

Protection of the Dharma: Daoxuan and Three Types of *Hufa* in the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*

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Abstract: This paper provides a discussion on the category of *hufa* 護法 ('protection of the Dharma') in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks], which was compiled by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667 CE), one of the most influential masters of Buddhist Vinaya (*lüshi* 律師) in the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) and the history of Chinese Buddhism. Compared to the previous Buddhist biographies, *hufa* is a new category added by Daoxuan. In this paper, I discuss three types of *hufa*: enhancing the saṅgha-emperor relationship, upholding Vinaya, and presenting miraculous responses. While enhancing the saṅgha-state relationship was the primary type of *hufa* among elite monks against external persecution in the capital city, upholding Vinaya was a way to protect the Dharma from internal decay of the saṅgha, and manifesting miracles was how Buddhists protected the Dharma and proselytized Buddhism in local society.

Keywords: Daoxuan, Dharma, *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, Vinaya, miracle

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*H**u**f**a* 護法 is a category in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks]. It was compiled by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667 CE), one of the most prolific and erudite masters of Buddhist Vinaya (*lüshi* 律師) in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Compared to the previous Buddhist biographies compiled by Huijiao 慧皎 (497–544 CE), *hufa* (‘protection of the Dharma’) is a new category and is generally regarded as a response to the long-term political turmoil and religious persecution during the sixth and seventh centuries.¹

Many of the monks in the *hufa* category have been studied as individuals in previous studies of the period. In those cases, the category *hufa* serves as a kind of historical database, from which individual cases and records are drawn to discuss religious persecution, Buddhist-state relationships, and the balance of power among political, military, and religious forces. This paper provides a deeper discussion of the term *hufa* as well as various types of *hufa*. I will first discuss the notion of protecting the Dharma in Daoxuan’s time. Then, drawing materials from both *hufa* and other categories of the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, I will examine three types of *hufa*: enhancing the saṅgha-emperor relationship, upholding the Vinaya, and presenting miraculous responses. Through this discussion, I will demonstrate how Daoxuan’s religious interests and pursuits are related to his choices of *hufa* activities in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, since he was himself an enthusiastic Dharma protector.

Hufa and Saṅgha-Emperor Relationship

In the biography of Shi Huiyuan 釋慧遠 (523–593) in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, when Daoxuan uses the term *hufa pusa* 護法菩薩 (Dharma protector bodhisattvas) for the first time, he suggests that the *hufa pusa* described in the ‘great sūtra’ must be like Shi Huiyuan.² The sūtra that Daoxuan refers to is most likely *Da banniepan jing* 大般

¹ Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 9.

² *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 8.490c25: 大經所云護法菩薩，應當如是。

涅槃經 [Skt. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*; hereafter ‘*Nirvāṇa Sūtra*’]. In the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, the protection of the Dharma after the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* is one of its central themes, and the term *bufa pusa* appears three times in both the northern and southern versions of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, and eight times in the six-fascicle version translated by Faxian 法顯 (338–423).³ The sūtra depicts various actions as examples of *bufa* in a world without the Buddha, including self-sacrifice, upholding precepts, maintaining a vegetarian diet, and protecting monks who act according to the Dharma.⁴

For Daoxuan, the world in his time was probably as—if not more—dangerous than the world without the Buddha in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. His writings deliver the sense of the decline of the true Dharma and the nostalgia for the flourishing of Buddhism in China’s past.⁵ The

³ In the *Taishō Shinsbū Daizōkyō*, the northern version is *T* no. 374 *Da ban-niepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (Skt. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), 40 *juan*, translated by Tan Wuchen 曇無讖 (385–433), while the southern version is *T* no. 375 *Da ban-niepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), 36 *juan*, modified by Huiyan 慧嚴 (363–443) et al. The six-fascicle version is *T* no. 376 *Foshuo daban niyuan jing* 佛說大般泥洹經 (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), translated by Faxian. In this paper, I use Mark Blum’s translation of the northern version: Blum, *The Nirvāṇa Sutra*. For a translation of the southern version, see Yamamoto, *The Mahayana Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sutra*.

⁴ For example, in the chapter entitled ‘Longevity’ (Ch. *Shouming pin* 壽命品), Cunda indicated that bodhisattvas who protect the Dharma should adhere to the true Dharma and be willing to give up their own lives (Blum, *The Nirvāṇa Sutra*, 42–43). In the chapter on the ‘Nature of the Tathāgata’ (*Rulaxing pin* 如來性品), the Buddha claimed that the bodhisattva who protects the Dharma should not eat meat (Blum, *The Nirvāṇa Sutra*, 110–11). Later in the same chapter, the Buddha further teaches that bodhisattvas who protect the true-Dharma would regulate and discipline precept-breaking monks even if doing so required the Dharma-protecting bodhisattvas to violate precepts superficially (Ibid., 187). In the chapter on ‘the Adamantine Body’ (*Jingangshen pin* 金剛身品), the Buddha allowed protectors of the true-Dharma to take up swords and other weapons to protect the Dharma preachers (Ibid., 97).

⁵ In several writings, Daoxuan regarded previous dynasties, especially the

political environment also generated uncertainty and insecurity among Buddhists before and during Daoxuan's time. Due to the previous political turmoil and the anti-Buddhist persecutions during the Northern Wei 北魏 (386–535) and Northern Zhou 北周 (557–581) dynasties,⁶ Buddhists in the Sui (581–618) and early Tang Dynasty

Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577), as occurring in the *xiangzheng* 像正 age. Examples include his evaluation on *bufa* in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2060, 50: 640b23: 通括像正任持, and in the *Sifenlü shanfan buque sui ji jiemo*, *T* no. 1808, 40: 492a16–17: 自慧日西隱, 法水東流, 時兼像正, 人通淳薄.

Buddhists in medieval China had various ways of interpreting and dividing the tripartite temporal division of the Buddha Dharma: *zhengfa* 正法 (True Dharma), *xiangfa* 像法 (Semblance Dharma), and *mofa* 末法 (Final Dharma). During the period of the True Dharma, Buddhist followers are still able to practice according to the true teachings. During the period of the Semblance Dharma, Buddhist practices and teachings still look good on the surface, but spiritual corruption has started. During the Final Dharma, the actual practice of Buddhism dies out and nobody is able to attain enlightenment. See *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. 'Zheng xiang mo' 正像末 for details.

It is unclear at which age Daoxuan believed he was living. Chen Jinhua argues that, unlike most of Daoxuan's contemporaries who believed they were living under the *xiangfa* age, Daoxuan believed his time was part of the *mofa* age. He referred to that age as *xiangji* 像季 (the end of *xiangfa* epoch) in his preface to the *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 [An Abridged and Explanatory Commentary on the Four Part Vinaya]: *T* no. 1840, 40: 1a9: 逮于像季時轉澆訛. Occasionally, Daoxuan also uses the rather ambiguous expression *xiangmo* 像末, which could be interpreted as a reference to either the end of *xiangfa* epoch or to both the *xiangfa* and *mofa* epochs. Examples include: *Sifenlü shanbu sui ji jiemo*, *T* no. 1808, 40: 494a1: 況今像末焉可輕哉義無怠慢; *Zhongtianshu sheweiguo zhibuansi tujing*, *T* no. 1899, 45: 882b14: 泊乎像末之運. See Chen, 'An Alternative View', 338, note 16. In the note, Chen quotes from James Benn, who leaves an open interpretation of *xiangmo* in Daoxuan's evaluation on the chapter of *yishen* 遺身: Benn, 'Self-immolators', 123, note 131.

