Weituo: A Protective Deity in Chinese Buddhism and Buddhist Art

韋馱——中國佛教與佛教藝術中一位護法神

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis represents my own work, except where the acknowledgement is made, and it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.
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Abstract

Weituo 韋馱 is a protective deity in Chinese Buddhism. He is derived from the Indian war god Skanda with significant shift of the characteristics, iconography and functions. In the transformation of Skanda in the twelfth century, the vinaya master Daoxuan’s legendary encounter help to shape Weituo. As a result, Weituo was tightly connected with the saṅgha. He is very special to the saṅgha because his statue is usually the only one facing inside in a temple and he is the only Buddhist protector supposed to take care of monks’ daily life. Meanwhile, Daoxuan’s story determined the iconography of Weituo. After the formation of Weituo, the deity has been enjoying tremendous popularity in China. He was mentioned in popular novels and various records on Buddhist rituals. And he has been a very common figure in Buddhist art. In these records, he was supposed to play diversified roles according to different occasions. In this paper, through studying the formation of Weituo, I attempt to show how Weituo who comes from an Indian origin was absorbed by Chinese Buddhism. The worship and visual representations not only proved the popularity of Weituo, but also showed how the functions of Weituo were adapted to the needs of the saṅgha and the secular people.

This thesis aims to examine the legend, iconography, worship and visual representations of Weituo comprehensively in order to provide a fuller portrait of Weituo’s history in China.

Key Words: Weituo, Skanda, protective deity, Chinese Buddhist art.
Chapter One Introduction

Weituo is a protective deity in Chinese Buddhism. His function is “protecting the dharma.”¹ Weituo is very popular in China.² He normally was dressed as a Chinese general wearing armors and a helmet (Fig 1.1). His weapon is a vajra-mallet (jingang chu 金剛杵).³ He owns individual Bodhi-site 道場 in Tianmu Mountain 天目山 west from Hangzhou.⁴ In Chinese temples, as a protector, his statue is usually settled at the Heavenly Kings Hall.⁵

Weituo 韋馱 has been known by various names. The reason why he has so many names is that he comes from multiple origins. The merging of different origins of Weituo ended the twelfth century and after that, he has been regarded as General Wei (Wei jiangjun 韋將軍). General Wei was a deity first found in the writing of a vinaya master Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667 C.E.).⁶ Besides, Weituo had also been considered as the Indian war god Skanda.⁷ Skanda had been mentioned in the *Golden Light Sūtra* (Śrīvāraṇaprabhāsottama Sūtra; Jinguangming Jing 金光明經) (414-421 CE).⁸ Name such as the deity Weituo (Weituo tianshen 韋馴天神; Weituo tian 逹陀天) is a Chinese name of Skanda due to transliteration.⁹

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1 “擁護三洲之佛法。” T.45 874c23.
5 Fang Litian 方立天, Zhongguo fojiao wenhua 中國佛教文化 [Chinese Buddhist Culture] (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian xianggang youxian gongsi, 2008), 161.
6 “弟子是南天韋將軍下之使者。” T.45 874c22.
7 “光明鬼神品中有韋馴天神。梵語韋馴。此云智論。今此則以韋為姓，雖類華夏一經之裔。而其天神隱顯其號，烏可惻量。唐高宗乾封歲。京師淨業寺道宣律師。因覩韋天嘗問律相等事。” X88 430b07–b10
Names such as the deity Wei 韋天, Wei Kun 韋琨 had been recorded as the name of General Wei. There are a few names with the traits of both two origins such as the General Weituo (Wei jiangjun 韋駕將軍). As General Wei, Skanda and Weituo had been widely accepted as the same deity since the twelfth century, all the names mentioned above had been linked with Weituo.

The war god Skanda is the Indian origin of Weituo. As the child was cast off by Rishis, he came to be called by the name Skanda (cast off). This name is first found in the Chandogya Upanisad, one of the primary philosophical texts considered to be an early source from the Hindu religion, before the first century BCE. And the name Skandavarna appeared in a Brāhmī inscription of second century BCE. During the third to fifth century, Skanda appeared in a number of literature materials as a violent deity and there were detailed description on the birth and fostering stories of the deity. For example, the Mahābhārata which is a major Sanskrit epic of ancient India completed during the third to fifth century contains several plots linked with Skanda. The deity won the title of war god after humbling the pride of Devarāja Indra, lord of the deities. His greatest achievement which had been considered as the generalissimo of Skanda was killing the powerful Asuras Mahiśa and Tāraka during the god’s fighting against the Asuras, another kind of deities. It marked the success of the gods’ army. Skanda had been linked with many other names. For example, in the Mahābhārata, he had been linked with names such as Kārtikeya, Kumāra, and Mahāsena which used to be other deities. These names had been explained as different names of the
same deity. In India, Skanda is a well-known war god but his function is far more extensive than that. The deity’s fierce character sometimes links with people especially children, because Kumāra had been considered as a disease demon. In the Mahābhārata, Skanda was depicted as a figure with multiple limbs and heads (Fig 1.2). Usually, peacock has been considered as his vehicle. In visual representations of Skanda, the hand-held objects of the deity involve a cock, spear, stick, a shell and etc. According to his legend, these objects were given by deities when Skanda was born. His images had appeared on coins of ancient India, such as on coins made during a Kushan emperor Huvishka’s reign (ca. 103/104-137/38 C.E.) in the beginning of the second century (Fig 1.3). In the fifth century, his name had appeared in a number of Chinese Buddhist sūtras which indicates he may be introduced into China during this time. Weituo had been mentioned as the Chinese name for Skanda.

Weituo has been worshiped as a Buddhist protector in Chinese Buddhism. After Daoxuan’s legendary encounter defined Weituo’s characteristics in the twelfth century, the function of the deity as a protector of the dharma was settled down. Weituo has been worshiped both as a member of a group of protective deities and as an independent protector.
Weituo has been considered as a member of a certain group of protective deities coming from the *Golden Light Sūtra*. This group of protective deities was considered to have Indian origins and some of them are non-Buddhist deities. Skanda, one of Weituo's origins, has appeared in the *Golden Light Sūtra*. Weituo was added to the group by monk Mingzhi 明智 (?-1115 C.E.) in the second half of the eleventh century together with the goddess of the dawn Marīcī. As a member of these protective deities, Weituo has been invited by in a series of Buddhist rituals. These protective deities are supposed to be invited in some of the greatest Buddhist ceremonies such as the *Golden Light Purification Ritual* (Jinguangming chan 金光明懺) and the *Liberation Rite of Water and Land* (Shuilu fahui 水陸法會). The *Liberation Rite of Water and Land* have been prevalent since the Northern Song Dynasty 北宋 (960-1127 C.E.). It requires procedures such as food-bestowing, chanting of texts and mantras and preaching sermon to all sentient beings who attend the ceremony. These protective deities are supposed to save all sentient beings from *saṃsāra* which refers to a process of continuous pursuit or flow of life. As a member of these protective deities, the visual representation of Weituo has appeared in Buddhist paintings on the protective deities. In the *Liberation Rite of Water and Land*, the appearance of each deity in *shuilu* paintings means they have been invited to this ceremony. As a group, the images of the protective deities often appear in Upper Hall part (*shangtang hua* 上堂畫) together with Buddha and

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23 Weituo normally appear in the group of twenty or twenty four *zhutian* worshipping the Buddha. Occasionally, he had been placed in the group of twenty eight attendants led by the Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara, such as in the Hall of Great Mercy of Dahuisi 大慧寺. Please see Wang Minqing 王敏慶, “Mingdai beijing dahuisi caisu neitong kaobian” 明代北京大慧寺彩塑內容考辨[A study on painted sculptures of Ming Dynasty in Dahui Temple in Beijing], *Wenbo* 02(2010): 71.

24 "熙寧中。明智師遊學永嘉忠公之室。一日告歸。忠曰子歸必紹延慶法席。余嘗夢摩利韋天欲為位於道場。殆歸。果尸是剎。二天預位。從是懺法加召天下。像設亦取。則事見明智塔” X.20 521c12–c16; “若摩利支韋馱二天。是明智住南湖日加入之(事見本傳)” T.49 321a22–a24.

Bodhisattvas of *Shuilu* paintings, such as the case in Pilusi 毘盧寺 of Hebei province.\(^{26}\) For sculptures they are usually placed in or around the main hall of a temple. The *Golden Light Purification Ritual* started from the sixth century. In this case, the protective deities are supposed to protect he who recites, preaches and worships. The protective deities are considered to have Indian origins.\(^{27}\) Skanda has appeared in the *Golden Light Sūtra* with the name “deity Weituo” 違馱天神 in “Chapter of Ghosts and Deities” (*guishen pin* 鬼神品), the thirteenth chapter of this *sūtra*.\(^{28}\) It may provide a reason for Weituo to be accepted as a member of the protective deities.

Weituo began to become popular in the Song Dynasty 宋代 (960-1276 C.E.). It was manifested in many ways. Various types of visual representations have been established during this period. Portrait of Weituo appearing on Buddhist *sūtras*, as a major way of Weituo’s visual representation, had appeared in the Song Dynasty.\(^{29}\) Statue of Weituo had already existed during this time.\(^{30}\) Besides, in Buddhist practices, Weituo had been accepted as a member of the protective deities during this period of time. The liturgy of morning service in which Weituo receives regular worship by the *saṅgha* was primarily completed in the Song Dynasty.\(^{31}\) All of these indicated people paid attention to Weituo worship since the Song Dynasty.

