 says: “Morality and loyalty are not valid without rites. Teaching and correcting the world necessitate the rites.” It is indicated in the sutras that: “The precepts can be akin to a plain field; various virtues grow from it. The three generations of Buddha-Dharma emerge with the support of the Vinaya.” Thereupon, the intelligence of the Vinaya principles preconditions the exegesis of the five skills relating to precepts.¹ To cut the roots² of the three weeds, one should know them first; then, the dharma gates of meditation and wisdom can be pursued.

Nevertheless, the bigoted ones refute approaches other than their own. Those incline to the Vinaya state that the precepts play a central role and that the doctrines are illusory. Some who merely remember the categories and concepts of the precepts claim themselves to be Upāli. This is well like the monk who can merely use the water filter bag considering himself an Arhat or the only Bhikṣu in the world and believing that the others are dumb. This is just the proscription of self-praise and disparagement of others in the precepts; their merits do not repay their sins. The notion of conceit and egoism refer to these people. Whereas, those who prefer the scriptural systems argue that the preceptors are partial; perfection uniquely comes forth from the doctrines. They slander the Vinaya and focus on the aggregates and sense bases; fearlessly treading on the air without restraint or discipline, they say that the fire in hell does not burn the wise men and that the caldron of molten iron does not boil the wisdom of perfection. This misconduct will eventually cause them to hurt themselves. They are

1 The five skills in regard to the precepts: knowing when to breach or comply, distinguishing slight or grave offences, and reciting pratimokṣa.

2 The three weed roots here refer to the three unwholesome roots: greed, hatred, and delusion.

just as the rats watching the sheep.¹

Paean

Carving the precept words on the plates and bowls and inscribing the mottos on the staff and desk, if one does not discipline himself, how can he bring forth actions? The monastic clothes have been mended; the Vinaya texts have been made. Implementing them in speech and consciousness, the body and mind are supposed to wither. Secular happiness and suffering are two reflections in the mirror, which look real but are in fact empty.

¹ Rats and sheep are a simile for the undisciplined and disciplined.

Volume XII

Self-Immolation

11 main figures 4 auxiliaries

1. Shi Sengqun of Mount Huo during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Sengqun 釋僧群 was of unknown origins. He lived with scant means and observed the disciplines strictly, taking a vegetarian diet and reciting the sutras diligently. Later, he moved to Mount Huo in Luojiang County¹ and built a thatched cottage. The isolated mountain stood in the sea, and a stone basin that was dozens of feet in diameter was on top, forming a pool that measured six or seven feet deep; clear streams flowed down from it. An ancient legend says that immortals abided on this island. Sengqun would not feel hungry after drinking the water, thus he stopped eating cereals. When Tao Kui, the Prefect of Jin'an,² heard about this anecdote, he asked for water from Sengqun. However, as soon as the water was carried to the prefect, it became stinky: this phenomenon happened three or four times repeatedly. Hence, Tao Kui decided to cross the sea in person. On the day of departure, the sky was blue; yet when he approached the mountain, the wind was blowing with heavy rain. Even after returning to the mainland and waiting for several days, he still could not get to the island. Tao Kui sighed: "A secular person is unable to reach the locale of the saints." Then, he went back with regret.

The stone basin and Sengqun's cottage were divided by a creek; the master put a log to serve as a bridge, through which he went to fetch water from the stone basin. One day, a duck with a broken wing blocked the bridge by standing on it and opening its wing. Seeing Sengqun coming, it tried to peck him. Sengqun wanted to get rid of it with his Buddhist staff, but he finally abstained from

1 Luojiang County was in Guangdong Province.

2 Jin'an was in Fujian.

this act out of fear that he would hurt it. Then, the master returned his cottage, stopped taking water, and died a few days later in sitting posture; he lived 140 years. Before his death, he told those around him: “When I was young, I broke a duck’s wing; this is the karmic effect.”

2. Shi Tancheng of Mount Jia in Pengcheng during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Tancheng 釋曇稱 was a native of Hebei. Since his childhood, he was kindhearted and considerate, even to insects. During the late years of the Jin Dynasty,¹ he came to Pengcheng and found an 80-year old elderly couple living in grinding poverty. Tancheng thus gave up his renunciation and joined the family as their servant for years, but he continued his inner cultivation without interruption, which amazed the neighborhood. After the senior people died, Tancheng found a job elsewhere to earn enough money for the couple's funeral. He even tried to sell himself as a slave to make up the sum. Completing the funeral, he wanted to join the order again, yet he could not afford the monastic necessities and equipment, thus giving up.

During the early years of the Liu Song Dynasty, tigers infested the Mount Jia area in Pengcheng. One or two people would be killed each day. Tancheng told the villagers: "If the tiger eats me, this disaster will cease." People dissuaded him but he did not listen. Thus, sitting in the grass field, he made the vow: "I will feed you with my body so that you may stop killing other people and receive dharma nutrition in the future." The villagers recognized his steadfast will, paid homage to him, and returned to the village with tears on their faces. At about two o'clock in the morning, they heard a tiger take Tancheng. The villagers followed the sound to the southern slope and discovered that all of Tancheng's body was eaten save for the head. Thereupon, they buried him and built a stupa. Afterwards, the tiger catastrophe subsided.

1 The Jin Dynasty: 265-420.

3. Shi Fajin of Gaochang during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengzun

Shi Fajin¹ 釋法進, also known as Daojin or Faying, was originally from a Tang family in Zhangye, Liangzhou. He diligently studied and recited sutras, outstripping his peers. Juqu Mengxun valued him. After Juqu Mengxun's death, his son, Jinghuan, was defeated by barbarian invaders. The young monarch consulted Fajin: "I want to attack Gaochang; will I succeed?" The master replied: "You surely can, but a famine may follow." The battles went in the favor of Juqu's army; the city was captured.

Three years later, Jinghuan died; Anzhou, his younger brother, succeeded to the throne. A devastating famine broke forth that year, and countless people died of hunger. Anzhou venerated Fajin deeply, and the latter repeatedly requested that the king relieve the civilians of their misery. Thereupon, the national coffers were depleted. Fajin hence stopped offering this compassionate advice. One day, he washed his body, taking a knife and some salt with him, and went to the slum where those struggling with starvation gathered. Following the due rituals, he granted them refuge in the Three Jewels; then taking off his clothes, he hung them on a tree with his bowl. Next, he came to the starving crowd, saying: "I want to donate my body to you. Please eat me." Although the sufferers were starving to death, they did not have the heart to eat his flesh. Thus, Fajin cut the muscles on his body, dipped them in salt, and gave them to the paupers. After the muscles on his two thighs were distributed, Fajin was too breathless to continue cutting, then saying: "Take my skin and the rest of my body; it can serve you for a couple of days. If King Anzhou sends for me, his people would carry me back. You had better take me there now." The poor people were deeply saddened; no one wanted to do it. Soon, the disciples of Fajin arrived, followed by the king's men; numerous people came forth and all cried out loud in grief. They carried Fajin back to the palace, and Anzhou ordered for the distribution of another

1 Shi Fajin (d. 444).

30,000 liters of wheat grains for calamity relief, later opening the state's warehouse to help the paupers. The next morning, Fajin passed away. He was carried to the north of the city for cremation. The flames rose towards the sky and were quenched after seven days. His bones were burnt out; only his tongue remained. People hence built a three-story pagoda at that location and erected a stele on the right side.

Sengzun 僧 遵 was a disciple of Fajin, originally coming from a Zhao family in Gaochang. He was good at *the Ten Recitations Vinaya*, maintaining a vegetarian diet and observing the precepts faithfully. Frequently, he recited *the Lotus Sutra*, *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra*, and *Diamond Sutra*. He requested that his disciples remain strict in their practice and constantly advocated repentance methods.

4. Shi Sengfu of Tingwei Temple in Wei Prefecture during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Sengfu 釋 僧 富 was from a Shan family in Gaoyang. His father, Shan Ba, used to be the Magistrate of Lantian.¹ Sengfu lived a meager life in his childhood yet studied tirelessly, collecting firewood for light to read at night. At the age of 20, he became a handsome and eloquent young man, having read through all the classics and historical books. Later, he met Yang Yong, the general of guardians in the bogus Qin government who supported him with clothes and food, and studied with Xi Zaochi.² When he listened to Dao'an's lecture on *the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 放光經, he aspired to renounce the world. Being tonsured, he followed Dao'an as his teacher. After the grand master's death, he returned to Wei Prefecture and abided at Tingwei Temple. Contemplating in peace, he was aloof from worldly affairs.

At that time, someone in the village committed a robbery, grabbing a little child and planning to use his heart and liver to sacrifice to the gods. Sengfu walked to the junction at ease, met with the robbers, and inquired their reason for their actions. Then, he took off his clothes and wanted to exchange himself for the child. The bandits did not agree. Sengfu said: "Can the guts of adults serve the purpose?" The bandits thought that Sengfu was fearful of death, so they said that it would be alright. Sengfu returned: "The body is like a flame that ceases soon. Now, I die in exchange for another life; death will then have no difference from life." Thus, he took out a knife and cut from his chest to his navel. The robbers regretted their decision and blamed each other, scattering and escaping; later, they returned the child to his home.

At that moment, a passenger saw Sengfu's act, asking what happened. Sengfu had difficulty breathing but could still speak and

1 Lantian was in Shaanxi Province.

2 Xi Zaochi (d. 384) was a famous scholar that wrote *the History of the Han and the Jin* 漢晉春秋.

narrate the incident. The passenger was sorrowful and touched, fetching a needle from home and stitching Sengfu's belly; he put some effective medicine on him and carried the master back to the temple for recuperation. Soon after, Sengfu recovered. Yet his whereabouts were unknown afterwards.

5. Shi Fayu of Puban in the Bogus Qin during the Liu Song Dynasty Huishi

Shi Fayu¹ 釋法羽 was a native of Jizhou. He joined the monastic order at 15 and followed Huishi 慧始 as his teacher, who cultivated diligently and practiced wandering asceticism. Fayu aspired with a sincere heart and comprehended the doctrines deeply. Admiring the Bhaiṣajya-rāja Bodhisattva's deeds,² he wanted to burn himself to sacrifice for the Buddha. At that time, Yao Xu, the Prince Jin of the Later Qin government, was on duty in Puban;³ Fayu told him about his idea. Yao Xu replied: "Buddhism provides several ways to attain higher spirituality, so self-burning is not necessary. I dare not push you against your will, but please think it over." Since Fayu had pledged his life, he drank sesame oil; after binding his body with cloth and reciting *the Chapter on Self Immolation*⁴ 舍身品, he lit himself aflame. Both monastics and laypeople who witnessed the event felt saddened and respectful. He lived 45 years.

1 Shi Fayu (c. 356-c. 400).

2 "The Bodhisattva's deeds," refers to an event in the Lotus Sutra where, as an offering, the bodhisattva burned his arms as a sacrifice to his Buddha.

3 Puban is in Shanxi Province now.

4 *Self-Immolation* is a chapter in *the Sutra of Golden Light* 合部金光明經.

6. Shi Huishao of Zhaoti Temple in Linchuan during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengyao

Shi Huishao¹ 釋慧紹 was of unknown origins. When he was an infant, his mother fed him with fish, but he spat it out; replacing them with vegetables, he accepted it. Since then, he was raised with vegetarian food. At the age of eight, he joined the monastic order and followed Sengyao 僧要 as his teacher. He studied with assiduity, observing the precepts faithfully.

Going after Sengyao, Huishao later came to abide at Zhaoti Temple in Linchuan.² The idea of self-burning for immolation to the Buddha arose in him secretly. Thus, he hired people to collect firewood on the mountain; he piled it up several dozens of feet high in a stone chamber at the eastern hill, making some room for his body in the rick. Then, he returned to the monastery, bidding farewell to Sengyao, who dissuaded him bitterly; yet the disciple would not hear of it. On the day set for the burning, he organized a Dana Assembly of Eight Precepts for the public at the east hill and said goodbye to his virtuous friends. At this event, the area was filled with vehicles and crowds, offering immeasurable treasures and money. That evening, Huishao started the ritual, burning incense in person and practicing walking meditation holding the incense. After the process, he used the candle to light the firewood, then sitting inside it and reciting *the Chapter on Former Matters of the Medicine King Bhaisajyarāja* 藥王本事品. The mass lost sight of the master and realized that he had gone to burn himself. Before the entire ritual was completed, they went to the site and found the flame that had risen. The master's voice of recitation could still be heard, chanting "the oneness of mind." Shortly after, his voice waned. A star of 10 liter in size dropped into the smoke and then leapt towards the sky instantly. The witnesses all believed that heaven was welcoming Huishao. The firewood burned out after three days.

1 Shi Huishao (412-451).

2 Linchuan was in Fuzhou, Jiangxi.

Before the burning, Huishao told his school friends: “A (Chinese) parasol tree will grow on the location where I burn myself, please do not cut it off.” Three days later, a (Chinese) parasol tree really sprouted. He burned himself during the 28th year of the Yuanjia Period at the age of 28.

Sengyao, Huishao’s teacher, was also noble and virtuous, following the precepts strictly. He died at 160 in the temple.

7. Shi Sengyu of Zhaoyin Temple on Mount Lu during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Sengyu¹ 釋僧瑜 was from a Zhou family in Yuhang, Wuxing. He joined the monastic order at 20 and had a pure, vegetarian diet. During the 15th year of the Yuanjia Period, Sengyu, with his school friends, Tanwen and Huiguang, built a vihara on the south hill of Mount Lu and named it Zhaoyin. He believed that humans may descend to the three inferior realms of hell, animals, and ghosts due to their attachment to sentiments and forms. Just as desire is severed, form should be abandoned as well; the Medicine King's deeds should be followed. Thus, he repeatedly made the vow to burn himself and wrote a pledge describing his determination.

On the third day of the sixth month in the second year of the Xiaojian Period during the Liu Song Dynasty, Sengyu collected firewood and piled it up in the shape of a baldachin and requested that the monks organize a Dana Assembly where he could bid farewell to the mass. That day, clouds covered the sky, and torrential rain poured. Sengyu swore: "If my will is righteous, the sky should turn clear. In the case that my vow does not comply with the path, let the rain continue. So, the four groups of Buddhists would know the heavenly guidance." After his words, the sky cleared up. That night, he entered the firewood rick and sat tight, chanting *the Chapter on the Medicine King* 藥王品. When the flame rose up, his palms did not separate. The monastics and laypeople that learned the news flocked to the hill, prostrating and paying homage to express their admiration and awe. They all saw purple smoke rise to the sky for a long time. Sengyu was 44 that year.

On the 14th day after his death, two (Chinese) parasol trees grew up from the room where Sengyu used to live. They flourished in a symmetric manner from the earth towards the sky; their branches interconnected. The ones who knew the legend said that they were śāla trees. They appeared in the world to demonstrate a sign of

1 Shi Sengyu (412-455).

Sengyu's nirvana; people hence called them "Śramaṇa Double (Chinese) parasol trees."

Zhang Bian of Wu Prefecture, who was a staff officer of Nanping that witnessed the event, wrote a eulogy: "The profound truth and limitless path, life and death; who does the math?

The former Medicine King cured the world with great compassion. Hearing of these deeds, we now see it in person. An outstanding śramaṇa of firm mind and wisdom; purple smoke came forth in his concentration, and double trees manifested at his home. Virtue is admirable, and this conduct is invaluable; I compose this eulogy to make its spirit immortal."

8. Shi Huiyi of Zhulin Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huiyi¹ 釋慧益 was originally from Guangling. He renounced the world in his youth and abided at Shouchun Temple with his master. During the Xiaojian Period of the Liu Song Dynasty, he arrived in the capital and dwelled at Zhulin Temple; studying and cultivating diligently, he vowed to sacrifice himself by burning his body. When this plan was revealed, both praise and censure arose. During the fourth year of the Daming Period, Huiyi stopped taking meals, merely eating hemp and wheat seeds. In the sixth year, he abandoned wheat and replaced it with butter. Soon, he gave up butter and took incense pills. Although his body was weak, his mind was vigilant and clear. Emperor Xiaowu admired him deeply, sending frequent regards; later, he dispatched Liu Yigong, the Prince of Jiangxia, and the Prime Minister to persuade Huiyi into changing his mind; yet the master would not alter his aspiration.

Huiyi decided to carry out the plan on the eighth of the fourth month in the seventh year of the Daming Period. He had a big caldron put on the southern slope of Mount Zhong and prepared oil accordingly. That morning, he took a bullock cart pulled by men that was going to Mount Zhong from Zhulin Temple. First, he bid farewell to the emperor as the monarch had governed the people and protected the Three Jewels. He stepped onto the platform of the palace but could not continue walking. Thus, he sent a message to the emperor: “Huiyi abandons his body today and bids farewell at the gate. Buddhism will rely on the support of His Majesty.” The emperor was stunned by the news and came to the gate in person. When Huiyi met with the emperor, he again requested for the latter to uphold the Dharma, then saying goodbye. Emperor Xiaowu followed him to the burning site with the empresses. Monastics and laypeople covering all the hills and valleys, countless treasures and clothes were offered by the crowds. Huiyi entered the caldron; sitting on a small bed, he bound himself with cloths and put on a

1 Shi Huiyi (d. 463).

high hat. Then, he filled the hat with oil. Before the fire was set, the emperor ordered the prime minister to persuade the master in front of the caldron once again: “Multiple paths lead to enlightenment, so why do you have to give up your life? Please think it over and pursue another way.” Huiyi was set in his plan and replied: “My life is minuscule; thank you for His Majesty’s concern. If the emperor has pity, I would like to request for his approval of a quota of 20 new monks.” This request was instantly approved. Hence, Huiyi held the candle and lit his hat ablaze. After the flames rose, he threw the candle and joined his palms, reciting *the Chapter of the Medicine King Bhaiṣajyarāja*. When the fire went down to his eyebrows, his voice could still be heard clearly; the flame further burned down to his eyes, and he then passed away. Nobles and commoners all cried out; the sound resonated in the valley. They paid homage to the Buddha and wiped their eyes. The flame was quenched the following day. That night, the emperor dreamed of Huiyi holding a staff coming to entrust Buddhism to him. The next day, he set an Assembly to tonsure monks, ordering the host to recite the sutra aloud; the emperor wrote an essay himself to record this omen. Later, he built a monastery at the locale where Huiyi burned himself to imitate the scene of Huiyi’s sacrifice; the temple was known as Medicine King Temple.

