

Appendix E - UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Jennifer Dan

College: Arts & Sciences Department: Classics

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Christopher Craig

PROJECT TITLE: Manichaeism and Its Spread into China

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: [Signature] Faculty Mentor

Date: 4/23/02

General Assessment - please provide a short paragraph that highlights the most significant features of the project.

Comments (Optional):

This project pursues Jennifer's recondite interest in the ancient dualistic religion of Manichaeism, known to most of us only through St. Augustine. Jennifer shows a command of appropriate bibliography and strong synthetic ability in presenting a picture of Mani and of his teachings. Jennifer further describes precisely the spread of Manichaeism to China along the Silk Road. For this part of her work, she relies heavily on the writings of the greatest living authority on this topic, Professor Samuel Lieu of Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. Jennifer undertook an email correspondence with Dr. Lieu to receive guidance through some of this material, and her initiative has proven worthwhile. Finally, an appendix describes Jennifer's own visit to the only shrine of Mani still extant on the Chinese mainland. The ensemble is a unique project which certainly meets the criteria for honors level undergraduate research.

Manichaeism and its spread into China

Jennifer Dan

It is interesting to ponder how an ancient Persian religion made its way to the Southeastern coast of China and how its shrines survived throughout the periods of China's turmoil. How could such a foreign religion maintain a following amongst a people devoted to the *san jiao* (three religions), i.e. Confucianism, Taoism, or Buddhism? Like Buddhism, which was brought over from India around the 1st century A.D., Manichaeism gradually found a following by its appeal to the masses. Manichaeism attained Buddhist qualities, especially after the missionary work of Mar Ammo, a Manichean monk who brought this religion East beyond the Oxus River, which ran from the Aral Sea (located between Kazakstan and Uzbekistan) through Bactria (Northern Afghanistan).¹

Mani's goal was to bring his religion to all parts of the world. In order to do this, he had to align his religion with the already accepted edicts of established religions. For example, Mani preached about man's tendency to sin. Unlike most Gnostic religions, he did not absolve the elite members of his sect from sin.² This idea of sin and salvation was common to most religions in the Middle Eastern area, particularly Christianity which had only emerged two hundred years prior to Mani's birth. Manichaeism broached the Roman Empire as a Gnostic sect, as evidenced by a letter from the Emperor Diocletian to his Proconsul in Africa in 302 A.D, in which he complained about a sect that masqueraded as

¹ Samuel Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 2nd ed. , p. 217. Map of Silk Road in appendix.

² Jes Asmussen, *Studies in Manichaeism*, p. 15.

Christian.³ At this time, there were other Gnostic sects such as that of the Mandaeans, whom Mani's father is purported to have joined in Ctesphion (near Baghdad), the capital of the Seleucids in 150 A.D.⁴ The Seleucids, the ruling clan of Mesopotamia at that time, were then conquered by the Parthians and their ruling family the Arsacids, the race of Mani's father. Around 208 A.D., the Sassanids gained power over Mesopotamia and maintained their power during Mani's birth in 216 A.D. It was under this clan that Manichaeism emerged and under which Mani died, persecuted by the Iranian national religions of Zervanism and Zoroastrianism. However, his proselytizing was not in vain; following his martyrdom, his teaching spread far and wide, as evidenced by St. Augustine's diatribes, Chinese texts in Turkistan with references to Manichaeism, a historic Iranian work preserved in Tibetan, and many other texts, not to mention a Manichaean shrine in Southeastern China. Manichaeism's spread into China is a long one, but one which can be traced by clues left in villages along the Silk Road, the most convenient route for cultural interactions.

Mani's Life:

Any discussion about Manichaeism must begin with the life of this historical figure. Mani was born to Patik, a Parthian prince of Arsacid descent, and to Mariam, also of the Arsacid dynasty. When Mariam was pregnant with Mani, his father went to Ctesphion in order to seek God. What he found when he was in the "House of Idols" was

³ Samuel Lieu, *The Religion of Light: An Introduction to the History of Manichaeism in China*, p. 1.

⁴ Geo Windengren, *Mani and Manichaeism*, p. 23.

a voice uttering “Eat no meat, drink no wine, and abstain from women.”⁵ After hearing this for three consecutive days, his father joined what scholars consider the Mandeans, a sect which incorporated both Christian elements and the Iranian practices of baptism. While Patik joined the Mandeans, Mariam gave birth to Mani, who later followed in his father’s footsteps and joined this group. At the age of twelve, Mani received a vision from what he later describes as his twin or the Living Paraclete. In Christian doctrine, the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit. This Living Paraclete, which originated from the Syriac word *tauma* meaning twin, was a celestial being who told Mani to forsake the Mandeans. It revealed to him the nature of the universe that he was to preach.⁶ A later revelation in his early twenties convinced him that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ.⁷

Later, when he did leave the Mandeans, he had as his first converts his father and a few elder relatives. In the *Kephalaia*, a Coptic collection of Mani’s oral teachings to his disciples, Mani is said to have sailed south to India to convert the masses. Northern India at that time, as well as eastern Iran, was under the heavy influence of Buddhism. Thus, certain Buddhist qualities filtered into Mani’s teachings. Mani then returned to Persia when Shahpur I, the son of King Aradishir, came to power. At this time, the Sassanids ruled Persia. In order to attain Shahpur’s permission to preach in Persia, Mani converted the king’s two brothers Mihrsah, who ruled over Maisan, and Peroz. Peroz obtained three audiences with Shahpur for Mani.⁸ Impressed by Mani, Shahpur retained him as a royal vassal, according to Alexander of Lycopolis. However, along with Mani, Shahpur also had a Zoroastorian priest Kartēr, who later brought about Mani’s death. It is said that

⁵ Widengren, p. 23.

⁶ Widengren, p. 26.

⁷ N. Joseph Torchia. *Creatio ex nihilo and the Theology of St. Augustine*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999., 66.

⁸ Widengren, p. 30.

