

**THE CULT OF GUANYIN WHO BRINGS SONS
IN CHINA**

By

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Abstract

Guanyin Who Brings Sons (*Songzi Guanyin* 送子觀音), usually represented as a white-robed lady carrying a baby in her arms, is a famous goddess specializing in granting sons widely worshiped in China. Developed from a promise of Guanyin to bring children to people in the “Universal Gateway” chapter of *Lotus Sutra*, a significant scripture promoting Guanyin belief, she is not an independent deity different from Guanyin, the Bodhisattva Avalokitasvara or the Goddess of Mercy in Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Personalizing and embodying Guanyin’s power of bringing children, she is one form of Guanyin’s various manifestations.

The establishment of the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in China has a long history, which was closely associated with the development of Guanyin worship in China. Having the same Buddhist background as Guanyin, Guanyin Who Brings Sons experienced the same Chinese transformation as Guanyin did in her development in China. The Chinese transformation of Guanyin occurred under the impact of Chinese traditional culture, social values and indigenous religions after the worship of her had been introduced to China. The result of it is to make her widely accepted by the Chinese and to be deemed as a deity with Chinese characteristics. As a manifestation of Guanyin, Guanyin Who Brings Sons was also syncretized with Chinese culture and gained her Chinese image during the transformation. The Sinicized cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons had different belief dimensions, which can be basically divided into orthodox Buddhism and folk Buddhism. Moreover, her duty was no longer confined to the function of granting sons. She was charged with the responsibilities concerning childbirth and childcare to become the patron of women and children.

The objective of this thesis is not only to draw a sketch of the development of this cult in

China from miracle tales, indigenous scriptures, scholars' field reports and other historical materials, but also to explore the different belief dimensions of this cult and compare the roles of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in these dimensions, in order to investigate the Chinese transformation reflected in them.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In traditional China, the importance of families has long been emphasized. Individuals were always asked to do whatever could maintain the unity and continuity of a family. Surrendering their own interests was sometimes required when theirs conflicted with family interests. Having an heir to continue a family line is a basic concern of this family concept. For those who suffered from lack of sons, both men and women, being unable to fulfill their families' expectation of having an heir was always painful. While some sought for medical solutions¹ and some considered getting concubines as a hope, the others drew their attention to deities in charge of granting children to people. By sincerely praying to these deities, they hoped they could eventually obtain an heir. Among these deities worshipped in China, Guanyin Who Brings Sons (*Songzi Guanyin* 送子觀音) is one of the most popular.

Guanyin Who Brings Sons is actually one of many manifestations of Guanyin 觀音. Guanyin, also called Guanshiyin 觀世音, is the Bodhisattva Avalokitasvara in Mahayana Buddhist tradition, often known as the Goddess of Mercy. She is one of the Three Holy Ones of the Pure Land, presenting herself on the left side of Amitabha to carry believers to be reborn in the western paradise of Amitabha.² She is also the exemplar of wisdom for Buddhist meditators.³ The impression of great compassion she gives to people actually can be traced back to the records in the twenty-fifth chapter—"Universal Gateway"—of the Lotus Sutra. The "Universal Gateway" chapter (*Pu men pin* 普門品) is one of the most important Buddhist

¹ See Wu Geyan 吳格言, *Zhongguo gudai qiuzi xisu* 中國古代求子習俗 [Ancient Chinese Customs of Praying for Sons] (Shijiazhuang: 1995).

² Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), V. 6, p. 40.

³ Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), P. 3.

scriptures related to Guanyin. Its earliest Chinese translation was produced in the middle of third century by Chu fahu 竺法護 (*Dharmaraksha*) as he translated the whole Lotus Sutra⁴. But the circulation of Chu fahu's version became less and less popular after Jiumo luoshi's 鳩摩羅什 (*Kumarajiva*, ca. 350-409) new translation had appeared⁵. Jiumo luoshi's version is the most common Chinese version of "Universal Gateway" chapter we see today. It is usually circulated along under the title Guanyin Sutra (*Guanyin jin* 觀音經) or Guanshiyin Sutra (*Guanshiyin jin* 觀世音經)⁶. In the "Universal Gateway" chapter, Guanyin is described to be able to release people from seven kinds of peril, to take away three poisonous elements—greed, hatred, and ignorance—from people's minds, and to satisfy people's wishes of having boys or girls. As soon as she hears people crying out her name to seek for help, she will immediately deliver assistance to those in need or in danger. This promise of swift relief of their sufferings explicitly indicates the main feature of Guanyin—great compassion, which is also revealed by her name "Guanyin" or "Guanshiyin"—the One Who Observes the Cries of the World. Responding people's wishes of obtaining a son or daughter is one of the various ways Guanyin manifests her compassion.

In the "Universal Gateway" chapter, Bodhisattva Guanshiyin's power of responding people's wishes of having a child is described as follows:

⁴ Chu fahu is the first one to translate the whole Lotus Sutra into Chinese, even though parts of the Lotus Sutra had been introduced into China before him. See Goto Daiyo 後藤大用, *Guanshiyin pusa benshi* 觀世音菩薩本事 [Studies of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin] (Taipei: 1994), p 233-234. Jiumo luoshi's translation of Lotus Sutra is named *Zheng fa hua jing* 正法華經 [The Correct Lotus Sutra], which is compiled in *Taisho shinshu daizoukyou* 大正新脩大藏經, V. 9. (Tokyo: 1924-1934), and the Universal Gateway chapter in this sutra is the twenty-fourth chapter instead of the twenty-fifth.

⁵ Jiumo luoshi's translation of Lotus Sutra is compiled in *Taisho shinshu daizoukyou*, V. 9, under the title *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 [Lotus Sutra of the Wondrous Dharma].

⁶ The title *Guanshiyin jing* 觀世音經 could be used to indicate another scripture, the whole name of which is *Guanshiyin guan jing* 觀世音觀經 [The Sutra of Picturing Guanshiyin], before 597AD. The *Guanshiyin guan jing* got lost between 597 and 602 C.E. After its disappearance, the term *Guanshiyin jing* exclusively indicated the Universal Gateway chapter. See Shi Daoyu 釋道昱, "*Guanshiyin jing kao* 觀世音經考 [An Investigation of

If there is a woman, and if she is desirous and hopeful of having a son, worshiping and making offerings to the Bodhisattva—the One Who Observes the Cries of the World, she shall then bear a son of bliss, excellence, and wisdom. If she is desirous and hopeful of having a daughter, she shall then bear a daughter, with grave and upright demeanor as well as good looks, one who has previously planted wholesome roots, who is loved and honored by a multitude of people.⁷

若有女人，設欲求男，禮拜供養觀世音菩薩，便生福德智慧之男，設欲求女，便生端正有相之女，宿植德本，眾人愛敬。

A similar passage is found in another Buddhist scripture—the sixth chapter of the Surangama Sutra (*Shou leng yan jing* 首楞嚴經), “Completeness and Thoroughness of the Listening Ability of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin” (*Guanshiyin pusa er geng yuan tong zhang* 觀世音菩薩耳根圓通章). It records Guanyin’s ability of granting children to people as follows:

[Bodhisattva Guanshiyin] can let those in Dharma realm who have no children but desire to seek for a son to give birth to a son with bliss, excellence, and wisdom...[The Bodhisattva Guanshiyin] can let those in Dharma realm who have no children but desire to seek for a daughter give birth to a good-looking daughter with grave and upright demeanor, bliss, excellence, and tenderness, one who is loved and honored by a multitude of people...⁸

...能令法界無子眾生欲求男者，誕生福德智慧之男...能令法界無子眾生欲求女者，誕生端正福德柔順眾人愛敬有相之女...

the Guanshiyin Sutra], *Yuanguang foxue xuebao* 圓光佛學學報 [Buddhist Journal of Round Lights] (Oct 1997), pp. 19-28.

⁷ C.f. the twenty-fifth chapter of Leon Hurvitz’s *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: 1976), p 311-319, and Master Yanpei 演培法師’s *Guanshiyin pusa pumenpin jiangji* 觀世音菩薩普門品講記 [A Record of Elucidating the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin’s University Gateway Chapter]. (Taipei: 1997), p.98-106.

Among a huge amount of Buddhist scriptures associated with Bodhisattva Guanshiyin⁹, only these two scriptures contain a record of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin's power of bringing children. Their similar descriptions of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin's unfailing power of bringing children are the major Buddhist textual sources of Guanyin Who Brings Sons. However, after the Surangama Sutra was introduced into China around the end of seventh century, this scripture was not as widespread as the "Universal Gateway" chapter. As a result, the "Universal Gateway" chapter virtually has played a more influential role than the Surangama Sutra in the Chinese cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons.

It is noteworthy that while Buddhist scriptures promise Guanyin's efficacy of granting sons and daughters, the emphasis of the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in China is exclusively partial to the coming of sons. This partiality, undoubtedly resulting from the stress of family line's continuation in the Chinese family concept, is an example of the Sinicization of Guanyin cult.

The belief of Guanyin experienced a Chinese transformation in its development in China. After being confronted and syncretized with Chinese culture, the belief of Guanyin not only was gradually accepted by Chinese people to become part of Chinese culture but also started to bear Chinese characteristics. This Chinese transformation of Guanyin belief can be exemplified by the composition of Chinese indigenous scriptures concerning Guanyin, the collection and composition of Chinese indigenous miracle tales about Guanyin, and the creation of Chinese vernacular literature about Guanyin, such as the legend of Guanyin with a

⁸ The Surangama Sutra, translated into Chinese by Buola midi 般刺蜜帝 (*Paramiti*) in the Tang, is in the Taisho shinshu daizokuyou, V. 19. No. 946 (Tokyo: 1924-1934),

⁹ The Avatamsaka Sutra, Heart Sutra, and Great Compassion Dharani are other well-known Buddhist scriptures about Guanshiyin besides the "Universal Gateway" chapter and the "Completeness and thoroughness of the Listening Ability of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin" chapter.

Fish Basket (*Yulan Guanyin* 魚籃觀音)¹⁰ and the legend of *Miaoshan*¹¹. These indigenous creations and records not only demonstrate the popularity of Guanyin belief in China but also add Chinese elements into the image of Guanyin to shape her as a Chinese deity. In addition, Chinese traditional values, such as loyalty, righteousness and filial piety, also little by little became part of the teachings of Guanyin in a popular religious or folk Buddhist dimension. As a result, this compassionate bodhisattva is tightly tied up with the Chinese land, and the emergence of Guanyin's sacred pilgrimage centers in China, such as Xiangshan during the Song and Mt. Putuo in the Ming, Qing and present, is a solid product of the Chinese transformation of this Guanyin belief. The Chinese image of Guanyin reduced the impression of exoticism she left on people and decreased the unfamiliarity that Chinese people felt about her, which actually attracted more and more worshippers to popularize the worship of her in China.

Along with the wide spread of Guanyin cult in China, this Buddhist bodhisattva of great compassion was no longer just worshiped in Buddhist monasteries or temples. She has also been worshiped in local temples or shrines together with other local deities to be incorporated into local cults. Great compassion still characterizes her in the local cult level, which, together with her fame of efficacy, causes ordinary people to pray to her for almost everything. However, what her local followers see in her is different from her Buddhist nature. Local people treat her as a local patron, or sometimes a family protectress¹², even though they

¹⁰ For the investigation about the legend of Guanyin with a Fish Basket, please see Gao Zhenying 高楨英, *Yulan Guanyin zhi yanjiu* 魚籃觀音之研究 [A Study of Guanyin with a Fish Basket] (Taipei: 1992).

¹¹ For the further studies about the Legend of *Miao Shan*, please see Glen Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miao-shan* (Oxford University: 1978) and "Miao-shan on Stone: Two Early Inscriptions", in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42:2, p. 589-614.

¹² See Ren Jianqun 任建群, "Dingnan de Guanyin chongbai 定南的觀音崇拜 [Guanyin Worship in Dingnan]", in *Gannan miaohui yu minsu* 贛南廟會與民俗 [Temple Festivals and Folklore in South Jiangxi] (Hong Kong: 1998), p. 51, and Zhang Quanqing, "Wuhuaxian huachangzhen hutiancun Zhangshi zongzu yu shenming chengbai 五華縣華城鎮湖田村張氏宗族與神明崇拜 [The Lineage of the Zhang and the Worship of Gods in Hutian Village, Huacheng Town, Wuhua District]", in *Mwizhou heyuan diqu de cunluo wenhua* 梅州河源地區

also recognize her Buddhist nature, which makes her a universal divinity. They understand that her salvation is open to all creatures in the world, unlike local deities whose powers are confined to, or whose favors are partial to, a specific region, but they still worship her in local cultic temples and family shrines as the patron of their own regions or families.

As a manifestation of Guanyin, Guanyin Who Brings Sons is worshipped in local cults as well. Special customs of praying for sons to her are practiced within local people, and different regions have different customs. However, it is noteworthy that when people pray to Guanyin Who Brings Sons in local temples, sometimes the statues that they pay homage to are not the statues of Guanyin Who Bring Sons but Guanyin. This phenomenon connotes that when local people pray to Guanyin Who Brings Sons, what they really pray to is Guanyin's special ability of bringing sons. Guanyin Who Brings Sons is not a fertility goddess differed from Guanyin but a personalized deity who embodies Guanyin's power of granting sons. Therefore, in the matters of seeking the birth of sons, praying to Guanyin practically has no difference from praying to Guanyin Who Brings Sons for local people.

Due to her role of bringing children, Guanyin or Guanyin Who Brings Sons is naturally associated with the relevant matters about the safety of pregnancy and the health of children. In addition, most devotees who go to local Guanyin temples to make worship are women, and most of their wishes are concerned with their children. Therefore, this divinity actually becomes a protectress of women and children in the minds of her worshippers.

Regarded as a protectress of women and children, Guanyin Who Brings Sons or Guanyin is usually considered a female divinity by her devotees. The iconography of Guanyin Who Brings Sons we see most frequently today is a white-robed lady carrying a baby in her arms. As for Guanyin, she is a white-robed lady without bearing any baby. However, neither a

white-robed lady nor a white-robed lady who carries a child fits the image of Guanyin provided by the “Universal Gateway” chapter. According to the “Universal Gateway” chapter, Guanyin can transform herself into as many as thirty-three different forms to assist people, and which form she takes to manifest really depends on the situation. Some of the forms are human forms, including monks, nuns, male and female Buddhist devotees, ordinary men and women, boys, girls, etc., while some other forms she takes, like celestial beings, dragons, demons on earth or in lower heavens, etc., do not exist in human realm. None of the forms that are mentioned in the “Universal Gateway” chapter is a lady who is dressed in white. In fact, interpreted by orthodox Buddhism, the gender of Guanyin should be sexless. For she is not confined to a specific gender, she can reveal herself in many different forms to provide proper assistance. However, in China, paintings and sculptures usually represented Guanyin with male figures before the Song dynasty (960-1279 C.E.); after the Song, the female image of Guanyin started to prevail. In this paper, I will still use the term “she” or “her” to address Guanyin or Guanyin Who Brings Sons, for presently her most popular image is still a female, especially a white-robed lady.

From an Indian Buddhist Bodhisattva to a Chinese local deity, and from a compassionate savior depicted in the “Universal Gateway” chapter to a specialist in giving male children and protecting women and children, the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons, a manifestation of Guanyin, went through a transformation in the development of her cult in China. This Chinese transformation of Guanyin Who Brings Sons is the focus of this thesis. Scholars have produced abundant research on the topic of the Chinese transformation of Guanyin worship, and Chun-fang Yu’s newly published book Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara¹³ is the most significant recent work. In this work, Yu

Kong:1997), p. 58.

¹³ Chun-fang Yu, Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara (New York: 2001).

views this dramatic transformation of the Indian bodhisattva Avalokitesvara into the Chinese Guanyin within the larger picture of how Buddhism became Chinese. She explores the questions how the indigenous Chinese traditions influenced the conceptions and perceptions of Avalokitesvara and how Guanyin, the domesticated Avalokitesvara, affected Chinese religion by widely examining various media other than Buddhist scriptures, including Chinese indigenous scriptures, miracle tales, myths, art, vernacular literature, rituals, and pilgrimages. These media are the ways through which Guanyin was made known to the Chinese people, and the knowledge and images of Guanyin reflected in them help comprise the whole picture of the cult of Guanyin in China. By contrast, the studies concerning the Chinese development of the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons are absent. Scholars, including Chun-fang Yu, usually ascribe the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons to the religious phenomena of Guanyin worship, briefly mentioning it under the topic of Guanyin worship, and overlooking its academic and religious value as an independent research topic. In fact, although Guanyin Who Brings Sons is a manifestation of Guanyin, and some devotees make no distinction between them, others do worship Guanyin Who Brings Sons as an individual entity specializing in granting male children. Thus, it is necessary to clarify the role of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in the minds of her devotees and her relationship with Guanyin. Furthermore, the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons is not Indian Buddhist but a product of the Chinese transformation of Guanyin worship. An investigation of how the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons developed in China, therefore, provides a specific example of the Chinese transformation of Guanyin worship, which enables us to gain a clear understanding of the intricate cult of Guanyin in China.

This thesis is basically divided into three parts. The first part aims to reconstruct the historical development of the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in China. Miraculous stories

about how Guanyin Who Brings Sons efficaciously brought sons to people, which are collected in collections of Buddhist miracle tales, collections of Buddhist hagiographies, gazetteers of temples, and collections of miracle tales without specific religious purposes, are used as the main source in this part. Most of these miracle tales were written down by devout Buddhists to be proof of the reliability of Guanyin's power of giving sons. Since most of the compilers of these miracle tales and the main characters in these stories were lay Buddhists or monks, the description of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in these tales unavoidably represents a Buddhist standpoint. However, what these miracle tales reflected is not purely Buddhist. Chinese social values and local people's imagination about this divinity can also be perceived in these tales. Therefore, by examining these miracles, I wish to present readers with a clear picture about how the worship of Guanyin Who Brings Sons developed in China and eventually became part of Chinese culture.

The second part explores the role of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in the Ming and Qing's *Baojuan* 寶卷 [Precious Volumes] literature. *Baojuan* are the scriptures created by popular religious sectarian groups. Some of these sectarian groups absorbed Guanyin Who Brings Sons into their pantheons by producing new scriptures about her. Whether Guanyin Who Brings Sons has a novel image deviating from her Buddhist origin is the question I attempt to solve in this part. I have found two extant *Baojuan* directly related to Guanyin's power of granting sons to people. One is *Xiaoshi Baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan* 銷釋白衣觀音菩薩送嬰兒下生寶卷 [The Precious Volumes Explaining the White-robed Guanyin Who Sends Infants Down to Be Born] and the other is *Shangcai longnu baojuan* 善才龍女寶卷 [The Precious Volumes of the Disciple Named Shancai and the Dragon Princess]. The contents of these two *Baojuan* will be studied in detail in this part to investigate the role of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in popular religious sects.

The third part discusses the practices of praying to Guanyin Who Brings Sons in the orthodox Buddhism and folk Buddhism. Materials other than miracle tales about Guanyin and scholars' field research results are used here as main sources. Recent years, scholars in China have published much about their field research in local cults. Their detailed research reports, I believe, can provide us with enough information about the worship of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in the level of local cults or folk Buddhism.

By studying various materials from different sources, I would like to provide the reader with a complete picture of how Chinese indigenous culture affected the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons and absorbed this deity into its indigenous religious system. This transformation course is very complicated and resulted in different belief dimensions of the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons. In addition to a detailed description of the Chinese transformation that the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons experienced, the changing roles of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in different belief dimensions and her association with Guanyin are also the issues I would like to explore in this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical Development of the Cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons

The chief goal of this chapter is to investigate the sinicization of the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in its historical development. This sinicization can be observed in two aspects: the absorption of Chinese traditional values in teachings about her and the views that her Chinese believers held toward her. While the former shows the interaction between her cult and Chinese traditional values, the latter reveals the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in the minds of her devotees. The content of the both aspects is supplied by examples of religious experience in miracle tales about Guanyin Who Brings Sons.

Miracle tales about Guanyin Who Brings Sons are stories recording the actual religious experience of devotees who prayed to Guanyin Who Brings Sons for an heir and received what they believed was a miraculous response from her. These tales were written down by lay Buddhists or monks as proof of Guanyin's efficacy in giving sons, showing the truthfulness of the words in Buddhist scriptures about her ability of bringing sons to people, strengthening believers' faith in her and Buddhism, and recruiting converts. Authors of these miracle tales usually acquired their stories from three sources: previous records written by others, hearsay from a trusted acquaintance or relative, and personal experience.¹⁴ No matter which source such a miracle tale originally comes from, its format usually begins with the date of the event and a brief introduction of main characters' backgrounds, such as their names, places of birth and occupations or official positions if any. Following this is a description of their difficulty having a son, the extreme sincerity they bore in mind, the various ways in which they prayed to Guanyin Who Brings Sons, and the miraculous

¹⁴ See Robert Ford Campany, "The Earliest Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin", in Religions of China in Practice, edited by Donald S. Lopes, Jr. (Princeton: 1996), p. 85.

responses they received. By carefully writing down the background of the protagonists, the authors of these miracle tales endeavored to demonstrate the reliability of these miracles. In some cases, the authors would tell their readers from whom they learned the stories, and the storytellers were usually persons reputable in their times. Some of the authors would even point out their relationships with the protagonists, such as acquaintances, family members, or someone they knew in their neighborhood, to make their stories more convincing, so as to inspire their readers' faith. Moreover, it is noteworthy that these miracle stories often occurred in China and the protagonists were usually Chinese, which makes these tales distinct from the Buddhist stories transmitted from India. These China-oriented stories were more easily to be accepted by Chinese. They played an important role in deepening the roots of the Guanyin cult in China.

These records about devotees' experience of receiving a son from Guanyin are a component of the narrative mode of Buddhist apologetics, which is very close to another Buddhist apologetic genre—Buddhist hagiographies. As a matter of fact, some of the miracle tales about Guanyin Who Brings Sons we have access to are derived from Buddhist hagiographies. If we classify the miracle tales about Guanyin Who Brings Sons into two groups—lay Buddhist devotees and monks, according to the statuses of their protagonists, the miracle tales with monks as their main characters usually have their origins in Buddhist hagiographies. Even though the two groups of tales have a common goal—to claim the efficacy of Guanyin's unfailing power of bringing sons, the tales with monks as their protagonists stress more the unusually divine background of an eminent monk. Commonly, his intimate connection with Guanyin, such as his special devotion to Guanyin or that he was a granted son from Guanyin, will be mentioned as a means to elucidate his unusual

achievements in Buddhism. These achievements of eminent monks are the most significant part of such miracle tales.

The miracle tales about Guanyin Who Brings Sons were usually compiled into miracle tale collections dedicated to Bodhisattva Guanshiyin, Buddhist miracle tale collections, Buddhist encyclopedias, and the collections of biographies of eminent monks. I have collected about 200 stories related to Guanyin's efficacy of bringing sons, and except for few found in miracle tale collections without any religious purpose, all of them are extracted from Buddhist sources.

The earliest miracle tales about Guanyin Who Brings Sons are four stories which happened in Northern and Southern dynasties (317-581 C.E.). *Xi Guanshiyin yingyan ji* 繫觀世音應驗記 [More Records of Guanshiyin's Responsive Manifestations], which was compiled by Lu Gao 陸杲 (459-532 C.E.) to succeed two preceding miracle tale collections about Bodhisattva Guanshiyin¹⁵, contains one of the earliest tales. This tale is under the category of "If [one] is desirous and hopeful for a son 設欲求男",¹⁶ which is one of

¹⁵ These two miracle tale collections respectively are *Guangshiyin yingyan ji* 光世音應驗記 [Records of Guangshiyin's Responsive Manifestations] and *Xu Guangshiyin yingyan ji* 續光世音應驗記 [Continued Records of Guangshiyin's Responsive Manifestations]. The former was written by Fu Liang 傅亮 (374-426 C.E.), based on his memory of an earlier work written by Xie Fu 謝敷 (fl. Late fourth century), a famous lay Buddhist in his time, which was lost during the upheaval of Sun En 孫恩 (early fifth century). To succeed Fu's work, Zhang Yan 張演, who served as an official under the Liu Song dynasty, composed the latter one as the sequel of Fu's work. Lu Gao's work was meant to continue the tradition of writing and compiling of miracle tales about Guanshiyin. Fu's, Zhang's and Lu's collections, usually viewed as a tripartite collection, were lost in China for long and re-discerned in Japan in 1943. Makita Tairyō edited and annotated all these three records in his book *Rikuchō koitsu Kanzenon keikenki no kenkyū* 六朝古逸觀世音應驗の研究 [A Study of Tales of Guanshiyin's Responsive Manifestations Surviving from the Six Dynasties] (Kyoto: Hyōrakuji shoten, 1970). In 1994, the three records were re-edited by Sun Changwu and for the first time published in China under the title *Guanshiyin yingyan ji san zhong* 觀世音應驗記三種 [Three Records of Guanshiyin's Responsive Manifestations], which is the version I am using in this research. The first two works used the term *Guangshiyin* 光世音 instead of *Guanshiyin* 觀世音 to address Bodhisattva Avalokitasvara, which indicates that the composition of these two works were under the influence of the *Lotus Sutra* translated by Chu fahu, since he used the name *Guangshiyin* to translate this bodhisattva in his translation. By contrast, the title of the third collection conveyed to us that it was compiled after Jiumo luoshi's translation appeared and took place of Chu fahu's, because in Jiumo luoshi's translation the term *Guangshiyin* was replaced by the term *Guanshiyin*.

¹⁶ The arrangement of tales in Lu's collection is to sort miracle tales by the various promises in the "Universal Gateway" chapter, unlike the other two collections, which have no method of arranging miracle tales.

Guanyin's promises in the "Universal Gateway" chapter. Right after this tale, Lu Gao criticized a contemporary or a little bit earlier work, the *Xuan yan ji* 宣驗記 [Records of Manifest Miracles], which is attributed to Lu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-444 C.E.)¹⁷, the Prince of Linchuan 臨川王 in the Liu Song dynasty (420-479 C.E.). According to Lu's comments, there are two miracle tales other than the one in his work collected into the *Xuan yan ji*. However, the original version of the *Xuan yan ji* had been lost in Tang dynasty. It exists today only in thirty-five quotations retrieved from various later collections¹⁸, and none of these thirty-five tales is related to Guanshiyin's power of bringing sons. Fortunately, these two miracle tales of Guanshiyin's granting sons are found in another collection—*Ming xiang ji* 冥祥記 [Records of Miraculous Omens], compiled by Wang Yan 王琰 (fl. late fifth-early sixth centuries), a contemporary of Lu Gao and a minor government official under both the Qi (479-502 C.E.) and Liang (502-557 C.E.) dynasties¹⁹. This work also had been lost in the Tang and was partly reclaimed from quotations in diverse sources later.²⁰ This restored collection contains three miracle tales about acquiring sons by praying to Guanshiyin, including the two stories supposed to be in the *Xuan yan ji*, and each of them was frequently placed into later Buddhist miracle tale collections.

After the Northern and Southern dynasties, the compilation of Buddhist miracle tales was still in progress. However, before the Song dynasty (960-1279 C.E.), the miracle tales about Guanyin's bringing sons were relatively rare. For instance, Tang Lin 唐臨's *Ming bao*

¹⁷ Liu was a famous scholar of his time. His other two well-known works are *Yuming lu* 幽明錄 [Records of the Hidden and Visible Worlds] and *Shi shuo xin yu* 世說新語 [A New Account of Tales of the World].

¹⁸ See Lu Xun 魯迅, *Gu xiaoshuo gou chen* 古小說鈞沈 [Ancient Tales Rescued from the Depths] (Beijing: 1954), pp. 361-372.

¹⁹ See Donald E. Gjetson, *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of Tang Lin's Ming-pao-chi*, p. 23. Also see *Sui Shu* 隋書 [The History of Sui Dynasty] and *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 [The Old Edition of Tang History].

²⁰ See Lu Xun, *Gu xiaoshuo gou chen*, pp. 449-534.

ji 冥報記 [Records of Miraculous Retribution]²¹ and Daoshi 道世's *Fa yuan zhu lin* 法苑珠林 [A Grove of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma]²², a Buddhist Encyclopedia, are well-known Buddhist miracle tale collections in the Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.). However, the former does not include any miracle tales regarding Guanyin as a granter of sons, and while the latter contains this kind of miracle tales, these tales were extracted from preceding works. Even though some miracle tales on this theme found in later collections are dated back to take place during the period of Sui (581-618 C.E.), Tang, and Five dynasties (907-960 C.E.), most of them are originally from various Buddhist hagiographies. It is very hard to find lay people as the protagonists of miracle tales about Guanyin's bringing sons in this period.

Beginning with the Song dynasty, the quantity of miracle tales about Guanyin Who Brings Sons progressively increased. These stories were mostly incorporated into various miracle tale collections dedicated to Guanshiyin. Particularly after the late Ming, the compilation of this kind of miracle tale collections about Guanshiyin reached its climax. Zhou Kefu 周克復's *Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji* 觀世音經咒持驗記 [Records of Miraculous Responses of Retaining and Reciting Guanshiyin Sutras and Mantras]²³, compiled in 1659²⁴, Hongzan 弘贊's *Guanyin ci li ji* 觀音慈林集 [Compassionate Grove of Guanyin]²⁵, and He dong zi 鶴洞子's *Hai nan yishao* 海南一勺 [One Scoop of the Southern Sea]²⁶ are works

²¹ For a detailed introduction and a complete English translation of *Ming bao ji*, see Donald E. Gjetson, *Miraculous Retribution—A Study and Translation of Tang Lin's Ming-pao ji* (Berkeley: 1989).

²² See *Taisho shinshu daizoukyou* 大正新脩大藏經 [The Buddhist Canon Published in the Taisho Era] (Tokyo, 1924-1934), no. 2122.

²³ See *Xu zang jing* 續藏經 [The Continuation of the Buddhist Canon] (Hong Kong: 1905), V. 134. Zhou was a devout lay Buddhist in the early Qing. In addition to this work, he also compiled another Buddhist miracle tale collection—*Fa hua jing chi yan ji* 法華經持驗記 [Records of Miraculous Responses to Retaining and Reciting the Lotus Sutra] compiled in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134, pp. 477-495.

²⁴ See Yu Chun-fang, "Miracle Tales and the Domestication of Kuan-yin", in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 11 (1998), p. 437.

²⁵ See *Xu zang jing*, V.149, pp. 291-323.

²⁶ The version I am using in this research is the one printed in the fifteenth year of the Daoguang 道光 reign period (1835) by *Si xiang cai tang* 四香草堂 [The Hut of Four Kinds of Fragrance] in ten volumes and is preserved in Fu Sinian Library 傅斯年圖書館 of the Academia Sinica.

from the late Ming and the beginning of the Qing. During the earlier period of the Republic, there were Li Yuanjing 李圓淨's *Xin bian Guanyin linggan lu* 新編觀音靈感錄 [Newly Compiled Records of Guanyin's Efficacious Responses]²⁷, Xu Zhijing 許止淨's *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song* 觀世音菩薩本迹感應頌 [Tributes of Praise for the Origin and Responsive Manifestations of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin]²⁸, Wan Jun 萬鈞's *Guanyin lingyi ji* 觀音靈異記 [Records of Guanyin's Marvelous Efficacy]²⁹, Nie Yuntai 聶雲臺's *Guanyin jing zhou linggan luyao* 觀音經咒靈感錄要 [A Summary Record of the Efficacious Responses of Guanyin Sutras and Mantras]³⁰, Nie Qijie 聶其杰's *Guanyin jing zhou linggan lu huibian* 觀音經咒靈感錄匯編 [An Inclusive Compilation of the Efficacious Responses of Guanyin Sutras and Mandras]³¹, Ding Fubao 丁福保's *Guanshiyin pusa linggan luyao* 觀世音菩薩靈感錄要 [A Summary Record of the Efficacious Responses of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin]³², and Zhi Cheng Lay Buddhist 智成居士's *Guanshiyin pusa lingying shiji shilu* 觀世音菩薩靈應事蹟實錄 [Real Records of the Events of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin's Efficacious Manifestations]³³. The common characteristic of these miracle tale collections contributed to Bodhisattva Guanshiyin is that the previous records written by others are the main source for their tales, even though miracle tales learned from authors' acquaintance or

²⁷ See Li Yuanjing, *Xin bian Guanyin linggan lu* (Taipei: 1973). This work is also collected into *Zhongguo lidai Guanyin wensian jicheng* 中國歷代觀音文獻集成 [A Complete Collection of Documents about Guanyin from Successive Dynasties in China], V.8 (Beijing: 1998), pp. 453-608.

²⁸ See Xu Zhijing, *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song* (Taipei: 1979). This collection is also incorporated into *Zhongguo lidai Guanyin wensian jicheng*, V. 7 & 8.

²⁹ See Wan Jun, *Guanyin lingyi ji* (Taipei: 1983).

³⁰ See Nie Yuntai, *Guanyin jing zhou linggan luyao*, in *Zhongguo lidai Guanyin wensian jicheng*, V.8, pp. 139-218.

³¹ See Nie Qijie, *Guanyin jing zhou linggan lu huibian*, in *Zhongguo lidai Guanyin wensian jicheng*, V.8, pp. 305-406.

³² Ding Fubao, *Guanshiyin pusa linggan lu*, in *Zhongguo lidai Guanyin wensian jicheng*, V.8, pp. 219-304.

³³ Zhi Cheng Lay Buddhist, *Guanshiyin pusa lingying shiji shilu* (Taipei: 1994).

their own experience are also adopted in these collections³⁴. As a result of this characteristic, the miracle tales in different collections unavoidably overlap with each other, which is especially discernible in the collections in the Republic. Sometimes, one miracle tale compiled into several collections is presented with different details in different collections. In some occasions, the name of the main character is changed; in others, the scripture related to Guanyin chanted by the main character to pray for a son is changed to another. This is possibly resulted from the negligence of compilers or the different sources that compilers consulted. Additionally, all of these collections, except for the *Hai nan yi shao*, include several kinds of sutras and mantras related to Guanshiyin right before the main body of miracle tales. By contrast with the earliest miracle tale collections dedicated to Guanshiyin, the arrangement of a collection of Guanyin-related scriptures into miracle tale collections about Guanyin is relatively new.

There were also some other collections of miracle tales, which are not especially dedicated to Guanshiyin, preserving miracle tales about Guanyin's bringing sons during and after the Song period. Li Fang 李昉's *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記 [Broad-ranging Records Compiled in the Era of Great Peace]³⁵, Hong Mai 洪邁's *Yi jian zhi* 夷堅志 [Records of the Listener]³⁶ and Shi Jiexian 釋戒顯's *Xian guo sui lu* 現果隨錄 [Casual Records of Retribution in Present Life]³⁷ are three examples. Li's *Taiping guang ji*, compiled in 978 C.E.³⁸ and gathering numerous tales from three hundred forty five different antecedent

³⁴ For example, Li Yuanjing's work contains a section of records of things heard recently (*Jin wen lu* 近聞錄).

³⁵ See Li Fang (Song), *Tai ping guang ji*, in *Biji xiaoshuo daguan shiwu bian* 筆記小說大觀十五編 [The Fifteenth Compilation of the Kaleidoscope of Random Jottings and Novels], V.2 (Jiangsu: 1984), which is the reprinted copy of its edition in the eighteenth year in the Qianlong 乾隆 reign period (1753).

³⁶ Hong Mai (Song), *Yi jian zhi* (Shanghai: 1914).

³⁷ Shi Jiexia (Ming), *Xian guo sui lu*, in *Biji xiaoshuo daguan san bian* 筆記小說大觀三編 [The Third Compilation of the Kaleidoscope of Random Jottings and Novels], V.10 (Taipei: 1974).

³⁸ See Robert F. Campany, "The Real Presence", in *History of Religions*, V. 32, no. 3 (Feb, 1993), p. 271.

works³⁹, is an encyclopedia of past tales. By contrast, Hong Mai (1123-1202 C.E.)'s *Yi jian zhi*, another Song work compiled during the Qiandao 乾道 reign period (1165-1173 C.E.)⁴⁰, collected miracle tales of his time, which he personally heard from others. Nevertheless, these two collections are still similar at one point—both of them were not compiled for the promotion of any specific religion. In comparison with these two Song works, Shi Jiexian's *Xian guo shui lu*, a Ming work, is full of Buddhist teachings. Tales in Jiexian's collection are basically meant to exemplify the real existence of the cause and effect method, and are usually stories that occurred in his time.

The miracle tales about Guanyin Who Brings Sons are mostly compiled into the various works I mentioned in the above discussion. Only few were neglected by these works and scattered in local gazetteers and scholars' notes. By analyzing the contents of these miracle tales, I hope to find out how the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons changed over time, the ways her devotees prayed to her and the issues relevant to her sinicization, in order to draw a sketch of her worship in its historical development.

A. The Image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in Historical Change

In a miracle tale of Guanyin's bringing sons, we can often read a description about Guanyin who manifested herself to a certain devotee in response to his or her prayer for obtaining a son. The description of her manifestation, usually revealed in a dream, is the core of a miracle tale. It brings the whole story to a climax—a stunning and awe-inspiring miraculous response from Guanyin. Through such a response, messages from Guanyin are clearly conveyed to her followers, informing them that their wishes will be satisfied as a reward of their sincerity. In individual miracle tales, the depiction of the image of Guanyin

³⁹ See Li Fang, *Taiping guang ji*, in *Biji xiaoshuo daguan shiwu bian*, p. 1.

Who Brings Sons is more or less varied, which reflects the diversity of her image preserved in different minds and in different times. By studying the images of Guanyin Who Brings Sons described in miracle tales, I hope to find out the changes of her image in historical development and how her most popular iconography—a white-robed lady carrying a baby in her arms—emerged and was accepted by her devotees.

At the beginning, let us examine the four extant earliest miracle tales about Guanyin's responding to one's prayer of having a son. All of them occurred in the Northern and Southern dynasties. As I mentioned before, one of the miracle tales is from Lu Gao's *Xi Guanshiyin yingyang ji*, and the others are from Wang Yan's *Ming xiang ji*. The stories are as follows:

Tale 1, from the *Xi Guanshiyin yingyang ji*:

A person whose surname was Tai had no sons and felt very sad about himself, so he went to pray to Guanyin for a son. He took an oath in front of a multitude of monks and said: "If I have a son later in my life, this [son] shall not be considered an auspicious efficacious response [from Guan-yin]. Only the son who is born in the eighth of the fourth lunar month is caused by [Guanyin's] great and wondrous power." [Afterwards], he actually had a son who was born in the eighth of the fourth month, and this son was immediately named after Guanshiyin.⁴¹

有一人姓臺，無兒息，其自傷悼。於是就觀世音乞子。在眾僧前誓曰：「若以餘日生兒，更非瑞應；唯以四月八日生者，則是威神之力。」果以四月八日產一男，即字爲觀世音。

Tale 2, from the *Ming xiang ji*:

⁴⁰ *Yi jian zhi* was compiled in the second half of the twelfth century (1161-?).

Sun Daode, a native of *Yi* prefecture in the [Liu] Song period, worshiped the Way (*Dao*) and was a libationer. He did not yet have a son even though he was over fifty. He lived near a monastery, and during the Jingping reign period (423-424 C.E.), a monk [who lived in the monastery nearby] told [Dao]de: "If you determinedly desire to have a son, you should wholeheartedly worship and chant the *Guanshiyin Sutra*. This is what you can put your hopes on." Therefore, [Dao]de gave up serving the Dao but took refuge in Guanshiyin with single-minded sincerity. Within a few days he had a dream-response, and soon his wife was pregnant. Subsequently, she gave birth to a son.⁴²

宋孫道德，益州人也，奉道祭酒，年過五十，未有子。居近精舍，景平中，沙門謂德：「必願有兒，當至心禮誦觀世音經，此可冀也。」德遂罷不事道，單心投誠歸觀世音；少日之中而有夢應，婦即有孕，遂以產男也。

Tale 3, from the *Ming xiang ji*:

In the [Liu] Song period, a devout Buddhist named Bian Yuizhi, a native of Jiying, was an Audience Attendant (*Chao qing* 朝請)⁴³ and lived in Chaogou (presumably a place's name). He was fifty years old but had no sons. His wife got him a concubine, but this concubine was still not pregnant after many years. Wanting to pray for a son to continue his family line, he chanted the *Guanshiyin Sutra* thousand times. When the thousand times were almost completed, this concubine became pregnant and

⁴¹ See Lu Gao (Qi of Southern Dynasties), *Xi Guanshiyin yingyan ji*, edited by Sun Changwu (Beijing: 1994), p. 53.

⁴² See Wang Yan (Qi & Liang in Southern Dynasties), *Ming xian ji*, in *Gu xiaoshuo gou chen*, edited by Lu Xun (Beijing: 1954). Also see Hongzan (Ming), *Guanyin ci li ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V.149. (Hong Kong: 1905).

⁴³ According to Charles O. Hucker's *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, California: 1985), *Feng chao qing* 奉朝請 is the official designation of numerous low-ranking members of the Department of Scholarly Counselors (*Ji shu sheng* 集書省) in the era of N-S Division (Song). In this passage, *Chao qing* should be the abbreviation of *Feng chao qing*.

subsequently gave birth to a boy. The time was the twenty-eighth year of the Yuanjia reign period, which was also the Yichou year (451 C.E.).⁴⁴

宋居士王悅之，濟陰人也。作朝請，居在潮溝。行年五十，未有子息，婦爲娶妾，復積載不孕。將祈求繼嗣，千遍轉觀世音經；其數垂竟，妾便有娠，遂生一男，時元嘉二十八年己丑歲也。

Tale 4, from the *Ming xiang ji*:

Wang Min was a native of Langye. His wife had no son, and he constantly prayed to Guanyin for sons. Afterwards, while walking on street, he encountered a foreign monk, who liked Min very much. This monk told [Min]: "After I die, I will be your son." After a short period, this monk (*Dao ren* 道人) actually died, and within three months [after this monk's death], Min's wife got pregnant. Being able to speak at birth, [the son of Min] could understand the languages of sixteen countries in Western Region (*Xi yu* 西域) at once and was very intelligent and with great capability. This son was, namely, Wang Yuanming, the Secretarial Court Gentaleman (*Shangshu* 尚書) of the Jin.⁴⁵

瑯琊王珉，其妻無子，常祈觀音乞兒。珉後行路逢一胡僧，其意極甚悅之。其胡僧：「我死當爲君子。」少時，道人果亡，三月間，珉妻有妊，及生能語，即解西域十六國音，大聰明有器度，即晉尚書王淵明身也。

In these four tales, we do not read any records concerning the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons. Her efficacious responses in these four stories were not evidenced by her self-revelation in someone's dream but proven by various time coincidences. For the first story, what makes

⁴⁴ See Wang Yan (Qi & Liang), *Ming xian ji*, in *Gu xiaoshuo gou chen*, edited by Lu Xun (Beijing: 1954). Also see Hongzan (Ming), *Guanyin ci li ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V.149. (Hong Kong:1905).

it a miracle is the coincidence of the time that a son was actually born at the eighth day of the fourth month, which was the so-called birthday of Buddha and the date picked up by the protagonist in front of a group of monks. In the second story, the Daoist libationer obtained a son after he was converted to Buddhism and sincerely worshiped Bodhisattva Guanshiyin. In the third story, Bian Yuizhi's concubine became pregnant when he was almost done with chanting of the Guanshiyin Sutra a thousand times. Finally, in the last story, Wang Min's wife became pregnant three months after the monk who admired Wang passed away. Of course, the coincidence of time is not the only factor to determine miracles in these four stories. For example, the second story also mentioned a dream-response received by the Daoist libationer, even though no further details about this dream were provided; in the fourth story, the new born baby's astounding talent in western languages subtly explained his unusual relationship with the western monk. However, no description in these four tales provides any message about Guanyin's image.

As in the four tales above, the two miracle tales from the Tang dynasty do not provide any information about Guanyin's image, either. The main characters in these two tales are both Tang monks. One of the stories, concerning a monk named Wan Hui 萬回, used only one short sentence to depict the extraordinary connection between Guanyin and the birth of Wan Hui: "At first, his mother prayed to an icon of Guanyin and then gave birth to Hui 初母祈於觀音像而娠回"⁴⁶. The theme of this narrative is obviously not the unusual birth of a son granted by Guanyin but an eminent monk's marvelous and respectful life, since following this sentence are couples of anecdotes about Wan's life.⁴⁷ Moreover, this brief sentence hardly

⁴⁵ See Wang Yan (Qi & Liang), *Ming xian ji*, in *Gu xiaoshuo gou chen*.

