FAZANG (643-712): THE HOLY MAN

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By and large, the importance of the Tang Buddhist monk Fazang 法藏 (643-712) has still been so far appraised and appreciated in terms of his contributions to Buddhist philosophy, and especially his status as the *de facto* founder of the East Asian *Avataṃsaka* tradition, which has been well known for its sophisticated and often difficult philosophical system. The choice of modern scholars to focus on Fazang's philosophical contributions is certainly justifiable. Most of his extant writings are indeed philosophical texts. This "Avataṃsaka-only" vision of Fazang might well give the impression that he was an armchair philosopher, who was almost exclusively preoccupied with metaphysical speculations, with little or no interest in other forms of religion.

Fazang's historical and hagio/biographical sources present to us three different types of images, all quite contrary to the sober, if not stern, impression that his reputation as a great philosopher might have cast upon us: first as a politician who deliberately and shrewdly added his significant weight to the balance of power when it reached a critical point of exploding into major and fundamental sociopolitical changes ("revolutions" is perhaps not too strong a word); second, as a warrior who fought the enemy of the empire, not by sword, but by charms; and eventually, as a mediator between humanity and the heavens when disharmony started to develop between them and threatened the very structure of the human world. It is probably in terms of such a status as a go-between of humanity and heaven, or — more in line with Chinese traditional ideas — an adjustor if not manipulator of *yin* and *yang*, that we ought to discuss Fazang's function and image as a holy man in medieval China.

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I) Fazang the Court Politician

A twenty years junior of Wu Zhao 武曌 (623-705), as Empress Wu was personally known, Fazang outlived her by seven years. When he started to distinguish himself as a young Buddhist scholar towards the end of the 660s, the empress had already managed to place herself at the center of power stage. It seems therefore reasonable to say that Fazang spent the majority of his career under the shadow of Empress Wu, who had been the actual ruler of China in the half century spanning from 655, when she became the new empress of Gaozong (r. 649-683), to the beginning of 705, when she was forced into abdication. During this period, she first (655-683) shared supreme power with her husband, then after a short interval, during which her first emperor-son Zhongzong (r. 694, 705-710) maintained his nominal rule for less than two months, she wielded the state power as the Regent of her second emperor-son Ruizong (r. 684-690, 710-712), a puppet manipulated by her, until 16 October 690, when she replaced the Great Tang with her own dynasty the Great Zhou. This fact alone accounts for the irreplaceable importance of the empress's influence on Fazang, which, in turn, justifies the amount of attention that we are going to pay to their relationship.

I.1) *Fazang and Empress Wu: 671-690*

The earliest dated association between Fazang and Empress Wu started from Xianheng 1 (27 March 670-14 February 671), when the empress, at the recommendation of several prestigious monks, assigned Fazang, who was then still a novice, to the Taiyuansi 太原寺. Built on the foundations of the old residence of Empress Wu's mother Madam Rongguo 榮國 (579-670), who died on 22 August of that year, this monastery was dedicated to her posthumous welfare[1].

[1] See Fazang's funeral epitaph by Yan Chaoyin 閻朝隱 (?-713?) shortly after his death in 712, the "Da Tang Da Jianfusi gu Dade Kangzang Fashi zhi bei" (hereafter "Kang Zang bei"), *T* 50: 280b15-17; a more detailed account can be found in *Tang Tae Ch'ŏnboksa kosaju pŏn'gyŏng taedŏk Pŏpjang hwasang chŏn* (hereafter *Pŏpjang chŏn*), *T* 50: 281b15-20. For the epigraphic evidence establishing Madame Rongguo's dates, see Forte 1996: 456-57.

It seems that from the very beginning, Fazang succeeded in capturing the attention of the empress, as Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn tells us that shortly after he entered the Taiyuansi, in the *duanwu* 端午 festival (later to be known as Dragon Boat festival) of an unspecified year, which was either during the time when Fazang entered the Taiyuansi or several years after, Empress Wu showed a significant favor to him by sending him a set of five monastic robes, as a match to the symbolism implied in the *duanwu* festival, which was annually celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth month. This gift was accompanied with a short but highly laudatory message:

> As now the season turns to the fifth month, it is time for enjoying the *zongzi* 粽子 dumpling (*jiaosu* 角黍). Now the weather is gradually getting hot, does the Master's "spiritual body" (*daoti* 道體) still feel light and comfortable? It happens to be the good season for wearing the longevity-thread (*changsi* 長絲), and the excellent time of receiving the "ribbon of life" (*minglu* 命縷)[2]. Now We have sent the five kinds of monastic dress[3] to match the number implied in the festival of *duanwu* (5.5). It is Our hope that following this season of collecting Artemisia-leaves[4], you, O Master, will grow evergreen like the aging of a pine! The lamp of dharma-transmission will be alight forever and you will always be the guiding head. This brief letter was written [merely] to convey Our regards and We will not linger on now. 薤賓應節, 角黍登期。景候稍炎, 師道體清適？屬長絲之令節, 承命縷之嘉辰。今送衣裳五事, 用符端午之數。願師承茲采艾之序, 更茂如松之齡。永耀傳燈, 常為導首。略書示意, 指不多云。[5]

Given that he was then no more than a Buddhist novice, the amount of attention that Empress Wu paid to him is remarkable. In addition to his reputation as an excellent Buddhist scholar, there must have been some more profound factors contributing to this extraordinary success. They might include Fazang's prestigious family background. Some of Fazang's ancestors were state ministers in their original home, the kingdom of

[2] Here both the *changsi* and *minglü* refer to the *changmingsi* 長命絲 (or *changminglü* 長命縷), a bunch of five-colored threads, which it was customary to wear during the *duanwu* festival in hope of extending one's life, hence the name of *changmingsi*/*changminglü* – "longevity thread."

[3] The five sets of monastic dress included *saṅghāṭi*, *uttarāsaṅgha*, *antarvāsa*, *saṃkakṣikā* and *kūsula* (*kūsulika*).

[4] It was also a custom during the *duanwu* festival to collect the Artemisia-leaves, which, put on the doors, were allegedly capable of warding off evil spirits.

[5] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 281b24-28.

Kangju 康居 (Samarqand). Fazang's father received the posthumous function of Commandant of the Left Guard (*zuowei zhonglang jiang* 左衛中郎將), which was "rank four, second class" (4b) in the bureaucratic hierarchy (Hucker 1985: 191, 526). This suggests that Fazang's father might have been active in contemporary aristocratic circles[6].

Another likely reason for Fazang's access to the royal family was the close relationship between his teacher Zhiyan 智儼 (602-668) and Li Xian 李賢 (653-684) (posthumously known as Crown Prince Zhanghuai 章懷), a son of Gaozong and Empress Wu, who became the Heir Apparent on 3 July 675, a position he held for five years until he was deposed on 20 September 680 on a charge of treason[7]. We do not know for certain how long Zhiyan associated himself with Li Xian. Since it was in the capacity of Prince Pei, a princely title he achieved on 18 October 661[8], that Li Xian started to associate with Zhiyan, who died on 8 December 668, we can assume that the association lasted for a period of time falling between these two dates. Given the close relationship between Zhiyan and Li Xian on the one hand and the extent to which Fazang was favored by Zhiyan on the other, it seems likely that Fazang would have had regular opportunities to visit the imperial court and attract attention from Empress Wu.

The importance of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* in Fazang's relationship with Empress Wu becomes more evident when we turn to examine another event in which the *sūtra* was the subject of a series of religious activities which were held on the eve of Empress Wu's "usurpation" in 690. On the night of 2 February 689, the emperor (nominally Ruizong, but actually Empress Wu, who was then "supervising the court" as the Regent) ordered Fazang and others to build a "high Avataṃsaka-seat" (*Huayan gaozuo* 華嚴高座) and a *bodhimaṇḍa* of "Eight Assemblies" (*bahui* 八會) at the Northern Gate of Xuanwu 玄武. The assembly was nominally convened for the purpose of elucidating and promoting the wondrous *Avataṃsaka sūtra*.

[6] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 281a19-21.

[7] *Zizhi tongjian* 202.6377, 6397. The association between Zhiyan and Li Xian is reported in Fazang's *Huayan jing zhuanji*, *T* 51:3.163c20-22, in which Li Xian is referred to as Prince of Pei 沛.

[8] *Zizhi tongjian* 200.6325.

Empress Wu honored the occasion with a poem. In the short preface, She tells us that in the intervals between conducting national affairs she attended the Avataṃsaka lectures, which provided her an opportunity to "watch the depth and breadth of the wisdom and eloquence, and to observe the performance of the 'dragon and elephants' (that is, 'eminent monks')."[9] She also congratulates herself that by virtue of her previous cultivation she was able to understand instantly the parts where she had deep-rooted doubts[10]. Empress Wu here suggests that her interest in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* was not extemporaneous, but long-lasting (and had possibly even begun in an earlier life as she suggested). This does not seem a perfunctory remark given her familiarity with Buddhism and the *sūtra* in particular, which can also be seen in the poem proper[11].

This apparently purely religious event turns out to have other dimensions as soon as we scrutinize it against the current social and political context. The two years from 689 and 690 were crucial for Empress Wu's political ambition. She was then keenly plotting for her formal usurpation of supreme power. The histories record a series of important measures that Empress Wu and her ideologues adopted to justify her aspiration for a new dynasty in her own right. Since I have delineated elsewhere (Chen 2003: 327-329) these main measures, let me here confine myself to an overall conclusion on the significances of this *Avataṃsaka* assembly had for Empress Wu and her ideologues:

It was only a couple of days after a series of events related to the completion and celebration of a huge complex generally known as the *mingtang* 明堂 (the "Luminous Hall"), the most important architectural expression of Empress Wu's sacral-political institution, that Empress Wu ordered Fazang and other monks to convene the Avataṃsaka assembly and the subsequent vegetarian feast. What made such a dharma-assembly noticeable was not only its size, but also Empress Wu's deep involvement with it — in addition to her own personal participation in the assembly, she honored it with an elegantly composed poem. It warrants our particular attention that the assembly was held in the vicinity of the north gate of

[9] *Huayan jing zhuanji*, *T* 51: 3.164b1-2.
[10] *Huayan jing zhuanji*, *T* 51: 3.164b2.
[11] *Huayan jing zhuanji*, *T* 51: 3.164b3-7, translated in Chen 2003: 327.

Xuanwu, close to the place where stood the *mingtang* complex, which was successfully brought to completion only ten days earlier. Given the spatial and temporal proximity between the *mingtang* and the Avataṃsaka Dharma-assembly, I suspect that the two events (or more accurately, the two series of events) associated with them, were executed for the same or similar purposes, among which was the politico-religious propaganda leading to the formal replacement of the Great Tang with the Great Zhou Dynasty on 16 October 690. Only by referring to this historical context can we do full justice to this religious events organized and guided by Fazang (Chen 2003: 329).

The efforts that Fazang, like other Buddhist leaders at the time, made to legitimate Empress Wu's unconventional (indeed, anti-conventional) and unprecedented rule as a female monarch and the enthusiasm with which he embraced the current dharma-prosperity rendered possible by Empress Wu and further anticipated even the grander vision of a truly world empire of Buddhism in China are best expressed in the following passage that Fazang wrote in featuring this *Avataṃsaka* dharma-assembly and introducing the empress's poem dedicated to it:

> The August Emperor of Divine Spirit (Shengshen huangdi 聖神皇帝) of the Great Zhou, having planted the seeds of Way in previous *kalpa*s, has been widely supported by myriads of people[12]. As prophesized by the Buddha in the *Dayun jing*, Her Majesty has been able to turn and manipulate the Golden Wheel. In accordance with the predictions in the Graphs from the River Luo, Her Majesty has come to rule the country by beating the jade-drum (*yugu* 玉鼓). Being divine and marvelous, Her Majesty has performed the "Six Kinds of Supernatural Powers,"[13] which know no limit. Being of supreme goodness and perfect beauty, Her Majesty has expanded to the boundless spheres the transformation in terms of "Ten Good Acts."[14] Her

[12] This refers to these lines in the *Daode jing*: 是以聖人處上而人不重, 處前而人不害, 是以天下樂推而不厭 (Zhu 1984: 268), which Lau (1963: 73) translates as, "Therefore the sage takes his place over the people yet is no burden; take his place ahead of the people yet causes no obstruction. That is why the empire supports him joyfully and never tires of doing so."

[13] The *liu shentong* 六神通 (Skt. *ṣaḍ abhijñāḥ*) refer to the six kinds of supernatural power attributed to the Buddha.

[14] The "Ten Good Acts" (*shishan* 十善) are those of avoiding (1) "killing" (*shasheng* 殺生), (2) "stealing" (*toudao* 偸盜), (3) "committing adultery" (*xieyin* 邪淫), (4) "lying" (*wanyu* 妄語), (5) "speaking harshly" (*ekou* 惡口), (6) "speaking divisively" (*liangshe* 兩舌), (7) "speaking idly" (*qiyu* 綺語), (8) "being greedy" (*tanyu* 貪欲), (9) "being angry" (*chenhui* 瞋恚), and (10) "having wrong views" (*xiejian* 邪見).

Majesty exceeded the rulers of the Xia and Yin (i.e. Shang) in [her compassion to animals by] "opening up the nets"[15] (*jiewan* 解網) and [showing sympathy to the people by] "wailing over the criminals" (*qigu* 泣辜)[16]. Thus, a jade-citadel (*guicheng* 瑰城) is surrounded by River Fen 汾水, the sun of wisdom equally spread its light into every tiny being. Therefore, "wearing herself out from head to foot,"[17] Her Majesty has exerted her energy in helping people with her "ten powers."[18] Stopping with only a mouthful in the middle of eating and binding up her hair in the midst of a bath [in order to grant audience to those useful to the state] just like Duke Zhou 周公, Her Majesty has kept having "Four Necessities"[19] delivered [to the saṃgha]. With the finest metal cast and the sandalwood carved for [metal and wooden] statues, the roseate clouds are mirrored as deeply as one thousand gates [of the monasteries]. [Sailing through the oceans by] floating on wooden cups and [climbing mountains by] shaking their staffs, [eminent monks] have been coming to gather within the nine-layered walls of the imperial palaces. Compared to these, how could the extraordinary propitious signs that happened during the Han and Wei dynasties and the profound faiths in Buddhism displayed in the Liang and Qi dynasties be worth mention? The [government's] efforts to open up the treasure-stores within the dragon palace and greet the magnificence and beauty of the jade-gates [of new monasteries] have keep going on just as the sun and moon move [across the sky], without stopping even for a moment. The compositions of chanting and eulogizing the virtue of the Buddha and the music singing praises of the dharma-words have been spread on musical instruments, both strings and wind, and piling up in paper and ink. 大周聖神皇帝, 植道種於塵劫, 當樂推於億兆。大雲授記, 轉金輪而御之; 河圖應錄, 桴玉鼓而臨之。乃聖乃神, 運六神通而不極; 盡善盡美, 暢十善化於無邊。解網泣辜, 超夏轢

[15] This refers to the story that the Shang 商 King Tang 湯, in hunting, ordered to leave three sides of the four-sided net open so that only the animals without intention to live on got caught. This enhanced the feudal princes' (*zhuhou* 諸侯) admiration for Tang's compassion, which they believed extended from the human to animals. See *Shiji* 3.95.

[16] According to Liu Xiang 劉向 (77BC-6BC), in seeing indicted criminals on the road, Yu 禹, the King of the Xia, came down from his chariot and became so overwhelmed by his sympathy that he could not help but wail over their misfortune and his own dereliction of duty, which caused them to fall into crimes. See *Shuoyuan* 1.4b.

[17] This refers to a saying in the *Mencius*: 墨子兼愛, 摩頂放踵, 利天下為之 (Yang Bojun 1960: 43), which Lau (1970: 187-188) translates as, "Mo Tzu advocates love without discrimination. If by shaving his head and showing his heels he could benefit the Empire, he would do it."

[18] The *shili* 十力 (*daśabalāni*) indicates ten kinds of powers of awareness specially possessed by the Buddha.

[19] *Siyi* 四依 indicate the four kinds of necessities required by the monastic life: those of food, clothing, shelter and medicine.

殷。於是環 [塊]襄城[20] 於汾水, 方智日於錙銖。是以摩頂至踵, 馳精十力; 捉髮吐哺, 委質四依。鑄銑彫檀, 霞鏡千門之裏; 乘杯振錫, 霧集九重之內。雖漢魏殊感, 梁齊深信, 亦何足以言乎? 爾其闢龍宮之寶藏, 迓象扉之雄俊, 則日月相繼, 歲時不絕; 贊頌佛德, 歌詠法言, 則絃管流溢, 翰墨繁積矣。[21]

Fazang here has woven Chinese traditional ideas (mainly Confucian) and Buddhist ideologies into a coherent discourse with impressive skill. These two parallel sentences — "With the finest metal cast and the sandalwood carved for [metal and wooden] statues, the roseate clouds are mirrored as deeply as one thousand gates [of the monasteries]. [Sailing through the oceans by] floating on wooden cups and [climbing mountains by] shaking their staffs, [eminent monks] have been coming to gather within the nine-layered walls of the imperial palaces" (鑄銑彫檀, 霞鏡千門之裏; 乘杯振錫, 霧集九重之內) — are of particular interest to scholars interested in Empress Wu's court Buddhism. It seems to me that two expressions (*zhushen* 鑄銑 and *diaotan* 彫檀) in the first sentence refer to the astronomic device called *dayi* 大儀 ("Great Regulator") and the immense lacquer statue of the Buddha that were installed within, respectively, the observatory *lingtai* 靈臺 (lit. "Numinous Terrace") and the Heavenly Hall (*tiangong* 天宮) — two essential parts of the *mingtang* complex[22]. The second sentence, on the other hand, features the regular congregations of Buddhist monks within Empress Wu's palace chapels, which were characteristic of the monastic institution under her rule[23].

It seems that as the empress was approaching the unprecedented step of taking supreme power, not only in fact but also in name, her reliance on Fazang increased daily. A couple of years before the Avataṃsaka assembly, she had just asked for Fazang's help in abating the damage

[20] Since here is involved a pair of parallel sentences, one character must be redundant in the sentence 環塊襄城於汾水 (paralleled by 方智日於錙銖). Given that 環, 城, 於, 汾水 can find their parallels in 方智日於錙銖 (方, 日, 於, 錙銖 respectively), either 塊 or 襄 is redundant. While I believe that it is 襄, 塊 should be emended to 瑰. The whole sentence should be reconstructed as 環瑰城於汾水.

[21] *Huayan jing zhuanji*, *T* 51: 3.164a12-22.

[22] See Forte, 1988 (*passim*), for *dayi* and *tiantang*.

[23] For the latest study of Empress Wu's palace chapels, see Chen Jinhua 2004: 113-120.

caused by a severe drought. We are told that Fazang did a great service to the state by constructing a platform at Ximing si 西明寺 to pray for rain. That monastery had been built by her and her husband in 658 to celebrate the successful recovery from illness of their Heir Apparent, the four year old Li Hong 李弘 (652-675).

