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A Reassessment of the Early History of Chinese Buddhist Vegetarianism

INTRODUCTION

Lifelong vegetarianism for the clergy is a regular and expected feature of Buddhism in East Asia (with the exception, recent for the most part, of Japan).¹ This is not the case, however, elsewhere in the Buddhist world. Scholars have traced the origin of this peculiarity of East Asian Buddhism to a period of roughly one hundred years between the early-fifth and early-sixth centuries AD in China, when, it is thought, a confluence of factors – including the translation of new Indian Buddhist texts that advocated vegetarianism, and a growing non-Buddhist vogue for renunciation of meat as an expression of filial piety after the death of a parent – eventually led emperor Wu (r. 502–549) of the Liang dynasty to mandate vegetarianism for Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns.² The expectation that Buddhist monks and nuns would be

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¹ For the purposes of this article, “vegetarianism” means the non-consumption of meat and fish. Chinese Buddhists also eventually prohibited consumption of the “five pungent foods” (*wu xin* 五辛), principally certain vegetables of the *allium* family. See Suwa Gijun 諏訪義純, *Chūgoku chūsei Bukkyōshi kenkyū* 中国中世佛教史研究 (Tokyo: Daito shuppansha, 1988), pp. 183–98. In the contemporary Chinese-speaking world “vegetarian food” (*su shi* 素食) – literally, “plain food” – thus usually means food lacking both animal products and vegetables such as onions and garlic. See Vincent Goossaert, “Les sens multiples du végétarisme en Chine,” in Aida Kanafani-Zahar, Séverine Mathieu, and Sophie Nizard, eds., *A croire et à manger: Religions et alimentation* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007), pp. 65–93.

² On the development of vegetarianism in this period, see Michihata Ryōshū 道端良秀, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shisōshi no kenkyū* 中国仏教思想史の研究 (Tokyo: Shoen, 1985), pp. 458–98; Suwa, *Chūgoku chūsei Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, 64–91; Valérie Lavoix, “La contribution des laïcs au végétarisme: croisades et polémiques en Chine du sud autour de l’an 500,” in Catherine Despeux, ed., *Bouddhisme et lettrés dans la Chine médiévale* (Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2002),

vegetarian, and the enforcement of this by the state, would continue in China and other East Asian countries for centuries to come.³

This generally accepted history of the origin and early development of East Asian Buddhist vegetarianism is complicated, however, by hitherto overlooked sources that suggest that the Chinese Buddhist clergy, and perhaps even pious Chinese Buddhists more generally, were expected to be vegetarian from as early as the early-third century AD, and possibly even from the beginnings of Buddhism in China. Chinese Buddhists seem, moreover, to have accepted vegetarianism as a standard part of monastic behavior without any overt debate or controversy. In this article I first provide evidence for this new history of early Buddhist vegetarianism in China. Second, I also consider why Chinese Buddhists would have so readily adopted vegetarianism – in theory if not necessarily in practice – even in the absence of any clear influence from Indian Buddhism, where strict vegetarianism was not a normal feature of Buddhist life. As a partial answer to this question, I will suggest that vegetarianism served Chinese Buddhists as a kind of “translation,” one that reframed the contrasts between Buddhists and non-Buddhists in a way that would make sense in the Chinese context, where the traditional rivals of Buddhism in India did not exist.

BUDDHIST VEGETARIANISM

As do those of many other Indian religions, Buddhist sources have always expressed at least some discomfort with the consumption of meat because of its connection to the killing of animals, a source of negative karma.⁴ Nevertheless as far as can be determined by surviving textual evidence, though early Indian Buddhist groups, like other Indian ascetic movements of the time, criticized the rituals of animal

pp. 103–44; Kang Le 康樂, *Fo jiao yu su shi* 佛教與素食 (Taipei: San min shu ju, 2002); John Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism in China,” in R. Sterckx, ed., *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 186–212; Pu Chengzhong, *Ethical Treatment of Animals in Early Chinese Buddhism: Beliefs and Practices* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp. 66–99.

³ Chinese legal regulations beginning from at least 637 AD stipulated a punishment of forced labor for monks or nuns who ate meat or drank alcohol. See Moroto Tatsuo 諸戸立雄, *Chūgoku Bukkyō seidoshi no kenkyū* 中国仏教制度史の研究 (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1990), p. 39; Ann Heirman and Tom De Rauw, “Offenders, Sinners and Criminals: The Consumption of Forbidden Food,” *Acta Orientalia* 59.1 (2006), pp. 76–78. In Japan, similar laws were abolished only in the late-19th century; see Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2001).

⁴ Lambert Schmithausen, “Meat-Eating and Nature: Buddhist Perspectives,” *Supplement to the Bulletin of the Research Institute of Bukkyo University* (2005), pp. 183–201.

sacrifice that characterized high Brahmanical religion, they did not mandate vegetarianism, not even for monks and nuns. In all known versions of the Buddhist monastic codes (*vinaya*), the Buddha in fact explicitly permits the consumption of meat that is “pure” in three ways – neither seen, heard, nor suspected of having been killed expressly for one’s own benefit.⁵

Insistence on total vegetarianism was, moreover, generally painted by the Indian Buddhist tradition as a decidedly incorrect practice. Refusing alms of meat and fish is thus listed among the various harsh ascetic practices pursued by the Buddha prior to his awakening but then abandoned as uncondusive to liberation.⁶ Many of these nominally rejected practices were, it is true, officially permitted within Buddhism as part of the optional ascetic undertakings (the so-called *dhutagūṇas*). But, significantly, vegetarianism is never included in the lists of such practices.⁷ This rejection of vegetarianism is seen most dramatically in the stories told within the monastic codes concerning the schismatic monk Devadatta, who formed a rival faction and broke away from the order when the Buddha failed to institute five new mandatory rules, one of which was strict vegetarianism.⁸ Those Indian Buddhists who compiled the monastic codes thus did not just fail to insist on vegetarianism, but actively presented it as characteristic of the tradition’s most

⁵ David Seyfort Rugg, “Ahiṃsā and Vegetarianism in the History of Buddhism,” in *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1980), pp. 234–36. Shimoda Masahiro has observed that there does appear to have been something of a debate within *vinaya* texts concerning these matters. See Shimoda Masahiro 下田正弘, *Nehangyō no kenkyū: Daijō kyōten no kenkyū hōhō shiron* 涅槃經の研究, 大乘經典の研究 方法試論 (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1997), pp. 388–416. Still, despite what Shimoda reads as a certain push for stronger restrictions, no surviving *vinaya* text completely prohibits the consumption of meat.

⁶ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Somerville: Wisdom, 1995), p. 173 (from the *Mahāsihanāda-sutta*).

⁷ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices* (Cambridge U.P., 1990), p. 160. On the *dhutagūṇas*, see Jean Dantinne, *Les qualités de l’ascète (dhutagūṇa): Étude sémantique et doctrinale* (Brussels: Thanh-Long, 1991); Reginald A. Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1994), pp. 293–323.

⁸ The first four of Devadatta’s proposed rules – wearing only rag robes, eating only food obtained by begging, eating once a day, and sleeping outdoors – overlap with some of the *dhutagūṇas*, and the Buddha’s rejection of Devadatta’s proposal is clearly presented as a rejection of the idea of making these optional practices mandatory. But vegetarianism is not one of the optional practices, and this distinction is made explicit in the relevant stories from the *vinaya*. In the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*, for example, in rejecting Devadatta’s proposals, for the first four rules the Buddha says that he has permitted monks to either follow or not follow the rule in question. But in the case of vegetarianism, the Buddha states only that he has declared three kinds of meat to be pure (*Shi song lü* 十誦律, T.1435:23.264C19–265A10). The Buddha is thus pointedly shown to not endorse vegetarianism even optionally. (See List of Abbreviations for the use of “T.” throughout this article.)

famous heretic, and hence, as we are invited to understand, characteristic of at least some of the rival ascetic traditions that Buddhism defined itself against.⁹ With few exceptions, this attitude towards vegetarianism remained predominant within Indian Buddhism, and in later times Buddhist monks were often held up as the paradigmatic case of non-vegetarian ascetics.¹⁰

The Indian Buddhist tradition may, of course, in practice have permitted a greater diversity of views about vegetarianism than appear in the surviving textual record.¹¹ Even if so, however, an explanation would still seem to be required for why and how something that among Indian Buddhists was by all accounts a marginal or unofficial practice became, in China, a *sine qua non* for monks, nuns, and even pious laypersons.

And scholars have indeed generally viewed the eventual dominance of vegetarianism within Chinese and East Asian Buddhism not simply as the continuation of Indian Buddhist norms to which Chinese Buddhists were exposed, but as a contingent development resulting from the coming together of three key factors:

⁹ The Jains were – and are – the Indian ascetic tradition eventually most strongly associated with vegetarianism, where it is considered the key embodiment of the principle of *ahimsā*, “non-harming.” See, e.g., Padmanabh Jaini, “Fear of Food: Jaina Attitude on Eating,” in *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000), pp. 284–85. Early Jains, however, followed a rule similar to the Buddhist one, namely, that meat and fish could be accepted as alms under certain conditions. See Nand Kishore Prasad, “Studies in Buddhist and Jaina Monachism,” (Vaishali: Research Institute of Prakrit, Jainology and Ahimsa, 1972), pp. 117–18; Paul Dundas, “The Meat at the Wedding Feasts: Kṛṣṇā, Vegetarianism and a Jain Dispute,” in Joseph T. O’Connell, ed., *Jain Doctrine and Practice: Academic Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for South Asian Studies, 2000), pp. 99–101. How vegetarianism became so closely associated with Jainism is not fully known. Some scholars consider that vegetarianism first arose in Brahmanical circles, whose ascetic traditions were, along with Jainism, the main “other” against which early Buddhism defined itself. On the possibly Brahmanical origins of vegetarianism, see Herman W. Tull, “The Killing That Is Not Killing: Men, Cattle, and the Origins of Non-Violence (*Ahimsā*) in the Vedic Sacrifice,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 39.3 (1996), pp. 223–44. The ideology of vegetarianism in Brahmanical religion can indeed be traced in legal texts (*dharma-sūtras*), from an early phase in which certain animals were taboo but meat-eating was assumed, to a middle stage in which the only meat permitted was of animals that had been used in a sacrifice, to a final stage, one that continues to this day, in which total vegetarianism is recommended (and for ascetics, required) and sacrifice is discouraged. See Ludwig Alsdorf, *The History of Vegetarianism and Cow-Veneration in India* (London: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁰ Willem B. Bollée, “Le végétarisme défendu par Haribhadrasūri contre un Bouddhiste et un Brahmane,” in Narendra K. Wagle and F. Watanabe, eds., *Studies in Buddhism in Honour of Professor A.K. Warder* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), pp. 22–28.

¹¹ For example though Devadatta is demonized in the monastic codes, alternative views of his legacy, and perhaps even organized Buddhist factions devoted to him, may have once existed. See Max Deeg, “The Saṅgha of Devadatta: Fiction and History of a Heresy in the Buddhist Tradition,” *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies* 2 (1999), pp. 183–218.

1. a pre-Buddhist Chinese ideology of temporary abstention from meat during periods of mourning and ritual purification;
2. the translation into Chinese in the early-fifth century of a few Indian scriptures mandating vegetarianism (most importantly the Mahāyāna¹² versions of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*);¹³ and
3. the intervention of the Chinese government, when in the early-sixth century Liang emperor Wu made clerical vegetarianism the law of the land.

Historical materials indeed reveal a spirited debate among Chinese intellectuals during the late-fifth and early-sixth centuries about vegetarianism in general, and in relation to Buddhism in particular.¹⁴ Among Buddhists, one measure of the victory of the pro-vegetarian side was the composition, around this time, of the distinctly Chinese versions of the Buddhist precepts found in the famous *Scripture of Brahma's Net* (*Fan wang jing* 梵網經). This text drew from various then-available Indian versions of the so-called “bodhisattva precepts” (a set of additional vows available to both the clergy and committed lay persons), but further included, unlike the known Indian versions of these vows, a blanket prohibition on the consumption of meat.¹⁵ This assimilation

¹² Extant Sanskrit fragments of the text suggest the title *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*. See Michael Radich, *The Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra and the Emergence of Tathāgatarbha Doctrine* (Hamburg: Hamburg U.P., 2015), p. 13n1. For the sake of convenience, I follow the usual custom of referring to it as the “Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*” (to distinguish it from the entirely different but similarly titled *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* of early Buddhism).

¹³ A shorter version of the text (T.376) was translated by Faxian 法顯 in 418, and a longer version (T.374) by Dharmakṣema 曇摩讖 shortly after 420. On the dating of these translations, see Jinhua Chen, “The Indian Buddhist Missionary Dharmakṣema (385–433): A New Dating of His Arrival in Guzang and of His Translations,” *TP* 90.1 (2004), pp. 215–63. Both versions call for total vegetarianism. The other major Indian scripture discussing vegetarianism is the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, first translated in 443 by Gunabhadra 求那跋陀羅. Lai Yonghai 賴永海 has suggested that the early-fifth-century translation of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* (*Shi song lü* 十誦律) encouraged vegetarianism. See Lai Yonghai 賴永海, ed., *Zhongguo fo jiao tong shi* 中國佛教通史 (Nanjing: Jiangsu ren min chu ban she, 2010) 4, p. 397. However the passage Lai cites in fact only concerns the consumption of raw (*sheng* 生) meat, not meat in general. Concerning other putatively early translations from Indian sources that discuss vegetarianism, see n. 20, below.

¹⁴ Lavoix, “La contribution des laïcs au végétarisme.”

¹⁵ Ōno Hōdō 大野法道, *Daijō kaikyō no kenkyū* 大乘戒經の研究 (Tokyo: Risosha, 1954), p. 271. Indian versions of the bodhisattva precepts sometimes discuss meat-eating unfavorably, but none completely prohibit it. Śāntideva thus cites, from a “bodhisattva prātimokṣa,” the rule that meat should not be *given* to a monk, but that a monk *should* eat meat if he receives it. See Cecil Bendall and W. H. D. Rouse, *Sikshā-Samuccaya, a Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine* (London: J. Murray, 1922), p. 143. The fifth-century Chinese translation of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi* (*Pusa shan jie jing* 菩薩善戒經), contains at least two statements about meat-eating. A bodhisattva, we read, must not serve food containing meat to someone who does not eat meat (T.1582:30.980c6). But in a different part of the text, it says that when putting forth the bodhisattva vow one should vow to not harm all living beings. The Chinese translation here adds: “and not eat meat” (不食肉; T.1582:30.965b26). However the extant Sanskrit version of the *bodhisattva-bhūmi*, exactly the same here in all other respects, says nothing about meat-

of vegetarianism to the level of the precepts continued in various different ways in later times.¹⁶

The general understanding has thus been that Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism was a gradual development, one part of the slow process of the “Sinification” of Buddhism. Following Indian Buddhist norms, Chinese Buddhists initially did not consider vegetarianism an essential part of Buddhism. But when exposed, in the early-fifth century, to a minority voice from Indian Buddhism in which vegetarianism was demanded, Chinese Buddhists became more and more attracted to this approach. Actually changing societal expectations about the lifestyle of Buddhist monks and nuns, however, required the intervention of the state, and the newly normative status of vegetarianism, in the wake of such intervention, is reflected in its inclusion within the distinctly Chinese version of the bodhisattva precepts that would thereafter define the expected lifestyle for the Chinese Buddhist clergy and for certain exceptionally pious laypersons.

