

**THE MAKING OF A SAINT: IMAGES OF XUANZANG IN EAST ASIA\*****Dorothy C. Wong**

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The figure of Xuanzang 玄奘 (600-64), the celebrated Buddhist traveler and translator of early Tang China was revered in many different countries and inspired a variety of visual representations and commemorative objects. One of the most common in East Asian tradition is Xuanzang's portrayal as a pilgrim and itinerant, wearing sandals and carrying a backpack of *sūtra* scrolls. We are also familiar with his portrayal in *Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji* 西遊記) by Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (ca. 1500-ca. 1582), a novel which fictionalizes Xuanzang's journey to India in the company of the mythical Monkey and other colorful characters.

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\* In the research for this paper, I have relied on many pioneering studies by scholars of the distant past and of more recent times. A number of important sources are acknowledged in the notes but specifics of the arguments will not be repeated here except when pertinent. Early versions of this paper were presented at the College Art Association meeting of February 1999, Los Angeles, and at the International Conference on Dunhuang Studies held at the University of Hong Kong, July 2000. I would like to thank the following individuals for their comments and suggestions: Sylvan Barnet, Terese Tse Bartholomew, Karen Brock, William Burto, Susan Bush, Lokesh Chandra, Chen Jinhua, Robert Gimello, Paul Groner, Jao Tsung-I, Robert Linrothe, Victor H. Mair, Naomi Richard, John Shepherd, and Roderick Whitfield. At the Dunhuang Studies conference in Dunhuang, also summer 2000, I learned that an exhibition titled "The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang" had opened at the Nara Prefectural Museum the previous summer, and was traveling to other sites in Japan. I am deeply grateful to Professor Donohashi Akio 百橋明穂 of Kobe University for sending me the exhibition's catalogue, *西遊記のシルクロード～三蔵法師の道* (Nara: Nara Prefectural Museum, 1999). While the premise of this paper has remained unchanged, the materials published in the catalogue have enabled me to furnish the discussion with abundant further evidence.

Examples of both kinds of images appeared during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, suggesting the consolidation of a popular cult surrounding Xuanzang. Depictions of itinerants, however, may be found as early as the ninth and tenth centuries, in paintings and murals from the Dunhuang cave-temple site in Gansu. These usually featured foreigners, probably Central Asians. That the figure of Xuanzang became superimposed upon this image type illustrates the appropriation of a preexistent iconography to create a visual identity for the monk five centuries or so after his death. Around the same time, at the Yulin cave-temples near Dunhuang, murals with suggestions of a narrative context began to portray him accompanied by Monkey. Together with oral and literary narratives about Xuanzang's journey that are known to have circulated then, these were antecedents of the popular story cycle whose further development culminated in the Ming dynasty novel. Additionally, Xuanzang was honored by commemorative steles, a *stūpa*, picture scrolls, and mandala paintings. Some of these objects were created even during his lifetime.

Why was Xuanzang such a hallowed figure in East Asian Buddhism? He spent almost seventeen years, from 629 to 645, on a pilgrimage to India to visit Buddhism's sacred sites, to learn its truths from Indian masters, and to seek its authentic texts. He endured the hardship of twice crossing the deserts and mountains of Central Asia, bringing back from India a total of six hundred and fifty-seven Buddhist texts, as well as sacred images and the Buddha's relics. Upon returning to Chang'an, the Tang capital, he dedicated the rest of his life to translating the scriptures he had collected. His translation of the monumental Yogācāra texts became the doctrinal foundation of the Faxiang 法相 sect, which was later to be a major school of Nara Buddhism in Japan.

To the merits of Xuanzang's piety and dauntless efforts must be added the personal charisma by which he gained the attention and admiration of Emperor Taizong (r. 627-49), one of the most powerful rulers in Chinese history. The romance and exoticism associated with his traveling to India further enhanced the aura surrounding him. In fact, two nearly contemporary biographies

were written about the monk, and for his contributions to Buddhism, he was conferred the honorific title "Tripitaka."<sup>1</sup>

There exist numerous works, however, about Xuanzang the historical person and his contributions.<sup>2</sup> The present study concerns instead the images and material objects associated with him. It examines the artifacts' origins, modes of representation, functions, and evolution, and how they testify to the larger phenomenon of the development of cults surrounding Xuanzang. The medieval cults of Christian saints are well-known, having been the subject of much study.<sup>3</sup> In recent years, the Asian tradition of saints has also received increasing attention. Here, the term "saint" is abstracted from its strictly Christian sense and used to designate a person venerated for spiritual qualities.<sup>4</sup> In the context of current

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<sup>1</sup> Tripitaka refers to the "three baskets" of the Buddhist canon: the sūtras, or scriptures, which contain the original doctrine, the vinaya texts on monastic discipline, and the śāstras, or commentaries. Xuanzang received this title for his work as a translator of the scriptures.

<sup>2</sup> Significant works include Samuel Beal, trans., *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World* (2 vols., London: Trübner and Co., 1884; rpt. 4 vols., Calcutta: Susil Gupta (India) Limited, 1957-58) and Ji Xianlin 季羨林 et al., annota., *Da Tang Xiyu ji jiaozhu* 大唐西域記校註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985). An account in English of Xuanzang's life is given in Arthur Waley's *The Real Tripitaka, and Other Pieces* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952).

<sup>3</sup> See Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981); Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982); Stephen Wilson, ed., *Saints and Their Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Barbara Abou-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Studies about Asian traditions of sanctity include Karl Jaspers' *The Foundations: the Paradigmatic Individuals: Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Ralph Manheim (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1962), and H. G. Creel's *Confucius: The Man and the Myth* (New York: J. Day Co., 1949). Among more recent works are Richard Kieckhefer and George D. Bond, comp., *Sainthood: Its Manifestation in World Religions* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988), and Stanley J. Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

discussion, including cross-cultural studies, what, then, is a saint? Richard Cohn writes that sainthood refers to “the state of special holiness that many religions attribute to certain people.”<sup>5</sup> Thomas Heffernan defines the saint as a symbol for the “interplay between the known and the unknown,” “the intersection of ... the human and the divine, ... the historical and the metahistorical.”<sup>6</sup> In Asian traditions, persons that approximate the Western notion of saint include the arhat and bodhisattva of Buddhism, the sage-king of Confucianism, the *xianren* 仙人 or immortal of Daoism, and the *kami* 神 of Shinto. Saints exemplify their religion’s paramount values and are recognized as both subjects for imitation and objects of veneration. They may play the roles of wonder workers, helpmates, and intercessors.

As defined above, Xuanzang was indeed perceived to be a saint in East Asia, especially in China and Japan. Tentatively, I classify four separate traditions in which he was so revered. These are: 1) the orthodox literary tradition in China, 2) the founder worship tradition in Japan, 3) the religious icon tradition in China, Japan, and Tibet, and 4) the folkloric tradition in China. Each honored the man in a different role. Respectively, these were as a great Buddhist teacher and translator, as the founder of a Buddhist sect, as a pious pilgrim and transmitter of the faith, and as a witness to and recipient of supernatural help. Examining the origin and development of the artifacts associated with Xuanzang, this paper explores the processes by which he was transformed into a saintly figure. The manifold images of Xuanzang reflected the interaction and synthesis of Chinese and Indian Buddhist traditions that began during the early medieval period, further transformations when transmitted to other cultures, distinctions between elite and popular worship, and the intertwining of visual and literary forms of art.

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Most studies of saints in Chinese tradition have focused upon popular religions after the Tang.

<sup>5</sup> Article on “Sainthood” in M. Eliade, Editor-in-chief, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 13, 1. An influential treatise on the subject is Max Weber’s discussion of charisma, in *Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff, introduced by Talcott Parsons (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

<sup>6</sup> *Sacred Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 38.

### Xuanzang in the Orthodox Literary Tradition of China

Long before Xuanzang became a larger-than-life figure in Buddhist tradition, his contributions were memorialized in China's orthodox literary tradition through commemorative steles. This section examines the significance of this mode of commemoration. In 645, Xuanzang returned from his long residence in India to the Tang capital of Chang'an, and settled at the Hongfu Monastery 弘福寺. Following precedents dating from the Northern Dynasties (386-581), he sought imperial funding for the translation of the Buddhist scriptures that he had collected. Appreciating full well that imperial backing was essential for the huge project, Xuanzang sought the support of Emperor Taizong and of his successor Gaozong (r. 650-83). The personal bond he eventually developed with Taizong was instrumental to his project's success. With the court's financial support, he was able to assemble a large staff of learned monks to assist in the translations.

In 646, the year after his return, Xuanzang petitioned Taizong to write a preface for the translations which, of course, were still in the making. The petition was denied, primarily because the emperor's initial interest was not in Buddhism but in Xuanzang's knowledge of India and other Central Asian kingdoms. At Taizong's request, however, Xuanzang authored an account of the countries that he had visited, under the title *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記.<sup>7</sup> Several times thereafter, the emperor tried to persuade Xuanzang to renounce his religious vows and serve instead as his adviser, but to no avail. Only in the last years of his life did Taizong become genuinely interested in Buddhism. Weakened in health after his failed Korean campaign, he summoned Xuanzang to explain Buddhist teachings and the works he had been translating. In 648, upon Xuanzang's completing the translation of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, a basic treatise of the Yogācāra school, the emperor granted the monk an imperial preface, called *Preface to the Sacred Teachings [Translated by] the Tripiṭaka of*

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<sup>7</sup> This work was written together with his disciple Bianji 辯機. In Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (85 vols., Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kan-kōkai, 1924-32; hereafter *T.*) no. 2087, vol. 51, 867-947.

*the Great Tang* (大唐三藏聖教序).<sup>8</sup> Consisting of seven hundred and eighty-one characters, the text eloquently extolled Xuanzang's endeavors. It was ceremonially presented to him at the Qingfu Palace 慶福宮, and read aloud in the presence of a general assembly of court officials and guards.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Crown Prince Li Zhi 李治, the future Emperor Gaozong, recorded the event with an essay titled *Commemoration of the Preface written by the Emperor of the Great Tang Dynasty to the Sacred Teachings [Translated by] the Tripitaka* (大唐皇帝述三藏聖教序記).

Overjoyed at this formal recognition of the foreign faith, Yuanding 圓定, head abbot of the Hongfu Monastery, along with other monks of the capital, requested and received the court's permission to incise the imperial texts honoring Xuanzang's translations on *bei* 碑, stone steles or tablets. To make the template for the *bei*, the preface and the commemorative text were penned by Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (596-658), the imperial secretary and an expert calligrapher, in the elegant if restrained *kaishu* (regular script) mode. The texts were carved on two separate stones, both completed in 653 (figs. 1, 1a, 2).

In 648 the crown prince formally dedicated the Da Ci'en Monastery 大慈恩寺 to the memory of his deceased mother, Empress Wende 文德皇后. The monastery was also built in honor of Xuanzang, who was invited to become its abbot. Xuanzang declined but later, when the Fanjing yuan 翻經院 (Institute for the Translation of Scriptures) was established inside the compound, he took up residence there to continue his translation work. In 652, at Xuanzang's request, Gaozong authorized the erection on the temple grounds of a five-story Indian-style *stūpa*, which was built as a brick-covered earth core. After the *stūpa* was completed, the two steles incised with the imperial texts were installed in a stone chamber on its top floor. Xuanzang himself participated in the

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<sup>8</sup> Published in Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定 and Sekino Tadashi 関野貞, *Shina bukkyō shiseki* 支那仏教史跡 (6 vols., Tokyo: Bukkyō shiseki kenkyūkai, 1925-31), vol. 1, 23-9; plates, 12-3.