⁶ The persecution initiated by Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei began in 446. The persecution during the Northern Zhou Dynasty started in 573 and ended upon Emperor Zhou's demise in 578. For detailed studies, see Shi, 'Bud-

(618–907) were very sensitive towards the relationship between saṅgha and state. The saṅgha-state or saṅgha-emperor relationship may have been especially tense in northern China, where large-scale anti-Buddhist persecutions occurred twice. Such concerns are addressed in Daoxuan's *hufa* section, as were discussions of other priorities such as defeating Daoists in debates and gaining imperial support.

Based on the writings in the *hufa* category, it seems that maintaining a solid saṅgha-emperor relationship in Daoxuan's current age was even more difficult than before. The *hufa* category is divided into two parts. The first part contains eight main biographies and four supplementary ones,⁷ and covers the period from the division of Northern Wei into the Eastern Wei (534–550) and Western Wei (535–557) to the end of the Sui dynasty. In this part, the primary way for Buddhists in the capital cities to win imperial support is to defeat Daoists through court debates. The second part of *hufa*, which contains ten main biographies and five supplementary ones, focuses on the beginning of the Tang dynasty. Compared to the emperors in the first part, Tang emperors seem to be a more direct and urgent concern for Daoxuan and his contemporaries.

In the first part of the *hufa* section, most emperors were either pro-Buddhism or tried to treat Buddhism and Daoism equally. During the court debates, emperors usually served as initiators and mediators, seeking a more persuasive and beneficial tradition for their rule.⁸ For example, in the biography of Shi Tanxian 釋曇顯 (died after 559), Daoxuan notes that Buddhists and Daoists were competing for superiority in front of Emperor Wenxuan 文宣帝 (529–559) during the Tianbao 天保 era (550–559). In the end, Emperor Wenxuan announced the Buddhists' triumph over the Daoists. The leading Daoist Lu Xiujing's 陸修靜 disciples gave up and begged the monks for refuge.⁹ Those who did not

dhism and the State'.

⁷ For details, see the section 'Miraculous Response' of this paper and note 52.

⁸ For more studies on court debates, see Kohn, *Laughing at the Tao*; Assandri, 'Inter-Religious Debate'.

⁹ The only Lu Xiujing I could locate in historical records was active during the fifth century (406–477). The time does not match Daoxuan's record in

follow the imperial order to take the tonsure were executed:

Emperor Wenxuan sat on the throne and verified the good and evil with his eyes. On that day, his (Lu Xiuqing's) disciples all gave up the false to follow the true, pitifully begging to be saved. Those who did not arouse the mind [to follow Buddhism] were ordered to take the tonsure by imperial decree. Thus, those being beheaded were more than one. 文宣處座，目驗臧否，其徒爾日皆捨邪從正，求哀濟度。未發心者，勅令染剃，故斬首者非一。¹⁰

When it comes to the anti-Buddhist persecution of the Northern Zhou Dynasty, Daoxuan still portrays Emperor Wu mainly as a mediator of the court debates, even though his favour towards Daoism is noted:

In the fourth year of the Tianhe 天和 era (569), the year of *jichou*, on the fifteenth day of the third month (April 16, 569), an imperial decree called more than two thousand eminent Buddhists, Daoists, Confucian scholars, and officials to court. The emperor ascended the imperial throne, judging the three teachings to decide abolishment and establishment by himself. 至天和四年，歲在己丑，三月十五日，勅召有德眾僧名儒道士文武百官二千餘人於正殿，帝昇御座，親量三教優劣廢立。¹¹

At the time, Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou dynasty intended to abolish Buddhism and keep Daoism. Thus, [he] ordered all the monks and Daoists to assemble, tested them and kept the superior ones. 會周武帝廢佛法欲存道教。乃下詔集諸僧道士，試取優長者留。¹²

The next morning, the imperial decree was announced. Both [Buddhist and Daoist] teachings were abolished but [their clergies

Tanxian's biography. There are several inconsistencies in this biography, including the temporal conflict and the ambiguous identity of Lu Jingxiu. I have a discussion on this issue in my Master's thesis. See Zhao, 'Protection of the Dharma', 23–24.

¹⁰ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 625b25–27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 628b20–23.

¹² *Ibid.*, 631b21–22.

were still being] regarded highly. 明旦出勅, 二教俱廢, 仍相器重.¹³

On the other hand, in the second part of *bufa*, emperors are the opponents of Buddhism, and court debates between Buddhists and Daoists are seen less frequently. With the pro-Daoist emperors of the Tang dynasty, Buddhism's situation was not favourable. Although Daoists remained the major external threat to and rival of Chinese Buddhists, confrontations between Buddhists and Daoists had shifted from formal court debates to polemics and memorials that they presented to the emperors.

For example, in the biography of Tang monk Shi Zhishi 釋智實 (601–638), Zhishi was in direct conflict with Emperor Taizong. In the eleventh year of the Zhenguan 貞觀 era (637), Emperor Taizong decreed that Daoist clergy should take precedence over Buddhist monks and nuns in all ceremonies and rankings. Zhishi, together with Fachang 法常 (567–645) and nine other eminent monks, presented a memorial to argue that Daoists followed the notorious rebels known as the 'Yellow Turbans' rather than Laozi, and practiced evil trickery. However, Taizong had made up his mind and sent an official to announce that whoever disobeyed the imperial decree would face punishment. All the other monks silenced themselves except Zhishi, who was beaten with a heavy stick as punishment and later passed away at Zongchi Monastery 總持寺 at age thirty-eight due to his wounds and subsequent sickness.¹⁴ For the first time in the whole *bufa* category, we see the death of a monk as a direct result of imperial court punishment.¹⁵

The biography of Shi Falin 釋法琳 (571–640) is another case in which we see direct and violent conflicts between the monks and the emperor.¹⁶ In the thirteenth year of the Zhenguan era (639), the Daoist

¹³ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 632a20.

¹⁴ Weinstein has a study of the monks' reaction to Taizong's decree of 637, including Zhishi and Falin; see Weinstein, *Buddhism under the Tang*, 16–17.

