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Research Articles

觀音蜜咒圖



Figure 1: Guanyin mizhou tu, from the Xingming guizhi; Qing dynasty.

Looting the Pantheon: On the Daoist Appropriation of Buddhist Divinities and Saints

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Alas! Daoism has secretly preyed upon Buddhist books. From olden times until the present they have made false fabrications and forgeries, pirating and stealing the words and sentences from the Buddhist scriptures, including pictures, structures and all of their pages [as well as their] headings and titles. [Moreover] they have slandered and vilified the Thus Come Ones by plundering falsely the former sages.¹

Introduction

S**CHOLARS** working on different Christian cults in medieval Europe are wont to deal with the rather commonplace, although highly interesting, cases of relic thefts and the associated co-option of particular saints and their cults. Such cases reinforce our perception of the period as a dynamic and creative one in regard to the transfer and proliferation of Christian cultic practices to new areas and social contexts beyond their original locales. However, in the cases I shall discuss in the following, you will not be treated to cases of intra-religious take-overs or the simple borrowing or copying of relics within a single religious tradition, but you will be presented with cases in which one religion appropriated entire cults, divinities and saints from another religion. What we shall see here concerns gods and saints in what we may term “inter-religious transit” and their ultimate adoption and inclusion into different—and as I hope to demonstrate—entirely

1. *Fozu lidai tongcai* 佛祖歷代通載 [Comprehensive Record of Buddhas and Patriarchs in Historical Periods], compiled under the Yuan; cf. T. 2036, 49: 719b.

new spiritual contexts. This paper will deal with a major aspect of the religious exchange between Buddhism and Daoism in medieval China, namely that of Daoist appropriation of Buddhist divinities and saints. The related and highly important issue concerning the typological copying of deities for similar, functional purposes that we see in both the Buddhist and Daoist material will not be dealt with here for practical reasons. Although it is of equal importance for our understanding of the inter-religious appropriations that took place in the meeting and co-existence in the same cultural space of the two religions, that issue is so extensive that it would require a separate discussion in its own right.

That being said, there are certain religious parameters which set the Buddhist and Daoist meeting and subsequent interaction apart from the general situation we see in medieval Europe with its distinct center-periphery situation, at least up to the time of the Reformation. In the following I shall endeavour to present the most important and obvious features of this process as it unfolded in medieval and early pre-modern China. Firstly (and perhaps most importantly), both Daoism and Buddhism were polytheistic. We are to a large measure justified in this claim, I believe, even though on a perceived deeper level, there are indeed underlying concepts of larger, divine and cosmic entities behind their respective doctrines and cosmologies. Nevertheless, on the practical and functional levels both traditions upheld the notions of numerous gods in ranked hierarchies staffing their respective pantheons, a reality which is of course also reflected in the liturgical literature such as prayer books and ritual manuals.

Secondly, both were non-centralized religions in the sense that none of them upheld a specific religio-political centre. Both Buddhism and Daoism had numerous primary and secondary centres, controlled by different schools or distinct lineages. Moreover, their professionals, i.e. the Daoist and Buddhist monks and nuns, did not enjoy universal status or authority, similar to designated representatives of the Catholic Church such as priests, bishops or cardinals. Therefore their ability to function, expand and proselytize depended in large measure on local socio-political and economic conditions. But when doing so, these professionals would appear to have enjoyed considerably more individual freedom and spiritual licence than for example their Catholic counterparts, who appear—at least in principle—to have carried out their work under some degree of papal supervision.

Thirdly, the two religions co-existed within the same social and cultural frameworks, i.e. within the boundaries of Chinese society and cultural norms. This factor is crucial for understanding how and why Buddhism and Daoism were so relatively open towards each other's teachings and practices, and why borrowings between them took place rather frequently.

Fourthly, Buddhism and Daoism shared holy sites (although not exclusively so). This holds good for both larger-scale, primary sites such as holy mountains, as well as for more localized centers like provincial towns or even localized cult-sites such as those we find at the county-level.

Fifthly, both were major book traditions. The cult of the book, or rather the cult of

books, was central to both Buddhism and Daoism. Holy writ was universally upheld by both traditions and numinous values ascribed to books were established in more or less the same manner, such as through divine revelation or a special, sanctified transmission. On the practical level it is well known that both Buddhism and Daoism copied from each other's scriptures. In other words, as far as the the formation of their respective sets of holy books are concerned, each was indebted to the other to a considerable extent.

Finally, the degree of inter-religious influence, borrowing and appropriation that took place in the intersections and cross-overs between Buddhism and Daoism, varied in intensity, depth and significance in the course of Chinese history. There were periods where this inter-religious activity was exceptionally strong and far-reaching, impacting greatly on the development of both religions; while at other times, Buddhism and Daoism would appear to have developed without too much interference from the other, in almost autonomous fashion. However, at no time in their respective progress in Chinese history did the inter-play between the two traditions cease or disappear.

Even though some of the above aspects relating to Buddhism and Daoism can also be found—in more or less similar manner—in the interplay between the medieval Christian church and its religious rivals in Europe and beyond, I would like to stress that the decentralized, polytheistic and doctrinally polyvalent, sometimes even internally contradictory elements found within the structures of both Chinese Buddhism and Daoism, immediately set them apart from Christianity, in particular the Catholic church, as direct, comparative models.

Here I cannot address all the relevant cases or the entire range of relevant sources, but will limit myself to a few representative examples with the aim of casting light on some of the most important ones. I shall distinguish between Buddhist gods and saints which were simply borrowed, and those that were appropriated and transformed into Daoist gods or saints. Nevertheless, both categories are of interest to us here. Although the co-opting of divinities and saints was also done on the Buddhist side, in what follows I shall limit myself to the Daoist appropriations.

Co-opting gods and saints

It is my contention that the Daoist taking-over of parts of certain deities from the Buddhist pantheon conceptually and practically altered the course of Daoism, just as the copying and adaption of Buddhist scriptures and parts of their teaching did. This is because, from its very beginning as a bona fide religion, the direction Daoism took was to a considerable degree shaped and formed by the components it took over from Buddhism.² More than three decades ago the Dutch Sinologist Erik Zürcher identified various aspects of Daoism which had developed through the religion's close contact with Buddhism. Zürcher distinguished between so-called "soft" areas in the Daoist make-up, aspects of

2. See Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism", *T'oung-pao* 66 (1980), pp. 84–147.

Daoist practice in which Buddhist influence was stronger, and “denser” areas where it was less so or not at all. This model has—with minor modifications—persisted down to the present, and although it does have a number of methodological advantages, and constituted a methodological approach of considerable significance when it appeared, it is now outmoded. In any case it is no longer adequate to explain the range, depth and dynamics which the Daoist adaption of Buddhist doctrines and practices reveal. The main reason for this being that the Buddhist influence on Daoism has now begun to be understood as a much more complex, deep-seated and variegated process than hitherto acknowledged.³ Incidentally, one of the areas which Zürcher largely overlooked has to do with the topic of the present essay, namely the taking-over by Daoism of Buddhist divinities and a number of saintly figures as well as the appropriation of entire cults.

Let us begin our investigation by identifying in the Daoist context, the appearance of Buddhas, the highest and most primary deities in the Buddhist pantheon. Given the extensive and highly structured Daoist pantheon with its hierarchies of gods, one would perhaps expect that Buddhas did not have a place in the Daoist religion, but they actually do. Here it must be said that Buddhas generally do not appear as primary divinities, and also rarely figure with their Buddhist names in the Daoist literature, but more as a sort of “divine extras”, evidently added on for good measure.⁴ Nevertheless, we do encounter both buddhas and bodhisattvas to a greater or lesser extent in the Daoist scriptures, and it is therefore not surprising to find them incorporated into the pantheon of Daoism in visual representations as well.