⁴⁶ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), *Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134, p. 483.

⁴⁷ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), *Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134, p. 483. Here, I translate this story as an example of miracle tales concerning an eminent monk's marvelous life to let readers gain a brief understanding on the tales with this theme. The story is as follows: In the Tang, Master Wanhui was a native of

provides us with any picture of the Guanyin icon which Wan's mother prayed to. The other story relates the event of obtaining a son from Guanyin in more details, but its main concern is the same as that of Wan's story—the marvelous life of a monk. The story is as follows:

Chan Master Cizang's surname was Jin. His father's name was Wulin, and his official rank reached the first class. After enjoying high rank, he considered resigning. However, he had no heirs, which made his worries constantly accumulated. He habitually respected Buddhist theories, so that he prayed for Buddha's extra aid by making a thousand copies of Guanyin Sutra in hope to give birth to a son. If this son grew up later, this son would vow to exert his mind on Buddhist principles to offer salvation to all kinds of living beings. [Then,] an obscure auspicious sign appeared to respond to him. He dreamt that a star fell into his bosom, and [his wife] immediately became pregnant. [Cizang] was born at auspicious time in the eighth day of the fourth month, and [both] monks and lay people were happy for this rare auspicious sign. As

Min town. His lay surname was Chang. At first, his mother prayed to a Guanyin image and then gave birth to Hui. Hui was stupid after he was born. He started to be able to speak at the age of eight or nine, and his parents also fostered him as a pig or dog. As he grew older, his father asked him to plough the fields. Hui ploughed straight without making a turn for several tens *li* till he hit a ditch, and then he finally stopped but kept saying it was equal [to plough in this way]. His father beat him up angrily, and Hui said: "Just plough here and there all together, and why do we need to differ here from there?" Hui's elder brother served in the army in distant Anxi. Without hearing from him for a long time, his parents said he must have died, so they worried and wept day and night. Hui felt sad [to see] his parents [like this], so he knelt [in front of them] and said: "Now, it is useless to worry about and weep for big brother. I think what my big brother needs are provisions, so please prepare them soon. I will wait for them for one day." Getting up at the *Chen* hour (7:00-9:00am), he told his parents that he was going to visit his brother. By night, he already returned home and said: "Big brother is quite peaceful and safe. He has a letter to inquire about parents' [health and other situations]." They looked at it [and found] it was really his brother's handwriting. The whole family was astonished [at the letter or Hui], since the distance from Hongnong to Anxi was more than a hundred thousand *li*. He went to a place that was a hundred thousand *li* away but returned in one day, so he was called Wanhui 萬回 [Return in a distance of a ten thousand *li*]. Before, when [Master] Xuanzang went to Buddha's country (India) to fetch [Buddhist] scriptures, he saw a line on a post of a Buddhist shrine saying: "Bodhisattva Wanhui has been sent to Min town to spread [Buddhism] and teach [people]." [Later,] Zang went to Min to pay a visit to Master Wanhui by riding official horses. He worshiped Master Wanhui, donated three sets of clothes, bottles, and alms-bowls and then left.

唐萬回師，閩鄉人，俗姓張，初母祈於觀音像而娠回。回生而愚，八九歲始能言，父母亦以豚犬畜之。年長，父令耕田，回直耕去數十里不轉，遇溝坑乃止，口但連稱平等，其父怒擊之，回曰：「彼此總耕何須異相？」回兄遠戍安西，音聞久絕，父母謂其死矣，日夕憂泣，回痛父母，跪而言曰：「今為兄憂泣無益，計兄所需者糗糧，請速備焉，我將候之一日。」辰起告親前往，晚即返家，曰：「兄甚平安，有書省父母。」視之，果兄跡也，一家異之，弘農抵安西蓋萬餘里，其萬里，一日而回，故號萬回。先是玄奘向佛國取經，見佛龕題柱曰：「菩薩萬回謫向閩鄉布化。」奘馳驛至閩訪萬回師，禮之，施三衣瓶鉢而去。

he grew up, he felt tired of worldly prosperity and deeply realized the impermanent [nature of everything], which [led everything] eventually return to emptiness and stillness. Therefore, he left home to become a monk during the Zhenguan reign period (627-649 C.E.). [At that time,] two bodhisattvas were moved to descend from heaven to confer the certificate of ordination of a monk on him in person. He greatly promoted Buddhism and broadly benefited beings in both the human and heavenly realms, just like his father's prayer. His father's vow was not empty.⁴⁸

慈藏禪師，姓金氏，父名武林，官至一品，既享高位，籌議攸歸，而絕無後嗣，憂念每積，素仰佛理，乃求加護，造千部觀音經，希生一息，後若成長，願發道心，度諸生類。冥祥顯應，夢星墜入懷，因即有娠，以四月八日誕載良辰，道俗銜慶，希有瑞也。年既已長，情厭世華，深體無常，終歸空寂。遂於貞觀年間出家，感二菩薩從天降下，親與授戒，大弘佛法，廣利人天，如父所禱，願不虛也。

In this story, Cizang's father printed a thousand copies of Guanyin Sutra in hope to obtain a son. The miraculous responses to the father's wish are his dream of a star falling into his breast, the birth of Cizang at the eighth day of the fourth month—a very special and significant day for Buddhism, as well as the Cizang's becoming a monk later, which corresponds with the father's previous vow: "If this son grew up later, this son would vow to devote his mind to Buddhist principles to offer salvation to all kinds of living beings". Here, Guanyin's revelation of herself in a dream is still not a component of the story.

The reason that no description of Guanyin's image is found in the miracle tales about Guanyin's bringing sons in Tang dynasty or earlier is probably that Guanyin Who Brings Sons did not have a established, common iconography at that time. People's understanding

⁴⁸ According to Shi Hongzan's *Guanyin ci li ji*, this story is originally from the book *Tang gao seng zhuan* 唐高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks in Tang], P.314.

about her was basically from the teaching of the Universal Gateway chapter, which does not present any fixed iconography of Guanyin but emphasizes Guanyin's flexibility in taking various forms to assist people in need. Therefore, instead of her image, her divine power of satisfying all kinds of needs is the main point the miracle tales aimed to emphasize and promote.

The earliest miracle tale including a description of the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons is a Song story written down by Hong Mai in his Yi jian zhi:

Zhai Ji, a native of the capital of the Song, lived in Sian town of Hu prefecture (*zhou*). He was fifty years old but had no son, so he drew a picture of Guanyin and prayed to it with utmost sincerity. Just as his wife got pregnant, she dreamt that a lady dressed in white delivered a son who was carried on a platter [to her]. The child looked very handsome, so she was very delighted and wanted to carry and take this baby. But [suddenly] a cow came in between the baby and her, so she could not get the baby in the end. The wife later gave birth to a son, but he died after a month. After that, this couple prayed to Guanyin again as before. Someone heard of the wife's dream and told Ji: "does it have something to do with your extreme fondness for eating beef?" [Hearing this,] Ji was alarmed and then vowed that his whole family would never eat beef again. After that, his wife had another dream in which the same lady came again to deliver a son, and [the wife] carried and obtained the baby [this time]. The wife then gave birth to a son, who grew up to be an adult.⁴⁹

宋京師人翟輯，居湖州四安鎮，年五十無子，繪觀音像，懇禱甚至。其妻方娠，夢白衣婦人以槃擎一兒，甚韶秀，妻大喜，欲抱取之，一牛橫陳其中，竟不可得。既而生

⁴⁹ Hong Mai (Song), Yi jian zhi, section Yi 乙, V. 17, p. 877. Also see Zhou Kefu (Qing), Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji, in Xu zang jing, V. 134. (Hong Kong: 1905). Cf. Chun-fang Yu, "Images of Guan-yin in Chinese Folk Literature", in Han xue yan jiu 漢學研究 [Sinologist Studies] 8:1 (1990), p. 262.

男, 子彌月不育, 又禱請如初. 有聞其夢者告楫曰: “子酷嗜牛肉, 豈爲是歟?” 楫悚然, 即誓舉家不復食, 遂復夢前婦人送兒至, 抱得之, 妻遂生子爲成人。

In this narrative, the “miracle” is the revelation of a white-robed lady in two of Zhai’s wife’s dreams: the first one is to deliver a warning that eating beef will prevent Zhai from having a son, and the second is a real omen of a son’s coming. The revelation of a white-robed lady in Zhai’s wife’s dreams is a responsive result of Zhai’s painting a picture of Guanyin and praying to it with utmost reverence. We do not know if the manifested white-robed lady looked the same as or similar to the image of Guanyin depicted by Zhai. In addition, there is no sentence explicitly claiming that this lady is Guanyin. Nevertheless, from the context of the story, we can discern a correlation between the lady and Guanyin, which, at least, was apparently believed by Zhai, his wife, the author and whoever heard this story. All of them took the white-robed lady as the manifestation of Guanyin. The white-robed lady together with the baby she brought just makes up the most common image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in China.

Zhai’s story is not the only story describing the image of Guanyin as a white-robed lady in the Song dynasty. In another Song story from the same source—the *Yi jian zhi*, a white-robed lady manifested in an old woman’s dream was identified to be a damaged image of White-robed Guanyin:

An old female villager in Hu prefecture (*zhou*) had her arm hurt, which could not be cured for a long while. One night, she dreamt of a white-robed lady coming to visit her. [The white-robed lady] said: “I am suffering from the same affliction as well. If you can cure my arm, I will cure your arm, too.” The old woman said: “Where do you live, Madam?” She said: “I live in the west corridor of Chongning Temple.” After the old woman woke up, she entered the town, went to the Chongning Temple, and told her

dream to a monk named Zhongdao, who lived in this temple. [Zhong]dao considered the dream and said: “[The lady in your dream] must be Guanyin. My room has an icon of white-robed [Guanyin], whose arm was accidentally damaged when the room was repaired.” He brought [the old woman] to the room to take a look and to pay reverence to [the icon]. One of her arms was actually damaged. Therefore, the old woman asked workers to repair it. Right after the Buddha arm was already completely mended, the illness of the old woman was healed. Wu Jia, a native of Hu prefecture, told me [this story].⁵⁰

湖州有村媼，患臂久不愈，夜夢白衣女子來謁曰，我亦苦此，爾能醫我臂，我亦醫爾臂。媼曰，娘子居何地？曰，我寄崇寧寺西廊。媼既寤，即入城至崇寧寺以所夢白寺舍僧忠道者，道者思之曰，必觀音也。吾室有白衣像因葺舍誤傷其臂。引至室中瞻禮，果一臂損。媼遂命工脩之。佛臂既全，媼病隨愈。湖人吳价說。

This miracle tale together with Zhai's story suggests the popularity of the white-robed lady as Guanyin's image. However, in more miracle tales of Song dynasty, the term we frequently encounter to identify Guanyin is “White-robed Great Being” (*Baiyi dashi* 白衣大士), another popular title of White-robed Guanyin, or “White-robed person” (*Baiyi ren* 白衣人). Like the image of a white-robed lady, neither of the two terms is specifically related to the idea of bringing sons in miracle tales. The “White-robed Great Being” or “White-robed person” was also mentioned in records about Guanyin who assisted people with other kinds of needs, such as saving them from flood, fire, bandits, and so on. It implies that the White-robed Guanyin was already a popular image worshipped among the people in the Song. Praying to this White-robed Guanyin was not exclusively for the purpose of obtaining an heir but for all kinds of demands. Accordingly, the figure of Guanyin Who Brings Sons that a white-robed

⁵⁰ See Hong Mai (Song), *Yi jian zhi*, Section *Jia* 甲, Vol. 21, p. 235.

lady carrying a baby in her arms is a mere image which personifies Guanyin's promise of bringing sons and was derived from the prototypical iconography of White-robed Guanyin.

In reality, the Artist Wu Daozi 吳道子 had drawn the image of Guanyin wearing a white robe in several paintings as early as in the Tang.⁵¹ With regard to the origin of White-robed Guanyin, the opinions held by scholars are diverse. The conventional view in Buddhological scholarship traces her to a Tantric female deity—White Tara or Pandaravasini, the female consort of Avalokitesvara in Tibetan Buddhism introduced into China in the eighth century.⁵² It is also believed that the White Tara, literally meaning “clad in white”, together with the legend of *Miaoshan*, exerted crucial influence in transforming Guanyin's masculine image into its female form.⁵³ By contrast, Chun-fang Yu, a later scholar, with a relatively uncertain and scrupulous attitude toward the theory of “White Tara”, attempts to connect White-robed Guanyin to Water-moon Guanyin (*Shui yu Guanyin* 水月觀音), a traditional topos in Chan Buddhist literature.⁵⁴

A Song scholar, Hong Hao 洪皓 (1088-1155 C.E.) associated the origin of the cult of White-robed Guanyin to Changbai Mountain 長白山 of northeastern China in his book *Song mo ji wen* 松漠紀聞 [A Record of What I Learned about the Boundless Pine Woods]:

Changbai Mountain, more than a thousand *li* away from the Southeast of Leng Mountain, is where White-robed Guanyin lives. In that mountain, birds and animals

⁵¹ See Figure 2 & 3.

⁵² See Chun-fang Yu, “A Sutra Promoting the White-robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons”, p. 97, and Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China* (Princeton: 1973), pp. 340-342.

⁵³ See John Blofeld, *Bodhisattva of Compassion: The Mystical Tradition of Kuan Yin* (Boulder Colo.:1988).

⁵⁴ See Chun-fang Yu, “Miracle Tales and the Domestication of Kuan-yin”, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 11, p. 465.

are all white. People dare not to enter the mountain, for they are afraid to pollute the mountain and accordingly be harmed by snakes and vipers.⁵⁵

長白山在冷山東南千餘里, 蓋白衣觀音所居, 其山鳥獸皆白, 人不敢入, 恐穢其間, 以致蛇虺之害.

Hong's comment on the geographic relevance between the dwelling of White-robed Guanyin and the northeastern area of China, which is also quoted in the *Liao zhi* 遼志 [The Topography of Liao]⁵⁶, is proven and reinforced by a historical episode about Taizong 太宗 of Liao 遼. According to the *Liao shi* 遼史 [The History of Liao], Taizong, whose reign period is from 925 to 947 C.E., once visited the Hall of Great Compassion in Xingwang Temple 興王寺 in You'幽 Prefecture, which is in today's Hebei and Liaodong provinces. Pointing at an image of White-robed Guanyin, he said that he had a dream of a divinity, which was exactly the same as this image. Therefore, he built a temple in Muye Mountain 木葉山 for this image of White-robed Guanyin and worshipped her as his family patron.⁵⁷ The myth that White-robed Guanyin dwelled in lofty, snow-clad mountains, and her intimate link with the royal family of Liao do not provide enough information in determining the origin of the image of White-robed Guanyin. However, from these two sources, we can know that before the mid-tenth century, the cult of White-robed Guanyin already existed.

In South China, the cult of White-robed Guanyin also rose in the same period. The presence of White-robed Guanyin was disclosed in two miracle tales related to the founding of the monastery of Upper Tianzhu 上天竺寺 in Hangzhou 杭州, which was renowned for

⁵⁵ See Hong Hao (Song), *Song mo ji wen*, in *Liao hai cong shu* 遼海叢書 [A Collection of Reprinted Books about the Great Land of Liao] (China: 1933), Vol. 2, p. 209.

⁵⁶ See Ye Longli 葉隆禮 (Yuan), *Liao zhi*, in *Cong shu ji cheng chu bian* 叢書集成初編 [The First Compilation of a Complete Collections of Reprinted Works] (Taipei, Shangwu), Vol. 3897, p. 11.

⁵⁷ This event is recorded in Vol. 37 and 49 of the *Liao shi* 遼史, edited by Tuo Tuo 脫脫 (1238-1298).

the devotion to White-robed Guanyin and became one of the most significant pilgrimage centers for Guanyin cult. One of the miracle tales is as follows:

Chan Master Baiyun daoyu, whose background was unknown, established (*Zhuo* 卓)⁵⁸ a hut in the northwestern side of Tianchu Mountain during the fourth year of Tianfu reign period in the Shi Jin dynasty (939 C.E.). He dressed [in clothes woven with] grass and ate plants. With lofty conduct, he retired from the pursuits of this life. One evening, he saw that in the front peak, there was light brightening the sky. He traced where the light was from, took a look at it, and got a piece of unusual wood. No one could name the wood, so Master [Daoyu] took it to a craftsman named Kong Renqian and asked him to carve it into a statue of the Great Being Guanyin. One night, he dreamt of a white-robed person, saying: “The statue has already been completed. Tomorrow, there will be a monk coming from Lo[yang]. Brought with him are relics of the ancient Buddha. You should ask for them.” Soon after that, a monk really came. Following [the instructions in] his dream, Master [Daoyu] asked for relics [from the monk] and obtained three relics. Master inlaid them on the top of the Great Being’s head. After that, the relics were often shown in the flesh topknot on her crown, radiating white rays. Since then, its unusual efficacy became very prominent.⁵⁹

白雲道翊禪師，不知何許人，石晉天福四年，卓菴天竺山西北，草衣木食，高行絕塵，一夕見前峰有光燭天，跡其所起，視之，得異木焉，人莫能名之者，師乃取之，命匠者孔仁謙，刻爲觀音大士像，夜夢白衣人曰：「雕像已就。明日有僧自洛來，隨身有

⁵⁸ The character *Zhuo* 卓 can be explained as “to establish”. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese English Dictionary* (Cambridge: 1943), p. 179.

⁵⁹ See Shi Yuanfu 釋元復 and Shi Yuanjing 釋元敬 (Song), *Wulin xihu gaoseng shi lue* 武林西湖高僧事略 [A Sketch of the Achievements Made by the Eminent Monks in Xihu, Hangzhou] (“*Wulin*” is another name for Hangzhou or Zhejiang 浙江), in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134, p. 236, and Hongzan, *Guanyin ci lin ji*, p. 315. This anecdote is also collected into the *Gazetteer of the Monastery of Upper Tianzhu in Hangzhou*, compiled by Shi

古佛舍利,當求之。」已而僧果至,如其夢求之,得舍利三顆,納於大士頂門,其後舍利常現於頂冠肉髻,白光煥發,自是靈異大著。

Tianzhu Mountain, in today's Hangzhou, is where the monastery of Upper Tianzhu is located. In this narrative, the white-robed person is supposed to be the manifestation of the Guanyin statue, which later was worshipped in the monastery of Upper Tianzhu and became its most important treasure.

The other miracle story is related to Qian Shu 錢俶 (?-988 C.E.), the last ruler of Wuyue kingdom 吳越國 in the Five dynasties period (907-959 C.E.): Once Qian had a dream of a white-robed person who asked him to repair her dwelling by promising the prosperity of Qian's kingdom in exchange. After discovering that only the Guanyin in Tianzhu Mountain was dressed in white, Qian built a hall, called Hall of Reading Scriptures in Tianzhu (Tianzhu kan jing yuan 天竺看經院 or *an* 庵), for this divinity, and this hall is the earliest portion of the monastery of Upper Tianzhu we see today.

Echoing the appearance of White-robed Guanyin in North China, these two miracle tales not only provide a brief account of the rising worship of White-robed Guanyin in the monastery of Upper Tianzhu, but also demonstrated the wide spread of the cult of White-robed Guanyin in the tenth century.

With the prevalence of the iconography of White-robed Guanyin, the image of a white-robed lady holding a baby, a varied form of White-robed Guanyin, gradually became a favorite subject of artistic creation and miracle tales about Guanyin, especially in the Ming and Qing. The miracle tale of Zhai Ji, which I mentioned before, is merely one of many miracle tales centered on White-robed Guanyin who manifested herself to deliver a son. Her

Guangbien in the Ming, p.14. However, in the gazetteer, the plot that Master Daoyu dreamt of a white-robed person is not mentioned.

popularity should be partly, if not totally, ascribed to the promotion of an indigenous Buddhist scripture bearing the title The Dharani Sutra of the Five Mudras of the Great Compassionate White-robed One (*Baiyi Dabei wuyinxin tuoluoni jing* 白衣大悲五印心陀羅尼經).

This scripture, frequently mentioned in miracle tales of Ming and Qing about Guanyin Who Brings Sons, is not included in any existing editions of the Buddhist Canon. This scripture appears to have reached its summit of popularity in the late Ming. The rare book collection of the Palace Museum in Taipei, Taiwan has a copy of this scripture written by Dong Qichang 董其昌, a famous Ming calligrapher, in 1558.⁶⁰ The rare book section of the Library of Chinese Buddhist Cultural Artifacts (*Zhongguo fojiao wenwu tushuguan* 中國佛教文物圖書館) located at the Fayuan Monastery 法源寺 in Beijing has also preserved thirty-five copies of this scripture, which were printed during the Ming, the earliest one in 1428, and the majority during the Wanli 萬曆 reign period (1573-1620 C.E.).⁶¹ Each copy has a drawing of White-robed Guanyin, sometimes carrying a baby but sometimes not; each has appended to it several miracle tales as witness of the efficacy of the text. Chun-fang Yu in the article “*Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang* 偽經與觀音信仰” [Apocryphal Scriptures and the Cult of Guanyin] has published four of these miracle tales, which are as follows:

- (1) Xie Zongning, the Secretariat Drafter⁶² in the Hall of Martial Eminence, was a native of Guangyang. He was the only heir of five generations. In the Jimao year during the Wanli reign period (1579), he, together with his wife Madam Gao, worshipped and upheld this scripture, printing the copies of it by themselves for free distribution. In the

⁶⁰ See Chun-fang Yu, “A Sutra Promoting the White-robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons”, in *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton: 1996), p. 98.

⁶¹ See Chun-fang Yu, “A Sutra Promoting the White-robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons”, in *Religions of China in Practice*, p. 98; “*Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang* 偽經與觀音信仰 [Apocryphal Scriptures and the Cult of Guanyin]”, in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 8, p. 121; and “Images of Kuan-yin in Chinese Folk Literature”, in *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 [Sinologist Studies] 8:1 (1990), p. 265.

Renwu year (1582), they gave birth to a son named Gu. [Then,] they gave birth to [one more] son named Ran in the Yichou year (1585) and [another two] sons named Ji and Ying in the Bingxu year (1586). All [of the sons] were doubly clad in a white placenta [at birth].

武英殿中書舍人謝從寧，廣陽人，五世單傳。萬曆己卯同妻高氏禮持，自刊經印施。至壬午生子穀，乙酉生子染，丙戌生子稷及穎，皆白衣重包。

- (2) The Marquis of Respectfulness and Obedience Wu Jijue had no son at fifty. In the Renwu year during the Wanli reign period (1582), someone granted this scripture to Marquis. [Since then,] Marquis sincerely chanted it fifty-three times every morning. At the twenty-fourth day of the tenth month of the second year, he obtained a son doubly clad in a white placenta [at birth], who was named Renshou. [The Marquis, therefore,] printed the copies of this scripture for free distribution.

恭順侯吳繼爵年五十無子，萬曆壬午有以此經授侯，侯每晨虔誦五十三遍，次年十月廿四日得一子，白衣重包，名之曰仁壽，刻經印施。

- (3) Zhang Taiming, living in Chengjia Fan (literal meaning: the farm of Cheng clan) of Macheng District in Huguang [province], had a wife, Madam Wang and a concubine, Madam Miao, but had no heir. He vowed to chant this scripture at the first day of the fourth month in the Yimao year during the Jiajing reign period (1555), and gave birth to a son doubly clad in a white placenta at the seventh day of the eighth month in the Bingchen year (1556). [Therefore,] he furthermore printed seven hundred copies of

⁶² “*Zhong shu she ren* 中書舍人” is the Secretariat Drafter, who is principally a handler of central government documents. See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, pp. 193-194.

this scripture for free distribution and chanted it five thousand and forty eight times⁶³ to give thanks for the efficacious response.

湖廣麻城縣成家畝張太名, 妻王氏, 妾繆氏, 無嗣. 於嘉靖乙卯四月一日許誦此經, 丙辰八月七日生一子, 白衣重包. 復刊施七百卷, 誦一藏酬應.

(4) The Left Mentor (*Zuo shizi* 左庶子)⁶⁴ Zhao Yongxian⁶⁵ was a native of Changshou.

His wife Madam Chang chanted this scripture very sincerely and gave birth to a daughter at the sixteenth day of the seventh month in the Bingxu year during the Wanli reign period (1586). The head, face, chest and back [of the daughter] were covered by a placenta as white as snow⁶⁶. After the midwife stripped off [the placenta], her eyebrows and eyes were then seen. Although Mentor [Zhao] had many sons, only this daughter had the efficacious manifestation of “white cloth”, that is why I recorded it.

左庶子趙用賢, 常熟人. 妻陳氏誦此經甚虔. 萬曆丙戌七月十六日生一女, 白衣如雪覆頭面及胸背, 產嫗揭去, 乃見眉目. 庶子固多男, 而此女獨有白衣之驗, 故記之.

In the four miracle tales, every protagonist paid reverence to this scripture by chanting it and printing it for free distribution, and eventually obtained a son or daughter doubly clad in a white placenta at birth. As a matter of fact, the extraordinary sign of a newborn baby being

⁶³ “One zang 一藏” is a way to count numbers. “One zang” means 5,048 times. See Chun-fang Yu's “A Sutra Promoting the White-Robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons”, in *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton: 1996), p. 101.

⁶⁴ “*Shuzi* 庶子” is the official title of Mentors, which are prefixed Left and Right. In the bureaucratic system of the Ming, there are one Left Mentor and one Right Mentor, which are heads of the two major subdivisions of the supervision of the Household of the Heir Apparent (*Zhan shi fu* 詹事府). See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, p. 437.

⁶⁵ *Ming shi* 明史 [The History of Ming] contains a biography of him. See *Ming shi*, V. 229, Biography no. 117. p-6000.

⁶⁶ The term “*Baiyi* 白衣” with original meaning as white cloth in this passage is used to indicate the white placenta.

wrapped in a white placenta is promised by this scripture to be the testimony of White-robed Guanyin's manifestation.

Master Hanshan 憨山 (1546-1623), a famous monk in the late Ming, mentioned this unusual sign in a prologue he wrote to praise and elaborate the efficacy of this scripture and Guanyin's bringing sons:

The Dharani Sutra of White-robed One actually flowed out from the inner of the great compassionate heart of our omnipresent hearer of those who call.⁶⁷ Therefore, [as long as] the good men and women in the world who suffer from lack of heirs fix their whole mind to maintain this scripture, none of their prayers is not efficaciously responded as an echo in response to a sound. Moreover, there is usually not just one response...Therefore, the living beings in this realm who desire to seek for a son will give birth to a son with good fortune, virtue and wisdom. Those who are born are all doubly clad in a white placenta to show as verification that the Great Being never deceives the living beings...⁶⁸

白衣陀羅尼經, 乃我圓通大士, 從大悲心中實際流出, 故世之善男子女人, 苦於無嗣, 志心持此, 求無不感應如響, 且往往應之者非一.....故法界眾生, 欲求男者, 誕生福德智慧之男, 生者皆白衣重胞, 以示大士不誑眾生之驗也.....

The Dharani Sutra of White-robed One (*Baiyi tuoluoni jing* 白衣陀羅尼經) is the abbreviated title of The Dharani Sutra of the Five Mudras of the Great Compassionate White-robed One. Sometimes, it is also known as The Sutra of White-robed Guanyin (*Baiyi Guanyin jing* 白衣觀音經) or White Robe Sutra (*Baiyi jing* 白衣經). Left to demonstrate that the boy is really granted by White-robed Guanyin, the white placenta symbolizes the white robe of White-

⁶⁷ See R. H. Mathews, A Chinese English Dictionary, p. 398.

robed Guanyin. In fact, Master Hanshan himself was a child brought by Guanyin. His mother, who constantly worshipped Guanyin, dreamed of Guanyin bringing a boy to her house and later gave birth to Master Hanshan, whose body was doubly wrapped by a white placenta at the moment of birth.⁶⁹

Another miracle tale claiming to be from the Tang and collected in Zhou Kefu's Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji also emphasized this miraculous sign brought by chanting this scripture, while it attempts to construct an awe-inspiring background for this scripture. This miracle tale is as follows:

During the Tang dynasty, a scholar who lived in Hengyang was old but had no son. In order to pray for a son, there was no place he did not go. [One day,] he suddenly met an old monk, who gave him a copy of The Sutra of White-robed Guanyin and said: "This sutra was preached by Buddha. If one is capable of receiving and keeping this scripture, whatever he wishes would be fulfilled, and unlimited blessings will be bestowed on him. If one desires to pray for a son, he will immediately have a boy of wisdom and with a wondrous phenomenon of being doubly clad in a white placenta [when he is born]." Therefore, he and his wife sincerely recited this scripture 5,048 times. In several years they had three sons who were actually born doubly wrapped by a white placenta. The governor of Hengyang personally witnessed this event, and then reprinted and distributed this scripture in order to seek for a son. Within one year, he had a son.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ See Tong Jung 通炯 (Ming), Hanshan laoren mengyou ji 憨山老人夢遊集 [A Collection about Elder Hanshan's Dream Journey] (Taipei: 1989) V.3, Ch.31, pp. 26-28.

⁶⁹ See Tong Jung (Ming), Hanshan laoren mengyou ji, Vol. 4, Ch.53, p. 1.

⁷⁰ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji, in Xu zang jing, V. 134. (Hong Kong: 1905). Cf. Chun-fang Yu's "Images of Guan-yin in Chinese Folk Literature", in Han Xue Yan Jiu 漢學研究 8:1 (1990), p. 266, and his another article "A Sutra Promoting the White-Robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons", in Religions of China in Practice, pp.100-101.

唐衡陽一士人, 年高無子, 祈嗣靡所不至, 忽遇老僧持白衣觀音經授之, 曰:佛說此經, 有能授持, 隨心所願, 獲福無量, 若欲求子, 即生智慧之男, 有白衣重包之異。於是夫婦竭誠誦滿一藏, 數年遂生三子, 果有白衣重包。衡陽太守親睹其事, 重爲印施, 亦以祈祠, 不逾年, 生一子。

This miracle tale illustrates the efficacious power of this scripture in granting heirs with a sign of the granted sons doubly clad in a white placenta. By relating the origin of the scripture to Buddha, this miracle tale aimed to establish the credibility of this scripture's efficacy, which is also reinforced by two stories—one is about the scholar in Hengyang and the other is about Hengyang's governor. However, to view this miracle tale as a reliable historical event requires further consideration. At first, even though the story mentioned the governor of Hengyang as a witness of the miracle, the exact date of this miracle and the names of the main character as well as the governor of Hengyang are not provided. Furthermore, this alleged Tang miracle tale was never included in any miracle tale collections before Zhou's work. Zhou claimed that this story was extracted from another miracle tale collection dedicated to this scripture, entitled Records of the Efficacy of White Robe Sutra (*Baiyi jing ji yan* 白衣經紀驗). All of these make one wonder if this miracle tale was composed to promote this White Robe Sutra. Therefore, it would be reckless to date this scripture to the Tang dynasty just based on this miracle tale.

Aside from the wondrous sign of a baby doubly clad in a white placenta, the revelation of White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons, which is exalted by the White Robe Sutra, is another significant component frequently found in miracle tales related to this scripture as proof of its unusual efficacy. The two following stories are two examples for this kind of miracle tales:

(1) During the Yuan, Wang Yu, who lived in Daning ward in Nanjing, was older than forty but had no son. In the second year of the Zhiyuan reign period, which was also the Yichou year (1265 C.E.), he saw a copy of the Sutra of White-robed Guanyin in front of the image of the household god in the house of his friend Ma Gongzhuo. He asked [his friend] where this sutra came from, and Ma replied that in the spring of the Gengshen year (1260 C.E.), the army returned and brought some people from the south to live in his house [for several days], and they left this sutra when leaving. Yu then took this sutra home and kept chanting it without indolence. At the fourteenth night of the fourth month in the Dingmao year (1267 C.E.), his mother-in-law, Madam Liu, dreamt of a person in white who wore a golden crown and brought a boy to come to tell her, "I am coming to deliver a holy slave (*Shengnu*) to you." Liu accepted this baby and suddenly woke up. The next morning, Wang's wife, Madam Zhang, gave birth to a son, who was handsome and wrapped in white placenta. They named him Slave of the Holy Monk (*Sheng seng nu*), and then, this couple vowed to print five hundred copies of this sutra for free distribution to reward Guan-yin for bringing them a son.⁷¹

元南京大寧坊王玉，年踰四十，無子。至元二年乙丑，於友人馬公酌家神前見白衣觀音經。問此經何來，馬云庚申春大軍還擄帶南人止宿本家，遺下而去。玉取回專心持誦不怠。丁卯歲四月十四夜，岳母劉氏夢白衣人頭戴金冠，攜一童子來曰，吾送聖奴來。劉氏抱接，恍然而寤。明日巳時，妻張氏生一男，神氣聳秀，果有白衣之異，即名子曰聖僧奴。夫婦遂發願刊施五百卷以酬抱送之恩。

⁷¹ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), *Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134. (Hong Kong: 1905). Cf. Chun-fang Yu's "A Sutra Promoting the White-Robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons", in *Religions of China in Practice*, p.101.

(2) Li Qing in the Office of Scrutiny for Justice⁷² in the Ming, whose style name (*zi*) was Xinshui, was a native of Guangling. At first, he had a son, but [the son] died due to smallpox. Li's mother Madam Jiang could not stop lamenting [for the child's death] and chanted the Sutra of White-robed Guanyin every day to pray for an heir on behalf of her son. Soon, Xinshui went to Shaoxing for investigation. [One night,] he dreamt of a lady who held a son entered the room. The son's face had scabs left by smallpox, which seemed to cure and would scale off soon. She told Xinshui, saying: "Like a cloud, like the moon." [Then,] Xinshui awoke and wondered about it. After he got up in the morning, someone just [visited him] and gave him a piece of embroidery of Guanyin who holding a son just like his dream. The embroidery had a poem, which began with the sentence "Colorful clouds, surrounded fragrance and the tides among the sea and sky" and ended with the sentence "There are also red flowers of cassias adrift in [the light of] the moon". These two sentences just matched the two words—cloud and moon. At that time, Xinshui's wife got pregnant. She really gave birth to a son.⁷³

明刑科李清，字心水，廣陵人，初有一子，痘殤，母姜安人追悼不已，日誦白衣觀音經爲子祈嗣。未幾，心水查盤紹興，夢一婦人抱兒入室，面帶痘痂，似將愈而落者，語心水云：「如雲如月。」覺而異之。晨起，適某生贈以繡觀音抱兒如夢，上題一詩，起有彩雲香繞海天潮，未有還來丹桂月中飄之句，恰應雲月二字，時夫人甫孕，果生子。

⁷² "*Xing ke* 刑科" is the Office of Scrutiny for Justice, which was one of the Six Offices of Scrutiny (*Liu ke* 六科) and was staffed with Supervising Secretaries (*Ji shi zhong* 給事中) who principally monitored the functioning of the Ministry of Justice (*Xi bu* 刑部). See Charles O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, p. 245.

⁷³ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji, in Xu zang jing, V. 134. (Hong Kong: 1905), p. 491

In the first tale, Guanyin is depicted to present herself as a white-robed person wearing a golden crown to bring a boy to the protagonist's mother-in-law in a dream, and the newborn boy doubly clad in a white placenta is also a part of its plot. In the second story, Guanyin is said to be a lady who brought a boy to the protagonist in his dream. The miraculous part of the second story is also seen in that the scabs of the baby's face in the protagonist's dream, which was just like the face of his dead son. In addition, the sentence Guanyin said in the dream is another sign of Guanyin's real manifestation, and her real guarantee of granting a son. Both of the descriptions about Guanyin in these two tales depict the most common images of Guanyin Who Brings Sons under the influence of the White Robe Sutra. Whether the description of Guanyin's manifestation was alone or combined with other plots, such as "doubly clad in a white placenta", its purpose is to prove the reliability of this scripture.

Another thing about the two miracle tales worth our attention is that in both stories, the wives' pregnancy happened earlier than Guanyin's real presence in dreams. It suggests the impropriety of regarding this divinity as a goddess of engendering pregnancy. As a matter of fact, the White-robed Guanyin under the promotion of the White Robe Sutra is meant to be an heir giver, instead of a fertility causer. While getting pregnant does not guarantee the arrival of heirs, these dreams indicate Guanyin's commitment of granting sons. Therefore, in a miracle tale about Guanyin Who Brings Sons, whether the pregnancy or a manifestation dream comes first does not decrease Guanyin's miraculous power of granting sons.

Different from the Universal Gateway chapter, which promises to grant both sons and daughters, the White Robe Sutra emphasizes sons, even though one miracle tale I quoted before did mention the arrival of a daughter doubly clad in a white placenta brought by worshipping this scripture sincerely. Its emphasis on sons is probably influenced by the traditional Chinese family concept, which prefers sons to daughters, for sons can continue

family lines but daughters will be married out. Therefore, Master Hanshan's comment and the miracle tale of a Tang scholar only singled out its efficacy in bringing sons while introducing the White Robe Sutra, and in other relevant miracle tales what the believers usually prayed for were sons only.

Although the time of the White Robe Sutra's composition cannot be determined, the background of this scripture is illuminated by other sources. A stele engraved with the text of this scripture and the image of White-robed Guanyin carrying a child on her lap attributed to Qin Guan 秦觀 (1049-1100 C.E.), a notable literatus in Song, has survived.⁷⁴ This inscription is dated to 1082 C.E., which indicates that this scripture was in circulation by the early eleventh century. The text of this scripture consists of five parts: the mantra which purifies the karma of the mouth, the mantra which pacifies the earth, the sutra-opening gatha, the invocation and the dharani. When Yuan Huang 袁黃 (1533-1606 C.E.), a literatus in Ming, wrote his work entitled Qisi zhenquan 祈嗣真詮 [True Instructions for Praying for an Heir] to help those lacking heirs, he arranged chanting or paying homage to this scripture as the tenth way of obtaining heirs, and identified the dharani part of this scripture to be another dharani in the Buddhist canon. This identical dharani is named The Dharani Comforting to the Heart's Desire (*Suixin tuoluoni* 隨心陀羅尼), which was translated into Chinese by Zhikong 智空 in the Tang and is elaborated in a Buddhist scripture called The Dharani Sutra Comforting to the Heart's Desire of Bodhisattva Guanzizai Damo duola (*Guanzizai pusa damo duola suixin tuoluoni jing* 觀自在菩薩怛𑖀𑖦多唎隨心陀羅尼經)⁷⁵. After a brief introduction about the origin of this dharani, Yuan quoted the instructions of worshipping the

⁷⁴ See Figure 5, from Lidai minghua Guanyin baoxiang 歷代名畫觀音寶像 [Honorable Images of Guanyin in Famous Paintings of Each Dynasty] (Nanjing:1981), V.2, no.144; Chun-fang Yu, "A Sutra Promoting the White-robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons", in Religions of China in Practice, p. 98, and "Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang 偽經與觀音信仰", in Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal 8, p. 121.

dharani from Zhikong's work, such as the ways of chanting it, setting up the image, setting the altar, and hand gestures, to let his readers to follow.⁷⁶ In Zhou Kefu's *Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji*, this scripture was also compiled into the Guanyin-related texts before the section on miracle tales. Therefore, we can know that in early Qing, this scripture was continuously in circulation.

Aside from the *White Robe Sutra*, another indigenous scripture also contributed to the popularity of White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons. Its full title is *The Divine Mantra of White-robed Guanyin* (*Baiyi Guanyin shenzhou* 白衣觀音神咒) or *The Divine Mantra of White-robed Great Being* (*Baiyi dashi shenzhou* 白衣大士神咒). It was also circulated under another shortened title as *The Divine Mantra of White Robe* (*Baiyi shenzhou* 白衣神咒). This scripture claimed its efficacy in causing a son's arrival, and its copies are still widely printed for free distribution by its devotees in the present day. This scripture is not incorporated into the Buddhist Canon, and its origin is as obscure as the *White Robe Sutra*. According to a miracle tale recorded in Wang Gong 王鞏's (fl. 1048-1104 C.E.) *Wen jian jin lu* 聞見近錄 [Records of Things Heard and Seen Recently], nineteen words of the Mantra had appeared in the Northern Song.⁷⁷ Except for the last sentence—*Nanmo mohe bore poluomi* 南無摩訶般若

⁷⁵ See *Taisho shinshu daizokuyou*, V.20, no.1103b, pp. 0463b-0464a, pp. 0470b-1047b.

⁷⁶ See Yuan Huang 袁黃 (Ming), *Qisi zhenquan* 祈嗣真詮, in *Baibu congshu jicheng chu bian* 百部叢書集成初編 [The First Compilation to Completely Gather a Hundred Collections of Reprinted Works], V.90. Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965.

⁷⁷ The translation of these nineteen words is "Gods in heaven, gods on earth, people depart from disasters, disasters depart from the body, all evils be reduced to dust" (*Tian Luo Shen, Di Luo Shen, Ren Li Nan, Nan Li Shen, Yi Qie Zai Yang Hua Wei Chen* 天羅神, 地羅神, 人離難, 難離身, 一切災殃化為塵). In research for the origin of these nineteen words, Wang Jun in *Guanyin ling yi ji* says, "Once I read Wang Gong's *Wen jian jin lu*, which records a story: Zhu Daocheng's wife, Madam Wang, chanted the *Heart Mantra of Guanyin in Ten Sentences* (*shi ju Guanyin xin zhou* 十句觀音心咒) everyday. At forty-nine years old, she was seriously ill. [Once] in semi-consciousness, she saw a person in green who told her 'You constantly chanted the *Heart Mantra of Guanshiyin*, but the Mantra missed nineteen words. If you added them, your life span would be benefited.' Then, [this person in green] taught her the five phrases [containing the nineteen words.] She woke up and was recovered from her illness. Later, she lived till seventy-nine years of age. Therefore, these five phrases were known to people in the Northern Song." See Wang Gong, *Wen jian jin lu*, P. 33b-34a, in *Zhi bu zu zhai cong shu* 知不足齋叢書 [A Collection of Books Reprinted by the Study "Knowing Insufficiency"], edited by Bao Tingbo 鮑廷博 (Taipei:

波羅蜜 [Homage to great wisdom by which one can cross over from this shore of births and deaths to the other shore of nirvana]⁷⁸, the whole Mantra of White Robe we presently read had already been widely circulated in the early Qing.⁷⁹ Promising to fulfill the wish of having heirs, this scripture has been popularly disseminated among those who desire sons till today, and the image of White-robed Guanyin exalted by it has been further rooted into people's mind. However, granting sons is not the only matter this Mantra promises to deal with. For its believers, chanting this Mantra can solve all kinds of troubles and also satisfy all kinds of wishes.

Even though the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons has been popularly believed to be a lady in white, White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons is not the only iconography of this form of Guanyin. Infused with artists' imagination, the images of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in paintings and sculptures are not uniform, but each one has its own characteristics. As for miracle tales, the most common depiction of Guanyin Who Brings Sons found in these tales is as an old lady, but the appearance of the old lady in each miraculous story is varied. Sometimes the lady is described to be in white, but sometimes not. In a miracle tale about the life of an eminent Qing monk, named Zhongzan 中贊 (?-1729 C.E.), the Guanyin who manifested herself to his mother Madam Luo in her dream is even described to be an old lady carrying a fish basket. After the old lady left a carp for her, Madam Luo awoke from her dream and became pregnant. Later, she gave birth to Master Zhongzan.⁸⁰ The image of a lady carrying a fish basket in this miracle tale is obviously derived from the legend of Guanyin with

1921), Vol. 2, p. 1188. Also see Chun-Fang Yu, "Images of Kuan-yin in Chinese Folk Literature" in *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 8:1, p. 264, and "Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang 偽經與觀音信仰", in *Chung-Hua Buddhist Journal* 8, p. 122.

⁷⁸ This sentence is the last phrase of the Mantra in the booklets or little cards free distributed in the present days. However, this phrase did not exist before the early years of the Republic.

⁷⁹ The *Lidai minghua Guanyin baoxiang* has several Qing paintings with this sutra, which does not have this sentence. See Figure 6.

a Fish Basket, a popular folklore story about Guanyin. The combination of Guanyin's ability of bringing sons and the image of Guanyin with a Fish Basket perfectly serves as an example to explain that the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons is not confined to a white-robed lady in her believers' minds. Learning about Guanyin or Guanyin Who Brings Sons from different sources, every believer's knowledge about her is different. As a result, it is normal to see diversified images of Guanyin Who Brings Sons preserved in different people's mind. And each source about Guanyin, including Buddhist scriptures, indigenous scriptures, artists' creations, popular literature, and miracle tales, all makes its contribution to shape the numerous images of Guanyin Who Brings Sons.