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\(^{29}\) “一匣小七冊兩靣俱有經文第一冊第二冊經。後有韋䭾像。宋刻法華經” Please see Zhang Zhao 張照, *Midian zhulin* 秘殿珠林 [Forest of Pearls in the Secret Palace] (Wenyuange sikuquanshu dianzi ban 文淵閣四庫全書電子版 Electronic version of Wenyuange Sikuquanshu), 6.


\(^{31}\) Chen Pi-yen, “Morning and evening service: The practice of ritual, music, and doctrine in the Chinese Buddhist monastic community” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1999), 5.
Weituo had been worshiped by both the saṅgha and the secular people. He had been mentioned in various records on Buddhist rituals and was worshiped as a Buddhist protector by the saṅgha. Today, he is tightly connected with the saṅgha’s daily life and has been worshiped in Buddhist regular practices. In the secular society, Weituo’s functions were very flexible and had been adapted to people’s practical needs. He enjoyed popularity in both groups of people and promoted the communication between the saṅgha and the secular people.

The visual representation of Weituo as an independent protector had already existed as early as in the ninth century. There three types of visual representations of Weituo appearing as an independent protector. The visual representations of Weituo are very common in temples and on Buddhist sūtras. Apart from these two types, Weituo was paired up with Guanyin in Buddhist art in the late imperial time. At present time, Weituo’s sculptures are placed in the Heavenly Kings Hall in almost every temple. His images often appear on Buddhist pamphlets.

**Literature Review**

The previous study on the subject is very scanty. It is a common sense for researchers in the field of Buddhist studies that the deity Weituo comes from Daoxuan’s record, and has been linked with Skanda. There are few academic works on the formation of legend and iconography of Weituo. The visual representation and different types of worship of the deity had rarely been talked about. In the field of Buddhist studies, master Yinshun 印順 the first one among scholars doubted about the formation of Weituo. He had written an article about the different origins of Weituo in China. He believes that Weituo consists of characteristics of three deities. The name Weituo comes from Skanda. The iconography of Weituo comes from
Vajrapāṇi. General Wei in the writing of Daoxuan promotes the popularity of Weituo in China. His opinion had been widely accepted by scholars. In the field of folklore studies, researchers had tried to find Weituo’s origin in Chinese classics. There is another suggestion on the origins of Weituo. Folklore researcher Li Shengquan 李盛銓 believes Weituo is a local deity of an area in the Southwest of China, because a name **Tuowei** 駝圍, which sounds like Weituo in reverse, had appeared frequently in the record from the *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhaijing* 山海經), a Chinese classic text talking about early geography and myth. This text has existed before the fourth century B.C.E. Li thinks the name Weituo was generated in China and spread by merchants. When Buddhism was introduced to China, the name came back to China and become the name of a Buddhist protective deity. Few Buddhist researchers had paid attention to the article and Li’s opinion had little influence on scholar’s idea of Weituo in the field of Buddhist studies.

In the studies on related fields, there are a few academic works had mentioned Weituo. In the field of the protective deities studies, Prof. Bai Huawen 白化文 believes although the protective deities were claimed to be Buddhist protectors came from India, they had been totally localized in China. He points out that the process of the localization of Weituo did not end in the twelfth century. In late imperial time, Weituo had been borrowed by the Chinese novel *Creation of the Gods* (*Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義) in which Weihu 韋護 (Protector Wei) is a transformed Weituo. Prof. Liao Yang 廖暘 has drew researchers’ attention on the

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34 Bai Huawen 白化文, “Hanhua de zhutian” 漢化的諸天 [Sinicized Various Deities], in *Hanhua fojiao yu fosi* (漢化佛教與佛寺) (Beijing, Beijing chubanshe, 2009), 141-166. And his another article “Cong bijiaowenhuashi de jiaodu kan zhutian de bianhua” 從比較文化史的角度看“諸天”的變化 [A Study on Zhutian from An Aspect of Comparative Cultural Studies], [http://www.chinafolklore.org/web/index.php?Page=1&NewsID=8413 (accessed in]
number of deities in the protective deities and how the group of deities combined with other subjects such as the twelve Yuanjue 十二圓覺 (twelve Bodhisattvas of complete enlightenment) in visual representations.\(^{35}\) She has pointed out the geographical pattern of the two protective deities groups in the Ming Dynasty 明代 (1368-1644 C.E.). The visual representation on twenty protective deities usually appeared in Sichuan province, southwest of China while examples of twenty four protective deities were closely connected with the imperial family.\(^{36}\) For the study of Weituo, she had showed how Weituo was added to the group of protective deities in the Northern Song Dynasty. Her academic works benefit people’s understanding on the background of Weituo. Besides, scholar who studies Buddhist sculptures had revealed interesting facts about Weituo. For example, Chang Qing 常青 in his doctoral dissertation on Feilaifeng 飛來峰 (Hangzhou, Zhejiang province), had discussed Weituo’s connection with Guanyin, a possible pair in Chinese Buddhist art.\(^{37}\) In addition, foreign scholars have studied the cult of Skanda in India\(^{38}\) and Central Asia.\(^{39}\) Their works promote people’s comprehension on the origins of Weituo.

While shedding much light on the subjects mentioned above, the existing study on Weituo also raises questions that deserve further attention. At present, people’s idea about

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35 Liao Yang 廖暘, *Mingqing siyuan yuanjue zhutian tu* 明清寺院圓覺、諸天圖 [Paintings of Twelve Bodhisattvas of Complete Enlightenment and Various Deities in Temples during Ming and Qing Dynasties] (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009).


37 Chang Qing 常青, “Feilaifeng and the flowing of Chinese Buddhist sculpture from the Tenth to Fourteenth centuries” (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2005), 261-262, 274-278.


Weituo is largely depend on the studies on the protective deities. However, Weituo does own an independent position outside the protective deities no matter in Buddhist visual representations or practices. Besides, the cult of Weituo in China consists of many aspects including the legend, the iconography, the worship and visual representation of the deity and is broader than what scholars have currently focused on. There are a number of materials involved in each aspect. The values of the cult of Weituo an integrated whole should not be underestimated. And this is what this thesis is focusing on.

**Sources and Methodology**

The purpose of the present study is to show Weituo’s history in China by discussing the deity’s religion practice and visual representation. The thesis is largely based on primary materials including textual sources and visual representations. A wide range of Buddhist texts and Chinese literature relating to Weituo have been consulted. These records include memoirs, temple histories, gazetteers, traveling records and miracle stories. Textual sources played a central part in the interpretations. Visual representations including archeological investigation, catalogs, photo collection and museum collections act as strong arguments of my analysis. This research is a cross region study. In order to see Weituo’s development in a broader historical perspective, materials including Buddhist texts and literatures on Skanda in India and Weituo in China need to be taken into consideration. My interpretations depend on the use of iconography in a contextualized manner, which means the position and arrangement of the images in space are used to analyze their function and nature in religious practice.
Expected Contribution

This thesis focuses on the formation and development of Weituo worship in China. It has combined Buddhist texts with visual representation, literary materials and practices related to the deity. A series of coincident events in various aspects happened in the Song Dynasty indicated that the worship of Weituo was established and began to be popular during this time. The formation of Weituo was comparatively obvious in records about the legend of the deity. Chapter two shows the process of how the legendary encounter of Daoxuan became the most important miracle story of Weituo and determined the characteristics of the deity. The formation of Weituo in texts is a starting point of this thesis. Moreover, it discusses what the legend brought to Weituo worship. Chapter three is about the iconography of Weituo. It explains how Weituo’s iconography mirrors the legendary encounter of Daoxuan. And the following two chapters concentrate on the worship and visual representations of Weituo developed after the formation of Weituo. The author takes records on practice and visual representation of Weituo in the late imperial time into consideration aiming to increase people’s understanding on Weituo worship.

The thesis is a trans-regional study. The process of the formation of Weituo is how the Indian god Skanda was adapted to Chinese Buddhism and transformed to Weituo. Certain elements of Weituo’s iconography have been influenced by Buddhist art in Central Asia. The author paid attention to possible origins of Weituo’s formation and iconography in India and Central Asia.
Chapter Two The Formation of Weituo: From the Legendary Encounter of Daoxuan

There is a well-known miracle story about Weituo. The deity Weituo was said to respond to monk Daoxuan in the seventh century. It was believed that this story occurred in the last years of Daoxuan’s life and determined the characteristics of Weituo. This story has profound effects on Weituo’s iconography and functions.

Weituo was formed in the twelfth century. Originally, he is derived from the Indian war god Skanda. In the twelfth century, vinaya master Daoxuan’s legendary encounter was considered to be an important legend of Weituo. Therefore, General Wei, a figure initiated in Daoxuan's record, became another prototype of Weituo. As a result, Daoxuan’s records on General Wei helped to shape the characteristics of Weituo and the deity had been widely accepted as a protector of the dharma. Furthermore, the name Weituo replaced General Wei in Daoxuan’s story and he had been added to the protective deities in the name of Skanda. Weituo has been considered as General Wei and Skanda.