Shahpur retained both men because he could not decide on an official religion; Manichaeism possessed both a hint of Christianity and Iranian belief on a firm Mesopotamian foundation while Zoroastrianism was entirely Iranian.⁹ With Shahpur's permission, Mani sent three scribes to different areas of the world. One went to Alexandria, Mar Ammo went to the East, and Adda went to Karka de Bet Selok, a city east of the Tigris.¹⁰

It was during the change of Sassanian power that Mani was martyred. Following the death of Shahpur in 273, his son Hormizd I took over. Mani paid his respects to this king and received the same tolerance for his religion as he did from Shahpur. However, Hormizd I died while Mani was away in Kushan and his brother King Bahram I took over. Under the heavy influence of Karter, Bahram issued a royal decree for Mani to return to Belapat, the royal residence.¹¹ When Mani arrived, he was chained; for twenty-six days he talked to his disciples, after which time he died from exhaustion.¹²

The Manichaean Cosmogony:

When the Holy Spirit came he revealed to us the way of Truth and taught us that there are two natures, that of Light and that of Darkness, separate one from the other from the beginning.¹³

Taken from the Coptic Psalm Book, this revelation by Mani's twin, the Paraclete, formed the foundation of his entire religion, containing particularly both Iranian and Christian

⁹ Zoroastrianism is characterized by a battle between good (Ahura Mazda) and evil (Ahriman) with its mediator being Mithra. This is where the

¹⁰ Widengren, p. 35.

¹¹ Mani taught in Khorasan which was Parthian territory. Because Mani was of Arsacid blood, he was welcomed. However, this was also seen as a political activity due to the defeat of the Parthians by the Sassanids. Widengren, p. 35.

¹² Widengren, p. 41.

¹³ Manfred Heuser and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Studies in Manichaean Literature and Art*, p. 7.

qualities. The co-existence of Light and Darkness is what is termed the Primal Condition, in which neither was established prior to the other but each always existed separate from the other. These two principles are independent of each other and this independence is the requirement for salvation, just as in Zoroastrianism. This duality is also characteristic of Gnosticism, by which Mani was influenced as a child through his father. Mani perceived the Kingdom of Light as the Great Father where the Light is God whose five glories or intellectual virtues include intelligence, knowledge, reason, thought, and deliberation.¹⁴ In apposition to the Kingdom of Light is the Kingdom of Darkness where the Evil Principle dwells in the five realms: Smoke, Fire, Wind, Water, and Darkness. Ruling over the Kingdom of Darkness, is the Devil as described in the *Kephalaia*.

Now regarding the King of Darkness, there are five shapes on him! His head is lion-faced; his hands and feet are demon- and devil-faced; his shoulders are eagle-faced; while his belly is dragon-faced; his tail is fished faced.¹⁵

Manichean time is divided into three parts. In the beginning, there was the dual but separate existence of light and darkness. In the middle, light and darkness intermingle. In the end, the world is restored to normal, i.e. the dual but separate existence of light and darkness. According to Manichean theology, man is in the middle phase which consists of three ages: the descent of man to ascent, the coming of the Living Spirit and the creation of the Macrocosmos, and the Appearance of the Third

¹⁴ N. Joseph Torchia. *Creatio ex nihilo and the Theology of St. Augustine*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999., 66.

¹⁵ Heuser, p. 15.

Envoy which is the Light of God.¹⁶ The creation of Primal Man began when the Prince of Darkness waged war against the Kingdom of Light. The proximity of the Kingdom of Heaven to the Kingdom of Darkness was a great temptation to the Evil Principle such that he, too, was attracted to the Light. Thus, to protect good from evil, the Father of Light created the Mother of Life who begat Primal Man. Girded with his Five Sons or Five Elements (ether, wind, light, water, and fire), Primal Man battled the Prince of Darkness on the borders of the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness.¹⁷ However, Primal Man was overpowered and forgot his origin when Darkness devoured the Five Elements. The Second Cosmogonic Action constitutes the redemption of Primal Man by the Living Spirit. Lying defeated by Darkness, Primal Man called out for help. However, the Living Spirit could not save Primal Man and he gave himself as a sacrifice for the good of the world. The Five Elements of Primal Man mixed with the Five Realms of Darkness such that light defeated darkness in this mixture, preventing further proliferation of either. From this mixture emerged the Living Soul.¹⁸ The Third Cosmogonic Action concerns the creation of the Third Envoy who organized the Macrocosmos, creating plants, animals, and human beings from the mixture of Primal Man with the Five Realms of Darkness.¹⁹

It (Sin) took its body from the five bodies of darkness. (Sin) constructed the body. Yet, its soul it took from the five shining gods.²⁰

¹⁶ Heuser, p. 24.

¹⁷ Peter Bryder. *The Chinese Transformation of Manichaeism*. p. 77.

¹⁸ Heuser, p. 33.

¹⁹ The Milky Way is said to constitute the light particles freed from darkness. The sun and moon are considered part of the Kingdom of Light while the planets like Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, as well as the signs of the zodiac are members of the Kingdom of Darkness.

²⁰ Heuser and Klimkeit, p. 45, cited from *Kephalaia* 95: 14-16.

Thus, there is a basic struggle between good and evil which creates Real Time. Real Time and the world will end only when the two become separate again. This idea of Manichaeism is quite similar to Zoroastrianism which preaches an on-going battle between good and evil. This battle will eventually end on the side of good, and at this time, everything else will end. Likewise, the idea of man emerging from the soil is reminiscent of Adam's birth in the *Book of Genesis*. Many scholars refer the birth of Adam and Eve in the context of Manichaeism to this particular facet of Mani's doctrine. However, instead of Man being comprised of both good and evil, Christianity presents Man as made in the image of God.²¹

In practice, Manichaeism divided its followers into the Hearers and the Elect. The Elect lead a life of strict abstinence and were forbidden from working in the fields for fear of hurting the light particles. The Hearers would perform these daily tasks of harvesting and would attain salvation through the transmigration of their souls into the bodies of the Elect. Before eating a meal, the Elect would say: "I did not reap thee or grind thee or press thee, nor did I put thee into the oven. Another person performed all this and brought thee to me. I shall now consume thee without sin."²² We also hear of this in St. Augustine's *Confessions*, in which he relates how the Elect could eat figs, which they afterwards burped, causing all the little light particles to float up in the air.²³ However ridiculous this may seem, strict vegetarianism was an important tenet. This idea of doing no harm to living creatures extends its reach to Buddhism. In addition, the idea of sin was very strong in Manichaeism. The Elect were not absolved when they sinned

²¹ Jes Asmussen, *Studies in Manichaeism*, p. 14.

