

Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: Discourses and Practices

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ABSTRACT

Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: Discourses and Practices

中古中國佛教裡的產孕之道: 觀念論述與歷史實踐

Hsin-Yi Lin

林欣儀

In Buddhism birth is regarded as the origin of suffering and impurity, whereas it also forms the physical basis indispensable for seeking and attaining awakening. Birth is both the starting points of incurring defilement and achieving sanctity. Pointing out this paradox on birth in Buddhism and situating the issue within the context of Chinese religion and history, this dissertation extensively investigates Buddhist discourses and practices of reproduction in medieval China. It answers how Buddhist discourses and practices of childbirth were transmitted, transformed, and applied in medieval China, and how they interacted with indigenous healing resources and practices in both Chinese religious and medical realms. Through examining the primary sources such as the excavated *Day Books* (Chapter One), Buddhist hagiographies (Chapter Two), Buddhist obstetric and embryological discourses (Chapter Three and Four) and healing resources preserved in Tripiṭaka and Dunhuang manuscripts, Dunhuang transformation texts and tableaux, and miracle tales and anecdote literature (Chapter Three, Four and Five), I argue that not only was there a paradoxical dualism at the heart of Buddhism's relationship with reproduction, but also Buddhism provides abundant healing resources for dealing with childbirth on the practical level. Overall I contend that Buddhist healing resources for childbirth served as an effective channel through which Buddhist teaching, worldview and concepts of gender and body were conveyed to its supplicants. Through this investigation, this dissertation contributes to the understanding of the association of Buddhism with medicine, the influence of Buddhist discourses and practices of reproduction on China, and the transmission of Buddhist views of gender, the body, and life to China through its healing activities related to childbirth.

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Introduction

Buddhism and Childbirth: A Few Cases

In the tenth month of 656 CE, Empress Wu was in the last month of pregnancy with her third son, Li Xian 李顯, later known as Emperor Zhongzong of Tang (656-710 CE).

During this “difficult month,” a term generally referring to the last month of pregnancy in the medieval period, Empress Wu felt uncertain about it and turned to Buddhism to seek divine blessing and protection from the most prestigious monk at the time, Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664CE). Taking the opportunity to strengthen the tie of Buddhism with the imperial family, Xuanzang requested Emperor Gaozong (628-683 CE), the father, to let the newborn be raised as a monk after delivery if it was a boy. Five days later, Xuanzang presented a report to the emperor, describing an auspicious event he witnessed:

Śramaṇa Xuanzang reports: I have heard that the appearance of a white pigeon is an auspicious sign, symbolizing the rise of the emperor of Yin dynasty, and the presentation of an omen by a red sparrow to King Zhou anticipated his prosperity. Thus for a long time it is known that Heaven sends down omens to manifest itself in human affairs. Early this evening I saw in the Xianqing Hall a sparrow, whose back and feathers have the color of cinnabar and whose abdomen and feet are vermillion. Flying from the south, it landed on the emperor’s seat, walked and jumped around, and appeared at ease. Seeing this extraordinary bird, I said to it, “The empress has been pregnant and is about to give birth. I am deeply worried about it and wish her delivery be smooth and safe. If it will be as what I expect, please manifest some good sign.” The sparrow then circled around and hopped, displaying a peaceful manner, as if it understood my mind.¹

Not long after turning in this memorial, Xuanzang was informed by the emperor’s messenger of the result of Empress Wu’s delivery. She safely gave birth to a son, handsome and

¹ Huili 慧立 and Yancong 彥棕 of Tang dynasty, *Datang da tsien si sanzang fashi zhuang* 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of Dacien Temple, a biography of Xuanzang), T. 2053, 270c-271a. The original text is as follows. “沙門玄奘言：玄奘聞白鳩彰瑞，表殷帝之興，赤雀呈符，示周王之慶。是知穹昊降祥以明人事，其來久矣。玄奘今日申後酉前，於顯慶殿庭帷內見有一雀，背羽俱丹，腹足咸赤，從南飛來，入帳止於御座，徘徊躡躍，貌甚從容。見是異禽，乃謂之曰：『皇后在孕未遂分誕，玄奘深懷憂懼，願乞平安，若如所祈，為陳喜相。』雀乃迴旋蹠足，示平安之儀，了然解人意。”

extraordinary. During the childbirth, it was said that the divine light shone throughout the whole court and even up to the sky. The emperor was extremely delighted and promised to let the son become a monk. He bestowed the child a title, the King of Buddha's Light.²

Three days after Li Xian's birth, Xuanzang presented a document to the court again. In it he compared the newborn to Prince Siddhārtha, the future Śākyamuni Buddha, and praised that Li Xian's birth had similar auspicious signs and inborn noble acts just like the Siddhārtha's first "seven steps" soon after his birth. Finally he reminded the emperor once again his promise of allowing the prince to become a monk.³ The emperor then made the newborn accept the Three Refuges, put on monastic garments, and live close by Xuanzang. One month later, to celebrate the infant's birth, Xuanzang personally shaved Li Xian, together with other seven companions, all of whom formally became Xuanzang's disciples.⁴

Another anecdote about Xuanzang and Li Xian's birth was recorded in a Song monk's annotation of Daoxuan 道宣's *Commentary on the Dharmagupta Vinaya* (*Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T. 1428), titled *Sifen lü xingshi chao pi* 四分律行事鈔批. It mentions nothing about the omens but does mention the transformation of the fetus' sex:

When Zhetian (Empress Wu) conceived Emperor Shenlong (Li Xian), the Emperor inquired Tang Sanzang (Xuanzang), "Is it a boy or a girl?" and also asked Daoists, "Is it a boy or a girl?" Those knowing divination replied the Emperor, "According to the Diagrams of *Yijing*, it shall be a girl." Although Sanzang knew the fetus was indeed a girl, he was not willing to give the same answer as those Daoists. Therefore he gave the Emperor an opposite answer, "It is a boy." Despite knowing that this answer was not true, Sanzang believed that the power of the Three Jewels was capable of

² *Datang da tsien si sanzang fashi zhuang*, 271b.

³ *Ibid*, 271b.

⁴ *Datang da tsien si sanzang fashi zhuang*, 271c-272a; Liu Shu-fen has pointed out that Li Xian was in fact not living close with Xuanzang and the record here in Xuanzang's biography is not precise. See Liu Shu-fen, "Xuanzang de zuehou shinian (655-664) 玄奘的最後十年(655-664) (The Final Ten Years of Xuanzang's Life, 655-664)," *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢 95 (2009.3):45-46.

changing the situation. Therefore, he summoned monks and nuns in the capital and made them chant so that the Empress would manage to produce a son. Because if his prediction failed, the imperial family might think that the Dharma was ineffective and would no longer support it. After monks and nuns gathered and painstakingly chanted, the fetus succeeded in transforming itself into a male. This was why King Yin (Li Xian) still had a female voice.⁵

These two stories are among the few sources that report Xuanzang's participation in the prince's birth event during the medieval period. At this time, there was political struggle between Emperor Gaozong and the elder ministers left by his father Taizong (599-649 CE). Being close with the elder ministers, Xuanzang was somewhat alienated from Emperor Gaozong and had a difficult time in his final ten years. His biography was hidden once finished by his disciple rather than circulated publicly given the sensitive relationship between him and the imperial court. Except in Xuanzang's biography, the first story is not recorded anywhere else. From the phrasing of the two memorials Xuanzang presented to the emperor, one can detect that he strove very hard for the emperor's favor of Buddhism.⁶ The second anecdote shows that behind the scene of the prince's birth, Buddhism and Daoism competed intensely for the emperor's trust and support.

There is something more intriguing than the hidden political tension and religious competition in these two stories. That is the relationship of Buddhism with reproduction. Why did the imperial family turn to Buddhism for help on the childbirth issue? In what sense were Buddhist teaching and monastics considered to be helpful to human procreation? The two episodes demonstrate that the Buddhist monk was assumed to be capable of providing spiritual succor by means of the protective divine power to which he had access, the divinatory clairvoyance to interpret heavenly signs, and the practical services of divining the

⁵ Śramaṇa Dajue of the Huayen Temple in Jiandong, *Sifen lü xingshi chao pi* 四分律行事鈔批 (Annotation on Daoxuan's Commentary of the Dharmagupta Vinaya), X. 42, No. 736, 1043b. Liu Shu-feng thinks that this anecdote probably appeared between 677 and 707 and was first composed in 712. See Liu, "Xuanzang de zuehou shinian," 42.

⁶ Ibid.

fetus's sex and holding a ritual to change it.

Xuanzang was neither the first nor the last Buddhist monk involved in childbirth. The techniques that medieval Buddhist monks employed were also not confined to praying for smooth birth, divining through auspicious signs, and anticipating and changing fetal sex by a ritual. About one hundred years before him, another renowned monk, Tanluan 曇鸞 (475-542 CE), later known as the founder of Pure Land School, was once also engaged in assisting with a difficult birth. Requested by an anxious father-in-law whose daughter-in-law was about to give birth, Tanluan utilized his medical knowledge, just like a physician, instructing the household to prepare a room for the woman's parturition, informing her of the proper position and body movements for delivery, and guiding the family to prepare an appropriate diet for her. Under his instruction, the woman managed to produce a child.⁷ This case was later collected in a Tang medical work, *Waitai miyao fang* 外臺秘要方 (Arcane Essentials from the Imperial Library) by the official Wang Tao 王燾 (ca. 670-755 CE).⁸ Unlike Xuanzang who was said to count on omens and ritual chanting to help Empress Wu's parturition, monk Tanluan mastered medicine himself and was well-known for his pursuit of transcendent recipes for immortality. His biography mentions that in order to search for recipes of wellness and longevity, he traveled far from Shangxi to the south to visit Tao Hongjing (451-536 CE), a famous Daoist physician at that time. Tanluan was also said to excel in "regulating mind and *qi*, and identifying the causes of a disease, which made him renowned in the capital of Northern Wei. For instructing people, he composed "A *Thesis on*

⁷ Wang Tao 王燾, *Waitai miyao fang* 外臺秘要方 (Arcane Essentials from the Imperial Library), fasc. 3, 54, in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu* (SKQS below).

⁸ This case has been discussed by Jen-der Lee in her study on medieval Chinese medicine and women. See her *Nuren de zhongguo yiliao shi: hantang zhi jian de jiankang zhaogu yu xingbie* 女人的中國醫療史—漢唐之間的健康照顧與性別 (Women's History of Chinese Medicine: Health Care and Gender during the Han-Tang Period) (Taipei: sanming shuju, 2008), 3-9.

Regulating Qi " (*Tiaoqi lun* 調氣論).⁹ As a Buddhist monk who was known for studying medicine his entire life, it is not difficult to understand why the father-in-law went all the way into the mountain to find Tanluan to assist his pregnant daughter-in-law and why this medical case was preserved in Wang's medical collection. Wang as well as Tang physicians might use Tanluan's instruction on giving birth as reference.

Buddhist monks providing healing or medical service for childbirth during this period can also be seen in another case that happened seventy years after Xuanzang. Described briefly in the *Old Book of Tang* (*Jiutang shu* 舊唐書), it is said that Emperor Xuanzong's (685-762 CE) first Empress Wang and her brother, fearing that the empress might be abolished soon due to her failure to produce an heir, turned to a heretical monk named Mingwu 明悟 and asked him to "pray to the South and the North Dipper" for the empress' conception. The monk carved the characters of "tian" (heaven), "di" (earth), and the emperor's name on a "thunderbolt wood." He made the empress wear this piece of wood, and cast a spell over it, "wearing it shall bring a son and [make the queen] as powerful as Empress Wuzetian." This scheme was soon uncovered by Emperor Xuanzong. He abolished the empress and sentenced her brother to death.¹⁰ Chou Yi-liang has briefly discussed this case in his study "Tantrism in China", and suggested that the monk might have relied on some Tantric scriptures such as *The Homa Ritual of The Big Dipper* (*Beidou qixing humo fa*

⁹ *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*Continuation of the Biographies of Eminent Monks*), T. 2060, 470a-c. Before and after Tanluan, there are a number of Buddhist monks, Chinese, Central Asians or Indians, who were said excelling in medicine and treating people by their medical expertise during this time, such as Yu Fakai 于法開, Sen Shen 僧深, and Zhi Facun 支法存. See Liu Shiu-fen, "Tang Song shiqi senren, guojia, he yiliao de guanxi: cong yaofang don dao huiming ju 唐宋時期僧人、國家和醫療的關係: 從藥方洞到惠民局" (*Monks, State, and Medicine in Tang-Song Period: From the Longmen Cave of Medicine Recipes to the Bureau of Benefiting People*), 149-150; Chen Ming, *Zhonggu yiliao yu wailie wenhua* 中古醫療與外來文化 (*Foreign Medicine and Culture in Medieval China*), Ch.2.

¹⁰ *Jiutang shu* (The Old Book of Tang, JTS below) (Taipei: dingwen shuju, 1981), fasc. 51, 2177. In *Xintang shu* (The New Book of Tang, XTS below), the term "Nanbei dou" 南北斗 (The Southern and Northern Dippers) was changed to "Beidou" (The Northern Dipper) and the character "nan" (South) was taken out. See XTS, fasc.76, 3490.

北斗七星護摩法, T. 1310) to pray for the empress' conception.¹¹

These three cases above exhibit that it is not uncommon for Buddhist monks in the medieval period being involved in or actively interfering in reproduction with their ritual healing or medical expertise. In fact, after Buddhist dhāraṇīs and esoteric rituals were introduced to China, there were cases that monks used them treating sicknesses. Both the biographies of Esoteric Buddhist Master Vajrabodhi (Jinggāng zhī 金剛智, 671-741CE) and his disciple Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705-774 CE) mention their deeds treating the imperial members by using esoteric spells or rituals. Vajrabodhi once used āveśa rite to temporarily bring back the spirit of Xuanzong's princess from the hell when the princess was about to die.¹² Amoghavajra also performed the Wish-Fulfillment Dhāraṇī (*Dasuiqiou tuoluoni* 大隨求陀羅尼) to exorcise the evil spirits for Emperor Suzong (711-762 CE), whose illness soon became cured next day after the exorcistic healing.¹³ The various benefits that this dhāraṇī text promises, if copied and worn it, also includes “obtaining a son if seeking a son, a girl if wishing for a girl, and having safe pregnancy and smooth childbirth.”¹⁴

Monks performing Buddhist incantations or rituals for the purpose of childbirth

¹¹ Chou Yi-liang, “Tantrism in China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8.3/4 (1945), Appendix L, 320. I check this scripture, but find no reference to the ritual related to childbirth. But in another similar scripture, titled *Beidou qixing yanming jing* 北斗七星延命經 (*The Sutra of the Northern Dipper for Extending Lifespan*, T. 1307). The benefits it mentions to worship this scripture include “safe childbirth both for mother and the child” and “giving birth to a child who is pretty and long-lived,” 426b. Mollier has explored the scripture and related issues in the fourth chapter of her book, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2008).

¹² *Song Gaoseng zhuan* (SGSZ below, T. 2061), 711c. Study of the details of the story and the āveśa rite, see Michel Strickmann, edited by Bernard Faure, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), chapter 6 and 5.

¹³ According to Bukong's biography, this happened around 761 CE during the reign of the Emperor Suzong, See SGSZ, 713a. This text, *Dasuiqiou tuoluoni jing* 大隨求陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Wish-Fulfillment*, T. 1153), was translated by Bukong, who submitted it to the emperor in 758 CE. Before him, this text has been translated by the North India monk Baosiwei (Skt. Ratanacinta, d.721) from Kāśmīra (T. 20, No. 1154). See Chou Yi-liang, “Tantrism in China,” 295 and Appendix N, 322.

¹⁴ *Dasuiqiou tuoluoni jing*, 621c. A well-known esoteric dhāraṇī with similar content promising fertility to parents has also been seen in the “Chapter of Universal Gate” of the *Lotus Sutra*. I will discuss this more in Chapter Four, “The Healing Resources for Reproduction in Buddhist Tripitaka.”

happened in medieval Japan as well. Lady Murasaki (c.973-c.1014 or 1025 CE) recorded in her diary describing Empress Shōshi's delivery of her first child at her father Michinaga's mansion, where five altars were installed for five Myōō guardian kings and prayers were intoned continuously by thirty-seven Buddhist priests from various temples.¹⁵ Michel Strickmann in his research on spirit possession notices that in tenth- and eleventh-century Kyoto women were often the principal victims of demons. Among them, pregnant women, or women in their culmination of pregnancy, would demonstrate "the most vivid scene and activities of demons" when they "cried out in their labor pains that the demons were made manifest."¹⁶ At this moment, monks were summoned to transfer the afflicting demons into the bodies of young mediums. Through the medium the demons could tell their stories, by which monks reveal the identities of the attackers, who were often jealous or vengeful spirits of the dead, whether courtiers, consorts of palace women, or rivals of the woman they afflicted. As described in medieval Japanese literature like Lady Murasaki's *Tale of Genji* or the *Pillow Book* of Sei Shōnagon (968-1025 CE), these potent otherworldly forces manifested themselves most dramatically around the bed of an expectant mother, where all hopes, anxieties, jealousies and ambitions were most intensely focused.¹⁷ Interestingly, Strickmann suggests that these cases of spirit possession, visible and audible, were in fact produced in a passive but willing medium by a monk. To some extent, these possession cases might be considered iatrogenic, produced by the monkish physicians themselves.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ōsumi Kazuo, translated by Cecilia Segawa Seigle and Barbara Ruch, "Historical Notes on Women and the Japanization of Buddhism," in Babara Ruch ed., *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 2002), xxxv; Richard Bowring, trans. And ed., *Murasaki Shikibu; Her Diary and Poetic Memories: A Translation and Study* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 51-73.

¹⁶ Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, Ch. 5, 194.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 195.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 196-198.

Key Issues: Buddhist Healing, Indigenous Religions, and Gender

From the third to the eleventh centuries, from China to Japan, with the spread of Buddhism in East Asia, Buddhist healing techniques and medical knowledge were brought to these areas. Childbirth was one of the major occasions where these imported healing resources were put into use along with other indigenous available ones. While accepting these healing resources, people usually perceived them through the lens of their indigenous practical or epistemological framework. In Xuanzang's case, it is apparent that his allusion of heavenly bestowed omens of previous dynasties and his rhetoric of witnessing auspicious signs stemmed from the native tradition of the human-universe correspondence. This native resource on the one hand made Buddhism easier to connect with local people. But on the other hand, in Xuanzang's case of divining and changing fetal sex, we also see that Buddhism had to compete with native religion to prove its superiority and earn sponsorship. The method of divining fetus' sex already existed in Qin-Han period as shown in the excavated *Day Books*. The method of changing fetus' sex was also available in the medical books from Han to Tang.¹⁹ But in order to earn the emperor's favor for Buddhism, it was said that Xuanzang had to prove the superior efficacy of the "power of the Three Jewels" by holding a Buddhist ritual to change the fetus' sex.

In the case of Tanluan, we see another kind of interrelationship between Buddhism and local healing tradition. From his tale, we do not know the exact sources that he utilized to give his instruction to the parturition. His instructions include setting up a room for the parturient woman by laying out thatch and felts on the ground and thus providing the woman for delivery and hanging up ropes and wooden sticks for her to apply force. These remind us

¹⁹ For the methods of divining fetus' sex in the *Day Books*, see my Ch.1; for those of changing fetus' sex in Chinese medical works from Han to Tang, see Lee Jen-der, "Hantang zhijian qiuzi yifang shitan: jianlun fuke lanshang yu xingbie lunshu (Reproductive Medicine in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China: Gender Discourse and the Birth of Gynecology)," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 68.2 (1997.6): 309-310.

of similar instructions recorded in the medieval Chinese medical works. In these works, padding the ground with furs over thatch for delivery is suggested in order to absorb the reproductive effluvia and to prevent the birth blood flowing out to polluting the ground, so as to avoid offending the *fanzhi* (反支) and its harm.²⁰ When aiding in the difficult birth, Tanluan did not mention any thing that could be characterized as Buddhism. His medical learning background and the medical work he left, "*A Thesis on Regulating Qi*," shows his healing skill basically coming from indigenous tradition. His know-how of treating childbirth probably also benefits from native source. We have no way of knowing whether he might also teach the pregnant woman he helped to recite Amitabha's name, as he taught his Pure-Land followers. Nevertheless, it appears that Tanluan's identity of being a Buddhist monk propagating Pure-land teaching had no conflict with his application of indigenous healing techniques.

This inclination of intermingling Buddhism with indigenous religious healing resources when treating reproductive problems is also exemplified in the cases of Empress Wang and those in medieval Japan. The monk whom the Empress Wang turned to seek help in solving infertility, Mingwu, utilized the method of carving some spell-like characters and the emperor's name on the wood to make him return his favor to the Empress in fact sounds like the "female art of charming." This art was often carried out by concubines to compete for emperors' love in the Han court and was regarded as a kind of "bedchamber art."²¹ Though Chou Yi-liang suggests that the monk might perform a kind of esoteric Buddhist rite, the term that the *Old Book of Tang* used to describe him, "the heretical monk" (*zuodao sen* 左道僧), somewhat betrayed his complex, unofficial Buddhist identity. The cult he appealed to was the

²⁰ Lee Jen-der, *Nuren de zhongguo yiliao shi*, 3, 101-102. *Fanzhi* are some specific dates or months which were seen as especially harmful of doing things. In the *Day Books* of Qin period from Shuihudi, the term has appeared.

²¹ Li Jian-Min 李建民, "The Art of Charming in Han China," *Xinshixue* 7.4 (1996.12): 1-32.

Northern Dipper. According to Christine Mollier, the belief of Northern Dipper's power of imbuing the embryo with its celestial souls and controlling one's lifespan originated in Eastern Han and also continued to exist in Shangqing and Lingbao Daoist texts.²² In medieval Japan, as Lady Murasaki described in her diary, while Buddhist monks were summoned to chant to avert a difficult delivery in the woman's room, Yin-Yang diviners were also installed in other rooms to offer prayers at the same time.²³

While appropriating or competing with native religious healing resources, Buddhist monks also introduced their own. And by treating people's sicknesses, Buddhist monks may not just build connection with them, but also transmit to them Buddhist teachings and conceptions of illnesses, the body, and life. In Xuanzang's case, for instance, his success in praying a smooth birth for the Empress and in anticipating the fetus's sex must have strengthened the belief that Buddhist monks had access to the divine power that could grant healing or blessing to wellbeing. By aiding the birth event, he also reinforced the tie of Buddhism with the imperial house. The document he presented to the emperor repeatedly stressed the appearance of auspicious signs and compared the prince's birth to the Buddha's birth. This not only gave the sacred meaning to the birth event but also implicitly conveyed a Buddhist view regarding and wishing that this birth event could be the starting point for an imperial member heading toward the Buddhist path pursuing enlightenment.

Buddhist healing resources on childbirth are most abundantly preserved in the dhāraṇī texts and dhāraṇī-related rituals. As earlier as the third century when the *Lotus Sutra* was translated by Dharmarakṣa (ca.230-316 CE), it had already promised its follower reproductive fertility in the "Chapter of Universal Gate" and included a paragraph of dhāraṇī

²² Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, Ch. 4 and 3.

²³ *Engendering Faith*, xxxv.

right in the next chapter with the effect of guarding the sūtra-receiver.²⁴ From the fourth century on, more and more dhāraṇī texts and dhāraṇī-related rituals were translated or compiled in China. The secular benefits that these incantations promise to the followers include those aiming at solving reproductive problems including infertility, difficult birth, and postnatal care. The Wish-Fulfillment Dhāraṇī indeed guarantees to its receiver obtaining children and safe pregnancy as mentioned above.²⁵ In Dunhuang, these kinds of Buddhist incantatory healing resources related to childbirth are richly found and appear to be used extensively in daily life.²⁶ Seen against this background, it might not be simply an accidental choice or personal favorite that led Empress Wu or Empress Wang to turn to Buddhism to seek help in solving their reproductive problems.

Another noteworthy aspect about Buddhist healing and childbirth are the concepts of gender and the body reflected in these healing knowledge and practices. In his observation of the relationship between male monastic healers and female patients in the cases of Japan, Strickmann notices that Buddhist monks, by using their ritualistic skills of chanting, praying, and transferring demons to the medium waited to be possessed, reveal the cause of labor pain and the identity of demon attackers, and thereby recreate the whole story. These Buddhist monks in some sense are ritual healers as much as the definers of the illness, the translators of the experience of the reproductive body, and the directors of the whole ritual drama. This inspires a series of questions: how does Buddhism define and perceive reproduction, the female reproductive body, and fetuses overall? How were these ideas of birth, gender and life conveyed to the healing recipients while they apply and receive Buddhist healing services

²⁴ Dharmarakṣa of Western Jin dynasty trans., *Zheng fahua jing* 正法華經 (T. 263), vol. 23 and 24. Both features are also found in Kumārajīva's second translation except he transliterated the dhāraṇī instead of translating it like Dharmarakṣa. See Kumārajīva of Yao Qin dynasty trans., *Miaofa lienhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (T. 262), vol. 25 and 26.

²⁵ See note 14.

²⁶ See my chapter 5.

provided by the monastic healers? How would these ideas entrained by the healing practices weave "a web of meaning" for repairing and curing, and thus having a huge impact on the healing recipients?

Some More Questions

These cases above in fact demonstrate one aspect of Buddhism that has long been neglected by scholars, namely its discourses and practices on reproduction. Using the examples of Xuanzang, Tanluan, Empress Wang, and a few Japanese pregnant noblewomen, my primary analyses show that any intention to understand the issue is impossible to bypass such essential questions as Buddhist perspectives and practices concerning childbirth, the relationship of Buddhist healing resources with indigenous religious ones, and Buddhist concepts of gender, reproductive bodies, and life.

Besides these major inquiries, there are other microscopic questions extended from the above cases and worth further exploration. For instance, Xuanzang drew on native tradition of auspicious signs while also comparing the prince's birth to that of the Buddha. We may wonder, what are the implications, rhetorics, omens or metaphors given and attached to childbirth existed in ancient Chinese religion and in Buddhism? How did indigenous religious traditions and Buddhism consider and engage with childbirth overall? Moreover, while the imperial birth event was described by Xuanzang as auspicious and sacred as Siddhārtha's birth, but one of the Four Noble Truths that Buddhism holds is the unavoidable nature of the suffering of birth. How would the two opposite views toward birth inside Buddhism influence people's perceptions and real experience of childbirth in their daily lives? And how would people reconcile one with the other or adopt either of them based on different contexts or interests in their daily practices of Buddhist healing?

Buddhism and Reproduction in China: Approaches and Sources

In ancient China, the discourses and practices of reproduction are intimately interwoven with its cosmology, religion, medicine, and conceptions of gender and the body. This brings scholars' attention to these fields but among them religion is the one that has been relatively neglected for a long time when discussing this issue of reproduction. However, it is worth exploring for two reasons. First, religion is a storehouse of myths, symbols, and metaphors, many of which involve childbirth or draw inspiration from it. Second, if we regard "religion" as a kind of "cultural repertoire," it actually provides abundant ideological and practical resources for dealing with various bodily issues ranging from religious cultivation to ordinary illnesses via ritual healing in daily life. Through examining these religious resources related to reproduction, it offers a channel to observe how religion, through its discourses of birth and healing practices for birth, permeate its concepts of gender, bodies, life through people's lives. It also pushes us to rethink the line between religion and medicine, and between the "natural" and "cultural" or "religious" perceptions of the body.

When Buddhism was transmitted to China, Buddhist healing and medicine were introduced to there as well. There are abundant discourses and practical resources associated with reproduction, including doctrinal definition of birth, literary metaphors inspired by the birth myths of the great Buddhist figures, embryological theories, healing techniques, and meditation cultivation on the issue. Intriguingly, on the one hand, Buddhism believes that life is suffering and this suffering begins from the origin of life, birth. On the other hand, birth and physical life ironically form the material basis and the starting point of seeking and attaining awakening. How does Buddhism perceive this origin of life, namely pregnancy and childbirth? What are the pragmatic resources that Buddhism provides for dealing with this suffering technically? And how did medieval Chinese Buddhists perceive and interact with these two paradoxical views of birth?

Starting from this paradox on birth in Buddhism, my dissertation extensively investigates the Buddhist discourses and practices of reproduction in medieval China. It explores how these Buddhist discourses of childbirth were formulated, the way in which these resources were transmitted and applied in the medieval period, their literary and religious transformation, and their interrelation with medieval Chinese conceptions of gender, bodies, and life.

My research on this topic builds on several sub-fields of scholarship of Buddhism. I shall review each of these different realms in details at the opening of every chapters. Here I just bring up two major fields that inspire this research in its beginning. The first is Buddhism and gender. Studies on Buddhist reproductive pollution and scriptures related to it such as the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* first trigger my curiosity of the relationship of Buddhism with reproduction. Although my dissertation does not address the scripture directly, scholarly works done by Michel Soymié (1965), Emily Ahern (1975), Gary Seaman (1981), Steven Sangren (1983), Beata Grant and Wilt Idema (2011) encouraged my further thinking on the issue. These studies also demonstrate an academic lacuna that has not been solved yet. That is the reason that gave rise to the appearance of this Buddhist idea of reproductive pollution in the medieval period. Thus I feel that tracking down Buddhist discourses and practices related to childbirth is in urgent need. There are also some scholars such as Stephen Teiser (1996), Alan Cole (1998), Chün-fang Yü (2001), and Zhiru (2007) who have touched upon the issue of the impact of Buddhism on Chinese parent-child relationship, especially on motherhood. Yet it is similarly unclear in these studies as to the cause of the emphasis on female reproductive pollution in Buddhist scriptures, and their impact on parent-child relationship. Besides these studies that focus more on the negative representation of birth in Buddhism, there is also research that pays attention to the sacred side on motherhood and reproduction. Hubert Durt's work on the scenes of pregnancy and birth in Buddha's biographies inspires me to further

survey hagiographical narratives in medieval China to understand Buddhist depictions of sacred birth, their literary rhetorics, and their influence on Chinese perception and reception of birth in hagiographical literature.

The second major field related to this dissertation is Buddhism and medicine. Current scholarship has indicated the blurred boundaries and intimate exchange between Chinese religions and medicine (Donald Harper, 1982, 1985, 1997; Paul Unschuld, 1985). Some discuss the medical activities of ancient shamans, the view that regarded pollution as a kind of etiology, and the notion of reproductive blood as a kind of powerful but dangerous taboo and “medicine” that had already existed in ancient China (Lin Fushi, 1994, 2008; Li Jianming, 1994, 2011; Liu Tseng-Kui, 2007; Lee Jen-der, 2002). Some show the profound connection of medieval Daoism with demonic etiology and exorcistic healing techniques, and the existence of their similar counterparts in Buddhism. (Michel Strickmann, 2002) For the study on Buddhism and medicine itself, Kenneth Zysk (1991) and Paul Demiéville (1985) provide good overview and starting point respectively on Indian and medieval Chinese sides. Moreover, studies on bodhisattvas or buddhas like Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) and Kṣitigarbha (Dizang), Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yaoshi, or Healing Buddha) have addressed the prominent role that these Buddhist deities played in the healing activities of common people's lives (Yü, 2001; Zhiru, 2007; Birbaum, 1989). Japanese scholars have contributed a few thorough textual studies on Buddhist obstetrics and pediatrics based on canonical sources. (Fukunaga Katsumi, 1972; Obinata Daijō, 1965; Nihonyanagi Kenji, 1994) Recently, more scholars call for study in this rising field (Chen Ming, 2013; Pierce Salguero, 2014) and have done inspiring research on Buddhist embryology and birth theory in different local traditions (Chen Ming, 2001,2004; Li Qinpu, 2006; Robert Kritzer, 2004, 2009, 2014; Amy Langenberg, 2008; Frances Garrett, 2008; Jessey Choo, 2012). Developing along this trend, my dissertation aims to remedy this gap of knowledge on Buddhism, medicine and gender. It also uncovers the

content of Buddhist obstetrics and its development in medieval China so as to reveal the process in which religious healing and medicine joined hands in shaping the seemingly “natural” knowledge of the body and reproduction.

The primary sources I utilize in this research include the excavated *Day Books* (Chapter One), Buddhist hagiographies (Chapter Two), Buddhist obstetric and embryological discourses and healing resources preserved in Tripitaka and Dunhuang manuscripts (Chapter Three, Four, and Five), Dunhuang transformation texts and tableaux (Chapter Two, Three, and Five), miracle tales and anecdote literature (Chapter Five). Through inquiring into these materials, I show that there was a paradox at the heart of Buddhism's relationship with reproduction, which it regards simultaneously as the origin of suffering and impurity and also as a prophecy or proof of achieving sanctity. I also explore the healing resources that Buddhism provides for dealing with the issue on the practical level. Through this investigation, this dissertation contributes to the understanding of the association of Buddhism with medicine, the influence of Buddhist discourses and practices of reproduction on China, and the transmission of Buddhist views of gender, the body, and life to the mainland through its healing activities.

Dissertation Outline

For tackling these aspects and questions of reproduction in medieval Chinese Buddhism mentioned above, I divide my dissertation into five chapters. Following the Introduction, Chapter One, "Time and Space, Divination and Taboos: Reproduction under Ancient Chinese Correlative Cosmology" delineates the religious ideas and practices of childbirth in pre-Buddhist ancient China. It analyzes a divination manual *Day Book (Rishu)* and several Han literati's reflections on contemporaneous social customs and religious taboos. I point out how ancient Chinese considered and dealt with reproduction with a divinatory and

taboo system based on correlative cosmology in coordination with time and space. Most previous scholarship focused on *Gestation Book (taichanshu)* excavated from Mawangdui and confines the discussions of reproduction to the medical realm. Few concentrates on the significance of the religious taboos, rituals and practices on childbirth recorded in ancient religious accounts. I contend that not only was the custom of reproductive pollution traced all the way back to the Han dynasty in the first century of the common era, but also these “religious” ideas of reproduction form an indispensable part of constructing ancient Chinese cosmology. Human reproduction at the microcosmic level embodies and takes part in the macrocosmic cosmogenesis. This chapter is meant to lay out the cosmological backdrop of perceiving birth on the native soil.

Chapter Two and Three constitute a pair, treating respectively the two seemingly paradoxical perspectives toward birth found in medieval Chinese Buddhism: the sacred and suffering birth. Chapter Two, “Sacred Birth: Reproductive Scenes in Chinese Buddhist Hagiographies,” focuses on one aspect of the paradox concerning birth in Buddhism, which is to view it as a prophecy or proof of a great figure's sanctity. Inspired by the Hubert Durt's research on the Buddha's birth and his mother Māyā's pregnancy, I examine the birth scenes depicted in Buddhist hagiographical narratives, namely the life of the Buddha and Chinese monastic biographies. I explore the translations and Chinese compositions of the Buddha's biographies. I also look into the three medieval Chinese monastic hagiographies. Overall I argue that Chinese Buddhist hagiographical depiction of monks' birth scenes and their mothers' pregnancy assimilate numerous elements from the Buddha's birth tales and Buddhist symbols while also keeping many indigenous features. Through comparison between the Buddha's and Chinese monastic hagiographies, I show one of the multifarious veins through which Buddhism exerted influence on the Chinese imagination of giving birth. I also demonstrate the striking Daoist influence in these narratives of Chinese monks' birth tales.

Chapter Three, “The Origin of Suffering: Buddhist Obstetrics, Birth Duḥkha, and Filial Piety,” shifts the focus on birth from its sacred facet to the other side, suffering. Based on the careful textual studies on Buddhist gynecology and obstetrics done by Japanese scholars like Daijō Obinata and Fukunaga Katsumi, this chapter first illustrates Buddhist obstetrics as described in translated and indigenous Buddhist scriptures. I then use the example of *the Sūtra on Entry into the Womb* and other similar scriptures to demonstrate how the knowledge of gestation in these scriptures endorses the Buddhist doctrine of suffering and to define childbirth as one of the four major forms of physical suffering. They did so by vividly elaborating the horrible scenes of the various afflictions experienced by the fetus in womb in every weekly or monthly stages. This emphasis of birth as suffering was inherited and further strengthened by a series of Chinese Buddhist transformation texts and tableaux, part of which promoted "repaying parents' kindness." In these Chinese representations and recreations of Buddhist obstetrics and embryology, the subject bearing this birth suffering gradually shifts from fetuses to mothers. This shift also further legitimizes and reinforces the necessity of children fulfilling filial piety via Buddhist practices.

Chapter Four and Five form the second pair of the dissertation. This part concentrates on the pragmatic solutions that Buddhism could offer to deal with childbirth on the practical level. Chapter Four, “Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: Canonical Sources,” examines the relevant Buddhist healing resources embedded in Tripitaka respectively on 1) treating infertility and seeking conception, 2) pregnancy care, 3) difficult birth, 4) postnatal care for mothers and newborns, and 5) miscarriage and abortion. These healing resources inherit partially from Āyurvedic obstetrics, and add to them Mahāyāna merit-making practices and dhāranī-related practices and rituals for exorcism to make Buddhist reproductive treatments more powerful. These healing practices also come with a whole package of demonic etiology, and pathology partially explained through the logic of

karmic retribution. Previous scholarship has examined some of these Buddhist practices that were used as healing resources in Buddhism in general, but few spotlights their applications in the occasion of childbirth. My research indicates that these practices are largely suggested to use in tackling various types of reproductive issues in canonical texts and are especially powerful in transmitting Buddhist body concepts.

Chapter Five, “Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: Historical and Archeological Sources,” further investigates the evidences of these Buddhist healing resources for childbirth that have been applied in real historical settings. I first examines dhāraṇīs, talismans and seals offered for a series of reproductive issues among Dunhuang manuscripts and printed copies. I analyze both their textual and pictorial forms and contents, their usages, and decipher their meanings. Among these exorcistic healing techniques, there are several ones especially associated with Avalokiteśvara, which lead to my ensuing discussion in the second section, in which I examine three protective deities of childbirth, namely Avalokiteśvara, Hārītī and Bāla-grahā (the pediatric demons or protectors). I explore reproductive healing resources related to them and evidence of these resources being applied in the textual and iconic forms as shown in Dunhuang and archeological sources. In the third section, I investigate prayers used in the Buddhist ritual setting for praying safe birth and prayers written in colophon of a scripture-copying manuscript for the same purpose. Finally in the fourth section I turn to monastic biographies, miracle tales and literati's notes to examine cases that display monks treating childbirth or any above resources being applied and mentioned in these narratives. As a whole, I find in these sources a considerable extent of crossing of boundaries between Buddhism and native religious traditions, and between religions and medicine. Many Buddhist incantations and talismans for childbirth not only largely borrowed from Daoism but also were collected into contemporary medical works together with other Daoist ones with similar functions. Prayers for childbirth adopted a great

amount of native rhetoric of celebrating fertility and inherited traditional gender role and expectation of familial prosperity. They appear along with Buddhist ideas of impermanence and suffering of birth within the same prayer. This intermingling notwithstanding, Buddhist healing resources for childbirth still served as an effective channel through which Buddhist teaching, worldview and concepts of gender and the body were conveyed to its supplicants. Medieval miracle tales and literati's notes served exactly as the tool and the arena that both contribute to and reflect this phenomenon.

Chapter One

Time and Space, Divination and Taboos: Reproduction under Ancient Chinese Correlative Cosmology

In the seventh chapter of "Quintessential Spirit" (*Jinshenshun* 精神訓) of *Huainanzi* (ca. 139 BCE), a work compiled in the second century BCE of early Han dynasty by the local King of Huainan, Liu An (179-122 BCE), an illustration is provided for the intimate correlation between the universe and the formations of human embryos, the bodies and emotions:

The Quintessential Spirit is what we receive from Heaven; the physical body is what we are given by Earth....The myriad things carry the yin and embrace the yang, and, through the blending of *qi*, become harmonious. Therefore it is said, "In the first month, fertilization occurs. In the second month, a corporeal mass develops. In the third month, an embryo forms. In the fourth month, the flesh is produced. In the fifth month, the muscles form. In the sixth month, the bones develop. In the seven month, the fetus forms. In the eighth month, the fetus starts to move. In the ninth month, its movements become more pronounced. In the tenth month, the birth occurs. In this way, the physical body is completed and the five orbs are formed....Therefore, the roundness of the head is in the image of Heaven; the squareness of human feet is in the image of Earth. Heaven has four seasons, five phases, nine regions, and 366 days. Humans have four limbs, five orbs, nine apertures, and 366 joints. Heaven has wind, rain, cold, and heat; humans have taking, giving, joy, and anger."²⁷

The paragraph continues to elaborate descriptions of how each of the bodily sections, emotions and functions can be compared to the different natural phenomena and the temporal and spatial structure of the universe.²⁸ This source best demonstrates that at least from the

²⁷ John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, Harold D. Roth trans. and ed., *The Huainanzi by Liu An, King of Huainan, A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 241-242. In this translation, I replace the translation of "the vital energy" provided by the book with the original Chinese, *qi*, in the third line in order to emphasize the *qi*'s role in the theory of human embryonic formation in the Han. I will discuss this point more below.

²⁸ The comparison between the universe and human bodies after the above quote continues as follows. "Therefore, the choleric orb parallels the clouds; the pulmonary orb parallels the air; the hepatic orb parallels the

Han dynasty the human procreation and the cosmic creation have been regarded as an identical thing happening on different levels. The structures of the two were believed to correspond to each other from the outermost and macroscopic levels down to the innermost and microscopic levels. This correspondence between the universe and human body also reaches to the most microcosmic level, namely from the beginning of the formation of human embryo and down to every aspect of the structures of corporeal body and every kind of emotion. This paragraph of *Huainanzi* is among the very few texts that elaborate the monthly embryonic development under a Chinese correlative cosmological framework before the coming of Buddhism, which posited an embryology inherited from Indian medicine.²⁹ It thus provides a pivotal clue to understand pre-Buddhist ancient Chinese perceptions of gestation and the formation of a fetus, which, as displayed by the quote, was set against the backdrop of correlative cosmology. Viewing reproduction this way, human procreation not just participate in the creation of universe, it itself is a representation and reenactment of cosmogenesis.

In this chapter I will delineate practices and ideas of childbirth in ancient China by focusing on reproductive divination and taboos that stemmed from correlative cosmology and were utilized in daily life. I use both texts and images from historical sources as well as archeological artifacts. Early research on childbirth in ancient China has tended to either focus on birth myths of cultural heroes in antiquity or on the fertility cults revealed in these myths such as the cults to "dark bird" (*xuanniao* 玄鳥), "gaomei高禘"(divine matchmaker), and nuwa女媧. Scholars also discuss folk birth customs followed by these cults in the later

wind; the renal orb parallels the rain; and the splenic orb parallels the thunder. In this way human beings form a triad with Heaven and Earth, and the mind is the ruler of this. Therefore, the ears and eyes are the sun and moon; the blood and vital energy are the wind and rain." Ibid, 242.

²⁹ Other early Chinese texts with the similar statement of embryology in pre-Buddhist time include *Guanzi*, *Wenzi*, and *Mawang dui Gestation Book*, which I shall discuss below.

ages.³⁰ In the recent two decades, some scholars approach the issue in terms of the development of Chinese medicine and medical history from the perspective of gender.³¹ These works have more or less touched upon the religious aspects of ancient reproductive practices but have not given a comprehensive analysis by delving into how ancient people managed childbirth in terms of divination and taboos and what kind of thinking logic behind these practices. It is thus unclear concerning the relationship between these indigenous "religious" healing resources and their later Buddhist counterparts. Nevertheless, thanks to archeological findings in recent decades concerning almanac manuscripts, *Rishu* 日書 (*The Day Books*) dated to the Qin and Han period (221 BCE-9CE), we now have a more complete sense of how people tackled the issue on a daily basis through the guidance of texts on divination and taboos. In this regard, some scholars have utilized these rich resources to explore various aspects of everyday life and folk customs including those of childbirth in Qin-Han period.³² However, since more and more versions of the *Day Books* from different

³⁰ See for instance, Guo lichen 郭立誠, *Zhongguo shenyu lisu kao* 中國生育禮俗考 (Research on Chinese Rites and Customs of Reproduction)(Taipei: wenshizhe, 1971), esp. 1-15; Liang Yenming 梁豔敏, "Luexi shijing gansheng shenhua zhi yihan 略析詩經感生神話之涵義" (A preliminary analysis on the birth myths of mysterious correspondence in the *Classic of Poetry*), *Leshan shifan xueyuan xuebao* 樂山師範學院學報 25.3 (2010.5): 12-15; Yang Xian 楊顯, "Lun shiji zhong de gansheng shenhua 論史記中的感生神話" (On the birth myths of mysterious correspondence in the *Records of the Grand Historian*), *Sichuan shifan daxue xuebao* 四川師範大學學報 (Social Science Edition) 39.2 (2012.3): 87-89.

³¹ A series of representative studies have been made by Li Zhende (Jen-der Lee) 李貞德 in this respect. See her *Nuren de zhongguo yiliao shi: hantang jian de jiankang zhaogu yu xingbie* 女人的中國醫療史: 漢唐間的健康照顧與性別(A Women's History of Chinese Medicine and Healing: Health and Care in the Han to Tang dynasties) (Taipei: Sanming shuju, 2008); "Hantang zhijian qiuzi yifang shitan: jianlun fuke lanshang yu xingbie lunshu 漢唐之間求子醫方試探—兼論婦科濫觴與性別論述" (Reproductive Medicine in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China: Gender Discourses and the Birth of Gynecology), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 68.2 (1997.6): 283-367; "Hantang zhijian yishu zhong de shengchan zhi dao 漢唐之間醫書中的生產之道" (Childbirth in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 67.3 (1996): 533-654; "Hansui zhijian de shenzi buju wenti 漢隋之間的「生子不舉」問題" (Infanticide and Child Abandonment from Han to Sui), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 66.3 (1995): 747-812. For a brief introduction of recent results on childbirth of ancient China in English scholarship, see the three entries written respectively by Jessy J. C. Choo, "Prerequisites for Treating Childlessness," Sabine Wilms, "Nurturing the Fetus," Jen-der Lee, "Childbirth," all collected in TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes ed., *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 70-71, 71-73, 73-75. For the discussion of birth myths of ancient sages kings, see the final section of my Chapter Two.

³² Two particular comprehensive studies on the daily life and folk customs displayed in the *Day Books*, see Poo

localities have been excavated and annotated recently, so far researchers have yet to explore the issue of reproduction by examining the relevant sources scattered in different sections and editions of the *Day Books*.

In the following discussion, I will first look at the ideas and practices of childbirth mentioned in the *Day Books* by drawing on recent studies on various local versions of the *Day Books*. I will then situate these ideas and practices of childbirth against the backdrop of the correlative cosmology of the Qin-Han period by reading them together with the contemporaneous intellectual works such as *Guanzi*, *Huainanzi*, and *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*The Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*). I argue that the intimate correlation between human reproduction and cosmic reproduction found in these texts reveals the same logic behind the divination and taboos methods in the *Day Books*. In the third section I will further discuss some Han literati's observation on and criticism of these customs of divination and taboos of childbirth. Literati like Wang Cong 王充 (27-97 CE) explicates these customs in light of the theory of *qi* (vital energy) transformation while also harshly criticizing these customs. This theory was fully formed in the early Han and was integrated into correlative cosmology to explain the formation and mutual correspondence of myriad things and beings in the universe. Paradoxically, the same basis and component of *qi* of human reproduction shared with all other beings in the universe also made the process of birth subject to various contagious influences from the *qi* of other beings. This leads to the need of avoiding negative contagion in the larger environment where a birth event happens, just as the mechanism working behind the divination and taboos in the *Day Books*. Moreover, birth itself also turns into a source of negative contagion due to its dangerous and lethal attribute. In the final section, I will briefly examine the divination and taboos of childbirth used in ancient and

Mu-chou 蒲慕州, "Shuihudi qinjian rishu de shijie 睡虎地秦簡日書的世界," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 62.4 (1993.4): 623-675; Liu Tseng-kuei 劉增貴, "Taboos: An Aspect of Beliefs in the Qin and Han," *Xinshixue* 新史學 18.4 (2007.12): 1-70. For other relevant studies, see my footnotes below.

early medieval medical works like the *Gestation Book* (*Taichan shu* 胎產書) and *Classic of Childbirth* (*Chanjing* 產經). Reading their contents of reproductive divination and taboos with those in the *Day Books* reveals that, no matter whether they were regarded as folk customs, religion, or medicine by later scholars, a strict line drawn between any two of them did not exist. Rather, categorized as a kind of "occult arts," these resources were sometime appropriated to the therapeutic use on the occasion of childbirth. This ambiguity between medicine and religion in antiquity has been pointed out both by many scholars of Chinese medicine and Chinese religion. Here I want to contend that this feature did not decline after Qin-Han period, but continued at least in the field of reproduction all the way till the end of the medieval period. As a result, it paved a way for later Buddhist magical medicine to thrive, and in return Buddhist healing resources also helped to maintain this ambiguity between medicine and religion.

Divination and Taboos: Daily Practices on Childbirth in the *Day Books*

The bamboo slips that bears the title *Rishu* (*The Day Books*) was first found at Shuihudi 睡虎地在 Hubei Province in 1975. It is also the one with relatively intact content among all versions excavated so far. Since then, this type of almanac manuscript has been discovered all over China. They reveal a previously unknown world of ordinary people's lives in the ancient time. These manuscripts are dated as early as around the third century BCE during the late period of Warring States and as late as the second century BCE in the middle of the Western Han dynasty. They are uncovered from the tombs whose owners were generally the middle or lower class of local officials with some extent of literacy.³³ These

³³ For general overview about the excavated *Day Books* so far, see the introduction by Ethan Harkness in the first chapter of his dissertation on the *Kongjiapo Day Book*, "Cosmology and the Quotidian: Day Books in Early China," (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011), also the first chapter in Huang Ruxuan's 黃儒宣 recent publication, *Rishu tuxiang yanjiu* 日書圖像研究 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), based on her dissertation in the same title written in 2009. I appreciate that professor Guo Jue kindly shares this information with me.

Day Books provide a variety of prognostic systems for local officials to decide whether it is auspicious or not to carry out some activities at a specific date, time, direction, and location. From the contents of activities listed and the advices given in these prognostic systems, we can construct the cultural frame in which ancient Chinese considered certain activities necessary and the time frames of how they should carry them out. These include moving, traveling, construction, fishing or cutting trees. Childbirth is among the various issues that are waited to be consulted through divination in these *Day Books*. According to Ethan Harkness's categorization, the dominant mechanisms working behind these divinatory systems in the *Day Books* include the direction of Dipper, the theory of yin-yang, the theory of the five agents, Diagram-based systems, the ten heavenly stems (*tiangan* 天干) and the twelve earthly branches (*dizhi* 地支), and a set of asterisms called the twenty-eight lodges (*ershi ba su* 二十八宿), and some ancient myths.³⁴

Among all the published *Day Book* corpuses, those which preserve contents or fragments related to childbirth are mostly found in the Jiudian 九店, Shuihudi 睡虎地, Fangmatan 放馬灘, Kongjiapo 孔家坡, and those collected by Hong Kong University and Beijing University (abbreviation as HKU and BJU below). The earliest one among these is the *Jiudian Day Book*, dated to the late period of Warring States around the third century BCE. Two of them, Shuihudi and Fangmatan, are from Qin cemeteries. Kongjiapo and BJU are dated around the mid-second century BCE in the Han dynasty. Among these *Day Books*, except the Fangmatan text from Gansu and BJU text (original unknown), the others are all from Hubei. As for the owners of these manuscripts and the tombs, Huang Ruxuan indicates that they are either a literate commoner, as in Jiudian's case, or mostly middle or lower

³⁴ Harkness, "Day Books in Early China," 50-71.

class of local officials responsible for judicial work, taxation, manufacture and logistics.³⁵

The sections involving childbirth in these *Day Books* are mainly collected in the two chapters respectively titled "*shengzi* 生子" (childbirth) or "*sheng*生" (birth) and "*renzi* 人字 (human-form divination chart)."³⁶ Other chapters, such as *Congchen* 叢辰 or *Jichen* 稷辰 (Thicket of Branches³⁷), *Chu*除³⁸, *Xing*星 (Asterism), and *Guan* 官 (Administration), occasionally mention a specific date, time, and direction propitious or unpropitious for managing childbirth along with other activities. Below, to utilize these materials to illustrate the divinatory systems and taboos related to childbirth in the *Day Books*, I borrow palaeographers' transcriptions and annotations of these manuscripts to interpret these contents. Also, since no scholar has translated these parts related to childbirth scattered in the *Day Books* before, the English translation below is done by myself.

Among various prognostic mechanisms in the *Day Books*, those dominating the taboos and divinatory systems linked to reproduction are mainly three types: the *Congchen* (Thicket of Branches), the asterism of the twenty-eight lodges, and the heavenly stems and the earthly branches. And these taboos and divinatory systems of reproduction covers things such as the choice of the proper time, day, direction or a specific star in charge of marrying wives, sexual intercourse, giving birth and abortion. In other words, the thinking behind these systems assumes that the outer and larger environment has a much more powerful and decisive role than the actions and actors themselves.

³⁵ Huang, *Rishu tuxiang yanjiu*, 18-19.

³⁶ The titles of all chapters in the *Day Books* are given by the archeologists and palaeographers editing these manuscripts instead of being there originally when excavated.

³⁷ This translation is from Harkness, see his dissertation, 8.

³⁸ The content of these two chapters, *Jichen* and *Chu* in *Shuihudi Day Book* partly overlapped with that of "*Congchen*" of *Kongjiapo Day Book*. The annotation group of *Shuihudi Day Book* and scholars now think that *Jichen* and *Congchen* are two different phrases with the same meaning. See Liu Lexian 劉樂賢, *Shuihudi qinjian rishu yanjiu* 睡虎地秦簡日書研究 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1994), 55-56, 58.

Take the marriage for begetting a child for instance. In the *Shuihudi Day Book*, the chapter "marriage" (*quqi chunu* 取妻出女) of the first part (*jiazhong* 甲種) has two paragraphs mentioning that men would not have posterity if they marry wives in some particular days. "In the fortieth day (*guichou* 癸丑), the fifty-fifth day (*xuwu* 戊午), and the fifty-sixth day (*jiwei* 己未), these are the days in which (the sage king) Yu married a wife in Tushan. If [people do] not abandon [the wives married in these days], their children shall die"³⁹ The other paragraph states that, " During the last ten days [of the sixty-day circle of the heavenly stems and the earthly branches] beginning from the fifty-first day (*jiayin* 甲寅), men should not marry wives. Otherwise, they will not beget children. If they do, it is impossible to have sons."⁴⁰ Here we see that the plan for obtaining posterity start right from the beginning of marrying wives instead of waiting until the moment of conception. Choosing a proper partner for producing children is also mentioned in medical works, in which physical conditions like a woman's age and fertility receive much emphasis.⁴¹ Yet in the *Day books*, it is the choice of proper days that matters due to the concern for taboos. Sometimes, ancient legends in which bad events were said to have happened on some specific days became the source of a taboo too. According to one version of the legend about Yu, it was said that his wife whom he married in Tushan left him because she has witnessed him transforming into a bear when working to stop the flood. Petrified and running away, she ended up becoming a stone from which Yu's son was born after its break. Since this legend ends in tragedy, these

³⁹ Liu, *Shuihudi qinjian rishu yanjiu*, 204, 208. The original Chinese text is "癸丑、戊午、己未，禹以取塗山之女日也，不棄，必以子死."

⁴⁰ Liu, *Shuihudi qinjian rishu yanjiu*, 204, 206, 208-209. The original text is "甲寅之旬，不可取妻，毋(無)子。雖有，毋(無)男."

⁴¹ Some ancient texts of bedchamber arts used for medical purpose specify the physical conditions of the women who can successfully produce children. For instance, they should be sexually mature(meaning at least ten years after the first menstruation), not too old, and are better to have been produced before. See Jen-der Lee, "Hantang zhijian qiuzi yifang shitan: jianlun fuke lanshang yu xingbie lunshu," 295-296.

days are thus seen as inauspicious and people are advised not marry wives at these times.⁴²

Sometimes, some specific days are considered inauspicious simply because their positions in the sixty-day circle symbolize "ending" or "being alone." In the second paragraph on the chapter of "marriage" above, the last ten days of the sixty-day cycle of the heavenly stems and the earthly branches are suggested to avoid for marriage. In the chapter "marriage" of the *Kongjiapo Day Book*, there is also the same warning of infertility to marry off daughters during the last ten days of the sixty-day cycle.⁴³ Liu Lexian indicates that the sixty-day cycle was divided by ancient Chinese into six sets of ten days which all begin with the head of *jia* 甲 such as *jiazi* (the first day), *jiayu* (the eleventh day), *jiashen* (the twenty-first day), and all the way to *jiayin* (the fifty-first day).⁴⁴ It is unclear why one should not marry wives in the last set of the six ten-day cycles. One may speculate that because it is in the final position in the whole sixty-day cycle, it has the connotation of "ending." In the system of heavenly stems and earthly branches, some stems or branches may obtain inauspicious meaning due to the position assigned to them in the sixty-day cycle. For example, some earthly branches in the *Kongjiapo Day Book* were assigned as *gu* 孤 (orphan). They are the two additional earthly branches that are left aside when pairing with the ten heavenly stems to form each of the six ten-days. Placed on a chart of direction, these left-aside earthly branches, *gu*, and the direction they represent are inauspicious.⁴⁵ Their opposite direction and the

⁴² Liu, *Shuihudi qinjian rishu yanjiu*, 458-461. According to Liu, not all the legends about Yu and his wife have this tragic result. Some have happy ending. There are a lot of contradictions among different versions of the legend. Also, the days in which the transmitted texts mention Yu marrying a wife in Tushan are also different from those listed in the *Day Books*. Yet the reason why *Shuihudi Day Book* adopted the version of bad ending and why it has different days need further research. It is also unknown why the *Day Book* asserts that these days will incur infertility given that most legends of Yu do mention the birth of his son, Qi 啟.

⁴³ Kongjiapo Slip, No. 177 back. Also see Chen Xhuanwei 陳炫璋, "Kongjiapo hanjian rishu yanjiu 孔家坡漢簡日書研究" (MA Thesis, Xinzhu: Tsinghua University, 2007), 198. The *Kongjiapo Day Book* lacks the emphasis of "having no sons" as *Shuihudi* has.

⁴⁴ Liu, 206, note 9; 208-209.

⁴⁵ For example, the first ten days of the sixty-day cycle, it goes as below: *jiazi* 甲子, *yichou* 乙丑, *bingyin* 丙寅,

earthly branches called *xu* 虛, or empty, become inauspicious too. Marrying wives to the place associated with these directions would incur bad results.⁴⁶

After deciding proper days for marriage that will not incur infertility, the next step is to carefully select the time and place for sexual relation and conception in order to avoid unwanted consequences and acquire a desired one. In the *Day Books*, the time and place of conceiving and giving birth may determine things such as an infant's sex and its life-long destiny. In the *Shuihudi Day Book*, for instance, the chapter "travel" (*xing* 行) which appears both in its first and second parts forbids various activities including travel, singing and playing instruments, gathering domestic stocks, and having sexual relations on a specific day in every month of a year because in these days Chidi 赤帝 (the Red Emperor) always descends and brings calamities upon people.⁴⁷ In the *Fangmatan Day Book*, it considers giving birth in different time of a day. A child's gender is dependent on the position of sun in the sky during the day. Titled "*sheng nannu* 生男女" (giving birth to a boy or a girl), the chapter says,

In giving birth, at dawn it would be a girl; at sunrise, a boy. Before breakfast,⁴⁸ a

dingmao 丁卯, *wuchen* 戊辰, *jisi* 己巳, *genwu* 庚午, *xinwei* 辛未, *renshen* 壬申, *guiyou* 癸酉. Though the heavenly stems are completely used, two more earthly branches, *xu* 戌 and *hai* 亥, are not used out. These eleventh and twelve earthly branches become the *gu*, the orphan branches. And on a chart of direction, they represent the northwest. Their opposite direction, the fifth and the sixth earthly branches, *chen* 辰 and *si* 巳, become *xu*, the empty branches. They are inauspicious. See Chen Xhuanwei, "Kongjiapo hanjian rishu yanjiu 孔家坡漢簡日書研究" (MA Thesis, Xinzhu: Tsinghua University, 2007), 63-64; Harkness, 150-151.

⁴⁶ The Kongjiapo slips No.116-120. Chen Xhuanwei, "Kongjiapo hanjian rishu yanjiu," 63; Harkness, 150-151.

⁴⁷ The Shuihudi Slip, the first part, No. 127-128; the second part, No.132-134. Also see Liu, *Shuihudi qinjian yanjiu*, 153-154, 363. The original text in the section *jia* is as follows: "凡且有太行、遠行若飲食、歌樂、聚畜生及夫妻同衣，毋以正月上旬午，二月上旬亥，三月上旬申，四月上旬丑，五月上旬戌，六月上旬卯，七月上旬子，八月上旬巳，九月上旬寅，十月上旬未，十一月上旬辰，十二月上旬酉。凡是日赤帝(帝)恒以開臨下民而降其英(殃)，不可具為百事，皆毋(無)所利。" The content in the second part is almost the same.

⁴⁸ According to the annotation, "*sushi* 夙時" refers to a period of time before morning meal. The time of breakfast itself was referred as "*shishi* 食時." The time after "shishi" was called "*moshi* 莫食," referring to a

girl, and after breakfast, a boy. At noon, a girl, and after noon, a boy. In the late afternoon, a girl, and at sunset, a boy. In the early evening, a girl, and the late evening, a boy. Before mid-night, a girl, and at mid-night, a boy. After mid-night, a girl, and during the time of cock crowing, a boy.⁴⁹

平旦生女，日出生男。夙食女，莫食男。日中女，日過中男。旦(日)則(側)女，日下則(側)男。日未入女，日入男。昏女，夜莫(暮)男。夜未中女，夜中男，夜過中女，雞鳴男。

Apart from the *Fangmatan Day Book*, most versions of the *Day Books* concern the choice of a day more than the specific time in a day for giving birth. A large number of divinatory systems and taboos for childbirth in the *Day Books* are calculated on the basis of day. The auspiciousness of a day can be decided by the condition of the sun or the moon, the position of a particular asterism, or the earthly branch of that day. Thanks to its relatively intact condition, the *Shuihudi Day Book* preserves several prognostic systems for divining the auspiciousness of birth or an infant's destiny based on his birth day. In the chapter of "Jichen 稷辰" (Thicket of Branches⁵⁰) of the *Shuihudi Day Book*, for example, it divides the days of a month into eight kinds: *Xiu*秀 (excellence), *Zhengyang*正陽 (straight Yang/masculinity), *Weiyang*危陽 (declined Yang/masculinity), *Jiao*敷 (flowing light), *Ju*踽 (isolation), *Yin*陰 (shadow/femininity), *Che*徹 (withdrawal), *Jie*結 (end).⁵¹ The reason for coming up with these eight kinds of days seems to be associated with the change of brightness of sunlight in a

period of time after morning meal as shown in the next sentence. See Sun Janyu 孫占宇, *Tianshui fangmatan qinjian jishi* 天水放馬灘秦簡集釋 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 2013), 63, note 1.

⁴⁹ *Fangmatan qinjian jishi*, 63. This item is from the first part (jiazhong 甲種) of *Fangmatan Day Book*. The content of the second part (yizhong 乙種) of *Fangmatan Day Book* is nearly the same. See *Fangmatan qinjian jishi*, 162. The terms of time in this item are some common usage referring to different time section in a day during the Qin-Han period. A day was divided into twelve sections, among which the "pindan 平旦" (dawn) is equal to today's 3 to 5am; "richu 日出" (sunrise) is 5-7am; "shishi 食時" (breakfast) is 7-9am, "rizhong 日中" (noon) is 11am-1pm; "riru 日入" (sunset) is 5-7pm; and "huanghun 黃昏" (evening) is 7-9pm.

⁵⁰ See note 10. Scholars now think Jichen and Congchen are the same. *Ji* 稷 may be the variant of *Cong* 叢. The chapter of *Congchen* 叢辰 in the *Kongjiapo Day Book* has very similar content to this Jichen chapter of *Shuihudi Day Books*. See Chen Xuanwei, 24-25.

⁵¹ These are my translations, made by referring to the *Shuihudi Day Book* annotation and *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典 dictionary. See Liu, 53-60.

month and in different seasons in the beginning but later transforming into some abstract categories. The evidence is that the *Xiu* day is explained as the day with solar corona in the text. And the meanings of *Zhengyang*, *Weiyang* and *Jiao* also connect with the degree of Yang, typically represented by sun, and with sunlight. According to this chapter, on the *Xiu* day, possibly a day with the most "excellent" and strongest sunlight originally, it is propitious to carry on field battle and also to give birth to a child, who shall be beautiful, tall and worthy.⁵² On the *Zhengyang* day, everything grows prosperously. It is advantageous to cultivate crops as a farmer. Giving birth on this day is auspicious too.⁵³ On the *Weiyang* day, everything will not work. It is disadvantageous to marry, meet people, or give birth to a child. The child will die if it is born. On the *Jiao* day, if people produce a child, the child will be aborted. On the *Ju* day, childbirth is propitious. On the *Yin* day, a child born in this day will become a thief whether it is a boy or a girl. On the *Che* day, the child born will die after birth.⁵⁴

Besides the *Jichen* (or *Congchen*) system, the twenty-eight asterisms were also used to predict the auspiciousness of various activities including childbirth in everyday life. The "*Xin* 星" (asterisms) chapter of the *Shuihudi Day Book* lists various propitious or unpropitious activities under each of the twenty-eight constellations.⁵⁵ Like the *Jichen* or *Congchen* system, childbirth is nearly included in every item among these activities in the divinatory system of the twenty-eight asterisms. This indicates the importance of divining and avoiding taboos of

⁵² The *Shuihudi Slip* No. 32. Also see Liu, 54, 56. The original text is "秀，是胃(調)重光，利野戰，必得侯王。以生子，既美且長，有賢等."

⁵³ The *Shuihudi Slip* No. 34. Liu, 54. The original text is "正陽，是胃(調)滋昌，小事果成，大事有慶，它毋(無)小大盡吉。利為齋夫，是胃(調)三昌。.....生子，吉."

⁵⁴ The *Shuihudi Slip* No. 36-45. Liu, 54-55. The original texts that are related to childbirth are as follow: "危陽，是胃(調)不成行。.....不可娶婦，家(嫁)女，不可見人。生子，子死"; "敷，....以生子，子不產"; "躡，....以生子，吉"; "陰，...生子，男女為盜"; "徽，...以生子，子死."

⁵⁵ *Kongjiapo Day Book* also has this chapter of "*Xinguan* 星官" (asterism). The contents of the *Kongjiapo* and *Shuihudi* versions are largely the same with some slight differences. One major difference is that in the *Kongjiapo* version, months were added in front of most of the astral names. Here I use *Shuihudi* version due to its relative completeness. *Kongjiapo's* version and its annotations, see Chen Xuanwei, 32-41.

birth in the *Day Books*. According to the chapter of asterisms, for instance, when it is the turn of the *Jiao* 角 (Horn) asterism⁵⁶, the child born at this time will become a low level official. When it is the turn of the *Kang* 亢 (Neck) asterism, the child born will obtain the rank of nobility. During the turn of the *Di* 氐 (氏) (Root) asterism, the newborn shall be smart. When it comes to the *Fang* 房 (Room) asterism, the newborn will be rich. The turn of *Xin* 心 (Heart) asterism will bring an adorable baby. When it is the turn of the *Wei* 尾 (Tail) asterism, the child born this time will be poor. The turn of the *Ji* 箕 (Winnowing Basket) asterism will make the newborn half poor and half rich in her life. When it comes to the *Dou* 斗 ([Southern] Dipper) asterism, the newborn will not live longer than three years. The child born in the turn of *Qianniu* 牽牛 (Ox) asterism will become a minister; in the turn of *Xunu* 須女 (Girl) asterism the baby will not live beyond three months or born handicapped. When the *Xu* 虛 (Emptiness) asterism appears, the newborn will not have siblings.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Scholars have different opinions about whether the star names here do refer to the real astral entities appearing in the sky by turn, or just abstract categories which are exchangeable with the names of heavenly stems and earthly branches and refer to different days. Therefore, my translation uses the noun "turn" to show its change by some kind of order rather than use verb "appear" to signify some astral entities appearing in the sky by turn. See Liu, 113-115.

⁵⁷ See Shuihudi Slip No. 68-95. Also see Liu, 109-116. The original text related to childbirth and translated in the above content is as follows. These are the first eleven stars: "角，...生子，為吏。亢，...生子，必有爵。氐(氏)，...生子，巧。房，...生子，富。心，...生子，人愛之。尾，...生子，貧。箕，...生子，貧富半。斗，...生子，不盈三歲死。牽牛，...生子，為大夫。須女，...生子，三月死，不死毋晨。虛...，以生子，毋(無)它同生。"

Below are part of the original text of the following thirteen stars and my translation. My translation refers to the Liu's annotations. The original text is "危，...生子，...老為人治也...。營室，...生子，為大吏。東辟(壁)，...以生子，不完。奎，...生子，為吏。婁，...生子...。胃，...生子，必使。卯，...以生子，喜斷(鬪)。畢，...以生子，管。此(觜)，生子，為正。參，...唯生子不吉。東井，...生子，旬而死。輿鬼，...以生子，癰。[柳]，...以生子，肥。七星，...生子，樂。張，...以生子，為邑桀(傑)。翼，生子，男為見(覲)，[女]為巫。[軫]，...以生子，必駕。" My translation goes, "When it is the turn of the *Wei* 危 (Rooftop) asterism, the child born this time will be subject to others' rule (or to the flogging [sentence], if 治 is used as the variant of 笞 here, see Liu, 112, note11). When it is the turn of the *Yingshi* 營室 (Encampment) asterism, the child born this time will become a higher official. When it is the turn of the *Dongbi* 東辟 (East Wall) asterism, the child born this time will not be wholesome. When it is the turn of the *Kui* 奎 (Legs) asterism, the child born this time will be a lower official. When it is the turn of the *Lou* 婁 (Bond) asterism, the child born this time will [text absent here]. When it is the turn of the *Wei* 胃 (Stomach) asterism, the child born this time will command [people] When it is the turn of the *Mao* 卯 (Hairy Head) asterism, the child born this time will like fighting. When it is the turn of the *Bi* 畢 (Net) asterism, the child born this time will have eye problem. When it is the turn

This divination list and its statements about childbirth continue to the very last of the asterism, but the above prognostication suffices to supply some information about the feature of the divination of birth. First, this divinatory system is not simply about predicting a newborn's sex or whether the day is auspicious to give birth. It gives more detailed statements foretelling a child's inborn nature and life-long destiny. It covers one's future career (being a nobleman, low level official, or a minister), wealth, life-span, health, and character. Although this chapter of asterism can serve as an instruction manual for choosing a better time for giving birth as the *Jichen* system, it seems much closer to the art of fortune-telling of later age, which often bases its prophecy of one's life-long destiny on his birth time. Or very possibly these two functions are not separable or contradictory with each other in ancient time. If one can foresee one's life by calculating the birth time, then one may also want to change it by manipulating the time of giving birth. As we see in the *Jichen* system, though it mainly advises on whether a day is suitable for birth, one of its items still mentions an undesirable career of a child, being a thief, if he or she is born on the *Yin* day. Developing along this line, it is natural that a divinatory system for choosing a propitious day for birth gradually evolved into more sophisticated statements, which in turn made itself become a prototype of fortune-telling art of later age. In another chapter of "shengzi" (childbirth) that I will discuss below, this tendency of sophistication in divining birth becomes much more prominent.

Another feature of the divinatory system of asterisms is that its predictions reveal the

of the *Zi* 觜 (Turtle Beak) asterism, the child born this time will be administrator. When it is the turn of the *Shen* 參 (Three Stars) asterism, only the thing of birth is inauspicious. When it is the turn of the *Dongjing* 東井 (East Well) asterism, the child born this time will die in ten days. When it is the turn of the *Yugui* 輿鬼 (Ghost) asterism, the child born this time will be a hunchback. When it is the turn of the *Liu* 柳 (Willow) asterism, the child born this time will be stout. When it is the turn of the *Qixing* 七星 (Seven Stars) asterism, the child born this time will be happy (or good at music). When it is the turn of the *Zhang* 張 (Extended Net) asterism, the child born this time will be locally outstanding. When it is the turn of the *Yi* 翼 (Wings) asterism, if a child is born this time, the boy will become a shaman, and the girl will become shamaness. When it is the turn of the *Zhen* 軫 (Chariot) asterism, the child born this time will be nice (or worth celebration, according to the *yizhong* 乙種/second edition of the *Day Book*).

social expectation of an ideal child, the desirable characters of a child, and the available choices of careers for commoners of this time. Although this chapter of asterisms still has something to say about the auspiciousness of giving birth during a particular lodge's turn, like during the *Dou* and *Xunu* lodges' turn a newborn being said to die young, yet most items here are concerned more than the auspiciousness or physical danger of childbirth. It extends its foretelling interest to a child's inborn and social characters, and his future careers. Some children may be smart, some adorable, and some may be aggressive or nice. Some have no siblings, and some may be handicapped. They may become rich or poor. To become a nobleman, lower or higher level officials, or even a minister, also seems to be predictable for the author and readers of this chapter. More interestingly, an item even predicts that if a child is born during the turn of *Yi* 翼 (Wing) Star, the boy will become a shaman, and the girl shall be a shamaness.⁵⁸ The wide range of the possibilities of careers not only demonstrates a certain kind of social mobility during this period. It also reflects that the readership of the text might not be limited to certain very few social groups, otherwise the wide range of possibilities of social mobility may sound inapplicable or unrealistic.

The final noteworthy issue here is whether the constellations' names in this chapter refer to the real astral entities and their movement in the sky or symbolic signs representing other things. We have seen that the signs of the *Jichen* divinatory system may originate from the changing strength of sunlight but later turn into some abstract categories representing days. While some scholars believe the astral lodges here do refer to the real movement of twenty-eight lodges in the sky and people divined their daily activities according to their movement and locations, some scholars argue that these astral names in the *Day Books* are actually another system signifying days identical to the system of heavenly stems and earthly

⁵⁸ Ibid. See the item of *Yi* (Wing) asterism.

branches.⁵⁹ Among these opinions, three arguments brought up by the scholars standing for the latter point sound more convincing to me. First of all, astrology in ancient texts is mostly associated with the divination of state affairs such as war, natural disaster, and court politics. The astrology in ancient China was never used in divining daily activities as the *Day Books* did.⁶⁰ Second, in other edition of *Day Book* like Kongjiapo one, we do find astral names are used together with the character of day, *ri* 日, proving that they were used as a way of counting days.⁶¹ Third, Marc Kalinowski points out that there are at least three models of using twenty-eight lodges to count days in ancient China. One of these models corresponds to what the *Day Books* described. Namely, it stipulates the astral lodge of the first day of every month (*shuosu* 朔宿), which for instance makes *Shi* 室 (Encampment) the first lodge of the first day of the first month, *Kui* 奎 (Legs) the first lodge of the first day of the second month, *Wei* 胃 (Stomach) the first lodge of the first day of the third month, and so on so forth till the twelfth month.⁶² In this way, every asterism was assigned to a day by turn, but they do not necessarily correspond to the appearance of heavenly astral entities. In short, like the *Jichen* system, the chapter of asterism in the *Day Books* is also a divinatory system based on the calculation of days. Although the meaning of an asterism or a *Jichen* day may be related to

⁵⁹ Liu, 113-115. Chen Xuanwei gives a list summarizing all these scholars' points in his thesis. See Chen Xuanwei, 37.

⁶⁰ Chen Xuanwei, 37-38. Also see Huang Yinong 黃一農, "Xingzhan dui zhongguo gudai de yingxiang 星占對中國古代的影響" (The Influence of astrology on ancient China), 74, in *shehui tianwenxue shi shijiang* 社會天文學史十講 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2004), 74-92. Narike Tetsurō 成家徹郎, Wang Weiqun 王維坤 trans., "Shuihudi qinjian rishu xuange 睡虎地秦簡日書玄戈," (The chapter of Xuange asterism in the *Shuihudi Day Book*) *Wenbo* 文博 (1991.3), 73.

⁶¹ Chen Xuanwei, 38; *Kongjiapo Day Book*, chapter of jianu 嫁女 (marrying off daughters), Slip No. 173.

⁶² Marc Kalinowski, "The use of the twenty-eight Xiu as a Day-count in Early China," *Chinese Science* 13 (1996): 55-81; Chen Xuanwei, 38. From the excavated ancient Chinese compass, shi, or cosmic board, we can also find that twenty-eight lodges were assigned to match with each of the four direction, which makes the twenty-eight asterisms represent not only days but also directions and makes the use of astral names corresponding to and exchangeable with the heavenly stems and earthly branches and the four directions. See Li Lin 李零, *Zhongguo fangshu zhengkao* 中國方術正考, Ch. 2; Donald J. Harper, "The Han Cosmic Board." *Early China* 4 (1978-1979): 1-10.

the judgment of auspiciousness of doing something on a particular day, it is no longer the real strength of sunlight or the real appearance of a star that makes doing something propitious or not.

In addition to the *Jichen* and asterism systems, which foretell the auspiciousness of childbirth along with other things, the *Day Books* in fact provide two sections of augury particularly addressing childbirth. One is the chapter "*shengzi*生子" (childbirth) and the other "the chart *renzi*人字" (human form divination chart). The chapter "shengzi" has a few editions available from archeological excavation in different areas so far. The *Shuihudi Day Book* has two editions, titled "*shengzi*" and "*sheng*生" respectively in its first and second parts. They have only some slight differences. The *Kongjiapo Day Book* has a chapter with the same title, "*shengzi*," but has somewhat different content from Shuihudi's version. The Shuihudi's version is organized by the order of the sixty heavenly stems and earthly branches, each of which represents one day in the sixty-day circle and is followed by a statement of prediction of a child's future fate, inborn character, career, or social and economic conditions. In contrast, the predictions in Kongjiapo's version are organized only by the twelve earthly branches and spend more words on the newborn's survival chance and expectant life-span than its character, future career and economic conditions. Besides, a *Day Book* collected in Hong Kong University (*HKU Day Book* below) also has a chapter "Shengzi," whose content is closer to the Kongjiapo's version.⁶³

Below I choose some representative cases from these editions to illustrate the mechanism and features of the divination in these editions of the chapter of childbirth. The contents of the chapters of childbirth in the first and second part of *Shuihudi Day Book* are

⁶³ 陳松長 Chen Songchan ed., *Xianggang zhongwen daxue wenwu guantsang jianbu* 香港中文大學文物館藏簡牘 (Bamboo and Wooden Slips in the Art Museum Collections)(HK: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2001), 41-42; Liu Lexian 劉樂賢, "Tan chanjing de shengzhi zhanwen 談產經的生子占文," in *Jianbo shushu wenxian tanlun* 簡帛數術文獻探論 (Research on the literatures of numerology and prognostication on Bamboo Slips and Silk Manuscripts)(Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), 395; Chen Xuanwei, 188.

similar to each other. Both share the same concern with childbirth section in the chapter of asterism but elaborate with more details about the newborns' character, preference, health, physical appearance, career, or economic situation. For instance, in the chapter "Shengzi" of the first part, it mentions that, the child born on "*dingchou* 丁丑" (the fourteenth day of the sixty-day circle) will be "good at language" or "have sick eyes." The child born on the "*guichou* 癸丑" (the fiftieth day) will be "fond of water, rarely ill and become an official for sure." The child born on "*gengyin* 庚寅" (the twenty-seventh day) will be "a merchant if it is a girl" and will be "fond of clothing and adornment if it is a boy." One item identifies especially the career of girls, stating that "the child born on *renyin* 壬寅 (the thirty-ninth day) will be inauspicious or become a physician if it is a girl." The careers shown in the predictions are diverse, as they are in the chapter of asterisms. Girls born in "*gengyin* 庚寅" (the twenty-seventh day) as stated in the chapter "Sheng" of the second part are said to become shamaness, different from what it is said in the first part.⁶⁴

The content of the chapter "*Sheng*" in the second part of *Shuihudi Day Book* is largely identical to that of the chapter "Shengzi" in the first part but still has some variances from it.⁶⁵ Some predictions in the second part are simplified or shortened. For instance, in the second part it is said that the child born on "*yiwei* 乙未" (the thirty-second day) "will be ill in a young age but become rich later on" whereas in the first part the same item says "will be ill and become orphan in young age, but become rich later on" The child born on the "*jiachen* 甲辰" (the forty-first day) is said to be "nice, valiant and beneficial to his brothers" in the first part, but shortened as merely "nice" in the second part. The child born in the *dingwei* 丁未

⁶⁴ Liu, 179-186; 394-400.

⁶⁵ According to Liu's study, among the total fifty-seven items of divination statements in the chapter of sheng of the second part of *Shuihudi Day Book*, there are forty-six items identical to those in the chapter of shengzhi of the first part. See Liu, 398.

(the forty-fourth day) is said to be "unpropitious, has no mother, and be jailed" in the first part but simplified as "inauspicious" in the second part. The contents of a few items in the second part are partly or completely different from those in the first part, like the above "*gengyin*" case, and like the item of "*renchen* 壬辰" (the twenty-ninth day), which states that the child born on this day will be "valiant and fond of clothing and swords" in the first part but turns to "be good at medicine" in the second part.⁶⁶ Moreover, there are even some items in the second part that are contradictory to those in the first part. The item of "*guiyou* 癸酉" (the sixtieth day) in the first part mentions that the child born on this day will "have no achievement" whereas in the second part it says "have achievement." The child born on the *bingzi* 丙子 (the thirteenth day) was regarded as inauspicious according to the first part yet as auspicious according to the second part.⁶⁷

The other major difference of the chapter "Sheng" in the second part from the chapter "Shengzi" in the first part of the *Shuihudi Day Book* is that the former has two additional lines that do not exist in the latter. Appearing in the end of the chapter, both of these two lines are quite critical. The first indicates the days for infanticide and the stillborn situation, suggesting that "those who are born on the *jisi* 己巳 (the sixth day) should not be raised (*wuju* 勿舉) because they will be disadvantageous to parents. The male ones shall be officials under a ruler and the female ones shall serve men as concubines. The child born on the *gengzi* 庚子 (the thirty-seventh day) will surely die within three days."⁶⁸ The second line informs the significance of direction for giving birth, stating that "those who are born [with their mother's

⁶⁶ Liu, 179-186; 394-400.