The records on the legendary encounter of Daoxuan written during the seventh to the twelfth century are very important to Weituo’s formation. These accounts help to shape the deity Weituo. They emphasize on different aspects of Daoxuan’s original records and indicated authors’ comprehension of the story. They display how certain part of Weituo’s characteristics and functions come from.
The name General Wei 韋將軍 is first found in Daoxuan’s writing in the seventh century. Daoxuan is a well-known vinaya master in the Tang Dynasty 唐代 (618-907 C.E.). According to Daoxuan’s original record such as the Record of the Miraculous Instructions Given [by the Deities] to Vinaya Master Daoxuan (Daoxuan lushi gantong lu 道宣律師感通錄) (664 C.E.) and the Discussion with the Deities about Vinayas (Luxiang gantong zhuan 律相感通傳) (667 C.E.), vinaya master Daoxuan’s marvelous encounter with several deities in the last years of Daoxuan’s life. In the text, Daoxuan had particularly introduced General Wei, one of the deities who had appeared during this adventure. This legend had largely influenced the characteristics, function and iconography of the new deity.

General Wei was an important figure in Daoxuan’s adventure. He was the only one who appeared in Daoxuan’s writing had two followers. He had been introduced twice in the article by his two followers. In their words, General Wei had been respected by other gods. Although in Daoxuan’s adventure, he was only one of the deities appearing during these days, certainly he was the most impressive one. He had been appreciated by other deities:

As a pure practitioner and sincere dharma protector, when he [General Wei] comes to the Four Heavenly Kings’ Palace, Four Heavenly Kings stand up to show their respect to him.

The Four Heavenly Kings are in charge of the four continents and are commanders of General Wei. Standing up was the Four Heavenly Kings’ way to pay homage to General Wei. Besides, he was the last deity that met Daoxuan in this adventure. Such sequence hints to the rank of General Wei is the highest among the deities that had appeared in the story.

40 Daoxuan 道宣, Daoxuan lushi gantong lu 道宣律師感通錄[Record of the Miraculous Instructions Given [by the Deities] to Vinaya Master Daoxuan] (T52 435a22--442b18) and Luxiang gantong zhuan 律相感通傳[Discussion with the Deities about Vinayas] (T45 874a16--882a28).
41 故有事至。須往四王所。時王見皆起。為韋將軍修童真行護正法故。” T.45 875a16--a18.
General Wei was very distinctive in Daoxuan’s record. During the nights his personal information had been respectively introduced by these two other deities. Firstly, Wang Pan, who came to tell Daoxuan that General Wei would soon arrive, had briefly introduced General Wei’s role as a Buddhist protector:

The deity was very polite to me. I asked him where he was from. He paid homage to me and said, “My family name is Wang and my given name is Fan. I used to be one of the ministers of the Wu regime.

Now I’m in the Heaven, my work is to protect the Buddhist dharma. I’m guided by General Wei who is a general under the South Heavenly King. He is very busy. He protects the Buddhist dharma in three continents. If there were any quarrels or perilous activities, he would come to manage it. He will soon arrive here together with the South Heavenly King. Prior to his arrival, he has asked me to tell you.”

Wang Pan pointed out General Wei’s function was to “protect the Buddhist dharma in three continents.” The three continents refer to the east, west and south continents which the deity Fei had talked about in the paragraph below. Buddhism declares the ideal over three continents just except north due to Northern people do not believe Buddhism. Wang Pan did not explain the specific work General Wei was engaged in. Later, another deity Fei came to see Daoxuan, and he talked more about General Wei:

Then another deity whose family name was Fei came in. He gave a salute like the man who came earlier. He said, “I was born in the era of Kaśyapa when deities were immersed in lust. I’m a pure practitioner with special respect for...
vinayas. General Wei strictly complies with the rules of pure practices, and he is free from sexual desires. One Heavenly King is in charge of eight generals. In all, there are Four Heavenly Kings and thirty two generals distributed around the world. The North continent is out of the Buddhist dharma, while the dharma are promoted and developed in the other three continents. However, monks and nuns do not abide by the disciplines. They frequently break precepts. Human beings of the East and West continents seldom have the wisdom to be free from suffering. Although people of the South continent also make mistakes, they submit to the Buddha’s teaching. When the Buddha was going into nirvāṇa, he had entrusted General Wei to protect the saṅgha from damaging by the evil. He said that if the saṅgha’s misdeeds had been connived and they kept on breaking the principles like this, the law would be abandoned by them. Deities remember the words from the Buddha. Although the dharma has been damaging by the monks, deities is still protecting the world out of sympathy. No action will be taken against those who have done any good behaviors. They treat everyone equally and do not punish anyone because of the man’s previous faults. The awful odor of human disperses in the Heaven. Holy deities feel sick about the smell. However, they still protect the people because of the Buddha’s word. General Wei is the greatest protector among thirty two generals. When evil spirits tease practitioners, he who is not strong enough, may be in delusion, General Wei will go there in panic and correct errors. 43
General Wei had been depicted as a Buddhist protector especially to the saṅgha. This paragraph shows how General Wei “protects the dharma in the three continents.” The saṅgha was who he protects because if they kept breaking the vinayas, the dharma would be in danger. According to Daoxuan’s record, General Wei was a diligent protector and get very busy with his work. Wang Pan mentioned if there were any quarrels or perilous activities, he would come to manage it. He was kind to the monks that he was protecting. For instance, he was pleased to help those who felt contrition or regret for past wrongs.

Being a pure-practitioner (a practitioner of Brahmacharya; fanxing 梵行) and reaching the state of Buddha-son now complete are typical characteristics of General Wei. Brahmacharya originally refers to a period of fourteen to twenty years in Hinduism and sexual abstinence is one of the common usages denoting to the practice of Brahmacharya. In Buddhism, Brahmacharya strictly, refers to the practice of sexual chastity. More generally, for the monastic group it pure-practitioner refers to the monks who decide to live a moral life as a way to end suffering and to reach enlightenment to take the vow, committing themselves to Buddhism. In the case of General Wei, it refers to refraining from sexual desire because it mentioned he reached the state of Buddha-son now complete. A Buddha-son now complete means General Wei keeps a child nature of simplicity. It is called kumāra-bhūta by Buddhist sūtras is the eighth one among the ten stages of bodhisattva-wisdom (pusa shizhu faxing 菩薩十住法行). It should be noted Skanda had been linked with the name Kumāra in India.

Daoxuan’s writing indicates that General Wei is a practitioner and he has attained the eighth stage of the Bodhisattva-wisdom. According to Daoxuan’s record, General Wei’s role as a practitioner was linked with his work. It particularly enables him to be familiar with the
saṅgha’s practices. His protection to the monks is accompanied with monks’ daily life. Fei had provided an example. He said General Wei would help monks overcome difficulties especially when evil spirits tease the practitioners.

General Wei has magic powers. He can catch ideas in the three continents and reach there to resolve conflicts. The magic power helps him to protect the dharma in the three continents. His own discussion with master Daoxuan proves his super powers. During the conversation of General Wei and Daoxuan, he had talked about numerous affairs happened in places other than China:

I [Daoxuan] asked, “Is the evil in control of the world of lust. Are the deities in the Heaven the attendants of the evil?” General Wei answered, if the evil commit any sorts of wickedness, the Four Heavenly Kings, Indra and Brahma will not tolerate it. The evil cannot stop people from doing the good. The saṅgha here have not been disturbed by the debate on Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hinayāna Buddhism. Both of the two branches are worshiped by the saṅgha. However, things in the western region are different. When people who believe in Hinayāna Buddhism get sūtra of Mahāyāna Buddhism, they put the sūtra into fire. Some sell monks of the Mahāyāna Buddhism to the North regimes. For those who worship Mahāyāna Buddhism, such behaviors grab their life. Such cases are countless. Weimengxiang who are the present lord of Bodhi big temple (puti dasi 菩提大寺) owns eight thousand monks and ten thousand households. The king cannot manage this place. Many people walk around the pagodas presented gold and silks every day. In the kitchen, fish are piled and sheep heads are hanged. Though they act like this without any restraint, they are still protected from ghost. I asked why good deities or nāga
did not stop them from committing the crime. General Wei answered that deities who drink blood come to receive the offering and who hear the Buddha’s teaching will protect the monks who believe in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

I said, when I saw people of that place appreciate killing, I wish there could be any power to stop them from killing. However, I cannot imagine they are with the connivance of the deities. General Wei answered, all these are caused by *karma* of the beings. Fish and sheep need to pay for their *karma* too. I asked that although it is true that everyone need to pay for their *karma*. Killing was caused by delusion which formed in evil destinies. How could deities wink at that? General Wei answered it is *karma* that the Buddha cannot help. Besides, the deities were born in the country where the right though was missing. I asked how to treat someone who had the right though but it was missing in *samsāra*? General Wei answered that it could not be comprehended by imagination.  

In this paragraph, they discussed things happened in the world of lust (*karma-dhatu*, *yujie* 欲界), a layer of *samsāra*. Their discussion covered a broad area and it indicated that General Wei was well-informed about world and national events.

