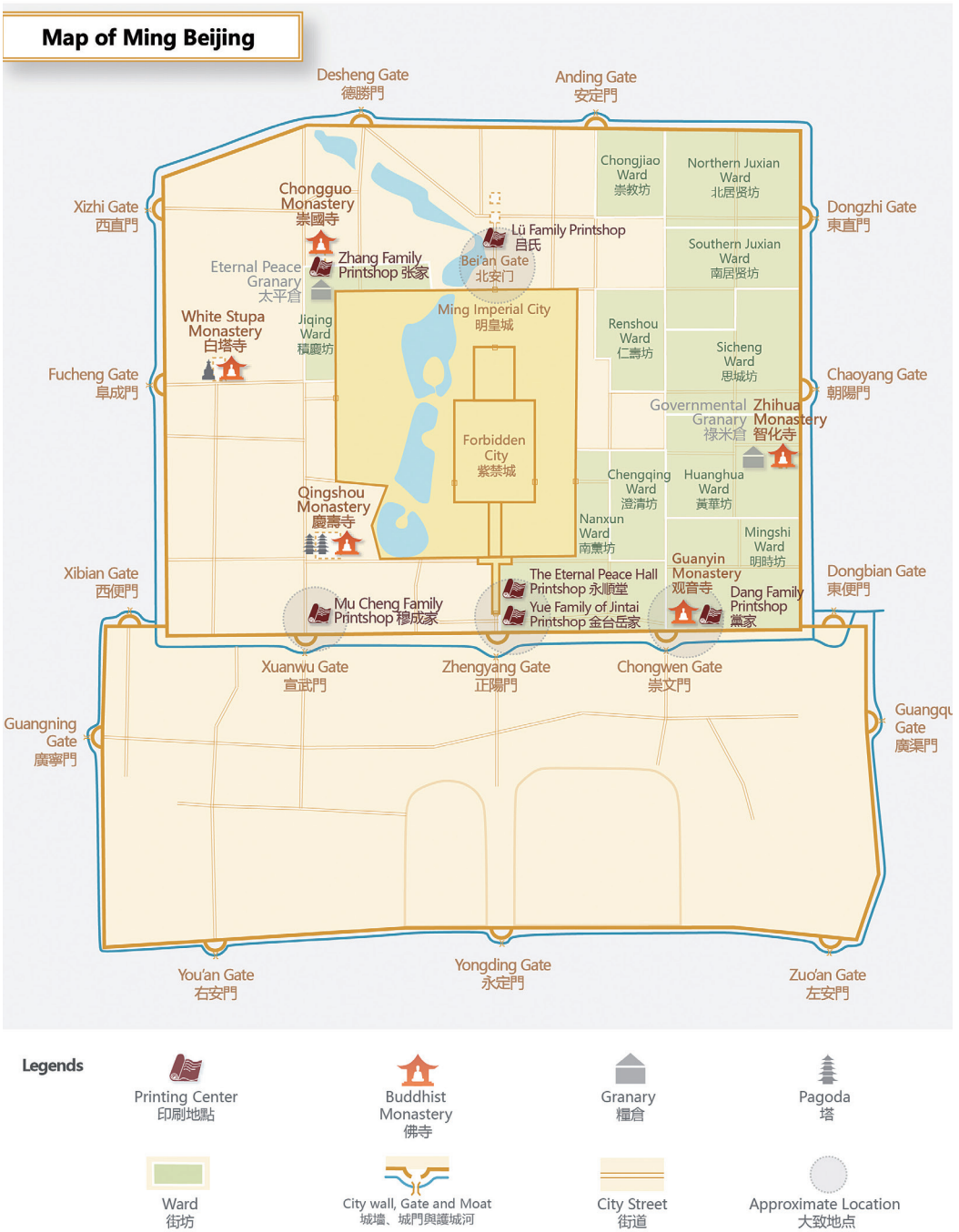
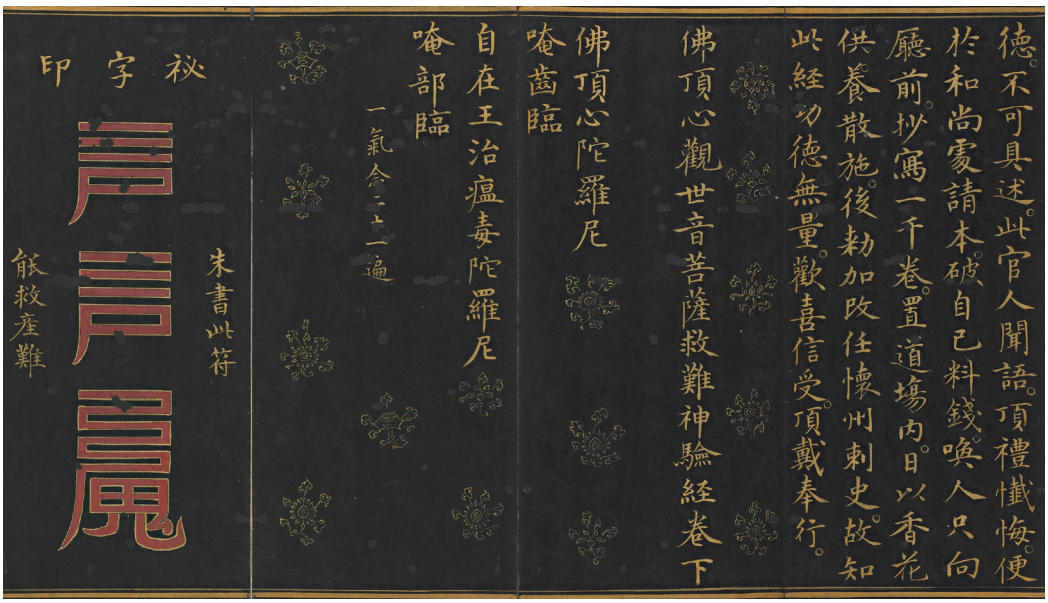


Map of Ming Beijing. By Rita Xiong.

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Samples of the “Esoteric Script Seals”. Dharani woodcuts.
Detail, hand-written “esoteric script seals”. Fodingxin scripture. Copied in gold and red ink. Indigo paper. Ming dynasty. National Palace Museum, Taipei (故佛000419)



Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1440. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

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The *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* and its Audience: Healing, Talisman Culture, and Women in Popular Buddhist Print Culture

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Abstract: This study examines the book art contained within the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* (*Fodingxin tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心陀羅尼經; hereafter also called the dharani text), with the broader concerns of how popular Buddhist print culture addresses healing, talisman culture, and women. The primary sources it investigates include a ninth-to-tenth century Dunhuang manuscript **(Figs. 1a–b)** and other illustrated printed counterparts dated from the twelfth **(Figs. 2a, 3a)** to the fifteenth centuries **(Figs. 4a, 5)**. The *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*, an indigenous Chinese Buddhist text traceable to medieval Dunhuang manuscript culture, synthesizes miscellaneous beliefs, turning a Buddhist scripture into a form of magical medicine. The twelfth century marks fresh illustrative and talismanic traditions in the print age. The printed text is accompanied by a frontispiece at the beginning, and three talismanic scripts at the end. The book art of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* reached its peak in the first half of the fifteenth century. In addition to the frontispiece and talismanic scripts, the text is fully illustrated throughout, with its new illustrated repertoire highlighting the healing power of the scripture and the dharani charms, as well as the challenges women faced in childbirth. Numerous extant specimens offer valuable documentations of its donors, most of whom were residents in Ming (1368–1644) Beijing **(Figs. 1a, 2)**. Accompanied by lively narrative pictures and containing Daoist-inspired talismanic writs that promise to save women from birth complications, it was often printed on demand. Women and their families, preoccupied with childbirth complications or ardently desiring a baby boy, were its main donors.

Keywords: ***Fodingxin Dharani*, healing, talisman, women, childbirth, illustrations, Buddhism, popular print culture, Southern Song, Ming, Beijing**

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臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

The year 1450 was a time that coincided with the printing of the first book in Europe using movable type—the famous Bible by Johannes Gutenberg (ca. 1400–1468). Since this landmark has been much better-known in world history, it has often mistakenly been described as the beginning of printing around the entire globe. On the other side of the world, in fifteenth-century Beijing, the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* was the most widely-produced Buddhist book. Not included in any Buddhist canon, the book gained currency especially because of its acclaimed healing power for miscellaneous household problems and health issues. Ample extant specimens bearing dates and donors' information reveal its transmission was both wide and long-lasting. Going back to medieval China, the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* synthesizes the Guanyin 觀音 (*Avalokitesvara*) cult, dharani charms, and other indigenous practices, especially those associated with Daoism. Available in both manuscript and printed formats, it was copied in other parts of East and Inner Asia, with Tangut and Uighur translations excavated in northwest China marking its multi-lingual transmissions. The age of printing brought about two major changes with regard to the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. For one, by the eleventh century, three newly-invented esoteric script seals (*mizi yin* 秘字印) **(Figs. 4a-f)**, rendered in Daoist talismanic style, had been added to the end of the text. The printed copies are also adorned with pictures. The Song versions show a standard frontispiece design; in the Ming, starting from the first half of the fifteenth century, a new series of narrative illustrations were embedded to the text, mostly juxtaposed above. Additionally, the first half of the fifteenth century saw the standardization of the *Fodingxin Dharani* woodcuts. By 1450, two dominant designs—one more refined and the other coarser—set the standard, exerting a lasting impact over the following 250 years.

The following study investigates this popular Buddhist book, tracing its historical development from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries, and placing it within the context of larger concerns regarding healing, talisman culture, and women in popular Buddhist print culture in traditional China. Using a Dunhuang manuscript as the primary source, the first part traces the scripture's textual tradition to the ninth and tenth centuries. Composed of three fascicles, the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* advocates healing efficacy for the sick and for women, and reflects the practical concerns of its intended audience. The second part explores the recurring "secret script seals" evoked multiple times throughout the text, taking concrete form as three Daoist-inspired talismanic writs at the age of printing. Printed in a standardized fashion at the end of all illustrative woodcuts from the twelfth century onward, these "secret script seals" served as magical medicine especially powerful in safeguarding women who suffered in delivery. Turning to the visual designs, the third and fourth parts study the illustrated *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* woodcuts, with the former focusing on the Song prototypes, and the latter on the fully illustrated Ming specimens. Ample information

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

surrounding lay donors of the Ming woodcuts suggests that most extant fifteenth century products were printed in Beijing—the Ming capital after 1421, and a significant number of them were sponsored by women. Novel developments took place in the first half of the fifteenth century, with standardized designs coming into vogue. Visual examples cited from various sets show that images representing hell, demons attacking the household, a woman in labor, and text as devotional object and magical medicine, were among the most popular motifs.

I. The Tripartite *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*

As an "all-in-one" manual, the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* exemplifies popular Buddhist teachings that address the common people, especially women, who seek solutions to their practical concerns. The text contains long lasting pictorial motifs transmitted through the cults of Guanyin and dharanis.[1] Going beyond Buddhism, numerous examples of religious borrowing, modifying, abbreviating, and synthesizing reflect the active interaction with indigenous beliefs and religious practices, especially those associated with Daoism.

A Dunhuang booklet manuscript in a Tibetan-inspired pothi form provides a glimpse of the dharani text circulated in ninth-to-tenth century northwest China **(Figs. 1a–b)**.[2] Narrated by Guanyin, the text consists of three fascicles,[3] each with a sub-title.

A. The First Fascicle

The first fascicle, entitled *Guanyin's Great Dharani Sutra of the Buddha's Essence* (*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經), opens with Guanyin rising from her seat to deliver the dharani charms, a scenario borrowed from

1. For a classic study of the dharanis in Duhuang manuscripts, see Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
2. Zheng Acai 鄭阿財, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu* 見證與宣傳：敦煌佛教靈驗記研究 (Testimony and Promotion: Research on Buddhist Miracle Accounts in Dunhuang) (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe 新文豐出版社, 2010), pp. 116, 126-132. For a synopsis of the tripartite text in English, see Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 120, 123-126. For more study of the pothi form, see Imre Galambos, *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture: End of the First Millennium* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), pp. 25-26, 146-147. The other Dunhuang manuscript (P. 3236) only records part of the text; see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 115.
3. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 93.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

the Tang Esoteric Buddhist scripture associated with the Thousand-eyed, thousand-armed Guanyin.[4] Next, Guanyin encourages the transcribing, reciting, and venerating the dharani text, which will prevent one from falling into the Avici hell as a result of having killed animals. Furthermore, addressing women exclusively, Guanyin promises those who detest their female body (*yan nuren shen* 厭女人身) to transform it into a male one in the next life, provided they copy and venerate the dharani text.[5] Whoever recites the dharani text daily will be guarded by the Secret Trace Vajrapāla (*Jingang miji* 金剛秘跡) and be free from all loss of money, sickness, and bad dreams caused by demons.[6] When one recites up to 1000 times, Guanyin will manifest in the monkish form of Buddha's disciple Ānanda.

B. The Second Fascicle

The second fascicle, entitled *Guanyin's Healing and Childbirth Prescriptions of the Buddha's Essence* (*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa liaobing cui[jiu]chanfang* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩療病催（救）產方), caters to pregnant women and sick people. Challenging "the orthodox Buddhist beliefs and practices," it claims that the merit of copying the tripartite dharani text is as great as copying the entire Buddhist canon,[7] or fashioning a Buddha statue made of "purplish burnished gold."[8] A common formula entails copying the dharani text and the so-called esoteric script seal (*mizi yin* 秘字印) in cinnabar (*zhusha* 朱砂), then imbibing them with "fragrant water" (*xiangshui* 香水) **(Fig. 1a)**—a method borrowing from earlier Daoist practices. Daoists in early China already prescribed the method of imbibing talismanic writs inscribed in red (*danshu tunzi* 丹書吞字) in their healing and exorcist rituals. In addition

4. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 120. For the dharani charms in Chinese, see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 127.
5. Yü Chünfang 于君方, "'Weijing' yu Guanyin xinyang 「僞經」與觀音信仰 (Apocryphal Sutras and the Cult of Kuan-yin)," *Zhonghua foxue xuebao* 中華佛學學報 (Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal), 8 (1995), p. 118; Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 120. To illustrate this gender transformation, some early Ming woodcuts juxtapose a transformed man and a proto-transformed woman, surrounded by musicians; see Weng Lianxi 翁連溪 and Li Hongbo 李洪波, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji* 中國佛教版畫全集 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian 中國書店, 2014), vol. 2, p. 28; Jin Weinuo 金維諾 ed., *Zhongguo banhua quanji* 中國版畫全集 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe 紫禁城出版社, 2008), vol. 7, pp. 26-27; vol. 8, pp. 14, 56.
6. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 120.
7. Yü Chünfang, "'Weijing' yu Guanyin xinyang," p. 119; Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 123. The original term for the Buddhist canon is the "twelve-section Great Respectful Scriptures" (shi'er bu da zun jing 十二部大尊經); see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu,* p. 130.
8. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 123.

臺灣大學學術典藏資料庫

to the fragrant water, water drawn from a well is also recommended as the liquid base for imbibing talismanic medicine.[9]

When a pregnant woman experiences difficulty in separating the placenta from her body, which endangers either her baby or herself, or both, she is advised to chant the name of the Sovereign Master Buddha of Precious Moon and the Light and Sound of Wisdom Peak (Baoyue zhiyan guangyin zizai wang fo 寶月智嚴光音自在王佛). Chün-fang Yü identified this deity as the second of the seven Medicine Buddhas, who made a vow "to protect pregnant women in child-birth."[10]

Other pieces of advice are geared toward other household and health-related problems. One specific recipe for soup claims that it helps with heart pain. It entails mixing the copied dharani text and the "esoteric script seal" in a slowly cooked liquid stewed with medicinal ingredients such as dry root of aristolochia (*qingmu xiang* 青木香) and "nice dogwood" (*hao zhuyu* 好茱萸). To expedite a dying family member's journey to the Western Paradise, one should burn the copied dharani text, mix the ashes with mud retrieved from the western direction, and leave the mixture on the dying member's chest. Doing so, the dying person would be welcomed by the Amitabha Buddha immediately, avoiding going through the forty-nine days of the in-between state (*buzhu zhongyin zhi shen sishijiu ri* 不住中陰之身四十九日).[11] If one is enchanted by "the flying talisman that is determined to kill you" (*feifu zhu sha* 飛符注煞), or troubled by demons in the household, one should venerate the dharani text at home.

C. The Third Fascicle

The third fascicle, entitled the *Buddha Essence Scripture of Guanyin's Saving the Suffering and Magical Manifestation* (*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa jiunan shenyan jing* 佛頂

9. See the discussion of the Taiping jing in Xiao Dengfu 蕭登福, "Daojiao fu lu zhou yin dui fojiao mizong zhi yingxiang 道教符籙咒印對佛教密宗之影響 (The Influence of Taoist Talismans, Mantras and Seals on Buddhist Esotericism)," *Taizhong shangzhuan xuebao* 臺中商專學報 (Journal of National Taichung Institute of Commerce), 24 (1992), pp. 53-54.
10. The same name is also evoked in the Five Mudra Dharani of the Great Compassionate White-robed Guanyin; see Yü Chünfang, "'Weijing' yu Guanyin xinyang," pp. 119, 123; Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, pp. 123, 140.
11. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 123; Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 129. Also known as antarābhava in Sanskrit or bardo in Tibetan, zhongyin refers to an intermediate state. For a Himalayan painting representing the visions of divinities when one goes through bardo, see the *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Bardo* (c. 1700-1799) in Rubin Museum of Art. This author thanks Eric Huntington for his help.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

心觀世音菩薩救難神驗經), is the longest among the three; it also has the strongest "Chinese flavor."[12] Its four miracle tales embody some elements re-appropriated from earlier scriptures associated with the lore of dharanis and Guanyin.[13] Like the miracles of the *Diamond Sutra*, these miracles often detail the names of the protagonists, as well as specific places and time,[14] making them more convincing to ordinary people seeking healing, longevity, offspring, and protection during childbirth . All stories stress the meritorious sponsorship of 1000 copies of the dharani text **(Fig. 1b)**, which prompted later donors in the Song-to-Ming times to sponsor 1000 copies of the dharani woodcuts **(see table 2; Figs. 14a, 14c)**.

The first story, inspired by the scenario recounted in the Tang-dynasty scripture evoking the healing power of the thousand-armed, thousand-eyed Guanyin, is set in a kingdom in India or Kashmir,[15] where citizens were in danger of dying from a raging epidemic. Disguised as a white-robed lay Buddhist (*baiyi jushi* 白衣居士), the therapeutic Guanyin bodhisattva goes door to door to distribute the "seal of the law" (*fayin* 法印), advising the citizens to copy the dharani text. Pertinent to this, a dharani spell for healing the poisonous epidemics (*zhi wendu* 治瘟毒), to be chanted twenty-one times, is listed at the end of the scripture **(Fig. 1b)**.

The second story, borrowed from another Tang sutra which also evokes the thousand-eyed, thousand-armed Guanyin, is about a rich old man who saves his fifteen-year-old son that was destined to die in the following year by copying, venerating, and reciting the dharani text.[16] Upon hearing from a demonic messenger sent by King Yama that his son's life would

12. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 123. For the tenth-century Dunhuang scroll that records part of the third fascicle, see P. 3236. Zheng Acai dates the scroll to either 912 or 972; see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, pp. 137-138.
13. Zheng Acai 鄭阿財, "Dunhuang xieben 'Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa jiunan shenyan jing' yanjiu 敦煌寫本《佛頂心觀世音菩薩救難神驗經》研究 (Research on the Dunhuang Manuscript of the Great Dharani Sutra of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva for Rescuing from Disasters)," *Xin guoxue* 新國學 (New Chinese Traditional Studies), 1 (1999), pp. 313-333; Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, pp. 134-135, 140-144; Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 124.
14. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 123; Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 134.
15. Cf. the story recounted in Bodhiruci 菩提流志 trans., *Qianshou qianyan guanshiyin pusa lao tuoluoni shen jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩姥陀羅尼身經, in Takakusu Jujirō 高楠順次郎 et al. eds., *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切經刊行會, 1924-1932), vol. 20, no. 1058, p. 100c. For more, see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu,* pp. 130, 134-135; Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, pp. 123-124.
16. Cf. Zhitong 智通 trans., *Qianya qianbi guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神呪經, in Takakusu Jujirō 高楠順次郎 et al. eds., *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新

臺灣大學博物館期刊資料庫

be extended to ninety years old, the old man is overjoyed and decides to further sponsor 1000 copies of the text.