B. The Practices of Praying to Guanyin for Sons

In addition to the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons, miracle tales about her also provide abundant information about the ways her devotees employed to pray for a son. These practices can be basically classified in two groups. In the first group are practices to convey the devotees' faith in this divinity and to propagandize her cult. Painting her images, modeling her statues, building altars or shrines dedicated to her, paying homage to her iconography, chanting scriptures about her, and printing the scripture copies for free distribution are all included in this category. The second group is the category of benevolence: to conduct oneself with morality, integrity and kindness as well as to do things beneficial to others.

The best example of painting Guanyin's image to pray for heirs is the miracle tale of Zhai Ji in the Song, which we discussed previously⁸¹. He drew a painting of Guanyin and prayed to it everyday. Later, his wife received a dream response from Guanyin, and they

⁸⁰ See Wang Hengyan 王亨彦, *Putuo luoguo xinzhì* 普陀洛迦新志 [The New Gazetteer of Potalaka], Ch. 6, p.

eventually obtained a son. As for building a Guanyin shrine or altar, there is an early Qing story concerning a person named Tan Xianqing 譚憲卿. This story, originally from *Xian guo sui lu*, is as follows:

In Changshou, Tan Xianqing, whose *hao* 號 was Fufong and whose family was quite rich, did not have a son after the prime of his life had passed. The whole clan said they wanted to divide his property, which made Xianqing furious. He took an oath, saying: “I would rather cultivate how to give up my property to make myself completely poor than let those people divide and distribute it.” Therefore, he donated five thousand catties of silver in order to establish a Confessional Altar of Great Compassion. After Xuanmu (assumed to be a place’s name) was selected by divination [to be the place to build the altar, he went there and] saw that the land behind the Hall of Brahmaloaka was spacious and faced a lake, which made its scenery beautiful beyond description. Therefore, he explained his wish to the Elder Poshi. The Elder gave him his permission, so he built the floor with scented cement to create an exquisite and beautiful Confessional Altar. As soon as the altar finished, he followed the master who led a confessional ritual to worship for forty-nine days and nights. That year when he came home, his concubine gave birth to a son, whose placenta was all white. His wife, Madam something, who never gave birth, also resolved to donate a thousand catties of silver to build a White Robe Hall in Xuanmu. She made a wish, saying: “If I can also give birth, it will be the demonstration of the Great Being [of Guanyin]’s efficacy.” Soon, she also gave birth to a son, whose placenta was as white as that of the first son.

14a.

⁸¹ See the section A of Chapter 2 in this essay, pp.13-14.

Presently, both of the brothers are taking the first degree in the chief college of the state^{82 83}.

常熟譚憲卿，號扶風，家頗厚，年過壯無子，合族聲言欲來析產，憲卿大恨，立誓曰：

「吾寧修捨到赤貧，決不爲若輩分析。」乃資五千金，欲興大悲懺壇，卜至玄墓，見梵天閣後地敞面湖，景致絕勝，乃陳願于剖石老人，老人許之，遂以香泥築地，創成精麗懺壇。壇就，隨懺師禮四十九晝夜，是年回家，側室生一子，衣胞皆白，元配某氏素不生產，亦發心捐千金，建一白衣閣于玄墓，立願云：「若我亦得生育，即大士有靈矣。」未幾，亦生一子，胞白如初，今伯仲皆遊頻焉。

Both Tan Xianqing and his wife contributed to build an altar or hall to worship Guanyin, and both of them really had their wishes of having a son satisfied. Both creating a shrine and drawing a picture dedicated to Guanyin are fundamentally for the purpose of worshipping Guanyin's image. The efficacy of praying to Guanyin's image for a son is furthermore illustrated in the following miracle tale:

Chan Master Baojin (a monk in late Yuan⁸⁴), whose *hao* was Bifeng, was a native of Yongshou (in today's Shanxi province⁸⁵). The surname of his clan was Shi. His father was known as an honorable elder, and his mother, Madam Zhang, diligently participated in benevolence without weariness. [Once,] a monk holding an alms-bowl granted a Guanyin image to Madam Zhang, bidding her: "Worship it carefully, and you shall give birth to an intelligent son." Soon, Master [Baojin] was born. At the moment of birth, white lights shone the room.⁸⁶

⁸² "Pan 頻", equal to "pan 泮", means the chief college of a state, and "You pan 遊頻" means to take the first or bachelor's degree. See Herbert A. Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary* (London: 1912), pp. 1059-1060.

⁸³ See Shi Jiexian (Ming), *Xian guo sui lu*, no. 42, p. 34.

⁸⁴ See Wan Jun, *Guanyin lingyi ji*, pp. 112-113, and Nie Yuntai, *Guanyin jing zhou linggan lugao*, p. 195.

⁸⁵ See Wan Jun, *Guanyin lingyi ji*, pp. 112-113.

⁸⁶ See Shi Hongzan (Ming), *Guanyin ci li ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V. 149, p. 320.

寶金禪師，號璧峰，永壽人。族姓石，父稱長者，母張氏，勤善弗倦。有持鉢僧，以觀音像授張，囑曰，謹事之，當生智慧之男。未幾生師，白光照室。

The instruction given by the monk clearly pointed out the efficacy of the Guanyin image granted to Madam Zhang. The consequent birth of Master Baojin, accompanied with an extraordinary sign, also supported the reliability of its efficacy.

In regard to the recitation, printing and free distribution of scriptures about Guanyin, the Universal Gateway chapter of Lotus Sutra, the whole Lotus Sutra, Great Compassion Dharani (*Da bei zhou* 大悲咒), Heart Sutra, Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao (*Gao Wang Guanshiyin jing* 高王觀世音經), The Divine Mantra of White-robed Guanyin, and The Dharani Sutra of the Five Mudras of the Great Compassionate White-robed One are the scriptures we frequently see in miracle tales about Guanyin as the granter of sons. We have already discussed the Universal Gateway chapter of Lotus Sutra, The Divine Mantra of White-robed Guanyin, and The Dharani Sutra of the Five Mudras of the Great Compassionate White-robed One in the preceding pages. Each of them claims credit for the power of bringing sons and has enjoyed great popularity among those who long for an heir through dynasties.

As for the other three scriptures, Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao is generally believed to be an indigenous Chinese Buddhist apocrypha, even though it is collected into the Buddhist canon along with the other two scriptures.⁸⁷ According to Japanese Scholar Makita Tairyō's studies, its emergence and promulgation, which can be dated back to the sixth century, was tightly connected with a miracle tale that happened in the era of Eastern Wei 東魏 (534-550 C.E.).⁸⁸ The main character of this tale is Lu Jingyu 盧景裕 (?-542 C.E.), who was put into

⁸⁷ See Chung-feng Yu, "Wei jing yu Guanyin xinyang", in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 8, pp.103, 104, 106-116, and Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, "Gikyou kenkyu 疑經研究 [A Study of Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha]", trans. by Yang Baiyi 楊白衣, in *Hua gang foxue xuebao* 華岡佛學佛報 [Hua Gang Buddhist Journal], pp. 284-306.

⁸⁸ See Makita Tairyō, "Gikyou kenkyu", trans. by Yang Baiyi 楊白衣, in *Huagang foxue xuebao*, pp. 284-306.

jail due to getting implicated in a rebellion against the authoritative Prime Minister Gao Huan 高歡. In prison, Lu wholeheartedly chanted the Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao, and one day, his shackles suddenly loosened by themselves. Because of this stunning miracle, Lu was released from prison and this scripture began to be disseminated.⁸⁹ The term “King Gao” in the title of the scripture, therefore, refers to Gao Huan, who later founded the kingdom of Northern Qi 北齊 (550-559 C.E.). Another miracle tale concerning the origin of this scripture is a story of Sun Jingde 孫敬德, a contemporary figure of Lu. Lying in prison, Sun was taught this scripture by a monk in a dream, so that he started to recite it for a thousand times. Later, when Sun was sent for execution, the knife suddenly broke as soon as it touched Sun’s neck. The executioner changed his knife three times, but the same miracle continued to happen.⁹⁰ As a result, Sun got released from both death and prison.

Having prestige for rescuing people from prison, this scripture at first was not distinguished for bringing sons. From relevant miracle tales, it is in the late Ming or early Qing that this scripture began to be widely chanted by devotees for human fertility matters. Its fame for granting sons appeared to be built up later than The Dharani Sutra of the Five Mudras of the Great Compassionate White-robed One. For the purpose of propagation, therefore, sometimes miracle tales centered on the Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao would challenge the efficacy of the White Robe Sutra to make its own strength outstanding, which can be perceived in the following narrative:

Xu Jin in Hui region prayed for an heir. He dreamt of a deity, telling him: “It is quite nice of you to constantly recite White Robe Sutra. [However,] if you can also

⁸⁹ See Li Yanshou 李延壽 (Tang), Bei shi 北史 [History of the Northern Dynasties], V. 30, Liezhuàn 列傳 [Biographies] no.18, p. 1099. Also, see Li Fang (Song), Taiping guang ji, in the second volume of Biji xiaoshuo daguan, Vol. 102. However, instead of the Guanyin Sutra of King Gao, the scripture Lu Jingyu chanted in the tale of the Li’s book is the Diamond Sutra.

sincerely recite Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao for 5,048 times [in addition to the White Robe Sutra], you can obtain an heir [for sure].” Jin followed the deity's words and really got a son. Later, he again had a dream of the deity who he dreamt of before. This deity told him: “if you can widely offer convenience to people and distribute 5,048 copies of the Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao, this son can become honored and brilliant.” Jin followed these instructions to print and distribute the copies, and his son actually passed the civil service examination sequence.⁹¹

徽州徐錦求嗣，夢一神人告之曰：“汝常誦白衣經咒甚善，若再能虔誦高王觀世音經一藏，可獲嗣矣。”錦如言，果得子，後又夢見前此所夢之神人，語之曰，“汝能廣行方便，并印施高王觀世音經一藏，此兒可貴顯矣。”錦如言印施，子果登第。

Instead of directly criticizing the efficacy of White Robe Sutra in respect of bringing sons, this story implicitly suggests the more efficacious power of the Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao by subtly arranging a comparison between these two scriptures, spoken by a deity. Even though the information of the deity's image and other details are not given by the story, the deity's manifestation does make the judgment about the two scriptures look more convincing. In addition to bringing sons, the Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao also emphasizes its power of guaranteeing a prosperous future for the granted son.

Similar to the Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao, Great Compassion Dharani and Heart Sutra were not frequently recited for the purpose of praying for a son until the Ming. Transmitted to China during the Tang as two significant scriptures disclosing Guanyin's teachings, both of them do not have any immediate connection with Guanyin's efficacy of

⁹⁰ Daoxuan 道宣 (Tang), Xu gaoseng zhuan 續高僧傳 [The Continuation of the Biographies of Eminent Monks], in Taisho shinshu daizokuyou, V. 50, p. 692c-693a, and Li Fang (Song), Taiping guang ji, V. 111.

⁹¹ See Wan Jun, Guanyin lingyi ji, pp. 114-115. According to Wan, this story is originally extracted from an out-of-print late Ming or early Qing work Nan hai ci hang 南海慈航 [The Compassionate Navigator of Southern Sea], whose author is Chu Chongzhi 褚崇志.

giving sons. Nevertheless, ever since Guanyin's reputation of bringing sons was established through the demonstration of numerous miracle tales and the propagation of other scriptures, chanting most Guanyin-related scriptures, including these two scriptures, has been deemed to have similar effect in terms of receiving a response from Guanyin. In addition, the Great Compassion Dharani and Heart Sutra both are quite short in length, easy to recite and circulate. As a result, both of them were increasingly chanted for obtaining a son.

Reciting these Guanyin related scriptures is a means to call on Guanyin's manifestation for assistance and to show her devotees' sincerity. Some of the devotees may choose only one scripture to recite, some may recite two or three scriptures at the same period, and the other may chant the name of Guanyin only. Some of them chant scriptures everyday, but some do the recitation only on the first and the fifteenth day of every month. As for distributing copies of scriptures for free, it is not only regarded as another channel to show the sincerity and kindness of the devotees but also a very important way to promote teachings about Guanyin. The more copies of scriptures are put into circulation, the more access people may have to read them and learn about Guanyin from them. However, the quantity of the scripture copies printed by different devotees is varied. It depends on the individual economic situation of devotees.

While the first group of practices concerning praying for a son to Guanyin is Guanyin belief oriented, the second group is not that directly related to this cult. However, the importance of the second group in the respect of praying for an heir is not less than the first. The practices in the second group are the fundamental behavior standards one should observe to benefit his family, neighborhood, and society and to attain his personal moral perfection. Once a person makes up his mind to pray to Guanyin for a son, the first thing he should do is to refine his conduct to be in line with all kinds of virtues. On this moral basis, he can then fix

his mind on Guanyin and undertake other practices of worshipping her, because morality is Guanyin's basic teaching. Nevertheless, this is an elementary level of committing benevolence and righteousness. For the advanced level, one should sincerely do kindness without expecting or thinking of its retributive rewards. Thus, bliss will automatically be bestowed on this person without seeking for it. The following two miracle tales serve as the best examples of sincerely doing goodness:

- (1) Zhang Qing, a resident of Bianjing in the Song, worked as a jailer in the Xiangfu reign period (1008-1016 C.E.). He constantly maintained kindness and carefulness in his mind. [Every] morning when he began [to work], he cleaned up the excessive filth [in cells]. In the months of summer, he was especially diligent [in doing so]. He would always make food, soup, medicine and bedding clean. He constantly instructed his apprentices, saying: "It is a tragic for a person to undergo [the punishment of] the laws. If we do not sympathize with them, where can those who suffer punishment get any joy?" He constantly maintained reciting the Lotus Sutra. Whenever a criminal with heavy penalty was sent for execution, he would always keep a fast and recite scripture without stop for a month. He ever taught prisoners to confess their sins if they had any, and not to falsely accuse good people and so increase their own sins. At the age of forty-eight, his wife, Madam Yuan, contracted a disease. After having passed away for three days, she suddenly recovered consciousness and said: "At first I arrived at a filthy place. Thinking of having a clean and fresh place, I suddenly saw White-robed Great Being, who told me: 'you are not supposed to be here. In addition, you have not had an heir yet. Your husband has [accumulated] much unostentatious virtue, so his descendants should be prosperous.' Then, [the White-robed Great Being] led her out with her hand, and she accordingly revived. The next year, [Qing] gave birth to a son,

named Heng, who [later] attained the official position of the Attendant of the Three Ranks⁹². Qing passed away at the age of eighty-two without contracting any disease, and his six grandsons were all in honorable official positions.⁹³

宋汴京張慶，祥符中爲司獄，常以慈慎自持，晨興掃除濫穢，暑月尤勤，飲食湯藥臥具必加精潔，每戒其徒曰：「人不幸罹於法，我輩若不憐恤，受罪者何從赴訴耶？」生平持誦法華經，每遇重犯就戮，必爲齋素誦經一月乃止。嘗教獄囚有罪當自認，毋誣良善以重己孽。妻袁氏年四十八染疫，死三日忽甦曰：「我始至一穢所，思得清涼處，忽見白衣大士謂曰：『汝不當至此，且尙未有嗣，汝夫多陰德，子孫當有興者。』」乃以手挈之而出，遂得甦。明年生子亨，官三班借職。慶年八十二無疾而終，六孫皆顯仕。

(2) The Seals Officer⁹⁴ Yan Zheng, a native of Changshou in the Ming, had a style name Daoche and was the second son of the Senior Wenjing (His name was Yan Na 嚴訥⁹⁵). He was thirty but had no sons. A fortuneteller ever predicted that he had difficulty in having heirs. He had two concubines, who were not selected for their beauty. [In fact,] both of them looked plain and ugly. [Thus,] people frequently laughed at him. Once he visited his relatives by marriage, he saw a maid who reached marriageable age⁹⁶ but still did not wear long hair. He asked his owner for the reason, and the owner said that she would eventually become a disabled person due to her dumbness. With sympathy,

⁹² "San ban 三班" is the prestige title awarded to officials of rank 9b in Song, mainly those in military service. See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, p. 400.

⁹³ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), *Guanyin jing zhou chi yan ji*, in *Xu zhang jing*, V. 134, p.486.

⁹⁴ "Shangbao 尚寶" is a Ming official position in the Seals Office (*Shangbao si* 尚寶司), an autonomous agency of the central government headed by a Chief Minister and charged with the monitoring of a large number of seals, tallies, and stamps used by the Emperor, each having special and specified uses. See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, pp. 409-410.

⁹⁵ See Chang Tingyu 張廷玉 (Qing), *Ming shi* 明史 [The History of Ming], V.193, *Liezhuan* 列傳 [Biographies] no. 81.

he said: "Make her wear the long hair. I will marry her." His relative's family dared not to believe this, so Daoshe made an appointment with them. In the next year, he really married this girl. Hearing of this, Wenjing happily said, "What my son did is in line with the principles of the heaven. He will definitely have descendants." [Later,] all of his three concubines gave birth to sons. Daoche constantly recited the White Robe Dharani and firmly observed abstinence from killing. When he obtained sons, the sons frequently have the unusual sign of being doubly wrapped in placenta. Afterwards, his descendants were multitudinous and prosperous, constantly attaining high official positions. Indeed, this resulted from his profound virtue.⁹⁷

明常熟嚴尙寶徵，字道徹，文靖公仲子，年三十無子，日者推爲艱嗣，置兩妾，俱不選色，容質朴陋，人爭笑之，偶過姻家，見一侍女，年及笄，未蓄髮，問其主，云以瘡故，終成癰人，道徹惻然曰：「第令蓄髮，吾將娶之。」其姻家未敢信，道徹即爲申約，踰年果納焉。文靖聞之，喜云：「吾兒所行允合天道，必有後繼。」三妾皆生子，道徹素誦白衣陀羅尼，且堅持不殺戒，凡舉子多重胞之異，後子姓繁昌，青雲接踵，誠厚德所培也。

In the first story, Zhang Qing's benevolence toward the prisoners brought him great earthly bliss—having a son and six grandsons with remarkable prosperity. Partly because the bliss Zhang deserved had not arrived yet, White-robed Great Being saved his wife from death in order to make his felicity come true. In the second story, Yan Daoche's compassion toward the dumb maid and his rejection of beautiful women gained him moral merits. Combined with his practices of reciting the White Robe Dharani and not killing, his moral virtues not only transformed his destiny of having no sons but also resulted in the prosperity of his

⁹⁶ "Ji 笄" is a hairpin on which the hair is bound at the back of the head. It also means fifteen years of age. See R. H. Mathews, A Chinese-English Dictionary, p. 53.

descendants. It is noteworthy that praying for heirs or the prosperity of the descendants was not the purpose for Zhang and Yan to act with kindness and righteousness. It is that the resultant bliss was automatically bestowed on them due to their unselfish compassion while acting virtuously. However, in some miracle tales about praying for sons, the main characters' benevolent behavior usually aims at the grant of sons.

No matter which previous practices the faithful take to pray to Guanyin for a son, their sincerity and determination are always the main concern. Although the sincerity and determination of praying to Guanyin are revealed in their persistence of undertaking any of the previous practices, such as constantly reciting scripture or getting involved into charity affairs, taking a vow is usually a formal way to announce their commitment in praying to her at the initiation of their practices. Miracle tales of the Ming and Qing frequently contain the plot of a devotee who takes a vow to print certain copies of a certain scripture and to distribute them free of charge so as to seek for a son from Guanyin. As a matter of fact, the content of such a vow is the price one would like to pay in order to demonstrate his or her sincerity, so it is very flexible and entirely depends on the devotees' will and economic situation. While some devotees vow to print several thousands copies of scripture, others may promise to print a hundred copies only. Aside from printing and distributing copies of scripture, chanting the name of Guanyin for certain times, keeping a lifelong fast, making a pilgrimage to Guanyin's pilgrimage centers, persistently participating in benevolent activities, and so on, can also be the content of vows. Once a person takes a vow, this vow taker is obligated to fulfill his or her words before or after Guanyin has satisfied his or her wish of obtaining a son. According to some miracle tales, if one fails to fulfill his or her oath,

⁹⁷ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), *Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134, p. 490.

punishment will be inflicted on him or her. Such punishments are exemplified by the following two stories:

- (1) In the fourth year of the Xuande reign period (1429 C.E.), Zhang Gui, who lived in Zhangde Prefecture (*fu*), followed the King of Huai to go to his kingdom. In Guangdong, he obtained a copy of White Robe Sutra. After six years, Zhang went back to his hometown. Together with his wife Madam Tian, he vowed to distribute the copies of this sutra free of charge in order to seek for a son. Soon, he got a son, but he did not fulfill his vow of distributing sutras [after having this son]. At the age of twelve, the son suddenly became ill and died. [Thus,] the couple felt heartbroken and regretted this very much. They burned incense, prayed with great sincerity, and distributed one thousand five hundred copies of this sutra free of charge. In the second month of the Dingsi year (1437 C.E.), they again had a son. The efficacy of keeping [faith on] this sutra was as outstanding as this.⁹⁸

宣德四年，彰德府張貴隨淮王之國，於廣東得白衣經。六年歸里，偕妻田氏發心施經求嗣，未幾得男，經願未酬，十二歲忽病故。夫婦痛心追悔，焚香虔禱，施經一千五百卷，丁巳二月復生一子，持驗彰彰如是。

- (2) In the Jiaqing reign period of the Qing (1796-1820 C.E.), there was a person named Yang Adong. His son tended to be ill, so Yang recalled that before his son's birth, he promised in his mind to make four hundred copies of scriptures, but he had not yet fulfilled his promise. Therefore, he repented in front of an image of Guanyin and immediately made copies of scriptures for free distribution. As soon as he did so, his son recovered from his illness.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), *Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134, p. 491.

⁹⁹ See Xu Zhijung, *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song* (Taipei: 1979), p. 49.

清嘉慶間楊阿棟，子多疾，因憶兒未生時，心許刻經四百卷，未了願，懺悔於大士前，即日梓經施送，疾旋愈。

Bound by their contract-like vows but failing to fulfill them, the protagonists in the two stories could not have their wishes satisfied perfectly. In the first story, the granted son died, and in the second story, the penalty is the granted son's illness. Only after repenting of their negligence and compensating for it by fulfilling their previous promises, the couple in the first story obtained a son again, and the son of the main character in the second story recovered.

This kind of punishment will also be inflicted on those who once fixed faith in Guanyin when they relied on her efficacy of bringing sons, but lost their sincerity afterwards:

Zou Lu, a native of Lingchuan in the Qing, recited the Guanyin Sutra with great sincerity during the Yongzheng reign period (1723-1725 C.E.) and [then] had two sons. [After having two sons,] he privately considered that the birth of his two sons might not have been caused by the power of Bodhisattva, and his faith [in Guanyin] gradually loosened. [After that,] his two sons suddenly died, and he felt regret [for his losing faith in Guanyin.] He wholeheartedly prayed to Guanyin and vowed to distribute copies of the scripture for free. [Afterwards,] his wife had a dream in which White-robed Guanyin with a smiling face put a child on her bed. The next day, she gave birth to a son. After several years, she had the same dream, and then gave birth to a son again.¹⁰⁰

清臨川鄒魯，雍正間虔誦觀音經，生二子，私謂未必菩薩力，心漸弛，二子忽夭，乃悔悟，虔禱大士，矢願施經。妻夢白衣大士笑容可掬，抱一孩置榻，次日生子，歲餘如夢又生一子。

¹⁰⁰ See Xu Zhijing, *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song*, p. 46.

The skeptical attitude of a former Guanyin's follower not only expresses his insincerity to Guanyin. It also is a libel on Guanyin's efficacy, which will shake other Guanyin believers' faith and restrain her potential followers from further understanding and belief. Therefore, the sin it causes is much more serious than the negligence in the respect of not fulfilling one's vow. That is the reason why the protagonist in this story lost his two sons. To atone for this sin, sincere repentance is the only solution. By doing so, the protagonist eventually had another son granted by Guanyin.

Since many devotees vowed to print copies of scriptures and distribute them free of charge, printing copies of scriptures for free distribution seems to gradually have become a basic requirement to demonstrate son-seekers' piety to Guanyin in relevant miracle tales. In many miracle tales, their content is as simple as that a devotee who printed certain copies of a certain scripture actually obtained a son as a reward for his devotion. This kind of story outline elucidates the importance of making copies of scriptures for free distribution in the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons. The following story is one of the miracle tales of such a story structure:

In the Qing, Cha Bangyue, a native of Wuyuan, had no son. His nephew persuaded him to recite the Guanyin Sutra and also try his best to make copies of this sutra for free distribution. [The nephew told him that once he did this, this scripture's efficacy of bringing sons] would definitely be verified. Therefore, in the Xingchou year during the Kangxi reign period (1681 C.E.), Cha and his wife chanted this sutra together. [Later,] they had two sons, but both of them died before growing up. Cha felt regret for not printing and distributing copies of this scripture free of charge, so he vowed to distribute three thousand copies of this scripture free of charge. Then, he gave birth to

a son, named Fouci (given by Buddha). After he fulfilled his vow by printing copies of this scripture, his son eventually grew up.¹⁰¹

清婺源查邦鉞無子，其姪勸誦觀音經，更竭力印送必驗。遂於康熙辛酉，夫婦同誦，生子二，然不育，自悔未印送，發願送三千卷，生子名佛賜，印經願酬，子獲長成。

In this story, the protagonist did not vow to print copies of this scripture for free distribution, but still confronted a tragedy of sons who died, which explicitly impresses us with the necessity of printing copies of scriptures for free distribution in devotion to Guanyin Who Brings Sons.

C. The Enlarging of the Guardianship of Guanyin Who Brings Sons

With the accumulation of Guanyin's reputation for her efficacy of bringing sons, the guardianship of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in her believers' mind was no longer confined only to bringing sons. After the late Ming, miracle tales about her reflected two new tendencies toward the enlarging of her guardianship. First, granting sons was not the only way Guanyin took in response to her worshippers' general demand of continuing their family lines. Granting grandsons instead of sons and transforming the gender of children from female to male were other two alternatives. Second, a huge quantity of miracle tales about Guanyin concerning the protection of women and children during pregnancy and childbirth as well as the assurance of children's health and welfare appeared after the late Ming, which makes Guanyin Who Brings Sons the patron of women and children.

The focus of the miracle tales reflecting the first tendency is beyond Guanyin Who Brings Sons' primary duty of granting sons. Their theme is dominated by a more general

¹⁰¹ See Xu Zhijing, *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song*, p. 49.

concept of the continuation of family lines. While obtaining a son is still the basic way for ordinary people to continue their family lines, Guanyin's granting grandsons in the following two miracle tales makes her competence to continue family lines more striking and astonishing to her devotees:

- (1) Su Xun, a native of Zhejiang province, sincerely recited the [Guanshiyin] Sutra of King Gao, due to his mother's illness. He kept a vegetarian diet for three years [to pray for her recovery]. Once he had a dream in which a deity told him: "You are really a filially pious son, so I have reported to Shangdi (上帝) to add ten more years to your mother's lifespan. However, your ancestors had only little merits, so that you are destined to have no heirs. The three children you have now will not live long. You should donate 5,048 copies of the Guanyin Sutra for free distribution and have your first son married soon. I shall find a good grandson for you." After waking up, he managed to have a daughter-in-law. At the next year, he had a grandson. And all of his sons died young.¹⁰²

浙人蘇迅，因母病，虔誦高王經，茹素三載，夢神謂汝誠孝子，吾奏上帝，增汝母壽一紀，但汝祖德薄當無後，現生三子，皆不永年，宜施觀音經一藏，速為長子完婚，當為汝請一賢孫。覺而娶婦，逾年抱孫，子俱不壽。

- (2) A rich person who lived on the right side of a mountain was old. He had one son and one daughter-in-law only. His daughter-in-law had died already, and his son was seriously ill. The father got his son a concubine, and the mother was astonished and said: "In this case, won't our son die sooner?" The old man replied, "Once I prayed for heirs in the Lingyin [Temple], I dreamt of [Guanyin] the Great Being, who told me: 'You are destined to have no heirs. [However,] because you saved one thousand

people's lives by donating money [before], I will give you a grandson.' This is why I want to let our son have a concubine so soon." Within three months, their son died. After his death, his concubine gave birth to a son to continue his family line.¹⁰³

山右某富室，老惟一子一媳，媳亡，子病瘵。父爲子納妾，母駭曰，不速之死乎。翁曰，吾嘗祈嗣於靈隱，夢大士諭汝命無後，以捐金賑活千人，與汝一孫，故速爲納妾耳。未三月，子卒，妾遺腹生子，延其祀。

In the first story, it is reasonable to assume that the deity who manifested in Su's dream was Guanyin, due to the mention of Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao and Guanyin Sutra. Even if this premise cannot be proved, the efficacy of the two scriptures about Guanyin is still the key point stressed by this story. The role of Guanyin in both stories is to disclose and change the destinies of the two protagonists at the same time. Having three sons, the protagonist of the first story was not aware of the crisis that his family lineage was going to cease until the manifestation of the deity that is assumed to be Guanyin. Since his fate of having no heirs was irresistible, the grandson promised by Guanyin was a clever solution to Su's distressful destiny. A similar situation happened to the protagonist of the second story. He also had a son already, but the son was seriously ill. After being informed by Guanyin that he was fated to have no heirs, he took Guanyin's promise of granting a grandson as the only hope for the continuation of his family lineage. Therefore, he made his son have a concubine without a deep concern for the health of the son. The mother's inquiry that "in this case, won't our son die sooner?" sarcastically reflects the high enthusiasm of those who were insistent in pursuit of the continuation of their family lines.

¹⁰² See Xu Zhijing, *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song*, p. 48.

¹⁰³ See Xu Zhijing, *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song*, p. 48.

Aside from the story type of granting grandsons, the emphasis of continuing family lines can also be discerned in another type of miracle tales about transforming the gender of children from female to male. The following two stories are the examples of this theme:

(1) In the Great Qing, Yang Heng, whose style name was Xizhou, was a native of Dangtu.

Each generation of his family lived in the graveyard of chestnut trees in Guanyu¹⁰⁴. He took Confucianism as his profession to improve his own behavior. He hated the strangeness and ridiculousness of contemporary literature but preferred and followed [the teachings of] the former Cheng's¹⁰⁵, so he dwelled in such destitution and adversity. As an army besieged his hometown, Yang cried and told his family: "The grave mounds of my ancestors are here, how can I bear to abandon them to run away?" Therefore, he hid his wife, concubine and son in woods and guarded the mounds in person. As the soldiers came and saw there was one with clothes and hat in the tomb, they went to seize him, but Yang rushed to jump into the water and died [before they could capture him]. Witnessing his father's death from the woods, the son, who was just ten years old, also cried and ran to jump into the water. The time was the sixteenth day of the third month in the Bingshu 丙戌 year during the Shunzhi reign period (1646 C.E.). The next morning, two corpses holding each other emerged [to the surface of water]. Whoever saw this scene shed tears. Yang's wife Madam Lu was sorrowful about her husband's having no son to continue his family line, so she vowed to stop eating meat and received a Buddha image [to settle it] at home. Day and night she cried with deep grief and chanted the name of Buddha. [One night,] she suddenly dreamt of an old lady who brought a boy and told her "[The boy was] left to you."

¹⁰⁴ "Yu 圩" means "shore or bank", according to the *Zhongwen da cidian* 中文大辭典 [The Great Chinese Dictionary] (Taipei: 1963), V. 7, p. 291. Therefore, "Guanyu 官圩" is presumably the name of a place close to a river or the sea.

After waking up, she sighed and said: "I hope the concubine Madam Chang will give birth to a son who is left behind [by my husband]. Thus, this son will definitely be granted by Bodhisattva." At the end of this year, this concubine gave birth to a daughter. [Seeing this daughter,] Madam Lu cried and said: "My hope is gone." In the spring gathering of the Dihai year (1647 C.E.), the head of Yang clan told [Madam Lu]: "Since your husband has no son, the small field [of your husband] has to be distributed to other members of this clan. I will provide the basic clothes and food to raise this girl." ... she cried again. The clan head could not bear [to see her crying] and said: "Let us wait until Xiaoxiang 小祥¹⁰⁶ when the Buddhist salvation rituals for Heng are done and then discuss the thing of distribution." By that time, [Madam Lu] was prepared to meet all the relatives. At the evening of the end of fast, the date of which was also the sixteenth day of the third month, the girl constantly cried, so the concubine carried her to go to bed. Like being repressed by the influence of a nightmare, Chang fell into deep sleep, and the girl's extraordinary cries were even louder. [After] the main consort of Heng (namely, Madam Lu) called out to Chang, she started to wake up. She held the girl in her arms [and found out that] the girl was no longer a girl. Lu was greatly astonished, so the whole family gathered to go [to see what happened]. They saw that the baby's face was the same as before, but a penis grew up in her privates. Beside the penis, there were still bloodstains. Everyone was all very surprised and started to realize that Bodhisattva was efficacious and the previous dream [Lu had] was not a fraud. All of them [then] crowded in the front of the Buddha image and worshiped it, and the baby's name was changed to Fouci (given

¹⁰⁵ The former Chang's 先程 supposedly indicates Chang Hao 程顥 (1032-1085 C.E.) and Chang Yi 程頤 (1033-1107 C.E.), two great thinkers of Neo-Confucianism.

¹⁰⁶ Xiaoxiang 小祥 is an ancient sacrificial rite which is held when parents have passed away for two years.

by Budda 佛賜). The next day, those who wanted to see what happened crowded at the door. Hearing this miracle, the district magistrate Mr. Chang took the boy to examine him in public and still did not believe [this story]. He asked the clan members, and all of them said: "It is not true that the baby was exchanged. We, the nephews, do not want to divide their fields and houses." Thus, the magistrate stopped his doubt. How astonishing! The date at which Fouci's body changed is exactly the date at which the father and son died. However, if Heng had not been so upright in his lifetime, if his son was not so extremely filially pious to follow his father in death, and if his wife did not cry and weep with such deep grief, which even moved heaven, how could this thing that happened only once in thousands and hundreds years be achieved? Privately, I also want to say that if Fouci's body's transformation did not happen at the moment that the relatives gathered together, then who would believe the whole thing! ¹⁰⁷

大清楊璜，字希周，當塗人，世居官圩栗樹墳，業儒勵行，厭時文怪謬，趨法先程，坐此困滯。會兵遶其鄉，璜泣謂家人曰：「吾祖父丘壟在此，何忍棄去？」因匿妻妾與子林中，以身守壟。兵來見墳內有衣冠者，將執之，璜急赴水死，子甫十齡，自林間見父溺，亦號哭奔投於水，時順治丙戌三月十六日。越辰，兩屍相抱浮出，見者隕涕。妻陸氏悼夫無後，誓斷血肉，迎佛像於家，旦夕慟哭念佛，忽夜夢老嫗攜一子曰：「遺汝。」醒而歎曰：「願妾張氏遺腹生子，則菩薩之賜也。」歲暮，妾生女，陸氏泣曰：「已矣。」丁亥春集，族長告曰：「夫既無子，薄畝當分諸侄，吾得粗給衣食，以撫此女。」言復哭，族長不忍，云：「俟小祥為璜作佛事議分。」及期具會親族，散齋之夕，亦三月十六日，女哭不已，妾抱就枕，張如夢魘，憤憤不醒，女怪啼益甚，嫡疾呼始覺，抱女入手，則已不復女身矣。陸大驚，家人群往，見面目依然，

¹⁰⁷ See Zhou Kefu (Qing), *Guanshiyin jing zhou chi yan ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134, pp.492-493.

惟私處生長男根，其旁尙有血痕，眾咸詫異，始悟菩薩靈爽前夢不虛，競至佛前臚拜，更名佛賜。次日觀者闐門，聞，縣張公取兒庭閱之，猶未信，問其宗異口一詞曰：「脫兒變非真，侄輩不願分其田宅耶。」侯乃不疑。異哉，佛賜變身之日，即父子死難之日，然非璜之生平方正，子之至孝殉父，婦之號泣動天，豈能邁此千百年僅見之事乎，余竊又有說，若佛賜變形非親族群聚時，其又誰能信之。

(2) In Jing prefecture, an old man with a surname Huang was an old widower. He was earnest to practice filial piety and took delight in committing good deeds. He only had a daughter, named Sigu (The heiress). At the age of fourteen, she followed her father in studying and was sagacious and virtuous. She embroidered an image of the Great Being of White-robed [Guanyin] and worshipped it with great sincerity. One night, she dreamt of the Great Being, saying: "Your father is filial pious and righteous and is not supposed to have no heirs. Unfortunately, he is [too] old [to give birth to a son]. I will make you become his son." After swallowing a red pellet [given by the Great Being], the daughter felt a hot breath descending [through her body] and then lost her consciousness for seven days. After she woke up, her body had already become male. Learning about it, the family of her future husband was amazed and suspected that [the gender transformation] was false. [Hence,] they appealed to a court for an official investigation, which proved the transformation was real. At the investigation, there were clouds of onlookers.¹⁰⁸

荊州黃叟，老而鰥，篤孝好善，一女嗣姑，年十四，隨父讀，慧而賢。繡白衣大士像，禮拜甚虔，一夕夢大士曰：「汝父孝義，不應無後，奈年老，我以汝子之。」啖紅丸，

¹⁰⁸ See Xu Zhijing, *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song*, p. 45.

女覺熱氣一縷下達, 昏瞽者七日, 醒則已化男身。聞之婿家, 詫爲妄, 鳴官驗得實, 觀者雲集。

In both of the stories, the protagonists were unable to continue their family lines, for the tragic father and son of the first story died in warfare, and the father of the second story was beyond the age of giving birth to any children. Facing such an unchangeable fact, Guanyin's only answer to continuation of their family lines is to change their daughters' gender. Concerning the course of the sexual transformation, it occurred at the night of the death anniversary of Madam Lu's husband and son in the first story, accompanied with the daughter's acute cries. The sharpness and severity of the cries vividly convey to us the pain and unpleasantness that the daughter experienced during the gender transformation. In the second story, the transformation happened right after a dream response from Guanyin, and then the daughter lost her consciousness for seven days after taking a pill given by Guanyin. The first story also gives great details on the complicated background of the sexual transformation. First, the birth of an unexpected daughter denied the reality of a dream response, which Madam Lu received, from Bodhisattva Guanyin. In this dream, Guanyin manifested herself as an old lady to bring a son to Madam Lu. Nevertheless, the reliability of this dream response, or Guanyin's promise, was saved by an awesome transformation of the daughter's gender. This sexual transformation distinguished Guanyin's efficacy in terms of bringing sons more than the plot of bringing sons only. While a story plainly describes that one prayed to Guanyin and obtained a son later, its readers can never be assured that whether it is the effect of Guanyin's power. Such a miracle of sexual transformation, however, leaves its witnesses or hearers no other choice but to believe Guanyin's efficacy in bringing sons. The ending of both of the stories that an investigation trial in court determined the reality of the sexual transformation further fortified the creditability of Guanyin's competence. The investigation gave an official

confirmation to her efficacy, which would draw more followers to her. As for the crowd attracted to this investigation, they served as the best witnesses to testify the reality of this miracle and the best media to widely advertise Guanyin's efficacy.

While the miracle tales of the first group specially promote Guanyin's competence in taking other ways than granting sons to continue family lines, the stories of the second group are concerned with Guanyin's enlarged responsibilities related to her role of bringing sons. They are to protect women and children at childbirth and to patronize children's health and welfare.

In respect of protecting women and children in hard labor, the Qing work *Hai nan yi shao* edited by He dong zi, which I mentioned previously, contributes a chapter of fifteen miracle tales to this theme. Here, I translated four stories chosen from them as examples of this genre.

- (1) In the Bingyan year of the Jiaqing reign period (1806 C.E.), Wang Puzhai's daughter-in-law, Madam Chen, contracted menorrhagia after giving birth. Her condition was critical. Because [Wang's] family was in poverty, they vowed to print a hundred copies for each of the *White Robe Sutra* and the *[Guanshiyin] Sutra of King Gao*. In a day or so, she was recovered.¹⁰⁹

嘉慶丙寅，汪樸齋媳陳氏，產後血崩，勢劇危迫，因家貧，許印白衣經，高王經各百卷，不日愈。

- (2) A student of the Imperial Academy¹¹⁰ in Shucheng of Jiangnan was named Zhong Pong. His wife, Madam Chou, had spasms after childbirth and gasped heavily. The

¹⁰⁹ He dong zi (Qing), *Hai nan yishao*, (the edition of *Si xiang cao tang* 四香草堂, 1835), Vol. 13, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ "Jian sheng 監生" is actually the lowest literary degree in the Imperial Academy. It could be obtained by purchase throughout the empire. See Herbert A. Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 201.

doctor dared not to prescribe any medicine for her. Therefore, Zhong sincerely prayed to and worshiped [Guanyin] and vowed to print a thousand copies of the Guanyin Sutra of King Gao for free distribution. [After that, his wife] recovered immediately.¹¹¹

江南舒城監生鍾鵬妻周氏，產後驚風大喘，醫不敢下藥，於是虔誠祝拜，許印施高王觀音經千卷，立愈。

(3) A lady, whose last name was Chen, gave birth [to a son] after seven-month pregnancy.

The boy's two legs came out [from womb] first. Assuming that it would be difficult for both of [the mother and the son] to survive, her parents-in-law and husband sincerely recited the Guanyin Sutra of King Gao a thousand times together.

Sequentially, the boy's legs returned to the [mother's] abdomen. After three days, the boy was given birth [again]. The mother and the son were both fine. Later, the son attained the third degree¹¹² [in the civil service recruitment examination sequence].¹¹³

有陳氏婦者，孕七月而產，兒二足先出，料難全生，翁姥及夫男，共虔誦高王觀音經千遍，兒足仍入腹，越三日而生。母子無恙，後成進士。

(4) A northern frontier town in the area of Jingshao was named Zang ya miao (Temple of Hidden Girls?). [Its resident] Zong Weihuan had a wife, Madam Zhang. She frequently suffered from difficult labor. In the spring of the Yiyao year, Zong met his friend Zhu Shiyuan, who told him the White Robe Sutra was peculiarly efficacious. Thus, Zhong respectfully looked for and obtained a copy of this scripture. On the dates of fast, he recited it solemnly. In the winter of that year, he obtained a son, who was doubly wrapped in a white placenta [at birth] and could speak at the age of six months.

¹¹¹ See He dong zi (Qing), Hai nan yi shao, Vol. 13, p. 3.

Handsome, clever and unusual, the son was named Dashi bao (Protected by the Great Being [of Guanyin]). [Then, Zong] had people to cut trees and carve printing blocks to print this scripture for free distribution in order to broad its teaching.¹¹⁴

荆邵北鄙, 地名藏丫廟, 宗維垣妻張氏, 頻遭產厄, 已酉春, 宗晤其友朱士元, 云白衣經奇驗, 遂請經, 如齋期莊誦, 是冬生子, 白衣重包, 且六月能言, 秀慧不凡, 名大士保, 伐棗鐫板, 印施廣勸.

In the four stories, White Robe Sutra and Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao, the two scriptures frequently recited by devotees to pray for sons, were worshipped for the safety of women and children at childbirth. The vows of printing copies of these two scriptures protected the women who had just given birth in the first two stories. In the third story, reciting the Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao saved the pregnant woman and her prematurely delivered son in difficult labor. In the last story, not only did the White Robe Sutra prevent the pregnant woman from difficult labor, but also the son it saved was born with an auspicious sign and was especially sagacious.

As a matter of fact, long before the renown of these two Guanyin-related scriptures were established for protecting women and children in difficult labor, another Buddhist scripture, the Great Compassion Dharani, had already recorded Guanyin's promise of saving women in difficult delivery. Basically, the whole scripture aims to illuminate Guanyin's power and promises of universal salvation. This scripture was introduced into China in the Tang and has multiple translations. Its most popular version¹¹⁵, the one translated by Qiefan

¹¹² "Jin shi 進士" is a graduate of the third or doctor's degree. See Herbert A. Giles, A Chinese-English Dictionary, p. 258.

¹¹³ See He dong zi (Qing), Hai nan yi shao, Vol. 13, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ See He dong zi (Qing), Hai nan yi shao, Vol. 13, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ It is in Taisho shinshu daizokuyou, no.1060.

damo 伽梵達摩 (*Bhagavadharma*)¹¹⁶, contains a sentence, saying: “When women confront the difficulty of giving birth, evil spirits overwhelm them and the pain is hard to bear. If they recite the Great Compassion Dharani with utmost sincerity, ghosts and spirits will retreat and disperse, and their safety and joy will grow. 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.” Clearly, this sentence claims the efficacy of this Dharani in saving women at childbirth. Therefore, even though a great amount of miracle tales about Guanyin’s attentiveness to pregnant women emerged after the Ming, her power of saving women in difficult labor had already been introduced before.