¹⁵ Another major part of Zhishi's biography is about his conflict against the monk Faya 法雅 (?–629), who coerced monks to take up military service. For a detailed study, see Chen, 'A "Villain-Monk"'.
¹⁶ For more studies on Falin, see Wong, 'A Study of the Life and Thought of

Qin Shiyong 秦世英 (active 627–649) slandered Falin out of jealousy, reporting that Falin had denigrated the imperial lineage by criticizing Daoists. Falin was arrested and initially sentenced to death. He was eventually expelled to Yi Prefecture 益部 and passed away on the way there due to sickness. Daoxuan did not make a clear connection between Zhishi and Falin. However, Weinstein points out that Falin had also participated in the protest against Emperor Taizong's decree of 637, which gave priority to Daoism over Buddhism and caused hostility between Daoists and the emperor.¹⁷

It is worth noting that in the biographies that Daoxuan collected for the first part of the *hufa* category, no monk is described as being maltreated or killed by any northern emperors because of their religious dissent—even during the anti-Buddhist persecution of the Northern Zhou. As Zhang Jian 張箭 has argued, the persecution in the Northern Zhou Dynasty was relatively mild compared to the previous one ordered by Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei Dynasty, and the government massacred no monks.¹⁸ The only monk whose death is related to religious persecution is Shi Jing'ai 釋靜藹 (534–578), who committed suicide and is categorized as a self-immolator rather than a Dharma protector in the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 [A Forest of Pearls from the Dharma Garden] by Daoshi 道世 (c. 607–684).¹⁹ In comparison, in the second part, monks such Falin and Zhishi are described as being captured, punished, and expelled by the emperors or even passing away due to torture. Based on Daoxuan's collections and writings, it seems that Tang monks experienced more confrontational relationships with the emperors when they were trying to enhance the saṅgha-emperor relationship.

Below is a table of the significant direct conflicts in each biography of the *hufa* chapter. While in Part One there are still direct conflicts, such as court debates between Daoist and Buddhists, pro-Daoist emperors in Part Two almost become the near-exclusive threat to Buddhists.

Falin'; Jülch, *Die Apologetischen Schriften*.

¹⁷ Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, 17.

¹⁸ Zhang, *Sanwuyizong*, 101–02.

¹⁹ Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 14.

Table 1: Monks in Part One of *Hufa* Section, *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan*

No.	Name	Dynasty	Monastery Affiliations	Direct Conflict**	
				Daoist	Emperor
1	Shi Tanwuzui 釋曇無最 (died after 521)	N. Wei 北魏	Rongjue Monastery 融覺寺	√	
2	*Shi Daozhen 釋道臻 (circa. 466–557)	W. Wei 西魏	Great Zhongxing Monastery 大中興寺		
3	Shi Tanxian 釋曇顯 (died after 559)	N. Qi 北齊	無定所 recluse <i>śramaṇa</i>	√	
4	Shi Jing'ai 釋靜謫 (534–578)	N. Zhou 北周	終南山避世峰 Recluse Peak at Mount Zhongnan	√	√
5	Shi Dao'an 釋道安 (died before 581)	N. Zhou 北周	Great Zhihu Monastery 大陟帖寺, Great Zhongxing Monastery 大中興寺	√	√
6	Shi Sengmian 釋僧勣 (d.u.)	N. Zhou 北周	Yuanguo Monastery 願果寺		√
7	Shi Sengmeng 釋僧猛 (circa. 507–588)	Sui 隋	Great Xingshan Monastery 大興善寺 (previously Zhihu Monastery 前陟帖寺) Yunhua Monastery 雲花寺		√
8	*Shi Zhixuan 釋智炫 (circa. 488–605)	Sui 隋	Xiao'ai Monastery 孝愛寺	√	√

Table 2: Monks in Part Two of *Hufa* Section, *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan*

No.	Name	Dynasty	Monastery Affiliations	Direct Conflict	
				Daoist	Emperor
1	*Shi Tanxuan 釋曇選 (531–625)	Tang 唐	Xingguo Monastery 興國寺		√
2	* Shi Fatong 釋法通 (d. before 627)	Tang 唐	<i>śramaṇa</i> , Tonghua Monastery 通化寺		
3	Shi Mingshan 釋明瞻 (559–628)	Tang 唐	Daji Monastery 大集寺, Fazang Monastery 法藏寺, Great Xingshan Monastery 大興善寺, Zhiju Monastery 智炬寺		√
4	Shi Huichen 釋慧乘 (555–630)	Tang 唐	Zhuangyan Monastery 莊嚴寺, Shengguang Monastery 勝光寺		√
5	Shi Zhishi 釋智實 (601–638)	Tang 唐	Great Zongchi Temple 大總持寺		√
6	*Shi Hongzhi 釋弘智 (595–655)	Tang 唐	Jingfa Monastery 靜法寺, Zhixiang Monastery 至相寺		
7	Shi Falin 釋法琳 (571–640)	Tang 唐	Longtian Monastery 龍田寺		√
8	*Shi Daohui 釋道會 (circa. 583–652)	Tang 唐	Yanyuan Monastery 嚴遠寺, Shengzhong Monastery 聖種寺	√	√
9	*Shi Zhiqin 釋智勤 (586–659)	Tang 唐	Great Xingguo Monastery 大興國寺		
10	Shi Cizang 釋慈藏 (d.u.)	Tang 唐	Shengguang sub-monastery 勝光別院, Wangfeng Monastery 王芬寺 (新羅)		

* Monks whose biographies are not in the *Tripitaka* editions before Southern Song Dynasty.
** Direct conflict here refers to face-to-face debates, arguments, or memorials.

Daoxuan deeply understood the importance and difficulty of winning royal support, and he was defending the Dharma in the same way as the monks he praised in the *hufa* chapter. Traditionally, Daoxuan is regarded as a Buddhist Vinaya master. In the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 [Song Biographies of Eminent Monks], Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) categorized Daoxuan in the category of *minglü* 明律 (Vinaya Exegetes). However, Daoxuan was also a leading Dharma protector, especially when staying at one of the imperial monasteries, Ximing Monastery 西明寺. On the fifteenth day of the fourth month in the second year of the Longshuo 龍碩 era (May 8, 662), Emperor Gaozong ordered officials to discuss his decree ordering all Buddhist and Daoist monks and nuns to bow to the emperor, empress, crown prince, and their parents.²⁰ This imperial decree aroused strong resistance among Buddhists in the capital city, among whom Daoxuan was a prominent leader.

Daoxuan's concern for protecting Buddhism from its critics at court is also reflected in another of his major works: *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 [Expanded Collection on the Propagation and Clarification (of Buddhism)]. In the *Guang hongming ji*, Daoxuan collected imperial decrees, memorials, and petitions from Emperor Gaozong, officials, and leading monks in the capital. On the twenty-first day of the fourth month (May 14, 662), the monk Weixiu 威秀 (circa. 613–712) of the Great Zhuangyan Monastery 大莊嚴寺, together with about two hundred monks in the capital, presented a memorial to the emperor to protest the decree.²¹ Upon hearing it, Gaozong said he would order the court to discuss the issue before making the final decree. Monks gathered at Ximing Monastery to work on petitions together. Following Weixiu's memorial, Daoxuan and other monks presented petitions to Prince Pei (the Governor of Yong Prefecture 雍州牧沛王), Madam Yang (the Lady of Rong 榮國夫人楊氏; Daoxuan sent two petitions to her), and to all the councilors and executive officials of the central government.²² In both his petitions to Prince

²⁰ *Guang Hongming ji*, T no. 2103, 50: 284a15–27: 今上制沙門等致拜君親勅。For detailed studies on the decree, see Reinders, 'Buddhist Rituals'.