9. Shi Sengqing of Wudan Temple in Shu Prefecture during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Sengqing¹ 釋僧慶 was from a Chen family in Anhan,² Baxi. His family followed Wudoumi Daoism.³ Sengqing was born intelligent; different from the other members of his family, he joined the Buddhist order at 13 and stayed at Yixing Temple. Practicing pure conduct, he wished to see the Buddha; abandoning three fingers at first, he later vowed to burn himself for immolation. Gradually, he stopped eating cereals and merely took sesame oil. On the eighth of the second month in the third year of the Daming Period, he burned himself in front of the Vimalakīrti's statue that he had made to the west of Wudan Temple in the prefecture town of Shu. Zhang Yue, the prefect, came to witness it in person; all the Buddhists and secular people in the area flocked to watch the event. At that time, the clouds poured out sad rain. Soon after, the sky cleared up, and a dragon-like creature rose towards heaven. He was 23 that year. Pei Fangming, the Prefect of Tianshui, collected his ashes and built a stupa.

1 Shi Sengqing (437-459).

2 Anhan is in Nanchong today.

3 Wudoumi Daoism was an early Daoist branch which required 50 liters of rice as subscription for joining the religion, hence the name Wudoumi, which means "50 liters of rice" in Chinese.

10. Shi Faguang of Longxi during the Southern Qi Dynasty Facun

Shi Faguang¹ 釋法光 was a native of Longxi.² He believed in Buddhism from his childhood, renouncing the world at 29. Practicing wandering asceticism, he would not wear cotton or silk, abstained from cereals, and only ate pine leaves. Later, he vowed to burn himself and started to take rosin and oil, which lasted for half a year. On the 20th of the tenth month in the fifth year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty, he burned himself at Jicheng Temple in Longxi to fulfill his wish. His recitation could be heard when the flame reached his eyes; when it burned further down to his nose, he died in peace at the age of 41.

During the last year of the Yongming Period, a monk in Shifeng County named Facun 法存 also burned himself for immolation. Xiao Mian, the prefect, ordered Huishen the śramaṇa to build a stupa for him.

1 Shi Faguang (447-487).

2 Longxi was in Gansu Province.

11. Shi Tanhong of Xianshan Temple in Jiaozhi during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Tanhong 釋曇弘, a native of Huanglong, observed precepts from his youth, focusing on Vinaya studies. In the first year of the Yongchu Period during the Liu Song Dynasty, he traveled southwards to Guangdong and abided at Tai Temple. Later, he moved to Xianshan Temple in Jiaozhi; reciting *the Sutra of Immeasurable Lives and Avalokitêśvara Sutra*, he wished for rebirth in the Western Paradise. During the second year of the Xiaojian Period, he went to collect firewood in the mountains and burned himself secretly. After his disciples discovered his plan, they chased after him and carried him back the monastery; half of his body had been severely burnt, but, in a month, he nearly recovered. Once, a neighboring village held an Assembly; the mass of the temple went to attend. Again, Tanhong entered the valleys to burn himself on that day. When the villagers rushed to save him, he had died. Thus, they added firewood to cremate him; the flame was quenched the next day. The locals all saw Tanhong in golden color, riding on a golden deer speeding to the west. The monastics and laypeople realized that it was a sign; collecting his ashes, they built a stupa to memorialize him.

Comments

The body is the most valuable among all forms; consciousness depends on lives. One eats meat, drinks blood, rides on strong horses, and wears silk for the enjoyment of the body; practicing alchemy, taking pills, nourishing the body, and preserving health, they aim for longevity. As for taking off a fine hair, some would stint even if this act could benefit others; those who do not want to offer a meal for the sake of someone's life gravely taint their qualities. Nevertheless, there is another kind who, in possession of great aspirations and insights, takes care of others and neglects themselves. They realize that the three realms are mere houses in

a lengthy darkness and that the four forms of birth¹ derive from illusion. Thereupon, the spirit is, for these people, considered as light as the wings of insects, and the body as the grains that block up a bottle. Thus, from bare head to feet, nothing matters; the kingdom and family can be abandoned as weed seeds. This is the type we are hereby discussing.

Sengqun died of dehydration because he cared for a duck; Sengfu cut his belly and lost his life to save a child. Fajin distributed his muscles to feed paupers in famine; Tancheng offered his body to beasts in an effort to cease the calamity of tigers. They all upheld the virtue of relieving the suffering of others, benefitting sentient beings and neglecting themselves. In the past, the Prince² fed himself to a tiger and provided his flesh in exchange for the dove's, which astonished the world. Such kind of people surpassed ordinary standards. Later, Fayu and Tanhong burned themselves to ashes, abandoning the most valuable thing of theirs, to wish for rebirth in the Western Paradise or to inspire people to restrain from attachment. Therefore, double (Chinese) parasol trees grew up in the room, and purple smoke appeared in the sky. The omens manifested on their occasions.

Yet, the holy discourses are uttered in different ways; various approaches exist. In the right circumstances, proper acts can be carried out in order to benefit sentient beings. Thus, it is said in the sutras that burning a finger or a toe outstrips the donation of a town or a nation. However, the monks in the Sangha are required to maintain a dignified mien to display the moral model to the public. If the body is damaged, the meritorious countenance will be spoiled. In analysis, it is a matter of a trade-off. The gain is detachment from the body; the loss lies in the breaching of the precepts. Whereupon, Nāgārjuna said: "New Bodhisattvas cannot follow all the skillful means to deliver sentient beings." Feeding the

1 The four forms of birth refer to the Buddhist theory that distinguishes embryo, egg, moisture, and incarnation births.

2 The Prince here refers to Shakyamuni Buddha in his previous lives when he was cultivating as a Bodhisattva.

tiger like the Prince helps the accumulation of merit still violates filial piety; saving others by not eating may increase wisdom but hurt one's loving parents. These deeds tend to lead to imperfection and leave flaws.

In addition, as what the Buddha taught, 80 thousand worms live within a human body. If one dies, those lives will perish as well. That is why the Buddha only permitted cremation after an Arhat's death. While humans are burned alive, those lives, in fact, will be killed. Some may say that the Arhats are also burnt, so there are precedents. Others argue that the life has been abandoned and that the one who lights the fire is the spirit. The Bodhisattvas at the stage of nature¹ might also give up their bodies of enjoyment by throwing themselves into fire or by cutting their bodies. Whether the worms are killed, no one actually knows.

The three poisons² and the four reversals³ lay the foundation of life and rebirth; the seven factors of enlightenment and the eightfold path lead to Nirvana. Why should self-burning be necessary for liberation? In case of emergency or saving others, it would be a different scenario out of this discussion. Some ordinary people without deep insight end their life in this way as well, what is the reason behind? It might be for public admiration or reputation. Facing the flame, they might feel fearful and regret it; however, going back on their words would not bring any good. Thus, they have to continue and suffer the burns. If this is the case, it would not serve the purpose they claim.

Paean

Those who have great aspirations exceed gold and diamonds. Burning the valuable body is to reach the liberated state without bounds. Fragrant (Chinese) parasol trees and purple smoke

1 The stage of nature is one of the ten stages listed in the Prajñāpāramitā texts.

2 The three poisons in Buddhism are greed, hatred, and delusion.

3 The four reversals refer to the ordinary people's belief in permanence, joy, self, and purity.

manifested the good signs. After a thousand generations, praise and appreciation will still be found.

Scriptural Recitation

21 main figures 11 auxiliaries

1. Shi Tansui of Baima Temple in Heyin during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Tansui 釋曇邃, origins unknown, renounced the world in his youth and abided at Baima Temple in Heyin.¹ Having vegetarian food and constantly reciting *the Lotus Sutra* once per day, he mastered the meanings precisely and explicated it for others. One day, he heard someone knock on his door at night, saying: “I would like to invite Your Reverence to expound the Dharma for three months.” Tansui did not agree at first, yet the guest insisted; the master then accorded. It seemed like it was in a dream. When he woke up, he found himself in the gods’ temple behind Baima Village. A disciple was there as well. Since then, they came in secret every day, and nobody knew it. Later, a monk of Baima Temple passed by the gods’ temple, seeing two monks, Tansui sitting in the north and his disciple in the south. The voice of sutra recitation could be heard and a rare fragrance smelled. Thus, that monk spread what he saw to the public; everyone was amazed. The dharma talk concluded in the summer; the deity offered a white horse, five white goats, and 90 bolts of silk to the master. After the mantra and vow, they stopped their connection. Afterwards, Tansui’s whereabouts became unknown.

1 Heyin was in Guangwu, Henan.

2. Shi Faxiang of Yuecheng Temple during the Jin Dynasty Tangai Sengfa

Shi Faxiang¹ 釋法相, with the family name Liang, was of unknown origins. He constantly lived in mountains and observed the precepts strictly, reciting sutras of more than 100 thousand words. Birds and animals gathered around him as tame as pets. In the temple of the deity of Mount Tai, there was a big stone container in which many treasures were stored. One day, Faxiang walked on the mountain and stayed at the temple. He saw a figure wearing a black gown and the hat of a knight. The man told Faxiang to open the stone box and then disappeared. The container weighed several tons, but the master easily opened it when he gave it a try. Thus, he took all the treasures and distributed them to needy ones. Later, Faxiang traveled to the south of the Yangtze River and abided at Yuecheng Temple. He suddenly changed and was in full swing, joking to others and sometimes baring his clothes to offend the nobles. Sima Tian detested his undisciplined manner, summoned him, and intended to kill him with poison. However, after three big cups of poison were poured in his mouth, he was still energetic and sober, which marveled Sima Tian. Faxiang died in the last year of the Yuanxing Period at 80.

At that time, Zhu Tangai 竺曇蓋 and Zhu Sengfa 竺僧法 both practiced asceticism and obtained supernatural powers. Tangai could pray for rains through mantra recitation; he was venerated by Sima Xian, the Prefect of Yangzhou. While Sengfa utilized mantra as well; Sima Daozi, the Prince of Kuaiji, and the Prime Minister of the Jin government established Yecheng Temple for him.

1 Shi Faxiang (c. 325-c. 404).

3. Zhu Fachun of Xianyi Temple in Shanyin during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Fachun 竺法純 was of unknown origins. He joined the monastic order in his youth and abided at Xianyi Temple in Shanyin.¹ Practicing asceticism and virtuous conduct, he recited and mastered *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*. During the Jinyuan Period² of the Jin Dynasty, he went to purchase an old cottage in Lanzhu for the temple. On his way back in the evening, the small boat encountered gusts. Fachun recited the name of Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva piously, and soon he was saved by a big boat coming across. Reaching the bank, he wanted to thank the boatman but did not find anyone; the boat disappeared shortly afterwards as well. The monastics and laypeople were all amazed by this incredible incident. Later, his whereabouts were lost.

1 Shanyin was in Zhejiang.

2 The Jinyuan Period: 402-404.

4. Shi Sengsheng of Sanxian Temple in Shu Prefecture during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Sengsheng 釋 僧 生 was from a Yuan family in Pi County, Shu Prefecture. He joined the monastic order at young age and was known for his asceticism. On the invitation of Song Feng of Chengdu, he assumed the abbot position at Sanxian Temple. He recited *the Lotus Sutra*, practiced meditation, and frequently went to chant sutras in the mountains. One day, a tiger crouched in front of him and left after his recitation. Henceforth, four men could be seen flanking him every time he recited sutras in the mountains. After he was aged, he recited more diligently. Once, he had an indisposition and told the attendant: “I am leaving; you may cremate me afterwards.” Later, his disciples followed his will.

5. Shi Fazong of Fahuatai Temple in Shan County during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Fazong 釋法宗, a native of Linhai,¹ was fond of hunting in his youth. He once shot a pregnant deer and led to its abortion. Despite the arrow in its body, the deer licked the embryo. After seeing this scene, Fazong felt remorseful for what he did, realizing that love for life and children was universal. Thus, he broke his bow and arrows and joined the monastic order. He constantly lived on alms begging, just having one vegetarian meal per day to remedy his previous wrongdoings. Reciting *the Lotus Sutra* and *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, Fazong frequently ascended a platform² to declaim sutras. His voice could be heard from afar. 3000 secular people followed him for precepts. Thereupon, he converted his abode into a vihara, known as Fahuatai. Later, Fazong's whereabouts became unknown.

1 Linhai was in Zhejiang.

2 Platform was an abbreviation of the temple's name, meaning the "Platform of Lotus Flower" or "Fahuatai."

6. Shi Daojiong of Nanjian Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Daojiong 釋道叵 was from a Ma family in Fufeng. At first, he followed Daoyi as his teacher after his renunciation. When the master fell ill, he sent Daojiong and three other disciples to collect stalactites as medicine from Mount Huo in Henan. Entering the cave for miles and floating on water with a wooden log, three of them drowned; worse yet, the torch went out. Daojiong reckoned that his chance of survival was minimal; he then recited *the Lotus Sutra* devoutly and depended solely on it, contemplating Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva. Shortly after, he saw a firefly-like glow in front of him and thus followed it; before catching it, he found the way out. Henceforth, he practiced meditation diligently, observed the precepts to a stricter level, and organized Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Dana Assemblies several times, which incurred auspicious signs. Indian monks would be seen sitting in the banquet, or men would arrive on horses; however, they all disappeared abruptly before Daojiong had talked to them. Later, along with three school friends, he went to the capital to observe and learn customs and traditions. One night, they crossed the river on ice. Midway, the ice broke up, and the rest all died. Again, Daojiong contemplated Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva and then perceived something supporting him under his feet and saw a red light in front of him. Following the light, he reached the bank.

In the capital, Daojiong abided at Nanjian Temple and focused on the studies of *the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhâvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* 般舟三昧. Once, he was meditating at midnight; four figures drove a carriage to his room and asked him to get inside. Automatically, he found that he had arrived at Chenqiao, which was on the other side of the prefecture. He saw a man sitting on a campstool surrounded by hundreds of people. The man jumped up when Daojiong arrived. The master said: "I am just a meditator." That person told his assistants: "I just asked you to find out where the master lives; why do you bother the master by bringing him

here?” He then prostrated to Daojiong and had him carried back to the temple. He knocked on the gate for quite a while, but someone came to open the door; entering the temple, he discovered his door was still bolted from the inside. No one knew what happened. During the 20th year of the Yuanjia Period¹ in the Liu Song Dynasty, Liu Yiqing, the Prince Kang of Linchuan, brought Daojiong to Guangling, and the master died there.

¹ The 20th year of the Yuanjia Period was 443 CE.

7. Shi Huiqing of Mount Lu during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huiqing¹ 釋慧慶 was a native of Guangling. Renouncing the world, he abided at the temple on Mount Lu. Versed in sutras and Vinaya texts, he had pure conduct and observed the precepts faithfully, reciting *the Lotus Sutra*, *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, *Sutra of the Questions of Viśeṣa-cinti-brahma*, and *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*. Every night, he practiced recitation; gasps of admiration were often heard during his daily chanting. Once, he traveled locally in Xiaolei, and the boat he took was hit by a storm and about to capsize. Huiqing recited sutras ceaselessly; the boat was seemingly dragged by someone and soon reached the shore. Thus, he devoutly worshiped Maitreya Bodhisattva from that point forward. He died in the last year of the Yuanjia Period during the Liu Song Dynasty at the age of 62.

1 Shi Huiqing (c. 392-c. 453).

8. Shi Puming of Linwei during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Puming¹ 釋普明 was from a Zhang family in Linzi. He joined the monastic order in his youth and had pure characteristics. Having vegetarian food and coarse clothes, he focused on repentance and recitation, chanting *the Lotus Sutra* and *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*. When he recited sutras, he would put on special clothes and take a special seat to differentiate it from other activities. Every time he chanted *the Chapter Pleading for Explanation* 勸發品,² he had a vision of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva riding an elephant standing in front of him. When he recited *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, he could hear singing in the air. He was also good at mantras, curing many people of disease. Once, the wife of a villager named Wang Daozhen fell ill, and Puming was invited to recite mantra for her. As soon as the master entered the room, the wife lost consciousness; shortly afterwards, a fox-like creature that was a few feet long went out through the dog hole. The patient then recovered. Puming once passed by an ancestral temple near the water, and the priest muttered to himself: “When the deities see him, they all run away.” Puming died in the first year of the Xiaojian Period during the Liu Song Dynasty at 85.

1 Shi Puming (c. 371-c. 455).

2 *The Chapter Pleading for Explanation* is the last chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

9. Shi Fazhuang of Daochang Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Fazhuang¹ 釋法莊 was from a Shen family in Huainan. He joined the monastic order at the age of ten and followed Huiyuan of Mount Lu as his teacher. Though very young, he was known for his asceticism and precept observance. Later, he traveled to Guanzhong and learned from Master Huirui. During the first year of the Yuanjia Period, he came to the capital and abided at Daochang Temple. Being honest and pious, he took vegetarian food and mere ate one meal per day. The sutras he recited were *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, *the Lotus Sutra*, and *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*. When he chanted at late night, the noises made by the guards of honor could be heard in the next room; this was actually due to the deities who came to listen to him. Fazhuang died in the first year of the Daming Period during the Liu Song Dynasty at the age of 76.

1 Shi Fazhuang (c. 382-c. 457).

10. Shi Huiguo of Waguan Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huiguo¹ 釋 慧 果 , originally from Yu Prefecture, started a vegetarian diet and asceticism in his childhood. At the beginning of the Liu Song Dynasty, he came to the capital and abided at Waguan Temple, reciting *the Lotus Sutra* and *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*. Once, he saw a ghost in the toilet saluting him and saying: “I was a monastic rector; due to slight violations of the code, I became a ghost that had to eat excrement. Your Reverence is kind and compassionate; please help me alter my fate.” Furthermore, he said: “I had three thousand coins buried under the persimmon tree. Please use the money for benediction.” Huiguo thus had the mass dig under the tree, and they found the 3000 coins. With this money, he made a transcript of *the Lotus Sutra* and held a Dana Assembly. Later, he dreamed of the ghost informing him: “My life has been changed, and it is much better than the old days.” Huiguo died in the sixth year of the Taishi Period during the Liu Song Dynasty at 76.

1 Shi Huiguo (395-470).

11. Shi Fagong of Dong'an Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Senggong

Shi Fagong 釋法恭 was originally from a Guan family in Yong Prefecture.¹ He stayed at Anyang Temple in Jiangling when he first joined the monastic order, later moving to Dong'an Temple in the capital. Since his youth, he observed the precepts strictly. He wore coarse clothes, merely ate beans and wheat grains, and recited sutras of 300 thousand words. Every night during his recitation, a rare fragrance could be smelled in Fagong's room or in the public area of the temple. He used worn clothes to collect fleas and then put them on to feed the tiny creatures with his blood. Emperors Wu, Wen, and Ming and Liu Yiji, the Prince of Hengyang in the Liu Song Dynasty, respected him for his virtuous deeds. Fagong distributed the offerings he received to needy ones, never keeping any for himself. He returned to the west during the Taishi Period² of the Liu Song Dynasty and died there at the age of 80.

Senggong 僧恭 at Wuyi Temple was virtuous and learned, managing the monastic affairs of the temple. Also, he would not eat cereals, only taking beans and wheat grains.