According to the Korean monk Kyunyŏ 均如 (923-973), Fazang's career suffered a severe setback in 694 or early 695, sometime before the arrival of Śikṣānanda (652-710) in China. Exasperated by Fazang's interpretation of a Buddha as a "provisionally-named bodhisattva" (*jiaming pusa* 假名菩薩), Fuli 復禮 (fl. 680-705), a Buddhist monk who was also very influential under the reigns of Gaozong and Empress Wu, impeached Fazang for advocating such a heterodox theory and urged that Fazang be punished in accordance with the law. As a result, Empress Wu decreed Fazang's exile to the Jiangnan 江南 area, whence he was not called back to the capital until Śikṣānanda and Fuli encountered insurmountable difficulties in translating the chapter on "Puxian" 普賢品 of the new version of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* that Śikṣānanda brought to China. In the course of cooperating with Fazang in the translation project, Fuli even once went so far as to coerce him to alter some passages in the original text in order to fit his own theories[24]. This record is not found in any other sources. However, Fazang's banishment from the capital (though only a brief one) seems likely given his absence from two extremely important religio-political projects that were carried out in 693 and 695 respectively — the re-translation of the *Ratnamegha sūtra*, which resulted in the ten fascicle Chinese text titled "Baoyu jing" 寶雨經 (Skt. *Ratnamegha sūtra*; Sūtra of the Precious Rain), and the compilation of an officially sanctioned Buddhist catalogue which included (and thereby canonized) those texts (some of dubious origins) that had been newly translated under the aegis of the empress.

The *Baoyu jing* is believed to have contained passages interpolated by the translators for the purposes of providing further ideological support for Empress Wu's female rule. The translation project, led by Bodhiruci, involved almost all the major Buddhist monks in Chang'an and Luoyang

[24] Kyunyŏ, *Sŏk hwaŏm kyobun wŏnt'ong ch'o*, *HPC* 4: 256c19-257a11. For a detailed discussion of this critical turning point in Fazang's life, see Chen forthcoming: Chapter 2.

at the time[25]. The other project, the compilation of the *Da Zhou kanding zhongjing mulu* 大周刊定眾經目錄, in which at least seventy major monk-scholars were involved according to a list that was attached to the catalogue[26]. Fazang's name was — conspicuously — absent from the above two lists, a fact which strongly suggests his absence in the two capitals at that time given that his eminence as a Buddhist leader and his extraordinary capacity as a Buddhist translator should have made him a very likely candidate to be included in either of the two enterprises, on which so much was staked by Empress Wu's government and the Buddhist church at the time.

I.2) *Fazang and Empress Wu: 695-705*

Empress Wu's interest in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* remained unabated after her accession to the throne. It was under her auspices that a new Chinese translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, which turned out to be the most complete of its kind, was finished. Under the supervision of Śikṣānanda and joined by over twenty first-rate Chinese and non-Chinese Buddhist scholars, the translation project was started on 1 May 695[27]. The empress attended the initiating ceremony, and personally acted (although no more than symbolically) as a scribe (*bishou* 筆受) for the translation, as is described by Fazang[28]. When the huge translation, in total of eighty fascicles (thirty-eight *parivarta* [chapters]), was successfully brought to completion on 5 November 699[29], Empress Wu honoured it with a preface.

A few weeks later, when Fazang was delivering a lecture on the new version of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* at the Foshoujisi as a celebration of this significant achievement, an earthquake occurred, allegedly as a response

[25] The names of its thirty-two translators (both Buddhist monks and court officials, Chinese and non-Chinese) appear in a Dunhuang manuscript, S. 2278; the full list is translated in Forte 1976: 171-176.

[26] *Da Zhou kanding zhongjing mulu, T* 55: 15.475a-476a.

[27] If Kyunyŏ's account about the rivalry between Fazang and Fuli is credible, we should concede that Fazang was not actually involved in the project when it was started on 1 May 695, although he definitely took part in it afterwards.

[28] *Huayan jing zhuanji*, *T* no51: 1.155a14-19; the quotation is from 155a16-17.

[29] For this date, see Empress Wu's "Da Zhou xinyi Da fangguangfo Huayan jing xu," *T* 10: 1b11-12 (*QTW* 97.7a6-7).

to Fazang's lecture on a sentence "Huazang shijie-hai zhendong" 華藏世界海震動 ("the Seas of the Avataṃsaka-realm started to shake"). The strong tremors were felt around the area of the monastery. The report of this episode greatly pleased Empress Wu, who issued an edict to praise this auspicious sign and ordered it to be recorded in the historical texts[30].

Empress Wu's enthusiasm for the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* caused a "boom" of Avataṃsaka worship throughout the empire. The *Da Fangguangfo huayan jing ganying zhuan* 大方廣佛華嚴經感應傳, which was originally compiled by one of Fazang's chief disciples, records two such Avataṃsaka-related miracle stories featuring the popularity of the *sūtra* among the lay and religious communities, and the empress's efforts to promote people's enthusiasm for the *sūtra*[31]. It is also against the same historical background that we must understand a series of legends and stories featuring Empress Wu's admiration for Fazang's expertise on the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*. Of these legends/stories, the following three are perhaps the most famous:

1) The Ordination Episode: Sometime around 696 a white ray of light was emitted from his mouth while he was delivering an Avataṃsaka lecture, shooting into the sky where it turned into a canopy and remained there for a long while. Hearing of this, Empress Wu immediately ordered ten of the most prestigious preceptors in the capital to confer full ordination on Fazang, who was then still a novice. She also bestowed on him the title of "Xianshou" 賢首 (Saintliness and Eminence) and then summoned him to the palace chapel the Great Biankongsi to participate in the Avataṃsaka translation office headed by Śikṣānanda[32].

2) The Golden-lion Lecture: Sometime between 26 November 701 - 1 February 702, or as another source has it, sometime between 29 October - 26 November 699, when Fazang explained to Empress Wu the Avataṃsaka teaching on interpenetration, the interdependence between all the dharmas of any space and time; the teaching was so abstruse that it confounded a brain even as brilliant as Empress Wu's. Recognizing this, Fazang resorted to a golden-lion in the palace as a metaphor. He finally awakened Empress Wu

[30] The earliest known source for this *Huayan jing* episode is a commentary on the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* by Huiyuan 慧苑 (673?-743?), a chief disciple of Fazang. See *Xu lüeshu kandingji*, *XZJ* 5: 25b-c.

[31] *Da Fangguangfo huayan jing ganying zhuan*, *T* 51: 177a, 177a-b.

[32] The first known source for a fully-fledged version of this episode is a Southern Song dynasty, non-Avataṃsaka source. See *Longxing fojiao biannian tonglun*, *XZJ* 130: 280a2-6.

to the Avataṃsaka teaching. This was the alleged provenance for Fazang's short but extremely popular essay called "Jin shizi zhang" 金師子章 (Essay on the Golden Lion)[33].

3) The Mirror-hall Device: For the same purpose of explaining to Empress Wu the complicated tenet of universal interconnectedness, Fazang, on some unspecified date, created for her a "hall of mirrors" in which all images replicated themselves infinitely as in the legendary Indra's net woven with numerous jewels[34].

As I have argued elsewhere, the Ordination Story was probably concocted by later Huayan followers to dispel people's doubts concerning Fazang's possible lack of full ordination (*juzujie* 具足戒) as a fully qualified Buddhist monk (Chen forthcoming: Chapter 3). The "Jin shizi zhang" was, on the other hand, actually written much earlier and might have had nothing to do with the empress. As for the mirror-hall, we certainly cannot exclude the possibility that Fazang did construct such a device for some pedagogical purposes, but he might have done so for his disciples, rather than for the empress, and what is more interesting is that he here seems to have only reproduced a scheme that had been envisioned by one of his senior contemporaries (the learned monk scholar Daoxuan) several decades earlier[35].

Although it is naïve to accept all these legends/stories uncritically, it is not too far from the truth to assume that Express Wu's esteem for Fazang was largely derived from her respect for his superior expertise in the Avataṃsaka teaching. That said, we should also realize that Fazang served the empress and her government not merely through his advanced philosophical and philological skills, but also by his capacity as a performer of esoteric rituals aimed at some worldly benefits (like bringing down rain, snow and so on) or simply as a magician. During Empress Wu's regency and reign, some local officials around the Chang'an area,

[33] The earliest source promoting this idea is Zongmi's 宗密 (780-841) *Huayan jing xingyuan pin shuchao*, *XZJ* 7: 487a7-8.

[34] While Zanning just ambiguously observes that it was for those who failed to understand his teachings, rather than specifically Empress Wu, that this ingenious device was designed (*Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50: 5.732a28-b2), the *Longxing fojiao biannian tonglun* (*XZJ* 130: 281c13-16) is the first known source which attempted to correlate this story with Empress Wu.

[35] *Shimen guijing yi*, *T* 45: 2.865b4ff, discussed in Chen 2003: 335-336.

who suffered from the ravages of a drought, had already repeatedly enrolled the kind of supernatural power that Fazang allegedly possessed. They were one of Empress Wu's first cousins once removed, and a local official two of whose nephews were to become her favorites in the last decade of her life (see [III.1]).

What might appear more startling to modern scholars who are accustomed to Fazang's reputation as a sophisticated religious theoretician is the fact that Fazang was also believed to have wrought some magic in the battles that the Chinese army fought — some time from 16 June 696 to 23 June 697 — against the rebellious Khitan and thus played a crucial role in overcoming a military and political crisis that was then severely threatening the national security of the Great Zhou dynasty. We will discuss this unexpected exploit of Fazang in the next part.

This feat of Fazang must have earned more respect from Empress Wu, although we have no more documentation on their relationship in the succeeding several years except for the following example of their cooperation. In the summer of 700, Sikṣānada, Fuli, and other monks who might or might not include Fazang, were in the empress's company in one of her summer palaces at the Songshan area when they were preparing for a new translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*[36]. The translation project was continued at the Qingchansi 清禪寺 in Chang'an after Sikṣānada followed the empress to there on 26 November 701. Sikṣānada was only able to finish a draft of the translation before going back to Khotan. The draft was then polished by the Tokharian monk Mituoshan 彌陀山 (a.k.a. Mituoxian 彌陀仙) (Mitrasena or Mitrasanta?, ?-704†), who arrived in China probably in 702, with the assistance of Fuli, Fazang and other monks[37]. Its completion was officially announced on 24 February 704 (Chang'an 4.*zheng*.15)[38]. The empress was then starting to show increasing interest in Chan Buddhism, which at least partly accounted for her determination

[36] In her preface to the new Chinese translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*, Empress Wu mentions Sikṣānada and Fuli, but not Fazang. See "Xinyi Dasheng ru Lengqie jing xu," *QTW* 97.10a8-9.

[37] The history of this important translation is surveyed in Fazang's *Ru Lengqiexin xuanyi*, *T* 39: 430b16-23.

[38] This date is provided by Empress Wu; see "Xinyi Dasheng ru Lengqie jing xu," *QTW* 97.10b2-3.

to sponsor a new translation of the *sūtra* since it was recognized as the primary theoretic basis of that tradition. In spite of his commitment to the Avataṃsaka tradition, Fazang still decided to cooperate with the empress in fostering this type of Buddhism separate from his tradition. His effort in this respect is fully shown in the commentary that he wrote on the new *Laṅkāvatāra* translation, the *Ru Lengqiexin xuanyi* (Ishii 2002).

Starting from the very beginning of the eighth century, taking advantage of Empress Wu's age and poor health, those court officials loyal to the Li royal house conspired to re-enthrone one of the disposed Tang emperors. They found an easy target: the empress's two favorites, Zhang Yizhi 張易之 (676?-705) and Zhang Changzong 張昌宗 (676?-705)[39]. It was in this delicate political environment that Empress Wu launched a major politico-religious campaign which she entrusted Fazang to steer. It so happened that this campaign developed into a watershed not only in the life of the empress but also in that of the monk.

At the start of the year 705, at the instigation of Fazang, Empress Wu decided to bring the Famensi relic to her palace in Luoyang. In view of Empress Wu's rapidly deteriorating health at the time, the Famensi relic was then also consulted for its putative therapeutic power, not unlike the situation forty-five years earlier when she and her husband had turned to the same "sacred bone" for the personal welfare of the emperor. However, in view of the political situation at the time, one might assume that Empress Wu also sponsored this relic veneration with an eye to rallying her declining political support.

Contrary to her expectation, this grand religious ceremony did not perpetuate her fortune. Only one week later, a court coup broke out, resulting in the killing of the two Zhang brothers, and Empress Wu's abdication of the throne to her son Zhongzong, who was then ranked as "Heir Apparent." Empress Wu was subsequently transferred to the Shangyang palace 上陽宮, where she died less subsequently ten months later, on 16 December 705[40].

There is evidence that Fazang was actually an "accomplice" of some Pro-Tang royalists, with whom he worked to facilitate the end of

[39] *Zizhi tongjian* 207.6563-67.
[40] *Jiu Tang shu* 6.132.

Empress Wu's rule (Chen 2003: 341-352). Fazang seems to have leaked to Zhongzong some damaging privileged information about the Zhang brothers, who, according to the two Tang dynastic histories, were then intensively plotting with their group in order to pre-empt any possible offensive on the part of their rivals after the death of Empress Wu, whose health was then rapidly worsening[41]. Fazang's information was deemed crucial in helping him and his supporters to suppress the Zhang brothers. His access to secrets about the Zhang brothers was probably made possible by his special status as a court priest at that time. We know from Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's 崔致遠 (857-904†) report that Fazang was then a chief director of the relic veneration in the court, especially the enshrinement ceremony in the Luminous Hall complex. A 708 inscription confirms Fazang's role as the superintendent of the Famensi relic while it was stored in the imperial palace (Wu and Han 1998: 70; Barrett 2001: 16). We can imagine that after he brought the relic to Luoyang on 9 February 705, he must have stayed close to Empress Wu (and therefore close to her favorites, the two Zhang brothers) in the course of orchestrating this important ceremony. This provided him some opportunities to keep abreast of what the two Zhangs and their clique were then planning. He thus cunningly turned his close relationship with his patroness into a valuable political asset that he used to ingratiate himself with Zhongzong, who was then waiting beside his mother's sickbed for the chance to rule again. This reveals Fazang as a politically sophisticated and shrewd monk, who was ready to abandon his most important secular supporter when he sensed that the political situation had started to spin out of her control, making his continued association with her increasingly to his own disadvantage (or as he might have thought of it, to the disadvantage of his religion). Fazang thus ended up being a "betrayer," rather than a supporter and sympathizer, of Empress Wu. This switch of loyalty also partly explains the glory and success that he continued to enjoy under the reigns of the three successors of Empress Wu, Zhongzong, Ruizong and Xuanzong (r. 712-756), an issue we are going to discuss in the next section.

[41] *Jiu Tang shu* 6.132; 7.135; *Xin Tang shu* 4.103, 102.4015.

I.3) *Fazang under the Reigns of Zhongzong and Ruizong (705-712)*

Several months after his re-enthronement on 24 February 705, Zhongzong ordered Fazang to be rewarded for his role in the court coup removing the two Zhang brothers. Fazang was awarded a fifth-rank title, which he resolutely declined. Since the government insisted in rewarding Fazang, he proposed a compromise that this award be transferred to his younger brother, Kang Baozang 康寶藏 (?-706†), who was then serving as a Gentleman for Court Discussion (*chaoyilang* 朝議郎) and the Vice Director (*fujian* 副監) in the Tongwan 統萬 City[42]. The government approved the proposal and in the following year Zhongzong issued an order to the effect that Kang Fabao be appointed as Mobile Corps Commander (*youji jiangjun* 游擊將軍) and the Left Commandant of the Courageous Garrison (*zuo guoyi[fu] duowei* 左果毅[府]都尉) [belonging to] the Awesome Guard (Weiwei 威衛) based in the Commandery (*fu* 府) of Longping 隆平[43]. The emperor further specified that in order for Baozang to take care of his mother at home, he should not be given any actual responsibilities[44]. This must have been the same occasion recorded in other sources, in which Fazang, along with other eight monks, were awarded a fifth-rank

[42] Tongwan probably referred to the city of Tongwan, the capital of Helian Bobo 赫連勃勃 (a.k.a. Helian Qugai 赫連屈丐, r. 407-425), who ordered it to be built in 413 and had it completed five years later. The city was named in this way allegedly because Helian wanted it to embody his ambition of "unifying [the land] under heavens and looking down on the ten thousand states like a sovereign" (Tongyi tianxia, junlin wanbang 統一天下, 君臨萬邦). See *Jin shu* 130.3205, *Zizhi tongjian* 116.3658.

[43] Hucker 1985: 565: "2 prefixed left and right, included among the sixteen Guards (*shih-er wei*) at the dynastic capital, generally responsible for defense of the eastern sector of the capital city; created in 622 to replace the Left and Right Encampment Guards (*t'un-wei*) inherited with the Sui dynasty's Twelve Guards (*Shih-erh wei*) organization; in 684 renamed Guards of the Leopard Strategy (*pao-t'ao wei*); in 705 briefly named Awesome Guards; from late 705 to 711 again called Encampment Guards; from 711 once agin called Awesome Guards." Thus, although Ch'oe dates this edict to Shenlong 2 (706), the appearance of the title Weiwei 威衛 therein reveals that it had actually been drafted by late 705 — when the title was still in use, although it was probably announced in early 706 — so shortly after the official reversion of the title back to Dunwei (Tun-wei) 屯衛 (Encampment Guards) that there was no time to make the necessary correction in the edict to reflect this change.

[44] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 283b18-c1. Although according to Ch'oe, Fazang received a third-rank title at the time, I have argued elsewhere (Chen in preparation: Chapter 1) that the title was actually fifth-ranked.

title, although some of these sources tell us that he and his colleagues were rewarded for their merits in reconstructing a major monastery dedicated to the posthumous benefits of Empress Wu Shengshansi 聖善寺[45].

The high degree of esteem that the emperor held for Fazang was also clearly shown by four verses that he dedicated to Fazang's portrait. They are still preserved in the *Pŏpjang chŏn*, another Korean source and the *Quan Tang wen* as well[46]:

宿植明因 With the luminous causes planted from the past [lives],
專求正真 [He] has single-mindedly searched for the right and true.
菴園晦跡 Although the [Buddha's] traces turned into obscurity in the "park of *āmra*,"
蓮界分身 his body appeared in the Realm of Lotus.
闡揚釋教 Expounding the teaching of the Śākya,
拯濟迷津 saving and delivering people stuck in the swamp of illusion.
常流一雨 Always pouring out the rain of oneness,
恒淨六塵 For the constant purification of the "six dusts."

辯囿方開 When the garden of eloquence opens,
言泉廣濬 the spring of words gushes out widely.
護持忍辱 Protect and maintain the dharma in the sprit of enduring humiliation,
勤修精進 diligently cultivating the way of vigor.
講集天華 His lectures caused the gathering of heavenly flowers,

[45] See, for example, *Da Song sengshi lüe*, *T* 54: 3.250b3-11. Cf. *Jiu Tang shu* 7.141 and *Zizhi tongjian* 208.6598, which tells us that three more Daoist priests including Shi Chongxuan 史崇玄 (?-713) and Ye Jingneng 葉靜能 (?-710) were also among those who were rewarded for their merits in building this monastery of exceptional importance for Zhongzong. All these relevant sources and their implications are discussed in Chen in preparation: Chapter 1.