<sup>9</sup> Recorded in the earliest biography of Xuanzang, *Da Tang Da Ci'ensi sanzang fashi zhuan* 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (hereafter *Ci'en zhuan*) by Huili 慧立 and Yancong 彦悰 (d. after 688), in *T.* no. 2053, vol. 50, 6.256.

installation ceremony.<sup>10</sup> The *stūpa* later collapsed and in the early eighth century was rebuilt as a seven-story brick pagoda in the Chinese style. This became known as the Dayan ta 大雁塔, or Great Wild Goose Pagoda.<sup>11</sup> The commemorative steles were then enshrined in two niches flanking the south entrance of the square pagoda, and have remained there ever since.

In 672 the same imperial texts were inscribed anew, this time in the style of Wang Xizhi's 王羲之 (307-65) *xingshu*, or running script (fig. 3). Huairen 懷仁, a monk from the Hongfu Monastery, initiated the project and was responsible for its design. Assembling characters from Wang Xizhi's extant works, he shrank or enlarged them as necessary, so that the texts incised on the stele would replicate Wang's fluent, semi-cursive style.<sup>12</sup> This work is currently in Xi'an's Beilin 碑林, or Forest of Steles. Huairen is said to have been a descendant of Wang Xizhi, who was honorifically called the "sage of calligraphy" (書聖). He may have had access to some of the master's original works. Emperor Taizong was known to have been an avid collector of Wang's works, and legend has it that he even asked to be buried with Wang's famous *Lanting xu* 蘭亭序, or *Preface [Written] at the Orchid Pavilion*.<sup>13</sup> Taizong's aesthetic taste exerted much influence on court calligraphers such as Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641), Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558-638) and Chu Suiliang, all of whom emulated Wang's calligraphy. It is therefore likely that Huairen's reproduction of Wang's style for the new engraving was meant to honor the deceased emperor's calligraphic taste.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ci'en zhuan* 7.260.

<sup>11</sup> Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bukkyō shiseki*, vol. 1, 9-23.

<sup>12</sup> See the collection of essays in *Shoen* 書苑 3, no. 10 (1939); also, *Ō Gishi: Dai Tō sanzō shōgyō jo hi* 王羲之: 大唐三藏聖教序碑, in *Shoseki meihin sōkan* 書跡名品叢刊 (163 vols., Tokyo: Nigensha, 1960), 1:18.

<sup>13</sup> For the artistic stature of Wang Xizhi, see Nakata Yūjirō 中田勇次郎, *Ō Gishi* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974), and Lothar Ledderose, *Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), ch. 1, pp. 7-44.

To Chinese Buddhists, Xuanzang's most momentous accomplishment was to secure the support critical for the religion to flourish in China. Frederick Mote observes:

It was his [Xuanzang's] personal achievement to bring the emperor of China, Tang Taizong [who reigned 626-649], to wholehearted acceptance of Buddhism as a component of Chinese life. Because of him, the emperor began the patronage of Buddhist institutions, starting with his extraordinary favor toward Xuanzang himself; he founded a teaching and study monastery at the capital and agreed to Xuanzang's call for increased licensing of Chinese monks throughout the realm. Because of that, patronage of Buddhism by the Chinese elite greatly increased. This patronage occurred at the beginning of a stable and rich cultural era that lasted two centuries, during which the fullest flowering of Chinese Buddhism took place within a highly cosmopolitan phase of Chinese civilization.<sup>14</sup>

To honor Xuanzang in a manner quintessentially Chinese, no format was more fitting than the stele. As early as the Eastern Han (25-220), Chinese used stone tablets for funerary and other commemorative purposes, especially to describe the virtues or achievements of cultural heroes.<sup>15</sup> The virtues extolled were primarily Confucian ones, such as loyalty, filial piety, or good governing. Some steles eulogized national figures but the majority commemorated magistrates and functionaries of regional govern-

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<sup>14</sup> "Forward" to Sally H. Wriggins, *Xuanzang: A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p. xii. Stanley Weinstein also discusses Xuanzang's activities during Taizong's reign in *Buddhism Under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 24-31.

<sup>15</sup> Seminal works on the uses of stone tablets are Ye Changchi's 葉昌熾 *Yu shi* 語石 (10 *juan*, 1909; rpt. 2 vols., Taipei: Shangwu, 1956), Sekino Tadashi's *Shina hiketsu keishiki no henten* 支那碑碣形式の変遷 (Tokyo: Zayûhō kankōkai, 1935, and J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1897), ch. 3, pp. 1152-64. See also my "The Beginnings of the Buddhist Stele Tradition in China" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1995), 189-202.



ments or local teachers. Sociologically, steles were identified with the educated elite, or the scholar-official class, in particular with those models of saintly conduct who cultivated themselves through learning and applied their talents in government for the good of the society. Aesthetically, steles gave public display to the literary merits of texts and the fine hand of the calligraphy, the two forms of expression most intimately linked with learning and education.

This background enables us to understand the significance of the monastery's wish to erect steles for preserving the imperial encomiums of Xuanzang's works. Honoring Xuanzang in this way was to equate his accomplishments with those of a Chinese sage, even though his achievements were Buddhist and not Confucian. With the *bei* of 653, Xuanzang's contributions to Buddhism were acclaimed by the compositions of both the emperor and the crown prince, and were rendered in the calligraphy of a prominent scholar-official. The stele of 672, which duplicated Wang Xizhi's calligraphic style, would have further elevated his stature in the eyes of the educated elite, for Wang's style had been especially favored by the father of the reigning emperor as the benchmark of calligraphic excellence.<sup>16</sup>

During the early medieval period, Xuanzang was exalted also through the medium of the sacred biography. From the sixth century on, Chinese Buddhists started to compile biographies of eminent monks, to commend those whose lives illumined the Dharma and exemplified Buddhist piety.<sup>17</sup> This practice derived from an established genre, namely, the biographies that were a standard element in dynastic histories from the very inception of the histories in Han times. While Buddhist biographies were generally more liberal in their apocryphal contents, it is important

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<sup>16</sup> In addition to these tablets, there are at least three others made during the latter seventh century that were inscribed with the same imperial texts. Tokiwa and Sekino, 24-5.

<sup>17</sup> Beginning with Huijiao's 慧皎(497-554) *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T. no. 2059), Chinese Buddhists compiled sacred biographies throughout the medieval and later periods. See John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

to note that they also came to emphasize literary abilities—traditionally a Confucian value—as well as the individual's associations with emperors, princes, and high officials. Arthur Wright comments that these adaptations succeeded in their intent “to rescue Buddhist biographies from the limbo of the exotic, the bizarre, and give to the lives of the monks a place of honor in the cultural history of China.”<sup>18</sup> Besides recording Xuanzang's later acquaintance with important personages, the telling of his life story notes that he came from a family that for generations had produced scholars and officials who were well versed in Confucian learning. The biography tells also that at the age of eight, Xuanzang learned the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao jing* 孝經) from his father, and asserts that he admired the ancient sages and went on to study other canonical texts before entering a Buddhist monastery.<sup>19</sup>

As a celebrated Buddhist personage, Xuanzang was also honored in Indian Buddhist fashion—namely, with a five-story pagoda built to contain his relics at Xingjiao Monastery 興教寺, near Chang'an.<sup>20</sup> The multi-storied pagoda was derived from the Indian *stūpa*—the relic mound containing the Buddha's relics, which was in turn derived from the ancient Indian funeral mounds erected to honor kings or great men. Before the worship of Buddhist images came into vogue, Indian *stūpas* were major sites for cultic worship and religious practice. In later Buddhist traditions, smaller *stūpas* or pagodas were built to honor Buddhist monks of extraordinary accomplishments.<sup>21</sup> These pagodas, reminders of

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<sup>18</sup> “Biography or Hagiography: Hui-Chiao's Lives of Eminent Monks,” in Robert M. Somers, ed., *Studies in Chinese Buddhism* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1990), 76.

<sup>19</sup> *Ci'en zhuan* 1.221 (*T.* no. 2053, vol. 50). Following the *Ci'en zhuan*, two briefer biographies of Xuanzang were written: Daoxuan's 道宣 (596-667) *Xuanzang zhuan* 玄奘傳, in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*T.* 2060, vol. 50, 446-58) and Mingxiang's 冥詳 (10<sup>th</sup> century) *Da Tang gu sanzang Xuanzang fashi xingzhuang* 大唐故三藏玄奘法師行狀 (*T.* no. 2052, vol. 50, 214-20).

<sup>20</sup> Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bukkyō shiseki*, vol. 1, 29-31; plates 17, 18.

<sup>21</sup> For example, the Talin 塔林, or Forest of Pagodas, near the Shaolin Monastery 少林寺 in Henan, consists of many pagodas in Indic form honoring Buddhist monks.

those whose lives fulfilled the ideals of Buddhism, illustrate the honoring of Xuanzang in the Indian mode and in their own right became objects of veneration.

### The Founder Worship Tradition in Japan

The writing of sacred biographies (biographies of holy persons or religious founders) or hagiographies (biographies of saints) is common in most religious traditions. In general, such works are characterized by the mixing of history and mythology. The holy persons are portrayed as having infallible knowledge or supernatural powers, or both, as evidenced by their abilities to fulfill a divine mission. In many traditions, such texts are a form of devotional literature.<sup>22</sup> In the Chinese genre, however, certain features underscore a distinctive cultural pattern. For example, Confucius (511-479 BCE) was a sage in the Chinese tradition, and yet his sacred biography emphasizes history rather than myth when compared with those of other traditions. William LaFleur notes that Master Kong's apotheosis was shown through his paradigmatic life as the exemplar of teacher and sage—in other words, through his sagacity rather than his supernatural power.<sup>23</sup> As discussed above, this model influenced the writing of Chinese Buddhist biographies.

In this section I will examine Japanese narrative picture scrolls that depict the biography of Xuanzang, and discuss how the pictorial biography manifests a localized cultural phenomenon. This type of artifact belongs to the founder worship tradition in medieval Japan, and honors Xuanzang (Jap. Genjō) in his role as the founder of the Hossō sect [Ch. Faxiang] of Buddhism. A set of picture scrolls, now held in the Fujita Art Museum, titled *Genjō sanzō e* 玄奘三藏絵, was commissioned during the Kamakura

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<sup>22</sup> See William LaFleur's discussion of "Biography," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 2, 220-4. Another useful work on the subject is Frank E. Reynolds and Donald Capps, eds., *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976).

<sup>23</sup> LaFleur, 223.

period (1185-1333) for the Kôfuku-ji 興福寺 in Nara.<sup>24</sup> The headquarters of the Hossô sect, the Kôfuku-ji was also the clan temple of the Fujiwara 藤原 family, a powerful aristocratic clan that dominated the politics as well as the literature and arts of the Heian (794-1185) court. Textual sources indicate that a set of scrolls of the same title was made at the beginning of the Kamakura period, and another set was produced by the artist Takashina Takakane 高階隆兼. Takashina was also the painter of the *Kasuga gongen gengi e* 春日権現験記絵 (*Picture Scrolls of the Tales of Miracles of the Kasuga Deity*), executed in 1309 to honor the Shinto deity, Kasuga, and dedicated by a Fujiwara family member for the Daijô-in 大乘院, a sub-temple of the Kôfuku-ji. The *Genjô* scrolls were likewise kept in the Daijô-in. Since the Kasuga deity scrolls and the set honoring Xuanzang at the Fujita Art Museum exhibit the same painting style, it is thought that the extant *Genjô* scrolls was also the work of Takashina, probably based on the earlier set, which is now lost.<sup>25</sup>

Consisting of a total of 12 scrolls, the *Genjô sanzô e* illustrates the events of the life of Xuanzang, based on the Chinese biographies. Alternating texts and images, the composition begins with Xuanzang's birthplace in China. An early scene shows the young boy being taught the *Classic of Filial Piety* by his father. The scrolls continue with Xuanzang's travels to India. His encounters with hardships and with exotic persons in the desert are portrayed with restraint by comparison with later elaborations in the folklore tradition. Xuanzang the traveler is shown as a dignified figure, often helped on his way by local rulers. Once in India, he is portrayed making pilgrimages to all the sacred sites of Buddhism, including Jetavana, Nagarahāra, and Gr̥dhrakūta.

