中華佛學學報第 011 期 (p425-481)： (民國 77 年)，臺北：中華佛學研究所，http://www.chibs.edu.tw
Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal, No. 11, (1988)
Taipei: The Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies
ISSN: 1017─7132

Miracle Tales and the Domestication of Kuan-yin

Yü Chün-fang

Professor of Rutgers University

Summary

Miracle stories about Kuan-yin began to be compiled in the fourth century and continue tobe collected and circulated down to the present day.

In this article I discuss how themiracle tale collections served as a medium for the domestication of Kuan-yin by focusingon several questio

ns. First of all, who were the compilers?

Is there any difference in thechoices made on the selections between a monk compilor and that of a lay person?

Whatis the role of literati as promoters of the belief in Kuan-yin?

Second, to whom doesKuan-yin appear and how does the bodhisattva appear: in dreams or in broad daylight? asmale or female? monk or lay person?

from what dangers does Kuan-yin rescue thebeliever and what benefits does the bodhisattva bestow?

Third, what is the connectionbetween icons, visions and the changing iconograpy of Kuan-yin? Fourth, how are thecollections organized? are the individual stories simply listed one after another without anycle ar organizational principle?

are they categorized to fit a scriptural paradigm and therebyserve to provide evidential proof for the truth of the sutra?

and finally, compared to the earlycollections, do the later collections show marked departures reflecting historical changeseffected both by the new developments of the cult and new anxieties and hopes of theb elievers?

關鍵詞：1.Kuan-yin　2.miracle tales　3. “stimulus and response” （kan-ying）

Anyone who visits a temple in Taiwan, Hong Kong and even in Mainland China can oftenfind posters, pamphlets, brochures and books piled on the side tables or stacked onbookshelves along the walls of the main hall.

They are printed by lay devotees and areplaced there for visitors to browse or take home for later reading.

Among the piousliterature distributed free in this fashion, many are scriptures, such as the Diamond Sutra,the Heart Sutra, the A-mi-t'o ching （Smaller Sukhavativyuha Sutra）, but the“UniversalGateway” chapter of the Lotus Sutra is by far the favorite.

Stories about Kuan-yin'smiraculous responses are also found very frequently among them.

This is one of the bestways for a true believer to spread the Dharma and to create merit for him／herself at thesame time.

The compilation of such stories about Kuan-yin's salvific deeds is not of course a modernphenomenon.

It began already in the fourth century.

Contemporary stories, like theirancient counterparts, are characterize d by their specificity: who experiences the event whenand where are usually carefully noted.

When we examine the modern stories, they attractour attention by the ir ability to address our current concerns.

Kuan-yin saves devoteesmore from cancer and car accident, for insta nce, than from imprisonment and shipwreck asin former times.

As the time changes, people begin to have new problems and new fe arsinstead of old ones.

Kuan-yin is nevertheless still always ready and capable of renderingh elp.

In thus updating and upgrading the bodhisattva's competence, the sto ries contributeto the continuing faith of the people in the savior.

I argue that this has been the role playedby the miracle stories all alon g.

It is through such stories that the Chinese people form apersonal con

nection with Kuan-yin.

The stories concretize the knowledge about Kuan-yinprovided by the scriptures.

They make the sculpted and painted images of Kuan-yin takeon living life.

Miracle tales teach people about Kuan-yin and validate what the scripturesclaim the bodhisattva can do.

They also bear a close relationship to the cult of icons.

Experiences of miracles often lead to the creation of icons or, conversely, the worship ofKuan-yin images facilitate the experiences.

Finally, how a person experiencing the miraclesees Kuan-yin in his/her vision can often be predetermined by the existing iconographies ofthe bodhisattva or, in another direction, lead to the creating of new ones.

There is acircularity between Kuan-

yin, the devotee, and the icon.

I offer a few examples culled from a collection of such stories published in the Buddhistjournal Lion's Roar

（Shih-tzu hou）, which could serve as one of several sourcessupplyi ng materials for such devotional liteature distributed in the temples, th e other sourcesbeing traditional compendia, oral accounts, and the co mpiler's personal experiences.

The first one comes from Mao Ling-yun who was the compiler of the c ollection.

When heread the news in the newspaper Central Daily on October 22, 1974 that a typhoon wasmoving northwestly toward Taiwan, he began to chant the name of Kuan-yin with greatsincerity and prayed that it w ould change direction or reduce its power so that it would notcome as hore to create havoc.

Sure enough, it began to move toward north and northeast,then sudd enly turning directly westward, it left the area.

In the meantime, it reduced itspower and did not even cause much rai n in Taiwan.

In recent years, he would pray toKuan-yin whenever there was a warn ing for typhoon and everytime it happened like this.

The second story comes from a woman devotee named K'uan-fen Ch an Chung whorelated it to the compiler.

Mrs Chung lives in Tai-chung, Taiwan, right across from theInternatio nal Cinema on Fu-hsing Road.

Her third son, Ching-li, was standing in front ofthe front door one day i n the fall of 1953 when he was fifteen years old.

A freight trucksuddenly veered right in order to avoid hitting the three children playing in the middle of thestreet and struck him instead.

His clothes were caught and he was dragged along by thetruck which could not stop right away. He cried out three times,

"My mother believes in theBuddha.

Kuan-yin Bodhisattva, please come quickly to save me!" The truck ca me to astop and fortunately he was not killed.

But his left arm was mangled badly.

Becausesand and pebbles got mixed together with blood and flesh, th ey could not be taken out.

He stayed in the hospital for four days and the arm became black and festered.

Thedoctor told the mother that he would have to amputate the arm in

order to save the son's life.

She asked the doctor to first cut away the festered part before attempt ing to amputate thearm.

She called on Kuan-yin throughout the operation.

When the boy woke up from theanesthesia, he said,

“Just now a white-robed doctor carried me to Heaven and madeheav enly maidens dance for me.

I was very happy.” Apparently the White-robedKuan-yin

used her skillful means and made him forget his pain.

He dreamt three times of Kuan-yinsprinkle pure water with the willow branch onto his damaged arm and he felt immediatecoolness.

Flesh gradually grew and the arm was healed.

The third story was supplied by the famous woman writer Hsieh Ping-ying who wrote thepreface to the collection.

She related that she fell and broke her right leg on August 31, 1972 on board the ship sailing for America.

Because there was no doctor and no medicine,she spent the entire tw

enty days chanting the“Universal Gateway”chapter, the GreatCompa ssion Dharani, and Kuan-yin's name to reduce her pain.

When she landed inAmerica she was x-rayed in Michigan and New Y ork and her doctors were astonished.

Because although the leg was broken and the bones were crushed, it was not infested oreven swollen. This was truly a miracle!

She added that in the following year,

1973, shewent to a two-week retreat at the Golden Mountain Temple i n San Francisco.

During thattime, she became very clear-headed and intelligent.

She painted several pictures of thebodhisattva although she did not k now how to paint and composed fifteen poems in half anhour althoug h she had not written any poem for several decades.[1]

When I interviewed pilgrims on P'u-t'o island in March of 1987, one of t he questions I askedthem was if they knew of any stories about Kuan-yin's response either to their own prayer orsomebody else's.

Invariably the reply was affirmative.

I will just cite two examples frommy field notes.

A young woman of twenty-four came with her mother, a retired nurse

offorty-nine, from Shanghai to fulfill a vow （huan-yüan）.

Two years ago the mother camedown with cancer of the intestines.

When she was operated, the cancer was veryadvanced and had spre ad.

So the doctor sewed her up and predicted that she would diesoon.

Mother prayed to Kuan-yin for a whole year and vowed that if she sho uld

survive, she would come to P'u-t'o to give thanks.

Now two years had passed and shewas well.

That was why mother and daughter were there.

A fifty year old fisherman from Ning-p'o had come to P'u-t'o six times.

He told me thatoriginally he did not believe in Buddhism.

But ten years ago, in 1977, his left pinky fingerwas biten off by a snake and the whole arm became paralyzed.

He went to Shanghai andBeijing for cure but had no success after spe nding 4000 RMB.

His mother thenaccompanied him to pray to Kuan-yin at the Buddha's

Peak

（nickname for Hui-chiMonastery situated on the highest point of the i

sland）on P'u-t'o.

One month later he hada dream in which he received a shot.

It was so piercingly painful that he jumped up in hissleep and woke his

wife. Soon after he could move his left arm.

Believing that Kuan-yinhad saved him, he came in 1979, the first year

when P'u-t'o was reopened to the public afterthe Cultural Revolution.

He went up to the Buddha's Peak following the Pilgrim's Path

（anuphill path leading from Fa-yü Monastery to Hui-chi Monastery）,

bowing every three stepsto show his thankfulness.

He also told me about a miracle which happened to eightfishermen w

hom he met.

Their boat went out with three other boats three years ago.

There was a big storm and the other boats capsized drowning more th

an forty people.

They followed a light which appeared in front of them and reached P'u

-t'o safely. Whenthey embarked, the light also disappeared.

They started coming every year on the 19thday of the 6th month （on

e of the three holy days of Kuan-yin, the day Kuan-yin achievedenlight enment）, making one full prostration after walking every three steps along thePilgrim's Path.

Miracle Tales and the Theory of kan-ying

I have called these stories “miracle tales”, for they do share a commo n feature with miraclesas understood in the Western traditions. According to the Encyclopaedia Brittannica,miracle is “an extraordinar y and astonishing happening that is attributed to the presenceand acti on of an ultimate or divine power”（Micropaedia VI: 927c）. What happened to theindividuals whose stories I have retold would un doubtedly have been viewed by them asnothing but extraordinary and astonishing. They would also attribute them to the divinepower of Kuan-yin. The Chinese word for such stories, however, is ling-kan,“efficacious

response”, or ling-ying, “efficacious manifestation”, or ying-yen, “evidential manifestation”. All these expressions are derived from an indigenous world view whic

h believes thateverything in the world is interrelated and interdepende nt.

This belief is called kan-yingwhich literally means“stimulas and respo nse”, or, “sympathetic resonance”.

JohnHenderson, referring to it as “cosmic resonance”, says,

“According to this theory, things ofthe same category but in different c osmic realms were supposed to affect one another byvirtue of a mutu al sympathy, to resonate like properly attuned pitchpipes”（1984: 20）.

The relationship between the devotees and Kuan-yin is built on the th eory of Kan-yin：

their prayer and calling aloud of Kuan-yin's name is the initiating stimu lus or trigger which,when it is sincere and desperate enough, is answe red with Kuan-yin's response. Kuan-yin does not act gratuitously.

Human suppliants are linked to Kuan-yin throughsincerity

（cheng）, for it is through sincerity that the mechanism of stimulus a nd response isset into motion.

Although Avalokiteshvara was already known in India as the savior fro mperils, and Buddhist scriptures proclaim this as a central message, t he Chinese compilers ofmiracle tales nevertheless understood the mir

aculous workings through this indigenousepistomological lense, just a s the persons who themselves experienced the events did.

In order for us to understand why the Chinese see Kuan-yin in this wa y, it may be helpful todiscuss briefly the Chinese views of the universe prior to the introduction of Buddhism intoChina.

The world in which human beings live is called in the Chinese languag e, “Heavenand Earth”（t'ien-ti）.

Unlike most other religions, Chinese religion does not have acreator g od. On the contrary, as seen in the Book of Changes （I-ching）, one of thebasic Confucian classics, and a divinatory hand book of great antiquity,

“Heaven and Earth”, is the origin of everything, including human bein gs, in the universe.

This creating andsustaining force, otherwise known as Tao or the Wa y, is seen as good and the highest goalof the human life is to live in co nformity to it.

There is no God transcendent and separatefrom the world and there i s no heaven outside of the universe to which human beings wouldwan t to go for refuge.

The Book of Changes contains sixty-four hexagrams which aremade up by the eight trigrams.

The first and second trigrams, known as ch'ien and k'un,representing the two prime principles of yang

and yin which constitute the Tao, and Heaven and Earth are the physical representations ofthese principles.

Although these ideas are datable to the Chou（1111～249 B.C.E.）, they received furtherrefinement during the Han dynasty（206 B.C.E.～220 C.E.）, particularly from TungChung-shu（c. 179～c. 104 B.C.E.） and his contemporaries.