1 Yong Prefecture is in present day Shaanxi and Gansu areas.

2 The Taishi Period: 465-471.

12. Shi Sengfu of Pengcheng Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Sengfu¹ 釋僧覆 was of unknown origins. He was orphanized in his childhood and raised by servants. At the age of seven, he joined the monastic order and followed Tanliang as his teacher. Mastering various sutras, he maintained a vegetarian diet and practiced mantra, reciting *the Longer Version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *the Lotus Sutra*. Emperor Ming of the Liu Song Dynasty thought highly of him and appointed him the abbot of Pengcheng Temple. He led the mass to cultivate in an effective way. During the last year of the Taishi Period, he died at 66.

¹ Shi Sengfu (c. 406-c. 471).

13. Shi Huijin of Gaozuo Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Sengnian

Shi Huijin¹ 釋慧進 was from a Yao family in Wuxing. He was brave, reckless, and loyal in his youth, wandering like a knight. At the age of 40, he was abruptly inspired by his intrinsic nature and joined the monastic order, abiding at Gaozuo Temple in the capital. Having vegetarian food and coarse clothes, he vowed to recite the Lotus Sutra with assiduity; yet, every time he held the scripture texts, he would fall ill. Thus, he swore to print 100 copies of *the Lotus Sutra* to repent for his previous sins. When he saved 1600 coins, one day, robbers broke in and asked him: “Do you have money?” Huijin replied: “The money for printing sutras is placed under the Buddha statue.” The robbers then left in shame. Later, he requested for the patrons of the temple to raise the funds, and he finally accomplished the printing of 100 copies. Henceforth, his sickness was nearly healed. Thus, he started to recite *the Lotus Sutra*. After his recitation and fulfillment of his wish, he was more pious and observed the precepts more strictly. He often accumulated merits, aspiring to be reborn in the Western Paradise. Before his death, he heard a voice in the air telling him: “Your aspiration is fulfilled; you will go to the Western Paradise.” During the third year of the Yongming Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, he died at 85 without any ailment.

At that time, Shi Sengnian 釋僧念 at Longhua Temple in the capital recited *the Lotus Sutra* and *Suvarṇa-prabhāsōttama-sūtra* 金光明經, maintaining a vegetarian diet and keeping a distance from worldly affairs.

1 Shi Huijin (401-485).

14. Shi Hongming of Bailin Temple in Yongxing during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Hongming¹ 釋弘明 was from a Ying family in Shanyin, Kuaiji. Renouncing the world in his youth, he observed the precepts strictly and cultivated in asceticism at Yunmen Temple in Shanyin. Reciting *the Lotus Sutra* and practicing meditation, he repented diligently during the day constantly. Each morning, his water vase was automatically filled; it was actually offered to him by celestial children. Once, a tiger entered Hongming's meditation room and crouched in front of the bed while he was in concentration. Seeing that the master had not moved for a long time, the tiger left on its own volition. Hongming once saw a little boy come to listen to his recitation and asked: "Who are you?" The boy replied: "I used to be a novice in this temple, but now I descended as a ghost in the toilet due to my theft of food. Hearing of your virtuous deeds, I come to listen to your sutra recitation in the hope of absolving my punishment." Hongming thus expounded the Dharma to the boy, who hence understood the essence and disappeared. Later, when the master entered Samadhi at Shimu Rock in Yongxing,² a mountain spirit came to make trouble. Hongming caught it and trussed it on his waist. The ghost repented and pleaded for release, saying: "I dare not disturb you anymore." Hence, the master let it go, and it never came again.

During the Yuanjia Period, Meng Yi of Pingchang, the local prefect, appreciated Hongming's virtue and invited him to abide at Daoshu Vihara. Afterwards, Jiang Zong of Jiyang³ built Zhaoxuan Temple in the town of Yongxing and pleaded for Hongming to stay there. In the last year of the Daming Period, a man of Taoli surnamed Dong built Bailin Temple for the master, inviting him to abide at the new temple. Hongming taught the mass meditation and precept texts;

1 Shi Hongming (403-486).

2 Yongxing was in Hunan Province.

3 Jiyang is in Henan today.

Buddhists lined up to enroll as his disciples. In the fourth year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty, he passed away in Bailin Temple at 84.

15. Shi Huiyu of Linggen Temple in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Fayin

Shi Huiyu¹ 釋慧豫 was a native of Huanglong; he traveled to the capital and abided at Linggen Temple. He studied diligently from his youth, visited various teachers, and was eloquent and elegant. Every time he heard others tell tales, he would cover his ears to avoid listening or interrupting them with other topics. Having vegetarian food and undyed, coarse clothes, he only took one meal at noon each day, practicing and observing the precepts strictly for the sake of saving sentient beings. He recited *the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, *Lotus Sutra*, and *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, practiced Chan, and mastered the five approaches to meditation. One day, he saw three men with luxurious clothes knocking on his door while he was sleeping. Huiyu asked: “Who are you looking for?” They replied: “Your Reverence should die now.” The master returned: “I still have a matter to arrange; can I apply to postpone if for a year?” They agreed. The next year, he died on the same date. This was in the seventh year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty; he lived 57 years.

In the same temple as Huiyu, a novice named Fayin also recited sutras frequently.

1 Shi Huiyu (443-489).

16. Shi Daosong of Upper Dinglin Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Daosong 釋道嵩 was from a Xia family in Gaomi.¹ He joined the monastic order at ten, formed steady and calm characteristics at an early age, and aspired high. After full ordination, his interest concentrated on Vinaya; in addition, he recited sutras of 300 thousand words. Dealing with various people, he would not show any favor or disdain in his face. With the quality of charity, he donated what he was offered to others as soon as he received it; thus, he possessed nothing but bowls and simple clothes. During the Yuanhui² Period of the Liu Song Dynasty, he moved to the capital and abided at Dinglin Temple on Mount Zhong. Reading the sutras ceaselessly in his tranquil room, he entertained visitors with dharma talks instead of banquets. Many people followed him to receive precepts. Later, he died on the mountain at 49.

1 Gaomi was in Shandong Province.

2 The Yuanhui Period: 473-477.

17. Shi Chaobian of Upper Dinglin Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Faming Sengzhi Fading

Shi Chaobian¹ 釋超辯 was from a Zhang family in Dunhuang. He demonstrated high intelligence and deep insight from his childhood, observing the precepts strictly and reciting *the Lotus Sutra*, *Diamond Sutra*, and *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Learning about how the Buddha-Dharma prevailed in the capital, he arrived in Jianye after crossing the western part of the Yellow River and traveling through Ba and Shu Prefectures. Shortly afterwards, he went to the Wu and Yue areas, visiting mountains and waters. He stayed at Chengbang Temple in Shanyin for a short period of time. Then, he returned to the capital and abided at Upper Dinglin Temple with a calm mind and vegetarian diet; Chaobian stayed within the temple for the rest of his life. Reciting the Lotus Sutra once a day, he could easily learn what was uttered from his mouth by heart. Worshipping the thousand Buddhas, he prostrated over 1,500,000 times in total and did not leave the temple for over 30 years. During the tenth year of the Yongming Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, Chaobian died at 73. Buried to the south of the temple, Sengyou the śramaṇa erected a stele for him; Liu Xie of Dongguan composed the inscription in tribute to the master.

At that time, Shi Faming 釋法明 of Linggen Temple, Shi Sengzhi 釋僧誌 of Qihuan Temple, and Shi Fading 釋法定 of Yi Prefecture could recite sutras of more than a hundred thousand words. They all practiced asceticism, maintained a vegetarian diet, and were in possession of great virtue.

1 Shi Chaobian (420-492).

18. Shi Fahui of Mount Tianzhu in Shanyin during the Southern Qi Dynasty Tanyou

Shi Fahui¹ 釋法慧 was originally surnamed Xiahou. He stuck to his aspiration and practiced diligently from his youth, observing the precepts strictly. During the last year of the Daming Period in the Liu Song Dynasty, he visited the tomb of the Great Yu and then abided at Mount Tianzhu Temple. Reciting *the Lotus Sutra*, he took vegetarian food and coarse cotton clothes; vowing to stay outside worldly affairs, he dwelled in the loft and did not go downstairs for over 30 years. When the princes and nobles came, they could merely pay homage in front of the hall and return home. Only Zhou Yong² of Runan was received, because of his deep faith and comprehension of the Dharma. Some who admired and valued the master's virtue might be given an interview through Zhou Yong's introduction. In the second year of the Jianwu Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty, Fahui died at the age of 85.

At that time, Shi Tanyou 釋曇遊 at Mount Xuanliu by Ruoye Creek³ also took vegetarian food and recited sutras, concentrating on the practice of asceticism.

1 Shi Fahui (411-495).

2 Zhou Yong was a poet, official, and Buddhist scholar in the Southern Qi Dynasty; he wrote *the Treatise on the Three Schools* 三宗論.

3 Ruoye Creek is in Shaoxing, Zhejiang.

19. Shi Senghou of Hougang in the Capital during the Southern Qi Dynasty Huiwen

Shi Senghou¹ 釋僧侯 was from a Gong family in Xiliang Prefecture. At 18, he started repentance rituals and began a vegetarian diet. After full ordination, he toured various areas to observe different customs and traditions. In the first year of the Xiaojian Period during the Liu Song Dynasty, he arrived in the capital. Reciting *the Lotus Sutra*, *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and *Suvarṇa-prabhāśōttama-sūtra* once every two days, he persisted this practice for over 60 years. Xiao Huikai² wanted to go to Shu Prefecture and invited the master to accompany him. Later, Xiao Huikai returned with the Prince of Jin'an, both bearing accusations; the master came back to the capital as well. Senghou built a stone room at Hougang as his meditation locale; since then, he abstained from fish and meat until his death and would not have meal after lunch time. During the second year of the Yongming Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty, he had an indisposition. At noon, he could not take any food; he thus asked for water to rinse his mouth and then died with his palms joined. He was 89 in that year.

At that time, Shi Huiwen 釋慧溫 at Puhong Temple recited *the Lotus Sutra*, *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and *the Sutra of the Concentration of Heroic Progress*, taking vegetarian food and practicing asceticism with high virtue.

1 Shi Senghou (396-484).

2 Xiao Huikai, an official in the Liu Song government, was conferred the title of Marquis of Fengyang. When Liu Zixun, the Prince of Jin'an, rose in revolt, Xiao Huikai supported him but was exempt from punishment after its failure.

20. Shi Huimi of Upper Dinglin Temple during the Liang Dynasty Faxian

Shi Huimi¹ 釋慧彌, from a Yang family in Huayin,² Hongnong, was the offspring of Yang Zhen, an official of Taiwei³ in the Han Dynasty. Renouncing the world at 16, he aspired to be aloof from the world after his full ordination; he thus entered Mount Zhongnan, dwelling by the depopulated precipice. Ferocious tigers and rhinoceroses would not harm him. Reciting a portion of the longer version of *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, he then studied the skills of meditation deeply; he also built a thatched cottage to cultivate his spirituality. Regularly, he went to the village for alms begging and returned to his Chan room after the meal, this routine lasted for eight years. Later, he heard that the Dharma was popular in Jiangdong; thereupon, he toured the capital and then abided in Dinglin Temple at Mount Zhong, where he continued his previous cultivation habits. Huimi was modest and gentle but did not show his joy or dissatisfaction in his face; always ready to learn, he observed the precepts strictly, advising and counselling tirelessly. To those who visited the mountain, monastics or laypeople, he frequently expounded the Dharma and provided guidance to them instead of entertaining them with meals. From his renunciation to his old age, he abstained from meat and stayed on the mountain for over 30 years. Practicing meditation day and night, he constantly recited *the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. He acted as an example for the masses, repenting in the six periods of the day. On the 15th of the intercalary month after the eighth month in the Tianjian Period during the Liang Dynasty, Huimi died in the mountain cottage at 79. Afterwards, he was buried to the south of the temple and a stele was erected to eulogize his virtue.

1 Shi Huimi (440-518).

2 Huayin was in the east of Shaanxi.

3 Taiwei was a title for a high-ranking official position that was similar to prime minister in the Han Dynasty.

At that time, Faxian 法 仙 , a śramaṇa at Dinglin Temple, also recited the sutras constantly; later, he returned to Wu Prefecture, assuming the position of Monastic Head and dying there.

21. Shi Daolin of Qixi Temple in Fuyang during the Liang Dynasty

Shi Daolin¹ 釋道琳 was a native of Shanyin, Kuaiji. Renouncing the world in his youth, he observed the precepts strictly. Versed in *the Nirvana Sutra* and *the Lotus Sutra*, he recited *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*. Zhang Xu of Wu Prefecture venerated him with regular offerings. Later, he abided at Quanlin Temple in Fuyang County,² where ghosts and demons often appeared. After Daolin dwelt in it, they vanished. Crushed by a collapsed room, a disciple named Huishao's head was stuck between his shoulders. Daolin prayed for him, and then the disciple saw two western monks pulling up his head at night. The next morning, his body recovered. Daolin hence organized a Saint Monks Dana Assembly and put a piece of new silk on the bed. After the Dana banquet, human-shaped dents, measuring three-feet long, were left on the silk. The mass was marveled by the sign. Since then, the Saint Monk's seat was arranged for food offering in every household in the Fuyang area. In the early years of the Liang Dynasty, the master moved to Qixi Temple. During the 18th year of the Tianjian Period, he died at 73.

Comments

Sutra recitation produces great benefits, yet few attained high levels through this path because people are unable to concentrate or understand the meaning and implications of the text, thus dullness or negligence will easily arise. It says in the sutras, reciting one paltry verse or even one sentence can please the saints. Therefore, Tansui was invited to expound the Dharma to the deities at the rear of the village, Sengsheng was guarded by the mountain spirits during his recitation, Daoyong was saved from danger, and Huiqing was rescued when his boat was on the brink of sinking. These all displayed as external signs which arose from the internal virtues of

1 Shi Daolin (447-519).

2 Fuyang was in Zhejiang.

these masters. The sutra indicates: “When the six-tusked elephant descends to the world, the four heavenly kings will protect the Bodhisattva.”¹ How can the words be untrue? On cold winter night, when the bright moon hangs in the sky, reciting the sutras alone in a quiet room with a loud and clear voice can touch and delight the spirits and deities. This is the sound of sutra recitation and chanting, the music of joy.

Paean

The dharmakāya has long gone; we need to depend on the Teaching. Wonderful benefits will be brought to us by repeatedly chanting it. Mindful of the deeds by body, speech, and mind, we are reciting in the six periods of the day. The Buddha will send guardians to protect us, and deities will be arriving. This is due to the virtue of recitation, but who can recount the mechanism that is working?

¹ Samantabhadra Bodhisattva purportedly rides an elephant with six tusks. Thus, the Bodhisattva here refers to Samantabhadra.

Volume XIII

Benevolent Cause

14 main figures 3 auxiliaries

1. Zhu Huida of Bingzhou during the Jin Dynasty

Zhu Huida 竺慧達 was originally named Liu Sa'a and from Lishi, Xihe of Bingzhou.¹ He enjoyed hunting in his youth. One time when he was 31, Sa'a suddenly lay deathly still and revived after an entire day. During that time, he saw all sorts of retribution in hell. A monk who told Sa'a that he was his teacher in the previous life expounded the Dharma for the student and provided advice, requiring him to renounce the world; Sa'a then went to Danyang, Kuaiji, and the Wu Prefecture area to seek the stupa of King Aśoka, in front of which he paid homage and repented for his sins. Then, he woke up and joined the monastic order to learn the Dharma, changing his name to Huida. He diligently brought forth the benevolent cause,² yet, above all, paying homage and repenting were his first priority.

During the Ning kang Period³ of the Jin Dynasty, Huida arrived in the capital. Emperor Jianwen formerly built a three-story pagoda at Changgan Temple. After its completion, the building emitted a glow every night. Huida ascended the town wall of Yue⁴ to observe it, seeing colorful lights on top of the pagoda. Then, he went to worship piously in front of the pagoda every morning and evening. At night, he often perceived light pouring out from the foundation, thus informing others of his discovery and digging it out together. After excavating ten feet, they unearthed three stone tablets. On top of the central one, lay an iron box; there was a silver case inside that

1 Bingzhou is between Hebei, Shanxi and Inner Mongolia today.

2 Benevolent cause here refers to the building of temples and making of Buddhist statues.

3 The Ning kang Period: 373-375.

4 Yue Town is in Nanjing today.

contained a small golden casket, which held three pieces of sarīra, a fingernail, and some hair. The hair extended a few feet long, coiled in the shape of conch, and emitted a splendid halo. This pagoda was one of the 84,000 stupas built by King Aśoka during King Xuan's reign in the Zhou Dynasty. Monastics and secular people were all amazed by the findings. Thereupon, a monastery was built to the west of the stupa to store the Buddhist relics. During the 16th year of the Taiyuan Period in the Jin Dynasty, Emperor Xiaowu added another three stories to the old pagoda.

Previously, in the Xianhe Period during the Jin Dynasty, Gao Kui, the Magistrate of Danyang, uncovered a gilded statue during an excavation by Zhanghou Bridge, which was highly crafted but without the halo piece or the throne. In front of the statue, there was an introduction in Sanskrit that said it was made by the fourth daughter of King Aśoka. Gao Kui carried the statue back; passing by the alley next to Changgan Temple, the bullock would not move, even after it was whipped. So, people let the bullock go by itself; it went directly to Changgan Temple. About a year later, a fisherman named Zhang Xishi in Linhai¹ found a bronze lotus throne floating on the water. Sending it to the magistrate who then reported it to the capital, the emperor ordered for it to be put under the statue that Gao Kui found, and the two pieces matched perfectly. Later, five monks from the Western Regions told Gao Kai: "Earlier, we acquired an Aśoka statue in India. Encountering a revolt when we arrived at Ye County, we hid it by the river. After the turmoil passed, we looked for it but failed to find it. Recently, we dreamed that the statue was found by Gao Kai in Jiangdong. Thus, we want to worship it once again." Gao Kui thereupon introduced them to Changgan Temple. Seeing the statue, the five monks shed tears and the statue instantly emitted a glow that reflected in the hall. The monks said: "There was a halo piece as well. Although it is far away now, it can be traced." In the first year of the Xian'an Period,²

1 Linhai was in Zhejiang Province.

2 The first year of the Xian'an Period was 371 CE.

Dong Zongzhi, a pearl collector in Hepu County,¹ Jiaozhou, found a piece of bronze halo at the bottom of the sea. The prefect reported it, and Emperor Jianwen of the Jin Dynasty decreed for it to be put behind the gilded statue at Changgan Temple. Again, the mortise and tenon joined well, and the color of the different parts were homogenous. After over 40 years, inspired by the divine powers in the east and the west, the whole structure was complete. Learning the omens of the statue in the temple, Huida cultivated more diligently.