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<sup>24</sup> The scrolls are published in Minamoto Toyomune 源豊宗, ed., *Genjô sanzô e*, vol. 15 of *Shinshû Nihon emakimono zenshû* 新修日本絵巻全集 (30 vols., Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1977), and in Nakano Genzô 中野玄三, ed., *Genjô sanzô e*, vol. 9 of *Zoku Nihon emaki taisei* 続日本絵巻大成 (Tokyo: Chûhō kôron sha, 1982).

<sup>25</sup> Toyomune, ed., *Genjô sanzô e*, 3-7; see also Tani Nobukazu 谷信一, "Genjô sanzô e to Kasuga gongen gengi e no denrai kô" 玄奘三藏絵と春日権現験記絵の伝来考, *Kokka*, no. 552 (1936): 311-7.

Another section shows him studying in the monastery at Nālandā, the greatest center of Buddhist learning at that time (fig. 4a). At the end of his stay, we see him bidding farewell to the Indian master Śīlabhadra. Śīlabhadra had studied with Dharmapāla—a direct doctrinal descendent of Vasubandhu, founder of Yogācāra Buddhism. By clearly situating Xuanzang in the Indian lineage, the scrolls affirm the Hossō sect's legitimacy. Architectural details and scenery, however, are all rendered in the native Japanese mode.

We later come to Xuanzang's return to Chang'an, where the texts and images he brought back are paraded in triumphal procession through the capital's thoroughfares (fig. 4b). A further scene depicts the earnest enthusiasm of the many monks translating Buddhist texts under his direction (fig. 4c). Imperial favors conferred on the monk are also depicted, and he is shown at the side of the dying Emperor Taizong. The scrolls end with Xuanzang's own death and funeral procession.

In the late Heian to Kamakura period, *emakimono* 絵巻物, or picture-scrolls, were the most highly regarded form of painting. Rulers and aristocrats patronized the art form, for private as well as public purposes. Famous *emakimono* from the period include the *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (*Tale of Genji*) and the *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (*Tale of Heike*). Extrapolating from the *Genjō sanzō*'s sumptuousness, one can infer aristocratic or imperial sponsorship. The temple that housed the scrolls was moreover well connected with the imperial family. Certainly, aristocratic patrons would have approved of the scrolls' indications of Xuanzang's erudition and refined bearing. He appears as a dignified courtly figure, often wearing the *kesa*, a ceremonial priestly mantle made of lengths of different-colored cloth in imitation of a patched garment.

Japan's tradition of pictorial biography began as early as the eighth century, a notable example of that time being the *E-ingakyō* 絵因果経 (*Sūtra of Causes and Effects*). Generally thought to closely copy a Chinese original, the scrolls belonging to this set portrayed key incidents of the Buddha's life, such as his birth as a prince, his leaving the royal palace and fleeing to the mountains, his meditation and awakening, and the conversion of his leading

disciples.<sup>26</sup> This type of biography, like its oral and literary counterparts, served the didactic purpose of communicating the message that the Buddha's life offered a model of moral and religious behavior for worshipers to follow.

Most of the translations made by Xuanzang were texts from the abstruse Yogācāra school. Its doctrine maintained that the external world was but an illusion created from the consciousness of the internal world. Hence, the apotheosis of Yogācāra in China, Xuanzang's Faxiang school, was alternately known as "Ideation Only" (唯識, Ch. Weishi; J. Yuishiki). Xuanzang's teachings attracted followers, among them the notable Kuiji 窺基 (632-82).<sup>27</sup> Yet the Yogācāra school never achieved broad acceptance in China. It declined rapidly soon after its early leaders were gone, partly because of the impact of the Buddhist persecution of 845, and partly due to competition from the simpler teachings of other schools, such as Pure Land and Chan.<sup>28</sup>

In Japan, however, the scholastic Hossō school flourished with much greater success. It was embraced as part of the Buddhist tradition transmitted from Tang China, and recognized in the capital as one of the six schools of Nara (645-794) Buddhism. The Kōfuku-ji and Gangō-ji 元興寺, headquarters of the school, enjoyed the patronage of the aristocracy. The school also had influence over other rich and powerful temples, including the Tōdai-ji 東大寺, Yakushi-ji 藥師寺, Saidai-ji 西大寺, and Hōryū-ji 法隆寺.<sup>29</sup> Yet, during the Kamakura period, new religious movements sprang up, including three Pure Land schools (Jōdo 淨土, Shin 真, Ji 時), two Zen schools (Sōtō 曹洞, Rinzaï 臨濟), and the

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<sup>26</sup> Akiyama Terukazu, *Japanese Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1961), 28-29.

<sup>27</sup> Kuiji's surname was Yuchi 尉遲. He was of nomadic descent, and his father and grandfather were high-ranking generals at the Tang court. Kuiji took the tonsure at the age of seventeen and studied both Sanskrit and Buddhism with Xuanzang. An outstanding translator, he also authored commentaries on many Buddhist texts. He remained at the Ci'en Monastery for most his career.

<sup>28</sup> Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 321-5.

<sup>29</sup> G. B. Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1931), 121-2.

Nichiren 日蓮 school. As shaped by their visionary leaders, these sects appealed more directly to the laity and society at large than did the schools ensconced in Nara's powerful temples, of which Hossô was a prime example.<sup>30</sup>

Scholars of Japanese Buddhism have noted a trend concurrent with the rise of the new sects—namely, the worship of religious founders.<sup>31</sup> In founder worship, religious leaders were perceived as embodiments of the truth they proclaimed. As James Dobbins notes, “they were treated as incarnate forms of the dharma or as manifestations of the Buddha.”<sup>32</sup> Material objects associated with them—relics, images, portraits, or pictorial biographies—became the focus of cultic worship. Rituals expressing founder worship were important events in the Buddhist calendar. In the architectural plans of temples, special spaces were allocated to honor founders.<sup>33</sup>

Kamakura founder worship had its prototype in the cult surrounding Kôbô-daishi 弘法大師, a.k.a. Kûkai 空海 (774-835), founder of the esoteric Shingon 真言 sect during the Heian period. Shingon departed from the scholasticism of the older schools; in exerting broader appeal, it was a precursor to the reformed Buddhism of the Kamakura period. The cult surrounding Kôbô-daishi was moreover spread by a new type of religious practitioner called *hijiri* 聖 (holy man, or wise man). *Hijiri* might be ex-monks who were disaffected by the corruption of institutionalized Buddhism, wandering or mountain-dwelling ascetics, or other individuals who led relatively solitary lives so as to focus on the goal of rebirth in the Pure Land. Many gladly endured physical and mental hardship as a route to salvation. All the *hijiri* looked especially to Kûkai as

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<sup>30</sup> James Dobbins, “Envisioning Kamakura Buddhism,” in *Re-Visioning ‘Kamakura’ Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1998), 24-42.

<sup>31</sup> Masao Fujii, “Founder Worship in Kamakura Buddhism,” in *Religion and the Family in East Asia*, ed. George A. de Vos and Takao Sofue (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 155-67.

<sup>32</sup> Dobbins, “Envisioning Kamakura Buddhism,” 36.

<sup>33</sup> Fujii, “Founder Worship in Kamakura Buddhism,” 156-9.

a model, for in his youth he had practiced a severe mountain-dwelling eremitism in order to master mystical powers.

The *hijiri*'s emergence should be understood in the context of Buddhism's domestication in Japan, specifically in its incorporation of Shinto concepts and practices.<sup>34</sup> The activities of the *hijiri* were thought to demonstrate *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹, the theory that Shinto gods were manifestations of Buddhist deities. Based on the Shinto belief that gods (*kami*) wander to bless people everywhere, the *hijiri* saw their own practices, and those of the religious founders, as fulfilling Buddhist purposes.<sup>35</sup> *Hijiri* groups and founder worship are cultural patterns unique to Japanese Buddhism. Joseph Kitagawa notes that an important motif in the Japanese religious heritage is "its tendency to depend on the charismatic qualities of religious leaders as efficacious ingredients for salvation of man," and that this motif originated in pre-Buddhist Shinto tradition but was amplified by Buddhist piety. The deification of Kūkai, and later of other religious founders, thus demonstrates what Kitagawa calls a "homologizing of Shinto and Buddhist savior motifs."<sup>36</sup>

Seen against this background, we can appreciate the rationale during the Kamakura period for creating picture scrolls of Xuanzang's biography. The Hossō sect was one of the sects of Nara Buddhism against which the reform schools rebelled. Hossō devotees no doubt felt compelled to glorify the sect's founder in order to defend the sect against this challenge. Unlike Kūkai or Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262, founder of the Jōdo-shin sect), who enjoyed popular appeal in Japan, Xuanzang's stature depended upon the claim to authentic interpretations of the Dharma through a direct lineage to Indian masters. Hence, the scrolls' emphasis upon the scholarly monk's contacts in India, as well as his connections with Chinese emperors and courtiers.

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<sup>34</sup> These practices might also exhibit Daoist influence. It is well-known that Daoist adepts performed austerities to obtain magical power.

<sup>35</sup> Fujii, "Founder Worship in Kamakura Buddhism," 159-63.

<sup>36</sup> Kitagawa, "Kūkai the Master and Savior," Reynolds and Capps, ed., *The Biographical Process*, 335.



To honor the founders of a sect or an institution, temples commissioned portraits of their patriarchs. Sometimes these were arranged in the magical configuration of the mandala. A number of paintings depicting the lineage of the Hossô sect, called *Hossô mandalas* 法相曼荼羅, were made during the Kamakura and Muromachi (1392–1573) periods.<sup>37</sup> One example from Kôfuku-ji, dating from the fifteenth century, portrays the sect's chief deity, Maitreya Bodhisattva, in the center, surrounded by sixteen patriarchs of the Hossô sect—five Indian, four Chinese, and seven Japanese (fig. 5). Xuanzang, here a youthful figure wearing a *kesa* and holding *sûtras* in flat leaves in his right hand, is seen on the left, the second figure from the top (fig. 5a). Donohashi Akio remarks that “to the Japanese...these images [along with those depicting Xuanzang as a guardian deity to be discussed below] appeared to have supernatural power.”<sup>38</sup>

As with the mandala paintings and other material objects associated with founder worship, the biographical scrolls of Xuanzang were used in a manner that indicates the meaning vested in them. Revered as sacred treasures of the Kôfuku-ji, they were ascribed with magical powers, and treated like protective spirits essential to the monastery's well-being. Viewing of the scrolls was granted only on special occasions or at imperial request.<sup>39</sup> Since the eighteenth century, the scrolls were known as the *Hossô-shû hiji e-kotoba* 法相宗秘事絵詞 (*Illustrated Tales of the Mysteries of the Hossô Sect*), in further reflection of their sanctified status. Xuanzang, founder of the sect and thus tutelary guardian of the temple, assumed the role of a patron saint with supernatural power.

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<sup>37</sup> *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue nos. 197-9. The *Hossô mandala* at the Kôfuku-ji is also illustrated in Nakano Genzô, *Genjô Sanzô-e*, 123.

