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Visualizing the *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa Sutra* as a Contemplation Sutra

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE *MAÑJUŚRĪ PARINIRVĀṆA SŪTRA* AND ITS PROVENANCE

As with so many Buddhist texts preserved in Chinese “translation,” we know very little about when or where an original manuscript for the *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa Sutra* (hereafter, *Mañjuśrī Sutra*) may have been composed. The *Mañjuśrī Sutra*, or *Wenshushili banniepan jing* 文殊師利般涅槃經,¹ is a brief Chinese scripture devoted to the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. The text is purported to be a translation by a collaborator of Dharmarakṣa (born ca. 233), Nie Daozhen 聶道真, and dated circa 280–312. As this article will show, however, the attribution to Nie Daozhen and corresponding dating is dubious at best. The *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is

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¹ T 463 (references, below, to texts printed in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* [T] are identified by overall text number then, as needed, by volume, page, register, and line numbers). The text can also be found in the Korean Buddhist canon (the second Koryō canon, completed ca. 1251) with no significant differences apart from variant characters; see *Koryō taejanggyōng* 高麗大藏經 (Seoul: Dongguk U.P., 1976), vol. 13, pp. 1241B–1243A. Consistency with the T version here is predictable, however, as much of *Taishō*'s Chinese section was reprinted from the second edition of the Koryō canon.

Annotated *yomikudashi* 読み下し versions of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* can be found in Iwano Shin'yū 岩野真雄, ed., *Kokuyaku issaikyō: Indo senjutsubu* 國譯一切經, 印度撰述部 (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1929–36), vol. 61, pp. 245–49, and in Murakami Shinkan 村上真完 and Oikawa Shinkai 及川真介, eds., *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō: Monju hyōtenbu 1* 新国訳大藏經, 文殊經典部 1 (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1994), pp. 379–84. In addition, Étienne Lamotte has translated the sutra into French in his article “Mañjuśrī,” *TP* 48 (1960), pp. 35–39. Lamotte did not annotate his translation, but provided a helpful introduction on pp. 32–35 and many Sanskrit (though no Chinese) interlinear glosses. I have naturally benefited greatly from Lamotte's prodigious scholarship; if the notes to the translation here primarily reflect points of disagreement with Lamotte's translation, this is only because I saw no need to comment on the many points of agreement. An alternative English translation, largely consistent with Lamotte's French ren-

not extant in Sanskrit or other Chinese or Tibetan translations, which is part of the basis for the difficulty in establishing its provenance.² But vexed questions concerning the provenance of Chinese Buddhist “translations” hold true even for many for which a version in Sanskrit, Tibetan, or another South or Central Asian language exists, as these versions often postdate the Chinese translation. Ironically, we often stand on firmer ground regarding the provenance of recognized “apocryphal” Chinese Buddhist scriptures, texts claiming to be sutras based on originals from western (that is, South or Central Asian) countries, but which were later deemed native Chinese compositions. For such texts, the very “Chinese” elements that can belie their claims to foreign provenance can also give indications of the historical circumstances in which they were composed.

Unfortunately for our understanding of the historical and intellectual conditions influencing their composition, the matter of foreign versus Chinese provenance for many other Buddhist scriptures in Chinese is less clear. Such is the case for an entire genre of scriptures with which the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* shows affinities, the “contemplation” or “visualization” sutras (Ch.: *guan jing* 觀經; Jpn.: *kangyō*) generally believed to have been translated in the first half of the fifth century. These scriptures include the *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life*,³ *Sutra on the Contemplation of Bhaiṣajyarāja and Bhaiṣajyasamudgata*,⁴

dering, can be found in Mary Anne Cartelli, “The Poetry of Mount Wutai: Chinese Buddhist Verse from Dunhuang,” Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 1999), pp. 40–46.

² This article’s rendition of the title as the *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa Sutra* should thus not be construed as a reconstruction of a hypothetical Sanskrit text but as an “English” translation. This is in accordance with my rule-of-thumb to transliterate where the Chinese transliterates (this principle is, however, relaxed at times, particularly with terms such as *sutra*, *Mahayana*, and *nirvana* that have entered English-language dictionaries in their Anglicized forms).

³ Hereafter, *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra*; *Guan Wuliangshoufo jing* 觀無量壽佛經 (T365). A recent English translation can be found in Hisao Inagaki, trans., *The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation from Chinese*, 2d rev. edn., in collaboration with Harold Stewart (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1995), pp. 317–50. Translations of the full titles of the contemplation sutras in the present study are adapted from Fujita Kōtatsu 藤田宏達, “The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*: A Canonical Scripture of Pure Land Buddhism” (trans. Kenneth K. Tanaka), in Robert E. Buswell, Jr., ed., *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* (Honolulu: U. Hawai‘i P., 1990), pp. 149–73.

⁴ Hereafter, *Bhaiṣajyarāja Contemplation Sutra*; *Guan Yaowang Yaoshang erpusa jing* 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經 (T1161). See Raoul Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha*, rev. edn. (Boston: Shambhala, 1989), pp. 115–48, for an English translation. See also the recent work of Inoue Hirofumi 井上博文, “Kan yakuō yakujō ni bosatsukyō’ no kenkyū” 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經の研究, *Ryūkoku daigaku daigakuin bungaku kenkyūka kiyō* 龍谷大学大学院文学研究科紀要 23 (2001), pp. 1–16; “Kan yakuō yakujō ni bosatsukyō’ to kanren kyōten” 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經と関連経典, *Ryūkoku daigaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyūshitsu nenpō* 龍谷大学仏教学研究室年報 11 (2001), pp. 1–24; and “Yakuō bosatsu kō” 藥王菩薩考, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究 50.2 (2002), pp. 126–28.

Sutra on the Sea of Samādhi Attained through Contemplation of the Buddha,⁵ *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Cultivation Methods of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra*,⁶ *Sutra on the Contemplation of Maitreya Bodhisattva's Ascent to Rebirth in the Tusita Heaven*,⁷ and *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha*.⁸ The grouping of these six sutras as a particu-

⁵ Hereafter, *Samādhi Sea Sutra*; *Guan Fo sanmei hai jing* 觀佛三昧海經 (T 643). Bruce C. Williams, "Seeing through Images: Reconstructing Buddhist Meditative Visualization Practice in Sixth-Century Northeastern China," *Pacific World* 3d ser. 7 (2005), pp. 49–56, includes translations and original text for several passages on visualization practices. Among Japanese scholars, the most sustained studies of this text are by Yamabe Nobuyoshi 山部能直 and Ōminami Ryūshō 大南竜昇. Yamabe's "The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha: The Interfusion of the Chinese and Indian Cultures in Central Asia as Reflected in a Fifth Century Apocryphal Sūtra," Ph.D. diss. (Yale University, 1999), is a meticulous analysis of the text and its provenance; idem, "Kanbutsu kyōten kenkyū ni okeru 'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' no igi" 観仏経典研究における観仏三昧海経の意義, in Azuma Ryūshin Hakushi Koki Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai 東隆眞博士古稀記念論文集刊行会, ed., *Zen no shinri to jissen* 禅の真理と実践 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2005), pp. 401–23, contains a good Japanese summary of his findings. Ōminami's work includes "'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' no sanmai shisō" 観仏三昧海経の三昧思想, *Bukkyōgaku* 仏教学 40 (1999), pp. 49–72; "'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' no hiyu" 観仏三昧海経の譬喩, *Jōdo shūgaku kenkyū* 浄土宗学研究 27 (2000), pp. 1–31; "'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' kanzō hon no kōsatsu" 観仏三昧海経観像品の考察, in Ishigami Zen'ō Kyōju Koki Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai 石上善應教授古稀記念論文集刊行会, ed., *Bukkyō bunka no kichō to tenkai* 仏教文化の基調と展開 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2001), vol. 1, pp. 3–29; "'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' to Eon, Dōshaku, Zendō" 観仏三昧海経と慧遠、道綽、善導, in Taishō Daigaku Jōdogaku Kenkyūkai 大正大学浄土学研究会, ed., *Hōnen Jōdokyō no shisō to denreki* 法然浄土教の思想と伝歴 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2001), pp. 491–519; "'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' kanbushin hon no kōsatsu" 観仏三昧海経観仏心品の考察, in Takahashi Kōji Sensei Koki Kinenkai Jimukyoku 高橋弘次先生古稀記念会事務局, ed., *Jōdogaku Bukkyōgaku ronsō* 浄土学佛教学論叢 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 339–69; "'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' no Butsuden to byakugōkan" 観仏三昧海経の仏伝と白毫觀, in Miyabashi Shōgen Kyōju Koki Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai 宮林昭彦教授古稀記念論文集刊行会, ed., *Bukkyō shisō no juyō to tenkai* 仏教思想の受容と展開 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 71–98; "'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' kanbaō zō hon no kōsatsu" 観仏三昧海経観馬王藏品の考察, in Taishō Daigaku Jōdogaku Kenkyūkai 大正大学浄土学研究会, ed., *Jōdokyō no shisō to rekishi* 浄土教の思想と歴史 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2005), pp. 451–72.

⁶ Hereafter, *Samantabhadra Contemplation Sutra*; *Guan Puxian pusa xingfa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經 (T 277). English translations can be found in Bunnō Katō et al., *The Threefold Lotus Sutra: Innumerable Meanings, The Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law, and Meditation on the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue* (New York: Weatherhill, 1975), pp. 345–70, and Gene Reeves, *The Lotus Sutra: A Contemporary Translation of a Buddhist Classic* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008), pp. 399–423.

⁷ Hereafter, *Maitreya Contemplation Sutra*; *Guan Mile pusa shangsheng Doushuaitian jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經 (T 452). I am not aware of any English translation of this text, but Alexander Coburn Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1959), pp. 215–16, and Yamabe, "Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi," pp. 42–46, include summaries of its contents.

⁸ Hereafter, *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation Sutra*; *Guan Xukongzang pusa jing* 觀虛空藏菩薩經 (T 409). A thorough paraphrase can be found in M. W. de Visser, *The Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (Kokūzō) in China and Japan* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1931), pp. 29–35. Yamabe Nobuyoshi also addresses this sutra, along with the *Samantabhadra Contemplation Sutra*, the *Samādhi Sea Sutra*, and the related *Chan miyaofa jing* 禪祕要法經 (T 613), in "'Bonmōkyō' ni okeru kōsōgyō no kenkyū: Toku ni zenkan kyōten to no kanrensei ni chakumoku shite" 梵網經における好相行の研究、特に禅觀經典との関連性に着目して, in Aramaki Noritoshi 荒牧典俊, ed., *Hokuchō Zui Tō Chūgoku Bukkyō shisōshi* 北朝隋唐

lar genre of scriptures, a modern conception, is useful because in fact they have many shared characteristics.⁹

This article illustrates the affinities of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* with the contemplation sutras. Moreover, it discusses a major reason why it has rarely been associated with them by scholars: the widespread spurious attribution of translators that is literally canonized in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*. Such attributions are yet another factor that has obscured the provenance of Chinese scriptures that were not extant in South or Central Asian languages. In a pioneering study, Hayashiya Tomojirō 林屋友次郎 calculated that about one-fourth, or about four hundred, of the translations in this Sino-Japanese canon were misattributed.¹⁰ His efforts in this study, along with such other works as his earlier study *Kyōroku kenkyū* 経録研究 and Tokiwa Daijō's 常盤大定 *Gokan yori Sōsei ni itaru yakukyō sōroku* 後漢より宋齊に至る訳経総録,¹¹ provide substantial evidence that this is indeed the case. Yet scholars continue using these questionable translator attributions to date translations and continue making historical interpretations based on such dating. In the case of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*, such eminent Buddhologists as Étienne Lamotte, Hirakawa Akira, and Paul Harrison have simply repeated the *Taishō* at-

中国仏教思想史 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2000), pp. 228–40, an abbreviated English-language version of which is “Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination in the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*,” in William M. Bodiford, ed., *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 2005), pp. 32–38.