²¹ T no. 2103, 50: 284a28–c3. 大莊嚴寺僧威秀等上沙門不合拜俗表。

Pei and to the central government officials, Daoxuan points out that Buddhism in China had been persecuted and Chinese Buddhists had been forced to bow to secular authorities at various times, all of which happened under policies that he equated with tyrannical leadership. In his petition to the officials, Daoxuan summarized the history of Buddhism in China since the time of the Zhou Dynasty, proclaiming the superiority of Buddhism over Daoism and praising emperors and officials who had promoted and protected Buddha Dharma from political persecution and Daoist criticism.

Daoxuan's petitions reflect his understanding of the underlying political tensions that had motivated Emperor Gaozong to promulgate his anti-Buddhist decree. Emperor Gaozong had a long-term connection to the eminent monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) and a favourable impression of Buddhism ever since he was the crown prince. However, since 655, when Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705) became the empress, Gaozong started to lose administrative control of the central government. Since Wu Zetian and her family were well-known Buddhist patrons, Gaozong issued the decree to combat Wu Zetian's power and flush out the pro-Buddhist political factions in the court.²³ Prince Pei, the Governor of Yong Prefecture, was Li Xian 李賢 (654–684), the sixth son of Gaozong and the second son of Empress Wu Zetian. He was one of Gaozong's favorite sons. At the age of two, Li Xian was given the title of Governor of Yong Prefecture; and at the age of seven, he was titled 'Prince Pei'. He was around seven years old when Daoxuan sent him the petition. Lady Rong was the mother of

²² 'Ximingsi seng Daoxuan deng shang Yongzhoumu Peiwang Xian lun shamen buying baisu qi' 西明寺僧道宣等上雍州牧沛王論沙門不應拜俗啟, *ibid.*, 284c4–25; 'Ximingsi seng Daoxuan deng shang Rongguo furen Yangshi qinglun shamen buhe baisushi qi' 西明寺僧道宣等上榮國夫人楊氏請論沙門不合拜俗啟, *ibid.*, 284c26–285a22; 'Ximingsi seng Daoxuan deng shang Rongguo furen Yangshi qinglun baishi qi' 西明寺僧道宣等上榮國夫人楊氏請論拜事啟, *Guang Hongming ji*, T no. 2103, 50: 290b22–c4; 'Ximingsi seng Daoxuan deng xu fojiao longti shijian zhu zaifu dengzhuang' 西明寺僧道宣等序佛教隆替事簡諸宰輔等狀, *ibid.*, 285a23–286c9.

²³ Chen, "Zhibai junqin".

Empress Wu Zetian and was also an important patron of Buddhism at the time. She also had powerful political connections with imperial officials and aristocrats. By presenting petitions to Li Xian and Lady Rong, Daoxuan sent a message to Empress Wu. Although Empress Wu did not appear in official documents or Buddhist texts regarding the decree and petitions, she and her political supporters and pro-Buddhist officials and nobles in the capital city played a significant role in the competition between Buddhism and Daoism in Chang'an. In other words, the competition between Buddhism and Daoism at the imperial court level was associated with the political struggle between Wu Zetian (and her supporters) and Gaozong (and the pro-imperial Li officials).

Daoxuan's action in the above incident epitomizes the sort of activity that he promotes in the *bufa* category. At that time (662), Daoxuan had officially finished writing the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, and a large part of his petition matches his writing in the *bufa*. It is clear that for Daoxuan, *bufa* is associated with protecting the Dharma from political suppression and gaining imperial patronage for the saṅgha. It is worth noting that most of the monks who had protected the Dharma from Daoists' accusations and state persecution were Buddhist clerics from the capital cities. They were the leaders of the Buddhist monastic communities and had a connection with the emperors. Weinstein points out that the Tang policy towards Buddhism before the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion in 755 was characterized by expedient patronage and increasingly restrictive control.²⁴ Monks who were categorized or praised as protectors of the Dharma by Daoxuan were those who received imperial patronage directly and stood in the frontier when criticisms came; Daoxuan himself was one of them.

Upholding the Vinaya

According to the the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, upholding precepts and disciplining precept-breaking monks are ways to protect the Dharma

²⁴ Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, 5.

from the internal decay of Buddhism.²⁵ Maintaining the Buddhist regulations or upholding the Vinaya is not an explicit theme in the *bufa* category, but Daoxuan values it as a significant action of protecting the Dharma. In the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, Daoxuan praises several monks as *bufa pusa* 護法菩薩 (Dharma-protecting bodhisattva) or *bufa kaishi* 護法開士 (Dharma-protecting enlightened hero),²⁶ but only one of them, Shi Cizang 釋慈藏,²⁷ is in the *bufa* category. Moreover, the central theme of Cizang's biography is his contribution to teaching Vinaya.

Shi Cizang was from Silla, and his ancestors were descendants of the San Han 三韓 (Ma Han 馬韓, Jin Han 辰韓, and Byeon Han 卞韓).²⁸ He was born in a high official family in Jin Han but renounced the householder's life after his parents passed away. In the twelfth year of Zhenguan era 貞觀 (628), Cizang came to the Tang capital city with about ten disciples and lived in an independent cloister of the Shengguang Monastery 勝光別院. In the seventeenth year of Zhenguan era (633), the government of Cizang's home country sent an envoy to invite Cizang back to teach Buddhism, and the imperial court of Jinhan ordered monasteries and branch temples built for Cizang. Cizang regulated the Buddhist communities, teaching them monastic discipline and Buddhist scriptures.

In the biography of Cizang, Daoxuan writes:

[Cizang] lectured on the *She dasheng lun* [Summary of the Great Vehicle] the whole summer, and later preached the *Pusa jie ben* [Book of Bodhisattva Precepts] at the Huanglong Monastery. ... Up to the

²⁵ See note 4.

²⁶ *Kaishi* means the hero who is enlightened, or who opens the way of enlightenment. It is usually another way of referring to a bodhisattva. *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. 'Kaishi'.

²⁷ Here I spell Cizang's name following the Chinese romanization. As a native Korean, Cizang is romanized as Jajang in Korean.

²⁸ San Han refers to the three Han of the southern part of the Korean peninsula. It was also used as a general name for the Korean Peninsula. *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. 'San Han'.

day when the assembly ended, those who received precepts from him rolled in like clouds. ... He taught the precepts every half month, giving confession and forgiveness accordingly. He held comprehensive inspection in the spring and winter, letting them keep the precepts and ceasing wrongdoing. He also sent inspectors. He traveled among the monasteries to instruct, encourage, and expound the Dharma. ... based on those actions I say that the *hufa pusa* is this very person. [釋慈藏] 一夏講攝大乘論, 晚又於皇龍寺講菩薩戒本. ... 及散席日, 從受戒者其量雲從. ... 半月說戒, 依律懺除. 春冬總試, 令知持犯. 又置巡使, 遍歷諸寺, 誠勵說法. ... 據斯以言, 護法菩薩即斯人矣.²⁹

The above quotation clearly shows that Daoxuan regarded Cizang as a Dharma protector bodhisattva because of his contribution to regulating the Buddhist communities, teaching monastic disciplines, and giving precepts. Cizang's biography is distinct from the previous biographies because there was no confrontation between him and any Daoist or other non-Buddhist opponents. Although Daoxuan records eighteen monks as exemplars of protecting the Dharma in the *hufa* category, only Cizang received the title of *hufa pusa*.