According to them, all livingand non-living things in the universe are constituted of ch'i, which has been translated asvital force, material force, or life force.

Ch'i refers to yin and yang, and the five phases ofwood, fire, earth, metal and water, which evolve from the interaction of the two.

This is theworldview shared by all Chinese religions.

Such a worldview has been describedas“organic, vitalistic, and holisti

c" and the unvierse is seen as "a dynamic, ongoing processof continu al transformation"（Needham 1969 : 287; Tu 1989 : 72）.

Because humansshare the same substance with the universe, there i s the possibility for communicationbetween us and our environment.

This belief is implied by the concepts of"mandate ofHeaven" （t'ien-ming） and"stimulus and response"（kan-ying）.

Mandate of Heaven was originally used by the Chou founders to justif y their rebellionagainst the previous Shang dynasty.

According to them, the last two Shang rulers losttheir mandate becau se they were deficient in virtue.

The mandate went to the Choufounders because they were virtuous.

That is why the Book of History says,

"TheMandate of Heaven is not easily preserved.

Heaven is hard to depend on.

Those whohave lost the mandate did so because they could not practi ce and carry on the reverenceand the brilliant virtue of their forefather s" （Chan 1963: 7）.

Heaven not only gave andtook away mandate, it also sent blessings o r warnings before it did so.

Thus the Chinesebelieved in omens and portents, taking them to mea n Heaven's responses to the behaviorof mankind.

By the Han times,“the unity of men and Nature was turned into one of mutualinfluence, these influences were thought to be exerted through strange phenomena andcalamities; Heaven, though not anthropomor phic, was purposive, asserting its will throughprodigies and warning to men” （Chan 1963 : 292）.

Tung Chung-shu, the architect ofHan Confucianism, was a firm believ er of such ideas. He said,

“When a great ruler isabout to arise, auspicious omens first appear; w hen a ruler is about to be destroyed, thereare baleful ones beforehand. Things indeed summon each other, like to like, a dragonbringing rain, a fan driving away

heat, the place where an army has been being thick with thorns. Things, whether lovely orrepulsive, all have an origin”

（Needham 1969: 282）.

The Han Chinese’ interest inobserving natural phenomena was in fact related to the ruler's intense obsession withomens.

Systematic notation of spots on the sun began in 28 B.C.E.

and the firstseismograph in the world was invented in 132 C.E.

in order to pin-point earthquakes,which were regarded as signs of dis order in nature.

Writing on the relationship betweenChinese Buddhism and the cosmo logy of sympathetic resonance, Robert Sharf observes,

“From the time of the Han, dynastic histories typically included a chap ter entitled ‘fivephases’ which recorded occurrences of ‘unusual phen omena’ or ‘wonders’（kuai）

including earthquakes, avalanches, feather-rain, and the birth of two-h eaded chickens.

The principle of kan-ying was invoked to explain moral retribution, ritu al efficacy, naturaland astronomical cycles, political upheavals and so on.

It should not, therefore, besurprising to discover that kan-ying also infl uenced the Chinese understanding of Buddhistcosomology and practi ce”（1991：187）.

I would argue that the fascination with thestrange and anamolous whi ch led to the production of the genre called chih-k'uai， or whatRobert

Campany calls“strange writings”, literature during the Six Dynasties was related tothis.

The compilation of miracle tales, which can be regarded as a sub-genre of thisliterature and frequently shares data with it, is the application of the native kan-ying theory toBuddhist soteriology.

The philosophical explanation for the mutural influence between nature and humans wasexplained by Tung Chung-shu thus,

“Heaven possesses yin and yang and man alsopossesses yin and yang.

When the universe's material force of yin arises, man's materialforce of yin arises in response.

Conversely, when man's material force of yang arises, thatof the universe also arises in response”（Needham 1959 : 284）.

This provides thefoundation for the Chinese belief in the correspondence between microcosm andmacrocosm: a person is a small universe replicating the greater universe without.

Although the Mandate of Heaven was originally used in a political context to justify thechange of dynasties, very early on the Confucian think

ers understood it in a much broadersense of moral destiny, moral natu re or moral order. Confucius （551～479 B.C.E.）

already used it in this sense when he said in the

Analects,“At fifty I knew the Mandate of Heaven”（2 : 4）, and“The superior man stands inawe of three things. He stands in awe of the Mandate of Heaven, he stands in awe ofgreat men, and he stands in awe of the words of the sages. The inferior man is ignorant ofthe Mandate of Heaven and does not st and in awe of it”（16 : 8）.

Just as a ruler has tobe vigilant in cultivating himself in order to keep h is mandate to rule, similarly, a morallysensitive person has to cultivate him/herself in order to live in accordance with the Way andin harmon y with Nature and other human beings.

The Confucian tradition identifiedMandate of Heaven with the innate g oodness of human nature which was first emphasizedby Mencius （c. 372～289 B.C.E.）.

Human nature is good because it is bestowed by theWay, and accordi ng to the Book of Changes，

“What issues from the Way is good and thatwhich realizes it is the indi vidual nature”（Chan 1963 : 266）.

To follow our inborn moralnature and cultivate it to its fullest potential should be the goal of humankind.

In theConfucian tradition, the spiritual force fueled this self-transforma tion and self-realization iscalled “sincerity”（ch'eng） or“humanity”（jen）. Sincerity is the main theme in theDoctrine of the Mean（Chung-yung） a chapter in the Confucian classic Book of Rites.

When a person fully develops his/her nature through sincerity, he/she forms a trinity withHeaven and Earth.

It is safe to say that this has been the ultimate goal for the Chinesewh o is educated in the literati traditon.

But even for those who were not necessarily soeducated, such as wo men and commoners who also featured in the miracle stories, thebeli ef in the cosmic power of sincerity was universal.

The only difference is that this samespiritual force is directed toward making a contact with Kuan-yin, instead of one's ownsagehood.

Buddhist biographers and theologians shared the same fascination wi th the idea ofsympathetic rosonance.

Miracle stories were collected by both monks and lay people.

Popular miracle tale collections served as sources for monastic biogra hies. Hui-chiao（497～554）wrote the Kao-seng chuan（Biographies of Eminent Monks, T no. 2059）,the earliest surviving work of the genre and devoted one sectio n to wonder-working monks.

He was familiar with contemporary miracle tale collections and drew materials from them.

He mentioned Hsüan-yen chi （Records in Proclamation of Manifesta tions） andMing-hsiang chi （Signs from the Unseen Realm） by title and used twenty stories fromthem in his work. He

also stated that he had used the Yu-ming lu （Records of the Hidden and Visible Worlds）by Liu Yi-ch'ing （403～444）, who was also the author of the Hsüan-yen chi which is alsokno wn as Ming-yen chi （Records of Manifestating the Unseen Realm）, the Kan-yinchuan （Records of Responses to Stimuli） by Wang Yen -hsiu （fl. 465～471）, theCheng-ying chuan （Accounts of the Verifies Responses）

by Chu Chün-t'ai （5thcentury）, and the Sou-shen lu （Records of th e Searching for the Spirits） by TaoYuan-ming （365～424） （T 50 : 418b～c）. Tao-hsüan （596～667）, the vinaya masterand the author of the Hsu Kao-seng chuan （Continuous Biographies of Eminent Monks, Tno. 2060）, was a great believer and promoter of miracles.

He wrote the （Chi shen-chousan-pao k'an-t'ung lu （Records of Spiri tual Resonance Associated with the Three Jewelsin China, T no. 2106） in which he compiled miracles wrought by relics, stupas, imag es,sutras and divine monks.

He was also the author of the Tao-hsüan lü-shihk'an-t'ung （Records of Spiritual Resonance of the Vinaya Master Tao-hsüan, T no. 2107）

in which he recorded a series of interviews he conducted with spirits.

He used the termk'an-t'ung both in these two works and in the biograp hies to refer to the supernatural events. Tsan-ning （919～1001）, the compiler of the massive Sung kao-seng chuan （Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled in the Sung, T no. 2061）, followed his usageand entitled the section on monks who exp

erienced miraculous responses with this term.

As pointed out by John Kieschnick, the expression k'an-t'ung comes fr om the“GreatTreatise” of the Booh of Changes：

“When stimulated, it penetrates.” Tao-hsuan andTsan-ning saw no co nflict between the indigenous idea of spiritual or sympatheticresonanc e and the Buddhist idea of karma.

Rather they were complementary to eachother （Kieschnick 1997 : 101）.

As the cult of Kuan-yin spread in China, there was growing scholastic debate concerningthe workings of kan-ying（Fukushima 1979 : 36～ 49）.

Since in real life there were plentyof cases in which people were not al ways successful in eliciting Kuan-yin's response,theological explanati on then became necessary.

Accoring to Chi-tsang, the bodhisattvaboth affects and responds.

The T'ien-t'ai school uses the image of water and moon todescribe the “wonder of affect and response”, one of the thirty wonders concernin g theinvocation of Buddhas.

The relationship between the sentient beings and the Buddha iscomp ared to that between water and moon in the Miao-fa lien-hua ching hs

üan-i（Mysterious

Meanings of the Lotus Sutra, T no. 1716）：

“Water does not rise, nor does the moondescend.

Yet in a single instant, the one moon is manifest in manifold 〔bodies 〕 of water. 〔Similarly〕

Buddhas do not come and sentient beings do not go.

The power of thegood roots of compassion should be perceived in thi s way （T 33: 697c）.” Robert Sharfsummarizes the discussion thus,

“The power of beings to affect a response in the Buddha isidentified w ith the power of the impetus or chi， the source of which lies in the kar micaccumulation of good deeds.

In later exegetical work in China and Japan, the image of themoon on the water becomes the standard illustration of the workings of kan-yin g”（1991 : 223）.[2]

According to Mahayana Buddhism, all sentient beings are endowed w ith buddhanature.

There is no essential difference separating buddhas and bodhisattvas fromordinary people, the only distinction being that buddhas and bod

hisattvas are those who areenlightened whereas ordinary people hav e not achieved the same realization about thenature of reality.

In this regard, there is a congruence between Buddhist ontology and t heChinese indigenous one.

Just as humankind can form a trinity with Heaven and Earth,they can also become Buddhas through the experience of enlightenment.

Sincerity andgood karma are hereby equally emphasized and skillfully harmonized.

Miracle Tales about Kuan-yin

In 1970 Makita Tairyo published an edited and annotated edition of the three earliestChinese collections of miracle tales about Kuan-yin （w hich I shall refer as first, second,and third collection for short）.

They are:

(1)Kuang-shih-yin ying-yen chi （A Record ofKuang-shih-yin's Respo nsive Manifestations）, written from memory by Fu Liang （374～426）, based on an earlier work with the same title and written by Hsie

h Fu before 399 butlost in that year due to war. It has seven stories.

(2)Hsu Kuang-shih-yin ying-yen chi

（Continued Records of Kuang-shih-yin's Rsponsive Manifestations

）, written by ChangYen in mid-fifth century. It has ten stories. (3)

H

su Kuang-shih-yin ying-yen chi （MoreRecords of Kuan-shih-yin's Re

sponsive Manifestations）, compiled by Lu Kao in 501.

Ithas sixty-nine stories.

Although these collections were once well known and famousBuddhis

t monks referred to them by name, they did not survive as independen

t works inChina.[3]

Individual stories were adopted and incorporated into biographies of e

minentmonks and encyclopedic collections such as the seventh centu

ry Buddhist work Fa-yüanchu-lin （A Groveof Pearls from the Garden

of the Dharma, T no.2122） or the tenth centuryT'ai-ping kuang-chi （

Broad-ranging Records Compiled in the Era of Great Peace）.

Thediscovery of the 12th century Japanese copy of these lost works a

nd Makita's careful studyof them provide us with valuable information

about the earliest evidences for the cult ofKuan-yin in China.

Donald Gjertson is the first Western scholar who emphasizes the valu

eof Buddhist miracle tales, including the ones contained in these colle ctons, because

they “were concerned not with intricacies of doctrine or subtleties of s peculation, but with themechanics of popular faith”（1989: xii）.

Robert Campany has translated a number ofstories from the collectio ns and made sophisticated theoretical analysis of them （1991, 1993, 1996a, 1996b）.

