

Did Bodhidharma Meet Emperor Liang Wu Di?

达摩与梁武帝的历史性会面

Copyright 2010 Andrew Ferguson

This paper will examine evidence that explains why the legendary meeting between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu may be a historical fact. It is based on evidence that comes from field observation, classical texts, and most important, from scholarship by Chinese researchers such as Sun Changwu 孙昌武, Yang Xiaotian 杨笑天, Wang Rutong 王孺童 and others. The deep knowledge and scholarship of these researchers is widely known. Their work is an important service to those of us who seek a better understanding of early Chan, a tradition close to the heart of China's great culture. Some ideas in this paper restate ideas advanced by Yang Xiaotian in his important essay entitled *On the life of Bodhidharma and Hui Ke*. I offer additional ideas that carry Dr. Yang's ideas further. A wider review of the historical evidence suggests that Bodhidharma could have met Emperor Liang Wu Di, though this position is not widely held by scholars.

Essentially, two conflicting stories exist about Bodhidharma's life in old Chan records. One story, based on a biography and other information about Bodhidharma that appears in *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* [续高僧传], a seventh century text by the monk Dao Xuan, relates that Bodhidharma arrived in South China before the end of the Liu-Song Dynasty, on or before the year 478, and eventually lived under the Wei Dynasty [初達宋境南越. 未又北度至魏].ⁱ The biography, written between 645 and 665 CE, also mentions two of Bodhidharma's disciples, Daoyu and Hui Ke [有道育慧可此二沙門]. Daoyu, also known as Dao Fu [道副], is the same monk as the one identified as Seng Fu [僧副] whose biography also appears in the *Continued Biographies*. Bodhidharma's biography also indicates that Bodhidharma traveled widely to spread his teaching, but his place of death was unknown [遊化為務不測于終].

An example of a different and popularly accepted version of Bodhidharma's life is in the mid-thirteenth century work called *Compendium of Five Lamps* [五灯会元].ⁱⁱ This work relates that Chan's first ancestor arrived in South China in the year 527, the seventh year of the Pu Tong era [梁普通七年], and soon thereafter traveled to Nanjing to meet Emperor Liang Wu Di. After a brief and unsuccessful meeting with the emperor, Bodhidharma proceeded to Mt. Song, where he practiced meditation in a cave near Shao Lin Temple. Eventually, according to this account, Bodhidharma died at Thousand Saints Temple [千圣寺], a place about which no other records are evident. A definite date for Bodhidharma's death is not provided in the *Compendium of Five Lamps* story.

Scholars agree that the former *Continued Biographies* story of Bodhidharma's life is more reliable because it was written far earlier than other accounts, perhaps only 130 years or so after Bodhidharma lived. Also, biographies of other monks in the same work offer evidence that supports Bodhidharma's story. Scholars in the East and West regard the *Continued Biographies* as the most reliable source of information about Bodhidharma's life. However, the *Continued Biographies* account of Bodhidharma

does not offer evidence about him that can be reliably dated after the year 494. Some scholars have suggested, and some later old Chinese texts report, that Bodhidharma died in the year 494 or soon thereafter. However, taking account of the *Continued Biographies* biography of the Second Chan Ancestor Hui Ke's life, it is widely accepted that Bodhidharma died in the geographical area around Luoyang before the Wei Dynasty split into the Western and Eastern Wei Dynasties in the year 534. The biography of Hui Ke in the *Continued Biographies* indicates that after Bodhidharma died, Hui Ke, "on the basis of his teacher's widespread stature continued [Bodhidharma's teaching], and was invited to teach by clergy and laity" [而昔怀嘉誉传檄邦畿。使夫道俗来仪请从师范].

But the exact date of Bodhidharma's death remains uncertain. Based on the *Continued Biographies* some Chan scholars suggest the date of Bodhidharma's death was around the year 530. Suggestions that he died later than this are based on later historical records, including a memorial stele allegedly created by Emperor Wu that is discussed below.

The Chan tradition places great importance on the legend of Bodhidharma meeting Emperor Wu. The story is a pivotal tale that contrasts Bodhidharma's Chan with the views and practice of the Buddhist establishment of his time. In the *Continued Biographies* there are various passages that describe Bodhidharma's teaching. One relates that it emphasized the "true perception doctrine" of "forgetting-words, forgetting-thought, and no attainment" [忘言忘念无得正观为宗].ⁱⁱⁱ In contrast, Emperor Wu is remembered to be devoted to Buddhist sutra and doctrinal studies [义学], the ordination of monks [度僧] the building of temples and writing of sutras [造寺写经], and the accumulation of merit coming from these activities [功德]. Bodhidharma's practice, which later was summarized in the phrase "directly pointing at the human mind [直指人心], is thus favorably compared with Emperor Wu's wide ranging embrace of other Buddhist beliefs and practices.

Because Emperor Wu did not gain power and establish the Liang Dynasty until the year 502, the Chan tradition widely accepts the story that relates that Bodhidharma arrived in China after Emperor Wu gained power. This is now the most widely accepted version of Bodhidharma's life even though the most reliable historical source, the *Continued Biographies*, contradicts this timeline. If Bodhidharma lived and presumably died in the Luoyang area in 494 or thereafter, how could he have met Emperor Wu, who gained the throne and ruled as the "Bodhisattva Emperor" in the year 502 at place distant from Luoyang and Mt. Song?

Bodhidharma's Early Years in China

While there is no direct evidence of Bodhidharma's arrival date in China scholars widely accept that he arrived before 479 CE. The *Continued Biographies* states that Bodhidharma arrived in Southern China during the Liu-Song Dynasty (420-479) [初達宋境南越]. I will set aside, for the moment, a discussion of the widely known story in the *Record of the Temples of Luoyang* [洛阳伽蓝记] that quotes a certain monk named Bodhidharma who claimed to be 150 years old when he met Yang Xuanzhi, the text's author, sometime between 516 and about 528. Instead, I will assume that if the most reliable date for Bodhidharma's death is 534, then with a lifespan of 100 years Bodhidharma could have arrived in China

at the age of 30 in the year 464. In this scenario Bodhidharma would have had ample time to learn Chinese, meet the elder teacher Gunabhadra (d. 468) and travel in South China. If, as some evidence suggests, the date of Bodhidharma's death was 528, and if he died at age one hundred, an arrival in 464 places his age at thirty six years old. Thus his arrival in China as early as 460 cannot be ruled out. Of course, without certainty about how long Bodhidharma lived, all these dates are only conjecture. However, they indicate the possibility of his arrival in China by 460.

If Bodhidharma arrived in China around 460, it is possible he met the Indian Buddhist scholar Gunabhadra who lived in Nanjing during the Liu-Song Dynasty and who died in 468. This view is partly supported by Bodhidharma's use of the Lankavatara Sutra text translated by Gunabhadra as reported in the *Continued Biographies* [达摩禅师以四卷楞伽授可]. Furthermore, the *Record of the Lankavatara Masters* [楞伽师资记] written in the year 708 by the monk Jing Jue [净觉] places Gunabhadra in the first position in the succession of spiritual ancestors of the "Northern School" of Chinese Chan. Bodhidharma is listed as Gunabhadra's spiritual heir. [魏朝三藏法师菩提达摩承求那跋陀罗三藏后...].^{iv} Although the *Record of the Lankavatara Masters* does not explicitly state that Bodhidharma met Gunabhadra, it indicates that early Northern School monks connected these two Indian teachers in the direct succession leading to the East Mountain School, a wellspring of China's mainstream Chan tradition. Gunabhadra was not otherwise recognized as the first ancestor of the Chan School, however. The text of a stele marking the death of the East Mountain School monk Fa Ru in the year 681 indicates Bodhidharma as the first of the Chan ancestors. It reads "Bodhidharma entered Wei and transmitted to [Hui]Ke, Ke transmitted to Can..." [菩提达摩入魏传可，可传粲...].

Why would it matter whether Bodhidharma met Gunabhadra? The *Record of Eminent Monks* [高僧传] composed by the monk Hui Jiao in the year 417 (from which the later *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* termed itself "continued") records the story of Gunabhadra's life in China. After arriving there around the year 435 he enjoyed the favor of the Liu-Song emperors and aristocracy. He translated various sutras and taught at different temples in Nanjing, Xuzhou, and elsewhere. During one ten year period Gunabhadra enjoyed the patronage of the official Jiaowang Yixuan [譙王义宣] who met Gunabhadra, supported his teaching, and carried on correspondence with him. Later, Jiaowang plotted and rebelled against the Liu-Song emperor Xiao Wu but his rebellion was defeated. The emperor suspected Gunabhadra of involvement in the plot, but upon investigating letters between Gunabhadra and Jiaowang the emperor realized that the former had no involvement in the attempted coup. Gunabhadra's name was cleared. Thereafter Gunabhadra continued to teach and work until his death in 468. If Bodhidharma arrived in China in 464 or earlier, he would have had ample time to meet Gunabhadra before the latter's death. In such a case, the political dangers Gunabhadra previously faced may have led him to counsel Bodhidharma to beware of entanglement in China's ruling circles. This could have shaped Bodhidharma's later attitude toward his contacts with the ruling houses of the Northern Wei and Liang Dynasties. Although this is just speculation, it fits nicely as a possible piece of the puzzle concerning why Bodhidharma avoided contact with emperors, feudal kings, or high ranking members of China's aristocracy.