⁶⁷ Ibid, especially see Liu, 399. Another similar case is the item of *xingmao* 辛卯 (the twenty-eighth day). In the first part it states that the child born in this day will be "auspicious" but in the second part it becomes "inauspicious."

⁶⁸ Liu, 398; Slip No.247.

head in the north]⁶⁹ and themselves facing the west shall become prime ministers; females [born with this direction] shall become a feudal ruler's wife."⁷⁰ The second line in the chapter "Sheng" has its counterpart in another chapter, titled "divining childbirth by direction" (*fangxiang zhan shengzi* 方向占生子) by Shuihudi archeological and annotation group. In this short section, it lists various results of giving birth in different directions: "Those who are born in the east will be noble, in the south rich, in the west long-lived, in the north humble, and in the northwest subject to be sentenced by a court."⁷¹

The first of the above two lines proves the application of augury in the ancient practice of infanticide and the second shows the importance of direction in divining birth besides using days. Both the chapters of "Thicket of Branches" and "Asterisms" also mention that infants born on particular days may die early and thus may imply the possibility of aborting children.⁷² But here in the chapter "Sheng" in the second part of the *Shuihudi Day Book* speaks explicitly giving instruction for infanticide rather than just prediction. As for the divination by direction, it reflects again the correlative thinking as shown in other chapters, appropriating the symbolisms of directions derived from the culture and geopolitics to the divinatory use of childbirth. Thus a child born "facing the west" or "in the east" shall become a prime minister or a noble since this direction is traditionally treated as the noblest besides the host who supposedly stays in the north and faces the south. The north and northwest used to be considered by people of "middle-land" as barren, desolate and where nomadic tribes come from or criminals were exiled to. Hence these directions get connected with the fate of

⁶⁹ Liu quotes some almanacs of the later ages after Han, suggesting that the term "*beishou* 北首" here might refer to the direction of expectant mothers' heads and the term "*xixiang* 西向" refers to the newborn's direction while being born. See Liu, 338-339.

⁷⁰ Liu, 396; Slip No. 247-248.

⁷¹ Liu, 338; Slip No. 74b, 75b, and 76b.

⁷² See the above lines related to note 26 and 29.

being “humble” and “subject to be sentenced.”

Kongjiapo and *HKU Day Books* are the other two versions that contain the chapter of childbirth. *Kongjiapo*'s divination is organized by the order of the twelve earthly branches instead of the sixty-day circle like *Shuihudi*'s version while *HKU*'s is listed simply by the number of days and its statements are more concise. Yet the format of statements of both versions is very similar. In *Kongjiapo*'s version, each earthly branch is followed by a prediction of the newborn's death on a specific day or month, expectant life-span, and general fate concerning career, social or economic condition. Its prediction also distinguishes the fate of males from that of females. *HKU*'s prediction follows a similar pattern but does not have sexual differentiation. For example, an item in *HKU* says, "Those who are born in the seventh day, [if] they do not die in the four months, will become extremely rich. They will die at the age of twenty-nine on the day of *jisi* 己巳 (the sixth day)."⁷³ An item in *Kongjiapo* states, "those [males] who are born in the day of *chen* 辰 will not die on the seventh day or on the third month, and will be susceptible to diseases. They will die at the age of thirteen on the day of *xinmao* 辛卯 (the twenty-eighth day). Females [born on this day] will not die on the third day or the fifth month, and will become shamanesses. They will die at the age of seventy-two on the day of *renwu* 壬午 (the nineteenth day). [Some say] they will become widows."⁷⁴ The statement of women becoming shamaness appears quite common in the *Day Books*' divinations. We have seen a couple of examples previously and here it appears again three times in total in this chapter including the one above. Another item in *Kongjiapo* also contains information of women's career that is quite unusual. It mentions that females who are born on the day of *wu* 午 "will be good at stealing," and "some says that they are good at

⁷³ Chen Songchan ed., *Xianggang zhongwen daxue wenwu guantsang jiandu*, 41-42.

⁷⁴ *Kongjiapo Day Book*, Slip No. 383b; Chen Xuanwei, 185.

farming." ⁷⁵ Neither stealing nor farming were considered to be conventional roles of women.

Moreover, the last line of Kongjiapo's chapter of childbirth provides the anticipation of a newborns' sex, a feature that also appears in the *Fangmatang Day Book* but is not mentioned in the two chapters of childbirth in the Shuihudi version. ⁷⁶ According to this last line, among the ten heavenly stems, those who are born on the odd numbers of days, such as *jia* 甲, *bing* 丙, *wu* 戊, and so on, will be a boy, and those born on the even numbers of days, like *yi* 乙, *ding* 丁, *ji* 己, and so on, will be a girl. ⁷⁷ Another thing worthy of note here is that this birth divination organized by the twelve earthly stems in Kongjiapo is also seen in a medieval medical work, *Chanjing* 產經 (*Classic of Childbirth*) quoted by *Ishinpo*, showing the exchange between "medicine" and "religion" when dealing with the issue of childbirth in ancient and medieval periods of China. ⁷⁸

Using a birth day to prognosticate one's destiny, health, lifespan, career, or wealth, and thereby manipulate one's fate by choosing an appropriate day to give birth or address the relevant issues in advance may be the common purpose of these texts. Beside the literary form, *Day Books* also provide pictorial form for birth divination. Called *renzitu* 人字圖 (human-form divination chart), it exists in several *Day Book* versions including Shuihudi (Figure 1.1), Kongjiapo, HKU and BJU, and even appears among excavated texts *Taichanshu* (Gestation Book) of the Han Mawandui tomb written on a silk (Figure 1.2). This to some extent reflects its popularity in the Qin-Han period. Since Shuihudi's divination chart and its statements are the most intact version among all the versions and the others are nearly the

⁷⁵ *Kongjiapo Day Book*, Slip No. 385b; Chen Xuanwei, 185.

⁷⁶ Anticipation of a newborn's sex in the *Fangmatan Day Book*, see the above note 23 and the paragraph in the text.

⁷⁷ *Kongjiapo Day Book*, Slip No. 391b; Chen Xuanwei, 185.

⁷⁸ Chen Xuanwei, 186-187.

same as that of Shuihudi, I will use it to explain the principle of the divination chart. As Figure 1.1 shows, in the chart there are two human figures surrounded by the characters referring to the four seasons *chun* 春 (spring) and *xia* 夏 (summer) on the right one and *qiu* 秋 (autumn) and *dong* 冬 (winter) on the left one and by characters of the twelve earthly stems. The chart also comes with a few lines illustrating the meaning of the position where a specific earthly stem was situated. It states that

[About this] human birth chart, those who are born on the day [with the earthly stem] located on the top [of the human figure] are destined to be incomparably wealthy. Those who are born on the day [with the earthly stem] at both sides of the neck are destined to be noble. Those who are born on the day [with the earthly stem] between the two legs shall be rich. Those who are born on the day [with the earthly stem] under the armpits will be adored. Those who are born on the day [with the earthly stem] at the hands will be good at stealing. Those who are born on the day [with the earthly stem] under the feet will be humble. Those who are born on the day [with the earthly stem] by the shoulder will be exiled. 人字，其日在首，富難勝也。夾頸者貴。在奎者富。在掖(腋)者愛。在手者巧盜。在足下者賤。在外者奔亡。⁷⁹

According to scholars, the right human figure is applied to people born in the spring and summer and the left one to those born in the autumn and winter. Since every day is assigned to an earthly stem, people can locate the earthly stem of their birth day on the chart, refer to the above text description and then find out their fate.⁸⁰ Therefore, a person who is born on the *chou* 丑 day in the spring or summer, for instance, should refer to the right figure on this human-form divination chart, in which one can find out that the earthly stem “*chou*” was situated “by the shoulder” and that means he “will be exiled.”

⁷⁹ Shuihudi Slip No. 150-154; Liu, 186-187; Huang Ruxuan, 168-169.; Li Jianmin 李建民, "Renzi tu kao 人字圖考," in his *Fanshu, yixue, lishi* 方術, 醫學, 歷史 (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 2000), 81-94. My translation of some difficult words here like the character "*kui* 奎" and "*wai* 外" is made according to the explanation of Shuihudi archeological group and scholars like Liu's philological study. They contend that "*kui*" means "between the legs" and "*wai*" in ancient Chinese refers to "shoulder."

⁸⁰ Liu, 186-187; Huang, 168-176.

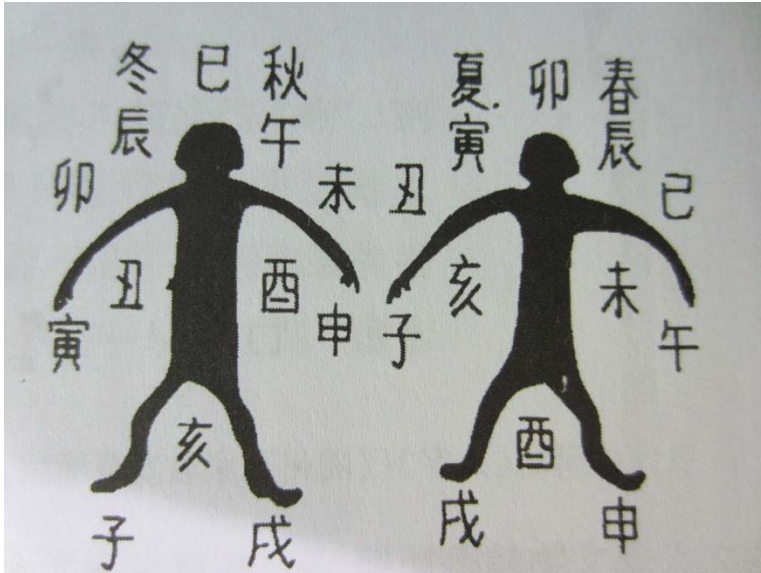


Figure 1.1: Human-form divination chart in the *Shuihudi Day Book*⁸¹

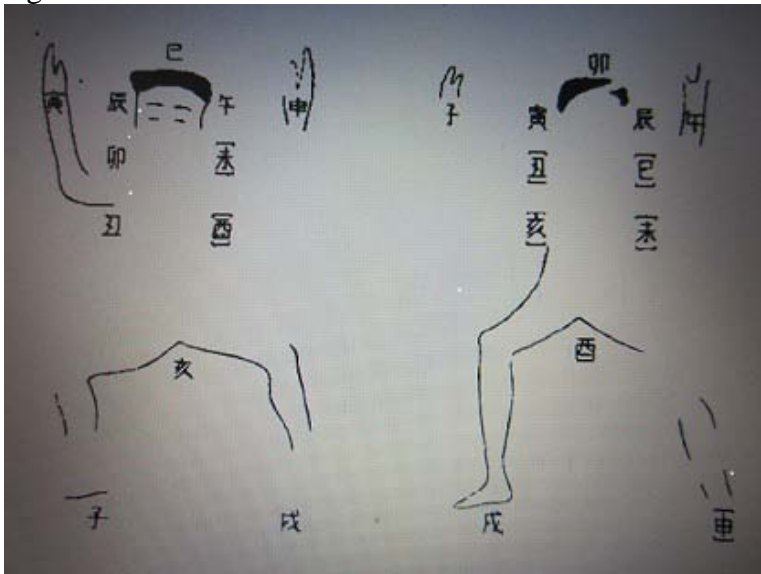


Figure 1.2: Human-form divination chart in the Mawangdui *Taichanshu (Gestation Book)*⁸²

To sum up, the above discussion demonstrates various divinatory methods applied to childbirth in the *Day Books*. In these daily practices in divining birth, the decisive roles of cosmological coordinates such as time, day, and direction are conspicuous. The thinking behind them assumes that the formation of human beings, from the moment of conception as an embryo, corresponds to every change of the universal pulse. Thus one's birth is

⁸¹ The image is from Liu's book, 186, originally from Shuihudi Slip, No. 150-154.

⁸² The image is from Liu's book, p. 188, originally from Mawangdui Han Tombs research group ed., *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu* 馬王堆漢墓帛書 (Mawangdui Han Tomb Silk Manuscripts), volume 4 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985).

conditioned by the movement of the sun, the moon, stars and the shift of day and direction. One's life-long trajectory is largely decided at the moment of birth. The purpose of various divination methods and taboos offered here is to help people predict the corresponding results under a specific condition of time and space so as to obtain the greatest benefit from it. As the beginning quote of *Huinanzi* denotes, human beings receive spirit and physical substances from heaven and earth. They partake of the creation of universe and they themselves are products of cosmic reproduction "through the blending of vital energy." Sharing Yin and Yang with myriad things, humans' worldly existence from the beginning moment of birth resonate with the vibration of cosmos from the forming of physical components and wholeness to that of a person's disposition and lifelong fortune. Only through attuning themselves to the cosmic rhythm whose principles were found and recorded in the texts such as the *Day Books*, will there be a way to become harmonious with the environment and to thrive. The application of this kind of thinking to reproduction is not just seen in the *Day Books* but also popular in other contemporaneous texts from the philosophical works, literati's writings of customs to the medical works.

Human Reproduction as a Representation of Cosmic Creation

The idea that human birth parallels cosmic creation or the other way around is commonly seen in many texts of Han dynasty or pre-Han texts that were compiled in Han. Since the body in ancient China was always perceived in connection with the larger space surrounding it, it is not surprising that ancient Chinese correlated the microcosmic creation with the macrocosmic one. Mark Edward Lewis points out that the ancient Chinese understanding of space was constructed through a hierarchical order from the elementary unit, the body and the mind, and then the outer ones like households and villages, to the larger units like states and cosmos. Each level was understood as a smaller or larger replica of the

other levels and a minor change on one level may simultaneously affect the others. Each level was also ordered through regulating a lower level until one reached the center of centers in the human mind. Under this model the body is most often compared to a form of state or cosmos.⁸³ And it is the latter analogy, namely the body as a "replica of the cosmos," that makes the most ancient discussions, identifying the human reproduction with cosmic creation or equate the latter with the former.

In the *Book of Rites (Liji)*, the Confucian collection of ideal social forms and rites of Zhou dynasty that was believed to be passed from the pre-Han yet largely redacted by Han Confucians, there are a few passages applying human procreative terms or imagery to the relationship between heaven and earth and equating the natural growth of living things with human breeding. For example, the chapter of "Monthly Ordinances" (*yueling*) describes, "Heaven's *qi* descends, while Earth's *qi* leads up. Heaven and Earth join together, and all the plants flourish and stir."⁸⁴ In the chapter of "Record on Music" (*yueji*), as Lewis notices, the account of the union of Heaven and Earth is particularly graphic and explicitly sexual:

When Heaven and Earth stimulate and join, while yin and yang attain one another, then they illumine, protectively cover, and nourish all things. Only then do plants flourish, buds emerge, wings begin to beat, horned animals procreate, and hibernating insects come into the light and return to life. Winged creatures cover and protect their eggs, while furry animals couple and then nurse their young. Neither animals born in wombs nor those born in eggs perish.

The energy of Earth rises up and that of Heaven descends. Yin and yang rub together. Heaven and Earth agitate one another. Drumming it with thunder and lightning, arousing it with wind and rain, setting it in motion with the four seasons, warming it with the sun and moon, all forms of fertilization [hua 化] arise. Thus music/joy is the harmony of Heaven and Earth. If the fertilization is not timely there will be no birth, and if men and women are not properly distinguished [through having different surnames] then chaos will arise. This is the nature of Heaven and

⁸³ Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 2006), 3-5.

⁸⁴ Lewis, 42. *Liji*, the chapter of *yueling* 月令.

Earth.⁸⁵

The language used here reminds one of the scenes of human mating and procreation. All forms of fertilization (*hua*), including human birth, were said to originate from the converging energy of Heaven and Earth, Yin and Yang, and males and females. Interestingly, cosmic generation of living beings was imagined and described here in the terms and imageries of human reproduction. Human birth was reversely counted as one form of cosmic fertilization and as a microcosmic reenactment of macrocosmic procreation.

Under this model that views the body and the cosmos are each other's replica and that human birth and universal procreation parallel each other, reproduction of the human body from the union of Heaven and Earth directly result in a point-by-point correspondence between the structure of the body and that of the cosmos. Humans and the universe thus share common substance, energy and structure. Several early-Han texts explicitly convey this idea when talking about the birth of human beings. One essay in the *Huainanzi* remarks, "Heaven, Earth, and the cosmos are one human body. Everything within the three dimensions is a single human frame....The men of ancient times shared a common *qi* with Heaven and Earth."⁸⁶ In the beginning quote of *Huainanzi*'s chapter "Quintessential Spirit," while delineating the ten-month evolution of a fetus taking form as a human, it simultaneously asserts that since humans receive the spirit from Heaven and the physical body from Earth, humans' four limbs, five orbs, nine apertures, and 366 joints are equivalent to four seasons, five phases, nine regions, and 366 days, respectively. Humans' disposition and actions also corresponds to different weather and temperature.

In another early-Han encyclopedic composition *Guanzi*, its chapter "Water and Earth"

⁸⁵ Lewis, 42. *Liji*, the chapter of "Record on Music" (*yueji* 樂記). Here is Lewis' translation.

⁸⁶ Lewis, 44. *Huainanzi*, the eighth chapter of "the Basic Warp" (*benjing xun* 本經訓). Also see John S. Major, Sarah A Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, Harold D. Roth trans. and ed., *The Huainanzi by Liu An, King of Huainan: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), Ch. 8.

likewise compares the composition of nature to that of human body and formulates its embryology according to this parallel between nature and human body. It argues that water is "the root of all things and the source of all life" and "the blood and breath of Earth" and functions like "the circulation of blood and breath in the sinews and veins."⁸⁷ Humans are also composed of, and originates from, water. Therefore,

When the vital essence and vital force of male and female unite, water passes between them and assumes form. At the third month the resulting fetus begins to suck. What does it suck? The answer is the five tastes. What do these five tastes produce? The answer is the five viscera. The sour produces the spleen, the salty produces the lungs, the acrid produces the kidneys, the bitter produces the liver, and the sweet produces the heart. After the five viscera have been formed, they produce the five constituents of the body. The spleen produces the membranes, the lungs produce the bones, the kidneys produce the brain, the liver produces the skin, and the heart produces the flesh. After the five constituents of the body have been formed, the nine apertures are developed. The spleen develops to form the nose, the liver develops to form the eyes, the kidneys develop to form the ears, the lungs develop to form the mouth, and the heart develops to form the lower apertures. By the fifth month the fetus is fully formed; in the tenth month it is born.⁸⁸

The embryology here appears as a different system from the one in the chapter "Quintessential Spirit" of *Huainanzi*. *Guanzi* identifies the elementary substance of human fetus as water, while *Huainanzi* believes it to be earth. *Guanzi* depicts the development of embryo by tracing its formation of nine apertures, five constituents, five viscera all the way back to the fundamental five tastes and water, whereas *Huainanzi* emphasizes the monthly embryonic growth of different bodily parts and functions. In spite of these differences, the paragraphs related to embryology in both texts reveal the intimate correlation between the human body and the larger environment. In *Huainanzi*, it is the one-to-one correspondence between the structures and movements of cosmos and those of human body. In *Guanzi*, it is

⁸⁷ The translation here follows W. Allyn Rickett, *Guanzi, political, economic, and philosophical essays from early China: a study and translation* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1998), chapter XIV, 39, Shui Di, Water and Earth, p. 100. The author points out that the original Chinese of the first character, di, or earth, is probably the misnomer of shui, water, and the chapter title may be just "Water" instead of "Water and Earth" because the entire chapter is devoted to a discussion of water alone, see p. 98, and note 7.

⁸⁸ Rickett, *Guanzi*, 103-104.

the sharing of the most basic element of the composition of nature and human body. Moreover, like the above *Liji*'s quote, words used to describe human's bodily acts or features are also applied to nature. As the interaction between Heaven and Earth, Yang and Yin, was depicted with the language of sexual connotation in *Liji*, the basic element water is also considered in *Guanzi* as "the blood and breath" circulated in the "sinews and veins" of earth.

This emphasis of the correspondence between the universe and human body is elaborated most maturely and thoroughly in the *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*) which is compiled around the turn of the first century BCE in the early Han dynasty. One section in it titled "*Renfu tianshu* 人副天數" ("the corresponding of human bodily parts with heaven's natural order")⁸⁹ explicates the interlocking character and function of heaven, earth and human. It states that, "Regarding the human's body, his head is round, mirroring the appearance of heaven; his hairs represents stars and constellations; his ears and eyes are shining and sharp like sun and moon; his nose, mouth and breath is similar to wind and air; his mind is intelligent, similar to gods and spirits; his abdomen and its inner organs, full or empty, are like hundred things (in the world)."⁹⁰ With this intimate mutual correspondence, it further points out that, "the signs of heaven and earth and the copies of Yin and Yang are both installed on human body. Therefore, the body is like the universe. Its order is identical to the universe and its destiny connects with the universe."⁹¹

⁸⁹ The translation of the title refers to the terms used by Michael Loewe in his work, *Dong Zhongshu, a "Confucian" heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu* (Boston: Brill, 2011), 247, 289.

⁹⁰ This is my translation. The original Chinese is "是故人之身，首而員，象天容也；發，象星辰也；耳目戾戾，象日月也；鼻口呼吸，象風氣也；胸中達知，象神明也，腹胞實虛，象百物也。" See Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu*, vol. 56.

⁹¹ Ibid. This is my translation. The original Chinese is 天地之符，陰陽之副，常設於身，身猶天也，數與之相參，故命與之相連也。 Similar discourse can also be found in the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (the *Inner Cannon of Huangdi*). One of its chapter *Xieke* 邪客 of *Linshu* 靈樞 part dwells at length upon this mutual correspondence and interlocking nature between the universe and human body. It states that "Heaven has sun and moon, and human has two eyes; Earth has nine regions, and human has nine apertures; Heaven has wind

This text presents an established version of the correlative cosmology of Han on the interrelation between the body and the universe. Human body, its features and functions are perceived as replicas of the universe on a microcosmic level whereas the universe is imagined and described in a personified manner on a macrocosmic level. Against this cognitive backdrop, languages that were used to picture cosmic creation and human procreation are highly similar. Human reproduction hence is regarded as not just part of but also representation and reenactment of cosmic creation. Given this belief to the relationship of mutual correspondence between the body and the universe, the choice of appropriate time and space to coordinate human activities with the cosmic structure and rhythm becomes critical and explains the use of taboos and divination for childbirth in the *Day Books*.

Han literati's Writings on Childbirth: the Theory of *Qi* Transformation and the Reproductive Customs

The popular belief of taboos and divination in the practice of childbirth are attested in Han literati's writings as well. In these writings, Han literati record the folk customs related to reproduction and often criticized them harshly. Among them, Wang Cong is the one explicitly drawing on the theory of *qi* transformation to expound the interrelation between the universe and human beings, the formation of every thing and being, and thereby explain sense the diverse conditions of human's birth and fates. Compatible with the correlative cosmology, Wang Cong and Han people view *qi* as a substance which fills in the universe and is shared by every living being within it, including humans. It appears as a kind of medium penetrating

and rain, and human has joy and anger; Heaven has thunder and lightning, and human has voice and sound; Heaven has four seasons, and human has four limbs; Heaven has five notes, and human has five viscera," and so forth. In the end of the paragraph, it even notices and tries to explain the phenomenon of infertility, saying that "there are lands that do not produce plants in four seasons, and there are people who do not have offspring. These are instances showing the mutual correspondence between human, heaven and earth." Though there is no agreement among scholars about the exact time for the compilation of different sections in the Linshu part, this paragraph quoted above clearly reveal the bodily concept similar to that under the Han correlative cosmology and may only possibly composed during or after the Han dynasty.

and connecting all things and making them resonate to one another. Therefore, even though Wang Cong expresses his strong disagreement with many reproductive customs like infanticide and the taboo of birth pollution, the theory of *qi* behind his thinking and its association with correlative cosmology still somewhat weaken his objection. Examining Han literati's writings below, particularly those of Wang Cong, I argue that due to the same basis and component of *qi* of human birth shared with all other beings in the universe, it made the process of reproduction subject to various contagious influences of other beings' *qi*. This leads to the desire to avoid negative contagion in the larger environment in which a birth event happens⁹² and the desire to anticipate one's future luck because the *qi* received in a particular time and space determines one's lifelong destiny. This explains the popularity of taboos and divination literature like the *Day Books* in the Han period or even earlier time. However, as Wang's observation proves, childbirth itself can become the source of negative contagion due to its dangerous and lethal attribute under the same correlative thinking and the *qi* theory.

Using the transformation of *qi*, or the fluid of vital energy, to illustrate the emergence of all beings and humankind in the universe already appears in the *Huainanzi*. And it is further elaborated in Wang Cong's *the Balanced Inquiries* (*Lunheng* 論衡) to explain the variant conditions of humans' birth and fates. Aiming at critically examining contemporaneous folk customs, Wang includes in his work those related to childbirth and commented on them occasionally. The topics he discusses contain the connection of birth and *qi*, its relationship to one's lifespan, personality and fortune, and people's taboo on birth pollution.

Regarding the emergence of human beings, Wang clearly indicates that it is the

⁹² This point has been brought up by scholars like Liu Tseng-kuei, "Taboos: An Aspect of Beliefs in the Qin and Han," *Xinshixue* 18.4 (2007.12), pp. 28-30; Jen-der Lee, "Hantang zhijian qiuzi yifang shitan 漢唐之間求子醫方試探," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 68.2 (1997.6): 290-291.

random result of "the union of *qi* between Heaven and Earth." Similarly, the birth of a child results from "the union of *qi* between husband and wife" motivated by their desire.⁹³ Wang also holds that the *qi* received at the moment of conception can decide one's lifelong health, fate, wealth and social status, an idea that we constantly see in the *Day Books* despite without mentioning the role of *qi*. He states that "those who receive copious *qi* have strong bodies, which make their lives long; those who receive scanty *qi* have weak bodies, which make their lives short," and "those who die soon after birth are caused by some harm before being born and due to their reception of *qi* too little and weak."⁹⁴ For Wang, the amount of the reception of *qi* accounts for some infants' premature death and people can tell this from their frequency of requiring feeding. He says, "When a mother nurses her child at longer intervals, it will be fit for life, whereas, when she nourishes the infant very frequently, he will die. Why? Because the nursing at long intervals shows that the (child's) *qi* is copious, and the child is strong. The frequent suckling proves the insufficiency of the *qi* and the weakness of the baby."⁹⁵

Besides the amount of *qi* matters, the quality of *qi* that a child receives during the pregnancy determines one's wealth, social status and lifelong fate. As Wang asserts in the chapter "the meaning of destiny" (*mingyi* 命義), "Every mortal receives his own destiny, whether a lucky or an unlucky one, has been decided at the time when his parents bestowing *qi* on him."⁹⁶ The degree of wealth and nobility is also determined by the quality of *qi* that one receives at birth. "Imbibing the *qi* (from Heaven and Stars), humans are born. They live

⁹³ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *wushi* 物勢. The following quotations of *Lunheng* partly refer to Alfred Forke's translation. He translated "*qi*" mainly into the "fluid," or "vital fluid." I prefer to keep its original Chinese.

⁹⁴ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *qishou* 氣壽. The original Chinese is "夫稟氣渥則其體彊，體彊則其命長；氣薄則其體弱，體弱則命短；" "始生而死，未產而傷，稟之薄弱也。"

⁹⁵ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *qishou* 氣壽. The original Chinese is "婦人疏字者子活，數乳者子死。何則？疏而氣渥，子堅彊；數而氣薄，子軟弱也。"

⁹⁶ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *mingyi* 命義. The original Chinese is "凡人受命，在父母施氣之時，已得吉凶矣。"

and keep the *qi*. If they obtain a fine *qi*, they become men of rank, if common one, common people."⁹⁷

Given the significant role of *qi* plays in one's life, its reception at the moment of conception and during the period of gestation raises great concern. These are where Wang Cong warns parents, especially the expectant mothers, to notice the time for having sex, the lifestyle, and the fetal education during the pregnancy. Quoting the commentary of the *Book of Changes*, he divides human's fate into three types: the natural, who will die at one hundred years old, the concomitant, who will die at the age of fifty, and the adverse, meaning one who is inflicted by wickedness or encounters a thunderstorm during the gestation and thus dies young.⁹⁸ By the term "evilness," Wang refers to those which may incur negative influence on fetuses in terms of the correlative thinking. For example, he mentions, "if the pregnant women eat rabbits, the child born may have a split lip." Citing "Monthly Ordinances" in the *Liji*, he warns that having sex in the month often which thunders often, parents may beget children with handicaps. Those born dumb, deaf, lame, and blind are also due to their *qi* being infected by the outer malign *qi* and were harmed in the womb.⁹⁹ Thinking along this line, Wang hence emphasizes the importance of fetal education and place most responsibility of it on mothers. He says, "Therefore the *Li* offers the method for fetal education. It states that as long as the child is in the womb, the mother must not sit down if the mat be not properly placed, nor eat anything cut in the improper manner. Her eyes must see but the proper colors, and her ears hear but the proper sounds." The moment of conception should be particularly cautious as Wang once again warns, "if at the moment the mother is not discreet, having a

⁹⁷ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *mingyi* 命義. The original Chinese is "人稟氣而生，（舍）〔含〕氣而長，得貴則貴，得賤則賤."

⁹⁸ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *mingyi* 命義. The original Chinese is "正命者、至百而死，隨命者、五十而死，遭命者、初稟氣時遭凶惡也，調妊娠之時遭得惡也，或遭雷雨之變，長大夭死."

⁹⁹ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *mingyi* 命義. The original Chinese is "故妊婦食兔，子生缺脣。《月令》曰：'是月也，雷將發聲，有不戒其容者，生子不備，必有大凶。'瘖聾跛盲，氣遭胎傷。"

deluded mind and wicked thoughts, her child, when grown up, will be fierce, rebellious, and look ugly and wicked."¹⁰⁰

As for the childbirth-related taboos in the Han, Wang opposes them strongly and unequivocally. However, it seems that his disapproval of these reproductive taboos is somewhat undermined by his use of the *qi* theory. In the chapter of "four things to be avoided" (*sihui* 四諱), Wang lists four major taboos according to his contemporaries' opinion. Two of them are concerned with childbirth. One is to shun a woman who is going to give birth and who may bring others misfortune. The other is to avoid a child born in the first or the fifth month, by whom parents would be cursed and die. Wang also notices that Han people considered the placenta inauspicious and would temporarily live outside if encountering a woman in labor at home.¹⁰¹ For these folk taboos concerning childbirth, Wang's disapproval is straightforward and the reason he brings up for countering against these taboos is still the *qi* theory:

If we study the question carefully, on what is this dislike based? When a woman gives birth to a child, it comes into the world, filled with the original *qi*. This *qi* is the finest essence of Heaven and Earth. How could it be harmful and detestable? Human is an organism, and so is a child. What difference is there between the birth of a child and the production of all the other organisms? If human birth be held to be baleful, is the creation of the myriads of organisms baleful too? The newborn issues with the placenta. If the placenta be deemed inauspicious, the human placenta is like the husk of fruits growing on trees; wrapped round the infant's body, it comes out with it like the egg-shell of a young bird. What harm is there to justify people's aversion? Should it be due to its supposed inauspiciousness, then all

¹⁰⁰ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *mingyi* 命義. The original Chinese is "故《禮》有胎教之法：子在身時，席不正不坐；割不正不食；非正色，目不視；非正聲，耳不聽；" "受氣時，母不謹慎，心妄慮邪；則子長大，狂悖不善，形體醜惡." The emphasis of fetal education is a long tradition inherited from *Liji* of Confucianism. Similar content of this paragraph on fetal education is again repeated in Zhang Hua's 張華 (232-300) *Bowuzhi* 博物志 (Record of Diverse Things) composed in the Western Jin dynasty. Ji Yi 賈誼 (200-168 BCE) of early Han has also brought up similar view by quoting *Liji*. Studies on the fetal education of ancient and early medieval China, see Jen-der Lee, "Hantang zhijian qiuzi yifang shitan" (Reproductive Medicine in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China: Gender Discourse and the Birth of Gynecology), 311-313.

¹⁰¹ Discussion for avoiding pregnant women and those going to give birth by moving outside during the Han dynasty, see Jen-der Lee, "Hantang zhijian yishu zhong de shengchan zhi dao" (Childbirth in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 67.3 (1996): 574-576.

organisms with husks and shells ought to be detestable.....Human birth does not distinguish itself from that of the six domestic animals. They are all animated beings with blood and *qi*, that breed and bring forth their young not otherwise than man. Yet the aversion applies to human birth only, and does not include that of animals.....I must say that this popular avoidance is unreasonable.¹⁰²

Wang criticizes both the taboos to birth and placenta and argues that what people consider polluting of these two things is nothing but composes of *qi*, something that is shared by all animated beings. In fact, scholar Liu Tseng-kuei points out that Han people generally considered things related to childbirth polluting. Not just parturition and placenta, menstruation blood was also regarded as filthy as well. Therefore, when fasting or sacrificing in shrines, people were required to avoid all of them. When planning to hold festivals, ceremonies, entering into forests and mountains, or traveling far, people were suggested not to contact pregnant women as well.¹⁰³

Wang Cong uses the same kind of *qi* theory to dispute the reasonableness of the infanticide custom in the Han:

The fourth thing to be shunned is the bringing up of children born in the first or the fifth months because such children are supposed to kill their father and mother, and therefore on no account can be reared... Now, wherefore should children of the first or the fifth months kill their father and mother? The human embryo, filled with the *qi*, remains in the womb, where it develops ten months, when it is born. All are imbued with the same original *qi*; what difference is there between the first and the second months, and what diversity between the fifth and the sixth, that an ill omen might be found in them?¹⁰⁴

Questioning the reason for killing children born in specific months, Wang indicates that infants, no matter which month they are born, are imbued with the same *qi*. Wang tries to remind readers of the common basis of all beings, the *qi*, and the self-contradiction of some kind of *qi* being perceived filthier than others. However, he neglects that even though the *qi*

¹⁰² Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *sihui* 四諱. This quotation mostly follows Alfred Forke's translation.

¹⁰³ Liu Tseng-kuei, "Taboos," 30-31.

¹⁰⁴ Wang Cong, *Lunheng*, the chapter of *sihui* 四諱.

constitutes the common ground of all beings and makes no difference between human's birth and others' birth or between children born in the first and second month, the nature of *qi* is fluid, permeable, omnipresent, and thus contagious in terms of the law of correlative cosmology. The same *qi* that is shared by all beings could also reversely make them easily affect one another. The high fatality of childbirth therefore makes the contact of its *qi* dangerous. The *qi* in the beginning month of the year and in the fifth month when Yang reaches its acme may also infect the children born in these times, making them fiery and impetuous and threatens their parents. Simply speaking, the fundamental assumption behind these reproductive taboos and Wang's objection comes from the same source, the transformative and fluid *qi*.

The practice of infanticide is also found in the *Day Books* and other contemporary writings. We have seen the relevant records in the *Day Books* previously. Many items of divination in the different chapters of the *Day Books* imply the cases of infants' neonatal or premature death. Some even suggests that those being born in specific days or months "should not be raised." In fact, the custom of aborting infants born in the fifth month and relevant records, for instance, are seen in many contemporary writings like *Shiji* 史記, *Houhan shu* 後漢書 (*Book of Later Han*), *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (*Miscellaneous Notes on the Western Capital*) and *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (*Comprehensive Meaning of Customs and Habits*). This particular custom of infanticide of babies born in the fifth month continues and still appears frequently in the writings of the Southern and Northern Dynasties.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ The comprehensive discussion of early medieval Chinese phenomena of abortion, the relevant customs and taboos, see Jen-der Lee, "Hansui zhijian de shenzi buju wenti" (Infanticide and Child Abandonment from Han to Sui), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 66.3 (1995): 747-812, the part related to the infanticide of children born in the fifth month, see 752-755; Liu Tseng-keui also mentions that newborns with unpropitious birth time, direction, incorrect direction or weird appearance and bodily features may be killed. See his "Taboos," 31-33.

Divination and Taboos in the Medical Works

Before ending the chapter, I want to say a few more words about the intimate interrelation between the realm of medicine and that of religion in ancient and medieval China. In the previous sections, we see that some contents related to childbirth in the *Day Books* appear in ancient and medieval Chinese medical works as well. The childbirth chapter in the *Kongjiapo Day Book* shares its content of divination with *Chanjing*, a Six-Dynasty medical work of childbirth. The human-form divination chart collected in many local versions of the *Day Book* is also depicted in *Taichan shu*, the gestation book found in the Han tomb of Mawangdui.

This sharing of healing resources by religious and medical fields are common in many ancient cultures and have been well discussed by many scholars of Chinese religion and Chinese medicine. Donald Harper's early study on the "Fifty-two Ailments" of Mawangdui silk manuscript to the recent study on the medical use of "Spellbinding" of the *Day Book* and Dunhuang divinatory manuscripts all demonstrates the fluidity of the two realms and the significance of magical medicine in ancient China.¹⁰⁶ Paul Unschuld in his *Medicine in China* identifies the religious components of medicine for each period, confirming the prominent roles of demonology, the relationship with the dead, magical correspondence, and Daoist and Buddhist medicine in Chinese medical development.¹⁰⁷ Michel Strickmann further explore in depth the Daoist and Buddhist talismanic and ritual resources that were put to the therapeutic use.¹⁰⁸ In this regard, scholars like Lin Fushi and Chen Ming also devote long-term effort to the research on the association of medicine with Daoism and Buddhism,

¹⁰⁶ Donald Harper, "The Wu Shih Erh Ping Fang: Translation and Prolegomena." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, 1982; "A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century B.C." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45(1985): 459-98; "Dunhuang iatromantic manuscripts: P.2856R° and P.2675V°," in Vivienne Lo and Christopher Cullen ed., *Medieval Chinese Medicine: The Dunhuang Medical Manuscripts* (Routledge, 2005), 134-165.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

¹⁰⁸ Michel Strickmann, Bernard Faure ed., *Chinese Magic Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

exploring their etiology, medical theory, monastic practices of medicine and various means of religious healing.¹⁰⁹

With regard to reproduction, the blurred boundary between medicine and religion before medieval period is similar and sometimes even more striking, given its nature of high uncertainty and the centrality in the continuation of human species. Thus we see above the birth divination system organized by the twelve earthly stems appeared in the *Kongjiapo Day Book* was adopted in *Chanjing* as well. Liu Lexian's study also points out that the sixty-day circle divination system of heavenly stems and earthly branches to predict newborns' future destiny not only exists in the *Shuihudi Day Book* but is also collected in one section titled "*Xiangzi sheng liujiari fa* 相子生六甲日法" (Divining the fortune of a child born in each day of the sixty-day circle) in *Chanjing*, quoted in the twenty-fourth fascicle of *Ishinpo*. Though the contents of the two are slightly different and the divination statements in *Chanjing* have been somewhat reduced and simplified, yet their principle is exactly the same.¹¹⁰

Another good example is *Gestation Book's* inclusion of divination and taboos. This medical work does not just have the same human-form divination chart as the *Day Book*. Its reproductive practice of burying afterbirth also shares the identical concern with the *Day Books* of properly choosing direction and location for carrying out an activity and the same taboo on birth pollution attested by Wang Cong's observation of Han folk custom. According to Li Jianmin, this earliest gestation work and another Mawangdui medical recipes "*Zaliao fang*" 雜療方 (Recipes for Treating Miscellaneous Ailments) contain respectively a type of diagram called "*Yucang maibao tu*" 禹藏埋胞圖 (Burying the afterbirth chart hidden by Yu)

¹⁰⁹ For the medical components in the medieval Daoism, see Lin Fu-shih 林富士, *Zhongguo zhonggu shiqi de zongjiao yu yiliao* 中國中古時期的宗教與醫療, (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 2008); For the Buddhist part, see Chen Ming 陳明, *Zhonggu yiliao yu wailai wenhua* 中古醫療與外來文化 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2013).

¹¹⁰ Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi qinjian rishu yanjiu*, 184-185. Liu believes that the simplification of divinatory predictions in *Chanjing* reflects that part of the function of birth divination recorded in the *Day Books* has become the origin of fortune-telling and was gradually replaced this tradition.

(Figure 1.3) and its literal illustration. Since the afterbirth was perceived unpropitious and filthy yet closely connected with a child's future destiny, properly burying it can evade pollution, bring good fortune for the child, and determine the sex of the next child. The literal instruction of the diagram suggests that one should first cleanse afterbirth, then dry it and preserve it in an old clean earthen container after parturition. The chart provides twelve directions for use in each month of a year for determining a propitious direction and location for depositing afterbirth. Two of the twelve directions marked on these diagrams would be associated with death and should be avoided. At the same time, people should choose the direction assigned to the biggest number for doing the burial.¹¹¹ More interestingly, this chart for burying the afterbirth is exactly the one that was also popularly used in the *Day Books* for determining propitious time, place and direction for carrying on an activity, also named as "*ersheng sigou tu*" 二蠅四鉤圖 (chart of two cords and four hooks which representing the model of the universe).¹¹²

¹¹¹ See Li Jianmin 李建民, "Mawangdui hanmu boshu yucang maiboa yu jianzheng 馬王堆漢墓帛書禹藏埋胞圖箋証" (Notes on "Burying the Afterbirth Chart Secreted by Yu": A silke document from Mawangdui), in the *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 65 (Taipei, 1994.12): 725-832.

These two directions for avoiding the burial of afterbirth are respectively linked to the "*Dashi*" 大時 (Great Period) and "*Xiaoshi*" 小時 (Little Period). The *Dashi* originated from observations of the Year Star (Jupiter), while *Xiaoshi* was based on observations of either the Little Dipper (*doubing* 斗柄), or of the lunar-founding (月建 *yuejian*) which was based on observation of the Big Dipper.

¹¹² For a concise English explanation of the chart of burying the afterbirth and the chart of two cords and for hooks, see Li Jianmin, "An Introduction to the Occult Arts in China," on the website of Academia Sinica, <http://saturn.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/~bencao/0309.htm>. I quote part of his explanation below.

"This chart consists of three parts: 1) The whole chart is a large square made of twelve small squares representing the twelve months. The twelve squares are arranged in a clockwise order starting from the bottom left square, which is labeled "First Month." The rest of the squares are labeled sequentially. 2) Each monthly square is divided into twelve directions, by a diagram called "*ersheng sigou tu*" 二蠅四鉤圖 (chart of two cords and four hooks). 3) Each of the twelve monthly squares is marked with two "death" positions and 10 numbers, ranging from 20 to 120. The "death" positions and numbers differ for each month. The person who buries the afterbirth has to strictly observe several rules concerning time, direction, and numbers."

"The "*ersheng sigou tu*" (chart of two cords and four hooks) is particularly interesting. According to the *Tianwen* 天文 "Celestial Patterns" chapter of the *Huainan zi* 淮南子, heaven is supported by two cords and four hooks. The two cords intersect each other perpendicularly through the center of heaven. The four corners of heaven are tied and supported by the four hooks. When read in conjunction with the Twelve Earthly Branches, the "Chart of two cords and four hooks" becomes a model of the universe. The two cords and four hooks can be interpreted as representing "temporal spaces," an important concept for understanding the occult arts. Similar charts or figures of temporal spaces can also be seen in devices, such the *liubo* 六博 chart and the *guiju* mirror 規矩鏡 (or TLV diagram) that embodied the ancient view of the cosmos. The twelve-month chart of "Burying

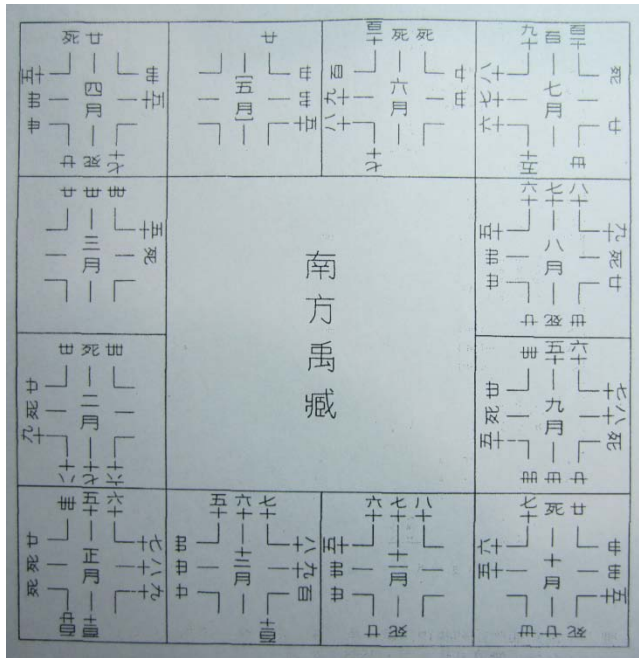


Figure 1.3: "Yucang maibao tu" 禹藏埋胞圖 (Burying the afterbirth chart secreted by Yu)¹¹³

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has examined sections of several local versions of the *Day Books* that contain reproductive divination and taboos. It further reads these manuscripts with contemporary philosophical compilations, demonstrating their common inner logic, namely the intimate correlation between the universe and the body under the correlative cosmology. It also analyzes literati's criticism to folk customs of reproductive taboos and indicates the theory of *qi* transformation serving as the common assumption behind both the birth taboos and criticisms. It finally reveals the sharing of contents of some reproductive divination and taboos between the *Day Books* and contemporary medical works. As a whole, this chapter has explored a pre-Buddhist worldview in China, in which childbirth was perceived and carried out under all the above elements. The application of divination and taboos for treating reproduction was categorized by the contemporaries as a kind of "fanshu" 方術 (Occult Arts)

the Afterbirth Secreted by Yu" is just such a chart. The positions of "dashi" (大時, Great Period) or "xiaoshi" (小時, Small Period) are unlucky positions to bury the afterbirth, and are the two positions labeled "death" for each month."

¹¹³ Li Jianmin (1994), 725-832.

and a strict line between custom, magic, medicine and religion never exists there.¹¹⁴ These resources of occult arts can sometimes be appropriated to the therapeutic use in the occasion of childbirth. As a result, the ambiguity between religion and medicine paved a way for later Buddhist magical medicine to thrive and the application of Buddhist healing resources also in return helped maintain this ambiguity down to the end of the medieval period. Moreover, the transmission of Buddhism brought its fundamental doctrine of birth suffering and its exorcistic healing techniques for birth that would come to operate alongside the indigenous tradition of correlative thinking and the divination-taboo system.

¹¹⁴ See the above two studies by Li Jianmin. Lin Fushi 林富士 in his study on divination and healing in ancient China also points out that diviners have been playing the role of healer since the Shang dynasty as shown from the contents of oracle bones. Many ancient texts always mention diviners together with physicians and shamans. They appear together very often. Specialists of occult arts were usually good at healing and medicine. In medieval period, diviners continued to act as healers. They could foretell date of birth, life span of a patient, diagnose the causes of one's disease, instruct people the therapeutic methods, predict the prevalence of epidemics, diagnose or cure a woman's infertility, and forecast a fetus' gender or date of birth. See his "Divination and Healing in Medieval China," in Hoyt Tillman ed., *Wenhua yu lishi de zhueisuo: Yu Yinshi jiaoshou bazhi shouqing lunwen ji* 文化與歷史的追索: 余英時教授八秩壽慶論文集 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 2009), 583-620.

Chapter Two

Sacred Birth: Reproductive Scenes in Chinese Buddhist Hagiographies

In contemporary Taiwan, an influential Buddhist institution, Dharma Drum Mountain, publishes a series of pamphlets in which the founder Master Sheng Yen (1931-2009) lectures on Buddhist teachings and stories in colloquial and plain language. Among these widely circulated free prints, one text entitled *fomu moye furen* (The Story of Buddha's Mother, the Queen Māyā) is included in the series. At its beginning, Sheng Yen tells the well-known story of Māyā's pregnancy and the birth of the Buddha Śākyamuni. When the prince Siddhartha entered into her womb:

Māyā in her dream clearly saw the Bodhisattva, who rode a six-tusked white elephant and entered into her womb from her right side. At that moment, her body and mind both felt unprecedentedly refreshing, comfortable and delighted. According to a dream-diviner, this was an auspicious sign for giving birth to a noble child, who would either become a Buddha or well-known in the world.

While bearing the sacred embryo of the Bodhisattva, she never had abdomen pain or waist discomfort like ordinary pregnant women. She was neither fearful nor horrified. She was immune to all poisons and untainted by all sorts of impurities. She never felt tired but only great joy. She kept her precepts and stayed pure, without any thought of desire and wish for good food. She had no feeling of coldness, hotness, hunger and thirst. She was always cheerful, willing to offer alms, compassionate to all sentient beings and beneficial to all with an impartial mind.

When the bodhisattva was in her womb, the Queen Māyā could perform great miracles. If people were haunted by ghosts or spirits, they would be immediately cured once they saw her, regardless of their sex, age, or social and economic standing. Those who had diseases like jaundice, swollen bodies, madness, tinea and scabies, tumor, ulcer, and all other pains as well as various strange symptoms, would quickly be cured as soon as they came in front of the Queen Māyā and once the Queen rubbed their infected parts or gave them any grass stem or leaf.¹¹⁵

This account of Māyā's pregnancy depicts the moment of her conception and various marvelous physical and mental transformations following her impregnation. Sheng Yen

¹¹⁵ Master Sheng Yen, *Fomu moye furen* 佛母摩耶夫人(Buddha's Mother, the Queen Māyā), The Series of Dharma Drum Mountain's Wisdom Handy Book, Dharma Drum Cultural Center, 2009. The translation here is my own.

recounts the story mainly based on *Fobenxing jijing* 佛本行集經 (*Abhiniṣkramaṇa*, T190), which was in China one of the most popular versions of Jātaka compilation of Buddha's life. Translated in Sui dynasty (581-618CE), this scripture have been widely read, quoted and adapted by Chinese Buddhists since then all the way to nowadays Taiwan.

Few texts in the Buddhist Tripitaka take up the themes of pregnancy and childbirth or treat reproductive experience from an expectant mother's perspective. Even though there are some such cases, most of them tend to emphasize how suffering the whole process involves, in order to demonstrate the necessity of converting to Buddhism to liberate oneself from worldly bondage to lust and desire. This above account, on the contrary, not only details the mental and bodily states of an expectant mother but also describes Māyā's pregnancy as sanctifying all things and experience surrounding the event, a style that is typically seen in Buddhist hagiographies. In this account of Māyā's pregnancy that Sheng Yen adapted from *Fobenxing jijing*, the whole course of reproduction Māyā went through is represented as a delightful and honorable one. It was filled with divine wonder and blessing, and accompanied with the acquiring of magical healing power, which all came from the power of the sacred embryo, the future Buddha.

According to Buddhist canonical tradition Māyā died soon after Siddhartha was born. The whole process of gestation, or at least the time of parturition, may not have been as pleasant as the Buddha's hagiography claims. Māyā's experience described here must have been romanticized by Buddhists of later age rather than reflect a historical truth. Thanks to her bearing of this sacred embryo that was destined to achieve awakening, Māyā was believed to be exempt from all sorts of sufferings that "ordinary pregnant women" would have to bear. Moreover, she obtained incredible healing power to cure diseases and to soothe people simply by her magic hand-rubbing or indirect contact through the grass and leaves she delivered to them. In fact, Māyā's sanctified experience of childbirth, her divinity and her

esteemed status in Buddhist tradition all come from her role as the Buddha's birth mother. That is to say, although the above account of Māyā seemingly intends to convey a woman's reproductive process from her own viewpoint and in a positive light, the source of her delightful pregnant experience and her miraculous healing power still originate from the embryo hidden inside her abdomen.

Interestingly, in opposition to the sanctified account of Māyā's pregnancy in Buddhist hagiographies, Buddhist doctrine regards the nature of birth and life as suffering and repulsive. The first principle of the four noble truths is suffering, or *duḥkha* in Sanskrit, and the first of the four major *duḥkhas* is birth, the very origin and beginning of life. Extending from that, females' reproductive bodies and function are also conceived as abominable and filthy. Sexual desire or the desire for posterity is thus the most severe and fundamental obstacle, which caused the Buddha to make it the subject of the first precept.¹¹⁶ The whole array of Buddhist teachings is dedicated to analyzing and figuring out solutions for this essential dimension of life. Previous scholarship, therefore, when talking about the interrelation between Buddhism and childbirth, tends to focus on the impact of this Buddhist notion of suffering on perceptions of motherhood and childbirth. For instance, Reiko Ohnuma points out that in Buddhist texts mothers who grieve for the loss of children become a typical and iconic representation of the doctrine of suffering. In China, scholars contend that the ideas of debt-repayment and even debt-revenge that developed in indigenous Chinese Buddhist texts based on the notion of birth suffering served to convinced Chinese audiences

¹¹⁶ Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), Ch2, esp. 74-76. Faure has discussed various Buddhist approaches to sexuality, including that of disciplining sex through a series of precepts and rituals like ordination and confession. He also identifies the importance of Sudinna's story in making the first Vinaya rule. On Sudinna's story, see *Sifen lü* 四分律 (T. 1428), 571a. Janet Gyatso has utilized Pāli Vinaya to write a concise introduction of sexuality as a problematic issue for monks, its danger of social entanglements, and the connection between sexuality and reproduction, see "Sex," in Donald Lopez ed., *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 271-290.

that Buddhism was equally committed to the norm of children's filiality to their parents.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, this perspective neglects one prominent aspect existing in the Buddhist literary tradition, namely its hagiographical genre. Ranging from the Buddha's life accounts to eminent monks and nuns' biographies, these hagiographies tell stories of Buddhist paragons, describing their previous and present lives pursuing awakening, and often containing marvelous scenes of their mothers' pregnancy and their birth. In these accounts, miracles occur and auspicious signs are identified, prognosticating their destined future of great spiritual pursuits and achievements. These stories, which were translated, recorded, and propagated in China, open a new scope of imagination or a "discursive realm," allowing Chinese Buddhists who regarded these figures as models to reinterpret childbirth beyond the normative Buddhist definition of birth as suffering. In brief, in the Buddhist hagiographical tradition, despite the significance of the Buddhist core teaching of *duḥkha*, childbirth is not merely taken to illustrate the doctrine of birth suffering and treated simply as the cause and origin of suffering. Instead, reproductive events such as conception, pregnancy, giving birth, lactation, and reproductive bodies like wombs and fetuses may all be idealized as the embodiments of sacredness foretelling one's future spiritual achievement. They may be treated as the evidence of one's inborn extraordinariness and integrated into one's life account from a retrospective view to attest one's destined greatness as exemplified by the sanctified account of Māyā's pregnancy and Śākyamuni's birth.

Although this aspect of viewing reproduction as a sacred event rather than as symbolizing suffering or defilement has been paid less attention by scholars, this is the

¹¹⁷ Reiko Ohnuma, *Ties that Bind: Maternal Imagery and Discourse in Indian Buddhism* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), Ch.2; Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Jessey J. C. Choo, "That 'Fatty Lump': Discourses on the Fetus, Fetal Development, and Filial Piety in China before the Eleven Century CE," *Nan Nü* 14 (2012): 177-221. For the further discussion on the relevant scholarship and its discourses in Buddhism and in Chinese Buddhism more specifically, see Chapter Three.

approach adopted by Hubert Durt in his pioneering study on Māyā's pregnancy. He is interested in the mother's role, and especially the carnal link between a mother and her son shown in the Buddha's biographies. Utilizing the Sanskrit and Chinese *Mūlasarvāstivāda* Vinaya and several versions of the Buddha's biographies translated into Chinese between the late second century and the early seventh century, he investigates two prominent phenomena in Māyā's pregnancy, namely *dohada*, the uncontrollable craving of pregnant women influenced by their fetuses, and her acquisition of magical healing power endowed by the embryo. However, since he only examines the two phenomena, the other rich contents and connotations found in the Buddha's biographies that describe Māyā's pregnancy remain largely unexplored. Additionally, Durt's research is confined to the scriptural analysis and does not further track down whether these hagiographical descriptions of Māyā's pregnancy and Śākyamuni's birth have left any trace in history on people's perceptions of childbirth or Buddhist writings of hagiographies by looking into relevant materials and Chinese historical sources.

Therefore this chapter begins from Hubert Durt's research on Māyā's pregnancy and its two features, her *dohada* and magical healing power. It continues to examine other features by delving into some medieval Chinese translations of the Buddha's biographies which Durt quickly mentions but not thoroughly investigate. By doing so, I uncover some other striking features of the reproductive event, such as Māyā's conception dreams, repeated emphasis on her purity, and various auspicious signs that celebrated the Buddha's sacred birth and distinguished his birth from the birth of ordinary people. Finally, I explore the impact of these narratives by examining both literary and visual representation of them by Chinese monastic and lay followers. I also compare the descriptive patterns and components of the reproductive events described in Chinese Buddhist hagiographies with those in the Buddha's biography to show this influence.

Regarding the sources I utilize, for the Chinese translations of the Buddha's biographies, I draw on his life account in *Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶 (Skt. *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*, T. 1442), *Puyao jing* 普曜經 (Skt. *Lalitavistara*, T. 186), *Fanguang da zhuangyan jing* 方廣大莊嚴經 (one later version of T. 186, T. 187), *Xiuxing benqi jing* 修行本起經 (Skt. *Cārya-nidāna*, T. 184), *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* 太子瑞應本起經 (another version of T. 184, T. 185), *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing* 過去現在因果經 (a later and fuller translation of T. 184 and T. 185, T. 189), *Fo benxingji jing* 佛本行集經 (Skt. *Abhiñṣkramaṇa*, T. 190), and *Zhongxu mohe di jing* 眾許摩訶帝經 (Skt. *Mahāsammata-rāja*, T. 191). Following the investigation of the scriptures, I turn to indigenous Buddhist writings of the Buddha's life to analyze how Chinese Buddhists quoted, retold, and interpreted scriptural contents of the Buddha's birth and his mother childbearing experience. These writings contain Chinese Buddhist compositions of the Buddha's biographies like the monk Sengyou 僧祐's *Genealogy of the Śākya* (*Shijiapu* 釋迦譜, T. 2040), relevant excerpts of the Buddha's birth drawn from Buddhist encyclopedias like *Hongming ji* 弘明集 (T. 2102), *Jinlu yixiang* 經律異相 (T. 2121), *Fayuan julin* 法苑珠林 (T. 2122). In addition to the monastic writings, I also utilize a few Dunhuang transformation texts and tableaux that sketch the birth scenes of the prince Siddhartha, in order to demonstrate the reception of the event among a general audience. In the final part, I survey the reproductive scenes of medieval Chinese monastics by employing the four biographies of eminent monks and nuns, namely the *Biographies of Nuns* (*Biqiu ni zhuan* 比丘尼傳, T. 2063), the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, T. 2059), both written before the mid-sixth century, and the two continuations compiled in the seventh century (*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, T. 2060) and the tenth century (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, T. 2061).

As a whole, I point out that some narrative patterns and components utilized in depicting Māyā's pregnancy and Śākyamuni's birth are very similar to those used in writing hagiographies of Chinese Buddhist monastics. Yet the latter also displays considerable appropriation from local tradition ranging from the birth myths of ancient sage kings to Confucian apocryphal writings for political legitimacy. The overlap between the writings of the Buddha's biographies and Chinese Buddhist hagiographies demonstrates that the narrative model for depicting birth as a sacred and marvelous event of divine blessing applied in the Buddha's biographies became no longer restricted to the privilege of sages or kings and imperial household. Instead, miraculous pregnancy and birth serve as retrospective prediction for the accomplishments of religious practitioners. With the transmission and circulation of the Buddha's biographies, the miraculous reproductive scenes within them and their connotation of childbirth as a sacred event offered another way for Chinese people to perceive reproduction through other perspectives than that of Buddhist doctrine, for which it symbolized suffering, or ancient Chinese correlative cosmology, which merely focused on the selection of an auspicious time and place. Wonderful and miraculous pregnancy and birth with a sanctified implication ceased to be the privilege of a limited group and became a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy for practitioners aspiring to the highest enlightenment and liberation.

Māyā's Pregnancy: *Dohada* and Magical Healing Power

Hubert Durt's research on Māyā's pregnancy centers on two topics: Māyā's pregnant longings, *dohada*, and her magical healing power. There are several versions of the account of Māyā's pregnancy and the Buddha's birth, and the focuses of different versions are varied. Māyā's *dohada* is most clearly depicted in the Buddha's life account in the Saṃghabhedavastu of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* Vinaya. Its Sanskrit version is now only

preserved in a Gilgit manuscript. Two extant Chinese translations including the similar section are found in *Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye poseng shi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事 (T. 1450), translated by Yijing 義淨 (635-713 CE) of Tang dynasty, and the *Zhongxu mohe di jing* 眾許摩訶帝經 (T191), rendered by the Kashmiri monk Faxian 法賢 during the years 982-1001 AD of the Song dynasty.¹¹⁸

In the Indian gynecology, *dohada* means that a mother is connected with and influenced by the virtuous or nefarious desires of the embryo that she is bearing. The mother of a virtuous child will benefit from the innate qualities of her embryo. The famous case is Śāriputra, whose mother became astonishingly wise while expecting the birth of his son. The opposite example is Ajātaśatru, who was notorious for jailing and killing his father King Bimbisāra and is said to have had negative influence on his mother Vaidehī while in her womb. When bearing him, she experienced the two sinister cravings of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of her husband.¹¹⁹ Durt defines the six characters of *dohada* as follows: 1) a craving only felt by women during pregnancy; 2) it happens only to the birth of a son; 3) an urgent and perilous craving for a precise object that the husband is charged with the burden of satisfying; 4) the craving is usually material but may be sublimated to other forms; 5) with the desire to eat specific things, which may also be sublimated; 6) a *dohada* can be either good or bad, depending on the virtuous or perverse nature of the embryo.¹²⁰

The depiction of Māyā's *dohada* in Buddhist texts inherited this tradition of Indian gynecology. The innate wisdom and compassion of the future Buddha exerted influences on the first three longings among Māyā's five *dohadas*. These pregnant cravings of Māyā are as

¹¹⁸ Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: I. The Five Uncontrollable Longings (*dohada*)," in the *Journal of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies* [JICABS], V (2002), 59-60.

¹¹⁹ Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: I. *Dohada*," 48-56.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 52-53.

follows. The first is to drink water from the four oceans, referring to the magnitude of the wisdom that will be reached by her son. The second and third are the wish to free prisoners and to present gifts to the needy, implying the future Buddha's compassion. The fourth and fifth are to view a garden, specifically to visit the garden named Lumbinī.¹²¹ Apparently, Māyā's first three cravings are the sublimated form of *dohada*, not just remaining in material form or carnal desire but rather symbolizing the Buddha's unlimited wisdom and compassion. The last two cravings explain why the child happened to be born in the garden Lumbinī.

Comparing the accounts of Māyā's *dohada* mentioned in the Sanskrit versions with the two Chinese ones, Durt finds that Chinese Buddhists did not coin a technical term for the translation of the concept of *dohada* even though the Sanskrit account has been translated twice into Chinese. Only Sanskrit Vinaya account used the term. In Yijing's translation, the *dohada* is described as "a sudden personal thought" (or [Māyā] suddenly thinking of [sth.] by herself, 忽自思念) and Faxian's translation uses almost the same phrase, a "sudden personal thought about drinking [sth.]" (忽自思飲), or other similar expression like "wish" (*yuan* 願, *xinyuan* 心願), "think" (*si* 思, *nian* 念, *siwei* 思惟), or "request" (*qing* 請).¹²² Despite lacking a fixed Chinese translation of the term, the carnal link between a mother and her son was still preserved through the depiction of Māyā's longings influenced by the fetus. As Durt indicates, a *dohada* was generally considered to be symptomatic of female weakness in Indian literature. But it was somewhat transformed and sublimated in a positive manner in *Mūlasarvāstivāda* Vinaya. The tendency of the deification of the Buddha over the course of development of Buddhism into Mahāyāna did not succeed in clearing out the significant role of his natural

¹²¹ Ibid, 58.

¹²² Ibid, 59-61. Also see Faxian 法賢 of Song dynasty trans., *Zhongxu mohe di jing* 眾許摩訶帝經, T. 191, vol.3, 939a; Yijing 義淨 of Tang dynasty trans., *Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye poseng shi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事, T. 1450, vol.2, 107c. Durt also notices that Faxian's translation follows rather closely the passage of the Māyā's stories in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda*.

mother.¹²³

Besides *dohada*, another benefit that the embryo imparted to Māyā is the power of supernatural healing. Buddhism honors the Buddha as the great king of physicians because he treated the diseased by the Dharma. As Durt indicates, *Lalitavistara* considers that the Buddha, "being the king of physicians, became the remedy itself when he settled in a womb." Thus the embryo is both a living medicine and the supreme medicine. It grants Māyā herself not only a wholesome pregnant body, exempt from any negative turbulence of her mental and physical state, but also miraculous healing powers to cure all illnesses. This power corresponds to Māyā's second and third *dohada*, all of them manifesting the embryonic influence of its infinite compassionate power on her and thus making her the intermediary physician for the Buddha.¹²⁴

According to the sixth chapter of the *Lalitavistara*, "The descent of the embryo into the womb" (Skt. Gharbhâvagrânti-parivarta), Māyā obtained three kinds of superpowers of healing while carrying the Buddha in her belly. The first is that by virtue of looking at her, people of any kind from anywhere, but especially those possessed by malevolent spirits, would recover their memory, and non-humans would turn into humans. The second is that people afflicted by sicknesses, listed at length,¹²⁵ would be cured if she placed her right hand on their heads. The third is that those who touch the grass that Māyā picked up from the ground and offered to them would become free from sickness, without any trace of it.¹²⁶

¹²³ Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: I. Dohada," 65; "The Pregnancy of Māyā: II. Māyā as Healer," VI (2003), 47-48.

¹²⁴ Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: II. Māyā as Healer," 43-44.

¹²⁵ Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: II. Māyā as Healer," 53, note 39. Sicknesses include 1) those due to an imbalanced combination of wind, gall and phlegm; 2) troubles of the eyes, of the ears, of the nose, of the tongue, of the lips, of the teeth, of the throat, swollen neck; 3) particular sicknesses including swollen chest, two varieties of leprosy, tuberculosis, madness, epilepsy, fever, oozing, goitre, blister, cellulitis, a skin infection, and scabs.

¹²⁶ Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: II. Māyā as Healer," 53-54.

Two early Chinese versions of the *Lalitavistara*, the *Puyao jing* 普曜經 (T. 186) and *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing* 方廣大莊嚴經 (T. 187), also contain the similar account of Māyā's healing power. The *Puyao jing* was translated in the Western Jin dynasty by Dharmarakṣa (ca. 237-316). It mentions the above three aspects of Māyā as a healer. The gāthā describing her healing power states, "Men and women come from the four directions, perturbed by demons with deranged spirits. Looking at the Queen, their mind is delivered.For those suffering problems from wind, cold, heat, sicknesses of the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and any sort of torment, if the Queen caresses their head and they attain peace. If she takes a piece of grass and gives it to them, sickness disappears. Without pain and in peace, they return home. The embryo acts as the medicine King."¹²⁷ These three aspects depicting the Queen's healing methods, namely looking at her face, caressing patients' heads, and delivering grasses to them, also appear in the Tang version of *Lalitavistara*, titled *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing* translated by Divākara (613-648CE) (Chi. Dipohelo 地婆訶羅), which featured stylistic elaborations.¹²⁸ The *Fobenxing jijing* of the Sui dynasty (the sixth C.) which Master Sheng Yen adapted to illustrate Māyā's pregnancy in the pamphlet with which I open this chapter, contains the similar content of these three aspects of Māyā's healing deeds. Yet this scripture makes some interesting addition in the third aspect. Rather than just mentioning her "offering" patients grasses, *Fobenxing jijing* elaborates her deeds not only in style but also in details, depicting her "gathering" herbs, leaves or stalks, "rubbing" these quasi-materia medica with her right hand and "sending" them to the sick people who may eat, touch or apply them to their bodies. This elaboration of her own acts seems to give more significance on her role as an independent healer rather than simply being an intermediary for

¹²⁷ Dharmarakṣa of the Western Jin dynasty trans., *Puyao jing* 普曜經, T. 186, vol. 2, 492b-c. The translation here refers to Durt's one with minor adjustments, 55.

¹²⁸ Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: II. Māyā as Healer, 55-56.

the Buddha in her womb.¹²⁹

Other Aspects of Māyā's Pregnancy: Dreams, Purity, and Auspicious Signs

Dreams

Māyā's gestation is also characterized by other features in addition to her pregnant cravings and magical healing power. Depending on sectarian and textual traditions, her childbearing story was presented with variant emphases and plots. One of the variations is whether Māyā's four conceiving dreams (Skt. *svapna*) is included. Durt indicates that the Sanskrit *Mūlasarvāstivāda* Vinaya mentions all four dreams. They are 1) a six-tusked white elephant entering into her womb, 2) feeling herself flying up in the air, 3) climbing a high mountain, and 4) receiving homage from a big crowd. The King Śuddhodana then summoned a dream-diviner to interpret them. The diviner announced that the prince would become either a Cakravartin (wheel-turning king) or a Tathāgata Samyaksambuddha.¹³⁰ Examining *Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye poseng shi* and *Zhongxu mohe di jing*, the two Chinese Buddhist texts closest to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* Vinaya, I find that the former one, Yijing's translation of the Vinaya, does have the four dreams equivalent to the Sanskrit account, whereas the latter, Faxian's version from the Song dynasty, misses the second one of flying up in the air, and divides the original first dream into two parts, the dream of a six-tusked white elephant, and the dream of the white elephant descending from the heaven to the womb. This version also replaces Maya's feeling of flying with the elephant descending.¹³¹

In other sectarian or textual traditions, I notice that Māyā's four dreams of conception

¹²⁹ Zhenajueduo 闍那崛多 (Skt equivalent, Jñānagupta) (523-ca.600/605 CE) of the Sui dynasty, *Fobenxing jijing* 佛本行集經, T190, vol. 7, 685b. Also see Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: II. Māyā as Healer," 56.

¹³⁰ Hubert Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: I. Dohada," 62.

¹³¹ Yijing, *Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye poseng shi*, vol.2, 107b; Faxian, *Zhongxu mohe di jing*, vol.3, 939a. Durt did not notice this slight difference between the two Chinese translations even though they are both close to Sanskrit *Mūlasarvāstivāda* Vinaya.

are unexceptionally reduced to only one kind, which is the most well known one, the entry into her womb of a six-tusked white elephant. In *Puyao jing*, for instance, there is no mention of the four dreams or any of Māyā's dream experiences at all. The moment of conception is told by the Buddha himself in the first person, stating that "the Bodhisattva thus descended from the Tuṣita Heaven, transformed into a white elephant, with six tusks and all senses tranquil and settled,and entered into the womb near the armpit of the right side."¹³² In two other earlier translations of the Buddha's biography, *Xiuxing benqi jing* (T. 184) and *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* (T. 185), the conception scene is short, simply saying that the Bodhisattva "transformed and rode the white elephant" (*hua cheng baixiang* 化乘白象) to settle in Māyā's womb.¹³³ In the *Fobenxing jijing*, the focus is placed on the appearance of the elephant: "At the time, the Queen in her dream saw a six-tusked white elephant, with the vermilion color of its head, its four limbs, nose, tail and genital leaning on the ground, and its gold-clothed tusks, descending from the air and entering into the right side."¹³⁴ Overall, compared to the Sanskrit version, most Chinese translations (with the exception of Yijing's), regardless of whether early or later, emphasize only the part of the six-tusked white elephant, the imagery representing the Buddha himself. This reduction of Māyā's four dreams during pregnancy into only one gives prominence to the imagery of the Buddha and to his activeness of descending into the womb. It downplays Māyā's physical experience and her significance as the Buddha's natural mother. Using Durt's words, this reduction of Māyā's pregnant dreams

¹³² *Puyao jing*, T. 186, vol. 2, 491a-b.

¹³³ Zhu Dali 竺大力 and Kang Mengxiang 康孟詳 ed. and trans.(in 197CE of the Later Han dynasty), *Xiuxing benqi jing* 修行本起經, T. 184, vol.1, 463b; Zhi Qian 支謙 trans. and ed. (ca. between 223-253CE of Wu Kingdom) , *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* 太子瑞應本起經, T. 185, vol.1, 473b.

¹³⁴ *Fobenxing jijing* 佛本行集經, T. 190, vol. 7, p. 683b. The original Chinese is "是時大妃, 於睡眠中, 夢見有一六牙白象, 其頭朱色, 七支拄地, 以金裝牙, 乘空而下, 入於右脇." According to one Buddhist scripture, the elephant's qizhi 七支 refers to its four limbs, head, tail and genital. See Bodhiruci 菩提流支 of Northern Wei trans., *Dasa zhe niqianzhi suoshuo jing* 大薩遮尼乾子所說經 (Mahāsatya-nirgrantha Sūtra), T. 272, vol.3, 331b03.

tends to turn Māyā into nothing but a temporary "living tabernacle sheltering her son."¹³⁵

Chinese reception of this episode in later age also tends to keep the white elephant as the only sign of the Buddha's conception without mentioning Māyā's other dreams. As I will show below, Dunhuang's wall paintings depicting this scene of conception also without exception use this imagery of six-tusked white elephant as the only one representative imagery. Māyā's other conceiving dreams thus disappeared from the scope of Chinese vision of the Buddha's birth.¹³⁶

Purity

The development of blurring the carnal link between Māyā and her son is likely reflected in the emphasis of both of their absolute purity during the gestation period. In the sixth chapter of *Lalitavistara*, "The descent of the embryo into the womb" (Garbhāvākṛānti), it describes that when the Buddha talks to the monks about the gestation period, Ananda is shocked to know the Buddha descending from the Tuṣita heaven into a "stinking human body." The Buddha explains to him that in fact during gestation he lived in a miraculous palace, the Ratnavyūha, which acted as a cushion between the embryo and the womb. The Buddha then commands the Brahmā King to bring this palace back from his heaven, make it visible and display it to the monks.¹³⁷

In the two Chinese translations of *Lalitavistara*, *Puyao jing* and *Fanguang da zhuangyen jing*, which Durt did not further explore about this episode, the former text in fact does not expound this plot while the latter does. However, both mention a kind of "palace" characterized by its purity and used to quarantine the embryo from the contact with maternal

¹³⁵ Durt's words, see "The Pregnancy of Māyā: II. Māyā as Healer," 44.

¹³⁶ See my below discussion on the Dunhuang transformation texts and paintings of the Buddha's birth.

¹³⁷ Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā: II. Māyā as Healer," 45-46. Here I refer to Durt's description, which follows the research and Japanese translation of *Lalitavistara* by Hokazono Kōichi 外園幸一, *Lalitavistara の研究*, 上卷 (Tōkyō: Daitō shuppansha, 1994).

body during the gestation. Instead of transliterating the name of the palace, the Ratnavyūha, *Puyao jing* translates it into *baojing jiaolu pengge* 寶淨交露棚閣, literally meaning a precious and pure pavilion with canopy and jeweled curtain, or more succinctly as *baojing pengge*, a precious and pure pavilion with canopy. In Sanskrit, “ratna-” refers to jewel or precious thing, and “-vyūha” means to place apart, namely a pure and separate place.¹³⁸ The sūtra continues by saying that this palace is located in the right side of the Queen Māyā and has been perfumed by the most wonderful sandalwood (Skt. candana). Its fragrance spreads all over the three thousand worlds and ten directions; its solidness is as strong as vajra and its softness is like heavenly clothes.¹³⁹ The *Fangguang da zhuangyen jing*, on the other hand, translates the whole plot, which is closer to the original section in *Lalitavistara*. It describes that when the Buddha declares his plan to descend into the human world, all heavenly beings wonder, "we four heavenly kings have heard that the human world is filthy and impure....why would the treasure of the world, the Bodhisattva, the highest, the purest, and most wonderful one, like to abandon the Tuṣita heaven and reside in the mother's womb for ten months?" Ananda then asks the Buddha, "World-honored one, the bodies of women have various desires for evil, why does the Tathāgata, being a bodhisattva, abandon the Tuṣita heaven and live in the right side of a mother's womb?" The Buddha replies, "When the Bodhisattva lived in the mother's womb, he was not defiled by impurities but instead always resided in a palace of utmost solemnity and purity."¹⁴⁰ The Buddha then commands Brahmā King to bring it and

¹³⁸ *Puyao jing*, T186, vol. 2, 492a. The meaning of Sanskrit "ratna-" and "-vyūha," see DDB.

¹³⁹ *Puyao jing*, T186, vol. 2, 492a. The original text is "於時菩薩坐於寶淨交露棚閣，處妙后右脇所坐寶淨棚閣，殊妙梅檀而香熏之；其香遍動三千世界，魏魏奇異強若金剛，軟如天衣，香氣芬馥徹於十方。"

¹⁴⁰ Divākara (613-648) of Tang dynasty trans., *Fangguang dazhuangyen jing* 方廣大莊嚴經, T187, vol.2, ch.6, 549c. The original text is "會中有諸天子生如是念：「四天王天聞此人間污穢不淨，況乎此上三十三天乃至兜率諸大天耶？云何菩薩世間之寶，最勝清淨殊妙香潔，乃捨兜率處在人間，於母胎中經於十月？」爾時，阿難承佛威神，長跪合掌而白佛言：「世尊！女人之身多諸欲惡，云何如來為菩薩時，乃捨兜率處於母胎右脇而住？」佛告阿難：「菩薩昔在母胎，不為不淨之所染污，恒處寶殿嚴淨第一。」"

display to all its incredible broadness, brightness and incomparable beauty.¹⁴¹

The Buddha's indisputable purity from worldly defilement is guaranteed by this placenta-like palace when living inside Māyā's womb. Yet this presupposes the impurity of the maternal body and in turn makes Māyā's purity questionable. Indeed, Māyā's purity is an issue more frequently brought up than the Buddha's, and is repeatedly emphasized in all versions of the Buddha's biography. As the *Fobexing jijing* demonstrates, Māyā's mind and body are depicted as being free from any fear, pain, poisons and dirtiness and immune to any thought of desire. She only felt "incomparably refreshing, comfortable and delighted" thanks to the fact that she bears the sacred embryo. The *Puyao jing* mentions that when conceiving the Bodhisattva, Māyā "did not sense it [i.e. the conception] at all, ...and felt only a lightness and tenderness of body, calm and tranquil without any trouble. She was free from thoughts of lust, anger, attachment, as well as from the three poisons, and also lacked any feeling of coolness, heat, hunger, or thirst, which could corrupt her sacred body and fingers...She was protected from encountering any evil color, sound, smell, taste and delicate things. She also did not have bad dreams and foul discharges."¹⁴² Besides general human afflictions, the *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing* further adds several faults specifically attributed to women that Māyā freed from: "when bearing the Bodhisattva... [Māyā] also did not have general women's covetousness, deception, deceit, envy or other various faults of women in general."¹⁴³ Māyā's holy pregnancy thus delivers her not only from ordinary people's vexations but also from the "defects" that general women are understood to have. However, the longer the list of the afflictions that Māyā was said to free from as a woman, the more anxious the account thereby

¹⁴¹ *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing* 方廣大莊嚴經, T. 187, vol.2, 549c--595a.

¹⁴² *Puyao jing*, T186, vol. 2, ch. 4, 492a-b. The original text is "其菩薩母悉不知之，...，唯覺己身輕便柔軟安隱無橫，無婬怒癡、不想三毒，亦無寒熱及諸飢渴，不污聖體及餘手指...亦不遇惡色聲香味細滑之法，不見惡夢亦無惡露."

¹⁴³ *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing*, T. 187, vol.2, 550c. The original text reads "菩薩處胎之時，...聖后.... 亦無女人貪誑、諂曲、嫉妬、諸煩惱過."

seems to deal with its assumptions of the impurity of the maternal body. In the *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing*, Māyā was further said to have received precepts for purity and practiced the ten moral activities (Skt. *daśa-kuśala-karma-patha*), even though its predecessor the *Puyao jing* does not include this section.¹⁴⁴ In *Fobenxing jijing*, it even creates the idea that Māyā possessed "thirty-two marks" to match those of the Buddha. And most of Māyā's marks, unlike the Buddha's (which emphasize both the perfection of his physical body and that of his spiritual achievement), are associated with moral virtues that particularly underscore her mental purity.¹⁴⁵ Chinese monks also paid attention to this emphasis on Māyā's purity, and I shall return to this in the next section.

Auspicious Signs

Māyā's pregnancy concludes at the moment of parturition or the Buddha's birth, and at this time various auspicious signs appear to celebrate it. They are typically labeled as "thirty-two auspicious signs" in most versions of the Buddha's biography although there are some nuances in different versions. *Puyao jing*, for instance, has one chapter that describe these signs in particular detail. Though it is impossible to list all of them here, these auspicious signs can be generally categorized into four types, for each of which I will give a couple of examples to explicate. According to the scripture, when the Bodhisattva was about to be born, thirty-two auspicious signs appeared in advance. The first type of these omens includes the first three and the thirty-first one. They are all about reproduction and regeneration in nature. For example, trees spontaneously produced fruits (1); new leaves sprouted from all withered trees (3); and all pregnant women in the country gave birth to boys (31). The second type covers from the fourth to the tenth items, involving the emergence of auspicious jewels and

¹⁴⁴ *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing*, T187, vol.2, 550c. The original sentence is “聖后...具足受持清淨禁戒行十善道.”

¹⁴⁵ *Fobenxing jijing*, T. 190, vol. 6, 697b-c.

animals. For instance, two thousand treasures spontaneously appeared from the earth (5). Five hundred lions and elephants, and even natural springs and foods containing hundreds of tastes appeared (7, 8, 10). From the eleventh to the sixteenth items and the thirty-second items, they are the third type, involving the emergence of non-human beings for celebration and paying homage, such as nāga, heavenly ladies, and tree gods holding peacock feather fan, bottles of nectar, perfume. The final type ranges from the seventeenth to the thirtieth items and concerns miraculous natural phenomena due to the Buddha's birth, like the stop of river flow (17), the stop of the movement of sun and moon (18), the convergence of constellations which rarely meet(19), the hiding of poisonous insects and the flying and singing of auspicious birds (25), and the closure of hell and the appeasement of poisons and harms (26).¹⁴⁶

Among these four types of auspicious signs, the first—associated with fertility and regeneration—is particularly noteworthy. The birth of the Buddha and its festive atmosphere trigger a series of birth events among other sentient beings. Both withered and new plants bloom. Pregnant women all produced male babies. Following the descriptions of the thirty-two auspicious signs, the next few paragraphs continue to convey this celebratory mood surrounding the birth of the Buddha through elaborating multiple simultaneous birth of other human and non-human beings. "At that time, there were five thousand servants all giving birth to sons, who were all with great strength, short or tall, and could serve Śuddhodana, the Buddha's father; there were also eight hundred wet nurses all giving birth to children; hundreds and thousands of elephants were born; white horses produced colts, whose color is as white as snowy sweaters, smooth and glossy; yellow antelopes gave birth to baby lambs as many as twenty thousands."¹⁴⁷ This affirmative attitude toward fecundity expressed through

¹⁴⁶ *Puyao jing*, T186, vol. 2, 492c-493b.