The third and fourth stories, which became the foundation of the most elaborate illustrations in Song and Ming woodcuts **(Figs. 10b–d, 4b–c, 15)**, are the most dramatic. The third features a Buddhist woman, who venerates the dharani text; her karmic debtor (*yuanjia* 怨家), whom she had poisoned three incarnations previously, comes back to exact revenge by entering her womb as a potential child; plus a monk, who is Guanyin bodhisattva in disguise. The woman suffered the loss of her son when he was just a toddler. When the same scenario happens for the third time, Guanyin manifests in the form of a monk. Through his magical powers, he reveals that the woman's child was in fact a disguised demonic yaksa (*yecha* 夜叉), who, as the woman's karmic debtor in the previous life, tried to harm her multiple times, but could not do so because she was guarded by "kind gods" (*shanshen* 善神).[17] Feeling thankful, the woman asks someone to transcribe 1000 copies of the dharani text. As a result, she lives to the age of 97 and is later reborn as a man in the Qin 秦 Kingdom, referring to China.[18]

The fourth story features an official and a novice in the temple traveling along the waterways from south to north China.[19] It begins with the official borrowing money from the abbot of the Puguangsi 普光寺 Monastery in Sizhou 泗州 (modern Jiangsu),[20] in order to pay for his coming trip to Huaizhou 懷州 (modern Henan), where he is due to assume a new official posting as a county magistrate. The abbot sends the novice to accompany the official so he can collect the repaid loan upon arrival; however, a dramatic event takes place while they travel on boat. To free himself from the debt, the official puts the monk in a sealed bag and throws it into the river. Miraculously, the monk emerges unharmed, feeling as if "being supported by someone in midair and carried through a dark room."[21] He reaches Huaizhou two days before the official. Stunned by the monk's presence, the official asks him what

修大藏經 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切經刊行會, 1924-1932), vol. 20, no. 1057b. See Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 124; Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 135.

17. For the notion of the "demon child" in Chinese belief, see Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 175; Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 125.
18. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 124; Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 131.
19. Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 132.
20. Puguang Monastery "was an important cultic center" for Guanyin worship; see Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 126.
21. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 125.

臺灣大學圖書館期刊資料庫

magical power he possesses. The monk confesses that he carries the three-fascicle *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* inside his robe. The official repents by making 1000 copies of the text, using the monk's copy as the original; he is later promoted to the level of prefect. The story may be appealing to both elite laymen and Buddhist monks, for any novice who is diligent in sutra-chanting is promised to receive magical protection against others' evil doings.

II. Esoteric Script Seals as Daoist-inspired Talisman Culture

The Dunhuang copy of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* repeatedly advocates the apotropaic or therapeutic benefit of copying and ingesting the esoteric script seals, although it does not illustrate what these seals look like. In a significant development from the twelfth century onward, three esoteric script seals appear transcribed at the end of the sutra copies. Extant specimens retrieved from the Song **(Fig. 6a)**,[22] Jin **(Fig. 6b)**, Xi Xia **(Fig. 6c)**,[23] and Ming **(Figs. 6d–f)** in woodblock print, stone carving, and hand-written versions demonstrate a fairly consistent formula resembling Daoist talismans.

A notation accompanying the esoteric script seals copied in the Song-to-Ming woodcuts responds directly to pregnant women. Rendered in four legible Chinese characters, it reads, "efficacious in rescuing [a woman] from the childbirth difficulty" (*neng jiu chan'nan* 能救產難) **(Figs. 6a, 6d–f)**. Select Ming examples bear additional guideline that reads, "write this talisman in vermilion ink" (*zhushu ci fu* 朱書此符) **(Figs. 6e–f)**, identifying the three seals as a composite talisman (*fu* 符). The overall preoccupation with birth complications echoes the healing advice stated repetitively in the second fascicle, which urges the devotee to imbibe the copied esoteric script seals as oral medicine. A refined Ming manuscript copied in golden

22. Cf. the esoteric script seals copied in the Song manuscript sponsored by Huang Rong 黃融 from Shaoxing 紹興, Zhejiang province, now in Shanghai Library (no. 823825); see Shanghai tushuguan 上海圖書館 (Shanghai Library) et al., *Shanghai tushuguan cang Dunhuang Tulufan wenxian* 上海圖書館藏敦煌吐魯番文獻 (Dunhuang-Turfan Manuscripts Collected in Shanghai Library) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1999), vol. 4, p. 338.

23. See also Zhang Jiuling 張九玲, "Xi Xia ben 'Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing' shulue 西夏本《佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經》述略 (A Brief Introduction to the Western Xia Version of the Great Dharani Sutra of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva)," *Ningxia shehui kexue* 寧夏社會科學 (Ningxia Social Sciences), 3 (2015), p. 143. For more manuscript and printed copies of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* in Tangut script, discovered in Khara Khoto, see Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan 中國社會科學院 et al. eds., *Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian* 俄藏黑水城文獻 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1996-2018), vol. 26, pp. 3-26 (for printed illustrations, see pp. 3-4, 14); Wu Yulin 武宇林 and Arakawa Shintaro 荒川慎太郎 eds., *Riben cang Xi Xia wen wenxian* 日本藏西夏文文獻 (Xixia Documents Collected in Japan), 2 vols (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 [Zhonghua Book Company], 2010), pp. 316-317, 416-433.

臺灣大學學術發展中心

pigment in indigo paper **(Fig. 6f)** follows the guideline literally: its esoteric script seals are colored in vermilion red.

The three esoteric script seals are rendered in Daoist-inspired talismanic form. A closer look at the esoteric script seals reveal that some components are based on legible Chinese characters. The first talismanic seal is made of two legible characters, *san shi* 三尸, literally, three deathbringers—three body spirits residing in one's various sections of the inner body and potential of causing various kinds of sickness **(Fig. 7)**, according to early and medieval Daoists and the Daoist-inspired medicinal treatises.[24] The character *shi* 尸 is also present in the bottom component of the second talismanic seal; in some cases **(Figs. 2d, 2f)**, the second seal is identical with the first one. In the third seal, *shi* is transformed into layers of angular switchbacking lines, below which is a separate component resembling the character *gui* 鬼, meaning demons. Both demons and the three deathbringers were regarded as causes of sickness since ancient times. Graphs that evoke them form the recurring leitmotifs of the healing talismans and seals.[25]

It is possible that the esoteric script seals copied at the end of the dharani text make intentional graphic references to the three deathbringers. The three talismans deployed by

24. For more studies of the three corpses, see Shih-shan Susan Huang, "Daoist Imagery of Body and Cosmos, Part 2: Body Worms and Internal Alchemy," *Journal of Daoist Studies,* 4 (2011), pp. 33-64; Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China* (Cambridge: Harvard Asia Center, 2012), pp. 52-61. Livia Kohn, "Kōshin: A Taoist Cult in Japan, Part I: Contemporary Practices," *Japanese Religions,* 18:2 (1993), pp. 113-139; Livia Kohn, "Kōshin: A Taoist Cult in Japan, Part II: Historical Development," *Japanese Religions,* 20:1 (1995), pp. 34-55; Livia Kohn, "Kōshin: A Taoist Cult in Japan, Part III: The Scripture," *Japanese Religions,* 20:2 (1995), pp. 23-42.

25. For studies of Daoist and Buddhist talismans, see Michel Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing," *Asia Major*, 3rd series, 6:2 (1993), p. 1083; Michel Strickmann; Bernard Faure ed., Chinese Magical Medicine (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Christine Mollier, "Talismans," in Marc Kalinowski ed., *Divination et société dans la Chine médiévale* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2003), pp. 405-429; Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); Christine Mollier, "Astrological Talismans and Paper Amulets from Dunhuang: Typology and Function," *Dunhuang tulufan yanjiu* 敦煌吐魯番研究 (Journal of the Dunhuang and Turfan Studies), 15 (2015), pp. 505-519; James Robson, "Signs of Power: Talismanic Writing in Chinese Buddhism," *History of Religions,* 48:2 (2008), pp. 130-169. For studies of Daoist and Buddhist seals, see Paul Copp, "Manuscript Culture as Ritual Culture in Late Medieval Dunhuang: Buddhist Talisman-Seals and Their Manuals," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie,* 20 (2011), pp. 193-226; Paul Copp, "Seals as Conceptual and Ritual Tools in Chinese Buddhism, CA. 600-1000 CE," *The Medieval Globe,* 4:1 (2018), pp. 15-47; Shih-shan Susan Huang, "Daoist Seals, Part 1: Activation and Fashioning," *Journal of Daoist Studies,* 10 (2017), pp. 70-101; Shih-shan Susan Huang, "Daoist Seals, Part 2: Classifying Different Types," *Journal of Daoist Studies,* 11 (2018), pp. 46-81.

臺灣大學學術期刊資訊網

the Daoists to get rid of the three deathbringers **(Fig. 8)**, for example, show the recurring *shi*, the zigzag graphs, and the stylized character *gui*, comparable to the esoteric script seals. According to the twelfth century *Enlarged and Illustrated Material Medica* (*Tujing yanyi bencao* 圖經衍義本草) preserved in the Daoist Canon, treating the three deathbringers is indeed considered part of occult gynotechnics.[26] The instruction concerning the use of realgar (*xionghuang* 雄黃)—deemed efficacious in eliminating the three deathbringers and prolonging life—stresses that it can also help a pregnant woman to transform the sex of her baby in the womb from female to male (*zhuan nu cheng nan* 轉女成男). The overarching notion of female-to-male gender transformation is comparable to that expressed in the dharani text.[27]

The talismanic esoteric script seals of the dharani text reflect the facet of the larger talisman culture in service of birth complications, shared by Daoism, Buddhism, and medical treatises. This "religiomedical system" fits in Francesca Bray's broader definition of "reproductive technologies" or "gynotechnics," which includes "the use of prayers or spells." [28]

Daoist childbirth-related talismans are often much more complicated in form than the esoteric script seals transmitted in the copies of the dharani text. The *Trilogy of Talismans of the Origin of Chaos, the Most High Lord Lao* (*Taishang laojun hunyuan sanbu fu* 太上老君混元三部符), likely dated to the Tang, provides the most resourceful handbook of Daoist talismanic gynotechnics **(Figs. 9a–e)**.[29] Among the twenty-eight talismans for producing a son

26. For an introduction to this compilation, see Catherine Despeux in Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 765-769.
27. *Tujing yanyi bencao* 圖經衍義本草, in *Daozang* 道藏 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店; and Tianjin: Guji chubanshe 天津古籍出版社, 1988), vol. 17, pp. 298, 300.
28. Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 277; Yuhang Li, *Becoming Guanyin: Artistic Devotion of Buddhist Women in Late Imperial China* (New York: Columbia University, 2020), p. 19. I borrow the term "religiomedical system" from C. Pierce Salguero, *Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), p. 23.
29. *Taishang laojun hunyuan sanbu fu* 太上老君混元三部符, in *Daozang* 道藏 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店; and Tianjin: Guji chubanshe 天津古籍出版社, 1988), vol. 11, pp. 672-674; see also Zhang Zong 張總, "*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* zhouyin mifu tanxi 《佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經》咒印秘符探析 (An Analysis of the Mantras, Seals, and Secret Symbols in the Great Dharani Sutra of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva)," in Xileng yinshe 西冷印社 ed., *Zhuanwu mingxing: tuxing yin yu fei hanzi xitong yinzhang guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 篆物銘形：圖形印與非漢字系統印章國際學術研討會論文集 (Imprint of Scripts and Images: Collected Theses of Graphic Marks and Non-Chinese

臺灣大學圖書館

and securing the womb (*qiuzi antai fu* 求子安胎符), the talisman to secure the womb **(Fig. 9a)**, which is for imbibing, is filled with thirty repetitive characters *zi* 子, meaning "sons." Two talismans—one that enables a pregnant woman who wears it under her armpit to give birth to a baby boy **(Fig. 9b)**, and another that transforms a baby in the womb from the female sex to the male **(Fig. 9c)**—share repetitive characters *nan* 男, meaning "boys." The latter also bears a legible character *yang* 陽, referring to the masculine cosmic energy. Moreover, twenty-five talismans for birth complications (*channan fu* 產難符) treat the death of a baby before birth (*zi si fuzhong* 子死腹中) **(Fig. 9d)**, the blockage of the placenta inside a woman's body (*baoyi buchu* 胞衣不出) **(Fig. 9e)**, and so on. One talisman bears the character *hui* 穢, meaning filth **(Fig. 9d)**, because it entails getting the polluted dead placenta out of the female body. The other talisman shows repetitive characters *ri* 日 **(Fig. 9e)**, literally "suns," the source of light and positive energy.

Buddhist counterparts of childbirth talismanic writs are less complex than their Daoist prototypes, although some common graphs are worth noting.[30] Furthermore, two identical compound scripts in a Dunhuang manuscript **(Fig. 10)**, each bearing the tripling of the character "son" (*zi* 子), are similar to Daoist talismans **(Fig. 9a)**. According to Hsin-yi Lin, the character "horse" (*ma* 馬) below the three "sons" in the Dunhuang manuscript takes the cue of a horse's galloping speed and signify the wish that the childbirth goes smoothly.[31] The accompanying instruction explains that these talismanic writs should be imbibed with peach soup and drops of vinegar. Similar multiplicities of the "son" character form the recurring leitmotifs of two other son-seeking talismans **(Figs. 11a–b)**, transcribed alongside miscellaneous household-related talismans in a Dunhuang almanac.[32] One contains three repetitions of the term "bearing a child" (*shengzi* 生子) at the bottom **(Fig. 11a)**. The other bears nine repetitions of the character "son" under a large character "corpse" **(Fig. 11b)**. The same manuscript also records a talisman bearing two "sun" (*ri* 日) components on top of a

Character System Seals International Conference), 2 (Hangzhou: Xileng yinshe 西冷印社, 2016), p. 741. For dating, see Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, pp. 483-484.

30. Hsin-Yi Lin, "Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: Discourses and Practices," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2017), pp. 249-252. For more about the lore of childbirth in Dunhuang manuscripts, see Liang Liling 梁麗玲, "Dunhuang wenxian zhong de huchan xinyang yanjiu 敦煌文獻中的護產信仰研究 (Research on the Beliefs in Childbirth Protection in the Dunhuang Documents)," *Tonkō shahon kenkyū nenpō* 敦煌寫本研究年報 (Annual Report on Dunhuang Manuscript Studies), 1 (2016), pp. 189-204.

31. Hsin-Yi Lin, "Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: Discourses and Practices," p. 250.

32. Nathalie Monnet, *Chine, l'empire du trait: Calligraphies et dessins du Ve au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2004), pp. 55-56.

臺灣大學圖書館期刊資料庫

demon (*gui*) **(Fig. 11c)**; its accompanying annotation, rendered in legible Chinese, states that if one pastes the talisman under the bed, it will help a woman to give birth to a baby boy.

Intriguingly, the talismanic script with three "sons" and a "horse" **(Fig. 10)** in the Dunhuang manuscript was transmitted in the medical texts in the twelfth century. In the *Compendium of Excellent Treatments for Women* (*Furen Daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方), compiled by the Song physician Chen Zhiming 陳自明 (ca. 1190–1270) **(Fig. 12)**, it states that this talisman is used for treating a woman who suffers from "horizontal birth" (*hengsheng* 橫生), a birth complication that occurs when a baby "first reveals his hand, or his buttocks." [33]

It is likely that the widespread tripartite esoteric script seals transmitted by the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* in turn stimulated even more Daoist responses. The *Marvelous Book for Dispelling Hereditary Enmity through Three Generations* (*Taishang sansheng jieyuan miao jing* 太上三生解冤妙經), narrated by the Heavenly Worthy Who Follows the Sound to Save the Suffering (*Xunsheng jiuku tianzun* 尋聲救苦天尊),[34] and available in various versions, is a case in point.[35] The individual version printed in 1442 **(Fig. 13)** was sponsored by a "Buddhist devotee-officer" (*fo xinguan* 佛信官) from the Juxian 居賢 Ward **(Map 1)** in Beijing. It

33. Margaret Wee Siang Ng, "Male Brushstrokes and Female Tough: Medical Writings on Childbirth in Imperial China," (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2013), p. 75; Hsin-Yi Lin, "Dealing with Childbirth in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: Discourses and Practices," p. 254. The Chosŏn medical compilation reprinted in Edo Japan preserves most of these talismans. It also records an unusually long and complex talisman not seen in the Song prototype; see Zhejiangsheng zhongyi yanjiusuo and Huzhouo zhongyiyuan 浙江省中醫研究所、湖州中醫院 collated, *Yifang lei ju* 醫方類聚 (compiled in Joseon Korea around 1852, reprinted in Edo Japan, reprint edition, Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe 人民衛生出版社, 1982), vol. 10, p. 569.

34. This deity is among the twelve Heavenly Worthies worshipped at the Offering for the Ninefold Darkness salvation ritual; for a ritual diagram, see Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China*, p. 208 (fig. 4.19). Kristofer Schipper refers to this Daoist text as a "modern popular scripture"; see Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, p. 961.

35. For the version preserved in the Daoist Canon, see *Taishang sansheng jieyuan miao jing* 太上三生解冤妙經, in *Daozang* 道藏 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店; and Tianjin: Guji chubanshe 天津古籍出版社, 1988), vol. 6, pp. 313-314. Although there is no specific date for this scripture, the late Kristofer Schipper referred to it as a "modern popular scripture"; see Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, p. 961. For the printed version dated 1442 (now in Zhihua Monastery), see Beijing wenbo jiaoliu guan 北京文博交流館 (Beijing Cultural Exchange Museum), ed., *Zhihuasi cang Yuan Ming Qing fojing banhua shangxi* 智化寺藏元明清佛經版畫賞析 (Appreciation and Analysis of Buddhist Sutra Woodblock Prints from the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties in Zhihua Temple's Collection) (Beijing: Beijing Yanshan chubanshe 北京燕山出版社 [Beijing Yanshan Press], 2007), pp. 122-125; Weng Lianxi 翁連溪 and Li Hongbo 李洪波, *Zhongguo daojiao banhua quanji* 中國道教版畫全集 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian 中國書店, 2019), vol. 3, pp. 268-270.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

attributes the birth compilations to a woman's karmic enemy caused by the abortion she had committed in a previous life. Echoing the three esoteric script seals transcribed at the end of the dharani text, three talismans transcribed at the end are said to protect oneself (*baoshen* 保身), avoid the karmic enemy (*biyuan* 辟冤), and expedite the delivery (*cuichan* 催產) respectively.

III. The Beginning of an Illustrated Tradition

The twelfth century saw the beginning of an illustrated tradition for the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. Two highly comparable printed frontispieces **(Figs. 2a, 3a)**, both discovered in Buddhist pagodas in southern China, form primary examples.