General Wei praised on Chinese Buddhism and master Daoxuan. General Wei had expressed the deities’ favor for China in an era when Buddhism is in decline:  

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46“余問。欲界主者豈非魔耶。以下諸天皆非魔屬耶。答曰。魔若行惡。四天帝釋皆所不從。若下二天行諸善法。魔及魔子無如之何。此方僧勝於大小乘曾無二見。悉皆奉之。西土不爾。諸小乘人獲大乘經。則投火中。小僧皆賣於北狄耆者奪其命根。不可言述。今菩提大寺主威猛象。有八萬僧戶數十萬。王征不得。遶塔之下。日有金帛。收已自納廚內生魚積成大聚。羊腔懸之。劇屠宰肆然亦守護。不令惡鬼害之。余問曰。可無善神龍王。何因縱其造罪。答曰。血食之神鹹來嚮衛。諸受佛語者。守護大乘寺僧。余曰。常見此國以殺戮為功。每願。若死生龍鬼中。有大勢力。令其不殺如何。此神還縱其殺者。答曰。皆是眾生惡業所致。魚羊還債。是其常理。余問。還債之業誠是可嘉。然彼殺噬無不由感。感者何物。禽獸之感結在惡道。如何諸神故縱之耶。答曰。亦是業定諸佛不能除。況諸神者生此國中。正念既失。便縱其殺。余曰。先有此願。脫生失念。墮彼如何。答曰。自非觀行明白。” T.45 881c25--882a16.
Presently, the dharma declines. Countries in Indian are inferior to here [China].
People in China confess for their fault after they break their vow of abstinence.
Although they also make mistakes, they are much more careful to their behaviors. Protective deities do not punish those who have done good behavior.
They are sympathy about the human beings and try their best to protect the people from intrusions by the evil.\textsuperscript{47}

He believed China is relatively better than countries of old India. One reason was the Chinese repent for their actions. Secondly, Chinese people did not have discrimination on different branches of Buddhism. This text was an encouragement for Chinese Buddhism when it was competing with Taoism in the Tang Dynasty.\textsuperscript{48}

This article was a proof of Daoxuan's achievement. The deities were very polite to master Daoxuan and expressed their appreciation for Daoxuan's work:

Recently, from the February of this year, the deities have responded to me for several times. One told me it was because books I had written such as the Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks (Xu Gaozeng Zhuan 續高僧傳) (645 C.E.) and the Expanded Collection for the Spread of Enlightenment (Guang Hongming Ji 廣弘明集) (664 C.E.) help to spread Buddhism, deities and spirits all felt happy about my works. As for the vinayas, your commentary works are also excellent. But they have made some mistakes in judging the light and the heavy. “Anyway,” one [of the deities] said, “this is not your fault. It is translators who make these conceptions confusing from the origin.”\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{47}師今須解佛法衰昧。天竺諸國，不及此方，此雖犯戒，太途慚愧。內雖陵犯，外猶慎護故，使諸天見其一善忘其百非。若見造過，鹹皆流涕，悉加守護。不令魔子所見侵惱。" T.45 881c21–c25.
\textsuperscript{48} Tonami Mamoru 礬波護, Sui Tang fojiao wenhua 隋唐佛教文化[Studies in the Political and Social History of Tang China] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), 87-91.
\textsuperscript{49}“近以今年二月末，數感天人，有若諸面，告余云，所著文翰，續高僧傳，廣弘明集等，裨助聖化，幽靈囂喜。無
This is the beginning of the article. This deity explained the reason of their visit. The deities spoke highly of the writings of Daoxuan. In fact, they met Daoxuan largely because Daoxuan’s book on Buddhism. As a main figure of the deities, General Wei has also express his appreciation for Daoxuan’s understanding on the Buddha’s teaching:

In the last night of my adventure, General Wei came in. He salute to me, and said he had seen me in Anfengfang 安豐坊 when I began to write the

*Expanded Collection for the Spread of Enlightenment*. He saw me judging between the right and the wrong. My interpretation is pure and open and different from what he had heard about. It coincides with deities’ explanations of the Buddha’s teaching. He has long been waiting to talk about the *dharma* with me. The *dharma* and the monk are the most important thing is in three continents. Debates and fights never end. General Wei’s responsibility is to protect the law and talk them around. That is why he sent his subordinates come to see me and hear my words. Today, he has time to come, but he won’t stay long.\(^{50}\)

This paragraph indicates Daoxuan’s book had attracted General Wei’s attention for a long time. General Wei, as a member of deities from the Heaven, said that the deities all “feel happy about these works.” Their respectful attitude towards Daoxuan and his writing are a proof of the authority of the explanations in Daoxuan’s books. One version of the story noted it was in 667 C.E. when the article was written.\(^{51}\) The year 667 C.E. is also the last year of Daoxuan’s life. As an event happened in the last years of Daoxuan’s life, this story helped to enhance the dignity of Daoxuan among the *saṅgha*.\(^{52}\)
In the very beginning, the story of General Wei was attached to records on Daoxuan and the story soon began to change. The *Pearl Forest in the Dharma Park* (Faxuan zhulin 法苑珠林) (668 C.E.) is an index for Buddhist texts. It was completed only one year after Daoxuan’s death. It was written by Daoshi 道世 (?- 683 C.E.) who used to be an assistant of Daoxuan. In this account on Daoxuan’s adventure, much important information had been changed. First, the name of General Wei became more accurate. Daoshi adopted the name Wei Kun 韋琨 to refer to General Wei:

> And there is a man from the Heaven whose name is Wei Kun 韋琨. He is a general guided by the South Heavenly King.

It should be mentioned that the name Wei Kun also referred to a high ranking official living in the seventh century. The Wei family had been a prominent powerful family in the sixth to seventh century. A number of generals and officials came from this family and Wei Kun was one of them. The man Wei Kun had been mentioned in the *New Book of Tang* (Xingtangshu 新唐书). Emperor Taizong of Tang 唐太宗 (599-649 C.E.) had conferred the title of the Marquis of Wuyangxian 武陽縣侯 to Wei Kun. Wuyangxian 武陽縣 is a place now belong to Sichuan province. Wei Kun had been a teacher of Gaozong (628-683 C.E.) when the former was a crown prince. When Wei Kun was dead, Gaozong gave him a posthumous name as Zhen 貞 (meaning “upright man”). Wei Kun was elder and dead earlier than Daoxuan, so possibly Daoshi believed Wei Kun was the deity that had responded to Daoxuan.

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53 又有天人韋琨，亦是南天王八大將軍之一臣也。” T.53 354a22-23.

Secondly, Wei Kun became more important in the deity’s army compared with General Wei in Daoxuan’s record who was only one of the thirty two generals. In Daoshi’s writing, Wei became the leader of these generals:

There are Thirty-two generals guided by the Four Heavenly Kings and this man [Wei Kun] is the head of these generals.  

His rank had been improved in this account. Besides, Wei Kun’s function turns to be more tightly connected with Daoxuan. In the beginning of the text, he narrated the weak health of master Daoxuan:

In the spring of 667 C.E., [Daoxuan] is meditating in the Jingyesi 淨業寺, South of the capital. He is in his last years and his health is in decline. He is thinking about the four forms of birth and the three assemblies. Suddenly, because of his causes in the past, he is received by some deities and he comes to be recovered. He becomes more sincere to Buddhism and gets response from the Heaven. At that time, there are the protective deities including Four Heavenly Kings come to the vinaya master’s room. Daoxuan hears the sound of their footsteps and asked who is outside? [A deity] answers: this is Zhang Qiong 張瓊.  

Daoshi considered this adventure of Daoxuan as a prediction of his death. As a result, the deities’ talk with Daoxuan is mainly about Daoxuan’s future life:

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55 “四天王合有三十二將。斯人為首。” T.53 354a23.
56 “粵以大唐乾封二年仲春之節。身在京師。城南清宮故淨業寺。逐靜修道。年至桑榆。氣力將衰。專念四生。又思三會。忽以往緣幽靈顧接。病漸瘳降。勵力虔仰。遂感冥應。時有諸天四王臣佐。至律師房門。似人行動蹀足出聲。律師問言。是誰。答言。弟子張瓊。” T.53 353c26--354a02.
He [Zhang Qing 張瓊] answered, “I only know master [Daoxuan] will be reborn in the fourth heaven where there lived Maitreya.”

In text, Wei Kun did not directly meet Daoxuan. He had been considered as one of the two companions of Daoxuan when the master was entering the world of Maitreya. Wei Kun’s function was to escort him in Daoxuan’s future life.

The future life of Daoxuan was the emphasis of Daoshi’s writing. It seems the author Daoshi’s intention had affected Wei Kun’s function. Daoshi is a monk from the Ximingsi 西明寺, the temple possessing Daoxuan’s ancestral. It should be noted that Daoshi and Daoxuan used to learn Buddhism from the same teacher. Daoshi’s strong personal relationship with Daoxuan may influence the way he illustrated the story about Daoxuan and General Wei.

General Wei was soon linked with Weituo and his legend with Daoxuan gradually became a miracle story of Weituo. In approximately the twelfth century, there are several records showing General Wei and Weituo had been treated as the same deity. Their names were mixed up. They even formed new names for the deity such as “General Weituo.” For instance, Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214 C.E.), a monk and Buddhist historian of Tiantai School, when he quoted the words of Daoxuan in the *Topical Anthology of the Land of Bliss (Lebang wenlei 樂邦文類)* (1200 C.E.), he said:

That is why Master Nanshan [Daoxuan] said, General Weituo is the greatest protector.  