Dao Xuan (596-667), the author of the *Continued Biographies*, was a brilliant and famous Buddhist monk of the seventh century. He drew on different streams of Precepts School teachings and systemized them to create and lead the “South Mountain” Precepts School of Chinese Buddhism. He lived in the Tang capital Chang An after the year 642. There he assisted the famous monk Xuan Zang in translating Yogacara scriptures that the latter had brought back from India. Between 742 and 765 Dao Xuan authored the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*, which categorized and described famous Buddhist teachers starting from around the year 500 until his own era. Dao Xuan was not a monk of the Chan tradition, and his comments about Chan teachers are therefore considered by scholars to be more objective than the Chan histories created within the Chan tradition itself.

In his *Continued Biographies* Dao Xuan wrote about monks of then different schools of Buddhism. After the section on Chan monks he wrote an appendix concerning the Chan School. It summarizes Dao Xuan’s view of the Chan tradition at that point in China’s history. He discusses the Chan’s School’s history in some detail, making some critical comments, but also describing the great popularity of Chan and its well known teachers. Regarding Bodhidharma’s apparently widely known mission in China, he says “[A teacher] of this type was Bodhidharma, who’s transcendent teaching he proselytized in the Yang-tse and Luoyang [regions]. [属有菩提达摩者。神化居宗阐导江洛]. [His practice of] Sitting gazing at a wall being the highest meritorious practice of the Mahayana[大乘壁观功业最高]. In society those who came to study with and honor him, taking refuge in his teachings, were [as numerous as] a city [在世学流归仰如市]. In another section of the *Continued Biographies* Dao Xuan provides a biography for a monk named Fa Chong which refers to Bodhidharma’s teachings, saying, “Later, Chan Master Bodhidharma spread this teaching to the north and south” [于后达磨禅师传之南北]。 These and other accounts indicate that Bodhidharma’s influence was not limited to the area around Luoyang but stretched at least to the region of the Yang-tse River. The Chinese scholar Hu Shi proposed that Bodhidharma’s spent only limited time in the south of the country before he traveled north to the Luoyang area.^v He points out that Bodhidharma would have needed time to learn Chinese and thus did not likely carry out widespread teaching until he came north to the Yellow River area. However, if Bodhidharma did not return south after living in Luoyang, Dr. Hu Shi’s conclusion contradicts the aforementioned passages from the *Continued Biographies* that says he spread his teaching “in the Yang-tse and Luoyang” regions. If Bodhidharma arrived in China around 460, he would have ample time to meet Gunabhadra, learn to speak Chinese fluently, and begin teaching in the Yang-tse River area before traveling north to Luoyang. However, we have no record that this occurred. Without any clear evidence on Bodhidharma’s actions during this time we can’t draw firm conclusions. We are left with the fact that his disciples joined him around Luoyang, and therefore he likely did not teach extensively before arriving in that area.

In his appendix to “Chan Practitioners” in the *Continued Biographies*, Dao Xuan makes an intriguing statement. He writes that Bodhidharma “Did not stay in places of imperial sway, and those who loved to see him could not draw him to them.” [帝网之所不拘。爱见莫之能引]. This statement by Dao Xuan describes an important facet about Bodhidharma’s life. His legendary brief meeting with Emperor Wu notwithstanding, there is no record to indicate he sought out contact with the imperial, or a lesser royal

court, during his years in China. Bodhidharma seems to have regarded the court as dangerous to his religious mission. He was a teacher well known in his own era, an individual who “spread [his teachings] to the Yang-tse and Luoyang,” yet unlike other foreign priests who came to China, he did not curry favor with China’s emperors. His behavior is in contrast to foreign priests during the Liang Dynasty who actively sought Emperor Wu’s support, including Samghapala [僧伽婆罗] (in China circa 495-524), and Paramartha [波罗末陀 or 真谛] (arrived China in 546 and died 569).

The Luoyang Region 485?-497?

Although the *Continued Biographies* indicates that Bodhidharma’s teachings were widespread in China, the text only indicates his location during a period of five to ten years, from approximately 485-495. It was at this time that we know he taught a few disciples in the area around Luoyang. The *Continued Biographies*, in its story of Bodhidharma’s oldest disciple Seng Fu, states that that disciple departed the Luoyang area during the Jian Wu era, (494-7) and made his way to Nanjing. [齊建武年南遊揚輦] Later in the same biography, Seng Fu is said to have died at Kai Shan Temple [in Nanjing] at the age of sixty-one, in the year 524. [...卒於開善寺春秋六十有一。即普通五年也]. Thus we can deduce that Seng Fu was about 31 years old when he left Luoyang to travel to Nanjing during the period 494-7. Working backward, this indicates he studied under Bodhidharma when he was in his twenties.

The record in the *Continued Biographies* for Bodhidharma’s more famous disciple, Hui Ke, raises some questions about his age and whereabouts during different times of his life. Both the *Continued Biographies* and later records indicate that upon meeting Bodhidharma, Hui Ke was already forty years old. Dr. Yang Xiaotian points out that the *Record of the Lankavatara Masters*, written in 708, says that Hui Ke was only fourteen when he met Bodhidharma. Yang suggests that the *Continued Biographies* record was the result of reversing the order of the characters of his age, and thereafter the mistake was copied in later records. Despite this error, the *Record of the Lankavatara Masters* listed Hui Ke’s correct age. Based on this Yang suggests that Hui Ke met Bodhidharma at the age of 14 in the year 490. Yang further proposes that Hui Ke died in the year 482 at the age of 107. This timeline of Hui Ke’s life conforms to a believable life expectancy for Hui Ke. For if he was already 40 years old upon meeting Bodhidharma in the year 490 and died, as traditional sources tell us, in 592, he would have been over 140 years old. Despite the longevity attributed to many Chan masters this seems unlikely. Dr. Yang’s argument has merit. According to the *Continued Biographies*, Hui Ke met Bodhidharma around the year 490 and studied with him for six years.

Because Bodhidharma taught his disciples in the Luoyang area of the Northern Wei around the years 490 to 494, and he ultimately died in that area, most scholars have assumed that he did not leave that area after the year 494. However, I think the passage stating that he taught in “Luoyang and the Yang-tse [regions],” and similar historical statements call for a closer review of the evidence.

Dr. Yang Xiaotian has argued that Bodhidharma, along with his disciples, likely left the Luoyang area in 494 or shortly thereafter.^{vi} He bases this argument on textual and known historical evidence. He points out that in the *Continued Biographies* Bodhidharma is said to have received sharp criticism for the

content of his teaching. “Wherever he stayed he taught Chan. At that time throughout the country [sutra teachings, i.e. non-Chan] were widely expounded. When the Samadhi Dharma [Chan teachings] were first heard they received much criticism.” [隨其所止誨以禪教。于時合國盛弘講授。乍聞定法多生譏謗]。 Yang Xiaotian points out that the criticism likely came from the doctrinal factions of the Buddhist establishment who supported the study of various scriptures.^{vii}

The Northern Wei emperor Xiao Wen (ruled 471-499) was deeply involved with Buddhism. He famously commissioned the Buddhist sculptures of the Yun Gang and Long Men Grottos, sponsored the building of Chan temples, including Shao Lin Temple on Mt. Song, and entertained learned debates and discourse among Buddhist monks on questions of doctrine. The Chinese scholar Tang Yongtong (1893—1964), in his landmark book *Buddhist History of the Han, Wei, Jin, and North-South Dynasties* 《汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史》 offers extensive evidence of how doctrinal disputes based on different translations and interpretations of Buddhist sutras were widespread during Bodhidharma’s lifetime.^{viii} The conflict between competing factions was sometimes acute. Yang Xiaotian also offers evidence of such doctrinal conflicts. Naturally, some factions wishing to advance their own positions with the imperial court had reason to defend their own doctrines and criticize others. It was during this contentious period that Bodhidharma lived in the Mt. Song/Luoyang area during the period 486-495.

Dr. Yang Xiaotian points out that a critical event happened in 494 that may have precipitated Bodhidharma leaving the Luoyang area along with his disciples. In that year the imperial capital of the Northern Wei moved from the northern city of Ping Cheng to Luoyang, the ancient seat of Chinese governments near the Yellow River. Emperor Xiao Wen, along with his court and favored Buddhist priests, suddenly relocated to the place near where Bodhidharma lived and taught. Priests known and favored by the Wei court came south to Luoyang with their sovereign. These included Dao Deng, the Emperor’s personal teacher, Seng Yi, who headed the Buddhist community in Ping Cheng, Fotuo a well-known foreign monk who established monasteries sponsored by the court, plus other high ranking monks who were doctrinally at odds with Bodhidharma’s teachings. Emperor Xiao Wen was devoted to the wide dissemination of Buddhist doctrinal teachings based of different sutras. He organized the clergy for the purpose of supporting and spreading sutra study. Tang Yongtong quotes an imperial edict entitled “Edict Commanding Monks of All Provinces to Expound Sutras During the Summer Ango” [令诸州众僧安居讲说诏] that reads, “It is ordered that [the expounding of sutras will occur] in every province during the Buddhist clergy’s summer anga [practice period]. In each large province there will be three hundred monks, in mid-size provinces two hundred monks, and in small provinces one hundred monks, all dedicated to expounding sutras [for the public].”^{ix}

Moreover, during the Northern Wei Dynasty there were rebel Buddhist monks who opposed the religious establishment. Such monks led rebellions against the throne with surprising frequency. Uprisings occurred in the years 473, 481, and again in 490, the latter occurring not long before Xiao Wen’s court moved from Ping Cheng to Luoyang.^x Such rebellions were couched in religious rhetoric that claimed they represented the true meaning of the Buddhist faith. The leader of the rebellion in the year 490, a monk named Sima Hui-e [司马惠御] declared himself to be a Buddhist messiah [自称圣王]

before his revolt was brutally crushed and he was executed by the authorities.^{xi} Naturally, the emperor and Buddhist establishment wanted to forestall any reoccurrence of such problems, and monks who operated outside the control of the court, especially those with a large following, most certainly were regarded as dangerous. When the imperial court moved from Ping Cheng to Luoyang, many people who had reason to criticize or even persecute Bodhidharma were moving into his neighborhood. This conforms with the “many criticisms” leveled against him reported in the *Continued Biographies*. Dr. Yang Xiaotian proposes that this atmosphere contributed to a decision by Bodhidharma to move away from Luoyang. This proposal has much evidence to support it.