The first and the earliest specimen **(Fig. 2a)**, dated 1102, was once collected by the late Zheng Zhenduo, who noted that the woodcut was first found in the late Qing period in a stone container in the Huayan Pagoda (Huayan ta 華嚴塔), located in today's Wujiang 吳江 suburb, Jiangsu.[36] A colophon identifies an elite couple as the donors. The husband was Shi Chudao 石處道, who served the governmental post as the Gentleman for Discussion (Chengyi lang 承議郎); his wife was Woman Liang 梁 from Fanchang 繁昌 county, Anhui province. The couple sponsored the printed sutra to pray for the longevity and prosperity of their family.

The second specimen **(Figs. 3a–b)**, dated 1172, is among the tenth-to-eleventh-century Buddhist printed scrolls deposited in the sealed underground chamber of the Song pagoda in Bihu 碧湖, Lishui 麗水, Zhejiang province. The pagoda started to tilt and was finally dismantled in 1960.[37] The colophon **(Fig. 3b)** identifies the other couple, Woman Wang and her husband, as donors. The motivation for their sponsorship was related to their loss of two of their children—a baby boy and a little girl who both died young. The couple attributed their children's death to their own karmic retributions, they wished to repent extensively and eventually had another son by sponsoring 1000 copies of the dharani text.

Although based on different blocks, the two frontispieces share highly comparable designs, suggesting that their respective makers may have consulted a common template circulating in twelfth-century Jiangsu and Zhejiang. The shared composition places the

36. Jin Weinuo 金維諾 ed., *Zhongguo banhua quanji* 中國版畫全集 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe 紫禁城出版社, 2008), vol. 1, the explanatory text for pl. 58 (for the plate, see p. 43).

37. See also Zhejiangsheng bowuguan 浙江省博物館 (Zhejiang Provincial Museum) ed., *Zhongxing jisheng—Nansong fengwu guanzhi* 中興紀勝—南宋風物觀止 (Zhongxing Jisheng Geographical and Historical Book - Scenery and Customs of the Southern Song Dynasty) (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian 中國書店, 2015), p. 227. For a Southern Song manuscript specimen, now in Shanghai Library (no. 823825), see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 157.

臺灣大學學術期刊論文集

diagonally-composed buddha-preaching scene at the center, further enclosed by wavy double contour lines. Narrative depictions with cartouches,[38] cited from the tripartite dharani text, are laid out on both sides, with the continuous ground plane in the foreground, set against a waterscape in the upper half.[39] The composing logic of placing the narrative scenes does not follow the textual order of the episodes on which these scenes are based **(Table 1)**. In the frontispiece dated 1102 **(Fig. 2a)**, for example, the two scenes selected from the first fascicle, marked in blue in table 1, are placed separately in the middle right and upper left sections, respectively. The former represents the guardian-gods protecting the devotee from demonic disturbance; the latter depicts Amitabha Buddha welcoming the dying devotee. The only scene based on the second fascicle appears in the lower left of the composition, marked in green in table 1. Corresponding to the story of Guanyin disguised as a lay Buddhist, healing sick people suffering from the epidemic, the scene depicts Guanyin standing in front of a city gate; an official kneels and bows to him. Five narrative scenes, marked in purple in table 1, are drawn from the third fascicle. The story of the official borrowing money from a temple receives most attention, illustrated in three scenes. Beginning in the lower left section, the first scene **(Fig. 2c)** shows the official seated with the abbot in the temple, with strings of money depicted on the foreground outside the building. The second and third scenes shift to the upper right. The second scene depicts the official on a boat, looking at a bag (contained the novice monk) sinking into the river. To the right of the river is the third scene: the official encounters the novice at his destination; they are both seated inside a building.

Table 1 Frontispiece Divisions of the Narrative Scenes Based on the Cartouches

[Juan 1] Amitabha Buddha welcoming the dying devotee		**[Juan 3]** Official borrowed money, part 3	**[Juan 3]** Official borrowed money, part 3
[Juan 3] Guanyin disguised as a monk to reveal the woman's enemy from her past life	**Buddha-preaching Scene**	**[Juan 1]** Devotee protected by guardian-spirits from the demons	
[Juan 2] Guanyin disguised as a lay Buddhist to save the devotee from the epidemic	**[Juan 3]** Official borrowed money, part 1	**[Juan 3]** Demon sent by the underground court informed the elder that his son's live has been extended	

38. For the cartouches, see Zhang Jiuling, "Xi Xia ben 'Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing' shulue," p. 142.
39. For the transliteration of nine cartouches, see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, pp. 125-126.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

The narrative order of individual scenes here does not necessarily follow the textual order of the episodes illustrated. One crucial determining factor regarding where an individual scene is placed within the frontispiece lies in what background it shares with other scenes. Narrative scenes are divided into two groups, each against different background settings. Divided diagonally from the middle left to the upper right, the seascape dominates the upper part, and the land-based background runs through the lower part. For example, the story of a woman and her demonic child-enemy manifested in the water, cited from the third fascicle and depicted in the middle left **(Fig. 2b)**, shares the waterscape background with the second scene of the official borrowing money from a temple, positioned in the upper right **(Fig. 2d)**, highlighting the dramatic scenario of the official in a boat, throwing the novice in a sealed bag into the water.

A. Fully Illustrated Versions Circa 1450

The first half of the fifteenth century saw the proliferation of a new and highly standardized pictorial repertoire. Table 2 lists select dated specimens, with respective documentations of their donors, and numbers of copies they sponsored. These woodcuts of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* (hereafter called the dharani woodcuts) represent the most popular Chinese Buddhist books at this time. Though none of the extant specimens bears any explicit information regarding publisher or place of production, colophons that listed the residents of Ming Beijing as the majority of donors suggest that the woodcuts were made there.[40]

40. Chün-fang Yü examined almost one hundred Ming printed specimens of the dharani woodcuts in the library collection of the Fayuansi 法源寺 Monastery, Beijing. While she noted that the earliest version was dated back to the early fifteenth century, most specimens she surveyed were around the year of 1600. See Yü Chünfang, "'Weijing' yu Guanyin xinyang," p. 99. For more comparable versions dated after 1450, see Weng Lianxi 翁連溪 and Li Hongbo 李洪波, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji bubian* 中國佛教版畫全集補編 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian 中國書店, 2017), vol. 4, pp. 1-46, 106-140, 156-191.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

Table 2 Dated Copies of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* with Donors' Information, 1405–1461

	Date/ (quality)	Donor(s)	Location of Donors	Copies
1	1405	Zhang Fuxian of the Yulin Guard and his wife Zheng Huilian 羽林前衛弟子張福先同妻鄭氏惠連	Beijing of the Great Ming Nation 大明國北京	100
2	1423 (coarse)	Buddhist layman Wei Quan 魏全 and his family (pray for his father's asthma and couching)	Great Ming, Beijing, Weizhou, Anfu Ward 大明國北京蔚州衛安富坊	5048
3	1427	Chen Gang 陳剛		?
4	1430 (refined)	Buddhist devotee, Official Li Shun, his wife Zhu Miaozheng, and so on 佛信官李順同室人朱氏妙政等	Beijing Shuntian Prefecture, Daxing County, Chengqing Ward 北京順天府大興縣澄清坊	1000
5	1431 (refined)	Monk Chongyuan 嗣教比丘崇遠 (pray for health and longevity)	Beijing	440
6	1432 (coarse)	Buddhist woman Wei Miaoxiu 佛信女人魏妙秀		?
7	1432 (refined)	Du Renren, whose ancestors were from Guangxi, Liuzhou Prefecture, Liucheng County; Official of the Weaving and Dyeing Bureau in Suzhou, Luo Longming, Guang Weisheng and his wife Jiang Miaoming 祖貫廣西柳州府柳城縣杜人任、蘇州府織染局信官羅龍銘、廣諱		1000
8	1433 (refined)	Madame who Protects the Sage, Zhang Shanlian 佑聖夫人張善蓮	Beijing	5048
9	1435	Zhang Zhong 張忠 and his wife Woman Guo Huijin 郭惠金 (pray for their son to get rid of disaster and prolong life)		1000
10	1436 (refined)	Buddhist devotee, the wife of Zhang Xiang, Cui Miaolian 佛信張祥室人崔妙連	Capital of the Great Ming Nation 大明國京都	60
11	1438 (refined)	Abbot Chongyuan 住持嗣教比丘崇遠	The Great Qishou Chan Monastery 大慶壽禪寺 in Beijing	500

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

12	1439 (refined)	Buddhist devotee, Woman Xu Huixiu 佛信女人許氏慧秀	Shuntian Prefecture, Daxing County Juxian Ward, Beijing 順天府大興縣居賢坊	1000
13	1440 (coarse)	Buddhist devotee, Woman Xun Miaojing on behalf of the daughter Tang Miaozhen and her newborn son 佛信女人孫氏妙淨為女唐氏妙真	Capital, Shuntian Prefecture, Daxing County, Chengqing Ward, Beijing 京都順天府大興縣澄清坊	1000
14	1447 (refined)	Buddhist devotee He Jueduan and his wife Lu Huixiu, praying for having a son 奉佛信士何覺端同室人路氏惠秀，為祈子嗣		1000
15	1461 (refined)	Anonymous Buddhist disciple	Resident of the inner court of the Great Ming 大明國内府居住	1000

B. Donors' Colophons

The majority of donors contributed 1000 copies each **(Table 2; Figs. 14a, 14c)**. The number 1000 resonates with the 1000 sutra copies advocated in various stories of the dharani text. Two exceptional donors contributed 5048 copies respectively **(Figs. 14b, 14f)**.[41] Its symbolic meaning is traceable to Tang-Song times, as the seventh-century pilgrim-monk Xuanzang claimed to have brought back from India 5048 scrolls of Buddhist scriptures,[42] and the tenth-century Kaibao Canon consisted of 5048 *juan*.[43]

Most donors were lay Buddhists living in Ming Beijing.[44] In some cases, they represented a family led by a husband, whose post was affiliated with the Ming government.

41. Cf. the same amount of copies of the *Great Amitabha Sutra* sponsored by an eunuch in Beijing in 1541; see ch. 11 of this book; Lucille Chia, "Printing for Merit: A Preliminary Survey of the Role of Donors in Buddhist Publishing, Song-Ming," in Jean-Pierre Drège and Michela Bussotti ed., *Imprimer sans profit? Le livre non-commercial dans la Chine impériale* (Paris: École Pratique des Hautes Études/Librairie Droz, 2015), pp. 128-129, 150 (fig. 15).
42. William Theodore de Bary, *Finding Wisdom in East Asian Classics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 162. For a study of Xuanzang's pilgrimage, see Dorothy Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645–770* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2018).
43. Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 85; Patricia Ebrey, "Song Government Policy," in John Lagerwey and Pierre Marson eds., *Modern Chinese Religion, Part One: Song-Liao-Jin-Yuan (960-1368)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 96.
44. The earliest product listed in table 2 was dated 1405, prior to the Ming capital relocated from Nanjing to Beijing. Its woodcut style is rough and its pictorial repertoire simpler than the rest of the woodcuts examined here. For plates, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 5, p. 101.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

For example, the "disciple Zhang Fu" (*dizi* Zhang Fu 弟子張福) from "Beijing of the Great Ming Empire" (Daming guo 大明國北京), who was the co-donor of the set dated 1405, was an imperial guard of the Front Unit of the Feathered Forest Guards (*Yulin qianwei* 羽林前衛) serving Emperor Yongle 永樂 (r. 1403–1424). On the other hand, the "devout Buddhist, Officer Li Shun" (*Foxin guan* Li Shun 佛信官李順) **(Fig. 14a)**, who donated the set dated 1430 together with his wife Zhu Miaozheng 朱妙政, was the Director of the Embroidered Uniform Guard (*Jinyiwei zhihui* 錦衣衛指揮) serving Emperor Xuanzong.[45] It is notable that besides the household-based donors, lay women, such as Cui Miaolian 崔妙連 **(Fig. 14d)**, Sun Miaojing 孫妙淨 **(Fig. 16d)**, and Xu Huixiu 許慧秀 **(Fig. 14c)**, also served as major donors. Many female donors, furthermore, bear the common character "miao" 妙 in their names, which may refer to their Buddhist names they adopted to strengthen the "religious affiliation," thus resonating with Barend ter Haar's findings in relation to the women of the White Lotus Society.[46]

The unusually generous donor Zhang Shanlian 張善蓮 **(Fig. 14f)**, also known as "Madame who Protects the Sage" (Yousheng furen 佑聖夫人), sponsored 5048 copies dated 1433.[47] Written in elegant regular script, its extensive dedicatory colophon is not confined within the conventional lotus frames adopted in the other colophons **(Figs. 14a–e)**. Madame Zhang used to work as the imperial nanny (*baomu* 保母), taking care of the young Zhu Zhanji 朱瞻基 (1399–1435), who later became Emperor Xuanzong. Madame Zhang received an honorable title, Madame who Protects the Sage, soon after Xuanzong raised to the throne.[48] As

45. According to *Ming shi lu*, Li Shun was promoted to the Director of the Imperial Guard in 1426. In 1429, he reported to Emperor Xuanzong regarding the locust problem in Yongqing 永清, Hebei. See Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica 中央研究院歷史語言研究所 compiled; preface by Huang Zhangjian 黃彰健, *Ming shi lu* 明實錄 (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica 中央研究院歷史語言研究所, 1962-1966), vol. 18, p. 490; vol. 54, p. 1289. Since Li Shun was the Director of the Embroidered Uniform Guard serving Emperor Xuanzong, it is likely that the woodcuts were made in Beijing.
46. See, for example, Barend ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), pp. 39-40. This author would like to thank the valuable reference offered by the anonymous reviewer.
47. For complete reproductions of the set, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, pp. 82-193. According to Zhang Zong, this set was from the collection of the Zhihuasi Monastery in Beijing; see Zhang Zong 張總, "*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* zhouyin mifu tanxi," p. 744; Beijing wenbo jiaoliu guan ed., *Zhihuasi cang Yuan Ming Qing fojing banhua shangxi*, pp. 66-69.
48. Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica compiled; preface by Huang Zhangjian, *Ming shi lu*, vol. 21, p. 555. She received a posthumous name, Zhuangjing 莊靖, in the Chenghua 成化 reign (1465–1487); see Wang Qi 王圻 (1530–1615), *Ming Wanli xu wenxian tongkao* 明萬曆續文獻通考 (reprint, Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe 文海出版社, 1979), vol. 152, p. 9291.

臺灣大學圖書館

we shall see in the next section **(Figs. 18a–g)**, the version she sponsored is among the finest extant specimens printed in the fifteenth century.

Although most documented donors of the dharani woodcuts were lay people, the monk Chongyuan 崇遠 used the same blocks to print 440 copies in 1431, and 500 copies in 1438 **(Fig. 12e)**.[49] The colophon dated 1438 lists him as the abbot of the Qingshou Monastery **(Map 1)**; hence, the copies sponsored by Chongyuan may well be produced by the Qingshou Monastery. The temple played a major role in the Ming government-sponsored Buddhist printing. First built in the twelfth century and sponsored by the court and a host of transnational elite members throughout the Mongol Yuan period, the Qingshou Monastery had close connections to the court in the early Ming.[50] After the capital was officially moved to Beijing in 1421, the Central Buddhist Registry (*Senglu si* 僧錄司) under the Ministry of Rites (*Libu* 禮部) was housed in the Qingshou Monastery.[51] The temple was in charge of the Northern Canon (*Beizang* 北藏), an ambitious new Buddhist canon launched by

49. For complete reproductions of the two sets, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 7, pp. 94-96; vol. 9, pp. 81-83. The 1431 version is from the Zhihuasi Monastery collection; see Beijing wenbo jiaoliu guan ed., *Zhihuasi cang Yuan Ming Qing fojing banhua shangxi*, pp. 48-51; Zhang Zong 張總, "*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* zhouyin mifu tanxi," p. 744.

50. Emperor Taizu 太祖 (r. 1368–1398) appointed the monk Daoyan 道衍 (1335–1418) as its abbot. Daoyan was also a close advisor to Prince Zhu Di 朱棣 (1360–1424), the future Emperor Yongle, especially with regard to public affairs in Beijing. For studies of his portrait painting, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, see Wang Zheng 王征, "Zhigong zuigong, xing you dingpan—Nanxundian *Yao Guangxiao xiang zhou* kaoshi 知公罪公, 星有定盤——南薰殿《姚廣孝像軸》考釋 (Knowing One's Duty and Punishing the Guilty - Study and Explanation of the Portrait Scroll of Yao Guangxiao in the Nanxun Hall)," *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化 (Chinese Classics & Culture), 1 (2011), pp. 118-133; Marsha Haufler, "Faces of Transnational Buddhism at the Early Ming Court," in Craig Clunas et al. ed., *Ming China: Courts and Contacts 1400–1450* (London: British Museum, 2016), pp. 143-151.

51. The temple was renamed Daxinglongsi 大興隆寺 (also Ci'ensi 慈恩寺) in 1448 after the renovation supervised by the eunuch Wang Zhen 王振 (?–1449) under Emperor Yingzong's 英宗 (r. 1436–1450, 1457–1465) patronage. See Wang Zheng 王征, "Zhigong zuigong, xing you dingpan—Nanxundian *Yao Guangxiao xiang zhou* kaoshi," pp. 118, 122-123; Marsha Haufler, "Faces of Transnational Buddhism at the Early Ming Court," in Craig Clunas et al. ed., *Ming China: Courts and Contacts 1400–1450*, p. 144; He Xiaorong 何孝榮, *Mingdai Beijing fojiao siyuan xiujian yanjiu (shang)* 明代北京佛教寺院修建研究 (上) (Research on the Construction of Buddhist Temples in Beijing during the Ming Dynasty (Part 1)) (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe 南開大學出版社 [Nankai University Press], 2007), pp. 72, 81, 190.

