

**ACCULTURATION AS SEEN THROUGH  
BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY PARADES IN NORTHERN WEI LUOYANG:  
A MICRO PERSPECTIVE ON THE MAKING OF BUDDHISM AS A  
WORLD RELIGION**

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## **APPROVAL PAGE FOR GRADUATE**

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Buddha's Birthday Parades in Northern Wei Luoyang:

a micro perspective on the making of Buddhism as a world religion

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**I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted as an  
exercise for a degree at any other institution,  
and that it is entirely my own work.**

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## ABSTRACT

The genesis of world religions necessitates an integration process with contemporary local society, political enterprises, and cultural institutions. Through the study of a foreign religious festival in a historical period, this study reveals the circumstances of such a society. By tracing the evolution of the integration process in this dissertation, I discuss how people assimilate a foreign religion and make the religion part of their culture. The phenomenon studied is an image procession of over a thousand carriages celebrating Buddha's birthday in Northern Wei Luoyang. When Emperor Xuanwu (r. 500 – 515) ascended the Northern Wei (386 – 534) throne, he inherited a prosperous nation and several crises threatening his authority. One menace came from pro-Xianbei forces and border garrison troops dissatisfied with the previous emperor's sinification program and capital relocation. Under such circumstances, the grand Buddha's birthday parade became a clever scheme to legitimize royal authority, confirm the wisdom of Emperor Xiaowen's (r. 471 – 499) decision through a vibrant display in the new capital, and pacify pro-Xianbei forces by having foreign icons take center stage. This transdisciplinary and holistic study of cultural, political, religious, social, literary, artistic, and archaeological evidence underscores the importance of Buddha's birthday celebration to Buddhism taking root in medieval China.

**Keywords:** acculturation, assimilation, Buddha's birthday, hybridization, image procession, legitimacy to rule, Luoyang, merit, Northern Wei

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# Chapter One INTRODUCTION

“World religions are not, nor have they ever been, homogeneous or isolated constructions, but rather the product of dynamic interactions between adaptation and demarcation.”

From Kate Hamburger Kolleg’s series, *Dynamics in the History of Religions*<sup>1</sup>

Between 500 and 528,<sup>2</sup> the people of Luoyang held citywide parades on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month to celebrate Buddha’s birthday. The procession showcased over a thousand exquisite images, accompanied by throngs of Buddhist monks chanting *sūtras*, musicians, acrobats, performers, and animals.<sup>3</sup> Foreign<sup>4</sup> and indigenous monks and performers gathered in the newly relocated<sup>5</sup> Northern Wei (386 – 534) capital city to celebrate this festive religious event. Variety shows attracted crowds of devotees and bystanders, causing traffic congestion. Images, carriages, and decorations mostly in gold, jade, and other precious materials richly displayed the nation’s wealth. Imperial guards and the emperor who waited for the images to approach from his palatial gate also participated. The head of the empire scattered flowers on the Buddha images, as had his predecessors from the former capital city gates of Pingcheng.

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<sup>1</sup> Jason Emmanuel Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange Within and Beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2010), ix.

<sup>2</sup> According to *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, Emperor Xuanwu of Northern Wei (r. 500 – 515) established Ching Ming Temple during the Ching Ming era (500 – 503) (p. 124). Since the festive Buddha’s birthday parades began at Ching Ming Temple, I have used 500 CE as the starting date. Emperor Xiaoming’s reign ended in 528, and hence, the choice of 528 CE as the ending period of the parades under study.

<sup>3</sup> Xuanzhi 楊街之 Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang* 洛陽伽藍記, trans. Yi-t’ung Wang (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 126–127.

<sup>4</sup> By foreign, I refer to any faith, ideology, artifact, or person that was made or born outside the Yellow River basin.

<sup>5</sup> Relocation from Pingcheng further north to Luoyang took place in 494.

Yang Xuanzhi's (fl. c. 550)<sup>6</sup> classic, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang* (*Luoyang qielan ji* and hereinafter known as *Record*) describes these spectacular parades. The context of these Buddhist parades holds even greater importance. Held in Luoyang, the ancient seat of Chinese civilization, this rich and grand display of foreign icons took place during foreign rule. The emperor, of Tuoba Xianbei origin, scattered flowers on Buddha images. Participants and spectators, of both indigenous and foreign ethnicities, partook in chants, birthday celebrations, and image processions, foreign imports that evolved over three hundred years in the nation. The Buddha's birthday parade presented a vivid display of foreign iconography in a capital city that had deep-seated ancient Chinese roots.

An interesting question surfaces from the preceding observation. The prevalence of foreign symbols in this parade ran counter to the common assumption of the Northern Wei being "an authentically Chinese dynasty"<sup>7</sup> after Emperor Xiaowen's (r. 471 – 499 CE) sinification program. Did Buddhism survive in China because it became sinified? In this dissertation, I assert that the assimilation of Buddhism into Chinese culture constituted a bilateral process: not only did Buddhists adapt their faith to the Chinese way of life, but the Chinese had also adopted Buddhist and foreign thoughts and practices in the process. In Chapters Two and Three, I examine this mutual acculturation process as seen through the lens of religious festivals. In Chapter Two, I review the effectiveness of using festivals as a determinant of acculturation when different ethnicities met, especially as seen in Chinese processions. In Chapter Three, I examine how the Buddha's Birthday

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<sup>6</sup> John Minford, *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 615.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Holcombe, *A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 68.

carnival became a showcase of the hybridization of Buddhism along the Yellow River plains. In this latter chapter, I also highlight the political circumstances that could have encouraged the staging of grand festive parades in a newly relocated capital city.

The underlying political concerns unveil an equally intriguing research question. Why were the Buddha's birthday parades in Northern Wei Luoyang so popular that they attracted an entire city, including the emperor, to participate? While scholars who studied Buddha's birthday celebrations in China often cited this mega-parade, few explained the rationale for and implications of their grandeur. Hence, Chapters Four and Five examine the political and religious factors sustaining Buddhist image processions in Northern Wei Luoyang. By combining the needs of the powerful monarch and the needs of the populace, festive celebrations connected people, bridged the profane and the sacred, as well as provided continuity from the past to the present. The implications of this study of the Buddha's birth story and its celebration highlight that acculturation also involve meeting the dynamic needs of different segments of the populace and integrating those needs into various institutions on a sustainable basis.

In this dissertation, then, I study the making of a world religion. Whenever and wherever world religions emerged, they underwent an integration process with local society, political enterprises, and cultural institutions. Buddhism in medieval China fit into this pattern. The goals of this piece of research include identifying the mutual acculturation process that resulted in the procession of foreign images and recognizing the important role of the Buddha's birth story in enabling Buddhism to become large organized movements in medieval China.

Such a study necessarily involves transdisciplinary research. It integrates information and perspectives from different disciplines (such as history, sociology, and anthropology of religion) as well as draws on data from multiple sources (textual, artistic, epigraphic, and archaeological). In the 1970s, transdisciplinary research was introduced during the first international conference on interdisciplinarity.<sup>8</sup> According to Leavy, even “an individual researcher working with multiple sets of disciplinary knowledge and tools”<sup>9</sup> is engaged in transdisciplinarity. Hence, I base my interpretations on a synthesis of current and seminal research in archaeology, art history, Buddhist studies, cultural anthropology, economics, history, political science, Chinese literature, and social studies. As such, it complements other studies such as Dorothy Wong’s *Chinese Steles*,<sup>10</sup> Amy McNair’s *Donors of Longmen*,<sup>11</sup> and Katherine Tsiang’s “Changing Patterns of Divinity and Reform in the Late Northern Wei,”<sup>12</sup> just to name a few. From different perspectives, my research provides information about the dynamic interactions between the changing society and the way in which Buddhism adapted to the needs of various communities through the Buddha’s birth story.

Besides engaging in transdisciplinary research, I also adopt another methodological innovation: dependent co-origination. The quest for answers to my research questions requires me to investigate conditions leading to the birthday parades of over a thousand Buddha images. Therefore, I have opted to use the principle of

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<sup>8</sup> Patricia Leavy, *Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research: Using Problem-Centered Methodologies* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2011), 24.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Dorothy C. Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (University of Hawaii Press, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Amy McNair, *Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture* (University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Katherine R. Tsiang, “Changing Patterns of Divinity and Reform in the Late Northern Wei,” *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 2 (June 1, 2002): 222–245.



dependent co-origination to explore the evolution of inter-dependent conditions leading to the devotional fervor of Northern Wei, especially after Emperor Xiaowen's reign. During his reign, 6,478 temples and monasteries as well as 77,258 monks and nuns<sup>13</sup> existed throughout the empire about the year 477.<sup>14</sup> By the end of the Northern Wei Dynasty in 534 (within 57 years), over 30,000 temples and monasteries as well as two million monks and nuns were noted.<sup>15, 16</sup> This foundation of Buddhist institution was so important that even Tang Dynasty (618 – 907) emperors who felt little affinity for Buddhism recognized the devotion of the populace and could not ignore the religion.<sup>17</sup> This phenomenal growth of a foreign religion towards the end of a foreign dynasty deserves closer examination for readers to understand the initial transformation of Buddhism into a sustainable world religion through “dynamic interactions between adaptation and demarcation.”

The study of a religious festival represents a unique opportunity to gain insight into the confluence of religious, cultural, social, and political climate of the time. Besides, it will also reveal the value of festivals in acculturation and assimilation when different cultures meet. Festivals make up a major feature of all religions<sup>18</sup> and human societies<sup>19</sup>. Among the many Buddhist festivals, the Buddha's birthday parades emerge as the most popular and most public. Specifically, the Buddha's birthday celebration reached new

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<sup>13</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「四方諸寺六千四百七十八，僧尼七萬七千二百五十八人」

<sup>14</sup> Yong hui 王永會 Wang, *A Study of the Development and Management of Chinese Buddhist Sangha* 中國佛教僧團發展及其管理研究 (Chengdu 成都: Bashu Book Publisher 巴蜀書社, 2003), 40.

<sup>15</sup> 《佛祖統紀》卷第三十八：「興和四年。時魏境有寺三萬所僧尼二百萬人」

<sup>16</sup> Wang, *A Study of the Development and Management of Chinese Buddhist Sangha*, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>18</sup> Nikki R. Keddie, *Iran: Religion, Politics, and Society: Collected Essays* (London: F. Cass, 1980), 108.

<sup>19</sup> Eric O. Ayisi, *An Introduction to the Study of African Culture* (Nairobi: East African Publishers, 1992), 82.

heights during the reigns of Northern Wei emperors Xuanwu (r. 500-515) and Xiaoming (r. 516-528).<sup>20</sup> This festival highlights the mediatory role of religion in an interwoven fabric consisting of politics, economics, society, culture, and ethnicities. The study of mutually dependent influences of political, social, cultural, and religious issues, as well as native and foreign icons, then brings into focus the role of festivals and parades as a means to enable a foreign religion to gain popular appeal.

Although festivals are ephemeral, they express important cultural heritage, political aspirations, and religious needs. Through Buddha's birthday celebrations, Chinese accepted image processions, adopted the *cakravartin* model of kingship, and promoted "merit" as an expedient means for liberation of self and others in a manner appropriate to Chinese worldview. Hence, one can study festivals within a context of time and place to reveal historical and cultural information that may otherwise escape notice.

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<sup>20</sup> Ming-chiu Lai, "On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD: An Interpretation of an Elephant Sculpture at the Kongwangshan Site," in *Politics and Religion in Ancient and Medieval Europe and China* (Hong Kong: Chinese Univ Pr, 1999), 60.

## Chapter Two FESTIVALS

### 2.1 FESTIVAL AS CONDUIT FOR ACCULTURATION

A festival<sup>21</sup> means to most people a “special day or period, usually in memory of a religious event, with its own social activities, food and ceremonies,” or an “organized set of special events, such as musical performances.”<sup>22</sup> Etymologically, “festival” has Latin roots: *festum*, meaning “public joy, merriment, revelry,” and *feria*, referring to the “abstinence from work in honor of the gods.”<sup>23</sup> The Chinese equivalent is *jie*.<sup>24</sup> Rites performed during such celebrations were like “plays”; they are not real life. Instead, festivals offer an opportunity for people to step out of real life into a temporary sphere of activity, “only for fun.”<sup>25</sup> For the purpose of this dissertation, I define a festival as a time of celebration marked by religious and/or cultural events that occur periodically. Participants and spectators may step into a make-believe world to re-enact or commemorate a historical or mythical event.

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<sup>21</sup> “Festival” is a fourteenth century Middle English word, although the phenomenon of periodic entertainment with a specific focus already existed centuries before.

<sup>22</sup> “Festival,” *Cambridge Dictionary Online: Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus* (Cambridge University Press, n.d.), <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/festival?q=festival>.

<sup>23</sup> Alessandro Falassi, *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival* (University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 2.

<sup>24</sup> The word “節” refers to the knots of plants, particularly on bamboo. A secondary meaning of *jie* is “festival.” Ancient Chinese *jie* or 節 refers to eight seasons that are sub-divided into twenty-four seasonal division points according to the Chinese lunar-agrarian calendar. The ancient Chinese first divided the year into eight: Vernal Equinox, Autumnal Equinox, Winter Solstice, Summer Solstice, Beginning of Spring, Beginning of Summer, Beginning of Autumn, and Beginning of Winter. Later, they further divided into twenty-four points. One significant solar period is Pure Brightness (Qingming) Festival when most Chinese would pay a visit to their ancestors’ tombs.

<sup>25</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London: Beacon Press, 1955), 8.

Many scholars from different disciplines<sup>26</sup> have studied the social phenomenon of festivals over the last decade.<sup>27</sup> As Falassi pointed out, the interest in studying festivals could come from festival being “an event, a social phenomenon, encountered in virtually all human cultures.”<sup>28</sup> An example is the ancient Egyptian Opet festival, celebrated on the second lunar month, in which a joyous procession carried the images of God Amon, Mut (his consort) and Khon (their son) from their temples in Karank to Luxor and back, marking at least eleven days of festive celebrations.<sup>29</sup> The earliest known record of this festival was during the reign of Thutmose III (r. 1479 - 1425 BCE).<sup>30</sup> Priests carried statues and stopped along the two-mile stretch to receive offerings.<sup>31</sup> During this festival, not only did the god re-crown the king, marking a renewal of bond between god and people, but Amon also relived his marriage to renew his powers.<sup>32</sup> Through a happy reunion, king and god assured participants of continued protection.

Human civilizations celebrated various aspects of their beliefs and culture with festivals. In the west, the Athenian calendar had 120 annual festival days, each festival celebrated with a procession, a sacrifice and a communal meal.<sup>33</sup> For example, the Great Dionysia festival celebrated the unity of Athens through three days of poetic recitations, with awards of prizes and sacrifices at the end.<sup>34</sup> In the east, the Indian calendar reads

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<sup>26</sup> Disciplines interested in festivals include anthropology, folklore, religion, and sociology.

<sup>27</sup> Falassi, *Time Out of Time*, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Nicholas Carr, “Opet (Egyptian Festival) -- Britannica Online Encyclopedia,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d., <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/429983/Opet>.

<sup>30</sup> Frederick Monderson, *Temple of Karnak: The Majestic Architecture of Ancient Kemet* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), 138.

<sup>31</sup> Evžen Strouhal, *Life of the Ancient Egyptians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 228.

<sup>32</sup> Rivka Ulmer, *Egyptian Cultural Icons in Midrash* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 90.

<sup>33</sup> Claude Mosse, “Religion, Philosophy, Science and Technology,” in *History of Humanity: From the Seventh Century B.C. to the Seventh Century A.D.*, ed. J. Herrmann and E. Zürcher (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 154.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 155.

like one long procession of festivals and fairs, with an event to commemorate almost every day.<sup>35</sup> Indian festivals may celebrate religious occasions and birthdays of gods or gurus, or mark seasons of the year. The festivals represent Indian culture and history, celebrating life and cementing the society.<sup>36</sup> Their prevalence from ancient to modern, and from east to west, as well as their rich symbolism makes “festivals” a subject worthy of study.

Why have governing bodies and citizens devoted resources to the staging of festivals? One philosophical response is that they remind people of the meaning of life. In ancient times, this meaning may have been expressed through relationships with a divine being, such as the Indian Krishna Janmashtami, birthday of Krishna, celebrated by devotees independent of caste and creed. According to Plato (429 – 347 BCE), religion was play consecrated to the deity.<sup>37</sup> Taking the function of festivals to an extreme was Epictetus (55 - 135 CE) who encouraged his students to live life like a festival, living joyously and enduring hardships as part of the pageant and festival of God.<sup>38</sup> Governing bodies could sponsor festivals because of political implications such as the re-coronation at the Egyptian Opet festival. Combining ideology and politics, festivals are more than the sum of their parts: they have served many purposes in different societies.

Above, I have cited scholarship related to indigenous homegrown festivals, religious or secular, to highlight the characteristics of festivals and account for their popularity in human civilizations worldwide. As people migrated, so did their religious

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<sup>35</sup> Kartar Sing Bhalla, *Let's Know Festivals of India*, second ed. (New Delhi: Star Publications, 2007), back cover.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Keith H Seddon, “Epictetus,” A Peer-Reviewed Academic Resource, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2005, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/epictetu/>.

beliefs and festivals. If these immigrants were a minority in their new environment, the participation in their festivals might be limited to the interested community members and their guests. However, if the migrants were conquerors, they could introduce foreign icons into familiar festival vocabulary to encourage the majority indigenous population to participate and accept the new power.

The Ptolemaia festival, started in 278 BCE,<sup>39</sup> reveals the complex problems a foreign ruler faced in forming new sociopolitical institutions that could satisfy both Greeks and Egyptians. Instituted by Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 283 - 247 BCE) in honor of his deceased parents,<sup>40</sup> the Ptolemaia was a famous Greek display by the second Macedonian ruler in Egypt. Goyette pointed out that the choice of Dionysus, a syncretic god, appealed to both Greeks and Egyptians.<sup>41</sup> This festival celebrated the triumph of a new capital, Alexandria, over Memphis, and the wealth of the Ptolemaic dynasty.<sup>42</sup> The procession included 80,000 armed troops, a four-wheeled chariot on which stood a twelve-foot Nyla statue that could move mechanically, a 36-feet long winepress on which sixty singing satyrs treaded ripe grapes, a vast wineskin from which wine flowed continuously, and an 18-feet statue of Dionysus image riding on an elephant.<sup>43</sup> This display appealed to the ruling Greeks since it used the Greek god, Dionysus, to justify the foreign Ptolemaic dynasty in foreign territory.<sup>44</sup> The presence of a large organization of armed troops also warned off any other possible Macedonian invaders. To the Egyptians

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<sup>39</sup> Theodore Leslie Shear, *Kallias of Sphettos and the Revolt of Athens in 286 B.C.* (Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1978), 37.

<sup>40</sup> Françoise Dunand and Christiane Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 Bce to 395 Ce* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2004), 285.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Goyette, "Ptolemy II Philadelphus and the Dionysiac Model of Political Authority," *Journal of Ancient Egypt Interconnections* 2, no. 1 (September 16, 2010): 1.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Hamer, *Signs of Cleopatra: Reading an Icon Historically*, Updated 2nd ed. (Exeter UK: University of Exeter Press, 2008), 17.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Dunand and Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt*, 288.

who believed in divine kingship, the association of Ptolemy II with a god legitimized his dynasty.<sup>45</sup> Resemblances between Dionysus and Osiris were significant to the Egyptians. Such integration of foreign and local iconography helped the continuation of worship festivals of Dionysus.

Another more recent example of acculturation was the presence of British in India, first as traders and later as colonizers. Having established their first outpost in 1619 through the East India Company, the British expanded its influence until in 1857 when the Crown began to govern India directly.<sup>46</sup> The Christian missionaries who came with merchants and government officials met with an immediate problem to the propagation of their faith: idolatry. Hindus were accustomed to worshipping images of gods, including placing gods in chariots on processions. However, the Second Commandment forbids Christians from making “for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.”<sup>47</sup> This difference in practice did not deter the Jesuits from starting a “Madura mission” to convert the Indians in the seventeenth century; they reported great success.<sup>48</sup> In retort to the supposed success, Kaye remarked that the “Christianity of Madura under the Jesuits was indeed undisguised idolatry.”<sup>49</sup> The church in Avur responded that Rome had sanctioned chariot processions of the Risen Christ and Virgin Mary in India since 1802.<sup>50</sup> In 1995, Waghorne observed how Indian

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<sup>45</sup> Goyette, “Ptolemy II Philadelphus and the Dionysiac Model of Political Authority,” 5.

<sup>46</sup> Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, “India,” *U.S. Department of State, Diplomacy in Action*, July 14, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3454.htm>.

<sup>47</sup> Earl D Trent, “Breaking the Myths, Shattering the Shackles: Interpreting the Second Commandment,” *Journal of Religious Thought* 56/57, no. 2/1 (Spring -Fall 2001 2000): 63.

<sup>48</sup> John William Kaye, *Christianity in India* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1859), 30–32.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>50</sup> Joanne Punzo Waghorne, “Chariots of the God/s: Riding the Line Between Hindu and Christian,” *History of Religions* 39, no. 2 (November 1, 1999): 97.

devotees spent Easter week performing the Passion and Resurrection dramas, and on the day of the festival, three decorated chariots paraded the streets of Avur. Before the parade, Tamil devotees dressed the image of Christ in elite Indian men clothes.<sup>51</sup> In front of the main chariot that carried the Risen Christ were two smaller chariots for St. Michael the Archangel and Virgin Mary.<sup>52</sup> Instead of riding with the image as in Hindu chariot festivals, the priest and dignitaries walked ahead of hundreds of men carrying the *ter*.<sup>53</sup> The *ter* used familiar Hindu procession imagery to parade Christian symbols. Waghorne claimed that even until today, festivals from temples and churches in South India competed for public attention; besides the difference in images, the processions were rather similar.<sup>54</sup>

Both in Ptolemaic Egypt and British India, rulers used religious festivals to bring different ethnicities together. The entire population, independent of race, faith, gender, age, and social background, could celebrate the same event. Although the festivals were new, the processions were familiar. Although the iconography was foreign, the symbols were placed in familiar contexts. By having everyone step out of his or her usual sphere in life, he or she partook in a special reality at these festivals.<sup>55</sup> Through this reality, the foreign power introduced itself to the local majority and the local majority accepted the foreign religions (implicitly endorsing the new power). Thus, festivals, a unique expression of human creativity, became the conduit for foreign and local, old and new, to accept one another in a spirit of conviviality.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 105–106.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>55</sup> Falassi, *Time Out of Time*, 3.



## 2.2 NORTHERN WEI FESTIVALS

Like Ptolemaic Egypt (323 - 30 BCE)<sup>56</sup> and British India (1858 - 1947),<sup>57</sup> Northern Wei China (386 - 534)<sup>58</sup> represented an era of foreign rule; it lasted for almost 150 years. As the dynastic chronology in Table 5 (Appendix A) shows, this was the first time the Chinese experienced an extended period of rule by an external civilization. From 304 CE,<sup>59</sup> northern China experienced over 100 years of unstable nomadic rule, starting with the uprising of Liu Yuan, a Xiongnu who claimed maternal descent from the first Han emperor.<sup>60</sup> Emerging from the turbulence of the fourth century Sixteen Kingdoms era was the victorious Tuoba (Tabgatch) clan of the Xianbei steppe people who established the Northern Wei Empire from 386.<sup>61</sup> One kingdom at a time, the Northern Wei Empire reunified northern China under its rule. By 439,<sup>62</sup> their local subjects had experienced over 130 years of foreign rule and the Tuoba clan had more than fifty years of experience governing different parts of China. The Tuoba emperors had gained familiarity with the customs and festivals of their subjects, and vice versa.

The royal family visibly joined the local Chinese in celebrating their festivities, and documented their participation in local events through inscriptions and historical records. A popular Chinese custom during the Southern and Northern dynasties (420 - 589) was “ascending to a height” (*deng gao*) on the seventh day of the first lunar month,

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<sup>56</sup> Glenn Richard Bugh, *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xix.

<sup>57</sup> Anne M. Todd and Martin E. Marty, *Mohandas Gandhi* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004), 116–121.

<sup>58</sup> Lin Yi, *Cultural Exclusion in China: State Education, Social Mobility and Cultural Difference* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis US, 2008), 129.

<sup>59</sup> Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: BRILL, 2007), 83.

<sup>60</sup> Ray Huang, *China: A Macro History* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 76.

<sup>61</sup> Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 64.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

also known as the Human Day or the day every Chinese celebrated his or her birthday. The *Imperial Overview from the Taiping Reign* held an inscription record of Northern Wei Prince Caoxi of Dongping successfully climbing Mount Anren of Shandong.<sup>63,64</sup> Hill climbing was already a custom since the Later Zhao Kingdom (319 - 351); Lu Hui noted that Shi Hu (r. 335 - 349) had commented on the Chinese custom of “ascending to a height” on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month.<sup>65,66</sup> Another popular custom during the Wei-Jin Southern and Northern dynasties was river activities on the last day of the first lunar month (*hui ri*). On that day, the Tuoba emperor and his officials rode on boats to enjoy the spring scenery.<sup>67</sup> Lu Yuanming of Northern Wei wrote a poem, *Imperial Decree to Ride on a Boat on Hui Ri*, about officials enjoying spring with the emperor.<sup>68</sup> These records reveal that Northern Wei monarchs did not alienate themselves from the customs of their subjects.

In a number of instances, Tuoba emperors continued the tradition of ancient Han emperors. Consider Emperor Taiwu (r. 424 – 451) who, according to the *Book of Wei*, invited his officials to compose poetry during the Lustration Festival (*shangsi*) on the third day of the third month.<sup>69</sup> He followed the example of Emperor Guangwu of Eastern

<sup>63</sup> 《太平御覽》卷三十：「【銘】李充登安仁峰銘曰：正月七日，厥日惟人，策我良駟，陟彼安仁。」[http://www.ourartnet.com/Sikuquanshu/Ziku/Lei\\_shu/Leishu\\_002/004.asp](http://www.ourartnet.com/Sikuquanshu/Ziku/Lei_shu/Leishu_002/004.asp)

<sup>64</sup> Jianhua 常建华 Chang, *Chinese Festivals 歲時節日裡的中國*, Gu Dai She Hui Sheng Huo Tu Ji. 古代社会生活图记 (Beijing 北京市: Zhonghua shu ju 中华书局, 2006), 23.

<sup>65</sup> 石虎《鄴中記》：「正月十五日，有登高之會。」

<sup>66</sup> Ian D. Chapman, “Carnival Canons: Calendars, Genealogy, and the Search for Ritual Cohesion in Medieval China” (Princeton University, 2007), 141.

<sup>67</sup> Chang, *Chinese Festivals*, 62.

<sup>68</sup> 北魏盧元明《晦日泛舟應詔詩》：「輕灰吹上管，落螢飄下蒂。遲遲春色華，婉婉年光麗。」in 《太平御覽》卷三十 [http://zhongguoshi.boxueren.com/contents/1398/25859.html?\\_\\_r=9870](http://zhongguoshi.boxueren.com/contents/1398/25859.html?__r=9870)

<sup>69</sup> 《魏書》卷五十二〈列傳第四十〉記載：「三年三月上巳，帝幸白虎殿，命百僚賦詩，逸製詩序，時稱為善。」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@6^1998575691^807^^60202010000200430001^81@@821294185>

Han (r. 25 - 57 CE) who invited people to his imperial garden to enjoy the blossoms on the third day of the third month.<sup>70</sup> Lustration festivals were also an occasion during which ancient people purified themselves with water by rivers and seas.<sup>71</sup> During the Southern and Northern dynasties, literati and peasants often gathered by rivers to enjoy themselves.<sup>72</sup> Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471 – 499) respected this custom; the *Book of Wei* recorded that he rode to a river and watched his subordinates display their skills in archery.<sup>73</sup><sup>74</sup> The preceding examples demonstrate that Northern Wei emperors extended existing native traditions and joined in the convivial spirit of their Chinese subjects.

Although under foreign rule, the Chinese did not stop practicing local customs. The following celebrations continued under the Northern Wei: New Year's Day, Human Day, Lantern Festival, last day of the first lunar month, cold food festival, Lustration festival, double fifth, double seventh, double ninth, *laba*, sacrifice to the Stove god, and New Year's eve.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, from the Han (206 BCE – 220 CE) to the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907), the Chinese ingeniously combined competing models of festivals to create cultural cohesion.<sup>76</sup> These rival models came from the different customs of the people living around the Yellow River basin. Details and dates of sacrifices differed between

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<sup>70</sup> Alsace Yen, "'Shang-ssu' Festival and Its Myths in China and Japan," *Asian Folklore Studies* 34, no. 2 (January 1, 1975): 48.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>72</sup> Chang, *Chinese Festivals*, 97.

<sup>73</sup> Yen, "'Shang-ssu' Festival and Its Myths in China and Japan," 49.

<sup>74</sup> 《魏書》卷五十八〈列傳第四十六〉記載：「時車駕耀威河水，上巳設宴，高祖與中軍、彭城王勰賭射，左衛元遙在勰朋內，而播居帝曹。遙射侯正中，籌限已滿。高祖曰：『左衛籌足，右衛不得不解。』播對曰：『仰恃聖恩，庶幾必爭。』於是彎弓而發，其箭正中。高祖笑曰：『養由基之妙，何復過是。』遂舉卮酒以賜播曰：『古人酒以養病，朕今賞卿之能，可謂今古之殊也。』從到懸瓠，除太府卿，進爵為伯。」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@6^1998575691^807^^60202010000200490001^82@@99635973>

<sup>75</sup> "Festivals and Customs During the Wei-Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties 魏晉南北朝節令習俗," *中國史博學人—中國歷史百科*, 2010 2009, <http://zhongguoshi.boxueren.com/channels/1398.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," iii.

the agrarian and steppe communities. Through a combination of royal decrees<sup>77</sup> and local adaptation, festivals continued to be a source of fun and merriment for the populace.

The Xianbei people injected innovations into existing Chinese festivals. For example, during Lantern Festivals (*shang yuan*) on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, Xianbei people held dramas of “mutual stealing” (*xiang tou*) at night.<sup>78</sup> The cities lifted curfews and people spent the night in revelry. The *Book of Wei* recorded that Emperor Xiaojing (r. 534 – 550) stopped these dramas in 537.<sup>79</sup> Although short-lived, this innovation shows that the Xianbei people likely used popular Chinese festivities to re-live their own traditions.

The preceding description may have given an impression that Tuoba emperors were accommodating towards Chinese customs. Yet, there were differences between Xianbei steppe customs and propriety-based Chinese practices. For example, state sacrifices instituted at the beginning of the dynasty occurred at different times and places as the Chinese version.<sup>80</sup> While Chinese emperors after Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty (r. 140 - 87 BCE) abandoned the use of shamans and shamanesses<sup>81</sup> to perform sacrifices on their behalf, Xianbei emperors retained the tradition of having a religious medium to execute sacrifices. For example, the “Biography of Wei Lu” in the *Book of Southern Qi*

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<sup>77</sup> Jinlong 張金龍 Zhang, *Essays on Northern Wei Politics and Systems* 北魏政治與制度論稿 (Lanzhou Shi: Gansu jiao yu chu ban she 甘肅教育出版社, 2003), 88.

<sup>78</sup> Chang, *Chinese Festivals*, 40.

<sup>79</sup> 《魏書·東魏孝靜帝紀》記載：「（天平）四年（五三七）春正月禁十五日相偷戲」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@10^356474937^807^702020100001001400010005^5@@@1131354903>

<sup>80</sup> John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, *Early Chinese Religion: The Period of Division (220-589 AD). Part Two* (BRILL, 2010), 286.

<sup>81</sup> Viveiros de Castro defines shamanism as “the capacity evinced by certain humans deliberately to cross ontological boundaries and adopt the perspective of non-human subjectivities, in order to administer the relations between humans and non-humans.” Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 152.

documented the Tuoba tradition of sacrifices to Heaven, which included sacrificial rituals and festive performances on the fourth day of the fourth lunar month.

To the west of the outer city is a shrine to the Heavens, on which rise forty-nine wooden men, each over 10 feet tall, wearing white head scarf, white skirt, and hair in the shape of horse tail. On every fourth day of the fourth month, sacrifices of oxen and horses were made and next to the shrine were musicians.<sup>82</sup>

Chinese emperors had a different practice. They sacrificed to Heaven during the Winter Solstice (shortest day of the month) at the Altar of Heaven (*tian tan*). This was the most important sacrifice which the emperor personally attended because it confirmed that he continued to hold the Heavenly mandate to rule (*tian ming*).<sup>83</sup> This sacrifice to Heaven (*Tian*), also known as the Border Sacrifice, took place at the southern outskirts of the imperial city.<sup>84</sup> Music, dance and martial art performances were a part of the ritual proceedings.<sup>85</sup> The Chinese version of heavenly sacrifice consisted of elaborate details before, during and after the ritual event. Details consisted of attire, diet, liturgy, and performance, among many others. Mention of such a level of detail was absent from the Xianbei sacrifices. The *History of the Former Han Dynasty* confirmed the supreme importance of this ritual.<sup>86</sup>

To an emperor, the most important thing is the heavenly mandate. In following Tian, nothing is more important than the Sacrifice at the Border.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> 《南齐书·魏虏传》：“其郭城绕宫城南，悉筑为坊，坊开巷。坊大者容四五百家，小者六七十家。每闭坊搜检，以备奸巧。城西南去白登山七里，于山边别立父祖庙。城西有祠天坛，立四十九木人，长丈许，白帟、练裙、马尾被，立坛上，常以四月四日杀牛马祭祀，盛陈卤簿，边坛奔驰奏伎为乐。城西三里，刻石写《五经》及其国记，于邺取石虎文石屋基六十枚，皆长丈余，以充用。”

<sup>83</sup> Chan Kei Thong and Charlene L. Fu, *Finding God in Ancient China* (Zondervan, 2009), 116.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 136–139.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>87</sup> 《漢書·郊祀志下》：「帝王之事莫大乎承天之序，承天之序莫重于郊祀。」

Another example of the differences between Xianbei and Chinese customs will highlight the varying levels of cultural sophistication between these peoples. The manner in which Northern Wei emperors embraced ancestral worship reveals the importance they accorded to elaborate rituals. Although the Xianbei creation myth mentioned that their ancestors emerged from a sacred cave, the exact location was unknown until the rule of the third emperor of Northern Wei.<sup>88</sup> Between 440 and 450, an envoy from the kingdom of Wuluohou reported to Emperor Taiwu that a still-existing Northern Wei ancestral rock shrine in today's Inner Mongolia (Figure 1) efficaciously answered prayers.<sup>89</sup> The emperor dispatched Li Chang, a high-ranking official to this faraway place, who verified the report and sacrificed a horse and an ox at the cave in 443.<sup>90</sup> Li Chang left an inscription describing the ceremonies; the *Book of Wei* recorded this incident.<sup>91</sup> This historical event indicated that a Xianbei ruler could delegate the duty of ancestral worship to others, while Chinese monarchs were required to perform ancestral sacrifices personally.

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<sup>88</sup> Daniel Waugh, "The Tuoba Xianbei and the Northern Wei Dynasty," *Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities @ UW - Silk Road Seattle*, n.d., <http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/exhibit/nwei/essay.html>.

<sup>89</sup> Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion*, 171.

<sup>90</sup> Waugh, "The Tuoba Xianbei and the Northern Wei Dynasty"; Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion*, 171.

<sup>91</sup> 《魏書·志》卷一百八之一〈禮志四之一第十·祭祀上〉：「魏先之居幽都也，鑿石為祖宗之廟於烏洛侯國西北。自後南遷，其地隔遠。真君中，烏洛侯國遣使朝獻，云石廟如故，民常祈請，有神驗焉。其歲，遣中書侍郎李敞詣石室，告祭天地，以皇祖先妣配。祝曰：『天子燾謹遣敞等用駿足、一元大武敢昭告于皇天之靈。自啟闢之初，祐我皇祖，于彼土田。歷載億年，聿來南遷。惟祖惟父，光宅中原。克翦凶醜，拓定四邊。冲人纂業，德聲弗彰。豈謂幽遐，稽首來王。具知舊廟，弗毀弗亡。悠悠之懷，希仰餘光。王業之興，起自皇祖。綿綿瓜瓞，時惟多祜。敢以丕功，配饗于天。子子孫孫，福祿永延。』敞等既祭，斬樺木立之，以置牲體而還。後所立樺木生長成林，其民益神奉之。」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@1^1343195472^807^^^60202010000300110003^4@@1754384791>



*Figure 1 Gaxian Cave*<sup>92, 93</sup>

Emperor Taiwu was not the first Tuoba monarch to practice ancestral worship. Northern Wei emperors started to adopt Chinese-style ancestral worship from the beginning of the dynasty. In 399, the first Northern Wei emperor, Emperor Daowu (r. 386–409), built an ancestral temple in the capital city of Pingcheng.<sup>94</sup> Five times a year the emperor had sacrificial officers perform sacrifices for three generations of his ancestors.<sup>95</sup> The second emperor, Mingyuan (r. 409–424), built an ancestral temple for Emperor Daowu in the palace where four sacrifices were performed annually.<sup>96</sup> However, it was not until the sixth emperor, Xiaowen, that the monarch personally performed all imperial ancestral sacrifices according to the Confucian prescription.<sup>97</sup> In his new capital, Luoyang, Emperor Xiaowen founded a seven-generation ancestral temple for this purpose.<sup>98</sup> Emperor Xiaowen, noted for his sinification program, personally learned and practiced the Confucian virtue of filial piety. Emperor Xiaowen's successors continued with Confucian-style seasonal ancestral sacrifices, but did not always personally execute

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<sup>92</sup> Located 10 kilometers northwest of Alihe Town in the Oroqen Banner of the Hulunbair League in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

<sup>93</sup> "Gaxian Cave Site," *China Culture*, n.d., [http://www.chinaculture.org/library/2008-02/15/content\\_33489.htm](http://www.chinaculture.org/library/2008-02/15/content_33489.htm).

<sup>94</sup> Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion*, 171.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

nor do so with the same level of seriousness.<sup>99</sup> This marked the difficulties of the acculturation process.

Most of the information cited in the preceding paragraphs came from imperial records stating the activities of emperors during festivals. What did the residents of Luoyang, the new capital of Northern Wei, do during festive days? An entry of the Temple of Precious Radiance (Baoguang si) in the *Record* gave one a peek into the rustic setting in Buddhist monasteries that provided literati the serenity to pursue their interests while traffic filled the streets outside.<sup>100</sup>

On pleasant days and festivals, or when off duty, literati of the capital would invite their friends and associates to visit this temple [Temple of Precious Radiance] with them. As a result, the thundering chariots followed one after another and the feathered canopies [of their carriages] formed [fabricated] shade. [Some visitors] would set out wine in the woods or near the springs, write poems in the flower gardens, pick lotus roots or float melons [in the pool] – thus each of them enjoyed the festivity and moments of relaxation.<sup>101</sup>

The Northern Wei Dynasty brought a relatively long period of peace and prosperity after approximately a hundred years of turbulence. People, from the ruling class to peasants, enjoyed festive celebrations and participated in seasonal rituals. The deliberate effort by Tuoba rulers and Chinese subjects to promote cultural cohesion through festival customs demonstrated mutual attraction and repelling influences.<sup>102</sup> The foreign rulers did not ban the celebration of indigenous festivals. Instead, evidence showed that the steppe people attempted to join in the festivities and followed at least some of the practices. Occasionally, they introduced innovations such as the dramas on

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 172–173.

<sup>100</sup> 《洛陽城西伽藍記卷第四》：「寶光寺...京邑士子。至於良辰美日。休沐告歸。徵友命朋。來遊此寺。雷車接軫。羽蓋成陰。或置酒林泉。題詩花圃。折藕浮瓜。以為興適。」  
[http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_004.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_004.htm)

<sup>101</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 177–176.

<sup>102</sup> Chapman, “Carnival Canons,” 20.



“mutual stealing.” This acculturation process was not always smooth, as the need for the emperor to display the cherished Chinese virtue of filial piety and hence, personally perform ancestral rites showed. On closer examination, many Northern Wei rulers could also be impatient with the details to which elaborate Confucian rites (such as ancestral worship) demanded. Nevertheless, there seemed to be mutual adaptation and respect, such as a high-ranking Chinese official performing ancestral sacrifices to Xianbei ancestors on behalf of the emperor. The ordinary people were also able to relax and enjoy themselves on festival days during periods of peace.

## 2.3 CHINESE FESTIVALS

The majority of festivals observed during the Northern Wei Dynasty had Han Chinese roots. These festivals demonstrated the people’s beliefs and aspirations. By participating in these festivals, the Northern Wei rulers displayed a concerted effort to understand their subjects and sinicize their own people. Prior to Sui reunification in 581, northern China encountered two types of invaders: those who exploited possible gains but never occupied the lands and those who legitimized themselves as rulers by adopting Han culture.<sup>103</sup> The better-known steppe conquerors who sought to sinicize themselves were the Xiongnu, Murong Xianbei, and Tuoba Xianbei.<sup>104</sup> Among them, the Tuoba clan of the Xianbei people established the longest and most widespread dynasty, Northern Wei, and hence their sinification effort deserves the most attention. The Tuoba emperor most determined to formalize the sinification effort was Emperor Xiaowen. He decided to move the capital from Pingcheng (close to nomadic roots) to Luoyang (an ancient

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<sup>103</sup> An-king Lim, “On Old Turkic Consonantism and Vocalic Divisions of Acute Consonants in Medieval Han Phonology,” in *The Chinese Rime Tables: Linguistic Philosophy and Historical-Comparative Phonology*, ed. David Prager Branner (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006), 61.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

Chinese capital closer to agrarian subjects) in 493, abandoned nomadic style clothing in 494, banned the use of nomadic language in court in 495, and ordered his people to adopt Han surnames in 496.<sup>105</sup> Although his efforts had varying degrees of success, the process of sinification had already been underway, as can be seen from ritual and festival participation by earlier emperors, and Emperor Xiaowen's attempts gave further impetus to the course.

Festivals were so important to Chinese that they have documented their celebrations into carnival canons since the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). Table 9 (in Appendix C) contains a list of major historical carnival canons. Among extant records were the *Monthly Ordinances (Yueling)* in *Record of Rites (Liji)* and *Monthly Ordinances of the Four People (Simin Yueling)* dating from the Han Dynasty, and *Record of the Year and Seasons of Jing-Chu (Jingchu suishi ji)*, a Southern dynasty canon contemporary with the Northern Wei. These canonical texts contain a continuum of information, from prescribed rules for each position-holder, through rituals, to festivals. For example, the "Monthly Ordinances" chapter of the *Record of Rites* contained monthly sections of the myriad duties of an officer,<sup>106</sup> including appropriate propriety (*li*) for each group in the social hierarchy.

China has a long and complex history of ceremonial practices, possibly the oldest continuous tradition of systematic philosophical, moral, religious, political reflection on what rites were and should be.<sup>107</sup> Canonical texts contained ritual terminology and writings formalized since the Zhou Dynasty (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century – 256 BCE), folk customs,

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>106</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 27.

<sup>107</sup> Catherine M Bell, "Acting Ritually: Evidence from the Social Life of Chinese Rites," in *Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 372.

mediums, shamans, etiquette and divinely revealed liturgies, as well as politically significant imperial ceremonies.<sup>108</sup> For example, the *Rites of Zhou* detailed five types of rituals: joyous rites for marriages, inauspicious rites for burials and mourning, military rites, guest rituals, and auspicious rituals for sacrifices. Ancient Chinese celebrated twenty-eight festivals during Han times. These were lunar new year (month i.day1), lantern festival (i.15), welcoming of spring, plowing, supreme intermediary (spring equinox), first sericulturalist (iii), lustration festival (iii), welcoming of summer, *qing ming* (fifth of 24 solar nodes), midsummer festival for summer solstice (v), midsummer festival for double fifth (v.5), day of concealment (vi), double seventh (vii.7), ghost festival (vii. 15), welcoming of “fifth season” (18 days before start of fall), welcoming of autumn, *chu liu* sacrifice (start of autumn), registration of households (autumn equinox), grand military review (viii), mid-autumn festival (viii.15), double ninth (ix.9), welcoming of winter, fiscal new year (x.1), entertaining the aged (x), competitive hunting (x), winter solstice (xi), great exorcism (eve of *la*), and *la* festival (xii).<sup>109</sup> One of the reasons for the Chinese to consider themselves more civilized than their *hu* conquerors was the meticulous attention they accorded to festivals, treating them as a distinct form of cultural activities.<sup>110</sup> This documentation probably helped to entrench the tradition of festival observances in spite of foreign rule during the turbulent Wei-Jin Southern and Northern dynasties period.

Festivals fulfilled a variety of functions in the Chinese calendar. There were two main types of indigenous festivals: one type harmonized people with nature and the other the living with the dead. As a largely agrarian society, China designed a number of

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China*, 1975, 387, 394.

<sup>110</sup> Chapman, “Carnival Canons,” 144.

festivals for the purpose of harmonization with nature. In Han and pre-Han China, festivals, such as the welcoming of spring, summer, autumn and winter, occurred in significant moments in the yearly cycle to harmonize men's movements with the seasons.<sup>111</sup> According to Bodde, this accounted for why Chinese held most of their festivals in the open air rather than within buildings.<sup>112</sup> In spring and autumn, Chinese worships of *she* (Earth god) involved offerings of sacrificial animals, prayers for the benefit of the participants (such as for the ending of a drought), entertainment and banquets.<sup>113</sup> All participants shared the expenses.<sup>114</sup> These seasonal festivals complemented agricultural cycles. Xianbei conquerors who had led a sedentary lifestyle with the Han Chinese were likely to be familiar with such rites, and hence, participated in these festivals.

Another important set of local festivals harmonized the living with the dead and spirits. Since the Shang Dynasty (c. 17<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE), Chinese believed that the living and the dead shared the same ontological continuum.<sup>115</sup> Up to the time just before the Han dynasty, only the ruling class conducted ancestral worship. During the Eastern Zhou period (770 – 256 BCE), the unstable political climate caused a breakdown of royal kin groups that led to the rise of ancestral worship among feudal lords.<sup>116</sup> With the expansion of a literate elite class, ancestral worship became privatized and more

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<sup>111</sup> Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China*, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Sanqing 王三慶 Wang, *Harmonization of Buddhism and Chinese Tradition from the Perspective of Dunhuang Offering Manuscripts 從敦煌齋願文獻看佛教與中國民俗的融合* (Taipei Shi: Xin wen feng chu ban gong si 新文豐出版公司, 2009), 3.

<sup>114</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 17.

<sup>115</sup> Jack L. Dull, "The Evolution of Government in China," in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, ed. Paul S. Ropp and Timothy Hugh Barrett (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 58.

<sup>116</sup> John Lagerwey, *Early Chinese Religion: Part One: Shang Through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)* (Leiden: BRILL, n.d.), 241.

prevalent in society.<sup>117</sup> Classical ritual prescribed special observances, such as abstinence from pleasure and social intercourse,<sup>118</sup> on death anniversaries of parents and royalty.<sup>119</sup> These taboos were a means to placate rather than expel the dead. Clear Brightness Festival (*qingming jie*) in spring was designed for ancestors.<sup>120</sup> Ancestral veneration, an extension of the Confucian virtue of filial piety, meant that the living continued to care for the dead with respectful rituals while ancestors protected the interests of the living.<sup>121</sup> Confucians believed that such unity of the family unit would lead to the stability of the nation.

Those who died without descendants to worship them, from dying as children, before marriage, or before their parents,<sup>122</sup> became ghosts. The Ghost Festival, commemorated on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month, was a day for every living person to make offerings to deceased ancestors and ghosts.<sup>123</sup> Unlike ancestors who were culturally transformed, ghosts were troublesome and needed to be placated. Hence, the Chinese looked to rituals of various religions to appease these ghosts.

From ancestral worship arose a cult of worship of cultural heroes. This started as early as the Zhou Dynasty when descendants presented certain personages in the Zhou houses as having more than ordinary human qualities.<sup>124</sup> Legends of these heroes lived

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>118</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 211.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>120</sup> Michael D. Coogan, *The Illustrated Guide to World Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 232.

<sup>121</sup> Jeaneane D. Fowler and Merv Fowler, *Chinese Religions: Beliefs and Practices* (Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), 36.

<sup>122</sup> Arthur P. Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ Pr, 1974), 146–147.

<sup>123</sup> Stephen Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 31.

<sup>124</sup> Derk Bodde, *Essays on Chinese Civilization*, ed. Charles Le Blanc and Dorothy Borei (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 56.

on beyond the ancestral temples, and some eventually grew into a permanent cult of worship. This tradition parallels Euhemerism in which the first gods were living kings.<sup>125</sup> Euhemerus (c. 300 BCE) developed the notion that the Olympian deities were benevolent rulers who had been objects of worship when they were alive and after they were dead.<sup>126</sup> Among Chinese legends arose festivals dedicated to memorializing some historical persons. The *Record of Examining Spirits* contains a famous tale about double ninth in memory of Lady Ding.<sup>127</sup>

In Quanjiao District in Huainan there was a new bride Ding. Originally a daughter of the Dings of Danyang, at the age of sixteen she married into the Xie family of Quanjiao. Her mother-in-law was cruel in her exactions: for each task, she set a target, and whenever this was not met, she would whip her to her heart's content, such as was beyond bearing. On the 9th day of the 9th month, she hanged herself. Afterwards, word of the resonance of her spirit spread among the people. She announced through a medium [diviner or sorcerer] (wuzhu): "Spare a thought for the wives of the world, toiling without respite. Let them observe a taboo on the 9th day of the 9th month, and not have to work." [...] The people of Jiangnan all called her Lady Ding. On the 9th day of the 9th month, one does not have to work; everyone takes a day of rest. Offerings are made to her at her present resting place [in Danyang].<sup>128</sup>

After the Han Dynasty, in addition to taboos such as abstinence from work, Chinese also offered sacrifices during death memorials. A famous death day commemoration with food offerings was Qu Yuan, a wronged loyal official, who threw himself into the river. Since late Eastern Han (25 – 220 CE), he became associated with

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<sup>125</sup> Joseph Eddy Fontenrose, *The Ritual Theory of Myth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 21.

<sup>126</sup> Wolfgang Haase and Meyer Reinhold, *The Classical Tradition and the Americas* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 173.

<sup>127</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 216–217.

<sup>128</sup> 《搜神記》：「淮南全椒縣有丁新婦者，本丹陽丁氏女，年十六，適全椒謝家。其姑嚴酷，使役有程，不如限者，仍便笞捶不可堪。九月九日，乃自經死。遂有靈嚮，聞於民間。發言於巫祝曰：『念人家婦女，作息不倦，使避九月九日，勿用作事。』」[...] 江南人皆呼為丁姑。九月九日，不用作事，咸以為息日也。今所在祠之。」

the Double Fifth festival.<sup>129</sup> A detailed description of the sacrifice, including returning to the site, is in Wu Jun's *Sequel to the Records of Qi Xie*.<sup>130</sup>

Qu Yuan threw himself into the Miluo river on the 5th day of the 5th month. The people of Chu mourned him, so on this day would pack rice into bamboo tubes, and cast them into the river as an offering. In the Jianwu reign period of the Han [494-498], a certain Ou Qu from Changsha suddenly saw a gentleman, who introduced himself as the Master of the Three [Royal] Households [i.e. Qu Yuan], and said to Ou: "I perceive you are about to make an offering, splendid! Each year they are stolen by flood dragons, so if you are to be so gracious today, it would be best to cover it with chinaberry leaves, and bind it with colored thread. These two things are feared by flood dragons." Ou did as he was instructed. Today one makes zongzi on the Double Fifth, and wears chinaberry leaves and thread of five colors; these customs are a legacy of this.<sup>131</sup>

Besides nature deities, ancestors, ghosts, and legendary heroes, there was another group of spirits that needed special treatment: malignant spirits to be expelled with appropriate rituals. The Confucius' Analects (*Lunyu*) contained the earliest mention of village community rituals when villagers carried out *nuo* exorcism to protect ancestral spirits<sup>132</sup> during the *la* month, the last month of the year. Han emperors carried out the Great Exorcism (*da nuo*) whereby an exorcist led assistants dressed as mythical animals, holding torches and shouting chants to "expel evil demons from the palace."<sup>133</sup> The purpose of this exorcism was to drive away demons, pestilences, droughts and other evils lingering from the preceding year.<sup>134</sup> By banishing the evil spirit, people could welcome the new. The following passage in Wang Chong's *Discourses in the Balance* (*Lun*

<sup>129</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 223.

<sup>130</sup> 《續齊諧記》：「屈原以五月日投汨羅水，楚人哀之，至此日，以竹筒貯米，投水以祭之。漢建武中，長沙區曲忽見一士人，自云三閭大夫，謂曲曰：『聞君當見祭，甚善。常年所為蛟龍所竊，今若有患，當以楝葉塞其上，以綵絲纏之。此二物，蛟龍所憚也。』曲依其言。今五月五日作粽，并帶楝葉、五花絲，遺風也。」

<sup>131</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 224–225.

<sup>132</sup> Daniel L. Overmyer, *Local Religion in North China in the Twentieth Century: The Structure and Organization of Community Rituals and Beliefs* (BRILL, 2009), 35.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China*, 75.

*Heng*)<sup>135</sup> demonstrates the importance of the *La* festival in expelling the evil in order to welcome good fortune in the new year.

Of old, Zhuangxi had three sons, who all died soon after birth. One dwells on the Jiang [Yangzi] river as a pestilent ghost; another dwells on the Ruohu river as a wangliang demon; another dwells in the corners of buildings, and is responsible for infecting people with disease. So at the completion of end-of-year affairs, one drives out pathogenic ghosts. At the same time, one sees out the old, welcomes the new, and lets in good fortune. People everywhere have imitated this method, hence there is the expurgation.<sup>136</sup>

A third type of festivals was not native to the Chinese. One of the first things that Buddhists had to do when they brought the religion to China was to promote the Buddha. Some easy ways to do so were through images and festivals: birthday on the eighth day of the fourth month, leaving home on the eighth day of the second month, turning the wheel on the fifteenth day of the first month, and *nirvāṇa* day on the fifteenth day of the second month.<sup>137</sup> Celebrations helped Buddhists to remember the founder of their faith and added joy to the lives of devotees and non-devotees alike. The Chinese canons contain records of Buddhist festivals such as the Buddha's birthday and the end of *saṅgha* summer retreats, as Table 8 (in Appendix C) illustrates. While Buddha's birthday stood out as a separate event on a specially designated day, the Buddhist Ullambana Festival at the end of the *saṅgha* summer retreat merged well with the Chinese Ghost Festival. The first mention of Ullambana was during the Southern Liang Dynasty (502 – 557).<sup>138</sup> Together with the generation of blessings during Buddhist rites, monastics also

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<sup>135</sup> 《論衡》：「昔顓頊氏有子三人，生而皆亡，一居江水為虐鬼，一居若水為魍魎，一居（歐）〔區〕隅之間，主疫病人。故歲終事畢，驅逐疫鬼，因以送陳、迎新、內吉也。世相倣效，故有解除。」

<sup>136</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 233–234.

<sup>137</sup> Wang, *Harmonization of Buddhism and Chinese Tradition from the Perspective of Dunhuang Offering Manuscripts*, 375.

<sup>138</sup> Chang, *Chinese Festivals*, 163.



promoted vegetarian sacrifices.<sup>139</sup> Vegetarian meals were an innovation introduced by Buddhists.<sup>140</sup> This was especially significant since Chinese customarily slaughtered animals to host huge communal feasts during festivals.<sup>141</sup> Northern Wei agriculturalist, Jia Sixie, recorded China's first vegetarian recipes in the eighty-seventh chapter of his book, *Essential Methods of the Common People (Qimin Yaosu)*.<sup>142</sup> Buddhist festivals making their way into Chinese canonical texts confirmed local acceptance of Buddhism and its innovations.

Carnivals fulfilled a number of social functions, thereby easing the governing process. Festivals provided a relief from the monotony of routinized life and presented a sense of abundance to the peasants' hard life. As a group activity, festivals strengthened family and group ties. Chinese maintained their social unity and cultural coherence through the various activities during celebrations. A communal feast enabled poor peasants to enjoy delicacies not normally served in their daily rations and radiated a feeling of abundance and reward, thereby bolstering people's optimism of and confidence in the future.<sup>143</sup>

Northern Wei rulers contended with three main types of Chinese festivals. The indigenous festivals had two characteristics: harmonization of all things under heaven for human welfare and humanitarian orientation through ancestral worship.<sup>144</sup> In the hierarchy, nature deities were more powerful than ancestors, who ranked before ghosts.

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<sup>139</sup> Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, trans. Franciscus Verellen (Columbia University Press, 1995), 261–262.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 257.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Sixie 賈思勰 Jia, "Essential Methods of the Common People 齊民要術校釋 目錄", n.d., <http://www.chinapage.com/big5/science/gm0.htm>.

<sup>143</sup> C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (University of California Press, 1961), 94–95.

<sup>144</sup> Chang, *Chinese Festivals*, 272.

Since Chinese believed in the pervasiveness of spirituality in all parts of nature, they dedicated festivals to appease nature deities, ancestral spirits, and ghosts for harmonious co-existence. As an agrarian society, communities celebrated festivals as seasonal, communal holidays on their calendars,<sup>145</sup> and a number of legends combined seamlessly with these seasonal celebrations. The third type of festivals, although belonging to a foreign religion, was gaining a foothold in local society. By embracing these festivals, the ruling class could join in the same activities together with the people they had conquered.

## **2.4 CHINESE PROCESSIONS**

Among the many celebrative forms at carnivals, the procession is the most visible and popular. Like many civilizations, China had a long tradition of parades. There were three main types of processions: imperial, cultural, and funerary. Whereas imperial processions were associated with royal hunts, inspection tours or sacrificial trips, cultural processions were often impressive events in popular carnivals. Not only did Chinese use funerary processions to display the status, wealth and prestige of the dead, they also took advantage of such occasions to remind the young of their ancestor's lifetime accomplishments.<sup>146</sup> Although funerary processions were common, the symbols in such processions are irrelevant to the discussion on Buddha's birthday. Instead, I shall focus on the spectacular sights and treats of imperial and cultural processions.

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<sup>145</sup> Scott T. Cummings, "Review: Recent Writing on Interculturalism," *Performing Arts Journal* 11/12 (January 1, 1989): 242.

<sup>146</sup> Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors* (Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira, 2005), 201.

The earliest processions in China were imperial. Since the late Shang Dynasty, the king had held hunting and inspection tours of his territory, performing sacrifices at holy sites to bind the state and Heaven, as well as impress his subjects with his cultural and military might.<sup>147</sup> Zhou kings organized armed processions and sacrifices in sacred mountains,<sup>148</sup> a form of power display. The first emperor of China in the unified Qin Dynasty (221 – 206 BCE) started the tradition of emperors visiting Mount Tai, the tallest and most sacred mountain in China,<sup>149</sup> to pay respect to Heaven. He assembled a train of chariots and led the way up to the summit of the mountain for the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices.<sup>150</sup> Since then, Chinese emperors officiated at elaborate rituals during their trip to Mount Tai at least once during their reigns.<sup>151</sup> During the Han Dynasty, Emperor Wu associated himself with Daoist immortals. Sima Xiangru, a distinguished Han poet, wrote an essay on how auspicious signs appeared to signal the timeliness of imperial rituals at Mount Tai and that the emperor sent down rains to bless the crop.<sup>152</sup> In this poem, Sima described powerful spirits and ten thousand chariots escorting the emperor, who in turn rode on a dragon-drawn chariot, to meet immortal sages. Imperial processions were important because they demonstrated to the public the important spiritual role of the emperor and emphasized the special relationship between him and Heaven.

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<sup>147</sup> David N. Keightley, “The Late Shang State: When, Where, and What?,” in *The Origins of Chinese Civilization*, ed. David Keightley (Berkeley Calif.: University of California Press, 1983), 551.

<sup>148</sup> Mark Lewis, “The Feng and Shan Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han,” in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 57.

<sup>149</sup> Changjian Guo, Jianzhi Song, and Lingyu Feng, *World Heritage Sites in China* (China Intercontinental Press 五洲传播出版社, 2003), 28.

<sup>150</sup> Lester J. Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, vol. 2, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs 71 (Taipei: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1975), 239.

<sup>151</sup> After Emperor Zhenzong of the Song Dynasty (960-1279), most emperors only sent their envoys to make this difficult journey (Guo, Song and Feng 2003, 29). One possible reason is that the Khitans occupied sixteen prefectures in northern China from 937.

<sup>152</sup> Lewis, “The Feng and Shan Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han,” 77.

The kings were not sparing in their processional displays. According to the *Comprehensive Canons*, Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty decreed that a “grand procession” (*da jia*) should consist of one thousand chariots and ten thousand equestrians<sup>153</sup>. The Buddha’s birthday parade held in Northern Wei Luoyang involving over a thousand carriages could be mimicking such a “grand procession.” The second most elaborate state procession, the “exemplary procession” (*fa jia*), had a six-horse imperial carriage.<sup>154</sup> In an exemplary procession, Emperor Wu of Western Jin (r. 265-290) rode on a chariot adorned with gold, jade, ivory, leather, and wood.<sup>155</sup> Imperial processions often included displays of military might, in both numbers and quality. The northern *hu* invaders used “a procession of retainers and military escorts accompanied by military bands” to show their military power as well as to legitimize their rule.<sup>156</sup> Monarchs traditionally used their power and wealth to stage impressive processions that reinforced their hold on the imperial seat. The Northern Wei Buddha’s birthday parade of ornate carriages and participation of imperial guards certainly followed this tradition.

Northern Wei emperors held imperial processions too; the most often quoted examples being contained in the cave art of Gongxian and Longmen, near the dynasty’s final capital city of Luoyang. These processions (depicted in Figure 2 and Figure 3) represented the splendor of the Northern Wei court.<sup>157</sup> Clad in Han-style attire, the royal

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<sup>153</sup> From the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*, 興服志第二十九: “乘輿大駕，公卿奉引，太僕禦，大將軍參乘。屬車八十一乘，備千乘萬騎。” (Source: <http://www.xysa.net/a200/h350/03houhanshu/t-039.htm>).

<sup>154</sup> B. J. Mansvelt-Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han: Their Author, Sources, Contents, and Place in Chinese Historiography* (Leiden: BRILL, 1990), 246.

<sup>155</sup> Shuguo Chen, “State Religious Ceremonies. The Period of Division (220-589 AD) Part Two,” in *Early Chinese Religion. / Part Two, The Period of Division, 220-589 AD*, by John Lagerwey and Peng Zhi Lu (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 101, [http://www.worldcat.org/title/early-chinese-religion-part-two-the-period-of-division-220-589-ad/oclc/690650295&referer=brief\\_results](http://www.worldcat.org/title/early-chinese-religion-part-two-the-period-of-division-220-589-ad/oclc/690650295&referer=brief_results).

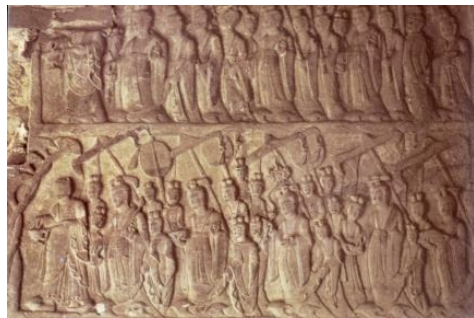
<sup>156</sup> Albert E. Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization* (Yale University Press, 2007), 229.

<sup>157</sup> Angela Falco Howard, *Chinese Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 240.

processions looked stately and gracious. These graphic representations demonstrated the extent of sinification and the desire of the rulers to memorialize their processional activities in stone. They also portrayed the emperor and empress as devout Buddhists. These visual depictions were significant because they were one of the earliest grotto art impressions of imperial processions, and together with the stately statues in Yungang caves, one of the earliest public associations of the imperial family with Buddhism.



*Figure 2 Northern Wei procession accompanying the emperor<sup>158</sup>*



*Figure 3 Northern Wei procession accompanying the empress<sup>159</sup>*

While imperial processions were relatively private, cultural processions had popular appeal. China celebrated certain festivals and occasions with public processions. The earliest record was an exorcist procession carried out by the government during the

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<sup>158</sup> Found in Binyang Cave of Longmen Grottoes (photo courtesy of Mrs. Meiyin Lee)

<sup>159</sup> Found in Gongxian (photo courtesy of Mrs. Meiyin Lee)

Zhou Dynasty.<sup>160</sup> Processions gradually became more varied and sophisticated. During the Han Dynasty, the influx of innumerable different exotic performances from the Western Regions created the “hundred variety shows” (*baixi*).<sup>161</sup> This led to the categorization of five types of performers: martial arts, animals, acrobats, magicians, and clowns.<sup>162</sup> Accompanying them were music and dance. It was likely that military troops performed many of the martial arts displays.<sup>163</sup> For example, towards the end of the Wei-Jin period (220-420), a popular performance was lifting of heavy weights to music (Figure 4).<sup>164165</sup> Such performances might be attractive to militarily inclined steppe people who could demonstrate their prowess in an entertaining manner.



Figure 4 Musical performance of lifting weights<sup>166167</sup>

Another type of presentation was animal shows. During Han Dynasty, these made up a significant portion of street processions.<sup>168</sup> Like hunting, these stunts showed the triumph of men over animals. The court kept numerous exotic creatures, many of

<sup>160</sup> Justus Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese: With Some Account of the Religious, Governmental, Educational, and Business Customs and Opinions. with Special but Not Exclusive Reference to Fuchchau* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), 276.

<sup>161</sup> Hongchang 郭洪昌 Guo and Zhongyang 吳中陽 Wu, eds., *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang 圖說洛陽絲綢之路* (Zhengzhou 鄭州市: Great Elephant Publishers 大象出版社, 2007), 61.

<sup>162</sup> Jianmin 李建民 Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances: A Study of Music, Dance, Variety Shows and Their Relationships with Life in Society 中國古代游藝史：樂舞百戲與社會生活之研究* (Taipei: Dong da tu shu gong si 東大圖書公司, 1993), 107–108.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>164</sup> 《宋書·樂志》：「魏晉訖江左，猶有夏育拱鼎。」

<sup>165</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 113.

<sup>166</sup> Engraving shows musicians in the top row and acrobats-weightlifters in the second row (Rubbing from a stone engraving in Shandong)

<sup>167</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 116.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 120.

which were gifts from faraway lands. For example, the *History of the Later Han Dynasty* mentioned that Parthia once gave the Han emperor a lion.<sup>169, 170</sup> Besides bears, lions, tigers, horses, and snakes, people also performed with elephants. The first elephant shows depicted the Buddha's birth. The *Rhapsody on the Western Capital (Xijing Fu)* by Eastern Han author, Zhang Heng, contains the following verse, "A pregnant white elephant walks with her nose curled into the shape of a wheel."<sup>171, 172</sup> The pregnant white elephant symbolized the carriage of the birth of the Buddha-to-be to Queen Māyādevī in her dream. Buddhism brought into China the use of elephants in parades. Pieces of evidence were found in an Eastern Han tomb in Luoyang (Figure 5) and cliff carvings in Kongwangshan, northern Jiangsu of the same period.<sup>173</sup> Since the Han Dynasty, there were frequent enough contacts between Chinese and foreign lands that the natives had incorporated foreign animals and even the Buddha's birth story into their parades.

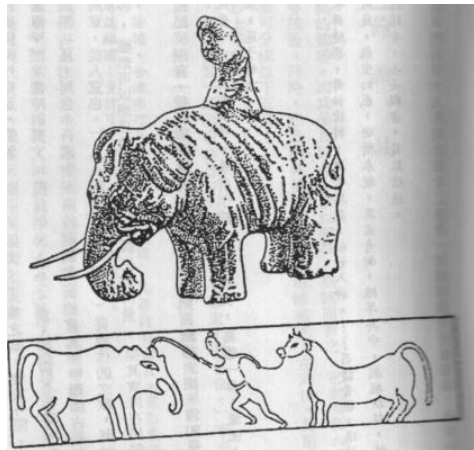


Figure 5 Elephant procession and elephant dance<sup>174</sup>

<sup>169</sup> 《後漢書·河帝記》：「安息國遣使獻師子...」

<sup>170</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 125.

<sup>171</sup> 張衡《西京賦》：「白象行孕，垂鼻轉困。」

<sup>172</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 135.

<sup>173</sup> Lai, "On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD," 49.

<sup>174</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 137.

The rich display of performances described gradually became a part of Chinese festivals. During the Qin dynasty, variety shows were limited to wrestling and other martial performances.<sup>175</sup> The variety of performances grew over time, including music from rural areas and non-Chinese sources. Liu Bang (r. 206 - 194 BCE), first emperor of the Han Dynasty, brought music from his Chu hometown into the Han court.<sup>176, 177</sup> During Lunar New Year, the court celebrated with entertainment that included singing girls walking and dancing on tight ropes, fish and dragon processions, jugglers, acrobats on horses, as well as musicians playing drums, bells and stone chimes.<sup>178</sup> Entertainers came from Central Asia and further places. In 121, foreign, possibly Syrian, magicians performed for Emperor An (r. 94 – 125) during Lunar New Year; their performances included spitting fire, separating limbs, and interchanging heads of cows and horses.<sup>179</sup> The royal court enjoyed entertainment of both local and foreign origins.

Chinese peasants also enjoyed performances and parades in the streets. Music was a part of the life of ordinary Chinese as could be seen from musician figurines found in a Luoyang tomb (Figure 6) and the presence of music deities (Figure 7).<sup>180</sup> Western Han processions could be a merry gathering of musicians and performers over a bridge by a river (Figure 8). In the *Rhapsody on the Western Capital*, Zhang Heng described processions of bears, tigers, monkeys, ostriches, and a white elephant in fish and dragon processions during the Eastern Han Dynasty.<sup>181</sup> Often held together with public processions of rare animals and variety shows on the streets were shamanistic rituals and

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>176</sup> 《漢書·禮樂志》：「高祖樂楚聲，故〈房中樂〉楚聲也。」

<sup>177</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 260.

<sup>178</sup> Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China.*, 152–153, 156.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 156–159.

<sup>180</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 261.

<sup>181</sup> Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China.*, 160.



sacrifices.<sup>182</sup> From these descriptions, we could see that ancient Chinese liked to step out of reality into a make-belief world filled with mythical and strange beasts and deities.



Figure 6 Western Han musician figurines found in a tomb in Luoyang<sup>183</sup>



Figure 7 Music deities (Nüwa and Fuxi with musical instruments)<sup>184</sup>



<sup>182</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 261.

<sup>183</sup> Yan 崔琰 Cui, *The Large Collection of Chinese Musical Instruments: Henan Fascicle* 中國音樂文物大系: 河南卷 (Daxiang Publishing, 大象出版社, 1996).

<sup>184</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, 261–262.

Figure 8 Western Han brick rubbing of festive procession occurring over a bridge<sup>185</sup>

As early as the Eastern Han Dynasty, Buddhism was already a feature of court and street celebrations. In Cai Zhi's *Administrative Ceremonials of Han Officials Selected for Use*, the emperor watched a spectacular show on the first day of the Lunar New Year whereby acrobats, fabulous animals, and *śarīra* from the west were presented to the emperor.<sup>186</sup> The Han, Wei and Jin courts often saw white elephants (signifying birth) and *śarīra* (representing *parinirvāṇa*) together.<sup>187</sup> Chinese commoners also witnessed elephants in parades and in dances (Figure 5) as a depiction of the Buddha's birth story. This demonstrated Chinese proclivity towards foreign spectacles and the initial attempts of Buddhists to present themselves publicly using the Buddha's birth story from the onset.

In practice, the Han court combined music and dance with shamanistic practices in its observances of festivals. People in the streets did the same. Generally, peasants ate and drank, sang and danced, watched entertainment, as well as wandered about the streets at festivals.<sup>188</sup> The Han Dynasty had started incorporating foreign music and legends into their repertoire of entertainment. Gan Bao presented in detail a series of court customs through the lady of Qi in an Eastern Jin text, *Record of Examining Spirits (Soushen ji)*.

An attendant of Madame Qi named Jia Peilan later left [the palace] and became the wife of Duan Ru, from Fufeng. It is said that during her time in the Palace, she would often make merry with string, woodwind, song and dance, competing to dress like a siren to greet fair occasions. On the 15th of the 10th month, she would go with the rest into the shrine of the Numinous Girl, pleasing the spirit with suckling pig and

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<sup>185</sup> Cui, *The Large Collection of Chinese Musical Instruments*.

<sup>186</sup> Erik Zürcher, "Han Buddhism and the Western Region," in *Thought and Law in Qin and Han China: Studies Dedicated to Anthony Hulsewé on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Wilt L. Idema and Erik Zürcher (Leiden, New York: Brill Archive, 1990), 161.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 152.

millet, playing the flute and zither, singing “Melody of the Supreme Numinous.” Then they would link arms, tap their feet for rhythm, and sing, “The Scarlet Phoenix comes”; that is a shamanistic custom. Come the 7th of the 7th month, she would go to the Pool of a Hundred Sons, playing Khotan music. After the music, she would tie together threads of five colors, called “cord of mutual attachment.” On the 4th day of the 8th month, she would go out through the north entrance of the carved villa to play goh (*weiqi*) beneath the bamboos. The winner would have a lifetime’s good fortune, the loser a lifetime’s ill health. She would take silk thread, and beseech the Pole Star [to] grant her long life, before withdrawing. In the 9th month, she would wear a sash of cornel, eat [fleabane cakes], and drink chrysanthemum wine, to bring long life. When the chrysanthemums are in blossom, one picks them along with the stems and leaves, and ferments them along with millet kernels. It is ready by the 9th of the 9th the following year, at which time one drinks it. This is called “chrysanthemum wine.” On the first *chen* day of the first month, she would go out to the edge of the pond to perform ablution, eat bitter flea bane cakes, and purge evil spirits. On the first *si* day [*Shangsi*] of the 3rd month, she would let her music sound out by the flowing water. In this way, the year ended.<sup>189, 190</sup>

The Chinese have hosted increasingly colorful public parades over the centuries. From the exorcist processions to drive out pestilences in the Zhou Dynasty to the parade of exotic animals and varied art forms of the Han Dynasty, the people were treated to a rich array of cultural performances. The Han Chinese population was already familiar with displays of martial arts, animals, acrobats, and musicians of both local and foreign origin. The Northern Wei emperors brought this tradition to another level of grandeur when they supported Buddha’s birthday parades in Luoyang.

## 2.5 ANALYSIS

After reunification of the northern kingdoms by 439, Northern Wei emperors met with many complex problems. The empire faced a restoration challenge as it began to

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<sup>189</sup> 干寶《搜神記》：「戚夫人侍兒賈佩蘭，後出為扶風人段儒妻。說在宮內時，嘗以弦管歌舞相歡娛，競為妖服以趨良時。十月十五日，共入靈女廟，以豚黍樂神，吹笛擊筑，歌《上靈之曲》。既而相與連臂，踏地為節，歌《赤鳳皇來》，乃巫俗也。至七月七日，臨百子池，作于闐樂。樂畢，以五色縷相羈，謂之『相連綬』。八月四日，出雕房北戶，竹下圍棋。勝者終年有福，負者終年疾病。取絲縷，就北辰星求長命，乃免。九月，佩茱萸，食蓬餌，飲菊花酒，令人長命。菊花舒時，并採莖葉，雜黍米（釀）〔釀〕之。71 至來年九月九日始熟，就飲焉，故謂之『菊花酒』。正月上辰，出池邊盥濯，食蓬餌，以祓妖邪。三月上巳，張樂於流水。如此終歲焉。」

<sup>190</sup> Chapman, “Carnival Canons,” 150–151.

experience peace and prosperity. During the Sixteen Kingdoms Period (304 – 439 CE), states formed based on military successes of nomadic chieftains and disintegrated as the chiefs died or lost battles.<sup>191</sup> Under the leadership of Tuoba Gui (who became the first Emperor Daowu of Northern Wei, r. 386 – 408), the growing military reorganized into units that were loyal to the dynasty rather than the chief and became dependent on the resettled herdsmen and farmers for provisions.<sup>192</sup> In this way, the first emperor started a dynasty that had assurance of loyalty from its most important and core structure, the military. After assuring sustenance of military power, the Northern Wei Dynasty handled the challenge of restoring the agricultural economy and ordinary life of its people.

China depended on agriculture for its survival. Since the Zhou Dynasty, Chinese had produced a continuous list of books on agriculture to encourage efficient farming.<sup>193</sup> The turbulent Sixteen Kingdoms Period forced many peasants to move into more remote and defensible areas away from cities and main roads.<sup>194</sup> The Northern Wei Empire made a deliberate effort to resume agricultural prosperity. Jia Sixie's *Essential Methods of the Common People (Qimin Yaosu)*, written about 533, focused on methods for clearing wasteland, selecting crops, and means for productive farming.<sup>195</sup> The *saṅgha* and Buddha households used the labor of domestic establishments and prisoners to bring in harvests. The *Book of Wei* described these households.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Mark Edward Lewis, *China Between Empires: The Northern and Southern Dynasties* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 73.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>193</sup> Joseph Needham and Francesca Bray, *Agriculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 48.

<sup>194</sup> Lewis, *China Between Empires*, 121.

<sup>195</sup> Jia, "Essential Methods of the Common People."

<sup>196</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四《釋老志》：「曇曜奏：平齊戶及諸民，有能歲輸穀六十斛入僧曹者，即為『僧祇戶』，粟為『僧祇粟』，至於儉歲，賑給飢民。又請民犯重罪及官奴以為『佛圖戶』，以供諸寺掃洒，歲兼營田輸粟。高宗並許之。」

Tanyao memorialized: “[I] request that the households of Pingqi [a commandery founded with war captives] and those able to provide sixty *hu* of grain each year to the Office of Buddhist Clergy to be designated ‘sangha households’ and the grain ‘sangha millet.’ This grain will be distributed to the starving in years of famine. I further request that those guilty of major crimes and state slaves be classed as ‘Buddha households’ and charged with maintaining monasteries, working in their fields, and bringing in the harvest. Gaozong granted the request.”<sup>197</sup>

With the majority of people gainfully occupied and a provision of food supplies assured, the emperors of this period turned to other matters of government. The most often quoted reform of the Northern Wei government was its sinification program and the emperor most associated with this program was Emperor Xiaowen. A hundred years after the founding of the Northern Wei Empire (386), Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471 – 499) banned Tuoba dress and language in court, changed all Tuoba family names to Yuan, and moved the capital from Pingcheng to Luoyang,<sup>198</sup> among many other sinification measures. The Xianbei tribes of the northeast had a long history of sinification: they had already experienced a semi-sedentary lifestyle and lived in both agricultural communities as well as nomadic camps during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period.<sup>199</sup> Prior to Emperor Xiaowen, Tuoba monarchs had already started to adopt Han-style legal system and codified Confucian ethics<sup>200</sup>. However, Emperor Xiaowen formalized and implemented sinification measures in official decrees, culminating in the move of the capital. Such political and social reforms strengthened the northern society while corruption was rampant in the southern societies.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Lewis, *China Between Empires*, 138.

<sup>198</sup> Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2008), 111.

<sup>199</sup> Lewis, *China Between Empires*, 74.

<sup>200</sup> Sherry J. Mou, *Presence and Presentation: Women in the Chinese Literati Tradition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 100.

<sup>201</sup> Lang Ye, Zhenggang Fei, and Tianyou Wang, *China: Five Thousand Years of History and Civilization* (Kowloon, Hong Kong: City University of HK Press, 2007), 61.

Assimilation took place in both directions. While Xianbei nobility adopted Chinese culture and government, the Chinese also learned Xianbei language, dress, and diet.<sup>202</sup> Luoyang was a bilingual and cosmopolitan city. Emperor Xiaowen's sinification program brought him closer to the majority Chinese population but alienated him from the Xianbei clan and pro-Xianbei Chinese. In particular, the frontier garrisons that protected the Northern Wei Dynasty were nomadic archers and saw little appeal in adopting a sinicized cultured lifestyle.<sup>203</sup> Another previously influential Xianbei clan, the Murong family, found themselves marginalized.<sup>204</sup> This indirectly led to the downfall of the Northern Wei Empire less than fifty years after its move to Luoyang.

The timing of the impressive Buddha's birthday parades during the reigns of Emperors Xuanwu and Xiaoming could not be a fortuitous coincidence. The carnivals reflected the growing affluence of northern China as well as the aspirations of the populace. Successors to Emperor Xiaowen faced the growing challenge of managing a difficult sinification program: disgruntled nobility and imminent rebellions. Building on a mutually familiar "procession" paradigm and encouraging hero-veneration through festivals, Northern Wei emperors staged an impressive public display of foreign icons in familiar carnival processions to secure the place of the monarch as a spiritual and earthly ruler.

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<sup>202</sup> Lim, "On Old Turkic Consonantism and Vocalic Divisions of Acute Consonants in Medieval Han Phonology," 60.

<sup>203</sup> Charles Holcombe, *The Genesis of East Asia, 221 B.C.-A.D. 907* (University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 143.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Three      BUDDHA’S BIRTHDAY PARADES IN LUOYANG

### 3.1 LUOYANG

Several strategic conditions made Luoyang an excellent site to host grand Buddha’s birthday parades in the first two decades of the sixth century. Its geographical location and temperate climate gave it natural advantages as the center of agricultural activities. Moreover, with the opening of the Silk Roads (interwoven land-based and sea-based Silk Roads)<sup>205</sup>, Luoyang became the easternmost distribution center of valuable goods, such as nephrite jade from Khotan<sup>206</sup> and night shining jewel from Syria.<sup>207</sup> Even more important geographically, this ancient capital city formed the seat of Confucianism, with the stone classics<sup>208</sup> located in front of the old Han Academy.<sup>209</sup> Emperor Xiaowen’s (r. 471 – 499 CE) decision to relocate his capital to Luoyang, followed by his successors’ continued expansion of this city, helped Luoyang surpass its past glory in terms of its physical landscape and Buddhist architecture. Overall, Emperors Xuanwu (r. 500 – 515) and Xiaoming (r. 516 – 528) supporting the decision to relocate the capital

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<sup>205</sup> Ralph Kauz, *Aspects of the Maritime Silk Road: From the Persian Gulf to the East China Sea* (Wesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 2.

<sup>206</sup> Susan Whitfield and British Library, *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, Inc., 2004), 43.

<sup>207</sup> Joseph Needham and Ling Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China: Introductory Orientations*, vol. 7, Part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 193.

<sup>208</sup> The Confucian classics inscribed in stone were the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (《春秋》) and the *Book of Documents* (《尚書》). Also in stone were four classical works *Zhouyi* (《周易》), *Shangshu* (《尚書》), *Gongyang Zhuan* (《公羊傳》), and the *Book of Rites* (《禮記》).

<sup>209</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 136.

while moderating the sinification program, capitalized on the joyful Buddha's birthday parade to display Northern Wei (386 – 534) prosperity and power.

As a rebuilt capital, Luoyang held a politically significant status. Historically, Luoyang, the “center of everything below Heaven” (*tianxia zhizhong*), acquired its reputation based on its strategic location and natural geographical advantages. It had been a political center, receiving tributes “from four directions” since the Shang Dynasty (c. 17<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE).<sup>210, 211</sup> Continuing this tradition, Emperors Xuanwu and Xiaoming of Northern Wei received tributes from eighty-two kingdoms in the Western Regions, some kingdoms sending envoys as many as twelve times to Luoyang.<sup>212</sup> Besides being the earliest Chinese capital, thirteen dynasties<sup>213</sup> had set up capitals in Luoyang over a period of 1,500 years, making it the longest-serving capital city in China.<sup>214</sup> Just before the tumult of the Sixteen Kingdoms, Luoyang had been a political and cultural center for about 260 years.<sup>215</sup> Spectacular parades in this city served to highlight the political gem that was now in Northern Wei's possession.

The parades celebrated the capital's relocation. When in 493 Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei designed the move of the capital from Pingcheng to Luoyang, he considered the strategic advantages of governance from a more central location,

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<sup>210</sup> 《史記·周本紀》：「此天下之中，四方入貢道里均」 <http://ctext.org/shiji/zhou-ben-ji>

<sup>211</sup> Di 吳迪 Wu, Defang 李德方 Li, and Wansong 葉萬松 Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang* 古都洛陽 (Hangzhou: Hangzhou Publisher 杭州出版社, 2011), 6.

<sup>212</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 88.

<sup>213</sup> The thirteen dynasties were Xia Dynasty (c. 22<sup>nd</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century BCE), Shang (c. 17<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE), Western Zhou (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century – 771 BCE), Eastern Zhou (770 – 256 BCE), Eastern Han (25 – 220CE), Cao Wei (220 – 265 CE), Western Jin (265 – 317 CE), Northern Wei (386 – 534 CE), Sui (581 – 618 CE), Tang (618 – 907 CE), Later Liang (907 – 923 CE), Later Tang (923 – 936 CE), and Later Jin (936 – 947 CE).

<sup>214</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 11–12.

<sup>215</sup> Xiaohui 孫曉輝 Sun, *A Study of the Historical Music Records of the Two Tangs* 兩唐書樂志研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai yin yue xue yuan chu ban she, 2005), 369.



accessibility to food, trade routes and people, as well as adoption of more advanced Chinese systems of governance.<sup>216</sup> Nevertheless, this decree met with violent resistance from many fronts, including the then crown prince.<sup>217</sup> Hence, Emperor Xuanwu's staging of parades in Luoyang was a diplomatic reinforcement of this relocation within a decade of its happening.

Emperor Xiaowen's capital relocation had several precedents and for good reasons. Wang Mang (r. 9 – 24 CE) decreed several times to move his capital to Luoyang, a wish that the first Eastern Han (25 – 220 CE) emperor fulfilled. King Wu of Zhou (r. 1049/45 – 1043 BCE)<sup>218</sup> had planned to move his capital eastwards to Luoyang because of its strategic and natural advantages.<sup>219</sup> Luoyang was attractive because it occupied flat lands near rivers Luo and Yi, having views of mountain ranges in the south and north, and it was not too distant from the sacred mountain of Song.<sup>220</sup> The Mang Mountains to its north and Luo River to its south provided military protection and access to natural resources. In addition, the agricultural plains assured continuous supplies of food for residents and armies. Emperor Xiaowen, too, saw these strategic relocation advantages and joined earlier rulers in moving the capital to Luoyang.

The first twenty years of Northern Wei Luoyang was a showcase of prosperity and organization. The Northern Wei regime opted to rebuild the capital on the previous site of Eastern Han, Cao Wei (220 – 265 CE), and Western Jin (265 – 317 CE). The

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<sup>216</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 160.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>218</sup> Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 241.

<sup>219</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 10.

<sup>220</sup> 《史記·周本紀》：「王曰：“定天保，依天室，悉求夫惡，貶從殷王受。日夜勞來定我西土，我維顯服，及德方明。自洛汭延于伊汭，居易毋固，其有夏之居。我南望三涂，北望岳鄙，顧瞻有河，粵詹雒、伊，毋遠天室。」 <http://ctext.org/shiji/zhou-ben-ji>

rebuilt capital was larger than the Western Jin city.<sup>221</sup> In addition to the original city structure, Northern Wei added an exterior city wall so that the new capital had an innermost palatial city, an inner city, and an outer city (Figure 9).<sup>222</sup> Occupying 100 square kilometers in total,<sup>223</sup> Luoyang was not only the largest city in early medieval China, but also the largest in the world then.<sup>224</sup> It had thirteen city gates, one more than Western Jin, and eight wide roads.<sup>225</sup> According to the Preface of the *Record*, the passageways of city gates were so wide that nine carriages could pass at the same time.<sup>226</sup> Hence, the infrastructure of the city was well suited to staging parades of over a thousand carriages.

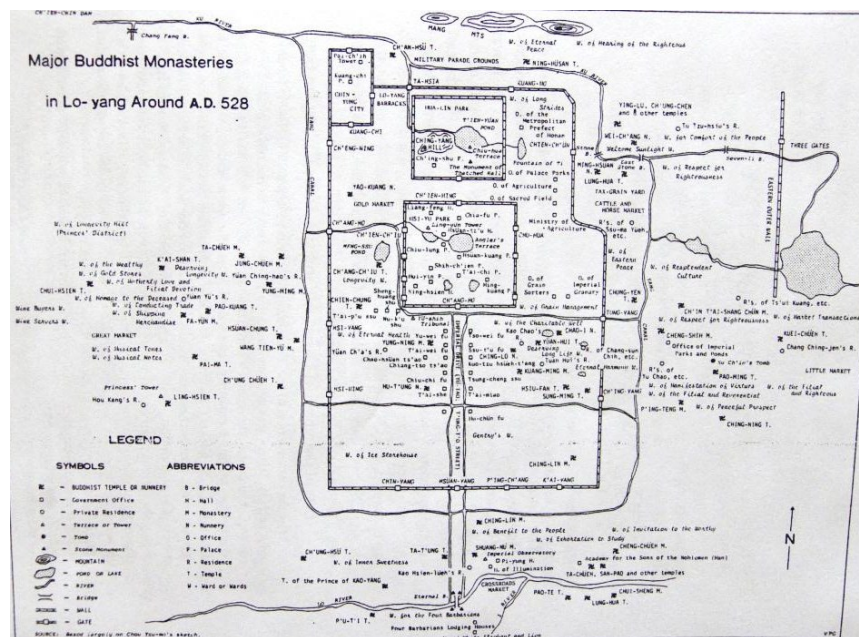


Figure 9 Northern Wei Luoyang about 528 CE<sup>227</sup>

<sup>221</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 164.

<sup>222</sup> Rulin 邵如林 Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts 絲路起点看洛陽* (Beijing: Kunlun chu ban she 昆崙出版社, 2008), 133.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>225</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 164–165.

<sup>226</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 134.

<sup>227</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 14.

Besides watching parades, spectators and visitors also enjoyed the garden city of Luoyang. Imperial guests could visit the palatial city that was 1,398m from north to south, and 660m from east to west.<sup>228</sup> Emperor Xuanwu added buildings, gardens, orchards, manmade mountains (Penglai mountain), and lakes to the palatial grounds.<sup>229</sup> Among private establishments, Princes Yuanyi of Qinghe, Yuanchen of Hejian, and Yuanyong of Gaoyang had the most extravagantly designed gardens.<sup>230</sup> The beautifully landscaped gardens in monasteries offered shade to all passers-by and visitors. Northern Wei pioneered garden landscape designs, a major change from the simple designs of Eastern Han.<sup>231</sup> This impressive cityscape provided residents and visitors a relaxing environment to enjoy Buddhist festivities.

Relative political stability and economic prosperity attracted many merchants, farmers, and breeders to Luoyang soon after the relocation of the Northern Wei capital. The markets had ample agricultural and pastoral produce, as well as goods from the Silk Roads. Located in the Central Plains (*zhongyuan*), the Luoyang basin was ideally suited for agricultural activities: moderate climate (average annual temperature of 14.6°C), good rainfall (601mm annually), and fertile soil.<sup>232</sup> As a commercial city, Luoyang had a Great Market in the western suburb, markets for cattle, horses, and gold, as well as wards for people engaged in the businesses of funerals, music, and more.<sup>233</sup> Luoyang served as a hub where merchants exchanged and distributed goods throughout the country. Merchants doing business in the rebuilt capital of Luoyang were reliving the prosperity of

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<sup>228</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 164.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 168–169.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>233</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, map 1.

the Zhou (1027 – 256 BCE) and Han (206 BCE – 220 CE) Dynasties when Chinese had access to the Silk Roads. The earliest evidence of Luoyang's access to the Silk Roads was in the fourth century BCE when Prince Mu of Zhou Dynasty returned with imperial tributes (*chao gong*) from faraway lands.<sup>234</sup> Joseph Needham pointed out that ancient westerners could have known "China" as two distinct regions, *Sera* (or *Seres*) and *Sinae* (Latin), recognizing Chang'an as the capital of *Sera* and Luoyang as the capital of *Sinae*.<sup>235</sup> Like the nodes on the Silk Roads that first became centers for tribute relation and later, flourished into commercial and cultural centers,<sup>236</sup> Luoyang attracted merchants and artisans as it accumulated economic surpluses.

During the reigns of Emperors Xiaowen, Xuanwu, and Xiaoming, Luoyang amassed much wealth and prosperity. Luoyang's strategic location at the eastern end of the land-based Silk Road coupled with its position as capital created the demand and subsequently, the availability of many precious and rare ornaments as well as exotic animals. The demand of silk from countries as far away as Rome gave the famous trade route its name. Besides silk, the artisans of Luoyang had been creating implements for international sale. As early as the Xia Dynasty (c. 2070 – 1600 BCE), agricultural prosperity in the Central Plains had already led to production of crafts.<sup>237</sup> Xia archaeological findings included jade ornaments, bronze vessels, and ceramic crafts.<sup>238</sup> During the Han Dynasty, Luoyang's bronzes had become famous.<sup>239, 240</sup> By the time of

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<sup>234</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 19–21.

<sup>235</sup> Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 7:, Part 2:181.

<sup>236</sup> Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks*, 302.

<sup>237</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 8.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>239</sup> A bronze mirror manufactured during the time of Wang Mang stated that bronze came from Xuzhou while artisans came from Luoyang: 「銅出徐州，師出洛陽」

<sup>240</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 128.

the Northern Wei,<sup>241, 242</sup> Luoyang resumed its position as an international marketplace for silk, meats, fishes, grains, musical instruments, wines, coffins, currencies, and decorative ornaments.<sup>243</sup> At the same time, wealthy people demonstrated their fervent devotion by donating valuables generously to the cause of Buddhism.<sup>244</sup> Hence, the massive parades became a showcase of grand images, decorative carriages, as well as large amounts of precious substances and offerings.

As the most populous city in the Central Plains, Luoyang could afford the population to stage and watch the parades. The *Record* stated that the city had over 109,000 households,<sup>245</sup> including slaves, army, foreign students and merchants; Luoyang could host over 600,000 people, comparable to Rome.<sup>246</sup> Within the capital of 20 *li* from east to west and 15 *li* from north to south<sup>247</sup> were 320 wards.<sup>248</sup> The Silk Roads brought so many merchants and envoys to Luoyang that in 501, the government had to add 220 wards to the outer city.<sup>249</sup> Residences of aristocratic and plebeian families were neatly organized in these wards in the outer city for ease of governance.<sup>250</sup> Hence, Luoyang had a large enough population to stage these Buddhist parades, as well as the capacity to accommodate international spectators.

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<sup>241</sup> Kosmas Indikopleustes described how sixth century Chinese brought silks, aloes, clove-wood, sandalwood to Ceylon and other ports via the maritime Silk Road in exchange for pepper, copper, sesame wood, musk, and castor.

<sup>242</sup> Max Deeg, "Maritime Routes in the Indian Ocean in Early Times According to Chinese Buddhist Texts," in *Aspects of the Maritime Silk Road: From the Persian Gulf to the East China Sea*, ed. Ralph Kauz (Wesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 154.

<sup>243</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 170.

<sup>244</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 5–6.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>246</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 95.

<sup>247</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 246.