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57. "答云。但知律師不久報盡。生第四天彌勒佛所。" T.53 354a18.
58. "故南山雲。韋馱將軍。最多洪護。" T.47 206c26–c27.
It should be noted the name he adopted was General Weituo rather than General Wei which indicates in Zongxiao's mind, General Wei and Weituo had already become the same deity.

Meanwhile, the Indian war god Skanda had been absorbed in General Wei’s legend and mixed up with Weituo. Skanda had replaced General Wei to be the one respond to Daoxuan. For example, Zonggao 宗杲 (1089-1163 C.E.) who was a dominant Chan master in the twelfth generation of the Linji 臨濟 line of Chan school, directly used the “deity Weituo” (alternative name of Skanda) to replace General Wei in the General Sermons by Chan Master Dahui (Dahui pujue chanshi pushuo 大慧普覺禪師普說) (1171 C.E.):

There was a vinaya-holder named Daoxuan. He is the only one who is complete without lack with the upasampada after the Nirvāṇa of Śākyamuni. As a result, his light reached the Heaven. The deity Weituo responded to him. The deity served him food from the Heaven every day. One day, he asked the deity, who are you? The deity answered, I am not a normal person. I completed five commandments and got good fruit. The deities in the Heaven respond to me and finally I became a deity in the Heaven.

Master Zonggao explains the reason why Skanda responded to Daoxuan was Daoxuan was strict to commandments. Skanda’s response seems to be a reward for Daoxuan. Besides, this story hinted Daoxuan may be able to become a deity in the Heaven. Neither did Zonggao say any words about other deities appearing during Daoxuan’s adventure, nor did he mention if...
the deity was a general. In Zonggao’s words, the legendary encounter of Daoxuan became a miracle story of Skanda.

General Wei’s legend had been adopted to supplement the personal information about the deity Weituo in the *Golden Light Sūtra*. Zongxiao in his explanation about the *sūtra*, said:

The deity Weituo's 韋駄天神 family name is Wei 韋 and his given name is Kun 琨. 60

He recorded Wei Kun as another name of the deity Weituo (Skanda). After that, he recorded Daoxuan’s depiction about General Wei, but the name of the deity had been replaced by Weituo. Zongxiao's description clearly showed General Weituo was the deity Weituo in the *Golden Light Sūtra*. He regarded Wei as the Chinese family name of the Indian god Skanda. The records mentioned above shows the merging of General Wei and Skanda had already begun in in the eleventh or twelfth century. In this record, different origins of Weituo became different names of the same deity.

The name Weituo comes from Skanda. The Indian war god Skanda is the “deity Weituo”. The name of the “deity Weituo” originated from the *Golden Light Sūtra*. In 810 C.E., a Chinese monk Huilin 慧琳 (737-820 C.E.), who was a master in science of language (*śabdavidyā*), explained how Skanda was translated as the “deity Weituo”. In the *Huilin’s Sounds and Meanings (Huilin yinyi 慧琳音義)*, he noted:

Weituo tian 娑馱天 in Sanskrit is pronounced as *Sijiantuo* 私建陀 deva.

*Sijiantuo* is a transliteration of Skanda. Deva means deity (*tian* 天). Scribes confused these two words because *jian* 建 and *wei* 邪 looks alike. 61

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60 “韋駄天神，此天姓韋名琨。” X20 521c05.
Here, Huilin believed that 私建陀 become Weituo 違陀 by accident. The original translation should be Jiantuo. According to Huilin’s explanation, the mistake was caused by careless copyists. Huilin reckoned Weituo is Skanda.

Skanda was a protective deity in Chinese Buddhism. In the fifth century, the name had appeared on several Buddhist sūtras translated by Dhármakṣema 曇無讖 (385-433 C.E.) who was a Buddhist monk from Central India and was one of the most prolific translators of Buddhist literature into Chinese. In the Great Cloud Sūtra (Mahāmegha Sūtra; Da fangdeng wuxiang jing 大方等無想經) (421-433 C.E.), he is named as Jiantuo 建馱.62 In the Nirvāṇa Sūtra (Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra; Da ban niepan jing 大般涅磐經) (260-280 C.E.), he is named as the deity Weituo (Weituo tian 違陀天).63 In the thirteenth chapter of the Golden Lights Sūtra, Skanda had been listed as deities obtaining extraordinary strength:

Possessed of miraculous power and great strength

Indra, Soma and Yama,

Vayu, Varuna and Skanda,

Vishnu and Srasvati,

Prajapati and Hutashana-

These protectors of the worlds,

Who are powerful and outshine every foe,

Day and night will offer protection without fail

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61 “違陀天(譯勘。梵音云私建陀提婆。私建陀。此云陰也。提婆。云天也。但建違相濫。故筆家誤耳)” T.54 469b18.
62 “見事八臂作八臂像。見事建馱作建馱像。” T12 1094c16.
To those who have heard this sūtra⁶⁴

According to this record, his characteristic is “possessed of miraculous power and great strength.”⁶⁵

In the twelfth century, as Weituo had been added to the protective deities, there was a biography written about Weituo. It was named as the “Biography for General Weitian” (Weitian jiangjun zhuan 韋天將軍傳) (1131 to 1162 C.E). This text was a chapter in Xingting 行霆’s the Re-edited Biography of the Protective Deities (Chongbian Zhutian zhuan 重編諸天傳) (1173 C.E). Sixteen deities had been invited to participate in rituals and Weituo was the tenth of the protective deities according to the Biography of the Protective Deities (Zhutian liezhuan 諸天列傳) (Lost).⁶⁶ The Biography of the Protective Deities was written by Shenhuan 神煥 who was most active during 1131 to 1162 C.E., and it may contain a biography of Weituo. Although the Biography of zhutian text had already lost, it was a reference to Xingting’s record which had accepted and summarized previous records on the protective deities.⁶⁷ It contained the biographies for twenty deities and Weituo was the twelfth of the protective deities. The “Biography for General Weitian” was a summary of previous records on Weituo.

It talked about General Weitian’s basic information such as name, miracle stories, figure, and the iconography of the figure:

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⁶⁵“大力勇猛，常護世間” T.16 350a09.

⁶⁶ Liao Yang, “Yuandai ershizhutian de tuxiangzhi kaocha” 元代二十諸天的圖像志考察 [Study on the Inscription of Mural on Twenty Protective Deities in the Yuan Dynasty], in Zongjiaoxinyang yu minzu wenhua 宗教信仰與民族文化 [Beliefs and culture], Wang Xiaoli 王曉麗, Liao Yang 廖暘 and Wu Fengling 吳鳳玲 eds. (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 2009), 214.

Brief record on the adventure with the spirits and the awe-inspiring Gods

(Lingwei yaolue 靈威要略) said that the deity’s family name was Wei 韋 and his given name was Kun 琨. He is one of the generals led by South Heavenly King. There are thirty-two generals under the Four Heavenly Kings in total, and he is the head general. He is born with wisdom and strictly complying with the rules of pure practices. He is free from sexual desire. He has heard about the Buddha’s entrustment. He is a protector of the three continents. He stays and protects the Buddhist dharma. He is very busy with his work and worries about the four divisions of disciples. He fully understands the beings and the process of samsāra and tides over the Five Vehicles. The “Chapter of Ghost and Deities” in the Golden Light Sūtra contains the deity Weituo. Weituo in Sanskrit means wise opinion. However, today, Wei becomes the deity’s surname, which happens to be a Chinese surname. The deity hides his real name and it is impossible to know what it is now. During the Qianfeng era 乾封 (666 - 668 C. E), a vinaya holder Daoxuan, in the Jingyesi 淨業寺 of Xi’an had met with Weitian (alternative name of General Wei). He recorded their [he and several deities] discussion on the vinayas in his books Lingwei yaolue and Luxiang gantong 律相感通 (Discussion with the Deities about Vinayas). In Yaolue (An abbreviation for Brief record on the adventure with the spirits and the awe-inspiring Gods), the deity, whose surname is Fei 費 said, “I was born in the era of Kaśyapa when deities were immersed in lust. I’m a pure practitioner with special respect for vinayas. General Wei strictly complies with the rules of pure practices, and he is free from sexual desires. When

68 The word Veda which means wise opinion is translated as 韋陀, while Skanda is translated as 韋馱. Because these two words are of the same pronunciation in Chinese the author reckons they are the same word in Sanskrit.
General Wei comes to Four Heavenly Kings’ Palace, Four Heavenly Kings stand up to show their respect to him. All Buddhist temples and practice halls establish the sculptures of Weituo from the reign of Emperor Gaozong as a reward for achievement in protecting the [Buddhist] dharma. There are numerous writings on this adventure. The "a Buddha-son now complete" is the eighth of the Ten stages of Bodhisattva-wisdom 十住. He is a man of virtue or a sage, how to know? To sing praises,