[46] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284a18-29; Ŭichŏn 義天 (1055-1101), *Wŏnjong mullyu*, *HPC* 4: 22.631b-c; *QTW* 17.21b-22a. Ku Cheng-mei (*pinyin*: Gu Zhengmei) 古正美 understands the phrase 敕令寫藏真儀 as "Zhongzong ordered Fazang to draw a portrait of Zangzhen 藏真, that is, Qiujiuque 丘就卻 (Kujūla Kadphises, 5 BC – 78 AD)," who was the founding emperor of the Kushān dynasty, whom some scholars — including Professor Ku — believe to be the prototype for the Buddhist king Aśoka. On the basis of this understanding, Ku has read the following verses written by Zhong zong as dedicated to Qiujiuque, rather than to Fazang. See Ku 1996: 175-76. This reading seems questionable given that the character *zang* 藏 in the phrase obviously refers to Fazang and therefore that *zangzhen* cannot be understood as a separate term. In other words, I read 寫藏真儀 as *xie Zang zhenyi* ("to draw [*xie* 寫] the portrait [*zhenyi* 真儀] of Fazang"), rather than *xie zangzhen yi* ("to draw a portrait of Zangzhen") as is suggested by Ku. Consequently, the four verses should be regarded as dedicated to Fazang, rather than to Qiujiuque.

徵符地震　An unusual sign emerged in response to [the sentence of] earthquake[47].
運斯法力　Exerting this dharma-power,
殄茲魔陣　he got the evil camps removed.

爰標十觀　The ten contemplations are raised,
用契四禪　to accord with the "Four Dhyanas."
普斷煩惱　Universally cutting off the afflictions,
遐祛蓋纏　ridding himself of the secular ties from afar.
心源鑒徹　With the source of mind mirrored and penetrated,
法鏡澄懸　the dharma-mirror brilliantly suspended.
慧筏周運　The boat of wisdom steered perfectly,
慈燈永傳　the lamp of compassion to be transmitted forever.

名簡紫震　His names echoing in the imperial palace,
聲流紺域　his reputation circulating among the monastic world.
梵眾綱紀　The guiding principle for the Brahmanic Congregation (i.e. saṃgha),
僧徒楷則　the standard and example for Buddhist followers.
鎮洽四生　In protecting those born in four ways[48],
曾無懈息　he never feels fatigue.
播美三千　Spreading the beautiful [name] in the three thousand worlds,
傳芳百億　transmitting the fragrant [reputation] to the ten billions of generations.

According to Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, these verses were written in the winter of the first year of the Shenlong reign-era (30 January 705-18 January 706). However, it seems more likely that Zhongzong wrote them some time later.

In my article on the palace chapels under the Tang dynasty, I have collected some materials on this important Buddhist institution within the Tang imperial palace in Chang'an[49]. Some time between 7 December 706 and 23 March 709, Zhongzong summoned to the Linguang chapel twenty

[47] Chengguan, *Da Fangguangfo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao*, *T* 36: 3.17a21-23: 謂晉譯微言, 幽旨包博。玄義全盛, 賢首方周。故講得五雲凝空, 六種震地. This suggests that Chengguan had access to Zhongzong's verses dedicated to Fazang.

[48] Four forms of birth (*sisheng* 四生): *taisheng* 胎生 (*jarāyu-ja*) birth from the womb (humans, animals); *luansheng* 卵生 (*aṇḍa-ja*) birth from the egg (birds), *shisheng* 濕生 (*saṃsveda-ja*) birth from moisture (insects), and *huasheng* 化生 (*upapādu-ja*) birth by transformation (dwellers in the heavens and hells).

[49] Chen Jinhua 2004: 124-128.

or so eminent Buddhist monks from all over the country. Seven of these palace chaplains are still identifiable. They are (1) Hongjing 弘景 (var. Hengjing 恆景, 643-712), (2) Xuanzang 玄奘 (d. after 709) (not to be confused with the homonymous great Buddhist translator and pilgrim), (3) Daojun 道俊 (?-709†), (4) Daoan 道岸 (654-717), (5) Wengang 文綱 (636-727), (6) Sengqie 僧伽 (Saṃgha?, 628-710), and (7) Siheng 思恆 (653-726)[50]. These monks were requested to perform Buddhist rituals for the welfare of the state, while ten of them served on the ten-member committee known as *shidade* 十大德 (Ten Buddhist monks of "Great Virtue"), which was in charge of national monastic affairs. While some of these monks left the palace chapel shortly after 23 March 709, when a parting banquet was held for their behalf (during this banquet Zhongzong wrote verses for the departing monks and his verses were responded to by the academicians who participated in the banquet), other monks remained there. One year later, in Jinglong 4 (4 February-4 July 710), Zhongzong invited Bodhiruci (a.k.a. Dharmaruci, 572?-727) and his colleagues for a vegetarian banquet at the Linguang Palace, where the emperor watched the monks discussing Buddhist teachings. He then ordered the painter Zhang Shun 張訓 (otherwise unknown) to draw on the wall of the palace the portraits of all the *bhadanta*-translators and the academicians who participated in the translation. On these portraits, Zhongzong himself wrote eulogies in verse[51].

From the above discussion, we get the impression that during the Shenlong and Jinglong eras, Zhongzong invited some Buddhist monks to his palace chapel Linguang[si] for at least two banquets, during both of which he penned laudatory verses for these monks. It seems quite likely that the verses that Zhongzong wrote for Fazang might have been related to one (or several) of these similar occasions. In other words, we have reason to believe that Fazang might have been among the twenty or so monks

[50] *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T*50: 5.732b20-27, 24.863c19-20, 8.758a5ff, 14.793b14, 14.792a22-23, 18.822a19-23; for Siheng, see "Da Tang gu dade Siheng lüshi muzhiwen," in Zhou 1992: 1321-22.

[51] *Fozu tongji*, *T* 49: 38.372c21ff. Zhipan dates this event to Shenlong 4, which was apparently an error for Jinglong 4 (4 February-4 July 710) given that the Shenlong reign-era only lasted from 30 January 705 (Shenlong 1.1.1 [*renwu*]) to 4 October 707 (Shenlong 3.9.4 [*yihai*]).

who were invited to reside at the Linguang palace chapel and that like Siheng, who was his acquaintance if not friend[52], Fazang might have been a member of the *shidade* committee considering his eminence at the time.

Fazang's crucial role in a series of events that centered on the continuous veneration of the Famensi relic, to which Empress Wu turned in the last phase of her life, also reveals Zhongzong's extraordinary trust of and reliance on him. In the spring of 708, Zhongzong entrusted him with the task of escorting the relic, which was brought to the imperial palace at the end of 704 at Empress Wu's request, back to its home temple (see [III.3]).

Fazang's reputation as a great Buddhist expounder and translator, and especially his important role in the 705 court coup were certainly chief factors contributing to the preeminent position that he had managed to achieve (or maintain) in this period. However, evidence shows that, not unlike his relationship with Empress Wu and his status under her regency and rule, Fazang's continuing success as a Buddhist leader also depended to a large extent on the service that he rendered to the Tang rulers through his mastery of some esoteric (or even shamanic) skills, which made him a top candidate whenever the capital area was threatened by some natural calamities like drought. As we have an opportunity to talk in detail about the stories and legends on this type of supernatural ability attributed to Fazang, suffice it here to a brief mention of these feats recorded in the sources.

In the mid-summer (i.e. the fifth month) of Jinglong 2 (24 May-22 June 708), Fazang successfully performed a rain-praying ritual at Jianfu si 薦福寺, which was the monastery that Zhongzong dedicated to the posthumous welfare of his father Gaozong. The next year, when the drought recurred, Fazang rose to alleviate the ravages of the drought as he did before and was once again praised by Zhongzong. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn continues by saying that from then on, Zhongzong and Ruizhong relied on Fazang as their bodhisattva-preceptor. This might refer to the possibility that some time during the Shenlong or Jinglong era Fazang was invited to the Linguang Palace Chapel, as was suggested above.

[52] Siheng's relationship with Fazang is discussed in Chen forthcoming: Chapter 3.

In the winter of Jingyun 2 (24 January-22 April 711), one year before his own death, Fazang performed an esoteric ritual at a temple on Mount Zhongnan and allegedly brought down some snows, thus significantly alleviating the drought that was threatening the capital area. Fazang was highly praised by Ruizong because of this.

The high esteem that Ruizong maintained towards Fazang can be seen by the fact that on Fazang's sixty-ninth birthday (4 December 712 – Xiantian 1.11.2 [*dingmao*]), which turned out to be his last as he died a mere twelve days later, Ruizong, who had by then abdicated in favor of his son Xuanzong but who still maintained a part of supreme power in the capacity of Taishanghuang 太上皇 (Emperor Emeritus), sent him some gifts (a set of monastic robes and some noodles of longevity [*changming suobing* 長命索餅]), along with a congratulatory letter quite respectfully addressed[53]. Ruizong's letter amply expresses his respect for and fondness of Fazang. Far more than a perfunctionary greeting from a secular monarch toward a prestigious religious leader, the letter conveyed a taste of the very genuine and personal sense of friendship that was usually only cherished between two close friends[54]. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn continues by telling us that in order to show his appreciation of Fazang's unflagging effort to serve the Tang royal family and his constant respect for Fazang as a teacher, Ruizong presented him two thousand bolts of silk to cover the expenses caused by the religious rituals that Fazang was to carry out for people's benefits.

Most notably, according to Dōchū, it is by following Fazang's advice that Ruziong decided to relinquish the throne to Xuanzong[55]. Unfortunately, Dōchū did not tell us the source for this claim, which, if true, would testify Fazang's crucial role in the power-transition at the highest level in 712 that ushered in one of the most prosperous eras in imperial China[56].

The amiable personal relationship between Fazang and Ruizong is also reflected in the good terms that he maintained with a couople of family

[53] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284c2-7.

[54] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284c2-7.

[55] "Shinkan Genju hiden shōgō," *T* 50: 288c1: 睿宗後讓位養德, 皆依法藏之勸導也。

[56] It is interesting to note that Fazang died on 16 December 712 (Xiantian 1.11.14), only four months after Ruizong officially handed over supreme power to Xuanzong on 8 August 712 (Yanhe 1.8.3 [*jiazi*]).

members of the emperor, including one of daughters and one of his sons-in-law who married another of his daughters. It is at the request of Zheng Wanjun 鄭萬鈞 (?-734†), who married Ruizong's fourth daughter Li Hua 李華 (style-name Huawan 華婉) (687-734)[57], that Fazang wrote a commentary on the *Heart Sūtra* in Chang'an 2 (February 2, 702 - January 21, 703) at the Qingchansi, while he engaged in preparing some Buddhist translations. To this commentary, Zhang Yue 張說 (667-730), a prestigious statesman and author, wrote a preface, "Bore xinjing zanxu" 般若心經贊序 (A Preface to the Comments on the *Bore xinjing*)[58].

Fazang also befriended another daughter of Ruizong, Princess Jinxian 金仙 (689-732), who, along with her blood sister Yuzhen 玉真 (692?-762?), was famous for her devotion to Daoism. Her friendship with Fazang was made likely not only because of the monk's good relationship with both her father Ruizong and her brother-in-law Zheng Wanjun, but also by the fact that her Daoist teacher Shi Chongxuan 史崇玄 (?-713) was obviously a friend of Fazang[59]. Shi Chongxuan's friendship with Fazang can be deduced from their shared efforts in building the important monastery Shengshansi, as was noted in the preceding section (I.3). It is quite unusual that four Daoist priests should have become involved in such a project. I speculate that their function might have mainly consisted in raising funds, not unlike the role Shi Chongxuan played in the course of constructing the two convents for Jinxian and her sister. No matter what Shi Chongxuan's real role was in the Shengshansi project, his friendship with Fazang seems of little doubt. As I have suggested elsewhere, Princess Jinxian was probably such a close friend of Fazang that she, though already an ordained Daoist priest at the time, was willing to honor Fazang's fond memory of Yunjusi by requesting in 730 (two years before her death and eighteen years after Fazang's) her brother-emperor to send to the temple a copy of the Kaiyuan canon, which must

[57] For Zhang Wanjun's marriage with Li Hua, see *Xin Tang shu* 83.3656.

[58] This preface is now preserved in *QTW* 225.10b11a, and attached to the Taishō edition of the *Bore boluomiduo xinjing lueshu* (*T* 33: 555a24-b9).

[59] For Shi Chongxuan's status as a teacher of Jinxian and her sister, see *Chaoye qianzai* 5.114. Jinxian and her sister's ordination ceremony was superintended by Shi Chongxuan. This important ceremony is the subject of Charles D. Benn's excellent monograph (Benn: 1991). Shi Chongxuan was believed to have raised a huge amount of money for building two Daoist convents for her two royal disciples. See *Xin Tang shu* 83.3656-3657.

have constituted a precious gift that the marginal local temple would have been very hard to secure but for the forceful intervention from a figure with Jinxian's influences[60].

Fazang died on 16 December 712 (Xiantian 1.11.14) at the Great Jianfusi. Five days later, Ruizong issued an edict to praise his outstanding performance as a Buddhist leader and his valuable service to the state as well[61]. According to Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, it was the Tang government policy that on the death of an official, no matter whether military or civil, the government would make a donation in proportion to his rank — from a donation worth two hundred *duan* 端[62] and two hundred *shuo* 碩 (i.e. *shi* 石) of millet for a first-rank office, down to only ten *duan* of silk for a ninth-ranked office. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn observes that the value of the donation the government made on Fazang's death revealed the extent of the respect that the imperial house held for him. The government also offered to pay the labor needed to build Fazang's tomb. The additional donations made by princes dukes and commoners were innumerable. His funeral was conducted with the ceremony reserved for a third-rank official[63].

II) The Magician as a Warrior?: Fazang and the Suppression of the Khitan Rebellion (696-697)

We have already highlighted above several essential elements that contributed to Fazang's success as a court priest: his accomplishment as a Buddhist philosopher, his political skills, his reputation as a miracle worker, and — rather unusually for a Buddhist priest — his battle skills in a series of campaigns that the Great Zhou army launched against the Khitan rebels. This last feat was made particularly noteworthy by the fact that it was allegedly achieved by virtue of his prowess with black magic. Due to its significance for revealing a hidden aspect of his intellectual life, Fazang's role in the suppression of the Khitan rebellion warrants an

[60] Chen forthcoming (a).
[61] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 285b.
[62] *Duan* 端 was a unit of measurement for cloth (*bu* 布), while *pi* 匹 (bolt) a unit for silk (*juan* 絹). Under the Tang, four and six *zhang*s equaled one *pi* and *duan* respectively.
[63] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 285b18-21.

in-depth investigation. In this part, I will therefore examine this issue from three perspectives. After a survey of how his biography by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn (by far the most important biographical source on Fazang) presents this side of Fazang's life, I will contextualize this important account against the larger political, military and religious background — the 696-697 Khitan rebellion and its suppression described in secular sources on the one hand and on the other, the Avalokiteśvara cult developed under the rule of Empress Wu.

II.1) *Description in Fazang's Biography*

In the first year of the Shengong reign-era (29 September-19 December 697), the tribe known as Khitan (Ch. Qidan 契丹), then a vassal state based in the northeastern part of the empire, refused to pledge loyalty any longer. Empress Wu dispatched an army to suppress the "rebellious" tribe. At the same time, the empress sought advice from Fazang, consulting him on the possibility of employing the assistance of the Buddha to help the imperial army defeat the Khitans. Fazang told the empress, "In order to destroy and subdue the ferocious enemies, please allow me to resort to the 'left-hand (that is, Buddhistically unorthodox) path' (*zuodao* 左道)." Imperial permission was swiftly granted. Fazang took a bath and changed his dress before building a *bodhimaṇḍa* (*daochang* 道場; i.e. "ritual-precinct") of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara, in which he placed images of that bodhisattva and started to carry out the observance. The effect of this esoteric procedure was rapid and astonishing. Within several days, the barbarians saw to their panic that they were faced not only by countless warriors of the Great Zhou army, but also that the troops were backed by a congregation of deities. Some of the enemies saw images of Avalokiteśvara floating in the sky and then slowly descending to the battlefield. In addition, flocks of goats and packs of dogs started to harass the Khitan soldiers. Within a month, Empress Wu received the news of victory. In her great joy, she rewarded the monk's merits with a nicely-worded decree, which says,

> Outside the city of Kuai, the warriors heard the sound of heavenly drums; within the district of Liangxiang, the enemy crowd saw images of Avalokiteśvara. Pure wine spread its sweetness in the battalions, while the chariots

> of the Transcendent led the flags in front of the army. This [victory] was accomplished by the divine army sweeping away [the enemy], and that must have been aided by the [Buddha's] compassionate power! 蒯城之外, 兵士聞天鼓之聲; 良鄉縣中, 賊眾睹觀音之像。醴酒流甘於陳塞, 仙駕引蠶於軍前。此神兵之掃除, 蓋慈力之加被。[64]

Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn plainly states that Fazang performed these rituals one month before the victory over the Khitans was declared, which happened on July 27, 697 according to the secular sources[65]. This implies that Fazang was invited to resolve the military conflict in June 697. Contrast to the clear way Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn provides a timeframe for this event, his locating of these rituals is problematic and requires further clarification. The two locations in which the miraculous effects of Fazang's rituals were allegedly carried out, Kuaicheng and Liangxiang, were in present-day Baoji 寶雞 in Shaanxi and Fangshan 房山 in Beijing respectively. Given that the uprising Khitan army had never been able to reach its spearhead to the Kuaicheng area bur rather that it had throughout engaged in close combat with the Great Zhou army in some areas of Hebei Circuit 河北道, including Tanzhou 檀州, Pingzhou 平州, Dingzhou 定州, Yizhou 易州, Zhaozhou 趙州, and particularly Youzhou 幽州, which had decisive importance for the defense system of the Sui and Tang empires[66], I suspect that in the current edition of the *Pŏpjang chŏn* the character *ji* 薊, which indicated a place — in present-day Daxing 大興, Beijing — very close to Liangxiang, was miswritten as *kuai* 蒯 due to their similarity in form. I am therefore inclined to believe that Ch'oe Chiwon believed that the miraculous effect of Fazang's rituals took place in two battlefields close to each other, both falling in present-day Beijing.

Further, it is important to note that Liangxiang happened to be in the proximity of Fangshan, where is located the Yunjusi, the monastery which has over the past several decades earned a world-wise reputation for the immense repository of Buddhist scriptures carved on the stone slabs (the so-called "Fangshan shijing" 房山石經) that it has enshrined. It is

[64] This episode is recorded in the *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 283c16-25. The passage quoted here is located at 283c22-25.

[65] Li 2003: 100-101.

[66] See below for a survey of the military conflicts between the Khitan and Zhou armies in this one-year period.

possible that Fazang might have carried out the ritual at the Yunjusi or at a neighboring location.

The secular sources make no mention whatsoever of Fazang's role in this year-long military endeavor. Here we must note that a first cousin of Empress Wu, Wu Youyi, who played a significant role in suppressing the Khitan, was a friend of Fazang, who had just (a mere one year before) helped the prince to end a drought afflicting the area under his jurisdiction, by praying for rain (see [III.2]). This relationship suggests that Fazang's role in the suppression of the Khitan army was not unlikely. However, it is Empress Wu's edict quoted above and a poem that Zhongzong wrote for Fazang, which confirms and commends Fazang's role in "destroying these devils' camps" (*tian zi mozhen* 殄茲魔陣) (very likely referring to the Khitan rebels)[67] that force us to consider this role of Fazang more seriously. It seems undeniable that Fazang did contribute to the overcoming of this severe socio-political crisis, or at least was perceived to have done so.