<sup>248</sup> 《魏書·宣武帝紀》：『九月丁酉，發畿內夫五萬五千人築京師三百二十坊，四旬罷。』  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@@87142131>

<sup>249</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 135.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

Visitors to Luoyang could enjoy the parades and the city for an extended period. Emperor Xuanwu welcomed visitors from the Western Regions and elsewhere, providing them with accommodation in the Four Barbarians ward (*siyi li*) that had four lodges for foreigners from the south, west, north, and east.<sup>251</sup> This practice was not new. The Eastern Han Dynasty already had lodging houses such as *hutao guan* and *manyi di* for foreigners.<sup>252</sup> However, the generosity of Northern Wei was worth mentioning. The government awarded land to foreigners after they had stayed in Luoyang for three years, a demonstration of Northern Wei's hospitable international relations.<sup>253</sup> Emperor Xuanwu built the Monastery of Eternal Brilliance (Yongming si) to provide housing for over 3,000 *hu* monks.<sup>254</sup> Luoyang had the infrastructure to welcome many foreign visitors to witness its dazzling parades.

Northern Wei sinification started in 439 when Emperor Taiwu (r. 424 – 451) united northern China by conquering Northern Liang (397 – 439) Guzang.<sup>255</sup> He relocated 30,000 households, the best of Han and steppe intellectuals, artisans, and Buddhist monks, to Pingcheng.<sup>256</sup> Northern Liang acquired fame for its sinification and Buddhist devotion.<sup>257</sup> By moving the best brains from Guzang to Pingcheng, Northern Wei directly imported the people who could help it sinify, as well as adopt Buddhism.

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<sup>251</sup> 《洛阳伽蓝记》卷三：「龙华寺...永桥以南，圜丘以北，伊、洛之间，夹御道有四夷馆。道东有四馆。一名金陵，二名燕然，三名扶桑，四名崦嵫。道西有四里：一曰归正，二曰归德，三曰慕化，四曰慕义。吴人投国者处金陵馆，三年已后，赐宅归正里。...北夷来附者处燕然馆，三年已后，赐宅归德里。...东夷来附者处扶桑馆，赐宅慕化里。西夷来附者处崦嵫馆，赐宅慕义里。自葱岭已西，至於大秦，百国千城，莫不欢附，商胡贩客，日奔塞下，所谓尽天地之区已。乐中国土风，因而宅者，不可胜数。是以附化之民，万有馀家。」

<http://www.tianyabook.com/lishi/luoyangjialanji/3.html>

<sup>252</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 130.

<sup>253</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 111.

<sup>254</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 204.

<sup>255</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 182.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

When Emperor Xiaowen assigned the design of Luoyang to Li Chong (formerly from Guzang), the new capital inevitably took the best of historical Han architecture and Northern Liang design.<sup>258</sup> Emperor Xiaowen's sinification program was resolute. In 495, the steppe people who moved south to Luoyang, eight clans and ten lineages from the royal class as well as thirty-six clans and ninety-two lineages from the aristocratic class, were forbidden to return north.<sup>259</sup> Further, Emperor Xiaowen decreed the adoption of Han surnames, abolition of non-Han language in court, abandonment of *hu* costumes and rituals, and encouragement of intermarriages with Han clans.<sup>260</sup> The Northern Wei court injected its legal system, method of governance, and education system with Han equivalents. Northern Wei's sinification program extended to the Western Regions and to all steppe people. The sinification scheme was so famous that a year after Songyun's visit, the king of Gaochang sent an envoy to Luoyang to ask Emperor Xiaoming to send an instructor of Confucian classics to Gaochang.<sup>261</sup> Emperor Xiaowen's relocation decree revived Luoyang as the cultural center of China, with Luoyang surpassing Jiankang, southern Chinese capital.<sup>262</sup> The amalgamated cultures of Xianbei and Han made for a more superior blend that spectators of the Buddhist parades could witness.

Besides being the seat of ancient Chinese civilization, Luoyang was also the cradle of Buddhism: White Horse Monastery, the first Chinese Buddhist monastery<sup>263</sup> was built in Luoyang in 68 CE.<sup>264</sup> Buddhists translated many early *sūtras* in Luoyang.

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>259</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 162.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 110.

<sup>262</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 133.

<sup>263</sup> The White Horse Monastery is known as the first ancient monastery 「中國第一古剎」, forefather monastery 「祖庭」, and source of Sakya 「釋源」.

<sup>264</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 171.

Visitors to Luoyang during the Northern Wei not only relived past Buddhist glories, but also experienced the new heights of Northern Wei Buddhism. Besides the White Horse monastery that continued to be popular during the Northern Wei Dynasty, Luoyang had over 1,367 monasteries within 100 square kilometers. Yang documented fifty-two monasteries in his *Record*, the biggest and most famous of which was Yongning Monastery. Empress Dowager Hu built the largest, tallest, and most complicated wooden *stūpa*<sup>265</sup> (pagoda, Figure 10) in the Yongning Monastery.<sup>266</sup> Not only was this monastery a model of contemporary Buddhist architecture (with *stūpa* as primary and shrine as secondary), but it was also an exemplar of unmatched magnificence:<sup>267</sup> it housed 21 huge Buddha images, it had over a thousand *saṅgha* rooms, and its *stūpa* was 136.71m tall<sup>268</sup> (not an easy construction task even for today).<sup>269</sup> The *Record*'s remark by Bodhidharma gave an indication of the grandeur of this pagoda.<sup>270</sup>

The monk Bodhidharma of the Western Regions was a native of Persia. He came from the desolate frontier to visit China. Having seen the golden plates making dazzling reflections of the sunlight and shining into the clouds, and having heard the ringing of bejeweled bells lofted into the sky by the wind, he sang praises of this extraordinary artistic achievement. Bodhidharma claimed at that time to be one hundred and fifty years old. But during his extensive travels, which had taken him to every corner of many countries, nowhere in the sullied world had he seen a monastery as elegant and beautiful as this one. Not even in Buddha's realm of ultimate things was there anything like this. He chanted *namah* – an expression of complete

<sup>265</sup> Unfortunately, it was burnt down by fire only twelve years later owing to political tumult.

<sup>266</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 103.

<sup>267</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 181.

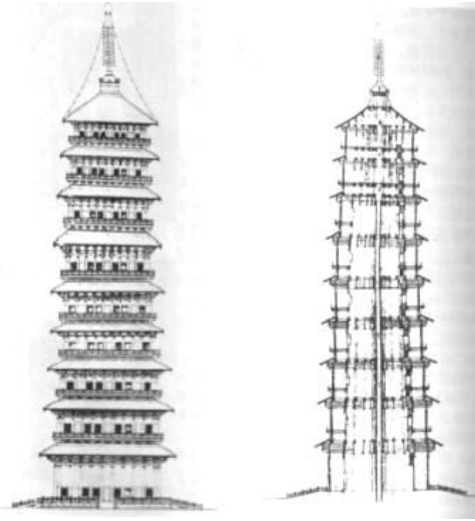
<sup>268</sup> As a comparison, the Great Giza Pyramid of Egypt was 146.5m when constructed and currently stands at 138.8m.

<sup>269</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 181–182.

<sup>270</sup> 《洛陽城內伽藍記卷第一》：時有西域沙門菩提達磨者。波斯國胡人也。起自荒裔來遊中土。見金盤炫日光照雲表。寶鐸含風響出天外。歌詠讚歎實是神功。自云年一百五十歲歷涉諸國。靡不周遍。而此寺精麗閭浮所無也。極物境界亦未有。此口唱南無合掌連日。(Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, T51, no. 2092, p. 1000, b22); henceforth, Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association will be abbreviated as CBETA.



submission to the Buddha – and held his palms together for several days after having seen it.<sup>271</sup>



*Figure 10 Re-created design of Yongning Pagoda<sup>272</sup>*

Royal family members, aristocrats, foreign monks, and indigenous natives sponsored the building of 1,367 monasteries in Luoyang.<sup>273</sup> Princes, concubines, administrative and military officers as well as many others who competed among themselves to show their devotion to Buddhism<sup>274</sup> treated Luoyang's visitors to a spectacular cityscape of sacred Buddhist sanctuaries. Besides visiting numerous magnificent monasteries and temples, visitors and residents of Luoyang could also see and pay respect to other Buddhist sites, the most famous of which were the grottoes. The art of grotto building came from Northern Liang, who learned from the Western Regions such as Kucha. Emperor Taiwu had used the talents of Northern Liang in building the Yungang Grottoes. Emperor Xiaowen also relocated grotto builders to Luoyang. Around Luoyang were many Buddhist grottoes built during the Northern Wei, including

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<sup>271</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 20–21.

<sup>272</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 172.

<sup>273</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 187.

<sup>274</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 5.

Longmen, Gongxian, Yanshi Shuiquan, Mengjin Meiyao, Xin'an Xiwu, Yiyang Hutou Monastery, Songxian Pugou and Yichuan Lüzhai.<sup>275, 276</sup> Longmen, the largest of this family of grottoes, had over 30,000 Buddha images. The Northern Wei sponsored twenty-five caves in Longmen.<sup>277, 278</sup> Officials and royal family members supportive of the Luoyang relocation sponsored the Guyang Cave, the first cave in Longmen Grottoes. They dedicated this cave to Emperor Xiaowen and it contained Chinese calligraphy that was “the best of its time.”<sup>279</sup> Luoyang's thriving religious activities made it a spectacular showcase of Buddhist innovation and devotion to the world.

Luoyang was an ideal site for Northern Wei rulers to stage massive parades in the first two decades of the sixth century to display their power, wealth, and organized government. The display of exotic treasures through the parades in Luoyang indirectly testified to the power of Northern Wei in having access to the Silk Roads. In particular, the Central Asian Silk Road carried the idea of image processions to Luoyang. Many Buddhists were willing to dedicate resources to the staging of the Buddha's birthday parades, the economic and political climate permitted the public demonstration of merriment, and visitors to the city felt welcomed and awed by the variety of Buddhist sites in the capital. Many of the popular Buddhist activities in the capital, such as grotto building and monasticism, testified to the fact that late Northern Wei was not embarking

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<sup>275</sup> The Northern Wei grottoes are 龍門石窟、鞏縣石窟、偃師水泉石窟、孟津煤窯石窟、新安西沃石窟、宜陽虎頭寺石窟、嵩縣鋪溝石窟、伊川呂寨石窟等等。

<sup>276</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 173.

<sup>277</sup> The Northern Wei caves in Longmen are Guyang (古陽), Binyang Central (賓陽中), Binyang North (賓陽北), Binyang South (賓陽南), Cixiang (慈香), Weizi (魏字), Yaofang (藥方), Lu (路), Huoshao (火燒), Lotus (蓮花), Putai (普泰), Maitreya (彌勒), Maitreya North 1 (彌勒北一), Maitreya North 2 (彌勒北二), Huangfugong (皇甫公), Longxiang Jiangjun (龍驤將軍), Laisijiu (來思九), Dihua (地花), Liushi (六獅), Yaofang (藥方), Tangzi (唐字), Lu (路), Datong (大統), Zhaokeshi (趙客師), and Bianzhou (汴州).

<sup>278</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 98–100.

<sup>279</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 173.

on a unilateral sinification program. In fact, the processional display through a joyful festival not only reinforced the strategic decision to relocate the capital to Luoyang but also the superiority of the Xianbei rulers.

### 3.2 POPULARITY OF BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY PARADES IN LUOYANG

Yang Xuanzhi described the Buddha's birthday parades in the *Record*. Completed in 547, this classic gives a detailed account of the later years of Northern Wei history (493-534) through the fate of famous Buddhist monasteries in the capital city. Yang began his Preface with how most local Chinese perceived Buddhism then: China was a land with its own set of classical teachings inseparable from their rulers and Buddhism was an unfamiliar introduction.<sup>280</sup>

The sayings [embodied in] the works of the Three Emperors and Five Monarchs, along with teachings [imparted by] the nine classes of literature and one hundred schools of philosophy, have all prevailed in China and included ideas introduced from abroad. But such teachings, the law of the One Vehicle and the Two Truths, or the essence of the Three Insights and Six Powers acquired by the Buddha or an arhat – these were recorded in great detail in countries of the Western Regions, but scarcely touched upon in the Eastern Land.<sup>281</sup>

It was in this marginalized climate that Buddhism and the Xianbei rulers had to identify and re-define themselves to the majority of the population. This definition process also involved adaptation to Han culture for ease of acceptance. The *Record*, through accounts of events, people and legends in the last capital city of the Northern Wei, gave precious insights into the complex process of acceptance and rejection of this foreign religion and monarchs.

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<sup>280</sup> 《洛陽伽藍記》卷1：「三墳五典之說。九流百代之言。並理在人區而義兼天外。至於一乘二諦之原。三明六通之旨。西域備詳。東土靡記。」(CBETA, T51, no. 2092, p. 999, a6-8)

<sup>281</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 3.

The *Record* was a reliable source of information. Yang's many official positions under the Northern Wei and Eastern Wei rule enhanced the historical value of this document. Yang had been warden of Qicheng, grand warden of Qicheng, supervisor of archives, and sergeant-at-arms in the Office of the Commanding General of the Army.<sup>282</sup> <sup>283</sup> As supervisor of archives, Yang had access to the imperial library.<sup>284</sup> This and the fact that Yang wrote in 547, only thirteen years after the disintegration of the Northern Wei empire helped to ascertain the authenticity of the data within this *Record* and hence, the historicity of the events. Yang described the physical structures and events associated with fifty-two monasteries, big and small. He organized the book into five chapters: inner city, eastern suburb, southern suburb, western suburb, and northern suburb. Each section of the chapter, divided by monasteries, could be long or short, depending on the events, people, legends, and architecture of each monastery. The *Record* was the earliest substantial account of a Chinese city to survive,<sup>285</sup> making it a book worthy of study.

Among the Buddhist activities described in this book was massive Buddha's birthday parades held on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month. The citywide procession of images started from the Bright Prospect Monastery (Jingming si) in the southern suburbs. Emperor Xuanwu established this monastery between 500 and 503, shortly after he began his reign in 500.<sup>286</sup> This large monastery had more than 1,000 rooms, three ponds, and water mills.<sup>287</sup> The fact that the Buddha's birthday parades started from the monastery that Emperor Xuanwu built soon upon taking up the throne

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<sup>282</sup> The Chinese titles are 期城郡守、期城郡太守、秘書監 and 撫軍府司馬 respectively.

<sup>283</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, xvii.

<sup>284</sup> W Jenner, *Memories of Loyang: Yang Hsüan-Chih and the Lost Capital (493-534)* (Oxford ;New York: Clarendon Press ;;Oxford University Press, 1981), 15.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>286</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 124.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 124–125.

implied that the emperor initiated and endorsed these massive parades. The account from the *Record*, found in the Jingming si section,<sup>288</sup> clearly demonstrated the popularity of this event.

At the time, the nation liked to pray for happiness, [so] on the seventh day of the fourth month all images in the capital were assembled in this monastery, numbering more than one thousand, according to the records of the Office of Sacrifices, Department of State Affairs. On the eighth day, the images [were carried] one by one into the Hsüan-yang Gate, where the emperor would scatter flowers in front of the Ch'ang-ho Palace. At this moment, gold-colored flowers reflected the dazzling sunlight, and the bejeweled canopies [over the carriages] for the images floated in the clouds. Banners were [as numerous as trees] in a forest, and incense smoke was [as thick as] a fog. Indian music and the din of chanted Buddhist scriptures moved heaven and earth alike. Wherever variety shows [were performed], there was congestion. Renowned monks and virtuous masters, each carrying a staff, formed a throng. The Buddhist devotees and their "companions in the law" holding flowers resembled a garden in bloom. Carriages and horses choked [traffic] and jostled each other. A foreign monk from the Western Regions saw it, and he chanted and said it was [the same as the Buddha's land as he had witnessed it].<sup>289</sup>

From the description, it is apparent that this Buddhist festival attracted many people. Since the Office of Sacrifices recorded the assembly of over a thousand images and there were over a thousand monasteries in the capital city, this number could not be an over-exaggeration. The congestion and traffic-choking situation amply described the mass participation. In addition, other descriptions supported this claim. At the Temple of the Prolonger of Autumn (Changqiu si) in the inner city, its image would traditionally parade the city on the fourth day of the fourth lunar month and it too attracted massive crowds.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> 《洛陽伽藍記》卷3：「時世好崇福。四月七日京師諸像皆來此寺。尚書祠曹錄像。凡有一千餘軀。至八月節。以次入宣陽門。向閭闔宮前。受皇帝散花。于時金花映日。寶蓋浮雲。旛幢若林。香煙似霧。梵樂法音。聒動天地。百戲騰驤。所在駢比。名僧德眾負錫為群。信徒法侶持花成藪。車騎填咽。繁衍相傾。時有西域胡沙門。見此唱言佛國。」(CBETA, T51, no. 2092, p. 1010, b8-15)

<sup>289</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 126–127.

<sup>290</sup> 《洛陽伽藍記》卷第一：「長秋寺...像停之處。觀者如堵。迭相踐躍。常有死人。」  
[http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_001.htm)

Wherever the statue stopped, spectators would encircle it like a wall. Stumbling and trampling on each other, people in the crowd often suffered casualties.<sup>291</sup>

The description at the Temple of Respect for the Sage (Zongsheng si) of the eastern suburb corroborated with the preceding account. People vacated their homes and businesses in order to participate in the festive parade; residents of the eastern suburb gathered at this temple on Buddha's birthday.<sup>292</sup>

In the Tsung-sheng Temple ... Whenever the statue was on parade, [they would leave their homes or the marketplace to see it, so that] all the homes and marketplaces were virtually empty. The aureole of this statue had no parallel in its time. The skillful games and miscellaneous music performed here were second in excellence only to those in Liu Teng's [Ch'ang-ch'iu Temple]. Men and women living in the eastern section of the city often came to this temple to watch the shows.<sup>293</sup>

Buddhism, in spite of popular belief of monastic austerity, sanctioned such public display of revelry. The artwork on the southern wall of one of the earliest caves of the Mogao Grottoes (cave 275th), which could be dated to as early as the Northern Liang kingdom (401 – 460), depicted bodhisattvas watching celestial musicians.<sup>294</sup> In the context of Indian cosmology, this scene was congruent with beliefs such as Śakra, the lord of Trāyastriṃśa heaven, enjoying heavenly entertainment all day long.<sup>295</sup> The grotto art represented praise of and devotion to the Buddha as well as the devotees' wish to be reborn in heavenly Buddha lands.<sup>296</sup>

By the time of the early sixth century, it was apparent that residents of Luoyang were participating and rejoicing in this Buddhist festival. It seemed like a major holiday

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<sup>291</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 46.

<sup>292</sup> 《洛陽城東伽藍記卷第二》：「宗聖寺 ... 此像一出市井。皆空炎先。騰輝赫赫。獨絕世表。妙伎雜樂。亞於劉騰。城東士女。多來此寺觀看也。」

<sup>293</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 72–73.

<sup>294</sup> Ruzhong 鄭汝中 Zheng, *Study of Dunhuang Grotto Art, Music and Dance 敦煌壁畫樂舞研究* (Lanzhou Shi: Gansu jiao yu chu ban she, 2002), 55.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 57.

in which the Emperor scattered flowers to over a thousand images, many people carried the statues, numerous entertainers kept spectators engaged, a large number of monks gathered to chant, throngs of devotees made offerings, and residents took the opportunity to visit temples. After decades of turbulence, this parade gave people the impression of a return to prosperous and stable days. Through these parades, Buddhism proved that it had defined itself and displayed its popular appeal by adapting to both indigenous and foreign cultures in a thriving cosmopolitan center of the time. These events taking place in Northern Wei Luoyang reflected a multi-cultural milieu that had not been seen in Han annals.

### 3.3 PROCESSIONS: A COMMON PARADIGM

The popular parades of Luoyang were based on a paradigm common to Chinese and their steppe conquerors: public processions. There are some general characteristics about public processions: they make use of and occupy public space, music and entertainment often accompany the processions, the main object(s) of the parade is/are lavishly decorated, royal paraphernalia (such as banners) assert the authority of the main object(s), and they occur on certain festive days of the calendar.<sup>297</sup> Even before Northern Wei, Indian and Central Asian influences had already appeared in public spaces, infiltrated musical scenes, and been part of exotic public performances.

Accompanying parades in Han festivals were performances of martial arts, animals, acrobats, magicians, and clowns in the “hundred variety shows” (*baixi*). Based

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<sup>297</sup> Matthias Frenz, “The Virgin and Her ‘Relations’: Reflections on Processions at a Catholic Shrine in Southern India,” in *South Asian Religions on Display: Religious Processions in South Asia and in the Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 93, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=74ab8563-e50f-40de-92e4-3f2f89388cf2%40sessionmgr4&vid=9&hid=11&bdata=JmF1dGh0eXBIPWNvb2tpZSxjcGlkNmN1c3RpZD1uczA1NTk1NiZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmU%3d#db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001695989>.

on textual and artistic evidence, these shows took place indoors, in palaces, and the residences of nobility, or outdoors in public. The performers at the parades belonged to one of three categories: kept by nobility for their own private entertainment, a mobile group of performers who performed on special occasions, or part-time performers.<sup>298</sup> These performers could be natives or foreigners. Shan (on the Burmese border) offered Emperor An of the Han Dynasty (r. 106 – 125 CE) Syrian acrobats who performed on New Year's day in 121 CE.<sup>299</sup> The *History of the Later Han Dynasty* mentioned *baixi* scenes where performers would “spit fire, bind and release their limbs without assistance, interchange the heads of cows and horses, and dance cleverly with up to a thousand balls.”<sup>300</sup> Even during the Northern Wei, White Elephant Ward and Lion Ward in southern Luoyang were so named because these wards took care of these exotic animals for processions.<sup>301</sup> The Chinese audience was accustomed to entertainment from the Western Regions and did not seem to tire of exotic displays.

During the Southern and Northern dynasties, Kuchan music and dance were famous in the Central Plains.<sup>302</sup> Kuchan music was a blend of music from India, West Asia, and the Central Plains.<sup>303</sup> The ancient music books of China recorded the use of Kucha music for drums and dance and Han music for zither.<sup>304, 305</sup> The prosperity of the

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<sup>298</sup> Li, *History of Ancient Chinese Performances*, ix.

<sup>299</sup> Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 7:, Part 2:197.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Qifeng 傅起鳳 Fu and Tenglong 傅騰龍 Fu, *History of Acrobatics in China 中國雜技史* (Shanghai: Shanghai ren min chu ban she : Xin hua shu dian Shanghai fa xing suo jing xiao, 2004), 99.

<sup>302</sup> Xuchu 霍旭初 Huo and Xiaoshan 祁小山 Qi, *The Buddhist Art in Xinjiang Along the Silk Road* (Urumqi: Xinjiang University Press, 2006), 82.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> 《舊唐書·清樂》：「自周、隋已來，管絃雜曲將數百曲，多用西涼樂，鼓舞曲多用龜茲樂，其曲度皆時俗所知也。惟彈琴家猶傳楚、漢舊聲，及清調、瑟調，蔡邕雜弄，非朝廷郊廟所用，故不載。」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@23^2034087320^807^^^702020160002000900010003^1@@@1749992435>



Central Asian Silk Road certainly had helped to transmit elements of culture across borders. Another major reason for the influx of Kuchan music into the Central Plains came from Lü Guang's conquest of Kucha.<sup>306</sup> Figure 11 is a famous mural of Kizil Cave 38 showing musicians and typical *hu* musical instruments.

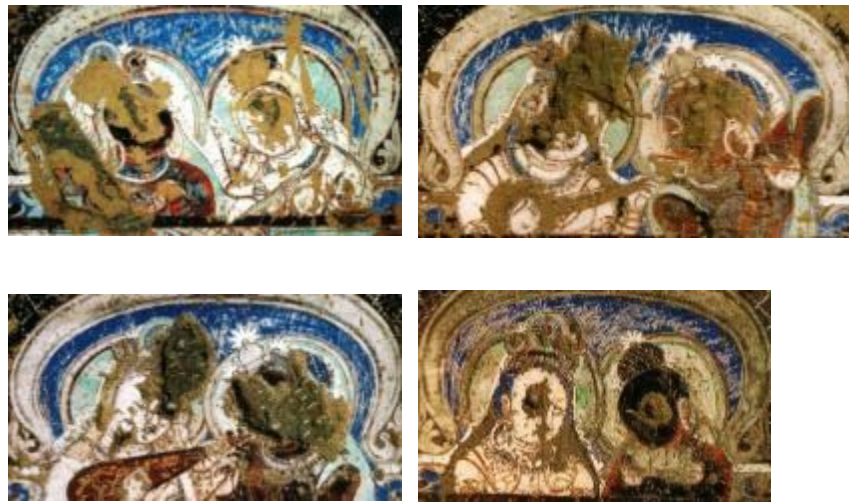


Figure 11 Heavenly musicians in Kizil Cave 38<sup>307, 308</sup>

Buddhist music and singing entered China since Eastern Han. Five types of Buddhist music pervaded the Central Plains: *sūtra* reading music (*zhuandu yinyue*), *sūtra* chanting music (*beizan yinyue*), opening music (*changdao yinyue*), festival music (*qingjie dahui yinyue*), and music for praising and prostrating to the Buddha (*zanfo lifo yinyue*).<sup>309</sup> The vivid descriptions of processions in the *Record* were examples of festival music. Many nations along the Silk Road gave the Central Plains a rich myriad of rare animals and performances. For example, Persians (Anxi) brought lion processions and lion

<sup>305</sup> Sun, *A Study of the Historical Music Records of the Two Tangs*, 115.

<sup>306</sup> Kunwu 王昆吾 Wang, *A Study of the Yan Music and Lyrics of Sui-Tang and Five Dynasties Period* 隋唐五代燕乐杂言歌辞研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju : Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing, 1996), 27.

<sup>307</sup> Top left: musician playing harp (*konghou*) and showering flowers; top right: musician playing *ruanxian* and flute, Bottom left: musician playing 5-stringed *pipa* and bamboo pipe (*bili*); Bottom right: musician beating cymbals and playing pan flute

<sup>308</sup> Huo and Qi, *The Buddhist Art in Xinjiang Along the Silk Road*, 84–85.

<sup>309</sup> Wang, *A Study of the Yan Music and Lyrics of Sui-Tang and Five Dynasties Period*, 30.

dances.<sup>310</sup> Therefore, foreign imports enriched Chinese music and entertainment, a testimony to bilateral assimilation.

During the tumultuous period of warfare after the dissolution of the Western Jin Dynasty, the Han music tradition also went through a period of instability. At the same time, the kings of the Sixteen Kingdoms brought musicians and makers of musical instruments to various capital cities as prizes of victory.<sup>311</sup> For example, Former Liang (314 – 376) received male singers and dancers from India, forming the *tianzhu bu* (music of ancient India).<sup>312</sup> The conquest of Kucha in 384 resulted in the importation of music to Liangzhou and a mixture of Han and Western Region music, forming *xiliang yue* (music of Han and Western Regions).<sup>313</sup> After the migration of musicians and music from Northern Liang through Pingcheng to Luoyang,<sup>314</sup> Emperor Xiaowen re-established the standards of music<sup>315</sup> by harmonizing Han<sup>316</sup> and *hu*<sup>317</sup> musical instruments and sounds.<sup>318</sup> The resulting blend of *luoxia jiuyue* (ancient music of Luoyang) consisted of *qing yue* (music of the Han people), *ya yue* (elegant music), *xiyü yinyue* (music of the Western Region) and *xiliang yue*.<sup>319</sup> Different ethnic groups and levels of society

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>311</sup> Sun, *A Study of the Historical Music Records of the Two Tangs*, 158.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 370.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., 371.

<sup>315</sup> The Tang *Taiyue lingbi ji* (《太樂令璧記》) by Liu Kuang (劉貺) gave a good overview of music through the dynasties.

<sup>316</sup> Han musical instruments were wind instruments (管), stringed instruments (弦), and percussion (击).

<sup>317</sup> *Hu* musical instruments from the Western Regions included *hujia* (胡笳), *huqin* (胡琴), drum (羯鼓), harp (箏篎), and *pipa* (琵琶).

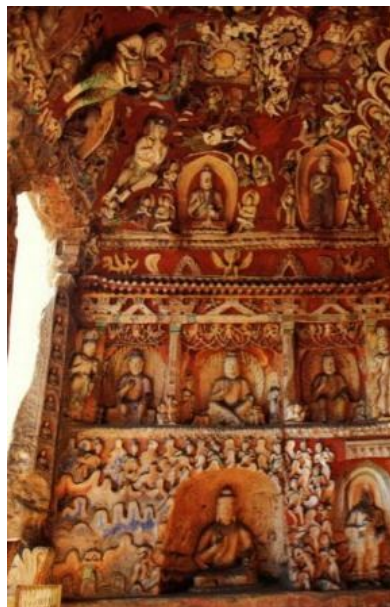
<sup>318</sup> 《魏書·樂志》：「太和初，高祖垂心雅古，務正音聲。時司樂上書，典章有闕，求集中祕羣官議定其事，并訪吏民，有能體解古樂者，與之修廣器數，甄立名品，以諧八音。詔『可』。雖經眾議，於時卒無洞曉聲律者，樂部不能立，其事彌缺。然方樂之制及四夷歌舞，稍增列于太樂。」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@21^529870665^807^^^5020201000030015^1@@43247533>

<sup>319</sup> Sun, *A Study of the Historical Music Records of the Two Tangs*, 159.

received the resulting blend of *hu*-Han song and dance (*huan gewu*) well.<sup>320</sup> The twin caves No. 9 and 10 of the Yungang Grottoes were music caves (Figure 12), built by Emperor Xiaowen's favorite eunuch, Qian'er Qing in 484.<sup>321</sup> In these caves were many devas and *apsaras* playing musical instruments and dancing. By the time of the construction of Longmen Grottoes, music and dance were already prevalent in the caves. The Nunnery of Happy View (Jingle si) mentioned the rhythmical and breathtaking harmony of stringed and pipe instruments to which dancers danced, and singers sang.<sup>322</sup>

At the time of the "great fast" (six monthly fast days, *posadha*), music performed by women artists was often provided: the sound of singing enveloped the beams, while dancers' sleeves slowly whirled in enchanting harmony with the reverberating notes of stringed and pipe instruments. It was rhythmical and breathtaking.<sup>323</sup>



<sup>320</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 110.

<sup>321</sup> 山西省文物工作委员会 Working Committee on Cultural Artifacts in Shanxi Province and 山西雲岡石窟文物保管所 Shanxi Yungang Grottoes Cultural Artifacts Protection Agency, *Yungang Grottoes 雲岡石窟* (Beijing: Wen wu chu ban she 文物出版社, 1977), 7.

<sup>322</sup> 《洛陽城內伽藍記卷第一》：「至於大齋。常設女樂。歌聲繞梁。舞袖徐轉。絲管寥亮。諧妙入神。」 [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_001.htm)

<sup>323</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 52.

Figure 12 Yungang Cave of Music<sup>324</sup>

The return of music and dance could have led to a reappearance of processions. Buddhist festivals gave the Chinese audience another opportunity to revel in *baixi* performances. The descriptions of variety shows accompanying Buddha's birthday processions in Northern Wei Luoyang implied a celebration of the revival of music and dance, as well as a return to the prosperous days of Han China. I list below descriptions of these processional performances that appeared similar to Han processions seen in Figure 4 and Figure 8.

The Ch'ang-chiu Temple (Temple of the Prolonger of Autumn) ... As a rule, this statue would be carried out [of the temple] and put on parade on the fourth day of the fourth month, behind such [man-made] animals as pi-hsieh and lions. [Variety shows would be held, featuring] sword-eaters, fire-spitters, galloping horses, flagstaff climbers, and rope-walkers—all being [demonstrations] of unusual skills. Their spectacular techniques and bizarre costumes were unmatched in the capital. Wherever the statue stopped, spectators would encircle it like a wall. Stumbling and trampling on each other, people in the crowd often suffered casualties.<sup>325, 326</sup>

The Chao-i Nunnery (Nunnery of the Exemplar) ... On the seventh day of the fourth month, [the three statues] were always carried to the Ching-ming Monastery (Bright Prospect Monastery) where they were habitually met by three others housed there. [On that occasion] the display of rich music and shows was comparable to that of Liu Teng's [Ch'ang-ch'iu Temple].<sup>327, 328</sup>

In the Tsung-sheng Temple ... The skillful games and miscellaneous music performed here were second in excellence only to those in Liu Teng's [Ch'ang-ch'iu Temple]. Men and women living in the eastern section of the city often came to this temple to watch the shows.<sup>329, 330</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Guo, Song, and Feng, *World Heritage Sites in China*, 239.

<sup>325</sup> 《洛陽伽藍記》卷第一：「長秋寺 ... 四月四日。此像常出。辟邪師子導引其前。吞刀吐火騰驤一面。綵幢上索詭譎不常。奇伎異服冠於都市。像停之處。觀者如堵。迭相踐躍。常有死人。」  
[http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_001.htm)

<sup>326</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 46.

<sup>327</sup> 《洛陽伽藍記》卷第一：「昭儀尼寺 ... 四月七日。常出詣景明。景明三像恒出迎之。伎樂之盛與劉騰相比。」  
[http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_001.htm)

<sup>328</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 53–54.

<sup>329</sup> 《洛陽城東伽藍記》卷第二：「宗聖寺 ... 妙伎雜樂。亞於劉騰。城東士女。多來此寺觀看也。」  
[http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_002.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_002.htm)

<sup>330</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 72–73.

On this auspicious day, each temple put forth spectacular shows to entertain and attract crowds. Again, Luoyang was the ideal location for the display of the revival of music and dance because it was where rules of music and propriety (*liyue*) began. Soon after the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century – 771 BCE) set up its capital in Luoyang, Zhou Gong established the rites for Zhou.<sup>331</sup> Music harmonized heaven and earth while propriety established order for people.<sup>332</sup> Since the Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century – 256 BCE), music and propriety played an important social role in maintaining hierarchy and governance. At the same time, Silk Road access had introduced to Luoyang foreign performers, music and dance. Northern Wei continued this tradition by encouraging temples to stage performances and participate in massive processions that demonstrated the unique blend of both local and foreign cultures.

In addition to music, dances had political and religious significance. During sacrificial ceremonies, the first dance performed was the dance of Peaceful Beginning, made in 201 BCE and adapted from an Eastern Zhou (770 – 256 BCE) dance.<sup>333</sup> Emperor Wu of Zhou (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE) organized a *chengwu* (city dance) of eighty dancers.<sup>334</sup> The rites of dances reinforced the grandeur of the emperor during the Han Dynasty. During the reign of Emperor Gaozu of Han (r. 206 – 194 BCE), children of high officials between twelve and thirty years old performed three dances to commemorate the achievements of the dynasty's founder.<sup>335</sup> During the Northern Wei, starting from the emperor, everyone celebrated a timely revival of music and dance, as

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<sup>331</sup> 《史記·樂書》：「樂者，天地之和也；禮者，天地之序也。和，故百物皆化；序，故群物皆別。樂由天作，禮以地制。過制則亂，過作則暴。明於天地，然後能興禮樂也。」

<http://ctext.org/shiji/yue-shu>

<sup>332</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 76.

<sup>333</sup> Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, 2:269.

<sup>334</sup> Sun, *A Study of the Historical Music Records of the Two Tangs*, 110.

<sup>335</sup> Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, 2:269.

well as the successful introduction of an innovative blend of Han and *hu* music. The monarch offered his imperial performers to perform in the public parades that accompanied the image of the Flourishing Prospect Nunnery (Jingxing nisi).<sup>336</sup>

The Ching-hsing Nunnery (Flourishing Prospect Nunnery ... When the [carriage-held] image was on parade, the emperor as a rule would order one hundred yu-lin guards to carry it, with the accompanying music and variety shows all provided for by the court.<sup>337</sup>

The music, dance, and carriages in the Buddha's birthday parades indicated that the sinification program of Northern Wei was not a straightforward unilateral assimilation of Han Chinese culture by the foreign Xianbei steppe people. Northern Wei rulers enjoyed music from the Western Regions; Emperor Xuanwu was renowned for his love of *pipa*, harp and other *hu* musical instruments.<sup>338</sup> Building on familiar Han Chinese festive elements, Northern Wei reinforced the blending of indigenous and foreign ideas to make for a distinctively Northern Wei display. Chinese also received influences from Western Regions regarding their literature, architecture, art, music and dance.<sup>339</sup> Not only did bilateral assimilation create a unique cultural blend atop a familiar paradigm of public processions, it also proved that the so-called Northern Wei sinification was also nomadicization of Han Chinese.

### 3.4 FOREIGN INNOVATIONS

While sharing a common idiom of public processions, a dialogue proceeded between the Buddha's birthday festival and native customs. Unlike the Egyptian

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<sup>336</sup> 《洛陽城東伽藍記》卷第二：「景興尼寺 ... 像出之日。常詔羽林一百人舉此像。絲竹雜伎皆由旨給。」[http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_002.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_002.htm)

<sup>337</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 77–78.

<sup>338</sup> Wang, *A Study of the Yan Music and Lyrics of Sui-Tang and Five Dynasties Period*, 33.

<sup>339</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 188.

Ptolemaia and Indian Easter processions that built on familiar image processions, there were fewer similarities between Buddhist birthday parades and Chinese processions. Hence, the justification and symbolism of the processions were important. Acceptance of these foreign ideas constituted a large part of the assimilation process.

### **3.4.1 THE BIRTH STORY**

When Buddhism moved out of its land of origin, one of the first things that missionaries needed to do was to establish the identity of their religion's founder. An early complete biography of the Buddha was Aśvaghōṣa's *Buddhacarita* (*Acts of the Buddha*), translated into the Chinese as *Fosuo xingzan* in 414 – 426 during the Northern Liang Dynasty of the Sixteen Kingdoms.<sup>340</sup> Since Aśvaghōṣa was likely a monk poet serving under Gandhāra's Kaniṣka during the second century CE, it was possible that this Sanskrit masterpiece in twenty-eight chapters served to introduce the Buddha in order to promote the faith in Gandhāra. Although Speyer pointed out that as many as twenty-four stanzas could be missing between the birth scene and the next act,<sup>341</sup> the extant portion still displays the author's wish to highlight the special attributes of the Buddha. Since *Buddhacarita*, Buddhists in South Asia had compiled many other versions, such as the *Lalitavistara* (possibly written in Nepal)<sup>342</sup> in the third century. Dharmarakṣa translated this text into the Chinese as *Puyao jing* in 308 during the Western Jin Dynasty. The Pāli *Nikāya*, written earlier than the *Buddhacarita*, contains few references to the birth of the

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<sup>340</sup> G. H. Johnston and E. H. Johnston, *Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita Or Acts of The Buddha* (Calcutta: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998), abstract.

<sup>341</sup> J. S. Speyer, "Some Critical Notes on Aśvaghosa's Buddhacarita," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (January 1, 1914): 107.

<sup>342</sup> Thomas William Rhys Davids, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Some Points in the History of Indian Buddhism* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1881), 197.

Buddha. The *Mahāpadāna Sutta* (*The Great Discourse on Lineage*, D.II.14)<sup>343</sup> gives a semblance of the Śākyamuni's birth through Buddha Vipassī,<sup>344</sup> while Ananda describes the wonderful and marvelous birth of the Buddha in the *Acchariya-abhūta Sutta* (*Wonderful and Marvelous*, M.III.120).<sup>345</sup> The *Nikāyas* were available in the Chinese from the fourth century. These early texts spawned a long list of canonical references (in Appendices D and E) that Buddhist missionaries in China used to introduce their founder.

Birth stories were uncommon in China prior to the introduction of Buddha's birthday. Missionaries in China probably faced some of the same challenges as missionaries in the early days of establishing Buddhism in Gandhāra and other steppe regions. Through a process of social, cultural, and literary "domestication," Buddhists documented the birth stories, *jātakas* and *avadānas* in their region.<sup>346</sup> Over the centuries, Buddhist missionaries transmitted and translated these stories to a Chinese audience. The various versions of the Buddha's birth stories found in the Chinese canon were variations based on the *Nikāya*, *Buddhacarita* and *Lalitavistara*. These birth stories were among the first documented accounts of births in China.

Some important themes in Buddha's birth stories pointed to the importance of this religious founder. First, the bodhisattva chose his parents, especially the mother, and the circumstances of the birth with great care. The *Buddhacarita* began by describing the

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<sup>343</sup> Maurice Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 203–206.

<sup>344</sup> Donald K. Swearer, "Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa's Interpretation of the Buddha," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64, no. 2 (July 1, 1996): 318.

<sup>345</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Wisdom Publications, 1995), 980–983.

<sup>346</sup> Anne Elizabeth Monius, *Imagining a Place for Buddhism: Literary Culture and Religious Community in Tamil-Speaking South India* (New York: Oxford University Press US, 2001).



virtues of the king, queen, and kingdom of Kapila in eighteen stanzas.<sup>347</sup> In the *Lalitavistara*, Chapter III dedicates itself to describing the sixty-four characteristics of the dynasty and thirty-two characteristics of the mother of the Buddha-to-be.<sup>348</sup> In Chapter V, the bodhisattva prepares for descent after King Śuddhodana's palace shows the eight pre-ordained signs.<sup>349</sup> Chapter VI describes the descent of the bodhisattva into Queen Māyādevī's womb in the form of a yellowish-white elephant, having six tusks, crimson veins, golden teeth and perfect parts, together with the divine preparation of the bodhisattva's birth.<sup>350</sup> Knowing that this would be his last (re-)birth and that he was destined to be the Buddha, the bodhisattva designed this last birth with care.

Second, the Buddha-to-be had a propitious birth. According to *Buddhacarita*, “the constellation Puṣya was auspicious.”<sup>351</sup> Accompanying the birth were the shaking of the earth, scattering of lotuses and water lilies from the sky, pleasant breezes, and many other amazing sights in the garden.<sup>352</sup> One of the earliest Chinese texts to describe the Buddha's birth was *Xiuxing benqi jing*, translated in 197 by Kang Mengxiang during Eastern Han. According to this text, on the seventh night of the fourth month, all flowers were in bloom and the stars were bright.<sup>353</sup> Chapter VII of *Lalitavistara* describes thirty-two auspicious omens that ushered in the bodhisattva's birth.<sup>354</sup> Another early text, *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, translated in 223 – 253 during the Three Kingdoms (220 – 280),

<sup>347</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa”, 1977, 7–9, <http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Texts-and-Translations/Buddhacarita/index.htm>.

<sup>348</sup> Rājendralāla Mitra, tran., *The Lalitavistara or Memoirs of the Early Life of Śākya Siṃha* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1881), 32–46.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 73–76.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 94–111.

<sup>351</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 11.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 13–14.

<sup>353</sup> 《修行本起經》卷 1〈菩薩降身品〉：「十月已滿太子身成，到四月七日，夫人出遊，過流民樹下，眾花開化、明星出時，夫人攀樹枝，便從右脇生墮地。」(CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c11-13)

<sup>354</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 118–119.

described the thirty-two auspicious omens accompanied by the illumination of the thirty-two heavens and eighteen hells.<sup>355</sup> In the *Abhiniṣkramaṇa(sūtra)* or *Yichu pusa benqi jing* translated between 280 and 312 during Western Jin, heaven and earth shook, and 12,000 heavens and earths were illuminated at the moment of the bodhisattva's birth.<sup>356</sup> These early descriptions suggested that divine blessing accompanied this unusual birth.

Finally, the birth was supernatural, not one normally associated with any other human being. Since the Buddha represented the “ideal of awakening of wisdom and practicing compassion,”<sup>357</sup> the birth caused no pain or illness to the mother. He ushered forth from her right side, not “the natural way.”<sup>358</sup> To accentuate the miraculous birth of a baby, “born full of wisdom” and with perfect radiance and beauty, *Buddhacarita* added that this boy was able to speak and walk seven steps immediately after birth. In *Lalitavistara*, the narrative was similar, with the bodhisattva born “with full memory.”<sup>359</sup> Śakra and Brahma received the baby and the *naga* kings, Nanda and Upananda, bathed

<sup>355</sup> 《太子瑞應本起經》卷 1:「上至二十八天，下至十八地獄，極佛境界莫不大明。當此日夜，天降瑞應，有三十二種：一者、地為大動坵墟皆平，二者、道巷自淨臭處更香，三者、國界枯樹皆生華葉，四者、苑園自然生奇甘果，五者、陸地生蓮華大如車輪，六者、地中伏藏悉自發出，七者、中藏寶物開現精明，八者、篋笥衣被[\*]披在桯架，九者、眾川萬流停住澄清，十者、風霽雲除空中清明，十一、天為四面細雨澤香，十二、明月神珠懸於殿堂，十三、宮中火燭為不復用，十四、日月星辰皆住不行，十五、沸星下現侍太子生，十六、釋梵寶蓋彌覆宮上，十七、八方之神捧寶來獻，十八、天百味食自然在前，十九、寶甕萬口懸盛甘露，二十、天神牽七寶交露車至，二十一、五百白象子自然羅住殿前，二十二、五百白師子子從雪山出羅住城門，二十三、天諸姝女現妓女肩，二十四、諸龍王女繞宮而住，二十五、天萬玉女把孔雀尾拂現宮牆上，二十六、天諸姝女持金瓶盛香汁列住空中侍，二十七、天樂皆下同時俱作，二十八、地獄皆休毒痛不行，二十九、毒虫隱伏吉鳥翔鳴，三十、漁獵怨惡一時慈心，三十一、境內孕婦產者悉男，聾盲瘡癰癰殘百疾皆悉除愈，三十二、樹神人現低首禮侍。」(CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c1-p. 474, a2)

<sup>356</sup> 《異出菩薩本起經》卷 1:「太子生時，上至三十三天下至十六泥犁，傍行八極，萬二千天地，皆為大明，天地為之振動，乃下為兒。」(CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a21-24)

<sup>357</sup> Terry L. Burden, “Review of The Buddha and the Christ: Exploration in Buddhist and Christian Origins by L.D. Lefebure. Orbis Books, 1993,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64, no. 3 (October 1, 1996): 664–665.

<sup>358</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa,” 12.

<sup>359</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 123.

him.<sup>360</sup> In this narrative, the bodhisattva walked seven steps in each of six directions (east, south, west, north, downwards, and upwards) and proclaimed his vows.<sup>361</sup> In the *Mohe chatou jing* translated in 388 – 407 during Western Qin of the Sixteen Kingdoms, besides Brahma and Śakra, the four heavenly kings also joined in the receipt of the baby bodhisattva and offered flowers and fragrant water to bathe the future Buddha.<sup>362</sup> The Chinese were introduced to a religious founder that was able to choose his (re)-birth, had a supernatural and auspicious birth, and was blessed by the protection of Brahma, Śakra, many deities, and other divine beings. Not only did Buddhism introduce birth stories to China, it also presented graphic details of a baby's birth (from conception through incubation and birth to bath) to which the Chinese were unaccustomed.

The significance of this birth story could be seen by its later incorporation into Chinese texts. One such text suspected to be apocryphal, the *Zhoushu yiji*, indicated that during the reign of King Zhao of Zhou, on the eighth day of the fourth month, the skies in the west brightened their way to the east signifying that a sage was born in the west and his teachings would reach China a thousand years later.<sup>363</sup> This sage was none other than the Buddha. The *Zhoushu yiji* remained a highly cited book, even up to the Northern Wei Dynasty.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 123–124.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 124–125.

<sup>362</sup> 《佛說摩訶剎頭經》卷1：「太子生時天地皆為大動。第七梵天。第二忉利天王釋。及第一四天王。皆來下持十二種香湯雜華。用浴太子身。」(CBETA, T16, no. 696, p. 797, c12-14)

<sup>363</sup> 《護國司南抄》卷1：「客準《周書異記》云：周昭王二十四年甲寅歲四月八日，神光五色貫入太微，先遍西方，漸入東夏。問太史蘇由曰：是何祥也？由曰：有大聖人生在西域，一千年外聲教被此。鑄石理之，在於西郊。佛生時也。」(CBETA, ZW07, no. 61, p. 92, a3-6)

<sup>364</sup> Chuan Yin 傳印, “About the Buddhist Calendar 關於佛歷紀年,” *The Buddhist Academy of China* 中國佛學院, April 3, 2009, <http://www.zgfyx.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=579>.

This birth story revealed the religious mentality of the people from Gandhāra to China, along the land-based Silk Road. It was important to prove to the people that a new leader who lived more than five hundred years ago in a foreign land had supernatural powers that came from wisdom and compassion from prior lives. Since his karma was sufficient to guarantee that this would be his last rebirth, there were no more occasions to meet this Buddha again. In the *Buddhacarita*, the bodhisattva said, “I am born for supreme knowledge, for the welfare of the world, thus this is my last birth.”<sup>365</sup> After his death, Buddhist missionaries carried the profound wisdom of the Buddha to foreign lands. Exercising expedient means (*upāya*), the early missionaries emphasized the auspicious, deliberate, and divine nature of the Buddha’s last birth. These assurances were important to introduce the character of the Buddha, and to win over devotees in the early days.

Yet, this Buddha with superhuman abilities was born a human being. One commonly cited proof of the historicity of the Buddha was Queen Māyādevī’s carriage of the baby for a full term of ten months. In the *Acchhariya-abhuta Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the “Bodhisatta’s mother gave birth to him after carrying him in her womb for exactly ten months.”<sup>366</sup> Besides biological evidence, literary texts such as the *Buddhacarita* also mentioned King Śuddhodhana’s adherence to cultural and religious customs.

When ten days were fulfilled after his son's birth, with his thoughts kept under restraint, and filled with excessive joy, he offered for his son most elaborate sacrifices to the gods with muttered prayers, oblations, and all kinds of auspicious ceremonies. And he himself gave to the Brāhmins for his son's welfare cows full of milk, with no traces of infirmity, golden-horned and with strong healthy calves, to the full number of a hundred thousand. Then he, with his soul under strict restraint, having performed all kinds of ceremonies which rejoiced his heart, on a fortunate day, in an auspicious

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<sup>365</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 12.

<sup>366</sup> Ñāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 982.

moment, gladly determined to enter his city. Then the queen with her babe having worshipped the gods for good fortune, occupied a costly palanquin made of elephants' tusks, filled with all kinds of white flowers, and blazing with gems. Having made his wife with her child enter first into the city, accompanied by the aged attendants, the king himself also advanced, saluted by the hosts of the citizens, as Indra entering heaven, saluted by the immortals.<sup>367</sup>

In addition to affirming the Buddha, the Gandhāran initiative written by Aśvaghoṣa and possibly supported by Emperor Kaniṣka also endorsed King Śuddhodhana and Queen Māyādevī strongly. From *Buddhacarita* to *Lalitavistara*, the royal family was virtuous, and had both power and exorbitant wealth. The kingdom represented an ideal state, experiencing a prosperous economy and stable politics. Hence, the re-enactment of the Buddha's birth implied both sacred and secular endorsement for a new religious leader and a virtuous regime that enjoyed power and wealth.

### 3.4.2 THE BIRTH DATE

Eliade viewed rituals as a re-enactment of sacred prototypes or past events to preserve and transmit the foundations of society.<sup>368</sup> The Buddha's birth story offered opportunities for recalling the values of compassion and wisdom, as well as for collective support of the governing power. It was also sacred time for devotees to re-live the joy of a sage's birth and to celebrate the dawn of a new age. If the Buddha's birth stories were to be re-enacted on a regular basis, an appropriate day for this to happen would be the birthday of the Buddha. Birth commemoration would make for a convenient annual event. Searching for a birth date led me to notice a conspicuous difference between the Sanskrit version of *Buddhacarita* and the Chinese version in *Fosuo xingzan*. The Chinese version added a birth date of the Buddha-to-be as the eighth day of the fourth

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<sup>367</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa," 20–21.

<sup>368</sup> Gnana Stanley Jaya Kumar, *Religion and Society* (New Delhi: M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1996), 98.

month. The Northern Liang translator, Dharmakṣema, could have felt that the Chinese audience then appreciated the birth date enough to add extra data to the translated text.

Then one day by the king's permission the queen, having a great longing in her mind, went with the inmates of the gynaeceum into the garden Lumbinī. As the queen supported herself by a bough which hung laden with a weight of flowers, the Bodhisattva suddenly came forth, cleaving open her womb. At that time the constellation Puṣya was auspicious, and from the side of the queen, who was purified by her vow, her son was born for the welfare of the world, without pain and without illness.<sup>369</sup>

Dharmakṣema tr., *Fosuo xingzan jing* (translation of *Buddhacarita*):  
On the eighth day of the fourth month, a clear and harmonized day, and the Queen had observed vegetarian fasts and virtuous actions, the bodhisattva came forth from her right side. Her son was born for the welfare of the world [with great commiseration for liberating the world], without pain and without illness.<sup>370</sup>

The *Lalitavistara* and its Chinese translation, *Puyao jing*, did not ascribe a birth date to the bodhisattva. The *Nikāyas* also did not assign a birth date to the auspicious occasion. From these observations, I posit that the birth date was an afterthought for the convenience of annual celebrations.

It is still unknown when or where the first Buddha's birthday celebration took place. As such, I am unable to determine the derivation of the date. The only certainty is that there is no agreement on a particular date. While South Asians typically celebrate the birth of the Buddha on the full moon day of the *Vaiśāka* month today, Faxian's *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* mentioned that people in Magadha held image processions on the eighth day of the second month in honor of the Buddha's birth.<sup>371</sup>

Xuanzang's *Record of Regions West of the Great Tang* (*Datang xiyu ji*) in 648 CE

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<sup>369</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa," 10.

<sup>370</sup> 《佛所行讚》卷1〈1生品〉：「時四月八日，清和氣調適，齋戒修淨德，菩薩右脇生，大悲救世間，不令母苦惱」(CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a21)

<sup>371</sup> Faxian, *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms: Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fā-hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon, A.d. 399-414, in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline. Translated and Annotated with a Korean Recension of the Chinese Text*, trans. James Legge (Clarendon Press, 1886), 79.

documented celebrations on both the fifteenth and the eighth days in India.<sup>372</sup> In Khotan, Faxian noted that celebrations were held from the first to the fourteenth day of the fourth month in the fourth century.<sup>373</sup> Therefore, between the fourth and seventh centuries, Buddhists in both South and Central Asia had not standardized Buddha's birth date yet. Nevertheless, pilgrims noticed these dates in their travels and incorporated them into the Chinese Buddhist calendar.

During the Southern and Northern dynasties, Chinese festival and canonical records did not confirm the date of the Buddha's birth either. There were at least two birth dates of the Buddha up to the Northern Wei Dynasty. A study of all texts in the Korean *Tripitaka* up to the Northern Wei showed that seventeen assigned the birth date to the eighth day of the fourth month, while two texts considered eighth day of the second month to be the birth date. Table 10 of Appendix D gives a listing of these canonical references and excerpts of these texts. The first text, *Xiuxing benqi jing*, available in 197 used the eighth day of the fourth month. Most Fangshan steles dedicated on Buddha's birthday carried the date of "eighth day of the fourth month." *Guoqu xianzai yingguo jing* of the Southern Song Dynasty (420 – 479) was the first text to combine both dates: the bodhisattva entered the mother's womb on the eighth day of the fourth month, and after ten months, he was born on the eighth day of the second month.<sup>374</sup> Judging from the frequency used in the Buddhist canon, Chinese Buddhists showed a tendency to prefer the eighth day of the fourth month.

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<sup>372</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 641.

<sup>373</sup> Faxian, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 18–19.

<sup>374</sup> 《過去現在因果經》卷1：「以四月八日明星出時，降神母胎...十月滿足，於二月八日日初出時，夫人見彼園中，有一大樹，名曰無憂，花色香鮮，枝葉分布，極為茂盛；即舉右手，欲牽摘之；菩薩漸漸從右脇出。」(CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 624, a23-p. 625, a24)

The birth date was not the only subject of inquiry. Mori Shōji's detailed analysis of the Buddha's biographical information<sup>375</sup> revealed that northern traditions (Mahāyana) generally dated the Buddha's birth, leaving home, attaining Buddhahood, and *nirvāṇa* as eighth day of the second month (*vaiśākha*), while the southern tradition (Theravada) considered the Buddha's birth, attainment of Buddhahood and *nirvāṇa* to be on the fifteenth day of the *vaiśākha* month.<sup>376</sup> The *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* was an exception to this rule: the Buddha entered the mother's womb, left home, and attained Buddhahood on the eighth day but entered *nirvāṇa* on the fifteenth because the moon "neither waxes nor wanes" on the fifteenth.<sup>377</sup> Hence, the dates for many of the biographical events of the Buddha had remained uncertain during these early years.

The controversies were so big that canonical materials tried to settle the differences. The earliest to appear was Western Jin's *Foshuo guanxi fo xingxiang jing* that affirmatively stated that all Buddhas will be born, leave home, attain Buddhahood, and enter *nirvāṇa* on the eighth day of the fourth month.<sup>378</sup>

All Buddhas of the ten directions are born in the middle of the night on the 8th day of the 4th month; all Buddhas of the ten directions take leave of their homes and enter the mountains to study the Way in the middle of the night on the 8th day of the 4th month; all Buddhas of the ten directions attain Buddhahood in the middle of the night on the 8th day of the 4th month; all Buddhas of the ten directions achieve *nirvāṇa* in the middle of the night on the 8th day of the 4th month. The Buddha said, 'The 8th day of the 4th month is chosen for its being on the cusp of spring and summer, when perils and transgressions are all extinguished. The myriad beings all come to life, while poisonous pneuma are not yet abroad. Neither cold nor hot, the air of the

<sup>375</sup> Mori Shōji, "The Birth, the Renunciation, the Enlightenment, and the Parinibbāna of Sakyamuni -- on the Dates and His Ages," *A Study of the Biography of Sakya-muni Based on the Early Buddhist Scriptural Sources*, 2010, <http://www.sakya-muni.jp/english/0001/0099monograph-series-no1/1-03article03/>.

<sup>376</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 260–261.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 263 and 266.

<sup>378</sup> 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》卷1：「佛告諸天人民。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時生。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時出家。入山學道。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時成佛。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時而般涅槃。佛言。所以用四月八日者。以春夏之際殃罪悉畢。萬物普生毒氣未行。不寒不熱時氣和適。正是佛生之日。」(CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c15-22)



season is harmonious and agreeable. This is the very day on which a Buddha is born. All good men and women, after the Buddha's passage to *nirvāṇa*, should dwell deep in their hearts on the strength of the Buddha's immeasurable merit. By washing an image of the Buddha as if he were still alive, one attains immeasurable good fortune, beyond all reckoning.<sup>379</sup>

This assertion that all Buddhas were born on the same day: eighth day of the fourth month, did not conclude the differences. Fifty years later, *Sarvāstivādinayavibhāṣā*, translated in the Qin kingdom, stated that the Buddha was born and enlightened on the eighth day of the second month and he turned the Dharma wheel and entered *nirvāṇa* on the eighth day of the eighth month.<sup>380</sup> Suffice to say, the birth date remained inconsistent up to the Northern Wei period.

In practice, Chinese in different places at different times had celebrated the Buddha's birthday on either date. In the *Book of Wei* and the *Record*, Northern Wei emperors celebrated on the eighth day of the fourth month. In the Southern Liang Dynasty (502 – 557) *Record of the Year and Seasons of Jing-Chu* (*Jingchu suishi ji*), the people of Jingchu commemorated the Buddha's birth with image processions on the eighth day of the second month and held Buddha bathing ceremonies on the eighth day of the fourth month. Even up until the Sui Dynasty (581 – 618), the *Precious Canon of the Jade Candle* (*Yüzhu baodian*) contained ambivalent reference to city processions, possibly assigning the Buddha's birth commemoration to the eighth day of the second lunar month.<sup>381</sup> Hsiao studied the practices in China over the dynasties and concluded that prior to and during the northern dynasties, Chinese tended to celebrate on the eighth day of the fourth month. From southern Liang to the beginning of Liao (907 – 1125),

<sup>379</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 306–307.

<sup>380</sup> 《薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙》卷 2：「佛以二月八日弗星現時。初成等正覺。亦以二月八日弗星出時生。以八月八日弗星出時轉法輪。以八月八日弗星出時取般涅槃。」(CBETA, T23, no. 1440, p. 510, b21-24)

<sup>381</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 256.

southern Chinese celebrated on the eighth day of the second month.<sup>382</sup> In a dissertation on *Carnival Canons*, Chapman devoted his last chapter to the birth commemoration of the Buddha. In his analysis of the dating of Buddha's birth, Chapman concluded that prior to the sixth century, the critical biographical events of the Buddha took place on either the eighth day of the second or fourth month, except for his *nirvāṇa* on the fifteenth day of the second month.<sup>383</sup> The different versions of birth dates in canonical texts inevitably led to varying practices.

Up until the Northern Wei Dynasty, one major canonical difference was the month. The reason for this difference could be one of calendric translation. While the *Vaiśāka* month was the second Hindu lunar month, it was the fourth month in the Chinese calendar. Some translators could have kept to the Hindu calendar while others could have translated according to the local calendar. The *Foshuo guanxi foxingxiang jing* of Western Jin alluded to the perfect climate of the fourth month as the reason for spring to be the ideal time for the bodhisattva's birth.<sup>384</sup>

The Buddha said, 'The 8th day of the 4th month is chosen for its being on the cusp of spring and summer, when perils and transgressions are all extinguished. The myriad beings all come to life, while poisonous pneuma are not yet abroad. Neither cold nor hot, the air of the season is harmonious and agreeable. This is the very day on which a Buddha is born.'<sup>385</sup>

Besides calendric and climatic considerations, there could also be another reason for the overwhelming canonical support of the fourth month. According to the *Treatise*

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<sup>382</sup> Yu Chuan 蕭玉娟 Hsiao, "A Research on Folk Festival and Buddhist Culture: Take Buddha's Birthday, the Eighth Day of the Fourth Month in Chinese Lunar Calendar as an Example 民俗節慶與佛教文化之探究: 以四月八日浴佛偈為例," *Tajen Journal* 大仁學報 36 (March 2010): 109.

<sup>383</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 284.

<sup>384</sup> 290-306 西晉法炬 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》卷 1: 「佛言。所以用四月八日者。以春夏之際殃罪悉畢。萬物普生毒氣未行。不寒不熱時氣和適。正是佛生之日。」 (CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c10-22)

<sup>385</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 306-307.

on *Ritual Observances* (a part of the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*), summer began in the fourth month and it was the time of the year for the emperor to appoint imperial heirs-apparent<sup>386</sup>, kings, and dukes.<sup>387, 388</sup> Since the bodhisattva was born with the destiny to be either a universal monarch or a Buddha, Chinese emperors could better associate with celebrations in the fourth month. The Tuoba Wei chieftains used to make sacrifices to *Tian* in the western suburbs during the fourth month, avoiding conflicts with other major sacrifices by Han Chinese.<sup>389</sup> Hence, the fourth month became a convenient period in the Chinese soil, having little contention with other carnivals or agricultural activities. In the fifth century *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing*, King Śuddhodhana announced Prince Siddharta as the crowned prince (imperial heir) on his birthday of the eighth day of the second month.<sup>390</sup> The sixth century Southern Liang compilation by Sengyou, *Shijia shipu* (*Genealogical Records of the Sakya Clan*), contained a similar segment.<sup>391</sup>

*Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing*:

One the eighth day of the second month, all the kings, priests, and brahmans gathered. Banners flew, incense offered, flowers scattered, and music pervaded ... At this time, King Śuddhodana bathed the prince's head and gave him a seal made of seven

<sup>386</sup> 《後漢書》·〈禮儀志〉第五：「拜皇太子之儀：百官會，位定，謁者引皇太子當禦坐殿下，北面；司空當太子西北，東面立。讀策書畢，中常侍持皇太子璽綬東向授太子。太子再拜，三稽首。謁者贊皇太子臣某，中謁者稱制曰“可”。三公升階上殿，賀壽萬歲。因大赦天下。供賜禮畢，罷。」 from <http://www.xysa.com/xysafz/book/houhanshu/t-015.htm>

<sup>387</sup> 《後漢書》·〈禮儀志〉第五：「拜諸侯王公之儀：百官會，位定，謁者引光祿勳前。謁者引當拜者前，當坐伏殿下。光祿勳前，一拜，舉手曰：“制詔其以某為某。”讀策書畢，謁者稱臣某再拜。尚書郎以璽印綬付侍御史。侍御史前，東面立，授璽印綬。王公再拜頓首三。贊謁者曰：“某王臣某新封，某公某初除，謝。”中謁者報謹謝。贊者立曰：“皇帝為公興。”重坐，受策者拜謝，起就位。供賜禮畢。罷。」 from <http://www.xysa.com/xysafz/book/houhanshu/t-015.htm>

<sup>388</sup> Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China*, 19.

<sup>389</sup> Yongjun 楊永俊 Yang, “The Tuoba Xianbei: Their Ritual of Sacrifice to Heaven Held at the Western Suburbs 論拓跋鮮卑的西郊祭天,” *Ethnic Studies 民族研究*, no. 2 (2002): 52.

<sup>390</sup> 《過去現在因果經》卷 2：「至二月八日，諸餘國王并及仙人婆羅門等，皆悉雲集。懸繒幡蓋，燒香散花，鳴鍾擊鼓，作諸伎樂 ... 時王即以灌太子頂，以七寶印而用付之，又擊大鼓，高聲唱言：『今立薩婆悉達以為太子。』」 (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 629, a8-21)

<sup>391</sup> 《釋迦氏譜》卷 1：「時王會議應立太子。以二月八日具物盛四大海水。諸仙諸人各各頂戴已。授與父王便灌太子頂。以寶印付之。擊鼓宣令言。今立薩婆悉達以為太子。空天八部同聲讚言善哉。諸八國王所生太子。亦同時立。」 (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 90, b10-15)

precious jewels. After sounding the drums, the King announced in a loud voice, “Now I declare Prince Siddharta as the crowned prince.”

*Shijia shipu*:

At that time, the King determined that it was time to announce his imperial heir. On the eighth day of the second month, all priests sincerely offered water from the four seas to the King for him to bathe the prince’s head. The King gave a precious seal to the Prince. At the sound of the drum, the King announced that Prince Siddharta would be his crowned prince. The eight demi-gods sang praises simultaneously. The kings of the eight kingdoms also announced their crown princes at the same time.

Since the Buddha selected his last birth in a royal family, it is little wonder that both the birth story and the birth date of the Buddha had close association with royalty. Putting aside the question of whether the second month in the text was equivalent to the fourth Chinese lunar month, even in the two texts that agreed on the crowning of the prince on the eighth day of the second month, they did not agree on the birth date. *Guoqu xianzai yingguo jing* had the Buddha born on the eighth day of the second month while *Shijia shipu* used the same day on the fourth month. The controversies over calendric systems in use in India and China, ritual expedience, and preferences of Buddhists in terms of spreading out the biographical events of the Buddha’s life led to Chinese texts bearing different dates.<sup>392</sup> While South Asians eventually standardized on the full moon day of the *Vaiśāka* month, Chinese standardized on the eighth day of the fourth month. Both countries use the lunar month to commemorate the Buddha’s birthday. Suffice to say, Chinese finally opted to use the eighth day of the fourth lunar month although the eighth day was not a traditional date for Chinese festivals<sup>393</sup> nor for birthdays of any other Indian gods.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Chapman, “Carnival Canons,” 276–284.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>394</sup> The birthdays of Indian gods and heroes are Rama (ninth day of Chaitra), Mahavir (thirteenth day of Chaitra), Basava (third day of Vaishaka), Krishna (23<sup>rd</sup> day of Sravana), Ganesh (fourth day of Bhadrpada), and Nanak (full moon of Karthika).

The establishment of a birth date for the Buddha influenced local religions in China. Prior to the sixth century, Chinese hardly recognized or celebrated birthdays. Subsequently, Laozi acquired a birthdate sometime between the late Six Dynasties (220 – 589) and Tang Dynasty.<sup>395</sup> The earliest mention of Laozi's birthdate as the fifteenth day of the second month was in the preface to the *The Ascent of Laozi to the West to Transform the Barbarians* (*Laozi xisheng huahu jing, xushuo diyi*).<sup>396</sup> Eventually, many Daoist deities as well as eternal buddhas and bodhisattvas also acquired birth dates.

Buddhist missionaries in China did not stop at introducing birth stories to justify the supreme nature of the Buddha. They skillfully conceived of birthday commemoration according to canonical descriptions. Such sacred re-enactment not only brought Buddhists closer to their religious founder, but also served to establish the validity of a new religion in foreign soil. For periodic commemoration to take place, the birth date became important. Given the novelty of birthday commemorations in China, it is little wonder that during the early years, the method of annual observances and actual dates were still evolving. In spite of the initial confusion over the month, the eighth day remained consistent up to the Northern Wei Dynasty. Subsequently, Indians changed the date to full moon day of the *Vaiśāka* month while Chinese preserved the eighth day. A large part of the acculturation process in China was the adoption of the Buddha's birth date based on authoritative canonical texts, and the acceptance of birthday celebrations. Subsequently, even Chinese sages and deities started to acquire birthday celebrations and birth dates.

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<sup>395</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 320.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

### 3.4.3 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday commemorations for any Chinese human or deity were unknown in China prior to the third century.<sup>397</sup> Harsh living conditions meant that babies might not survive beyond their first month. Instead, a child's first month, hundred days, and first year were occasions for feasting. Ancient Chinese hardly remembered their birth dates, let alone celebrate birthdays. Traditionally, everyone turned a day older on the seventh day of the lunar New Year (Human Day), not on one's birthday.<sup>398</sup> Even in the divine realm, the description of a Daoist deity's descent to earth (as birth) became conceivable only during the Six Dynasties (220 – 589) and established in the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279).<sup>399</sup> Laozi's birthday first became a public holiday celebrated for three days under Emperor Wuzong of Tang (r. 840 – 846).<sup>400</sup> Such Chinese assignment of birth stories to their heroes reflected a form of reverse euhemerism.<sup>401</sup> The Buddha's birth story had influenced indigenous faiths.

While the birth of a male heir called for celebration in ancient China,<sup>402</sup> it certainly did not deserve annual celebration. In pre-Buddhist China, emperors received congratulations of longevity during New Year or after a military victory, not on the date of his birth.<sup>403</sup> Chapman highlighted that the Buddha's birthday celebrations created a “ritual community around a cult of personal biography,” eventually leading to the

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>400</sup> Julia Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China: The Heart of Chinese Wisdom* (Cambridge U.K. ; New York NY USA: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 223.

<sup>401</sup> Anne M. Birrell, “James Legge and the Chinese Mythological Tradition,” *History of Religions* 38, no. 4 (May 1, 1999): 349.

<sup>402</sup> Chapman, “Carnival Canons,” 252.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 205.

institution of the Emperor's birthday celebrations in the Tang dynasty.<sup>404</sup> In 729, Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty (r. 712 – 756) was the first emperor to declare the fifth day of the eighth lunar month as a three-day national holiday in commemoration of his birthday.<sup>405</sup> We know that this was the first time an emperor granted a holiday for the observance of birthdays from a passage documented in the Song Dynasty's *Cefu yuangui*.<sup>406</sup>

Let the ancient begin with me; this is no transgression of ritual propriety (li).<sup>407</sup>

While national celebration of an emperor's birth started in the eighth century in China, some emperors held sumptuous feasts on their birthdays. The same passage in *Cefu yuangui* began with the emperor inviting all his officials to his birthday feast. The Song Dynasty *Fozu tongji* recorded that Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei decreed Buddhist temples to perform rites on his birthday in 425 and 428, together with the building of Buddhist sanctuaries.<sup>408</sup> Although public celebrations were not common, emperors and nobility could have held private functions after Buddhism introduced the concept of birthday celebrations into China.

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid., iv.

<sup>405</sup> Bill Cooke, *Imperial China: The Art of the Horse in Chinese History: Exhibition Catalog* (Lexington, KY: Kentucky Horse Park, 2000), 54.

<sup>406</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 196.

<sup>407</sup> 《冊府元龜》：「開元十七年八月癸亥以降誕之日大置酒張樂宴百寮於花萼樓下終宴尚書左丞相源乾曜右丞相張說率文武百官等上。表曰：臣聞聖人出則日月記其初王澤深則風俗傳其後故少昊著流虹之感商湯本玄鳥之命孟夏有佛生之供仲春修道祖之追始樂原其義一也。伏惟開元神武皇帝陛下二氣合神九龍浴聖清明總於玉露爽朗冠於金天月惟仲秋日在端午常星不見之夜祥光照室之期群臣相賀曰：誕聖之辰也。焉可不以為嘉節乎！比夫曲水禊亭重陽射圃五日采線七夕粉筵豈同年而語也。臣等不勝大願請以八月五日為千秋節（臣欽。若等曰：誕聖節名始於此）著之甲令布於天下鹹令宴樂休假三日群臣以是日獻甘露醇酎上萬歲壽酒（臣欽。若等曰：上壽自此始）王公戚裏進金鏡綬帶士庶以絲結承露囊更相遺問村社作壽酒宴樂名為賽白帝報田神上明玄天光啟大聖下彰皇化垂無窮異域占風同見美俗帝手詔報曰：凡是節日，或以天氣推移或因人事表記八月五日當朕生辰感先聖之慶靈荷皇天之眷命卿等請為令節上獻嘉名勝地良遊清秋高興百方熟萬寶以成自我作古舉無越禮朝野同歡是為美事依卿來請宣付所司。」<http://wenjin.nlc.gov.cn/zjtj/zjtj/cfyg.html>

<sup>408</sup> 《佛祖統紀》卷 38：「二年。帝誕節詔於佛寺建祝壽道場（聖節道場之始）神慶元年（慶音加牡鹿）帝誕節詔天下佛寺並建道場。」（CBETA, T49, no. 2035, p. 354, a20-22）

The first public birth commemoration activities were Buddhist and they were lavish. As early as the reign of Emperor Xian of the Eastern Han Dynasty (r. 189 – 220), Buddhists had already used the Buddha's birthday festival as a means to attract crowds.<sup>409</sup> The earliest record of Buddha's birthday celebrations in China was in the *Record of the Three Kingdoms* about feasts offered for over 10,000 people along the streets during the period of Eastern Han Dynasty between 189 and 220.<sup>410</sup>

Whenever it was time to bathe the Buddha, many entertained with drinks and food along the streets for several *li*, over 10,000 people watched and partook in the feasts, and the costs were phenomenal.

Since people often associated feasts with religious rituals and sacrifices, Buddhists cleverly offered meals as a means of celebration that had popular appeal. To distinguish these generous offerings from other sacrifices, Buddhist missionaries associated their public feasts with the Buddha bathing ritual since its introduction in the Eastern Han Dynasty. During the fourth century, Shi Le (r. 328 – 333) of Later Zhao kingdom bathed the Buddha on the Buddha's birthday to seek blessings for his sons.<sup>411</sup> As could be seen from the passages of the Eastern Han and Later Zhao periods, the activity of Buddha bathing was synonymous with Buddha's birthday.

Besides Buddha bathing rituals and public feasts, Chinese canonical texts also recommended the donation of personal wealth to Buddhist sanctuaries for the

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<sup>409</sup> Chang, *Chinese Festivals*, 122.

<sup>410</sup> 《三國志》卷四十九 吳書四：「笮融者，丹楊人。初聚眾數百，往依徐州牧陶謙。謙使督廣陵、彭城運漕，遂放縱擅殺，坐斷三郡委輸以自入。乃大起浮圖祠，以銅為人，黃金塗身，衣以錦采，垂銅槃九重，下為重樓閣道，可容三千餘人。悉課讀佛經，令界內及旁郡人有好佛者聽受道，復其他役以招致之，由此遠近前後至者五千餘人戶。每浴佛，多設酒飯，布席於路，經數十里，民人來觀及就食且萬人，費以巨億計。」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@4^318477009^807^^^60202004000300040001^1@@301017960>

<sup>411</sup> 《高僧傳》卷第九〈竺佛圖澄〉：「每至四月八日。勒躬自詣寺灌佛為兒發願。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 384, b25-26)



perpetuation of Buddhist activities. A relatively early Western Jin canonical text, *Bonihuanhou guanla jing*, advised devotees to offer lamps, burn incense, support *sūtra* making, contribute to statue building, and donate to the needy.<sup>412</sup> Buddhists since the Southern and Northern dynasties considered *sūtra* copying a form of meritorious activity.<sup>413</sup> In 522, under the reign of Emperor Xiaoming of Northern Wei, a postscript in a copy of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* found in Dunhuang mentioned monk Fading's completion of the *sūtra* copying on the eighth day of the fourth month.<sup>414, 415</sup> Dedicating images on the Buddha's birthday was also popular during the Northern Wei Dynasty. Feng Shoushou dedicated an image in 466,<sup>416</sup> and Gao Axing also dedicated a bronze statue in 506.<sup>417, 418</sup> Buddha bathing and offering of Buddhist objects of veneration were meritorious and could assure the granting of wishes.<sup>419</sup>

In addition to merit-making activities, Buddhists also made use of the day of the Buddha's birth for personal practice. The *sūtras* advocated the keeping of eight precepts

<sup>412</sup> 卷1：「佛語阿難：「灌臘佛者，是福願人之度者，各自減錢寶，割取珍愛，用求度世之福。當給寺然燈、燒香、用作經像；若供養師，施與貧窮，可設齋會。」(CBETA, T12, no. 391, p. 1114, a11-14)

<sup>413</sup> Tong 李童 Li, "A Study of Buddha's Birthday Rituals During the Han and Six Dynasties 漢魏六朝佛誕節儀考述," *China Academic Journal 宗教學研究* 4 (2008): 189.

<sup>414</sup> 敦煌遺書英藏S. 2724《華嚴經卷第三》抄尾記：「夫妙旨無言，故假教以通理，圓體非形，必藉以表真，是以亡兄沙門維那慧超悟財命難持，識三聖易依，故資竭/賄，唯福是務，圖金容於靈剎，寫冲曲於竹素，而終功未就，倏忽異世。弟比丘法定，仰瞻遺跡，感慕遂甚，故瑩飾圖形，廣寫眾經，華嚴、涅槃、法華、維摩、金剛、般若、金光明、勝鬘，願福鐘亡兄，騰神梵鄉，游形淨國，體無無生，早(出)苦海，普及含靈，齊成正覺。大魏正光三年歲次壬寅四月八日寫訖」

<sup>415</sup> Li, "A Study of Buddha's Birthday Rituals During the Han and Six Dynasties," 189.

<sup>416</sup> 冯受受造像发愿文：「天安元年四月八日冯受受敬造供养时。」

<sup>417</sup> 高阿兴所造铜像发愿文：「正始三年四月八日，为七世父母，所生父母，建造真容。缘此敬因，愿前往生处，所离三途，不遭八难，龙华树会以为首，广及一切，共同斯愿。」

<sup>418</sup> Li, "A Study of Buddha's Birthday Rituals During the Han and Six Dynasties," 189.

<sup>419</sup> 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》卷1：「用浴佛形像者。如佛在時所願悉得。欲求度世取無為道生生不與死會者可得。欲求精進勇猛如釋迦文佛者可得。欲求如文殊師利阿惟越致菩薩者可得。欲求轉輪聖王飛行教化者可得。欲求辟支佛阿羅漢者可得。欲求永離三惡道者可得。欲求生天上人間富樂者可得。欲求百子千孫者可得。欲求長壽無病者可得。世間人民貪欲如海。寧割身上一臠肉。不肯出一錢物與人。人生時不持一錢來。死亦不持一錢去。財物故在世間。人死當獨去憶如此苦。乃浴佛形像者。持是功德生死相隨無有斷期。」(CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 797, a2-14)

and vegetarianism on this day,<sup>420</sup> as well as adhering to bodhisattva practice of meditation, *sūtra* reading, and sleeping from the eighth day to the fifteenth day of the fourth month.<sup>421</sup> Besides personal cultivation, it was also a day to strengthen one's faith. During the Southern and Northern Dynasties, faith in Maitreya was strong. Devotees carried out Buddha's bathing rituals on the eighth of the fourth month in anticipation of the arrival of Maitreya.<sup>422</sup>

In Jing-Chu, on the eighth day of the fourth month, all the [Buddhist] temples hold assemblies, and bathe the Buddha with fragrant water. They all hold a Dragon Flower Assembly; this is viewed as a portent of Maitreya's descent to be born.<sup>423</sup>

The Buddha's birthday was also a day for ordination of Buddhist monks. Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei decreed that on every eighth day of the fourth month and fifteenth day of the seventh month, large provinces could ordain one hundred monks and nuns, middle-sized provinces fifty, and small provinces twenty.<sup>424</sup>

In the sixteenth year (492), it was decreed that on the eighth day of the fourth month and the fifteenth day of the seventh month it was permitted to the great provinces to ordain one hundred persons, to the middle provinces fifty persons, and to the inferior

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<sup>420</sup> 《大方便佛報恩經》卷5〈7 慈品〉：「時憍曇彌告諸比丘尼及一切諸善女人，而作是言：『我等應當至心歸命阿難大師。若有女人欲求安隱，吉祥果報，常當於二月八日、八月八日，著淨潔衣，至心受持八戒齋法，晝夜六時建大精進。阿難即以大威神力，應聲護助，如願即得。』」(CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 154, b6-11)

<sup>421</sup> 《菩薩受齋經》卷1：「如諸菩薩六萬菩薩法齋，日夜一分禪、一分讀經、一分臥，是為菩薩齋日法。正月十四日受，十七日解；四月八日受，十五日解；七月一日受，十六日解；九月十四日受，十六日解。」(CBETA, T24, no. 1502, p. 1116, b22-26)

<sup>422</sup> 《荊楚歲時記》：「四月八日、諸寺設齋、以五色香水浴佛、共作龍華會。」  
[http://cls.hs.yzu.edu.tw/orig/all\\_sourcelist.asp?book\\_id=479&sSource=%A1m%AF%F0%B7%A1%B7%B3%AE%C9%B0O%A1n](http://cls.hs.yzu.edu.tw/orig/all_sourcelist.asp?book_id=479&sSource=%A1m%AF%F0%B7%A1%B7%B3%AE%C9%B0O%A1n)

<sup>423</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 297.

<sup>424</sup> 《魏書 釋老志》：「十六年詔：『四月八日、七月十五日，聽大州度一百人為僧尼，中州五十人，下州二十人，以為常準，著於令。』」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@@914824115>

provinces twenty persons. This was to be made a fixed standard and published in the law codes.<sup>425</sup>

Northern Wei emperors sought to control the number of *saṅgha* members by determining the dates and quota of ordination. The Buddha's birthday became a conveniently auspicious day for such an event. The Chinese monarch, the most supreme being in the secular world, assumed the duty to mediate with the world of the sacred. Hence, it was interesting to note that in a Tang dynasty poem in the *Complete Collection of Tang period poems (Quantangshi)*, the emperor's and Buddha's birthdays were considered equally important, with Queen Māyādevī compared with Empress Dowager Zhaocheng and the bodhisattva compared with Emperor Xuanzong.<sup>426</sup> For supporters of the religion and the royal family, this represented a mutual raising of profiles of the Buddha and the Emperor in terms of nation-wide veneration. This symbiotic relationship between a religion and political power was a major characteristic of the dialogue of cultural assimilation.

Buddhism introduced to China Indian practices of birthday rituals, such as image building and image bathing. Local festive methods of celebration, for example, public feasts, blended in with these foreign practices to meet local needs of the time. Practices could be private or public, merit seeking or for personal cultivation. There was consistent recourse back to the authority of canonical materials to justify these practices. Since Chinese festivals traditionally commemorated death anniversaries as a means to harmonize the living with the dead (Section 2.3), birth commemoration on an annual

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<sup>425</sup> Shou Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism: An English Translation of the Original Chinese Text of Wei-Shu Cxiv and the Japanese Annot. of Tsukamoto Zenryū*, trans. Leon Hurvitz (Kyoto: Kyoto Univ., 1956), 80.

<sup>426</sup> 《全唐詩》卷 265\_19 〈八月五日歌〉：「顧況 -- 四月八日明星出，摩耶夫人降前佛。八月五日佳氣新，昭成太后生聖人。」<http://www.xysa.com/quantangshi/t-265.htm>

basis really started with the Buddha's birthday.<sup>427</sup> Instead of mourning the passing of a sage, this birthday parade celebrated his birth. It represented a new type of festival in China. Not only did the Chinese accept a new religious figure through the birth stories and celebrate the birthday according to the prescribed dates in the canon, they also adopted the practice of birthday commemorations and celebrations, as well as followed the festive modes of celebrations introduced to them by foreign Buddhist missionaries. None of these celebrative modes could be as public and as joyous as the image processions.

#### **3.4.4 IMAGE PROCESSIONS**

Image procession in China was a foreign import. While processions were a familiar sight in ancient China, images were new. Academia had not determined the site of the first Buddha image. One of the earliest carving of a Buddha statue, as Prince Siddharta Gautama before his enlightenment, dated back to the Scythian period (first century BCE).<sup>428</sup> Numismatic evidence also suggested the presence of the head of the Buddha on Emperor Kaniška's coins.<sup>429</sup> From the Buddha image to its procession, China imported from the Central Asian Silk Road the most visible and involved form of religious re-enactment.

The Buddhist processions were inspired from Buddha's birth stories. In *Buddhacarita*, Aśvaghoṣa described how the royal family paraded through the city ten days after the prince was born. Preceding this royal procession was an elaborate religious ceremony and generous offerings to priests. In this description, the crowd rejoiced at the

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<sup>427</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 252.

<sup>428</sup> Yuvraj Krishan, *The Buddha Image: Its Origin and Development* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1996), 37.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 34.

sight of the imperial family, and the King was compared to the divine Indra or Lord of Heaven in Indian mythology, indirectly raising the profile of this royal family due to the birth of the Buddha-to-be.

When ten days were fulfilled after his son's birth, with his thoughts kept under restraint, and filled with excessive joy, he offered for his son most elaborate sacrifices to the gods with muttered prayers, oblations, and all kinds of auspicious ceremonies. And he himself gave to the Brāhmans for his son's welfare cows full of milk, with no traces of infirmity, golden-horned and with strong healthy calves, to the full number of a hundred thousand. Then he, with his soul under strict restraint, having performed all kinds of ceremonies which rejoiced his heart, on a fortunate day, in an auspicious moment, gladly determined to enter his city. Then the queen with her babe having worshipped the gods for good fortune, occupied a costly palanquin made of elephants' tusks, filled with all kinds of white flowers, and blazing with gems. Having made his wife with her child enter first into the city, accompanied by the aged attendants, the king himself also advanced, saluted by the hosts of the citizens, as Indra entering heaven, saluted by the immortals.<sup>430</sup>

Following the *Buddhacarita*, the *Lalitavistara* gave an even more elaborate account of an extremely lavish procession consisting of royal paraphernalia. This procession took place seven days after the birth of the prince.

Now, Bhikshus, the Bodhisattva entered the great city of Kapilavastu with a retinue millionfold greater than that with which Mayadevi had seven days previously issued forth therefrom to retire to the garden. On his entry five thousand pitchers filled with scented stream water were carried before him. Five thousand maidens, holding peacock's tail chouries, marched before him. Five thousand maidens, holding palm-leaf fans, marched before him. Five thousand maidens, holding spouted urns full of aromatic water, marched before him, sprinkling the water on the road. Five thousand maidens, holding pieces of chintz, marched before him. Five thousand maidens, holding fresh, variegated, long garlands, marched before him. Five thousand maidens, holding appropriate jewelled ornaments, marched before him, purifying the road. Five thousand maidens, carrying appropriate chairs, marched before him. Then five hundred thousand Brāhmans, holding bells walked in procession before him, ringing auspicious music. Twenty thousand elephants, arrayed in beautiful ornaments, marched before him. Twenty thousand horses, richly caparisoned and decked with golden ornaments, paraded before him. Eighty thousand chariots mounted with white umbrellas, flags, pennons and networks of bells followed the train of the Bodhisattva. Forty thousand veteran heroes of majestic form, arrayed in invulnerable mail coats and breast-plates, followed the Bodhisattva. Under the sky illimitable and uncountable millions of millions of Devaputras of the class Kamavacharas followed

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<sup>430</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa," 20–21.

the train, offering worship to the Bodhisattva with various collections of offerings. The magnificent chariot in which the Bodhisattva repaired had been decorated by Kamavachara devas with numerous collections of precious articles. Twenty thousand celestial maidens set off with numerous ornaments and holding jewelled threads dragged that chariot. Between every two Apsarases there was one human female, and between every two human females there was one Apsaras, but neither did the Apsarases feel the rank smell of the human females, nor did the human females feel bewildered by the beauty of the Apsarases: this was due to the glory of the Bodhisattva.<sup>431</sup>

When Buddhist missionaries spread the religion to other parts of the world and introduced the re-enactment of this birth story, the procession became an important part of the ritual. From Faxian's travelogues, Khotan<sup>432</sup> and Magadha<sup>433</sup> held image processions to celebrate the birth of the Buddha in the early part of the fourth century. In China, the earliest textual evidence of image processions were in 247 (Wu of the Three Kingdoms). Kang Senghui introduced Buddhism to the kingdom of Wu; in 247, he paraded an image atop a *stūpa* in the streets of Jianye (modern day Nanjing) soon after he arrived.<sup>434</sup> Subsequently, Chinese started to accept the concept of image processions as a means to celebrate Buddha's birthday. Sun Zhi participated in a procession of images in 337 in Wuchang on Buddha's birthday.<sup>435</sup> Royal participation appeared in *Records from the Region of Ye* account of King Shi Hu's automated Buddha's bathing carriage,<sup>436</sup> and *Book of Wei* account of early Northern Wei emperors' venerating images as they paraded past Pingcheng's city gate.<sup>437</sup> The Liang Dynasty *Record of the Year and Seasons of Jing-Chu* stated that the tradition of parading carriages with precious canopies and

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<sup>431</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 136–137.

<sup>432</sup> Faxian, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 18–19.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>434</sup> 《高僧傳》卷第一〈康僧會〉：「僧會欲使道振江左興立圖寺。乃杖錫東遊。以吳赤烏十年。初達建鄴營立茅茨設像行道。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 325, b5-7)

<sup>435</sup> 《法苑珠林卷第九十一》：「晉孫稚... 至三年四月八日。沙門于法階。行尊像經家門。夫妻大小出觀見。稚亦在人眾之中。隨侍像行。見父母。拜跪問訊隨共還家。」

[http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T53/2122\\_091.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T53/2122_091.htm)

<sup>436</sup> Lai, "On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD," 57.

<sup>437</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 56.

colorful lights in the city streets continued with flowers and incense.<sup>438</sup> The epitome of these processions was the Northern Wei parades of Luoyang, where over a thousand images and carriages were involved.

This unprecedented scale of birthday procession took place in Northern Wei Luoyang within five hundred years after the introduction of image processions, a new metaphor, into China. According to *Precious Canon of the Jade Candle*, the Buddha's birthday parades in Northern Wei were so special that residents were exempted from the usual city night curfews so that they could rejoice in this event.<sup>439</sup>

Today, on the 8th day of this month, people do a circuit of the city; this must be the legacy of this. The [Northern] Wei Dynasty followed earlier traditions; [the custom] particularly flourished in this period. On the evening of the 7th day, the official responsible would petition for permission to open the city gates early, and after midnight people inside and outside the city would all arise, filling to capacity the outer walls.<sup>440</sup>

Unlike India and Gandhāra, pre-Buddhist China did not celebrate birthdays with processions. Ancient China was unaccustomed to the procession of a baby prince. In general, Han peasants had no occasion to see their emperor or crowned prince. Chinese customs strictly forbid any ordinary person from seeing the divine emperor's face.<sup>441</sup> Although imperial processions were grand, the largest consisting of a thousand chariots, the emperor was out of public view. Hence, the public parade of an image of a historical royal figure, with a great merit field, introduced a novelty into medieval China. The significance and benefits of the Buddha image on procession were manifold. First, it

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<sup>438</sup> 《荆楚歲時記》：「二月八日，釋氏下生之日，迦文成道之時，信篤之家建八關齋戒，車輪寶蓋，七變八會之燈。至今二月八日平旦，執香花繞城一匝，謂之行城。」

<http://www.ourartnet.com/Sikuquanshu/Shiku/Shiling/102.asp>

<sup>439</sup> 《玉燭寶典·典一》：「今人以此月八日巡城，蓋其遺法矣。魏代踵前，於此尤盛。其七日晚，所司預奏早開城門，過半夜便內外俱起，遍滿四鄰。」Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 297.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., 298–300.

<sup>441</sup> Jane Bingham, *Society and Class* (Chicago: Heinemann-Raintree Library, 2006), 15.

enabled Buddhists to express their joy over the birth of the Buddha according to canonical description. Second, Buddhahadra's translation of Southern Song *Foshuo guanfo sanmeihai jing* prescribed that anyone who saw the image of Buddha on parade could eliminate negative karmic obstructions of a thousand kalpas.<sup>442</sup> This could explain the popularity of Northern Wei parades at a time when the nation "liked to pray for happiness."<sup>443</sup> Corroborating with the *Foshuo guanfo sanmeihai jing* account was an earlier text (from the Qin kingdom), *Śrīkaṇṭhasūtra*, of how ghosts and devas retreated from the city once the Buddha entered and how all handicapped and ill people were miraculously cured; the Buddha and his retinue of monks compassionately walked around the city to bless all residents.<sup>444</sup> Hence, in lieu of the baby prince on parade as in the stories of *Buddhacarita* and *Lalitavistara*, the Chinese put an image of the Buddha on parade so that the city might learn about and rejoice in the birth of a universal sage and that Buddhists might receive the Buddha's blessings.

Buddhists generously displayed the images that represented the Buddha. The *Record* contained vivid textual portrayals. Parading from the Temple of the Prolonger of Autumn (Changqiu si) was "a six-tusked white elephant carrying on its back Śākyamuni in the void. The sumptuous Buddhist decorations were all made of gold or jade, with a

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<sup>442</sup> 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 6〈6 觀四威儀品〉：「佛去世後。三昧正受想佛行者。亦除千劫極重惡業。雖不想行。見佛跡者見像行者。步步亦除千劫極重惡業。」(CBETA, T15, no. 643, p. 675, c6-8)

<sup>443</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 126.

<sup>444</sup> 秦釋聖堅《佛說除恐災患經》卷 1：「佛便入城。空中鬼神。昇空退散。地行鬼神。爭門競出。城門不容。各各奔突。崩城而出。於時城中。諸有不淨。廁穢臭惡。下沈入地。高卑相從。溝坑皆平。盲視聾聽。瘡語變行。狂者得正。病者除愈。象馬牛畜。悲鳴相和。箏篪樂器。不鼓自鳴。宮商調和。婦女珠環。相[敲-高+亭]妙響。器物[土\*瓦]鬲。自然有聲。柔軟和暢。妙法之音。地中伏藏。自然發出。一切眾生。如遭熱渴得清涼水服飲澡浴泰然蘇息。舉城眾病。除愈解脫。亦復如是。佛與大眾。便還出城。垂大慈哀。欲為眾生施大擁護。遶城周匝。門門呪願。敷演妙法。除凶致祥。普國疾患。災疫悉除。國界盡安。」(CBETA, T17, no. 744, p. 555, a12-25)



distinctive workmanship difficult to describe.”<sup>445</sup> The Nunnery of the Exemplar (Zhaoyi nisi) put on parade “statues of one Buddha and two bodhisattvas, splendid sculpture not matched elsewhere in the capital.”<sup>446</sup> Equally spectacular, the image from the Zongsheng Temple bore a reputation that attracted crowds to watch it on parade. It “was thirty-eight Chinese feet high. Its countenance was unusually grave, and it had all [the thirty-two marks and eighty signs on the body].”<sup>447</sup> While demonstrating the wealth of the nation, these impressive images also showed how Buddhists in Northern Wei Luoyang dedicated their resources towards the Buddha in a way fit for a royal family member.