⁹ See in particular Tsukinowa Kenryū 月輪賢隆, *Butten no hihanteki kenkyū* 仏典の批判的研究 (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1971), pp. 43–173, and the following studies by Fujita Kōtatsu 藤田宏達: *Genshi Jōdo shisō no kenkyū* 原始浄土思想の研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), pp. 116–36; “The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*” (a translation of the latter, with emendations and additions by Fujita and the translator); *Kanmuryōjūkyō kōkyū* 観無量寿経講究 (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha Shūmusho Shuppanbu, 1985); and *Jōdo sanbūkyō no kenkyū* 浄土三部経の研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007), pp. 163–208. Japanese scholars have also pointed to connections among the contemplation sutras and a group of meditation manuals (Jpn.: *zengyō* 禪經) believed to date near the same time. See, for example, Sueki Fumihiko 末木文美土, “*Kanmuryōjūkyō*: Kanbutsu to ōjō” 観無量寿経, 観仏と往生, in Sueki Fumihiko and Kajiyama Yūichi 梶山雄一, eds., *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō* 浄土仏教の思想, vol. 2, *Kanmuryōjūkyō, Hanju sanmaikyō* 観無量寿経, 般舟三昧経 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1992), pp. 27–30, 134–47; Myōjin Hiroshi 明神洋, “Zenkan kyōten ni okeru nenbutsukan: Sono imi to kigen ni tsuite” 禅観経典における念仏観, その意味と起源について, *Bukkyōgaku* 35 (1993), pp. 59–79; Ōminami Ryūshō, “*Kanmuryōjūkyō*’ no seiritsu to zenkan kyōten” 観無量寿経の成立と禅観経典, *Taishō Daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 大正大学研究紀要 80 (1995), pp. 67–97, and “*Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō*’ no sanmai shisō,” pp. 49–72; Yamabe, “*Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi*,” pp. 39–114, 502–12, and “*Shiyui ryakuyō hō*’ to ‘*Gomon zengyō yōyō hō*’” 思惟略要法と五門禅経要用法, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 49.2 (2001), pp. 169–75.

¹⁰ Hayashiya Tomojirō, *Iyaku kyōrui no kenkyū* 異譯經類の研究 (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko, 1945), English summary, p. 3. On this point, see also Michel Strickmann, “The *Consecration Sūtra*: A Buddhist Book of Spells,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, p. 79.

¹¹ Hayashiya Tomojirō, *Kyōroku kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1941); Tokiwa Daijō, *Gokan yori Sōsei ni itaru yakukyō sōroku* (Tokyo: Tōhō Bunka Gakuin Tōkyō Kenkyūjo, 1938).

tribution of Nie Daozhen as the translator without further comment.¹² This attribution is what provides the traditional dates of the translation as circa 280–312, because this is when Nie Daozhen worked with the famous translator Dharmarakṣa.¹³ However, an inquiry into the basis for this attribution in the traditional Chinese Buddhist bibliographic catalogues, another aim of this article, should immediately raise doubts.

In defense of Hirakawa and Harrison, both only mentioned the text in passing, as they were more concerned with Mañjuśrī in earlier Chinese translations. The *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is a very short sutra without any other recensions and is attributed to a second-tier translator. The question of its dating has not been a significant issue for most scholars who have referred to it.¹⁴ Lamotte, Hirakawa, and Harrison are singled out here simply because they have all devoted essays to Mañjuśrī and considerable attention to the rise of the Mahayana as attested in early Chinese translations, among other sources.¹⁵ Although the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is not among the very earliest corpus of translations, its traditional dating places it only about one hundred to 150 years later. Yet the text also demonstrates substantial literary development concerning Mañjuśrī as an object of cultic attention that contrasts with the earlier translations, as Harrison aptly points out.¹⁶ Thus the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and

¹² See Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” pp. 7, 32; Hirakawa Akira, *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*, trans. Paul Groner (Honolulu: U. Hawai‘i P., 1990), p. 292; and Paul Harrison, “Mañjuśrī and the Cult of the Celestial Bodhisattvas,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 13 (2000), p. 178.

¹³ See Daniel Boucher, “Dharmarakṣa and the Transmission of Buddhism to China,” *AM* 3d ser. 19.1–2 (2006), pp. 13–37, for a recent study of Dharmarakṣa and his translation activities.

¹⁴ Raoul Birnbaum, however, is to be commended for addressing, even if briefly, the questionable nature of the traditional dating of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*. See his “The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-Ying’s Experiences on Mount Wu-t’ai in T’ang Context,” *JAS* 106.1 (1986), pp. 123–24, where he remarks that “While it is not possible here to probe into the likely origin of this text, nor its likely date of translation into Chinese, provisionally it appears to have been composed in the northwestern borderlands of India and it would not be unreasonable for it to have been translated in the fifth or sixth centuries, around the time when the first visions of Mañjuśrī were beginning to be reported at Mount Wu-t’ai.” However, Birnbaum’s note in support of his position (p. 124, n. 19), regarding references to the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* in earlier catalogues, needs revision. The first citations both of the text alone and of the text with Nie Daozhen as the translator appear substantially earlier than Birnbaum indicates (see my section “The *Mañjuśrī Sutra* in Chinese Buddhist Bibliographic Catalogues,” following the translation of the sutra).

¹⁵ For their essays on Mañjuśrī, see Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī”; Hirakawa Akira, “Mañjuśrī and the Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism,” *Journal of Asian Studies* [Madras, India] 1.1 (1983), pp. 12–33; and Harrison, “Mañjuśrī and the Cult of the Celestial Bodhisattvas,” pp. 157–93.

¹⁶ Harrison, “Mañjuśrī and the Cult of the Celestial Bodhisattvas,” p. 178. I should also add in support of Harrison that his point in citing the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* was precisely that the cultic elements it demonstrates are *later* developments regarding Mañjuśrī than the portrayals of the bodhisattva in the Lokakṣema translation corpus he analyzes. Thus if the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is in fact a “translation” later than traditionally believed, this would actually strengthen Harrison’s central argument.

the question of its dating could be of interest to other scholars working on the development of the cult of Mañjuśrī, or of so-called “celestial” bodhisattvas more generally.¹⁷

Furthermore, despite its brevity and status as a “miscellaneous sutra” without strong influence in South or Central Asia, the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is not an insignificant sutra. Even if we do not accept the traditional late-third to early-fourth-century attribution, and simply posit instead a pre-515 dating (the reasons for which are given following the translation), the text still predates, and likely influenced, the flourishing of the Mount Wutai Mañjuśrī cult in the Tang period. The sutra’s influence on this cult – at least on the cult’s literary expressions – is suggested in explicit references to the text in the two principal medieval monographs on the mountain:¹⁸ 1. *Ancient Records of Mount Clear-and-Cool*,¹⁹ by the monk Huixiang 慧祥 (d.u.), who made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in 667; and 2. *Extended Records of Mount Clear-and-Cool* (completed around 1060),²⁰ composed by Yanyi 延一 (d.u.), a monk who lived on the mountain.

Moreover, the *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa Sutra*’s influence on the Mañjuśrī cult in Japan, from the early ninth century on, was so fundamental that Japanese scholars often refer to it simply as “the Mañjuśrī sutra,” amid many other sutras in the Sino-Japanese canon that include Mañjuśrī in the title or otherwise accord a prominent place to the bodhisattva. To cite just a few notable examples of references to this text in Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura period (1185–1333) Japan, the founder of the Japanese Tendai tradition, Saichō 最澄 (767–822), quoted the text in its entirety in his *Kenkairon* 顯戒論, which he submitted to the court of emperor Saga 嵯峨 (r. 809–823) in 820. Saichō used the text to support his position that “exclusively Mahayana temples” should install Mañjuśrī, instead of the arhat Piṇḍola, in the seat of honor (Jpn.: *jōza*

¹⁷ Harrison persuasively challenges this designation in “Mañjuśrī and the Cult of the Celestial Bodhisattvas,” which is why I have problematized the concept here.

¹⁸ For information on these two monographs, and on Mount Wutai and the Chinese Mañjuśrī cult in general, I have benefited from the following studies by Raoul Birnbaum: *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī: A Group of East Asian Maṇḍalas and Their Traditional Symbolism* (Boulder: Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, 1983); “The Manifestation of a Monastery”; and “Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords: The Caves of Wu-t’ai Shan,” *CEA* 5 (1989–90), pp. 115–40.

¹⁹ *Gu qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳; *T* 2098. For paraphrases of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* in this monograph, see *T* 2098, vol. 51, p. 1093A27–B1, which includes selections from *T* 463, vol. 14, p. 481A15–B8.

²⁰ *Guang qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳; *T* 2099. This monograph has many references to the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*; see especially *T* 2099, vol. 51, pp. 1102A–1104A.

上座) in dining halls.²¹ Passages were again quoted soon thereafter, in an 828 Council of State directive granting the Gangōji 元興寺 monk Taizen's 泰善 (d.u.) request for state-sponsored Mañjuśrī assemblies.²² Taizen and the eminent Daianji 大安寺 monk Gonzō 勤操 (754–827) are credited with privately inaugurating the practice of holding Mañjuśrī assemblies in conjunction with charitable relief efforts, and this directive provided public support for such assemblies.²³ Describing the Mañjuśrī assemblies of 984, the provisional governor and literatus Minamoto Tamenori 源爲憲 (d. 1011) also quoted from the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*, in his collection of Buddhist tales titled *Illustrations of the Three Jewels* (*Sanbōe* 三宝絵).²⁴

After the practice of widespread, state-sponsored Mañjuśrī assemblies waned in the late-Heian period, the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* version of Mañjuśrī faith was promoted again by the founder of the Shingon Ritsu

²¹ Saichō, *Kenkairon*, *T* 2376, vol. 74, pp. 602A15–603C6. The text of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* as quoted here shows only minor differences with the version found in *T* 463, most of which are consistent with variations indicated in the footnotes to *T* 463; I have pointed out the most significant such variations in the annotations to my translation. An annotated *yomikudashi* version of the *Kenkairon* can be found in Andō Toshio 安藤俊雄 and Sonoda Kōyū 園田香融, eds., *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想大系, vol. 4, *Saichō* 最澄 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), pp. 8–156; the full text of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is on pp. 62–67. See also Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (Berkeley: University of California, 1984), pp. 138–41, for a carefully annotated translation and discussion of Saichō's regulations for enshrining Mañjuśrī in the seat of honor, based on Saichō's 819 *Tendai Hokkeshū nenbundōsha eshō kōdai shiki* 天台法華宗年分度者回小向大式; this latter text can be found at *T* 2377, vol. 74, pp. 624C17–25B16.

²² The directive, dated 828/2/25, quotes the following passages from the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*: “If there are sentient beings who hear Mañjuśrī's name, their transgressions from birth-and-death through twelve hundred million kalpas will be removed. Those who pay reverence and make offerings will always be reborn, lifetime after lifetime, in the households of the buddhas and will be protected by the might of Mañjuśrī. [...] If they wish to make offerings and cultivate meritorious deeds, then [Mañjuśrī] will transform himself, turning into an impoverished, solitary, or afflicted sentient being, and appear before the practitioners” (from *T* 463, vol. 14, pp. 481A15–17, A29–B1; the ellipsis marks in brackets in the quote represent the directive's ellipsis from the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*). For the full text of the directive, see the *Ruijū sandaikyaku* 類聚三代格, in Kuroita Katsumi 黑板勝美, ed., *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* 新訂増補國史大系 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929–), vol. 25, pp. 53–54, and for an annotated translation, see David Quinter, “The Shingon Ritsu School and the Mañjuśrī Cult in the Kamakura Period: From Eison to Monkan,” Ph.D. diss. (Stanford University, 2006), pp. 314–15.

²³ See the analysis of their activities, and other early examples of the Mañjuśrī cult in Japan, in Horiike Shunpō 堀池春峰, “Nanto Bukkyō to Monju shinkō” 南都仏教と文殊信仰, in *Nanto Bukkyōshi no kenkyū* 南都仏教史の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1980–82), vol. 2, pp. 473–91, and Yoshida Yasuo 吉田靖雄, “Monju shinkō no tenkai: Monju-e no seiritsu made” 文殊信仰の展開, 文殊会の成立まで, *Nanto Bukkyō* 南都仏教 38 (1977), pp. 21–46.