²² Samuel N. Lieu, *Religion of Light: An Introduction to the History of Manichaeism in China*, p. 6.

²³ St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, p. 50.

and a person was not considered damned until he chose evil after having learned the esoteric knowledge of Mani.

St. Augustine and Manichaeism:

What first attracted St. Augustine to Manichaeism was his desire to answer for himself what was the origin of evil and its relation to God. Because of his materialism as a child, he broke with the Catholic Church due to its conception of evil as being created by the free will of men. Augustine felt that evil was something of substance.²⁴ Thus, at the age of nineteen, Augustine became a Hearer and indulged himself in Manichean teachings. Yet, he came upon the same feeling of uneasiness in his search for the origin of evil. The Manichees proposed that Man was not responsible for evil. Whenever an evil deed was committed, the evil particles had taken over the body of Man such that they had suppressed the good. Evil existed with God and in continual conflict. However, after having read the works of Plotinus and having been influenced greatly by Neo-Platonism, Augustine began to attack Manichaean theology, particularly their questioning others “Whence is evil?” when instead they should be asking “What is evil?”²⁵ After nine years as a member of the sect, Augustine left because he had now arrived at the answer: evil is that which is contrary to nature and God is the only eternal being who made the universe. All things are not part good and part evil but all things are made from God and conform to their nature. That which deviates from nature then becomes evil. All nature is good but

²⁴ Alexander Lawrence Pleban. *The Problem of Evil and Divine Providence in the anti-Manichean writings of St. Augustine*. Baltimore, Maryland: St. Mary's University, 1957, 2.

²⁵ St. Augustine. “On the Morals of the Manichaeans.” *The Works of Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*. Volume 5, Edinburgh, Scotland: T. and T. Clark, 1872, p. 52.

the parts of nature have different degrees of goodness in accordance with their changeability. In contrast, Manichaeans consider all matter to be evil and need help to separate the good particles from the evil particles.²⁶ To Augustine, evil becomes a reality when it corrupts nature in some way. His next question concerned how evil can exist in a world with God as a supreme being. God regulates evil in such a way that good will result. Evil does not result from God but he can control it.²⁷ This is where Augustine develops his *creatio ex nihilo* idea. God is supreme and unchangeable; however, the things he creates are “finite and mutable” so that they are subject to corruption or defects of nature, otherwise defined as evil.²⁸ Thus, evil is a creature’s falling into nothingness and its falling away from God. Augustine develops this monistic philosophy because of his adamant belief that God is the creator of the universe. In opposition to the dualistic philosophy of Manichaeism in which matter emerges from evil and in which there are two supreme beings, God and the Evil Principle, Augustine finally reconciles his beliefs with his definition of evil based on *creatio ex nihilo*.

In his arguments with Faustus, a Manichaean, Augustine questions the selectivity of the Manichaeans in choosing what to believe in Scripture. They tend to reject the *Acts of the Apostles* mainly because they predict the coming of the Paraclete. To the Manichaeans the Paraclete had already come in the form of Mani’s Twin. Faustus also believed that the Gospels represented the teachings of Christ and did not signify anything of his heavenly origin. Likewise, the Manichaeans did not believe in the scriptural authority of the Letters of Paul but rather accepted other apocryphal works like the *Acts*

²⁶ Alexander Lawrence Pleban. *The Problem of Evil and Divine Providence in the anti-Manichean writings of St. Augustine*. Baltimore, Maryland: St. Mary’s University, 1957, 13.

²⁷ Pleban p. 36.

²⁸ Pleban p. 41.

of Thomas. It is also this selectivity along with the duality of good and evil, which drove Augustine back to the Catholic Church.²⁹

Along the Silk Road:

Dr. Samuel Lieu, a professor at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, traced the spread of Manichaeism in China. Beginning with Mani's permission granted to Mar Ammo to preach east of the Oxus River, the religion passed into Sogdiana (Southern Uzbekistan and Western Tajikistan), whose merchants served to exchange Chinese silk for horses from the Pamirs (mostly Tajikistan on borders of Xinjiang, China; Kashmir, India; and Afghanistan).³⁰ In the third century, however, North China was invaded by the Hsing-nu and then by the Tobas. Added to this was the invasion of Sogdiana by another barbarian army and the ruling of the Hephthalites in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. Yet, trade did not cease during this tumultuous period, as has been recently discovered. In Inner Mongolia (China), a body of a trader was found with his cargo of Sassanian and Byzantine items, along with a coin of Leo I, dating his journey to around 457-474 A.D.³¹ Although trade along this route probably slowed down due to barbarian attacks, trade was still active in the Tarim Basin (northwest China), which was "a zone of cultural transition for China, as Mesopotamia was for the Roman Empire."³² The Tarim Basin was also known as a Buddhist cultural center, where the Chinese would make pilgrimages to India to collect Buddhist scripture. Because of this, Buddhism became established in

²⁹ Roland Teske. "Augustine, The Manichees and the Bible." *Augustine and the Bible*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1999, pp. 211-213.

³⁰ Samuel Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Late Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 2nd ed., p. 220-221.

³¹ Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Late Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 1st ed, p. 181. Chinese discovered this probably in late 1970s or early 1980s.

³² Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Late Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 2nd ed., p. 223.

Samarkand, the capital of Sogdiana.³³ Here is where Manichaeism acquired many of its Buddhist-like qualities. Scholars have found frequent use of Buddhist terminology in Manichaean writings written in Parthian. Thus, it is obvious that the Manicheans used Buddha as a teaching aid, which allowed Manichaeism to pass back through Bactria along the Silk Route, where it earned the name heresy in Persia.³⁴

And Into China:

The Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.)

Following the resumption of trade and the defeat of the Hephthalites which brought the lands on both sides of the Pamirs under Sogdian rule, trade was established between China, who was then under the leadership of the Tang Dynasty, and the Byzantine Empire. This is evidenced by the discovery of coins bearing a likeness to Justin II in China. Additionally, there is a tombstone at Xian bearing both Chinese and Middle Persian, evidence of the Chinese attempts to aid the Sassanians against the encroaching Arabs. Yet, the Arabs did arrive and they continued trade with the Chinese. They sent envoys and horses to the Chinese through Sogdiana, which became a center for Manicheans. This is seen by the later adoption of the Sogdian language with that of Middle Persian and Parthian in Manichean literature.³⁵

Cited in the *Fu duo dan*, in 694 A.D., the first Manichean arrived at the Chinese court. With him came "The Book of the Two Principles." This is the earliest year to

³³ Samarkand was known as Maracanda in 4th century B.C. and captured by Alexander the Great in 329 B.C. It was then made an important city along the Silk Route by the Arabs and Turks. Later it was made the capital of Timur in 1370.