VEGETARIANISM IN EARLY CHINESE BUDDHISM

The above historical reconstruction is complicated by the fact that Buddhist vegetarianism is discussed in a number of Chinese texts that can be dated, with greater or lesser degrees of certainty, to long before the early-fifth century. These include both formal injunctions in Buddhist scriptures requiring Buddhists (or some subset thereof) to be vegetarian, as well as more passing references, in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts composed by Chinese authors, that seem to take it for granted that Buddhist monks and nuns (at the least) are expected to be vegetarian.

At least one modern scholar has indeed already suggested that vegetarianism was practiced by some Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns

eating. See Unrai Wogihara, *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Tokyo, 1930–36), p. 20, ll. 1–5. The translator of the *Pusa shan jie jing* was Gunabhadra, also the translator of the vegetarian-promoting *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* and one of the few *foreign*-born monks explicitly recorded in China as having been a vegetarian (Suwa, *Chūgoku chūsei Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, p. 46; T.2059:50.345A7–8). The words “not eat meat” may thus have been inserted during the translation process, perhaps as Gunabhadra’s explanation of what “not harming living beings” means. Even here, however, we should note that vegetarianism is not elevated to the status of an official precept.

¹⁶ Chinese apocryphal scriptures from the seventh century and later occasionally add vegetarianism to the five precepts for laypersons, and this is usually assumed to reflect vegetarianism’s eventual acceptance in China as a normal part of Buddhist ethics. See Françoise Wang-Toutain, “Pas de boissons alcoolisées, pas de viande: Une particularité du bouddhisme chinois vue à travers les manuscrits de Dunhuang,” *CEA* 11 (1999–2000), pp. 123–34. However as we will see, below, examples of the lay precepts that include vegetarianism can be found as far back as the third century.

long before the early-fifth century. Suwa Gijun has noted that keeping a vegetarian diet – *shu shi* 蔬食 – is mentioned within many of the biographies of Chinese monks and nuns who lived before the fifth-century translations of the key Buddhist scriptures endorsing vegetarianism.¹⁷ Suwa concludes from this that even though texts such as the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra* later became the key authorities for it, vegetarianism among the Chinese Buddhist clergy had earlier origins, perhaps first adopted under the influence of the kinds of dietary restrictions long favored by Chinese seekers of immortality (though none of these include vegetarianism per se), or, more likely, the Chinese custom of keeping a vegetarian diet during mourning.

From a purely historical point of view, however, the implications of Suwa's data are difficult to determine. For while the subjects of the monastic biographies he consults lived in the fourth century, the biographical collections themselves date only to the early-sixth century, precisely when vegetarianism for Buddhist clerics became the law of the land.¹⁸ Given hagiography's tendency to, as John Kieschnick puts it, "make saints of men of the past according to the standards of the author's rather than the subject's day," sixth-century accounts of fourth-century life-long vegetarians do not necessarily represent either the practices or ideals of fourth-century Chinese Buddhists.¹⁹ And, as Kieschnick further notes, even if these biographies do date from the era in which they are set, vegetarianism is mentioned in them only occasionally, as part of a broader regime of dietary restriction carried out by particularly ascetic monks, and not as a generally appropriate or expected diet for all members of the clergy. No matter what its historical reliability, the biographical literature by itself thus does not give reason to doubt the usual story according to which vegetarianism became a standard expectation of Chinese Buddhist monastic life only in the early-sixth century.

Nevertheless there are other, genuinely early, sources in which vegetarianism is strongly encouraged or held up as the proper duty of not just virtuosos ascetics, but of all Buddhist monks, nuns, and occasionally even lay persons. Most of these sources have escaped the attention

¹⁷ Suwa, *Chūgoku chūsei Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, pp. 45–57.

¹⁸ In general, even outside of the examples of explicitly vegetarian monks that Suwa examines, the early-sixth-century biographical collections tend to present meat-eating as transgressive, suggesting that by this time it was assumed that readers would see such behavior as irregular and contrary to norms if not to expectations. See, e.g., John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 1997), pp. 51–66.

¹⁹ Kieschnick, "Buddhist Vegetarianism in China," p. 194.

of previous scholars.²⁰ Some can be securely dated to as early as the Three Kingdoms period (220–280 AD), and others must have existed no later than 374 (the date of the earliest surviving catalog of Chinese Buddhist texts). Many of these texts take the form of Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist scriptures, but most bear signs, either globally or in the specific passages in question, of having been composed in China or at the very least carefully tailored for a Chinese audience. While these sources are normative rather than descriptive in character, we also find a number of other texts, explicitly composed by Chinese authors, that seem to simply assume that Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns would be vegetarian. Taken together these sources suggest that proper Buddhist behavior during this period of time was generally understood to include a meat-free diet.

SOME EARLY CHINESE BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES REQUIRING OR ENCOURAGING VEGETARIANISM

1. *Bonihuan jing* 般泥洹經 (T. 6)

The most compelling early reference to a Buddhist regulation prohibiting the consumption of meat occurs in a version of the story of the Buddha's death (*Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*) that modern scholars agree

²⁰ Pu Chengzhong (*Ethical Treatment*, pp. 43–47), whose study I became aware of only after completing the research for this article, briefly mentions two of the texts that I discuss below (T.6, and T.730), along with many other Chinese Buddhist scriptures that, he claims, were translated into Chinese during the second, third, and fourth centuries, and which he therefore takes as evidence that Indian Buddhist vegetarianism was more widespread than has been thought (and in particular, that evidence for it is not limited to *tathāgatagarbha* texts such as the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*). Although I agree about the significance of T.6 and T.730, my approach to this material differs from Pu's in crucial respects. Most importantly, Pu's arguments are problematic because he adopts an uncritical approach to the historiography of Chinese Buddhist texts, unquestioningly accepting the translator attributions, and hence dates, given in the modern Taishō canon. He thus takes as representative of Indian Buddhism texts that are either universally agreed among modern scholars to have been composed in China (such as the *Guan ding jing* 灌頂經; Pu, *Ethical Treatment*, p. 46n33), or else strongly suspected to be (such as *Cheng ju guang ming jing* 成具光明定意經; see Jan Nattier, *A Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations: Texts from the Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms Periods* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, 2008), pp. 96–101. This approach also creates serious problems for Pu's chronology. Thus, for example, the version of the *Banzhou sanmei jing* 般舟三昧經 in which we find the command that "one must never eat living beings" (眾生生命慎勿食; T.417:13.898c27) is not a Han-dynasty translation by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖, as the attributions in the Taishō would lead us to believe, but an abridgement, carried out by a much later Chinese author (who in places clearly misunderstands the original), of one or more earlier versions of this text, into which at least some material of unknown origin had been added (including, significantly, the verses in which the above quotation is found.) See Paul Harrison, *The Samadhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1990), pp. 250–54. So too, *Fo yi jing* 佛醫經 is almost certainly not an early-3d c. translation (Pu, *Ethical Treatment*,

was translated into Chinese by Zhi Qian 支謙 (d. 252 AD).²¹ Though it bears the same title, this is *not* another version of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* that would later serve as the *locus classicus* for Buddhist vegetarianism, but rather a rendition of the entirely different “mainstream” *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, for which there exist several other Chinese translations, as well as Pāli, Sanskrit, and Tibetan versions.

The relevant passage occurs immediately after an episode, found in all versions of the text, in which a certain Putkasa hears the Buddha’s preaching and becomes a Buddhist follower.²² In Zhi Qian’s translation (T.6), Putkasa at this time requests to take the five precepts, which are then listed:

I take the precepts for the [person of] pure-faith:²³ not to personally kill, not to steal, not to fornicate, not to deceive, not to drink

p. 45); its form makes one very much suspect it was authored or compiled in China, and in any event it is first mentioned in Chinese catalogs only in the late-6th c. (*Zhong jing mu lu* 眾經目錄, T.2146:55.144A27). The *Fa ju pi yu jing* 法句譬喻經 (Pu, *Ethical Treatment*, p. 46) also cannot be dated earlier than the fifth century and was furthermore most likely compiled in China. See Funayama Tōru 船山徹, *Butten wa dō kanyaku sareta no ka: sūtra ga kyōten ni naru toki* 仏典はどう漢訳されたのか: スートラが経典になるとき (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2013), p. 151. Pu’s readings of other sources are also frequently unreliable. The *Dao xing bore jing* 道行般若經, an authentically Han-dynasty translation of an Indian text, does not at all say that bodhisattvas must not eat meat as Pu claims (Pu, *Ethical Treatment*, p. 44); it says simply that a bodhisattva “must not follow along with non-Buddhists when they sacrifice to the various spirits using either alcohol, meat, or grains 不與餘道人若祠祀諸鬼神酒肉穀食從事” (T.224:8.455C9–10). Pu also claims that a story in the famous *Xian yu jing* 賢愚經 “prohibits the eating of the [sic] meat that is clean in three respects” (Pu, *Ethical Treatment*, p. 47n37). But the passage in question (T.202:4:375c) actually states the exact opposite, that *only* meat that is thrice-pure may be eaten (“Then the Buddha commanded the monks: you must not eat impure meat 爾時世尊, 即制比丘: 諸不淨肉, 皆不應食”; T.202:4.375C3–4). In some cases I have not been able to track Pu’s references at all. Pu thus says (*Ethical Treatment*, p. 47n36) that *Da fang deng da ji jing* 大方等大集經 prohibits meat-eating, but nothing of the sort is mentioned in the passage to which he points.

²¹ T.6 is not attributed to Zhi Qian in later medieval catalogs (or the modern Taishō edition of the canon), but the text is mentioned in Zhi Qian’s biography in the *Chu san zang ji ji* 出三藏記集, and the attribution is also supported by internal evidence and citations in other texts (Nattier, *Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations*, pp. 126–28). See also Jungnok Park, “A New Attribution of the Authorship of T5 and T6 Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 31.1–2 (2008 [2010]), pp. 339–68, who thinks that T.6 may be a revision, by one of Zhi Qian’s successors later in the Wu kingdom period, of the identically titled T.5. On Zhi Qian’s dates, see Antonello Palumbo, “Dharmarakṣa and Kaṇṭhaka: White Horse Monasteries in Early Medieval China,” in Giovanni Verardi and Silvio Vita, eds., *Buddhist Asia: Papers from the First Conference of Buddhist Studies Held in Naples in May 2001* (Kyoto: Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2003), p. 204n108.

²² I give the person’s name as found in the Sanskrit version. See Ernst Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra: Text in Sanskrit und Tibetisch, verglichen mit dem Pāli nebst einer Übersetzung der chinesischen Entsprechung im Vinaya der Mūlasarvāstivādins* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1950–1951), p. 276.

²³ “Gentleman of Pure-faith” (*qing xin shi* 清信士) is a common translation of *upāsaka* (male lay follower) in Chinese Buddhist texts translated and composed during the Wu kingdom period (e.g., *Da ming du jing* 大明度經, T.225:8.492B21; *Liu du ji jing* 六度集經, T.152:3.42C20).

alcohol, and not to eat meat. I will not dare to transgress these. 受清信戒：身不殺，不妄取，不姪姪，不欺僞，不飲酒，不噉肉。不敢有犯。²⁴

The first five rules listed here – to refrain from killing, stealing, improper sexual activity, lying, and drinking alcohol – are the standard five precepts found throughout Buddhist literature. To these the text here adds abstention from meat, and it is difficult to read this passage as anything but an endorsement of vegetarianism as an integral part of basic Buddhist morality, applicable to both committed lay persons and the clergy.

Despite its clarity, this passage should also arouse our suspicions. None of the other known versions of “mainstream” *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* gives a list of precepts at this moment,²⁵ and the five precepts themselves – which do prohibit drinking alcohol but which never include vegetarianism – are entirely standard within known Indian Buddhist literature. This thus raises the question of whether or not this reference to meat-eating really was part of the Indian text translated by Zhi Qian. I will return to such questions, below. Many of the other examples I will discuss also occur in texts or passages showing signs of Chinese rather than Indian origin.

2. *Fo kai jie fan zhi Aba jing* 佛開解梵志阿闍經 (T. 20)

An injunction to abstain from meat also occurs in the context of the explicitly monastic precepts, in an early translation of a text corresponding to the *Ambaṭṭha-sutta* of the Pāli Canon (found in the *Dīgha-nikāya*).²⁶ This text (T. 20) is listed, as the product of an unknown translator, in the earliest preserved catalog of Chinese Buddhist texts, which dates to 374 AD,²⁷ and it thus must have existed no later than the middle of the

²⁴ T.6:1.184A15–17.

²⁵ In a later Chinese translation of this same text, Putkasa becomes a monk (T.7:1.198B23–26). In the Sanskrit version and in T.5 (a different, early Chinese translation of the text), Putkasa simply salutes the Buddha and departs without formally converting (Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, p. 278; T.5:1.168B24–25). In the Pāli version, Putkasa asks to become a lay follower, but the precepts are not listed. See T.W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter, eds., *The Dīgha Nikāya* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1975) 2, p. 131; Maurice Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 258.

²⁶ A Sanskrit version of this text under the title *Ambāṣṭha-sūtra* is also found in the recently discovered *Dirghāgama* manuscript. See Jens-Uwe Hartmann, “Contents and Structure of the Dirghāgama of the (Mūla-) Sarvāstivādins,” *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 7 (2004), p. 127; Gudrun Melzer, “Ein Abschnitt aus dem Dirghāgama,” unpub. Ph.D. (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 2006). A later Chinese translation is also found in the *Chang Ahan jing* 長阿含經 (T.1:1.82A6–88B8).

²⁷ The catalog is Dao’an’s 道安 (312–384) *Zong li zhong jing mu lu* 總理眾經目錄, lost as an independent work but included in the *Chu san zang ji ji*. A text corresponding to T.20 is listed here under the title *Aba jing* 阿拔經, said to be extracted from the *Dirghāgama* (T.2145:55.18A7). Later catalogs attribute the text to the aforementioned Zhi Qian.

fourth century. Internally, the text reveals numerous terminological and stylistic markers characteristic of the Chinese Buddhist texts translated and composed during the Wu kingdom period (220–280).²⁸

The heart of T.20 is a version of a formulaic presentation of the entire Buddhist path of practice ranging from ordination as a monk up to the attainment of awakening, a formula repeated verbatim in the first thirteen texts of the *Dīgha-nikāya* (and in a similarly large number of sutras from the Sanskrit *Dirghāgama* and the corresponding Chinese translation of this collection).