臺灣大學學術期刊論文集

Emperor Yongle and completed in 1440 under Yingzong 英宗 (r. 1436-1465).[52] Eminent monks came to the temple to collate the canon, as did staff members from the Department of Ritual (*Sili jian* 司禮監), arguably the largest governmental publishing house in the Ming run by eunuchs.[53] Books published by the Department of Ritual, both printed and hand-copied versions, are often referred to as scriptorium editions (*jingchang ben* 經廠本) or inner palace editions (*neifu keben* 內府本).[54] Aside from publishing government-funded books, the Qingshou Monastery also printed Buddhist texts on behalf of powerful individual donors. For

52. Deng Shujun 鄧淑君, "Mingdai guanban fojiao dazangjing Yongle beizang kanyin yu banci yanjiu 明代官版佛教大藏經《永樂北藏》刊印與頒賜研究 (Research on the Printing and Distribution of the Official Buddhist Tripitaka "Yongle Tripitaka" in the Ming Dynasty)," (M.A. Thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2017), p. 39; Wan Chui-ki Maggie 尹翠琪, "Daozang feihua de banben, goucheng yu tuxiang yanjiu 《道藏》扉畫的版本、構成與圖像研究 (Research on the Edition, Formation, and Images of the Frontispieces to the *Daozang*)," *Guoli Taiwan daxue Meishushi yanjiu jikan* 國立臺灣大學美術史研究集刊 (Taida Journal of Art History), 43 (2017), pp. 15-16. For extant specimens, especially the frontispieces, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, pp. 156-238; Beijing wenbo jiaoliu guan ed., *Zhihuasi cang Yuan Ming Qing fojing banhua shangxi*, pp. 110-111. In addition to the most recurring frontispiece design, which shows a symmetrical layout of pantheon with a seated buddha at the center, there are illustrations juxtaposed above the text to depict patriarchs amid complex landscape (see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p. 233). In addition, there are Buddhist mudras, symbols, and cosmological maps (see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, pp. 216-221, 236-238).
53. Li Fuhua 李富華 and Mei He 何梅, *Hanwen fojiao dazangjing yanjiu* 漢文佛教大藏經研究 (Research on the Chinese Tripitaka) (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe 宗教文化出版社 [China Religious Culture Publisher], 2003), p. 439. For more about the subdivisions of the Department of Ritual run by eunuchs, see Chen Yunü 陳玉女, *Mingdai ershisi yamen huanguan yu Beijing fojiao* 明代二十四衙門宦官與北京佛教 (The Imperial Eunuchs of the Twenty-Four Yamen in the Ming Dynasty and Buddhism in Beijing) (Taipei: Ruwen chubanshe 如聞出版社, 2001), pp. 51-53.
54. Gao Zhizhong 高志忠 and Wen Bin 溫斌, "Mingdai huanguan yu tushu kanke kaoshu 明代宦官與圖書刊刻考述 (Research on Eunuchs and the Printing of Books in the Ming Dynasty)," *Tushuguan lilun yu shijian* 圖書館理論與實踐 (Library Theory and Practice), 8 (2012), pp. 79, 81; Ma Xueliang 馬學良, "Mingdai neifu keshu jikao 明代內府刻書稽考 (Research on Woodblock Printing of Books by the Imperial Household Department of the Ming Dynasty)," *Wenjin xuezhi* 文津學志 (2016), pp. 116-126; Ma Xueliang 馬學良,"Mingdai neifu keshu chatu banhua yishu shulue 明代內府刻書插圖版畫藝術述略 (Brief Introduction to the Art of Illustrated Prints Compiled by Imperial Household Department of the Ming Dynasty)," *Yinshua wenhua* 印刷文化 (Print Culture), 1 (2021), pp. 40-52; Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良, "Ming Yongle nianjian neifu kanben fojiao jingji 明永樂年間內府刊本佛教經籍 (Publication of Buddhist Scriptures by the Imperial Household Department during the Yongle Period of the Ming Dynasty)," *Wenwu* 文物 (Cultural Relics), 4 (1985), pp. 39-41. For a detailed study of the Ming official scriptorium, including its sub-divisions and location, see Deng Shujun, "Mingdai guanban fojiao dazangjing Yongle beizang kanyin yu banci yanjiu," pp. 39-52. Gao Mingyi identifies the calligraphic style of the court calligrapher Shen

臺灣人文學術期刊資料庫

example, in 1437, the temple produced a reprinted edition of the *Diamond Sutra in Thirty-two Seal Scripts* (*Zhuanshu sanshi'er ti Jin'gang jing* 篆書三十二體金剛經), sponsored by the powerful eunuch Li Tong 李童 (d. 1453).[55]

C. The Refined vs. the Coarse

The majority of the dharani woodcuts include a frontispiece proceeding the text, and a sequence of newly composed illustrations embedded throughout. Based on woodcut quality, individual motifs, and the compositional scheme, the extant specimens can be further divided into two groups: the refined and the coarse. The discrepancy in quality may reflect the varying costs of different productions as well as available funds contributed by donors to sponsor the printing.

Departing from the Southern Song prototype **(Figs. 2a, 3a)**, which depicts the buddha as the main icon at the center of the picture plane, a newly-standardized frontispiece design **(Figs. 4a, 5, 15a, 16a)** in the Ming stages Guanyin as a female goddess, seated on a rock to the right, surrounded by wavy waters, with Child Sudhana on the lower right, and a flying bird lingering in the distant mountain at the top. The overall design reflects a gradually standardized imagery of Guanyin, commonly shared by frontispiece designs associated with the *Guanyin Sutra* and devotional Guanyin paintings. The shift from a buddha-centered frontispiece template in the Southern Song to a Guanyin-based design in the Ming reflects the growingly important role of Guanyin in the transmission of the *Fodingxin* book culture.

In the refined version, figures on both sides come to pay tribute. On the lower left, we find the dragon king and his female attendant floating on the water; on the upper left, there is a descending celestial guardian **(Figs. 4a, 15a)**. In the coarse version **(Fig. 5)**, the dragon king grouping is often replaced with lay donors (such as a family) standing on the shore and the celestial guardian is omitted. A comparison of the refined version dated 1433 **(Fig. 15a)**, with

Du 沈度 (1357–1434), admired by Emperor Yongle as the "Wang Xizhi of our time," as the standard style of the Ming imperial hand-written and printed sutra copies; see Gao Mingyi 高明一, "Mingdai neifu fojiao xiejing yanjiu 明代內府佛教寫經研究 (Research on Buddhist Sutra Writing in The Imperial Household Department of the Ming Dynasty)," *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 (The National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art), 468 (2022), pp. 25-29.

55. For more study, see Shih-shan Susan Huang, "Illustrating the Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in Vernacular Buddhism," *National Palace Museum Research Quarterly*, 35:4 (2018), pp. 70-71, 118 (fig. 38a).

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

a Chosŏn counterpart dated 1477 **(Fig. 17)**, suggests the swift transmission of the popular trends from Ming China to Korea in the fifteenth century.[56]

Beyond the frontispiece design, the rest of the illustrations are imbedded in the text. The most popular layout is to arrange the illustrations above and parallel to the text **(Figs. 4a, 5)**, forming a continuous long horizontal sequence. Some, however, such as the set sponsored by Woman Xu, printed in 1439 **(Fig. 18a)**, juxtapose individual scenes with pertinent part of the text section by section, breaking the sequential continuity but giving each scene a larger space.[57]

Woodcuts dated 1430, donated by the Director of the Embroidered Uniform Guard **(Figs. 4a–d)**, and those dated 1433, sponsored by Emperor Xuanzong's former nanny **(Figs. 14f, 15a–i)**, are prime examples of the refined style. Specimens in coarse style are more widely mass-produced, though often without documentation. The one donated by Woman Wei in 1432 **(Fig. 5)** and that donated by Woman Sun in 1440 **(Figs. 16a–e)**, now in the Indianapolis Museum, are in fact based on the same blocks, with customized colophons added at the end. An undated and much damaged set **(Fig. 19)**, donated by a woman named Tao Miaoyuan 陶妙圓, compares closely to the two dated versions and thus may also have been produced in Ming Beijing in the fifteenth century.[58] She lived in Hunhekou 渾河口, Zhangjiawan 張家灣—a town that still exists and is today located to the west of modern Beijing, about 35.6 km outside Tiananmen Square.

Examples in refined style often contain more elaborate illustrations, with individual scenes or motifs rendered in more detail and taking up more space. For instance, one could compare the most dramatic story of a woman and her child-enemy illustrated in both refined **(Fig. 4b–c)** and coarse **(Fig. 16b)** versions. They expand the single-scene depiction in the Song prototype **(Fig. 2b)** into a multi-scenic, handscroll-like rendition. The coarse version **(Fig. 16b)** is composed of two scenes along the continuous waterscape, separated by a tree. The first depicts the woman standing at the shore, about to throw a dead baby into the river. The next scene, which recalls the mono-scenic Song prototype, depicts the monk-like

56. For the other Korean version dated 1485, see Kim Minchi 김민지, "Chosŏnhugi kwanŭmsamjonsang hyŏpshie nat'ananŭn wit'aech'ŏn kwallyŏn tosang punsŏk 조선후기 관음삼존상 협시에 나타나는 위태천 관련 도상 분석 (Skanda-Karttikeya in Avalokitesvara Triad in Late Joseon)," *Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 미술사학연구 (Korean Journal of Art History), 306 (2020), p. 118 (fig. 7).

57. For a complete reproduction of a set, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, pp. 84-145. See also Lucille Chia, "Printing for Merit: A Preliminary Survey of the Role of Donors in Buddhist Publishing, Song-Ming," p. 151 (fig. 16a–b).

58. For the full set, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 5, pp. 275-282.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

Guanyin revealing to her the "true form" of the demon emerging from the water. One refined version **(Fig. 4b–c)** is composed of three scenes against a similar waterscape, with the female protagonist present three times and the monk-like Guanyin shown twice; trees, rocks, and reeds serve as "space dividers" to separate the scenes. While the first and the third scenes of the refined version compare to the two scenes in the coarse version **(Fig. 16b)**, in its second scene **(Fig. 4c)** depicting the monk, the woman, and the servant standing on the shore, is an addition not seen in the coarse version. Alternatively, the narrative scenes in the other refined version dated 1439 are divided into two sections, separated by a section of the text in between **(Fig. 18a)**. Here, the second section rearranges the second and third scenes in the previous version in an elongated composition.[59]

The other story, also turned into elaborate illustrations **(Figs. 15b, 16c)**, is about an official who throws a monk in the river in the hope of avoiding repayment of his debt from the temple. The refined set **(Fig. 15b)** sponsored by the former imperial nanny contains a sequence of four continuous scenes, separated by rocks, trees, and architectural motifs. The coarse version **(Fig. 16c)**, on the other hand, shows the story in a more abbreviated, congested, and flatter fashion. Here, the most dramatic moment of the story is missing; one feature the refined version has is an extensive river scene, with a boat arranged diagonally amid the torrents, and a floating bag that supposedly contains the monk depicted in oval shape that echoes the wavy patterns of the water.

IV. Popular Motifs

The Ming dharani woodcuts showcase popular motifs widely reproduced in Buddhist print culture and not seen in the mainstream frontispiece designs decorating canonical compilations. They include the depictions of hell, demons in the household, hindrance to pregnancy, labor, and delivery, and the dharani text as the devotional object and magical medicine. Intriguingly, some motifs, such as depictions of hell and a pregnant woman, are new to the Ming illustrated print culture and have not been seen before.

A. Picturing Hell

A narrative sequence combining two visual motifs—one on slaughter and the other on the hellish gate, sets the new standard for the Ming dharani woodcuts **(Fig. 15c)**. On the right, the slaughter is represented by two men killing a pig on a table; the pig's blood is pouring

59. For the first section, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p. 130.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

from its mouth into a bowl on the ground like a waterfall. The accompanying cartouche reads, "[If you] accumulate sins by killing living beings, [you shall] enter the underground prison after death" (*zaozui shasheng, si ru diyu* 造罪殺生，死入地獄). To its left is the entrance to a walled underground prison, labeled as "the Avīci Hell (*Abi diyu* 阿鼻地獄), equivalent to the non-stop hell located at the bottom layer of the Eight Hot Hells **(Fig. 20)**. The two scenes are further connected by two small, darkened figural motifs, which refer to human souls driven amid balloon-like vapors into the gate of the underground prison. They most likely refer to the two deceased butchers, depicted in the scene on the right.

While neither butchery nor a hellish gate is new to Chinese Buddhist art, re-packaging them into a narrative sequence is.[60] Doing so effectively expounds the cause and effect of the killing and retribution in Buddhism, condemning meat-eating as a sinful act that leads to posthumous punishment. Its straightforward fashion makes dharani woodcuts such as these especially powerful to the popular folks.

The Xi Xia frontispiece to a now-lost Tangut-script *Golden Light Sutra* **(Figs. 21a–c)**, which depicts the miracle story of the butcher Zhang Judao 張居道, is a woodcut predecessor that pairs the butcher scene with hellish judgement, though no hellish gate is depicted.[61] Its

60. In the Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Ten Kings of Hell* pictures, for example, the court of King Yama depicts a motif of a karmic mirror, which features a recurring scene of a butcher killing an animal. See Shih-shan Susan Huang, "Illustrating the Efficacy of the *Diamond Sutra* in Vernacular Buddhism," p. 103 (fig. 12).

61. Mikhail Piotrovsky, *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto (X–XIIIth Century)* (Milan: Electa, 1993), p. 264; Jean-Pierre Drège, "De l'icône à l'anecdote: les frontispices imprimés en Chine à l'époque des Song (960-1278)," *Arts asiatiques,* 54 (1999), p. 62; Anne Saliceti-Collins, "Xi Xia Buddhist Woodblock Prints Excavated in Khara Khoto: A Case Study of Transculturation in East Asia, Eleventh-Thirteenth Centuries," (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, Seattle, 2007), p. 90. The story, often entitled "Record of Confession and Sin Extinction, the Golden Light Scripture" (*Chanhui miezui jin guangming jing zhuan* 懺悔滅罪金光明經傳), has been widely transmitted in medieval China, evident in more than thirty copies in Dunhuang manuscripts (such as P. 2099); see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, pp. 81-111. See also Feizhuo 非濁 compiled, *Sanbao ganying yaolue lu* 三寶感應要略錄, in Takakusu Jujirō 高楠順次郎 et al. eds., *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切經刊行會, 1924-1932), vol. 51, no. 2084, p. 841b. Note that the mainstream sutra paintings and frontispieces of the *Golden Light Sutra* do not depict the miracle story of Zhang Judao. See Zhang Jianyu 張建宇, "Jiangyin chutu Beisong Duangong yuannian *Jin guangming jing* bianxiang yanjiu 江陰出土北宋端拱元年《金光明經》變相研究 (A Study on Bianxiang of Golden Light Sutra Created in 988 Excavated in Jiangyin)," *Nanjing yishu xueyuan xuebao (meishu yu sheji ban)* 南京藝術學院學報 (美術與設計版) (Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute [Fine Arts & Design]), 5 (2014); figs. 2.37a–b of this book.
The story of Zhang Judao is not the only miracle story affiliated with a sutra and featuring a butcher's journey to the underground world and back again. About fifteen Dunhuang manuscripts

臺灣大學圖書館期刊資料庫

unique composition divides into upper and lower registers, with the lower register further charted into three vignettes. The narrative scenes begin from the lower right corner, move toward the lower left, then turn upward to the upper left, and from there move toward the upper right.[62] The animal-killing scene is the first in the sequence **(Fig. 21b)**. It depicts three men killing a sheep hung on poles, a pig laid on a table, and a rooster and two geese on the ground. The motif of a man killing a pig, laid on the short table and spitting blood onto a bowl on the ground, forms a direct prototype for the animal-killing scenario in the Ming *Fodingxin* woodcuts **(Fig. 15c)**. The accompanying Tangut cartouche reads, "Judao kills sheep and pigs for meat." [63]

The overall scenario corresponds to the opening of the miracle story, which highlights the dramatic death of the layman Zhang Judao soon after his daughter's wedding banquet, in which he ordered butchers to kill "oxen, sheep, pigs, roosters, geese, ducks, and so on."[64] The rest of the narratives in the Xi Xia woodcuts detail Zhang's journey to the underground court presided by King Yama, who released him back to life after he promised to sponsor the copying of the *Golden Light Sutra*. The final scene **(Fig. 21c)**, which appears on the upper right vignette, directly above the animal-killing scene in the lower right register, shows all the animals he killed before—a goose, a rooster, a sheep, and a pig— ascending to heaven on clouds. The accompanying cartouche explains that "all those who had petitioned against him were allowed to go to heaven."[65]

The hellish gate reproduced in the Ming dharani woodcuts **(Fig. 15c)** reflects the other popular meme transmitted in popular Buddhism. By the mid-fifteenth century, Buddhist woodcuts of various themes widely feature a hellish gate with a devouring mouth on the top.

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record the story of the other butcher Huang Shiqiang 黃仕強 of the Tang dynasty, which is copied before the indigenous *Scripture Attested by Samantabhadra Bodhisattva* (*Puxian pusa shuo ci zhengming jing* 普賢菩薩說此證明經), although there is no illustration. See Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, pp. 251-255.

62. Anne Saliceti-Collins, "Xi Xia Buddhist Woodblock Prints Excavated in Khara Khoto: A Case Study of Transculturation in East Asia, Eleventh-Thirteenth Centuries," p. 90.
63. The English translation is based on Mikhail Piotrovsky, *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto (X–XIIIth Century)*, p. 264.
64. I refer to Zheng Acai's transliteration; see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 91.
65. Mikhail Piotrovsky, *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto (X–XIIIth Century)*, p. 264; Anne Saliceti-Collins, "Xi Xia Buddhist Woodblock Prints Excavated in Khara Khoto: A Case Study of Transculturation in East Asia, Eleventh-Thirteenth Centuries," p. 91. Note that Piotrovsky's translation states that Zhang "expressed the wish to pay for the copying of ten juan" of the scripture. This is different from the "four juan" of the scripture stated in the miracle tale; see Zheng Acai, *Jianzheng yu xuanchuan: Dunhuang fojiao lingyanji yanjiu*, p. 92.

臺灣大學圖書館

The woodcuts highlighting hell retribution depict a gate marked as the "Demon Gate" (*Guimen guan* 鬼門關) **(Fig. 22)**, on top of which is an animal face bearing a wide-open mouth.[66] To the right of the gate is the second court of the underworld, presided over by the King of the First River. In the foreground is a bridge over a river, where sinners are struggling in the water, combined with the "good Buddhists"—those who sponsor sutra copies—crossing the bridge, led by a monk. A similar gate motif is further blended in the visual culture of the Lotus Sutra to represent the prison. In an early fifteenth-century version featuring the "Universal Gateway" chapter **(Fig. 23)**,[67] unshackled criminals stand outside the demonic gate to pay tribute to Guanyin, who appears in the sky; surrounding them are the executors, whose swords are left on the ground. The motif of a hell gate with an open-mouth animal face became a popular meme by the mid-fifteenth century, evident in the other widely reproduced Buddhist woodcuts, *Origin of the Buddha*.[68]

B. Demons Attacking the Household

Sharing the common notion of demons in popular culture, the dharani woodcuts highlight demons as the very factors that cause miscellaneous problems in one's household.[69] A refined version sponsored by a group of lay Buddhists and dated 1432 provides a good example **(Fig. 24)**. It depicts the demons running away from a house, inside which a layman holds his hands together near the chest, praying in front a sutra. As the accompanying cartouche explains, if the demons are disturbing one's household, venerating the dharani text will help to eliminate them.

The demons depicted here are different from human beings. They have more exaggerated and exposed physical traits, such as hairy faces, upward turning hair, and bare

66. The Yuan-dynasty Dunhuang Mogao Cave 95 bears a comparable mural of a tiger face with an open mouth decorating the top of a sub-entrance to the passageway.
67. The set bears an unusual frontispiece, which represents a large group of monks amid the Buddhist assembly. For the plates, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 5, pp. 148-189.
68. For the illustration accompanying the miracle story of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, entitled "Chanting the ji-eulogy to rescue one out of the underground prison" (*Songji chu yu* 誦偈出獄) in the edition printed in 1450–1457, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji,* vol. 10, pp. 282-283.
69. For disease-causing demons depicted in Dunhuang documents, see the manuscript (Or.8210/S.6216) and the printed almanac (Or.8210/P.6) published in Shih-shan Susan Huang, "*Tianzhu lingqian*: Divination Prints from a Buddhist Temple in Song Hangzhou," *Artibus Asiae,* 67:2 (2007), p. 262 (fig. 5); Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China*, p. 58 (fig. 1.34).

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

feet. Their body gestures are more dramatic, including raised arms and running positions. The flame-like framing devices that enclose individual demons further distinguish them from people shown in the same woodcuts. In terms of gender, demons here all look like wild men.

C. A Woman in Labor

Demonic obstacles to a woman's pregnancy, labor, and delivery **(Fig. 15d)**, represented in a standardized template of the dharani woodcuts, reflect the most pressing concerns in terms of the demonic disturbance of a household widely shared in East Asian religious culture. As part of the stormy setting, evident in heavy rain shown on the roof, three demons emerging from clouds on both sides of the house are trying to harm a pregnant woman, who holds her big belly as she is seated in a bedroom. The demons are blowing diagonal stripes of wind toward her from different directions. Their upward-turning flying hair, exposed bodies, dramatic gestures, and horrific facial expressions are similar to the overarching characteristics of demons depicted in other household settings **(Fig. 24)**.[70]

The cartouche summing up the scenario reads, "[When] a woman is pregnant, evil demons create obstacles to the process and pose difficulties" (*nüren shenhuai liujia, e'gui weizuo zhangnan* 女人身懷六甲，惡鬼為作障難).[71] The text parallel to the illustration further elaborates that the demons disturb a woman when she is "sitting on the grass" (*zuocao* 坐草)—a standard expression in Chinese gynotechnics referring to an expectant woman's delivery position either by semi-squatting or standing. It goes on to ensure that if she ingests the liquid medicine mixed with the copied dharani and seals, she shall be free from any demonic harm.[72] Echoing this, the illustration depicts a female bodhisattva—very likely

70. A Korean version in booklet format, dated 1485 and in the Horim Museum collection, closely follows the same illustrated template, but spreads the original scene over two pages. For a plate, see Horim Pangmulgwan 湖林博物館 (Horim Museum), *Horim Pangmulgwan myŏngp'um sŏnjip* 湖林博物館名品選集 (Masterpieces from Horim Museum) (Seoul: Horim Pangmulgwan湖林博物館, 1999), p. 47 (no. 33).