Among thirty-two generals led by Four Heavenly kings,

Weitian of the South is the best

Brilliant and out of desire

Strict to himself about pure practices

Being cut off from sexual desire

Made up his mind in the era of Kāśyapa Buddha

Protector of four divisions of disciples

In charge of the three continents

His name confused with the incarnate

Appeared in the Tang Dynasty and met Daoxuan

Carefully talked about impenetrable mysteries

Luxiang 律相 (An abbreviation for Discussion with the Deities about Vinayas)

and Lingwei 靈威 (An abbreviation for Brief record on the adventure with the spirits and the awe-inspiring Gods) record it
The Four Heavenly Kings stand up to welcome him
Show their respect to the uncontaminated
From Qianfeng 乾封 (666-668 C.E.) to protect the dharma
Find his place in the protective deities at present time
In temples and practice places,
He acts as a safeguard
Helmet on his head and precious mallet is balanced on his wrist
He put the palms together and looks like a child
Sometimes (he) guides the practitioners and promotes the practices
Sometimes (he) protects the temple
Removing obstacles from outside and helps [the practitioners] to be free from worries
Soon Buddha’s teaching will cover the trisahasra^69

This record combined Buddhist texts of Skanda and General Wei. This record has specifically explains various names of the deity such as General Weitian 韋天將軍, Wei Kun 韋琨, the

^69 灵威要略曰。天神姓韋。諱琨。南方天王八將之一臣也。四王合三十二將。而為其首。生知聰慧。早離塵欲。清淨梵行。修童真業。面受佛勅。外護在懷。用統三洲。住持為最。亡我亡瑕。殷憂於四部。達物達化。大濟於五乘。光明鬼神品中有韋駄天神。梵語韋駄。此云智論。今此則以韋為姓。雖類華夏一經之裔。而其天神隱显其號。烏可惻量。唐高宗乾封歲。京師淨業寺道宣律師。因覩韋天嘗問律相等事。律師述靈威要略。並律相感通二傳。備載其實。如要略中。天神姓費。自述云。弟子迦葉佛時生在初天。在韋將軍下。諸天貪欲如醉。弟子以宿願力不受天欲。清淨梵行。偏敬毗尼。韋將軍童真梵行。不受天欲。若有事至四王所。王見皆起。自唐高宗已來。諸處伽藍及建立薰修。皆設像崇敬。彰護法之功。其間感應錄於文集者甚多。然童真乃十住中第八住。而賢乎聖乎。孰可知之。讚曰。四王三十二大將。南方韋駄以為先。生知聰慧離塵欲。清淨梵行威儀全。修童真業持禁戒。迦葉佛時志已堅。四部殷憂常守衛。三洲護法應機緣。名姓雖凡安可側。示範唐朝護道宣。律相靈威二集傳。或見四王王起接。是知無染所當然。爰自乾封至今化。逮今名位列諸天。每在伽藍或蘭若。薰修之所現威權。頭頂金兜橫寶杵。合十指掌兒童年。或警行人令進行。或隨方所護其邊。卻除外障令無惱。庶幾佛日照三千。" X88 430b03-c05.
deity Weituo 韋馱天神. Different deities had been explained as different names of the new deity Weituo. Each names exposed diversified aspects of him. The “deity Weituo” (the Chinese name for Skanda) in the *Golden Light Sūtra*, indicates the god’s Indian origin. General Wei pointed out the deity’s link with Daoxuan. The deity came to meet Daoxuan in the seventh century. In conclusion, Xingting’s explanation blends the two origins of Weituo’s legend.

The merging of Weituo’s different origins ended in the twelfth century when the monks widely accepted General Wei who appeared in the legendary encounter of Daoxuan was the Indian war god Skanda in the *Golden Light Sūtra*. The new deity Weituo was formed as a result. In this process, the name Weituo which originally referred to Skanda, gradually replaced General Wei and Weituo became the one responded to Daoxuan.

Daoxuan’s legendary encounter is very important to the formation of Weituo. In the biography of Weituo, the story of General Wei with Daoxuan occupies more than half of it and served as the foundation of it. The characteristics of Weituo were decided by General Wei’s role in the story. The deity Weituo had been depicted as a protector of the *dharma*. He had been widely acknowledged to be the deity responded to Daoxuan in the seventh century. He is a diligent Buddhist protector and a practitioner of *vinayas*. His function is to protect practitioners. His distinguishing iconography in Chinese Buddhist art was also based on Daoxuan’s description on General Wei. The story of General Wei with Daoxuan promoted the spread of the worship of Weituo.

Weituo’s legend was formed in the twelfth century when monks widely accepted Weituo as the deity responded to Daoxuan. As a result, Weituo, who was originally derived from Skanda, obtained the characteristics of General Wei. After that, Daoxuan’s legendary encounter had been considered as the earliest miracle tale of Weituo among the materials we
can see nowadays. It had decided the characteristics, possible iconography, functions of the
deity and these elements served as foundations of further worship of Weituo. Owing to
Weituo’s role in this story, his position as a protector of the dharma had been established.
Chapter Three The Iconography of Weituo

Weituo owns a distinguishing iconography in Chinese Buddhist art and his images changes little over time. Mostly, he has been depicted as a Chinese young general. There are several certain elements of Weituo’s iconography. He dresses helmet and armor and he takes vajra-mallet as his weapon. Visual representations of Weituo at present time still match these iconographical characteristics. His iconography was mainly based on accounts on the legendary encounter of Daoxuan. Meanwhile, his iconography had been influenced by Vajrapāṇi, another Buddhist protector who appeared in Buddhist art much earlier than Weituo.

Records on specific elements of Weituo’s iconographical characteristics indicated the deity’s iconography came from multiple origins. In the twelfth century, the “Biography for General Weitian” had recorded specific details of Weituo’s iconography. In this record, some of Weituo’s iconography came from Daoxuan’s description on the characteristics of General Wei. In the late imperial time, Weituo’s iconographical characteristics had been mentioned in a few inscriptions. On one hand, these inscriptions indicated Weituo’s images corresponded with the characteristics of General Wei. On the other hand, they showed Vajrapāṇi’s influence on Weituo’s iconography.

The iconography of Weituo showed the complexity of Weituo’s origins. It not only showed Weituo’s connection with General Wei, but also pointed out Weituo’s relationship with Vajrapāṇi. As the attribute of Weituo probably appeared in Buddhist art earlier than the textual account, the iconography of Weituo may have adapted to accounts on this legend.
when Weituo had been linked with Daoxuan’s legendary encounter,. The iconography of Weituo had prepared for the worship of Weituo as a deity linked with Daoxuan.

Weituo’s iconography is largely based on Daoxuan’s description on General Wei. For example, in the twelfth century, the “Biography for General Weitian” which was written by Xingting matches Daoxuan’s account on General Wei. The biography is the first text introduces specific iconographical characters of Weituo. According to its accounts, Weituo wore helmet and armor and he balanced mallet (chu 杖) in front of his chest. It showed Weituo’s military rank as a general. The face of Weituo had been depicted as a young man. It was linked with General Wei’s merits a Buddha-son now complete. The “Biography for General Weitian” accurately reflected Daoxuan’s account on General Wei in Weituo’s iconography.

General Wei had affected Weituo’s iconography in two aspects. First, the deity obtains a look of a military official. In order to shape Weituo as a Chinese general, his dresses have been largely influenced by armor and helmet of ancient China. Details of the iconography of Weituo reflected certain elements of military dressing at the same era. For example, Mountain Pattern Armor (shanwenkai 山紋铠) is style of armor worn by high ranking officers in China at least during the Tang Dynasty. It is made for small pieces of steel and shaped like the Chinese character shan 山 (mountain). In Weituo’s statue during the same period such as the statue in Foguangsi 佛光寺, a temple built in 857 C.E., this pattern had appeared on Weituo’s armor (Fig1.1). There is another example. The book A Collection of Military Classics (Wujing Zongyao 武經總要), a Chinese military compendium written in 1044 C.E. during the Northern Song Dynasty, had recorded a sort of helmet called as “Wings

70 頭頂金兜橫寶杵。” X88 430e03.
of Phoenix” (fengchi 鳳翅) (Fig 3.1). This kind of helmet has wing at two sides. A number of Weituo’s images contain such iconographical element such as the sculpture of Weituo in the Lingyinsi 靈隱寺, a temple in Hangzhou (Fig 3.2). This sculpture of Weituo was established in the Southern Song dynasty 南宋 (1127—1279 C.E.). Besides, breast mirror which is common military equipment also be absorbed in the iconography of this statue. As protective deities who intimate the visual representations of Chinese military official, Weituo sometimes looks very alike the Four Heavenly Kings. For example, the Baoensi 報恩寺 which was completed in 1446 C.E., lies in Sichuan Province, southwest of China. On the west side of North wall in the Ten-Thousand-Buddha Pavilion (Wanfoge 萬佛閣) in this temple, Weituo’s image is near that of the North Heavenly King (Fig 3.3). Their helmet and armor are of the same shape.

Secondly, because of Daoxuan’s record, it is very common to shape Weituo as a child-face deity. Most of his statues do not have hair on the chin. Weituo obtains such iconographical characteristics from a very early time. For example, the statue of Weituo in the Foguangsi has plump cheek without wrinkles or beard. His facial expression is usually very calm. There is an inscription on Weituo support such iconographical character:

[The skin of] General Wei Kun is fair and clear. [He] has plump cheek and on beard.  