The *Continued Biographies* tells the story of one of Bodhidharma’s disciples named Seng Fu. His biography relates that he was born in Taiyuan and “went everywhere looking for a teacher but was unable to find one.” 遊無遠近。裹糧尋師訪所不逮 seeking a teacher. Eventually he met Bodhidharma who was “famous for his practice of observing [mind]” [有達摩禪師。善明觀行]. Seng Fu “roamed the peaks and caves to find Bodhidharma and query him about the profound doctrine” [循擾巖穴言問深博]. Seng Fu formally became Bodhidharma’s student, and thereafter is said to have “no longer asked about points of doctrine [sutra studies] and embraced [Bodhidharma’s] single practice, strictly devoted to practicing the Samadhi path” [義無再問一貫懷抱尋端極為定學宗焉].

Notice that Seng Fu’s biography says that he sought out Bodhidharma in “peaks and caves.” During this period (about 486-90) Shao Lin Temple was not officially established. However, its ultimate location, Mt. Song, was already long the “central peak” of the sacred mountains in China. Within its wide geographical area several important Buddhist and Taoist temples already existed, including Fa Wang (Dharma King) and Hui Shan (Wisdom Goodness) temples, both important sites that were already several centuries old. Geographically, Mt. Song encompasses several peaks and valleys. It is possible that here, during the decade before Shao Lin Temple was established, Bodhidharma had already begun sitting in his famous cave on Mt. Song and there taught his students. Perhaps he actually did live and teach at the place where a hermitage now bears his name, a place about one mile from where Shao Lin Temple was established. This would have been a natural place for a foreign holy man to establish his practice in that era. Could the impending construction of the temple have caused Bodhidharma and his monks to leave? Dr. Yang Xiaotian points out that if Bodhidharma arrived at Mt. Song in 486 and departed in 495, the time would correspond with the traditional “nine years” of sitting in meditation that the Chan credits Bodhidharma to have spent on Mt. Song.

The *Continued Biographies* account of the life of Bodhidharma’s disciple Seng Fu offers more tantalizing clues concerning the movements of Bodhidharma and his disciples. It states that in the Jian Wu Era (494-7) Seng Fu left the Luoyang area and traveled to live at Nanjing, then the capital of the Qi dynasty that ruled in the south of the country [齊建武年南遊揚輦]. There he took up residence at Lower Samadhi Forest Temple on Mt. Zhong, a mountain at the northeast outskirts of the city, because he “delighted in [Mt. Zhong’s] forest and lakes” [副美其林藪]. What is surprising is the very close proximity of Mt. Zhong to the imperial palace of the Qi Dynasty, which shortly thereafter, in the year 502, would become the home of the new emperor Xiao Yan, known to history as Emperor Liang Wu Di. The *Continued*

Biographies thus clearly indicates that Bodhidharma's senior disciple established himself at a temple only a few thousand meters away from Emperor Wu's imperial palace.

The *Continued Biographies* holds other interesting information concerning Bodhidharma's disciple Seng Fu and Emperor Wu. The record says that Seng Fu's lifestyle was that of a simple monk, his possessions consisting of the "three garments and six items, and nothing more" [三衣六物外無盈長] used by monks of ancient times. This simple lifestyle and modesty earned Seng Fu praise from Emperor Wu's imperial household, including from the emperor himself. The record says that Emperor Wu invited Seng Fu to come and address the court, but Seng Fu steadfastly refused. Is this refusal a reflection of his teacher Bodhidharma's attitude about avoiding royalty? Also, Seng Fu's refusal to visit Emperor Wu's court seems to have only enhanced his reputation. The record relates that Emperor Wu prepared special quarters at Kai Shan temple for Seng Fu to enjoy. Seng Fu eventually died at Kai Shan Temple in the year 524. The same records says that upon his death, Emperor Wu was grief stricken, bestowing posthumous gifts to Bodhidharma's disciple [天子哀焉。下敕流贈]. The emperor's eldest child, Princess Yong Xing, asked the Crown Prince Zhao Ming to compose a letter of "taking refuge" with Seng Fu. [而永興公主素有歸信。進啟東宮請著其文].

The ramifications of this old record in the *Continued Biographies* require consideration in more detail. It describes close geographical proximity between Bodhidharma's most senior disciple and Emperor Wu. It relates that Emperor Wu honored Seng Fu highly, and both Emperor Wu and his family paid great respect to Seng Fu upon his death. It indicates that Seng Fu lived on Mt. Zhong for a significant portion of an approximately twenty seven year period (497-524) but he declined to visit Emperor Wu's court, even though *it was within easy walking distance from the temples where Seng Fu lived*. Indeed, Emperor Wu's Tai Cheng Palace was readily viewable from the slopes of Mt. Zhong.

This account raises many questions, but there are two that come immediately to mind. First, why would Seng Fu not visit the Tai Cheng Palace? Second, what was it about Seng Fu, aside from his admirably simple lifestyle that caused Emperor Wu to respect him so greatly? To appreciate the importance of these and related questions more deeply, we should first review a brief history of Emperor Wu of Liang and his court.

Emperor Wu, whose personal name was Xiao Yan, attained power in the year 502 after leading a successful rebellion against the Qi Dynasty Emperor Xiao Baojuan (ruled 498-502). Baojuan's rule was characterized by his personal debauchery and mindless executions of honest court officials and commoners. Though still in his teens, Baojuan was an unstable, dangerous individual who managed to put down three major rebellions prior to Xiao Yan's successful campaign against him. Xiao Yan, an aristocrat with a heroic military record in campaigns against the Northern Wei Dynasty, led a group of disaffected officials in a skilled psychological and military campaign to unseat the tyrant on the throne.

During about the first ten years or so of Xiao Yan's rule, he gradually embraced the teaching of Buddhism. Sometime around the middle of the Tian Lan Period (502-519) he became a vegetarian and ceased "entering the women's quarters" (i.e. the chambers of the imperial concubines) [不食魚肉,

不近女人]^{xii}. Very early in his rule, Emperor Wu began constructing new Buddhist temples, partly to honor his deceased mother and father, but also to promulgate Buddhist teachings in his empire. The scope of such building became very extensive and a drain on the resources of the country. Emperor Wu entertained and supported many Buddhist priests and regularly consulted with them about points of religious doctrine and sutra study. The emperor personally wrote commentaries about various sutras and held large public ordination ceremonies at the temples on Mt. Zhong. The emperor's oldest son and Crown Prince, Zhao Ming, was heavily tutored in Buddhist and Confucian literature. Xiao Yan utilized the "Eastern Palace," a building inside the palace compound, to entertain high ranking Buddhist monks and listen to their teachings. There, with Zhao Ming's participation, many famous monks of the day instructed Emperor Wu about Buddhist doctrines.

The seriousness with which Emperor Wu embraced Buddhism may be seen from the fact that in 419 he formally "left home" by taking the Bodhisattva Precepts in a grand public ceremony. This event occurred in a large garden at the rear of the palace named Hua Lin (Flowered Woods) where the emperor received the precepts along with other members of the aristocracy in a ceremony celebrated by "48,000 people." Historical accounts indicate that Emperor Wu "left home" in this manner three more times. On each such occasion, the aristocracy was forced to "ransom" the emperor back to his throne by paying large sums to support Buddhist construction projects. The emperor lived in a single plain room without furniture at the rear of the palace, sleeping on a plain mat on the ground, and spending much of his time studying scriptures.^{xiii}

The "Eastern Palace," which comprised a group of halls within the Tai Cheng Palace perimeter, was the great intellectual salon of the age. High ranking monks and literary figures spoke there, and it was the scene of "pure conversation," [清谈] discussions among learned individuals from different traditions undertaken for the pleasure of the court. Emperor Wu and his son Xiao Tong sought out not only the high Chinese monks of the realm to visit the Eastern Palace, but foreign monks as well. The *Book of Liang* describes Xiao Tong's activities as a Buddhist believer and an organizer of speaking events by monks. "The Crown Prince honored and was devoted to the Three Treasures, studying a great number of sutras. Within the palace he established the 'Wisdom Hall' as a special place for Dharma assemblies. He invited famous monks [there] and their discussions went on endlessly" [太子亦崇信三宝，遍览众经。乃于宫内别立慧义殿，专为法集之所。招引名僧，谈论不绝].^{xiv}

The Tai Cheng Palace thus served as a location for the famous activities of Xiao Yan's son, Xiao Tong, known to posterity as Prince Zhao Ming [昭明太子]. The *Book of Liang* relates how this young individual, before his untimely death at the age of 30 in 531, attained fame as a compiler of China's growing literary heritage, collecting and editing twelve volumes of prose and poetry from past ages, organizing them in over a hundred categories, and providing commentaries on them. This body of literature was later called the "Prince Zhao Ming Anthology" and is regarded China's first major literary anthology and work of literary criticism. Emperor Wu and his son collected thousands of volumes of Chinese and Buddhist literature that were kept in a grand library. Xiao Tong also studied and wrote poetry of which many examples remain. Like his father, the young prince wrote learned commentaries on sutras. In his short

lifetime, Emperor Wu's son Xiao Tong became a major literary figure.^{xv} Upon his tragic death by illness in 531, the Book of Liang describes his stricken father's deep grief, quoting him to say, "What command can I give so that you can understand how grievous this loss is to me? [云何令至尊知我如此恶]"^{xvi}

Emperor Wu's long rule, from 502 to 549, saw an intimate connection between Buddhism and the Imperial throne hardly matched by any other era of Chinese history. Xiao Yan was called the "Bodhisattva Emperor," and he personally expounded from Buddhist scriptures to large convocations of aristocrats and commoners at Tong Tai Temple and specially built platforms on Mt. Zhong. He wrote his own commentaries on sutras and expounded these in public as well.