The lack of historical evidence has left us no alternative but to speculate that Fazang or some of his followers might have performed some forms of black magic (the so-called "Left Path" he was reported to have recommended to Empress Wu) on the battlefield, bringing up the illusion of some images of Avalokiteśvara floating in the sky, which scared away some Khitan soldiers[68]. Although the effect of this feat might not have been as decisive and far-reaching as it was depicted in the Buddhist sources, Fazang's intervention in this crisis and Empress Wu's appreciation of it seem beyond doubt. It is not hard to imagine that both Fazang (and his group) and the empress were more than happy to play up the effect of this feat, although they may have done so with different purposes in mind: for Fazang and his group, they must have interpreted this episode as a telling demonstration of the divine power of both the Bodhisattva and

[67] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284a23-24; *QTW* 17.22a2.

[68] Eugene Wang (2005: 259) suggests that in helping the Zhou army battle the Khitan rebels, Fazang brought up some frightening reflections with a device composed of eleven faces of mirror. Although this interpretation is not supported by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's biography, in which *shiyimian guanyin* 十一面觀音 just means Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara, Wang does raise a possible stratagem that Fazang might have employed to defeat the Khitan army, especially this seems to have been related to his skill in magic.

Fazang, while Empress Wu and her ideologues must have treasured it as a potent sign from the heavens that justified and protected her rule.

Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn here has given the reader the impression that with the help of Fazang Empress Wu and her government smashed the Khitan rebels without the slightest effort. This impression is by no means supported by the secular historical sources, which depict the two major campaigns that the Great Zhou launched against the Khitans as two of the bloodiest in the history of the Great Tang and Zhou[69].

II.2) *Historical Background*

The historical sources date the outbreak of this rebellion to 16 June 696 and identify the two rebel leaders as Li Jinzhong 李盡忠 (?-696), the Commander-in-chief (*dudu* 都督) of Songmo 松漠, and Sun Wanrong 孫萬榮 (?-697), the governor of the Guicheng 歸誠 Prefecture (in present-day Hebei) and whose younger sister was married to Li Jinzhong. They also inform us that this rebellion was triggered by the haughty and humiliating attitude that the Commander-in-chief of Yingzhou 營州, Zhao Wenhui 趙文翽 (?-696), showed to the Khitan chieftains and the callousness that he displayed towards the Khitans during a famine. The angry Khitans killed Zhao Wenhui and occupied Yingzhou. Judging by the fact that thousands of them joined the rebellious army within a mere ten days, the Khitans' animosity towards their Chinese rulers must have run rather deep and wide. Apparently shocked by this largely unexpected rebellion, Empress Wu dispatched an army to suppress it thirteen days after the Khitans rose. Although its strength is not specified, the imperial army must have had an impressive size given that it was under the joint leadership of twenty-eight generals, including the prestigious Cao Renshi 曹仁師 (?-696†) (General of the Left Soaring Hawk Guard [Yingyang wei 鷹揚威]), Zhang Xuanyu 張玄遇 (?-696?) (the Great General of the Right Imperial Insignia Guard [Jinwuwei 金吾衛]), Li Duozuo 李多祚

[69] The following account of the Khitan rebellion and the quelling thereof is mainly based on *Zizhi tongjian* 205.6505-6523. See also Guisso 1978: 138-143, 1979: 314-316, Li 2003. For a survey of the history of warfare under the Tang and Great Zhou dynasties, see Graff 2002 (esp. pp. 8-11).

(?-707) (Great General of the Left Awesome Guard [Weiwei 威衛]), Ma Renjie 麻仁節 (Vice Chamberlain for the National Treasury [Sinong Shaoqing 司農少卿]). Still uncertain about the strength of this army, Empress Wu, on 15 August of the same year, appointed her first cousin once removed, the Prince of Liang 梁 Wu Sansi 武三思 (?-707), who was then her Minister of Rites (Chunguan shangshu 春官尚書), as the Pacification Commander-in-chief (Anwu dashi 安撫大使) of the Yuguan 榆關 Circuit (Dao 道), with Yao Shu 姚璹 (?-705) as his associate.

Li Jinzhong and Sun Wanrong turned out to be two exceptionally shrewd warriors. The historical sources portray the military success they achieved in the early phase of the rebellion in this way: "wherever their spearheads pointed, those places fell into their hands." Their military talents were amply displayed in the first major battle they fought against the imperial army on 29 October 696 at the Valley of Xiashi 硤石 (probably in present-day Mengjin 孟津, Henan). With some brilliant tactics they easily defeated the Zhou army, almost entirely wiping them off the surface of the earth. They were able to expand their victory by luring the Zhou relief force into an ambush with forged orders, which they counterfeited with the seals that they captured from the Zhou army.

The extent to which this traumatic defeat was felt in the Zhou court is dramatically shown by the unprecedented offer the empress made in the ninth month to reward any criminals and private slaves willing to serve in the army. For the first time, the prefectures to the east of the Taihang 太行 Ranges (the so-called Shandong 山東 areas) set up cavalry units (*wuqi bingtuan* 武騎兵團) who were expected to fight the horsemen of the Khitans. She appointed another of her nephews, Prince Jian'an 建安 Wu Youyi 武攸宜 (d. between 705 and 710), the Tongzhou 同州 Governor, as the Grand General of Right Militant and Awesome Guard (Wuweiwei 武威衛), the Adjunct (Xingjun 行軍) Commander-in-chief of the Qingbian 清邊 Circuit, obviously in preparation for another major attack on the Khitan.

Fortunately for the empress, at this crucial moment the new qaghan of the Northern Turks, Qapaghan (Mochuo 默啜) offered to help, on the condition that he be accepted as her son and that an imperial marriage be arranged for his daughter, both of which were apparently envisioned out of his ambition for the Chinese throne. Although not at all blind to the

hidden agenda of the Turks, Empress Wu still welcomed this offer and rewarded Mochuo with titles of distinction. The Turkish support was compounded by an unexpected turn of events which was very favorable to Empress Wu: Li Jinzhong died on 22 November 696, of an unspecified cause. Although Sun Wanrong rapidly took over the Khitan leadership, Mochuo wasted no time in taking advantage of the chaos inevitably created among the Khitans by this power transition. He raided the Khitan base in Songmo, capturing Li Jinzhong and Sun Wanrong's wives and sons. However, it did not take Sun Wanrong long to recover from this setback, rapidly managing as he did to rally the scattered Khitan soldiers. Using two of his valiant subordinates Luowuzheng 絡務整 and He Axiao 何阿小 as vanguards, he seized Jizhou 冀州 (present-day Jixian 冀縣, Hebei) and massacred the inhabitants of the city, killing several thousand officials and commoners, including the governor Lu Baoji 陸寶積 (?-696). He also moved on to attack the whole Yingzhou area, making the Chinese-inhabited areas to the north of the River shiver in anticipation of further military aggression.

On 8 April 697, another major battle was fought between the Khitan and Zhou armies, the latter of which, comprising one hundred and seventy thousand troops, was commanded by Wang Xiaojie, the Commander-in-chief of the Qingbian Circuit. History repeated itself: conducted in the Eastern Xiashi Valley, this campaign resulted in the complete annihilation of the 170,000 Chinese soldiers, including even Wang Xiaojie himself, who was driven off an overhanging cliff.

On 13 May 697, Empress Wu appointed one of her first cousins twice removed Wu Yizong 武懿宗 (641-706), who was then the Grand General of the Right Imperial Insignia Guard, as the Adjunct Commander-in-chief of the Shenbing Circuit 神兵道, ordering him and He Jiami 何迦密, the General of the Right Guard of Leopard Strategy (Baotaowei 豹韜衛), to prepare for another round of battle with the Khitans. On 2 June 697, Empress Wu appointed Lou Shide 婁師德 (631-700) the Vice Commander-in-chief of the Qingbian Circuit, Satuo Zhongyi 沙陀忠義, the General of the Right Militant Awesome Guard, as the Commander of the Army of the Front (*qianjun* 前軍). They led two hundred thousand soldiers to attack the Khitans. Obviously, the Empress had staked virtually the whole of her empire on this single strike. Once again, she turned out

to be extraordinarily fortunate, largely thanks to a tussle between the Turks and Khitans.

The decisive victory over Wang Xiaojie in April of 697 turned Sun Wanrong's head. He pondered on one more overwhelming raid on another major Chinese city Youzhou 幽州 (close to present-day Beijing). In hope of freeing himself of any possible threat to the rear while dealing with the Chinese, Sun Wanrong tried for a provisional alliance with the Turks, intending to turn against them as soon as he got his way in Youzhou. The Turks saw through his trickery by chance and turned it against him. They attacked the Khitan base in Liucheng 柳城 (present-day Chaoyang 朝陽, Liaoning), seizing all the booty that Sun Wanrong had stored there. When news of this reached the Khitan army, which was then battling the Chinese army, they panicked. One Khitan tribe, the Xi 奚, mutinied and this eventually led to the dispersion of the whole army. Sun Wanrong fled, followed only by some remnants of his routed army. He did not run too far before he was beheaded by a servant on 23 June 697.

On 27 July 697, Wu Youyi returned in triumph to the capital from Youzhou. This marked the successful suppression of the Khitan rebellion, which was not achieved without an enormous loss of life and property on the side of the Great Zhou government. From 16 June 696, when the rebellion broke out, to 23 June 697, when Sun Wanrong died, it took the Chinese army a whole year to suppress the Khitan rebels. In order to celebrate this hard-fought victory, and probably also for the casting of the *jiuzhou-ding* 九州鼎 (Tripods of the Nine Prefectures)[70], the empress ordered on 29 September 697 a change of the reign-name from Tiance-wansui to Shengong 神功 (The Divine Feat), apparently attributing the overcoming of the Khitans to divine intervention.

II.3) *Impact*

It does not seem a mere coincidence that Fazang availed himself of the rituals of Avalokiteśvara in this endeavor. This bodhisattva was then widely worshipped within China. A Buddhist monk from Uḍḍhyāna,

[70] *Jiu Tang shu* 22.867-68; cf. *Zizhi tongjian* 205.6499, 206.6512.

Damozhantuo 達摩戰陀, once drew on a fine carpet a portrait of the One-thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, which he presented to Empress Wu along with the Sanskrit original of *Qianyan qianbi Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經 (*Sūtra* of Divine *dhāraṇī*s [spells] [spoken by] the One-thousand-eyed and One thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara). Empress Wu ordered her palace maidens to embroider the portrait. She also requested a craftsman to draw portraits of the bodhisattva. The portraits were then distributed throughout the empire in the hope of perpetrating his "numinous shape" (*lingzi* 靈姿)[71]. This episode attests to the exceptional degree of esteem that Empress Wu and her Buddhist supporters rendered to the bodhisattva. Damozhantuo must have been the monk who is elsewhere simply known as Zhantuo 戰陀, a major translator very active under the reign of Empress Wu[72].

More remarkably, in Changshou 2 (6 December 690-25 November 691), shortly after the empress declared herself as the founding emperor of the Great Zhou dynasty, another Indian monk closely associated with Empress Wu, Huizhi 慧智 (fl. 676-703), composed in Sanskrit a set of odes in praise of the bodhisattva and then translated it into Chinese. To the end of the translation Huizhi makes it clear that these odes were dedicated to Empress Wu, implying that he regarded her as one of the reincarnations of the bodhisattva[73].

However, it should be noted that it is the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara, rather than the One-thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, who was invoked by Fazang in the course of the service he rendered to the Great Zhou government in 696 or 697. Therefore, it must have been an esoteric text other than the *Qianyan qianbi Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing*

[71] *Qianyan qianbi Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing, T* 20: 83c7-11.

[72] In the capacity of "translator of Sanskrit words" (*yiyu* 譯語), Zhantuo was active in the translation bureaus supervised by Divākara (*Xu Gujin yijing tuji* 368c14, *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 9.564a18, *Song gaoseng zhuan* 2.719a27), Devendraprajñā (*Xu Gujin yijing tuji* 369b14, *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 9.565b22), and Bodhiruci (*Xu Gujin yijing tuji* 371b15, *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 9.570a18, *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*14. 873a9). A Dunhuang manuscript identifies him, as of October 7, 693, as a monk of Jifasi 濟法寺 in Chang'an and a translator of Bodhiruci's *Ratnamegha* translation office. See S 2278; Forte 1976: 172.

[73] This text is now extant as *Zan Guanshiyin pusa song* 讚觀世音菩薩頌 (*T* 20: 67a-68a). Forte (1985: 118-122) has convincingly argued that Huizhi was not only its translator, but also its author.

that was used as the scriptural support for Fazang's Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara *bodhimaṇḍa*.

The *shiyimian* 十一面, *ekadaśamukha* in Sanskrit, means "eleven of the utmost," or "eleven heads." The Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara was sometime called Daguang puzhao Guanyin 大光普照觀音 (Avalokiteśvara with Great Light and Universal Illumination). One of the most popular esoteric *sūtra*s dedicated to this type of Avalokiteśvara is *Avalokiteśvaraekadaśamukha dhāraṇī*. It appears in four Chinese versions: (1) the *Foshuo Shiyimian Guanshiyin shenzhou jing* 佛說十一面觀世音神咒經 (one fascicle, *T* no. 1070), translated by Yeshejueduo 耶舍崛多 (Yaśogupta?) of the Northern Zhou dynasty[74]; (2) *Shiyimian Guanshiyin shenzhou jing* 十一面觀世音神咒經 by Adiquduo 阿地瞿多 (Wujigao 無極高, Skt. Atikūṭa, fl. 650s), which was completed sometime between 16 April 653 and 6 May 654, and was included as a part (fascicle 4) in the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經[75]; (3) *Shiyimian shenzhou xinjing* 十一面神咒心經 by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664) on 27 April 656, only two to three years after the appearance of Atikūṭa's version[76]; and (4) *Shiyimian Guanzizai Pusa xin miyan niansong yigui jing* 十一面觀自在菩薩心密言念誦儀軌經 (in three fascicles) by Bukong 不空 (Amoghavajra, 705-774) (*T* no. 1069)[77]. Although in principle Fazang could have used any of the three former versions, in all likelihood he may have used Xuanzang's given his prestige as a great translator and that his version was made so shortly after Atikūṭa's, a fact which attested to the importance given to it by Xuanzang's patrons, Gaozong and very likely also Empress Wu, who had then successfully achieved the hard-fought status as Gaozong's empress.

Regarding the image of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara, the earliest of these Chinese versions gives us the following description. Its height measures one *chi* 尺 and three *cun* 寸, with eleven heads. The three front faces are those of Bodhisattvas; the three left faces are angry faces; the three right faces look like those of bodhisattvas, with dog-teeth protruding [from the mouths]; the rear face is one with wild laughter; the face at the top is one of the Buddha. All the faces are looking forward, with

[74] *Lidai sanbao ji* (*T* 49: 11.100c); *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, *T* 55: 7.545a.
[75] *T* 18: 4.812b-825c; see *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, *T* 55: 8.562c.
[76] *T* no. 1071; *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, *T* 55: 8.556a.
[77] *Zhenyuan xinding Shijiao mulu*, *T* 55: 15.879b, 20.929c.

lights attached to the rear. Further, all the eleven faces have flower-crests (headdresses?), each containing an image of the Amitabha Buddha. The Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara holds a water jar (*kuṇḍikā*) in his left hand, with a lotus flower sprouting out from the mouth [of the jar]. Stretching out his right hand surrounded by jade bracelets, he forms the *mūdra* of fearlessness[78].

This *sūtra* promises that a ritual devoted to the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara is able to draw away any enemies pillaging on the border[79]. Not only was he celebrated for his military prowess, he was also believed to be efficacious in dispelling natural disasters like epidemics, as is shown by a story recorded in a Chinese collection of Buddhism-related miracles[80].

Although the *sūtra* had already appeared in Chinese translation as early as the Northern Zhou dynasty, it seems that it did not start to gain widespread popularity until the Tang, especially after it was successively translated by both Atikūṭa and Xuanzang within a two or three year period. A telling example of its popularity is that in the third month of Longshuo 1 (5 April 661 - 3 May 661), five years after the appearance of Xuanzang's version, a Daoist priest of the Xihua Abbey 西華觀, Guo Xingzhen 郭行真 (?-663), who then bore the official title of Grand Master for Closing Court (*chaosan daifu* 朝散大夫) and who was a neophyte of Buddhism, made two sandalwood (*tan* 檀) statues of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara in addition to five gold or copper statues of the Buddha[81]. Significantly, Guo Xingzhen was a confidant of Empress Wu. He started to associate with her probably in or shortly after 655, when she became Gaozong's new empress and when she, out of her sense of insecurity over her position in the court, regularly invited Guo Xingzhen to the inner palace to perform some black magic (*yasheng* 壓勝) aiming at dispelling malicious spirits and inflicting disaster on her enemies. However, it turned out that his newly aroused piety towards the Buddha did not bring him good fortune. After his black magic was exposed in 663, which would have destroyed the empress herself but for her shrewdness and resoluteness, he

[78] *Foshuo Shiyimian Guanshiyin shenzhou jing*, *T* 20: 150c. See also Yü 2001 (esp. pp. 54-56).

[79] *T* 20: 151b25-28.

[80] *Sanbao ganying yaolüe lu*, *T* 51: 3.852c.

[81] *Ji gujin fodao lunheng*, *T* 52: 4.395cb-397a.

was banished to Aizhou 愛州 (in present-day Qinghua 清化 in Guangxi) where he died[82]. The unusual closeness of Guo Xingzhen's relationship with Empress Wu means that both his decision to switch his religious faith and his efforts to cast the statue of Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara must have been tacitly approved if not instigated by her. Thus, it seems that Empress Wu might have been exposed to the worship of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara as early as the beginning of the 660s, three and half decades before Fazang invoked the power of the bodhisattva to her service. It is also noteworthy that one of her confidants became a devotee of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara when his patroness was deliberately working through to the political summit from where she was able to rule as a co-emperor[83].

On either 24 October 696 or 22 December 696 — almost simultaneous with Fazang's availing of the *dhāraṇī* of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara — a Buddhist thaumaturge Qingxu 清虛 (active 696-712), who was to become a friend of Fazang in ten years or so, allegedly succeeded in saving his own hermitage from a fire, which devastated other neighboring buildings, on Mount Sanzhong 三總, to the north of Lingyansi <靈嚴寺> (probably an error of Lingyansi 靈巖寺) in Qizhou 齊州 (Shandong), not very far from the battlefield of the Great Zhou and Khitan armies[84]. Some time in 702, the same Qingxu resorted to the *dhāraṇī* of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara and that (or those) in the *Jin'gan bore jing* 金剛般若經 to pray for rain at the request of Fuli, whom we have already identified as a foe of Fazang. It worked[85]. However, the same Avalokiteśvara *dhāraṇī* did not prove efficacious two years later (around 8 May 704), when Qingxu was requested to pacify a malicious spirit haunting a Buddha-hall at Shaolinsi 少林寺 on Mount Song 嵩山[86].