The discussion of meat-eating occurs here within a long list of behavioral rules for monks, explicitly said to be a summary of the “250 precepts 二百五十戒.” Having noted that monks must not sleep on fine beds, wear decorative clothing, become attached to the taste of their food, or use fancy eating bowls, the text goes on to add that: “A monk must not drink alcohol or *eat meat*, or desire to taste their flavors. He must not consume alcohol even as medicine, or visit wine shops 沙門不得飲酒嗜肉思嘗氣味, 不得服藥酒及詣酒家.”²⁹ Here, then, the non-consumption of meat is enshrined within behavioral norms presented as the monastic precepts.

Interestingly, however, in some recensions of this text the precise characters “eat meat” (*shi rou* 嗜肉) are missing.³⁰ Could a later editor have added these words? This seems unlikely for several reasons. First of all, this discussion of meat-eating is not out of place within T.20, which in several other passages (passages that are, interestingly, not present in other versions of this text) strongly emphasizes doing no harm to animals.³¹

²⁸ For example we find the technical terms *gou gang* 溝港 (*śrotāpanna*), and *pin lai* 頻來 (*sakṛdāgāmin*; T.20:1.260C13–15), and *fei xing huang di* 飛行皇帝 (*cakravartin*; *ibid.*, 259C22), all strongly associated with the Wu kingdom translators Zhi Qian and Kang Senghui 康僧會, and all of which become nearly extinct in later periods. The translation of *upāsaka* as *qing xin shi* 清信士 (see n. 23, above) is also noteworthy, as it seems to have been rarely used later than the translations of Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu 竺法護) in the early-4th c. More generally, the text is written in an elegant literary Chinese and makes use of the same kind of highly “domesticating” vocabulary found in other Wu-era translations and which Jan Nattier has called the “Wu scriptural idiom” (Nattier, *Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations*, p. 52).

²⁹ T.20:1.261B4–5. The meaning of *qi wei* 氣味 is not entirely clear, but I have taken it to refer to the taste of the aforementioned alcohol and meat.

³⁰ The words “eat meat” are missing in the Sixi 思溪 and Puning 普寧 editions (宋 and 元 respectively in the Taishō footnotes), as well as in the Qisha 磧砂 edition. On the editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, see Stefano Zacchetti, *In Praise of Light: A Critical Synoptic Edition with an Annotated Translation of Chapters 1–3 of Dharmarakṣa’s Guang Zan Jing 光讚經, Being the Earliest Chinese Translation of the Larger Prajñāpāramitā* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University, 2005), pp. 92–140.

³¹ For example the first lay precept is explicitly formulated to include not killing animals, which is unusual (260C29–A1). These precepts are indeed given in response to Ambaṭṭha’s pre-

Second, the editions of T.20 that lack the words “eat meat” are also missing other, longer passages that clearly were part of the original text, suggesting that, all other things being equal, it is these other editions that are incomplete.³²

Third, the words “eat meat” are present in the manuscript copy of this text from the Kongō-ji 金剛寺 Temple in Japan.³³ Though the manuscripts of Chinese Buddhist scriptures from the Kongō-ji collection generally date from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, they derive from a different lineage of transmission than that found in the printed editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, a lineage going back to the Tang dynasty when copies of Buddhist scriptures were being brought to Japan from the Chinese capitals. Agreement between this manuscript copy and the Second Koryō edition – the edition used by the Taishō edition for its base text – strongly suggests that this is an authentic reading, and that the removal of these characters was the intervention of a later editor.³⁴

Finally, and most straightforwardly, it is difficult to imagine why a later editor would have added these words, but easy to understand why they would have been removed. After the early-fifth century, it became common knowledge in China that the Indian Buddhist monastic codes do not prohibit all meat-eating and indeed explicitly allow some forms of it. This fact would indeed have been impossible to

sentation of his (non-Buddhist) teacher’s precepts, which include “not killing human beings, and not killing cows” (不得殺人殺牛; 260C23–24). The Buddhist precept is thus implied to be superior precisely because it extends to all animals. Later, the Buddha presents another version of the five lay precepts, to which is added, as a sixth, a prohibition on “performing sacrifices and serving evil spirits 祠祀事邪.” This is then explained, in a passage with a distinctly Chinese feel to it, as follows: “People will themselves later experience the punishment for the evil they have done before. There is no transgression more severe than that of cooking and killing [animals] to sacrifice to Heaven. It cannot be atoned for. Indeed, Heaven’s will is one of pure benevolence; how could it eat human food? If one has virtue, [Heaven] extends its protection. It is not through killing that one makes merit 人宿爲惡, 身當受罪, 烹殺祠天, 爲過滋甚, 無所補也。且夫天意清仁, 豈食人食乎。有德致祐, 非殺爲福” (260C9–C11). The Buddha even declares to Ambaṭṭha that: “I originally sought the unsurpassed, correct Way of the Buddha because I despised killing ... because the whole world delights in killing, I have taught them benevolence and righteousness 吾本用惡殺故, 求佛無上正真之道 ... 用天下人皆好殺故, 教以仁義” (260A15–18). These passages thus align the fundamental message of Buddhism with the perennial Chinese virtues of “benevolence” (*ren* 仁) and “righteousness” (*yi* 義), which are in turn linked specifically to refraining from killing.

³² There are 28 characters missing in these other editions between lines 261C7–9. Similarly, 15 characters are missing between 261B13–14. Official manuscript copies of Buddhist scriptures had 14 or 15 characters per column. The missing text thus corresponds precisely to one or more skipped columns at some point in the transmission history of these versions.

³³ I wish to thank Paul Groner, and Professor Ochiai Toshinori 落合俊典 of the International College of Postgraduate Buddhist Studies, for helping me gain access to this manuscript.

³⁴ The editions from which the characters “eat meat” are missing all belong to a generally similar set of woodblock printed editions of the canon produced in south China during the

ignore, and it was fully acknowledged even within those sources that pro-vegetarian Chinese Buddhists cited as scriptural support (such as the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, where the absence of a requirement for vegetarianism in the monastic codes is conceded but then explained as a partial, preliminary teaching). Even the most ardently pro-vegetarian Chinese Buddhist of a later time would therefore have had no reason for adding this to a text – an obscure one at that – that purports to describe the 250 monastic precepts. On the other hand we can easily see why it might have been seen by a later editor as a mistake, as it patently contradicts the common later Chinese understanding of the Indian monastic rules (*vinaya*), and is also not found in the later Chinese translation of this same scripture (nor, for that matter, is it found in any of the surviving Indic counterparts).³⁵

And it may well be a mistake in the sense of something not found in the original Indian version of this passage. For as some scholars have noted, there are many highly suspicious passages throughout T.20 that are found in no other versions of the text and which look almost certain to have been composed in China.³⁶ We find, for example, two citations from the Confucian *Analects* (*Lun yu* 論語),³⁷ a description of the four Indian elements (*mahābhūta*) as the “four kinds of *qi* 四氣,”³⁸

Song dynasty (960–1279). In contrast the Second Koryō edition – as well as the Jin 金 edition, where “eat meat” is also found (*Zhonghua da zang jing* 中華大藏經 [Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1984] 33, p. 575c) – is in the lineage of the Kaibao 開寶 canon, the first complete printed edition of the Chinese canon. The Kaibao canon was carved on the basis of a set of manuscripts specially brought from Sichuan, rather than on the basis of the manuscript copies that had been kept and copied in the major monasteries of the Tang and early-Song capitals. Agreement between editions in the Kaibao lineage and a manuscript such as the Kongō-ji manuscript thus strongly suggests that the change was introduced sometime during the later history of the lineages that form the basis of the editions of the canon carved in south China during the Song and later periods.

³⁵ The later Chinese translation occurs within the *Chang Ahan jing* 長阿含經, T.1:1:82A7–88B7. We also know that the rules for monks found in T.20 were consulted by at least some later Chinese Buddhists, such that the anomalous nature of its understanding of the *vinaya* might have attracted editorial attention. For example the text surviving under the name *Shami shi jie fa bing wei yi* 沙彌十戒法并威儀 (T.1471), containing rules for novice monks, is clearly a Chinese composition that weaves together the regulations from T.20 with those found in T.1478, the *Da’aidao biqiuni jing* 大愛道比丘尼經 (**Mahāprajāpatī-bhikṣuṇī-sūtra*), a pre-374 AD translation giving the ten precepts for novice nuns (listed in Dao’an’s catalog of Indian texts by unknown translators; T.2145:55.18c19). On the dependence of T.1471 on T.1478, see Ōno, *Daijō kaikyō no kenkyū*, pp. 391–93. Almost everything in T.1471 that does not borrow from T.1478 can be found, nearly or exactly verbatim, in T.20.

³⁶ See Okayama Hajime 丘山新, ed., *Gendaigo yaku Agon kyōten: Jōagonkyō* 現代語訳阿含經典, 長阿含經 (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1995–2005) 4, pp. 25–26. See also Jungnok Park, *How Buddhism Acquired a Soul on the Way to China* (Oxford: Equinox Publishing, 2008), pp. 28–36, whose examples are not all persuasive.

³⁷ 無適無莫 (T.20:1.260c18); 溫故知新 (261A28).

³⁸ T.20:1.262B24.

reference to eating bowls made from “red lacquer 朱漆,”³⁹ and a passage that seems to invoke the *Chinese* meaning of the standard ancient translation of the technical term *skandha*.⁴⁰ At the very least, T.20 is clearly highly adapted to fit a Chinese audience. This is seen most dramatically in a seemingly deliberate modification of a crucial narrative scene. In all other versions of the text, Ambaṭṭha asks to see, and is then shown, the two of the Buddha’s special bodily marks that are otherwise hidden: his long tongue, and his ensheathed penis. In T.20, however, Ambaṭṭha asks only to see the long tongue.⁴¹

The passages in T.20 immediately surrounding the reference to vegetarianism do not display any particular marks of Chinese origin. But given the character of the text as a whole, and their absence in the other known versions of either this particular text or the formulaic presentation of the monastic rules it contains, we are justified in suspecting that the statements about meat-eating might well be the result of the various liberties taken by the translator when rendering this text into Chinese.

If this passage was indeed added by the translator or the translation team, it would be even more relevant for our understanding of Chinese Buddhism during the time when it was produced, as it would reveal to us that at least some Chinese Buddhists at this time thought that the monastic rules *should* include a requirement of vegetarianism. But again setting aside such concerns for the moment, what is important for now is simply that we have here in T.20 a second reference in a Chinese text dating to no later than the middle of the fourth century (and probably even to the middle of the third century) to the idea that the Buddhist precepts, in this case for those for monks and nuns, explicitly prohibit the eating of meat.

³⁹ T.20:1.261B3.

⁴⁰ *Yin* 陰, “dark,” the standard early translation of *skandha* (normally understood to mean “heap” or “aggregate”), fell out of use after the late-4th century. The text here explains: “These five [*skandha*] cover over a person, making him unable to see the Way 此五覆人令不見道” (T.20:1.261C28–29). This explanation appears to presuppose the Chinese meaning of the term *yin* 陰 (similar explanations are found in later Chinese exegetical sources; e.g., *Fa jie ci di chu men* 法界次第初門, T.1925: 46.665C1–4). Long ago Tang Yongtong actually noted this passage from T.20 as a possible justification for the choice of *yin* 陰 to translate *skandha*. See Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Han Wei liang Jin Nan Bei chao Fo jiao shi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (Taipei: Foguang shu ju, [1938] 2001) 1, pp. 167–68. Given the other unusual features of this text, it seems more likely that this is simply an explanation based on the Chinese meaning of the term, not an accurate translation of an Indian explanation of the meaning of *skandha*, as Tang had presumed.

⁴¹ The non-visibility of the Buddha’s ensheathed penis (at least under normal circumstances) would be obvious to anyone familiar with the details of the 32 marks, making it likely that this portion of the story was changed to suit a non-Indian audience.

3. *Chu chu jing* 處處經 (T. 730)

In addition to unusual lists of the precepts that include abstention from meat, we also find a more casual reference to vegetarianism in the enigmatic *Chu chu jing*, a text whose title is none too clear but which might be provisionally interpreted as *Scriptural Miscellany*. This almost entirely unstudied text comprises a number of short explanations on a variety of Buddhist topics, written in relatively elegant Chinese and each introduced with the words “The Buddha said 佛言.” The first half of the text focuses on various reasons why the Buddha, or his enlightened disciples, did or do certain things. Later it presents various short anecdotes about the Buddha’s famous disciples. Many of the stories and sayings here are known from other Buddhist sources, but the style of the text – closer in format to the sayings of Confucius than an Indian Buddhist scripture – is reminiscent of the famous *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* (*Si shi er zhang jing* 四十二章經), one of the most famous early Chinese Buddhist texts.⁴² Vegetarianism is mentioned in a single passage in the later part of the *Scriptural Miscellany* which discusses certain attributes of the three classes of awakened beings (*arhats*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *buddhas*):

The Buddha said: As for why it is that *arhats* do not eat meat, they consider that each part of the animal, from head to toe, has its own name, and that there is nothing named “meat”(?). As for *pratyekabuddhas*, they consider that [an animal] is something originally formed from sperm and is thus impure, and therefore they do not eat meat.⁴³ As for *buddhas*, it is because they consider that everything in the world is empty and non-existent, that what exists passes away and is then reborn. 佛言。阿羅漢不食肉者。計畜生從頭至足。各自有字無有肉名。辟支佛計本精所作不淨故不食肉。佛計一切天下皆空無所有，有便滅滅復生。⁴⁴

⁴² On the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections*, see Robert H. Sharf, “The Scripture in Forty-Two Sections,” in Donald S. Lopez Jr., ed., *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1996), pp. 360–71.

⁴³ Defining meat as that which is produced by semen recalls the term *retovasikta*, literally “those who use beings produced by semen,” a term from the *Baudhāyana-dharma-sūtra* (3.3.4) referring to ascetics who use, for eating and sacrifice, only animals killed by birds and beasts of prey. See Patrick Olivelle, *Dharmasūtras: The Law Codes of Āpastamba, Gautama, Baudhāyana, and Vasiṣṭa* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000), p. 309.

⁴⁴ T.730:17.528B5–8. The text then continues with: “[Everything] necessarily returns to emptiness; therefore it is ‘non-existent’ 要歸空故為無所有。” This appears to be a comment or explanation of the meaning of “non-existent 無所有.” I thus take the previous sentence to end after 滅復生.