I agree with his suggestion that the initial success of the bodhisattvaa mong the Chinese faithful was his“newness”: not only it was the first ti me in Chinesereligion that a deity manifested himself as a“strikingly i mmediate, concretely salvific,unfailingly responsive presence”, but als o because he was exotic and unfamiliar.

Themiracle tales which were compiled from eyewitness oral accounts reported by the faithfulwould in turn inspire and instill faith in the bodhi sattva among potential readers and listeners.

It is through the circular spiral consisting of confirmed devotees, mirac le tales and futureconverts that Kuan-yin was domesticated （1993：256～268）.

Before I begin to discuss the stories, let me first say something about t he sources which Iuse.

Because of their unique value of being the oldest accounts, I use thes e three earliestcollections as my main sources in discussing miracle t ales about Kuan-yin.

Other relevantmaterials I use include some seventy stories from the th ree biographies of eminent monksand other monastic chronicles.

While these sources are dated and cover tales happenedbefore the 1 0th century, three other miracle tale collections were compiled much l ater.

Thefirst is the Kuan-shih-yin ching-chou chih-yen chi （Record of Ma nifestations 〔Resulting〕

from Recitation of Kuan-shih-yin Sutras and Mantras） compiled by th e layman Chou Ke-fuin 1659.

The second is the Kuan-yin tz'u-lin chi （Compassionate Grove of Ku an-yin）

compiled by the monk Hung-tsan in 1668 and, finally, the Kuan-shih-yi n ling-kan lu

（Record of Kuan-shi-yin bodhisattva's Efficacious Responses） with

out an author andpublished in 1929.

Although all three contain stories happened long time ago, and some ofwhich are actually taken from earlier collections, more stories in the l ater collectionshappened after the 10th century, particularly in the Min g and Ch'ing.

It is curious that nocollections compiled prior to the 17th century have survived as independent works.

ChouKe-fu, Hung-tsan, and the annymous compiler often mentioned t he titles of some miracletale collections as their sources, but these are no longer extant.

As we reach the 20thcentury, compilation and publication of miracle st ories became very popular,

particularly in the 1910s and 20s.

During my research in various locations in China andTaiwan, I came a cross half a dozen such compilations which were published either inP eking or Shanghai with donations by the faithful.

I chose the last mentioned one mainlybecause it is most extensive in i ts coverage.

In the following discussion, when I refer toearly collections, I mean the tales edited by Makita Tairyo, and when I refer to latercollections, I mean the collections compiled by Chou Ke-fu, Hung-tsan, and the onep ublished in 1923 in Shanghai.

I would like to discuss how the miracle tale collections served as a me dium for thedomestication of Kuan-yin in this article by focusing on se veral questions. First of all, whowere the compilers?
Is there any difference in the choices made on the selectionsbetween a monk compiler and that of a lay person?
What is the role of literati as promotersof the belief in Kuan-yin?
Second, to whom does Kuan-yin appear and how does thebodhisattv a appear: in dreams or in broad daylight? as male or female? monk or layperson?
from what dangers does Kuan-yin rescue the believer and what benefi ts does thebodhisattva bestow?
Third, what is the connection between icons, visions and thechanging iconography of Kuan-yin? Fourth, how are the collections organized? Are theindividual stories simply listed one after another without any cl ear organizational principle?

Are they categorized to fit a scriptural paradigm and thereby serve to provide evidentialproof for the truth of the sutra?

And finally, compared to the early collections, do the latercollections s how marked departures reflecting historical changes effected both by the newdevelopments of the cult and new anxieties and hopes of the believers?

While it may notalways be possible to answer all the questions fully, I would like to have us keep them inmind as we wade through this rich and fascinating material.

I will first talk about the three earliest collections of miracle stories abo ut Kuan-yin. All threecompilers came from the gentry-literati class. Since they wrote prefaces for the collectionsand their biographies are found in standard dynastic histories, it is fairly easy for us to placethe m socially and spiritually. Fu Liang（374～426）, the compiler of the first collection,served as an official under bo th the Eastern Chin and Sung dynasties, reaching the positionof presi dent of the Department of the Affairs of State under the Sung.

He came from aninfluential gentry family and was well known as a sch olar of classics （Sung shu 43;

Nan-shih 15）.

He related in the preface that his father Fu Yüan was given a copy of anearlier collection containing more than ten tales made by Hsieh Fu. In 399 he escapedfrom Kuai-chi （present Shao-hsing, Chekiang） when Sun En attacked the city.

Whenhe returned, he could no longer find the volume.

He then wrote down seven stories basedon his memory.

Hsieh Fu, the original writer of the lost collection, was a recluse, living inthe mountains for more than ten years.

He was once offered an official position butrefused to accept it （Chin shu 94）. He, Fu Yuan and Hsi Ch'ao （336～377）, theauthor of Feng-fa-yao （Essentials of the Dharma）, were Buddhist devotees and closepersonal friends.

Thus, Fu Liang, the compiler of the earliest surviving miracle talecollection, was introduced to Buddhism by his father.

Chang Yen, the compiler of the second collection, served as the grand secretary in theSecretariat of the Heir Apparent under the Sung.

He came from an aristocraticbackground, descending from Chang Lia ng of the Han, and is mentioned in the biographyof his father Chang M ao-tu（Sung shu 53）. His family had also been followingBuddhism. He was friendly with Pei-tu, a monk famous for his magical powers act ive in thecapital of Chien-kang. His nephew Chang Jun（444～ 497） wrote a work on the vinayawhich was included in the Buddhist p olemical work, Hung-ming chi.

In the preface to hiscollection, he mentioned that when he read Fu Lia ng's accounts, he was greatly moved.

Inspired, he gathered together the things he had heard and wrote the m down in order topass them on to those who share the same delight i n such stories.

Lu Kao（459～ 532）, the author of the third collection, was related to Chang Yen, wh o wasthe first cousin of his maternal grandfather.

Like Chang, he also came from an influentialgentry family and believe d in Buddhism since youth.

He served as an adjunct in theservice of the director of instruction und er the Southern Ch'i as well as an official in the Liang

（Liang shu 26; Nan-shih 48）.

In the dated preface （501） to his collection, he mentionsthe first two collections by their authors and titles and provides a geneology of this literatureby tracing it to Hsieh.

He refers to his effort as“continuation”, thus its title.

Clearly thesethree collections were produced by authors belonging to a distinctive social stratum.

Theauthors were educated Buddhist laymen from distinguished gentry families.

They all livedin the Wu area, in present Kiangsu and Chekiang.

They moved in

the same circles and were familiar with each other's work.

The most striking featureshared by these stories is the name used for the bodhisattva: Kuang-shih-yin.

This is thename used in all the seventeen stories contained in the first and second collections.

Fourstories out of sixty-nine in the third collection also use this name, while the rest use the morefamiliar name of Kuan-shih-yin.

When we recall that the earliest translation of the LotusSutra made by Dharmaraksha in 286 refers to the bodhisattva by this name in the “UniversalGateway” chapter, the reason for their choice makes sense. Being educated Buddhistlaymen, they undoubtedly were familiar with the translation and thus followed its usage.

However, by the time the third collection was compiled, Kumarajiva's translation wasalready available and the bodhisattva was called Kuan-shih-yin in this new translation.

The miracle stories can thus tell us about the changing popularity of the two versions ofthe sutra.

They also give us an amazing proof of how quickly the “good news” about thebodhisattva's grace proclaimed by the Lotus found willing ears and believing hearts inChina.

For the first such story, recounted in the first collection and translated below, wasdated to the Yüan-k'ang era（291～299）.

Less than fifteen years after the sutra wastranslated into Chinese in Ch'ang-an, the bodhisattva's presence was already made knownin Loyang.

In this particular case the protagonist was said to have an ancestry ha

iled fromthe Western Regions which probably refer to India based on his surname of Chu.

However, even though he might have known the bodhisattva prior to h is move to Loyang,it did not necessarily mean that he became a conv ert to Kuan-yin outside of China.

In fact,when we consider how early the period during which these stori es happened （mostly the5th century） is, it is quite surprising that on ly six out of the total of eighty-six stories in thesethree collections are about non-Chinese.

Similarly, contrary to usual assumptions, monks do not dominate thes e stories either.

Thethree collections contain stories about both monks and lay people. Whereas the first twohave almost even numbers for both groups （thr ee monks and four laymen in the first, fivemonks and five lay people, i ncluding one woman in the second）, the third collection hasmore lay people （fifty including five women versus eighteen monks and one n un）.

Inthe later collections, the proportion of lay people to monks becomes even greater. While itmay be true that initially it

were foreign monks who introduced the belief in Kuan-yin to the Chin ese, the cult certainlydid not remain confined within the monastic circl es for long.

The first and second collections share another commonality which set s them apart from thethird collection.

The stories do not follow any organizational principles.

They are notgrouped together either geographically or historically.

There is no specific theme runningfrom one story to the next either, ex cept for the single fact that they all have to do with theprotagonist' des perate need for help and Kuan-yin's speedy aid when called.

In the initialperiod of Kuan-yin worship represented here, the bodhisat tva is shown to be able to appearanywhere and everywhere.

One does not have to pray to him in a temple or in front of hisimage.

Nor do they have to perform any prescribed ritual in order to receive di vine aid.

Although the compilers were knowledgeable Buddhist laymen, they w ere more interestedin making known the marvelous efficacy of this ne

w universal savior than educating theirreaders by linking the stories to any scriptures.

The third collection, on the other hand,groups the stories around the promised deliverances performed by Kuan-yin in the“Universal Gateway” chapter of the Lotus Sutra and the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching which wastranslated probably in the early fifth century, by 420, barely eighty years before Lu compiledhis collection.

He first narrated the forty-five stories, arranging them according to the dangers his hero/heroine faced using the categories found in the“UniversalGateway”chapter: three stories about fire, six about water, one about running into rakshas,eight about execution, twenty-two about imprisonment, fourteen about robbers, one aboutseeking the birth of a son.

Then he narrated another fourteen stories under the four typesof dangers mentioned in the Ch-ing Kuan-yin ching： five stories about finding the way afterbeing lost, four about returning to one's native place, three about recovering from seriousillnesses, and two about unharmed after encountering ferocious animals.

Thus after tellingthe first three stories, he would say,“The above three

stories

〔confirm〕 what the ‘UniversalGateway’ says,‘if you enter the fire, fir e cannot burn you.’” Or,“The above four stories

〔confirm〕 what the Ch-ing Kuan-yin ching says about returning to o ne's native place.”

I will translate the seven stories from the first collection compiled early in the fifth century byFu Liang and use them as a framework to discus s some important

issues common to these and related tales.

(1)The first story is about a miraculous escape from fire:

Chu Ch’ang-shu’s ancestors were originally from the Western R egions.

They had accumulated much property over generations and were verywealthy. During the Yuan-k’ang era (291～299) of the Chin, he movedto Loyang.

He was a devout believer of the Buddha and particularlyloved to

recite the Kuang-shih-yin Sutra.

One day his neighbor's housecaught fire.

His own house was made of thatch and was situated downwind.

He thought to himself that because the fire was so near, even i fthey could manage to save some possessions, it would not be much.

Remembering what the Kuang-shih-yin Sutra says, "If one enco untersfire, one should call single-mindedly〔the bodhisattva〕", [4] he told hisfamily members not to try to carry things out of the h ouse nor to try toput out the fire with water, but just to chant th e sutra with sincerity.

Thefire soon consumed the neighbor's house.

When it reached the fenceoutside his own house, the wind sudd enly turned back and the fire alsostopped.

Everyone took this to be an efficacious response.

But therewere four or five juvenile delinquents living in the neigh borhood whoridiculed it, saying that because the wind happened to change directions, there was nothing miraculous about it.

They decided to wait for a warmand dry night and then they wo

uld burn the house.

If it still did notburn, only then would they agree it was a miracl e.

Sometime later theweather did indeed become very dry and hot and the wind was alsoblowing hard.

The youths secretly got hold of some torches and threwthem ont o the roof.

They did this three times and each time the torchesdied out.

They became very frightened and ran home.

The nextmorning

they came to Ch' ang-shu' s house and told him what had happ ened theprevious night. They begged him for forgiveness.