A prominent example of a primary buddha appearing in a Daoist text, is that of Vairocana, the so-called Cosmic Buddha,⁵ who came to the fore in Esoteric Buddhism in China during the middle of the Tang dynasty (618–906). Although it took some centuries for him to be included in the Daoist pantheon, he occurs by name among the divinities to be

3. For examples of this change, see Charles D. Orzech, “Fang Yankou and Pudu: Translation, Metaphor, and Religious Identity”, in *Daoist Identity: History, Lineage and Ritual*, Livia Kohn and Harold D. Roth (eds.), Honolulu: Hawai’i University Press, 2002, pp. 213–34; Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008; Livia Kohn, “Steal Holy Food and Come Back as a Viper: Conceptions of Karma and Rebirth in Medieval Daoism”, *Early Medieval China* 4 (1998), pp. 1–48; Henrik H. Sørensen, “On the Appropriation and Borrowing of Spells in the Inter-Religious Meeting Between Daoism and Esoteric Buddhism”, unpublished paper presented at the workshop, *Between Borrowing and Taking Over: The Problem of “Sinification” and its Implications for a Theory of Religious Contact*, at RUB, August 2011.

4. For such an example see the celebrated scripture, *Gaoshang Yuhuang benxing jijing* 高上玉皇本行集經 [Scripture on the Collected and Fundamental Acts of the Highest Jade Emperor], dating from the Northern Song. See *Zhentong Daozang* 正統道藏 [Daoist canon from the Zhengtong Reign-period; hereafter *DZ*], Xinwenfeng reprinted edition, 60 vols. (Taipei, 1976), 1428. It features the Buddha (*rulai* 如來), “Qingjing Ziran Juewang 清靜自然覺王, teaching all the bodhisattvas sudden-enlightenment (*dunwu* 頓悟) of the Great Vehicle”, cf. *ibid.*, p. 717c.

5. For a brief presentation of Vairocana in the context of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism, see Henrik H. Sørensen, “Central Divinities in the Esoteric Buddhist Pantheon in China”, in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, Charles D. Orzech (General Editor), Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K. Payne (eds.), *Handbook of Oriental Studies*, Section 4 (China), 24, Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 90–133 (esp. pp. 90–92).

invoked in the *Yuqing yuanshi xuanhuang jiuguang zhen jing* 玉清元始玄黃九光真經 [True Scripture [Spoken by] Original Commencement of the Heaven of Jade Purity on the Nine Luminaries of Primordial Obscure Yellow].⁶ In this scripture there is a lengthy spell, actually a series of spells, uttered by the Heavenly Worthy of the Original Commencement, one of the principal divinities in Daoism,⁷ in which Vairocana has a prominent position. The spells read as follows:

Om, Original Commencement who gives birth to heaven,
 Om, Original Commencement who gives birth to earth,
 Om, Original Commencement, who gives birth to man, the complete order of
 the three forces, the profusion of the ten thousand things, people, who
 do not cherish life, are transformed into yin spirits, spirits without their
 vital force (*qi* 炁) complete, continue to become lower ghosts,
 Om, Lower Ghosts listen to my jade sounds, when your ghostly forms are de-
 stroyed, on giving up that ghostly appearance you will gain rebirth in my
 heaven, *zha!*
 Om, men of the Way listen to my jade sounds,
 and I will suddenly shed my human karma and enjoy long life as a divine im-
 mortal.
 Whether in heaven or on earth my lifespan will be the same.
 Harmonizing the brightness of sun and moon,
 Let me all my life enjoy blessings,
 [And may] seven generations of ancestors flourish.
 After that, let the bodies of these seven generations of ancestors be liberated
 [and remain for] a *kalpa*⁸ in [the heaven of] Jade Purity.⁹
 Om, Heavenly Way, listen to my jade sounds.
 May heavenly blessings suddenly increase,
 and my old karma forever be exhausted.
 Do not let me sink down into the lower heavens, but always dwell in Jade
 Purity.
 Quickly, quickly in accordance with the august command of Original Com-
 mencement, [May] the two teachings [i.e. Daoism and Buddhism] merge
 into one.

6. DZ 42. Date uncertain, but probably from the Song–Yuan transition. For a survey, see *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, Kristoper Schipper and F. Verellen (eds.), Chicago University Press, 2003, p. 1232.

7. This god is the Supreme Emperor of Original Commencement 元始上帝. See *The Taoist Canon*, Vol. 2, p. 1231.

8. The original text is somewhat obscure at this point. Hence, I here seek to render its actual meaning rather than attempting a literal translation.

9. The heaven of Jade Purity is the three-fold paradise propounded in the Shenxiao 神霄 cycle of scriptures. For additional information on this tradition, see *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, pp. 1081–83.

Om, Quickly, quickly in accordance with the command of the pure *dharmakāya* [fashen 法身]¹⁰ Great Holy Vairocana.¹¹

While the entire format and extensive parts of the contents of these spell-texts are full of Buddhist references and concepts, their ritual logic and referential context is otherwise fully in accord with Daoist doctrine. Nevertheless, not only does the final spell in the series refer to the harmonization between Daoism and Buddhism, it goes so far as to fuse them into one complete teaching. The fact that the final spell in the series invokes Vairocana, the primary Buddha in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon, shows the degree of the scripture's indebtedness to that Buddhist tradition.

However, Vairocana was not the only buddha which found its way into the Daoist pantheon in the course of history. The *Quanzhen lidou qingjing keyi* 全真禮鬥清淨科儀 [Ritual Proceedings of the Quanzhen for Purifying Prostrations],¹² a ritual manual of the Quanzhen School 全真 of Daoism includes Tejaprabha, the Buddha of the Constellations among the divinities to be invoked in connexion with the worship of the asterisms.¹³ Another important Daoist scripture, the ritual manual *Taishang sandong shenzhou* 太上三洞神咒 [Divine Spells of the Three Caverns of Taishang],¹⁴ refers to the Buddha in a honorific manner as the "Old Buddha, the Golden Immortal (Gufo Jinxian 古佛金仙)".¹⁵ This indicates that both transposition and displacement was part of the process that took place with the appropriation of the Buddhist divinities. More on this will follow.

Avalokiteśvara in Daoism

As the most popular bodhisattva in the Chinese Buddhist pantheon Avalokiteśvara was also subject to Daoist appropriation. Or stated differently, the Daoist side could not afford

10. In standard Daoist parlance *fashen* 法身 normally indicates a monastic rank, at least during the Tang period. Here, however, the traditional Buddhist concept of *dharmakāya* as the cosmic or transcendental body of a buddha is retained. Exactly how this was to be understood in the Daoist context is not immediately clear to me, and is, in any case, not evident in the text itself either.

11. DZ 42, p. 1300. See also the conflation between Vairocana and the Superior Emperor of Original Commencement in the spell-texts contained in DZ 1452, p. 768c.

12. Cf. <http://canon.theway.hk/index.php?s=全真禮斗清淨科儀>. This ritual text of the Quanzhen primarily concerns the Doumu and Great Dipper cults in combination. Uncertain date but probably not much older than the early Qing, although it obviously builds on earlier material. It incorporates most of the *Taishang xuanling doumu dasheng yuanjun benming yansheng xin jing* 太上玄靈斗姆大聖元君本命延生心經 (DZ 621), but also additional material including the entire text of the *Taishang xuanling beidou benming yansheng zhen jing* 太上玄靈北斗本命延生真經 [True Scripture of the Highest, Abstruse Numinosity Great Dipper of Original Destiny for the Extension of Life], DZ 751.