²⁴ See Mabuchi Kazuo 馬淵和夫 et al., eds., *Sanbōe* 三宝絵, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), vol. 31, pp. 198–201, for the original and Edward Kamens, trans., *The Three Jewels: A Study and Translation of Minamoto Tamenori's Sanbōe* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1988), pp. 333–36, for an English translation. The passage quoted by Tamenori appears to be an abbreviated version of the passage in the Council of State directive.

movement, Eison 叡尊 (1201–90), and his disciples. Shingon Ritsu followers sponsored many Mañjuśrī offering ceremonies and assemblies, in which they dedicated Mañjuśrī images, conferred the precepts, and made offerings to outcasts (*hinin* 非人).²⁵ In his proposal to his dharma-colleagues for the largest such gathering, to be held at Hannyaji 般若寺 on the twenty-fifth day of the third lunar month of 1269, Eison quotes specifically from the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*. The passage as quoted in Eison’s autobiography reads:

“The Dharma-Prince Mañjuśrī [...] turns into an impoverished, solitary, or afflicted sentient being and appears before practitioners. When people call Mañjuśrī to mind, they should practice compassion. Those who practice compassion will thereby be able to see Mañjuśrī.”²⁶

By way of explanation, Eison then adds the following comment:

You should know that compassion and Mañjuśrī are two different words for the same thing. To promote compassion, Mañjuśrī appears in the form of a suffering being. This is the basis for the origins of such charitable acts (*segyō* 施行).²⁷

Thus the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* should be of interest also to scholars studying the Mañjuśrī cult in Japan, as well as to those dealing with the religious phenomena of Mount Wutai. Furthermore, the text sheds light on an often-neglected aspect of cultic devotion to Mañjuśrī, namely, Mañjuśrī as an embodiment of compassion, which the tag-line Bodhisattva of Wisdom does not adequately convey. Finally, with the traditional treatment of the text as a late-third, early-fourth-century “translation” by Nie Daozhen called into question, the field of interest in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* could actually widen and become more relevant to scholars studying native Chinese scriptures and related subjects. Such subjects may include Central Asian-Chinese collaborations in the pro-

²⁵ I have examined the activities of Eison and his disciples in connection with the Mañjuśrī cult at more length in “Shingon Ritsu School.” See also Quinter, “Creating Bodhisattvas: Eison, *Hinin*, and the ‘Living Mañjuśrī,’” *MN*62.4 (2007), pp. 437–79, and “Emulation and Erasure: Eison, *Ninshō*, and the *Gyōki* Cult,” *Eastern Buddhist* NS 39.1 (2008), pp. 29–60.

²⁶ *Kongō Busshi Eison kanjin gakushōki* 金剛仏子叡尊感身学正記 entry for 1268/9, in Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjo 奈良国立文化財研究所, ed., *Saidaiji Eison denki shūsei* 西大寺叡尊伝記集成 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1977), p. 34. See *T*463, vol. 14, p. 481A28–29, B1–3, for the original *Mañjuśrī Sutra* passage from which Eison quotes.

²⁷ *Kongō Busshi Eison kanjin gakushōki* entry for 1268/9, p. 34. See also the same entry in Hosokawa Ryōichi 細川涼一, ed., *Kanjin gakushōki 1: Saidaiji Eison no jiden* 感身学正記 1, 西大寺叡尊の自伝 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999), pp. 289, 361; Hosokawa’s edition of the *kanbun* 漢文 text (p. 361) and his *yomikudashi* rendering (p. 289) improve on the punctuation of the Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjo version here.

duction of scriptures, fifth-century and later contemplation or visualization sutras, or the role of Daoist-Buddhist interactions in scriptural composition and interpretation. This essay can only touch on these issues. But in doing so, if it can motivate interest in the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra* by scholars with expertise in native Chinese scriptures, I hope that this venture outside my own specialization in medieval Japanese Buddhism will prove worthwhile.

The question of the provenance of the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra*, and its parallels with the contemplation sutras, should be more accessible after a read of the sutra. Thus at this point I provide a complete annotated translation.

TRANSLATION OF THE MAÑJUŚRĪ
PARINIRVĀNA SŪTRA (WENSHUSHILI BANNIEPAN JING)

Thus have I heard: At one time, the Buddha was staying in the country of Śrāvastī, at the Jeta grove in the garden of Anāthapiṇḍada, accompanied by a great *bhikṣu-saṃgha* of eight thousand people.²⁸ The elders Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Mahākātyāyana, and the like were at the head of the assembly. Also in attendance were the sixteen bodhisattva-mahāsattvas as well as the one thousand bodhisattvas of the Auspicious Kalpa,²⁹ with Maitreya at the head. Also in attendance were twelve hundred bodhisattvas from other directions, with Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva at the head.

²⁸ A *bhikṣu-saṃgha* refers to a community of monks.

²⁹ The “1,000 bodhisattvas of the Auspicious Kalpa 賢劫千菩薩” apparently refers to the widespread Mahayana tradition of “1,000 *bhadrakalpika* buddhas” (1,000 buddhas of the Auspicious Kalpa). According to this tradition, the current eon, the *bhadrakalpa*, is characterized by the presence of 4 bodhisattvas who have already attained buddhahood, or former bodhisattvas, and 996 future buddhas, or current bodhisattvas. The phrase “1,000 bodhisattvas of the Auspicious Kalpa” appears in a variety of texts following the 1,000-buddha tradition. Perhaps most significant for this study is the appearance of the phrase in Kumārajīva’s version of the *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra* (Ch.: *Shoulengyan sanmei jing* 首楞嚴三昧經; *T*642, vol. 15, p. 639B21; Étienne Lamotte, trans., *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra: The Concentration of Heroic Progress, An Early Mahayana Buddhist Scripture*, trans. Sara Boin-Webb (Surrey, England: Curzon Press, 1998), p. 198, and in two contemplation sutras, the *Samādhi Sea Sūtra* (*T*643, vol. 15, p. 696C26) and the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation Sūtra* (*T*409, vol. 13, p. 677B7–8). In particular, in this last text the 1,000 bodhisattvas appear in the opening lines regarding the assembly accompanying Śākyamuni, with Maitreya at the head, just as they do here in the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra*. Although the tradition of 1,000 buddhas is the most common in Mahayana sutras, there are various alternative systems, including a 1,004-buddha tradition in the *Lotus of Compassion Sūtra* (Ch.: *Beihua jing* 悲華經; Skt. *Karuṇāpūṇḍarikasūtra*; see, for example, *T*157, vol. 3, p. 202C5, as well as *T*158, vol. 3, p. 263C4). On these traditions, see Jan Nattier, *Once upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), pp. 23–24.

At that time, the World-Honored One, in the last watch of the night, entered *samādhi*. That *samādhi* was called “total light.” After entering *samādhi*, his entire body emitted a golden light. The light extensively and vigorously illuminated the Jeta grove, which became truly golden. Spiraling out smoothly, it illuminated Mañjuśrī’s dwelling and transformed itself into a seven-storied golden tower. On each story were five hundred transformation buddhas, going back and forth upon it. Then, in front of Mañjuśrī’s dwelling, five hundred lotus flowers made from the seven treasures were spontaneously manifested, round like a carriage wheel. Their stalks were made of silver,³⁰ their corollas were made of pleasing³¹ emerald, and their stamens were made of multicolored pearls. A light from those flowers illuminated the Buddha’s abode,³² then left the abode and returned, entering Mañjuśrī’s dwelling.

At that time, there was a bodhisattva-mahāsattva named Bhadrāpāla in the assembly. When this auspicious sign appeared, Bhadrāpāla left his dwelling and paid reverence at the Buddha’s

³⁰ According to the notes to the *Taishō* edition of *Mañjuśrī Sutra*, the “Three Editions” (of the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties) and the Old Song Edition add the phrase “their leaves were made of yellow gold” here (*T*463, p. 480, n. 9).

³¹ *Amazha* 阿茂吒. It is unclear what this term refers to. My translation quite tentatively follows the *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō* editors’ own tentative suggestion that it may be a transliteration for *āmōda*, which they translate as *yorokobashii* 喜ばしい (pleasing, delightful) or *utsukushii* 美しい (beautiful) (Murakami and Oikawa, *Monju kyōtenbu* 1, p. 379, n. 5). To their suggestion, we should add that the Sanskrit term *āmōda* can also mean “fragrant,” which would work well here given that the jewels and precious minerals in this passage form miraculous flowers. Alternatively, the notes to the *Kokuyaku issaikyō* version of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* – as well as those for the text in the *Nihon shisō taikēi* edition of Saichō’s *Kenkairon* – suggest that *amazha* is the name of a jewel (see Iwano, *Kokuyaku issaikyō: Indo senjutsubu*, vol. 61, p. 247, n. 8, and Andō and Sonoda, *Nihon shisō taikēi*, vol. 4, *Saichō*, p. 63). This interpretation is supported by an entry in the Tang-period Buddhist encyclopedia *Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義, indicating that the term refers to “the name of a jewel in Sanskrit” (*T*2128, vol. 54, p. 602c2). Although this interpretation is plausible, the type of jewel is not specified in any of these three sources, the source given (p. 602c1) for the *Yiqie jing yinyi* entry is the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* itself, and I have not found the term in any standard Buddhist list of treasures. In any event, in this rendering, the corollas would be made of two kinds of jewels, emerald and the mysterious jewel. Lamotte takes this approach, translating the passage as “their corollas of sapphire (*musāragalva*) and of emerald (*āsmagarbha*)” (“Mañjuśrī,” p. 36). He does not, however, indicate how he reconstructed the first “jewel” of the two; none of the compounds commonly used to translate the Skt. *musāragalva* is in the original passage (the second, *manao* 馬瑙, does indeed typically translate the Skt. *āsmagarbha*, as Lamotte’s Sanskrit interpolation indicates).

³² *Jing she* 精舍; literally, “pure abode.” This term often translates Skt. *vihāra*, which in turn is generally rendered in English as “monastery.” Perhaps accordingly, *jing she* is often similarly translated as “monastery” or “temple.” As Gregory Schopen indicates, however, “The term *vihāra* is – again conventionally – translated as ‘monastery,’ but even a quick reading of Buddhist monastic literature will show that the word is used to designate a large and wide range of types of dwelling places”; see Schopen’s *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: U. Hawai’i P., 2004), p. 332. Even as an imagined Indian setting during the Buddha’s time, both “monastery” and “temple” here do seem anachronistic, thus I have opted for the more neutral “abode.”

abode. Arriving at Ānanda's dwelling, he told Ānanda, "You should know what time it is; tonight the World-Honored One has manifested the marks of his spiritual powers. For the benefit of sentient beings, he will preach the wondrous dharma. Sound the bell!"

Then Ānanda replied, "Great sir, the World-Honored One is now in a profound meditation. I have not yet received his order; how can I convene the assembly?"

When Ānanda spoke these words, Śāriputra appeared before Ānanda and said, "Dharma-brother, the time is right to convene the assembly!"

Ānanda then entered the Buddha's abode and paid reverence to the Buddha. Before he could raise his head, there was a voice in the sky telling Ānanda, "Quickly, convene the assembly of monks!"

After hearing this, Ānanda was overjoyed; he sounded the bell and convened the assembly. And thus the sound permeated the country of Śrāvastī and could be heard as high as the summit of existence. Śakra (Indra), Brahmā, and the [four] world-protecting heavenly kings together with countless lesser gods brought celestial flowers and incense to the Jeta grove.³³

At that time, the World-Honored One arose from his samādhi and smiled. A five-colored light emerged from the Buddha's mouth. When the light emerged, the Jeta grove abode was transformed into beryl. Then the Dharma-Prince Mañjuśrī entered the Buddha's abode and paid reverence to the Buddha. On each of his knees five lotus flowers appeared. When Mañjuśrī joined his fingers and palms before the Buddha, his ten fingertips and his palm-prints emitted ten thousand golden lotus flowers, which he scattered over the Buddha. They changed into a large seven-treasure canopy, suspending various banners. The innumerable buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions manifested inside the canopy, circled the Buddha three times, then withdrew and stood to one side.³⁴

At that time, Bhadrupāla arose from his seat, arranged his robes, and paid reverence to the Buddha. Kneeling down and joining his palms together, he addressed the Buddha: "World-Honored One, from long ago, this Dharma-Prince Mañjuśrī has been close to one hundred thousand buddhas, resided in this Sahā world carrying out the activities of a buddha, and manifested spontaneously

³³ "Lesser gods" here refers to *tianzi* 天子. The Chinese term is variously used to translate Skt. *devatā* (lower-ranking or minor gods) or *devaputra* (son of a god).

³⁴ There are two variations to the end of this sentence in the Three Editions and the Old Song Edition, which read "circled the Buddha *seven* times, then withdrew and *sat* to one side. (*T* 463, vol. 14, p. 480, nn. 11, 12; emphasis mine).

throughout the ten directions. In the distant future, shall he attain *parinirvāṇa*?”

The Buddha proclaimed to Bhadrāpāla:

“This Mañjuśrī has great compassion. He was born in this country, in the village of Uttara,³⁵ in the household of the Brahman Brahma-Virtue.³⁶ When he was born, the interior of the house transformed into a lotus. He emerged from his mother’s right side, and his body was the color of purple gold. When he descended to the earth he could speak, just like a divine child, and a canopy made of the seven treasures covered his head. He visited many sages seeking the teachings on leaving the household,³⁷ but the Brahmans and the ninety-five kinds of treatise masters could not respond.³⁸ Only under me could he leave the household and learn the way. He dwells in the *śūraṅgamasamādhi*.³⁹ Through the power of this samādhi he manifests himself in the ten directions, being

³⁵ Uttara is Lamotte’s reconstruction of *Duoluo* 多羅; see “Mañjuśrī,” pp. 32–33, for his analysis. The editors of the *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō* version simply mark the name of the village as unclear (Murakami and Oikawa, *Monju kyōtenbu* 1, p. 381, n. 9). The *Nihon shisō taikei* editors of the text as quoted in Saichō’s *Kenkairon* render the name in *katakana* as “*Tāra* ターラ” in their notes, but with no explanation other than that it is a place name (Andō and Sonoda, *Nihon shisō taikei*, vol. 4, *Saichō*, p. 64). No suggestion is made in the *Kokuyaku issaikyō* version.