<sup>38</sup> Donohashi, “From Chang’an to Nara: Buddhist Art Brought Home by Japanese Envoys to T’ang China,” *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, 63.

<sup>39</sup> Records show that in 1433 the emperor requested a viewing of the picture scrolls. Toyomune, ed., *Genjô sanzô e*, 6.

### The Religious Icon Tradition in China, Japan, and Tibet

Iconic representations of Xuanzang also show the monk as a pilgrim. The best known examples are two almost identical silk paintings from Japan, both probably dating from the early Kamakura period.<sup>40</sup> As one of them is illustrated by fig. 6, the paintings show Xuanzang the pilgrim in the garb of an itinerant monk, wearing a short tunic and sandals and carrying a parasol. He also carries a bamboo-framed backpack of *sūtra* scrolls. A small object hangs from the bamboo frame. Some scholars identify it as a censer, others as a reliquary (see also fig. 11).<sup>41</sup> He holds a flywhisk in one hand and a scroll in the other: the flywhisk to drive away evil spirits and the scroll for *sūtra* recitation. Around his neck is a necklace strung with skulls, although their details are not distinct.

The necklace of skulls is an iconographic feature of a spirit associated with Xuanzang's travel. While Xuanzang was crossing the desert to the west of Dunhuang, he lost his water flask. For a few days he went on without water; finally, in thirst and despair, he encountered a spirit in a dream. Standing many feet tall and wielding a halberd, the spirit urged the monk to continue his journey. Xuanzang awoke and set forth again, whereupon his horse veered from his intended path and would not be reined back. Soon

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<sup>40</sup> The painting reproduced as figure 6 appeared in Kakujō Kōshi 鹤城居士, "Kōga Genjō hōshi angya-zu kō" 古画玄奘法師行脚図考, *Kokka*, no. 96 (1897): 231-3, color plate. Previously in a private collection, this work is now owned by the Tokyo National Museum and recognized as an Important Cultural Property. The other, almost identical painting is introduced in Matsumoto Eiichi 松本栄一, "Genjō sanzō angya-zu kō" 玄奘三藏行脚図考, *Kokka*, nos. 590-591 (1940): 436-45.

<sup>41</sup> At the International Conference on Dunhuang Studies held at Dunhuang, July 29-August 3, 2000, Roderick Whitfield and Lokesh Chandra presented papers, "Dunhuang Depictions of Pilgrim Monks" and "Tun-Huang as Virtue and Power," respectively, that discussed the iconography of the image of the monk-pilgrim accompanied by a tiger. In the Dunhuang painting at the Musée Guimet (fig. 11), the object hanging from the bamboo frame in front of the pilgrim is accompanied by a bird with red beak, known as *sari niao* 舍利鳥; this suggests that the object is a reliquary containing relics of the Buddha. This author is grateful to both Whitfield and Chandra for sharing their findings.

the horse brought Xuanzang to green grass and a pool of water, enabling him to replenish his water supply and continue the journey.<sup>42</sup>

In later accounts, this spirit became known as Shensha dashen 深沙大神, the mysterious Spirit of the Deep Sand. The Japanese pilgrim Jōgyō 常曉, who traveled to China in 838-39, brought a statue of Shensha shen, among other objects, back to Japan. He asserted this deity to be the one Xuanzang had encountered in the desert, and further identified him as a manifestation of Vaiśravaṇa, the Heavenly King of the North (Ch. Beifang duowen tian 北方多聞天 or Pishamen tian 毗沙門天), who protected the people of the Tang from calamity and received their worship.<sup>43</sup> Vaiśravaṇa was worshipped also by travelers as a protective spirit.

A twelfth-century drawing from Japan shows this figure with hair standing on end and a ferocious demeanor, with one arm extended and the other raised as if to strike (fig. 7). His necklace is strung with seven skulls. Snakes twirl around his limbs, elephant heads emerge from his knees, and his feet are clawed. This guardian deity, called Jinja Taisho in Japanese, appears in Japanese wooden statues of late Heian and Kamakura dates.<sup>44</sup> Other accounts portray Shensha shen as a demonic figure, to be subdued by Xuanzang. In Wu Cheng'en's novel, he became Sha heshang 沙和尚, a member of the monk's entourage.<sup>45</sup> In the two Kamakura paintings, Xuanzang has acquired the necklace of skulls from Shensha shen (fig. 6); supposedly, the skulls represent Xuanzang's seven previous incarnations.

Another well-known legend associated with Xuanzang told of the efficacy of the *Heart Sūtra* (*Xin jing* 心經), an abbreviated version of the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya sūtra* (*Da bore poluo miduo xin jing* 大般若波羅密多心經).<sup>46</sup> According to the legend, this

<sup>42</sup> *Ci'en zhuan* 1.224.

<sup>43</sup> *Jōgyō heshang qingrai mulu*, in *T.* no. 2163, vol. 55, 1070. See Matsumoto, "Genjō sanzō angya-zu kō," 440-1; Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi*, 18-21.

<sup>44</sup> *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue nos. 185-7.

<sup>45</sup> Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi*, 20-1.

<sup>46</sup> Xuanzang's translation of the *Heart Sūtra* is in *T.* no. 251, vol. 8, 848. See Leon Hurvitz, "Hsüan-tsang 玄奘 [602-664] and the *Heart Scripture*," in

scripture was taught to Xuanzang by a mysterious, ragged old man in Sichuan. Later, when Xuanzang encountered evil spirits during his travels, not even invoking the name of Avalokiteśvara could help, but as soon as he started to recite the *Heart Sūtra*, the evil spirits would all disappear. Because of its potency as a charm, a cult developed around the scripture in medieval China, and since Xuanzang had translated the work, the cult naturally became linked with him. The text was worshiped as a sacred object, as its word was considered equivalent to the Dharma and the Buddha.<sup>47</sup>

In association with the cult of the *Heart Sūtra*, the iconography of the sixteen benevolent deities (*lokapālas*, or guardian deities; Ch. *shiliu shanshen* 十六善神) developed, sometimes in conjunction with Xuanzang. According to literary sources, Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-56) asked the Indian monk Vajrabodhi (Ch. Jin'gangzhi 金剛智, 669-741) to depict the sixteen benevolent deities who protect the sacred *Heart Sūtra*. These pictures were purportedly brought to Japan by Kūkai.<sup>48</sup> Although the Tang examples have not survived, the earliest extant depictions in Japan of the sixteen benign deities date from the late Heian period. Painted on the interior panels of *sūtra* cases designed to contain the *Heart Sūtra*, the *lokapālas* are portrayed as protectors of the sacred text.<sup>49</sup> Sometimes the *Heart Sūtra* is symbolized by an icon of

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*Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honor of Edward Conze*, ed. Lewis Lancaster and Luis O. Gómez (Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977), 103-21. I thank Victor H. Mair for the reading of 般若 as *bore* in this context.

<sup>47</sup> Concerning the worship of sacred texts, see Robert F. Campany, "Notes on the Devotional Uses and Symbolic Functions of *Sūtra* Texts as Depicted in Early Chinese Buddhist Miracle Tales and Hagiographies," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 14: 1 (1991): 28-72, and Victor H. Mair, "The *Heart Sūtra* and *The Journey to the West*," forthcoming in *Festschrift for Professor Liu Ts'un-yan*.

<sup>48</sup> Matsumoto, "Genjō sanzō angya-zu kō," 441.

<sup>49</sup> One such cabinet at the Kōfuku-ji is illustrated in *Nara rokudaiji taikan* 奈良六大寺大觀, ed. Nara rokudaiji taikan kankōkai (Iwanami shoten, 1969), vol. 7, 92-7, and *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue no. 176.

Śākyamuni, and the assembly of protective deities is expanded from the original sixteen to include bodhisattvas and *devas* (heavenly beings).<sup>50</sup>

In examples from as early as the Kamakura period, two figures are added to the group: Xuanzang and the Spirit of Deep Sand (fig. 8; see also fig. 13a-b).<sup>51</sup> In the painting from the Nanzen-ji 南禪寺 in figure 8, the Prajñā assembly now consists of Śākyamuni Buddha flanked by Mañjuśrī (Ch. Wenshu 文殊, Bodhisattva of Wisdom) riding a lion and Samantabhadra (Ch. Puxian 普賢, Bodhisattva of Principle) riding an elephant. There are also the two *devas* Śrīmahādevī (Ch. Gongde tian 功德天, Goddess of Wealth and wife of the Hindu god Indra) and Vāsu (Ch. Poshu xian 婆數仙, younger brother of Indra), as well as the sixteen *lokapālas*. Xuanzang the itinerant stands in the lower right corner, and Shensha shen, looking ferocious and rendered in reddish flesh tones, is in the lower left. Even though Xuanzang, of human origin, and Shensha shen, a demonic figure, were of low status in the Buddhist hierarchy, they are represented because of their role in the transmission of the *Heart Sūtra*, and become elevated in rank by being shown with the deities and bodhisattvas that protect the sacred text. Although depictions of Xuanzang in the Prajñā assembly sometimes show him as a dignified monk wearing a *kesa* and holding *sūtras* of flat leaves (following the image established in the picture scrolls or in mandala paintings discussed in the previous section), the majority present him as an itinerant carrying a backpack of *sūtra* scrolls.

The two Kamakura paintings that show Xuanzang as an itinerant monk (as in fig. 6) were probably derived from late Song (960-1279) models. The refined brushwork and delicate details correspond to the Song style of figure painting. In the brisk traffic

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In this example, Xuanzang is portrayed as a monk wearing a *kesa* and not as an itinerant.

<sup>50</sup> Matsumoto, "Genjō sanzō angya-zu kō," 441-4. See also Nakano Genzō, "Sō shōrai zuzō no denpa – Chōkan sannen [1165] Hannya jūroku zenshin zuzō o chūshin ni shite" 宋請來圖像の伝播 – 長寛三年般若十六善神圖像を中心にして, *Kokka* no. 1026 (1979): 16-37.

<sup>51</sup> *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue nos. 178-84.

between Song China and Japan, many painted or woodblock-printed iconographical drawings were brought to Japan at that time and subsequently influenced the development of Japanese Buddhist painting.<sup>52</sup>

Numerous scholars have pointed out that the iconography of Xuanzang as a pilgrim, in the guise of an itinerant monk, originates from depictions of foreign-looking travelers.<sup>53</sup> About a dozen such paintings found at Dunhuang are now housed in the British Museum, the Musée Guimet, the Korean National Museum, and elsewhere.<sup>54</sup> Dating from the ninth and tenth centuries, these images are usually rather crudely painted on paper, and show persons with prominent Central Asian or non-Chinese facial features (figs. 9-11). In addition, examples may be found among Dunhuang's mural paintings. There are two from Cave 45 (Five

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<sup>52</sup> See note 50.

<sup>53</sup> The derivation was early noted by Matsumoto Eiichi, *Tonkô-ga no kenkyû* 敦煌画の研究 (2 vols., Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Studies, 1937), 520-2; figs. 147a-b, 148a, pl. 10. Other references include Akiyama Terukazu 秋山光和, "Tonkô-ga 'Tora o tsureta angyasô' o meguru kôsetsu - Perio shôrai kinue ni irei no shôkai o chûshin ni" 敦煌画「虎をつれた行脚僧」をめぐる考察〜ペリオ請来絹画二遺例の紹介を中心に, *Bijutsu kenkyû* 美術研究, no. 238 (1965): 163-83, and Paul Demiéville, "Appendice sur 'Damaduoluo' (Dharmatrâta)," in Paul Demiéville and Jao Tsung-i, *Peintures monochromes de Dunhuang (Dunhuang Baihua 燉煌白畫)*, (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1978), Tome 1, 43-9, and Yamaguchi Zuihō 山口瑞鳳, "Tora o tomonau dai jûhachi rakkan zu no raireki" 虎を伴う第十八羅漢図の来歴, *Indo koten kenkyû* 6 (1984). References of the recent decade include Wang Huimin 王惠民 "Dunhuang hua zhong de xingjiaoseng tu xintan" 敦煌畫中的行脚僧圖新探, *Jiuzhou xuekan* 九州學刊 6.4 (1995): 43-55; Jacques Giès, et al., *Les arts de l'Asie centrale: La collection Paul Pelliot du musée national des arts asiatiques - Guimet* (3 vols., Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux & Kodansha, 1996), vol. 1, 316-8; vol. 2, pls. 87-9. See also notes 56, 63.