¹⁴⁷ *Puyao jing*, T. 186, vol. 2, 494b. The original text is "爾時五千青衣各各生子，皆為力士，現大小等給使

the Buddha's birth auspices and the sequential multiplication of birth, notwithstanding its striking contrast with the teaching of birth's inherent *duḥkha*, also appears in many other editions of the Buddha's biography such as the *Xiuxing benqi jing*, *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing*, and *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing*.¹⁴⁸ These plots and auspicious signs associated with the celebration of fertility, intriguingly, were frequently quoted later by medieval Chinese monks in their compositions of the Buddha's biography and Buddhist encyclopedia.

Chinese Buddhist Representations of Māyā's Pregnancy and the Buddha's Birth

The Buddha's biography is one of the earliest genres in the Buddhist Tripitaka that was transmitted to China. The *Xiuxing benqi jing* and *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* had already been translated by the late second century and the early third century, and the *Lalitavistara* was also translated as *Puyao jing* by Dharmarakṣa in the second half of the third century. Through the introduction of the Buddha's life account, Māyā's pregnancy and the Buddha's sacred birth became familiar to Chinese.

In Mouzi's *Lihuo lun* 理惑論 (*Master Mou's Treatise Settling Doubts*), a text that was

白王；八百乳母亦各生子；百千象生；白馬生駒，形色如雪毛衣滑澤；黃羊生羔子，即有二萬。” Hubert Durt notices that a remarkable painting of the Kamakura period, kept in the Entsūji 円通寺 (Wakayama Prefecture), also demonstrates "birth of the Buddha with the miracle of the multiplication of births of divine children, lions and elephants." This might have to do with *Lalitavistara* tradition and with the revival of the interest for Śakyamuni inspired by Myōe Shōnin (1173-1232). See Durt, "The Pregnancy of Māyā : II. Māyā as a healer," 50. The pictorial and sculptural representations of the birth of the Buddha and other accompanying human and non-human beings in East Asia are worth to explore in the future.

¹⁴⁸ The mention of thirty-two auspicious signs of the Buddha's birth in other versions of the Buddha's biography, see *Xiuxing benqi jing* 修行本起經, T. 184, vol.1, 464a, 465a; *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* 太子瑞應本起經, T. 185, vol.1, pp. 473c-474a; *Fanguang dazhuangyen jing* 方廣大莊嚴經, T. 187, vol.2, ch.7, pp.551b-552a; *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing* 過去現在因果經, T. 189, 625b, 626a. In *Fobengxing jijing* 佛本行集經 (T. 190, vol.7, 686b-687a), there is no mention of the thirty-two auspicious signs but other kinds of "auspicious signs" which make sharp contrast between the Buddha's sacred birth and the ordinary people's suffered birth. I will discuss this in Chapter Three.

Zhongxu mohe di jing 眾許摩訶帝經 (T191, vol.3) do not mention the thirty-two auspicious signs too, but it quickly talks about the simultaneous births of other beings accompanying with the Buddha's birth, see p.939c.

collected in *Hongming ji* and dated to sometime between the late Eastern Han (ca. the end of the second century) and as late as the early fifth century,¹⁴⁹ we find probably the earliest Chinese representation of the Buddha's birth. Written in dialogue form, this text at its very beginning raises its first question on Śākyamuni's biological origin, extending from his ancestral lineage and country to the process of his birth. Mouzi replies concisely: "When the Buddha was about to be born in India, he borrowed the form[i.e. the body] of the King Śuddhodana's Queen, who dreamed during the day that the Buddha rode a white elephant with six tusks and who felt pleasant about it. Then she got pregnant. On the eighth day of the fourth month, the Buddha was born from his mother's right side...At that time, heaven and earth were shaken and the palace was shining and bright. On the same day, a royal servant in the palace gave birth to a son and a horse in the stables also produced a colt."¹⁵⁰

This quote does not have much to say about Māyā, even not mentioning her name. She is simply "the queen" from whom the Buddha "borrowed the form." It is the Buddha's active decision and descent that results in her pregnancy. Here the textual tradition that *Lihuo lun*'s author mentions apparently refers to the versions that have only one conceiving dream, namely the six-tusked elephant in the *Puyao jing* and in the two *Benqi jing*, rather than the tradition that has the four conceiving dreams as shown in *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*. Moreover, there is no mention of miraculous multiplication of birth for other beings following Śākyamuni's birth, but rather a briefer statement about a servant and a horse's birth

¹⁴⁹ Scholars have debated on the composition date of the text. Some holds that it was composed between the Eastern Han (25-220 CE) and the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 CE) by Mouzi himself. Some think that it was made by people of Eastern Jin (317-420 CE) but falsely attributed to Mouzi. Others believe that different contents of this text were made in different time, and some of them might be written in Liu-Song dynasty (420-479). Relevant research and scholarly debates are collected in Zhang Mantao 張曼濤 ed., *Sishi erzhang jing yu Mouzi Lihuo lun kaobian* 四十二章經與牟子理惑論考辨, Xiandai fojiao xueshu congkan 現代佛教學術叢刊 11 (Taipei, Dashen wenhua chubanshe, 1978). Latest research by Li Xiaorong 李小榮 considers that the text is made between Han-Three Kingdom period and the middle of Eastern Jin. See Hou Xudong 侯旭東, "The Buddhist Pantheon," in John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi eds., *Early Chinese Religion, Part II: The Division Period (220-589CE)* (EJ. Brill, 2010), 1138 and note 143.

¹⁵⁰ Mouzi, "Lihuo lun," in Sengyou of Liang dynasty ed., *Hongming ji* 弘明集, T. 2102, vol.1, 1c.

events. As for Māyā's mental and physical states or the healing power conferred to her by the sacred embryo, they seem either to have still been unknown for the Chinese or simply not the author's concern.

In the first indigenous compilation of Śākyamuni's biography by Sengyou 僧祐 (445-518 CE) of Southern Liang dynasty, the report of the scenes of Māyā's gestation and parturition is no longer vague and brief. With numerous Buddhist scriptures translated over the prior two hundred years since the end of Han dynasty, relevant sources in this regard became plentifully available for Chinese Buddhists. In his writing of *Gynealogy of Śākyamuni* (*Shijia pu*), Sengyou quoted up to six different scriptures that narrated Māyā's gestation and Śākyamuni's birth.¹⁵¹ Among these texts, the *Puyao jing*, *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, and *Xiuxing benqi jing* are the three most often cited. Drawing on the *Puyao jing* in the beginning, Sengyou first enumerates the Queen's innate worthy and pure qualities, indicating that she has been serving many bodhisattvas' mothers for the past five hundred generations, which fully qualify her to be the Buddha's mother. He then explains why the Bodhisattva manifested in the form of a white elephant, because "the way of crossing river of a white elephant" is just like "Mahayana bodhisattva," who crossed the river (of life and death) thoroughly and deeply. As for why the Bodhisattva resided in the queen's right side, he interprets that it was because "what the Bodhisattva never went askew (or left, literally)." Hence, "when the king of the white elephant came to stay in the womb, Māyā's body and mind were calm, tranquil and comfortable."¹⁵²

Then Sengyou turns to a series of auspicious signs that occurred respectively at Māyā's conception, during the Bodhisattva's descent, and at Śākyamuni's birth. The

¹⁵¹ See Sengyou, *Shijia pu* 釋迦譜, T. 2040, vol. 1, 4c-5c. These six scriptures include *Puyao jing*, *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, *xiuxing benqi jing*, *Da huayen jing*, *Fo suoxing zan* 佛所行讚 (T. 192, by Dharmarakṣa), and *Da shanquan jing* 大善權經 (T. 345, also by Dharmarakṣa).

¹⁵² Sengyou, *Shijia pu*, T. 2040, vol. 1, 4c.

appearance of various auspicious signs is no doubt a critical part in the Buddha's biography. However, it seems that Sengyou also made a special point to recount all sorts of birth omens that demonstrate the Buddha's inborn greatness. As we see in the *Day Books* of last chapter, this preference of using propitious signs to reveal or foretell a child's extraordinary destiny is also embedded in pre-Buddhist ancient China. Here Sengyou lists all the auspicious signs appearing throughout the whole reproductive process by quoting the *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, *Xiuxing benqi jing*, and *Da huayen jing*. He points out that when Māyā conceived, there were two major signs, namely the manifestation of a white elephant and the "essence of sunlight" shining upon the world. When the Bodhisattva descended from Tuṣita Heaven, there were ten propitious omens, such as the emergence of precious trees, fragrant aloe-wood, flower garlands for decoration, transformation of stones into diamonds, heavenly beings holding palms in respect, light shining forth from the navels of buddhas in the ten directions, and so on. As for the moment of the Buddha's birth, there are thirty-two auspicious omens.¹⁵³ Sengyou also notices the prolific births of royal servants, householders, horses and yellow antelopes occurring simultaneously with the Buddha's birth.¹⁵⁴

Besides giving special notice to all the divine omens, Sengyou's excerpts are also characterized by his emphasis on clarifying things that are seemingly contradictory to common sense. For instance, Sengyou devotes extra space to explaining why the Buddha was born from his mother's right side. Quoting *Fosuo xing zan* (T. 192, Skt. *Buddhacarita*, composed by Aśvaghoṣa and translated by Dharmakṣema, 385-433 CE), he cites several Indian kings who were not born from the parturient canal but from other parts of their mothers' bodies, such as thighs, hands, or heads.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, it is similarly doubtful for

¹⁵³ Ibid, 5a.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 5b.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 5b. The original text is "佛所行讚云: 優留王股生, 卑偷王手生, 曼陀王頂生, 伽叉王腋生, 菩薩亦如是從右脇而生。"

Sengyou that the Buddha as a bodhisattva and a future enlightened one descending from Tuṣita Heaven had to go through the ten-month gestation period like the rest of humankind. On this issue, Sengyou drawn on the *Da shanquan jing*,¹⁵⁶ explaining that "a bodhisattva could be born directly from Tuṣita Heaven instead of from the womb...didn't he do so in order to prevent people from wondering about the place he came from? If people have doubts, they may reject the Dharma, so he manifested as being born from the womb."¹⁵⁷ Another issue that potentially incur question was Māyā's death. If the Buddha is such an omnipotent one, how could he let his birth cause his mother's passing even as all scriptures claim that her pregnancy is pleasant and comfortable? In response to this doubt, Sengyou relies upon the *Da shanquan jing* and the two *benqi jing* to provide an answer. First, he considered that Māyā's tranquility during pregnancy and in parturition was deliberately shown. This resulted from the Bodhisattva "performing upāya" so as to dispel the doubt of general people who believed that the queen must have suffered when giving birth to the Buddha.¹⁵⁸ Second, the reason Māyā died even days after the Bodhisattva's birth is because the Buddha had already known that his mother was destined to die soon. While still living in Tuṣita Heaven, he foresaw that exactly "ten months and seven days" remained in her life. Further, the Bodhisattva knew that Māyā is not qualified to receive the Buddha's respect. Therefore he chose to be born from her at this time, and this is also another expedient means performed by the Bodhisattva.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ *Huishang pusa wen dashanquan jing* 慧上菩薩問大善權經, T. 345, translated by Dharmarakṣa around 285 CE.

¹⁵⁷ Sengyou, *Shijia pu*, T. 2040, vol. 1, 5b. The original text is "大善權經云: 菩薩發意, 能從兜率不由胞胎, ...防人有疑此所從來變化所為乎?若懷狐疑不聽受法, 故現處胎。"

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.5b. The original text is "眾人當謂后生菩薩必有惱患, 欲現安隱。母適攀樹枝、菩薩誕生, 是為菩薩善權方便。"

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.5c. The relevant texts are as follows: "菩薩七日後其母命終。所以者何?應然。菩薩察之, 臨母命終因來下生"; "瑞應本起云: 菩薩本知母人之德不堪受其禮, 故因其將終而從之生"; "大善權經云: 生後七日其母便薨, 福應昇天, 非菩薩咎。前處兜率觀后摩耶, 大命將終, 餘有十月七日之期, 故神變來下, 是菩薩善權方便。"

Compared to Sengyou's extensive excerption on Māyā's pregnancy and the Buddha's birth, the first Chinese Buddhist encyclopedia—*Jinglu yixiang* compiled by Baochang in 516 CE—offers only a succinct summary on the event. In one short paragraph, Baochang mostly focused on the auspicious signs that appeared during the birth event: the two conceiving signs including the white elephant and the shining sunlight, the ten propitious omens of pregnancy, and the thirty-two signs at the parturition. This attention to the auspices is identical to Sengyou. Yet unlike Sengyou, Baochang does not spend many words on Māyā's bodily and mental state or changes. He also does not further explicate the parts that have logical loopholes or are incompatible with common sense by quoting more scriptures as Sengyou does.¹⁶⁰

During the Tang dynasty, narratives of Māyā's pregnancy and the Buddha's birth continued to be recounted. Daoxuan (596-667 CE), a prestigious Vinaya master known for following Sengyou's footsteps and said as his reincarnation, composed the *Clan Genealogy of the Śākya* (*Shijia shipu* 釋迦氏譜), in which he extracted contents of the Buddha's life from scriptures as Sengyou had done in his *Genealogy of Śākyamuni*.¹⁶¹ In this work, Daoxuan delineated the reproductive event mainly by citing the *Puyao jing*, *Xiuxing benqi jing*, and *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*. Surprisingly, although another comprehensive collection of the biographies of the Buddha, *Fo benxin jijing* 佛本行集經 (T190, *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra*) has just been translated by Jñānagupta (Chi. 闍那崛多, 523-ca.600, 605 CE) in the Sui dynasty, Daoxuan did not cite anything from it at all. Instead, Daoxuan mostly followed Sengyou's choice of scriptures and plots, offering similar points and explanations in many places when describing the birth event. However, compared to Sengyou's version, Daoxuan's relied more

¹⁶⁰ Baochang 寶唱 of Liang dynasty, *Jinglu yixiang* 經律異相, T. 2121, vol. 4, 15a-b.

¹⁶¹ See the preface of *Shijia shipu* (T. 2041, 84) and the biography of Daoxuan in *Song gaosen zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (T. 2061, 790b).

heavily on the above three texts, particularly the *Puyao jing*, and recounted more details of the event than Sengyou's concentration on a few specific episodes.

Some of the differences between Sengyou's and Daoxuan's representations of the Buddha's birth event warrant further discussion. First of all, similar to his other writings, Daoxuan concerns himself with heavenly beings' reaction to the human world and their interaction with the event of the Buddha's birth. This part is not found in Sengyou's excerpt. Daoxuan mentions that there were over "ninety-nine billion" heavenly beings who decided to be reborn in the human world after seeing the Bodhisattva being born in the palace, because they would like to serve in his "entourages" and be "transformed by his Dharma." Moreover, during the ten months in the womb, the Buddha was said to have already preached the Dharma to all the heavenly beings of the thirty-six heavens.¹⁶² Second, Daoxuan expresses doubts about the length of the Buddha's gestation period. When citing scriptures as evidence of the date of conception, the eighth day of the fourth month, he raises questions about it. "I suspect that the month of the Buddha's entry into the womb might be too early." In the next third paragraph, while addressing the Buddha's birth date—which happened on the same date of his entry into the womb according to scriptures—Daoxuan discovered that the Buddha actually "stayed in the womb for twelve months." This is at odds with what scriptures claim that he was only in the womb for ten months.¹⁶³ Finally, unlike Sengyou, Daoxuan does not bother to detail most items of the ten or the thirty-two auspicious signs. But interestingly, he still lists the simultaneous births of many other beings as celebrations of the Buddha's birth.

The second Chinese Buddhist encyclopedia—the *Pearl Forest of the Dharma Grove* (*Fayuan zhulin*, T. 2122) compiled by Daoxuan's comrade, Daoshi 道世 (d. 683)—presents a

¹⁶² Daoxuan, *Shijia shipu*, T. 2041, 89a.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 89b.

very different representation of the Buddha's gestation and birth scenes from its predecessors and contemporaries. Daoshi largely adopts the newly translated *Fo benxin jijing* and many other sources like the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (T. 374) and *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing* (T. 189) and does not count on the *Puyao jing* or the two *Benqi jing* as major references as the way Sengyou and Daoxuan do. Daoshi's depiction reflected the newest understanding of the birth event among monastic Buddhists at that time.

Daoshi's discussion of Māyā's pregnancy and the Buddha's birth is collected in the fifth chapter of the book on the "Thousand Buddhas." Its fourth and fifth sections, "Descent into the womb" and "Birth from the womb" contain Daoshi's excerpts on the event drawn from numerous scriptures. These two sections are further divided into six and eight subsections respectively to elaborate all the relevant episodes. For the current topic, I will focus on their two distinguishing characteristics and the relevant story lines concerning the gestation and birth process. The first is that Daoshi's version gives equivalent importance on the appearance of auspicious signs and even further compares these signs to those happening at the birth of ancient Chinese sage kings. The second is that Daoshi's presentation of Māyā stresses her moral and physical purity more strikingly than the previous versions due to his choice of *Fo benxin jijing* as his major source. In the *Fo benxin jijing*, Māyā purity is repeatedly highlighted by contrasting her immaculacy during the period of gestation with the ordinary people's general experience of suffering in childbirth.

Daoshi's attention to the reproductive omens are displayed not only in his inclusion of the two conceiving signs and the thirty-two birth signs, but also in his further comparison of these omens to those associated with the birth of ancient Chinese sage kings. In fact, in his opinion, the birth omens of Chinese sage kings are barely comparable to the spectacular signs accompanying in the Buddha's birth. As Daoshi remarks on these signs in the beginning of the section "Birth from the womb," he points out that, before his birth in the Śākya family,

Śākyamuni Buddha already received prediction of his future enlightenment from the previous Dīpaṃkara Buddha. His noble origin was thus already superior to any others. Hence, “all the divine and auspicious omens converge and appear simultaneously at his birth. This phenomenon has not happened in hundreds of generations. The bearing of the Buddha (by Māyā) is therefore distinct from that of King Yao 堯 and King Shun 舜, and his birth is also dissimilar to that of King Yu 禹 and King Qi 契. As for the omen of the Emperor Dark’s entry into the Dream [of the mother of the First Emperor of Han dynasty] or its sign of white light filling the room, although these omens might be regarded as auspicious signs, how could they be comparable to those at the Buddha’s birth?”¹⁶⁴

Indeed, in the minds of Chinese Buddhists, Śākyamuni Buddha was undoubtedly equivalent to a monarch, despite the fact that his accomplishments belonged to the spiritual realm. His imperial blood, his destiny predicted by a diviner to become either Cakravartin or king of the Dharma, and his thirty-two bodily marks all point to his regal identity. However, in Sengyou's and Daoxuan's collections and comments on episodes concerning the Buddha's birth, we never find this unambiguous parallel of the Buddha with ancient Chinese kings through drawing their birth omens as evidence, not even mention that Daoshi even thinks the Śākyamuni's birth signs are way much superior to those of ancient Chinese kings. To a certain degree, Daoshi is bold in drawing this parallel and in challenging the uniqueness of ancient sage kings' birth omens, because these omens were used to represent the heavenly mandate that grants legitimacy to a regime or a ruling dynasty. In arguing for the superiority of the Buddha's birth omens to those of ancient Chinese sage kings, Daoshi implicitly disputed the overriding power of the Tang emperors who promoted Daoism, claimed to be descents of its

¹⁶⁴ Daoshi 道世 of Tang dynasty, *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林, T. 2122, vol. 9, 343b. The original text is “神瑞畢臻吉徵總萃，觀諸百代曾未之有。然後孕異堯軒、產殊禹契，至如黑帝入夢之兆、白光滿室之徵，徒曰嘉祥，詎可擬議。”

patriarch Laozi, and suppressed Buddhism in his time. Daoshi's Buddhist encyclopedia—which was finished in 668 CE, during a time of intense contention between Buddhism and Daoism that took place during first three Tang emperors' reigns (618-683CE)—was in fact compiled for the sake of promoting the Buddhist Dharma against this background.¹⁶⁵ It is thus not difficult to imagine that Daoshi may have wanted to bolster the superiority of his teaching by means of the Buddha's birth omens.

Another noteworthy feature of Daoshi's presentation of the Buddha's birth is that it is the first to include Māyā's "thirty-two marks," and emphasizing her absolute purity by opposing it to ordinary people's suffering-filled and impure reproduction. These contents are primarily extracted from the *Fo benxing jijing*. According to this scripture, not only was the newborn Prince Siddhartha already equipped with thirty-two marks of perfection, his mother Māyā also had the "thirty-two marks" so as to be qualified to bear him. Unlike the Buddha's thirty-two marks which are mainly physical and originated from traditional Indian ideals of masculinity,¹⁶⁶ Māyā's "thirty-two marks" seem to have developed later in a deliberate attempt to match the Buddha's marks, and are nearly all moral rather than physical. For instance, as the Buddha's mother, she should be born with integrity (1), complete body (2), morally pure (3), born in a proper place (4), and without improper deeds (5). Her lineage and family should be pure (6). She had never given birth before (10). She always thinks about joyful things (12), does good deeds (13), has no evil thoughts (14), has peaceful bodily actions, speech, and thoughts (15), and has no fear (16). She was knowledgeable (17), good at needlework (18), and not deceptive (19, 20), wrathful (21), jealousy (22), avarice (23) and so

¹⁶⁵ Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the Tang* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5-36; Chen Yujen 陳昱珍, "Daoshi yu fayuan zhulin 道世與法苑珠林" (Daoshi and his *Pearl Forest of the Dharma Grove*), in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 5 (Taipei, 1992.7):233-262, esp. 242-252.

¹⁶⁶ See John Powers, *A Bull of a Man: Images of Masculinity, Sex and the Body in India Buddhism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), Ch.1.

on.¹⁶⁷ Finally, according to the text, as the Buddha's mother, she had to receive eight lay precepts first before the Bodhisattva could enter into her womb. All these qualifications seem to have evolved and been elaborated from earlier versions of the Buddha's biography like the *Puyao jing* and *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing*. In these earlier texts Māyā was merely said to free from the three poisons, have several chaste virtues, has received precepts without specification, or eagerly practiced the six pāramitās. All these virtues have not yet been turned into a new set of "thirty-two marks" as we find in the *Fo benxing jijing*.¹⁶⁸

Besides the expansion of the content of Māyā's virtues and the number of precepts she received, the sheer purity and comfort of her reproductive experience are also emphasized in Daoshi's representation, where they are set in opposition to ordinary sentient beings' impure and suffering-filled experience of birth. These contrasting descriptions are drawn from *Fo benxing jijing* and in this original text they are much longer and more detailed. In the next chapter, I will discuss all relevant paragraphs in the *Fo benxing jijing* more thoroughly. Here I would like to just quote a few representative sentences cited by Daoshi to show the transmission of this dualistic view into China between the sacred and the suffering-filled birth.

According to Daoshi's quotations, "all sentient beings are oppressed by the suffering of birth, thus they move around in the womb. Yet this did not happen in the case of the Bodhisattva. Instead, he entered into [Māyā's] right side and simply stayed there without moving further. He was born from her right side and not suppressed by all sorts of suffering at all."¹⁶⁹ As a result, Māyā's body was "normal as usual, without harm and damage, and not

¹⁶⁷ Daoshi, *Fayuan zhulin*, T. 2122, vol.8, 341b-c; *Fo benxing jijing*, T. 190, vol. 6, 679b-c. The two texts have almost entirely identical descriptions on this part.

¹⁶⁸ See for instance the parts in these scriptures depicting Māyā's virtues for being qualified to bear the Buddha, *Puyao jing*, T. 186, 492a-b; *Guoqu xianzai yinguo jing*, T. 189, 624b.

¹⁶⁹ Daoshi, *Fayuan zhulin*, T. 2122, vol.9, 344b. The original text is "又復一切諸眾生等生苦逼故，在於胎內，處處移動。菩薩不然，從右脇入、還住右脇，在於胎內不曾移動。及欲出時、從右脇生，不為眾苦之所逼切。" Also see *Fo benxing jijing*, T. 190, vol.7, .686b.

wounded or hurt at all.”¹⁷⁰ Also, “when the Bodhisattva was born from the maternal womb, he did not suffer and was not troubled by it, but only rose up tranquilly. He is different from all sentient beings and unable to be polluted by any kinds of defilements.”¹⁷¹ In the original text of the *Fo benxin jijing*, this contrasting opposition between the sacred and suffering-filled birth is phrased much more drastically. “When staying in the womb, the Bodhisattva...was not tainted by any evil things. All the impurities such as nasal mucus, spittle, and yellow or white phlegm cannot pollute him. As for other sentient beings, [they encountered] in maternal wombs all sorts of impurities, but these are unable to stain the Bodhisattva, because he resembles a lapis lazuli wrapped by a heavenly clothe and unable to be defiled even being put in a contaminated place.”¹⁷² Quoting this most elaborate version among all Chinese translations of the Buddha's biography that heavily emphasizes Māyā's purity as well as the sheer contrast between suffering and the sacred, Daoshi's representation of the birth event offers a picture quite distinctive from those of previous monastic authors. As the most voluminous and complete Buddhist encyclopedia, which most people of later ages relied on for accessing the preliminary knowledge of Buddhism, it may not be too far to hypothesize that this was the reason Master Sheng Yen chose the *Fo benxing jijing* as his reference for narrating Māyā's story of pregnancy and birth-giving. Yet it is also this most elaborate version that seems to further polarize the dualism of purity versus impurity, and of sacred and suffering-filled birth.

Outside the monastic circles, the popular understanding of the Buddha's birth and life relied much on performed texts and visual representation that were aimed at the public and given an approachable style. In Dunhuang, up to seventy-eight copies of the transformation

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. The original text is “時菩薩母身體安常，不傷不損無瘡無痛。”

¹⁷¹ *Fayuan zhulin*, T. 2122, vol.9, 344b. The original text is 又菩薩初從母胎出時，無苦無惱安庠而起，一切諸穢不能污染，不同眾生。” Also see *Fo benxing jijing*, T. 190, vol.7, 684c, 687a.

¹⁷² *Fo benxing jijing*, T. 190, vol. 7, 684c.

text, *The Scripture of the Prince Siddhartha Achieving Dao* (*Taizi chengdao jing* 太子成道經), also titled *The Story of the Prince Siddhartha Practicing Dao* (*Sida taizi xiudao yinyuan* 悉達太子修道因緣) in some of the copies, have already been found.¹⁷³ This text for performance is also based on the *Fo benxing jijing*, further illustrating the influence of this scripture after mid-Tang. Yet, in terms of the description of Māyā's pregnancy and the prince's birth, this text offers a relatively simplified and thus different version of the event from the scripture itself. When mentioning Māyā's "sacred dream" during conception, it says that she saw "the wheel of the sun descending from the heaven, and inside of which there was a child with ten perfect body marks, riding on a six-tusked white elephant, entering into the top of her head, and staying under her right armpit." When Māyā was about to give birth, it is said that "Śākyamuni the sacred lord" was born "from her sleeve." After that, the prince walked seven steps in each of the four directions, with "lotuses holding up his feet" and "nine dragons spilling water for bathing him."¹⁷⁴ Unlike the scripture, in the transformation text, there is no elaboration of Māyā's purity, her thirty-two marks, her pleasant child-bearing feeling and her magical healing power and deeds. Detailed illustration of various auspices at different reproductive phases of the event and repeated emphasis of Śākyamuni and Māyā's purity as displayed in the scripture are all omitted from the major story line, in which only elements directly related to the Buddha's birth process are kept.

Among Dunhuang wall paintings, there are also several that depict the scenes of Māyā's pregnancy and the Buddha's birth. Although more careful research on the birth scenes in Dunhuang paintings is still necessary, my preliminary review of these paintings leaves an

¹⁷³ Dunhuang Research Academy, <http://public.dha.ac.cn/content.aspx?id=932420480021>

¹⁷⁴ Pan chonggui 潘重規, *Dunhuang Bianwen ji shinshu* 敦煌變文集新書 (New Collection of Dunhuang Transformation Texts), (Taipei: zhongguo wenhua daxue zhongwen yanjiu suo, 1984, first print; wenjin chubanshe, 1994, reprint), 500-501, 538-539. Pan's collation and transcription is based on Dunhuang manuscripts P. 2999, S. 548, S. 2682, S. 2352, P. 2924, P. 2299, S. 4626. *The Story of the Prince Siddhartha Practicing Dao* that he transcribes in this collection is based on a copy collected in Ryukoku University in Japan and also refers to S. 3711 and S. 5892.

impression that almost all the visual representations of the scenes gives prominence to two major motifs, namely the Bodhisattva riding on a six-tusked elephant waiting to enter into the womb, and Māyā having dreams and giving birth to the prince from her right side under a tree in Lumbinī. The wall paintings with the reproductive scenes made from the Northern Wei to the Tang dynasty express the former motif more vividly and strikingly than the latter one, whereas those with the scenes made between Five dynasties and Song, due to their basis on the *Fobengxing jijing*, give the latter motif more details comparable with the former in size and visual prominence. (See below for images of the reproductive scenes painted in Dunhuang attached in the appendix in the end of this chapter).¹⁷⁵

Examining the above five medieval Chinese Buddhist writings and Dunhuang textual and visual representations of the Buddha's birth event, we find that they share certain features. First of all, they all took the six-tusked white elephant as the only dream or sign of Māyā's conception, without mentioning the other three conceiving dreams. As for *dohada*, Māyā's pregnant craving, not only did it end up not being clearly rendered in Chinese versions of the Buddha's biography, it also does not appear in these Chinese representations of the event. In these representations, it is the Buddha's active will of choosing a proper maternal shelter and his decision of descending into the womb that play the dominant role in the depictions. And according to Sengyou and Daoxuan's opinion, his manifestation as the white elephant symbolizes the profound path of a "Mahayana bodhisattva." Nevertheless, aside from the account in the *Lihuo lun* (which is too brief to describe Māyā's pregnancy in detail), the other all mention to varying degrees Māyā's physical and moral purity, the various auspicious signs occurring during the pregnancy and at birth, and her healing power were still noticed by different authors to different degrees. Noticeably, many Chinese Buddhist authors paid much

¹⁷⁵ Fan Jingshi 樊錦詩 ed., *Dunhuang shiku quan ji* 敦煌石窟全集 (The collection of images of Dunhuang Caves), vol. 4, volume of the paintings of the Buddha's biographies 佛傳故事畫卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renming chuban she, 2004).

attention to the reproductive omens, especially those associated with fertility. Yet their representations are also unavoidably influenced by their choices of scriptures and episodes. Sengyou, Baochang, and Daoxuan all drew their excerpts largely from *the Puyao jing*, *Xiuxing benqi jing*, and *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*. In contrast, Daoshi was the first Chinese monk drawing on the *Fo benxing jijing* to describe the Buddha's birth event. The Dunhuang transformation text, *Scripture of the Prince Siddhartha Achieving Dao*, and cave paintings of the sacred birth event that were made after the Five dynasty, are also based on the *Fo benxing jijing*. Given the expansiveness of this scripture in volumes and details, its depiction of the reproductive scene is characterized by its elaboration of Māyā's magical healing power and deeds, her absolute purity expressed through her thirty-two marks and set in opposition to the defilement and suffering that characterizes ordinary pregnancy. Daoshi's choice of excerpts focus on the Queen's purity, while Dunhuang texts and paintings, by contrast, highlight the main story line, giving prominence mainly to the image of the white elephant and the birth of the Buddha from the Queen's right side. Below we shall further see how medieval Chinese Buddhist hagiographies imagined and depicted the birth event of monastics, and explore whether these depictions were interrelated with those of the Buddha's birth.

Chinese Buddhist Hagiography: Eminent Monks and Nuns' Birth Scenes

In the four major medieval Chinese Buddhist hagiographies, we can easily find a considerable number of descriptions related to reproduction, such as a monk's mother seeking pregnancy, her miraculous correspondence during pregnancy with people and the external environment or with fetus inside, and various propitious omens of birth. These hagiographies include Huijiao's 慧皎 (497-554 CE) *Biographies of Eminent Monks (Gaoseng zhuan)*, Baochang's *Biographies of Nuns (Biqiuni zhuan)*, Daoxuan's *Xu Gaoseng zhuan (Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks)*, and Zanning's 贊寧 (919-1001 CE) *Song Gaoseng zhuan*

(*Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*). They contain up to 1970 monks and nuns, providing an excellent database for studying medieval monastic imagination of sacred birth.¹⁷⁶

In her research based on the above three biographies of monks, Lin Yunjo points out that there are usually three reasons used to explain why people "left the home" to join the Sangha, namely "accumulated karma of past generations," "personal pursuit of knowledge and belief," and "being struck by the impermanence and suffering of the world."¹⁷⁷ Similar to the birth account in the Buddha's biography, these monks' biographies often utilize miraculous events happening in pregnancy and birth to attest to their inborn holiness that resulted from the "accumulated karma of their past generations".¹⁷⁸ Lin finds that the later the biographies were written, the higher that the category of "accumulated karma of past generations" occupied in relation to all three types.¹⁷⁹ Since the "accumulated karma of past generations" is usually expressed through the occurrence of miraculous omens in the hagiographies, readers may encounter more miraculous reproductive events in *Song gaoseng zhuan* than in *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, and more in *Xu gaosen zhuan* than in *Gaoseng zhuan*. This shift reflects an increasing belief that a monk's extraordinariness must originate from his accumulated karma in previous lives. These sacred birth stories also in turn contributed to the propagation of this idea, which became not only a narrative model describing hagiographical birth but also a requirement of

¹⁷⁶ The total numbers of monks in the three biographies of eminent monks are 1854, combining the monks with their individual biographies (1257 monks) and those who are listed in others' biographies (597 monks). See Lin Yunjo (林韻柔), "Chūgoku Chūsei ni okeru sōryo no shukke innen: kōsō no denki shiryō wo chūshin toshite 中国中世における僧侶の出家因縁 —高僧の伝記史料を中心として," in Harada Masadoshi 原田正俊 ed., *Nihon kodai chūsei no bukkyō to higashi ajia* 日本古代中世の仏教と東アジア (Osaka: Kansei University Press, 2014), p.246. Besides monks, I also add here the number of nuns, which are 116 in total, including those having individual biographies (65 nuns) and those only listed in others' (51 nuns).

¹⁷⁷ Lin Yunjo, "Chūgoku Chūsei ni okeru sōryo no shukke innen: kōsō no denki shiryō wo chūshin toshite," 248-250.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 263.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 250.

being an eminent monk.¹⁸⁰

Lin also analyzes several types of these miraculous pregnancy and birth tales of eminent monks, but does not include nuns' biographies. The religious implications of these cases are also not sufficiently expounded. As far as this chapter is concerned, the relationship of these narrative models describing miraculous pregnancy and birth with those in the Buddha's biographies as well as those in the indigenous tradition still requires further elucidation.

The miraculous reproductive correspondence of monks and their mothers may occur respectively at the moment of conception, during the gestation period, or at the time of birth. At the conceiving moment, the miraculous resonance is always represented as mothers' dreams. Lin indicates that there are three forms of these conceiving dreams. First, mothers dream of objects falling into their abdomens or of their swallowing something to get pregnant. Second, they dream of propitious omens related directly or indirectly to Buddhism. Third, they dream a divine person, a child, or a monk being reborn as their child.¹⁸¹

For the first kind, for example, the monk Zhizang 智藏 of the Liang dynasty was conceived when his mother dreamt of "a star dropping" and she "picked up and swallowing it."¹⁸² The mother of another Silla monk, Cizang 慈藏, also dreamt of a star falling into her abdomen when conceiving him.¹⁸³ Dreaming of swallowing the moon is another common motif. There are three cases in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*. Vinaya master Daoxuan's mother was said to have "become pregnant while dreaming of the moon penetrating her belly"¹⁸⁴ Xuanzang's disciple Kuiji 窥基 was conceived when his mother dreamt of holding the moon

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 263-264.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 264.

¹⁸² *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T2060, vol.5, 465c.

¹⁸³ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T2060, vol.24, 639a08.

¹⁸⁴ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 14, 790b08.

in her palms and ingesting it.¹⁸⁵ The monk Zhixuan’s 知玄 mother also came to bear him while dreaming of the moon entering into her womb.¹⁸⁶ Other cases involve the mother dreaming of swallowing a variety of symbolic objects, such as “a white mouse” that represented a “white dragon” by Tiantai Patriarch Zhiyi’s 智顓 mother, “a golden statue” by the monk Huiyue’s 慧約 mother, a “seven-jeweled bowl” flying from the top of a tree by the monk Linruei’s 靈睿 mother, and a “śarī given by a Sanskrit monk from his bag” to the monk Duanfu’s 端甫 mother.¹⁸⁷ Among these objects, golden statue, seven-jeweled bowl and śarī are unequivocally linked to Buddhism while the moon or a star is more frequently seen symbols in local tradition.

Eminent monks’ mothers may also simply dream of propitious figures or omens without having had to intake them. These characters and omens involve Buddhist monks or exotic objects exported from the western regions implicitly linked to Buddhism. For example, the monk Zhiwen’s 智文 mother, when in the beginning stage of her pregnancy, dreamt of a “Sanskrit monk bestowing a pine twig” and told her to give it to her future son to make *zhuwei* 麈尾, a Daoist duster known for its popular use in Mysterious Learning (*xuanxue* 玄學) idle talk.¹⁸⁸ Another monk Lintan’s 靈坦 mother dreamt of a “divine monk bestowing a jeweled-mirror” when conceiving him.¹⁸⁹ The monk Zuenhui 遵誨’s mother saw a “divine

¹⁸⁵ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 4, 725b18.

¹⁸⁶ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 6, 743b05.

¹⁸⁷ These cases of swallowing varied symbols happened relatively early ranging from Southern Liang dynasty to Tang dynasty. See *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T2060, vol.17, 564a18; vol.6, 468b; vol.15, 539c12; *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 6, 741a26.

¹⁸⁸ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T2060, vol. 21, 609b07.

¹⁸⁹ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 10, 767a16.

person bestowing a precious jewel” in sleep before getting pregnant.¹⁹⁰ The monk Shaokang’s 少康 mother dreamt “a heavenly girl holding a blue lotus 青蓮 and giving it to her future noble son.”¹⁹¹ The monk Fashen’s 法洗 mother “dreamt of swallowing a shining jewel” and hereafter “dislike and abandon fishes and meats” before getting pregnant.¹⁹² Scholars have pointed out that in miracle tales and the notes of literati from the medieval period, there is a recurrent motif about foreign merchants trading treasures or precious jewel (Chi. *baozhu* 寶珠). The conjunction of *Hu* 胡 or barbarians people with rare and exotic jewels constituted an important part of the Chinese imagination of foreign countries and people. This association stemmed from the role of merchants from western regions in trans-regional trade at the time. Chinese also linked barbarians (*hu* 胡) and Buddhist monks together with this type of story of trading treasures.¹⁹³ Here we see that this kind of object also showed up in eminent monks’ birth tales to link them with a teaching transmitted from western countries. Additionally, the gifts given by monks in those dreams include the blue lotus (Skt. *utpala*), a symbol used in *Lotus Sūtra* to refer to those who hear or receive the scripture.¹⁹⁴ There are also domestic religious symbols like pine twig or Daoist duster appearing together with a Sanskrit monk.

Sometimes the content of these mothers’ conceiving dreams points to Buddhism in a more explicit manner. They dreamt not just of a precious object or monks but rather of buddhas, Buddhist temples, or stūpas. For instance, the monk Shanjin’s 善靜 mother saw “a

¹⁹⁰ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 28, 884b11.

¹⁹¹ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 25, 867b12.

¹⁹² *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 5, 736a21.

¹⁹³ Seo Tatsuhiko 妹尾達彦, “Huren yu hanren: yiren maibao tan yu hanren renshi zhi bianqian 胡人與漢人: 異人買寶譚與漢人認識之變遷” (Hu people and Han people: the story of foreigners buying treasures and the change of Han people’s concept of Hu), in Huang Yinggui ed., *Kongjian yu wenhua changyu: kongjian zhi yixiang, shijian, yu shehui shengchan* 空間與文化場域: 空間之意象、實踐與社會生產(Space and Cultural Field: The imagery, practice and social production of space) (Taipei: National Library, 2009), 107-134.

¹⁹⁴ See *Miaofa lianhua jing*, T. 262, vol. 6, 54c.

shining golden Buddha's face" in dream.¹⁹⁵ The monk Chujing's 楚金 mother dreamt of "multiple buddhas."¹⁹⁶ The monk Zhilan's 智朗's mother had "several śramaṇas sitting in a circle and preaching to her" in the sleep.¹⁹⁷ Some mothers dreamt "stepping in a Buddhist temple," "touched a dharmic vessel," or "climbing up a stūpa and acquiring two golden bodhisattvas."¹⁹⁸ One mother even dreamt of "a stūpa springing from her house and rising up into the sky," which is reminiscent of the famous chapters of "The Jeweled Pagoda" and "Bodhisattvas Springing out from the Earth" in the *Lotus Sūtra*.¹⁹⁹ However, other signs appearing in conceiving dreams were not connected with Buddhist figures or items. In many cases, mothers envision some general portents, such as appearance of heavenly companions, divine light, colorful clouds, sudden blooming of flowers, thundering, sun and moon, and so on.²⁰⁰ While dreaming, some of them were performing Buddhist rituals or holding sūtras but others were not. These portents may stem from local context as much as from Buddhism. I will elaborate this more below when remarking on the features of birth described in Chinese Buddhist hagiographies as a whole.

The third type of conceiving dreams involves the reincarnation of divine person or a monk. As early as the Liu Song dynasty, the monk Tandi's 曇諦 mother has dreamt of "a monk calling her mother and left her a Daoist duster, an iron block, and a paperweight." After

¹⁹⁵ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol. 13, 787c14.

¹⁹⁶ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol. 24, 864c05.

¹⁹⁷ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol. 28, 884c22.

¹⁹⁸ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol.7, 751a13; vo.7, 478a21.

¹⁹⁹ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol.12, 783b18; *Miaofa lianhua jing*, T. 262, vol. 4, 32b; vol. 5, 39c-40a.

²⁰⁰ The appearance of this type of auspices, see *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol. 4, 731a06; vol. 30, 701c12; vol. 8, 754a14; vol. 15, 803b05; vol. 5, 734b16; vol. 27, 883a20; vol. 29, 893b28; *Biquini zhuan*, T. 2063, vol. 3, 942a.

waking up, she found all things still there and thus gave birth to Tandi.²⁰¹ In Northern Wei dynasty, the monk Daobian's 道辯 mother has dreamt him “dressed monastic robe and held a monk's staff while entering into her womb.”²⁰² In the Tang dynasty, a woman became pregnant after witnessing a śramaṇa in her dream slowly and gracefully walking into her house and telling her, “I would like to be your child.”²⁰³ Another woman conceived after hearing a voice in the sky saying, “May I temporarily reside here?”²⁰⁴ Coming to the Five Dynasties and Song dynasty, similar cases continued to be found. The monk Xichen's 息塵 mother has dreamt of “a divine person who dressed magnificently and asked for an overnight stay.” After that, she felt pregnant.²⁰⁵ Both the mothers of the monks Wuen 晤恩 and Wuzuo 無作 dreamt of unusual mendicants visiting their homes or requesting to “sojourn here” just before they conceived.²⁰⁶

There are some cases in which mothers directly dreamt of obtaining children who were transformed from divinities or bequeathed by them. For instance, there was a monk of Southern Liang named Fajing 法京, whose mother dreamt of “entering into a lotus pond and holding a beautiful and adorable child” when coming to bear him. When Fajing was about to be born, she dreamt of him “riding on a white lion to play around the heaven.”²⁰⁷ This obviously symbolizes that Fajing may be regarded as the reincarnation of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. The Sui Three-Treatises master Falang's 法朗 mother saw in sleep “a divine

²⁰¹ *Gao sengzhuān*, T. 2059, vol. 7, 370c.

²⁰² *Xu Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2060, vol. 6, 471c.

²⁰³ *Song Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2061, vol. 4, 731b09.

²⁰⁴ *Song Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2061, vol. 11, 772b14.

²⁰⁵ *Song Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2061, vol. 23, 857c13.

²⁰⁶ *Song Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2061, vol. 7, 751c21; vol. 30, 896c07.

²⁰⁷ *Xu Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2060, vol. 16, 556b15.

person riding on a palace into her belly.”²⁰⁸ The patriarch of the Three Stages sect Xinxing 信行 was conceived after his mother prayed to the Buddha for a child for a long time and dreamt of “a god holding an infant and telling her: ‘now I hand it over to you.’”²⁰⁹ Another Sui monk Zhikuong’s 智曠 mother dreamt “getting into flowing baths,” after which “a child approached her in a jeweled boat” right before her conception.²¹⁰

During the long gestation period, mothers of eminent monks may perceive miracle correspondence as well. Similar to *dohada*, eminent monks’ mothers may similarly have unusual pregnant cravings or be influenced by fetuses’ characters and virtues. In fact, it is said that Kumārajīva’s mother, when bearing him, acquired exceptional capacity of comprehending things and even suddenly learned Sanskrit on her own.²¹¹ The mother of the monk Huiyue 慧約 of Southern Liang, while expecting, became extremely refreshing in spirit and enlightened in thoughts.²¹² As for the mother of the Sui monk Zhenguan 真觀, her mind and determination became distinguished from commoners and her speech turned unusually clear and sensible.²¹³

Many other mothers of eminent monks changed to vegetarian diet during their pregnancy. These cases were recorded beginning from the Liu Song dynasty and became popular in Tang.²¹⁴ Although Māyā’s *dohada* does not contain the longing of vegetarian diet,

²⁰⁸ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 7, 477b03.

²⁰⁹ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 16, 559c18.

²¹⁰ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 25, 658b28.

²¹¹ *Gao sengzhuan*, T. 2059, vol. 2, 330a.

²¹² *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 6, 468b.

²¹³ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 30, 701c12.

²¹⁴ Lin Yunjo, “Chūgoku Chūsei ni okeru sōryo no shukke innen: kōsō no denki shiryō wo chūshin toshite,” 269-270.

these mothers' distaste of pungent herbs and meats similarly reflect the influence from their fetuses. The Chinese Buddhist monastic order banned eating meats after the reign of Emperor Wu of the Southern Liang dynasty, and since then has considered a vegetarian diet to be a significant part or even a requirement of an eminent monk. This type of reproductive correspondence amounts to 19 cases and cover various categories of professions in the three biographies of eminent monks.²¹⁵ Here I just list three representative examples. Of the aforementioned monk Falang's mother, it was said that after conceiving him "her four limbs became light and easy" and she "henceforth abandoned the five pungent roots."²¹⁶ The Ox-head Chan master Fachin's 法欽 mother once dreamt of a lotus flower growing in the yard, from which she cut one piece to tie her clothes. After waking up, "she immediately felt distaste for pungent herbs and meats."²¹⁷ A Tang Vinaya master Huijing 慧璿's mother was said to have simply "discarded spicy, pungent and mundane tastes" during gestation. And "people believed that this change was caused by her child, just like the case of Śāriputra."²¹⁸ This final case convincingly shows that even though the term of *dohada* was not transliterated in most Chinese versions of the Buddha's biography, its notion of a mother's pregnant longing or change influenced by her embryo still became well known in China.

When approaching the moment of giving birth, mothers of eminent monks were said to receive a variety of auspicious signs. These omens include the mysterious appearance of fragrance, *qi*, light, divine music. Some cases involved infants born with remarkable physical features or monks predicting that newborns will leave home to become monastics in the

²¹⁵ Besides the below three examples, the source origins of the other 16 cases are as follows. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 15, 539c12; vol. 13, 531a28; vol. 28, 689b16; *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T2061, vol. 4, 731b09; vol. 6, 740c18; vol. 7, 752b05; vol. 9, 754a14; vol. 11, 774c29; vol. 12, 783c15; vol. 14, 794c16; vol. 16, 806a08; vol. 16, 810c24; vol. 22, 853; vol.24, 866a11; vol. 26, 875b27; vol. 26, 876a24.

²¹⁶ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 7, 477b05.

²¹⁷ *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol. 9, 764b14.

²¹⁸ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 22, 615a25.

future, just as the Buddha. In several cases, being born on the same date of the Buddha's birth date was also regarded as an auspicious sign. The appearance of marvelous fragrance, light, *qi* or divine music was the most commonly seen, appearing in up to fourteen cases in the three biographies. For example, the monk Linyu 靈育 of Northern Wei dynasty was born "there was suddenly an extraordinary fragrance and light shining on the wall in their home." This is the reason that he was named a "divine birth."²¹⁹

As for remarkable physical signs at birth, it is said that the Sui monk Zhenguan was born "with divine words on his left hand and human words on his right hand."²²⁰ Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi was said to have been born with double pupils,²²¹ a physical feature that the ancient sage king Shun also famously possessed. Another later Tiantai monk Qinguan 清觀 was born "with webbed fingers," one of the thirty-two major marks of the Tathāgata.²²² Moreover, the monk Tanchen 曇晟 was said to have been born with his embryonic membranes worn on the body yet baring the right shoulder just in the manner that monastic robes were worn.²²³ The Song Tiantai monk Yiji 義寂 was said to have been born with "his head covered in a purple hat."²²⁴ Finally, some eminent monks were predicted to leave home for the Sangha immediately following their birth.²²⁵ In several other cases, such as that of the above-mentioned Linyu, the Vinaya master Daoxuan, and the Silla monk Cizang were said to have

²¹⁹ *Gao sengzhuān*, T. 2059, vol.11, 397a09. Sources of the other similar fourteen cases are as follows. *Xu Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2060, vol. 5, 463c; vol. 6, 488b; vol. 14, 535c13; vol. 17, 564a18; vol. 23, 631b18; *Song Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2061, vol. 5, 734b16; vol. 8, 754a14; vol. 11, 772b14; vol. 12, 778c14; vol. 14, 792b26; vol. 16, 806a08; vol. 16, 810c24; vol. 25, 867b12; vol. 26, 877c19.

²²⁰ *Xu Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2060, vol. 30, 701c12.

²²¹ *Xu Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2060, vol. 17, 564a29.

²²² *Song Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2061, vol. 20, 842a28.

²²³ *Song Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2061, vol. 11, 775b08.

²²⁴ *Song Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2061, vol. 7, 752b05.

²²⁵ *Xu Gaoseng zhuān*, T. 2060, vol. 17, 564a26.

been born on the eighth day of the second month or at the eighth day of the fourth month, both traditionally regarded as the Buddha's birth day.²²⁶

Examining these birth scenes of different reproductive stages in medieval Chinese Buddhist hagiographies and comparing them with those in the Buddha's biographies, I am convinced that there is a certain kind of structural parallel between them despite of their evident difference of contents. I find that the sanctified birth scenes of the Buddha and eminent Chinese monastics are both expressed through a three-stage formula: a mother's conceiving dreams, her longings during pregnancy, and auspicious signs at birth. However, there are still numerous elements that are independently developed in the domestic context and unique to Chinese Buddhism. There are also components that share commonality with the indigenous tradition rather than drawing from Buddhism.

In terms of the similarity of the three-stage formula shown in the two kinds of literatures, admittedly, two of the three stages—namely mothers' conceiving dreams and birth auspices—are not unseen in ancient China, as I analyze below. Moreover, although in the description of Māyā's pregnancy she has gone through all the three phases, mothers in Chinese Buddhist hagiographies might be found to just encounter one or two of them during the whole process. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that each of the three became a relatively fixed narrative model for writing the scene of a sacred reproductive event in these hagiographies. And usually the more eminent the one was, the more the miraculous happenings surrounding their birth would be reported in their biography. Among these three major motifs, *dohada* is particularly interesting and its possible influence on Chinese perception of childbirth has not yet been seriously discussed by scholars. Although Chinese Buddhist scriptures never coin a specific term for transliterating the notion and merely give it an inconspicuous translation in Yijin's edition, it seems that in Chinese Buddhist

²²⁶ For Linyu, see *Gao sengzhuan*, T. 2059, vol.11, 397a09; for Daoxuan, see *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol. 14, 790b08; for Tsuzang, see *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060, vol. 24, 639a08.

hagiographies, the idea that mothers' feelings, behaviors and longings during pregnancy may have been largely influenced by their embryos' virtues was quite pervasive across the four major hagiographical collections.

Regarding the specific contents touching upon the three major motifs, in the Chinese Buddhist hagiographies we actually find components that developed uniquely in Chinese Buddhism. For example, while Māyā's conceiving dream is the Buddha manifesting himself as a six-tusked white elephant (sometimes with his own figure riding on it as well), in Chinese cases, a mother may dream her future child "riding on a palace" or "riding on a white lion" into her belly. Mothers of Chinese eminent monks in their conceiving dreams may also be said to simply dream objects or figures that are associated with Buddhism, like precious jewels, stūpa, śarī , flying jeweled bowl, the Buddha's or bodhisattvas' statues, or monk who will be reincarnated. While Māyā's *dohada* endowed her absolutely pure and pleasant physical and mental states and even granted her healing power, mothers of Chinese eminent monks were sometimes said to have become extremely knowledgeable and intelligent thanks to the virtues of their embryos. Moreover, since the Chinese Buddhism has particularly promoted the vegetarian diet from the time of the Emperor Wu of the Southern Liang, it was natural for them to employ this theme to express the fetal influence on mothers and itself also the best device to display mothers' mental and physical purity. Finally, as for the various auspicious signs at birth, while the signs surrounding the Buddha's birth were systemized into the thirty-two items ranging from phenomena expressing fertility and regeneration in nature, and the emergence of auspicious jewels, animals, to miraculous natural changes, the omens surrounding Chinese eminent monks' births tended more simply to involve the appearance of marvelous fragrance, *qi*, light, or divine music. Some monks were said to have been born with unusual physical features which diviners could identify in order to predict that they would become monastics, two plots that also appear in the Buddha's birth tale but differ from

it in significant details.

These similarities and variations in depicting eminent monks and nuns' birth scenes reflect how Chinese Buddhists imagine their sacred births through combining elements drawn from the Buddha's biography with those embedded in the indigenous tradition. In fact, several motifs or elements appearing in eminent monks and nuns' birth scenes can be traced back to ancient Chinese birth legends of sage kings. Motifs like mothers becoming pregnant by swallowing an object or by dreaming of the visit of divinities are common found in these legends, but do not seem to have a direct relation to Buddhist tradition. In *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), it reports that the mother of Qi 契, the patriarch of Shang dynasty, became pregnant after "swallowing the egg of a dark bird." The birth legend of the patriarch of Qin dynasty follows the same pattern, describing his mother "swallowed an egg after a dark birth dropped it."²²⁷ The birth myth of the first emperor of the Han dynasty is associated with his mother receiving a visit of divinities. The biography of Gaozu of the Han in *Shiji* states that Gaozu's mother once rested by the side of a great lake and "dreamt of meeting with a god while the day was profoundly dark with thunder and lightening." When Gaozu's father went to see her, he saw "a dragon upon her." After that, she got pregnant.²²⁸

If we further examine birth myths of the emperors and the empresses in historical records from the Han to the Northern and Southern dynasties, we can also find that they share certain motifs and narrative elements between with the hagiographies of eminent monks and nuns. First of all, just as certain eminent monks' mothers who dreamt of swallowing the moon or a star at conception, there are several cases in the Chinese historical records showing that

²²⁷ *Shiji* 史記, vol. 3, p. 91. Also see Sun Juan 孫娟, "Shiji gansheng shenhua yu sima qian biao xian yishu 史記感生神話與司馬遷表現藝術" (The Birth myth of miraculous correspondence in Shiji and its expressive art), *Tangdu Journal* (2006.May) 22.3: 89-93.

²²⁸ *Shiji*, vol. 8, p. 341 ; The ruler of Former Qin dynasty (350-394 CE), Fujian (338-385CE), was also conceived while his mother "dreamt to have intercourse with a god." See *Jinshu* 晉書, vol. 101, 2645.

mothers of future emperors or empresses dreamt of the sun or moon entering into their bellies before pregnancy. In the Han dynasty, the Emperor Wu's mother was said to have conceived him when "dreaming of the sun entering into her belly."²²⁹ A powerful Empress dowager Wang was said to have conceived while her mother "dreamt of the moon entering into her belly."²³⁰ The two early founders of the Wu kingdom in the Three Kingdoms period were asserted to have been conceived while their mother dreamt of the moon and the sun respectively entering into her belly.²³¹ The birth myths of the three non-Han sovereigns in the Sixteen Kingdoms period of the Northern dynasty are also all related with the entry of the sun into mothers' bellies.²³² Among them, Liu Yuan's 劉淵 case is particularly noteworthy and reminiscent of certain monks' birth tales involving a divine person bestowing a precious object upon the mother. Liu's mother dreamt one night of "a large fish she saw in the day transforming into a human, who held an extraordinary object as big as half an egg, bestowed it to her and said, 'This is the essence of the sun. If you take it, you shall give birth to a noble son.'"²³³

Furthermore, omens like divine light or mysterious *qi* appearing at eminent monks' birth are also commonly found in the birth myths of emperors and empresses of Northern and Southern Dynasties. The "Xianrui zhi" 祥瑞志 (Book of Auspices) in the *Songshu* 宋書 (*Book of Song*) claimed that its founder, the Emperor Wu, was born with "divine light

²²⁹ *Shiji*, vol. 49, 1975; *Hanshu* 漢書, vol. 97, 3946.

²³⁰ *Hanshu*, vol. 98, 4015.

²³¹ *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, vol. 50 "The Book of Wu: The Biographies of Concubines", 1195.

²³² They are Liu Yuan 劉淵 (252-310 CE), Liu Cong 劉聰 (?-318CE), and Murong de 慕容德(336-405CE). The first two are the founding emperors of Xiongnu state Former Zhao, and the last is the founding emperor of Xianbei state Southern Yen. See their birth tales in *Jinshu*, vol. 101, 2645; vol. 102, 2657; vol. 127, 3161.

²³³ *Jinshu*, vol. 101, 2645.

illuminating the room.”²³⁴ Numerous emperors and empresses in the Northern and Southern dynasties were reported to have been born with “sun light shining out from the birth room” “purple light,” “colorful light,” “red light,” “purple haze,” or “black haze.”²³⁵ Additionally, as we see from the case of one Sui eminent monk Zhenguan who was said to have been born with “divine words” and “human words” on his hands, this omen can also be found in contemporary political myths and even all the way back to the tradition of *chenwei* 讖緯 (divination based on mystical Confucian apocrypha) prevalent since the Eastern Han dynasty. Two non-Han rulers of the Sixteen Kingdoms, Liu Yuan and Fu Jian 苻堅, were in fact said to have been born with “his name on the left hand” and “red words on the back,” respectively.²³⁶

In brief, the birth scenes of eminent monks and nuns depicted in the four major collections of hagiographies combine motifs and narrative elements which were derived both from the Buddhist tradition and the indigenous traditions. On top of the influence of the Buddha’s biography, their descriptive framework and components were also drawn from a variety of sources like Buddhist cults to the *Lotus Sūtra*, stūpas, relics and Buddha’s bowl, native Daoist tradition (embodied in the appearance of Daoist symbols like a duster or a pine

²³⁴ *Songshu*, vol. 27, 783. This “Book of Auspices” in *Songshu* particularly lists all sorts of miraculous correspondence and auspices including birth omens of emperors of all previous dynasties. The composition of this book in *Songshu* is apparently influenced by the *chenwei* tradition and representative of the impact of mystical Confucian apocrypha in forming political myths that were used for legitimating the rule of a dynasty.

²³⁵ There are numerous cases of this kind in the official histories of these dynasties, such as the founder of Northern Wei, the Empress Dowager Hu of Northern Wei, the first emperor of Northern Qi, the first two founders of Northern Zhou, the empresses and concubines of Southern Qi, Liang and Chen dynasties. See *Weishu* 魏書, vol. 2, 19; vol. 13, 337; *Beiqishu* 北齊書, vol. 4, 43; *Zhoushu* 周書, vol. 1, 2; vol. 5, 63; *Nanqishu* 南齊書, vol. 20, 390; *Liangshu* 梁書, vol. 7, 156-157, 160; *Chenshu* 陳書, vol. 7, 126.

²³⁶ *Jinshu*, vol. 101, 2645; vol. 113, 2883. According to some *weishu* 緯書 (Confucian apocrypha) like *hetu* 河圖 (The Chart of Yellow River) and *hetu woju qi* 河圖握拒起, it is said that the ancient sage king Zhuanxu 顓頊 was born “with lines like the image of dragon on his hand” and the Yellow Emperor was born “with lines on his chest.” See Hu Xiangqin 胡祥琴, “Shiliu guo de zhengzhi gansheng shenhu yu minzu ronhe 十六國時期的政治感生神話與民族融合” (The political myth of miraculous birth correspondence during the Sixteen Kingdoms period and the synthesis of ethnic groups), *Journal of the Second Northwest University for Nationalities* 78 (2007.6): 13-17, esp. 16.

trig), and ancient political birth myths of sage kings as well as the later Confucian apocryphal tradition that further promoted the popularity of the myths. All these contribute to shaping the imagination of the sacred birth of Chinese Buddhist monastics. Yet one question deserving special notice and further research is whether any similar idea like *dohada* ever existed in pre-Buddhist China, and if so, how much impact this idea had after the transmission of Buddhism. As far as I know, it seems that there only existed in ancient China the idea that mothers' virtues may heavily influence their fetuses, as clearly conveyed in many tales for fetal education, rather than a fetus' virtues may in turn change mothers' bodily and mental conditions.

Conclusion

This chapter begins its discussion by reflecting on the Buddhist concept of birth, contending that even though the essential Buddhist teaching regards birth as one of the four roots of suffering, at least one important Buddhist literature genre, namely the Buddha's biography and monastic hagiographies, describes the scenes of childbirth using sanctified language and imagery. In this regard, Hubert Durt's study on Māyā's pregnancy demonstrates how reproductive bodies and events in the Buddha's biography were presented in a divine manner. He focuses on two phenomena: Māyā's sublimated longings during pregnancy, or *dohada*, and her magical healing power. For the former, he argues that the lack of a technical term specifically created for *dohada* in Chinese translations of the Buddha's biography led to its original connotation of the intimate carnal link between mother and embryo to be somewhat lost in Chinese translations. Yet my research on the birth scenes in Chinese Buddhist hagiographies shows that many of these tales still emphasize impact of fetuses on mothers, such as their inclination to adopt a vegetarian diet, as well as their exceptional intelligence or wisdom. As for Māyā's healing power, Durt indicates that it constitutes an

important episode in the Buddha's birth narratives, existing in both in Sanskrit *Lalivistara* and in its two Chinese translations. Further adding on that, I have observed that in the *Fo benxing jijing* this episode evolved more details which give further illustrations of Māyā's activity and agency in her healing deeds.

The sanctified narrative of Māyā's pregnancy is also characterized by other features. This chapter has further explored three others, namely the conceiving dreams, emphasis of her purity, and the thirty-two auspicious signs at the Buddha's birth. My investigation discovers that although the *Mulasavastivada* and its two closest Chinese versions (Yiji's translation and *Zhongxu mohedi jing*) contain the full four conceiving dreams, most other Chinese versions of the Buddha's biography such as the *Puyao jijing*, the two *Benqi jing*, and the *Fo benxing jijing* all have only one dream, the entry of the six-tusked white elephant into the womb, sometimes with the Bodhisattva riding on it. This has been the most popular of Māyā's conceiving dreams in China, repeatedly quoted by authors of Chinese Buddhist encyclopedia and drawn upon conspicuously in Dunhuang transformation texts and wall paintings that nevertheless lack the other three dreams.

The purity of the entire childbirth process is another prominent concern of the Buddha's birth story. Both the Buddha and Māyā's purity were constantly brought up and emphasized. On the one hand, the Buddha's purity in the womb is guaranteed by a placenta- or amniotic sac like "palace" or "heavenly clothe" inside the womb, serving to quarantine the embryo from the general pollution of the maternal body. On the other hand, paradoxically, Māyā herself was depicted as absolutely virtuous and free from ordinary people's shortcomings and worldly contamination. Both the *Puyao jing* and the *Fangguang dazhuanyen jing* mention this placenta-like "ratnavyūha" to different degrees. And both also discuss Maya's moral and bodily purity by addressing her reception of the precepts and practice of the ten moral activities. In the *Fo benxing jijing*, her immaculacy is further stressed by listing her own set

of "thirty-two makrs," which are mostly concerned with moral virtues.

Māyā's pregnancy and the Buddha's birth also come with the appearance of various propitious omens. The *Puyao jing*, for instance, has one particular chapter listing all the thirty-two auspicious signs. I have categorized these signs into four types, including phenomena expressing fertility and regeneration in nature, the emergence of auspicious jewels and animals, of non-human beings, and of miraculous natural changes in celebration of the event. The first kind is particularly noteworthy and further elaborated in the scriptures as well. The birth of the Buddha triggers a series of births and rebirths among sentient beings, implying an affirmative attitude toward reproduction and even celebrating of fertility, instead of treating childbirth as inherently characterized by suffering as it is in Buddhist doctrine.

This chapter continues by examining medieval Chinese Buddhists' compilations and quotations associated with the sacred birth event to explore its reception among Chinese monastics. Between the second and the fourth centuries, the first mention of the birth event in the *Lihuo lun* is brief and does not say much about Māyā. Only in the fifth century did there appear two more elaborate representations of the Buddha's birth compiled by the monks Sengyou and Baochang respectively. Largely quoting from the *Puyao jing*, *Taizi ruiying benqi jing*, *Xiuxing benqi jing*, Sengyou's representation of the birth event is characterized by his attention to the auspicious signs, and his use of the Mahayana's doctrine of expedient means to explain many seemingly unreasonable paradoxes such as the unusual twelve-month length of Māyā's pregnancy, the Buddha's strange birth from her right side, and her instant death after parturition. Baochang's representation of the birth event is concise but interestingly takes similar notice of the various propitious omens said to have appeared during the different stages of conception, pregnancy and parturition. Their common interest in the auspicious signs is reminiscent of similar indigenous tradition that has been utilized by Xuanzang to divine the prince's birth and that has been shown in the *Day Books* in which a

child's birth and destiny are intimately associated with the auspiciousness of a specific time and space.

The other two representations of the birth event in the Tang dynasty were written by Daoxuan and Daoshi. Daoxuan mostly followed Sengyou's choice of scriptures and shared his excerpts and explanations. Unlike him, Daoshi adopted a newly translated version of the Buddha's biography—the *Fo benxing jijing*, translated by Jñānagupta during the Sui dynasty—and presented a relatively novel account of the birth event. This scripture and Daoshi's representation of the event based on it come up with a novel way of stressing Māyā's purity by contrasting her immaculate and pure reproduction to ordinary people's suffering-filled and detestable birth, amplifying this dualistic view of sacred and suffering-filled kinds of birth. Daoshi paid attention to the birth omens as his predecessors had, and also intriguingly argued for the superiority of the omens in the Buddha's birth over those of ancient Chinese sacred kings, bravely challenging the tradition that appropriated auspicious birth signs to serve as proof of political legitimacy.

The final part of this chapter explores the birth scenes of eminent monks and nuns in medieval Chinese Buddhist hagiographies. Overall, I argue that there is a similarity of narrative structure between accounts of the Buddha's birth and those of Chinese Buddhist monastics' birth. Whether fully or partially deployed, both involve a three-stage formula: a mother's conceiving dreams, her longings during pregnancy, and auspicious signs at birth. Though the first and the third kinds are also found in the pre-Buddhist Chinese tradition and the specific contents of the three stages differ between Buddhist and indigenous Chinese traditions, it is undeniable that each of the three constitutes a relatively fixed model for writing a sacred birth scene in these Chinese Buddhist hagiographies. As for the contents, narrative components were drawn from a variety of sources. Besides the influence from the Buddha's biography, there are many elements that are independently developed in the

domestic context and unique to Chinese Buddhism. Mothers of Chinese monastics may in their conceiving dreams reveal Buddhist cults to scriptures, stūpas, relics, miraculous monks, precious jewels, and Daoist symbolic objects. Their longings during pregnancy were largely expressed as the desire to adopt a vegetarian diet due to the specific Chinese Buddhist context. Auspicious signs at the moment of giving birth assimilate much from the ancient Chinese political tradition of birth myths of sage kings and Confucian apocrypha. All these contribute to shaping medieval Chinese imagination of birth as a sacred event exemplified in the birth scenes of Chinese Buddhist hagiographies. Below, we shall turn to the other opposite of the idea regarding childbirth in Buddhism, suffering.

Appendix: Reproductive Scenes of Māyā and the Buddha on Dunhuang wall paintings

Figure 2.1 "The Bodhisattva riding a white elephant into the womb," Mogao Cave No.

431, Northern Wei dynasty (386-534 CE)



Figure 2.2 "Māyā having her conceiving dream," Mogao Cave No. 290, Northern Zhou dynasty (557-581 CE)



Partial enlargement of the above painting, the circle in the right side depicts the prince riding on the white elephant and going to enter into the womb



Māyā holding a tree and giving birth to the prince from her right side



Figure 2.3 "The Bodhisattva riding a white elephant into the womb," Mogao Cave No. 322, Sui dynasty (581-618 CE)



Figure 2.4 "The Bodhisattva riding a white elephant into the womb," Mogao Cave No. 329, Early Tang period (618-712 CE)



Figure 2.5 "The Bodhisattva riding a white elephant inside a circle and on clouds flying to Māyā," Yulin Cave No. 36, Five Dynasty (907-979 CE)



Figure 2.6 "Māyā gave birth to the Prince from her right side; the small prince is looking back to the Queen; a dragon on the left side of the small prince is spilling water for bathing him." Mogao Cave No. 76, Song dynasty



Partial enlargement of the above painting

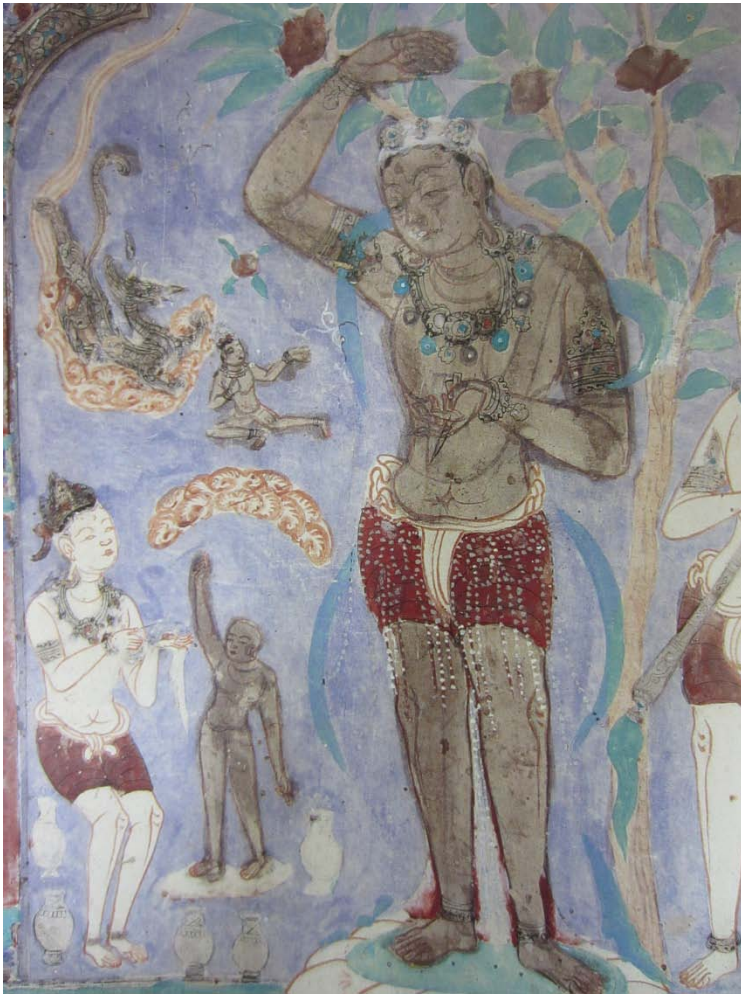


Figure 2.7 "Māyā holding a tree, a maid helping her in the left, and the prince being born from the right side," Yulin Cave No. 3, Tangut Kingdom



Chapter Three

The Origin of Suffering:

Buddhist Obstetrics, Birth *Duḥkha*, and Filial Piety

In the last chapter we explored in the Buddhist hagiographical tradition in order to see the sanctified perspective on reproduction, in which the birth events of extraordinary Buddhist figures were divinized and romanticized, retrospectively prophesying their later achievements. In the case of Buddha's biographies, some later versions such as the *Fobenxin jijing* developed more details in every respect of the Buddha's life, including Māyā's pregnancy and his birth. These later additions of the event included added details about the suffering of ordinary sentient beings' birth in order to highlight the Buddha's distinction. The *Fobenxin jijing* not only was cited by Daoshi in his Buddhist encyclopedia, but also served as the major reference for many popular transformation texts and paintings of the Buddha's life story that were created from the mid-Tang dynasty onward. Among all versions of the Buddha's biographt, this scripture cast the sharp contrast between the sacred birth of the awakened one and the suffering-filled birth of ordinary people most drastically. The scripture illustrates a huge gap between these two respective ways of understanding birth by dwelling on all kinds of defilements that commoners may encounter during their pitiable births:

When residing in the womb, the Bodhisattva is not frightened and terrified but remained fearless. He was not tainted by any evil things. All the impurities such as nasal mucus, spittle, and yellow or white phlegm were unable to pollute him. As for other sentient beings, they have all sorts of defilements in maternal womb. Yet these were unable to stain [the Bodhisattva because he] resembled a lapis lazuli wrapped in heavenly clothing, incapable of being defiled even when put in an unclean place.²³⁷

²³⁷ *Fo benxing jijing* 佛本行集經, T. 190, 684c. The translation is made by me. The original text is "菩薩在胎，不驚不怖，得大無畏，惡物不染，所有不淨，涕唾膿血，黃白痰癢，不能穢污。自餘眾生，在母胎時，種種不淨。如琉璃寶，以天衣裹，置不淨處，亦不染污。"

When the Bodhisattva emerged from the maternal womb, he rose up tranquilly, without any suffering and trouble. All kinds of impurities were unable to taint him, no matter they were excrements, urine, yellow or white phlegm, pus or blood, all of which could not taint him. As for other sentient beings, they are stained by all sorts of evil contaminations.²³⁸

This drastic opposition represented by the two types of birth continues in the following several paragraphs. Each paragraph opposes a situation from the Bodhisattva's hallowed gestation and birth against that of the ordinary people's miserable birth processes. The Bodhisattva's mother enjoyed a delightful pregnancy, whereas ordinary people may bring their mothers "heavy burden" and "bodily discomfort" during the nine or ten months. The Bodhisattva's mother naturally receives precepts for purity during pregnancy, whereas ordinary people's mothers may do "miscellaneous deeds" without differentiating the virtuous from the evil ones. The Bodhisattva's mother bore no thought of desire and was not disturbed by it, but ordinary mothers produce twice as much desire as usual during the gestation period. The Bodhisattva's mother did not crave exceptional foods and felt neither hotness and coldness, nor hunger and thirstiness, while the lust of ordinary people's mothers turns versatile and insatiable. Moreover, the Bodhisattva in womb did not emaciate his mother, but ordinary people would do emaciate their mothers. Finally, the Bodhisattva entered into the womb with his full body and faculties accomplished already, whereas ordinary people have to wait some time for their bodies to develop inside the womb.²³⁹

This dramatic contrast between the two types of birth serves not only to differentiate the sacred birth of an enlightened one from the suffering-filled birth of ordinary people, but

²³⁸ *Fo benxing jijing*, T. 190, 686c. The translation is made by me. The original text is "菩薩初從母胎出時，無苦無惱，安庠而起，一切諸穢，不能污染，或屎或尿，黃白痰癢，或膿或血，皆不穢著。自餘眾生，出母胎時，諸惡雜穢。" The term "*tanyin* 痰癢," according to Huilin's 慧琳 *Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義 (T. 2128, 502c13), is a kind of disease resulted from the abnormal accumulation of *qi* in the area of chest diaphragm. Since the *qi* is unable to circulate freely and normally in the body, it becomes gelatinous fluid and unable to cut off. Based on Huilin's explanation, here I choose to translate the term as phlegm.

²³⁹ *Fo benxing jijing*, T. 190, 684c-685b.

also once again to affirm the essential Buddhist teaching, suffering (*duḥkha*), through picturing various detestable aspects of commoners' birth. In fact, as I will show below, from a very early time Buddhism began appropriating obstetric knowledge of reproduction from Indian medicine in order to flesh out its teaching of birth *duḥkha*. These scriptures were transmitted to China and translated between the second and eighth centuries. In the fifth-century Chinese monk Baochang quoted from one of these medical scriptures in his encyclopedic work *Jinlu yixiang*. It gives one entry explicating eight kinds of *duḥkha* including birth *duḥkha*, by vividly portraying the suffering-filled scenes of a fetus in the womb and at the moment of its birth:

The Buddha said, listen, I would like to inform you about the essence of *duḥkha*. People in the world suffer through all sorts of miseries. I want to briefly explain the eight kinds of suffering. The first is the suffering of birth. When dying, people's spirits do not know which path to follow, and before being reborn they take the form of intermediate existence (*antarābhava*). Around the third week after death, the spirit receives embryonic form during the intercourse of his parents. For the first seven days [the embryo] is like thin yogurt; for the second seven days like thick yogurt; for the third seven days like curdled butter; and for the fourth seven days like a piece of meat. At this time its five embryonic organs are formed. A subtle wind enters into the mother's belly and blows its body to open its six faculties. At this time it is situated in the mother's belly under the organs that digest raw foods and above the organs that digest cooked foods. When the mother eats a piece of hot food, it pours onto the embryonic body as though it were being plunged into boiled soup. When the mother drinks a cup of cold water, it feels like frozen ice cutting its body. When the mother is full, its body is squashed and endures unutterable painful. When the mother is hungry and her belly is empty, it feels immeasurable pain like being hung upside down. When it is about to be born, its head, facing the birth gate, is pressed drastically like two stones squeezing a mountain. When it is born and falls out onto a grass mat, its tender and soft body is touched by the grass, which feels like lying on knives and swords, and thus it cries out loudly. Isn't this suffering? The audience all responds that this is indeed suffering.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ Baochang, *Jinlu yixian*, T. 148, 148a. The original text from which Baochang quoted is the *Foshuo wuwang jijing* 佛說五王經 (Sutra of The Five Kings taught by the Buddha), T. 523, 796a-b. Li Qinpu 李勤璞 points out this, see his "Yindu qiri zhutai lun jiqi zai hanyi de biaoxian: shang 印度七日住胎論及其在漢醫的一個表現 (上篇)(Indian theory on weekly fetal transformation and its influence on Chinese medicine Part I)," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 2006.9 (77.3): 577-578. The original text is "佛言：卿等善聽，當為說之。人生在世，眾苦切身，略說八苦。一、生苦。人死時不知精神趣向何道，未得生處，普受中陰之形。至三七日中，父母和合，便來受胎。一七日如薄酪，二七日如稠酪，三七日如凝酥，四七日如肉臠，五胎成就，巧風入腹，吹其身體，六情開張。在母腹中，生藏之下、熟藏之上。母噉一粒熟食，灌其身

The long quotation on the birth *duḥkha* demonstrates how Buddhist scriptures could mobilize obstetric knowledge to more vividly underscore its point about the suffering of being born and reborn. Its inclusion in Baochang's compilation also demonstrates its reception by Chinese monastics. More importantly, a passage with highly similar content appeared later in a popular tenth-century transformation text from Dunhuang, *Lushan Yuangong hua* 廬山遠公話 (*The Story of Huiyuan of Mount Lu*), suggesting that this kind of illustration of birth *duḥkha* with its whole package of understanding of embryology and gestation, different from the understanding of Chinese medicine, also permeated the popular imagination and was not confined to monastic circle.²⁴¹

While the previous chapter explored the sanctified aspect of Buddhist views of childbirth, in this chapter I want to delve into its opposite facet, namely the classical Buddhist view that treats birth as the ultimate source of suffering. As the materials above demonstrate, this kind of perspective toward reproduction was set in opposition to the birth of awakened beings. It combines with obstetric knowledge of gestation to make it more graphic and convincing. This way of representing birth *duḥkha* elicits some questions worthy of careful study, which constitutes this chapter's several lines of inquiry. First of all, what is the relationship between Indian medicine and Buddhist medicine, and how does the latter absorb and remold the former one to suit its need, particularly in the realm of embryology and obstetrics? How did Buddhists comprehend and represent conception, pregnancy, embryology, giving birth, and abortion as recorded in Tripitaka? Second, how did Buddhism illustrate its

體，如入瀉湯。母飲一杯冷水，亦如寒冰切體。母飽之時，迫迕身體、痛不可言。母飢之時，腹中了了，亦如倒懸，受苦無量。至其滿月欲生，頭向產門，劇如兩石挾山。生墮草上，身體細軟，草觸其身，如履刀劍，忽然失聲大呼。此是苦不？咸言是苦。”

²⁴¹ Discussion of this transformation text, see Jessy J.C. Choo, “That ‘Fatty Lump’: Discourses on the Fetus, Fetal Development, and Filial Piety in China Before the Eleventh Century CE,” *Nan Nü* 14 (2012): 202-206.

first noble truth, and particularly the birth *duḥkha*, by drawing on relevant fields of knowledge regarding childbirth? Finally, to what extent and how was the Chinese audience in the religious and medical realms influenced by this set of knowledge through the transmission and popularization of Buddhism in medieval China? Did Chinese audiences somehow change their perception toward childbirth, maternal and fetal bodies, and relevant religious practices in response to Buddhist interventions in the meaning of childbirth?