In some accounts, emperors and kings led their family and subjects in receiving the Buddha’s blessings. The image processions in the Buddhist kingdom of Khotan during early fourth century were so significant that Faxian delayed his travel itinerary for three months to observe the event. The Khotanese king removed his crown and with bare feet went out of the gate to meet the carriage about a hundred paces away. He bowed to the feet of the image of the Buddha, scattered flowers and offered incense to the Buddha. This was repeated from the first to the fourteenth day of the fourth month in celebration of the Buddha’s birth.<sup>448</sup> In contrast, Chinese emperors maintained their superiority. During the Northern Wei, cars carrying Buddha images came to meet the emperors. In Pingcheng, Emperors Daowu (r. 386 – 409), Mingyuan (r. 409 – 424) and Taiwu scattered flowers over the Buddhas as the images passed the city gate.<sup>449</sup> Emperors

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<sup>445</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 46.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>448</sup> Faxian, *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, 19.

<sup>449</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 56.

remained above the Buddha. In Luoyang, Emperors Xiaowen,<sup>450</sup> Xuanwu, and Xiaoming invited images of the city to the Changhe Palace where the emperors scattered flowers over the images.<sup>451</sup> Whether in Pingcheng or Luoyang, the emperors decreed these image processions. Royal endorsement of Buddha's birthday parades helped to raise the profile of the festival and the religion.

Royal endorsement went beyond personal participation. During the Northern Wei Dynasty, the emperor decreed one hundred plumed-feathered guards to carry the image of the Flourishing Prospect Nunnery (Jingxing nisi).<sup>452</sup> Not only was this a re-enactment of *Lalitavistara*'s "forty thousand veteran heroes of majestic form, arrayed in invulnerable mail coats and breast-plates",<sup>453</sup> it was also an indirect demonstration of the power of the emperor. The fatal garrison troop rebellion of 520s<sup>454</sup> had already started to threaten the throne soon after the move to Luoyang. These showcase parades served to flaunt the central power.

The participation of the emperor was not limited to his personal presence and his troops. He also sent his imperial performers to provide music and variety shows when the image of Flourishing Prospect Nunnery (Jingxing nisi) went on parade.<sup>455</sup> As the previous chapter had demonstrated, variety shows combined displays from both indigenous and non-native cultures. From the depiction of *devas* (including celestial musicians), bodhisattvas and devout Buddhists in the Mogao Grottoes (especially the

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<sup>450</sup> 《佛祖統紀》卷 51：「北魏孝文。詔德法師一月三入殿說法。帝數幸王園寺。與沙門談論佛法。○幸白塔寺聽登法師講成實論。○詔四月八日迎洛京諸寺佛像。入閭闔宮受散花禮敬。○宣武御式乾殿講維摩經。西域沙門至者三千人。」(CBETA, T49, no. 2035, p. 451, a4-9)

<sup>451</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 126–127.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>453</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 137.

<sup>454</sup> Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* (Cambridge U.K., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 272.

<sup>455</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 78.

early 275<sup>th</sup> cave), one could discern the congruence of western and eastern influences.<sup>456</sup>

The description of both imperial and celestial musical processions in *Lalitavistara* and the presence of both heavenly and lay figures in grotto art suggested that the offering of music and dance was important. Buddhist image processions were carnival-like in Northern Wei Luoyang. People enjoyed variety shows accompanying the dignified images, causing congestions wherever the shows were performed.<sup>457</sup> “Skillful games and miscellaneous music, second in excellence only to those in Liu Teng’s [Changqiu Temple]”<sup>458</sup>, performed in the Zongsheng Temple on the day of the parade attracted residents of the eastern suburbs of Luoyang. At the Nunnery of the Exemplar, the “display of rich music and shows was comparable to that of Liu Teng’s [Changqiu Temple].”<sup>459</sup> The Temple of the Prolonger of Autumn (Changqiu si) had the city’s most spectacular processional variety shows.<sup>460</sup>

As a rule, this statue would be carried out [of the temple] and put on parade on the fourth day of the fourth month, behind such [man-made] animals as pi-hsieh and lions. [Variety shows would be held, featuring] sword-eaters, fire-spitters, galloping horses, flagstaff climbers, and rope-walkers—all being [demonstrations] of unusual skills. Their spectacular techniques and bizarre costumes were unmatched in the capital. Wherever the statue stopped, spectators would encircle it like a wall. Stumbling and trampling on each other, people in the crowd often suffered casualties.<sup>461</sup>

Although the greatest crowd came to see the exotic variety shows, the processions were not only tailored to secular needs. Just as King Śuddhodhana began the parade of his baby prince with religious ceremonies, so did the Northern Wei

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<sup>456</sup> Zheng, *Study of Dunhuang Grotto Art, Music and Dance*, 59.

<sup>457</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 127.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>460</sup> 《洛陽城內伽藍記》卷第一〈長秋寺〉：「此像常出。辟邪師子導引其前。吞刀吐火騰驤一面。綵幢上索詭譎不常。奇伎異服冠於都市。像停之處。觀者如堵。迭相踐躍。常有死人。」(CBETA, T51, no. 2092, p. 1002, c17-20)

<sup>461</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 46.

emperors. Together with the emperor scattering flowers on the images at the Changhe Palace, “Indian music and the din of chanted Buddhist scriptures moved heaven and earth alike.”<sup>462</sup> Incense smoke was thick as fog. The chanting of *sūtras* and burning of incense reminded devotees of the Buddha’s compassionate mission to descend to earth to “bring to an end all birth, decay, death and pain.”<sup>463</sup> The *Lalitavistara* described that all beings became free from negative sentiments and illnesses as a result of Buddha’s birth. Such inclusion of religious elements in processions was familiar to Chinese. The earliest Chinese procession happened in the Zhou Dynasty when an exorcist and his assistants expelled evil forces. During pre-Qin times, kings attending funerals of their subordinates sent shamans holding peach-wood wands to proceed in the front of the processions to ward off evil spirits.<sup>464</sup> Hence, religious figures had been a part of processions to help people ward off evil and accrue blessings. Buddha’s birthday parades greatly enhanced the soteriological side of Chinese processions.

Image processions came to China from the Western Regions.<sup>465</sup> Whether in India, Western Regions or China, Buddhists based their re-enactment on the royal procession of the baby prince in the Buddha’s birth stories. The Northern Wei processions in Luoyang were unprecedented in magnificence and numbers when compared to documented processions in Khotan and Magadha a hundred years earlier and in other parts of China through three hundred years of history. Royal endorsement was prevalent, from personal participation to the dispatch of troops and performers. The splendid images, numbering over a thousand, showed off the wealth of the nation. Spectacular variety shows helped

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<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 126–127.

<sup>463</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 125.

<sup>464</sup> Yen, “‘Shang-ssu’ Festival and Its Myths in China and Japan,” 54.

<sup>465</sup> Chapman, “Carnival Canons,” 288.

to draw throngs to watch these displays. Buddhists also availed themselves of this opportunity to accrue merits. This massive carnival, although foreign in origin, met the universal needs of people for blessings and entertainment.

### **3.4.5 FROM ELEPHANTS TO CARRIAGES**

Luoyang, capital of Eastern Han, could have been one of the earliest places in China where elephants participated in processions. As described in Section 2.3, kingdoms in the Western Regions presented elephants as imperial tributes to the Han emperor. In Indian mythology, one of the seven treasures<sup>466</sup> of a *cakravartin* (universal monarch) was the elephant.<sup>467</sup> The elephant became an Indian royal symbol because of its legendary symbolism as a celestial jewel and its utility in wars.<sup>468</sup> In particular, a white elephant was a gift suitable for a great king.<sup>469</sup> However, in China, the fate of elephants suffered greatly. Although archaeological finds in Luoyang unveiled elephant fossils from the Xia Dynasty<sup>470</sup> as well as intricate wine vessels in the shape of elephants from the Shang Dynasty,<sup>471</sup> elephants became rare from the pre-Han era.<sup>472</sup> These archaeological discoveries show that the climate in ancient Luoyang was sufficiently hot for elephants to thrive. In later years, the animal had to be shipped from southern China. The book of *Mencius* revealed, “the Duke of Zhou assisted King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty to destroy Zhou ... he drove the tigers, leopards, rhinoceroses and elephants far away.”<sup>473</sup> Elephants became victims of deforestation, farmers’ protection of their crops, and hunters

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<sup>466</sup> The seven treasures were wheel, royal chariot, jewel, queen, territory, horse, and elephant.

<sup>467</sup> S. K. Gupta, *Elephant in Indian Art and Mythology* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1983), xxi.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

<sup>469</sup> In Thailand, only the king can possess an albino elephant.

<sup>470</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 5.

<sup>471</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 35.

<sup>472</sup> Lai, “On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD,” 45.

<sup>473</sup> Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 11.

in pursuit of their ivory tusks.<sup>474</sup> Without necessary tree cover, elephants could no longer survive nor be kept in large enough numbers for warfare. Mythological accounts corroborated with this reality. One of the earliest Chinese legends was King Shun of the Xia Dynasty taming a wild elephant, while in Zhou's *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing*) a snake swallowed an elephant. Although elephants were Indian symbols of auspiciousness, strength, and protection, these animals had already lost their prestige in China before Eastern Han Dynasty.

With the advent of Buddhism, the elephant regained its status. In India, the (white) elephant not only represented royalty but also the Buddha.<sup>475</sup> Indians used animal figures as vehicles for deities or representations of the divine.<sup>476</sup> Early Indian Buddhist art (Figure 13) used an elephant to symbolize the conception of the Buddha.<sup>477</sup> Buddhists brought the sacrality of the Indian elephant to China. Kongwangshan's elephant sculpture, 480 cm in length and 260 cm in height, dated back to the Eastern Han Dynasty.<sup>478</sup> The lotus flowers under each of the elephant's feet suggested Buddhist origin of this carving.<sup>479</sup> This relief demonstrated Buddhist use of the dancing elephant (*xingxiang*) as part of their ceremonies and festivals to promote the religion.<sup>480</sup> This imagery was later assimilated into Daoist art found in an Eastern Han tomb fresco entitled *An Immortal Riding a White Elephant* (*Xianren qibaixiang*).<sup>481</sup> The extent to which Chinese loved foreign exotic animals could be seen from the naming of White

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<sup>474</sup> Ibid.

<sup>475</sup> Gupta, *Elephant in Indian Art and Mythology*, 34.

<sup>476</sup> Lai, "On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD," 49.

<sup>477</sup> Gupta, *Elephant in Indian Art and Mythology*, 32.

<sup>478</sup> Lai, "On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD," 42–43.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid., 45–46.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid., 48.

Elephant Ward and Lion Ward in the southern suburb of Northern Wei Luoyang.<sup>482</sup> The white elephant was a royal gift from Gandhāra and the elephant was another royal gift from Persia.<sup>483</sup> Even as late as Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911), elephants carrying vases (sounds like “peace”) on their backs participated in parades celebrating the emperor’s birthday.<sup>484</sup> Not only did local Chinese accept the Buddhist restoration of the elephant imagery, but they also copied its Indian sacred association and royal implications. Buddhism became the catalyst for hybridization of indigenous cultures with foreign ideas.



Figure 13 Queen Māyādevī’s dream of the white elephant<sup>485, 486</sup>

Owing to their massive size, outstanding prowess, and great maintenance expenses, elephants became the exclusive property of royalty in China.<sup>487</sup> Being rare and expensive to upkeep, elephants soon gave way to palanquins that were more practical,

<sup>482</sup> Fu and Fu, *History of Acrobatics in China*, 99.

<sup>483</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 151.

<sup>484</sup> Game Frog, “Elephant Symbol and Meaning,” *Basic Chinese Horoscope*, 2009, <http://chinesehoroscope.com/astrology/elephant-in-feng-shui.php>.

<sup>485</sup> Remains of a railing of a Bharhut *stūpa* believed to be built around 100 BCE

<sup>486</sup> Benoy K. Behl, “Birth of Classic Form,” *Frontline: India’s National Magazine*, August 25, 2007, <http://www.hindu.com/fline/fl2417/stories/20070907505406400.htm>.

<sup>487</sup> Gupta, *Elephant in Indian Art and Mythology*, 69.

floats, and carriages in processions.<sup>488</sup> Although the earliest use of chariots (chiefly for the purpose of war) occurred in the third millennium in Mesopotamia,<sup>489</sup> civilizations around the world adapted the use of chariots for more civilian uses. With the availability of Buddha images, image processions replaced elephant dances in Buddhist festivals. The aniconic gave way to the iconic.

Chinese used carriages to transport people and deities. The *Records of the Grand Historian* attributed the earliest use of carriages for road transportation, whether military or civilian, to the Xia Dynasty.<sup>490</sup> At the Erlitou site, archaeologists found two-wheeled chariot marks.<sup>491</sup> In the *Book of Poetry*, Prince Xuan of Zhou rode east on a hunting expedition on a chariot pulled by four majestic horses.<sup>492, 493</sup> Han Chinese had used chariots in processions for transporting the emperor and nobility, as well as for performers, especially drummers. In Qu Yuan's (Warring States official and poet) poem on *The Great Marshal of Fate (Dasi ming)*, a god who could revive the dead rode on a dragon-driven chariot into the heavens.<sup>494</sup>

He mounts the dragon: the carriage rolls off,  
He rides off high and flies up to heaven.<sup>495</sup>

The use of carriages in Buddhist *sūtras* evolved from *Buddhacarita's* palanquin made of elephant tusks, "filled with all kinds of white flowers, and blazing with gems,"

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<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>489</sup> Nic Fields and Brian Delf, *Bronze Age War Chariots* (Osprey Publishing, 2006), back cover.

<sup>490</sup> 《史記·夏本紀》：「陸行乘車，水行乘船，泥行乘橇，山行乘輶。」 <http://ctext.org/shiji/xia-ben-ji>

<sup>491</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 33.

<sup>492</sup> 《詩經·車攻》：「我車既攻、我馬既同。四牡龐龐、駕言徂東。」 <http://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/che-gong>

<sup>493</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 86.

<sup>494</sup> 《大司命》：「乘龍兮鱗、鱗高駝兮冲天。」 <http://www.69fw.com/wx/xqqt/378.html>

<sup>495</sup> A. Bulling, *The Meaning of China's Most Ancient Art* (Leiden: Brill Archive, 1952), 138.



used in a royal procession of the queen and her baby.<sup>496</sup> In the *Xiuxing benqi jing*, the queen and her baby paraded the city on a carriage that had intertwining dragons, accompanied by carnival-like banners and entertainment.<sup>497</sup> Kang replaced elephant tusks with dragons, demonstrating his knowledge of symbols of royalty in both Indian and Chinese cultures. The splendor and motif of the carriage and palanquin stressed the royal status of the procession.

People who executed image processions understood that the decoration of the carriages could enhance the grandeur of the event. Artisans had a major role to play in designing sacred and royal motifs befitting the occasion and understandable to the spectators. During his journey through Khotan, Faxian saw monasteries making four-wheeled image cars, more than 30 cubits high, decorated with seven precious materials, silken streamers and canopies.<sup>498</sup> Simulating the accompaniment of heavenly beings rejoicing the birth of the bodhisattva, these carriages had gold and silver *devas* carved on them. In Pataliputra, another mega-city of its time, Faxian saw a four-wheeled car carrying a five-storied high bamboo *stūpa* wrapped in white and silk-like cloth of cashmere; on the cloths were painted various colors as well as figures of *devas*, decorated with gold, silver and lapis lazuli.<sup>499</sup> Silk streamers and canopies hung over the structure. On four sides were niches of Buddha and bodhisattva images. There were twenty such carriages on parade. Faxian's vivid accounts during the early fifth century could explain the source of inspiration of similar carriages in Luoyang for the same celebration.

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<sup>496</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa," 21.

<sup>497</sup> 《修行本起經》卷1〈菩薩降身品〉：「夫人抱太子，乘交龍車，幢幡伎樂，導從還宮」(CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, b11).

<sup>498</sup> Faxian, *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, 19.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid., 79.

Ornate carriages enhanced the grandeur of Northern Wei Luoyang parades. The *Record* contains two vivid descriptions of carriages used in image processions. The Nunnery of Happy View (Jingle si) had a carriage with “deft carving” that was the best of the times.<sup>500</sup> The gold carriage in Flourishing Prospect Nunnery (Jingxing nisi) boasted superb artisanship, with gold bells and beads made out of seven precious materials<sup>501</sup> hung on the four sides of a jeweled canopy; images of heavenly musical entertainers adorned this carriage.<sup>502</sup> Given that the royal family and government officials (including eunuchs) sponsored at least twenty-nine (29) of the fifty-two (52) temples described in the *Record*, carriages from these temples were likely to be of exquisite design matching their patrons’ stature. From Yang’s description of bejeweled carriages choking traffic,<sup>503</sup> one can deduce that sponsors donated generously for merit. Supporting these patrons were artisans who created these striking carriages and flourishing trade that made available precious treasures for float decoration.

Processions, as described in the *sūtras*, promoted commerce. In addition to the royal palanquin and carriage described, the fifth century *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing* recounts King Śuddhodhana riding into the city with his baby prince on an elephant carriage of seven treasures.<sup>504</sup> The Silk Roads had opened up the demand for precious gems in China.<sup>505</sup> Han Chinese historians recorded contacts with Jibin<sup>506</sup> (present

<sup>500</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 51.

<sup>501</sup> The seven precious materials were gold, silver, glazed material, glass, coral, agate, and seashells.

<sup>502</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 77.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>504</sup> 《過去現在因果經》卷 1：「爾時白淨王，叉手合掌，禮諸天神；前抱太子，置於七寶象輿之上，與諸群臣後宮嫔女虛空諸天，作諸伎樂，隨從入城。」(CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 626, a12-15)

<sup>505</sup> India and present-day Sri Lanka served as entrepôt for precious gems. Evidence for this claim is found in thousands of Roman coins in South Asia whereas only sixteen Roman coins have been recovered in Chang’an.

<sup>506</sup> Jibin is the only source of lapis lazuli.

Kashmir) through semi-diplomatic and semi-mercantile missions in the first century BCE.<sup>507</sup> From Syrian merchants, the Chinese obtained coral and pearls from the Red Sea, amber from the Baltic or Sicily, and artificial gems such as the night-shining jewel from Syria.<sup>508</sup> These precious gems reached China via both the land-based and maritime Silk Roads. Northern Wei Luoyang highlighted its wealth and prosperity through the extensive spread of jewels on the carriages and their canopies through this parade of Buddha images.

From a vehicle for transporting people and deities, the carriage evolved into an interesting symbol of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Luoyang. First, the splendor and number of carriages in Luoyang represented the “*mahā*” aspect, commonly seen in Mahāyāna *sūtras*. For example, Faxian’s translation of the *Dabo niepan jing* (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*) contains a section of King Dashanjian possessing 84,000 white elephants, horses and carriages.<sup>509</sup> Since the largest imperial procession in China, the Grand Procession (*dajia*), had one thousand carriages, Luoyang’s parade of over a thousand floats symbolically represented the august nature of this event. Second, the carriage could not be a better metaphor for “*yāna*.” While symbolically carrying the Buddha or Buddha-to-be, the carriage also transported its devotees and participants to liberation or a better life. The popular *Lotus Sūtra*’s parable of the three carts spoke of the father’s promise of deer, goat and bullock carts of treasures in order to lure his children out of a burning house. The father demonstrated the use of skillful means (*upāya*). The carts carried treasures, and in the case of the parade, carriages carried the precious head of the triple gem, the

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<sup>507</sup> Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 7:, Part 2:191–194.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid., 7:, Part 2:200.

<sup>509</sup> 《大般涅槃經》卷3：「白象車馬，其數各有八萬四千，大王宜應乘之遊觀。」(CBETA, T01, no. 7, p. 202, b25-26)

Buddha. Therefore, we could consider the Buddha's birthday parade as *upāya* used by generations of Buddhists from India through Central Asia to China to express their faith and devotion, and to promote the religion.

Buddhists had expressed the story of the Buddha's birth in sculpture and painting in caves and buildings. Lu Hui's *Records from the Region of Ye* a description of Xie Fei's automated float commissioned by King Shi Hu (r. 335 – 349). Through technological innovation, the Buddhist story came to life in the streets of the capital city of Ye.<sup>510</sup>

Shi Hu liked to glorify the Buddha with incalculable extravagances. He commissioned an altar-carriage. In breadth, it was more than a *zhang* (approximately 10 feet), in length two *zhang*, with a golden Buddha image on top of a flat four-wheeled cart and nine dragons above that. A wooden figure of a monk was placed before the Buddha, and all round the Buddha were more than ten monks, each a bit more than two feet in height, all wearing white *kaśāyas*. When the cart moved, the nine dragons would spew water over the image of the Buddha, and the monk standing in front of the Buddha would rub the area between the Buddha's heart and his abdomen, as if washing a newborn. The other ten-odd monks would circumambulate the Buddha. As each would come just in front of the Buddha, he would do obeisance, then, taking incense in his hand, deposit it in a censer. When the cart stopped, so would the activity.<sup>511</sup>

Of the many events that occurred in Buddha's eighty years, some agent(s) in history selected the baby procession as the main theme for annual ritual re-enactment. As the image(s) of the Buddha traveled the city streets on carriages, with the monarch making the first offerings, followed by the royal family, and with opportunities for every devotee to seek merits as actor or audience, the ritual epitomized a highly intense meeting

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<sup>510</sup> 《鄴中記》：「石虎性好佞佛，眾巧奢靡，不可紀也。嘗作檀車，廣丈餘，長二丈，四輪。作金佛像，坐於車上，九龍吐水灌之。又作木道人，恒以手摩佛心腹之間。又十餘木道人，長二尺。餘皆披袈裟繞佛行，當佛前，輒揖禮佛。又以手撮香投爐中，與人無異。車行則木人行，龍吐水，車止則止。亦解飛所造也。」 <http://big5.dushu.com/showbook/101182/1041934.html>

<sup>511</sup> Lai, "On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD," 57.

point of the sacred and profane.<sup>512</sup> For this to happen on a regular basis, the city, whether in China or the Western Regions, had to be part of a Buddhist state or in a state tolerant towards Buddhism. The festival could have started with elephant(s), followed by easy to (dis)assemble carriages, and later evolved into permanent carriages that were part of an altar (as in the Nunnery of Happy View and Flowering Prospect Nunnery). The parade could have started with one carriage and then involved a carriage per monastery, under the decree of the ruler. Depending on the tradition of the region, the city might organize the event in an orderly manner, from a day to a fortnight. Whether or not the head of state participated in the event, this parade already exhibited royal symbols that became acceptable across cultures.

The elephant and carriage aptly demonstrated the acculturation process that had been taking place in China for centuries, culminating in the grand image processions in Northern Wei Luoyang. Both India and China used elephants and carriages, for wars and transportation, as well as in their legends. When Chinese adopted the foreign activity of image processions, they also embraced the use of elephants and carriages, both being royal symbols of the universal monarch or *cakravartin*. Carriages represented the crosscurrents of culture, politics and technology. Furthermore, the carriage turned out to be an excellent metaphor for the religious adaptation of Mahāyāna *upāya* that happened during this period.

### 3.5 HYBRIDIZATION OF BUDDHISM

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<sup>512</sup> Stanley Tambiah postulated a performance theory in which a “performative” ritual (1) involves action (2) uses stage sets and objects to give audience an intensive experience and (3) validates social hierarchy and refers to the cosmos. This theory was referred to in Dorothy C. Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 23.

The Buddha's birthday parade was a creative conjunction of Indian conventions and Chinese practices, with the benefit of centuries of Central Asian domestication experience. Many scholars have noted the blend of Indian, Tuoba Wei and Chinese influence in Yungang's<sup>513</sup> and Longmen's grotto art. The development of the Buddha's birthday parade also reflected Buddhist history and Indian influence in China. Just as Taddei argued that the famous Buddhist Gandhāran art was an innovative development based on Hellenistic, Indian, and Iranian traditions over centuries,<sup>514</sup> I would like to suggest that the symbolic elements seen in Buddhist parades were similarly construed.

China had been open to foreign influences for a long time. Between the third and seventh centuries, foreign plants and vegetables such as chive, coriander, cucumber, fig, safflower, sesame, pomegranate, and walnut entered China; some of their Chinese names contain the character *hu*, denoting their Central Asian origin.<sup>515</sup> Trade went both ways as orange, peach, pear, rose, peony, azalea, camellia, and chrysanthemum reached Tibet and beyond.<sup>516</sup> Needham referred to the period between the third and seventh centuries as the great Chinese-Indian age because of the exchange of knowledge regarding medicinal plants, mathematics,<sup>517</sup> musical scales, painting, and sculptured columns.<sup>518</sup> Indian music went into China through Kucha during the Southern and Northern dynasties and became popular.<sup>519</sup> The Chinese pagoda evolved from the Indian *stūpa*.<sup>520</sup> As societies between

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<sup>513</sup> For example, the presence of Indian Buddhist guardian gods in the eastern Yungang caves has been noted by Changjian Guo, Jianzhi Song, and Lingyu Feng, *World Heritage Sites in China* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2003), 235-236.

<sup>514</sup> Glen Warren Bowersock, Peter Robert Lamont Brown, and Oleg Grabar, *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 461.

<sup>515</sup> Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 7:, Part 2:175.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.

<sup>517</sup> Zhao Junqing (趙君卿) proved the Pythagoras Theorem in a second century commentary.

<sup>518</sup> Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 7:, Part 2:212-214.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid., 7:, Part 2:213-214.

Zheng, *Study of Dunhuang Grotto Art, Music and Dance*, 59.

India and China borrowed traits from one another over time,<sup>521</sup> acculturation took place within this social network.

Buddhism expanded its influence in China during this period. It began with Western Central Asian monks (such as Dharmarakṣa) from Yuezhi, Parthia and Sogdia arriving in China from the Kuṣāṇa Empire from 150 to 270.<sup>522</sup> Translators from Khotan and Kucha (such as Kumārajīva) followed this wave from 270 to 380 and from North India from 380 to 450.<sup>523</sup> Besides high profile translators who received official patronage, there were also anonymous foreign monks, not recorded in biographies, who transmitted Buddhism at the sub-elite levels. They worked miracles, healed the sick, meditated, performed ordination, promoted image veneration, and authenticated relics.<sup>524</sup> Many of these missionaries were also able agents of localization.

Domestication is a process of adaptation to the socioeconomic and cultural life of an ethnic group or a region.<sup>525</sup> Central Asia, an important mediator in Buddhism's transmission from India to China, consisted of Buddhist kingdoms that adapted Buddhism to their local cultures. Gandhāran Buddhists made Buddhism their own by documenting the *jātakas* and *avadānas* in their region.<sup>526</sup> The Buddhist *jātakas* identified Taxila as a center for learning for princes from various kingdoms.<sup>527</sup> The *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya* includes narratives of Śākyamuni's conquest of the Dharma in

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<sup>520</sup> Ibid., 7:, Part 2:214.

<sup>521</sup> Rebecca Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2008), 242–243.

<sup>522</sup> Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks*, 306.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>525</sup> Todd T. Lewis, "Newar-Tibetan Trade and the Domestication of 'Siṃhalasārthabāhu Avadāna'," *History of Religions* 33, no. 2 (November 1, 1993): 135.

<sup>526</sup> Monius, *Imagining a Place for Buddhism*.

<sup>527</sup> Bimala Law, *Geography of Early Buddhism*. ([Varanasi]: Bhartiya Pub. House, 1973), 53.

Gandhāra, Kashmir and other *Jibin* areas.<sup>528</sup> Through what Zürcher terms “long-distance transmission” along the land-based Silk Road rather than contact expansion of big Indian monasteries,<sup>529</sup> Buddhism in China hybridized as it blended with local Daoism, Confucianism, and shamanism through social, cultural, and literary domestication.

Subsequent development based itself on this hybrid form of Buddhism. Studies have identified several phases of development. One model posits three phases: contact and explication whereby terminologies were explained and *sūtras* translated; penetration, especially into the cultured strata of society;<sup>530</sup> and expansion.<sup>531</sup> During this third period, Buddhism started acquiring a distinct identity, made visible through various cultural and art forms.

One visible cultural form that received both royal and popular support was the Buddha’s birthday parade. Buddhists promoted the Buddha as a foreign icon, elevated to the status of a cosmic being with supernatural power that accorded with the religious mentality of the masses. The parade was a conspicuous form of worship that when combined with carnival-like gaiety, cleverly promoted the founder in both a religious and secular way. This timely maneuver coincided with Chinese widespread adoption of Indian and Central Asian cultural artifacts. Luoyang, a cosmopolitan city during the Northern Wei, was the perfect site for the variegated display of foreign motifs associated with this icon. The Luoyang display in early sixth century demonstrated the cross-cultural mobility of Buddhism as it gained local appeal.

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<sup>528</sup> Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks*, 254.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>530</sup> Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 18.

<sup>531</sup> James Huntley Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea: A Study in the Emplantation of Religion* (Leiden: BRILL, 1985), 12.



The process of hybridization occurred over centuries in China. Before the religion developed a sufficiently strong foundation, state support was a critical factor in the rise and fall of Buddhism. However, attributing the popularity of Buddhism to politics alone would overlook the larger social and cultural backdrop. Buddhism grew to prominence in the north amidst an open environment that found foreign ideas and cultures appealing. Buddhism and the architecture, art, music, rituals, literature, and missionaries that it brought along made for the most visible foreign adoption and adaptation to local needs. In case anyone should believe that the process was unilateral sinification, the parades proved that the assimilation process took place bilaterally, with Buddhism assuming its distinct identity through foreign ideology, icons and metaphors.

### **3.6 ONGOING DEFINITION OF NORTHERN WEI**

#### ***3.6.1 FROM XIANBEI TRIBE TO NORTHERN WEI CHINESE EMPIRE***

Religious agents of change worked with the political climate of the time. Buddhist acculturation during the Northern Wei revealed the process of natives owning the spirituality of the religion in a culture that was predominantly Confucian and Daoist, and royalty who were previously shamanistic. Buddhism encountered Northern Wei at a time when the rulers were adapting to Chinese culture, and Chinese to Xianbei rulers. This multi-directional dialogue made for a continuous establishing of Buddhism and Northern Wei's identity in China, and the resultant "Chinese" culture of the Northern Wei Dynasty.

Historical annals recognized Northern Wei as a legitimate Chinese dynasty, although the Xianbei people were not of Chinese origin.<sup>532</sup> They did not descend from the Yellow Emperor<sup>533</sup> as Han Chinese did. According to the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*, the Xianbei people belonged to the Eastern *hu* people; they practiced different customs and reared different animals from the Han Chinese.<sup>534</sup> Based on evidence from the *Book of Wei*, the Tuoba clan belonged to the Turkic *tilig* family (*dili*). The Xianbei invaders were steppe people who spotted different lifestyles and traditions from the agrarian settlers they eventually ruled. They started as hunters residing in the Gaxian Cave. The first time the words “Xianbei” referred to a tribe was in Warring States’ *Guoyu*<sup>535</sup> describing this tribe as an inferior minority group that could only watch the fire to prevent it from extinguishing and could not join in the confederation.<sup>536</sup> King Cheng of Zhou (r. 1032 – 1020 BCE) assigned the Xianbei people to watch the fire because they had kept an eternal fire<sup>537</sup> burning in the Gaxian cave to cook their meats.<sup>538</sup> This was the humble beginning of the Xianbei people.

The desire to improve living conditions and assure constant food supply motivated the Xianbei people to move out of Gaxian Cave.<sup>539</sup> The Xianbei people were

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<sup>532</sup> Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 68.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> 《後漢書·烏桓鮮卑列傳》：「鮮卑者，亦東胡之支也，別依鮮卑山，故因號焉。其言語習俗與烏桓同。唯婚姻先髡頭，以季春月大會於饒樂水上，飲讌畢，然後配合。又禽獸異於中國者，野馬、原羊、角端牛，以角為弓，俗謂之角端弓者。又有貂、貉、鯁子，皮毛柔輭，故天下以為名裘。」 <http://ctext.org/hou-han-shu?searchu=%E9%AE%AE%E5%8D%91%E8%80%85>

<sup>535</sup> 《國語·晉語八》：「昔成王盟諸侯于岐陽，楚為荊蠻，置茅蕝，設望表，與鮮卑守燎，故不與盟。」 <http://ctext.org/quo-yu>

<sup>536</sup> Ruiying 王瑞英 Wang, “The Xianbei People 鮮卑故里的鮮卑人,” *The People’s Government of Oroqen - 鄂倫春自治旗人民政府*, March 4, 2009, <http://www.elc.gov.cn/zjcl2/html/1027.html>.

<sup>537</sup> Nomads deemed it important to keep a sacred fire eternally burning.

<sup>538</sup> Wang, “The Xianbei People.”

<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

under the Xiongnu confederation until the disintegration of the latter.<sup>540</sup> The Xianbei moved southwards and adopted a pastoral lifestyle.<sup>541</sup> Since then, they absorbed many Xiongnu tribes and grew in prominence. The Xianbei people consisted of several clans, the most powerful of them being the Tuoba clan.<sup>542</sup> The name “Tuoba” or “Tabgatch” may mean “descendants of Xianbei father and Xiongnu mother.”<sup>543</sup> By the middle of the third century, the Xianbei people allied themselves with the Western Jin court.<sup>544</sup> When the latter fell in 311, the Former Qin kingdom forcibly moved the Xianbei people to Shandong to adopt an agricultural lifestyle.<sup>545</sup> After Former Qin disintegrated, chieftain Tuoba Gui (Emperor Daowu) established the Northern Wei Dynasty in 386, and in 398, set up his capital at Pingcheng (modern Datong, Shaanxi).<sup>546</sup> By 439, its third emperor (Taiwu) unified northern China. Tuoba Xianbei had emerged as the victor, eventually ruling over the longest-lived and most powerful of the northern kingdoms.

Sustained rule over the Chinese presented several challenges to the Northern Wei. There were a number of differences between the victorious rulers and the indigenous Chinese. The semi-nomadic Xianbei people were largely pastoral. Hence, livestock remained a significant part of the Northern Wei economy.<sup>547</sup> There were millions of heads of cattle, horses, camels, and sheep on record.<sup>548</sup> To match their lifestyle, they

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<sup>540</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, and James Palais, *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2009), 53.

<sup>541</sup> Wang, “The Xianbei People.”

<sup>542</sup> Barbara A. West, *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Asia and Oceania* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 891.

<sup>543</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 44.

<sup>544</sup> Waugh, “The Tuoba Xianbei and the Northern Wei Dynasty.”

<sup>545</sup> Ibid.

<sup>546</sup> Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 65.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

wore shirts and trousers<sup>549</sup> whereas Han Chinese wore skirts with long and loose sleeves. The Xianbei people were of proto-Tungusic Donghu origin from the northeastern part of China, and they spoke a Tungusic Xianbei dialect called Orkhon Turkic, not Chinese.<sup>550</sup> Shamanism was a common religion among northern tribes in ancient times.<sup>551</sup> Hence, the early Xianbei people worshipped heaven, earth, sun, moon, stars, mountains, and rivers.<sup>552</sup> As semi-nomads, these foreign rulers were used to migration. Early Northern Wei emperors relocated population groups of Chinese, Xianbei, Xiongnu, and other ethnic origins from different parts of China to new locations, thereby dissolving old affiliations and forging a new Northern Wei identity.<sup>553</sup>

The Northern Wei society was neither static nor uniform. Instead, the Central Plains experienced cultural, social, and political changes. In Lim's study of Turkic and Han linguistics, she noticed that the Hans learned Turkic language and customs while the Tuoba ruling class formed a new aristocracy with Han aristocrats and encouraged intermarriages.<sup>554</sup> Northern Wei Luoyang and Pingcheng were bilingual societies.<sup>555</sup> Chinese learned the nomadic ways of wearing shirts and trousers, and some Chinese adopted Xianbei names and spoke Xianbei language.<sup>556</sup> While this dynasty had undoubtedly affected the formation of the Chinese identity through embracing various

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<sup>549</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>550</sup> West, *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Asia and Oceania*, 891.

<sup>551</sup> Ruiying 王瑞英 Wang, "Relationship Between Tuoba Xianbei and Oroqen 拓跋鮮卑與鄂倫春民族的淵源關係淺探," *The People's Government of Oroqen - 鄂倫春自治旗人民政府*, April 7, 2009, <http://www.elc.gov.cn/zjclc2/html/1163.html>.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

<sup>553</sup> Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 65.

<sup>554</sup> Lim, "On Old Turkic Consonantism and Vocalic Divisions of Acute Consonants in Medieval Han Phonology," 60.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>556</sup> Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 68.

ethnicities,<sup>557</sup> one of the most outstanding impacts had to be Northern Wei acceleration of Buddhist assimilation and acceptance.

### 3.6.2 *NORTHERN WEI BUDDHIST PARADES*

Originally shamanistic, the Xianbei people first encountered Buddhism when they entered China during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period. A powerful Xianbei clan, the Murong, became Buddhists after they moved into Dajicheng under the leadership of Murong Hui in 294.<sup>558</sup> After they set up the Former Yan kingdom in a new capital of Longcheng (in present day Liaoning), king Murong Huang built the first Xianbei Buddhist temple in nearby Longshan in 342.<sup>559</sup> The Tuoba clan had not heard of Buddhism until Fotucheng (232-348) and Dao'an (312 – 385) popularized the religion in Ye and Chang'an respectively.<sup>560</sup> The first emperor of the Northern Wei, Tuoba Gui, became a follower of the ways of Daoism and Buddhism. In 398, he decreed the building of a Buddhist monastery in his new capital of Pingcheng.<sup>561</sup>

When the ancestors of Wei established their kingdom in the bleak North, their customs were simple, and without any ado they kept themselves. From the Western

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<sup>557</sup> Dorothy Wong, "Ethnicity and Identity," in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries, and Human Geographies in Chinese History*, by Nicola Di Cosmo and Don J. Wyatt (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 80.

<sup>558</sup> Cheng-shu 金成淑 Jin, "The Buddhism Culture of Murong Xianbei Race 慕容鲜卑的佛教文化," *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy*, no. 2, 287 (2005): 105–106.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>560</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 50–51.

<sup>561</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「魏先建國於玄朔，風俗淳一，無為以自守，與西域殊絕，莫能往來。故浮圖之教，未之得聞，或聞而未信也。及神元與魏、晉通聘，文帝久在洛陽，昭成又至襄國，乃備究南夏佛法之事。太祖平中山，經略燕趙，所逕郡國佛寺，見諸沙門、道士，皆致精敬，禁軍旅無有所犯。帝好黃老，頗覽佛經。但天下初定，戎車屢動，庶事草創，未建圖宇，招延僧眾也。然時時旁求。先是，有沙門僧朗，與其徒隱于泰山之瑯琊谷。帝遣使致書，以繒、素、旃罽、銀鉢為禮。今猶號曰朗公谷焉。天興元年，下詔曰：「夫佛法之興，其來遠矣。濟益之功，冥及存沒，神蹤遺軌，信可依憑。其敕有司，於京城建飾容範，修整宮舍，令信向之徒，有所居止。」是歲，始作五級佛圖、耆闍崛山及須彌山殿，加以續飾。別構講堂、禪堂及沙門座，莫不嚴具焉。」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@5^1631004334^807^^^60202010000300210003^1@@1660566800>

Regions they were cut off, and there was no coming and going between them. Therefore they had not yet heard of the doctrine of Buddha, or, if they had heard of it, they did not yet believe in it. ... In the first year of Tianxing [398] an edict was handed down, saying: "Since the rise of the Law of Buddha it is now a long time. Its saving and benevolent powers mysteriously reach to life and death. Its divine traces and the models it has bequeathed may indeed be trusted. We hereby command the officials to build and adorn images and repair the official residences in the Capital and see to it that the believers have places in which to stay." In this year there were first made the five storeyed reliquary and the Mount Qishejue and Mount Xumi Halls. To these were added paintings and decorations, and there were built in addition a lecture hall, a meditation hall, and cells for śramaṇas, all thoroughly accoutered.<sup>562</sup>

Besides architecture and art, festivals represented another way that the religion manifested itself in the Northern Wei Dynasty. The first three emperors of the Northern Wei Dynasty ordered the parade of Buddhas through the streets of the capital city on the eighth day of the fourth month. The emperors created this observance as a tradition; they also personally attended the parade and scattered flowers from the gate tower.<sup>563</sup>

At that time Shih-tsu had just ascended the throne. He also, continuing the actions of T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung, always used to invite śramaṇas of high character and discuss with them. On the eighth day of the fourth month he used to mount the Buddha images on carriages and march them through the wide streets. The Emperor would personally drive to the gate tower and watch; he would scatter flowers and thus perform acts of veneration.<sup>564</sup>

Emperor Taiwu (Shih-tsu in the preceding quotation) favored Buddhism until unfortunate circumstances caused him to decree its persecution. Buddhism revived and reached new heights under the reigns of later emperors. Although there is no information regarding Emperor Wencheng's (452 – 466) and Xianwen's (466 – 471) support of Buddhist parades, the tradition was not lost. Emperor Xiaowen continued this visible royal endorsement of Buddhism in Luoyang on the eighth day of the fourth month. He

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<sup>562</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 50–52.

<sup>563</sup> 《魏書 釋老志》：「世祖初即位。亦遵太祖太宗之業。每引高德沙門。與共談論。於四月八日。與諸佛像。行於廣衢。帝親御門樓臨觀。散花以致禮敬。」[http://w3.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead=X77n1521\\_p0008b21](http://w3.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead=X77n1521_p0008b21)

<sup>564</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 56.

invited monasteries to parade their images to the Changhe palace where he scattered flowers and paid respect.<sup>565</sup> The epitome of these parades came from his successors. Under Emperor Xuanwu, over one thousand images paraded through the new capital of Luoyang, marking the dynasty's glorious peak. Yang estimated 1,367 temples in Luoyang before the collapse of the Northern Wei Empire,<sup>566</sup> and if most of these temples participated in the Buddha's Day festival, it was plausible for over a thousand images to be on the city streets that day. The carriages entered the city gate of Xuanyang and proceeded north on the main road of the city (Tongtuo Street or Imperial Drive) which was 42m wide.<sup>567</sup> With most of Luoyang's population, estimated to be 600,000<sup>568</sup>, on the streets participating in the procession in one way or another, this festival made for an overwhelming sight.

Of all the biographical events in the life of the Buddha, the birthday was the most relevant to the Northern Wei emperor. However, indigenous Chinese and Buddhists might be more inclined to commemorate other events of the Buddha's life. Chinese were used to celebrating death anniversaries of their legendary heroes, an inappropriate implication for the emperor. The leaving home, enlightenment and *nirvāṇa* days implied transcendentalism, rather irrelevant to the reigning monarch. By endorsing birthday parades, the Northern Wei emperors were elevating their status from that of a secular monarch to the cosmological. Grotto art supports this assertion. In Yungang Grottoes,

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<sup>565</sup> 《佛祖統紀》卷 51：「北魏孝文。詔德法師一月三入殿說法。帝數幸王園寺。與沙門談論佛法○幸白塔寺聽登法師講成實論○詔四月八日迎洛京諸寺佛像。入闔闔宮受散花禮敬○宣武御式乾殿講維摩經。西域沙門至者三千人。」(CBETA, T49, no. 2035, p. 451, a4-9)

<sup>566</sup> Xuanzhi Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang*, trans. Yi-tung Wang (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 246.

<sup>567</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 165.

<sup>568</sup> Using Yang's declaration that there were 109,000 households, Jenner estimated a conservative 600,000 population size in William John Francis Jenner, *Memories of Lo-yang: Yang Hsuan-chih and the Lost Capital (493-534)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 117.

the five Buddha statues designed by superintendent monk Tanyao stood for the five Northern Wei emperors who ruled up to 460.<sup>569</sup> In Longmen, monk Huicheng designed seven Buddha statues in Central Asian costumes to represent the seven Northern Wei emperors up to 493.<sup>570</sup> McNair alluded to Hebei's 495 Seven Emperors Monastery to support her assertion.<sup>571</sup> Hence, it was plausible for emperors who had associated themselves with the Buddha through Buddhist art and architecture to support a festival glorifying the birth of the Buddha.

Just as ancient Indian and Chinese monarchs used their chariots in imperial processions to mark their territorial boundaries, the ruler sent carriages carrying the Buddha (symbolically also representing the emperor) throughout the streets of Luoyang. The emperor clearly staked his claim on this ancient capital. The display of superb organizational and coordination skills of government officials, lay devotional societies and monastics came at a time when the unity and identity of the Northern Wei people were at risk. While capital relocation had alienated pro-Xianbei people who preferred to rule from further north, Buddhism helped different groups to build an identity that transcended their ethnicities.<sup>572</sup> Especially in Luoyang, the Buddhist parades took on the grand scale in order to syncretize diverse populations, answer to the needs of those seeking a better life, and provide a communal identity to the faithful.

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<sup>569</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 17.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.

<sup>572</sup> Wong, "Ethnicity and Identity," 82.



## Chapter Four SACRED LEGITIMACY TO RULE:

### FROM SAGE KING TO *TATHĀGATA* KING

*"A king is one who rules the people of one city or province, and rules them for the common good."*

St. Thomas Aquinas<sup>573</sup>

*"The strongest is never strong enough to be always master, unless he transforms his strength into right, and obedience to duty."*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Edward Lorraine Walter<sup>574</sup>

Compared to Chinese emperors, Northern Wei (386 – 534 CE) emperors faced a more difficult problem justifying their royal authority in China. The majority of their subjects, Han Chinese, had a different foundation of kingship than the steppe people. Combative superiority did not translate directly into right of monarchy according to Han Chinese rules of kingship. Even among the steppe peoples, the apparent weakening of Xianbei authority because of Emperor Xiaowen's (r. 471 – 499) sinification program also threatened continued Tuoba leadership of the nomadic tribes. From the time that Tuoba Gui (371 - 409) declared himself Emperor Daowu (r. 386 – 409) of the Northern Wei empire in Pingcheng in 398<sup>575</sup> to Emperor Xuanwu's (r. 500 – 515) ascendance to the throne in Luoyang, a hundred years had passed by. During this century, Northern Wei

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<sup>573</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship, to the King of Cyprus*, trans. Gerald Bernard Phelan (Westport Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1949), 8–10.

<sup>574</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Edward Lorraine Walter, *The Social Contract: Or, the Principles of Political Rights*, trans. Rose M. Harrington (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1893), 7.

<sup>575</sup> Ernst Faber, *Chronological Handbook of the History of China: A Manuscript Left by the Late Rev. Ernst Faber*, ed. P. Kranz (Shanghai: General Evangelical Protestant missionary society of Germany, 1902), ix (Appendix A).

emperors had leaned on Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist endorsements for their right to rule.

Legitimacy to rule was a significant problem to Northern Wei emperors. Although of non-Han origin, the royal court during the Northern dynasties (386 – 588) continued to respect Han Chinese heritage. The *Record* and the “Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism” of the *Book of Wei* demonstrated this tendency. Even though written in the Eastern Wei (534 – 550) court, the *Record* began its Preface by referring to the “three emperors and five monarchs.”<sup>576</sup> This tradition continued to Northern Qi (550 – 577). The “Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism” also opened with a reference to Fuxi and the Yellow Emperor (two of the three ideal albeit mythical emperors of ancient China), as well as to the *fen* and *dian* writings of the Three Emperors and Five Monarchs.<sup>577</sup> Even foreign emperors had to adhere to, or at least show command of, the wisdom of pre-historic Chinese monarchs.

The sayings [embodied in] the works of Three Emperors and Five Monarchs, along with teachings [imparted by] the nine classes of literature and one hundred schools of philosophy, have all prevailed in China and included ideas introduced from abroad.  
<sup>578579</sup>

Great men once arose and shepherded the people. But everything anterior to the tying of knots is unmentioned in literary records. Therefore there is no way of knowing about it. From Fu-hsi and Hsüan-yüan down through the Three Dynasties, the preternatural words and mystical scriptures were accumulated in the writings of the

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<sup>576</sup> The three emperors and five monarchs were considered exemplary monarchs of antiquity. The Three Emperors are Fuxi (伏羲, 2852? -2738? BCE), Shennong (神農, 2737?-2698? BCE) and Huangdi (黃帝, 2697? -2598? BCE). The Five Monarchs are Shaohao (少昊, 2597? -2514? BCE), Zhuanxu (顓頊, 2513? -2636? BCE), Gaoxin (高辛, 2435? -2366? BCE), Yao (堯, d. 2258? BCE), Shun (舜, 2317? -2208? BCE).

<sup>577</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 25.

<sup>578</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 3.

<sup>579</sup> 《洛陽伽藍記》：「三墳五典之說，九流百氏之言，并理在人區，而義兼天外。」

<http://www.tianyabook.com/lishi/luoyangjialanji/1.html>

diagrams and apocrypha. The art of setting an example to the ages and of guiding of people was handed down in the traces of the *fen* and *tien*.<sup>580, 581</sup>

More substantial proof of foreign powers adopting ancient Chinese traditions of legitimacy could be seen in their adherence to the prescription of “three unities and five powers” throughout the turbulent Southern and Northern dynasties (420 – 589) period. The three unities of black, white, and red, as well as the five phases of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water justified change.<sup>582</sup> According to Dong Zhongshu (179 – 104 BCE), an emperor who realized one of the three unities or obtained one of the five phases would receive the heavenly mandate.<sup>583</sup> Most emperors accepted this political system throughout the Southern and Northern dynasties. For example, when Emperor He of Southern Qi (r. 501 – 502) abdicated the throne to Xiao Yan or Emperor Wu of Southern Liang (r. 502 – 549) in 502, Emperor He issued an edict that started with “The five powers must start afresh; the three unities must switch and flourish.”<sup>584</sup> Dynastic change was a means to complete Heaven’s plan for cosmic social and moral order.<sup>585</sup> Emperor Daowu declared Northern Wei to be “earth power” of the five-phase cycle.<sup>586</sup> Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471–499) changed Northern Wei to “water power.”<sup>587</sup> In spite of such justification, the short periods of reign of emperors succeeding Emperor Xiaoming (r. 516–528) pointed to the Tuoba Wei family losing their hold on the throne as tribesmen rebelled

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<sup>580</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 25.

<sup>581</sup> 《魏書·釋老志》：「大人有作，司牧生民，結繩以往，書契所絕，故靡得而知焉。自羲軒已還，至於三代，其神言秘策，蘊圖緯之文，範世率民，垂墳典之迹。」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@5^1199715872^807^^5020201000030021^2@@1456104378>

<sup>582</sup> Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion*, 60.

<sup>583</sup> Chen, “Early Chinese Religion,” 54.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>585</sup> Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 146.

<sup>586</sup> Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion*, 67.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid., 68.

against the monarch in the 520s.<sup>588</sup> Coming under increasingly formidable threats, Emperor Xiaowu (r. 532-534) left Luoyang to seek the protection of Yu Wentai in Shanxi.<sup>589</sup> Yu Wentai effectively ruled Western Wei<sup>590</sup> and eventually formed Northern Zhou (557 – 581). The Gao family (Gao Huan, Gao Cheng and Gao Yang), finding that Emperor Xiaowu had run away, moved the Wei capital to Ye in 534 and eventually forced a young Emperor Xiaojing (r. 534 – 550) to abdicate the throne to Gao Yang,<sup>591</sup> thereby starting the Northern Qi Dynasty (550 – 577). Even after the breakup of the Northern Wei Empire, both Eastern Wei (534 – 555) and Western Wei (535 – 556) Dynasties kept a puppet Tuoba Wei descendant on the throne, thereby respecting the birthright heritage of royalty. When Northern Zhou succeeded Western Wei, it declared itself to have inherited the “wood power” since the wood phase followed water, hence legitimizing the transfer of the heavenly mandate to Northern Zhou. The dominance of Confucian systems compelled foreign emperors to adopt the same scheme, as well as borrow from other complementary traditions.

The identity of the Northern Wei emperor was a constant struggle. Tuoba emperors reigning before Emperor Xiaowen ascended the throne using traditional Tuoba rituals. After Emperor Xiaowen’s sinification program, Tuoba emperors adopted Chinese propriety.<sup>592</sup> Towards the end of the Northern Wei era, Emperor Xiaowu (r. 532 – 534)

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<sup>588</sup> Albert E. Dien, *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford University Press, 1991), 336.

<sup>589</sup> Shounan 王壽南 Wang, *The Founding Emperors of Chinese Dynastic History 中國歷代創業帝王* (Taiwan Shangyin Book Company 臺灣商務印書館, 2003), 44.

<sup>590</sup> Benjamin E Wallacker, “Studies in Medieval Chinese Sieecraft: The Siege of Yu-Pi,” A.d. 546,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* (pre-1986) 28, no. 4 (August 1969): 789.

<sup>591</sup> Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, 6–7.

<sup>592</sup> Changshou 馬長壽 Ma, *Wuhuan Yu Xianbei 烏桓與鮮卑* (Guilin Shi: Guangxi shi fan da xue chu ban she 廣西師範大學出版社, 2006), 255.

resumed ancient Tuoba rituals when he ascended the throne.<sup>593</sup> From this, one can deduce the sensitive divide between foreign and local factions.

Besides utilizing the dominant “three unities and five powers” model, Emperors Xuanwu and Xiaoming had three major options of monarchy that could further strengthen their royal position. First was the traditional Confucian *huangdi* model with which the native Chinese were familiar. Second was a Daoist *taiping zhenjun* model that their ancestor, Emperor Taiwu (r. 424 – 451), adopted. Third was a Buddhist *cakravartin* and *tathāgata* king model that had grown in popularity since the Sixteen Kingdoms Period. King Shi Le of Later Zhao (r. 328 – 349) pioneered a Buddhist *tianwang* title that resembled a *cakravartin* and remained in use up to the Northern Wei. Emperor Wu of Liang Dynasty (r. 502 – 550) used a *pusa huangdi* (bodhisattva emperor) title that was yet another derivation from the *cakravartin* model. The mega-parades, together with the unprecedented rate of Buddhist construction and growth in Buddhist monastics in Luoyang during the first two decades of the sixth century, revealed that Emperors Xuanwu and Xiaoming had endorsed the Buddhist model to legitimize their claim to the throne. When viewed as an affirmation of the emperor as a *tathāgata* king, the grand scale of parades celebrating Buddha’s birthday becomes understandable.

The Buddha’s birth stories, together with the life stories of a number of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, presented to emperors an alternative for legitimizing their claim to the Chinese throne. This alternative was particularly important to nomadic emperors who could not comfortably lay claim to descent from the Yellow Emperor lineage, nor to effective ritual merit accumulation from personal performance of elaborate sacrifices.

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<sup>593</sup> 《資治通鑑》：「戊子，孝武帝即位于东郭之外，用代都旧制，以黑氍毹七人，欢居其一，帝于氍毹上西向拜天毕，入御太极殿，群臣朝贺」[http://www.guoxue.com/shibu/zztj/content/zztj\\_155.htm](http://www.guoxue.com/shibu/zztj/content/zztj_155.htm)

The Buddha's birth stories at once solved the problems of birthright and divine mandate, crucial to the acknowledgment of Chinese and steppe people of the supreme monarch. The problems under investigation are not about how the Chinese emperor institutionalized his<sup>594</sup> power and authority, nor how he ruled his people. Instead, the questions are about the monarch's right to rule, and manifestation of that right, especially as they relate to the scale of the Buddha's birthday parades in Luoyang.

#### 4.1 EVOLUTION OF THE SAGE KING (*SHENGWANG*)

The royal titles of *cakravartin* or wheel-turning sage king (*zhuanlun shengwang*), bodhisattva emperor (*pusa huangdi*), and *tathāgata* king (*rulai wang*) were Buddhist adaptation of the Chinese sage king model. This sage king paradigm evolved from a more rudimentary relationship between the ruler and a divine Heaven. As an agriculturally based society, the Chinese were dependent on nature for survival. They conceived an omnipotent force, variously known as *Shangdi* (Lord-on-high), *Tian* (Heaven), or *huangtian shangdi* (heavenly lord-on-high) controlling nature. The ruler of the people, initially known as *wang* (king), later incorporated a divine title into his epithet. As his estate grew larger, he called himself *huangdi* (emperor), borrowing from two characters, *huang* and *di*, which were previously associated with the heavenly lord-on-high. However, the subjects of Chinese kings and emperors were not always satisfied with their rulers. This was especially true during extended periods of war such as the Spring and Autumn (770 – 476 BCE) as well as Warring States (475 – 221 BCE) periods, when people recalled with nostalgia the golden age of antiquity. Chinese intellectuals

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<sup>594</sup> China has seen only one empress in its entire history. She was Empress Wu Zetian (r. 690-705) who lived during the Tang dynasty. Given the scarcity of empresses, I shall use the male gender when referring to the ruler and most positions of power.

idealized their kings who could unite the embattled kingdoms as *shengwang* (sage kings). By the time of the Sixteen Kingdoms (303 – 436), people turned to Buddhism for ideal kingship. Northern Wei brought Buddhist kingship to another level of sophistication.

To understand the *shengwang* model of China, one has to start from the relationship between Chinese kingship and Heaven. In ancient times, kingships often based themselves on a combination of secular and sacred foundations. The ruler's supreme authority rested on the people's belief in his charismatic gifts and in the social order as divinely established.<sup>595</sup> The extent of religious authentication of a ruler could vary from civilization to civilization, depending on the degree that the monarch associated himself to the divine. In the case of ancient China, the ruler for a long time was none other than one of the sons of Heaven. Only he had the right to perform sacrifices to royal ancestors and heaven. This model evolved from a simpler paradigm used in earlier dynasties.

Ancient Chinese civilization had simple beginnings. The majority of people were farmers and the economy was agricultural. The population was largely concerned about seasons and fertility.<sup>596</sup> Among the natural calamities often faced by the Chinese inhabiting the rich alluvial plains of the Yellow River were floods and droughts.<sup>597</sup> Shang and Zhou ritual implements and oracle bone inscriptions detailing divination related to seasonal messages provided strong evidence that the survival and prosperity of these sedentary inhabitants were largely dependent upon nature.

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<sup>595</sup> Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (University of California Press, 1980), 22.

<sup>596</sup> D. Howard Smith, "Divine Kingship in Ancient China," *Numen* 4, no. 3 (1957): 171.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

The ancient relationship between Heaven and men was hierarchical. During the Shang Dynasty (c. 17<sup>th</sup> century – 15<sup>th</sup> century BCE), people believed that *Shangdi*, the highest deity they venerated, determined their fate and gave political power to their king to govern them.<sup>598</sup> After their king passed away, he joined the ranks of royal ancestors who served *Shangdi* directly. Hence, the living king personally offered sacrifices so that his royal ancestors could mediate on his behalf.<sup>599</sup> According to the *Record of Rites*,<sup>600</sup> the ruler accumulated ritual merit (for himself and the nation) through his exclusive duty of officiating at rituals worshipping ancestral spirits and the Gods of Earth and Grain.<sup>601</sup> Shang ancestral worship provided psychological and ideological support for the dominance of Shang kings.<sup>602</sup> However, during the later Shang period, at least as early as King Wuding of Shang (who ruled for fifty-nine years during thirteenth century BCE)<sup>603</sup>, there seemed to be a slight but significant change. Royal ancestors started to assume the title of *di* (lord): King Wuding addressed his father, Xiaoyi, as Lord Yi (Yidi) and King Wuding's successor addressed him as Lord Ding (Diding).<sup>604</sup> This escalation in the divine status of the monarch became the basis for formalizing the right to rule during the following Zhou Dynasty (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century – 256 BCE).

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<sup>598</sup> Jiahe 劉家和 Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship 論中國古代王權發展中的神化問題," in *Ancient Kingship and Despotism 古代王權與專制主義*, ed. Zhisheng 施治生 Shi and Xinru 劉欣如 Liu (Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she ;Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing 中國社會科學出版社, 1993), 17.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>600</sup> *Record of Rites* 46/797 (Poo 1998, 104): "he who owns the world should sacrifice to the hundred gods ... those who do not [possess mountains and rivers] should not sacrifice."

<sup>601</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 17.

<sup>602</sup> Mu-chou Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (SUNY Press, 1998), 23.

<sup>603</sup> Lily Xiao Hong Lee, A. D. Stefanowska, and Sue Wiles, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: Antiquity Through Sui, 1600 B.c.e.-618 C.e.* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), 13.

<sup>604</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 17.



After Zhou took over the rule from Shang, the court made two innovations to justify its claim to the prestigious throne. First, the king became the eldest son (*yuanzi*) of *huangtian shangdi*.<sup>605, 606</sup> The dukes of various kingdoms were the other sons of heaven (*tianzi*).<sup>607</sup> By this time, birthright was already a complex amalgamation of hereditary succession, descendance from the Yellow Emperor (one of the exemplary three emperors of antiquity), and divine bloodline from the Lord-on-high. Hereditary succession was important to maintain stability. When Yu transferred kingship to his son in the Xia Dynasty (c. 2070 – 1600 BCE), he started the tradition of hereditary kingship. The practice of ancestral worship assumed overriding importance for the monarch who had to exercise ritual propriety personally so that his royal ancestors could intervene on his nation's behalf. Descendants could not pass the duties to anyone else since Chinese believed that ancestors only accepted offerings from blood relations. Hence, the practice of hereditary succession kept the ruling power to a privileged few.

Blood descent was so important that even the first Xiongnu leader who rebelled against the Western Jin (265 – 317) to form his own kingdom claimed maternal ancestry from the first emperor of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE).<sup>608</sup> Liu Yuan (r. 304 – 310 CE), founder of Cheng Han kingdom, claimed descent from both Xiongnu and Han Chinese nobility.<sup>609</sup> Knowledgeable in Chinese culture since young and skilled in Xiongnu military skills, he started dual administration to win the hearts of his Chinese

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<sup>605</sup> 《周書·召誥》：「皇天上帝改厥元子」  
<http://hanchi.iuh.sinica.edu.tw/iuhpc/hanjiquery?@24^2015365004^807^^^701010010002000700090001^1@@422147829>

<sup>606</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 20.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>608</sup> Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, 61.

<sup>609</sup> Huang, *China*, 76.

subjects and pacify his Xiongnu compatriots.<sup>610</sup> As a pioneer of the Sixteen Kingdoms, Liu Yuan adopted a dual strategy that formed the foundation for later kingdoms.

The second innovation of the Zhou court was a special gift from heaven to his eldest son: the mandate to rule.<sup>611</sup> Placed on the throne by the will of Heaven (heavenly mandate), the emperor became both a religious leader as well as a political ruler. From the lessons of Xia and Shang, the Zhou kings were aware that this heavenly mandate (*tianming*) was impermanent.<sup>612</sup> While the Xia Dynasty began the system of hereditary succession, the Zhou Dynasty invented the innovative “heavenly mandate” political concept that legitimized their overthrow of the Shang family lineage. Since then, the Son of Heaven received his mandate to rule his subjects directly from Heaven; the Zhou replaced the Shang whom the Zhou claimed had violated heavenly moral standard.<sup>613</sup> At the same time, the emphasis shifted from serving Heaven to supporting the people. This humanistic twist affected the reason for the transfer of mandate to another house. Heaven transferred the mandate to rule based on the king’s morality (*de*), certainly not an arbitrary decision.<sup>614</sup> Hence, the Shang had *tianming* to defeat the corrupt Xia, and Zhou carried *tianming* to conquer Shang because the last king of Xia and Shang respectively did not cater to the welfare of their people.<sup>615</sup> Legitimacy to the throne and rebellion against the incumbent could both be justified with this double-edged heavenly mandate.

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<sup>610</sup> Xuediao 劉學鈔 Liu, *Ethnic Strategies of Hu Kingdoms 歷代胡族王朝之民族政策* (Zhi shu fang chu ban she, 知書房出版集團, 2005), 123–124.

<sup>611</sup> Liu, “A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship,” 20.

<sup>612</sup> 《周書·多方》：「皇天無親惟佑有德故以聖君代闇主」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@24^2015365004^807^^^701010010002000700130002^3@@1578387007>

<sup>613</sup> Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, 30.

<sup>614</sup> Liu, “A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship,” 22.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

The title of *tianzi* took on an increasingly moral and ethical component, intertwined with the heavenly mandate, while retaining a strong religious association.<sup>616</sup>

The titles used to represent kingships reflected the changing relationship between kings and heaven. When King Zheng of Qin<sup>617</sup> unified the other warring states of Zhou (Han in 230 BCE, Zhao in 228 BCE, Wei in 225 BCE, Chu in 223 BCE, Yan in 222 BCE, and Qi in 221 BCE), he devised a new title more powerful than *wang*.<sup>618</sup> In Old English, the word “king” stood for a “scion of a (noble) kin or tribe” or a “son or descendant of one of (noble) birth.”<sup>619</sup> By including divine descent of an individual, family, or clan, the king received sacred legitimacy for rightful sovereignty. The Chinese character for *wang* consists of three horizontal strokes (one for each of heavenly order, human order, and earthly order) with a vertical line mediating across all three strokes.<sup>620</sup> This vertical line legitimized the king as the supreme mediator representing all people to Heaven.<sup>621</sup> However, the chaos of the later Zhou Dynasty had diminished the prestige of *wang*. King Zheng invented a new title of “*huangdi*” by combining *huang* and *di* that Zhou people had reserved for heaven as well as sage kings.<sup>622</sup> Hence, he reigned as the First Emperor of Qin (*Qin shi huangdi*). To legitimize this title further, the First Emperor of Qin started a tradition of performing the ultimate *feng* and *shan* sacrifices in Mount Tai. This political maneuver declared publicly the Chinese emperor’s receipt of the Heavenly Mandate following the footsteps of Shun, who was allegedly the first king to have made

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<sup>616</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 46.

<sup>617</sup> His Chinese name is Ying Zheng 嬴政.

<sup>618</sup> Harold Miles Tanner, *China: A History* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2009), 87.

<sup>619</sup> William Little, H. W. Fowler, and J. Coulson, “King,” ed. C. T. Onions, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Taipei: Southeast Asia Bookstore 東南亞書店股份有限公司出版部, 1968).

<sup>620</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 35.

<sup>621</sup> Ibid., 35–36.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid., 36–37.

an offering at Mount Tai.<sup>623</sup> Throughout the imperial history of China, *huangdi* remained the most popular royal title in use.

Although popular, the preferred title of *huangdi* suggested imperialism and could not compare with the morality connotations of *wang*. Hence, several nomadic conquerors of the Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern dynasty adopted the titles of *tianwang* (heavenly king), *zhuanlun shengwang* (wheel-turning sage king) and *rulai wang* (*tathāgata* king). Although it seemed to be a political admission of weakness in monarchical authority, the title *wang* suggested governance by benevolence and virtuosity, traits that Chinese subjects longed for in sage kings.

Sagehood was not the sole propriety of the king. In the Zhou *Classic of Changes*, a sage had foreknowledge of fortune and misfortune.<sup>624, 625</sup> Hence, shamans who possessed the power to access gods and foretell the future through rituals and divination were highly respected. The Chinese king was the chief priest (or shaman) responsible for divination.<sup>626</sup> By virtue of his descentance from Heaven, he had privileged access to the divine, be it in ritual sacrifice or in divination.<sup>627</sup> A king represented the supreme sage who surrounded himself with wise officials. The monarch was at once the wisest and the most sacred person managing the relationships among Heaven, Earth, and the people.

By the time of Zhou Dynasty, the heavenly mandate theory acquired moral consideration. In 606 BCE (Eastern Zhou Dynasty), King Zhuang of Zhou asked about

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<sup>623</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>624</sup> 《周易·易經》：「知進退存亡而不失其正者，其唯聖人乎！」“He only is the sage who knows to advance and to retire, to maintain and to let perish; and that without ever acting incorrectly. Yes, he only is the sage!” <http://ctext.org/book-of-changes/yi-jing/zh?searchu=%E8%81%96#n278964>

<sup>625</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 6.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid., 21.

the size of the ritual cauldron (symbol of legitimacy for the ruler).<sup>628</sup> Wang Sunman replied that the key was in virtues and not the cauldron.<sup>629</sup> This idea formed the basis from which intellectuals formulated various “sage king” models. Eventually, “sage king” became the highest ideal for a Chinese man: to possess the virtue of a sage and the accomplishments of a ruler.<sup>630</sup>

#### 4.1.1 THE CONFUCIAN APPROPRIATION

During the Spring and Autumn (770 – 476 BCE) and Warring States (475-221 BCE) periods, many dukes proclaimed themselves to be kings (*wang*). The extended period of tumult caused the prior shamanic kingship<sup>631</sup> to undergo a series of transformations. Confucian scholars created models of virtue and composed a “sage king” paradigm as the epitome of virtuosity. Confucius (551 – 479 BCE) allegedly conferred the title of *shengwang* to legendary sovereigns of antiquity such as Yao and Shun because they were considered role models of royal virtues.<sup>632</sup> King Shun nominated Yu as his successor because of his many virtues and his ability to overcome the floods of the Yellow River.<sup>633</sup> According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, Sima Qian attributed King Yu as the first emperor of the Xia Dynasty.<sup>634</sup> Confucians could have popularized

<sup>628</sup> Liu, “A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship,” 27.

<sup>629</sup> 《史記·楚世家》：「楚王問鼎小大輕重，對曰：『在德不在鼎。』」<http://ctext.org/shiji/chu-shi-jia?searchu=%E5%9C%A8%E5%BE%B7%E4%B8%8D%E5%9C%A8%E9%BC%8E&searchmode=showwall#result>

<sup>630</sup> Yu-Lan Fung and Youlan Feng, *History of Chinese Philosophy, Volume 1: The Period of the Philosophers (from the Beginnings to Circa 100 B.C.)*, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 2.

<sup>631</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, xii.

<sup>632</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>633</sup> Mark Edward Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 34.

<sup>634</sup> Qian Sima, *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty*, trans. Burton Watson, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 5.

these legends to emphasize the virtues of sage kings.<sup>635</sup> The humane Yao, filial Shun, and self-sacrificing Yu, made into “paragons of human virtues,” became an aspiration for all who looked to a leader to unite the divided kingdoms of Zhou.<sup>636</sup>

“Sage kings” was so successfully promoted that generations of ancient Chinese aspired to become *shengwang*. When a Confucian sage ruled using five virtues and five relationships,<sup>637</sup> his state would be the perfect empire.<sup>638</sup> Hence, the canon of Confucian classics supported the “sage king” paradigm and eventually became a repository of sagely authority.<sup>639</sup> Even the historical *History of the Former Han Dynasty* endorsed a sage king as ruling by administering virtues according to *li*.<sup>640</sup> Famous Confucian scholars such as Mencius (391 – 308 BCE), Xunzi (312 – 230 BCE) and Dong Zhongshu (c. 179 – 104 BCE) had a hand in formulating the *shengwang* institution of a humane government.

According to Mencius, the king was the protector of the ruling house and all the people.<sup>641</sup> Only a true sage king possessing morality could unify the states.<sup>642</sup> Mencius emphasized that a ruler who practiced oppression and injustice would not be a suitable minister on behalf of *Tian* and so, the Chinese could dethrone this ruler.<sup>643</sup> Heaven only

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<sup>635</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 209.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>637</sup> The five virtues (五常) are human-heartedness (仁), justice (義), propriety (禮), wisdom (智), and faithfulness (信). The five relationships (五倫) are ruler-subject (君臣), parent-child (父子), husband-wife (夫婦), elder-younger brother (兄弟), and friend-friend (朋友).

<sup>638</sup> George William Knox, “The Orthodox Philosophy of the Chinese,” *The American Journal of Theology* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 1903): 48.

<sup>639</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, xv.

<sup>640</sup> 《漢書·宣帝劉詢》：「聖王之制，施德行禮」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@13^79133890^807^^^60202002000200090028^98@@1080709991>

<sup>641</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 63.

<sup>642</sup> Mencius, *Mencius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), ix.

<sup>643</sup> James M. Hubbard, “Problems in China,” in *The National Geographic Magazine* (National Geographic Society, 1900), 299.

legitimized a just king. In this way, Mencius extended the heavenly mandate to include the people's acceptance of their ruler.<sup>644</sup>

Zhang said, 'I presume to ask how it was that Yao presented Shun to Heaven, and Heaven accepted him; and that he exhibited him to the people, and the people accepted him.' Mencius replied, 'He caused him to preside over the sacrifices, and all the spirits were well pleased with them; thus Heaven accepted him. He caused him to preside over the conduct of affairs, and affairs were well administered, so that the people reposed under him; thus the people accepted him. Heaven gave the throne to him. The people gave it to him. Therefore I said, "The sovereign cannot give the throne to another. Shun assisted Yao in the government for twenty and eight years - this was more than man could have done, and was from Heaven. After the death of Yao, when the three years' mourning was completed, Shun withdrew from the son of Yao to the south of South river. The princes of the kingdom, however, repairing to court, went not to the son of Yao, but they went to Shun. Litigants went not to the son of Yao, but they went to Shun. Singers sang not the son of Yao, but they sang Shun. Therefore I said, "Heaven gave him the throne." It was after these things that he went to the Middle Kingdom, and occupied the seat of the Son of Heaven. If he had, before these things, taken up his residence in the palace of Yao, and had applied pressure to the son of Yao, it would have been an act of usurpation, and not the gift of Heaven. This sentiment is expressed in the words of The Great Declaration: "Heaven sees according as my people see; Heaven hears according as my people hear."<sup>645</sup>

The possibility of a transferrable heavenly mandate conflicted with the progeny model of succession practiced in ancient China. In order to solve this problem, Mencius quoted Confucius as saying that appointment by virtue and hereditary succession were equally legitimate as both were guided by morality.

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<sup>644</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 35.

<sup>645</sup> 《孟子·萬章上》：「曰：『敢問薦之於天而天受之，暴之於民而民受之，如何？』」曰：『使之主祭而百神享之，是天受之；使之主事而事治，百姓安之，是民受之也。天與之，人與之，故曰：天子不能以天下與人。舜相堯二十有八載，非人之所能為也，天也。堯崩，三年之喪畢，舜避堯之子於南河之南。天下諸侯朝覲者，不之堯之子而之舜；訟獄者，不之堯之子而之舜；謳歌者，不謳歌堯之子而謳歌舜，故曰天也。夫然後之中國，踐天子位焉。而居堯之宮，逼堯之子，是篡也，非天與也。《太誓》曰：『天視自我民視，天聽自我民聽』，此之謂也。』

<http://ctext.org/mengzi/wan-zhang->

[i?searchu=%E5%A4%A9%E5%AD%90%E4%B8%8D%E8%83%BD%E4%BB%A5%E5%A4%A9%E4%B8%8B%E8%88%87%E4%BA%BA&searchmode=showall#result](http://ctext.org/mengzi/wan-zhang-i?searchu=%E5%A4%A9%E5%AD%90%E4%B8%8D%E8%83%BD%E4%BB%A5%E5%A4%A9%E4%B8%8B%E8%88%87%E4%BA%BA&searchmode=showall#result)

Confucius said, "Tang and Yu resigned the throne to their worthy ministers. The sovereign of Xia and those of Yin and Zhou transmitted it to their sons. The principle of righteousness was the same in all the cases."<sup>646</sup>

Living just after Mencius, Xunzi separated *Tian*'s behavior from the people's. A sage need not understand Heaven.<sup>647</sup> A sage king was strong, discriminating and wise enough to bear the weight of ruling an empire.<sup>648</sup> Hence, all men were to obey the ruler's virtuous and wise orders. The monarch received the pre-ordained order to rule; hence, his words supreme, and his orders to be obeyed.<sup>649</sup>

By assuming oneness of Heaven and humanity,<sup>650</sup> Dong Zhongshu, a Confucianist, helped the Han Dynasty institutionalize a state cult of heavenly worship and formalize a theory of heavenly approval based on moral behavior. *Tian* was an omnipotent Lord-on-high who loved his king.<sup>651</sup> If the ruler could not keep harmonious relationships, he would receive warning signals from nature; continued digressions could result in the mandate being removed from him and his lineage.<sup>652</sup> In *The Great Learning*, the ruler who does not administer a government beneficial to the people and persists in oppression will no longer be entitled to be their ruler.<sup>653</sup> Unfortunately, this belief that Heaven gave the mandate to the best person to rule the country instigated rebellions.<sup>654</sup> In order to

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<sup>646</sup> 《孟子·萬章上》：「孔子曰：『唐虞禪，夏后、殷、周繼，其義一也。』」

[http://ctext.org/mengzi/wan-zhang-](http://ctext.org/mengzi/wan-zhang-i?searchu=%E5%A4%A9%E5%AD%90%E4%B8%8D%E8%83%BD%E4%BB%A5%E5%A4%A9%E4%B8%8B%E8%88%87%E4%BA%BA&searchmode=showall#result)

[i?searchu=%E5%A4%A9%E5%AD%90%E4%B8%8D%E8%83%BD%E4%BB%A5%E5%A4%A9%E4%B8%8B%E8%88%87%E4%BA%BA&searchmode=showall#result](http://ctext.org/mengzi/wan-zhang-i?searchu=%E5%A4%A9%E5%AD%90%E4%B8%8D%E8%83%BD%E4%BB%A5%E5%A4%A9%E4%B8%8B%E8%88%87%E4%BA%BA&searchmode=showall#result)

<sup>647</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 103.

<sup>648</sup> Smith, "Divine Kingship in Ancient China," 197.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>650</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 105.

<sup>651</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 40.

<sup>652</sup> Smith, "Divine Kingship in Ancient China," 203.

<sup>653</sup> Confucius and Mencius, *The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*, trans. James Legge (London: Trubner, 1861), 106.

<sup>654</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, xv.



prevent peasant and military uprising, *The Great Learning* teaches a king to regulate his states, families, persons, and hearts<sup>655</sup> according to Confucian virtues.

The Han Dynasty officially sanctioned the Confucian model and this model remained in use for many dynasties. Emperor Wen of Han (r. 179 – 157 BCE) recognized that winning the support of people was equivalent to obtaining the heavenly mandate.<sup>656</sup> In his decrees, he opposed blaming his subjects and officials for wrongdoings and proposed that prosperity arose from virtues.<sup>657, 658</sup> Hence, in the Confucian model, the sage king's relationship with an omnipotent *Tian* also depended on his treatment of his subjects. Equally important were that anyone could be a sage and anyone with this call to greatness could own the heavenly mandate.<sup>659</sup> Consequently, the sage king, *Tian* and people formed an intricate tripartite relationship in the Confucian model.

#### 4.1.2 THE MOHIST APPROPRIATION

Mozi (fifth century BCE) believed that the Lord-on-high created people on earth and worked with the Son of Heaven for the welfare of all people.<sup>660</sup> During the tumultuous Spring and Autumn as well as Warring States periods, Mozi bravely recommended that the highest virtue was universal love.

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<sup>655</sup> Confucius and Mencius, *The Chinese Classics*, 357.

<sup>656</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 39.

<sup>657</sup> 《史記·孝文本紀》：「人主不德，布政不均，則天示之以菑，以誠不治。乃十一月晦，日有食之，適見于天，菑孰大焉！朕獲保宗廟，以微眇之身託于兆民君王之上，天下治亂，在朕一人，唯二三執政猶吾股肱也。朕下不能理育群生，上以累三光之明，其不德大矣。令至，其悉思朕之過失，及知見思之所不及，句以告朕。及舉賢良方正能直言極諫者，以匡朕之不逮。因各飭其任職，務省繇費以便民。」

<http://ctext.org/shiji?searchu=%E4%BA%BA%E4%B8%BB%E4%B8%8D%E5%BE%B7>

<sup>658</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 39.

<sup>659</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 101.

<sup>660</sup> Di Mo, *Mozi: Basic Writings*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 8.

The emperor is the most honourable of the world and the richest of the world. So, the honoured and the rich cannot but obey the will of Heaven. He who obeys the will of Heaven, loving universally and benefiting others, will obtain rewards. He who opposes the will of Heaven, by being partial and unfriendly and harming others, will incur punishment. Now, who were those that obeyed the will of Heaven and obtained rewards, and who were those that opposed the will of Heaven and incurred punishment? Mozi said: 'The ancient sage-kings of the Three Dynasties, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu, were those that obeyed the will of Heaven and obtained reward. And the wicked kings of the Three Dynasties, Jie, Zhou, You, and Li, were those that opposed the will of Heaven and incurred punishment.' How did Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu obtain their reward? Mozi said: 'In the highest sphere they revered Heaven, in the middle sphere they worshipped the spirits, and in the lower sphere they loved the people. Thereupon the will of Heaven proclaimed: "All those whom I love these love also, and all those whom I benefit these benefit also. Their love to men is all-embracing and their benefit to men is most substantial." And so, they were raised to the honour of Sons of Heaven and enriched with the heritage of the empire. They were succeeded by descendants for ten thousand generations to continue the spread of their righteousness all over the world. And people praise them unto this day, calling them righteous sage-kings.'<sup>661</sup>

To Mozi, the sage king had the sanction of Heaven to rule because he practiced universal love to the benefit of all people, including his enemies. Mohism's major difference with Confucianism in its definition of the sage king rested with whether he also loved the people of other families and states as much as he loved his own subjects because all were the people of the Lord-on-high.<sup>662</sup>

#### 4.1.3 THE LEGALIST APPROPRIATION

Han Fei (280? – 233 BCE), a prince of the royal family of the Han state,<sup>663</sup> discovered that the humanistic view of the heavenly mandate could not be proven in

<sup>661</sup> 《墨子卷七·天志上》：「故天子者，天下之窮貴也，天下之窮富也，故於富且貴者，當天意而不可不順，順天意者，兼相愛，交相利，必得賞。反天意者，別相惡，交相賊，必得罰。然則是誰順天意而得賞者？誰反天意而得罰者？」子墨子言曰：「昔三代聖王禹湯文武，此順天意而得賞也。昔三代之暴王桀紂幽厲，此反天意而得罰者也。然則禹湯文武其得賞何以也？」子墨子言曰：「其事上尊天，中事鬼神，下愛人，故天意曰：『此之我所愛，兼而愛之；我所利，兼而利之。愛人者此為博焉，利人者此為厚焉。』故使貴為天子，富有天下，業萬世子孫，傳稱其善，方施天下，至今稱之，謂之聖王。」

<http://ctext.org/mohism?searchu=%E9%A0%86%E5%A4%A9%E6%84%8F%E8%80%85>

<sup>662</sup> Mo, *Mozi*, 9.

<sup>663</sup> Fei Han and Burton Watson, *Han Feizi: Basic Writings* (New Y: Columbia University Press, 2003), 2.

history, especially during the troubled Warring States.<sup>664</sup> Instead of an omnipotent *Tian*, he advocated the use of severe punishments and rewards to strengthen the ruler's hold on the throne.<sup>665, 666</sup> A sage king understood the way of government and was strict enough to put it into effect.<sup>667</sup> Once secured on the royal throne, a Chinese ruler enjoyed almost absolute power in the country. According to Steele, Chinese emperors were among the most powerful rulers in history.<sup>668</sup> This concentration of absolute power began with the First Emperor of Qin in 221 BCE.

The first emperor of Qin subscribed to Han Feizi's theory. He believed that his success in uniting the six warring states came primarily from his ability and the foundation laid down by his ancestors.<sup>669, 670</sup> The emperor legitimized his claim to the throne by considering himself divine. This was evident from his choice of the *huangdi* title. Although the emperor started the tradition of *feng* and *shan* sacrifices in Mount Tai,<sup>671</sup> the Legalist claim to legitimacy was political rather than religious as it did not rest with any omnipotent sacred force, but with actionable behavioral patterns to protect an absolute power base.

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<sup>664</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 35.

<sup>665</sup> 《韓非子》：「不知治者，必曰：『無變古，毋易常。』變與不變，聖人不聽，正治而已。然則古之無變，常之毋易，在常古之可與不可。伊尹毋變殷，太公毋變周，則湯、武不王矣。管仲毋易齊，郭偃毋更晉，則桓、文不霸矣。凡人難變古者，憚易民之安也。夫不變古者，襲亂之跡；適民心者，恣姦之行也。民愚而不知亂，上懦而不能更，是治之失也。人主者，明能知治，嚴必行之，故雖拂於民心立其治。」

<http://ctext.org/hanfeizi?searchu=%E5%9A%B4%E5%BF%85%E8%A1%8C%E4%B9%8B>

<sup>666</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 36.

<sup>667</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 242.

<sup>668</sup> Philip Steele, *The Chinese Empire* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2009), 10.

<sup>669</sup> 《史記·秦始皇紀》：「寡人以眇眇之身，興兵誅暴亂，賴宗廟之靈，六王咸伏其辜，天下大定。」

<http://ctext.org/shiji?searchu=%E5%AF%A1%E4%BA%BA%E4%BB%A5%E7%9C%87%E7%9C%87%E4%B9%8B%E8%BA%AB>

<sup>670</sup> Liu, "A Discussion on the Question of Divinity in Ancient Chinese Development of Kingship," 37.

<sup>671</sup> Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, 2:239.

#### 4.1.4 THE DAOIST APPROPRIATION

Unlike Confucians, Daoists criticized kings Yao, Shun and Yu for their unnatural preference for virtues over longevity.<sup>672</sup> Instead, they referred to the mythical Chinese ancestor, *Huangdi* (Yellow Emperor), as a sage. Laozi's teachings promoted the concept of a "universal king," a sage ruler intimately acquainted with the laws of nature and able to transform humanity from the woes of civilization back to its natural *wuwei* being.<sup>673</sup> Daoist philosophers defined the sage king as one who could harmonize with heaven, earth and humanity.<sup>674</sup>

Therefore the sage, in the exercise of his government, empties their minds, fills their bellies, weakens their wills, and strengthens their bones. He constantly (tries to) keep them without knowledge and without desire, and where there are those who have knowledge, to keep them from presuming to act (on it). When there is this abstinence from action, good order is universal.<sup>675</sup>

Political activists, before the advent of Buddhism, had already attempted to use Daoism to construe a sage king as a messiah or a restorer of dynastic decline. A Han Dynasty text of 32 BCE, *Tianguan libaoyuan taiping jing* (*The Classic on Great Peace and on the Conservation of the Origin according to the Calendar revealed by the Officers of Heaven*),<sup>676</sup> taught that a divine man would restore the ideal period of Great Peace. This divine man would pass the mandate to a *taiping zhenjun* (true lord of great peace),

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<sup>672</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 214.

<sup>673</sup> Benjamin Isadore Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 213.

<sup>674</sup> 《鶡冠子·上禮》：「老子曰：昔者之聖王，仰取象於天，俯取度於地，中取法於人，調陰陽之氣，和四時之節，察陵陸水澤肥墪高下之宜，以立事生財，除飢寒之患，辟疾疫之讚，中受人事，以制禮樂，行仁義之道，以治人倫。」<http://ctext.org/daoism?searchu=%E8%81%96%E7%8E%8B>

<sup>675</sup> 《道德經》：「是以聖人之治，虛其心，實其腹，弱其志，強其骨。常使民無知無欲。使夫<sup>(天)</sup>知者不敢為也。為無為，則無不治。」<http://ctext.org/dao-de-jing?searchu=%E8%81%96>

<sup>676</sup> Anna K. Seidel, "The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism: Lao-tzu and Li Hung," *History of Religions* 9, no. 2/3 (November 1, 1969): 217.

the legitimate ruler, who would bring about a new harmony with heaven and earth.<sup>677</sup>

The restoration of a new harmony had become a reason for rebellion. A famous attempt was made in the late Western Han Dynasty, in 3 BCE, when thousands of peasants relayed the wands of Queen Mother of the West (*xi wangmu*) across twenty-six locales to reach the imperial capital, co-opting religious movement and political cause.<sup>678</sup>

Emperor Ai of Han (r. 27 – 1 BCE) created the title “August Emperor of Great Peace of the Liu [family] exalting sageliness” (*chensheng liu taiping huangdi*). When neither the empire nor his health improved, the emperor rescinded the decree.<sup>679</sup> Under the rule of Emperor Huan of Han (r. 146 – 168), the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 – 220) was crumbling. Rebellions were common. The Yellow Turban revolution led by Zhang Jue in 184 aimed to start a new dynasty of Great Peace; one of Zhang’s titles was great sage and good master (*daxian liangshi*) marking his attempt to merge religion and politics.<sup>680</sup> This unconventional merger, a departure from the *dao* of Huangdi and Laozi (*huanglao dao*) prescribing complementary emperor and sage roles,<sup>681</sup> indicated that the Chinese were continuing a tradition of combining politics and religion in the same authority.

Since the Qin Dynasty, Daoism promoted sagely immortals who could communicate with various deities, practiced alchemy, made elixir medicines,<sup>682</sup> and possessed the talisman for understanding the primordial design. It was probably the second function that attracted Qin and *Hu* kings to use Daoist priests, especially in the

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<sup>677</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 208 and 220.

<sup>678</sup> Eriberto P. Lozada, *God Aboveground: Catholic Church, Postsocialist State, and Transnational Processes in a Chinese Village* (Stanford University Press, 2001), 28.

<sup>679</sup> Seidel, “The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism,” 218.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>682</sup> Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Berkeley Calif.: University of California Press, 2000), 25.

quest for elixirs for eternal life and diseases. The first function was also politically significant. For example, Eastern Jin chieftain and devout Daoist, Wang Ningzhi who was a close relative of famous calligrapher Wang Xizhi (303 – 361), rejected advice to strengthen his defenses when attacked, claiming that he had the promise of “ghost armies” to assist him.<sup>683</sup>

Emperor Daowu of Northern Wei (r. 421 – 451) became the first foreign emperor in Chinese history to carry the title of *taiping zhenjun* (440 – 451) officially. In 440, reputed Daoist, Kou Qianzhi, bestowed the title on Emperor Daowu and declared that the *zhenjun* (perfect lord) would establish the period of True Peace.<sup>684</sup> Emperor Daowu believed that he was the reincarnation of Laozi, *Laojun*.<sup>685</sup> To complete the investiture, Kou presented Daoist talismans (*fushu*) to the emperor to confirm the sagely virtues of the latter.<sup>686</sup>

#### 4.1.5 THE BUDDHIST APPROPRIATION

The Buddhist model of ideal kingship attracted foreign rulers because it did not require the tracing of bloodline to the Yellow Emperor. Chinese sage kings of antiquity, Yellow Emperor, Yao or Shun, were irrelevant. Instead, the ideal king, a *cakravartin* (wheel-turning universal monarch), had a choice of Buddhahood or kingship. Śākyamuni Buddha and his successor, Maitreya Buddha, had this option because of their past karmic merits. A number of Six Dynasties (220 – 589) Buddhist *sūtras*, such as the *Sūtra on*

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<sup>683</sup> Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 115.

<sup>684</sup> Hubert Michael Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden, Boston: BRILL, 2003), 60.

<sup>685</sup> Le 康樂 Kang, “The Concept of Cakravartin and Its Influence on Medieval Chinese Kingship 轉輪王觀念與中國中古的佛教政治,” *Journal of Academic Sinica History and Philology Institute 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊* 67, no. 1 (March 1996): 134.

<sup>686</sup> Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, 60.

*Perfect Wisdom for Humane Kings* translated by Kumārajīva (344 – 413) between 402 and 409 CE, prescribed how kings of states could become humane kings (*renwang*), a term possibly derived from Confucian influence<sup>687</sup> but adapted to Buddhist doctrines.

Foreign monarchs had to lean on alternative sources of legitimacy. Since they could not claim blood descent from the Yellow Emperor, they could barely justify a legitimate mandate from Heaven. During the chaotic Sixteen Kingdoms Period (304 – 439 CE), a number of kings turned to Buddhist monks as their aides. Already a recognized pattern among nomadic kingdoms, seers had been close aides of kings in military matters. For example, in order to stop an attack from the Han army, Xiongnu buried sheep and cattle, and shamans put a curse on these animals to stop the attackers.<sup>688</sup> Divination and knowledge in both secular and divine affairs drew nomadic kings to religious figures for psychological as well as physical security in the face of many uncertainties.

The steppe kings' dependence on seers or religious guides had deep roots. Oracles were important partners to ancient Eurasian kings. Not only were they predictors of future events, they were also crucial advisors. Cicero, one of the greatest Roman politicians of the first century BCE,<sup>689</sup> testified to this importance in his note, "What colony has Greece sent into Aeolia, Ionia, Asia Sicily, or Italy without an oracle from the

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<sup>687</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 227.

<sup>688</sup> 《漢書·匈奴傳》：「聞漢軍當來，匈奴使巫埋羊牛所出諸道及水上以詛軍。單于遣天子馬裘，常使巫祝之。縛馬者，詛軍事也。」<http://ctext.org/han-shu/xi-yu-zhuan?searchu=%E5%B7%AB>

<sup>689</sup> Anthony Everitt, *Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician* (New York: Random House Digital, Inc., 2011), 1.

Pythia or Dodona or Ammon?”<sup>690</sup> Oracles played a pivotal role in building cities, averting illnesses, and bringing about prosperity.<sup>691</sup>

In ancient China, the role of oracles diminished in importance over time. Archaeologists believed that Shang kings and diviners interpreted oracle bones to understand the wishes of departed royal ancestors and natural forces.<sup>692</sup> Even after rationalistic Confucianism pervaded the Han court, officials had to make room for divination. The *Classic of Changes* consisted of two distinct parts: one oracular in nature and the other philosophical.<sup>693</sup> More concerned about cosmological and ethical interpretations than future prediction, Confucians used this *Classic* to explain how the human ethical system should align with the cosmic order.<sup>694</sup> Buddhism during the Sixteen Kingdoms helped steppe kings to bring their spiritual advisers back into the Chinese royal court.

The steppe people first adopted Buddhist models of kingship in China. King Shi Le of Later Zhao was among the first kings to assume a Buddhist title of *tianwang* briefly in 330 CE.<sup>695</sup> Even after the Tuoba Wei Xianbei people no longer held the throne, the new ruler of the Yuwen clan of the Xianbei people assumed the title of *tianwang*.<sup>696</sup>

This adoption was quite natural after considering the model of kingship among steppe people. They organized themselves according to clans and families, and hence,

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<sup>690</sup> Arthur Stanley Pease, “Notes on the Delphic Oracle and Greek Colonization,” *Classical Philology* 12, no. 1 (January 1, 1917): 1.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>692</sup> Peter Hessler, *Oracle Bones: A Journey Through Time in China* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 138.