In such an environment, it is all the more fascinating that Bodhidharma's senior disciple declined to visit the Tai Cheng Palace. Avoiding the court's invitation in such a manner, while a number of other high priests came from distant lands to visit there, is remarkable. On the other hand, Seng Fu was not a recluse who avoided all public contact. The *Continued Biographies* indicates that he was honored as a model of virtue by the public. Moreover, he accepted an invitation from the Emperor's elder brother, the Marquis of Chang Hou, to travel to and live in distant Sichuan, far up the Yang-tse River from Nanjing. Seng Fu left Nanjing and traveled to Sichuan, staying there for an extended time. There he visited sacred Mt. Emei and is said to have "established the Chan School" [遂使庸蜀禅法自此大行]. After some time he returned to Nanjing [久之還返金陵].

Why did Emperor Wu, someone with many eminent monks to grace his court, pay special honors to a monk who never set foot there? Was it because Seng Fu's teacher, Bodhidharma, was already widely known and honored? We have already examined reasons why Bodhidharma himself likely avoided contact with ruling circles who valued doctrinal discussions. It seems his eldest disciple followed his teacher's example in his attitude toward the court.

Bodhidharma's Location between the Years 494 and 524

The only early text that might directly indicate Bodhidharma's location after 494 is the *Record of the Temples of Luoyang* [洛阳伽蓝记] composed by the official Yang Xuanzhi around the year 547. This record offers visual descriptions of the temples of Luoyang written more than a decade after their nearly complete destruction during the war that divided the Wei Dynasty into eastern and western parts. Yang Xuanzhi's motive for writing the book may have been partly to criticize the extravagance spent upon the lost temples, but the account is also a remembrance of the glory of Luoyang following the time when Emperor Xiao Wen moved his court to that city.

The first temple described in Yang Xuanzhi's account is Yong Ning Temple, a grand landmark positioned close to the Wei Dynasty imperial palace. After describing the grandeur of the temple, the record quotes a monk from "western regions" [西域] named Bodhidharma who made exclamations in praise of the temple's beauty, saying, "I am one hundred and fifty years old and have traveled through many countries and there's nowhere I haven't been. Yet [behold] the beauty of this temple! Nothing like it can be found in Yan Fu [a mythical southern continent in Buddhism]. Throughout the Buddha Realm,

there is nothing else like this! He chanted 'namu' with his hands together for days on end" [“白云：‘年一百五十岁，历涉诸国，靡不周遍。而此寺精丽，阎浮所无也。极佛境界，亦未有此’。口唱南无，合掌连日”]。

Dr. Yang Xiaotian argues that the monk in this record was probably not the same Bodhidharma that is credited to be the first ancestor of the Chan tradition. Yang and others have pointed out incongruities in this record of Bodhidharma that make it unlikely that he was the individual quoted here. The monk is said to be from “western regions.” While this statement might literally include the area of Southern India, where Bodhidharma is said to have come from, it would not be the likely way to describe his origin. It also seems unlikely that a monk that clasped his hands and chanted “namu” for days on end would be the same monk that only emphasized “observing mind.” Yang suggests the monk in the story was a different monk who is known to have had the name Bodhidharma. I would go even further to say that Yang Xuanzhi’s account, many years after the fact, has a false ring to it. The episode sounds like an embellishment for the description of the temple and may not have happened in this way, or even at all. Dao Xuan, the compiler of the *Continued Biographies*, was the author of another text entitled *Guang Ming Hong Ji* [广弘明集].^{xvii} In that text he provides a biography for Yang Xuanzhi indicating that he was hostile to Buddhism. For these and other reasons I agree with Dr. Yang Xiaotian that the Bodhidharma described in this story should not be considered the well-known Bodhidharma of history.

Yang Xiaotian proposed that the Bodhidharma in the *Record of the Temples of Luoyang* was a certain monk who shared Bodhidharma’s name and was also called “Song Toutuo,” meaning roughly the “itinerant monk of Mt. Song.” He suggests that records indicate that this monk later traveled south and crossed the Yang-tse into Southern China and may be the origin of legends saying Bodhidharma crossed the Yang-tse River on a “single blade of grass.”

Yang Xiaotian’s paper, from which I have drawn extensively, does not consider whether Bodhidharma left Luoyang after 494 and accompanied his disciples to travel into South China, specifically to the region of Nanjing. It is this idea which I’d now like to discuss.

Bodhidharma and Nanjing

Previously in this paper we looked at reasons why Bodhidharma and his disciples might have wanted to leave Luoyang. Foremost among these reasons likely was the criticism, even persecution, he would suffer if he remained close to the Wei court. Whether or not Bodhidharma met Gunabhadra, the latter’s experience in China might have provided a lesson that it is better for foreign monks to stay out of Chinese politics. There are also the statements recorded by Dao Xuan in the *Continued Biographies* that Bodhidharma “who’s transcendent teaching he proselytized in the Yang-tse and Luoyang [regions]” [神化居宗阐导江洛] and that he “did not stay in places of Imperial sway, and those who loved to see him could not draw him near” [帝网之所不拘。爱见莫之能引]. So, it is possible that Bodhidharma simply wanted to stay out of public view, at least in those places where he was already well known and recognized.

Was Bodhidharma too old to undertake a distant trip in 494? If Bodhidharma was born in 434, he would have been sixty years old when he and his disciples left Luoyang. If a trip to the far south required much walking, he still might have been able to proceed on such a trip. Such long trips using one's own feet were common in old China. Although monks in old China are thought to have walked on their long pilgrimages, riding on ox carts was also possible. He certainly would have been capable of making the trip by boat.

One possibility is that, starting around 495, Bodhidharma's eldest disciple Seng Fu traveled south on his own, while Bodhidharma and Hui Ke went elsewhere. Local legends in Cheng An County of Hebei Province in Northern China claim that a particular temple there served as a platform for sermons by both Bodhidharma and Hui Ke in ancient times. However, lacking more substantial evidence this remains in the realm of speculation.

Whether Bodhidharma and Hui Ke proceeded to the north or not, some physical and recorded evidence suggests that Bodhidharma, Hui Ke, and Seng Fu all eventually reached the region around Nanjing. What is the physical evidence? First and foremost, there is the Yang-tse River. In Dr. Yang's paper he suggests that Bodhidharma might have "crossed the Yang-tse River" and proceeded south. Although walking to the south was quite possible, using a boat for transport can not be ruled out.

There is other evidence that Bodhidharma, Hui Ke, and Seng Fu remained in the Nanjing region for a long period of time. We'll examine the literary evidence first.

Scholars correctly point out that most "physical evidence" is unreliable as a historical guide. In the case of famous religious figures this is particularly true. Whether it's the Shroud of Turin or some other relic, artifacts and physical evidence related to famous religious figures are unreliable. However some physical evidence may be valuable and may complement old documents. Taking documents as the basis of research we may find physical evidence that either confirms, contradicts, or fills in the content of old documents.

During the years 494 to 498, the Northern Wei Dynasty was at war with the Southern Qi Dynasty. If Bodhidharma and his disciples traveled through the contested frontier into Qi territory, certainly they would reach a place where they could not be followed by the authorities. Is it plausible that they made such a trip?

For about two centuries before Bodhidharma's life, a great migration of Chinese Han people flowed from Northern into Southern China and populated the Yang-tse River Valley. One major migration route went almost directly south from Luoyang through the Fu Niu Mountains to meet major tributaries of the Yang-tse River. By reaching the Han River and its tributaries, migrants could sail downstream to reach the Yang-tse. Therefore, it would not have been difficult for Bodhidharma and his disciples to literally boat their way all the way downstream to Nanjing. The entire river system was used for the transport of

passengers and freight. As mendicant monks, it is unlikely that the small group would encounter serious obstacles if they decided to make this journey. While this may be possible, it would also have been possible for them to walk the entire distance.

There is much folklore that indicates that Bodhidharma, Hui Ke, and Seng Fu all made such a journey to Nanjing. Seng Fu's record in the *Continued Biographies* is clear on this point. While early written evidence of Bodhidharma and Hui Ke traveling to that region is lacking, the abundance of local stories and temples that claim a connection with them is worth examining.