Later, Huida traveled to Wu County to worship the two stone statues that had been floating to the Hudu Mouth of the Wusong River during the first year of the Jianxing Period² as the Western Jin Dynasty declined. Fishermen suspected that they were ocean deities and invited sorcerers to welcome them. However, a storm broke immediately, and they returned to shore frightened. Some who believed in Taoism said that they were the deities of the Heavenly Master; again, they went to welcome the statues along with the sorcerers, and the storm resumed. Later, a Buddhist layman named Zhu Ying heard of this anecdote and said: “Is this the Buddha demonstrating his trace?” Thus, he washed himself and took vegetarian food; then, with Boni of Dongyun Temple and some laymen, he arrived at Hudu Mouth. Prostrating piously, he chanted the praise of the Buddha; the wind fell, and the waves ceased. Remotely, they saw two figures floating towards them, they were stone statues; inscriptions were carved on the back of the statues: one was named Vipāśyin, and the other was Kāśyapa. Hence, they carried them back and settled them in Tongxuan Temple. Nobles and commoners in the Wu area were all amazed by the supernatural signs; numerous people were converted to Buddhism.

Huida abided at Tongxuan Temple for three years, prostrating day and night without a slight bit of slackness. Then, he moved to

1 Hepu is in Guangxi today.

2 The Jianxing Period: 313-317.

Kuaiji and paid homage to the stupa in Mao County.¹ This stupa was also built by King Aśoka, yet it had fallen into disuse; only the foundation survived. Huida contemplated in front of it for a while, seeing celestial light and flames shine from it. Thereupon, he built a shrine on which birds did not dare stay. When people hunted or fished near the stupa, they would catch nothing. Henceforth, everyone established their faith in Buddhism in this region. Later, Meng Yi, the prefect, further developed the buildings. Huida worshiped Buddha statues from the west to the east; supernatural signs emerged multiple times. He practiced with assiduity and devotion all along. Afterwards, his whereabouts were unknown.

¹ Mao County was in Zhejiang.

2. Shi Huiyuan of Mount Ping in Wuling during the Jin Dynasty Zhu Huizhi

Shi Huiyuan¹ 釋慧元 was a native of Hebei. He had a kindhearted and nice nature, not showing favor or distaste on his face. Frequently, he practiced meditation and recited the sutras, taking counseling people to bring forth benevolence as his constant mission. In the early years of the Taiyuan Period during the Jin Dynasty, he established a monastery on Mount Ping in Wuling,² housing over 20 monks who had vegetarian food and renounced worldly contact. During the 14th year of the Taiyuan Period, Huiyuan died. Afterwards, someone saw him at the foot of Mount Wudang;³ with a cheerful countenance, he passed words on to the Sangha to continue the monastic cause. Since then, the sound of a bell could be heard regularly in the temple; monks gathered accordingly for devotions without fail.

Later, Zhu Huizhi 竺慧直 the śramaṇa stayed at that monastery, studying and observing the precepts diligently. Afterwards, he abandoned grains and merely took pine seeds. One day, he climbed up the mountain and passed away like a cicada that rids its shell.

1 Shi Huiyuan (d. 389).

2 Wuling was in Hunan.

3 Mount Wudang is in Hubei.

3. Shi Huili of Waguan Temple in the Capital during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Huili 釋慧力 was of unknown origins. In the Yonghe Period¹ during the Jin Dynasty, he arrived in the capital, begging for vegetarian food and practicing wandering asceticism to accumulate merit. During the Xingning Period² of the Jin Dynasty, he reported to the imperial court that he would like to be granted the site of a pottery workshop to build a monastery to be named Waguan Temple. Originally, the foundation of the pagoda was planned to be located to the west of the current spot. Every night, the mark made for the foundation on the ground was moved eastwards a dozen steps. The next morning, when people moved it back to the west, it would return to the same location at night. Covertly, they observed during the night and saw a figure wearing red clothes and a general's hat pull out and relocate the mark. Thus, they built the stupa at the new location where the current pagoda is located. A note indicated: "The stupa will be burned down by a heavenly fire 30 years after the temple was constructed." One night in the seventh month of the 21st year in the Taiyuan Period³ under Emperor Xiaowu during the Jin Dynasty, flames rose automatically, of which tens of monks in the temple were unaware. The next morning, the stupa had become ashes. The emperor uttered: "This is a bad sign for the country." He thus issued a decree to dispatch Yang Fashang and Li Xu to rebuild it. In the ninth month of that year, the emperor died. Five statues made by Dai Dao'an and a gilded statue of 16 feet high made by Dai Yong were enshrined in the monastery. When the gilded statue was just finished, the face looked extremely thin. The craftsmen did not know how to improve it; then inviting Dai Yong to inspect it, the latter said: "It is not because the face is thin, but because the shoulders are too wide." Thereupon, the craftsmen polished the shoulders to make them slenderer, and the face appeared correct. All the workers admired the master work.

1 The Yonghe Period: 345-356.

2 The Xingning Period: 363-365.

3 The Taiyuan Period: 376-396.

A four-foot, two-inch high, jade statue from the State of Lion¹ was also worshiped at the temple. Earlier, the King of the State of Lion learned about the diligent practice of Buddhism by Emperor Xiaowu of the Jin government and sent a śramaṇa named Tanmoyi to offer this statue. After a voyage of over ten years, he arrived in China during the Yixi Period.² Once, Wang Mi, the Official Situ, went to the imperial court; he saw monks playing dice outside the eastern, side door. The place where the dice hit emitted a glow. Being amazed, he ordered for the spot to be dug and unearthed a seven-foot, two-inch high, gilded statue. Wang Mi reported this matter to the emperor and Emperor Wu of the Liu Song Dynasty welcomed it into the imperial court for veneration. During the Jingping Period, it was sent to Waguan Temple; it is now placed at Longguang Temple.

1 The State of Lion refers to Sri Lanka.

2 The Yixi Period: 405-418.

4. Shi Huishou of Anle Temple in the Capital during the Jin Dynasty

Shi Huishou 釋慧受 was from Anle. During the Xingning Period¹ of the Jin Dynasty, he toured the capital, practiced asceticism, maintained a vegetarian diet, and accumulated merits through wholesome deeds. Once, he passed by Wang Tanzhi's² garden and had a dream that night, seeing a monastery in the garden, which happened repeatedly afterwards. Huishou thus wanted to request a room at the garden. He did not dare send the message directly, but he told Song Qi, the family's guest who kept the garden. Song Qi replied: "Wang's garden is not supposed to be offered." Huishou returned: "To touch with sincerity, there should be a good chance." Then, he sought an interview with Wang Tanzhi and stated his wish. The latter was raptured and approved the plan. At first, a small room was built in the garden. Later, every night, Huishou dreamed of a green dragon from the south turning into a pillar of a Buddhist hall. Taking a novice, the master explored in Xinting River area, seeing a long log flowing down with the current. Huishou said: "This must be what I have dreamed about." Thus, he hired people to carry it back and built one-storied temple rooms. Monastics and laypeople gathered and deeply admired the supernatural sign. Wang Tanzhi thereupon donated the garden and converted it into a temple. Huishou named it after his hometown; hence its name was Anle Temple. The residence of Wang Ya, the Magistrate of Danyang, was located to the east of the temple; to the west, that of Liu Dou, the Prefect of Dongyan;³ to the south, that of Fan Ning, the Prefect of Yuzhang. They all donated their residences for the monastery. Afterwards, śramaṇas named Daojing 道靖 and Daojing 道敬 further renovated it, bringing forth its current splendor.

1 The Xingning Period: 363-365.

2 Wang Tanzhi was a famous scholar-official in the Jin Dynasty.

3 Dongyan was in Henan.

5. Shi Senghui of Chongming Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Senghui 釋僧慧 was of unknown origins. He focused on merit accumulation from his youth. During the Yixi Period,¹ along with Xing Changsheng of Chang'an, he established a temple at Powu village in the capital. Originally, they just built a few thatched cottages and gathered monks to hold Buddhist ceremonies. One night, two lamps in the hall moved tens of steps by themselves. The oil containers were steady without imbalance while in motion. The mass was amazed. Visiting the elders, they said that the location where the lamps stopped used to be the foundation of a stupa built by foreign monks. Thus, the mass worked collectively to construct a monastery at that spot. Since the lamps showed the auspicious sign, they named it Chongming² Temple.

1 The Yixi Period: 405-418.

2 Chongming means "noble light" in Chinese.

6. Shi Sengyi of Mount Fahua in Shanyin during the Liu Song Dynasty Daojing

Shi Sengyi¹ 釋僧翼 was originally from Yuhang, Wuxing. Since his youth, he had faith and comprehension in Buddhism hence would renounce the world. First, he joined the monastic order at the temple on Mount Lu and followed Huiyuan as his teacher. Taking vegetarian food and observing precepts diligently, he was respected by his school friends. Later, he moved to Guanzhong and learned from Kumārajīva, studying sutras, Vinaya texts, and Sāṃkhya and reciting *the Lotus Sutra*. In the 13th year of the Yixi Period during the Jin Dynasty, Sengyi and Tanxue the śramaṇa, who shared the same aspiration, visited Kuaiji, touring the mountains and waters. To the northwest of Qinwang,² they saw five peaks standing side by side, which was similar to the Vulture Peak.³ Thus, they built thatched cottage and named it Fahua Vihara. Meng Yi, the prefect, and Chen Zai of Fuchun were devoted to Buddhism; the monastery was accomplished with their patronage. Sengyi had vegetarian food and drank spring water for over 30 years, dying at the age of 70 in the 27th year of the Yuanjia Period during the Liu Song Dynasty. A stone tablet was erected at the mountainous temple to immortalize his virtue. Kong Huan of Kuaiji drafted the inscription. Tanxue the śramaṇa, who cultivated with Sengyi, moved to the north of Qinwang and later established Lelin Vihara; abiding there with Shaoxiang, Guanqian, and famous monks from Mount Tai.⁴

At that time, Shi Daojing 釋道敬 was originally from a noble family in Langya and the great-grandson of Wang Xizhi, the Right General in the Jin Dynasty. To evade worldly affairs, he joined the monastic order, enjoying mountains and valleys. To dwell on Ruoye Mountain, he built Xuanliu Vihara. In order to better serve and offer

1 Shi Sengyi (381-450).

2 Qinwang Mountain was in Zhejiang.

3 Vulture Peak, or Ḡṛdhṛakūṭa-parvata, was a narrow, high mountain located near Rājagṛha in the ancient Indian state of Magadha, where the Buddha used to expound the Dharma.

4 Mount Tai is in Shandong Province.

to the Sangha, he later suspended his full ordination and focused on the observance of the ten precepts.¹

¹ The ten precepts here refer to the precepts for the śrāmaṇera (novice), implying that Daojing resumed the śrāmaṇera status.

7. Shi Senghong of Yu Prefecture during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Senghong 釋僧洪, a native of Yu Prefecture, abided at Wagan Temple in the capital. He practiced diligently and tidily in his youth, later leading the companions and patrons to build a gilded, 16-foot high statue. The mold had been filled but not unpacked yet. In the late years of the Jin Dynasty, civilians were prohibited from handling brass objects, a death sentence would be served by the violators. At that time, the future Emperor Wu of the Liu Song Dynasty initially assumed the position of prime minister;¹ Senghong was arrested and detained in the powerful man's residence. The master concentrated on reciting *the Chapter of the Universal Gate of Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva* and contemplated the Buddha's statue. At night, he dreamed of the statue he cast coming to him and touching his head with a hand, asking: "Are you scared?" Senghong replied: "I think I must die." The statue told him: "Do not worry." Senghong saw a mark of molten bronze drops on the surface of a square foot spotting the statue's chest. On the day of execution, the military secretary of the prime minister supervised the decapitation of Senghong. However, the bullock of the cart ran crazy, and the cart broken. Thus, the execution had to be rescheduled. Soon, an order from Pengcheng was passed on: "Do not kill him; Senghong is forgivable." Hence, he survived. After returning, he opened the mold and took a look at the statue. A mark of molten bronze drops appeared on the chest. Afterwards, Senghong died of asceticism.

¹ In 418, Liu Yu, the founder of the Liu Song Dynasty, was in the position of prime minister in the Jin government.

8. Shi Sengliang of the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Sengliang 釋 僧 亮, origins unknown, was famous for his observance of precepts from his youth. Once, he wanted to build a gilded, 16-foot statue, yet he needed a great quantity of bronze, which could not rely on small donations. He heard that there were many bronzewares at Wu Zixu's¹ temple in Tongxi, Xiang Prefecture and that the temple was awe-inspiring and no one dared approach it. After learning about the bronzewares, Sengliang wanted to go have a visit. He sought an interview with Prefect Zhang Shao first, requesting 100 men and ten big boats. Zhang Shao asked: "The temple has super powers, so offenders would die. In addition, barbarians guard it, so how can you get what you want?" Sengliang replied: "If meritorious results can be achieved, you will share the virtue; should any punishment befall this, I will take the responsibility." Zhang Shao thus provided the manpower and boats. Arriving at the temple after three days and three nights of travel, Sengliang walked towards the temple with the workforce. Around twenty steps away from the hall, two huge bronze caldrons, which could contain over ten thousand liters each, appeared in sight. A dozen-foot long python stayed between them and the temple to block the way. Sengliang hence stood straight holding his staff and recited mantras of several tens of words. The python abruptly vanished. Soon, a man came out holding a bamboo hu before his breast, saying: "I have heard that Your Reverence has wonderful virtue and deeds and that you are making benevolence now; I would like to join your endeavor." Thus, the master ordered people to carry the bronzewares. There were too many of them in the temple; one tenth had already fully filled the boats. A spittoon was placed by the bed of the deity, a two-foot long lizard moved in and out of it swiftly. Some said that the deity was fond of this object, so Sengliang did not take it. Setting sail, with the wind and current in their favor, the boats moved quickly. When the barbarians

¹ Wu Zixu (559-484 BCE) was a famous strategist and minister during the Warring States Period.

had found out about the endeavor and ran after them, it was already too late to catch up. Returning to the capital, the statue was cast, but the flare-patterned back screen remained unsolvable. Emperor Wen of the Liu Song Dynasty thereupon made a screen with gold foils for the statue and enshrined it at Pengcheng Temple. During the Taishi Period,¹ Emperor Ming moved it to Xianggong Temple and it is still there today.

¹ The Taishi Period: 465-471.

9. Shi Fayi of Yanxian Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Fayi 釋法意 was from Jiangzuo, keen on benevolent endeavors, and had built 53 temples. He was the son of Zhu Ying of Mount Zhong, the official of Jijiu¹ during the Yixi Period² in the Jin Dynasty. Previously, Sun En³ led the majority of his troops to escape to Mount Zhong, and a small group of the party went to another place. The rebel leader, together with Fayi, built a temple and named it Yanxian Temple. Later, Beidu came to his temple, saying: “This place will soon encounter bad luck; afterwards, it will turn to a wholesome site. The location is beneath the heavenly hall, and a meritorious cause can then be easily accomplished.” Shortly after, the temple was burned down by a wild fire. Inspired by Beidu’s prophecy, which is recorded in the Biography of Beidu, Qi Xie and Zhang Ying wanted to rebuild the monastery with Fayi and surveyed the terrain in the mountain. But it lacked water, hence it was unlivable. Fayi reckoned Beidu’s words, piously worshipping, repenting, and praying for a water pond from the Western Paradise. Three days later, due to the devout prayer, a sound moving from the sky into the ground was heard. Fayi thought that it might be gold or silk. Getting people to dig, clear water spouted at the depth of two feet; a creek was thus formed. With this favorable condition, the temple was reestablished. Afterwards, the whereabouts of Fayi became unknown.

1 Jijiu or 祭酒 can be various types of chief or master in ancient China, the most common ones include educational official and chief of rites.

2 The Yixi Period: 405-418.

3 Sun En (d. 402) was a rebel leader in the late Jin Dynasty.

10. Shi Huijing of Yunfeng Temple in the Southern Sea during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Huijing 釋 慧 敬 was originally from the southern sea. Travelling to the Jing and Chu areas¹ for study in his youth, he constantly upheld the benevolent cause; therefore, doctrinal learning became his secondary focus. Anywhere he went he would establish monasteries and make statues, helping the mass accomplish the Buddhist cause. Later, he returned to his hometown, renovating Yunfeng Temple and Yong'an Temple. Huijing observed the precepts strictly with virtuous conduct and high aspirations; thus, the monks and nuns in the region to the south of the Wuling Mountains² all venerated him. Afterwards, he was nominated as the Monastic Head because he was doing a good job in teaching and leading the monastic communities.

A servant's son and a novice that were following Huijing were once beset by ghosts. The mountain spirit then appeared before the master and pleaded for forgiveness, saying: "My subordinates made a mistake to assault your affinity." Shortly after, the youths recovered. When Huijing built temples or statues, he always transferred the merit to the goal of rebirth in the Western Paradise. At his death, a rare fragrance lingered in his room for a long time.

1 Jing and Chu respectively refer to Hubei and Hunan today.

2 The south of the Wuling Mountains refers to the Guangdong and Guangxi areas.

11. Shi Faxian of Mount Cangwei in the Southern Sea during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Faxian 釋法獻, a native of Guangzhou, originally abided at Bei Temple. As the monastery was weathered by time, Faxian led the mass to raise funds and renovated the temple, renaming it Yanxiang. Later, he entered Mount Cangwei to establish a monastery. Two boys came to him and sang: “Cangwei has a virtuous man; joy and happiness will last a long time.” After their singing, they suddenly disappeared. The entire temple was amazed by the supernatural sign. Later, when Faxian practiced Chan, he saw a man approaching him and saying: “The rope hanging the bell is about to break; why do you not fix it?” Faxian was frightened and went to take a look right away; sure enough, the bell was about to fall on the ground. He held it and avoided the damage. Since his renunciation, Faxian constantly advised others to carry out meritorious deeds; as for himself, he followed the precepts and practiced meditation diligently without any violation of the code. Afterwards, his whereabouts were unknown.