<sup>693</sup> F. M. Doeringer, “Oracle and Symbol in the Redaction of the I Ching,” *Philosophy East and West* 30, no. 2 (April 1, 1980): 195.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>695</sup> Southern Liang, 519, Huijiao 《高僧傳》卷9：「勒迺僭稱趙天王行皇帝事。改元建平。」 (CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 384, b14-15)

<sup>696</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 37.



naturally practiced the progeny method of kingship succession. Blood descent also determined holders of important military positions, while talent decided administrative position holders. The *chanyu*, chieftain of the Xiongnu (who claimed common ancestry with the Chinese) and also called the Son of Heaven, once ruled as many as over twenty-four major tribes.<sup>697</sup> While the *chanyu*'s power was hereditary, it was not absolute.<sup>698</sup> There were many uncertainties and they turned to shamanism to ward off evil. The chief shaman served the *chanyu*,<sup>699</sup> unlike the ancient Chinese whereby the emperor was the chief shaman. When epidemics, drought, famine, wars, and population shifts plagued northern China from 304 to 439, these foreign rulers turned to shamans, Daoist priests and Buddhist monks to conduct state rituals and participate in politics so as to reduce calamities and legitimize their hold on power.<sup>700</sup>

In ancient China, religion and politics were inseparable. Yang pointed out that classical Chinese religion consisted of four major elements: ancestral worship, worship of Heaven and its hierarchy of natural deities, divination, and sacrifice.<sup>701</sup> The office of the Chinese king or emperor was sacred in nature<sup>702</sup> even though the sovereign assumed more secular duties over time. The sage king ideal assumed that monarchy was the best form of government.<sup>703</sup> Confucianism, Mohism, Daoism, and Buddhism expected a benevolent sage king. Legalists believed otherwise; examples of antiquity were only

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<sup>697</sup> Sima, *Records of the Grand Historian*, 2:136; N. Ishjams, "Nomads in Eastern Central Asia," in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, by János Harmatta, vol. II (Paris: UNESCO publ., 1994), 158.

<sup>698</sup> Ishjams, "Nomads in Eastern Central Asia," 158.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>700</sup> Fu-Shih Lin, "Shamans and Politics," in *Early Chinese Religion: The Period of Division (220-589 AD). Part Two*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 317.

<sup>701</sup> Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 106.

<sup>702</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 62.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

references and lessons for the present, not necessarily models for duplication.<sup>704</sup>

Confucian scholars, Daoist monks, and Buddhist practitioners turned to the head of state for support and patronage, while the emperor depended on them for confirmation of his mandate, and hence, his legitimacy to rule.<sup>705</sup> Religion gave supernatural sanction to the ruling groups and enforced values instrumental in maintaining the socio-political order.<sup>706</sup> Hence, each religion in its own way played an important role to support sacrality in the most powerful Chinese.

## 4.2 FROM *CAKRAVARTIN* TO *TATHĀGATA* KING

### 4.2.1 INTRODUCTION OF *CAKRAVARTIN* TO CHINA

As early as the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 – 220), Buddhists had introduced the concept of *cakravartin*, translated as *zhuanlun shengwang* (wheel-turning sage king), *zhuanlun wang* (wheel-turning king) and *tielun wang* (iron-wheel king) to China, as well as transliterated as *zhejia yueluo* and *zhejia yue*. Two hundred and forty-six (246) canonical texts carried one or more of these terms between Eastern Han and Northern Wei. In one or more of these translations or transliterations, “*cakravartin*” occurred 2,532 times. Judging from the frequency with which this term occurred, the concept of *cakravartin* was relevant and important during the first five hundred years of its introduction. The transliteration of *zhejia yueluo* and *zhejia yue* appeared 124 times in thirty (30) texts. It gave way to the translations of *zhuanlun shengwang* (being the most popular, appearing 1,403 times in 171 texts), *zhuanlun wang* (occurring 996 times in 166

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<sup>704</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>705</sup> Ibid., xii–xiii.

<sup>706</sup> Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 104–105.

texts) and *tielun wang* (appearing nine times in nine texts).<sup>707</sup> Interchangeably used, these terms appear in the same text. For example, *Fenbie gongde lun* (Eastern Han) contains all three translated terms (but not the transliterated terms). Within 500 years, the popularity of this Buddhist political model manifested itself both textually as well as in practice in the life of Chinese emperors.

Since the *cakravartin* model was foreign to the Chinese, it was necessary to justify and explain its superiority. Prince Siddharta was destined to be a *cakravartin* or a Buddha. To Buddhists, either of these destinies marked the most supreme accomplishments of humanity. While the prince opted to become a Buddha, King Aśoka (r. ca. 265 – 238 BCE or 273 – 232 BCE)<sup>708</sup> was presented as the ideal monarch. Although scholars such as Ku argued that the stories of King Aśoka in the Buddhist canon were effectively the biography of Emperor Kujūla Kadphises (r. 30 – 80) of the Kuṣāṇas,<sup>709</sup> the actual identity of the “King Aśoka” in the canon is immaterial to my exploration. Nor the accuracy of the biographies that reached China.<sup>710</sup> Of greater concern is how this foreign political ideology was interpreted to become a means for legitimizing the rule of emperors and the establishment of the *śarīra* (relic) cult in medieval China.

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<sup>707</sup> The computations resulted from an analysis using BlueDots ([http://ecai.org/BlueDots\\_test/test1/BlueDots\\_Flex.html#](http://ecai.org/BlueDots_test/test1/BlueDots_Flex.html#)) and *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalog* ([http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive\\_catalogue/cat-kor-can.pdf](http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/cat-kor-can.pdf)).

<sup>708</sup> Rongxi Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1993), 1.

<sup>709</sup> Cheng-Mei 古正美 Ku, *Kuṣāṇa Buddhist Political Tradition and Mahāyana Buddhism* 貴霜佛教政治傳統與大乘佛教 (Taipei 台北市: Yun chen wen hua shi ye gu fen you xian gong si 允晨文化實業股份有限公司, 1993), 3.

<sup>710</sup> Ananda W.P. Guruge, “Emperor Aśoka and Buddhism: Unresolved Discrepancies Between Buddhist Tradition & Aśokan Inscriptions,” in *King Aśoka and Buddhism: Historical and Literary Studies*, ed. Anuradha Seneviratna (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994), 83, [http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/king\\_asoka.pdf](http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/king_asoka.pdf).

King Aśoka's (known variously as Ayu wang<sup>711</sup>, Asuqie<sup>712</sup>, or Ashuqie<sup>713</sup>) deeds after conversion to Buddhism<sup>714</sup> were highly meritorious. The *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* explained that the good deeds in his past life enabled him to turn into a staunch supporter of Buddhism, building 80,000 *stūpas* miraculously, and not be reborn into evil realms even though he massacred 18,000 court people prior to his conversion.<sup>715</sup> Atrocities performed during his current lifetime could not deter the *cakravartin*-to-be from assuming the throne. The account of King Aśoka's life showed that repentance and wholesome deeds in support of the Buddhist Dharma in the current lifetime as *cakravartin* could make up for past misdeeds.<sup>716</sup> Chinese emperors were undoubtedly

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<sup>711</sup> Between Eastern Han and Northern Wei, the term *Ayu wang* (阿育王) appears 521 times in 25 canonical texts. [http://ecai.org/BlueDots\\_test/test1/BlueDots\\_Flex.html#](http://ecai.org/BlueDots_test/test1/BlueDots_Flex.html#)

<sup>712</sup> Between Eastern Han and Northern Wei, the term *Asuqie* (阿恕伽) appears 129 times in three (3) canonical texts. This term first appears in Kumārajīva's *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* (Qin text). While *Ayu wang* appears 4 times, *Ashuqie* appears 8 times in this text. [http://ecai.org/BlueDots\\_test/test1/BlueDots\\_Flex.html#](http://ecai.org/BlueDots_test/test1/BlueDots_Flex.html#)

<sup>713</sup> Between Eastern Han and Northern Wei, the term *Ashuqie* (阿輸伽) appears 12 times in four (4) canonical texts. This term first appears in the *Aśokarājāvādāna* (Western Jin text). While *Ayu wang* appears 21 times, *Asuqie* appears 112 times in this text. [http://ecai.org/BlueDots\\_test/test1/BlueDots\\_Flex.html#](http://ecai.org/BlueDots_test/test1/BlueDots_Flex.html#)

<sup>714</sup> To-date, the exact circumstances of King Aśoka's conversion remained a mystery. According to Rock Edict VIII, King Aśoka experienced a dramatic change of heart after witnessing "the havoc of death and deportation, famine and pestilence that was caused by his war of conquest against Kalinga" (Guruge, "Emperor Aśoka and Buddhism," 37). In the *Aśokarājāsūtra*, the King turned from *caṇḍāśoka* (cruel Aśoka) to *dharmaśoka* (Aśoka who protected the Dharma) after listening to a sermon by an arhat monk (Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 13–20). The Pāli sources attributed the conversion to a young Buddhist monk Nyagrodha (Guruge, "Emperor Aśoka and Buddhism," 47).

<sup>715</sup> Later Qin, 402–412, Kumārajīva 《十住毘婆沙論》卷6〈11 分別功德品〉：「如阿輸伽王。以兵伏閭浮提。殺萬八千宮人。先世施佛土故。起八萬塔。常於大阿羅漢所聽受經法。後得須陀洹道。即人身輕償。如是等罪多行福德志意曠大。集諸功德故不墮惡道。」(CBETA, T26, no. 1521, p. 49, b1-5)

<sup>716</sup> Southern Liang, 502–557, Sengyou 《出三藏記集》卷3：「阿育王出世。初大邪見。毀壞佛法焚燒經書。僧眾星散。故八十誦灰滅。後值羅漢更生信心。懺悔除罪甚有神力。為鐵輪王閻浮提。能役鬼神。一日一夜壞舍利八塔造八萬四千塔。還興顯佛法。請諸羅漢誦出經律。時有五大羅漢。各領徒眾弘法。見解不同。或執開隨制。共相傳習。遂有五部出焉。十六大國隨用並行。競各進業皆獲道證。自非聖道玄通。孰能使之然乎。後時五部異執紛然競起。阿育王言。皆誦佛語。我今何以測其是非問僧。佛法斷事云何。諸僧皆言。法應從多。阿育王即集五部僧共行籌當。爾時眾取婆羅富羅部籌多。遂改此一部為摩訶僧祇摩訶僧祇者。大眾名也。若就今時。此土行籌便此十誦律名摩訶僧祇也。大集經佛記。未來世當有此等律出世。與今事相應六名不異也。」(CBETA, T55, no. 2145, p. 19, c13-29)

attracted to such a model whereby past evil deeds would not lead to unwholesome ends if they could support the growth of the religion.

Another reason for the allure of the Buddhist *cakravartin* lies in its definition. Through King Aśoka, readers understood a Buddhist *cakravartin* to be a ruler over the “entire world” (meaning that he ruled over a large extent of land).<sup>717</sup> More accurately, King Aśoka was an iron-wheel monarch, meaning that he used force to establish his rule.<sup>718</sup> In the *Abhidharma-vibhāṣā-śāstra*, the iron-wheel king ruled over one of four continents.<sup>719</sup> A more detailed description came later in Xuanzang’s (c. 602 – 664) *Datang xiyu ji* that named the continent an iron-wheel king ruled over as Jambudvīpa.<sup>720</sup> In reality, none of the emperors in China ruled over such a large area of human civilization (Jambudvīpa possibly referred to India, Mediterranean, Western Regions, and China).<sup>721</sup> The *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (translated into the Chinese in 413 during the Later Qin kingdom) gave an appealing scenario whereby all other continents surrendered to a *cakravartin* without the prospect of war.<sup>722</sup>

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<sup>717</sup> Eastern Jin, 317-420 《天尊說阿育王譬喻經》卷 1：「昔有大國王。字名阿育。統領諸國莫不臣屬。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2044, p. 170, a15)

<sup>718</sup> John S. Strong, “Aśoka’s Wives and the Ambiguities of Buddhist Kingship,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 13, no. 1 (2002): 37.

<sup>719</sup> Northern Liang, 437-439, Buddhavarman and Daotai 《阿毘曇毘婆沙論》卷 16 〈4 愛敬品〉：「若其輪是金王四天下。其力最勝。若其輪是銀王三天下。其力轉減。若其輪是銅王二天下。其力復減。若其輪是鐵王一天下。其力最劣。」(CBETA, T28, no. 1546, p. 120, a7-10)

<sup>720</sup> Tang, 646, Xuanzang 《大唐西域記》卷 1：「海中可居者，大略有四洲焉。東毘提訶洲(舊曰弗婆提，又曰弗于逮，訛也)，南瞻部洲(舊曰閻浮提洲，又曰剌浮洲，訛也)，西瞿陀尼洲(舊曰瞿耶尼，又曰的伽尼，訛也)，北拘盧洲(舊曰鬱單越，又曰鳩樓。訛也)。金輪王乃化被四天下，銀輪王則政隔北拘盧，銅輪王除北拘盧及西瞿陀尼，鐵輪王則唯瞻部洲。夫輪王者，將即大位，隨福所感，有大輪寶，浮空來應，感有金、銀、銅、鐵之異，境乃四、三、二、一之差，因其先瑞，即以為號。」(CBETA, T51, no. 2087, p. 869, a27-b7)

<sup>721</sup> Kang, “The Concept of Cakravartin and Its Influence on Medieval Chinese Kingship,” 121.

<sup>722</sup> Later Qin, 416, Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian translated 《長阿含經》卷 6：「時，轉輪王即召四兵，向金輪寶偏露右臂，右膝著地，復以右手摩捫金輪，語言：『汝向東方，如法而轉，勿違常則。』輪即東轉。時，王即將四兵隨從其後，金輪寶前有四神導，輪所住處，王即止駕。爾時，東方諸小國王見大王至，以金鉢盛銀粟，銀鉢盛金粟，來趣王所，拜首白言：『善來，大王！今此東

Then, rising from his seat, covering one shoulder with his robe, the King took a gold vessel in his left hand, sprinkled the Wheel in his right hand, and said: “May the noble Wheel-Treasure turn, may the noble Wheel-Treasure conquer!” The Wheel turned to the east, and the King followed it with his fourfold army. And in whatever country the Wheel stopped, the King took up residence with his fourfold army. And those who opposed him in the eastern region came and said: “Come, Your Majesty, welcome! We are yours, Your Majesty. Rule us, Your Majesty.” And the King said: “Do not take life. Do not take what is not given. Do not commit sexual misconduct. Do not tell lies. Do not drink strong drink. Be moderate in eating.” And those who had opposed him in the eastern region became his subjects. ... south, west, and north.<sup>723</sup>

Buddhists introduced this new political ideology through a historical figure, King Aśoka. China saw the first full-length biography, *Aśokarājavadāna*, in 306 during the Western Jin Dynasty. About the same time (in 308), Dharmarakṣa translated the first full-length biography of the Buddha, *Lalitavistara*. Interest in understanding the characters of Buddha and King Aśoka during this period was apparent from the frequent appearance of “King Aśoka”: 662 times in 29 canonical texts up to the Northern Wei Dynasty.<sup>724</sup> However, his importance diminished over time since there were only 341 references<sup>725</sup> to him in subsequent years throughout the Buddhist canon.

Since the *cakravartin* represented ideal Buddhist kingship, it was befitting to introduce the ideology to the Chinese in association with their concept of ideal kingship. Hence, the most popular translation of *cakravartin* was “wheel-turning sage king.” To explain the reasons for King Aśoka’s right to be a *cakravartin*, Buddhists turned to his past life. As early as Han Dynasty, the *Za piyu jing* had already introduced Chinese to

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方土地豐樂，人民熾盛，志性仁和，慈孝忠順，唯願聖王於此治正，我等當給使左右，承受所當。』時，轉輪大王語小王言：『止！止！諸賢！汝等則為供養我已，但當以正法治，勿使偏枉，無令國內有非法行，此即名曰我之所治。』「時，諸小王聞此教已，即從大王巡行諸國，至東海表，次行南方、西方、北方，隨輪所至，其諸國王各獻國土，亦如東方諸小國比。時，轉輪王既隨金輪，周行四海，以道開化，安慰民庶，已還本國。時，金輪寶在宮門上虛空中住，時，轉輪王踊躍而言：『此金輪寶真為我瑞，我今真為轉輪聖王，是為金輪寶成就。』」(CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 40, a7-25)

<sup>723</sup> Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 397–398.

<sup>724</sup> Computation from BlueDots, [http://ecai.org/BlueDots\\_test/test1/BlueDots\\_Flex.html#](http://ecai.org/BlueDots_test/test1/BlueDots_Flex.html#)

<sup>725</sup> Computation from BlueDots, [http://ecai.org/BlueDots\\_test/test1/BlueDots\\_Flex.html#](http://ecai.org/BlueDots_test/test1/BlueDots_Flex.html#)

the reason behind King Aśoka's ability to become a *shengwang* (sage king) over the sixteen kingdoms in India. He had accumulated karmic merit from offering the Buddha a mound of earth mindfully in one of his past lives.<sup>726</sup> In the Western Jin *Aśokarājāvadāna* (306), the Buddha predicted that the result of this young man's dedication would result in subsequent rebirth as King Aśoka a hundred years later (this date was found to be problematic)<sup>727</sup> and the building of 84,000 *stūpas* for the benefit of humanity.<sup>728</sup> Ignoring the accuracy of the dating, such past life karmic merit immediately made bloodline descendance from the Yellow Emperor, Yao or Shun irrelevant, an important consideration for foreign rulers. It also embodied the Chinese *tianxia weigong* (empire belongs to the public) as opposed to *tianxia weijia* (empire belongs to one family).<sup>729</sup> In the process of introducing this new political ideology to China, Buddhists found the strongest benefactors to be foreign monarchs seeking to establish legitimacy over their conquered lands.

In the Buddha's birth story, Asita, the great seer, identified the baby prince's career as a *cakravartin* or a Buddha through the thirty-two sagely marks. Yet, no mention was made of these in King Aśoka's biography. Instead, various *sūtras* have alluded to the seven treasures (Figure 14) of chariot (wheel), elephant, horse, jewel, (the best) wife, (the best) treasurer or minister, and (the best) adviser as marks of

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<sup>726</sup> Eastern Han, 147-186, Lokakṣema 《雜譬喻經》卷1：「昔阿育王曾作小兒，時道遇佛不勝歡喜，以少沙土至心奉佛，由此之福故得為聖王，典主四十萬里十六大國。」(CBETA, T04, no. 204, p. 501, a6-8)

<sup>727</sup> Guruge, "Emperor Aśoka and Buddhism," 83.

<sup>728</sup> Western Jin, 306, An Faqin 《阿育王傳》卷1：「佛言我若涅槃百年之後。此小兒者當作轉輪聖王四分之一。於花氏城作政法王號阿恕伽。分我舍利而作八萬四千寶塔饒益眾生。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2042, p. 99, c5-8)

<sup>729</sup> Howard Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), x.

legitimacy.<sup>730</sup> The *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* contains the following list: wheel treasure, elephant treasure, horse treasure, jewel treasure, woman treasure, householder treasure, and counselor treasure.<sup>731, 732</sup> Some other Chinese *sūtras* contain the equivalent of golden wheel, magical jewel, purple horse, white elephant, women, virtuous minister, and sagely adviser.<sup>733</sup> Of these, the most significant was the wheel treasure. In the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta*, the appearance and correct positioning of the wheel treasure symbolized the appropriate sovereignty of the king. The King was taught, “the Wheel-Treasure is not an heirloom from your fathers,”<sup>734</sup> but had to be earned by good government following the Buddhist Dharma. Once the Wheel Treasure appeared, the empire would be at peace. Since the mythical Wheel Treasure was hard to ascertain, most kings demonstrated the Wheel Treasure with the possession of royal chariots. The most important and practical treasure to possess was the sagely advisor. In the case of King Aśoka, Moggaliputta Tissa played that role, advising him to build Buddhist vihāras, perform *dāna* of the four requisites, and to ordain his offsprings in the Saṅgha.<sup>735</sup> Moggaliputta Tissa also presided over the Third Buddhist Council and advised the King to start overseas missions to propagate the Dharma.<sup>736</sup> Instead of ritual cauldrons (of which there was only one set to be handed down), these seven treasures

<sup>730</sup> J. Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View* (Leiden: Brill Archive, n.d.), 60.

<sup>731</sup> Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 395.

<sup>732</sup> Later Qin, 416, Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian translated 《長阿含經》卷 6〈轉輪聖王修行經〉：「乃往過去久遠世時，有王名堅固念 Daḥhanemi，剎利水澆頭種，為轉輪聖王，領四天下。時，王自在以法治化，人中殊特，七寶具足，一者金輪寶，二者白象寶，三者紺馬寶，四者神珠寶，五者玉女寶，六者居士寶，七者主兵寶。」(CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 39, b4-9)

<sup>733</sup> Wu, 223-253, Zhiqian 《太子瑞應本起經》卷 1：「轉輪聖王飛行皇帝——七寶自至，一、金輪寶，二、神珠寶，三、紺馬寶朱髦鬣，四、白象寶朱髦尾，五、玉女寶，六、賢鑒寶，七、聖導寶」(CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, b3-6)

<sup>734</sup> Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 396.

<sup>735</sup> Guruge, “Emperor Aśoka and Buddhism,” 47.

<sup>736</sup> Ibid., 51 & 77.



were more easily acquired by foreign rulers as proof of legitimacy. Hence, Buddhism brought into China the revival of sagely royal advisors.



Figure 14 Seven treasures of a cakravartin, often found in Buddhist art<sup>737</sup>

Besides advancing a different model of proving legitimacy, the Buddhist *cakravartin* also suggested actions of a “wheel-turning sage king” unlike Chinese sage kings. The elaborate *li* (rituals) associated with ancestral worship that preserved the royal throne to a particular ethnic group or family was unnecessary under the ideal Buddhist kingship. In the Eastern Han *Za piyu jing*, Lokakṣema introduced King Aśoka as the ideal Buddhist universal monarch who loved the Dharma and often made offerings of the four requisites to the 20,000 bhikkhus in his land.<sup>738</sup> This ruler governed using the ten wholesome deeds<sup>739</sup> with compassion and equanimity.<sup>740</sup> He also encouraged his subjects to practice these ten wholesome deeds so that they could accumulate karmic

<sup>737</sup> Gupta, *Elephant in Indian Art and Mythology*, 6.

<sup>738</sup> Eastern Han, 147-186, Lokakṣema 《雜譬喻經》卷 1：「昔佛般泥洹去百年後，有阿育王愛樂佛法，國中有二萬比丘，王恒供養之。」(CBETA, T04, no. 205, p. 503, b17-18); 《釋迦氏譜》卷 1：「譬喻經云。宮中四事常供二萬沙門。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 97, c26)

<sup>739</sup> The ten wholesome deeds (*daśa-kuśala-karma-patha* or 十善) in Buddhism are not killing, stealing, committing adultery, lying, speaking harshly, speaking divisively, speaking idly, being greedy, being angry, and having wrong views. (from Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?53.xml+id%28%27b5341-5584-696d%27%29>)

<sup>740</sup> 《大方便佛報恩經》卷 2〈3 對治品〉：「菩薩久於無量阿僧祇劫中，為求佛法故；我為一切眾生心無增減故；以慈悲心故；住平等心故，時作轉輪聖王，常以十善，導化一切眾生。」(CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 131, c25-28)

merit to be reborn in the heavenly realm.<sup>741</sup> Another detailed description is given in the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.<sup>742</sup>

Yourself depending on the Dhamma, honouring it, revering it, cherishing it, doing homage to it and venerating it, having the Dhamma as your master, you should establish guard, ward and protection according to Dhamma for your own household, our troops, your nobles and vassals, for Brahmins and householders, town and country folk, ascetics and Brahmins, for beasts and birds. Let no crime prevail in your kingdom, and to those who are in need, give property. And whatever ascetics and Brahmins in your kingdom have renounced the life of sensual infatuation and are devoted to forbearance and gentleness, each one taming himself, each one calming himself and each one striving for the end of craving, if from time to time they should come to you and consult you as to what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, what is blameworthy and what is blameless, what is to be followed and what is not to be followed, and what action will in the long run lead to harm and sorrow, and what to welfare and happiness, you should listen, and tell them to avoid evil and do what is good. That, my son, is the duty of an Ariyan wheel-turning monarch.<sup>743</sup>

In addition to ruling his kingdom according to the Dharma (based on the ten wholesome deeds), a Buddhist *cakravartin* was expected to support the Buddhist Order. In the Indian or Western Regions model, the *cakravartin* practiced wealth *dāna* (provision of four requisites to the Buddha and *saṅgha*) while the Buddha and *saṅgha* practiced Dharma *dāna* (giving Dharma advice). The monarch performed the role of a *mahādānapati* (great donor). In the story of King Aśoka, he went to the extreme of giving all he could and ended his life in such poverty that he could only offer half a

<sup>741</sup> Later Han, 25-220 《分別功德論》卷3：「以聖王有十善教世。使人皆生天。在人之上故稱為天。」(CBETA, T25, no. 1507, p. 38, b25-26)

<sup>742</sup> Later Qin, 416, Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian translated 《長阿含經》卷6：「「子白父王：『轉輪聖王正法云何？當云何行？』王告子曰：『當依於法，立法具法，恭敬尊重，觀察於法，以法為首，守護正法；又當以法誨諸婁女，又當以法護視教誡諸王子、大臣、群寮、百官及諸人民、沙門、婆羅門，下至禽獸，皆當護視。』」又告子曰：『又汝土境所有沙門、婆羅門履行清真，功德具足，精進不懈，去離憍慢，忍辱仁愛，閑獨自修，獨自止息，獨到涅槃，自除貪欲，化彼除貪；自除瞋恚，化彼除瞋；自除愚癡，化彼除癡。於染不染，於惡不惡，於愚不愚，可著不著，可住不住，可居不居。身行質直，口言質直，意念質直；身行清淨，口言清淨，意念清淨，正念清淨，仁慧無厭，衣食知足，持鉢乞食，以福眾生。有如是人者，汝當數詣，隨時諮問，凡所修行，何善何惡？云何為犯？云何非犯？何者可親？何者不可親？何者可作？何者不可作？施行何法，長夜受樂？汝諮問已，以意觀察，宜行則行，宜捨則捨。國有孤老，當拯給之；貧窮困劣，有來[19]取者，慎勿違逆。國有舊法，汝勿改易，此是轉輪聖王所修行法，汝當奉行。』」」(CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 39, c4-25)

<sup>743</sup> Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 396–397.

*āmalaka* fruit to the *saṅgha*. Yet, he bore neither sorrow nor afflictions; instead, he understood the impermanence of all phenomenal existence.<sup>744</sup> According to the *Dasabhūmi Vibhāṣā Sāstra*, King Aśoka attained *srotāpanna* (stream-enterer) and accumulated enough merits so that he would not be reborn among the three evil realms.<sup>745</sup> Such were the causes and effects of a *cakravartin*, which were more open to a foreign monarch than Confucian or ancient rituals reserved for imperial descendants.

The Buddhist *cakravartin* contributed a different model of royal legitimacy. The use of *shengwang* (sage king) in *zhuanlun shengwang* (wheel-turning sage king) helped Chinese relate *cakravartin* to a more familiar sage kingship. Just as Chinese who associated sages with wisdom, King Aśoka also possessed superior wisdom and intelligence.<sup>746</sup> With the help of his Buddhist advisor, he ruled his empire using the ten wholesome Dharmas, thereby establishing a Buddhist kingdom to the benefit of humanity. Such symbiotic relationship was obvious in most of the canonical texts as the *cakravartin* often was in the presence of a Buddha or a member of the *saṅgha*. This model, familiar to Indian and nomadic kingship, was slowly morphed into a Chinese model that combined both roles in the supreme sovereign.

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<sup>744</sup> Northern Wei, 472, Kekaya and Tanyao 《付法藏因緣傳》卷4：「阿恕伽王即以七寶施雞頭末寺。立拘那羅子式摩提以為太子。邪見惡臣語太子曰。阿恕伽王命臨欲終散諸庫藏。汝若紹位無所資用。今應遮斷勿從其意。時式摩提信受邪說。以一金盤為王送食。王即迴施雞頭末寺。後以瓦器半庵摩勒持與王食。王召群臣而問之曰。此閻浮提誰為其主。諸臣答言。唯王統御。答曰非也。我唯於此半庵摩勒而得自在。便作是言。咄哉富貴甚可惡賤。榮位如幻不久散滅。雖居尊顯終歸墜落。我為人帝威德無倫。臨終貧乏唯有半果。故知世間皆為虛誑。愚人甘樂賢聖所訶。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2058, p. 310, b5-17)

<sup>745</sup> Later Qin, 402-412, Kumārajīva 《十住毘婆沙論》卷6〈11分別功德品〉：「如阿輸伽王。以兵伏閻浮提。殺萬八千宮人。先世施佛土故。起八萬塔。常於大阿羅漢所聽受經法。後得須陀洹道。即人身輕償。如是等罪多行福德志意曠大。集諸功德故不墮惡道。」(CBETA, T26, no. 1521, p. 49, b1-5)

<sup>746</sup> Eastern Jin 《天尊說阿育王譬喻經》卷1：「大王聰明智慧無量。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2044, p. 170, a16)

#### 4.2.2 TIANWANG DURING THE SIXTEEN KINGDOMS

Over time, emperors and kings incorporated Buddhist political ideology in China. Emperor Huan of Han and various Western Jin emperors showed favor towards Buddhism. They encouraged *śramaṇas* from India and the Western Regions to translate *sūtras* and promote the Dharma in their territories. These foreign monks made available to emperors the *cakravartin* concept. However, it was not until the Sixteen Kingdoms that Buddhist kingship was actualized.

Foreign kings in China were obviously uncomfortable with the indigenous view towards kingship. They were aware of the limits of their legitimacy if based solely on military superiority. Hence, some foreign kings turned to foreign religions for alternative models of claiming sacred legitimacy to the Chinese throne. Since the title of *huangdi* suggested the Chinese primordial ancestor and the Yellow Emperor pedigree, as well as the use of Confucian rites, foreign kings were the first to adopt a different monarchical title. Referring to India and Southeast Asia, they noticed the use of *devarāja*.<sup>747</sup> This title translated into *tianwang* (heavenly king). Given that Chinese had already started embracing foreign concepts and products, they were able to accept, with initial reluctance and difficulty, a different definition of *Tian*. In this case, Heaven no longer meant a primordial ancestor, but a realm where heavenly beings resided. *Devarāja* is the king of these heavenly beings in Indian cosmology. This term connoted divine status for the ruler, which foreign kings found attractive. In China, this term had already been in use.

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<sup>747</sup> Zheng-mei Gu, *From Heavenly Kingship to Tathāgata Kingship: A Study of Medieval Chinese Buddhist Political Ideology* 從天王傳統到佛王傳統：中國中世佛教治國意識形態研究 (Taipei 台北市: Shang zhou chu ban 商周出版, 2003), 66.

In the *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, “*tianwang*” is the same as “*tianzi*” (son of Heaven).<sup>748</sup>

The first king to adopt the title of *tianwang* in northern China was Shi Le (r. 328 – 333), the founding king of Later Zhao.<sup>749</sup> Shi Le enlisted a Kuchan Buddhist monk, Fotucheng (232 – 348), as his adviser.<sup>750</sup> Fotucheng was effectively Shi Le’s counselor or sagely advisor treasure (one of the seven treasures of a *cakravartin*). However, Shi Le’s Confucian advisers were obviously uncomfortable with this innovation and so, managed to persuade the king to rescind the decree nine months later and resumed the Chinese *huangdi* title.<sup>751</sup>

Shi Hu (r. 335 – 349) of Later Zhao assumed the *tianwang* title in 337; he also gave the title of *tianwang huanghou* (empress of heavenly king) and *tianwang taizi* (crowned prince of heavenly king) to his empress and crowned prince respectively.<sup>752</sup> When Fotucheng passed away in 348, Shi Hu immediately reverted to the use of *huangdi*, indicating both the importance of possessing a counselor treasure and the influence of

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<sup>748</sup> 《漢書·文帝紀》：「卜人曰：『所謂天王者，乃天子也。』」  
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<sup>749</sup> Gu, *From Heavenly Kingship to Tathāgata Kingship*, 78.

<sup>750</sup> 《釋氏稽古略》卷2：「咸和五年勒稱大趙天王。行皇帝事。奉澄彌如篤敬。號曰大和尚。」  
(CBETA, T49, no. 2037, p. 780, c11-13)

<sup>751</sup> 《十六國春秋別傳》：「建平元年二月，車騎石虎等上尊號，勒不許，固請，勒號趙天王，行皇帝事，大赦。八月，郡臣又固請，以名位不正，宜即尊號。九月，僭即皇帝位，大赦改年。」  
<http://gj.zdic.net/archive.php?aid-11266.html>

<sup>752</sup> 《晉書·石季龍》：「於是依殷周之制，以咸康三年僭稱大趙天王，即位于南郊，大赦殊死已下。追尊祖晉邪為武皇帝，父寇覓為太宗孝皇帝。立其鄭氏為天王皇后，以子遵為天王皇太子。」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@75^863174088^807^^^60202005000400060001^1@@1292096177>

Confucian scholars in the Later Zhao court.<sup>753</sup> To mark his legitimacy to the Chinese throne, Shi Hu commissioned Xie Fei to build an altar-carriage for Buddha's birthday.<sup>754</sup>

Shi Hu liked to glorify the Buddha with incalculable extravagances. He commissioned an altar-carriage. In breadth, it was more than a zhang (approximately 10 feet), in length two zhang, with a golden Buddha image on top of a flat four-wheeled cart and nine dragons above that. A wooden figure of a monk was placed before the Buddha, and all round the Buddha were more than ten monks, each a bit more than two feet in height, all wearing white kaśāyas. When the cart moved, the nine dragons would spew water over the image of the Buddha, and the monk standing in front of the Buddha would rub the area between the Buddha's heart and his abdomen, as if washing a newborn. The other ten-odd monks would circumambulate the Buddha. As each would come just in front of the Buddha, he would do obeisance, then, taking incense in his hand, deposit it in a censer. When the cart stopped, so would the activity.<sup>755</sup>

This altar-carriage was an innovative display of legitimacy, possibly initiated by Fotucheng. There was a departure from the South Asian and Western Region account of Buddha's bathing ritual. In those accounts, there were only two dragons bathing the baby Buddha. Yet, there were nine dragons in this altar-carriage. According to Gu's analysis, this scene in Later Zhao's new capital of Ye indicated Shi Hu's ascendance to the *tianwang* platform. Nine dragons symbolized the emperor in China, and only the emperor had the right to use this symbol. The nine dragons legitimized Shi Hu (represented by the golden Buddha statue) and with the endorsement of a sagely counselor, Fotucheng (the wooden monk rubbing the Buddha's belly).<sup>756</sup> It was possible to conceive of the king in the image of the Buddha because Prince Siddharta was destined to be either a universal monarch or a Buddha. In India, the chariot represented the wheel

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<sup>753</sup> Gu, *From Heavenly Kingship to Tathāgata Kingship*, 81.

<sup>754</sup> 《鄴中記》：「石虎性好佞佛，眾巧奢靡，不可紀也。嘗作檀車，廣丈餘，長二丈，四輪。作金佛像，坐於車上，九龍吐水灌之。又作木道人，恒以手摩佛心腹之間。又十餘木道人，長二尺。餘皆披袈裟繞佛行，當佛前，輒揖禮佛。又以手撮香投爐中，與人無異。車行則木人行，龍吐水，車止則止。亦解飛所造也。」<http://big5.dushu.com/showbook/101182/1041934.html>

<sup>755</sup> Lai, "On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD," 57.

<sup>756</sup> Gu, *From Heavenly Kingship to Tathāgata Kingship*, 85.

treasure, the first of the seven treasures of a *cakravartin*. Hence, this altar-carriage was a significant exhibition of Shi Hu's *tianwang* status in that it contained the *cakravartin*, together with his most important symbols of legitimacy: the wheel and counselor treasures.

Fotucheng pioneered the Buddhist model of kingship in Later Zhao, China. His expertise in the *cakravartin* model of governance started in Kucha.<sup>757</sup> Subsequent to Shi Hu, the *tianwang* model spread to other kingdoms. In 379, Fu Jian (r. 357 – 385) of Former Qin (351 – 394) raised an army 100,000 strong to capture Dao'an (312 – 385) in Xiangyang, with the explicit intention to have a talented spiritual master assist him in handling affairs of governance.<sup>758</sup> Dao'an, Fotucheng's premier disciple, helped to legitimize his kingship in the same way as his predecessor helped Later Zhao kings. However, Dao'an recognized his limitations with this foreign *cakravartin* model and recommended Kumārajīva from Kucha, his teacher's homeland, as the ideal counselor treasure to Fu Jian. In the same manner, Fu Jian dispatched Lü Guang and an army of 70,000 to Kucha to capture Kumārajīva in 382. Circumstances had it that Lü Guang (r. 386 – 399) set up the Later Liang kingdom over the defeated states in the Western Regions, assumed the *tianwang* title in 389,<sup>759</sup> and engaged Kumārajīva as his counselor. Lü Guang also appointed his crowned prince as *tianwang*. Kumārajīva's expertise in Buddhist kingship reached the ears of Yao Xing of Later Qin (r. 394 – 416). In 399, Yao Xing assumed the title of *tianwang* after Kumārajīva was invited to Chang'an. The

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<sup>757</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>758</sup> 《高僧傳》卷5：「時符堅素聞安名。每云。襄陽有釋道安[34]是神器。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 352, c23-24)

<sup>759</sup> 《晉書·孝武紀》：「六月，呂光僭即天王位。」

《晉書·安帝紀》：「呂光立其太子紹為天王，自號太上皇。」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@19^116822980^807^^^702020050001001000010004^313@@501324260>

*Eulogy to Kumārajīva* mentioned both Fu Jian and Yao Xing as *tianwang*.<sup>760</sup> Helian Bobo (r. 407 – 425), Yao Xing's Xiongnu general, established the state of Great Xia (407 – 431) and proclaimed himself *tianwang*<sup>761</sup> and great *chanyu* at the same time.<sup>762</sup> Another famous combination was Juqū Mengxun of Northern Liang (367 – 433) and Dharmakṣema (384-433).<sup>763</sup> Their relationship was expressed in the *Book of Wei*.<sup>764</sup>

Before this, when Chū-Ch'ü Meng-hsün was in Liang-chou, he also loved Buddha's Law. There was a Chi-pin śramaṇa, T'an-mo-ch'en, who conned scriptures and treatises. In Ku-tsang, with the śramaṇa Chih-sung and others, he translated the *Nirvāṇa* and other scriptures, more than ten in number. He was also wise in fortune telling and the casting of spells. He spoke one after another of the fortunes of other countries, and many of his words proved right. Meng-hsün always consulted him on affairs of the state.<sup>765</sup>

Steppe kings forcibly invited Kumārajīva and Dao'an to their non-Han courts to serve as spiritual counselors. While Buddhists thought of these reputable monks as exegetes and translators, the secular rulers considered them as seers and oracles. In addition to serving as advisors in day-to-day governmental affairs, such as predicting the outcomes of military attacks, Buddhist monks were instrumental in helping the kings be more humane in their administration. For example, Fotucheng advised Shi Hu to punish the evil but not to kill the innocent and to do more deeds that were benevolent.<sup>766</sup>

<sup>760</sup> 《廣弘明集》卷 23〈鳩摩羅什法師誄〉：「故大秦苻姚二天王師旅以延之。」(CBETA, T52, no. 2103, p. 264, c5-6)

<sup>761</sup> 《晉書·帝紀》：「六月，姚興將赫連勃勃僭稱天王于朔方，國號夏。」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@7^248495898^807^^^702020050001001000010012^1@@86341547>

<sup>762</sup> Chen, "Early Chinese Religion," 65.

<sup>763</sup> Gu, *From Heavenly Kingship to Tathāgata Kingship*, 107.

<sup>764</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「先是，沮渠蒙遜在涼州，亦好佛法。有罽賓沙門曇摩讖，習諸經論。於姑臧，與沙門智嵩等，譯涅槃諸經十餘部。又曉術數、禁呪，歷言他國安危，多所中驗。蒙遜每以國事諮之。」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@19^116822980^807^^^60202010000300210003^1@@920355946>

<sup>765</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 57.

<sup>766</sup> 《高僧傳》卷 9：「虎常問澄。佛法云何。澄曰。佛法不殺。朕為天下之主。非刑殺無以肅清海內。既違戒殺生。雖復事佛詎獲福耶。澄曰。帝王之事佛。當在心體恭心順顯暢三寶不為暴虐不害



Buddhism offered a viable competitive alternative to the Confucian sage king ideal.

Kumārajīva translated the *Humane King Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra* between 402 and 409.<sup>767</sup>

He also translated the *Brahmajālasūtra* in 405.<sup>768</sup> These *sūtras* offered kings and laity virtuous codes of conduct. The Sixteen Kingdoms Buddhist court seer revived and enhanced the role of the diviner or oracle since the Shang dynasty.

These Buddhist kings and their seer counterparts followed the textual examples of King Aśoka and other cosmic *cakravartins* in practicing *dāna*, that is, the kings supported the sagely advisor and the advisor offered counsel in the Dharma. Kings such as Shi Hu encouraged and supported the building of *stūpas* (and monasteries) and images.<sup>769</sup>

Translation activities were rife under Fu Jian, Yao Xing and Mengxun. Northern Liang grotto art was a forerunner to the Northern Wei Yungang and Longmen grottoes. In return, these Buddhist counselor monks functioned as able aides to nomadic kings.

Fotucheng offered Shi Le and Shi Hu “charismatic and magical power which helped to ward off natural disasters, win battles and calculate future natural and human events.”<sup>770</sup>

Fotucheng accurately predicted the outcomes of many military advances for Shi Le, assisted in agricultural activities, and revived a crown prince.<sup>771</sup> No wonder a cultivated

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無辜。至於凶惡無賴非化所遷。有罪不得不殺。有惡不得不刑。但當殺可殺刑可刑耳。若暴虐恣意殺害非罪。雖復傾財事法無解殃禍。願陛下省欲興慈。廣及一切則佛教永隆福祚方遠。虎雖不能盡從。而為益不少。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 385, a27-b7)

<sup>767</sup> Lewis R. Lancaster and Sung-bae Park, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (University of California Press, 1979), 17.

<sup>768</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>769</sup> Gu, *From Heavenly Kingship to Tathāgata Kingship*, 91–93.

<sup>770</sup> Arthur F. Wright, “Buddhism and Chinese Culture: Phases of Interaction,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 17, no. 1 (November 1, 1957): 28.

<sup>771</sup> 《高僧傳》卷9：「勒登位已後。事澄彌篤。時石葱將叛。其年澄誠勒曰。今年葱中有蟲食。必害人。可令百姓無食葱也。勒班告境內慎無食葱。到八月石葱果走。勒益加尊重。有事必諮而後行。號大和尚。石虎有子名斌。後勒愛之甚重。忽暴病而亡。已涉二日。勒曰。朕聞號太子死扁鵲能生。大和上國之神人。可急往告必能致福。澄迺取楊枝呪之。須臾能起。有頃平復。由是勒諸稚子多在佛寺中養之。每至四月八日。勒躬自詣寺灌佛為兒發願。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 384, b16-26)

Buddhist monk became an important sign of royal legitimacy and one of the seven treasures of a *cakravartin*.

#### 4.2.3 THE EMPEROR BODHISATTVA

A significant Chinese innovation of Buddhist kingship occurred in the Southern Liang Dynasty (502 – 557). The founding Emperor Wu of Liang (r. 502 – 549) created a new title of *huangdi pusa* (emperor bodhisattva) as a means of merging Chinese “sage king” and Indian “*cakravartin*.”<sup>772</sup> He designed a set of bodhisattva vows; on the eighth day of the fourth month (Buddha’s birthday) of 519, he took those vows.<sup>773</sup> In this grand ordination ceremony of 20,000 people, Emperor Wu declared that he would give up Daoism lifetime after lifetime.<sup>774</sup> He had effectively become an emperor bodhisattva (bodhisattva vows transcend one lifetime), following the admonitions of *Brahmajālasūtra* (*Fanwang jing*). This *sūtra* prescribes that a *cakravartin* and his officials shall take the bodhisattva precepts before coronation in order to get divine protection.<sup>775</sup>

By declaring himself an emperor bodhisattva, Emperor Wu also united the *saṅgha* and secular realms.<sup>776</sup> Since Huiyuan wrote the influential *Shamen bujing wangzhe lun* (*The Śramaṇa Does Not Pay Homage to the Ruler Treatise*),<sup>777</sup> there was contention between the *saṅgha* and the ruler. Emperor Wu of Liang attempted to emulate the

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<sup>772</sup> Zheng-mei Gu, “Emperor Liang’s Image of a Maitreya Buddha King 梁武帝的彌勒佛王形象,” *Universal Buddhist Gate Journal* 普門學報 52 (July 2009): 238.

<sup>773</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 529; Gu, “Emperor Liang’s Image of a Maitreya Buddha King.”

<sup>774</sup> 《佛祖統紀》卷 37：「四月八日。帝於重雲殿親製文。率群臣士庶二萬人。發菩提心永棄道教。其文云。願使未來生世童真出家廣弘經教化度含識同成佛道。寧在正法中長淪惡道。不樂依老子教暫得生天。」(CBETA, T49, no. 2035, p. 348, c9-13)

<sup>775</sup> Later Qin, 405, Kumārajīva 《梵網經》卷 2：「佛言。若佛子。欲受國王位時。受轉輪王位時。百官受位時。應先受菩薩戒。一切鬼神救護王身百官之身。諸佛歡喜。既得戒已。生孝順心恭敬心。」(CBETA, T24, no. 1484, p. 1005, a27-b1)

<sup>776</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 229.

<sup>777</sup> Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 15.

Northern Wei model by combining the supremes in sacred and secular in the body of the monarch.<sup>778</sup>

As the founding emperor of a new dynasty, Emperor Wu of Liang had to justify his right to the royal house. He found the Buddhist model appealing in establishing himself as a divine, sagely, and humane ruler. Soon after the Emperor took the bodhisattva vows, he abolished all animal sacrifices and hosted huge vegetarian feasts for as many as 500,000 people from time to time.<sup>779</sup> Just as King Aśoka's Rock Edict I prohibited slaughter and sacrifice of animals<sup>780</sup> as well as festive gatherings often accompanied by animal fights, drinking, and feasting,<sup>781</sup> Emperor Wu also decreed that everyone should stop taking alcohol and meat as well as to stop animal sacrifices. Like a *cakravartin*, Emperor Wu tried to rule his country using the ten wholesome Dharmas. Emperors in China used the Buddhist kingship model beyond just establishing legitimacy, but also applied it to varying degrees in governance.

#### **4.2.4 TATHĀGATA KINGSHIP DURING NORTHERN WEI**

Emperor Wu of Southern Liang based his invention of “emperor bodhisattva” on a *tathāgata* king model of Northern Wei.<sup>782</sup> This latter model evolved from the *tianwang* political ideologies of the Sixteen Kingdoms. Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei sought after Dharmakṣema from Juqū Mengxun (r. 401 – 433), founding king of Northern Liang, and threatened to use military force if Mengxun refused to release the Buddhist monk that

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<sup>778</sup> Gu, “Emperor Liang’s Image of a Maitreya Buddha King.”

<sup>779</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, 229–230.

<sup>780</sup> Guruge, “Emperor Aśoka and Buddhism,” 66.

<sup>781</sup> Sailendra Nath Sen, *Ancient Indian History and Civilization* (New Delhi: New Age International, 1999), 148.

<sup>782</sup> Gu, “Emperor Liang’s Image of a Maitreya Buddha King.”

had fame equivalent to Kumārajīva.<sup>783</sup> Both Northern Liang and Northern Wei wanted to possess this counselor treasure exclusively. Eventually, Juqū Mengxun murdered Dharmakṣema for fear that he would assist Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei.<sup>784</sup> This tragic episode demonstrated the importance of a sagely counselor to a steppe ruler.

When Northern Wei defeated Northern Liang in 439, Emperor Taiwu forced the migration of many Buddhist monks to Pingcheng; among them were Xuangao, Huichong, Shixian, and Tanyao.<sup>785</sup> This happened when Emperor Taiwu followed his predecessors' footsteps in emulating Buddhist kingship. Emperor Taiwu appointed Xuangao as teacher to the crowned prince,<sup>786</sup> and Huichong as a minister's teacher.<sup>787</sup> Emperor Wencheng (r. 452 – 466), successor to Taiwu, appointed Shixian as the first *shamen tong*<sup>788</sup> in 452<sup>789</sup> and Tanyao to the same post in 460.<sup>790</sup> These monks and many others helped Northern Wei rulers adopt Buddhist kingship and eventually surpassed other kingdoms in magnitude and grandeur.

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<sup>783</sup> Southern Liang, 519, Huijiao 《高僧傳》卷2〈曇無讖〉：「時魏虜託跋焘聞讖有道術。遣使迎請。且告遜曰。若不遣讖便即加兵。遜既事讖日久未忍聽去。後又遣偽太常高平公李順策拜蒙遜為使持節侍中都督涼州西域諸軍事太傅驃騎大將軍涼州牧涼王。加九錫之禮。又命遜曰。聞彼有曇摩讖法師。博通多識羅什之流。祕呪神驗澄公之匹。朕思欲講道可馳驛送之。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 336, b21-29)

<sup>784</sup> Ming 《神僧傳》卷3〈曇無讖〉：「蒙遜既吝讖不遣。又迫魏之強。至蒙遜義和三年三月。讖因請西行。更尋涅槃後分。蒙遜忿其欲去。乃密圖害讖。偽以資糧發遣。厚贈寶貨。臨發之日讖乃流涕。告眾曰。讖業對將至。眾聖不能救矣。以本有心誓義不容停。比發蒙遜果遣刺客於路害之。春秋四十九。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2064, p. 961, c4-10)

<sup>785</sup> Gu, *From Heavenly Kingship to Tathāgata Kingship*, 135.

<sup>786</sup> Tang, 1243, Daoxuan 《廣弘明集》卷2：「時有沙門玄高者。空門之秀傑也。通靈感眾。道王河西涼平。東歸太武信重。為太子晃之師也。晃孝敬自天崇仰佛法。」(CBETA, T52, no. 2103, p. 103, a19-21)

<sup>787</sup> Tang, 1243, Daoxuan 《高僧傳》卷11：「時有涼州沙門釋慧崇。是偽魏尚書韓萬德之門師。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 398, a3-4)

<sup>788</sup> In the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, the official translations for 沙門統 and 僧統 are “monk superintendent.” In Hucker's *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 僧統 is translated into “Buddhist controller” in entry 4949. There is no entry for 沙門統.

<sup>789</sup> Song, Zhiqing 《佛祖統紀》卷38：「初闕賓沙門師賢五人來京。值罷佛法。假醫術以守道。復教之曰。帝親為五人下髮。以師賢為沙門統。」(CBETA, T49, no. 2035, p. 354, c29-p. 355, a2)

<sup>790</sup> Song, Zhiqing 《佛祖統紀》卷38：「和平元年。詔沙門統曇曜為昭玄沙門都統。」(CBETA, T49, no. 2035, p. 355, a3-4)

A *cakravartin* displayed his legitimacy by possessing seven treasures, one of which was a sagely advisor. In the case of Northern Wei, Emperor Wencheng's establishment of the position of *shamen tong* aptly demonstrated his possession of such treasure. Instituting an official post for a Buddhist figure was unprecedented in Chinese history. Korea followed this example by establishing the positions of National Preceptor and Royal Preceptor, the highest ranks of Buddhist officials.<sup>791</sup> Following the example of King Aśoka and other Buddhist kings, Northern Wei emperors supported the *saṅgha*, built *stūpas*, carved images, supported textual translation, and encouraged the growth of Buddhism. The *shamen tong* and other sagely Buddhist monks played an important role in managing these activities to demonstrate the *cakravartin* status of the ruler. Northern Liang monks effectively imported the kingship model of the Western Regions to Northern Wei and further expanded the influence of Buddhism under the patronage of powerful Northern Wei emperors.

Yungang Grottoes was a prime example of enhanced Northern Liang Buddhism. Buddhist monks and artisans of Northern Liang grottoes<sup>792</sup> whom Emperor Taiwu relocated in 439 helped build the Yungang Grottoes.<sup>793</sup> The Northern Liang grottoes copied Kucha, Khotan, and Gandhāra predecessors.<sup>794</sup> In 460, Tanyao received the royal decree to begin construction of Yungang Grottoes. Tanyao built what later became known as “Tanyao's Five Grottoes” to house five *Tathāgata* statues symbolizing

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<sup>791</sup> Michael J. Seth, *A History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 90.

<sup>792</sup> They were 涼州天梯山石窟、馬提寺石窟、金塔寺石窟、酒泉文殊山石窟、昌馬石窟、敦煌莫高石窟。

<sup>793</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 181–184.

<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

Emperors Taizu, Taizong, Shizu, Gaozong and Gaozu.<sup>795</sup> In terms of appearance and costumes, these images were similar to those in Northern Liang.<sup>796</sup> Eventually, Northern Wei developed its acculturated form of Buddhist art. By the time of Emperor Xuanwu, the Binyang images of Longmen Grottoes developed their own *xiugu qingxiang* (slender and clean image) Chinese style.<sup>797</sup> Figure 15 shows this development of grotto images.



Figure 15 Wuwei Tianti,<sup>798</sup> Yungang Grotto,<sup>799</sup> and Longmen Binyang Grottoes<sup>800</sup>

This unprecedented act of putting a ruler's face on a Buddha image solidified an earlier assertion of another important Buddhist monk. Faguo, honored by both the founding and succeeding emperors of Northern Wei,<sup>801</sup> combined the person of the Buddha and the emperor.<sup>802</sup> For the first time in China, the personage of the Buddha combined with the emperor.

Fa-kuo had always used to say, "T'ai-tsu is enlightened and loves the Way. He is in his very person the Thus-Having-Come-One. Sramanas must and should pay him all homage." Then he would always do obeisance. Fa-kuo would say to others, "He who

<sup>795</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>796</sup> Ibid.

<sup>797</sup> Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion*, 607.

<sup>798</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 182.

<sup>799</sup> Guo, Song, and Feng, *World Heritage Sites in China*, 236–237.

<sup>800</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>801</sup> Wendi Leigh Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 93.

<sup>802</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「初，法果每言，太祖明叡好道，即是當今如來，沙門宜應盡禮，遂常致拜。謂人曰：『能鴻道者人主也，我非拜天子，乃是禮佛耳。』」  
<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@7^999712568^807^^^60202010000300210003^1@@1065933439>

propagates the teaching of the Buddha is the lord of men. I am not doing obeisance to the Emperor, I am merely worshipping the Buddha.”<sup>803</sup>

It was not until the reign of the fourth Northern Wei emperor that the manifestation of this combination took place. Tanyao designed five caves in Yungang Grottoes in which the bodies of the Buddhas bore the faces of the first five emperors of Northern Wei.<sup>804</sup>

This year the officials were commanded by Imperial edict to have made a stone likeness of the Emperor’s person. When it was finished, on both the face and the soles of the feet were black pebbles, which mysteriously resembled the moles on the upper and lower parts of the Emperor’s body. Those who discussed this thought that it was in response to his purity and sincerity. In the autumn of the first year of Hsing-kuang, the officials were commanded by Imperial edict to cast within the great five-storeyed temple, for the sake of the five emperors beginning with T’ai-tsu, five standing Śākya-figures, each of one rod and six feet in length. Together there were used twenty-five thousand pounds of copper.<sup>805</sup>

Of interest is Faguo’s reference to *rulai* (*tathāgata* or “Thus-having-come-One”). He did not say *fo* (Buddha), but referred to another epithet that had transcendental significance. Through Mahāyana Buddhism, the Chinese understood Buddha to be a historical figure who gained enlightenment under a Bodhi tree, any one of innumerable cosmic enlightened beings in distant pure lands, and a transcendental and all-pervasive being eternally teaching the Dharma.<sup>806</sup> The canonical “*tathāgata* king” did not refer to a

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<sup>803</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 53.

<sup>804</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「是年，詔有司為石像，令如帝身。既成，顏上足下，各有黑石，冥同帝體上下黑子。論者以為純誠所感。興光元年秋，敕有司於五級大寺內，為太祖已下五帝，鑄釋迦立像五，各長一丈六尺，都用赤金二十五萬斤。」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@7^999712568^807^^^60202010000300210003^1@@467444058>

<sup>805</sup> Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 71.

<sup>806</sup> Cheng Chien and Cheng Chien Bhikshu, *Manifestation of the Tathāgata: Buddhahood According to the Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1993), 4–5.

monarch but a Buddha.<sup>807</sup> Hence, the amalgamation of *tathāgata* and monarch was a brave but known innovation.

Pre-Buddhist Chinese monarchs, such as King Zhou of Shang or First Emperor of Qin, had attempted to claim divinity status. Hence, an association of a supreme ruler with a cosmic Buddha could not come as a major surprise. According to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* (*Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom*), even the heavenly Brahmā sought after the Buddha and his wisdom.<sup>808</sup> More than divine endorsement, this expresses superiority over the divine and certainly implies the ability to rule over men and heaven. Emperors who wished to associate themselves with sage kings of antiquity found various impressions of Buddha appealing. In the same treatise, Kumārajīva explained that the various epithets of the Buddha connote his virtues,<sup>809</sup> his all-encompassing wisdom,<sup>810</sup> and other sagely attributes. Such description reminded Chinese of their ideal sage king of antiquity. *Tathāgata* means transcendental “suchness” or the ease with which the Buddha comes and goes with the Dharma (he who does not

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<sup>807</sup> Wu, 251, Kang Senghui 《六度集經》卷 7：「眾祐自說，為菩薩時，名曰常悲。常悲菩薩，常流淚且行。時世無佛，經典悉盡，不觀沙門賢聖之眾，常思觀佛聞經妙旨。時世穢濁，背正向邪，華偽趣利猶蛾之樂火；四等六度永康之宅，而世廢佛斯法，就彼危禍，以自破碎也，故為愁荒哀慟且行。往昔有佛名影法無穢如來王，滅度來久，經法都盡。常悲菩薩，夢見其佛為其說法云：「慎無貢高，學士之行，去心思愛之垢，無著六情之塵勞，無遺眾愛毛髮之大。藏爾心內，諸念寂滅是為無為。」菩薩從佛聞斯法，猶餓夫得甘食，其喜無量，心垢除，入淨定。」(CBETA, T03, no. 152, p. 43, a13-25) and

Northern Liang, 397-439 Daotai 《入大乘論》卷 2〈3 順修諸行品〉：「問曰。縱令十方皆使自在。復有何過。答曰。若爾者但是一佛世界。十方諸佛。則無依果。復次如諸經說。皆謂釋迦如來王領三千大千世界。不言乃至十方世界。若如汝語則無因果。如經中說。諸佛出世。國土眾生。皆是依報。各有齊限。是故當知。在淨居天。成於正覺。領三千大千世界。非閻浮提。」(CBETA, T32, no. 1634, p. 46, c19-26)

<sup>808</sup> Later Qin, 402-406, Kumārajīva 《大智度論》卷 1〈1 序品〉：「示言：「我身不可思議，梵天王等諸天祖父，於恒河沙等劫中，欲思量我身，尋究我聲，不能測度，況我智慧三昧？」」(CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 58, c10-13)

<sup>809</sup> Later Qin, 402-406, Kumārajīva 《大智度論》卷 2〈1 序品〉：「「婆伽婆」者，「婆伽」言「德」，「婆」言「有」，是名有德。」(CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 70, b15-16)

<sup>810</sup> Later Qin, 402-406, Kumārajīva 《大智度論》卷 2〈1 序品〉：「復名「佛陀」[3](秦言「知者」)。知何等法？知過去、未來、現在，眾生數、非眾生[4]數，有常、無常等一切諸法。菩提樹下了了覺知，故名為佛陀。」(CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 73, a2-5)



really live through the suffering of birth and death).<sup>811</sup> Since a *cakravartin* is still inferior to Buddha in terms of spiritual attainment<sup>812</sup> but possesses unsurpassed earthly wealth and power, Faguo's combination of *tathāgata* and kingship offered the emperor the best of both worlds.

The *cakravartin* model offered nomadic rulers in China an alternative claim to legitimacy that fit in with their kingship needs. In China, Buddhist kingship was largely modeled on the deeds of King Aśoka. From the support of the *saṅgha* (including encouraging its growth), building *stūpas* and temples, creating images, spreading the Dharma and other Buddhist activities, as well as celebrating Buddhist festivals, the Northern Wei emperors based their actions on Buddhist kings of the Sixteen Kingdoms and further expanded their scale.

### 4.3 BIRTH STORIES' CORROBORATION

Buddha's birth story contains several events that are useful for ascertaining the legitimacy of a ruler. Appendix E contains a list of fifty-eight (58) relevant canonical texts (three influential Pāli-Sanskrit texts and fifty-five Chinese texts) available from Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasties. I have analyzed the available birth accounts into forty-two events (42) in eight episodes. Before discussing the significance of some of

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<sup>811</sup> 《大智度論》卷2〈1序品〉：「如法相解；如法相說；如諸佛安隱道來，佛亦如是來，更不去後有中，是故名「多陀阿伽陀」。」(CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 71, b17-19)

<sup>812</sup> Later Qin, 402-406, Kumārajīva 《大智度論》卷2〈1序品〉：「轉輪聖王、釋、梵、護世者，無有及佛，何況諸餘凡庶！所以者何？轉輪聖王與結相應，佛已離結；轉輪聖王沒在生、老、病、死泥中，佛已得[48]渡；轉輪聖王為恩愛奴僕，佛已永離；轉輪聖王處在世間曠野災患，佛已得離；轉輪聖王處在無明闇中，佛處第一明中；轉輪聖王若極多領四天下，佛領無量諸世界；轉輪聖王財自在，佛心自在；轉輪聖王貪求天樂，佛乃至有頂樂亦不貪著；轉輪聖王從他求樂，佛內心自樂。以是因緣，佛勝轉輪聖王。諸餘釋、梵、護世者，亦復如是，但於轉輪聖王小勝。」(CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 70, b19-c1)

these events to the assertion of royal legitimacy, I shall first review how Gandhāran Buddhism influenced the Buddhism of Southern and Northern dynasties.

The *Buddhacarita*, an epic poem written by Aśvaghoṣa in the first century CE, was the Buddha's first complete extant biographical account.<sup>813</sup> There still exists contention over whether Aśvaghoṣa served under King Kaniṣka's court.<sup>814</sup> The general view is that both were contemporary in the late first or early second century.<sup>815</sup> Ku confirmed Aśvaghoṣa's presence because he compiled the *(Abhidharma)vibhāṣā(śāstra)* when Kaniṣka held a Buddhist Council.<sup>816</sup> Another area of debate is whether King Kaniṣka devoted himself to Buddhism exclusively<sup>817</sup> and ruled as a *cakravartin*. If indeed the *Buddhacarita* was written in Kaniṣka's court, then the following short but interesting reference to King Aśoka could ascertain the importance of this ancient historical monarch in Kuṣāṇa.

Come and see this young Aśoka, covered all over with new shoots, which stands as it were ashamed at the beauty of our hands.<sup>818</sup>

In this section, a group of women likened Prince Siddharta to King Aśoka, who lived after the prince but before Aśvaghoṣa. It would be logical to assume the importance of King Aśoka in the Kaniṣka court, and possibly for his *cakravartin* status. In emulating Aśoka, the impact of Kaniṣka's Buddhist activities (from encouraging artistic and literary

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<sup>813</sup> Merv Fowler, *Zen Buddhism: Beliefs and Practices* (Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 32.

<sup>814</sup> Alf Hiltebeitel, *Dharma: Its Early History in Law, Religion, and Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 626–627.

<sup>815</sup> Gushtaspshah Kaikhushro Nariman, *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1992), 28.

<sup>816</sup> Ku, *Kuṣāṇa Buddhist Political Tradition and Mahāyana Buddhism*, 486.

<sup>817</sup> John Rosenfield, "Prologue: Some Debating Points on Gandhāran Buddhism and Kuṣāṇa History," in *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, Texts*, by Pia Brancaccio and Kurt A. Behrendt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 12.

<sup>818</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa," 47.

growth for the religion) reached China.<sup>819</sup> Gandhāran art, considered by some to be the parent of Buddhist art<sup>820</sup> in the medieval period, influenced Buddhist artforms through the land-based Silk Road (from Gandhāra to Kucha and Khotan, and onwards to Hexi Corridor and China). Besides art, Gandhāra also exported its Buddhist political ideology through the spread of Mahāyana Buddhism. *Stūpa* worship flourished in parallel with the *cakravartin*'s building of reliquaries. Various versions of Buddha's birth and birthday celebrations staged over the years were also offshoots from Kaniṣka's initial *cakravartin* activities in support of Buddhism.

#### **4.3.1 BIRTHRIGHT AND HEAVENLY MANDATE**

Prince Siddharta's birth accounts offered nomadic kings in China alternative methods for asserting legitimacy to rule. First was birthright. The prince was destined to be either a universal monarch or a Buddha. Seventeen (29%) of the fifty-eight texts analyzed contain the segment where Asita, the great seer, predicted the career of the prince.

I know this for certain, O king, that whosoever has on his body the thirty-two noble and untainted signs, has one of two careers open to him, and not a third; he will either become a Chakravarti sovereign, or a Buddha, the noblest of men. This Prince is not desirous of sensuous objects, so he will be a Buddha.”<sup>821</sup>

This matched well with ancient Chinese belief that a person, the son of Heaven, was pre-destined to rule. The fact that the bodhisattva descended from Tuṣita Heaven implied that he was divine or had divine origin. The monarch's acquisition of divine status was an important consideration. While it was unclear how a Chinese could

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<sup>819</sup> Ku, *Kuṣāṇa Buddhist Political Tradition and Mahāyana Buddhism*, 556.

<sup>820</sup> Vincent Arthur Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1911), 130.

<sup>821</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 138–148.

become a son of Heaven, the Buddhist story clarified that the Prince's sovereignty was a result of his past karmic merits.

There was not a being living who could drink that vigorous essence and remain at ease, except the next coming Bodhisattva who had acquired the fullness of all the stages of Bodhisattva perfection. What were the works through the influence of which the essence remained in the Bodhisattva? For having for long nights practised the duties of a Bodhisattva; for having given medicine to the sick; for having fulfilled desires of longing people ; for protecting those who sought his shelter; for daily offering to Tathagatas, to Chaityas, to Śrāvakas, to Saṅghas, and to his parents, the first share of flowers, fruits and tasteful substances, before partaking of any of them himself. These were the works in recognition of which Mahābrahmā brought to him the nectariferous essence.<sup>822</sup>

The Chinese translation of *Lalitavistara* quoted that the bodhisattva perfected the six *pāramitās* (perfections) in his past lives.<sup>823</sup> Hence, the bodhisattva prince had accumulated sufficient merits through his practice to reach full enlightenment.

While planning his final lifespan in Tuṣita Heaven, the bodhisattva mindfully decided the time, place, and household to which he would descend. The bodhisattva gave the most detailed description in terms of the selection of time in the third century

*Lalitavistara*:

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<sup>822</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>823</sup> 308 《普曜經》

「前世積功德，	長夜來善本；	布施得真正，	故今致奉敬。
尊本無數劫，	惠施愛男女；	以斯施果報，	兩天諸花香。
害身肉稱之，	用哀愍鳥故；	由此布施果，	餓鬼蒙食醬。
尊本無數劫，	護戒無所犯；	由禁獲果報，	消盡惡道難。
本無數億劫，	志道行忍辱；	忍行致此果，	慈心愍天人。
本無數億劫，	上進無怯劣；	以是精進果，	身好如須彌。
本無數億劫，	禪思消眾塵；	以是一心果，	不樂眾塵欲。
本無數億劫，	行智斷貪欲；	以是智慧果，	光明最清淨。
被鎧善伏塵，	普愍念眾生；	仁德度彼岸，	禮清淨安住。
光耀悉普照，	皆除眾塵冥；	為三千目導，	禮最勝現道。
曉了神通飛，	顯示學究竟；	化度以種類，	稽首善船師。
皆學清淨辭，	示現沒終始；	未曾捨俗法，	於俗無所著。
其見求博聞，	弘利甚無限；	況復聽受法，	得信愛樂者。」

(CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 490, c14-p. 491, a10)

when the manifest world is in peace, when men know what is birth, what is decay, what is disease and what is death<sup>824</sup> ... on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the waxing moon, when the moon is full, and in conjunction with the constellation of Pushya<sup>825</sup> ... ascertained the time of his birth, observed the eight pre-ordained signs in the palace of the king Śuddhodhana<sup>826</sup>

Both the selection of time and place testified to the auspiciousness of the period and country. That the prince selected his birthplace in the Middle Kingdom, where people were civilized and virtuous, and during a time of peace implied that the kingdom where the Chinese or any *cakravartin* existed was the same. Kings must have welcomed such indirect endorsement of their capability.

does not take birth in an outlying continent (or the continent of savages) ... born in Jambudvīpa ... does not take birth in an outlying country (or the country of savages) where men are born blind, dumb, uncivilised, or ignorant of the distinction between good and bad speech. It follows that Bodhisattvas are born in the middle country.<sup>827</sup>

Most significant of all was his selection of household. The prince opted for the best king and a virtuous queen. Hence, this endorsement not only meant that the Chinese *cakravartin* kept the tradition of hereditary succession, but also applauded his royal parents.

Śuddhodhana ... The very best of kings with his train ever near him, -- intent on liberality yet devoid of pride; a sovereign, yet with an ever equal eye thrown on all, -- of gentle nature and yet with wide-reaching majesty ... he illuminated his people on every side, showing them the paths which they were to follow ... Duty, wealth, and pleasure under his guidance assumed mutually each other's object, but not the outward dress ... actual pre-eminence was brought about by his numberless councillors of exalted wisdom ... queen, named Māyā as if free from all deceit ... a chief queen in the united assembly of all queens ... Like a mother to her subjects, intent on their welfare<sup>828</sup>

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<sup>824</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 37.

<sup>825</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>826</sup> Ibid., 75–76.

<sup>827</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>828</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 8–9.

Another important element to asserting royal legitimacy in China was the mandate to rule. This mandate manifested itself as the “thirty-two noble and untainted signs” on the prince’s body, as Asita, the great seer, pointed out.

In the great city of Kapilavastu, in the house of king Śuddhodana has been born a prince who is refulgent with the light of a hundred virtues, who is the adored of all regions, who bears on his body the thirty-two signs of greatness. Should he remain at home he will become a great sovereign, owner of a fourfold army, an emperor, victorious, virtuous, master of religion, ruler of countries, possessed of great might, and endowed with the seven jewels, and these will be the seven jewels, viz., the jewel wheel, the jewel elephant, the jewel horse, the jewel ruby, the jewel wife, the jewel lord chamberlain, the jewel commander-in-chief. Unto him will be born a thousand sons, valorous, heroic, handsome, and oppressors of enemical armies. He will conquer the whole circle of the earth to the brink of the ocean through his impartial discipline, his arms, his religion, and his might, and reign over all with supremacy and power.<sup>829</sup>

Since Asita predicted that one of the careers of the prince was a *cakravartin* possessing seven royal jewels, later Buddhists in India conceived of their ideal kings as possessing these seven treasures as a mark of endorsement.<sup>830</sup> Chinese Buddhists adopted this mark of legitimacy, as evidenced in the following quote from a Southern Song text:

At this time, King Śuddhodana bathed the prince’s head and gave him a seal made of seven precious jewels. After sounding the drums, the King announced in a loud voice, “Now I declare Prince Siddharta as the crowned prince.”<sup>831</sup>

Therefore, a monarch who owned the seal of seven precious jewels possessed the right to rule. This made irrelevant the need to possess Han imperial seals and ribbons as

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<sup>829</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 139.

<sup>830</sup> Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View*, 60.

<sup>831</sup> 435-443, Southern Song, Guṇabhadra 《過去現在因果經》卷2：「時王即以灌太子頂，以七寶印而用付之，又擊大鼓，高聲唱言：『今立薩婆悉達以為太子。』」(CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 629, a16-18)

a mark of political legitimacy.<sup>832</sup> Furthermore, during the period of disunion, the transmission of imperial seals and ribbons was subject to much suspect.<sup>833</sup>

Another significant event from the *Lalitavistara* text was Asita's prediction of the prince's future career. The need for a seer to tell the fortune of the baby prince revealed the importance of the sagely advisor (lord chamberlain) treasure to Indian monarchs. The seer confirmed the birthright and mandate of the baby from birth. Hence, a *cakravartin* in China could reduce reliance on traditional hereditary succession and a heavenly mandate dependent on Confucian principles.

#### 4.3.2 DIVINE SANCTION

The bodhisattva prince received divine protection from the moment of his descent to earth. Innumerable devas rejoiced with music, incense and flowers,<sup>834</sup> splendid omens such as earthquakes and bright light appeared at the moment of conception.

a great immeasurable light surpassing the splendour of the gods appeared in the world ... this ten-thousandfold world system shook and quaked and trembled<sup>835</sup>

Furthermore, deities protected mother and child during the pregnancy.

four young deities came to guard him at the four quarters so that no humans or non-humans or anyone at all could harm the Bodhisattva or his mother<sup>836</sup>

The guardians of the world hastened from heaven to mount watch over the world's one true ruler; thus the moonbeams, though they shine everywhere, are especially bright on Mount Kailāsa<sup>837</sup>

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<sup>832</sup> Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 87.

<sup>833</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>834</sup> 435-443 《過去現在因果經》卷 1：「無量諸天，作諸伎樂，燒眾名香，散天妙花」(CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 624, a21-22)

<sup>835</sup> Ñāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 980.

<sup>836</sup> Ibid., 981.

<sup>837</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa," 10.

Yakshas, Rakshas, Kumbhāṇḍas, Guhyakas, Devas and Dānavas with Indra at their head, who are now the guardians of the noble being, will ere long attain salvation (*moksha*).<sup>838</sup>

The prince's birth received divine sanction. Just before the Prince's birth, thirty-two omens announced the arrival of a bodhisattva.

thirty-two omens became manifest in the garden attached to the palace of king Śuddhodana<sup>839</sup>

Accompanying the queen to Lumbini garden were human as well as divine beings to ensure the safety of mother and child.

Heavenly damsels came to the sky to behold it ... showered, too, choice flowers after whirling them in the air ... The four guardians of the quarters are carrying that chariot. Indra, lord of the gods, is purifying the road, and Brahma is marching in front to restrain the wicked. Immortals by hundreds of thousands are, with joined hands, saluting her. The king, in delight, is beholding the procession.<sup>840</sup>

After the delivery of the prince, heavenly beings first received him and *naga* kings bathed him. No human hands defiled the pure baby.

there were present before him Śakra, the lord of the Devas, and Brahma, lord of the earth, and they respectfully and intelligently and in full memory received the Bodhisattva under cover of a beautiful piece of silk cloth. Brahma, lord of the earth, and his suite of Brahmakayika Devaputras plucked out the tower in which the mother of Bodhisattva had dwelt during her pregnancy, and carried it away to Brahmaloḥa for the purpose of erecting a chaitya on it, and worshipping it. No Bodhisattva should be received by any human being, therefore was the Bodhisattva first received by the Devas ... Immediately after his birth the Bodhisattva alighted on the earth; and at that time, piercing through the earth, a noble lotus appeared for the newly-born Mahasattva Bodhisattva.<sup>841</sup>

The two Naga kings, Nanda and Upananda, remaining in semi-developed form under the sky, bathed the Bodhisattva by pouring two streams of water, one hot and the other cold ... Śakra, Brahma, the guardians of regions, and the Devaputras by hundreds of thousands, who had come there, bathed the new-born Bodhisattva with scented water

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<sup>838</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 88.

<sup>839</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>840</sup> Ibid., 121–122.

<sup>841</sup> Ibid., 123–124.



and well-blown flowers, and sprinkled the same about him. Two chamaras, and a jewelled umbrella became manifest in the sky.<sup>842</sup>

Auspicious signs such as light and earthquake accompanied the birth of the prince.

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The king inquired, “What were the auspicious signs when the Tathāgata was born.” The heavenly being answered, “It is not possible for me to relate all the wonderful things in full. I can tell only a few things briefly.” Then he uttered the following stanza:

Emitting a light of golden color,  
Shining upon this blind world,  
He was adored by men and beings in heavens,  
And the earth quaked with the sea and mountains.<sup>844</sup>

Finally, celestial beings celebrated the prince’s birth with music, flowers, dance and gentle climate.

and from a cloudless sky there fell a shower full of lotuses and water-lilies, and perfumed with sandalwood. Pleasant breezes blew soft to the touch, dropping down heavenly garments; the very sun, though still the same, shone with augmented light, and fire gleamed, unstirred, with a gentle lustre<sup>845</sup>

superhuman celestial clarions sounded without being blown by any one ... Devas slowly showered down from the cloudless sky small particles of rain.<sup>846</sup>

Then trees of every season bore flowers and fruits in the three thousand great thousand regions. Clear rolling sounds of the clouds were heard under the sky ... Delightful, mild, fragrant breeze loaded with many kinds of flowers, apparels, ornaments, and aromatic powders circulated everywhere. Free from darkness, dust, smoke and fog all the sides sparkled delightfully. From above the sky loud, deep and grave sounds were heard ... Innumerable were the flowers, powders, essences, garlands, jewels, ornaments and apparels which were showered from the clouds<sup>847</sup>

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<sup>842</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>843</sup> Southern Liang, 512, Saṅghabhadra 《阿育王經》「時王問言。如來生時有何瑞相。天人答言。我今不能廣說妙事。略說少分。即說偈言。

放金色光明 照於盲世間 人天所愛樂 及山海地動。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2043, p. 137, a12-17)

<sup>844</sup> Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 29.

<sup>845</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa,” 13.

<sup>846</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 125.

<sup>847</sup> Ibid., 125–126.

With heavenly sanction, a *cakravartin* could claim that he had the approval of the divine beings and that they would bless his rule with peace and prosperity. This helped him to avert the need for royal ancestral sacrifices to the Lord-on-high by descendants of the Yellow Emperor.

#### **4.3.3 THE SAGE IN “SAGE KING”**

After borrowing the Chinese concept of “sage king,” translators borrowed the Buddha’s birth stories to explicate the Buddhist ideals of both sageliness and kingship. The sageliness of the bodhisattva manifested itself in several ways: his pure birth, endowment of perfect wisdom upon birth, self-declaration of utmost virtuosity and supremacy, as well as aiming his descent towards the eradication of evils in the world. Since Chinese looked to antiquity to idealize their sage kings as pure, wise, virtuous, benevolent, and courageous, the model of the Buddha-to-be fit in with the Chinese sage king paradigm.

The earliest birth story, *Acchhariya-abhuta Sutta*, ascertained the purity of the prince from the moment of birth.

When the Bodhisatta came forth from his mother’s womb, he came forth unsullied, unsmeared by water or humors or blood or any kind of impurity, clean, and unsullied.<sup>848</sup>

This concept of purity eventually influenced Chinese philosophy. Ming philosopher, Wang Yangming (1473 – 1529), compared a sage to pure gold, stating that a man ought to have pure quality to be a sage.<sup>849</sup>

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<sup>848</sup> Ñāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 982.

<sup>849</sup> Fung and Feng, *History of Chinese Philosophy, Volume 1*, 2.

The bodhisattva also acquired perfect wisdom upon birth. When he looked around, he ascertained that he was equal to none.

he who was born full of wisdom, not foolish, as if his mind had been purified by countless aeons of contemplation<sup>850</sup>

with full memory, knowing everything ... beheld the four quarters ... with the sight of a lion—with the sight of a Mahapurusha. At that time further birth being precluded by the maturation of the fruit of his former good works, the Bodhisattva obtained a transcendental sight ... He perceived, too, the mind and habits of all created beings. Perceiving them, he looked to ascertain whether there was any person equal to him in good conduct, in meditation, in thorough knowledge, and in the exercise of all virtuous actions; but nowhere in the three thousand great thousand regions did he see any.<sup>851</sup>

When the baby prince took the miraculous seven steps (the most popular event among the birth stories), he declared his utmost superiority.

He took seven steps facing north, and with a white parasol held over him, he surveyed each quarter and uttered the words of the Leader of the Herd: 'I am the highest in the world. This is my last birth; now there is no renewal of being for me.'<sup>852</sup>

The bodhisattva chose his birth on earth for the benefit of humanity, in particular, to destroy the world's evils. This altruistic goal agreed with the Mohist concept of sage kings.

Having forsaken his kingdom, indifferent to all worldly objects, and having attained the highest truth by strenuous efforts, he will shine forth as a sun of knowledge to destroy the darkness of illusion in the world.<sup>853</sup>

These Buddhist ideals generally matched well with Chinese conception of sage kings, with the possible exception of Legalists. Although sage kings existed only as

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<sup>850</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa," 12.

<sup>851</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 123–124.

<sup>852</sup> Ñāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 983.

<sup>853</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa," 18.

political ideals in China,<sup>854</sup> they remained as motivational goals towards which people cultivated. Confucians believed that *ren* (all-embracing love) was the source of all virtues.<sup>855</sup> Since the purpose of the Buddha's birth was out of his compassion for humanity, the Buddha fit this Confucian perception of sageliness.

#### **4.3.4 THE KING IN "SAGE KING"**

The bodhisattva chose to be born in into a *kṣatriya* family, immediately acquiring a royal status. Foreign monarchs in China who wanted to exploit the Buddha's birth story and foreign beliefs could not completely replace the classical tradition of the ruler receiving Heaven's mandate to rule the Middle Kingdom.<sup>856</sup> They incorporated local beliefs into the foreign faith by using familiar associations with sovereignty. Hence, Chinese imperial power, whether foreign or indigenous, associated itself closely with divinity through such symbols of royalty.

One such symbol was "nine dragons." The mythological dragon, the most powerful animal dwelling among the clouds and controlling natural forces such as rain, was associated with the emperor. During the Xia Dynasty, the king worshipped their ancestors and Earth God, as well as practiced animism and oracle bone reading. In 2002, archaeologists discovered over 2,000 fragments of turquoise dating from the Xia Dynasty that made up a dragon design 64.5 centimeters long.<sup>857</sup> This proved that as early as the Xia Dynasty, kings already practiced totem worship with the dragon symbol.

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<sup>854</sup> Xuezhi Guo, *The Ideal Chinese Political Leader: A Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 3.

<sup>855</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>856</sup> Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 128.

<sup>857</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 35–36.

The number “nine” sounds like another character meaning “forever” in Chinese; it is also the product of three (representing heaven, human, and earth). For these reasons, Chinese considered “nine” an auspicious number representing *Tian*.<sup>858</sup> Hence, in Chinese tradition, “nine” means very “high” in the Heaven. For these reasons, nine dragons was a symbol reserved for the exclusive use by the emperor to display his authority.

To show the equivalence of a *kṣatriya* prince with a Chinese emperor, Buddhist translators exploited the divine bath in Buddha’s birth accounts. In the *Lalitavistara*, two *naga* kings bathed the prince:

The two Naga kings, Nanda and Upananda, remaining in semi-developed form under the sky, bathed the Bodhisattva by pouring two streams of water, one hot and the other cold.<sup>859</sup>

However, the Chinese translation, *Puyao jing*, translated it into nine dragons bathing the baby prince with fragrant water.<sup>860</sup> Soon after this translation in 308, Shi Hu built an altar-carriage with nine dragons bathing a golden Buddha statue. This symbolic association of the prince’s birth with Chinese royalty was an obvious process of acculturation.

The earliest mention of “nine dragons” in Buddhist texts happened during the Three Kingdoms period (220 – 280). In 251, Kang Senghui translated *Guoqushi fo fenwei jing*. In one of Buddha’s past lives, he was born into a poor family. At age seven, he was brought before a Buddha to be his novice monk. When attempting to bathe her son, the mother saw nine dragons appearing to shower the child. The Buddha predicted

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<sup>858</sup> Patricia Bjaaland Welch, *Chinese Art: A Guide to Motifs and Visual Imagery* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2008), 230.

<sup>859</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 124.

<sup>860</sup> 308 《普曜經》卷2〈5 欲生時三十二瑞品〉：「天帝釋梵忽然來下，雜名香水洗浴菩薩，九龍在上而下香水，洗浴聖尊，洗浴竟已身心清淨」(CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 494, a26-b2)

that after fourteen *kalpas*, this child would become a Buddha after lifetimes as *cakravartin*.<sup>861</sup> Hence, during the early days, translators tried to accentuate the royal status of the Buddha.

By the time of the Northern Wei, Faguo's declaration that the emperor's virtuosity qualified him to be a *tathāgata* exploited the Buddha's birth story in a different way. The emperor chose a secular career instead of a religious one although he could be a Buddha. Unlike the *cakravartin* model whereby a Buddha or a sagely Buddhist advisor accompanied the universal monarch, the *tathāgata* king presumed himself to be the Buddha.<sup>862</sup>

#### 4.4 VISIBILITY THROUGH PARADES

Although mostly carrying the conventional Chinese *huangdi* title, Northern Wei emperors borrowed Buddhist kingship ideology to sanction their hold on power. One of the more visible forms of such endorsement was in the massive Buddha's Birthday parades in the last capital city. Through these parades, Northern Wei emperors brought the public display of religious affirmation of their royal legitimacy to new heights.

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<sup>861</sup> Three Kingdoms, 251, Kang Senghui 吳康居國沙門康僧會《過去世佛分衛經》卷1：「子年七歲，家復貧狹，即作二人飯具，及三法衣，手持澡瓶，自將其子行詣佛所，稽首佛足，前白佛言：『願哀我子使為沙門，令後得道，身形如佛。』佛即聽之，令作沙門。母以澡灌，前洗兒手，應時九龍從瓶口出，吐水灌兒手中，澡訖殘水散兒頭上，水之潺湲於兒頭上，化成華蓋珠交絡帳。中有師子座，上有坐佛。佛笑，口中五色光出，照十億佛剎，還遶佛身從兒頂入。母以飯具前上佛，并食其子，便發無上平等道意，應時十億佛剎為六反震動，眾剎諸佛皆自然現。佛以母飯飽，爾所佛及諸比丘僧皆等飽足，其飯如故，亦不損減；母即歡喜，及無數天人皆得阿惟越致。」

「時，兒髮墮成為沙門，即亦得立不退轉地。母前白佛：『今我所見，有三可怪：我澡兒手九龍吐水，此一可怪；澡已殘水散兒頭上，化成寶帳，及師子座上有坐佛，是二可怪；佛笑口中光從兒頂入，是三可怪；願佛為我分別說之。』佛言：『此兒却後十四劫當得作佛，九龍當浴，師子座華蓋寶帳，佛笑光從兒頂入，皆是其應。』母聞佛言倍懷踊躍，後當作母人轉輪聖王，積七百世竟，其劫壽盡轉母人身，當得阿惟越致。」」（CBETA, T03, no. 180, p. 452, a26-b19）

<sup>862</sup> Whalen Lai, "Society and the Sacred in the Secular City: Temple Legends of the Lo-yang Ch'ieh-lan-chi," in *State and Society in Early Medieval China*, ed. Albert E. Dien (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 233.

First was the superiority of the *tathāgata* king relative to the Buddha or even the most virtuous *saṅgha* member. In the *Aśokarājasūtra*, King Aśoka went out of his city to receive the virtuous Upagupta and prostrated before the monk. This is because Upagupta lived in the world “like a *Tathāgata*”<sup>863</sup> <sup>864</sup>.

He also ordered the man to make an announcement with the beating of a drum, so that all people in Pāṭaliputra might know that Upagupta was coming on the following day. The man was also instructed to utter the following stanza:

Those who wish to enjoy the bliss of riches,  
Be born in the heavens, or achieve the causes of liberation,  
Should all go to see  
That person Upagupta.  
One who did not see the Buddha --  
The most honored one among bipedal beings,  
Who was compassionate by intrinsic nature,  
The great master free from passions --  
Should go with offerings  
To see the person named Upagupta.

King Aśoka made all his people hear this stanza and also ordered them to mend and decorate the roads. He went out of the city to a distance of half a *yojana*, together with his subjects, holding flowers and playing various musical instruments, to welcome Upagupta. One seeing that Upagupta had already come ashore at a distance, surrounded by eighteen thousand arhats standing in a group shaped like a crescent moon, King Aśoka alighted from his elephant and walked to Upagupta. With one foot on board the ship and the other one on land, he carried Upagupta in his hands onto the ship, where he prostrated himself, with his knees, elbows, and head touching the floor, at the feet of the monk, like a big tree collapsing on the earth.<sup>865</sup>

The king of Khotan, a Buddhist kingdom, was no less devout. Faxian witnessed the dignity of Buddha’s birthday celebrated over a fortnight. As each altar carriage

<sup>863</sup> Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 22.

<sup>864</sup> Southern Liang, 512, Saṅghabhadra 《阿育王經》卷2〈2 見優波笈多因緣品〉：「復令此人擊鼓宣令。使波吒利弗多國一切聞知優波笈多明當入國。復令此人說此偈言。

若人樂富樂	及天解脫因
一切應當見	彼優波笈多
若人不見佛	兩足中最尊
自然大慈悲	無漏大師等
彼見當供養	名優波笈多

乃至阿育王。令一切人民聞此偈言。又復令其嚴治道路。時王出城至半由旬共諸臣民嚴持香花。種種伎樂迎優波笈多。時阿育王遙見優波笈多已在岸上。與一萬八千阿羅漢。如半月形而自圍繞。即便下象步至優波笈多處。時阿育王一足在船一足在岸。以兩手捧優波笈多以置船中。五體投地敬禮其足猶如大樹摧折墮地。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2043, p. 135, c28-p. 136, a14)

<sup>865</sup> Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 23–24.

prepared to enter the city, the king was the first to make offerings outside the city gate, but with his crown removed and with great Buddhist reverence.<sup>866</sup>

When the car was a hundred paces from the gate, the king put off his crown of state, changed his dress for a fresh suit, and with bare feet, carrying in his hands flowers and incense, and with two rows of attending followers, went out at the gate to meet the image; and, with his face (bowed to the ground), he did homage at its feet, and then scattered the flowers and burnt the incense.<sup>867</sup>

When Buddhists first brought their faith to China, they faced a major political dilemma. It would be unthinkable to require a Chinese emperor to prostrate to a mortal, no matter how sagely he might be. Yet, King Aśoka had set an example for future *cakravartins*, including paying obeisance to the Triple Gem of Buddha, Dharma and *Saṅgha*. The king followed the advice of Upagupta in his actions.<sup>868</sup>

It is rare to meet the Three Treasures,  
To which offerings should always be made.  
The World-honored One transmitted the Dharma-*piṭaka*  
To you, to me, and to others.  
The Buddha-dharma you should constantly guard,  
In order to convert all living beings.<sup>869</sup>

Second, Northern Wei emperors continued the tradition of *cakravartins* making offerings to the Buddha, but with a major difference. The first three Northern Wei

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<sup>866</sup> 339-420 東晉法顯《高僧法顯傳》卷1：「像去門百步。王脫天冠易著新衣。徒跣持花香翼從出城。迎像頭面禮足散花燒香。」(CBETA, T51, no. 2085, p. 857, b20-21)

<sup>867</sup> Faxian, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 18–19.

<sup>868</sup> Southern Liang, 512, Saṅghabhadra《阿育王經》卷2〈2見優波笈多因緣品〉：

「三寶值遇難 王應常供養  
世尊付法藏 於王及我等  
當守護佛法 為攝受眾生」(CBETA, T50, no. 2043, p. 136, a29-b2)

<sup>869</sup> Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 24–25.



emperors situated themselves above Pingcheng's gate tower to scatter flowers on the Buddha statues as the images passed beneath them.<sup>870</sup>

At that time Shih-tsu had just ascended the throne. He also, continuing the actions of T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung, always used to invite śramaṇas of high character and discuss with them. On the eighth day of the fourth month he used to mount the Buddha images on carriages and march them through the wide streets. The Emperor would personally drive to the gate tower and watch; he would scatter flowers and thus perform acts of veneration.<sup>871</sup>

With Mahāyana Buddhism gaining a major foothold in China, the Buddha was certainly not a mere mortal from India, but a figure carrying both cosmic and transcendental connotations. Since Faguo had already introduced the first Northern Wei emperor as a *tathāgata*, it was acceptable for the *tathāgata* king not to perform obeisance to the Buddha images like his *cakravartin* predecessors. While King Aśoka and the king of Khotan approached Upagupta and Buddha's images respectively with reverence outside the city (that is, outside the king's primary realm of control), earlier Northern Wei kings waited for the Buddha images to approach and performed their offerings at the border of the city.

Third, Northern Wei emperors instituted a tributary system (*chaogong*) with other "equal" states, such as the Southern dynasties. Northern Wei practiced the custom of *suishi chaogong* (paying tributes during festivals).<sup>872</sup> Therefore, Tuoba Xianbei emperors could have used Buddha's birthday parades to enhance the experience of friendly neighbors paying tributes to Northern Wei.

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<sup>870</sup> 424 – 451 《魏書 釋老志》：「世祖初即位。亦遵太祖太宗之業。每引高德沙門。與共談論。於四月八日。與諸佛像。行於廣衢。帝親御門樓臨觀。散花以致禮敬。」 [http://w3.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead=X77n1521\\_p0008b21](http://w3.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead=X77n1521_p0008b21)

<sup>871</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 56.

<sup>872</sup> Ma, *Wuhuan Yu Xianbei* 烏桓與鮮卑, 304.

In the last capital city of Luoyang, the scenario was very telling. Building on the tradition of their ancestors, Emperors Xuanwu and Xiaoming arranged for over a thousand Buddha images to enter the city. The emperors waited for the procession of Buddha images at the southern gate of their palatial grounds, inside the city. They did not make the trip to Luoyang's southern city gate or to any place outside the city gate. Over a thousand Buddha images, parading towards the *tathāgata* king to receive flower offerings, spoke of celestial endorsement of the power of the emperor. The occasion mirrored the tributary relationships between Northern Wei and its neighboring states. The celebratory joy of the occasion went to the Buddhas as much as to the emperor.

## Chapter Five SHIFTING RELIGIOSITY: FROM CLASSICAL MERIT TO MOBILE BUDDHIST MERIT

Northern Wei (386 – 534) monarchs endorsed and intensified the parades celebrating the Buddha's birthday as a means to legitimize their claim to the Chinese throne. The populace supported the parades for different reasons, one of which was the promise of fortune and merit. According to the *Record*, "the nation liked to pray for happiness [good fortune]."<sup>873, 874</sup> Since this clause appeared just before the description of the grand Buddha's Birthday parades, these parades evidently offered an opportunity for residents of and visitors to the city to acquire Buddhist merits, a concept that gradually acquired meaning based on Chinese foundation and vocabulary.

### 5.1 MERITS IN ANCIENT AND HAN CHINESE RELIGIOSITY

The predominantly agricultural Chinese society relied on nature for a bountiful harvest. In ancient, classical,<sup>875, 876</sup> and Han (that is, pre-Buddhist) times, Chinese believed that their fate rested with the primordial ancestor, *Shangdi* (Lord-on-high), and *Tian* (Heaven). Hence, they performed sacrifices to *Shangdi* and *Tian* for good fortune (*fu*). The *Record of Rites* documented this belief system.