At the end of Cizang's biography, Daoxuan adds a supplementary biography of the Silla monk Yuansheng 圓勝 (Kor. Wonseung, d.u.), who was also originally from Jinhan and came to the capital area during the beginning of the Zhenguan era. Yuansheng was also a follower of the Vinaya School, for Daoxuan compares him with Cizang, noting that he taught the Vinaya to a wide audience after he went back to Silla and 'held the protection of the Dharma as his intention' 護法為心.³⁰

²⁹ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 639c9–639c22.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 640a4. Here I interpret the word *xin* 心 as the initial arousal of the intention to achieve enlightenment (*chufaxin* 初發心), which is probably associated with the path of bodhisattva. In Shi Sengchou's 釋僧稠 (480–560) biography in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, Sengchou mentioned that *hufa weixin* is the bodhisattva vow (T no. 2060, 50: 554b9–10: 稠曰: 菩薩弘誓, 護法為心). Besides in Yuansheng's and Sengchou's biographies, the term *hufa weixin* also appears in the biography of Shi Huicheng of the *hufa* section, in which Daoxuan describes Huicheng as *hufa weixin* (*Ibid.*, 634c1).

Besides Cizang and Yuansheng, another example of upholding the Vinaya to protect the Dharma is found in the biography of Shi Xuanwan 釋玄琬 (563–637), who is also regarded as a Dharma protector bodhisattva by Daoxuan.

Xuanwan's biography is in the category of *minglü* 明律 (Vinaya Exegetes).³¹ He had followed Master Tanyan 曇延 (516–588), studied the *Sifenlü* 四分律 (Skt. *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*) under Vinaya master Hongzun 洪遵 (530–608) and *Shelun* 攝論 (Skt. *Mahāyānasamgrahaśāstra*) under dhyāna master Tanqian 曇遷 (543–608).³² After studying with Hongzun for three years, Xuanwan could expound on the Vinaya texts extensively.³³ He led the ordination ceremony every spring and explained the regulations. At the beginning of the Zhenguan era (627), Xuanwan transmitted bodhisattva precepts to the crown prince and other princes.³⁴ Daoxuan notes that more than three thousand Chinese and non-Chinese monks and nuns received the full ordination from Xuanwan, and more than two hundred thousand aristocratic families and their servants took refuge with him.³⁵ Xuanwan's teaching and lineage were passed down, and for those reasons, Daoxuan praises him as a Dharma protector bodhisattva.³⁶

In the cases of Cizang and Xuanwan, upholding the Vinaya is one way to protect the Dharma from internal decay of the Buddhist community. In the biography of Shi Huiman 釋慧滿 (589–642), we see a more complicated overlap between protecting the Dharma and upholding the Vinaya. Huiman's name appears in Daoxuan's evaluation (*lun* 論) of the *hufa* section when he praises Huiman for his courage in 'carrying robes among the assembly of the court' 載衣於

³¹ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 616a1–617c12.

³² Hongzun was a master of the Vinaya school during the Sui Dynasty, being well-known for his teaching on *Sifenlü* 四分律. His biography is in the first part of the chapter of *minglü* 明律 in *ibid.*, 571b12–574b6.

³³ *Ibid.*, 616a7: 涉律三載, 便事敷演.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 616b7–8: 有勅召為皇太子及諸王等受菩薩戒.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 616b24–26: 華夷諸國僧尼, 從受具戒者三千餘人. 王公僚佐爰及皂隸, 從受歸戒者二十餘萬.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 616b2–3: 並傳嗣于今住持不絕. 從此而求, 可謂護法菩薩也.

朝伍.³⁷ His biography, on the other hand, is in the category of *minglü*. While categorizing Huiman as a Vinaya exegete, two major stories in his biography are about how he defended the Dharma against Daoists and imperial families by criticizing and regulating precept-breaking nuns.

The first case happened with nuns of the Jixian Monastery, who had statues of Laozi and (Daoist) sages being built and were worshiping the statues privately. The nuns also extensively invited Daoists to celebrate in the hall. Huiman publicly rebuked them and stopped their activity, and proclaimed the punishment of expulsion on the nuns. Huiman also ordered the Daoist statue to be brought back to the Taiyuan Temple and had it recast with the Buddha's characteristics to warn other nuns. Although this case relates to precept-breaking nuns, Daoxuan may have wanted emphasize the superiority of Buddhism over Daoism as a historical fact, as he quotes a similar case from the Northern Zhou Dynasty to explain Huiman's decision to recast the statues:

In the past, Duke of Zhao of the Northern Zhou Dynasty was governing the Shu area. There were Daoists who built a statue of Laozi with statues of bodhisattvas attending on the side. Monks reported this incident. The duke judged that, 'The [statues of] bodhisattvas have been completed and should not be damaged. The Heavenly Lord could be promoted with one official rank'. Therefore, monks welcomed it to the temple and changed it to the Buddha's appearance. The cases are the same. 昔周趙王治蜀, 有道士造老君像, 而以菩薩俠侍. 僧以事聞, 王乃判曰: 菩薩已成不可壞, 天尊宜進一階官. 乃迎于寺中, 改同佛相. 例相似也.³⁸

³⁷ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 641a3. It refers to Huiman's participation in the protest against Emperor Taizong's decree of 637, which gave priority to Daoism over Buddhism. See *ibid.*, 618c10–13: 及駕巡東部, 下勅李眾在前. 滿集京僧二百人詣闕陳諫, 各脫袈裟置於頂上, 擬調達之行五法. 舉朝目矚, 不敢通表. 乃至關首, 重勅方迴.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 618b20–23.

By quoting from the Duke of Zhao, Daoxuan has made it clear that the recasting of Daoist statues into Buddhist ones was historically justified, and that Daoism was inferior to Buddhism.³⁹ While precept-breaking nuns were punished by Huiman in the story, Daoism was also the target from which Huiman was defending the Dharma.

The second case involves a conflict between monks in the capital city and the imperial family for a nun named Huishang 慧尚 from the Zhengguo Nunnery 證果寺, who took away a monastery that belonged to monks. In this incident, the imperial court granted Huishang support and protection. Daoxuan notes that Huishang was ‘favored by luck and visited the inner palace with great frequency’ 僥倖一時, 宮禁還往.⁴⁰ When Emperor Gaozu passed away in the ninth year of the Zhenguan era (635), the imperial court decided to set up an ancestral hall for the imperial spirit at Huishang’s residential nunnery and moved nuns from their nunnery to the Yueai Monastery 月愛寺 in Chang’an. The conversion of the monastery into a nunnery caused complaints among leading monks in the capital. Huiman publicly announced the expulsion of Huishang from the monastic community based on *fa* 法 (law or Dharma):

[Hui]Man thereupon gathered more than two hundred monks,

³⁹ Due to the lack of information, it is difficult to verify whether or not Daoxuan’s example is a real historical case. Yet it is trustworthy that Duke Zhao had ordered Buddhist statues being carved when he was in Shu. Duke of Zhao was Yuwen Zhao 宇文招, the younger brother of Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou Dynasty. He was given the title of Duke of Zhao and appointed as the Command-in-chief of Prefecture Yi during the Baoding era, the first era of Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou Dynasty. The anti-Buddhist persecution had not started yet at that time, and archeologists have found Buddhist statues in the Shu during this period. According to note 17 in Dong and He, ‘Chengdu Wanfosi’, a statue of Aśoka that was unearthed in the Sichuan area has an inscription on the back indicating it was built under the order of State Duke Zhao of Zhao 趙國公招. The statue of Aśoka proves that Buddhism received government patronage under the rule of Duke Zhao in Sichuan area during the early Northern Zhou period.