In addition to this Dharani, a indigenous scripture, which was composed not earlier than the Tang¹¹⁷, also had a long part dedicated to Guanyin’s efficacy in protecting pregnant women. Its title is the Great Dharani Scripture of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin’s Prescriptions for Curing Diseases and Saving Those in Difficult Labor [Transmitted from] the Heart of Buddha’s Vertex (*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa liaobing jiuchan fang da tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩療病救產方大陀羅尼經). This scripture includes prescriptions to assure women’s security in childbirth and is actually the second volume of an apocryphal Buddhist scripture called the Scripture of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin [Transmitted from] the Heart of Buddha’s Vertex (*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩經)¹¹⁸, which contains three sections in total.¹¹⁹ According to this scripture, if a woman is plagued by evil spirits who cause her great pain at the moment of delivery, she should immediately have someone write

¹¹⁶ See Ernest J. Etel, *Hand-book of Chinese Buddhism* (Taipei: 1993), p. 30.

¹¹⁷ See Chun-fang Yu, “*Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang*”, in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 8, p. 117.

¹¹⁸ *Dunhuang bao zang* 敦煌寶藏 [The Treasure in Dunhuang], V. 132, pp. 67-70. no. Bao 伯 3916.

¹¹⁹ Its first volume is entitled the Great Dharani Scripture of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin [Transmitted from] the Heart of Buddha’s Vertex (*Foding xin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經), and the third part is entitled the Divine Spell Scripture of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin’s Efficacy of Rescuing Those in Dangers [Transmitted from] the Heart of Buddha’s Vertex (*Foding xin Guanshiyin pusa jiunan lingyan shenzhou jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩救難靈驗神咒經). See Chun-fang Yu, “*Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang*”, in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, pp. 118-119.

the dharani in the first volume of this scripture¹²⁰ and the “secret character seal” (*Mi zi yen* 秘字印) in vermilion ink. Then, she should swallow the written dharani and seal with incense water. By doing so, she will immediately give birth to an intelligent boy or a good-looking girl. If the placenta does not come out from the womb, the baby and the mother then would be in a critical condition, sometimes only the baby or the mother could survive and sometimes both of them would die. In this situation, the pregnant woman should also follow the above procedure, which will procure an abortion. After the dead baby comes out, it should be thrown into a river instantly. In addition, this scripture warns pregnant women not to eat dog meat, eels, or birds, and teaches them to frequently invoke the name of *Baoyue zhiyan guangyi zizai wang Fo* 寶月智巖光意自在王佛, a Buddha of medicine who especially takes care of pregnant women¹²¹. It is noteworthy that the dharani in this indigenous scripture has great similarity to the Great Compassion Dharani.¹²² It is reasonable to presume that this dharani was composed under the influence of the Great Compassion Dharani. This apocryphal scripture was transmitted down to the Ming. The Palace Museum in Taipei, Taiwan has a copy of this scripture, which is noted to be a Ming copy, and the Fayuan Monastery in Beijing also has several woodblock copies of it.¹²³ Therefore, we can be sure that this scripture played certain influence in the devotion to Guanyin’s power of granting safety to pregnant women. Actually, there is another Chinese indigenous scripture obviously derived from this apocrypha.

The indigenous scripture, entitled the Real Seal and Real Incantation for Saving Those in Difficult Labor Transmitted by the Great Being [Guanyin] (*Dashi chuan jiuchan zhenyan zhenyin* 大士傳救產真言真印), is compiled into the Qing book *Hai nan yi shao*.¹²⁴ It begins

¹²⁰ See Chun-fang Yu, “*Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang*”, in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 8, p. 130.

¹²¹ See Chun-fang Yu, “*Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang*”, in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 8, p. 123.

¹²² See Chun-fang Yu, “*Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang*”, in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 8, p. 118.

¹²³ See Chun-fang Yu, “*Weijing yu Guanyin xinyang*”, in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 8, p. 117.

¹²⁴ See He dong zi (Qing), *Hai nan yishao*, V. 13, pp. 7-8.

with a story illustrating how Guanyin transmitted the real incantation and seal down to the world: One day, Guanyin saw a widow in the eastern side of Guangdong province who kept a fast, worshipped Buddha and was fond of benevolence. She had one son and one daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law was nearly thirty but still had no sons. Each time when she gave birth, she suffered from difficult labor, and as soon as the baby was born, it died instantly. Thus, the widow frequently prayed to the Guanyin image worshipped in her family shrine for a safe childbirth and a son. Due to her sincerity, Guanyin thus manifested herself as an old nun to visit her family and taught the widow an incantation and a real seal to protect women against difficult labor. The incantation revealed here is exactly the same as the dharani in the indigenous scripture we discussed in the preceding paragraph. The only difference is that the incantation is claimed to possess the power to transform girls to boys with good fortune and longevity while the dharani in the previous scripture does not. Moreover, a talisman of the real secret character seal, which is mentioned in the previous scripture as well, is also provided here. As in the previous scripture, the scripture here also instructs pregnant women to write down the incantation and seal in vermilion ink and swallow them with incense water in order to escape from any danger in childbirth. However, it gives more warnings to women: they are prohibited from drowning baby daughters and not allowed to eat beef, dog meat, loach, eels, frogs and birds. In addition, the name of the Buddha that this scripture recommends women to recite is different from the one in the previous scripture, even though they are very similar. Its name in the scripture in discussion is *Baoyue zhiyan Guanyin zizai wang fo* 寶月智嚴觀音自在王佛, while the previous one is *Baoyue zhiyan guangyi zizai wang fo* 寶月智嚴光意自在王佛. With two changed characters—from *Guangyi* to *Guanyin*, the *Baoyue zhiyan Guanyin zizai wang fo* is deemed to be another title of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin. In the end of this scripture, it mentions a son's successful delivery by the

widow's daughter-in-law as a demonstration of the efficacy of the incantation and the real seal. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of circulating this scripture. If someone keeps this scripture for his own benefits or prevents it from widespread, the person will be punished by heaven.

While the main concern of the Great Dharani Scripture of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin's Prescription of Curing Diseases and Saving Those in Difficult Labor [Transmitted from] the Heart of Buddha's Vertex is pregnant women's difficulty and safety, the Real Seal and Real Incantation for Saving Those in Difficult Labor Transmitted by the Great Being [of Guanyin] pays attention to the mother and the baby both. The latter scripture appears to be closely connected to Guanyin's role of granting sons. For example, the incantation in it is declared to have the efficacy of transforming girls to boys, and in its introductory story, not only the widow's wish of her daughter-in-law's safety in childbirth but also her wish of obtaining a grandson motivates Guanyin's transmission of this scripture. The special tie to the function of bringing sons reflects that for her worshippers in the late imperial period, Guanyin's role of saving women in childbirth was not that distinct from her other role of bringing sons. It also discloses the attempt of the scripture to satisfy these two wishes at the same time. After all, both of them are related to the ultimate wish of each Chinese family—to continue their family lines. Moreover, the intense and popular desire of obtaining a son in each Chinese family and the frequency of the tragedy of drowning baby girls in imperial Chinese society are also discernible in this scripture.

In addition to these scriptures, Guanyin's power of preventing women from difficult labor is also stored up in some peculiar objects. According to a folklore story in the Hai nan yi shao, a kind of tree fruit, called *Mo huan zi* 莫患子 [Not suffer from childbirth], was effective in helping a smooth childbirth. The story is as follows:

[Once,] the Great Being [Guanyin] stayed in an inn in Zhou city and pretended to be Li Xian from South East. The host's wife was just giving birth¹²⁵ and suffering from difficult labor. The Great Being saw a tree in front of the yard having heaps of hanging ears. Each string of ears produced one hundred and eight grains. [The Great Being] immediately took one of them and made the pregnant woman swallow it. [Later,] a son with his hand holding this grain was born. [Afterwards,] people considered this kind of ear extraordinary. They took a string of the ear and made it in one thread to record the good deeds they did. [This kind of ear] was called *Mo huan zi* [Not suffer from childbirth].¹²⁶

大士寓周城旅舍，假稱東南李賢，主人婦坐蓐難下，大士見庭前一樹，纍纍垂穗，每穗結實一百八，隨摘一枚，使產婦吞之，兒手握其枚以出，後人異之，取一穗穿成一串，以記所行善事，名莫患子。

Another divine object with the same effect is recorded in the *Putuo luoguo xin zhi* 普陀洛迦新志 [New Gazetteer of Potalaka], compiled in the early Republic.¹²⁷ With the name *Cui sheng zi* 催生子 [Impeller of giving birth to a son], it is a kind of snail usually sold in the shops on Mt. Putuo, a famous pilgrimage center for the devotion to Guanyin. Pilgrims usually bought it to use on the occasion of childbirth. According to the instruction in the gazetteer, when a woman experiences difficult labor, she should wholeheartedly chant the name of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin and swallow the special snail with warm water. Then, the baby will be delivered right away. If the baby is a boy, one can find this snail in his left hand. If it is a girl, one should check her right hand for the snail then. After being washed, this snail can be saved for

¹²⁵ “*Zuo ru* 坐蓐” means giving birth, in *Guoyu ribao cidian* 國語日報辭典 [Dictionary of Chinese Daily Newspapers] (Taipei: 1986), p. 716.

¹²⁶ See He dong zi (Qing), *Hai nan yishao*, V. 13, p. 1.

the next time. Since this kind of snails will never die or decay, it is also called the Snail of Longevity (*Changsheng gua* 長生蝸). Claimed to be able to smooth difficult childbirth, both the Snail of Longevity and *Mo huan zi* will be brought out by the newborn baby after the mother swallows them. As for how do they miraculously shift from the mother's stomach to the baby's hand, this is the mystery of these two remarkable objects representing Guanyin's power.

Aside from the magical power displayed through scriptures, incantations, talismans and the divine substances discussed in the previous paragraph, Guanyin's attendance on women can also be observed in some prescriptions ascribed to Guanyin's bestowal. Collected into the *Zhongguo lidai Guanyin wenxian jichen* 中國歷代觀音文獻集成 [A Complete Collection of Documents about Guanyin from Every Dynasty in China], a document entitled the *Divine Prescriptions Specialized in Treating All Kinds of Women's Ailments—Guanyin's Prescriptions of Elixir for Universal Salvation* (*Zhuanzhi furen baibing shenfang—Guanyin puji danfang* 專治婦人百病神方—觀音普濟丹方) contains eighteen prescriptions for treating women's illness resulting from pregnancy, fifty-four for post-childbirth and nine for mothers to give milk easily.¹²⁸ This document was printed in the Jiawu 甲午 year of the Guangxu 光緒 reign period in the Qing (1894 C.E.). Each prescription first accounts for the cause of a specific symptom and then recommends suitable medical instructions for this symptom. There are also prescriptions for menstrual disorder and upset stomach caused by menstruation. According to the instructions, when one follows the prescriptions to produce medicine, one should always purify his mind, accompanied with a grave and sincere manner. Joking around is particularly forbidden. Also, good timing and choosing right places to

¹²⁷ See Wang Hengyan, *Putuo luoguo xin zhi* 普陀洛迦新志 [New Gazetteer of Potalaka] (Taipei: 1960), V. 11, pp. 4-5.

manufacture the medicine are very important in the whole procedure. Quiet periods of time and clean places are always preferable. It is noteworthy that men and children, intriguingly, are not overlooked in this collection of prescriptions dedicated to women. Prescriptions concerning diseases of men's generative organs and preventing children from smallpox are also found in this document. The whole document conveys to us that Guanyin's salvation is really universal, even though she is principally viewed as a patron of women. She is not only a specialist of releasing women from difficult labor but able to cure all kinds of women-related diseases and to further extend her care to men and children.

Concerning Guanyin's role in bestowing health and welfare on children, the following two miracle tales are stories on this theme:

- (1) Yang Pailun was a person in the Qing. His son contracted smallpox and [his illness] was critical during the Qianlong reign period (1736-1795 C.E.). His wife burned incense, chanted scripture and continued to weep. [Then,] she dreamed of a white-robed old lady who went to the son's bedroom and lifted¹²⁹ the curtain [of the bed]. She held a pint measurer in her left hand and carried a small broom in her right hand to sweep toward the head, the face, the heart and the stomach of the son and sweep the poxes into the pint measurer. When she finished sweeping, she said: "Your son has nothing worth worrying about." [Then,] she immediately woke up, and the son's poxes were instantly cured.¹³⁰

清楊霽綸，乾隆間子病痘危，妻焚香誦經，繼之以泣，夢白衣姥入房褰帷，左手持升，右手操小帚，向子頭面心腹掃痘升中，掃竟，曰，兒無慮也。遂寤，子痘頓痊。

¹²⁸ See *Zhongguo lidai Guanyin wenxian jichen* 中國歷代觀音文獻集成 (Beijing: 1998), V. 9, pp. 275-316.

¹²⁹ "Qian 褰" means "to lift", according to *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 744.

¹³⁰ See Xu Zhijing, *Guanshiyin pusa benji ganying song*, V. 2, p. 22.

(2) In the Ming, Xu Mingfu, a native of Wujun, went to a local school in Chu. Thus, he moved his whole family there. He was diligent in study and sedulous to put what he learned into practice. [Moreover,] he instructed his son's studying. He frequently gave offerings to a painting of the Great Being of Guanyin [in his home]. He worshipped and revered it with great sincerity. His son, named Lian, suddenly contracted a dangerous disease at the age of about ten. He and his wife kowtowed and prayed before the image of the Great Being every day and night. At the evening of the seventh day, [he or his wife] dreamed of Bodhisattva [Guanyin], telling them: "Do not worry. Your son will¹³¹ be able to get out of bed tomorrow." Suddenly, they heard a sound of trembling from a table. Astounded and woken up [by the disturbance], they saw that the plates of fruits offered on a small table in front of Guanyin image all dropped to the floor. Examining them, none of them was damaged. And his son mumbled in a low voice, calling out: "Save me, Bodhisattva! Save me, Bodhisattva!" They asked him [why], but he did not respond. At the second morning, they inquired him what happened. The son said: "In the middle of last night, when I just felt extremely faint, I saw the Great Being came to my bed, calling me: 'I [come to] save you.' Then, she took a bottle of water and ordered me to drink. [After I drank it,] my whole body immediately sweated and felt comfortable." In a short time, he really recovered from his illness. Later, the son attained the third degree graduate [in the national exam] in the Bingzhen year of the Wanli reign period (1616 C.E.).¹³²

明吳郡徐明甫赴館於楚，遂徙家焉，好學篤行，教子讀書，素供觀音大士一軸，禮敬甚虔，子名鑣，十餘歲忽遭危疾，夫妻於大士前晨夕叩禱，至七日夜夢菩薩告曰：

¹³¹ "Qie 且" means "will, is going to be" here, according to *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 18.

¹³² See Zhou Kefu (Qing), *Guanyinjing jing zhou chi yan ji*, in *Xu zang jing*, V. 134, p. 489.

「無憂，汝子明且可起也。」忽聞有聲震桌上，驚而寤起，視所供大士几前果碟諸俱墜地，檢之，無一損者，子口中喃喃微聲喚曰：「菩薩救我，菩薩救我。」問之不應，天明詢其故，子曰：「昨夜半正憤絕間，見大士至臥榻間呼男曰：『吾救汝。』乃以水一甌，命飲之，冰涼徹骨，遂舉體得汗而爽耳。」不數日，病果愈，後子成萬曆丙辰進士。

These two stories clearly record the manifestation of Guanyin in dreams to cure children's illness. In the first story, Guanyin manifested herself in the mother's dream. Guanyin was portrayed as a white-robed old lady, which is her most common iconography. This story also includes a very interesting description about her treatment for smallpox—exercising a broom to brush away the poxes, which reminds us of the previous prescriptions about preventing children from smallpox. In the second story, it is the ailing son's dream in which Guanyin revealed herself to make the boy drink a bottle of water so as to save his life. The story also implicates that the son's later attainment of a high rank is a result of Guanyin's cryptic protection. It is believed that a son granted by Guanyin or ever assisted by Guanyin will definitely enjoy blessings.

In short, promoted by miracle tales about protecting women and children in difficult labor as well as doctoring and nursing children, Guanyin's relationship with women and children was no longer simply bound by her role of giving sons, or occasionally daughters. She was believed to be the patron of women and children. Of course, she is still the venerable and efficacious granter of sons in the mind of ordinary people. Nevertheless, assuring the safety in pregnancy of mothers, patronizing childbirth, looking after the health of children as well as guaranteeing their prosperous future are also included in her duties.

CHAPTER THREE

The Image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in Ming-Qing *Baojuan* Literature

If we say that the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in the tradition of miracle tales—the white-robed lady and the protectress of women and children—slightly strayed from the image of Guanyin presented by the Orthodox Buddhist corpus, her image in Ming-Qing *Baojuan* literature further diverged from her Mahayana Buddhist background.

Baojuan 寶卷 [Precious Volumes] were a popular form of Chinese vernacular literature in the Ming and Qing dynasties, which can be basically divided into two types. The first type is sectarian “precious volumes”, the religious scriptures of Chinese popular religious sectarian groups in late Ming and early Qing. This type of scriptures contains teachings and ritual instructions of sectarian groups and is meant to be chanted or sung in group worship. The second type is literary or narrative “precious volumes”, which were produced in great quantity after the Kangxi 康熙 reign period (1662-1722) of the Qing. The intense repression against the sectarian religions from the central government during the Kangxi, Yongzheng 雍正, and Qianlong 乾隆 reign periods turned the development of sectarian religions into underground and more or less discouraged the composition of their doctrinal scriptures, which probably prompted the contents of “precious volumes” in the direction of literary stories. This kind of “precious volumes” does not reveal the messages carried by sectarian groups. Most of their stories are moralistic and had been widely circulated in other forms of Chinese vernacular literature before the authors of literary “precious volumes” took them as their sources of creation.¹³³

¹³³ See Daniel L. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes—An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Harvard: 1999), p. 1-8, and Che Xilun 車錫倫, “*Zhongguo baojuan*

In both types of this genre, Guanyin is a favorite motif. Some “precious volumes” expound the most popular legend about her insistent pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, such as *Xiangshang baojuan* 香山寶卷 [The Precious Volume of Xiang Mountain]¹³⁴ and *Guanyin jidu benyuan zhenjing* 觀音濟度本願真經 [The True Scripture of Guanyin’s Original Vow [to Bring] Universal Salvation]. In this legend, she is Princess Miaoshan 妙善, the third daughter of the King Miaozhuang 妙莊王. Disobeying her father’s order to get married, she abandoned the physical enjoyment in the royal palace and followed a life of seeking spiritual enlightenment. After having overcome many obstacles from her father, she finally achieved the enlightenment, and thus became the Thousand-Handed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, a renowned form of Guanyin from Tantric Buddhism, which was first introduced to the Chinese in Tang. Some “precious volumes”, such as *Tilan baojuan* 提籃寶卷 [The Precious Volume of Carrying a Basket]¹³⁵, illustrates another famous legend of Guanyin, in which she took the form of a beautiful young female fishmonger and enticed many men to study the teachings of Buddhism by promising a marriage to whomever could recite the “Universal Gateway” chapter of *Lotus Sutra*, *Diamond Sutra* and the whole *Lotus Sutra*. Some scriptures, otherwise, put their focus on the universal salvation provided by Guanyin, such as *Lianchuan baojuan* 蓮船寶卷 [The Precious Volume of the Lotus Boat]¹³⁶, *Guanyin you diyu* 觀音遊地獄 [Guanyin’s Journey to Purgatory]¹³⁷, *Guanyin shier yuanjue* 觀音十二圓覺 [The Complete Enlightenment of Guanyin’s Twelve Disciples]¹³⁸, while others have a theme centered on Mt. Putuo, one of the pilgrimage sites of Guanyin worship,

gailun 中國寶卷概論” [A Brief Study of Chinese Precious Volumes], in *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu lunji* 中國寶卷研究論集 [The Anthology of the Studies of Chinese Precious Volumes] (Taipei: 1997), P. 5-34.

¹³⁴ See *Baojuan chuji* 寶卷初集 [The Preliminary Collection of Precious Volumes] (Shanxi: 1994), V. 26 & 27.

¹³⁵ See *Baojuan chuji*, V. 23.

¹³⁶ See *Baojuan chuji*, V. 23.

¹³⁷ See *Baojuan chuji*, V. 22.

like *Putuo Guanyin baojuan* 普陀觀音寶卷 [The Precious Volume of Guanyin in Putuo]¹³⁹ and *Miaoying baojuan* 妙英寶卷 [The Precious Volume about Miaoying]¹⁴⁰. Among the many Guanyin-related “precious volumes”, some belong to the sectarian “precious volumes”, and some should be assigned to the category of literary “precious volumes”. While the image of Guanyin is featured by the teachings of different sectarian groups in different sectarian “precious volumes”, the compassionate Buddhist bodhisattva is usually arranged into the celestial bureaucracy of Chinese native divinities headed by the Grand Jade Emperor (*Yuhuang dadi* 玉皇大帝) in literary “precious volumes”, even though her rank in the celestial hierarchy was never explicitly expounded. Both types of “precious volumes” present or unfold a novel image of Guanyin that resulted from her domestication in Chinese native culture.

In addition to Guanyin, Guanyin Who Brings Sons is also supplied with new images in the Guanyin-related “precious volumes”. The *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan* 銷釋白衣觀音菩薩送嬰兒下生寶卷 [The Precious Volume Explaining the White-robed Guanyin Sending Infants Down to Be Born]¹⁴¹ and the *Shancai longnu baojuan* 善才龍女寶卷 [The Precious Volume of the Disciple Named *Shancai* and the Dragon Princess]¹⁴² are two works with stories of Guanyin’s granting sons to people. Exploring the role of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in these two “precious volumes” is the task of this chapter.

A. *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan* [The Precious Volume Explaining the White-robed Guanyin Sending Infants Down to Be Born]

¹³⁸ The copy of *Guanyin shier yuanjue* I read is published by Zhengyi shanshu publisher (Taipei: 1995).

¹³⁹ See *Baojuan chujie*, V. 26.

¹⁴⁰ The copy of *Miao ying baojuan* I read is preserved in the University of Toronto and printed by Wen Zaizi 文在茲 in Henan 河南 in 1914.

¹⁴¹ See *Baojuan chujie*, V. 12.

1. The Background of This Scripture

This scripture, also known by its abbreviated title *Baiyi pusa baojuan* 白衣菩薩寶卷 [The Precious Volume about White-robed Bodhisattva] or *Pusa song yinger jing* 菩薩送嬰兒經 [The Scripture of Bodhisattva Granting Infants], is a Ming work produced during the Wanli reign period (1573-1619).¹⁴³ It is a sectarian “precious volume” advocating the belief of White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons. However, scholars hold diverse opinions concerning its sectarian origin.

Based on several references to the term “*Huangtian dao* 皇天道” [Way of Imperial Heaven] in the text, Che Xilun affirms that this scripture was composed by the practitioners of this specific sectarian group, which is also known as *Huangtian dao* 黃天道 [Way of Yellow Heaven]. He also suggests that its composers were two, and their surnames, Wu 吳 and Wang 王, are respectively alluded by two obscure phrases “*Kou Tian* 口天” and “*Yi Shi Yi* 一十一” in the passage describing the author’s hardship of composition, for *Kou Tian* and *Yi Shi Yi* are separately the component elements of the written characters “Wu” and “Wang”.¹⁴⁴ Using this kind of veiled reference to the writer’s identity, indeed, is a typical practice of sectarian writing, which is probably a way to protect the writer himself from official detection, as is often in various sectarian “precious volumes”.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² See *Baojuan chuiji*, V. 27.

¹⁴³ See Che Xilun 車錫倫, *Zhongguo baojuan zongmu* 中國寶卷總目 [A General Bibliography of Chinese Precious Volumes] (Taipei: 1998), P. 162, and Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York: 2001), p. 467.

¹⁴⁴ See Che Xilun, “*Ming Qing minjian zongjiao de ji zhong baojuan* 明清民間宗教的幾種寶卷 [Several Precious Volumes of the Popular Religions in the Ming and Qing]”, in *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu lunji*, P. 94.

¹⁴⁵ Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 473.

The *Huangtian dao* was founded by Li Puming 李普明¹⁴⁶ in the thirty-third year of the Jiajing 嘉靖 reign period (1554).¹⁴⁷ His real name was Li Bin 李賓;¹⁴⁸ he was born in today's Wanquan district 萬全縣 of Hebei 河北 province.¹⁴⁹ After encountering a sage teacher who taught him the practices of interior alchemy to attain immortality, Puming launched his missionary life to preach the Way he had realized to local people. In the forty-first year of the Jiajing reign period (1562), he passed away,¹⁵⁰ but his teachings were transmitted by his followers through many generations. Two late-Ming sectarian groups, respectively named the *Yuandun jiao* 圓頓教 [Sect of Complete Realization] and the *Changsheng jiao* 長生教 [Sect of Longevity], were directly inspired by the *Huangtian dao* and connected their patriarchal lineages to Puming.¹⁵¹ Moreover, the *Huangtian dao* itself was still active in North China during the early Republican period.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ About the founder of the *Huangtian dao*, relevant "precious volumes" refer to two different persons. One is Pujing 普靜, and the other is Puming. Contemporary scholars, like Ma Xisha 馬西沙 and Wang Jianchuan 王見川, consider that the second opinion is more reliable. See Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang 韓秉方, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi* 中國民間宗教史 [The History of Chinese Popular Religions] (Shanghai: 1992), p. 408-419; Wang Jianchuan, "Huangtian dao qianqi shi xin tan—jian lun qi zhipai" 黃天道前期史新探—兼論其支派 [A New Investigation of the Earlier Period of the History of *Huangtian dao*—with a Discussion of its Branches], in *Haixia liangan daojiao wenhua xueshi yantaohua lunwen* 海峽兩岸道教文化學術研討會論文 [Essays from the Academic Conference on the Daoist Culture in the Two Sides of the Strait] (Taipei: 1994), p. 4-5.

¹⁴⁷ See Wang Jianchuan, "Huangtian dao qianqi shi xin tan—jian lun qi zhipai", in *Haixia liangan daojiao wenhua xueshi yantaohua lunwen*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁸ About the real name of Li Puming, there are two different saying. The first one, from *Poxie xiangbian* 破邪詳辯 [A Detailed Dispute to Refute Heresy] written by Huang Yubian 黃育鞭 in the Qing, considers his real name to be Li Shengguan 李陞官. The second one, according to the records of *Wanquan xianzhi* 萬全縣志 [Gazetteer of Wanquan Prefecture], says that his original name is Li Bian. See Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi*, p. 412, and Wang Jianchuan, "Huangtian dao qianqi shi xin tan—jian lun qi zhipai", in *Haixia liangan daojiao wenhua xueshi yantaohua lunwen*, p. 4-5.

¹⁴⁹ See Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi*, p. 408-414.

¹⁵⁰ See Wang Jianchuan, "Huangtian dao qianqi shi xin tan—jian lun qi zhipai", in *Haixia liangan daojiao wenhua xueshi yantaohua lunwen*, p. 8-9.

¹⁵¹ See Wang Jianchuan, "Huangtian dao qianqi shi xin tan—jian lun qi zhipai", in *Haixia liangan daojiao wenhua xueshi yantaohua lunwen*, p. 23-28, and Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi*, p. 473-487.

¹⁵² See Li Shiyu 李世瑜, *Xianzai huabai mimi zongjiao* 現在華北秘密宗教 [Sectarian Religions in Today's North China] (Taipei: 1975), p. 10-13, and Wang Jianchuan, "Huangtian dao qianqi shi xin tan—jian lun qi zhipai", in *Haixia liangan daojiao wenhua xueshi yantaohua lunwen*, p. 1.

Basically, the doctrine of the *Huangtian dao* is a mixture of Daoist practices of interior alchemy and the ontological teachings of “True Emptiness” (*zheng kong* 真空) and “Eternal Unbegotten” (*wu sheng* 無生) taught by Luo Qing’s 羅清 (1443-1527), the patriarch of *Luo Jiao* 羅教.¹⁵³ Interior alchemy is a method of psycho-physiological meditational exercise to refine and circulate the vital forces in the body. With a goal of attaining immortality, this practice attempts to reverse the normal course from life to death by uniting yang forces and ying forces in a esoteric way so as to create a true or immortal body called the “golden elixir” (*Jindan* 金丹) or “holy embryo” (*Shengtai* 聖胎) within the mortal body and to achieve eternal life.¹⁵⁴ As for Luo Qing’s teachings, they are preserved and illuminated in his writings, known as *Wubu liuce* 五部六冊 [Five Books in Six Volumes], and dominate the mainstream of the teachings of nearly every later sectarian group. For example, the abstract concept of the “Eternal Unbegotten” was gradually deified and personified by the advocates of sectarian groups after Luo Qing as the “Eternal Mother”, the highest deity worshipped by almost every sectarian group; and the concept of “True Emptiness” was increasingly perceived as the “Home”, where the Eternal Mother lives and waits for her stray children, all humankind, to come back.¹⁵⁵ Consisting of these three teachings, the *Huangtian dao* taught its adherents to escape the cycles of birth and death. The attainment of immortality or the return to the home, namely “True Emptiness” and the primal source of myriad creature, is their goal, and the self-cultivation of the vital forces in the body is the means. Once a person successfully creates his own “golden elixir”, he will transcend from the mundane

¹⁵³ See Che Xilun, “*Ming Qing minjian zongjiao de ji zhong baojuan*”, in *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu lunji*, P. 94, and Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi*, p. 447-469.

¹⁵⁴ See Daniel L. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes—An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p.232-237, and Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 462.

¹⁵⁵ See Richard Shek, “Eternal Mother Religion: Its Role in Late Imperial Chinese History”, in *Proceeding of 2nd International Conference on Sinology, Academia Sinica* (Taipei: 1989), p471-478.

world, realize the abstruseness of the “Eternal Unbegotten” by reuniting with it, and reach the utmost happiness.

Aside from the *Huangtian dao*, its branch, the *Yuandun jiao*, is another possible answer to the sectarian origin of the “precious volume” in discussion considered by Sawada Mizuno. Sawada’s assertion is on the basis of the records of Huang Yubian 黃育鞭, a Qing official scholar, who regarded this particular text as the creation of the *Yuandun jiao* in his book *Poxie xiangbian* 破邪詳辯 [A Detailed Dispute to Refute Heresy] and identified its author as Liu Douxuan, a well-known practitioner of the *Yuandun jiao*.¹⁵⁶ Huang Yubian also considered the *Yuandun jiao* to be a branch of the *Hongyang jiao* 弘 / 紅陽教 [Sect of Vast Yang Sect or Red Yang], which, together with various terminologies of the *Hongyang jiao* found in this “precious volume”, makes the scholar Chun-fang Yu to suggest the possibility that *Hongyang jiao* advocates composed this text.¹⁵⁷

The *Hongyang jiao* was an active sectarian religion in North China during the Wanli reign period of the Ming (1573-1619). Its legendary founder, Han Taihu 韓太湖 (1570-1598), is known as the Patriarch Piao Gao 飄高.¹⁵⁸ Following Luo Qing’s example of writing *Wubu liuce*, he produced five books called the Five Scriptures of Hongyang. However, the content of the five scriptures are very different from those of Luo Qing. They are not about the intangible anthologies of “True Emptiness” and the “Eternal Unbegotten” but mainly variations on the Eternal Mother (*Wusheng laomu* 無生老母) mythology, which contain many

¹⁵⁶ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 467.

¹⁵⁷ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 470.

¹⁵⁸ See Pu Wenqi 濮文起, *Zhongguo minjian mimi zongjiao* 中國民間秘密宗教 [Sectarian Religions in Chinese Society] (Taipei: 1996), p. 65-67.

terms from internal alchemy, even though the origin of this mother-like goddess can be traced back to the term “Eternal Parents” (*Wusheng fumu* 無生父母) used in Luo Qing’s writings.¹⁵⁹

Although the matter of the sectarian origin of this “precious volume” in issue still remains controversial, the image of White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons it presents is new. Absorbed and re-illustrated by sectarian groups, the White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons is fused with the Eternal Mother (*Wusheng laomu* 無生老母) in this scripture. This image is unconventional and characterized by the teachings of the specific sectarian group to which this scripture belongs.

2. The Contents of this Scripture

This scripture illuminates the power and teachings of White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons by recounting a story about this divinity who granted a son and a daughter to a couple, Gentleman Chang 常 and Madam Sui 隋, in response to their sincere prayers, and later guided them to attain immortality.

It begins with the Eulogy of Raising Incense (*Ju xiz zan* 舉香讚) and the Verses for Opening the Scripture (*Kai jing ji* 開經偈). The eulogy, which is an imitation of the Eulogy of Incense (*Xiangzan* 香讚) at the beginning of any Buddhist daily recitation text to invoke the presence of buddhas and bodhisattvas, is a liturgical text. Its contents are as follows:

Everyone, with sincerity, [should] burn the incense together.

May the White-robed bodhisattva descend from the celestial palace.

May she give infants and save the masses.

¹⁵⁹ See Daniel L. Overmyer, Precious Volumes—An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, p. 132-135, and Pu Wenqi, *Zhongguo minjian mimi zongjiao*, p. 65-67.

One who receives [aid from her] will be able to extend life to eternity and return home,
the source [of the universe].

Homage to the Great Being the White-robed bodhisattva (Everyone recites it three
times together)

Homage to all of the three treasures in the complete void and emptiness, everywhere
in the dharma realm, and in the past, present and future.¹⁶⁰

大眾虔誠，齊把香焚，白衣菩薩下天宮，捨嬰兒，濟群生，蒙得續長生，還源到家中。

南無白衣菩薩摩訶薩 (眾和三聲)

南無盡虛空遍法界過現未來佛法僧三寶

This invokes the presence of White-robed Guanyin while extolling her merit of granting infants and providing universal salvation, as well as pointing out the ultimate goal of the salvation she offers—to return to the primal source of universe so as to escape death. Guanyin's image in this eulogy is shaped as a white-robed celestial divinity dwelling in a celestial palace, which is divergent from her Buddhist background, even though the whole passage imitates Buddhist liturgy and attempts to impress its readers with its Buddhist connection. As for the Verse of Opening the Scripture, it is a poem praising the greatness of Buddha's teachings and rareness of the chance to encounter these abstruse teachings. This poem, frequently read in Buddhist texts, is as follows:

The supreme and very abstruse wondrous dharma,

Which is hard to encounter through hundreds, thousands and ten thousands kalpas.

Today, I see it, hear it, and am able to receive and retain it.

I would like to understand the true meaning of Buddha¹⁶¹.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ See *Baojuan chujī*, V. 12, P. 159-160.

¹⁶¹ “*Ru lai* 如來” is one of the highest titles of a Buddha. See William Edward Soothill & Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (Taipei: 1982), P. 210.

無上甚深微妙法,百千萬劫難遭遇,我今見聞得授持,願解如來真實意。

After this verse, a prologue is provided to extol White-robed Guanyin's promise of granting children, explain the reasons of people's suffering from lacking children, illustrate the ways of praying to White-robed Guanyin for heirs, and emphasize the benefits and importance of reciting this "precious volume". The sign of a white placenta as a proof of the baby's being a divine gift, which is frequently recorded in miracle tales, is also mentioned here.

This story is expounded in twenty-four chapters and interwoven with instructions of practicing internal alchemy and words urging people to cultivate themselves to attain immortality. The story line is that Gentleman Chang and his wife Madam Sui, who lived in Shouyang district 收陽縣 of Henan prefecture 河南府, were rich but old and had no children. They wholeheartedly prayed to White-robed Guanyin for an heir by vowing to keep a vegetarian fast, recite the name of buddha, build a shrine for her, and go on a pilgrimage to Mt. Putuo. Their sincere prayers reached Guanyin, who dispatched Shancai and Longnu 龍女 [Dragon Princess], her two consistent attendants or her children in this scripture, to find out what is going on. After hearing the report from them, Guanyin felt responsible to fulfill their wish. Thus, she sent down Shancai and the Dragon Princess to be the couple's son and daughter by transforming them into two magical peaches and delivering them to Madam Sui in her dream. While the pair of brother and sister were born, both of them were clad in a white placenta as the demonstration of their unique and divine birth, and they were separately named Jinge 金哥 [Gold brother] and Yinjie 銀姐 [Silver sister]. After dwelling the earthly world, however, Jinge and Yinjie were still under the blessings and care of Guanyin, who manifested herself as a poor old lady to be hired by the Chang couple as a wet nurse for the two children. In order to convert the whole family of Gentleman Chang to pursue the path of

¹⁶² See *Baojuan chujī*, V. 12, p. 161.

transcendence by following her teachings, the disguised White-robed Guanyin stayed with the Chang family for eight years. However, nobody in the family discovered her true identity to accept her teachings, which made her privately sigh over their senselessness and ignorance. A maid accidentally overheard her moan, but she misinterpreted it by assuming that the wet nurse was homesick. Therefore, she reported to Gentleman Chang and Madam Sui, who accordingly planned to send the wet nurse back home, and had a talk with her. Perceiving their intent, the White-robed Guanyin thus left a letter written by her blood disclosing her true identity and departed. Her disappearance deeply distressed the Chang family, especially after they realized that the wet nurse was White-robed Guanyin. In a mood of regret, Gentle Chang and Madam Sui recalled their vow of building a shrine for White-robed Guanyin to thank her granting children. Therefore, they immediately started preparations for building a shrine, which was, of course, seen by White-robed Guanyin. Hence, she dispatched Lu Ban 鲁班, the divinity of woodcraft, to help out. Lu Ban assumed the disguise of an old craftsman wandering on the street and ran into an attendant of Gentleman Chang. Consequently, he was hired by Gentleman Chang for this construction. Spending only one night, he built up a splendid shrine for White-robed Guanyin. Such a miracle made this newly established shrine enjoy great popularity and attract many devotees. After this, things were going well with the Chang family, but Gentleman Chang and Madam Sui still forgot one vow they had taken previously, which was to make a pilgrimage to Mt. Putuo to pay their reverence and gratitude to White-robed Guanyin. In order to refresh their memory, White-robed Guanyin decided to inflict punishment on them as a warning. She took the primal spirit of Jinge back to the Mt. Putuo at his age of twelve. Losing his primal spirit, Jinge immediately fainted away, which was extremely heartbreaking for Gentleman Chang and Madam Sui. Fortunately, their neighbor knew how to examine the pulse and gave Jinge a diagnosis. She diagnosed this case

as offending divinities, which reminded this couple of their unfulfilled vow. Therefore, they burned incense and made a prayer to White-robed Guanyin to demonstrate their determination of going on a pilgrimage. Their sincerity moved White-robed Guanyin to release Jinge's primal spirit. She blew her divine breath and then Jinge became conscious again. After Jinge recovered, Gentleman Chang and Madam Sui took him and Yinjie, together with the attendant mentioned before, to go on a journey to Mt. Putuo. They encountered several obstacles on their way, but White-robed Guanyin always sent divinities to provide them with help. Finally, she personally led a divine boat to bring all of them to where she dwelled, the Crystal Palace (*Shuijing gong* 水晶宮) on Mt. Putuo. The palace was surrounded by water. White-robed Guanyin made the five of them wash away their earthly qualities in this water and then explained to them their true identities: Gentleman Chang was originally the Patriarch of Long Eyebrows (*Changmai zushi* 長眉祖師); Madam Sui the Bodhisattva of Complete Enlightenment (*Yuanjue pusa* 元覺菩薩); Jinge and Yinjie Shancai and The Dragon Princess; and the attendant the Star of the Sound¹⁶³ of Heavenly River (*Tianhe shuiping xing* 天河水萍星). Realizing their original natures, the five of them respectively returned to the heaven and obtained their "golden bodies" and eternal life.

After this story, there is a passage explaining to the readers the impermanence of the earthly world and urging them to commit good deeds, keep a vegetarian diet, recite the name of the Buddha, and follow the meditation instructions of the *Huangtian dao* in order to reach physical and psychological refinement, reunite their nature with the primal source and thus transcend the cycles of life and death. This passage also emphasizes the reliability of Guanyin's efficacy of giving children and provides a record of the incentive and hardship of

¹⁶³ "Ping 萍" means the sound of water. See Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo 中國文化研究所 [Research Center of Chinese Culture], *Zhongwen da cidian* 中文大辭典 [The Great Chinese Dictionary] (Taipei: 1968), V. 19, p. 92.

composing this scripture. The scripture concludes with an emphasis on the benefits of retaining, printing, listening to and transcribing it.

3. The Role of Guanyin Who Brings Sons

Throughout this scripture, a great number of different titles is used to address Guanyin, such as White-robed Guanyin (*Baiyi Guanyin* 白衣觀音), White-robed Bodhisattva (*Baiyi pusa* 白衣菩薩), White-robed Bodhisattva of the South Sea (*Nanhai baiyi pusa* 南海白衣菩薩), Bodhisattva (*Pusa* 菩薩), White-robed Lady Mother (*Baiyi niang niang* 白衣娘娘), White-robed Granny (*Baiyi nai nai* 白衣奶奶), Venerable Mother (*Lao mu* 老母), White-robed Venerable Mother (*Baiyi lao mu* 白衣老母), and White-robed Mother (*Baiyi mu* 白衣母). This variety of titles discloses the complicated image of Guanyin here. While the designations of the White-robed Guanyin or Bodhisattva and the White-robed Bodhisattva of the South Sea separately refer to two of the most renowned iconographies of Guanyin, White-robed Guanyin and Guanyin of the South Sea (*Nanhai Guanyin* 南海觀音), the titles of White-robed Lady Mother or Granny and the Venerable Mother respectively reflect the influence of Chinese popular religion and sectarian groups, for the “Lady Mother” and “Granny” are the titles frequently and intimately used by the Chinese to name indigenous goddesses. The “Venerable Mother” is a contraction of the title of Eternal Mother (*Wusheng laomu*).

Although the image of Guanyin represented in the context of this “precious volume” is multifaceted, the complexity of the image is established on the basis of the iconography of Guanyin of the South Sea, which enjoyed great popularity after Mt. Putuo’s reputation as the

most important pilgrimage site of Guanyin worship had accumulated.¹⁶⁴ The frontispiece of the “precious volume” shows the appropriation of this iconography in this scripture.¹⁶⁵ In this picture, a white-robed Guanyin carrying a baby in her arms stands on the top of a cloud and is attended by Shancai and the Dragon Princess against the background of a cluster of bamboo. On the right side of Shancai, a huge lotus is blooming, and a pure vase with a piece of willow branch inside is placed beside it. On the left side of the Dragon Princess, a couple kneel in front of an altar table with candles and an incense burner while a white parrot is flying above. The elements of Guanyin in a white robe, Shancai and the Dragon Princess, a white parrot, a bamboo bush, willow branch, and pure vase found in this frontispiece, together with the several references to Mt. Putuo through over the text, form the famous iconography of Guanyin of the South Sea, which began to appear in the Yuan dynasty (1260-1341).¹⁶⁶ This iconography is also the prototypical image of Guanyin in this “precious volume”.

Based on this prototypical iconography, however, the image of Guanyin in the scripture still includes some unconventional features. As a result, the compassionate bodhisattva, together with her two attendants, possesses various titles in this scripture, and the scenery of Mt. Putuo depicted in this text is totally different from the records of Putuo gazetteers. The new ingredients, which shape the unusual role of Guanyin in this “precious volume”, are the topics of the following discussion.

a. Mt. Putuo

According to this scripture, Mt. Putuo, which is also named Mt. Luoqie 洛伽山, is the divine place where Guanyin dwells. As a matter of fact, Mt. Luoqie is the abbreviation of Mt. Butuo Luoqui 補陀洛伽山, which is the Chinese translation of Mt. Potalaka, the island home

¹⁶⁴ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 9 & 10, p. 353-406, 438-448.

¹⁶⁵ See Figure 8.

of Guanyin mentioned in the *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 [Flower Garland Sutra or Avatamasaka Sutra] and the *Qianshou qianyan Guanshiyin pusa tabeixian tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩大悲心陀羅尼經 [Thousand-Handed and Thousand-Eyed Guanyin Great Compassionate-Heart Dharani]. According to the forty-chapter version of the *Huayan jing* translated by Prajna between 795 and 810, Mt. Potalaka is situated in the ocean. While the young pilgrim, named Sudhana (or Shancai in Chinese) paid a visit there to search for truth, Guanyin is said to have been sitting on a diamond boulder in a clearing in the midst of a lush woods, preaching the dharma. In the Dharani, Mt. Potalaka is the sacred island where the Guanyin's palace is located and where the powerful dharani of saving all beings is revealed to the assembly of bodhisattvas and other beings gathered around Sakyamuni Buddha.¹⁶⁷ The establishment of Mt. Putuo's fame as a pilgrimage center for the worship of Guanyin is closely connected to this legendary Mt. Potalaka.

