

Where Professor El Amine quotes from the key source texts, she does not give due consideration to different commentarial traditions, not even the particular commentary followed by the translator for the passage in question. The author seems to be unaware of the problems caused by this reliance on translations, particularly the fact that her conclusions are preordained by the choice of commentary the translator has used—the plethora of alternative interpretations having already been screened out. Although the actual quotations given in *Classical Confucian Political Thought* are relatively unproblematic, deriving as they do from translations produced by highly respected scholars with an excellent knowledge of the texts, on the occasions that Professor El Amine ventures away from them, her work is marred by anachronistic translations of key Chinese terms. For example, the author translates *di* 帝 as “Emperor” when speaking of the sage-kings of high antiquity; although many scholars dislike the word “Thearch” as a translation for this term, in this case it would actually be an improvement. Given the strong tendency of early Chinese philosophers, including those categorised as Confucian, to illustrate their theories with historical anecdotes, it is particularly crucial that the terms indicating the respective ranking of the individuals concerned should be properly translated, and if necessary explained with footnotes.

In terms of discussion on secondary scholarship, El Amine does not appear to acknowledge that these texts have been intensively studied in China for at least two thousand years, in many cases with particular reference to political thought. Only one Neo-Confucian scholar is mentioned in passing, and that is Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). Furthermore, Professor El Amine’s virtually exclusive reliance on English language material means that not a single scholar from Mainland China has their work referenced, with the exception of those who write in English. In this day and age, it is deeply worrying that a reputable academic press still feels that it is appropriate to publish books about East Asia by authors working through translations and secondary sources. milburn@snu.ac.kr

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BUILDING A SACRED MOUNTAIN – THE BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE OF CHINA’S MOUNT WUTAI. By WEI-CHENG LIN. pp. 344. Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 2014.
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Mount Wutai in Shanxi Province has been a significant site of Chinese Buddhism throughout its two millennia of religious history. The mountain landscape, legends, the apparitions of the residing bodhisattva, monastic community and architecture are subjects of several anthological hagiographies and gazetteers of the mountain, the earliest dated to 680. The conception of Mount Wutai as the abode of Mañjuśrī the bodhisattva of wisdom, was formed in the sixth century. Interest in the sacred mountain also extended to the art and architecture associated with it. The images of Mañjuśrī, particularly the idea of a true image of the bodhisattva and the depiction of the mountain in prints, paintings and wall paintings have been well studied. The surroundings of Wutai include two wooden buildings with the main structure and sculpture dating from the late eighth and mid-ninth centuries. They are the earliest wooden constructions extant in China. The sacred mountain is thus ideal for the study of an important aspect of Chinese Buddhism.

How can the rise of Mount Wutai as a sacred realm be understood and conceptualised? *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China’s Mount Wutai* offers an in-depth attempt in examining the sacred phenomenon of the mountain through its architecture and representation of

architecture within the religious context. The primary objective of this well-articulated book is to map the development of mountain site through the construction of the sacred narrative in monastic architecture on the mountain. As the first Buddhist site to be called a sacred mountain, Mount Wutai is an appropriate site for the study of the process of such construction and the author, Wei-Cheng Lin, has been thorough in the use of source material and innovative in constructing the narrative with a focus on the architecture of the mountain.

Building a Sacred Mountain starts with a background sketch of second to fifth-century north China, concentrating on the architecture and the construction of what the author called the 'sacred presence' of the architecture found in excavated sites and cave-temples that uncover the experiencing of sacred ambience through the grand imperial cave temples of Yungang and Longmen, and imperial monasteries such as Yongning Monastery in the capital city of Luoyang. Following on is another sketch of the use of mountains in China as sacred imagery. The author is keen to suggest that with its 'numinous traces' and 'divine marvels', Mount Wutai was becoming the ideal site for the potential encounter with divinity. The author's first proposition is that "sutra carvings and/or iconic images should be reconsidered as different undertakings that collaboratively reinvented a sacred geography mapped over the Northern Qi's territory". (p. 80) It is, however, hard to substantiate that there was a conscious effort to design a holistic schema to cover all these various sites, as the author merely gathers different religious artefacts with no evidence of their connection.