⁴⁰ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 618b23–24.

including the three bonds⁴¹ and noble ones, from the capital city, carried out the punishment of expulsion and said: ‘Ever since the Buddha Dharma spread in the world, there has never been any group of nuns who took away the monks’ temple by relying on government forces.⁴² Since it is against the Dharma, [those who conduct it] should be expelled from the community, should not join the four types of monastic communities and various Dharma services. If anyone speaks for [the nun Huishang] and her assemblies, it will result in the same punishment’. The regulations and orders have been carried out, right and wrong revealed naturally. 滿遂構集京室三綱大德等二百餘人, 行於擯黜云: ‘自佛法流世, 未有尼眾倚官勢力奪僧寺者。既是非法, 宜出眾外, 不預四眾還往及諸法事。若有與尚眾言論者, 亦同此罰。制令既行, 是非自顯。⁴³

After Huishang complained to both the Eastern Palace and all the court officials, Du Zhenglun 杜正倫 (?–658), the head of the Household Administration of the Heir Apparent,⁴⁴ was sent by the Eastern Palace to rescind the banishment. Huiman still insisted that the punishment was made according to *fa*:

Man said, ‘His Highness firmly holds onto impartial laws, while Huiman truly judge sentiments and principles. Today (the case) violates the principles but attaches to sentiment. This case constructs

⁴¹ *Sangang* 三綱 (the three bonds) refer to the top three directors of a monastery, which usually include the temple head (*sizhu* 寺主) who manages the temporal affairs, the rector (*weinuo* 維那) who is charged with enforcing rules and maintaining discipline, and the elder or senior monk (*shangzuo* 上座) (Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 571a).

⁴² Since there was no punctuation in the original sentence ‘未有尼眾倚官勢力奪僧寺者’, it could also be read as ‘未有尼眾倚官勢, 力奪僧寺者’: There has never been any group of nuns who forcibly took away the monks’ temple by relying on the government power. The tone is slightly harsher in this version.

⁴³ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 618b26–c2.

⁴⁴ The title *zhanshi* 詹事 literally means ‘overseer of affairs’. It referred to the head or supervisor of the Household of the Heir Apparent, and sometimes for the Empress. See Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 107.

a disorder. Expulsion is originally to punish the offence, yet the offence has not been repented. Examining it carefully, I dare not to listen to the order'. Thus, picking up the sitting cloth, he respectfully retreated. 滿曰：'殿下住持正法，慧滿據法情理。今則違理附情，此則規模一亂。擯本治罪，罪仍未悛，據此而詳，未敢聞旨'。便捉坐具，逡巡而退。⁴⁵

However, under pressure from the imperial household, most monks agreed to rescind the expulsion. Daoxuan notes that Huiman was disappointed by his fellow monks, lamenting the discord in the community. Daoxuan supported Huiman's position. By praising Huiman in the evaluation of *hufa*, Daoxuan confirms Huiman as an exemplar of Dharma protection. In his commentary on the *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 [An Abridged and Explanatory Commentary on the Dharmaguptaka-vinaya], Daoxuan emphasizes the connection between holding precepts and protecting the Dharma:

The *Nirvāṇa* exhaustively discusses the seven *karmans*,⁴⁶ then broadly elucidates the aspects of protecting the Dharma, saying: when a dharma-holding bhikṣu sees someone who damages the Dharma, he banishes and reprimands [that person], punishing and correcting based on the principles. This person would receive immeasurable merit. 涅槃盛論七羯磨，後廣明護法之相云：有持戒比丘，見壞法者，

⁴⁵ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 618c4–c7.

⁴⁶ A list of the seven *karmans* is in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*: T no. 374, 12: 380c22–23: 於毀法者，與驅遣羯磨，訶責羯磨，置羯磨，舉罪羯磨，不可見羯磨，滅羯磨，未捨惡見羯磨。English translation is available in Blum, *The Nirvāṇa Sutra*, 78: For those who are corrupting the dharma, my punishment will be to instigate ecclesiastical action as follows: banishment from the monastery for improper conduct, censure for quarreling with fellow monks, probation for too many precept violations, restriction of activities for offensive behavior toward a householder, suspension for not recognizing one's own transgressions, revocation of monastic privileges for not confessing precept violations, and suspension for not abandoning wrong views.

驅遣訶責, 依法懲治, 當知是人, 得福無量.⁴⁷

Yet neither Huiman nor Daoxuan elaborated on which specific Buddhist precept or regulation did Huishang exactly offend. At least, we cannot find the answer in Daoxuan's record. Several non-Buddhist documents attest to the relocation of Zhengguo Nunnery. The *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 [Institutional History of the Tang Dynasty] indicates that in the ninth year of Zhenguan era (635), the Zhengguo Monastery was abolished in order to build the ancestral hall of Gaozu.⁴⁸ The *Chang'an zhi* says the Zhengguo Nunnery was relocated to Chongde Ward 崇德坊 in the ninth year of Zhenguan era, and Gaozu's ancestral hall, Jing'an Palace 靜安宮, was built on the site.⁴⁹ Both the documents simply depict the relocation as a result of imperial decree, and neither the monks' disagreement nor the nuns' voice are recorded. In contrast, in Daoxuan's writing, Huiman clearly blamed the nun Huishang, referring to her behaviour as relying on government power 倚官勢力和 taking away the temple by force.

There are not many historical records about the nun Huishang and Zhengguo Nunnery. Yet from our limited sources, we know that the nunnery might have a connection with Emperor Gaozu before the nun Huishang's time. According to the Records of Chang'an, there was a temple in the early Sui Dynasty on the original site of Zhengguo Nunnery. The temple was rebuilt as the ancestral hall of Emperor Wen of Sui when he passed away in 605, named as Xiandu Palace 仙都宮, and abolished in 618 under the order of Emperor Gaozu of Tang to build the Zhengguo Nunnery for a nun named Mingzhao 明照.⁵⁰ The fact that Eastern Palace interfered in Huishang's expulsion suggests there might be a close relation between her and the crown prince, as well as other imperial family members from the Eastern Palace at the

⁴⁷ *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshi chao*, T no. 1840, 40: 20c18–20.

⁴⁸ *Tang huiyao* 48.4: 貞觀九年, 廢寺立為高祖別廟.

⁴⁹ *Chang'an zhi* 9.7: 貞觀九年, 徙崇德坊, 於此置靜安宮, 即高祖別廟.