All things originate from Heaven; man originates from his (great) ancestor. This is the reason why *Ji* was associated with God (at this sacrifice). In the sacrifices at the

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<sup>873</sup> 495 – 534 《洛陽城南伽藍記》卷第三〈景明寺〉：「時世好崇福」

[http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_003.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_003.htm)

<sup>874</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 126.

<sup>875</sup> Thomas A. Wilson, "Sacrifice and the Imperial Cult of Confucius," *History of Religions* 41, no. 3 (February 1, 2002): 251.

<sup>876</sup> I have adopted a common division whereby ancient China refers to the legendary Xia and Shang Dynasties, and classical China refers to Zhou Dynasty (including the spring and autumn period, and warring states).

border there was an expression of gratitude to the source (of their prosperity and a going back in their thoughts to the beginning of (all being)).<sup>877</sup>

### 5.1.1 *RECIPROCITY AS DETERMINANT OF FORTUNE*

According to Chinese tradition, the biggest determinant of one's fortune was *bao* (retribution). Chinese apparently had little interest in cosmic origins; instead, most of the indigenous philosophies seemed to be more concerned with maintaining relationships<sup>878</sup> for practical gains in the future. *Bao* formed an important basis for Chinese relations among people, and between people and supernatural beings.<sup>879</sup> The *Record of Rites* emphasized the importance of reciprocal relationships according to the rules of propriety.

In the highest antiquity they prized (simply conferring) good; in the time next to this, giving and repaying was the thing attended to. And what the rules of propriety value is that of reciprocity. If I give a gift and nothing comes in return, that is contrary to propriety; if the thing comes to me, and I give nothing in return, that also is contrary to propriety. If a man observes the rules of propriety, he is in a condition of security; if he does not, he is in one of danger. Hence there is the saying, 'The rules of propriety should by no means be left unlearned.'<sup>880</sup>

In a simple agrarian Chinese society, eating and the exchange of food represented communally significant acts.<sup>881</sup> Extending this principle of social interaction to their communication with the divine, the Chinese treated deities as houseguests. The living presented to deities feasts as a form of appeasement. Sacrifice to deities was equivalent to gifts and should be lavish; the form and manner of which differed according to the status of the deity in the divine hierarchy.<sup>882</sup> Strict rules governed who could sacrifice to

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<sup>877</sup> 《禮記·郊特牲》：「萬物本乎天，人本乎祖，此所以配上帝也。郊之祭也，大報本反始也。」  
<http://ctext.org/liji?searchu=originate>

<sup>878</sup> Bodde, *Essays on Chinese Civilization*, 81.

<sup>879</sup> Lien-Sheng Yang, "The Concept of Pao as a Basis for Social Relations in China," in *Chinese Thought & Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 291.

<sup>880</sup> 《禮記·曲禮上》：「太上貴德，其次務施報。禮尚往來。往而不來，非禮也；來而不往，亦非禮也。人有禮則安，無禮則危。故曰：禮者不可不學也。」  
<http://ctext.org/liji/qu-li-i>

<sup>881</sup> Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors.," 176.

<sup>882</sup> *Ibid.*, 177–178.

which gods and the rituals to be used. The bureaucratic and positional power of the individual determined the deities to whom he could make sacrifices.

*Tian*, the ultimate judge and distributor of appropriate reward or punishment, answered the prayers of the people who made appropriate sacrifices. According to the *Classic of Documents*, deities listened to the pleas of people and helped *Tian* to reward the good and punish the evil.

[Y]ou protested with one accord your innocence to the spirits of heaven and earth.  
The way of Heaven is to bless the good, and make the bad miserable.<sup>883</sup>

Confucianism also conceived of *Tian* as being bound by the rules of reciprocity.<sup>884</sup> Farmers tended the fields and herded while ritual officers presented the harvests to the deities who requited the peasants with *fu* (blessings).<sup>885</sup> As such, Chinese fatalism was often expressed with a Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911) adage, *tingtian youming* (submit to the will of heaven). Sacrifices, thus, became the center of attention, with elaborate rituals and taboos.

The Tuoba people also made sacrifices to *Tian* since 258.<sup>886</sup> However, their *Tian* was different from the Han Chinese' *Tian* or imperial *Shangdi*. The Tuoba *Tian* was neither subject to reciprocal relations with its people<sup>887</sup> nor responsible to oversee ethical behaviors.<sup>888</sup> The purpose of Tuoba sacrifices was to secure victories in battle.<sup>889</sup> When

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<sup>883</sup> 《尚書·湯誥》：「爾萬方百姓，罹其凶害，弗忍荼毒，並告無辜于上下神祇。天道福善禍淫。」  
<http://ctext.org/shang-shu/announcement-of-tang>

<sup>884</sup> Joseph P. Schultz, "Reciprocity in Confucian and Rabbinic Ethics.," *Journal of Religious Ethics* (March 1, 1974): 148.

<sup>885</sup> Wilson, "Sacrifice and the Imperial Cult of Confucius," 251.

<sup>886</sup> Yang, "The Tuoba Xianbei: Their Ritual of Sacrifice to Heaven Held at the Western Suburbs," 45.

<sup>887</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>888</sup> Ibid.

<sup>889</sup> Ibid.

the Tuoba and other steppe peoples assumed control in northern China, they adopted the Han imperial *Tian* sacrifices.

Besides sacrifices to supernatural powers, Chinese also emphasized ancestral worship to preserve their blessings. Since the Shang Dynasty (c.17<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century BCE), Chinese believed that the living and the dead shared the same ontological continuum.<sup>890</sup> Sacrificial rites, according to Confucius, reinforced moral values, especially filial piety.<sup>891</sup> Confucian protocol required the living to serve the dead as though they were still alive.<sup>892</sup> A filial child offered to his deceased parents their favorite food as part of the sacrifice.<sup>893</sup> There also was a penalty system. Since ancestors depended on offerings for sustenance, unfed ancestors punished delinquent descendants with *huo* (disasters).<sup>894</sup> The *Book of Jin* attributed floods in the Wu kingdom (222 – 280) to Sun Quan's (r. 222 – 229) lackadaisical attitude towards ancestral rites.<sup>895</sup> As such, ancestral worship bonded the Chinese socio-political system.

The Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Wei rulers followed Chinese practices in sacrificing to cultural heroes. For example, in 415, Emperor Mingyuan of Northern Wei (r. 409 – 424) sacrificed at the temple of sage king Shun.<sup>896</sup> The steppe monarchs, including Northern Wei emperors, performed ancestral sacrifices to cultural heroes who

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<sup>890</sup> Dull, "The Evolution of Government in China," 58.

<sup>891</sup> Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 45.

<sup>892</sup> 《荀子·禮論》：「喪禮者，以生者飾死者也，大象其生以送其死也。故事死如生，事亡如存，終始一也。」

<http://ctext.org/confucianism?searchu=%E4%BA%8B%E6%AD%BB%E5%A6%82%E7%94%9F>

<sup>893</sup> Keith Knapp, "Borrowing Legitimacy from the Dead: The Confucianization of Ancestral Worship," in *Early Chinese Religion: The Period of Division (220-589 Ad). Part Two*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü (Leiden: BRILL, 2010), 147.

<sup>894</sup> Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors.," 160, 177.

<sup>895</sup> Knapp, "Borrowing Legitimacy from the Dead: The Confucianization of Ancestral Worship," 189.

<sup>896</sup> Gang Li, "State Religious Policy," in *Early Chinese Religion: The Period of Division (220-589 Ad). Part Two*, ed. John Lagerwey (Leiden, Boston: BRILL, 2010), 141.

had benefited the welfare of Chinese much like their southern Chinese counterparts.<sup>897</sup>

Hence, Han and steppe ethnic rulers, in both the north and south, drew on the ancient Chinese ritual tradition and reciprocity basis for maintaining relationships with supernatural forces.<sup>898</sup>

Han Chinese also believed that the effects of good and bad deeds extended for generations. This concept explained why a bad person from a good family might enjoy good fortune.

The family that accumulates goodness is sure to have superabundant happiness, and the family that accumulates evil is sure to have superabundant misery.<sup>899</sup>

In summary, Han Chinese believed that a person's sacrifices to the deities, offerings to his ancestors, and ancestral virtues or vices determined his good or bad fortune. The ultimate judge and distributor of fortune was *Tian* (heaven). This important foundation of reciprocity, with its ancient roots, later became a platform for Buddhists to introduce their concept of *punya*.

### **5.1.2 PRE-BUDDHIST UNDERSTANDING OF FUDE AND GONGDE**

The general perception today is that the terms, *fude* and *gongde*, were Buddhist inventions for the term *punya* in Chinese. However, it turns out that these popular Buddhist terms existed since pre-Han times and translators chose these terms as the most appropriate translations of the Buddhist concept of *punya*. A study of pre-Buddhist meaning of *fude* and *gongde* will be instrumental in understanding the reasons for

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<sup>897</sup> Ibid.

<sup>898</sup> Chen, "Early Chinese Religion," 142.

<sup>899</sup> 《易經·坤》：「積善之家，必有餘慶；積不善之家，必有餘殃。」 <http://ctext.org/book-of-changes/wen-yan>

translators to select these pre-existing terms and how exegetes subsequently introduced flavors of *punya* to cater to the mindset and expectations of the indigenous people.

A close look at the compound, *fude*, reveals that *fu* means blessings, fortune, or happiness, while *de* stands for morality, good deeds or good fortune. When combined, the classical usage indicates good fortune. According to the eight divinatory trigrams (*bagua*) of the *Classic of Changes*, *fude* belongs to the trigram of *bao* (treasure).<sup>900</sup> The ancient classics typified a blessed individual (enjoying *fude*) as a happy person and his rewards could continue to his descendants.<sup>901</sup> The fortune could be a combination of secular and sacred riches. A crown prince assuming responsibilities as the head of Qi was described as having *fude* (fortune), such as blessings from the divine and abundant treasures.<sup>902</sup> Interestingly, none of the nine occurrences of *fude* in online classical texts<sup>903</sup> pointed to acquisition through morality in spite of the presence of *de* (morality) in the compound. Instead, one acquired *fude* through sacrifices rather than through moral behavior. Conversely, a person who failed to perform the appropriate sacrifices would receive misfortune.<sup>904</sup>

The compound, *gongde*, has a distinctively different meaning in classical Chinese. In the Warring States' *Record of Rites*, the "Royal Regulations" chapter stipulated that

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<sup>900</sup> 《京氏易傳·歸妹》：「八卦：鬼為繫爻，財為制爻，天地為義爻，福德為寶爻，同氣為專爻。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E7%A6%8F%E5%BE%B7>

<sup>901</sup> 《焦氏易林·遯之》：「革：福德之士，歡悅日喜，夷吾相國，三歸為臣，賞流子孫。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E7%A6%8F%E5%BE%B7>

<sup>902</sup> 《焦氏易林·艮之》：「兌：黃裳建元，福德在身。祿祐洋溢，封為齊君。賈市无門，富寶多殮。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E7%A6%8F%E5%BE%B7>

<sup>903</sup> The search was done using ctext.org. In December 2011, a search in ctext.org unveiled nine occurrences of “福德” and 308 matches of “fortune” (appearing variously as 幸, 吉, and 福 in pre-Qin and Han texts. There were 185 occurrences of “功德” and 189 matches of “merit.”

<sup>904</sup> 《說苑·辨物》：「不禋於神，而求福焉，神必禍之」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E7%A6%8F%E7%A6%8D>



the Son of Heaven punished irreverent, unfilial, and disobedient rulers, and rewarded those who had done good service to their people (*gong*) and shown exemplary virtues (*de*).

The son of Heaven, every five years, made a tour of Inspection through the fiefs ... Where any of the spirits of the hills and rivers had been unattended to, it was held to be an act of irreverence, and the irreverent ruler was deprived of a part of his territory. Where there had been neglect of the proper order in the observances of the ancestral temple, it was held to show a want of filial piety and the rank of the unfilial ruler was reduced. Where any ceremony had been altered, or any instrument of music changed, it was held to be an instance of disobedience, and the disobedient ruler was banished. Where the statutory measures and the (fashion of) clothes had been changed, it was held to be rebellion, and the rebellious ruler was taken off. The ruler who had done good service for the people, and shown them an example of virtue, received an addition to his territory and rank.<sup>905</sup>

While *de* meant virtues or morality, *gong* was achievement or good results. In the preceding description, public service was one form of meritorious duty. Another type of achievement considered as deserving large *gong* was military victory.<sup>906</sup> For an ordinary person to acquire *gong* (merit), he had to exert effort through love and respect for his superior, and the superior would reward him according to rules of propriety and reciprocity; hence, one would selflessly dedicate oneself to the superior's mission for merit to posterity.<sup>907</sup>

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<sup>905</sup> James Legge's translation of 《禮記·王制》：「天子五年一巡守 ... 山川神祇，有不舉者，為不敬；不敬者，君削以地。宗廟，有不順者為不孝；不孝者，君絀以爵。變禮易樂者，為不從；不從者，君流。革制度衣服者，為畔；畔者，君討。有功德於民者，加地進律。」<http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7>

<sup>906</sup> 《白虎通德論·考黜》：「及中興征伐，大功皆封，所以著大功。盛德之士亦封之，所以尊有德也。以德封者，必試之為附庸，三年有功，因而封五十里。元士有功者亦為附庸，世其位。大夫有功成，封五十里。卿功成，封七十里。公功成，封百里。士有功德遷為大夫，大夫有功德遷為卿，卿有功德遷為公，故爵主有德、封主有功也。」<http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7&page=2>

<sup>907</sup> 《漢書·賈鄒枚路傳》：「故不致其愛敬，則不能盡其心；不能盡其心，則不能盡其力；不能盡其力，則不能成其功。故古之賢君於其臣也，尊其爵祿而親之；疾則臨視之亡數，死則往弔哭之，臨其小斂大斂，已棺塗而後為之服錫衰麻經，而三臨其喪；未斂不飲酒食肉，未葬不舉樂，當宗廟之祭而死，為之廢樂。故古之君人者於其臣也，可謂盡禮矣；服法服，端容貌，正顏色，然

Ancient Chinese valued *gongde* highly. The king could reward with a gift of land or punish by removing parcels of land.

Those unappropriated lands were taken to reward any of the princes of acknowledged merit, and what was cut off from some others (because of their demerit) became unappropriated land.<sup>908</sup>

Besides increasing one's land hold, another benefit of possessing *gongde* was the bestowal of ranks by the Son of Heaven. While the position of princes in fiefdoms was hereditary, the appointment of officers within their estates came from the king's conferment of titles and ranks to individuals showing merit. In other words, the possession of *gongde* could lead to promotion.

The (appointed) heir-sons of the feudal princes inherited their states. Great officers (in the royal domain) did not inherit their rank. They were employed as their ability and character were recognized, and received rank as their merit was proved.<sup>909</sup>

There was a distinction between those possessing merit (*gong*) and virtues (*de*): the virtuous were honored with official ranks, while the meritorious were given tangible rewards. The royal bestowal of ranks and emoluments (such as land) was treated with great dignity. Not only did the king conduct the conferment ceremony in the royal ancestral temple, the officers also proudly displayed their honors in their ancestral temples.

Anciently the intelligent rulers conferred rank on the virtuous, and emoluments on the meritorious; and the rule was that this should take place in the Grand temple, to show that they did not dare to do it on their own private motion. Therefore, on the day of

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後見之。故臣下莫敢不竭力盡死以報其上，功德立於後世，而令聞不忘也。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7&page=7>

<sup>908</sup> James Legge's translation of 《禮記·王制》：「諸侯之有功者，取於間田以祿之；其有削地者，歸之間田。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=merit&page=2>

<sup>909</sup> James Legge's translation of 《禮記·王制》：「諸侯世子世國，大夫不世爵。使以德，爵以功，未賜爵，視天子之元士，以君其國。諸侯之大夫，不世爵祿。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=merit&page=2>

sacrifice, after the first presenting (of the cup to the representative), the ruler descended and stood on the south of the steps on the east, with his face to the south, while those who were to receive their appointments stood facing the north. The recorder was on the right of the ruler, holding the tablets on which the appointments were written. He read these, and (each man) bowed twice, with his head to the ground, received the writing, returned (home), and presented it in his (own) ancestral temple - such was the way in which rank and reward were given.<sup>910</sup>

Placing honors in the ancestral temple was important. Besides enhancing the position of the family or clan, it also indicated the significance of this temple and could prevent it from being destroyed by later rulers.<sup>911</sup> Hence, many were motivated to acquire merits for his lineage, in order to secure future sacrifices for himself and his ancestors.

The ancients also prized *gongde* as an important value. Together with righteousness and propriety, *gongde* ranked above wealth and tangible possessions.<sup>912</sup> In Ban Gu's Eastern Han (25 – 220 CE) text, *Baihu tongde lun*, a family or clan considered its *gongde* more beneficial than its skills or trade and hence, advised people to conduct themselves in a wholesome manner.<sup>913</sup>

A monarch practiced *bao* (reciprocity) by honoring his deserving men with *gongde*. The reciprocal behavior of a ruler to meritorious individuals was of paramount

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<sup>910</sup> James Legge's translation of 《禮記·祭統》：「古者，明君爵有德而祿有功，必賜爵祿於大廟，示不敢專也。故祭之日，一獻，君降立于阼階之南，南鄉。所命北面，史由君右執策命之。再拜稽首。受書以歸，而舍奠于其廟。此爵賞之施也。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=merit&page=3>

<sup>911</sup> 《孔子家語·廟制》：「如殷周之祖宗，其廟可以不毀。其他祖宗者，功德不殊，雖在殊代，亦可以無疑矣。《詩》云：『蔽芾甘棠，勿剪勿伐。』邵伯所憩，周人之於邵公也，愛其人，猶敬其所舍之樹。況祖宗其功德而可以不尊奉其廟焉？」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7&page=2>

<sup>912</sup> 《韓詩外傳》卷六：「故民雖有餘財侈物，而無禮義功德，則無所用。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7>

<sup>913</sup> 《白虎通德論·考黜》：「所以貴功德，賤伎力。或氏其官，或氏其事。聞其氏即可知，其所以勉人為善也。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7&page=2>

urgency. According to *The Great Treatise*, it was the second of five major duties of a sovereign in order to assure good government.

When a sage sovereign stood with his face to the south, and all the affairs of the kingdom came before him, there were five things which for the time claimed his first care, and the people were not reckoned among them. The first was the regulating what was due to his kindred (as above) the second, the reward of merit; the third, the promotion of worth; the fourth, the employment of ability; and the fifth, the maintenance of a loving vigilance. When these five things were all fully realised, the people had all their necessities satisfied, all that they wanted supplied. If one of them were defective, the people could not complete their lives in comfort. It was necessary for a sage on the throne of government to begin with the (above) procedure of human duty.<sup>914</sup>

The importance of appropriate bestowal of honors based on merit arose from motivating the right behavior for a strong country. In China of antiquity, kings gave merits to soldiers and farmers since they were critical for survival. The *Legalist Book of Lord Shang* reflects such mentality.

I have heard that when the intelligent princes of antiquity established laws, the people were not wicked; when they undertook an enterprise, the required ability was practised spontaneously; when they distributed rewards, the army was strong. These three principles were the root of government. Indeed, why people were not wicked, when laws were established, was because the laws were clear and people profited by them; why the required ability was practised spontaneously, when an enterprise was undertaken, was because merits were clearly defined; and because these were clearly defined, the people exerted their forces; and this being so, the required ability was spontaneously practised; why the army was strong when rewards were distributed refers to titles and emoluments. Titles and emoluments are the goal of a soldier's ambition. Therefore, the principle on which princes distributed titles and emoluments was clear; when this was clear, the country became daily stronger, but when it was obscure, the country became daily weaker. Therefore, the principle on which titles and emoluments are distributed is the key to the state's preservation or ruin. The reason why a country is weak or a prince is ruined is not that there are no titles or emoluments, but that the principles followed therein are wrong. The principle followed by the Three Kings and the five Lords Protector was no other than that of giving titles and emoluments, and the reason that people emulated each other in merit was because the principles which they followed were clear. Thus the way in which

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<sup>914</sup> James Legge's translation of 《禮記·大傳》：「聖人南面而聽天下，所且先者五，民不與焉。一曰治親，二曰報功，三曰舉賢，四曰使能，五曰存愛。五者一得於天下，民無不足、無不贍者。五者，一物紕繆，民莫得其死。聖人南面而治天下，必自人道始矣。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=merit&page=2>

intelligent princes utilized their ministers was that their employment was made dependent on the work which they had done, and rewards were bestowed on the merits which they had acquired. When the relation between merit and reward was clear, then the people emulated each other in merit. If, in administering a state, one succeeds in causing the people to exert their strength so that they emulate each other in merit, then the army will certainly be strong.<sup>915</sup>

The ancients used merit and punishment as means to elicit the right behavior. The “Interdicts and Encouragements” chapter of the same Legalist text documents this function of merits:

The method by which a ruler of men prohibits and encourages is by means of rewards and penalties. Rewards follow merit and penalties follow crime; therefore is it necessary to be careful in appraising merit and in investigating crime. Now, rewards exalt and punishments debase, but if the superiors have no definite knowledge of their method, it is no better than if they had no method at all. But the method for right knowledge is power and figures.<sup>916</sup>

According to the Chinese, an emperor had the highest *gongde* (merit) of the time. In the Daoist text, *Wenzi*, Laozi explains that the Son of Heaven has the use of heaven and earth, as well as the resources of everything on earth, thereby giving him utmost *gongde* and reputation.<sup>917</sup>

Of all the emperors, sage kings were held in the highest esteem. They too possessed *gongde*. In Dong Zhongshu’s (179 – 104 BCE) Western Han (206 BCE – 25

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<sup>915</sup> J. J. L. Duyvendak’s translation of 《商君書·錯法》：「臣聞古之明君，錯法而民無邪，舉事而材自練，行賞而兵彊，此三者治之本也。夫錯法而民無邪者，法明而民利之也。舉事而材自練者，功分明；功分明則民盡力，民盡力則材自練。行賞而兵彊者，爵祿之謂也；爵祿者，兵之實也。是故人君之出爵祿也，道明；道明，則國日彊；道幽，則國日削。故爵祿之所道，存亡之機也。夫削國亡主，非無爵祿也，其所道過也。三王五霸，其所道不過爵祿，而功相萬者，其所道明也。是以明君之使其臣也，用必出於其勞，賞必加於其功。功賞明，則民競於功。為國而能使其民盡力以競於功，則兵必彊矣。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=merit&page=6>

<sup>916</sup> J. J. L. Duyvendak’s translation of 《商君書·禁使》：「人主之所以禁使者，賞罰也。賞隨功，罰隨罪，故論功察罪，不可不審也。夫賞高罰下，而上無必知其道也，與無道同也。凡知道者，勢數也。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=merit&page=8>

<sup>917</sup> 《文子》：「天子以天地為品，以萬物為資，功德至大，勢名至貴，二德之美與天地配，故不可不軌大道以為天下母。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7&page=4>

CE) text, *Luxuriant Dew of the Annals*, the sage kings, Yao and Shun, did not have to use penal codes because of their *gongde*.<sup>918</sup> Hence, having a meritorious ruler could lead to easy governance.

While based on the principles of reciprocity, pre-Buddhist *fude* and *gongde* carried distinctively different meanings. *Fude* referred to good fortune that one acquired through observance of propriety, especially ritualistic propriety. *Gongde* meant merit that could lead to tangible benefits in the form of emoluments and official ranks handed out by the king. In the Eastern Han text, *Shuowen jiezi*, *gongde* (merit) and *fu* (fortune) had a cause and effect relationship: one needed to accumulate secular merit for divine good fortune.<sup>919</sup> A meritorious ruler possessed both *gongde* and *fude*; he wisely awarded *gongde* to his subordinates to motivate the right behavior: military successes, public service for common good, and agricultural production. On this basis, Buddhists used the benefits of acquiring *gongde* and *fude* to grow the religion.

## 5.2 INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHIST *PUNYA* FROM HAN TO WESTERN JIN

Buddhists brought into Eastern Han China a relatively mature concept of *punya*<sup>920</sup> (*puñña* in Pāli). *Punya* refers to karmically wholesome actions,<sup>921</sup> which will produce desirable results. An Shigao, Lokakṣema, Kang Mengxiang, Kāśyapa Mātāṅga,

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<sup>918</sup> 《春秋繁露·身之養重於義》：『故曰：聖人天地動、四時化者，非有他也，其見義大故能動，動故能化，化故能大行，化大行故法不犯，法不犯故刑不用，刑不用則堯舜之功德。』

<http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7>

<sup>919</sup> 《說文解字》卷四〈言部〉：「累功德以求福。」 <http://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han?searchu=%E5%8A%9F%E5%BE%B7&page=17>

<sup>920</sup> According to the Fo Guang dictionary (version 3), *punya* refers to deeds that can lead to mundane and supra-mundane welfare. Mundane *punya* refers to deeds that can lead to health and prosperity in this life or rebirth in heavenly realms, while supra-mundane *punya* refers to deeds that can lead to attainment of Buddhahood (or spiritual *nirvāṇa*).

<sup>921</sup> Mahathera Nyanatiloka, "A Buddhist Dictionary: A Manual of Pali Terms and Buddhist Doctrines," *UrbanDharma.org*, 1980, <http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma2/dictionary/bdindex.html>.

Dharmarakṣa, Tanguo, Zhiyao, Anxuan, and Zhu Dali translated forty-four canonical texts that contained *punya*-related terms during the 200 years of Eastern Han rule. These texts include definition of, purpose for, examples of, and methods for acquiring *punya*. Subsequently, 130 texts in the next 120 years of Three Kingdoms (220 – 280) and Western Jin (265 – 317 CE) further elaborated and expanded the scope of Buddhist *punya*.

Translators found a close equivalent to *punya* in the Chinese vocabulary and did not have to transliterate the term. Both the meanings of “fortune” or “blessings” in *fude* and “merit” and “virtues” in *gongde* presented themselves as close equivalents to the interpretation of *punya*. Chinese familiarity with *fude* and *gongde* made it easy to assimilate these terms. In addition, Chinese recognized the working principle behind *punya* and karma, as the ethics of reciprocity embedded in *bao*. Hence, translators and exegetes sometimes used the terms *fubao* (good retribution), *yebao* (karmic retribution), and *guobao* (fruit of retribution), to indicate reciprocal relationships working in a way familiar to the Chinese. However, the former set of terms (*fude* and *gongde*) was still more popular than the latter set (*fubao*, *yebao*, and *guobao*) although *guobao* was considerably widespread.<sup>922</sup>

Chinese assimilation of *punya* as *fude* and *gongde* was so successful that Chinese today is likely to associate these terms with Buddhism rather than classical Chinese. As the following sections will demonstrate, this assimilation did not occur automatically. The Han, Three Kingdoms and Western Jin periods laid the philosophical and behavioral foundation. Building on this basis, Buddhists in the Sixteen Kingdoms had a catalytic

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<sup>922</sup> Of the 160,465 pages of rubbings from Korean printing blocks that spanned 1,530 canonical texts, 512 documents contain *fude* (with 5,619 hits), 958 documents contain *gongde* (with 33,325 hits), and 235 documents contain *fubao* (with 816 hits), 264 documents contain *yebao* (with 1,961 hits), 501 documents contain *guobao* (with 7,066 hits).

effect and spurred rapid development. However, it was not until the Northern Wei Dynasty that the nation went on a fervent pursuit of Buddhist merit.

### 5.2.1 APPROPRIATING FUDE AND GONGDE

Translators identified “merit” as an English equivalent for *punya*. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, “merit” is a Middle English term meaning “that which is deserved” and theological studies later adapted the term to mean “good works as entitling to reward from God” or “righteousness and sacrifice (of Christ).”<sup>923</sup> Today, the theological meaning dictionaries often assigned to “merit” is “spiritual credit granted for good works.”<sup>924</sup> As the meaning of “merit” evolved, it lost the original sacrificial and God-specific implications. This paralleled the evolution of *fude* and *gongde* after Chinese accepted the concept of *punya*: these terms gradually shed their classical sacrificial as well as *Tian* or *Shangdi* associations. In both English and Chinese, “merit” retains its implication of a deserved reward or punishment.

While *bao* (reciprocity) was central to Chinese interrelationships, *ye* (karma) was fundamental for Buddhists. In Vedic literature, *punya* implies an offering, especially of food, to a worthy recipient.<sup>925</sup> Such meritorious and purificatory acts were understood to constitute good karma,<sup>926</sup> just as ritually appropriate actions would lead to good *bao*.

Translators combined these two terms and invented a new term, karmic retribution (*yebao*), in three Eastern Han texts. From the comparatively slow growth of this term, it

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<sup>923</sup> William Little, H. W. Fowler, and J. Coulson, “Merit,” ed. C. T. Onions, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Taipei: Southeast Asia Bookstore 東南亞書店股份有限公司出版部, 1968), 1237.

<sup>924</sup> Robert B. Costello, “Merit,” *The American Heritage College Dictionary* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 853.

<sup>925</sup> James R. Egge, *Religious Giving and the Invention of Karma in Theravāda Buddhism* (Richmond: Curzon, 2002), 4.

<sup>926</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



is likely that Chinese did not favor the deterministic and strict rules of karma. Another reason could be the absence of correlation with Chinese reality.

Together with karma, the Buddhist theory of causality or *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent-coorigination) can also explain the important Chinese principle of reciprocity. The oft-quoted formula is “When this is present, that comes to be; from the arising of this, that arises. When this is absent, that does not come to be, on the cessation of this, that ceases.”<sup>927</sup><sup>928</sup> Hence, one would expect reciprocal actions (fruit of causes, translated as *guo*) although these could take place in future lifetimes.<sup>929</sup> Translators invented another term, *guobao* (the fruit of reciprocity), to express the effect of prior karmic action; like *yebao*, *guobao* could be either wholesome or unwholesome. As a largely agrarian society, the Chinese tended to use nature as a convenient metaphor. From the relative textual popularity of *guobao* over *yebao*, Chinese preferred the use of “fruit” to karma to understand dependent co-origination through reciprocity.

Translators did not have to invent new vocabulary all the time. Wholesome or fortunate karmic effects were known as *fubao*, and unwholesome or unfortunate effects were *zuibao*. *Fubao* appeared in various pre-Buddhist texts. In the Eastern Han *Zhantanshu jing*, the Buddha taught that fortunate and unfortunate effects (*zui fubao*) accompany one’s physical form like a shadow.<sup>930</sup> Nevertheless, from dynasty to dynasty, *fubao* was used less frequently than *fude* in conveying fortunate karmic reward. While translators acknowledged that classical *fude* and *gongde* were built on the principles of

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<sup>927</sup> The Pāli version is “Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imassa uppādā idaṃ uppajjati. Imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjati” (M I.262-264; S II.28, 70, 96).

<sup>928</sup> David Kalupahana, *Causality--the Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1975), 90.

<sup>929</sup> Buddhists introduced the concept of cycles of rebirth to China.

<sup>930</sup> Eastern Han 《佛說梅檀樹經》卷 1：「佛言：『罪福報應，如影隨形。』」 (CBETA, T17, no. 805, p. 751, a10)

reciprocity, they made a concerted effort to shed this classical association as they introduced Buddhist nuances into these Chinese terms. Over the centuries, familiar *fude* and *gongde* assumed rational Buddhist causality instead of classical good fortune from sacrificial rituals performed to Tian and deities who were bound by rules of reciprocity to respond.

*Fude* and *gongde* became overwhelmingly popular when referring to fortunate karmic retribution (as Table 1 shows). During these early centuries, *fude* and *gongde* were used interchangeably. For example, the *Avadānaśataka* (*Zhuanji baiyuan jing*) documents that in one of Buddha's past lives, he was a king who generously gave away his possessions, including his eyes, in order to seek Buddhahood.<sup>931</sup> The account of this story begins with the pursuit of *gongde* and ends with the perfection of *fude*. Fifty out of 174 relevant texts (Table 3) between Eastern Han and Western Jin contain both *fude* and *gongde*.

From humble beginnings in the Eastern Han, the number of texts providing instruction on *punya*-related concepts increased during the Three Kingdoms and Western Jin. To express *punya*, early Buddhists appropriated *fude*, *gongde*, and *fubao* from classical Chinese and invented *futian*, *yebao*, *guobao*, and *huixiang*. Table 1 presents an

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<sup>931</sup> Wu, 223-253, Zhi Qian 《撰集百緣經》卷 4〈4 出生菩薩品〉：「如來往昔，於彼耆舊老比丘所，修何功德？願為解說... 乃往過去無量世中，波羅[\*][木\*奈]國有王，名曰尸毘，治正國土，人民熾盛豐樂無極。時尸毘王常好惠施，賑給濟乏，於諸財寶頭目髓腦，來有乞者終不吝惜... 我今不求釋梵及以轉輪、世俗榮樂，以此施眼善根功德，使我來世得成正覺，度脫眾生... 欲知彼時尸毘王者則我身是，彼時驚者今老比丘是。由於彼時布施眼目不吝惜故，自致成佛，是故今者，猶於汝上，修於福德，尚無厭足」(CBETA, T04, no. 200, p. 218, b9-c13)

overview of the occurrences of the *punya*-related terms using BlueDots<sup>932</sup> that has access to 1,530 canonical texts.

Table 1 Occurrences of *punya*-related terms in early Buddhist texts

	Eastern Han (195 years)	Three Kingdoms (60 years)	Western Jin (59 years)
<i>Yebao</i> (業報)	3 texts (3 hits)	4 texts (4 hits)	3 texts (3 hits)
<i>Guobao</i> (果報)	7 texts (19 hits)	7 texts (26 hits)	20 texts (60 hits)
<i>Fubao</i> (福報)	11 texts (17 hits)	3 texts (3 hits)	21 texts (55 hits)
<i>Fude</i> (福德)	19 texts (71 hits)	17 texts (62 hits)	26 texts (97 hits)
<i>Gongde</i> (功德)	33 texts (547 hits)	34 texts (388 hits)	85 texts (1,240 hits)
<i>Futian</i> (福田)	10 texts (32 hits)	8 texts (18 hits)	24 texts (66 hits)
<i>Huixiang</i> (迴向)	1 text (3 hits)	1 text (4 hits)	2 texts (4 hits)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44 texts (692 hits)</b>	<b>39 texts (505 hits)</b>	<b>91 texts (1,525 hits)</b>

Besides introducing the concept of rebirth, Buddhists also brought to the Chinese the goal of Buddhist practice to attain Buddhahood and *nirvāṇa*. The *Sumāgadhāvadāna-sūtra* claims that of all the ninety-six different paths available to people, none is superior to Buddha's *nirvāṇa*.<sup>933</sup> Hence, the best fortune for a practitioner is attainment of Buddhahood and the worst misfortune is unwholesome rebirth. For example, the Eastern Han *Shou shishan jie jing* teaches that a person who upholds the eight precepts<sup>934</sup> will not only receive the *gongde* of no rebirth in

<sup>932</sup> The Blue Dots Project explores the design of high dimensional visualizations and analyzes text structure and patterns for humanities scholars. I use BlueDots' capability of interactive search, retrieval, browsing, and analysis within 160,465 pages of Korean printing block rubbings.  
<http://ecai.org/textpatternanalysis/ProjectHighlightsSummary.html>

<sup>933</sup> Wu, 230, Zhu Liyan 《佛說三摩竭經》卷 1：「若有點人當學正道，其道不生不老不病不死，是為泥洹大道。世間凡有九十六種道，皆不及佛道。」(CBETA, T02, no. 129, p. 845, b12-14)

<sup>934</sup> The eight precepts are no killing, no stealing, no sexual conduct, no lying, no alcohol, no wide beds, no entertainment and perfumes, and no untimely meals. 《受十善戒經》卷 1〈1 十惡業品〉：「八戒齋者，

unwholesome realms,<sup>935</sup> but also rebirth as a human who will leave home and reach *nirvāṇa*, or a heavenly being who will have access to the Dharma and attain Buddhahood.<sup>936</sup> In the *Adbhutadharmaparyāya-sūtra*, the Buddha teaches Ananda that the accumulation of merits can lead to the extermination of all defilements leading to Buddhahood. This important passage introduces *punya* as a prerequisite for attainment of Buddhahood. Hence, together with explaining the goal and benefits of the Buddhist practice, early Buddhist texts maintained that merits was a prerequisite for attaining this goal.

To an audience unfamiliar with Buddhahood, it was important that under this new norm, Chinese could still receive recognizable divine blessings and secular wealth (*fude*). To attract lay devotees whose goal might not be liberation, Lokakṣema's translation of *Drumakinnararājaparipṛcchā-sūtra* assures practitioners that a bodhisattva with *gongde* will receive divine protection,<sup>937</sup> a concept familiar with most ordinary Chinese. The Western Jin *Dharmapāda* contains a tale of the Buddha teaching a king to govern well, treat his army fairly, continue his Buddhist practice, trust the advice of loyal officers, and reduce his desires in order to accumulate fortune (*fu*) so that ghosts and deities will assist

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是過去、現在、諸佛・如來，為在家人制出家法：一者，不殺；二者，不盜；三者，不淫；四者，不妄語；五者，不飲酒；六者，不坐高廣大床；七者，不作倡伎樂故往觀聽，不著香熏衣；八者，不過中食。應如是受持。」(CBETA, T24, no. 1486, p. 1023, c28-p. 1024, a4)

<sup>935</sup> Unwholesome rebirths include hell, hungry ghosts, animals, and asuras.

<sup>936</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《受十善戒經》卷1〈1十惡業品〉：「持此受齋功德，不墮地獄，不墮餓鬼，不墮畜生，不墮阿修羅，常生人中，正見出家，得涅槃道。若生天上，恒生梵天，值佛出世，請轉法輪，得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提」(CBETA, T24, no. 1486, p. 1024, a9-12)

<sup>937</sup> Eastern Han, 168-172, Lokakṣema, 支婁迦讖《佛說佉真陀羅所問如來三昧經》卷3：「彌勒菩薩謂提無離菩薩。佛般泥洹已後。吾等當護是法。當教告人廣說其事。後世若有菩薩有功德者。當逮得是經卷。我等當勸助而擁護之。若後世其逮得是經者。有書諷誦讀皆得安隱。當知彌勒。提無離菩薩之所擁護。」(CBETA, T15, no. 624, p. 367, a11-16)

him.<sup>938</sup> This advice accorded well with Chinese belief in exertion of effort to cultivate virtues for *gongde*.

Buddhists promoted wholesome acts as inevitably leading to wholesome results. This simple model encouraged a strong element of self-responsibility rather than reliance on an external divine or secular agent to hand out rewards. Hence, fortunes and misfortunes descended on a person due to his or her past intentions and behaviors. The *Avadānaśataka* (*Zhuanji baiyuan jing*) that contains the highest occurrences of *gongde* and *fude* among Three Kingdoms' texts has an example. A woman who has just offered a meal and scattered flowers on the Buddha makes a resolution to use all her merits to assist the blind, those who have no refuge, those who need protection, and the unliberated.<sup>939</sup> In return, the Buddha predicts that her resolution will enable her to practice the bodhisattva path and perfect the six *pāramitās*, finally attaining Buddhahood.<sup>940</sup>

One acquired merit through the performance of *dāna* (giving) and the dedication of merits through *parīṇāma* (merit transfer). The earliest text containing both concepts was *Da fangbian fo baoen jing* (Eastern Han). In it, Queen Māyādevī fulfills her vow to

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<sup>938</sup> Western Jin, 290-306, Fajū and Fali 《法句譬喻經》卷 4〈38 道利品〉：「王前世時為大王給使，奉佛以信、奉法以淨、奉僧以敬、奉親以孝、奉君以忠，常行一心精進布施，勞身苦體初不懈倦。是福追身，得為王子補王之榮。今者富貴而反懈怠。夫為國王當行五事。何謂為五事？一者領理萬民無有枉濫。二者養育將士隨時稟與。三者念修本業福德無絕。四者當信忠臣正直之諫，無受讒言以傷正直。五者節欲貪樂心不放逸。行此五事，名聞四海福祿自來。捨此五事，眾網不舉，民困則思亂，士勞則勢不舉；無福，鬼神不助；自用失大理，忠臣不敢諫；心逸國不理臣，[卅/(阿-可+辛)/女]民則怨。若如是者，身失令名，後則無福」(CBETA, T04, no. 211, p. 606, c20-p. 607, a8)

<sup>939</sup> Wu, 223-253, Zhi Qian 《撰集百緣經》卷 1〈1 菩薩授記品〉：「時彼兒婦聞此語已，便從姑妯，求索財物，設會請佛。飯食已訖，持種種花，散佛頂上，在虛空中變成花蓋隨佛行住。見是變已，喜不自勝，五體投地，發大誓願：「以此供養所作功德，於未來世，盲冥眾生，為作眼目；無歸依者，為作歸依；無救護者，為作救護；無解脫者為作解脫；無安隱者，為作安隱；未涅槃者，為作涅槃。」」(CBETA, T04, no. 200, p. 203, c8-16)

<sup>940</sup> Wu, 223-253, Zhi Qian 《撰集百緣經》卷 1〈1 菩薩授記品〉：「今此名稱發廣大心，善根功德，過三阿僧祇劫，具菩薩行，修大悲心，滿足六波羅蜜，當得作佛，名曰寶意，廣度眾生，不可限量」(CBETA, T04, no. 200, p. 203, c22-p. 204, a2)

give birth to a Buddha because in a previous life, she has transferred merits from building 500 relic *stūpas* for her sons who became *pratyeka-buddhas*.<sup>941</sup> During this early period, merits of good effort were redirected to the ultimate goal of attaining Buddhahood. In the Three Kingdoms' *Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra* (*Foshuo wuliangshou jing*), a person transfers the merits of practicing wholesome deeds, upholding vegetarian fasts, erecting *stūpas* and images, feeding the saṅgha, and supporting the monastery to the vow of rebirth in the Amitabha's land.<sup>942</sup> In the Mahāyana spirit, the purpose of such dedication was for the benefit of all suffering beings.

A new concept that emerged during these early centuries was *parīnāma*, turning around one's "good roots and virtues of one's own religious practices" and directing them to somewhere else.<sup>943</sup> From Eastern Han to Western Jin, only four texts used this term. In spite of this slow initial growth, it became very popular in later years. Such popularity arose because the strict form of an individual attaining his soteriological goal through only his own effort was unappealing.<sup>944</sup>

One reason for the low frequency of occurrence of "*huixiang*" in early Chinese Buddhist texts is that the concept of *parīnāma* has not been consistently translated as *huixiang*. In the *Ugra(data)paripṛcchā-sūtra* (Eastern Han *Fajing jing* and Western Jin

<sup>941</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《大方便佛報恩經》卷3〈5論議品〉：「即立誓願：『我供養是五百辟支佛，并起五百塔，供養舍利功德，悉以迴向普及一切眾生。令我來世不用多生諸子，而不能發菩提之心，但生一子能發道心，現世出家，得一切智。』」(CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 140, c8-12)

<sup>942</sup> Wei, 252, Kang Sengkai 《佛說無量壽經》卷2：「多少修善、奉持齋戒、起立塔像、飯食沙門、懸繒然燈、散華燒香，以此迴向願生彼國。」(CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 272, b27-29)

<sup>943</sup> Gajin Nagao and Leslie S. Kawamura, *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies: Collected Papers of G.m. Nagao* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 149.

<sup>944</sup> Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 124.

*Yujialuoyue wen pusa xing jing*), a lay Buddhist is urged to transform the merits acquired from *dāna* into the supreme perfect enlightenment,<sup>945</sup> effectively an act of merit transfer.

And again, O Eminent Householder, if a householder bodhisattva has four things, he is one who ‘goes to the Dharma for refuge.’ What are the four? (1) he relies on and associates with those people who are preachers of the Dharma; (2) having heard the Dharma, he thoroughly reflects upon it; (3) just as he has heard and absorbed it himself, he teaches and explains those Dharmas to others; and (4) he transforms the root-of-goodness [*gongde*] which has sprung from his gift of the Dharma into Supreme Perfect Enlightenment.<sup>946</sup>

Devotees were initially directed towards self-effort and sowing of “merit fields” through the Triple Gem.<sup>947</sup> Buddhists introduced the concept of a “merit field” (*futian*) to China as early as the Eastern Han. The religious life served as a pure and fertile field of merit.<sup>948</sup> The more fertile the fields of the beneficiaries of lay offerings, the more merit a devotee will gain from the gift.

It is possible to understand the growing sophistication of *punya* by tracing the textual development of *futian* (merit field). As an agriculturally oriented economy, exegetes explained *futian* as a field for which one could grow fortune. Hence, one was encouraged to sow fortune or merit through self-effort, a concept easily understood by farmers. In one of its earliest appearances in *Dafangbian fo baoen jing*, a rich donor

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<sup>945</sup> Western Jin, 265, Dharmarakṣa 《郁迦羅越問菩薩行經》卷1〈1上士品〉：「復次長者。居家菩薩。有四法行歸命法。何等為四。一者與正士法人相隨相習。稽首敬從受其教勅。二者一心聽法。三者如所聞法為人講說。四者以是所施功德。願求無上正真之道。是為四居家菩薩為歸命法。」 (CBETA, T12, no. 323, p. 23, c17-21)

<sup>946</sup> Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path According to the Inquiry of Ugra (ugraparipṛcchā)* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 221.

<sup>947</sup> Wendi Leigh Adamek, “The Impossibility of the Given: Representations of Merit and Emptiness in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” *History of Religions* 45, no. 2 (November 1, 2005): 139.

<sup>948</sup> Jacob N. Kinnard, *The Emergence of Buddhism: Classical Traditions in Contemporary Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 65.

cultivated his merit field by feeding the villagers during a famine.<sup>949</sup> This *sūtra* also introduces the *saṅgha* as a transcendental merit field and parents as a secular merit field.<sup>950</sup> Hence, Chinese continued to uphold Confucian filial piety together with a new community that required support.

To justify the support of this new community, Eastern Han texts presented the *saṅgha* as a supreme merit field from which devotees could reap benefits. *Fenbie gongde lun* explains that the *saṅgha* is a good merit field because monastics can save themselves and liberate others.<sup>951</sup> An Shigao further elaborates that acts such as bathing and generosity towards the *saṅgha* reap the advantages of the *saṅgha*'s limitless merit field and can protect one from drought, as well as result in subsequent fortunate rebirths as state officials, emperors, heavenly kings, *cakravartins*, bodhisattvas, and Buddha.<sup>952</sup> In order to encourage devotees to part with their wealth, the *Zhong benqi jing* explains that material wealth is impermanent, unlike a merit field that cannot be reduced by natural or manmade disasters.<sup>953</sup>

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<sup>949</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《大方便佛報恩經》卷2〈3對治品〉：「汝等應當至心聽我所說。汝等知不？天時炎旱，時世饑饉，人民飢餓死者無數。我等居家，庫藏盈滿，穀米無量。可共及時，種於福田」(CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 132, c17-20)

<sup>950</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《大方便佛報恩經》卷3〈5論議品〉：「眾僧者，出三界之福田；父母者，三界內最勝福田。」(CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 141, b22-23)

<sup>951</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《分別功德論》卷2：「用是證故。知眾僧為良福田也。已既自度復能度人至三乘道。念眾之法其義如此。」(CBETA, T25, no. 1507, p. 36, a29-b2)

<sup>952</sup> Eastern Han, 148-170, An Shigao 《佛說溫室洗浴眾僧經》卷1：「作此洗浴眾僧、開士，七福如是。從此因緣，或為人臣、或為帝王，或為日、月四天神王，或為帝釋、轉輪聖王，或生梵天，受福難量；或為菩薩，發意持地，功成志就，遂致作佛。斯之因緣，供養眾僧，無量福田，旱澇不傷」(CBETA, T16, no. 701, p. 803, a16-21)

<sup>953</sup> Eastern Han, 148-170, Tanguo and Kang Mengxiang 《中本起經》卷2〈14尼捷問疑品〉：「財有八危，損而無益。何謂為八？一者為官所沒、二者盜賊劫奪、三者火起不覺、四者水所沒溺、五者怨家債主橫見奪取、六者田農不修、七者賈作不知便利、八者惡子博掩用度無道。如是八事，至危難保，八禍當至，非力所制。是故，如來以此因緣，勸人布施，安置福田，深堅難動，水火盜賊，不復得害，壽終生天，衣食自然」(CBETA, T04, no. 196, p. 162, b7-14)



Throughout the Eastern Han Dynasty, the *saṅgha* represented a supreme merit field. It was not until the Three Kingdoms' *Avadānaśataka* (*Zhuanji baiyuan jing*) that there was formal reference to the Buddha as a limitless merit field to which *dāna* should be offered.<sup>954</sup> Successive *sūtras* continued to praise Buddha's merit field. The *Sumāgadhāvadāna-sūtra* (*Foshuo sanmojie jing*) persuades one to give *dāna* to the Buddha because he is everyone's merit field.<sup>955</sup>

In addition to supporting the *saṅgha* and the Buddha, Western Jin texts also encouraged the support of the Dharma. The *Aśokarājāvadāna* reminds readers that it is more important to sustain the Dharma at the expense of tangible wealth because of its supreme merit.<sup>956</sup> In addition, the *Foshuo zhude futian jing* encourages the building of monasteries and *vihāras* as a form of *dāna* to sow in the merit field.<sup>957</sup> Hence, by the time of Western Jin, the Triple Gem of Buddha, Dharma, and *saṅgha* were all considered fertile merit fields.

The increasing prevalence of Mahāyana Buddhism led to Western Jin texts presenting a bodhisattva as a superior merit field. The first such *sūtra*, *Brahmaṇiṣeṣacintīparipṛcchā-sūtra* (*Chixin fantian suowen jing*), describes the Buddha

<sup>954</sup> Wu, 223-253, Zhi Qian 《撰集百緣經》卷 6〈6 諸天來下供養品〉：「如來出於世，如日月光明，照彼諸黑闇，皆悉普使明。見者生歡喜，心垢自然除，善哉無上尊，眾生良福田。信心修福德，我不惜身命，被害致命終，得生於天上」(CBETA, T04, no. 200, p. 230, a27-b3)

<sup>955</sup> Wu, 230, Zhu Liyan 《佛說三摩竭經》卷 1：「難國王前後所飯諸尼捷，譬如五穀著火中，終不復生；今日飯佛及諸菩薩、羅漢，得福多無有量。譬如人有好地有好種，天復時雨，何憂不生？今佛是一切人福田，隨人所種必得其願」(CBETA, T02, no. 129, p. 845, b4-9)

<sup>956</sup> Western Jin, 306, An Faqin 《阿育王傳》卷 7：「佛法如明燈 得修進諸善 佛法若在世 福田勝無量 佛法若滅者 作福田有量 我以不堅財 當易堅牢法」(CBETA, T50, no. 2042, p. 127, c4-8)

<sup>957</sup> Western Jin, 290-306, Fali and Fajū 《佛說諸德福田經》卷 1：「復有七法廣施，名曰福田，行者得福，即生梵天。何謂為七？一者、興立佛圖、僧房、堂閣；二者、園果、浴池、樹木清涼；三者、常施醫藥，療救眾病；四者、作牢堅船，濟度人民；五者、安設橋梁，過度羸弱；六者、近道作井，渴乏得飲；七者、造作園廁，施便利處。是為七事得梵天福」(CBETA, T16, no. 683, p. 777, b2-8)

as a great bodhisattva who benefits all sentient beings, and hence, has a big merit field.<sup>958</sup>

The *Vīradattagr̥hapatiparipṛcchā-sūtra* (*Foshuo pusa xiuxing jing*) states that the bodhisattva's bodhicitta is the virtue sown in his merit field.<sup>959</sup> Hence, with the growth of Buddhism over the dynasties, the *saṅgha*, Buddha, Dharma, and bodhisattva were gradually included as supreme merit fields.

Another innovation in Western Jin was the combination of filial piety and the act of honoring the Buddha. The *Sāgaranāgarājaparipṛcchā-sūtra* (*Foshuo hailongwang jing*) states that a *nāga* king offered the Buddha (the most supreme merit field) seven types of treasures on behalf of all parents.<sup>960</sup> This was the beginning of an important concept that later turned into a big phenomenon of merit dedication during the Northern Wei. Putting aside philosophical debates over the feasibility of merit or karmic transfer,<sup>961</sup> I shall focus on the textual encouragements and religiosity changes that led to the mega-parades of Northern Wei.

### 5.2.2 INITIAL USE OF BUDDHA IMAGES

Buddha images that were on parade in Northern Wei Luoyang had a long history in China. In spite of the early effort at translating texts, China's first documented encounter of Buddhism was not through the written word but through an art form. In the *Records of the Grand Historian*, Sima Qian provided us with an episode that took place

<sup>958</sup> Western Jin, 286, Dharmarakṣa 《持心梵天所問經》卷 1〈4 解諸法品〉：「如來開導順化眾生。數弘大哀。斯為如來。謂行大哀。佛告梵天。若有菩薩奉行於斯三十二事。合集大哀。如是菩薩為大士者。名大福田為大威神。樂於巍巍至不退轉。為眾生故而造立行。」(CBETA, T15, no. 585, p. 10, a17-21)

<sup>959</sup> Western Jin, 290-306, Bai Fazū 《佛說菩薩修行經》卷 1：「諸發菩提心，種德於福田，深樂菩薩者，得為三界明。」(CBETA, T12, no. 330, p. 65, c10-12)

<sup>960</sup> Western Jin, 285, Dharmarakṣa 《佛說海龍王經》卷 1〈1 行品〉：「施與七大財，恩慈加眾生，為一切父母，稽首最福田。」(CBETA, T15, no. 598, p. 132, b10-11)

<sup>961</sup> Ronald Wesley Neufeldt, *Karma and Rebirth: Post Classical Developments* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), 113–114.

in 121 BCE. A Western Han general, Huo Qubing, defeated a Xiutu (Xiongnu) king and seized a “golden man” (believed to be Buddha) used in worshipping Heaven.<sup>962</sup>

Furthermore, cave 323 in Dunhuang (a seventh century creation) shows Emperor Wu of Han (r. 140 – 87 BCE) and his attendants worshipping two standing images of the Buddha, possibly as the emperor sent off Zhang Qian to forge alliances in the Western Regions.<sup>963</sup> According to the *Book of Wei*, Emperor Wu “did not sacrifice to him, but merely burnt incense and did obeisance before him.”<sup>964, 965</sup> These accounts demonstrated that some Chinese had seen and venerated Buddha images even before Buddhist teachings arrived in China.

Another official record of Buddha images in China occurred in Eastern Han. When Cai Yin returned from the Western Regions, he gave Emperor Ming of Han (r. 57 – 75) “a Buddhist scripture in forty-two chapters and a standing image of Śākya. Emperor Ming commanded artists to figure Buddha images and install them on the Ch’ing-liang-t’ai and atop the Hsien-chieh-ling.”<sup>966, 967</sup> From these beginnings, Buddhism’s popularity resulted in an increase in objects of worship throughout the Central Plains. In 435, Emperor Wen of Southern Song (r. 424 – 453) received a

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<sup>962</sup> Sima, *Records of the Grand Historian*, 2:152.

<sup>963</sup> Julia K. Murray, *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 44.

<sup>964</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「不祭祀，但燒香禮拜而已」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@3^898887360^22^^2@@1115102294>

<sup>965</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 27.

<sup>966</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「惜又得佛經四十二章及釋迦立像。明帝令畫工圖佛像，置清涼臺及顯節陵上」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@3^898887360^807^^5020201000030021^2@@805373259>

<sup>967</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 29.

memorial that since Buddhism had spread in China for four dynasties, there were thousands of images, *stūpas* and temples.<sup>968</sup>

From the preceding accounts, it is safe to deduce that Buddhist image worship originated outside China. Scholars debated the possibilities of either Gandhāra and/or Mathura as the source of the first Buddha image.<sup>969</sup> The depiction of the Buddha in iconic human form reached Gandhāra and Mathura, directly or indirectly, from Greece.<sup>970</sup> Prior to Greek introduction, Buddha worship was primarily aniconic, through relics, *stūpas*, and symbols such as empty thrones, wheels, and trees.<sup>971</sup> Hence, from Greece through the Western Regions on to China, image creation, worship, and processions made their way across religions and cultures.

The doctrinal motivation for Buddha image (*foxiang* or *fo xingxiang*) creation was for the generation of merit from *Buddhadarśana* (beholding the Buddha or *jianfo*).<sup>972</sup> Table 2 shows a comparison of the appearance of Buddha image-related terms from an analysis of BlueDots canonical data. After a slow start, these terms became more widespread in the Western Jin.

Table 2 Occurrences of image-related terms in early Buddhist texts

	Eastern Han (195 years)	Three Kingdoms (60 years)	Western Jin (59 years)
<b><i>Jianfo</i> (見佛)</b>	38 texts (191 hits)	31 texts (211 hits)	85 texts (482 hits)

<sup>968</sup> 《宋書》卷 97〈列傳 57・夷蠻〉：「元嘉十二年，丹阳尹蕭摩之奏曰：“佛化被于中国，已历四代，形像塔寺，所在千数」<http://gj.zdic.net/archive.php?aid-6350.html>

<sup>969</sup> Krishan, *The Buddha Image*, 28.

<sup>970</sup> Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, *The Origin of the Buddha Image & Elements of Buddhist Iconography* (Fons Vitae, 2006), 287.

<sup>971</sup> Susan L. Huntington, “Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism,” *Art Journal* 49, no. 4 (December 1, 1990): 402.

<sup>972</sup> Rob Linrothe, “Inquiries into the Origin of the Buddha Image: A Review,” *East and West* 43, no. 1/4 (December 1, 1993): 241.

	Eastern Han (195 years)	Three Kingdoms (60 years)	Western Jin (59 years)
<i>Foxiang</i> (佛像)	5 texts (15 hits)	3 texts (3 hits)	11 texts (23 hits)
<i>Fo xingxiang</i> (佛形像)	7 texts (39 hits)	2 texts (2 hits)	11 texts (33 hits)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47 texts (245 hits)</b>	<b>31 texts (216 hits)</b>	<b>89 texts (538 hits)</b>

*Buddhadarśana* derived its importance from the teaching that being in the Buddha's presence is conducive towards enlightenment,<sup>973</sup> and hence, meritorious. In the Eastern Han *Shou shishanjie jing*, the Buddha explains that the practice of the ten wholesome acts will enable practitioners to see the Buddha lifetime after lifetime, releasing their bodies and minds from suffering in order to attain Buddhahood.<sup>974</sup> Seeing the Buddha was also important because it could increase one's merits. In the Eastern Han *Zhongbenqi jing*, the Buddha tells the sons of an elder family that their past merits have enabled them to enjoy fame and happiness, and their seeing the Buddha in this lifetime will increase their store of merits.<sup>975</sup>

However, by the time Buddhism reached the Middle Kingdom, Śākyamuni Buddha had already passed into *nirvāṇa*. Hence, an image represented the next best alternative to being in his presence. As early as the Eastern Han Dynasty, Chinese knew the use of images as a substitute to seeing the Buddha in person through the translation of

<sup>973</sup> Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente Rome, *East and West*, vol. 43–44 (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1993), 244.

<sup>974</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《受十善戒經》卷 1 〈1 十惡業品〉：「若能行十善，隨順正法教，生生常見佛，身意悉開解，永離諸苦縛，疾成無上道。」(CBETA, T24, no. 1486, p. 1024, a14-16)

<sup>975</sup> Eastern Han, 148-170, Tanguo and Kang Mengxiang 《中本起經》卷 2 〈13 度奈女品〉：「佛告族姓子：『榮位尊豪，快樂如意，皆是前世福德所致；今復見佛，功德增益。』」(CBETA, T04, no. 196, p. 161, c12-14)

*Tathāgatapratibimbapraṭiṣṭhanuśaṃsā-sūtra* (*Foshuo zuofo xingxiang jing*). In this *sūtra*, a fourteen-year old King Udayana of Kauśāmbī builds a Buddha image for occasions when he cannot see the Buddha personally.<sup>976</sup> Soper suggested that the development of an iconographic tradition in King Udayana's reign was due to the need to provide tangible evidence of the Buddha in a region so far from the Buddha's homeland.<sup>977</sup> This practical and earthly need was also confirmed in Lancaster's study of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (*Daoxing bore jing*) that revealed early image making was based on a glorified *rūpa-kaya*.<sup>978</sup> This tradition eventually spread throughout all Buddhist kingdoms.

Early texts taught Buddhist devotees that the merits of beholding a Buddha image were similar to *Buddhadarśana*. In the *Tathāgatapratibimbapraṭiṣṭhanuśaṃsā-sūtra*, the Buddha teaches that anyone who beholds and pays respect before an image will not be reborn in *niraya* (joyless hell) or other evil realms, but will be reborn in the heavens and eventually in a rich household before attaining Buddhahood.<sup>979</sup> In addition to the benefits of enlightenment and rebirths, a practitioner can also achieve *pratyutpanna-samādhi* by erecting a Buddha image.<sup>980</sup> Hence, an image also served as a tool for contemplative visualization.

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<sup>976</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《佛說作佛形像經》卷1：「佛去後，我恐不復見佛，我欲作佛形像，恭敬承事之。」(CBETA, T16, no. 692, p. 788, a26-27)

<sup>977</sup> Alexander Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*. (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1959), 263.

<sup>978</sup> Lewis R. Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon About the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images," *Artibus Asiae* 36, no. 4 (January 1, 1974): 290–291.

<sup>979</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《佛說作佛形像經》卷1：「其有人見佛形像，以慈心叉手，自歸於佛塔、舍利者，死後百劫不復入泥犁、禽獸、薜荔中，死即生天上。天上壽盡，復來下生世間，為富家作子，珍寶奇物不可勝數，然後會當得佛泥洹道。」(CBETA, T16, no. 692, p. 788, c9-13)

<sup>980</sup> Eastern Han, 179, Lokakṣema 《般舟三昧經》卷1〈3 四事品〉：「為求是三昧者。當作佛像。」(CBETA, T13, no. 418, p. 906, b9-10)

In addition, texts attempted to relate a Buddha image to the familiar Chinese mentality of fortune (*fu*)-seeking. The *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* clarifies that creating an image will enable devotees to acquire *fu* (merits or fortune).<sup>981</sup> The Western Jin *Guanxi fo xingxiang jing* states that one who bathes the Buddha image as though the Buddha was alive will acquire unlimited *fu*.<sup>982</sup>

Besides patrons, texts also motivated artisans to produce Buddha images. The *Tathāgatapratibimbapraṭiṣṭhanuśaṃsā-sūtra* persuades artisans to make Buddha images by promising *fu* (fortune) resulting in pure and beautiful bodies and eyes, and rebirth in the seventh Brahman heaven, rich households, royal families, and not in the three evil realms.<sup>983</sup> In future lives, the image builders will be able to make offerings to Buddhas and reach *nirvāṇa*.<sup>984</sup> Furthermore, the *Adbhutadharmaparyāyasūtra* teaches that merits from building images far outweigh those who present beautiful *viḥāras* to the *saṅgha* and

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<sup>981</sup> Eastern Han, 179, Lokakṣema 《道行般若經》卷 10〈29 曇無竭菩薩品〉：「所以作佛像者，但欲使人得其福耳。不用一事成佛像，亦不用二事成，有金有點人，若有見佛時人，佛般泥洹後念佛故作像，欲使世間人供養得其福」(CBETA, T08, no. 224, p. 476, b21-24)

<sup>982</sup> Western Jin, 290-306, Fajū 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》卷 1：「浴佛形像如佛在時。得福無量不可稱數」(CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c23-24)

<sup>983</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《佛說作佛形像經》卷 1：「佛言：『天下人作佛形像者，其後世所生處，眼目淨潔，面目端政，身體手足常好。生天上亦淨潔，與諸天絕異，眼目面貌好。作佛形像，得福如是。作佛形像，所生處無有惡身，體皆完好。死後得生第七梵天上，復勝餘天，端政絕好無比，為諸天所敬。作佛形像，得福如是。作佛形像，後世當生豪貴家，其實與世間人絕異。所生處，不在貧窮家作子。作佛形像，其得福如是。作佛形像者，後世身體常紫磨金色，端政無比。作佛形像，後世所生處當生富家，錢財珍寶不可勝數，常為父母、兄弟、宗親所重愛。作佛形像，其得福如是。作佛形像，後世生閻浮利地，常生帝王、王侯家，為賢善家作子。作佛形像，其得福如是。作佛形像，後世作帝王中，復最尊勝於諸國王，諸國王所歸仰。作佛形像，其得福如是。作佛形像，後世作遮迦越王，上天上後，來下自恣，在所作為，無所不至。作佛形像，其得福如是。作佛形像，後世生第七梵天上，壽一劫，智慧無有能及者。作佛形像，死後不復在惡道中生。生者，常自守節；心念常欲求佛道。作佛形像，其得福如是。』」(CBETA, T16, no. 692, p. 788, b2-27)

<sup>984</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《佛說作佛形像經》卷 1：「作佛形像，後世生常敬佛，慈心於經，常持雜繒綵、好華、好香、然燈火、諸天下珍寶、奇物持上佛舍利，其後無數劫，會當得泥洹道。人有出意持珍寶上佛者，皆非凡人，前世故作佛道。作佛形像，其得福如是。」(CBETA, T16, no. 692, p. 788, b27-c2)

erecting *stūpas* because of the limitless merits of the *tathāgata*.<sup>985</sup> As late as the Western Jin, texts continue to relate the building of Buddha images to fortune. The *Sumatidārikāparipṛcchā-sūtra* teaches that a builder of Buddha images will be popular<sup>986</sup> and be reborn on a lotus flower in a Buddha land.<sup>987</sup> Hence, during this early period, texts encouraged artisans to build Buddha images for their personal welfare.

One often-quoted early account of actual Buddha image worship took place in Eastern Han. Ze Rong (c. 190) built a monastery with a Buddha image and organized vegetarian feasts during festivals.<sup>988</sup>

Then he built a great Buddha shrine with a bronze [figure] of a man with gold smeared on the body and clothed with elegant colorful garmets. [It had] nine layers of hanging copper (?) plates. Below was a storied pavilion, with a capacity of 3,000 some persons, all of whom examined and read the Buddhist scriptures. ... Each time the Buddha was bathed, much wine and food was arranged and mats were spread out on the road for several tens of *li* [one *li* is one-third of a mile]. People who came to see and to partake of the food moreover were 10,000 persons. The expenditure ran into the hundred millions.<sup>989</sup>

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<sup>985</sup> Eastern Han, 25-220 《佛說未曾有經》卷 1：「若有善男子善女人。作百千億釋提桓因大莊嚴殿。施四方僧。復有善男子善女人。於佛般涅槃後。以如芥子舍利起塔。大如菴摩勒果。其剎如針。上施槃蓋如酸棗葉。若造佛形像乃至如[麤-夫+廣]麥。此功德滿足百倍不及。千倍萬倍百千萬億倍所不能及。不可稱量。阿難當知。是如來無量功德。戒分定分智慧分解脫分知見解脫分。復次阿難。如來無量功德。有大神通神足變化及檀波羅蜜尸波羅蜜羼提波羅蜜毘梨耶波羅蜜禪波羅蜜般若波羅蜜如是等無量功德。」(CBETA, T16, no. 688, p. 781, c10-20)

<sup>986</sup> Western Jin, 265, Dharmarakṣa 《佛說須摩提菩薩經》卷 1：「佛言菩薩有四事法。人見之皆歡喜。何等為四。一者瞋恚不起。視冤家如善知識二者常有慈心向於一切。三者常行求索無上要法。四者作佛形像。是為四法。」(CBETA, T12, no. 334, p. 76, b28-c3)

<sup>987</sup> Western Jin, 265, Dharmarakṣa 《佛說須摩提菩薩經》卷 1：「菩薩復有四事法。得化生千葉蓮華中立法王前。何等為四。一者細搗紅蓮華青蓮華黃蓮華白蓮華。合此四種末之如塵。使滿軟妙華。持是供養世尊若塔及舍利。二者不令他人起恚意。三者作佛形像使坐蓮華上。四者得最正覺便歡喜住。是為四法。」(CBETA, T12, no. 334, p. 76, c22-28)

<sup>988</sup> 《三國志·吳書》：「乃大起浮圖祠，以銅為人，黃金塗身，衣以錦采，垂銅槃九重，下為重樓閣道，可容三千餘人，悉課讀佛經，令界內及旁郡人有好佛者聽受道，復其他役以招致之，由此遠近前後至者五千餘人戶。每浴佛，多設酒飯，布席於路，經數十里，民人來觀及就食且萬人，費以巨億計。」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@8^207174061^807^^^60202004000300040001^3@@@1183690130>

<sup>989</sup> Stanley Abe, *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 15.



Besides this Ze Rong example, there were few documented accounts of early Buddha image worships. Instead, the earliest Buddha images (late second through early third century) were excavated in tombs occupying apotropaic or auspicious positions.<sup>990</sup> Eastern Han cave tombs of Mahao and Shiziwan, both in Sichuan, contained reliefs of Buddha images.<sup>991</sup> Emperor Ming of Eastern Han installed copies of the Buddha image from the Western Regions “atop the Hsien-chieh-ling,” which was his mausoleum.<sup>992</sup> During its early introduction, the Buddha image occupied a position equivalent to Daoist deities and Confucian sages in the Han Chinese mind that pursued objects of *xiangrui* (auspiciousness).<sup>993</sup>

During the Three Kingdoms and Western Jin, Buddha images were found on bronze mirrors and *hunping* (soul urns) in tombs.<sup>994</sup> Inscriptions on the *hunping* said that the funerary soul urns would bring good fortune to descendants, such as high official positions, and infinite blessings to all beings.<sup>995</sup> This provided evidence of Buddhist merit intermixed with Chinese filial customs and classical perceptions regarding hereditary fortune. Based on the preceding studies of location and possible uses of Buddha images, “popular” Buddhism in the early days incorporated the Buddha among the pantheon of Daoist immortals and into funerary rites.<sup>996</sup>

During Han, Three Kingdoms, and Western Jin Dynasties, translators had expressed the benefits of image worship through *Buddhadarsana*. Although seeing and

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<sup>990</sup> Ibid., 6, 18, 30.

<sup>991</sup> Wu Hung, “Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.),” *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 3/4 (January 1, 1986): 266.

<sup>992</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 29.

<sup>993</sup> Hung, “Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.),” 268–270.

<sup>994</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>995</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>996</sup> Ibid., 300.

building a Buddha image were meritorious, the merits were mostly attainable in future lives. It was little wonder that most Chinese combined their inchoate knowledge of *punya* and *Buddhadarśana* into existing funerary practices. Nevertheless, these textual and practical foundations enabled Buddhism's first blossoming during the Sixteen Kingdoms.

### 5.3 FLOURISHING DURING THE SIXTEEN KINGDOMS

The Sixteen Kingdoms Period in northern China presented to the indigenous people many difficult trappings in Confucian rationality. Through confrontation, steppe and Chinese cultures exposed their religious and intellectual presuppositions.<sup>997</sup> Yet, these prolonged encounters also enabled beliefs to merge and new practices to surface. In this section, I shall trace the ways in which Buddhists combined their tenets with traditional Chinese ancestral worship, a pervasive Chinese custom, so as to introduce to the natives an alternative practice.

#### 5.3.1 A MERITORIOUS GIFT

Buddhism introduced to China an alternative to the performance of bloody sacrifices in exchange for favors, divine or secular. In this principle of reciprocity, one gives so that the deity is compelled to return.<sup>998</sup> Instead, Buddhist devotees were encouraged to practice ethical virtues, give *dāna*, and build a new community centered around the *saṅgha*. Buddhist texts during this period encouraged donative piety and the sharing of merits for the benefit of the self, parents, all sentient beings, and the nation. Psychological and religious motivations inspired devotees to present gifts and offerings

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<sup>997</sup> Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, xxvi.

<sup>998</sup> Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 66.

to monasteries.<sup>999</sup> Devotees believed that the presentation of offerings could lead to the healing of disease, safe journey, or repose of deceased relatives.<sup>1000</sup>

In China, this belief took root during the turbulent Sixteen Kingdoms. From the introduction of the belief that one could conduct meritorious activities on behalf of parents in Western Jin arose an inventory of Buddhist texts related to merit transfer in the Sixteen Kingdoms. According to the data presented in Table 3, *huixiang* (merit transfer) experienced the highest growth rate (113-fold) after the Western Jin Dynasty. Merit transfer implies that merit can become a “spiritual currency.”<sup>1001</sup> Hence, shareable or transferable *punya* supplemented traditional ancestral and cultural hero worship.

*Table 3 Occurrences of punya-related terms in early and medieval Buddhist texts*

	Eastern Han to Western Jin (314 years)	Sixteen Kingdoms (135 years)	Northern Wei (148 years)
<i>Yebao</i> (業報)	10 texts (10 hits)	44 texts (357 hits)	11 texts (39 hits)
<i>Guobao</i> (果報)	34 texts (105 hits)	73 texts (1,826 hits)	25 texts (350 hits)
<i>Fubao</i> (福報)	35 texts (75 hits)	41 texts (158 hits)	7 texts (18 hits)
<i>Fude</i> (福德)	62 texts (230 hits)	66 texts (1,761 hits)	21 texts (292 hits)
<i>Gongde</i> (功德)	152 texts (2,175 hits)	107 texts (5,451 hits)	33 texts (2,252 hits)
<i>Futian</i> (福田)	42 texts (116 hits)	65 texts (728 hits)	18 texts (110 hits)
<i>Huixiang</i> (迴向)	4 text (11 hits)	46 text (1,240 hits)	14 texts (182 hits)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>174 texts (2,722 hits)</b>	<b>116 texts (11,521 hits)</b>	<b>39 texts (3,243 hits)</b>

<sup>999</sup> Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 195.

<sup>1000</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>1001</sup> Richard Francis Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 125.

The popular *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* (*Lotus Sūtra*) and *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* promoted the notion that buddhas and bodhisattvas gained inexhaustible merits through lifetimes of good deeds.<sup>1002</sup> By drawing on the merit fields of the compassionate buddhas and bodhisattvas, a practitioner produced his or her own good merits, which in turn could be redirected for the benefit of others.<sup>1003</sup> Although Holt asserted that the practice of ancestral veneration and merit transfer associated with such dedication were “undocrinal,”<sup>1004</sup> this assertion is not entirely correct. While canonical texts did not explicitly state the benefit of merits to deceased ancestors, there were references to dedication of merits to parents. As early as Eastern Han, An Shigao has stated that a bodhisattva practicing the six *pāramitās* can offer his *fu* (fortune) to his parents and all other beings<sup>1005</sup> in the *Triskandhaka-sūtra* (*Shelifo huiguo jing*). By extension, if a practitioner could dedicate merits to living parents and all sentient beings, then Buddhists could certainly transfer merits of their practice to deceased parents in conjunction with ancestral veneration practice.

A bodhisattva could care for all sentient beings because he treated them as his own parents. This characterizes the universality of salvation in the Mahāyana movement.<sup>1006</sup> The *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* (*Dazhidu lun*) teaches a bodhisattva to

<sup>1002</sup> Adamek, “The Impossibility of the Given,” 143.

<sup>1003</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>1004</sup> John C. Holt, “Assisting the Dead by Venerating the Living: Merit Transfer in the Early Buddhist Tradition,” in *Buddhism: Critical Concepts In Religious Studies*, ed. Paul Williams (New York: Routledge, 2005), 163.

<sup>1005</sup> Eastern Han, 148-170, An Shigao 《佛說舍利弗悔過經》卷 1：「諸當來菩薩奉行六波羅蜜者。某等勸樂助其歡喜。今現在菩薩奉行六波羅蜜者。某等勸樂助其歡喜。某等諸所得福。皆布施天下十方人民父母蜎飛蠕動之類兩足之類四足之類多足之類。皆令得佛福」(CBETA, T24, no. 1492, p. 1090, c26-p. 1091, a1)

<sup>1006</sup> Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2001), 121.

save all sentient beings from suffering as though they were his parents.<sup>1007</sup> In the earliest text that introduced the ten merit transfers, *Pusa yingluo benye jing*, one can transfer merits to save all sentient beings.<sup>1008</sup> In *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīkasūtra* (*Dacheng beifantuoli jing*), one can transfer merits specifically to hellish beings so that they may be relieved of suffering.<sup>1009</sup> Through the concept of merit transfer, Chinese Buddhists could express filial piety and induce harmony to all beings.

The popularization of selfless cosmic bodhisattvas won over skeptical Chinese. Ancient Chinese were accustomed to a *Shangdi* or *Tian* who would return favors and operated in a flexible manner; that was classical merit and reciprocity. Buddhist ethical and atheistic karmic laws as well as the requirement of eons of self-effort did not pose as an attractive alternative in the beginning. However, the ability to leverage the infinite merit fields of cosmic Buddhas and bodhisattvas to benefit all beings, deserving or otherwise, during a turbulent period appeared more attractive. Not only did Buddhism seemed more familiar, it also filled a gap where the Confucian promise of fortune and merits broke down during foreign rule.

Buddhism won over rulers with a corpus of texts that taught kings how to protect the nation. Besides virtuous governance, the *sūtras* also highlighted the importance of

<sup>1007</sup> Later Qin, 402-406, Kumārajīva 《大智度論》卷 16〈1 序品〉：「菩薩見此，如是思惟：『此苦業因緣，皆是無明諸煩惱所作，我當精進勤修六度，集諸功德，斷除眾生五道中苦。』興發大哀，增益精進。如見父母幽閉囹圄，拷掠撻笞，憂毒萬端，方便求救，心不暫捨；菩薩見諸眾生受五道苦，念之如父，亦復如是。」(CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 177, c5-10)

<sup>1008</sup> Later Qin, 374, Zhu Fonian 《菩薩瓔珞本業經》卷 1〈3 賢聖學觀品〉：「十迴向心者。一救護一切眾生相迴向心。二不壞迴向心。三等一切佛迴向心。四至一切處迴向心。五無盡功德藏迴向心。六隨順平等善根迴向心。七隨順等觀一切眾生迴向心。八如相迴向心。九無縛解脫迴向心。十法界無量迴向心。」(CBETA, T24, no. 1485, p. 1014, a9-14)

<sup>1009</sup> Qin, 350-431 《大乘悲分陀利經》卷 5〈18 歎品〉：「我以是一切善根迴向地獄眾生；其有眾生在阿鼻地獄受諸苦切者，以是善根令彼得脫，於此佛土得生為人，值如來法，令得羅漢而入涅槃。」(CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 271, a19-22)

religious support. In *Foshuo renwang bore poluomi jing*, kings should erect hundreds of images and invite hundreds of monks to chant this *sūtra* as well as to be honored.<sup>1010</sup> In so doing, ghosts and *devas* will protect the country from calamities. It was not surprising that “nation-protecting” texts such as this *Prajñā Sūtra of the Humane King* and the *Sūtra of Golden Light* enjoyed popularity during the turbulent Sixteen Kingdoms Period. These texts satisfied the religious needs of those who wanted to display filial piety, benefit all sentient beings, and live in a protected state.

Besides appropriating the Chinese terms *gongde* and *fude*, Buddhists also introduced soteriological and karmic merit that gradually became a part of Chinese culture. This new form of thinking eventually gained ground and even influenced Daoism during the Song Dynasty. The *Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution* (*Taishang ganying pian*) taught how to redeem oneself and *Table of Merits and Demerits* (*Gongguo ge*) listed standard good and evil deeds.<sup>1011</sup>

### 5.3.2 MAKING SENSE OF IMAGE WORSHIP AND DĀNA

Many people found it difficult to cope with reality and so, turned to supernatural forces for comfort and strength. Religion contributed significantly through rites praying for the dead and the living; ritualistic liturgy helped the living satisfy their needs for prayers and merits, especially since they might not be able to explicate their wishes

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<sup>1010</sup> Later Qin, 402-409, Kumārajīva 《佛說仁王般若波羅蜜經》卷2〈5護國品〉：「當國土欲亂，破壞劫燒，賊來破國時，當請百佛像、百菩薩像、百羅漢像，百比丘眾，四大眾、七眾，共聽請百法師講般若波羅蜜。百師子吼高座前燃百燈，燒百和香，百種色花，以用供養三寶，三衣什物供養法師，小飯中食亦復以時。大王！一日二時講讀此經，汝國土中有百部鬼神，是一一部復有百部，樂聞是經，此諸鬼神護汝國土。」(CBETA, T08, no. 245, p. 830, a1-9)

<sup>1011</sup> Yang, “The Concept of Pao as a Basis for Social Relations in China,” 300.

otherwise.<sup>1012</sup> Various sources informed us that devotees performed pious acts such as financing monastic institutions, supporting the *saṅgha*, making images, building grottoes, copying Buddhist texts, sponsoring ritual ceremonies and festivals, and offering incense, flowers and other gifts in the hope of religious merits.<sup>1013</sup> Since most Buddhist monasteries, festivities, and rituals in China included an image of a Buddha or a bodhisattva, I will trace the development of image worship during the formative Sixteen Kingdoms Period to better understand the solace *punya* offered to the indigenous population-at-large.

Table 3 and Table 4 indicate an unprecedented but consistent peak in textual use of terms related to *punya* and images respectively during the Sixteen Kingdoms. When placed in the context of unstable political climate and influx of strong foreign influences, this phenomenon suggested a general desire for explanations and solutions. Since Buddhists perceived a correlation between poverty and sins from current and past lives, lay devotees assigned their predicament to demerits from the past. With the Chinese concept of merit referring to “acts of piety for the purpose of conferring blessings,”<sup>1014</sup> Buddhists believed that they could improve their lot with the act of giving to extinguish past debts, ensuring a better rebirth.<sup>1015</sup> This could explain why medieval Buddhists started investing a large amount of resources and labor to promote the Dharma in order to accumulate karmic merit for this life and future lives.<sup>1016</sup>

*Table 4            Occurrences of image-related terms in early and medieval Buddhist texts*

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<sup>1012</sup> Wang, *Harmonization of Buddhism and Chinese Tradition from the Perspective of Dunhuang Offering Manuscripts*, 28.

<sup>1013</sup> Wong, “Ethnicity and Identity,” 83–84.

<sup>1014</sup> Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 257.

<sup>1015</sup> *Ibid.*, 246–247.

<sup>1016</sup> Kang, “The Concept of Cakravartin and Its Influence on Medieval Chinese Kingship,” 125.

	Eastern Han to Western Jin (195 years)	Sixteen Kingdoms (135 years)	Northern Wei (148 years)
<i>Jianfo</i> (見佛)	154 texts (884 hits)	83 texts (1,232 hits)	20 texts (216 hits)
<i>Foxiang</i> (佛像)	19 texts (41 hits)	27 texts (82 hits)	9 texts (19 hits)
<i>Fo xingxiang</i> (佛形像)	20 texts (74 hits)	14 texts (36 hits)	4 texts (7 hits)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>167 texts (999 hits)</b>	<b>418 texts (1,350 hits)</b>	<b>21 texts (242 hits)</b>

Buddhism popularized image adoration in China. This foreign religion imported Buddha images and the benefits of building, sponsoring, and worshipping Buddha images. The popular portrayal of Buddha in human image started with Buddhist *bhakti* (devotional) cults during the time of Kaniṣka.<sup>1017</sup> Conze defined *bhakti* as the “loving personal devotion to adored deities conceived in human form.”<sup>1018</sup> Indian *bhakti*, which furthered the growth of image worship, influenced Kuṣāṇa Gandhāran religiosity heavily.<sup>1019</sup> In the Gandhāra area, Buddhists donated generously to monasteries to upkeep monks, build reliquaries, and make images in order to produce merits.<sup>1020</sup>

Based on available studies, I have noted that many images and steles uncovered prior to the Sixteen Kingdoms Period were related to funerary rites and ancestral honors. In a study of Han Chinese steles, Wong observed that funerary inscriptions listed the genealogy of the deceased and merits of his/her ancestors.<sup>1021</sup> Continuing early Han tradition, Buddha images were also found in unearthed “money trees,” bronze mirrors,

<sup>1017</sup> Krishan, *The Buddha Image*, 52.

<sup>1018</sup> Conze, *Buddhism*, 121.

<sup>1019</sup> Rosenfield, “Prologue: Some Debating Points on Gandhāran Buddhism and Kuṣāṇa History,” 14.

<sup>1020</sup> Robert L. Brown, “Bodily Relics of the Buddha in Gandhāra,” in *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, Texts*, by Pia Brancaccio and Kurt A. Behrendt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 191.

<sup>1021</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 40.



and soul urns dating back to Three Kingdoms and Western Jin.<sup>1022</sup> One major difference between these funerary objects and earlier ones were the presence of Central Asian (*huren*) figurines, some dancing with musical accompaniment.<sup>1023</sup> Interestingly, Koguryō tombs of the same period in Korea also contained frescoes of Buddhist reliefs, showing Central Asian and Buddhist influences pervading the region. Several scholars,<sup>1024</sup> east and west, had studied this unusual phenomenon of early association of Buddhism with funerary objects and even some sacrilegious uses.<sup>1025</sup> Researchers generally agreed that the presence of Buddha images in tombs reflected the perception that in the first few centuries Buddhism was treated as a part of Chinese religious belief and the extensive teachings had not percolated down to the masses.

This funerary usage pattern changed after nomadic invasion in northern China. Documented use of images as objects of worship occurred more frequently during the Sixteen Kingdoms. The *Biography of Eminent Monks (Gaoseng zhuan)* contains 161 incidents of Buddha images in use. Dao'an (314 – 385) was a gifted monk, supported by many rich members of royal and aristocratic families. When he was in Xiangyang, Yang Hongzhong gave him over 5,000 kilograms of bronze; Dao'an raised more funds to build a magnificent bronze statue that was placed in the main shrine of a new monastery.<sup>1026</sup>

Fu Jian of Former Qin (338 – 385) gave Dao'an numerous foreign Buddha images that

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<sup>1022</sup> Bai Bin, "Religious Beliefs as Reflected in the Funerary Record," in *Early Chinese Religion: The Period of Division (220-589 AD). Part Two*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, vol. 2 (Leiden, Boston: BRILL, 2010), 993–996.

<sup>1023</sup> Ibid., 996.

<sup>1024</sup> Scholars who have published theories in this area include He Zhiguo, Wu Hung, Eric Zürcher, Kida Tomoo, Kuo Liying, Luo Erhu, and Huang Wenkun.

<sup>1025</sup> Bin, "Religious Beliefs as Reflected in the Funerary Record," 1013–1017.

<sup>1026</sup> Liang, 519, Sengyou 《高僧傳》卷 5：「涼州刺史楊弘忠送銅萬斤。擬為承露盤。安曰。露盤已訖汰公營造。欲迴此銅鑄像事可然乎。忠欣而敬諾。於是眾共抽捨助成佛像。光相丈六神好明著。每夕放光徹照堂殿像後。又自行至萬山。舉邑皆往瞻禮。遷以還寺。安既大願果成。謂言。夕死可矣。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 352, b7-13)

lined the lecture hall when Dao'an gave Dharma talks.<sup>1027</sup> Dharmakṣema of Northern Liang (385 – 433) organized ordination practices before a Buddha image.<sup>1028</sup> By the time of Juqū Mengxun's reign, Mogao Grottoes was already flourishing with over 280 images.<sup>1029</sup> Cave temple building, including the Thousand Buddha grottoes in Toyoq and Bezeklyq, reached its peak in Gaochang, along the Hexi Corridor, during the Sixteen Kingdoms.<sup>1030</sup> Engaging in expensive and labor-intensive craft of putting more permanent impressions of Buddha images in caves was for the purpose of *Buddhadarśana*.<sup>1031</sup> Even earlier, during the reigns of Shi Le (r. 328 – 333) and Shi Hu (r. 335 – 349) in Later Zhao, there were records of Buddha image-bathing activities and image carriage. The oldest iconic Buddha image dated by inscription to 338 (Figure 16) was also found during this period.<sup>1032</sup>



<sup>1027</sup> Liang, 519, Sengyou 《高僧傳》卷 5：「符堅遣使送外國金[竺-二+伯]倚像高七尺·又金坐像·結珠彌勒像·金縷繡像·織成像各一張每講會法聚。輒羅列尊像。布置幢幡。珠珮迭暉。烟華亂發。使夫昇階履闥者。莫不肅焉盡敬矣。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 352, b13-17)

<sup>1028</sup> Liang, 519, Sengyou 《高僧傳》卷 2：「進欲詣識說之。未及至數十步識驚起唱言。善哉善哉。已感戒矣。吾當更為汝作證。次第於佛像前為說戒相。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 336, c25-27)

<sup>1029</sup> Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 109.

<sup>1030</sup> Guang-da Zhang, "Kocho (Kao-ch'ang)," in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, ed. Ahmad Hasan Dani, vol. III (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1999), 311.

<sup>1031</sup> Zheng, *Study of Dunhuang Grotto Art, Music and Dance*, 56.

<sup>1032</sup> Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 15.

Figure 16 Later Zhao bronze Śākyamuni Buddha image dated 338<sup>1033</sup>

The Buddha images of the Sixteen Kingdoms began to assume a central authoritative position in monasteries, as opposed to earlier secondary locations in tombs. The Chinese accepted the power of the Buddha as a viable substitute for or more likely, supplement to their primordial *Shangdi* and *Tian*. Offerings directed to the Buddha and his community were expected to produce reciprocal benefits (in the form of *gongde* and *fude*) that far exceeded the value of the gifts.

From inscriptions and literary records found along the Hexi Corridor, much motivation for making images seemed to be merit-related and for ancestors. Over forty temples in the Toyoq and Bezeklyq region functioned as family shrines of imperial and aristocratic families.<sup>1034, 1035</sup> Juqū Mengxun (r. 401 – 433) of Northern Liang built a Buddha image on behalf of his mother.<sup>1036</sup> A Jiuquan votive *stūpa* dated to 429 that has parts of three seated Buddhas still intact was dedicated to the concern of Tian Hong's father, mother and monarch so that his ancestors would continue to shower blessings on him.<sup>1037</sup> A more detailed epigraphy in a Baishuangju votive *stūpa* of Jiuquan dated to 434 indicated the patron's wish for merits that will enable his ancestors of the past seven generations and relatives to have a future encounter with Maitreya.<sup>1038</sup>

In contrast to cave images, votive *stūpas* were more affordable. The dedications indicated that the patrons were largely local landowners and merchants.<sup>1039</sup> The form and

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<sup>1033</sup> Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), 59.

<sup>1034</sup> Zhang, "Kocho (Kao-ch'ang)," 311.

<sup>1035</sup> Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 130.

<sup>1036</sup> Liang, 519, Sengyou 《高僧傳》卷2：「遜大怒謂事佛無應。即遣斥沙門五十已下皆令罷道。蒙遜先為母造丈六石像。像遂泣涕流淚。識又格言致諫。」(CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 336, b18-21)

<sup>1037</sup> 「天弘為父母君王報恩立此塔」

<sup>1038</sup> Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 143–145.

<sup>1039</sup> Ibid., 157.

function of Northern Liang *stūpas* supported the central thesis of this dissertation: that a foreign religion undergoes hybridization and in the process, creates objects that are products of a complex cultural milieu<sup>1040</sup> and religious mindset.

One practice that had foreign origin was the listing of royal family members as a beneficiary of merit transfer. None of the pre-Buddhist Han steles showed a similar pattern. These Han steles contrasted with the Northern Liang Baishuangju votive *stūpa* whose dedications included the king as one of the beneficiaries of the donation.<sup>1041</sup> This contrasted with the traditional Chinese emperor who kept a distance from all sectors of society.<sup>1042</sup> As the following section will demonstrate, Northern Wei copied this model and epigraphic evidence followed this practice. A section of *The Book of Wei* testified to this assertion of model migration eastwards, as well as the popularity of Buddhism under the Northern Liang.<sup>1043</sup>

Liang-chou had from Chang Kuei onward for generations believed in Buddhism. Tun-huang touches upon the Western Regions, and the clergy and laity both acquired the old fashions. The villages, one after the other, had many reliquaries and temples. During T'ai-yen (435 – 440) Liang-chou was pacified and the people of the country moved to the Capital. The śramaṇas and Buddhist practices both went east, and both the images and the doctrine prospered more and more.<sup>1044</sup>

The Buddhism that Northern Liang monks brought to Northern Wei emphasized the many merit-seeking and merit-transfer opportunities promulgated by canonical texts.

The Buddha image, representing a fertile merit field, started to assume central

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<sup>1040</sup> Ibid., 169–171.

<sup>1041</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>1042</sup> Lionel Rothkrug, *Death, Trust, & Society: Mapping Religion & Culture* (North Atlantic Books, 2006), 66.

<sup>1043</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「涼州自張軌後，世信佛教。敦煌地接西域，道俗交得其舊式，村塢相屬，多有塔寺。太延中，涼州平，徙其國人於京邑，沙門佛事皆俱東，象教彌增矣。」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@41^752925275^807^^^60202010000300210003^20@@@1801415493>

<sup>1044</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 61.

significance instead of being relegated to an apotropaic position. Filial patrons combined Confucian virtues with their newfound faith by dedicating merits from sponsoring images to their ancestors and building ancestral shrines with Buddha images. Included as beneficiary was the king, a new phenomenon in the Middle Kingdom. Believing that their birth in times of wars was due to past karmic retributions, Buddhists sought opportunities to generate positive merits.

Images made of durable materials were expensive creations of artisans. Scholars have pointed out that research based on excavated materials were biased towards rich individuals or associations led by the wealthy.<sup>1045</sup> Even canonical texts were targeted towards the literate elite and not the illiterate peasant majority. Hence, Buddhism gained popularity initially through the well-to-do aristocrats who could read and afford the objects of worship that came through the Silk Roads.

However, with China in the early medieval period moving from an archaic<sup>1046</sup> to a historic<sup>1047</sup> religious system, more people could afford to sponsor images. Borrowing the seminal definitions of Robert Bellah, historic religions operated within a domain of four classes: political-military elite, cultural-religious elite, urban merchants and artisans, and rural peasants.<sup>1048</sup> A new strata consisting of the cultural-religious elite, merchants, and artisans could now have access to merit-making opportunities through innovative methods.<sup>1049</sup> The Northern Liang votive *stūpa* was a novelty from this group. Such advancement fit well with the egalitarian appeal of merits.

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<sup>1045</sup> Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 2.

<sup>1046</sup> Robert Neelly Bellah, "Religious Evolution by Robert N. Bellah -- American Sociological Review 29, No. 3, Pp. 358-374..pdf," *American Sociological Review* 29, no. 3 (June 1964): 364.