13. Cf. <http://canon.theway.hk/index.php?s=全真禮斗清淨科儀>.

14. DZ 78. For further information on this text, see Tiyao, p. 59. Only superficially dealt with in *The Taoist Canon*, vol. II, p. 1039. Here the work is classified as belonging to the Lingbao tradition.

15. DZ 78, ch. 8, ch. 10, etc.

not to adopt the worship of this important divinity.¹⁶ In the early pre-Song material, Avalokiteśvara does not figure as such in the Daoist scriptures, but from the Song onwards, he appears with increasing frequency in the canonical material, not always as a primary deity, but certainly important enough to be mentioned by his Buddhist name.¹⁷ One of the reasons that Avalokiteśvara only occurs by name in the later material, is that as a divine character he had already been appropriated by Daoism earlier in his career as a saviour-divinity, but under the name Heavenly Worthy Jiuku 救苦天尊.¹⁸

There are several cases where Avalokiteśvara makes his appearance in the context of Daoism, but for the present purpose I shall limit myself to one case only, namely that we find in the Daoist work, the *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨 [Tablet for Pointing Out Nature and Mandate],¹⁹ which belongs to the Three Religions (*sanjiao* 三教) complex of Daoist Ming texts. Here we find a special chart featuring Avalokiteśvara in which the celebrated Six Character Spell associated with him is placed in the context of *neidan* 內丹, the practices on so-called “inner alchemy”, a major element in the Daoist cult of immortality. The chart in question is entitled *Guanyin mizhou tu* 觀音密咒圖 [Chart of the Esoteric Spell of Avalokiteśvara].²⁰ This chart features an image of the seated bodhisattva, in effect a carbon copy of a Buddhist illustration, above which are two diagrams, one on either side (Figure ??). The chart on the right of Avalokiteśvara features six letters in slightly corrupted Siddham, reading: *Oṃ manī padme huṃ*, the celebrated Six Character Spell associated with this bodhisattva. The chart on the left side is the Chinese rendering of the spell with additional explicative text in Chinese. The manner in which the individual elements of the spell have been arranged therein is distinctly un-Buddhist. Note that the final power sound, *huṃ*, has been set apart, being placed atop the text of the mantra. The primary reason for this, I suspect, is because the chart is geared towards correlating the first five syllables of the mantra with the traditional five elements-complex that underlies all *neidan* practice.

In order to gain a fuller picture of what transpired when our Buddhist divinity was

16. For an example of the Daoist appropriation of Avalokiteśvara, but with a changed name, see the *Taiji jiuku hushen miao jing* 太一救苦護身妙經 [Wonderful Scripture on the Highest Unity Alleviating Suffering and Protecting The Body], DZ 351, said to date from the period between the Tang and Song, probably not much earlier than the late ninth century; cf. *Daozang tiyao*, p. 266. A survey of the scripture can be found in Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, pp. 180–85.

17. For one such example, see the *Taiji jilian neifa* 太極祭煉內法 [Inner Method of Taiji for Sacrificing to and Sublimating [the Souls of the Deceased]], DZ 548. The work itself dates from the late Southern Song and was compiled by the Fuzhou scholar and artist Zheng Sixiao 鄭思肖 (1241–1318). It features the use of Sanskrit phonetics in the performance of the magic. For further information on this important ritual text, see *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, pp. 1003–4.

18. For further discussion on this development, see Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, pp. 174–208.

19. *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨 as contained in the *Daozang jinghua lu* 道藏精華錄 [Flowery Record of the Essence of the Daoist Canon]. For an overview of this work, see *Zhongguo daojiao qigong yangsheng daquan* [Comprehensive Compilation of Daoist Qigong Practices for Nourishing Life in China; hereafter ZDQY], Li Yuanguo (comp.), Chengdu: Sichuan Cidian Chubanshe, 1991, pp. 1940–41.

20. *Xingming guizhi*.

integrated into a context of Daoist ideas, we may take a look at the text accompanying the *Guanyin mizhou tu*:

This spell is Guanyin Bodhisattva's secret and wonderful mind seal. If people write down the six characters of this greatly famous spell, it is the same as if they were copying the Dharma Treasure of the Tripiṭaka. If people chant the *Six Character Great Vidyā Spell*, then it is the same as if they were chanting seven turnings [zhu 軸] of numinous communications [lingjiao 靈交],²¹ whereby one will be able to open the gate of wisdom and be able to get rid of the one hundred sufferings, and the karmic oppressions of the three worlds which will all be purified. All sins will be exhausted, completely dissipated and done away with. One will be liberated from birth and death and receive the blissful *dharma*-body [Skt. *dharmakāya*]. Moreover, chanting the spell also has an esoteric dimension [mijue 密訣] [as follows]:

Hence, with the utterance of the first sound, i.e. *om*, my body becomes that of Vairocana Buddha.

With the utterance of the eastern sound, i.e. *ma*, my body becomes that of Akṣobhya Buddha.

With the utterance of the southern sound, i.e. *ni*, my body becomes that of Ratnasambhava Buddha.

With the utterance of the western sound, i.e. *pad*, my body becomes that of Amitāyus Buddha.

With the exhalation of the northern sound, i.e. *ma*, my body becomes that of Amoghasiddhi Buddha.

As for the sixth sound, after the above make the guttural *hum* sound, and with that my body will become that of Mahāsthāmaprabhavarāja (?).²²

After the passing of some time the five breaths will return to the origin [wuqi gui yuan 五炁歸元],²³ whereby one will accomplish unimaginable virtues, and give evidence to the penetration of the absolute.²⁴

We see here the popular Buddhist deity and his spell presented, at least on the surface, in a manner that appears to be purely Buddhist. We even have the Esoteric Buddhist setting of the Five Buddha families (Skt. *kula*), one of each of the five spell-sounds in the mantra.

21. This can either refer to scriptures revealed by the gods or writ for communication with the gods.

22. To my knowledge such a *vajrapāla* is not found in the Buddhist sources, and would therefore appear to be an invention by the author of the *Xingming guizhi*.

23. The five *qi* refer to the vital breaths of the five viscera, and in typical Daoist fashion ultimately relate to the five elements theory. They are described in the *Wuqi chaoyuan shuo* 五氣朝元說 [An Explanation of the Five Breaths Reverting to the Origin], found elsewhere in the *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨. In any case the wording here is not Buddhist, but has a strong Daoist connotation. As such it indicates a meditational form of breathing related to the internal circulation of *qi* in accordance with *neidan* practice. For further information, see ZDQY, pp. 120–21.

24. *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨.

However, the Daoist *neidan* context becomes apparent when the spiritual result of the practice with the spell is described at the end of the passage, namely the return of the visceral breaths to their origin in the absolute.

The appropriation of Avalokiteśvara and the Six Character Spell reveals something about the manner in which the Daoists utilized the material they took over. There can be little doubt that their appropriation of Avalokiteśvara first of all reflects an interest in using the power and image of the popular bodhisattva to boost their own practices. Secondly, Avalokiteśvara as a popular Buddhist divinity was an obvious choice as a vehicle for facilitating the harmonization of the Three Religions. Lastly, in doing so, they “lifted” the bodhisattva out of his (or her) original setting and re-inserted him into a new setting dominated by the spiritual concerns of *neidan* Daoism.

The increasing Daoist appropriation and transformation of the Avalokiteśvara cult and the associated teachings which took place during the later imperial period, is also reflected in the mid-Qing work, the *Guanyin xin jing bijue* 觀音心經秘解 [Secret Explanation on the Heart Scripture of Avalokiteśvara].²⁵ This text, which to all appearances and purposes appears to be a Buddhist commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya sūtra*,²⁶ one of the most important and popular Buddhist scriptures in China, on closer examination turns out to be a Daoist commentary on the Buddhist sūtra. In addition to its full-scale doctrinal modification, it casts Avalokiteśvara in the role as a female immortal (*nuxian* 女仙) from the Zhou dynasty (1122–255 BCE).²⁷ This is not the place to explore the more delicate aspects of the Daoist transformation of the terse and stringent teaching on “the perfection of wisdom (Skt. *prajñāpāramitā*)” as presented in this short sūtra, but to simply point out that the level of appropriation could, and often did, go well beyond superficial borrowing, ending with something akin to full-scale integration.