⁵⁰ *Chang'an zhi* 9.7: '橫街之北大開業寺: 本隋勝光寺, 文帝第三子蜀王秀所立, 大業元年徙光德坊於此置仙都宮, 即文帝別廟. 武德元年, 高祖徙明昭, 廢宮立為證果尼寺'.

time.⁵¹ In Sui-Tang period, it was quite common to see connections between nunneries and imperial or aristocratic families, since most nunneries in the capital city were patronized by emperors, consorts, and royal family members.⁵² If Daoxuan's narrative is accurate, Huishang might even have had enough connections to other court officials to be able to appeal to all of them. All the evidence suggest that Huishang was favored by the inner palace and not merely by luck. She and the Zhengguo Nunnery had a long-term connection with the imperial family, and that could be one of the reasons for the imperial household to choose the Zhengguo Nunnery as the site of Gaozu's mourning hall. Yet, to Huiman, and probably Daoxuan as well, the relocation of the nunnery was unacceptable—not only because monks had lost their residential monastery and superiority to nuns, but also because of the pressure and intervention from the imperial court.

Both Xuanwan's and Cizang's cases are examples of how Buddhist clergy protected the Dharma from internal decay. Daoxuan depicts their protection and support of the Dharma as upholding monastic rules, regulating monastic communities, giving ordination, and performing religious ceremonies appropriately. In comparison, Huiman's case involves the conflict of Buddhism against Daoism and the imperial families. Huiman protected the Dharma by not only punishing precept-breaking nuns and regulating the saṅgha, but also by striving to maintain the supremacy of Buddhism over Daoism, and the dignity of Buddhist clergies and the autonomy of the saṅgha in front of the court.

Miraculous Response

After finishing compiling the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, Daoxuan may have also compiled the *Hou xu gaoseng zhuan* 後續高僧傳 [Later Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks], which was gradually combined into

⁵¹ The crown prince at the time was Li Chengqian 李承乾 (618–645), who was deposed and exiled in 643.

⁵² Gong, 'Sui-Tang Chang'an', 34.

the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* by later editors. Therefore, among the ten main biographies in the second part of *hufa* category, five are not present in editions of the text that predate the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), as the chart below shows:⁵³

Table 3: Number of Biographies in *Hufa* in Different Editions of *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan*

	<i>Kaibao Tripitaka</i> 開寶藏 (compiled in 971–983)	<i>Zhaocheng Jin Tripitaka</i> 趙城金藏 (compiled in 1148–1173)	<i>Tripitaka Koreana</i> 高麗藏 (compiled in 1011–1082)	<i>Taishō Tripitaka</i> 大正藏 (1922–1932)	<i>Zhonghua Tripitaka</i> 中華藏 (1984– present)
Part One 護法上	6	6	6	8	8
Part Two 護法下	5	5	5	10	10

Editions compiled after the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279) have seven additional main biographies in the *hufa* category: Shi Daozhen 釋道臻 (c. 466–557) and Shi Zhixuan 釋智炫 (c. 488–605) in the first part of the *hufa* category, and Shi Tanxuan 釋曇選 (531–625), Shi Fatong 釋法通 (died before 627), Shi Hongzhi 釋弘智 (595–655), Shi Daohui 釋道會 (c. 583–652), and Shi Zhiqin 釋智勤 (586–659) in the second part. Up to the current studies, it is unclear by whom and exactly around what time those additional biographies were combined and categorized into *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*. We are also not sure whether the content of *Houji Xu Gaoseng zhuan* was categorized in the same way as it was in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*.⁵⁴ If Daoxuan did indeed author and categorize those biographies, his criteria on *hufa* might have changed at the time,

⁵³ For detailed studies on the editions of *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* and *Houxu Gaoseng zhuan*, see Chi, “Xu Gaoseng zhuan” de wenben yanbian’; Chi, “Xu Gaoseng zhuan’ zai Riben’.

⁵⁴ Chi Limei points out that the titles of both *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* and *Houxu Gaoseng zhuan* were included in the *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 [Record of Buddhist Sources of the Great Tang Dynasty], which was compiled and finished by Daoxuan in 664 CE. Based on the record, there were thirty volumes in the *Xu*

because the narrative pattern in those five biographies is quite different from those found in the others in the *hufa* category. There is usually no reference to any specific emperors or Daoists, and the depiction of miraculous response (*gantong* 感通) as a means of protecting the Dharma in several of those biographies is rather noticeable. For example, in the biography of Shi Fatong 釋法通, Daoxuan writes:

He was once traveling to this district. The county magistrate ran into him and asked where he came from. [Fatong] answered that he was a hermit. Therefore, the county magistrate imprisoned him, forbidding him from wandering around. Fatong refused to eat any food but circumambulated inside the cell as he chanted sincerely. That night, a wild fox barked in the courtroom, an eerie atmosphere descended, and the whole night was disturbing. When the morning came, [the magistrate] ordered his release. Fatong said: ‘I am circumambulating and chanting alone within the jail, and am attaining the Way. Why do you release me?’ He fasted for a whole day. In the night, the fox barked again. The county officials and local people were all terrified. ... Another time, [Fatong] was seeking temporary lodging and was bitten by a dog on his shank. The dog died soon after, and [Fatong’s] fame increased. 曾行本邑，縣令逢之，問是何僧。答云山客。令乃禁守，不許遊從。通即絕粒，竭誠遶獄行道。其夜，聽事野狐鳴叫，怪相既集，通夕不安。及明放遣，通曰：‘我遶獄行道，正得道理，如何見放？’經日不食，夜又狐鳴，宮庶以下莫不震懼。..... 曾投人宿，犬咋其脛，尋被霹死，風聲逾顯。⁵⁵

Gaoseng zhuàn and ten *juan* in the *Houxu Gaoseng zhuàn*. However, that was the first and last time for *Houji Xu Gaoseng zhuàn* to be named as an independent work. And by 800 CE, when Yuanzhao 圓照 (circa 800s–900s) compiled the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 [Zhenyuan Era Catalogue of Newly Authorized Buddhist Teachings], *Houxu Gaoseng zhuàn* was already listed as missing. Chi Limei suggests that the evidence indicates the *Houxu Gaoseng zhuàn* was completed by Daoxuan by the year of 664 and combined into the *Xu Gaoseng zhuàn* gradually afterwards, and eventually lost the necessity of being preserved as an individual work. See Chi. “‘Xu Gaoseng zhuàn’ de wenben yanbian”, 227–28.

Why is Fatong categorized as a *hufa* monk? At the end of the biography, Daoxuan praises Fatong for proselytizing Buddhism to secular people and for guiding ignorant minds,⁵⁶ which is a way to protect and pass down the Dharma. Daoxuan also expresses his opinion on Fatong, suggesting that one should ignore the family background and appearance of a master as long as one can receive the teaching from him. This may refer to Fatong's nomadic lifestyle and possibly untidy appearance since the county magistrate arrested him. Fatong's biography is also an example of *hufa* being related to miraculous events and local society rather than the capital city.