³⁴ Lieu, 2nd ed., p. 225.

³⁵ Lieu, 2nd ed., p. 229.

which scholars attribute Manichaeism's entrance into China.³⁶ Later, the Manicheans were given royal patronage by Empress Wu, who looked to Buddhism and other foreign religions to support her claim to the throne. When her reign ended, an imperial edict was issued in 732 on the subject of Manichaeism.

The doctrine of *Mo-mo-ni* is basically a perverse belief and fraudulently presumes to be a school of Buddhism and will therefore mislead the masses. It deserves to be strictly prohibited. However since it is the indigenous religion of the Western Barbarians and other foreigners, its followers will not be punished if they practice it among themselves.³⁷

Despite this condemnation, it was not until 843 A.D. that the Tang Dynasty ordered the suppression of Manichaeism. From the time of the edict until 843 A.D., the Tang government had to settle a rebellion led by a half-Sogdian military commander who took over the capital city at Lo-yang in 762. With the help of the Uighurs, a Turkish tribe inhabiting part of northwestern China, General Khaghan Mo-yu successfully stifled the rebellion and was greeted by Sogdian Manicheans upon his entrance into Lo-yang. Here, he converted to Manichaeism. Because of this, the Tang government allowed the building of Manichaean temples in both their capital cities, as well as in the Yangtze Basin in Ch'ing, Yang, Hung, and Yüeh.³⁸ This is the only time that Manichaeism had such a status amongst the Chinese.

Although the Chinese were indebted to the Uighurs, they despised them. A number of times the Uighur khaghan, or ruler, demanded from the Chinese emperor one of his daughters in marriage. One incident records how the Tang emperor invited eight

³⁶ Peter Bryder. *The Chinese Transformation of Manichaeism: A Study of Chinese Manichaean Terminology*. Loberod: Bokforlaget Plus Ultra, 1985, p. 1.

³⁷ Samuel Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Late Roman Empire and Medieval China*, p. 231.

³⁸ Lieu, p. 234-235.

Manicheans to his court in order to tactfully reject the demand of the Uighur khaghan. Angered by the refusal, a procession of five hundred seventy-three people including Manichaeans, princesses, ministers, and governors-general, marched to the Chinese court to obtain the princess.³⁹ In 840 A.D., the Uighur Court was defeated by another Turkish tribe, the Kirghiz. Part of the Uighurs settled in the Southwest at Chotcho while the other settled in Chinese territory, now Inner Mongolia. Over a hundred thousand Uighurs settled here and made demands to the Chinese government for a walled fort. In 843 A.D., the camp was ransacked by a powerful Chinese commander Li Deyu. This is the point when the Chinese took control over the Manichaeans. It is recorded that seventy Manichaean nuns were killed in the capital. The Chinese burned Manichaean scripture and ordered all clerics to resume wearing traditional Chinese clothing.⁴⁰

Chinese Manichaean Texts

At the same time, Buddhism came under heavy attack, as the imperial government moved toward the more traditional Chinese outlooks of Confucianism and Taoism. Thus, many of the shrines, both Buddhist and foreign (including Manichaean, Zoroastrian, and Nestorian) were closed. However, the Uighur Court, which had been established near Turfan, thrived. In 1902, a German expedition found Manichean scriptures in Chotcho, as well as in one of the caves in Dunhuang. This expedition, led by Grünwedel, the Director of the Indian Department of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, unearthed a fresco containing white robed priests. Later locals brought to them

³⁹ Peter Bryder. *The Chinese Transformation of Manichaeism: A Study of Chinese Manichaean Terminology*. Loberod: Bokforlaget Plus Ultra, 1985, p. 7.

⁴⁰ Bryder p. 9.

fragments of manuscripts, which were subsequently determined to be Sogdian by F.W. K. Müller.⁴¹

From the Cave of the Thousand Buddhas near Dunhuang, English archaeologist A. Stein convinced a Taoist monk guarding old manuscripts to allow him to take two scrolls. This was the first Chinese manuscript obtained. Paul Pelliot later visited the cave and obtained another section of Stein's manuscripts. Upon hearing of the manuscripts, the Beijing government seized the remaining ones and placed them in the National Library of Beijing.⁴² Known as the *Canjing*, the manuscript bears similarities in style to the Coptic *Kephalaia* and to The Book of the Giants which is preserved at least six other languages. The other two scrolls are found in the British Library. One called *Xia bu zan* contains Manichaean hymns, some of which have Iranian equivalents in Parthian, Sogdian, and Middle Persian.⁴³ The other, which was brought by Pelliot, is called *Moni guangfo jiaofa yilue* (The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light). There are Iranian originals and Chinese translations of them including information about the grades of believers. The scroll is incomplete.⁴⁴

The Song Dynasties (960-1279 A.D.)

A period of turmoil emerged during the Song Dynasties, in which there were more important matters than the suppression of a foreign religion. During this period, a rebellion initiated by Fang-la broke out in response to a government sanction to find rare rocks and plant species and move them to a new area close Kai-feng, the capital of the

⁴¹ Samuel Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China*, p. 2-4.

⁴² Peter Bryder. *The Chinese Transformation of Manichaeism: A Study of Chinese Manichaean Terminology*. Loberod: Bokforlaget Plus Ultra, 1985, p. 36.

⁴³ Bryder p. 41.

⁴⁴ Bryder p. 45.