Although parts of this passage are somewhat difficult to interpret,⁴⁵ the intention seems to be to explain why *arhats*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *buddhas* do not eat meat. What is noteworthy here is this passage presumes that the reader already expected such people to be vegetarian. In as much as these three kinds of Buddhist saints are in some way exceptional beings, this passage does not necessarily speak to the assumed daily diet of Buddhist monks and nuns.⁴⁶ At the very least, however, it presumes the existence of an ideal of vegetarianism for accomplished practitioners.

Unlike the two previously discussed texts, the *Scriptural Miscellany* is not listed in Dao'an's catalog of 374, and appears for the first time only in Sengyou's sixth-century catalog.⁴⁷ Internal evidence, however, suggests a relatively early date. It thus betrays no trace of the new (and eventually pervasively-used and borrowed) Buddhist vocabulary introduced by Kumārajīva in the early-fifth century, and the simple introduction "the Buddha said" points to a time before Chinese audiences had become more sensitive to the need for a "correct" opening formula for Indian scriptures.

There is, furthermore, at least one "smoking gun" that can help date the text to relatively early in Chinese Buddhist history: the technical term *san shi qi pin jing* 三十七品經, an archaic translation of the phrase "Thirty-seven Factors of Awakening" (*bodhi-pakṣika-dharmas*), a standard list of Buddhist virtues.⁴⁸ This Chinese expression is unusual for using the word *jing* 經 to mean *dharma* (later invariably translated by the graph *fa* 法), seemingly drawing from the meaning of *jing* as

⁴⁵ As pointed out by one of the anonymous reviewers of this article, the line pertaining to buddhas does not explicitly mention meat. However the overall sense of the passage seems quite difficult to construe unless we assume that the point is to explain the non-meat-eating of all three classes of beings. Furthermore what is mentioned about the buddhas – that they contemplate the rebirth of all beings – may well be connected to the question of meat-eating, as in later times it was common to argue that vegetarianism is required because rebirth implies that animals might be our kin from former lives. Also, while grammatically 阿羅漢不食肉者 could mean "those *arhats* who do not eat meat," implying that some *arhats* do eat meat, the following line concerning *pratyekabuddhas* can only be read as I have done, suggesting that the meaning is similar for the case of *arhats*.

⁴⁶ One might even wonder if perhaps the context here is not living beings, but ritual offerings, and as discussed below (see sect. "Vegetarianism and the Development of Chinese Buddhism"), from an early date the Chinese noted that Buddhist ritual offerings, unlike those of traditional Chinese sacrifice, did not involve meat.

⁴⁷ T.2145:55.28B7. Sengyou lists it as translator unknown. Later catalogs assign it to An Shigao 安世高, the earliest known translator of Buddhist texts who worked in the late Han dynasty. Though this attribution is unlikely to be correct, it might perhaps reflect a recognition of the text's archaic style.

⁴⁸ T.730:17.525A27.

“constant principle.”⁴⁹ After the late-fourth century, *jing* 經 was invariably used in Chinese Buddhist texts to mean “scripture” (*sūtra*), but the earlier and eventually archaic use seen here in the *Scriptural Miscellany* has been observed in Han-dynasty Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, and it appears occasionally up until the time of Dharmarakṣa in the late-third and very early fourth century.⁵⁰ After this, it disappears completely.

We may thus tentatively date the *Scriptural Miscellany* to no later than the early 300s.⁵¹ Since it may well be an assemblage of material from multiple sources, it is difficult to be more precise than this, and there remains some uncertainty. At the least, however, we seem to have here another pre-fifth-century source from the Chinese Buddhist canon that strongly endorses vegetarianism – one that indeed *presumes* that advanced Buddhist practitioners do not eat meat.

4. *A’nan si shi jing* 阿難四事經 (T. 493)

This brief text – *The Scripture of the Four Matters* [Preached to] *Ānanda* – is listed in Dao’an’s catalog of 374 as a translation by Zhi Qian. Following Dao’an, and judging from her extensive studies of Zhi Qian’s characteristic style and terminology, Jan Nattier has tentatively included it in her list of authentic Zhi Qian translations, which if correct would date the text to the first half of the third century. She also notes, however, certain features potentially suggesting that the text might be a Chinese composition, or might at the least contain added elements crafted to suit a Chinese audience.⁵²

Reference to meat-eating occurs in the long passage from the middle of the text in which the Buddha explains four ways of obtaining merit

⁴⁹ Elsewhere in the text we also find the word *jing fa* 經法 clearly used in the meaning of “constant law” and as a translation of *dharma* (T. 730:17.524B23).

⁵⁰ Stefano Zacchetti and Tilmann Vetter, “On *Jingfa* 經法 in Early Chinese Buddhist Translations,” *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University* 7 (2004), pp. 159–66; Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path According to the Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)* (Honolulu: U. Hawai’i P., 2003), p. 261n336.

⁵¹ Pu, *Ethical Treatment*, p. 44, simply follows the Taishō canon’s attribution of this text to An Shigao and hence dates it to the second century. None of the scholars who have critically reconstructed An Shigao’s corpus accept this attribution. See, e.g., Erik Zürcher, “A New Look at the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Texts,” in Koichi Shinohara and Gregory Schopen, eds., *From Benares to Beijing: Essays on Buddhism and Chinese Religion* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1991), pp. 277–304; Nattier, *Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations*; Stefano Zacchetti, “Defining An Shigao’s 安世高 Translation Corpus: The State of the Art in Relevant Research,” in Shen Weirong 沈衛榮, ed., *Xi yu li shi yu yan yan jiu ji kan di san ji* 西域歷史語言研究集刊第三輯 (Beijing: Ke xue chu ban she, 2010), pp. 249–70.

⁵² Nattier, *Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations*, p. 132, points in particular to the text’s emphasis on “social service,” such as encouraging rulers to store grain to disperse to the people during times of famine.

after the Buddha has died.⁵³ If, the Buddha says, a country is plagued by bandits, natural disasters, or the spread of disease-causing “noxious *qi* 毒氣,” this is the doing of the dragons and spirits living in the ocean. These creatures are the reborn spirits of animals who have died at the hands of hunters, butchers, and fishermen. Angry on account of their unjust deaths, they spread illness among the human realm, and “with the inhumane slaughter of animal lives, mutual enmity [between the dragons and humans] continues 不仁殘殺物命, 展轉相怨.”⁵⁴ Those who themselves kill animals will be immediately poisoned and killed. But those who merely enjoy the fruits of these killers by eating the meat of animals will also contract either contagious or non-contagious illnesses.⁵⁵ The final message is then made clear:

Intelligent men therefore realize that killing is a sin, and so enjoin others not to kill . . . even if the killers [of animals simply] give you meat, be sure not to eat it. If you do not eat it, then even if you live in an evil age, amongst bandits, natural disasters, and noxious *qi*, you will not be contaminated. 聽聰之士, 覺知殺罪, 追人不置 . . . 若彼殺家, 以肉與己, 慎莫食之. 不食之者, 雖處惡世、盜賊災變、毒氣之時, 雖處其中, 不相塗染.⁵⁶

One might perhaps wish to argue that the text here stops short of issuing a universal requirement for Buddhists to be vegetarian. And this notion that meat-eating can cause the wrath of spirits is also occasionally found in Indian Buddhist sources as well.⁵⁷ But even so, this text would appear to extend such an idea considerably, elevating vegetarianism to the status of one of four major ways that people may gain merit and avoid calamities after the death of the Buddha, and furthermore insist-

⁵³ T.493:14.757B1-23.

⁵⁴ T.493:14.757B8-9.

⁵⁵ There are some difficulties of interpretation here, and there are several important variants in the different editions collated in the Taishō (T.493:14.757B7-11). None of these versions seems to make perfect sense, however, and the most coherent version appears to be the Tang-era carving from Fangshan: 其時人民, 或中毒死者, 或但得病者, 有相塗污者, 不相塗污者. 皆由世人所作, 不仁殘殺物命, 展轉相怨; 手自殺者, 中毒即死; 助其喜者, 皆更因病; 或相塗污, 不相塗污者, 皆由食肉, 相分致不相分致者 (*Fangshan shi jing* 房山石經 [Beijing: Zhongguo fo jiao tu shu wen wu guan, 1986] 3, p. 610). Even this version is rather difficult to understand. I (very tentatively) translate: “The people in this time will either be struck down dead by poison or else contract illnesses either contagious or non-contagious. All of this results from the doings of human beings, who by inhumanely slaughtering living things perpetuate mutual enmity [between humans and dragons]. Those who themselves kill [animals] will be struck down dead by poison. Those who encourage and delight in [the work of the killers by eating the meat] will all contract illnesses, either contagious or non-contagious depending on whether they have or have not shared when eating the meat.”

⁵⁶ T.493:14.757B12-16.

⁵⁷ Schmithausen, “Meat-Eating and Nature: Buddhist Perspectives,” p. 189.

ing, in contradistinction to the principle embodied in the usual Indian monastic rules about the three kinds of pure meat, that those who merely receive meat from others necessarily share in the sin of killing.

5. *Xumoti nü jing* 須摩提女經 (T. 128A)

The *Xumoti nü jing* (*Scripture of the Girl Sumāgadhā*) – listed in Dao'an's catalog of 374 as the work of an unknown translator⁵⁸ – is a version of the *Sumāgadhāvadāna*, in which Sumāgadhā, daughter of the famous Buddhist layman Anāthapiṇḍada, is given in marriage to a non-Buddhist family whom she helps convert to Buddhism. There are several Chinese translations of this story, as well as Sanskrit and Tibetan versions.⁵⁹

The rough outline of Sumāgadhā's story is shared across these versions. Though Anāthapiṇḍada is initially hesitant to marry his pious daughter Sumāgadhā to the son of the wealthy Puṇḍravardhana because this family supports non-Buddhist ascetics,⁶⁰ the Buddha counsels Anāthapiṇḍada to permit the marriage anyway. Later, Sumāgadhā convinces her new family to invite the Buddha and his disciples (who, in a memorable scene, show their power by arriving flying on the backs of various beasts), and the family is converted to Buddhism.

In all versions of the story first Anāthapiṇḍada, and then Sumāgadhā, unfavorably contrast the customs of Puṇḍravardhana's family and the non-Buddhist ascetics they follow to those of their own country and of the Buddha. One group of texts presents the ascetics as Jains, while in the other group – comprising T.128a, the text under

⁵⁸ T.2145:55.17C8. Two distinct texts titled *Xumoti nü jing* 須摩提女經 are included in the Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon, as T.128a and T.128b. The version represented by T.128b, however, has clearly been extracted from the Chinese translation of the *Ekottarika-āgama* (*Zeng yi Ahan jing* 增壹阿含經; T.125:2.660A1-665B9). That T.128b cannot be the original text bearing this title is seen in that the name of the heroine is initially transcribed not as *Xumoti* 須摩提, but as *Xiumoti* 修摩提.

⁵⁹ All known versions of the story have been studied in depth by Iwamoto Yutaka 岩本裕, *Sumāgadā Avadāna kenkyū* スマーガダーアヴァダーナ研究 (Tokyo: Kaimei shoin, 1979). In addition to the version from the *Ekottarika-āgama* (see previous note), there is the *Sanmojie jing* 三摩竭經 (T.129), and the *Geigu zhang zhe nü de du yin yuan jing* 給孤長者女得度因緣經 (T.130). Yet another version of the story is the *Fenhetan wang jing* 分憇檀王經, listed in Dao'an's catalog (T.2145:55.17A22) but lost apart from a substantial citation in the *Jing lü yi xiang* 經律異相 (T.2121:53.156A1-C13). (This version is quite different in many respects from the others.) There is also the *Xumoti pusa jing* 須摩提菩薩經 (T.334; *Scripture on the Bodhisattva Sumāgadhā*), which though featuring the character Sumāgadhā is a Mahāyāna scripture and has no connection to the *Sumāgadhāvadāna* story. This text is listed in the *Chu san zang ji ji* as a translation by Dharmarakṣa (T.2145:55.8A8).

⁶⁰ For convenience sake I here use the names as given in the Sanskrit version. In T.128a and the *Ekottarika-āgama* version (T.128b), the name is translated as *Mancai* 滿財, which suggests Purṇavardhana.

consideration, and T.128b (a version seemingly extracted from T.125, a Chinese translation of the *Ekottarika-āgama*) – they are Brahmin ascetics (*fan zhi* 梵志; *brāhmaṇa*).⁶¹

In all versions of the story the ascetics are eventually criticized. What they are criticized for, however, is presented quite differently in T.128a compared with the other versions. In all versions except T.128a it is the ascetics' nakedness that is singled out for censure and presented as their main point of contrast with Buddhist ascetics. Thus in the *Ekottarika-āgama* version of the story (T.128b) – the version whose narrative is closest to T.128a in all other respects – Anāthapiṇḍada opposes his daughter's marriage to Puṇḍravardhana's son because: "the religious rites that you and I carry out are not the same. This girl serves the Buddha and is a disciple of Śākya[muni], while you serve the heterodox teachers of other sects 所事神祠與我不同, 此女事佛, 釋迦弟子, 汝事外道異學."⁶² Later, when Puṇḍravardhana's family invites the ascetics for a meal, Sumāgadhā refuses to reverence them on the grounds that they are naked, shameless, animal-like men.⁶³

In T.128a, however, the contrast between Buddhist and non-Buddhist ways is presented very differently. Anāthapiṇḍada thus explains the difference in religion between his daughter and Puṇḍravardhana's family as follows:

My daughter constantly turns her thoughts towards the Buddha, and she upholds the abstentions and precepts. Your family has long adhered to non-Buddhist gods, *and you kill living beings for bloody food*. Because we adhere to different things, this matter [of marriage] is not suitable. 我女長夜念佛奉持齋戒, 卿家繼屬外神殺生血食, 以是繼屬不同, 事不宜爾。⁶⁴

Buddhists thus "uphold the abstentions and precepts"; non-Buddhists "kill living beings for bloody food." That at least part of the meaning here is indeed that non-Buddhists eat meat is confirmed by the remainder of the story, in which the Brahmin ascetics that Puṇḍravardhana's family honors are depicted as voracious carnivores, and Sumāgadhā, who loudly contrasts these ascetics and their habits with those of the Buddha and his monks, is shown refusing to serve them their food.⁶⁵ Not only, then, is a vegetarian diet (for monks, at

⁶¹ The opponents are Jains in the Sanskrit *Sumāgadhāvadāna*, as well as in T.129 and T.130.

⁶² T.128b:2.838A8-9.

⁶³ T.128b:2.838B21-C11.

⁶⁴ T.128a:2.836A3-5.

⁶⁵ These later parts of the story will be discussed in more detail, below.

least) a part of proper Buddhist behavior, but the contrast between eating meat and not eating meat is a key distinction between Buddhism and other religions.

I will return below to the question of the ultimate origin of the negative attitudes towards meat-eating that we see in T.128a and the other texts previously discussed. For now, we may simply conclude by noting that T.128 is another Chinese text dating to before 374 AD in which vegetarianism is presented as a distinctive mark of Buddhism and Buddhist practitioners.