Some of these questions have been explored by previous studies published in the last two decades, while others remain unanswered or answered insufficiently. In terms of the issues like the communication between Indian and Buddhist medicine, Buddhist appropriation and adaptation of Āyurvedic obstetrics and embryology, and its use of illustrating the birth *duḥkha*, English scholars like Kenneth Zysk, Pierce Salguero, Robert Kritzer, Frances Garrett, and Amy Langenberg have approached them from different angles and diverse local areas and historical traditions.²⁴² Japanese scholars such as Daijō Obinata, Fukunaga Katsumi, Kenji Nihonyangi, and Namba Tsuneo have also worked on these issues by offering careful exegetical analyses based on texts contained in the Tripitaka—although for some of them, their agenda is to update Buddhism with the modern era and to reformulate a field of "Buddhist medicine" by means of the categories of Western science.²⁴³ Utilizing

²⁴² Kenneth G. Zysk, *Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India: Medicine in the Buddhist Monastery*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991); Pierce Salguero, *Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); "Reexamining the Categories and Canons of Chinese Buddhist Healing," *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 28 (2015): 35-66; Robert Kritzer, *Garbhākrāntīsūtra: the Sūtra on Entry into the Womb* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies, 2014); "Life in the Womb: Conception and Gestation in Buddhist Scripture and Classical Indian Medical Literature," in Vanessa R. Sasson and Jane Marie Law ed., *Imagining the Fetus: The Unborn in Myth, Religion, and Culture* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2009); "Childbirth and the Mother's Body in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and Related Texts," *Indotetsugaku bukkyō shisō ron shū: Mikogami Eshō kyōju shōju kinen ronshū* インド哲学仏教思想論集：神子上恵生教授頌寿記念論集 (Kyoto: Nagatabunshodō, 2004); Frances Garrett, *Religion, Medicine and the Human Embryo in Tibet* (Routledge, 2008); Amy Paris Langenberg, *Like Worms Falling from a Foul-Smelling Sore: The Buddhist Rhetoric of Childbirth in an Early Mahāyāna Sūtra*, Dissertation, Columbia University, 2008.

²⁴³ Daijō Obinata, *Bukkyō igaku no kenkyū* 仏教医学の研究 (Study of Buddhist Medicine) (Tōkyo: Kazama Shobō, 1965); Hattori Toshirō, *Shaka no igaku: Bukkyō kyōten o chūshin toshita* 釈迦の医学：仏教経典を中心とした (Medicine of Gautama Buddha in Buddhist scriptures) (Nagoya: Reimei Shobō, 1968); Fukunaga

these studies critically, the first section of this chapter will lay the groundwork for my inquiry by clarifying the relationship between Indian and Buddhist medicine, and touch upon the definition of the so-called "Buddhist medicine." Following that, the second part is a brief illustration of the content of "Buddhist obstetrics." Since the above academic findings by Japanese scholars, especially the part related to reproduction, have not been well introduced to English scholarship before, I would like to draw on their careful textual studies of Buddhist knowledge of obstetrics in the Tripitaka in order to analyze a series of reproductive issues like conception, transforming fetus' sex, nurturing fetus, giving birth, and dealing with difficult birth and miscarriage as described in Buddhist canon. In the third section, I look further into discussions of embryology in Buddhist texts, because these best exemplify Buddhist strategies for adapting Āyurvedic obstetric knowledge for the doctrinal purpose of promoting birth *duḥkha*. In this regard, Robert Kritzer, Francis Garrett, and Amy Langenberg have meticulously collated and examined several different Chinese and Tibetan versions of a representative sūtra, *Garbhākrāntisūtra, the Sūtra on Entry into the Womb*, and demonstrate this course of appropriation by comparing these versions with other Indian medical and Buddhist texts. In the final section, I turn to medieval Chinese reception of these ideas, which is also the least studied area in terms of the topic of this chapter. Recently, scholars like Li Qinpu, Chen Ming, and Jessy Choo have published several important articles concerning the impact of Buddhist embryology and its treatment of birth *duḥkha* on Chinese medicine and on the concepts of maternal and fetal bodies.²⁴⁴ Specifically, Jessy Choo utilizes a Dunhuang

Katsumi, *Bukkyō igaku shōsetsu* 仏教医学詳説 (Research on Buddhist Medicine)(Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1972); Kenji Nihonyangi, *Bukkyō igaku gaiyō* 仏教医学概要 (Outline of Buddhist Medicine) (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1994); Namba Tsuneo and Komatsu Katsuko ed., *Bukkyō igaku no michi o sagru* 仏教医学の道を探る (Osaka: Toho Shuppan, 2000). A brief reflection on Japanese scholars' anachronistic reformulation of the medicine and healing related contents in Tripitaka through modern scientific categorization to wipe out their internal heterogeneity, see Salguero (2015).

²⁴⁴ See Li Qinpu 李勤璞, "Yindu qiri zhutai lun jiqi zai hanyi de biao xian 印度七日住胎論及其在漢醫的一個表現(上篇)(Indian theory on weekly fetal transformation and its influence on Chinese medicine Part I)," pp. 577-578; the second part of this article is in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 2006.12 (77.4):

transformation text and an indigenously-composed Buddhist scripture to demonstrate this kind of influence on the general populace in medieval China. Developing my inquiry along these lines, I observe that there are still quite a few transformation texts and images involving the distribution of the teaching of birth *duḥkha* by means of Buddhist embryology in medieval China. I shall examine these materials and argue that Buddhist embryology had a greater impact and popularization in medieval China than than previously thought. Scholars have noticed before that some Chinese Buddhist scriptures such as the *Yulan pen jing* and the series of scriptures on *Repaying Parents' Kindness* promote filial piety among children by depicting mothers' suffering in hells. This in return grants legitimacy of Buddhist monastic intervention in family life that somewhat reshaped the Chinese parent-child relationship.²⁴⁵ Here, by analyzing the Dunhuang transformation texts related to birth suffering and Buddhist embryology, I argue that through graphically portraying the excruciating details of pregnancy and birth-giving scenes and spotlighting their polluting nature in these texts, the notion of birth *duḥkha* made its way into popular imagination of medieval China. In its Chinese reception, more emphasis was placed on the suffering on mothers, rather than on both fetus and mother as in Indian Buddhist texts. These texts also became the most convenient device not only for promoting the necessity of filial piety, but also for legitimizing the indispensability of converting to and practicing Buddhism to be delivered from this suffering of birth.

517-590; "Qipo wuzang lun renchen xueshuo de yuanliu 耆婆五藏論妊娠學說的源流" (The origin of the gestation theory in Jivaka's remarks on five viscera) *Zhonghua yishi zazhi* 中華醫史雜誌 (Beijing) 27 (1997.7): 170-175; Chen Ming 陳明, "Shiyue chentai yu qiri yibian: yindu taixiang xueshuo de fenlei jiqi dui woguo de yingxiang 十月成胎與七日一變: 印度胎相學說的分類及其對我國的影響" (Gestation of Ten-Months or Weekly Fetal Transformation: Indian Embryology, its categorization and its influence on China), in *Guoxue janjiu* 國學研究 (Beijing: Beijing University Press) 13(2004.6): 167-216; "Zhuannu weinan, Turning Female to Male: An Indian Influence on Chinese Gynecology?" *Indian Medicine: Tradition and Modernity* 1, No. 2 (2005): 315-334. Jessy J.C. Choo (2012).

²⁴⁵ Stephen F. Teiser, *Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

From Indian Medicine to "Buddhist Medicine"

Buddhist knowledge of the body, healing, and medicine has been heavily influenced by both classical Indian Āyurveda and ascetic śramaṇic movement.²⁴⁶ Meaning "the knowledge (veda) of life (Āyur-)," the formation of Āyurveda was closely associated with contemporary philosophical discussion of the connection between the material constitution of the body and human nature. It was also related to yoga tradition concerned with the control of the mind and senses. Its systemization into medical theory mainly owes to three scholars, Caraka, Suśruta, and Vāgbhaṭa, who respectively contributed to the compilation of four representative Āyurvedic texts: Carakasamhitā (by Caraka allegedly before the 2nd century), Suśrutasamhitā (by Suśruta allegedly in the 4th century), Aṣṭāṅgasaṅgraha and Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasamhitā (both by Vāgbhaṭa during the 7th century). Despite differences of their contents from one another, these texts have similar structures and are categorized into eight disciplinary branches. One of them is particularly devoted to addresses reproduction, covering topics like conception, fetal development, determination of embryo's sex, features of healthy reproductive fluids, midwifery, and postpartum care. Since the topic of childbirth triggered a series of ensuing issues like the existence and continuity of one's soul or self, the intermediate state between this life and next one, the identity of transmigrating being, the mechanism of rebirth, their material bases, and so on, embryology in India thus was a lively debated subject both in philosophical, medical and religious realms. As we shall see later, when discussing these above reproductive issues, Buddhism largely borrowed from these Āyurvedic texts, adapt them for its doctrinal purposes, and transmitted them further while

²⁴⁶ The term "Indian medicine" consists at least of Āyurveda, Buddhist medicine and South Indian Siddha medicine. It is actually an overarching term including different components and would be wrong if entirely equated with Buddhist medicine. See Chen (2004), 169-170; Hartmet Scharft, "The Doctrine of the Three Humors in Traditional Indian Medicine and the Alleged Antiquity of Tamil Siddha Medicine," *Journal of the American Oriental Studies* 199.4 (1999): 609-630.

spreading to China, Japan and Tibet.²⁴⁷

The śramaṇic movement that arose in the later Vedic period (ca. 10th-6th centuries BCE) also played an important role in the formation of Buddhist medicine. Kenneth Zysk has presented a great deal of evidence showing that physicians (Aśvins) of this period lived with wandering ascetics (śramaṇas), roaming together with them and often ascetics themselves. A great deal of knowledge about the body's physiology, therapeutics and materia medica based on empirical experience rather than magical correspondence was developed among these śramaṇic physicians along their journey of ascetic practice. Yet Brāhmanic priests centering on ritualistic healing denigrated these śramaṇic physicians for their impurity, which resulted from their contact with all kinds of people over the course of their performance of healing during travel. As one branch of the ascetic movements, Buddhism and Śramaṇic medicine also shared this symbiotic relationship and contributed to each other's doctrines. One prominent instance is the direct observation of decayed corpse, a practice that served Buddhist ascetic needs for experiencing the reality of impermanence, while simultaneously giving the opportunity to understand the anatomy of the human body firsthand. Acquiring knowledge of the physiology of the human body in this way would have not been imaginable for Brāhmanic priests, given their taboo against impurities.²⁴⁸

In fact, scholars have noticed the intimate connection between Buddhism and Indian medicine not only in terms of the constituent members of their communities but also in the expressions used for some of their technical terms, explanations of etiology, and practices used for relief from physical and mental illnesses of human beings. Śramaṇa-physicians of this period were simultaneously philosophers considering the interrelation between the body

²⁴⁷ Chen (2004), 170; Garrett (2008), 23-25. Kenneth G. Zysk has studied medical knowledge preserved in these four texts in his *Religious Medicine: The History and Evolution of Indian Medicine* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1993.)

²⁴⁸ Kenneth G. Zysk, *Asceticism and Healing* (1991), 21-37.

and mind of mankind. As Buddhism formed one branch of the śramanic movement, the Buddha was honored by his followers as the King of physicians and his teaching of Four Noble Truths was characterized as a superlative dharma medicine for humanity's afflictions. Metaphors associated with medicine and healing are commonly found in Buddhist scriptures, and sūtras often read like medical books providing analysis of pathogenesis and prescriptions for human suffering.²⁴⁹ Indian medicine uses the theory of three-humor (*tridoṣa*), namely wind, bile and phlegm that are produced from the waste of digested food, to explicate the cause of all the human maladies. The three peccant humors are considered capable of disrupting the normal balance of the five bodily elements (*dhātu*), namely earth, air, fire, water, and ether/void or space. Both of these theories—of the three-humor and the five bodily elements—were repeatedly utilized in Buddhist texts to exemplify the interdependent origination of our physical bodies, to expound the origin of suffering in meditation practice, and to show the constantly changing, impermanent substance of the self.²⁵⁰

Medicine and healing practices play prominent roles in Buddhist monasticism and were carried out by peripatetic monk-healers over their missionary journey, which in return greatly helped the spread of Buddhism in Asia. Since the Buddhist teaching of the Middle Way emphasizes the balance between spiritual cultivation and the health of physical bodies, medical knowledge and practices, as well as rules pertaining to them, were codified in the Vinaya. There are also numerous cases of medical treatment recorded in the canon. Medicine is counted among the four resources (*nissaya*) or four possessions (*parikkhara*) provided to a new monk of the sangha. The Pāli canon's *Mahavagga* has a particular chapter on medicine

²⁴⁹ For example, see *Foshuo yiyu jing* 佛說醫喻經 (*Sūtra on the Medical Simile taught by the Buddha*, T. 219), *Foshuo foyi jing* 佛說佛醫經 (*Sūtra of Buddhist Medicine taught by the Buddha*, T. 793), *Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論 (*Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, T. 1579), *Jushe lun* 俱舍論 (*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, T. 1558), *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (*The Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*, T. 374, T. 375); Namba, 63-67; Demivelle, *Byo*, 9-20, 92-94; Zysk, 29-30; Salguero's manuscript, "Fathom long body" on Indian medicine used in ascetic meditation; Salguero, "Putting the Medicine Buddha in Context," conference paper.

²⁵⁰ Salguero, "Fathom long body;" "Putting the Medicine Buddha in Context;" Demivelle, 65-76.

(*Bhesajjakkhandhaka*) to specify the requisite medicines for monks and nuns, including butter, oil, honey and molasses. There are even precepts in which the Buddha prescribes detailed steps and qualities in the caring for a sick monk by his fellows. As Buddhism began to spread during Aśoka's reign from the mid-third century BCE, monks' medical aids were no longer restricted in monasteries but extended to the laity. The Mahāyāna ideal of the bodhisattva's compassion further strengthened this tendency. Both inscriptional and literal records show that at least after the third century in India there are monastic houses dedicated to the care and treatment of the sick and to dispensing charity and medicine to the poor, the destitute, the maimed, the crippled and the diseased. Similar kinds of institutions appeared in China as well after the fifth century, and prospered in the Sui-Tang period (sixth to tenth centuries). Buddhism's involvement with medicine also resulted in the establishment of monastic medical education. When the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang visited Nālandā, the biggest Buddhist education center in the early 7th-century India, the science of medicine (*cikitsā-vidyā*) already constituted one of the five sciences (*panca-vidyā*) for those who wanted to study at monasteries.²⁵¹

This conjunction of Buddhism and medicine in India continued even after Buddhism was transmitted to China, and was even further developed in local context. On the one hand, Buddhist sūtras, śāstras and vinaya with medical contents were extensively translated. For instance, the *Sūtra of Buddhist Medicine* (佛醫經 (*Foyi jing*, T. 793)²⁵² and the "Chapter of

²⁵¹ Zysk, 39-48; Demivelle, 43-60; Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, "Beiqi biaoyi xiang yi tsuhui shizhu: zhonggu fojiao shehui jiuji de ge'an yanjiu 北齊標異鄉義慈惠石柱: 中古佛教社會救濟的個案研究" (A Stone Pillar Inscription of a Buddhist Benevolent Society: A Case Study of Buddhist Charitable Activities in Medieval China), *Shinshixue* 5.4 (1994.12, Taipei): 1-50; *Tsubei qingjing: fojiao yu zhonggu shehui shenhua* 慈悲清淨: 佛教與中古社會生活 (Compassion and Purity: Buddhism and Medieval Chinese Social Life) (Taipei: Sanming shuju, 2000).

²⁵² For the English translation of the title of the scripture, Salguero thinks "the Sūtra of the Buddha as Physician" is better than the "the Sūtra of Buddhist Medicine." But after examining the content of the scripture, I find no mention of the Buddha being regarded as a physician, whereas most contents elaborate details surrounding categories and reasons of illnesses and medicine and therapies treating them, so I still use the latter as my translation. See Salguero, "Reexamining the Categories," (2015), 48, note49.

Eliminating Diseases" (*chubing pin* 除病品) in the *Sūtra of Golden Light* (*Jin guangming jing* 金光明經 (*Suvarṇa-prabhāsōttama-sūtra*, T. 663, T. 665) have been respectively rendered in the third and fifth centuries. The two texts contain detailed explanations of the reasons giving rise to illnesses, categories and features of diseases, proper methods for treating them in accordance with different seasons, weathers, personality and physiological types of patients.²⁵³ Śāstras like *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (T. 1558, T. 1559), *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (T. 1579) and *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* (T. 1509) all involve to different degrees medical discourses such as embryology, medical education and pathology.²⁵⁴ Vinaya of different versions from different schools introduced into China contained one to three chapters particularly expounding the methods of medical treatments, various types of illnesses, precedents of nursing sick monastics, and applicable materia medica, just like their Pāli predecessor *Bhesajjakkhandhaka* in *Mahavagga*.²⁵⁵ On the other hand, Chinese monks also themselves engaged in medical activities and composed numerous writings on medicine and healing themselves, such as Zhiyi's 智顓 work on curing the illnesses of meditation, Tanluan's 曇鸞 on the recipes for circulating *qi* and for hundreds of common diseases, and Yijing's 義淨 profound report of the medicine he encountered being used in contemporary Indian monasteries in his travelogue. Many medical recipes recorded in the bibliographies of Sui and Tang's official histories bear titles related to Indian or Buddhist origins. Chinese physicians like Tao Hongjing 陶宏景 and Sun Simiao 孫思邈 were more or less influenced by

²⁵³ Nambe, 63-64; Unschuld, *Medicine in China* (2010), 309-314.

²⁵⁴ *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (T. 1558, T. 1559) contains passages related to embryology, see Kritzer (2004, 2014). The content of medical education in *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (T. 1579) is found in its 15th fascicle. The medical discourse on pathology in *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* (T. 1509) is in its 8th fascicle. See Namba, 63-67.

²⁵⁵ Namba, 66-67.

the medical theories or practices brought by Buddhism when they composed their works.²⁵⁶ I will leave more to say about Buddhist medical activities carried out in medieval Chinese societies in Chapter Five. Suffice it to say here that Buddhism in medieval China was deeply involved in the creation of medical discourses as well as the practice of healing activities, as it had done in India.

Given this background, we can further narrow down our focus to one branch inside the whole spectrum of the medical contents of Buddhism, namely the part that is concerned with reproduction. Before moving to the next section, it needs to be clarified first that the terms like "Buddhist medicine" and those further deriving from it like "Buddhist gynecology," "Buddhist obstetrics," or "Buddhist embryology" are used here mainly for the convenience of understanding. They are actually a series of concepts created only after the mid-twentieth century when the field of "Buddhist medicine" was first examined by scholars in the modern humanities. Salguero indicates that the coining of these terms implied an attempt to dissociate Buddhism from "magic" and "superstition," modernizing it by finding parallels between its teachings and Western medical sciences. Although medical discourses and activities indeed thrived in Indian and Chinese Buddhism, no one had combined them under one technical term like "Buddhist medicine." This phenomenon is particularly evident in Japanese scholarship on Buddhism and medicine such as the representative work by Fukunaga Katsumi.²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the studies of Japanese scholars, with their meticulous textual analyses based on the Tripitaka, are of great benefit to scholars of later generation. Their unqualified use of the above categories from modern Western

²⁵⁶ Namba, 70-72. More descriptions and investigation on Chinese Buddhist monks' medical activities, see Liu Shufen, "Tang Song shi sengren, guojia he yiliao de guanxi: Cong yaofang dong dao huimin ju 唐宋時僧人, 國家和醫療的關係: 從藥方洞到惠民局"(Buddhist monks, the state and medical therapy in the Tang and Song Periods: From Formulary Cave to the Bureau for Benefiting the People), in Li Jianmin ed., *Cong yiliao kan zhongguo shi 從醫療看中國史* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 2008), Ch.6, 145-202.

²⁵⁷ Salguero, "Reexamining the Categories," (2015), pp. 48-51; for the other Japanese scholars' works on Buddhism and medicine in this kind or with this tendency, see note 7 above.

medical sciences notwithstanding, their academic results still provide a solid starting point for delving into the world of medical knowledge embedded in the Buddhist canon, if filtered through the careful and critical reading.

"Buddhist Obstetrics"

Obstetric knowledge in the Buddhist Tripitaka was not initially designed for use in the medical treatment of reproductive issues. Scattered across all the three canonical sections (sūtra, śāstra and vinaya), these discussions instead intricately correlated with debates over a series of philosophical issues: salvation, selfhood, rebirth and karma, in which Buddhist scholars participated with their predecessors and contemporaries in the circle of Indian scholasticism. These discussions and the obstetric knowledge embedded within them were drawn on by Buddhist authors primarily to illustrate their perspectives on the substance of the suffering of life.²⁵⁸ In this sense, it might be problematic to treat knowledge of reproduction like this found in the Tripitaka as "Buddhist obstetrics," which implies its intended medical use. Nevertheless, it was indeed generated and adapted from Indian Āyurvedic medicine. Frances Garrett indicates that these discussions about reproduction in India were shared and partaken not only by medical specialists but also by philosophers and religious thinkers who pondered the problems of the formation of humankind, such as the roles of natural materials, the self or soul (Ātman), the mind (manas), the interval between death and rebirth, the intermediate being or the subtle body, and the karma or karmic wind. Below, for the convenience of referring to this whole set of reproductive knowledge in the Tripitaka, I may sometimes wrap it under the umbrella of "Buddhist obstetrics," but we should still be aware of its difference from the obstetrics in the sense of modern Western medical science.

Buddhist discourses of reproduction contain analyses of the conditions necessary for

²⁵⁸ Kritzer (2004, 2009, 2014); Garrett (2008); Langenberg (2008).

successfully conceiving, the role of intermediate existence, explanations of infertility, the course of fetal development counted either by weeks or by months, parturition, miscarriage and abortion. I shall leave the issue of fetal development and parturition to the next section on Buddhist embryology, and devote this section to examining all the above issues as described in Buddhist texts produced in India and Central Asia and those later translated in China. As for those which addressed these issues specifically through spells, talismans and ritualistic healing, which are found mostly in Esoteric Buddhist scriptures and indigenous Chinese scriptures, I will address them in chapters four and five.

Most Buddhist texts consider three conditions necessary for successful conception, namely the respective reproductive substances of a male, and female, and intermediate being or consciousness. This last spiritual component was understood to be impelled by its own karma into the union of the reproductive substances of the two sexes during the intercourse.²⁵⁹ Some early Buddhist schools like Mahāsāṃghika, Mahīśāsaka and Vibhājyavādin believe that the stage of the intermediate state does not exist outside the other three stages of birth, life and death. Other schools like Pūrvaśailāḥ, Saṃmitīya and Sarvāstivāda, by contrast, argued for the existence of an intermediate being by citing the twenty-seventh fascicle of *Samyuktāgama sūtra*, which mentions that some practitioners may attain full awakening "in between" (Skt. *antarā-parinirvāyin*, *antarā-parinirvṛti*) the present and the future existence. In the fifty-fourth fascicle of *Madhyamāgama* and the tenth fascicle of *Dīrghāgama*, there are also mentions of the existence of intermediate being, Gandharva.²⁶⁰

According to the seventieth fascicle of *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*, the form of

²⁵⁹ Fukunaga (1972), 204. He indicates that only Vimuttimaggā (Path of Freedom) does not mention the necessity of consciousness in the formation of a human fetus.

²⁶⁰ Fukunaga, 205-206; Gandharva was originally considered as one of the protective deities in Buddhist cosmology. This deity is described as flying through the air and known for its skill as musicians. It is also associated with scents of natural plants, trees and flowers and is believed to survive on perfume vapors, so it is sometimes rendered as "the deity of consuming scent" (or the deity of searching for scent, the deity of scent, the god of music) in Chinese translated Buddhist texts. Also see the entry "乾闥婆" or searching by "Gandharva" in DDB.

intermediate being for humankind is like a five- or six-year-old child with all its adult faculties already equipped already. But just as some people in life do not have complete faculties, intermediate being may also have incomplete faculties. Overall, the form of an intermediate being depends on sentient beings' features in each of the different six realms in which it anticipates being reborn in the following life. In the case of a bodhisattva, for instance, its intermediate being is also like its full form in life and has the thirty-two marks and eighty minor marks. As for its duration in time, some said that it could exist only in a very short moment, others said seven days, and still others believed it lasted for forty-nine days or an indeterminate number of days.²⁶¹

The notion of intermediate being appears in many Chinese Buddhist texts and had a variety of ways of translation. In some translations, it is linked with the feature of the deity Gandharva, associated with scent. For instance, in the fifty-fourth fascicle of *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經 (*Madhyamāgama*), it was rendered as *Xiangyin* 香陰, literally meaning an intermediate being of scent, or aggregates of scent. In the first fascicle of *Genben shuoyiqie youbu pinaiye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶 (*Mūla-sarvāstivāda-vinaya*, T. 1442), it is called *Shixiang* 食香, meaning the being who survives by consuming vapor or scent. Other texts emphasize its intermediate state, translating it as *Zhongyin* 中陰, *Zhongyun* 中蘊, *Zhongyou* 中有 (antarābhava, all similarly meaning "intermediate being," "intermediate aggregates," "intermediate existence").²⁶²

In these texts where the notion of intermediate being appears, they also enumerate prerequisites for successful conception. They include parents' reproductive fluid, the

²⁶¹ *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*, see the Chinese version, Xuanzang 玄奘 trans, *Api damo dapi posha lun* 阿毘達摩大毘婆沙論, vol. 70, 360c-361c; Fukunaga, 206.

²⁶² These different translations of terms are found in the texts including the vol. 55 of *Da baoji jing* 大寶積經 (*Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*, T. 310), 322b; the vol. 23 of *Daji jing* 大集經, 164b; the vol. 11 of *Pinaiye zashi* 毘奈耶雜事 (T. 1451), 253a; the vol.1 of *Pinaiye pigeshi* 毘奈耶皮革事 (T. 1447), 1048c ; Fukunaga, 207.

appearance of the intermediate being and intercourse of the two sexes. Sometimes they add that the regularity and the coming of women's menstruation are needed.²⁶³ But in regard to the role of menstruation in conception, there is also ambiguity and disagreement among Buddhist texts. Some simply state that people should wait until the coming of the menstrual period without specifying the best moment to get pregnant; some texts call it "red essence" (*chidi* 赤滯), regarding it as the counterpart of male reproductive fluid which is called "white essence" (*baidi* 白滯). Only the union of the two essences can produce a fetus.²⁶⁴ Other texts hold that menstruation correlates with conception indirectly. Only after the menstrual discharge runs out completely, would it be the time for successful conception.²⁶⁵

At the moment of the two essences joining, the appearance of intermediate being is the next required condition for conception. Some Buddhist texts delineate how the intermediate being determines a fetus' sex, and specify the part of the maternal body that the intermediate being enters to be reborn. It is stated in the seventieth fascicle of *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-sāstra* that, when Gandharva is about to enter the womb, if it likes the mother and dislikes the father, being entranced and confused, it will change into a male intermediate being, and will assume that he is having intercourse with the mother. If the situation is the opposite, then it will become female, assuming that it is having sex with the father.²⁶⁶ As for the specific part of the mother where intermediate being enters to be reborn, there are three theories in Buddhist texts. In the *Sūtra on the Questions of King Milinda* (*Naxian biqu jing* 那

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Texts having this view include the vol. 23 of *Daji jing* 大集經 (T. 397, 164b) and the vol. 4 of *Fugai zhengxing suoji jing* 福蓋正行所集經 (T. 1671, 726b); Fukunaga, 209.

²⁶⁵ Texts explicitly showing this view, for instance, see the vol. 6 of *Shanjian lü* 善見律 (T. 1462, *Samantapāsādikā*), 713a; Fukunaga, 208-209.

²⁶⁶ *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-sāstra*, see the Chinese version, Xuanzang 玄奘 trans, *Apidamo dapiposa lun* 阿毘達摩大毘婆沙論, 363b-c.

先比丘經, T. 1670a), it holds that the body of the intermediate being is too subtle to allow people to observe its way of entering into the maternal body with their naked eyes. The seventieth fascicle of *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* believes that it enters through the female genitals. The eleventh fascicle of *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu* (*Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye zashi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事, T. 1451) expounds that when the intermediate being appears during the union of its parents, it perceives illusions of coldness, big wind, big rain or cloud and fog oncoming and thus looks for a hiding place. Then ten illusionary visions appear, namely a house, building, hall, beds, grass hut, leaf hut, bushes, forest, holes of the wall, and fences, but they are actually nothing but the female genitals. The fifty-fifth fascicle of *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* (*Da baoji jing* 大寶積經, T. 310) also lists these ten illusions and indicates that the first four kinds are visions acquired by virtuous people whereas the later six types belong to those without virtues. The first fascicle of *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (*Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論, T. 1579) adds that the intermediate being of the most virtuous people only hear tranquil and wonderful sounds and visions, and ascend to a palace. Finally, the third theory applies only to bodhisattvas. They are said to enter into the maternal body through her right side like the Buddha because bodhisattvas already surpass the lure of sexual desire for the female genitals.²⁶⁷

In some Buddhist texts, it is the term "consciousness" (Skt. *viñāna*, Ch. *shi* 識) instead of Gandharva or intermediate state that is used and identified as the one that is going through the process of transmigration. In fact, the questions of whether the intermediate state is a being and whether it has a body were heatedly debated among different Buddhist schools. For many Buddhists, terminology that might have derived from early South Asian theories of *ātman* implying a permanent and unchanging being or self was unacceptable. Whereas

²⁶⁷ *Naxian biqiu jing*, 698b; *Apidamo dapiposa lun*, vol. 70, 363c; *Genben shuo yiqie youbu pinaiye zashi*, vol. 11, 253c; *Da baoji jing*, vol. 55, 322b; *Yuqie shidi lun*, vol. 1, 282c-283a; Fukunaga, 211.

Gandharva seems suspiciously close to this kind of permanent being, many Theravādins proposed a "rebirth-linking consciousness" (Skt. *paṭisandhivijñāna*) that arises newly at the moment of conception and is only casually linked to previous lifetime "like a sound and its echo," according to Buddhaghosa.²⁶⁸ Both the twenty-fourth fascicle of *Madhyamāgama* and the tenth fascicle of *Dīrghāgama* clearly state that the formation of a fetus relies on both the presence of consciousness and its combination with other compositional elements of the body. Consciousness itself cannot exist independently of a material bases.²⁶⁹ Vasubandhu, in the third chapter of his *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, also emphasizes that there is no enduring self that transmigrates, merely a series of skandhas. To demonstrate this point, he follows the growth of the soon-to-be-reborn skandhas through the various stages of the embryo.²⁷⁰

In addition to discussing the conditions of conception and the role of intermediate state/being, many Buddhist texts offer explanations for infertility.

Samantapāsādikā (*Shanjian lǚ* 善見律, T. 1462) in its eleventh fascicle mentions several causes. The first is due to the fact that the sentient being who plans to be reborn has committed crimes in previous lives, which makes it disappear as soon as it enters the womb. The second is that because the mother's four major bodily elements are ill and "out of harmony," a wind then expels the fetus. The third results from the worms that live inside the embryo or produced from the embryo and that end up consuming the embryo. Finally, sometimes a monk might be requested by a mother to make a medicine to keep the fetus, but the medicine ends up accidentally killing the fetus.²⁷¹ The *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* offers three

²⁶⁸ Frances Garrett, 26, note 26; Fukunaga, 211-213.

²⁶⁹ *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經 (*Madhyamāgama*), vol. 24, 579c; *Chang ahan jing* 長阿含經 (*Dīrghāgama*), vol. 10, 61b. Besides the two texts, Āyurvedic text *Carakasamhitā* and Pāli canon *Mahanidana Sutta* also identify consciousness as the transmigrating factor, see Fukunaga, 211-212.

²⁷⁰ Kritzer (2004), 1085; Amy Langenberg (2008), 57-74.

²⁷¹ *Shanjian lǚ* (*Samantapāsādikā*, T. 1462), vol. 11, 753a. Here Fukunaga only identifies two causes. I follow the original text listing all the four causes.

reasons for infecundity, including faults of female genitals, of parents' reproductive seeds, and of the past karma of the embryo. Female genital diseases are caused by the three peccant humors (*tridoṣa*) of wind (*vāta*), bile (*pitta*) and phlegm (*śleṣman*),²⁷² and can lead to abnormal forms of her genitalia, swelling like the sesame or barley's seed, or distorted like a spiral shell, and unclean and foul.²⁷³ In the *Ratnakūṭa sūtra* and *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*, both texts further list the problems of the womb that may result in failure of conception. Caused similarly by the three harmful humors, these problems contain "the block or proliferation of the womb," the diseases of "barley-like belly" or "ant-like waist," the distorted forms of the womb like axle, leaf, spiral bamboos, the uncontrollable discharge of essence and blood, or other abnormal shapes of the belly.²⁷⁴ As for the faults of parents' seed, it refers to one partner, or both, failing to provide their reproductive essence or providing unhealthy and corrupted essence during the intercourse.²⁷⁵ Regarding the past karma of the fetus, it actually means that all the three parties—including the intermediate being and parents—should have accumulated sufficient good karma in the past in order to successfully conceive, according to *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* and *Ratnakūṭa sūtra*. Moreover, the virtues and social classes of the three parties have to match with one another, otherwise the conception will fail.²⁷⁶

²⁷² See the entry "*sanbing* 三病" in DDB; also see Pierce Salguero, "Mixing Metaphors: Translating the Indian Medical Doctrine Tridoṣa in Chinese Buddhist Sources," *Asian Medicine: Tradition and Modernity* 6.1 (2010-11): 55–74.

²⁷³ *Abdhidharmakośabhāṣya* 俱舍論 (T. 1558), vol. 1, 282b-c; Fukunaga, 213-214.

²⁷⁴ *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*, (*Baoji jing*), vol. 55, 322a-b; *Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*, (*Pinaiye zashi*), vol. 11, 253b; Fukunaga, p. 214.

²⁷⁵ Buddhist texts discussing this include: the *Yogācāryabhūmi sūtra* (*Xiuxing daodi jing*, *Sutra of the Path of Stages of Cultivation*, T. 606), vol. 1, 186c-187a; *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (*Yuqie shidi lun*), vol. 1, 282c; *Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*, (*Pinaiye zashi*), vol. 11, 253a-b; *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*, (*Baoji jing*), vol. 55, 322a-b. Fukunaga, 214.

²⁷⁶ *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (*Yuqie shidi lun*), vol. 1, 282c; *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*, (*Baoji jing*), vol. 55, 322b; Fukunaga, 214-215.

Early Buddhist texts in the Tripitaka address not only the beginning of reproduction but also its failure or ending in miscarriage and abortion. Many of them are recorded in the different versions of vinaya. These precept-texts narrate cases in which monks provide services like massage, medical recipes or needling (for bloodletting, unlike Chinese acupuncture) for lay people to poison and kill their fetuses, thus transgressing the rule of non-killing.²⁷⁷ I shall discuss the technical details of these methods of abortion reflected in these texts in Chapter Four. Here I just utilize two sources in *Samyuktâgama sūtra* (*Zaahan jing* 雜阿含經) and in *Abdhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*Jushe lun* 俱舍論) to present the basic Buddhist attitude and perspective toward the issue.

In the nineteenth fascicle of the *Samyuktâgama sūtra*, there are many sections describing a variety of sentient beings with terrifying appearances that the Buddha and his disciple Mahāmaudgalyāyana encounter on the road in Rājagṛha. One of these sentient beings witnessed by them is described as "its whole body having no skin, looking like it [consists of] of chunks of flesh, and walking through the air." The Buddha then explains to his disciples, "This sentient being in its previous life aborted her own fetus in this Rājagṛha. Due to this crime, she has fallen into hell for hundreds and thousands of years and suffered from innumerable tortures. Due to her remaining crimes, she received this body and continued to suffer from it."²⁷⁸ This above paragraph is probably the earliest scriptural source clearly stating the Buddhism's critical attitude toward abortion, as well as the terrifying this-worldly and hell-bound punishments descending upon women who have abortions. Noticeably, while

²⁷⁷ These Vinaya texts involving practically dealing with miscarriage and abortion are found, for instance, in *Shisong lǚ* 十誦律 (*Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya*, T. 1435), vol. 2, 9c-10a; *Pinimu jing* 毘尼母經 (T. 1463), vol. 4, 825a; *Genben shuoyiqie youbu pinaiye* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhaṅga*) vol. 6, 652c-655c; *Shisonglun* (*Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā*), vol.3; Fukunaga, 221-222.

²⁷⁸ *Samyuktâgama sūtra* (*Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經, T. 99), vol. 19, 136a-b. Fukunaga in his section discussing abortion indicates that in the vol.15 of the sūtra has a section particularly on abortion and titled as "the sūtra of abortion," but I did not find it or the title in the scripture and even in the whole Tripitaka. See Fukunaga, p. 221. The original text of this

in the vinaya most blame is placed on monastics who offer poison to kill fetuses, in the *Samyuktāgama sūtra* and many later Buddhist texts it is usually women that are blamed.²⁷⁹

Not only are women warned of serious karmic consequence for abortion, it is the female body in particular that is utilized to exemplify the horrifying scenes of stillbirth and abortion. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Kritzer points out that Vasubandhu (ca. the 4-5th C.), in his explanation of childbirth, also talks about the scenes and the management of stillbirth. It describes that when trying to remove the dead fetus by cutting it "limb by limb" and "pull it out" from the vagina, midwives "smear their hand with heated clarified butter, oil, ground *śalmālī* paste, or something else, and had attached sharp, thin knives to it," and introduced their hand into the vagina, which is a place like "an excrement-hole, a cruelly foul-smelling, dark pool of ordure, the home of many thousands of swarms of worms, permanently oozing, constantly in need of cleansing, hot, slimy, and drenched in semen, blood, mucus, and impurities, terrifying to behold, covered by a thin, the great ulcer-like wound in the body."²⁸⁰ Here, the description is meant to evoke revulsion to the female genitalia, to desire and to saṃsāra as a whole. It also thereby demonstrates the nature of the suffering of birth. Very similar passages are also seen in the *Garbhābkrāntisūtra* in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* (translated by Yijing around 710 CE).²⁸¹ Importantly, Kritzer finds that these descriptions of the removal of the dead fetus are strikingly parallel to those found in Āyurvedic texts like *Carakasamhitā* and *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, but there are absolutely no negative depictions of the vagina at all in these medical texts.²⁸² In early Buddhist scriptures

²⁷⁹ See Chapter Five, the section "miscarriage and abortion."

²⁸⁰ Kritzer (2004), 1087-1088.

²⁸¹ See *Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*, (*Pinaiye zashi*), vol. 11, 256a; Xuanzang trans., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* 阿毘達摩俱舍論 (T. 1558), vol. 9, 47c-48a. Also see Kritzer (2004), 1086, 1091; Hara Minoru, "Shō Ku" 生苦, in *Hotoke no Kenkyū: Tamaki Kōshirō Hakushi Kanrekikinenronshū* 仏の研究：玉城康四郎博士還暦記念論集. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1977, 667-683, esp. 669.

²⁸² Kritzer (2004), 1092-1093.

on the embryo's entry into the womb, such as the *Baotai jing*, *Daodijing* and *Xiuxing daodi jing* (*Yoga-cārya-bhūmi-sūtra*), there is moreover no mention of dismembering the dead fetus or vagina. The depictions of the removal of the stillborn and those of the repugnant vagina in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and *Garbhābakraṅti Sūtra* in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* are probably later additions to the week-by-week or month-by-month accounts of gestation and childbirth found in the earlier text.²⁸³

Birth *Duḥkha*: "Buddhist Embryology"

The reproductive process and bodies that are used to induce revulsion and hence to demonstrate the suffering-filled nature of birth are not just limited to depictions of abortion, vaginal diseases and impurities, and the stillborn. The embryo and the mother in all the stages of gestation are also depicted as experiencing numerous pains and defilements that exemplify birth *duḥkha*. This kind of contemplation on impurity (Skt. *aśubha-bhāva*) is a typical practice in Buddhism for counteracting excessive desire. As Liz Wilson's studies on post-Aśokan hagiographies show, though doctrinally the objects for contemplation were not stipulated as female bodies, in practice most chosen corpses in the charnel fields to meditate in various stages of decay and disfiguration were the bodies of women who have died recently.²⁸⁴ These female bodies instantiate three principles that are characteristic of all conditioned phenomena: impermanent (Skt. *anitya*), suffering (Skt. *duḥkha*), and the absence of any abiding essence (Skt. *anātman*).²⁸⁵ In Buddhist obstetric and embryological texts, the unpleasant delineations of reproductive process and bodies function similarly and are used to trigger the detestation of any desire of to be reborn, having posterity, or staying in *samsāra*.

²⁸³ Kritzer (2004), 1090-1091.

²⁸⁴ Liz Wilson, *Charming Cadavers: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Indian Buddhist Hagiographic Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 11-12, and Ch.3.

²⁸⁵ Wilson (1996), 3-11, and Ch.2.

This is also the most striking feature that differentiates Buddhist from Āyurvedic obstetrics and embryology, as we shall see further below.

The scripture that most thoroughly describes the weekly process of fetal development in the Tripitaka, namely the *Garbhābakraṅti Sūtra* (*Sūtra of Entering into the Womb*), is composed exactly for this purpose for monks contemplating the above three major doctrinal principles. Amy Langenberg, in her research on this scripture, suggests that it may very well be the product of early Mahāyāna. During the course of Mahāyāna's ascendancy this kind of texts was meant to theorize and integrate forest asceticism into monasticism and to provoke inspiration for monks practicing *aśubha-bhāva*, a skill widely used by ascetic monks dwelling in forests and cemeteries.²⁸⁶ Reading the sūtra against this backdrop, it becomes comprehensible of its repeated emphasis on the wound-like bodies, the foulness of womb, and the suffering of embryo and mother in gestation and parturition. Ascetic practitioners adopted a kind of anatomical perspective to dissect the detestable reproductive organs and bodies in mind so as to obtain a vision of birth as not only polluting and disgusting but also painful and frightening. By doing so, they aspired to attain liberation from worldly desire.²⁸⁷

Descriptions of suffering-filled scenes of birth are found from the beginning to the final stages of gestation, but Buddhist texts' technical knowledge about fetal growth is inherited from Āyurvedic obstetrics and embryology. Robert Kritzer has meticulously annotated and translated the version of *Garbhābakraṅti Sūtra* in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*

²⁸⁶ Langenberg (2008), Ch3, 77-94. Scholars recently point out that, contrary to the previous impression of Mahāyāna as a popular movement of laity that somewhat downplayed the importance of discipline and practice, Mahāyāna in its beginning was actually "marked by a conservative outlook emphasizing a return to the core Buddhist values of discipline and practice." "Early Mahāyānaists were proposing to reform not a remote and effete monasticism but a vibrant if worldly monasticism overly enmeshed in the affairs of the laity." See Amy Langenberg (2008), 78-79. Other scholarship and overview on the issue, see Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997); *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected Papers* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005); "Mahāyāna," in Robert Buswell, ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004).

²⁸⁷ Langenberg (2008), 94-121.

and compared it with the obstetric part of *Carakasamhitā*. His conclusions are similar to Wilson's and confirmed further by Langenberg, contending that the most striking difference of the *sūtra* from the medical text is its purpose of "arousing or confirming disgust in *saṃsāra*" and its orientation toward an audience of meditating monks. In contrast, the medical text is intended to "encourage a successful pregnancy and a healthy birth." Thus the scripture delineates the scenes of pain, frightening diseases, defilements in gestation for the purpose of evoking repulsion, whereas the medical text often takes into account the importance of arousing desire and maintaining the purity, health and pleasantness of the whole reproductive process.²⁸⁸

We have seen part of the *Garbhābakraṅti Sūtra* in the previous section. It vividly portrays womb diseases and horrible scenes of dealing with stillbirth to achieve the purpose of repulsion. Now I would like to turn to the portion of this text dedicated to fetal development in order to show how it weaves the embryological understanding of fetal growth into the doctrine of birth *duḥkha*.

There are several extant versions of *Garbhābakraṅti Sūtra* in Chinese and Tibetan, but no Sanskrit manuscript survived. The earliest and shortest one is a translation by Dharmarakṣa (ca. 230-316 CE) entitled *Baotai jing* 胞胎經 (T. 317), dated 281 or 303 CE. Another is Bodhiruci's translation done in 703-713 CE, named *Fo wei anan shuo chutai hui* 佛為阿難說處胎會 (T. 310, no. 13). The final and longest version is Yijing's translation of 710 CE, collected in two different places, in the *Ratnakūṭa sūtra* (T. 310, no. 14), with the title *Foshuo ju taizang hui* 佛說入胎藏會 and in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu* with the title *Ju mutai jing* 入母胎經 (T. 1451). There are three early Tibetan

²⁸⁸ Robert Kritzer, "Life in the Womb: *Conception and Gestation in Buddhist Scripture and Classical Indian Medical Literature*," in Vanessa R. Sasson & Jane Marie Law ed., *Imaging the Fetus the Unborn in Myth, Religion, and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 73-90, esp. 78-79. The complete translation of the text, see Kritzer (2014).

recensions corresponding respectively to Bodhiruci's version in the *Ratnakūṭa sūtra* No.13, and Yijing's versions in the *Ratnakūṭa sūtra* No. 14 and *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*.²⁸⁹

Many scholars, in their research on Buddhist embryology, have discussed in details the monthly or weekly embryonic changes according to the above versions of *Garbhābakraṅti Sūtra* and other Buddhist texts. Here I want to highlight the passages that delineate the suffering-filled scenes of gestation by using Robert Kritzer's translation of the scripture in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. According to this scripture, beginning from the first week, the fetus experiences "affliction in the womb, staying inside a filthy, putrid, blazing bog, its entire bodily sense organ suffering, having become greatly troubled, oppressed, and pained, having a consciousness with the sole flavor of suffering" when becoming a *kalala*, a form like the liquid part of yogurt, in its mother's belly. And in this week, it "becomes heated, scorched, burned, combusted, and burned up."²⁹⁰ In the second week, when turning into *arbuda*, a form like yogurt or hardened butter, it continues to sense "very hot, very unbearable, oppressed, and pained" feeling, and has "a consciousness with the sole flavor of suffering."²⁹¹ In the following two dozens of weeks, the scripture describes how the fetus develops limbs, five faculties, nine orifices, joints, sinews, meridian vessels, bones, flesh, blood, skin, hairs and nails, all of which are impelled by the sequence of "karmic winds" with different names.²⁹² The notion that the embryo's growth is propelled by a series

²⁸⁹ The version that Robert Krtizer annotates and translates is Chinese and Tibetan *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*. Amy Langenberg in her dissertation says the version she studies and translates is the Tibetan counterpart of *Ratnakūṭa sūtra* No.14, collected in Tog Palace Manuscript of the Tibetan Kanjur, volume 37, 775-869 (Leh: Smanttsis Shesrig Dpemzod, 1979). And she thinks this is Bodhiruci's version. But *Ratnakūṭa sūtra* No.14 is in fact Yijing's version. Bodhiruci's version is in *Ratnakūṭa sūtra* No.13. She seems to confuse the authorship of the two versions. See Kritzer (2008), 77; Kritzer (2014), 10-12; Langenberg (2008), 4-5, 208. Kritzer in his 2014 publication has meticulously compared the variances of several Chinese and Tibetan versions of the scripture.

²⁹⁰ Kritzer (2014), 57-58; *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu* (T. 1451), vol. 11, 254b.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*, 329a-330a. Krtizer's translation here is firstly based on Tibetan version of *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*, which is slightly different from Chinese one. Tibetan version is more elaborated while Chinese one is concise, but the basic points of the two are the same. Tibetan

of karmic winds is noteworthy here. Both Kritzer and Langenberg notice that although in Āyurvedic texts like *Carakasamhitā* and *Suśrutasamhitā* "bodily winds" play a certain role in forming bodily tissues or involving the growth of embryo, the notion of bodily winds in Āyurveda is very different from that of karmic winds in *Garbhābakraṅti Sūtra*. The former is described as a material cause of physical function and diseases, while the latter is linked with karma and is responsible for fetal transformation in every stage.²⁹³

In fact, when coming to the twenty-seventh week of the fetal development, the sūtra expounds upon how the fetus' karma from previous lives may impact its appearance in positive or negative ways. For those "fetuses that created evil karma previously by being miserly and grasping at things and not listening respectfully to its teachers," their appearances will assume a form absolutely opposite to what people appreciate as handsome. Due to the evil karma incurred by their evil deeds, they will become "deaf, blind, dumb, stupid, ugly, having unpleasant voice, and crippled limbs resembling *pretas*." On the other hand, fetuses with good karma brought by their virtuous deeds in previous lives will grow and appear in perfect accord with what people perceive to be beautiful, adorable, pleasant and proper in every body parts.²⁹⁴

The following paragraph returns to the afflictions endured by the embryo while also identifying the way of distinguishing the sex of the fetus at this stage. All are told by the Buddha to his disciple Nanda who is known for his strong attachment to his wife and

version also more frequently repeats in every paragraph of weekly stages the phrases like "due to the maturation of previous karma," "affliction in the womb," or "having a consciousness with the sole flavor of suffering." This creates an atmosphere of emphasis of suffering in the womb. See Kritzer (2014), 59-75.

²⁹³ Kritzer (2008), 83; Langenberg (2008), 180-183. Langenberg finds some cases in *Atharva Veda* mentioning the association of breath with growth and birth of the fetus and in *Upaniṣad* mentioning the connection of bodily winds with movement, growth, and with the essence of life itself. In contrast, "the association between the wind element and fetal development, however, are not as elaborate in the *Suśruta* and *Caraka*, as they are in the *Entering the Womb Sūtra*."

²⁹⁴ *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu* (T. 1451), vol. 11, 255b; Kritzer's translation of Tibetan version is also slightly different from Chinese one. I made some adjusts here by referring to his translation. See Kritzer (2014), 75-78.

passionate lust to women. "If the fetus will be a boy, he squats on the mother's right side, covering his face with both hands and facing his mother's spine. If it will be a girl, she squats on the mother's left side, covering her face with both hands facing her mother's abdomen."²⁹⁵ [The fetus is] below her stomach (lit. the place of what is not digested, *shengzhang* 生藏) and above her intestines (lit. the place of what is digested, *shouzhang* 熟藏). [It dwells there] as though oppressed by raw foods from above and stabbed by digested food from below, and as though tied by five bonds and impaled on a pointed stake." "No matter whether the mother eats too much or too little food, all [digestion] will cause it affliction. If the mother eats food too oily, too dry, too cold, too hot, excessively salty, too plain, too bitter, too sour, or too sweet and spicy, these are all harmful to the fetus. If the mother engages in sexual activities, excessive running, or sometimes sitting stiffly, sitting for a long time, lying for a long time, or jumping, the fetus suffers in all cases. Nanda, you should know that dwelling in the mother's womb entails all of these innumerable sorts of sufferings threatening one's body. If even human beings, who are considered to be born in a fortunate birth, experience that sort of suffering [during gestation], what need is there to consider hell-beings, who have fallen into the misfortune of a bad existence? Nothing can compare to that suffering. Nanda, in this regard, who are those with wisdom willing to reside in this endless sea of bitterness and bear these sufferings?"²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Some other Buddhist scriptures have opposite opinion on the fetus's sex and the mother's side it reside. Also, Chen Ming has explored whether Buddhist scriptures provide any resources for transforming a fetus' sex during the gestation period. He did not find any in Chinese translation of Buddhist texts. But he points out that both in early Chinese medicine and in some Āyurvedic texts, the fetus' sex is mainly decided by the odd or even number of the conceiving day counted from the end of menstruation. *Carakasamhitā* and *Aṣṭāṅga Samgraha* do provide some ritualistic recipes and medicines for the transformation of the fetus's sex before its sex become fixed before the first or the third month. In Tibetan medicine, the *Rgyud-bzi* (*Fourth Tantra*) indicates that the fetus' sex is not fixed until the third month, so it is best at the third week to use some ritualistic recipes to transform the fetus's sex. See Chen Ming 陳明, "Zhuan nu wei nan 轉女為男 (Turning Female to Male: An Indian Influence on Chinese Gynecology)?" *Asian Medicine: Tradition and Modernity* 1:2, 315-334; later collected in the first chapter of his monograph, *Zhonggu yiliao yu weilai wenhua* 中古醫療與外來文化 (Foreign Medicine and Culture in Medieval China) (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2013), 33-42.

²⁹⁶ *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu* (T. 1451), vol. 11, 255c-256a. Still, the Tibetan version translated by Kritzer here is slightly different from Chinese one. I made adjustment according to Chinese version. See

After the twenty-seventh week the embryo continues to grow, confronting its next torture during its final two weeks in the womb and during parturition. In the thirty-seventh week, the embryo begins to have three "unmistaken visions within the mother's belly: a vision of dirtiness, a vision of a foul smell, and a vision of darkness."²⁹⁷ In the final week, the fetus will be blown by a karmic wind, as happened every prior week to make it move into the next stage, and the wind of this week will make the embryo turn its body downward, with its two arms hanging down and facing toward the vagina. Another wind arising as a result of the fetus's karma will turn the fetus's head so that its head is pointing downward and its legs are pointing up. If the fetus has performed evil deeds previously, then its karma will pose its limbs askew and incorrectly, becoming unable to turn its body and as a result dying inside the mother's womb.²⁹⁸ The text then concludes by introducing methods of dealing with stillbirth, as discussed above. Overall, it can be seen that Buddhist embryology constantly stresses the propelling function of karmic wind, the corresponding good or bad karmic results arising from one's past deeds, and the suffering-filled scenes of the embryo. These features differentiate Buddhist embryology from that found in Āyurveda, and constitute the basis of its teaching of birth *duḥkha*.

Birth *Duḥkha* and Filial Piety in Medieval China

If the notion of sacred birth circulated to a certain degree in medieval China through the genre of Buddhist hagiographies, to what extent did the notion of the suffering of birth impact medieval China by means of the above Buddhist discourse on obstetrics and

Kritzer (2014), 77-78.

²⁹⁷ *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*, p. 256a. Kritzer's translation of Tibetan version still goes somewhat differently here. It says, "the fetus has three unmistakable notions within the mother's belly: a notion of dirtiness, a notion of a foul smell, and a notion of emerging."

²⁹⁸ *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu*, p. 256a.

embryology? Studies in this regard have only begun to be performed in the last several years. In terms of the influence of Buddhist embryology on Chinese medicine, two scholars—Chen Ming and Li Qinpu—have explored the impact of various views of monthly or weekly-fetal-transformation and gestation in Buddhism on Chinese obstetrics and embryology.²⁹⁹ While Āyurvedic texts mainly hold the theory of ten-month pregnancy, the Buddhist canon has several different opinions on the length of gestation counted by month or by week. These theories include (a) nine-months (*Xiuxing daodi jing* 修行道地經, T. 606, vol. 1; *Daji jing*, T. 397, vol. 24; *Liqu liudu jing* 理趣六度經, T. 261, vol.1), (b) ten-months (*Zhuanji baiyuan jing* 撰集百緣經, T. 200, vol. 10; *Chuyao jing* 出曜經, T. 212, vol. 2; *Shengjing* 生經, T. 154, vo. 2; *Jiaye xianren shuo yiniuren jing* 迦葉仙人說醫女人經, T.1691), (c) roughly ten-months (Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra, T. 1509, vol. 89; *Śāriputrābhidharma, Shelifo apitanlun* 舍利弗阿毘曇論, T. 1548, vo. 15), (d) thirty-eight weeks (*Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*, T. 310, vol. 55-57), and (e) forty-two weeks (*Vimokṣamārga-śāstra, Jietuo dao lun* 解脫道論, T.1648).³⁰⁰

The influence of the Āyurvedic theory of ten-month gestation on Chinese medicine is ambiguous. Li in his early articles argues that Āyurvedic theory of ten-month gestation may have left some traces in certain medical texts of Song and Ming dynasties, based on some similarities shared by these texts and a allegedly Indian-origin text, *Qipo wuzang lun* 耆婆五藏論. But Chen points out that this text may very well be a compilation mixing both non-Chinese and Chinese sources, thus making it hard to decide whether its ten-month theory is of a Chinese-origin or not.³⁰¹ By contrast, the view of weekly fetal transformation appear less often in Chinese texts, but evidence for it is stronger and more concrete. Both Chen and Li

²⁹⁹ Chen Ming (2004); Li Qinpu (2006a, 2006b).

³⁰⁰ Fukunaga (1972), 216-217; Chen (2004), 176-177.

³⁰¹ Chen (2004), 15-23; Li (2006a), 547-576.

identify quite a number of Chinese Buddhist commentaries, indigenous scriptures, Daoist texts and medical works citing words about the embryonic growth and suffering that were extracted from scriptures with the view of thirty-eight weeks of gestation.³⁰² I will discuss some of these texts dated before the Song below.

As for the influence of Buddhist obstetrics and the notion of birth *duḥkha* on broader Chinese culture, Jessy Choo's inspiring article on this topic draws on two indigenous Buddhist texts, *the Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* (*Fumu enzhong nanbao jing* 父母恩重難報經) and *the Story of Huiyuan of Mount Lu* (*Lushan Yuangong hua* 廬山遠公話), to explore the issue. She convincingly indicates that their descriptions about mothers' suffering of pregnancy and birth drawn from Buddhist obstetric discourses were mobilized to underscore the necessity of fulfilling filial piety on the children's side through the intervention of Buddhism.³⁰³ Stephen Teiser and Alan Cole have previously made similar points in their research on the Buddhist texts and rituals related to the story of Mulian saving his mother. Cole has also discussed these two texts above in his book, but his focus is instead on textual descriptions of the mother's general sufferings and efforts made in raising children, as well as how her "milk-debt" was employed to strengthen mother-son bond, which was somewhat neglected in pre-Buddhist Confucian patriarchal tradition.³⁰⁴ For her part, Choo highlights Buddhist embryological discourse and the impact of its representation of mothers' reproductive suffering on medieval China. However, the mention of these scenes is not limited to the above two indigenous Buddhist texts. In this final section, I shall examine more materials of this kind. Some of them are Chinese Buddhist, Daoist or literati's compositions; some are transformation texts surviving in Dunhuang

³⁰² Chen (2004), 24-27; Li (2006a), 547-576.

³⁰³ Choo (2012), "That 'Fatty Lump'."

³⁰⁴ Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996; Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), esp. Ch.7 and 9

manuscripts, and some are transformation tableaux (*bianxiang* 變相) carved on cave walls.

Sculptures with the same motifs of mothers' birth suffering are even found among the Dazu stone sculptures in present-day Sichuan.

The earliest Chinese quotation of birth suffering is in a monograph written by the well-known pious Buddhist, the King of Wenxuan of the Southern Qi dynasty (479-502 CE), Xiao Ziliang 蕭子良 (460-494 CE), titled *the Teachings of Pure Precepts by the Master Jinzhu* (lit. who resides in purity) (*Jinzhu* *zhi jingxing fa* 淨住子淨行法) dated in 490 CE. This text was later collected in the chapter of "the merit of precepts" (*jiégong* 誡功) by the compiler Daoxuan 道宣 in the *Guanhongming ji* 廣弘明集. Xiao's writing aims to promote Buddhism and convert people to it by offering basic Buddhist teachings and precepts for people to follow. Among its thirty-one sections, the fifth—"On Birth, Oldness, Sickness and Death"—discusses the four *duḥkhas*. On birth *duḥkha*, it says,

According to *the Sūtra on the Embryo in the Womb* (*Baotai jing* 胞胎經), sentient beings, when entering the womb, are in a state of darkness and vagueness and looks like floating dust. The embryo resides in the womb for ten months and transforms forty-two times. Its consciousness is subtle, and the bitterness and poison in the womb [makes it] unbearably painful. The cramped condition of this foul place is more severe than being in jail. Its hunger, thirst, coldness and hotness are worse than those of hungry ghosts. If the mother is full, the embryo is pressed by the congestion [of food]. If the mother is hungry, it is like nearly dying of suffocation. If she eats something cold, it is like in the ice. If she eats something hot, it is like in the fire. If she drinks a lot, it is like the embryo is floating in the sea. If she walks fast, it feels like falling into a steep valley. If she sits too long, it is like being pinned under earth. If she stands too long, it is like hanging up in a latrine, with a stinking smell coming from below and oppressive weight from above. It is indeed torturous all the time. At the moment of being born, the embryo suffers even more. It is like a knife against naked flesh, and its crying is ear-splitting. Despite all of this suffering, there are many ways in which [the newborn may not] live long. [It may live for just] one day, one hundred days, one month or ten months. Or its birth may cause the death of both mother and child. [You] should contemplate that life (or birth) is truly the great suffering 如胞胎經云: 眾生受胎, 冥冥漠漠, 狀若浮塵, 在胎十月, 四十二變, 識微苦毒, 楚痛難忍, 臭處迫迮, 劇於牢獄, 飢渴寒熱, 過於餓鬼。母飽急塞, 母飢悶絕, 食冷如水, 食熱如火, 飲多如漂大海, 行急如墮險谷, 坐久如土鎮迮, 立久如懸廁屋, 下熏上壓, 無時不苦。及將欲生, 倍復艱難, 如赤身赴刃, 叫聲震裂。雖具此苦,

復多不全。若一日、百日、一月、十月，或在胞胎墮落，或出生母子喪命，當思此生實是大苦。³⁰⁵

A few things in this quote are noteworthy. First, although the author claims that this passage is quoted from *the Sūtra on the Embryo in the Womb* (T. 317), the earliest and shortest Chinese version of *Garbhābākṛānti Sūtra* translated by Dharmarakṣa, the view of the gestation period in this scripture is thirty-eight weeks instead of ten months or forty-two weeks as Xiao states here. Xiao himself was reported to "have copied three fascicles of the *Sūtra on the Embryo*" according to Sengyou in his Buddhist catalogue.³⁰⁶ However, among Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, the view of forty-two-week gestation appears only in the *Treatise on the Way to Attain Deliverance* (*Vimokṣamārga-śāstra*, *Jietuo dao lun* 解脫道論, T. 1648). The text is translated by Saṃghabhara (Sengqie polou 僧伽婆羅, 460-524 CE)³⁰⁷ in the 14th year of Tianjian 天監 of Liang dynasty (515 CE), which is 25 years later after Xiao's work was written. Moreover, comparing the content here with the original text of *the Sūtra on the Embryo in the Womb*, although they share some common ideas and descriptions, the details and phrasing of the two are quite different.³⁰⁸ Li compares this quote with four other texts, among which a paragraph in the *Sūtra of the Five Kings* (*Wuwang jing*

³⁰⁵ Xiao Ziliang, "Jin Zhu zi jingxing fa," in Daoxuan, *Guanhong ming ji* (T. 2103), vol. 27, 308b-c. Li Qinpu is the first scholar identifying this source as the earliest evidence showing the influence of Buddhist embryology and its accompanying notion of birth *duḥkha* on medieval China. See Li (2006a), 548-550.

³⁰⁶ Sengyou, *Compilation of Notes on the Translation of the Tripiṭaka* (*Chu sangzang jijì* 出三藏記集, T. 2145), vol. 5, 37c; Li (2006a), 550.

³⁰⁷ *Treatise on the Way to Attain Deliverance* (*Vimokṣamārga-śāstra*, *Jietuo dao lun* 解脫道論, T. 1648), compilation attributed to Upaṭiṣya and translated by Saṃghabhara. The view of forty-two weeks of gestation appears in the vol.7, 433b; Li (2006a), 550.

³⁰⁸ As quoted above on the fetus's suffering in the twenty-seventh week, the Sūtra has the content talking about the fetus's location inside the mother's body, its connection with the fetus's sex, and all kinds sufferings a fetus would undergo due to the mother's diet, taste, body gesture, walking pace or sexual activities. Also see the original text, *the Sūtra on the Embryo in the Womb* (*Baotai jing* 胞胎經, T. 317), vol. 1, 889a.

五王經, T. 523) shares the highest degree of similarity with Xiao Ziliang's quote here.³⁰⁹ But this scripture does not define the length of pregnancy, only mentioning in passing the embryo's form in the first four weeks.³¹⁰ Observing from these pieces of evidence, it is very likely that Xiao's understanding of Buddhist embryology mingled sources from various origins, some of which might be acquired from hearing, rather than relying upon one single textual source as he himself claimed.³¹¹

The idea of birth *duḥkha* has influenced not only Buddhists but also Daoists in medieval China. Li found in Dunhuang manuscripts a popular Daoist scripture written in the early seventh century entitled *Book of the Original Term of the True One*³¹² (*Taixuan zhenyi*

³⁰⁹ The *Sūtra of the Five Kings* (*Wuwang jing* 五王經, T. 523), 796a-b. The paragraph on birth *duḥkha* is as follows and the part related to Xiao Ziliang's quotation is its latter part. "何謂生苦？人死之時，不知精神趣向何道，未得生處，並受中陰之形，至三七日父母和合，便來受胎。一七日如薄酪；二七日如稠酪；三七日如凝酥；四七日如肉饜；五胞成就，巧風入腹，吹其身體；六情開張，在母腹中，生藏之下，熟藏之上。母噉一杯熱食，灌其身體，如入鑊湯；母飲一杯冷水，亦如寒冰切體；母飽之時，迫迮身體，痛不可言；母饑之時，腹中不了了，亦如倒懸，受苦無量。至其滿月，欲生之時，頭向產門，劇如兩石挾山；欲生之時，母危父怖，生墮草上，身體細軟，草觸其身，如履刀劍，忽然失聲大呼。此是苦不？諸人咸言：「此是大苦。」" Here is my translation: "What is the birth *duḥkha*? When people die and their souls do not know where to go and not yet to have a place for rebirth, they receive the form of antarābhava. Waiting within the three weeks until its parents have intercourse, it comes to the womb. In the first week, it is like a thin yogurt. In the second week, it resembles a thick yogurt. In the third week, it appears a condensed butter. In the fourth week, it becomes like a piece of meat. [Henceforth], the five organs [of the embryo] take shape; and subtle winds enter into the belly to blow its body, making its six senses open. It resides in the mother's belly, situating below her stomach and above her intestines. When she has a cup of hot food, which pours over its body, making it like enter into a pot of boiled soup. When she has a cup of cold water, it is as if cold ice cut its body. When she is full, [the food] presses its body, causing it unspeakable pain. When she is hungry and without anything in the belly, it is like being hung upside down, receiving infinite torture. When it reaches its full term of gestation and is about to be born, its head faces toward the vagina orifice. [The situation is] as much severe as if a mountain is pressed between two boulders. At the moment of its birth, the mother is jeopardized and the father is terrified. Being dropped down on a grass mat when being delivered, due to the tenderness of the body and being touched by the grass, it is like stepping on knives and swords. The newborn thus suddenly bursts to cry. Is not it suffering? The audience all reply, 'this is truly great suffering.'"

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ The author of the *Sūtra of the Five Kings* is unknown but the Tāisho version of the text says it being collected in a Buddhist catalogue of Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420 CE). However, I do not find its title appearing in Sengyou's catalogue. It seems to be utilized for the first time by Xiao Ziliang here and cited for the second time by Baochang in his Buddhist encyclopedia *Jinlu yixiang* 經律異相 (T. 2121, vol. 27, p. 148a). This scripture is about the Buddha teaching the four sufferings of birth, oldness, sickness and death, whose theme quite matches Xiao Ziliang's writing. In Tāisho, there is no evidence showing any mention of this scripture before Liang dynasty.

³¹² The term *Benji* 本際 can be rendered as "original terminus" or "fundamental origin." The translation of the title here follows Hans-Hermann Schmidt, the entry "Taixuan zhenyi benji miaojing," in Kristopher Schipper and Franciscus Verellen ed., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago and London:

benji jing 太玄真一本際經, *Book of the Original Term* in short below), in which Buddhist embryological discourse was drawn on to illustrate sentient beings' suffering, their miserable situation, and the "filthy" nature of this world, in opposition to the "pure and wonderful" land where the Supreme Lord (Taishan 太上, the deified Laozi) resides:

At that time, the Supreme Lord again informs [the interlocutor named] Universal Attainment and Wonderful Act, "as for what you just asked, the Supreme Lord has a separate body that lives in other place. Though his body and land are pure and wonderful, this world that he [tries to] transform is obscene and filthy. Good men, sentient beings make all sorts of karma, so the lands with which they resonate are varied. Those who perform pure deeds and make good karma obtain a real pure land, whereas those who create assorted bad karma acquire various filthy lands. Sentient beings of this world make miscellaneous evil karmas and incur the impurity, defilement and evilness of this world collectively. Their lives are short. [They are like someone] sleeping in the profound darkness.³¹³ [Since they are] in the womb, they have suffered from miseries, [living in] a dark and cramped place like a jail. Transforming every seven days and gradually growing up, they are furnished with spirit and consciousness. Till the full term of ten month, they are born. At the moment of birth, they hit and conflict [with the mother's body] inside and outside, causing them to endure extreme pain and crying out. What great suffering it is!" 爾時，太上復告普得妙行曰：如汝所問，'太上異身在於他處，身及居土雖復淨妙，所化此方獨為鄙穢者？' 善男子，世間眾生造業不同，感土各異。行淳善業，得真淨土；造雜惡業，得雜穢土。此土眾生造雜惡業，共感雜穢濁惡世間，壽命短促，臥以霄中，處在胞胎，嬰受苦惚(惱)，幽闇迫迮，如在牢獄。七日一變，漸漸增長，神識備足，十月乃生。誕育之時，內舉(觸)外舉，痛苦交切，失聲號叫，受大苦惚。³¹⁴

This passage is from the Daoist scripture's sixth fascicle, "On pure land" (*jintu pin* 淨土品), of which only the second and ninth fascicles are preserved in the printed Daoist canon of Ming

The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 520-521. According to Schmidt, the term is nowhere explained in the extant parts of the text. But in Buddhist scriptures from which the author presumably borrowed the term, it denotes the origins of suffering and of the cycle of transmigration, namely ignorance and desire (p. 521).

³¹³ The original Chinese sentence of my translation here "sleeping in the profound darkness" is "*woyi xiaozhong* 臥以霄中." "*Xiao* 霄" is equal to "*Xiao* 宵," meaning midnight and profound darkness. See Ye Guiliang 葉貴良, *Dunhuang ben 'Taixuang zhenyi benji jing' jijiao* 敦煌本太玄真一本際經輯校 (Collation of Dunhuang manuscripts of *Book of the Original Term of the True One*) (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2010), 177.

³¹⁴ Ye Guiliang (2010), 176.

dynasty. Yet scholars found more than one hundred manuscripts from Dunhuang and used them to recover the whole scripture.³¹⁵ The numerous extant copies of the text prove its extreme popularity in Sui and Tang period. Emperor Xuanzhong of Tang decreed that all Daoist temples in the country recited it regularly every month. The integration of Buddhist embryological discourse into this Daoist text reflects medieval Chinese assimilation and comprehension of Buddhist embryology, featured not only by its reconciling the view of ten-month gestation with the Buddhist one of weekly embryological change, but also by acknowledging the nature of birth as suffering. With its circulation and regular recitation in the state, it likely played some role in helping the view of birth *duḥkha* to infiltrate the Chinese imagination.

So far the teaching of birth *duḥkha* has been embodied mainly in the suffering scenes of the embryo rather than on those of the mother. No matter whether it is in Xiao Ziliang's work and in the above-mentioned Daoist scripture, or in our earlier discussion of Buddhist obstetrics and embryology found in scriptures, the depictions of reproductive tortures mainly concentrate on the embryo itself over the course of its development. The mother's suffering is only presented in the final part on parturition and particularly on miscarriage and abortion. However, this attention to the suffering of birth in Buddhist obstetrics and embryology gradually shifted its focus from fetuses to mothers after around the ninth and tenth centuries in a series of indigenous Chinese Buddhist compositions that promoted "repaying parental

³¹⁵ According to *Zhenzheng lun* 甄正論 (T. 2112, 3:569c), the first five fascicles of the scripture were written by Liu Jinxi 劉進喜, and Li Zhongqing 李仲卿 enlarged it to ten fascicles. Both are famous Daoist monks living in the capital of Tang dynasty. Li has also participated in the debates at the imperial academy in the presence of Emperor Gaozu. Wu Chiyu 吳其昱 in his pioneering study of this text and the two authors find that they lived sometime between 560 and 640 AD, and the earliest quotation from the text is found in *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論 (T. 2110, 8:544a-b). The quotation and Buddhists' attack on the text found in *Zhenzheng lun* and *Bianzheng lun*, the two important Buddhist compilations of Buddho-Daoist polemics, also show the importance of this Daoist scripture. The scholarship of the textual history of this text and about the uncovering and collation of its Dunhuang manuscripts, see Ye Guiliang, pp. 27-29, Hans-Hermann Schmidt, the entry "Taixuan zhenyi benji miaojing," 516, 520-521; Wu Chiyu, *Pen-tsi king: ouvrage taoïste inédit du VIIe siècle; manuscrits retrouvés à Touen-houang reproduits en fac-similé (Livre du terme origine)* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1960); Yamada Takashi, *唐初道教思想史研究: 太玄真一本際經の成立と思想* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1999).

kindness" and the necessity of fulfilling filial piety by vividly sketching mothers' pains in pregnancy and parturition. Many of these texts have been extensively studied in English and Chinese scholarship due to their importance for comprehending Buddhist accommodations to and propagation of the value of filial piety and their impact on Chinese family relationships.³¹⁶ However, these texts are rarely analyzed in terms of their association with Buddhist obstetrics and embryology, specifically the depictions of the fetus and the mother's suffering in childbirth.

The earliest one among this group of texts promoting repaying parental kindness by drawing on Buddhist embryology to emphasize mothers' reproductive suffering is found in the writing of the mid-Tang monk Fazhao 法照 (active around mid-eighth century), who was later revered as the fourth patriarch of Pure Land school. Among the series of hymns he composed for the Pure land ritual gathering for chanting the Amitâbha's name, one is titled "Hymn on the Depth of Parental Kindness" (*Fumu enzhong zan wen* 父母恩重讚文), which together with the other hymns pays respect to Amitâbha Buddha and bodhisattvas.³¹⁷ Written in five-character verse, it states that,

The mass of kalpas all have their karmic causes. One's birth in this life depends on the mother's womb. After about a month [in the womb] the five buds (*wubao* 五

³¹⁶ As mentioned above, Jessy Choo (2012) has studied two of these texts, *The Story of Huiyuan of Mount Lu* and *The Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay*. Alan Cole (1998) has also analyzed the above two texts (in Ch. 9) and others "Homily on the Profound Kindness of Parents" (*Fumu enzhong zan wen* 父母恩重讚文) (in Ch. 9) and "The Ten Kindnesses" (*Shi ende* 十恩德) (in Ch. 8). For another Dunhuang manuscript, the *Lecture on Parental Kindness* (*Fumu enzhong jing jiangjing wen* 父母恩重經講經文), as far as my knowledge is concerned, no one has carefully studied it in terms of its Buddhist embryological content. Chen Ming and Li Qipu both mention it in passing. Chinese scholarship mostly focuses on philological investigations and textual history of these texts. I shall list relevant studies when discussing each of them respectively below.

³¹⁷ Fazhao 法照, "Hymn on The Depth of Parental Kindness" (*Fumu enzhong zan wen* 父母恩重讚文) in *Jintu wuhui nienfo lue fashi yizan* 淨土五會念佛略法事儀讚 (*Ritual Hymns for the Five Ways of Chanting the Buddha's Name of Pure land*) (T. 1983), vol. 2, 490a. Alan Cole provides part of the translation related to pregnancy and fetal development, see Cole (1998), 192-193.

胞)³¹⁸ sprout out. And then in seven weeks the six consciousnesses³¹⁹ begin to function. The fetus begins to get heavy like a mountain. When [the fetus] moves, [the mother] is afraid of any disaster happened to the body. Her nice clothing now can no longer be worn, and her vanity mirror is covered with dust. When the pregnancy reaches the tenth month, the difficulty of childbirth is imminent. Every morning it is like she is seriously ill. Day in and day out she hums to comfort herself. Because the fear she feels is difficult to cope with, worry and regret fill her mind. With tears she calls out to her relatives, [telling them that] she is afraid that death is coming upon her. When the time finally comes, childbirth is truly arduous. Her five organs feel as though they are being cut.³²⁰

This hymn almost speaks from the mother's point of view. Conventional narratives of Buddhist embryological development from the fetus's perspective are here condensed and confined only in the first five sentences. From the sixth sentence onward, the narrative completely shifts to mother's voice, her discomfort, fear, anxiety, sacrifice and difficulty in childbirth, underscoring the profound price she pays for the childbirth. The dimension of Buddhist embryology is largely simplified and placed at the beginning as a relatively insignificant background. The subject embodying birth *duḥkha* is replaced with the mother. Yet it is also noteworthy that the Buddhist view of weekly fetal development is still retained and combined with the view of ten-month gestation.

One Dunhuang transformation text entitled *the Story of Huiyuan of Mount Lu* dated no earlier than 925 CE, unlike Fazhao's purpose of extolling filial piety, is meant to address the most essential notions of Buddhist teaching—including the four *duḥkhas*—in a colloquial

³¹⁸ The term "five buds" is *wubao* 五胞 in Chinese. Here I follow Jessey Choo in her translation of the similar content in the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* which I discuss below. In this scripture, it clearly explains the five buds consisting of the fetus's head, two shoulders and two kneecaps. So I feel it is better to translate the term as "five buds" than "five limbs" as provided by Cole.

³¹⁹ The term "six consciousnesses" is *liuqing* 六情 in Chinese. The same place in the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* is replaced with "*liujing*" 六精, which Choo translates as "six essences." The scripture explains the six essences consisting of eyes, ears, nose, mouth, tongue and the consciousness. They correspond to Buddhist notion of six faculties, "*liugen* 六根."

³²⁰ Fazhao, "Hymn on The Depth of Parental Kindness," 490a. I refer to Cole's translation here but adjust some according to my understanding, see Cole (1998), 192-193.

style to the public from all walks of life.³²¹ In one section the protagonist, Chief Minister Cui 崔宰相, shares his learning of eight kinds of suffering to his wife and the household. For the first type of the birth *duḥkha*, he narrates,

The one who grows a body under the protection of the mother in her womb, in its first month, is like a yogurt fat. Within the next ninety days, it takes on a human shape. If male, it leans on the mother's left side; if female, it leans on the mother's right side. It attaches itself close to the mother's heart and liver and absorbs *qi* to form its body. The fetus suffers various pains. Whether it is wise or ignorant, noble or common, it suffers the same. Yet the mother's kindness [to the fetus] is the same. When the mother eats hot meals, it feels like its body being boiled in a wok. When the mother eats cold things, it feels as if in a frozen hell. When the mother is full, it feels as if it is being cramped and swallowed. When the mother is hungry, it feels the pain of being hanged upside down. By the tenth month, the fetus is fully-grown. When it is about to be born, it feels as if the hundred joints are being sawn open and the four limbs torn off. Its five organs ache as if they are being wounded by knives and cut by swords. [It feels] as if it has lived a thousand lives and died ten thousand times. It feels suffocated, not knowing whether its life is hanging by a thread, yet longs to live again. Soon the mother and child split and blood issues forth like when a lamb is slain."³²²

This explication of birth *duḥkha* keeps quite a few details about the embryo's growth and suffering that were inherited from Buddhist embryology. The content reads similarly to what we find in Xiao Ziliang's work, the Daoist scripture *Book of the Original Term*, and can even be traced back to the *Sūtra of the Five Kings*. It also reduces the sophisticated details of Buddhist embryology to some extent, but not as much as Fazhao's hymn does, a difference we can attribute to the distinctive messages the two seek to convey. Furthermore, for the force

³²¹ *The Story of Huiyuan of Mount Lu* tells the fictional account of the life and work of the monk Huiyuan 慧遠, who was revered in later ages as the first patriarch of the Pure Land school. Written in a highly vernacular prose, it belongs to a group of performed texts that were used to delivered to the popular people. See Choo (2012), pp. 202-203; the dating of this text, see its note 39; Luo Zongtao 羅宗濤, "Dunhuang bianwen 'Lushan Yuangong hua' chengli de shidai 敦煌變文廬山遠公話成立的時代" (Dating the age of the Dunhuang transformation text *The Story of Huiyuan of Mount Lu*), *Zhonghua xueyuan 中華學苑* 16 (1975): 84-88.

³²² I refer to Choo's translation here with minor adjustment. For example, for the sentence of "慈母之恩，應無兩種，" her translation is "[Even as] the kindness [the fetus] receives from its gentle mother has no second, [it still suffers]." I prefer to translate it as follows, "Yet the mother's kindness [to the fetus] is the same." For the term "熱飯," she renders as "something hot" while I translate it as "hot meals." See Choo (2012), p. 204. For the original Chinese text, see Wong Chongmin 王重民 ed., *Dunhuang bianwen ji 敦煌變文集* (Compilation of Dunhuang Transformation Texts) (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe; reprint 1984), vol. 1, fasc. 2, 178-179

propelling fetal development, it replaces the Buddhist notion of karmic wind with an idea familiar from Chinese contexts, *qi*. Moreover, there is also no mention of weekly fetal change or the view of thirty-eight or forty-two weeks, only the view of ten-month. Most importantly, the term of "the mother's kindness" (*cimu zhien* 慈母之恩) is interpolated here, since the mother's kindness is never mentioned in translated Buddhist scriptures on obstetrics and embryology. It is found neither in Xiao Ziliang's work, nor in the *Book of the Original Term*. Its appearance here is to elicit the next theme, the mother's equal or even greater suffering than the embryo in pregnancy and giving birth, and its association with children's filial piety:

If the child is unfilial, how would it be born? In the belly of its mother, it would cause her to feel uneasy. It stamps and kicks its mother; at no time does it rest. It moves suddenly above the [mother's] heart or suddenly to the [mother's] waist. No place between the five viscera does it not reach. It is born after completing the tenth month. As such time, its hands grab onto the mother's heart and lungs, and its feet step on the mother's pelvis. For three [or even] five days, it refuses [to be born in] peace and safety. Henceforth the mother's life is in flux. She appears to be [heading for] death. Her mother thinks she is dead and her screams shake the earth and pierce through the heart [of those who hear her] like a sword. Her brothers and mother are at a loss to find a solution. [The child] is a vengeful creditor who will not desist unless it claims [the mother's] life.³²³

Here the mother's suffering in childbirth is set forth in more vivid details than we find in Fazhao's hymn, but identically approaches the issue from the angle of her unpleasant sensationis during pregnancy and her near-to-death experience of parturition. All of these are blamed for the child's unfiliality. As Choo observes, the fetus changes from the perceiver of pain as shown in the canonical scriptures to the cause of pain here in this popular Buddhist performance text. The birth *duhkha* is here no longer the karmic consequence emerging purely out of the fetus's ignorance, but also entails its plan for vengeance. The mother-child

³²³ I follow Choo's translation here, see Choo (2012), 205-206. For the original Chinese text, see Wong, *Dunhuang bianwen ji*, 178-179.

relationship is hence described as creditor-debtor relationship.³²⁴

This tendency of elaborating a mother's pains and her kindness by drawing on embryology and the difficulty of the birth-giving experience so as to call for children's appreciation becomes one of the most prominent themes in the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* (*Foshuo fumu enzhong nanbao jing* 佛說父母恩重難報經).³²⁵ This scripture is allegedly translated by Kumārajīva (344-413CE), but is probably an indigenous composition mixing different sources and was put together section by section during and even after Song dynasty (960-1279 CE). In his *Gikyōkenkyū*, Makita Tairyō discusses this scripture and considers it to be based on No. 12 of the He 河 character in the Beijing library collection of Dunhuang manuscripts. However, examining this manuscript from the Beijing library shows that it is in fact not the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay*, but rather the "Homily on the Depth of Parental Kindness" (*Fumu enzhong jing jiangjing wen* 父母恩重經講經文).³²⁶ In addition, if we examine the Taishō canon, we find another two scriptures bearing similar titles, one entitled *the Sūtra on the Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* (*Foshuo fumu en nanbao jing* 佛說父母恩難報經, T. 684) and the other entitled, *the Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness* (*Foshuo fumu en zhong jing* 佛說父母恩重經, T. 2887). The former is shorter and allegedly translated by An Shigao. It has also been mentioned by Sengyou in his Buddhist

³²⁴ Choo (2012), 206.