The Jade Emperor’s Buddhist Past

One of the pre-eminent cults in pre-modern Daoism is that of the Jade Emperor (Yudi 玉帝).²⁸ Common to many of these cults is the creation of a myth of origin, a story which explains how a given deity came to be. In the case of the Jade Emperor we find that his lengthy journey towards sanctity—said to have taken numerous time-cycles (Skt. *kalpa*)—was in large measure modelled on the traditional account of Śākyamuni Buddha. The Daoist use of the Śākyamuni template also reveals some familiarity with the Buddha’s life

25. For additional information on this work, see ZDQY, p. 1891.

26. T. 252, 8.

27. ZDQY, p. 1891.

28. For information on the cult of the Jade Emperor, see *Zhonghua daojiao da cidian* 中華道教大辭典, ed. Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛 *et. al.*, Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1995, pp. 1464b–65a. For the Jade Emperor’s place and role in the Daoist Pantheon, see Lennert Gesterkamp, *The heavenly court: Daoist temple painting in China, 1200–1400*, Sinica Leidensia, vol. 96, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011.

stories or at least a broad conceptual understanding of their function and importance.²⁹

It is not the place here to give a succinct account of the Jade Emperor's Buddhist connexions, nor to provide a review of all the relevant scriptural sources. Here I shall limit myself to a discussion of the *Gaoshang Yuhuang benxing jijing* 高上玉皇本行集經 [Collected Scriptures on the Supreme Jade Sovereign's Fundamental Progress],³⁰ on the basis of which we shall gain an insight into yet another feature of Daoist appropriation of Buddhist material. While the scripture in question contains a variety of Buddhist material, including structural elements, we shall here focus on the first of the *Gaoshang Yuhuang benxing jijing*'s three major parts, which deals with the Jade Emperor's myth of origin.

The text tells the story of how the Jade Emperor in a previous lifetime in the distant past was miraculously born in the country Bright Adornment of Wonderful Bliss as a son to a childless royal couple, King Pure Virtue and Queen Precious Moon Light. Having been unable to conceive, the queen prayed to Lord Lao for a son. In a dream, Lord Lao manifested himself to her and promised her a son. Accordingly a son was born amidst a variety of miracles. Having performed cultivation for many hundreds of *kalpas*, during which time the prince practised asceticism and made all kinds of self-sacrifices in the mountains he eventually became a "Golden Immortal" (*jinxian* 金仙) with the name Pure Spontaneously Enlightened King Tathāgata (Qingjing Ziran Jue Wang Rulai 清淨自然覺王如來). After this he taught all the bodhisattvas' sudden enlightenment (*dunwu* 頓悟) of the Great Vehicle and how to enter gradually the Wondrous Dao of Vacuous Nothingness (*xuwu miao dao* 虛無妙道). Eventually he became the Jade Emperor and taught all sentient beings the Dao.³¹

Anyone remotely familiar with Buddhism will immediately recognize the account of the Jade Emperor's spiritual progress as a thinly disguised version of the life story of Śākyamuni Buddha, i.e. divine origin, royal birth and associated miracles, ascetic practices in the mountains, self-sacrifice, enlightenment, teaching the disciples etc., including the loose references to the deity's previous lives in imitation of the Jātakas. Interestingly the *Gaoshang Yuhuang benxing jijing*'s reference to the "sudden realization of the Great vehicle" and "gradually entering the wondrous Dao" echoes the Chan Buddhist doctrine of

29. For an example of such use, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Viśvantara-jātaka in Buddhist and Daoist translation", in *Daoism in History: Essays in Honour of Liu Ts'un-yan*, ed. Benjamin Penny, London & New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 56–73. The origin myth surrounding the cult of Doumu 斗母, the Dipper Mother, another Daoist divinity, features direct references to Buddhism. For this, see Henrik H. Sørensen, "On the Recasting of a Buddhist Astral Divinity: Marīcī as the Daoist Goddess Doumu" (forthcoming, 2014). Interestingly the cultic connexion between the Jade Emperor and Buddhism can be highlighted in at least one Song site in Sichuan that features a blend of Buddhist and Daoist images carved in stone. See Tom Suchan, "The Cliff-sculpture of Stone-Gate Mountain: A Mirror of Religious Eclecticism in the Art of Twelfth-Century Sichuan", *Archives of Asian Art* 57 (2007), pp. 51–94.

30. DZ 10–11.1. In its present form the scripture dates from the second half of the Southern Song. Cf. Schipper's entry in *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, pp. 1096–97. Although he notes the Buddhist input, he has somehow missed the fact that the text has appropriated Śākyamuni's life story for its creation of the myth of the Jade Emperor.

31. DZ 10.1, p. 717c.

“sudden enlightenment followed by gradual practice”, something which would have been widely known to religious practitioners across the board during the Song dynasty.³² Even the manner in which the Dao is referred to as “vacuous nothingness” may be seen as reflecting Buddhist thought. Elsewhere in the text we find a reference to “golden immortal bodhisattvas (*jinxian pusa* 金仙菩薩)”³³ as a compound indicating the conflation of Daoist immortals and Buddhist bodhisattvas into a single category of holy beings.

In this case we are not dealing with the Daoist appropriation of an actual Buddhist divinity, but rather with a case of conceptual borrowing and religious re-dressing. The “life of the Buddha” template serves as a narrative and structural platform for the creation of the account of the Jade Emperor’s ascent to sanctity on the one hand, while on the other, salient Buddhist doctrines are invoked to underscore the dispensation of his teaching of salvation. Undoubtedly the popularity of Chan Buddhism during the Song must have been a primary reason for casting the Jade Emperor’s primary religious activity in such a straightforward Buddhist manner rather than utilizing a more obvious Daoist wording. This example is therefore one in which the appropriation of the Buddhist deity, in this case Śākyamuni, happens indirectly, as a re-fashioning or re-casting. Even so, the primary Buddhist features of the Jade Emperor’s previous incarnation as Pure Spontaneously Enlightened King Tathāgata is never in doubt, indicating a conscious and integrated take-over of the Buddhist message of liberation and salvation.

Appropriated Cults: Marīcī and Mahāmayūrī

In addition to Avalokiteśvara, the Daoists took over a number of other Buddhist cults, primarily those concerning major bodhisattvas and divinities. The material pertaining to these various cults is substantial, and here I shall limit myself to discussing two of the more prominent ones. Interestingly enough, the two cases to be dealt with involve the appropriation of female divinities, namely those of Marīcī³⁴ and Mahāmayūrī.³⁵ The cults

32. For a discussion of sudden enlightenment and gradual cultivation, see Peter N. Gregory, “Sudden Enlightenment followed by gradual Cultivation: Tsung-mi’s Analysis of Mind”, in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory, Studies in East Asian Buddhism 5, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987, pp. 279–320.

33. DZ 10.1, p. 742b.

34. A general discussion of this divinity can be found in David Hall, “Martial Aspects of the Buddhist Mārīcī in Sixth Century China”, *Taishō daigaku sōgō bukkyō kenkyū so nenpō* 11 (1988), pp. 146–63. For a discussion of the Marīcī cult during the Southern Song in Sichuan, primarily from an art historical perspective, see Tom Suchan, “The Eternally Flourishing Stronghold: An Iconographic Study of the Buddhist Sculpture of the Fowan and Related Sites at Beishan, Dazu ca. 892–1155”, PhD thesis, The Ohio State University, 2003, pp. 311–25.