He said to them, "Ihave no divine power.

I just called on Kuang-shih-yin and meditated onhim.

It must be the protection given by his majestic efficacy.

Youshould repent and believe in him." Everyone in the neighbo rhoodmarvelled with amazement about this.[5]

This is the only story among the seven which credits the chanting of th e Kuang-shih-yinsutra （the“Universal Gateway”chapter） as the rea son why Chu Ch'ang-shu was sparedfrom the fire.

All the other stories, as we shall see, emphasize the calling of thebodh isattva's name.

But even in this case, the triggering impetus for the bodhisattva'sinterv ention lies in the devotee's oral chanting as well as mental concentrati on on him

（sung-nien）, as it is made clear in his statement to the young troubl e makers.

We comeacross the word nien very often in the miracle stories.

This is for a very good reason, fornien has the double meanings of vo cal invocation and mental meditation at the same time.

(2)This story is about a monk’s receiving a new voice：

Monk Po Fa-chiao, a native of Chung-shan （present Ting Cou nty, Hopei）, was a diligent and devout person.

He would like to recitesutras but lacked the voice.

He was very unhappy about it. He told hisfellow monks,

“Kuang-shih-yin can help a person fulfill his wishes in thisvery life. I will now pray to him with singleness of mind.

If my sincerityis weak and cannot move the bodhisattva, my pre vious sins from badkarma will not be eliminated.

I would rather die than living a long life butwithout a good voice .” After saying that he refused to eat andconcentrated his mind with utmost sincerity.

After three or four days hebecame weak and his disciples asked him to give up, saying, “One’ s

voice, like other endowments, is determined and cannot be cha nged inone life.

You should cherish your health in order to practice thereligion.” But he told them not to disturb him because his determinationw as unshakable.

After five or six days he became even weaker andcould only br eathe.

His companions were greatly worried, fearing that hewas going t o die.

On the morning of the seventh day, however, hesuddenly opened his eyes and looked happy.

He told the disciples thathe had received a good response.

He asked for water to wash anduttered three gathas.

His voice was so loud that it could be heard two tothree li away.

Villagers were all startled and wondered what strangevoice was coming from the temple.

When they came to inquire, theyrealized that this was no other than the voice of the monk.

He recitedhalf a million words after this.

His voice sounded like a bell and showedno sign of weakness.

People at that time all realized that he was aperson who had achieved the Way. He was still alive at the end of ShihHu〔r. 334 ～ 349, the third emperor of the Latter Chao〕, when he wasover ninety years of age.

This story introduces a theme not identified with the perils mentioned in the sutras.

Thiswas the case of a healthy person living a normal life who did not f

ace any life-threateningdanger.

Moreover, according to the theory of karma, one's physical endowme nts, likeone's lifespan and other circumstances, are predetermined an d cannot be altered.

However, because he wanted to chant the sutras with a beautiful voic e which he did nothave, he was willing to die in order to get it.

He was motivated by a sincere desire to glorifyBuddhism and Kuan-yi n granted him the wish.

Here is an impressive example of how theindigenous ideas of sincerit y and sympathetic resonance influenced the Buddhist idea ofkarma.

It also bears a striking similarity to the even more dramatic story of Gu nabhadra found in theBiographies of Eminent Monks.

Gunbhadra arrived in Canton in 435 after a dangerousjourney from Ce ylon when the wind suddenly stopped and the boat was marooned in t heocean.

He asked his fellow passengers to concentrate on the buddhas of the tendirections and call on Kuan-

yin.

He himself secretly chanted a dharani sutra, repented to the bodhisatt va andworshiped him. Wind rose up and rain began to fall.

The boat could then continue to sail.

After he arrived in China, he was well received.

But because he could not speakChinese, he had to rely on translators.

When he was asked to give lectures on theHua-yen Sutra by the prim e minister, he felt very ashamed because he himself could notspeak t he language.

In the same night, he performed a repentance rite and beggedKuan-yi n for help.

He then dreamt of a person in white who carried a sword in one handa nd a man's head in the other.

The person asked Gunabhadra why he was worried.

When told the reason, he told Gunabhadra not to worry.

He cut off Gunabhadra's headand put the head he was holding on the latter instead.

The next morning whenGunabhadra woke up, he could speak Chines e perfectly （T 50 : 344b）.

Similar stories, though much less spectacular than the one above, ab out other monks whogained wisdom or eloquence are found in other monastic collections.

Because a monk'sreputation was closely related to his ability to either chant sutras or give lectures on sutras, itis understandable why a goo d voice and an ability to explain Buddhist doctrines would be ahighly p rized quality in a monk.

In the Biographies of Promoters of the Lotus Sutra （Hung-tsan fa-hua chuan, T no. 2067）, there is this story about the monk ShihFa-ch'eng （562～640） who was committed to the chanting of the Lotus Sutra as hisvoc ation.

However, at one time he was exhausted both physically and mentally and feltthat he had to give up his practice.

So he carried out a ritual program of worshipingKuan-yin and prayed f or protection.

When he finished the twenty-one day rite, hesuddenly saw a giant in white standing in front of the Buddha image.

The giant gave himsome medicine and asked him to swallow it.

After that he became doubly vigorous in bodyand mind.

He could then recite the sutra without stop （T 8 : 37b）.

The T'ien-t'ai masterTsun-shih （963～

1032）, who wrote a ritual manual based on the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching

and was a great promoter of repentance rites, also figured prominentl

y in the miracle taletradition.

According to the Fo-tsu t'ung-chi （Record of the Lineage of the Budd

has andPatriarchs, T no.

2035） compiled by Chih-p'an around 1260, he was born as a result of

hismother's praying to Kuan-yin for a son.

She dreamt of a beautiful woman who gave her apearl to swallow.

When he was seven months old, he could already call the name

of Kuan-yin by following his mother's example.

Later in life, he achieved great reknown inChekiang for his extreme au

sterities. Once when he became ill, he saw Kuan-yin[6]

touching him, pull out several worms from his mouth and pour drops o

f sweet dew into hismouth from the bodhisattva's fingertips.

He recovered and his physical shape alsochanged.

The crown of his head grew more than an inch, his hands came down to belowhis knees, his voice became as loud as a booming bell and hi s skin was as fair as whitejade （T 49 : 207b）.

The dharma master by the name of Hui-tsai（997～1083）
lived slightly later than Tsun-shih.
He was said to be confused and dull by nature.
He chanted the Great CompassionDharani all his life and hoped to be able to understand Buddhist teachings.
One night hesuddenly dreamt of an Indian monk who was several met ers in height.
The monk took offhis robe and put it on Hui-tsai, saying,
“Hui-tsai, remember me all your life!” The next daywhen he attended t he lecture, he immediately understood what was being said.
Heachieved a thorough enlightenment（T 49 : 215b～c）.

In the collections of miracle tales compiled in late imperial China,
“gainingwisdom”（te-hui）constituted a separate category.
Not only monks and nuns, but alsoordinary men and women were enc ouraged to call on Kuan-yin to improve their intellectualabilities.

Sheng-yen（1930

～）, a contemporary Ch'an master of Taipei and New York,delights i

n telling his audience about how slow witted he was when he worked

as a youngnovice in Jiangsu.

He did not understand the lectures, nor could he learn how to chant.

His master told him to do continuous prostrations in front of the Kuan-

yin image, chantKuan-yin's holy name and concentrate on the bodhis

attva with single-mindedness.

He didso faithfully for six months and one day he suddenly understoo

d everything.

When I didmy field work in Hangchow and P'u-t'o in 1987, I came acro

ss a number of young peoplewho were hoping to pass the examinatio

ns to enter high schools or colleges.

When askedwhy did they come to P'u-t'o, they answered that they ho

ped Kuan-

yin would grant them intelligence.

Let us return to the stories in the earliest collection of miracle tales.

(3)This story is about deliverance from being killed, or in the vo cabularyof the “Universal Gateway”, peril by knife(tao-nan):

After Shih Hu died, Jan Min (d. 352)[7]

persecuted non-Chinese.

Even Chinese who looked like barbarians were killed.

At that timethere were three non-Chinese monks in the capital Y eh (in presentHopei) who knew that they were going to die.

So they discussedamong themselves to figure out a way to esca pe their predicament.

Theysaid to each other that Kuang-shih-yin could save people fr om perils.

Sothey decided to take refuge in the bodhisattva and recite sutr a together tobeg him for help.

They did so day and night without stop.

Several dayslater, soldiers came to the temple to get them.

They surrounded thetemple and three came in carrying knives in their hands intending to killthe monks.

One monk was hiding behind the wall of the lecture hallwhich w as behind a thicket of trees.

When the man came and thrustedout the knife to kill the monk, the knife struck a tree trunk.

It becamecrooked like a hook and could not be taken out.

The next person cameforward to kill.

But his knife broke into two pieces, one piece flying tothe sky and the other came back at him.

When the last person saw thisstrange happening, he became frightened and dared not go forward.

Hethrew down his knife and asked,

"What divine skill do you have that youcannot be harmed by knives?" To which the monk replied,

"I havenone." It is just because I heard that the government is killingnon-Chinese.

p. 448

I feared that I could not escape so I had no choice but turned my heart toKuang-shih-yin.

This must be divine protection." The men hurried backand reported this to Min who pardoned these three monks.

Monk Tao-iheard this story himself at Yeh.

This and the following story introduce us to the violent world of the 4th and 5th centuries inwhich a person could become imprisioned, senten ced for execution, or summarily killed forno other reason than that he happened to be in the wrong place or on the wrong side of aconflict.

Although there is only two stories of this nature in the first collection, t hey wouldincrease enormously in the third collection which includes ei ght stories about execution andtwenty-two about imprisonment.

They provide a vivid sociological and psychologicaltemplate of that pe riod.

In fact, a number of the later stories would bear a strikingresemblence to the story giving rise to the indigenous sutra King Kao's Kuan-yin S utra（Kao Wang Kuan-shih-yin ching）.

(4)To Chuan was a native of Ho-nei（present Ju-yang, Honan). During the years 345～

356 he was serving as an official under KaoCh' ang, the govern er of Ping-chou, who was feuding with Lü Hu, thegovernor of Y i-chou.

To was captured by the Lu faction and was throwninto prison to gether with six or seven compatriots.

They were shackledsecurely and to be executed soon.

Monk Chih Tao-shan was in thecamp of Lu and he knew To fro m before.

When he heard that the latterwas in prison, he came to visit an d talked to him through the door.

Totold the monk that his life was in danger and asked if there was any waythat he could be saved.

The monk answered that no human methodwould be of any use but Kuang-shih-yin could save people from danger.

If he could concentrate and beg the bodhisattva sincerely, he w ouldsuddenly receive a response.

To himself had also heard aboutKuang-shih-yin.

So after this conversation, he started to follow themonk' s advice.

For three days and nights he took refuge in thebodhisattva with utmost sincerity.

He felt the shackles beginning to loosenand when he tried to sh ake them, suddenly they fell away from his body.

He prayed to the

bodhisattva,

“My own shackles have now become loosened bythemselves d ue to your compassionate protection.

But I still have severalccompanions and cannot bear to escape b y myself. You, Kuan-shih-yin, save universally.

Please make them also free.” After the prayer hetouched the o thers and each one also became free from the shackles asif so meone had cut them loose.

So they openned the prison door andleft.

Even when they walked among the guards, no one noticed the m. They scaled the city gate and escaped.

About that time the day wasdawning.

After they walked four or five li they did not dare to go anyfurth er because it was daylight.

So they hid among tall grasses and fellasleep.

Soldiers were sent out to search for them everywhere.

Theyburned bushes and trampled on grasses and searched for t hemeverywhere.

But only this small area of land where they hid did not getsearc

hed. They escaped and arrived home safely.

They became firmbelievers of Buddhism and showed extraordinar y faith and reverence.

Monk Tao-shan later came south and told Hsieh Fu 〔the origin alcompiler of the collection〕 about this.

This story is interesting on several accounts.

First of all, it was a monk, Shih Tao-shan,who told To Chuan to conce ntrate his thoughts on Kuang-shih-yin to ask for deliveranceand who l ater related the story to Hsieh Fu who then wrote it down.

This was not anisolated incident, but was replicated in other stories.