[82] See *Xin Tang shu* 76.3474, *Zizhi tongjian* 201.6342, for Guo Xingzhen's involvement in Empress Wu's court strife. Gaozong's edict, dated 17 January 664, condemning Guo Xingzhen is fully quoted in *Fayuan zhulin* (*T* 53: 55.705b5-18), which Daoshi 道世 (596?-683) precedes with a summary (705a27-b5).

[83] Sima Guang (*Zizhi tongjian* 200.6322) remarks that after overcoming this crisis, Empress Wu became the *de facto* ruler of the empire. See Twitchett and Wechsler 1979: 255.

[84] *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji*, *XZJ* 149: 2.47c6-15; Qingxu-Fazang relationship discussed in (III.2).

[85] *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji*, *XZJ* 149: 3.53b16-c14.

[86] *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji*, *XZJ* 149: 2.48b7-d4.

At any rate, Fazang's feat seems to have further contributed to the popularity of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara, as is shown by the fact that it was exactly such an image of Avalokiteśvara, rather than that of the one-thousand-armed and -eyed Avalokiteśvara, that was materialized in a statue within the Qibaotai 七寶臺 (Tower of Seven Jewels). This tower (actually very likely a pagoda enshrining some relics of the Buddha) was completed around 703 under the supervision of Degan 德感 (ca. 640 – after 703)[87] — another major Buddhist ideologue of Empress Wu — at the Guangzhaisi 光宅寺, a monastery in Chang'an of essential importance to Empress Wu's pursuit and wielding of supreme power.

The cult of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara eventually infiltrated so deeply into society that he became embodied in Sengqie 僧伽 (Saṃgha?, 628-710), a Central Asian Buddhist thaumaturge, who arrived in China in the early Longshuo era (661-663) (Yü 2001: 211-222). This embodiment, in turn, catalyzed the cult of Sengqie and its integration with the cult of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara. After spending some time in Xiliang Prefecture 西涼府, he settled in the Longxingsi 龍興寺 of Shanyang 山陽, where he wrought various miracles. Then, he moved to Linhuai 臨淮, where he impressed a local householder so much that he surrendered a plot of land for building a temple. From there was unearthed an old epitaph, which revealed that the place was the old site of the Xiangjisi 香積寺 of the Northern Qi dynasty, and an image of a Buddha, who was called "Puzhao wang" 普照王 (The King of the Universal Illumination). There was a legend that when he was staying at the home of one of his patrons (called Heba 賀拔), his body suddenly grew so much that it exceeded the whole bed by three *chi*. He subsequently turned himself into the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara. Some time after being called to Zhongzong's court in Jinglong 2 (January 28, 708-February 14, 709), Sengqie proposed to the emperor that his temple at Sizhou 泗州 be renamed Puzhaowangsi 普照王寺 — the temple of the King of Universal Illumination. Given that the character *zhao* 照 was then tabooed because of Empress Wu's personal name Zhao 曌, Zhongzong modified the temple's name as Puguangsi 普光寺. The name of Puzhao 普照 or Puguang

[87] For this monk, see Forte 1976 (esp. pp. 100-108); for Qibaotai's importance under the late years of Empress Wu, see Yen 1986, Chen Jinhua 2002: 92-97.

普光 obviously echoes the Dazhao puguang Wang, a name of the Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara. That Sengqie was an avatar of Avalokiteśvara was verified by Wanhui 萬迴 (632-711), another Buddhist thaumaturge in Zhongzong's favor. When Zhongzong, who was amazed by a series of miracles that arose following Sengqie's death, asked him to reveal the real identity of Sengqie, Wanhui confirmed this to the emperor (Yü 2001: 213).

III) Fazang the Wonderworker

As a politician, Fazang adroitly interacted with his secular patroness and patrons, and with other leaders of political groups at the time, exerting a subtle influence on contemporary court politics that was hard to ignore. As a warrior, Fazang combated the enemies of the Great Zhou empire with a special weapon — black magic. His roles as a skillful politician and an awe-inspiring warrior are the topics which the preceding two parts of this article have addressed. Let us now turn to another of his multiple roles, which was even grander compared with the former two; i.e. that of an intermediary between the heavenly and human realms. According to his followers, he undertook this role not only with his supernatural abilities to conjure up miracles, but also through his passion for some special forms of religious practices, including relic veneration and self-immolation.

III.1) *Miracle Stories Related to Fazang's Mastery of the Avataṃsaka Teachings*

Centering around the theme of Fazang's extraordinary capacity as an Avataṃsaka preacher, a series of stories and legends were created and promoted both within and without the Chinese Avataṃsaka tradition. These stories and legends can be roughly divided into two categories, one in which the legendary elements are so clear and overwhelming that they can be taken as no more than faithful accounts, or simply legends without historical veracity. The second consists in those which are manufactured in such a way that legendary and semi-legendary elements are mixed with some accounts which may or may not be verified historically. Compared

with the first category, the second appears more complicated and deserves more attention. In this section, let us try to study one example of the first and two more belonging to the second.

Of the first category, the following legend is quite characteristic and telling. During the Yonglong era (21 September 680-24 January 681), a native of Yongzhou 雍州 Guo Shenliang 郭神亮, who had continued to cultivate pure practices, died suddenly. The deities led him to Tuṣita Heaven to pay homage to Maitreya. A bodhisattva there asked him, "Why didn't you receive and uphold the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*?" Guo Shenliang replied, "nobody preaches on that *sūtra*." The bodhisattva said, "There is indeed someone who preaches [on the *sūtra*], why do you say that there is not?" Later Guo Shenliang returned to life and recounted in detail this experience to Dharma Master Baochen 薄塵 (?-688†), one of Fazang's mentors, who discussed it with him in detail. The author (editor) of this story then remarks, "Looking closely into this, we find that Xianshou's [Fazang's] expositions and turning the dharma-wheel were such that their powers was known even in the most ethereal [realms]!"[88]

We cannot exclude the existence of a layman named Guo Shenliang, who was obviously an acquaintance (or even a friend) of Fazang. However, his experiences as a traveler to Tuṣita Heaven, where he is allegedly instructed on the superiority of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* and the availability of an Avataṃsaka preacher in the area, can only be accepted as a piece of religious narrative concocted and promoted by a believer of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* — very likely Fazang himself given that the legend made its first known appearance in a collection originally compiled by him.

Although it is possible that the main body of the story was written by Fazang himself, we can certainly reject the idea that the last couple of sentences in praise of the supernatural power of his lectures were by his own hand; they must have been, rather, added by his disciples. A comparison of the two versions of the same story in the *Huayan jing zhuanji* and Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's biography shows that Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn seems to have slightly recast it to the extent that it further features Fazang's lectures

[88] *Pŏpjang chŏn* (*T* 50: 281c11-16) contains a largely identical version of the same story.

having attracted attentions from both worldly and celestial beings. If this analysis of the formation and development of the legend can be accepted, then we can see an interesting process through which a legend which originally focused on the superiority of the Avataṃsaka teachings in general was recast into a new one in which Fazang's brilliance as an Buddhist preacher (especially his skill in lecturing on the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*) became the central theme.

As for the second category, we have the two most famous and representative stories/legends, the Ordination Episode and the "Earthquake Story." Not only do these two stories feature Fazang's exceptional capacity as an expounder of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, but they also portray the high esteem that Fazang evinced from Empress Wu by some miracles associated with or directly brought out by his Avataṃsaka lectures. They have been deeply embedded in Buddhist historiography, to the extent that they have been taken for granted and few scholars have ever given a second thought to their historical credibility. However, as was noted above, the Ordination Story does not have any historical support and cannot be taken as more than a legend.

The earthquake episode proves more complicated. Given that this record directly quotes from the reply from Empress Wu and that it was found in a text compiled shortly after the death of Fazang, a time so close to Empress Wu's reign that it would be virtually impossible for anyone to fabricate such an edict in the name of Empress Wu, I believe that it should have some historical basis, although the event might not have happened exactly the way as is described here. The following scenario appears close to the truth. In the course of lecturing on the new Avataṃsaka translation, probably on 7 January 700, a small-scale earthquake broke out in the region close to the Foshoujisi, not necessarily at the moment when Fazang lectured on the sentence regarding the quake in the Avataṃsaka-sea. Very likely, the Foshoujisi monks correlated the earthquake with the sentence in the *sūtra* in an attempt to recast it as a propitious portent related to the *sūtra*. Given that an earthquake was generally understood as a punitive omen from the heavens, this reaction of the Foshoujisi monks can also be read as a deliberate act of turning a sign, which would be taken as unfavorable in traditional Chinese thought, into a favorable one that accorded with Buddhist ideology (Chen 2003: 329-336).

III.2) *Fazang's Supernatural Ability to Bring down Snow and Rain*

Fazang had begun to enjoy a high reputation as an efficacious invoker of rain long before Zhongzong began to rule again in 705. During Empress Wu's regency and reign, some local officials around the Chang'an area, who suffered from ravages of a drought, had already repeatedly enrolled this kind of supernatural power that Fazang allegedly possessed. As early as Chuigong 3 (19 January 687-6 February 688), when Empress Wu did not formally rule in the right of an emperor but as the regent of her emperor-son Ruizong, a serious drought struck the capital area. Empress Wu ordered Fazang to construct a platform at Ximing si to pray for rain. The Magistrate of the Chang'an District Zhang Luke 張魯客 (?-687†), an uncle of Zhang Yizhi and Zhang Changzong (Fujiyoshi 1997: 320), acted as the "host of the prayers" (*qingzhu* 請主). After strictly observing both fast and precepts for less than seven nights, the rain started to pelt down. During the Tiancewansui reign-era (22 October 695-20 January 696), while the Senior Subaltern (*zhangli* 長吏) of Yongzhou 雍州, Prince of Jian'an 建安 (i.e. Wu Youyi, a first cousin once removed of Empress Wu who, as noted above, played an important role in the suppression of the Khitan rebellion)[89], performed his duties in Yongzhou, a drought attacked the area. Like Zhang Luke, Wu Youyi turned to Fazang for help. It was reported that the rain poured down while Fazang prayed, as swiftly as echoes responded to a sound.

Now, let us see how Fazang was sought out by Zhongzong and Ruizong for his expertise in invoking rain during the seasons of drought. In the mid-summer (i.e. the fifth month) of Jinglong 2 (24 May-22 June 708), a drought started to threaten the capital area once again. The emperor ordered Fazang to gather one hundred dharma-masters at Jianfu si to pray for rain with proper religious rituals and procedures[90]. Approaching the dawn of the seventh day, a heavy downpour fell from the sky. It lasted

[89] Wu Youyi became a prince on 20 October 690 (*Jiu Tang shu* 183.4729, *Zizhi tongjian* 204.6467-68), a mere four days after Empress Wu proclaimed the foundation of her own dynasty.

[90] At least two records are left of Zhongzong's Jianfusi visits, once on 28 May 707 (Shenlong 3.4.23 [*gengyin*]), and the other 3 May 709 (*Jiu Tang shu* 7.144, 147); discussed in Sun 2003: 135-137.

for ten nights, until everyone was satisfied with the rainfall. Zhongzong made manifest his satisfaction and excitement over the performance of Fazang and his colleagues in his reply to the memorial submitted to report the result of this rain-praying ritual[91]. The next year, when the drought recurred, Fazang came to people's rescue again. Zhongzong issued another edict to extol his merits[92]. Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn continues by saying that from then on, Zhongzong and Ruizhong relied on Fazang as their bodhisattva-preceptor. This might refer to the possibility that some time during the Shenlong or Jinglong era Fazang was invited to the Linguang Palace Chapel, as was suggested at the beginning of (I.3).

In the spring of Jingyun 2 (24 January-22 April 711), it did not rain enough, causing a shortage of water. To make things worse, it did not snow in the winter. The Chang'an area was on the verge of another severe drought. Ruizong summoned Fazang to the inner palace, eagerly seeking from him the method to counter the damage to crops threatened by the imminent drought. Fazang recommended to the emperor an esoteric Buddhist scripture called *Suiqiu zede Da zizai tuoluoni* 隨求則得大自在陀羅尼. He also proposed that a platform be set up so that Buddhist priests, with peace and purity in their minds, could copy and recite the *dhāraṇī* in the *sūtra* before throwing the *dhāraṇī*-scripts into a dragon-pond. He anticipated that this would cause some snow to fall. Ruizong was convinced and ordered that the proposed procedures be carried out under Fazang's guidance beside the dragon-pool at or beside the Wuzhensi 悟真寺 in Lantian 藍田 valley on Mount Zhongnan, where Fazang had started his search for Avataṃsaka teachings and also some Daoist practices in his youth.

The *Suiqiu zede Dazizai tuoluoni [jing]* was probably the same text that has descended to us by the title "Foshuo suiqiu jide Da zizai tuoluoni shenzhou jing" 佛說隨求即得大自在陀羅尼神咒經 (The *Sūtra* preached by the Buddha on the *Dhāraṇī-riddhimantra* of Great Self-existence to be obtained as one wishes) (in one fascicle) (*T* no. 1154) translated by Baosiwei 寶思惟 (Manicintana?, ?-721)[93] in 693. This text contains an extensive *dhāraṇī*. The whole text is partly identical with the *Pubian*

[91] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284b3-5.
[92] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284b5-7.
[93] For this Kashmiri monk, see Forte 1984.

guangming [yanmang] qingjing chisheng ruyi baoyin xin wunengsheng da mingwang da suiqiu tuoluoni jing 普遍光明[焰鬘]清淨熾盛如意寶印心無能勝大明王大隨求陀羅尼經 (in two fascicles) (*T* no. 1153), translated by Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空 [705-774]), although the latter represents a more developed version.

Fazang's choice of the pool at or beside the Wuzhensi to perform this ritual for snow should not be easily passed over as a coincidence. Since the Sui dynasty (581-617) the temple had attracted a number of eminent monks, including (1) Jingye 淨業 (564-616), the founder of the monastery, who was a joint disciple of two Sui Buddhist leaders Jingying Huiyuan 淨影慧遠 (523-592) and Tanqian 曇遷 (542-607) (Chen 2002a: 41 [n. 85]); (2) Huichao 慧超 (546-622), a major disciple of the Tiantai patriarch Huisi 慧思 (515-568) (Chen 2002a: 200-201); (3) Facheng 法誠 (563-640), who was an admirer (or even a disciple) of Huichao and who contributed immensely to the renovation and expansion of the temple[94]; (4) Huiyuan 慧遠 (597-647), who, as perforce the most important disciple of the Sanlun master Jizang 吉藏 (549-623), spent his last decade or so at the Wuzhensi[95]; (5) Baogong 保恭 (542-621) and (6) Huiyin 慧因 (539-627) (Chen 2002a: 41 (n. 85), 170 [n. 56]); and last but definitely not the least, (7) the Pure-land master Shandao 善導 (613-683), who achieved his sobriquet "Great Master Zhongnan" 終南大師 allegedly thanks to his lengthy stay at the Wuzhensi[96].

Furthermore, Fazang himself had developed a close tie with this temple starting from an early phase of his career. Although we are not clear as to exactly when he started to be affiliated with the Wuzhensi, this must have happened no later than Yifeng 2 (8 February 677-27 January 678), assisting as he did on 29 August 677 (Yifeng 2.7.26) a Pure-land aspirant called Xuanji 玄際 (a.k.a. Jingwu 靜務) (640-706) and ten more monks to erect at the monastery a pagoda celebrating the various miracles that emerged in the process of copying the *Diamond Sūtra*[97]. Some evidence even suggests that he had been a leader of the monastery by

[94] See Facheng's *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography at *T* 50: 28.688c-689b.

[95] See *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50: 11.514c13-17, 515a5-8; *Hongzan Fahua zhuan*, *T* 51: 3.19b-c, 17c21.

[96] *Shinshū ōjō den chūkan itzubun*, *Zoku jōdo-shū zensho* 16: 92a17-b3.

[97] See *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, *T* 51: 10.47b7-13.

674[98]. Fazang was also known to have resided at the Wuzhensi sometime in the intercalary fourth month of Chang'an 3 (20 May 703-18 June 703), when he was said to have requested the Buddhist thaumaturge Qingxu to perform a miracle at the temple, which resulted in the successful probing and excavation of a well of sweet water[99]. Although the story itself cannot be read as more than a legend, Fazang's presence at the temple in 703 should not be rejected hastily. This role of Fazang shows his high position in (and accordingly intense and long-lasting ties with) the temple.

From other sources we know that at the top of the central peak of Mount Zhongnan there was a pool called "Bailianchi" 白蓮池 ("Pool of the White Lotus Flower"). It seems that this pool was too lofty and unreachable for ordinary people. Near the Wuzhensi was a pool (*tan* 潭) as deep as one hundred *zhang*s 丈, a measure which, though no more than a rhetorical one, unmistakably registers the exceptional depth of the pool. This pool developed into a long and curving river bend, at some point of which it formed a pool which was so deep that a dragon was believed to have lived there[100]. Therefore, it will not be difficult to imagine that in the proximity of Wuzhensi there was a deep pool, which probably also bore a name such as *longchi* 龍池, *longtan* 龍潭, or *longqiu* 龍湫 — all indicating "dragon pool" — thanks to its reputation as the residence for a dragon.

The distinctiveness of this temple resides in the fact that not only did it grow from a mountain which was strongly imbued with Daoist influence, but also the temple itself was also steeped in Daoism. The mountain on which the Wuzhensi was located, Mount Fuju 覆車山 (a part of the range of Mount Zhongnan), was believed to have been the place where Wang Shun 王順 achieved immortality. The mountain was therefore sometime named after him[101]. In his poem for the Wuzhensi, Bai Juyi 白居易

[98] According to the *Shimen zijiang lu* (*T* 51: 1.805a22), a monk called Fazang served as the Elder (*shangzuo* 上座) of the Wuzhensi sometime during the Xianheng era (27 March 670-19 September 674). If this monk was the Avataṃsaka master Fazang, Fazang's affiliation with the monastery can be traced back to at least 674.

[99] *Jin'gang bore jing jiyan ji*, *XZJ* 149: 2.47d14-48b6; *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50: 25.867a17-23; cf. *Shenseng zhuan*, *T* 50: 6.991b15-21.

[100] Bai Juyi, "You Wuzhensi," *QTS*, 13: 429.4734.

[101] "You Wuzhensi," *QTS*, 13: 429.4734.

(772-846) mentions several Daoist sites at the neighborhood of the temple, like Yexian-ci 謁仙祠 (Shrine of Visiting Immortals), Shayao-tai 曬藥臺 (Sun-dried herbs Terrace), Zhizhu-tian 芝朮田 (Field of "numinous fungus" and "medicinal herbs"), and so on[102].

Such a heady environment within which the temple had grown provides us with an important clue to deciphering the ritual for snow that Fazang performed there, which is so poorly documented in the historical sources. As soon as we become aware of Wuzhensi's Daoist connections, Fazang's ritual immediately reminds us of the Daoist practice of "hurling dragon strips" (*tou longjian* 投龍簡)[103]. As this practice had it, on some specific dates, a strip (usually bamboo or wooden, but sometimes jade or metal) inscribed with a votive and scriptural passage and/or Daoist mysterious charms and scripts (*fulu* 符籙), were thrown from mountains, into water, or even a residence, in the hope that the messages in the strip could be passed on to the gods who would then grant the fulfillment of these human wishes. In order to fasten the transmission of the message, the casting away of the script was usually accompanied by that of a piece of jade carved with dragons, referred to as *jinlong yichuan* 金龍驛傳 ("Gold-dragon the Messenger"), implying as it did that the dragon, which was believed to be a reliable and rapid go-between for the human and divine beings, would carry the human messages to the intended deities in a timely fashion.