12. Shi Faxian of Upper Dinglin Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Xuanchang

Shi Faxian¹ 釋法獻 was from a Xu family in Yanshui, Xihai.² He first traveled to Liangzhou with his maternal uncle and then joined the monastic order. During the 16th year of the Yuanjia Period, he moved down to the capital and abided at Upper Dinglin Temple. Erudite in sutras and Vinaya texts, he aspired high and was keen on delivering sentient beings and establishing monasteries. When he learned about Master Sengmeng's journey to the west and his supernatural experiences, he vowed to worship the holy sites to the west despite the perils. In the third year of the Yuanhui Period during the Liu Song Dynasty, he departed from Jinling³ and toured Ba and Shu Prefectures that were in western China. Passing by the south of the Yellow River and the territory of the Ruirui Tribe,⁴ he reached Khotan and wanted to continue the voyage by crossing the Pamirs, but the plank road was shut down. He had to return from Khotan after obtaining a Buddha's tooth, 15 relics, a copy of *the Avalokitêsvara Dhāraṇīs to Erase the Karmic Seeds of One's Crimes* 觀世音滅罪咒 and *the Chapter on Devadatta* 調達品, and a golden statue, golden stick, and disc from Kucha. The dangers and hardships of his way home are noted in another book. The Buddha's tooth was originally in the State of Udyāna; through the land of the Ruirui, it was carried to China. Faxian returned to the capital and offered the tooth to the Southern Qi government after a 15-year journey. During the trips, he frequently worshiped the relics covertly; no one knew it until Emperor Wenxuan dreamed of them. The legend about the holy objects was then revealed to the monastics and laypeople. Faxian observed the precepts strictly, and his virtue would act as an example for the masses. Wang Su and Wang Rong of Langya, Zhang Rong of Wu Prefecture, and śramaṇas like Huiling and Zhizang all prostrated by his feet for his

1 Shi Faxian (d. c. 498).

2 Xihai is in Qinghai today.

3 Jinling is one of the old names of Nanjing.

4 Ruirui, or the Ruru tribe, was an ancient minority group in northwest China.

consultation. Faxian and Xuanchang 玄暢 of Changgan Temple were both appointed as Monastic Head during the Yongming Period,¹ in charge of the south and the north respectively.

Xuanchang² was originally from Qin Prefecture; he diligently observed the precepts as well. Wenhui the Crown Prince respected him as his preceptor. Faxian was later dispatched to the Wu areas to benefit the monastics and laypeople. Xuanchang also went eastwards, reiterating the precept rituals and process. Both masters studied the Vinaya texts from young age and detached from worldly interests. Talking to Emperor Wu, they always referred to themselves with their own names and would not sit down. Later, during the Zhongxing Period, Sengzhong was received by Emperor Wu, who asked: “Is this the proper way for the monks to address themselves?” Sengzhong replied: “‘humble monk’ is rather ascetic.” The answer did not gratify the emperor; he then sought another one from Minister Wang Jian: “Formerly, when śramaṇas talked to the emperor, how did they address themselves? Did they sit in the great hall?” Wang Jian replied: “During the Han and Wei Dynasties, Buddhism was not prevalent, so no record could be found in this regard. Since the bogus governments,³ the religion started to prosper; they called themselves ‘humble monk’ and sat down to have conversations with the emperors. In the early Jin Dynasty, the same rite remained. Later, Yu Bing and Huan Xuan wanted to make the śramaṇas pay homage to the emperors. The debates lingered but without conclusion. During the Liu Song Dynasty, such discussions arose quite a few times, but finally the homage policy was not carried out. Nowadays, ‘humble monk’ and sitting conversation apply in most cases.” The emperor said: “The monks known as Xuanchang and Faxian have great virtue; they still address themselves by their own names, let alone the others. Ordering them to worship the monarch is too much. Calling themselves by their own name should be alright.” Since then,

1 The Yongming Period: 483-493.

2 Xuanchang (c. 420-c. 494).

3 The bogus governments here refer to the regimes of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period.

śramaṇas all address themselves by their own names; this tradition started from Xuanchang and Faxian.

Xuanchang died in the first year of the Jianwu Period at the age of 75. Faxian passed away in the last year of the Jianwu Period; both were buried on the south side of Mount Zhong. Faxian's disciple, Sengyou, erected a stele beside the tomb; Shen Yue of Wuxing, the Magistrate of Danyang, composed the inscription. The Buddha's tooth and the relics that Faxian acquired in the Western Regions were kept in Upper Dinglin Temple.

In the first month of the third year in the Putong Period,¹ a group of people with sticks suddenly knocked on the door of the temple at night, claiming: "the Prince of Linchuan's servant escaped, and someone reports that he is hiding in the pagoda of the Buddha tooth. Please open the door for a search." The abbot thus ordered that the door be opened; the general went to the Buddha tooth table, opened the casket, and took out the tooth. After three bows on knees, he wrapped it with a silk handkerchief and left to the east towards the mountains. It is still missing now.

1 The Putong Period (520-527) was one of the reign titles for Emperor Wu in the Liang Dynasty, the contemporary ruler of the author.

13. Shi Senghu of Mount Shicheng in Shan County during the Liang Dynasty

Shi Senghu¹ 釋僧護 was native of Shan County, Kuaiji. He renounced the world in his youth and practiced asceticism devoutly with pure precept observance. Later, he abided at Yinyue Temple on Mount Shicheng. To the north of the temple, a grey stone cliff measured hundreds of feet high; there was a pattern akin to the flare back screen of Buddha statues at the centre. On top of the cliff, dense foliage bent over to shadow the flare pattern. Every time Senghu passed by the cliff, he could see bright light and hear music and songs of praise. Thus, holding an incense burner, he vowed to make a hundred-foot statue of Maitreya, in order to give ordinary people the opportunity to admire and worship the Buddha. During the Jianwu Period of the Southern Qi Dynasty, Senghu called on monastics and laypeople to start the project with careful carving. After years of hard work, they had just completed a vague face. Shortly after, Senghu died of illness; on his death bed, he vowed: “I did not expect the project to be finished in one lifetime; in my next life, I intend to continue and accomplish it.” Later, Sengshu the śramaṇa kept on the work, yet, due to a lack of funds and workforce, he did not make much progress.

In the sixth year of the Tianjian Period,² when Lu Xian of Wu Prefecture, the Magistrate of Shifeng, finished his office term and returned home; he passed by and stayed at Shan River overnight. It was dull and raining; darkness reigned over the surroundings. Lu Xian felt scared and could hardly sleep; shortly after, he dreamed of three monks coming to tell him: “You should be alright as you have great faith in the Dharma. Yet, Prince Jian’an is susceptible to diseases; if he could help complete the stone sculpture that Senghu started, he will enjoy a healthy life. Karmic effect is not illusory, please accomplish the wonderful cause.” However, after Lu Xian returned to the capital, he forgot about the dream. One year later,

1 Shi Senghu (d. c. 497).

2 The Tianjian Period: 502-519.

when he went out of his residence, he met a monk who talked to him about his stay at Shan River and asked: "Do you remember the matter you were entrusted regarding the Prince of Jian'an?" Lu Xian was frightened and replied: "No." The monk smiled and returned: "Please think it over." Then, he took leave. Lu Xian felt strange and chased after the monk to have a clearer idea. After he ran a hundred steps behind, the figure suddenly disappeared. Lu Xian henceforth realized the monk's point and recalled the previous dream. This was the third monk in the trio he dreamed of at that night. Instantly, Lu Xian reported to the Prince of Jian'an, and the prince presented the request to the emperor. The emperor issued a decree ordering that Vinaya Master Sengyou be in charge of the project. The prince was deeply convinced of the omen; joyful of the decision, he donated plenty of treasures and gold, vowing to support the project to its completion. One day before Sengyou arrived at the site, Huicheng, a monk of Yinyue Temple, dreamed of a grand deity in black with many guardians and attendants standing in front of the statue and discussing how to finish it. The next morning, Sengyou arrived at the temple; the sign was amazingly accurate.

The original cave that was sculptured by Senghu was too shallow; thereupon, Sengyou deepened it 50 feet further and added a hair bun. When the body was carved, and the entire sculpture was closing, one night at the spot designed for the Swastika, the precipice turned red and bumpy. At present, the Swastika is still red instead of in ordinary gold lacquer. The statue was preliminarily complete in the spring of the 12th year of the Tianjian Period; in the spring of the 15th year, the project was totally accomplished. The Buddha's body in sitting posture is 50 feet high, and the entire sculpture measures 100 feet; three layers of platforms in front of the statue, gates, halls, and foundations were also built for receiving worship and offerings. Monastics and laypeople ceaselessly come from far away with flowers and incenses to pay homage. After the construction of the statue, the Prince of Jian'an's illness started to heal. Now, he is recovered and conferred as the Prince of Nanping.

14. Shi Fayue of Zhengjue Temple in the Capital during the Liang Dynasty

Shi Fayue¹ 釋法悅 was a śramaṇa that maintained a vegetarian diet and strictly observed precepts. In the late Southern Qi Dynasty, he was nominated as the Monastic Head, abiding at Zhengjue Temple in the capital. He focused on bringing forth benefits for sentient beings; the four Buddhist groups trusted and venerated him. Fayue heard of the eighteen-foot, gilded statue at Songwang Temple in Pengcheng that was made by Wang Zhongde, the Prefect of Xuzhou, and General Cheqi. The statue and the halo screen stood out in the Jiangzuo area. When disasters happened or monks or nuns had grievances, the statue would sweat. How much it sweated would indicate the gravity of the troubles. In the first year of Taishi Period during the Liu Song Dynasty, Pengcheng was occupied by the northern government;² the barbarians wanted to snatch away the statue. They mobilized ten thousand men but could not move it. In the early Southern Qi Dynasty, several counties in Yanzhou wanted to rise in revolt and turn to the southern government. They forced the monks to guard the trenches. Duke Linglan, the grand general of the north, captured the camp and detained all the monks of the two prefectures,³ reporting to the bogus government that the monks were involved in the uprising. At that time, the statue sweated again, and the entire floor of the hall became wet. King Liang⁴ of the Bogus Liang,⁵ who believed in Buddhism, governed Pengcheng during that period; he went to the site of the statue in person and had people clean the statue, yet the beads of sweat continuously reappeared as soon as they were wiped away. The king thus burned incense and prostrated, devoutly vowing: “The monks are innocent; I will do my best to save them from persecution. If the Buddha hears my vow, please stop sweating after I wipe the statue.” He then

1 Shi Fayue (d. 509).

2 The Northern government here refers to the Northern Wei government.

3 The two prefectures: Pengcheng and Yanzhou.

4 King Liang refers to Gao Liang, a high-ranking official in the Northern Wei Dynasty.

5 Bogus Liang refers to the Northern Wei government.

wiped it himself, and the statue became dry and clean. The king hence reported his experience to the emperor, and the monks were pardoned. Fayue wanted to worship that statue personally; however, the border was so closely guarded that he could not fulfill his wish.

Formerly, Emperor Ming of the Liu Song Dynasty wanted to make an eighteen-foot high gilded statue, but failed to cast it four times. Thus, he changed the plan to fourteen feet. Later, Fayue and Zhijing, a śramaṇa of Baima Temple, along with the supporters contrived to build an eighteen-foot tall Amitabha Buddha statue and started to collect bronze and gold. In the late years of the Southern Qi Dynasty, the project was held off due to social upheavals. During the Liang Dynasty, Fayue reported the plan to the emperor, and His Majesty approved and sponsored the statue as well as its throne; skillful craftsmen and materials were hence supplied in accordance with their needs. On the third day of the fifth month in the eighth year of the Tianjian Period during the Liang Dynasty, the casting began its operation at Xiaozhuangyan Temple. The craftsmen originally calculated that 20 tons of bronze would be needed. When all the raw materials were smelted, the hot bronze merely filled below the chest of the mold. Learning this news, the civilians offered an immeasurable amount of bronze. Putting it in the furnace and filling the mold, it was still insufficient; the molten bronze remained at the same level. Reporting this to the imperial court immediately, the emperor donated another 1.5 tons of bronze. As the court started to weigh and deliver it, the decree on a goat cart and the bronze had arrived at the cast site. Using the bronze, the mold was abundantly filled. Then, the cart and deliverymen all disappeared. When the bronze from the palace arrived, people realized that the previous batch was sent by the super powers. In rapture, the craftsmen, monastics, and laypeople were all amazed and chanted praise. After the mold was opened, the statue actually measured nineteen feet tall with good luster. Two unmelted coins stuck to the belt of the statue, no one understood how it happened. Previously, 20 tons was estimated to be more than sufficient, 1.5 tons were later added; at this rate, the follow-up supply should not

have been enough either. Yet, the statue was complete with the heavenly help. In the final analysis, this was the result of sincere devotion. Thus, the deities worked in parallel with the humans.

After the statue was accomplished, a bhiksu named Daozhao constantly paid homage and repented in front of it at night. Once, he saw a bright light over the statue; gazing at it for a long time, he realized that it was a holy gleam. Three days after the mold had been sealed and before it was opened, Chan Master Daodu, with great virtue, donated seven cassocks to sponsor its opening. Shortly after, he saw two monks kneeling there to uncover the hair bun of the statue from the mold. When he came closer, they disappeared. Afterwards, Fayue and Zhijing both died; the statue project was entrusted to Sengyou of Dinglin Temple. On the 26th of the ninth month in the same year, the statue was moved to Guangzhai Temple. During that month, it did not rain, so the roads were dusty. The night before the relocation, it drizzled. Worrying about the weather, Sengyou came to the statue to check on it. In the distance, he saw glows next to the statue well like lamps or candles; in addition, he heard prayers. Entering the hall, the lights were gone. The temple guard caught sight of it as well. That night, traders on the Huai River all heard the sounds of a big boat moving and the voices of people urging for the building of bridges. It sounded like hundreds of people were involved. It indicated to us that the extremely heavy statue was divine; how could men move it? To relocate it, celestial power was necessary.

Later, the throne and the back screen of the statue were cast as well. Auspicious signs of floral fragrance manifested accordingly. This is the tallest gilded statue to the east of Pamirs.

Comments

In ancient times, King Udayana carved the first Buddha statue with sandalwood; King Prasenajit started to cast gold statues; they sculpted based on the real appearance of the Buddha, producing

lively and marvelous statues. Therefore, the sculptures looked so radiant and benevolent that the pilgrims would leave their seats to worship them. As for the stupas for the hair and nails, as well as the two platforms for his clothes and shadow, the rules and regulations were all set in the Buddha's time. After the Buddha took Nirvana by the Hiranyavati River and was cremated outside the woods, the eight kings shared the relics and respectively built stupas while returning to their countries. Including the sites of the spittoon and ashes, stupas were erected in a total of ten locales. They are the Buddha's birthplace, venues of enlightenment, dharma talks, nirvana, the flesh bun and parietal bone, the four teeth, two footprints, the Buddhist staff, spittoon, and nivāsana;¹ the purpose of these monuments was to mark the supreme traces.

During King Aśoka's age, over a hundred years later, the monarch ordered the demolition of many stupas, taking out the relics and sending them overseas for the sake of dharma transmission. Some encountered storms and were lost in the ocean. That is why coastal and insular people might find them from time to time. His endeavors led to the creation of the 84,000 stupas. The daughters of the king were also pious and devoted, smelting metal to cast the Buddha's statues. Afterwards, certain sculptures crossed the ocean and exerted influence in China. Though the holy deeds gradually spread to the east, no one had seen any image of the Buddha. Then, Cai Yin and Qin Jing returned from the Western Regions, carrying back Shakyamuni's paintings on fine cotton cloth. Henceforth, his portraits began to be found on balconies and in graveyards. Later, the images, monasteries, and stupas developed together. The statues flourished during the Liang Dynasty in particular.

Actually, the dharmakāya is formless, and the images are engendered by various conditions and perceptions, hence different tableaux would be seen in each case. If one is ignorant, the image will be distant; when aspiration is keen, the wooden log or rock

1 Nivāsana, in Sanskrit, means "inner garment."

could open and respond. Thus, Liu Yin's¹ filial piety touched heaven and the tripod was automatically inscribed to memorialize his deeds; Ding Lan² carved a wooden sculpture of his mother to carry on his filial duty. Lu Yang³ pointed towards the sun with his axe, and the sun retreated for 30 li; the wife of Qi's⁴ tears burst the Great Wall. Those were the omens and signs shown in compassion of their affections and sincerity.

Therefore, we can understand why Huida discovered the relics through the light on the stupa, why Huili determined the pagoda foundation with celestial help, why Huishou's devotion guided him to find the floating log, and why Senghui witnessed the move of the lamps. We can also understand why Senghong and Sengliang risked their lives for the building of statues, why Faxian aspired and obtained the Buddha's tooth, why Prince Wenxuan in the Southern Qi Dynasty dreamed of that relic, and why Senghu contrived the huge statue project at Mount Shicheng, which triggered the Prince of Nanping's magical response. Recently, the nineteen-foot statue was installed at Guangzhai Temple and is shining in the capital. While the emperor of the Liu Song Dynasty failed after four attempts, His Majesty of the Liang Dynasty succeeded in one cast, which has an auspicious appearance despite the raw bronze that was once insufficient yet supplied amply afterwards. Thus, we comprehend that the Dharma is promoted by humans and that the assistance of celestial efforts is reflected through objects;

1 Liu Yin was a scholar-official in the Former Zhao regime (304-329). He was known for his deeds of filial piety to his parents since his childhood.

2 Ding Lan of the Han Dynasty purportedly lost his father at a young age and treated his mother badly. One day, he was inspired and touched by the lamb that knelt down to suckle from the ewe; he thus decided to be a good son. After his mother died, he made a sculpture of her to complete his filial duty.

3 Lu Yang was a general in the Han Dynasty; reportedly, once, during his battle with Duke Han, the sun went down. He pointed his axe to the sun and demanded that the sun rise up so that he might continue the fight.

4 The wife of Qi was named Mengjiangnyu; her husband was drafted into the workforce that built the Great Wall in the Qin Dynasty and died at the site. Mengjiangnyu looked for her husband at the wall but could not find him; upon her crying, a part of the wall was burst by her tears, and her husband's body was uncovered from underneath it.

it is not illusory. It is purported that: “Sacrifice should be held as if the deities are present, which brings forth celestial and human interactions; when worshiping the statue as if the Buddha is himself present, thereupon, the dharmakāya will respond. That is the reason why cultivation ought to aim at wisdom, which in turn depends on merit and virtue. It is well like the two wings that enable the bird to fly towards the sky; the two wheels that support the cart to travel thousands of miles. Is it not due to their efforts? Shall not we practice diligently?”

Paean

The true demeanor of the Buddha outshines the sun; their brilliance is demonstrated through golden and stone statues, hence the creation of stupas and images, which allow believers to venerate. Marvels manifest to indicate supremacy, and auspicious signs arise to illustrate power. The rock and the earth store the treasures, while the water flows and clouds stream to carry them. Having faithful conviction, affinity will arise between the Buddha and the devotee.