<sup>1047</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>1048</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>1049</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

The ordinary Chinese person in the street was less concerned about imperial cults but looked for ways to enhance his/her personal welfare. As civilization matured and wars introduced sedentary peasants to a migratory lifestyle, the Chinese integrated their local welfare needs with Mahāyana religiosity through dynamic interactions with foreign monks, traders, artisans, and musicians. Farmers depended on nature and hence, the classical *fude* in which *Tian* handed out good fortune was relevant. Merchants and soldiers, the main travelers along the Silk Roads, depended on self-effort, making karmic merit such as *gongde* meaningful. Mobile religious merits in the form of small, portable Buddha images seemed to fit with nomadic lifestyle, and for traders on the land-based Silk Road. Small and portable Indian images or the molds for making these images came through that Silk Road and made up the earliest Chinese Buddha-like images found in Han tombs.<sup>1050</sup> During the Sixteen Kingdoms, classical merit and karmic merit found a middle ground. Offerings that helped to spread the religion such as image dedications earned egalitarian merit for the king, ancestors, the self, the nation, and all beings. The Buddha transcended the laws of reciprocity but continued to bless the devout through his compassion and limitless merit field. From these humble beginnings, mobile merits ended up as grand image processions during Buddhist festivals.

## 5.4 GAINING FOOTHOLD IN NORTHERN WEI

### 5.4.1 NORTHERN WEI'S IMAGE DEDICATION BEHAVIOR

Northern Wei Buddhism presented several unprecedentedly large-scale phenomena: building of grottoes, monasteries and *stūpas*, erection of steles, tonsuring of monks and nuns, as well as lavish image processions during Buddha's birthday

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<sup>1050</sup> Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 100.

celebrations. Although Northern Wei could not take credit for being innovators of these events, this dynasty created history by heightening the scale of these experiences.

Buddhism was well-received by the elite classes. Princes, concubines, administrative and military officers as well as many others contributed to the construction of temples, grottoes, statues, and other Buddhist affairs to pray for blessings and reduce karmic obstructions.<sup>1051</sup> Driving this display of devotion was the devotees' belief in taking advantage of merit-making opportunities, as evidenced by stele inscriptions associated with Buddha and bodhisattva images.

Researchers who wish to understand the religious behavior of the Northern Wei have access to large amounts of epigraphic materials. From the decline in textual occurrences of my search terms (Table 3 and Table 4) but phenomenal growth in images, I assert that more effort was expended on practice than theory of *punya* during Northern Wei. An invaluable record of the practice resides in stele inscriptions that had identified the background of donors. For example, Tsukamoto Zenryū recognized that members of the aristocracy, monastic community, and devotional societies patronized Longmen's Guyang Cave.<sup>1052</sup> In Amy McNair's compilation of Longmen inscriptions, Northern Wei donors included a son of the Duke of Shiping, Military Aide of Luhun district, two hundred members of a devotional society led by Grand Master of Palace Leisure and Governor of Yingyang, a devotional society led by the Bulwark-General of the State, a laywoman, a wife of Superior Grand Master of the Palace, Supervisor of the Entourage in the Court of the Women's Chambers, and *bhikṣuṇīs*.<sup>1053</sup> A similar profile was apparent in the support of Buddhist institutions. Of the fifty-two monasteries and nunneries listed in

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<sup>1051</sup> Guo and Wu, *Pictorial Depiction of Silk Road Luoyang*, 107.

<sup>1052</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 56.

<sup>1053</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 167–171.

the *Record*, five were sponsored by the emperor, four by the empress dowager, sixteen by government officials, four by eunuchs, four by peasants and foreigners, and two by monastics. For example, a butcher serving in the Ministry of Grand Ceremonies converted his residence to become the Guijue si (Temple of the Return to Enlightenment).<sup>1054</sup> From laymen to laywomen, monks to nuns, peasants to royal family members, and locals to foreigners, Buddhists joined together or individually sponsored the display of Buddhist devotion. This bore testimony to the egalitarian nature of *punya*.

The Yungang and Longmen grottoes were famous sites demonstrating Northern Wei's national fervor in dedicating Buddha images. Epigraphic evidence suggested that there were the following beneficiaries of merit dedication: the nation and royal family, ancestors, living relatives, self, and all sentient beings. Each stele bore one or more of the preceding recipients. Donors transferred the merit of building the sacred object for national prosperity, divine blessings, secular fortune, good rebirth, meeting of Maitreya, and/or attainment of enlightenment. Several inscriptions included prayers for continuance of the Buddhist Dharma.

Many Northern Wei inscriptions bore dedications of good fortune for the nation and the royal family. Ninety-five images offered by fifty-four members of a devotional society in Yungang Grotto in 483 bore the following inscription:

Accordingly, by banding together in endeavoring to bring good fortune to the country, we reverently made ninety-five images [of Buddhas] and Bodhisattvas. ... May this bring good fortune to the country ... and may the virtues of the Emperor [Xiaowen] and Empress Dowager [Wenming], and the Prince be identical with Heaven and Earth.<sup>1055</sup>

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<sup>1054</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 122–123.

<sup>1055</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 52.



The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) housed a four-sided stele from the Shanxi province dated to 520 that had a similar inscription. Besides national and royal dedication, donors listed their ancestors. Although listed after national and royal beneficiaries, ancestors were the real motivation for dedicating the images and steles.

As a result of this trifling work of merit, [the donors] wish first, concerning His Majesty the Emperor, that the prosperity of the Empire may ever continue gloriously, and that universal peace may prevail. Secondly, they vow it on behalf of all the members of the *yiyi* association, that the dead may be reborn in heaven, that the living may enjoy peace and security, and that beings in the six conditions of sentient existence (*gāti*), including those in the “three [lower] paths,” may share universally in the benefits of this vow.<sup>1056</sup>

By the time of the Northern Wei, Chinese had acquired the understanding of rebirth in heaven as a good destination. Another popular destination was the Pure Land, as seen in this 527 stele dedicated by a laywoman, Song Jingfei, through a Longmen image:

I relied on my late parents, who compassionately raised me with profound kindness, until I attained maturity. My insignificant self, looking respectfully upon their labor to raise me, but lacking the means to recompense them, has now parted with half my hairpins and girdles, and respectfully, for my late father and mother, has reverently had made one image of Śākyamuni. With this bit of merit, I pray that my late father and mother may be reborn in the land of marvelous joy in the West, there to meet Buddha and hear the Dharma, then to see Maitreya manifest in the world. May all those with form share in this blessing.<sup>1057, 1058</sup>

The epigraphy suggested a maturation of the understanding of canonical texts as well as more sophisticated adoption of Northern Liang practice. Another Northern Liang custom of building Buddhist family shrines could be seen in the Northern Wei grottoes. In Yungang, some cave chapels served as royal ancestral shrines. Emperor Xianwen

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<sup>1056</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>1057</sup> 「賴亡父母慈育恩深得長，輕軀是以仰尋曷養之勞，無以投報，今且自割釵帶之半，仰為亡考亡比敬造釋加像一區，藉此微功，願令亡考比托生西方妙樂國土，值佛聞法，見彌世勒，一切有形皆同斯福。」

<sup>1058</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 169.

dedicated a chapel to his father, Emperor Wencheng, while his son, Emperor Xiaowen, dedicated another chapel to him.<sup>1059</sup> Each of these chapels featured groups of Buddha images. In Luoyang, this practice continued and prospered in the dedication of monasteries. Empress Dowager Hu and her sister dedicated two monasteries (popularly known as Monasteries of the Two Sisters or Shuangnü si) to the posthumous happiness (*fu*) of their father.<sup>1060, 1061</sup>

Besides praying for good fortune or ancestral rebirth into lands where Buddhas and bodhisattvas were teaching, some sponsors wished for their ancestors to be enlightened. This demonstrated an acceptance of Buddhist theories of rebirth and the pursuit of liberation as opposed to purely secular fortune. The following Longmen inscription on an image made for the Duke of Shiping presents a relevant example:

As a result, for my late father, I have had made a single stone image. I pray that my late father's spirit will fly over the three worlds, the five circuits (of cause and effect), and the ten stages (of the bodhisattva's enlightenment).<sup>1062, 1063</sup>

Given the proliferation of merit transfer to all sentient beings in inscriptions, Northern Wei Buddhism bore a strong Mahāyana flavor. This could explain the tendency towards large numbers in Northern Wei display of their Buddhist faith. The prayer for sustenance of Buddhism in the nation was apparent in the Longmen Guyang Cave inscription dedicated in 483 by over 200 people in a devotional society:

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<sup>1059</sup> Alexander Coburn Soper, "Imperial Cave-Chapels of the Northern Dynasties: Donors, Beneficiaries, Dates," *Artibus Asiae* 28, no. 4 (January 1, 1966): 243.

<sup>1060</sup> 《洛陽伽藍記》卷3：「西寺太后所立。東寺皇姨所建。並為父追福。因以名之。時人號為雙女寺。」(CBETA, T51, no. 2092, p. 1010, c19-21)

<sup>1061</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 132.

<sup>1062</sup> 「遂為亡父造石像一區。願亡父神飛三[會][五]周十地」

<sup>1063</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 167.

May the country enjoy everlasting prosperity and may the Three Jewels [*triratna*: Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha] prevail. May the number of Buddhist disciples multiply like the luxuriant blossoming of the *huai* tree. May the fragrance [of the doctrine] suffuse far and wide, and [the Buddha's] golden light shine throughout the reigns of sacred [emperors].<sup>1064</sup>

These image dedications were very costly: individuals and families documented their exhaustion of wealth to build Buddha images for the acquisition of merits, usually for their late parents. They were encouraged to believe that intangible merits were more valuable than material treasures. McNair argued that such pious acts were motivated by classical patterns whereby sons of prominent families bankrupted themselves to produce extravagant funeral services and tombs for their departed parents.<sup>1065</sup> Lavish Chinese funerals and extended mourning meant that common people exhausted their family fortunes and a feudal lord emptied the state coffers to supply the right amount of gold, jade, pearls, silk, carriages, and horses for a deceased parent.<sup>1066</sup> Hence, the steep spending to build images was an extension of such Confucian customs. It was commonplace to see Northern Wei Buddhist inscriptions such as “we made bold to exhaust our families’ wealth to make one stone image such that none of the auxiliary figures have been omitted,”<sup>1067, 1068</sup> found in one of the most expensive shrines by a layman group led by Wei Lingzang in the Guyang Cave.

The royal family spared little to build Buddhist ancestral shrines. One of the most lavish was Emperor Xuanwu’s Binyang Cave in Longmen to accumulate merits for

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<sup>1064</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 58.

<sup>1065</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 52.

<sup>1066</sup> P. J. Ivanhoe, “Mozi,” in *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Bryan William Van Norden and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2005), 82.

<sup>1067</sup> 「敢輒罄家財造石像一區，凡及眾形罔不備列」

<sup>1068</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 168.

Emperor Xiaowen (Figure 2) and Empress Dowager Wenzhao (Figure 3).<sup>1069, 1070</sup>

Requiring 802,366 person-days, it took twenty-four years to build.<sup>1071, 1072</sup> This cave contained eleven huge Buddha images.<sup>1073</sup>

Two possible motivations led to the extravagant image dedications in Luoyang: a belief that the greater the costs involved, the greater the merit<sup>1074</sup> and a general competitive climate for displaying one's wealth. An entry in the Temple of Guidance to Goodness (Kaishan si) of the *Record* testified to this latter observation.<sup>1075</sup>

This was the period of time when peace reigned within the four seas, and the various states in all outlying lands paid regular tribute to China[kept their duties]. Court archivers had nothing but jubilation [auspicious signs] to record, while the four seasons followed each other smoothly without the occurrence of natural calamities. The masses were well-to-do, [enjoying] good harvests and pleasant customs ... As a result, [such aristocrats as] imperial clansmen, dukes and marquises, empresses' relatives and princesses, enjoying the riches [yielded by] mountains and seas, and living on the wealth [reaped from] rivers and forests, competed among themselves in building gardens and residences, and showed off against each other.<sup>1076</sup>

When this climate of competition combined with the aristocratic Confucian practice to display filial piety encountered foreign Buddhists, traders, and artisans presenting *punya* as a merit-seeking opportunity, a karmic gift represented a perfect showcase. Furthermore, expensive stone images and inscriptions were longer lasting than any other form of display.

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<sup>1069</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 91.

<sup>1070</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「景明初，世宗詔大長秋卿白整準代京靈巖寺石窟，於洛南伊闕山，為高祖、文昭皇太后營石窟二所。」

<sup>1071</sup> 《魏書》卷一百一十四〈釋老志〉：「從景明元年至正光四年六月已前，用功八十萬二千三百六十六。」

<sup>1072</sup> Wu, Li, and Ye, *The Ancient Capital City of Luoyang*, 173.

<sup>1073</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 192.

<sup>1074</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 49.

<sup>1075</sup> 《洛陽伽藍記》卷4：「當時四海晏清八荒率職縹囊紀慶玉燭調辰。百姓殷阜。年登俗樂。鰥寡不聞犬豕之食。鶩獨不見牛馬之衣。於是帝族王侯外戚公主。擅山海之富。居川林之饒。爭修園宅。互相誇競。崇門豐室。洞戶連房。飛館生風。重樓起霧。高臺芳樹家家而築。」(CBETA, T51, no. 2092, p. 1016, b1-6)

<sup>1076</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 190–191.

In the human realm, things are very changeable, so in accord with this, we carve stone (to make an unchangeable Buddha image).<sup>1077, 1078</sup>

Based on stele inscriptions and literary records, Northern Wei Buddhists were motivated by merit seeking and transfer opportunities. This active seeking of fortune was already a part of Chinese customs as seen in the classical texts and worship practices. However, the epigraphy indicated further Buddhist-specific reasons for the quest of merits:

1. Northern Wei Buddhists believed that they were born in an age of degenerate Dharma (a sentiment already present in Northern Liang inscriptions), and they were fortunate to have access to the Dharma and *saṅgha*, as well as a supportive ruler. A mixed melancholic feeling of misfortune and the possibility of redemption motivated Buddhists to seize the opportunity to sow seeds of Buddhist merits to reach salvation. The prelude to the 483 ninety-five image Yungang Grotto inscription expressed this kind of conviction:

Because of the lack of good merit in the past, [we were] born in this degenerate period and are immersed in [this] dark world without means of self-enlightenment. However, due to the accumulation of small good deeds, we encountered benevolent rulers who guide the world with the faith and enable the Three Jewels (*triratna*) to flourish. ... Exposure to the Dharma opens our minds and hearts.<sup>1079</sup>

2. Some felt that they were afflicted with bad merits in this lifetime and hoped that the act of image dedication could help them and/or their families reduce karmic obstructions and attain a better future. Inscriptions of the period indicate people's earnest wish for a future with the Buddha and Dharma. The 527 Song Jingfei stele expressed such sentiment:

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<sup>1077</sup> 「人世易遷，同茲斷石」

<sup>1078</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 174.

<sup>1079</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 52.

Laywoman, Song Jingfei, whose poor karma from former incarnations has left my fortune shallow and dirty, was born (on the continent of) Jambudvīpa and received the form of a woman ... With this bit of merit, I pray that my late father and mother may be reborn in the land of marvelous joy in the West, there to meet Buddha and hear the Dharma, then to see Maitreya manifest in the world. May all those with form share in this blessing.<sup>1080, 1081</sup>

3. Third, Mahāyana Buddhists promoted the transfer of merits, which fit in with Chinese filial piety, duty to superiors, and virtuous behavior. Altruistic actions could lead to karmic merits, which could be selflessly transferred to others for their release from suffering.<sup>1082</sup>

The proliferation of merit seeking behavior also had strong textual support.

Translators and exegetes of Buddhist texts during the Northern Wei Dynasty mentioned *punya* frequently. Northern Wei texts had the highest average use of *fude* and *gongde*.<sup>1083</sup> Among the thirty-three Northern Wei canonical texts containing *fude* or *gongde*, eighteen texts had over fifty occurrences of these terms. Bodhiruci's translation of *Foshuo foming jing* had 652 occurrences of *fude* and *gongde*. It only ranked behind Kumārajīva's *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*,<sup>1084</sup> Buddhahadra's *Buddha-avataṃsakasūtra*,<sup>1085</sup> and Dharmakṣema's *Mahāvaipulyamahā-sannipātasūtra*.<sup>1086</sup> Therefore, Northern Wei translators continued the tradition of their predecessors in promoting the concept of Buddhist merits.

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<sup>1080</sup> 「清信女宋景妃自惟先因果薄福緣淺漏，生於閻浮，受女人形 ...藉此微功，願令亡考比托生西方妙樂國土，值佛聞法，見彌世勒，一切有形皆同斯福。」

<sup>1081</sup> McNair, *Donors of Longmen*, 169.

<sup>1082</sup> Paul Williams, *Buddhism: Buddhism in China, East Asia, and Japan* (New York: Taylor & Francis US, 2005), 200.

<sup>1083</sup> Average number of occurrences of *fude* and *gongde* per text in Northern Wei = 77; Sixteen Kingdoms = 65; Southern dynasties = 36; Western Jin = 16; Eastern Han = 12.

<sup>1084</sup> *Dazhidu lun* translated in 493 during the Later Qin kingdom with 1,678 occurrences of *fude* and *gongde*.

<sup>1085</sup> *Dafang guofo huayan jing* translated from 418 to 422 during the Eastern Jin Dynasty with 1,394 occurrences of *fude* and *gongde*.

<sup>1086</sup> *Dafangdeng daji jing* translated between 414 and 426 during the Northern Liang Dynasty with 686 occurrences of *fude* and *gongde*.

Canonical content reflected the epigraphic fervor described earlier. The earliest Northern Wei text with mention of karmic merits is *Damamūka-nidānasūtra* (*Xianyu jing*). Translated in 445 by Huijue, this text about the previous lives of the Buddha demonstrated how his past deeds resulted in future merits. For example, by practicing compassion and filial piety towards his parents in the past, the Buddha acquired merits for respectable and affluent rebirths as well as for attainment of Buddhahood.<sup>1087</sup> The Buddha also explained that in his past life as a king, he drew 84,000 Buddha images for countries that could not directly access the Buddha and ordered that his people should make flower and incense offerings. As a result, he was reborn as an emperor with great fortune lifetime after lifetime, until he eventually became a Buddha and had 84,000 *stūpas* dedicated to him after his *nirvāṇa*.<sup>1088</sup> These important episodes gave credence to the practice of image dedication. Bodhiruci continued to reinforce this practice in a late Northern Wei translation, *Maitreyapariṣcchopadeśa* (*Mile pusa suowen jinglun*). He summarized nine motivations for giving *dāna*: building up a merit field, fear of impermanence of the gift, reciprocity as expression of gratitude, expectation of reciprocity, following generosity of parents, rebirth in heavenly realm, reputation as a donor, purification of mind, and offer of Dharma to relatives.<sup>1089</sup>

<sup>1087</sup> 445 元魏沙門慧覺等《賢愚經》卷1〈7須闍提品〉：「佛語阿難：「由過去世慈心孝順，供養父母，以持身肉，濟父母厄，緣是功德，天上人中，常生豪尊，受福無量，緣是功德，自致作佛。」」(CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 357, a24-27)

<sup>1088</sup> 445 元魏沙門慧覺等《賢愚經》卷3〈17阿輸迦施土品〉：「緣於彼世畫八萬四千如來之像，布與諸國令人供養，緣是功德，世世受福，天上人中，恒為帝王，所受生處，端正殊妙，三十二相、八十種好。緣是功德，自致成佛，涅槃之後，當復得此八萬四千諸塔果報。」(CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 369, a13-18)

<sup>1089</sup> 508-535 元魏菩提流支《彌勒菩薩所問經論》卷6：「以如來修多羅中說有九種施。一者植施。二者畏懼施。三者報恩施。四者求恩施。五者學父母施。六者為生天施。七者為名稱施。八者為莊嚴心施。九者眷屬法施。」(CBETA, T26, no. 1525, p. 258, a8-12)

The basis of such generous behavior was faith. The failure to reap the benefits stated in the canon in one's lifetime necessitated such an assurance. In 508, Ratnamati translated the *Ratnagotravibhāga-mahāyānottaratantraśāstra* (*Jiujing yicheng baoxing lun*) that induced devotees to have faith since conviction itself can generate limitless merits.<sup>1090</sup> In the same text, Ratnamati continued to inspire his readers to give of their wealth to the Buddhas generously<sup>1091</sup> so that they can see the Amitābha Buddha at the end of their lives and eventually reach Buddhahood.<sup>1092</sup> In order to assist a devotee to acquire merits for perfection of one's vows and practices, Bodhiruci's translation of *Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvāṇanirdeśa-sūtra* (*Dasazheniqianzi suoshuo jing*) also contains an important appeal to make the Bodhi resolve.<sup>1093</sup> Hence, in accordance to the prerequisite Mahāyana Bodhi resolve to benefit all sentient beings, a bodhisattva had faith that his or her good deeds would materialize into merits eventually.

Canonical texts put forth the Buddhas and bodhisattvas as exemplars of beings with perfect merit fields. *Foshuo foming jing* embeds its 652 occurrences of *fude* and *gongde* in the names of the Buddhas.<sup>1094</sup> In the *Dasazheniqianzi suoshuo jing*, Bodhiruci

<sup>1090</sup> 508 後魏勒那摩提《究竟一乘寶性論》卷1〈11 校量信功德品〉：

「此諸佛境界 若有能信者 得無量功德 勝一切眾生 以求佛菩提 不思議果報  
得無量功德 故勝諸世間」(CBETA, T31, no. 1611, p. 819, c27-p. 820, a1)

<sup>1091</sup> 508 後魏勒那摩提《究竟一乘寶性論》卷1〈11 校量信功德品〉：

「若有人能捨 魔尼諸珍寶 遍布十方界 無量佛國土 為求佛菩提 施與諸法王  
是人如是施 無量恒沙劫」(CBETA, T31, no. 1611, p. 820, a2-6)

<sup>1092</sup> 508 後魏勒那摩提《究竟一乘寶性論》卷1〈11 校量信功德品〉：

「依此諸功德 願於命終時 見無量壽佛 無邊功德身 我及餘信者 既見彼佛已  
願得離垢眼 成無上菩提」(CBETA, T31, no. 1611, p. 820, c17-20)

<sup>1093</sup> 520 元魏菩提流支《大薩遮尼乾子所說經》卷1〈3 一乘品〉：「善集一切功德，為欲修滿諸願行故，發菩提心」(CBETA, T09, no. 272, p. 320, a10-11)

<sup>1094</sup> For example, 520-524 元魏菩提流支《佛說佛名經》卷1：「南無功德海佛 南無法海佛 南無虛空寂佛 南無虛空功德佛 南無虛空庫藏佛 南無虛空心佛 南無虛空多羅佛 南無無垢心佛 南無功德林佛



also embeds these terms in the names of bodhisattvas.<sup>1095</sup> The Northern Wei texts containing the highest and second highest number of occurrences of *fude* and *gongde* both named their models of perfection after *punya*, highlighting the importance of merits to the attainment of Buddhahood. Among the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, Śākyamuni Buddha's merits were the most relevant to Buddhists.

#### 5.4.2 BUDDHA'S MERITORIOUS BIRTH ACCOUNT

Of all the stories related to the Śākyamuni Buddha, his birth account was so well-liked that Buddhists selected it for annual re-enactment. A reason for this choice was that the Buddha's birth represented the culmination of lifetimes of merits; it was to be his last rebirth and the birth itself was highly meritorious. It represented an occasion for devotees to remember and cultivate merits in Buddha's infinite merit field.

The Buddha's final birth arose from the maturation of lifetimes of merit cultivation. In the Three Kingdoms' *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, the Buddha declared that he had practiced the Buddhist path and virtues for ninety-one *kalpas*, surpassed all ten bodhisattva *bhūmi* stages, and had only one life left when he would attain Buddhahood.<sup>1096</sup> Upon birth, the bodhisattva himself also confirmed his supreme status and that this would be his final life.

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南無放光世界中現在說法。虛空勝離塵無垢塵平等眼清淨功德幢光明花波頭摩琉璃光寶香象身勝妙羅網莊嚴頂無量日月光明照莊嚴願上莊嚴法界善化無障礙王佛。」(CBETA, T14, no. 440, p. 117, a2-9)

<sup>1095</sup> 520 元魏菩提流支《大薩遮尼乾子所說經》卷1〈1序品〉：「月功德菩薩、寶月菩薩... 普藏菩薩、功德藏菩薩、」(CBETA, T09, no. 272, p. 317, b27-c5)

<sup>1096</sup> 223-253 吳月支支謙《太子瑞應本起經》卷1：「菩薩於九十一劫，修道德，學佛意，通十地行，在一生補處。後生第四兜術天上，為諸天師，功成志就，神智無量。期運之至，當下作佛，」(CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, b12-15)

He took seven steps facing north, and with a white parasol held over him, he surveyed each quarter and uttered the words of the Leader of the Herd: ‘I am the highest in the world. This is my last birth; now there is no renewal of being for me.’<sup>1097</sup>

By reminding themselves of the Buddha’s birth, devotees demonstrated their respect for the Buddha’s cultivation over the *kalpas* by mimicking the acts of *devas* who accompanied the bodhisattva during his descent and birth. Not only did they protect the bodhisattva, these *devas* also announced the delivery of a meritorious being in their visit to King Śuddhodhana soon after the prince’s birth:

On the birth of a being with such wonderful purity, men and gods have obtained the highest blessings. The road of vice is closed, and the wide road of the gods is made resplendent, glowing in light, by the purifier, the jewel among men.<sup>1098</sup>

The purposeful pursuit of the bodhisattva from Tuṣita heaven to Jambudvīpa showed that even *devas* were admirers and devotees of the Buddha. In the bodhisattva’s final teaching in Tuṣita heaven, he reminded the *devas* to continue their practice of good conduct and charity for the welfare of all beings:

Let him who constantly take to this religion look upon pain as impermanent and unspiritual. Effect proceeds from cause without a master, and is inert. Whatever wealth exists of mine, whatever splendour, whatever knowledge and merit, they all are due to good actions, good conduct, traditional knowledge and disillusion. Follow me through good conduct, through tradition, through disillusion, through charity, through the control of passions, and through humanity for the sake of welfare and friendship of all created beings.<sup>1099</sup>

The *devas*, who had been in the company of the Buddha-to-be for a long time, were aware of the supreme merits of this bodhisattva. Upon the descent of the bodhisattva into Queen Māyādevī’s womb, *devas* sang praises to the bodhisattva’s “ocean of merit”:

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<sup>1097</sup> Ñāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 983.

<sup>1098</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 152.

<sup>1099</sup> Ibid., 64.

Whoever wishes to worship the Sugata, to hear of religion from the kind one, whoever wishes to attain noble merits, let him follow that ocean of merit ... In order to redeem yourself and others, follow the dear one, knowing him to be endowed with all the noble signs and merits, conceivable on earth ... For the attainment of these and other merits of different kinds, for friendliness and cessation of transmigration, follow the wise one who, for the sake of perfection, is full of accomplished penance and is replete with all merits.<sup>1100</sup>

Since the *devas* sang such high praises of the Buddha-to-be's birth, it was little wonder that the people of Northern Wei chose to celebrate the birthday with much pomp. It demonstrated their "following" of the Buddha and their belief in his ability to redeem them. Buddhists were hopeful that the Buddha could alleviate their suffering because of his miraculous birth.

All beings were devoted to the gratification of the newly-born Bodhisattva. They were all devoid of anger, malice, delusion, pride, dejection, disappointment, fear, covetousness, envy, and vanity. All were averted from all hurtful actions. The diseased got rid of their ailments. The hungry and the thirsty had their hunger and thirst subdued. Drunkards had their drunkenness removed. The insane got their reason back. The blind got back their power of vision, and the deaf their hearing. Those who had deformities in their mouth or other parts of their bodies had those defects removed. The poor obtained wealth, and the bound their freedom from bonds. The sufferings of those who dwelt in Avichi and other hells were suppressed at the time. The brute creation were free from the pain of devouring each other, and the dwellers in the region of Yama suffered not from hunger, thirst, and the like.<sup>1101</sup>

The preceding praise suggested that devoted beings could benefit from the Buddha's miraculous birth. Such extraordinary fortune arose from their faith in the Buddha's infinite merit field. When the Buddha-to-be took seven steps towards the various directions to ascertain his superiority, his first proclamation was his wish to present his field of merit to all sentient beings.<sup>1102</sup>

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<sup>1100</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>1101</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>1102</sup> 414-421 《大般涅槃經》：「隨順世間眾生法故示為嬰兒。南行七步示現欲為無量眾生作上福田。西行七步示現生盡永斷老死是最後身。北行七步示現已度諸有生死。東行七步示為眾生而作導首。四維七步示現斷滅種種煩惱四魔種性。成於如來應正遍知。上行七步示現不為不淨之物之所染污猶如虛空。下行七步示現法雨滅地獄火。令彼眾生受安隱樂。」(CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 388, b28-c12)

Following the way of the world, I appeared as a child. I took seven steps to the south and proclaimed that I would become the best field of weal for the sake of innumerable beings. Taking seven steps to the west, I indicated that life was now ended, that I would part from age and death, and that this was the last of my bodies. Taking seven steps to the north, I manifested that I would cross all the seas of birth and death of all existences. Taking seven steps to the east, I revealed that I would become the guide to all beings. Taking seven steps to the four corners, I revealed that I would cut off the roots of various illusions and the natures of the four Maras, becoming the Tathagata, the Alms-deserving, the All-Enlightened One. Taking seven steps heavenwards, I proclaimed that I would never be tainted by impurities. Taking seven steps netherwards, I proclaimed that the rain of Dharma would extinguish the fire of hell, so that beings born there would be blessed with peace and bliss.<sup>1103</sup>

The Buddha's birthday, a significant day in the Northern Wei calendar, was a day to hold monastic ordination ceremonies, as seen in Emperor Xiaowen's decree below.<sup>1104</sup>

In the sixteenth year (492), it was decreed [by Emperor Gaozu] that on the eighth day of the fourth month and the fifteenth day of the seventh month it was permitted to the great provinces to ordain one hundred persons, to the middle provinces fifty persons, and to the inferior provinces twenty persons. This was to be made a fixed standard and published in the law codes.<sup>1105</sup>

Northern Wei Buddhists also chose this auspicious day to dedicate objects of merit, such as images. One inscription dated on the eighth day of the fourth month of the year 506 stated the patron's wish to dedicate merits of building an image to his/her parents of seven generations so that they might be elevated from the three evil realms and meet Maitreya in the future.<sup>1106</sup> Three years earlier on the same day, a certain Zhang Daozhi built a monastery for monks to perform ritual duties to his late grandparents and relatives (much like an ancestral shrine); he made an image to remind monks of posterity

<sup>1103</sup> Tony Page, ed., *The Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra (from Dharmarakshema's Chinese Version)*, 2007, 57, [http://www.shabkar.org/download/pdf/Mahaparinirvana\\_Sutra\\_Yamamoto\\_Page\\_2007.pdf](http://www.shabkar.org/download/pdf/Mahaparinirvana_Sutra_Yamamoto_Page_2007.pdf).

<sup>1104</sup> 492 《魏書 釋老志》：「十六年詔：『四月八日、七月十五日，聽大州度一百人為僧尼，中州五十人，下州二十人，以為常準，著於令。』」

<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@@914824115>

<sup>1105</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 80.

<sup>1106</sup> 「正史三年四月八日，為七世父母，所生父母，建造真容。緣此敬因，願前往生處，所離三途，不遭八難，龍華樹會以為首，廣及一切，共同斯願。」 (Li 2008, 189)

to perform the necessary rituals.<sup>1107</sup> The abbot of Longshan Monastery, Daoqiong, and his family also dedicated a shrine of Buddha images and *stūpas* on Buddha's birthday.<sup>1108</sup>

With the Buddha's birth stories providing strong support for devotees' dedication to their religious founder, Buddhists used the birthday festival as a means to seek karmic merits. The religious thinking and goals of Northern Wei Buddhists in Luoyang facilitated the appreciation of Buddha's meritorious birth. From the Buddha's past lives through his last teaching in Tuṣita Heaven to conception and delivery, the birth story provided evidence that this prodigy was born to save people from the world's sufferings. Northern Wei Buddhists saw an opportunity to follow his teachings by cultivating merits through worship and re-enactment of the meritorious birth story.

#### **5.4.3 BRINGING IT ALTOGETHER: MERIT-MAKING THROUGH IMAGE PROCESSIONS**

Chapters Three and Four highlighted several reasons for reenacting the Buddha's birth through a parade. Buddhists staged citywide parades to promote the Buddha, a foreign icon, in a conspicuous form of religious worship that combined with carnival-like gaiety. Luoyang, a cosmopolitan capital, became the perfect site for the variegated display of foreign and indigenous motifs that demonstrated the cross-cultural appeal of

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<sup>1107</sup> 503 《張道智造像記》卷1：「大魏正始元年四月八日佛弟子張道智。知三寶可崇。□發微願。用寺西家地兩拾畝。永施五樓村。永福寺主開。常住眾僧等。願許其有僧在寺永為智亡祖父母。居門眷屬。依時禮拜。齋會之次。各為禮一拜。慮後僧不曉。造石像一區。因銘記之。」(CBETA, I01, no. 8, p. 20, a0-7)

<sup>1108</sup> 《比丘道瓊造像記》：「大魏武定七年歲次己巳四月丙戌朔四月八日癸巳 司州魏郡易陽人今為武安龍山寺主比丘道瓊記夫萬相具朗... 信心令偶一百餘人。共裁己貴。同尊上道。且使育王盡藏。須達傾珍。無以比其福。即乃運石荊巖。左置文碑。右法勇塔。雕錯漏彩。連剋聖容之質。狀如真見。晌聆若丹霞之斑。金環向[穴/光]。如曜靈之入魚淵。兼下神蔡。奇章顯分。亦治形影... 瓊記此碑直東敬南四百步有水 直北五十步殖松樹供養 直東一陌南西北遂回分流是常住僧伽藍地 瓊記/都維那光景/象塔寺都主兩縣令/桓肆周 供養侍佛/婁樊無字供養侍佛/息盆生供養侍佛/息慶哲供養侍佛/孫子穆供養侍佛/孫子崇供養侍佛/瓊周貴姿光叔女/比丘像邑主道勝供養」(CBETA, I01, no. 0, p. 134, a0-e9)

Buddhism. The Northern Wei ruler arranged for over a thousand Buddha images to parade towards him to receive flower offerings, a celebration of his supreme leadership as *tathāgata* king. This chapter focuses on reasons for the populace to support such an activity. A Buddhist believed that a processional Buddha image represented an infinite merit field from which one could obtain blessings for oneself and others.

In place of traditional sacrifices, image processions during Buddha's birthday represented the emergence of a new form of festival and ritual to help devotees acquire mobile merits. Buddhists made offerings of incense and flowers as well as music and dance to images on parade to celebrate the birth of their founder. Instead of believers visiting temples to dedicate offerings and participate in festivities, images from all over the city were brought to them. Mobility of the Buddha's image allowed for both convenience and public display of piety.

During the days when the Buddha was alive, he brought merit to places he visited. When the Buddha went on almsrounds, his presence in cities was considered meritorious. In a text, *Śrīkaṇṭhasūtra*, translated during the Western Qin kingdom, ghosts and impure beings left cities traversed by the Buddha. Furthermore, the sick and handicapped recovered, and harmony prevailed. Out of compassion for the residents, the Buddha and his retinue of monks circumambulated cities in order to remove the ominous and usher in the auspicious.<sup>1109</sup> This account, an early example that the Buddha himself transferred

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<sup>1109</sup> 388-408 秦釋聖堅 《佛說除恐災患經》 *Śrīkaṇṭhasūtra* 卷 1：「佛便入城。空中鬼神。昇空退散。地行鬼神。爭門競出。城門不容。各各奔突。崩城而出。於時城中。諸有不淨。廁穢臭惡。下沈入地。高卑相從。溝坑皆平。盲視聾聽。瘖語躄行。狂者得正。病者除愈。象馬牛畜。悲鳴相和。箜篌樂器。不鼓自鳴。宮商調和。婦女珠環。相 [敲-高+亭] 妙響。器物[土\*瓦] 鬲。自然有聲。柔軟和暢。妙法之音。地中伏藏。自然發出。一切眾生。如遭熱渴得清涼水服飲澡浴泰然蘇息。舉城眾病。除愈解脫。亦復如是。佛與大眾。便還出城。垂大慈哀。欲為眾生施大擁護。遶城周匝。門門呪願。敷演妙法。除凶致祥。普國疾患。災疫悉除。國界盡安。」 (CBETA, T17, no. 744, p. 555, a12-25)

his merit to others, further confirmed the source of merits of image processions. In addition, Buddhahadra translated another text about forty years later suggesting that witnessing a Buddha image on procession was equivalent to visualizing the Buddha walking. Witnessing each step would result in the removal of a thousand *kalpas* of unwholesome karma.<sup>1110</sup> Such promises could have induced believers to stage image processions so that all who witnessed the event could benefit from the reduction of karmic obstructions and the city could be blessed with auspiciousness.

Furthermore, people were encouraged to participate, and not just witness. In a Western Jin text, the Buddha taught that one who bathed a Buddha image with fragrance would receive merits and wisdom. The Buddha went on to state that a person who scattered flowers on the Buddha's image would obtain merits resulting in a body of unparalleled beauty or dignity. Those who carried banners over the Buddha's image would receive merits leading to the possession of the best clothes.<sup>1111</sup>

These textual inspirations motivated mimicry during the Northern Wei. Epigraphic evidence suggested that devotional societies had members of honor responsible for selecting and holding images, very likely during ceremonies<sup>1112</sup> such as the Buddha's birthday parades. The *Record of Image Building by Chen Shenjiang* had two names holding the title of image carrier (*fuxiangzhu*).<sup>1113</sup> Devotional societies had a

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<sup>1110</sup> 420-423 劉宋 Buddhahadra 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 6〈6 觀四威儀品〉：「佛去世後。三昧正受想佛行者。亦除千劫極重惡業。雖不想行。見佛跡者見像行者。步步亦除千劫極重惡業。」(CBETA, T15, no. 643, p. 675, c6-8)

<sup>1111</sup> 290-306 西晉法炬 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》卷 1：「佛言。持好香浴佛形像者。自得其福智。在清淨功德名聞。諸持好華散佛上者。自得其福端政好色無有雙比。諸持繒幡上佛者自得其福。在所從生當得自然好衣無極。」(CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 797, a17-21)

<sup>1112</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 83.

<sup>1113</sup> 《陳神姜等造像記》卷 1：「扶像主裴小女 ...扶像主杜元智」(CBETA, I01, no. 50, p. 130, c1-c16)

catalytic effect on the growth of Buddhism. Steles helped to confirm the conjecture that many private acts of piety were attributable to devotional societies.<sup>1114</sup> Devotees associated themselves to a religious person, such as the Buddha, in the hope of benefiting from his aid in future lives.<sup>1115</sup> Yet, individual offering, no matter how wealthy, could not reap as much merits as communal offering to the needy.<sup>1116</sup> Hence, major activities, such as image processions, helped to reaffirm the cohesion of the association through the offering of merits to all beings.<sup>1117</sup> With merits obtained through such communal rites construed to be salvational, transferable, and beneficial, the mass participation and congestion documented in the *Record* was plausible.

Buddhist masters had positioned image processions as meritorious activities. The consumption of massive resources fit in with the competitive climate in Northern Wei Luoyang. During the first two decades in Luoyang, residents experienced economic prosperity from tributes to the royal house and political peace. Besides investing in visible construction activities, people could also have competed through devotional societies and temples. The grand Buddha's birthday parade provided just such a platform for everyone to decorate their statues and carriages with expensive jewels and offerings, luxury items made available through trade. It demonstrated the city's commitment to devote itself to *dāna* in order to procure merits for the nation, ancestors, and all beings.

When Buddhists appropriated the terms *fude* and *gongde* to express *punya* during the Eastern Han Dynasty, they used what seemed to be the easiest for people to understand. The concepts of fortune, merit, and virtues were appropriate. Based on this

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<sup>1114</sup> Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 259.

<sup>1115</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>1116</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>1117</sup> Ibid., 275.



common understanding and the classical Chinese rules of reciprocity, Buddhists introduced karmic merit, merit transfer, self-effort, and merit field. Image worship gradually became a popular means of expressing devotion, especially for the rich. With the advent of traders, performers, and artisans as well as nomadic culture of mobility, image processions became increasingly popular. Devotees reenacted the meritorious birth of the Buddha by mimicking royal and divine processions in the *sūtras* (section 3.4.4). Even non-Buddhists welcomed the gaiety of a festival and an opportunity to maintain harmonious relationships, secular and divine. Combined with canonical encouragement that image procession presented a merit-making opportunity and the open competitive climate of the time, Buddha's birthday parade reached its height in Northern Wei Luoyang under the auspices of Emperors Xuanwu and Xiaoming. These emperors built on the tradition of their royal ancestors by celebrating the Buddha's birth with parades, but involved the entire city in an unparalleled display of fortune and merits.

Changes took time to percolate through the masses and effect a cultural shift. The Buddhist appropriation of classical Chinese *fude* and *gongde* demonstrated that it could take five hundred years for the populace to accept a new paradigm. From funerary practices during the Eastern Han to grand birthday parades in Northern Wei, devotees selected nuances of *punya* that were most relevant to their lives and daily concerns. However, it would be dangerous to think that Chinese adopted Buddhist religiosity at the expense of their tradition. Buddhist karmic retribution did not completely replace Chinese reciprocity (*bao*). Turfan tombs indicated that up to the sixth century, Buddhist objects numbered much fewer than Confucian and Daoist inventories.<sup>1118</sup> It was only

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<sup>1118</sup> Bin, "Religious Beliefs as Reflected in the Funerary Record," 1065.

after the middle of the sixth century that more Buddhist elements and inscriptions related to rebirths were unearthed.<sup>1119</sup> Even the generally enthusiastic Buddhist Northern Wei emperors continued justifying their rule with the classical three unities and five phases<sup>1120</sup> as well as esteemed the tradition of Confucian suburban sacrifices.<sup>1121</sup> Nevertheless, the evolution of the terms *fude* and *gongde* from their classical roots into Buddhist vocabulary demonstrated the slow process of religious assimilation. Together with iconographic and epigraphic evidence, history unveiled how the indigenous Chinese of different strata gradually embraced an assimilated version of egalitarian *punya* to express their wishes for a better future and afterlife.

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<sup>1119</sup> Ibid., 1065–1066.

<sup>1120</sup> Chen, “Early Chinese Religion,” 67.

<sup>1121</sup> Ibid., 82.

## Chapter Six NEW LIGHT ON BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY AND LATE NORTHERN WEI

The study of a foreign religious festival in a historical period can reveal the circumstances of the society then, whereas a study of its evolution can uncover how people have assimilated a religion over time and made the religion a part of their culture. When Emperor Xuanwu (r. 500 – 515) ascended the Northern Wei (386 – 534) throne, he inherited a prosperous nation and several crises threatening his authority. One menace came from pro-Xianbei forces and border garrison troops dissatisfied with the previous emperor's sinification program and capital relocation.<sup>1122</sup> Under such circumstances, the grand Buddha's birthday parade turned out to be a clever scheme to legitimize royal authority, confirm the wisdom of Emperor Xiaowen's (r. 471 – 499) decision through a vibrant display in the new capital, and pacify pro-Xianbei forces with foreign icons taking center stage.

Foreign rule was an important catalytic condition for the successful execution of Buddha image processions. However, interests of Tuoba rulers, foreign monks, and interested merchants or artisans alone could not have brought about a phenomenon whereby residents of and visitors to the city jostled each other to “pray for happiness.”<sup>1123</sup> This was especially so since the Chinese were more accustomed to commemorating death anniversaries than birthdays. For practicing Buddhists, the enlightenment or *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha should be more significant than his birthday. Yet, the popularity of Buddha's

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<sup>1122</sup> Chang and Owen, *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, 272.

<sup>1123</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 126.

birthday celebrations in Luoyang between 503 and 528 demonstrated this festival's successful integration into the fabric of Chinese society. From the first few isolated evidence of elephant parades during the Eastern Han (25 – 220, Figure 5) and image parade in a *stūpa* in 247 under the Wu kingdom (220 – 265),<sup>1124</sup> image processions grew increasingly sophisticated as seen in the technologically advanced and politically symbolic Later Zhao (328 – 351 CE) carriage. The parades' culmination in the Northern Wei Luoyang phenomenon occurred because of centuries of acculturation as well as the clever exploitation of the significance of the Buddha's birth story.

This dissertation has set as its central thesis the study of an unprecedented phenomenon: the parade of over a thousand Buddha images through the streets of a recently relocated capital city that was not only the seat of ancient Chinese civilization but also of Confucianism. Luoyang was the earliest capital, served the most number of dynasties, and had the longest period as capital. The goals of this piece of research were twofold: first, to recognize the important role that the Buddha's birth story played in enabling Buddhism to take root in China; and second, to identify the mutual acculturation process that resulted in the procession of foreign images in the capital.

To achieve these two goals, I have chosen a transdisciplinary approach. By viewing evidence and prior research results holistically, this dissertation has unveiled that in the earlier centuries up to the Western Jin (265 – 317 CE), general practice (as uncovered in archaeological finds) lagged behind textual encouragements in the use of Buddha images. Even within the field of textual study, if I had only investigated Buddhist materials without examining classical Chinese texts, I would have missed the

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<sup>1124</sup> 《高僧傳》卷一〈康僧會〉：「僧會欲使道振江左興立圖寺。乃杖錫東遊。以吳赤烏十年。初達建鄴營立茅茨設像行道。」 [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T50/2059\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T50/2059_001.htm)

archaic meaning of *gongde* (merit) and *fude* (fortune), as well as the concerns of native Chinese. Furthermore, through cultural anthropology, striking symbolic similarities between the Egyptian Ptolemaia festival and the Northern Wei Luoyang Buddha's birthday parade suggested the use of religious carnivals to legitimize a foreign ruler, glorify a new capital city, and demonstrate local support of a foreign authority. This attempt at holistic, synergistic, and integrative research also reveals more in-depth insight on prior research. Take for example, Matsunaga, who in a dedicated study of Buddhist assimilation based on textual study, observed, "If it had not been for the continued interchange of monks and scholars between China and India after the first introduction of Buddhism, the new faith might have become merely a branch of Taoism."<sup>1125</sup> This dissertation has shown that the truth defied such simplicity. Foreign kings wanting to establish credibility as sage kings and borrowing the powerful image of the ruler as Buddha, as well as masses wanting to transfer merits to ancestors, more than intellectual exchange between monks and scholars, gave Buddhism the impetus to flourish in the north.

To put the transdisciplinary knowledge together, I borrowed an age-old Buddhist tenet: dependent co-origination. The Northern Wei Luoyang phenomenon resulted from the maturation of centuries of political, religious, cultural, social, literary, artistic, and philosophical conditions, just to name a few. This is a multi-dimensional matrix, with each condition being the result of many other conditions over time. As a result, some chapters rely on an extended prelude to explain the interdependent conditions leading to the final episode. Each of Chapters Two through Five explores a particular facet through

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<sup>1125</sup> Alicia Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the Honji-Suijaku Theory* (Tokyo, 1969), 137.

the dynasties in as broad a manner as possible, while this concluding chapter synthesizes the results.

### *CONTRIBUTION #1: CRITICAL ROLE OF BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY*

The biggest contribution of this dissertation lies in the discovery of the crucial role that Buddha's birthday assumed in medieval China, especially in late Northern Wei. Scholars had pointed to the political turmoil and intellectual vacuum resulting from the collapse of the Han Dynasty and disillusionment with Confucianism as reasons for Buddhism to take root in China.<sup>1126</sup> This dissertation has proven that Buddhism assumed a more proactive and positive role. It explains that Buddhism offered other advantages besides its foreign origin to match the rulers' background.

The Buddha's birthday came into prominence since the Sixteen Kingdoms (303 – 436 CE) because it met the needs of the most important stratum of society. In a nation of concentrated power and wealth, the ruler's needs were paramount. Fotucheng (232 – 348) brought the *cakravartin* model of kingship from the Central Asian Silk Road to northern China in order to help nomadic rulers, Shi Le (r. 328 – 333) and Shi Hu (r. 335 – 349), legitimize their claim to the Later Zhao throne. In the process, Fotucheng also highlighted the legend of the Buddha's birth that was first exploited in Kaniška's court (c. 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE). Instead of relying on blood descent from the Yellow Emperor, the Buddha's birth account legitimized a universal monarch as one pre-destined to rule because of his karmic merits. Several kings in the Sixteen Kingdoms, notably Shi Le, Fu

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<sup>1126</sup> Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 46; Florence Wheelock Ayscough, *China* (Ayer Publishing, 1970), 252; Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton University Press, 1987), 256; Brian Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 149; Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 131.

Jian of Former Qin (r. 358 – 385), Lü Guang (r. 386-399, Yao Xing of Later Qin (r. 394 – 416),<sup>1127</sup> Juqū Mengxun of Northern Liang (r. 401 – 433),<sup>1128</sup> and Helian Bobo (r. 407-425)<sup>1129</sup> proclaimed themselves to be Chinese *cakravartins* (*tianwang*). Beyond the Sixteen Kingdoms, Emperor Wu of Liang titled himself an “emperor bodhisattva” (*huangdi pusa*)<sup>1130</sup> and under the sanction of Faguo, the person of the emperor was combined with the Buddha in the Northern Wei.<sup>1131</sup>

Since steppe kings could hardly trace their pedigree back to the Yellow Emperor, they welcomed the Buddhist model of kingship based on karmic merit. An important episode lies in Asita’s prediction of the prince’s future career soon after his birth. The baby was destined to be either a *cakravartin* or a Buddha. Hence, it was little wonder that among the various stages of the Buddha’s eighty-year life span, rulers chose his birthday for public re-enactment. Over time, symbols of *cakravartin* legitimacy shifted from the thirty-two bodily auspicious marks to the seven royal treasures.<sup>1132</sup> The Northern Wei parade in Luoyang demonstrated the emperor’s possession of these treasures in the most conspicuous manner. Through a festive public procession, Buddhists helped the ruler send an important political message.

In late Northern Wei, Emperors Xuanwu and Xiaoming (r. 516 – 528) made a bold move. In earlier parades, the king made his way to or outside the city gate to pay

<sup>1127</sup> 《晉書·石季龍》：「於是依殷周之制，以咸康三年僭稱大趙天王。」；  
《廣弘明集》卷 23 〈鳩摩羅什法師誄〉：「故大秦符姚二天王師旅以延之。」；

《晉書·孝武紀》：「六月，呂光僭即天王位。」

<sup>1128</sup> Gu, *From Heavenly Kingship to Tathāgata Kingship*, 107.

<sup>1129</sup> Chen, “Early Chinese Religion,” 65.

<sup>1130</sup> Gu, “Emperor Liang’s Image of a Maitreya Buddha King,” 238.

<sup>1131</sup> 《魏書》卷 114 〈釋老志〉：「初，法果每言，太祖明叡好道，即是當今如來，沙門宜應盡禮，遂常致拜。謂人曰：『能鴻道者人主也，我非拜天子，乃是禮佛耳。』」

<sup>1132</sup> The seven treasures are chariot (wheel), elephant, horse, jewel, (the best) wife, (the best) treasurer or minister, and (the best) adviser.

obeisance to the Buddha image. However, Emperor Xuanwu made offerings to over a thousand Buddha images that were brought to him in his palatial grounds. In addition, the monarch sent carriages carrying the Buddha (symbolically also representing the emperor) through the streets of Luoyang just as ancient Chinese monarchs used their chariots in imperial processions to mark their territorial boundaries. The emperor clearly staked his claim on this relocated capital as well as his position in the eyes of the people as their rightful spiritual and earthly ruler. Hence, the emperor staged the Buddha's birthday as a public statement of his supreme status as *tathāgata* king.

If Buddha's birthday parades were staged only to legitimize foreign rulers, then they would fall into oblivion with the return of native reigns. Yet, the Buddha's birthday celebrations continued to the present day, indicating that the carnivals have also met the needs of the indigenous population-at-large across the dynasties. One such need was for divine blessings, especially during uncertain times. Chinese found an equivalent in Buddhist *punya* (merit). The birth legend promised that the Buddha chose to be enlightened on earth because he wished to present his merit field to all sentient beings and the proof of his perfect merit field lay in his final rebirth in Kapilavastu. Hence, Northern Wei people had chosen the Buddha's birthday as the day for dedicating images, *stūpas*, and *sūtras*, as well as for tonsuring monks and nuns in order to acquire merits. Making offerings to a Buddha image on this day was a more accessible means of merit making for most individuals. A hundred imperial guards carried the image from Flourishing Prospect Nunnery. This scenario emphasized the Northern Wei emperor's status as *tathāgata* king and the masses effectively receiving merits from the emperor. This resembled Chinese emperors handing out merits and honors to his deserving



officials. The Northern Wei Luoyang parades showcased a clever marriage of Buddhist merits and the royal display of power and wealth.

Image processions put merit in images and on wheels, simultaneously presenting Buddhist merit as accessible and egalitarian. These were unheard of in ancient China. Gradually, Buddhist offerings to an image presented an increasingly attractive meritorious supplement to Confucian sacrifice to *Tian* in exchange for good fortune or ingratiation of one's superior (ultimately, the king) to gain merit for ancestral shrines. Image worship also replaced the Buddhist relic and *stūpa* cults. With the advent of traders, performers, and artisans as well as nomadic culture of mobility from the Central Asian Silk Road, the sedentary agriculturalists accepted portable images in addition to fixed images, and cherished the opportunity of portable merit-making opportunities. Textual promises of reduction of karmic obstructions, attainment of Buddhahood, and most of all, merit transfer to ancestors, were instrumental in promoting participation in parades. This Buddhist introduction was so successful that *fude* and *gongde* eventually lost their original classical content and assumed this new Buddhist karmic meaning.

Image processions were a celebration of community: some people offered labor to carry the images, others offered spectacular performances, monks offered chants, and devotees offered flowers and incense. Buddhists participated because they were re-enacting the royal procession that occurred after the prince's birth, expecting meritorious returns. According to legend, *devas* and *nagas* offered flowers, music, and water to the newborn prince, and the baby toured the city amidst carnival-like processions. Hence, devotees staged elephant and later, image processions to mimic the original divine and royal procession. In the spirit of gift exchange or reciprocity (*bao*), divine and secular

participants alike expected to derive (much more) merits from their offerings. With Mahāyana Buddhism favoring communal rites over individual practice, mass participation in parades were deemed more meritorious to all sentient beings. The parade became especially relevant to an emperor wishing to syncretize different ethnicities experiencing conflicts arising from prior sinification decrees.

## *CONTRIBUTION #2: DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE CULTURE*

Besides ascertaining the critical role of the Buddha's birthday celebrations to rulers and the populace, this dissertation has also identified that the assimilation process in medieval China was not a unidirectional "triumph" of one culture over another and that "Chinese" culture was not closed. Much scholarship to-date in art, Buddhist, and Chinese histories had emphasized how Buddhism underwent a sinification process. Northern Wei scholars often highlighted Emperor Xiaowen's sinification decrees,<sup>1133</sup> obvious sinification of statues from Yungang to Longmen,<sup>1134</sup> and Tuoba emperors' execution of suburban sacrifices.<sup>1135</sup> Comparatively fewer pieces of literature focused on the study of Buddhist influence on Chinese culture. Zürcher, with his classical work on *The Buddhist Conquest of China* that focused on the southern medieval period, asserted that Buddhism conquered the higher strata of society (the gentry) without much participation from foreign missionaries.<sup>1136</sup> However, the evolution of the Buddha's birthday parades to their grandeur in Luoyang shows that Chinese-Buddhist acculturation during the medieval period was bi-directional and rulers competed with one another to recruit reputable foreign missionaries as their sagely advisers.

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<sup>1133</sup> Holcombe, *The Genesis of East Asia, 221 B.C.-A.D. 907*, 137.

<sup>1134</sup> Tsiang, "Changing Patterns of Divinity and Reform in the Late Northern Wei," 222.

<sup>1135</sup> Chen, "Early Chinese Religion," 82.

<sup>1136</sup> Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 8.

Seen through the eyes of the Buddha's birthday, Buddhism had gradually enriched Chinese culture with new elements such as birthday legends, birthday celebrations, and image processions. Chapter 5 has shown that the Buddha image began in China as an apotropaic object<sup>1137</sup> in Han tombs. Gradually, it took center stage in shrines, including ancestral shrines. By the time of the Northern Liang and later glorified by the Northern Wei, hundreds of Buddha images lined the walls of grottoes, thereby leaving behind a long-lasting record of devotional fervor. Image processions during Buddha's birthday went through a similar process of evolution. They started in Eastern Han as exotic elephant shows in a larger festive procession not dedicated to Buddha's birthday. Later, Buddha images on carriages replaced elephants and Buddhists paraded these images on the day of the Buddha's birth. By the time of Emperor Xuanwu, all monasteries in Luoyang participated to stage a parade of over a thousand Buddha images.

Cultural engagement had to rely on common grounds. Building on a metaphor of "public procession" common to steppe and Han peoples, image processions demonstrated how two paradigms interacted, eventually gaining citywide popularity. People of different ethnicities had enjoyed the music and entertainment that accompanied processions in public spaces. They liked to see lavishly decorated carriages and royal paraphernalia, an uncommon sight for most Chinese men and women. Hence, this mutual basis formed a springboard for Buddhist processions.

Highlights of processions included skillful performances and exotic animals. Since the Han Dynasty, Chinese had looked forward to performances of martial arts, animals, acrobats, magicians, and clowns in the "hundred variety shows" (*baixi*). During

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<sup>1137</sup> The position of the Buddha images indicated their use to ward away evil influences.

the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, rulers imported famous Kucha music and dance into China. This laid the foundation for Northern Wei Emperor Xiaowen to combine Han and *hu* music and dance, as seen in Yungang's Cave of Music (Figure 12). When executed in a cosmopolitan metropolis, the accompanying performances in Buddha's birthday processions became a conduit for foreign and local, old and new, to accept one another in a spirit of conviviality.

From this familiar ground of festive processions, Buddhists introduced to China birth stories, birthday celebrations, and image processions. Buddhists adapted these to local understanding. For example, Chinese translators replaced Queen Māyādevī's palanquin of elephant tusks in *Buddhacarita* with a carriage designed with intertwining dragons. New Buddhist concepts, such as *punya*, leveraged on existing ideas and practice of *gongde* and *fude*. Eventually Chinese found *dāna* made to Buddha images a meritorious expression of Confucian filial piety and loyalty. With over a thousand Buddha images on procession, Northern Wei brought Mahāyana Buddhism to new heights. This hybrid form of Buddhism germinating from the blend of foreign concepts and local culture also influenced both Xianbei and Chinese cultures.

Northern Wei emperors could redefine the culture of the times because the Chinese had been exposed to foreign influences. Since the opening of the Central Asian Silk Road, China had enriched its diet, literature, architecture, art, music, and dance.<sup>1138</sup> Hence, Chinese culture had not remained only Confucian or Daoist. In this spirit of cultural hybridization, Emperor Taiwu (r. 424 – 451) moved the best Han and *hu* brains from Guzang, capital of Northern Liang (current Wuwei, Gansu Province), to Pingcheng

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<sup>1138</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 188.

in 439. Although earlier scholarship tended to divide Chinese civilization from nomadic “barbarism,”<sup>1139</sup> Luoyang’s vibrant multi-cultural milieu that surpassed prior dynasties demonstrated Northern Wei’s expedient combination of sinification and foreign iconography. The rich display shows more nomadicization than sinification. The cross-cultural mobility of Buddhism and Chinese’ open attitude towards integrating new values with their culture helped create a parade that gained local appeal.

Besides these two major contributions, this dissertation also contains a repository of chronologically organized literature related to Buddha’s birthday up to the Northern Wei Dynasty. Appendix D contains information related to Buddha’s birthday celebrations while Appendix E contains a detailed breakdown of the Buddha’s birth account by episodes. Both appendices are generated using state-of-the-art tools and available online databases of literary and epigraphic materials.

One possible extension of this dissertation can be a study of the foundation of creative harmony among cultures laid in the Northern Wei that led to the sustainability of the Buddha’s birthday parade to-date. In contrast, the Ptolemaia festival of Macedonian Egypt did not last long after the decline of their proponents. A second possibility is an examination of the extent to which Korean Buddhism paralleled the Northern Wei development. A third opportunity lies in comparative religions: a comparison of Christmas with Buddha’s birthday, especially in areas related to the spirit of giving or *dāna* and their celebration of kingship. Comparative studies with Korea or Christianity may unveil humanity’s universal needs and solutions.

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<sup>1139</sup> James Ellis, *Grasslands and Grassland Sciences in Northern China: A Report of the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People’s Republic of China, Office of International Affairs, National Research Council* (Washington DC: National Academy Press, 1992), 184.

Luoyang, a prosperous metropolis with unprecedented numbers of monasteries and landscaped gardens during the reign of Emperor Xuanwu, became a desolate place when Yang Xuanzhi visited the city in 547.<sup>1140</sup> Together with the city's and dynasty's inevitable decline went the grand Buddhist parade. Although the carnival was ephemeral, its place in history lives on. The late Northern Wei Buddha's birthday parade demonstrated that Buddhism gained a strong foothold in China through its appealing kingship and merit-through-*dāna* models. Image processions registered the dynamic interactions between Buddhism and different strata of society as Buddhists adapted the religion to the cultural milieu of the populace through its festive celebrations. Buddha's birthday parade has and will continue to become the condition to inspire future development.

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<sup>1140</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 137.

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# **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A. CHINESE DYNASTIES

This appendix contains the chronological dates for dynasties and the Sixteen Kingdoms.

### Dynastic Chronology in China

Table 5 *Dynastic chronology*<sup>1141</sup>

Dynasty	Period
Shang Dynasty	c. 17 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> century BCE
Zhou Dynasty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Western Zhou</li> <li>- Eastern Zhou <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Spring and Autumn period</li> <li>o Warring States</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	c. 11 <sup>th</sup> century – 256 BCE c. 11 <sup>th</sup> century – 771 BCE 770 – 256 BCE 770 – 476 BCE 475 – 221 BCE
Qin Dynasty	221 – 206 BCE
Han Dynasty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Western Han</li> <li>- Xin (Wang Mang interregnum)</li> <li>- Eastern Han</li> </ul>	206 BCE – 220 CE 206 BCE – 25 CE 9 – 23 CE 25 – 220 CE
Three Kingdoms period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wei</li> <li>- Shu</li> <li>- Wu</li> </ul>	220 – 280 220 – 265 221 – 263 222 – 280
Jin Dynasty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Western Jin</li> <li>- Eastern Jin</li> </ul>	265 – 420 265-317 317 – 420
Southern and Northern Dynasties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Northern Dynasties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Northern Wei</li> <li>o Eastern Wei</li> <li>o Northern Qi</li> <li>o Western Wei</li> <li>o Northern Zhou</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Southern Dynasties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Song</li> <li>o Qi</li> <li>o Liang</li> <li>o Chen</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	420 – 589  386 – 534 534 – 550 550 - 577 535 – 556 557 – 581  420 – 479 479 – 502 502 – 557 557 – 589
Sui Dynasty	581 – 618
Tang Dynasty	618 – 907
Five Dynasties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Later Liang</li> </ul>	907 – 960 907 – 923

<sup>1141</sup> Zhongguo she hui ke xue yuan. Yu yan yan jiu suo. Ci dian bian ji shi 中國社會科學院語言研究所詞典編輯室, ed., *Modern Chinese Dictionary 現代漢語詞典* (Beijing: Shang wu yin shu guan 商務印書館, 1996), 1556–1557; *Ci Yuan 辭源* (Beijing: Shang wu yin shu guan 商務印書館, 2004), 270–284.

- Later Tang	923 – 936
- Later Jin	936 – 946
- Later Han	947 – 950
- Later Zhou	951 – 960
Song Dynasty	960 – 1279
- Northern Song	960 – 1127
- Southern Song	1127 – 1279
Liao Dynasty	907 – 1125
Jin Dynasty	1115 – 1234
Yuan Dynasty	1206 – 1368
Ming Dynasty	1368 – 1644
Qing Dynasty	1616 – 1911
Republic of China (in mainland China)	1912 – 1949
People's Republic of China	1949 – present

### **Sixteen Kingdoms of the Five *Hu* Tribes**

Between 304 and 439 CE, Xiongnu, Xianbei, Badi, Jiang, and Jie invaded northern China. Table 6 below details the kingdoms in northern China preceding unification by Northern Wei.

*Table 6 Chronology of Sixteen Kingdoms*<sup>1142</sup>

<b>Period</b>	<b>Name of Empire</b>	<b>First Ruler</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Conquered By</b>
304-347 (43 years)	Cheng Han (成漢)	Lixiong (李雄)	Di	Chengdu (成都)	Eastern Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou (貴州)	Eastern Jin (東晉)
304-329 (25 years)	Han/Former Zhao (漢趙)	Liuyuan (劉淵)	Xiongnu	Pingyang (平陽), Chang'an	Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan, Hebei, Gansu (甘肅)	Later Zhao
328-351 (23 years)	Later Zhao (後趙)	Shi Le (石勒)	Jie	Xiangguo (襄國), Ye (鄴)	Hebei, Henan, Shandong (山東), Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Liaoning (遼)	Former Yan

<sup>1142</sup> Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 187; ZhengNan 鄧振男 Deng, "Northern and Southern Dynasties, Five Hu and Sixteen Kingdoms 南北朝與五胡十六國," *Five Hu Tribes and Sixteen Kingdoms (304-589)*, 2002, [http://w3.hles.tpc.edu.tw/works/igame/95/files/6/60901/theme\\_33.html](http://w3.hles.tpc.edu.tw/works/igame/95/files/6/60901/theme_33.html); Wong, *Chinese Steles*, xix.

Period	Name of Empire	First Ruler	Race	Capital	Area	Conquered By
					寧), Anhui (安徽), Jiangsu (江蘇)	
314-376 (50 years)	Former Liang (前凉)	Zhang Mao (張茂)	Han (漢)	Guzang (姑臧 in Gansu)	Gansu, Xinjiang, Ningxia (寧夏)	Former Qin
337-370 (33 years)	Former Yan (前燕)	Murong Huang (慕容皝)	Xianbei	Longcheng (龍城), Ye	Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Liaoning, Anhui, Jiangsu	Former Qin
350-352 (2 years)	Wei (冉魏)	Ranqu (冉閔)	Han	Ye	Hebei	Former Yan
351-394 (43 years)	Former Qin (前秦)	Fu Jian (符堅)	Di	Chang'an	Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Liaoning, Anhui, Jiangsu, Sichuan, Guizhou, Hubei (湖北)	Western Qin
384-409 (25 years)	Later Yan (後燕)	Murong Chui (慕容垂)	Xianbei	Zhongshan (中山 in Hebei)	Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, Liaoning	Northern Yan
384-394 (10 years)	Western Yan (西燕)	Murong Hong (慕容泓)	Xianbei	Changzi (長子 in Shanxi)		Later Yan
384-417 (33 years)	Later Qin (後秦)	Yaochang (姚萇)	Jiang	Chang'an	Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Shanxi (山	Eastern Jin

Period	Name of Empire	First Ruler	Race	Capital	Area	Conquered By
					西)	
385-431 (46 years)	Western Qin (西秦)	Qifu Guoren (乞伏國仁)	Xianbei	Jincheng (金城 in Gansu)	Eastern Gansu	Xia
386-403 (17 years)	Later Liang (後涼)	Lü Guang (呂光)	Di	Guzang	Gansu, Xinjiang	Later Qin
397-414 (17 years)	Southern Liang (南涼)	Tufa Wugu (秃髮烏孤)	Xianbei	Ledu (樂都 in Qinghai)	Western Gansu, Qinghai (青海)	Western Qin
401 -439 (38 years)	Northern Liang (北涼)	Duanye (段業)	Han	Zhangyi (張掖 in Gansu)	Gansu, Xinjiang	Northern Wei
		Juqu Mengxun (沮渠蒙遜)	Xiongnu			
400-410 (10 years)	Southern Yan (南燕)	Murong De (慕容德)	Xianbei	Guanggu (廣固 in Shandong)	Shandong, Henan	Eastern Jin
400-421 (21 years)	Western Liang (西涼)	Li Gao (李暠)	Han	Dunhuang (敦煌)	Western Gansu	Northern Liang
405-413 (8 years)	Western Shu (西蜀)	Qiao Zong (譙縱)	Han	Chengdu		Eastern Jin
407-431 (24 years)	Xia (夏)	Helian Bobo (赫連勃勃)	Xiongnu	Tongwan (統萬 in Shaanxi)	Shaanxi and Inner Mongolia(內蒙古)	Northern Wei
409-439 (30 years)	Northern Yan (北燕)	Gao Yun (高雲)	Chaoxian (朝鮮)	Helong (和龍 in Liaoning 遼寧)	Hebei, Liaoning	Northern Wei
		Feng Ba (馮跋)	Han			

## Appendix B. CHRONOLOGY OF NORTHERN WEI EMPERORS

The Xianbei clan came into power after the Xiongnu retreated from China. There were three main tribes: Eastern Xianbei (originated from Inner Mongolia), Northern Xianbei, and Western Xianbei.<sup>1143</sup> During the fourth century, the Murong, Duan, Yuwen, and Tuoba<sup>1144</sup> families rose to power in succession.<sup>1145</sup> The Tuoba clan eventually united northern China. Table 7 provides a listing of Northern Wei emperors.

*Table 7 Chronology of Northern Wei Emperors*

Name	Regnal Period
Emperor Daowu / Taizu / Tuoba Gui 道武帝珪 (太祖)	386 – 409
Emperor Mingyuan / Taizong / Tuoba Si 明元帝嗣 (太宗)	409 – 424
Emperor Taiwu / Tuoba Dao 太武帝焘 (世祖)	424 – 451
Emperor Wencheng / Tuoba Jun 文成帝濬	452 – 466
Emperor Xianwen / Tuoba Hong 獻文帝弘	466 – 471
Emperor Xiaowen / Gaozu / Tuoba Hong 孝文帝宏 (高祖)	471 – 499
Emperor Xuanwu / Shizong / Tuoba Ke 宣武帝恪 (世宗)	500 – 515
Emperor Xiaoming / Tuoba Xu 孝明帝詡	516 – 528
Emperor Xiaozhuang / Tuoba Ziyu 孝莊帝子攸	528 – 530
Prince Changuang / Tuoba Hua 長廣王曄	530 – 530
Emperor Jiemin / Tuoba Gong 節閔帝恭	531 – 53
Emperor Xiaowu / Tuoba Xiu 孝武帝修	532 – 534

<sup>1143</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 131.

<sup>1144</sup> The families are 慕容、段、宇文、拓跋.

<sup>1145</sup> Shao, *Luoyang, the City Where the Silk Road Starts*, 132.

## Appendix C. FESTIVALS IN CHINA

This appendix contains two tables: a list of festivals celebrated in China up to the Northern Wei Dynasty and a list of Chinese texts documenting festivals celebrated.

Table 8 *Chinese festivals in existence during or before Northern Wei*<sup>1146</sup>

Occasion	Lunar Date	Earliest Mention
New Year's Day 元旦	January 1	Han
Human Day 人日	January 7	Southern dynasties
Arrival of Spring 立春		Han
Lantern Festival 上元	January 15	Han
Tian Chuan 天穿、填倉	January 20, 23	Eastern Jin
Last Day of First Month 晦日	January 30	Southern dynasties
(Spring) Earth Sacrifice Day 社日	February 2	Han
Lustration 上巳	March 3	Warring States (Zhou Dynasty)
Cold Food festival 寒食	105 days after Winter Solstice (冬至)	Western Jin
Qing Ming (Clear Brightness) 清明	105 days after Winter Solstice (冬至)	Eastern Han (visiting graves began in Warring States)
Buddha's Birthday 佛誕、浴佛	February 8 or April 8	Eastern Han
Beginning of Saṅgha's summer retreat 結夏	April 15	Sui
Dragon Boat 端午	May 5 (acknowledged as a day of bad fortune)	Han
Summer Solstice 夏至	Middle of May	Han
Seventh Evening of Seventh Month 七夕	July 7 (night)	Han
Hungry Ghost 中元	July 15	Ullambana festival started in Liang Dynasty Daoists used this day as birthday of 地官 from Tang dynasty
Midautumn 中秋	August 15	Han
Double Ninth 重陽	September 9	Three Kingdoms
Beginning of the Tenth Month 十月朝	October 1	Qin (used as beginning of the year)
Winter Solstice 冬至	Shortest day in November	Han
Laba 臘八	December 8	Liang
Sacrifice to the Stove God 祀	December 24 (date originated from Song Dynasty)	Han

<sup>1146</sup> Chang, *Chinese Festivals*.

Occasion	Lunar Date	Earliest Mention
灶		
New Year's Eve 除夕	December 30	Han

Table 9 Ancient books with information about Chinese festivals<sup>1147</sup>

Name	Author	Dynasty
<i>Monthly Ordinances in Record of Rites</i> 《禮記·月令》	Dai Sheng 戴聖	Western Han
<i>Monthly Ordinances of the Four People</i> 《四民月令》	Cui Shi 崔寔	Eastern Han
<i>Essential Methods of the Common People</i> 《齊民要素》 – first vegetarian recipes on record	Jia Sixie 賈思勰	Northern Wei
<i>Record of the Year and Seasons of Jing-Chu</i> 《荊楚歲時記》	Zong Lin 宗懷	Southern Liang
<i>Precious Canon of the Jade Candle</i> 《玉燭寶典》	Du Taiqing 杜臺卿	Sui
《歲華紀麗》	Han E 韓鄂	Tang
《藝文類聚·歲時部》	Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢等	Tang
《東京夢華錄》	Meng Yuanlao 孟元老	Song
《夢梁錄》	Wu Zhimu 吳自牧	Song
《武林舊事》	Zhou Mi 周密	Song
《歲時廣記》	Chen Yuanjing 陳元靚	Song
《太平御覽·時序部》	Li Fang 李昉等	Song
《歲時雜詠》	Pu Jizhong 蒲積中	Song
《月令廣義》	Feng Yingjing 馮應京	Ming
《清嘉祿》	Gu Lu 顧祿	Qing
《帝京歲時紀勝》	Pan Rongbi 潘榮陛	Qing
《燕京歲時記》	Fucaì Dunchong 富察敦崇	Qing
《古今圖書集成·歷像匯編·時序部》 and 《古今圖書集成·歷像匯編·歲功典》	Chen Menglei 陳夢雷	Qing

<sup>1147</sup> Ibid., 2.



## Appendix D. CANONICAL, LITERARY AND EPIGRAPHIC RECORDS

Using search terms (四月八日, 二月八日, 四月十五日, 二月十五日, 五月八日, 五月十五日) in the Blue Dots text pattern analysis tool,<sup>1148</sup> I scanned through canonical texts available in the Korean Buddhist Canon for all data related to the Buddha's birth date up to the Northern Wei Dynasty. The table below lists all relevant texts (as active hyperlinks) and the terms contained within.

Table 10 Major canonical texts mentioning the date of Buddha's birth

	Date	Title	Keywords
1.	197 後漢	《修行本起經》	四月八日, 右脇生
2.	223-253 吳	《太子瑞應本起經》	四月八日, 右脇生
3.	280-312 西晉	《異出菩薩本起經》 <i>Abhiṣkramaṇa(sūtra)</i>	四月八日, 右脇生
4.	290-306 西晉	《佛說灌洗佛形像經》	四月八日, 浴佛
5.	290-307 西晉	《佛般泥洹經》 <i>Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra</i>	四月八日, 右脇生
6.	317-420 東晉	《般泥洹經》 <i>Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra</i>	四月八日
7.	350-431 秦	《薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙》 <i>Sarvāstivādinayavibhāṣā</i>	二月八日
8.	388-407 西秦	《佛說摩訶剎頭經》	四月八日, 浴佛
9.	392 東晉	《佛說十二遊經》	四月八日
10.	414-426 北涼	《佛所行讚》 <i>Buddhacarita</i>	四月八日, 右脇生
11.	435-443 宋	《過去現在因果經》	四月八日, 二月八日, 右脇生
12.	502-518 梁	《弘明集》	四月八日
13.	502-557 梁	《釋迦譜》	四月八日, 二月八日
14.	502-557 梁	《釋迦氏譜》	四月八日, 二月八日
15.	502-557 梁	《出三藏記集》	四月八日
16.	516 梁	《經律異相》	四月八日

Based on the collated results in the preceding table, I have arranged in chronological order all the preceding accounts of the Buddha's birth stories.

197 後漢竺大力共康孟詳《修行本起經》卷1〈菩薩降身品〉

「於是能仁菩薩，化乘白象，來就母胎。用四月八日，夫人沐浴，塗香著新衣畢，小如安身，夢見空中有乘白象，光明悉照天下，彈琴鼓樂，絃歌之聲，散花燒香，來詣我上，忽然不現。... 十月已滿太子身成，到四月七日，夫人出遊，過流民樹下，眾花開化，明星出時，夫人攀樹枝，便從右脇生墮地。」<sup>1149</sup>

<sup>1148</sup> <http://ecai.org/textpatternanalysis/>

<sup>1149</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, b12-c21)

223-253 吳支謙《太子瑞應本起經》卷1

「到四月八日夜明星出時，化從右脇生墮地，即行七步，舉右手住而言：『天上天下，唯我為尊。三界皆苦，何可樂者？』」<sup>1150</sup>

280-312 西晉聶道真《異出菩薩本起經》卷1

「太子以四月八日夜半時生，從母右脇生墮地，行七步之中，舉足高四寸，足不蹈地，即復舉右手言：『天上天下，尊無過我者！』」<sup>1151</sup>

290-306 西晉法炬《佛說灌洗佛形像經》卷1

「以四月八日夜半明星出時。生墮地行七步...十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時生。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時出家。入山學道。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時成佛。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時而般涅槃。佛言。所以用四月八日者。以春夏之際殃罪悉畢。萬物普生毒氣未行。不寒不熱時氣和適。正是佛生之日。」<sup>1152</sup>

All Buddhas of the ten directions are born in the middle of the night on the 8th day of the 4th month; all Buddhas of the ten directions take leave of their homes and enter the mountains to study the Way in the middle of the night on the 8th day of the 4th month; all Buddhas of the ten directions attain Buddhahood in the middle of the night on the 8th day of the 4th month; all Buddhas of the ten directions achieve *nirvāṇa* in the middle of the night on the 8th day of the 4th month. The Buddha said, 'The 8th day of the 4th month is chosen for its being on the cusp of spring and summer, when perils and transgressions are all extinguished. The myriad beings all come to life, while poisonous pneuma are not yet abroad. Neither cold nor hot, the air of the season is harmonious and agreeable. This is the very day on which a Buddha is born. All good men and women, after the Buddha's passage to *nirvāṇa*, should dwell deep in their hearts on the strength of the Buddha's immeasurable merit. By washing an image of the Buddha as if he were still alive, one attains immeasurable good fortune, beyond all reckoning.'<sup>1153</sup>

290-307 西晉白法祖《佛般泥洹經》卷1

「佛為阿難說：『天地動有八事。何等為八？地在水上，水在風上，風持水，如從地上望天，或時風動水，水動地，地因動，是為一動。有阿羅漢尊貴，自欲試威神，意欲令地動，因以手兩指案地，天地為大動，是為二動。中有天威神大，意欲動地，地即為大動，是為三動。佛為菩薩時，從第四兜術天來下，入母腹中，時，天地為大動。』」<sup>1154</sup>

290-307 西晉白法祖《佛般泥洹經》卷2

「經曰：佛以四月八日生，八日棄國，八日得道，八日滅度，以沸星時，去家學道，以沸星時得道，以沸星時般泥洹。草木復更華葉，舉國樹木皆更茂盛。佛般泥洹去，三界天中天，光明以滅，一切十方，皆自歸於佛。」<sup>1155</sup>

317-420 東晉《般泥洹經》卷2

「佛從四月八日生，四月八日捨家出，四月八日得佛道，四月八日般泥洹，皆以佛星出時，此時百草華英，樹木繁盛。佛已般泥洹，天下光明滅，十方諸天神，莫不自歸佛。」<sup>1156</sup>

A Buddha is born on the 8th day of the 4th month; gives up his home on the 8th day of the 4th month; attains the way of the Buddha on the 8th day of the 4th month; and achieves *nirvāṇa* on the 8th day of the 4th month. Each takes place at the rising of the stars of *puṣya*. At this time, all the flowers are in blossom, and the trees lush with growth.<sup>1157</sup>

<sup>1150</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c1-p. 474, a2)

<sup>1151</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a17-b14)

<sup>1152</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c10-22)

<sup>1153</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 306-307.

<sup>1154</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 5, p. 165, a27-b10)

<sup>1155</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 5, p. 175, c16-20)

<sup>1156</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 6, p. 190, c4-8)

<sup>1157</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 270.

350-431 秦《薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙》卷2

「佛以二月八日弗星現時。初成等正覺。亦以二月八日弗星出時生。以八月八日弗星出時轉法輪。以八月八日弗星出時取般涅槃。佛初得道於七七日中。遊諸法門及觀眾生。初七日八喜法門。第二七日入樂法門。第三七日入諸解脫。第四七日遊入大捨。第五七日入逆順觀十二因緣。第六七日重復遊歷前諸法門。第七七日觀諸眾生應受化者。」<sup>1158</sup>

388-407 西秦聖堅《佛說摩訶剎頭經》卷1

「以四月八日夜半明星出時。生墮地行七步。舉右手而言。天上天下我當為人民作師。太子生時天地皆為大動。第七梵天。第二忉利天王釋。及第一四天王。皆來下持十二種香湯雜華。用浴太子身。太子立身作佛開視道法以示天下人。佛告天下人民。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時生。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時。去家入山行學道。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時得佛道。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時般泥洹。佛言。所以用四月八日者何。春夏之際殃罪悉畢。萬物普生毒氣未行。不寒不熱時氣和適。今是佛生日故。諸天下人民共念佛功德。浴佛形像如佛在時。是故以示天下人。」<sup>1159</sup>

392 東晉迦留陀伽《佛說十二遊經》卷1

「調達以四月七日生，佛以四月八日生，佛弟難陀，四月九日生，阿難以四月十日生。調達身長，丈五四寸；佛身長丈六尺；難陀身長，丈五四寸；阿難身長，丈五三寸。其貴姓舍夷，長一丈四尺，其餘國皆長丈三尺。」<sup>1160</sup>

414-426 北涼曇無讖《佛所行讚》卷1〈1生品〉

「時四月八日，清和氣調適，齋戒修淨德，菩薩右脇生，大悲救世間，不令母苦惱」<sup>1161</sup>

435-443 宋求那跋陀羅《過去現在因果經》卷1

「爾時菩薩觀降胎時至，即乘六牙白象，發兜率宮；無量諸天，作諸伎樂，燒眾名香，散天妙花；隨從菩薩，滿虛空中，放大光明，普照十方；以四月八日明星出時，降神母胎...十月滿足，於二月八日日初出時」<sup>1162</sup>

502-518 梁僧祐《弘明集》卷1

「以四月八日。從母右脇而生。墮地行七步。舉右手曰。天上天下靡有踰我者也。時天地大動宮中皆明。其日王家青衣復產一兒。廐中白馬亦乳白駒。奴字車匿。馬曰捷陟。」<sup>1163</sup>

502-557 梁僧祐《釋迦譜》卷1

「菩薩四月八日夜半明星出時生。身長丈六(出十二遊經)。」<sup>1164</sup>

502-557 梁僧祐《釋迦氏譜》卷1

「於四月八日日初出時。於無憂樹下花葉茂盛。便舉右手欲牽摘之。」<sup>1165</sup>

502-557 梁僧祐《出三藏記集》卷13

「至四月八日。皓至廁污穢像云。灌佛訖。還與諸臣共笑為樂。未暮陰囊腫痛。叫呼不可堪忍。」<sup>1166</sup>

<sup>1158</sup> (CBETA, T23, no. 1440, p. 510, b21-29)

<sup>1159</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 696, p. 797, c10-24)

<sup>1160</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 195, p. 146, b20-c16)

<sup>1161</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a21-c28)

<sup>1162</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 624, a20-p. 626, a22)

<sup>1163</sup> (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 1, c1-10)

<sup>1164</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 10, a22-23)

<sup>1165</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, a19-p. 90, a23)

<sup>1166</sup> (CBETA, T55, no. 2145, p. 96, c16-p. 97, a10)

516 梁僧旻寶唱等《經律異相》卷28

「四月八日夜半明星出時取五色香水集華用灌此樹。即還更生。王便願言。當令十方諸佛生時用今日。得道時用今日。般泥洹亦用今日。從此以來諸佛興世。皆是此日。故用四月八日灌佛也(山宿願果報經)。」<sup>1167</sup>

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Ever since then, when Buddhas come into the world, they always do so on this day. Hence one bathes the Buddha on the 8th day of the 4th month.<sup>1168</sup>

The following section contains accounts of Buddha's birthday image processions held between Eastern Han and Northern Wei Dynasties. Table 11 lists the date of the event and the reference source. Where available, English translations follow the Chinese texts.

Table 11 *Accounts of Buddha's birthday parades*

	Date of Event	Reference Source
1.	1 <sup>st</sup> – 2 <sup>nd</sup> century	<i>Buddhacarita</i>
2.	3 <sup>rd</sup> century	<i>Lalitavistara</i>
3.	247	519 梁《高僧傳》卷第一
4.	337	668 唐《法苑珠林》卷第九十一
5.	334 - 349	519 梁《高僧傳》卷第九
6.	334 - 349	317-420 東晉《鄴中記》
7.	339-420	339-420 東晉《佛國記·于闐》
8.	339-420	339-420 東晉《佛國記·摩竭國》
9.	424 – 451	550-572 北齊《魏書釋老志》
10.	473	519 梁《高僧傳》卷10
11.	497	1269 宋《佛祖統紀》卷51
12.	495-534	547 東魏《洛陽城內伽藍記》卷第一〈長秋寺〉
13.	495-534	547 東魏《洛陽城內伽藍記》卷第一〈景樂寺〉
14.	495-534	547 東魏《洛陽城內伽藍記》卷第一〈昭儀尼寺〉
15.	495-534	547 東魏《洛陽城東伽藍記》卷第二〈宗聖寺〉
16.	495-534	547 東魏《洛陽城東伽藍記》卷第二〈景興尼寺〉
17.	495-534	547 東魏《洛陽城南伽藍記》卷第三〈景明寺〉
18.	502-557	502-557 梁《荊楚歲時記·二月八日》
19.	564-581	564-581 隋《玉燭寶典·典一》
20.	564-581	564-581 隋《玉燭寶典·典四》

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, Āśvaghoṣa, *Buddhacarita*

When ten days were fulfilled after his son's birth, with his thoughts kept under restraint, and filled with excessive joy, he offered for his son most elaborate sacrifices to the gods with muttered prayers, oblations, and all kinds of auspicious ceremonies. And he himself gave to the Brāhmins for his son's welfare cows full of milk, with no traces of infirmity, golden-horned and with strong healthy calves, to the full number of a hundred thousand. Then he, with his soul under strict restraint, having performed all kinds of ceremonies which rejoiced his heart, on a fortunate day, in an auspicious moment, gladly determined to enter his city. Then the queen with her babe having worshipped the gods for good fortune, occupied a costly palanquin made of elephants' tusks, filled with all kinds of white flowers, and blazing with

<sup>1167</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 152, c15-27)

<sup>1168</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 309–310.

gems. Having made his wife with her child enter first into the city, accompanied by the aged attendants, the king himself also advanced, saluted by the hosts of the citizens, as Indra entering heaven, saluted by the immortals.<sup>1169</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> century, *Lalitavistara*

Now, Bhikshus, the Bodhisattva entered the great city of Kapilavastu with a retinue millionfold greater than that with which Mayadevi had seven days previously issued forth therefrom to retire to the garden. On his entry five thousand pitchers filled with scented stream water were carried before him. Five thousand maidens, holding peacock's tail chouries, marched before him. Five thousand maidens, holding palm-leaf fans, marched before him. Five thousand maidens, holding spouted urns full of aromatic water, marched before him, sprinkling the water on the road. Five thousand maidens, holding pieces of chintz, marched before him. Five thousand maidens, holding fresh, variegated, long garlands, marched before him. Five thousand maidens, holding appropriate jewelled ornaments, marched before him, purifying the road. Five thousand maidens, carrying appropriate chairs, marched before him. Then five hundred thousand Brabmans, holding bells walked in procession before him, ringing auspicious music. Twenty thousand elephants, arrayed in beautiful ornaments, marched before him. Twenty thousand horses, richly caparisoned and decked with golden ornaments, paraded before him. Eighty thousand chariots mounted with white umbrellas, flags, pennons and networks of bells followed the train of the Bodhisattva. Forty thousand veteran heroes of majestic form, arrayed in invulnerable mail coats and breast-plates, followed the Bodhisattva. Under the sky illimitable and uncountable millions of millions of Devaputras of the class Kamavacharas followed the train, offering worship to the Bodhisattva with various collections of offerings. The magnificent chariot in which the Bodhisattva repaired had been decorated by Kamavachara devas with numerous collections of precious articles. Twenty thousand celestial maidens set off with numerous ornaments and holding jewelled threads dragged that chariot. Between every two Apsaras there was one human female, and between every two human females there was one Apsaras, but neither did the Apsaras feel the rank smell of the human females, nor did the human females feel bewildered by the beauty of the Apsaras: this was due to the glory of the Bodhisattva.<sup>1170</sup>

247 《高僧傳》卷第一〈康僧會〉

僧會欲使道振江左興立圖寺。乃杖錫東遊。以吳赤烏十年。初達建鄴營立茅茨設像行道。<sup>1171</sup>

337 《法苑珠林》卷第九十一

晉孫稚... 至三年四月八日。沙門于法階。行尊像經家門。夫妻大小出觀見。稚亦在眾人之中。隨侍像行。見父母。拜跪問訊隨共還家。<sup>1172</sup>

334 - 349 《高僧傳》卷第九〈竺佛圖澄〉

石虎有子名斌。後勒愛之甚重。忽暴病而亡。已涉二日。勒曰。朕聞號太子死扁鵲能生。大和上國之神人。可急往告必能致福。澄迺取楊枝咒之。須臾能起。有頃平復。由是勒諸稚子多在佛寺中養之。每至四月八日。勒躬自詣寺灌佛為兒發願。<sup>1173</sup>

334 - 349 《鄴中記》

石虎性好佞佛，眾巧奢靡，不可紀也。嘗作檀車，廣丈餘，長二丈，四輪。作金佛像，坐於車上，九龍吐水灌之。又作木道人，恒以手摩佛心腹之間。又十餘木道人，長二尺。餘皆披袈裟繞佛行，當佛前，輒揖禮佛。又以手撮香投爐中，與人無異。車行則木人行，龍吐水，車止則止。亦解飛所造也。<sup>1174</sup>

<sup>1169</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 20–21.

<sup>1170</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 136–137.

<sup>1171</sup> [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T50/2059\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T50/2059_001.htm)

<sup>1172</sup> [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T53/2122\\_091.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T53/2122_091.htm)

<sup>1173</sup> [http://w3.cbeta.org/result2/normal/T50/2059\\_009.htm](http://w3.cbeta.org/result2/normal/T50/2059_009.htm)

<sup>1174</sup> <http://big5.dushu.com/showbook/101182/1041934.html>

Shi Hu liked to glorify the Buddha with incalculable extravagances. He commissioned an altar-carriage. In breadth, it was more than a zhang (approximately 10 feet), in length two zhang, with a golden Buddha image on top of a flat four-wheeled cart and nine dragons above that. A wooden figure of a monk was placed before the Buddha, and all round the Buddha were more than ten monks, each a bit more than two feet in height, all wearing white kaṣāyas. When the cart moved, the nine dragons would spew water over the image of the Buddha, and the monk standing in front of the Buddha would rub the area between the Buddha's heart and his abdomen, as if washing a newborn. The other ten-odd monks would circumambulate the Buddha. As each would come just in front of the Buddha, he would do obeisance, then, taking incense in his hand, deposit it in a censer. When the cart stopped, so would the activity.<sup>1175</sup>

#### 339-420 《佛國記·于闐》

法顯等欲觀行像，停三月曰。其國中十四大僧伽藍，不數小者。從四月一曰，城裏便掃灑道路，莊嚴巷陌。其城門上張大幃幕，事事嚴飾。王及夫人、采女皆住其中。瞿摩帝僧是大乘學，王所敬重，最先行像。離城三四裏，作四輪像車，高三丈余，狀如行殿，七寶莊校，懸繒幡蓋。像立車中，二菩薩侍，作諸天侍從，皆金銀雕瑩，懸於虛空。像去門百步，王脫天冠，易著新衣，徒跣持華香，與從出城迎像，頭面禮足，散華焚香。像入城時，門樓上夫人、采女搖散眾華，紛紛而下。如是莊嚴供其，車車各異。一僧伽藍，則一曰行像。四月一曰為始，至十四曰行像乃訖。行像訖，王及夫人乃還宮耳。<sup>1176</sup>

Hwuy-king, Tao-ching, and Hwuy-tah set out in advance towards the country of K'eeh-ch'a; but Fa-hien and the others, wishing to see the procession of images, remained behind for three months. There are in this country four great monasteries, not counting the smaller ones. Beginning on the first day of the fourth month, they sweep and water the streets inside the city, making a grand display in the lanes and byways. Over the city gate they pitch a large tent, grandly adorned in all possible ways, in which the king and queen, with their ladies brilliantly arrayed, take up their residence (for the time). The monks of the Gomati monastery, being mahayana students, and held in greatest reverence by the king, took precedence of all the others in the procession. At a distance of three or four le from the city, they made a four-wheeled image car, more than thirty cubits high, which looked like the great hall (of a monastery) moving along. The seven precious substances were grandly displayed about it, with silken streamers and canopies hanging all around. The chief image stood in the middle of the car, with two bodhisattvas in attendance on it, while devas were made to follow in waiting, all brilliantly carved in gold and silver, and hanging in the air. When the car was a hundred paces from the gate, the king put off his crown of state, changed his dress for a fresh suit, and with bare feet, carrying in his hands flowers and incense, and with two rows of attending followers, went out at the gate to meet the image; and, with his face (bowed to the ground), he did homage at its feet, and then scattered the flowers and burnt the incense. When the image was entering the gate, the queen and the brilliant ladies with her in the gallery above scattered far and wide all kinds of flowers, which floated about and fell promiscuously to the ground. In this way everything was done to promote the dignity of the occasion. The carriages of the monasteries were all different, and each one had its own day for the procession. (The ceremony) began on the first day of the fourth month, and ended on the fourteenth, after which the king and queen returned to the palace.<sup>1177</sup>

#### 339-420 《佛國記·摩竭國》

凡諸中國，唯此國城邑為大。民人富盛，競行仁義。年年常以建卯月八曰行像。作四輪車，縛竹作五層，有承檣、握戟，高二丈余許，其狀如塔。以白氈纏上，然後彩畫，作諸天形像。以金、銀、琉璃莊校其上，懸繒幡蓋。四邊作龕，皆有坐佛，菩薩立侍。可有二十車，車車莊嚴各異。當此曰，境內道俗皆集，作倡伎樂，華香供養。婆羅門子

<sup>1175</sup> Lai, "On the Image Procession in China from the Second to the Sixth Centuries AD," 57.