The biography of another monk, Shi Zhiqin 釋智勤, is also full of miraculous and supernatural responses. At the beginning of the biography, Daoxuan notes that from an early age, Zhiqin kept the protection of the Dharma in his mind. When Zhiqin's mother was sick, he recited the name of Guanyin for her, and all the tree leaves in the backyard manifested the image of the Buddha. The whole family witnessed the phenomenon, and his mother soon recovered.⁵⁷ When bandits surrounded him, he heard a voice from the sky, telling him to take off his secular clothes. When Zhiqin removed his outer garment and showed his Buddhist robe, the raiders all paid homage to him.⁵⁸

More supernatural and miraculous responses occurred when Zhiqin retreated to the northern mountains:

[Zhiqin] often heard bells from the valley. Later, when searching among the mountains, he suddenly saw a magnificent temple. He entered to pay homage. It seemed like someone was living there. After going there a few times, he could not find the temple's location anymore. On another occasion, Zhiqin lived in the mountains and almost ran out of food. Along the path where he walked, piles of soil emerged from the earth. He shoveled them and threw them away. Yet [the piles of soil returned] again the next day. After a few times, grains

⁵⁵ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 641c26–642a5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 642a10–11: 弘導塵蒙, 攝迷沒之鄙夫.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 643a11–14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 643a16–19.

appeared from the soil. Thus, Zhiqin dug beneath the pile deeply and found more than twenty *shuo* of grains,⁵⁹ which were large and red, different from ordinary grain. When the Buddhadharmā in Deng Prefecture was declining, local monastics and laypeople approached the mountain and invited Zhiqin to protect the Dharma. At the time, Zhiqin experienced a dream and decided to come out of the mountains.⁶⁰ The exact content of the dream was not clear. Later, [Zhiqin] carried the [Buddha's] statue and left the mountain. On his way, the sky suddenly became dark. Zhiqin could not find his way. Soon, two miraculous fire torches appeared to illuminate the road extremely brightly. Zhiqin could see the path. The torches guided him to the village before being extinguished. Villagers who saw the scene were all astonished. 恒聞谷中鐘聲，後尋巖嶺，忽見一寺，宛麗奇常。入中禮拜，似有人住。如是數度，後更尋覓，莫知所在。又居山內，糧食將盡，其行道之處，土自發起。遂除棄之，明日復爾。如是再三，遂有穀現。因即深掘，得粟二十餘碩，其粟粒大色赤，稍異凡穀。時鄧州佛法陵遲，合州道俗就山禮請，願出任持。遂感夢而出，其夢不詳子細。後時負像出山，中途忽闇，莫知其路，不得前進。俄有異火兩炬，照路極明，因得見道。送至村中，火方迴滅，村人並見，無不驚異。⁶¹

The above two examples do not meet the common patterns among other *bufa* biographies I discussed in the previous sections. In the biographies of Fatong and Zhiqin, Daoxuan mainly depicts miracles as proof of their religious faith and achievement. There are no religious debates nor monk-emperor conflicts, and all the events happened at the local level rather than in the capital city. Unlike the biographies in the early editions, among those which were included in the later editions, we see more explicit and long depictions of astonishing phenomena and miracles, especially in Fatong's and Zhiqin's biographies.

⁵⁹ *Shuo* 碩 is an ancient Chinese unit of measurement of grain. One *shuo* is close to 100 liters.

⁶⁰ Christopher Jensen discusses Zhiqin's emergence from seclusion after the dream, and he translates the verb *gan* as 'experiencing'. See Jensen, 'Dreaming Betwixt and Between', 75–76.

⁶¹ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2060, 50: 643a23–643b5.

The content of the additional biographies and the location of the monasteries suggest that it is highly possible that Daoxuan authored those biographies. Early in the first year of the Zhenguan era (627), Daoxuan started his travels among various prefectures to study and promote Buddhism and collect information for *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*. During that time, he mainly visited areas in the modern-day Shanxi 山西, Hebei 河北, and Henan 河南.⁶² Zhiqin resided at the Xingguo Monastery 興國寺 of Deng Prefecture 鄧州, which is in the modern-day southern part of Henan. Daoxuan might have collected Zhiqin's stories during his trip. In Fatong's biography, Daoxuan indicates that during the first year of the Zhenguan era, he paid a visit to Fatong's son, who was a monk in Xi Prefecture, which is in modern-day Shanxi Province. That is to say, Daoxuan might have collected Fatong's and Zhiqin's biographical information but did not include them in the original edition of the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*.

The remaining question is whether Daoxuan indeed categorizes those additional biographies as *bufa* or not. Due to the lack of historical record, the answer is unclear. It is possible that Daoxuan regarded divine power and miraculous signs as a means of protecting the Dharma later in his life due to his increased interest in miraculous response. Most of Daoxuan's works associated with miraculous responses were finished in his later years.⁶³ It is also possible that later editors, no later than the early Southern Song Dynasty, interpreted those monks with divine power as Dharma protector.

⁶² Fujiyoshi, *Dōsen den no kenkyū*, 107.

⁶³ For instance, the *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantonglu* 集神州三寶感通錄 [Record of Miraculous Responses to the Three Jewels in China] was finished in 664 when Daoxuan was sixty-nine years old. The *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 [Narrative of Miraculous Response on Monastic Discipline] was finished in the second year of the Qianfeng 乾封 era (667). Both the *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tu jing* 關中創立戒壇圖經 [Illustrated Scripture on the Precepts Platform Established in Guanzhong] and *Zhongtiantanzhu sheweiguo zhibuansi tujing* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經 [Illustrated Sūtra of the Jetavana Monastery in the Kingdom of Śrāvastī] were finished in 667 before Daoxuan passed away and were full of supernatural phenomena.

Conclusion

Since lack of respect to the throne was one of the main criticisms that Buddhists encountered in the early Tang,⁶⁴ gaining imperial support was the primary type of *hufa* among elite monks in the capital city, among whom Daoxuan was one of the pioneers. However, as a Vinaya master, Daoxuan was also aware that the corruption of the saṅgha could damage the Dharma, and believed that upholding and transmitting precepts could protect the Dharma from internal decay. In his later years, Daoxuan seems to have had a broader criterion on *hufa* and embraced miraculous response as a means of proselytizing Buddhism and protecting the Dharma, especially in the local society.

By discussing the above three types of *hufa* in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, this paper does not attempt to define the category of *hufa*. Instead, it aims to discuss the complexity of *hufa* and how it reflects Daoxuan's religious pursuits. Shinohara points out that the categories in Buddhist biographies sometimes appear to be artificial and do not always match 'the contents of the biographies or the self-understanding of their subjects.'⁶⁵ Kieschnick also argues that the Buddhist biographical category was merely a formal principle of organization and was not how medieval Chinese people thought of monks.⁶⁶ Daoxuan must be aware of the ambiguity and arbitrariness of those biographical categories, and *hufa* is probably one of the most ambiguous categories in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*. For Daoxuan, *hufa* is probably not a specialty but a duty that all Buddhists could and should perform, and the approach may vary depending on who those monks were and against whom they were protecting.

⁶⁴ Weinstein, *Buddhism under the Tang*, 7, 14.

⁶⁵ Shinohara, 'Biographies of Eminent Monks', 484–85.

⁶⁶ Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 14.

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Abbreviations

T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. See Bibliography, Secondary Sources, Takakusu and Watanabe, eds.

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⁶⁷ Unless otherwise indicated, all Taishō citations refer to the 2018 version provided by SAT Daizokyo Text Database (SAT 大藏經テキストデータベース).

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