35. For additional information on this important cult, see Henrik H. Sørensen, “A Ming Statue of the Vidyaraja Mahamayuri in the Collection of the National Museum of Copenhagen”, *Oriental Art*, vol. XXXVII: 3 (1991), pp. 137–47; and Sørensen, “The Spell of the Great, Golden Peacock Queen: The Origin, Practices and Lore of an Early Esoteric Buddhist Tradition in China”, *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute for Buddhist Studies*

of both have a long pre-history in Chinese Buddhism, in particular in Esoteric Buddhism, before they aroused the interest of the Daoists, something which is also apparent in the manner in which they were appropriated.

Turning first to the cult of Marīcī, there are a number of scriptures, all relatively late works, which throw light on the conflation of the Marīcī/Doumu cults in the context of Daoism, but for the sake of brevity, let us focus on one of them, namely the *Xiantian doumu zougao xuanke* 先天斗母奏告玄科 [Ritual of the Mysterious Prayer to Doumu of the Former Heaven].³⁶ Here we find the Buddhist astral divinity Marīcī and the derived Daoist goddess Doumu placed side by side as part of an entire array of mainly astral divinities. The former is referred to as, “Marīcī, Divine, Great Holy, Completely Bright Heavenly Worthy Goddess”. The “Heavenly Worthy” epithet added to the name of the goddess is a standard title for Daoist divinities. Thus we see that at beginning of this text that Marīcī was still retained as an appropriated Buddhist divinity, although clearly in the process of becoming a fully fledged Daoist goddess. However, later in the same text we may observe that the final conflation of Marīcī/Doumu had taken place, as we read that “Doumu is the transformation body of the Buddha Mother [Marīcī] (Doumu huashen wei fomu 鬥母化身為佛母)”.³⁷ In other words Marīcī and Doumu are here conceived of as one and the same goddess.

As for the cult of Mahāmayūrī, or the Golden Peacock Queen, she is a powerful *vidyārājñī* and protector in the context of Esoteric Buddhism. There are three Mahāmayūrī scriptures in the Daoist Canon, of which the most important for the present purpose is the *Taishang Yuanshi tianzun shuo baoyueguang huanghou shengmu tianzun Kongque mingwang jing* 太上元始天尊說寶月光皇后聖母天尊孔雀明王經 [The Heavenly Worthy, Highest Original Commencement Speaks the Scripture on the Precious Moon Light Empress, Holy Mother and Heavenly Worthy, Mayūrī Vidyārājñī].³⁸ When looking at this scripture, it is evident that it is not a direct copy of any of the Buddhist *Mahāmayūrī vidyārājñī sūtras*, but rather a pastiche incorporating essential Buddhist elements and concepts. While it is clear that whoever compiled the Daoist scripture was familiar with one (or more) of the *Mahāmayūrī vidyārājñī sūtras*, it was probably Amoghavajra’s translation/compilation from the eighth century which served as the most immediate model, or rather source of inspiration. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the *Taishang Kongque wangzun jing* contains little in the way of Esoteric Buddhist lore or ritual. It is to all purposes and intents a “pure” Daoist scripture, apart from the fact that its main divinity is a Buddhist one. This means that the Daoist compiler of the *Taishang Kongque wangzun jing*, at least as far as we can see, con-

(Special Issue: Honoring James H. Sanford) 3: 8 (2006), pp. 89–123.

36. DZ 1452. Probably from the Yuan-Ming transition. See *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, pp. 1234–35.

37. Cf. DZ 1452, p. 765c.

38. DZ 1433, 1434, 1435, pp. 574b–85a. See also *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, pp. 1233–34. There is some uncertainty as to the dating of this scripture. However, the current consensus is that it probably originated during the early Ming. Given that it was directly inspired by the Buddhist scripture, the *Mahāmayūrīvidyārājñī-dhārāṇī sūtra* (Amoghavajra’s translation as found in T. 982, 19), it is not surprising that this Daoist rip-off is packed with Buddhist elements.

sciously avoided aspects of Esoteric Buddhist practice which would require the type of master–disciple transmission of the more arcane aspects of the Mahāmayūrī ritual. This included in particular the mantras and spells in Sanskrit as well as the mudrās and special offerings. Instead he chose those elements and ritual structures which would meet with a ready resonance in a Daoist-oriented audience. The Mahāmayūrī cult in its Daoist form therefore represents a case where the overall idea of a Buddhist cult was appropriated, and in this case limited to the deity herself, while the ritual and overall conceptual “packing” remained Daoist.

Buddhist Monks as Daoist Saints

By the beginning of the Song dynasty (960–1276), Daoism underwent a series of new developments, which heralded in the reformation of earlier sectarian groupings and the establishment of new dispensations including the Zhengyi 正一 tradition and the Shenxiao mentioned earlier. Characteristic of both these movements are their production of a new and extensive Daoist literature, much of which with focus on ritual practices.³⁹ The growing evidence of borrowings from Buddhism and appropriations of certain aspects of ritual technology, especially that relating to Esoteric Buddhism, is conspicuously in evidence. It is also during this period, more precisely during the early eleventh century that the important Daoist compendium, the Yunji qiqian 雲笈七籤 [Seven Tallies in the Cloud Satchel] appeared.⁴⁰ Despite the fact that this work represents a form of “purified” Daoism, i.e. a Daoism that had been through an anti-Buddhist purge to cleanse many of the important scriptures from Buddhist elements, the YJQQ nevertheless still features many remains. Among these we find Buddhist saints, cast in roles as Daoist immortals.

The most prominent among these appropriated Buddhist saints is the Indian monk Bodhidharma (d.c.530).⁴¹ In fact an entire section devoted to him is contained in the YJQQ, entitled *Damo dashi zhushi liuxing neizhen miaoyong jue* 達磨大師住世留形內真妙用訣 [Testament on the Inner and Truly Wondrous Activity of the Great Master Bodhidharma While Dwelling in this World].⁴² The text primarily deals with inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), a type of spiritual cultivation, involving an almost physical refinement of the inner spirit(s), which was of course not part of traditional Buddhist practice.⁴³ The essentially

39. For surveys of both traditions, see *The Taoist Tradition*, vol. 2, pp. 849–973; 1081–95.

40. Hereafter YJQQ; DZ 1032. However, in this study I make use of the modern, punctuated edition as found in Li Yongsheng (ed.), *Yunji qiqian*, 5 vols., Daojiao Dianji Biankan, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003.

41. Bodhidharma is thought to have been active under the Liang and later the Northern Wei during the first quarter of the sixth century. For additional information, see John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 3, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986, pp. 15–21.

42. YJQQ, vol. 3, pp. 1310–14, 1556. For a discussion of this work from the perspective of Buddhism, see Sekiguchi Shindai, *Daruma daishi no kenkyū* [Studies on the Great Master Bodhidharma], Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1969, pp. 391–400.