³⁶ 梵德婆羅門家. The identity of “Brahma-Virtue” is unclear; Lamotte translates the name as Brahmadata (“Mañjuśrī,” p. 37), while the *Kokuyaku issaikyō* and *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō* editors offer no suggestions. Alternatively, the phrase could simply mean that Mañjuśrī was born “in a Brahman household [possessing] the Brahmanical virtues (Skt.: *guṇa*)” (I am grateful to Jan Nattier for suggesting this possibility).

³⁷ “Sages” here translates *xianren* 仙人 (rendered as 僊人 in the Ming edition; *T* 463, vol. 14, p. 480, n. 14). The Chinese term is used to translate Skt. *ṛṣi* or for any of a variety of non-Buddhist renunciants. The term is also used for Daoist “transcendents” or “immortals,” although the context here suggests that Indian or Central Asian renunciants are intended. That said, the ambiguous referent of this phrase is noteworthy, and I will address this point in the penultimate section of the article.

³⁸ Lamotte interprets the “ninety-five kinds” as referring to the Brahmans rather than the “treatise masters 論議師.” However, the versions of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* found in *Kokuyaku issaikyō*, *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō*, and the *Nihon shisō taikei* edition of Saichō’s *Kenkairon* all treat the “ninety-five kinds” as referring to the treatise masters (see Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” p. 37, and the contrasting interpretation in Iwano, *Kokuyaku issaikyō: Indo senjutsubu*, vol. 61, p. 247; Murakami and Oikawa, *Monju kyōtenbu* 1, p. 381; and Andō and Sonoda, *Nihon shisō taikei*, vol. 4, *Saichō*, p. 64). As references to ninety-five (or ninety-six) kinds of heretics in the Buddha’s time is a common trope in Buddhist literature, and either the Brahmans or the treatise masters could refer to such heretical practitioners, both interpretations are possible. Based on the Chinese, however (and disregarding the punctuation in the *Taishō* edition of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*), I believe it is slightly more natural to read the phrase the way the *Kokuyaku issaikyō*, *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō*, and *Nihon shisō taikei* renditions have, and I have followed them here.

³⁹ Lamotte translates this samādhi as “The Concentration of Heroic Progress,” and his French translation of Kumārajīva’s version of the *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra* (*T* 642) has been translated into English (Lamotte, *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra*). For an alternative English translation of this sutra, see John McRae, trans., *The Śūraṅgama Samādhi Sutra*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 25.3 (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1998). Lamotte’s “Mañjuśrī”

born, leaving the household, attaining liberation, and entering *parinirvāṇa*. He manifests the division of his *śarīra* for the benefit of sentient beings.⁴⁰ So doing, the great being has long been dwelling in the *śūraṃgamasamādhi*.

“Four-hundred and fifty years after the Buddha’s *nirvāṇa* he shall arrive in the Mountain of Snows and widely proclaim the twelfefold scriptures to five hundred sages.⁴¹ He will convert and ripen [the karma of] the five hundred sages, causing them to attain the stage of non-regression. Along with the spiritual sages he will assume the form of a bhikṣu⁴² and fly through the air until he reaches his birthplace. There, in a desolate marsh, sitting cross-legged beneath a banyan tree, he will enter the *śūraṃgamasamādhi*. Due to the power of this samādhi, all the pores of his body will emit a golden light. That light will shine widely throughout the worlds of the ten directions, saving those with karmic affinities. All of the sages will see fire⁴³ emitted from the pores of [his] body.⁴⁴

also devotes much attention to the *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra*, in which Mañjuśrī figures prominently. Thus for a fuller treatment of this sutra and samādhi, I would refer the reader to any of these fine studies. In short, only bodhisattvas of the tenth stage and buddhas can obtain the *śūraṃgamasamādhi*, which enables the bodhisattva to reign supreme over all samādhis (Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” p. 14). Of the one hundred characteristics of the *śūraṃgamasamādhi* (in Kumārajīva’s version), the final is to “enter *parinirvāṇa* without definitively extinguishing oneself” (p. 26, citing *T*642, vol. 15, p. 631C25–26). As we shall see, this is indeed the case with Mañjuśrī in this sutra. In fact, Lamotte goes so far as to suggest that the title of the *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa Sutra* is misleading, as the text focuses on a provisional nirvana manifested by Mañjuśrī during the *śūraṃgamasamādhi* rather than on an ultimate *parinirvāṇa*. Lamotte thus suggests that the *Mañjuśrīśūraṃgamasamādhi* would be a more accurate title (p. 32).

⁴⁰ The term *śarīra* is usually translated as “relics,” but see n. 68, below.

⁴¹ “Mountain of Snows” usually refers to the Himalayas, although the term was somewhat flexible in Chinese (Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” p. 49).

⁴² 與諸神仙作比丘像。This could be interpreted, as Lamotte does (“Mañjuśrī,” p. 37), as meaning that they “built a statue of a bhikṣu.” If that were the case, however, it is not clear what they did with this statue, as the phrase “bhikṣu statue (or image, form, likeness 比丘像)” is not used again. The “beryl statue 琉璃像” referred to later in the text – which Lamotte apparently identifies with the bhikṣu statue, image, or form (pp. 33, 37) – was created chronologically later, after Mañjuśrī manifests his auspicious signs, from the lights and flames that were part of these signs (see *T*463, vol. 14, p. 481A7–8). For further reference, there is a subtle particle difference in the *yomikudashi* renderings of the text here in the *Kokuyaku issaikyō* (諸の神仙と比丘像と作り; Iwano, *Kokuyaku issaikyō: Indo senjutsubu*, vol. 61, p. 247; emphasis mine) and the *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō* (諸もろの神仙と比丘像と作り; Murakami and Oikawa, *Monju kyōtenbu* 1, p. 381; emphasis mine) that may reflect the same difference in interpretation as between my rendering and Lamotte’s.

⁴³ The *Taishō* edition of *Mañjuśrī Sutra* renders the character here as “fire” (*huo* 火), with a note indicating that the versions in the Three Editions and the Old Song Edition add the character for “light” (*guang* 光) (*T*463, vol. 14, p. 480C27, and n. 15). However, the editions in Iwano, *Kokuyaku issaikyō: Indo senjutsubu*, vol. 61, p. 248, and the *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō* (Murakami and Oikawa, *Monju kyōtenbu* 1, p. 381) both render the character simply as “light,” with no mention of fire.

⁴⁴ Lamotte (“Mañjuśrī,” p. 37) interprets the fire here as being emitted from the pores of

“At that time, Mañjuśrī’s body will be like a mountain of purple gold, attaining a height of sixteen feet.⁴⁵ He will be adorned with a halo, equal on all sides. Inside the halo are five hundred transformation buddhas. Each one of those transformation buddhas has five transformation bodhisattvas serving as attendants. Mañjuśrī’s headdress is adorned with the jewel worn by Śakra. It has five hundred kinds of colors, and in each one of those colors are the sun, the moon, the stars, and the palaces of the gods and dragons.⁴⁶ All that the people of the world long to see will appear inside.⁴⁷ Between his eyebrows, there will be a white curl, spiraling to the right.⁴⁸ Transformation buddhas flow out of it and enter a net of light. Their entire bodies shine, with flames following one after another. In each flame are five *maṇi* gems, and each *maṇi* gem has a different light, with each different color distinct. Amid the multitude of colors are transformation buddhas and bodhisattvas, who cannot be fully described. In his left hand, [Mañjuśrī] holds a begging bowl and in his right hand [he] hoists a Mahayana scripture.⁴⁹

the sages’ own bodies, rather than Mañjuśrī’s. The original is ambiguous (*T*463, vol. 14, p. 480c27), and either interpretation is plausible.

⁴⁵ *Zhangliu* 丈六; an abbreviation of 一丈六尺, or about sixteen Chinese feet. The term is used to represent the height of transformation buddhas, as well as the historical Buddha. Janet Goodwin cautions against the traditional translation of *zhangliu* (Jpn.: *jōroku*) as sixteen feet for Buddhist statues, which are often characterized as standing *zhangliu* tall, regardless of their actual height; see her article “The Buddhist Monarch: Go-Shirakawa and the Rebuilding of Tōdai-ji,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17.2–3 (1990), p. 230, n. 7. Here, a much greater height than sixteen feet does seem to be implied; my translation choice of “sixteen feet,” therefore, is merely intended to represent the convention of this traditional designation and not an “actual” size.

⁴⁶ *Long* 龍; commonly translates the Skt. *nāga*.

⁴⁷ Alternatively, this sentence (*T*463, vol. 14, p. 481A3) could be read as “All that which is rarely seen by the people of the world will appear inside,” as the *Nihon shisō taikei* editors of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* as quoted in Saichō’s *Kenkairon* have (Andō and Sonoda, *Nihon shisō taikei*, vol. 4, *Saichō*, p. 65). The translation here largely follows the renderings in the *Kokuyaku issaikyō* (Iwano, *Kokuyaku issaikyō: Indo senjutsubu*, vol. 61, p. 248) and *Shin kokuyaku daizōkyō* (Murakami and Oikawa, *Monju kyōtenbu* 1, p. 382).

⁴⁸ This refers to the *ūrṇā* spot, one of the thirty-two distinguishing marks of a buddha or a *cakravartin* (“wheel-turning king”).

⁴⁹ Lamotte (“Mañjuśrī,” p. 37) interprets the subject here as the transformation buddhas and bodhisattvas mentioned in the previous sentence, supplying the pronoun “they” rather than “he” (for Mañjuśrī). Linguistically, Lamotte’s reading is certainly possible, and it is difficult to state conclusively which is intended. From the context, however, it seems more likely that Mañjuśrī is the intended subject. The text in this paragraph moves from the top of Mañjuśrī’s adorned body down, and the description of the beryl Mañjuśrī image in the next paragraph begins with its left and right arms. Note too that, as Fukuhara Ryūzen 福原隆善 points out, it is typical in the contemplation sutras to describe a buddha’s (or bodhisattva’s) auspicious signs in this order, from the top of the head down. Although the *Samādhi Sea Sutra* does also allow for a “reverse contemplation 逆觀” from the feet up, to label it as “reverse” suggests that it was the

“When [Mañjuśrī] finishes manifesting these marks, the lights and flames will all be extinguished and change into a beryl statue. On its left arm are ten buddha seals. In each seal are ten buddha images, and the letters expounding the buddhas’ names are clear and distinct. On its right arm are seven buddha seals.⁵⁰ In each of those seals are seven buddha images, and the names of the seven buddhas are clear and distinct. Inside its body at the place of its heart is a statue made of real gold, sitting cross-legged. With a height of six feet and resting on a lotus, it is visible from all four sides.”

The Buddha proclaimed to Bhadrāpāla:

“This Mañjuśrī has innumerable spiritual powers and innumerable manifestations, which cannot be fully recorded. I will now explain them briefly for the blind sentient beings of future generations. If there are sentient beings who merely hear Mañjuśrī’s name, their transgressions from birth-and-death through twelve hundred million kalpas will be removed. Those who pay reverence and make offerings will always be reborn, lifetime after lifetime, in the households of the buddhas and will be protected by the might of Mañjuśrī.⁵¹ Thus people should strive to fasten their attention and call to mind the image of Mañjuśrī.

“The method of calling to mind the image of Mañjuśrī [is as follows].⁵² First, call to mind the beryl statue. Those who call to

exception that proves the rule for this line of scriptures. See Fukuhara’s “Kanbutsukei kyōten ni mirareru hotoke no sōkō: ‘Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō’ o chūshin ni” 観仏系經典にみられる仏の相好, 観仏三昧海経を中心に, in *Bukkyō bunka no kichō to tenkai*, pp. 149–52.

⁵⁰ The references to the “ten buddha seals” and the “seven buddha seals” in this passage could be translated instead as “the seals of the ten buddhas” and “the seals of the seven buddhas,” pointing respectively to the present buddhas of the ten directions and the seven buddhas of the past. See the notes to this section of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* in the *Nihon shisō taikai* version of Saichō’s *Kenkairon* (Andō and Sonoda, *Nihon shisō taikai*, vol. 4, *Saichō*, p. 65).