EARLY TEXTS BY CHINESE AUTHORS

The five texts examined above – along with, more tentatively, a sixth that I relegate to the appendix – show that between the early-third and late-fourth centuries, Chinese readers of what would have appeared to be canonical Buddhist scriptures would have been able, had they so wished, to find many passages that present vegetarianism as an essential part of proper Buddhist behavior, at the least for the clergy, and in some cases for lay followers as well.

To be sure, the passages discussed above are all *normative*. They do not tell us what Chinese Buddhists actually did. Yet in asking about the prevalence of vegetarianism within Chinese Buddhism, the most important question is not whether any Chinese Buddhists actually ate meat, but whether the Chinese *thought* Buddhists were supposed to eat meat. To ask about “vegetarianism” is indeed to ask not simply about behavior, but about the prevalence of an ideal.

What we must ask of the above sources is thus not whether they are normative or descriptive, but whether the ideals they express were the kind of ideals that shaped (but did not necessarily govern) people’s expectations and behavior; if they were what we might ironically (but not illogically) call *real* ideals. This is not to say that the actual consumption of meat is not relevant at all. But one is not a vegetarian *merely* because of not consuming meat. Nor do we consider it impossible for someone (or groups of people) who are “vegetarian” to occasionally violate their own standards and consume meat. As with many of the most interesting questions in the study of religion, what we are after here is not simply behavior – not simply what people did “on the ground” – but rather some kind of interaction between behavior and ideals.

What limits the value of the above texts is thus not their normative status per se, but our uncertainty over their authorship. If they are, as

they claim to be, translations of Indian texts, the ideals they express may well never have become ideals for Chinese Buddhists.

However, as hinted above, there are reasons for suspecting that many if not all of the passages cited above do reflect Chinese “authorship” of a sort. But it would still be helpful if we had texts or passages of clearer Chinese provenance, dating to before the early-fifth century, in which vegetarianism was discussed. While scholars have long been aware of the many pro-vegetarian essays and treatises written by Chinese authors during the late-fifth and early-sixth centuries, there also exist a few references to such matters in earlier texts. Unlike the later essays that actually argue for vegetarianism – and which therefore reveal a society-wide debate about this topic – the four texts discussed below seem to simply *assume* that vegetarianism is expected of Buddhist monks and nuns. Especially when read in light of the passages discussed above from nominally canonical Buddhist scriptures, this material provides evidence that during the third and fourth centuries vegetarianism had indeed become, ideally, a generally accepted feature of Buddhism as it was understood in China.

1. *Mou zi li huo lun* 牟子理惑論

The clearest and perhaps most interesting reference to vegetarianism in an early text of undisputed Chinese authorship is found in the *Treatise on Removing Doubts* (*Li huo lun* 理惑論) of “Master Mou 牟子.”⁶⁶ Many scholars believe that the *Treatise on Removing Doubts* is one the earliest Chinese Buddhist apologia, written either in the late-second or, more likely, early- to mid-third century.⁶⁷ However some scholars consider the text to date no earlier than the middle of the fifth century, when we first find mention of it in other sources.⁶⁸ While its dating is thus controversial, what it has to say about vegetarianism is perfectly clear. Into the mouth of its skeptical interlocutor, who often argues for the superiority of the teachings of the Chinese sage Laozi, the text puts this question:

⁶⁶ *Hong ming ji* 弘明集, T.2102:52.1B1–7A22. The text has been translated into French by Paul Pelliot, “Meou-Tseu ou les doutes levés,” *TP* 19 (1920), pp. 355–433 and English by John P. Keenan, *How Master Mou Removes Our Doubts: A Reader-Response Study and Translation of the Mou-Tzu Li-Huo Lun* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) as well as by Harumi Hirano Zeigler, *The Collection for the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism, Volume I* (Moraga: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America, 2015), pp. 5–48.

⁶⁷ Tang, *Han Wei liang jin Nan Bei chao fo jiao shi*, 1:81–85.

⁶⁸ Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, [1959] 1972), pp. 13–15. For a useful collection of many of the most important Chinese and Japanese studies of the dating and authenticity of the text, see Zhang Mantao 張曼濤, ed., *Si shi er zhang jing yu Mou Zi li huo lun kao bian* 四十二章經

Question: Those who practice the Way avoid eating grains and instead drink alcohol and eat meat, which is said to be the method of Master Laozi. But for Buddhists, wine and meat are what is prohibited above all, and instead they eat grains. Why is there this difference? 問曰。爲道者或辟穀不食。而飲酒啖肉。亦云老氏之術也。然佛道以酒肉爲上誠。而反食穀。何其乖異乎。⁶⁹

The author replies to this query by criticizing any diet that avoids grains, citing no less an authority than Confucius, and thus implicitly accepting the idea that Buddhists indeed reject the consumption of meat. But what is most significant about this passage is that it shows that the author of the *Treatise on Removing Doubt* evidently felt his contemporaries would have assumed vegetarianism to be a requirement for all Buddhists.

Though some scholars have noticed this passage, presupposing that vegetarianism did not become common in Chinese Buddhism until the fifth century, they have usually seen it as an anomaly, as the views of a single, idiosyncratic author.⁷⁰ Such a conclusion is premature, to say the least. In light of the early Chinese Buddhist scriptures examined above that express similar views, it is at least equally probable that the *Treatise on Removing Doubts* should be read as confirmation that third-century (or even earlier) Chinese Buddhists had indeed come to understand vegetarianism as a defining aspect of Buddhism.

However as mentioned above, at least some scholars consider the *Treatise on Removing Doubt* to be a fifth-century text. In fact this discussion of vegetarianism has itself been held up as evidence for this, as an anachronism proving the text could not have been written before the middle of the fifth century.⁷¹ As we have seen, it is clearly at least possible to imagine a third-century Chinese author expressing such ideas. In fact, that the *Treatise on Removing Doubt* presumes its readership will think that Buddhism prohibits meat-eating might even be evidence of the text's early date. During the fifth century vegetarianism was, precisely, a contested issue among Chinese Buddhists. Even learned Buddhist laymen who supported vegetarianism such as Shen Yue 沈約

與牟子理惑論考辨 (Taipei: Da sheng wen hua chu ban she, 1978).

⁶⁹ T.2102:52.6A12-14.

⁷⁰ See for example Kang Le 康樂, "Su shi yu Zhongguo Fo jiao" 素食與中國佛教, in Zhou Zhiping 周質平 and Willard Peterson, eds., *Guo shi fu hai kai xin lu* 國史浮海開新錄 (Taipei: Lianjing, 2002), p. 94. The passage is also mentioned in passing by Michihata, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shisōshi no kenkyū*, p. 469, and Pu, *Ethical Treatment*, p. 45.

⁷¹ Tan Shibao 譚世保, *Han Tang Fo shi tan zhen* 漢唐佛史探真 (Zhongshan da xue chu ban she, 1991), pp. 307-8.

(441–513) knew that it was not required by the Buddhist monastic codes and believed (wrongly, as it turns out) that explicit scriptural support for vegetarianism had been introduced to China only with the translation of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in the early-fifth century.⁷² This passage from the *Treatise on Removing Doubt*, in contrast, was clearly written in a context where the status of vegetarianism within Buddhism was taken for granted, not one in which it was actively contested.⁷³

Though I am thus inclined to see the *Treatise on Removing Doubt* as confirming that the emphasis on vegetarianism found in the scriptural texts discussed above had, as early as the middle of the third century AD, become a “real ideal” for Chinese Buddhists, there remains uncertainty about the dating of the text and hence its value as a source for the period of time in question. However as I will now discuss, there also exists a non-Buddhist source dating more securely to the third century that similarly suggests that the Chinese of this time assumed vegetarianism to be a key commandment of Buddhism.

2. *Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao (Da dao jia ling jie 大道家令戒)*

The *Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao* is one of the earliest surviving texts of Celestial Master Daoism. Most specialists date it to the year 255 (mentioned in the text itself) or shortly thereafter,⁷⁴ and have considered the text to stem from north China,

⁷² See Shen Yue’s 沈約 (441–513) pro-vegetarian essay “Treatise on Ultimate Compassion” (“Jiu jing ci bei lun” 究竟慈悲論; T.2103:52.203A13–15). See also Richard B. Mather, “The Bonze’s Begging Bowl: Eating Practices in Buddhist Monasteries of Medieval India and China,” *JOS* 101.4 (1981), p. 422.

⁷³ One might argue that this merely reflects the fact that the *Treatise on Removing Doubts* was written so as to *appear* to be an ancient pro-Buddhist apologia. Yet scholars who consider the text to be a fifth-century work agree that its supposed anachronisms are subtle and require careful detective work to uncover. During the fifth century, learned laymen such as Shen Yue believed that vegetarianism was a recent development in Chinese Buddhism (see previous note). We would, in other words, expect a 5th-c. author trying to convince his contemporaries that this was a Han-dynasty work to have studiously avoided implying that Han-dynasty Buddhists in China knew that meat-eating was prohibited.

⁷⁴ The text is found as pages 12a–19b of the *Zheng yi fa wen tian shi jiao jie ke jing* 正一法天文師教戒科經 (DZ 788; see List of Abbreviations for the use of DZ throughout this article). For a summary of the text, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1997), pp. 149–64. The mid-third-century date is supported by a majority of scholars. See Anna Seidel, “The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism,” *History of Religions* 9 (1969), p. 226; Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, *Shoki no Dōkyō* 初期の道教 (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1991), pp. 301–4; Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 2004) 1, pp. 120–23; Terry F. Kleeman, “Daoism in the Third Century,” in Florian C. Reiter, ed., *Purposes, Means, and Convictions in Daoism: A Berlin Symposium* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), p. 14. Some scholars have proposed that because the text uses the word *qin* 秦 to refer to ethnically Han Chinese people, it must date to the late-4th c. under one of the later Qin 秦 dynasties.

where many Celestial Masters families had been relocated after the fall of their Sichuan-based theocracy in 215. Providing one of our first glimpses of the teachings and social organization of the early Celestial Master church, this text also contains an early version of the so-called “conversion of the barbarians” (*hua hu* 化胡) story that presents Buddhism as originally an alternate, or perverted, form of Laozi’s teaching designed to conform to the Indian temperament.⁷⁵

The “conversion of the barbarians” stories, though usually blatantly polemical, do nevertheless provide a useful window onto certain aspects of how Buddhism was perceived and understood in China. The elements of Buddhist practice that these stories choose to highlight, though obviously not reliable as factual records about Indian or even Chinese Buddhism, can be taken as representing common Chinese perceptions of the most distinctive features of Buddhism. The version found here in the *Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao* begins as follows:

The Dao [Laozi] then went westward into the land of the barbarians to transmit the practices of the Dao. In this case, the prohibitions were extremely severe. Sexual activity was not allowed at all, and they were not to kill living beings [in order] to consume them.” 西入胡授以道法，其禁至重，無陰陽之施，不殺生飲食。⁷⁶

The story later reveals other details about the practices of these “barbarian” followers of the Dao, including that they shaved their heads.

Buddhism was thus imagined by the Chinese of the third century as a religion that included various severe restrictions on sexual activity, killing living things, and, most relevant for our present question, eating living things. Once again this passage does not provide any direct evidence for the actual behavior of Buddhists in China. But what

See Tang Changru 唐長孺, *Wei Jin Nan Bei chao shi lun shi yi* 魏晉南北朝史論拾遺 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1983), p. 228. Tang’s argument, however, has been conclusively disproven by Zhang Songkai, who shows that *qin ren* 秦人 is used throughout the Han and post-Han eras in reference to Han Chinese living in northwest China, the areas near the former Warring States state of Qin. See Zhang Songkai 張松輝, “Zheng yi fa wen Tian shi jiao jie ke jing de cheng shu nian dai kao” 正一法天文天師教戒科經成書年代考, *Shi jie zong jiao yan jiu* 世界宗教研究 1 (1994), pp. 20–26.

⁷⁵ On sources for this story and its development, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, pp. 288–320; Ōfuchi, *Shoki no Dōkyō*, pp. 469–84; Gil Raz, “Conversion of the Barbarians [Huahu 化胡] Discourse as Proto Han Nationalism,” *The Medieval History Journal* 17.2 (2014), pp. 255–94.

⁷⁶ DZ 788, p. 12b, translation by Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 169–70, with slight modifications. Other scholars have also interpreted the meaning of this line as does Bokenkamp, e.g., Kristofer Schipper, “Purity and Strangers: Shifting Boundaries in Medieval Taoism,” *TP* 80 (1994), p. 68. Erik Zürcher, however, has suggested that 飲食 may be an error for 飲酒. See Erik Zürcher, “Buddhist Influence on Early Taosim: A Survey of Scriptural

it does provide is evidence for what normative or ideal Buddhist behavior was thought to be.

3. *Essentials of the Practice of Buddhism* (*Feng fa yao* 奉法要)

Moving forward roughly a century, we may now consider an important discussion of meat-eating found in the *Essentials of the Practice of Buddhism*, written by the Buddhist layman Xi Chao 郗超 (336–377), a text that is one of our most important sources for glimpsing how Buddhism was understood by the Chinese elite in the south during the middle of the fourth century.⁷⁷

One of the first things that we may note about the *Essentials of the Practice of Buddhism* is that it cites the *Bonihuan jing* 般泥洹經 (T.6) on several occasions, the text that, as discussed above, unambiguously makes vegetarianism part of the five lay precepts.⁷⁸ Xi Chao thus would have known that at least some texts he viewed as authoritative endorsed vegetarianism as a basic element of Buddhist morality. And Xi Chao indeed invokes vegetarianism in the context of his description of proper behavior for laymen and laywomen, though not as part of the five lay precepts, but as part of the duties of those who participate in the monthly “fast” days (*zhai* 齋; *uposatha*) that form the core of the Buddhist liturgical calendar. This passage has been frequently cited by modern scholars as one of the earliest descriptions of how this important Buddhist ritual was carried out in China.⁷⁹ Having first presented the five precepts, Xi Chao then explains the additional fast-day practices:

On fast days, neither meat nor fish should be served. One must eat before noon, and as soon as noon has passed, no delicious foods may be eaten at all ... One must stay away from one’s bedchamber so as not to become attached to the six desires. One must not beat [people or animals] with whip or stick, or abuse them ver-

Evidence,” *TP* 66.1–3 (1980), p. 94n10 (I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer of this article for bringing this to my attention). Zürcher’s emendation has the virtue of making this phrase slightly less awkward grammatically, but its plausibility seems to rest primarily on the presupposition that it would be strange to find Buddhists characterized as vegetarians, which is precisely what is at issue. It therefore seems best to at least begin with the assumption that the reading 飲食 is correct.

⁷⁷ The *Essentials of the Practice of Buddhism* is found in *Hong ming ji*, T.2012:52:86A24–89B2. For a translation, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 177–79.