Yang Xiaotian points out that the *Continued Biographies* that the time between when Hui Ke received "Dharma transmission" from Bodhidharma and the time he traveled to Ye and begin to teach publically was forty years (494-534). This time span matches in length the difference between when Seng Fu left Luoyang and the time when Hui Ke started teaching. Yang proposes that during this forty year period Hui Ke lived in Anhui Province at Si Kong Mountain. Later historical records claim that Hui Ke lived in that place and its vicinity, and that was where the "Third Ancestor" of Chan once lived as well. Si Kong Mountain is north of the Yang-tse River, about 300 kilometers upstream from Nanjing. While local legends about Hui Ke say he lived there to escape from the Zhou suppression of Buddhism (in the year 574) this is extremely unlikely. Hui Ke would have been at a very advanced age, around one hundred years old, at that time and probably not capable of traveling from the area of Ye City in Hebei to lower Anhui Province. The *Continued Biographies*, moreover, indicates that Hui Ke remained in Hebei during the Zhou suppression and protected Buddhist property there along with a Dharma master named Lin and their students [时有林法师。...及周灭法与可同学共护经像及周灭法与可同学共护经像]. Yang Xiaotian's proposal that Hui Ke lived in Anhui during the earlier period is much more likely. Hui Ke may have parted ways with Bodhidharma after they traveled from Luoyang after 494 and lived in the region of Si Kong Mountain sometime between 494 and around 525.

What about Bodhidharma himself? Writings cited above say he taught in the north and south and "in the Yang-tse and Luoyang [regions]," where the followers flocking to him were "like a city." These statements suggest that Bodhidharma left Luoyang after 494. We must consider whether this famous teacher, wary of contact with authorities and the court, traveled south along with his disciples. Did he accompany Seng Fu and Hui Ke through the well traveled migration route of the Fu Niu Mountains? If Bodhidharma did make such a trip, where did it take him and why do we not find any early written records of his presence in the south?

If Bodhidharma traveled upon or along the Han and Yang-tse Rivers with his disciples, we may assume he must have gone east toward Anhui Province, and hence to Nanjing on the Yang-tse's lower reaches. Since the record of Seng Fu indicates that he established Bodhidharma's Chan in the Sichuan area, we can surmise that if Bodhidharma traveled south he did not travel upstream through the Three Gorges upon reaching the Yang-tse. Thus we must decide whether he could have lived in any of the Yang-tse's downstream locations during a period of time after the year 494.

During his lifetime, his apparent fame notwithstanding, there was no mainstream Chan tradition associated with Bodhidharma and he may not have seemed noteworthy to China's literary circles. Also, if he avoided the court, as evidence indicates he did, he would not likely have earned a place in official biographies such as the Book of Liang [梁书] or the Southern [Dynasties] History [南史]. Despite the lack of early written records about Bodhidharma's life in the south, local traditions and folklore offer many locations where he is said to have lived in the Nanjing region.

Again, folklore should be carefully weighed. After his death Bodhidharma became a figure of great historic importance. As the founder of the mainstream of Mahayana Chan in China, later generations sought to prove their connections to his legendary life. This was especially true after the year 680, when the "Northern School" of Chinese Chan, which traced itself to Bodhidharma, gained important influence with the Tang Dynasty court. During the mid and later Tang Dynasty, a monk's relationship to Bodhidharma's mainstream Chan helped demonstrate the legitimacy of the monk's practice. Such legitimacy was essential if monks wanted to maintain their spiritual practice and avoid the military service, taxes, and corvée labor demanded of the lay public by the court. The importance of being from an officially recognized stream of religious tradition was, if anything, even more important than it was when Bodhidharma taught his students around Luoyang in the 490's.

So, as Bodhidharma's Chan became the dominant religious ideology of the Tang Court, perhaps around the year 700, there were both religious and political reasons for people to create histories linking themselves to Bodhidharma's life. The Chinese scholar Sun Changwu provides a good description of the factional and class conflict that arose when Bodhidharma's style of Chan became popular at the court after the year 680.^{xviii} Given the strong incentives for later generations to show connections with Bodhidharma and his legends, physical evidence concerning his life must be approached with great caution. Temples and other places had religious, political, and monetary reasons to connect their history with Bodhidharma's life. The incentives to create hagiographies that made such connections were great indeed. In the Chan tradition, like so many other traditions, there are important instances where scholars have proven that lineage connections and documents were simply created many years after the supposed occurrence of a fictitious event. Still, there are some instances where local legends and events have helped explain old records. An example can be found with the famous "Fourth Ancestor" of Chan, named Daoxin (580-651), who together with the "Fifth Ancestor" Hongren, established Chan's influential East Mountain School. Old records indicate that he was posthumously granted the title "Great Healer" by Emperor Dai Zong in the year 766. Local stories about Dao Xin say he was skilled at Chinese medicine. Until now every year a local festival is held on his birth date where participants prepare special food said to be beneficial to people's health that Daoxin is credited to have discovered. Thus he earned the posthumous name, "Great Healer." This is a case where traditions surviving to modern times complement ancient records. Old stories and folklore should therefore should not be dismissed without examination, as they may complement written records in ways that suggest a kernel of truth lies within them.

The sheer quantity of local folklore and geographic landmarks related to Bodhidharma in the Nanjing area merit a review to see what evidence might suggest he really lived there. Can any of these sites help answer, as Dr. Hu Shi described it, the “koan of Bodhidharma’s life.”

In a paper entitled “A Talk on Bodhidharma,” by the Chinese scholar Wu Rutong, delivered in 2003 to a gathering of Buddhist organizations, Wu offered a long reference list of both existing and lost historical documents, locations, verses, legends, fables, and more about Bodhidharma’s life.^{xix} Among this wealth of material, various geographic locations related to Bodhidharma are listed. Of interest here are certain temples in the general area of Nanjing that claim a connection with Bodhidharma. At least three of these sites offer landmarks that can be visited and examined. These three include the ancient sites of Ding Shan [Samadhi Mountain], Chang Lu [Long Reed], and Zhen Sheng [True Victory] Temples.

Each of these temples is said to have been founded at or before the time when Bodhidharma visited Nanjing, an era when Emperor Wu undertook the construction or renovation of scores of new Buddhist Temples.

Ding Shan Temple, a temple site destroyed in the 1950s but now a place of extensive archeological excavation, displays a spring named “Bodhidharma Spring,” that remains a source of high quality water for the temple site.

According to historical sources, Ding Shan Temple was founded in the year 503, but details about its origin are sketchy.^{xx} A record indicates that Emperor Wu founded the temple for a monk named Fa Ding [“Dharma Samadhi”] whose biography is obscure. A monk by the same name is recorded to have lived in Upper Samadhi Temple [上定林寺] on Mt. Zhong during the Qi dynasty, placing him in same area just before the establishment of the temple, and thus within the right time frame. However, that monk is remembered for being one of a group of pious monks who recited sacred sutras “more than a hundred thousand times.” In contrast, the record of the monk who founded Ding Shan says that he practiced “rigorous renunciation, planting his staff [and teaching] in the north and south” [戒行精严, 锡周南北]。 The year 503 corresponds to the period, by evidence cited above, when Bodhidharma could have been in the Nanjing area. Also, the Yang-tse River upstream from the temple was the site of extensive warfare during the two years prior to 503, suggesting that travelers coming downstream may have been hesitant to do so until after 502. In that year troops led by Xiao Yan fought their way downstream to Nanjing and overthrew the last Qi Emperor, Baojuan, whereupon fighting ceased. That Ding Shan Temple was established so soon after the end of hostilities, when few resources existed in public or private treasuries, makes the temple’s establishment even more interesting.

Its obscure beginnings notwithstanding, folklore and legends claim that Bodhidharma stayed at the temple for “three years.” However, the three year period is claimed to have occurred after Bodhidharma left his meeting with Emperor Wu and before he traveled to Mt. Song, placing the time according to local reckoning in the late 520s or 530’s, long after the temple is was established. An eleventh century stele unearthed and displayed at the site commemorates Bodhidharma, and it is recorded that a rock ledge at the site was where the sage meditated. Unquestionably, aspects of the

temple's self-proclaimed connection with Bodhidharma contradict with the most reliable historical records of his life. And whether the monk "Dharma Samadhi" who "Planted his staff in the North and the South" could be a reference to Bodhidharma is very speculative. But if Fa Ding "planted his staff in the north and south," (a gesture that also corresponds with finding springs), then why are there no clear records of this monk in other contexts? Some aspects of the temple's story might fit into the "whole picture" of what we know about Bodhidharma. But the confused legends and later records saying that Bodhidharma lived at the site are suggestive, but inconclusive. If it is true that Bodhidharma lived at Ding Shan for "three years," then such a time frame would likely have occurred not long after the year 494, when Bodhidharma probably left Luoyang.

Farther down the Yang-tse River, the old site of Chang Lu Temple is located across the Yang-tse River from Nanjing, about twenty kilometers downstream from Ding Shan Temple. This temple, like Ding Shan Temple, claims that Bodhidharma stayed here after leaving the court of Emperor Wu. According to tradition, the temple was built by Emperor Wu in gratitude for the fact that his daughter regained her health after a severe illness. This temple was said to be at the site where Bodhidharma came ashore after crossing the Yang-tse "on a single blade of grass" before he traveled north to Mt. Song. During the Song Dynasty this temple was constructed on a grand scale, and as many as 1700 monks were once in residence there. The temple was reportedly destroyed by Japanese troops during World War II. Of the three temples considered in this essay, this location shows the clearest evidence that a history about Bodhidharma was created for the place long after he lived. Many poems were written about the temple in ancient times, and among the poets was the famous Li Bai. None of the existent poems about this temple from early times records that Bodhidharma ever passed this way.