Though not exclusively, monks wereoften the agents who promoted th e faith in Kuan-yin and instructed people about the correctmethod of s howing faith in Kuan-yin.

Secondly, all the tales in the first collectionemphasize that the mental concentration on, sometimes accompanied by invocation of, thebodhi sattva with great sincerity was the key to deliverance.

Except for the first story of ChuCh'ang-shu, there was no mention abo ut chanting the Kuan-yin ching, nor any specificationof how many time s one must call the name of the bodhisattva before the miracle occure

d. This would change in the stories compliled in the third collection. Not only the recitationof the Kuan-yin Sutra was mentioned more frequently, but a specific number, mostfrequently one thousand times as it was the case of the King Kao's Kuan-yin Sutra, wasnecessary to trigger a divine

response from Kuan-yin. For instance, four stories （#27, 34, 35, 36） specify thechanting of the sutra for one thousand times, whereas one story each specifies threehundred （# 37） and ten thousand times （#62）, and one story （# 67） calls for theinvocation of the bodhisattva's name one thousand times.

The interest in such ritualexactitude probably reflected influences of the various ritual sadhanas mentioned in theesoteric scriptures, for these ritual texts usually specify a specific number of times in thechanting of the dharani, be they 21, 108, 1008, or 1080 times, before it becomes effective.

Similarly, I would suggest that“the person in white”who mysteriously appeared in thedreams of Gunabhadra and Fa-ch'eng after they perfor

med rites of repentance might be theesoteric Kuan-yin who is often de scribed as being clothed in white in the same sadhanas.

At the same time, it is also important to keep in mind that the term“whi te-clad”（pai-i）can also have other less esoteric connotations.

It can be understood to mean a layperson, in contrast to a monk who i s someone wearing black robes.

The Chinese followedthe Indian usage of referring to a lay person as a person wearing white clothes.

A famousexample for such usage is the layman Vimalakirti who is the main protagonist in the sutranamed after him.

That sutra has been one of the favorites among the monks and gentry Buddhists since its translation in the third century and would thus be f amiliar to the compilersand readers of the miracle tales.

Finally, in contrast to the color yellow which symbolizesTaoism in the popular mind, the color white can also indicate that the deity is not Ta oist.[8] The

origin of the term is obscure and cannot be pinpointed to any specific source.

Perhapsdifferent persons might have different understandings in acco rdance with his／herbackground and education.

However, the different connotations of pai-i would all refer toKuan-yin who, being a bodhisattva, is neither monk nor, of course, Taoist.

In the earlyperiod, the white-clothed person who appeared in these tal es was unmistakably male, buthe would be replaced by the feminine white-robed Kuan-yin in later miracle tale collections.

The next two stories are about deliverance from being drowned or wh at the Lotus Sutracalls“peril of the water”（shui-nan）.

(5)The river south of Shih-feng （present T’ ien-t’ ai, Chekiang ） hasmany currents and its banks are steep.

It is very winding and also full ofrocks.

Even during the daytime it is very fearful to travel on it.

Lu Shuwas originally from Kuang-hsi and now living in Shih-fen g. He told methat his father once traveled on the river.

When he was some ten li fromhome, it got dark and the weath er suddenly became stormy.

The skybecame as dark as black lacquer and he could not tell

whether he washeading east or west.

He thought for sure he would suffer a shipwreckand drown.

He turned his mind to Kuang-shih-yin.

He called thebodisattva' s name and also meditated on him.

After a short time, a firelight appeared on the shore as if some one were holding a torch.

Itshone on the river making everything very clear.

He could thus returnhome.

The fire was always guiding the boat, about more than ten step sahead of it.

Lu Shu was friendly with Hsi Ch' ao and the latter told methe st ory.

Hsi Ch'ao, as we recall, was a friend of the compiler's father and a not ed

scholar of Buddhism.

It is a characteristic of all miracle tales that the writer always notesthe source of his story whenever possible.

If the writer hears the story from somebody, hewould provide the pers on's identity.

Even in later compendia, it is usual for the compilers tocite the written sources from which a particular story originated.

The chain of transmissiongurantees the authenticity of the story.

(6)Hsu Jung was a native of Lang-ya （present Tung-hai, Kian gsu） andoften went to Tung-yang （in present Shangtung）.

Once when hereturned by way of Ting-shan （present Hang Co unty, Chekiang）, because the boatmen were unfamiliar with the river, the boat was suckedinto a whirlpool and floundered in th e waves.

He had no way but calledKuang-shih-yin with concentrated heart.

Instantly the boat was lifted upas if by several tens of men.

After the boat emerged from the whirlpool, it could sail smoothly.

Then it got dark and a storm rose.

They lost thedirection and the waves became more turbulent.

Jung continued to chantthe sutra.

After a while they saw a fire on top of the mountain.

Turningthe boat around they followed it and thus arrived at port

safely. Oncethey disembarked, the light also disappeared.

All the passengers weresurprised, doubting it could be a fire ma de by human beings.

Next daythey asked the local people about the fire on the mount ain. They weresuprised to hear about it, saying,

"With such a big storm yesterday, how could there be a fire? We did not see any." It was then clear thatit must be a divine light.

Later Jung became the protector-general ofKuai-chi and told Hsi eh Liang himself about this story.

There was amonk by the name of Chih Tao-yu who traveled on the same boat withhim and also saw this miracle.

He told me the same thing as that toldby Jung.

The last story in the first collection is about a miraculous cure perform ed by Kuan-yin on themonk Fa-yi (307～380).

Curing diseases is one of the new promises found in the Ch'ingKuan-yin ching, but not in the"Universal Gateway" chapter of the Lotus Su tra. In the thirdcollection, three stories are about people

being cured by the bodhisattva and are offered as validation of Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching. Tale #

67, the only dated one, relates that in 446 a monk called Hui-sheng livi ng inpresent Kiangsu became deaf and dumb as a result of illness. Thinking that there was nomedicine capable of curing him, he turned his heart to Kuan-shih-yin totally and called thebodhisattva's name a t housand times.

As soon as he finished the number of invocation,he recovered the use of his eyes and ears.

Since the sutra was translated only recently,by interpretating these st ories in this light, the compiler Lu Kao showed us the speed a newsutr a became known among the faithful, particularly those who were educ ated.

Bycontrast, what happened to Fa-yi was interpretated by Fu Liang diff erently.

Fu chose touse it as a confirmation of the ability of the bodhisattva to appear in different forms, onebeing that of a monk, as announced in th e “Universal Gateway”.

It may also indicate thatthe knowledge of the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching w as probably not yet available to him.

(7)Monk Fa-yi lived in the mountain and loved to study.

He became illbut continued to work hard and the illness got wor se. He sincerely calledon Kuang-shih-yin.

Several days went by like this.

One day he took anap during daytime and dreamt a monk who came to visit him in order tocure him.

He cut open Fa-yi's chest and stomach and washed hisintestine s which were all knotted together and looked very dirty.

Afterwashing them, the monk stuffed them back into the body a nd told Fa-yi,

"Your illness is now cured." Upon waking up he felt relieved of illnessand returned to his former self.

He lived on Mt. Pao in Shih-ning (inpresent Chekiang) in 372 and my father used to visit him.

He liked totell this story and my father always felt great respect toward him.

Thesutra says that the bodhisattva can appear in the form of a

monk.

Ibelieve that what Fa-yi dreamt was a confirmation of this.

Visions of Kuan-yin in the Early Miracle Tales

Although all the tales in the three early collections affirm the unfailing deliverance fromdifferent kinds of perils effected by the bodhisattva, very few report the devotees' actualseeing of their savior.

In most cases, we are simply

told that the devotee called Kuan-yin's name with utmost concentration and sincerity, and inresponse, a miracle occurred.

The devotee clearly felt the presence of Kuan-yin andcredited him with the deliverance.

But she could not tell what the bodhisattva looked like.

It is thus very fortunate for us that several tales do report visions of Kuan-yin.

Theyprovide important clues as to how Kuan-yin was conceived by the faithful in this earlyperiod.

As the story about Fa-yi （＃7） shows, Kuan-yin appeared in his dream as a monk.

Infact, when the bodhisattva did appear to his devotee in human form, he usually appeared asa monk. Two stories （＃7, ＃9） in the second collection and four stories in the thirdcollection （＃21, ＃23, ＃24, ＃62） identify Kuan-yin as a monk.

While Kuan-yinappeares to the protagonists in the first five stories in t heir dreams and saves them fromimprisonment, he interacts with the devotees in their waking state in the last one.

The storyrelates how in 462 when P'eng-ch'eng （in present Kiangsu ） fell, a man by the name ofHan Mu-chih fled and in the confusion los t his son who was kidnapped.

Being a piousBuddhist, Han vowed to chant the Kuang-shih-yin sutra t en thousand times in the hope ofgetting the son back.

He also invited monks to his home for a vegetarian feast wheneverhe finished one thousand recitations.

But no response occurred after he had alreadyrecited the sutra for six or seven thousand times.

He interpreted this as a lack of sincerityon his part.

So he redoubled his effort and began to recite the sutra day and night withoutkeeping track of the number.

In the meantime, his son was sold as a slave to someone inYi-chou（in present Szechwan）.

One day when the son was laboring alone in the field,he suddenly saw a monk who came to him and asked if he was Han Mu-chih's son.

Surprised, he answered yes.

The monk then asked him if he would like to see his fatheragain.

To which the son again answered yes, but asked how was that possible?

Themonk replied that because the father had been most persistent in pressing him, he had nowdecided to bring the son home.

The monk then told the boy to hold tight onto the corner ofhis cassock.

When the son did so, he felt being lifted up and carried off by someone.

Soon they arrived outside the door of the father's new residence which the son did notrecognize.

The monk stayed outside but ordered the boy to go in and see if anyone wasat home.

When the son went inside, he saw his father sitting there reciting the s utra. Thefather and son were overjoyed

in seeing each other.

When the son told the father the holy personage who brought himhom e was outside, the father rushed out to thank him.

But the monk was nowhere to beseen.

In one of the stories （# 21）, not only did the bodhisattva appear as a monk to a Mr. Hsiain hi s dream and freed him from imprisonment in 411, but told him that he wasKuan-shih-yin.

However, because Hsia was apparently ignorant of Buddhism, he tho ughtthat “Kuan-shih-yin” was the name of a real monk.

Only when he asked some monkswhom he met after his successful e scape where could he find the monk by the name ofKuan-shih-yin wa s he told that it was the bodhisattva.

He then had a golden image madeand wore it around his neck, beca me a vegetarian, and converted to Buddhism.

In thesestories which identify Kuan-yin as a monk, no description is pr ovided about his physicalcharacteristics.

We are not told how old he was or what he looked like.

Only in oneinstance （tale #

9 of the second collection）, is he described as smiling and eight Chin esefeet（chih） tall.

However, a story found in Tao-hsuan's Hsü kao-seng chuan doesdesc ribe Kuan-yin with a telling detail which hints at the close link between existingiconography and visionary experiences.

When the monk Hung-man was still living in the secular world, hesuffered from paralysis on both his feet when he was fifteen. Heconstantly chanted the Kuan-shih-yin Sutra for three years. One day hesuddenly saw a monk holding a water bottle stand i n front of him. Whenhe asked the monk,

"Where are you from?" The monk answered,

"Because you constantly call me, that is why I have come."

Man thenbowed down and asked,

"What evil karma did your disciple accumlatefrom previous lives that I should suffer this paralysis?" The monkanswered, "Beca

use in your past life you captured and bound livingbeings, that i s why you are now reaping its evil consequences.

Closeyour eyes and I shall cure you.” When he did as instruct ed, he felt anail of six or seven inches being pulled from each of his knee.

By thetime he openned his eyes to thank the monk, the latter was gone. Hegot up and could walk normally as before.

He then realized that themonk was Kuan-yin and he vowed nev er to get married （T 50 : 663a）.

Indian and Chinese images of Kuan-yin indeed usually show him as h olding a water bottle

（kundikha, ts'o-p'ing）. Just as existing iconography might predispos e how a devotee sawKuan-yin in his vision, scriptural description of th e bodhisattva could have played a similarrole.

Kuan-yin is connected strongly with light symbolism in the scriptures.