<sup>54</sup> British Museum Ch. 00380, 0037; Musée Guimet 17683, EO.1138, EO.1141; Pelliot Tun-huang manuscripts 3075v, 4029, 4074. Others are in the Korean National Museum, the Tenri Library, Nara, the Chinese Collection of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, and the private collection of Nakayama Shôzen 中山正善.

Dynasties, 907-79), and two each from Caves 363, 306, and 308 (Xixia period, 1032-1227).<sup>55</sup> The monk's paraphernalia includes a bamboo backpack holding scrolls, flywhisk, wide-brimmed hat, hanging censer or reliquary, and sandals. He does not wear the skull necklace, but walks on a puff of cloud and is accompanied by a tiger. A small image of a transformation Buddha, sometimes identified as Baosheng rulai 寶聖如來 (Ratnaketu) appears in the upper left corner.

Itinerant monks played a very important role in the spread of Buddhism. They proselytized in largely illiterate rural communities, often employing skills such as story-telling to teach the moral lessons of the religion. Victor H. Mair has asserted that the depictions at Dunhuang of Central Asian itinerants probably represented such folk entertainers.<sup>56</sup> The scrolls they carried might have been pictures used as visual aids in story-telling, and the stories they told were probably the oral antecedents of the popular literary genre called *bianwen* 變文, or transformation texts. The puffs of cloud were conventional symbols for supernatural or transformation events. Since the itinerant's role was to spread Buddhism, his storytelling would have been considered a sacred event that mediated between the known and the unknown, the human and the divine. Overlooking the itinerant's activities, a guardian Buddha made his appearance as a transformation Buddha. His companion tiger symbolized animal ferocity transformed to mildness by Buddha's aura.

Because of his role as a transmitter of the faith, it is easy enough to see how this image type could have been adopted for Xuanzang. It is now generally accepted that Xuanzang acquired this persona sometime between the late Tang and the Song

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<sup>55</sup> Liu Yuquan 劉玉權, "Shazhou Huigu shiqi shiku yishu" 沙洲回鶻時期石窟藝術, *Anxi Yulin ku* 安西榆林窟, ed. Dunhuang Academy (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1997), 219, fig. 5; and idem, "Minzu yishu de qipa - lun Dunhuang Xixia Yuan shiqi de bishu" 民族藝術的奇葩 - 論敦煌西夏元時期的壁畫, *Zhongguo Dunhuang bishu quanji* 中國敦煌壁畫全集 (Tianjin: Renmin meishu, 1996), vol. 10, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Victor H. Mair, "The Origins of an Iconographical Form of the Pilgrim Hsüan-tsang," *T'ang Studies* 4 (1986): 29-41.

dynasties, and that the Kamakura paintings were probably copies of a Song Chinese painting that has been lost (or that one is a copy of the Chinese original and the other a copy of the copy). The time frame in which Xuanzang the pilgrim took on the new iconic identity of an itinerant monk, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is significant, for it was precisely during this period that we find a profusion of legends about him appearing in oral and written stories, in drama, and in other Buddhist and non-Buddhist forms of entertainment.

Although the appropriation of the image of an itinerant for the Chinese pilgrim probably took place in China, similar developments occurred in Japan. As noted above, the Japanese pilgrim Jōgyō brought back a statue of Shensha shen and reported on legends about Xuanzang. Presumably, other ninth-century Japanese travelers did so as well. When Sino-Japanese contacts resumed during the twelfth century, the image of Xuanzang in the new guise of an itinerant monk came to Japan, and served as an object for veneration for an entirely different class of Buddhists there. Just as the previous figure of the learned monk in the company of courtiers and royalty had been aligned with the elite establishment, so the model of the indefatigable pilgrim had special meaning for the *hijiri*, and would naturally have been popularized and disseminated by them.<sup>57</sup>

This figure was embraced also by practitioners of Shugendō 修驗道, a movement related to the *hijiri* phenomenon. Shugendō eclectically drew from a large assortment of indigenous and imported traditions—Shinto, Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, folk religion, and mountain cults (called *sangaku shinkō* 山岳信仰). Followers of Shugendō were variously called *shugenja* 修驗者, “persons who master extraordinary religious power” or *yamabushi* 山伏, “those who sleep in the mountains.” Besides practicing austerities in the mountains, they also traveled around the countryside to preach their religion to the common

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<sup>57</sup> In *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue nos. 176 and 180 portray Xuanzang as a learned monk, while nos. 178, 181-4 depict him as an itinerant.



people.<sup>58</sup> Said to have been founded by En no Ozunu 役小角 (ca. 643–ca. 701), Shugendô did not become institutionalized until the late Heian and Kamakura periods. The *shugenja* or *yamabushi* followed codified religious and ritual practices; their very rigid dress code prescribed a monk's staff, prayer beads, straw sandals, and a portable altar containing Buddhist scriptures.<sup>59</sup> They went on pilgrimages to sacred mountains, temples, and cult centers. A nineteenth-century photograph of one of these ascetics shows how closely they imitated the attire of the prototypical pilgrim, Xuanzang (fig. 12). Later Japanese paintings and screens often portrayed mountain ascetics and pilgrims visiting sacred sites.<sup>60</sup>

Shugendô practitioners wore amulets.<sup>61</sup> One such amulet, consisting of a long roll of stamped icons, has a section that shows Śākyamuni (who espouses the *Heart Sūtra*) flanked by two bodhisattvas and two deities (probably the Hindu gods Brahmā and Indra), the sixteen *lokapālas*, and Xuanzang at far right, and Shensha shen at far left (fig. 13a-b). The example indicates that Xuanzang, along with other deities, had become a protective spirit for Japanese mountain ascetics and pilgrims.

The Japanese portrayal of Xuanzang as an itinerant had a convoluted circulation, for modern Chinese depictions all copied it. In 1933, images of Xuanzang based on the Japanese Kamakura-

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<sup>58</sup> H. Byron Earhart, *A Religious Study of the Mount Haguro Sect of Shugendo; an Example of Japanese Mountain Religion* (Tokyo: Sophia Univ., 1970), ch. 1, "The Religious Background and Historical Development of Shugendô."

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-7. For artworks associated with Shugendô, see *Nihon bijutsu zenshū* 日本美術全集, vol. 11, *Shinto no bijutsu* 神道の美術 (Tokyo: Gakushū ken-kyūsha, 1979).

<sup>60</sup> *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang* features an eighteenth-century wooden statue of Xuanzang as an itinerant from the Yakushi-ji, catalogue no. 6.

<sup>61</sup> For fetishism of cult objects such as amulets, votive plaques and icons, see Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cults of Amulets*, and this author's "Personal Devotional Arts of Buddhist Asia," in Larry D. Perkins et al., *Intimate Rituals and Personal Devotions: Spiritual Art through the Ages*, exhibit catalogue (Gainesville: Harn Museum of Art, Univ. of Florida, 2000), 23-35.

period paintings were carved on two steles, one of the images being superimposed on a modern map of the routes of Xuanzang's pilgrimages (fig. 14). Both steles are now in Xi'an's Beilin. Again we note the Chinese preference for commemorating and preserving culturally significant images on the potent form of the stele.<sup>62</sup>

The itinerant prototype was drafted in the Tibetan tradition about the fourteenth or fifteenth century.<sup>63</sup> It is fascinating to observe the similarity between the Tibetan metamorphosis and the role the figure plays in the Chinese and Japanese Buddhist pantheons. In the Tibetan formulation, the itinerant figure is known as Dharmatāla or Dharmatrāta (Ch. Damoduoluo 達磨多羅). He is a lay devotee and servant of the Buddha, and thus of rather low rank (fig. 15). His physical appearance is essentially the same as that of Central Asian itinerants portrayed at Dunhuang—long hair or hair tied into a topknot, an umbrella or a wide-brimmed hat to keep off the sun, a flywhisk in one hand, a vase for holy water in the other. He wears the clothing of a laic and carries a backpack filled with scrolls or books. Since Dharmatāla is a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, the transformation Buddha accompanying him is Amitābha. The tiger, by the itinerant's right knee, and the cloud motif are also retained in this iconography.

Dharmatāla may also be shown as one of the two arhats added to the traditional group of sixteen.<sup>64</sup> As protectors of the Dharma, they surround a central Buddha in *thangka* paintings (fig. 16, 16a). Dharmatāla is easily recognizable because of the attributes des-

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<sup>62</sup> For her recent book, *Xuanzang: A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road*, Sally Wriggins chose this very image for the dust jacket, with the monk looking even more youthful and buoyant.

<sup>63</sup> Matsumoto, Akiyama, Demiéville, and Mair have all discussed this aspect of the figure's transformation, as noted above. Additionally, Roderick Whitfield also treats the development of the itinerant figure in *The Art of Central Asia* (2 vols., Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983), 336-7; vol. 2, pl. 59.

<sup>64</sup> See Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico della stato, 1949), Part II, *thangkas* nos. 121-36; Marilyn M. Rhie and Robert A.F. Thurman, *Wisdom & Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1991), catalogue nos. 3, 4, 6, 17.

cribed above. The eighteenth arhat is Hvashang (Ch. Budai 布袋), adapted from Maitreya or the pot-bellied “Laughing Buddha” in later Chinese Buddhism.<sup>65</sup> The addition of Dharmatāla and Hvashang to the original group represents the incorporation of Chinese and perhaps Central Asian folk elements into the Tibetan tradition.

These two figures’ elevation to the rank of arhat parallels the addition of Xuanzang and Shensha shen to the sixteen *lokapālas* guarding the *Heart Sūtra*. The prototypical Central Asian itinerant monk, as well as Xuanzang and Dharmatāla, were all human in origin. But because of their service to Buddhism’s cause, Xuanzang and Dharmatāla both earned a semi-divine status and the privilege of accompanying the *lokapālas* and arhats in the Buddha’s assembly.

### The Folkloric Tradition in China

The last set of visual representations of Xuanzang developed as his cult reached the popular level. Mixing facts with fancy, the bizarre, and extravagant romanticism, the folklore about Xuanzang embedded his image in the popular psyche. Probably begun within a vernacular tradition, folklore and a story-cycle about Xuanzang culminated in the novel *Xiyou ji*, or *Monkey*.<sup>66</sup> Glen Dudbridge traces the antecedents of *Xiyou ji* to the city-culture of the Song capitals, and specifically to the story-telling profession.<sup>67</sup> A still earlier antecedent may be “transformation texts.” The discovery in the early part of the last century of *bianwen* among the Dunhuang manuscripts has shed much light on the origin of this genre of

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<sup>65</sup> The Laughing Buddha originated from the claim made by an enigmatic tenth-century native of Zhejiang to be the reborn Maitreya. He carried a hemp bag on his person and was very popular with children. Kenneth Ch’en, *Buddhism in China*, 405-6.