⁷⁸ See Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 376n471, 377n67, and 378n80. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of this article for pointing this out to me.

⁷⁹ On the Buddhist *zhai* in early Chinese Buddhism, see Antonino Forte, “Chōsai,” *Hōbōgirin* 5 (1979), pp. 392–407; Sylvie Hureau, “Buddhist Rituals,” in John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi, eds., *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 1213–30.

bally. One must not drive an ox-cart, ride on horseback, or carry weapons. Women must further abstain from adorning themselves with perfumes, flowers, or cosmetics. 凡齋日皆當魚肉不御。迎中而食。既中之後。甘香美味一不得嘗... 遠離房室不著六欲。不得鞭撻罵詈乘駕牛馬帶持兵仗。婦人則兼去香花脂粉之飾。⁸⁰

That Xi Chao specifies that lay people must not eat meat or fish on fast days implies he did not think this was necessarily required for them at other times.⁸¹ However, that total vegetarianism would be prescribed for lay followers on fast-days is nonetheless significant.

Indian Buddhist texts provide a standard set of additional precepts that lay people may choose to follow on fast days. These eight precepts begin with the five precepts, usually modified slightly to require total celibacy, and then add three more: no eating after noon, no sleeping on high beds, and no wearing perfumes. Though Xi Chao does not mention the eight fast-day precepts explicitly, his prescriptions are clearly derived from them. However the eight fast-day precepts do not include vegetarianism.⁸² Indeed, the fast-day precepts are usually presented as rules that allow a lay person to temporarily adopt a lifestyle similar (though not, of course, identical) to that carried out at all times by monks and nuns,⁸³ and as discussed above the traditional Indian Buddhist monastic rules pointedly do not include vegetarianism.⁸⁴

Xi Chao does not specifically say that the fast-day involves a temporary assumption of a monastic lifestyle, but comments to this effect can be found in other early Chinese texts,⁸⁵ and in any event all of the

⁸⁰ T.2102:52.86B12-16. Parts of this translation are borrowed from Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, p. 164.

⁸¹ It also seems significant that when presenting the “ten good deeds” (*shi shan* 十善), Xi Chao explains that “not killing 不殺” means, in part, not eating meat that one suspects has been killed explicitly for one’s own benefit (T.2102:52.86B26-29). This is immediately recognizable as a version of the *vinaya* regulations pertaining to “pure” meat. That this rule would have come to be seen as something even lay persons must follow shows that Xi Chao was working with an understanding of the limits on meat-eating considerably stricter than the usual Indian canonical Buddhist lay precepts.

⁸² Kieschnick writes that: “in the context of special days set aside for the maintenance of the five precepts, vegetarianism seems to have been practiced in India” (Kieschnick, “Buddhist Vegetarianism in China,” pp. 195-96). He does not, however, provide any evidence for this, and I have not been able to find any sources or studies that would confirm it.

⁸³ See for example *Zhai jing* 齋經 (T.87:1.911A25), a third-century translation of Zhi Qian (Nattier, *Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations*, p. 130), in which the third precept is clearly changed to reflect the demands of total celibacy during the fasting period. The formula for receiving the eight fast-day precepts in the *Da zhi du lun* 大智度論, to take another example, also explicitly describes the prohibitions as the temporary assumption of precepts that buddhas (and hence monks and nuns) maintain for their entire lives (T.1509:25.159B26-c12).

⁸⁴ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2000), pp. 87-88.

⁸⁵ A passage from the aforementioned *Treatise on Removing Doubt* makes it explicit that

other rules that Xi Chao prescribes, such as not eating after noon, not wearing perfumes, and not engaging in sexual activity, would have been well known in China as permanent features of the monastic lifestyle. That Xi Chao prescribes vegetarianism for lay persons on fast days has generally been read as evidence that during the fourth century lay Chinese Buddhists were not expected to be vegetarian at other times. And this indeed seems like a reasonable interpretation. What has been overlooked, however, is that at the same time this suggests that vegetarianism *was* most likely expected of monks and nuns at all times.

4. *Treatise That Dispels Criticism* (*Shi bo lun* 釋駁論)

The *Treatise That Dispels Criticism* is an important though little studied piece of early Chinese Buddhist apologetics, written by the monk Daoheng 道恒 (d. 417) sometime shortly after the year 405 in response to an essay on governmental reform that had proposed increased regulation and control of the Buddhist clergy.⁸⁶ Daoheng does not directly cite this other essay, but rather presents, in a fashion typical of such treatises, a fictitious dialog with an opponent.

The opponent paints a picture of a corrupt Buddhist clergy that engages in numerous practices unbecoming of the religious life and that wastes the resources of the country through extravagant feasting and the construction of luxurious temples. This tactic of attacking the Buddhist church for its failures to live up to its own standards of renunciation was common in this kind of literature.⁸⁷ What is here interesting to observe is that the opponent suggests that Buddhist monks who were properly devoted to their practice would be vegetarians:

Monks, having left their families, part from the worldly and keep their aspirations high and noble. Turning away from their heaven-bestowed kin, they give up the treasures of honor and splendor. Discarding the adornments of beauty, they maintain the abstentions of purity and restraint. They hone their minds only on those things pertaining to truth.⁸⁸ Treading their feet only on what ac-

the “fast,” which is periodic and temporary for lay persons, is the permanent lifestyle of the clergy: “[Laymen] who maintain the five precepts fast six times each month . . . monks maintain the 250 precepts, and fast every day 持五戒者，一月六齋 . . . 沙門持二百五十戒，日日齋” (T.2102:52.2A1-3).

⁸⁶ *Shi bo lun* is discussed briefly by Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 156–57. For an English translation, see Zeigler, *Collection for the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism*, pp. 207–20.

⁸⁷ The best survey of the strategies and arguments found in early anti-Buddhist rhetoric (and Buddhist apologetics) remains Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 254–85.

⁸⁸ Translation tentative.

cords with the Law, they keep themselves entirely to a vegetarian diet. 沙門既出家離俗高尚其志. 違天屬之親. 捨榮華之重. 毀形好之飾. 守清節之禁. 研心唯理屬已. 唯法投足, 而安蔬食而已.⁸⁹

Daoheng's response to this objection proposes that Buddhist monks do not necessarily need to totally sever all of their contact with the world, and that they must, accordingly, support themselves with at least a minimum of necessary requisites:

Our human bodies have neither fur nor feathers, thus we cannot go naked and without clothes; our bellies are not empty gourds, and they cannot be hung up without being fed. Until one has reached the ultimate, one must be supported materially. In years of plenty, [monks] thus take what is necessary from the people; in lean years, they work to provide for themselves. 然體無毛羽不可袒而無衣. 腹非匏瓜不可繫而不食. 自未造極要有所資. 年豐則取足於百姓. 時儉則肆力以自供.⁹⁰

Daoheng thus aims to refute the charge that Buddhist monks are drains on society. He does not directly address the issue of vegetarianism, though his call for flexibility suggests that he is perhaps attempting to gently argue that monks do not necessarily need to always be vegetarian.

A complete interpretation of these passages from the *Treatise That Dispels Criticism* would, of course, require knowing more about the particular context in which they were written, and it would certainly be a mistake to take anything in this brief exchange as straightforwardly descriptive of the typical behavior of Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns at this time. Nevertheless, it is significant that Daoheng here presents vegetarianism as the proposal of a *critic*, one giving an idealized portrait of Buddhist renunciation. In other words it would seem that in the early-fifth century – close in time to, but still well before the translation of the famous vegetarian-promoting scriptures such as the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* – Buddhist monks and nuns could expect to be criticized for *not* being vegetarian. That they *should* ideally be vegetarian must have been a reasonably widespread notion.

⁸⁹ T.2102:52.35B2-5.

⁹⁰ T.2102:52.36A8-11.

TOWARDS A NEW HISTORY OF
VEGETARIANISM IN EARLY CHINESE BUDDHISM

As mentioned above, scholars have typically traced the origins of Buddhist vegetarianism in China to the late-fifth and early-sixth centuries, when a debate about this topic was clearly taking place among learned Chinese Buddhist laymen. It has been widely assumed that prior to this time vegetarianism was not the norm or expectation among Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns (even if it may have been practiced by a small minority as one facet of a more generalized regime of ascetic dietary restriction). Yet this conclusion about the early status of Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism relies not on any direct evidence, but on a number of questionable presuppositions.

In the first place, scholars have assumed that vegetarianism could not have been expected of Chinese Buddhists prior to the fifth century because only at this time did the Chinese gain access to canonical Buddhist texts that promote it. As we have seen, this is false. Since the early-third century at the latest there had existed numerous nominally canonical Chinese Buddhist scriptures that either encourage or require vegetarianism, or assume it to be a key part of Buddhist practice.

Second, because Buddhist vegetarianism was debated in the fifth and sixth centuries, scholars seem to have inferred that it must have been a new idea at this time. However while the early-fifth century did see the first Chinese translations of what would become the best known and most famous pro-vegetarian Buddhist texts such as the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, this is also when the first translations were made of Buddhist texts that *permit* limited meat-eating, namely the complete versions of the Indian monastic codes.⁹¹ In other words, fifth- and sixth-century debates about meat-eating could just as easily have been prompted not by the appearance of texts prohibiting meat-eating, but by the arrival of material that, for the first time, explicitly allowed it.⁹²

Third, scholars seem to have assumed that because vegetarianism was not required by Indian monastic law, it could not have been expected of early Chinese Buddhists. Even Suwa Gijun, who has raised

⁹¹ Concerning the early history of the *vinaya* in Chinese Buddhism, see Ōchō Enichi 横超慧日, *Chūgoku Bukkyō no kenkyū* 中国仏教の研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1958-1979) 1, pp. 2-189.

⁹² The basic Buddhist prohibition on killing can, just as it was in later China, easily be interpreted as implying vegetarianism. The absence of an explicit prohibition on meat-eating thus cannot be taken as evidence for its permission. A question that is worthy of further research is whether or not there exist *any* pre-5th-c. canonical Chinese Buddhist texts in which meat-eating is explicitly allowed.

the possibility that some Chinese Buddhists in the third and fourth centuries may have been vegetarian, concludes that this must have been the exception because the lifestyle of early Buddhist monks in China would have in general conformed to Indian monastic law, where meat-eating is permitted.⁹³

Yet in the absence of other evidence it is clearly not a good idea to assume continuity between Indian Buddhist norms or practices and early Chinese Buddhist ones. No one presumes the first Chinese Buddhist monasteries functioned precisely like Indian ones, any more than we would expect the first Buddhist monasteries in California to be replicas of those in Asia. Nor do we assume that the Buddhist practices early Chinese Buddhists encountered first hand, through their contact with Indian and Central Asian Buddhists, always conformed to what we think of as orthodox monastic law (the married monks of the third-century Indic monastic communities at Niya are perhaps the clearest example of this).⁹⁴

It would, of course, be perverse to suggest that a double negative – the absence of evidence for non-vegetarianism – is itself meaningful in any way. But it does show that there are no good reasons for dismissing the sources discussed in the first part of the essay. And if we take these data seriously, a new history of Buddhist vegetarianism in China suggests itself. An initial and very tentative sketch of this history might be as follows.

From the early-third century, if not even earlier, vegetarianism was assumed to be part of the lifestyle of Buddhist monks and nuns, and there was little debate about this topic (as evidenced by the way that texts such as the *Treatise on Removing Doubts* seem to take it for granted). In the early-fifth century, things began to change. The Indian monastic codes were translated, and some began to realize that these texts

⁹³ Suwa, *Chūgoku chūsei Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, p. 65. The evidence Suwa cites – 6th-c. monks noting that the *vinaya* does not prohibit meat-eating – cannot tell us what 2d-, 3d-, or 4th-c. Chinese monks would have thought, and indeed the complete *vinaya* texts were unknown to the Chinese prior to the early-fifth century.

⁹⁴ Ratna Chandra Agrawala, “Life of Buddhist Monks in Chinese Turkestan,” in Jagan Nath Agrawal and Bhim Dev Shastri, eds., *Sarūpa-Bhārati or the Homage of Indology Being the Dr. Lakshman Sarup Memorial Volume* (Hoshiarpur: Vishveshvaranand Institute Publications, 1954), pp. 173–81; Valerie Hansen, “Religious Life in a Silk Road Community,” in John Lagerwey, ed., *Religion and Chinese Society* (Paris and Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong and l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 2004), pp. 279–316. As pertains to diet, the ideal of the *vinaya* is precisely that one *not* insist on complete vegetarianism and accept alms containing meat (an ideal that, among other things, extends the opportunities for meritorious giving as widely as possible). Being a strict vegetarian could therefore constitute *failing* to live up to an ideal. This makes sense in an Indian context, where vegetarianism, practiced by other religious groups or seen as a matter of caste purity, could have been something that an aspiring Buddhist monastic had to abandon.

explicitly permitted monks and nuns to consume meat under certain circumstances. At the same time, with the appearance of texts such as the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, the Chinese heard arguments explaining why the monastic rules were not definitive, and why Buddhist ideals such as compassion demanded vegetarianism.

A debate ensued. This debate may have been largely about the laity, and the status of vegetarianism among the clergy was not necessarily ever in doubt. Apart from when they were required to do so by emperor Wu, we thus find no records of any Buddhist monks or nuns feeling the need to argue in favor of specifically clerical vegetarianism, and the several surviving fifth-century Chinese commentaries to the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* do not register anything particularly noteworthy about this text's call for total vegetarianism.⁹⁵ On the other hand we do find at least one apocryphal scripture, composed in the early-fifth century, hesitatingly arguing that monks devoted to meditation *should* be allowed to consume some meat, albeit only so as to prevent illness, and only after washing it to rid it of its flavor.⁹⁶ Perhaps, in other words, what was novel at this time – what needed to be argued for – was not clerical vegetarianism, but its opposite.

The debates about meat-eating continued for nearly a century and culminated in emperor Wu's mandating vegetarianism for the clergy, thereby establishing it as the proper duty of any truly pious Buddhist. Emperor Wu's actions, however, may have been most significant as a manifestation of the state's increasing desire and ability to police clerical behavior (even in nominally "religious" areas), rather than as something that radically changed the customs of Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns or societal expectations of them. Indeed the emperor's famous decree, to which is appended the record of the debates he sponsored, prohibits not only eating meat, but also drinking alcohol, something whose status as a violation of the Buddhist precepts was never in question.⁹⁷

VEGETARIANISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE BUDDHISM

The details of the above historical reconstruction remain tentative. But regardless of precisely what happened later, the available evidence suggests that during the third and fourth centuries, and perhaps even

⁹⁵ *Da boniepan jing ji jie* 大般涅槃經集解, T.1763:37.427c10-428c20; cf. Kieschnick, "Buddhist Vegetarianism in China," 195.

⁹⁶ *Chan mi yao fa jing* 禪祕要法經, T.613:15.249c3-9.