Even a hasty comparison of the Daoist *toujian* practice with Fazang's 711 ritual reveals some important similarities between them. First and foremost is of course the theoretic presupposition that some specific human wishes, which concerned state welfare, personal heath and post-mortem salvation in the case of *toujian*, and the alleviation of drought for Fazang. Second, both rituals resorted to a "written slip" (either bamboo, jade or even gold in Daoism, or paper in Fazang's 711 ritual) as a means of communicating between the human beings and deities. Third, both involved the act of casting away the strips (into water, abyss, and so on). Finally, the image of dragon was also highly and heavily played in both

[102] "You Wuzhensi," *QTS*, 13: 429.4734.

[103] For this practice, see Chavannes 1919, Benn 1991: 69-71, Robson 2001, Barrett 2001a.

cases. In contrast to Daoism, in which dragon, as noted above, was explicitly employed as a messenger, Fazang and his colleagues seem to have contented themselves by implicitly calling a dragon into service. Actually, I am willing to believe that Fazang's proposal of throwing the Esoteric scriptural scripts into the "dragon pool" at the Wuzhensi was not merely based on the usual association between dragon and water (and by extension, rain or snow), it might have also been — although apparently not exclusively — inspired by the crucial role that the legendary creature played in the Daoist practice of *toujian*.

Thus, the snow-prayer ritual that Fazang performed at the Wuzhensi in 711 must be taken as a very significant example of his interest in some Daoist practices and his capacity to perform them. Fazang's interest in Daoism probably derived from his long seclusion at Mount Zhongnan in his youth. His friend Yan Chaoyin, who wrote the funeral epitaph for him, characterizes Fazang's experiences at Mount Zhongnan by a general expression, *ya yi chongxuan* 雅挹重玄 ("often investigating into the double mysteries"), which might at least partly refer to some general Daoist theories, if not specifically the Daoist trend known as *chongxuan*[104]. This assumption is corroborated by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, who unambiguously tells us that the year following his burning off a finger in front of the Famensi pagoda when he was only sixteen *sui* (i.e. the year 658), he "entered the mountain (i.e. Mount Zhongnan) to learn the Way (*xuedao* 學道)," an expression which in Classical Chinese usually indicated one's effort to pursue Daoist ideas and practices. On another occasion, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn also notes that during his seclusion at Mount Zhongnan in search of the dharma, Fazang ate "numinous fungi" (*zhu* 朮) for several years[105]. This suggests that Fazang practiced both Buddhism and Daoism on the mountain. Thus, as is implicitly insinuated by Yan Chaoyin and explicitly indicated by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, who are respectively the earliest and the best biographers of Fazang, when the young Fazang climbed Mount Zhongnan in 659, he was primarily (if not exclusively) in search of arts of longevity and immortality, rather than the Buddhist wisdom of how to achieve enlightenment and *nirvāṇa* — this despite his previous startling self-immolation

[104] On this significant trend in Tang thought, see, most recently, Sharf 2001: 52-71.
[105] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 281a29-b1.

act at the Famensi, which unmistakably conveyed his devotion to Buddhism. It seems that after entering Mount Zhongnan, Fazang continued to learn and practice Buddhism along with Daoism. It should not surprise us that a religious environment like Mount Zhongnan, where Buddhism and Daoism reached an exceptionally intense degree of convergence and interaction, allowed and encouraged Fazang to maintain and develop — simultaneously (if not even-handedly) — his enthusiasm and knowledge in the two religions. The mountain was at the time frequented by a number of world-renouncers who were both Avataṃsaka experts and Daoist adepts, some of them also self-immolators[106] — for whom Fazang must have felt a great deal of sympathy given his own experiences in this regard.

After this excursion on Fazang's association with the Wuzhensi and his previous interests as a Daoist adept, let us now return to the result of his 711 snow-prayer rituals. As reported in his biography, the ritual was quite successful. Before ten days passed, it started to snow heavily. Fazang or the monks at the Wuzhensi sent a memorial to the throne, to which the emperor responded with high appreciation, urging Fazang and his colleagues to remain on the mountain to continue their efforts for more snowfall[107]. After it snowed six times and in all four directions, a decree was issued again, to inquire after Fazang's health. Ruizong attributed all this plentiful snowfall to the compassion of the Tathagātha and Fazang's sincere prayers as well[108].

III.3) *Other Miracle Stories Associated with Fazang*

In view of the importance of Daoism in the earliest phase of Fazang's career, one might get the impression that he must be rather friendly to Daoist priests. This impression would not be borne out insofar as we can accept the historicity of a story told by one of his direct disciples, which

[106] *Huayan jing zhuanji* (*T* 51: 4.165c11-166a15), for example, records an *Avataṃsaka* adept acquiring immortality after making acquaintance with some local deities, who resembled, according to Fazang's description, Daoist immortals. For three outstanding examples of Avataṃsaka masters who were self-immolators at Mount Zhongnan, see (III.3).

[107] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284b22-26.

[108] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284b26-29.

reflects at least some of his real attitude toward that religion after he became an Avataṃsaka master[109]:

> Reaching the second year [of the Tianshou era] (6 December 690-25 November 691), [people in Cengzhou] entreated [Fazang] to lecture on the *Huayan jing*. After preaching on the dharma, the discussion [between him and his audience] carried them to issues of what was orthodox and what heterodox. A young Daoist priest, who was then present, returned to report to the Head of Hongdao Abbey 弘道觀, saying, "The preacher in the temple to the north has disparaged the Daoist Worthies." This exasperated the Head. Next morning, he led over thirty Daoist priests to go to the lecture center. With a face contorted with anger, he uttered coarse words, asking Master [Fa]zang, "It would be all right if you just focused on your lectures. [But] why did you [rashly] comment on things related to Daoism?" Master [Fa]zang replied, "A poor monk [like me] has only lectured on the Huayan [teachings], with no intention whatsoever to comment on or disparage other [teachings]." The Chief of the abbey asked, "Are all the dharmas equal?" Master [Fa]zang replied, "All the dharmas are both equal and unequal." The Head asked again, "Which dharmas are equal, and which not?" [Fazang] replied, "None of the dharmas goes beyond the sphere of two categories, one Absolute Truth and the other Provisional. In view of the Absolute Truth, there is neither this-ness nor that-ness, neither self nor others, neither purities nor impurities, [since they] are all detached from [any characteristics]. Therefore, [all the dharmas] are equal. However, when judging from the view of Provisional Truth, there are distinctions between the good and evil, the honorable and humble, the orthodox and heterodox — how could they be equal?" Although the priest found himself unable to respond to the argument, he couldn't constrain his anger, raising poisonous and harmful words in the "Place of Tathāgata" (i.e. the Buddhist temple). 至二年, 請講華嚴。說法之次, 議及邪正。時有少道士在側, 歸報弘道觀王[110], "北寺講師, 誹謗道尊" 。觀主聞之其[111] 怒, 明晨領諸道士三十餘人, 來至講所。面興慍色, 口發麤言。謂藏公曰, "但自講經, 何故論道門事"? 藏公曰, "貧道自講華嚴, 無他論毀" 。觀主問曰, "一切諸法, 悉皆平等耶"? 藏公對曰, "諸法亦平等, 亦不平等" 。觀主又問, "何法平等? 何法不平等?" 答曰, "一切法不出二種: 一者真諦, 二者俗諦。若約真諦, 無此無彼, 無自無他, 非淨非穢, 一切皆離, 故平等也。若約俗諦, 有善有惡, 有尊有卑, 有邪有正, 豈得平等耶"? 道士詞窮無對, 猶嗔不解。於如來所, 生毒害言。
>
> He then returned to the abbey. The night passed [without anything abnormal happening]. But in the morning, when he washed his face and hands,

[109] *Da fanguangfo Huayan jing ganyin ji*, *T* 51:176a-b.
[110] Obviously an error for 主.
[111] 其 is probably an error for 甚.

> his eyebrows and hair all started to fall out suddenly, and boils erupted all over his body. Not until then did he start to repent, and take refuge in the "Three Treasures." He pitifully begged [pardon] from Master [Fa]zang, vowing to recite and uphold the *Huayan jing* one hundred times. After chanting the sūtra for about two years, there were still ten times [short of the one hundred times], he felt [to his delight] that his eyebrows and hair start to grow out again and the sores in his body start to heal. This was seen and heard by both the religious and lay people in Cengzhou. 歸觀, 經一宿, 明朝, 洗面手, 忽眉髮一時俱落。通身瘡皰, 方生悔心, 歸敬三寶。求哀[112] 藏公, 誓願受持華嚴經一百遍。轉誦向二年, 猶有十遍未畢, 忽感眉髮重生, 身瘡皆愈。曾洲道俗, 無不見聞。[113]

It is interesting to note that this miracle tale attributes Fazang's success in defeating a Daoist challenger not so much to his skill in the explication and application of the Madhyāmika theory on the "Two Truths," as to his prowess in exerting a kind of black magic, which is, as suggested by the plot of the tale, responsible for the symptoms of leprosy that befell his unlucky rival. It is quite ironic for a Buddhist theoretician of Fazang's fame that his magic prowess is here depicted as more decisive than his eloquence and theoretical sophistication in proselytizing a disbeliever.

In addition to the light that such a miracle story throws on Fazang's image among his admirers of later generations, it also contains some historical elements valuable for our efforts in constructing some aspects of Fazang's life and his intellectual background as well. Although it is hard for a modern scholar to believe that a Daoist leader was indeed defeated and converted by a Buddhist master in the way described here, it was probably true that there was indeed such a Daoist priest, even one as important as the head of a Daoist abbey at the local level, who was converted by Fazang. We should take this possibility more seriously in view of the fact that at the time some Buddhist monks, probably encouraged by Empress Wu's pro-Buddhist policies, were rather aggressive in approaching Daoists and their religion, sometimes even going to the extreme of converting them by violence, as is shown by the case of Huaiyi

[112] *Qiuai* 求哀 is probably an error for *aiqiu* 哀求.

[113] *Da Fangguangfo huayan jing ganyin ji*, *T* 51: 176a-b. A far briefer account of this standoff is found in *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 283c11-16.

懷義 (?-695) — this extraordinary monk was accused of having physically tortured those Daoist priests who refused to convert (Forte 1998, 1999). What is more interesting in this regard is that in 696 the head of the Hongdao Abbey in Luoyang, Du Yi 杜乂, gave up his faith in Daoism and had himself ordained as a Buddhist monk, taking the dharma-name Xuanyi 玄嶷. To the immense dismay and exasperation of his former religious brothers, Du Yi/Xuanyi wrote a three-fascicle work, titled "Zhenzheng lun" 甄正論, to criticize Daoism and defend Buddhism[114]. We note with interest that the author of our story identifies his Daoist priest also as the head of the Hongdao Abbey, although he locates this abbey in Cengzhou 曾州 (actually an error for Xiazhou 夏州, present-day Baichengzi 白城子 in Shaanxi) (For this correction, see Chen Forthcoming: Chapt. 2), rather than in Luoyang. Is the author recasting the Du Yi/Xuanyi conversion in such a way that Fazang is represented as his tamer, or he is here simply partly reproducing the famous case by contextualizing his tale in a marginal area with a homonymous Daoist abbey? Whatever the real situation, this tale is definitely worth serious note for those who are interested in the Buddho-Daoist and state-saṃgha relationships during this period, when Buddhism was reaching its heyday under the patronage of Empress Wu.

Fazang is also associated with some other miracles that are related to the Famensi relic, which seems to have played a very crucial role in his life, starting from the very beginning of his career. As a matter of fact, his biographers are unanimous in telling us that the finger-bone enshrined in the Famensi pagoda which was believed to have been Śākyamuni's, was a major catalyst that triggered his enthusiasm for Buddhism. As noted above, he burned a finger in front of the Famensi pagoda when he was only sixteen *sui*. We have also already noted that the last example of cooperation between Fazang and Empress Wu was also mediated through the same relic and ironically it was also through a process of venerating this very relic that Fazang eventually ended up as a betrayer of empress Wu. This is a very important aspect of the Famensi relic veneration at the beginning of 705 that we attempted to investigate in the first part of this article. The time is now ripe for us to examine another of its dimensions.

[114] For Du Yi and his authorship of the *Zhenzheng lun*, see Palumbo 1997.

At the end of Chang'an 4 (10 February 704-29 January 705), Empress Wu, whose health was then deteriorating, had an audience with Fazang in her palace chapel within the Longevity Basilica (Changsheng-dian 長生殿). During this audience, Fazang raised the Famensi relic, with which she was by no means unfamiliar. Forty-five years earlier, in April or May of 660, when Gaozong started to have some severe health problems he and his empress ordered the transferal of the relic to the inner palace, where they worshipped it for almost two years before sending it back. As scholars generally believe, in this relic veneration it was mainly the relic's alleged therapeutic power that was invoked for the sake of the ailing emperor (e.g. Sen 2002: 69). Given this former tie with the Famensi relic and her own deteriorating health at the time, it is quite understandable that when Fazang mentioned the relic Empress Wu responded very enthusiastically. She immediately ordered one of her Vice Directors of the Secretariat Cui Xuanwei 崔玄暐 (638-705), Fazang and nine more *bhadanta*-monks to go to the Famensi to fetch the relic to Luoyang.

Before opening the Famensi pagoda, the imperial emissaries and their entourages performed a seven-day observance, probably in front of the pagoda. When it was brought out, the relic emitted dazzling rays of light. Fazang was emotionally overwhelmed. He held his votive text in hands, reading it aloud to the people present there. The relic shone on the palm of his hand, lighting up places both near and far away. In accordance with the power of the merit that they accumulated over their past lives, people on the spot saw different divine phenomena. Driven by their flaming religious passion, they competed with each other in performing acts of self-immolation. They also feared lagging behind in offering donations[115].

The imperial team returned to the Chongfusi 崇福寺 in Chang'an (that is, the Western Taiyuansi as it was then known at the time) with the relic on the very last day of that year (29 January 705). On this day, the Regent (*liushou* 留守) of Chang'an, who was very likely no other than Wu Youyi (Chen 2002: 99n165), led all the officials and five congregations of Buddhist believers in Chang'an to prostrate themselves at the left side of the road, greeting the relic with extravagant offerings including fragrant flowers and various types of music. The relic allegedly brought sight and

[115] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 283c-284a.

hearing back to the deaf and blind, enabling them to see the relic and hear the music honoring it.

On the eleventh day of the first month of the new year (9 February 705), the relic entered Luoyang. The empress ordered the officials below the ranks of Prince and Duke, along with commoners in Luoyang and its adjacent areas, to carefully prepare banners, flowers and canopies. She also ordered the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichang* 太常) to perform music and to greet the relic as it was placed in the Luminous Hall. As the third storey of the Luminous Hall was actually a pagoda (Forte 1988: 161-163), it should not come as a surprise at all that Empress Wu chose this building as the location for the ceremony of honoring the Famensi relic. Then, on the day of "Lantern Watching [Eve]" (*guandeng-ri* 觀燈日; i.e. the fifteenth day of the first month [13 February 705]), Empress Wu, with her mind and body properly maintained and purified and with an expression of supreme piety on her face, asked Fazang to hold up the relic as she herself prayed for universal good.

This relic-veneration allegedly brought up a number of miracles, as is described by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn. First, on the first day when the relic was unloaded from its reliquary, it emitted some light. Second, on the border of the Wugong 武功 sub-prefecture (in present-day Baoji 寶雞, Shaanxi), the light from the relic shot back to the Famensi and came to encircle it. Third, on the night spent at the Chongfusi, where the relic was kept in the Grand Hall (*huangtang* 皇堂, probably a hall reservred for the spirit of Gaozong), some lights, as bright as flames and shooting stars, issued from the relic. Fourth, when the relic arrived at the gate to the Chongren 崇仁 quarter, an aura appeared around the sun. Fifth, on the night spent at the Xingfasi 興法寺 in the Weinan 渭南 sub-prefecture, the light from the relic made the night as bright as if it were daytime. Sixth, when arriving on the border of the Shouan 壽安 sub-prefecture, the light from the relic shot into the sky, bringing forth, once again, an aura around the sun. Seventh, the relic produced light again when Empress Wu and the Crown Prince (Zhongzong) carried the relic, wrapped with the *tūla* silk, on the crowns of their heads[116].

[116] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284a14-19.

Since it was brought to Luoyang at the very end of 704 at the order of Empress Wu, the Famensi relic had not been returned to its home temple until almost forty months later, when the Great Zhou dynasty was over and the Great Tang had been restored for about three years. Fazang and Wengang 文綱 (636-727), two of the ten monks who accompanied the relic to the capital from Famensi, were among the monks escorting the "sacred bone" back to Famensi on 11 March 708. Fazang, in particular, made for the relic a "spirit canopy" (*lingzhang* 靈帳), which was excavated in 1987[117]. A stone stele unearthed in 1978 from near the Famensi pagoda reveals an extraordinary practice on the part of the royal family—Zhongzong, Empress Wei and their prince, two princesses and the empress's two sisters cut off their hair to be buried with the newly re-enshrined relic at the Famensi on 11 March 708 (Han and Luo 1983). We do not know whether the relic was sent back to Famensi from Luoyang or Chang'an, to which Zhongzong switched his imperial court on 7 December 706. It could be that Zhongzong brought the relic with him when he left Luoyang or that he just left it there[118].

Started at the very end of Empress Wu's reign, this series of "Fazang-directed" relic-veneration activities was carried on toward that of Zhongzong's. It is noteworthy not only because of the various miracles that adorned its repeated climaxes, but also those acts of self-immolation that were inspired by and emphatically punctuated the whole process. On the one hand, either out of some deliberate pre-planning or largely acting in accordance with the volatile sociopolitical conditions, Fazang had aptly turned this series of seemingly pious acts to the best service of his religious tradition; on the other, this complicated religious drama vividly reflects some long-obscured aspects of his intellectual and religious background, most notably his inextricable involvement in the practice of

[117] This role of Wengang is recorded in his *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography at *T* 50: 14.792a21-22. Fazang's role on this important occasion, however, is recorded in none of his biographical sources, including the most thorough one, that by Ch'oe. We fortunately know this from an inscription on the "spirit canopy" unearthed from the Famensi underground chamber containing the finger-bone relic. See Wu and Han 1998: 70.

[118] Two years later, Zhongzong decided to honor the Famensi relic once again by bestowing the title, "Dasheng zhensheng baota" 大聖真身寶塔 ("Treasure-pagoda for the True Body of the Great Sage"), on the pagoda; Chen Jinhua 2002: 102-103.

self-immolation, which most of modern scholars are still not so prepared to associate with such a learnt and elite Buddhist priest like Fazang.