A third site is the former location of Zhen Sheng (True Victory) Temple near Chang Tian City in Anhui Province. The location is about 60 kilometers north of Nanjing. Dr. Wu Rutong, in his paper published in 2002, refers to a Qing Dynasty history entitled, "Complete Record of the South" [江南通志] that describes True Victory Temple in Yu Prefecture by saying, "Zhen Sheng Temple, located in Eastern Tian Chang County, built in the Pu Tong Era of Emperor Liang Wu Di [520-526], was built by Bodhidharma and was rebuilt in the middle of the Hong Wu Era." [“真胜寺，在天长县东。梁普通间，达磨建。明洪武中修。”] Local legends say the temple was built in the year 520. Today, a well is the only remains of this temple site. Without independent confirmation of whether the temple was indeed established by Bodhidharma, this site is still noteworthy because it indicates that ancient records contain contradictions about the dates of Bodhidharma's stay around Nanjing. If Bodhidharma's history was compiled from early, obscure and/or local records, then compilers may have needed to make an "official" version of that history that was at odds with local evidence and stories.

Two geographic sites near Nanjing claim to be places where Bodhidharma practiced meditation. One is a terrace south of the city on Fang Mountain [方山] close to Ding Shan Temple, which was moved to this its current site from Mt. Zhong around the year 1170. A second site claiming a connection with Bodhidharma is a "Bodhidharma's Cave" that sits within the palisades along the Yang-tse River north of the city.

Besides the above mentioned sites, local legends claim that Bodhidharma met Emperor Wu at TongTai Temple. That temple was built in 521 at a location just north of the Tai Cheng Palace. It faced south toward a palace gate leading into the imperial Hua Lin [Flowered Woods] Garden. The temple was actively used by Emperor Wu during after its construction as a venue for Buddhist ceremonies, sermons, and meetings. Tong Tai Palace and Hua Lin Garden, located next to one another, were where the emperor publically took the Bodhisattva Vows and on four occasions performed a ceremonial *atmaparityaga*, a ceremony of “leaving home” and dedicating one’s life to Buddha. Possible remains of Tong Tai Temple were excavated in a north Nanjing City location in the year 2006.

Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu

Did Bodhidharma remain in the greater Nanjing area sometime after 494? The period after Emperor Wu took power saw an explosion of Buddhist culture at Nanjing amongst both the aristocracy and commoners. Scores of temples were built or refurbished, and the resources dedicated to support the clergy were substantial. In that environment, could Bodhidharma have successfully avoided contact or acknowledgement by the court even while his most senior disciple, living almost within shouting distance of the palace, gained recognition?

Dao Xuan wrote in the *Continued Biographies* that Bodhidharma “Did not stay in places of Imperial sway” [帝网之所不拘] and “Those who loved seeing him could not draw him near” [爱见莫之能引]. It appears that this principle did not only get practiced by Bodhidharma, but his main disciple Seng Fu as well. Seng Fu avoided the emperor, and if his teacher lived in the area we might expect him to have done the same. But could something have brought Bodhidharma to Emperor Wu’s court, despite his reluctance to go there? What could compel such a meeting?

Seng Fu’s death in 524 might have brought Bodhidharma into contact with Emperor Wu. Certainly, the death of his senior disciple might cause Bodhidharma to travel a distance such as the 60 kilometers from True Victory Temple to Nanjing for public observances. If Bodhidharma, like his disciple, made a point of avoiding the emperor, as it says in the *Continued Biographies* [宫闈未尝謁覲], then perhaps only an event like Seng Fu’s death brought them together for a brief meeting, a meeting Bodhidharma was compelled by circumstances to attend. The date of the meeting would have been in the fifth year of the Pu Tong Era (524), when Emperor Wu’s Buddhist activities were at their zenith. Tong Tai, Kai Shan, and other great temples had recently been constructed. At these places Emperor Wu, the Crown Prince Zhao Ming, the then second in succession prince Xiao Wang (who later became Emperor Jian Wen), and the imperial court publically embraced Buddhism in grand ceremonies. Bodhidharma, who taught “adherence to the solitary empty mind teachings of Mahayana” [志存大乘冥心虛寂], clearly did not fit into the fashion of the times. As Seng Fu’s teacher, Bodhidharma should have enjoyed some reputation. Did his previous experience with the Wei Buddhist establishment make him resolve, once again, to avoid contact with the court? Moreover, did a brief, unsuccessful contact with Emperor Wu compel Bodhidharma to travel again to the north of China? In that case did Bodhidharma leave Nanjing and returned to Luoyang in the year 524 or shortly thereafter?

Chan's Second Ancestor, Hui Ke, may also have come to Jian Kang for the funeral of Seng Fu. In that case, although no account of a possible meeting between Emperor Wu, Bodhidharma, and Hui Ke exists, from the known historical evidence it cannot be ruled out.

If Bodhidharma left the Liang Dynasty court after Seng Fu's death in 524 would he have been too old to make the journey back to North China? Here again river transport up the Yang-tse and its Han River tributary might be considered possible. If Bodhidharma avoided imperial contact and thought it best to leave Nanjing, then he, along with Hui Ke, could have journeyed back to the north together. The essential points of the traditional story of Bodhidharma meeting Emperor Wu thus have real plausibility. The meeting may have been short, it may have involved Hui Ke, and Bodhidharma may have returned to the north of China after the meeting ended.

Bodhidharma's death

Emperor Wu's Memorial Stelae for Bodhidharma

After Bodhidharma's death, Emperor Wu is said to have created three memorial stelae to commemorate him. Reproductions of these stelae exist now at different locations, each of them said to be copies of the original memorials which have been lost. The three stone monuments are nearly identical in content, and each praises Bodhidharma as a great teacher that Emperor Wu failed to appreciate until after they met. The three separate stele are located at Shao Lin Temple, Kong Xiang Temple [Bodhidharma's traditional burial temple] at Bear Ear Mountain in Henan Province, and the burial temple of Chan's Second Ancestor Hui Ke named Yuan Fu Temple, in Cheng An County, Hebei Province.

Regarding the stelae's authenticity, there has been a wide range of opinions. However, in 2002 the Chinese scholar Ji Huazhuan [纪华传] established that the memorials were almost certainly created between the years 728 and 732, approximately two hundred years after Bodhidharma lived. Ji Huazhuan offered several compelling reasons why the stelae could not have been made at the time of Bodhidharma's death. His evidence includes the following points:

- 1) The stelae state that they were created ten days after Bodhidharma's death, a time when Emperor Wu was on the throne of the Liang Empire. The stelae's text claims they were authored by "Emperor Liang Wu Di" by name. However, Emperor Wu did not receive the title "Emperor Wu" until his rule ended upon his death in 549, many years after the date of Bodhidharma's death as stated on the stelae (536). For this reason, the stelae could not have been created before 549.
- 2) An inventory of existing stelae at Shao Lin Temple done in the year 728 does not include a reference to the Bodhidharma memorial by Emperor Wu. However there is a reliable statement by the Chan monk Shenhui that the stele in question existed at Shao Lin Temple before the year 732. These facts indicate that the stele at Shao Lin Temple was likely created and set up between the years 728 and 732.
- 3) The Chinese monk "Jingjue," a Dharma heir of the East Mountain School of Chan, lived during the time in question. He authored two works, including the "Record of the Lankavatara Masters," and a "Commentary on the Heart Sutra." Many words and phrases used in those texts, as well as the "Treatise on Observing Mind" [Guan Xin Lun] attributed to the principle Northern School patriarch Shenxiu

match phrases and words used in the stelae. Therefore, the relationship between Jingjue and the memorials appears very strong. This suggests that he may have been, or was closely associated with, the stelae's creator.

For these and other reasons professor Ji Huazhuan suggests that the Bodhidharma memorial ostensibly composed by Emperor Wu is likely a document created by Jingjue or his close associates for political reasons, probably after the year 727 and before 732. Professor Ji points out that although a slightly earlier composition date for the text is possible, the link between it and the Northern School monk Jingjue points to his close involvement with the stelae's creation, if not authorship.

Professor Ji offers this evidence to support his conclusion that the stelae were created to advance the position of the Northern School of Chan at the imperial court of Emperor Xuan Zong. By demonstrating a connection between Emperor Wu and Bodhidharma, the author of the stelae's text advanced the idea of an imperial connection between the spiritual ancestry of the East Mountain School of Daoxin and Hongren, and the royal court of the Liang Dynasty. Thus, the meeting between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu should be regarded as a fiction created for political purposes. I would add that there may be other reasons to believe that the stelae were created in the time frame Professor Ji has suggested. During the period in question (728-730) Emperor Xuan Zong ordered a review of the Buddhist clergy to determine the authenticity of monks and nuns. It is widely accepted that many people entered the Buddhist orders so that they could avoid conscription for military service and corvée labor. The need to establish a spiritual pedigree, proof of a monk's legitimate connection to an imperially recognized spiritual line, was very important. The stelae's creation could have served this purpose. However, I want to suggest that the creation of these stelae, or even fabrication of parts of the text, does not conclusively show that their entire text was created during the time in question, or that a meeting between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu did not take place.

If we accept the idea that the stelae's purpose was to advance the political interest of the Northern School by creating a link between that school and the imperial court, then we are faced with a new set of problems that cast doubt on this idea.

First, in the "Record of the Lankavatara Masters," Jingjue claims that Gunabhadra was the "First Patriarch" of the lineage of Lankavatara masters. If that is the case, why would a fictional meeting between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu be necessary to show a connection between the Chan lineage and the imperial court? Gunabhadra, who is given the honor of being the first of the Lankavatara masters by the stelae's alleged author Jingjue, also was known to have translated the sutra into Chinese and introduced it to China. He is moreover recorded to have had a strong relationship with Emperor Xiao Wu Di of the Liu-Song Dynasty, as noted earlier in this paper. As the translator of the sutra, and as having had a strong relationship with the Liu-Song emperor, wouldn't the imperial link with Gunabhadra be much more important than an alleged and heretofore unknown story about a meeting between Emperor Wu and Bodhidharma? If Jingjue or someone close to him was attempting to solidify the Chan-Imperial link, then why make up the story of such a meeting if it didn't exist? This suggests that it may have been widely accepted that Bodhidharma did in fact meet Emperor Wu, and that this fact carried

some importance. It seems possible that Jingjue or his associates' goal was not to make up the Bodhidharma-Emperor Wu link, but to expand upon it using evidence that was at hand or had come to light. This evidence might have been some document or other evidence that reported that Emperor Wu actually met Bodhidharma.