⁹⁷ This document is preserved in the *Guang hong ming ji* 廣弘明集 under the title "Essay on

earlier, vegetarianism was widely considered in China to be a key feature of the Buddhist monastic lifestyle.

Yet we are also justified in thinking that this did not happen merely as a result of Chinese Buddhists reading accurately translated Indian texts or faithfully copying models of behavior received from India. In every example discussed above from texts nominally translated from an Indian language, there were at least some reasons for suspecting a Chinese origin for either the passages discussing vegetarianism or the entire text in question. In *Bonihuan jing* 般泥洹經 (T.6), we thus find vegetarianism added to the list of the five precepts, a list that is otherwise entirely standard within known Indian Buddhist literature. The scripture *Fo kai jie fan zhi Aba jing* 佛開解梵志阿毘經 (T.20) not only contains many stylistic elements suggesting a large amount of Chinese editorial intervention, but none of the other versions of this same text (neither the other Chinese translations, nor any of the surviving Indian versions) mentions vegetarianism, and vegetarianism is not found in any other known list of official monastic precepts. *Chu chu jing* 處處經 (T.730), while certainly containing much of authentic Indian origin, seems very likely to have been at least compiled into its present form in China, similar to the situation of the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections*, which it resembles in structure and style. *A'nan si shi jing* 阿難四事經 (T.493) too has been noted by Nattier for at least some elements that appear designed to appeal to a Chinese audience, and finally, as will be discussed in more detail below, the account of vegetarianism in the text of *Xumoti nü jing* 須摩提女經 (T.128a) is not found in any of the many other surviving versions of this story.

But even apart from these admittedly tentative observations, the strongest reason for thinking that these references to vegetarianism do not ultimately reflect the Indian Buddhist textual tradition is that they are fundamentally different in character from the discussions of vegetarianism in known Indian Buddhist sources. Unlike the above mentioned texts, whose subject matters and doctrinal orientations are eclectic, all known Indian Buddhist texts promoting vegetarianism are linked to a specific current of Buddhist philosophy (that pertaining to “Buddha-nature”).⁹⁸ Even more important and revealing, Indian Bud-

the Prohibition of Meat and Alcohol” (“Duan jiu rou wen” 斷酒肉文; T.2103:52.294B16).

⁹⁸ Modern scholars have occasionally linked vegetarianism to Mahāyāna Buddhism in general. See, for example, Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *La morale bouddhique* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1927), pp. 64–65; Harvey, *Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, pp. 163–65. However as noted by Ruegg (“Ahimsā and Vegetarianism in the History of Buddhism”), most Indian Mahāyāna texts do not discuss vegetarianism, and those that do seem to be associated

dhist texts that advocate permanent clerical vegetarianism – either those that actually survive in Indian languages or those surviving in Chinese or other translation but whose Indian provenance is undisputed – are aware of their status as a minority voice and of the novelty of their position relative to standard Buddhist doctrine and practice. Texts such as the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra* thus *argue* for vegetarianism and explicitly attempt to reconcile it with the permission given in the Buddhist monastic codes to consume the three kinds of pure meat.⁹⁹ By arguing their position in this manner, these texts tacitly concede that vegetarianism was not a common Buddhist virtue. The Chinese texts discussed above, however, show no anxiety whatsoever about the status of clerical (or even general) vegetarianism. They imply a context in which it had always and ever been a Buddhist value, and it is thus extremely difficult to imagine these passages as having been composed in India or intended for an Indian audience.

To be sure, vegetarianism may have been more widely practiced among Indian Buddhists than scholars have hitherto suspected, and it would certainly be wise to avoid assuming a monolithic Indian Buddhism against which Chinese Buddhism can be contrasted. But even if some Indian Buddhists did practice vegetarianism, it was clearly not the norm, as evidenced by the shrill tone of those (very) few texts that do advocate it, and it was furthermore at least reasonably common to actively depict insistence on vegetarianism in a negative light, à la Devadatta (remembered, as discussed above, both for insisting on vegetarianism and for trying to kill the Buddha). Thus even if there did exist some vegetarian Indian Buddhists, total abstention from meat evidently acquired a radically different status within Chinese Buddhism. What in Indian Buddhism was, at best, a fringe movement and at worst a positively non-Buddhist practice, became in China a defining feature of Buddhist identity.

Previous scholars have, of course, recognized that Chinese Buddhist vegetarianism is in some way anomalous within the Buddhist world. What has not been appreciated, however, is that the Chinese Buddhist adoption of vegetarianism as normative feature of the Buddhist monastic lifestyle may have happened *not* after a long period of debate with and accommodation to Chinese values and the eventual imposition of these views by the state (as the usual history has it), but

with the philosophy of the *tathāgatagarbha* (“Buddha nature”), though they do not necessarily all ground their arguments for vegetarianism in that philosophy. The Chinese texts surveyed above, in contrast, are unified neither in doctrinal content, style, or anything else.

⁹⁹ Schmithausen, “Meat-Eating and Nature: Buddhist Perspectives,” p. 193.

all at once, from nearly the beginnings of Buddhism in China, and without any signs of debate.

The causal factors that led Chinese Buddhists to adopt vegetarianism in such a manner were, no doubt, many. But among them was surely that vegetarianism seems to have served as a potent means of establishing a distinctly Buddhist identity vis à vis mainstream Chinese religion, which at both the elite and popular levels was defined above all by rituals of sacrifice.¹⁰⁰ As scholars have noted, the early Daoist institution, which arose in the second century AD, just when Buddhism was first gaining traction in China, similarly defined itself against the bloody sacrificial rituals characteristic of local Chinese religion.¹⁰¹ Daoist gods gained their identity by what they were *not* – the meat-eating gods and ancestors of the popular pantheon.

But Buddhism was also understood and positioned by means of a similar structural contrast (in India too Buddhism presented itself as an alternative to sacrificial religion). That a defining feature of Buddhist identity was the abandoning of meat sacrifices, even to one's ancestors, is thus prominently mentioned in the writings of early Chinese Buddhist laymen (whether Buddhist laymen actually followed this idea is an entirely different question).¹⁰² In fact the Buddhist invocation of this contrast may well predate the Daoist one – from at least as early as 65 AD (the date of the famous imperial edict sent to king Ying 英 of Chu), Buddhist shrines in China were called “humane sacrificial temples 仁祠,”¹⁰³ a term that might have been intended to signify that Buddhist worship did not involve the killing that normally accompanied sacrificial rites.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ My approach to thinking about diet as a means of establish identity through contrast with a presumed other is informed by the writings of Robert Ford Campany. See Robert Ford Campany, “The Meanings of Cuisines of Transcendence in Late Classical and Early Medieval China,” *TP* 91 (2005), pp. 1–57.

¹⁰¹ Terry F. Kleeman, “Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, Reciprocity and Violence in Traditional China,” *AM* 3d ser. 7.1 (1994), pp. 185–211.

¹⁰² See for example Sun Chuo's 孫綽 (ca. 300–380) essay “An Elucidation of the Way” (“Yu Dao lun” 喻道論), preserved in *Hong ming ji* 弘明集. In it he is forced to respond to his (imaginary) interlocutor's complaint that following Buddhism is unfilial because, among other things, Buddhists “do not [make offerings] of bloody food [meat] when one's [parents] are deceased” (終絕血食; T.2102:52.17A21–22). Though Sun Chuo refutes the charge that this means lack of filial piety, he agrees that Buddhists do not perform such offerings. Indeed, the major part of this treatise is concerned with justifying Buddhism's prohibition on killing and reconciling it with the teachings of past Chinese sages.

¹⁰³ *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1965) 24, p. 1428.

¹⁰⁴ This interpretation of the meaning of *ren ci* 仁祠, though speculative, is plausible. Three points may be noted. First, the term *ren*, “benevolence,” is used in early Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist texts as a native gloss for the meaning of the precept of not killing (see, for example, *Fanmoyu jing* 梵摩渝經, T.76:1.886A9–10; Nattier, *Guide to the Earliest Chinese*

Interestingly, the complete rejection of meat, as a distinctive diet maintained by the clergy of a voluntary, non-localized religious association, was also not limited to Buddhism, and was at least occasionally advocated by early-Daoist groups, even in the third and early-fourth centuries, before the occurrence of widespread Buddhist influence on Daoism.¹⁰⁵

“Meat and alcohol must be avoided 不可不遠酒肉,” thus states the *Code and Scripture of the Precepts Taught by the Celestial Master of the Ritual Writs of the Correct One* (*Zheng yi fa wen tian shi jiao jie ke jing* 正一法文天師教戒科經),¹⁰⁶ a collection of early-Celestial Masters commandments thought to date to the third century.¹⁰⁷ The famous *Spirit Statutes of the Lady Blue* (*Nüqing gui lü* 女青鬼律), which most scholars of Daoism assign to the end of the third century at the latest,¹⁰⁸ similarly includes a regulation that seems to prohibit meat-eating,¹⁰⁹ as do the various versions of the precepts and commandments associated with the Xiang'er 想爾 commentary to the *Dao de jing* 道德經, which many scholars date to the third century.¹¹⁰ Meat-eating and drinking alcohol are also prohibited

Buddhist Translations, pp. 129–30), a precept that, as discussed above, was often explicitly formulated to refer to, or at the very least include, no killing of animals (see above, n. 31; for another example, see the Han-dynasty *Fa jing jing* 法鏡經, T.322:12.16C21–22). This association between *ren* and the first Buddhist precept of not killing was eventually formalized through the commonly encountered association between the five precepts and the Chinese list of the five “constant virtues 五常,” the first of which is *ren* 仁. Second, the association between the virtue of *ren* and discomfort over the slaughter of animals during sacrifice is an old one in Chinese literature, and one immediately thinks of Mencius 1.A7, in which Mencius sees the sprouts of *ren* in King Xuan’s reluctance to send an ox to be sacrificed; see *Mengzi zheng yi* 孟子正義 (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1987), pp. 80–82. Third, the Buddhist condemnation of the sacrifice of animals is universal, and even assuming that whatever rituals took place within the earliest Buddhist shrines in China were only vaguely “Buddhist,” it is quite difficult to imagine that they would have involved the offerings of sacrificial meat. In other words to the extent that Buddhist ritual worship was interpreted in China as a kind of “sacrifice 祠,” it would, in practice, have indeed been a meatless sacrifice.

¹⁰⁵ The early-Daoist “clergy” were, of course, laymen, not celibate monks, but in as much as they were religious professionals endowed with rank and authority, it does not seem inappropriate to refer to them this way.

¹⁰⁶ DZ 788, p. 2a.

¹⁰⁷ Schipper and Verellen, *Taoist Canon*, pp. 120–22. This is the same collection of documents that also contains the *Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao*, discussed above.

¹⁰⁸ Chi-Tim Lai, “The *Demon Statutes of Nüqing* and the Problem of the Bureaucratization of the Netherworld in Early Heavenly Master Daoism,” *TP* 88 (2002), p. 259; Kleeman, “Daoism in the Third Century,” pp. 15–16; Schipper and Verellen, *Taoist Canon*, pp. 127–28.

¹⁰⁹ 不得持真入偽, 姦亂聖明, 飲酒食肉, 呼嗟無道 (DZ 789, p. 16b). In Kleeman’s translation: “You must not, bearing the truth, enter into falsity, defiling and disrupting your saintly luminaries, drinking wine and eating meat, lamenting that the world does not possess the Dao” (Kleeman, “Daoism in the Third Century,” p. 20). Kleeman reads this to be a prohibition against incorporating Daoist rituals into non-Daoist rituals, or of a Daoist participating in such a ritual.

¹¹⁰ “One is prohibited from eating living beings that contain blood and delighting in their

in the *180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao* (*Lao jun shuo yi bai ba shi jie* 老君說一百八十戒), which most likely dates to the fourth century.¹¹¹

Whatever mutual influence there might have been between Buddhism and Daoism during the third and fourth centuries, that vegetarianism was advocated by both groups shows that within Chinese society during this time, refraining from the consumption of meat had the power to define a distinct religious identity, one constructed by way of its contrast with mainstream Chinese ritual and religious life. Vegetarianism was one way Buddhists and Daoists could explain what and who they were *not*.

So powerful was the idea of vegetarianism in this regard that Buddhists in China seem to have sometimes used it as a way of “translating” other kinds of contrasts that appeared in Indian Buddhist sources but which risked unintelligibility or irrelevance in China. This appears to be what is going on in T.128a, the anomalous version the story of Sumāgadhā that presents vegetarianism as a key Buddhist virtue.¹¹²

As discussed above, this tale contrasts Buddhist and non-Buddhist ascetics. And in all versions of the story except T.128a, the non-Buddhist ascetics are criticized primarily because they are the type that go about naked (fully, in the stories where the rivals are Jains,¹¹³ or partially, when the rivals are *brāhmaṇas*). Instead of nakedness, T.128a makes vegetarianism the key point of contrast, something that, I would suggest, preserves the pragmatic function of the original contrast between properly dressed Buddhists and naked or partially naked ascetics even as it alters the semantic content of this contrast dramatically.

This comes out most clearly when we compare the key episode of the story in T.128a to the version that otherwise resembles it most

flavor 戒勿食含血之物樂其美” (Öfuchi, *Shoki no Dōkyō*, 255). On these precepts, see also Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 49–50. These commandments are transmitted in various forms within texts that date to considerably later, but as Öfuchi and others have shown, they are almost all referred to within the Xiang'er commentary. Nothing corresponding to the commandment against eating “living beings that contain blood” is mentioned in the surviving portions of the Xiang'er commentary. Nevertheless because this commentary survives only in an incomplete manuscript, and given that other early-Celestial Masters material also mentions abstinence from meat-eating, it makes sense to imagine that these ideas were indeed found in now-lost portions of the text.

¹¹¹ On these precepts, which exist in several slightly different versions, see Benjamin Penny, “Buddhism and Daoism in the *180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao*,” *Taoist Resources* 6.2 (1996), pp. 1–16. For the precepts that discuss meat-eating, see Benjamin Penny and Barbara Hendrischke, “*The 180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao* 老君說一百八十戒: A Translation and Textual Study,” *Taoist Resources* 6.2 (1996), pp. 17–29 (nos. 24, 173, 176, and 177).

¹¹² See no. 5, sect. “Some Early Chinese Buddhist Scriptures Requiring Vegetarianism,” above.

¹¹³ E.g., T.129:2:843c25–26.

closely (from the *Ekottarika-āgama*). Sumāgadhā's refusal to honor the non-Buddhist ascetics is introduced by noting that they were invited because of a local custom requiring anyone marrying a foreign bride (as Sumāgadhā's husband had) to offer food to 6,000 *brāhmaṇas*. In these two, otherwise closely similar versions, the drama then unfolds as follows, on the facing page.