71. Cf. the illustration in coarse style in Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 11.

72. For the liquid medicine taken by a pregnant woman in her final month of pregnancy; see Lee Jender 李貞德, "Han Tang zhijian yishu zhong de shengchan zhi dao 漢唐之間醫書中的生產之道 (Childbirth in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China)," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 (Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica), 67:3 (1996), pp. 539-542; Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*, p. 173. For other medicine that facilitates the delivery, cures the birth complication, and cares for the post-delivery health, see Lee Jender, "Han Tang zhijian yishu zhong de shengchan zhi dao," pp. 581-634.

臺灣大學學術典藏資料庫

representing Guanyin—descending to the chaotic scene from the upper left.

The fear of demonic disturbances in the delivery process, universally shared in East Asia, even extends to the time after the baby is born. This is vividly represented in the twelfth-century Japanese *Scroll of the Hungry Ghosts* **(Fig. 25)**, where a hungry ghost is preying on a newborn baby, whose placenta may be still connected to the mother.[73]

The position of the pregnant woman depicted in the Ming dharani woodcuts **(Fig. 15d)** mimics that of a woman in labor. Seated in bed, she is holding her large belly with both hands while two female helpers assist her. The one kneeling on the bed and holding her from behind[74] most likely represents a midwife, whose task involves supporting a woman in labor under her arms and holding her waist from her back so that she can concentrate all her strength on the delivery.[75] The other helper stands in front of the bed, opening her arms toward the woman in labor, as if ready to catch the emerging baby.

The overall scenario is comparable to scenes in earlier Buddhist art. The depiction of a woman delivering a baby in a squatting position, with a midwife supporting her from behind, for example, also appears in a tenth-century Dunhuang booklet of the *Guanyin Sutra* **(Fig. 26)**. Here, the illustration represents the "end result" of praying to Guanyin bodhisattva. An earlier action, depicted in the preceding page, shows the woman and her husband kneeling before the deity. The accompanying text mentions that if one seeks to have a boy, one should pay respects to Guanyin. The pairing of two female helpers assisting the delivery further echoes the Southern Song stone carvings found in Baodingshan 寶頂山, Dazu 大足, Sichuan **(Fig. 27)**, except that the woman giving birth there is standing, not squatting.[76] In the larger

73. For a study of this painting, see Yui Suzuki, "Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding Off Evil in Medieval Japanese Birth Scenes," *Artibus Asiae*, 74:1 (2014), pp. 17-41. For more about the childbirth at an aristocratic household in medieval Japan, recorded in *Procedures During the Day of the Roayl Consort's Labor* studied and translated in Anna Andreeva, "Childbirth in Early Medieval Japan: Ritual Economies and Medical Emergencies in Procedures During the Day of the Royal Consort's Labor," in C. Pierce Salguero ed., *Buddhism and Medicine: An Anthology of Premodern Sources* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 336-350.

74. Cf. a similar scenario depicted in the story of the woman and her karmic enemy-child, reproduced widely in the refined versions. For select specimens, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 7, pp. 63, 67; vol. 8, pp. 155, 161.

75. Charlotte Furth, "Concepts of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infancy in Ch'ing Dynasty China," *Journal of Asian Studies,* 46:1 (1987), p. 17; Lee Jender, "Han Tang zhijian yishu zhong de shengchan zhi dao," pp. 546-548. For a Tang source detailing the labor guideline, see Wang Tao 王燾 (670–755); Lin Yi 林億, and Sun Zhao 孫兆 (active 960–1127) collated, *Waitai miyao fang* 外臺秘要方, in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu dianzi ban* 文淵閣四庫全書電子版 (Hong Kong: Dizhi wenhua chuban youxian gongsi 迪志文化出版有限公司, 1999), vol. 33, pp. 54a-57a.

76. Angela Howard identifies the kneeling person as the woman's husband; see Angela Falco Howard, *Summit of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art of Dazu, China* (Trumbull: Weatherhill, 2001), p. 27.

臺灣大學藝術史研究資料庫

Dazu Buddhist carving context, the scene represents the second of ten aspects of parents bestowing kindness on their children.[77]

Contrary to the seemingly smooth delivery featured in the Dunhuang booklet and Dazu carvings, the demonic attack of a woman in labor in the Ming dharani woodcuts speaks volume of a pregnant woman's fears when facing the unpredictability of the childbirth process, which in turn reflects common views broadly shared in traditional society. In Tang times, it became popular for pregnant women to use the twelve monthly childbirth charts transmitted in medical books as guidelines for auspicious and inauspicious childbirth locations. An example is the childbirth chart of the seventh month **(Fig. 28)**.[78] It recommends two locations for burying the placenta (*cangyi* 藏衣) and setting up the delivery tent (*an chanfu zhang* 安產婦帳), one in the north and the other in the south, both avoiding the northeast and the southwest, where the "demonic guardians" (*yungui lishi* 運鬼力士) appear. The diagrammatical notion of the "demonic guardians" reflects the shared preoccupation with demons as illustrated in the dharani woodcuts.

It is reasonable to assume that quite a few donors supporting the Ming dharani woodcuts were preoccupied with the pregnant women in their families or child-bearing in general, hence their prayers to Guanyin and sponsoring of sutra copies. Sun Miaojing, a Beijing resident from the Chengqing Ward **(Map 1)**, funded 1000 copies in 1440 to fulfill a promise she made three years earlier **(Fig. 16d)**. Back then, her daughter Tang Miaozhen had suffered from severe chest pain while in labor. Woman Sun prayed to Guanyin on behalf of her daughter and vowed that, should her daughter be free from pain and deliver the baby smoothly, she would distribute 1000 copies of the dharani text to thank the deity. Donors like Sun Miaojing, who sponsored Buddhist printing as a token of gratitude responding to blessings she received previously, must have provided convincing testimonials that coerced more people to turn to Buddhism for help and support the printing.

77. For the layout of the ten aspects in Baodingshan cavings, see the table organized in Kim Jahyun 金慈玄, "Pumoŭnjunggyŏngŭi pyŏnch'ŏn'gwa tosangŭi hyŏngsŏnggwajŏng yŏn'gu 『父母恩重經』의 변천과 圖像의 형성과정 연구 (A Study on Transformations of Bumo-eunjung-gyeong (父母恩重經) and the Formation Process of Its Iconographies)," *Pulgyo misul sahak* 불교미술사학 (Journal of Buddhist Art), 18 (2014), p. 78. For more about the Baodingshan carvings, see Karil J. Kucera, *Ritual and Representation in Chinese Buddhism: Visualizing Enlightenment at Baodingshan from the 12th to 21st Centuries* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2016).

78. For the complete series of twelve charts, see Wang Tao (670-755); Lin Yi, and Sun Zhao (active 960-1127) collated, *Waitai miyao fang*, vol. 33, pp. 63b-69a. See also Lee Jender, "Han Tang zhijian yishu zhong de shengchan zhi dao," pp. 643-645. Cf. the two similar versions of twelve monthly childbirth charts preserved in the Northern Song *Taiping shenghui fang* 太平聖惠方 and the Southern Song *Weisheng jiabao chance beiyao* 衛生家寶產科備要, reproduced in Lee Jender, "Han Tang zhijian yishu zhong de shengchan zhi dao," pp. 643-651.

臺灣人學與佛學研究資料庫

The fears related to childbearing graphically expressed in the dharani woodcuts, moreover, only reflect one side of the story. The flip side is the proliferation of the prosperity-provoking imagery, widely circulated contemporaneously. One example is the indigenous *Five-Mantra Dharani Scripture of the White-robed Guanyin* (*Baiyi guanyin wuyinxin tuoluoni jing* 白衣觀音五印心陀羅尼經) **(Figs. 29a-b)**, printed in 1440 and co-sponsored by a large group of Beijing residents living in its central and eastern parts.[79] It is adorned with a refined frontispiece that shows six toddlers paying tribute to Guanyin **(Fig. 28a)**. The lengthy colophons printed at the end of the text shed light on the lay donors' common preoccupation and fears related to childbearing **(Fig. 29b)**. The couple Yao Puguan 姚普觀 and his wife Woman Xie from the Renshou 仁壽 Ward **(Map 1)** contributed funds because they wanted to thank Guanyin for granting them a son. Similarly, Hu Yongming 胡永明 from River of Grains Alley (Jiangmi xiang 江米巷) in Chengqing Ward,[80] committed to sponsoring 1000 copies to thank Guanyin, who helped his wife Zhang Miaoming 張妙明 safely deliver a son. Alternatively, Wu Zhen 吳震 and his wife Woman Yan 嚴 from Suzhou Alley in Mingzhi 明智 Ward (likely equivalent to Mingshi 明時 Ward, see **Map 1**),[81] previously had lost various children in childbirth; they donated funds to pray for better fortune in the future. Finally, two brothers from Jiangmi Alley in Nanxun 南薰 Ward **(Map 1)**, Zheng Chun 鄭春 and Zheng Tai 鄭泰, accompanied by their grandmother, father, and wives, both prayed to have baby boys. Given that these documented donors were all from Beijing, it is likely that the woodcuts were also printed in Beijing.

D. Text as Devotional Object and Magical Medicine

Numerous details in the dharani woodcuts celebrate the power of the scripture. They detail the devotees' engagement in the dharani text in three modes: venerating the text as a

79. For a classic study of this indigenous text, see Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, pp. 93, 95, 123, 126-135, 185, 192, 258, 452. For a slightly different rendition printed in 1450, see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 10, p. 8; for a later version dated 1603 (Fayuan Monastery collection), with a rougher frontispiece, see Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 97.

80. The River of Grains Alley was divided into the eastern and western sections by the Great Bright Gate (Daming men 大明門) situated in between.

81. Although the Map of Ming Beijing (dated 1560) does not show the Mingzhi Ward, it is likely that this refers to the Mingshi 明時 Ward in Eastern City, in which there was a "Suzhou Alley" (*Suzhou hutong* 蘇州衚衕); see Zhang Jue 張爵 (1560), *Jingshi wucheng fangxiang hutong ji* 京師五城坊巷衚衕集, in *Beijing guji congshu* 北京古籍叢書 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe北京古籍出版社, 2000), p. 8.

臺灣大學學術期刊資訊網

devotional object **(Figs. 15e, 16e, 18b)**, copying or reciting it **(Figs. 15f-i)**, and taking it as a form of magical medicine **(Fig. 15j)**.

The first mode, showing the dharani text as an object of veneration, depicts its physical display on a domestic altar. A standard template featured in the coarse version depicts a pile of books bundled together, with a vertical plaque listing the title of the text on top of the pile **(Fig. 16e)**. In various refined versions, the veneration of the text is represented in more diverse ways. In its indication of a woman's wish to transform herself to a male, one illustration depicts a radiating sutra container at the altar **(Fig. 15e)**. Very rarely, a scripture takes the place of a lotus pedestal against a throne, replacing a Buddhist iconic statue usually placed upon **(Fig. 18b)**.

The second mode, which depicts the devotees' transcribing or reciting the dharani text **(Figs. 15f–i)**, constitutes the most popular repertoire among the three modes, evident in the multitude of illustrations within one single version. These images reflect the visual responses to the dharani text's repetitive notions of making 1000 copies of the scripture as a meritorious act. The refined version, which is dated 1433 and sponsored by the former imperial nanny, Madame Zhang **(Figs. 15f–i)**, depicts four scenarios: reciting the sutra, which leads to visualizing the divinity **(Fig. 15f)**; encouraging others to transcribe the sutra, and copying it by oneself, both of which lead to eliminating disease **(Fig. 15g)**; a woman reciting the sutra **(Fig. 15h)**; and a woman hiring people to copy the sutra **(Fig. 15i)**. Examined together, the images of sutra recitation are similar to those of copying: they show lay Buddhists seated in front the texts in booklet format unfolded on various desks. Although all the illustrations depict the act of sutra-copying as done by hand, in reality all the illustrated dharani woodcuts sponsored by lay donors under the Ming were mass-produced by woodblock printing. A humorous sutra-reciting motif not exclusive to the cited version but widely appropriated in other refined sets shows a man dozing off while reciting the text **(Fig. 15f)**. His arms crossed below his chin to support his face, while his eyes are already closed.

The third mode **(Fig. 15j)** highlights the dharani text used as magical medicine. One illustration of this kind depicts a sick person in bed: an attendant offers him a bowl. The accompanying cartouche reads, "Transcribe the esoteric scripts in red, imbibe them to cure the disease" (*zhushu mizi, tunzhi zhibing* 朱書秘字，吞之治病), suggesting that the bowl depicted may contain liquid medicine mixed with esoteric-script seals. The text below the illustration stresses that this formula should be taken only after a sick person had tried more established remedies but still cannot recover (*mingyao zhi zhi buchai* 名藥治之不瘥). The overall emphasis on the scripture's power of healing explains why some documented donors highlighted their wishes to pray for sick family members. For example, the generous donor

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

Wei Quan, who sponsored 5048 copies, prayed for his father to recover from asthma and coughing **(Fig. 14b)**.

The illustration featuring sickness and healing in a domestic setting can be linked to earlier illustrations embedded in the *Divination Slips from Tianzhu* **(Figs. 30a–b)**—a temple divination booklet associated with the Upper Tianzhu Monastery, printed in Southern Song Hangzhou.[82] The illustration for Lot 40 depicts a sick man being fed with "wondrous medicine" (*miaoyao* 妙藥) in a bedroom scene **(Fig. 30a)**.[83] A Buddhist monk stands near the bed, suggesting that the clergy provided the medicine to the sick man. The interpretive text of this lot, juxtaposed below the illustration, associates sickness in general with "demon spirits" (*yaomo* 妖魔), which echoes the overall notion of demon-caused diseases also expressed in the dharani woodcuts. Lot 65 **(Fig. 30b)**, alternatively, provides a Daoist solution.[84] Set in a similar bedroom, the illustration depicts a Daoist master standing in front of a burning candle to conduct a night ritual to the stars. According to the interpretative text, if the malady lingers and "the medicine is inefficient" (*fuyao weixiao* 服藥未效), one should commission a ritual to the stars. Whereas the domestic healing pictured in the *Divination Slips from Tianzhu* is still "monitored" by a Buddhist monk or Daoist priest, the Ming dharani woodcuts present more of a "do-it-yourself" approach devoid of involvement by any representative from a religious institution.

The most provocative visual representation of the third mode, which is only available in the refined versions and not seen in the coarse versions, depicts a sequence of actions **(Fig. 4d)**, which offer the step-by-step process of preparing magical medicine for a dying person, whose soul is then welcomed by Amitabha. An unusual scenario shows two men setting the sutra on fire in an outdoor space right next to the dying person's bedroom. The embedded cartouche reads, "Burning the scripture to ashes" (*shaojing zuo hui* 燒經作灰). To the left of the sutra-burning scene, a man kneels to collect mud from the ground. The accompanying cartouche reads, "Taking clean mud from the west" (*qu xifang jingtu* 取西方淨土). These two sequential scenes serve as "how-to" illustrations of the textual guideline juxtaposed below, which expounds that taking the medicine of the burnt sutra will safeguard a dying person's speedy journey to Amitaba's Pure Land without lingering in the "in between state" (*zhongyin*

82. For a study, see Shih-shan Susan Huang, "*Tianzhu lingqian*: Divination Prints from a Buddhist Temple in Song Hangzhou".
83. Shih-shan Susan Huang, "*Tianzhu lingqian*: Divination Prints from a Buddhist Temple in Song Hangzhou," pp. 278 (fig. 35), 282.
84. Shih-shan Susan Huang, "*Tianzhu lingqian:* Divination Prints from a Buddhist Temple in Song Hangzhou," pp. 278 (fig. 36), 283.

臺灣人學學術期刊資料庫

中陰) for forty-nine days.[85] As a result, the deceased's soul, rendered as a minute figure enclosed by a vaporous cloud, is heading toward the Amitabha triad, depicted to the left of the narrative sequence.

Conclusion

The many copies of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* examined in this study from manuscripts to woodcuts paint a vivid picture of how Buddhism spread at the popular level for hundreds of years. While the book is characterized as "popular," its intended audience came from both high and low social classes, ranging from the former imperial nanny and other staff members of the administration to anonymous folks from the lower strata. The scripture remained popular after the mid-fifteenth century. In 1557, the Ming Emperor Wanli's Consort De (Defei 德妃) (1565–1630) funded 1000 copies of a refined illustrated version alongside an equal amount of a Daoist scripture **(Fig. 31)**.[86] Many features of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* overlap with other indigenous beliefs and practices, synthesizing widespread interests in the veneration of the Guanyin bodhisattva, the dharani spells, and Daoist talismans and seals. Its therapeutic concerns addressing childbirth, death, disease, and medicine touch upon the most pragmatic issues ordinary folks care about most. Indeed, it is this all-encompassing quality that makes it the most popular book.

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85. Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, p. 123.
86. As indicated in the colophon, the Daoist text she sponsored is the *Scripture of Numinous Official Wang* (*Wang Lingguan jing* 王靈官經); see Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji bubia*n, vol. 4, pp. 156-191.

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臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

List of Illustrations

Figs. 1a-b Details. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. Dunhuang manuscript. 9th or 10th century. BnF (P. 3916).

Figs. 2a-d *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1102. Northern Song. National Library, Beijing. a. Complete view of the frontispiece. b-d Details. After Weng Lianxi 翁連溪 and Li Hongbo 李洪波, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji* 中國佛教版畫全集 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian 中國書店, 2014), vol. 2, p. 28; Jin Weinuo 金維諾 ed., *Zhongguo banhua quanji* 中國版畫全集 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe 紫禁城出版社, 2008), vol. 1, p. 43 (pl. 58).

Figs. 3a-b *Fodingxin tuoluoni jing*. 1172. Southern Song dynasty. Woodblock print. Discovered in Lishui, Zhejiang. Zhejiang Museum, Hangzhou. a. Frontispiece. b. Talismans and colophon. After Zhejiangsheng bowuguan 浙江省博物館 (Zhejiang Provincial Museum) ed., *Dongtu foguang* 東土佛光 (Buddha's Radiance of the Eastern Land) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe 浙江古籍出版社, 2008), p. 147.

Fig. 4a *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1430. Accordion format. Height of the frame: 21cm. Width of a fold: 9.6cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 7, p. 1.

Figs. 4b-c Details. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1430. Ming dynasty. Accordion format. Height of the frame: 21cm. Width of a fold: 9.6cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 7, pp. 69-71.

Fig. 4d Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1430. Ming dynasty. Accordion format. Height of the frame: 21cm. Width of a fold: 9.6cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 7, p. 46.

Fig. 5 *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1432. Accordion format. Height of the frame: 18.8 cm. Width of a fold: 9.1 cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji,* vol. 8, p. 1.