³²⁵ Makita Tairyō, *Gikyō kenkyū* 疑經研究 (Tōkyo: Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo 京都大学人文科学研究所, 1976), 55-60; Jessy Choo (2012) used Makita's transcription of this scripture to explore the issue, 207-211. But she does not trace the source and the origin and authenticity of Makita's transcription of the scripture.

³²⁶ This *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* that Makita Tairyō here might be in fact from Luo Zongtao's 羅宗濤 *Dunhuang bianwen shehui fengsu shiwu kao* 敦煌變文社會風俗事物攷 (The investigation on the social customs and materials shown in Dunhuang transformation texts), which Makita also lists as one of his reference when transcribing this scripture. I will discuss the "Homily on the *Depth of Parental Kindness*" below.

catalogue and is probably an authentic translated text despite the dubious nature of the authorship.³²⁷ The latter, according to scholars, is based on Dunhuang manuscript S. 2034 while also referring to S. 190 and a manuscript No. 19 in Nakamura Fusetsu collection when it was included in the Taishō compiled by the Japanese in 1930s.³²⁸ It is longer than T. 684 and has an entirely different content. Its translator is anonymous. Scholars now agree that this one is an indigenous work appearing in Tang dynasty.³²⁹ Most significantly, neither of these two Taishō texts include any description of fetal development nor a mother's birth-giving process as the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* (Makita's text) does.

So where does this *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* and its Buddhist embryological and obstetric content come from? What does it have to do with the other two Taishō texts bearing similar titles yet without embryological contents? When Jessy Choo uses this text from Makita Tairyō's collection to analyze the change of Chinese reception of Buddhist embryology, she does not track down the origin of Makita's transcription of the scripture and clarify the confounding relationship between this text and other texts bearing similar titles.³³⁰ Since this question concerns the first incorporation of

³²⁷ T. 2887; Sengyou's catalogue, see T. 2145, vol.4, 29c.

³²⁸ Zhang Yongquan 張湧泉, "Dunhuang ben foshuo fumu enzhong jing yanjiu 敦煌本佛說父母恩重經研究" (A Study on Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Sūtra of the Depth of Parental Kindness*), *Wenshi* 文史 49 (1999.4), p. 65, 80, note 1; Zhang Xiaoyen 張小艷, "Dunhuang ben fumu enzhong jing canjuan zhuihe yanjiu 敦煌本父母恩重經殘卷綴合研究" (Studies on the conjugation of different Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*), *Journal of Anhui University* (2015.3), 88, note 3.

³²⁹ Both the *Dazhou kanding zhongjing mulu* 大周刊定眾經目錄 (T. 2153, 474a, 474c) and *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (T. 2154, p. 673a) identify the text titled "*fumu enzhong jing* 父母恩重經" as apocrypha. Also see, Zhang Yongquan (1999); Zheng Acai 鄭阿財, "fumu enzhong jing chuanbu de lishi kaocha 父母恩重經傳佈的歷史考察" (The transmission of the *Sūtra of the Depth of Parental Kindness*), in Xiang chu 項楚 and Zheng Acai ed., *Xin shiji dunhuang xue lunji* 新世紀敦煌學論集 (Chendu: Bashu shushe, 2003), 27-48. Others who study or touch on this text like Ma Shichang 馬世長, Sun Xioushen 孫修身, and Chen Mingguang 陳明光 have all agree that. I shall list their studies when discussing relevant parts below. Cole (1998) has analyzed the T. 2887 in depth and provides English translation, see 132-150.

³³⁰ Jessy Choo (2012), 207-211.

Buddhist embryology in making the series of indigenous scriptures of "repaying parental kindnesses," it is worth tracking down its source in some depth here.

In fact, so far scholars have found one hundred and fourteen copies in total from Dunhuang with the title of the "*Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*." This does not include many other manuscripts with the same title scattered in Khara-Khoto, Fangshan 房山 and Anyue 安岳 stele inscriptions, and Japanese and Korean manuscripts.³³¹ Some have identical or similar content to the T. 2887 and some have additional ones. In his study on the subject, Zhang Yongquan categorizes all these copies that he collected into four types by comparing their structure and contents with one another. The first type contains some stories of filial sons of antiquity in China and thus was quickly judged by the Buddhist cataloguists of Tang dynasty to be apocryphal. The second type does not have these stories but retains all the other content of the first type. This is also the one collected into the Taishō canon as T. 2887. The third type is close to the second, but adds one sentence to the end which encourages people to repay parents' kindness through "making offering to the sangha in the Yulan pen festival." The fourth type, preserved only in P. 3919 with the same title, is very different from the previous three ones and probably another tradition. It contains the headings of ten parental kindnesses and descriptions of the punishment of eighteen hells for the unfilial children. It is also the version that is closest to Makita's text. Although it lacks the first part on

³³¹ Besides the above scholarship, for the condition of the text in Dunhuang manuscripts, See Zhang Xiaoyen (2015.3), 88-97; Zheng Acai (2003); Keiyo Arai 新井慧譽, "敦煌本佛說父母恩重經について" (The text of the Fumu enzhong jing found at Dunhuang), *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 100 (Tokyo, 2002), 680-686; For its distribution outside Dunhuang and China, Keiyo Arai has traced its copies in Fangshan stele inscriptions, in Khara-Khoto, and in Japan, see his articles in the same journal, No. 83(1993.12), pp. 256-260; No.101 (2002), pp. 37-43; and "黑水城發見の『父母恩重經』について" in アビダルマ佛教とインド思想: 加藤純章博士還曆記念論集(Tokyo: shunjunsha, 2000); also see Sun Xioushen 孫修身, "Foshuo fumu enzhong jing banben yenjiou 佛說父母恩重經版本研究" (Study on different versions of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*), in *Duan wen jie dunhuang yanjiu wushi nian jinian wenji* 段文傑敦煌研究五十年紀念文集(Beijing: shijie tushu chuban gongsi, 1996), 260-297; Zhang Yongquan, Guanyu foshuo fumu enzhong jing de jige shinben zi 關於佛說父母恩重經的幾個新本子 (Some newly discovered manuscripts of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*), in *Zhuanxing qi de dunhuang xue* 轉型期的敦煌學 (Dunhuang Studies in the transformation period) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chuban she, 2007).

Buddhist embryology and the hymns under each of the headings of the ten kindnesses, most of its content is identical to the text that Makita transcribed in his work, namely the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay*.³³²

In other words, this *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* in Makita's book may very well be a text that evolved as a much later edition of this fourth version of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*. This fourth version probably began to circulate at least from the Five dynasty (897-979 CE), since one popular homily based on this version, the "Homily on the *Depth of Parental Kindness*" (which is also the character He No. 12 manuscript in Beijing Library that Makita wrongly identified as the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay*) is preserved in Dunhuang manuscript dated 927 CE. Scholars like Ma Shichang contend that this fourth version should be seen as a totally different tradition from the other previous three versions, because only this fourth version emphasizes "repaying" (*bao* 報) and mentions ten parental kindnesses and hells for unfiliality. Furthermore, aside from P. 3919, which was still titled the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*, most copies of this text that were widely circulated in Tangut and Korea between the late-tenth century and eighteenth century were named "the *Sūtra on Repaying the Depth of Parental Kindnesses*" (*Bao fumu enzhong jing* 報父母恩重經, or *Bao fumu ende jing* 報父母恩德經).³³³ The transformation tableaux found in Dunhuang caves and Dazu 大足 stone carvings of Sichuan province also demonstrate this chronological development. Those found in Dunhuang and dated to Tang are visualized according to the first three versions, while those in Dazu are based on the fourth version or its later variation and characterized by the two exclusive pictorial motifs of the longer version—the ten

³³² Zhang Yongquan (1999). Makita Tairyō (1976), 55-60.

³³³ Ma Shichang 馬世長, *Bao fumu enzhong jing yu xiangguan bianxiang tu* 報父母恩重經與相關變相圖, in *Subai xianshen bazhi huadan jinian wenji* 宿白先生八秩華誕紀念文集 (Beijing: wenwu chubanshe, 2002), 521-586.

parental kindnesses and the eighteen hells for unfiliality—both of which are unseen in Dunhuang cave paintings based on the earlier three versions of the same scripture.³³⁴

But when was the Buddhist embryological component interpolated into this fourth version of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness* to form the current text of *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* collected in Makita's work? Where did it come from? Among the four earliest printed copies of this text from Khara-Khoto collection of Tangut Kingdom (1038-1227 CE)—namely TK119, TK120, TK139, and TK240—none contains the embryological content.³³⁵ Not until the late fourteenth century (1378 CE) in one printed version of the scripture with a similar title to that found by Makita Tairyō, the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindnesses on the Embryo and its Bones* (*Fumu enzhong taigu jing* 父母恩重胎骨經) of Koryō period, do we find the content of Buddhist embryology.³³⁶

As for the source of the Buddhist embryology shown in the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay*, the issue is still being debated among scholars. Chen Ming notices that the embryological contents in Fazhao's hymn and in the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* both overlapped with part of the embryological content in *Qipo wuzang lun* 耆婆五藏論 (*Jivaka's remarks on five viscera*). Though this text appears to be a translated text and is allegedly attributed to an

³³⁴ Ma Shichang, “Fumu enzhong jing xieben yu bian xiang 父母恩重經寫本與變相” (Manuscripts and transformation texts of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*), in *1987 Dunhuang guoji taolun hui wenji* 1987年敦煌國際討論會文集 (The collection of the thesis of the international Dunhuang conference) (Liaoning: Liaoning meshu chuban she, 1990), 314-335; Sun Xiushen 孫修身, “Dazu baoding yu dunhuang mogaoku foshuo fumu enzhong jing bianxiang de bijiao yanjiu 大足寶頂與敦煌莫高窟佛說父母恩重經變相的比較研究,” (Comparison of the transformation texts of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness* between those in the Dazu baoding caves and in Dunhuang Mogao Caves), in *Dunhuang Research* (Lanzhou, 1997.1): 57-68. Also see Ying guangming 殷光明 ed., *Dunhuang shiku quan ji* 敦煌石窟全集 (The collection of images of Dunhuang Caves), vol. 9, volume of *Baoen jing* 報恩經卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renming chuban she, 2001), 166-172.

³³⁵ Zhang Yongquan (2007), 207; Ma Shichang (2002), 523-530.

³³⁶ Makita Tairyō (1976), 52-54.

Indian author, the physician Jivaka, so far the existent evidence from its Turfan manuscript and from scattered quotations by the physician Chen Ziming 陳自明 of the Song dynasty are still insufficient to prove whether its medical thoughts entirely originated from Indian or Buddhist medicine, or whether this is actually a composition by a Chinese author borrowing some foreign medical thoughts.³³⁷

In the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay*, it is noteworthy that, on the one hand, its Buddhist embryology is not the typical view of weekly fetal change, but that of ten-month gestation that is usually seen in China. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the usages of some phrases like "five buds," "six essences" or comparing the fetus to "congealed lard" were probably taken from or influenced by scriptures featuring Buddhist embryology such as the *Sūtra of the Five Kings*.³³⁸ Moreover, the most striking phenomenon here is that although Buddhist embryology is employed to illustrate fetal development, the depiction of the embryo's pain completely disappears. Only an objective statement of the fetus's growing process is kept, whereas the mother's sacrifice in nurturing and in giving birth to the fetus, by contrast, is enlarged:

During the first month, [the fetus is like] dew on grass. Its existence in the morning may not extend into the afternoon. The morning condenses the dew and the noon evaporates it. When the mother is pregnant during the second month, [the fetus is like] congealed lard; during the third month, [like] congealed blood. When the mother is pregnant during the fourth month, [the fetus] assumes a vaguely human shape. When the mother is pregnant for the fifth month, the fetus in the mother's belly grows five buds. What are the five? The head is one, and the two shoulders and two kneecaps are each one—hence the five buds. When the mother is pregnant for the sixth month, the fetus in the mother's belly opens all six essences. What are the six? The eyes are the first essence, the ears the second, the nose the third, the mouth the fourth, the tongue the fifth, and the consciousness the sixth. When the mother is pregnant during the seventh month, the fetus in the mother's belly grows bones and joints, [numbering] three hundred and sixty; then grows the pores, [numbering]

³³⁷ See Chen (2004), 181-189; Li Qinpu (1997). Li believes its embryological content is Indian or Buddhist origin, whereas Chen points out many Chinese thoughts and word usages in this text.

³³⁸ Ibid. Also see the *Sūtra of the Five Kings* (T. 523), 796a; or the above footnote 72.

eighty-four thousand. When the mother is pregnant during the eight month, the fetus in the mother's belly develops the intelligence and the nine external orifices. When the mother is pregnant during the ninth month, the fetus in the mother's belly absorbs the nutrients from various kinds of food [that the mother eats, such as] peaches, pears, garlic, and fruits, and from the essences of the five grains.....When the mother is pregnant during the tenth month, the fetus in the mother's belly fully matures one part by one part. It is then the time to be born. If the fetus has decided to be a filial child, it will fold its hands and arms together and be born peacefully. It will not harm the mother, and the mother will not suffer much. If the fetus has decided to be an unfilial child, it will destroy the mother's womb, pull on the mother's heart and lungs, step on the mother's pelvis. [The mother will] feel as if a thousand knives are churning [in her body] and ten thousand blades are driving into her heart. It is with such extreme pain that she gives birth to the child.³³⁹

In the first half of this quote, the fetal development is delineated in a quite objective tone without touching on any of its pain in the womb as we find in *the Story of Huiyuan* or any typical Buddhist embryological discourses found in translated scriptures. Yet when coming to part of the ninth month, it suddenly turns to what the fetus takes away from the mother, all the nutrients it absorbs through what she eats. It corresponds to the subject brought up in the opening of this scripture, where the Buddha speaks to his disciple Ānanda on "the kindness of the mother and the indebtedness of the child" by stating first that the mother's milk is converted from her blood and thus making her exhausted and weakened.³⁴⁰ In the next part of this quote, we see narratives of the mother's suffering in giving birth resembling to those in *the Story of Huiyuan*. Yet the child here was depicted as seeming to possess full individual will, being able to make self-aware decision of being filial or not, and able to torture the mother deliberately by adopting different bodily positions and performing various acts toward her. The embryo is no longer the sufferer in childbirth. Instead, now it is the mother that bears the bitterest result of birth *duḥkha*. She is the victim under this debt-revenge relationship but she also becomes the creditor of this debt-repayment relationship. This shifting subject of

³³⁹ I follow Choo (2012)'s translation here, 208-209. The original Chinese text, see Makita Tairyō, *Gikyō kenkyū* (1976), 56.

³⁴⁰ Jessy Choo (2012), 208; Makita Tairyō (1976), 55.

birth *duhkha* in reproduction is further pushed to an extreme in another indigenous *Longevity Sūtra* on miscarriage and abortion which I shall discuss in the next chapter.

After expounding embryonic growth and the mother's sacrifice and pain in childbirth, the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* then moves to its central theme, parental loving-kindness, by first listing ten major ones. The content of the first five kindnesses is highly similar to the first half part of Fazhao's "Hymn on the Depth of Parental Kindness," concisely recounting the mother's painstaking process in gestation and in giving birth written in five-character verse. Cole notices that the simple set of the mother's ten kindnesses already existed before the later longer versions appeared. And the content and phrasing of the simple set are drawn from scriptures such as *the Sūtra on the Filial Son* (T. 687, *Xiaozhi jing* 孝子經, an apocryphal sūtra dated pre-sixth century) and *the Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness* (T. 2887).³⁴¹ This simple set does not mention anything about embryo in the womb or a mother's gestation and giving birth. Its visualization in Dunhuang tableaux is characterized by the images of a mother taking care of the baby in a cart or her nurturing the baby.³⁴² In contrast, the later version of the ten kindnesses has much more to do with the fourth version *the Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*. It includes descriptions of fetal development, the mother's languish during pregnancy, and her fear and deadly experience in giving birth, which are listed as the first three kindnesses with the headings of "the kindness of bearing and protecting [the child] in the womb" (*huaitai shouhu en* 懷胎守護恩), "the kindness of the suffering right before giving birth" (*linchan shouku en* 臨產受苦恩), and "the kindness of forgetting all the worry after giving birth to a son" (*shengzi*

³⁴¹ Cole (1998), 181.

³⁴² Sun Xiushen (1997), 60-64. Dunhuang tableaux in the Mogao cave No. 156 (late Tang), No. 170, No. 449 (the Five dynasties), for instance, represent the simple set of the ten kindnesses and are based on the earlier three versions of *the Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*. The images of the tableaux can see Ying guangming ed., *Dunhuang shiku quan ji*, vol. 9, 166-172.

wongyou en 生子忘憂恩).³⁴³

This later version of the ten kindnesses went on to be widely circulated together with the fourth version of *the Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness* and its later variation like the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* in various literal and visual forms. Its impact can be found in many countries of East and Southeast Asia. For instance, besides the aforementioned Tangut printed copies, it is also found in one printed version of the scripture with the similar title collected in Makita Tairyō's book, the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindnesses on the Embryo and its Bones* (*Fumu enzhong taigu jing* 父母恩重胎骨經) dated 1378 CE in Koryō period. This text contains full content of Buddhist embryology and the list of ten parental kindnesses, similar to the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay*.³⁴⁴ Ma Shichang notices that very rare copies of the fourth version of *the Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness* survived in China after Song dynasty but numerous woodblocks and prints of the text are made between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries in Korea and still existent.³⁴⁵ Zhang Yongquan collected two printed edition of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay* dated mid-20 century. But one of them in its preface mentions that "the Wang 王 family in early Qing dynasty enthusiastically propagated this text and sponsored to print it four thousand copies... Later, believers in Singapore, Penang, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur and Malacca all sponsored its printing ... and its first edition numbers as many as one thousand copies."³⁴⁶ Today printed version of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly*

³⁴³ These are based on the version collected in Makita Tairyō, *Gikyō kenkyū* (1976), 56. Dunhuang manuscript S. 289 is another longer version with one slightly different character in the first kindness yet with the same list of the ten headings. Cole used this version, 182.

³⁴⁴ Makita Tairyō (1976), 52-54.

³⁴⁵ Ma Shichang (2002), 521-522.

³⁴⁶ Zhang Yongquan (2007), 71-72.

Repay is still commonly seen in Taiwanese temples placed together with other morality books. Its electronic copies and musical adaptation are easily available through online websites established by several major Taiwanese Buddhist orders such as Zhongtai 中台, Foguang shan 佛光山 and Tzuchi 慈濟.³⁴⁷

Back to the medieval period, two Dunhuang transformation texts with overlapped content, P. 2418 (d. 927 CE) and character He 訶 No. 12 of Beijing Library, entitled by modern scholars as "Homily on the *Depth of Parental Kindness*" (*Fumu enzhong jing jiangjing wen* 父母恩重經講經文), in fact are folk lecture based on this fourth version of the *Sūtra of the Depth of Parental Kindness*.³⁴⁸ As a homily addressed to the public, it expatiates not only the ten parental kindnesses but also the mother's suffering in gestation and in giving birth by drawing on Buddhist embryology, as the scripture itself also touches on. When commenting the scripture on the hardness of ten-month gestation and the first kindness of bearing and protecting the child in the womb, it explains, "Our bodies all contain and originate from the two substances of the red and white from the father and the mother, thereby forming our current body. It [starts from] five [stages of] forms, first as *kalala*...[and transforming such and such], until the thirty-eighth week. Therefore we know how much hardness [the fetus and the mother] bear when we stay in the womb. Mother thus becomes haggard and worn-out."³⁴⁹ Expectably, the homily also illustrates in vivid vernacular the deadly risks and horrifying scenes of giving birth, which corresponds to the second kindness. It

³⁴⁷ By searching the key words of the scripture's title and the names of these Buddhist groups in Google together will find out the relationship of the text with these monasteries.

³⁴⁸ These two transformation texts are collected in Pan Chonggui 潘重規, *Dunhuang bianwen ji shinshu* 敦煌變文集新書 (New collections of Dunhuang transformation texts)(Taipei: wenjing, reprint, 1994; first print, 1984), 447-485 (or 411-449).

³⁴⁹ Pan Chonggui (1994), 452 (or p. 416). The original text is “我等身攬父母赤白二物，成此身形。此有五色，初生羯羅藍……三十八七日方知我等於母腹內，受多少苦辛，阿母形貌汪羸。”

says, for instance, "if [the child] is a filial daughter or son, it will be born very quickly. If it is the enemy (*yuanjia* 冤家) [from previous lives], the mother is immediately losing her life."

"When the child is not yet born, the mother is worried approaching the end of her life; when it is born, the blood sprays and flows all over the floor [as if pigs and lambs are killed.] Servants in the house are all busy around for help, fearing that her life is imminent to death...When giving birth after the full term of pregnancy, she suffers from extremely devastating pain."³⁵⁰

The later version of the ten kindnesses depicting the mother's suffering in gestation and in dangerous parturition, along with the eighteen hells punishing unfilial children, become the prominent motifs of stone-carving on Baoding 寶頂 mountain in Dazu 大足 of Sichuan province constructed between the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries by the monk Zhao Zhifeng 趙智鳳 (1159-1249 CE) of the Southern Song dynasty. It is said that he built the cave statues as his base for practicing Esoteric Buddhism which he inherited from a local sect passed from the late Tang.³⁵¹ In No. 15 cave on Dafo wan 大佛灣 and in No. 13 cave on Xiaofu wan 小佛灣 on the mountain, there are respectively two sets of statues depicting the motif of the ten parental kindnesses and the former set is preserved relatively well. These statues of ten kindnesses are placed in the middle of the tableau, with those of the seven Buddhas on the above of the tableau and the scenes of infernal punishments for unfilial

³⁵⁰ Pan Chonggui (1994), pp. 453-454 (or pp. 417-418). The original text is “忽然是孝順女兼男，一旦生來極峻疾。若是冤家托蔭來，阿娘身命逡巡失；”“孩子未降，母憂性命逡巡，及至生來，血流洒地（如煞豬牙），渾家大小，各自忙然，只怕身命參差，...經月滿生時，受諸痛苦至極。”

³⁵¹ For introduction of the history and images of these stone-carving statues in Dazu of Sichuan, see Chen Mingguang 陳明光, "Baoding shan shiku gailun 寶頂山石窟概論" (Overview of the Stone Caves of Baoding Mountain), in *Dazu shike diaosu quanji* 大足石刻雕塑全集, the 2nd volume, Baoding shiku juan 寶頂石窟卷 (Chongqing: Chongqing chuban she, 1999), 1-16. The photo Images of the stone carving statues depicting the ten parental kindnesses are collected here, see images No. 76-85. For the constructor of these caves and statues, Zhao Zhifeng, his life and his connection with esoteric Buddhism, see the above Chen's article, and also Yang Xiong 楊雄, "Zhao Zhifeng shengping zaikao 趙智鳳生平再考" (Investigation on Zhao Zhifeng's life), in *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2008.4 (110): 33-35.

children on the below.³⁵²

The ten kindnesses carved in Dafo wan cave corresponds exactly with the headings of the ten kindnesses described in the fourth version of *the Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness* and also the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness that One Could Hardly Repay*. But Dafo wan's version does not directly refer to the scripture but quotes from the Chan master Zongze's 宗蹟 work. And the scriptural content carved here is also drawn from a local version of the scripture only circulated in Sichuan and Yunnan.³⁵³ The existence of this local variant of the scripture and the quote of the ten parental kindnesses only by itself in Zongze's work once again reflect certain degree of popularity of them and its evolution in history and in local area.

Scholars in fact found in Dunhuang a number of manuscripts copying only "ten kindnesses." Its verse form allows it to be easily memorized, chanted as a song and circulated alone.³⁵⁴ In Dazu, this later version of the ten kindnesses was visualized for the first time. The stele embodiment of the physical process of the mother's pregnancy and giving birth (see Figure 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 below) best demonstrate how Chinese Buddhists remolded Buddhist embryology into a media to emphasize parental kindnesses in reproduction, and henceforth transformed the teaching of birth *duḥkha* into the device propagating the necessity to repay

³⁵² See images in *Dazu shike diaosu quanji*, 68-69.

³⁵³ According to the stele inscription carved beside the statues, the textual source of this "ten kindnesses" is directly quoting from a work *Record of Filial Piety (Xiaoxing lu 孝行錄)* written by a Chan and Pureland master Zongze's 宗蹟 (ca. 1053-1103) in the Song dynasty. He is also famous for compiling *Rules of Purity for the Chan Monastery (Chanyuan qinggui 禪苑清規)*. Zongze wrote a poem under each of the titles of ten kindnesses beside these Dazu statues. For the full texts of Zongze's poems of stele inscription on the ten kindnesses, see Chen Mingguang 陳明光, "Fumu enzhong jingbian jingwen jisong 父母恩重經變文經文偈頌" (Poems for the transformation text of the *Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*), in Zhangwei fojiao wenxian 藏外佛教文獻 (CBETA), vol. 4, No. 36; Cheng Mingguang, "Dazu shike bao fumu ende jingbian chakao yu bianzheng 大足石刻報父母恩德經查考與辨正" (Investigation and Analysis on the Dazu stele inscription of the transformation text of the scripture of repaying the parental kindnesses), in *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies* 1 (2007): 177-205; For Zongze's life and work, see Fong Guodong 馮國棟 and Li Hui 李輝, "Cijue Zongze shenping jushu kao 慈覺宗蹟生平著述考" (The life and work of Master Cijue Zongze), in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Studies* 8 (2004): 235-248.

³⁵⁴ Sun Xiushen (1997), 57-60.

the parental kindnesses. The stele inscriptions of Zongze's verses carved beside also display that the subject bearing the birth suffering completely shifts from the embryo to the mother. The tableaux scenes of the seven Buddhas above and the infernal punishments below further incorporate this motif of repaying parental kindnesses into the large Buddhist cosmology, with the supervision of the Buddhas of the past, current and future generations in the celestial realms, and the assurance of forthcoming retributions waiting in the netherworld. (Figure 3.1) For medieval Chinese audience, this combination of visualized Buddhas, mothers' birth suffering, and underworld punishment must have made the demand of fulfilling filial piety much more pressing and undeniable.



Figure 3.1 The whole scene of the transformation tableau based on the fourth version of the "*Sūtra on the Depth of Parental Kindness*," with the Seven Buddhas on the above, the ten kindnesses in the middle, and underworld punishment for unfiliality in the below, Dafo wan No. 15 Cave, Dazu, Sichuan Province, Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279 CE)³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ *Dazu shike diaosu quanji*, 68, image No. 76.



Figure 3.2 The Transformation Tableau "The First Kindness of Bearing and Protecting [the Child] in the Womb," (*Diyi huaitai shouhu en* 第一懷胎守護恩), Dafo wan No. 15 Cave, Dazu, Sichuan Province, Southern Song dynasty (Tableau height 170cm, width 110cm, statue height, 120cm) On the left is a pregnant woman; on the right is her maid holding a bowl serving her meal. Beside the statues, there is a line of stele inscription of Zongze's verse on the topic, "during the days when the loving mother bears the child, the child makes her body as heavy as □. The mother is languishing as if she is sick. It is also difficult for her even just turning the body."³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ *Dazu shike diaosu quanji*, 71, image No. 78; Chen Mingguang (2007), 197. The original text of the verse is "禪師頌曰：慈母懷擔日，令身重若□。母黃如有病，動轉亦身難。"



Figure 3.3 The Transformation Tableau "The Second Kindness of the Suffering right before Giving Birth," (*Dier linchan shouhu en* 第二臨產受苦恩), Dafo wan No. 15 Cave, Dazhu, Sichuan Province, Southern Song dynasty. The right depicts a pregnant woman with full-length skirt and her hand on her belly; her maid stands behind her with both arms under her armpits for support. The middle is a midwife kneeling, with her sleeves rolled up and preparing for delivering the baby. On the left might be religious specialist or physician, who is trying to help by offering instruction. The stele inscription of Zongze's verse reads "□□ loving parents are suffering, □people's tears□. Hence [people] know the profoundness of their kindness right at the moment of delivering the baby."³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷ *Dazu shike diaosu quanji*, 71, Image No. 79; Chen Mingguang (2007), 197. The original text of the verse is "□□慈親苦，□人眼淚□。方知恩力重，能取出胎時。"

The literal illustration of this image in *Dazu shike diaosu quanji* considers the left figure as a shaman



Figure 3.4 The Transformation Tableau "The Third Kindness of forgetting all the worry after giving birth to a son" (*Disan shengzi wongyou en* 第三生子忘憂恩), Dafo wan No. 15 Cave, Dazu, Sichuan Province, Southern Song dynasty (Tableau height 185cm, width 115cm, the male figure's height 120cm). The wife is holding the child and the husband is playing with the child. The stele inscription of Zongze's verse beside reads "When looking at the face of

(wu 巫) for exorcism in this occasion, but it does not offer any reference. It is also possible that this figure is an invited physician or a religious professional. Jen-der Lee in her research on childbirth in the medieval China offers a historical case, in which a physician named Lungong 鬻公, probably the famous Buddhist monk Tanlun 曇鬻 who also mastered medicine and Daoist techniques of circulating *qi* and immortality, was invited to a household to give instruction for a woman giving birth. This case is representative and shows that in medieval China the only invited male figure in this occasion may be only religious or medical specialists. The husband is the least possible figure appearing in the occasion. See Jen-der Lee 李貞德, *Nuren de zhongguo yiliao shi* 女人的中國醫療史 (Women's history of Chinese medicine) (Taipei: Sanming shuju, 2008), 1-9.

the baby for the first time, the parents are smiling and nodding their heads. All the worries and bitterness before are all gone right at this time."³⁵⁸

Conclusion

Amy Langenberg in her dissertation points out that Buddhist obstetrics and embryology were originally aimed at monastic mendicants as their audience and meant to provoke their revulsion to being reborn, to the family bond and to the sexual lust by terrifying them with the horrible scenes of being inside the mother's belly as a fetus.³⁵⁹ These depictions are part of the tradition of the meditation on the impurity and used to inspire monks to undertake ascetic practice and reach liberation through abandoning sexual and other worldly desire. In medieval China, a series of scriptures and transformation texts and images containing Buddhist embryology were made not to promote the revulsion to the worldly desire and family bond. On the contrary, they are meant to promote filial piety through elaborating mothers' suffering in birth and as a result strengthen the family bond via the intermediation of Buddhist sangha.

As this chapter has demonstrated, Buddhist obstetrics and embryology are largely inherited from Āyurvedic medicine, but add in it the significance of the karmic function, the emphasis of embryo's suffering in the womb, and the impurity of the maternal body. These teachings were designed for the meditation purpose especially aimed at monastic practitioners. When Buddhist scriptures and vinaya with these obstetric and embryological contents were brought to China, we begin to see various Chinese quotations and comprehensions. In the Xiao Ziliang's writing on the four *duḥkha* and the Daoist scripture *Taixuan zhenyi benji jing*, the depictions of the fetus's suffering are still largely in accordance

³⁵⁸ *Dazu shike diaosu quanji*, 72, Image No. 80; Chen Mingguang (2007), 197. The original text of the verse is "慈覺頌曰：初見嬰兒面，雙親笑點頭。從前憂苦事，到此一時休。"

³⁵⁹ Langenberg, 102-161.

with canonical contents. However, since the mid-Tang, a series of indigenous writings including Fazhao's commentary, scriptures and transformation texts and tableaux on repaying parental kindnesses appeared and shifted the focus of the subject bearing the birth *duḥkha* to the mother. The audience now is no longer a monastic practitioner who needs to be admonished about the horror of being reborn but the general lay people who need to be converted to Buddhism by carrying out its services to fulfil filial piety.

Chapter Four

Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism:

Canonical Sources

So far I have shown the two opposite views toward childbirth in Buddhism and their transmission and transformation in medieval China. This kind of dualistic thinking treats birth either as a sacred prophecy or proof of one's "future" enlightenment or as a torturous and filthy curse meant to inspire monks to seek deliverance and to promote Buddhist version of filial piety among lay audience. This conceptual model is very different from the indigenous divination and taboo system that is used to deal with childbirth based on correlative thinking in coordination with time and space. Yet Buddhism does not lack its own technical aspect addressing the issue in addition to the two ideological attitudes toward reproduction. In the two final chapters I will explore this practical aspect of dealing with childbirth in medieval Chinese Buddhism. This chapter focuses on the canonical sources within the Buddhist Tripitaka that were translated or composed indigenously between the fifth and the tenth centuries in China, whereas the next chapter will be on the historical and archeological sources about this period.

Scholarship in this regard is still few. For those related to Buddhist obstetrics and embryology and its influence on medieval China, I have reviewed them in the last chapter. As for those related to the issue of how Buddhist medicine and healing were put into practice and applied to childbirth in the actual historical setting, I shall discuss them in the next chapter. Here I just want to identify a few pioneering works that inspire and provide a good starting point for this chapter, though they may not directly concentrate on the issue.

Most resources provided for dealing with childbirth in Buddhist canon involve bodhisattva cults and esoteric Buddhist skills such as incantations, talismans, seals and rituals.

For the bodhisattva cult, Chün-fang Yü in her research of the cult of Avalokiteśvara and the multifarious mediums contributing to its indigenous transformations often touches on the healing aspect of this deity in its various appearances. She notices its special relationship with women who pray to her for having posterity and taking care of childbirth, no matter in which form of manifestation.³⁶⁰ This leads me to further look into other bodhisattva cults which also promise blessing and assistance to fertility and childbirth such as Dizang (Ksitigarbha), Yaoshi (Bhaiṣajyaguru or Medicine King, appearing as bodhisattva or Buddha) and Yaoshan (Bhaiṣajyasamudgata or Medicine Superior).³⁶¹ As we will see below and in the next chapter, these bodhisattvas not only promise curing female reproductive problems in scriptures but also were worshipped by people exactly for the same reason as shown in historical and archeological sources. For the esoteric Buddhist techniques being applied in healing, Michel Strickmann's *Chinese Magic Medicine* is groundbreaking on the issue. Starting from exploration of the demonic etiology that was shared by both Daoism and Buddhism in medieval China, he mainly utilized materials such as spells, talismans and seals to reveal their healing function in treating sicknesses that were thought to be caused by demons and needed to be exorcized. He also shows the intimate correlation and mutual borrowings of these resources between Daoism and Buddhism. Some of these esoteric Buddhist or "Buddho-Daoist" resources and demonology are concerned with tackling with sterility, difficult labor, and child diseases. Though reproductive sicknesses are not the central concern of his book, many texts he drawn on are worth delving further in terms of their significance in Buddhist medicine and association with Buddhist treatments of childbirth. The final study, and also the most recent one, is Chen Ming's research on Buddhism medicine and childbirth. Most of his

³⁶⁰ Chün-Fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2001).

³⁶¹ Zhiru, *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); Raoul Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha* (Shambhala Publications, 1979, 1989).

works are dedicated to the intercommunication between Indian, Central Asian and Chinese medicine. I have drawn on some of his studies on the relationship between Āyurveda and Buddhist obstetrics and embryology in the last chapter. The current chapter and next one also benefit greatly from his three articles on a set of rarely studied pediatric deities, Bāla-grahā, when exploring the relevant texts and evidence of the cult in medieval China.³⁶²

Situating this chapter against these studies on Buddhism, healing and medicine, specifically with regard to female reproduction, I divide the discussion below into four sections, examining the relevant Buddhist healing resources embedded in Tripitaka respectively on 1) treating infertility and seeking conception, 2) pregnancy care, 3) difficult birth, 4) postnatal care for mothers and newborns, and 5) miscarriage and abortion.

Additionally, one thing that should be reminded again is that this chapter is not meant to reconstruct a field of "Buddhist obstetrics" under the categorization of modern Western medicine by gathering all the relevant sources from Buddhist Tripitaka. Although these may have been the goal of some Japanese scholars with the agenda to modernize Buddhism, this approach is somewhat anachronic and we do not know whether ancient Chinese Buddhist really considered these Buddhist healing resources for childbirth as a kind of "obstetric medicine." However, as shown here and in the next chapter, there is no doubt that difficult birth is indeed regarded as a kind of sickness by medieval Chinese, and Buddhist healing resources ranging from bodhisattva cults to esoteric techniques provided alternative choice for tackling childbirth. But scholarship on Buddhist medicine and childbirth has so far

³⁶² Chen Ming, "Huzhu tongzhi: xiyu de Bāla-grahā tuxiang jiqi tongzhi fang 護諸童子: 西域的 Bāla-grahā 圖像及其童子方" (Protecting Children: Images of Bāla-grahā and its formulary for caring the children), in his *Shufang yiyao: chutu wenshu yu xiyu yixue 殊方異藥: 出土文書與西域醫學* (Rare Formularies and Exotic Medicine: Excavated texts and Medicine of Western Regions) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chuban she, 2005), Ch5, 91-106; "Silu chutu mijiao yixue wenxian chuyi 絲路出土密教文獻芻議" (Excavated Texts of Esoteric Buddhism on the Silk Road), *Dunhuang tulu fan yanjiu 敦煌吐魯番研究* 15 (2015): 473-496; "Jielo he yu yaomu gui: sichou zhi lu de fojiao nushen xingxiang jiqi chuanbo 揭囉訶與曜母鬼: 絲綢之路的佛教女神形象及其傳播" (Grahā- and Planet-demons: the images of Buddhist goddesses and the transmission on the Silk Road), manuscript presented in 2012-2013 and given by the author in 2015.

concentrated merely on the Buddhist embryological discourses in a limited number of texts. Hence this chapter aims to extend the scope of this subject by looking at some others related to the whole process of childbirth.

Treating Infertility and Seeking Conception

In the previous chapter we read that some Buddhist texts on embryology explain the specific conditions for successful conception, the role of the intermediate being or state in rebirth and in conception, formation of the fetus's sex, and different phases of embryonic transformation and growth. While these texts are meant to convey the noble truth of birth *dukkha*, the inescapable law of karma, and the stage between this and next life, they also inform in some ways of how Buddhists may "deal with childbirth" following these discourses. For those unable to become monastics to escape permanently this suffering in *saṃsāra*, they may appeal to bodhisattvas' compassion and power to acquire help and be temporarily released from the suffering. The earliest and the most well-known paragraph that shows a bodhisattva granting this kindness is in the famous chapter "Universal Gate" of the *Lotus Sūtra*, where the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara promises to satisfy a woman's wish of having a beautiful son or a daughter and to protect children growing up as virtuous and handsome people.³⁶³ Since its translations in the third and the fifth centuries in China, the chapter has been one of the most widely circulated texts among East Asian Buddhists who approach it for the infertility issue.

Besides the reasons such as incomplete or flawed conceiving conditions, lack of intermediate being, or previous bad karma by any one of the three parties, infertility is more frequently explained by demonic etiology in Buddhist *dhārāni* texts. Like other illnesses, the

³⁶³ Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1976), 313.

solution for it is to identify the demons' names and the symptoms they cause, and then use specific spells, talismans and seals to expel the demons to solve the problem. One scripture translated in the early sixth century, *the Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children told by Buddha* (*Foshuo huzhu tongzi tuoluoni jing* 佛說護諸童子陀羅尼經), indeed draws on demonology to explain why parents are unable to conceive and bear children, and the methods it suggests to recover from barrenness is to identify the forms of the pathogenic demons. According to the text, people are childless because there are “yakṣas and rākṣasas that delight in devouring human fetuses” and are able to “kill fetuses in the womb.” Also, when a husband and a wife are having intercourse, these demons can cause their thoughts to be distracted so that pregnancy does not occur, or can cause swelling of the womb that destroys the fetus and leaves the woman barren. Sometimes, after a child is born, these demons kill it in infancy.³⁶⁴ For treating these problems of sterility, the Brāhman King presents Buddha with his recipe. He lists the names of the fifteen demons that cause childlessness and identifies their different forms, mostly as animals, but also a woman and a rākṣasī. Scholars point out that these demons also appear in Āyurveda and their names have to do with planets.³⁶⁵ I shall come back to these fifteen demons below when discussing postnatal care and their association with various children's diseases. Suffice it to take one example here. When a child is scared by the third demon called Skanda, who takes the form of the god Kumāra (meaning boy, youthful son, and shoulder in Sanskrit, also called *Jumoro* or *Jomoro* 俱摩羅, 拘摩羅, 矩摩羅, 鳩摩羅 in Chinese), the child's shoulders will shudder abnormally.³⁶⁶ After identifying the pathogenic demons and the relevant symptoms they

³⁶⁴ *Foshuo huzhu tongzi tuoluoni jing* (T. 1028A), translated by Bodhiruci (ca. 527 CE) in the Northern Wei dynasty, 741b-c. Also see Strickmann's discussion of this scripture in Chapter Five in *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 219-220.

³⁶⁵ Chen Ming (2005): 95; P. C. Bagachi (1941). See footnote 60 and the section "postnatal care for mothers and newborns" below.

³⁶⁶ *Foshuo huzhu tongzi tuoluoni jing*, 741c-742a; Strickmann, 219-220.

cause, the sūtra in the end instructs people the methods to expel these demons: use a thread of five colors, chant the dhāranī provided here each time when tying a knot until completing one hundred and eight knots, write the demons' names on the thread, and have one take this thread and say to the demons: “now you should immediately recede to the four cardinal points as fast as the wind...I command to bind you demons with this five-color thread and do not disturb sentient beings.” After this, one should present all kinds of tasty foods, flowers, lamps and milk porridge to offer to the head of the fifteen demons who is named Zhantan Qiantapo 梅檀乾闥婆 (Sk. Gandharva).³⁶⁷

While presenting these healing methods for treating childless, the scripture does not forget to use these baits to convert people to Buddhism. When coming to the end of this scripture, the Brāhman King comes up and pledges that, “If there are women who are unable to bear children, or suffer from miscarriage, or lost the baby in its infancy, and if they desire to have a child with long life, they should always bear in mind the thought of doing good deeds. They should also receive eight lay precepts in the fifteenth day of the eighth month, bathe and purify themselves and dress in clean clothes, and worship Buddhas of ten directions until midnight. Then take some mustard seeds and put them on top of the head, and chant the dhāranī I give here. By doing so this woman can satisfy her wish, and her child will grow up safely and live to his full life span.”³⁶⁸ In a nutshell, diagnosing barrenness as being caused by demons' disturbance, this scripture provides not only its etiological diagnosis with demons' names, their guises, to the occasions and the time they show up, but also detail prescriptions like using knotted five-color thread, chanting the spell, putting mustard-seed on the head, receiving precepts and worshipping the Buddha to treat the problem of sterility.

³⁶⁷ *Foshuo huzhu tongzi tuoluoni jing*, 742a.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 742b.

Unlike Chinese medical texts which prefer to set up meticulous regulations on the choice of time and place based on correlative thinking and apply various kinds of materia medica to prevent from or cure sterility,³⁶⁹ Buddhism as shown from the above cases uses demonology to explain the problem and treats it through appealing to the divine blessing from bodhisattvas or through its expertise in exorcism.

Pregnancy Care

In the Tripitaka there is one scripture particularly addressing how to take care of women during various stages of their pregnancy by offering them its own therapeutics. It is entitled the *Sūtra on Obstetrics Spoken by the Sage Kāśyapa* (Ch. *Jiashe xianren shuo yinuren jing* 迦葉仙人說醫女人經, Sk. *Kāśyapaṣiproktastrīkītsā-sūtra*), and translated relatively late in the early Northern Song dynasty by the monk Faxian 法賢 (ca. 973, d. 1000 or 1001 CE).³⁷⁰ Kenneth Zysk notices that this text probably reflects traces of Indian śramaṇa-physicians' tradition left in Buddhism. He believes that śramaṇa-medicine inspired the formation of early Āyurveda. So this means that Āyurveda and Buddhist medicine share a common origin. Indeed, he finds that the content of this obstetric scripture "bears a very close similarity to the section concerning the aphorisms of procreation" (*jātisūtrīya*) in the anatomical books of the *Caraka*, *Bhela*, and *Kāśyapa Saṃhitās*. The techniques involve the

³⁶⁹ See my Chapter One. The medical part, see Jender Lee, *Nuren de zhongguo yiliao shi: Hantang zhi jian de jiankang zhaogu yu xingbie* 女人的中國醫療史—漢唐之間的健康照顧與性別 (Taipei: sanming shuju, 2008), 34-40.

³⁷⁰ The scripture sees T. 1691; Faxian is said to be an Indian monk from Nālandā and come to China in 973 AD. *The Chronicle of Buddha and Patriarchs (Fozu tongzhi 佛祖統記)* by Zhipan 志磐 (1269 CE) considers that Faxian 法賢 is Fatian 法天 (Dhamadeva) and changed his name to Faxian. This makes some later scholars including the compilers of the *Hôbôgirin* taking the two as the same person. However, there is also scholar following an earlier Buddhist catalogue *Dazhong xiangyuan fabao lu* 大中祥符法寶錄 (1011 CE) and believing that the Kashmiri translator Tian Xizai 天息災 (active 980-1000, d. 1000 CE) changed his name to Faxian. This reference to Tian Xizai is strengthened by his death year in 1000CE, which is the same as that given to Faxian, and different from that of Fatian (d. 1001 CE). More confusingly, the posthumous name for Fatian is Mingjiao Dashi 明教大師, the same as that given to Tian Xizai. See DDB, the entries "Faxian," "Fatain," and "Tian Xizai."

prescription of specific drugs during each of the ten months of the fetus's gestation."³⁷¹

Kāśyapa Saṃhitā is an incomplete Āyurvedic text devoted to gynecology, obstetrics and children's diseases, which is ascribed to a certain Vṛddhajīvaka ("Jīvaka the Elder") and which is based on the earlier treatises of the *Caraka* and *Bhela Saṃhitās*. When the relevant sections in these three Āyurvedic texts and the *Sūtra on Obstetrics Spoken by the Sage Kāśyapa* are compared, the Buddhist scripture turns out to be a clear derivation of the *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā*.³⁷²

Interestingly, this scripture in fact begins with the interlocutor, a ṛṣi named Jivaka, requesting prescription for caring pregnancy from a senior ṛṣi named Kāśyapa, the preacher of this scripture. One day the thought suddenly occurs to Jivaka that "all sentient beings' bodies are born from women. And a woman begins her pregnancy in the first month and continues it to the end of the tenth or the twelfth month if prolonged. There may be sicknesses during this period and she may suffer greatly from them."³⁷³ Therefore he approached the sage Kāśyapa to ask why "there are sicknesses causing the fetus moving and feeling uncomfortable" and request Kāśyapa giving some "medical prescriptions for treating the suffering from this sickness."³⁷⁴ The sage Kāśyapa responds, "This is because women do not know how to protect their fetuses during pregnancy and thus cause uneasiness of the womb. Now I shall inform you about the medicine for each month to protect the womb." "If she feels the uneasiness of the womb in the first month, she can use sandalwood incense and utpala lotus flower, soak them in water, grind them together, and cook them with milk and sugar. Taking this medicine warm can make those just beginning their pregnancy have no

³⁷¹ Kenneth Zysk, *Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India* (1991): 31, 67; the study Zysk quotes is P. C. Bagchi, "A Fragment of the Kāśyapa Saṃhitās in Chinese," *Indian Culture* 9 (1942-1943): 53-64.

³⁷² Zysk (1991): 67; Bagchi, 53-64; Demiéville (1985), "Byō," 82-92.

³⁷³ T. 1691, 787b-787c.

³⁷⁴ Ibid, 787c.

trouble but enjoy only benefit and comfort."³⁷⁵ For the discomfort of pregnancy in the second month, one should use these medicines including "blue utpala lotus flower, the root of the flower *Jumuna* 俱母那, water chestnut (*linjiaoren* 陵角仁), and *Jiexilujia* 羯細嚕迦," prepare them in the same amount, grind and filter them, cook the filtered powder with milk, and wait it when cool to take it. And this prescription should make a woman suffer no harm and stop the pain in the womb, and only have comfort day and night.³⁷⁶ This list of prescriptions for each month continues and provides with different herbal medicines for each of the twelve months of pregnancy. Though herbal medicines vary in each month, the utpala lotus flower is always used and the method of grinding them with water and cooking them with milk, usually with sugar and honey, are the same.³⁷⁷ Their purpose and effect are also identical, all functioning to soothe fetuses, ease the pain of the womb, and prevent miscarriage. The ingredients and herbal medicine used here probably have certain medical effect given that they come from Āyurveda. But the symbolic implication of some ingredients such as sandalwood incense and utpala lotus flower is equally intriguing. Given my limited knowledge of materia medica, the exploration of their medical effects and religious

³⁷⁵ Ibid. The original text is "第一月內胎藏不安者，當用栴檀香、蓮華優鉢羅花入水，同研後入乳汁乳糖同煎。溫服此藥能令初懷孕者，無諸損惱而得安樂。"

³⁷⁶ Ibid. The original text is "女人懷孕於第二月胎藏不安者，當用青色憂鉢羅花、俱母那花根、陵角仁、羯細嚕迦等藥。諸藥等分，搗篩為末，用乳汁煎候冷。服之此藥能令胎藏不損，疼痛止息，晝夜安隱。"

³⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that honey and molasses, or treacle, are among the "five basic medicines" (*bhesajja*) that the Buddha sanctioned to be given to monks as their food supplements to maintain health and can be stored for a maximum of seven days according to a monastic code. See Zysk (1991), 74. The chapter on Materia Medica in Buddhism by Zysk in his book is a good starting point of the issue here. Furthermore, as Benedetta Lomi notices in her study on ox-bezoar consecration used for safe childbirth in Shingon rituals, while the reason of a medicine used in Buddhist ritual healing activities may be first due to its religious or symbolic meanings, often time it may also has some kind of medical effect. Here in our text, milk, sugar and honey are all nutrients for the bodies. In the seventh month, the scripture even suggests to utilize an herb by "grinding it into powder, and mixing it with milk, sugar and honey to make it into a pill." Then "taking the pill with meat soup and rice with the meat soup, or rice congee with green beans." It says, "This medicine and rice can soothe the womb and the sick can acquire comfort from taking it." Despite the medical effect of utpala lotus flowers and other herbs for pregnancy here is not clear to me, the other ingredients are for sure helpful for pregnancy. See T. 1691, 788a; Benedetta Lomi, "The Ox-Bezoar Consecration (*Goo kaji*) for Safe Childbirth: Selected Readings from the Shingon Ritual Collection," the talk presented in Buddhist seminar in Columbia University, 2015, article collected in Pierce C. Salgeuro ed., *Buddhism and Medicine: Selected Translations*, 2 Volumes (NY: Columbia University Press, 2017).

symbolism and the identification of their appearance in Chinese Buddhist texts awaits research in the future.³⁷⁸

Difficult Birth

Compared to infertility, pregnancy care or any other reproductive problems, difficult childbirth is the most frequently mentioned issue and enjoy the most abundant healing resources in the Buddhist canon. These resources are found both in translated and indigenous Buddhist scriptures, and most of them involve incantations, talismans and seals. The earliest Buddhist text containing therapeutic spells for difficult birth is probably the *Dhāranī Sūtra of Invoking Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva to Dissipate Poison and Harm* (*Qing Guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluoni jing* 請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼經, *Qing Guanyin jing* 請觀音經 for short). It was attributed with some question to Nanti, a lay Buddhist living in the end of the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420 CE).³⁷⁹ In this scripture, bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara once again plays the role of helping women with their reproductive concerns. He appears in order to rescue the people who are suffering from all kinds of diseases caused by yakṣas in Vaisālī. The bodhisattva teaches them to chant three sets of dhāranīs, the last of which, consisting of fifteen phrases, is particularly powerful. Known as the “divine dhāranī of six-character phrases” (*liuzi shenzhou* 六字章句神咒), chanting it together with the three-fold calling of

³⁷⁸ Though this study of identifying the herbal medicines appearing in Chinese Buddhist texts and locating their origin, medical effects and symbolic meanings in Buddhist and Āyurvedic medicine is difficult, scholars like Edward Shafer in his work, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of Tang exotics*, has done some investigation on the transmission of Indian medicines to China (see its chapter 11). Recently Chen Ming also examines several Indian materia medica that were transmitted to China via international trade and some prominent medicine appearing frequently in Chinese Buddhist scriptures, such as “*zhihan* 質汗” (Sk. citragandha, possibly meaning “various fragrances”), “*Supiluo jiang* 蘇毘羅漿” (Sk. sauvīraka, possibly a fermented barley porridge), See Chen Ming, *Zhonggu yiliao yu wailaiwenhua* 中古醫療與外來文化 (Foreign Medicine and Culture in Medieval China) (2013): 179-186, 364-389, Ch. 3.

³⁷⁹ According to Seng You's catalogue, this scripture was categorized under those “unable to find its translator.” However, in Sui and Tang's catalogues this scripture was considered as being translated by Kumārajīva. See Seng You, *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 T. 2145, 21b, 22b; Fei Changfang, *Lidai sanbaoji* 歷代三寶紀 T. 2034, 78c-79a; Zhisheng, *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 T. 2154, 513b. In *Kaiyuan lu*, it also lists the other translation version by Nanti, see 509a.

Avalokiteśvara's name will save people from all sorts of dangers. Women who are on the point of death because of difficult childbirth will also be saved by doing so.³⁸⁰

Soon after the translation of the *Qing Guanyin jing*, in the *Consecration Sūtra* (*Foshuo Guanding jing* 佛說灌頂經) compiled by the Chinese monk Huijian 慧簡 during the Liu-Song dynasty (420-479 CE), there are two other sources available for the protection of difficult labor.³⁸¹ One entry appears in the last fascicle of the scripture, entitled the *Consecration Sūtra of Delivering People from Life and Death and from Transgressions* (*Guanding bachu guozue shengsi dedu jing* 灌頂拔除過罪生死得度經), in which Buddha tells his audience about various benefits of worshipping the Healing Buddha (Bhaiṣajyaguru), especially that of curing all kinds of diseases. Women who have difficult labor, if they recite the bodhisattva's name, will experience a smooth delivery. Their children shall have "nice bodies without any illnesses" and with "complete six faculties." They will be smart, wise and enjoy longevity. They will not encounter any accident, and be protected by gods. Their heads will also not be "licked by evil demons."³⁸² The other entry appears in the fourth fascicle of the scripture, entitled the *Consecration Sūtra of Spells for Protecting the Body offered by the Divine King of Hundred Knots* (*Guanding baijie shenwang hushenzhou jing* 灌頂百結神王護身咒經). It mentions that for those who "recite the words of *Guanding Sūtra*," women can thus "give birth to sons, and if they have girls, they will look dignified. During their labor, there will be demons manifesting themselves to protect the birth gate, and no danger that

³⁸⁰ *Qing Guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluoni jing* (T. 1043), 36b. Also see Yü, *Kuan-yin* (2001): 49.

³⁸¹ For a study about the scripture's authorship, see Michel Strickmann, "The Consecration Sūtra: A Buddhist Book of Spells," *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), edited by Robert E. Buswell. For detailed analysis of the contents of the twelve chapters of this scripture, see Wu Xiaojie 伍小劫, "Da guanding jing yanjiu 大灌頂經研究," Ph.D. Dissertation, Shanghai Shifan daxue (Shanghai Normal University), 2010.

³⁸² See Wu Xiaojie, 191; *Foshuo guanding jing* (T. 1331), 534c.

these women cannot pass through.”³⁸³

Reciting dhāranī to safely pass through difficult birth can also be seen in a compilation of dhāranīs, *The Compilation of Miscellaneous Dhāranī (Tuoluoni zaji 陀羅尼雜集)*.³⁸⁴ In this compilation, we find that among the twenty-eight incantations collected in its fifth fascicle, there are two kinds specifically for easing birth and two other ones containing this kind of effect together with other advantages. The first one of these four spells is called “the dhāranī for difficult labor taught by the Buddha” (“*Foshuo furen channan tuluoni*” 佛說婦人產難陀羅尼). It teaches that chanting this dhāranī seven times over oil and then applying the oil to “the place giving birth” will ease the difficulty of labor.³⁸⁵ The second one is “the dhāranī for smooth childbirth taught by Nirgrantha-jñāniputra”³⁸⁶ (“*Niqianten shuo lingren yichan tuluoni*” 尼乾天說令人易產陀羅尼). It provides somewhat different way of using childbirth dhāranī, first writing the spell on birch bark, then burning it down to ashes, and finally having the woman giving birth drinking the water containing the ashes.³⁸⁷ The third one is called “The Divine Spell for Dispelling Disasters and Various Disturbances and Poisons” (“*Foshuo chuzai huan zhunaodu shen zhou*” 佛說除災患諸惱毒神咒). The disasters and disturbances this spell promises to dispel include difficult childbirth. It instructs the

³⁸³ Wu Xiaojie, 267-268; *Foshuo guanding jing*, 507c-508a.

³⁸⁴ *Tuoluoni zaji 陀羅尼雜集 (Compilation of Miscellaneous Dhāranī)* (T. 1336), translator unknown. Taishō notes that it was collected in the Catalogue of Buddhist Scriptures of the Southern-Liang dynasty (“jinfu lianglu 今附梁錄”). But strangely I cannot locate the registration of this text in the Sengyou 僧祐’s Catalogue of Buddhist Scriptures (*Chusan zang jiji 出三藏記集*, T. 2145) of Liang dynasty. See *Tuoluoni zaji*, 580c.

³⁸⁵ *Tuoluoni zaji*, 606a-b. Also see Ayixian 阿依先, “Mijiao zhuchan jingzhou zhitan 密教助產經咒摭談,” *Shjie zongjiao wenhua 世界宗教文化* 2008.4: 38. The original text is “*tu chansuo jiyi 塗產所即易*.” The term “chansuo 產所” probably means the woman’s birth gate.

³⁸⁶ The term “Niqianten 尼乾天” is the transliteration of the Sanskrit “Nirgrantha-jñāniputra,” referring to the name of the founder of Jain sect in India, one of the six non-Buddhist belief systems (*liushi waidao 六師外道*) in Buddha’s time. His name is also transliterated in Chinese as 尼健, 尼乾, 尼乾陀, 尼虔, 尼乾陀若提子, 若提子. See the entries of these terms in DDB. This naming of this dhāranī might possibly reflect the origin of this spell.

³⁸⁷ *Tuoluoni zaji*, 610a.

chanting of this dhāranī seven times over a black thread and tying it to the patient’s neck and assures that this will ease the situation.³⁸⁸ The final one is “The Divine Spells for Extinguishing Ten Evils” (“*Foshuo miechu shie shenzhou* 佛說滅除十惡神咒”). This spell can help childbirth if the patient unbinds her hair, chants the spell over it fourteen times, and ties her hair up again.³⁸⁹

Coming to the Sui-Tang period, more translated and indigenous Buddhist scriptures containing dhāranīs of protecting childbirth appeared. In *Dhāranī Collection Scripture* (*Tuoluoni jijing* 陀羅尼集經) translated by monk Atigupta in Tang (654CE), it includes two dhāranīs in the second fascicle for treating difficult birth. One is called “The Seal-dhāranī of Pure-King Buddha's Peak³⁹⁰” (*Jingwang foding yin zhou* 淨王佛頂印咒), or “The Seal (dhāranī) of Akṣobhya-buddha's Peak” (“*Achu foding yin*” 阿闍佛頂印). This dhāranī is in the form of a seal. Unlike the earlier ones in the *Tuoluoni zaji*, it is required to be used together with a set of prescribed rituals such as making a consecrated area and using mudrās, which is representative of the way of using dhāranī in the later mature form of Esoteric Buddhism. According to the instruction, when using this seal-dhāranī, the performer has to first make the mudrā taught here. When applying it to treat diseases, the performer needs to spray mustard-seeds to form a defined area in order to make the spell work. For relieving difficult labor, the performer is asked to stamp the seal on the vessel that holds the sesames

³⁸⁸ Ibid, 606b.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, 608c.

³⁹⁰ The term *foding* 佛頂 is the Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit word “uṣṇīṣa,” meaning Buddha’s tuft, excrescence or protuberance on the frontal crown, one of the thirty-two marks of the Buddha. According to the explanation in DDB, “in non-Buddhist Sanskrit texts, uṣṇīṣa refers to anything wound around the head, such as a turban or diadem, and to a crown. Textual and art historical evidence suggests that in early (e.g. Gandharan) sculptures the bun shaped protuberance that was later explained as part of the Buddha's anatomy — his uṣṇīṣa — may not have been intended to represent anything more than a topknot of hair. Once it was identified as flesh, however, it came to be understood as an outward sign of the Buddha's awakening, and as the anatomical 'location' of his awakening. In the esoteric Buddhist tradition, the idea developed that the Buddha's true uṣṇīṣa or 'head mark' 頂相 was 'invisible' 無見, and that it contained the concentrated wisdom and merit of all the tathāgatas. See the entries “*foding* 佛頂” and “*usenisa* 烏瑟膩沙” in the DDB.

oil, and chant the dhāranī twenty one times; after that he then applies the oil to the women's naval, massages it, and chants the spell. The baby will then come out.³⁹¹

The second dhāranī is associated with the famous Healing Buddha, Bhaiṣajyaguru. It is “the Seal-Dhāranī of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha” (“*Yaoshi liuliguan fo yingzhou*” 藥師琉璃光佛印咒). This spell requires a performer to make a mudrā while first chanting the spell as well. For taking care of difficult birth and other diseases, the performer needs to make the “five-color spell thread” and tie it to the patient's neck, hands and feet. The patient herself also needs to create a statue of Bhaiṣajyaguru, copy a *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra*, and make a five-color banner whose length should be forty-nine meters. She has to light forty-nine lanterns, which shall take the form of a wheel and have seven layers, and place them in front of the statue. It is also necessary for the patient to release forty-nine caged animals, and then make a five-color spell thread. The way to make the thread is as follows. Before making the thread, burn incense and make a vow. Then chant the dhāranī forty-nine times until the incense is burnt down. When twisting the thread, the chanting of the sūtra should not stop. After the making of the thread is completed, stamp the dhāranī seal on it, and chant the spell over it forty-nine times again. While chanting the spell each time, make each one of the forty-nine knots on the thread respectively. Tying this kind of thread to the human body and chanting the *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra* forty-nine times will liberate one from all kinds of harmful actions. There will be no suffering in delivery at all. The child will be nice looking, smart, wise and live a long life. He or she will not encounter any accident and disease brought by demons.³⁹²

From these above methods used in difficult childbirth, we can find a course changing from a simple model to a sophisticated one. In the earliest one in the *Qing Guanyin jing*,

³⁹¹ *Tuoluoni jijing* 陀羅尼集經 (T. 901), translated by the monk Atigupta in the Tang dynasty, p. 798b-c. Also see Ayixian, 39.

³⁹² *Tuoluoni jijing*, 799a-b; also see Ayixian, 39.

simply reciting the spell itself is sufficient to activate it. In the two small scriptures inside *Guanding jing*, chanting the name of Healing Buddha and the words of the scripture, both typical Mahāyāna merit-making practices, can save women in difficult labor. In *the Compilation of Miscellaneous Dhāraṇī*, reciting spells are further combined with some palpable and material media such as chanting it over oil or hair, or writing it on the bark. In *Dhāraṇī Collection Scripture*, incantations further incorporate other esoteric skills such as forming mudrās, setting an altar, and stamping seals. Their operation rely even much more on tangible materials: mustard seeds, sesames oil, a vessel, five-color threads, banners, statues, lamps, and incenses. Through these solid substances, ritual participants acquire more opportunities to physically engage with the spells. They spray the mustard seeds to form an altar, apply oil over skin, ingest the ashes of barks, tie or unbind hair, making threads and banners with hands, constructing statues and lanterns, burning incense and making vows before them. All these bodily acts are intertwined with the chanting of spells. Both are indispensable in order to generate efficacy. Paul Copp's recent studies on the two incantations popular in the Tang, the Wish fulfillment Dhāraṇī (*Da suiqiu tuoluoni* 大隨求陀羅尼) and Dhāraṇī of Glory (*Zunsheng tuoluoni* 尊勝陀羅尼), similarly notice the striking feature of bodily engagement of using these spells.³⁹³ Koichi Shinohara also observes the evolvement of esoteric rituals from a simpler form with only spell-chanting to a complex one that integrates other practices and gradually shifting its focus from incantations to image worship.³⁹⁴ My examination of dhāraṇīs used in difficult birth here reflects this same development of complication. Seeking help from Healing Buddha for childbirth, for instance, requires only reciting his name and reading and copying the scripture collected in *Guanding jing*, but in the

³⁹³ Copp, *The Body Incantatory*, esp. 59-63. Also see Chapter Five.

³⁹⁴ Koichi Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals*, Introduction.

Seal-Dhāranī of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha in *Dhāranī Collection Scripture* it began to require creating a statue, and adding all the other Mahāyānic and esoteric practices such as releasing caged animals, making banners and lanterns, chanting and stamping seals, and so on.

Roughly at the same time of the appearance of the *Dhāranī Collection Scripture*, the one-volume *Sūtra on the Merit of the Fundamental Vows of the Master of Healing, the Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathāgata* (*Yaoshi liuliguan rulai benyuan gongde jing* 藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經) and the two-volume *Sūtra on the Merit of the Fundamental Vows of the Seven Buddhas of Lapis Lazuli Radiance, the Master of Healing* (*Yaoshi liuliguan qifo benyuan gongde jing* 藥師琉璃光七佛本願功德經) were also translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664 CE) and Yijing 義淨 (635-713 CE) respectively. In Xuanzang's one-volume version, it teaches believers to make five-color banner of forty-nine meters, light forty-nine lanterns which take the form of a wheel and having seven layers, and release forty-nine caged animals to deal with all kinds of disasters and diseases. This method is called "the method of using banner and lantern to prolong life" (*xuming fandeng fa* 續命幡燈法).³⁹⁵ In Yijing's two-volume translation, we see the mention of the method for saving women from their suffering of childbirth that does not exist in Xuanzang's version. In the third great vow made by the "Sovereign Master Tathāgata of Precious Moon and the Light and Sound of Wisdom Peak" (Baoyue zhiyen guangyin zizai wang fo 寶月智嚴光音自在王佛)³⁹⁶ in this scripture, it says that, "if there is a woman in ten directions, whose mind is often covered by greed, desire and affliction, and who continues to become pregnant and hate this situation. If my name passes her ears or she recites my name during the pains of giving birth, she will be thereby liberated

³⁹⁵ *Yaoshi liuliguan rulai benyuan gongde jing* 藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經 (T. 450), translated by Xuanzang of Tang dynasty, 407c.

³⁹⁶ The same Buddha appears in the indigenous scripture *Fodingxin tuoluoni jing*, see below. I adopt Yü's translation of the Buddha's name. See *Kuan-yin*, 120-23.

from all sufferings. After dying, she will be definitely reborn as a man until she becomes enlightened.”³⁹⁷

From the Southern Dynasties to the Sui-Tang period, scriptures related to the Healing Buddha were translated into Chinese and made into indigenous one up to four times. On top of the *Consecration Sūtra of Delivering People from Life and Death and from Transgressions*, Xuanzang and Yijing’s translations, there is another one titled *Sūtra on the Fundamental Vow of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha* (*Yaoshi rulai benyuan jing* 藥師如來本願經) translated by Dharmagupta in the Sui dynasty (616 CE). Besides these four texts, the Chinese monk who mastered Esoteric Buddhism Yixing 一行 (673-727 CE) also wrote a ritual manual based on them, and is called *Disaster-Erasing Reciting Ritual Manual of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha* (*Yaoshi liuliguang rulai xiaozai niansong yigui* 藥師琉璃光如來消災除難念誦儀軌).³⁹⁸ In this manual he laid out a whole set of esoteric ritual for performing this disaster-erasing dhāranī of Healing Buddha, which consists of making maṇḍalas, worshipping the Bhaiṣajyaguru’s statue or image, reciting mantras, lighting forty-nine lanterns, making five-color banners and five-color threads, setting up the altar, making offerings, and so on. The main part of the method is similar to what is taught in “The Seal-Dhāranī of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha” collected in *Dhāranī Collection Scripture*. And one of the major goals of this ritual manual, like the “Seal-Dhāranī of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha,” is to help women suffering during childbirth.³⁹⁹

Healing Buddha is not the only deity having special connection with the treatment of

³⁹⁷ *Yaoshi liuliguan qifo benyuan gongde jing* 藥師琉璃光七佛本願功德經 (T. 451), translated by Yijing of Tang dynasty, p. 410a-b. The name of this Buddha was still used by literati in the Ming dynasty to pray for children (instead of protecting women’s giving birth), as pointed out by Yü in her *Kuanyin*, 140.

³⁹⁸ Yixing 一行, *Yaoshi liuliguang rulai xiaozai niansong yigui* 藥師琉璃光如來消災除難念誦儀軌 (T. 922), 22c.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 20a, 22a-b.

women's reproductive diseases in the early medieval period. Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, as we have seen in the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Qing Guanyin jing*, also gives his promise in this regard. There are two other esoteric sūtras related to this bodhisattva, one translated and one made during the Tang, offering dhāranīs for aiding childbirth and other diseases and mishaps.⁴⁰⁰ The first sūtra was translated three times during the Tang dynasty, and the one we discuss here is Zhitong's 智通 version, which is entitled *Sūtra of the Divine Dhāranī of the Thousand-eyed and Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara* (*Qianyan qianbi guanshiyin pusa toluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音陀羅尼神咒經). Like the above esoteric dhāranī sūtras of Healing Buddha, this spell also requires to be performed in company with other esoteric practices like forming mudrās, setting up an altar and maṇḍala, and making offerings to worship the deity. For helping women in difficult childbirth, the performer is instructed to recite the dhāranī twenty-one times over ghee and feed it to her. The woman will then assuredly have an easy delivery and give birth to a good-looking boy or girl who will be blessed through his or her whole life and be well loved and respected by everyone.⁴⁰¹

The second sūtra is an indigenous one, named *Fodingxin tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心陀羅尼經, consisting of three fascicles. I shall discuss this text more completely in the next chapter.

Here I just point out that its first fascicle contains a dhāranī, and about half of the phrases in the dhāranī are identical to those of the above *Sūtra of the Divine Dhāranī of the Thousand-eyed and Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara*. Its second fascicle provides a talisman against difficult labor. It mentions that at the time of delivery, if a woman is plagued by demons who cause her great pain, she should immediately have someone write the dhāranī and the “secret character seal” in vermilion ink and swallow it with incense water; then she will give birth to

⁴⁰⁰ The following discussion of the two esoteric sūtras refers to *Kuanyin*, particularly pp. 66-67 and pp. 120-123.

⁴⁰¹ *Qianyan qianbi guanshiyin pusa toluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音陀羅尼神咒經 (T. 1057a), translated by Zhitong of the Tang dynasty, 87a; also see *Kuanyin*, 67.

a wise boy or a beautiful girl right away. If the placenta does not become separated and is going to cause the death of either the mother or the child, the pregnant woman should follow the above procedure. This will cause the dead baby to abort; it should be thrown into a river right away. Pregnant women are warned not to eat dog meat, eels, or birds. They should invoke the name of the "Sovereign Master Buddha of Precious Moon and the Light and Sound of Wisdom Peak."⁴⁰²

Using talismanic seals to cure difficult labor is also found in an indigenous "Buddhist" text that mingled native Daoist tradition of ensigillation. According to Strickmann, this text, titled *Longshu wuming lun* 龍樹五明論 (Nāgārjuna's Treatise on the Five Sciences), was written in the sixth century in North China. It appears to have survived only in a single manuscript copy made in Japan probably in the eleventh or twelfth century, and preserved there in a monastic archive.⁴⁰³ Many religious techniques described in this text are intended to provide secular benefits and look very similar to Chinese ones. For example, it says, if a human figure is carved from willow wood, properly empowered with spells and buried in the courtyard of your house, it will bring great riches. This text also includes twelve anti-demonic talismans for curing disease, with precise instructions for their ingestion according to an exact astrological schedule. The twelve are correlated with the twelve hours, into which the East Asian day is divided. In one place, the method that the text teaches to make the "Seal of Buddha's Peak" (*foding yin* 佛頂印) is to carve it on the "wood of a jujube-tree's root" and "redden it by rubbing with vermilion."⁴⁰⁴ These beliefs, such as using willow and jujube woods to exorcize demons and maladies, and considering different demons appearing

⁴⁰² *Kuan-yin*, 119-23.

⁴⁰³ The text *Longshu wuming lun* 龍樹五明論 itself, see *Taishō*, T. 1420; Michel Strickmann, 170. In the footnote 76 of Strickmann's book here, there is no explanation of why Strickmann concludes that this is a sixth-century text.

⁴⁰⁴ Strickmann, 170-172.

according to twelve astrological hour cycles, are quite characteristic of Chinese religion and can be traced all the way back to the Qin-Han period.⁴⁰⁵ There is even a spell and a recipe specifically provided for refraining from grains, a typical Daoist practice. The minerals which the recipe suggests to take have been known and used by Chinese Daoists for immortality at least from Ge Hong's 葛洪 (284-363) time.⁴⁰⁶

Among the seals this text supplies in the second volume, there is one named “*Xingsu yin* 星宿印” (“Seal of Constellations”), which can cure all kinds of illnesses, including difficult birth.⁴⁰⁷ The method to prepare this seal is as follows. Firstly purify a room, spread incense on the ground, and burn incense to worship the Three Jewels. Then take red jujube wood, five inches in length and three inches in width, and carve the image of this seal of Constellations on it. Finally redden it by rubbing it with vermilion and chant the spell provided here nine hundred times. If a performer wants to use it to cure sentient beings’ diseases and misfortune, he shall have the patient bathe with perfumed water and stamp the seal on the sick place. If a woman has difficult labor, the performer should rub the seal with vermilion, stamp the seal on a piece of clean paper and let her swallow it. The child will be born straightaway with ease and even catch the seal out. The child’s body will be smooth and neat, and will not be taken advantage of by a demon. Yet while carrying out this Constellation Seal, the performer should notice that no women and children are allowed to see the process, and the performer should also not sleep with them.⁴⁰⁸ Making and applying seals to treat

⁴⁰⁵ For the study of exorcism and its application in treating diseases in ancient Chinese religion, see Donald Harper, “A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century B.C.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45(1995): 459-98.

⁴⁰⁶ See the section of “zhou bushi fa 呪不食法,” *Longshu wuming lun*, 962b-c. One of the minerals, chishizhi 赤石脂, has been listed in the fourth chapter of Jindan (金丹) in *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 as one ingredient for concocting an elixir for immortality. See Wang Ming 王明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子内篇校释 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 74.

⁴⁰⁷ The image of this seal can be seen in *Longshu wuming lun*, 963b-964a.

⁴⁰⁸ *Longshu wuming lun*, 964a.

diseases and difficult birth is popularly carried out in medieval China. As we are going to see in Chapter Five, many Dunhuang manuscripts preserve copies of this kind of "Buddhist texts" instructing the ways of making and using seals, which often function as talismans to exorcize evils and disasters, bring in blessing and fortune, and realize one's wishes. These texts usually invoke Buddhist deities' help and sometimes contain instructions of chanting dhāranīs, setting ritual altars and maṇḍalas, but the making process of seals, their forms and the methods of applying or ingesting these seals involved native exorcism and Daoist seal or *fu* tradition, just as Nāgārjuna's Treatise on the Five Sciences has shown here.

Postnatal Care for Mothers and Newborns

Success of reproduction encompasses not just mothers but also children. An embryo's past bad karma may impede conception or cause miscarriage or difficult labor. A child may also be attacked by demons when it is still in its infancy or youth and suffer from various pediatric diseases. Therefore several of the above scriptures promise the benefit to both when advertising the efficacy of worshipping Avalokiteśvara or Healing Buddha or that of using a specific dhāranī and a seal for obtaining a child or having easy delivery. Some scriptures I introduce here are even written particularly for protecting children, and some on postnatal care for both mothers and newborns.

The scripture concerning postnatal care for mothers and newborns is found in the *Sūtra of the Original Vows of Bodhisattva Dizang* (*Dizang pusa benyuan jing* 地藏菩薩本願經). This scripture is attributed to the seventh-century Khotanese monk Siksānanda (652-710 CE) but may very well have been composed in China, and was already circulating by the early tenth century.⁴⁰⁹ Its chapter six states various kinds of benefits of worshipping Dizang

⁴⁰⁹ Zhiru, *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press,

Bodhisattva. Buddha states, “in the future generations, if there is any one in Jambudvīpa, like kṣatriya, brāhman, householder or other castes, who has newborn babies, boys or girls, and recites this incredible scripture for seven days, or furthermore, recites the bodhisattva’s name ten thousand times, then the newborn child, no matter male or female, will be easily raised and liberated from the misfortunes resulting from the past karma. If the child is endowed with blessing, [reciting this sūtra and the bodhisattva’s name will make his or her] fortune and lifespan both increase.”⁴¹⁰ In chapter eight, which introduces the members of hell, one of them, Juming Guiwang 主命鬼王 (Demon King of Lifespan), explains to the Buddha the reason for difficult labor, the method to avoid it, and the way to protect the mother and the child after delivery. The Demon King tells Buddha that he is responsible for the lifespan of people living in Jambudvīpa, and would love to benefit sentient beings, but since people do not understand his good will, their behaviors very often incur their death. “When Jambudvīpa people just give birth, or when they are going to give birth, no matter [the baby is] a boy or a girl, they shall only do good deeds to benefit their house, please [the spirits of] the soil and the land, and these will in return protect the safety of the mother and the child.....Be sure not to kill living creatures to make a meal for the mother who has just given birth, or gather family members to drink, eat meat, sing songs, and play music, all of which will make the mother and the child ill at ease.” “Why do I say so? Because when difficult labor happens, there are numerous evil demons and spirits waiting to drink the blood. That is why I command the spirits of house, soil and land to guard the mother and the child.....These people should reward the spirits of soil and land by making an offering to them, yet on the contrary they kill lives and gather families [to enjoy meats]. Due to this, they suffer from

2007), 107.

⁴¹⁰ *Dizang pusa benyuan jing* 地藏菩薩本願經(T. 412), translation attributed to Siksānanda of the Tang dynasty, 783b.

their faults, which harm both the child and the mother. ”⁴¹¹

The first method given here is a typical Mahāyāna practice, namely reciting the sūtra and the bodhisattva's name. It does not involve any spells, talismans, seals or esoteric rituals. The second method nevertheless shares the same etiology with those above texts preaching dhāranīs. They all regard evil demons and spirits as the main cause of sterility, miscarriage, difficult birth or stillbirth. While previous dhāranī texts rely on powerful spells to exorcize these pathogens, the *Sūtra of the Original Vows of Bodhisattva Dizang* emphasized non-killing because the pathogenic demons are blood-lusting. It is also because the sacrifice offering should be made to “spirits of soil and land,” supposedly vegetarian one, instead of animal foods enjoyed by the family members themselves. This counteraction of killing for meat sacrifice reminds us of the extensive efforts by medieval Buddhist monks trying to convert people from heterodox sacrifice to Buddhism. And this is spoken from the mouth of a demon king of the hell with a very local title, "Demon King of Lifespan." "Spirits of Soil and Land" also sounds like to be native gods. Although we are unable to know whether this is because its author is Chinese or because its translator deliberately chose a local style to render these terms, this is our first time seeing a Buddhist scripture that considers “spirits of soil and land” having roles in the safety of birth and clearly illustrates that the death of mother and child is caused by the “demons who wait to drink blood.” This implicitly conveys a belief that blood may offend the spirits of soil and land, and incur punishment for the women giving birth and the newborn, a belief that is later expressed more explicitly despite of some difference in the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* which circulated only a century later. For instance, the object being punished for offending soil and land spirits is only the mother in the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* instead of both mother and child as in the *Sūtra of the Original Vows*. The blood that offends the spirits of soil and land comes from women's blood produced from

⁴¹¹ Ibid, 785b.

menstruation and childbirth instead of from killing lives for a feast after birth in the *Sūtra of the Original Vows*.

