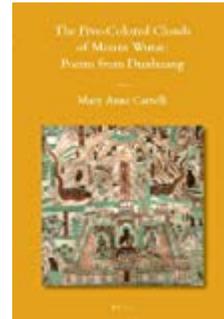




Mary Anne Cartelli. *The Five-Colored Clouds of Mount Wutai: Poems from Dunhuang.* Leiden: Brill, 2012. xii + 224 pp. \$129.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-90-04-18481-7.



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Published on H-Buddhism (August, 2013)

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The caves of Dunhuang 敦煌 contained the manuscripts of a series of poems about Mt. Wutai 五台, most likely dating from sometime between the late eighth century at the earliest and the start of the tenth century, plus a mural from the period 947 to 951 depicting Mt. Wutai. The massif of Mt. Wutai is well over a thousand kilometers to the east of Dunhuang. This linkage over such a distance is evidence of the popularity of Mt. Wutai as a Buddhist pilgrimage site in that period. Aspects of this popular religion of Buddhism can be glimpsed through these poems (although this is not a large corpus) and the mural.

Through a series of alterations to translations of Indic sÅtras dedicated to or involving Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom, Mt. Wutai came to be identified as the home of this bodhisattva who could manifest himself in innumerable ways (chiefly in visions, as an old man or five-colored clouds) to devotees who traveled to these rather forbidding mountains. This textual sleight-of-hand was married with a native Chinese tradition of venerating holy mountains where Daoist transcendents (à» xian) lived and magical plants grew. These latter elements occasionally surface in these poems.

After a brief survey of the Chinese poetry dealing

with sacred mountains, the development of landscape poetry, and some genres of poetry popular with Chinese Buddhists, Cartelli shifts attention to the legends and history of Mt. Wutai as seen in the literature, such as the records of pilgrims, several of whom were near contemporaries of the poem authors and the mural painter/s. These pilgrims include the Indian monk Rama Ārānīvasa (late ninth to early tenth century) and the Japanese monk Ennin 遍照, who visited the mountain between 838 and 847. Later, another Japanese monk, Jājin 鉴真, left a record of his 1072-1073 pilgrimage there. The earliest record of any length was by Huixiang 惠祥, who visited the mountain in 667. The later records include one by Yanyi 延一, of ca. 1060, another by Zhang Shangying 张尚盈 of his visit in 1088, and the last by Zhu Bian 朱bian (d. 1144).

These records, as well as sÅtra references, are used to help elucidate the content of the poems, which are carefully translated and provided with an edition of the original Chinese. The most important sÅtras that provide justification for these beliefs are the *Avataā'saka*, *Saddharma-puā'āgrika*, and *Vimalakārti-nirdeāa*, plus a number devoted to Mañjuśrī. One brief sÅtra, the *Mañjuśrī-parinirvāā'a* (*Foshuo Wenshushili ban-niepan jing*, 法华经疏, Taisho no. 463),

is translated to show that many of the miraculous motifs and beliefs related to Mañjuśrī on Mt. Wutai have a scriptural basis. These records aid in the identification of places and legendary incidents found in the poems.

The poems, as literature, are more related to the ornateness of the Han rhapsody, the complexity of the *Verses of Chu*, and the mysticism of Dark Learning verse (p. 53) than to the spare and restrained simplicity of poems influenced by Chan. They rather reflect the elaborate language of the *Avataśśaka* and so are crowded with sensation (p. 54). Some also allude to legendary events and the divine, but they do range from the more lyrical songs (*quzi*) and eulogies (*zan*) to the regulated verse of the monk Xuanben (all the other authors are anonymous). Doctrinally, most can be identified with popular *Avataśśaka* (Chinese, Huayan) belief. One series of eulogies relates the pilgrimage of the famous Pure Land Buddhist monk Fazhao, who went to Mt. Wutai in 770.

The main theme of this poetry is the transformations and manifestations of Mañjuśrī and his associates. These miraculous traces of Mañjuśrī were revealed to pilgrims in accord with their level of spiritual development and so the pilgrims are encouraged to aim for enlightenment. These poems then are didactic, and highlight faith and ascetic practices rather than mastery of theory, although the *Avataśśaka* ideas of interpenetration underpin many of the beliefs.

Following the chapters on the poems, Cartelli relates them to the wall painting of Mt. Wutai found in cave 61 at Dunhuang. This was not so much a map as a visual reminder for pilgrims, an evocation of mood. Cartelli concludes that the mural is an icon, just like the mountain itself. The poems and the mural then deal with the sacred, and so they are not narratives, nor are they traditional Chinese poems or landscape paintings.

One problem, that of the Silla prince who supposedly died on Mt. Wutai (pp. 93-94), is the subject of much inconclusive scholarly debate, but also opens up the question of the reproduction of sacred space, such as India's mythic Potalaka being recreated off the Chinese coast.[1] As history records no Silla princes going to China as Buddhists, except the controversial Musang (684-762), allegedly the third son of a Silla king who died in Sichuan, the accounts of a Silla prince on Mt. Wutai may be a reverse translocation of the legend of the Silla

prince who died on Mt. Odae (Chinese, Wutai) in Silla Korea. Mt. Odae was a deliberate reproduction of Mt. Wutai in Silla as part of a Silla Buddhist bid for superiority.[2] Notably, Yanyi ca. 1060 in his *Guang Qingliang zhuan* (T51.2099.1104a14-15) quoted a *Wenshu zhuan* by Haidong to justify the association of Mt. Wutai with Mañjuśrī (p.40). Cartelli equates Haidong with Yuanxiao (p. 40 note 26), in other words with the famous Silla Buddhist monk Wǎnhyo (617-686) (ǎ is pronounced Yuanxiao in Chinese and Wǎnhyo in Korean). However, although Haidong (Korean Haedong, which means "Eastern Sea") is used sometimes to indicate Wǎnhyo, it also may simply mean Korea. Moreover, the text named *Wenshu zhuan* is not extant, but it may have been part of one of Wǎnhyo's lost works on the *Avataśśaka*, or was simply a text of Korean (Haedong) provenance. In the latter case, the title of the text may well have been *Haidong Wenshu zhuan*. Whether or not Wǎnhyo was the author of the text, Yanyi's quotation of what was probably a Korean text suggests that there were exchanges of information or legends between Chinese and Koreans concerning Mt. Wutai or Mt. Odae. Is it possible then that the Chinese simply took a Korean account of a Silla prince on Mt. Odae and transplanted the event to Mt. Wutai? This appears more likely than a Silla prince going to Mt. Wutai, dying there, and there being no records of this matter in the Korean literature.

With the exception of such minor oversights, this is a book of solid scholarship, providing information on the colorful world of medieval Chinese Buddhist pilgrimage and popular belief in Mañjuśrī and Mt. Wutai, as well as insights into the history of popular Chinese Buddhist poetry.

Notes

[1]. See examples mentioned in Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 375.

[2]. For a better translation of the source than that used by Cartelli, see Michael Finch, trans., *Samguk Yusa* (St. Paul and Images), in *Korean Buddhist Culture: Accounts of a Pilgrimage, Monuments, and Eminent Monks*, ed. Roderick Whitfield, *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism*, vol. 10 (Seoul: Compilation Committee of Korean Buddhist Thought, 2012), 388-417.

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Citation: John Jorgensen. Review of Cartelli, Mary Anne, *The Five-Colored Clouds of Mount Wutai: Poems from Dunhuang*. H-Buddhism, H-Net Reviews. August, 2013.

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