Scriptural Intoners

11 main figures 23 auxiliaries

1. Bo Faqiao of Zhongshan during the Jin Dynasty

Sengfu

Bo Faqiao¹ 帛法橋, a native of Zhongshan,² enjoyed chanting sutras from his youth, yet he was unsatisfied with his voice, which was neither loud nor clear. He thus abstained from food for seven days to repent of his sins, prostrating to Avalokitêsvara Bodhisattva to pray for an improvement to his voice. His school friends dissuaded him, but he would not give up; on the seventh day, his throat was suddenly refreshed. He asked for water to rinse it, saying: “I got a response.” Then, he read a sutra three times; his voice was resonant and agreeable. It could be distinctly heard from one li away. Crowds from near and far came to listen. Since then, day and night, he recited sutras of tens of thousands of words in clear and sad utterances and tunes that could touch the deities. His voice did not change until he was 90. During the Yonghe Period of Emperor Mu in the Jin Dynasty, or the last year of Shi Hu’s reign, he died in Hebei.

His disciple, Sengfu 僧扶, observed the precepts strictly with virtuous conduct as well.

1 Bo Faqiao (d. c. 349).

2 Zhongshan is in Hebei today.

2. Zhi Tanyue of Jianchu Temple in the Capital during the Jin Dynasty

Zhi Tanyue 支曇籥 was originally from the Yuezhi ethnic group and lived in Jianye. He joined the monastic order at a young age; practicing asceticism and taking vegetarian food, he abided at Hu Hill in Wu Prefecture. During the first year of Emperor Xiaowu's reign¹ in the Jin Dynasty, he moved to the capital on the invitation of the emperor, dwelling at Jianchu Temple. Emperor Xiaowu received the five precepts under Tanyue. The master had a clear and sweet voice; he was also good at recitation. Once, he dreamed of a deity teaching him the ways of utterance; waking up, he invented a new vocal method. His chanting thus became resonant, lingering, mild, and distinct. This utterance method had been modified and spread by Dong'a and Kang Senghui, yet no one's voice was as beautiful and resonant as Tanyue's. Later, his manner of pronunciation was marked on the sutras for posterity. The chanting of six characters created by Tanyue is still popular today. Afterwards, he died in his abode at 81.

1 Emperor Xiaowu's reign in the Jin Dynasty lasted from 362-396.

3. Shi Faping of Qihuan Temple in the Capital during the Jin Dynasty Fadeng

Shi Faping¹ 釋法平, originally from Sogdiana and named Kang, lived in Jianye. Along with his younger brother Fadeng, they renounced the world and abided at Baima Temple; following Tanyue as their teacher, they then both spread their master's teachings. His voice was clear, distinct, mild, and smooth. Later, the brothers abided at Qihuan Temple.

Fadeng 法等 had a short figure and ugly look, but his voice was more wonderful than that of his older brother. Once, a grand general of the Liu Song troops held a Dana banquet in the east residence and despised him for his appearance. However, after listening to Fadeng's recitation of the sutra in three different tones, he had to admire and praise him, saying: "'Judging a person based on his looks would miss their talents, just like Ziyu,'² now I believe it." Later, Master Huiyan of Dong'an Temple expounded sutras; Fadeng recited the sutra three times, once being in a distinct tone. After he completed, Huiyan waved his horsetail whisk slowly, making these comments before the meeting concluded: "Recitating in such a way makes its significance no less than explication." When the lecture resumed on the next day, the learners believed that the recitation and the preaching supplemented each other. Both brothers died in the last year of the Yuanjia Period.

1 Shi Faping (d. c. 453).

2 Ziyu was a famous strategist of the Kingdom of Zheng in the Spring and Autumn Period. He had an ugly face; thus, Confucius did not pay enough attention to this student. This led to Ziyu to finally quit from his school. This sentence in particular was quoted from the Historical Record by Sima Qian.

4. Shi Sengrao of Baima Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Daozong Chaoming Minghui

Shi Sengrao¹ 釋僧饒, a native of Jiankang, renounced the world and abided at Baima Temple. He was good at letter writing and acrobatics; Sengrao was also known for his vocal skills in the time of Emperors Wu and Wen during the Liu Song Dynasty. His voice was melodious and bright, just as good as Daozong's. Daozong 道綜 was skilled in the recitation of *the Sutra of the Origin of the Prince* 本起經 and *the Sudāna Sutra* 須大拿經 with three tones. As long as Sengrao read the sutras, his voice would fascinate both monastics and laypeople. He often recited the sutras while walking around the Prajña platform in the monastery, offering his chanting to the Buddha. Everyone that heard his recitation would stop and appreciate it with their thumbs up. He died at 86 in the second year of the Daming Period during the Liu Song Dynasty.

At that time, Chaoming 超明 and Minghui 明慧, who learned to chant in their youth and recited sutras during their long abstinence,² were also known by the public.

1 Shi Sengrao (373-458).

2 A long abstinence included observing precepts, abstaining from lust, taking vegetarian food, and constraining from aliments after lunch each day for either a long period of time or during a multiple-day period for a Buddhist event at a monastery.

5. Shi Daohui of Anle Temple during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Daohui¹ 釋道慧 was from a Zhang family in Chaisang, Xunyang. Renouncing the world at 24, he abided at Mount Lu, took vegetarian food, observed precepts faithfully, and read various classics. Since he naturally had a clear voice, he was fond of chanting. His pronunciation had special charms, flexible tones, and distinct and beautiful segmentations. After, he moved to the capital and abided at Anle Temple, becoming known for his recitation in the Jiankang area. Later in life, he moved to Zhulin Temple in Zhufang,² reciting tens of thousands of words. Every night, he chanted sutras, and people could hear voices of praise in his room. During the second year of the Daming Period in the Liu Song Dynasty, he died at 51.

1 Shi Daohui (408-458).

2 Zhufang was in Jiangsu.

6. Shi Zhizong of Xie Temple during the Liu Song Dynasty Huibao Daoquan

Shi Zhizong¹ 釋智宗 was from a Zhou family in Jiankang; he joined the monastic order at Xie Temple. Erudite and knowledgeable, he was good at recitation. His voice was clear and fresh. At midnight on the long night of observing the eight precepts, the four Buddhist groups were sleepy and fighting. When Zhizong mounted the high seat and chanted the sutras with a resonant voice, everyone was refreshed and sober, thus continuing their cultivation. During the third year of the Daming Period, he died at 31.

Although Huibao 慧寶 and Daoquan 道詮 were not in the same period, they had similar practices. Their voices were solid and exalted, and their tones did not follow fixed patterns. Emperor Ming of the Liu Song Dynasty once rewarded Daoquan; people hence made comments, saying that he was lucky.

¹ Shi Zhizong (429-459).

7. Shi Tanqian of Wuyi Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Fachang Daoyan

Shi Tanqian¹ 釋曇遷, originally named Zhi, was from the Yuezhi ethnic group. He lived in Jiankang; fascinated by metaphysics, Confucianism, and the Buddha-Dharma, he was fond of discussing *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi*. He commentated on *the Chapter on the Ten Grounds* 十地經, was skilled in regular-script calligraphy, and frequently transcribed sutras and donated to others. He was especially good at recitation; with countless tones, the melody he made was in a novel style, surpassing the older versions. Liu Yikang, the Prince of Pengcheng, Fan Ye,² and Wang Tanshou associated with him. At first, Tanqian abided at Qihuan Temple and later moved to Wuyi Temple. By the time Fan Ye and his family of 12 persons were executed, no one dared come close enough to bury them. Only Tanqian arranged the funeral with the money he made by selling some of his clothes and belongings. After hearing of his deed, Emperor Xiaowu appreciated him and told Xu Yuan: “When you draft *the History of the Song* 宋書, do not omit this person.” Wang Sengqian³ invited the master to tour with him as he assumed official positions in Xiang and Wu Prefectures. Tanqian passed away at the age of 99 during the fourth year of the Jianyuan Period in the Southern Qi Dynasty.

At that time, Shi Fachang 釋法暢 of Daochang Temple and Shi Daoyan 釋道琰 of Wagan Temple both had loud and clear voices with agreeable tones. Although less famous than Tanqian, they were experts as well.

1 Shi Tanqian (382-480).

2 Fan Ye (398-445), a scholar-official in the late Liu Song Dynasty, supported Liu Yikang, the fourth son of Emperor Wu, in taking the throne but failed.

3 Wang Sengqian (426-485) was an official in the Liu Song Dynasty that was known for his calligraphy.

8. Shi Tanzhi of Dong'an Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Daolang Faren Zhixin Huiguang

Shi Tanzhi¹ 釋曇智 was from a Wang family in Jiankang. He joined the monastic order at Dong'an Temple; having a casual and elegant bearing, he was good at discussing *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi*. He read a wide range of books regarding sutras, sastras, and history, among other things. Since he possessed a stentorian voice, Tanzhi was fond of recitation. Based on the traditional method, he developed and applied new techniques, uttering loud and distinct voices and conveying the meanings with his vocal efforts. Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu Song Dynasty, Xiao Sihua,² and Wang Sengqian respected and admired him. When Wang Sengqian assumed a position in Xiang Prefecture, he invited Sengzhi to accompany him to the post; while Xiao Sihua guarded the Wu area, the master was requested to go with him as well. Tanzhi died in Wu Prefecture in the fifth year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty at the age of 79.

At that time, Daolang 道朗, Faren 法忍, Zhixin 智欣, and Huiguang 慧光 did not deeply comprehend the sutras, but they recited them well. Daolang's tone was relaxed, Faren swift, Zhixin good at side tune,³ and Huiguang sonorous.

1 Shi Tanzhi (409-487).

2 Xiao Sihua (406-455), a nephew of Emperor Wu's step-mother, was a renowned noble and official in the Liu Song Dynasty.

3 The side tune, or "Ce Diao," was one of the three musical tunes in ancient China; the other two are "Qing" (clear) and "Ping" (plain).

9. Shi Sengbian of Anle Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Senggong

Shi Sengbian¹ 釋 僧 辯 was from a Wu family in Jiankang. He renounced the world and abided at Anle Temple. In his youth, his interests focused on sutra recitation, learning from Tanqian and Fachang. At first, he imitated his teachers and later ameliorated their methods; uttering mildly and agreeably, he became the number one intoner in early Qi Dynasty. Once, he participated in a Dana Assembly in the residence of Liu Chang at Xinting;² at forenoon, when Sengbian finished reciting the sutra once, a flock of cranes abruptly gathered down the stairs. After he finished the reading, the cranes flew away. This incident made him known in the country; near and far, all came to study under him. On the 19th of the second month in the seventh year of the Yongming Period, Prince Wenxuan of Jingling, an official of Situ, dreamed of reciting *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* and was awakened by the voice he pronounced. Thus, he got up and came to the Buddhist hall, chanting *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* one time in the way that he dreamed. He enjoyed the agreeable voice and practiced the utterance for an entire day. The next day, he gathered śramaṇas with good voices in the capital, such as Puzhi of Longguang Temple, Daoxing of Xin'an Temple, Hui ren of Duobao Temple, Chaosheng of Tianbao Temple, and Sengbian, teaching them the uttering method. Later, Sengbian imparted the pronunciation of *the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* and *the seven-character³ verse in the Sutra of the Buddha's Previous Life* 瑞應本起經, including the best practice of the prince. Later generations kept learning and passing it on, yet the essential had been lost. Sengbian died in the 11th year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty.

1 Shi Sengbian (d. c. 493).

2 Xinting is in Nanjing today.

3 Seven-character verse is a form of poems in China in which each sentence consists of seven characters.

In the same period, Shi Senggong 釋 僧 恭 was as famous as Sengbian. He later returned to worldly life.

10. Shi Tanping of Baima Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Daoguang

Shi Tanping 釋曇憑 was from a Yang family in Nan'an,¹ Jianwei. At his young age, he traveled to the capital, studying recitation at Baima Temple. His pronunciation and tones were precise and appropriate, but he had an over-confident attitude: his contemporaries did not praise him. Thus, he researched and practiced diligently, becoming outstanding in his later life. His method altered completely, being able to fabulously employ different voices to chant *the Sutra of the Origin of the Prince* three times. Later, he came to Shu Prefecture and abided at Longyuan Temple; sutra intoners in the areas all learned from him. When he recited, elephants and horses whinnied along with his voices; travelers stopped their steps to listen. He cast a bell and vowed to have the Buddha's eight kinds of voices and the four types of wisdom;² the use of bronze bells in Yong and Shu Prefectures³ hence began. Afterwards, he died at his abode.

At that time, Daoguang 道光, a monk in Shu Prefecture, was good at recitation as well.

1 Nan'an is in Gansu today.

2 The eight kinds of voice refer to the eight kinds of wonderful voices that the Buddha employed for dharma talks. The four types of wisdom indicate the four abilities of unhindered understanding and expression.

3 Yong and Shu refer to Sichuan Province today; Yong indicates eastern Sichuan, and Shu indicates the west.

11. Shi Huiren of Northern Duobao Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Falin Tanbian Huinian Tangan Tanjin Huichao Daoshou Tiantiao

Shi Huiren¹ 釋慧忍 was from a Kuai family in Jiankang. He renounced the world in his youth, abiding at Northern Duobao Temple. Without special comprehension in the doctrines, he was fond of rhythm and music. Originally, he studied under Master Sengbian of Anle Temple, acquiring all the skills that the master possessed. His voice was sad, moving, and more agreeable than that of his teacher. After having the recitation dream, Prince Wenxuan summoned sutra intoners to impart it to them; he then weighed the traditional method with Huiren, analyzing the nuances between the new and the old. Huiren grasped the 42 ways of pronunciation designed by Sengbian for *the Sutra of the Buddha's Previous Life* the best. Thus, the prince ordered over 40 students, including Huiwei, Sengye, Sengshang, Chaoming, Sengqi, Chaoyou, Huixu, Fatan, Huiman, Sengyin, Huituan, and Faci, to learn from Huiren. He died in his 40s during the first year of the Longchang Period.

Shi Falin 釋法臨 employed a plain tune to read the texts segmented by commas, making a musical rhythm.

Shi Tanbian 釋曇辯 had an easy and smooth voice that was excellent for longer recitation.

Shi Huinian 釋慧念 had a soft and delicate voice.

Shi Tangan 釋曇幹 had a quick, melodious, and crispy voice that would convey the messages of the text.

Shi Tanjin 釋曇進 was skilled in leading to aftertastes.

Shi Huichao 釋慧超 was good at three recitations, yet he lacked endurance.

Shi Daoshou 釋道首 was unstable at the beginning, but magnificent in long recitation.

Shi Tiantiao 釋曇調 conveyed the meanings with his clear voice, yet practice was still needed.

1 Shi Huiren (c. 454-494).

The above eight monks were all famous in the Southern Qi Dynasty. In Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Jing and Sichuan Prefectures, recitation was popular as well, but they merely recited without any particular method or skills, thus it is unworthy of recording. These eight did not have biographies either.

Comments

Articles are written so as to state one's thoughts, sentiments, and aspirations; songs and verses give expression to the meaning by combining the rhythm and words. Therefore, in the Preface of *the Book of Songs*,¹ it indicates: "When sentiments arise in the mind, one expresses them through words; if the words do not suffice, then people will sing a song." However, songs in China entail rhyme for singing; paeans in India are composed in the form of verses, also requiring rhythm for musical arrangement. Though the songs differ with their verses, both harmonize while coordinating with musical instruments and melodies. Thus, songs to the accompaniment of chimes and bells produce music; the Buddhist verses to the accompaniment of flutes and strings make Buddhist hymns.

Composing music, saints endow it with four qualities: touching the heaven, communicating with the deities, rendering peace to the nationals, and leading the people to goodness; while listening to Buddhist hymns brings forth five benefits: to refresh the body, to memorize the messages, to sober the mind, to beautify the voice, and to please the gods. Thus, pāñcika² played music at the stone chamber, entreating the Buddha to open the dharma gate; Druma³ sang and danced in the double-tree woods in appreciation

1 The preface of *the Book of Songs* was a general introduction to *the Book of Songs*, which is a collection of ancient songs from the Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn Period; the author of the foreword, however, hangs in doubt.

2 A pāñcika is a "musical god" in Sanskrit, who played music on the request of Indra the powerful to entreat the Buddha, who just achieved enlightenment, to expound the Dharma.

3 Druma was the musical deity abiding in the pure heaven that the Buddha delivered before entering Parinirvana.

of the deliverance by the Buddha. In between, the eulogies and paeans could be heard at all times and places. At night, when millions of ears were ready to listen to the finest sounds, Āryadeva struck the bell in the palace.¹ One could express the unspeakable truth with a flute or pronounce the virtuous deeds with strings; the melody can inspire minds, which was praised by the Buddha. In comparison, ancient Chinese musical pieces of Xianchi, Shaowu, Jichu, and Liangchen are less fabulous.

Since Buddhism spread to China, numerous translators were involved in the rendering of texts, yet few worked on the recitation and musical methods. This due to the fact that one Sanskrit word usually contains several syllables while a Chinese word merely consists of one syllable. Due to the difference in number, if one chants the Chinese version with a Sanskrit rhythm, it will be speedy and pressing; if one recites the Sanskrit language with a Chinese melody, the music will be insufficient for the syllables. Thus, the holy texts have been translated, but the rhythm had not been introduced.

During the Cao Wei Dynasty, Cao Zhi, the Prince of Chen and Si,² fell in love with music and was fond of Buddhist melodies. He mastered the marvelous skill of pāñcika and made the tunes for *the Sutra of the Buddha's Previous Life* and *the Sutra of the Origin of the Prince* at Mount Yu,³ which became a model for intoners' chanting. Three thousand ways of pronunciation existed for chanting 42 times in different tones. Later, Boqiao and Zhiyue also affirmed that their recitation methods originated from the Prince Chen and Si. Inspired by the divine powers, they made new tunes, but the traditional ones continued to only count to one thousand. During the Jianping Period⁴ of Shi Le's reign, deities

1 Āryadeva struck the bell to request a national debate with non-Buddhist religionists and beat them.

2 Cao Zhi (192-232) was the prince of Chen and Si and the third son of Cao Cao (155-220) who laid the foundation of the (Cao) Wei Dynasty (213-265).

3 Mount Yu is in Shandong.

4 The Jianping Period: 330-333.

descended into the hall in Anyi County,¹ chanting sutras for seven days. Someone had recorded the melody, which was however discarded later. During the Liu Song and Southern Qi Dynasties, Tanqian, Sengbian, an official named Taifu, and Prince Wenxuan exerted themselves to research and improve the Buddhist melodies by comparing the deviations of the new and the old, weighing on the notes. Unfortunately, the traditional methods remained a few more than 300. Afterwards, these remainders were lost in different corners; people focused on the recitation, but the tones are irrelevant to them. Every teacher imparted his own ways; each school invented a different set. Because people did not master the musical knowledge, no one could make the proper judgement and appraisal.