Song Dynasty, where the emperor was going to establish a monument to Taoism. Although this revolt was a response to corrupt officials who ravaged the country to gratify the emperor's desire for rare species, the government officials who captured Fang-la cited sorcery as his means of bewitching the crowd to join his revolt.⁴⁵ This brought close government scrutiny of all other foreign religions such as Manichaeism. At this time, even before the Fang-la rebellion, the more established religions of Buddhism and Taoism were monitored in Confucian China. The government required certificates of ordination from monks and nuns along with licenses for temples and monasteries. Thus, the more unorthodox religions were forced to meet secretly. These garnered more suspicion for the potential of subversive acts.⁴⁶ Included in these suspicious sects were Maritreya, a society which predicted the coming of a future Buddha, and the White Cloud Society, which was a sect of Chan Buddhism. Followers of Manichaeism at this time were referred to as "vegetarian demon worshippers." The influence of this religion deeply penetrated Fuchien province. Concern for the spread of this religion is evidenced by imperial edicts demanding the destruction of these *cai tang* (vegetarian halls).⁴⁷ One Confucian official remarked on the practices of these worshippers which included abstaining from alcohol, meat, holding funeral ceremonies where the dead are naked, and referring to their leader as *mo wang* or devil king.⁴⁸

The capital later moved south closer to Fuchien province when the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279 A.D.) became established. During this period, the White Lotus

⁴⁵ Samuel Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 1st ed., p. 230.

⁴⁶ Lieu, 1st ed., p. 234.

⁴⁷ Lieu, 1st ed., p. 235.

⁴⁸ Lieu, 1st ed., p. 237.

Society emerged, a Buddhist sect, which stressed vegetarianism, repentance, suppression of desires, and the taking of life. Thus, officials continued their effort to rid the country of sects which they believed were the sources of social unrest.⁴⁹ Penalties for the practice of Manichaeism included strangulation and exile. One letter written by Lu Yu, who was an administrator for Fuchien Province, commented on what he called the guile of the “Religion of Light” sect to use the names of Taoists on their own works in order for them to be printed.⁵⁰

Peace came for the Manichaeans under the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 A.D.), the brief period of Mongol occupation in China. Kublai Khan had dictated that China should have three religions: Buddhism, Nestorianism, and Islam. The Mongols had also stated that secret gatherings of those clothed in white were prohibited, although there is little evidence showing that this law was enforced.⁵¹ Incidentally, it was under this dynasty that Marco Polo came to China and found a religious culture not unlike Christianity.

Manichaeism was able to continue to grow in Southern China, where it actually found a safe-haven in the prefecture of Quanzhou in Fuchien province.⁵² It is said that a preacher fled from the capital around 995-997 A.D. and attained his own following. Quanzhou was used as an active sea-faring port, used by Arab seafarers in the time of “Sinbad the Sailor”.⁵³ Marco Polo himself visited this port in 1292; however, he probably mistook the Manichean priests that he saw for Christians.⁵⁴ At this time, there were also

⁴⁹ Lieu, 1st ed., p. 245.

⁵⁰ Lieu, 1st ed., p. 247.

⁵¹ Lieu, 1st ed., p. 256.

⁵² My trip to the Manichaean shrine in Fuchien Province, China is located in the appendix.

⁵³ Samuel Lieu, *Manicheism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 2nd ed. p. 264.

⁵⁴ It is said that Marco Polo and his uncle came upon this sect dressed in white robes and urged them to petition Kubla Khan to allow them to continue their practice under the name of Christians. Lieu, p. 301-302.

Jews and Arabs.⁵⁵ However, Manichaeism probably did not arrive by sea. Dr. Lieu sites particular terminology found in Fuchien province which dates back to Manichaeism of the Tang Dynasty, indicating that this religion traveled along the Silk Road.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Manichaeism began to subside following the end of the Yuan Dynasty. When the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.) took over, the Manicheans suffered persecution because their name *Ming-Jiao* was too much like *Ming* Dynasty. However, to change their foreign origins, Manichaeans purposely made this change from *Moni jiao* or the Religion of Mani.⁵⁷ No one knows how the Manicheans became extinct, but they soon faded from memory in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912 A.D.) when scholars could no longer distinguish them from the Christian Nestorians.⁵⁸

Hence, it is indeed a wonder that such a relatively obscure religion should have come so far and survived a little over one thousand years. The fact that Manichaeism possessed so many similarities to other religions allowed it to grow in areas where other religions would have surely died out. Because of its Iranian qualities, Mani survived the Sassanian rule of Shaphur. Because of its Buddhist qualities, Manichaeism entered into China. Finally, because of its Christian qualities, Manichaeism sustained the royal patronage of the Mongols up till the ascension of the Ming Dynasty due to Mongol religious tolerance. Even today, there are some scholarly reports that Manichaeism is still

⁵⁵ A mosque still exists in Quanzhou.

⁵⁶ Samuel Lieu, *Manicheism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 1st ed., p. 235