43. A survey of the Daoist body and internal practices can be found in *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology*,

alien and non-Buddhist nature of the discourse which this text places in the mouth of Bodhidharma, is most notable in the section where vital energy (*qi* 氣/炁), the primary, cosmic “building-block” of Daoism, is discussed. The text reads:

Fundamentally vital energy is the root of man [*ben qi shi ren you zhi gen* 本氣是人有之根]. Vital energy causes the spirits and life, [while on its part] the body is caused and completed by vital energy. If the body does not obtain vital energy, it cannot be completed. [Likewise] vital energy without a body, cannot become a person.⁴⁴

Even if we substitute *qi*, i.e. vital energy, with *prāṇa*, the standard term for breath used in Buddhist meditation texts, we cannot explain away the strong and persuasive implication of the way *qi* as a solid, material force or energy appears in the text. Moreover, the idea of a spirit (*shen* 神) inhabiting the human body, is also a concept which is inherently alien to Buddhism, but which of course stands centrally in Daoist ontology. There are other instances in the text under discussion which indicate its non-Buddhist origin. Another example of Daoist discourse in the text is the reference to filial piety (*xiao* 孝) performed by Śākyamuni, the historical founder of Buddhism, on behalf of his parents.⁴⁵ And the manner in which the inside of the human body is discussed, in particular the relationship between vital energy and the five viscera and the six organs (*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑).⁴⁶

As our text features prominently in an important Daoist compendium from the early eleventh century, it is obvious that the Daoist borrowing or adoption of Bodhidharma was not the result of a random appropriation. By the time the *YJQQ* was compiled, Bodhidharma's status as the First Chinese Patriarch of Chan Buddhism had long since been established, and he already had a virtually saintly position in Chinese Buddhism at that time.

It is not known when Bodhidharma made his entry among the saints of Daoism, and it is in my view debatable whether it can actually be traced back to the Tang period. I find it more likely that the Daoist co-option of the Bodhidharma-character took place during the early Northern Song more or less simultaneously with the rise of formalized Chan Buddhism.⁴⁷ As we have already seen, the *YJQQ* entry bears little resemblance to

Livia Kohn (ed.), Albany: SUNY Press, 1993, pp. 161–90. Additional information can be found in Paul W. Kroll, “Body Gods and the Inner Vision: The Scripture of the Yellow Court”, in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. López, Jr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 149–55. See also *The Primordial Breath: An Ancient Chinese Way of Prolonging Life Through Breath Control*, vol. 1, Jane Huang et al. (tr.), Torrance: Original Books, 1987.

44. *YJQQ*, vol. 3, p. 1310.

45. *ibid.*, p. 1310.

46. *ibid.*, p. 1310.

47. For a study of this significant development in Chinese Buddhism, see Ishii Shudō, *Sōdai zenshū shi no kenkyū* [Studies in the History of Chan Schools during the Song], Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1987. See also Morten Schlütter, *How Zen became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song Dynasty China*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 22, University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

the early Buddhist material relating to Bodhidharma.⁴⁸ It is also rather far away from the portrayals he is given in contemporary works of formalized Chan literature such as the *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 [Compilations from the Patriarchs' Halls],⁴⁹ the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 [The Jingde Transmission of the Lamp],⁵⁰ etc. We must therefore assume that the transposition of Bodhidharma into the fold of Daoist saints was primarily effected via a two-fold strategy. First by re-casting him as a Daoist adept of *neidan*, and secondly by forging a scripture bearing his name, but with a distinct Daoist content.

Other saintly Buddhist monks referred to in the YJQQ include the celebrated thaumaturge Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (fl. first half of 4th cent.),⁵¹ who is also credited with having written a work on alchemy (*danjing* 丹經) entitled *Jinye jue* 金液訣 [Methods of Molten Metal].⁵² There is also the famous Jingtu 淨土 master, Tanluan 曇鸞 (476–542),⁵³ whom the YJQQ credits with having written a *Qishu lun* 氣術論 [Treatise on the Arts of Vital Energy].⁵⁴ As with Bodhidharma these monks also appear in the YJQQ as Daoist adepts of outer and inner alchemy rather than as Buddhist monks.

In connexion with the praise—and indeed use—of these Buddhist monks, the YJQQ openly states the reason for incorporating them into the hierarchy of Daoist saints was because “they are all similar to Daoists”.⁵⁵ This shows that when Buddhist saints were introduced into the Daoist context, it was because they were considered as practitioners of Daoism, i.e. as being “one of us”. Moreover, the primary characteristics associated with the appropriated Buddhist saints, were “rewritten” or altered so as to match with Daoist ideology and practices.

The same would appear to have been the case with Huineng 慧能 (638–713),⁵⁶ the Sixth Patriarch, undoubtedly the most famous of all Chan masters in the entire history of Chinese Buddhism. Although I have not come across what we may take as a full-blown appropriation of the character of Huineng, the important scripture associated with his name, the *Liuzu dashi fabao tan jing* 六祖大師法寶壇經 [The Sixth Patriarch's Platform

48. For a discussion and translation of much of this material, see McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an*, pp. 15–23; 101–17.

49. Cf. the xylograph-print of the original Haein Temple blocks of the *Zutang ji*: Yanagida Seizan (ed.), *Sodōshū*, Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1984, pp. 32a–39a.

50. T. 2076, 50: 217a–20a.

51. YJQQ, vol. 3, p. 1556. For a classical study of this Buddhist thaumaturge, see Arthur F. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, Robert M. Somers (ed.), New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990, pp. 34–68.

52. YJQQ, vol. 3, p. 1556. The title indicates an alchemical work, and of course apocryphal to the extent that it ever existed.

53. *ibid.*, p. 1308–10.

54. *ibid.*, p. 1556. I have been unable to locate any of these texts, and it is unlikely that they exist.

55. *Jietong daoja* 皆同道家, *ibid.*, pp. 1556.

56. For a monumental study on this important Buddhist figure, see John Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-Neng, the Sixth Patriarch: Hagiography and Biography in Early Ch'an*, Sinica Leidensia, vol. 68, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005.

Scripture],⁵⁷ or some other Buddhist text quoting it,⁵⁸ is quoted twice in the Daoist commentary, the *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing neiyi* 元始無量度人上品妙經內義 [Inner Meaning of the Wonderful Scripture Highest Category of the Original Commencement of the for the Limitless Salvation of Men],⁵⁹ to underscore an otherwise entirely Daoist line of argumentation regarding so-called “inner cultivation”. The first passage in question reads:

The *Inner Meaning* states: From ancient times up to the present is not very far. The scriptural methods concerning the way of alchemy has one principle, which is non-discrimination. The Sixth Patriarch has said: My teaching of the *dharmā*⁶⁰ is like the seasonal rain, which moistens the great earth. The Buddha Nature you all have, may be likened to all the various kinds of seeds, which benefit from the saturation [caused by the rain], causing them to sprout and grow.”⁶¹ This then accords with the methods of the received scriptures (*yujing* 遇經),⁶² which have extensive salvation (*pudu* 普度) as their principle. The inner form (*neixiang* 內象) is what constitutes the body. This is the idea. Having obtained it, one knows its spirit and cherishes it; illuminating its vital breath, one treasures it. If one does this throughout the entire year, nothing will be able to cause one injury. For the entire year, one will not encounter what are referred to as “perverse gods (*huangtian* 橫天)”.⁶³

What we see here is that the passage from the Buddhist text is inserted into a doctrinal discourse which has an entirely different aim and practical purpose, namely the preservation of the “inner body” or “embryo” created through the internal, alchemical process.⁶⁴

Later on in the same text we find another quote from Huineng’s *Platform Scripture*. This time inserted into a discussion on the mutual integration and transposed identity of Daoist gods in a manner vaguely resembling the teaching on the so-called “transformation bodies (*huashen* 化身)” of Buddhism. The text reads:

The Buddhists have also explained the three bodies of their own nature. The Sixth Patriarch said: “The pure *dharmakāya* is your own nature; the complete

57. T. 2008, 48: 361b.

58. The first passage appears verbatim in several Song Buddhist sources relating to Chan Buddhism including the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, the *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 [Five Lamps Meeting at the Source], etc. Xiao Yingsou could therefore in principle have lifted these excerpts from a wide range of Chan texts. Cf. e.g. T. 2076, 51: 238b.

59. DZ 90. Authored by Xiao Yingsou 蕭應叟 (fl. late 12th–first half of 13th cent.) of the Southern Song. See also *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, pp. 716–17.