⁵¹ “Households of the buddhas” translates 諸佛家, which refers to being born where the buddhas reside – in other words, in their buddha-fields or pure lands; see Nakamura Hajime 中村元, ed., *Bukkyō daijiten* 佛教語大辞典, reduced size edn. (Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 1981), p. 690b, s.v. “shobutsu no ie.” This expression can be found in various Mahayana scriptures, including all three major Chinese versions of the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Ch.: *Huayan jing* 華嚴經; e.g., *T* 278, vol. 9, p. 433c1–2; *T* 279, vol. 10, p. 392b10; and *T* 293, vol. 10, p. 779c19). The context in which the phrase is used here, however, finds particularly close parallels in two contemplation sutras, the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra* (*T* 365, vol. 12, p. 346b10–14) and the *Samādhi Sea Sutra* (*T* 643, vol. 15, p. 663c2–5; see also 693b24–26).

⁵² “念文殊像法”. A plausible alternative reading is “Call to mind the method [or dharma] of Mañjuśrī’s image,” which apparently is how the *Shin kokuyaku daijōkyō* version interprets it (Murakami and Oikawa, *Monju kyōtenbu* 1, p. 382). The editors add an annotation that what follows may also indicate how to make Mañjuśrī drawings and statues (p. 382, n. 2). This interpretation I find less plausible. The translation here is intended to clarify the repetition with the previous sentence and the close link with the contemplative method that follows.

mind the beryl statue should contemplate [the marks] as described above one by one and make them all clear.⁵³ If one still is unable to see [Mañjuśrī], one should recite and retain the *śūraṅgama*⁵⁴ and recite Mañjuśrī's name from one to seven days; Mañjuśrī will surely come to that person. If there are still people who have obstacles from residual karma, then they will be able to see him in dreams.⁵⁵ If those who see him in dreams in their present incarnations pursue [the path of] auditors (*śrāvakas*), they will, as a result of seeing Mañjuśrī, attain a stage from *srotaāpanna* to *anāgāmin*.⁵⁶ If those who have left the household see Mañjuśrī, once they have attained the sight of him they will in one day and one night become arhats. If they have deep faith in the Broad-and-Equal scriptures,⁵⁷ this Dharma-Prince will expound the profound dharma for them while they are in meditation.⁵⁸ For those whose minds are full of disturbances,⁵⁹ he will explain the true meaning in their dreams. He thereby makes them firm in the unsurpassed way, where they will attain the stage of non-regression.”

The Buddha proclaimed to Bhadrāpāla:

“If people call to mind this Dharma-Prince Mañjuśrī, if they wish to make offerings and cultivate meritorious deeds, then [Mañjuśrī] will transform himself, turning into an impoverished, solitary, or afflicted sentient being,⁶⁰ and appear before the practitioners.

⁵³ The character translated in this sentence as “contemplate,” *guan* 觀, is used in this text for the first time here, as opposed to the *nian* 念 used previously, which I rendered as “call to mind” to distinguish the two terms. For remarks on the term *guan* as used here, see the section “Parallels between the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the Fifth-Century Contemplation Sutras” below.

⁵⁴ The Three Editions and the Old Song Edition add the term “*sutra*” (*jing* 經) after *śūraṅgama* here (*T* 463, vol. 14, p. 481 n. 5).

⁵⁵ “Residual karma 宿業” refers to the negative karma from previous lives.

⁵⁶ These are the first (stream-winner or stream-enterer) and third stages (non-returner) of the *śrāvaka* path. The omitted second stage is *sakṛdāgāmin* (once-returner).

⁵⁷ “Broad-and-Equal scriptures 方等經典” (Skt.: *vaipulyasūtra*) is an epithet for Mahayana scriptures.

⁵⁸ The Three Editions and the Old Song Edition render the second clause in this sentence differently, adding the phrases I have italicized here: “this Dharma-Prince will expound *the true meaning* for them *and cause them to obtain* the profound dharma while they are in meditation” (*T* 463, vol. 14, p. 481, n. 6).

⁵⁹ The Three Editions and the Old Song Edition add two characters (*ruo shi* 若使) at the beginning of this clause, changing the meaning as follows: “*If this causes* their minds to be full of disturbances...” (*T* 463, vol. 14, p. 481, n. 7; emphasis mine).

⁶⁰ The passage on Mañjuśrī transforming himself reads: “即自化身。作貧窮孤獨苦惱衆生。” As probably the most widely cited portion of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* in premodern Japanese sources, this section has accordingly been cited in many modern Japanese studies. Japanese scholars, however, are divided as to whether to render this passage as Mañjuśrī transforming himself into three types of sentient beings (貧窮, 孤獨, 苦惱の衆生) or as two or even one type (貧窮孤獨の苦惱の衆生; which could be translated as “an impoverished or solitary suffering sentient

When people call Mañjuśrī to mind, they should practice compassion. Those who practice compassion will thereby be able to see Mañjuśrī. Thus the wise should carefully contemplate Mañjuśrī's thirty-two marks and eighty auspicious signs.⁶¹ Those who perform this contemplation will be able to see Mañjuśrī immediately due to the power of *śūramgama*. Performing the contemplation this way is called correct contemplation. If one contemplates otherwise, it is called false contemplation.

“After the Buddha's nirvana, all the sentient beings who have been able to hear Mañjuśrī's name or see his image will not fall into the evil paths for one hundred thousand kalpas. Those who have received, retained, read, and recited Mañjuśrī's name, even if they have grave obstacles, will not fall into the horrible and vicious fires of Avīci Hell.⁶² Constantly reborn in the pure lands of other directions, they will encounter buddhas, hear the dharma, and attain the receptivity to [the dharma of] non-arising.”⁶³

When the Buddha pronounced these words, five hundred bhikṣus distanced themselves from the dust, separated from the defilements, and became arhats.⁶⁴ Innumerable gods gave rise to the bodhi-mind and vowed to follow Mañjuśrī perpetually.⁶⁵

At that time, Bhadrupāla addressed the Buddha:⁶⁶ “World-

being” or as “a sentient being suffering from poverty and solitude”). All three interpretations are plausible. This translation's rendering of the passage as referring to three types largely follows the treatment of the passage in Minamoto Tamenori's 984 *Illustrations of the Three Jewels* (Mabuchi et al., eds., *Sanbōe*, p. 108; English translation in Kamens, *The Three Jewels*, p. 333); Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” p. 38; and Hosokawa, ed., *Kanjin gakushōki*, p. 289. This translation differs from Tamenori's classical Japanese version and Lamotte's French version, however, in rendering *gudu* 孤独 as “solitary” rather than just “orphan.” Although the term does commonly refer to orphans, it can also apply to elderly people without children to take care of them. In both of these translation choices, I have also considered traditional motifs in the Mañjuśrī cult at Mount Wutai and in premodern Japan, which were influenced by this scripture to varying degrees. In these contexts, Mañjuśrī is frequently said to appear as a beggar, as an old man or woman, or as a person suffering from serious disease or physical disability.

⁶¹ These terms refer to the 32 marks and 80 auspicious signs (also often referred to as “80 lesser signs”) that a buddha's body is said to possess.

⁶² In Mahayana cosmology, Avīci Hell was traditionally considered the worst hell.

⁶³ “Pure lands” here translates *qingjing guotu* 清淨國土. The “receptivity to the dharma of non-arising” (Skt.: *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*) refers to a state of realization in which one recognizes and accepts that all phenomena are unproduced.

⁶⁴ To “distance oneself from the dust and separate from the defilements 遠塵離垢” represents the initial awakening, or “first fruit,” on the path of auditors (Skt.: *śrāvakas*). The term also corresponds to the second stage of the ten-stage bodhisattva path based on the *Flower Garland Sutra*.

⁶⁵ For a very close textual parallel to this sentence, see the *Maitreya Contemplation Sutra*, T452, vol. 14, p. 420C19–20.

⁶⁶ The Three Editions and the Old Song Edition add a pluralizing marker (*deng* 等) after

Honored One, then as for Mañjuśrī's *śarīra*,⁶⁷ who shall erect a seven-treasure stupa above it?"⁶⁸

The Buddha proclaimed to Bhadrāpāla: "On the Mountain of Fragrances,⁶⁹ there are eight great demon-spirits.⁷⁰ They themselves shall take it and place it on the diamond peak of the Mountain of Fragrances. Innumerable gods, dragon-spirits, and *yakṣas* will constantly come and make offerings. When the great assembly is convened, the statue will continuously emit light, and the light will broadly expound the dharmas of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and no-self. Bhadrāpāla, this Dharma-Prince has attained an indestructible body.⁷¹ What I have now told you, receive and retain well; expound it broadly for all sentient beings."

When the Buddha pronounced these words, Bhadrāpāla and the other great bodhisattvas, Śāriputra and the other great auditors, and the eight kinds of gods, dragons [and other protectors of Buddhism] were all overjoyed at hearing what the Buddha said. They paid reverence to the Buddha and withdrew.

Bhadrāpāla here, which would render the phrase as "Bhadrāpāla and the others addressed the Buddha" (*T* 463, vol. 14, p. 481, n. 11; emphasis mine).

⁶⁷ Instead of "Mañjuśrī's *śarīra*" (*Wenshu sheli* 文殊舍利) here, the Three Editions and the Old Song Edition render the subject simply as "Mañjuśrī" (*Wenshushili* 文殊師利) (*T* 463, vol. 14, p. 481, n. 12). The passage as quoted in Saichō's *Kenkairon* adds another variation, rendering the phrase with the full transliteration of Mañjuśrī's name as well as the transliteration for *śarīra* (Jpn.: *Monjushiri shari* 文殊師利舍利); see *T* 2376, vol. 74, p. 603A29.

⁶⁸ Although *śarīra* is usually translated in pluralized form as "relics," as Gregory Schopen has pointed out in the Indian context the term is frequently rendered in the singular, referring to the "body" of a deceased monk "before it was cremated, before there could have been anything like what we call 'relics'"; see his *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 1997), p. 105. As a Chinese text – regardless of whether there ever was an Indian or Central Asian original – the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and its use of the term *śarīra* in transliteration need not reflect this Indian usage. But based on the Buddha's response to Bhadrāpāla's query (see the following paragraph in the translation), I believe the singular is also called for here and thus have used the pronoun "it" to refer to Mañjuśrī's *śarīra*. See also n. 71, below, including the quotation made by Cien 慈恩 (or Kuiji 窺基, or Ji 基; 632–82).

⁶⁹ The "Mountain of Fragrances" (*Xiangshan* 香山) is generally used to refer to Mount Gandhamādana.

⁷⁰ *Guishen* 鬼神; indicates any of various demons, spirits, or demigods, including *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *pretas*, and the spirits of the dead.

⁷¹ The precise relation between Mañjuśrī's *śarīra* and the "statue" or "image" (*xiang* 像) and "indestructible body" referred to in the Buddha's response here is not made explicit, but it is likely that an identification is intended between Mañjuśrī's *śarīra* and the beryl statue referred to earlier. If this interpretation is correct, the statue – created from the lights and flames manifested as part of Mañjuśrī's auspicious marks after he entered the *śūraṅgamasamādhi* – represents both the "body" or "remains" (*śarīra*) Mañjuśrī left behind and the "indestructible body" he has attained. This clearly seems to be how the text is interpreted in the *Commentary to the Amitāyus Sutra* (*Amituo jing shu* 阿彌陀經疏) attributed to the Faxiang patriarch Cien, which indicates that Mañjuśrī "left behind a full-body relic sixteen-feet high, like pure beryl,

THE MAÑJUŚRĪ SUTRA IN CHINESE
BUDDHIST BIBLIOGRAPHIC CATALOGUES

This is a striking scripture for many reasons: the mini-biography of Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva's appearance at the Mountain of Snows precisely 450 years after the Buddha's nirvana, the conversion and journey of the five hundred "sages," the views it affords of strategies for coping with the Buddha's absence, the explicit counsel and comfort for "the blind sentient beings of future generations," the graded contemplations and attainments for practitioners of differing capacities and from differing Buddhist paths. But what I am most interested in here is illuminating the text's affinities with the fifth-century genre of Chinese contemplation or visualization sutras.⁷² And as rich and worthy of fuller exploration as the aforementioned elements might be, a necessary first step in "seeing" the connection of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* to the contemplation sutras is redressing the standard treatment of the text as a circa 280–312 translation from a Sanskrit original. To do so, a brief tour through the Chinese Buddhist bibliographic catalogues, although less scenic, is indispensable.