To allow for a better understanding of how architecture and landscape elements at Mount Wutai can be used for symbolic representation of sacred realms the book discussed four periods of the sacred landscape and architecture, both virtual and actual, and the representation of the sacred mountain in images, prints and wall murals in chronological sequence. The first discussion is on the vision of the mountain and the first major monastery Huayan Monastery as the centre of the sacred realm, taking place between late sixth to mid-seventh century. The second is on the changing nature of Mount Wutai through the patronage of Empress Wu Zetian in late seventh to early eighth century. The third surrounds the esoteric master Amoghavajra in redefining the sacred realm in mid-eighth century as a ritual field. The last discussion is about the images of the sacred presence of Mañjuśrī bodhisattva culminating in the illustration of Mount Wutai in cave 61 of Mogao caves at Dunhuang between the ninth to tenth centuries.

The author begins the first discussion with stating that "Vision was critical in Mount Wutai's conversion into a Buddhist sacred site". (p. 89) The chapter outlines the visions related to "turning Mount Wutai into a sacred abode of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī not only subverts the Buddhist notion of the possibility of salvation in any place in the universe, but also begs the questions of how the utopian vision of Buddhism could be 'emplaced', and how it could be replaced by such a different vision and conception as we see in Mount Wutai". (p. 90) The author goes on to discuss the central monastery of Mount Wutai, Dafu Lingjiu Monastery, later renamed as Huayan Monastery, by tracing its history and its growth. Since the monastery had been rebuilt many times and there are no traces or textual evidence of the form of the monastery during the late seventh century, the author resorts to discussing the literary descriptions of how a multiple-cloistered monastery might have looked like at the time. However, since Dafu Lingjiu Monastery was located in a remote mountainous region, its architecture might not be comparable to those described in literature cited. That being the case, when the author turns his attention to the central axis of the central valley of Mount Wutai stringing together a pagoda built in mid-eighth century, the Huayan Monastery, and the Cloister of the True Presence further up the hill, he substantiates his argument that the architecture was "meant to be a place of practice and enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*) in the sacred presence of the divine". (p. 110)

The second discussion focused on the worship of the Mañjuśrī bodhisattva in late seventh to early eighth century. The first part of the thesis centres on Empress Wu Zetian and her many decrees and patronage in making the sacred mountain the centre of pilgrimage for the cult of the bodhisattva. Here, the author constructs the arguments based on thin evidence of the imperial sanctioned sacred

space for political motive, it is thus difficult to conclude that the patronage of Empress Wu was to bring Mount Wutai within reach of metropolitan capitals of the Tang dynasty. Subsequent discussion about sacredness and topography is well developed using examples of monastery in vision, or the “virtual monastery *huasi*” as the author puts it. The monasteries include Fazhao, Fahua, Jin’ge, and Zhulin, referred to by the author as “monastery in vision” (p. 124), said to be effective in provoking thoughts and mediating between the abstract ideology and material buildings. (p. 124) However, the use of the term ‘virtual monastery’ seems to be short-changing the intense purpose of the narration of divine encounter to show the sacred nature of the site as true experience. It might be more appropriate to use monastery in vision.

The third discussion developed in Chapter 5 is on esoteric practices during the eighth century. In the petition of Amoghavajra in the building of the Golden Pavilion at Jin’ge Monastery, the author attempts to map out the five monasteries with Jin’ge Monastery located in the centre, surrounded by Foguang, Dali Fahua, Qingliang, and Yuhua monasteries. This is both to accentuate the central position of Jin’ge monastery within the esoteric practices of the time at Mount Wutai and also to relate the number five within the teaching of Amoghavajra, centering on the Mañjuśrī of five wisdoms. The author rightly claims that “It is in this regard that Jin’ge Monastery can be considered an example of ‘iconographic architecture’ that transformed the entire sacred mountain into its ritual field”. (pp. 133–134) The author further discusses the nature of this iconographic architecture of the Golden Tower (pp. 144–152) by concluding that “Chinese religious architecture may not be defined by a particular iconography (e.g. symbolic details), building typology, or interior type as much as by how its religious programme (i.e. iconography) is integrated with the architecture that determines the ways in which its structure and space should be understood and experienced”. (p. 150) This statement is demonstrated aptly by drawing on textual description of Jin’ge Tower and other extant examples through the discussion of both the *ge*, or tower, the images and iconographic programmes embodied within the building, and the spatial conception of ritual movement through the building.