<sup>66</sup> A recent monograph about the novel’s development is Glen Dudbridge’s *The Hsi-yu Chi: A Study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth-century Chinese Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970). Other important works include Hu Shi 胡適, “*Xiyou ji kaozheng*” 西遊記考證, in *Hu Shi wencun* 胡適文存 (Taipei: Yuandong, 1953), 354-99, and C. T. Hsia, “Journey to the West,” *The Classic Chinese Novel* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1968), 115-64.

<sup>67</sup> Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi*, p. 1.

popular literature, linking it with the practice of story-telling, drama, painting, and other performances that predate the Song.<sup>68</sup> As Zhou Shaoliang explains, “‘*Bianwen*’ take stories dealing with miraculous transformations (*shenbian* 神變) from the Buddhist *sūtras* and elaborate them into written works for the purpose of guiding the common people and converting the masses.”<sup>69</sup> Mair elaborates on the term *shenbian* (Skt. *prātihārya*), explaining that “it is a miraculous transformation [that is, appearance or manifestation] performed by a Buddha or Bodhisattva for the edification of sentient beings.”<sup>70</sup> Although derived from Buddhist practices, *bian* (transformations) came to be performed in secular settings as well, sometimes using picture scrolls as props.<sup>71</sup> Apparently, these transformation performances were a widely popular form of entertainment among the lower strata of society from the middle to the end of the Tang period.<sup>72</sup> Jōgyō’s report of the legend about Shensha shen in the ninth century gave indications of the cultic beliefs that had grown up around Xuanzang. Since the monk was an exemplary Buddhist figure, it

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<sup>68</sup> The bibliography on *bianwen* is vast. See Victor H. Mair, “Catalogues of Tun-huang Manuscripts and Bibliographies of Studies,” *T’ang Transformation Texts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), 220-78, and idem, *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai‘i Press, 1988), 227-68.

<sup>69</sup> Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良, *Dunhuang bianwen huilu* 敦煌變文彙錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai chuban gongsi, 1954), x-xi. Citation translated by Mair, *T’ang Transformation Texts*, 48.

<sup>70</sup> Mair, *T’ang Transformation Texts*, 49.

<sup>71</sup> In “The Origins of an Iconographical Form of the Pilgrim Hsüan-tsang,” Mair asserted that the images of Central Asian itinerants from Dunhuang might portray transformation entertainers. The use of picture scrolls to disseminate Buddhist doctrine was well-known in ancient India and related to the development of Buddhist narratives; see A. K. Coomaraswamy, “Picture-showman,” *Indian Historical Quarterly* V (1929): 82-187, and Vidya Dehejia, “On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art,” *Art Bulletin*, 73:3 (1990): 374-92.

<sup>72</sup> Mair, *T’ang Transformation Texts*, 170.

would not be surprising if his life story and heroic journey were dramatized in *bian* performances.

By the Song dynasty, the sudden profusion of literary and visual materials dealing with Xuanzang attests to a full-blown popular cult. Two Song texts representing early forms of the *Xiyouji* story have survived in the Kôzan-ji 高山寺 in Kyoto. These happen also to be the earliest printed texts of Chinese popular fiction: *The Newly Printed Record of the Procurement of Scriptures by the Master of the Law, Tripitaka, of the Great Tang*, and *The Poetic Tale of the Procurement of Scriptures by the Master of the Law, Tripitaka, of the Great Tang*.<sup>73</sup> Dudbridge points out two salient features of the texts:

[Firstly,] many elements of vaguely Buddhist origin are there, but there is certainly no monopoly of Buddhist themes, of whatever degree of orthodoxy. The episodes are bewilderingly varied. Secondly, such Buddhist (or sub-Buddhist) cults and traditions as are represented there lose most of their own significance and logic in the process.<sup>74</sup>

Many scholars have marveled at how little the fictional accounts resemble the historical Xuanzang and his journey. These early texts of the story-cycle illustrate the manner in which a variety of cults and myths, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, became added. An analysis of the novel is beyond the scope of the present paper but it is worth noting that by emphasizing the mythic and supernatural over the historical, the Xuanzang story-cycle is more closely allied to sacred biographies of other religious traditions (in this case, of Indian Buddhism) than to China's heritage.

Beginning in the Song dynasty, literary sources mention paintings or murals depicting Xuanzang in quest of *sūtras*. The

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<sup>73</sup> Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi*, ch. 2. See also Anthony C. Yu, trans., *The Journey to the West* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), 6-9. Pages of the *Da Tang Sanzang qujing shihua* are illustrated in *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, 269, reference pl. 6.

<sup>74</sup> *The Hsi-yu Chi*, 44-5.

*Guangchuan huaba* 廣川畫跋 of Dong You 董道 (fl. late 11<sup>th</sup> – early 12<sup>th</sup> century) listed a *Xuanzang qujing tu* 玄奘取經圖 (*Picture of Xuanzang Retrieving the Sūtras*).<sup>75</sup> The poet-official Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-72) recorded a visit to the Shouling-si 壽靈寺 in Yangzhou in the year 1036. There he was told that when the place was used as a “traveling palace” by the Late Zhou emperor Shizong (r. 954-59), it was already dilapidated, with only a mural of Xuanzang retrieving the *sūtras* remaining.<sup>76</sup> Neither depiction has survived to the present day, and it would be fruitless to speculate what they might have looked like. With the recent publication of the murals of the Yulin Caves 榆林窟 in Gansu province and of a Song album in Japan, however, we now have more visual evidence available of the story-cycle.

At the Yulin cave-temples and the Eastern Thousand Buddhas Caves (Dong qianfo dong 東千佛洞) in nearby Anxi 安西, several murals of the Xixia period portray Xuanzang.<sup>77</sup> An example from Yulin Cave 3 shows him in the abode of Samantabhadra (figs. 17, 17a)—one of the great bodhisattvas who is usually paired with Mañjuśrī to accompany Śākyamuni (as in fig. 8’s Prajñā assembly). Against the backdrop of a panoramic landscape that is rendered in masterful brushwork, the majestic, slightly feminized Samantabhadra sits upon a white elephant at center stage. Encircling him and similarly supported by a bed of ocean waves is a retinue of minor bodhisattvas, the Hindu gods Brahmā and Indra in the guise of Chinese emperors, heavenly kings, and arhats. To the left, standing on a cliff bank, is the diminutive figure of a haloed monk paying homage to Samantabhadra. Behind him stand a monkey and a white horse, the latter bearing atop its saddle what looks like a parcel of *sūtras*.

In the *Gandavyūha* (Ch. *Rufajie pin* 入法界品, “Entrance into the Realm of Ultimate Truth”), the last chapter of the *Flower*

<sup>75</sup> *Guangchuan huaba*, juan 4, in Yu Anlan 于安瀾, ed., *Huapin congshu* 畫品叢書 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1982), 274-8.

<sup>76</sup> *Ouyang wenzhong gong wenji* 125.4b-5a.

<sup>77</sup> Duan Wenjie 段文傑 reported a total of five depictions, including some from the Eastern Thousand Buddhas Cave. “Yulin ku de bihua yishu” 榆林窟的壁畫藝術, *Anxi Yulin ku*, 172-3, pls. 138, 158-60.

*Garland Sūtra*,<sup>78</sup> the protagonist is a young boy called Sudhana who goes on a pilgrimage in search of enlightenment. Under the guidance of Mañjuśrī, the boy visits fifty-three sages, of whom the last is none other than Samantabhadra. Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra are the two great bodhisattvas honored in this scripture (together with Vairocana, they are called the Three Holy Ones). Whereas the former embodies the themes of faith, understanding, and insight, the latter personifies the “object of faith,” “practice,” and “principle.” Thus, Sudhana’s encounter with Samantabhadra signals the attainment of the goals of his pilgrimage, the fruition of the practice of the bodhisattva path in Mahāyāna faith. In the Yulin mural, Xuanzang has assumed the role of the prototypical pilgrim Sudhana in his ultimate meeting with Samantabhadra. This demonstrates how a major text such as the *Flower Garland Sūtra* can provide the doctrinal basis and inspiration for pictorial images associated with the cult of Xuanzang.<sup>79</sup>

Further developments also occurred in the literary medium. In the Kōzan-ji text, an episode tells of the Tripitaka being entertained and tempted in opulent surroundings by the queen of the legendary “Land of Women” in Central Asia. The queen later revealed herself to be a compound of two bodhisattvas: Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra—again a reference to the *Flower Garland Sūtra*.<sup>80</sup> A mural from the Eastern Thousand Buddhas Caves, which dates to the twelfth or thirteenth century, also depicts

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<sup>78</sup> Namely, the *Mahāvaiṣṭya Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra* (Ch. *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經; *The Great Expansive Scripture of the Buddha’s Flower Garland*), which was translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra 佛訖跋陀羅 between 418–420 (T. 278), and again by Śikṣānanda (Ch. 實叉難陀) between 695–699.

<sup>79</sup> I am grateful to Robert Gimello for sharing his insights into the *Flower Garland Scripture*; see his “Ch’eng-kuan’s [澄觀] Meditations on the “Three Holy Ones,”” in *Kegongaku ronshū* 華嚴學論集, edited by the Committee for the Commemoration of Professor Kamata Shigeo’s Seventieth Birthday 鎌田茂雄博士 古稀 記念会 (Tokyo: Daizō shuppan, 1997), pp. 131–213. For pictorial images associated with the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, see Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton & Co., 1967).

<sup>80</sup> Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi*, 13–4.

Xuanzang accompanied by Monkey and a white horse.<sup>81</sup> In Yulin Cave 2, however, Xuanzang is shown only with Monkey in a mural featuring the Water-moon Guanyin.<sup>82</sup> As noted by Dudbridge, Avalokiteśvara is yet another Buddhist god masquerading as a tempter.<sup>83</sup> Apart from this role, Avalokiteśvara looms large in other legends associated with Xuanzang's travels, especially as a protector of travelers. These murals correspond to the fictionalization of the monk's travels, and demonstrate the mutual influence of the literary and pictorial accounts.

In the murals of both these cave complexes, Monkey makes an early appearance as a companion on Xuanzang's long journey. There are several theories regarding the origin of the monkey figure, with the most prevalent relating it to the Hindu demigod Hanuman in the epic *Rāmāyana*.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, evidence of local cults of the monkey god in south China and the relief depictions of the monkey pilgrim with Xuanzang on the Western Pagoda of Kaiyuansi 開元寺 in Quanzhou 泉州, Fujian, which date to the Southern Song, suggest an indigenous development.<sup>85</sup> In any case, the addition of the mythical Monkey (who is later the

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<sup>81</sup> A reproduction painted by Duan Wenjie is illustrated in *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue no. 204.

<sup>82</sup> *Anxi Yulin ku*, pl. 138.

<sup>83</sup> Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi*, 14, n. 2.

<sup>84</sup> See discussions of the monkey in Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi*, 31-2, 47-8, 160-4; Meir Shahar, "The Lingyin Si Monkey Disciples and the Origins of Sun Wukong," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52:1 (1992): 193-224; Hera S. Walker, *Indigenous or Foreign? A Look at the Origins of the Monkey Hero Sun Wukong*, *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 81 (1998). A Yuan painting depicting Xuanzang acquiring *sūtras*, preserved in the Yakushi-ji in Nara, shows the priest accompanied only by an attendant and a demonic figure identified as Shensha shen. *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue no. 208.

<sup>85</sup> The relief panels on the pagodas of Kaiyuansi are examined in G. Ecke and P. Demiéville, *The Twin Pagodas of Zayton*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph series, 11 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1935). See also Dudbridge, *The Hsi-yu Chi*, 158-60, and Nakano Miyoko 中野美代子, "Sanzang Fashi in Legend: The World of *Xiyou-ji*," *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, 35-36, reference pl. 5.



main protagonist in the novel *Xiyouji*) signals a change in the story of Xuanzang by which the narrative becomes situated in the realm of the gods. As the pictorial images indicate, once Xuanzang is accompanied by Monkey, he may be reduced to a mere supplicant in a majestic tableau, a holy yet relatively peripheral figure awed by the heavenly courts over which the great bodhisattvas Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī or Avalokiteśvara preside.