Mt. Putuo is more a small island than a real mountain, located at the southeast side of today's Zhejiang province 浙江省. It is a part of the Zhoushan Archipelago 舟山群島. Before being acknowledged as a Buddhist sacred site, this island had long been known as a Daoist holy island. Many Daoist figures and immortals are claimed to have a connection to this island.¹⁶⁸ It is in the Tang that this island started to be associated to Bodhisattva Guanyin and thereby to be identified as her dwelling, Mt. Potalaka. According to the *Butuo luoguo shan zhuan* 補陀洛伽山傳 [Gazetteer of Mt. Butuo luoguo] written by Sheng Ximing 盛熙明 in 1361, in the Dazhong 大中 (847-860) reign period of the Tang, a foreign monk who paid a visit to the Cave of Tidal Sounds (*Chaoyin dong* 潮音洞) on this island burned his ten fingers in front of the cave. As soon as his fingers were burned off, he saw Bodhisattva Guanyin, who

¹⁶⁶ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 9, p. 389.

¹⁶⁷ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 354-355.

preached Dharama to him and granted him a precious stone consisting of seven kinds of jewelry.¹⁶⁹ While the vision of Guanyin gained by the foreign monk in this story suggests the identification between Mt. Putuo and Mt. Potalaka, another miracle tale recorded by Sheng provides a historical account for Mt. Putuo's mythical founding. The story is that in the Five Dynasties (907-959), a Japanese monk named Huie 慧鑊 brought an image of Guanyin from Mt. Wutai 五台山, another cultic site for the worship of Guanyin, and returned Japan by sea. When the ship came near Mt. Putuo, it suddenly ran aground on hidden rocks. Huie silently prayed toward the direction of the Cave of Tidal Sounds for the aid from Guanyin, and the ship then moved and reached the shore of the cave. Out of gratitude, Huie left the image of Guanyin beside the cave as an offering. Later, a Chang family who lived nearby the cave donated their house as a shrine to house the image, for they frequently witnessed the miraculous responses of this image.¹⁷⁰ This shrine is supposed to be the earliest temple of Guanyin on Mt. Putuo.

Renowned for the frequent presence of Guanyin image in the Cave of Tidal Sounds and the Cave of Brahma's Voice (*Fan yin dong* 梵音洞), which started to compete the former to be the famous spot for obtaining a vision of Guanyin in the seventeenth century, Mt. Putuo gradually became the largest pilgrimage site for devotion to Guanyin from the late Ming on.¹⁷¹ Even though the pilgrimage journey to Mt. Putuo is usually very difficult, for it is surrounded by the stormy sea and shipwreck is not unusual there, the miracle tales about Mt. Putuo and Guanyin of the South Sea still attract many pilgrims every year, especially around the three holy days of Guanyin: the nineteenth day of the second month, the nineteenth day of

¹⁶⁸ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 370-371.

¹⁶⁹ See Sheng Ximing (Yuan), *Butuo luoguo shan zhuan*, in *Xu zhang jing*, Vol. 150, p. 255-260, and Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 374-377, 383-384.

¹⁷⁰ See Sheng Ximing (Yuan), *Butuo luoguo shan zhuan*, in *Xu zhang jing*, Vol. 150, p. 256, and Wang Hengyan 王亨彦, *Putuo luoguo xin zhi* 普陀洛迦新志 [New Gazetteer of Mt. Potalaka] (Taipei: 1960), Ch. 3, p 2.

the sixth month, and the nineteenth day of the ninth month, which separately memorialize her birth, enlightenment, and departure for the pursuit of the Way.

While Mt. Putuo's claim to be Mt. Potalaka firmly anchors Guanyin's legendary dwelling to China and makes it more approachable, the description of Mt. Putuo in the present "precious volume" nonetheless makes it look like a fairyland rather than a real place. In the text, this Chinese Potalaka is pictured with some fairy-tale fantasies. Although it is still the island where Guanyin dwells, this island is located amid a sea with a dramatic name, the Sea of Troubles (*Fannao hai* 煩惱海), according to the text. As for Guanyin's dwelling, it is said to be the Crystal Palace on Mt. Putuo. This Crystal Palace is a celestial realm, which is surrounded by a celestial river called Bajie River 八解河. Whoever takes a bath in this river will be transformed into an immortal. Moreover, on the route to Mt. Putuo, some of the places the Chang family passed by were taken from other contemporary vernacular literature works, such as the Cave of Flowing Water (*Shuilian dong* 水漣洞), which is from a Ming novel called *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 [The Journey to the West]. Some of them are just made up for this text. There are also some places whose names are relatively real and geographically fit the real location of Mt. Putuo, such as the Qiantang River 前唐江. With the same pronunciation, the name of the Qiantang river could be the miswriting of the other two words "*Qiantang* 錢塘", and the Qiantang River 錢塘江 is a big river in South China, whose mouth is in today's Zhejiang province and very close to Mt. Putuo. In a word, the description of Mt. Putuo in this "precious volume" consists of the author's personal imagination as well as his knowledge of other contemporary novels and the geography of Mt. Putuo. All of these elements shape Mt. Putuo to be like a fictional and unworldly place.

¹⁷¹ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 394-406.

b. The Triad of Guanyin and Her Two Attendants, Shancai and the Dragon Princess

As depicted in the frontispiece, Guanyin and her two attendants, Shancai and the Dragon Princess, form a triad, which is a popular motif of various Guanyin's portraits. However, the constitution of the triad does not have a direct source in Buddhist Canon, which only provides references to Guanyin's relationship with either Shancai or the Dragon Princess. According to the *Huayan jing*, Shancai is not an attendant of Guanyin but a zealous young pilgrim, who visited fifty-three "good friends" (*Shan zhishi* 善知識) in order to search for the truth, and Guanyin is the twenty-eighth "good friend" whom he visited.¹⁷² As for the relationship between Guanyin and the Dragon Princess, it can be traced to the esoteric sutras exalting the Thousand-handed and Amoghapasa forms of Guanyin.¹⁷³ These sutras narrate that Bodhisattva Guanyin paid a visit to the Palace of Dragon King at the bottom of the ocean to preach her dharani to the inhabitants there. In gratitude, the Dragon Princess presented her with a precious pearl. Aside from this story, the source of the Dragon Princess can also be identified in the *Lotus Sutra*, although she is not specifically related to Guanyin in this scripture.¹⁷⁴ These different Buddhist sources legitimize neither Shancai's nor the Dragon Princess' status as the attendant of Guanyin in the iconography of the divine triad.

The transformation of Shancai and the Dragon Princess from their original roles in the Buddhist canon to the constant attendants of Guanyin is a result of indigenous modification. As early as in the twelfth century, the combination of Guanyin and Shancai and the Dragon Princess as the chief deity and her two attendants has already appeared, which is attested by

¹⁷² See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 9, p. 354.

¹⁷³ Amoghapasa is an esoteric form of Guanyin or Avalokitesvara who holds a lasso. For the discussion of the various esoteric forms of Avalokitesvara, see Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, ch. 2. To gain a deep insight of the form of the Thousand-handed Avalokitesvara, see the chapter 7 of the same book.

¹⁷⁴ See *Taisho shinshu daizokuyou*, V. 20, p. 88b, 252b. Also see Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 83, 440.

several groups of stone sculptures in Sichuan.¹⁷⁵ In the Yuan, this triad began to be associated with Mt. Putuo, and accordingly formed the iconography of Guanyin of the South Sea. Many Ming and Qing vernacular literature works mentioned the pair of Shancai and the Dragon Princess while talking about Guanyin or Guanyin of the South Sea, such as the *Xiyou ji*. Some of these works even tried to explain and justify the combination of these three, such as the *Nanhai Guanshiyin pusa chushen xiuxing zhuan* 南海觀世音菩薩出身修行傳 [The Biography of Bodhisattva Guanshiyin of the South Sea: Her Origin and Self-cultivation]¹⁷⁶ and the *Shancai longnu baojuan*, the latter of which is the “precious volume” I shall discuss next. They provide the pair of divine attendants with indigenous life stories to build up a relationship with Guanyin; these stories are varied in different works. In the popular Ming work *Nanhai Guanshiyin pusa chushen xiuxing zhuan*, for example, Shancai is said to be a young disciple who lost his parents when he was little and cultivated his nature alone in Mt. Dahua 大華. His self-cultivation enabled him to inspect good and evil deeds at a thousand-mile distance but still had not reached perfection. When Guanyin, who is the princess Miaoshan in the text, successfully attained enlightenment on Xiangshan, which is also identified as Mt. Putuo here, the Bodhisattva Dizang 地藏 suggested that she adopted a disciple, and Shancai was a candidate recommended to her by the Earth God. After verifying his sincerity, Guanyin accepted him as her pupil to constantly follow her. As for the Dragon Princess, she is the daughter of Dragon King’s third prince and always had an intention to

¹⁷⁵ While giving some details about these groups of the stone sculptures in Sichuan in the footnotes, Chun-fang Yu makes a special mention to a group of sculptures in the Cave of Perfect Enlightenment (*Yuanjue dong*), which are dated from 1099 to 1107. Her special concern with this site is not only because this site is the earliest example for the pairing of Shancai and the Dragon Princess, but also because the image of Shancai in this group is represented to be a young boy while other groups make him an old man resembling a foreign ascetic or Brahmin. See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, p. 545, note 22, and p. 549, note 17.

¹⁷⁶ See Xi da she chen zou ren 西大什辰走人 (Ming), [edited by Zhu, Dingchen 朱鼎臣 (Ming)], *Nanhai Guanshiyin pusa chushen xiuxing zhuan*, in *Gu ben xiaoshuo congkan* 古本小說叢刊 (Beijing: 1990), No. 16, v.1-v.5.

cultivate the Way. Her father once took the form of a carp to patrol the sea but was accidentally captured by a fisherman. When he was sold in the market, Shancai was dispatched by Guanyin to take the disguise of a customer, buy this carp and release him to the sea. In great gratitude, Dragon King decided to present Guanyin with a precious shining pearl. Grabbing this opportunity, the Dragon Princess volunteered to take this task and expressed to Guanyin her desire to learn from her. Valuing her piety, Guanyin accepted her to be her disciple, and bid Shancai and her to treat each other as brother and sister. Hence, Shancai and the Dragon Princess became the constant attendants of Guanyin.¹⁷⁷ This indigenous story of Shancai and the Dragon Princess is basically a combination of Buddhist sources and the author's imagination. Through the promotion of this kind of indigenous stories, the images of Shancai and the Dragon Princess as Guanyin's divine attendants were firmly rooted in the Chinese mind.

Though the iconography of Guanyin attended by Shancai and the Dragon Princess was greatly exalted by various tales, paintings and sculptures, and enjoyed great popularity among her devotees, the present "precious volume", nonetheless, gives the triangular relationship a new interpretation: Shancai and the Dragon Princess are not simply the attendants of Guanyin, but also her children. The kinship of the triad is clearly revealed in the two passages, both of which first relate Shancai and the Dragon Princess' detection of the Chang couple's prayer and then describing the inner struggle of Guanyin for being a compassionate and efficacious divinity and a mother at the same time after receiving the prayer and deciding to send down

¹⁷⁷ See Xi da she chen zou ren 西大什辰走人(Ming), [edited by Zhu, Dingchen 朱鼎臣 (Ming)], *Nanhai Guanshiyin pusa chushen xiuxing zhuan*, in *Gu ben xiaoshuo congkan*, Ch.2, p. 77-84.

Shancai and the Dragon Princess, her two children, to be their children.¹⁷⁸ These two passages are as follows:

Now you have heard the part talking about that the two people (the Chang couple) were finished praying. [At that moment,] the night had reached the time of the third night drum (one o'clock in the morning), so they returned to their bedroom to sleep. Let us put aside this part but talk about the White-robed Bodhisattva in the South Sea. She was absorbed into a meditation to contemplate that all things have no fundamental reality and attained a perfect absorption of meditation [at that moment]. The sincerity of the Gentleman [Chang] and the dame [Madam Sui] stimulated the bodhisattva, whose ears became hot and eyes fluttered, and prevented her from attaining tranquility. She called Shancai and the Dragon Princess in a big hurry to go to the four great continents of the world¹⁷⁹ to observe, saying "If there is any place where people are committing good or evil deeds, or doing things against their conscience, make a report me." Shancai and the Dragon Princess observed and hurried to make a report: "In the Shouyang district, Henan prefecture, the West Capital in the South Continent¹⁸⁰, there are Gentleman Chang Jinli as well as his dame, Madam Sui. These two persons pray for sons and daughters by reciting the title of the Venerable Mother". The Venerable Mother saw that in his last life he cultivated [the goodness to bring] blessings but did not cultivate his intelligence. "What should I do about this? Men and women commend me to be able to save those in sufferings when seeing suffering, and to save

¹⁷⁸ In the writing of "precious volumes", it is typical to see the authors to use prose to describe a plot first and then use a verse to rephrase the same plot. The prose is for narrating, and the verse is for singing. See Che Xilun, "Ming Qing minjian zongjia de jizhong baojuan", in *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu lunji*, p. 95-99.

¹⁷⁹ See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 173.

¹⁸⁰ "Nanzhan buzhou 南瞻部州", whose Sanskrit is Jambudvīpa, is originally a Buddhist term. It indicates one of the four continents, that situated south of Mt. Meru, comprising the world known to the early Indians. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous' *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 298. In the present "precious volume", this term is modified to indicate China.

those in disasters when seeing disasters. If I do not display my transforming power [to satisfy their wish], I will look short of compassion.” Deliberating for a while, she shed tears with bitterness and felt sad and troubled, calling *Yinger* and *Chanu*: “Which of you want to go down to be born?” Hearing this, *Yinger* refused to go down to be born. Hearing of this, *Chanu* was greatly astonished. The Venerable Mother then said: “If two of you do not go, then I will transgress my original vow, which will make the people in later generations not fond of doing good deeds to improve themselves.” Two of them answered: “It is difficult to leave the Venerable Mother.” When the bodhisattva heard this, she felt sad and was troubled with bitterness and grief.¹⁸¹

蓋聞說二人禱祝已罷，夜至三更，回後房睡下不提，卻說南海白衣菩薩入定觀空，禪中三昧，有員外婆婆虔誠感應菩薩耳熱心跳不得安寧，忙叫善才龍女往四大部州觀看一遍，那裡有行善作惡，有虧心之事，報與我知，善才龍女觀看一遍急忙來報，有南瞻部州西京河南府收陽縣，有員外常進禮，同婆婆隨氏，他二人求兒求女，念老母名號，老母觀見他前生修福，無從修慧，這事怎了，如之奈何，男女稱我逢苦救苦，逢難救難，我若不顯化，缺了慈心，尋思一會，眼流痛淚，發悲煩惱，叫嬰兒姪女，你二人誰去下生一遭，嬰兒聽說，不肯下生，姪女聽說，唬一大驚，老母便說，你二人不去，違我本願，使後人不好投賢進步，二人答曰，難離老母，菩薩聽說，發悲煩惱，痛苦傷情。

Talking about these two people (the Chang couple), they regulated their pious minds, which moved Guanyin.

In Mt. Potalaka, she was absorbed into a meditation, in which her wisdom eye looked in the distance.

¹⁸¹ See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chuj*, V. 12, p. 188-193.

[Suddenly,] her ears were hot and her eyes fluttered, which made her body and mind uneasy.

She called Shancai and the Dragon Princess: "Listen to my reason for calling you."

The Dragon Princess and Shancai knelt down on their two knees,

Asking the Venerable Mother: "Why did you call us?"

The Venerable Mother said: "[When I was] absorbed into a meditation, my body and mind were uneasy."

"Two of you observe with your clear-sightedness to see what is going on."

Hearing this, both of them dared not to be negligent.

They opened the clouds and looked down in the four directions, which were obscure.

They saw that in Shouyang district, there was a gentleman.

[He had a wife] Madam Sui, an old lady, who was in such great piety.

In front of Buddha image, both of them burned incense and took a vow,

Saying that they would not forget [the favor of] White-robed Guanyin, in order to pray for a son.

Hearing of this, Shancai rushed to make a report to the Venerable Mother.

After hearing of this matter, Mother signed with sadness.

She called the Dragon Princess and Shancai and asked them: "Which of you want to go?"

Hearing of going [down], both of them grasped the Mother,

Saying: "[We would like] to accompany Mother in the Bamboo Mountain to cultivate the true nature."

"Mother is so hard-hearted to send down two of us from the mountain."

The brother grasped the sister, and the sister grasped the brother. Both of them were vexed: "Mother is so hard-hearted to make two of us leave each other right now."

They told the Mother: "Let us stay in the mountain to realize the Way."

"We are afraid that after descending to be mortal fetuses, [we will be attracted to the mundane world,] like tiny particles are attracted to amber and needles are attracted to magnet.¹⁸²

The Venerable Mother listened to two of them, who were loath to leave each other.

Her eyes bore the tears resulting from observing their minds¹⁸³. She privately contemplated:

"Now, I start to ponder, and feel sad and troubled.

If I am loath to send them down, I will transgress my vow."

The Mother and children, all three, wept [together] with sadness and lamination.

The children grasped the mother, the mother held the children, and all started to cry aloud.

They cried so hard that they made the mountains overcast with dense mists and heavy clouds.

People on the earth do not know the Venerable Mother's inner struggle.

It is truly difficult for the Mother to send children to your family.

For after two, three, or five years, [the children and your family] will just forget the Mother.

Who can understand the Mother's compassion to give up her son and daughter?

¹⁸² According to the Mathews' Chinese English Dictionary, "*Zhen* 針" means needles, and "*jie* 芥" means a tiny particle. The magnet attracts needles; amber attracts tiny particles of matter; so the two characters are used to describe the situation that dispositions attract each other. P. 38, 634.

¹⁸³ "*Guanxin* 觀心" means to observe the mind. See *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo*, *Zhongwen da cidian*, V. 30, p. 379. In this passage, the mind could refer to the minds of *Yinger* and *Chanu* or the mind of the Venerable Mother.

She gives her blood son and daughter who are as dear as her marrow to become the children of others.¹⁸⁴

說二人, 虔心正, 感動觀音; 洛伽山, 禪有定, 慧眼遙睜; 耳又熱, 眼又跳, 身心不穩;
叫善才, 喚龍女, 聽我言因; 有龍女, 和善才, 雙膝跪下; 告老母, 有甚事, 吩咐兒童;
老母說, 禪有定, 身心不穩; 你二人, 慧眼觀, 有甚事情; 他兩個, 聽得說, 不敢怠慢;
撥雲頭, 四下觀, 杳杳冥冥; 眼看著, 收陽縣, 有一員外; 有隨氏, 老夫人, 那等虔誠;
在佛前, 焚上香, 二人發願, 求一兒, 不忘了, 白衣觀音; 善才聽, 急慌忙, 報與老母.
母聽說, 這件事, 感嘆傷情; 叫龍女, 喚善才, 你槓誰去; 有二人, 聽說去, 扯住母親;
培老母, 竹林山, 修真養性; 母恨心, 送二人, 去下山中; 哥扯妹, 妹扯哥, 二人煩惱;
母恨心, 叫咱兩, 眼下離分; 告老母, 留我在, 山中悟道; 怕的是, 落凡胎, 滾芥投針;
老母聽, 他兩個, 難割難捨; 眼噙著, 觀心淚, 自顧因沈; 我如今, 尋思起, 發悲煩惱;
捨不的, 下生去, 違我願心; 母子三, 只哭的, 傷情感嘆; 兒扯娘, 娘抱兒, 大放悲聲;
只哭的, 霧騰騰, 愁雲靄靄; 大地人, 全不知, 老母操心; 母送兒, 來你家, 非同容易;
過二年, 三五載, 忘了母親; 誰知道, 母慈心, 捨兒捨女; 把骨髓, 親兒女, 送與別人.

In these two passages, Guanyin or White-robed Guanyin is also called the Venerable Mother (*Laomu* 老母), the respectful title referring to the Eternal Mother, and Shancai and the Dragon Princess are respectively called *Yinger* 嬰兒 [Child] and *Chanu* 姪女 [Young girl]¹⁸⁵. The term *Yinger* can be identified in two different traditions. In Taoism, *Yinger* is a technical term of internal alchemy and is always paired with the other term *Chanu*. While *Chanu* refers to *yin* or the life force, *Yinger* symbolizes *yang* or the nature,¹⁸⁶ and the goal of the internal alchemical practice is to harmonize these two essential elements inside the mortal body in

¹⁸⁴ See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chuj*, V. 12, p. 194-202.

¹⁸⁵ See *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 204.

order to produce an immortal body. As for the other tradition, the sectarian religions, it provides the term *Yinger* with a totally different content. The term is usually associated with the Eternal Mother to be perceived under the theme of “children see their mother” (*Yinger jian mu* 嬰兒見母) in sectarian scriptures. In Eternal Mother mythologies, *Yinger* refers to all human beings, the lost children of the Eternal Mother, who is the mother-like source of all creatures. Becoming bewildered in the secular world, human beings forget their origins, so that they are unable to return home, the place where the Eternal Mother lives and where they originally came from, but experience all kinds of sufferings in the world. Sympathizing with and missing her stray and ignorant children, the Eternal Mother accordingly dispatches many divine missionaries to the world, or sometimes manifests herself, to find her children, instruct them and get them to return to their true home. The phrase “children see their mother”, therefore, expresses the reunion of the Eternal Mother and her lost children, which is also a status of spiritual enlightenment and pure happiness. The attainment of this status indicates the achievement of immortality, which is the ultimate goal of all sectarian teachings and will be accomplished only when the lost children follow the teachings of the Eternal Mother to cultivate their true nature.¹⁸⁷ The two meanings of the term *Yinger* in these two traditions are combined with each other in the *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*. This “precious volume” personifies the two internal alchemical elements—*Yinger* and *Chanu*, uses them to indicate the divine pair of Shancai and the Dragon Princess, and connects them to the sectarian theme of “children see their mother” to create a triad comprising of the Venerable Mother, *Yinger* and *Chanu*.

As indicated in the second quotation, the elements of the new triad are bound to each other by the relationship of mother and children, while *Yinger* and *Chanu* are depicted as

¹⁸⁶ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 11, p. 462, 469.

brother and sister. This new triad is meant to be identical to the triad of Guanyin and the divine pair, Shancai and the Dragon Princess, even though the latter is based on a master-attendant relationship, in which Shancai and the Dragon Princess serve as Guanyin's inspectors to observe the world and report to her. The triangle of the Venerable Mother, *Yinger* and *Chanu* provides the relationship among Guanyin, Shancai and the Dragon Princess with an unconventional meaning as well as supplies Guanyin with some odd characteristics distinct from her image in both Buddhism and folklore.

At first, while Shancai and the Dragon Princess, or *Yinger* and *Chanu*, are the children of Guanyin in the new triad, they are also the children Guanyin sent down to the world in response to the Chang couple's wish according to the scripture. However, their role as the children she gives to them is not based on any Buddhist source or other indigenous stories about Guanyin. In miracle tales about her, even though both boys and girls could be the children delivered by Guanyin to whoever sincerely prayed to her, the boys were never said to be Shancai, and the girls were never identified as the Dragon Princess. The most divine and miraculous mark associated with them is the white placenta symbolizing Guanyin's white robe, which only demonstrates that the children are from White-robed Guanyin but does not refer to her attendants, Shancai and the Dragon Princess. The delivery of Shancai and the Dragon Princess, a boy and a girl, to be the children at the same time slightly blurs the Chinese traditional focus on boys and, in a sense, corresponds to orthodox Buddhist perception of Guanyin. Her promise of giving boys and girls equally to childless parents is related in the Lotus Sutra. However, the sending down of Shancai and the Dragon Princess to be the Chang couple's children in the "precious volume" here possesses a more complicated meaning beyond this Buddhist egalitarianism. Due to the Daoist background of their

¹⁸⁷ See Daniel L. Overmyer, Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, p. 38, 47, 90-91, 189.

alternative names—*Yinger* and *Chanu*, Shancai and the Dragon Princess respectively symbolize yang and yin forces, the two essential elements of all creatures and the world. The harmonization of these two forces inside or outside the body is the way to keep the body and the outside world in a good shape. Thus, playing the role as their mother or the source of yang and yin forces, Guanyin or the Eternal Mother is actually regarded as Mother Nature in the scripture. Guanyin's, or the Eternal Mother's, sending down the yang and yin forces together is a gesture implying her creation and nourishment of the world. Therefore, in a way, Guanyin, identified with the Eternal Mother in "precious volumes", is exalted to the role of the world creator, which is never found in the Buddhist or the indigenous general understanding of her.

In addition to the relationship among the divine triad, the image of Guanyin herself shaped by this "precious volume" is also unconventional. According to the text, she is the Venerable Mother, having deep and true affection for both her children—Shancai and the Dragon Princess or *Yinger* and *Chanu*, and the people of the world. The passage about her heartbroken decision to send down her children, which I quoted previously, vividly conveys to us her softhearted image as a mother as well as an efficacious goddess. Nonetheless, the portrait of Guanyin as an old mother cannot be traced back to her Buddhist background or identified in her famous indigenous life story, the legend of *Miaoshan*. In Buddhism, Guanyin is an omnipotent and omnipresent bodhisattva with endless compassion. However, unlike the Eternal Mother, she is never confined to a specific sex or a fixed role, such as a mother, but always takes the most appropriate form to be manifest in the world to deliver the most appropriate aid and provide the most appropriate teachings to those in need. Her manifestations are varied according to different situations. Even though she was frequently reported as an old lady in the miracle tales related to her, especially after the Song, the old lady is not necessarily equivalent to a mother and is not the only image she manifests to

people. In fact, with the popularity of the legend of *Miaoshan*, in which she refused to get married, Guanyin is generally to be considered to be a virgin. This chaste image dominates ordinary people's imagination about her, no matter how she is portrayed in miracle tales or in various paintings and sculptures; hence, Guanyin as a mother of Shancai and the Dragon Princess is quite different from her Buddhist and general indigenous image.

c. The Personification of Guanyin

As the "precious volumes" provide Guanyin with a new image perceived in the kinship of Guanyin and the divine pair, Shancai and the Dragon Princess, there are also more detailed descriptions of her personality. For example, shedding tears and being sad are common phrases used to portray her feelings as she decides to give away her own children or when she misses them. This kind of depiction gives her an image of human beings and supplies her with rich human emotions and characteristics.

Her personal characteristics in the text other than a mother's heartbreak are best revealed in the divine course of stimulus and response (*Ganying* 感應) between the Chang couple and Guanyin. First, they are found in the description about how the sincerity of the Chang couple moved Guanyin: "[Suddenly,] her ears were hot and her eyes fluttered, which made her body and mind uneasy." For the Chinese, the sudden heat of ears and the sudden flutter of eyes are predictive physical reactions commonly indicating the happening of unknown events related to themselves. Using this kind of Chinese collective metaphor to illustrate the divine personality, the "precious volume" not only reduces the mystical color of Guanyin but also makes Guanyin's efficacy more comprehensible to her Chinese devotees.

Second, the passage about Guanyin's decision to respond the prayer of the Chang couple by sending down Shancai and the Dragon Princess to be their children also reveals the personified image of Guanyin in the scripture. The description of Guanyin's dilemma and

private contemplation about whether to send down Shancai and the Dragon Princess presents Guanyin's efficacious responses to be a result of deep deliberation, which, quoted previously, is as follows:

The Venerable Mother listened to two of them (Shancai and the Dragon Princess), who were loath to leave each other.

Her eyes bore the tears reflecting her mind. She privately contemplated:

"Now, I start to ponder, and feel sad and troubled.

If I am loath to send them down, I will transgress my vow."¹⁸⁸

This kind of inner struggle is totally different from the Buddhist perception of Guanyin's efficacious response. For Buddhism, the efficacious response of Guanyin is as spontaneous as what Master Hanshan described in his poem:

The Great Being [of Guanyin] does not have personal intentions, [and her responses] are as an echo responding the sound.

As long as someone is praying to her, she will reply immediately to his or her call.

大士無心，如響應聲；凡有求者，隨叫隨應。¹⁸⁹

In this poem, the sentence that Guanyin has no personal or selfish intentions can be comprehended as that Guanyin does not have a confused mind. A confused mind will lead to all kinds of deliberation and intentions. However, her mind is the true mind, which is extremely pure without any personal intent, so that her efficacious responses to prayers are not the consequence of any deliberation but the spontaneous results of the resonance between the purity of Guanyin's mind and her devotees' sincerity. This course of spontaneous "resonance" can be more easily understood in the example of a poetic sentence "In the water

¹⁸⁸ For the Chinese text of this quotation, see pp. 101-102.

¹⁸⁹ See Tong Jung (Ming), *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji*, V. 3, Ch. 33, p.38.

of a thousand rivers, there are a thousand moons reflected. 千江有水千江月”¹⁹⁰. The moon in the sentence symbolizes Guanyin. The moonlight indiscriminately illuminates the world, and the salvation from Guanyin is just like the moonlight to be provided to the people in the world indiscriminately, for she does not have a confused mind that makes any discrimination. As for the people who pray to Guanyin, their minds are just like the water in the rivers. When the water is tranquil without any wave, the moon will spontaneously appear in the water. When the devotees are sincere enough to reach a spiritual status of tranquility and purity, just like the waveless water, they will spontaneously see Guanyin respond their wishes or receive her help. Therefore, Guanyin’s responses to those in need and calling her name are spontaneous. As long as they discard their discrimination and use their most sincere minds to pray to her, they will realize that her efficacy in responding prayers is just as water reflects the moon, no matter where the water is. The illustration of an echo’s response to sounds in the Hanshan’s poem is another popular example used to emphasize the spontaneity of Guanyin’s responses, which, together with the purity of her mind, enables Guanyin to satisfy all kinds of wishes, and accordingly become an efficacious divinity in ordinary people’s mind. The Buddhist theory of Guanyin’s efficacious responses forms a striking contrast to the description about Guanyin’s bitter inner struggle in the present “precious volume”. From a Buddhist viewpoint, even though Guanyin’s final decision is still to satisfy the wish of the Chang couple by sending down her children in the “precious volume”, her pondering and cries, two human features, have made the course of her receiving and responding to prayers a result of a more complex mind.

Although the human qualities discussed above make Guanyin’s image different from her portrait in Buddhism, they increase her affinity with her devotees and shorten the distance

¹⁹⁰ The sentence is originally from *Huayen jing ti fajie guanmen song* 華嚴經題法界觀門頌, in *Taisho shinshu*

between them. With all kinds of human emotions and reactions, Guanyin is no longer a distant and lofty divinity in this “precious volume”, but a goddess with features that her devotees can identify within themselves.

d. Guanyin’s Teachings

Along with this innovative image of Guanyin, her teachings are also supplied with new contents in this “precious volume”. The new contents are composed of an emphasis on Guanyin’s promise of giving children, the practices of internal alchemy and the sectarian theme that “*Yinger* return home to see the Venerable Mother” revealed in the prologue and through the whole text. The combination of these three elements creates a non-Buddhist method of ultimate salvation, which is the topic I am going to analyze in this section.

At first, let us take a close look at the prologue. The prologue first describes the imbalance and imperfection of human life:

The multitude on the earth are [as mixed up] as hemp in the chaotic period. Some are rich, and some are noble. Some are poor, and some are humble. There are officials with official salaries. There are prime ministers, dukes, and high officials. There are [also] businessmen, scholars and so on. [Regardless of] richness, nobleness or poverty, the lives of people in four classes cannot be perfect. Those who are rich lack children, while those who are poor have many offspring.¹⁹¹

大地眾生，亂世如麻，有富有貴，有貧有賤，有爲官授祿，有宰相公卿，有商賈士人等，富貴貧窮，四眾人等，不得完全，有財的缺少兒女，貧窮的廣有子孫。

As for the reason of this imperfection, the prologue has Guanyin give it an explanation:

For those who have money, they cultivated [the goodness to bring] blessings but had no way to cultivate their intelligence in their last lives. For those who have no money,

daizoukyou, V. 45, p. 704b-0704, no. 1885.

they cultivated their intelligence but in their last lives had no way to cultivate the behavior causing blessings.¹⁹²

有財的前生修福, 無從修慧; 無財的前生修慧, 無從修福。

The lack of intelligence in last life makes people lack offspring in this life.¹⁹³

前世裡, 缺了慧, 今少子孫。

Whether a person cultivated goodness to bring blessing in his last life decides his richness or poverty in this life, and whether a person cultivated his intelligence in his last life determines whether he has any heirs in this life. Thus, if one cultivated the goodness and his intelligence equally in his last life, he will accordingly enjoy a perfect present life: having property and children at the same time. However, most people have a partiality toward blessings or intelligence, which makes their self-cultivation incomplete and causes the imperfection of their present lives. Therefore, Guanyin advised her devotees to commit good deeds and cultivate their intelligence at the same time in order to gain a perfect next life; the ways to undertake a balanced dual self-cultivation are to retain and recite the scripture, and to follow its teachings as well as to do good deeds and to keep a vegetarian diet.

After the discussion of the imperfection of the human life, the prologue switches its focus to White-robed Guanyin's promise of giving children:

For those who lack sons and daughters, they should pray to the White-robed bodhisattva. They can build temples for her, decorate or mold a golden image to her, or recite this "precious volume". Their sincerity will move the bodhisattva's compassionate mind to send *Yinger* and *Chanu* down to be born [as their children] to support their family's [prosperity], continue their family lineage, honor the parents and

¹⁹¹ See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chujì*, V. 12, P. 162-163.

¹⁹² See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chujì*, V. 12, P. 163.

become the root of the following generations. In case people do not believe [White-robed Guanyin's efficacy of giving children], there is a white placenta [clothing the granted baby at birth] as proof. Accordingly, people will know that it is true that the Eternal Mother gives people children.¹⁹⁴

或有少兒缺女, 該求白衣菩薩, 或建造廟宇, 粧塑金身, 或有宣念寶卷, 虔心有感菩薩慈悲, 送嬰兒姪女下生, 扶持門戶, 接續傳登, 光顯父母, 後代之根. 恐人不信, 有白衣胞爲証, 方知老母送得兒是實.

The white placenta symbolizing Guanyin's white robe to demonstrate the divine background of the new-born baby is mentioned here to assure the reliability of White-robed Guanyin's efficacy in responding people's wishes of obtaining sons and daughters. In addition, this passage also exemplifies the ways of praying to White-robed Guanyin for sons and daughters, which include building temples dedicated to White-robed Guanyin, molding a golden image for her, and reciting this "precious volume".

It is noteworthy that according to the prologue, reciting and keeping this "precious volume" in a respectful and sincere manner will not only result in the bestowal of children from Guanyin but also lead practitioners to attain a balanced dual self-cultivation; having heirs is just one of the benefits resulting from such balanced dual self-cultivation. Therefore, advocating the efficacy of White-robed Guanyin in giving children is not the only and ultimate theme of the teachings in this "precious volume" as its title *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan* [The Precious Volume Explaining the White-robed Guanyin Sending Infants Down to Be Born] seems to indicate. Guanyin's efficacy in giving children that is promoted here is simply a means to attract more devotees in order to introduce them to the more abstruse sectarian teachings and practices taught by the "precious volume".

¹⁹³ See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chujie*, V. 12, p. 169.

This hypothesis is further supported by the plot of the “precious volume”. The story of the Chang couple’s praying to White-robed Guanyin for an heir does not end up the point where White-robed Guanyin grants a son and a daughter to this couple but goes on to describe Guanyin or the Eternal Mother’s disguise as a wet nurse to live in the Chang family, her returning to Mt. Putuo, and the Chang family’s journey to Mt. Putuo. As the starting point of the story, the illustration of Guanyin’s efficacy of giving children is meant to bring in the sectarian teachings advocated by the scripture, which are the main messages that the scripture wants to convey to its readers.

The fundamental idea of the sectarian teachings in the “precious volume” is the common sectarian theme—the Eternal Mother’s looking for *Yinger* and the *Yinger*’s return home to see the Eternal Mother. Although the term *Yinger* is used exclusively to indicate Shancai in this scripture, other roles, such as the Dragon Princess, the Chang couple and their servants in the scripture are also *Yinger* in a sense, for all humankind is considered to be *Yinger*, the lost children of the Eternal Mother. In this case, the plot that the Eternal Mother descended the world to look for *Yinger* and *Chanu* as well as to convert the Chang family to her teachings of transcendence is a vivid interpretation of the Eternal Mother’s true affection toward the *Yinger* and her endeavor to get the *Yinger* back to their original home. Moreover, the Chang family’s pilgrimage to Mt. Putuo is actually a journey of returning home that *Yinger* took to see the Eternal Mother, or Guanyin in this scripture. As for Guanyin or the Eternal Mother’s response to the wish of the Chang couple by giving Shancai and the Dragon Princess to be their children, it is part of her scheme of providing ultimate salvation to the Chang family.

¹⁹⁴ See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chuj*, V. 12, p. 166.

As for the principal teachings taught by Guanyin or the Eternal Mother for ultimate salvation, they are the instructions of internal alchemy, which here are woven into the story line. The relevant abstruse terminologies can be found throughout the whole text. The purpose of the internal alchemical practices is to attain transcendence from mortal life. Comprehended in the context of the scripture and in the Eternal Mother's mythologies, internal alchemy is also the way for *Yinger* to return home to see the Eternal Mother. Even though the internal alchemical instructions that are written in mysterious language and scattered in different chapters of the text are hard to understand, we can still sense that there are different cultivation levels for the internal alchemical practitioners to meet. The Chang family's journey to Mt. Putuo seems to represent the progress of the cultivation levels. In other words, the route that starts from the Village of Two Forests (*Shuanglin Zuang* 雙林庄) and ends at Mt. Putuo is actually the cultivation course for mortals to become immortals.¹⁹⁵ As for the determination and industry of the Chang family in proceeding to the sacred site to pay their gratitude and reverence to Guanyin, they establish the model of the correct attitude for practicing the internal alchemy, which reminds the practitioners to be determined and diligent in the course of their self-cultivation.

In short, the teachings about the ultimate salvation elaborated in this "precious volume" are a compound of Guanyin's promise of giving children, the sectarian topic of *Yinger*'s return home to see the Eternal Mother and the internal alchemical practices. While Guanyin's giving children serves as a means to draw the child-seekers to the sectarian teaching—*Yinger* see the Eternal Mother, internal alchemy is the practical way to fulfill the goal of returning home to see the Eternal Mother, and the whole story in the scripture, from the Chang couple's praying for a son to their reaching Mt. Putuo to see Guanyin or the Eternal

¹⁹⁵ See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chuj*, V. 12, p. 459-532.

Mother, is an illustration of the teachings about ultimate salvation provided by Guanyin or the Eternal Mother. Transmitting such messages of ultimate salvation, the goddess with two identities promoted by this scripture appears to possess more sectarian features than Buddhist qualities.

e. Punishment

In chapter two, we have discussed the punishment inflicted on devotees if they take a vow to pray to Guanyin for a son but fail to fulfill their words after having their wishes satisfied. The vows are like contracts, which obligate devotees to fulfill their promises. A failure to fulfill the vows indicates the dishonesty and insincerity of vow-takers and will bring them divine punishment. As described in many miracle tales about Guanyin's bringing sons, the punishment for the negligent or ungrateful parents who did not fulfill their vows is either the illness or the untimely death of their children. This kind of divine punishment for ingratitude is also mentioned in the present "precious volume".

The passage below, extracted from this "precious volume", is a description of a story about when the Chang couple forgot to fulfill their third vow of making a pilgrimage to Mt. Putuo, Guanyin or the Eternal Mother thus decided to give the couple a punishment as a warning:

Then, [let us] talk about bodhisattva [Guanyin] who, on Mt. Putuo, made an observation [of the world] with her quick eyes and contemplated the three vows taken previously by the Gentleman Chang and his wife: "The first vow they took is to keep a lifelong vegetarian diet, which was fulfilled already. The second vow is to build a temple as well as to decorate and mold a gold image [for me], which was completed. The third vow says that after the son and daughter are old enough to understand

things¹⁹⁶, they will bring the son and daughter to make a pilgrimage to Mt. Putuo to pay reverence. From my observation of them, the *Yinger* and *Chanu* are twelve years old, but [the Chang couple] have forgotten their third vow. They have not said a word mentioning this vow.” [Therefore,] Bodhisattva sighed: “When you took the vow previously, the power of your vow was received by the four Celestial Staff in Personnel Evaluation Section¹⁹⁷ at that moment to send to my Mt. Putuo. I saw that the vows you took were as heavy as mountains, so out of my compassionate mind, I sent *Yinger* and *Chanu* to your home as your children to satisfy your wishes. [But now] I see that you recognize money only and covet children. You disobey your original vow and do not want to make a pilgrimage to Mt. Putuo. How can I not make a display today to make people in later generations know the marvels of my power?¹⁹⁸

再說菩薩普陀山慧眼觀看，想常員外同夫人發的三願在先，他一願吃了長齋已畢，二願蓋廟粧塑金身已完，三願說兒女惺是，同兒女去普陀山進香頂禮，我觀他嬰兒姪女一十二歲，忘了三願，不念一聲，菩薩嘆曰：“你當初發的願，那一時有四直公曹收你發的願力，他送往我普陀山中，我見你發的願深重如山，我發慈悲之心，把我嬰兒姪女送在你家爲子，滿你願力，我看你認財貪子，違了本願，不肯來山中進香，我今不顯化，使後人不知我老母妙用麼。

¹⁹⁶ According to *Mathews' Chinese English Dictionary*, “*Xing 惺*” means “intelligent” or “to comprehend”. As for the character “*Shi 是*”, I assume that it is a mistake of the word “*Shi 事*”, which means “things”. In this case, “*Xingshi*” means to have the intelligence to comprehend things, and “*Ernu xingshi 兒女惺是*” means that the son and daughter grow up to have basic intelligence to understand and distinguish things.

¹⁹⁷ The four characters of “*Sizhi gongxiao 四直公曹*” should be the miswriting of another four words “*Shizhi gongcao 四值功曹*”, which is a group title of four Daoist deities. They are four celestial officials responsible for preparing and processing merit ratings of immortals in the heaven realm and accordingly making reports to the Grand Jade Emperor. In addition, they are also responsible for receiving the document papers burned by Daoist priests or immortals to make a report to the divinities in the heaven realm. Each of the four celestial officials is separately in charge of the year, the month, the day, and the time. See *Daojiao da cidian 道教大辭典* [The Great Daoist Dictionary], compiled by the Chinese Daoist Association and the Suchou 蘇州 Daoist Association (Beijing: 1994), p. 383-384, and Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, p. 296.

¹⁹⁸ See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chujī*, V. 12, p. 442-445.

The display that Guanyin or the Eternal Mother decided to make is to take away the primal spirit of the son, which is not only a punishment for the Chang couple's ingratitude but also a reminder of their unfulfilled vow, and this tactic did receive its expected results: after the Chang couple realized their son's fainting resulted from their negligence to fulfill their vow, they repented immediately by taking another vow that they will fulfill their previous vow as soon as possible, which accordingly brought their son back, and before long, the Chang couple, together with their son and daughter, made a pilgrimage to Mt. Putuo and finally attained immortality.

According to the scripture, this kind of punishment plays a significant role in spreading Guanyin or the Eternal Mother's teachings. In a passage in which Guanyin or the Eternal Mother states her determination to inflict punishment on the Chang couple, she explains the necessity of punishment:

Today, if I do not show off my means [of punishment], there is no distinction between good deeds and bad deeds, [and in this case,] how can I teach people to commit good deeds? To differentiate good deeds from bad deeds is the correct way. [If I] acknowledge good deeds only without punishing bad deeds, [my teachings] will be incomplete, which will make me, the bodhisattva, look inefficacious in responding [good deeds and bad deeds]. [Then,] who will be willing to go to Mt. Putuo?¹⁹⁹

我今要不顯手段，無善無惡怎度賢，有善有惡方爲道，有善無惡不週全，顯的菩薩無感應，誰人肯進普陀山。

Urging people to do good deeds is a main concept of Guanyin or the Eternal Mother's teachings, and punishing evils is a way to draw a clear distinction between goodness and evil. Fairly rewarding goodness and punishing evil deeds will establish a righteous and efficacious

¹⁹⁹ See *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, in *Baojuan chuj*, V. 12, p. 447-448.

image of Guanyin or the Eternal Mother in devotees' minds, which will not only make her believers carefully observe her teachings about good and bad but attract more followers to her cult. Therefore, the scripture has Guanyin or the Eternal Mother give severe punishment to the Chang couple for their negligence, to convince the readers of her efficacy.