It is thereforenot surprising that next to seeing Kuan-yin as a monk, th e bodhisattva was experienced asbrilliant light. Thus, tale #

5 in the second collection tells us that monk Tao-t'ai dreamtsomeone t
elling him that he would die at forty-two.

When he reached that age, he becameseriously ill.

He donated all his possessions in order to seek blessing.

A friend told himthat according to the sutra 〔the Kuang-shih-yin chin
g〕, to call the name of Kuang-shih-yinonce would equal the merit res
ulting from making offerings to sixty-two billion bodhisattvas.

Therefore he should turn his heart to Kuang-shih-yin with sincerity an
d he would be ableto increase his lifespan despite the unfortunate dre
am prediction.

Tao-tai believed him andconcentrated his mind on the bodhisattva da
y and night for four days.

On the fourth nighthe was sitting on the bed which was shielded by a
curtain. He suddenly sawKuang-shih-yin come in from outside.

The bodhisattva whose legs and feet were coveredwith golden light, s
aid to him,

“Are you calling me?” But when he pushed aside the curtain,he could
not see anyone.

Covered with perspiration, he felt refreshed and his illness wentaway.

He told this story to people when he was already forty-four years old.

Tale #19and tale #

61 in the third collection also report the bodhisattva appearing as shini ng light. Tale #

19 is about a man by the name of K'ai Hu who was imprisoned and se ntenced todie.

He recited the Kuang-shih-yin sutra with concentrated mind for three days and nights.

Then in the middle of the third night, he saw the bodhisattva sending o ut brilliant light.

The shackles broke by themselves and the jail door, illuminated by the light, openned tolet him out.

The light shone in front of him leading the way.

After more than twenty li thelight disappeared and he had by then rea ched safety. Tale #

61 tells the miraclousexperience of a man by the name of Pan Tao-hsi u who became a soldier when he was inhis twenties in 410.

But he got separated from the army, became lost, and was sold as asl ave.

Wandering far from home, he constantly thought of Kuan-shih-yin and hoped to seethe bodhisattva in his dream.

One day he found himself alone in a mountain, he suddenlysaw the true

form of Kuang-shih-yin

〔notice the bodhisattva being called by both names in this story〕

full of light which was so brilliant that the entire mountain turned golden in color. He hastilybowed and prostrated in front of the bodhisattva. When the light disappeared, he foundhimself back in his native village. Following familiar roads, he returned to his home to thegreat amazement of everyone.

When Pan was said to have seen the bodhisattva in his"true form", what does it mean? What was the true form of Kuan-yin?

The story leaves it unexplained, but I suggest thatit refers to the form of the bodhisattva as depicted in contemporary iconography.[9]

Images of Kuan-yin often figure in the miracle tales.

They were worshiped as icons.

They were created to give thanks to the bodhisattva after the devotee was saved fromdanger.

Sculpted images stood as substitutes to receive the blows from the ex ecutioner'sknife on behalf of the worshiper.

Sometimes they were carried on the body or worn in thehair by the de votees as talismen.

But they also influenced the contents of the devotees' visionary experi ences which, in turn, sometimes led to the creation of new iconograph ies.

Icons, Miracles, and Iconographies

Buddhist art, like all religious art, is intimately connected with the spirit ual lives of the faithful.

Sculpted and painted images of Kuan-yin are first and foremost icons, although they canof course be appreciated as beautiful objects of art.

I will first discuss the close relationshipbetween the devotees and icon s of Kuan-yin revealed in some early miracle tales and thenlink the ne w forms of Kuan-yin appearing in devotees' visions of the bodhisattva containedin some later tales to the development of new iconographie

s.

Art and miracle tales servedas effective media in the domestication an d transformation of Kuan-yin.

As the foreignAvalokiteshvara increasingly became intertwined with th e lives of Chinese men and women,the bodhisattva was gradually cha nged into the Chinese Kuan-

yin.

Let us recall the story of Sun Ching-te, the hero of the origin myth of th e famous indigenousKing Kao's Kuan-yin sutra. As related by Tao-hsu an, Sun worshiped an icon of Kuan-yinwhich he kept in his room.

When he managed to finish chanting the sutra revealed to himin a dre am one thousand times before his beheading, the executioner's knife broke intothree sections.

Although the executioner changed the knife three times, the same thin ghappened.

When Sun was pardoned and returned to his room, he saw three cuts madeby a knife on the neck of the Kuan-yin image.

The implication is clearly that the icon borethe blows of the knife, thus sparing Sun.

This was supposed to have happened to Sunduring 534～537.

Two stories in the third collection report identical happenings.

Tale #

13which is dated describes a miracle which happened more than one hundred and fifty yearsearlier than that of Sun.

It tells the story of someone from P'eng-ch'eng who, during 376～395, was wrongly accused of being a robber and sentenced to die.

He worshipedKuan-yin and always wore a golden image of the bodhisattva inside his knotted hair behindhis neck.

When he was led out to be killed, he concentrated his thoughts even more firmlyon Kuan-yin.

When the executioner's knife struck his neck, there was a metalic sound andthe knife broke.

Although three times another knife was substituted, no harm could be done to him.

Everyone was astonished and he was questioned by the official in charge.

He answered that he had no special magic except that he worshiped Kuan-yin and worethe image on his neck.

When they loosened his hair and examined the image, there werethre e cuts on its neck. Tale #

14 is very similar, except it is about someone living inSzechwan who w ore the icon hidden inside a sandal wood portable shrine.

He wascaught in a hand-to-hand combat and was struck on his neck.

He heard a metalic soundbut did not feel any pain.

When he escaped from the melee, he took out the portableshrine whic h looked intact.

But when he openned it and looked at the icon, he saw that itbore sev eral cuts clearly made by the enemy's knife.

Instead of going to a temple to worship Kuan-yin, these early devotee s carried the icons ontheir bodies as talismen. Since they were wor n inside the hair, or on top of the crown （aswe read in the following st ory）, they must by necessity be small and light.

Indeed, sometiny gilt bronze images of Kuan-yin,

some measuring only 2 cm or so, have survived and can be seen in m
useums.

Arthistorians usually take them to be votive images made by humble p
eople who could notafford larger ones.

But seen in the light of such miracle tales, could the reason why theyw
ere made so small was because they were used for such purposes?

On the other hand,an icon was sometimes created for such devotional
use as a result of miraculousdeliverance. For instance, tale #
17 tells the story of Nan-kung Tzu-ao who lived in Shensiduring the fo
urth century.

His native city was sacked and many residents were killed.

Knowing that he was going to die, Tzu-ao put all his faith in Kuan-yin.

When his turncame to be executed, for some reason the executioners
suddenly became too tired to raisetheir hands.

Surprised, the official asked him what he could do.

Without knowing why, heanswered that he was good at making saddl
es and was thus pardoned.

When hereturned home, he had a small Kuan-yin icon made.

He put it inside a sandalwoodportable shrine and always wore it on to p of his head.

A very interesting story about a Buddhist devotee and his personal im age of Kuan-yin hasbeen preserved.

In the preface to the Signs from the Unseen Realm, a work familiar to LuKao, the compiler of the third collection, Wang Yen related his own i ntimate relationship witha votive icon of Kuan-yin which was first give n to him by his refuge master when Wang wasliving in Chiao-chih （pr esent Vietnam） as a child.

He described it as being finely made,resembling the ones created in t he Yüan-chia era （424～453）.

Although he was veryyoung, he worshiped it with his younger brother diligently.

Later when they returned to thecapital, the family home had to be ren ovated and there was no proper place to keep theimage.

So it was taken to a temple for temporary safekeeping.

However, at that timeordinary people were engaged in making coins p rivately and many gilt bronze images gotstolen and melt down becaus e of this.

Several months after the icon was sent to thetemple, one day when h e was sleeping during the daytime he had a dream in which he sawth e icon by his side.

Curious about what the dreamt meant, he decided to go to the temple although it was already getting dark and took the icon home.

In the same evening, morethan ten images were removed forcibly fro m the temple by robbers.

After that the iconshone brightly at night, illuminating the ground about three feet in radius around it. Thishappened in the fall of 463.

In 471 he moved to Wu-yi（in

present Anhui） and befriended a monk from the Monastery of Many Treasures located inthe capital.

He asked the monk to install the Kuan-yin image in that temple tempo rarily.

They then had to go separate ways and several years went by and he did not think of theimage.

But in 478 he met the monk again and was reminded by the latter that the imagewas still in the temple.

When he went to the capital, he visited the abbot of the temple andask ed for the image kept there.

But the abbot told him that no such image was there.

Hewas very disappointed and felt great sadness over losing the imag e.

In the same night hehad a dream in which a man told him that the ima ge was indeed still in the temple but theabbot had forgotten about it.

Still in the dream, the man took him back to the temple andopenned th e door to the main hall.

He saw clearly his own image nestled among manysmall images in th e eastern section of the hall.

The next morning he went back to thetemple and told the abbot about his dream.

When the abbot led him to the hall andopenned it, they found the imag e indeed in the eastern section of the hall. He took theimage back.

That was the 13th day of the 7th month in 479.

Wang Yen concluded thisamazing story by saying that he had worshi ped it ever since （Lu Hsun 1973 : 563～564）.

The kind of relationship which Wang Yen had with his personal icon m ay be difficult for amodern reader to appreciate, though not to his cont emporaries as he shared it with them inthe preface.

Twice he found a safe home for it in a temple so that it would not be di sturbedby the rebuilding of his home or the uncertainties of travel.

From the matter of fact wayWang Yen related the story, Buddhist ima ges were apparently either donated to temples orput there for tempor ary residence by the faithful in the 5th century, just as it is still sometim esdone today.

The icon sent him warnings or directions through dreams.

He regarded theicon as the embodiment of the bodhisattva.

Their relationship went through manyvicissitudes, covering a period of some twenty years.

When a devotee enjoyed such anintimate rapport with the icon, it is th en possible to imagine that when he had a vision ofKuan-yin either in a dream or in a waking state, he would be most likely see the bodhisat tvain the form as depicted by contemporary iconography.

During the second half of the 5thcentury, Kuan-yin became a favorite subject for gilt bronzes.

The earliest surviving giltbronze Kuan-yin inscribed with the date of th e 30th year of Yüan-chia （453） is at the

Freer Gallery.

The bodhisattva holds a lotus in his right hand and a bottle in the left h and.

He is bejewelled, with a dhoti draped from waist to knees, a cape cove ring the shouldersand forming an X in front of the body, and a long bill owing stole contouring the figure as ifblown by winds （Howard forthc oming: 88～90）.

Might the icon worshiped and belovedby Wang Yen be something sim ilar to this?

Although visions and images of Kuan-yin feature prominently in the mi racle tales as wehave seen, specific identification between the appear ances of the bodhisattva and the formof the image is surprising scarc e.

Could it be that the linkage was so obvious that thecompilers did not t hink it necessary to mention it?

Aside from the case of Pan Tao-hsiuwho was said to have seen the “t rue form” of the bodhisattva as depicted in contemporaryiconography related above, I have come across only another case making a similar specification. This was the story of the monk Hsuan-chi （639～706） found in theBiographies of Promoters of the Lotus Sutra.

His extraordinary visionary experiences wereall resulted from the recit ation of the Lotus Sutra.

When he first began to recite the Lotus Sutra and completed 2000 times, he dreamt of entering a large hall.

The hall was surrounded by goldenmountains on its four walls.

Light shone brightly.

There were niches inall the mountains and all the niches enshrin ed Kuan-yin.

He prostratedand circumanbulated and was full of emotion.

He then saw a crystalvase containing a relic.

When he tried to take it, he suddenly woke up.

When he finished chanting the sutra 5000 times, he was resting in thedaytime but suddenly fell into a trance in which he saw s everal hundredsandalwood niches all enshrining Kuan-yin.

He touched the niches withhis hands and they came toward him. He also saw inumerable goldenpearls flowing downward from the sky. They were brilliant and lovely.

When he openned his mouth and swalloed them, he felt joy all over.

After a duration of about two meals, he woke up and had no s ense ofhunger.

From then on he was full of ease in mind and body andbecame even more diligent in his effort.

He recited the sutra five timeseach twenty-four hours.