The *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is first mentioned in the earliest extant catalogue of Buddhist sutras in Chinese, *A Compilation of Notices on the Translation of the Tripitaka*, written by Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518) and dated to about 515.⁷³ It appears in a section on "Newly compiled continued selections of anonymously translated miscellaneous sutras."⁷⁴ Within this section – one of those reserved for sutras whose authenticity is not questioned by the cataloguer – it is recorded in the list of extant scriptures, with the same name and number of fascicles as in later catalogues and the *Taishō* and with no indication that it was a "condensed scripture 抄經."

its interior and exterior permeated with light" (*T* 1757, vol. 37, p. 318A25–26; for the full passage referring to the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*, see A21–B3).

⁷² After initially completing this study, I found a very brief Japanese article that also argues for the connections between the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the contemplation sutras, following similar reasoning to my own; see Hattori Hōshō 服部法照, "Monjushiri hatsunehangyō to kangyōrui" 文殊師利般涅槃經と觀經類, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 39.1 (1990), pp. 111–13. I have left my study largely in its original form, however, citing Hattori only where I have built upon his findings, rather than pointing out every parallel. That at least two researchers from different sides of the Pacific have now reached similar conclusions independently strengthens the case for the connections.

⁷³ *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集; *T* 2145. The details provided here on this and the other catalogues are based largely on Kyoko Tokuno's excellent survey, "The Evaluation of Indigenous Scriptures in Chinese Buddhist Bibliographic Catalogues," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, pp. 31–74. Note also that the dates given for the various catalogues discussed here vary slightly in different accounts; this article follows Tokuno's dating.

⁷⁴ See *T* 2145, vol. 55, p. 22B24.

Moreover, this catalogue is generally considered one of the most reliable. Thus we have a sound basis for believing the text was extant before 515 and considered, at least by Sengyou, as authentic (that is, transmitted in its complete form by a South Asian or Central Asian “translator”). The text, however, does not appear in the sections that reproduce entries from Daoan’s 道安 (312–385) *Comprehensive Catalogue of Scriptures* of 374.⁷⁵ Although this does not preclude the possibility that it was translated before 374, at least based on the earliest extant catalogue, we have no firm reason to assume that it was. The next major catalogue, the *Catalogue of Scriptures* completed by a team of twenty bibliographers under the direction of Fajing (d.u.) in 594,⁷⁶ echoes Sengyou’s designation of the text as an “anonymously translated,”⁷⁷ but authentic, sutra.⁷⁸

It is only with the third major extant catalogue, the *Record of the Three Treasures throughout Successive Generations*, written by Fei Changfang 費長房 (d.u.) in 597,⁷⁹ that things get messy – as is so often the case. Compiled just a few years after the catalogue supervised by Fajing, Fei Changfang’s catalogue suddenly assigns translator names to a great many scriptures previously recorded as anonymously translated. By Hayashiya’s calculations, the two earlier extant catalogues listed translators’ names for less than 30 percent of the scriptures believed to be of foreign provenance. In Fei Changfang’s catalogue, the figure jumps to about 80 percent,⁸⁰ and the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is one of those scriptures whose translator was miraculously “discovered”: for the first time, Nie Daozhen is listed as the translator.⁸¹ Yet though Nie Daozhen is listed as the translator of many scriptures in Fei Changfang’s catalogue, he does not appear as an independent translator anywhere in Sengyou’s catalogue or the portion of Daoan’s reproduced there.⁸²

⁷⁵ *Zongli zhongjing mulu* 綜理衆經目錄. Although the original version of this catalogue is not extant, most of it has been preserved in Sengyou’s catalogue. As Tokuno points out (in “Evaluation of Indigenous Scriptures,” p. 63, n. 12), Tokiwa, *Gokan yori Sōsei ni itaru yakukyō sōroku*, pp. 160–81, and Hayashiya, *Kyōroku kenkyū*, pp. 383–426, include efforts to reconstruct Daoan’s catalogue based on the material and annotations in Sengyou’s catalogue.

⁷⁶ *Zhongjing mulu* 衆經目錄; *T* 2146. There are three catalogues bearing this name in the same *Taishō* volume (vol. 55, *T* 2147 and *T* 2148), therefore this text is often referred to as the *Fajing lu* 法經錄 (Fajing Catalogue), based on the name of its chief bibliographer.

⁷⁷ “*Shiyi* 失譯”; literally, “translator’s [name] lost.”

⁷⁸ See *T* 2146, vol. 55, p. 121A5.

⁷⁹ *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶紀; *T* 2034.

⁸⁰ Hayashiya, *Iyaku kyōrui no kenkyū*, English summary, pp. 5–6.

⁸¹ See *T* 2034, vol. 49, pp. 65C7, 66A22–26.

⁸² On this point, see Hayashiya, *Kyōroku kenkyū*, pp. 286–87, and E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, rev. edn. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), vol. 1, p. 68.

And as Hayashiya asks of Fei Changfang's attributions more generally, with suitable irony: "If Fei Chang-fang... suddenly succeeded in discovering the translators or dates of translation of several hundred canons [sic] when no scholar had succeeded before him, might the results of such a miracle be relied upon as accurate facts?"

Evidently, Fei Changfang's contemporary fellow Buddhist bibliographers were not so credulous as later generations, since the next major bibliographic catalogue, the 602 AD *Catalogue of Scriptures* led by Yancong 彦琮 (557–610),⁸³ "does not at all follow the miraculous results, but adopts nearly all the older views presented in the *Fa-ching Catalogue* [T 2146]."⁸⁴ Indeed, when we turn to the catalogue to find the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*, no translator's name is given.⁸⁵ But however spurious it may have been concerning translators' names, Fei Changfang's catalogue was eventually to win the day as the progenitor of a line of catalogues that ultimately formed the basis for the *Taishō* translator attributions. In our case here, it is fair to say that the attributions of Nie Daozhen as the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* translator in later catalogues can all ultimately be traced back to Fei Changfang's⁸⁶ – and thus we need not be detained any longer by this tour of Chinese catalogues.

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE MAÑJUŚRĪ SUTRA AND THE FIFTH-CENTURY CONTEMPLATION SUTRAS

If we cannot trust the catalogue-based attributions of the *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa Sutra* to Nie Daozhen, and hence neither the dates assigned to the translation, then what can we conclude about the circumstances of its translation or original composition in Chinese? Although definitive answers remain elusive, clues can be found in the various parallels with the contemplation sutras, which are generally dated to the first half of the fifth century. Kōtatsu Fujita has compiled a convenient table of noteworthy parallel passages among the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra*, *Bhaiṣajyarāja Contemplation Sutra*, *Samādhi Sea Sutra*, *Samantabhadra Contemplation Sutra*, and *Maitreya Contemplation Sutra*.⁸⁷ Although

⁸³ *Zhongjing mulu* 衆經目錄; T 2147.

⁸⁴ Hayashiya, *Iyaku kyōrui no kenkyū*, English summary, p. 6.

⁸⁵ See T 2147, vol. 55, p. 153A1.

⁸⁶ For example, see the *Great Tang Record of Buddhist Scriptures* (*Da tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄), completed by the *Vinaya* master Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) in 664, T 2149, vol. 55, pp. 236c8 and 237b1–5, which repeats almost word-for-word the details about Nie Daozhen's translation efforts given in Fei Changfang's catalogue.

⁸⁷ See Fujita's *Genshi Jōdo shisō*, pp. 127–29, and "Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*," pp. 164–65. The table omits the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation Sūtra* as its brevity limits the number of parallels with the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra*. I have likewise omitted

the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra* is much shorter than these and thus does not demonstrate as many parallels, considering its brevity, the parallels it does show are significant. These include:

1. reciting the name (*chengming* 稱名) of a bodhisattva or buddha;⁸⁸
2. removing transgressions accumulated during birth and death through mind-boggling numbers of *kalpas*;⁸⁹
3. an emphasis on multiple manifestations of transformation buddhas or bodhisattvas;
4. the virtually word-for-word repetition of the injunction that “Performing the contemplation this way is called correct contemplation. If one contemplates otherwise, it is called false contemplation”;⁹⁰
5. references to Śakra’s *maṇi* jewels or to Brahmā-*maṇi* jewels adorning the heads of manifested deities;⁹¹ and
6. the preaching of “suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and no-self.”⁹²

As the treatment of some of these items here differs from that provided in the English-language version of Fujita’s table, in “Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*,” a few points merit elaboration. While relying largely on Fujita’s table—for which the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sūtra* was the reference point—the descriptions of the parallels above, and the *Taishō* references provided in my footnotes, are based on the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra* passages and my translation of this text. Thus at times my renderings of the phrases and *Taishō* citations differ from

the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation Sūtra* from my comparison with the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra*.

⁸⁸ Among many other examples of “reciting the name” in these sūtras, see the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra*, T463, vol. 14, p. 481A20–21; *Amitāyus Contemplation Sūtra*, T365, vol. 12, pp. 345C15, 346A19; *Bhaiṣajyarāja Contemplation Sūtra*, T1161, vol. 20, pp. 663C8, 665A28; *Samādhi Sea Sūtra*, T643, vol. 15, p. 661A12–13 (references to this text throughout Fujita’s “Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*,” as T642 appear to be a typographical error); *Samantabhadra Contemplation Sūtra*, T277, vol. 9, pp. 391C17, 392B3; and *Maitreya Contemplation Sūtra*, T452, vol. 14, pp. 420A14, 420B26. Because of the many references to these sūtras in the following notes, hereafter I will omit the titles of the sūtras, while retaining their *Taishō* numbers and always citing them in this order (the same order as in Fujita’s table, except with the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra* added and placed at the head instead of the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sūtra*). Note too that neither I nor Fujita has attempted to cite all occurrences of this and the following parallel phrases in these sūtras, but merely a representative sampling.

⁸⁹ See T463, vol. 14, p. 481A15–16; T365, vol. 12, pp. 342A27–28, 343B12; T1161, vol. 20, p. 662A11–12, 14; T643, vol. 15, p. 655B4–5, 7; T277, vol. 9, p. 393B24–25; T452, vol. 14, p. 420B28–29.

⁹⁰ See T463, vol. 14, p. 481B5–6. See also T365, vol. 12, p. 342A4–5; T1161, vol. 20, p. 663A27–28; T643, vol. 15, p. 649B16–17; T277, vol. 9, p. 393C1–2; T452, vol. 14, p. 419C10.

⁹¹ See T463, vol. 14, p. 481A1; T365, vol. 12, p. 343C15–18; T1161, vol. 20, p. 663B14; T643, vol. 15, p. 683A10; T277, vol. 9, p. 390A11–12; T452, vol. 14, p. 419C24–25.

⁹² See T463, vol. 14, p. 481B17; T365, vol. 12, p. 345B13; T1161, vol. 20, p. 662C12; T643, vol. 15, pp. 663B21, 664B11, 681A16, 684C16; T277 (no matching reference); T452, vol. 14, p. 419A6–7, B12–13.

those in Fujita's table, based on translation differences and examples where the parallels with the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra* were clearer.

In the case of "reciting the name," for example, although Fujita's table gives *nanwu Amituo Fo* (homage to Amitāyus/Amitābha Buddha) as the reference point, the term *nanwu* 南無 does not appear in the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra*. This does not, however, change the nature of the parallelism Fujita points to, as the various examples he cites more often than not use either *cheng* 稱 in combination with *nanwu* or *cheng* alone. Also, the greatest significance of this parallel for Fujita's and our purposes is that, as Fujita observes (specifically citing *chengming* rather than *nanwu*),

one should note the Chinese-tinged terms that can be detected in these passages – for example, 'reciting the name' [*chengming*] of the buddha or bodhisattva. Since the same term also appears in the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation Sūtra*..., the idea of reciting such a name is common to all the contemplation sūtras under discussion. However, as most of the occurrences of name-recitation cannot be traced back to Sanskrit texts, the idea is considered to have originated primarily within the religious milieu of Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures.⁹³

Item four above, on "correct" and "false" contemplations, also provides an interesting example. The phrase I have translated from the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra* as "Performing the contemplation this way is called correct contemplation. If one contemplates otherwise, it is called false contemplation 作此觀者名爲正觀。若他觀者名爲邪觀" is rendered as "To perform this contemplation is called the correct contemplation; if one performs other contemplations, it constitutes a heretical contemplation" in the English-language version of Fujita's table.⁹⁴ Linguistically, the latter translation can be justified. Based on the context, however, I interpret the issue as one of performing *this* contemplation correctly or incorrectly, not of this Mañjuśrī contemplation versus *all* other kinds of contemplations (such as contemplations on other deities), nor of "true contemplatives" versus "false contemplatives" as Lamotte renders it.⁹⁵

Translation differences aside, however, what is most significant here is not just that the stock phrase appears in the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra* and, repeatedly, in the contemplation sūtras. It is also conspicuous due to

⁹³ Fujita, "Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*," pp. 160-61; see also Fujita, *Genshi Jōdo shisō*, p. 129.