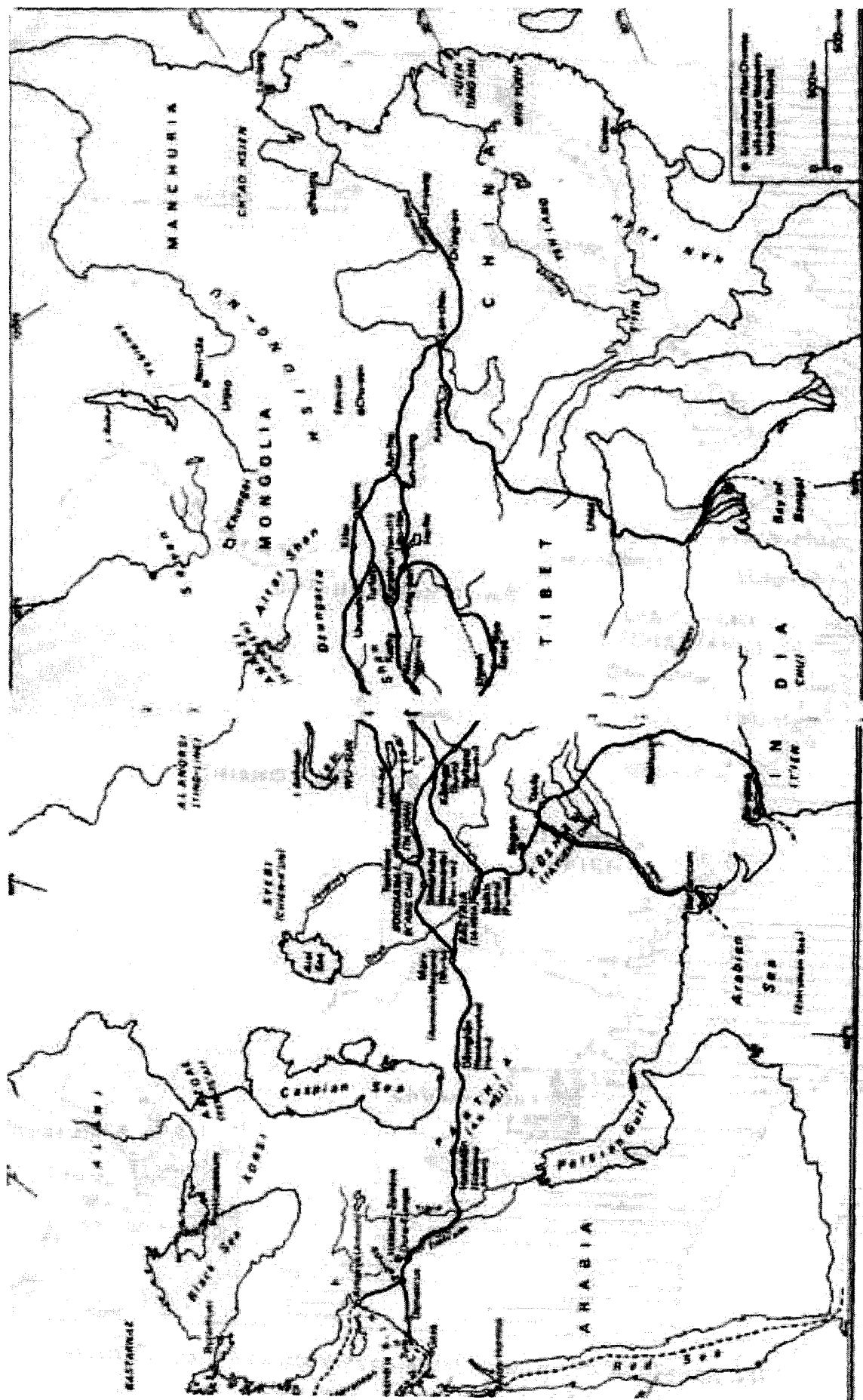
⁵⁷ Peter Bryder. *The Chinese Transformation of Manichaeism: A Study of Chinese Manichaean Terminology*. Loberod: Bokforlaget Plus Ultra, 1985, p. 14.

⁵⁸ Lieu, p. 308.

thriving in Quanzhou. In an e-mail posted to a Gnostic Society, Peter Bryder of Lund University in Sweden reports that he has inside information about the continued existence of the “Religion of Light” as a secret society and even more information about the existence of some Manichean temples in Taiwan.⁵⁹ As Mani had hoped for, his religion did reach far and wide.

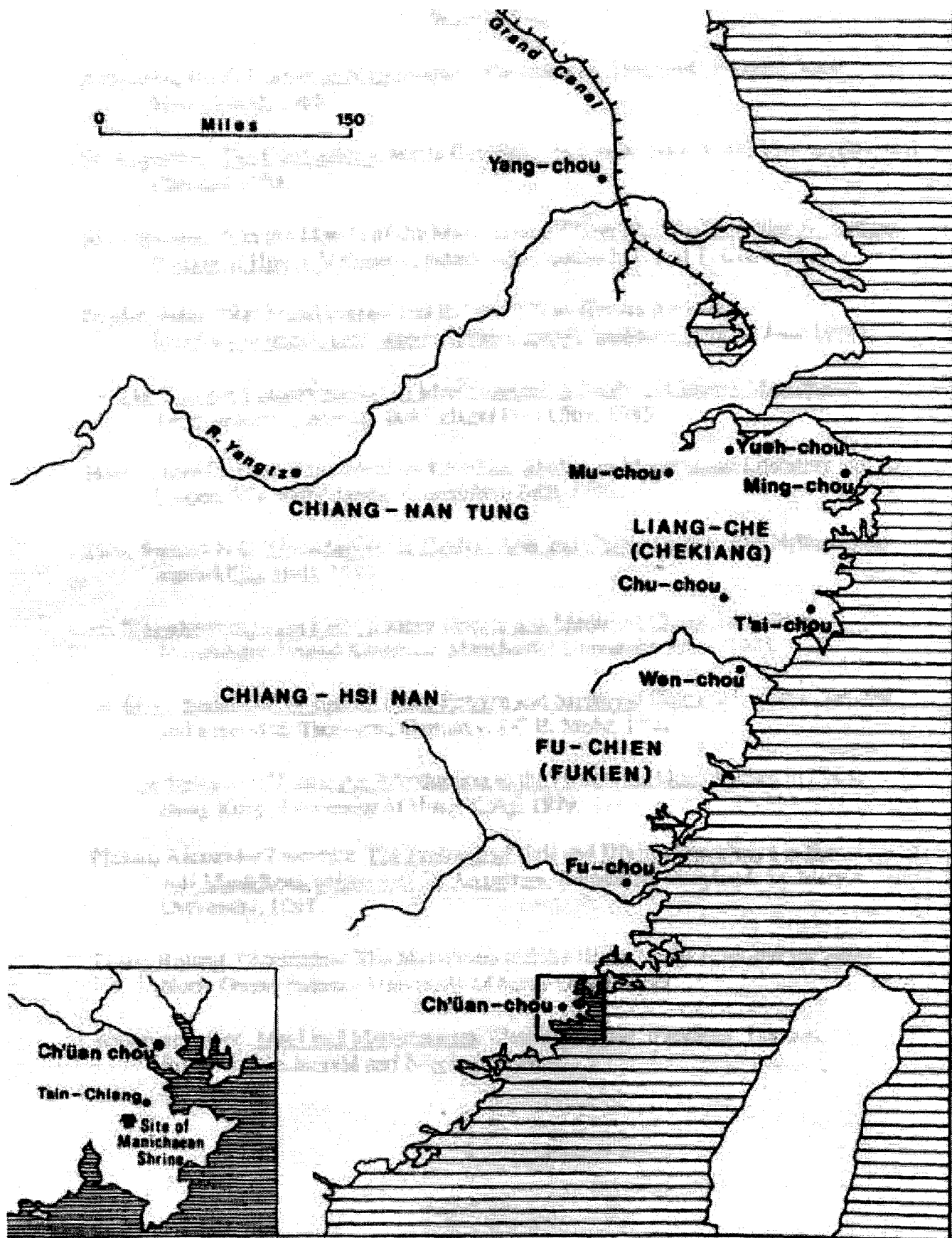
⁵⁹ <http://www.gnosis.org/~gnosis/chinese.gnosis.academic.html>

APPENDIX



The Silk Road from China to the Roman Orient (from the Cambridge History of Iran)

Shumail Liu, Mao's Revolution in the Late Roman Empire and Medieval China, 1st ed.