When he finished chanting it 9000 times, astrange

bird suddenly flew from the outside and came to rest in his bos som. After staying there seven days and nights, it flew away.

Then hedreamt of a person of seven or eight chih in height.

His appearance wascomely and dignified, looking the same way as the usual images.

Fromthe waist down, the bodhisattva was beautifully adorned wit h colorfulornaments.

Hsüan-chi prostrated with happiness and addressed Kuan-yinBod hisattva by name.

He approached and touched the feet of Kuan-yin, calling him the Great Compassionate One.

Kuan-yin touched the crownof his head several times.

He lifted up his hands and drank themilk

〔flowing from the finger-tips of Kuan-yin ?〕.

He woke with a start（T 50 : 46c～47a）.

In the three separate visions of Kuan-yin described above, images of t he bodhisattvasappeared in the first two, while in the last one Kuan-yi n appeared in person.

In his dreamthe monk saw multitute of Kuan-yin images enshrined wit hin niches.

To enclose Buddhistimages within niches was very common in the sc ulpture complexes at Yün-kang, Lung-menand elsewhere.

It was such a common practice that this kind of images were called“im ages in niches”（k'an-hsiang） in Szechwan.

The mention of niches on mountainscould refer to such cliff sculptures in these places.

When Kuan-yin finally appeared in hisdream, he could immediately re cognize the bodhisattva because Kuan-yin looked exactlyas the imag es popular at that time.

Kuan-yin was usually depicted as beautifully adornedwith jewels and ornate surface ornaments in Northern Chou and Sui sculptures, such as thespecimen held at Museum of Fine Art in Boston.

Moreover, since the statues were oftentaller than a real person, the he ight of eight chih would be a rather accurate measure.

What Hsuan-chi reported as seeing in the trance could thus be an acc urate description ofa contemporary Kuan-yin statue.

We can take this as an example of how a person'sfamiliarity with cont emporary iconography could predispose him to see the bodhisattva in acertain way in his visionary experiences.

On the other hand, there were also indicationsthat what a person saw in a vision provided the basis for how Kuan-yin was depictediconogra phically.

For instance, Wang Yen included the following story about a man nam edKuo Hsüan-chih in his Record of the Unseen

Realm. Kuo, a native of T'ai-yüan as imprisoned in 408.

He prayed to Kuan-shih-yin andhad a vision of the bodhisattva at nigh

t. He was later pardoned and released.

He then“painted an image of the bodhisattva based on what he saw a

nd established a shrine forreligious practice”（Lu Hsun 1973 : 601）.

In the pre-10th century miracle stories that we have examined, when

Kuan-yin appeared inperson in the devotees’ dreams, he appeared ei

ther as a monk, a person wearing white,[10]

a person about eight Chinese feet

（chih）in height, or a person bearing closeresemblance to an image.

None was feminine.

However, when we examine the miracletales in later collections, we fi

nd a striking new change.

Although the bodhisattvacontinued to appear in the forms just mentio

ned, Kuan-yin increasingly also appeared as awoman.

Starting in the 10th century, we begin to read tales in which Kuan-yin a

ppearedas a woman in white, then a woman carrying a fish-basket, an

d finally in the Ch'ing,increasingly as an old woman.

These forms correspond to the White-robed Kuan-yin,Fish-basket Ku an-yin and Old Mother Kuan-yin.

They are indigenous forms of the

bodhisattva created after the 10th century.

These new and feminine forms of Kuan-yin didnot follow scriptural tra ditions, but were indebted to indigenous sutras, legends and miracleta les.

It cannot be coincidental that Kuan-yin appeared in feminine forms fro m the 10thcentury onward just as the bodhisattva was also depicted in a similar way.

Although Icannot offer specific evidence, I suggest that the early femi nine forms of Kuan-yin might becreated based on someone's vision.

He could either paint the image himself, like Kuomentioned above, or have a painter do it following his own description.

But once afeminine image of Kuan-yin became available, more peopl e would naturally came to see thebodhisattva in this way whether in th eir dreams or in their conceptions.

The earliest example of the White-robed Kuan-yin with a clearly femini ne appearance isrepresented by the two images of the bodhisattva gr acing the entrance to the Yen-hsiaGrotto in Hangchow which Angela Howard dated to the 940s （Howard 1985 : 11）.

Indeed, the rulers of the Wu Yüeh Kingdom were great patrons of the Kuan-yin cult.

According to the Gazetteer of Upper T'ien-chu Monastery （Hang-cho u Shang T'ien-chuchih）, before Ch'ien Liu （851～

932）, the founder of the Wu Yüeh Kingdom, came topower, he dream t of a woman in white who promised to protect him and his descenden ts ifhe was compassionate and did not kill like the others.

She told him that he could find heron Mt.

T'ien-chu in Hangchow twenty years later.

After he became the king, he dreamt ofthe same woman who asked fo r a place to stay and in return, she would agree to be thepatron deity o f his kingdom. When he discovered that only one monastery on Mt. T'ien-chu housed an image of White-robed Kuan-yin, he gave patrona ge to it andestablished it as the T'ien-chu k'an-ching-yüan （Cloister f or Reading Scriptures atT'ien-chu）, the former name for Upper T'ien-

chu Monastery, which became one of themost important pilgrimage c enters for Kuan-yin worship （STCC 1980 : 31）.

Themonastery underwent a major revival in 939 under the monk Tao-i who discovered a pieceof marvelous wood lying in the stream from w hich a bright light shone.

He took the wood tothe local artisan K'ung to carve an image of Kuan-yin.

But when K'ung cut the wood open,he found a“spontaneously formed ” image of Kuan-yin inside the wood.

Attracted by itbeauty, he decided to keep it for himself and carved ano ther one for Tao-i.

However,forwarned by a person in white in his dream, Tao-i succeede d in getting

back this miraculous image （STCC 1980 : 29）.

Although we are not told what the imagelooked like, we can assume t hat it was a feminine looking White-robed Kuan-yin.

Not onlydid the bodhisattva appear in such a form in Ch'ien Liu's drea m mentioned earlier, she alsomanifested as a woman wearing white g

arment in the story connected with the Sungstateman Tseng Kung-lia ng （990～1078）.

In 1042 Tseng returned to his native home inCh'üan-chou to attend his mother's funeral.

A monk by the name Yüan-ta was a fellowpassenger in his boat.

When they arrived in Hangchow, they decided to go to the UpperT'ien -chu Monastery to worship Kuan-yin.

As they entered the temple, they were greetedby a woman wearing w hite garment who told them, “When Mr.

Tseng is fifty-seven yearsold, you will serve in the Secretariat-Chance llery and the reverend elder will also receive thetitle of a great master. ” After saying so, she disappeared.

When the predicted time arrived,Tseng was indeed appointed a Gran d Councillor and the monk was also given the title ofgreat master bec ause of his friendship with Tseng （T 49 : 411c）.

I have cited these examples in order to show the connection between the new iconographyof the White-robed Kuan-yin and the gender cha nge of the“person in white”.

Referencesto such images and the lady in white began to appear in th

e 10th centry.

The iconographyof White-robed Kuan-yin was probably derived from t he Water-Moon Kuan-yin which wasthe first indigenous iconography c reated in China.

Although there are a number ofsimilarities between these two types of iconography, Water-Moon Kuan-yin is neverthelessmasculine or ase xual, whereas the White-robed Kuan-yin is distinctively feminine.

It isvery puzzling that in all the miracle accounts that I have perused, I have not come acrossany reference to a vision of the Water-Moon Ku an-yin.

Could it be the case that becausethe figure of“white-clad person” had already become such a fixed topos in miracle talegenre by the 10th c entury that the new iconography of Water-Moon Kuan-yin was seenth rough its lense?

And as reports of people's seeing the lady in white becamedisseminat ed, the Water-Moon Kuan-yin was transformed into the White-robed K uan-yin?

Let us now turn to the later miracle tale collections and discuss their c haracteristics beforeconcluding this article.

Distinctive Characteristics of Later Miracle TaleCollections

All the three later miracle tale collections begin with excerpts from sutras glorifying Kuan-yin. I think this arrangement serves two purposes. First, the compilers want the reader tosee the sutras and miracle tales as integrally related to each other.

The teachings of thesutras illuminate the miracles, and the miracles in turn validate the scriptural teachings.Second, the collection is supposed to function as a self-contained anthology which instructsand enlightens the reader about the salvific nature and record of Kuan-yin.

Even if thereader has no prior exposure to Buddhism, the compilers hope to instill in the reader a basicunderstanding and, more importantly, an incipient faith in the bodhisattva after s/he readsthe selected sutra excerpts and the stories.

The collections were compiled for pedagogicaland prostelizing purposes.

By examining the sutras selected for inclusion in thecollections, we ca n get a sense about what constituted a Kuan-yin catechism for theco mpilers.

Chou Ke-fu, who compiled the Manifestations〔Resulting〕from Rec itation ofKuan-shih-yin Sutras and Mantras in 1659, was a layman.
He stated in his preface that hehad already compiled collections of mi racle tales resulting from the recitation of the DiamondSutra, the Pure Land Sutras, Lotus Sutra, and Hua-yen Sutra.
He dedicated himself todoing this task because he believed that the m erit from making donation of theDharma（fa-shih）was measureless.
Undoubtedly because he had already compiledseparate miracle tale c ollections for the other sutras, in the present collection he hadincluded only the Sutra of Great Compassion Dharani（the Ch'ien-shou ching）translatedby Amoghavajra, the indigenous sutra Dharani Sutra of t he Five Mudras of the GretCompassionate White-robed One, an eulo gy of Kuan-yin written by the Sung Ch'an masterTa-hui（1088～1163）, and two short critical essays dispelling common misunderstan dingabout Kuan-yin written by the Ming Pure Land master Chu-hung（1535～1615）.

Heincluded 118 miracle stories arranged chronologically, covering the periods from Chin toCh'ing.

Seventy persons lived before the Sung, while forty-eight after.

Of these people,

27 were monks, consisting about one quarter of the total.

Among the lay people, heincluded four emperors: Emperor Wen of Su ng（r. 424～453）, Wen-tsung of T'ang（r. 826～840）, Emperor Li（r. 961～975） of Southern

T'ang, and Emperor Yung-lo （r. 1402～

1424） of Ming, twelve women （one of them beingthe legendary Ma-l ang-fu or Wife of Mr Ma, but no nun）, statemen Fan Chung-yen and Shih Hao of the Sung, but also an anonymous Ming cripple from Shan gtung.

But contrast,the Compassionate Grove of Kuan-yin which was compil ed by the monk Hung-tsan in 1668,devoted more space to monks.

Of the 150 stories, eighty-one were about monastics

（including five nuns）, and the rest lay people, the two being almost of equal proportion.

He included seventy-one people who lived before the Sung and eighty-four after, thusgiving equal weight to more recent times.

The sutra excerpts chosen for inclusion at thebeginning of the collection are also more extensive and scholastic.

They are: Chih-i'scommentary on the“Universal Gateway” chapter included in his Mysterious Meaning ofKuan-yin （Kuan-yin hsüan-i）, the Karandhapundarika Sutra, the Sutra of Kuan-shih-yinBodhisattva's Receiving Prediction, the Sutra of Great Compassion Dharani, the“UniversalGateway” chapter, the Surangama Sutra， the Hua-yen Sutra, the Visualization of theBuddha Amitayus Sutra, the Elven-headed Divine Dharani Heart Sutra, KarandhavyuhaSutra, and finally, the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching.

Like Chou, Hung-tsan also included fivetales about pious emperors. However, the choices were not identical, his beingWen-tsung of the T'ang, Jen-tsung （r. 1022～1063）, Ying-tsung （r. 1063～1066）,Hsiao-tsung （r. 1162～1188） and Li-tsung （r. 1225～1264）, all of the Sung.

Theintense interest in noting the Buddhist sympathies among the rulers and literati-officials is acharacteric of Buddhist chronicles such as th

e Fo-tsu t'ung-chi, the Li-tai fo-tsu t'ung-tsai

（Comprehensive Record of Buddhas and Patriarchs in Successive Generations, T no.

2036）, the Shih-shih chi-ku lüeh （Brief Compilation of Buddhist History, T no.