A recently published album provides another rare example of visual evidence for the Xuanzang story-cycle during Song times. Consisting of two volumes, with sixteen leaves per volume, it bears an inscription by Wang Zhengpeng 王正鵬 (fl. 1280–1329) of the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). Through an analysis of the album's content and comparative literary and visual sources, Tanaka Issei 田仲一成 has concluded that its pictures depict a *Xiyou ji* cycle pre-dating the "poetic tale" from the Southern Song (1127–1279) in the *Kôzan-ji*. He proposes that it was produced during the twelfth century, during the Northern Song (960–1127) or Jin dynasty (1115–1234).<sup>86</sup>

This album portrays Xuanzang as a hero possessing the supernatural power to subdue demons, unlike later accounts in which he becomes an increasingly feeble character. In one of the leaves, the monk is shown wielding his staff to subdue dragons (fig. 18). While Monkey acts as a protector, characters such as Pigsy (Zhu bajie 豬八戒) and Sandy (Sha heshang) appear occasionally as demons yet to be subdued, personifying the obstacles the monk must overcome to accomplish his goals. Having been subdued, these colorful characters become Xuanzang's companions in later versions of the story-cycle.

In the sixteenth-century novel, Xuanzang retains a certain degree of magical power but Monkey's supernatural capabilities have increased enormously. Their relationship to the almighty pantheon of gods, however, remains the same. The pantheon by

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<sup>86</sup> Tanaka Issei 田仲一成, "'Tô sô shukyô zusatsu' koji shotan" 「唐僧取経図冊」 故事初探, and Toda Teisuke 戸田禎 佑, "'Tô sô shukyô zusatsu' no yôshiki teki kentô" 「唐僧取経図冊」 の様式的検討, *Kokka*, no. 1163 (1992): 21–33, 34–42, respectively. Two leaves of the album are also illustrated in *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue nos. 206–07.

now has also expanded to incorporate Daoist and other indigenous Chinese deities and spirits, as may be seen in late Ming and Qing woodblock editions of *Xiyou ji* that still survive.<sup>87</sup> The fantastic imagination shown in the comic masterpiece has captivated audiences for centuries up to the present day. Contemporary representations of the Monkey novel continue to proliferate, from cartoons to book illustrations and television dramas, gaining fans from East Asia to Mongolia and Tibet (fig. 19).<sup>88</sup> In traditional funerals in Taiwan, traveling troupes sometimes perform choreographed scenes of Xuanzang's journey accompanied by Monkey. Xuanzang's retrieval of the sacred texts is an act that promises salvation for the deceased, while his sidekick Monkey offers comic relief in the ritual.<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusion

Through the study of the images and artifacts associated with Xuanzang, we can identify characteristics that were common to the cults surrounding him: 1) Xuanzang assumed a distinct persona in each tradition, reflecting the religious ideals of the respective community, 2) formats and modes of representation were deter-

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<sup>87</sup> Several examples are illustrated in *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, catalogue nos. 209-12.

<sup>88</sup> Both Xuanzang's official biographies and the fictional account of his journey circulated in Mongolian literature, and the Tang monk became known as "The Marvelous Lama." See Christopher Atwood, "The Marvelous Lama in Mongolia: The Phenomenology of a Cultural Borrowing," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung* 46:1 (1992/3): 3-30. *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang* catalogue also includes popularized images associated with the *Xiyou ji*, catalogue nos. 214-22.

<sup>89</sup> Dudbridge observed the parallels between the early cycles of the Xuanzang story and the tale of Mulian 目蓮 saving his mother, which was popularly performed in Avalambana festivals (Ch. Yulanpen 盂蘭盆) in remembrance of one's parents and forebears (*The Hsi-yu chi*, 12, 165). The *Mulian* and *Xiyou ji* dramas are still performed in funeral rituals in Taiwan today. See Gary Seaman, "Mu-lien Dramas in Puli, Taiwan," in *Ritual Opera, Operatic Ritual*, ed. David Johnson (Berkeley: Univ. of California, IEAS Publications, 1989), 155-79.

mined by the message intended by the maker and the intended audience, and 3) each tradition elevated the monk to supra-human status.

Commemoration on steles honored Xuanzang in the manner of a Confucian sage, as the stele was reserved for honoring culture heroes of the orthodox tradition. The Buddhist establishment in Chang'an entreated permission to engrave the imperial prefaces on steles in order to emphasize Xuanzang's place within China's native tradition and to publicize imperial support for the religion. Not only were the literary texts on the tablets authored by two successive emperors, the later engraving by Huairen epitomized the contemporary ideal of elegance by duplicating Wang Xizhi's calligraphic style. The steles served to pronounce Buddhism's legitimacy and its acceptance by China's educated elite.

In Japan, the sumptuous picture scrolls narrating Xuanzang's life story were likely commissioned by aristocratic patrons. While modeled after pictorial tales of the Buddha's life, the *emakimono* made a point of the monk's direct lineage from the Indian master Vasubandhu. In a time of challenge from popular sects, the scrolls' depiction of this link bolstered the Hossô school's authority. Another form of Xuanzang's veneration tapped into Japan's indigenous tradition of worshipping charismatic religious leaders. As founder of the Hossô sect, Xuanzang was represented with other of its patriarchs as a patron saint cum *kami*. The scrolls and mandala paintings that depicted him as such were themselves objects of worship because they were thought to manifest his presence and supernatural powers. Finally, Xuanzang's identity as a pilgrim was a model for the *hijiri* groups, including ascetics and other elements outside the Buddhist establishment.

Xuanzang's role as pious pilgrim in the service of Buddhism must have been especially revered by monks who traveled as missionaries in spreading the faith throughout China, Tibet and Japan. His image in this pan-Asian context, while appropriated from the preexistent figure of the Central Asian itinerant, was much enriched by associations with guardian spirits, and by the medieval belief in the *Heart Sūtra*'s protective power. In this identity, Xuanzang achieved a semi-divine iconic status. Like Dharmatāla in Tibet, he joins the more spiritually developed *lokapālas* or arhats in the Buddha's assembly.

The Chinese folkloric tradition evolved contemporaneously with elite cults in both China and Japan. Arthur Wright noted that the Chinese literary tradition honored individuals in a sober, judicious manner, whereas the Indian hagiographic tradition associated saints with supernatural events and the majesty of demigods.<sup>90</sup> The bifurcation of the literary and the folkloric traditions not only attests to the cultural divide between the educated elite and the masses, but also suggests the lasting impact of Indian influence on Chinese culture from the time of the early medieval period. In the *Xiyou ji*, which took shape in the folkloric tradition, Xuanzang is a feeble human being who bears witness to supernatural events beyond the mortal domain, and is given superhuman assistance in his quest for *sūtras*. The invention of fellow travelers such as the mythical Monkey, and of many comical escapades along the route to India, was a jest that humorously satirized the legendary journey, as well as the fantastic creations of religious pantheons, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. These piquant elements enabled the story of Xuanzang's pilgrimage to reach an audience much wider than the educated and religiously knowledgeable. Thus, beginning with Xuanzang's sanctification among cultural elites of the early Tang dynasty, we have demonstrated through an analysis of visual images and art forms a continuing evolution of the religious ideals and values that were projected onto his achievements. Over the centuries, Xuanzang was made into a protean and multifaceted figure that provided inspiration for diverse groups of Buddhist believers and audiences.

### Sources and Notes on the Illustrations

1. Rubbing, stele inscription of AD 653. *Preface to the Sacred Texts Translated by Tripitaka of the Great Tang*. H. 180 cm, W. 69 cm. Dayan Pagoda, Cì'en si, Xi'an. From Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi, *Shina bukkō shiseki* (Tokyo: Bukkyō shiseki kenkyūkai, 1925-31), plate 13, 1.

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<sup>90</sup> Wright, "Biography and Hagiography," 76.

- 1a. Detail of Figure 1. From Yang Renkai, ed., *Shufa zhuanke*, vol. 3, *Sui Tang Wudai*, in *Zhongguo meishu quanji* series (Beijing: Renmin meishu, 1989), plate 33.
2. Rubbing, stele inscription of AD 653. *Commemoration of the Preface by the Emperor of the Great Tang Dynasty to the Sacred Texts Translated by Tripitaka*. H. 180 cm, W. 69 cm. Dayan Pagoda, Ci'en si, Xi'an. From Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi, *Shina bukkō shiseki*, plate 13, 2.
3. Detail of rubbing, stele inscription of AD 672. *Preface to the Sacred Texts Translated by Tripitaka of the Great Tang*. Beilin, Xi'an. From Yang Renkai, ed., *Shufa zhuanke*, vol. 3, *Sui Tang Wudai*, p. 4.
- 4a. Detail of handscroll, *Genjō sanzō e*. Xuanzang studying at Nālandā with Śīlabhadra. Early 14<sup>th</sup> century. H. 40.3 cm. Fujita Art Museum. From Minamoto Toyomune, ed., *Genjō sanzō e*, in *Shinshū Nihon emakimono zenshū*, vol. 15 (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1977), col. plate 6.
- 4b. Detail of handscroll, *Genjō sanzō e*. Xuanzang bringing back *sūtra* scrolls to Chang'an. Fujita Art Museum. From H. Bechert and R. Gombrich, eds., *The World of Buddhism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1984), p. 177.
- 4c. Detail of handscroll, *Genjō sanzō e*. Xuanzang and his staff translating Buddhist texts. Fujita Art Museum. From Minamoto Toyomune, ed., *Genjō sanzō e*, col. plate 9.
5. *Hossō mandala* (Lineage of the Hossō sect). 15<sup>th</sup> century. H. 126.5 cm, W. 79 cm. Kōfuku-ji, Nara. From *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang* (Nara: Nara Prefectural Museum, 1999), plate 199.
- 5a. Detail of Figure 5.
6. *Painting of Xuanzang as pilgrim*. 14<sup>th</sup> century. H. 135.5 cm, W. 90 cm. Important Cultural Property. Tokyo National Museum A-10600. From *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, plate 1.
7. *Iconographic drawing of Shensha shen*. 12<sup>th</sup> century. From Taishō shinshū daizōkyō kankōkai, *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō, zuzō bu*, vol. 3, p. 743.
8. *Painting of Śākyamuni triad, two devas, sixteen benign deities, Xuanzang, and Shensha shen*. 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century. H. 46.1 cm, W. 103 cm. Important Cultural Property. Nanzen-ji, Kyoto. From *The Silk Road and the World of Xuanzang*, plate 181.