The last discussion is entitled ‘Narrative Visualization and Transposition of Mount Wutai’. Mount Wutai had already been established as a major cult and pilgrimage centre. The mountain had attracted monks and pilgrims from all parts of China and neighbouring Korea and Japan. One such monk was master Ennin (794–864) who left a detailed account of his visit to the mountain in 840. According to the author, Ennin’s journey and his diary serve as an example of spatial sacrality. Travelling on foot in pilgrimage adds the dimensions of walking, ascending and the transformation of the topography. (p. 161) It is debatable whether Ennin’s diary has adequately revealed his intention in seeking a visionary experience, or simply just performing a pilgrimage paying homage to one and every monastery on the sacred mountain.

The discussion also looks at the various representations of Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai as ‘a transcendental reality’. (p. 163) The main narrative that the author would develop is Cave 61 of the Mogao caves in Dunhuang, particularly the spatial concept of the interior of the cave and the illustration of Mount Wutai. (pp. 178–194) In providing a reading of the iconography of Cave 61, dated to between 947–951, the author divides the cave into three sections, the front zone for lay devotees, the middle for the worship of the image of Mañjuśrī on his lion which once stood on the large dais, and the last zone on the illustration of Mount Wutai located on the back wall erected as a backdrop to the Mañjuśrī image. This reading is convincingly based on the experience of devotees entering and circumambulating the cave in ritual, relating to the images and the painted illustrations in the cave. It also provides the background to understanding the large illustration of Mount Wutai painted on the west wall of the cave. The author divides the illustration into three horizontal registers and three vertical sections. The three registers show the pilgrims and earthly architecture in the lower register, the monasteries of Mount Wutai in the middle layer, and celestial beings in the top layer. (Figure 6.12) The three vertical sections correspond to the geographical layout between Zhenzhou

and Taiyuan with the middle section depicting the central valley of Mount Wutai. (p. 184, Plate 9) In addition, architecture in the middle section is depicted with a herringbone parallel perspective leading off from the axis centring on the middle Peak and monastic complexes in the central valley. This reading has strengthened the author's argument that "the sacred mountain thus created in the cave is an embodied discourse of the monastery at Mount Wutai", in that "it seems to have rebuilt in its religious programme the functions and qualities that had over time shaped and defined the monastery as the most critical means of building Mount Wutai into a sacred mountain". (pp. 193–194)

The argument developed by the author from a terrestrial sacred mountain centring on pilgrimage by lay people and notable monks such as Ennin to one that would need to be visualised and experienced as a virtual sacred realm in Dunhuang, with the essential elements of the sacred experience neatly fitted into a pictorial centralised composition that followed regional practices is very convincing. It highlights the nature of the illustration as a transported realm and a transformed experience. This is a powerful argument for mapping the physical experiencing of the cave with its mural and image with the virtual sacred realm at Mount Wutai. The only drawback is the difficulty in explaining why the most important central section of the illustration of Mount Wutai is hidden behind the tall screen from the main cave space, with only a narrow passage between the illustration wall and the back of the screen rendering the appreciation of the central section of the illustration hard to see. (p. 185)

The final section of the book is devoted to a discussion of Foguang Monastery, mentioned in textual sources as early as in the sixth century, only to conclude that Foguang Monastery "was neither a single monastery couched at the hill of the mountain site nor an isolated destination in the pilgrimage narrative, but one that served as the 'mountain gate' (*shanmen*) leading the faithful into the 'Monastery of Mount Wutai'". (p. 201) It is hard to substantiate the reading of the monastery as the gate to the mountain. Rather, the view of the author expressed in the conclusion, putting the role of architecture in a neat nutshell, is most interesting: "Built at the sacred site to mark the holy traces of the bodhisattva, the monastery provided a sanctioned place for monastic routines and ritual performances, enacting and spatialising the sacred presence in its architecture and transforming the natural terrain on which the monastery stood into the sacred (monastic) topography". (p. 195) Here the author utilised Henri Lefebvre's notion of the nature of space but concluding that in the case of Mount Wutai, the perceived, conceived, and lived represent the three historical stages of the early period of the sacred mountain until the tenth century. (n. 1, 258). However, it is equally convincing if the author would interpret the early history of Mount Wutai as a history of perceived and conceived sacred space concomitantly. After all, in all period of Wutai's history, it had been constructed through visions, true image of the bodhisattva, imperial decree, architecture, esoteric practices, pilgrimages, and illustration of the bodhisattva and the sacred mountain, which the author had sufficiently charted in *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai*. hopp@eservices.cuhk.edu.hk

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This anthology of Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) *zaju* 雜劇, a form of musical theatre rendered in English variously as 'variety plays', 'variety shows', 'variety theatre', 'mixed plays/dramas', or (West and