After passing through delivery, the issue for the next stage is to safely bring up children, concerning which there are also a couple of texts in Buddhist scriptures. Two among them are especially complete. One is the *Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children* and the other is the *Sūtra of Rāvana's Explanations of How to Cure Children's Diseases* (*Luofuna shuo jiuliao xiaoer jibing jing* 囉嚩拏說救療小兒疾病經).⁴¹² These two texts show a close affinity, both being a kind of "pediatrics," providing a list of diseases of demonic possession in children to their teenage years and ritual therapeutics counteracting the demons. *The Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children* lists fifteen demons' names, their manifested forms, the symptoms that the children being caught by them may have, and finally the ritual treatments toward these diseases. In it Brāhman King states to Buddha, "There are fifteen demons often roaming in the world, terrifying infants and children. Now I should inform you about their horrible forms that terrify children. The form of Miṣika (Ch. Michoujia 彌酬迦) is like an ox. The form of Mṛgarāja (Ch. Miqiewang 彌伽王) is like a lion. The form of Skanda (Ch. Qiantuo 騫陀) is like Kumāra. The form of Apasmāra (Ch. Apoxiluomo 阿波悉魔羅) is like a wild fox. The form of Muṣṭika (Ch. Mouzhijia 牟致迦) is like a monkey. The form of Mātrkā (Ch. Mozhijia 魔致迦) is like a rākṣasī. The form of Jāmikā (Ch. Yanmijia 閻彌迦)

⁴¹² *Luofunu shuo jiuliao xiaoer jibing jing* 囉嚩拏說救療小兒疾病經 (T 1330) translated by Faxian of Song dynasty. The term Luofunu 囉嚩拏, also translated as "Luopona 羅婆那", refers to King of Sri Lanka and ruler of the rākṣasas, overcome by Rāmacandra. He is an interlocutor of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* who also appears in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. See the entry of "Luopona 羅婆那" in DDB. Kenneth Zysk follows P.C. Bagchi's view, holding that the Chinese version of this scripture "seems to have preserved the most correct form of the Rāvaṇakumāratāntra." See Zysk, 66-67, footnote 40; P. C. Bagchi, "New Materials for the Study of the Kumāratāntra of Rāvaṇa," *Indian Culture* 7 (1941): 269-286. In contrast, Jean Filliozat holds that the text, originating in the North India, mainly spread to Tibet and Southeast Asia. See Filliozat, "La Kumāratāntra de Rāvaṇa," *Journal Asiatique* 226 (1935): 1-66. Kumāra-tāntra contains material on possession by a number of different beings. The text also instructs a series of anti-demonic rituals to appease the possessors of the children, who give them sickness and fever. The text presents details of these ritual procedures, which comprise making offerings, ablutions, fumigation, mantra repetition and pious works. See Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion* (I. B. Tauris, 2005), 91.

is like a horse. The form of Kāminī (Ch. Jiamini 迦彌尼) is like a woman. The form of Revati (Ch. Lipozhi 黎婆坻). The form of Pūtanā (Ch. Fuduona 富多那) is like a pig. The form of Matṛṇandi (Ch. Manduonanti 曼多難提) is like a cat. The form of Śakunī (Ch. Shejiuni 舍究尼) is like a bird. The form of Kāṅṭhapānī (Ch. Jianzhaponini 捷吒波尼尼) is like a pheasant. The form of Mukhamaṇḍikā (Ch. Muqumantu 目佉曼荼) is like a strange bird. The form of Lambā (Ch. Lanpo 藍婆) is like a snake."⁴¹³

The text next states children's symptoms after being haunted by these demons. According to the above sequence of demons, children being caught by them may appear "eye balls rolling," "constantly vomiting," "shoulders shuddering," "foaming at the mouth," "their bodies twisting," "biting their own tongues," "crying and laughing abnormally," "fond of staying close by women," "being able to see miscellaneous things," "being scared and crying in sleep," "constantly crying and laughing," "unwilling to be breastfed," "losing voice in one's throat," and "having diarrhea with fever," and "keeping hiccupping."⁴¹⁴ To deal with these children diseases, as aforementioned, one should chant the dhārāni provided here over a five-colored thread every time when making a knot, and tie one hundred and eight knots. Also, write the demons' names over the knots to command them leave as soon as possible. This method can also be applied to those who are barren, have miscarriages, or whose infants die

⁴¹³ Bodhiruci of Northern Wei dynasty, *The Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children*, T. 1028A, 741c-742a. Chen Ming offers a comparison list of the Sanskrit, Chinese, and Khotanese names of the fifteen deities, and the variation of these names appearing in Āyurvedic texts. See Chen (2005): 94-95. Also see my Chapter Five, the section of "Bāla-grahā" for the Dunhuang and medieval Japanese manuscripts mentioning these pediatric demons.

⁴¹⁴ T. 1028A, 742a. Here is the paragraph of the original text: "此十五鬼神著諸小兒，令其驚怖，我今當復說諸小兒怖畏之相。彌酬迦鬼者著小兒眼睛迴轉。彌迦王鬼者著小兒數數嘔吐。騫陀鬼者著小兒其兩肩動。阿波悉魔羅鬼者著小兒口中沫出。牟致迦鬼者著小兒把捲不展。魔致迦鬼者著小兒自齧其舌。閻彌迦鬼者著小兒喜啼喜笑。迦彌尼鬼者著小兒樂著女人。黎婆坻鬼者著小兒見種種雜相。富多那鬼者著小兒眠中驚怖啼哭。曼多難提鬼者著小兒喜啼喜笑。金究尼鬼者著小兒不肯飲乳。乾吒波尼尼鬼者著小兒咽喉聲塞。目佉曼荼鬼者著小兒時氣熱病下痢。藍婆鬼者著小兒數數噫噦。"

young.⁴¹⁵

Where do these demons come from and what are the meanings of their names? Chen Ming recently compares these demons' names in the *Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children* with those in the *Sūtra of Rāvana's Explanations of How to Cure Children's Diseases*. He finds that these demons appearing in these two texts largely overlap.⁴¹⁶ Earlier in the 1930s, Jean Filliozat already notice that these demons show up in the sections of pediatrics in some Āyurvedic texts such as *Suśruta-saṃhitā* (6th C. BCE-6th C.), *Caraka-saṃhitā* (2nd C. BCE), *Mādhava Nidānam* (early 7th C.), and *Vāgbhaṭa* (mid-7th C.).⁴¹⁷ F. G. Bagchi in the 1940s further finds the connection of these demons with Buddhism and were translated in Chinese Buddhist scriptures as "yaomugui 曜母鬼" in *Sūtra of Rāvana's Explanations of How to Cure Children's Diseases*.⁴¹⁸ Bagchi considers that the term "yaomugui" is originally "graha-māṭṛkā" in Sanskrit, in which "graha-" means "being who seizes" and "māṭṛkā" comes from "māṭṛ," meaning mothers and being combined with the ending "kā-." The character "yao 曜" is from "graha."⁴¹⁹ "Graha" is often translated into "yao" in the Chinese Buddhist scriptures concerning planets and astronomy.⁴²⁰ Besides, the number of demons is not fixed in these Āyurvedic medical texts and also in Buddhist texts. Their numbers vary from text to

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, 742a-b.

⁴¹⁶ Chen (2005): 94-95; Chen Ming, "Hanyi mijiao wenxian zhong de shenming feituo bianxi: yi yanyao fang yu tongzhi fang weili 漢譯密教文獻中的生命吠陀辨析: 以眼藥方與童子方為例," in Lin Fushi 林富士 ed., *Zhongjiao yu yiliao 宗教與醫療* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 2011), 263-287, esp. 268-275.

⁴¹⁷ Filliozat (1935); Chen Ming (2005): 97, (2011): 268-275. Filliozat has compared several versions of different languages of Kumāra-tantra de Rāvaṇa including Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Cambodian. See Jean Filliozat, "Étude de démonologie indienne: Le Kumāratantra de Rāvaṇa et les textes parallèles indiens, tibétains, chinois, cambodgien et arabe." *Cahiers de la Société Asiatique, Le série* vol. 4, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1937.

⁴¹⁸ Bagchi (1941); Chen (2011): 273.

⁴¹⁹ Bagchi (1941); Chen (2005): 96, (2011): 273.

⁴²⁰ Therefore in *Dafangguang pusazang wenshushili genben yigui jing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經 (T. 1191, 846a-b) and in *Foshuo dakongque zhouwang jing* 佛說大孔雀咒王經 (T. 985, 474a), "Mahā-graha" is translated into "dayao 大曜" and "Nava-graha" is rendered as "zhichi tianshen 執持天神" (heavenly gods who seize). Chen, manuscript, 4-5.

text, including the combination of nine, ten, twelve, fifteen, and sixteen demons. In *Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children* there are fifteen and in *Rāvana's Explanations of How to Cure Children's Diseases* there are twelve.

These demons have several transliterated or translated names in Chinese Buddhist scriptures and "yao" or planet is only one of them.⁴²¹ Scholars so far have not clarified whether these demons have to do with real planets or Indian astronomy. However, it is interesting to note that in the *Sūtra of Rāvana's Explanations of How to Cure Children's Diseases*, these "twelve matriarchs of the planets"⁴²² each govern a year in a child's growth during the first twelve years of life. They would show up to attack a child in a specific day of a specific month of that year. Before children turn to twelve years old, they are vulnerable and weak and may suffer from attack by these demons who roam about the world day and night. They will manifest themselves in a variety of horrific forms, terrify and disconcert the child, then gobble up its vital essence and breath, causing it to become ill and die an early death. The demon king, Rāvana, thus kindly furnishes the reader with the particular year, month, day, hour, and minute when children are susceptible to each one of the twelve, together with a list of symptoms. He also provides the spells and describes the sacrifices by which the demonesses can be appeased and controlled, and the malady cured.⁴²³

Take the first demoness, for example. The sūtra states that if a child shows signs of possession by a demon on "the first day of the first month of the first year" after birth, this means that it is possessed by the mother-demon Mātṛnāndā.⁴²⁴ The victim suffers initially

⁴²¹ These translations include "Jieluohe 揭囉訶," "nieluohe 孽囉訶," "nieluohe 孽羅訶," "eluohe 誡羅訶," "mei 魅," "suomei 所魅," "suochi 所持," "yao 曜," and "nielihe 孽哩訶 or 孽里訶." See Chen Ming, manuscript, 1-5. When these demons appear in other Buddhist scriptures, they do not necessarily appear as pediatric demons. Some texts associate them with diseases but some do not.

⁴²² This is Michel Strickman's translation in his *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 221.

⁴²³ T. 1330, 491c; Michel Strickmann, 221.

⁴²⁴ The Chinese translation of Mātṛnāndā in this sūtra is Mota linan mu 摩怛哩難那母. It is translated as

from chills and fever, its body becomes emaciated and dried out, its spirits are in confusion, it shivers and trembles, it cries and does not eat. The healer needs to take earth from both banks of a river and mold an image of the sick child. He places it inside a square ritual area (maṇḍala) facing west, together with aromatics, flowers, and white-colored food and drink (including wine and meat). Next he sets up seven banners and lights seven oil-lamps. Then he takes white mustard seeds, the excrement of wild fox and kittens, Parthian incense, and sloughed-off snakeskin. He mixes these medicinal substances with curds from a brindled cow, making the mixture into incense pellets with which the child is to be fumigated. The child is then bathed in a decoction of leaves from five different kinds of trees. A spell is next pronounced over the offerings, and they are thrown away at midday in an easterly direction, at a place outside the city wall, as an offering to the demoness Mātrnāndā. Then the child will speedily recover.⁴²⁵

Buddhist scriptures with pediatrics are not limited to these above scriptures, though they are the longest ones. Two other texts also have similar lists of the names of the fifteen demons and the pediatric diseases they cause in part of their contents. One is in the twenty-first "Chapter of Dhārānis Curing Demonic Diseases" in *Method of Amṛta-kuṇḍalī of Vajra Fmaily in Western Dhārāni Collection (Xifang tuoluoni zangzhong jinggangzu amiliduo chunzhali fa* 西方陀羅尼藏中金剛族阿蜜哩多軍吒利法).⁴²⁶ The other is the *Sūtra of*

Manduo nanti 曼多難提 in the *Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children*. Based on the same logic, a child is said to be attacked by the next demon on "the second day of the second month of the second year" after birth, and by the next demon on "the third day of the third month of the third year." The same logic continues to the twelfth year.

⁴²⁵ T. 1330, 491c-492a. This whole paragraph refers to Strickmann's translation of the sūtra. See his *Chinese Magic Medicine*, 221-222. Interestingly, Strickmann explains why the treatment involves making an image of the child. He thinks that it is because the demoness is deemed to be lodging inside the child's body; therefore the offerings are placed before the image within the maṇḍala, and the offerings should be then cast away outside the town, away from human habitation.

⁴²⁶ T. 1212, 70b-c; Chen (2011): 268. The scripture is translated by Tang monk Yicao 義操 (d.u.). Kuṇḍalī is one of the five great guardian kings, who assumes a fierce appearance in order to drive off malevolent spirits and lead sentient beings to enlightenment. His symbol is a jeweled cup filled with amṛta (nectar, 甘露). See the entry "ganlu chuntuli 甘露軍荼利." "ami liduo 阿蜜哩多" is the transliteration of " amṛta ."

Defending the Great Thousand Directions of the Land (Sk. *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī-nāma-mahāyānasūtra*; Ch. *Foshuo shouhu daqian guotu jing* 佛說守護大千國土經).⁴²⁷ Moreover, in the *Sūtra of Treating Diseases and Making Medicine of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guṇyīn Bodhisattva* (*Qianshou qianyan guanyin pusa zhibing heyao jing* 千手千眼觀音菩薩治病合藥經, T. 1059), it mentions four kinds of sicknesses that children may suffer from, including "crying and not sleeping at night," "having ulcer on the head," "swelling tongue," and "ulcer in the mouth." It suggests to treat them by "writing the character of 'gui 鬼' under eyes," "taking ox's manure and pig fat," "drinking mulberry juice," and "taking coptis root and the milk of the child's mother," respectively."⁴²⁸

Among these texts for postnatal care, *the Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children* especially enjoyed certain degree of popularity in medieval China. After being translated in the Northern Wei, it is also collected in *the Compilation of Miscellaneous Dhāranī* and later again put into Daoshi's Buddhist encyclopedia of the Tang dynasty.⁴²⁹ A number of manuscript copies of this text and the demons' iconography are also found in Dunhuang and Japan, which I shall examine in the next chapter. As for the impact of the *Sūtra of Rāvāna's Explanations of How to Cure Children's Diseases* and other texts above with pediatric contents, they do not seem to have as much striking influence on later age as *the Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children* but they are worth to be delved further in the future.

Miscarriage and Abortion

Vinaya

⁴²⁷ T. 999, 591a-b; Chen Ming (2011): 268. The translator is Shihu 施護 (Dānapāla, d. 1017 CE), a North-Indian scholar monk who translated into Chinese some 111 works in Song dynasty. See the entry "Shihu 施護" in DDB.

⁴²⁸ T. 1059, 105a-b; Chen (2011): 276.

⁴²⁹ T. 1336, 598a, 600a-c; T. 2122, 740a-741a. Chen (2005): 99.

The earliest canonical narratives about the monastics assisting miscarriage or abortion are found in Vinaya collection. Imaginably, since Buddhist monks and nuns often bear certain medical knowledge and have access to medicine, it is not surprising that lay people often approach them for help and become involved accidentally or purposely in helping people to abort fetuses. Because Buddhist precepts regard killing as one of the most serious transgressions, their deeds and relevant events are thus recorded for later reference. In *Dharma-guputaka-vinaya* (*Sifen lü* 四分律), it does say, "no matter for what reason a monk should not kill lives of sentient beings, even as small as the lives of ants. If a monk kills another person's life by his hand, or offers a knife to another person, asking, encouraging, or urging him to kill himself, or gives another person poison, or aborts a fetus, or kills to sacrifice [to spirits], or creates a condition convenient for others' death, no matter doing it by himself or by asking others, by doing these deeds he is no longer a śramaṇa, no longer my son of the Śākya clan."⁴³⁰

From the Vinaya narratives that delineate the contexts of the transgressions of abortion, we can conveniently find all kinds of cases and methods that monks and nuns use to assist lay people aborting fetuses. Since the motives and the resulting harms to mothers and fetuses vary, monks and nuns helping abortion commit different degrees of transgressions. More significantly, different versions of Vinaya also pass different judgments on the transgression of an identical situation. For instance, in the twenty-second chapter of *Dharma-guputaka-vinaya*, there are five cases mentioning monks or nuns aiding abortion. It is said that a woman got pregnant while her husband was not at home. She went to see a monk whom she often made offerings to and requested from him a medicine for abortion. The monk chanted a spell over food and let her eat the food. She then managed to abort the fetus. The

⁴³⁰ T. 1428, vol. 35, 815c. The original text is "一切不得故斷眾生命，下至蟻子。若比丘，故自手斷人命，求刀授與人，教死、歎死、勸死，與人非藥，若墮胎、若厭濤殺，自作方便，若教人作，非沙門、非釋種子。" The same precept applies to nuns too. See vol. 48, p. 925b.

Buddha knew and asked the monk, "What is in your mind [when doing this]?" The monk replied, "[I did this] for killing [the fetus] in my mind." The Buddha said, this is the transgression of *pārājika*.⁴³¹ The next case is similar, stating a woman, after getting pregnant when her husband not at home, went to ask medicine from a monk to abort. The monk chanted a spell over a medicine, giving it to her and successfully aborting the fetus. The Buddha asked, "What is in your mind?" The monk replied, "to kill it." The Buddha said, "This is the transgression of *pārājika*. If a monk chants a spell over a powder medicine, over flowers, over clothes with fragrance, or over a fetus directly [in order to kill the fetus], these are all transgressions of *pārājika*."⁴³² The third and the fourth cases show a woman, after getting pregnant with another man, went to see a nun and asked medicine for abortion. In these two cases, the nuns both replied, "I do not understand medicine." Then one helped the woman "massage the abdomen" (*anfu* 按腹) and the other "gnaw (*nie* 嚙) [the place where the fetus resides]" to successfully abort the fetuses. Both the case also received the verdict of "*pārājika*."⁴³³ The fifth case differs from the previous four ones. A woman went to a monk and asked him for medicine to abort after conceiving a child with another man. The monk gave her an excessive amount of "emetics" (*tuxiyao* 吐下藥). The mother died while the child survived. The Buddha knew and said, "The mother has died. [The monk] committed no

⁴³¹ T. 1428, vol. 56, 981a. The text here is "時有婦人，夫行不在，他邊得娠，即往家常所供養比丘所，語言：「我夫不在，他邊得娠，與我藥墮之。」比丘即呪食與之令食，彼得墮胎。比丘疑，佛問言：「汝以何心？」答言：「殺心。」佛言：「波羅夷。」"

⁴³² Ibid. The text here is "時有婦人，夫行不在，他邊得娠，即往家常所供養比丘所，語言：「我夫不在，他邊得娠，與我藥墮之。」比丘即呪食與之令食，彼得墮胎。比丘疑，佛問言：「汝以何心？」答言：「殺心。」佛言：「波羅夷。」"

⁴³³ Ibid, 981a-b. The original text of these two cases are as follows. "時有婦人，夫行不在，他邊得娠，往常所供養比丘尼所，語言：「阿姨！我夫行不在，他邊得娠，與我藥墮之。」比丘尼言：「大姊！我不解藥，汝來與汝按腹。」即為按之令胎墮。疑，佛問言：「汝以何心？」答言：「殺心。」佛言：「波羅夷。」" "時有婦人，夫行不在，他邊得娠，往常所供養比丘尼所，語言：「阿夷！我夫行不在，他邊得娠，與我藥墮之。」比丘尼言：「我不解藥，來為汝嚙之。」即當胎處嚙令墮。疑，佛問言：「汝以何心？」答言：「以殺心。」佛言：「波羅夷。」"

transgression [of *pārājika*]. [Though the medicine] was used for the convenience of aborting the fetus, [the fetus] did not die. This is the transgression of *sthūlātyaya*."⁴³⁴

These cases of abortion in *Dharma-guṇṭaka-vinaya* show a variety of methods that monks or nuns may employ to aid lay people, usually women rather than men, to abort their illegitimate children. Food, medicine, flowers or clothes loaded with incantatory power, physical ways of massaging and gnawing, and a chemical way of taking emetics are all utilized to make miscarriage happen. Monks seem to have more access to medicine and medical knowledge than nuns. Additionally, monks and nuns' motives matter. The Buddha always asked their primary motive. However, the results of whether mothers and fetuses die or not constitute the key in the final judgment of their transgressions. If the fetus dies, the transgression is always the most severe one, *pārājika*. If the mother die and the fetus survive, the transgression is mitigated one level from *pārājika* to *sthūlātyaya*.

Intriguingly, whereas *Dharma-guṇṭaka-vinaya* seems to appreciate the life of a fetus much more than that of the mother, *Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* (*Shanjian lǚ* 十誦律) have a completely opposite concern and contradictory judgment. Regarding abortion, it states that, "If a monk offers a pregnant woman medicine such as emetics, nasal cleansing, enema, needles her blood vessels, excretes her tears or blood, while simultaneously think 'to make this woman die,' and if this woman really dies, the monk gets *pārājika*. If she does not die immediately but still die later, he also gets *pārājika*. If she does not die immediately and also not die later, the monk gets *sthūlātyaya*."⁴³⁵ "If a monk tries to kill the mother and thus

⁴³⁴ Ibid, 981b. The original text is "時有婦人，夫行不在，他邊得娠，往常供養比丘所，語言：「大德！我夫行不在，他邊得娠，與我藥墮之。」比丘即與過度吐下藥，母死兒活。彼疑，佛言：「母死，無犯；方便欲墮胎，不死，偷蘭遮。」" The subject of the phrase of "方便欲墮胎" is not clear here. It might refer to "the mother" or "the monk" using the medicine as convenient means to abort the fetus, so I use passive form to translate the phrase.

⁴³⁵ T. 1435, vol. 2, 9c. The original text is "墮胎者，有比丘與有胎女人吐下藥、灌鼻藥、灌大小便處藥、若針血脈、若出眼淚、若消血藥，作是念：「以是因緣令女人死。」死者，波羅夷。若不即死，後因是死，亦波羅夷。若不即死，後不因是死，偷蘭遮。"

command her to abort, he gets *pārājika*. If the fetus dies, he gets *sthūlātyaya*. If both die, he gets *pārājika*. If both do not die, he gets *sthūlātyaya*. If a monk tries to kill a fetus and thus purposely employ methods of abortion, and if the fetus dies, he gets *pārājika*. If the mother dies, he gets *sthūlātyaya*. If both die, he gets *pārājika*. If both do not die, he gets *sthūlātyaya*.⁴³⁶ It further adds, "If a monk makes a pregnant woman to do heavy work, carry heavy things, walk before carts, or climb a steep slope, and also thinks that 'may these cause the woman die,' and if the woman die, the monk gets *pārājika*. If she does not die immediately but dies later, he also gets *pārājika*. If she does not die immediately and also not die later, he gets *sthūlātyaya*."⁴³⁷ Finally, "if a monk massages the abdomen for a woman to abort, and the mother dies, he gets *pārājika*. If the fetus dies, he gets *sthūlātyaya*. If both die, he gets *pārājika*. If both do not die, he gets *sthūlātyaya*." "If a monk massages the abdomen to abort a fetus, and if the fetus dies, he gets *pārājika*. If the mother dies, he gets *sthūlātyaya*. If both die, he gets *pārājika*. If both do not die, he gets *sthūlātyaya*."⁴³⁸

In *Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya*, much more concern is given to the issue of whether a woman dies or not, whereas *Dharma-guṇṭaka-vinaya* tends to only focus on the fetus's life. Therefore, in *Dharma-guṇṭaka-vinaya*, if a monk intends to kill and manage to kill a fetus, he will get the most severe transgression. And thus when a mother dies yet the fetus survives, as shown in its fifth case, a monk just got *sthūlātyaya*. In *Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya*, on the contrary, the text pays attention to whether monks' abortion medicine given to women makes

⁴³⁶ Ibid, 9c-10a. The original text is "若是比丘為殺彼母故令墮胎，若母死者，波羅夷。若胎死者，偷蘭遮。若俱死者，波羅夷。俱不死者，偷蘭遮。若比丘為殺胎故作墮胎法，若胎死者，波羅夷。母死者，偷蘭遮。俱死者，波羅夷。俱不死者，偷蘭遮。"

⁴³⁷ Ibid, 10a. The text reads "有比丘使懷妊女人重作、或擔重物、教使在車前走、若令上峻岸，作是念：「以此因緣令女人死。」死者，波羅夷。若不即死，後因是死，亦波羅夷。若不即死，後不因是死，偷蘭遮。"

⁴³⁸ Ibid, 10a. The text reads "若比丘為母故按腹，母死者，波羅夷。胎死者，偷蘭遮。俱死者，波羅夷。俱不死者，偷蘭遮。若為胎故按腹，胎死者，波羅夷。母死者，偷蘭遮。俱死者，波羅夷。俱不死者，偷蘭遮。是名按腹。"

her die or not, and the severity of transgression also depends on her death or survival. *Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* also further differentiates the object that a monk tries to kill in the process of abortion. Only does a monk manage to kill the object, no matter a mother or a fetus, which he originally plans to kill, he gets the most severe *pārājika*.⁴³⁹ Besides, the methods shown here for abortion are also more abundant than those in *Dharma-guṇṭaka-vinaya*. It seems to reflect that any kind of medicine with assorted application purposes could have been utilized by monks to carry out abortion.

Most of the above narratives of abortion is said to be requested by women becoming pregnant out of wedlock or employed by monks and nuns to help them. In *Pinimu jing* 毘尼母經 (*Vinaya-māṭṛkā-sāstra*), however, it gives a somewhat different picture. It tells that a woman communicated with another man after her husband passed away. Getting pregnant and fearing being found, she asked the man to seek medicine for abortion. This man went to monks and nuns to look for medicine and managed to abort the unlawful fetus. The Buddha knew it and thus made a precept, stipulating that "monks and nuns are not allowed to give people abortion medicine."⁴⁴⁰ Besides the appearance of a man here looking for abortion medicine, the text is unique in that the Buddha explicitly prohibits the monastics to offer abortion medicine, whereas in the previous major Vinayas only the transgressions that monks and nuns commit by killing lives in the process of aiding abortion or giving medicine for abortion are stipulated. Why is there this kind of difference between Vinayas and the *Vinaya-māṭṛkā-sāstra*? This may be worth exploring further.

Indigenous Scriptures

⁴³⁹ This principle is also the same in *Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* (*Genben shuoyiqie youbu pinaiye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶). See T. 1442, vol. 7, 662b.

⁴⁴⁰ T. 1463, vol. 4, 825a. The original text is "有一女人夫主已喪，姪欲熾盛與外人交通，遂成有胎。恐事發露，語交通者求藥墮胎。此人於比丘比丘尼中求得藥，即墮其胎。佛聞而制戒：「不聽出家者與人墮胎藥。」"

Whereas in Buddhist vinayas monastics are charged with responsibility of killing mothers and fetuses in their assistance of abortion, both translated and indigenous Buddhist scriptures only blame women for their deed of abortion. I examine one translated scripture of this kind in the section of "miscarriage and abortion" in Chapter Three. Here I want to examine an indigenous scripture on this issue. This text is called *the Sūtra of Erasing Sins and Protecting Children for Longevity Taught by Buddha* (*Foshuo changshou miehzui huzhu tongzi jing* 佛說長壽滅罪護諸童子經, *Longevity Sūtra* in short below). It opens with a women named Diandao 顛倒, literally meaning the one who holds an inverted, mistaken or distorted view.⁴⁴¹ She comes in front of the Tathāgata of Universal Illumination and Correct View (Puguang Zhengjian rulai 普光正見如來) to confess her past transgression of aborting a fetus. She wails and beseeches him to save her from punishment in Avīci hell. The Tathāgata teaches her to atone for her sin by repenting before Buddha and monks, stating that once she no longer aborts children, the sin will vanish. After death, her family should invite monks to chant Mahāyāna scriptures for her to avoid the examination by the underworld messenger sent by King Yama. If the messenger finds that she has no evil deeds, he will hold a five-color banner when he brings her to King Yama's place, and then the hell will immediately transform into a place full of spring water and lotus flowers. If she does not believe in Mahāyāna teachings, the messenger will hold a black banner when bringing her there, and she will be tortured in the eighteen levels of hell filled with all kinds of punishments like being flung into a mountain of knives, trees of swords, or onto a bed of hot iron, and so on.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ The term diandao is commonly seen in Buddhist scriptures. One famous phrase in *Heart Sūtra* is "liberating oneself from distorted views and illusions" (*yuanli diandao mengxiang* 遠離一切顛倒夢想). The term is used here as the woman's name and simultaneously referring to her "distorted" deed of abortion.

⁴⁴² *Foshuo changshou miehzui huzhu tongzi jing* 佛說長壽滅罪護諸童子經 (Taishō 17, Vol 11), translator attributed to Buddhapāla, 394a-395a.

The Tathāgata of Universal Illumination and Correct View tells Diandao that there are five sins that are hard to be eliminated just by repentance. These are patricide and matricide, poisoning fetuses, demolishing stupas and temples, wounding the body of the Buddha, and destroying the harmony of sanghas. The Tathāgata, after stopping a ghost messenger who is chasing after Diandao to bring her to the hell for her past sin of abortion, preaches to her the teachings of the Twelve Links of Dependent Arising (*shier yinyuan* 十二因緣) and Six Perfections (Six Pāramitās 六波羅蜜). He tells her, “in the future generation when there are five disturbances,” if there are sentient beings “who have committed these five heinous crimes”⁴⁴³ and “who can receive the teaching of this *Longevity Scripture*, copy and recite it, no matter whether it is copied by oneself or by others, her sins will be removed and she will be reborn in Brahma Heaven.”⁴⁴⁴

After hearing these teachings, the woman Diandao becomes pleased, purified, and enlightened. At that time, there is a rich Brāhman who suddenly becomes seriously sick and needs humans’ eyes to make medicine to cure the disease. Knowing this, Diandao wants to sell her eyes and vows to make forty-nine copies of the *Longevity Sūtra*. Indra thus transforms himself into forty-nine people and comes to Diandao’s place to copy the sūtra for her. Diandao cuts out her bones to make a writing brush, and uses her blood as ink to offer to the copyists. In seven days, they finish making all the copies. They ask Diandao to pay them by selling her eyes. Diandao thus commands Caṇḍāla to gouge out her eyes. At this moment, Diandao’s brave deed of donating her life to copy the sūtra moves them. They praise her, give

⁴⁴³ The Five Heinous Crimes, or *wuni* 五逆, according to DDB, though have different sets, usually refer to any five of following things: patricide, matricide, wounding Buddha’s body, destroying stupas and temples, ill-treatment or killing of a monk, a nun, a bodhisattva, or arhat (saint), denial of the karmic consequences of ill deeds, acting or teaching others accordingly, an unceasing evil life, violation of a mother or a full-ordained nun. This list seems never contains abortion. It is interesting that the author of this scripture inserts fetus poisoning or abortion into this list of the five greatest crimes of Buddhism.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, 395a-c.

up the thought of selling her eyes to the rich Brāhman, and request her to deliver them after she achieves enlightenment.⁴⁴⁵

The second half of this scripture seems to be an independent text attached to the story of the woman Diandao sometime later. In the second half of the sūtra, it also calls itself the *Sūtra of Erasing Sins for Longevity, Twelve Links of Dependent Arising and Buddha Nature* (*Changshou miezhui shier yinyuan foxing jing* 長壽滅罪十二因緣佛性經). Though the title is not totally irrelevant to what is told in the first half, it actually has a content and style completely different from it. It opens with a new story, describing that King Prasenajit once hears a woman crying outside of the palace; she is terribly sad over one of her beloved son's death, and worries about the other one who is also going to die. In order to save her son, King Prasenajit brings her together with his ministers to Buddha's place to seek help. Buddha tells the King that the reason why this woman keeps losing her children is because in the past generation, as a stepmother, she poisoned and killed thirty sons of the previous mother. These children therefore vowed to take revenge by being reborn as her children in this life and making her heartbroken.⁴⁴⁶

Buddha tells the audience that every time a child is conceived, the demon king Pāpīyas always waits for chance to take the child's life. Buddha then offers a dhāranī which can dispel evil demons, cure any kind of children's disease and increase their lifespan. At this time, the bodhisattva king of medicine, Jīvaka, offers to Buddha his knowledge of children's diseases. He tells Buddha that there are nine causes of children's diseases that shorten their lives. The first is that parents have intercourse at an improper time. *The second is that the earth has been polluted with the birth blood.* The third is that they did not get rid of various small poisonous bugs in the children's navels. *The fourth is that they did not wipe the dirty*

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, 395c-396a.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, 396b-c.

blood of the fetus with cotton cloth. The fifth is that they killed (animals) for the banquet celebrating the birth. The sixth is that the mother ate various cold fruits. The seventh is that they fed the child with different kinds of meats mixed together when the child was sick. The eighth is that they let some inauspicious things be seen by the mother and the child during labor. If the mother and the fetus have not separated, that will make the mother die. If they have separated, the baby will die. These inauspicious things include corpses and transformative demons. Because they pollute eyes, they are called inauspicious things. Using particles of bovine bile, pearls, cinnabar, and honey can calm children's minds and prevent them from misfortune. The ninth is that they walked at night and were attacked by demons. If people are careful about these nine things, all children will not die.⁴⁴⁷

The story continues to describe how the demon king Pāpīyas and his demonic subordinates tried to disturb Buddha's sermon but were instead converted by him. They promise in turn to protect those receiving, reciting or copying this sūtra. Among these demonic subordinates, what is of interest to us is rāksasas. Very similar to what those rāksasas say in *Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children*, here they came in front of Buddha, telling him that, "World Honored One, from numerable eons we have been reborn as rāksasas. Demons of our kind are as numerous as the sands of the Ganges Rivers and compelled by hunger. Therefore we eat fetuses and infants' blood and flesh. We wait until the moment of intercourse between husbands and wives to prey on their essence, making them infertile. When a child enters into a womb, we follow behind it, hurting it and drinking its blood. From the first seven days of a child's birth to when he is ten years old, we always wait to take his life by changing ourselves into various kinds of evil and poisonous bugs, entering into his body and eating his five viscera, and all his essence and blood. This makes the infant vomit milk, have diarrhea, causes malnutrition, and malaria, and make his eyes and belly swell,

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, 397a.

until he gradually loses his life. Since we now have heard the World Honored One preaching this *Longevity Sūtra*, we, obeying your decree, will no longer prey on children even though we are compelled by hunger. ”⁴⁴⁸

The sūtra then turns to a series of predictions of all kinds of social and natural disorders which will happen in the age of Final Dharma, and spends a paragraph in the end to elaborate how impermanent the body is and the way to meditate on the impurity of the body. Since they are not related to our topic of reproductive healing, I will not discuss them in details here. But one thing worth noticing is that since these contents are probably excerpted from other different scriptures,⁴⁴⁹ it adds to the suspicion of the authorship of this scripture. Although the translation is attributed to Buddhapāla, who came to Tang China in 676 CE, we cannot find any record mentioning that he has rendered this scripture in any medieval Buddhist catalogue. The only scripture that was acknowledged as his translation by these catalogues is the *Sūtra of Dhāraṇī of the Jubilant Corona* (*Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經). Moreover, as we have seen above, not only is the part in which the rāksasas describe themselves is similar to the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Protecting Children*, the second half of this scripture also has an independent content and a separate title from the first half. Given all these inconsistencies within the text, this scripture may very well be compiled from different sources and written in China rather than translated by Buddhapāla in the Tang.

Do we know when this scripture was composed in China? This is a question that I am unable to answer for sure right now. But by analyzing some interesting passages, we may make a guess about the period it appeared, and suggest a connection of this sūtra with others with similar topics. First of all, the most striking feature throughout this text is its harsh

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, 397c.

⁴⁴⁹ For example, the part describing impurity of the body in the *Longevity Sūtra* is almost parallel to a paragraph in the *Nirvana Sūtra*. See *Longevity Sūtra*, p. 400a and *Nirvana Sūtra* (T374, vol12), 367a-b.

criticism of abortion. It holds the idea that women will be punished in hell due to the act of intentional abortion. Though abortion, as a act of killing, is clearly prohibited in all Vinayas translated in the medieval period, and often became a target for attack by medieval Confucians and Daoists who accused nuns of “aborting fetuses and killing infants” (*duotai shazi* 墮胎殺子, or *suntai shazi* 損胎殺子) in their polemics with Buddhists at the time,⁴⁵⁰ yet as far as I can tell, there seems to be no indigenous sūtra before Tang that singles this issue out and, especially, that discusses it in an entire scripture except this *Longevity Sūtra*.

The second noteworthy part is the depiction of the scenes of underworld. Hell, as we see in the *Longevity Sūtra*, simply consists of King Yama and his messenger, and lacks mention of the Ten Kings, an indispensable component of the underworld since *the Sūtra of Ten Kings* (*Shiwang jing* 十王經) became popular between the late Tang and Five Dynasties.⁴⁵¹ Moreover, the depiction that King Yama will send off his messenger to the human world, check out one’s moral deeds and his belief in Buddhism, and decide if one needs to go to hell in this process can also be found in many novels and miracle tales in the Tang dynasty.

The third intriguing point is the story of the woman Diandao gauging out her eyes for the sake of copying this *Longevity Sūtra*. The notion of sacrificing one’s body in copying a sūtra to make a Dharmic donation can be seen in the *Great Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom* (*Dazhidulun* 大智度論, *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*), translated by Kumārajīva in the fourth century. The practice was also mentioned in Dharmakṣema’s translation of the *Nirvana Sūtra* in the early fifth century, and was later again seen in the “Chapter on the Vows of

⁴⁵⁰ If one checks CBETA, these terms appear several times in the early medieval Buddho-Daoist polemic articles collected in *Hongming ji* and *Guang hongming ji* these two compilations made in Liang of Southern dynasties and early Tang dynasty, respectively.

⁴⁵¹ Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in the Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003).

Samantabhadra" (Chapter of *Puxian xingyuan* 普賢行願品) of the forty-volume-version *Flower Ornament Sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayen jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經), which was translated at the end of the eighth century. In the *Nirvana Sūtra*, bodhisattva Kāśyapa promises to the Buddha that for promoting the sūtra he will copy the sūtra by “peeling his skin to be used as paper, shedding his blood to be used as ink, turning his marrow into water, and breaking his bones to be used as a pen.”⁴⁵² In the forty-volume-version of the *Flower Ornament Sūtra*, the bodhisattva Samantabhadra preaches to Sudhana who comes to seek his advice on practicing Dharma. Samantabhadra explains to him that, “those who want to learn from the Buddha should follow the example of Vairocana Buddha, who never slides back since his first arousal of the determination for enlightenment. He gives his life and body as dharma donation, peeling his skin to be used as paper and shedding his blood to be used as ink for copying Sūtras which have been accumulated as high as Mt. Sumeru. He does not value his body and life for the sake of treasuring Dharma.”⁴⁵³ If we use CBETA to search cases of those who have shed blood copying Sūtras in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan*), *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu Gaoseng zhuan*) and *Biographies of Eminent Monks* compiled in the Song (*Song Gaoseng zhuan*), we find no record of this kind mentioned in *Gaoseng zhuan*. Only two cases in the early Tang who has done so or intended to do so are mentioned in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*.⁴⁵⁴ In *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, however, we have six cases mentioning shedding blood to copy Sūtras or paint images of buddha and bodhisattva. Three of them were in mid- and late Tang, and the other three of

⁴⁵² Dharmakṣema trans., *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* (T. 374), 449a.

⁴⁵³ *Dafangguang fo huayen jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 (T. 293), translated by Kaśmīra śramaṇa Prajñā (Jibing monk banro 箕賓沙門般若), 845c.

⁴⁵⁴ The two cases in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* are in vol. 13, 525a, and vol. vol. 23, 627b.

them happened in the Five Dynasties.⁴⁵⁵

Overall, this *Longevity Sūtra* seems to combine several elements from multiple Buddhist scriptures. The overlap of its title of "protecting children" with the *Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children* shows the probable source of its inspiration and informs us that its date may not be earlier than the Northern Wei dynasty when the latter text was translated by Bodhiruci. Its opposition to abortion was similarly seen in the polemics between Buddhism and Daoism during the fifth and sixth centuries. Its promotion of donating one's bodies for the sake of Dharma is a common theme in the three medieval Chinese monastic hagiographies. More significantly, in the second half of the *Longevity Sūtra*, there are admonishments of polluting the earth with the birth blood and that of killing lives for the banquet after birth. The former concern also appears in the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* and the latter one is identical to what we have seen in a allegedly seventh-century translation, *Sūtra of the Original Vows of Bodhisattva Dizang*. The *Blood Bowl Sūtra* started to circulate around the late twelfth century.⁴⁵⁶ According to Charlotte Furth and Francesca Bray's studies, it is during this period, namely in the Song, that a woman's reproductive role was more and more emphasized, stimulated by the spread of neo-Confucian agnatic lineages during the Song.⁴⁵⁷ In the field of medicine, the idea that "in women Blood is the leader" also became the most popular medical theory in explaining the cause of and treatment for women's diseases.⁴⁵⁸ I think the coincidence between emphasizing blood in medical texts and its prominent role of spiritual

⁴⁵⁵ See Shi Zangning 釋贊寧, *Song Gaoseng zhuan* (No. 50, T2061), vol.7, 747a (use blood to copy sūtra and paint Buddhist image, in the Five dynasties); vol. 14, 792a (sūtra -copying, in the mid-Tang); vol. 23, p. 856b (sūtra-copying, in the mid- and late Tang); 859a (image-painting, in the Five Dynasties); vol.25, 870b (sūtra-copying in the Five Dynasties; vol. 26, 877b (sūtra-copying, in the late Tang).

⁴⁵⁶ Michel Soymié, "Ketsubongyō no shiryōteki kenkyūi," in Michel Soymié and Iraya Yoshitaka eds., *Dōkyō kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shōshinsha, 1965), vol. 1, 109-166.

⁴⁵⁷ Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin*, 130-131; Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 150-155.

⁴⁵⁸ Furth, Ch. 2, especially pp. 60-61, 92.

offence in religious texts, and the coincidence between emphasizing women's role as mainly a mother in medical texts and ascribing the faults of miscarriage and abortion to them in religious texts are definitely not accidental. However, a more profound and complete explanation of these historical coincidences still needs further research.

In addition, the depiction of the hell in the *Longevity Sūtra* merely consists of two actors, King Yama and his messenger, and lacks the mention of the Ten Kings. The former two often appear in novels and miracle tales in the Tang dynasty. The Ten Kings, on the other hand, do not become the popular component of hell in folk arts and literature such as miracle tales, transformation texts and Buddhist sculptures until the late Tang (9th C.) and Five Dynasties (10th C.). The existence of the Ten Kings even turned into an indispensable part of underworld bureaucracy in the Ming-Qing period. Therefore, we can first safely exclude the possibility that the *Longevity Sūtra* was made after the Song, and infer that it probably emerged during Tang-Song period.

Finally, if we turn to the historical environment to think about the reason why abortion and infanticide was such an important issue for some people that they would take the trouble to create a scripture particularly to address it, we do find in the Song dynasty that there was really a considerable anxiety among literati and officials on this very problem. Along with the growth of neo-Confucian familism, literati elites spent great efforts criticizing this phenomenon, writing articles of moral persuasion, making policies to stop this custom that was considered not only uncivilized but also weaken the strength of the state.⁴⁵⁹ Seeing female reproductive function and fertility as part of their responsibility due to the increasing concern for the patrilineal family with the revival of Confucianism, the literati now tended to intervene in various reproductive issues more.⁴⁶⁰ With this historical background, it is not too

⁴⁵⁹ Liu Jingzen 劉靜貞, *Bujuzi: Songren de shenyu wenti* 不舉子: 宋人的生育問題 (*Abortion and Infanticide: The Birth Issue of Song*) (Taipei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1998); Furth, 130.

⁴⁶⁰ Furth, 130.

surprising that someone would create a text like the *Longevity Sūtra* to condemn abortion and infanticide. I also believe that this historical background of stressing motherhood had something to do with the appearance or spread of the scriptures like the *Longevity Sūtra*, *Blood Bowl Sūtra* and its Daoist counterpart from the Song onwards. Today, the Buddhist repentance rituals based on the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* are held not only for the women who have merely given birth or died in childbirth, but also those who have aborted children, although the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* does not mention abortion at all. Hopefully in the future we will find more evidence for the dating of these two Buddhist scriptures and their association with each other.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined narratives related to childbirth and the healing resources available for dealing with it in Buddhist canonical sources in treating infertility and seeking pregnancy, pregnancy care, difficult birth, postnatal care for mothers and newborns, and miscarriage and abortion. There are indeed quite a number of scriptures addressing the issues and offering relevant healing techniques and rituals. These scriptures include translations and indigenous Chinese compositions. Among them, some suggest regular Mahāyāna practices to solve the problems, such as worshipping Buddha or a specific bodhisattva, reciting their names, or receiving, chanting, and copying the scriptures to get rid of bad karma and to acquire blessings of obtaining offspring, safe childbirth, and divine protection of children's growth. Some are dhāranī scriptures, which generally regard demons as leading pathogens rather than bad karma. Thus they rely on the knowledge of these demons' names, using dhāranīs, talismans, and seals to tackle the problems. The ways of using these techniques also evolved from a simple model to a complex one. While in the early

stage reciting a dhāranī itself is sufficient to expel demons and sicknesses, employing a dhāranī in later stages incorporates more and more other Buddhist practices into a whole set of ritual. Materiality also acquires increasing significance. More physical substances are used as media over which incantations are chanted and patients were instructed to ingest or apply as medicine. As Paul Copp indicates, the striking feature of incantatory practices is the various ways of their engagement with the bodies. When being applied to tackling childbirth, the importance of substantial media and bodily engagement is equal or matter even more. In addition to Mahāyāna and incantatory healing practices for childbirth, some scriptures inherit Āyurvedic obstetrics and pediatrics. They inherit not only Āyurvedic demonology (like *Dhārāni Sūtra for Protecting Children*) but also its tradition of materia medica (like *Sūtra on Obstetrics Spoken by the Sage Kāśyapa*). The *Sūtra of Rāvana's Explanations of How to Cure Children's Diseases* even shows that Buddhism treats reproductive problems by not only combining Āyurvedic demonology and materia medica that already have some medical effect but also adding on top of them its own sacrifice ritual to make the treatment much more powerful.

Buddhist deities play prominent roles in treating reproduction. Bodhisattvas like Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) and Ksitigarbha (Dizang) are associated with childbirth several times in scriptures. Buddhas like Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Akṣobhya-buddha are said to be divine healer, health-protector, or medicine-provider and also assume the same roles in granting blessings to reproduction. At the same time, demons and local divinities are likely critical in determining the result of reproduction. Yakṣas and rākṣasas, planetary-mother-demons or demons of twelve calendrical cycles, God of Soil and Land, the Demon King of Lifespan, King Yama and his messenger all have different extents of power to decide the success or failure of childbirth, or to punish those who have aborted.

The above sources prove to us that in addition to making the issue of human

reproduction merely as a doctrinal metaphor of suffering or a sanctified background of a hagiographical protagonist's appearance in the world, Buddhism has its own pragmatic ways directly engaging with the issue. When involving what we may label as "obstetrics" and "pediatrics" today in terms of modern medicine, Buddhism never draws a line between its teaching and its healing discourses and practices. They are intertwined. However, even today in seemingly neutral and objective modern medicine, as Susan Sontag and Emily Ahern convincingly argue, there are still implicit assumptions, metaphors and implications embedded in it. When we adopt a healing or a medical system, not only do we receive its etiology, pathology and treatments, but also we are exposed to the influence of those implicit assumptions, metaphors, and implications about the bodies, gender and life hidden beneath that healing and medical system.⁴⁶¹ In terms of Buddhism, there seems to be no other case that best exemplifies this point than abortion. As seen in the *Longevity Sūtra*, when Buddhism is used to deal with miscarriage and abortion, the whole package of its demonic etiology, idea of karmic retribution, and attribution to female inferiority and impurity that constitute the narrative explicating the cause and treating the illness may simultaneously be transmitted to the recipients of its healing service. And the profound influence of Buddhist discourses of abortion on people continues all the way till today via its ritual healing practices.⁴⁶² As we shall see more clearly in the next chapter, when Buddhist demonic etiology and therapeutics were applied to dealing with childbirth in medieval China, its worldview, teachings and concepts of bodies and gender also somewhat made its way permeating through people's lives and mentalities.

⁴⁶¹ Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors* (Picador, 2001); Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (1987, 2001). Also see Conclusion.

⁴⁶² William La Fleur's *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) is a representative research concerning the issue in modern Japan. Marc L. Moskowitz has done a field research on the issue in Taiwan a decade ago, see *Haunting Fetus: Abortion, Sexuality, and Spirit World in Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001). But there seems no similar study on the issue in modern China.

Chapter Five

Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism:

Historical and Archeological Sources

If people go through miracle tales or strange writings of medieval China, there is certainly no lack of stories about Buddhist monks treating diseases and even illnesses related to childbirth. These stories display monks' marvelous power, educate audience about the inescapability of the law of karma and retribution, and inform them of the importance of accumulating merit to transcend the law via the help of the Three Jewels. Birth as a starting point of *samsāra* and fatal moment of mundane life is described in these narratives to exemplify the karmic law and monastic capacity to intervene. Among several stories of this kind collected in the *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping guangji* 太平廣記) which I shall discuss in the end of this chapter, the one narrating how a mysterious monk cured barrenness is intriguing:

The princess of Dai of the Tang dynasty has married Zheng Wanjun of Yingyang and had no children for many years. There was a monk named Hehe, who appeared to be crazy and foolish, but people called him a saint. His predictions usually came true. He resided in Daan Temple and [was in charge of] its renovation. He often came to the princess's house. Wanjun once asked him, "I have no heir and hope to have a son. Could the master be able to bestow on me the grace?" Master Hehe said, "Give me three thousand rolls of silk, and the princess will give birth to two boys." Wanjun did it as he said. Monk Hehe took the silk to the temple, saying to cultivate the merit [for Wanjun]. Later he informed Wanjun, "The princess is becoming pregnant now. I command two heavenly beings to descend and become the princess' sons." He also said, "The princess has a small belly. Could she bear two males at the same time? I shall make [them to be born] in the same year yet at different time." Subsequently the princess indeed became pregnant and gave birth to two sons in the beginning and at the end of the year respectively. The older one was named Qianyao, and the younger one Huiming. Both grew to be handsome and erudite.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶³ *Taiping Guangji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), vol. 97, "Mysterious Monks (yiseng 異僧), the 11th," 647-648. The original text reads "唐代國公主適滎陽鄭萬鈞，數年無子。時有僧和和者，如狂如愚。衆號為聖。言事多中。住大安寺，修營殿閣。和和常至公主家，萬鈞請曰：「吾無嗣，願得一子，惟師降恩，可得乎。師曰：「遺我三千疋絹，主當誕兩男。」鈞如言施之。和和取絹付寺，云修功德。乃謂鈞曰：「主有娠矣，吾令二天人下，為公主作兒。」又曰：「公主腹小，能併娠二男乎。吾當同年而前後耳。

This story, whether it is a historical fact or a fiction created by the literati, reflected a true mentality of people in the medieval period. That is, a Buddhist monk could be the one to be approached to consult and to acquire assistance on reproductive issues. In this case, the problem is to seek pregnancy. As we have seen in the Introduction, in Xuanzang's case, the problem is to pray for the smooth gestation and birth of the imperial heir. In Tanluan's case, it is the emergency of dealing with difficult childbirth for a commoner's family. In the last chapter, we also see in the Tripitaka containing abundant healing resources ranging from treating infertility to difficult birth and postnatal care. In this story of the monk Hehe, it does not mention any technical details like specific cult, rite or talismans that the monk employed to make the princess conceive. Rather, this story stresses "cultivating the merit" as the crucial step and spotlights the monk's supernatural power of "commanding heavenly being" and clairvoyance of gauging the womb's size and the anticipated time and order of giving birth to two children.

This story exemplifies how Buddhist teaching may infiltrate into supplicants' mind while they beseech monks' intervention relating to their reproductive problems. I have pointed in chapter 2 and 3 that Buddhism regards birth as the root of suffering for ordinary people yet possibly see it as the proof of or self-fulfilling prophecy of becoming awakened and sacred. How would this dualistic view be channeled to those who look for Buddhism to solve their reproductive issues while they receive healing resources from it? In fact, I shall argue throughout this chapter that given the high fatality rate of childbirth in the medieval period,⁴⁶⁴ Buddhist healing resources for childbirth were welcomed and an efficient vein to

公主遂娠，年初歲終，各誕一子。長曰潛耀。少曰晦明。皆美丈夫，博通有識焉。”

⁴⁶⁴ Yao Ping 姚平, *Tangdai funu de shengming lichen* 唐代婦女的生命歷程 (The Life Course of Tang Women) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), 303-305; Mao Hanguang 毛漢光, "Tangdai funu jiating jiaose de jige zhongyao shiduan: yi muzhiming weili 唐代婦女家庭的幾個重要時段" (Some important life phases of Tang women in their family roles: take tomb epitaphs as examples), in Bao Jialin 鮑家麟 ed., *Zhongguo funu shi lunwen ji* 中國婦女史論文集 (Taipei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1995). Both author point out the high percentage

convey Buddhist teachings from its cosmology in general to its concepts of life, birth, the body and gender in specific. The other interesting point of the above story is the monk's deed of "commanding heavenly being," which resembles Daoists' similar capacity of commanding heavenly gods to relieve illnesses. When tackling supplicants' sicknesses, some monks may rely on prayers or observation of auspiciousness like Xuanzang and some on his medical expertise like Tanluan. The monk Hehe's appealing to gods is another popular method of treating illnesses shared both by Buddhist and Daoist specialists. The extreme uncertainty of reproductive process made the treatment of childbirth especially a contesting yet interchanging arena between the two religions. As we recall, Xuanzang was legendarily said to have transformed the sex of the imperial fetus, by which he proved Daoists' prediction of the fetus's sex wrong and the superiority of the Three Jewels. Tanluan gained his medical expertise by studying with the Daoist Tao Hongjin. The series of Buddhist spells, talismans and rites for treating reproductive difficulties shown in the last chapter were also largely borrowed from or mingled with elements of native religions. The main project of this chapter is to detect the evidence and popularity of these religious healing resources that have been carried out for treating childbirth in the real historical conditions of medieval China. This investigation shall tell us not just the practical aspect of Buddhist medicine on the ground, specifically reproductive medicine, but also the extent of exchange between Buddhist and Daoist healing resources in a larger sense.

Research on the real application of Buddhist medicine in medieval China is much less than the study of textual analysis of the same topic. I have given in the literature review of the last two chapters an overview of the latter field. Here I want to identify some important studies on the practice of Buddhist medicine or healing resources in history that my exploration of this chapter is based on or refer to. First of all, in regard to the term of

of fatality of childbirth of Tang women.

"Buddhist medicine," although it has appeared as the title of a Buddhist scripture, as a category in parallel with "Chinese medicine" or "Western medicine" is emerging only in the mid-twentieth century.⁴⁶⁵ Before that, the label refers to the whole range of the terms denoting medicine in the modern sense may be "the suffering of sickness" (*bingku*病苦), a collective name created by Daoshi 道世 of Tang dynasty in his Buddhist encyclopedia to contain a variety of Buddhist understandings of the origins of disease, therapeutic techniques, means of caring for the sick and dying, miraculous cures, and others thought to be related by him.⁴⁶⁶

In Chapter Four and this chapter I follow Daoshi and refer to what he included under the title of "the suffering of sickness" in his work as what I call "Buddhist medicine," a usage admittedly out of convenience for general understanding here. Thus the "Buddhist medicine" as referred here, according to Daoshi's definition, contains Buddhist explanations of the reasons giving rise to illnesses, ways for caring for a sick monastic, all the means serving to cure the illnesses, hospice facilities for caring patients and the terminally ill, and miracle tales involving the cure of diseases by spirits and deities, the use of objects with magical power, and the intervention by the monastics.⁴⁶⁷ I will focus on the means treating reproduction including healing rites, incantations and talismans with magical power, a few critical materia medica that were utilized in accompany with the use of the previous healing techniques, cults of deities for acquiring posterity and assisting childbirth, prayers used together with copying or chanting scriptures, and miracle tales narrating monastic intercession.

I will review the previous studies along these lines and divide them into four categories to review them. I also indicate their connection with my exploration in this

⁴⁶⁵ Pierce Salguero, "Reexamining the Categories and Canons of Chinese Buddhist Healing," *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 28 (2015, New Taipei): 35-66, esp. 48.

⁴⁶⁶ Pierce Salguero, "Reexamining the Categories and Canons of Chinese Buddhist Healing," 40-43.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid; Daoshi, *Fayuan zhulin* (T. 2122), 984c-989c.

chapter.⁴⁶⁸ The first type of research exploring the role of Buddhist medicine in medieval China comes from the scholars doing social history or being interested in the interaction between Chinese and foreign medicine. Liu Shufen in her early studies on the local Buddhist communities, *yiyi* 邑義, has noticed that Buddhist lay followers in these communities often participated in social charities under the lead of monks. Encouraged by the idea of "accumulating merit in one's fields of merit and develop one's field of compassion," they cared for the sick, donated medicine and foods to the needy, and buried the dead after wars.⁴⁶⁹ Her later study further indicates the impact of Buddhist peripatetic monks' healing activities and their storage and distribution of medicine on the governmental establishment of institutions doing the same deeds.⁴⁷⁰ In fact, as early as scholars began to study medieval hagiographies and miracle tales, they have already noticed a handful of stories depicting monks displaying their miraculous healing power or scriptures functioning as elixir curing all sorts of difficult diseases.⁴⁷¹ Recently Salguero examines cases of healing deeds done by monks or by divinities as recorded in the *Biography of Eminent Monks*, revealing a wide range of illnesses and means by which monks treated others or being treated, such as using acupuncture for difficult childbirth, deities operating on abdomen to clean the intestines,

⁴⁶⁸ For those which I have reviewed in Chapter Four, I will not repeat them here.

⁴⁶⁹ See Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, "Beiqi biaoqi xiang yi tshui shizhu: zhonggu fojiao shehui jiuji de gean yanjiu 北齊標異鄉義慈惠石柱: 中古佛教社會救濟的個案研究" (A Stone Pillar Inscription of a Buddhist Benevolent Society: A Case Study of Buddhist Charitable Activities in Medieval China), *New History* 5.4 (1994.12, Taipei): 1-50; *Tsubei qingjing: fojiao yu zhonggu shehui shenhua* 慈悲清淨: 佛教與中古社會生活 (Compassion and Purity: Buddhism and Medieval Chinese Social Life) (Taipei: Sanming shuju, 2000).

⁴⁷⁰ Liu Shufen, "Tang Song shi sengren, guojia he yiliao de guanxi: Cong yaofang dong dao huimin ju 唐宋時僧人, 國家和醫療的關係: 從藥方洞到惠民局," (Buddhist monks, the state and medical therapy in the Tang and Song Periods: From Formulary Cave to the Bureau for Benefiting the People), in Li Jianmin ed., *Cong yiliao kan zhongguo shi* 從醫療看中國史 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 2008), Ch.6, 145-202.

⁴⁷¹ See John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997); Robert F. Campany, "Notes on the Devotional Uses and Symbolic Functions of Sūtra Texts as Depicted in Early Chinese Buddhist Miracle Tales and Hagiographies," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 14.1 (1991): 28-72; "The Real Presence," *History of Religions* 32.3 (1993): 233-272; *Signs from the Unseen Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012).

employing incantations to treat paralysis of limbs and for dispelling epidemic.⁴⁷² Chen Ming with his interest in the intercommunication of Chinese and non-Chinese medicine has extensively explored the social roles and activities of "barbarians," *hu*胡, including those of monks engaging with medicine and healing as narrated in Tang poems, official histories and literati's notes, and tomb epitaphs.⁴⁷³ These studies exhibit the degree of Buddhist monks involved with healing activities in medieval society. They also provide the larger background against which I delve into specifically the cases of monks carrying out the treatment of childbirth by utilizing tales of this kind collected in hagiographies, miracle tales and literati's notes in the final part of this chapter.

The second group of scholarship inspiring this chapter stems from the research of Buddhist medicine per se, especially a specific branch of Buddhist medicine, and its role, transmission and practice in medieval China.⁴⁷⁴ In this regard, the study of the application of Buddhist ophthalmology in history has triggered scholars' first attention. Ji Xianlin and Fan Kaiwai have respectively discussed the transmission and historical evidence of the practice of Indian ophthalmology in China.⁴⁷⁵ Approaching from the concern of the transmission of Āyurvedic gynecology from India and Central Asia to China, Chen Ming has explored a series of issues of Buddhist gynecology including the theory of monthly or weekly fetal

⁴⁷² Salguero, "A Flock of Ghosts Bursting Forth and Scattering: Healing Narratives in a Sixth-Century Chinese Buddhist Hagiography," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 32 (2010): 89-120.

⁴⁷³ Chen Ming 陳明, *Zhongguo yiliao yu wailai wenhua* 中古醫療與外來文化 (Foreign Medicine and Culture in Medieval China) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chuban she, 2013), Ch.2, 57-113; Ch.5, esp. 297-343.

⁴⁷⁴ For an overview of the role of Buddhist medicine in the larger picture of Chinese medicine in medieval period, see Fan Kaiwai 范家偉, "Weijin nanbei chao shiqi de yiliao 魏晉南北朝時期的醫療," the section "fodao yu yiliao" (Buddhism, Daoism, and medicine), in *Zhongguo shi shinlun: yiliao shi fence* 中國史新論: 醫療史分冊 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 2015), 151-194; a similar brief article on Buddhist medicine he wrote is also collected in TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes eds., *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 77-80.

⁴⁷⁵ Ji Xianlin 季羨林, "Yindu yanke chuanru zhongguo kao 印度眼科傳入中國考" (Investigation on the transmission of Indian Ophthalmology), *Guoxue yanjiue* 國學研究, vol. 2, (Beijing: Beijing daxue chuban she, 1994), pp. 555-560; Fan Kaiwai, "Tang Song shidai yannei zhang yu jinzhen bozhang fa 唐宋時代眼內障與金針撥障法," *Chinese Studies* 222(2004, Taipei): 271-297.

transformation, gestation length and fetus' sex change in the womb.⁴⁷⁶ His recent publications examine the Indian goddesses Bāla-grahā who were said to be able to both cause fetuses or infants ill and protect them from diseases. These studies provide the best case demonstrating the influence of Buddhist deities particularly with reproductive healing power and the transmission of these goddesses via silk road through images and texts such as the *Sutra of Protecting the Children taught by the Buddha*.⁴⁷⁷

The third group of scholarship that this chapter largely refers to is the recent rising field of the study of Buddhist incantations, talismans and esoteric rites. Michel Strickmann in his inquiry into the Buddho-Daoist common concern of demonology and share of techniques of exorcism also include those related to and applied on the occasion of childbirth. Studies on the Incantation of Glory (*Zunsheng tuoluoni* 尊勝陀羅尼) and the Incantation of Wish Fulfillment (*Dasuiqiu tuoluoni* 大隨求陀羅尼) by Liu Shufen and Paul Copp demonstrate the omnipresent use of dhāraṇīs including treating infertility and difficult birth by means of various bodily wearing of these dhāraṇīs in visible or invisible forms.⁴⁷⁸ My analyses of the

⁴⁷⁶ Chen Ming, "Zhuan nu wei nan 轉女為男 (Turning Female to Male: An Indian Influence on Chinese Gynecology)?" *Asian Medicine: Tradition and Modernity* 1:2, 315-334; later collected in his *Zhonggu yiliao yu weilai wenhua*, 33-42; also see the literature review in chapter 3 on Buddhist gynecology, esp. the part mentioning Chen Ming (2004) and Li Qinpu (1997, 2006a, 2006b).

⁴⁷⁷ Chen Ming, "Huzhu tongzhi: xiyu de Bāla-grahā tuxiang jiqi tongzhi fang 護諸童子: 西域的 Bāla-grahā 圖像及其童子方" (Protecting Children: Images of Bāla-grahā and its formulary for caring the children), in his *Shufang yiyao: chutu wenshu yu xiyu yixue 殊方異藥: 出土文書與西域醫學* (Rare Formularies and Exotic Medicine: Excavated texts and Medicine of Western Regions) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chuban she, 2005), Ch5, 91-106; "Silu chutu mijiao yixue wenxian chuyi 絲路出土密教文獻芻議" (Excavated Texts of Esoteric Buddhism on the Silk Road), *Dunhuang tulu fan yanjiu 敦煌吐魯番研究* 15 (2015): 473-496; "Jiello he yu yaomu gui: sichou zhi lu de fojiao nushen xingxiang jiqi chuanbo 揭囉訶與曜母鬼: 絲綢之路的佛教女神形象及其傳播" (Grahā- and Planet-demons: the images of Buddhist goddesses and the transmission on the Silk Road), manuscript presented in 2012-2013 and given by the author in 2015.

⁴⁷⁸ Liu Shufen's studies on the Zunsheng dhāraṇī and its different material forms such as dhāraṇī pillars and mortuary pillars are first published on the *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* (Taipei) in the issues 67.1(1996):145-193, 68.3 (1997): 643-786, and 74.4 (2003): 673-763, and later collected altogether as a book *Miezui yu duwang: foding zunshen tuoluoni jingchuang zhi yanjiu 滅罪與度亡: 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經幢之研究* (Erasing Sins and Releasing the dead: Study on the Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī Pillars) (Shanghai: Shanhai guji chuban she, 2008); Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2014).

dhāraṇīs utilized in reproduction benefits from their pioneering research and insights of esoteric techniques used as means of healing and their striking attribute of bodily engagement.⁴⁷⁹

The fourth type of scholarship that this chapter draws on concerns those studying manuscripts from Dunhuang area. They are the major sources that my current chapter utilizes and so did many works mentioned above. A large number of Dunhuang manuscripts exhibit Buddhist resources that have been applied in the reproductive scenes. Li Xiaorong's monograph on Dunhuang esoteric Buddhist manuscripts provides a thorough overview of the subjects and application of these manuscripts including those related to childbirth.⁴⁸⁰ Scholars of Dunhuang studies on literature and social customs begin noticing the preponderance of Buddhist manuscripts related to tackling childbirth by employing spells and talismans, worshipping deities, copying and chanting scriptures, and holding liturgical assemblies.⁴⁸¹ In addition, several Dunhuang manuscripts of Buddhist texts contain medical formularies, lists of materia medica, or names of illnesses for childbirth, testifying somewhat their circulation and practice in real historical setting. Scholars have identified the subjects of these materials, but their contents and implications still wait for further analysis and decryption.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ Discussion of the evolution of usages and forms of dhāraṇī and esoteric rituals extended from it in medieval history, see Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory*, Ch.2; "Altar, Amulet, Icon Transformations in Dhār aṇī Amulet Culture, 740-980," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 17 (2008): 239-264; Koichi Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁴⁸⁰ Li Xiaorong 李小榮, *Mijiao wenxian lungao* 敦煌密教文獻論稿 (Research on the Buddhist Esoteric Texts from Dunhuang) (Beijing: Renming wenxue chuban she, 2003).

⁴⁸¹; Cheng A-tsai 鄭阿財, "Dunhuang xieben fodingxin guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing yanjiu 敦煌寫本佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經研究" (Study on the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Sūtra of Great Dhāraṇī of the Uṣṇīṣa-cittā*), *Dunhuangxue* 23 (2001.9): 21-48; Gao Guofan 高國藩, *Dunhuang fuzhou fensu* 敦煌符咒風俗 (Social customs of the use of talismans and incantations in Dunhuang) (Hong Kong: Donya wenhua chuban she, 2005), Ch.8, 83-90; Li Ling 李翎, "Dunhuang yinben jiu channan tuoluoni jiqi xiangguan wenti 敦煌印本救產難陀羅尼及其相關問題" (Dunhuang Printed Edition of Saving-Difficult-Birth Dhāraṇī), *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 140(2013.4): 78-85; Liang Liling 梁麗玲, "Dunhuang wenxian zhong de yunchan xisu yu fojiao xinyang 敦煌文獻中的孕產習俗與佛教信仰" (The reproductive customs and Buddhist belief in Dunhuang texts), *Dunhuang Tulufan yanjiu* 15 (2015): 395-408. See the discussion below for more relevant studies in these respects.

⁴⁸² For a collection of these Dunhuang medical texts, see Ma Jixing 馬繼興, *Dunhuang yiyao wenxian jijiao* 敦

Departing from these but not limited to them, my discussion below is divided into four sections. The first section examines a number of dhāraṇīs, talismans and seals offered for a series of reproductive issues among Dunhuang manuscripts and printed copies. I analyze both their literal and pictorial forms and contents, their usages, and decrypt their meanings. Corresponding to Paul Copp's view which considers Buddhist incantatory tradition being unexceptionally categorized as a subdivision of "Esoteric Buddhism" problematic,⁴⁸³ I observe that these sources have mixed considerably with Daoist elements and local customs. Moreover, Buddhist incantatory tradition appeared as an independent tradition even before being integrated into a complete set of Esoteric Buddhist rite or a deity's cult.⁴⁸⁴ Among the dhāraṇīs, talismans and seals used for childbirth, there are many especially associated with Avalokiteśvara, some of which I leave in the second section that centers on protective deities of childbirth. In this section, I discuss three deities, Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin), Hārītī (Guizimu 鬼子母) and Bāla-grahā (the Twelve Children-Protecting Goddesses, or huzhu tongzi nushen 護諸童子女神), exploring reproductive healing resources related to them and evidence of these resources being applied in the literal and iconic forms as shown in Dunhuang and archeological sources. Besides appealing to protective talismans and divinities, prayer is another prominent method that would be used by medieval people to request blessing of safe birth. The third section investigates prayer used in the Buddhist ritual setting and prayer written in colophon of a scripture-copying manuscript for this purpose. These

煌醫藥文獻輯校 (Nanjing: Jiansu guji chuban she, 1998). For an overview of Dunhuang manuscripts of medicine, see Vivenne Lo and Christopher Cullen eds., *Medieval Chinese Medicine* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), Introduction, Ch. 1, 2; Namba Tsuneo and Komatsu Katsuko eds., 仏教医学の道を探る (Investigating on the Way of Buddhist Medicine) (Ōsaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 2000), 29-61.

⁴⁸³ Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory*, Introduction.

⁴⁸⁴ Both Paul Copp and Koichi Shinohara observe that incantations and talismans appeared early as independent traditions and only later were absorbed to construct a complete set of Esoteric Buddhist ritual that moves its focus from incantation to deities' cults. See Copp, Ch. 2; "Notes on the Term Dhāraṇī in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Thought," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 71.3 (2008): 493-508; Shinohara, Introduction.

prayers involve common Buddhist practices that Mahāyāna sūtras constantly promote, namely inviting monks to hold dharma assembly and copying and reciting scriptures. In the fourth section I turn to monastic biographies, miracle tales and literati's notes to look into cases that display monks treating childbirth or any above resources being applied and mentioned in these narratives. As a whole, the crossing of boundaries between different religious traditions and between religion and medicine as reflected in these healing resources and tales is striking. Many Buddhist incantations and talismans for childbirth were not only borrowed from Daoism but also were collected into contemporary medical works together with other Daoist ones with similar functions.

Prayers for childbirth largely adopted native rhetoric of celebration of fertility and inherited traditional gender role and expectation of familial prosperity even though Buddhist ideas of impermanence and suffering of birth still appear within the same prayer. This intermingling notwithstanding, Buddhist healing resources for childbirth still served as an effective conduit through which Buddhist teaching, worldview and concepts of gender and the body were somewhat conveyed to its supplicants. And miracle tales are exactly the tool and the arena that both contribute to and reflect this phenomenon.

Treating Childbirth with Incantations, Talismans and Seals

Species continuity and the high risk of childbirth no doubt constitute a prominent concern of any pre-modern society. They are also the major subjects to be divined or to pray for help from supernatural power as shown in ancient Chinese almanacs and divinatory books. In tomb epitaphs of Tang dynasty, a woman's reproductive condition of infertility, failed pregnancy, or dying during giving birth in her life are considered critical moments in her life and thus often brought up by epitaph authors.⁴⁸⁵ Women dying during childbirth comprise

⁴⁸⁵ Yao Ping, *Tangdai funu de shengming lichen*, 291-292. The phrases that these epitaphs call these conditions

38% of death of female population in Tang dynasty.⁴⁸⁶ Before medieval period, cultural resources available for relieving this anxiety mainly come from native medicine and divinatory techniques that are based on the spatio-temporal taboo system. After that, Buddho-Daoist incantatory and talismanic traditions provide another very different approach to deal with the issue.⁴⁸⁷ In Dunhuang, many manuscripts and printed copies of these incantations, talismans and seals for this purpose are preserved. Their uses are versatile, covering seeking pregnancy, difficult birth, discharge of placenta and fetal or maternal death.

One incantation scripture that has recently been studied by Paul Copp, the wish fulfillment dhāraṇī (*Da suiqiu tuoluoni* 大隨求陀羅尼, or *suiqiu jide dazizai tuoluoni shenzhou* 隨求即得大自在陀羅尼神咒), translated by Mañicintana (d. 722) in 693, contains the powerful functions of making a woman "give birth to males." It also promises that "if she receives and holds it while pregnant then what is within her womb will be secure in its fastness." And "while giving birth she will be secure and joyful and without any sickness." Her sins in past lives that may hinder her from a safe birth will be "eliminated" and "without karmic obstructions."⁴⁸⁸ For children being born already, wearing this spell shall make them "secure and blissful, without any illness," and "have bright and fulsome appearances."⁴⁸⁹ There are at least eight manuscript copies of this dhāraṇī text that have been found in

are like "作腹不孕"(infertile), "孕而不育"(pregnant yet failed to grow [the child]) "不育而死"(failed to grow [a child] and die), or "頻妊不育" (pregnant often but failed to grow it).

⁴⁸⁶ Liang Liling (2015): 553. Yao Ping in her study on tomb epitaphs also finds numerous cases mentioning women dying in childbirth, see Yao Ping (2004): 303-305.

⁴⁸⁷ Before Daoist and Buddhist spells and talismans, the only case using exorcistic techniques to deal with daily issues is the section of "Spellbinding" (Jiejū 詰咎) in the *Day Book*. However, I find no mention of using exorcistic methods to deal with childbirth in it.

⁴⁸⁸ I follow Copp's translation, see his *The Body Incantatory*, 68; the original text, T. 1154, p. 637c.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid; T. 1154, p. 638a.

Dunhuang.⁴⁹⁰ Interestingly, Copp points out the striking feature of bodily engagement with this incantation, which is instructed by the scripture to be carried on one's arm for protection. An archeological excavation of a Tang tomb indeed found it being worn by the occupant on his upper arm. The use of the spell is not limited to childbirth but multifunctional. It can protect one by deities from demons, eliminating disasters and sins of past acts, dispelling sickness, and being protected from the harm in hell.⁴⁹¹ Since a woman's difficulty in giving birth is usually attributed to "her sins in past lives" or demons' harassment and can be seen as a kind of sickness, it is not surprising that this dhāraṇī includes the function of protecting childbirth and fulfilling the wish related to that.

Unlike the multipurpose wish fulfillment dhāraṇī, some Buddhist talismans and talismanic seals only aim at a particular reproductive phase. The manuscript P. 3874 (Figure 5.1) provides a talisman-seal that is suggested to use for "seeking sons" and for acquiring samādhi. Listed together with other twelve talisman-seals, which all specify their usages, purposes, and effects, this eighth one was marked on its right upper side for being supposedly written on "the eighth day of the fourth month," the birth date of the Buddha.⁴⁹² Under the image of the seal, it denotes,

This seal of the World-honored One. If there are women seeking sons and coming in front of the Buddha, or sentient beings seeking samādhi, write [it] on one's fore head and chant the Dhāraṇī of the Wish-Fulfilling Wheel (*ruyilun tuoluoni* 如意輪陀羅尼) for twenty-one times. Disperse⁴⁹³ the eight-merit water⁴⁹⁴ to the sky, there shall be

⁴⁹⁰ Liang Liling, "Dunhuang wenxian zhong de yunchan xisu," 403, note3. There are P. 3920, 北鱗 58, 潛 27, 89, 薑 65, 淡 60, 乃 28, and S.403.

⁴⁹¹ Copp, *The Body Incantatory*, 59-63.

⁴⁹² Gao Guofan (2005) notices this seal in p.144, and discusses others, pp. 142-154. Although this manuscript is titled "*Guanshiyin ji shizun fuyin shier tong ji shenzhou* 觀世音及世尊符印十二通及神咒," examining this manuscript will find that it actually has thirteen seals. Gao's Chinese transcription has some errors and his interpretation of the contents of these seals has limited help.

⁴⁹³ "Xun 遜" is equal to "xun 巽," meaning "to disperse."

⁴⁹⁴ "*Bashui* 八水" means "*ba gongde shui* 八功德水," the water with eight merits according to Buddhism. It is said that the sea under the Mt. Sumaru has the water with eight merits: sweet, cold, soft, enduring, clean, not

five colors of light shining upon the ground and the ten directions of lands, which altogether contribute to the shining of the light and deliver sentient beings from suffering. This is to make them together cultivate the gate of liberation. All Buddhas shall grant the prophecy of practitioners' future Buddhahood. For such samādhi of grandeur, use the above seal and write it on the eighth day of the fourth month.⁴⁹⁵

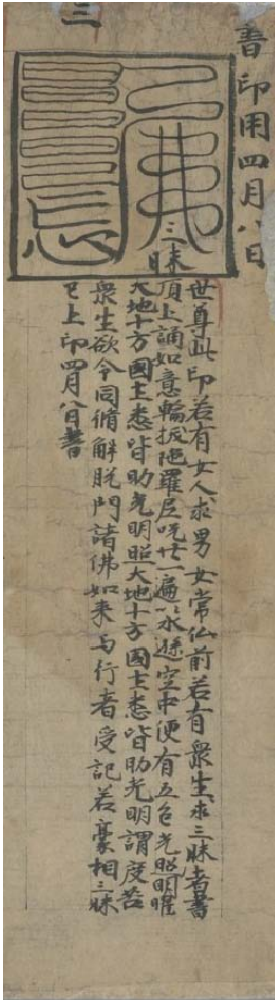


Figure 5.1 The Samādhi Seal of the Buddha, P. 3874 (Image from IDP), paper, roughly one fifth part in one of the seven fascicles of the manuscript, size of each fascicle, W. 40cm X H. 28cm (thus the width of the image around 8cm, H. 28cm)

Searching for the content of this manuscript inside the 2014 version of CBETA, there seems to be no scripture in Taishō matching its words here. However, its mention of Dhāraṇī of the Wish-Fulfilling Wheel provides a clue. The scriptures with the title containing the name of

stinky, not hurting the throat, and not hurting the belly.

⁴⁹⁵ The original text is "世尊此印，若有女人求男，女常佛前。若有眾生求三昧者，書頂上，誦《如意輪拔陀羅尼咒》廿一遍，八水遜空中，便有五色光照明耀大地十方國土，悉皆助光明，調度苦眾生，欲令同脩解脫門，諸佛如來與行者受記，若豪相三昧，已上印四月八日書。"

this dhāraṇī are mostly translated during the Early and High Tang.⁴⁹⁶ Among the translators, Mañicintana who rendered the above wish fulfillment dhāraṇī also contributed to the translation of the text. One prominent feature of this series of scriptures is its promise of curing all kinds of diseases by reciting the incantation. In Bodhiruci II's (d. 727) relatively complete version, for instance, it promises that those who can "believe and hold" the spell can

eliminate the four kinds of heavy sins, the five heinous crimes and the ten evil deeds⁴⁹⁷ that were committed and accumulated from past lives and this lives which should make one fall into the Avīci Hell. If people have all sorts of diseases, for one, two, three or four days, such as fever, wind malady⁴⁹⁸, jaundice, phlegm, being poisoned by magic (*gu* 蠱) or by curse of exorcism (*yandao* 厭禱), furunculosis, scabies, epilepsy, windy itching, any illnesses of head, nose, eyes, ears, tongues, mouths, teeth, throat, chest, upper part of one side of the body, heart, abdomen, waist and back, hands, feet, limbs and joints, as well as all sorts of disasters by demons and ghosts, all these will be cured by reciting this sūtra.⁴⁹⁹

The following chapters of this scripture further provide dozens of mudrās, the way of setting

⁴⁹⁶ In Taishō these scriptures and relevant esoteric rituals are collected in T. 20 from No. 1080 to No. 1091. The first four texts, No. 1080, 1081, 1082 and 1083, are scriptures, namely *the Sūtra of Dhāraṇī of the Wish-Fulfilling Wheel* (Skt. *Padma-cintāmaṇi-dhāraṇī*; Chi. *Ruyilun tuoluoni jing* 如意輪陀羅尼經), one fasc., translated by Bodhiruci; *the Sūtra of Dhāraṇī Spell of the Wish-Fulfilling Essence of the Bodhisattva of Spontaneous Contemplation* (*Guanzizai pusa ruyixin tuoluoni zhoujing* 觀自在菩薩如意心陀羅尼咒經), one fasc., translated by Yijing 義淨(635-713 CE); *the Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of the Wish-Fulfilling Wheel, Esoteric Store of the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva* (*Guanshiyin pusa mimizang ruyilun tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 觀世音菩薩秘密藏如意輪陀羅尼神咒經), one fasc., by Śikṣānanda (652-710 CE); *the Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of the Wish-Fulfilling Maṇi, the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva*, one fasc., by Mañicintana.

⁴⁹⁷ The four kinds of heavy sins (*sichong* 四重) refers to the four heavy offenses, or the four *pārājikas* that will lead to the expulsion of a monk or a nun from the saṃgha. They are 1) engaging in immoral sexual behavior or bestiality, 2) stealing, 3) killing a human being, and 4) lying about one's spiritual attainments. The five heinous crimes (*wuni* 五逆) has different versions in different texts, but the most commonly seen set is matricide, patricide, killing a saint, wounding the body of the Buddha, destroying the harmony of the saṃgha. As for the ten evil deeds (*shie* 十惡), they are unwholesome activities carried out through the three modes of bodily action, speech, and thought, including killing, stealing, debauchery, lying, ornate speech, insult (abusiveness), treachery (slander), converting, becoming angry, holding false views (or delusion). See the three entries in DDB.

⁴⁹⁸ For the understanding of the wind malady (*feng bin* 風病) in medieval China, a recent study is done by Chen Hsiu-fen 陳秀芬, "Wind Malady as madness in medieval China: Some threads from the Dunhuang medical manuscripts," In Vivienne Lo ed., *Medieval Chinese Medicine*, Ch.15, 345-362.