74 “(韋琨將軍)皙豐不髭”- Fu Yan 傅岩, “Huguosi yuanren zhutian huaxiangzan” 護國寺元人諸天畫像贊 [Inscription on Yuan Murals of zhutian in Huguosi], in Liao Yang 廖陽, “Yuandai ershi zhutian de tuxiangzhi kaocha” 元代二十諸天的圖像志考察 [Study on the Inscription of Mural on Twenty Protective Deities in the Yuan Dynasty], in Zongjiaoxinyang yu minzu wenhua 宗教信仰與民族文化 [Beliefs and culture], Wang Xiaoli 王曉麗, Liao Yang 廖陽 and Wu Fengling 吳鳳玲 eds. (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 2009), 232.
This feature makes him very distinguishing from other Buddhist protector depicting as military officials such as the Four Heavenly Kings. This iconographical character of Weituo is linked with Daoxuan’s description that General Wei has a child nature of simplicity. In 1715 C.E., Mujaku Dochu (1653-1745) recorded the links of the iconography of Weituo with Daoxuan:

The appearance of the deity imitates that of a child [in the praise of the Re-edited Biography of the Protective Deities]. I guess it comes from accounts on his child nature of simplicity in the original text [written by Daoxuan].

However, he thought it was unreasonable to make Weituo looks like a child:

However, the state of Buddha-son now complete means he has a child nature of simplicity. Why the deity needs to be shaped as a child? When Weitian (alternative name of General Wei) saw Daoxuan, it’s hard to know whether he was a child or as an adult.

According to Mujaku Dochu’s accounts, Weituo’s baby face was a mistake made by craftsman and some Chinese monks because they misinterpreted Daoxuan’s narrative on General Wei. From another perspective, this comment showed that the popularity of making Weituo a baby face figure.

It is rare to find statues of Weituo with beard but such visual representations indeed exist. There is an example. In the West Hall of the temple Upper Guangshengsi 廣勝上寺 of

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77 Mujaku Dochu also mentioned Japanese craftsmen sometimes add beard to make it looks like a middle-aged man (“日本佛匠或安鬚若三四十歲人，亦未必為失也。”). In fact, such statues also exist in China. Please see Mujaku Dochu 無著道忠, “Weitian jiangjun” 韋天將軍 [General Weitian], in Chanlin xiangqi jian 禪林象器箋, 255,

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Hongdong 洪洞 in Shanxi province, which is also called as Weituo Hall 韋馱殿 (Fig 3.4), there is a sculpture of Weituo with a sparse beard (Fig 3.5). It has been identified as a statue of the Ming Dynasty. In the Hall, Weituo is sitting on an armchair with one leg on the chair and the other step on the floor. The beard was drawn on his face. They are very sparse. His face looks serious but not wrathful. He looks like a young man. There is another case. In the Pilusi, Weituo’s image on the Shuilu painting have mustache. This image has an inscription “respectable Weituo saṃsāra” (Weituo zuntian saṃsāra 韋馱尊天森殺竭帝). He looks like a middle-aged Chinese general. It’s very rare among Weituo’s statues and images.

Vajrapāṇi is another source of Weituo’s iconography. In visual representations, these two deities sometimes appeared at the corresponding part of a mural. For example, in the Fahaisi 法海寺 which is a temple in Beijing had been repaired and painted in 1504 C.E. a figure on the north wall of the main hall of the temple, match the iconography of Weituo. On the Northeast wall, there is an image of Vajrapāṇi (Fig 3.6). These two images have been regarded as a deity in different conditions and Weituo has been considered as a non-wrathful Vajrapāṇi. In the late imperial time, Weituo has been regarded as a sort of Vajrapāṇi. For instance, in an inscription written in 1557 C.E. on a mural of the protective deities, the author Li Cui 李萃 has classified the Twenty-four deities into five species in total. Weituo had been recognized as a kind of Vajrapāṇi.:

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Among Twenty Four Deities, there are four belong to Vajrapāṇi 金剛: Guhyapada, Pāñcika, Skanda, and Prāthivī. 81

This text shows the close relationship between Weituo and Vajrapāṇi.

Vajrapāṇi and Weituo do seem very similar in many regards. The Indian origins of these two figures can be traced to yakṣa. In the Buddhist art from Gandhara, “it is known from the research of Senart (1905), Foucher (1905-51 vol 2: 481ff), Lalou (1956) and, above all, Lamotte (1966) that Vajrapāṇi is a yakṣa.” 82 Coincidentally, in the Mahāmāyūrī, a Buddhist Sanskrit text of the first or second century B.C.E., some of the deities that later merged with Skanda who is the Indian origin of Weituo were mentioned as the deity is a tutelary yakṣa of Rohitaka, a place northwest of New Delhi in India 83:

Rohitake Kārtikeyaḥ Kumārolokavisrūtaḥ (verse 21) 84

Kumāra-Kārtikeya was the world-famed tutelary deity of Rohitaka. 85

In Chinese Buddhist art, Weituo and yakṣa appeared at the two sides of Guanyin in Shuanglinsi. 86 If there is a correspondence between these two statues, the statue of yakṣa possibly indicates the nature of Weituo. Then Vajrapāṇi and Weituo have something in common in their origins and nature.

81 “金剛者四，曰：密跡、散脂、韋駝、堅牢” please see Li Cui 李萃, “Baimadong xinsu zhutian [Inscription on new sculptures of zhutian in Baima cave], in Nanzhangxianzhi jichao 南漳縣誌集録 (1864) Vol.23 quoted in Liao Yang 廖暘, “Yuandai ershizhutian de tuxiangzhi kaocha” 元代二十諸天的圖像志考察 [Study on the Inscription of Mural on Twenty Protective Deities in the Yuan Dynasty], in Zongjiaoxinyang yu minzu wenhua 宗教信仰與民族文化 [Beliefs and culture], Wang Xiaoli 王曉麗, Liao Yang 廖暘 and Wu Fengling 吳鳳玲 eds. (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 2009), 217.


86 In the picture book of Shuanglinsi edited in 2007, there is a picture shows a yakṣa existed in the Thousand Buddha Hall near Guanyin. But when I went to there in the beginning of 2012, the sculpture of yakṣa had disappeared. And now, the place of yakṣa is empty. Please see Shanxisheng Wenwuju 山西省文物局, Pingyao shuanglinsi caisuyishuguan 平遙雙林寺彩塑藝術館, Shuanglisi caisu 雙林寺彩塑 (Tianjin: Tianjin renminmeishu chubanshe, 2007), fig 77.
In Chinese Buddhism, both of Vajrapāṇi and Weituo are Buddhist protectors with military nature. The similarity may be caused by their similar nature. They are enthusiastic protectors of the dharma. It is possible, since General Wei’s legend widely spread in China, his figure combined with Vajrapāṇi had appeared earlier than Weituo in Buddhism.\(^{87}\)

The similarities of Weituo and Vajrapāṇi in iconography show in two aspects. The first one is their weapon. Vajrapāṇi was named after the weapon vajra.\(^{88}\) Vajra is a ritual object symbolizing the irresistible force of Buddhism. In Central Asia, for example in Kizil, it was painted as diamond scepter (Fig3.7 a). In Chinese Buddhist art, it was usually depicted as a combination of weapon and Buddhist symbol. It was shaped as a pestle-like weapon with a handle which is ended with a ball. The tips at the end of the central prong were shaped like a tapering pyramid.\(^{89}\) *Re-edited Biography of the Protective Deities* is the first Buddhist text that mentioned the name of the weapon of Weituo. The weapon of Vajrapāṇi and Weituo was briefly called by the mallet. According to the “Biography for General Weitian,” the deity Weituo takes a “precious mallet” as his weapon. It did not define the weapon. In *A Collection of Military Classics*, a book written in almost during the same period, mallet referred to a category of pestle-like weapons with big ends at both sides (Fig 3.8). The picture displays the appearance of the mallet. It seems to be a Chinese weapon that shared the same shape as vajra. In the visual representation of Weituo, the deity has been carrying the vajra-mallet. For example, in Foguangsi, Weituo carries a weapon in his right hand and the other hand is putting on his thigh. His weapon is long and the shape is similar to a vajra. It is a bladed bar. In the middle of the weapon, there are two metals with a hole at its center. The two metals have white lines which seem to represent closed prongs. In the late imperial time, Weituo’s

\(^{87}\) Yinshun 印順, “Hufa weituo kao”護法韋馱考 [A Study on the Protective Deity Weituo], in *Fojiao shidi kaolun* 佛教史地考論 (Taipei: Zhengwen chubanshe, 1992), 249.


weapon had been called as *vajra*-mallet. For example, the *Recorded Sayings of Chan master Ruyun shi in Caotang* (*Caotang ruyunshi chanshi yulu* 草堂耨雲實禪師語錄) (1687 C.E.) recorded:

In Weituo Hall, [Weituo] carries *vajra*-mallet. Who can resist the power? ⁹⁰

From the shape and the name, Weituo’s weapon indicates the deity’s connection with Vajrapāṇi.