Figs. 6a-f Samples of the "Esoteric Script Seals". Dharani woodcuts.

a. 1102. Northern Song dynasty.

b. Detail of the stone carving dated to the Jin dynasty. Fangshan, Hebei. After Zhang Zong 張總, "*Fodingxin Guanshiyin pusa da tuoluoni jing* zhouyin mifu tanxi 《佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經》咒印秘符探析 (An Analysis of the Mantras, Seals, and Secret Symbols in the Great Dharani Sutra of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva)," in Xileng yinshe 西冷印社 ed., *Zhuanwu mingxing: tuxing yin yu fei hanzi xitong yinzhang guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 篆物銘形：圖形印與非漢字系統印章國際學術研討會論文集 (Imprint of Scripts and Images: Collected Theses of Graphic Marks and Non-Chinese Character

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c. Detail. Tangut manuscript (no. 4357). Dated 1156. Xi Xia. After Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan 中國社會科學院 et al. eds., *Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian* 俄藏黑水城文獻 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1996-2018), vol. 26, p. 21.

d. 1432. Ming dynasty. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 38.

e. 1433. Ming dynasty. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 188.

f. Detail, hand-written "esoteric script seals". *Fodingxin* scripture. Copied in gold and red ink. Indigo paper. Ming dynasty. National Palace Museum, Taipei (故佛000419)

Fig. 7 Picture of the Three Deathbringers. *Scripture for the Protection of Life. Daoist Canon*. 1445. Ming dynasty. Rearranged by the author from *Taishang chu sanshi jiuchong baosheng jing* 太上除三尸九蟲保生經, in *Daozang* 道藏 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店; and Tianjin: Guji chubanshe 天津古籍出版社, 1988), vol. 18, pp. 700a-701c.

Fig. 8 Daoist talismans to eliminate the Three Corpses. *Yunji qiqian*, juan 81. Re-arranged after *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤, in *Daozang* 道藏 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店; and Tianjin: Guji chubanshe 天津古籍出版社, 1988), vol. 22, p. 582.

Figs. 9a-e Daoist talismans pertinent to childbirth. *Trilogy of Talismans (Daozang)*.

a. Talisman to secure the womb. *Taishang laojun hunyuan sanbu fu* 太上老君混元三部符, in *Daozang* 道藏 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店; and Tianjin: Guji chubanshe 天津古籍出版社, 1988), vol. 11, p. 672c.

b. Talisman that enables a pregnant woman who wears it under her armpit to give birth to a baby boy. *Taishang laojun hunyuan sanbu fu*, in *Daozang*, vol. 11, p. 673a.

c. Talisman to transform a female womb to a male womb. *Taishang laojun hunyuan sanbu fu*, in *Daozang*, vol. 11, p. 673a.

d. Talisman to treat the death of a baby in the womb. *Taishang laojun hunyuan sanbu fu*, in *Daozang*, vol. 11, p. 674a.

e. Talisman to treat the blockage of the placenta inside the body. *Taishang laojun hunyuan sanbu fu*, in *Daozang*, vol. 11, p. 674a.

Fig. 10 Detail that shows two compound scripts for difficult birth. Dunhuang manuscript (S. 2498). British Library.

Fig. 11 *Divine almanac that protects the household* that shows talismans related to childbirth. *Divine almanac that protects the household*. BnF (P. 3358).

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

Fig. 12 Talismans for difficult childbirth recorded in the Song medical text. Chen Ziming 陳自明 (c. 1190–1270), *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方, in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu dianzi ban* 文淵閣四庫全書電子版 (Hong Kong: Dizhi wenhua chuban youxian gongsi 迪志文化出版有限公司, 1999), vol. 16, p. 18a-b.

Fig. 13 Detail. *Marvelous Book for Dispelling Hereditary Enmity through Three Generations*. 1442. After Beijing wenbo jiaoliu guan 北京文博交流館 (Beijing Cultural Exchange Museum) ed., *Zhihuasi cang Yuan Ming Qing fojing banhua shangxi* 智化寺藏元明清佛經版畫賞析 (Appreciation and Analysis of Buddhist Sutra Woodblock Prints from the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties in Zhihua Temple's Collection) (Beijing: Beijing Yanshan chubanshe 北京燕山出版社 [Beijing Yanshan Press], 2007), p. 125.

Figs. 14a-f Colophons of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* woodcuts. Fifteenth century. Ming Dynasty.

a. Colophon of Li Shun and his wife, who sponsored 1000 copies. Dated 1430. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 7, p. 87.

b. Colophon of Wei Quan and his wife on behalf of his father who suffered from asthma and coughing. Dated 1423. After Weng Lianxi 翁連溪 and Li Hongbo 李洪波, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji bubian* 中國佛教版畫全集補編 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian 中國書店, 2017), vol. 2, p. 83.

c. Colophon of Xu Huuixiu, who sponsored 1000 copies. Dated 1439. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p. 145.

d. Colophon of Cui Miaolian, who sponsored 60 copies. Dated 1436. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p. 35.

e. Colophon of Monk Chongyuan, who sponsored 500 copies. Dated 1438. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p. 83.

f. Colophon of Madame who Protects the Sage, Zhang Shanlian, who sponsored 5048 copies. Dated 1433. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8 p. 189.

Fig. 15a Frontispiece to the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Zhihuasi collection. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 82.

Fig. 15b Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Height of the frame: 22 cm. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm. Reconfigured from Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, pp. 170-171, 180-181.

Fig. 15c Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Height of the frame: 22 cm. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 97.

Fig. 15d Detail of demons attacking a pregnant woman. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

dynasty. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 121.

Fig. 15e Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 105.

Figs. 15f-i Details. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, pp. 120, 145, 158, 172.

Fig. 15j Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 132.

Fig. 16a Frontispiece to the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1440. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

Fig. 16b Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. Dated 1440. Ming dynasty. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

Fig. 16c Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1440. Ming dynasty. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

Fig. 16d Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1440. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

Fig. 16e Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. Dated 1440. Ming dynasty. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

Fig. 17 Frontispiece to *Pulchŏngshimdaranigyŏng*. 1477. *Chosŏn* Korea. Myŏngjusa. AfterKim Minchi 김민지, "Chosŏnhugi kwanŭmsamjonsang hyŏpshie nat'ananŭn wit'aech'ŏn kwallyŏn tosang punsŏk 조선후기 관음삼존상 협시에 나타나는 위태천 관련 도상 분석 (Skanda-Karttikeya in Avalokitesvara Triad in Late Joseon)," *Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 미술사학연구 (Korean Journal of Art History), 306 (2020), p. 114 (fig. 6).

Fig. 18a Detail. *Fodingxing Dharani Scripture*. 1439. Donated by Woman Xu Huixiu. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p. 132.

Fig. 18b Detail. *Fodingxing Dharani Scripture*. 1439. Donated by Woman Xu Huixiu. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p. 95.

Fig. 19 Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 15th century (?). Ming dynasty. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 5, p. 282.

Fig. 20 Diagram of the Eight Hot Hells. *Fozu tongji*. Southern Song, ca. 1260. Woodblock print. Ink on paper. Zhipan 志磐 (ca. 1260), *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, juan 33, in *Xu zang jing: Zang jing shuyuan ban* 續藏經：藏經書院版 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi 新文豐出版公司, 1977), vol. 131, p. 392.

Figs. 21a-c Details. The miracle tale of Zhang Judao. Frontispiece to the Tangut-script *Golden Light Sutra*. Xi Xia. 31.2 x 59.5 cm. Institute of Oriental Studies, Saint Petersburg (Tang 376). a. The overall view. b. Detail. The butchers killing animals. c. Detail. The animals ascend to heaven.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

Fig. 22 Detail, *Scripture of the Hell Retribution Expounded by the Buddha*. 1453. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 10, p. 10.

Fig. 23 Detail, the Guanyin chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. 1403–1424. Ming dynasty. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 5, p. 183.

Fig. 24 Detail of demons. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1432. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 8, p. 63.

Fig. 25 Detail, *Hungry Ghosts Scroll*. Heian period, Japan. 12th century. Ink and color on paper. 26.9 x 380.2 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

Fig. 26 Detail, *Guanyin Sutra*. Manuscript in booklet form, ink and color on paper. 10h x 18w x 1.5d cm. British Library. Or.8210/S.6983.

Fig. 27 Narrative scene depicting a mother's suffering in delivering a child. Baodingshan, Dazu, Sichuan. Southern Song. After Lee Jender 李貞德, "Zuocao baoyao pogu xiangzhu! 1500 nian qian 'guren de wenrou shengchan'坐草、抱腰、婆姑相助！1500 年前古人的「溫柔生產」 (Gentle Childbirth Practices 1,500 Years Ago: Sitting on Grass, Holding the Waist, and the Mutual Assistance of Midwives)," National Geographic Taiwan, 2020, https://www.natgeomedia.com/history/article/content-10418.html (accessed on 31 March 2023). Also see Lee Jender 李貞德, "Han Tang zhijian yishu zhong de shengchan zhi dao 漢唐之間醫書中的生產之道 (Childbirth in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China)," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 (Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica), 67:3, pp. 533-654.

Fig. 28 The childbirth chart of the seventh month. After Wang Tao 王燾 (670–755); Lin Yi 林億, and Sun Zhao 孫兆 (active 960-1127) collated, *Waitai miyao fang* 外臺秘要方, in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu dianzi ban* 文淵閣四庫全書電子版 (Hong Kong: Dizhi wenhua chuban youxian gongsi 迪志文化出版有限公司, 1999), vol. 33, p. 66b.

Figs. 29a-b Details. *Five Mantras Dharani Scripture of the White-Robed Guanyin*. 1440. Ming dynasty. a. Frontispiece. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p. 150. b. Colophons of donors. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji*, vol. 9, p.151.

Figs. 30a-b Details. Efficacious Slips of the Tianzhu Monastery. Southern Song. Woodblock print. After Shih-shan Susan Huang, "*Tianzhu lingqian*: Divination Prints from a Buddhist Temple in Song Hangzhou," *Artibus Asiae*, 67:2 (2007), figs. 35-36.

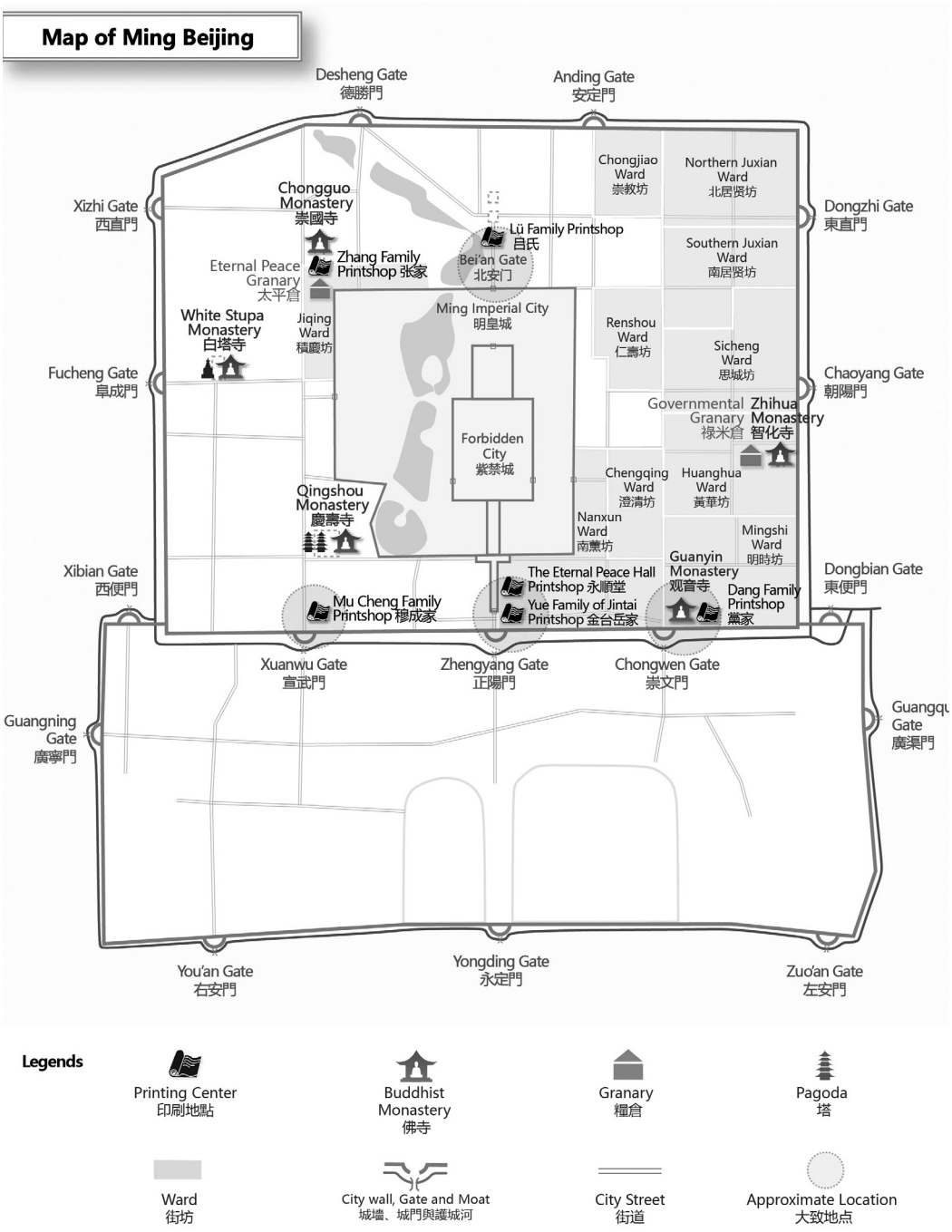
Fig. 31 Colophon. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* sponsored by Consort De. 1557. Ming dynasty. Accordion format. After Weng Lianxi and Li Hongbo, *Zhongguo fojiao banhua quanji bubian*, vol. 4, p. 191.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

Map 1 Map of Ming Beijing. By Rita Xiong.
Table 1 Frontispiece Divisions of the Narrative Scenes Based on the Cartouches
Table 2 Dated Copies of the Fodingxin Dharani Scripture with Donors' Information, 1405–1461

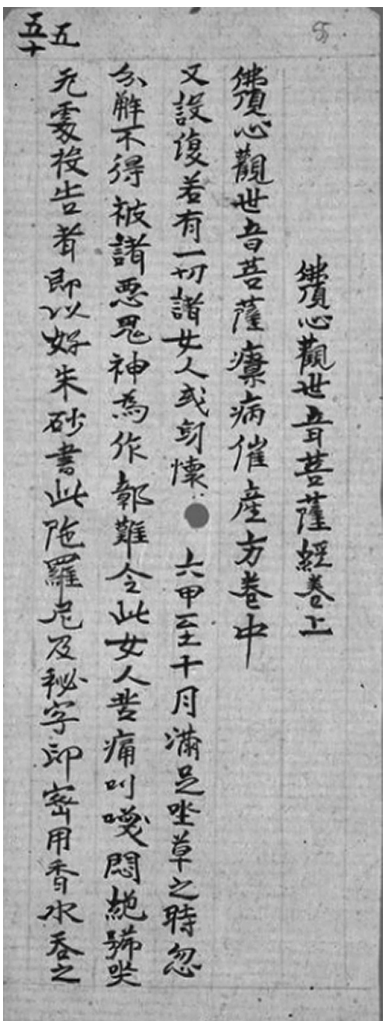
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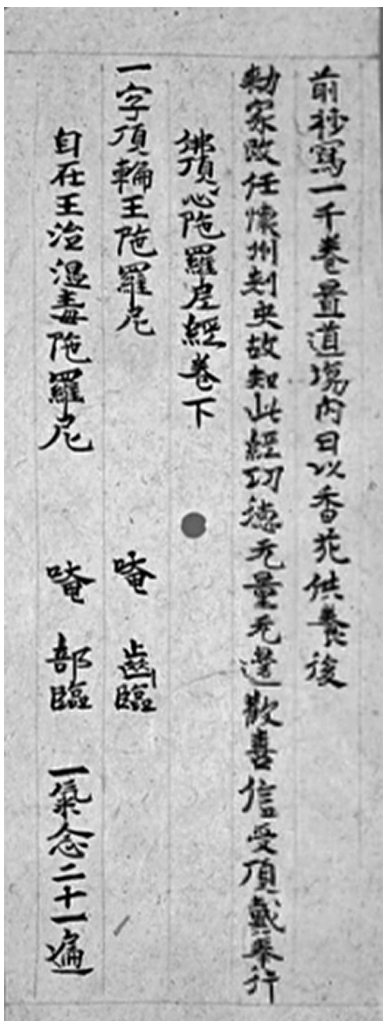


Map 1 Map of Ming Beijing. By Rita Xiong.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



a.



b.

Figs. 1a–b Details. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. Dunhuang manuscript. 9th or 10th century. BnF (P. 3916).

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



a.



b.



d.



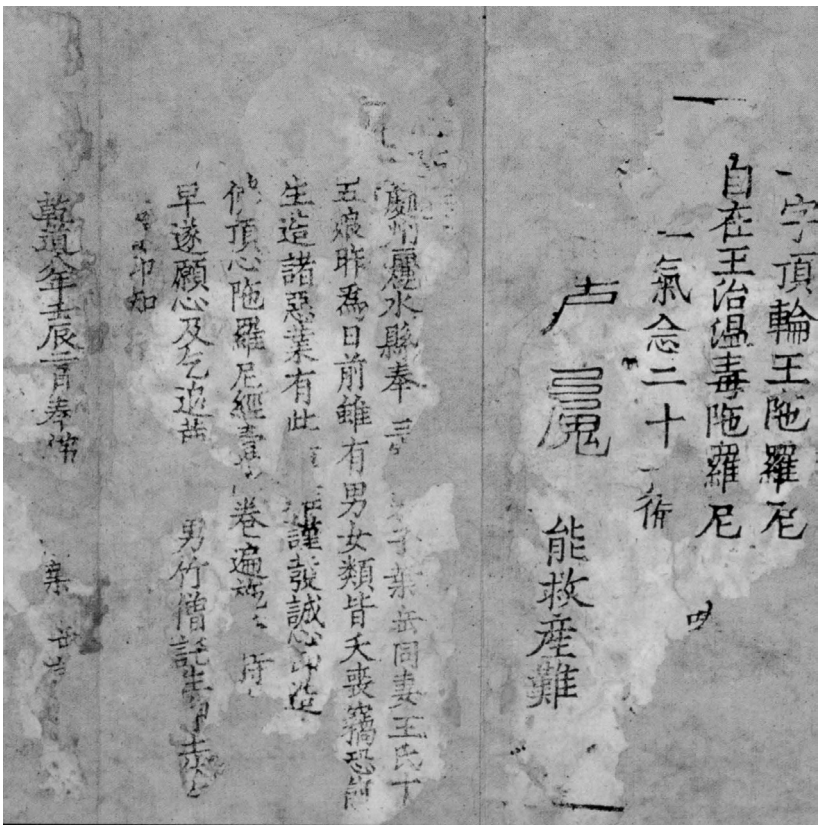
c.

Figs. 2a–d *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1102. Northern Song. National Library, Beijing. a. Complete view of the frontispiece. b-d Details.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



a.



b.