60. *Dharma* is here likely to have been read as “methods” by the Daoists.

61. T. 2008, 48: 361b.

62. A reference to the Daoist corpus of scriptures believed to have been revealed to man by the gods.

63. DZ 90, p. 344b. This usage of *huangtian* normally refers to the deities and demons worshipped by local cults, which were the arch-enemies of formal Daoism.

64. For a survey of this type of practice, including a study of a later tradition, see Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, *Procédés secrets du joyau magique: traité d'alchimie taoïste du XIe siècle*, Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1984.

and full *sambhogakāya* is your own wisdom; the myriad *nirmāṇakāyas* are your own activity.⁶⁵

First of all this data also reveals that the Daoists, even in later periods, were happily appropriating and utilizing Buddhist materials, even to the point of quoting from primary works belonging to that religion. Moreover, they did this without fiddling with the contents of the text, but instead they embedded the appropriated material into a quite different conceptual setting. The logic of these quotes, especially if one reads them as Chan Buddhist teaching, makes little sense. Nevertheless, in the Daoist tradition of inner alchemy, they serve the point of underlining the belief in interior, corporal bodies. By being taken out of its Buddhist context, the appropriated Chan teaching loses its original meaning, while in the new setting of Daoist doctrine it is imbued with a new and quite different meaning.

Do these examples indicate that the more clearly defined religious and doctrinal demarcations, such as those that had persisted between Buddhism and Daoism during the Tang, had become more fluid during late imperial China? Or perhaps a shift in the perception of saintliness had taken place, in which numinous power was no longer seen as carrying a distinct religious address, but was rather something which all could partake of, regardless of faith? Whether we will be able to answer these questions remains to be seen, but it is evident that the trend towards inter-religious borrowing and the sharing of mutual beliefs was a tendency that started to become more and more prominent as the Song period wore on.

The Case of Puan

Let us now proceed to a discussion of the case of the Chan master Puan Yinsuan 普庵印肅 (1115–1169),⁶⁶ later known as Ancestor Puan 普庵祖師, a historical figure of the Linji School 臨濟宗 of Chinese Chan Buddhism, who was active in south-eastern China during the transition between the Northern and Southern Song. Although in all respects a traditional master of *chan*, whose teaching focused on the practice of meditation with the use of *gong'an* 公案 (“public cases”), Puan is also known for his fondness for the *Avatamsaka sūtra* and is said to have attained enlightenment from reading a sentence in this important scripture. The traditional Buddhist sources also mention that he was a rain-maker and a practitioner of pious austerities. Among other feats Puan is said to have copied out the celebrated *Vajracchedikā sūtra* in his own blood. Nevertheless, as far as the historical figure of Puan goes, we are essentially dealing with a bona-fide Buddhist master, a human being operating in a religious context and in recordable time.

65. T. 2008, 48: 356a; DZ 90, p. 370b.

66. For the most authoritative biographical information on Puan, see *Zengaku daijiten*, vol. 1, p. 57bc. See also *FDC*, vol. 5, p. 4992bc.

Some time after Puan's death, a popular cult had developed around his persona, elements of which may already have been present during his own life time. This development was no doubt stimulated by the fact that the imperial court bestowed posthumous honours on Puan's temple on several occasions, something which greatly boosted the popularity of the cult locally.⁶⁷

The more dramatic shift from Buddhism to Daoism evidently took place during the first half of the Ming dynasty, as indicated in the compilation of the *Puan Chanshi lingyan ji* 普庵禪師靈驗記 [Records of the Numinous Responses of Chan Master Puan],⁶⁸ a collection of mythological stories evolving around Puan's role as a miracle worker and master of spells.⁶⁹ It is essentially this aspect of the Puan persona which can be credited with the popular and divine status both inside and outside the religious boundaries of Buddhism.

There are indications that the local worship of Puan, including its transmutations within the local Daoist Qinglian Sect 青蓮派, was also influenced by or at least absorbed elements from Manichaeism during the Ming.⁷⁰ The role and status of Puan is referred to in one text of the Qinglian Sect in the following terms: "Our Third Patriarch Puan is the transformation body (*huashen* 化身) of the Heavenly Worthy of Lingbao (Lingbao Tianzun 靈寶天尊)".⁷¹ In this manner they link together their own organization with the cult of Puan, one of the most important Daoist gods in that part of China.

Puan's importance as a figure who crossed the religious boundaries between Buddhism and Daoism, is also underscored by the fact that he, like a few select Buddhist monks and laymen, in addition to Bodhidharma, Fudashi 傅大士 (497–569), Baozhi 寶誌 (fl. first half of sixth cent.) etc., found his place in the expanded and revised *Soushen ji* 搜神記 [Record of the Search of the Divine],⁷² a Ming collection of tales that revolve around mainly Daoist gods, immortals, and human saints. In this source there is no direct mention of a connexion between Puan and Daoism, although his role as a thaumaturge, especially a rain-maker, is mentioned. However, given that the *Soushen ji* is a Daoist compilation, and that it was included in the Ming *Daozang*, indicates a stage in the process by which the gradual co-option of Puan as a Daoist sage took place.

67. For the imperial favours bestowed upon Puan's old temple during the Yuan, see *Fozu lidai tongcai*, T. 2036, 49: 731b.

68. See *Puan chanshi quanji* 普庵禪師全集 [Complete Compilation [of the Writings] on Chan Master Puan], Taipei: Dasheng Qingshe Yinjing Hui, 2004. This work contains material, most of it hagiographical, from later periods.

69. For the *Puan Spell*, see the important liturgical manual, the *Zhujing risong* 諸經日誦 [Daily Chants from all Scriptures], *Jiaxing dazang jing* [Jiaxing Tripiṭaka] 44.19, pp. 162b–163a. See also Wu Yongmeng, "Puan chanshi yu minjian xinyang" [Chan Master Puan and Popular Faith].

70. For a discussion of this, see Wang Jianchuan 王見川, *Cong senglong dao shenming: Dingguang gufo, Fazhu gong, Puan yanjiu* 從僧侶到神明: 定光古佛法主公普庵之研究 [Followers and Monks' Companions Reaching Spiritual Illumination: A Study of the Old Buddha Dingguang, the Worthy Fazhu and Puan], Taipei: Yuanguang Foxueyuan, 2007, pp. 75–6.

71. See the *Zumei yuanliu* 祖脈源流 [Source and Flow of the Patriarchal Veins], Wanquan Tang Zangpan, 1936 (reprint 1995), pp. 7–36 (esp. p. 11).

72. See DZ 1476, ch. 3.

The Puan Spell as a distinct piece of liturgy mentioned above also entered Daoist liturgy and ritual music. It is not known exactly when this took place, but probably some time during the late Ming, i.e. sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. In any case we know that the spell, together with a good many other Buddhist-inspired pieces, were chanted in the rituals of the Longmen Sub-sect 龍門派 of the Quanzhen School of Daoism.⁷³ In any case, it is clear that by the late Ming the popularity of the Puan cult in Fujian and north-eastern Guangdong had outgrown its original roots in Chinese Chan Buddhism as it had transcended both religious and narrow sectarian boundaries. By then Puan had become a god with universal appeal.

Thus we see that Puan's rise to divine status in Daoism was facilitated through a process by which he was lifted out of his status as an important religious leader in Chan Buddhism, via a post-mortem stage as a divine saint, in effect a bodhisattva, complete with a hagiography and a set of magic, ritual practices until he finally emerged as a fully fledged Daoist god.