<sup>1176</sup> <http://bbs.zdic.net/thread-115526-1-1.html>

<sup>1177</sup> Faxian, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 18–19.

來請佛，佛次第入城，入城內再宿。通夜然燈，伎樂供養。國國皆爾。其國長者、居士，各于城中立福德醫藥舍，凡國中貧窮、孤獨、殘跛一切病人，皆詣此舍，種種供給。醫師看病隨宜，飲食及湯藥皆令得安，差者自去。<sup>1178</sup>

The cities and towns of this country are the greatest of all in the Middle Kingdom. The inhabitants are rich and prosperous, and vie with one another in the practice of benevolence and righteousness. Every year on the eighth day of the second month they celebrate a procession of images. They make a four-wheeled car, and on it erect a structure of five storeys by means of bamboos tied together. This is supported by a king-post, with poles and lances slanting from it, and is rather more than twenty cubits high, having the shape of a tope. White and silk-like cloth of hair is wrapped all round it, which is then painted in various colours. They make figures of devas, with gold, silver, and lapis lazuli grandly blended and having silken streamers and canopies hung out over them. On the four sides are niches, with a Buddha seated in each, and a Bodhisattva standing in attendance on him. There may be twenty cars, all grand and imposing, but each one different from the others. On the day mentioned, the monks and laity within the borders all come together; they have singers and skilful musicians; they pay their devotions with flowers and incense. The Brahmans come and invite the Buddhas to enter the city. These do so in order, and remain two nights in it. All through the night they keep lamps burning, have skilful music, and present offerings. This is the practice in all the other kingdoms as well. The Heads of the Vaisya families in them establish in the cities houses for dispensing charity and medicines. All the poor and destitute in the country, orphans, widowers, and childless men, maimed people and cripples, and all who are diseased, go to those houses, and are provided with every kind of help, and doctors examine their diseases. They get the food and medicines which their cases require, and are made to feel at ease; and when they are better, they go away of themselves.<sup>1179</sup>

424 – 451 《魏書 釋老志》

世祖初即位。亦遵太祖太宗之業。每引高德沙門。與共談論。於四月八日。與諸佛像。行於廣衢。帝親御門樓臨觀。散花以致禮敬。<sup>1180</sup>

At that time Shih-tsu had just ascended the throne. He also, continuing the actions of T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung, always used to invite śramaṇas of high character and discuss with them. On the eighth day of the fourth month he used to mount the Buddha images on carriages and march them through the wide streets. The Emperor would personally drive to the gate tower and watch; he would scatter flowers and thus perform acts of veneration.<sup>1181</sup>

473 《高僧傳》卷 10

邵碩者 ... 至四月八日成都行像。碩於眾中匍匐作師子形。爾日郡縣亦言見碩作師子形。乃悟其分身也。<sup>1182</sup>

When it came to the 8th day of the 4th month, Shuo was in the crowd in Chengdu bounding along on all fours, in the form of a lion. The same day, people in the County also said they saw him dressed as a lion. It was then that people realized he could divide his body.<sup>1183</sup>

497 《佛祖統紀》卷 51

「北魏孝文。詔德法師一月三入殿說法。帝數幸王園寺。與沙門談論佛法○幸白塔寺聽登法師講成實論○詔四月八日迎洛京諸寺佛像。入閭闔宮受散花禮敬○宣武御式乾殿講維摩經。西域沙門至者三千人。」<sup>1184</sup>

<sup>1178</sup> <http://www.ourartnet.com/Sikuquanshu/Shiku/Dili/006.asp>

<sup>1179</sup> Faxian, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 79.

<sup>1180</sup> [http://w3.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead=X77n1521\\_p0008b21](http://w3.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead=X77n1521_p0008b21)

<sup>1181</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 56.

<sup>1182</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 392, c25-p. 393, a7)

<sup>1183</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 269.

<sup>1184</sup> (CBETA, T49, no. 2035, p. 451, a4-9)

495 – 534 《洛陽城內伽藍記》卷第一〈長秋寺〉

長秋寺...作六牙白象負釋迦在虛空中。莊嚴佛事悉用金玉。工作之異難可具陳。四月四日。此像常出。辟邪師子導引其前。吞刀吐火騰驤一面。綵幢上索詭譎不常。奇伎異服冠於都市。像停之處。觀者如堵。迭相踐躍。常有死人。<sup>1185</sup>

The Ch'ang-chiu Temple (Temple of the Prolonger of Autumn) ... There was a statue of a six-tusked white elephant carrying on its back Śākyamuni in the void. The sumptuous Buddhist decorations were all made of gold or jade, with a distinctive workmanship difficult to describe. As a rule, this statue would be carried out [of the temple] and put on parade on the fourth day of the fourth month, behind such [man-made] animals as pi-hsieh and lions. [Variety shows would be held, featuring] sword-eaters, fire-spitters, galloping horses, flagstaff climbers, and rope-walkers—all being [demonstrations] of unusual skills. Their spectacular techniques and bizarre costumes were unmatched in the capital. Wherever the statue stopped, spectators would encircle it like a wall. Stumbling and trampling on each other, people in the crowd often suffered casualties.<sup>1186</sup>

495 – 534 《洛陽城內伽藍記》卷第一〈景樂寺〉

景樂寺...有佛殿一所。像輦在焉。雕刻巧妙。冠絕一時。<sup>1187</sup>

The Ching-lo Nunnery (Nunnery of the Happy View) ... There was a Hall of Buddha that housed a carriage for the sacred image. The deftness shown in carving it had no parallel at the time.<sup>1188</sup>

495 – 534 《洛陽城內伽藍記》卷第一〈昭儀尼寺〉

昭儀尼寺...寺有一佛二菩薩。塑工精絕。京師所無也。四月七日。常出詣景明。景明三像恒出迎之。伎樂之盛與劉騰相比。<sup>1189</sup>

The Chao-i Nunnery (Nunnery of the Exemplar) The nunnery housed statues of one Buddha and two bodhisattvas, splendid sculpture not matched elsewhere in the capital. On the seventh day of the fourth month, [the three statues] were always carried to the Ching-ming Monastery (Bright Prospect Monastery) where they were habitually met by three others housed there. [On that occasion] the display of rich music and shows was comparable to that of Liu Teng's [Ch'ang-ch'iu Temple].<sup>1190</sup>

495 – 534 《洛陽城東伽藍記》卷第二〈宗聖寺〉

宗聖寺。有像一軀。舉高三丈八尺。端嚴殊特。相好畢備。士庶瞻仰。目不暫瞬。此像一出市井。皆空炎先。騰輝赫赫。獨絕世表。妙伎雜樂。亞於劉騰。城東士女。多來此寺觀看也。<sup>1191</sup>

In the Tsung-sheng Temple was an image that was thirty-eight Chinese feet high. Its countenance was unusually grave, and it had all [the thirty-two marks and eighty signs on the body]. People held the statue in high esteem and could not take their eyes off it. Whenever the statue was on parade, [they would leave their homes or the marketplace to see it, so that] all the homes and marketplaces were virtually empty. The aureole of this statue had no parallel in its time. The skillful games and miscellaneous music performed here were second in excellence only to those in Liu Teng's [Ch'ang-ch'iu Temple]. Men and women living in the eastern section of the city often came to this temple to watch the shows.<sup>1192</sup>

<sup>1185</sup> [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_001.htm)

<sup>1186</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 46.

<sup>1187</sup> [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_001.htm)

<sup>1188</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 51.

<sup>1189</sup> [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_001.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_001.htm)

<sup>1190</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 53–54.

<sup>1191</sup> [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_002.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_002.htm)

<sup>1192</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 72–73.



495 – 534 《洛陽城東伽藍記》卷第二〈景興尼寺〉

景興尼寺 ... 有金像輦。去地三尺。施寶蓋。四面垂金鈴七寶珠。飛天伎樂。望之雲表。作工甚精。難可揚推。像出之日。常詔羽林一百人舉此像。絲竹雜伎皆由旨給。<sup>1193</sup>

The Ching-hsing Nunnery (Flourishing Prospect Nunnery ... There was a gold carriage with an image, which was thirty Chinese feet off the ground. A jeweled canopy was hung above the carriage, from which were suspended gold bells, beads made out of seven varieties of precious materials, and images of Buddhist musicians and entertainers who appeared high up in the clouds. The craftsmanship was so superb it was hard to describe. When the [carriage-held] image was on parade, the emperor as a rule would order one hundred yu-lin guards to carry it, with the accompanying music and variety shows all provided for by the court.<sup>1194</sup>

495 – 534 《洛陽城南伽藍記》卷第三〈景明寺〉

景明寺... 時世好崇福。四月七日京師諸像皆來此寺。尚書祠曹錄像。凡有一千餘軀。至八月節。以次入宣陽門。向闔闔宮前。受皇帝散花。于時金花映日。寶蓋浮雲。幡幢若林。香煙似霧。梵樂法音。聒動天地。百戲騰驤。所在駢比。名僧德眾負錫為群。信徒法侶持花成藪。車騎填咽。繁衍相傾。時有西域胡沙門。見此唱言佛國。<sup>1195</sup>

The Ching-Ming Monastery [Bright Prospect Monastery]... At the time, the nation liked to pray for happiness, [so] on the seventh day of the fourth month all images in the capital were assembled in this monastery, numbering more than one thousand, according to the records of the Office of Sacrifices, Department of State Affairs. On the eighth day, the images [were carried] one by one into the Hsüan-yang Gate, where the emperor would scatter flowers in front of the Ch'ang-ho Palace. At this moment, gold-colored flowers reflected the dazzling sunlight, and the bejeweled canopies [over the carriages] for the images floated in the clouds. Banners were [as numerous as trees] in a forest, and incense smoke was [as thick as] a fog. Indian music and the din of chanted Buddhist scriptures moved heaven and earth alike. Wherever variety shows [were performed], there was congestion. Renowned monks and virtuous masters, each carrying a staff, formed a throng. The Buddhist devotees and their "companions in the law" holding flowers resembled a garden in bloom. Carriages and horses choked [traffic] and jostled each other. A foreign monk from the Western Regions saw it, and he chanted and said it was [the same as the Buddha's land as he had witnessed it].<sup>1196</sup>

502-557 《荊楚歲時記·二月八日》

二月八日，釋氏下生之日，迦文成道之時，信篤之家建八关斋戒，车轮宝盖，七变八会之灯。至今二月八日平旦，执香花绕城一匝，谓之行城。<sup>1197</sup>

The 8th day of the 2nd month is the day on which Śākyamuni descended to his birth, and also the time at which he attained enlightenment. Families that have given themselves up to the faith observe the eight precepts. [There are] carriages with precious canopies, and lanterns of all shapes and varieties. At dawn one makes a circuit of the city, carrying incense and blossoms. This is called "proceeding through the city."<sup>1198</sup>

564-581 《玉燭寶典·典一》

附說曰：《孔子內備經》云：「震爻動，則知有佛。」《大涅槃》云：「如旃檀林，梅檀圍繞；如師子王，師子圍繞。」又云：「稽首佛足百千万迹。」今人以此月八日巡城，蓋其遺法矣。魏代踵前，於此尤盛。其七日晚，所司預奏早開城門，過半夜便內外俱起，遍滿四鄰。《大涅槃》又云：「諸香木上懸五色幡，采微妙猶如天衣。種種名華（外書花字）以散樹（開）〔間〕。四方風神吹諸樹上時，非時華散雙樹間。」《法花經》云：

<sup>1193</sup> [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_002.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_002.htm)

<sup>1194</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 77–78.

<sup>1195</sup> [http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092\\_003.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T51/2092_003.htm)

<sup>1196</sup> Yang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, 126–127.

<sup>1197</sup> <http://www.ourartnet.com/Sikuquanshu/Shiku/Shiling/102.asp>

<sup>1198</sup> Chapman, "Carnival Canons," 297.

「或以歡憶心，歌唄頌佛德。」又云：「（兩）〔雨〕栴檀沈香，繽紛而亂墜，如鳥飛空下，供養於諸佛。衆寶妙香鑪，燒無價之香。」《華嚴經》云：「（兩）〔雨〕天衆寶花，而芬芬如雪下。」是日尊儀輦輿並出。香火竟路，幡花引前；寺別僧尼，讚唄隨後。此時花樹未甚開敷，去聖久遠，力非感降其花道。俗唯刻鏤錦綵為之。漢王符為《潛夫論》已言花綵之費。晉范汪集《新野四居別傳》云：「家以剪佛華為（葉）〔業〕。」來蓋（又）〔久〕。《荊楚記》云：「謝靈運孫名茲藻者，為荊府諮議云，今世新花，並其祖靈運所制。」（似是花樹之色）南北異俗，或不必同，圍繞乃是常事。八日獨行者，當以佛云：「劫後三月吾當涅槃，將欲滅度。」涅槃時到，戀慕特佛以二月八日生，轉法輪、降魔、涅槃。」皆同此日。《過去現在因果經》亦云：「佛以二月八日生。」或復由此。<sup>1199</sup>

Supplementary Explanation: *Confucius' Classic of Internal Preparation* says: "The movement of the trigram *zhen* signaled the birth of the Buddha." The *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* says: "As a sandalwood forest is ringed by sandalwood, so the Lion King is encircled by lions." It also says, "They touched their heads at the Buddha's feet, and [encircled him] ten million times." Today, on the 8th day of this month, people do a circuit of the city; this must be the legacy of this. The [Northern] Wei Dynasty followed earlier traditions; [the custom] particularly flourished in this period. On the evening of the 7th day, the official responsible would petition for permission to open the city gates early, and after midnight people inside and outside the city would all arise, filling to capacity the outer walls. The *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* also says: "Multi-colored banners were hung from all kinds of fragrant woods, colorful and delicate as celestial clothing. Various types of celebrated flowers were scattered among the trees. When wind spirits of the four directions blew onto the trees, blossoms were scattered, out of season, among the double-trunked trees." The *Lotus Sūtra* says: "Or with joy in their hearts, they praised in song the Buddha's virtue." It also says, "Sandalwood and aloe wood [*aguru*] in the rain, a riot of color falling in disarray; dropping from the void like flying birds, as offerings to all the Buddhas. The marvelous incense burner, [encrusted with] myriad jewels, burns priceless incense." The *Flower Adornment Sūtra* says: "Myriad precious flowers in the rainy sky, falling like a flurry of snow." On this day, His revered images are brought out in carriages. Clouds of incense filling the roads, banners and blossoms lead the way; monks and nuns, divided by temple, chanting eulogies bring up the rear. At this time of year, the flowering trees have still not fully distributed their blossoms; with the Sage so long departed, there is not the strength of resonance to draw down their flowery path. So the custom is to carve or embroider them. In the Han, Wang Fu's *Treatise of the Hidden One* already wrote of the expense of embroidered flowers. Wang Fan of the Jin, in his "Collection of Alternate Biographies of the Four Residents of Xinye," says: "The family cuts out Buddhist flowers for a living." The practice has probably been around quite a long time. *Record of Jing-Chu* says: "Xie Lingyun's grandson was named Zizao; he served as Advisor in the Jingzhou provincial government, etc. Today's new flowers were all planted by his ancestor Lingyun." (This seems to refer to flowering trees). The north and south have different customs, we need not assume them alike; but circumambulation is a constant. The fact that one only holds processions on the 8th day is probably related to the fact that the Buddha said, "In three months time I will attain *nirvāṇa*, and cross to extinction." When the time of *nirvāṇa* came, they yearned for him deeply. The *Sūtra on the Bodhisattva in the Womb* 101 says: "On the 8th day of the 2nd month, the Buddha was born, [delivered the lecture] "Setting in motion the wheel of the dharma," subdued the demon, and attained *nirvāṇa*." All occurred on this day. *Scripture on Past and Present Causes and Effects* also says that "The Buddha was born on the 8th day of the 2nd month." It might also come from this.<sup>1200</sup>

564-581 《玉燭寶典·典四》

後人每二月八日巡城圍繞，四月八日行像供養，並其遺化，無廢兩存。<sup>1201</sup>

<sup>1199</sup> Ibid., 300–301.

<sup>1200</sup> Ibid., 298–300.

<sup>1201</sup> Ibid., 302.

People of later times always circumambulate the city on the 8th day of the 2nd month, and hold a statue procession and make offerings on the 8th day of the 4th month. Both [occasions] represent the legacy of the transformation [effected by the Buddha]; neither is abandoned, both coexist.<sup>1202</sup>

The list of epigraphic texts below documents events that took place on the eighth day of the fourth month:-

(Event occurred in 289)

516 《出三藏記集》卷 7：「文殊師利淨律經記第十八  
經後記云。沙門曇法護。於京師遇西國寂志從出此經。經後尚有數品。其人忘失。輒宣  
現者轉之為晉。更得其本補令具足。太康十年四月八日。白馬寺中。聶道真對筆受。勸  
助劉元謀傅公信侯彥長等。」<sup>1203</sup>

466：

「天安元年四月八日馮受受敬造供養時」<sup>1204</sup> (馮受受造像發願文)

492 《魏書 釋老志》：

「十六年詔：「四月八日、七月十五日，聽大州度一百人為僧尼，中州五十人，  
下州二十人，以為常準，著於令。」」<sup>1205</sup>

In the sixteenth year (492), it was decreed [by Emperor Gaozu] that on the eighth day of the fourth month and the fifteenth day of the seventh month it was permitted to the [big counties] to ordain one hundred persons, to the middle [counties] fifty persons, and to the [small counties] twenty persons. This was to be made a fixed standard and published in the law codes.<sup>1206</sup>

503 《張道智造像記》卷 1：

「大魏正始元年四月八日佛弟子張道智。知三寶可崇。□發微願。用寺西家地兩拾畝。永施五樓村。永福寺主開。常住眾僧等。願許其有僧在寺永為智亡祖父母。居門眷屬。依時禮拜。齋會之次。各為禮一拜。慮後僧不曉。造石像一區。因銘記之。」<sup>1207</sup>

506：

「正史三年四月八日，為七世父母，所生父母，建造真容。緣此敬因，願前往生處，所離三途，不遭八難，龍華樹會以為首，廣及一切，共同斯願。」<sup>1208</sup>

535 《中岳嵩陽寺碑》卷 1：

「天平二年四月八日。倫。艷二統。乃刊石樹碑。雕飾尊像。贊貽嘉福。顯彰聖儀。」<sup>1209</sup>

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<sup>1202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1203</sup> (CBETA, T55, no. 2145, p. 51, b8-13)

<sup>1204</sup> Li, "A Study of Buddha's Birthday Rituals During the Han and Six Dynasties," 189.

<sup>1205</sup> <http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@@914824115>

<sup>1206</sup> Wei, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, 80.

<sup>1207</sup> (CBETA, I01, no. 8, p. 20, a0-7)

<sup>1208</sup> Li, "A Study of Buddha's Birthday Rituals During the Han and Six Dynasties," 189.

<sup>1209</sup> (CBETA, I01, no. 34, p. 86, b27-28)

## Appendix E. EVENTS IN THE BUDDHA’S BIRTH STORIES

From Eastern Han to Northern Wei, there were at least fifty-five (55) canonical accounts of the Buddha’s birth in China. Together with the original 80 BCE *Acchhariya-abhuta Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, Aśvaghoṣa’s *Buddhacarita*, and third century *Lalitavistara*, fifty-eight (58) accounts are available for analysis. The Buddha’s birth story consists of episodes before, during, and after the birth of the Bodhisattva. From these episodes, there are forty-two (42) events described in varying levels of details. The first section classifies the details accompanying the Bodhisattva’s birth into eight (8) major episodes (which appear in roughly the same order across the texts), while the second section lists the actual accounts related to each event. In the first section, the number appearing in parenthesis behind each event indicates the number of texts describing this event. Each event is hyperlinked to the relevant section of the canonical texts.

- **Episode #1: Prior to the Descent of the Bodhisattva from Tuṣita Heaven**

Past lives leading to the last rebirth (11), Choice of time (3), Choice of continent and country (8), Choice of household (13), Choice of form to enter mother’s womb (6), Farewell (4)

- **Episode #2: The Descent from Tuṣita Heaven and during the Carriage of the Bodhisattva**

The Descent (24), Miracles accompanying the descent (15), Pre-birth divine protection(5), Perfect faculties of the Bodhisattva (4), Receiving congratulations (2), Mother’s pregnancy (11)

- **Episode #3: Expecting Delivery**

Full term of carriage (25), Omens prior to birth (4), Mother’s escorts (7), Decorated Lumbini garden (delivery room) (4), Cheerful send-off (2), Royal chariot (5), Divine escorts (4), Divine procession to Lumbinī (4)

- **Episode #4: Bodhisattva’s Delivery**

Mother’s Delivery (23), Untainted Delivery (16), Pure birth (6)

- **Episode #5: First Contact**

Divine bath prior to taking seven steps (8), Wise baby (3), Radiant baby (6), Seven steps (50), Divine bath after taking seven steps (22)

▪ **Episode #6: Gifts**

Royal cot (2), Divine protection (12), Divine devotion (13)

▪ **Episode #7: Celebrations**

Light (20), Earthquake (25), Heavenly magnificence (12), Miracles in the garden (5),  
Meritorious birth (2), Joyous birth (3), Music and dance (10)

▪ **Episode #8: Return to Palace**

Return to palace (2), Procession out of palace (6), Fortune of baby (17), Mother's death (14)

Table 12 lists the canonical texts from which the preceding episodes and events were derived.

*Table 12 Canonical texts containing Buddha's birth stories*

	Date	Title	Dynasty and Author/Translator
1.	80 BCE	<i>Acchhariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya</i>	
2.	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> century	<i>Buddhacarita</i>	Aśvaghoṣa
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup> century	<i>Lalitavistara</i>	
4.	25-220	《大方便佛報恩經》	後漢
5.	197	《修行本起經》	後漢竺大力共康孟詳
6.	223-253	《太子瑞應本起經》 <i>Arthavargīyasūtra</i>	吳月支支謙
7.	252	《佛說無量壽經》 <i>Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra</i>	曹魏天竺康僧鎧 Saṅghavarman
8.	265-313	《等集衆德三昧經》 <i>Sarvaṇṇaśatkoṭṭhārasūtra</i>	西晉月氏竺法護 Dharmarakṣa
9.	266-313	《般泥洹後灌臘經》	西晉月氏竺法護
10.	270	《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》 <i>Ratnakāraṇḍa(ka)(vyūha)sūtra</i>	西晉月氏竺法護
11.	280-312	《異出菩薩本起經》 <i>Abhiṇiṣkramaṇa(sūtra)</i>	西晉居士聶道真
12.	285	《慧上菩薩問大善權經》	西晉月氏國竺法護
13.	290-306	《佛說灌洗佛形像經》	西晉沙門法炬
14.	290-307	《佛般泥洹經》 <i>Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra</i>	西晉河內沙門白法祖
15.	297	《漸備一切智德經》 <i>Daśabhūmikasūtra</i>	西晉月支竺法護

	Date	Title	Dynasty and Author/Translator
16.	306	《阿育王傳》 <i>Aśokarājāvadāna</i>	西晉安息三藏安法欽
17.	308	《普曜經》 <i>Lalitavistara(sūtra)</i>	西晉竺法護
18.	317-420	《般泥洹經》 <i>Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra</i>	東晉
19.	350-431	《薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙》 <i>Sarvāstivādavinayavibhāṣā</i>	秦
20.	350-431	《大乘悲分陀利經》 <i>Karuṇāpūṇḍarīkasūtra</i>	秦
21.	365-384	《中陰經》 <i>Antarābhava(sūtra)</i>	後秦涼州沙門竺佛念
22.	376	《菩薩瓔珞經》	姚秦涼州沙門竺佛念
23.	383	《鞞婆沙論》 <i>Vibhāṣā(śāstra)</i>	符秦罽賓三藏僧伽跋澄 Saṅghabhūti
24.	385	《僧伽羅剎所集經》	符秦罽賓三藏僧伽跋澄等
25.	388-407	《佛說摩訶剎頭經》	西秦沙門聖堅
26.	392	《佛說十二遊經》	東晉西域沙門迦留陀伽
27.	397-398	《中阿含經》 <i>Madhyamāgama(sūtra)</i> 未曾有法品 <i>Acchariya-abhuta Sutta</i>	東晉罽賓三藏瞿曇僧伽提婆 Gautama Saṅghadeva
28.	397-439	《優婆夷淨行法門經》 <i>Upasikābrahmacārya-dharmaparyāyasūtra</i>	北涼
29.	402-406	《大智度論》 <i>Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra</i>	後秦龜茲國三藏鳩摩羅什 Kumārajīva
30.	402-407	《坐禪三昧經》	
31.	402-412	《佛說首楞嚴三昧經》 <i>Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra</i>	後秦龜茲國三藏鳩摩羅什
32.	402-412	《集一切福德三昧經》 <i>Sarvapūnyasamuccayasamādhisūtra</i>	後秦龜茲國三藏鳩摩羅什
33.	402-412	《十住毘婆沙論》	後秦龜茲國三藏鳩摩羅什
34.	405	《高僧法顯傳》	東晉沙門法顯
35.	413	<i>Dīrghāgama(sūtra)</i> 遊行經 <i>Mahāparinibbānasutta</i>	後秦佛陀耶舍共竺佛念 Buddhayaśas
36.	414-421	《菩薩地持經》 <i>Bodhisattvabhūmi</i>	北涼中印度三藏曇無讖 Dharmakṣema
37.	414-421	《大般涅槃經》 <i>Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra</i>	北涼中印度三藏曇無讖
38.	414-426	《佛所行讚》 <i>Buddhacarita</i>	北涼天竺三藏曇無讖
39.	414-426	《大方等大集經》 <i>(Mahāvaipulyamahā)sannipātasūtra</i>	北涼中印度三藏曇無讖
40.	417-418	《佛說大般泥洹經》 <i>Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra</i>	東晉平陽沙門法顯
41.	418	《大方廣佛華嚴經》 <i>(Buddha)avatamsakasūtra</i>	東晉天竺三藏佛馱跋陀羅 Buddhabhadra
42.	424-452	《大般涅槃經》 <i>Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra</i>	宋沙門慧嚴等
43.	431	《菩薩善戒經》 <i>Bodhisattvabhūmi</i>	宋罽賓三藏求那跋摩

	Date	Title	Dynasty and Author/Translator
			Guṇabhadra
44.	435-443	《過去現在因果經》	宋天竺三藏求那跋陀羅
45.	435-443	《大方廣寶篋經》 <i>Ratnakāraṇḍa(ka)(vyūha)sūtra</i>	宋罽賓三藏求那跋摩
46.	435-443	《雜阿含經》 <i>Samyuktāgamasūtra</i> 阿育王傳，阿育王經 <i>Divyāvadāna</i>	宋罽賓三藏求那跋摩
47.	437-439	《阿毘曇毘婆沙論》 <i>(Abhidharma)vibhāṣā(śāstra)</i>	北涼天竺沙門浮陀跋摩共道泰等 Buddhavarman
48.	445	《賢愚經》 <i>Damamūka(nidānasūtra)</i>	元魏涼州沙門慧覺等
49.	455	《治禪病秘要法》	宋居士沮渠京聲
50.	472	《付法藏因緣傳》	元魏西域三藏吉迦夜共曇曜
51.	488	《善見律毘婆沙》 <i>Samantapāsādikā</i>	蕭齊外國三藏僧伽跋陀羅 Saṅghabhadra
52.	502-518	《弘明集》	梁釋僧祐
53.	502-557	《釋迦譜》	梁沙門僧祐
54.	502-557	《釋迦氏譜》	梁沙門僧祐
55.	512	《阿育王經》 <i>Aśokarājasūtra</i>	梁扶南三藏僧伽婆羅
56.	516	《經律異相》	梁沙門僧旻寶唱等

Below are extracts of accounts from canonical texts representing the episodes and events in the Buddha's birth stories.

### Episode #1: Prior to the Descent of the Bodhisattva from Tuṣita Heaven

#### Past lives leading to the last rebirth:

1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century, *Buddhacarita*

“he who was born full of wisdom, not foolish, as if his mind had been purified by countless aeons of contemplation”<sup>1210</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> century, *Lalitavistara*

“There was not a being living who could drink that vigorous essence and remain at ease, except the next coming Bodhisattva who had acquired the fullness of all the stages of Bodhisattva perfection. What were the works through the influence of which the essence remained in the Bodhisattva? For having for long nights practised the duties of a Bodhisattva; for having given medicine to the sick; for having fulfilled desires of longing people ; for protecting those who sought his shelter; for daily offering to Tathagatas, to Chaityas, to Śrāvakas, to Saṅghas, and to his parents, the first share of flowers, fruits and tasteful substances, before partaking of any of them himself. These were the works in recognition of which Mahābrahmā brought to him the nectariferous essence.”<sup>1211</sup>

25-220 《大方便佛報恩經》

「為欲利益一切眾生故，菩薩摩訶薩以大方便，處兜率天，成就壽命，有三事勝：一者，壽勝；二者，色勝；三者，名稱勝。初下之時，放大光明，遍照十方」<sup>1212</sup>

<sup>1210</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 12.

<sup>1211</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 102.

<sup>1212</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 164, b17-c8)

270 《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》

「沙門瞿曇有審諦德。所以者何？生大豪家種姓具足，父母苗裔清淨帝王轉輪聖種，一相有百福功德。」<sup>1213</sup>

290-306 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》

「吾本從阿僧祇劫時。身為白衣累劫積德。每生自剋展轉五道。不貪財寶棄身施與無所愛惜。自致為王太子。」<sup>1214</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「菩薩於九十一劫，修道德，學佛意，通十地行，在一生補處。後生第四兜術天上，為諸天師，功成志就，神智無量。期運之至，當下作佛」<sup>1215</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「前世積功德，	長夜來善本；	布施得真正，	故今致奉敬。
尊本無數劫，	惠施愛男女；	以斯施果報，	雨天諸花香。
害身肉稱之，	用哀愍鳥故；	由此布施果，	餓鬼蒙食醬。
尊本無數劫，	護戒無所犯；	由禁獲果報，	消盡惡道難。
本無數億劫，	志道行忍辱；	忍行致此果，	慈心愍天人。
本無數億劫，	上進無怯劣；	以是精進果，	身好如須彌。
本無數億劫，	禪思消眾塵；	以是一心果，	不樂眾塵欲。
本無數億劫，	行智斷貪欲；	以是智慧果，	光明最清淨。
被鎧善伏塵，	普愍念眾生；	仁德度彼岸，	禮清淨安住。
光耀悉普照，	皆除眾塵冥；	為三千目導，	禮最勝現道。
曉了神通飛，	顯示學究竟；	化度以種類，	稽首善船師。
皆學清淨辭，	示現沒終始；	未曾捨俗法，	於俗無所著。
其見求博聞，	弘利甚無限；	況復聽受法，	得信愛樂者。」

<sup>1216</sup>

388-407 《佛說摩訶剎頭經》(亦名灌佛形像經)

「佛身作白衣時。累功積德每生自剋。展轉五道不貪財寶出身施與。自致為王太子。」<sup>1217</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「修德無量劫， 自知生不死，  
安諦不傾動， 明顯妙端嚴。」<sup>1218</sup>

502-518 《弘明集》

「蓋聞佛化之為狀也。積累道德。數千億載不可紀記。」<sup>1219</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「因果經云。釋迦如來未成佛時。為大菩薩名曰善慧。功行滿已位登補處。生兜率天名曰聖善。為諸天主說補處行。亦於十方現身說法。期運將至當下作佛。」<sup>1220</sup>

Choice of time:

3<sup>rd</sup> century, *Lalitavistara*

“when the manifest world is in peace, when men know what is birth, what is decay, what is disease and what is death”<sup>1221</sup>

<sup>1213</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 461, p. 461, c24-27)

<sup>1214</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c7-10)

<sup>1215</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, b12-15)

<sup>1216</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 490, c14-p. 491, a10)

<sup>1217</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 696, p. 797, c8-10)

<sup>1218</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, b2-3)

<sup>1219</sup> (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 1, c3-4)

<sup>1220</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 88, b21-24)



3<sup>rd</sup> century, *Lalitavistara*

“on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the waxing moon, when the moon is full, and in conjunction with the constellation of Pushya”<sup>1222</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> century, *Lalitavistara*

“ascertained the time of his birth, observed the eight pre-ordained signs in the palace of the king Śuddhodhana”<sup>1223</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「爾時王宮先現八瑞」<sup>1224</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「便以春末夏初(中國以十二月十六日為春初。四月十六日為夏。三時各四月)樹始花茂。沸宿應下化為白象。諸根寂定現從日光。」<sup>1225</sup>

#### Choice of continent and country:

3<sup>rd</sup> century, *Lalitavistara*

“does not take birth in an outlying continent (or the continent of savages) ... born in Jambudvīpa ... does not take birth in an outlying country (or the country of savages) where men are born blind, dumb, uncivilised, or ignorant of the distinction between good and bad speech. It follows that Bodhisattvas are born in the middle country.”<sup>1226</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「迦維羅衛者，三千日月萬二千天地之中央也。佛之威神，至尊至重，不可生邊地，地為傾邪，故處其中。周化十方，往古諸佛興，皆出於此。」<sup>1227</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「迦維羅衛國者，天地之中央也；佛生者，不可邊土餘國，地為之傾側。」<sup>1228</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》

「又，族姓子！菩薩發意之頃，於兜術天逮正真覺、轉于法輪，閻浮利人不能自致昇兜術天聽受經法，菩薩心念，天上諸天能下至此。是故正士，於閻浮利而現成佛，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1229</sup>

350-431 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「爾時我當從兜率天下，為度眾生熟善根故」<sup>1230</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「觀五事已，即自思惟：『今諸眾生，皆是我初發心以來所成熟者，堪能受於清淨妙法，於此三千大千世界，此閻浮提迦毘羅旃兜國最為處中』」<sup>1231</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「其國種姓有六十德。一生補處乃應降神。今此釋種熾盛。五穀豐熟快樂無極。人民滋茂殖眾德本。迦維羅衛。眾人和穆上下相承。一切諸釋渴仰一乘。」<sup>1232</sup>

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<sup>1221</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 37.

<sup>1222</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>1223</sup> Ibid., 75–76.

<sup>1224</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 488, b28)

<sup>1225</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 88, c25-27)

<sup>1226</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 37.

<sup>1227</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, b16-20)

<sup>1228</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a6-8)

<sup>1229</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, b3-7)

<sup>1230</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, a8-9)

<sup>1231</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 623, b2-6)

<sup>1232</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 14, c5-8)

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「普曜經云。菩薩住兜率天有六十六億諸天。共議言今菩薩將降當生何國。父母真正宗族和穆。威德雄猛志性弘雅。各言諸國皆有。便問菩薩何國降神。菩薩答言。其國種姓有六十種德 ... 今此釋種熾盛五穀豐熟。人民滋茂相承德本。」<sup>1233</sup>

Choice of household:

*Buddhacarita*

“Suddhodhana ... The very best of kings with his train ever near him, -- intent on liberality yet devoid of pride; a sovereign, yet with an ever equal eye thrown on all, -- of gentle nature and yet with wide-reaching majesty ... he illuminated his people on every side, showing them the paths which they were to follow ... Duty, wealth, and pleasure under his guidance assumed mutually each other's object, but not the outward dress ... actual pre-eminence was brought about by his numberless councillors of exalted wisdom ... queen, named Māyā as if free from all deceit ... a chief queen in the united assembly of all queens ... Like a mother to her subjects, intent on their welfare”<sup>1234</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“not born in a low family ... born in one of two families, either in that of a Brāhmaṇa, or that of a Kshatriya. When the Brāhmaṇs are the most respected on the earth Bodhisattvas are born in Brāhmaṇ families, but when Kshatriyas are the most respected, they take their birth in Kshatriya families. Since now ... the Kshatriyas are in the ascendant, the Bodhisattva will be born in a Kshatriya family.”<sup>1235</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“family ... sixty-four qualities ... lady ... thirty-two noble qualities”<sup>1236</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「父王名白淨，聰叡仁賢；夫人曰妙，節義溫良。」<sup>1237</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「迦維羅衛國王，為人仁賢，即下入王夫人腹中」<sup>1238</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「菩薩報曰：『其國種姓有六十德 ... 迦維羅衛眾人和順，上下相承心念反復，將護情態積三帑藏；捨眾殃疊棄眾邪見，一切諸釋渴仰一乘；奉敬尊長，居士大臣眷屬和穆；色像第一，其白淨王性行仁賢，夫人曰妙，姿性溫良，仁慈博愛，容色難倫』」<sup>1239</sup>

350-431 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「於最妙轉輪王種第一夫人腹中受胎而住」<sup>1240</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「菩薩先已了知是父、是母。是父、是母能長養我身，我依父母生身得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。」<sup>1241</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「甘蔗之苗裔， 釋迦無勝王，  
淨財德純備， 故名曰淨飯，

<sup>1233</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 88, b26-c2)

<sup>1234</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 8–9.

<sup>1235</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 37.

<sup>1236</sup> Ibid., 40–42.

<sup>1237</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, b15-16)

<sup>1238</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a8-9)

<sup>1239</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 486, a10-17)

<sup>1240</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, a9-10)

<sup>1241</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 90, a17-19)

群生樂瞻仰， 猶如初生月。  
王如天帝釋， 夫人猶舍脂，  
執志安如地， 心淨若蓮花，  
假譬名摩耶， 其實無倫比。」<sup>1242</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「諸族種姓釋迦第一甘蔗苗裔聖王之後：觀白淨王過去因緣，夫妻真正堪為父母；又觀摩耶夫人，壽命脩短，懷抱太子，滿足十月，太子便生，生七日已，其母命終」<sup>1243</sup>

435-443 《大方廣寶篋經》

「是沙門瞿曇所生成就。父母清淨轉輪王種。以百福相莊嚴其身。」<sup>1244</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「其白淨王性行仁賢。夫人妙姿性溫貞良。猶天玉女。護身口意。強如金剛。前五百世為菩薩母。應往降神受彼胞胎。」<sup>1245</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「父性仁賢母懷貞良。前五百世為菩薩母。應往降神處彼胞胎... 又知其母壽命足滿。十月生已。七日便即命終。」<sup>1246</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「究竟菩薩。在兜率天。詰天共議。當使菩薩現生何氏。種英天子問曰。一生補處降神何種。答曰。種姓有六十德者。我當降之(文多不載)唯有釋家久植德本。迦維羅衛人。大小和穆上下相承。國富民樂渴仰一乘。且白淨王性行仁賢。夫人姓瞿曇氏。溫良忠善護身口意。已五百世為菩薩母。」<sup>1247</sup>

Choice of form to enter mother's womb:

*Lalitavistara*

“instruct Brāhmans who read the Mantras and the Vedas and the Śāstras, the Bodhisattva should enter the womb of his mother in a form befitting of that purpose ... noble elephant of great size, having six tusks. He should be covered with golden net-works, and pleasing in appearance; he should have well-blooded veins, manifest and well developed beauty, and be endowed with all auspicious marks”<sup>1248</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「象形第一。六牙白象頭首微妙，威神巍巍形像殊好，梵典所載其為然矣。緣是顯示三十二相。所以者何？世有三獸：一、兔，二、馬，三、白象。兔之渡水趣自渡耳；馬雖差猛，猶不知水之深淺也；白象之渡盡其源底。聲聞緣覺其猶兔馬，雖度生死不達法本；菩薩大乘譬若白象，解暢三界十二緣起，了之本無，救護一切莫不蒙濟。」<sup>1249</sup>

392 《佛說十二遊經》

「伊羅慢龍王，以為制乘，名白象，其毛羽踰於白雪山之白，象有三十三頭，頭有七牙，一牙上有七池，池上有七憂鉢蓮華，一華上有一玉女，菩薩與八萬四千天子，乘白象寶車來下。」<sup>1250</sup>

<sup>1242</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a8-13)

<sup>1243</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 623, b6-10)

<sup>1244</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 462, p. 475, c23-25)

<sup>1245</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 4, c17-20)

<sup>1246</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 88, c3-11)

<sup>1247</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, a28-b5)

<sup>1248</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 74.

<sup>1249</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 488, b18-26)

<sup>1250</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 195, p. 146, b29-c5)

502-518 《弘明集》

「假形於白淨王夫人。晝寢夢乘白象身有六牙欣然悅之。遂感而孕。」<sup>1251</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「於時菩薩問諸天子。以何形貌降神母胎。或言儒童形。或曰釋梵形。或言日月王形。或曰金翅鳥形。彼有梵天名曰強威。從仙道來。報諸天言。象形第一。六牙白象威神巍巍。梵典所載。所以者何。世有三獸。一兔二馬三白象。兔之渡水趣自渡耳。馬雖善猛。猶不知水之深淺。白象之渡盡其源底。聲聞緣覺其猶兔馬。雖渡生死不達法本。菩薩大乘譬如白象。解暢三界十二緣起。了之本無。救護一切莫不蒙濟。」<sup>1252</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「普曜經云。菩薩問天。以何形貌降神母胎。梵天強威白言。梵典所尊象形第一。何以故。三獸渡水。兔馬未知深淺。用譬二乘不達法本。象步盡底。以譬大乘解暢三界。」<sup>1253</sup>

### Farewell:

#### *Lalitavistara*

“These are, venerable sirs, the hundred and eight initiatory lights of the religion which were for certain disclosed to the godly congregation by the Bodhisattva at the time of his descent ... On that occasion, Bhikshus, the Bodhisattva addressed these highly exhilarating Gathas to the godly assembly :— 1. When the noble being and leader descends from the excellent mansion of Tushita, casting aside all errors, he invites all the Devas ... 21. In order that the Bodhi religion may be attained by him who is in quest of that nectar, and the same may be showered (on earth), adore him with purified mind, so that you may listen to the exposition of the great religion ... Then the Bodhisattva appointed Maitreya Bodhisattva to the office of Vice-gerent, and taking off from his own head his silken turban, placed it on that of Maitreya. He then said, ‘While I am gone, thou shalt instruct these good people in the absolutely perfect knowledge.’”<sup>1254</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「菩薩大士臨降神時，為諸天子講說此法。說是法門品時，八萬四千天子發無上正真道心，三十萬二千天子宿殖德本，尋時逮成無從生忍，三十六載諸天子等遠塵離垢諸法眼淨，兜術諸天咸皆欣然，皆散天華積至于膝。」<sup>1255</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「是時兜率諸天，見菩薩身，已有五相，又復觀外五希有事，皆悉聚集，到菩薩所，頭面禮足白言：『尊者！我等今日見此諸相，舉身震動，不能自安，唯願為我釋此因緣。』菩薩即便答諸天言：『善男子！當知諸行皆悉無常，我今不久，捨此天宮，生閻浮提。』」<sup>1256</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「菩薩爾時為欲廣利諸天。故現五衰相(文如諸天退相)又現五瑞一光照大千。二地十八相動。三魔宮隱蔽。四三光不明。五八部震駭。于時諸天見是兩相。具問菩薩。菩薩爾時答言。當捨此天生閻浮提。諸天聞已咸慕久住。菩薩答曰。生無不死愛合必離。諸行無常寂滅為樂。我生釋種出家成佛。當為眾生建大法幢。竭煩惱海淨入正道。設大法會請諸天人。汝等亦當同食法食。諸天聞已咸喜願生。」<sup>1257</sup>

<sup>1251</sup> (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 1, c5-6)

<sup>1252</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 4, c20-29)

<sup>1253</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 88, c22-25)

<sup>1254</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 62–74.

<sup>1255</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 487, c18-23)

<sup>1256</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 623, b21-27)

<sup>1257</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 88, c12-20)

## Episode #2: The Descent from Tuṣita Heaven and during the Carriage of the Bodhisattva

### The Descent:

*Acchhariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“Mindful and fully aware the Bodhisattva passed away from the Tusita heaven and descended into his mother’s womb”<sup>1258</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“Then falling from the host of beings in the Tusita heaven, and illuminating the three worlds, the most excellent of Bodhisattvas suddenly entered at a thought into her womb ... Assuming the form of a huge elephant white like Himālaya, armed with six tusks, with his face perfumed with flowing ichor, he entered the womb of the queen of king Śuddhodana, to destroy the evils of the world.”<sup>1259</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“At such a time the Bodhisattva, the eldest in the three regions, and adored of creation, seeing that the proper season had arrived, that the moon was on the 15th day of its age and in perfect fulness, renounced the mansion of Tushita, and, calling to mind the tradition, entered, in the form of an elephant, of a yellowish white colour, having six tusks, crimson veins, golden teeth, and perfect members, the womb of his mother who had been purified by the rite of Poshadha.”<sup>1260</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「於是能仁菩薩，化乘白象，來就母胎 ... 用四月八日 ... 來詣我上」<sup>1261</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「菩薩初下，化乘白象，冠日之精。因母晝寢，而示夢焉，從右脇入。」<sup>1262</sup>

252 《佛說無量壽經》

「處兜率天弘宣正法。捨彼天宮降神母胎。」<sup>1263</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》

「又，族姓子！菩薩發意，能從兜術忽然沒已，不由胞胎，一時之頃成最正覺。傍人有疑此所從來為是天耶？捷陀羅變化所為乎？若懷狐疑不聽受法，是故菩薩現處胞胎，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1264</sup>

297 《漸備一切智德經》

「輒得出生在兜術天上，從天來下，入母腹中」<sup>1265</sup>

385 《僧伽羅剎所集經》

「是時菩薩不懷恐怖，從兜術天降神」<sup>1266</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「世尊在兜瑟哆天，於彼命終，知入母胎」<sup>1267</sup>

<sup>1258</sup> Ñānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 980.

<sup>1259</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 10.

<sup>1260</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 94.

<sup>1261</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, b12-15)

<sup>1262</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, b21-22)

<sup>1263</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 265, c26-27)

<sup>1264</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, b8-12)

<sup>1265</sup> (CBETA, T10, no. 285, p. 462, a27-28)

<sup>1266</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 194, p. 122, b6)

<sup>1267</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, a13-14)

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「所謂菩薩捨兜率天身，憶念分明而處母胎，是為一未曾有奇特之法。」<sup>1268</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「是淨心念父母，相續入胎，是名正慧入母胎。」<sup>1269</sup>

414-421 《菩薩地持經》

「正知入胎。住胎出胎。」<sup>1270</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「或閻浮提示入母胎令其父母生我子想。而我此身畢竟不從婬欲和合而得生也。我已久從無量劫來離於婬欲。我今此身即是法身隨順世間示現入胎 ... 見於菩薩從兜率下化乘白象降神母胎。」<sup>1271</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「於彼象天后，降神而處胎。」<sup>1272</sup>

417-418 《佛說大般泥洹經》

「復於閻浮提五欲之中現受胎生，其諸父母謂我為子」<sup>1273</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「或閻浮提示入母胎。令其父母生我子想。而我此身畢竟不從愛欲和合而得生也。我已久從無量劫來離於愛欲。我今此身即是法身。隨順世間示現入胎 ... 見於菩薩。從兜率下化乘白象降神母胎。父名淨飯母曰摩耶。」<sup>1274</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「爾時菩薩觀降胎時至，即乘六牙白象，發兜率宮 ... 以四月八日明星出時，降神母胎。于時摩耶夫人，於眠寤之際，見菩薩乘六牙白象騰虛而來，從右脇入，影現於外如處琉璃」<sup>1275</sup>

472 《付法藏因緣傳》

「菩薩從兜率天化乘白象降神母胎。父名白淨母曰摩耶。」<sup>1276</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「菩薩過冬盛寒春末。夏初樹始花茂。不寒不暑適在時宜。沸宿應下。菩薩從兜率天化作白象。口有六牙。諸根寂定光色巍巍。現從日光降神母胎趣於右脇。所以處右。所行不左 ... 瑞應本起云。菩薩初下化乘白象。冠日之精。修行本起云。夫人夢空中有乘白象光明照天下。詣無憂樹。」<sup>1277</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「沸宿應下化為白象。諸根寂定現從日光。所行不左降母右脇。瑞應修行二經皆云。化乘六牙白象。冠日之精發兜率宮。諸天翼從滿虛空中。作樂散花大光普照。以四月八日明星出時降神母胎。夫人眠夢見人乘象入右脇內影現於外如在瑠璃。身安心樂。」<sup>1278</sup>

<sup>1268</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 960, c18-20)

<sup>1269</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 90, a19-20)

<sup>1270</sup> (CBETA, T30, no. 1581, p. 899, b8-9)

<sup>1271</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 388, b24-27) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 488, a9)

<sup>1272</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a14)

<sup>1273</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 376, p. 870, c23-24)

<sup>1274</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 731, a13-15)

<sup>1275</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 624, a20-26)

<sup>1276</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2058, p. 299, b9-10)

<sup>1277</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 4, c29-p. 5, a8)

<sup>1278</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 88, c26-p. 89, a3)

516 《經律異相》卷4：「王后晏寢。菩薩化乘白象。冠日之精。入于胎中。」<sup>1279</sup>

Miracles accompanying the descent:

*Acchhariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“a great immeasurable light surpassing the splendour of the gods appeared in the world ... this ten-thousandfold world system shook and quaked and trembled”<sup>1280</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“On the night when the Bodhisattva entered the womb of his mother, a stalk arose from the water below the earth, and, penetrating through sixty-eight hundreds of thousands of yojanas of the great earth, bore a lotus high up in the region of Brahmā. None, however, saw that lotus, except ten hundred thousand Brāhmaṇa choristers (of that region). In that lotus had been deposited the essence of the three thousand of regions, their radiance and their sap. Mahābrahmā placed the essence in a vase made of lapis lazuli, and brought it before the presence of the Bodhisattva. Bodhisattva accepted it, and drank it out of favour to Mahābrahmā. There was not a being; living; who could drink that vigorous essence and remain at ease, except the next coming Bodhisattva who had acquired the fullness of all the stages of Bodhisattva perfection.”<sup>1281</sup>

25-220 《大方便佛報恩經》

「初下之時，放大光明，遍照十方」<sup>1282</sup>

290-307 《佛般泥洹經》

「佛為菩薩時，從第四兜術天來下，入母腹中，時，天地為大動。」<sup>1283</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「於時菩薩坐於寶淨交露棚閣，處妙后右脇所坐寶淨棚閣，殊妙栴檀而香熏之；其香遍動三千世界，魏魏奇異強若金剛，軟如天衣，香氣芬馥徹於十方。」

350-413 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「我當爾時放淨光明遍照娑訶佛土，上至阿迦尼吒天下至金輪際妙光周遍。爾時眾生生娑訶佛剎者，或在地獄、或為畜生、或為餓鬼、或生天上、或生人中，在色界、無色界、想無想、非想非非想處，令彼一切見斯光明覺觸其身，令彼一切厭生死苦樂求涅槃，乃至住滅結心，是初種涅槃道種。」<sup>1284</sup>

385 《僧伽羅剎所集經》

「若菩薩從兜術天降神，地為大動... 若菩薩從兜術天降神時，有大光明照世間界，是智慧光明相初瑞應，諸幽冥之處皆悉見明，亦是智慧之相。」<sup>1285</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「是時震動一切天地，以大妙光普照世間，乃至幽隱諸闇冥處無有障蔽，謂此日月有大如意足，有大威德，有大福祐，有大威神，光所不照者，彼盡蒙耀，彼眾生者因此妙光各各生知，有奇特眾生」<sup>1286</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「菩薩捨天身已處胎之時，自然光明照於世間，世界中間幽冥之處，日月星光所不能照，悉皆大明，其中眾生各得相見，咸作是言：『此中云何忽生眾生，一切世間梵、魔、沙

<sup>1279</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b5-6)

<sup>1280</sup> Ñāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 980.

<sup>1281</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 102.

<sup>1282</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 164, b17-c8)

<sup>1283</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 5, p. 165, b4-6)

<sup>1284</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, a10-17)

<sup>1285</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 194, p. 122, b26-27) ... (CBETA, T04, no. 194, p. 122, c1-3)

<sup>1286</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, a15-20)

門、婆羅門，所有光明無能及者！』又復三千大千世界六種震動，諸須彌山震動不停，是為二未曾有奇特之法。」<sup>1287</sup>

413 《長阿含經遊行經》

「若始菩薩從兜率天降神母胎，專念不亂，地為大動」<sup>1288</sup>

*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya*

“Again, when a Bodhisatta descends from the Tusita Heaven, mindful and clearly aware into his mother’s womb, the the earth shudders and shakes and violently quakes.”<sup>1289</sup>

414-421 《菩薩地持經》

「生母胎時。奇特光明充滿世界。」<sup>1290</sup>

431 《菩薩善戒經》

「初下之時放大光明遍照十方。」<sup>1291</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「無量諸天，作諸伎樂，燒眾名香，散天妙花；隨從菩薩，滿虛空中，放大光明，普照十方 ... 菩薩降胎之時，三千大千世界十八相動，清涼香風起於四方，諸抱疾者皆悉除愈，貪欲瞋癡亦皆休息。」<sup>1292</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「大花嚴經云。菩薩從兜率陀天降神下時。此林中有十種瑞相。」<sup>1293</sup>

516 《經律異相》卷4：「入于胎中。身心安樂猶如深禪。詣無憂樹下。遣使啟王。時無憂林有十種瑞。一忽然廣博。二土石變為金剛。三寶樹行列。四沈香莊嚴。五華鬘充滿。六眾寶流出。七池生芙蓉。八天龍夜叉合掌而住。九天女恭敬。十一切諸佛放光普照。王大歡喜。后身輕軟。不想三毒。諸有疾者手摩必愈。」<sup>1294</sup>

Pre-birth divine protection:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“four young deities came to guard him at the four quarters so that no humans or non-humans or anyone at all could harm the Bodhisattva or his mother”<sup>1295</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“The guardians of the world hastened from heaven to mount watch over the world’s one true ruler; thus the moonbeams, though they shine everywhere, are especially bright on Mount Kailāsa”<sup>1296</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“Yakshas, Rakshas, Kumbhāṇḍas, Guhyakas, Devas and Dānavas with Indra at their head, who are now the guardians of the noble being, will ere long attain salvation (*moksha*).”<sup>1297</sup>

385 《僧伽羅剎所集經》

「於彼多起道意已，有此智慧，諸天子常衛護，兜術諸天遞來宿衛」<sup>1298</sup>

<sup>1287</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 960, c20-26)

<sup>1288</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 16, a4-6)

<sup>1289</sup> Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 248.

<sup>1290</sup> (CBETA, T30, no. 1581, p. 899, b8)

<sup>1291</sup> (CBETA, T30, no. 1582, p. 973, b23-24)

<sup>1292</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 624, a21-c3)

<sup>1293</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 15, c26-27)

<sup>1294</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b6-12)

<sup>1295</sup> Ñānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 981.

<sup>1296</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 10.

<sup>1297</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 88.

<sup>1298</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 194, p. 122, b11-13)



397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「菩薩處胎，有四天子執持威儀，四方侍衛守護菩薩及菩薩母，不令世間人、非人等之所惱害，是為三未曾有奇特之法。」<sup>1299</sup>

#### Perfect faculties of the Bodhisattva:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“She saw the Bodhisattva within her womb with all his limbs, lacking no faculty”<sup>1300</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“Nor is the Bodhisattva born as a foetus made of consolidated bubbles and fleshy fibres. No, he appears with all his body and its members fully developed and marked with all auspicious signs, and in a seated position.”<sup>1301</sup>

25-220 《大方便佛報恩經》

「自知始入母胞胎時、住時、出時」<sup>1302</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「我聞世尊覆藏住母胎，不為血所污，亦不為精及諸不淨所污，若世尊覆藏住母胎，不為血所污，亦不為精及諸不淨所污者，我受持是世尊未曾有法。」<sup>1303</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「本起云。菩薩處胎夫人修行六度。天食自然。三千世界常光明朗。病者除滅三毒停息。菩薩自身支節相好皆悉具足。行住坐臥無有妨礙。」<sup>1304</sup>

#### Receiving congratulations:

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「於是群臣諸小國王，聞大王夫人有娠，皆來朝賀。菩薩於胎中，見外人拜，如蒙羅穀而視，陰以手攘之。攘之者意，不欲擾人也。」<sup>1305</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「左右群臣，及隣國請可屬迦維羅衛國者，聞王夫人有娠，皆來賀大王，前為夫人作禮。」<sup>1306</sup>

#### Mother's pregnancy:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“she became intrinsically virtuous, refraining from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from wines, liquors and intoxicants ... no kind of affliction arose in her; she was blissful and free from bodily fatigue”<sup>1307</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“relieved the people around her from the sufferings of poverty by raining showers of gifts”<sup>1308</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“Nor did she feel any of the pains incident to the conditions of pregnancy. Nor was she

<sup>1299</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 960, c26-29)

<sup>1300</sup> Nānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 981.

<sup>1301</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 103.

<sup>1302</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 164, b20-21)

<sup>1303</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, b1-5)

<sup>1304</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, a12-15)

<sup>1305</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, b25-28)

<sup>1306</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a9-11)

<sup>1307</sup> Nānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 981.

<sup>1308</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 10.

oppressed by the heat of desires, envy and delusion. Nor did she think of the affairs of lust, malice or cruelty.<sup>1309</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「自夫人懷姙，天為獻飲食，自然日至，夫人得而享之，不知所從來，不復饗王厨，以為苦且辛。」<sup>1310</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「夫人懷抱太子時，天上諸神，日持天上飯食，來置夫人前，夫人不知飯食所從來？不能復食王家飯食，王家飯食，苦且辛。」<sup>1311</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「唯覺己身輕便柔軟安隱無橫，無姪怒癡、不想三毒，亦無寒熱及諸飢渴，不污聖體及餘手指，無有不可。亦不過惡色聲香味細滑之法，不見惡夢亦無惡露。」<sup>1312</sup>

385 《僧伽羅刹所集經》

「自從菩薩降母胎中，夫人之身未曾有穢，菩薩戒行極為清淨，心無傷害之意，施行立誓審諦至誠」<sup>1313</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》卷2〈3瑞應品〉：「菩薩處胎，能令其母自然持戒，不殺、盜、姪、妄語、飲酒，是為四未曾有奇特之法。菩薩處胎，其母清淨無有欲心，外人見之亦不生染，是為五未曾有奇特之法。菩薩處胎，常令其母大得利養，色、香、味、觸自然而至，是為六未曾有奇特之法。菩薩處胎，母常安樂，無諸疾病、飢渴、寒熱、疲極之患，菩薩亦然。菩薩胎中母常見之，譬如真摩尼毘琉璃寶，八楞清淨，內外明徹，一切具足，以五色縷而以貫之，明眼之人執在手中，見珠八楞及五色縷，青、黃、赤、白了了分明。菩薩處胎亦復如是，母見其身、頭、目、手、足一切身分，悉皆無有障礙，是為七未曾有奇特之法。」<sup>1314</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「母悉離憂患，不生幻偽心，厭惡彼諠俗，樂處空閑林。」<sup>1315</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「自從菩薩處胎以來，摩耶夫人，日更修行六波羅蜜；天獻飲食，自然而至，不復樂於人間之味」<sup>1316</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「時天帝釋及化自在天。各上天宮。花香妓樂琦異之饌供養妙后。」<sup>1317</sup>

### Episode #3: Expecting Delivery

#### Full term of carriage:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“The Bodhisatta’s mother gave birth to him after carrying him in her womb for exactly ten months”<sup>1318</sup>

<sup>1309</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 107.

<sup>1310</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, b28-c1)

<sup>1311</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a14-17)

<sup>1312</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 492, a28-b3)

<sup>1313</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 194, p. 122, b13-15)

<sup>1314</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 960, c29-p. 961, a13)

<sup>1315</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a15-16)

<sup>1316</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 624, b24-26)

<sup>1317</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, a17-19)

<sup>1318</sup> Nāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 982.

*Buddhacarita*

“Then one day by the king's permission the queen, having a great longing in her mind ...”<sup>1319</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“ten months having elapsed, and the time for the birth of the Bodhisattva having arrived”<sup>1320</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「十月已滿太子身成，到四月七日」<sup>1321</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「到四月八日夜明星出時」<sup>1322</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「太子以四月八日夜半時生」<sup>1323</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》

何故菩薩在母胞胎，具足十月無見而生？人儻起念在母之懷，日月不足諸根不具。現滿十月，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1324</sup>

290-306 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》

「以四月八日夜半明星出時」<sup>1325</sup>

290-307 《佛般泥洹經》

「經曰：佛以四月八日生」<sup>1326</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「滿十月已，菩薩臨產之時，先現瑞應三十有二」<sup>1327</sup>

317-420 《般泥洹經》

「佛從四月八日生...以佛星出時，此時百草華英，樹木繁盛」<sup>1328</sup>

350-431 《薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙》

「以二月八日弗星出時生。」<sup>1329</sup>

350-431 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「我當受一切法決定三昧，受一意法門三昧心，十月住母腹中。又我得佛，眾生厭離生死，我所應度者，令彼眾生於十月中見我在胎結加趺坐，心入三昧如摩尼現。滿十月生時」<sup>1330</sup>

388-407 《佛說摩訶剎頭經》(亦名灌佛形像經)

「以四月八日夜半明星出時...佛告天下人民。十方諸佛皆用四月八日夜半時生...佛言。所以用四月八日者何。春夏之際殃罪悉畢。萬物普生毒氣未行。不寒不熱時氣和適。」<sup>1331</sup>

<sup>1319</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 10.

<sup>1320</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 118.

<sup>1321</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c11)

<sup>1322</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c1)

<sup>1323</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a17)

<sup>1324</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, b26-28)

<sup>1325</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c10)

<sup>1326</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 5, p. 175, c16)

<sup>1327</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 492, c26-27)

<sup>1328</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 6, p. 190, c4-7)

<sup>1329</sup> (CBETA, T23, no. 1440, p. 510, b22)

<sup>1330</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, a17-21)

<sup>1331</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 696, p. 797, c10-22)

392 《佛說十二遊經》

「佛以四月八日生」<sup>1332</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「凡人受胎或九月日，或至十月而便產生；菩薩不爾，要滿十月然後乃生，是為九未曾有奇特之法。」<sup>1333</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「是菩薩滿十月，正慧不失念。」<sup>1334</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「處胎滿足十月而生。」<sup>1335</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「時四月八日，清和氣調適，  
齋戒修淨德，菩薩右脇生，  
大悲救世間，不令母苦惱。」<sup>1336</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「菩薩處胎，垂滿十月，身諸支節及以相好，皆悉具足，亦使其母諸根寂定，樂處園林，不喜憤鬧。」

437-439 《阿毘曇毘婆沙論》

「生有多種。或說。入母胎時名生。或說。出母胎時名生。或說。時五陰名生。或說。不相應行陰少分名生。或說。非想非非想處四陰名生。何處說入母胎時名生者。如經說。諸家生彼彼處生出現。出母胎時名生者。」<sup>1337</sup>

472 《付法藏因緣傳》

「處胎滿足十月而生。」<sup>1338</sup>

502-518 《弘明集》

「以四月八日。從母右脇而生。」<sup>1339</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「菩薩在胎十月。」<sup>1340</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「普曜經云。在胎十月。開化三十六載天人。使立三乘聖道... 普曜經云。時王思惟懷妊將滿。作此念時夫人白王。欲往園觀即勅莊嚴... 文多不載(今以四月八日入胎。亦以此月八日生。則十二月在胎也)。」<sup>1341</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「既滿十月臨產之時。」<sup>1342</sup>

### Omens prior to birth:

<sup>1332</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 195, p. 146, c14-15)

<sup>1333</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, a14-17)

<sup>1334</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 90, a20-21)

<sup>1335</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 488, a10-11)

<sup>1336</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a23-25)

<sup>1337</sup> (CBETA, T28, no. 1546, p. 381, a11-16)

<sup>1338</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2058, p. 299, b10)

<sup>1339</sup> (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 1, c6-7)

<sup>1340</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, a20-21)

<sup>1341</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, b4-13)

<sup>1342</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b12-13)

*Lalitavistara*

“thirty-two omens became manifest in the garden attached to the palace of king Śuddhodana”<sup>1343</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「滿十月已，菩薩臨產之時，先現瑞應三十有二」<sup>1344</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「菩薩臨產先現瑞應三十有二 ... 凡三十二瑞(文多不載瑞應及修行並同)疆場左右嘆未曾有。」<sup>1345</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「既滿十月臨產之時。有三十二瑞。一後園林木自然生果。二陸地出青蓮大如車輪。三枯樹生華。四七寶車至。五地中寶藏自然涌出。六名香好華遍布遠近。七雪山五百師子羅住城門。八五百白象皆住殿前。九細雨澤香。十百味飲食給諸飢渴(文多不載與諸本起同)。」<sup>1346</sup>

Mother's escorts:

*Buddhacarita*

“Then one day by the king's permission the queen, having a great longing in her mind, went with the inmates of the gynaeceum into the garden Lumbinī.”<sup>1347</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“vehicles harnessed to elephants and horses ... twenty thousand elephants of the colour of the cloud, like the blue mountain, housed in golden networks, decorated with gold and jewels, with bells hanging on their side—noble six-tusked elephants ... twenty thousand horses of the colour of snow or silver, with noble manes of the colour of munja fibre, covered with golden networks set with little bells,—swift as the wind, and worthy the vehicle of royalty ... twenty thousand men, veterans in warfare ... guard the noble Maya and her suite”<sup>1348</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「王勅嚴駕及諸侍從，雲母寶車嫫女圍繞，出行遊觀隣鞞樹下；車馬人乘皆共同色，光耀人目；二百白象前後導從，眾寶明珠垂絡諸象；象皆六牙，悉象中王，盡以紫金雜廁象身，微風吹之嗷嗷相和，懸諸繒幡皆勇戰鬪；時世和安無有爭心，眷屬圍繞宿衛王后，隣鞞樹下。」<sup>1349</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「王知其志願，而生奇特想，勅內外眷屬，俱詣彼園林。」<sup>1350</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「又勅嚴辦十萬七寶車輦，一一車輦，雕玩殊絕；又復勅外，嚴辦四軍，象兵、馬兵、車兵、步兵；又復選取後宮嫫女，容顏端正，不老不少，氣性調和，聰慧明了，其數凡有八萬四千，以用給侍摩耶夫人。又復擇取八萬四千端正童女，著妙瓔珞嚴身之具，齎持香花，先往往彼藍毘尼園。王又勅諸群臣百官，夫人去者，皆悉侍從。於是夫人，即昇寶輿，與諸官屬并及嫫女，前後導從，往藍毘尼園。」<sup>1351</sup>

<sup>1343</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 118.

<sup>1344</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 492, c26-27)

<sup>1345</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, a22-b1)

<sup>1346</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b12-18)

<sup>1347</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 10.

<sup>1348</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 120.

<sup>1349</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 493, b19-25)

<sup>1350</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a19-20)

<sup>1351</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, a10-16)

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「姝女圍繞出遊憐鞞樹下。」<sup>1352</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「十萬寶輦四兵外備。姝女姿妙八萬四千。給侍夫人。又擇童女八萬四千。齎持香花先往彼園。又勅臣婦皆令侍從。」

#### Decorated Lumbini garden (delivery room):

*Lalitavistara*

“Decorate the Lumbinī garden, which in its wealth of flowers is like the Nandana garden of the Sūras, with jewels and gold in profusion;—with precious stuffs of various kinds set off all the trees”<sup>1353</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》

「何故菩薩生於樹園不在中宮？菩薩長夜習在閑居，志樂寂寞行平等淨，欲令天、龍、鬼神、捷奢和、阿須倫、迦留羅、真陀羅、摩睺羅、人與非人，皆捨室宇寂然供養，此諸華香普流天下，使迦維羅衛國中人民歡喜悅預不為放逸，是故菩薩在於樹下寂寞處生，不在宮館，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1354</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「即勅於外，令淨掃灑藍毘尼園，更使栽植諸妙花果；流泉浴池，悉令清潔；欄楯階陛，皆以七寶而為莊嚴。翡翠鴛鴦，鸞鳳鸞鷖，異類眾鳥，鳴集其中；懸繒幡蓋，散花燒香，作諸伎樂，猶如帝釋歡喜之園。」<sup>1355</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「藍毘尼園花果泉池。欄楯階陛七寶莊飾。鸞鳳眾鳥翔集其中。幡蓋樂伎香花備滿。」<sup>1356</sup>

#### Cheerful send-off:

*Lalitavistara*

“put on soft and pleasant dresses of diverse colours in choice fashions, and redolent with delightful essences and aromatics ... pearl necklaces pendant on their chests, and let all appear fully ornamented. Let lutes, monochords, and mridangas,—let vinas, flutes, and mukundas,—let clarions by hundreds of thousands—raise their charming music, and so entertain all that even gods by hearing the sweet sounds may long for their goddesses”<sup>1357</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「又見王后處一好車，男女大小色像皆同不異，各御車乘，法無殊特，欲使王后不聞惡音。象馬乘步若干種兵，各各嚴飾住於門外。聞大洪音始出門時，百千聲響皆稱萬歲。」<sup>1358</sup>

#### Royal chariot:

*Lalitavistara*

“women of various ranks drag that car, causing no diversion ... a hundred thousand tinkling bells and a thousand chauris; it had a jewelled throne, and around it jewelled trees, rich in foliage and flowers. In that chariot geese, herons and peacocks raised a pleasant carol;

<sup>1352</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, b2)

<sup>1353</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 120.

<sup>1354</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, b29-c6)

<sup>1355</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, a4-9)

<sup>1356</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, a23-25)

<sup>1357</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 121.

<sup>1358</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 493, c5-9)

parasols, standards, flags and pennons were uplifted; little bells suspended from networks tinkled around”<sup>1359</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「又見王后處一好車，男女大小色像皆同不異，各御車乘，法無殊特，欲使王后不聞惡音。象馬乘步若干種兵，各各嚴飾住於門外。聞大洪音始出門時，百千聲響皆稱萬歲。其車嚴飾行止安詳，天師子座作四寶樹，枝葉華實皆悉茂盛，鳬鴈孔雀暢悲和音。豎幢幡蓋七寶交露車，時諸天人住於虛空，將御此車亦暢和音。」<sup>1360</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「於是夫人，即昇寶輿，與諸官屬并及姝女，前後導從，往藍毘尼園。」<sup>1361</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「王后臨產思入園觀。嚴雲母寶車。」<sup>1362</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「夫人爾時即昇寶輿導從往林。」<sup>1363</sup>

### Divine escorts:

#### *Lalitavistara*

“Heavenly damsels came to the sky to behold it ... showered, too, choice flowers after whirling them in the air ... The four guardians of the quarters are carrying that chariot. Indra, lord of the gods, is purifying the road, and Brahma is marching in front to restrain the wicked. Immortals by hundreds of thousands are, with joined hands, saluting her. The king, in delight, is beholding the procession.”<sup>1364</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「其四天王挽王后車，其天帝釋淨治道路；又梵天王列在前導，百千天人頭面稽首」<sup>1365</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「爾時復有天龍八部，亦皆隨從，充滿虛空。」<sup>1366</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「夫人爾時即昇寶輿導從往林。滿空八部亦同隨往。大華嚴云。林中現瑞凡有十種。乃至十方諸佛臍中放光。普照此林現佛方來。」<sup>1367</sup>

### Divine procession to Lumbinī:

#### *Lalitavistara*

“guarded by eighty-four thousand well-appointed horse-cars, eighty-four thousand well-appointed elephant-cars, eighty-four thousand brigades of heroic, veteran, sturdy soldiers clad in impenetrable mail and armour ... preceded by sixty thousand S'akya maidens ... guarded by forty thousand S'akyas, old, young and middle-aged, all born agnates to the king Śuddhodana ... surrounded by sixty thousand musicians of king Śuddhodana's inner apartments, all engaged in singing and music, playing on clarions and other instruments ... surrounded by eighty-four thousand Deva damsels, by the same number each of Naga damsels,

<sup>1359</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 121.

<sup>1360</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 493, c5-12)

<sup>1361</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, a17-19)

<sup>1362</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, b1)

<sup>1363</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, a28)

<sup>1364</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 121-122.

<sup>1365</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 493, c15-16)

<sup>1366</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, a19-20)

<sup>1367</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, a28-b2)

of Gandharva damsels, of Kinnara damsels, and of Asura damsels, ... decorated with a profusion of ornaments, and engaged in singing, music, or pleasant conversation.”<sup>1368</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「天帝釋梵四王皆共翼從，諸天散華速行案行 ... 威光輝曜其香芬熏，清涼甘美音聲柔軟，若干奇寶瓔珞其身，莊嚴要妙見者皆歡；諸音樂器笳簫鼓吹，若干種品相和而鳴，諸天玉女聞柔和應」<sup>1369</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「王后坐師子床。六反震動三千國土四天王挽王后車。梵天前導。適至樹下。」<sup>1370</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「普曜云。王后臨產乘雲母車。遊憐鞞樹坐師子座。六反震動三千國土。四天王挽車梵王前導。」<sup>1371</sup>

#### Episode #4: Bodhisattva's Delivery

##### Mother's Delivery:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“The Bodhisatta's mother gave birth to him standing up”<sup>1372</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“As the queen supported herself by a bough which hung laden with a weight of flowers, the Bodhisattva suddenly came forth, cleaving open her womb ... from the side of the queen, who was purified by her vow, her son was born for the welfare of the world, without pain and without illness”<sup>1373</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“the waved-leaved fig tree. It was the noblest of many noble trees ... it was bent ... This Plaksha tree did the lady approach ... Now, Mayadevi, extending her right hand, resplendent as the lightning on the sky, held a branch of the Plaksha tree, and, looking playfully towards the sky, stood there yawning. At that time sixty hundreds of thousands of Apsarases, along with Kamavachara Devas, engaged themselves in her service. Thus did the Bodhisattva remain thriving in the womb of his mother. And when ten full months had passed, forth from the right side of his mother, he issued ... his mother's flank became unbroken and scarless; as it was before so it became after”<sup>1374</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「夫人出遊，過流民樹下，眾花開化、明星出時，夫人攀樹枝，便從右脇生墮地」<sup>1375</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「到四月八日夜明星出時，化從右脇生墮地」<sup>1376</sup>

252 《佛說無量壽經》

「從右脇生」<sup>1377</sup>

<sup>1368</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 122.

<sup>1369</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 493, b26-c5)

<sup>1370</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, b2-4)

<sup>1371</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, b4-6)

<sup>1372</sup> Ñānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 982.

<sup>1373</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 10–11.

<sup>1374</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 123.

<sup>1375</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c12-13)

<sup>1376</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c1-2)

<sup>1377</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 265, c27-28)



280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「從母右脇生墮地」<sup>1378</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》

「何故菩薩從右脇生？若不如是眾人有疑，則謂菩薩因由遺精而處胎藏，不為化育。眾必懷結猶預難決，是故示現令人開解。菩薩雖從右脇而生，母無瘡瘡出入之患，往古尊聖因時如然，所行無違，是為菩薩善權方便。」「何故菩薩母攀樹枝，然後而生？設不爾者，眾人當謂：『皇后雖生菩薩必有惱患，若如凡庶而無殊別。』欲為黎元示現安隱，母適攀樹枝，志性柔和，則菩薩誕育，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1379</sup>

306 《阿育王傳》

「示王摩耶所攀樹枝生菩薩處。尊者舉手語菴羅樹神言。汝本見佛。今可現身以示於王。使王得見增長信心。時此樹神即現其身。尊者掘多語於王言。此樹神者。見佛生時。王即合掌。向於樹神說偈問言。

汝見相好身 莊嚴生時不 為見修廣目 蓮花葉眼不  
汝聞於牛王 說柔軟音不

樹神即便以偈答言。

我見真金色 兩足最勝尊 舉足行七步 聞彼世尊說」<sup>1380</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「眷屬圍繞宿衛王后，隣鞞樹下...爾時菩薩從右脇生，忽然見身住寶蓮華...菩薩生時其母安隱，無有瘡癥亦無痛痒，平復如故。」<sup>1381</sup>

350-413 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「我當從母右脇而出」<sup>1382</sup>

405 《高僧法顯傳》

「從舍衛城東南行十二由延到一邑名那毘伽...城東五十里有王園。園名論民。夫人入池洗浴出池。北岸二十步舉手攀樹枝東向生太子。」<sup>1383</sup>

413 《長阿含經遊行經》

「菩薩始出母胎，從右脇生」<sup>1384</sup>

*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, Digha Nikāya*

“Again, when a Bodhisatta emerges from his mother’s womb”<sup>1385</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「此闍浮提林微尼園。示現從母摩耶而生。」<sup>1386</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「時四月八日， 清和氣調適，  
齋戒修淨德， 菩薩右脇生，  
大悲救世間， 不令母苦惱。」<sup>1387</sup>

<sup>1378</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a17-18)

<sup>1379</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, c7-12)

<sup>1380</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2042, p. 103, b7-18)

<sup>1381</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 493, b24-p. 494, b19)

<sup>1382</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, a24)

<sup>1383</sup> (CBETA, T51, no. 2085, p. 861, a17-b9)

<sup>1384</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 16, a6-7)

<sup>1385</sup> Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 248.

<sup>1386</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 388, b27-28)

<sup>1387</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a23-24)

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「此閻浮提林微尼園。示現從母摩耶而生。」<sup>1388</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「爾時夫人，既入園已，諸根寂靜；十月滿足，於二月八日日初出時，夫人見彼園中，有一大樹，名曰無憂，花色香鮮，枝葉分布，極為茂盛；即舉右手，欲牽摘之；菩薩漸漸從右脇出。」<sup>1389</sup>

437-439 《阿毘曇毘婆沙論》

「生有多種。或說。入母胎時名生。或說。出母胎時名生。或說。時五陰名生。或說。不相應行陰少分名生。或說。非想非非想處四陰名生。何處說入母胎時名生者。如經說。諸家生彼彼處生出現。出母胎時名生者。」<sup>1390</sup>

445 《賢愚經》

「佛生迦毘羅衛淨飯王家，右脅而生」<sup>1391</sup>

455 《治禪病祕要法》

「日種王太子 甘蔗之苗裔 星光月外甥 摩耶夫人子」<sup>1392</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「適至樹下。樹即屈枝自歸王后。諸天百千咸共散花。爾時菩薩從右脇生。」<sup>1393</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「樹為屈枝。[普曜]經云。十月滿足。於四月八日日初出時。於無憂樹下花葉茂盛。便舉右手欲牽摘之。菩薩漸漸從右脇出。佛所行讚云。古昔王生或從股生。手生頂生腋生。我從右脇而生。大善權經。菩薩欲不由胞胎一頓成佛。為防人疑恐是變化。不受法故現受胎生。經中前後所現皆滅疑生信。」<sup>1394</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「四月八日夜明星出時。后思園觀遊憐鞞樹下。三千國土六反震動。沸宿隕落樹即屈枝。母即攀執。諸天散華。從右脇生。」<sup>1395</sup>

Untainted Delivery:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“When the Bodhisatta came forth from his mother’s womb, first gods received him, then human beings ... he did not touch the earth.”<sup>1396</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“As soon as he was born the thousand-eyed (Indra) well-pleased took him gently, bright like a golden pillar”<sup>1397</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“there were present before him S’akra, the lord of the Devas, and Brahma, lord of the earth, and they respectfully and intelligently and in full memory received the Bodhisattva under cover of a beautiful piece of silk cloth. Brahma, lord of the earth, and his suite of Brahmakayika Devaputras plucked out the tower in which the mother of Bodhisattva had dwelt

<sup>1388</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 628, c2-3)

<sup>1389</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, a20-24)

<sup>1390</sup> (CBETA, T28, no. 1546, p. 381, a11-16)

<sup>1391</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 433, a3)

<sup>1392</sup> (CBETA, T15, no. 620, p. 341, a9-10)

<sup>1393</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, b4-5)

<sup>1394</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, b6-12)

<sup>1395</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b18-21)

<sup>1396</sup> Ñānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 982.

<sup>1397</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 11.

during her pregnancy, and carried it away to Brahmaloaka for the purpose of erecting a chaitya on it, and worshipping it. No Bodhisattva should be received by any human being, therefore was the Bodhisattva first received by the Devas ... Immediately after his birth the Bodhisattva alighted on the earth; and at that time, piercing through the earth, a noble lotus appeared for the newly-born Mahasattva Bodhisattva.”<sup>1398</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「釋梵摩持天衣裏之」<sup>1399</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》卷 1：「何故菩薩安和澹泊忽然而生，其身清淨無有垢穢？菩薩至尊三界之上，雖處胎中如日炤水，淨無所著不增不減，故現脇生不與凡同，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1400</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「爾時菩薩從右脇生，忽然見身住寶蓮華」<sup>1401</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「世尊初生之時，有四天子手執極細衣，住於母前，令母歡喜」

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「菩薩出胎天人承接，後為世人之所捧持，是為十一奇特之法。」<sup>1402</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「梵天王持寶蓋、釋提桓因以天寶衣承接」<sup>1403</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「生未至地帝釋捧接。」<sup>1404</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「迦毘羅城處胎滿足十月而生。」<sup>1405</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「于時樹下，亦生七寶七莖蓮花，大如車輪；菩薩即便墮蓮花上，無扶侍者 ... 時四天王，即以天繒接太子身，置寶机上；釋提桓因手執寶蓋，大梵天王又持白拂，侍立左右」<sup>1406</sup>

472 《付法藏因緣傳》

「生未至地帝釋奉接。」<sup>1407</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「母適攀樹枝菩薩誕生。是為菩薩善權方便。忽然現身住寶蓮花 ... 瑞應本起云。梵釋下侍。四天王接置金机上 ... 釋梵天衣裏之。」<sup>1408</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「經云于時樹下。生七莖七寶蓮花。大如車輪。菩薩墮蓮花上 ... 經云。時四天王以天繒接待。置寶几上。帝釋執蓋。梵王執白拂。左右侍立。」<sup>1409</sup>

<sup>1398</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 123–124.

<sup>1399</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c19)

<sup>1400</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, c17-20)

<sup>1401</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 494, a26)

<sup>1402</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, a20-21)

<sup>1403</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 219, c12-13)

<sup>1404</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 488, a11)

<sup>1405</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 731, a15-16)

<sup>1406</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, a24-b2)

<sup>1407</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2058, p. 299, b10-11)

<sup>1408</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, b11-22)

516 《經律異相》

「四王接上金案。」<sup>1410</sup>

#### Pure birth:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“When the Bodhisatta came forth from his mother’s womb, he came forth unsullied, unsmearred by water or humors or blood or any kind of impurity, clean, and unsullied.”<sup>1411</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“undefiled by any uterine dirt”<sup>1412</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》

「又，族姓子！無得興念：『菩薩處胞。』勿懷斯意，菩薩大士不由精胎。所以者何？有三昧名曰無垢，菩薩大士以斯正受而自莊嚴。兜術天人謂菩薩沒而無動搖，不觀菩薩遊於胞胎。現處母腹而從脇生，棄國捐家尋坐佛樹，示勤苦行，普現悉遍無所不變，無有勞擾而無染污。所以者何？菩薩之瑞所化清淨，是為菩薩善權方便...何故菩薩適生斯須，帝釋即下前稽首奉，不使餘天？其釋無始立茲本願：『菩薩若生，當以淨意而奉受之。』亦為菩薩本德之徵，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1413</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「世尊覆藏出母胎，不為血所污，亦不為精及諸不淨所污」<sup>1414</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「菩薩初生無有水血及以胎膜諸不淨物，其身清淨如摩尼珠，以加私國[疊\*毛]而以裹之，不相染著。何以故？彼此淨故。菩薩初生亦復如是，清淨無染如摩尼珠，其母鮮淨亦如彼[疊\*毛]，是為十三奇特之法。」<sup>1415</sup>

417-418 《佛說大般泥洹經》

「而我過去無數劫來愛欲永盡，無染污身無穢食身，清淨法身諸生已斷，以方便智隨順世間，於閻浮提生現為童子」<sup>1416</sup>

#### **Episode #5: First Contact**

##### Divine bath prior to taking seven steps:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“When the Bodhisatta came forth from his mother’s womb, two jets of water appeared to pour from the sky, one cool and one warm, for bathing the Bodhisatta and his mother.”<sup>1417</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“two pure streams of water fell down from heaven upon his head with piles of Mandāra flowers”<sup>1418</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“The two Naga kings, Nanda and Upananda, remaining in semi-developed form under the sky, bathed the Bodhisattva by pouring two streams of water, one hot and the other cold ... Śakra, Brahma, the guardians of regions, and the Devaputras by hundreds of thousands, who had

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<sup>1409</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, b15-25)

<sup>1410</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b23)

<sup>1411</sup> Ñānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 982.

<sup>1412</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 123.

<sup>1413</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, b13-20) - (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, c21-24)

<sup>1414</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, b18-20)

<sup>1415</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, a24-28)

<sup>1416</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 376, p. 870, c24-27)

<sup>1417</sup> Ñānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 982.

<sup>1418</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 11.

come there, bathed the new-born Bodhisattva with scented water and well-blown flowers, and sprinkled the same about him. Two chamaras, and a jewelled umbrella became manifest in the sky. ”<sup>1419</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「菩薩生時，於虛空中自然而有二飛流水：一、冷，二、暖，浴菩薩身，是為十四奇特之法。」<sup>1420</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「阿那婆躡多龍王、婆伽多龍王以妙香湯澡浴 ... 是時於佛母前，有清淨好池，以浴菩薩；梵王執蓋，帝釋洗身，二龍吐水。」<sup>1421</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「難陀龍王及婆難陀吐水而浴。」<sup>1422</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「難陀龍王及婆難陀吐水而浴。」<sup>1423</sup>

472 《付法藏因緣傳》

「難陀龍王及跋難陀吐水而浴。」<sup>1424</sup>

### Wise baby:

#### *Buddhacarita*

“he who was born full of wisdom, not foolish, as if his mind had been purified by countless aeons of contemplation”<sup>1425</sup>

#### *Lalitavistara*

“with full memory, knowing everything ... beheld the four quarters ... with the sight of a lion—with the sight of a Mahapurusha. At that time further birth being precluded by the maturation of the fruit of his former good works, the Bodhisattva obtained a transcendental sight ... He perceived, too, the mind and habits of all created beings. Perceiving them, he looked to ascertain whether there was any person equal to him in good conduct, in meditation, in thorough knowledge, and in the exercise of all virtuous actions; but nowhere in the three thousand great thousand regions did he see any.”<sup>1426</sup>

431 《菩薩善戒經》

「了了自知始入母胞胎時住時出時。」<sup>1427</sup>

### Radiant baby:

#### *Buddhacarita*

“when he was gazed at, though of such surpassing brightness, he attracted all eyes like the moon. With the radiant splendour of his limbs he extinguished like the sun the splendour of the lamps”<sup>1428</sup>

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<sup>1419</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 124.

<sup>1420</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, a28-b1)

<sup>1421</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 219, c13-14) ... (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 308, a11-13)

<sup>1422</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 488, a11-12)

<sup>1423</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 731, a16-17)

<sup>1424</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2058, p. 299, b11-12)

<sup>1425</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Āśvaghoṣa,” 12.

<sup>1426</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 123–124.

<sup>1427</sup> (CBETA, T30, no. 1582, p. 973, b24-25)

<sup>1428</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Āśvaghoṣa,” 12.

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「身黃金色，有三十二相，光明徹照，上至二十八天，下至十八地獄，極佛境界莫不大明。」<sup>1429</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「漸漸從胎出，光明普照耀，如從虛空墮，不由於生門。」<sup>1430</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「身黃金色有三十二相，放大光明，普照三千大千世界」<sup>1431</sup>

445 《賢愚經》

「身黃金色，三十二相、八十種好，應王金輪典四天下。」<sup>1432</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「經云。太子身黃金色。三十二相光照大千。」<sup>1433</sup>

### Seven steps:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“He took seven steps facing north, and with a white parasol held over him, he surveyed each quarter and uttered the words of the Leader of the Herd: ‘I am the highest in the world. This is my last birth; now there is no renewal of being for me.’”<sup>1434</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“with the lotus-sign in high relief, far-striding, set down with a stamp, -- seven such firm footsteps did he then take ... ‘I am born for supreme knowledge, for the welfare of the world, thus this is my last birth,’ ... gazing at the four quarters”<sup>1435</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“dauntless and fearless as a lion, and unagitated, calling to mind and contemplating on the eight objects of reflection, and knowing the mind and habits of all beings, advanced seven steps towards the east, saying, “I shall be the easternmost (foremost) in all virtuous actions, the source of all goodness.” While he advanced, the beautiful, white, wide-extended umbrella and the auspicious chamaras, advanced along with him in the sky, and where he set his foot there sprouted forth lotuses ... seven steps towards the south, saying, “I shall be worthy of reward (*dakṣiṇīya*) from gods and men.” ... the west .. seven steps, and, stopping like a lion at the seventh step ... “I am the eldest on the earth; I am the noblest on the earth; this is my western (or last) birth; I shall bring to an end all birth, decay, death and pain.” ... seven steps towards the north ... “I shall be subsequenceless (without a north) among all creation.” ... seven steps downwards ... “I shall destroy Mara and his army; I shall shower on hell the rain of the cloud of the great religion, and blow out the fire of the nether regions, so that they may be restored to happiness.” ... seven steps upwards, ... “I shall be the observed of all who live above.””<sup>1436</sup>

25-220 《大方便佛報恩經》

「於十方面行七步時，無人扶持，作如是言：『我今此身是最後邊。』」<sup>1437</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「行七步，舉手而言：『天上天下，唯我為尊。三界皆苦，吾當安之。』」<sup>1438</sup>

<sup>1429</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c6-8)

<sup>1430</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, a29-b1)

<sup>1431</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, b3-5)

<sup>1432</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 418, c26-27)

<sup>1433</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, c1)

<sup>1434</sup> Nānamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 983.

<sup>1435</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 12.

<sup>1436</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 124–125.

<sup>1437</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 164, b21-22)

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「即行七步，舉右手住而言：『天上天下，唯我為尊。三界皆苦，何可樂者？』」<sup>1439</sup>

223-253 《惟日雜難經》

「菩薩生墮地行七步止住舉右手言。我為天上天下師。止不復行。」<sup>1440</sup>

223-253 《佛說義足經》

「是太子生時，地大動現大光明，悉照一切生，便行七步，無所抱猗，便左右視出聲言：『三界甚苦，何可樂者？』」<sup>1441</sup>

252 《佛說無量壽經》

「從右脇生現行七步。光明顯曜。普照十方無量佛土。六種振動。舉聲自稱。吾當於世為無上尊。」<sup>1442</sup>

265-313 《等集眾德三昧經》：

「適生墮地則行七步。」<sup>1443</sup>

270 《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》

「墮地而行至于七步，舉手而言：『我為天上、天下最尊，當為眾庶斷生老病死。』」<sup>1444</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「行七步之中，舉足高四寸，足不蹈地，即復舉右手言：『天上天下，尊無過我者！』」<sup>1445</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》

「何故菩薩適見受已，行地七步亦不八步？是為正士吉祥之應，應七覺意覺不覺者也。自古迄于今，未有能現行七步者，是為菩薩善權方便。何故菩薩已行七步，舉手而言：『吾於世尊，天上天下為最第一，當盡究竟生老死原！』釋、梵、梵志及諸天子，彼時眾會莫不遍集，設不現斯當各自尊，則懷憍慢，便不復欲禮侍菩薩。菩薩愍念外道梵志、諸天之眾長夜不安，必墜惡趣而受苦痛。是故菩薩舉聲自讚：『吾於世尊，天上天下第一，權慧超異獨步無侶，當究竟盡生老死根。』以此音告三千大千世界。其諸天子未有來者，應聲便至。爾時異學梵志及諸天子，皆共稽首敬禮讚音，叉手歸誠，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1446</sup>

290-306 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》

「生墮地行七步。舉右手而言。天上天下唯吾為尊。當為天人作無上師。」<sup>1447</sup>

297 《漸備一切智德經》

「從母腹出，隨行七步，舉手自讚，三界最尊」<sup>1448</sup>

306 《阿育王傳》

「佛之上眼始生之日行七步處。遍觀四方舉手唱言。此是我之最後生也。末後胞胎。王聞是語。五體投地。恭敬作禮合掌涕泣。而作偈言。」

<sup>1438</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c13-15)

<sup>1439</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c2-3)

<sup>1440</sup> (CBETA, T17, no. 760, p. 607, b26-27)

<sup>1441</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 198, p. 187, a17-19)

<sup>1442</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 265, c27-p. 266, a1)

<sup>1443</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 381, p. 974, a17)

<sup>1444</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 461, p. 461, c28-p. 462, a1)

<sup>1445</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a18-19)

<sup>1446</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 160, c25-p. 161, a10)

<sup>1447</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c11-12)

<sup>1448</sup> (CBETA, T10, no. 285, p. 462, a29-b1)

修勝福吉利 得見牟尼尊 復見佛生處 得聞所說語  
我無勝福業 不得見世尊 復不見初生 亦不聞所說」<sup>1449</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「墮地行七步顯揚梵音，無常訓教：『我當救度天上天下為天人尊，斷生死苦，三界無上，使一切眾無為常安。』」<sup>1450</sup>

350-413 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「令我適生即行七步」<sup>1451</sup>

365-384 《中陰經》

「當其如來初舉一足行七步天下大動。十方諸佛皆來扶助。」<sup>1452</sup>

376 《菩薩瓔珞經》

「菩薩初生時。墮地行七步欲趣金机。次舉左足內自思惟。」<sup>1453</sup>

383 《鞞婆沙論》

「彼生時行七步。」<sup>1454</sup>

385 《僧伽羅剎所集經》

「若菩薩初生時舉足行七步，此七覺意之瑞應。是時菩薩觀察四方時，此是四賢聖諦之瑞應。是時菩薩大笑時，現度人之瑞應。」<sup>1455</sup>

388-407 《佛說摩訶剎頭經》(亦名灌佛形像經)

「生墮地行七步。舉右手而言。天上天下我當為人民作師。」<sup>1456</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「世尊初生之時，即行七步，不恐不怖，亦不畏懼，觀察諸方」<sup>1457</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》卷2〈3瑞應品〉：「菩薩生已北行七步，爾時空中自然白傘覆菩薩身，行七步已遍觀十方，發師子吼，唱如是言：『一切世間，唯我為上，天、人中尊，我為最大，從此生盡，無復後生！』是為十五奇特之法...行七步已顧視十方..作師子吼。」<sup>1458</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「復次，菩薩初生時，放大光明，普遍十方，行至七步，四顧觀察，作師子吼而說偈言：

「我生胎分盡，是最末後身；我已得解脫，當復度眾生。」...