Second, if there was any importance to the idea of Emperor Wu's meeting Bodhidharma, what would it have been? Bodhidharma, like his successors Daoxin and Hongren, seems to have purposefully avoided contact with the imperial court. Daoxuan stated that Bodhidharma "Did not stay in places of Imperial sway, those who loved seeing him could not draw him to them." Daoxin, the famous fourth generation spiritual descendent of Bodhidharma, reportedly refused repeated imperial commands to come to the capital and meet the emperor. Nor is there any record of the fifth Chan ancestor Hongren visiting the imperial court. Extensive interaction with the court began with certain of Hongren's disciples, namely Faru, Shenxiu, and Lao An. This contact likely began around the time that Faru began teaching at Shao Lin Temple in 676. It expanded with extensive imperial contact between the court and Shenxiu, plus Empress Wu Zetian's three trips to visit Lao An at Hui Shan Temple on Mt. Song. The influence of the East Mountain School disciples at the court is well documented. This influence was established and known long before the Bodhidharma memorial was created around the years 728-732. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the memorial was a tool for advancing the Northern School reputation, as its reputation was already solidly established. However, the purpose of the memorial could have served a related function. The story of an emperor who did not heed one of the teachers of the school and later came to regret that fact could have been meant to further the acceptance of the Northern School's teachings. But is it likely that the story of a meeting between Emperor Wu and Bodhidharma would have been fabricated to serve this purpose? In my view such a story might, on the contrary, have highlighted the fact that certain Lankavatara Masters, like Bodhidharma and Daoxin, believed that they should avoid the court as a place of evil and intrigue. Thus, it does not seem at all clear that the relationship between Emperor Wu and Bodhidharma, as told on the memorial stela, was solely the result of the need to advance the interests of the "Lankavatara Masters" at the imperial court.

Third, Professor Ji makes a strong case linking the wording of the Bodhidharma memorial stela with the terminology used in the texts authored by the monk Jingjue. What remains uncertain is whether there is a cause and effect relationship between these texts. In other words, does the relationship between the texts indicate that the memorial was Jingjue's invention? Or does it show that Jingjue was heavily influenced by ideas and concepts that are also reflected in the stela? Moreover, is it possible that there is a third alternative, namely that some of the text of the memorial come from a genuine remembrance text issued by Emperor Wu, and some other parts were fabricated by others, perhaps including the monk Jingjue, at a much later time? Is there any evidence that indicates that the text of the memorial can be linked to authors of the Liang imperial court?

Two phrases used early in the memorial text are worth considering. In one line, the text likens Bodhidharma's teaching to "a flaming candle in a dark room," [如暗室之炷炬]. Shortly thereafter, the text likens Bodhidharma to "a leaping fish in the sea of wisdom," [跃鳞慧海...]. In a poem composed by Emperor Wu's son the Crown Prince Zhao Ming about the occasion of a Dharma meeting at Kai Shan

Temple on Mt. Zhong, he writes the following two lines: “The Dharma Wheel illuminates a *dark room*, Compassion ferries [beings] across the *sea of wisdom*” [法轮明暗室。 慧海渡慈航].

The use of the terms “dark room” [暗室] and “sea of wisdom” [慧海] merit attention. Neither term is common in Buddhist poetry, yet both terms appear in Zhao Ming’s poem as well as in the text of Bodhidharma’s memorials. It is worth emphasizing that the phrase “Dharma Wheel illuminates a dark room” in Zhao Ming’s poem is not a general metaphor. Instead, it refers to a specific event that occurred when Zhao Ming attended a Dharma talk at Kaishan Temple on a dark morning. Therefore I propose that the use of this metaphor in both the poem and the memorial stela is unlikely to be a coincidence. The author of the Bodhidharma memorials knew of a specific incident that occurred in Zhao Ming’s life that is described in his poem.

Moreover, In a poem composed by Zhao Ming’s younger brother Xiao Gang entitled “Receiving the Precepts in Hua Lin Park,” [蒙华林园戒] the poet describes a precepts ceremony that occurs in the palace park where legend says Emperor Wu met Bodhidharma. One stanza of that poem says, “The mind candle illuminates the dark room” [心灯朗暗室]. The use of this metaphor by Xiao Gang may indicate that he was familiar with his older brother’s poem, or even that he accompanied his older brother to Kaishan Temple on that dark morning to hear the Dharma speaker described in Xiao Tong’s poem.

The term “sea of wisdom” [慧海] is similarly found in both the memorial stela and in Zhao Ming’s poem, and is closely connected to the “dark room” metaphor as quoted above. The text of the memorial reads, “心灯朗暗室, 若朗月之开云。声震华夏。道迈今古。帝后闻名。钦若昊天。于是跃鳞慧海。”

Moreover, the term “sea of wisdom” is also found in another poem by Prince Xiao Gang [萧纲], In a poem entitled “和赠逸民应诏” there is a passage that reads, “愍兹五浊, 矜此四流。既开慧海, 广列檀舟。” . It is unlikely that the use of these terms in both the Liang princes’ poetry and in the memorial stela is a coincidence. However, it is possible that the composer of the stela, writing in a later time, used these phrases to lend an air of authenticity to the inscriptions. But if this is so, why is the authorship of the stela specifically credited to Emperor Wu and not Zhao Ming? The use of the terms cited in both texts must be weighed in a judgment of whether the stela’s text has some direct connection to a memorial that came from Emperor Wu’s court, and specifically from the hand of Prince Zhao Ming or his brother.

The idea that the Bodhidharma memorial text was written by Zhao Ming is stated in the text of the Bao Lin Zhuan [宝林传]. Professor Ji Huazhuan and others have acknowledged this and pointed out that this must be a fabrication because Prince Zhao Ming died in the year 531, five years before 536, the date that Bodhidharma is stated to have died as indicated on his memorial stela. What could explain this contradiction?

The Baolin Zhuan is regarded by most scholars as an unreliable record that was authored long after the mid-Tang Dynasty. The text contradicts itself on important matters of dates, especially related to

Bodhidharma. I presently do not think the text can support the idea that Prince Zhao Ming authored the Bodhidharma memorial stelae. However, I believe that the aforementioned examples of text found in both the memorial and in the poetry of the Liang Court imperial princes does not allow ruling out some genuine connection between the text of the memorials and Bodhidharma's death.

Where did Bodhidharma Die?

The only early account of Bodhidharma's death is found in Hui Ke's biography in the *Continued Biographies*. That record relates that Bodhidharma died on the shore of the Luo River, whereupon his remains were buried by Hui Ke. [达摩灭化洛滨。可亦埋形河滨]. Some scholars have suggested that Bodhidharma was a victim of political violence that occurred in the year 528. Specifically, a massacre of around two thousand Wei Court officials was carried out by the general Erzhu Rong on the banks of the Luo River at a place called Heyin [河阴] in that year. The officials were ordered to a place near the riverbank under the pretense of attending an imperial sacrifice to heaven and earth. An account says that Buddhist monks were among those slaughtered. While no conclusions can be drawn, the time and place of this massacre would accord with the account of Bodhidharma's death offered in Hui Ke's biography. However, Bodhidharma's history suggests he would not participate in this event. The possibility exists that because no one knew the exact circumstances of his death, the later account of his dying on the banks of the Luo River and being buried there arose because of the Heyin incident. Given Bodhidharma's avoidance of the court, that tragic event was unlikely to have been the place of Bodhidharma's death. Any conclusion about Bodhidharma's final days and place of death thus remains very speculative.

Conclusion

The *Continued Biographies*, by Dao Xuan, remains the most reliable historical record we have concerning the lives of eminent monks during the period when Bodhidharma lived. It includes prominent biographies of Bodhidharma and his disciples Hui Ke and Seng Fu. The biography of Bodhidharma, along with other passages in the *Continued Biographies*, clearly indicates that he taught and was well known in both North and South China. However, there is no evidence that he acquired disciples prior to living in the Luoyang/Mt. Song area between the years 489 and 494. Further, given that Bodhidharma needed time to learn Chinese after arriving in China, it seems likely that he did not teach in South China until after the year 494. This view accords with the suggestion by Professor Yang Xiaotian that Bodhidharma traveled to the south of China after that date. Extensive evidence suggests that Bodhidharma avoided contact with the Wei Court, and records state that his disciple Seng Fu avoided the Liang Court even though it was within walking distance of where he lived for many years. This suggests a purposeful avoidance of the court by Bodhidharma and his disciples. Thus, if Bodhidharma lived in the Nanjing region, as local folklore suggests, he may have refused to attend the court. Ding Shan or True Victory temples are candidates for where Bodhidharma may have lived during part of this time. It must be considered whether the speaker at Kaishan Temple referred to in Xiao Tong's poem may have been Bodhidharma's disciple Seng Fu, or even Bodhidharma himself. The textual similarities between the memorial stelae, purportedly composed by Emperor Wu, and the poetry of the Liang princes, indicates

that a connection between the stelae and the Liang court is plausible. Despite not entering the court, the monk Seng Fu was highly honored by Emperor Liang Wu Di. Both the emperor and the court mourned Seng Fu's death. That event could have precipitated a visit by Bodhidharma and Hui Ke to the Liang Court for a brief visit. Such a visit may be the basis for the legend of their meeting. Bodhidharma may have been at pains to avoid extensive contact and been blunt in his criticism of Emperor Wu and the court. Thus the legend of their words "not connecting" may have resulted from just such an encounter as later records indicate. Avoiding further contact with the court, Bodhidharma may have then returned to North China along with Hui Ke. By traveling on the Yang-tse and Han Rivers such a trip would have been possible even for a monk of advanced age. Although the date of the Heyin incident matches the time frame offered in this paper, it seems unlikely that Bodhidharma participated in that event and the idea that he died there in 528 remains speculative.