Conclusion

Before concluding this paper, I would like to address the question of what actually happens when one religion appropriates divinities and cults belonging to another religion. This issue would appear to be of primary importance in the over-all context of the KHK, not only because of its potential in throwing light on a major aspect of inter-religious practice, but also for its potential in revealing some of the more intricate mechanisms in the process of religious transfer. On the surface, it would appear that the simple take-over of a Buddhist cult by Daoism, such as Guanyin or Māricī worship, would not seriously alter or influence its core beliefs and practices, such as the longevity cult, cosmology, its pantheon and heavenly hierarchy, belief in internal gods etc, and as such may be understood as relatively unproblematic affairs, something akin to an addition. However, there can be little doubt that in the rather free and open-minded appropriation of Buddhist deities and their cults by the Daoists, not to mention the take-over of related scriptures, they did make their beliefs and practices vulnerable to a whole set of new, and in many cases, quite different doctrines and beliefs. Beliefs and practices with the potential to undermine or at the very least off-set core-values of Daoism. Several previous studies have shown how the borrowing from Buddhism was greatly influential in shaping the history of Daoism and its literature during the early medieval period. In the late medieval and early pre-modern period we begin to see, as I hope this short study has shown, how these wholesale borrowings gradually altered Daoist concepts and practices, sometimes in a radical manner.

This leads me to the question of what appropriation could entail in a given specific case. And more specifically to the question of appropriation accompanied by or without

73. See *Shanxi daojiao yinyue* 山西道教音樂 (Daoist Music from Shanxi).

a radical transformation. In the case of the former it would appear that a proper transformation or re-casting of the appropriated god or saint was deemed necessary or was otherwise done in order to have a similar god as the competitor. We may refer to this process as motivated by a mixture of practical necessity and religious jealousy. Or stated in another way, as being in possession of a religious ‘service’ similar to that of the Buddhists, but with a conscious re-formulation of the status of the appropriated god or saint. In the case of the latter proposition, namely that in which it was not felt necessary to alter or change the status of the appropriated god/saint, but simply to adopt him or her more or less as he/she had been in the original Buddhist context. This may have been because the cult of the god or saint was already so important and well-established that it was not necessary to change anything on a deeper level. This type of appropriation comes closer to how we normally understand “borrowing”, but with the twist that the “foreign” god or saint, depending on the case, was continuing his or her “existence” in an essentially alien environment and henceforth functioning in new doctrinal and ritual contexts. This might or might not mean a change in the divinity’s fundamental function, as for example in the case of Avalokiteśvara/Guanyin, whose cult in the Daoist context would appear to have continued in much the same way as it had unfolded in its original Buddhist surroundings—namely as a protector, healer and provider of children. Likewise, in the case of the goddess Marīcī, whether she continued under this name in Daoism or under her new appellation as Doumu, her function as an astral protector and status as martial goddess, did not change significantly either when she was lifted out of her originally Esoteric Buddhist context and into that of Daoism.

However, in the case of Puan discussed above, we see a Buddhist saint, originally a famous monk, whose status and function changed dramatically as his context shifted. In effect Puan was not only canonized as a saint through the process of appropriation, a development which may already have taken place while he was still worshipped in the Buddhist context, but he was made into a *de facto* god when he moved across the religious boundary and into the Daoist pantheon. Most likely this transition was greatly assisted by the massive popularity the cult enjoyed locally. In other words, the popularity that had developed around him, i.e. the cult itself, may have been the very factor which propelled Puan into the Daoist pantheon as a fully blown god.

The altering or changing of Daoist practices due to Buddhist influence can be observed in many different cases, in particular in its rituals and liturgy. At the very least the borrowing or adoption of certain Buddhist cults by Daoism, did serve to blur the formal sectarian and religious divide between the two religions, something which can be most readily observed in the formation of what we may refer to as the “Buddho-Daoist pantheon” which began to take shape during the Southern Song–Yuan transition of the thirteenth century and eventually reached maturity under the Ming.⁷⁴

74. The clearest and most straight-forward representations of this development are the sets of Shilu 水陸 votive paintings such as those from Baoning Temple 寶寧寺 and the Musée Guimet in Paris. See the discussion in Daniel B. Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the Shuilu fahui,

There may be several explanations for the proliferation of Daoist take-overs of Buddhist divinities, and certainly more than have been touched upon in this short essay. However, let me venture a hypothesis which—even if it does not explain everything—does, I believe, provide a significant and contributing rationale behind the borrowing, adoption and transformation of Buddhist divinities that we see in Daoist material.

Since the very beginning of the Buddhō-Daoist encounter, the divinities of the two religious traditions have in many cases appeared side by side, so to speak. One of the earliest sources that mentions imperial worship of Buddha images, is the celebrated memorial by Xiang Kai 襄楷 (second half of second cent. CE), which refers to sacrifices made to images of Laozi and the Buddha in the imperial palace.⁷⁵ Early archaeological findings have also revealed that Buddha images were placed in Han tombs as well as on artifacts.⁷⁶ There are of course numerous cases where local Chinese gods have been found in connexion with funerary practices. Hence, from early on in the history of Buddhism in China, its imagery could be found in the same locales populated by that of Chinese popular religion and of later, formalized Daoist religion. Evidence from the fifth to sixth centuries provides clear evidence of a iconographical conflation of Daoist and Buddhist images, especially in the area of Zhongyuan.⁷⁷ Given that Buddhism can be considered the primary and obviously inspirational factor for the rise of the formalized and structured Daoist pantheon, especially as far as iconography is concerned, it is in my view logical to assume that this fact greatly assisted and facilitated the subsequent adoption and appropriation of Buddhist divinities and divine characters by the Daoists. In any case, it is evident that there was little if any serious resistance on the side of Daoism towards the Buddhist deities and saints we have discussed here. Given that Buddhist cosmological concepts and its deities were readily accepted by the Daoists, this “openness” towards the gods of the other may therefore also have played an important role in the appropriation of doctrines, beliefs and ritual features, elements which work on the deeper levels of religious practice.

Just for the record, let me assure the reader that Daoism was by no means alone in

the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land”, in *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*, Marsha Weidner (ed.), Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001, pp. 30–70. Further examples may be found in *La voie du tao: un autre chemin de l'être*, Paris: MMN–Musée Guimet, 2010, cat. 1–3, 5, 7.1, 13.1–13.3.

75. For a discussion of this passage, see Rafe de Crespigny, *Portents of Protest in the Later Han Dynasty: The Memorials of Hsiang-k'ai to Emperor Huan*, Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies and Australian National University Press, 1976, pp. 29–30.

76. For a survey of some of this material, see Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989, pp. 126–41.

77. A useful survey of this material can be found in *Beizhao fodao caoxiang bei jingxuan* [Essential Selection of Buddhō-Daoist Image-Steles from The Northern Dynasties], comp. Shaanxi Yaowang Shan Bowuguan, Shaanxi Sheng Lintong Shi Bowuguan, and Beijing Liao-Jin Chengyuan Bowuguan, Tianjin: Tianjin Guji Chubanshe, 1996. For diverging interpretations, see Stanley K. Abe, “Heterological Visions: Northern Wei Daoist Sculpture from Shaanxi Province”, *CEA* 9 (1996–1997), pp. 69–83; and Stephen R. Bokenkamp, “The Yao Boduo Stele as Evidence for the ‘Dao-Buddhism’ of the Early Lingbao Scriptures”, *CEA* 9 (1996–1997), pp. 55–67.

its appropriation of Buddhist gods and holy persons. The Chinese Buddhists also took over certain Daoist divinities, but evidently on a much lesser scale and rarely—if ever—really major gods. This at least is how I perceive the situation at this stage of my current research. Despite this, important Daoist cults, such as the Great Dipper and its astral lords, as well as that of the Kitchen God, a god present in all households in traditional China, were incorporated fully into the Buddhist pantheon. I shall return to these issues as my research progresses.

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