⁴⁹⁹ T. 1080, p. 189b-c. The original text is "是陀羅尼若有能信受持之者，過現造積四重五逆十惡罪障、應墮阿毘地獄之者，悉能消滅。若一日、二日、三日、四日、乃至七日，熱病、風病、癩病、痰病，蠱毒、厭禱、疔瘡、疥癩、癩癩、風痒，頭、鼻、眼、耳、脣、舌、牙齒、咽喉、胸脇、心腹、腰背、手足支節一切疾病，種種災厄魍魎鬼神，由經誦念皆得除滅。"

mandala, and most importantly, three kinds of recipes of materia medica which cures all difficulties including eye disease.⁵⁰⁰ Checking all the versions of this scripture, it is clear that this series of dhāraṇī scriptures do not claim to address reproductive issue and do not offer the seals as the images depicted on the manuscript but only mudrā "seal." There is indeed one mudrā seal named "the Great Lotus Samādhi" but it teaches only hand gestures and its usage in mandala ritual without mentioning anything about birth or the stamp-like image of the seal.⁵⁰¹

In fact, the stamp-like square seal on P. 3874 appears to be more associated with Daoist tradition of talismans and seals, but its use together with the Buddhist dhāraṇī of the Wish-Fulfilling Wheel show the mingling of the two traditions on the practical level for treating diseases. As early as in the Han dynasty, talismans and seals have been used by occultists (*fanshi* 方士) to expel demons and treat diseases that were usually believed to be caused by demons. Michel Strickmann in his ground-breaking study on Chinese use of spells, talismans and seals for the healing purpose demonstrates the background of their rise in history and analyzes the intertwining relationship of mutual borrowing of these exorcistic techniques between Daoism and Buddhism.⁵⁰² Against this historical backdrop when Daoism and Buddhism both believed the coming of the final age that led to demons prevailing and causing epidemics, both developed rich exorcistic resources, constantly learned from each other and therefore intermingled from the very early stage.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ For the materia medica for curing all difficulties, see T. 1080, 194a; T. 1082, 198c-199a; T. 1083, 201b-202a.

⁵⁰¹ T. 1080, 190b-c.

⁵⁰² Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magic medicine*, esp. Ch.2, 3 and 4.

⁵⁰³ For instance, the cult of book functions both "physician and medicine" and merely possessing them is sufficient to be protected against all possible attacks from illness- or misfortune-provoking demons. This is probably first advocated by Buddhism in the *Lotus Sutra*, but can be seen in the Daoist scripture *The Spirit-Spells of the Abyss* (*Donyuan shenzhou jing* 洞淵神咒經, first part compiled between 4th and 5th C.), which promises "the Master of the Law" can simply save those suffering from illness or in immediate peril just by "taking this scripture and going to their houses." In the *Dhāraṇī Miscellany* (*Tuoluoni zaji* 陀羅尼雜集, T. 1336, translated in the 6th C.), amid all the Sanskrit spells we can also find classic Chinese incantatory expressions against ulcers and swellings. See Strickmann, Ch.3, esp. 97-98, 105-106.

For our current analysis of the image of the square seal on P. 3874, Chapter Four "Ensigillation" in Strickmann's book is especially useful. He notices that there is already a mixture of hand seals (finger gesture, or *mudrā*) with stamp seals (which are carved on clay or wood in round or square form) both in the Daoist scripture *Essentials of the Practice of Perfection* (*Zhengyi fawen xiuzhen zhiyao* 正一法文修真旨要, made between 4th and 6th centuries) and in the *Consecration Sūtra* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經), an indigenously composed "Buddhist text" full of native elements in the fifth century. The character, *yin* 印, in both texts can alternatively refer to hand seals or stamp seals. And these seals are offered for therapeutic purpose, saving people from all kinds of illnesses by applying them on the diseased parts.⁵⁰⁴ In the *Dhāraṇī Book of Āṭavaka, General of the Demons* (*Azhapoju guishen dajiang shanfo tuoluoni jing* 阿吒婆拘鬼神大將上佛陀羅尼經, T. 1238), appearing some time during the first half of the sixth century, not only oral spells but also a long list of finger seals and the diagrams of talismans and stamp seals are provided for therapeutic rituals. These talismans and stamp seals incorporate Daoist terms and elements. Interestingly, one of the stamp seals, like our P. 3874, draws the power from the character of *fo*, Buddha, to deliver women from the danger of difficult birth (Figure 5.2). It states that, "For the woman who suffers from difficult childbirth, using the seal and applying it above and below the heart will enable her to give birth safely." In addition, it "eliminates all illnesses and sufferings."⁵⁰⁵

In fact, examining and comparing the images of talismans and stamp seals shown in the above "Buddhist" texts with those in the Daoist ones, not only Buddhist ones incorporate rich Daoist elements but also the similarity of the Buddhist ones with those of Daoism is

⁵⁰⁴ Strickmann, 125-126 for the discussion of the Daoist scripture *Essentials of the Practice of Perfection*; pp. 134-137 for the discussion of the *Consecration Sūtra*.

⁵⁰⁵ Strickmann, 143-151; also see T. 1238, p. 184b for the diagram of the seal for difficult birth.

highly observable. This resemblance of talismans and seals between Buddhism and Daoism is much more striking in the following "Buddhist"

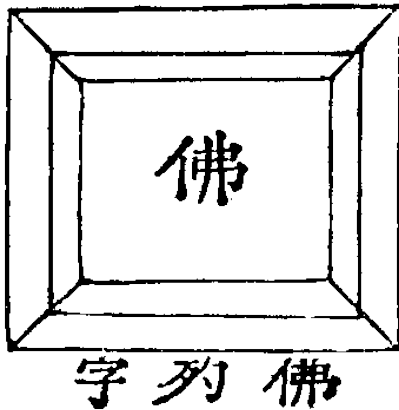


Figure 5.2 The Seal of Buddha (T. 1238, p.184b13)

texts which Strickmann discuss, the *Rites of Ucchuṣma (the Vajra-Being of Impure Traces) for Exorcising the Hundred Weirds (Huiji jingang jingang jin baibien fa jing 穢跡金剛禁百變法經, T. 1229)* and *Nāgārjuna's Treatise on the Five Sciences (Lunshu wuming lun 龍樹五明論, T. 1240)*.⁵⁰⁶ In his concluding remark on the intricate Buddho-Daoist relationship in terms of seals, Strickmann indicates that "the first to adopt ensigillation as a therapeutic technique,...this honor seems to go to the Taoists, yet it must be noted that our earliest full set of instructions for performing ensigillation comes from a Buddhist source, the mid-fifth-century *Book of Consecration*." Chinese Buddhists "exploited the wide range of meanings already attached to the Sanskrit word 'mudrā'" and "absorb ensigillation into their own system."⁵⁰⁷

With this knowledge of the intercommunication between Buddhist and Daoist seals in

⁵⁰⁶ See the images of the seals in Strickmann, p.160, 162-163, 172-173. Also, see T. 1229, p. 160a-161b; T. 1240, p. 962a-b.

⁵⁰⁷ Strickmann, 192-193.

mind, we can come back to analyze the image and content of the seal on P. 3874. Strickmann in this chapter on seals actually examines a Dunhuang manuscript Beijing 8738 (Figure 5.3) which have almost identical literal content with our P. 3874 yet with some nuances and without the images of seals. In this manuscript, the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara presents several seals for healing to the Buddha. One says, "If there women who seek male or female children, they should write out this seal and swallow it on the eighth day of the fourth month. Then they will certainly obtain a boy or a girl child, and when they grow up they will come to be in the presence of the Buddha. If anyone is seeking samādhi, he should write out the seal on the crown of his head. He should then recite the wishing-jewel spell twenty-one times and spew water into the air, and there will immediately be rays of light in all five colors, illuminating the world and all the ten regions of space, all contributing to give forth radiance. This is what I meant by saying that I would 'rub the crown of the head and bestow a prophecy of future Buddhahood.'"⁵⁰⁸ Here, like the P. 3874 version, the seal emphasizes it to be "written," rather than carved on a solid material, stamped, or gestured through fingers, although other seals listed in the same manuscripts of P. 3874 and B. 8738 often instruct it be engraved on a specific type of wood.

⁵⁰⁸ My Chinese transcription of the lines in this manuscript is as follows. "世尊，若有女人求男女者，四月八日書印吞之，當得男女，長侍佛前。若有眾生，求我三昧者，以書頂上，誦如意咒廿一遍，以水遜空中，便有五色光明照耀大地十方國土，悉皆助放光，(此?)謂摩頂授記。" The above translation is based on Strickmann (p. 167) with slight adjustment.

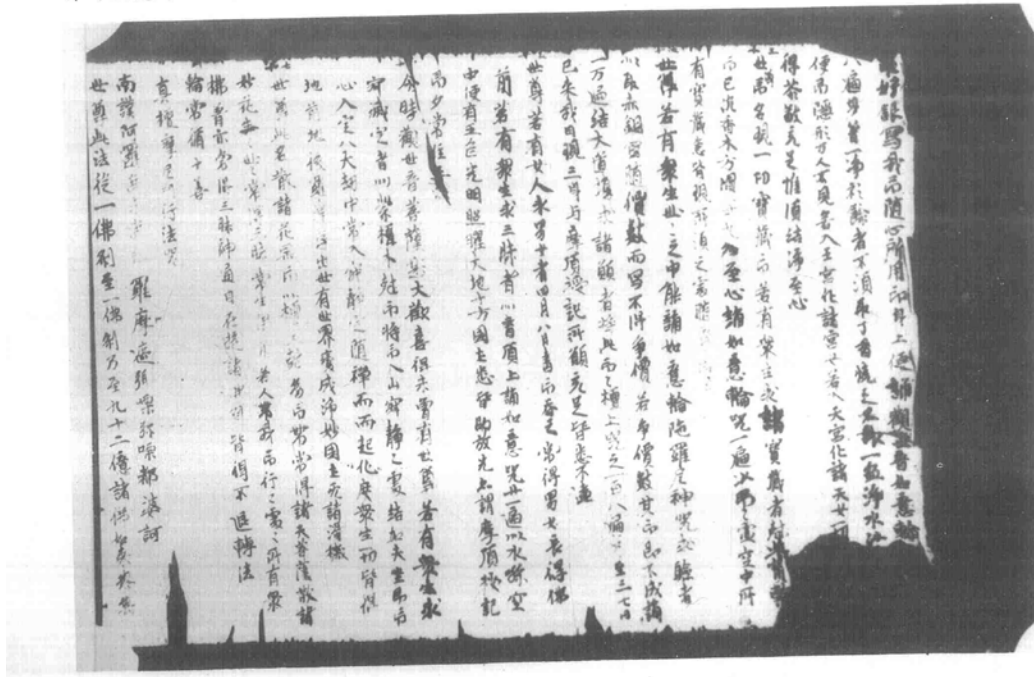


Figure 5.3 Dunhuang manuscript Beijing 8738 (from Huang Yongwu ed., *Dunhuang Baozang*, vol.111, p. 335)

In terms of the content of the seal on P. 3874 (Figure 5.1), it appears to be composed of pseudo-archaic form of Chinese characters inside, which look like seal script (*zhuān* 篆) and are mostly legible if one read from the top of the right line downward to the left line: "fo 佛 (Buddha), *sanmei* 三昧 (*samādhi*), four *ri* 日 (suns) forming two sets of *chan* 昌 (prosperous), *yi* 已 (already), *yi* 一 (one) and *shan* 上 (top) that together seemingly constitute a character like the left component of the character *yin* 印⁵⁰⁹, and *xin* 心 (mind)." This type of characters is regularly used in making Daoist talismans (*fu* 符) and have evolved from simple

⁵⁰⁹ Checking relevant images in the website of the *Yitizi zidian* 異體字字典 and in Wang Yuchen 王育成's article (1991:53), this image may possibly mean "hill" (*chiu* 丘) or "ear" (*er* 耳). But the two meanings do not match the context. I tend to think these strokes represent the left side of the word *yin* 印. Comparing this seal with the aforementioned seal in *Dhāraṇī Book of Āṭavaka* which mentions that women having difficult birth can "apply the seal above and below the heart" (*yi yin yin xin shang xia* 以印印心上下), this interpretation makes more sense. Also see the above note 40.

and legible forms to more complex and unintelligible forms like cloud seal script, dragon seal script, phoenix script in the Six Dynasties, the esoteric seal script in the Tang, and thunder seal script in the Song.⁵¹⁰ In ancient China, *fu* has served as a testimonial document, usually consisting of two split halves of an object, used in political or military occasions to establish fidelity, achieve authentication and guarantee authority by uniting the two-parts of the sign. It also has to do with the ancient Chinese idea that human writings (*wen* 文) are emanations of the primordial pneuma, or celestial writings (*tianwen* 天文), and thus is effective to manipulate things and events of future due to the attribute of *wen* being both "a nascent reality" and the traces or footprints of departed things that correspond to the primordial.⁵¹¹ As Yang Zhaohua well argues in his recent study, talismanic characters are purposely made archaic and illegible by Daoists in order to revert to authority of the primordial form of writing on the one hand and to enlarge the gap between their monopolized technology and the common people on the other. By resorting to the power from distant antiquity, Daoists acquire capital to better compete with the coming of another sacred power from distant place.⁵¹²

The talisman in my case here is easily recognizable, and the forming logic of its script inside the seal is the same as Daoist *fu*. According to Yang, who bases his decipherment of

⁵¹⁰ Yang Zhaohua, *Devouring Impurities: Myth, Ritual and Talisman in the Cult of Ucchuşma in Tang China* (Dissertation: Stanford University, 2013), 268, note 20. The studies he quoted here originally come from Liu Zhongyu 劉仲宇(1994:5) and Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光(1998:73; 2003:164-165).

⁵¹¹ For a concise introduction of the early history of *fu* and its scholarship, see Yang, 262-271. Some representative scholarship in this regard, see Anna Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments: Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha," in Michel Strickmann ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of Rolf Stein* (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises: 2), 291-371. Max Kaltenmark, "Ling-pao 靈寶: Note sur un terme du taoïsme religieux," *Mélanges publiés par l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, Collège de France* 2: 559-588; Stephen Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," in Strickmann, *Tantric and Taoist Studies*, 2: 434-486; Hsieh Shi-wei 謝世維, "Writings from Heaven: Celestial Writing in Six Dynasties Daoism;" Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University; *Tianjie zhi wen: Weijin Nanbei chao Lingbao jingdian yanjiu* 天界之文：魏晉南北朝靈寶經典研究 (Writings from the Heaven: Study on the Lingbao scriptures of Wei, Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties)(Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 2010).

⁵¹² Yang, 266-271.

talismanic characters on a series of pioneering studies by Wang Yucheng, Monika Drexler and Liu Zhongyu, the interpretative process of *fu* characters is composed of two principles: the splitting of form (*sanxing* 散形) and the combining of form (*juxing* 聚形 or *hexing* 合形). The form of talismanic scripts were often intentionally transformed to defamiliarize them from their regular forms, but through analyzing the meaning of each individual component of a talisman, namely *sanxing*, and through synthesizing each talismanic component and producing an overall meaning of the entire talisman, or *juxing*, it becomes possible to decode the meaning of a talisman.⁵¹³ Utilizing this interpretative method, I try to translate the meaning of the above seal as follows. Reading from the right to the left line of the talisman within the seal, it probably conveys that, with the power of the seal on which "the Buddha's samādhi" (*fosanmei* 佛三昧) is written and to be stamped on one's front head, much "prosperity" (*chan* 昌) or "life" (four suns here, referring to life)⁵¹⁴ shall be given "to such a mind" (*yi yi shan xin* 已一上心), or "by applying [the seal] on one's mind" (已印心).

Dunhuang manuscripts S. 2498 contains a few other talismans or seals with the function of treating difficult childbirth. They also reflect the phenomena that practitioners in their lives usually drew inspiration from Buddhism and Daoism simultaneously and mingle elements from both.⁵¹⁵ With the title "*Guanshiyin pusa fuyi yichuan* 觀世音菩薩符印一卷" (*One volume of talismans and seals of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva*) in the beginning, this long manuscript first summons deities from the four directions including both Buddhist and Daoist ones like heavenly kings, Vajra gods, yakṣa, Nāga, Peacock King, Yama King and Taishan

⁵¹³ Yang, 271-280. Yang provides some illustrations of talismanic characters that have been deciphered by Drexler in p. 276, which helps my interpretation here.

⁵¹⁴ Sun represents brightness, life and prosperity according to ancient Chinese philology. See Wang (1991): 47.

⁵¹⁵ For a general overview of the manuscript S. 2498, see Li Xiaorong (2003): 299-303, 314-315.

god.⁵¹⁶ It then gives several sets of Buddhist dhāraṇīs,⁵¹⁷ a couple of images of talismans, and finally some ways of using the dhāraṇīs and setting up a specific ritual altar called "the Altar Rite of Great Compassion" (*dabei tanfa* 大悲壇法). The whole manuscript overall has stronger color of Buddhism than Daoism. However, the talismans and their usages given here appears more like Daoist *fu* and seemed to be inserted later. This again proves Strickmann's observation of Buddhist efforts incorporating Daoist ensigillation into its system. Moreover, it is interesting to note that these talismans provided for childbirth here are related again with Avalokitêśvara as the above cases. Below we shall see that almost all spells, talismans and seals from Dunhuang manuscripts and printed copies that help to solve reproductive problems are associated with Avalokitêśvara bodhisattva.

The two talismans for difficult birth in S. 2498 (Figure 5.4, 5.5) are accompanied with specific instructions of ingesting them. The large one in Figure 5.4 has a vertical line combining several characters into a composite one on the right side and has two smaller composite characters on the top of the second right line. Below the two small characters a sentence describes, "This talisman is for difficult birth. [The amount] to be given is depending on the age of [the recipient]. Swallow it with the soup made from peach, adding into the soup a bit vinegar and seven granules of peach seeds whose sharp parts should be removed. This recipe is extremely secret and should not

⁵¹⁶ This big group of Buddhist deities listed in the beginning is probably the thousand-hand Avalokitêśvara's "twenty-eight groups of great ṛṣis (*daxian zhong* 大仙眾)," given the fact that this list of deities are immediately followed by "the Dhāraṇīs of the Thousand hands and Eyes with Great Compassion" (*qianhsou qianyan dabeixin tuoluoni zhou* 千手千眼大悲心陀羅尼咒). But interestingly, the Yama King and Taishan King who are not part of the twenty-eight groups of deities are also added into the list in this manuscript.

⁵¹⁷ In addition to "the Dhāraṇīs of the Thousand hands and Eyes with Great Compassion," other incantations given here are like Dhāraṇī of the Bodhisattva of Sunlight (*Riguang pupsa zhou* 日光菩薩咒), Dhāraṇī of the Bodhisattva of Moonlight (*Yueguang pusa zhou* 月光菩薩咒), Dhāraṇī of the Wish Fulfilling Words of the Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva (*Guanshiyin pusa ruyilun tuoluoni zhangju zhou* 觀世音菩薩如意輪陀羅尼章句咒), Dhāraṇī of the Jubilant Buddha-Corona (Foding zhunshen tuoluoni shenzhou 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼神咒), Dhāraṇī of the Fundamental Mind of Eastern Akṣobhya-Buddha (*Dongfang achufo mielo genbenxin tuoluoni* 東方阿閼佛滅羅根本心陀羅尼), and so on.

be passed to others."⁵¹⁸ On the manuscript, the Figure 5.4 is immediately followed by the Figure 5.5. On the right lower side of the Figure 5.5, there is a small seal-like talisman for difficult birth. The words below state, "Those who suffer difficult birth can swallow it. The child will come out with his hand holding the talisman. Seeing this shows its efficacy and is greatly auspicious."⁵¹⁹ In the middle line of the Figure 5.4, there is one more note, which seems to be applicable to both the former larger talisman and the later small one. It denotes that, "For those who want to write these talismans and seals, the efficacy of their application to the body and bodily movements relies on using them together with vermillion. After mixing and grinding it with vinegar, write and paint it, and then swallow it with the water drawn from a well. In the case of emergency, chanting the spell of Kuṇḍalī⁵²⁰ twenty-one times over water and drink the talismanic water."⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸ My Chinese transcription of this sentence is "此符難產，隨年幾(紀)與吞，桃湯下，以醋點湯，七立桃仁，去尖。此法極秘，勿傳。" Gao Guofan (2005: 84-92; 204-212) and Li Xiaorong (2003: 314-315) have both discussed this talisman in their books. Gao interprets "七立桃仁" as "making the peach seeds lining up and standing up for seven times," which I think makes less sense than interpret it as "seven granules of peach seeds."

⁵¹⁹ My Chinese transcription of this sentence is "難產者吞之，兒出，手把符出，見驗大吉。"

⁵²⁰ Kuṇḍalī, or Kuṇḍalin, is one of the five guardian kings of the five dhyāni-buddhas, of whom they are emanations or embodiments in two forms, compassionate and minatory. The five kings are the fierce aspect, and include *Acalāgra* (不動), *Trailokyavijaya* (降三世), *Kuṇḍalī* (軍荼利), *Yamātaka* (大威德), and *Vajrayakṣa*, and all vajra-kings. Interestingly, Kuṇḍalī also means a jar, vase, pitcher or water bottle in Sanskrit, which matches with the context here. See DDB.

⁵²¹ My Chinese transcription of this sentence is "凡欲書符及印，身行用法皆與朱砂驗，酢研之，書畫并吞，取井華水。如急待用，軍荼利小心咒即廿一遍、呪水下符。"

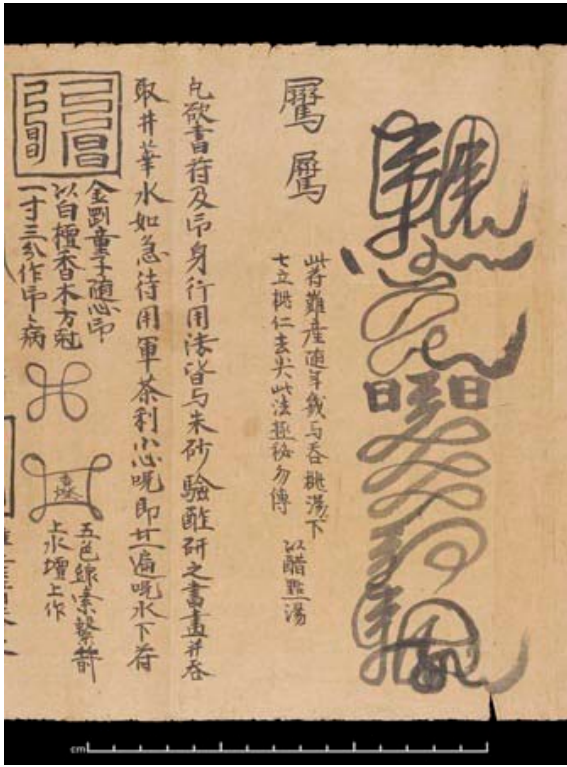


Figure 5.4 The Large Talisman for Difficult Birth, S. 2498 (Image from IDP), ink on paper, H. 25cm (1219.2 cm for the width of the whole scroll)

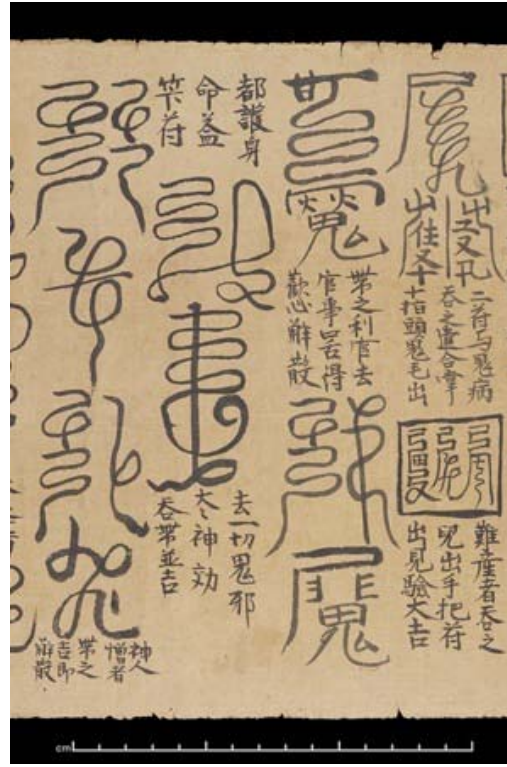
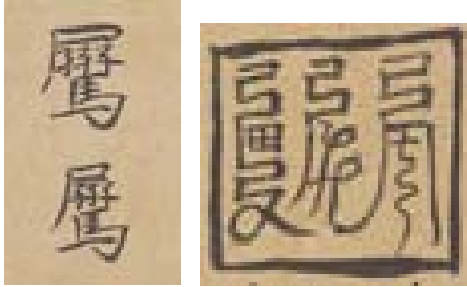


Figure 5.5 The Small Talisman for Difficult Birth, S. 2498 (IDP), ink on paper, H. 25cm

To dissect the form and components and to decode the meanings of the reproductive talismans and the seal on S. 2498 are more challenging than the above case of P. 3874. But a large part of them is still decipherable. Borrowing the results from scholars' decipherment of some frequent appearing components of Daoist composite script,⁵²² I shall try to translate their contents and meanings as follows. The two smaller ones are relatively easy. The former

⁵²² See Wang Yuchen, "Donghan daofu shili 東漢道符釋例" (Examination of some Taoist magic figures of the Eastern Han dynasty), *Kaogu xuebao* (1991.1): 45-56; "Luelun kaogu faxian de zaoqi daofu 略論考古發現的早期道符" (Discussion on the Daoist talismans of early stage from archeological findings), *Kaogu* (1998.1): 75-81; Liu Zhongyu, "Daofu suyuan 道符溯源" (Tracing the origin of Daoist talismans), *Shijie zhongjiao yanjiu* (1994.1): 1-10.

from Figure 5.4 is composed of three components: *shi* 尸 (ghosts or demons)⁵²³, three *zi* 子 (children), and *ma* 馬 (horse). Given the demonology of this period, demons and ghosts are considered to be the cause of illnesses. Thus the difficult birth of children also results from the obstruction of demons.



The lower part of the character horse stems from the logic of exorcistic thinking, which employs an object that ghosts and demons dislike in order to suppress its power. This is called *yansheng* 厭勝 in ancient texts.⁵²⁴ Here it implies that the situation of difficult birth obstructed by demons can be overcome with the speed of a running. The speed may refer both to the urgency of expelling demons and to that of giving birth to the child. The same logic also applies to the second smaller talismanic seal from Figure 5.5. It consists of three vertical lines all including the character of *gong* 弓 (bow). Inside the three *gong*, three different characters were inserted inside them, respectively *qi* 七 (seven)⁵²⁵ in the right, possibly *zi* 子 (children) in the middle, and *tian* 田 (field) in the left. *Gong* is another character that appears constantly in Daoist talismans and functions as the *yanshen* object quelling demons.⁵²⁶ These three inserted words, if we read them jointly, seem to state that

⁵²³ The component *shi* 尸 appears in Daoist talismans and in Dunhuang manuscripts of talismans very often. See Wang Yuchen (1998): 77; Gao Guofan (2005):29, 71-74, and P. 3358, P. 2856 for example.

⁵²⁴ Liu Zhongyu (1994): 8.

⁵²⁵ Yang, 276, who quotes Drexler (1994: 17) to identify the talismanic form of *qi* 七.

⁵²⁶ Liu Zhongyu (1994):8. Employing a bow made from mulberry tree to exorcize ghosts and demons has a long history in China. In the chapter of "spellbinding" of the *Day Book*, the mulberry bow is already used in exorcizing demons. In *Liji* 禮記, it even says, "When a male child is born, using the bow made from mulberry

"many (seven) children on the ground," implying the wish of children being born in this world smoothly. As for the large talisman in Figure 5.4, those curled strokes aside, the recognizable characters seems to contain *gui* 鬼 (demons) and *ma* 馬 (horse) on the top in the right and the left respectively, two *ri* 日 (sun) in the middle, a *gong* 弓 (bow) between the two *ri*, and a composite script in the bottom seemingly identical to the top one. These individual components also appear in the previous two smaller ones. Being combined differently here, they probably convey the message that hopes demons (that hinder the birth) to be expelled as speedily as a running horse, and new lives (represented by the two sun) to be born with the power of the demon exorcizing bow.

The usage prescribed below the reproductive talismans in Figure 5.4 and their medicine-like attribute and method of taking them are noteworthy. For these prescriptions to be efficacious, just like medical recipes, are instructed to take with specific amount depending on their ages, specific kind of medicine soup and plants, and should be made in particular manner. The use of peach and vermillion is commonly seen in ancient Chinese exorcism. The section of "Spellbinding" of the *Day Book* already mentions using bow and arrows made from peach wood to expel demons.⁵²⁷ Peach soup was sprayed to exorcize demons since the Han and became a regular drink on the first day of New Year at least from the Southern dynasties.⁵²⁸ Vermillion had been extensively utilized as ink in writing Daoist

wood and six arrows made from creepers, shooting the rows to the heaven, earth, and the four directions" (男子初生，以桑弧蓬矢六射天地四方). See Donald Harper, "Spellbinding," Donald S. Lopez, Jr. ed., *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 241-250, the use of mulberry, see item 4, 9.

⁵²⁷ Harper, "Spellbinding," 244-245, item 2, 5, 11.

⁵²⁸ See *Hanshu* 漢書, vol. 99, the biography of Wang Mang (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1986), 5011; Zonglin 宗懔 (6th C.) of Liang of Southern dynasty, *Jinchu suishi ji* 荆楚歲時記. Both from Gao (2005), 86-87; also see Hanji quanwen zhiliao ku 漢籍全文資料庫 from Academia Sinica and Chinese Text Project online. *Jinchu suishi ji* denotes that, "Peach is the essence of the Five Agents, suppressing evil *qi* and subduing hundreds of ghosts."

documents presenting to gods or commanding ghosts since its very beginning.⁵²⁹ The number of seven also frequently appears in "Spellbinding."⁵³⁰ More importantly, it asks that the prescription be kept secret. This corresponds to the ancient Chinese concept of the so called "forbidden techniques" (*jinfang* 禁方). According to Li Jianming, this idea was held both by physicians and occultists. The concept of "forbidden" has at least three connotations, namely "taboos," "constraints," or "prohibitions." All refer not making it public. The three meanings sometimes overlap. Formulas were passed on mainly from masters to disciples through transmission rites in both written and oral form. And the effectiveness (*yan* 驗) of a formula was in fact dependent upon the rite of transmission.⁵³¹

The overlap between exorcistic and medical formulas at this time is best exemplified in their shared purposes, the way of taking it, and some materia medica. On the one hand, large numbers of talismans from Dunhuang manuscripts aim at treating particular bodily illnesses and specify their ways of taking them just like medical prescriptions. P. 2856 (Figure 5.6), for instance, offers two dozens of talismans for treating diseases of almost every bodily symptoms just by carrying them on the body, such as discomforts of stomachs, belly, cold and fever, headache, chest distress, throat swelling, feeling of fullness in heart or abdomen, ache of limbs, vomit, indigestion, aches of both sides of upper body, aches of eyes and ears, and so on.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ Wang Yuchen, "Kaogu suojian daojiao jiandu kaoshu 考古所見道教簡牘考述" (A Study of Daoist Slips seen in Archaeology), *Kaogu xuebao* (2003.4): 483-510, esp. 483-484.

⁵³⁰ Harper, "Spellbinding," 247, item 32. It suggests that if a woman is haunted by the "Yang Demon" (*yanggui* 陽鬼) and thus abnormally sings in a high-pitched voice, she can "take seven seeds twice," incinerate them, and take the ashes. Then the demon shall leaves.

⁵³¹ Li Jianmin 李建民, "Zhongguo gudai jinfang kaolun 中國古代禁方考論" (Jinfang: The Transmission of Secret Techniques in Ancient China), *Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 68.1 (1997): 117-166.

⁵³² Gao (2005): 50-57; the website of IDP.









Figure 5.6 P. 2856, upper one fifth part of one of thirteen columns of the manuscript (image from IDP), ink on paper, with colophon in the end of the manuscript dated to the third year of Xiantong (862 CE) and entitled *Fabing shu* 發病書, size of each column, W. 42.3~43.8cm X H. 31cm, (Upper one fifth part around 6cm in height of the above figure)





In the other part of the above S. 2498, it even lists some talismans that were supposed to be "swallowed" rather than just being worn on the body. And the way of swallowing a talisman depends on one's specific symptom. Some requires to "swallow it with cold drink;" some with "hot drink;" some to swallow "after vomiting;" and some "after sweating."⁵³³ On the other hand, many materia medica suggested to use with talismans are considered effective in medical works as well. Gao Guofan notices that both peach and vinegar in the medical works of Tang and Song dynasties and later are suggested to treat difficult childbirth as regular materia medica.⁵³⁴ Furthermore, many talismans for childbirth were adopted into the medical works of Tang-Song period. In the section of reproduction of *Waitai miyao* 外臺秘要 (*Arcane Essentials from the Imperial Library*) written by Tang physician Wang Tao 王燾 (670-755 CE), there are six talismans provided for several reproductive problems. One is exactly the

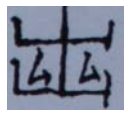

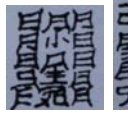
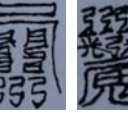
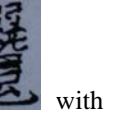









⁵³³ Gao (2005): 33-34.

⁵³⁴ Gao (2005): 87-89. For the medical works that Gao notices to mention the use of peach and vinegar to treat various reproductive illnesses, one is *Shanfan fang* 刪繁方 of the Six dynasties; another is quoted by *Chanke beiyao* 產科備要, or *Weishen jiabao chanke beiyao* 衛生家寶產科備要 (in 1184 CE) by Song physician Zhu Duanzhang 朱端章 (active 1174-1189 CE), made on the basis of all previous gestation works. It mentions using peach seed. The other two suggesting using vinegar are *Zhimu milu* 子母秘錄 of Tang and *Taiping shenhui fang* 太平聖惠方 of early Song.

same as the small one on the Figure 5.4 of S. 2498.⁵³⁵ These talismans collected in Tang-Song medical books apparently have strong Daoist color and have much wider varieties of applications for tackling childbirth than those in Dunahung Buddhist manuscripts.⁵³⁶ It seems that Daoism had a much longer tradition and more abundant resources on this issue. Those being incorporated into Buddhist texts and Dunhuang "Buddhist" manuscripts are only a

⁵³⁵ These six talismans are as follow. When the placenta is not discharged after birth, use this talisman  .
 For general or difficult birth, use these three talismans    . For the birth in danger, it suggests to burn this talisman  and drink it with water. If the child is born with legs or arms emerging first, swallowing this  , which is exactly the same as the one on S. 2498. See *Waitai miyao fang jiaozhu* 外臺秘要方校注 (Beijing: Huaxia chuban she, 1993), vol. 33, 673-674.

⁵³⁶ For the reproductive talismans collected in Tang-Song medical works, in addition to *Waitai miyao*, there are also some in *Chanke beiyao*, for example, in its vol. 1, four talismans are offered for difficult birth:  .
   . The first three ones are identical to the above ones in *Waitai miyao*. Images are culled from Gao (2005): 85. In *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方 (Compendium of Excellent Treatments for Women) by the physician Chen Zhiming 陳自明 (ca. 1190-1270) of the Southern Song, its 16th fascicle lists a dozen of talismans for various uses of childbirth. Among them, many are identical to the above ones in *Waitai miyao* and *Chanke beiyao*, one of which is also the same as the small one on S. 2498. It states that, when the

pregnant woman "feels unease," write these talismans      with vermilion and post them on the north wall where she stays. When she feels not sleep well, write this  and paste it on her pillow. This  can treat the infant born with wrong posture, use vermilion to write it and drink it with water. These three    are to be written with dark ink and swallowed when birth is in great peril. When the placenta is not discharged, use these four     and if in emergency write them with vermilion and swallow them. See Chen Zhiming, *Furen daquan liang fang* (Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chuban she, 2005), 169.

fraction of them.⁵³⁷

Protective Goddesses for Childbirth: Avalokiteśvara, Hārītī, and Bāla-grahā

In the above section on spells, talismans and seals for childbirth, we find that they are all unexceptionally associated with Avalokiteśvara or Guanyin, proving the deity's profound association with the blessing of childbirth. Since the first appearance of the bodhisattva's promise of giving beautiful sons and daughters in the Lotus Sutra, Guanyin has continuously served the role of fertility deity among many other roles in China. It did not wait until the transformation of sex of this deity into female form or the emergence of the White-Robe Guanyin as the child-bestower during the Song⁵³⁸ for Guanyin to start offering his assistance to parents facing reproductive issues. Since the Northern and Southern dynasties the bodhisattva has already been deeply connected with reproduction in many dhāraṇī texts. In the previous chapter we have seen as early as in the fourth century an indigenous Buddhist scripture, *Dhāraṇī Sutra of Invoking Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva to Dissipate Poison and Harm (Qin Guanyin jing)*, the bodhisattva teaches "divine dhāraṇī of six-character phrases" to save people from various dangers including women in the deadly moment of giving birth.

In Dunhuang, scholars have hitherto found numerous manuscripts and wooden prints of dhāraṇīs in the names of different manifestations of Guanyin that aim at tackling a variety

⁵³⁷ In Daoist canons there are indeed plentiful types and numbers of talismans provided for childbirth. Their purposes are not simply confined to praying for children and difficult birth, but also containing those used in preventing miscarriage (*antai fu* 安胎符), transforming fetal sex (*zhuantai fu* 轉胎符), and discharging placenta.

The exchange of medieval Daoism and medicine in terms of dealing with childbirth is another big topic that needs a separate study in the future and is impossible to exhaust here. But for a general overview, a dissertation "Chuantong yunchan mingsu ji wenxue zuopin zhi yanjiu 傳統孕產民俗及文學作品之研究" (Studies of traditional customs and literature of pregnancy) written by Zhong Peixuan 鍾珮媛 (Hualian: Hualian jiaoyu daxue, 2008) provides abundant references of talismans from Daoist canon and discusses their assorted uses in childbirth, but unfortunately the author does not clearly identify the time of different talismans and texts and often times mix them altogether. For the Daoist talismans for preventing miscarriage, see pp. 129-159; for transforming fetal sex, see p. 102; for helping smooth birth and tackling difficult birth, see pp. 208-225.

⁵³⁸ Chün-Fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), Ch3, Ch.6.

of birth-giving situations. Liang Liling in her recent article notices that in P. 3920, a long manuscript combining two dhāraṇī scriptures together, *the Dhāraṇī of the Mahāpratisarā Who Grants Great Freedom taught by the Buddha (Foshuo sui suiqiu jide dazizai tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 佛說隨求即得大自在陀羅尼神咒經, T. 1154) and the *Dhāraṇī of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Gunyin Bodhisattva With Vast, Complete, Unimpeded Great Compassion (Qianshou qianyan guanshiyin pusa guangda yuanman wuai dabeixin tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經, T. 1060, translated by Bhagavaddharma in 700 CE). She finds that both contain promises of safe childbirth.⁵³⁹ *Mahāpratisarā* is a many-armed female deity, who protects against evil and illness and whose iconography is related to Avalokiteśvara in his Esoteric Buddhist imagery.⁵⁴⁰ The latter text, usually abbreviated as *Dabei zhou* 大悲咒, offers a detailed healing procedure from chanting the dhāraṇī to the manners of applying oil and taking herbal medicine to deal with difficult birth, fetal death in the womb, and the discharge of the placenta.⁵⁴¹ Up to twenty manuscripts of this incantation has been found in Dunhuang.⁵⁴² The same prescription is found in another scripture that also has Guanyin's name and translated by

⁵³⁹ Liang Liling (2015): 403.

⁵⁴⁰ Charles Orzech, Henrik Sørensen, Richard Payne ed., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantra in East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010), 112.

⁵⁴¹ Liang Liling (2015): 403-404. The popularity of this incantation of Great Compassion and its integration into a complete set of repentance ritual in the Song, see Chün-Fang Yü, *Kuan-yin*, Ch. 7. I offer my translation of this relevant passage here: "When a woman is in peril of giving birth, the sufferings and obstruction caused by evil demons are really hard to bear. At this moment, sincerely chanting the Incantation of Great Compassion will expel demons and gods and give rise to the peace of mind....For those who suffer from difficult birth, take sesame oil and intone the spell twenty-one times to it, apply it on the woman's navel and 'jade gate' (vaginal orifice), then the parturition will be easy. If a woman is pregnant yet with her child dying in the womb, take one *liang* of apāmargā (namely *achryanthes aspera*), cook it with two *shen* of water, use one *shen* of water, chant spell to it, drink it, and [the dead fetus] will emerge. The woman will not have pain at all. Those who are unable to discharge the placenta can also take this medicine and will soon be cured." Its original text is "女人臨難生產時，邪魔遮障苦難忍，至誠稱誦大悲咒，鬼神退散安樂生。.....若患難產者，取胡麻油，咒三七遍，摩產婦臍中及玉門中，即易生。若婦人懷妊，子死腹中，取阿波末利伽草(牛膝草也)一大兩，清水二升和煎，取一升，咒三七遍，服即出，一無苦痛。胎衣不出者，亦服此藥，即差。" See T. 1060, 108c, 110b.

⁵⁴² Li Xiaorong (2003): 7, 92. These manuscripts are like S. 4543, S. 2498, P. 3912, S. 5589, P. 3289.

the same translator, the *Sūtra of Treating Diseases and Making Medicine of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guṇyīn Bodhisattva* (*Qianshou qianyan guanyin pusa zhibing heyao jing* 千手千眼觀音菩薩治病合藥經, T. 1059). Together with the prescription treating difficult birth, it has about two dozens medical recipes offering cure for all sorts of diseases when taken together with dhāraṇī-chanting.⁵⁴³

Dhāraṇī in the name of Guanyin for helping childbirth was quickly made into wooden prints serving as a kind of amulet as soon as the woodblock printing technique began to rise in the early tenth century. This reflects that this type of healing incantation may be extremely welcomed and was thus in great demand. Chinese art historian Li Ling found in Dunhuang an early tenth-century wooden print P. 4514 containing an illustrated dhāraṇī called the Dhāraṇī of Thousand-Turning and Eliminating Sins of the Sacred Avalokiteśvara (*Sheng guanzizai pusa qianzhuān miezui tuoluoni* 聖觀自在菩薩千轉滅罪陀羅尼) (Figure 5.7).⁵⁴⁴ In this illustrated dhāraṇī-amulet, Avalokiteśvara is depicted in the center who is surrounded by three circles and then two squares of Sanskrit spells. On its left side, the Chinese characters says that "the great power" of the dhāraṇī can "eliminate all sorts of sins and turn the six faculties into the bodies of making merit. Those who carry and hold it can eliminate sins and give rise to blessing and shall become a Buddha."⁵⁴⁵ Another copy of P. 4514 of this dhāraṇī presents a different form, in which the incantatory amulet is surrounded by eleven rectangular incantations. (Figure 5.8) They all have the same content, with two lines in Sanskrit on the right and one line in Chinese on the left. The Chinese line says, "Reciting [the name of] this Nirgrantha bodhisattva to pray for all the birth events safe and smooth."⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ Liang, 403-404; Li Xiaorong (2003): 92; T. 1059, 104a.

⁵⁴⁴ Li Ling (2013): 79; P. 4514 (9.6).

⁵⁴⁵ Its original text is "此聖觀自在菩薩千轉滅罪陀羅尼有大威力能滅眾罪，轉現六根成功德體，若帶持者罪滅福生、當得作佛。"

⁵⁴⁶ Li Ling seems not identifying the name of the bodhisattva in this Chinese line and explaining its meaning. Its



Figure 5.7 Dhāraṇī of Thousand-Turning and Eliminating Sins of the Sacred Avalokiteśvara, 17 X 14 mm, Wooden Print, P. 4514 (9.6), copied from Li Ling's article, p.84



Figure 5.8 Dhāraṇī of Thousand-Turning and Eliminating Sins of the Sacred Avalokiteśvara and the eleven rectangular dhāraṇī-amulets surrounding it, P. 4514 (9.6), copied from Li

original text is "念尼虔陀菩薩普願一切分解平善." *Niqiantuo* 尼虔陀 here refers to Nirgrantha-jñāniputra, the founder of the Jain school and noted in Buddhist scriptures as one of the six non-Buddhist masters (*liushi waidao* 六師外道). References to the Nigranths in indigenous East Asian works do not necessarily refer specifically to this school, but serve as a general reference to non-Buddhist Indian religious schools. The Sanskrit nirgrantha originally means one who is free from all ties and without possessions. It is alternatively transliterated in Chinese as 尼健, 尼捷, 尼乾, 尼虔陀, 尼虔, 尼乾陀若提子, 若提子. See DDB, the entry "*Niqianzi* 尼乾子."

The final example of dhāraṇī used in childbirth related to the bodhisattva Guanyin is an indigenous scripture entitled the *Sūtra of Avalokiteśvara with the Buddha's Crown* (*Fodingxin guanshiyin jing* 佛頂心觀世音經). This is probably the most popular birth-saving Guanyin dhāraṇī among all of which I have discussed so far. Since its appearance in the Tang, it has been repeatedly copied and printed all the way till the Ming dynasty. Its extant copies include those made in the Tang, Five dynasties, Song, Liao, Jin dynasties and in Tangut and Uighur kingdoms, showing its wide circulation both in the north border among non-Chinese groups and among the Chinese Han people. Several scholars have done fundamental studies on the content, circulation and significance of these copies in history.⁵⁴⁷ For the current subject of this chapter, I want to discuss particularly the parts of this text whose contents involving birth-giving, discharge of placenta, fetal and maternal death in childbirth, miscarriage or stillbirth caused by the revenge of a child.

The scripture has three fascicles, the first entitled *Fodingxin guanshiyin jing*, the second the *Recipe for Curing Diseases and Giving birth by the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva with the Buddha's Crown* (*Fodingxin guanshiyin pusa liaobing cuichan fang* 佛頂心觀世音

⁵⁴⁷ Chün-Fang Yü, "Weijing yu guanyin xinyang 偽經與觀音信仰" (Apocrypha and the cult of Guanyin), *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 8 (1995.7): 97-134, esp. 116-120; *Kuan-yin* (2001): 118-126; Fang Guangchang 方廣錫, *Zangwei fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻 7 (Beijing: Beijing zhongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2000), 380; Zheng Acai (2001): 21-48; Li Ling (2013): 80-83. According to them, this scripture was not collected into any Buddhist canon in Chinese history and is probably a native product. Chün-Fang Yü identifies two Dunhuang manuscripts of the text, P. 3916 and P. 3236, and notices two block-printing copies inside a Buddha's statue from Yingxian wood pagoda of Shanxi province. She also first found three kinds of copies of the text, which are all block-printing ones made in the Ming dynasty, preserved respectively in Fayuan Temple of Beijing, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Boston. Zheng Acai continues to identify three copies of Tangut language preserved in the Russian Academy of Sciences, a fragment of the Southern Song, one Tangut copy in Japan, and one in Uighur language in German. Both Yü and Zheng notices the appearance of the text on Fangshan 房山 stone-carving Buddhist canon. Fang Guangchang introduces 14 fragments of the text excavated from a square-pagoda of Tangut period in today's Ningxia. Li Ling points out that Zhejiang Provincial Museum collects two block-printing copies of the text from the Southern Song, one excavated from a local pagoda and one donated by a layman who prayed for family health. Both Yü and Li indicates that this text is repeatedly printed in the Ming court and currently still have several Ming copies.

菩薩療病催產方), and the third the *Miracle Tales of the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva with the Buddha's Crown who Save People in Danger in Efficacious Manifestations* (*Fodingxin guanshiyin pusa jiunan shenyan jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩救難神驗經). The contents related to childbirth are mostly found in the second and third fascicles. In the second, it provides a talisman against difficulties in childbirth. "At the time of delivery, if a woman is plagued by demons who cause her great pain....she should immediately have someone write the dhāraṇī and the secret character seal in vermillion ink and swallow it (the ashes?) with incense water; then she will give birth to a wise boy or a beautiful girl right away. If the placenta does not become separated and is going to cause damage to the baby so that either the baby dies in place of the mother or vice versa, or both baby and mother would die, the pregnant woman should follow the above procedure. This will cause the dead baby to abort; it should be thrown into a river right away. Pregnant women are warned not to eat dog meat, eels, or birds. They should invoke the name of Sovereign Master Buddha of Precious Moon and the Light and Sound of Wisdom Peak (Baoyue zhiyen Guangyin zizai wang fo寶月智嚴光音自在佛)." ⁵⁴⁸

This paragraph apparently shares great similarity in many aspects to the previous dhāraṇī-talismans or seals for childbirth we have discussed so far, especially to the T. 1060, or *Dabei zhou* (T. 1060) related to the *Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin*. Its etiology attributes to demons as the major cause of difficult birth. The reproductive problems it covers also contain tackling of delivery, and quickening the separation and discharge of placenta so as to avoid fetal and maternal death. It also provides a talismanic seal ⁵⁴⁹ which

⁵⁴⁸ Yü (2001): 122-123. The translation here follows Yü's.



⁵⁴⁹ The "secret character seal" shares the same logic of constitution of structure with the ones for childbirth in other Dunhuang manuscripts that I discuss in the previous section. The images here are culled from Zheng's article (p. 48), drawing from a Ming manuscript written in golden ink preserved in Taipei Palace

was taken in a similar way by using vermilion ink to write it and then swallowing it. Zheng Acai dated the earliest copy of the text, P. 3916, to the mid-9th century in the mid-Tang.⁵⁵⁰ He also notices that the opening two miracle tales about epidemics in Kāśmīra and treating the disease of a Brahman householder's son in the third fascicle of this scripture is highly similar to, and probably adapted from, the two precedent scriptures of the T. 1060, namely the T. 1057 and T. 1058 translated respectively by Zhitong and Bodhiruci.⁵⁵¹ In short, the composition of this scripture is very possibly inspired by the series of scriptures of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin. The appearance of all these scriptures at the same time and the indigenous creation of *Fodingxin guanshiyin jing* stimulated by the group of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Guanyin once again attests the great demand and popularity of this type of Buddhist texts with healing function.

Among the miracle tales that the third fascicle of this scripture describes, one is concerned with the themes of stillbirth and early death of the newborn. The story narrates a woman who had once used poison and killed someone in her previous three lives. To avenge his death in this life, this person entered the woman's womb as her son and, hugging her heart and liver, caused her great pain in childbirth and tried to kill her. After birth, the boy was comely and obedient but only lived to be two years old and then suddenly died. The same events happened three times in a row and caused the woman grief-stricken. At the third time, Guanyin appeared in the form of a monk to her, explaining that this was not her child, but her enemy of previous three life time ago. Guanyin then used his divine power to reveal the true

Museum.

⁵⁵⁰ Zheng (2001): 38-40. He dates another copy of the same text, P. 3236, to the tenth century between the late Tang and the Five dynasties.

⁵⁵¹ Zheng (2001): 35-36. T. 1057 is *Qianyan qianbi guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經 translated by Zhitong 智通 roughly between 627-649 CE. T. 1058 is *Qianshou qianyan guanshiyin pusa lao tuoluoni shen jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩姥陀羅尼身經 translated by Bodhiruci of Tang (d. 727). Description of the first two miracle tales about the disease-treating and epidemics in the third fascicle in English, see Yü (2001): 125.

form of the dead child, who was in fact a fierce yakṣa. The woman did not die in these three times of pregnancy only because of her chanting of the *Fodinxi* dhāraṇī and being protected by good gods.⁵⁵²

This tale reminds us of the same theme appearing also in some Buddhist texts of embryology in Chapter Three and the apocrypha *Longevity Sutra for Protecting the Children* in Chapter Four. Yü observes that this idea of the "demon child" is popular in the Song. Stories of this kind tell how the "demon child" were actually evil spirits instead of normal infants and who came back to cause grief to their parents as retribution for sins the parents committed.⁵⁵³ Yet in the early translated Buddhist scriptures of embryology, this idea of revenging or demonic child does not exist. The suffering of birth is depicted through every stage of embryonic growth in excruciating details only to emphasize the essential nature of life from its very beginning and to terrify monks about the miserable result of desire and mundane life. It is only in the early tenth century in the Dunhuang "Homily on the *Depth of Parental Kindness*" that we first see the appearance of the term "*yuanjia*" (enemy) in a popular Buddhist lecture addressing the fetal growth in pregnancy and the importance of filial piety. The time the "Homily" was composed matches exactly that of the two Dunhuang *Fodinxi* manuscripts P. 3916 and P. 3236. In the *Longevity Sutra*, it strongly warns the terrifying result of poisoning and killing the newborn and fetuses, which leads the mother falling into the Avīci hell and suffering from all kinds of unbearable tortures. It also proclaims that the death of one's own children resulted from one's karmic retribution of killing others in the past. Both these two themes and the probable composing time match well with those in the *Fodinxi Guanshiyin Scripture*. In other words,

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Yü (2001): 125. Yü made this point by quoting Patricia Ebrey (1993:175). Ebrey finds many stories with the same theme in the *Record of the Listener* (*Yijian zhi* 夷堅志) by Hong Mai (1123-1230), proving it as a popular belief in the Song, quoted from Yü's book.

it is highly possible that between the second half of the ninth century and the tenth century this idea of revenging or demon child, who is the "enemy" of his parents, already became established. This idea is conveniently utilized by the composers of scriptures and Buddhist folk homilies to expound on the reason of stillbirth, miscarriage, and a mother or an infant's death at birth, to warn people of the horrible result of aborting a fetus, and to teach the necessity of filial piety. "Demons" now become no longer external cause exterior to the embryo and can be dealt with via exorcistic talismans and seals but turn themselves into the children with potential antagonism to their unseen future mothers.

However, children are not the only ones with potential antagonism and can immediately turn from being "comely and obedient" to be an "enemy" and "fierce yakṣa." Two other children-protecting deities, Hārītī and Bāla-grahā demonstrate that demons and children-protectors may also be just two sides of the same coin.⁵⁵⁴ In terms of their roles in reproduction, these female deities ended up not enjoying as much fame and lasting influence as the bodhisattva Guanyin. Hārītī enjoyed some popularity in Japan and acquired many studies⁵⁵⁵, but its trace in China remains obscure and relevant studies scarce. The study on Bāla-grahā is even far more less. Fortunately some recent studies begin to emerge and offer some basis to start.

Hārītī

For Hārītī, two earlier and shorter Chinese translations of her story appear in *Guizimu jing* 鬼子母經 (T. 1262) translated in Western Jin dynasty (265-316 CE), and in the ninth

⁵⁵⁴ In fact, the anxiety and antagonism to parents from the children's side are also commonly expressed in many stories in which ancestors' ghosts come back to curse offspring and cause disasters to them. This is already seen in the divination words in the oracle bone divination of the Shang dynasty. It continues all the way to the early Shangqin Daoist text like *Zhengao* 真誥 (where ancestors of Xu's family came back to cause them ill), and is one of the major theme in the *Record of the Listener* of the Southern Song. Notes from Robert Hymes' lecture in his class "Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors" in Fall 2009.

⁵⁵⁵ For a general overview of Hārītī's cult, her multiple transformation and her rise of a major deity in Nichiren School, see Miyazaki Eishū ed., *Kishimojin Shinkō* (The Worship of Kishimojin) (Tokyo : Yūzankaku, 1985); Bernard Faure, *Gods of Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), vol. 1 and 2.

fascicle of *Samyuktaratna-piṭaka sūtra* (*Zabazang jing* 雜寶藏經, T. 203) rendered in 472 CE in Northern Wei dynasty. But the most detailed description of the deity is in the thirty-first fascicle of the *Kṣudrakavastu of Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* (T. 1451) translated by Yijing in 710 CE. Later, two Esoteric ritual texts centering this deity were translated to China by Bukong (Amoghavajra 705-774 CE) in the second half of the eighth century. According to these texts, Hārītī once in her previous life lost her child in a miscarriage on her way to a dharma assembly. Feeling angry and resentful, she vowed to devour other children in the next life. She was then reborn in Rājagṛha as a beautiful yakṣa with "pleasing" (*huanxi* 歡喜) appearance. She and her five hundred children fed themselves with the children in Rājagṛha and caused great horror to the people. Beseched by the people, Buddha thus exerted his divine power hiding one of her sons, made her realize the pain of losing one's own child, and managed to convert her to Buddhism. The Buddha also promised to let laymen and monks offering meals to her and her children after she stopped killing children. Hārītī was then transformed into a Dharma protector and was able to "bestow children to those who have none."⁵⁵⁶

Significantly, this promise of "bestowing children to those who have none" does not appear in *Samyuktaratna-piṭaka sūtra* and *Kṣudrakavastu of Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* but only in the earliest *Guizimu jing*. In the former two texts, Hārītī is mainly converted to Buddhism as a Dharma-protector and her later famous role of being a child-protector and a child-giver is not mentioned at all. In his recent article, Gregory Schopen finds that Pāli vinaya requires its monks to participate actively in a ritual meant to ensure or predict safe

⁵⁵⁶ T. 1262, p.290c-291c; T. 203, p. 492a-b; T. 1451, p. 360c-363b; the two Esoteric ritual texts are T. 1260, T. 1261. Tang monk Yijing in his travelogue mentioned that in the late 7th century, Indian temples still offered foods to Hārītī and her children, whose images or statues were placed in front of the temple gate or besides a pillar of kitchen. See Yijing, *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳 (T. 2125), p. 209b. Xuanzang in his *Record of Travels to Western Lands* recorded his visit to a stūpa where the Buddha converted Hārītī and mentions that Indians still go there to pray for having children. See *Datang xiyuji* 大唐西域記, T. 2087, 881a.

childbirth for lay householders. Buddhist monks also actively engaged in activities meant to cure sick children. One story in *Kṣudrakavastu of Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* mentions a layman approaching a monk to ask for the water in his bowl in order to bathe and thereby to cure his sick son. There is also a case in which an unborn child is given by the mother in advance to a monk to pray for the child's safe birth and growth.⁵⁵⁷ Hārītī's story in *Kṣudrakavastu of Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* actually shows her offering her children to monks after her conversion to Buddhism.⁵⁵⁸ Schopen argues that Hārītī, in addition to being a "stealer of children," or "the giver of children," is also "the bestower of wealth," a "goddess to ward off ill-health," or a "provider of protection." Her feature is actually much more complex than all these. Both in Chinese and Tibetan versions of *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* and relevant commentaries present her as the "model for the practice of giving endangered children to the monastic community for their protection."⁵⁵⁹

Despite not being clearly associated with fecundity or the role of a child-protector in some early Buddhist sources, Hārītī's image nevertheless has always shown her holding a child in her arm, on her lap, with children standing on her shoulder, or being surrounded by children when her images were transmitted from India to China along the Silk Road.

Numerous images and statues of her appeared in Gandhāra and the Northwest, and some separate shrines for her were located at Kauśāmbī and Ajaṅṭa.⁵⁶⁰ Li Ling recently investigates

⁵⁵⁷ Gregory Schopen, "A New Hat for Hārītī: On Giving Children for Their Protection to Buddhist Nuns and Monks in Early India," in his *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 131-156, esp. 133-136. The practice and cases of donating one's own child to monasteries in medieval China is worth to conduct more research in the future. As far as I can recall, the emperor Wen of Sui dynasty 隋文帝 is the famous case being donated raised by a nun. The well-known Tang novel *Nieh Yingnian* 聶隱娘 also tells this protagonist in her childhood being requested by a nun from her parents to donate their daughter to her.

⁵⁵⁸ Schopen (2014), 138-152; also see T. 1451, 363a-b.

⁵⁵⁹ Schopen (2014): 152-153. Schopen quotes Lokesh Chandra to summarize Hārītī's above five typical features.

⁵⁶⁰ Schopen (2014): 137; for an introduction of Hārītī's images and statues found in India, see Miranda Shaw, "Goddess of Motherly Love," in her *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), Ch.. 5, pp. 110-142, esp. 122-133.

Hārītī's images depicted on cave paintings in Khotan , Turfan, and Kizil caves along the Silk Road, and found several types of styles of her depictions. Turfan and Khotan's paintings of Hārītī are surrounded by five or seven children. The ones at Turfan portray her breastfeeding children, while the ones at Khotan show her holding and playing with children. In Kizil, she often appears in wall paintings of *nidāna* narratives in which she knelt and held her palms in front of the Buddha and only one child by her side. Only in a single case in Kizil appears a set of sitting statues depicting Hārītī holding a child on her lap and her husband Pāñcika by her side. They are the major deities in the cave instead of members of the eight groups of gods and demons.⁵⁶¹ Japanese scholars in their research on Yungang cave during the early twentieth century also found in Cave No. 9 similar style of husband-and-wife statues.⁵⁶² In Dunhuang, however, there is no such statues of Hārītī that have ever been found. She only shows up in cave paintings as one of the eight groups and with fierce yakṣa appearance.⁵⁶³

In medieval China, Hārītī's role of being a child-protector and the belief of her capability of bestowing children probably became more certain only after Bukong introducing the two Esoteric rituals that center on this deity and her child-giving and child-protecting functions. The other important reason is the conflation of this goddess with indigenous cult to the "mother of nine children" (jiuzimu 九子母). In Bukong's two ritual texts, the *Sādhana of the Great Yakṣiṇī* (*Da yaocha nu huanximu bing aizi chengjiu fa* 大藥叉女歡喜母并愛子成就法, T. 1260, trans. ca. 772-774 CE) and the *Scripture of Hārītī's Mantras* (*Helidi mu zhenyan jing* 訶利帝母真言經, T. 1261, trans. in 772 CE), both clearly

⁵⁶¹ Li Ling, "Yi guizimu tuxiang de liubian kan fojiao de dongchuan: yi qiuci diqu wei zhongxin 以鬼子母的流變看佛教的東傳--以龜茲地區為中心"(The Change of Hārītī's images along the road of the transmission of Buddhism to East Asia), *Meiyuan* (2008.4): 87-91. This type of husband-and-wife -sitting-together statue is also found in India during Kuṣāṇa period around the second or third century. See Miranda Shaw (2006): 126.

⁵⁶² Mizuno Seiichi and Nagahiro Toshio, *Unko Sekkutsu* (Yungang Caves), vol. 6 (Kyoto: Kyoto daigaku jimbun kagaku kenkyusho, 1951), Image No. 61.

⁵⁶³ Li Ling (2008): 89. These Dunhuang caves are No. 445(High Tang), 159(mid-Tang) and 138 (late Tang).

bring up the goddess's promise of tackling followers' problems of childbirth. For instance, the first text offers various rituals, together with chanting of a specific spell, to resolve problems like "disharmony between husbands and wives," "summoning lovers from faraway places," "women who have difficulties in getting married," and "difficult birth." For this last issue, it requires one to "chant the spell over milk curd one hundred and eight times or twenty-one times, feed it to the pregnant woman and apply it to her birth gate to make her birth-giving smooth."⁵⁶⁴ In the second text, it teaches that "those women who are infertile or continuously miscarry the embryo in the womb" are because of "their four great elements not in perfect condition, being "obstructed by demons," or "doomed to not have children due to the past karma." It then instructs the methods of painting Hārītī's image, making the altar, preparing the offering, and chanting before the image.⁵⁶⁵ For "women who desire sons and daughters," the text advises to "bathe after menstruation" and hand press the milk "from the yellow mother and child cows with exactly the same color into a silver container." Then churning the milk, chanting the mantra provided here to it for one thousand and the eighty times. When the milk is drunk, she will conceive in seven days.⁵⁶⁶

The evidence that may show the impact of the Esoteric version of Hārītī and her role of a child-bestower in medieval China can be seen in a couple of Esoteric Buddhist caves in Sichuan. Two caves in Bazhong of Sichuan, No. 68 (High Tang) and No. 81 (Late Tang), contain the statue of Hārītī with her nine children.⁵⁶⁷ Cave No. 122 of Beishan of Dazu constructed between the late Tang and the Southern Song, is a Hārītī cave. It depicts one woman dressed in Chinese imperial style, sitting and holding a child in her arms, one nurse

⁵⁶⁴ T. 1260, 287b-c.

⁵⁶⁵ T. 1261, 289c.

⁵⁶⁶ T. 1261, 289c.

⁵⁶⁷ Li Ling, "Bukong suoyi helidi midian jiqi tuxiang yanjiu 不空所譯訶利帝密典及其圖像研究"(Hārītī Tantras Translated by Amoghavajra and Hārītī Icons), *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan kan* 150 (2016.1): 92.

standing on her left side and breastfeeding an infant, and also nine children playing on the ground which are now missing."⁵⁶⁸ Cave No. 9 of Mt. Shimen 石門 of Sichuan is also a Hārītī cave, in which the goddess's imperial Chinese clothing style is as clear as the one in Dazu and seven children are depicted here.⁵⁶⁹

The highly sinicized iconic style of Hārītī, the frequent appearing of a number of her children, nine, and her link with fecundity lead some scholars to probe into the association of Hārītī with the ancient Chinese cult to the "Jiuzimu 九子母," the mother of nine children. Scholars point out that the term "Jiuzimu" has first appeared in the official history of Western Han, where a commentator of Eastern Han, Ying Shao 應劭, indicated the image of Jiuzimu being painted on the wall of a room for giving birth to princes in the imperial court.⁵⁷⁰ They also find on Han stone engravings and excavated tombs human-shaped clay lamps the images of a woman holding or being surrounded by nine children.⁵⁷¹ The sixth-century work *Seasonal Festive Customs in the Jinchu Region* (*Jinchu suishi ji* 荆楚歲時記) mentions the local custom of people praying to the deity of Jiuzimu for children.⁵⁷² The existence of these materials notwithstanding, I find it problematic that scholars' hasty equating the "Jiuzimu" in these sources with the spread of the cult of Buddhist "Guizimu" in China before the sixth

⁵⁶⁸ This is based on Ma Shutian's secondary report and still need to be further confirmed through other primary sources in the future. See Ma Shutian 馬書田, "Guizimu 鬼子母," in his *Huaxia zhushen* 華夏諸神: 佛教卷 (Gods of China: The Volume of Buddhism) (Taipei: Yunlun chuban she, 1993), 196. The Hārītī's image of this cave can be found online: http://zy7312.lofter.com/post/14614c_7c9c81c

⁵⁶⁹ Li Ling (2016): 90-91. Li identifies that the stone inscription carved beside the statue is based on one dhāraṇī sūtra *Dabao guangbo louge shanzhu mimi tuoluoni jing* 大寶廣博樓閣善住秘密陀羅尼經 (T. 1005A) translated by Bukong. Based on the scripture, the statue here carved seven children.

⁵⁷⁰ Bangu 班固, *Hanshu*, vol. 10, "Biography of Emperor Chengdi 成帝." Also see Sun Shaohua 孫少華, "Jiuzimu de xingxiang yanhua jiqi wenxue yu wenhua yihan 九子母的形象衍化及其文學與文化意涵," *Shandong daxue xuebao* (2014.1): 137; Hsieh Ming-liang 謝明良, "Guizimu zai zhongguo: cong kaogu ziliao tansuo qi tuxiang de qi yuan yu bianqian 鬼子母在中國: 從考古資料探索其圖像的起源與變遷" (A Study of the Origin and Development of the Representation of Hārītī), *Meishushi yanjiu jikan* 27 (2009): 118-119. Most of the archeological images of Hārītī can be found in Hsieh's article.

⁵⁷¹ Hsieh (2009): 111-121.

⁵⁷² *Jinchu suishi ji*, the entry of "the eighth day of the fourth month." Sun (2014): 142; Hsieh (2009): 109.

century.⁵⁷³ The similar pronunciation of "Jiu" and "Gui" in early Chinese language may lead to the merging of the two terms and even the two deities. However, judging from the current available sources, it is impossible to tell the exact time of the two merging and thus groundless to say the appearance of the cult of "Jiuzimu" in the pre-Tang era is equivalent to the spread of Hārītī. It is only among the sources appearing during and after the Tang that we begin to see the term "Guizimu" appeared frequently and alternatively used together with "Jiuzimu" or "Jiuzimomu 九子魔母."⁵⁷⁴ The alternation of the two terms after the Tang proves the merging of the two deities. This also explains why Hārītī's images during and after the Tang were usually made with nine children, even though in the caves of India, Xinjiang, Yungan, and Dunhuang the number of children may be one, three, five, or seven, and in the two Hārītī scriptures translated by Bukong it is three or five that should be painted.⁵⁷⁵ Hārītī's children-holding icon seems to have also influenced on or merged with the icon of the Child-giver Guanyin later. Since this subject is out of the time period that this dissertation deals with, I shall leave it for future exploration and stop my discussion here.⁵⁷⁶

Bāla-grahā

⁵⁷³ Sun (2014): 141-142; Hsieh (2009): 109.

⁵⁷⁴ Taichiro Kobayashi finds one cave inscription in 888 AD of the Tang, which mentions the building of a statue of "Guizimu" and her nine children, see his "支那における訶利帝—その信仰とその圖像とに就て"(Hārītī in China: On its cult and images), *Shinabukkyo shigaku* 2.3 (1938): 1-48, esp. 19. In many paintings records of Tang-Song period, they call Hārītī as "Guizimu" more frequently and only in few cases call her "Jiuzimu." For a list of the painting records of Tang-Song period that mention the deity, see Li Ling (2008): 91, note 16. In Tang poet Meng Qi 孟棻's *Benshi shi* 本事詩, a literati official was said to use the term "Jiuzimomu" to describe the fearful character of a woman in her middle age after giving birth. See Sun (2014): 144-145.

⁵⁷⁵ *Sādhana of the Great Yakṣiṇī* requires painting three children and the *Scripture of Hārītī's Mantras* requires five children. Li Ling (2016) analyzes all Hārītī's images collected in Taishō and find that the types of three children and five children have three cases in each; the type of seven children has one, but the type of nine children preserves six cases. See Li Ling (2016): 88-91. In Yijing's travelogue he also said that in India usually three or five children's statues were built to symbolize Hārītī's five hundred children.

⁵⁷⁶ The following scholars have brought up this observation. A Foucher, *The Beginning of Buddhist Art, and other essays in Indian and Central Asian archaeology* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1917); Taichiro Kobayashi (1938): Ogawa Kanichi, "土俗神パンチカとハーリティーの婦仏縁起"(The History of Conversion of Local Custom Deities Pancica and Hariti to Buddhism), *Ryukoku daigaku ronshu* 373 (1963.3): 26-65, esp. 38-42; Hsieh (2009): 129.

Demonic etiology related to birth and transformed instead into a way of children protection is also seen in the case of Bāla-grahā. It is a set of twelve or fifteen female goddesses that manifest in different animal forms causing assorted children's diseases yet can be avoided through incantations and sacrifice to them. Two scriptures associated with these goddesses and identifying their forms and the sicknesses they cause to children are the *Sūtra of Children-Protecting Dhāraṇī taught by the Buddha* (T. 1028A) and the *Sūtra of Curing Children's Diseases taught by Rāvaṇa* (T. 1330), translated respectively in the Northern Wei and early Song dynasties. In Chapter Four, I have discussed their contents, different Chinese translations of the goddesses' names, their linguistic association with planets, the deities' appearance in other Esoteric scriptures and Indian Āyurveda medical works. Here I want to discuss the spread of the goddesses' images and relevant manuscripts found in Dunhuang and Japan. The images of the goddesses are first found by Aurel Stein in Dunhuang Cave No. 17 dated to the ninth century of the Tang. They were painted on pothī leaves and only three of them have survived. Each has a hole for stringing through its upper half and are painted on both sides with representations of the deity. (Figure 5.9)⁵⁷⁷ The images have both Khotanese and Chinese colophons on them, and several scholars have studied them.⁵⁷⁸ The paintings vividly illustrate the animal forms of the goddesses. In four of them, we can see children were painted together with the deities, representing the deities' role as pediatric spirits. Matsumoto has transcribed the Chinese colophon, which I translate into English below.⁵⁷⁹ The order it

⁵⁷⁷ Roderich Whitfield and Anne Farrer, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese art from the Silk Route* (London: British Museum Publications, 1990), 88-91, image No. 69A-F; Chen Ming (2005): 91-92.

⁵⁷⁸ Studies on the Khotanese colophon are by H. W. Bailey in his *Khotanese Texts*, vol.III (Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 135; by Mauro Maggi, "A Chinese-Khotanese Excerpt from the Mahāsāhasrapramardanī," *La Persia e l'Asia centrale de Alessandro al X secolo* (Rome, 1997), 123-137; Prods Oktor SKJÆRVØ, *Khotanese manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan in the British Library: A complete catalogue with texts and translations*. London, The British Library, 2002; Studies on the Chinese colophon and its corresponding Chinese Buddhist scriptures are still few, see Matsumoto Eiichi, *Tonkoga no kenkyū 敦煌画の研究* (Tokyo: Toho bunka gakuin, 1937), 763-769, Image No. 190-191; Chen Ming (2005): 91-106. The summary of the scholarship, see Chen Ming (2005): 91-92.

⁵⁷⁹ Matsumoto Eiichi (1937): 763-769; Chen Ming (2005): 94.

mentions the character of each goddess is from left to right of Figure 5.9 above.



Figure 5.9 Six Female Goddesses related to Children-Protection, Ink and colors on paper.

Dunhuang Cave No. 9, the 9th C.. Each leaf: H. 33cm, W. 8cm.⁵⁸⁰

These sixteen goddesses all protect children. For those who are under twelve years old, these sixteen goddesses transform their bodies into evil forms and cause illnesses and harms to them. Each of the sixteen great deities commands innumerable small yakṣas. They absorb children's essence and soul. If people want their boys and girls having no illnesses, they should sacrifice to these deities. Then their children shall be cured. (Figure 5.9 the upper part of the first panel from the left)

This goddess is named Moyizhe nu 摩藝遮女 (Sk. Miṣika, Kh. Maṃgica). If a child suffers from [the issue] of breastfeeding, the mother would dream an ox. That is the goddess who is causing the child's sickness. Sacrifice to her will be auspicious. (The lower part of the first panel)

⁵⁸⁰ These images are first published by Stein in *Serinda: Detailed report of explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China* (5vol., Oxford, 1921), 978-979; then by Arthur Waley in his *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tunhuang by Sir Aurel Stein* (London, 1931), vol. 2, pl75. I photo the images from Whitefield's book.

This goddess is named Moqiepanni 磨伽畔泥 (Sk. Mukhamaṇḍikā, Kh. Mukhamaṇḍa). If one dreams of a macaque, the child [with some symptom].....and the macaque opens wide its two hands, we know that it is the deity causing illness. Sacrifice to her will be auspicious. (The second panel)

The goddess is named Shijuning 石俱寧 (Sk. Śakunī, Kh. Śakunī). If one dreams of a bird, the child is suffering from diarrhea, or illness of the abdomen. We then know that it is the deity causing illness. Sacrifice to her will be auspicious. (the third panel)

This goddess is named Monanning 摩難寧 (Sk. Matrṇandī, Kh. Matrranaṇḍī). If one dreams of a cat, the child puts out tongue and has diarrhea. We know that it is the deity causing illness. Sacrifice to her will be auspicious. (The fourth panel)

This goddess is named Jiqiebanli 吉伽半里 (Sk. Kāṇṭhapānī, Kh. Kirakapaṇḍanī/Kaṇṭhapānī). If one dreams of a rooster, the child is trembling, having phlegm in his mouth, and his voice is blocked up. Then we know that it is the deity causing illness. Sacrifice to her will be auspicious. (The fifth panel)

This goddess is named Zhenqieluozhe 真伽羅遮 (Sk. Mṛgarāja, Kh. Miṃkhalaca/Mṛgarāja). If a child or his mother dreams a stag, we know that it is the deity causing illness. Sacrifice to her will be auspicious. (The sixth panel)⁵⁸¹

In addition to this copy with bilingual colophons preserved in Dunhuang cave, one entry in the catalogue of art collection of Qing Court, *Midian zhuling* 秘殿珠林 (1744 CE), gives us another clue of circulation of the image of these goddesses. Titled the "Image of Candana God painted by Wudaozi" (Wudaozi hua Zhantan shenxiang 吳道子畫旃檀神像), it actually has nothing to do with any god of "Candana" (sandalwood in Sanskrit) at all, but paints the fifteen spirits that bring children sicknesses. The catalogue does not preserve the image but merely textual description. It first mentions that there are emperors' seals of early Northern Song dynasty stamped on the painting and says, "according to the scripture [of Children-Protecting Dhāraṇī], there are fifteen spirits causing troubles to children. They are commanded by a great demon. They include Michoujia 彌酬迦 (Sk. Miṣika) in the form of an ox, Mijiawang 彌迦王 (Sk. Mṛgarāja) in the form of a lion, Qiantuo 鞞陀 (Sk. Skanda) in the

⁵⁸¹ Chen Ming (2005): 94-95. He makes two detailed forms contrasting the goddesses' names in their Sanskrit, in the two Chinese Buddhist scriptures, and in the Khotanese and Chinese colophons of the image.

form of kumāra, Apoxiluo阿波悉羅(Sk. Aoasmāra) in the form of a wild fox, Niuzhijia牛致迦 (Sk. Muṣṭika) in the form of a macaque, Mozhijia 摩致迦 (Sk. Mātrkā) in the form of rākṣasī, Yanmijia閻彌迦 (Sk. Jāmikā) in the form of a horse, Jiamini迦彌尼(Sk.Kāminī) in the form of a woman, Lipozhi梨波吒 (Sk.Revati) in the form of a dog, Fuduna富都那 (Sk. Pūtanā) in the form of a pig, Manduonan曼多難(Sk.Matṛnandi) in the form of a cat, Shejiuni 舍究尼 (Sk. Śakunī) in the form of a bird, Jianchiponi 犍叱波尼(Sk. Kāṅṭhapāninī) in the form of a rooster, Mantuo曼陀 (Sk. Mukhamaṇḍikā) in the form of a smelly fox, and Lanpo 藍婆 (Sk.Lambā) in the form of a snake. The forms of these spirits on the painting all correspond to what the scripture states. All the children in the painting have the horrified, fearful and pitiful appearance. There is no doubt that [the image] is based on the scripture."⁵⁸²

The scripture and the image of the goddesses also spread to Japan. Kawamura Tomoyuki finds a manuscript of the text and its attached painting of the fifteen goddesses being collected in Nara's Yamatobunkakan. They are the old collection of Kōzanji and dated to 1196 AD in the seventh year of Kenkyū under the reign of Gotoba Tennō. (Figure 5.10)⁵⁸³ Compared to the Dunhuang image of the fifteen goddesses, the Japanese one further drew all the images of children and their symptoms after being caught by the goddesses individually. In the end, the "great god" commanding all the goddesses is also depicted, the named being Sandan Kendatsuba 梅檀乾闥婆 (Sk. Gandharva, Ch. Zhantan Gantapo).⁵⁸⁴ This is probably what the "Zhantan shen" refers to in Midian zhulin and what the Tang painter Wudaozi might

⁵⁸² *Midian zhulin*, fasc. 9, in *Qinding siqu quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, 110-114; Chen Ming (2005: 99) first found this.

⁵⁸³ Kawamura Tomoyuki, "Kōzanji kyuzō gōshodōjikyō to jūgokishinzuzō 高山寺旧蔵護諸童子經と十五鬼神図像," in *Yamatobunka* 大和文華 95 (1996): 1-19. This study is noticed by Chen Ming in his recent manuscript on the topic. He also kindly shares his manuscript with me. This subject of the children-protecting fifteen goddesses is one of his long-term study. Chen Ming, manuscript, 20-21.

⁵⁸⁴ Kawamura Tomoyuki (1996): 6.

have painted together with the fifteen goddesses but was wrongly entitled by the cataloguer of a later age.

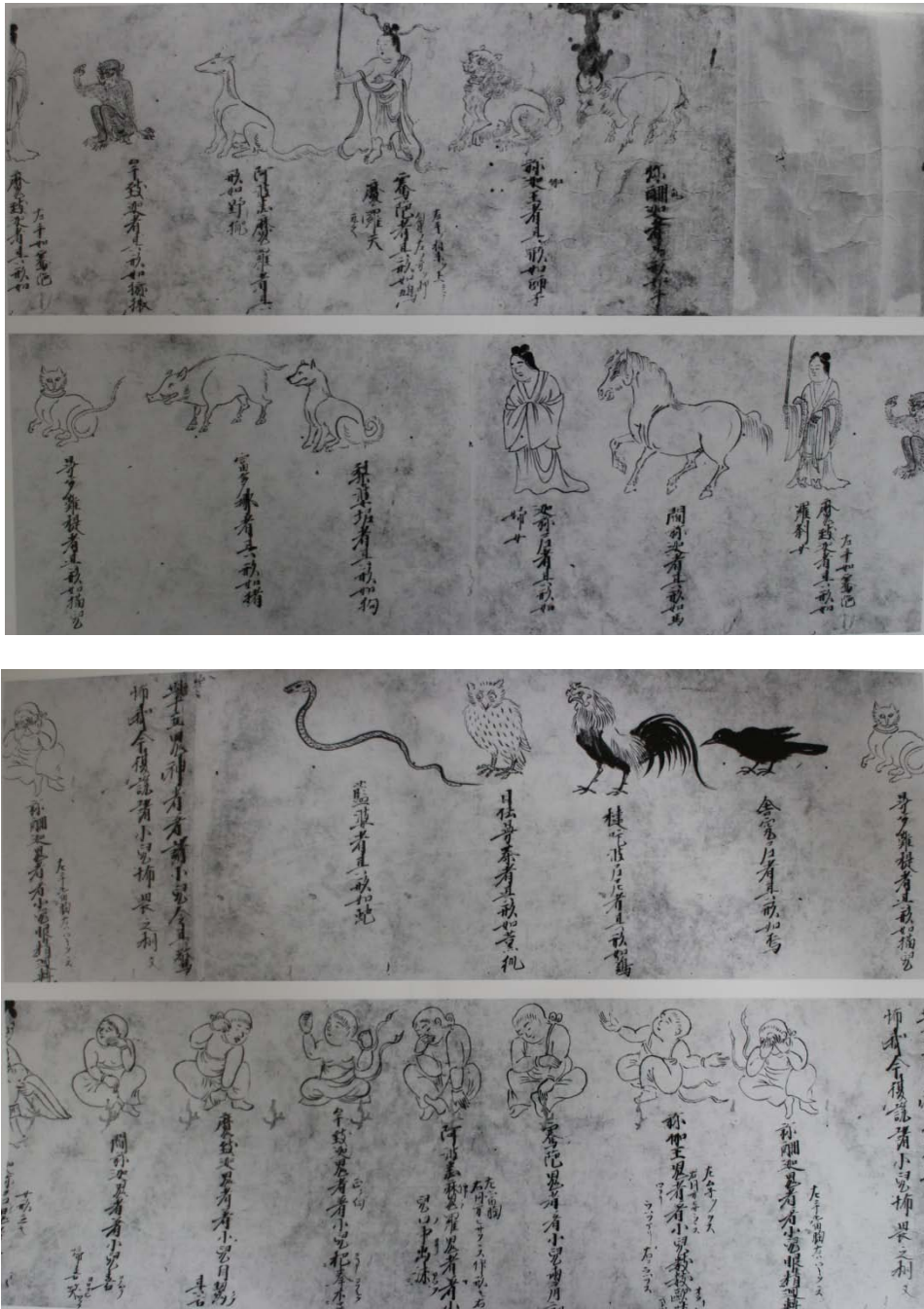




Figure 5. 10 The Image of the Fifteen Goddesses collected in Yamatobunkakan. Six pieces of papers, W 43.4cm & H 15.2cm of each paper⁵⁸⁵

Scholars recently found quite a number of copies of the *Sūtra of Children-Protecting Dhāraṇī* in many places. Japan's manuscript of the scripture kept in Kōzanji is one example. In China, manuscripts or printed copies of the text have all been discovered in Dunhuang, Turfan, Fangshan 房山 Stone-carving scriptures, and Qisha Canon (Qishazang 磧砂藏).⁵⁸⁶ Li Xiaorong identified two manuscripts of this scripture in Dunhuang, S. 988 and S. 6986.⁵⁸⁷ Chen Ming further locates S. 6334, Dx.02091, BD. 4544, BD. 4378, and Ōtani 4421 as the manuscripts of this text, but these copies seem to have no information about their time.⁵⁸⁸ Among the well-known manuscripts of scriptures offered by Zhai Fengda 翟奉達 (902-966

⁵⁸⁵ Kawamura Tomoyuki (1996): 5.