Hui Ke's biography states that in 534, after Bodhidharma died, Hui Ke made his way to live and teach in the area of the capital of the Eastern Wei Dynasty at Ye. This means that Bodhidharma died before the year 534 and clearly contradicts the date given on the memorial stelae purportedly composed by Emperor Wu. This casts doubt on the account of Bodhidharma's death indicated on the stelae. It has been established that the memorials were carved long after Bodhidharma's death. The text used in the stelae may have its source in some document now lost. The exact date of his death may have been surmised by the authors and added to the text. Furthermore, the possible involvement of Prince Zhao Ming or his brother Xiao Wang in composing the memorial at Emperor Wu's request is plausible, as certain terms in the memorial are the same as terms used by these brothers in poetry they composed at about the same time. The date 528 would harmonize with the known fact that Prince Zhao Ming died in 531. The evidence presented by Professor Ji Huazhuan and others shows that the Bodhidharma memorials now standing at Shao Lin, Kong Xiang, and Yuan Fu temples were not directly created by Emperor Wu or his court. But it can't be ruled out that they are based on some lost text that memorialized a meeting between the emperor and Bodhidharma, a text possibly composed at the Liang Court. The idea that the memorial was specifically created to advance the Northern School's position at the court is not supported by enough evidence to support such a conclusion. Professor Ji Huazhuan's contention that the memorial was created by the monk Jingjue or his close associates is very strong and is based on solid scholarship, but in my view it does not lead to the conclusion that the memorial was a fabrication unrelated to a real historical event.

ⁱ Taisho Tripitaka Vol. T50, No. 2060 續高僧《菩提達摩》

ⁱⁱ Compendium of Five Lamps <五燈會元> edited by Pu Ji (Song Dynasty) <宋·普濟撰> (Hsin Wen Publishing Company: Taipei:1989)

ⁱⁱⁱ Taisho Vol. T50, No. 2060 <釋法沖>

^{iv} T. Vol. 85, No. 2837 楞伽師資記

^v See 胡适, 《胡适文存三集》上海亚东图书馆印行, 卷 4

^{vi} See<关于达摩和慧可的生平> by Yang Xiaotian at: <http://www.fjdh.com/wumin/HTML/64549.html>

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} For a discussion of Emperor Xiao Wen's contacts with Buddhist teachers, See Tang Yongtong 《汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史》 Beijing University Press 1997 pp 358-9.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x See *Mahayana Uprisings* <大乘教起义> <http://www.hudong.com/wiki/大乘教起义>

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} See *Liang Wu Di and his Age* <梁武帝及其时代> by Zhao Yiwu <赵以武> (Nanjing: Phoenix Publishing House 2006) pp 99-103.

^{xiii} These facts are based on accounts in the *Liang Shu* 梁书 and other historical records. Zhao Yiwu provides extensive detail about Emperor Wu's involvement with Buddhism in *Liang Wu Di and his Age*.

^{xiv} 梁书, 唐姚思廉撰 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju <中华书局> 1973) vol. 1 pp 166

^{xv} See *A Critical Biography of Xiao Tong* <萧统评传> Cao Daoheng <曹道衡>, FuGang <傅刚> et.al. [Nanjing: Nanjing University Publishing House <南京大学出版社> 2001.

^{xvi} Ibid pp 169

^{xvii} T. Vol. 52 No. 2103 广弘明集

^{xviii} See *Bodhidharma and the East Mountain Dharma Gate* <达摩禅法与东山法门> by Sun Changwu <孙昌武> 佛教天地 点击数: 214 更新时间: 2006-3-15

<http://zhihai.heshang.net/Article/foshuku/hanchuan/czdj/200603/22823.html>

^{xix} "A Talk on Bodhidharma" [菩提达磨杂谈] appears in *Talks on Domestic Studies* <内学杂谈> by Wang Rutong <王孺童> [Beijing: China People's University Press <中国人民大学出版社>2008]

^{xx} See *Nanjing Historic Temple Descriptions* <南京寺庙史话> by Yang Xinghua et al. <杨新华> [Nanjing: Nanjing Publishing House 2003]

Chinese Text of the Bodhidharma Memorial Stele (Shao Lin Temple Version)

少林寺达摩碑文

震旦初祖菩提达摩大师之碑 梁武皇帝御制

我闻。沧海之内。有骊龙珠白毫色。天莫见人不识。我（）大师得之矣。大师讳达摩。云天竺人也。莫知其所居。未详其姓氏。大师以精灵为骨。阴阳为器。性则天假。智乃神欤。含海岳之秀。抱凌云之气。类邬阇身子之聪辩。若昙磨弗利之博闻。总三藏于心河。蕴五乘于口海。为玉久灰，金言未普。誓传师化。天竺东来。杖锡于秦。说无说法。如闍室之炆炬。若朗月之开云。声震华夏。道迈今古。帝后闻名。钦若昊天。于是跃鳞慧海。振羽禅河。法梁天横。佛日高照。尔其育物也。注无雨雨。洒润身田。说无法法。证开明理。指一言以直说。即心是佛。绝万缘以泯相。身离众生。实哉凡哉。空哉圣哉。心无也刹那而登妙觉。心有也旷劫而滞凡夫。有而不有。无而不无。智通无碍。神行莫测。大之则无外。小之则无内。积之于无。成之于有。我真教尔乎。于时奔如云。学如雨。果而少花而多。其得意者唯可禅师矣。大师乃舒容叹曰。我心将毕。大教已行。一真之法尽可有矣。命之以执手。付之以传灯。事行物外。理在斯矣。意之来也。身之住乎。意之行也。身之去乎。呜呼。大师可谓寿逾天地。化齐日月。使长流法海。洗幽

冥而不竭。永注禅河。涤樊笼而无尽。岂谓积善不祐。皇天何辜。月暗禅庭。风迷觉路。法梁摧折。慧水潜流。夜壑藏舟。潮波汨起。何图不夭。俄然往矣。神色无异。颜貌如常。其时也地物变白。天色苍茫。野兽鸣庭。甘泉顿竭。呜呼。无为将来。有为将去。道寄兹行。示现生灭。以梁大同二年十二月五日终于洛州禹门。未测其报龄也。遂莹葬于熊耳吴坂矣。于是门人悲感。号动天地。泣流遍体。伤割五情。如丧考焉。如丧妣焉。生徒眼闭。伤如之何。嗟呼。法身匪一。不现无方。骸葬兹坟。形游西域。亦为来而不去。去而不去也。非圣智者。焉得而知之乎。朕以不德。忝统大业。上亏阴阳之化。下阙黎庶之欢。夕惕勤勤。旰不暇食。万机之内，留心释门。虽无九年之储。以积群生之福。缅寻法意。恒寄兹门。安而作之。精矣。妙矣。传之耳目。乃大师苗裔也。嗟呼。见之不见。逢之不逢。今之古之。悔之恨之。朕虽一介凡夫。敢以师之。于后未获现生之得。顛有当来之因。不以刻石铭心。何表法之有也。亦恐天变地化。将大教之不闻。式建鸿碑。以示来见。乃作颂曰。

楞伽山顶生宝月 中有金人披缕褐
形同大地体如空 心如琉璃色如雪
匪磨匪莹恒净明 披云卷雾心且彻
芬陀利华用严身 随缘触物常欢悦
不有不无非去来 多闻辩才无法说
实哉空哉离生死 大之小之众缘绝
刹那而登妙觉心 跃鳞慧海超先哲
理应法水永长流 何期暂涌还暂竭

开善寺法会

萧统

栖鸟犹未翔，命驾出山庄。诘屈登马岭，回互入羊肠。
稍看原蔼蔼，惭见岫苍苍。落星埋远树，新雾起朝阳。
阴池宿早雁，寒风催夜霜。兹地信间寂，清旷惟道场。
玉树琉璃水，羽帐郁金香。紫柱珊瑚地，神幢明月珰。
牵萝下石磴，攀桂陟松梁。润斜日欲隐，烟生楼半藏。
千祀终何迈，百代归我皇。神功照不极，睿镜湛无方。
法轮明暗室，慧海渡慈航。尘根久未洗，希霏垂露光。

开善寺法会

萧统

栖鸟犹未翔，命驾出山庄。诘屈登马岭，回互入羊肠。
稍看原蔼蔼，惭见岫苍苍。落星埋远树，新雾起朝阳。
阴池宿早雁，寒风催夜霜。兹地信间寂，清旷惟道场。
玉树琉璃水，羽帐郁金香。紫柱珊瑚地，神幢明月珰。
牵萝下石磴，攀桂陟松梁。涧斜日欲隐，烟生楼半藏。
千祀终何迈，百代归我皇。神功照不极，睿镜湛无方。
法轮明暗室，慧海渡慈航。尘根久未洗，希霑垂露光。