⁹⁴ Fujita, "Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*," p. 164; the two phrases are identical in the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra* and the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sūtra*, except for an insignificant pronoun difference.

⁹⁵ Lamotte, "Mañjuśrī," p. 38.

the way in which it is used in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*. The phrase does occur in other Chinese sutra translations, including, with slight variations, three versions of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*.⁹⁶ But as Yamabe points out, the usage of the phrase differs in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the *Samādhi Sea Sutra*, one of the most significant contemplation sutras. In the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, the context in which the phrase occurs is one of “seeing” the Buddha philosophically, that is, with regard to the concept of emptiness. The passage in question “has no visual element.” In contrast, the relevant passages of the *Samādhi Sea Sutra* “concern only visual elements and almost completely neglect philosophical discussion.”⁹⁷ And notably for our purposes, the way in which the phrase is used in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* corresponds more closely to its usage in the *Samādhi Sea Sutra* than in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, a characteristic it generally shares with the other contemplation sutras.⁹⁸

Finally, item six above, concerning the preaching of “suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and no-self,” is also worth a closer look. The *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra* reference in Fujita’s table specifically includes the *pāramitās* at the end of this list of four dharmas,⁹⁹ or teachings, but the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* does not, nor does every reference cited by Fujita. As there are various other references among these sutras to just preaching “suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and no-self” without the *pāramitās* immediately following, the present study takes the first four elements as the basis for comparison. And in examining these four as a distinct set of dharmas, we find another significant parallel among the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the contemplation sutras, as well as the related meditation manuals often grouped with the contemplation sutras. Ōminami suggests that, although some examples of the dharma of “emptiness” being added to those of “suffering, impermanence, and no-self” and forming a distinct set of four dharmas can be found else-

⁹⁶ See *T* 474 (vol. 14, p. 534c8-9), *T* 475 (vol. 14, p. 555A23-24), and *T* 476 (vol. 14, p. 584B29). Note too that, as the parallel use of this phrase in the contemplation sutras and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* suggests, we need not assume that such parallel phrases among the contemplation sutras *originated* in that genre; the point is that these sutras demonstrated consistent fondness for them.

⁹⁷ Yamabe, “Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi,” p. 364. For Yamabe’s full analysis of this phrase, see pp. 181-82, and 364-71.

⁹⁸ Note, however, that the *Samantabhadra Contemplation Sutra* is somewhat of an exception in this regard. Although the stock phrase there does appear after a passage addressing the ability to “see” Samantabhadra, other bodhisattvas, and buddhas, it follows closely an injunction to “reflect on the *meaning* of the Mahayana” (*T* 277, vol. 9, p. 393B29, emphasis mine; for the fuller passage, see p. 393B14-c2). Thus the context of the phrase there, while having a visual element, could also be interpreted as closer to the more philosophical usage in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*.

⁹⁹ See *T* 365, vol. 12, p. 342C1.

where, the emphasis on these as the basic Buddhist principles was particularly taken up by these meditation manuals. He further suggests that the *Samādhi Sea Sutra*'s attribution of the preaching of these four dharmas to the workings of the Buddha's *light* (Ch.: *guang ming* 光明; Jpn.: *kōmyō*) shows the originality of this sutra.¹⁰⁰ Noteworthy here is the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*'s similar assertion that these four dharmas were preached by the light from the Mañjuśrī statue left on the Mountain of Fragrances.

Slight variations in the wording of the passages notwithstanding, then, I maintain that the parallels among the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the compared contemplation sutras for these six items are both clear and significant. That said, they cannot conclusively associate the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* with the genre. A question remains: how often do these six elements appear in one sutra among all kinds of Mahayana sutras not surveyed here? Clearly, many or all of the elements can be expected to appear in sutras of quite different provenance. Still, I believe they provide enough examples of specific linguistic parallels to support my contention that the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* reads like a short contemplation or visualization sutra. General elements contributing to this perceived affinity include the rich visual imagery of the contemplation of Mañjuśrī's auspicious marks; the link made between Mañjuśrī's manifestations, the performance of charitable acts, and the ability to *see* the bodhisattva; and the transformation, first, of Mañjuśrī's auspicious marks into a beryl statue, and, second, of his bodily remains into a statue that will continue preaching after his entry into nirvana.

Last but not least among the parallel terminological and conceptual elements I would like to highlight is how the term *guan* 觀 is used in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*. Although this is the very term that lends the six "contemplation" or "visualization" sutras their name, the proper interpretation of *guan* and its usage in these sutras remains a contested point among Buddhologists. This study generally uses "contemplation" to translate *guan*, in part due to issues raised by Robert Sharf, who has pointed out the hermeneutical pitfalls of Western interpreters' overemphasis on "visualization" in Buddhist contemplative techniques.¹⁰¹ In the present context, however, there is undoubtedly an emphasis on the visual component of the contemplation. The sentence in which the term first appears in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* reads: "Those who call to mind the beryl

¹⁰⁰ See Ōminami, "'Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō' no sanmai shisō," p. 61.

¹⁰¹ See Robert H. Sharf, "Visualization and Mandala in Shingon Buddhism," in Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, eds., *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2001), pp. 151–97.

statue should contemplate [the marks] as described above one by one and make them all clear 念琉璃像者如上所說一一觀之皆令了了，”¹⁰² and the entire paragraph is concerned with “seeing” *Mañjuśrī*.

Note too that Yamabe, whose work sets a new standard for the study of the contemplation sutras in Western-language scholarship, interprets the terms *guan* and *guanfo* 觀佛 (contemplating the Buddha) in the *Samādhi Sea Sutra* and certain other contemplation sutras “essentially as a visualization practice by first observing a statue”:¹⁰³ this is precisely the context in which the term *guan* is introduced in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*. As Yamabe also recognizes, this is not to claim, however, that *guan* is *always* used that way in the contemplation sutras, but rather that that this is a distinctive usage of the term in the genre for the time. In any event, the plethora of interpretations and uses of *guan* among the contemplation sutras and the broader context of Chinese Buddhist translations is part of what makes the contemplation sutras a rich field for study, and I suggest that the use of *guan* in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* contributes to this discussion.¹⁰⁴

Of course, part of the basis for the grouping of the six contemplation sutras in modern scholarship is the shared use of the term *guan* not only within the texts but in their titles, which is not a feature of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*. But here we should note Hattori Hōshō’s intriguing suggestion that the *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa Sutra* may in fact be an alternate name for a *Mañjuśrī Contemplation Sutra* (*Wenshu guan jing* 文殊觀經) that is listed as an anonymously translated, lost scripture in Sengyou’s and other catalogues.¹⁰⁵ As Hattori indicates, this is a matter requiring further research, and the mention of both the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the

¹⁰² See *T* 463, vol. 14, p. 481A19–20.

¹⁰³ Yamabe, “Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi,” p. 170; see also pp. 55–56.

¹⁰⁴ For additional reflections on the term *guan* and the practices it points to, see Alan Sponberg, “Meditation in Fa-hsiang Buddhism,” in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: U. Hawai‘i P., 1986), pp. 21–39; Kenneth K. Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Doctrine: Ching-ying Hui-yuan’s Commentary on the Visualization Sutra* (Albany: State U. New York P., 1990), p. 76; Julian Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvātī: Shan-tao’s Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang-Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State U. New York P., 1995), pp. 174–76, 202–6; Luis O. Gómez, “Oriental Wisdom and the Cure of Souls: Jung and the Indian East,” in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1995), pp. 213, 245, n. 62, and *Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light, Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvātīvyūha Sutras* (Honolulu: U. Hawai‘i P., 1996), p. 245, n. 15; Yamabe, “Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi,” pp. 125–27, 168–84, 353–76; and Nōnin Masaaki 能仁正顯, “Kanbutsu sanmai ron” 觀仏三昧論, in Asaeda Zenshō Sensei Kakō Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai 朝枝善照先生華甲記念論文集刊行会, ed., *Bukkyō to ningen shakai no kenkyū* 佛教と人間社会の研究 (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 2004), pp. 595–613.

¹⁰⁵ See Hattori, “Monjushiri hatsunehangyō to kangyōrui,” pp. 112–13, and, for the reference in Sengyou’s catalogue, *T* 2145, vol. 55, p. 32C7.

Mañjuśrī Contemplation Sutra in Sengyou's catalogue does suggest two different scriptures. That said, both are listed in the same fascicle of Sengyou's catalogue as one fascicle in size, there are many examples of the same scripture having different names, and the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* does indeed show many affinities with the contemplation sutra genre.

Additional comparative analysis of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the contemplation sutras may well yield additional parallels.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, if all we can claim with confidence about the dating of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* translation based on the catalogues is that it was pre-515, and given that it does not appear in Daoan's 374 catalogue, the late-fourth-century through fifth-century milieu of Chinese translations – within which the contemplation sutras and related meditation manuals appear – is a reasonable place to look for clues to the text's provenance. And in terms of clues for the text's provenance (or a lacuna that may provide a clue), another parallel with the contemplation sutras is that, as Fujita has indicated for the six that he examined, they all similarly lack Sanskrit versions, as well as Tibetan counterparts not based on the Chinese versions.¹⁰⁷ Among the contemplation sutras, only the translator credited with the *Samādhi Sea Sutra*, Buddhahadra (359–429), was not directly connected with Central Asia. Even here, however, Fujita believes it is possible that “the original manuscript of the *Samādhi Sea Sutra* came from the Central Asian region along with the other contemplation sutras,” as, among other reasons, Buddhahadra was said

¹⁰⁶ Hattori, “Monjushiri hatsunehangyō to kangyōrui,” p. 113, does add three terminological parallels not found in Fujita's table: references to “beryl” or “lapis lazuli” (*liuli* 琉璃), the white curl between the eyebrows (*baibo* 白毫), and a celestial headdress (*tian guan* 天冠 in Hattori's article, though it appears without the specific “celestial” [*tian*] reference in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*). Yet I have not altered my original analysis. All these terms do recur in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the contemplation sutras, but I think that the first two are found too commonly in Buddhist scriptures to be distinctive and that the third is more meaningful when grouped with the references to Śakra's *maṇi* jewels or to Brahmā-*maṇi* jewels (as the present study does in its own list of the parallels between the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and Fujita's table).

Further, Hattori's list of parallels from the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* that are found within Fujita's table includes two items not in my list: 1) indication that “Mañjuśrī will surely come to that person” who recites his name from one to seven days, and 2) injunction by the Buddha at the end, “What I have now told you, receive and retain well” (Hattori, “Monjushiri hatsunehangyō to kangyōrui,” p. 113). For the first, however, the parallel in Fujita's table among the contemplation sutras is considerably more detailed, involving a multitude of deities appearing when one's life is about to end. There is no specific indication that this is the case in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*, and accordingly I have omitted it from the list here. The second item is more promising because the phrasing in the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra* and the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* is indeed similar. My hesitation in including the phrase here is simply based on greater variation with the other contemplation sutras and corresponding doubt about the distinctiveness of the phrase. But the meaning of the different phrases cited by Fujita is indeed similar, and thus Hattori's suggestion of the parallel may be apt.

¹⁰⁷ See Fujita's “Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*,” p. 155, and *Jōdo sanbukyō no kenkyū*, pp. 171–72.

to have translated the *Flower Garland Sutra* (*Avatamsakasūtra*) based on a manuscript from Khotan (157).¹⁰⁸

Even if one does not share Fujita's faith in "original manuscripts" outside the heads of the contemplation-text specialists involved in the "translations," the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* may well have been produced through the kind of Central Asian-Chinese collaborative efforts at manuscript production that we see in the contemplation sutras. Concerning such collaboration, the approaches suggested in the following observations by Jonathan Silk and Nobuyoshi Yamada are particularly fruitful. Writing about the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra*, Silk remarks that "it may be best to use the term suggested by Fujita ... and speak of a 'mixed origin' for the sūtra, this referring to its composition out of units of mixed Indian, Central Asian and Chinese origin" – *even if* the sutra was originally written in Chinese, as Silk believes is likely.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, as suggested by the subtitle for Yamabe's ambitious dissertation on the *Samādhi Sea Sutra* ("The Interfusion of the Chinese and Indian Cultures in Central Asia as Reflected in a Fifth Century Apocryphal Sūtra"), the bulk of his study is concerned precisely with this collaboration and mixed cultural origins. Among many significant reflections on this theme in his work, Yamabe notes that texts regarded as Chinese apocrypha are typically "studied as products of native Chinese religious culture" and "as purely Chinese texts written in response to the needs of Chinese people." Commenting on the *Samādhi Sea Sutra* and the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra*, however, Yamabe argues instead that

in the case of the [*Samādhi Sea Sutra*] (as well as the [*Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra*] discussed by Fujita Kōtatsu ...), such a 'pure Chinese' approach does not seem sufficient. Without assuming considerable... cross-cultural interactions, many aspects of this peculiar text would become simply incomprehensible. In other words, even though the [*Samādhi Sea Sutra*] is an apocryphal text written in Chinese, it should be studied more as a reflection of cross-cultural transmission of Buddhism rather than as a source for understanding Chinese native culture.¹¹⁰

Yet whether or not such Central Asian-Chinese collaboration makes the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and these other texts "translated" or "native/

¹⁰⁸ Fujita, "Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*," p. 157; see also his *Jōdo sanbukyō no kenkyū*, p. 178.