⁵⁸⁶ Chen Ming, manuscript (2012-13): 12-13.

⁵⁸⁷ Li Xiaorong (2003): 4, 36.

⁵⁸⁸ Chen Ming (2015): 477; Chen Ming (2005): 99; Chen Ming, manuscript, 10-11.

CE) in 958 CE for his deceased wife Mrs. Ma on her Buddhist memorial services of every seventh day for seven times, one of them is the *Sūtra of Children-Protecting Dhāraṇī*.⁵⁸⁹ Extant manuscripts provide a complete list of scriptures that he offered on each of the seventh day.⁵⁹⁰ From the scriptures that were chosen and the time order that the scriptures were arranged to be copied, it is observable that each sūtra might have been especially chosen with particular implication on each of the seventh day during the forty-nine-day ritual. The scripture being copied in the seventh day, for instance, is the *Sūtra of Impermanence taught by the Buddha* (*Foshuo wuchang jing* 佛說無常經, T. 801), in which the Buddha lectured on the three major sufferings of life, oldness, sickness and death, and in the end a memorandum instructed the proper method for caring and preparing for the person approaching the end of life.⁵⁹¹ The scripture copied in the fourteenth day is the *Scripture of Water-Moon Guanyin* (*Suiyue guanyin jing* 水月觀音經). Chün-fang Yü has noticed that Guanyin in the late ninth- and the early tenth centuries had appeared as the "Guide of Souls" in a Dunhuang painting sponsored by a local official for his dead family members.⁵⁹² Another Dunhuang painting depicts four forms of the bodhisattva serving the role of guide of souls. Although in that painting Water-Moon Guanyin is not one of the, I suspect that the reason of the *Scripture of Water-Moon Guanyin* being copied on the second seventh-day may still very well be due to

⁵⁸⁹ Chen Ming notices the appearance of the scripture in his article(2005): 99-100; and his manuscript (2012-2013): 12-13. Stephen F. Teiser in his study on the Ten Kings commits one chapter to the manuscripts of scriptures offered by Zhai Fengda, see his *The Scripture On the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), Ch. 9. Besides, it is noteworthy that in these manuscripts Zhai Fengda alternatively called Mrs. Ma "Jiamu 家母," "Apo 阿婆," "Aniang 阿娘" or "Qi 妻" and called himself "Fu 夫." This may sound confusing and has caused debates among scholars, see Teiser (1994): 102, note 2. A scholar lately points out that calling young girl as "Aniang" or one's wife as "Apo," "Aniang" or "Jiamu" is not an uncommon usage in medieval Chinese literature, especially in colloquial language. See Zhuyao 朱瑤, "Dunhuang xiejing tijing zhong jiamu ciyi kaoshi 敦煌寫經題記中家母詞義考釋" (The Study of Meaning of Jia Mu in the Buddhist Sutras' Colophon in Dunhuang), *Shanxi danan* (2015.6):114-118.

⁵⁹⁰ These manuscripts include Jinyi 津藝 193, Beitu Gan 北圖岡 44 (or BD 4544), P. 2055.

⁵⁹¹ Yijing of the Tang dynasty trans., T. 801. Teiser (1994): 107-108.

⁵⁹² Yü (2001): 225-225, Figure 6.1, 6.2.

the bodhisattva's role as the guide of souls. The scripture copied on the fifth stage of the seven-day offered by Zhai, the *Scripture on the Prophecy Given to King Yama* (*Yanluowang shouji jing* 閻羅王授記經), functions similarly as the help for the deceased going through her intermediate state in the underworld journey, especially when she was brought before its ruler, the King Yama, and his court during the fifth week after death.⁵⁹³ Thinking along this line, we may guess that the reason of *Children-Protecting Scripture* being copied in the sixth stage of the seven-day ritual may point to Mrs. Ma's role as a mother and wish her children being blessed by means of copying the text. The other two scriptures being offered in Mrs. Ma's memorial feast also correspond to her role as a mother, the *Scripture on the Yulan Bowls* on the hundredth day and the *Scripture on the Buddha's Mother* on the first year. The former is concerned with the deliverance of mothers from the hell and the latter assists a mother further in getting enlightened by preaching the Dharma to her after she ascends to a heavenly realm. In short, the manuscripts of the *Sūtra of Children-Protecting Dhāraṇī* and the image of the fifteenth children-harming/protecting goddesses were found from Khotan to China and Japan. Their spread and the cults of Guanyin and Hārītī as a children-bestower or protector in medieval China witness the profound association of Buddhism with childbirth and Buddhist healing resources being applied and welcomed in the real life. Now we shall turn to other healing resources for birth in Buddhism.

Praying for Birth: Liturgy, Sūtra-Copying and Others

Liturgy

Besides exorcistic techniques and protective divinities, liturgies and scripture-copying are another two popular practices that medieval Chinese utilized to seek posterity and acquire

⁵⁹³ Teiser (1994): 111-112. Teiser in this chapter provides a thorough examination of the contents of every scriptures being copied by Zhai Fengda.

blessing and safety of childbirth. In Dunhuang manuscripts, there is one genre of ritualistic writing formulary or reference manuals provided for a Buddhist assembly or feast held for praying for blessing, accumulating merit, and eliminating sins and disasters. Scholars classed these ritualistic documents under the generic name called "*yuanwen* 願文" or "*zhaiwen* 齋文" (prayer, liturgy or ritual text).⁵⁹⁴ Among these ritual texts, there are several especially used in the occasion of childbirth, including the most well-known one titled "the Liturgy for the Difficult Month" (*Nanyue wen* 難月文) and others like "[the Liturgy] for Dying in Birth" (*yinchan wang shi* 因產亡事), "the Liturgy for the Newborn in a Full Month" (*manyue* 滿月, or *haizi* 孩子), and "the Liturgy for Children Dying Young" (*haizitan* 孩子嘆).

Agreeing with Hao Chunwen and Stephen Teiser's viewpoints, who both emphasize the ritual context and performative attribute of these texts in a Buddhist assembly or feast hosted by a monastic member, I follow them to call these texts liturgy as the English translation of *zhaiwen*. Below I want to focus on the "Liturgy for the Difficult Month" while also touching on others in the discussion of the overall features of these liturgies. I first examine its extant manuscripts in Dunhuang, translate and analyze the contents, and then situate the liturgy into its ritual setting to reveal its performative attribute, function and purpose based on some recent scholarship.

The "Liturgy for the Difficult Month" has at least nine copies discovered in Dunhuang.

⁵⁹⁴ There has been debates of which of the two terms is more proper to be the generic title of these ritualistic writing templates. For the scholarship and debate between the use of the two terms, English ones see Stephen Teiser (太史文), "Shilun zhaiwen de biaoyan xing 試論齋文的表演性" (On the Performativity of Zhaiwen), *Dunhuang tulufan yanjiu* 10 (2007): 295-307, esp. 295-298; "The Literary Style of Dunhuang Healing Liturgies (患文)," *Dunhuang tulufan yanjiu* 14 (2014): 355-377, esp. 355-361. Chinese part can see Hao Chunwen 郝春文, "Dunhuang xieben zhaiwen jiqi yangshi de fenlei yu dingming 敦煌寫本齋文及其樣式的分類與定名" (Categorization and Definition of Dunhuang manuscripts of liturgies for feast), *Beijing shifan xueyuan xuebao* (1990.3): 91-97; "Guanyu dunhuang xieben zhaiwen de jige wenti 關於敦煌寫本齋文的幾個問題" (Issues on the Dunhuang manuscripts of liturgies), *Shoudu shifan daxue xuebao* 109 (1996.2): 64-71. Here I follow Hao's argument, viewing a "prayer" (*yuanwen*) as one component of a "liturgy" (*zhaiwen*). The latter is particularly used in the occasion of a Buddhist feast and chanted aloud by monastic ritualist. It has several specific ritual steps and conveyed by different sections of the liturgy. See my discussion below.

They can be further divided into the longer version, including S. 5593, S. 5957, S. 5561, P 3765, S. 1441, P. 3825, and the shorter version, including S. 5639, BD. 7069, and S. 4081. Among the six copies of the longer version, the first four, S. 5593, S. 5957, S. 5561, P 3765, have almost identical content. The other two, S. 1441 and P. 3825, differ partly from the first four and also from each other in phrasing, but are still close to others in overall structure and meaning. P. 3825 is unlike the other five ones that were clearly entitled "the liturgy for the difficult month." It is instead interpolated into another longer ritual text titled *Huanwen* 患文 (healing liturgy, or the liturgy for illness). This reveals that the substance of "the liturgy for the difficult month." It was regarded as a kind of healing liturgy, and more importantly, childbirth was identified with a kind of sickness that waited to be treated by the healing ritual. This identification of childbirth with a kind of sickness is also seen in many aforementioned dhāraṇī scripture. It also recalls and explains the reason why Xuanzang was summoned to the court to hold the ritual praying for the safe birth of the prince. I will return to this point below. As for the three copies of the shorter version, BD. 7069 and S. 4081 have similar content and title of "Nanyue" while S. 5639 varies from them and has no title.⁵⁹⁵

For the liturgies of the longer version, S. 1441 (Figure 5.11) is preserved relatively well and has complete text, so I use it as the exemplar and translate the whole text below for the convenience of the following analysis.

⁵⁹⁵ Seven copies of these nine ones can be directly accessed to the images of their original documents on the website of IDP. Chinese transcriptions of some of these manuscripts are seen in Huang Zheng 黃徵, Wu Wei 吳偉 eds., *Dunhuang yuanwen ji* 敦煌願文集 (Chansha: Yuelu shushe, 1995), 33-34 (S. 1441), 56 (S. 1441, P. 3825), 174 (S. 4081), 206 (S. 5639), 698 (S. 5593, S. 5957, S. 5561, P 3765), 707 (BD. 7069).

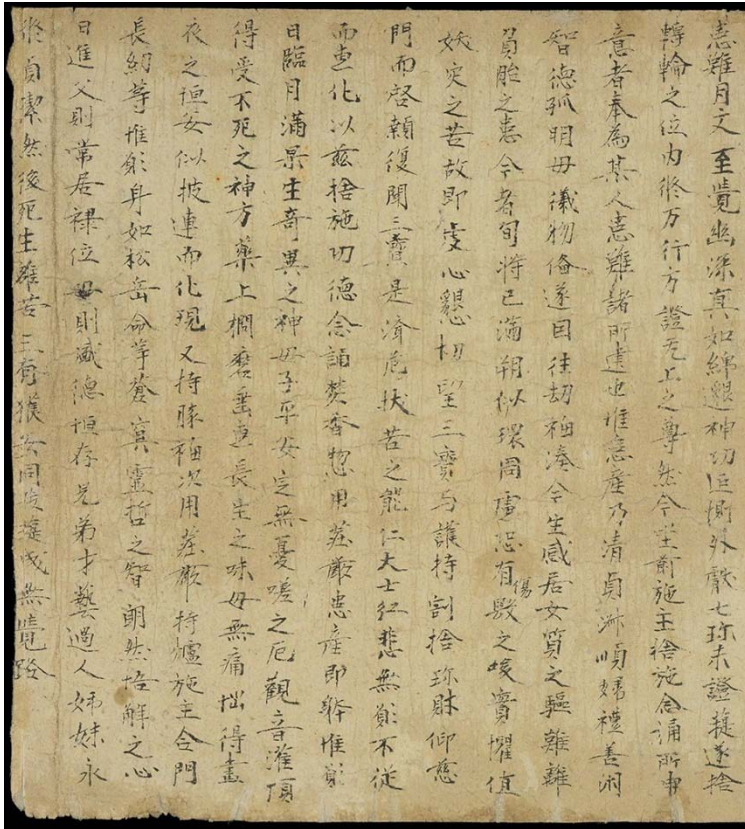


Figure 5.11 The Prayer for the Difficult Month, S. 1441, IDP, H. 27.9 cm

The Liturgy for the Difficult Month

(I) The ultimate awakened one is profound while the True Suchness [he realized] is remote and deep. His mysterious achievement is unfathomable. The seven treasures offered to him externally did not help him enlightened. Thus he abandoned the status as a wheel-turning king and cultivated internally ten thousand deeds. Only then did he achieve the ultimate truth and nobility. 至覺幽深，真如綿邈，神功叵測，外獻七珍，未證菩提，遂捨轉輪之位，內修萬行，方證無上之尊。

(II) Now, the purpose of the giving and chanting by the donor seated in front is to establish [the ritual assembly] on behalf of the illness of such and such person. 然今坐前施主捨施念誦所申意者，奉為某人患難諸所建也。

(III) Alas, the sick one is pure, chaste, kind and gentle. She is capable of her duty and manner as a good wife. Her intelligence and virtue are incomparable. She only began to acquire the mannerism of being a mother. Nevertheless, as a result of the past karma and the blessings converging in this present life, she was incarnated in the female body and thus the suffering of bearing a child is hardly avoidable. Now her ten [month of gestation] is nearly complete, like a new moon

finishing its cycle.⁵⁹⁶ Worrying about that there may be a severe condition⁵⁹⁷ of harms and damages, and truly fearing the pain caused by demonic disaster, thus [I, the speaker of the liturgy, on behalf of the donor and the beneficiary] sincerely pray that the Three Jewels may bestow protection. Therefore they donate treasure and money, looking up to the gate of compassion and bowing their heads. 惟患者乃清貞淑順，婦禮善嫻，智德孤明，母儀初備。遂因往劫，福湊今生，感居女質之軀，難離負胎之患。今者旬將已滿，朔似環周，慮恐有儼之峻，實懼值妖災之苦。故即虔心懇切，望三寶與護持，割捨珍財，仰慈門而啟顙。

(IV) Humbly, I have heard that the Three Jewels are the capable ones assisting people in danger and delivering them from suffering. The Great Being with his great compassion can fulfill any wish and bestow beneficent transformation. With compassion [we] distribute this merit (arisen from the assembly), chant and burn incense. 復(伏)聞三寶是濟厄拔苦之能仁(人)，大士紅(弘)悲，無願不從而惠化。以慈捨施功德、念誦焚香。

(V) We [take this merit and the fortunate causes from the chanting and the dharma feast] [first] to ornament the sick one herself, who is suffering from birth.⁵⁹⁸ 總用莊嚴患產即體。

(VI) [A] We pray that when the day of birth approaches and the ten month is full, [she] will give birth to a wonderful child.⁵⁹⁹ The mother and the child will be both safe and have absolutely no disaster for worry and sorrow. Bodhisattva Guanyin will come to consecrate and bestow them the divine recipe of immortality. Bodhisattva of healing (Bhaiṣajyasamudgata) will rub [their bodies] to grant the essence of everlasting life. The mother will have no pain and trouble, obtaining permanent safety of day and night. The transcendent child being born

⁵⁹⁶ "Huanzhou 環周" means a cycle.

⁵⁹⁷ The Chinese transcription offered by Huang and Wu (1995) is "suo 唆" or "suan 酸" (p. 34). But I do not think that this matches the context. After checking back with the original document of S. 1441, I feel the character appearing more like "jun 峻," and its meaning of severness more corresponds to the context.

⁵⁹⁸ Here I refer to Teiser's translation and explanation of this sentence in other manuscript of healing liturgy to give the context and render the terms in this sentence. See Teiser (2014); "Diction and Metaphor in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Healing Liturgies from Dunhuang," presented on Princeton University East Asian Studies Department Colloquium, September 2015. I cordially thank for his generous share of his ongoing manuscript with me. For the linguistic history of the term "zhuangyan 莊嚴" used in pre-Buddhist China and its religious implication in Buddhism, see Teiser, "Wei wangzhe yuan: Dunhuang yishi wenlei dingyi chutan 為亡者願: 敦煌儀式文類定義初探," in Li Fengmao and Liao Zhaoheng eds., *Shengzhuang yu chanshi: zhongguo wenxue yu zongjiao lunji* 聖傳與禪詩: 中國文學與宗教論集 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, Wenzhe suo, 2007): 248-307; "Ornamenting the Departed: Notes on the Language of Chinese Buddhist Ritual Texts," *Asia Major*, third series, 22.1 (2009): 201-237; Teiser (2007b). The phrase "患產即體" here in other healing liturgies often appear as "患者即體." Teiser translates the latter as "the sick one himself." In the liturgy for the difficult month, "患者" changes into "患產," so I render my text as "the sick one herself, who is suffering from birth."

⁵⁹⁹ The single character "Shen 神" here is written as shentong 神童 (divine or wonderful children) in other manuscripts.

will appear and manifest like being draped in a lotus.⁶⁰⁰ 惟願日臨月滿，果生奇異之神；母子平安，定無憂嗟之厄。觀音灌頂，得受不死之神方；藥上捫磨(摩)，垂惠長生之味。母無痛惱，得晝夜之恆安；[產子仙童]，似披蓮(蓮)而化現。

[B] With this superlative blessing, next we ornament the burner-holding donor and his whole families including adults and children. We pray that their bodies are like pine trees and mountains and their lives are equal to the heaven. Their divine intelligence is clear and bright. Their mind for comprehension advances day by day. The father holds the official office permanently. The mother keeps her virtues forever. The brothers have incomparable talents. The sisters cultivate chastity constantly. [May] the four kinds of birth [of living beings] escape sufferings and the three realms obtain happiness. [May] all people give rise to the aspiration for enlightenment and tread the path of awakening. 又持勝福，次用莊嚴持爐施主合門長幼等：惟願身如松岳，命等蒼冥；靈哲之智朗然，悟解之心日進。父則長居祿位，母則盛德恒存；兄弟才藝過人，姊妹永修貞潔。死(四)生離苦，三有獲安；同發菩提，成無(咸登)覺路。

The dissection of the text into the above paragraphs is made according to Hao's analysis of the structure of liturgies and Teiser's further discussion of this structure as being applied to healing liturgies. They indicate that a liturgy recited on a Buddhist feast usually follows a specific formula and order. It first praises the Buddha's virtue (section I), presents the purpose of the ritual (section II), then shifts to the main character, the patient herself to state her virtues and the illness (section III), lays out and executes the ritual (section IV), gathers up the merit that is produced from the ritual and distribute them to "ornament" the sick person(section V), and finally brings up prayers for the patient herself, for the donor of the feast and his relatives (section VI). This above manuscript lacks a concluding remark but in some, a benediction like "mahāprajñā" would be put at the end of chanting.⁶⁰¹

Obviously, every section of this liturgy serves different steps of the ritual. Each has its own function guiding performance of the ritual and making it and its healing purpose take

⁶⁰⁰ Noticeably, the phrase "manifest like being draped in a lotus" seems to describe the baby born with the placenta. I do not know whether using the metaphor of lotus to refer to placenta is common or not in Buddhist literature. This is worth exploration in the future.

⁶⁰¹ Hao (1996); Teiser (2014), (2015); Huang and Wu (1995): 56.

effect. Drawing from J. Austin and Webb Keane's research on ritual language, Teiser provides the insight that by the act of reciting a liturgy itself, and reciting it in a specific tone and mode under a specific ritual context, it is sufficient to "accomplish things," namely to have the wishes in a prayer come true.⁶⁰² The first section serves a preface to the whole rite by praising the virtues and deeds of the great savior, who is also the so-called Medicine King. This great physician and his unfathomable power are profound and remote but still approachable through the rite. They are the foundation that the whole ritual is based on and also the objects that the ritual appeals to. The second section presents the purpose of the ritual by drawing attention from the remote life and deeds of Śākyamuni to the current time, place, subject, and the ritual sponsor and the beneficiary/patient seated in front. The third section moves towards the major beneficiary for whom the ritual is performed, describing her worthy qualities and illnesses that are seemingly incompatible with her virtues but urgently need to be addressed. The fourth section comes to the ritual action itself, in which the petition for curing is proposed and accompanied by the actions of chanting and incense-burning. This is where and when the ritual action "happens." The following fifth section is the crux of the ritual: merit produced in the rite is channeled to "ornament" (*zhuangyan* 莊嚴) the sick one. Interestingly, Teiser in his analysis of literary style of healing liturgy notices that the second and this fifth section are the only two sections that do not use parallel prose like other parts but instead employ vernacular style and grammar. The parallel prose may sound more formal and aesthetic in style and easy to summarize things in short lines and to use classical allusion, and thus suits the need of making the formula of a liturgy. In contrast, the vernacular linguistic style in the entire second and fifth sections is clear and direct and thus used to "accomplish the action." The linguistic function of these sections is not descriptive but

⁶⁰² Teiser (2007): 298. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, vol. 2, J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa eds. (Harvard University Press, 1975), E. Webb Keane, "Religious Language," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26. 4 (1997): 50. Both are cited from Teiser's article.

performative.⁶⁰³ Coming to the sixth section, the language reverts to parallel prose. It is featured by two successive parts of prayers, first for the pregnant woman and her expectant child, and second for the donor and all his family members. In the end merit resulted from the ritual is further offered to all sentient beings and for their awakening and liberation.

The structure of the liturgy for the difficult month here is largely in accord with that of healing liturgy and may belong to one type of healing liturgy. The manuscript P. 3825 of the liturgy of the difficult month is even placed in-between a longer healing liturgy. A pregnant woman is also called "the sick person" (*huanzhe*患者) or "the one who is sick for/suffering from birth" (*huanchan*患產). The first prayer in the section VI in healing liturgies is to request "the dissipation of the four hundred and four ailments" and "the extinguishment of the five coverings and ten afflictions"⁶⁰⁴ while the same place in the liturgy for the difficult month is only replaced with the wish of the safety of birth. The two bodhisattvas Bhaiṣajyasamudgata and Guanyin who are most prestigious in medicine and healing are summoned for assisting in prescribing the "divine recipe" and appear both in healing liturgies and in the liturgy of the difficult month. This appealing to divinities for their curing power is expressed with more straightforward phrases in the healing liturgies P. 2058 or P. 3566. It says, "the Buddha is the Medicine King and saves all kinds of sicknesses. Dharma is the best medicine and cures all sorts of pains." "I humbly heard that the Three Jewels are the medicine king of this mundane world." "We pray that Medicine King (Bhaiṣajyaguru) and Medicine Superior (Bhaiṣajyasamudgata) confer divine recipes and Guanyin and Wondrous Sound (Gadgadasvara) bestow their wondrous medicine."⁶⁰⁵

The demonic etiology is still not absent here besides the mention of divinities' healing

⁶⁰³ Teiser (2014): 362-369, (2007).

⁶⁰⁴ Teiser (2014): 367.

⁶⁰⁵ Huang and Wu (1995): 664; Teiser (2015): 25.

power and the dharmic medicine. In the difficult-month liturgy "demonic disaster" is the reason of the birth pain while "enemies and creditors" in the past lives are similarly assumed to be the major causes of diseases in healing liturgies. Noticeably, inheriting from the general Buddhist concept of female inferiority, the liturgy for the difficult month likewise perceives the incarnation of the female form and its unavoidable duty of bearing a child as a kind of suffering. But interestingly the duty of bearing a child is considered as resulting from both the "past karma" and "the blessing converging in this life." Regarding birth as blessing in nature is hardly a typical Buddhist view and probably added for catering to the lay audience. Although in the difficult-month liturgies the Buddhist idea of birth *duḥkha* and that of the importance of people responsible for their illnesses resulted from past causes both exist, viewing birth as blessing betrays the indigenous common mentality and explicitly shows the targeted audience of the liturgies being mainly lay people rather than monastic members. Thus liturgies do not emphasize embryo and mother's sufferings as strong as scriptures such as the *Baotai jing*.

The good wishes to birth notwithstanding, the term "difficult month" (*nanyue* 難月) still informs us of its potential peril, but what does the term really mean, and where does it come from? Huang Zheng and Wu Wei in their annotation of "the liturgy for the difficult month" explain that "when a pregnant woman is undergoing difficult birth, her families would chant this prayer to appeal to divinities' help."⁶⁰⁶ Now it is clear that the liturgy is not read by the patient and her families nor by the donor, but supposedly by a monastic host and performer of the ritual in this Buddhist feast. Moreover, it may be too late to invite monks to hold the ritual and chant the liturgy right at the critical moment. Most likely, it may take place in the month, or one month before a pregnant woman expecting to give birth. In other words, I think the term of "difficult month" should not be mistaken for and made equal to

⁶⁰⁶ Huang and Wu (1995): 34.

"difficult birth" (*nanchan* 難產). Because even though a expectant mother does not anticipate to encounter difficult birth, her families may still want to hold the feast in advance to pray for the best luck for this highly fatal event. The most concrete evidence of the timing for performing the ritual is from Xuanzang's biography, written by his disciples right after his death and recording his participation in the ritual praying for the safety of the Empress Wu's "difficult month." It mentions that the ritual began in the tenth month of 656 CE and seems to have lasted for one month.⁶⁰⁷ The prince Li Xian, the later emperor Zhongzong, was born on the 26th day of the eleventh month according to the official history of the Tang.⁶⁰⁸ So the ritual or the liturgy for the difficult month must be carried out roughly one month before birth. As for the origin of this term and its circulation, this may need to be addressed elsewhere later. It is suffice to say here that the term seems not popular and does not appear in any indigenous Chinese texts when I searched it in the Digital Database of Ancient Chinese Texts of Academia Sinica (*Zhongyan yanjiuyuan hanji dianzi zuliao ku*). Inside the CBETA, before and during the Tang, there are also only three sources mentioning the term, all made in the Tang, and all in scriptures instead of in commentaries or monastic biographies.⁶⁰⁹

Regarding birth as blessing and the mood of celebration for forthcoming new life constantly bubble in the liturgies related to childbirth, even though expressions of worry, birth-suffering, threatening of death, and prayer wishing to be helped may simultaneously coexist with the positive emotion. The newborn is called "divine child" (*xiantong* 仙童) in the

⁶⁰⁷ *Datang da tsien si sanzang fashi zhuang* 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of Dacien Temple, a biography of Xuanzang), T. 50, No. 2053, 270c-271a. Also see Introduction chapter for the discussion of the event.

⁶⁰⁸ Liu Shu 劉昫, *Jiu tangshu* 舊唐書, vol. 7, "The Biography of Zhongzong" (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), 135.

⁶⁰⁹ They are *Tuoluoni jijing* 陀羅尼集經 (T. 901, 799b) translated by Atikūṭa in 653-654 AD, *Yaoshi liuliguang julai xiaozai chunan niansong yigui* 藥師琉璃光如來消災除難念誦儀軌 (T. 922, 20b) translated by Yixing 一行 (684-727 CE), and the indigenous scripture *Foshuo beidou qixing yanming jing* 佛說北斗七星延命經 (T. 1307, 426b).

above long version of difficult-month liturgy and as "fairy child" (*lingtong* 靈童) in the short version one such as BD 7069 and S. 4081.⁶¹⁰ BD 7069 prays for "a blessed child coming to the family" and S. 4081 for "the prosperity of the family and lineage."⁶¹¹ In S. 5639, it states that, "In this day [we] invite monks and the Buddha, appealing to your compassion. [We] praise Guanyin, hoping his protection. In the day of birth, may we be like walking in the garden of happiness. At the moment of separation [between the mother and the newborn], may we be like climbing the tree of no worry. The newborn must be a fairy child and divine infant. Both the mother and the child would be safe. [We shall] celebrate the safety, harmony and fecundity."⁶¹² The last phrase used here, "*jiaotai*交泰," comes from the hexagram of Tai (*taigua* 泰卦) of *Yijing*. Its divination reads "*tiandi jiao, tai*" (天地交，泰), meaning when the heaven and the earth's *qi* intermingles well and in harmony, it makes everything reproducing and fertile. Teiser in his analysis on the diction and metaphor used in healing liturgies points out that there is considerable appropriation of indigenous rhetoric and terms along with Buddhist ones, creating a phenomenon of "Buddhist hybrid Chinese" in the liturgies.⁶¹³ Here I want to add that in the Buddhist liturgies related to childbirth, it is through these native rhetoric and terms that ancient Chinese pursuit of posterity and fertility under the Yin-Yang cosmology and traditional Confucian family values are smuggled and preserved into this liturgical genre of Buddhist literature. They were presented by mixing with Buddhist ideas of karma and impermanence and thus under the guise of being part of "Buddhist" liturgy.⁶¹⁴ In the liturgy for lamenting a mother's death in birth, for instance, we find more

⁶¹⁰ Huang and Wu (1995): 707, 174.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Huang and Wu (1995): 206. The Chinese text is "于日延僧請佛，願假慈悲，讚誦觀音，希垂護衛。誕生之日，如遊歡喜之園，分解之時，似攀無憂之樹。生必仙子，剋保神童，母子平安，慶蒙交泰。"

⁶¹³ Teiser (2015): 19-20.

⁶¹⁴ This needs to be analyzed by examining dictions and metaphors used in other liturgies related to childbirth

Chinese classical allusions than those in the difficult-month liturgy. The Buddhist teaching of impermanence here is compared to Confucius's famous sigh about ceaseless river. The mother's virtue is praised like that of Mencius's mother. In the liturgies for lamenting newborn's early death or for celebrating the newborn's growth in one full month, the proportion of native rhetoric and terms are even higher. The Buddhist teachings of impermanence and suffering may be drawn on in the liturgies to explain the disappointing conditions but compared to that what is more prominent is still the expectation of familial prosperity and pragmatic mentality searching for help via the ritual from a remote yet unfathomable healing power.⁶¹⁵

Sūtra-Copying and Others

Some prayers for the safety of childbirth were made together with the practice of sūtra-copying and this fact is usually written in the colophon of the manuscripts.

In Chapter Four, we see that many scriptures advocate copying scriptures as one way to deal with infertility, solve difficult birth and miscarriage, and eliminate sins of abortion.

Scriptures-copying has always been suggested as one major method to treat disease. Now that pregnancy and giving birth are regarded as a kind of sicknesses, it is unsurprising that this practice also applies to them.

Many Dunhuang manuscripts of Buddhist scriptures preserve colophons that reveal their purposes of praying for curing diseases. Most of these scriptures being copied are dhāraṇī scriptures or scriptures related to healing and medicine. For example, P. 4563 is the one copying a scripture titled the *Scripture of Saving Diseases* (*Jiu jibing jing* 救疾病經), whose ending colophon states that "In the first day of the ninth month of the fifteenth year of

but given the confined length of a chapter I will not discuss them in details here. These examples can be found in the "liturgy for dying in birth," S. 2832, the "liturgy for the newborn in a full month," S. 2832, "the liturgy for the newborn," P. 2044, "the liturgy for the infant dying," S. 5637, S. 5639, see Huang and Wu (1995): 86, 87, 158, 203, 239.

⁶¹⁵ S. 2832, Huang and Wu (1995): 86.

Kaihuang (595 CE), the lay disciple Tan Yonghe sincerely made this *Scripture of Saving Diseases* with one hundred fascicles. May all the sentient beings, due to this cause, and those having sicknesses, are all cured. The six realms and the four birth all share this merit."⁶¹⁶ The manuscript No. 50 of Shanghai Museum in its ending sentence notes, "This scripture is called the *Scripture of Saving All Sentient Beings' Diseases* (*Jiuhu zhongsheng eji jing* 救護眾生惡疾經). In the twenty-seventh day of the fourth month of the sixth year of Wude (623 CE), lay disciple Suo Faxing sincerely made it, hoping in Jambudvīpa all people's disasters and diseases can be eliminated and cured and hoping this merit being distributed to all sentient beings of the six realms. All share this fortune."⁶¹⁷ The colophon of the *Scripture of Prolonging Life* (*Foshuo xuming jing* 佛說續命經) in P. 3115 says, "In the sixteenth day of the fifth month of the first year of Tianfu (901 CE), the mother Fanchen and the daughter Hong got sick successively. For adding the fortune to the treasured life, we write one copy of this *Scripture of Prolonging Life*. Written and Recorded by the Vinaya master Fayan of Lingtu Temple."⁶¹⁸ The colophon of P. 2805 dated to 941 CE mentions that a lay woman copied *Heart Sūtra*, the *Scripture of Prolonging Life*, and the *Scripture of Maricī* for "the disease of her body, which have not been alleviated for several days despite of taking much medicine." Now she "only begins to realize her previous misdeeds, and hopes the Great Sage helps the difficulty and saves her from danger by considering the merit of copying scriptures."⁶¹⁹

One indigenous scripture that targets the faithful to rid themselves of vices and to turn

⁶¹⁶ P. 4563; Chen Ming (2015): 481. The scripture is also in Taishō No. 2878. Both Sui and Tang's catalogues consider it as apocrypha, see T. 2146, 138c; T. 2149, 335c.

⁶¹⁷ *Shanghai bowuguan tsang dunhuang tulufan wenxian* 上海博物館藏敦煌吐魯番文獻 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), vol. 2, No. 50; Chen Ming (2015): 481.

⁶¹⁸ P. 3115; Chen Ming (2015): 481.

⁶¹⁹ P. 2805; Chen Ming (2015): 481-482.

to virtues lists seven or ten fatal diseases in its two different versions. They also contain diseases of childbirth and difficult birth. One is entitled the *Scripture of Succoring All Living Beings in Adversity* (*Jiuzhu zhongsheng kuanan jing zhong* 救諸眾生苦難經, S. 3417, listing ten fatal maladies, dated to 803 CE), and the other the *Scripture Urging Kindness* (*Quan shan jing* 勸善經, P. 3036, including seven fatal maladies, dated to 803 CE and 938 CE). Scholars have found nineteen manuscript copies of other editions of the former text in Dunhuang and about thirty copies containing the name of the ten diseases in another scripture.⁶²⁰ The colophon of the former text leaves us a precious record of the reason of copying the text and identifies the names of the ten diseases. "This year has rich harvest but no one come to reap. Because [people] die of several diseases. The first kind is dying of intermittent fever (*nüebing* 瘧病). The second is epidemics (*tianxing bing* 天行病). The third is foot diseases (*zubing* 足病). The fourth is inflammatory diseases (*zhongbing* 腫病). The fifth is diseases of childbirth (*chanbing* 產病). The sixth is the suffering in the abdomen (*huanfu* 患腹). The seventh is boils (*huanyong* 患癰). The eighth is wind yellow disease (or jaundice, *fenghuanbing* 風黃病). The ninth is water diarrhea (*shuili* 水痢). The tenth is diseases of eyes (*yanbing* 眼病)."⁶²¹

Another scripture that has been extensively copied for praying for childbirth and for health in general is the series of scriptures related to Medicine King Buddha (Bhaiṣajyaguru).⁶²² He is also the only one that appears with Guanyin bodhisattva in healing

⁶²⁰ Ma Jixing ed., *Dunhuang yiyao wenxian jijiao* (Collation of Dunhuang Medical Texts), 769-771; English translation of the relevant materials listed in this book, see Vivienne Lo and Christopher Cullen, *Medieval Chinese Medicine*, 430.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² For the Dunhuang manuscripts that copy the series of scriptures of the Medicine King Buddha, see Li Xiaorong (2003): 187-190. For its Indian origin and the various versions of Chinese translation of the Buddha, see Raoul Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha*. For the contents related to the assistance of childbirth in these scriptures, see Chapter Four.

liturgies. His younger brother Bhaiṣajyasamudgata and Guanyin also bestow divine healing in the difficult-month liturgy. In Dunhuang one prayer on the colophon of the manuscript copying *Yaoshi Sūtra* states, "In the twenty-seventh day of the eleventh month of the second year of Shanyuan (675 CE), your female disciple Suo Baniang is in the difficult month. May I have no suffering and trouble and enjoy the safety of giving birth."⁶²³ The year name *Shangyuan* is during the reign of Tang emperor Goazong and the year of this colophon is just nineteen years later after the difficult-month ritual held by Xuanzang for the Empress Wu. Praying to the Medicine King Buddha for childbirth was sometimes undertaken by building his statue, a practice that is also greatly promoted by Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures for merit making. In 678 CE, also in the reign of Gaozong, a Medicine King Buddha's statue was built, "praying for blessing to the woman Fan's pregnancy."⁶²⁴ The efficacy of the Medicine Buddha helping difficult birth was recorded by the Song monk Feizhuo 非濁 (d. 1063) in his collection of miracle tales. It reports that, "A woman in Zu County has been pregnant for twelve months. Her body was exhausted and her bones extremely painful. She cried aloud. Instructed by a monk named Mai, she recited the name of Medicine Buddha. She then dreamt of the Buddha coming to save her. She became more convinced of it and continued the recitation. The pain gradually ceased and she finally gave birth to a boy."⁶²⁵ These sources show that copying the scriptures, building the statues and reciting the names of the Medicine Buddha have all been carried out in praying for childbirth. The last tale further leads us to

⁶²³ P. 2900; Chen Ming (2015): 481; Liang (2015): 400. The term "difficult month," as we discuss above, rarely appears in the classical Chinese texts, but is found in the colophon here. The colophon of Cao Yuanzhong 曹元忠's painting of Water-Moon Guanyin bodhisattva that was dedicated to praying for the safe birth for his daughter-in-law, the term "difficult month" also appears. From these two records, I guess that the term might be closer to vernacular than to writing language. For Cao Yuanzhong's Water-Moon Guanyin painting and the colophon, see Li Xiaorong (2003): 123-124; Chun-fang Yü (2001): 239-241.

⁶²⁴ Li Xiaorong (2003): 187. Li quotes from Lu Zenxiang 陸增祥, *Bacongshi jingshi buzheng* 八瓊室金石補正 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), 96.

⁶²⁵ *Sanbao gangyin yaolue lü* 三寶感應要略錄, T. 2084, 833a; Li Xiaorong (2015): 190.

think the role that monastic members played in propagating these merit-making practices and in applying them in treating childbirth in medieval China, a topic to which I shall turn now.

Treating Childbirth with Dharmic Medicine and by Monks: Cases from Hagiographies, Miracle Tales and Literati's Notes

All these above exorcistic skills, cults to childbirth-protecting deities, liturgies performed in a ritual, and prayers left in the colophons of scriptures and statues would expect different degrees of participation of the monastics in order to produce the biggest efficacy and merit from the practices. We already see that monks like Xuanzang, Tanluan and Hehe were reported to employ praying ritual, native medicine, and mysterious power of commanding heavenly people to address various reproductive problems for their supplicants.⁶²⁶ Do we have any more record about how these Buddhist healing resources were put into practice by which kind of monastic figures? We know that monks in medieval China were involved in a variety of healing and medical activities, including treating diseases, studying, storing, and distributing medicine, and managing social charities for the elder and sick ones.⁶²⁷ But how did they operate their techniques to tackle the suffering of birth and to let Buddhist teachings simultaneously being incorporated into their supplicants' life and mind through these healing activities? These issues are what I want to turn to now by looking into monastic biographies, miracle tales and literati's notes.

In the *Biography of Eminent Monks*, there is one case in which the physician monk Yu Fakai 于法開 (ca. 310-370 CE) treated childbirth with his expertise in acupuncture. Yu was well-known in the Jin dynasty not only for his appropriating Buddhist teaching of emptiness to participate in literati's Mysterious Learning (*xuanxue* 玄學) debates but also by his medical

⁶²⁶ See Introduction.

⁶²⁷ Liu Shiufen (2008); Salguero (2010); also see the review of scholarship in the beginning of this chapter.

knowledge. A noble gentry named Chi Yin 郗愔 was once sick with his abdomen problems and found no cure. Yu prescribed a dose of medical soup. After taking it he immediately excreted a handful of papers, which turned out to be the Daoist talismans Chi took before.⁶²⁸ In the *Biography of Eminent Monks*, it is said that Yu "excelled at medical methods by following the model of Jīvaka."⁶²⁹ One day when he stayed in a layman's place, the woman in this household was giving birth and in imminent danger. All treatments were failed and everyone was worried. Yu Fakai said that this was easy to cure. The householder just then had killed a sheep to make a heterodox sacrifice (*yinci* 淫祠). Yu commanded the man to fetch some meat to be made into soup. After the woman finished drinking the soup, Yu applied acupuncture according to her *qi*. Soon after that, the child emerged within an amniotic sac wrapped around him.⁶³⁰ Another time when Yu Fakai was asked why he practiced medicine, he responded, "I cultivate the Six Perfections to eliminate the illnesses of the Four Māra, and read the Nine Indicators to treat illnesses of Wind and Cold. Is not it really good to benefit both myself and others?"⁶³¹ Here Yu Fakai's medical skills, despite "following the model of Jīvaka," seem to barely have connection with this Indian physician at all. Like the monk Tanluan, his approach was mainly based on native heritage but he combined it well with his propagation of Buddhist teaching. It may be imagined how grateful the woman and the householder would be after being saved in the most perilous moment and henceforth found

⁶²⁸ *Shishuo shinyu* 世說新語, "shujie 術解" (learning of techniques), "Yu Fakai."

⁶²⁹ The original phrase is "zhushu qipo miaotong yifa 祖述耆婆妙通醫法." Salguero translates it as "wondrous medical methods of Jīvaka," which I think imprecise and mistaking the verb "miaotong" as an adjective instead of a verb. Salguero (2010): 99. Also see T. 2059, 350a-b.

⁶³⁰ The last sentence is "須與羊膜裏兒而出." Amniotic sac, or *yangmo* 羊膜, contains the character for "sheep," *yang* 羊, and may point to the logic of sympathetic magic behind Yu Fakai's cure method. Salguero (2010): 99.

⁶³¹ The original text is "明六度以除四魔之病，調九候以療風寒之疾." The term Nine Indicators is from native medicine and has appeared in Suwen of the Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor 黃帝內經素問. It refers to the three meridian vessels in each of the three sections of the body from the head, the torso to the lower limbs. The Four Māra are the demons of the aggregates, the demons of passionate afflictions, the demon of death, and the supernatural demons. See DDB.

Buddhist monks powerful and their teachings attractive.

The direct evidence of monks treating childbirth in monastic biographies is limited, but lots of biographies described the process of monks' mothers becoming pregnant and giving birth. In Chapter Two I mentioned that many mothers dreamt of divinities or monks entering their dreams or wombs when getting pregnant. This somewhat indicates the profound link between seeking pregnancy and monks. A few cases in monastic biographies report the methods of conceiving with more details. Two biographies of monks of the Tang mentioned that a father "sincerely made thousand copies of Guanyin [scriptures] in order to pray for having a child,"⁶³² and a mother "often reciting the chapter of Guanyin's Universal Gate to pray for pregnancy."⁶³³ The mother of another monk in the Sui "beseched a child by reciting the sūtras of Yaoshi, Guanshiyin and Diamond Prajñāpāramitā. She also heard that the image of the King of Kapila in Shandinglin temple 上定林寺 was very efficacious, so she went there to pray [to the god] . She even carved and painted the icon and sacrificed to the icon as the real god. Later she practiced the ritual according to the *Yaoshi Sūtra* for seven days. In the third night, she became pregnant."⁶³⁴ A Tang monk's mother has "set a feast in a

⁶³² *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, vol. 24, "The biography of Tsuzang 慈藏," 639a.

⁶³³ *Song gaoseng zhuan*, vol. 17, "The biography of Daopi 道丕," 818c.

⁶³⁴ *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, vol. 30, "The biography of Zhenguan 真觀," 701c. Kapila 迦毘羅 is the founder of Sāṃkhya philosophy. The meaning of Kapila is brown, tawny, red, and translated as red head or yellow head. The term is chiefly used for the teaching founder. See DDB. In fact, it is quite unusual that Kapila appeared as a child-bestowing god here. Checking the term in CBETA, we also find it appearing as the Chinese translation of the city state's name Kapilavastu where Śākyamuni was born and lived. The most relevant record related to Kapila as a god originates from the biography of Jibing (Kashmir) Chan master Dharmamitra. It says that on his way to China Dhamamitra was always guarded by a "divine king of Kapila 迦毘羅神王" from Jibin to Kucha. The god would inform the king of every next city of Dharmamitra's arrival and order them to entertain him. He arrived to China in Liu Song dynasty in 424 AD and built the Shangdinglin temple in 435 AD, where he painted the image of the god to commemorate the god's protection on the road. See T. 2059, 342c. In Changxiao 常曉's (d. 865 CE) catalogue of what he brought to Japan, it includes a "Statue of the Great Sage Divine King of Kapila." Under the item, Changxiao wrote, "this deity is the manifestation of Tathāgata. Master Kumārajīva of the [Early] Qin dynasty had mysterious correspondence with this god and was sent by the god to China. Nowadays in the land of the Tang all respect this god as the protector of dharma and the state. If the sick person calls his name, his disease will be immediately eliminated. If the poor prays to him, he must be rich. His efficacy is immediate and striking. No one was not converted to him." Changxiao's report shows the god once being extremely popular in the Tang, though Dhamamitra is misidentified as Kumārajīva. See T. 2163, 1070c.

Daoist temple to beseech a child in the eighth day of the second month."⁶³⁵ These monastic sources show that copying and reciting scriptures are still the most common and probably the most accessible and affordable ways for solving infertility. Scriptures and rituals related to Guanyin and Medicine Buddha appeared here again, reflecting the wide acceptance of them in the middle age.⁶³⁶ Yet a Buddhist god like Kapila may also be approached as long as its efficacy is powerful enough, even if it is not directly related to childbirth like Guanyin, Yaoshi, Yaoshan, Hārītī, or Bāla-grahā. One may also hold a feast for pregnancy on the Buddha's birth day and even in a Daoist temple, apart from the one held in the "difficult month."

Moreover, reciting and copying scriptures and holding a Buddhist assembly are not merely solutions for infertility, they may also function as a way of "fetal education" when being carried out by mothers in gestation. The mother of a Tang monk was reported to "frequently listen, preach and recite Mahāyāna scriptures without interruption in order to conduct fetal education following Tairen's 太任 example."⁶³⁷ Tairen is the mother of the famous ancient sage king Wen of Zhou dynasty and her story is told in *Liji* and *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 as an exemplar of virtuous mothers carrying out successful fetal education. Her story has been constantly quoted by Confucian literati to emphasize the significance of mothers' virtues and their impact on the embryo. In a Tang tomb epitaph, we even find expression of praising a woman's efforts in transforming her child in the womb by engaging in Buddhist practices during the gestation. "Madame is knowledgeable about mysterious teaching and explore profoundly its gist and essence. She often hopes her daily efforts of this kind can

⁶³⁵ *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, vol. 15, "The biography of Lingrei 靈睿," 539c.

⁶³⁶ Chun-fang Yü notices that literatis beseeched especially White-Robed Guanyin and copied its scripture to pray for heirs at least starting from the eleventh century and continuing its popularity all the way to the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. See Yü (2001): 127-132.

⁶³⁷ *Song gaoseng zhuan*, vol. 5, "The biography of Daoyin 道胤," 734b.

benefit the education of the fetus. Every time when she expects to give birth to a son, she would diligently clean the room and fast. She would hand-copy sūtras and what she generously spend money on are all Buddhist things with no exception. Therefore, [her child is born] with perfect form and without causing her any harm. She breeds and cares him to maturity. [What ancient sages] taught about sitting and standing modestly and reciting poems and classics[during pregnancy] is hard to compare with these divine acts."⁶³⁸ This epitaph clearly shows that Buddhist practices of copying scriptures and making a fast were applied not only as a way praying for safe birth but also as a part of fetal education. This deed of using Buddhist merit-making practices to educate the child in the womb was praised by the epitaph author as superior to traditional methods. It reflects that at this time Buddhist resources for childbirth may have been fully incorporated into the cultural repertoire to such a degree that a native epitaph writer could proudly claim the surpassing effect of Buddhist methods over native ones.⁶³⁹

Miracle tales and literati's notes also provide us with some materials to gauge the mentality that reflects the relationship of Buddhism with childbirth. Below I take a few cases from *Taiping guangji*. The first is about a mysterious monk saving difficult birth by his clairvoyant power of seeing through one's past karma and future retribution and thereby subduing a snake spirit that may originally cause harm on a pregnant woman. This monk was called Huayen heshan 華嚴和尚. He was said to regulate his three hundred disciples strictly and required them to carry the whole set of bowls when eating in the dining hall. One time a novice monk was short of some bowls and went to borrow it from a senior monk who did not need to go to the hall due to his sickness. The senior monk was unwilling to lend it because

⁶³⁸ Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良 and Zhao Chao 趙超, *Tangdai muzhi huibian xuji* 唐代墓誌彙編續集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chuban she, 2001), "Tienbao 天寶," No. 108.

⁶³⁹ For more discussion of Buddhism having impact on fetal education and even more broadly on childbirth as being reflected in the tomb epitaphs of the Tang, see Yao Ping (2004): 288-317, esp. 288-289.

he treasured his bowl very much. However after the novice monk continuously begged him, he lent it to him but sternly warned him not to break it. The novice monk held the bowl nervously while eating and after that he wanted to return it quickly. On his way leaving the hall, he did not notice a breaking brick and fell over. The bowl broke. After knowing this, the senior monk got so furious that he became even sicker and ended up dying overnight. Later, one time when Huayan heshan was lecturing and the novice monk was in the gathering, a huge snake entered into the hall, approaching them, and appeared as if wishing to beg for something. Huayan heshan realized that the snake was the senior monk, who was almost enlightened if he did not become angry over the broken bowl. Huayan heshan used his staff to knock the head of the snake, saying to it that, "if you already know your karma, you should now return to the Three Jewels." The snake then left and was found later died in a valley by knocking its head on a rock. It came back to tell Huayan heshan in a dream, "now I, the snake, am going to be reborn in the household of the official Pei as his daughter and shall die in eighteen years old. Then I will become a male in the next life and leave home to become a monk. The official Pei is my previous lay disciple and you can go to the town to ask him. His daughter is going to be born and the situation is emergent. You can go to save them." Huayan heshan then sent his disciple to the official Pei's home. When the disciple monk arrived, Pei's wife was indeed in labor for six or seven days without success and became exhausted. The monk told them that he could save her. He ordered the family to set a sitting mat outside the delivery room. He went there, burned incense, beat the ritual instrument and called the name of the senior monk three times. Pei's wife then safely gave birth to a daughter, who later indeed died in her eighteenth year.⁶⁴⁰

This tale does not describe any Buddhist practice and teaching which are too complex and profound. It only describes how a monk converted a snake spirit to Buddhism by his

⁶⁴⁰ *Taiping guangji*, vol. 94, 624.

mysterious power of communicating with it and the inevitable principle of karmic retribution. Monks subduing animals transformed from spirits or demons is a common subject in medieval literature and especially in monastic biographies.⁶⁴¹ The snake here embodies one of the three poisons, the senior monk's anger. The healing method for difficult birth is nothing but the understanding of the rule of causes and karmic retribution, the mysterious power of communicating with the animal or the spirit, and a pacifying ritual held by burning incense, beating a stone dharmic instrument, and calling the name of the dead. This probably reflects very common understanding of Buddhism from an outsider's view.⁶⁴² Despite the very simple setting of plots and Buddhist ideas, the story nevertheless presents a scene where a monk managed to cure the difficult birth by merely following his teacher's clairvoyance to summon the name of the senior monk through a pacifying ritual.

If the supernatural abilities of reading one's future life and reading other's mind, the two of the five mysterious power of a divine monk, are what most impress general people, the ability of using talisman to treat disease seems to be a privilege belonging to Daoists more than Buddhists. One story in the *Taiping guangji* describes a person named Luo Xuansu 駱玄素, who entered into a mountain to avoid a lawsuit and happened to meet a transcendent. He taught Luo the methods of making medicine, cutting off grain, using talismans and breathing. One day the transcendent told Luo that he could now go home. After that Luo began to employ his skill of using talismans in his home town. It is said that there were often pregnant women who were unable to give birth even after the anticipated time had already passed. At

⁶⁴¹ Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, "Zhonggu sengren de famo wenshu 中古僧人的伐魔文書" (The literature of subduing demons written by medieval monks), in Poo-Mu Zhou ed., *Guimei shenmo: zhongguo tongsu wenhua tsexie* 鬼魅神魔--中國通俗文化側寫 (Taipei: Maitian chuban she, 2005), 135-173.

⁶⁴² This story collected in *Taiping guangji* came from a book titled *Yuanhua ji* 原化記. The author is almost anonymous. Only his surname, Huangfu 皇甫, and his art name, Dongtingzi 洞庭子, are known. Most of the stories in the book happened after the High Tang around the mid-eighth century and the book was probably written in the late Tang in the ninth century. Telling from the author's art name, he is probably a lay person instead of a monastic member.

this time, Luo Xuansu always "prescribes one piece of talisman to let them take, and the woman would immediately give birth in that night. The child being born is even still carrying the talisman swallowed by the mother."⁶⁴³ This episode corresponds exactly with what we have seen above in S. 2498, in which a talisman indeed requires a woman in difficult birth to swallow it. A child being born will catch the talisman she swallows. This story seems to further prove that talismans, especially those for childbirth, have a Daoist origin even though they were largely incorporated into a manuscript that mainly consists of Buddhist deities' names, spells, rituals and teachings like the case of S. 2498.

Other miracle tales or literati's notes related to childbirth similarly intend to promote Buddhist teaching of karmic retribution and to propagate recitation of scriptures and worshipping of Buddhist deities as solutions. When a Buddhist monk appears as a healer for childbirth, what he employed and did to deal with this issue are usually these methods in this particular Buddhist genre. One story in *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記⁶⁴⁴ tells that a Daoist priest (*Jijiu* 祭酒) has no offspring. A Buddhist monk teaches him to sincerely worship and recite the *Guanshiyin sūtra*. This Daoist priest thus abandons his belief and is converted to Buddhism to recite the name of the bodhisattva. In a few days, his wife becomes pregnant.⁶⁴⁵ This story interestingly conveys the superior efficacy of a Buddhist monk and a newly imported deity than that of a Daoist priest in solving the infertile issue. Another one in the same collection similarly reports the efficacy of an official reciting Guanyin scripture for solving the barrenness of his wife.⁶⁴⁶ Recitation of scriptures not only cures barrenness but also helps

⁶⁴³ *Taiping guangji*, vol. 73, 459. The story comes from *Xuanshi zhi* 宣室志 authored by a literati official Zhang Du 張讀 who lived in the second half of the ninth century in the Tang. This book also largely promotes the Buddhist idea of karmic retribution.

⁶⁴⁴ It is one of the earliest collections of miracle tales made by Wang Yan 王琰 in the second half of the fifth century.

⁶⁴⁵ *Taiping guangji*, vol. 110, 757.

⁶⁴⁶ *Taiping guangji*, vol. 111, 760.

ending prolonged pregnancy by removing a "ghost fetus." It is said that a woman Wang in the Tang was haunted by her cousin Chu Jing, who had desired to marry her but was rejected by her parents. He vowed to become a demon to harass her. Later after marrying another man, Wang dreamt Chu Jing one night and soon became pregnant. The gestation lasted for seventeen months. She worried greatly and thus sincerely recited the *Diamond Sūtra* day and night. After that Chu Jing never returned and the "ghost fetus" also disappeared.⁶⁴⁷ This story combines the popular belief of demonic etiology with Buddhist karmic retribution to explain the prolonged gestation as the result of the residence of the "ghost fetus." The term also appears in contemporary medical works. The earliest mention of it in specialized discussion of women's diseases appears in Tang physician Chao Yuanfang's 巢元方 *Zhubing yuanhou lun* (諸病源候論). According to Chao, women with vacuous *qi* and impaired vital functions could be invaded by the "Essence of goblins and ghosts" (*yaomei guijing* 妖魅鬼精). Chao's explanation was later incorporated by Song imperial physician Chen Ziming 陳自明 into his influential textbook, *Furen daquan liangfan* 婦人大全良方.⁶⁴⁸ Whereas medical works prioritize physical weakness over demons as major cause, miracle tales highlight karmic lesson and efficacy of reciting scriptures as the key solution.

There are also four entries in literati's notes mentioning *Guizimu* or Hārītī. However, only two of them, both in Tang, associated the goddess with childbirth or fertility and one of the two talks about praying to the goddess for a son. For the other two, the earliest among the four sources describes a woman Du "used to sacrifice to Guizimu and entertain the deity with female music performers (*nuyue* 女樂)." But later the deity's robe was stolen and its icon was

⁶⁴⁷ *Taiping guangji*, vol. 103, 698.

⁶⁴⁸ Yili Wu, "Ghost Fetuses, False Pregnancies, and the Parameters of Medical Uncertainty in Classical Chinese Gynecology," *Nan Nü: Men, Women and Gender in Early and Imperial China* 4.2(2002): 182.

burned by Du's maid with no reason.⁶⁴⁹ In this story Guizimu simply looks like a "heterodox sacrifice." We do not know Du's purpose of worshipping the deity. There is also no clue or context that can link the deity with Buddhism. The time of this story is roughly around the first half of the fifth century and the Guizimu scripture has just been translated previously in the second half of the fourth century. But still the goddess's relationship with childbirth was not clear. The other source is from the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 compiled in late Tang, telling that there are two striking statues of the goddess and a prince of Southern Liang being built in a temple in the capital Changan.⁶⁵⁰ But still nothing more about the context of the two statues is mentioned.

Now let us go back to the two sources that mention the goddess's relationship with childbirth. In *Benshishi* 本事詩 written in the late Tang, it tells of an official who fears his wife very much and whose wife is notoriously easy to get jealous and treats him harshly. He is a Buddhist and once has joked to people that, "What makes me fear my wife is due to three reasons. When she is young and beautiful, she is like a living bodhisattva to me. After she has many sons and daughters in front of her, I feel she is just like a *Jiuzi momu* 九子魔母 (demonic mother with nine children). Who could possibly not fear the demonic mother with nine children? When she turns to fifty or sixty years old, with some cosmetics yet still with darker appearance, she looks just like kumbhāṇḍa. Who could possible not fear kumbhāṇḍa?"⁶⁵¹ The other note reports that the "demonic mother" (*momu*) was worshipped during the period of Baoyin (762-763 CE) in Yuezhou 越州 (today's Shaoxing in Zhejiang

⁶⁴⁹ This story is collected in *Yiyuan* 異苑 by Liu Jinshu 劉敬叔 who was active around the first half of the fifth century in Liu Song dynasty. See *Yiyuan*, vol. 5, the entry "Guizimu," in *Hanwei liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan* 漢魏六朝筆記小說大觀 (Shanghai: Shanghia guji chuban she, 1999), 637.

⁶⁵⁰ Duan Chenshi 段成式 (ca. 803-863), *Youyang zazu*, the 2nd collection, vol. 5, "Sitaji 寺塔記," in *Tang wudai biji xiaoshuo daguan* 唐五代筆記小說大觀 (Shanghai: Shanghia guji chuban she, 2000), 753. Sitaji is also collected in Taishō, T. 2093, 1023a.

⁶⁵¹ Meng Qi 孟啟 (ca. 875), *Benshishi*, vol.7 "Jokes and Sarcasm," in *Tang wudai biji xiaoshuo daguan*, 1253.

province), where there is a particular hall enshrining the goddess in a temple. It is said that "those who in this county went to pray for sons and daughters all got the efficacious response" from the *Momu*. The wife of the governor of this county has long been troubled by barrenness. The governor thus took his wife one day to the temple and prayed to the goddess for a son. They both promised to donate huge amount of money to decorate the hall and the temple if their wish were fulfilled. Two months later, the wife really got pregnant and finally gave birth to a son. The governor was so delighted that he built three halls for the deity, all extremely luxurious.⁶⁵²

Overall, concerning these narratives of Buddhism and childbirth collected in miracle tales and in literati's notes, they strike me that most of the Buddhist healing resources for childbirth as we have discussed the previous sections are not mentioned. These stories do not have many profound or technical details about which incantations, talismans, liturgies or rituals being utilized to solve the problem. The goddesses being mentioned are only Guanyin and Guizimu, either the most popular one or the most exotic one. Compared to the rich exorcistic techniques, a variety of goddesses, and abundant liturgies and prayers presented above, the narratives in miracle tales and literati's notes are relatively simple. Miracle tales tend to express only a few specific and easy Buddhist ideas like karmic retribution, *saṃsāra* and monks' miraculous power, and the most common Buddhist practices like copying and reciting scriptures. Why is this so? My explanation is that because most of the healing resources for childbirth we discuss in previous sections are mostly used by the monastics and largely confined to this group of religious specialists. As we have seen in one manuscript of a talisman for birth, it explicitly says that it is a "secret recipe" and should not be passed to others. Liturgies for curing sicknesses and the ritual are supposedly performed by and thus only familiar to monastic members. Ways of writing and incantations, talismans and seals are

⁶⁵² *Tai ping guang ji*, vol. 41, 259.

only recorded in scriptures with limited circulation inside monasteries. On the other hand, miracle tales and literati's notes are usually written by lay literati and from an outsider's angle. These authors may barely have access to these resources, not to mention being able to describe their details in their stories. This observation reminds us of the limitation of using these narratives to construct the whole picture of a religious phenomenon in history. But it also again shows that Buddhist monks in medieval society enjoyed monopoly of a great amount of expertise, not just "religious" but also healing and medical one. What were left to general people are practices like copying and reciting scriptures and worshipping deities with healing function, both of which help to further propagate the teaching. Other than these, when being troubled by sicknesses people have to approach either a physician or another type of healers who claimed to be able to cure "all sorts of diseases" and able to channel the unfathomable healing power of the remote Medicine King and that of some bodhisattvas to the present supplicant. Over the course of healing, exchange happened. People being healed by Buddhist monks or Buddhist healing resources became more acquainted with Buddhist explanations of the causes of illnesses in specific and its teachings and worldview in general. Buddhism in return became more deep-rooted while also more willing to accommodate to indigenous taste and need. Both sides transformed and were transformed by each other. Suffering of birth continues but solution and aspiration to overcome it also never cease. The two mentalities are seemingly paradoxical and conflicting but always coexist and contribute to the prosperity of each other in Buddhism.

Epilogue

This dissertation begins with the consideration of the interactions between religion and gender, and between religion and medicine. It hopes to reveal the role of religious healing and medicine in the construction of the concepts of gender, the body and life in Chinese religions especially in Buddhism. In this ending section I want to draw on some sociological and anthropological studies to further reflect on these issues.

Reproduction in Religion and Medicine

Reproduction has been essential for the continuation of human species and society. Concepts of the body, gender relations, and life are interlocked with the real experience people have in dealing with the issue and the way they explain it. Practices and perceptions generated from reproductive activities also have influence on other human realms. They are projected onto the understanding of cosmo-genesis, constitute the basis of social division of labor, and become the organizing principle of kinship and society. Myths, metaphors and symbolism are frequently developed from and surround this core human concern. The significance of biological reproduction and its impact on various human realms thus make it the object of several disciplines in the humanities, bringing up several perspectives regarding it.

Inspired by early sociological studies, scholars in feminist theories and gender study have been reflecting upon the association of the domination of female reproduction with the establishment of private property, patriarchal rule, and capitalism. Some believe that biological reproduction is the root of women's subordination because sex-based childbearing is used to justify sex-based childbearing roles as well as other divisions within society, identifying women with their sexualized bodies. Others argue that it is the devaluation of

feminine attributes including childbearing and all the other domestic labors like caring and nurturing, rather than the biological sex and its natural attributes themselves that account for the origin of oppression. In recent decades, scholars turn to linguistics and psychoanalysis, digging into their hidden structures embedded in different cultures, in which they identify the omnipresence of dichotomous thought and hierarchical order of a series of gender associated attributes.⁶⁵³ In the Western philosophical tradition, for example, Aristotle and Aquinas had famously held that the male is more perfect of the two sexes because he provides semen in the process of reproduction. Semen was thought to be the catalyst and perhaps even the location of the soul; the ovum was not discovered until the later part of the nineteenth century.⁶⁵⁴ In ancient China, though reproduction was thought as something that needed the collaboration of both sexes and that both sexes contributed their reproductive essences to produce a new life, there was still a long tradition comparing a male and his reproductive essence, *jin*, with *yang* and heaven, and a female and her reproductive material, blood, *xie*, with *yin* and earth. By structuring sex, gender, and reproduction into this binary and hierarchical order, male reproductive essence was placed on a higher level than that of female. Hence just as earth is encompassed by heaven, blood is also encompassed by essence, essence by *qi*, and woman by man.⁶⁵⁵

In China this hierarchical order that was built on a dichotomous yet complementary relationship between *yin* and *yang*, or femininity and the masculinity, has been the major epistemological principle, which was further extended both inwardly and outwardly to different microcosmic and macrocosmic levels, serving as the building blocks of

⁶⁵³ Sally J. Scholz, *Feminism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2010), Ch.2.

⁶⁵⁴ Sally J. Scholz, *Feminism: A Beginner's Guide*, 39. Joan Scott also concisely summarizes the points of these few trends of feminist theories and gender study and give her criticism to the studies stemmed from these trends. See Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," 1056-1066.

⁶⁵⁵ Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 48.

comprehending and treating the body, society, world, and universe. Structuring the inner and outer world by this order in China, gender, as Joan Scott well puts it, serves as a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes; it is also a primary way of signifying relationship of power.⁶⁵⁶ Biological reproduction, given its fundamentality in human societies, thus is an excellent research object which exemplifies the formation of gender concept expressed through childbirth-related cultural symbols, normative concepts, gender relationship, and subjective identity.⁶⁵⁷

In this regard, scholarship in anthropology, mythology and religion, history, and gender study have offered different approaches and insights concerning the connection of reproduction with gender concept and gendered worldview. In his research on Kabyle society of North Africa, Pierre Bourdieu notices that its fundamental principle of division, from labor and daily practices to cosmology and worldview, are all organized upon the paradigm of the dichotomy between male and female, dry and wet, hot or cold, and a series of elements corresponding to these basic oppositions. Practices in daily life and ritual are reproduced and operated on these dichotomous oppositions and on the basis of the reunion of the two separated contraries or the separation of the two reunited contraries. The fecundation, germination, and birth in the land and in women's wombs are compared to each other. Both are categorized as female, interior, the dark and the cold, in contrast to the opposite of male, exterior, the bright and the hot.⁶⁵⁸ Analyzing Ndembu's ritual about reproduction and its

⁶⁵⁶ Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," 1067.

⁶⁵⁷ Joan Scott, 1067-1070. These four elements of the concept of gender are brought up by Scott. According to her definition, gender involves four interrelated elements: first, culturally available symbols that evoke multiple representations, such as Eve and Mary as symbols of the opposite woman in the Western Christian tradition; second, normative concepts that set forth interpretations of the meanings of the symbols, expressed in religious, educational, scientific, legal, and political doctrines, and typically take the form of a fixed binary opposition like male and female, masculine and feminine; third, the gender relationship in reality shown in a variety of social institutions and organizations; fourth, the formation of subjective identity, through examining historically the ways in which gendered identities are substantively constructed.

⁶⁵⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Nice trans., *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 200-227.

symbolic meanings, Victor Turner finds that their healing ritual "Isoma" for infertility or miscarriage actually reflects the hidden tension between Ndembu's matrilineal society and virilocal marriage. For curing bareness, the ritual serves to remind the wife and reinforce the power of her matrilineal ancestors in the virilocal marriage in order to balance the forces of two sides. Yet when women produced twins, a case seen by Ndembu as excess of fertility, another ritual Wubwang'u would be carried out. Both the healing rituals and their use of medicine, either for the defect or excess of fertility, employ symbols to emphasize the male-female opposites and function to balance the two. Whereas the Isoma ritual and its medicine linked this sexual opposition and the infertile problem to the life and death antithesis, the Wubwang'u emphasized separation before reunion of the two opposites to avoid the excess of birth. Both held the passage of rite, using the sexual opposition as their basic language to engage the husband and wife with the three-stage ritual process of separation, liminality, and reunion to solve the reproductive problem.⁶⁵⁹

Reproduction becoming a problem is not limited to the condition of insufficient or excessive fertility. In some sense, reproduction itself is a problem due to its nature of being a kind of liminal stage and being a break for many natural and social boundaries. Thus in Kabyle, birth of natural life and human life are explained by and integrated into a designed cyclic order of the separation and reunion of the dichotomous opposites based on sex and gendered worldview so that the natural and social order and its temporary break can be managed and repaired. In Ndembu, a woman's infertility is attributed to the haunt of her matrilineal womenfolk, reflecting the production of a new life may introduce unbalanced force to its composite matrilineal and virilocal structures. This threat of causing potential break of social structure and boundary by reproduction is also noticed by another

⁶⁵⁹ Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (NY: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), Ch.1 and Ch.2.

anthropologist Emily Ahern who has done her field work in an immigrant area of Chinese culture. Ahern was inspired by Mary Douglas, who pointed out that maintenance of boundaries of a given classification system is crucial in many societies, and anything out of place or breaking the boundaries of the system might be seen as polluting. Ahern argued that the popular view toward reproductive pollution in rural Taiwan might also be seen as the result of the nature of childbirth: its crossing of the boundaries of life and death, of the bodies, and of different kinship groups.⁶⁶⁰ Later, another anthropologist Gary Seaman who also did his field work in rural Taiwan confirmed Ahern's observation and indicated that the reason for women being considered as ritually polluting is due to the threat they posed to male solidarity. He also notices one thing that is absent in Ahern's research: the salient role of Buddhism in spreading the view of reproductive blood pollution through a repentance ritual based on one adapted ritual manuscript of the *Blood Bowl Sutra* circulated in 1970s' central Taiwan.⁶⁶¹

Reproduction as a liminal stage and as a potential break of social order and boundaries is not merely a problem waiting to be addressed through symbols and rituals, things or events related to birth like womb, gestation and parturition may also transform into symbols and metaphors, being appropriated to or representing many other liminal conditions. Mircea Eliade in his research on myths of birth and rebirth notices that initiatory rites and symbols, particularly of and for males, often adopt female religious symbolisms related to birth, such as womb and embryo. This phenomenon exists in many aboriginals and religious traditions. One common theme is the return to the womb. From Australian aboriginals to Indian Brahmanism and China, initiation rituals are arranged to make novices experience

⁶⁶⁰ Emily M. Ahern, "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," in Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke ed., *Women in Chinese Society* (Stanford University Press, 1975); also refer to Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Routledge, first published in 1966.

⁶⁶¹ Gary Seaman, "The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution," *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society* (Stanford University Press, 1981)

again the course of birth. Novices are secluded in womb-like adobes or imagine themselves returning to the womb as a fetus and go through a series of trials on their way of being reborn again. By returning to the primordial and embryonic state, practitioners reenact the origin of the life and world and hence obtain renewal of energy and recover the purest state.⁶⁶² In Daoism, this cult to matrix and womb turned into a permanent quest of returning to the "Dao," a synonym of matrix and womb yet signifying the ultimate universal origin. From the very ancient time earth has been seen by Chinese as the mother in contrast to the heaven as the father. Early Daoist text such as *Taiping jing* (Scripture of Great Peace) even demands that those pursuing the Dao should live in mountain caves to avoid hurting the earth mother by digging it and building abodes on it. Living in mountain caves also allow them connecting more easily to the universal matrix, cutting off their dependence on the mundane world, and transforming themselves into a more transcendent state.⁶⁶³ Gil Raz in his recent research on some Shangqing Daoist texts finds that there is a prominent denial of the biological birth and also of maternal body giving birth to a corporeal body that is doomed to death. For counteracting this destiny, practitioners are instructed to visualize the reunion of the male and female deities within one's body to reproduce a new divine embryo that is immortal.⁶⁶⁴ In medieval Japanese Esoteric Buddhism, Shintō unctio ritual and Shugendō mountain practice, as Bernard Faure points out, the notion of entering into the wombs and stages of gestation were also applied to describe the process of enlightenment

⁶⁶² Mircea Eliade, Willard R. Trask trans., *Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mystery of Birth and Rebirth*. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958), pp. 47-60.

⁶⁶³ Jiang Shen, "Lun daoijiao de dongxue xinyang 論道教的洞穴信仰" (On the Cult of Caves in Daoism), *Wen shizhe/Journal of Chinese Humanities* 文史哲 2003.5, 55-63.

⁶⁶⁴ Gil Raz, "Birthing the Self: Metaphors and Transformation in Medieval Daoism," in Jinhua Jia, Xiaofei Kang, and Ping Yao eds., *Gendering Chinese Religion: Subject, Identity, and Body* (Albany: State University of New York, 2014), 183-200.

symbolically.⁶⁶⁵

In other words, reproduction not only participated in forming a dichotomous and hierarchical gender-based worldview and division of social labors, but also inspires religious symbolism and rituals that are meant to maintain or repair the order. However, this system is never changeless in history. Scholars adopting the approach of historiography and being interested in gender and bodies such as Michel Foucault, Thomas Laqueur, and Caroline Bynum have shown how perceptions of gender and the body, the ways of managing them, and symbolism derived from them, while being culturally constructed, may have been received differently and even modified by human agents in history. Corresponding to this emphasis on the historical change of corporality and sensation, scholars of gender study on reproduction also call for reexamining the shift of the perceptions of the female bodies and their creation along with the formation of the modern body in these two hundred years. There are two scholars whom I want to discuss in particular here. They point out the gap between the perception of female reproductive bodies experienced by women themselves and that exposed under the professional and medical gaze. One also touches upon the issue of whether the fetus should be treated as an independent life or part of the female body.

One of the scholars, Barbara Duden, discusses how a fetus is perceived, surveyed, and managed and how its prenatal identity is established by means of various modern technologies that can see through the female body and turn it inside out so as to expose it to public examination what was once beyond human perception.⁶⁶⁶ In another study of hers, Duden examines a German doctor Johannes Storch's medical notes on the diseases of woman compiled in the 18th-century. She argues that in contrast to the modern understanding of the

⁶⁶⁵ Bernard Faure, "Buddhism Ab Ovo: Aspects of Buddhist Embryological Discourses in Medieval Japanese Buddhism." (Manuscript given by the author)

⁶⁶⁶ Barbara Duden, *Disembodying Women: Perspectives on Pregnancy and the Unborn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

bodies, characterized by its fragmented and bounded substance under the anatomical view, women's perceptions of their bodies expressed through Storch's pen, by contrast, are characterized by the invisible yet experienced flow.⁶⁶⁷ Perceiving the body this way before modern technology makes it possible to penetrate the reproductive bodies by sonogram, CT scan, or amniocentesis to see, feel, and touch the specific inside part of female bodies, we can ask to what an extent a fetus has its independent identity as it has today.

The other one scholar, Emily Martin, has interviewed women about their knowledge about their own bodies and examined modern medical discourses on reproduction in 1980s. She reveals what underlie their conceptions of reproductive bodies are metaphors of production, borrowed from modern industrial system where massive and efficient production is the dominant logic. The body is imagined as a small business or as a factory, thus menstruation carries with it the connotation of a productive system that has gone awry and failed to produce and whose sources are wasted. And menopause becomes a kind of deterioration and failure of bodily productive system.⁶⁶⁸ Reproduction, on the contrary, is an event worth celebration because it makes "product". And the term, reproduction, did not even possess the meaning of childbirth until the mid-19th century when the large scale industrial production system became popular and its language infiltrated into daily life.⁶⁶⁹ In other words, Martin indicate that what was used to be seen as neutral and scientific descriptions about reproduction and female bodies in modern medicine actually carries the connotation and metaphors stemmed from the language used in the contemporary industrial and economic system. All these above studies of reproduction in anthropology, religion, history, and gender

⁶⁶⁷ Barbara Duden, Thomas Dunlap trans., *The Woman beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991, first published in 1987 in German).

⁶⁶⁸ Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001, first published in 1987), Ch.3.

⁶⁶⁹ Duden, *The Woman beneath the Skin*, 28.

study well demonstrate that the way we perceive and manage our bodies and the way we perceive and manage our environment have always been intimately interlocked and penetrate mutually. Reproduction is especially an issue that strikingly exemplifies this mutual penetration and ambiguous lines between "natural bodies" and "cultural bodies" as expressed in religious and medical texts.

Reproduction in Medieval Chinese Buddhism and Religious Medicine

The dissertation asks and tries to answer the following questions: How does Buddhism perceive and deal with reproduction, the female reproductive body, and fetuses overall? How are these ideas of birth, gender and life conveyed to the healing recipients while they accept these ideas after they receive Buddhist healing services provided by the monastic healers? How are these ideas entwined with the healing practices that weave "a web of meaning" for repairing and curing, and thus having a huge impact on the healing recipients?

I answer these questions by situating Buddhism in the real historical context, in which it not only brought in its dualistic views toward reproduction and its own healing resources for addressing it, it also interacted and communicated with local medical and religious healing systems. Therefore in Chapter One I track down what is mainly used in pre-Buddhist China to deal with childbirth besides medicine. I point out how ancient Chinese considered and dealt with reproduction with a divinatory and taboo system based on correlative cosmology in coordination with time and space. Behind this system, it presumes the parallel and interpenetration between the reproduction happened on the microcosmic level with that happened on the macrocosmic levels. In Chapter Two and Three I argue that Buddhism brings into China, or more precisely speaking, strengthens the dualistic perspectives toward birth, namely viewing it either as the root of suffering or the prophecy and proof of achieving sanctity. The former idea is conveyed through Buddhist obstetrics and embryology that

depicts fetuses' suffering and transformation weekly or monthly in mothers' wombs and that is meant to be used in expounding the teaching of Four Noble Truths and for the use of meditation in the beginning. However, it transforms into the rhetoric emphasizing filial piety in a series of indigenous Chinese Buddhist texts. The latter idea is best represented in Chinese Buddhist hagiographies while also assimilating a large number of native elements regarding sacred birth. Chapter Four and Five move forward to examine the healing resources that Buddhism could provide for its followers to temporarily relieve them from the suffering of birth and life. These two chapters show that accompanying with the promotion of Mahāyāna merit-making practices and exorcistic techniques as healing treatments, others in the same package, namely the demonic etiology, karmic retribution as a pathological cause, and the healing power of Buddhist divinities are often conveyed together to healing supplicants simultaneously.

Before Buddhism comes to China, it is not that there are no two opposite views regarding birth. In fact, customs and taboos of reproductive pollution have already been popular in the Han. The birth of sage kings and the worthies is also celebrated with the appearance of sacred omens and hailed with romanticized and sanctified languages in pre-Buddhist Chinese official histories and Confucian apocrypha. But these two opposite perspectives toward birth have never been contrasted and polarized in such an extreme manner in China as in Buddhism. On the other hand, it is also not that there are no exorcistic techniques used in healing in Pre-Buddhist China, which actually has been recorded in "Spellbinding" of the *Day Books*. It regards demons and ghosts as pathogen as well but it does not come with a systematic pathological explanation and assumption that birth and life are suffering as Buddhism does.

By contrast, Buddhist healing resources for childbirth come to its supplicant with a whole package of teachings, cosmology, demonology and pantheon. It treats people not just

by providing medicine, but more importantly by repairing the broken parts of a web of meaning via its explanation of the cause of illnesses and the nature of birth, life, the body. This is where healing techniques and rituals function, and this is also where Buddhist monastics insert themselves into healing recipients' lives by playing the role of the definers of the illness, the translators of the experience of the reproductive body, and the directors of the whole ritual drama.

Rethinking Female Reproductive Pollution in Chinese Buddhism

This insertion of Buddhist concepts of gender, bodies and life into the healing methods it provides is best exemplified in the case of Buddhist dealing with reproductive pollution and abortion. The idea of reproductive pollution already appears in the Han but does not come with the revulsion to the female reproductive bodies and the emphasis on the fetuses' suffering and defilements in the womb. The pre-Buddhist version of reproductive pollution is mainly out of the fear of offending visible and invisible beings, whom might be contaminated by the contagious *qi* of birth that carries with it dangerous and lethal attributes. In contrast, revulsion to the female reproductive bodies and fetal bodies and fetuses' suffering and defilements in the womb, as we have seen in Chapter Two and Three, are most clearly expressed both in the description of ordinary people's birth in contrast with the Buddha's and in Buddhist obstetrics and embryology. In an age that still does not have modern technology such as sonogram or CT scan to see through the maternal and fetal bodies, Buddhist texts on these subjects nevertheless provide an anatomic viewpoint to "penetrate the reproductive bodies," put them under the gaze of readers, and graphically portray every physical details of mothers and fetuses' suffering and impurity during childbirth. Stillbirth and abortion, as well as the way dealing with them, just serve other exemplars to provoke the revulsion to maternal and fetal bodies and illustrate their suffering and impurity.

In indigenous Chinese Buddhist scriptures such as *Sūtra of the Original Vows of Bodhisattva Dizang*, *Longevity Sūtra*, and *Blood Bowl Sūtra*, this idea of reproductive pollution emerged mainly due to the native taboo of offending the God of Soil and Land by polluting it with birth blood or with blood shed from killing animals for holding a banquet. However, at the same time, ideas typically seen in Buddhist scriptures such as female inferiority and reproductive impurity, attributing the faults of miscarriage and abortion to women, or mothers' suffering in hell due to these faults in childbirth are also commonly seen in these texts. Previous scholars, when considering all these elements above, tend to regard all of them as "Buddhist" as shown in the repentance ritual of *Blood Bowl Sūtra* for delivering mothers from hell. However, my study demonstrates a more complex picture of historical development of the origin of "Buddhist" version of reproductive pollution. It is in fact a product from the mingling of different religious traditions. Furthermore, in these indigenous Buddhist scriptures, we see how female reproductive problems from infertility to miscarriage and abortion are suggested to be treated with Mahāhāyan merit-making practices. Along with the treatment, while the broken parts of a web of meaning is repaired and cured, Buddhist demonic and karmic pathology, pantheon with healing powers, and concepts of gender, bodies and life also make their way into the lives of the healing recipients as they constitute indispensable components of weaving this web.

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