As revealed in the previous discussion, the image of Guanyin in the scripture is non-Buddhist. Not only is she identified to be the Eternal Mother, the highest divinity in sectarian religions, and so has dual identities, but also her kinship with Shancai and the Dragon Princess, her teachings, and her personal characteristics described in the scripture, together with the depiction of Mt. Putuo, contribute to shape an unconventional image of her. While the arrangement of the dual identities is for the purpose of using the popularity of Guanyin to attract more believers to the sectarian teachings about the Eternal Mother, the other non-Buddhist characteristics reflected in the scripture are demonstrations of the Chinese transformation of the Guanyin worship. Assimilated into Chinese local religions, the Buddhist Bodhisattva described in this scripture has lost her Buddhist features in every respect to be a sectarian goddess, transmitting sectarian teachings and enjoying reverence among sectarian groups.

B. Shancai longnu baojuan [The Precious Volumes of the Disciple Named Shancai and the Dragon Girl]

1. The Background of This Scripture

Aside from the Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan, the Shancai longnu baojuan is the other "precious volume" containing a story of Guanyin's giving sons to childless parents. The scripture itself claims to be produced in the Qianfu 乾符

reign period of the Tang (874-879 A.D.) by “Yanbo diaotu 煙波釣徒 [A man fishing in the foggy waves]”, a pseudonym hiding the real identity of the author.²⁰⁰ However, according to the *Zhongguo baojuan zongmu* 中國寶卷總目 [A General Bibliography of Chinese Precious Volumes] compiled by Che Xilun 車錫倫, this scripture should be dated to the Qing.²⁰¹ The iconography of the Guanyin of the South Sea promoted in the scripture, which started to gain its popularity after the Yuan, also denies the possibility for the “precious volume” to be a Tang work.

This “precious volume” seems to be a sectarian scripture, even though no name of any sectarian group is found in the text to identify its sectarian background. There are no mythologies of the Eternal Mother in this scripture. However, it contains a reference to the True Man of the Yellow Dragon (*Huanglong zhenren* 黃龍真人), a “close friend” of Miaoshan and a major character in the *Guanyin jidu benyuan zhenjing* 觀音濟度本願真經 [True Scripture of Guanyin’s Original Vow to Save and Transform People], a seventeenth-century sectarian scripture connected with the Way of the Former Heaven (*Xiantian dao* 先天道).²⁰² The appearance of the True Man of the Yellow Dragon in the scripture suggests the influence of the Way of the Former Heaven. In addition, the attainment of immortality as the ultimate goal of the teachings elaborated by the scripture and the instructions for internal alchemical practices provided in the text as the cultivation way to attain immortality are also the goal and cultivation way taught by the Way of the Former Heaven.²⁰³ Therefore, even

²⁰⁰ See *Shancai longnu baojuan*, in *Baojuan chujī*, V. 27, p. 117.

²⁰¹ See Che Xilun, *Zhongguo baojuan zongmu*, p. 200.

²⁰² See Chun-fang Yu, *The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 10, p. 443; and Yu, Songqing 喻松青, “Jiexi ‘Guan Yin jidu benyuan zhenjing’ –yi bu jiajie Guan Yin dashi xuanchuan minjian mimi zongjiao jiaoyi de jingjuan 解析 ‘觀音濟度本願真經’ 一部假借觀音大士宣傳民間秘密宗教教義的經卷”, in *Minjian mimi zhongjiao jingjuan yanjiu* 民間秘密宗教經卷研究, edited by Yu Songqing (Taipei: 1994). Also see Che Xilun, “Ming Qing minjian zongjiao de jizhong baojuan”, in *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu lunji*, p. 107-111.

²⁰³ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 10, p. 461-467.

though we do not have solid evidence to classify this scripture as a work of the Way of the Former Heaven, there is still a probability that the practitioners of this specific sectarian group composed this scripture.

2. The Contents of The Scripture

Based on the title of the scripture, *Shancai longnu baojuan* [The Precious Volume of Shancai and the Dragon Princess], one is inclined to have the impression that this scripture is exclusively dedicated to the promotion of the worship of Shancai and the Dragon Princess, the divine attendants of Guanyin. As the matter of fact, even though the indigenous life stories about Shancai and the Dragon Princess cover the majority of the scriptural contents, the “precious volume” also contains a passage about a filially pious white parrot. The white parrot as well as Shancai and the Dragon Princess are three important elements of the iconography of Guanyin of the South Sea. Their life stories provided in the scripture, which offer an explanation of their connections to Guanyin different from their Buddhist sources and other vernacular tales about them, are meant to give the formation of this famous Guanyin iconography a new interpretation.

The interpretation is revealed in the story line of the scripture, which begins with a childless Tang official praying to Guanyin for an heir. According to the scripture, this official is named Chen Debao 陳德寶, who was already fifty but still had no son. Chen and his wife, Madam Han 韓, therefore, made a pilgrimage to Mt. Putuo and prayed to Guanyin of the South Sea for a son by vowing to rebuild the temple and burn incense. Moved by the sincerity of Chen and also knowing his destiny of having no son, Guanyin granted him “The Boy Who Attracts Wealth” (*Zhaocai tongzi* 招財童子), an attending fairy who served under the Heavenly Official Who Bestows Blessings (*Cifu tianguan* 賜福天官) and was about to be

banished from heaven to earth by the Heavenly Emperor for wrongly bestowing wealth, so that Chen could benefit from the future enlightenment of the boy bestowed on him. The boy, named Chen Lian 陳連, had a spiritual disposition, which was revealed when he was three years old. His desire for searching spiritual enlightenment, however, conflicted with his father's expectation for him—to be a high-ranking official. At the age of seven, the boy was sent to Two Immortals Mountain (*Erxian shan* 二仙山) by his father to study literature and martial arts after the True Man of the Yellow Dragon, a Daoist Master and a close friend of Guanyin, as the preparation for his future development. However, instead of observing his father's bidding, he studied the ways of attaining immortality from the teacher chosen by his father, and received a dharma name Shancai. Staying there for three years, the boy did well. In order to test him, the master asked him to take care of the cave they lived in and then left to visit his friends. Partly due to loneliness and partly because that day was the eve of the sixtieth birthday of his father, Shancai decided to go home for a visit. But on his way home, he was ensnared by a snake demon that cried for help in a girl's voice. Out of compassion, Shancai released her from a bottle, but she immediately reverted to the form of a huge python and wanted to eat him. After a long disputation about whether one should return favors with favors or with ingratitude, Guanyin, who took the form of a little girl, saved Shancai and tricked the snake demon to crawl into another small bottle. She then imprisoned the snake in the bottle, put her in the Cave of Tidal Sounds and told her to wash out the poison from her heart. Spending seven years, the snake succeeded in purging her mind of evils and transformed herself into the Dragon Princess, and her poisonous heart was accordingly transformed into a night-illuminating pearl, which she presented to Guanyin. As for Shancai, Guanyin took him to Mt. Putuo after rescuing him and instructed him in the ways of practicing internal alchemy. Finally, he attained immortality and benefited his parents.

After the narrative about how Guanyin recruited Shancai and the Dragon Princess, the focus of the scripture switches to the white parrot. According to the present “precious volume”, the white parrot was not only clever but also filially pious. In order to find cherries for her ill mother, the parrot was unfortunately seized by a hunter and imprisoned in a cage for a year. During the year, she transformed many evil people to do good deeds, which moved Bodhidharma 達摩 to help her escape from her imprisonment by teaching her to feign death. However, by the time she returned home, she found her mother had died already. Due to excessive grief, the white parrot fainted away, which moved Guanyin to appear to save her life and enable her parents to be reborn in human realm. In the end, Guanyin took her to the South Sea to cultivate the way and be forever by her side.

While the Buddhist sources of Shancai and the Dragon Princess are barely reflected in their life stories in the present “precious volume”, some elements comprising the sketch of the white parrot’s tale here can be identified in two Buddhist stories. One of the stories is in the *Za baozang jing* 雜寶藏經 [Sutra of Miscellaneous Treasures] and narrates that the future Buddha was once a filially pious parrot who used to carry grains of rice from a farmer’s field. Seeing the parrot doing so, the farmer was infuriated and captured the parrot. The parrot, thereupon, reminded him of his own vow, making him relent, and let the parrot go.²⁰⁴ The other story is compiled into the *Liudu ji jing* 六度集經 [Sutra on the Collection of the Six Perfections], in which a parrot is described as escaping from its captor by feigning death.²⁰⁵ The first story mentions filial piety as the parrot’s virtue, as the second story contains the plot of the parrot’s feigning death, and both the filial piety and the plot of feigning death are

²⁰⁴ The *Za baozangjing* is translated by Jiqiye 吉迦夜 and Tanyao 曇曜 (Yuan Wei), in *Taisho shinshu daizoukyou*, V. 4, no. 203. Also see Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 10, p. 444.

²⁰⁵ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 10, p. 444. The *Liudu jijing* is translated by Kang Senghui 康僧會 (Wu), in *Taisho shinshu daizoukyou*, V. 3, no. 152.

included in the white parrot's tale in the present "precious volume". While these two Buddhist tales contain only the segments of the white parrot's tale, its complete plot seemingly comes from another "precious volume". This scripture, entitled the *Yingge baojuan* 鸚哥寶卷 [Precious Volume of the Parrot], is a Qing work.²⁰⁶ Its author devoted the whole scripture to narrate the same story of the filial pious white parrot, including her determination of finding cherries for her ill mother, her misfortune of being captured, her sermon to bad people, and divine help from the Bodhidharma and Guanyin. Therefore, this scripture is a detailed version of the white parrot's tale in the *Shancai longnu baojuan*; the author of the *Shancai longnu baojuan* seemed to have known this scripture before composing his own work.

However, the story of the *Yingge baojuan* is not an original creation, either. It is indebted to another vernacular literary text, which bears the title *Xinke quanxiang yingke xiaoyi zhuan* 新刊全相鸚哥孝義傳 [Newly Printed and Completely Illustrated Tale of the Filial and Righteous Parrot] that was already popular in the fifteenth century.²⁰⁷ Basically, this story also relates the filial pious white parrot's adventure of finding cherries for her ill mother, in which she experienced a misfortune of being captured and could not see her mother before she died, and finally, her filial piety moved Guanyin to make her mother achieve rebirth in the Pure Land and to take her to be her constant assistant. However, its plot is more intricate than that in the *Yingge baojuan* and in the *Shancai longnu baojuan*. For example, this literary text has a description about the white parrot's intelligence of reading sutras and chanting the name of the Buddha. It also mentions her experience of being presented to the emperor due to her

²⁰⁶ See Che Xilun, *Zhongguo baojuan zongmu*, p. 247.

²⁰⁷ See Chun-fang Yu, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, Ch. 10, p. 444-446.

talent of making poems.²⁰⁸ Both of these themes are not found in the *Yingge baojuan* and the *Shancai longnu baojuan*.

The narrative about how Guanyin recruited Shancai, the Dragon Princess and the white parrot as her constant attendants not only explains the iconography of Guanyin of the South Sea but also contains moralistic teachings, such as the concepts of karmic cause, returning favors with favors, and filial piety. The law of causality is mentioned in the description of Chen Debao's fate of having no heir: "His destiny of having no son had a causation in his previous life. 他命中註定無子, 原是前生因果."²⁰⁹ The explanation of the Heavenly Emperor's inflicting a penalty on "The Boy Who Attracts Wealth" also conveys the importance of the law of causality to the readers: "Although The Boy Who Attracts Wealth's indiscriminate distribution of wealth to people was out of his good will and compassion, he had broken the Heavenly Emperor's policy of rewards and punishment and confused moral causality. Therefore, the Heavenly Emperor was furiously angry and degraded [his celestial status] as punishment. 雖發善念, 一片慈心, 因濫施人財, 破天帝之賞罰, 已錯因果, 因此天帝憾怒, 而受貶罰."²¹⁰ As for the teachings of returning favors with favors and filial piety, they are respectively revealed in the argument between Chen Lian and the snake demon and the life story of the white parrot.

In addition to the moralistic teachings, the scripture also values the pursuit of immortality, which is promised to benefit not only the practitioners themselves but also their family and ancestors. Shancai's story is the best example to encourage the readers to follow the model that he set up to persistently pursue the ways of transcending the mortal life. Along with the story line, the instructions of internal alchemy are introduced as the ways of self-

²⁰⁸ See *Ming Chenghua shuocha cihua congkan* 明成化說唱詞話叢刊 [The Collection of the Lyrics for Speaking and Singing during the Chenghua Reign Period of the Ming], vol. 10 (Beijing, Wen-wu: 1979).

²⁰⁹ See *Shancai longnu baojuan*, in *Baojuan chujī*, V. 27, p. 119.

cultivation to attain immortality, which hints at the present scripture's possible connection with sectarian groups.

3. The Role of Guanyin Who Brings Sons

While the *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan* is based on the iconography of Guanyin of the South Sea to create an unusual image of Guanyin corresponding to its sectarian teachings, this famous iconography of Guanyin is also the main theme of the *Shancai longnu baojuan*. As the *Shancai longnu baojuan* is dedicated to promote this iconography of Guanyin, Guanyin's role of giving sons in the scripture is not separated from this famous Guanyin image to be personified and worshipped as Guanyin Who Brings Sons. On the contrary, this role is incorporated into this Guanyin's iconography as a duty attributed to her. The plot of the Chen couple's praying for an heir to Guanyin of the South Sea instead of Guanyin Who Brings Sons clearly reflects that bringing sons is one of the powers that the devotees attribute to Guanyin, which is also the attitude most of the Chinese devotees hold, so that they will go to Guanyin Altars to pray for children if they do not build a shrine exclusively devoted to Guanyin Who Brings Sons.

It is noteworthy that the purpose for Guanyin to give a son to the Chen couple in the scripture is not to continue their family line, for the granted boy, having his last life in the heaven as "The Boy Who Attracts Wealth", possessed an unworldly disposition, which led him to leave home to study the ways of attaining immortality and finally became Guanyin's disciple and attendant. Guanyin's intention, which is revealed in the scripture, is to help "The Boy Who Attracts Wealth", who was degraded from the celestial realm, to complete the perfection of his self-cultivation while satisfying the Chen couple's wish of obtaining a son

²¹⁰ See *Shancai longnu baojuan*, in *Baojuan chuiji*, V. 27, p. 119-120.

and rewarding Chen as a righteous official by bestowing on him and his wife unworldly benefits brought from the granted son's future enlightenment. Therefore, the continuation of family lines is not the main concern for Guanyin to bring a son to the Chen family. Instead, it is the means that Guanyin uses to introduce the Chen couple and the readers to the pursuit of immortality and transcendence, which are what Guanyin actually values in the scripture.

As for the relationship between Guanyin and the granted boy who became Shancai later, there is no mother-and-son kinship in this scripture. Rather, the role Guanyin plays in the relationship is first as a savior and then as a master. Her role as a savior is illustrated in the story that Guanyin took the disguise of a little girl to save Shancai from the snake demon, and her role as a master is reflected in narrative that she instructed Shancai, as well as the snake demon, to cultivate their natures to attain immortality in the end. These two roles of Guanyin are in line with the Buddhist or Chinese conventional imagination about her, for as a Buddhist bodhisattva she is renowned for delivering timely aid, and in the *Huayan jing*, she is also one of the "good friends" who taught Shancai the ways of her self-cultivation.

Although these two roles of Guanyin can be identified in her Buddhist background, her status in the Chinese celestial hierarchy reflected in the scripture, on the other hand, suggests the assimilation between Guanyin worship and Chinese local cults. In the scripture, Guanyin is not fused with the Eternal Mother as the highest divinity in the sectarian pantheon as in the *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*, but arranged into the Chinese celestial bureaucracy headed by the Grand Jade Emperor to be known as Bodhisattva Guanshiyin Who Saves Those in Sufferings and in Disasters with Great Compassion and Follows Their Voices to Save Those in Sufferings with Great Efficacious Powers (*Daci dabeijiu kujiunan guangda linggao xusheng jiuku Guanshiyin pusa* 大慈大悲救苦救難廣大靈感

尋聲救苦觀世音菩薩).²¹¹ This image as a compassionate savior still indicates her Buddhist source, but the role as a celestial bureaucratic member is a product of Chinese indigenous religious teaching. Therefore, the image of Guanyin represented in this scripture is the perception of Chinese indigenous religious teaching about a Buddhist bodhisattva.

²¹¹ See *Shancai longnu baojuan*, in *Baojuan chujī*, V. 27, p. 119-121.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Worship of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in Practice

The worship of Guanyin Who Brings Sons is not just a cult in history reflected in miracle tales, Chinese vernacular literature and relevant historical records. It is also a living religious tradition, which is still in practice today. Even though miracle tales about Guanyin's bringing sons have revealed to us the various ways that protagonists prayed to this divinity for heirs, and these ways are extremely likely followed by the contemporary worshippers, the picture of this worship at the level of practice illustrated in the records of miracle tales is not complete. Most of the miracle tales are from Buddhist sources, but the development of the worship has gone far beyond the Buddhist dimension to be incorporated into Chinese indigenous religious beliefs, which is exemplified by the contents of the two "precious volumes" discussed previously. Besides, even in Buddhism, there are also other sources related to the practice of this worship in addition to the miracle tales. Therefore, the investigation of other Buddhist and non-Buddhist materials describing or instructing the practice of this worship is the topic of this chapter, in the hope of presenting the reader with a clear sketch of the living religious practice.

The practices of worshipping Guanyin Who Brings Sons can be generally divided into two categories—orthodox Buddhism and folk Buddhism, according to the sources of the material. Folk Buddhism indicates religious phenomena resulting from the interactions of Buddhism and Chinese indigenous religious beliefs. Devotees in these two different religious dimensions not only have different perceptions of Guanyin Who Brings Sons but also follow different methods to pray to her for heirs. In orthodox Buddhism, a memorial of praying to Guanyin for an heir written by Buddhist Master Yinguang 印光大師 (1860-1940) on behalf

of a childless devotee serves as a guideline for those who would like to take refuge of Bodhisattva Guanyin and pray to her for heirs to observe. In folk Buddhism, the recitation of the *Baiyi dashi shenzhou* 白衣大士神咒 [Divine Mantra of White-robed Great Being], an indigenous scripture usually found printed on little cards or pieces of paper in local temples or shrines for free circulation, is a popular means for local people to pray to Guanyin for heirs. In addition, there are also other customs of praying for heirs closely related to the temple festivals dedicated to Guanyin. These practices are examined in what follows.

A. *Linian Guanshiyin pusa qiuzi shu* 禮念觀世音菩薩求子疏 [A Memorial of Respectfully Worshipping Bodhisattva Guanshiyin to Pray for Sons]

According to the appendix of the memorial, this document was written by Buddhist Master Yinguang in 1940 for a childless devotee named Zhang Detian 張德田, who was a native of Yongjia 永嘉 in Zhejiang 浙江 province and wanted to pray to Guanyin for a son. Master Yinguang was the thirteenth patriarch of Pure Land School and was dedicated to the promotion and practice of the way of reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha to be reborn to the Pure Land.²¹² His writings were abundant, compiled as the *Yinguang fashi wenchao* 印光法師文鈔 [The Selection of Master Yinguang's Writings], the *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian* 印光法師文鈔續編 [A Continuation to the Selection of Master Yinguang's Writings], and other materials. This memorial is from the *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian*. It consists of three parts: the petition, the explanation of the three essential points of praying for sons, and an appendix of taboos; it is meant to serve as the Buddhist guide to instruct devotees the correct attitude and ways of praying to Guanyin for heirs.

²¹² See Master Shoucheng 守成法師, *Lidai jingtu gaoseng xuanji* 歷代淨土高僧選集 [A Selection of the Biographies of the Pure Land Eminent Monks through Dynasties] (Taipei: 1992), p. 37-39.

The translation of the petition is as follows:

Thanks to the great and deep vows of the Great Being Guanyin, all sentient beings in the dharma realm could equally receive [blessings from her]. For those who have not sowed good seeds, or whose good seeds have not been growing mature or be released, [Guanyin] will make them sow their good seeds immediately or make their good seeds mature or released immediately. If one can be conveyed to deliverance by a certain form, she will immediately manifest herself in such a form to preach dharma for such a person [no matter which form it is]. It is greatly owing to that the Great Being [Guanyin] does not have personal intentions but takes the thoughts of all living beings as her own; and that the Great Being does not have any [selfish] thoughts but takes the thoughts of all living beings as her own. Therefore, her compassion rises without immediate causal connection, and her empathy arises from the same nature. Just as the brilliant moon that is reflected in thousands of rivers indiscriminately, just as the spring that nourishes millions of flowers everywhere. She indiscriminately responds to the stimulus all over the numberless worlds. There is no prayer that she does not satisfy. As long as there is a wish, she will follow it [to make it come true]. Disciple ○○○, together with Wife ○○○, hate the danger of the way of the world and sympathize with sunken and overwhelmed human minds, which are getting worse and worse without an end. I respectfully hope that the Great Being will grant us a son with blessings, excellence and wisdom, in hope that in the future, if in the situation of poverty, he will attend to his own virtue in solitude to provide guidance in one area; and if successful, he will further reform and restore [the way of the world], which has collapsed as in a severe flood. [Here,] I particularly covenant three agreements to

provide an introduction for others.²¹³ The first one is to nourish the body and restrain lusts. The second one is to harmonize human relations and accumulate virtues. The third one is to give fetuses and little children good influence. [I shall] make strenuous efforts to observe these three things and wish not to be ungrateful for the Great Being's great compassion. Also, I beseech that all people inside and outside the four seas can all restrain their evil intentions and start good thoughts. So, all can give birth to sons with blessings, excellence and wisdom, and all can understand the universal shelter [from the Great Being] and fill up [their hearts] with benevolence. All will view neighboring countries as their own hands and feet, as well as consider the whole world to be a family. [All will] support but not infringe and violate each other in order to comfort the fatherly heaven and the motherly earth who bestow on us great favors in the upper, and below to coincide with role of human beings allied with the heaven and earth, and called "Three Powers"²¹⁴. When great chaos is turned into great order, then the whole world will join in congratulation. To expand Buddhist teachings in the midst of heaven and earth; then the millions of countries will all be peaceful. I only hope that the bodhisattva can bestow fearlessness universally, sympathizing with my humble sincerity and satisfying my wish.

Disciple ○○ bows a hundred times and respectfully present [this memorial] on ○○ year ○ month ○○ day.²¹⁵

伏以觀音大士，誓願洪深，法界有情，等蒙攝受。善根未種未熟未脫者，令其即種即熟即脫。應以何身得度者，即現何身而為說法。良由大士無心，以眾生之心為心。大士無念，以眾生之念為念。故得慈起無緣，悲運同體。如皓月之普印千江，若陽春之

²¹³ "Xianrong 先容" means "to make an introduction for another". See R. H. Mathews, A Chinese-English Dictionary (Shanghai: 1931), P. 400.

遍育萬卉。徧塵刹感，徧塵刹應，無求不遂，有願皆從也。弟子○○○同室人○○○痛世道之危岌，愍人心之陷溺，愈趨愈下，了無底止。仰冀大士賜我福德智慧之子，以期將來窮則獨善，以倡導於一鄉。達則兼善，挽狂瀾於既倒。特立三約，以爲先容。一保身節欲，二敦倫積德，三胎幼善教。勉行此三，以期無負大士之洪慈也。又祈四海內外，一切同人，咸息惡心，咸發善念。咸生福德智慧之子，咸體普覆並載之仁。視鄰邦如手足，以天下爲一家。互相維持，不相侵暴，以期上慰乾父坤母之洪恩，下符與天地並稱三才之人名。轉大亂爲大治，普天同慶。暢佛化於兩間，萬國咸寧。唯願菩薩，普施無畏，愍我愚誠，滿我所願。○○年○月○○日弟子○○百拜上呈

This prayer first extols the great merits of Bodhisattva Guanyin who provides universal salvation to all sentient beings in the dharma world by assuming different but appropriate forms according to different situations. After such praise, the prayer goes on to state its purpose—praying for a son granted by Guanyin. The names of devotees who would like to make such a wish should be provided here together with a statement of worrying the disorder of the world. This statement teaches devotees that their desire of having a son should not be simply based on the concern with the continuation of their own family lines. They should bear a greater intention to benefit the whole society as praying for a son. Following this, Master Yinguang gave three instructions for son-seekers to observe. The detailed explanation of the three instructions are provided in the second part of the memorial—*Qiuzi sanyao* 求子三要 [Three Essential Points of Praying for Sons].

The *Qiuzi sanyao* first points out the importance and purposes of these three instructions:

²¹⁴ “*Sancai* 三才” means “the Three Powers”. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 976.

²¹⁵ See *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian* (Taipei: 1997), V. 2, p. 524.

The first one is to nourish the body and restrain lusts in order to nurse one's natural physical endowments. The second one is to harmonize human relations and accumulate moral merit in order to establish the foundation of blessings. The third one is to give the fetus and infant good influence in order to prevent [the granted son] from following the flow [of the prevailing customs]. I earnestly hope that these three important things can be carried out. Then, use the upmost sincerity to respectfully worship Guanyin, praying for the bestowal of a son with blessings, excellence and wisdom to honor the clan and glorify the country. [By doing so,] one's wish will be definitely satisfied, and he or she will not be ungrateful for the holy favor [from Guanyin].²¹⁶

第一保身節欲, 以培先天. 第二敦倫積德, 以立福基. 第三胎幼善教, 以免隨流. 此三要事, 務期實行. 再以至誠, 禮念觀世音, 求賜福德智慧光宗華國之子, 必能所求如願, 不負聖恩矣.

These three instructions respectively stand for different concerns about having a son. The first one about nourishing the body and restraining lusts, which aims to nurse the natural physical endowments, is related to the physical condition of bearing a son. The explanation of the first instruction is as follows:

First, nourish the body and restrain lusts to nurse one's natural physical endowments. If one does not restrain his lusts, his essential forces will then be weak, which will definitely make it difficult to become pregnant. Even if conception bears, [the fetus] will definitely be hard to grow up to become an adult. Even if it grows up, its insufficient natural physical endowments will determine the weakness [of the person]. He will not have a healthy and strong body and an intelligent mind good at

²¹⁶ See *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian*, V. 2, p. 525.

memorizing. He will be weak before getting old and have no achievements. In this case of praying for a son, even though the bodhisattva satisfies his or her wish, he or she is actually greatly ungrateful for the bodhisattva's favor.²¹⁷

第一保身節欲, 以培先天者. 若不節欲, 則精氣薄弱, 必難受孕, 即或受孕, 必難成人. 即或成人, 以先天不足, 決定孱弱. 既無強健勇壯之身力, 亦無聰敏記憶之心力, 未老先衰, 無所樹立. 如是求子, 縱菩薩滿人之願, 人實深負菩薩之恩矣.

According to this passage, unrestrainedly going after lusts does not simply drain out or weaken one's essential forces to make it difficult to become pregnant. Furthermore, if a baby is produced in such an insufficient prenatal condition, the weak essential forces will result into a chain reaction, in which the weak essential forces will first decide the feebleness of the fetus, the feeble fetus will then grow up to become a physically and mentally feeble person, and the physical and mental situation of such a person will decide his future failure. Therefore, it is necessary to ask son-seekers to restrain their lusts.

The second instruction stands for another prenatal condition for having a son, which is the accumulation of plentiful moral merits to establish the foundation of blessings. Receiving a son granted by Guanyin is a kind of blessings. As for how the bestowal of sons relates to the accumulation of moral merit, the famous Buddhist scholar official Yuan Huang 袁黃 in the Ming provided an explanation in his work *Qisi zhenquan* 祈嗣真詮 [True Instructions for Praying for an Heir]. In this work, he put this condition in the second place among all of the instructions for praying for an heir and said:

If a person has committed enough good deeds to benefit a hundred generations, he will definitely have a hundred generations of offspring. If the good deeds are sufficient to benefit ten generations, he will definitely have ten generations of offspring. If the good

²¹⁷ See *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian*, V. 2, p. 525.

deeds are sufficient to benefit three or four generations, he will definitely have three or four generations of offspring.²¹⁸

善足被乎百世，則必有百世之子孫。善足以被乎十世，則必有十世之子孫。善足以被乎三世四世，則必有三世四世之子孫。

He also said:

As for those who lack heirs, their virtues are thin, so that there is no one to present offerings in sacrifice to their family shrines, and their offspring will not be blessed or secure.²¹⁹

無嗣者，德薄而宗廟不享，子孫不保。

Therefore, the accumulation of moral merit is the foundation of getting an heir. As for the ways of accumulating moral merit, Master Yinguang clearly illustrated them in the explanation of the second instruction:

Second, harmonize human relations and accumulate moral merit to establish the foundation of blessings. If one wants to give birth to a son with blessings, excellence and wisdom to honor the clan and glorify the country, he or she must harmonize human relations, fulfill his or her obligations, be filially pious to parents, respect elders, treat relatives well and pity servants. These are what to do in the family. As for neighbors, relatives and friends, it would be proper to keep peace with all of them and exhort them so as to enable elders to teach sons and daughters well and youth to serve parents well. Frequently harmonize human relations to fulfill one's own obligations. Restrain evil thoughts, and preserve honesty. Do not commit all kinds of evil deeds, but carry out all kinds of good deeds. Abstain from killing, and protect living beings.

²¹⁸ See Yuan Huang (Ming), *Qisi zhenquan*, in *Baibu congshu ji cheng chubian* 百部叢書集成初編 [The First Compilation to Completely Gather a Hundred Collections of Reprinted Works] (Taipei: 1965), V. 90, p. 4.

²¹⁹ See Yuan Huang (Ming), *Qisi zhenquan*, in *Baibu congshu ji cheng chubian*, V. 90, p. 4.

Keep a vegetarian diet, and recite the name of [Amitabha] Buddha in the hope of being reborn in the western [paradise] and forever escape from the suffering of cycles [of birth and death]. Sincerely explain [Buddhist teachings] for people without discrimination to help them nourish their excellent causes of transcendence and to make all of them become good people and observe the right way. If one can do so, his or her every motion can benefit both him/herself and others, and his or her every word and behavior can be the model. His or her son will definitely surpass all others, be outstanding, and have great achievements. [In this case,] the bodhisattva can of course satisfy people's wishes, and people also can comfort the bodhisattva's mind.²²⁰

第二敦倫積德，以立福基者。欲生福德智慧光宗華國之子，必須敦倫盡分，孝親敬長，善待眷屬，愍恤僕使，此行之家庭者。至于鄉黨親朋，俱宜和睦勸導。俾老者善教兒女，幼者善事親長。常以敦倫盡分，閑邪存誠，諸惡莫作，眾善奉行，戒殺護生，喫素念佛，願生西方，永出苦輪。普為同人，懇切演說，令培出世之勝因，咸作守道之良民。能如是者，一舉一動，悉益自他，一言一行，堪為模範。所生之子，必能超群拔萃，大有樹立。菩薩固能滿人之願，人亦可慰菩薩之心矣。

Simply speaking, the practice of accumulating moral merit is to fulfill one's obligations in human relations at home and to behave oneself morally in one's neighborhood and society; so the teachings of Buddhism can be the moral standards for all people to observe. Son-seekers should not only carry out Buddhist teachings by themselves, but also convey them to others to make everyone "not commit all kinds of evil deeds, but carry out all kinds of good deeds, to abstain from killing, and protect living beings, and to keep a vegetarian diet, and recite the name of [Amitabha] Buddha in the hope of being reborn in the western [paradise] and to forever escape from the suffering of cycles [of birth and death]". By doing so, one will

²²⁰ See *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian*, V. 2, p. 525.

definitely accumulate great moral merit to cause the birth of a wonderful son granted by Guanyin.

The third instruction is concerned with the prenatal and postnatal education of sons. The importance and purpose of this instruction are pointed out in the following few sentences:

Third, give the fetus and the infant good influence to prevent [the son] from following the flow [of the prevailing customs]. Ancient sages were all brought up through good education of their wise parents, not to mention ordinary people.²²¹

第三胎幼善教, 以免隨流著. 古昔聖人, 皆由賢父母之善教而成, 況凡人乎.

Since the purpose of praying to Guanyin for a son proclaimed in the petition is to get a good son to save the way of the world from corruption, giving this son a good education to make him grow up as a wise and moral person is very important.

The prenatal education is elucidated as follows:

If a son-seeker is willing to adopt prenatal education, his or her son will definitely be wise and kind. After getting pregnant, [the son-seeker] must keep his or her appearance grave, sincere and tranquil, make his or her language trustworthy and peaceful, and make his or her behavior filially pious, friendly, respectful and obedient. While walking, living, sitting or sleeping, frequently recite the holy title of Guanyin. Whether reciting it aloud or silently, he or she must concentrate his or her hearing to listen to it. If his or her mind can be unified as one listens, the merit he or she gains will even be greater. If one is dressed properly and has washed up his or her hands and mouth, reciting [the name of Guanyin] aloud or silently are both fine. If one has not washed up, or goes to unclean places, or goes to sleep, he or she has to recite it silently, and the merit he or she gains is the same [as voiced recitation]. It is because that

²²¹ See *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian*, V. 2, p. 525.

reciting it aloud in these occasions is inappropriate. [However,] if at the moment of giving birth, [the pregnant woman] cannot recite [the name of Guanyin] silently, for at the moment of giving birth, she has to push hard to deliver the baby. If she closes her mouth to recite [silently at that moment], she will definitely suffer the disease of suffocation. The pregnant woman should recite [aloud] by herself, and her relatives should all recite around to help her. [In this case, the pregnant woman] will not have a hard labor for sure as well as not encounter all kinds of postnatal dangers. If one can actually follow the way [I said] to make the body, mouth and will attentive to recite [the name of] Guanyin sincerely so as to make the infant endowed with these pure kindness and righteousness, then this baby will be definitely unusual.²²²

若求子者，肯用胎教之法，其子必定賢善。從受孕後，其形容必須端莊誠靜，其語言必須忠厚和平，其行事必須孝友恭順。行、住、坐、臥，常念觀音聖號。無論出聲念，默念，皆須攝耳而聽，聽則心歸于一，功德更大。若衣冠整齊，手口洗漱，出聲念，默念均可。若未洗漱，及至不潔淨處，併睡眠時，均須默念。默念功德一樣，出聲于儀式不合。若至臨產，不可默念。以臨產用力送子出，若閉口念，必受氣窒之病。產婦自念，家屬皆為助念，決定不會難產，亦無產後各種危險。果能如此謹身、口、意，虔念觀音，俾胎兒稟此淳善正氣，則其生也，定非凡品。

These two methods of prenatal education—to behave oneself and to recite the title of Guanyin—aim at the same purpose, which is to expose the infant to an environment of pure goodness and righteousness before birth so as to be born with innate good qualities. In addition, Guanyin's aid to women in hard labor is also mentioned here.

²²² See *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian*, V. 2, p. 525-526.

The prenatal education is one of the procedures to prevent the son from corruption in advance. The other procedure is the postnatal education. The actual practice of the postnatal education is illustrated in the following quotation:

As soon as the baby's intelligence starts [to be able to comprehend things], immediately tell him the ways of causality and retribution: those who benefit other people and things will definitely be prosperous, and those who hurt other people and things will definitely be ruined. One must [let him] know that when we benefit other people and things, we will then really benefit ourselves, and when we hurt other people and things, we will also hurt ourselves; those who commit good deeds will definitely get rewards, and those who commit evil deeds will definitely get retribution. In discussing becoming a proper human being, one must [have him] observe the eight virtues of filial piety, fraternal love, loyalty, faithfulness, polite behavior, righteousness, modesty, and the sense of shame, so he will not be ashamed [of his behavior] as a human being. Otherwise, even though he has a human body, his mind is similar to animals. Do not allow him to lie, do not allow him to trump up a charge, do not allow him to take away the belongings of others without permission, do not allow him to beat and scold others, do not allow him to trample worms and ants as well as do not allow him to spoil and waste things, such as paper, five grains, and so on. He should anticipate his acts and behavior to benefit both relatives and himself as well as not to harm both other people and things. Also, make him frequently recite the holy title of Guanyin to diminish his evil karma and increase his good qualities. Make him get used to these [good habits] in childhood. As he grows up, he will definitely be pure and sincere. He will not boast and treat others haughtily to become a rowdy person. Giving this kind of good education is actually [an act of] great filial piety for ancestors,

[an act of] great love for sons and daughters, and [an act of] great loyalty for the country and the society. I usually say: “A great part of the power of regulating the country and pacifying the world is in women’s hands.” The reason is here. Their admirable virtues can catch up with the Three Grand Ones of the Zhou²²³, and then they will not be ashamed of being entitled “*Tai tai* 太太” (ladyship, a honorable title of wife. It literally means the great grand one). I hope that all son-seekers can take examples from [what I write], then the family and the country will be fortunate indeed.²²⁴

及兒初開知識，即與彼說因果報應，利人利物者必昌，害人害物者必亡。須知利人利物，乃真利己。害人害物，甚于害己。作善必得善報，作惡必得惡報。及說做人，必須遵行孝、弟、忠、信、禮、義、廉、恥之八德，方可不愧為人。否則形雖為人，心同禽獸矣。不許說謊，不許撒謊，不許拏人什物，不許打人罵人，不許遭踐蟲蟻、字紙、五穀東西。舉動行為，必期于親于己有益，于人于物無損。又須令其常念觀音聖號，以期消除惡業，增長善根。幼時習慣，大必淳篤，不至矜已慢人，成狂妄之流類。如此善教，于祖宗則為大孝，于兒女則為大慈，于國家社會則為大忠。余常謂治國平天下之權，女人家操得一大半者，其在斯乎。其懿德堪追周之三太，庶不負稱為太太云。願求子者，咸取法焉，則家國幸甚。

In addition to nurturing the moral sense and good habits of the son from his childhood, teaching him to frequently recite the holy title of Guanyin is another emphasis of postnatal education. Its purpose is to diminish the evil karma of the child and increase his good qualities in order to supplement moral edification.

²²³ The Three Grand Ones of the Zhou (*Zhou zhi santai* 周之三太) are presumed to be Three Dukes (*Sangong* 三公) in Zhou, which are three official titles, the Grand Preceptor (*Taishi* 太師), Grand Mentor (*Taifu* 太傅), and Grand Guardian (*Taibao* 太保). See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, P. 6

Following the explanation of the three instructions of praying for sons is the appendix of taboos, which is mainly concerned with the harm of inopportune sexual intercourse:

I append a record of taboos to avoid any damage. Whoever wants to pray for a son, he or she must make an agreement with his or her spouse to cut off passions for half a year to nourish the natural physical endowments for having a son. Have intercourse after the wife's menstrual period ends, then the wife will definitely get pregnant. Never have intercourse before the end of the menstrual period. If do so, the wife's menstruation will definitely cease. This will cause illness to her, which is quite dangerous. Also, [intercourse] should be done on a propitious night of an auspicious day with good weather. If there are heavy winds and rains, together with thunders and lightening, one should certainly abstain [from sexual activities]. The chapter of "the seasons" in the Record of Rituals says: "In the last month of spring, there will first be thunder for three days. Heralds (*Youren* 適人)²²⁵ will beat a bell with a wooden clapper (*Muduo* 木鐸)²²⁶ to patrol the roads and announce: 'Thunders is going to rumble. If there are people who do not guard their demeanor, they will give birth to deficient sons and will definitely encounter calamities.'" The ancient sage kings were worried about the livelihood of the people very much, so they dispatched officials to announce this edict and also recorded it in the Classics. Their mind is like the mind of the heaven and earth as well as that of parents. "Heralds" are officials who announce edicts. "A bell with a wooden clapper" is a bell to vibrate so as to make all people to [pay attention] to listen [to the announcement]. "To patrol" is to walk around. "Roads" indicate the streets and lanes in cities and countries. "Demeanor" indicates sexual

²²⁴ See *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian*, V. 2, p. 526.

²²⁵ "*Youren* 適人" means heralds or marshals. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, P. 176.

²²⁶ "*Duo* 鐸" means a bell with a clapper. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 934.

intercourse. “Deficient” means the imperfection of the five senses or four limbs, or the birth of a monster. “Calamities” means that the couple may contract horrible diseases or die. After getting pregnant, [the couple] should cut off sexual intercourse, and the son or daughter whom they give birth to will definitely have a strong and healthy body and mind, and enjoy great blessings and longevity. During the pregnancy, if [a couple] has sexual intercourse once, the poison of the congenital diseases (*Tai du* 胎毒)²²⁷ will harm [the baby or the mother] once, the baby’s placenta will get thick once, and the delivery of the baby will become difficult once. If they have intercourse late in the pregnancy, it may cause miscarriage or hurt the fetus.²²⁸

附記禁忌，免致禍害。凡求子者，必須夫婦訂約，斷欲半年，以培子之先天。待婦天癸盡後一交，必定受孕。天癸未盡，切不可交，交必停經，致成帶病，頗有危險。又須吉日良夜，天氣清明。大風大雨，雷電震閃，亟宜切戒。禮記，月令，季春，先雷三日，適人以木鐸巡于道路曰，雷將發聲，有不戒其容止者，生子不備，必有凶災。古聖王痛念民生，特派官宣布此令，又復著之于經，其天地父母之心乎。適人，宣令之官。木鐸，即鈴，振鈴俾眾咸聽也。巡，行也。道路，城市街巷，及鄉村也。容止，謂房事。不備，謂五官四肢不全，或生怪物。凶災，謂其夫婦，或得惡疾，或致死亡。既受孕後，永斷房事，所生兒女，必定身心強健，福壽深長。孕後交一次，胎毒重一次，胞衣厚一次，生產難一次。孕久若交，或致墮胎，及與傷胎。

This appendix lists various kinds of possible aftermaths of ill-timed intercourse as a warning to son-seekers. Ill-timed intercourse includes having it in a bad weather, during the menstruation, or during the pregnancy, and the harm caused by it will not only jeopardize the health of the mother and the baby but also could risk their lives. In addition to illustrate the

²²⁷ “*Taidu* 胎毒” is the congenital disease. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, P.859.

danger of inopportune sexual intercourses, the appendix also admonishes son-seekers to cut off sexuality after the pregnancy. Intercourse is viewed as nothing other than a means to get pregnant and have a son and should not be taken as an enjoyment. After having a son, the reason of intercourse no longer exists. Also, considering all the disadvantages of intercourse, the appendix thus urges all son-seekers to maintain abstention of sexual behavior.

In summary, this memorial is not simply a liturgical text for praying for sons. It aims to help son-seekers to build up a correct conception of praying to Guanyin for sons by giving a doctrinal illustration of the efficacious response of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin. In addition, the liturgy of the memorial teaches the importance of compassion, and the three instructions and taboos of praying for sons teaches the importance of wisdom, so here, moral transformation is important.

B. Baiyi dashi shenzhou 白衣大士神咒 [The Divine Mantra of White-robed Great Being]

Baiyi dashi shenzhou is the most popular indigenous scripture related to Guanyin to be used by devotees to pray for heirs in the present time. As I have mentioned in the second chapter, the origin of this scripture is obscure. As early as the Northern Song, nineteen words of the mantra had already appeared and were known to ordinary people. However, not until the early Republican period did the complete mantra that we see today start to circulate. This scripture is circulated under many different titles, such as Baiyi Guanyin Shenzhou 白衣觀音神咒 [The Divine Mantra of White-robed Guanyin], Baiyi shenzhou 白衣神咒 [The Divine Mantra of White Robes], Baiyi Guanyin dashi linggan shenzhou 白衣觀音大士靈感神咒 [The Efficacious Divine Mantra of White-robed Guanyin the Great Being] and other similar names, and is usually printed on little cards or pieces of paper placed in local temples or

²²⁸ See *Yingguang fashi wenchao xubian*, V. 2, p. 526-527.

shrines by devotees for free distribution. Whoever would like to pray to Guanyin for a son can just go to temples to get such a card or paper and follow the instructions on it to perform the worship privately at home.

According to the economic situation of the donor, the printing quality and the size of the cards or papers are varied. In addition, their contents can be different as well. While some cards or papers have an image of White-robed Guanyin printed on them, some just contain words. While some contain the divine mantra only, some also include the Eulogy of Incense and other mantras before the divine mantra. Nonetheless, every card or paper will definitely have the instruction for reciting and retaining this divine mantra, and six hundred little circles for counting the times of recitation.