Figs. 3a–b *Fodingxin tuoluoni jing*. 1172. Southern Song dynasty. Woodblock print. Discovered in Lishui, Zhejiang. Zhejiang Museum, Hangzhou. a. Frontispiece. b. Talismans and colophon.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

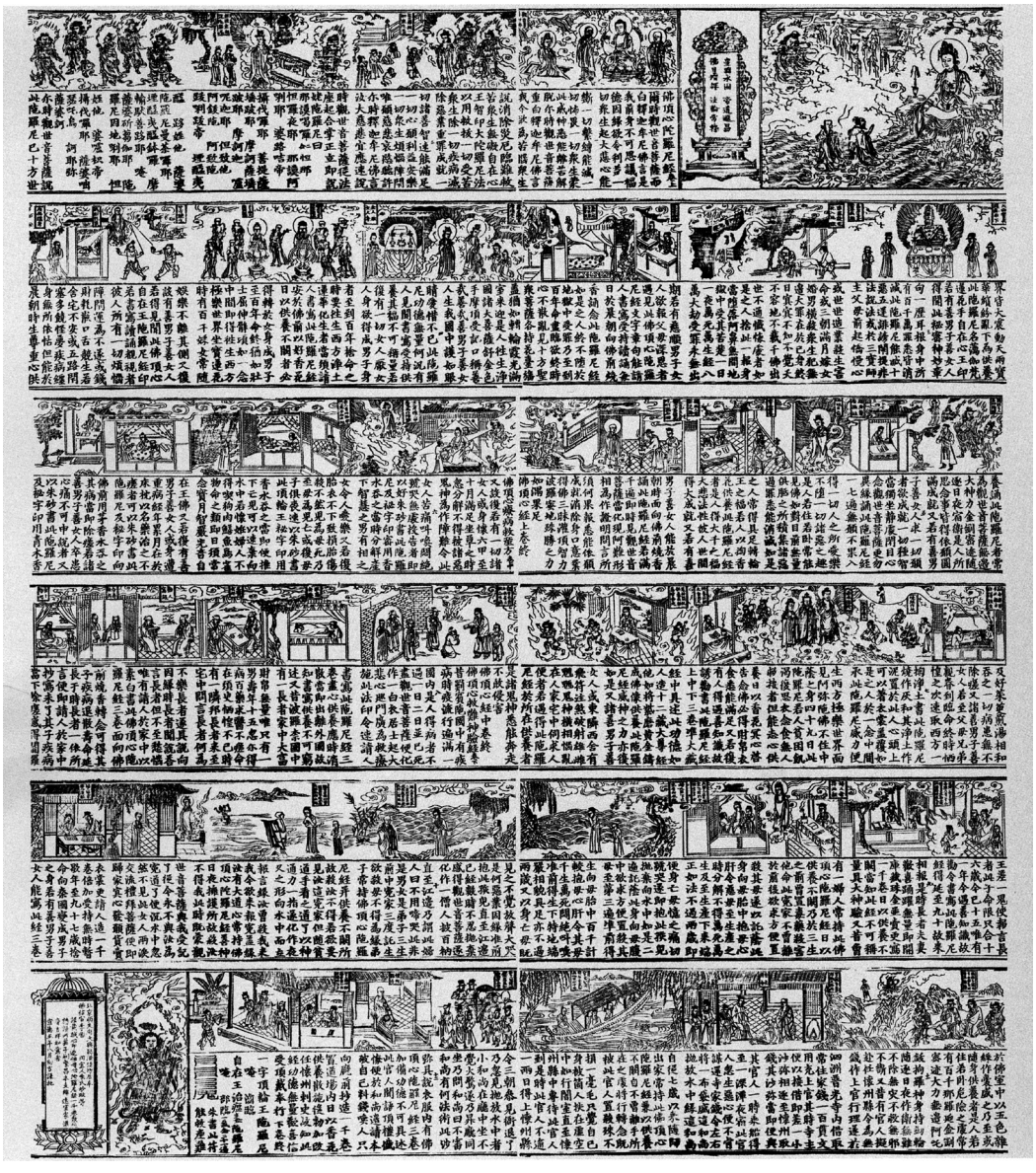


Fig. 4a *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1430. Accordion format. Height of the frame: 21cm. Width of a fold: 9.6cm.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



b.



c.

Figs. 4b–c Details. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1430. Ming dynasty. Accordion format. Height of the frame: 21cm. Width of a fold: 9.6cm.



Fig. 4d Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1430. Ming dynasty. Accordion format. Height of the frame: 21cm. Width of a fold: 9.6cm.

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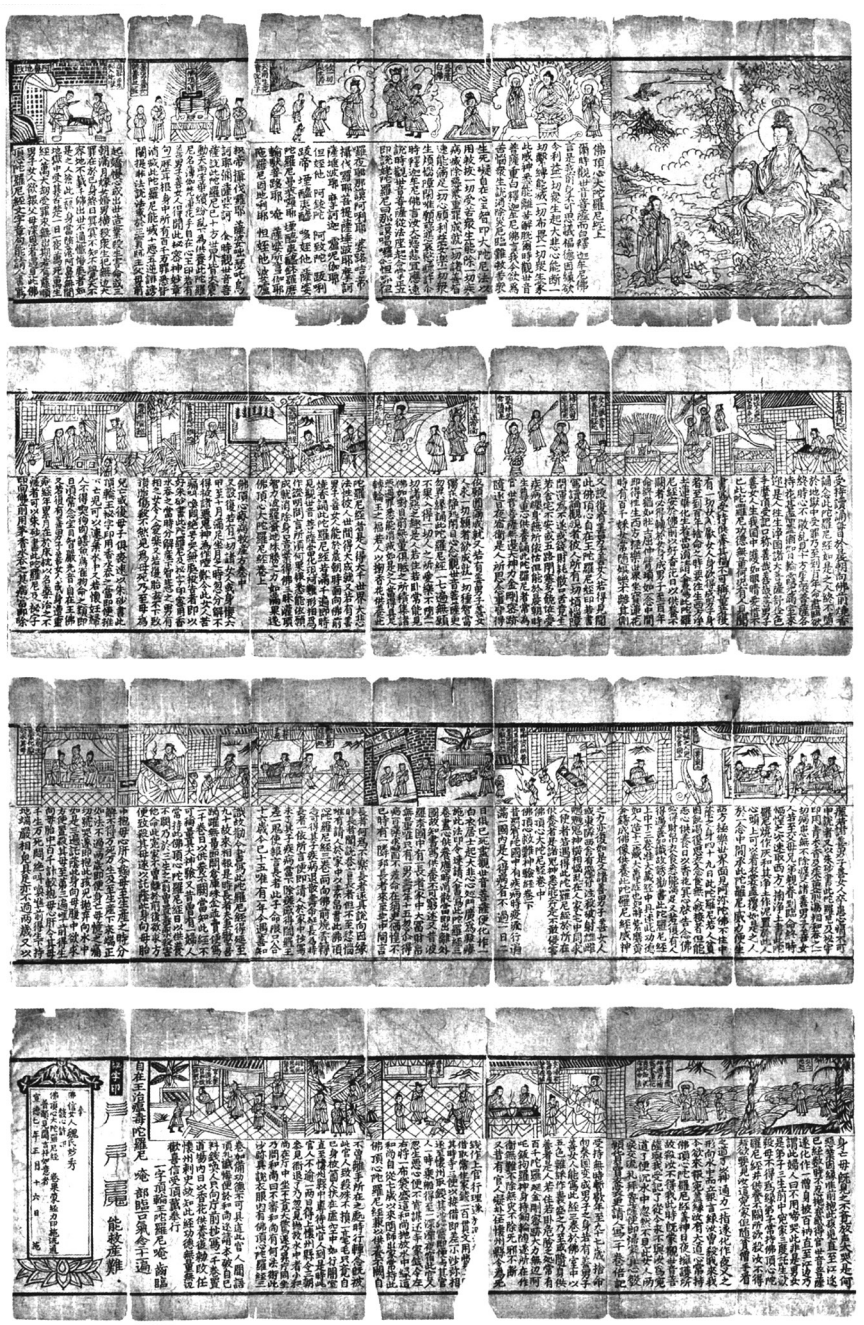
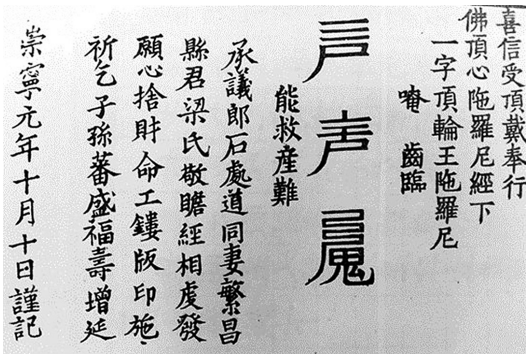


Fig. 5 *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1432. Accordion format. Height of the frame: 18.8 cm. Width of a fold: 9.1 cm.

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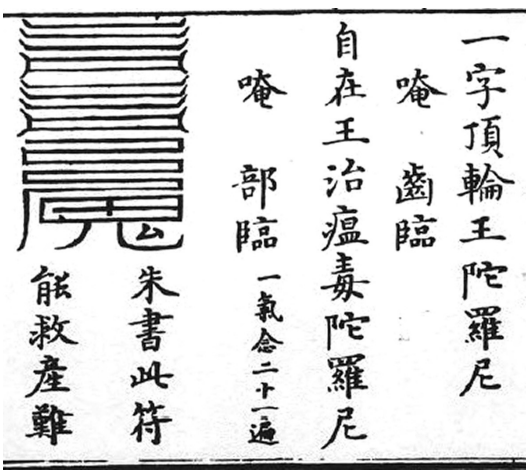
a.



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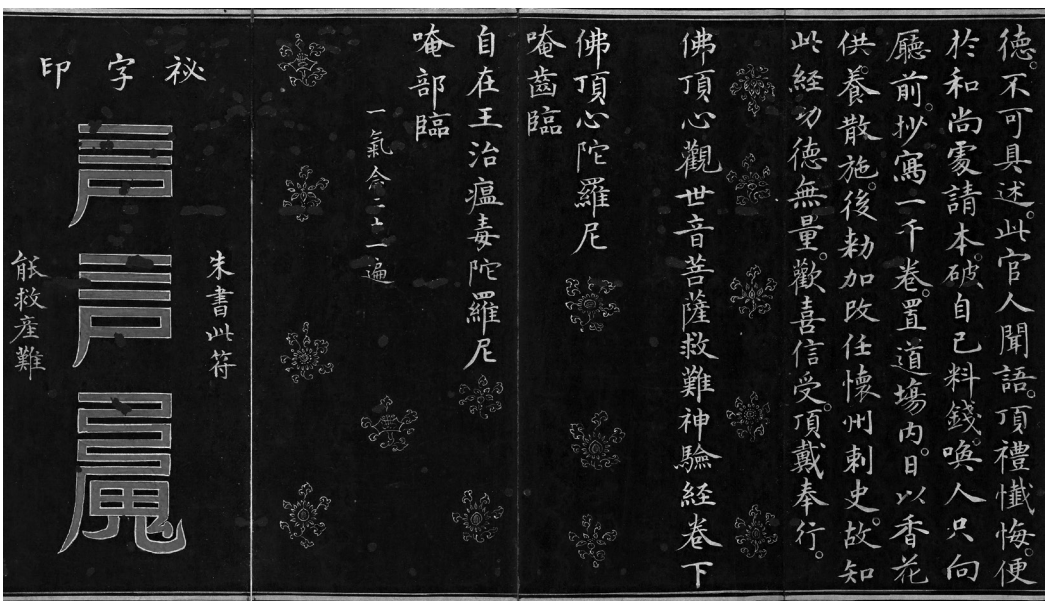


e.



c.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



f.

Figs. 6a–f Samples of the "Esoteric Script Seals". Dharani woodcuts.

a. 1102. Northern Song dynasty.

b. Detail of the stone carving dated to the Jin dynasty. Fangshan, Hebei.

c. Detail. Tangut manuscript (no. 4357). Dated 1156. Xi Xia.

d. 1432. Ming dynasty.

e. 1433. Ming dynasty.

f. Detail, hand-written "esoteric script seals". *Fodingxin* scripture. Copied in gold and red ink. Indigo paper. Ming dynasty. National Palace Museum, Taipei (故佛000419)

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



Fig. 7 Picture of the Three Deathbringers. *Scripture for the Protection of Life*. Daoist Canon. 1445. Ming dynasty.

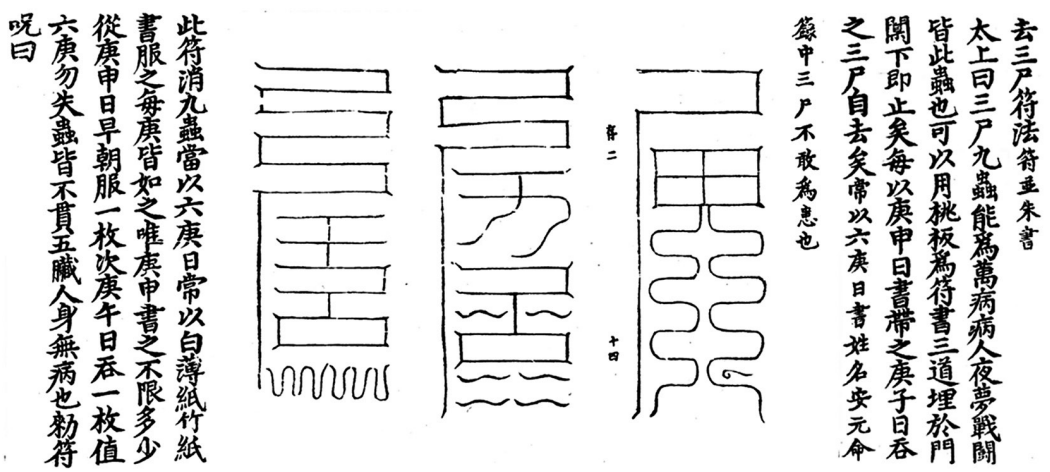
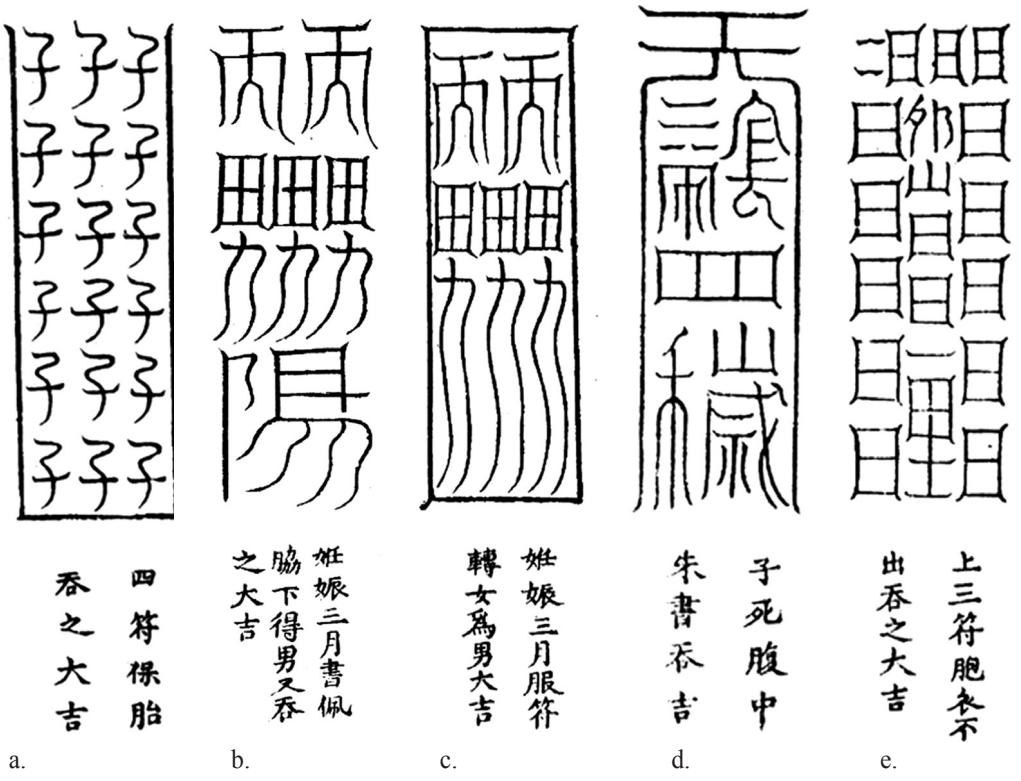


Fig. 8 Daoist talismans to eliminate the Three Corpses. *Yunji qiqian*, juan 81.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



a. b. c. d. e.

Figs. 9a–e Daoist talismans pertinent to childbirth. *Trilogy of Talismans (Daozang)*. a. Talisman to secure the womb. b. Talisman that enables a pregnant woman who wears it under her armpit to give birth to a baby boy. c. Talisman to transform a female womb to a male womb. d. Talisman to treat the death of a baby in the womb. e. Talisman to treat the blockage of the placenta inside the body.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



Fig. 10 Detail that shows two compound scripts for difficult birth. Dunhuang manuscript (S. 2498). British Library.



Fig. 11 *Divine almanac that protects the household that shows talismans related to childbirth. Divine almanac that protects the household*. BnF (P. 3358).

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

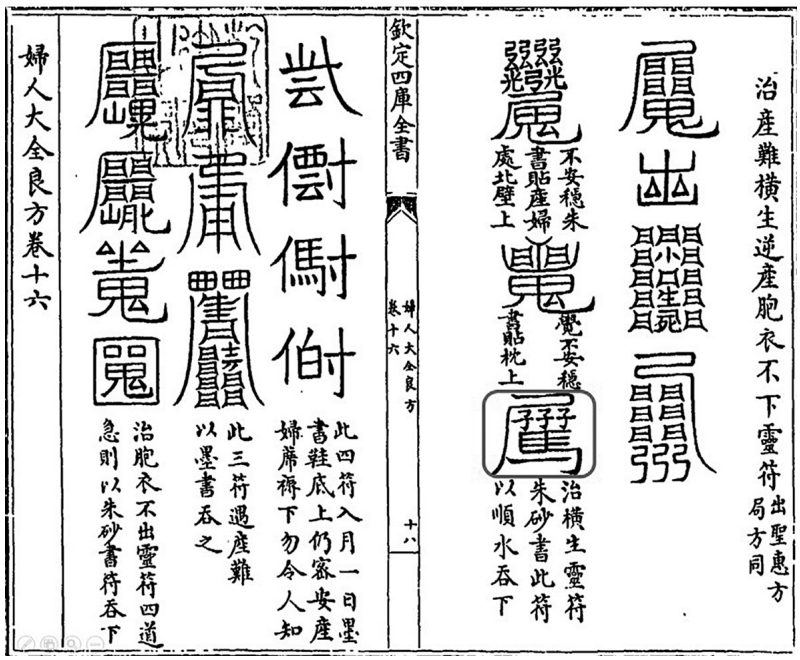
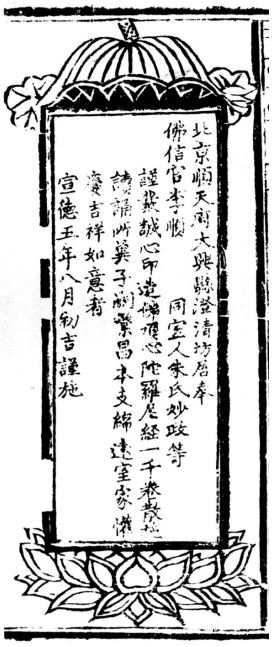


Fig. 12 Talismans for difficult childbirth recorded in the Song medical text.

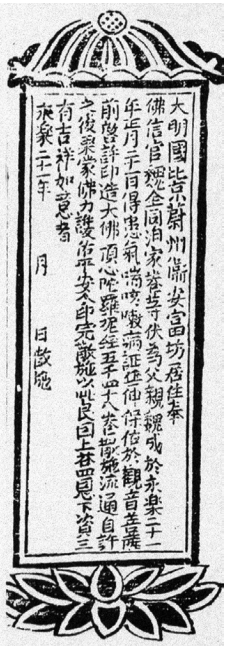


Fig. 13 Detail. *Marvelous Book for Dispelling Hereditary Enmity through Three Generations*. 1442.