It will take us too far afield to discuss how orthodox Buddhism in medieval China treated the issue of self-immolation. Suffice here to say that Buddhist doctors in the tradition were rather divided on this topic. Although some of them enthusiastically endorsed and promoted it, a majority of them were quite reluctant to do so — some of them were simply harsh critics. For example, Yijing 義淨 (635-713), a collaborator of Fazang, devotes one section exclusively to self-immolation in the forty-section report that he sent from South Asia to his Chinese colleagues. He rejected it as an inappropriate practice (*shaoshen buhe* 燒身不合) (Wang 1995: 222-223, discussed in Benn 1998). It is therefore of particular interest to see how Fazang, a self-immolator himself, wrote about this issue.

One of the strongest "scriptural" source for self-immolation in medieval China was the apocryphal *Fanwang jing* 梵網經. James Benn (1998) has recently convincingly shown that a chief motive of the Chinese author of this text was perhaps to legitimate self-immolation. In view of this, it is nothing but natural that it is in his commentary on the *Fanwang jing* (of whose apocryphal nature Fazang might or might not have been aware) that Fazang expresses himself most explicitly on this highly controversial issue. According to Fazang, the Buddhist stories about various heroic acts of self-immolations not only can and should be understood literally, but they were also to be seriously emulated, the more closely the better[119]. The unreservedness with which Fazang sanctioned those self-immolation acts, even those as radical as burning one's forearms or feeding a hungry tigress with one's own body, is really striking in the light of their controversial nature and the relatively lukewarm attitudes held by other Buddhist exegetes, either his contemporaries or predecessors. They either understood these stories metaphorically (*jukuang zhi qi* 舉況之辭), which could not be interpreted — let alone emulated — literally (e.g. Zhiyi 智顗 [538-597]); or were of the opinion that these exceptionally arduous deeds were highlighted just in order to test the steadfastness of people's faith — in other words, these stories were only used for pedagogical, and educational

[119] *Fanwang jing pusa jieben shu*, *T* 40: 5.641c10-15.

purposes (and should not be put into practice) (e.g. Ŭichŏk 義寂 [d.u.]); or conceded that self-immolation can only be committed by lay believers, and not by monks for its damaging effects on their awe-inspiring manners, which had irreplaceable importance for promoting religious causes (e.g. Sŭngjang 勝莊 [d.u.])[120].

As James Benn (2001) has eloquently shown with ample examples, self-immolation was a widespread practice among medieval Chinese Buddhist believers. However, it is noteworthy that *Avataṃsak*a followers who also happened to be known as self-immolators seem particularly numerous. In addition to Fazang's case, another similarly famous example involved the *Avataṃsak*a master Zongmi, who was once entangled in a lawsuit. His lectures in Luoyang excited the attendants so much that one of them cut off his forearm to express his devotion to Buddhism. The subject of this occident was called Taigong 泰恭 (?-811†), whose self-mutilation Zongmi has graphically depicted and enthusiastically praised in his letter (dated 4 October 811) to Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839), who was then staying in Chang'an as the "State Master" (*guoshi* 國師) of Xianzong (r. 805-820)[121]. Zongmi has given such a firm approval to Taigong's self-mutilation that one might even suspect whether Taigong was privately encouraged by him. Chengguan's reply does not, however, echo the same degree of appreciation. Probably apprehensive of any further legal troubles that Zongmi was to incur, Chengguan asked him not to encourage this kind of radical act, although he admitted that it does not lack in scriptural support[122].

I am of little doubt that at the midst of this emotional episode, the finger that Fazang set to fire in front of the Famensi stūpa one hundred and fifty-two years ago must have been aflame before the eyes of Zongmi, Taigong and other followers of the Avataṃska teachings in the Luoyang area, and Chengguan as well, who warily watched the development of the situation afar from Chang'an. They must have also thought of others of

[120] These three authors express their opinions on self-immolation in their respective commentaries on the *Fanwang jing*. See Zhiyi, *Pusa jie yishu*, *T* 40: 2.576b6-14; Ŭichŏk, *Pusa jieben shu*, *T* 40: 2A.675c5-676a14; Sŭngjang, *Fanwang jing pusa jieben shuji*, *XZJ* 60: 3.135d9-13.

[121] "Guifeng Dinghui Chanshi yaobing Qingliang Guoshi shu," *T* 39: 577b26-28.

[122] "Qingliang guoshi huida," *T* 39: 577c17-21.

their respectable predecessors who did not hesitate to demonstrate their religious passion with the sacrifice of a certain part of their bodies. Daoxuan, for example, records three *Avataṃsak*a experts, one master (Puyuan 普圓 [?-560†]) and two his disciples (Puji 普濟 [?-581] and Puan 普安 [530-609]), who shared their zeal for self-sacrifice[123]. Their friend Jing'ai 靜藹 (534-578), who was not only close to them personally, but also in appreciation of the *Avataṃsak*a teachings, was perhaps one of the most renowned self-immolator in medieval China. After spreading on a stone-slab slices of flesh that he cut off from his own body, Jing'ai scooped out his heart with a knife and, which is more astonishing, died sitting at the posture of meditation and with his hands holding his heart![124] In addition to Puyuan and two of his disciples, Fazang in his collection of *Avataṃsaka*-related accounts (i.e. *Huayan jing zhuanji*) also mentions at least three more Buddhist practitioners, both monks and laymen, who were *Avataṃsak*a admirers and self-immolators as well. First, a eunuch called Liu Qianzhi 劉謙之 (d.u.), an author of a six-hundred fascicle commentary on the *Avataṃsak*a *sūtra*, who, though himself not a self-immolator, was inspired by a very special self-immolator — a Northern Qi dynasty (550-577) prince who burned himself to death at Mount Wutai out of desperation derived from his failure to encounter Mañjuśrī there[125]. Second, Lingbian 靈辯 (477-522), another *Avataṃsak*a commentator (with a commentary less voluminous, only [!] one hundred fascicles), driven by his desire to see Mañjuśrī, had been crawling on the road, wearing a copy of the *Avataṃsak*a *sūtra* on the crown of his head, for a whole year, until his feet was broken, the blood flowing from his body and the flesh on his

[123] See the three monks' biographies at *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (*T* 50: 27.680b-c, 680c-681a, 681a-682b; discussed in Benn 2001: 81-90.

[124] See his biography at *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T* 50: 23.625c-628a; other biographical sources mentioned in Benn 2001: 223n33. His life, esp. his self-immolation, is extensively studied in Teiser 1988: 437-439; see also Jan 1965: 252-253. His association with Puyuan's group is briefly mentioned in Chen Jinhua 2002a: 203n72.

[125] Fazang does not tell us whether Liu Qianzhi became a eunuch before or after he witnessed the prince's religious suicide, although the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* (*T* 51: 1.1094c14-21), on which Fazang might have been based, suggests that he had already been castrated when the prince committed suicide. The possibility exists that Liu Qianzhi might have castrated himself as a consequence to the impact that the prince's religious zeal left on him. In the case, he can also be taken as an Avataṃsaka self-immolator.

feet all gone, even completely exposing his kneecaps. The third is Seng-fan 僧範 (476-555), who burnt a finger (or fingers) as an offering to the Buddha, when he turned his mind to Buddhism at youth[126].

This long list of Avataṃsaka self-immolators does not necessarily mean that the Avataṃsaka tradition produced more self-immolators than other non-Avataṃsaka tradition did (since the documentation of the Buddhist self-immolators in medieval China was far from being exhaustive). It does, however, suggest that compared with other traditions the Avataṃsaka tradition seems to have been more willing to promote this practice and that Fazang's attitude to and personal involvement in self-immolation definitely played a significant role in affecting how his followers of later generations approached this practice.

Fazang's attitude toward and involvement in self-immolation continued and reinforced the self-immolation practiced in the Chinese *Avataṃsaka* tradition. They were, of course, primarily derived from his own understanding of Buddhism in general and in particular, his fascination with those paradigms for self-immolators — especially the Buddha Bhaiṣajyarāja and several Buddhist princes understood to be Śākyamuni in his former lives — extolled in these Buddhist classics like the *Lotus sūtra* and the *Jātaka* literature. However, we should also consider the possibility that they might have had something to do with his Sogdian background.

Following the lead of Egami Namio 江上伯夫, scholars have come to recognize some acts of bodily devotion, such as severing one's ear(s), cutting the face, or even piercing through one's heart and cutting open one's belly, were part of mourning ceremonies that were executed among some medieval nomadic tribes living in the Euro-Asian prairies, including Fazang's mother country Sogdiana[127]. They sometime extended this custom beyond their own cultural spheres. When Taizong died in 649, for example, people from the "four barbarian regions" (*siyi* 四夷) who served in the Tang court and those barbarian envoys who came to pay tributes

[126] These three examples are recorded in *Huayan jing zhuanji*, *T* 51: 1.156c18-27, 157b6-16; 2.158b16-19. The cases of Liu Qianzhi and Lingbian are mentioned in *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, *T* 51: 1.1094c.

[127] Egami 1948, Mitani 1984, Cai 1998: 24-25.

to the Tang, numbering several hundred, are described as wailing, cutting off their hair, incising their faces, chopping off their ears and shedding blood to the ground[128].

Under some particular circumstances, such self-mutilation acts could also take on different (political or legal) purposes, including those of protesting, appealing or claiming for innocence to the secular authority. At the beginning of Ruziong's reign, when Guo Yuanzhen 郭元振 (?-722), who was then commanding the Anxi 安西 Protectorate (Duhu 都護), was summoned to serve in the court, the chiefs of the tribes under the governance of the Anxi Protectorate, were said to have cut off their ears and cut their faces before filing a memorial to the court appealing for Guo Yuanzhen's being retained as their governor[129]. A well-known example of slicing the abdomen as a radical legal means is provided by a Sogdian immigrant in China, An Jinzang 安金藏 (before 664-732?), a case which has been studied for the technique of abdominal suturing in medieval East Asia[130]. An Jinzang was a son of An Pu 安菩 (601-664), whose ancestors were chiefs of the city-state Anguo 安國 (Boukhara). An Pu or his father submitted to the Tang by leaving a Turk tribe and entering Chang'an during the Zhenguan era (626-649)[131]. Sometime after January 9, 693 (Changshou 2.1.23 [*jiayin*])[132], An Jinzang served as an attendant

[128] *Zizhi tongjian* 206.6537.

[129] See the biography that Zhang Yue wrote for Guo Yuanzhen, "Bingbu shangshu Daiguo gong zeng Shaobao Guo gong xingzhuan," 5a-5b.

[130] See, for example, Okano 2000. Although in China the application of the technique of abdominal suturing has been associated with the semi-legendary Hua Tuo 華佗 (?-208), this technique, like many other things (including his name!) about this mysterious physician, was probably of Indian origin. Hua Tuo's biography in the *Sanguo zhi* is translated in DeWoskin 1983: 140-53. For the Indian (Buddhist) origins of some legends about Hua Tuo (and his name), see Chen Yinque 1992: 36-40; Mair 1993: 331-341. Egami Namio, on the other hand, raises the possibility that some medical techniques attributed to Hua Tuo might have been derived from some magicians (*huanren* 幻人) from Central Asia. See Egami 1965-67: 135-152. These Central Asian techniques could still, however, have been derived from India. An early Chinese Buddhist self-immolator related with the practice of abdominal suturing has already been recorded by Huijiao 慧皎 (497-554). See *Gaoseng zhuan* 12.404b-c. The case is now capably studied by James Benn (Benn 2001: 45).

[131] "Tang gu Luhu zhou Da Anjun muzhi," 1104-1105. Rong 1999: 51; Lei 2003.

[132] The *Jiu Tang shu* here seems to have placed this event to the Zaichu era (December 18, 689-October 15, 690). However, according to the *Zizhi tongjian* (205.6490), which was based on *Xin Tang shu* (4.93), this happened sometime after January 9, 693, when several of Ruizong's confidants were executed on the ground of visiting him secretly.

of Ruziong in the capacity of *taichang gongren* 太常工人 (an artisan in the Court of Imperial Sacrifice). When Ruizong was accused of treason, Empress Wu ordered Lai Junchen 來俊臣 (651-697) to interrogate his attendants including An Jinzang. Broken by torture, other attendants were about to succumb to the false charge, when Jinzang

> shouted loudly to [Lai] Junchen, "If you, master, do not believe my words, let me cut out my heart in order to show that the heir apparent has no intention to rebel." He then pulled out the knife that he carried and opened up his breast [and belly]. As the five internal organs spilled out and his blood gushed onto the ground, his breath stopped and he fell down. Hearing of this, [Wu] Zetian ordered him brought into the palace by cart, asking the [imperial] physicians to put his internal organs back into his body. After sewing close stitches on the wounds with threads manufactured by the root bark of white mulberry (*sangbaipi* 桑白皮), the physicians applied medicinal ointments to the wounds. [An] Jinzang regained his consciousness in one night. Zetian visited him in person, sighing, "My own son, who is unable to vindicate himself, is incomparable with this person in loyalty." She thus ordered [Lai] Junchen to terminate the prosecution, and Ruizong was thus able to avoid being hurt because of this. 大呼謂俊臣曰:「公不信金藏之言, 請剖心以明皇嗣不反.」即引佩刀自剖其胸, 五藏並出, 流血被地, 因氣絕而仆. 則天聞之, 令輿入宮中, 遣醫人卻納五藏, 以桑白皮為線縫合, 傅之藥, 經宿, 金藏始甦. 則天親臨視之, 歎曰:「吾子不能自明, 不如爾之忠也.」即令俊臣停推, 睿宗由是免難.[133]

Not all of these belly-slitting acts were perceived as real acts of self-immolation. Some Central Asians were believed to perform them as magic, as described with remarkable vividness by Fazang's contemporary Zhang Zhuo 張鷟 (660-733):

> There are Zoroastrian shrines of the barbarians in Lide 立德 Ward[134] and the western ward to the west of South Market[135]. Every year, on the occasion of praying for the [divine] blessings, the barbarian merchants cooked pigs and goats, played the *pipa* instruments, drums and flutes, sang to the full and danced in intoxication. After making offering to the deities, they recruited one barbarian as the *xianzhu* 祆主 (Zoroastrian Head?). The onlookers

[133] *Jiu Tang shu* 187A.4885; cf. *Xin Tang shu* 191.5506.

[134] Luoyang had no ward named Lide. There existed two neighboring wards named Lixing 立行 and Demao 德懋. Here Zhang Zhuo might refer to these two wards by Lide 立德.

[135] There were two wards, Fushan 福順 and Sishun 思順, to the west of South Market in Luoyang. It is not clear as to which ward Zhang Zhuo is meaning here.

> donated their monies, which were to be given to him. The Zoroastrian Head pulled out a knife, which was as sharp as frost and snow (*xiangxue* 霜雪) and which was able to severe the hair that was blew against it — he inserted such a sharp knife into his belly until the blade pierced through his back. He further crazily shook the knife inside his body, making the blood shedding out of his bowels and belly. For the space of a single meal, after spraying water on the wound and empowering it with spells, his body was restored to its original form. This is the magic from the Western Regions. 河南府立德坊及南市西坊, 皆有胡祆神廟。每歲商胡祈福, 烹猪羊, 琵琶鼓笛, 酣歌醉舞。酹神之後, 募一胡為祆主。看者施錢, 並與之。其祆主取一横刀, 利同霜雪, 吹毛不過, 以刀刺腹, 又出於背。仍亂擾, 腸肚流血。食頃, 噴水呪之, 平復如故。此西域之幻法也。[136]

As is revealed by Zhang Zhuo, this belly-slitting show was a magic that was derived from the Western Regions, which here refers to Central Asia, including Fazang's original place (Sogdiana). Such magic was performed not merely for a religious assembly, but also for some secular occasions like a carnival sponsored by the government:

> On February 21, 656 (Xianqing 1.*zheng*.20 [*bingxu*])[137], Gaozong ascended the tower of Gate Anfu 安福 to watch the government-sponsored drinking feast (*dapu* 大酺)[138]. A barbarian proposed that he perform a magic to entertain the people by slitting his belly with a knife. The emperor did not approve it. A decree was then issued declaring, "It is heard that outside [the palaces] there are some Brahmin-barbarians who on the occasions of entertainment often pierce their bellies with swords and cut their tongues with knives, cheating on people with magic. This very much contravenes the way and principles [of true government]. It is proper that these people be repatriated and not be allowed to stay long." Subsequently, the prefectures on the borders were required not to send this kind of barbarian to the court. 高宗顯慶元年正月丙辰, 御安福門樓, 觀大酺。蕃人欲持刀自刺以為幻戲, 帝不許之。乃下詔曰, 如聞在外有婆羅門胡等, 每於戲處, 乃將劍刺肚, 以刀割舌, 幻惑百姓, 極非道理。宜竝發遣還蕃, 勿令久住。仍約束邊州, 若更有此色, 竝不須遣入朝。[139]

[136] *Chaoye qianzai* 3.64-65.

[137] The original here has the day as *bingchen*. However, there was no *bingchen* day in this month. According to the *Xin Tang shu* (3.57), the edict prohibiting the magic was issued on the *bingxu* (the twentieth) day of this month. I have therefore emended *bingchen* in the *Cefu yuangui* (159.10b) to *bingxu*.

[138] The expenses of the *dapu* ceremony were borne by the government, see Schafer 1965.

[139] *Cefu yuangui* 159.10b. Cf. *Tang huiyao* 34.628, *Taiping yulang* 737.9a.

Public performance associated with acts of apparent self-mutilation was by no means a new thing in Tang China. It could be traced back to the East Han dynasty (25-220), although it seems that it was not indigenous, but imported from the "Western barbarians." These publicly staged acts of self-mutilation included the performers' (or their assistants') cutting off their tongues, piercing through their ears, slicing their abdomen and so on. Without any exception, all the mutilated organs are said to have mysteriously healed shortly afterwards[140]. Fazang, as a Sogdian immigrant, was certainly quite familiar with all these unusual acts, no matter either attempted as genuine religious self-immolation or simply staged as a hoax. It is quite likely that his devotion to the self-mutilation was at least partly stimulated by the passion that his compatriots showed to this practice. A scrutiny of Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's account of Fazang's involvement in the 705 relic veneration might even suggest Fazang's mastery of the belly-slitting magic, which he employed to manipulate people's emotion:

> Before opening the pagoda, a seven-day observance was performed. [The relic emitted] divine rays of light that were shining. Fazang, who once burnt off a finger here in the past, further destroyed his liver at that time. Holding a votive text in his hand, he showed it to the religious and lay people around. Radiating on his palm, the relic projected its illumination from the near to the far. In accordance with the power of their blissful retribution, people witnessed different miracles — some seeing the radiant image of the Buddha made of the most brilliant gold and silver, some watching the extraordinary vision of the [Buddha-statues embellished with] fringes[141]. The relic, with its jade-like shape and quality, sometime appeared big and sometime turned small. It measured several *chi* when it became big and only several *cun* when turning small. Therefore, people competed to set fire to the crown of their heads (*dinggang* 頂釭), or burn their fingers (*zhiju* 指炬). They also feared lagging behind in offering donations. 行道七晝夜, 然後啟之, 神輝煜爚。藏以昔嘗鍊指, 今更燔肝, 乃手擎興願, 顯示道俗。舍利於掌上騰光, 洞照遐邇。隨其福力, 感見天殊。或睹銑鎒睟容, 或觀纓毳奇像。瑰姿瑋質, 乍大乍小。大或數尺, 小或數寸。於是頂釭指炬者爭先, 捨寶投財者恥後。[142]

[140] A wide range of Chinese sources on these public performances of self-mutilation aiming at entertaining the audience can be found in Wu Yugui 2001: 783-786, where he also covers the instance reported in the *Chaoye qianzai*. My thanks to Ian Chapman for referring me to these fascinating materials.