¹⁰⁹ Jonathan A. Silk, "The Composition of the *Guan Wuliangshoufo-jing*: Some Buddhist and Jaina Parallels to Its Narrative Frame," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 25 (1997), p. 215. In these remarks, Silk cites Fujita, *Kanmuryōjūkyō kōkyū*, pp. 60–61.

¹¹⁰ Yamabe, "Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi," p. 19. Yamabe's reference to Fujita cites the latter's *Genshi Jōdo shisō* and "Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*."

apocryphal Chinese” scriptures depends very much on one’s definition of translation, and we must allow room for a traditional Chinese Buddhist understanding of translation that is different from our own. That is to say, a sutra recited by a Central Asian translator – with or without an accompanying manuscript – and written down by a Chinese translator – with or without emendations based on other translations – could well have been considered an authentic translation, and hence an authentic sutra.¹¹¹

I would like to further suggest that the question of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*’s “Chinese-ness” versus its “Indian-ness” in narrative elements is not clear-cut, and this may partially explain why the Chinese cataloguers so consistently treated it as an authentic translation. The emphasis on “reciting the name” and the wording of the injunction on “correct” and “false” contemplations may strike many modern scholars as distinctively Chinese, or at least non-Indian. The text, however, lacks other elements that have traditionally singled out a Buddhist scripture as a native Chinese composition. Such other elements include yin-yang cosmology, a strong emphasis on filial piety, or unambiguous references to Daoist or Chinese popular practices or gods.¹¹² That this text was recognized as authentic by generations of canonical cataloguers, even in the absence of a clearly attributed Indian or Central Asian monk involved in the translation, may indicate that the text’s cosmology and soteriology appeared “Indian” to the eyes of the Chinese cataloguers.

At the same time, in light of the affinities between the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the contemplation sutras, Tsukinowa Kenryū’s suggestion that the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra* may have been composed in part as a response to Daoist competition could be significant for our in-

¹¹¹ In this regard, see Jonathan Silk’s insightful remarks on the provenance of the *Amitāyus Contemplation Sutra* and the questions surrounding its “authenticity” in “Composition of the *Guan Wuliangshoufo-jing*,” pp. 183–86. See also Funayama Toru’s recent study of five sutra lectures by Indian monks to Chinese audiences, “Masquerading as Translation: Examples of Chinese Lectures by Indian Scholar-Monks in the Six Dynasties Period,” *AM* 3d ser. 19.1–2 (2006), pp. 39–55; as Funayama indicates, these lectures were all transmitted as translations as though the originals had existed in India. The term Funayama coined for such texts, “Sino-Indian hybrid” compositions, may well also be appropriate for the contemplation sutras and the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*.

¹¹² For references to these as typical characteristics associated with native Chinese scriptures, see Robert E. Buswell, Jr., “Introduction: Prolegomenon to the Study of Buddhist Apocryphal Scriptures,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, pp. 7 and 24. It should be noted, however, that various scholars have also shown the importance of filial piety in Indian Buddhist epigraphs, sutras, and other texts. See, for example, John S. Strong, “Filial Piety and Buddhism: The Indian Antecedents to a ‘Chinese’ Problem,” in Peter Slater and Donald Wiebe, eds., *Traditions in Contact and Change* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier U.P., 1983), pp. 171–86; Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, pp. 56–71; and Guang Xing, “Filial Piety in Early Buddhism,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 12 (2005), pp. 82–106.

terpretation of various elements in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*.¹¹³ When the Buddha “predicts” that Mañjuśrī will arrive in the Mountain of Snows (Xueshan 雪山) 450 years after the Buddha’s nirvana, he also predicts that Mañjuśrī will preach to and convert five hundred “sages,” using a term that commonly refers to Daoist-style “transcendents” (*xianren* 仙人). I would not go so far as to say that the terms used here for “Mountain of Snows” or for “sages” *deliberately* targeted a Daoist mountain or Daoist practitioners: Xueshan usually refers to the Himalayas in an Indian setting, and *xianren* is commonly used to refer to Indian *ṛṣi* or any of various renunciants or sages not following the Buddha’s teachings. Indeed, the first time the term *xianren* appears in the text is in the following passage: “[Mañjuśrī] visited many sages (*xianren*) seeking the teachings on leaving the household, but the Brahmans and the ninety-five kinds of treatise masters could not respond.”¹¹⁴ This passage suggests that, at least on the surface, the term is meant to refer to Indian sages or renunciants.¹¹⁵

Yet it cannot be denied that the less-specific nature of translations rather than transliterations in such terms as Mountain of Snows, sages/transcendents, and even Mountain of Fragrances leaves considerable hermeneutical room for applying these to Chinese settings, regardless of whether that was the intention behind these translation choices. As Lamotte points out, the understanding of “Mountain of Snows” was flexible in China,¹¹⁶ even if the mention of the Mountain of Fragrances (which usually refers to Gandhamādana) in the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* suggests that the Mountain of Snows was intended to refer to the Himalayas.¹¹⁷ And as non-Buddhist renunciants in need of conversion (from a Buddhist perspective), obviously, Daoist practitioners easily fall under the umbrella of the term *xianren* in Buddhist usage. In later times the passages in question were indeed taken as referring to Mount Wutai and, apparently, Daoist “transcendents” inhabiting the mountain.

¹¹³ For Tsukinowa’s analysis of the contemplation sutras, see *Butten no hihanteki kenkyū*, pp. 43–173, esp. pp. 171–73 for his reflections on the issue of competition with Daoists. In English, Tsukinowa’s findings are briefly summarized in Yamabe, “Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi,” pp. 54–55, 118. See also Fujita’s remarks on Tsukinowa’s Chinese compilation theory in “Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*,” pp. 159–60, 169, n. 73, and *Jōdo sanbukyō no kenkyū*, pp. 192–96, 204, n. 2.

¹¹⁴ *T* 463, vol. 14, p. 480c16–17.

¹¹⁵ This is why I opted in my translation for the more neutral “sages” rather than “transcendents.” See also Lamotte (“Mañjuśrī,” p. 37), who translates *xianren* as “hermits” and adds the Sanskrit interpolation *ṛṣi*.

¹¹⁶ See Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” p. 49.

¹¹⁷ This, however, is not quite as clear-cut as Lamotte makes it sound. Lamotte’s extensive use of Sanskrit interpolations and acceptance of the translator attribution to Nie Daozhen suggests that he treated it as based on a Sanskrit or other “Indian” original. Thus regarding the

For example, in Daoxuan's 道宣 seventh-century *Collected Records of Sympathetic Resonance Associated with the Three Jewels in China*,¹¹⁸ we find the following passage referring to Mount Wutai (in Birnbaum's translation): "In scriptures, it is stated clearly that Mañjuśrī leads five hundred transcendents and dwells at a clear and cool snowy mountain.¹¹⁹ This is that very place. That is why anciently there were many masters seeking the Tao who roamed about this mountain."¹²⁰ This passage of Daoxuan's is repeated in Yanyi's eleventh-century *Extended Records of Mount Clear-and-Cool*,¹²¹ which earlier specifically cites the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and paraphrases the passage regarding Mañjuśrī's conversion of the "transcendents" or "sages."¹²² Granted, "the Tao" in Birnbaum's translation can simply mean "the Way" – whether "the Way" in question is Daoist or Buddhist – and thus the Daoxuan passage does not *have to* refer to Daoist practitioners. Yet Birnbaum's interpretation that Daoist-style transcendents are the intended referent of the passage at that time is highly plausible. In any case, it is clear that the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* passages on Mañjuśrī's conversion of the sages can easily be applied to specifically Chinese settings, thereby subsuming Daoist as well as non-Buddhist Indian renunciants within its Buddhist cosmology and soteriology. Thus whatever the facts are behind the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*'s provenance, the "translation" choices in its terminology may tell us as

"Mountain of Snows," Lamotte claims that in the mind of "the Indian redactor," it clearly referred to the Himalayas. He further claims that the mention of the "Mountain of Fragrances" was made "immediately" afterward ("Mañjuśrī," p. 49). However, there may never have been an Indian redactor, and the references to the two mountains are actually considerably separated relative to the size of the text.

¹¹⁸ *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄; T 2106.

¹¹⁹ In the phrase "clear and cool snowy mountain 清涼雪山" used here, we see an explicit example of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*'s term *xueshan* 雪山 being assimilated to the term 清涼山 used in Chinese versions of the *Flower Garland Sutra*, the locus classicus for the association of Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai. Lamotte ("Mañjuśrī," p. 74) translates the relevant passage of the *Flower Garland Sutra* into French, from the Chinese version attributed to Śikṣānanda in 695–99, T 279 (vol. 10, p. 241B20–23). Birnbaum ("The Manifestation of a Monastery," p. 124) translates the same passage, a bit more literally, into English. See also the corresponding passage in the translation attributed to Buddhahadra ca. 418–20, T 278 (vol. 9, p. 590A3–5). Lamotte argues that the references to "Mount Clear-and-Cool" 清涼山 as the abode of Mañjuśrī in the passage are Chinese interpolations; see his detailed analysis in "Mañjuśrī," pp. 60, 73–84. He also suggests that the passage was not originally in the version by Buddhahadra but only later falsified as such (p. 83), though John Kieschnick has questioned this interpretation in *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 1997), p. 179, n. 205.

¹²⁰ Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery," p. 120; see T 2106, vol. 52, p. 424C25–27, for the original passage. Although the scriptural source is not specified in this passage, Birnbaum's suggestion that it was probably the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* (p. 123) is apt. See also p. 422C15–16 of Daoxuan's text, in which Daoxuan similarly notes (but again without specifying the source) that Mañjuśrī dwells on Mount Clear-and-Cool with five hundred "transcendents" or "sages."

¹²¹ See T 2099, vol. 51, p. 1105A8–10. ¹²² See T 2099, vol. 51, p. 1103C6–8.

much by what they don't specify as by what they do, and the text reinforces the need to examine the canonical translation process within the context of both indigenous religious rivalry and transnational collaboration with Central Asian monks and scribes.

CONCLUSIONS

The *Mañjuśrī Sutra* and the contemplation or visualization sutras offer practitioners various methods for “seeing” more clearly the deities they venerate and the truths those deities are believed to embody. Simultaneously, these sutras offer modern scholars the opportunity to see more clearly through filters obscuring the formation of the Chinese Buddhist canon and the provenance of many of its scriptures. This study highlighted two such filters in particular. First is an often spurious attribution of translators that has been exacerbated by the authority of the *Taishō* Sino-Japanese canon. Second is the longstanding tendency to use Buddhist sutras extant only in Chinese (or in versions based on the Chinese) as screens through which to view hypothetical Indian originals. Although this tendency has abated recently, it is still evident and often obscures a more fluid and dynamic process of scriptural composition than a simple division of “translations” and “apocrypha,” or even “Indian” and “Chinese,” suggests.

In the case of our focus here, I have demonstrated that the attribution of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* as a translation by Nie Daozhen circa 280 to 312 has helped veil the connections the text shows with the fifth-century contemplation sutras. This study's examination of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra* in the Chinese Buddhist bibliographic catalogues suggests that the period from the late fourth through the fifth centuries is more likely for the Chinese composition of the text. Not coincidentally, I would argue, this period brackets relatively closely the dating of the contemplation sutras. And in reexamining the provenance and terminology of the *Mañjuśrī Sutra*, it is my hope that this study provides additional clues to the development of both the East Asian Mañjuśrī cult and the genre of contemplation sutras – a genre that, by blurring the lines between the Indian and the Chinese, the transnational and the indigenous, paradoxically actually helps clarify our vision of the process of scriptural translation and transmission.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- T* Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 et al., eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經; 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–34)