South China, showing place names mentioned in chapter VII

In Samuel Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*

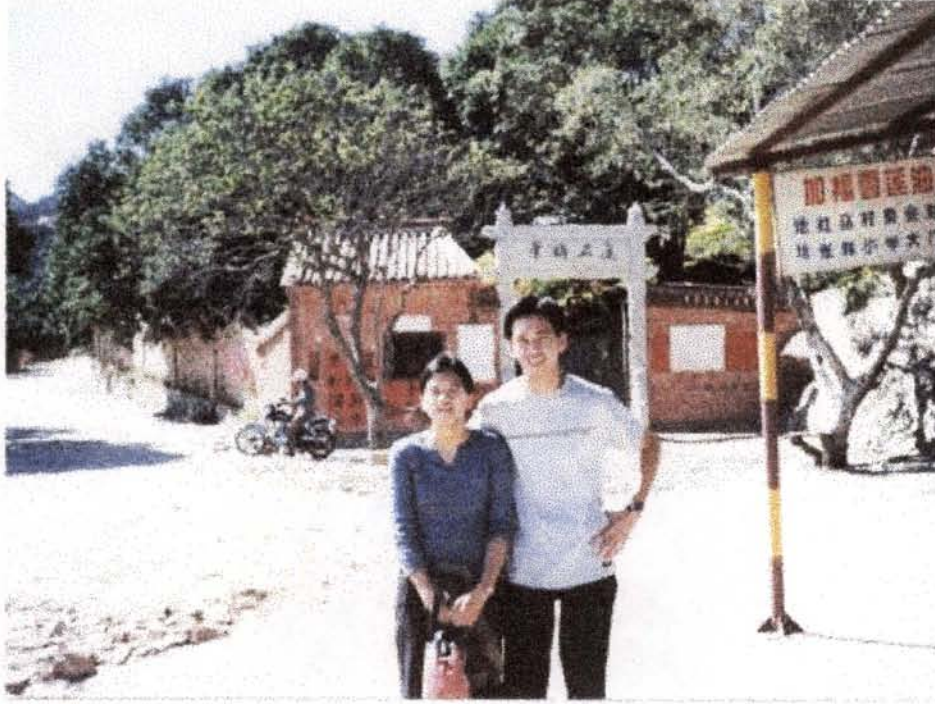
A Manichean Shrine in Fuchien Province:

On my trip to Fuchien province, I located the shrine which Dr. Lieu spoke of on Hua-piao Hill, first discovered by Wu Wen-liang in 1950. The location of the shrine is found in chapter seven of the *Min shu*, a rare book originally written by an active author from that region in the sixteenth or seventeenth century and later translated by Professor Chen Yuan.⁶⁰ I traveled with three friends, one (Chris) of whom was a local from Fuchien province who allowed us to stay with his grandparents in Xiamen. My other friends were Chinese Americans (Kara and Derek), one (Kara) of whom was born in Guandong province and thus could speak English, Guandonghua (Cantonese), and Putonghua (Mandarin). Day One consisted of an eight hour bus ride from Shenzhen, the entry point into the Chinese mainland from Hong Kong, to Xiamen. We arrived in Xiamen around five in the morning, at which time we took a taxi to Chris's house. After having breakfast, at the insistence of his grandmother, we took a small bus to Quanzhou. In my communication with Dr. Lieu by e-mail, he had indicated that this was the city to which I was to head. However, after arriving there, I had no clue as to where to begin looking for the Manichean shrine, but the small map which I had photocopied from Dr. Lieu's book. In an e-mail from Dr. Lieu, he spoke of it being on the main road to Zhinjiang, with a sign calling it a Zaoan or grass built, "rustic shrine." There was some confusion over the pinyin, which my geographer friend Kara figured out when we had then located a map.⁶¹ Thereafter, we took a small bus to Chow-An and then motorcycles up to Hua-piao Hill. We took two motorcycles which carried the driver and two of us. These are some pictures of the site.

⁶⁰ Peter Bryder. *The Chinese Transformation of Manichaeism: A Study of Chinese Manichaeism Terminology*. Loberod: Bokforlaget Plus Ultra, 1985, p. 12.



⁶¹ Pinyin is the term used for Romanization of Chinese. It changes depending on the dialect.