[141] This might refer to *Genben Shuoyiqieyoubu binaiye zashi*, *T* 24: 10.246c17.

[142] *Pŏpjang chŏn*, *T* 50: 284a1-6.

A comparison of this account with that provided by Zhang Zhuo reveals some remarkable similarities. First, the two occasions were both religious, one Buddhist and the other Zoroastrian. Second, each consisted in a grand assembly that seems to have been open to the public, a kind of *wuzhe fahui* 無遮法會 (*pañcavārṣika*) as it was called in Buddhism. Third, both involved fund-raising: in the case of Fazang, "people feared lagging behind in offering donations," while in the Zoroastrian assembly described by Zhang Zhuo, "the onlookers donated their monies, which were to be given to the Zoroastrian Head." Fourth, both seem to have culminated in the belly-slitting, which, in the case of Fazang, was depicted by the expression *huigan* 隳肝 ("destroying one's liver"). Finally, it is most interesting that in both cases self-mutilation seems to have been employed as a means to raise money. If the belly-slitting that was performed in the Zoroastrian assembly was, according to Zhang Zhuo, no more than a magic trick, then can the same be spoken of Fazang's self-mutilation on this occasion? This seems highly likely when we consider that Fazang lived for eight more years after he allegedly "destroyed" his liver. Since Fazang was believed to have taken out his liver, he was certainly perceived to have cut off his belly at the time. However, I cannot imagine how one, under the medical condition in Fazang's time, could have continued to live for several years after having his liver removed. The only logical conclusion could be that he here merely performed a magic and that his self-mutilation was, at least in part, a staged show. In other words, like some of his Sogdian compatriots, Fazang was also an adroit magician. Such a newly revealed capacity of Fazang is compatible with his role in another crucial point of his career, when he availed himself of his magic skill in helping Empress Wu to overcome the severe crisis posed by the rebellious Khitans.

Conclusion

In discussing Fazang's political career from the 670s to 710s, we have focused on his complicated and oft-misunderstood relationship with Empress Wu, who projected on his career an influence that can never be exaggerated. For their dramatic effects, the legends and stories that featuring Fazang's brilliant success as a Buddhist expounder and the exceptional

esteem these skills had helped inspire from Empress Wu are very much celebrated, both in historical sources and among modern Buddhist scholars, so much so that they have overshadowed the 689 Avataṃsaka Dharma-assembly, which has so far remained largely unnoticed by scholars. It turns out, however, that most of those stories/legends are of little if any historical veracity and that the 689 Avataṃsaka Dharma-assembly appears to have been a significant link in a series of deliberate and complicated operations working for the political revolution in the secular world in the turn of 690. This does not necessarily imply that the empress lacks historical knowledge and personal fondness of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* — on the contrary, her preface to the new translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* demonstrates her impressive knowledge of Buddhist teachings in general and the *sūtra* in particular.

However, we still have to recognize some political considerations as the more profound factors driving her to the *sūtra* and its most competent expounder at the time, Fazang. In addition to what has been pointed out by Stanley Weinstein (1973: 302), I have elsewhere (Chen 2003) highlighted several of these factors, including the complicated ideological program of turning Mount Wutai into a Buddhist "sacred site" by identifying it as the abode of Maňjuśrī, and the empress's effort to foster diplomatic ties with the kingdom of Khotan, which was, in turn, an important link in her policies toward other Central Asian states. In view of this, Fazang's "international" roles need also to be evaluated in this highly political and diplomatic regard, and not merely in terms of his status as the chief founder of the *Avataṃsaka* tradition in East Asia.

Fazang's relationship with Empress Wu also proves far more complex, volatile and even devious than traditional Buddhist historiography has led us to believe or has been generally understood in modern scholarship. According to an intriguing episode told in a Korean source, Fazang once fell afoul of another powerful Buddhist monk at the time, Fuli, and through him, of Empress Wu herself, who was then apparently more under the influence of that monk. The conflicts were so intense and irreconcilable that Fazang was said to have been exiled to the south, although probably only briefly. We do not know if there were any other more profound reasons behind this political setback that Fazang suffered sometime between 690 and 695, or how much his eminence as a Buddhist scholar

contributed to this reverse of his fate. However, it seems certain that Fazang definitely succeeded in regaining the empress's trust and having it reinforced through his much desired service in the 696-697 suppression of the Khitan rebellion, which has been widely recognized as one of the most crucial points in the empress's eventful life. This brings us to another little-known way in which Fazang served his patroness and her state.

It so happened that Fazang did not limit himself to serving the empress in the enterprise of diplomatic pacifism by working towards a new Chinese translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* and promoting its teachings. He also actively engaged in undermining and suppressing the "barbarian" enemies of the empire, not through his philosophical and philological expertise, but by resorting to his talents in spells and conjuring. Opaque as it may be, the account of Fazang's role in the 696-697 crisis found in a Buddhist source (which is, interestingly enough, Korean once again) not only attests to Fazang's participation in the military endeavors undertaken by the Great Zhou army, but also suggests that Fazang's role was highly appreciated by the court. As a matter of fact, his role was perceived to be so decisive that Empress Wu issued an edict to praise him and about a decade later Zhongzong also fondly recalled and eulogized his merits in one of his poems dedicated to him. Fazang's role in this crucial episode in the history of the Great Zhou is also noteworthy for one particular reason — the deepening and diversification of the Avalokiteśvara cult in the years that followed. Fazang's role in this crucial point in Zhou history is also noteworthy for one particular reason — the expansion of the Avalokiteśvara cult in the years that followed. Moreover, it seems that Fazang's effort to serve the Zhou government in 697 yielded a result unexpected by anyone (including himself) — that is, it constituted a decisive factor in the religious and political machinery that was eventually to accelerate the pace of an enormous religio-cultural project — the Yunjusi stone canon.

Not only does it seem ill-founded to assume that Fazang enjoyed sustained favor and support from the empress throughout the whole period of their association, which lasted for at least three and half decades, but the long-standing belief among Buddhist scholars that Fazang was a persistently staunch supporter of the empress also seems likewise in doubt. Evidence shows that he actually worked with some pro-Tang activists in

neutralizing Empress Wu by removing her two favorites. Although Fazang might have "betrayed" his chief patron in this sense, this political move saved Buddhism from being associated too closely with the Zhou Dynasty and it also succeeded in stabilizing the current politico-social structure, which was then jeopardized by Empress Wu's deteriorating health and her increasing reliance on her two favorites of questionable personality and political capacity.

In addition to the political shrewdness he demonstrated in the 705 court struggles, Fazang's reputation as an effective "trouble-shooter" also greatly contributed to his continuing success as a religious and political leader in the last eight years of his life. The two Tang emperors Zhongzong and Ruizong repeatedly resorted to his esoteric (or shamanic) expertise and his reputed skill in praying for rain and snow whenever their country was plagued by drought and other natural disasters. This history provides us with yet more chances to scrutinize Fazang's image as a wonderworker. Through three quite typical examples — a large-scale ceremony that he supervised in 708 in order to pray for rain, an extraordinary ritual for snow that he performed at Mount Zhongnan in 711, and his leadership of a series of relic veneration that lasted from the reign of Empress Wu to that of Zhongzong —, we are able to recover several more deeply-hidden layers in Fazang's intellectual and religious life that have been so far largely lain untouched. They include — but are not limited to — his promotion of relic veneration, his ideas of and personal engagement in self-immolation, and at last, quite unexpectedly, his deep involvement in some Daoist practices, which could be traced back to his early years as a religious seeker on Mount Zhongnan, a mountain with time-honored relationship with both Daoism and Buddhism. We are particularly interested in the ingenious way that he brought religious elements of different traditions into a highly creative and dynamic combination, as is most tellingly exemplified in the Esoteric-Daoist ritual that he performed at the banks of a pond either within or beside the Wuzhensi, a truly prestigious Buddhist monastery with strong Daoist ties.

In parallel to the Wuzhensi rain-prayer ritual, we should pay particular attention to the presence and dynamic interactions of various religious and political concerns in the relic veneration that seems to have persisted throughout most stages of Fazang's career. One cannot help but feel

amazed at the exceptional skill and subtlety with which so many diverse (at times quite incompatible) fibers were woven into the texture of this series of apparently pious acts. First and foremost, one's attention is drawn irresistibly towards Fazang's and his followers' passion for self-immolation. Fazang was so enthralled by the Famensi relic that the "sacred bone" brought out a sense of abhorrence for his own finger, the burning of which was subsequently intended as an offering to the former; in the meanwhile, this was also attempted as a catalyst for transforming his physical, destructible body into a diamond-like one — a personal and direct partaking of the *dharmakāya*. In this sense, a general remark John Kieschnick (1997: 44) makes on self-mutilation before relics of the Buddha seems also applicable to Fazang: it "was not only a sacrifice; it was an appropriation. By burning himself, the adept drew on the power of the Buddha's body, purifying his own body and transforming himself into a holy, living relic."

Fazang's involvement in relic veneration turns out to be far more multidimensional than just his body offerings. Before turning to the multiple sociopolitical and religious layers so deeply embedded in this series of relic veneration activities, let me stress one more long-hidden aspect of Fazang's intellectual life that would never have been exposed to us but for a brief note that Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn makes concerning Fazang's performance during the 705 Famensi relic worship. Although it seems historically true that Fazang did burn off a finger in front of the Famensi pagoda at the age of sixteen, as is affirmed by both Yan Chaoyin and Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, his earliest and best biographer respectively, the same cannot be said of another far more startling act of self-mutilation that he was alleged to have committed before the same pagoda almost half a century later. According to Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, Fazang greeted the Buddha's finger-bone, which was then newly exhumed from underneath the Famensi pagoda, by "destroying his liver." On the basis of the fact that he continued to live for eight years and that slicing of the abdomen was a common component of the magical tradition from Central Asia, I have broached the possibility that on the occasion Fazang simply enacted such a sleight of hand, without really cutting open his belly and destroying his liver. Be that as it may, in addition to being an enthusiastic and skillful manipulator of esoteric and shamanic rituals, Fazang was also an adroit showman,

a capacity which fits quite well with his experiences of conjuring up illusionary scenes frightening enough to drive away the Khitan army.

Contrary to the apparently damaging effects that the sacred bone caused to Fazang and other participants of the Famensi relic veneration ceremony, the same sacred object was sought as the source of therapeutic power that Fazang attempted to invoke on behalf of his patroness when she was struggling with her health, and of blessings for personal welfare (above all, health and longevity) that Fazang's new patron Zhongzong and other chief members of the imperial family were eager for when the court politics could make an immediate turn against them. This was, nevertheless, only the beginning of the story.

No matter whether of his own accord or against his will, in the course of the protracted relic saga, Fazang gradually found himself sitting in the hot seat of a "triple middleman" functioning at several different levels. First, on the grandest level envied by all religionists, he was expected to mediate between the sacred and secular spheres — while the former exerted its transforming impact on the latter through the medium of the spirituality of a religious leader like him, the latter, usually considered too ignorant and worldly to behold or directly get into contact with the former, had to look up to a religious paragon as its embodiment. Second, at a lesser level, as this series of relic veneration was turned into a special form of *pañcāvarṣika* in which people from all walks of the society, from the most powerful to the most helpless, were all invited to participate, Fazang — as its heart and mind — acted as the mediator between all these members coming from so diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Eventually, at the most isolated — and by far the most powerful — level, we come to the innermost part of Empress Wu's palaces, the *mingtang* complex (to be specific, its third story, which was built as and also functioned as a pagoda), at which this relic series reached its climax. In addition to its therapeutic effects, Empress Wu also pursued the Famensi relic as a new politico-sacral symbol around which she wished to rally various interest groups, several of which were then — to her intense alarm — starting to spin out of her control. To re-enshrine the relic in the *mingtang* was a key step towards recasting her imperial palace as the center of both the divine and human realms. Fazang was not only the chief escort of the relic in

the process of this reliquary relocation, but he was also supposed to sanctify a paradoxical transformation that was inevitably brought to the sacred bone by this relocation: it was an exaltation in that the relic was moved from the margin of a local monastery to the very centre of political power, and simultaneously it was also a fall — from the sacred to the mundane. Following this successful reliquary transferal, Fazang further acted as the guardian of the sacred bone; and more importantly, the orchestrator of the series of political and religious ceremonies aimed at mobilizing the broadest possible support for the aging and politically weakened empress. Thus, as far as this series of relic venerations was concerned, the primary role that Empress Wu had assigned to Fazang — at least at the level of court politics — was that of a chief coordinator between different religious and political forces, the representatives of which the empress wished Fazang to attract to this series of relic-centered ideological maneuverings. Completely unexpected to her (and probably to Fazang too), he was gradually drawn so close to the top of the power pyramid that he must have felt almost crushed by the pressure from two rival political forces, which were rapidly racing towards a head-on crash. As a result, he had no choice but to side with one of them and fortunately for him (and unfortunately for his patroness), he ended up in the right side of the vicious political infighting that led to the closure of Empress Wu's political life and with it the end of an unparalleled chapter in the history of imperial China.

Fazang's role as a middleman reminds us of Peter Brown's saint, who, as an outsider to a social group, is perceived by that group as distant, unknown and thus mysterious, and able to resolve disputes within the group and act as a mediator between the group and external entities (Brown 1971). Fazang appears to have been a typical "saint" in that he served as a "middle" man in several senses. He was half Han Chinese (in culture) and half Sogdian (in ethnicity), and both lay and monastic if we consider the possibility that he was never fully ordained. In the eyes of his followers and later hagiographers he was even half human and divine due to his alleged ability to communicate with deities on behalf of human beings. All these characteristics qualified him as a mediator and arbiter within a society that was in the grip of intensifying conflicts between diverse forces of distinct origins.

No matter at which of the above three levels, Fazang's status as an intermediary seems to have been primarily derived from a kind of unique power that he possessed — or was perceived to possess. It was a complex combination of spirituality, personal charisma and — let me add without any intention of doubting his religious sincerity — political shrewdness in acting between rival forces and a superior capability in manipulating mobs. Such a mysterious aura of power that surrounded Fazang contributed to the massive production of various miracle tales about him, which, in turn, reinforced his image as a wonderworker.

(I) Abbreviations:

HPC *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* 韓國佛教全書 (Tongguk taehakkyo pulchŏn kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe nae Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ pyŏnch'an wiwŏn [compiled], 1979-1984; see Bibliography III).

P Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Pelliot Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

QTS *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (see Bibliography II).

QTW *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (see Bibliography II).

S Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Stein Collection, British Library, London.

SKQS *Yingyin Wenyuan-ge siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (see Bibliography III).

T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (Takakusu, et al [comp.], 1924-1932; see Bibliography III).

TMH *Tangdai muzhi huibian* 唐代墓志匯編 (Zhou and Zhao [comp.], 1992 [see Bibliography III])

XZJ (Wan) *Xuzang jing* (卍) 續藏經 (see Bibliography III, Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, *et al* [compiled], 1905-1912).

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Fanwang jing pusajie ben shu 梵網經菩薩戒本疏, 6 *juan*, by Fazang 法藏 (643-712). *T* no. 1813, vol. 40.

Fayuan zhulin 法苑珠林, 100 *juan*, by Daoshi 道世 (ca. 596 - after 668) in 668. *T* no. 2122, vol. 53.

Fozu tongji 佛祖統紀, 54 *juan*, compiled by Zhipan 志磐 (?-1269†) between 1258 and 1269. *T* no. 2035, vol. 49.

Gaoseng zhuan 高僧傳, 14 *juan*, initially completed by Huijiao 慧皎 (497-554) sometime between 519 and 522 (final version probably completed ca. 530). *T* no. 2059, vol. 50.

Genben shuoyiqieyoubu binaiye zashi 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事, 40 *juan*, translated by Yijing 義淨 (635-713) in 710. *T* no. 1451, vol. 24.

"Guifeng Dinghui chanshi yoabing Guoshi shu" 圭峰定慧禪師遙秉清涼國師書. Zongmi's two letters (first one written shortly before November 12, 810, and the second dated November 12, 811). In Zongmi 宗密 (780-841), *Da Fangguang yuanjue xiuduoluo liaoyi jing lüeshu zhu* 大方廣圓覺修多羅了義經略疏注, *T* no. 1795, vol. 39, 4.576c2-577c8, 577c25-578a6.

Huayan jing zhuanji 華嚴經傳記, 5 *juan*, by Fazang 法藏 (643-712) (largely completed by 690). *T* no. 2073, vol. 51.

Ji gujin fodao lunheng 集古今佛道論衡, 4 *juan*, compiled by Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667) in 661. *T* no. 2104, vol. 52.

Jin shu 晉書, 130 *juan*, completed under the supervision of Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578-648) in 648. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1975.

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Jiu Tang shu 舊唐書, 200 *juan*, completed in 945 under the direction of Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.

Kaiyuan shijiao lu 開元釋教錄, 20 *juan*, by Zhisheng 智昇 (fl. 700-740) in 730. *T* no. 2154, vol. 55.

Lidai sanbao ji 歷代三寶紀, 15 *juan*, submitted by Fei Zhangfang 費長房 (?-598†) to the court at the very beginning of 598. *T* no. 2034, vol. 49.

Longxing [fojiao] biannian tonglun 隆興[佛教]編年通論, 30 *juan*, by Zuxiu 祖琇 (?-1164†) in 1164. *XZJ* no. 1489, vol. 130.

Pŏpjang hwasang chŏn 法藏和尚傳 → *Tang Tae Ch'ŏnboksa kosaju pŏn'gyŏng taedŏk Pŏpjang hwasang chŏn*

Pusa jie yishu 菩薩戒義疏, 2 *juan*, by Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597). *T* no. 1811, vol. 40.

"Qingliang guoshi hui da" 清涼國師誨答, dated October 4, 811. Chengguan's reply to Zongmi's letter addressed to him shortly before November 12, 810. In Zongmi, *Da Fangguang yuanjue xiuduoluo liaoyi jing lüeshu zhu*, T no. 1795, vol. 39, 4.577c9-24.

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Shiyimian Guanshiyin shenzhou jing 十一面觀世音神咒經, 1 *juan*, translated by Yeshejueduo 耶舍崛多 (Yaśogupta?) sometime between 557-572. *T* no. 1070, vol. 20.

Shuoyuan 說苑, 20 *juan*, by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77BC-6BC). *SKQS* vol. 696.

Sŏk hwaŏm kyobun ki wŏnt'ong ch'o 釋華嚴教分記圓通鈔, 10 *kwŏn*, by Kyunyŏ 均如 (923-973) on the basis of his delivered on Fazang's *Huayan wujiao zhang* lectures from 958 to 962. *HPC* 4: 239-510.

Song gaoseng zhuan 宋高僧傳, 30 *juan*, by Zanning 贊寧 (919?-1001?) and others in 988. *T* no. 2061, vol. 50.

Taiping yulang 太平御覽, 1,000 *juan*, compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) and others. *SKQS* vols. 893-901.

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Xu Gujin yijing tuji 續古今譯經圖記, *1 juan, by Zhisheng* 智昇 *(fl. 700-740) in 730. T no. 2152, vol. 55.*

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