From ancient times, music could touch living beings. That is why when intoners are chanting, the red eagles stopped moving because they were clinging to the voices; while bhiksus are singing, the grey birds forget they were flying out of enjoyment. Once, Tanping read out loud, and the elephants and horses stood still to listen; if Sengbian chanted, cranes would linger. In order to appraise the level of the intoners, the feelings of the audiences is a standard. Thus, if Kui² hit and touched the rocks, animals would dance; Xiaoguan played the music of Shao, and, before he finished, the phoenix flew over to greet him. Even birds and animals can be moved by music, let alone humans and deities. The beauty of sutra recitation lies on the benefits of both the content and the sound. If only the voice is heard without the understanding of the words, it would not raise the aspiration for cultivation; while merely reading the texts without the sound, the mind would not be inspired by the proper feelings. Hence, the sutras say: “The Buddha’s virtue should be eulogized by marvelous sounds.” Nevertheless, nowadays, the current learners, who obtain slight skills, then claim to have the

1 Anyi County was in Shanxi Province and the purported capital of Xia, the first Dynasty in Chinese history.

2 Kui and Xiaoguan were musicians in Chinese prehistory; Kui was purportedly the musical officer of Shun. The music of Shao was the first musical work for the imperial court, dating back to around 5000 years ago.

orthodox method without studying the meaning of the entire sutra. In order to make the text sound better, they sometimes break the sentences and ruin the meanings; listeners would feel confused and tired, which can be likened to covering the luster of rare pearls and diluting fresh milk. What a pity! If they understand the essence of the sutra and master the musical principle, they would not jumble the three tunes and seven notes, but could render the five words and four phrases¹ in order. Thereupon, tones and speed are put to the point, rising and falling in measured cadence; they are well like dragons flying in the sky or birds singing in the forest, being clear and soft with the Buddha's eight kinds of voice and promoting the seven kinds of excellence of the sutras.² The voice will be strong but not clumsy, serious but not stiff, soft but not weak, resonant but not irritating, clear but not disturbing, and deep but not ambiguous. In this manner, the subtle meaning will be conveyed, the mind will be refreshed, and the listeners will be delighted and inspired. If so, everyone would love to listen to the Dharma.

In India, the way to chant and eulogize is called intoning; in China, reading the sutra is known as recitation; hymns are called Fanbei.³ Formerly, the deities sang hymns accompanied by strings and flutes. Since the five groups of Buddhist disciples renounce the world, music can be pursued as a pleasure. In China, Buddhist music began from Cao Zhi, who composed *the Eulogy of the Holy Prince* 太子頌 and *the Praise of Śyāmakajātaka (Shan Song)* 睽頌; therefore, the rhythm was made accordingly, and the breathing rhymes, which benefited from celestial teaching, were made as well. Now, the splendor has been lost. Later, Zhiqian the layman also passed on the method for three tunes, which again disappeared in the mists of time. The one existing chapter of *the Discussion*

1 Five words and four phrases refer to a common form of verses. There are five words in a phrase and four phrases in total.

2 The seven kinds of excellence claimed for the Buddha's Teaching were: excellence in its timing or seasonableness, meaning, speech, uniqueness, completeness, pure adaptability, and its sole objective - nirvana.

3 Fanbei is a Chinese term for "heavenly intoning;" it later became the term for Buddhist music.

(*Gongyi*) 共議 might be the last remaining work of Zhiqian. Only the Buddhist melody for *the Nirvana Sutra*, made by Kang Senghui, is still circulating; Kang Senghui's text quoted from *the Nirvana Sutra* of two fascicles. It is also known as "Nirvana intoning." During the Jin Dynasty, senior masters imparted Mili. This is today's version. Zhi Tanyue composed the six-word verse; *the Great Loving Kindness and Compassion* 大慈哀憫 of one tune is still practiced at present. The current Xiliang intoning method derived from the Guanyou area; it later became popular in Jinyang. Some call it *the Mianrumanyue* 面如滿月.¹ These pieces were all composed by famous masters. Unfortunately, many flaws exist in them now because novices have been learning them from each other. How regretful! This issue pertains to pronunciation and recitation; thus, I mention it at the end of the comments.

1 *Mianrumanyue* is a melody title in Chinese, meaning "the face like a full moon."

Recitation Guides

10 main figures 7 auxiliaries

1. Shi Daozhao of Qihuan Temple in the Capital during the Liu Song Dynasty Huiming

Shi Daozhao¹ 釋道照, from a Qu family in Xiping,² was good at letter writing in his youth and widely read in classics and historical books. At 18, he joined the monastic order, abiding at Qihuan Temple in the capital. Studying various sutras, he focused on guidance and explication during recitation; he also had a loud and agreeable voice that could refresh and inspire passionate minds. His proclamations were constantly accompanied with evidence; therefore, he became a famous master in the early Liu Song Dynasty. Emperor Wu once invited him to a Dana Assembly in the inner court; Daozhao conversed with the emperor during the forenoon, discussing the mere hundred years of human life that perishes quickly. Alternation of joy and suffering was brought forth by karma; the Tathagata cared for the sentient beings in the six realms, just as how His Majesty worried for the civilians. Emperor Wu was full of praise to his points. After the rituals, the emperor donated an extra 30,000 coins to the master. Wang Daogui of Linchuan followed him as his teacher for the five precepts. In the 30th year of the Yuanjia Period during the Liu Song Dynasty, Daozhao died at 66.

Huiming 慧明, a disciple of Daozhao, was from a Jiao family in Wei Prefecture. He had a handsome appearance, inherited his teacher's skills and manner, and was known by the public as well.

1 Shi Daozhao (388-453).

2 Xiping was in Henan.

2. Shi Tanying of Changgan Temple during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Tanying 釋曇穎 was a native of Kuaiji. He renounced the world in his young age, observed the precepts strictly, and recited sutras of ten thousand words. Abiding at Changgan Temple, he was prudent, frugal, good at counselling, and both fond of and gifted at guidance during recitation and chanting. Whoever invited him, the wealthy or the impoverished, he would come without discrimination. Zhang Chang heard of his deeds and praised aloud: “His recitation and chanting are as fluent as the stream, drawing close the lofty truth.” Tanying used to have psoriasis that persisted for long time. He enshrined an Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva statue in his room, worshipping it every morning and night to pray for healing. One day, he saw a snake crawling to the ceiling through the wall behind the statue. Soon, a rat fell from the ceiling to the floor; it was covered with saliva and looked liked it was dead. After a while, the rat seemed alive. Thus, Tanying took a bamboo slice to remove the saliva. Having heard that a snake’s saliva which is produced while swallowing rats could cure psoriasis; he then applied the saliva to his body. After the treatment, the rat revived. Two days later, Tanying recovered. Therefore, he realized that his pious prayers invoked the snake and the rat. Ever since, he cultivated more diligently and observed the precepts with greater conviction. Liu Yigong, the Prince of Jiangxia and an Official of Taizai,¹ venerated him the most deeply. Tanying died in his abode at the age of 81.

¹ Liu Yigong (413-465) was the fifth son of Liu Yu, Emperor Xiaowu.

3. Shi Huiqu of Waguan Temple during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Huiqu¹ 釋慧璩, a native of Danyang, joined the monastic order at Waguan Temple. He widely read sutras, sastras, Confucian texts, and historical books; he was good at various skills, especially guidance and recitation. Having chapters at his tongue's tip, he often made impromptu speeches; when quoting from the classics, every phrase was precise and marvelous. Emperor Wen of Taizu during the Liu Song Dynasty and Zang Zhi, the General of Cheqi, appreciated and admired him, treating him respectfully and as a friend. When the Prince of Nanqiao went to guard Jingzhou, he invited Huiqu to go with him. Later, the Prince of Nanqiao wanted to rebel and returned to the imperial court, holding Assemblies at Mount Liang.² Soon, the plot failed. Huiqu went back to the capital. Afterwards, Emperor Xiaowu hosted a Dana Assembly; Huiqu was the guide for recitation. The emperor asked Huiqu: "How do you compare the Assembly today and the one at Mount Liang?" The master replied: "The deities help those who are compliant with the heavenly rules, not the ones who are against them." The emperor was gratified and offered Huiqu an extra 10,000 coins on top of the regular courtesy the next morning. Later, Huiqu was nominated as the rector of the temples in the capital. In the last year of the Daming Period, he died in the temple at 72.

1 Shi Huiqu (c. 393-c. 464).

2 Mount Liang is in Anhui.

4. Shi Tanzong of Lingwei Temple during the Liu Song Dynasty Sengyi

Shi Tanzong 釋曇宗 was from a Guo family in Moling.¹ He joined the monastic order at Lingwei Temple. Studying diligently from his childhood, he was knowledgeable in classics; his recitation and chanting stood out from his contemporaries. He was also good at debate and discussion, performing with great wits and adaptability. Once, Tanzong provided guidance and recitation services to Emperor Xiaowu. After the ritual, the emperor smiled and said: “For what sin do I have to repent?” The master replied: “The great Shun once said: ‘I have made mistakes, so please help me improve.’ King Tangwu² of the Shang Dynasty said: ‘The sins of all people are my fault.’ A great sovereign would acknowledge his errors and guide the people to tread the right path. Your Majesty’s virtue excels that of the previous emperors and is equivalent to that of the great Shun and Tangwu because you follow the same way and thoughts. Why does Your Majesty not have their faults?” The emperor was pleased with this answer. Later, Empress Yin Shuyi died,³ and Tanzong was invited to the twenty-one-day expiation and relief rituals after her death. The master lamented the moral degeneration of the world and that the beloved ones had to depart aloud; praising the virtue of the empress who departed too soon and deserved more happiness and glory in her lifetime. Tanzong’s utterance was so sincere and heartbreaking that the emperor shed tears for a long time; high rewards were granted to the master afterwards. Later, Tanzong died at his abode. He wrote *the Records of the Stupas and Temples in the Capital* 京師塔寺記 of two fascicles.

At that time, Shi Sengyi 釋僧意 at Lingwei Temple was also good at recitation and chanting, making the tunes for *the Śyāmakajātaka-sūtra* 睽經 with disciplined tones of depth and clarity.

1 Moling is in Nanjing today.

2 King Tangwu, the founder of the Shang Dynasty, was one of the legendary monarchs in China.

3 Empress Yin Shuyi died in 462 CE.

5. Shi Tanguang of Lingwei Temple during the Liu Song Dynasty

Shi Tanguang 釋曇光, from Kuaiji, abided with his teacher at Changsha Temple in Jiangling. He studied the five Confucian classics with great interest and was skillful in many areas, including poems, arithmetic, and divination. Approaching the age of 30, he once expressed his feelings: “What I have learned is all worldly knowledge and skills; I have never touched the profound Buddha-Dharma. This is not what a monk should practice.” Thus, he abandoned his old learning and started to listen to the dharma talks on sutras and sastras. He surpassed many others in comprehension and could understand after only listening once.

When Liu Yiji, Prince Wen of Hengyang in the Liu Song Dynasty, guarded Jingzhou, he looked for śramaṇas that were learned in doctrines with whom he could discuss the Dharma. Everyone recommended that Tanguang fill this important role, yet the master firmly declined. The prince thus came to his room to invite him, leaving him no choice but to accept the offer. The prince provided him carriages, servants, and ten thousand coins per month. At Dana Assemblies, no master was available for the guidance during recitation; the prince hence told Tanguang: “Encouraging and guiding the sentient beings are the bases of all virtues. Why does Your Reverence not undertake it? You should carry it out in person.” Tanguang then concentrated on learning recitation and composed repentance prose. Later, every time he burned incense and chanted, monastics and laypeople all admired his solemnity.

Afterwards, Tanguang returned to the capital and abided at Lingwei Temple. When Liu Chang, the Prince of Yiyang, went to his post in Beixu,¹ he had Tanguang accompany him. By the time of the Jinghe Period, the emperor was dethroned for his brutality; the Prince of Yiyang wanted to rise in revolt. He sought advice and prophecy

1 Beixu is in Anhui today; Wang Chang went to his post in 464.

from Tanguang, providing seven kinds of treasures to Tanguang, yet the master held his tongue. That is why Tanguang was pardoned after the plot failed. When Emperor Ming of the Liu Song Dynasty held an Assembly at Xianggong Temple, after hearing the guidance provided by Tanguang, the emperor highly praised him and offered three pieces of monastic clothes, bowls, and vases to him. Tanguang died in the temple at 65.

6. Shi Huifen of Xingfu Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Huifen¹ 釋 慧 芬 was from a Li family in Yuzhou. Since his childhood, he demonstrated uncommon virtue and joined the monastic order at 12, abiding at Changshan Temple in Gushu.² He studied with great achievement and observed precepts diligently. Every time he attended Assemblies, he would expound the Dharma for the public, which widely benefited people in the Liang and Chu areas.³ By the time the barbarian Northern Wei government persecuted Buddhism, he escaped southwards to Jianye. When he arrived at the Wu River, the pursuing cavalryman was closing in from behind; however, no boat was available at the dock. Huifen contemplated the Buddha devoutly; soon after, a boat floating towards him and he was hence saved. In the capital, he abided at Baima Temple. Yuan Minsun, the official of Yushi Zhongcheng,⁴ constantly proclaimed that the monks had prejudice and that they were unworthy for discussion. He once ordered his subordinates to wait for śramaṇas to prove his point of view. Huifen happened to pass by; Yuan Minsun thus asked the master about the Three Vehicles and Four Noble Truths. They then debated the essentials of Laozhi, Zhuangzhi, Confucius, and Mozi. Huifen was versed in classics and eloquent, talking fluently. From the morning to the evening, Yuan Minsun could not baffle the master; thereupon, he respected him as his teacher and requested for all his subordinates to receive precepts from Huifen. The master was also good at mantra, which was efficacious for curing patients. Later, Huifen himself seriously fell ill and needed pills, people asked him to take the medicine with wine to enhance the effect. Huifen said: “Observing the precepts for such a long time, I would rather die than violate the disciplines.” Then, he told his disciples: “I am

1 Shi Huifen (407-485).

2 Gushu was in Henan.

3 The Liang and Chu areas covered the region of Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, and Hubei today.

4 Yushi Zhongcheng was the title for the official position in charge of state supervision in the Southern Dynasties.

leaving.” In the third year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty, he passed away in Xingfu Temple at 79. On his deathbed, he left his article of admonition.

7. Shi Daoru of Qifu Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Sengxi

Shi Daoru¹ 釋道儒, originally from a Shi family in Bohai,² migrated to Guangling. He devoutly believed in Buddhism since his childhood and admired those who renounced the world. When Liu Yiqing, a Prince of Linchuan of the Liu Song Dynasty, guarded Nanyan,³ Daoru expressed his wish to the prince, who appreciated it and supported him by providing a monkhood certificate. After joining the monastic order, he kept a vegetarian diet and recited intently. On every feasible occasion, he would advise people to do good things and correct the bad. The Buddhists, near and far, venerated and admired him; he hence became a grand master. Needless of a draft before lectures, he expounded fluently with sensible logic. In the last year of the Yuanjia Period, Daoru moved to the capital and abided at Jianchu Temple. The Prince of Changsha followed him as his precept master. Prime Minister Lu, Bo Zhongsun, and others collectively procured the old residence of Zhang Jing'er, converting it into a monastery for Daoru, which is Qifu Temple today. The master died in the eighth year of the Yongming Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty at 81.

At that time, Shi Sengxi 釋僧喜 was good at guiding in recitation as well. He was famous in the late Liu Song and early Southern Qi Dynasties.

1 Shi Daoru (410-490).

2 Bohai is in Shandong today.

3 Nanyan, in the prefecture of Nanyan or Nanyanzhou, is close to Guangling in Jiangsu today.

8. Shi Huizhong of Waguan Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Fajue

Shi Huizhong¹ 釋 慧 重 was originally from a Min family in Lu Principality;² he migrated to Jinling. He was inspired by and hence believed in Buddhism from his young age; he was willing to renounce the world but could not fulfill his wish. Yet, he constantly took a vegetarian diet. Every time he led laypeople to gather for Dana Assemblies, he would take the role of guide during recitation. Gradually, his name was heard by Emperor Xiaowu of the Liu Song Dynasty. During the sixth year of the Daming Period, he was approved to join the monastic order at Xin'an Temple by the emperor, focusing on recitation and chanting. He had a smart and sensible character and could comprehend profound meanings. Without preparation, he was able to deliver lectures smoothly with great insight and adaptability. His audiences would always stay overnight so that they could listen to his dharma talks and recitation the following day, which was for the purpose of deepening their understanding. Later, Huizhong moved to Waguan Temple and died at the age of 73 during the fifth year of the Yongming Period.

Shi Fajue 釋 法 覺, a contemporary in Waguan Temple, inherited Huizhong's cause and was also renowned in the Southern Qi Dynasty.

1 Shi Huizhong (415-487).

2 Lu Principality is in Qufu, Shandong today.

9. Shi Fayuan of Zhengsheng Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty

Shi Fayuan¹ 釋法願, with the original family name of Zhong and given name of Wuli, had ancestors from Changshe, Yingchuan. To evade calamities, his forefathers migrated to Changcheng, Wuxing. Fayuan was the official inspector for metallurgy business in Meigen. Later, his successor, Shi Shenmin, came for the handover. Afterwards, errors were found in the documents during the successor's administration; Shi Shenmin wanted take responsibility because he did not verify the data, but Fayuan requested that they share the punishment. The emperor issued a decree to pardon the capital sentence of Shi Shenmin and nominated Fayuan as the new official of metallurgy.

Fayuan's family worshiped gods; he had learned drum beating and dancing himself. He mastered various worldly skills and divination. Once, looking at himself in the mirror, he said: "I will meet the emperor soon." Thus, he went to the capital; abiding at Shenqiao, he made his living by practicing physiognomy. Zong Que and Shen Qingzhi, who had not risen at the moment, visited him for fortune telling. Fayuan said: "Mr. Zong will be a prefect for three prefectures, and Mr. Shen will be a high-ranking minister." Many people proved Fayuan's predictions were accurate through their upcoming experiences. Thereupon, Emperor Wen heard of him and requested his presence. Taking a prisoner and a good-looking servant and dressing them up with quality clothes and hats, the emperor asked Fayuan to tell their fortune. Pointing to the prisoner, the physiognomist said: "You are in danger and will be chained after getting out of the hall." He then told the servant: "You are inferior, and this is just a temporary exemption from poverty." The emperor was amazed and granted him a room in the rear hall, placing him in charge of divination. Shortly after, Fayuan pleaded for renunciation. His wish was approved after he requested three times; he then followed Master Sengyuan of Upper Dinglin Temple

1 Shi Fayuan (414-500).

as his teacher. When Emperor Xiaowu was enthroned, Zong Que was appointed to govern Guangzhou, and he invited Fayuan to go with him, respecting the master as his teacher of the five precepts.