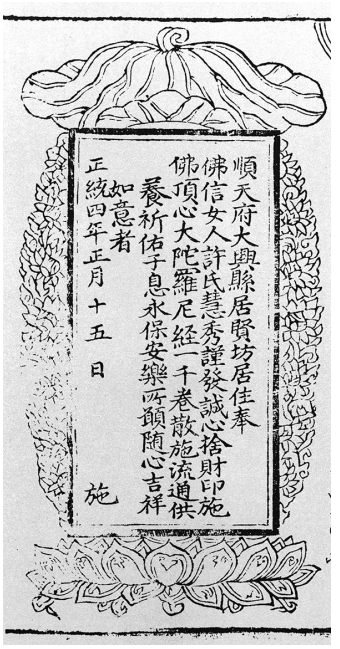
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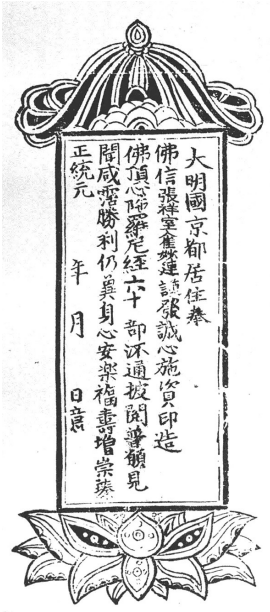
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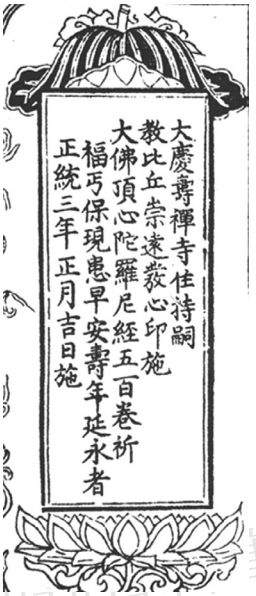
b.



c.

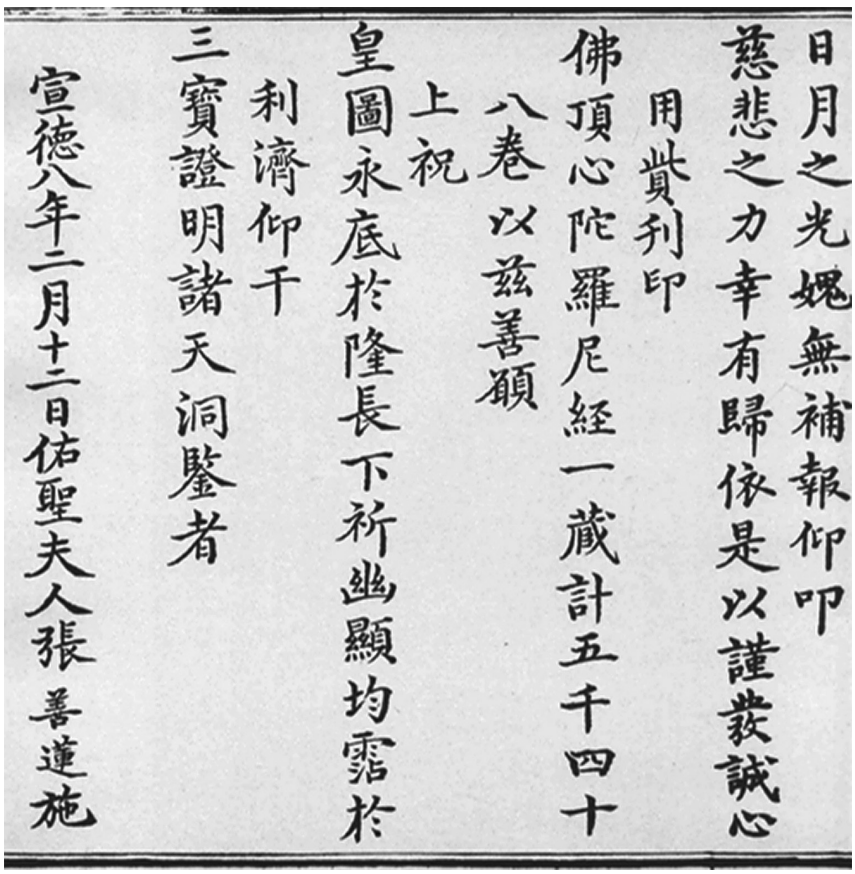


d.



e.

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利濟仰干
三寶證明諸天洞鑒者
宣德八年二月十二日佑聖夫人張善蓮施

f.

Figs. 14a–f Colophons of the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* woodcuts. Fifteenth century. Ming Dynasty.

a. Colophon of Li Shun and his wife, who sponsored 1000 copies. Dated 1430.

b. Colophon of Wei Quan and his wife on behalf of his father who suffered from asthma and coughing. Dated 1423.

c. Colophon of Xu Huixiu, who sponsored 1000 copies. Dated 1439.

d. Colophon of Cui Miaolian, who sponsored 60 copies. Dated 1436.

e. Colophon of Monk Chongyuan, who sponsored 500 copies. Dated 1438.

f. Colophon of Madame who Protects the Sage, Zhang Shanlian, who sponsored 5048 copies. Dated 1433.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



Fig. 15a Frontispiece to the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Zhihuasi collection.

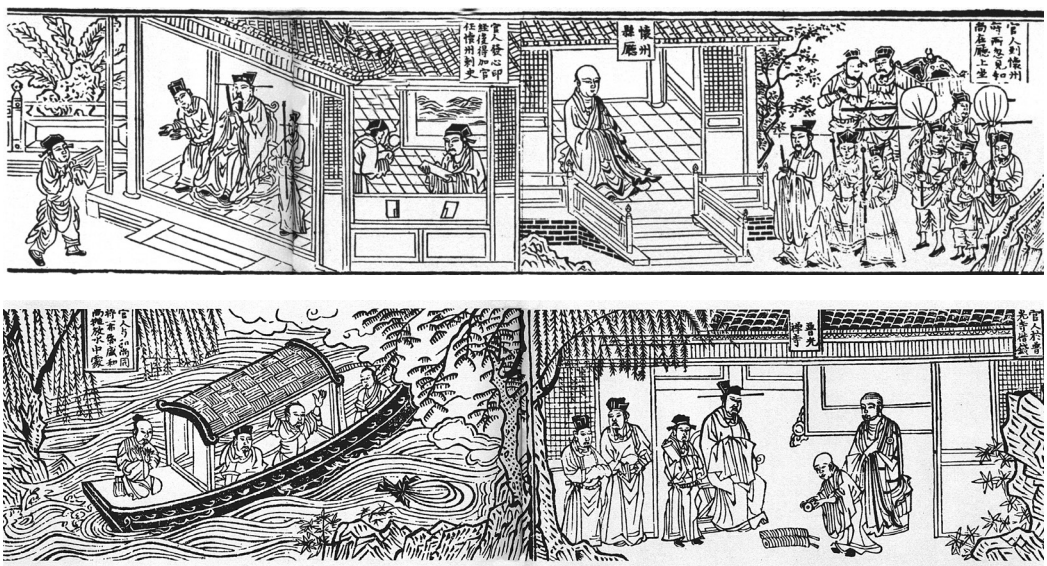


Fig. 15b Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Height of the frame: 22 cm. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm.

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此陀羅尼能滅十惡五
逆誹謗闡提非法說法
或於三寶師主父母前
起憍慢心或世世造業
殺生害命或三朝滿月
嫁女婚男橫殺衆生犯
無邊大罪在於己身終
日冥冥不知不覺天不
容地不載千佛出世不
通懺悔憂者如是之人

Fig. 15c Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Height of the frame: 22 cm. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm.



佛頂心療病救產方卷中
又設復若有一切諸女
人或身懷六甲至十月
滿足坐草之時忽分解
不得被諸惡鬼神為作
障難令此女人苦痛叫
喚悶絕號哭無憂投告
者即以好朱砂書此陀
羅尼及祕字印窓用香
水吞之當時分解產下

Fig. 15d Detail of demons attacking a pregnant woman. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm.



Fig. 15e Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm.

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f.



g.



h.



i.

Figs. 15f–i Details. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫



Fig. 15j Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1433. Ming dynasty. Width of a fold: 9.8 cm.

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Fig. 16a Frontispiece to the *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1440. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).



Fig. 16b Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. Dated 1440. Ming dynasty. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).



Fig. 16c Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1440. Ming dynasty. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

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Fig. 16d Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1440. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

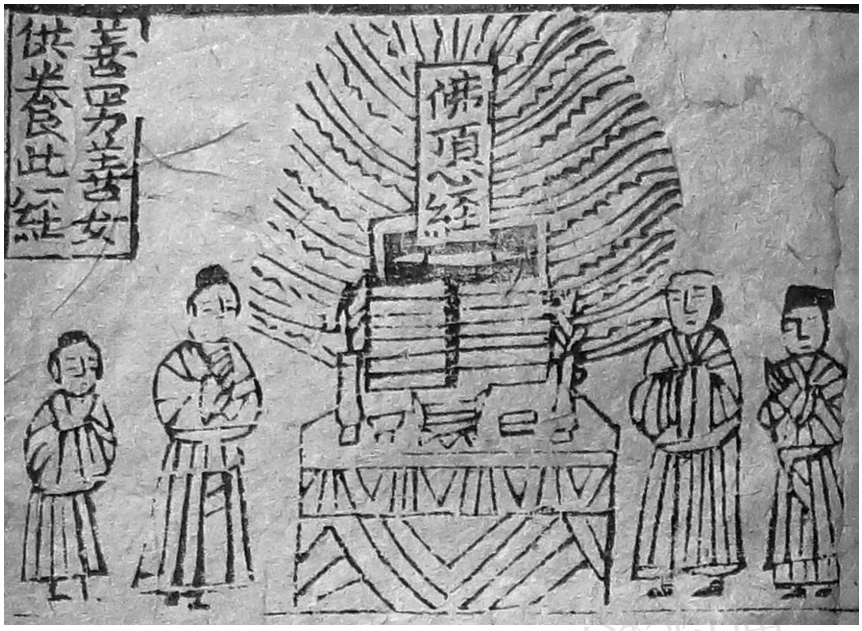


Fig. 16e Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. Dated 1440. Ming dynasty. Indianapolis Museum (1985.269).

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Fig. 17 Frontispiece to *Pulchŏngshimdaranigyŏng*. 1477. *Chosŏn* Korea. Myŏngjusa.

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Fig. 18a Detail. *Fodingxing Dharani Scripture*. 1439. Donated by Woman Xu Huixiu.



Fig. 18b Detail. *Fodingxing Dharani Scripture*. 1439. Donated by Woman Xu Huixiu.

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Fig. 19 Detail. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 15th century (?). Ming dynasty.



Fig. 20 Diagram of the Eight Hot Hells. *Fozu tongji*. Southern Song, ca. 1260. Woodblock print. Ink on paper.

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a.



b.



c.

Figs. 21a–c Details. The miracle tale of Zhang Judao. Frontispiece to the Tangut-script *Golden Light Sutra.* Xi Xia. 31.2 x 59.5 cm. Institute of Oriental Studies, Saint Petersburg (Tang 376). a. The overall view. b. Detail. The butchers killing animals. c. Detail. The animals ascend to heaven.

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Fig. 22 Detail, *Scripture of the Hell Retribution Expounded by the Buddha*. 1453.



Fig. 23 Detail, the Guanyin chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. 1403–1424. Ming dynasty.



Fig. 24 Detail of demons. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture*. 1432.

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Fig. 25 Detail, *Hungry Ghosts Scroll*. Heian period, Japan. 12th century. Ink and color on paper. 26.9 x 380.2 cm. Tokyo National Museum.



Fig. 26 Detail, *Guanyin Sutra*. Manuscript in booklet form, ink and color on paper. 10h x 18w x 1.5d cm. British Library. Or.8210/S.6983.

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Fig. 27 Narrative scene depicting a mother's suffering in delivering a child. Baodingshan, Dazu, Sichuan. Southern Song.

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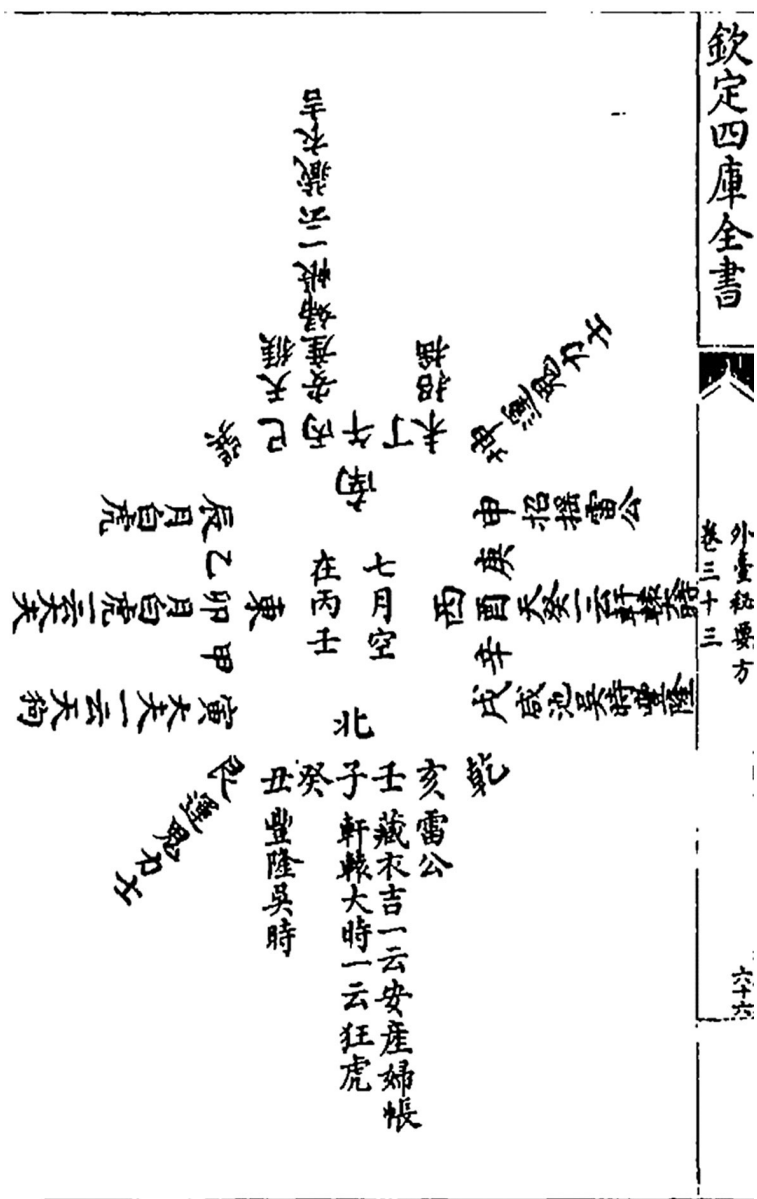


Fig. 28 The childbirth chart of the seventh month.

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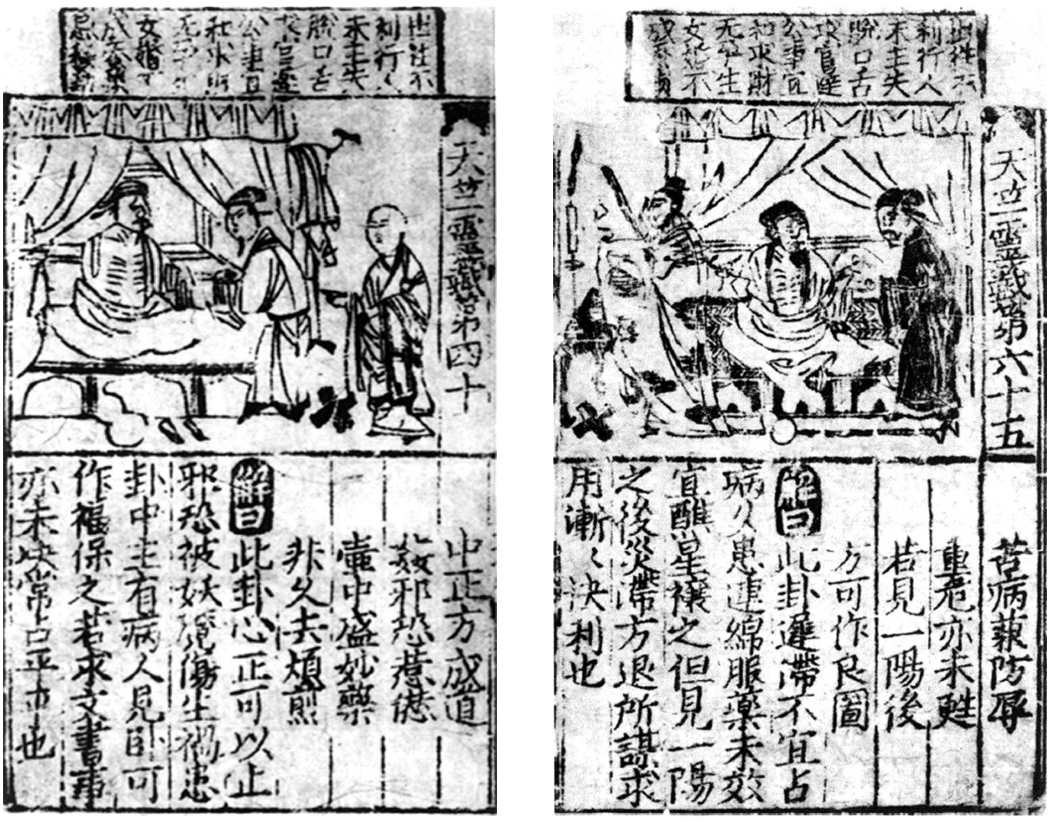
a.



b.

Figs. 29a–b Details. *Five Mantras Dharani Scripture of the White-Robed Guanyin*. 1440. Ming dynasty. a. Frontispiece. b. Colophons of donors.

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a. b.

Figs. 30a–b Details. *Efficacious Slips of the Tianzhu Monastery*. Southern Song. woodblock print.

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Fig. 31 Colophon. *Fodingxin Dharani Scripture* sponsored by Consort De. 1557. Ming dynasty. Accordion format.

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《佛頂心陀羅尼經》及其觀眾：通俗佛教印刷文化中的醫療、符文化、與女性

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本研究探討《佛頂心陀羅尼經》（*Fodingxin tuoluoni jing*，以下簡稱陀羅尼經）的佛教書籍藝術，並討論佛教印刷文化的流行如何回應醫療、符文化和婦女等較廣泛的議題。本文所使用之主要原始資料，包括九至十世紀的敦煌手抄本（圖1a–b），以及十二世紀（圖2a、3a）到十五世紀（圖4a、5）的木刻佛經插圖。《佛頂心陀羅尼經》是製造於中國本土的佛經，可追溯到中古敦煌的寫本文化。其經文和圖像本身是一個文化大熔爐，雜糅了多種信仰和文化因子，並把佛經看作具有療效的神藥。十二世紀標誌著印刷時代的新圖繪和符的使用傳統，印經的格套，是在開頭附有扉畫，而在結尾則加了三個秘字印。文圖並茂的《佛頂心陀羅尼經》刻經藝術在十五世紀上半葉達到了巔峰，除了扉畫和秘字印之外，全文均附有插圖，強調經文與陀羅尼的治癒力量，以及婦女在生育中面臨的挑戰。現存樣本中有許多有紀年的題記，為吾人提供了佛經施主的寶貴資料。因為這些有記錄的施主大多為明代北京的居民，或可進一步推測這些佛經就在北京印行。《佛頂心陀羅尼經》通常是接受施主訂製後再大量印刷的。這些經文的主要支持者為女性及其家人，她們受生育之苦，或非常渴望擁有男嬰。

關鍵詞：《佛頂心陀羅尼經》、佛經插圖、版畫、佛教、印刷文化、秘字印、符文化、民間宗教、醫療、生育、女性、南宋、明代、北京

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