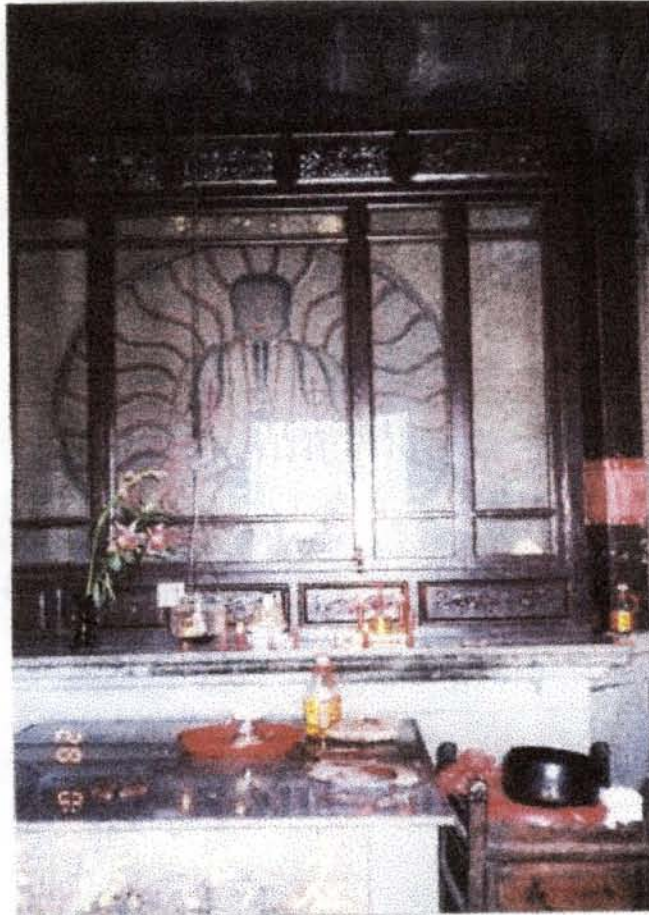


Above a shrine to the bodhisattva “Gun-yam”, rests the statue of Mani. According to Dr. Lieu, this is a 13th century replacement of an earlier one. The statue greatly differs from Buddha in that its hair is long and draped over his shoulders, he is bearded, and his hands rests on his abdomen, as opposed to the Buddhist ritualistic gesture. Additionally, his eyes stare straight out rather than down in reverence, and his robe bears a double knot, similar to that found on a wall painting in Chotcho.⁶² Below are some pictures of this shrine.

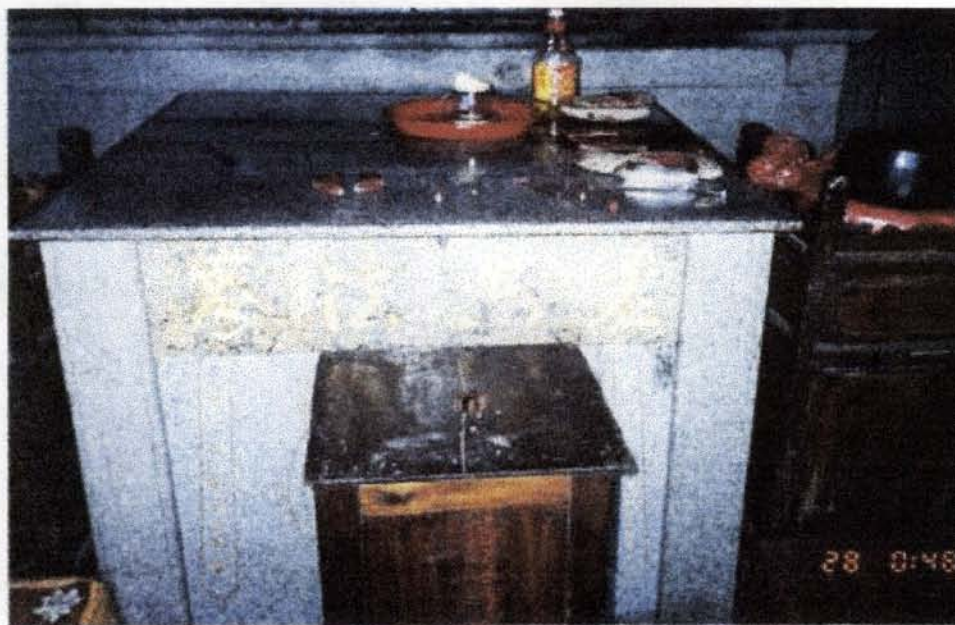
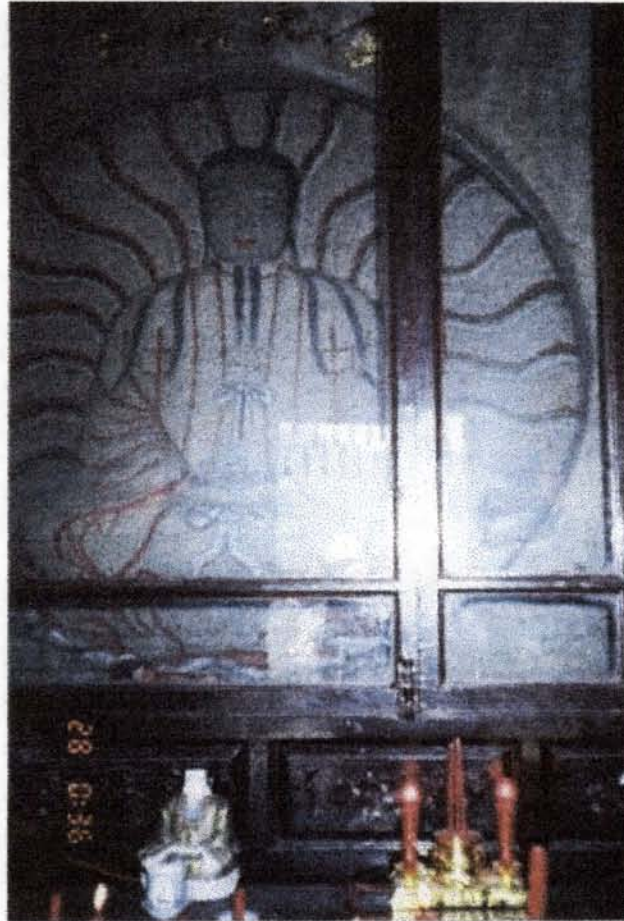
At first glance the image resembles the standard portraits of the Buddha as the figure sits cross-legged on a lotus dressed in a *kasaya* and is backed by a halo. On closer examination, however, a number of un-Buddhist features are manifest. The Buddha is usually depicted as having downcast eyes and curly hair and as being clean shaven. The statue of Mani however stares straight at the spectator. His hair is straight and drapes over his shoulders and he is also bearded. He is fleshy-jowled while the facial features of the Buddha are usually more shallow. His eyebrows are arched while those of Buddha are usually straight. Mani’s hands rest on his abdomen with both palms facing upwards while those of the Buddha are

⁶² Samuel Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China*, p. 57.

usually held up in a symbolic or ritual gesture (*mudra*). The head, the body and the hands of the statue of Mani are skillfully carved from stones of different hues to give an overall impression of luminosity.⁶³



⁶³ Lieu, p. 212.



Lying next to the temple was an engraving which was damaged during the Cultural Revolution. With the help of pictures, it was later restored at a different location. On this engraving is "Please remember Purity, Light, Great Power, Wisdom, the Peerless Truth, Mani, The Buddha of Light".⁶⁴ Purity, Light, Power, and Wisdom are the four attributes of the Father of Light.



⁶⁴ Lieu, 1st ed., p. 213.

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