At that time, the Prince of Nanqiao plotted treason, and Zong Que was ordered by the prince to support it with troops. Zong Que consulted the master about the dilemma, and Fayua replied: “I came here with you and have seen you killing people wrongly. Now the Great White Star¹ is against the South Star;² ministers would be executed based on this astrological sign. You should change your plan and be loyal to the imperial court, and then you will get rapid promotions.” Following the idea, as expected, Zong Que was promoted to the position of Prefect of Yuzhou and still kept Fayuan with him. At that time, the Prince of Jingling of the Liu Song Dynasty rebelled; Fayuan’s advice once again helped Zong Que. Later, Fayuan and the prefect wanted to reduce the number of monks, ordering the monks to follow the rule of eight fingers.³ At that time, Sengdao, a śramaṇa who was unrivaled in the Jiangxi area,⁴ nursed dissatisfaction, making comments that Fayuan meddled too much in monastic affairs and reporting the complaint to Emperor Xiaowu. The emperor thus summoned Fayuan to the capital, asking: “Why did you falsely claim that you were a vegetarian?” The master replied: “I have been having vegetarian food for over ten years.” The emperor ordered Shen Youzhi, the guardian officer, to force Fayuan to eat meat. During his resistance, two of Fayuan’s front teeth broke, but the master still disobeyed the order, which infuriated the emperor enough to deprive him of his monkhood and nominate him as General Guangwu, who guarded the Hualin Buddhist Hall. Though Fayuan was in worldly dress, he kept practicing meditation and precepts earnestly. Shortly afterwards, the emperor died; the dowager empress pardoned the

1 The great white star refers to Venus.

2 The South Star is a group of stars in the south of the Big Dipper that the ancient Chinese observed for astrology.

3 Monks would keep eight fingers by burning off their two little fingers in front of the Buddha statue as proof of their devotion or sin repentance.

4 The Jiangxi area here refers to part of Jiangxi and Anhui today.

master and let him rejoin the order.

During the sixth year of the Taishi Period in the Liu Song Dynasty, Xiao Changsheng donated his residence as a monastery and named it Zhengsheng Temple, inviting Fayuan to dwell in it. Before Emperor Gao of the Southern Qi Dynasty was enthroned, he officially served Liu Zhun, the young emperor of the Liu Song Dynasty, and constantly felt anxious. Then, he consulted Fayuan; the latter replied: "The matter should be settled in seven months." Sure enough, Emperor Gao of the Southern Qi Dynasty was crowned in the predicted timeframe, thereupon treating Fayuan as his teacher. When Emperor Wu succeeded to the throne, he also respected the master as his teacher. During the second year of the Yongming Period, Fayuan's older brother died; he thus requested a leave to return home. Staying in his hometown for a short period of time, the master's presence was requested in the capital by the emperor, abiding at Xianggong Temple. The emperor came to meet him at the monastery in person. Fayuan said: "My foot disease is lingering, so it is not a good time to meet." The emperor had to return.

Once, Prince Wenhui went to greet the master at the temple; Fayuan did not invite him to sit down, so the prince had to stand after their greetings. He told the master: "If one offers to the Buddhas by playing graceful music with flutes and cymbals, what merits can one get?" Fayuan replied: "In ancient times, Bodhisattvas offered to the Buddhas with eighty thousand pieces of music and dances; it was less meritorious than utmost devotion. Now, will playing flutes of bamboo and beating drums made of dead cow leather be worth mentioning?" Fayuan's virtue was unparalleled in his time. Princes, empresses, officials, and commoners from all directions followed him as their teacher for precepts; he could visit anywhere without notification. Every day, pilgrims offered over ten thousand coins to him; Fayuan donated them all by paying people for Buddhist rituals and the practice of a vegetarian diet, purchasing grains for the birds and fish, or procuring food for prisoners. He never saved any for

himself. His meritorious and virtuous deeds were countless. He was also good at guidance during recitation, expounding the Dharma according to what he comprehended without stereotypes. In fact, since the language is rich and complex, adaptability is essential. His intelligence could be learned but not his dullness.¹

Once, Fayuan entered Samadhi for three days without food; he then suddenly told his disciples: “You will lose your reliance on food and clothing.” Soon, he fell ill seriously. At that time, the neighbor of the temple’s home was on fire, and the monastery was located downwind; the smoke and the flames came along towards it. The disciples wanted to move Fayuan out. The master said: “If the Buddhas are burned, why should I live?” He would rather die as a sacrifice. Yet, the three sides of the temple were all burned; only the temple remained. Fayuan died at the age of 87 in the second year of the Yongyuan Period during the Southern Qi Dynasty.

1 A Chinese idiom says: “An intelligent man looks dull” when they despise “the clever ones.”

10. Shi Fajing of Qilong Temple during the Southern Qi Dynasty Daoqin Baoxing Daodeng

Shi Fajing¹ 釋法鏡 was from a Zhang family in Fucheng,² Wuxing. He enjoyed Buddhist studies from a young age yet did not have the chance to renounce the world. At the time when Huiyi burned himself as a sacrifice and pleaded with the emperor to tonsure 20 persons, Fajing was chosen and followed Fayuan as his teacher. After joining the Order, he observed the precepts strictly, constantly reminding himself of generosity and charity and aspiring to deliver sentient beings. Thus, he learned how to guide people in recitation and chanting, surpassing his predecessors. Prince Wenxuan of Jingling during the Southern Qi Dynasty treated him with honorable courtesy, but Fajing dealt with nobles and commoners in the same way, since he vowed to transmit the Dharma to all sentient beings. No matter who invited him, he would attend the religious event, regardless of the weather. He did not save money for himself, constantly practicing benevolence. During the first year of the Jianwu Period, the government built Qilong Temple for him to recognize his contribution to Buddhist affairs. Fajing was honest and modest, always appreciating others. Monastics and laypeople who associated with him all adored him. Though his doctrinal understanding was not sufficient yet, he had a great mind of comprehension, which was a natural gift. Challenged by difficult questions, he could always solve them. During the second year of the Yongyuan Period, he died at the age of 64.

Afterwards, Daoqin 道親 of Waguan Temple, Baoxing 寶興 of Pengcheng Temple, and Daodeng 道登 of Qishe Temple were all good at recitation and chanting. Their resonant voices and fabulous words exceeded the older generation, touched the audience, and attracted many learners. Since the temple where Fajing abided

1 Shi Fajing (437-500).

2 Wucheng is in Huzhou, Zhejiang today.

was administered by Prince Xuanwu of Changsha,¹ His Majesty renamed it Xuanwu Temple.

Comments

It is stated that guidance during recitation is to pronounce and chant the doctrines in order to inspire minds. Originally, when the Buddha-Dharma had just spread to China, people gathered regularly to merely chant the name of the Buddha and worship in accordance with the texts. Late at night, the assemblies became weary, so, in order to refresh and illuminate people, the host would invite grand masters to mount the high seat and expound the Dharma; they would narrate the causes and conditions or cite examples and metaphors. Later, Shi Huiyuan of Mount Lu, who had wonderful virtue and profound learning, mounted on the high seat himself to deliver lectures during Assemblies. First, he clarified the causality of the three lives and then explained the significance of the event, which had been passed on to the posterity and became a set rule. Thus, over ten masters, such as Daozhao and Tanying, followed Huiyuan as their teacher, deepening their own areas of specialty and gaining their fame at the time.

The value of guidance in recitation consists of four aspects, which are sound, eloquence, intelligence, and erudition. Quietness cannot draw attention from the public; without eloquence, the speech will not adapt to the situation. Unintelligent words cannot inspire people, and, without erudition, the lecture will be baseless. As for the tunes of voice and the bell and drum beating that make the audience concentrate, they demonstrate the function of the sound. A speech which is fluent and flawless can be achieved as a result of eloquence. Flowery language and ornate terms come from intelligence. Quotations from sutras and sastras and instances in the history entail erudition. If one can master the four aspects, he should adapt to the occasions and listeners as well.

¹ Prince Xuanwu of Changsha, named Xiao Yi, was the older brother of Xiao Yan, the emperor contemporary to the author.

To the five monastic groups, impermanence should be earnestly reiterated, and repentance must be stressed; to the monarchs and elders, classics and worldly anecdotes should be quoted, applying rich and elegant language and words. To the commoners in the mass, one should add his personal experiences and make it direct; to the barbarians, recent affairs and events should be raised, and sins should be blamed. Having such adjustments and adaptability, guidance can be considered a combination of the conditions of the situation, the audiences, and the skills of speech. Through this, the lecture will thus be sincere and touching to everyone; this is the utmost level. When I sketched the structure of *the Biographies of Eminent Monks*, I originally planned for eight categories. Later, I added the two skills of chanting and guidance during recitation; though they are on the lower side of the scale, these techniques play important roles in inspiring worldly people. Thus, I supplemented the biographies with these two and made ten categories. Why? Because, on occasions such as the first night of the eight precepts Assembly, practitioners continuously walk around the Buddha statue; the incense smoke is thick, the lamps are bright, and the four Buddhist groups are mindful, joining their palms in silence. At this moment, holding a lamp, the guide speaks loud and clear, utters fluently and unceasingly, conveys the messages about impermanence that shock the minds, and depicts the hell that leads to tears and fear. Proving that the previous karmic seeds result in the present conditions in life, the masses realize that the current karma will cause future effects. Talking about the joys, the audiences feel delighted; describing the sadness, the listeners shed tears. Thereupon, the sentiments will be transmitted to the assemblies so that they will become focused; everyone will feel sorrowful. People throw their bodies onto the mat, prostrating in grief and chanting the Buddha's name with inspiration. During the second half of the night, the bells stop beating, and the clock turns quiet. Then, the master says that time flies and that the Assembly is ending. Participants are hence disconsolate and reluctant to leave. This is the role of the guide in recitation. In between, the

intoners chant and recite, which has been discussed in previous chapters. Both should suit the occasions and build up right faith by eradicating wrong view. They should be commended for this one merit, thus I compile them at the end of the book.

Nevertheless, if practice and studies are not in place, the master cannot act and speak in consonance with the circumstances, he will still chant based on the old tunes and methods that were made by others; thus, the recitation and chanting have loopholes. The errors in the old versions are not corrected accordingly but followed; the characters of Yu and Lu are jumbled.¹ In this case, he is not worthy of his title. In some repentance rituals, the text of contrition should be read. If the master cannot manage the scene, he will feel timid, utter the words in difficulty, lose the presence of mind, speak with a lisp, and mumble disconnected phrase; by stroking his clothes and coughing, he stalls the process. The audiences will be dissatisfied, pouring ridicule on him. The patrons will stop donating, and the monks will deviate from the Teachings; they will cease the aspiration for virtue and treat the discourses as mere concept proliferation. Finally, the masters will be labelled as boasters and self-praisers. If so, how can we call them eminent monks?

¹ The characters of Yu 魚 and Lu 魯 look similar and are sometimes mistaken by the semiliterate. This is a simile to describe unskilled people.

Final Comments (Preface of the Catalogue)

Originally, the supreme path is silent and a void that requires certain instruments to manifest; profound doctrines and invisible thoughts rely on teachers to act in society. Therefore, the legendary tokens appeared alternately; sages rescued the people respectively, identifying the loyal, the chaste, the filial, and the kindhearted in order to determine the regulations for emperors and subjects or fathers and sons. They composed the Book of Songs, the Book of Documents, the Book of Rites, and the Book of Music for the sake of forming the conventions. They distained fame and titles, abandoned wealth, and concentrated on seeking the noble path; some disregarded their physical bodies and threw themselves into the great responsibilities. However, the teachings stayed in the region, and the effects benefited the locals; it was probably because the wonder of the path had not been thoroughly comprehended when they were circulated in the region.

By the time Shakyamuni Buddha expounded the Dharma, he had analyzed the subtlety of karmic effects that function in the three lives and spoke of the utmost theories that surpassed the creeds of all gods. He explicated *the Chapter on the Ten Grounds* to demonstrate perfect wisdom and revealed the conventional and ultimate truths to develop intelligence. The Buddhist doctrines comprise every sense and wonder; showing the essential of the worlds. Comparing Buddhism with other religions and philosophies, it is well like all rivers running into the sea or all stars shining towards the Big Dipper. How broad and profound! Indeed, it is inexpressible by language. The three thousand universes are replete with the Dharma, and the six realms are full of his incarnations; this is all for the sake of delivering the ignorant and providing sentient beings with great benefit. Through thrilling stories of the pure, the filthy, the ascendance to the heaven, and the descendance to the inferior realms, humans receive the Tathagata's Teaching. The west met with the Buddha first, revering his image and voice; the east then benefits from the learning and insight accordingly, which can

be likened to the dragon that shows itself in the moonlit, night sky and the tiger that appears in a dream.

As the wonderful Dharma prevails in China, it integrates into the local culture. Prominent monks come from the Western Regions in a steady stream, imparting the sutras, teaching meditation skills, demonstrating marvels to deliver people, or leveraging super powers to solve problems. From the Han Dynasty to the Liang Dynasty, a long history has passed; the Central Kingdom has experienced six dynasties in nearly five hundred years. While outstanding śramaṇas continuously emerge in this country, every epoch brings up its paragons, whereas the records on these eminent monks deviate. Faji the śramaṇa chose to only write of the category of monks that were aloof from worldly affairs; Fa'an the śramaṇa merely listed the type who had spiritual aspiration; Sengbao the śramaṇa stopped after recording the monks who practiced wandering asceticism; Fajin the śramaṇa assembled the comments on the biographies. In addition, the facts about the figures are incomplete in these records, or they are presented with contradictory information; they are, in general, brief. After research on them, there is an evident lack of proof. *The Records Proclaiming Manifestations* 宣驗記 and *the Record of the Hidden and Visible Worlds* 幽明錄 by Liu Yiqing, Prince Kang of Linchuan in the Liu Song Dynasty, *the Record on the Auspicious Signs of the Unseen Realm* 冥祥記 by Wang Yan of Taiyuan, *the Record of Yibu Temple* 益部寺記 by Liu Quan of Pengcheng, *the Record of the Temples in the Capital* 京師寺記 by Tanzong the śramaṇa, *the Tales of Responses* 感應傳 by Wang Yanxiu of Taiyuan, *the Record of Signs and Responses* 徵應傳 by Zhu Juntai, and *the Record in Search of Deities* 搜神錄 by Tao Yuanming, also present some monks, narrating their moral deeds. Yet, they are all postscripts that leave a great deal of information absent. *The Record of the Three Jewels* 三寶記傳, alternatively titled *The History of Buddhism* 佛史 or *Records of Monks* 僧錄, by Prince Wenxuan of Jingling in the Southern Qi Dynasty collectively introduces the Three Jewels; the messages are mixed and muddled. *The History of Monks* 僧史 by Wang Jin of Langya looks concise and clear, yet

it is missing certain categories in its structure; *the Compilation of Notes on the Translation of the Tripiṭaka* 出三藏記集 by Sengyou the śramaṇa only includes about thirty monks, which is shy of a large number. *The Biographies of Monks at Mount Dong* 東山僧傳 by Xi Chao, *the Official of State History, the Biographies of Monks at Mount Lu* 廬山僧傳 by Zhang Xiaoxiu of Zhizhong, and *the Biographies of Śramaṇas* 沙門傳 by Lu Gao, an Official of Zhongshu, portray monks in one location; they cover neither the ancient nor the present in a large range, eulogizing an aspect of virtue but are negligent of the rest.

Presently, writers continue to produce such works, yet they may overpraise the virtues and merits or introduce insubstantial stories and shallow thoughts; to those in pursuit of the truth, these works can provide little. The deeds of the figures are at times reduced by the writers because they dislike making it lengthy; however, the singular parts are thus deleted. They believe that monastics dwell in a state governed by the monarch and are not supposed to isolate themselves and keep a distance from society; in fact, observing the abandonment of glory and affection is an essential quality for monastic sages. If this aspect is omitted, what else shall we record?

In my spare time, I widely searched and read dozens of relevant books and records; I examined the historical and geographical works, reports, and independent articles from the the Jin, Liu Song, Southern Qi, and Liang Dynasties, along with those of the bogus governments of the Qins, Zhaos, Yans, and Liangs. I also visited elders with valuable memories and collections. In the end, I analyzed the differences and selected what was valid and worth keeping, all of which range from Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty to the Tianjian Period of the Liang Dynasty, count between four and five hundred years, and cover 257 figures and over 200 auxiliaries. In light of the virtuous deeds, ten categories are listed: first, scriptural translation, second, doctrinal exegesis, third, supernatural powers, fourth, meditative practice, fifth, Vinaya exhortation, sixth, self-immolation, seventh, scriptural recitation, eighth, benevolent

cause, ninth, scriptural intoners, and tenth, recitation guides. The Dharma spread to China is thanks to the exertions of translators who crossed deserts or oceans to transmit the Discourses regardless of their lives. China knows an open culture, so faith constantly grows. In consideration of its significance, I began with the section of translation and then that of doctrinal explanation with wisdom that can teach millions. These are followed by due inspiration with supernatural signs and deeds that turn the savage into the peaceful, mindfulness and meditation that foster merit and virtue, praise and promotion of Vinaya that guide the behavior of devotees, sacrifice of the self-body that helps repent for and abandon greed, recitation and chanting that pronounce silent truth and bring forth joy, and the benevolent causes that build monasteries and statues. Though the eight categories show the varying paths and approaches, they all comply with the four dharma reliances that aim to remove the poisonous karmas of greed, hatred and delusion; thus, multiple sutras laud such acts, and numerous saints extol these deeds. The sources and selections of each category are presented in the comments and paean at the end of each section. In the comments, I slightly differ my writing from the regular format by beginning with the gist, like a foreword; some contemporary monks' deeds that are absent in the main body of the biographies are also complemented in the form of postscripts in these parts. If I wrote the same summaries in different chapters, readers would be bored by the repetitiveness and complication; therefore, I put them at the end of a category under the title "comments." Though the scriptural intoners and the recitation guides originate from a short time ago, they adapt to the occasions and inspire the worldly people in a marvelous way, thus separate records exist in works of the Southern Qi and the Liu Song Dynasties. Those I collect in this book should be the best of their kind; in the case of a trifle of supernatural signs, they are added to the last part of the biography. I would otherwise not keep them.

The ten categories that I include here were originally scattered in various records; now, I put them together after collation. The book

is, therefore, a compilation rather than an original work, by which I intended to provide the essences of many works through this one book. The undeserved compliments and repetition have been removed, hence these mere thirteen volumes for the eminent monks of six dynasties. In addition, I made a preface for the catalogue at the end, thereupon totaling fourteen volumes, which are named *The Biographies of Eminent Monks*. The previous generations commonly used the term “famous monks” for their works, as if fame should be an appendage of substance. If the real deeds are understated, then people will know little of them; for those who lack of virtue, even if they are famous, they should not be eminent. That is why I replaced the adjective of “famous” with “eminent.” Due to haste and negligence, I may have made omissions in this work. Now, by finishing these comments at the end, I hereby finalize the manuscript. Should omissions and errors exist, I hope that readers can kindly point them out.

Catalogue (list of the monks in this book) is omitted

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