9. *Painting of pilgrim monk with tiger*. Dunhuang, 9<sup>th</sup> century. H. 41 cm, W. 29.8 cm. The British Museum 1919.1-1.168. Photograph courtesy of the British Museum.
10. *Painting of pilgrim monk with tiger*. Dunhuang, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century. H. 79.8 cm, W. 54 cm. Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris, France, MG.EO.1141, Pelliot Collection. Photograph courtesy of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY.
11. *Painting of pilgrim monk with tiger*. Dunhuang, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century. H. 79.5 cm, W. 53 cm. Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris. MG.EO.1138, Pelliot Collection. Photograph courtesy of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY.
12. *Photograph of Japanese itinerant monk*. 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the Peabody Museum of Salem. *Japan, Through the Eyes of E. S. Morse* (Tokyo: Shôgakkan, 1988), p. 72.
- 13a-b. Section of Japanese amulet. Edo period. *Śākyamuni with sixteen benign deities, Xuanzang, and Shensha shen*. Private collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
14. Rubbing of Chinese stele carving. Dated 1933. *Image of Xuanzang*. H. 143.3 cm, W. 67.4 cm. Beilin, Xi'an. From *Beijing tushuguan cang huaxiang taben huibian* (Beijing: Shumuwenxian chubanshe, 1993), vol. 6, plate 159.
15. Tibetan *thangka*. 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Dharmatāla, Virupakṣa and Vaiśravaṇa*. H. 61 cm, W. 33 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection. Chong-Moon Lee Center For Asian Art and Culture B62 D39. Photograph courtesy of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.
16. Tibetan *thangka*. Mid-15<sup>th</sup> century. *Śākyamuni with two disciples, the eighteen arhats, and Dharmatāla as an itinerant*. H. 92.8 cm, W. 79.4 cm. The British Museum 1880.309. Photograph courtesy of the British Museum.
- 16a. Detail of above.
17. Wall mural from Yulin Cave 3, China. AD 1032–1227. *Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, his heavenly court, and Xuanzang accompanied by Monkey and white horse*. From Dunhuang Academy, ed., *Anxi Yulin ku* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1997), plate 158.
- 17a. Detail of above. From the Dunhuang Academy, ed., *Anxi Yulin ku*, plate 160.

- 18.** Album leaf from set of 32 leaves in 2 albums. Attrib. Wang Zhengpeng, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century. *Xuanzang subduing demons*. H. 43.1 cm, W. 34.5 cm. Private collection, Japan. From Tanaka Issei, “‘Tô sô shukyô zusatsu’ kôji shotan,” *Kokka*, no. 1163 (1992), album vol. 1, leaf 13.
- 19.** Chinese woodblock print, 20<sup>th</sup> century. Book illustration of *Xiyou ji*.



**Fig. 1. Preface to the Sacred Texts Translated by Tripitaka of the Great Tang**

Rubbing of stele carved in 653  
Standard script calligraphy by  
Chu Suiliang (596-658)  
China, Tang dynasty



**Fig. 1a. Detail**



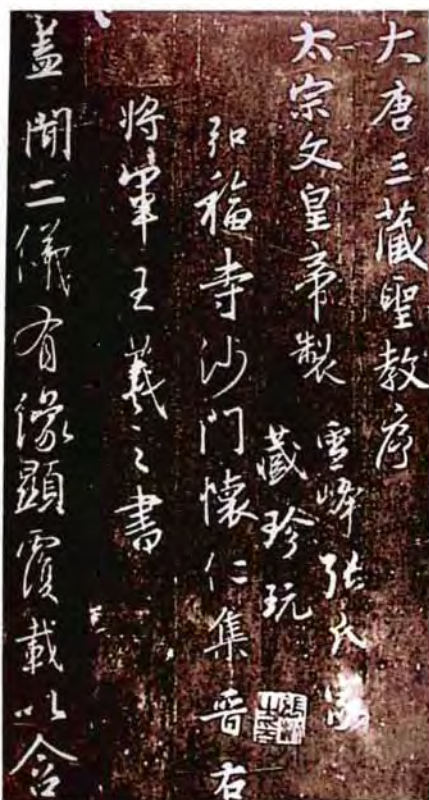


**Fig. 2. Commemoration of the Preface by the Emperor of the Great Tang Dynasty to the Sacred Texts Translated by Tripitaka**

Rubbing of stele carved in 653  
China, Tang dynasty

**Fig. 3. Preface to the Sacred Texts Translated by Tripitaka of the Great Tang (detail)**

Rubbing of stele carved in 672  
Designed by Huairen (fl. 7<sup>th</sup> c.)  
in the cursive style of Wang  
Xizhi (307—65)  
China, Tang dynasty





**Fig. 4a. From the *Gerjō sanzō e*, Xuanzang studying at Nalanda with Śīlabhadra**  
Attrib. Takashina Takakane  
Ink and colors on paper  
Japan, Kamakura period, early 14<sup>th</sup> c.





**Fig. 4b.** From the *Genjō sanzō e*, Xuanzang bringing back sūtra scrolls to Chang'an



**Fig. 4c.** From the *Genjō sanzō e*, Xuanzang and his staff translating Buddhist texts



**Fig. 5. Hossō mandala  
(Lineage of the  
Hossō sect)**

Ink and colors on silk  
Japan, Muromachi  
period, 15<sup>th</sup> c.

**Fig. 5a. Detail**







**Fig. 6. Xuanzang as a pilgrim**  
Ink and colors on silk  
Japan, Kamakura period, 14<sup>th</sup> c.

**Fig. 7. Iconographic drawing  
of Shensha shen**  
Ink on paper  
Japan, late Heian period, 12<sup>th</sup> c





**Fig. 8.** Śākyamuni Triad with two devas, sixteen benign deities, Xuanzang (*bottom right*), and Shensha shen  
Ink and colors on silk  
Japan, Kamakura period, 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> c.



**Fig. 9. Pilgrim monk accompanied by a tiger**  
Ink and colors on paper  
Dunhuang, late  
Tang dynasty, 9<sup>th</sup> c.

**Fig. 10. Pilgrim monk accompanied by a tiger**  
Ink and colors on paper  
Dunhuang, late Tang or Five  
Dynasties period, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> c.







**Fig. 11. Pilgrim monk accompanied by a tiger**  
Ink and colors on paper  
Dunhuang, late Tang or  
Five Dynasties period, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> c.

**Fig. 12. A Japanese itinerant monk**  
Photograph, 19<sup>th</sup> c.

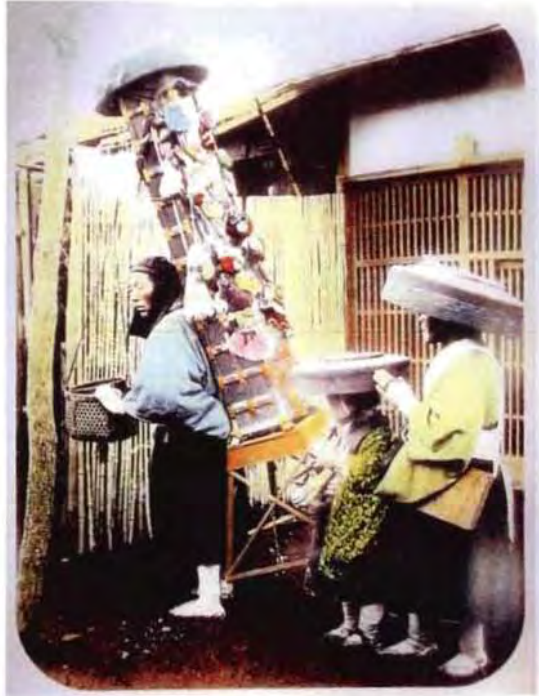




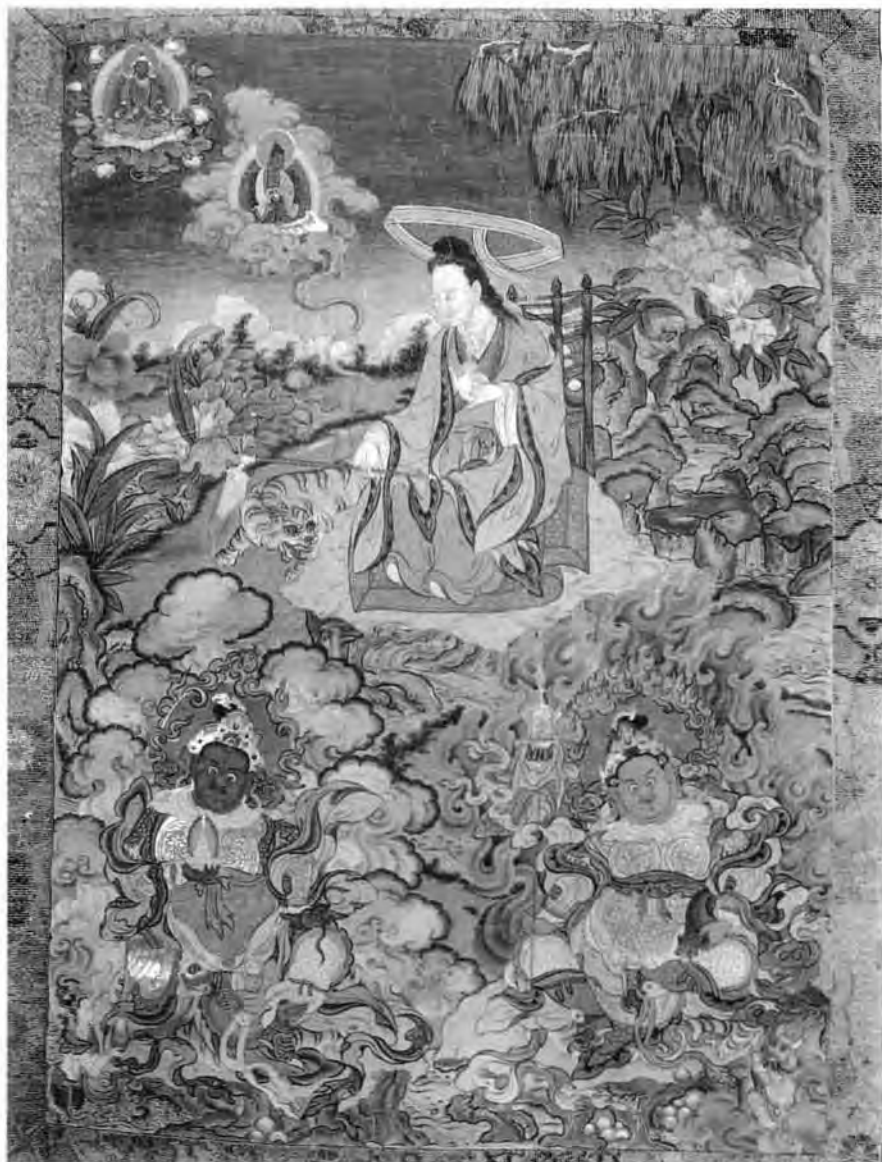


Fig. 13a-b. Śākyamuni with sixteen benign deities, Shensha shen (top, far left) and Xuanzang (bottom, far right)  
 Section of amulet worn by Shugendō practitioner, woodblock print on paper  
 Japan, Edo period



**Fig. 14. Image of Xuanzang carved on a stele**  
**(modeled after the painting in fig. 6)**

Rubbing on paper  
China, dated 1933



**Fig. 15. Dharmatāla, Virupaksa and Vaiśravana**  
Thangka, colors on cotton  
Tibet, 19<sup>th</sup> c.



**Fig. 16. Śākyamuni with two disciples and eighteen arhats, Dharmatāla as an itinerant (lower right)**

Thangka, gouache on cotton

Central Tibet, probably Tsang, mid-15<sup>th</sup> c.

**Fig. 16a. Detail**







**Fig. 17a. Detail**



**Fig. 17. Samantabhadra  
Bodhisattva and his  
heavenly court,  
with Xuanzang  
accompanied by Monkey  
and white horse**  
Mural, Yulin Cave 3, west wall  
China, Xixia period (1032 – 1227)



**Fig. 18. Xuanzang subduing demons**

Attrib. Wang Zhengpeng

Album leaf, ink and colors on silk

China, Southern Song or Yuan dynasty, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c.



**Fig. 19. Xuanzang with Pigsy, Sandy, and Monkey**  
Book illustration of *Xiyou ji*, woodblock print  
China, 20<sup>th</sup> c.