I have obtained several cards and papers of the Baiyi dashi shenzhou from local temples in northern Taiwan. One of them is printed on large-sized paper which contains no image of Guanyin. Its contents can be basically divided into upper and lower portions. The upper portion is a complex of verses and mantras, and the lower portion contains the instructions for reciting the text and the six hundred circles.

The translation of the verses and mantras in the upper portion is as follows:

Eulogy of Incense (*Xiangzan* 香讚)

The incense of the censer is now hot and the dharma realm is covered with its smoke. The assembly of all buddhas notice it at a distance. Auspicious clouds gather everywhere. The sincerity [of the devotees] is now abundant, and all the buddhas manifest their whole bodies.

Homage to the Great Being Bodhisattva Fragrant Cloud Cover (Repeat it three times)

爐香乍熱，法界蒙薰，諸佛海會悉遙聞，隨處結祥雲，誠意方殷，諸佛現全身。南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩。(三稱)

Eulogy of Willow Branches and Pure Water (*Yangzhi jingshui zan* 楊枝淨水讚)

Willow branches and pure water sprinkle all over the great chiliocosm²²⁹. Having an empty nature and the eight virtues benefits both the human and heavenly realms. Blessings and longevity are greatly increased and prolonged. Sins are destroyed and transgressions are dispelled. Flames [of sufferings] are transformed to become red lotuses.

Homage to the Great Being of Bodhisattva Pure and Cool Lands (Repeat it three times)

楊枝淨水, 遍洒三千. 性空八德利人天. 福壽廣增延. 滅罪消愆, 火燄化紅蓮.

南無清涼地菩薩摩訶薩 (三稱)

The mantra which purifies the karma of the mouth: *An, xiu-li-xiu-li, mo-he-xiu-li-xiu-xiu-li, sa-po-he* [*svaha*].

淨口業真言: 唵. 修唎修唎. 摩訶修唎修修唎. 薩婆訶.

The mantra which purifies the karma of the body: *An, xiu-duo-li, xiu-duo-li, xiu-mo-li, xiu-mo-li, sa-po-he*.

淨身業真言: 唵. 修多唎. 修多唎. 修摩唎. 修摩唎. 薩婆訶.

The mantra which purifies the karma of the mind: *An, fu-ri-la-da, he-he-hu*.

淨意業真言: 唵. 嚩日囉怛. 訶賀斛.

²²⁹ “*Sanqian* 三千” is the abbreviation of “*Sanqian daqian shijie* 三千大千世界”, which means a great chiliocosm. According to Buddhism, Mt. Sumeru and its seven surrounding continents, eight seas and ring of iron mountains form one small world; 1,000 of these form a small chiliocosm (*Xiaoqian shijie* 小千世界); 1,000 of these small chiliocosms form a medium chiliocosm (*Zhongqian shijie* 中千世界); a thousand of these form a great chiliocosm (*Daqian shijie* 大千世界), which thus consists of 1,000,000,000 small worlds. The term “*Sanqian* 三千” indicates the above three kinds of thousands, therefore “*Sanqian daqian shijie* 三千大千世界” is the same as “*Daqian shijie* 大千世界”, which is one Buddha-world. See William Edward Soothill & Lewis Hodous, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms (Taipei: 1982), P. 61.

The mantra which pacifies the earth: *Nan-mo-san-man-duo, mo-tuo-nan, an, du-lu-du-lu, di-wei, sa-po-he.*

安土地真言: 南無三滿哆. 沒馱喃. 唵. 度嚧度嚧. 地尾. 薩婆訶.

The Efficacious Divine Mantra of White-robed Guanyin the Great Being (*Baiyi Guanyin dashi linggan shenzhou* 白衣觀音大士靈應神咒)

Homage to the Great Being Bodhisattva Guanshiyin of Great Compassion and Empathy, Who Saves Those in Sufferings and Disasters with Great Efficacious Powers (Repeat and bow three times)

Homage to Buddha, homage to dharma, and homage to the *sangha*

Homage to Bodhisattva Guanshiyin Who Saves Those in Sufferings and Disasters

Da-zhi-duo, an, qie-la-fa-duo, qie-la-fa-duo, qie-he-fa-duo, la-qie-fa-duo, la-qie-fa-duo, suo-po-he

Gods in heaven, gods on earth, people depart from disasters, disasters depart from the body, all evils be reduced to dust.

Homage to great wisdom²³⁰ by which one can cross over [from this shore of births and deaths] to the other shore, [or nirvana]²³¹.

南無大慈大悲救苦救難廣大靈感觀世音菩薩摩訶薩 (三稱三拜)

南無佛. 南無法. 南無僧. 南無救苦救難觀世音菩薩.

²³⁰ “*Mohebo* 摩訶般若” means great wisdom. See Chen Yixiao 陳義孝, *Fuxue changjiang cihui* 佛學常見詞彙 [Buddhist Frequently-Seen Terms] (Hong Kong: 1990), p. 291.

²³¹ The Chinese translation of “*Boluomi* 波羅蜜” is “to arrive at the other shore”, which means that one takes the boat of Buddhism to depart from this shore of worries and the cycles of birth and deaths to arrive at the other shore of nirvana. See Chen Yixiao, *Fuxue changjiang cihui*, p. 199, and William Edward Soothill & Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, P. 267.

怛埵哆. 唵. 伽囉伐哆. 伽囉伐哆. 伽訶伐哆. 囉伽伐哆. 囉伽伐哆. 娑婆訶. 天羅神.
地羅神. 人離難. 難離身. 一切災殃化爲塵.
南無摩訶般若波羅蜜.

Verse of Vowing to Devote My Merit to Others (*Fayuan huixiang wen* 發願回向文)

I wish to destroy all worries from three groups of barriers²³²,
I wish to obtain wisdom to really understand [the truth of the universe],
I hope that the barriers of evils can be entirely dispelled, and that
Every generation can constantly follow the way of the bodhisattva²³³.

願消三障諸煩惱, 願得智慧真明了, 普願罪障悉消除, 世世常行菩薩道.

Except for the divine mantra itself, the verses and mantras in this upper portion are usually found in all kinds of Buddhist recitation texts. The incorporation of these verses and mantras having a Buddhist origin here is intended to provide the divine mantra with a Buddhist background.

As for the instruction of reciting the text in the lower portion, it guides devotees as follows:

The Bodhisattva Guanshiyin is compassionate and relieves sufferings. As long as there is a prayer to her, she will definitely respond to it. However, one should deeply believe in her without any doubts and sincerely pray to her without a second thought. Her unusual efficacy will then be revealed. As long as one has a proper wish, such as

²³² The three groups of barriers (*Sanzhang* 三障) are separately the barrier of passions (*Fannaozhang* 煩惱障), such as desire, hate, stupidity, the barrier of the deeds done (*Yezhang* 業障), and the barrier of the retribution (*Baozhang* 報障). See William Edward Soothill & Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 80. and Chen Yixiao, *Fuxue changjiang cihui*, p. 64.

²³³ “*Pusa dao* 菩薩道” means “the way or discipline of the bodhisattva”, which is to benefit self and benefit others, leading to Buddha hood. See William Edward Soothill & Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 389.

praying for the cure of diseases, the dissolution of disasters, the relief of dangers as well as praying for blessings, sons, longevity and so on, and would like to recite this divine mantra, he or she must respectfully present offerings to a holy image of the Great Being [of Guanyin] and not profane it. Everyday when reciting the mantra, one must wash his or her hands, burn incense, bow in front of the holy image of the Great Being with utmost sincerity, and then recite the mantra. {The way of recitation: repeat three times of chanting [the first sentence from] *Nanmo.....mohesa* and making a bow, and then recite [the mantra from] *Nanmofo.....boluomi* twenty times, which makes a circle.} After recite the mantra twenty times, immediately use a clean vermilion pen to dot a circle. Before the completion of each recitation, also recite the Verse of Vowing to Devote My Merit to Others and one's wish three times. Completing dotting six hundred circles, which means that one has recited the divine mantra twelve thousand times, will satisfy a wish. One should immediately offer vegetarian offerings to worship [Guanyin?] and burn [this paper] in a censer. Use a clean red paper to wrap the ashes of the paper and throw it to the flowing water of a river. Also, print one thousand two hundred copies of this mantra. [By doing so,] one's prayer will definitely have a response.

觀世音菩薩，慈悲救苦，有求必應，惟須深信無疑，誠求弗二，靈異乃著，凡有正當心願，如求癒病，消災，解危，以及求福，求子，求壽等，欲誦此神咒者，對大士聖像，務宜恭敬供奉，勿得褻瀆，每日誦咒時，須沐手焚香，對大士聖像前，至誠頂禮，然後誦咒。{誦法：(南無.....摩訶薩) 三稱三拜後復誦 (南無佛.....波羅蜜) 二十遍為一圈。} 誦咒滿二十遍，即用潔淨硃筆點一圈，每次誦咒圓滿結束前，復誦發願回向文及所求願望三遍，點完六百圈，共計神咒一萬二千遍，為滿一願，即當齋供，焚化

爐內，用潔淨紅紙包裹字灰，送擲於長溪流水中，並印送此咒一千二百卷，有求必應。

These instructions repeatedly emphasize Guanyin's efficacy in responding to prayers. In order to receive Guanyin's responses, devotees are required to worship Guanyin and sincerely recite the mantra twelve thousand times. In addition, from these instructions, we can also see that this mantra is not exclusively dedicated to praying for sons. Devotees are encouraged to recite it for all kinds of proper and upright wishes; praying for sons is just one of them. Since this mantra is short and easy to recite, and its text is easy to find in temples, it is therefore widely circulated among devotees.

C. Local Customs of Praying for Sons in Guanyin Festivals

In folk Buddhism, aside from privately reciting *Baiyi dashi shenzhou* at home, participating in Guanyin Festivals in local temples is the alternative way for son-seekers to pray to Guanyin for heirs. Usually, there are three Guanyin Festivals per year in local cults. They are held on the nineteenth of the second month, the nineteenth of the sixth month and the nineteenth of the ninth month in lunar calendar. Allegedly, the nineteenth of the second month is Guanyin's birthday, the nineteenth of the sixth month is the day of her enlightenment, and the nineteenth of the ninth month is the day that she left the family to pursue the Way. There is no documentary evidence to illuminate the questions when and why these three dates were chosen and believed to be three holy days in the Guanyin worship. However, the nineteenth of the second month seems to have already been related to Guanyin as a special day in the Ming. The *Nanhai Guanshiyin pusa chushen xiuxing zhuan* 南海觀世音菩薩出身修行傳, a Ming novel illustrating Bodhisattva Guanshiyin's life story as Princess Miaoshan, has a paragraph about the King Miaozhuang 妙莊王 and his queen who went to

Western Sacred Mountain (*Xiyue* 西嶽)²³⁴ to pray for heirs and afterwards gave birth to Miaoshan. The day for the King and Queen to make a worship in the Western Sacred Mountain is said to have been the nineteenth day of the second month.²³⁵ Even though this date is not claimed to be Miaoshan's birthday in the novel, one can still sense the unusual importance of this day in the Guanyin belief.

Although the nineteenth of the second, sixth, and ninth months are popularly believed to be three holy days in the Guanyin worship and nearly every Guanyin temple or hall will hold a ritual and festival on these three days, the interpretations of the three holy days vary in different regions. For instance, Tong Jingen 童金根 in his article discussing the folk customs and popular religious belief in Jinshi village 進士鄉 of Qingliu District 清流縣, a place in western Fujian 福建, points out that the ordinary people in Jinshi village also consider the nineteenth of the second and sixth months to respectively be Guanyin's birthday and the day of her enlightenment, but regard the nineteenth of the ninth month as the day of Guanyin's nirvana,²³⁶ which is different from the interpretation about this day I mentioned previously. In Shanghai, the nineteenth of the ninth month is also regarded as the day of Guanyin's nirvana.²³⁷ Moreover, in Taiwan, Guanyin's birthday is sometimes considered to be the nineteenth of the sixth month, instead of the nineteenth of the second month.²³⁸

²³⁴ "Xiyue 西嶽" is namely Mt. Hua (*Huashan* 華山), which is in today's Shanxi 山西 province. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, P. 363.

²³⁵ See Xi da she chen zou ren 西大午辰走人 (Ming), *Nanhai Guanshiyin pusa zhushen xiuxing zhuan*, in *Guben xiaoshuo congkan*, no 16, Ch. 1, p. 6 – 7.

²³⁶ See Tong Jingen 童金根, "Qingliuxian jinshixiang de minjian xinyang yu minus tese 清流縣進士鄉的民間信仰與民俗特色 [The Special Aspects of the Folk Customs and Popular Religious Beliefs in Jinshi Village, Qingliu District]", in *Dingzhoufu de zongzu miaohui yu jingji* 汀州府的宗族廟會與經濟 [The Clans, Temple Festivals, and Economy in Dingzhou Prefecture], edited by Yang Yanjie 楊彥杰 (Hong Kong: 1998), p. 244.

²³⁷ See Zhu Jianming 朱建明, *Shanghai dushi bai Guanyin xisu* 上海都市拜觀音習俗 [The Customs of Guanyin Worship in Shanghai City], in *Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝 [The Music and Arts in Folklore], no. 114 (1998), p. 25.

²³⁸ See Xi Li 刑莉, *Huaxia zhushen—Guanyin juan* 華夏諸神--觀音卷 [Various Deities in China—the Volume on Guanyin] (Taipei: 1999), P. 245.

Also, the dates of holding Guanyin Festivals are not always the three days discussed above. Some Guanyin temples in Taiwan hold the festival at the nineteenth of the eleventh month,²³⁹ and the Lettuce Fair (*Shengcai hui* 生菜會) in Guangdong 廣東 Province, a form of Guanyin Festival which I will investigate later, is held on the twenty-sixth of the first month.

In addition to the diversity of the dates and meanings of Guanyin Festivals, the activities of the festivals are not the same in different Guanyin temples. Some temples will only hold a grand ritual to worship Guanyin, while others will also take the image of Guanyin to parade in the community where the temple is situated to dispel the evil forces of this region. For example, the famous Longshan Temple (*Longshan si* 龍山寺) in Wanhua 萬華 area of Taipei, Taiwan, which worships Guanyin as the chief deity, holds only temple rituals during Guanyin Festivals,²⁴⁰ but two other Guanyin temples in Taipei, the Guanyin Temple of Zhulinshan 竹林山觀音寺 and the Temple of Compassion and Holiness (*Cisheng gong* 慈聖宮) in Neihu 內湖, do have parades for pacifying communities.²⁴¹

Praying for sons is another activity that devotees will take part in during Guanyin Festivals. The Lettuce Fair (*Shengcai hui*) in Guangdong I mentioned a bit earlier is an example. It is a celebration of the birthday of White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons as well as an occasion of praying for sons. Wu Youru 吳友如 (in 19th century), a late Qing painter, ever drew the scene of the festival with a comment:²⁴²

The original name of lettuce (*Shengcai* 生菜: raw vegetable) is *Woju* 萵苣. Because this vegetable can be served to eat without cooking, Cantonese people thus name it

²³⁹ See Xi Li, *Huaxia zhushen—Guanyin juan*, P. 245, and Zheng Zhiming 鄭志明, *Taiwan Guanyin xinyang de xianxiang fengxi* 台灣觀音信仰的現象分析 [An analysis of the phenomena of the Guanyin Belief in Taiwan], in *Zongjiao zhixue* 宗教哲學 [Religious Philosophy], no. 2: 1 (1996, Jan), p. 139.

²⁴⁰ See Figure 9.

²⁴¹ See Figure 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14.

²⁴² See Figure 15.

“raw vegetable”. When people give presents to departing friends²⁴³ in the end or beginning of a year, they will definitely add lettuce as an addition²⁴⁴. They probably take the meaning of “Ever producing without rest (*Shengsheng buxi* 生生不息)” from it. The people in Nanhai District have a temple of White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons in a pottery market (*Yao xu* 窯墟)²⁴⁵. Those who seek heirs to continue their family lines [will go there to] burn incense, worship and present offerings with great sincerity. The twenty-sixth of the first month is the birthday of the divinity. Those who are fond of activities form assemblies for gathering together with the Buddhas [for this day], called Lettuce Fair. Those who attend these Buddhist assemblies will arrange little mounds²⁴⁶ to place wine jars and stoves to cook tea as well as display various kinds of vegetarian²⁴⁷ dishes²⁴⁸ for tourists to drink and eat²⁴⁹. The dishes are mainly made with lettuce. At this day, gaily-dressed men and women will come together. After clasping hands to pay reverence [to the divinity], they will then taste the flavor of vegetables together. Laborers carrying vegetables who shoulder lettuce to come [to the fair] are a continuous stream on the roads. All of them will earn triple profits in this prosperous trade. After the close of the fair, some people will purchase lettuce to take home in order to [bring forth] the benefit of active vitality. Therefore, [the

²⁴³ “*Jian* 餞” means “to entertain or give a farewell dinner to a departing friend”. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 121.

²⁴⁴ “*Ying* 膺”, originally means concubines, also has the meaning “to append something to a letter”. Thus, the word here can be interpreted as an addition to the presents. See *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 208.

²⁴⁵ “*Xu* 墟” has the meaning of a fair or market. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 424.

²⁴⁶ “*Jiulu* 酒罇” is the little mound established to place wine jars. See *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 647.

²⁴⁷ “*Su* 藟” means vegetables. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 758.

²⁴⁸ “*Yao* 餚” means dishes. See *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 447.

²⁴⁹ “*Yu* 餮” means “to eat to much”. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 1146.

thriving situation of] this fair is not inferior to the prosperity at riversides of Changan at the third of the third month.²⁵⁰

生菜本名萵苣，粵人以其菜可生食，爰以生菜名之，臘尾年頭，人家餞送禮物者，必以生菜為媵意，蓋取乎生生不息也。南海縣屬之人窯壚有白衣送子觀音廟，求嗣續者焚香膜拜奉禮甚虔。正月二十六日為神誕日，好事者為聯佛會，名曰生菜會，趕佛會者於廟前安排酒壚茶灶，羅列各種穀菽，以供游人飲飫，而必以生菜為主。是日，紅男綠女結伴偕來，頂禮合十後，即相與領略菜根風味，挑菜傭之肩生菜而往者，絡繹於途，無不利市三倍，緣會散後有購生菜而歸，以卜生機之活潑者，然則是會也，當不亞三月三日長安水邊之盛。

From Wu's painting and comment, one can gain a basic understanding of the Lettuce Fair and its prosperity.

The modern Chinese scholars Li Shenghua 李聖華 and Huang Shi 黃石 also have a word about the Lettuce Fair in their articles, "*Guanshiyin pusa zhi yanjiu* 觀世音菩薩之研究 [A Search for the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin]" and "*Guanyu chanyu de mixin yu fengsu* 關於產育的迷信與風俗 [Concerning Superstitions and Customs about Pregnancy]".²⁵¹ Both of them consider that the fair is held at the twenty-fourth of the second month, instead of the twenty-sixth of the first month as Wu suggested. They also provide another explanation of the title of Lettuce Fair aside from that the name of "Lettuce" carries the meaning of vitality. They consider that the pronunciation of "Lettuce" (*Shengcai*) is very similar to the term "Giving birth to a son" (*Shengzai* 生子) in Cantonese, so that the lettuce is usually viewed as an

²⁵⁰ See Sun Jilin 孫繼林 ed., *Wanqing shehui fengsu baitu* 晚清社會風俗百圖 [A Hundred Drawings of the Social Customs in Late Qing] (Shanghai: 1996), p. 18. (Fig.)

²⁵¹ See Li Shenghua, *Guanshiyin pusa zhi yanjiu*, in *Minsu* 民俗 [Folklore], no. 38, and Huang Shi, *Guanyu chanyu de mixin yu fengsu*, in *Funu fengsu kao* 婦女風俗考 [An Investigation of Women's Customs] (Shanghai: 1991), p. 438.

auspicious object to bring sons in Guangdong. As a result, the fair of praying to Guanyin for sons is called Lettuce Fair.

Scholar Huang Shi, furthermore, gives a detailed description about the Lettuce Fair on the basis of his field research. According to his field report, there are three major customs of praying for sons in this fair. Of course, the first one is eating the lettuce. Women who would like to “eat the lettuce” in the fair are supposed to fast beforehand. At the day of the fair, they will go to Guanyin temples with their husbands or other female companions to worship and present offerings to Guanyin, and then buy a meal from the temple keeper to eat somewhere near the temple in the open air. The meal is basically made of lettuce. It is believed that eating this meal will bring sons. After the meal, devotees also will buy some lettuce and bring it home together with their leftover, utensils, a big candle, and a lamp with four words “*Tianding facai* 添丁發財” [Add sons and become rich] to bring good luck back home. However, the devotees still cannot be sure whether Guanyin will grant a son to them or not after eating the meal. That is the reason why they also carry out the customs of “Beating the Earth Forces” (*Da dishi* 打地氣) and “Groping Conches and Clams” (*Mo luoxian* 摸螺蜆) to look for omens of obtaining sons. The custom of “Beating the Earth Forces” is to sleep on the floor inside or outside the temple at the night of the fair in order to receive a predictive dream from Guanyin, which is the indication whether a devotee will obtain a son from Guanyin or not. As for the custom of “Groping Conches and Clams”, it is carried out at the daytime during the fair. The temple keeper will put some conches and clams in a pond of the temple. Those who seek omens can go beside the pond and put their hands into the water to grope. Groping a conch is a sign of obtaining a son, for conches are good at reproducing offspring. On the contrary, having a clam indicates the doom of not obtaining a son, because ordinary

people believe that clams are transformed from worms and cannot reproduce the next generation themselves.²⁵²

However, the Lettuce Fair is only a special local custom of praying to Guanyin for sons in Guangdong. Different areas have their distinct customs. In Shanghai, the worship of Guanyin Who Brings Sons usually takes place in Daoist temples. Zhu Jianming 朱建明 in his article "*Shanghai dushi bai Guanyin xisu* 上海都市拜觀音習俗" [The Customs of Guanyin Worship in Shanghai City] has a vivid depiction of it:

Most of the Daoist temples of the Pudong area have the holy image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons, carrying a naked baby boy in her arms. According to some female disciples, using a towel to wipe the body of the baby [boy], especially his penis, and then going home to [use the same towel] to wipe the stomach of a woman who is not pregnant will cause pregnancy. I have asked the head of a worship group (*Xiangtou* 香頭) in a temple of Dragon King [about this]. She said that there were many efficacious examples. It would be better to use a towel to wipe the stomach [of a woman]. She has to sleep with her husband at that night. She is not allowed to walk around for a time in order to cause the embryo settle in the womb. She is also not allowed to kill living things, such as chickens, ducks and fish. She is not allowed to have quarrels with others but should do more good deeds. If she can fulfill these points, she is guaranteed to receive an "efficacious response".²⁵³

在浦東道觀中，大都有送子觀音的神像，手中抱有一個男嬰，赤身。據一些女信徒說，用毛巾揩小孩身，特別是生殖器，回家擦未有身孕婦女的腹部，將會受孕。我曾在龍王廟中問一個姓陸的香頭，她說有不少有靈驗的，最好是用毛巾擦腹部，當晚

²⁵² See Huang Shi, *Guanyu chanyu de mixin yu fengsu*, in *Funu fengsu kao*, p. 438-439.

²⁵³ See Zhu Jianming, *Shanghai dushi bai Guanyin xisu*, in *Minsu quyī*, no. 114 (1998), p. 28.

要與丈夫同床, 一段時間裏不要東奔西走, 讓胎兒在子宮坐床; 也不要殺生, 如雞, 鴨, 魚一類動物; 不能與人吵架, 多做善事. 能做到這幾點, 保有“靈驗”.

The action of using the towel that has wiped the baby boy of the statue of Guanyin Who Brings Sons to wipe the stomach of a barren woman has the implication of putting a baby boy into this woman's womb. It also can be comprehended as a gesture of hoping to have Guanyin granted a son. As for the admonitions of not killing animals and not fighting with others, as well as the advice of doing good things, they are meant to help the woman who seeks sons to accumulate moral merit, because, as Master Yinguang mentioned in the memorial discussed earlier, having enough moral merit is a prerequisite of having a son bestowed by Guanyin.

Following the passage quoted above is a discussion of the food as offerings. Zhu Jianming writes down that peanuts, lotus seeds, jujubes, eggs, watermelon seeds, dried longans, pomegranates, and chestnuts are the best food to serve as offerings to Guanyin in the occasion of praying sons, for these food contain auspicious meanings related to having sons. For example, some devotees will present lotus seeds, peanuts, dried longans, and jujubes together as offerings and chant "*Liansheng guizi* 連生貴子" [Continuously Give Birth to Noble Sons]. The first word "*Lian* 連" [Continuously] is symbolized by lotus seeds, for the Chinese name of lotus seeds is pronounced as *Lianzi* 蓮子. The second word "*Sheng* 生" [Giving Birth] is symbolized by peanuts, for the Chinese name of peanuts is pronounced as *Huasheng* 花生. The third word "*Gui* 貴" [Noble] is symbolized by dried longans, whose Chinese name is *Guiyuan* 桂圓, and the last word "*Zi* 子" [Sons] is symbolized by jujubes, which is called *Zaozi* 棗子 in Chinese. The fig, on the other hand, is inappropriate to use as presented offerings. The Chinese name of the fig is *Wuhuaguo* 無花果 [Fruits without Flowers], which can be interpreted as "to not have flowers and fruits". In this case, the fig

implicates the lacking of children and is not recommended to be offerings to Guanyin Who Brings Sons.²⁵⁴

In addition, Zhu Jianming also mentions a traditional custom of stealing Guanyin's shoe. He says that formerly, women in Putuo 普陀 area of Shanghai would go to Guanyin temples to steal a shoe from the statue of Guanyin. This act is alleged to have the efficacy of causing pregnancy.²⁵⁵ Zhu's report corresponds to records about the local customs in Jiangsu 江蘇 province in the book *Zhonghua quanguo fengsu zhi* 中華全國風俗志 [The Record of Folklore in All of China]. Jiangsu is the province where Shanghai is situated. These records are as follows:

In Huangdu Town of Qingpu, women who do not have sons will definitely go to the Patriarch Hall in the eastern side of the town to burn incense and pray in front of the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons. Also, they will secretly steal an embroidered shoe of the image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons, which is said to enable [the women] to give birth to a son then. However, after the birth of the son, he has to be adopted by Guanyin Who Brings Sons as her adopted son.²⁵⁶

青浦黃渡鎮婦女之無子者，必往鎮東祖師堂之送子觀音前，燒香告禱，并暗中將送子觀音之繡花鞋，偷去一隻，云即能生子。惟生子以後，須寄給與送子觀音為乾兒子也。

Without any explanation provided in this passage, this custom appears incomprehensible and irrelevant to praying to Guanyin for sons at first sight. However, we can get some hints from the pronunciation of the word “*Xie* 鞋” [Shoes]. In Shanghai or Jiangsu dialect, “*Xie* 鞋” is

²⁵⁴ See Zhu Jianming, *Shanghai dushi bai Guanyin xisu*, in *Minsu quyī*, no. 114 (1998), p. 28.

²⁵⁵ See Zhu Jianming, *Shanghai dushi bai Guanyin xisu*, in *Minsu quyī*, no. 114 (1998), p. 28.

²⁵⁶ See Hu Yunyu 胡韞玉, *Zhonghua quanguo fengsu zhi* 中華全國風俗志 [The Record of Folklore in All of China](Shanghai: 1935), Vol. 2, Ch. 3, p. 116-117.

pronounced as *Hai* 亥, which sounds the same as the word “*Hai* 孩” [Children].²⁵⁷ Therefore, the symbolic meaning of stealing a shoe from a Guanyin statue is to steal a child from Guanyin.

As for the custom of giving the son to be Guanyin’s adoptive son, it seems to be a common practice in the Guanyin worship. Many field reports about local cults in different places have mentioned this custom. A report about Guanyin worship in Dingnan 定南 area of Jiangxi 江西 province has a description of this custom, saying that Guanyin is also called “*Qiyi* 契嫗” [Adoptive Mother], and all of the baby boys granted by Guanyin have to be carried to the original Guanyin temples where the parents prayed for sons to be adopted by Guanyin through a procedure called “*Renqi* 認契” [Recognizing Adoption]. The baby boys accordingly become Guanyin’s adopted sons (*Qizi* 契子).²⁵⁸

Nevertheless, in other places, it seems that a child who is not granted by Guanyin can still be recognized as an adopted child of Guanyin. Zhang Quanqing 張泉清 provides a detailed description of this custom carried out in a Guanyin temple called Nunnery of Blessings and Longevity (*Fushouan* 福壽庵) in his article “*Yuandong wuhaxian huachengzhen miaohui daguan* 粵東五華縣華城鎮廟會大觀 [An Overview of Temple Festivals in Huacheng Town, Wuhua District in Eastern Guangdong Province]”. The Nunnery of Blessings and Longevity is a popular place for female devotees to pay reverence to Guanyin. He points out that this practice of adoption is for the safety, health and blessings of children. As long as a child, especially a boy, has a disease or his “eight characters” (*Bazi* 八

²⁵⁷ See Lin Yutang 林語堂, *Jinghua yanyun* 京華煙雲 [The Mist of the Capital’s Prosperity], p. 261.

²⁵⁸ See Ren Jianqun 任建群, *Dingnan de Guanyin chongbai* 定南的觀音崇拜 [Guanyin Worship in Dingnan], in *Gannan miaohui yu minsu* 贛南廟會與民俗 [Temple Festivals and Folklore in South Jiangxi] (Hong Kong: 1998), p. 50.

字), the cyclic characters for the year, month, day and hour of the birth²⁵⁹, are divined to be in conflict with his parents, his mother or grandmother will bring him or her to the nunnery to be adopted by Guanyin so as to obtain blessings. Zhang's description is as follows:

..., so that the Nunnery of Blessings and Longevity has become a nunnery for female devotees to worship exclusively. And what women pray for most frequently is to ask Guanyin to bless their children, so they will be safe day and night and grow up healthy. In this case, the Nunnery of Blessings and Longevity becomes one of the busiest nunneries to ‘ “make a wish for receiving blessings” (*Xufu* 許福=taking a vow) for children's health. The so-called “making a wish of receiving blessings” is that when a child (a boy in most situations) contracts diseases after birth, or when a child is deemed to “destroy” (*ke* 克) the destiny of his parents through prediction or divination, his mother or grandmother will bring the child's “birth paper” (*Niangeng* 年庚), which is a red card recording the child's birth year, month, date, and time, as well as prepare fruits, incense, and paper money, and go to the Nunnery of Blessings and Longevity to pray. She will also leave the “birth paper” in the niche of Guanyin image of the nunnery, which means she has “sold” the child to Guanyin. Then, Guanyin (a nun actually) will give the child another name, having the word “*Miao* 廟” as the last name and the words “*Guan* 觀” or “*Fu* 佛” as the first name, such as “*Miao Guantao* 廟觀濤”, “*Miao Fuyou* 廟佛祐”, and so on. In this case, the child then becomes Guanyin's child.

...因此福壽庵成了女人專拜之庵. 而女人祈求最多的則是求請觀音保佑自己孩子日夜平安, 健康成長. 這樣一來, 福壽庵便成了為孩子健康而“許福”(許願)最熱鬧

²⁵⁹ See R. H. Mathews, A Chinese-English Dictionary, p. 670.

的庵堂之一。所謂“許福”就是孩子（主要是男孩）出生後碰上病痛，或經算命卜卦認定與父母相克時，便由母親或奶奶，攜帶孩子的年庚（寫著孩子出生年，月，日，時的紅帖子）并具辦齋果，香紙，到福壽庵去祈禱，并把“年庚”留在庵裡神龕，表示把孩子“賣”給了觀音。然後由觀音（實為尼姑）另起一個姓“廟”帶“觀”或“佛”一類的名字。諸如“廟觀濤”，“廟佛祐”等等。這樣，孩子便變為觀音的孩童了。²⁶⁰

The “Making a wish of receiving blessings” (*Xufu*) in this passage, which is also called “Praying for blessings” (*Qifu* 祈福) in Zhang’s another article,²⁶¹ is also the practice of having the child adopted by Guanyin. By presenting the child’s birth paper to the Guanyin image, the child is “sold” or “adopted” by Guanyin to be her child, receiving blessings from her and having a divine name to identify his special status.

Once the adopted child grows up to be an adult, his adoptive relationship with Guanyin will cease:

The age limit for a child to “make a wish for receiving blessings” is up to sixteen. [At this age, a child will] become an adult, the so-called “Going up to be an adult” (*Shengding* 上丁). Before the child is sixteen years old, his mother or grandmother must prepare fruits, incense and paper money and bring the child to the Nunnery of Blessings and Longevity to worship Guanyin at any day between the sixth day of New Year and the fifteenth of the first month every year, which is called “Warming up blessings” (*Nuanfu* 暖福). At the year that the child reaches sixteen, [the mother or

²⁶⁰ See Zhang Quanqing, “Yuandong wuhaxian huachengzhen miaohui daguan”, in *Meizhou diqu de miaohui yu zongzu* 梅州地區的廟會與宗族 [Temple Festivals and Clans in Meizhou Area], edited by Fang Xuejia 房學嘉 (Hong Kong: 1996), p. 15.

²⁶¹ See Zhang Quanqing, “Wuhaxian huachangzhen hutiancun Zhangshi zongzu yu shenming chengbai 五華縣華城鎮湖田村張氏宗族與神明崇拜”, in *Meizhou heyuan diqu de cunluo wenhua* 梅州河源地區的村落文化, edited by Fang Xuejia (Hong Kong: 1997), p. 58-59.

grandmother] have to bring the child to the Nunnery of Blessings and Longevity to worship at the same period after New Year, which is called “Thanks for blessings” (*Choufu* 酬福). After that, the child is announced to have grown up as an adult in front of the image of Guanyin.²⁶²

“許福”的年限均到孩子十六歲，即俗稱“上丁”成人止。在十六歲之前，孩子的母親或奶奶，每年春節後的年初六至正月十五日以前的任何一天，必須具辦齋果及香紙，攜孩子到福壽庵拜觀音，謂之“暖福”。及孩子十六歲那年，同樣是春節後的同一時間，則必須攜孩子到福壽庵朝拜，謂之“酬福”。此後，孩子便在觀音神前宣告成人。

The adoptive relationship between each adopted child and Guanyin lasts the sixteen years until adulthood. During these years, Guanyin's blessings toward the child are renewed every year by the annual practice of “Warming up blessing” until that the ritual of “Thanks for blessings” puts an end on the adoption.

This custom of dedicating children to Guanyin as her adopted children is also found in Taiwan. Devotees usually participate in the Guanyin Festival at the nineteenth of the sixth month to practice this custom. They get an adoption contract from the temple. The contract, having some space for devotees to fill out the child's name, birthday and other information, is supposed to be presented in front of Guanyin image together with other offerings, such as fruits and paper money. Although different temples may have different contract papers, their contents and format are generally similar to each other. The contract with the title *Yizi baiqi wenshu* 誼子拜契文疏 [A Memorial of Dedicating the Child to be Adopted as an Adoptive Child], which I obtained on a trip to Taiwan, is as follows:

²⁶² See Zhang Quanqing, “Yuandong wuhaxian huachengzhen miaohui daguan”, in *Meizhou diqu de miaohui yu zongzu*, edited by Fang Xuejia, p. 15-16.

I bow down, consider

And worry with care²⁶³ beforehand that my beloved child may suffer,

[So that] I sincerely pray to Buddha²⁶⁴ to destroy unexpected disasters in advance.

I unworthily present this note,²⁶⁵ which is held here, to clarify [the intentions of] my little heart.

The Southern Continent of the world of suffering²⁶⁶, is where I dwell now.

The person living in _____ area in Taiwan province, Republic of China is dedicated to Buddha to pray for the prolongation of blessings and good health.

(Male/Female) devotee of planting good karma _____ (name) together with the whole family sincerely burn incense and bow a hundred times:

Homage to Sakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism in the world of suffering

Homage to Buddha of Medicine Who Destroys Disasters, the founder of Buddhism in the east

Homage to Bodhisattva Guanshiyin of great efficacy

Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas in the gathering on Spirit Peak

Under each of their precious golden lotus seats

respectfully appeal for²⁶⁷ considering the (male/female) devotee _____ (name) as

your adoptive child, in whose present life is born at _____ year _____ month

_____ day _____ time.

²⁶³ “*Jin* 塵” means care. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 149.

²⁶⁴ “*Juehuang* 覺皇”, the king of enlightenment, is a respectful title of Buddha. This term is equal to the term “*Juewang* 覺王” or “*Juedi* 覺帝”. See Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, *Zhongwen da cidian*, V. 30, p. 375, and William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 480.

²⁶⁵ “*Chi* 尺” is a measure unit for length (See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 237). “*Chu* 楮” is the paper mulberry, from the bark of which paper is made and can be used to indicate paper (See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 196). The combination of the two words, “*Chichu* 尺楮”, means a letter, a little note, or a piece of paper, for in ancient times, the letter paper is about one *chi* 尺 long (See Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, *Zhongwen da cidian*, V. 10, p. 340). In this memorial, the phrase indicates the memorial.

My virtues are not superior to others, but I often worry about things in advance. I have fortunately obtained the birth of a (son/daughter), whom I privately hope to have the ability to excel the father²⁶⁸. However, the infant is not placid, [so] I deeply fear that he/she has the calamity resulted from the harm and conflicts of “Five Agents”²⁶⁹. Suckling the baby has many obstructions, [so] I extremely worry that the three lives²⁷⁰ will have misfortunes endangering body. Thus, I am distressed²⁷¹ [to think of] a strategy for thoroughly solving the problem²⁷² and specially pay my sincerity from the past²⁷³ [as tribute to you].

I respectfully kowtow toward

the Buddhist heaven that it bestows great welfare. I will be deferential at _____ (place name) at the selected day in _____ month _____ day to respectfully prepare offerings, such as fragrant flowers, tea, and fruits to hold the ritual of adoption and invite monks²⁷⁴ to recite the whole course of the *Yaoshi guanjing zhenyan* [Medical Master’s Dharani of Sprinkling Water on the Head for Initiation] and the *Xiaozai jixiang shenzhou* [The Divine Mantra of Destroying Disasters and Bringing in Good

²⁶⁶ See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 753.

²⁶⁷ The phrase “*Shen yizhe yan* 申意者言” can be abbreviated to be “*Shenyan* 申言”, which means “to state” or “to appeal”, for the term “*Yizhe* 意者” is a disjunctive particle, which contains no meaning. See Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, *Zhongwen da cidian*, V. 13, p. 157.

²⁶⁸ “*Nongzao* 弄灶”, which literally means to bestride a fireplace, implicates “to excel a father”. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 522.

²⁶⁹ “*Wuxing* 五行” (Five Agents) are five modes of energy in the universe. The five are wood, fire, earth, metal and water; all are forms of *qi*, the one basic substance of which all is made. The theory of “Five Agents” attempts to explain how difference forces influence each other. See Daniel L. Overmyer, *Religions of China: The World as a Living System* (USA: 1986), p. 121.

²⁷⁰ The three lives are presumed to be the lives of the parents and the child.

²⁷¹ “*Zhen* 軫” means distressed, sorrowful. See R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 38.

²⁷² The phrase “*che sang* 徹桑” is the abbreviation of “*cheng bi song tu* 徹彼桑土”, a sentence from the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* 詩經), which means “capture his land”. See *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 281. However, in this memorial, there is no land to capture but the worries about raising a baby, so it would be proper to interpret “*Che sang*” as to “thoroughly solve the problems of raising the baby”.

²⁷³ “*Xiangri* 向日” indicates the past. See *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 131.

²⁷⁴ “*Dade* 大德”, which means the most virtuous, is a title of honor of a Buddha. In the Vinaya it is applied to monks. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 88.

Fortune]. At that day, I will sincerely prepare delicious food²⁷⁵ and wonderful offerings to respectfully present and dedicate to

Three treasures in ten directions, ten thousands of virtuous ones and thousands of honorable ones, as well as Dharma protectors and all divinities. [Wishing them] to kindly descend to the dharma feast and compassionately receive [the offerings]. I humbly wish

The light of Buddha to shine forever, to sympathize with the feeble nature [of the child], and guard his/her tiny life. May his/her fate have no frustrations. May he/she be smart and intelligent. May he/she frequently encounter the Buddha of Infinite Life²⁷⁶. May his/her foundation of blessings be firm forever. May he/she always meet brilliant Buddhas²⁷⁷. May the guardianship²⁷⁸ for his/her capability²⁷⁹ be promised.

May he have a brilliant spirit. May he have the great welfare of abundant offspring. May whatever I pray for be [responded to] as I wish. May good fortune be kindly bestowed.

[The memorial] is reverently stated for the information of the year god.

At ____ year ____ month ____ day, I bow my head again with my whole mind [devoted].

伏以

²⁷⁵ “*Sutuo* 酥醢” is a kind of delicious food in India, which is made of cheese. See *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, Zhongwen da cidian*, V. 34, p. 39.

²⁷⁶ The Buddha of Infinite Life (*Wuliangshou fu* 無量壽佛) is another name of Amitabha. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 383.

²⁷⁷ “*Fanwang* 梵王” indicates Brahma. However, this explanation does not seem to fit the memorial here. Thus, I presume that the phrase of *fanwang* is an alternative expression of the phrase “*Fanhuang* 梵皇”, which, with a literal meaning of the Indian emperor, indicates Buddha. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 354.

²⁷⁸ “*Xiu* 廋” means protection, shelter or guardianship. See *Guoyu ribao cidian*, p. 260.

²⁷⁹ “*Gangu* 幹蠱”, indicating the situation that a child’s wisdom can cover the faults of his parents, contains the meaning of having competence for something. It can be interpreted as capability. See *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, Zhongwen da cidian*, V. 11, p. 348.

愛鍾孺子先廬困蒙之憂

誠禱覺皇預消無妄之災

忝陳尺楮 用白寸衷 今據

娑婆世界 南閻浮提 現寓

中華民國臺灣省_____地方居住人氏奉

佛祈求延禧康泰植福信(男/女)

暨合家人等虔誠焚香百拜

南無娑婆教主釋迦牟尼佛

南無東方教主消災藥師佛

南無廣大靈感觀世音菩薩

南無靈山會上諸佛諸菩薩

各寶金蓮座下

恭申意者言念信(男/女) _____ (名字)

爲誼子 本命生於__年__月__日__時生

德不前人事常先慮幸得弄(璋/瓦)之慶私期跨灶之能然

襁褓弗甯深恐五行有剋傷之咎乳哺多窒切憂三命

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佛光永照

愍其弱質衛其微生命運無屯聰明智慧

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無量壽佛

福基永固 恒值熾盛梵王 允爲幹蠱之庥

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From the memorial, we can know that in Taiwan the illness of children is usually the reason for their parents to dedicate them to Guanyin as her children in Taiwan. The illness is generally ascribed to children's "eight characters", which are suspected to be disharmonious with those of their parents. For fear that this disharmony should cause conflicts of "Five Agents" resulting in physical injuries to both the children and parents, the parents will give their children to Guanyin in hope of dissolving any possible misfortune related to their children. The ritual of adoption does not seem to be held at the same day of presenting this memorial. It appears that devotees should select another special day, which of course needs to be auspicious, to prepare offerings, such as flowers, fruits, and delicate food, and invite priests to recite scriptures to carry out the ritual formally.

In the custom of having children recognize Guanyin as their adoptive mother, what the parents expect is to establish a kinship between their children and Guanyin in order to make them receive more favors and blessings from the compassionate goddess. Instead of the role as a giver of sons, Guanyin's role in this particular custom is the patron of children. However,

these two roles may be connected to each other, for both of these roles are concerned with the matters of children, and in Jiangsu province, the sons granted by Guanyin are obliged to be adopted by her. One cannot say that Guanyin's role of protecting children is derived from her role of giving children, but the connection between these two roles is obvious.