Although both versions begin by mentioning that the non-Buddhist ascetics must be fed meat, in the more detailed *Ekottarika-āgama* version (right column), the *brāhmaṇas*' diet is not the issue.¹¹⁴ Sumāgadhā objects, rather, to these ascetics' partial nakedness, prompting her to compare them to animals, to claim they lack decorum, and so forth.

In T.128a (left), in contrast, the *brāhmaṇas*' nakedness – a key feature not only in the *Ekottarika-āgama* version, but all in all other known versions as well – is never mentioned (we find instead only a single remark that they are “ugly”). When Sumāgadhā objects to reverencing the ascetics, it is their desire for “fine food” that renders them unfit, which a reader would surely associate with the earlier remarks in this version that non-Buddhist ways involve “killing living beings for bloody food.”¹¹⁵ And, of course, in this version Sumāgadhā also does not ultimately feed the *brāhmaṇas* their meal of meat and wine.

Thus T.128a does more than just imply that vegetarianism is a distinctive feature of Buddhism. It actually uses the contrast between meat-eating and vegetarianism to establish Buddhist identity in comparison with a competing group. The other versions of the story also attempt to establish Buddhist identity by way of contrast. What they use, however, is the contrast between Buddhist monks and naked ascetics, a contrast that we find throughout Indian Buddhist literature and one that makes sense within an Indian context, where various kinds of “naked” ascetics were an established feature of the religious landscape, and were, in ideology as well as in fact, a clearly defined alternative to Buddhism.

¹¹⁴ It is possible that the original intention here was to depict the *brāhmaṇas* as consumers of impure meat. Various tabooed meats are listed in the *vinayas*, and while pork is not normally among these, it is mentioned in one such list, in the *vinaya* of the Mahāsaṃghikas (*Mohesengqie lü* 摩訶僧祇律, T.1425:22.487A24).

¹¹⁵ T.128A:2.836A4.

What these *brāhmaṇas* eat is soup made from pork and thrice-fermented wine. 梵志所食，豬肉爲羹，三釀爲酒。

Puṇḍravardhana knew he had broken the law [concerning marrying foreigners], so he invited the various teachers, laid out a feast in a large hall, and ordered Sumāgadhā to make reverence to these teachers. 滿財自知犯制，大請群師寬庭列會，命須摩提女爲諸師作禮。

Sumāgadhā said: Though I am a woman, my will is unbending. These *brāhmaṇas* are no different than cattle. Their bodies are ugly *and they crave fine foods shamelessly*. They are no different than beasts! I would rather have my limbs amputated than make reverence to them. 須摩提言：我雖女人志剛不可屈，此梵志之徒無異牛犢，醜陋五形貪嗜美味無慚無恥，與畜生何別。我寧形毀五兀，不能爲是作禮。

Hearing what she said, the six thousand *brāhmaṇas* were angered: “Where did you [king] find this low-born bride who comes and insults us!?” They then got up and left. 爾時，六千梵志聞即同忿：何處索民小家婢來罵辱我等？於是散坐。

[Those who violate the law] must give a meal to six thousand *brāhmaṇas*. Now what these *brāhmaṇas* eat is roasted pork, pork soup, and double-fermented wine. What these *brāhmaṇas* wear is either white cotton or animal skins. Further the law among these *brāhmaṇas* is that when they enter a city, they cover their right shoulders but leave the other half of their body exposed. 即飯六千梵志。然梵志所食，炙食豬肉，及豬肉羹、重釀之酒；又梵志所著衣服，或被白氈或被毳衣，然彼梵志之法入國之時，以衣偏著右肩半身露見。

[*The ascetics' arrival in the city is described in more detail, and Sumāgadhā is asked to make reverence to them.*]

Sumāgadhā replied: “Stop! I am unwilling to make reverence to naked men.” 修摩提女報曰：止止大家！我不堪任向裸人作禮。

The elder [Sumāgadhā's husband] replied: These are not naked men. It is not that they lack shame. These are their religious garments.” 長者曰：此非裸人，非不有慚，但所著衣者是其法服。

Sumāgadhā: “These are shameless men. They all expose their bodies. How could these be religious garments?” 修摩提女曰：此無慚愧之人，皆共露形體在外，有何法服之用？

[*Long discussion in which Sumāgadhā compares them to animals, contrasts their lack of decorum to that of the Buddhists, and says she would rather have her limbs amputated than make reverence to them, etc.*]

Then, Sumāgadhā and her husband prepared pork, pork soup, and twice-fermented wine, and fed the *brāhmaṇas* who were all satisfied. When the *brāhmaṇas* had eaten, after some conversation, they got up and left. 是時長者及修摩提夫，即辦豬肉、豬肉羹、重釀之酒，飯六千梵志皆使充足。諸梵志食已，少多論議，便起而去。

But Buddhists in China did not have naked ascetics as rivals. A story whose message is that “Buddhists are not like naked ascetics” would be pointless at best, and counterproductive at worst (reminding one as it does that some Indians did indeed go about naked).¹¹⁶ T.128a can thus be seen as a kind of *translation* of a version of the story that was originally much like that found now in the *Ekottarika-āgama* version (this can be seen concretely elsewhere, as T.128a assumes details about a certain character that are mentioned only in the *Ekottarika-āgama* version).¹¹⁷ This translation, while relying on or even creating the erroneous idea that vegetarianism was a distinguishing mark of Indian Buddhists, does successfully convey the pragmatic function of the tale – to assert that Buddhism is superior to its rivals or alternatives.¹¹⁸

Chinese Buddhists thus took up the idea, if not the practice, of vegetarianism as a defining feature of their identity far earlier than has previously been thought, and they did so with minimal, if any, prompting from Indian Buddhists or Indian Buddhist sources. Undoubtedly many factors contributed to this. But among these we can at least point, preliminarily, to the way that vegetarianism may have been used by Chinese Buddhists to help resolve interpretive challenges faced in dealing with texts, ideas, and practices of Indian Buddhism that spoke to background assumptions or contexts that were absent in China.

Scholars interested in assessing the meeting (or failure to meet) of Indian and Chinese cultures through the spread of Buddhism to East Asia have most often focused their gaze on the *content* of Indian Bud-

¹¹⁶ In fact, even Buddhist garb was often considered by the Chinese to be shamefully revealing, and there were debates about its appropriateness for the Chinese (*Hong ming ji*, T.2102:52.32B12–33B7).

¹¹⁷ In the *Ekottarika-āgama* version, after the episode with the non-Buddhist ascetics, Puṇḍravardhana retires to a tower to think. We are then introduced to a certain *brāhmaṇa* named Śubha (修跋; the reconstruction is tentative), said to be a long-standing acquaintance of Puṇḍravardhana. Śubha arrives in the city, seeks Puṇḍravardhana, is told by a servant that he is atop the tower, and then uses his magic powers to fly up to the top of the tower where he advises the king to invite the Buddha (T.125:2.661A6–C6). In T.128a, however, after saying that Puṇḍravardhana has gone to the top of his tower, with no other introduction the text simply reads: “Then, Śubha flew to the top of the tower where he saw Puṇḍravardhana 爾時，須拔飛來樓上，見滿財” (T.128a:2.836B12). It is clear that T.128a must have been originally based on a version of the story that included an introduction to the character of Śubha.

¹¹⁸ This would thus be what in translation studies is referred to as a “functional translation,” a translation in which the pragmatic or illocutionary force of a given utterance (or larger text) is given primary consideration over and above its semantic content. See Christiane Nord, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functional Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997). In the present case we need not, however, assume that the recasting of the Sumāgadhā story was deliberate or calculated. The original story does mention the meat-based diet of the rival ascetics, and in a context where vegetarianism was associated with Buddhism – as I have argued it was at this time in China – it is not hard to imagine someone assuming in good faith that this was the true point of the story.

dhist doctrines, practices, or texts and the subsequent transformation (or not) of such content in China. One problem with this approach – and there are others¹¹⁹ – is that it presumes that religious doctrines or ideas are important primarily as objects of belief, thought, or understanding. It fails to consider what Robert Ford Campany calls their “extrinsic” meaning, the function of such ideas or practices as expressions and builders of identity for those who subscribe to them, identity based not on the positive content of what is subscribed to, but on the contrasts thereby afforded with someone or something else.¹²⁰

In an Indian religious context, *non*-vegetarianism – either as ideology, practice, or both – seems to have had a clear extrinsic meaning, a clear function differentiating Buddhist ascetics from certain rivals.¹²¹ Accordingly when Indian Buddhists disavowed vegetarianism by portraying it as something insisted on by the heretic Devadatta, part of what they were doing was claiming not to be those other ascetics who refuse certain foods in order to keep themselves pure. But in China, non-vegetarianism did not signify anything. It had no extrinsic meaning. Vegetarianism, however, did. Paradoxically, vegetarianism may have allowed Chinese Buddhists to establish the kinds of contrasts with competing ideologies that Indian Buddhists established with non-vegetarianism (among many other things). We might then say, with a touch of irony but still in all seriousness, that Chinese Buddhists became vegetarians precisely because Indian Buddhists were not.

¹¹⁹ For important critiques of the classical approaches, see Robert M. Gimello, “Random Reflections on the ‘Sinicization’ of Chinese Buddhism,” *Society for the Study of Chinese Religions* 5 (1978), pp. 52–89; Gregory Schopen, “Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of ‘Sinicization’ Viewed from the Other Side,” *TP* 70 (1984), pp. 110–26; Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: U. Hawai‘i P., 2002). For some recent attempts to find new ways approaching the question of “Sinification,” see Michael Radich, “Ideas About ‘Consciousness’ in Fifth and Sixth Century Chinese Buddhist Debates on the Survival of Death by the Spirit, and the Chinese Background to *Amalavijñāna,” in Chen-kuo Lin and Michael Radich, eds., *Articulating Indic Ideas in Sixth and Seventh Century Chinese Buddhism* (Hamburg: Hamburg U.P., 2014), pp. 471–512; C. Pierce Salguero, *Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China* (Philadelphia: U. Pennsylvania P., 2014). On the issues involved in talking about cross-cultural influence in general, see Matthew P. Canepa, “Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction among the Ancient and Early Medieval Mediterranean, near East, and Asia,” *Ars Orientalis* 38 (2010), pp. 7–30.

¹²⁰ Robert Ford Campany, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: U. Hawai‘i P., 2009), pp. 39–87; “Religious Repetories and Contestation: A Case Study Based on Buddhist Miracle Tales,” *History of Religions* 52.2 (2012), pp. 109–11.

¹²¹ For a discussion of how the Buddhist idea of the “middle way” functioned in these terms, see Oliver Freiberger, “Early Buddhism, Asceticism, and the Politics of the Middle Way,” in Oliver Freiberger, ed., *Asceticism and Its Critics* (Oxford U.P., 2006), pp. 235–58.

Appendix: Scripture on the Son of the Householder Eloquent Intention
(Bianyi zhang zhe zi jing 辯意長者子經, T.544)

The *Scripture on the Son of the Householder Eloquent Intention* may be another early Chinese Buddhist scripture that mentions vegetarianism as part of the five lay precepts. In this case, however, textual difficulties add enough uncertainty to justify its relegation to this appendix. Within this text we find a variety of behavioral injunctions in sets of five, each said to ensure good rebirth and help avoid bad rebirth. The first of these lists, said to lead to birth in heaven, is of the standard five lay precepts. After these are listed, however, the passage is summarized again in verse, and the verses corresponding to the fifth lay precept read: “Let neither alcohol nor meat ever pass one’s lips, so that there is no disturbing of the mind 酒肉不過口，無有誤亂意。”¹²²

The modern Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon states that this text was translated by a certain Fachang 法場 of the Northern Wei dynasty. This is surely incorrect, as a text with this title is listed, with translator unknown, in Dao’an’s catalog of 374 AD.¹²³ We can probably trace the text back even further, for it is also mentioned in the biography of this same Dao’an, who, it is said, was assigned this text to read when he first became a monk.¹²⁴ We do not need to trust this biography as being of complete historical accuracy to infer that the work was known, by at least the era of Dao’an’s youth, as a convenient primer of rules and regulations for Buddhist monks, and its content is well suited to such a task. It is furthermore not hard to see why it would have been a popular text, as it is written in an elegant, literary style replete with terminology that would have resonated with an educated Chinese audience.¹²⁵

The *Scripture on the Son of the Householder Eloquent Intention* thus seems to be another text dating from before the middle of the fourth century that associates vegetarianism with the fifth lay precept. However, while the Taishō lists no variant readings here, a quotation of the above passage is preserved in a seventh-century Buddhist encyclopedia, but reads “alcohol and food 酒食” in place of “alcohol and meat 酒肉.”¹²⁶ This reading is also found in a Tang-era carving of the text from Fangshan.¹²⁷

We must thus ask whether this is a case of a Chinese editor “fixing” an account of the fifth lay precept to remove reference to abstention from meat, or whether, conversely, it was added later, either intentionally or by a copyist’s mistake.¹²⁸ In the absence of further textual evidence,¹²⁹ this is difficult to say for certain. We

¹²² T.544:14.837C10.

¹²³ T.2145:55.17B26-C1.

¹²⁴ *Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳, T.2059:50.351C-9; *Chu san zang ji ji*, T.2145:55.108A4-5.

¹²⁵ See for example the unusual and highly stylized translations of the first four of the five lay precepts, in which there is a clear effort to associate these regulations with classical Chinese virtues (T.544:14.837B24-28).

¹²⁶ *Fa yuan zhu lin* 法苑珠林, T.2122:53.922A22.

¹²⁷ *Fangshan shi jing* 3, pp. 626-27.

¹²⁸ The character 肉 has some common variants, such as 宀, that could plausibly be mistaken for 食 in a manuscript.

¹²⁹ There are several known partial Dunhuang manuscripts of this text, but none include the passage in question. See *Taishōzō Tonko shutsudo Bitten taishō mokuro* 大正藏敦煌出土

may note, however, that the reading “alcohol and food” would appear to make the passage say that one should abstain from all eating and drinking whatsoever, which surely cannot be the intention. This suggests that “alcohol and meat” may be the correct reading. As we have seen, even in the third and fourth centuries there existed Chinese Buddhist texts in which the fifth lay precept is associated with vegetarianism, and this may well be another.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- T *CBETA* electronic edition (version 5.2, 5/28/2014) of (with corrections) *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次朗 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932). Passages are cited by text number, followed by volume, page, register (A, B, or C), and line number(s).
- DZ *The Daoist Canon*, cited by page (of each text) and column (a or b) from the 1988 Wen wu chu ban she 文物出版社 36-volume photolithographic reprint of the Ming canon, using the numbering system given in Weng Dujian 翁獨健, ed., *Dao zang zi mu yin de* 道藏子目引得 (Beijing: Hafo Yanjing xue she, 1935).

仏典対照目録, 3d edn. (Tokyo: Kokusai Bukkyōgaku daigakuin daigaku fuzoku toshokan, 2015), p. 150.