2037） andtheShih-shih chi-ku lüeh hsü-chi （Continuation of the Brief Compilation of Buddhist History,T no. 2038） among others.

In fact, these served as some of the original sources for thetwo compilers who also used monks' biographies, earlier miracle tale collections and othersecular sources.

Since these two collections were compiled by two contemporaries who were a lay Buddhistand a monk respectively, it will be interesting to compare the stories they selected and see ifthere are significant differences because of their status.

However, except for the two Ihave already noted, namely, the monk compiler included more sutras and more monastics, Icannot find other striking differences.

In fact, there are a number of common features shared by these two c ollections.

First ofall, both include the story of Sun Ching-te, the man who receive d the indigenous King Kao'sKuan-yin Sutra.

In addition to Sun, Chou also included the story of Lü Ching-yü andHu ng-tsan the story of Wang Hsüan-mo.

Both these two men were originally identified asthe recipients of the re vealed sutra.

There is therefore no discernable difference in the twocompilers' attitu de toward this famous indigenous scripture.

Secondly, both include thestory of Ma-lang-fu （Wife of Mr Ma） who, also known as Kuan-yin with a fish-basket （Yü-lan Kuan-yin）, is one of the famous feminine manifestation of t he bodhisattva.

Bothrelate the story of a beautiful woman fish-seller who came to She nsi in 817.

Attracted byher beauty, many young men proposed to marry her.

She said that she would marry theman who could memorize the"Univ ersal Gateway" chapter in one night.

The next morningtwenty men passed the test.

She told them that since she could marry only one of them,she had to increase the difficulty.

This time she would marry the man who could memorizethe Diamond Sutra in one night. The next day, ten people passed the test.

Again shehad to raise the requirement and asked them to memorize t he entire Lotus Sutra in threedays.

This time only the young man by the name of Ma succeeded.

On the wedding day,however, she took ill and as soon as the wedding ceremony was completed, she died andthe body immediately started to rut.

After she was buried, a foreign monk came to pay herrespect and told Ma and the townspeople that she was actually the bodhisattva.

Ma-lang-fu would be called Fish-basket Kuan-yin in later periods.

She would become afavorite subject for paintings and poems written by Ch'an monks, not to mention herappearance in plays, novels and p recious volumes.

More relevant to our concern with theclose connection between miracl e tales and iconography, she would be canonized as oneof thirty-thre

e forms of Kuan-yin in Sino-Japanese art after the Sung.

While it is sometimesthe case that orthdox Buddhist monks would not recognize the fact that Kuan-yin appearedas a woman, such as Chu-h ung's criticism of the legend of Princess Miao-shan as acreation of “v ulgar monks”, we do not see this in the present case.

Hung-tsan the monkand Chou Ke-fu the layman apparently shared th e same view that Kuan-yin had manifestedas this clever and beautiful fish-seller.

Third, both collections include stories of emperors who either experien ced

the bodhisattva's efficacious responses or served as protectors of the faith.

Interestingly,all of the stories have something to do with Kuan-yin icon s.

Since I have emphasized therole icons played in the miracle tales and suggested that there was a dialectic relationshipbetween the two me

dia, it will be interesting to examine some of these stories for furtherpr oofs for my argument.

The story about Emperor Wen-tsung of the T'ang is included in both c ollections as well as inthe Buddhist chronicles Fo-tsu t'ung-chi, Li-tai f o-tsu t'ung-tsai, and Shih-shih chi-ku lüeh.

The emperor loved to eat clams and his officials stationed along the c oastal areas wouldregularly sent clams as tribute adding to the burde ns of fishermen.

One day in 831 thechef, as usual, was preparing clams for the empero r.

But on that occasion the clam wasan extraordinarily large one and no matter how he tried, he could not open it.

The emperorwas informed of this strange event.

When he offered incense and pray to it, the clamopenned by itself, rev ealing a fine image of the bodhisattva inside.

The emperor had itenshrined within a sandalwood case lined with da mask and sent it to Hsing-shanMonastery for the monks to worship.

He asked the court officials for an explanation of thismiracle.

They suggested to send for the Ch'an master Wei-cheng[11]

of Mt Chung-nannear Ch'ang-an.

Wei-cheng told the emperor that no response was without a cause an dthe miracle was inspired by the emperor's believing heart.

He then told the emperor aboutthe scriptural teaching that the bodhisa ttva would appear in a form in accordance with theneed of the devote e in order to teach him.

The emperor asked,“I have now seen the formof the bodhisattva, but I have not heard the teaching.” To which the Ch'an masterasked,“Whe n you witnessed this, do you think it is usual or unusual?

Do you believe or notbelieve?” The emperor answered yes to both qu estions and the master said,

“Now youhave already heard the teaching.” Satisfied, the emperor

ordered Kuan-yin images to be set up in all the temples in the realm （Kuan-yin tz'ulin chi478.）

A story similar to this one is found in the Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng （ Synthesis ofBooks and Illustrations of Ancient and Modern Times） e xcept that it happened to EmperorWen of Sui （r. 581～604）.

As a result of the miracle, the emperor stopped eating clams（497 :

36a）. In the Ⅰ

-chien chi （Record of the Listener）, written by the Sung writerHung Mai, however, we find yet another version of the same story.

This time it happenedto a man by the name of Yü Chi of Li-shui （in present Kiangsu）. During the Hsuan-hoera （1119～1125） he traveled on the River Huai which produced a lot of clams.

Whenever the boatmen bought the clams for food, he would pay them and then releasedthe clams into the water.

One day the boatmen obtained a heavy basketful of clams andwere going to cook them.

Yü tried to redeem them with twice the purchase price but wasrefused.

When the clams were put into the pot, suddenly a big noise came out of the pot. In the meantime, bright light followed.

The boatmen were greatly frightened.

Whenthey looked carefully, they saw a huge openned clam, revealing an image of Kuan-yinbetween the shells.

The bodhisattva was surrounded by two bamboo plants which looked alive.

The crown, clothes, necklaces and bamboo leaves were formed by fin

e pearls.

Hetold the boatmen to repent their sins and call on Buddha,s name.

He took the shells backhome with him （I : 293）.

Of the different versions of the story, it seems to me that the last one i

s probably the mostplausible.

It is highly unlikely that the story originated with Emperor Wen-tsung.

For asStanley Weinstein tells us, Wen-tsung was hostile toward Budd

hism and promulgated anedict to purge the sangha in 835, four years

after his supposed conversion as suggested bythe story（1987 : 111）.

However, the historicity of the story is not the point underdiscussion.

I am more interested in pointing out the link between miracle tales and

iconographies of Kuan-yin.

Just as the Fish-basket Kuan-yin is traced to the story aboutMr.

Ma's wife, this story is the origin myth for the“Clam-dwelling” Kuan-yin

, another one ofthe thirty-three forms of the bodhisattva popular in Chi

na and Japan.

Hung-tsan included two more stories about emperors and Kuan-yin ic

ons, copying almostverbatim from the Fo-tsu t'ung-chi, as he did with t

he story cited above.

EmperorJen-tsung wore a jade crown on which there was an image of

Kuan-yin.

In 1023 his attendants asked him to wear something else because it w as veryheavy. He declined, saying,

“All the officials who bow to me are men of talent and virtue.

I really do not dare to receive their veneration.

But because of the hiearchical distinctionbetween the ruler and subjec ts, there is no way around it.

However, when I wear thiscrown, they would be worshiping the bodhis attva instead of me”（Kuan-yin tz'u-lin chi490）.

This story reminds us of the devotee's wearing Kuan-yin icon either o n the head orbehind the neck in the earlier collections.

It also reminds us of the iconographicalconvention of depicting Kuan-yin with Amitabha in the crown, which must have been veryfamiliar to people living in the Sung.

The last story is about Li-tsung who in 1241 dreamt ofKuan-yin sitting

among bamboos and rocks.

He ordered a stele carved with the imagetogether with an eulogy writt en by himself.

He added the adjective “of broad and extensiveefficacious responses ”（kuang-ta ling-kan） to the title of Kuan-yin.[12]

The stone stelewas bestowed on the Upper T'ien-chu Monastery in H angchow （kuang-yin tz'u-lin chi 490～1）.

By the 13th century, the new iconography of Kuan-yin sitting among a naturalsurrounding of rocks and bamboo grove was already well-esta blished, the earliest prototypebeing the Water-Moon Kuan-yin created in the 10th century.

This is another example ofhow the prevailing Kuan-yin iconography c ould predispose how the emperor saw thebodhisattva in his dream.

On the other hand, an image made of Kuan-yin in such fashionby the order of the emperor would undoubtedly lend prestige to the same ico nography andpromote its popularity.

I want to turn now to the last miracle tale collection published in 1929.

This is a huge workcompared to the ones discussed so far.

Consisted of two volumes of 234 and 167 taleseach, it has altogether 4

01 tales.

In contrast to the previous collections, it includes morestories which took place after the Sung, particularly in the Ming and Ch'ing, while those of T'ang and before occupying only one sixth of the total.

It also includes far more storiesabout lay people, only fifty-two being monastics （four nuns）.

This could be because theanonymous compiler was a lay

person himself.[13]

Like Chou Ke-fu, the lay Buddhist compiler we discussed before, the present compiler also includes an indigenous sutra, the Kuan-shi-yin sa n-mei ching （Sutraof Kuan-shi-yin's Samadhi）, in his scriptural excerpts in the beginning of his work.

Theother sutras included are: the Karandhapandarika Sutra, theSurangamaSutra,theLotusSutra, theHuayenSutra, the Great Compassion Dharani Sutra,and the“Six-character Mantra”（Om Mani Padme Hum） from the KarandhavyuhaSutra.

The collection follows a thematic format.

The compiler arranges the stories under tencategories, each one cate gory is further subdivided into more minute and specific divisions.

While we can discern a rough chronological order, there is, however, c onsiderableskipping through dynasties from one part of the collection to another.

In this regard, itdiffers from the previous two Ch'ing collections which f ollowed a strict chronological order,modelled undoubtedly upon the B uddhist chronicles and lives of eminent monks.

In linkinggroups of stories to either perils avoided and blessings grant ed, the cimpiler wants tovalidate and verify the scriptural teachings ab out Kuan-yin.

Although much morevoluminous than the collection of Lu Kao compile d in 501, the modern collection does sharethe same organizational pri nciple.

The miracle tales are recorded under 31 categories which are subsum ed under

ten general categories.

I will list them with the number of tales in parenthesis.

Ⅰ · Relief from various diseases (49) : i. eye diseases (8) ;

ii. foot diseases (6); iii. throatdiseases (2) ; iv. leprosy (3) ;

v. possession (3) ; skin diseases (5) ;

vi. stomach andintestine diseases (6) ; vii. fever (2) ;

viii. epilepsy (1) ; ix. madness (1) ; x. smallpox(12).

Ⅱ · Rescue from water and fire (42) : i. water (33) ; ii. fire (9).

Ⅲ · Rescue from imprisonment and other dangers (55) :

i. from prison (19) ; ii. from otherdangers (36).

Ⅳ · Obtaining sons and blessings (58) : i. obtaining sons (42) ;

ii. obtaining otherblessings (16).

Ⅴ · Obtaining wisdom, lengthening lifespan and resurrection (30) :

i. obtaining wisdom (8); ii. extension of lifespan (4) ;

iii. resurrection from death (18).

Ⅵ · Reward of filial piety and good rebirth (30) :

i. parents' recovery due to children's filialpiety (7) ;

ii. rebirth in Pure Land (19) ; iii. rebirth in heaven (3) ;

iv. non-retrogression (1).

Ⅶ · Karmic retribution (43) : i. immediate karmic retribution in life (8) ;

ii. meeting KingYama (1) ; iii. making manifest evil karma (23) ;

iv. rewarding repentance (11).

Ⅷ · Manifesting divine presence through marvels (54) :

i. by transformations （7,examples including Wife of Mr. Ma and the cl

am）; ii. by efficacious anamolies (23) ;

iii.by supernormal powers (6) ; iv. by subduing demons (18).

Ⅸ ·

Manifestating divine presence through overcoming natural disasters (

10) : i. draught(3) ; ii. rainfall (6) ; iii. driving away locusts (1).

Ⅹ · Manifesting divine