Regarding Guanyin as the patron of children, devotees in Taiwan will also pray for the blessings from Guanyin to be bestowed on their children by making a silver plaque, usually a coin which has a hole in the middle, engraving it with the title of Guanyin, and using a red string to tie it as a necklace to let their children wear it. The plaque or coin tied with a red string is called *juan* 綫,²⁸⁰ and this custom is called "Hanging the plaque" (*Wojuan* 揲綫).²⁸¹ Devotees usually practice this custom in front of the image of Guanyin on the nineteenth of the sixth month, the holy day celebrating Guanyin's enlightenment. Children who wear the divine plaques will not take them off till they reach the age of sixteen, and every year their parents will bring them to Guanyin temples to renew the red string of their plaques, which indicates the renewal of Guanyin's blessings.²⁸²

In sum, there are different methods of praying to Guanyin for a son, and Guanyin's image represented in these methods is also different. The image of Guanyin in the memorial written by Master Yinguang is a symbol of great compassion and wisdom. Those who would like to pray to her for a son should have a compassionate mind and wisdom, together with most sincerity, to correspond to her virtues. In the *Baiyi dashi shenzhou*, Guanyin's image is

²⁸⁰ "*Juan* 綫" literally means strings (See *Yuandong hanyu da zidian* 遠東漢語大字典 [The Great Chinese Dictionary of Far East] (Taipei: Yuandong Book Company, 1991), V. 5, p. 3399), and here, "*juan*" indicates the divine plaque, according to Chen Wenxiang 陳文祥's article *Taiwan minjian Guanyin chongbai de yanjiu* 台灣民間觀音崇拜的研究 [A Study of the Local Cult of Guanyin in Taiwan] (Taipei: Ganlan Foundation, 1985), p. 29.

²⁸¹ "*Wo* 揲" literally means to pick out (See *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo*, *Zhongwen da cidian*, V. 8, p. 177). Here, "*Wo*" means to hang around the neck, according to Chen Wenxiang's article *Taiwan minjian Guanyin chongbai de yanjiu*, p. 29.

compassionate and efficacious, but her wisdom is not emphasized. Those who would like to pray to her for a son by applying this method should have a sincere and respectful mind and follow a certain instructions for recitation of the divine mantra. As for in the local customs of praying to Guanyin for a son, Guanyin is viewed as a giver of sons and a patron of children, and different areas have different customs to pray to her.

²⁸² See Chen Wenxiang, *Taiwan minjian Guanyin chongbai de yanjiu*, pp. 29-30.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Guanyin Who Brings Sons, usually portrayed as a white-robed lady carrying a baby in her arms, is popularly considered to be a granter of sons in Chinese popular religion with Buddhist background. Scholar Henri Maspero used the following sentence to explain her appearance: "Popular religion seized upon this Kuan-yin (or Guanyin) Clothed in White—whom art had already removed from the framework of Tantrism—and took her away from Buddhism itself to make the Kuanyin Who Brings Children (or Guanyin Who Brings Sons), whose images are so widespread."²⁸³ He emphasized popular religion's influence on Buddhism, especially Guanyin worship, while pointing out the close connection among the iconographies of White-robed Guanyin and Guanyin Who Brings Sons. For him, originating in Buddhist Guanyin worship but taken away and reshaped by popular religion, Guanyin Who Brings Sons should be ascribed to popular religion. However, through the discussion of previous chapters, we can get an impression that the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in China has many dimensions, and the popular religious dimension of her cult is just a segment of the whole worship. In addition, most devotees do not treat Guanyin and Guanyin Who Brings Sons as two different deities.

After being introduced into China and syncretized with Chinese traditional culture, social values and indigenous religions, Guanyin worship experienced a Chinese transformation. The result of the adjustment to Chinese culture is to make Guanyin widely accepted by the Chinese and deemed as a Chinese deity. However, the process of the Chinese transformation was not a straight line but went on many directions simultaneously. As a result,

²⁸³ Henri Maspero, Taoism and Chinese Religion (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), p. 168.

Guanyin is worshiped not only in Buddhist monasteries but also in local community temples, family shrines, and sectarian groups. The different worship places indicate the different dimensions of Guanyin worship, and these dimensions are really decided by devotees' attitudes toward her and their knowledge of her. Brought into China with Guanyin belief and developed from one of her promises in the "Universal Gateway" chapter of Lotus Sutra, Guanyin Who Brings Sons experienced the same Chinese transformation as Guanyin did, and is worshiped in various dimensions by Chinese devotees as well. In different belief dimensions, devotees follow different methods to pray for sons.

Buddhists take the "Universal Gateway" chapter as the scriptural source for the practice of praying to Guanyin for heirs. They recognize her origin as Guanyin's promise of bringing children to people and consider her to be not different from Guanyin, the compassionate bodhisattva. Authors of Buddhist miracle tale collections dedicated to Guanyin belong to this type of devotees. They compiled miracle tales about Guanyin's granting children, especially sons, into a collection together with other types of stories concerning Guanyin's efficacy in other matters, such as healing, carrying devotees to western paradise, divine protection from killing, demons, natural disasters, warfare, etc. and equally regarded all of these types of stories as the manifestation of Guanyin's various powers. Master Yinguang (1860-1940 C.E.), the thirteenth patriarch of Pure Land Buddhism, also revealed an indiscriminate attitude toward Guanyin Who Brings Sons and Bodhisattva Guanyin in the memorial he wrote for a devotee to pray to Guanyin for a son. From this memorial, we can also learn that Buddhists are expected to comprehend Guanyin's efficacy in responding to their prayers according to Buddhist teachings, understanding that Guanyin really has no personal intentions in responding devotees. Only keeping a pure and sincere mind to pray to her and recite her name or scripture is the correct way to obtain her efficacious responses.

In folk Buddhism or local cults, some local devotees seem to make no distinction between Guanyin Who Brings Sons and Guanyin, either. For example, the *Baiyi dashi shenzhou*, the most popular indigenous scripture promoting Guanyin's efficacy, is not exclusively dedicated to praying for heirs. Devotees recite it to pray for a variety of wishes, and asking for sons is just one of them. In addition, they also pay reverence to the Guanyin image in local temples to pray for sons. However, their knowledge of Guanyin is mostly associated with the legend of Miaoshan and other vernacular literature linked to Guanyin. Of course, they understand that she is a Buddhist bodhisattva with great compassion, but their perception of buddhas and bodhisattvas is nearly the same as that of other local deities or divinities of Chinese celestial pantheon headed by Jade Emperor: all of them are deities to whom they can pray for blessings. The slight difference may only lie on the degree of these deities' efficacy. Also, deities of Buddhist background are vegetarian, and devotees should not present meat as offerings to them.

Some devotees, however, worship Guanyin Who Brings Sons individually in local cults. They probably regard Guanyin Who Brings Sons as a specialist of granting sons independent of Guanyin. The Lettuce Fair in Guangdong is the best example. This fair is held to celebrate the birthday of White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons, the twenty-sixth of the first month or the twenty-fourth of the second month. Neither of these two dates is one of the three holy days associated with Guanyin. This phenomenon increases the possibility that these devotees treat Guanyin Who Brings Sons as an independent worship object. If so, however, the association between the Guanyin Who Brings Sons and Guanyin are still positive, for Guanyin Who Brings Sons is the embodiment of Guanyin's promise or power of bringing sons.

Therefore, what different devotees see in the Guanyin Who Brings Sons is varied at different position in a spectrum, the two extremes of which are a Guanyin's promise in the "Universal Gateway" chapter and an individual goddess personifying Guanyin's promise of granting sons and worshiped in local cults.

However, to some degree, Henri Maspero's observation of Guanyin Who Brings Sons is still correct. At the level of local cults, the worship of Guanyin Who Brings Sons has been strongly influenced by the worship of other Chinese deities having similar functions and traditional customs of seeking sons to become part of the religious phenomena of local cults. These other Chinese famous deities having similar functions mainly include the Lady of Azure Clouds (*Bi xia yuan jun* 碧霞元君) in northern China, the Lady of Golden Flowers (*Jinhua furen* 金花夫人) in Guangdong, the Lady of Bestowing Sons (*Zhusheng niang niang* 註生娘娘) in Taiwan and Fujian, and so on. The Lady of Azure Clouds is the goddess of Mt. Tai 泰山. She is generally considered to be the protectress of women and children, particularly to bestow children on women and preside over their delivery. She is accompanied with two female assistants, the Lady of Children (*Zisun niang niang* 子孫娘娘) and the Lady of Eyesight (*Yanguang niang niang* 眼光娘娘), and six secondary female deities specializing the matters about childbirth and the protection of infancy.²⁸⁴ Those who would like to pray for sons will use a red string to tie one of the numerous dolls, sometimes shoes, placed in front of or surrounding the statue of the Lady of Children and take it home, which is called "Stealing a son" (*Tou zi* 偷子) or "Tying a doll" (*Shuan wa wa* 拴娃娃).²⁸⁵ If they do obtain a son later,

²⁸⁴ See Henry Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, pp. 164-165, and Chuu Ling-in, "A Study of The Wondrous Scripture of the Lady of Azure Clouds Who Protects Country, Shelters the People, Offers Universal Salvation, and Preserves Life." Unpublished paper. Pp. 5-6.

²⁸⁵ See Henry Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, pp. 164-165, Ma Shutian 馬書田, *Zhongguo minjian zhushen* 中國民間諸神 [Various Gods in Chinese Folklore] (Beijing: Tuanjie Publisher, 1997), p. 130, and

they will buy some dolls to place around the statue of Lady of Children so as to repay the favors, which is called “Returning sons” (*Huan zi* 還子).²⁸⁶ In the worship of the Lady of Golden Flowers, a custom of praying for sons appears very similar to “Tying a doll”. The Lady of Golden Flowers is accompanied with twenty divine nannies taking care various matters linked to granting children and childcare. Those who would like to pray for a son should burn a bundle of incense sticks, place an incense stick in front of each goddess statue in an order and see in front of which they place their last incense stick. If the last statue is carrying a baby boy, it is a sign for obtaining a son. Then, the devotees should use a red string to tie the baby boy of this statue, make a bow and recite a prayer. It is believed that this tied baby boy will be transformed to be the son of the devotee.²⁸⁷ As for the Lady of Bestowing Sons in Taiwan and Fujian, she is believed to be Chen Jinggu 陳靖姑, the Lady of Danai (*Danai furen* 大奶夫人), who is well-known to ensure a safe childbirth. She is accompanied with twelve assistants in charge of matters related to the bestowal of children and childbirth.²⁸⁸ The practice of stealing shoes to get a son from Guanyin Who Brings Sons mentioned in the fourth chapter appears very similar to the custom of “Tying a doll”. Both of them are meant to obtain the bestowal of a son from a deity by “stealing a son” from such a deity. Also, the practice of making the sons granted by Guanyin to be her adopted sons seems to contain the implicit meaning of “Returning sons”. In addition, the custom of “Hanging the plaque” (*Wojuan* 掙綫) is not only practiced to pray for protection bestowed on children from Guanyin but also found in the worship of the Lady of Bestowing Children and other

Wang Zhaoxiang 王兆祥 and Liu Wenzhi 劉文治, *Zhongguo gudai miaohui* 中國古代廟會 [Temple Festivals in Ancient China] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu publisher, 1998), pp. 31-32.

²⁸⁶ See Ma Shutian, *Zhongguo minjian zhushen*, p. 130, and Chuu Ling-in, “A Study of The Wondrous Scripture of the Lady of Azure Clouds Who Protects Country, Shelters the People, Offers Universal Salvation, and Preserves Life.” Pp. 5-6.

²⁸⁷ See Ma Shutian, *Zhongguo minjian zhushen*, pp. 122-125.

²⁸⁸ See Ma Shutian, *Zhongguo minjian zhushen*, pp. 127-128.

protectresses of children, such as Mazu, the Lady of Seven Stars (*Qixing ma* 七星媽), and so on, in Taiwan.²⁸⁹ It is obvious that the worship of these goddesses wields a strong influence on the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons at the level of local cults, and as a result, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between Guanyin Who Brings Sons and these goddesses.

However, in a way, Guanyin Who Brings Sons is still unique among these goddesses. Her cult in China is nationally widespread, while the cults of these goddesses are associated with a special area, which is usually related to the mythology of their origins or the course of their development. For instance, the worship of the Lady of Azure Clouds is most popular in the Shandong peninsula and the Beijing area, because she is generally believed to be the daughter of the Grand Emperor of East Peak (*Dong yue da di* 東嶽大帝), the ruler of Mt. Tai, and Mt. Tai is located in Shandong, which is close to the Beijing area. The worship of Chen Jinggu is another example. Her worship is popular in Fujian, Taiwan and nearby areas. According to the mythology about her, which narrates her achievements of killing a snake demon and ensuring smooth and safe childbirth, she was a native of Fuzhou 福州 in Fujian. It is not difficult to conclude that when the residents of Fujian crossed the sea to move to Taiwan, this worship of her was brought to the island as well.²⁹⁰ In comparison, the national widespread of the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons, which is mentioned in the second chapter, should be owing to her Buddhist background, for in Buddhism she is a compassionate bodhisattva offering universal salvation to all creatures.

The uniqueness of Guanyin Who Brings Sons can be found in the comparison with not only other Chinese goddesses having similar functions but also this kind of goddesses in other cultures. Most goddesses in other cultures to whom devotees pray for children in other culture

²⁸⁹ See Chen Wenxiang, *Taiwan minjian Guanyin chongbai de yanjiu*, pp. 29-30.

are associated with agricultural fertility and nourishment, such as Demeter, the Greek goddess of the harvest, whose association with grain was translated into a close relationship with human fertility,²⁹¹ and Ganga Ma, the goddess of the Ganges river, whose nourishing quality was associated with the birth of children.²⁹² By contrast, the fame of Guanyin Who Brings Sons as a granter of sons is not based on any mythology about her power of causing agricultural fertility. The power of bringing sons possessed by her was transformed from Bodhisattva Guanyin's promise of bringing children, a manifestation of Guanyin's great compassion toward all sentient beings, which is very different from the worship of natural power related to agricultural fertility.

Aside from agricultural fertility, the establishment of the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons is also not associated with the topic of wifehood or motherhood, another important origin of most goddesses charged with human fertility in the world. For her Buddhist devotees, she is Bodhisattva Guanshiyin, and for her local followers, she is princess Miaoshan. Even though she was identified to be the Eternal Mother in a precious volume, this image of her as a mother was created after her reputation was fully established, and is unconventional. It is erroneous to consider that Guanyin Who Brings Sons as a granter of sons is transformed from this mother image of her. As a matter of fact, the origins of many Chinese goddesses specializing in giving children are not associated with wifehood and motherhood. Among the three Chinese local goddess I mentioned previously, the cult of the Lady of Azure Clouds originated from a statue of a Jade Maiden (*Wu nu* 玉女) on Mt. Tai, and in one of the myths

²⁹⁰ See Song Li 宋力 and Liu Qun 劉群, etc., *Zhongguo minjian zhushen* 中國民間諸神 [Various Gods in Chinese Folklore] (China: Hebei renmin publisher, 1987), p. 403 and Ma Shutian, *Zhongguo minjian zhushen*, pp. 138-139.

²⁹¹ See website <http://www.loggia.com/myth/demeter.html>, and Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, V. 6, p. 39.

²⁹² See David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses* (California: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 187-194.

about her, she even refused to get married but went to a mountain to cultivate the way;²⁹³ the cult of the Lady of Golden Flowers originated from a young lady drowned in a lake.²⁹⁴ Chen Jinggu is the only exception. In the mythology about her, she was a married woman who died in a miscarriage caused by the hardship of praying for rain for her community she was devoted to.²⁹⁵ Therefore, the way of explaining the origins of fertility goddesses in the patterns of wifehood and motherhood, as well as agricultural fertility, does not seem to be applicable in the case of the emergence of many Chinese goddesses in charge of human fertility, and this question deserves further research from more scholars.

To conclude, the cult of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in China is a complex and unique religious phenomenon. The Buddhist background of Guanyin provides this cult with a background of Buddhist ideas and beliefs. Simultaneously, syncretized with Chinese culture and local cults, this cult became part of Chinese popular religion. Different devotees follow different methods to pray for sons and comprehend this goddess from different perspectives in this cult. The multiplicity of the forms represented by this cult is unparalleled in Chinese religions.

²⁹³ See Chuu Ling-in, "A Study of The Wondrous Scripture of the Lady of Azure Clouds Who Protects Country, Shelters the People, Offers Universal Salvation, and Preserves Life." Unpublished paper. Pp. 2-5.

²⁹⁴ Ma Shutian, *Zhongguo minjian zhushen*, pp. 119-121.

²⁹⁵ Ma Shutian, *Zhongguo minjian zhushen*, pp. 138-140, and Song Li and Liu Qun, etc., *Zhongguo minjian zhushen*, pp. 404-405.

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FIGURES:



Figure 1: White-robed Guanyin Who Brings Sons, the most popular iconography of Guanyin Who Brings Sons in China



Figure 2: The painting of White-robed Guanyin by Wu Daozi in the Tang, together with a text of the Heart Sutra written by Chang Feng 張風. From *Lidai minhua Guanyin baoxiang*, vol. 1, no. 1.



Figure 3: Another painting of White-robed Guanyin by Wu Daozi in the Tang.

From *Lidai minhua Guanyin baoxiang*, vol. 1, no. 2.

Figure 4: Painting of Guanyin carrying a baby, by Jiang Zhenji 姜吉貞 in the thirteen year of Wanli reign period of the Ming (1585), and the text of The Dharani Sutra of the Five Mudras of the Great Compassionate White-robed One, written by Xu Guangzhuo 許光祚 in the same year. From *Lidai minhua Guanyin baoxiang*, vol. 1, no. 26.

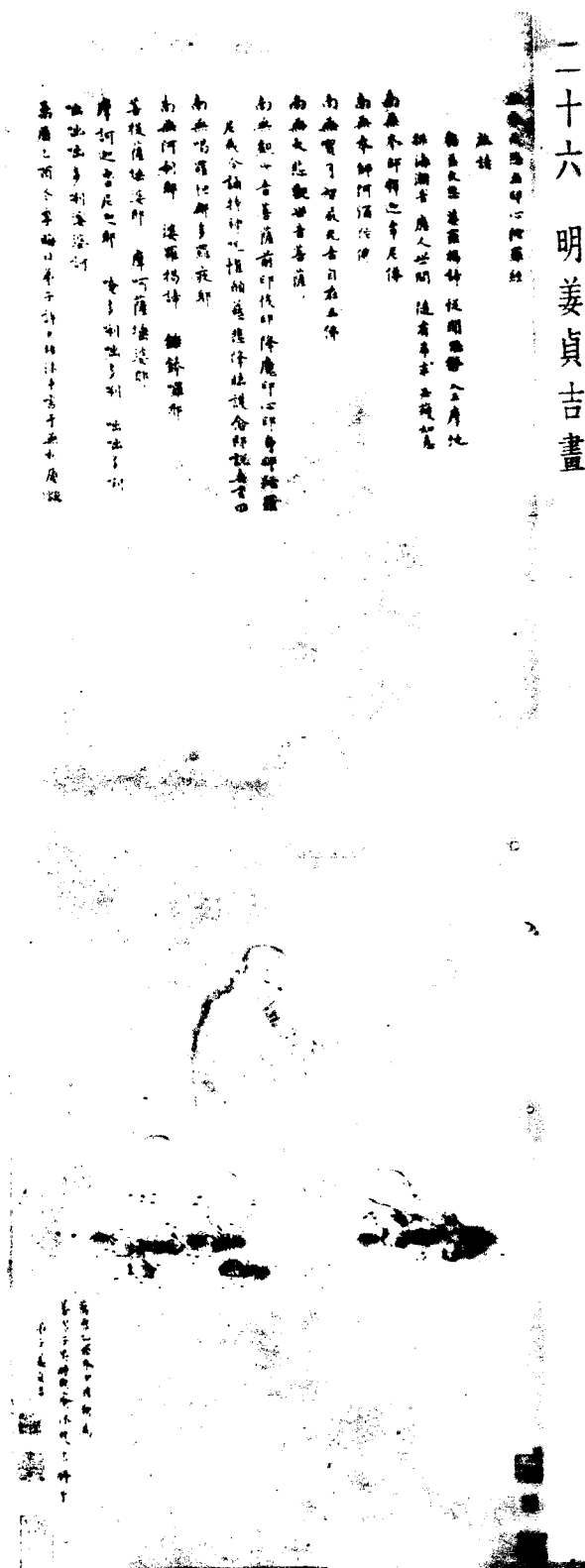




Figure 5: Stele of the White-robed Guanyin with an inscribed text of The Dharani Sutra of the Five Mudras of the Great Compassionate White-robed One attributed to Qin Guan, a literatus in the Song. From Lidai minhua Guanyin baoxiang, vol. 1, no. 144.

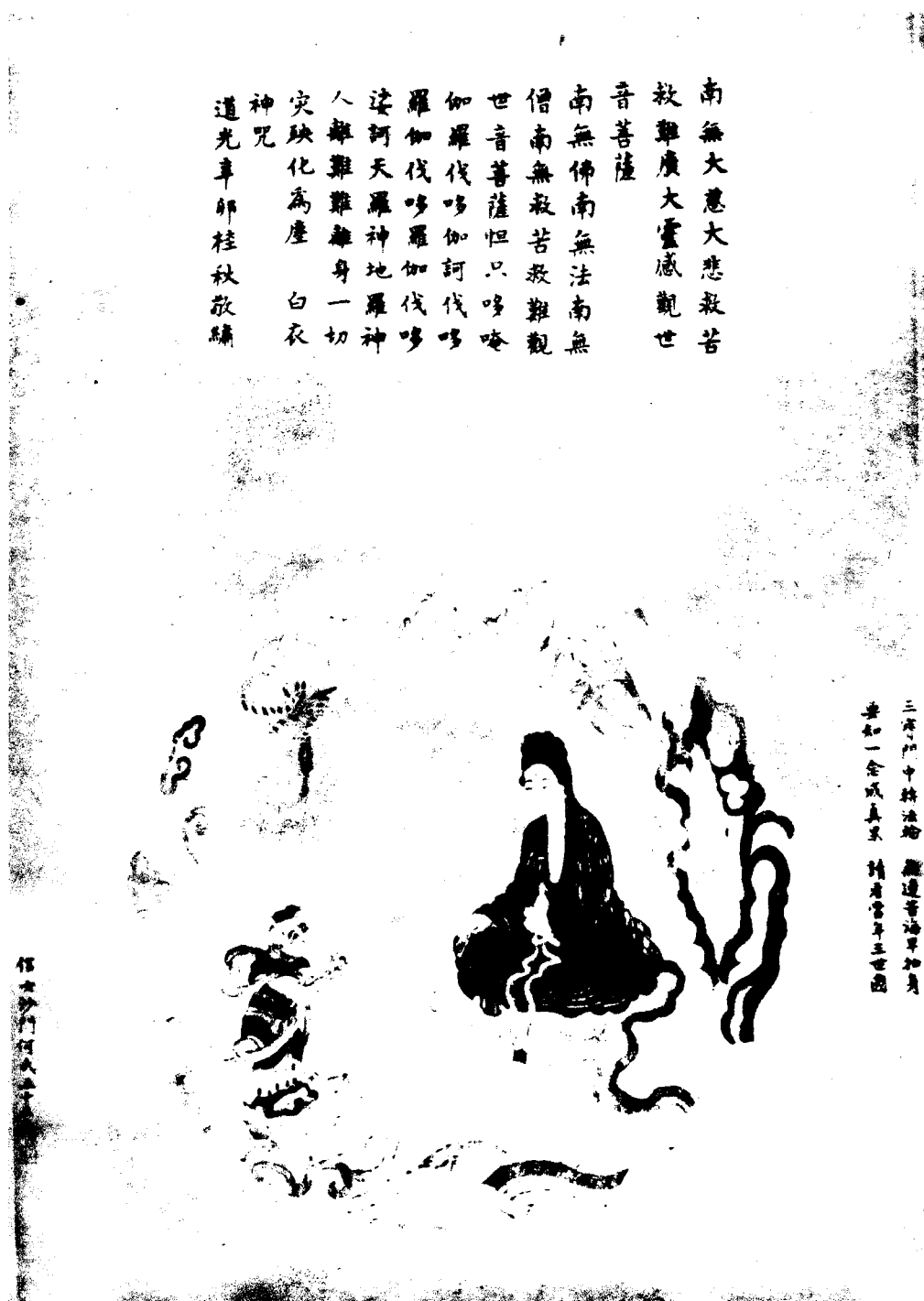
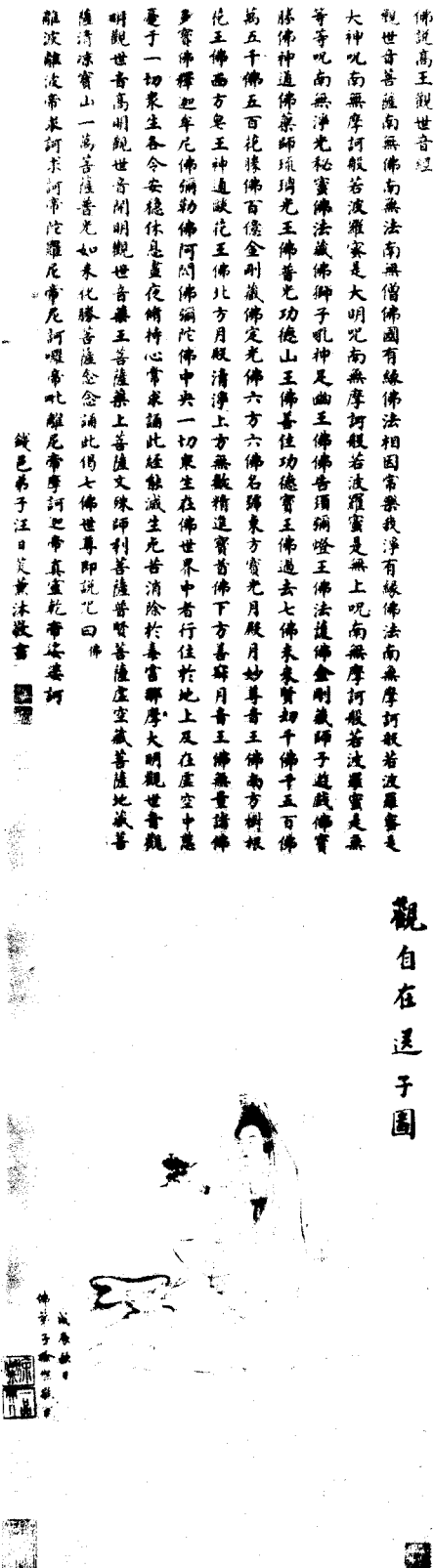


Figure 6: Embroidery of Guanyin image and the Divine Mudra of White-robed Guanyin, by Madam Shahe 沙何氏 in the eleventh year of Daoguang reign period of the Qing (1831 C.E.). From *Lidai minhua Guanyin baoxiang*, vol. 1, no. 132.

Figure 7: Painting of Guanyin sending sons by Xu Can 徐燦 in the thirteen year of Qianlong reign period of the Qing (1748), and the calligraphy of the Guanshiyin Sutra of King Gao written by Wang Rutan 汪日葵. From *Lidai minhua Guanyin baoxiang*, vol. 1, no. 58.



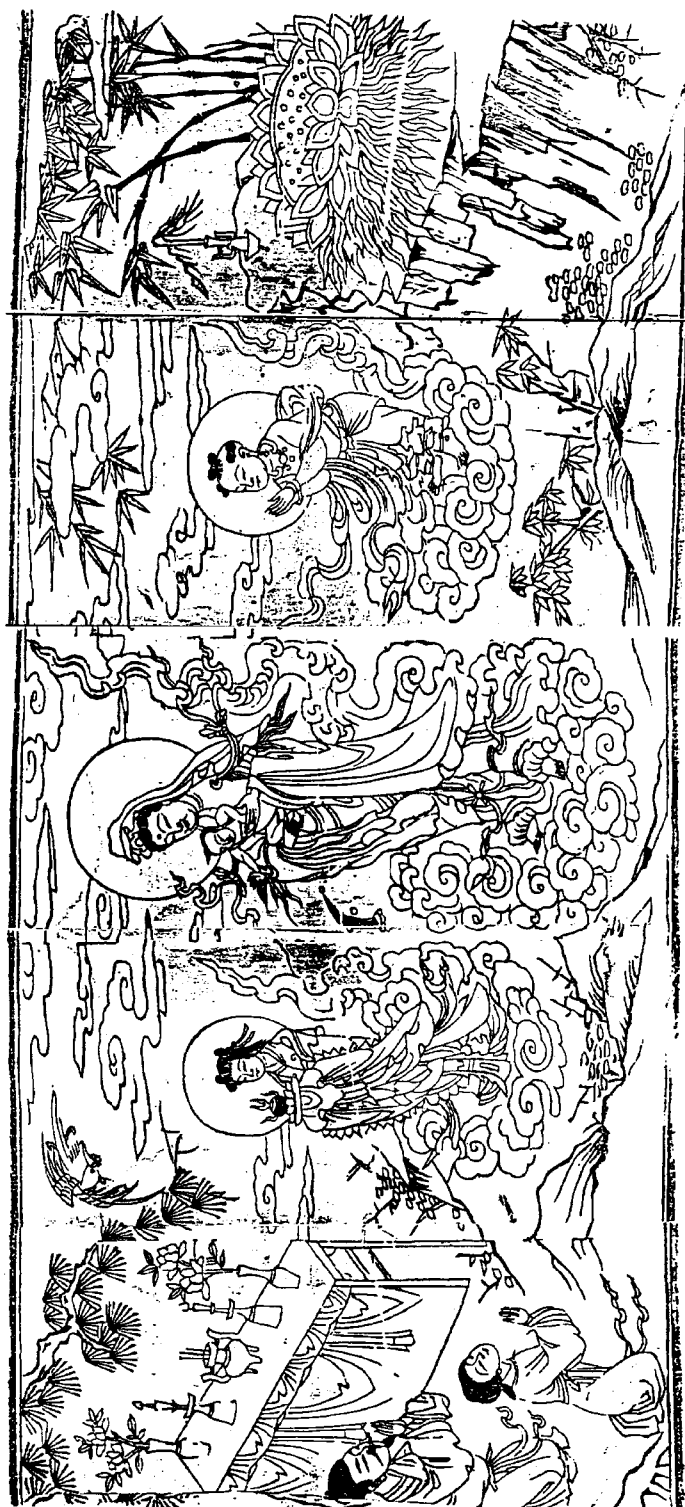


Figure 8: The frontispiece of the *Xiaoshi baiyi Guanyin pusa song yinger xiasheng baojuan*. The White-robed Guanyin is represented to hold a baby in her arms in the middle of this picture, attended by the Dragon Princess on her left side and Shancai on her right side.



Figure 9: A scene of Guanyin Festival held by the Longshan Temple in Wanhua, Taipei, on the nineteenth of the sixth lunar month, 1999.

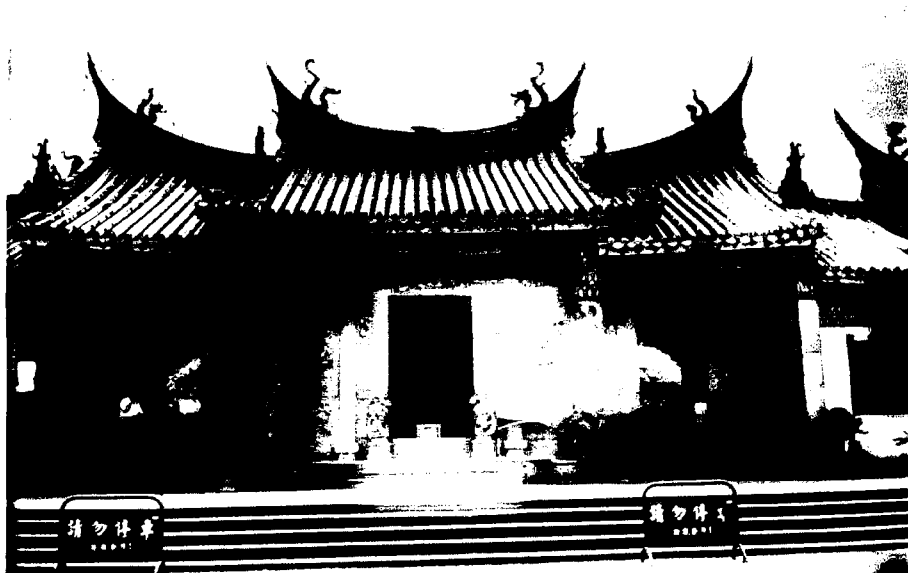


Figure 10: A front view of the Guanyin Temple of Zhulinshan in Taipei, Taiwan. (Summer, 1999)



Figure 11: The sedan chairs in the Guanyin Temple of Zhulinshan. Deity images will be placed inside of them to be carried around during a parade.



Figure 12: The Guanyin image in the Temple of Compassion and Holiness in Neihu, Taipei.
(Summer, 1999)



Figure 13 and 14: The procession of a parade in a Guanyin Festival held by the Temple of Compassion and Holiness in Neihu on the nineteenth day of the sixth lunar month, 1999.

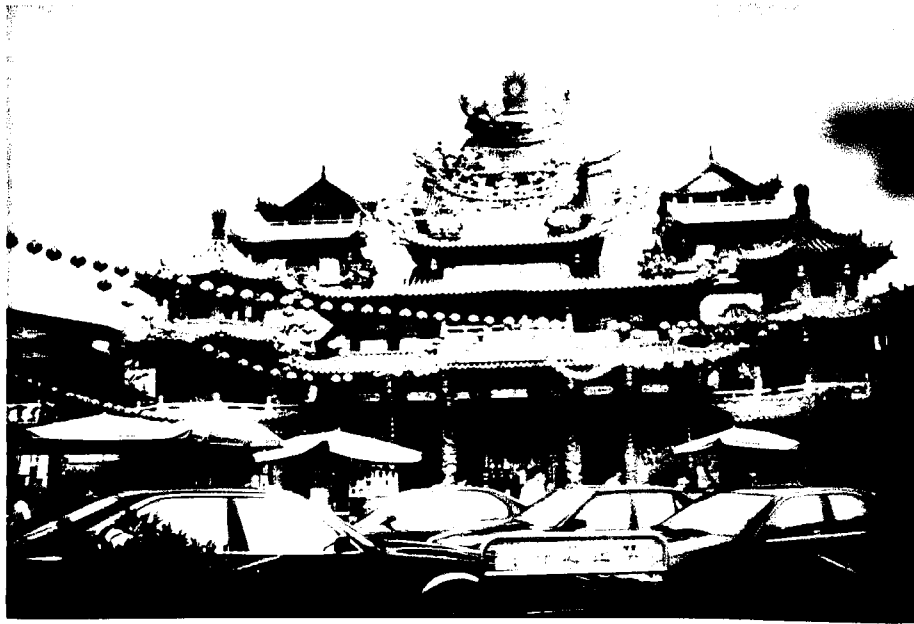


Figure 16: The Grotto of Purple Clouds, a Guanyin temple in Qingshui, Taizhong. (Summer, 1999)

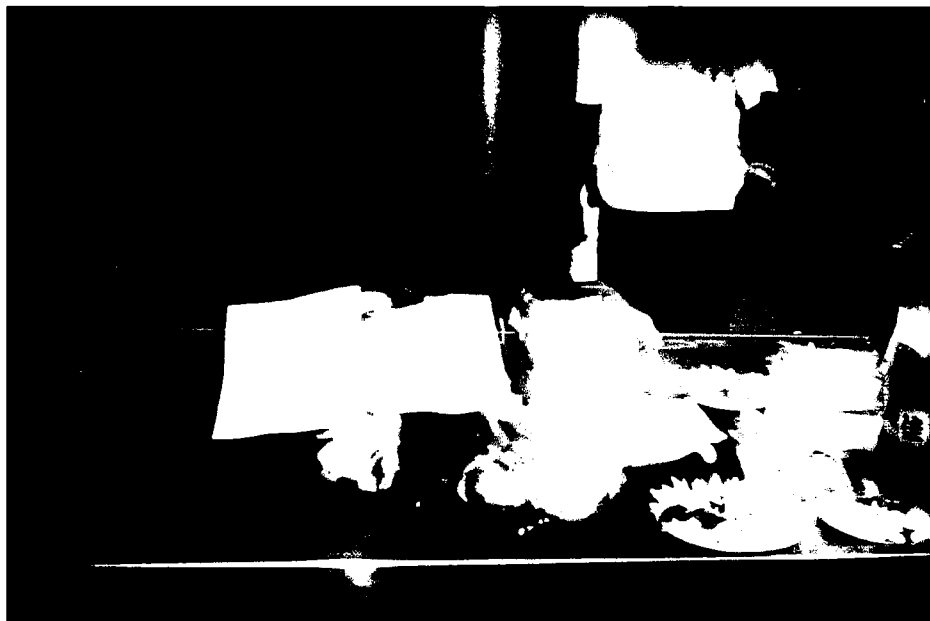


Figure 17: The document in this photo is the Memorial of dedicating children to be adopted by Guanyin as her children. Devotees presented it, together with other offerings, to Guanyin in the Guanyin Festival held by the Grotto of Purple Clouds in the summer of 1999.

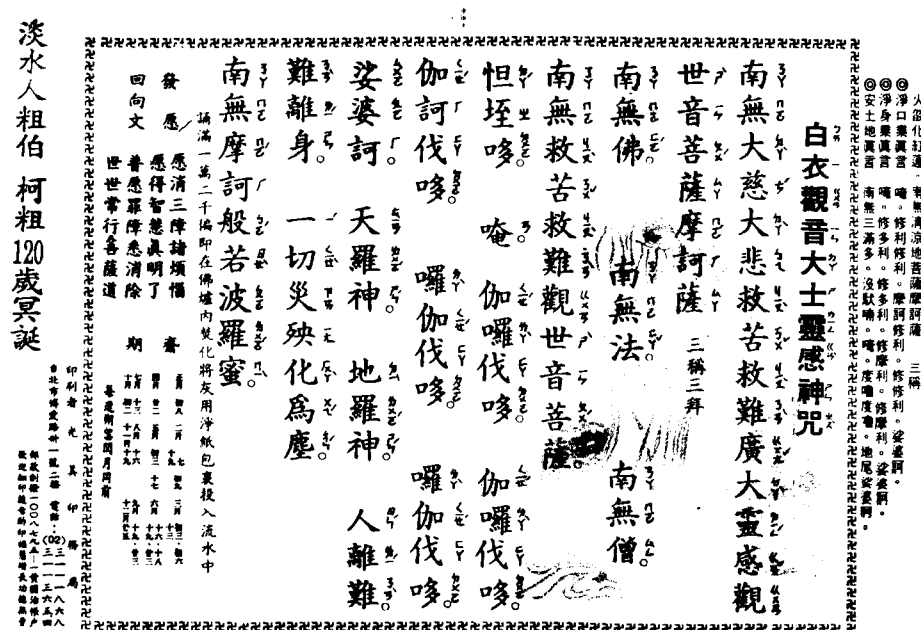
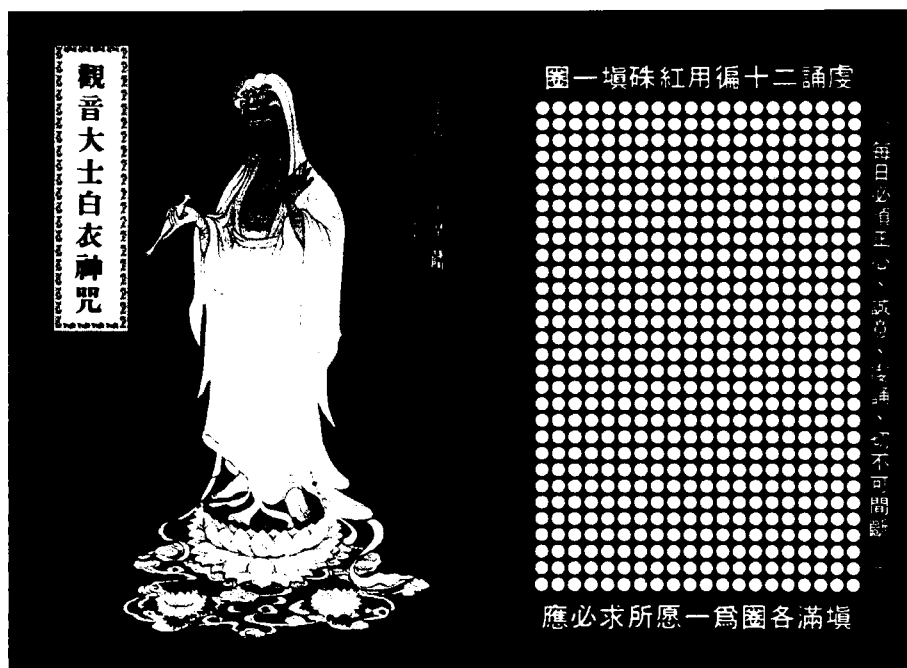


Figure 18: A little card of *Baiyi dashi shenzhou*, which is designed for folding in half. The upper picture is the outside of this card. On its front is the image of White-robed Guanyin, and on its back are six hundred circles for calculating the times of recitation. As for the lower picture, it is the inside of this card, which contains the text of this mantra and the instructions of recitation.



Figure 19: The images of Guanyin Who Brings Sons and her two attendants, Shancai and the Dragon Princess, worshiped in a temple in Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi 山西. This image of Guanyin Who Brings Sons is quite unusual, for it is represented to be a male, wearing a moustache. From *Zhongguo diaosu Guanyin* 中國雕塑觀音 [Chinese Sculptures of Guanyin] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji publisher, 1994), no. 66.

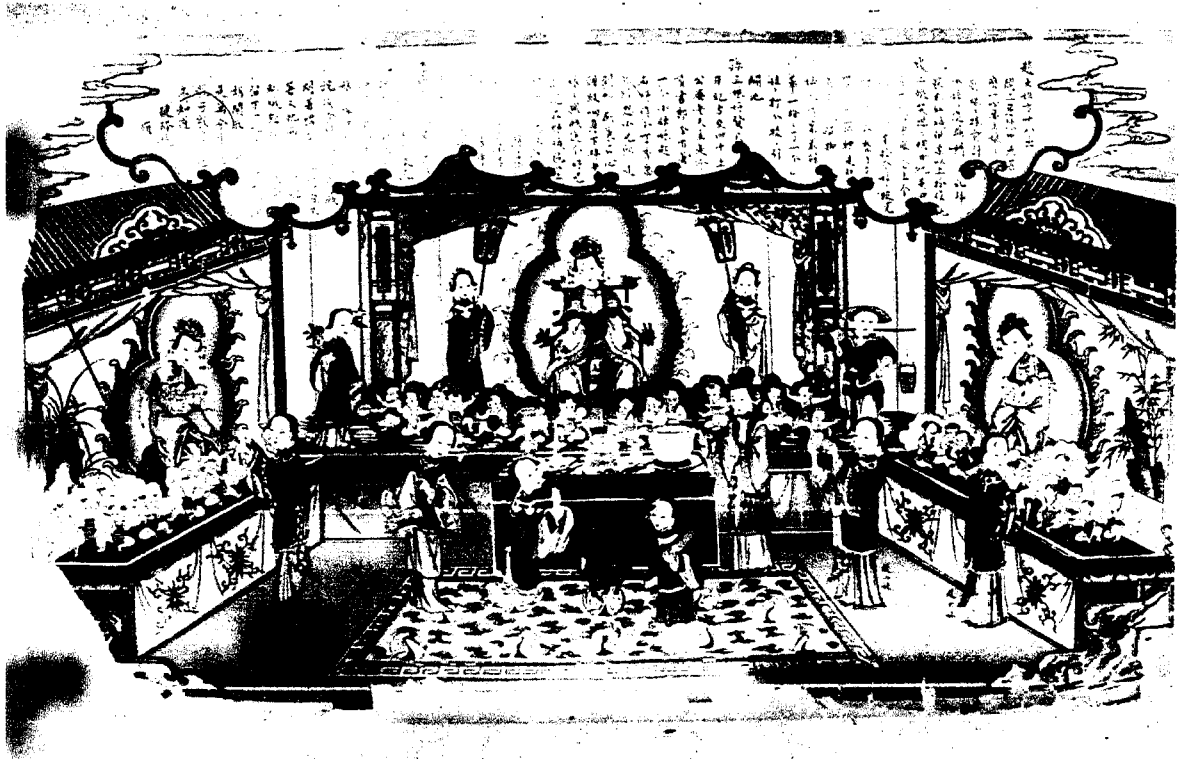


Figure 20: A scene of “Tying a doll”, a custom of praying to fertility goddesses for children practiced in China. This painting represents a worship hall, having a main altar dedicated to a fertility goddess and two side altars dedicated to her two female assistants. Many baby dolls are placed on the altars for female devotees to take home. From *Quanxiang Zhongguo sanbai shen* 全像中國三百神 [The Whole Pictures of Three Hundred Chinese Deities] (Jiangxi: Art Publisher, 1992).