復次，佛初生時，墮地行七步，口自發言，言竟便默，如諸嬰孩，不行不語...生時地六種動，行至七步，安詳如象王，觀視四方，作師子吼：我是末後身，當度一切眾生！...又生時，不須扶持而行七步，足跡之處，皆有蓮華，而發是言：「我是度一切眾生老、病、死者！」...菩薩初生時，行七步，口自說言：「我所以生者，為度眾生故。」言已，默然。」<sup>1459</sup>

<sup>1449</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2042, p. 103, a28-29)

<sup>1450</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 494, a27-29)

<sup>1451</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, b5-6)

<sup>1452</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 385, p. 1058, c13-14)

<sup>1453</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 656, p. 7, b9-11)

<sup>1454</sup> (CBETA, T28, no. 1547, p. 440, b25-26)

<sup>1455</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 194, p. 122, c3-6)

<sup>1456</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 696, p. 797, c11-12)

<sup>1457</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, b28-c1)

<sup>1458</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, b1-5) ... (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, c10-11)

<sup>1459</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 58, a11-15) ... (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 59, a4-5) ... (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 219, c14-16) ... (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 308, a13-15) ... (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 341, c8-10)



402-407 《坐禪三昧經》

「初生行七步發口演要言。」<sup>1460</sup>

402-412 《佛說首楞嚴三昧經》

「或於四天下。欲從兜率下生世間。或現入胎。或現處胎。或現欲生。或現生已而行七步。舉手自稱天上天下唯我為尊。」<sup>1461</sup>

402-412 《集一切福德三昧經》

「菩薩摩訶薩當其生已，行七步時，此界大地從廣六十八千由旬；菩薩生已，當下足時，便當却沒深百千由旬；還舉足時，復當踊出百千由旬；以佛持故，令是世界不動無壞、眾生無惱。最後身菩薩始初生時，則便具有如是力。」<sup>1462</sup>

402-412 《十住毘婆沙論》

「佛能普於十方無量無邊世界現生受身墮地行七步。」<sup>1463</sup>

405 《高僧法顯傳》

「太子墮地行七步。」<sup>1464</sup>

414-421 《菩薩地持經》

「生墮地時。即行七步舉手而言。吾當於世為無上尊。」<sup>1465</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「生已即能東行七步唱如是言。我於人天阿修羅中最尊最上。父母人天見已驚喜生希有心。而諸人等謂是嬰兒。而我此身無量劫來久離是法。如來身者即是法身。非是肉血筋脈骨髓之所成立。隨順世間眾生法故示為嬰兒。南行七步示現欲為無量眾生作上福田。西行七步示現生盡永斷老死是最後身。北行七步示現已度諸有生死。東行七步示為眾生而作導首。四維七步示現斷滅種種煩惱四魔種性。成於如來應正遍知。上行七步示現不為不淨之物之所染污猶如虛空。下行七步示現法雨滅地獄火。令彼眾生受安隱樂。毀禁戒者示作霜雹...如彼菩薩初出生時無人扶持。即行七步放大光明遍觀十方...摩尼跋陀大鬼神王執持寶蓋隨後侍立地神化花以承其足。四方各行滿足七步...若見菩薩初生之時。於十方面各行七步...或復示現菩薩初生行至七步」<sup>1466</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「正真心不亂，安庠行七步，足下安平跣，炳徹猶七星。  
獸王師子步，觀察於四方，通達真實義，堪能如是說。  
此生為佛生，則為後邊生，我唯此一生，當度於一切。」<sup>1467</sup>

414-426 《大方等大集經》

「既出生已舉手唱言。我三界中最尊最勝...又於生時一方面各行七步。」<sup>1468</sup>

417-418 《佛說大般泥洹經》

「北行七步而自稱言：『我於天人阿修羅為無上尊。』父母歡喜舉聲歎曰：『我生童子墮地行七步，世未曾有。』時諸眾生皆言奇特，而我未曾為童子也，無數劫來離嬰兒行，清淨法身非為骨肉穢食所長，法身示現而為童子隨順世間，南行七步現為一切無上福田；

<sup>1460</sup> (CBETA, T15, no. 614, p. 276, c25-26)

<sup>1461</sup> (CBETA, T15, no. 642, p. 640, b14-17)

<sup>1462</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 382, p. 990, b19-24)

<sup>1463</sup> (CBETA, T26, no. 1521, p. 72, b21-23)

<sup>1464</sup> (CBETA, T51, no. 2085, p. 861, a17-b9)

<sup>1465</sup> (CBETA, T30, no. 1581, p. 899, b9-10)

<sup>1466</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 388, b28-c12) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 452, a9-10) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 488, a12-14) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 528, a28-29) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 600, c18)

<sup>1467</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, b9-14)

<sup>1468</sup> (CBETA, T13, no. 397, p. 283, b14-18)

西行七步現究竟斷生老病死，於一切眾生為最後邊；東行七步現為一切眾生前導；向於四維行七步者，現斷眾邪煩惱魔行，自在天子皆悉降伏，當成應供等正覺道；上方躡虛行七步者，現如虛空無能染者；又向下方行七步者，現滅一切泥犁盛火，興大法雲霑大法雨安樂眾生，雨大法電破諸惡戒」<sup>1469</sup>

418 《大方廣佛華嚴經》

「人中尊導現生已， 遊行諸方各七步，  
觀察一切眾生類， 無礙法門覺一切。  
觀見眾生沒五欲， 人中師子現微笑，  
眾生盲冥愚癡覆， 我當度脫三有苦。  
大師子吼出妙音， 我為世間第一尊，  
顯現明淨智慧燈， 永滅生死愚癡闇。...

一生補處菩薩摩訶薩，嚴淨震動一切佛刹，釋、梵、四天王咸悉請求降神下生，以無[5]礙慧眼普觀世間一切眾生無勝我者，示現出生遊行七步大師子吼」<sup>1470</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「生已即能東行七步。唱如是言。我於人天阿修羅中最尊最上。父母人天見已驚喜生希有心。是諸人等謂是嬰兒。而我此身無量劫來久離是法。如是身者即是法身。非是肉血筋脈骨髓之所成立。隨順世間眾生法故示為嬰兒。南行七步示現欲為無量眾生作上福田。西行七步示現生盡永斷老死是最後身。北行七步示現已度諸有生死。東行七步示為眾生而作導首。四維七步示現斷滅種種煩惱四魔種性成於如來應供正遍知。上行七步示現不為不淨之物之所染污猶如虛空。下行七步示現法雨滅地獄火令彼眾生受安隱樂毀禁戒者示作霜雹...何等名為未曾有經。如彼菩薩初出生時。無人扶持即行七步...四方各行滿足七步...若見菩薩初生之時。於十方面各行七步。」<sup>1471</sup>

431 《菩薩善戒經》

「於十方面行七步時。無人扶侍作如是言。我今此身是最後邊。」<sup>1472</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「自行七步，舉其右手而師子吼：『我於一切天人之中最尊最勝，無量生死於今盡矣，此生利益一切人天。』」<sup>1473</sup>

435-443 《大方廣寶篋經》

「自行七步口出是言。我於一切世中最勝世中最大。我今當為滅諸生死。」<sup>1474</sup>

435-443 《雜阿含經》

「時，王將四兵軍眾，及持種種供養香華、幡幢，及諸伎樂，便將尊者發去。尊者隆頻林，此是如來生處，而說偈言：

「『如來初生處， 生時行七步， 顧視諸四方， 舉手指天上，  
我今最後生， 當得無上道， 天上及於人， 我為無上尊...

時，尊者舉手，指摩耶夫人所攀樹枝，而告彼樹神曰：『樹神！今現，令王見之，生大歡喜。』尋聲即見，住尊者邊，而作是言：『何所教勅？我當奉行。』尊者語王言：

『此神見佛生時。』王以偈問神曰：

『汝見嚴飾身， 生時青蓮華， 足行於七步， 口中有所說。』

神以偈答曰：

<sup>1469</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 376, p. 870, c27-p. 871, a11)

<sup>1470</sup> (CBETA, T09, no. 278, p. 533, a24-29) ... (CBETA, T09, no. 278, p. 659, c18-21)

<sup>1471</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 628, c3-16) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 35, p. 694, a10-11) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 731, a18-19) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 773, a2-3)

<sup>1472</sup> (CBETA, T30, no. 1582, p. 973, b25-26)

<sup>1473</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, a26-28)

<sup>1474</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 462, p. 475, c26-27)

『我見相好身，生時二足尊，舉足行七步，口中有所說，  
於諸天人中，我為無上尊。』<sup>1475</sup>

437-439 《阿毘曇毘婆沙論》

「菩薩已生。行於七步。」<sup>1476</sup>

445 《賢愚經》

「即行七步，舉手而言：『天上天下，唯我為尊。』... 尋行七步，稱天人尊」<sup>1477</sup>

455 《治禪病祕要法》

「生時行七步」<sup>1478</sup>

472 《付法藏因緣傳》

「地神化華以承其足。四方各行滿足七步。」<sup>1479</sup>

488 《善見律毘婆沙》

「佛以慈悲心而答婆羅門：『我不見佛於林中生時，墮地向北行七步，自觀百億萬天人、梵、魔、沙門婆羅門，無堪受我禮者。觀看已而自唱言：『天上天下，唯我為尊。』梵天聞菩薩唱已，即叉手而言：『菩薩三界獨尊，無有過者。』菩薩聞已，作師子吼：『唯我獨尊。』』佛語婆羅門：『爾時我未得道時，三界已自獨尊，何況於今眾善功德拜我為佛，云何為汝作禮耶？若人受我禮者，頭即墮地，是故汝勿於佛處希望禮拜。』」<sup>1480</sup>

502-518 《弘明集》

「墮地行七步。舉右手曰。天上天下靡有踰我者也。」<sup>1481</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「墮地行七步。顯揚梵音。天上天下為人天尊。大善權經云。菩薩行地七步亦不八步。是為正士應七覺意覺不覺也。舉手而言。吾於世間設不現斯。各當自尊。外道梵志必墜惡趣。為善權方便。」<sup>1482</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「無扶侍者自行七步。大善權云。為應七覺故行七步。涅槃經於十方面各行七步。經云。便舉右手言。我於一切天人中。最尊最勝無量生死盡矣。利益一切天人。大權云。舉手現相者。為除外道自尊必墜惡道。故本起云。天上天下唯我為尊。三界皆苦何可樂者。」<sup>1483</sup>

512 《阿育王經》

「即往彼處時優波笈多將阿育王至佛生處入嵐毘尼林(翻解脫處)舉右手指言。阿育王。此是佛生處。而說偈言。

世尊第一處 生便行七步 淨眼觀四方 而作師子吼

是我最後生 處胎住亦然 ...

優波笈多為阿育王生大信心。而問王言。有天見佛初生行七步。及聞師子吼王欲見耶。王答言大德。我今欲見優波笈多言。如來初生摩耶夫人所攀樹枝天在其中。即便以手指示其處。而說偈言。

<sup>1475</sup> (CBETA, T02, no. 99, p. 166, b25-c3) ... (CBETA, T02, no. 99, p. 166, c6-17)

<sup>1476</sup> (CBETA, T28, no. 1546, p. 381, a16)

<sup>1477</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 418, c25-26) ... (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 433, a3-4)

<sup>1478</sup> (CBETA, T15, no. 620, p. 341, a11)

<sup>1479</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2058, p. 299, b13)

<sup>1480</sup> (CBETA, T24, no. 1462, p. 699, b16-26)

<sup>1481</sup> (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 1, c7-8)

<sup>1482</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, b13-17)

<sup>1483</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, b16-22)

若有諸天人 住在此林中 得見世尊生 復聞師子吼  
 當現其自身 為阿育生信  
 是時天人便現其身。於優波笈多前立合掌說言。大德令我欲何所作。時優波笈多語阿育王。此天見佛生時。阿育王合掌向天。而說偈言。  
 汝見佛初生 百福莊嚴身 佛面如蓮花 世間所愛樂  
 復聞師子吼 依此大林中  
 是時天人復以偈答。  
 我已見佛身 光明如金色 七步行虛空 二足中最勝  
 亦聞師子吼 為天人中尊」<sup>1484</sup>

*The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*

Upagupta took King Aśoka to the Buddha's birthplace in the wood of Lumbinī, and said with his right hand pointing to the place, "King Aśoka, this is the Buddha's birthplace." And the he uttered the following stanza:

This is the first place of the World-honored One,  
 Where he walked seven steps after he was born.  
 With pure eyes he observed the four quarters  
 And made a Lion's Roar, saying,

"This is my last birth From a mother's womb."

King Aśoka prostrated himself on the ground to worship the place where the Tathāgata was born and uttered the following stanza with his hands joined palm to palm:

One who has seen the Buddha Possesses great merits.

If one has heard the Lion's Roar, He gains the same merits.

In order to engender a mind of deep faith in King Aśoka, Upagupta asked him, "Do you wish to see a heavenly being who saw the Buddha walking seven steps after he was born and heard the Lion's Roar?" The king said in reply, "Most Virtuous One, I do wish to see him."

Upagupta said, "The heavenly being is residing on the branch that Mahāmāyā was holding when the Tathāgata was born." Then he pointed to the place and uttered the following stanza:

If there is any heavenly being Residing in this wood,

Who has seen the World-honored One And heard his Lion's Roar,

May he appear in person To engender Aśoka's conviction.

The heavenly being then appeared in person and stood with hands joined palm to palm before Upagupta, to whom he said, "Most Virtuous One, what do you wish me to do?"

Upagupta said to King Aśoka, "This heavenly being saw the Buddha at the time of his birth." With his hands joined palm to palm, King Aśoka uttered the following stanza to the heavenly being:

You saw the Buddha when he was born With a dignified body of a hundred blisses.

His features resembled a lotus flower, Loved and admired by the whole world.

You also heard the Lion's Roar Right in this great wood.

The heavenly being uttered the following stanza in reply:

I have seen the Buddha's body, Brilliant with golden hues,

Walking seven steps in air, The supreme one among all bipeds.

The Lion's Roar I also heard, Honored by heavenly beings and mankind.<sup>1485</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「身長丈六。即行七步。寶華承足。舉手住而言。天上天下唯我為尊。三界皆苦何可樂者。」<sup>1486</sup>

Divine bath after taking seven steps:

*Buddhacarita*

"Two streams of water bursting from heaven, bright as the moon's rays, having the power of

<sup>1484</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2043, p. 136, c12-17) ... (CBETA, T50, no. 2043, p. 136, c22-p. 137, a11)

<sup>1485</sup> Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 27–28.

<sup>1486</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b21-23)

heat and cold, fell down upon that peerless one's benign head to give refreshment to his body”<sup>1487</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「有龍王兄弟，一名迦羅，二名鬱迦羅，左雨溫水，右雨冷泉」<sup>1488</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「四天王接置金机上，以天香湯，浴太子身。」<sup>1489</sup>

223-253 《佛說義足經》卷2：「復雨香水，盥浴太子」<sup>1490</sup>

270 《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》

「龍王吐水，釋梵共浴」<sup>1491</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「四天王即來下作禮，抱持太子，置黃金机上，和湯浴形」<sup>1492</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》

「何故菩薩清淨無垢而復洗浴，釋梵四天所見供侍？凡人初生皆當洗浴，菩薩清淨，隨俗而浴。況世人乎故現此義，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1493</sup>

290-306 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》

「第一四天王。乃至梵天忉利天王。其中諸天各持十二種香和湯雜種名花以浴太子。」<sup>1494</sup>

297 《漸備一切智德經》

「諸龍浴體」<sup>1495</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「天帝釋梵忽然來下，雜名香水洗浴菩薩，九龍在上而下香水，洗浴聖尊，洗浴竟已身心清淨」<sup>1496</sup>

350-413 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「我欲浴時令其中最勝龍王彼來浴我」<sup>1497</sup>

383 《韓婆沙論》

「二龍洗浴。」<sup>1498</sup>

388-407 《佛說摩訶剎頭經》(亦名灌佛形像經)

「第七梵天。第二忉利天王釋。及第一四天王。皆來下持十二種香湯雜華。用浴太子身。」<sup>1499</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「世尊初生之時，上虛空中雨水注下，一冷一暖，灌世尊身」<sup>1500</sup>

<sup>1487</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa,” 12.

<sup>1488</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c17-18)

<sup>1489</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c5-6)

<sup>1490</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 198, p. 187, a21)

<sup>1491</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 461, p. 462, a1)

<sup>1492</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a19-21)

<sup>1493</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 161, a18-21)

<sup>1494</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c13-15)

<sup>1495</sup> (CBETA, T10, no. 285, p. 462, b1)

<sup>1496</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 494, a29-b2)

<sup>1497</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, b11-12)

<sup>1498</sup> (CBETA, T28, no. 1547, p. 440, b26)

<sup>1499</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 696, p. 797, c13-14)

405 《高僧法顯傳》

「從舍衛城東南行十二由延到一邑名那毘伽 ... 城東五十里有王園。園名論民。夫人入池洗浴出池。北岸二十步舉手攀樹枝東向生太子。太子墮地行七步。二龍王浴太子。身浴處遂作井。及上洗浴池。」<sup>1501</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「難陀龍王及跋難陀以神通力浴菩薩身。」<sup>1502</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「應時虛空中，淨水雙流下，一溫一清涼，灌頂令身樂。」<sup>1503</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「難陀龍王及跋難陀。以神通力浴菩薩身。」<sup>1504</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「難陀龍王、優波難陀龍王，於虛空中，吐清淨水，一溫一涼，灌太子身」<sup>1505</sup>

435-443 《大方廣寶篋經》

「空中自然出生二水釋梵洗浴。」<sup>1506</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「大善權經云 ... 九龍在上而下香水洗浴菩薩 ... 修行本起云。龍王兄弟左雨溫水右雨冷泉。」<sup>1507</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「難陀龍王兄弟於空吐水。溫涼沐身。普曜云。釋梵雨香。九龍下香水浴身。修行云。水左溫右冷釋衣裹身。」<sup>1508</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「龍降香水以充洗浴。」<sup>1509</sup>

## Episode #6: Gifts

### Royal cot:

#### *Buddhacarita*

“His body lay on a bed with a royal canopy and a frame shining with gold, and supported by feet of lapis lazuli”<sup>1510</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「安處寶宮殿，臥於琉璃床，天王金華手，奉持床四足。」<sup>1511</sup>

### Divine protection:

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<sup>1500</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, c7-8)

<sup>1501</sup> (CBETA, T51, no. 2085, p. 861, a17-b9)

<sup>1502</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 528, b2-3)

<sup>1503</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, b15-16)

<sup>1504</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 773, a5-6)

<sup>1505</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, b2-3)

<sup>1506</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 462, p. 475, c27-28)

<sup>1507</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, b15-21)

<sup>1508</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, b25-28)

<sup>1509</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b23-24)

<sup>1510</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 12.

<sup>1511</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, b17-18)

*Buddhacarita*

“in his honour the yakṣa-lords stood round guarding him with golden lotuses in their hands”  
1512

197 《修行本起經》

「釋梵四王與其官屬，諸龍、鬼神、閼叉、捷陀羅、阿須倫，皆來侍衛」<sup>1513</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「梵釋神天，皆下於空中侍。」<sup>1514</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「摩尼跋陀大鬼神王。執持寶蓋隨後侍立。」<sup>1515</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「時四天王在虛空中，恭敬隨從；釋提桓因執蓋來覆；有二十八鬼神王，在園四角，守衛奉護。」<sup>1516</sup>

435-443 《大方廣寶篋經》

「又聞生時大地震動釋梵扶持。」<sup>1517</sup>

445 《賢愚經》

「萬神侍衛... 梵釋侍御」<sup>1518</sup>

472 《付法藏因緣傳》

「摩尼跋陀大鬼神王。執持寶蓋隨後侍立。」<sup>1519</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

「大善權經云... 天帝釋梵兩雜名香。斯。各當自尊。外道梵志必墜惡趣。為善權方便。」<sup>1520</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「諸夜叉王圍繞守護。」<sup>1521</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「釋梵奉侍。」<sup>1522</sup>

Divine devotion:

*Buddhacarita*

“The gods in homage to the son of Māyā, with their heads bowed at his majesty, held up a white umbrella in the sky and muttered the highest blessings on his supreme wisdom. The great dragons in their great thirst for the Law, -- they who had had the privilege of waiting on the past Buddhas, -- gazing with eyes of intent devotion, fanned him and strewed Mandāra flowers over him.”<sup>1523</sup>

<sup>1512</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 12.

<sup>1513</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c16-17)

<sup>1514</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c4-5)

<sup>1515</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 731, a17-18)

<sup>1516</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, c21-23)

<sup>1517</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 462, p. 475, c25-26)

<sup>1518</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 418, c24-25) ... (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 433, a5)

<sup>1519</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2058, p. 299, b12-13)

<sup>1520</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, b15-17)

<sup>1521</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, c4-5)

<sup>1522</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b23)

<sup>1523</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 13.

25-220 《大方便佛報恩經》卷7〈9親近品〉：「諸天、鬼神、乾闥婆、阿修羅、迦樓羅、緊那羅、摩睺羅伽，以諸華香、微妙伎樂、幡蓋供養」<sup>1524</sup>

225 《佛說無量壽經》  
「釋梵奉侍天人歸仰。」<sup>1525</sup>

270 《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》  
「我聞初始生時，釋梵奉敬皆動天地」<sup>1526</sup>

297 《漸備一切智德經》  
「釋梵稽首」<sup>1527</sup>

350-413 《大乘悲分陀利經》  
「令我生時娑訶佛土大梵魔王、帝釋、日月護世諸天、龍王、阿修羅化生大威德，夜叉、羅剎、龍、修羅令彼一切來供養我。」<sup>1528</sup>

414-421 《菩薩地持經》  
「天龍夜叉乾闥婆阿修羅迦樓羅緊那羅摩睺羅伽等。以天香花伎樂幢幡。種種嚴飾而為供養。」<sup>1529</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》  
「諸天形像承迎禮拜。」<sup>1530</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》  
「諸天於空中，執持寶蓋侍，承威神讚歎，勸發成佛道。  
諸龍王歡喜，渴仰殊勝法，曾奉過去佛，今得值菩薩。」<sup>1531</sup>

414-426 《大方等大集經》  
「光因緣故感動無量天龍夜叉及阿修羅人非人等。一切悉來而共供養。」<sup>1532</sup>

418 《大方廣佛華嚴經》  
「人中師子初生時，一切諸勝悉奉敬，  
天王帝釋梵天王，諸有智者悉敬侍。」<sup>1533</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》  
「摩尼跋陀富那跋陀鬼神大將執持幡蓋...諸天形像承迎禮拜。」<sup>1534</sup>

431 《菩薩善戒經》  
「諸天鬼神乾闥婆阿修羅迦樓羅緊那羅摩睺羅伽。以諸華香微妙伎樂幡蓋供養。」<sup>1535</sup>

435-443 《雜阿含經》  
「太子生時，令向彼神禮。時，諸神悉禮菩薩。時，諸民人為菩薩立名，今是天中天。」<sup>1536</sup>

<sup>1524</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 156, p. 164, b22-24)

<sup>1525</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 266, a1)

<sup>1526</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 461, p. 461, c27)

<sup>1527</sup> (CBETA, T10, no. 285, p. 462, b1)

<sup>1528</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, b3-5)

<sup>1529</sup> (CBETA, T30, no. 1581, p. 899, b10-12)

<sup>1530</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 528, b3)

<sup>1531</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, b19-23)

<sup>1532</sup> (CBETA, T13, no. 397, p. 283, b16-18)

<sup>1533</sup> (CBETA, T09, no. 278, p. 533, a20-21)

<sup>1534</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 773, a3-4) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 773, a6-7)

<sup>1535</sup> (CBETA, T30, no. 1582, p. 973, b26-28)

<sup>1536</sup> (CBETA, T02, no. 99, p. 166, c26-28)



502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「一切天人讚歎種智。速成佛道早轉法輪度脫眾生。惟有魔王不安本座。」<sup>1537</sup>

## Episode #7: Celebrations

### Light:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“When the Bodhisatta came forth from his mother’s womb, then a great immeasurable light surpassing the splendor of the gods appeared in the world.”<sup>1538</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“when he was born from his mother's womb, made the world bright like gold, bursting forth with his rays which dispelled the darkness”<sup>1539</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“The whole of the three thousand regions became aglow with the touch of the highest pleasure, with the growth of the mental and corporeal pleasures of all beings, and with the resplendence of many thousands of variegated colours ... At that time the farthest bound of all regions become aglow in a resplendent light.”<sup>1540</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「三千大千剎土莫不大明」<sup>1541</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「是時天地大動，宮中盡明。」<sup>1542</sup>

223-253 《佛說義足經》

「是太子生時，地大動現大光明，悉照一切生」<sup>1543</sup>

252 《佛說無量壽經》

「光明顯曜。普照十方無量佛土。」<sup>1544</sup>

270 《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》

「放大光明休息眾惡道，一切諸根皆而具足，及於其本不具足者。皆令群生去塵勞患，悉使安隱」<sup>1545</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「太子生時，上至三十三天下至十六泥犁，傍行八極，萬二千天地，皆為大明」<sup>1546</sup>

350-413 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「我當從母右脇而出，又以妙光普照娑訶佛剎無不周遍」<sup>1547</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「以大妙光普照世間，乃至幽隱諸闇冥處無有障蔽，謂此日月有大如意足，有大威德，有大福祐，有大威神，光所不照者，彼盡蒙耀，彼眾生者因此妙光各各生知」<sup>1548</sup>

<sup>1537</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, c5-6)

<sup>1538</sup> Nāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 983.

<sup>1539</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa,” 11.

<sup>1540</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 126.

<sup>1541</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c15-16)

<sup>1542</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c3-4)

<sup>1543</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 198, p. 187, a17-18)

<sup>1544</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 265, c28-29)

<sup>1545</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 461, p. 462, a2-4)

<sup>1546</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a21-23)

<sup>1547</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, a24-25)

<sup>1548</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, b11-15)

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「菩薩生時，自然光明照世界者，菩薩為得三達智故。」<sup>1549</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「生時行七步，光明滿十方；四觀發大音，我生胎分盡。... 生時光明遍照三千大千世界... 所謂佛生時，身放大光明，照三千大千世界及幽闇之處，復照十方無量諸佛三千大千世界。」<sup>1550</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「何等名為未曾有經。如彼菩薩初出生時無人扶持。即行七步放大光明遍觀十方... 金光晃曜彌滿虛空。」<sup>1551</sup>

414-426 《大方等大集經》

「放種種光能與一切眾生安樂。」<sup>1552</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「放大光明遍觀十方... 金光晃曜彌滿虛空。」<sup>1553</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「十方世界，皆悉大明」<sup>1554</sup>

435-443 《大方廣寶篋經》

「放大光明遍照世界。」<sup>1555</sup>

435-443 《雜阿含經》

「時，王問神言：『佛生有何瑞應？』神答言：『我不能宣說妙勝諸事，今略說少分：光明能徹照，身體具相好，令人喜樂見，感動於天地。』」<sup>1556</sup>

445 《賢愚經》

「光照天地」<sup>1557</sup>

512 《阿育王經》

「時王問言。如來生時有何瑞相。天人答言。我今不能廣說妙事。略說少分。即說偈言。  
放金色光明 照於盲世間 人天所愛樂 及山海地動  
乃至阿育王。以十萬兩金供養如來初生之處。即便起塔復往餘處。」<sup>1558</sup>

*The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*

The king inquired, "What were the auspicious signs when the Tathāgata was born." The heavenly being answered, "It is not possible for me to relate all the wonderful things in full. I can tell only a few things briefly." Then he uttered the following stanza:

Emitting a light of golden color,  
Shining upon this blind world,  
He was adored by men and beings in heavens,  
And the earth quaked with the sea and mountains.

<sup>1549</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, c17-18)

<sup>1550</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 75, b7-8) ... (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 219, c11-12) ... (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 308, a9-11)

<sup>1551</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 452, a9-10) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 528, b2)

<sup>1552</sup> (CBETA, T13, no. 397, p. 283, b15-16)

<sup>1553</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 694, a11-12) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 773, a5)」

<sup>1554</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, b18)

<sup>1555</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 462, p. 475, c28-29)

<sup>1556</sup> (CBETA, T02, no. 99, p. 166, c18-21)

<sup>1557</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 433, a5)

<sup>1558</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2043, p. 137, a12-17)

King Aśoka offered a hundred thousand taels of gold to the birthplace of the Tathāgata, where he constructed a stūpa. Then he went to the other places.<sup>1559</sup>

### Earthquake:

*Acchhariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“And this ten-thousandfold world system shook and quaked and trembled.”<sup>1560</sup>

*Buddhacarita*

“When he was born, the earth, though fastened down by (Himālaya) the monarch of mountains, shook like a ship tossed by the wind”<sup>1561</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“frightful, horripilating, extensive earthquakes took place”<sup>1562</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「應時天地大動」<sup>1563</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「是時天地大動」<sup>1564</sup>

223-253 《佛說義足經》

「是太子生時，地大動」<sup>1565</sup>

252 《佛說無量壽經》

「六種振動。」<sup>1566</sup>

270 《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》

「我聞初始生時，釋梵奉敬皆動天地」<sup>1567</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「天地為之振動，乃下為兒」<sup>1568</sup>

290-306 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》

「太子生時地為大動。」<sup>1569</sup>

290-307 《佛般泥洹經》

「菩薩從右脇生時，天地為大動。」<sup>1570</sup>

350-413 《大乘悲分陀利經》

「滿十月生時，以集一切福德三昧，六種震動，一切娑訶佛土，上至阿迦尼吒天下至金輪際，皆悉震動。」<sup>1571</sup>

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<sup>1559</sup> Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 29.

<sup>1560</sup> Nāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 983.

<sup>1561</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghōṣa,” 13.

<sup>1562</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 125.

<sup>1563</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c15)

<sup>1564</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c3-4)

<sup>1565</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 198, p. 187, a17)

<sup>1566</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 360, p. 265, c29)

<sup>1567</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 461, p. 461, c27)

<sup>1568</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a23)

<sup>1569</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 695, p. 796, c12-13)

<sup>1570</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 5, p. 165, b5-6)

<sup>1571</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 158, p. 267, a20-23)

365-384 《中陰經》

「當生之時天地六反震動。十方諸佛皆來扶助。是謂一弘誓法。云何為六反震動。東踊西沒。西踊東沒。北踊南沒。南踊北沒。四面都踊則中央沒。中央踊則四面沒。」<sup>1572</sup>

388-407 《佛說摩訶剎頭經》(亦名灌佛形像經)

「太子生時天地皆為大動。」<sup>1573</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「我聞世尊知出母胎，是時震動一切天地」<sup>1574</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》卷2〈3瑞應品〉：「菩薩生時於三千大千世界，一切眾生蠕動之類皆大歡喜，是為十六奇特之法...菩薩生時，地大震動者，菩薩現此生盡，無復煩惱；一切眾生應得道者，煩惱將滅，是故地動。」<sup>1575</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「生時動三千，須彌山海水；為破老病死，哀愍故生世。」<sup>1576</sup>

413 《長阿含經遊行經》

「菩薩始出母胎，從右脇生，專念不亂，則普地動」<sup>1577</sup>

*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya*

“Again, when a Bodhisatta emerges from his mother’s womb, mindful and clearly aware, then the earth shudders and shakes and violently quakes.”<sup>1578</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》

「摩尼跋陀富那跋陀鬼神大將。執持幡蓋。震動無量無邊世界。」<sup>1579</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「菩薩出興世，功德風所飄，普皆大震動，如風鼓浪舟。」<sup>1580</sup>

414-426 《大方等大集經》

「腳所蹈處皆有蓮華承捧其足。以此腳踏行步因緣。一切山河地及大海悉皆濤動。」<sup>1581</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「震動無量無邊世界。」<sup>1582</sup>

435-443 《大方廣寶篋經》

「又聞生時大地震動」<sup>1583</sup>

455 《治禪病祕要法》

「足躡動大千」<sup>1584</sup>

<sup>1572</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 385, p. 1058, c9-13)

<sup>1573</sup> (CBETA, T16, no. 696, p. 797, c12)

<sup>1574</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, b5-6)

<sup>1575</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, b5-7) ... (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, c14-16)

<sup>1576</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 75, b5-6)

<sup>1577</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 16, a6-7)

<sup>1578</sup> Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 248.

<sup>1579</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 528, a29-b2)

<sup>1580</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, b28-29)

<sup>1581</sup> (CBETA, T13, no. 397, p. 283, b18-20)

<sup>1582</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 773, a4-5)

<sup>1583</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 462, p. 475, c25)

<sup>1584</sup> (CBETA, T15, no. 620, p. 341, a11)

502-518 《弘明集》

「時天地大動宮中皆明。」<sup>1585</sup>

512 《阿育王經》

「時王問言。如來生時有何瑞相。天人答言。我今不能廣說妙事。略說少分。即說偈言。

放金色光明 照於盲世間 人天所愛樂 及山海地動

乃至阿育王。以十萬兩金供養如來初生之處。即便起塔復往餘處。」<sup>1586</sup>

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The king inquired, “What were the auspicious signs when the Tathāgata was born.” The heavenly being answered, “It is not possible for me to relate all the wonderful things in full. I can tell only a few things briefly.” Then he uttered the following stanza:

Emitting a light of golden color,

Shining upon this blind world,

He was adored by men and beings in heavens,

And the earth quaked with the sea and mountains.

King Aśoka offered a hundred thousand taels of gold to the birthplace of the Tathāgata, where he constructed a stūpa. Then he went to the other places.<sup>1587</sup>

Heavenly magnificence:

*Buddhacarita*

“and from a cloudless sky there fell a shower full of lotuses and water-lilies, and perfumed with sandalwood. Pleasant breezes blew soft to the touch, dropping down heavenly garments; the very sun, though still the same, shone with augmented light, and fire gleamed, unstirred, with a gentle lustre”<sup>1588</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“superhuman celestial clarions sounded without being blown by any one ... Devas slowly showered down from the cloudless sky small particles of rain.”<sup>1589</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「當此日夜，天降瑞應，有三十二種」<sup>1590</sup>

223-253 《佛說義足經》

「諸天於空中持白蓋，復散摩尼花」<sup>1591</sup>

397-398 《中阿含未曾有法品未曾有法經》

「世尊初生之時，諸天於上鼓天妓樂，天青蓮華、紅蓮華、赤蓮華、白蓮華、天文陀羅花及細末栴檀香散世尊上」<sup>1592</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「菩薩生時，有三十二瑞相一時俱現」<sup>1593</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「日月如常度， 光耀倍增明， 世界諸火光， 無薪自炎熾，  
淨水清涼井， 前後自然生。」<sup>1594</sup>

<sup>1585</sup> (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 1, c8)

<sup>1586</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2043, p. 137, a12-17)

<sup>1587</sup> Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 29.

<sup>1588</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 13.

<sup>1589</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 125.

<sup>1590</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 473, c8-9)

<sup>1591</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 198, p. 187, a19-20)

<sup>1592</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, c11-13)

<sup>1593</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, b18-19)

<sup>1594</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, c4-6)

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「當爾之時，所感瑞應，三十有四」<sup>1595</sup>

445 《賢愚經》

「淨飯王子，厥名悉達，其生之日，天降瑞應三十有二 ... 三十二瑞，振動顯發」<sup>1596</sup>

455 《治禪病祕要法》

「十方諸神應 嘉瑞三十二」<sup>1597</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「爾時瑞應又降三十有四。」<sup>1598</sup>

512 《阿育王經》

「時王問言。如來生時有何瑞相。天人答言。我今不能廣說妙事。略說少分。即說偈言。

放金色光明 照於盲世間 人天所愛樂 及山海地動

乃至阿育王。以十萬兩金供養如來初生之處。即便起塔復往餘處。」<sup>1599</sup>

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Miracles in the garden:

*Buddhacarita*

"a well of pure water appeared of its own accord ... Through the troops of heavenly visitants, who came seeking religious merit, the pool itself received strength to behold Buddha, and by means of its trees bearing flowers and perfumes it eagerly offered him worship. The flowering trees at once produced their blossoms, while their fragrance was borne aloft in all directions by the wind, accompanied by the songs of bewildered female bees, while the air was inhaled and absorbed by the many snakes (gathering near)."<sup>1601</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

"Then trees of every season bore flowers and fruits in the three thousand great thousand regions. Clear rolling sounds of the clouds were heard under the sky ... Delightful, mild, fragrant breeze loaded with many kinds of flowers, apparels, ornaments, and aromatic powders circulated everywhere. Free from darkness, dust, smoke and fog all the sides sparkled delightfully. From above the sky loud, deep and grave sounds were heard ... Innumerable were the flowers, powders, essences, garlands, jewels, ornaments and apparels which were showered from the clouds"<sup>1602</sup>

<sup>1595</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, b17-18)

<sup>1596</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 418, c23-24) ... (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 433, a5)

<sup>1597</sup> (CBETA, T15, no. 620, p. 341, a12)

<sup>1598</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, c6-7)

<sup>1599</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2043, p. 137, a12-17)

<sup>1600</sup> Li, *The Biographical Scripture of King Aśoka*, 29.

<sup>1601</sup> "The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa," 13-14.

<sup>1602</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 125-126.

197 《修行本起經》

「天雨花香，彈琴鼓樂，熏香燒香，擣香澤香，虛空側塞」<sup>1603</sup>

402-406 《大智度論》

「地大震動，天雨眾花，樹出音聲，作天伎樂。」<sup>1604</sup>

如是等無量希有事，是名未曾有經。」<sup>1605</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「奇特眾妙花，非時而敷榮，凶暴眾生類，一時生慈心，  
世間諸疾病，不療自然除。」<sup>1606</sup>

### Meritorious birth:

#### *Lalitavistara*

“All beings were devoted to the gratification of the newly-born Bodhisattva. They were all devoid of anger, malice, delusion, pride, dejection, disappointment, fear, covetousness, envy, and vanity. All were averted from all hurtful actions. The diseased got rid of their ailments. The hungry and the thirsty had their hunger and thirst subdued. Drunkards had their drunkenness removed. The insane got their reason back. The blind got back their power of vision, and the deaf their hearing. Those who had deformities in their mouth or other parts of their bodies had those defects removed. The poor obtained wealth, and the bound their freedom from bonds. The sufferings of those who dwelt in Avichi and other hells were suppressed at the time. The brute creation were free from the pain of devouring each other, and the dwellers in the region of Yama suffered not from hunger, thirst, and the like.”

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「天龍八部空中作樂歌頌佛德。燒香散花雨衣瓔珞紛繽亂墜。」<sup>1607</sup>

### Joyous birth:

#### *Buddhacarita*

“Gladdened through the influence of the birth of the Tathāgata, the gods of pure natures and inhabiting pure abodes were filled with joy”<sup>1608</sup>

#### *Lalitavistara*

“All creation was immersed in the highest delight.”<sup>1609</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「散曼陀羅花，專心樂供養，如來出興世，淨居天歡喜。  
已除愛欲歡，為法而欣悅，眾生沒苦海，令得解脫故。」<sup>1610</sup>

### Music and dance:

#### *Buddhacarita*

“on both sides songs mingled with musical instruments and tabours, and lutes also, drums, tambourines, and the rest, from women adorned with dancing bracelets”<sup>1611</sup>

#### *Lalitavistara*

“Great were the sounds of singing and dancing at the time ... for seven nights from the day of

<sup>1603</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c19-20)

<sup>1604</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 308, a15-16)

<sup>1605</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 308, a15-17)

<sup>1606</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, c11-13)

<sup>1607</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, c1-3)

<sup>1608</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Āśvaghoṣa,” 13.

<sup>1609</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 126.

<sup>1610</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, b23-26)

<sup>1611</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Āśvaghoṣa,” 14.

the birth of the Bodhisattva in the Lumbini garden, he was with the music of the clarion and the tadava beserved, respected, honoured, and adored<sup>1612</sup>

197 《修行本起經》

「夫人抱太子，乘交龍車，幢幡伎樂，導從還宮」<sup>1613</sup>

223-253 《佛說義足經》

「復鼓五百樂」<sup>1614</sup>

270 《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》

「諸天人民弦鼓伎樂」<sup>1615</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「菩薩生時夙夜七日，伎樂眾供百種飲食，隣鞞樹下奉菩薩母，布施、持戒、忍辱、精進興功立德」<sup>1616</sup>

397-398 《中阿含經·未曾有法品》

「我聞世尊初生之時，諸天於上鼓天妓樂，天青蓮華、紅蓮華、赤蓮華、白蓮華、天文陀羅花及細末栴檀香散世尊上。」<sup>1617</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「菩薩生時，世間樂器自然鳴者，菩薩為得八三昧故。毘舍佉！菩薩生時，不鼓自鳴者，菩薩為欲擊大法鼓故。」<sup>1618</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「萬川皆停流，濁水悉澄清，空中無雲翳，天鼓自然鳴。」<sup>1619</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「天龍八部亦於空中作天伎樂，歌唄讚頌，燒眾名香，散諸妙花，又雨天衣及以瓔珞，繽紛亂墜不可稱數」<sup>1620</sup>

435-443 《大方廣寶篋經》

「人天伎樂不鼓自鳴。」<sup>1621</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「爾時白淨王，叉手合掌，禮諸天神；前抱太子，置於七寶象輿之上，與諸群臣後宮嫔女虛空諸天，作諸伎樂，隨從入城。」<sup>1622</sup>

## Episode #8: Return to Palace

### Return to palace:

197 《修行本起經》

「夫人抱太子，乘交龍車，幢幡伎樂，導從還宮」<sup>1623</sup>

<sup>1612</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 126, 134–135.

<sup>1613</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c20-21)

<sup>1614</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 198, p. 187, a20)

<sup>1615</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 461, p. 462, a1-2)

<sup>1616</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 494, b26-28)

<sup>1617</sup> (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 470, c10-13)

<sup>1618</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, c18-20)

<sup>1619</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 1, c15-16)

<sup>1620</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 625, b5-7)

<sup>1621</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 462, p. 475, c28)

<sup>1622</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 626, a12-15)

<sup>1623</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 463, c20-21)



435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「爾時白淨王，叉手合掌，禮諸天神；前抱太子，置於七寶象輿之上，與諸群臣後宮嫔女虛空諸天，作諸伎樂，隨從入城。」<sup>1624</sup>

Procession out of palace:

*Buddhacarita*

“When ten days were fulfilled after his son's birth, with his thoughts kept under restraint, and filled with excessive joy, he offered for his son most elaborate sacrifices to the gods with muttered prayers, oblations, and all kinds of auspicious ceremonies. And he himself gave to the Brāhmans for his son's welfare cows full of milk, with no traces of infirmity, golden-horned and with strong healthy calves, to the full number of a hundred thousand. Then he, with his soul under strict restraint, having performed all kinds of ceremonies which rejoiced his heart, on a fortunate day, in an auspicious moment, gladly determined to enter his city. Then the queen with her babe having worshipped the gods for good fortune, occupied a costly palanquin made of elephants' tusks, filled with all kinds of white flowers, and blazing with gems. Having made his wife with her child enter first into the city, accompanied by the aged attendants, the king himself also advanced, saluted by the hosts of the citizens, as Indra entering heaven, saluted by the immortals.”<sup>1625</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“the Bodhisattva entered the great city of Kapilavastu with a retinue millionfold greater than that with which Mayadevi had seven days previously issued forth ... five thousand pitchers filled with scented stream water ... Five thousand maidens, holding peacock's tail chouries ... Five thousand maidens, holding palm-leaf fans ... Five thousand maidens, holding spouted urns full of aromatic water ... Five thousand maidens, holding pieces of chintz ... Five thousand maidens, holding fresh, variegated, long garlands ... Five thousand maidens, holding appropriate jewelled ornaments ... Five thousand maidens, carrying appropriate chairs ... five hundred thousand Brahmins, holding bells ... Twenty thousand elephants, arrayed in beautiful ornaments ... Twenty thousand horses, richly caparisoned and decked with golden ornaments ... Eighty thousand chariots mounted with white umbrellas, flags, pennons and networks of bells ... Forty thousand veteran heroes of majestic form, arrayed in invulnerable mail coats and breast-plates ... Kamavacharas followed the train, offering worship to the Bodhisattva with various collections of offerings. The magnificent chariot in which the Bodhisattva repaired had been decorated by Kamavachara devas with numerous collections of precious articles. Twenty thousand celestial maidens set off with numerous ornaments and holding jewelled threads dragged that chariot. Between every two Apsarases there was one human female, and between every two human females there was one Apsaras”<sup>1626</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「夫人即裹以白褰，乳母抱養，字名悉達 ... 即嚴駕白象，導從伎樂，出詣道人」<sup>1627</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「其乳母，以[疊\*毛]布囊授其母，即亦自乳養，名為悉達。悉達生身，有三十二相。明日，王與夫人議：「吾子生不與人同，國中有大道人，年百餘歲，大工相人，字為阿夷，寧可俱行相太子。」夫人曰：「大善！」王與夫人，共行到道人所」<sup>1628</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「生子滿十日，      安隱心已泰，      普祠諸天神，      廣施於有道。  
沙門婆羅門，      呪願祈吉福，      嚩施諸群臣，      及國中貧乏。  
村城婬女眾，      牛馬象財錢，      各隨彼所須，      一切皆給與。

<sup>1624</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 626, a12-15)

<sup>1625</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Āśvaghoṣa,” 20–21.

<sup>1626</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 136–137.

<sup>1627</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 474, a3-7)

<sup>1628</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a24-29)

卜擇選良時， 遷子還本宮， 二飯白淨牙， 七寶莊嚴輿。  
 雜色珠絞絡， 明焰極光澤， 夫人抱太子， 周匝禮天神。  
 然後昇寶輿， 嫫女眾隨侍， 王與諸臣民， 一切俱導從。  
 猶如天帝釋， 諸天眾圍遶， 如摩醯首羅， 忽生六面子。  
 設種種眾具， 供給及請福， 今王生太子， 設眾具亦然。」<sup>1629</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「經云。時白淨王將禮天神。前抱太子置象輿上。群臣嫫女諸天作樂。」<sup>1630</sup>

### Fortune of baby:

#### *Buddhacarita*

“Then having learned by signs and through the power of his penances this birth of him who was to destroy all birth, the great seer Asita in his thirst for the excellent Law came to the palace of the Śākya king. Him shining with the glory of sacred knowledge and ascetic observances, the king's own priest, -- himself a special student among the students of sacred knowledge, -- introduced into the royal palace with all due reverence and respect. He entered into the precincts of the king's gynaeceum, which was all astir with the joy arisen from the birth of the young prince, -- grave from his consciousness of power, his pre-eminence in asceticism, and the weight of old age ... ‘But hear now the motive for my coming and rejoice thereat; a heavenly voice has been heard by me in the heavenly path, that thy son has been born for the sake of supreme knowledge. Having heard that voice and applied my mind thereto, and having known its truth by signs, I am now come hither, with a longing to see the banner of the Śākya race, as if it were Indra's banner being set up.’ Having heard this address of his, the king, with his steps bewildered with joy, took the prince, who lay on his nurse's side, and showed him to the holy ascetic. Thus the great seer beheld the king's son with wonder, -- his foot marked with a wheel, his fingers and toes webbed, with a circle of hair between his eyebrows, and signs of vigour like an elephant. Having beheld him seated on his nurse's side, like the son of Agni (Skanda) seated on Devī's side, he stood with the tears hanging on the ends of his eyelashes, and sighing he looked up towards heaven. But seeing Asita with his eyes thus filled with tears, the king was agitated through his love for his son, and with his hands clasped and his body bowed he thus asked him in a broken voice choked with weeping, ‘One whose beauty has little to distinguish it from that of a divine sage, and whose brilliant birth has been so wonderful, and for whom thou hast prophesied a transcendent future, -- wherefore, on seeing him, do tears come to thee, O reverend one? ... ‘I have no feeling of fear as to his being subject to change, but I am distressed for mine own disappointment. It is my time to depart, and this child is now born, -- he who knows that mystery hard to attain, the means of destroying birth. Having forsaken his kingdom, indifferent to all worldly objects, and having attained the highest truth by strenuous efforts, he will shine forth as a sun of knowledge to destroy the darkness of illusion in the world. He will deliver by the boat of knowledge the distressed world, borne helplessly along, from the ocean of misery which throws up sickness as its foam, tossing with the waves of old age, and rushing with the dreadful onflow of death. ... He, the king of the Law, when he has attained to supreme knowledge, will achieve the deliverance from its bonds of the world now overcome by misery, destitute of every refuge, and enveloped in its own chains of delusion. ... Then the sage Asita, having made known the real fate which awaited the prince to the king who was thus disturbed about his son, departed by the way of the wind as he had come, his figure watched reverentially in his flight.”<sup>1631</sup>

#### *Lalitavistara*

“At that time there lived on the side of the noble Himavat mountain a great sage (*maharshi*) named Asita. He was versed in all the five sciences, and lived with his nephew Naradatta. At the moment of Bodhisattva's birth he beheld many extraordinary, wonderful, magical

<sup>1629</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 3, c8-24)

<sup>1630</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 89, c19-20)

<sup>1631</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 15–20.

occurrences. He saw Devaputras moving about in great joy under the sky, and, high in the void above, resounding the name of Buddha. The wish arose in his mind, "I must inquire into this mystery." With his intellectual eyes he surveyed the whole of the Jambudvīpa. He beheld in the great city called Kapila, in the house of king Śuddhodana, a prince was born, who was refulgent with the light of a hundred virtues, who was the adored of all regions, who bore on his person the thirty-two signs of greatness. ... Should he remain at home he will become a great sovereign, owner of a fourfold army, an emperor, victorious, virtuous, master of religion, ruler of countries, possessed of great might, and endowed with the seven jewels, and these will be the seven jewels, viz., the jewel wheel, the jewel elephant, the jewel horse, the jewel ruby, the jewel wife, the jewel lord chamberlain, the jewel commander-in-chief. Unto him will be born a thousand sons, valorous, heroic, handsome, and oppressors of enemical armies. He will conquer the whole circle of the earth to the brink of the ocean through his impartial discipline, his arms, his religion, and his might, and reign over all with supremacy and power. Should he, however, retire from urban life to a hermitage, he will become a Tathāgata, an Arhat, a knower of the perfect knowledge (*samyak-sambuddha*), a leader of unfailing policy, a lawgiver, and a perfect Buddha in this region. I should, therefore, proceed to see him. ... I know this for certain, O king, that whosoever has on his body the thirty-two noble and untainted signs, has one of two careers open to him, and not a third; he will either become a Chakravarti sovereign, or a Buddha, the noblest of men. This Prince is not desirous of sensuous objects, so he will be a Buddha."<sup>1632</sup>

#### 197 《修行本起經》

「於是香山有道士名阿夷，中夜覺天地大動，觀見光明暉赫非常，山中有[15]花，名優曇鉢，花中自然生師子王，墮地便行七步，舉頭而吼，面四十里，其中飛鳥走獸、蜎飛蚊行蠕動之類，莫不懾伏。阿夷念言：『世間有佛，應現此瑞。今世五濁盛惡，何故有此吉祥瑞應？』天曉飛到迦維衛國，未及國城，四十里外，忽然落地。心甚驚喜：『此必有佛，於我無疑。』步詣宮門，門監白王：『阿夷在門。』王愕然曰：『阿夷常飛，今者何故在門求通？』王即出禮拜迎，澡洗沐浴，施新衣服，問訊：『今日臨顧，勞屈尊聖！』阿夷答言：『聞大王夫人生太子，故來瞻省。』勅其內人，抱太子出。侍女白言：『太子疲憊，始得安眠。』阿夷喜悅，便說偈言：

『大雄常自覺，覺諸不覺者，歷劫無睡臥，豈當眠寐乎？』

於是侍女，抱太子出，欲以太子向阿夷禮。阿夷便驚起，前禮太子足。國王及群臣，見國師阿夷敬禮太子，心便悚然，益知至尊，即頭面禮太子足。阿夷猛力，迴伏百壯士，方抱太子，筋骨委震，見奇相三十二、八十種好，身如金剛，殊妙難量，悉如祕識，必當成佛，於我無疑，淚下哽咽悲不能言。時王惶怖請問：『太子有不祥乎？吉凶願告，幸勿有難。』阿夷自抑制，即便說偈言：

『今生大聖人，除世諸災患，傷我自無福，七日當命終。  
不見神變化，說法兩世間，今與太子別，是故自悲泣。』  
太子舉手言：『五道十方人，吾當盡教化，皆令得其所。  
[本我意所願，當度薩和薩，一人不得道，吾不入泥洹。』

於是阿夷喜，重禮太子足。白淨王怖止歡喜，而說偈言：

『太子有何相？當何治於世？願為一一說，諸相有何福？』

時阿夷以偈答王言：

『今觀太子身，金色堅固志，無上金剛杵，春破婬欲山。...  
面光如滿月，色像花初開，是以眉間毫，白淨如明珠。』<sup>1633</sup>

#### 223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「王告夫人：『子生非凡，吾國有道人，名曰阿夷，年百餘歲，耆舊多識，明曉相法；今欲共行相子可乎？』夫人曰：『佳！』即嚴駕白象，導從伎樂，出詣道人，賜黃金白銀各一囊，道人不受。披襲相太子，見有三十二相：軀體金色，頂有肉髻，其髮紺青，

<sup>1632</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 138–148.

<sup>1633</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 184, p. 464, a28-p. 465, a11)

眉間白毫，項有日光，目睫紺色，上下俱瞬，口四十齒，齒白齊平，方頰車廣，長舌七合，滿師子膺，身平正，脩臂指長，足跟滿安平趾，手內外握，合縵掌手，足輪千輻理，陰馬藏，鹿膺腸，鈎鎖骨，毛右旋，一一孔一毛生，皮毛細軟，不受塵水，胸有卅字。阿夷見此，乃增歎流淚，悲不能言。王夫人懼，拜手而問：『有不祥乎？願告其意。』舉手答曰：『吉無不利！敢賀大王，得生此神人。昨暮天地大動者，其正為此矣。我相法曰：「王者生子，而有三十二大人相者，處國當為轉輪聖王，主四天下，七寶自至，行即能飛，兵仗不用，自然太平。若不樂天下，而棄家為道者，當為自然佛，度脫萬姓。」傷我年已晚暮，當就後世，不觀佛興，不聞其經，故自悲耳。』」<sup>1634</sup>

#### 270 《佛說文殊師利現寶藏經》

「相師梵志豫說瑞應：「若在家者作轉輪聖王，假使出家便當得佛，則為法王而轉法輪。」」<sup>1635</sup>

#### 280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「明日，王與夫人議：「吾子生不與人同，國中有大道人，年百餘歲，大工相人，字為阿夷，寧可俱行相太子。」夫人曰：「大善！」王與夫人，共行到道人所，王以黃金一囊，白銀一囊，以上道人，道人不受金銀，即開[疊\*毛]布而視之。太子有三十二相，神光表現，道人即垂泣而悲。王夫人問：「道人！吾子將有何不善耶？王今日故相太子，欲知善惡，何以故悲泣？」道人曰：「昨日天地振動，正為太子！我傷年老，今我當去世，恨不待此人，恨不聞是人經戒，以故悲泣。」」<sup>1636</sup>

#### 308 《普曜經》

「時阿夷頭觀諸神變，知白淨王生聖太子，威神光曜過天世人；心懷欣豫欲往親觀。於是世尊重為眾會，而說頌曰...於是菩薩從寐覺起，大愛道白[疊\*毛]裹抱來詣王所；王賜黃金白銀各一囊賜道人，道人不受。披[疊\*毛]相太子，見三十二相：軀體金色，頂有肉髻，其髮紺青，眉間白毛，項出日光，目睫紺色，上下俱瞬，口四十齒，齒白齊平，方頰車廣，長舌七合，滿師子膺，身方正，脩臂指長，足跟滿安平正，內外握網縵掌，手足輪千輻理，陰馬藏，鹿膺腸，鈎鎖骨，毛右旋，一一孔一毛生，皮毛細軟不受塵水，胸有卅字。阿夷見此乃增歎，流淚悲不能言。王及大愛道心懷惶懼，拜手而問曰：『有不祥乎？願告其意。』舉手答曰：『吉無不利。敢賀大王，得生此神人！昨暮天地大動，其正為此。如我相法，曰王者生子，而有三十二大人相者，處國當為轉輪聖王，自然七寶千子，主四天下治以正法。若捨國出家，為自然佛度脫眾生。傷我年已晚暮當就後世，不觀佛興、不聞其經，故自悲耳。』」<sup>1637</sup>

#### 383 《鞞婆沙論》

「梵志相記於二處非餘。若在家者為轉輪王如法法王。若除鬚髮被著袈裟信樂捨家學道。當成如來無所著等正覺。」<sup>1638</sup>

#### 402-406 《大智度論》

「乃至將示相師：「汝觀我子實有三十二大人相不？若有三十二相具足者，是應有二法：若在家當為轉輪聖王，若出家當成佛。」諸相師言：「地天太子實有三十二大人相，若在家者當作轉輪王；若出家者當成佛。」...阿私陀仙人相之，告淨飯王：是人足下千輻輪相，指合縵網，當自於法中安平立，無能動、無能壞者。手中德字，縵網莊嚴，當以此手安慰眾生，令無所畏。如是乃至肉骨髻相，如青珠山頂，青色光明從四邊出。頭中頂相無能見上，若天、若人無有勝者。白毫眉間時，白光踰頗梨。淨眼長廣，其色紺青。」

<sup>1634</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 474, a3-25)

<sup>1635</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 461, p. 462, a4-6)

<sup>1636</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, a25-b6)

<sup>1637</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 495, b9-p. 496, b6)

<sup>1638</sup> (CBETA, T28, no. 1547, p. 440, b26-29)

鼻高直好，甚可愛樂。口四十齒，白淨利好。  
四牙上白，其光最勝。脣上下等，不大不小，不長不短。  
舌薄而大，軟赤紅色，如天蓮華。梵聲深遠，聞者悅樂，聽無厭足。  
身色好妙，勝閻浮檀金。大光周身，種種雜色，妙好無比。  
如是等三十二相具足，是人不久出家，得一切智成佛。」<sup>1639</sup>

414-421 《大般涅槃經》卷 21

「到於天廟令諸天像悉起承迎阿私陀仙抱持占相。既占相已生大悲苦。自傷當終不覩佛興... 阿私陀仙合掌恭敬。盛年捨欲如棄涕唾。」<sup>1640</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「時近處園中，	有苦行仙人，	名曰阿私陀，	善解於相法，
來詣王宮門，	王謂梵天應。	苦行樂正法，	此二相俱現，
梵行相具足，	時王大歡喜。	即請入宮內，	恭敬設供養，
將入內宮中，	唯樂見王子。	雖有姝女眾，	如在空閑林，
安處正法座，	加敬尊奉事，	如安低牒王，	奉事波尸吒。
時王白仙人：	「我今得大利。		
勞屈大仙人，	辱來攝受我，	諸有所應為，	唯願時教勸。」
如是勸請已，	仙人大歡喜：	「善哉常勝王，	眾德悉皆備。
愛樂來求者，	惠施崇正法，	仁智殊勝族，	謙恭善隨順。
宿殖眾妙因，	勝果現於今，	汝當聽我說，	今者來因緣。
我從日道來，	聞空中天說，	言王生太子，	當成正覺道。
并見先瑞相，	今故來到此，	欲觀釋迦王，	建立正法幢。」
王聞仙人說，	決定離疑網，	命持太子出，	以示於仙人。
仙人觀太子，	足下千輻輪，	手足網縵指，	眉間白毫時，
馬藏隱密相，	容色炎光明，	見生未曾想，	流淚長歎息。
王見仙人泣，	念子心戰慄，	氣結盈心胸，	驚悸不自安。
不覺從坐起，	稽首仙人足，	而白仙人言：	「此子生奇特，
容貌極端嚴，	天人殆不異，	汝言人中上，	何故生憂悲？
將非短壽子，	生我憂悲乎？	久渴得甘露，	而反復失耶？
將非失財寶，	喪家亡國乎？	若有勝子存，	國嗣有所寄，
我死時心悅，	安樂生他世，	猶如人兩目，	一眠而一覺。
莫如秋霜花，	雖數而無實，	人於親族中，	愛深無過子。
宜時為記說，	令我得蘇息。」		
仙人知父王，	心懷大憂懼，	即告言大王：	「王今勿恐怖，
前已語大王，	慎勿自生疑，	今相猶如前，	不應懷異想；
自惟我年暮，	悲慨泣歎耳。	今我臨終時，	此子應世生，
為盡生故生，	斯人難得遇。	當捨聖王位，	不著五欲境，
精勤修苦行，	開覺得真實。	常為諸群生，	滅除癡冥障，
於世永熾燃，	智慧日光明。	眾生沒苦海，	眾病為聚沫，
衰老為巨浪，	死為海洪濤。	乘輕智慧舟，	渡此眾流難，
智慧泝流水，	淨戒為傍岸。	三昧清涼池，	正受眾奇鳥，
如此甚深廣，	正法之大河。	渴愛諸群生，	飲之以蘇息，
染著五欲境，	眾苦所驅迫，	迷生死曠野，	莫知所歸趣；
菩薩出世間，	為通解脫道。	世間貪欲火，	境界薪熾然；
興發大悲雲，	法雨雨令滅。	癡闇門重扇，	貪欲為關鑰，
閉塞諸群生，	出要解脫門；	金剛智慧鑷，	拔恩愛逆鎖。
愚癡網自纏，	窮苦無所依；	法王出世間，	能解眾生縛。

<sup>1639</sup> (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 90, a22-27) ... (CBETA, T25, no. 1509, p. 219, c16-29)

<sup>1640</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 488, a14-16) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 374, p. 528, b3-4)

王莫以此子，    自生憂悲患，    當憂彼眾生，    著欲違正法。  
我今老死壞，    遠離聖功德，    雖得諸禪定，    而不獲其利。  
於此菩薩所，    竟不聞正法，    身壞命終後，    必生三難天。」<sup>1641</sup>  
王及諸眷屬，    聞彼仙人說，    知其自憂歎，    恐怖悉以除。」<sup>1642</sup>

424-452 《大般涅槃經》

「至於天廟令諸天像悉起承迎。阿私陀仙抱持占相。既占相已生大悲苦。自傷當終不覩佛興... 阿私陀仙合掌恭敬。盛年捨欲如棄涕唾。」<sup>1642</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「彼婆羅門又白王言：『有一梵仙名阿私陀，具足五通，在於香山，彼能為王斷諸疑惑。』諸婆羅門說此語已，辭別而去。爾時白淨王心自思惟：『阿私陀仙人，居在香山，途逕嶮絕，非人所到，當以何方請來至此。』王可作此心念之時，阿私陀仙人遙知王意；又復先見諸奇瑞相，深解菩薩為破生死故現受生；以神通力，騰虛而來，到王宮門。時守門者入白王言：『阿私陀仙人，乘虛空來，今在門外。』王聞歡喜，即勅令前，王至門上自奉迎之；既見仙人，恭敬禮拜，而即問言：『尊者既來，住門不進，為守門者不聽前耶？』仙人答言：『無見止者，既來相詣，宜須先白。』王便隨從，入於後宮，敬請令坐，而問訊言：『尊者！四大常安和不？』仙人答言：『蒙大王恩，幸得安樂。』時白淨王白仙人言：『尊者！今日能來下降，我等種族，方大熾盛，從今已去，日就吉祥，為是經過故來此耶？』仙人答言：『我在香山，見大光明諸奇特相，又知大王心之所念，以是因緣故來到此；我以神力，乘虛而來，聞上諸天說：『王太子必當得成一切種智，度脫天人；又王太子，從右脇生，墮於七寶蓮花之上而行七步，舉其右手而師子吼：『我於天人之中，最尊最勝；無量生死於今盡矣，此生利益一切天人。』』又復諸天圍繞恭敬，聞有如此大奇特事；快哉大王！宜應欣慶。太子今者可得見不？』即將仙人至太子所，王及夫人抱太子出，欲禮仙人；時彼仙人，即止王曰：『此是天人三界中尊，云何而令禮於我耶？』時彼仙人，即起合掌，禮太子足。王及夫人白仙人言：『唯願尊者為相太子。』仙人言：『善。』即便占相，具見相已；忽然悲泣，不能自勝；王及夫人見彼仙人悲泣流淚，舉身戰怖，生大憂惱，如大波浪動於小船，問仙人言：『我子初生，具諸瑞相，有何不祥而悲泣耶？』爾時仙人歔歔答言：『大王！太子相好具足，無有不祥。』王又問言：『願更為我占視太子，有長壽相不？得轉輪王位王四天下不？我年既暮，欲以國土皆悉付之，當隱山林出家學道，所可志願，唯在於此。尊者為觀，必定果耶？』爾時仙人又答王言：『大王！太子具三十二相，一者、足下安平平如奩底；二者、足下千輻網輪輪相具足；三者、手足相指長勝於餘人；四者、手足柔軟勝餘身分；五者、足跟廣具足滿好；六者、足指合縷網勝於餘人；七者、足趺高平好與跟相稱；八者、伊泥延鹿膺纖好如伊泥延鹿王；九者、平住兩手摩膝；十者、陰藏相如馬王象王；十一者、身縱廣等如尼拘類樹；十二者、一一孔一毛生青色柔軟右旋；十三者、毛上向靡，青色柔軟右旋；十四者、金色相其色微妙勝閻浮檀金；十五者、身光面一丈；十六者、皮薄細滑不受塵垢不停蚊蚋；十七者、七處滿，兩足下兩手中兩肩上頂中皆滿，字相分明；十八者、兩腋下滿如摩尼珠；十九者、身如師子；二十者、身廣端直；二十一者、肩圓好；二十二者、口四十齒；二十三者、齒白齊密而根深；二十四者、四牙最白而大；二十五者、方頰車如師子；二十六者、味中得上味，咽中二處津液流出；二十七者、舌大軟薄能覆面至耳髮際；二十八者、梵音深遠如迦陵頻伽聲；二十九者、眼色如金精；三十者、眼睫如牛王；三十一者、眉間白毫相軟白如兜羅綿；三十二者、頂髻肉成。具有如此相好之身，若在家者，年二十九，為轉輪聖王；若出家者，成一切種智，廣濟天人。然王太子，必當學道得成阿耨多羅三藐三菩提，不久當轉清淨法輪，利益天人開世間眼。我今年壽，已百二十，不久命終，生無想天，不覩佛興，不聞經法，故自悲耳。』又問仙人：『尊者向占言，有二種：一當作王；二成正覺；而今云何言決定成一切種智。』時仙人言：『我相之法，若有眾生，具三十二相，或生非處，又不明

<sup>1641</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 2, c2-p. 3, b23)

<sup>1642</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 731, a19-21) ... (CBETA, T12, no. 375, p. 773, a7-8)

顯，此人必為轉輪聖王；若三十二相，皆得其處，又復明顯，此人必成一切種智。我觀大王太子諸相，皆得其所，又極明顯，是以決定知成正覺。』仙人為王說此語已，辭別而退。」<sup>1643</sup>

445 《賢愚經》

「相師觀見，記其兩處，在家當作轉輪聖王，出家成佛。」<sup>1644</sup>

472 《付法藏因緣傳》

「至於天廟令諸天像悉起奉迎。阿私陀仙抱持占相。既占相已生大悲苦。自傷當終不覩佛興。」<sup>1645</sup>

502-557 《釋迦譜》

眾釋啟曰。聞雪山有仙梵志。名阿夷頭耆舊多識明曉相法。王大歡喜。嚴駕白象往詣阿夷頭。道人披[疊\*毛]相太子。見三十二相。軀體金色。頂有肉髻。其髮紺青。眉間白毫。頂出日光。目睞紺色。上下俱眇。口四十齒。白齊平方。頰車廣長。舌七合滿。師子膺。身方正。修臂指長。足跟滿安平。指內外握。合縵掌手。足輪千輻理。陰馬藏。鹿蹄腸。鈎鎖骨。毛右旋。一一孔一毛生。皮毛細軟。不受塵水。胸有萬字(瑞應本起悉同)。阿夷見此乃增嘆。流涕悲不能言。王惶懼而問。有不祥乎。願告其意。舉手答曰。吉無不利。敢賀大王生此神人。昨天地大動其正為此。我相法中王者生子。有三十二相者。處國當為轉輪聖王七寶自至。若捨國出家為自然佛。傷我年已晚暮。當就後世不覩佛興。故自悲耳。」<sup>1646</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「王召善相者五百人。於大寶殿令占太子。咸言出家成佛在家輪王。又曰。香山大仙阿私陀者。具五神通能斷王疑。彼仙應念騰空到宮。將太子出欲令致敬。便止之曰。此乃三界中尊。即起合掌禮太子足。便具相已忽然悲泣。便言至年十九為轉輪王。若出家者成一切智然必成佛說法度人。以相明顯皆得其處。我今已年百二十矣。不久生無想天。不覩佛興故自悲耳。」<sup>1647</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「愛道奉。雪山梵志名阿夷頭耆。見太子悲歎流涕。王問其故。答曰。仰慶大王。生此神人。昨天地大動。其正為此。我之相法。太子有三十二相。一體軀金色。二頂有肉髻。三其髮紺青。四眉間白毫。五頂出日光。六目睞紺色。七上下俱眇。八口四十齒。九齒白齊平。十方頰車。十一廣長舌。十二合滿堂。十三師子膺。十四身方正。十五脩臂。十六指長。十七足跟滿。十八安平正。十九內外握。二十合曼掌。二十一十千輻輪理。二十二足千輻輪理。二十三陰馬藏。二十四鹿蹄腸。二十五鈎鎖骨。二十六毛右旋。二十七一孔一毛。二十八皮毛細軟。二十九不受塵水。三十胸有萬字(瑞應同少二)。身有此者。若在家。為轉輪聖王。七寶自至。若出家為自然佛。傷我年已晚暮。不覩佛興。是故悲耳。」<sup>1648</sup>

Mother's death:

*Acchariya-abhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*

“Seven days after the birth of the Bodhisatta, his mother died and reappeared in Tusita heaven”<sup>1649</sup>

<sup>1643</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 626, c12-p. 627, c3)

<sup>1644</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 202, p. 433, a6-7)

<sup>1645</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2058, p. 299, b14-16)

<sup>1646</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, c17-p. 6, a4)

<sup>1647</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 90, a1-9)

<sup>1648</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b28-c15)

<sup>1649</sup> Nāṇamoli and (Bhikkhu.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 982.

*Buddhacarita*

“When ten days were fulfilled after his son's birth ... Then the queen with her babe having worshipped the gods for good fortune, occupied a costly palanquin made of elephants' tusks, filled with all kinds of white flowers, and blazing with gems ... But the queen Māyā having seen the great glory of her new-born son, like some Rṣi of the gods, could not sustain the joy which it brought; and that she might not die she went to heaven.”<sup>1650</sup>

*Lalitavistara*

“on the seventh night after the birth of the Bodhisattva, Māyādevī departed this life. After her demise she was born among the Thirty-three Devas ... the span of her life was so ordained. The mothers of all former Bodhisattvas also died on the seventh night after their confinement ... Because on the delivery of the well-grown Bodhisattva with all his organs complete his mother's heart splits”<sup>1651</sup>

223-253 《太子瑞應本起經》

「適生七日，其母命終，以懷天人師功福大故，上生忉利，封受自然。菩薩本知母人之德不堪受其禮故，因其將終，而從之生。」<sup>1652</sup>

223-253 《惟日雜難經》

「菩薩生已七日其母終者有四因緣。一者用懷菩薩故。天來占視與飯食。二者如生死法當禮母。以菩薩尊故母七日終。三者其母宿命自應爾。四者譬如人有功當封便上天生。」<sup>1653</sup>

280-312 《異出菩薩本起經》

「太子生七日，其母終矣。」<sup>1654</sup>

285 《慧上菩薩問大善權經》卷 1：「何故菩薩生後七日其母便薨？后壽終盡福應昇天，非菩薩咎。前處兜術，觀后摩耶大命將終，餘有十月七日之期，故從兜術神變來下現入后藏，以是推之，非菩薩咎，是為菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1655</sup>

308 《普曜經》

「於時菩薩生七日後，其母命終。於比丘意所趣云何？七日命終，菩薩咎也？莫作是觀。所以者何？本命應然。菩薩察之臨母命終，因來下生，懷菩薩時，諸天供養至見生矣，以服天食不甘世養，本福應然。去來今佛皆亦如是，母七日終。所以者何？菩薩生時，母根身具無有[(乖/土)\*央]漏，應受忉利天上功祚服食，上忉利天。」<sup>1656</sup>

397-439 《優婆夷淨行法門經》

「毘舍佉！菩薩生七日已，其母命終生兜率天，受天快樂，是為八未曾有奇特之法。」<sup>1657</sup>

414-426 《佛所行讚》

「時摩耶夫人，見其所生子，端正如天童，眾美悉備足，  
過喜不自勝，命終生天上。」<sup>1658</sup>

435-443 《過去現在因果經》

「太子既生，始滿七日，其母命終，以懷太子功德大故，上生忉利，封受自然。太子自知，福德威重，無有女人堪受禮者，故因將終，託之而生。」<sup>1659</sup>

<sup>1650</sup> “The Buddha-Carita or The Life of Buddha by Aśvaghoṣa,” 20, 24.

<sup>1651</sup> Mitra, *The Lalitavistara*, 136.

<sup>1652</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 185, p. 474, b7-10)

<sup>1653</sup> (CBETA, T17, no. 760, p. 607, c15-19)

<sup>1654</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 188, p. 618, b14)

<sup>1655</sup> (CBETA, T12, no. 345, p. 161, a27-b2)

<sup>1656</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 186, p. 494, c23-p. 495, a1)

<sup>1657</sup> (CBETA, T14, no. 579, p. 961, a13-14)

<sup>1658</sup> (CBETA, T04, no. 192, p. 4, b5-7)



502-557 《釋迦譜》

「菩薩七日後其母命終。所以者何。應然。菩薩察之。臨母命終因來下生。懷菩薩時諸天供養。已服天食不甘世養。本福應然。去來今佛皆亦如是。母七日終。應受忉利天上功祚。適升彼天。五萬梵天各執寶瓶。二萬魔妻手執寶縷侍菩薩母。瑞應本起云。菩薩本知母人之德不堪受其禮。故因其將終而從之生。長阿含經云。毘婆尸佛降神母胎。專念不亂安樂無畏。身壞命終生忉利天。此是常法。大善權經云。生後七日其母便薨。福應昇天。非菩薩咎。前處兜率觀后摩耶。大命將終。餘有十月七日之期。故神變來下。是菩薩善權方便。」<sup>1660</sup>

502-557 《釋迦氏譜》

「太子本起云。菩薩本知母人之德不堪受禮。因其將終而從生焉。普曜云。太子生七日後。母便命終生忉利天。五萬梵天各執寶瓶。二萬魔妻手執寶縷。而共侍衛。三世佛母皆同此相。大權經云。福盡生天非菩薩咎。前處兜率觀后餘命。十月七日故託神來。」<sup>1661</sup>

516 《經律異相》

「後七日母便命終。生忉利天。」<sup>1662</sup>

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<sup>1659</sup> (CBETA, T03, no. 189, p. 627, c18-21)

<sup>1660</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2040, p. 5, c2-14)

<sup>1661</sup> (CBETA, T50, no. 2041, p. 90, a18-23)

<sup>1662</sup> (CBETA, T53, no. 2121, p. 15, b25-26)

# GLOSSARY

*A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Loyang*  
《洛陽伽藍記》

*Abhidharma-vibhāṣā-śāstra*  
《阿毘曇毘婆沙論》

*Abhiṣkramaṇa(sūtra)*  
《異出菩薩本起經》

*Adbhutadharmaparyāya-sūtra*  
《未曾有經》

*Administrative Ceremonials of Han Officials Selected for Use*  
《漢官典職儀式選用》

altar of Earth and Grain Gods  
社稷壇

altar of Heaven 天壇

*An Immortal Riding a White Elephant*  
仙人騎白象

ancestral temple 宗廟

Anxi 安息

ascending to a height 登高

Ashuqie 阿輸伽

*Aśokarājāvadāna* 《阿育王傳》

*Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*  
《道行般若經》

Asuqie 阿恕伽

August Emperor of Great Peace of the Liu [family] exalting sageliness  
陳聖劉太平皇帝

auspicious rites 吉禮

auspiciousness 祥瑞

*Avadānaśataka* 《撰集百緣經》

*Avataṃsaka-sūtra* 《大方廣佛華嚴經》

Ayu wang 阿育王

*Baihu tongde lun* 《白虎通德論》

bagua 八卦

baixi 百戲

baizan yinyue 唄讚音樂

bao 報

bao 寶

beizan yinyue 唄讚音樂

*Bhadrapālasūtra* 《般舟三昧經》

bili 筆簞

Binyang Cave 賓陽洞

*Biography of Eminent Monks* 《高僧傳》

Bodhiruci 菩提流支

bodhisattva emperor 菩薩皇帝

*Bonihuanhou guanla jing*  
《般泥洹後灌臘經》

*Book of Jin* 《晉書》

*Book of Lord Shang* 《商君書》

*Book of Poetry* 《詩經》

*Book of Southern Qi* 《南齊書》

*Book of Wei* 《魏書》

border sacrifice 郊祭

*Brahmajālasūtra* 《梵王經》

*Brahmaviśeṣacintīparipṛcchā- sutra*  
《持心梵天所問經》

Bright Prospect Monastery  
景明寺

*Buddhacarita* 《佛所行讚》

*Buddhadarśana* 見佛

buddhist association 邑義

Cai Zhi 蔡植

<i>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta</i>	〈轉輪聖王修行經〉	custom	俗
Cao Wei	曹魏	cymbals	小鈸
<i>Cefu yuangui</i>	《冊府元龜》	<i>Da fangbian fo baoen jing</i>	《大方便佛報恩經》
central Kingdom	中國	dajia	大駕
central plains	中原	Dajicheng	大棘城
<i>changdao yinyue</i>	唱導音樂	<i>Damamūka-nidānasūtra</i>	《賢愚經》
<i>chanyu</i>	單于	dāna	布施
Chang'an (Xi'an)	長安 (西安)	danuo	大儼
<i>changdao yinyue</i>	唱導音樂	dao	道
Changhe Palace	閭闔宮	dao of Huangdi and Laozi	黃老道
Changqiu si	長秋寺	Daoqiong	道瓊
<i>chaogong</i>	朝貢	daoren tong	道人統
Chen Jing	陳景	<i>Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā</i>	《十住毘婆沙論》
<i>chengwu</i>	城舞	<i>Dasazheniqianzi suoshuo jing</i>	《大薩遮尼乾子所說經》
<i>Chensheng liu taiping huangdi</i>	陳聖劉太平皇帝	<i>Dasi ming</i>	《大司命》
<i>Classic of Changes</i>	《易經》	<i>Datang xiyu ji</i>	《大唐西域記》
<i>Classic of Documents</i>	《書經》 《尚書》	<i>daxian liangshi</i>	大賢良師
<i>Classic of Mountains and Seas</i>	《山海經》	de	德
<i>Classic of Poetry</i>	《詩經》	deng gao	登高
<i>Compendium of Chinese Books on Warfare</i>	《中國兵書集成》	<i>Dharmapāda</i>	《法句譬喻經》
<i>Complete Collection of Tang period poems</i>	《全唐詩》	Di or Badi	巴氏
<i>Comprehensive Canons</i>	《通典》	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>	《長阿含經》
Confucius	孔子	<i>Discourses in the Balance</i>	《論衡》
county	縣	district	鄉
crowned prince of heavenly king	天王太子	Dong Zhongshu	董仲舒
		<i>Drumakinnararājaparipṛcchā-sūtra</i>	《佉真陀羅所問如來三昧經》
		earth	社

eight divinatory trigrams	八卦	festival	節
eldest son	元子	festival music	慶節大會音樂
elephant dance	行象	fidelity	信
emperor	皇帝	First Emperor of Qin	秦始皇帝
Emperor Ai of Han	漢哀帝	five classics	五經
Emperor He of Southern Qi	南齊和帝	five virtues and five relationships	五常五倫
Emperor Huan of Han	漢桓帝	Flourishing Prospect Nunnery	景興尼寺
Emperor Wen of Han	漢文帝	flute	橫笛
Emperor Wu of (Southern) Liang	梁武帝	<i>fo xingxiang</i>	佛形像
empire belongs to one family	天下為家	<i>Foshuo foming jing</i>	《佛說佛名經》
empire belongs to the public	天下為公	<i>Foshuo guanfo sanmeihai jing</i>	《佛說觀佛三昧海經》
Empress Dowager Hu	胡太后	<i>Foshuo guanxi fo xingxiang jing</i>	《佛說灌洗佛形像經》
Empress Dowager Wenzhao	文昭皇太后	<i>Foshuo renwang bore poluomi jing</i>	《佛說仁王般若波羅蜜經》
empress of heavenly king	天王皇后	<i>Foshuo zhude futian jing</i>	《佛說諸德福田經》
Erlitou	二里頭	Fotucheng	佛圖澄
Erzhu Rong	爾朱榮	four barbarians ward	四夷里
<i>Essential Methods of the Common People</i>	《齊民要素》	<i>foxiang</i>	佛像
<i>Eulogy to Kumārajīva</i>	〈鳩摩羅什法師誄〉	<i>Fozu tongji</i>	《佛祖統紀》
exorcism	儺	fruit of retribution	果報
Fangshan	房山	<i>fu</i>	福
Faxian	法顯	Fu Jian	符堅
Fayun si	法雲寺	<i>fubao</i>	福報
<i>Fenbie gongde lun</i>	《分別公德論》	<i>fude</i>	福德
<i>feng and shan sacrifices</i>	封禪	<i>fushu</i>	符書
Feng Shoushou	馮受受	<i>futian</i>	福田

<i>futian</i>	福田	Guzang	姑臧
Fuxi	伏羲	Hall of Brightness	明堂
<i>fuxiangzhu</i>	扶像主	hamlet	里
Gan Bao	干寶	Han Feizi	韓非子
Gao Huan	高歡	harmonization	和
Gao Yang	高洋	harp	箜篌
Gao Axing	高阿興	heaven	天
<i>Genealogical Records of the Sakya Clan</i> 《釋迦氏譜》		heavenly king	天王
gentleman	君子	heavenly mandate	天命
Goddess of Heaven	天后	Helian Bobo	赫連勃勃
<i>gongde</i>	功德	Heyin	河陰
<i>Gongguo ge</i>	《功過格》	<i>History of the Former Han Dynasty</i> 《漢書》	
Gongxian	鞏縣	<i>History of the Later Han Dynasty</i> 《後漢書》	
good retribution	福報	<i>hu</i>	胡
grain	稷	<i>huangdi</i>	皇帝
grand procession	大駕	<i>huangdi zi</i>	皇帝子
great exorcism	大儺	<i>huhan gewu</i>	胡漢歌舞
great sage and good master	大賢良師	Huichong	慧崇
Guan Bo	管伯	<i>hui ri</i>	晦日
<i>Guanxi fo xingxiang jing</i> 《佛說灌洗佛形像經》		Huijue	慧覺
Guest rituals	賓禮	<i>huixiang</i>	迴向
<i>guobao</i>	果報	Huiyuan	慧遠
<i>Guodian</i>	《郭店》	<i>hunping</i>	魂瓶
<i>Guoqushi fo fenwei ji</i> 《過去世佛分衛經》		<i>huren</i>	胡人
<i>Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing</i> 《過去現在因果經》		<i>hutao guan</i>	胡桃館
<i>Guoyu</i>	《國語》	humanity	仁
Guyang	古陽	<i>Hun-dun</i>	渾沌
		<i>hunping</i>	魂瓶

*huo* 禍  
*i* 邑  
*i-i* 邑義  
*i-she* 邑社  
 image carrier 扶像主  
*Imperial Overview from the Taiping Reign* 《太平御覽》  
 imperial tributes 朝貢  
 inauspicious rites 凶禮  
 iron-wheel king 鐵輪王  
*Jeweled Forest of Buddhist Wisdom* 《法苑珠林》  
*jianfo* 見佛  
*Jiang* 羌  
*Jiangsu* 江蘇  
*Jianye* 建業  
*Jie* 羯  
*jie* 節  
*jieqing dahui yinyue* 節慶大會音樂  
*Jingchu suishi ji* 《荊楚歲時記》  
*Jingle si* 景樂寺  
*Jingming si* 景明寺  
*Jingxing nisi* 景興尼寺  
 joyous rites 嘉禮  
*junzi* 君子  
*Juqu Mengxun* 沮渠蒙遜  
*Kaishan si* 開善寺  
*Kang Mengxiang* 康孟詳  
*Kang Senghui* 康僧會  
 karmic retribution 業報

*Karuṇāpuṇḍarīkasūtra* 《大乘悲分陀利經》  
 king 王  
 King Cheng of Zhou 周成王  
 King Dashanjian 大善見王  
 King Wuding 武丁王  
 King Zhao of Zhou 周昭王  
 King Zheng of Qin 秦政王  
 King Zhou of Shang 商紂王  
 King Zhuang of Zhou 周莊王  
 Knight-errant 俠  
 Kongwangshan 孔望山  
 Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之  
*la* 臘  
*laba* 臘八  
*Lalitavistara* 《普曜經》  
 Lantern Festival 上元  
 Laozi 老子  
*li* 禮  
 Li Chong 李冲  
*Liji* 《禮記》  
 literati 世  
 little man 小人  
 Liu Teng 劉騰  
 Liu Yuan 劉淵  
*liyue* 禮樂  
 Longcheng 龍城  
 Longmen 龍門  
 Longshan 龍山  
 Lord Ding 帝丁

Lord Yi	乙帝	Mount Tai	泰山
Lord-on-high	上帝	Mozi	墨子
<i>Lotus Sūtra</i>	妙法蓮華經	Murong Huang	慕容皝
Lu Hui	陸翽	Murong Hui	慕容廆
Lu Yuanming	盧元明	music and propriety	禮樂
<i>luoxia jiuyue</i>	洛下舊樂	music for praising and prostrating to the Buddha	讚佛禮佛音樂
Luoyang	洛陽	mutual stealing	相偷
lustration festival	上巳	<i>Nadun</i>	納頓
<i>Luxuriant Dew of the Annals</i>	《春秋繁露》	Nunnery of Happy View	景樂寺
<i>Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra</i>	《大般涅槃經》	Nunnery of the Exemplar	昭儀尼寺
<i>Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra</i>	《大智度論》	<i>nuo</i>	儺
<i>Maitreyapariṣcchopadeśa</i>	《彌勒菩薩所問經論》	Nüwa	女媧
Mang Mountains	邛山	opening music	唱導音樂
<i>manyi di</i>	蠻夷邸	<i>pai</i> flute	排簫
Mencius	孟子	<i>pāramitās</i>	波羅蜜
Mengjin Meiyao	孟津煤窯	<i>parīnāma</i>	迴向
Middle Kingdom	中國	Penglai Mountain	蓬萊山
military rites	軍禮	perfect lord	真君
Modu	冒頓	Pingcheng	平城
<i>Mohe chatou jing</i>	《摩訶剎頭經》	<i>pipa</i>	琵琶
Monastery of Eternal Brilliance	永明寺	<i>Precious Canon of the Jade Candle</i>	《玉燭寶典》
<i>Monograph on Buddhism and Daoism</i>	《釋老志》	Prince of Rencheng	任城王
<i>Monthly Ordinances</i>	《月令》	Prince of Runan	汝南王
<i>Monthly Ordinances of the Four People</i>	《四民月令》	Prince Xuan of Zhou	周宣王
morality	德	Prince Yuanchen of Hejian	河間王元琛
		Prince Yuanyi of Qinghe	清河王元懌

Prince Yuanyong of Gaoyang  
高陽王元雍

propriety 禮

province 郡

*pusa huangdi* 菩薩皇帝

*Pusa yingluo benye jing*  
《菩薩瓔珞本業經》

*Qimin Yaosu* 《齊民要素》

*qingjie dahui yinyue* 慶節大會音樂

*qingyue* 清樂

Qu Yuan 屈原

Qian'er Qing 鉗爾慶

Queen Mother of the West  
西王母

Ran Min 冉閔

*Ratnagotravibhāga-  
mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*  
《究竟一乘寶性論》

reciprocity 報

*Record of Examining Spirits* 《搜神記》

*Record of Image Building by Chen  
Shenjiang* 《陳神姜等造像記》

*Record of Regions West of the Great  
Tang* 《大唐西域記》

*Record of Rites* 《禮記》

*Record of the Year and Seasons of Jing-  
Chu* 《荊楚歲時記》

*Records from the Region of Ye*  
《鄴中記》

*Records of the Grand Historian*  
《史記》

*ren* 仁

retribution 報

*Rhapsody on the Western Capital*  
《西京賦》

righteous 義

*Rites of Zhou* 《周禮》

*Ruanxian* 阮咸

*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*  
《妙法蓮華經》

*Sāgaranāgarājaparipṛcchā-sūtra*  
《佛說海龍王經》

*śarīra* 舍利

*Sequel to the Records of Qi Xie*  
《續齊諧記》

*Shamen bujing wangzhe lun*  
《沙門不敬王者論》

*Shamen tong* 沙門統

*shangdi* 上帝

*shangsi* 上巳

*shangyuan* 上元

*she* 社

*sheji* 社稷

*shengwang* 聖王

*shi* 士

*Shi Bo* 史伯

“*Shi Fu*” 世俘

*Shi Hu* 石虎

*Shi Le* 石勒

*Shixian* 師賢

*Shou shishan jie jing* 《受十善戒經》

*Shuangnü si* 雙女寺

*Shun* 舜

*Shuowen jiezi* 《說文解字》



Sima Qian 司馬遷  
*Simin Yueling* 《四民月令》  
*siyi li* 四夷里  
 slender and clean image 秀骨清像  
 Son of Heaven 天子  
*Songs of Chu* 《楚辭》  
 Songxian Pugou 嵩縣鋪溝  
 soul urns 魂瓶  
 sovereign altar 太社  
*Spring and Autumn Annals*  
 《春秋》  
*Śrīkaṇṭhasūtra* 《佛說除恐災患經》  
 submit to the will of Heaven  
 聽天由命  
*Sukhāvātīvyūhasūtra* 《佛說無量壽經》  
*Sumāgadhāvadāna-sūtra*  
 《佛說三摩竭經》  
*Sumatidārikāparipṛcchā-sūtra*  
 《佛說須摩提菩薩經》  
 Sun Zhi 孫稚  
 superintendent of śramaṇas 沙門統  
*Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom for Humane Kings* 《仁王般若波羅蜜經》  
*sūtra* chanting music 唄讚音樂  
*sūtra* reading music 轉讀音樂  
*taiping zhenjun* 太平真君  
*Taishang ganying pian*  
 《太上感應篇》  
*taishe* 太社  
*Taizi ruiying benqi jing*  
 《太子瑞應本起經》  
 talisman 符書

Tanyao 曇曜  
*Tathāgata* 如來  
*tathāgata king* 如來王, 佛王  
*Tathāgatapratibimbapratīṣṭhanuśaṃsā-sūtra* 《佛說作佛形像經》  
 Temple of Guidance to Goodness  
 開善寺  
 Temple of Respect for the Sage  
 宗聖寺  
 Temple of the Prolonger of Autumn  
 長秋寺  
*The Ascent of Laozi to the West to Transform the Barbarians*  
 《老子西昇化胡經》  
*The Classic on Great Peace and on the Conservation of the Origin according to the Calendar revealed by the Officers of Heaven* 《天官歷包元太平經》  
*The Great Learning* 《大學》  
*The Great Marshal of Fate*  
 《大司命》  
*The Śramaṇa Does Not Pay Homage to the Ruler Treatise* 《沙門不敬王者論》  
 three emperors and five monarchs  
 三皇五帝  
 three unities and five powers  
 三統五德  
*Tianguan libaoyuan taiping jing*  
 《天官曆包元太平經》  
*tianming* 天命  
*tianren heyi* 天人合一  
*tiantan* 天壇  
*tianwang huanghou* 天王皇后  
*tianwang taizi* 天王太子  
*tianxia weijia* 天下為家

<i>tianxia weigong</i>	天下為公	<i>xiangtou</i>	相偷
<i>tianxia zhizhong</i>	天下之中	Xiao Yan	蕭衍
<i>tianzhu bu</i>	天竺部	<i>xiaoren</i>	小人
<i>tianzi</i>	天子	Xiaoyi	小乙
<i>tielun wang</i>	鐵輪王	Xie Fei	解飛
<i>Tilig</i>	狄歷	<i>Xijing Fu</i>	《西京賦》
<i>tingtian youming</i>	聽天由命	<i>Xiliang yue</i>	西涼樂
<i>Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution</i>	《太上感應篇》	<i>xin</i>	信
<i>Treatise on Ritual Observances</i>	《禮儀志》	Xin'an Xiwuo	新安西沃
<i>Triskandhaka-sūtra</i>	《佛說舍利弗悔過經》	<i>xingxiang</i>	行像
		<i>xingxiang</i>	行象
		Xiongnu	匈奴
true lord of great peace	太平真君	<i>Xiugu qingxiang</i>	秀骨清像
<i>Viradattagrhapatipariprcchā-sūtra</i>	《佛說菩薩修行經》	<i>Xiuxing benqi jing</i>	《修行本起經》
virtue / all-embracing love	仁	<i>xiyü yinyue</i>	西域音樂
<i>wang</i>	王	Xuangao	玄高
Wang Mang	王莽	Xuanzang	玄奘
Wang Sunman	王孫滿	Xunzi	荀子
Wang Yangming	王陽明	Yang Xuanzhi	楊銜之
<i>Wenzi</i>	《文子》	Yanshi Shuiquan	偃師水泉
wheel-turning king	轉輪王	Yao	堯
wheel-turning sage king	轉輪聖王	Yao Xing	姚興
		<i>yayue</i>	雅樂
		<i>ye</i>	業
winter solstice	冬至	<i>yebao</i>	業報
Wuchang	武昌	Yellow Emperor	黃帝
Wu Jun	吳均	Yellow Turban	黃巾
Xianbei	鮮卑	<i>Yi Book of Zhou</i>	《逸周書》
Xiangguo	襄國	<i>Yichu pusa benqi jing</i>	《異出菩薩本起經》
<i>xiangrui</i>	祥瑞		

Yichuan Lüzhai	伊川呂寨	<i>zhuandu yinyue</i>	轉讀音樂
Yiyang Hutou Monastery	宜陽虎頭寺	<i>zhuanlun wang</i>	轉輪王
<i>yi</i>	邑義	<i>zhuanlun shengwang</i>	轉輪聖王
Yongming si	永明寺	Zongsheng si	宗聖寺
Yongning Monastery	永寧寺	<i>zuibao</i>	罪報
Yu	禹		
Yu Wentai	宇文泰		
Yuan Cheng	元澄		
Yuan Yue	元悅		
<i>yuanzi</i>	元子		
<i>Yueling</i>	《月令》		
<i>Za piyu jing</i>	《雜譬喻經》		
<i>zanfo lifo yinyue</i>	讚佛禮佛音樂		
Ze Rong	笮融		
Zhang Daoshi	張道智		
Zhang Heng	張衡		
Zhang Jue	張角		
<i>Zhantanshu jing</i>	《佛說栴檀樹經》		
Zhaoyi nisi	昭儀尼寺		
<i>zhejia yueluo</i>	遮迦越羅		
<i>zhenjun</i>	真君		
<i>zhenren</i>	真人		
<i>Zhong benqi jing</i>	《中本起經》		
<i>zhongguo</i>	中國		
<i>zhongyuan</i>	中原		
<i>zhuandu yinyue</i>	轉讀音樂		
Zhou Gong	周公		
<i>Zhoushu yiji</i>	《周書異記》		
Zhu Dali	竺大		