There are three ways of how Weituo carries the *vajra*-mallet. Although all of the gestures had appeared in visual representations of Weituo and Vajrapāṇi, they are slightly different in their ways of carrying the *vajra*. There are relatively more depictions on Weituo adopted the gesture of balancing the *vajra*-mallet in front of the deity’s chest than images of Vajrapāṇi. Apart from the one mentioned above, there are two other gestures of Weituo that appeared in visual representations. One is raise the *vajra*-mallet in one hand such as the case in Foguangsi (Fig 1.1) while the other is pointing the weapon straight down on the ground such as the case in Lingyinsi (Fig 3.2). For Vajrapāṇi, he is most frequently depicted to raise the weapon in visual representations.

The way Weituo holds the *vajra*-mallet in the Heavenly Kings Hall of Buddhist temples, has different meanings for the *saṅgha*. It serves as a signal to show whether the *saṅgha* in this temple offer accommodation to travelling monks or not. Liang Zhangju 梁章钜 (1775-1849 C.E.), a literati, had explained the custom:

No matter in big or small temples, there are Weituo’s statue with mallet. Some hold the arms straight down beside the weapon while some clasp hands when balancing the weapon upon the wrist. [I] asked the old monk about it, and he

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⁹⁰ “韋馱殿手持金剛杵威風孰敢當” J37 001c08.
told me the one put the palms together means the palmers are welcome in this temple. If palmers came, they would provide accommodation. If Weituo put the mallet on the ground, it means no. [They] can tell from a glance. 91

In above paragraph, he had explained two gestures of Weituo show whether the temple offered accommodation for strangers. If Weituo, who located near the door, balanced the weapon upon the wrist, it meant palmers were welcome in this temple, and if Weituo put the mallet upright down, it meant the temple would not offer accommodation for palmers. In fact, as we have mentioned above, there are three gestures of visual representations of Weituo. The extra one which is putting the mallet in his palm and the peak of this weapon pointing to the sky appears in present temples. For instance, in the White Horse Temple, the statue of Weituo which is in the Heavenly Kings Hall acts like this (Fig 3.9). He takes a weapon in his left hand and an object in the other. There is an explanation on the three gestures at present time. If Weituo takes on the mallet, no matter carries it in one hand or balances it in front of his chest, the temple will offer accommodation for palmers. The former one means the temple could serve food for palmers for three days while the latter one means the temple only serves for one day. If he put the weapon on the floor, it means not welcome strangers. 92 Being considered as an icon shows Weituo’s sculpture is very common in Buddhist temples.

Weituo had been depicted with the lion headdress which indicates the connection of Weituo with Vajrapāṇi. As early as in the second century C.E., Vajrapāṇi began to appear next to the Buddha with the lion headdress. 93 In the Buddhist art from Gandhara, Vajrapāṇi had been borrowing iconographical elements from gods from Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek

91 按今大小丛林头门内，皆立执杵韦驮，有以手按杵据地者，有双手合掌捧杵者，询之老僧，始知合掌捧杵为接侍寺，凡游方释子到寺，皆蒙供养，其按杵据地者则否，可以一望而知也。 Please see Liang Zhangju 梁章钜, Langji xutan 浪跡續談 [Successive Talks on Langji] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1983), 128.
coinages. Heracles is the Greek semi-god who is a hero wearing lion skin and hold club in its hand.\(^{94}\) Heracles’ certain elements had been absorbed by Vajrapāṇi. The lion headdress was one of the elements. Gradually, Vajrapāṇi became the constant member appearing with the Buddha.\(^{95}\) And sometimes, Vajrapāṇi wearing lion headdress had appeared at the side of the Buddha. This kind of visual representation of Vajrapāṇi had been introduced to Kushan art. For example, in Kizil cave No. 175, in murals at the right side of the niche, there is an image of Vajrapāṇi wearing the lion headdress (Fig 3.7 a, b). We can clearly see the nose, ears and eyes of the lion. In Chinese Buddhist art, in most cases, Weituo was depicted as a general wearing helmet at head in his visual representations. However, in the Shuanglin寺 in Shanxi province, a clear outline of a lion’s head could be found on Weituo’s forehead (Fig 3.10). The statue is located in the Thousand-Buddha Hall (qianfo dian 千佛殿) of this temple. It was date to the Ming Dynasty.\(^{96}\) The lion headdress shows Weituo had borrowed certain iconographical elements from Vajrapāṇi.

Weituo’s iconography supported the conclusion that the legendary encounter of Daoxuan had effects on Weituo in plenty of aspects. His iconography had showed how people comprehended Daoxuan’s description on General Wei’s characteristics and applied it to Weituo’s iconography. At the same time, Weituo’s iconography showed his multiple origins such as the connection with other Buddhist protectors such as Vajrapāṇi. In visual representation of Weituo, the main iconographical characteristics remain consistent over time and over various situations.

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\(^{94}\) Huo Xuchu 霍旭初, “Xiyu fojiao yishu zhong de jinganglishi” 西域佛教藝術中的金剛力士 [Vajrapāṇi in Buddhist Art of Central Asia], in Kaozheng yu bianxi: xiyu fojiao wenhua lunbao 考證與辨析西域佛教文化論稿 (Wulumuqi, Xinjiang meishu sheying chubanshe, 2002), 159-163.


\(^{96}\) Ma Yuanhao 馬元浩, Shuanglinsi caisu foxiang 雙林寺彩塑佛像 [Painted Sculptures in the Shuanglinsi] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008), 133.
Chapter Four The Worship of Weituo

The saṅgha and the secular society worship Weituo for different reasons although basically he has been worshiped as a protector of the dharma. For the saṅgha, Weituo is worshiped as a special protector of the saṅgha. He had been worshiped not only in elaborate Buddhist services such as the Liberation Rite of Water and Land and the Golden Light Purification Ritual, but also in the saṅgha’s regular practices such as the morning service. In Qing Dynasty 清代 (1644-1912 C.E.), according to the Karma (Jiemo yishi 羯磨儀式) (1699 C.E.) and the Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations (Baizhang qinggui zhengyi ji 百丈清規證義記) (1823 C.E.), Weituo were invited in rituals including the Summer Retreat (varṣah: xia anju 夏安居), the Inauguration of the new abbot (ruyuan 入院), the Retirement from the office of abbot (ruyuan 退院), the Going for Alms Food (piṇḍapāta: fenwei 分衛). In these rituals, Weituo’s function was to help the saṅgha to get rid of disturbing factors of their practices. For the secular society, Weituo has been worshiped in some rituals relating to the natural disasters. Weituo became an agriculture-related and weather-related deity. In these cases, Weituo’s function is close to that of a local deity.

In the late imperial time, the worship of Weituo was increasing. Before the Qing Dynasty, in the sixteenth century, there were a few texts on Buddhist rituals that had already mentioned Weituo such as the Pure Land Merits (Jingtu ziliang quanji 淨土資糧全集) (1594 C.E.)\textsuperscript{97}, the Notice on two Sequences in Temples (Conglin liangxu xuzhi 叢林兩序須知)

\textsuperscript{97}“又詣護法神前云。南無三洲感應護法韋陀尊天。” X.61 596b13.
(1593-1661 C.E.)\(^98\), and *A Collection of Daily Recitations in Sūtra (Zhujing risong jiyao 諸經日誦集要)* (1655 C.E.).\(^99\) In the Qing Dynasty, there were more rituals invited Weituo than before. Buddhist texts prove Weituo’s popularity among the *saṅgha* while novels containing plots related with Weituo help to illustrate the deity’s popularity in the secular world. Weituo had appeared in a lot of novels in late imperial time. He most frequently appears in themes related to religion, war and super nature among all the popular themes of novels. These literature materials supplemented how Weituo had been worshiped in the late imperial China.

4.1 Worship by the *saṅgha*

At present, Weituo had been tightly connected with the *saṅgha’s* daily life. Weituo is worshiped as a protector of the *dharma* in their regular practices such as the morning service. The *saṅgha* recite the *Praise to Weituo*, the *Great-Propitious-Celestial-Main’s Dharani* and the *Weituo Praise* to please the deity. The worship of Weituo shows how Weituo acted as a Buddhist protector in Buddhist rituals. On one hand, he has been worshiped as a protector of the Buddhism by the *saṅgha*. On the other hand, his worship benefited the communication of the *saṅgha* with the local society which in turn promoted the popularity of the deity in the secular society.

Weituo has been considered tightly linked with Daoxuan. As a deity responded to Daoxuan in the monk’s last years, Weituo is a proof of Daoxuan’s achievements. Daoxuan was a very famous monk in the Tang Dynasty. Daoxuan has been continuously remembered

\(^98\)“亦出位展具三拜。復至韋馱四處。” X.63 672c04.

\(^99\)“祈禱諸可儀韋馱
持誦善天女咒(三遍)(稱畢)。南無護法韋馱尊天菩薩(三稱)白祝文。神功叵測密行難思示勇健於天倫摧邪輔正受遺囑於大覺護法安僧護法護法安僧(八遍)白祝文。" X.19 177c15–178a06.
by latter monks and even literati. Respectively in the year 742 and 841 C.E., Li Yong 李邕 (678-747 C.E.) and Yan Houben 嚴厚本 (the middle Tang Dynasty), two high ranking officials, had written inscriptions for Daoxuan. In 776 C.E., the emperor required people to burn incense to Ximingsi 西明寺, a temple in Mountain Zhongnan and it is where Daoxuan’s ancestral hall located and in which he used to be the abbot in his last years, in memory of the great Buddhist master. In 869 C.E., the emperor bestowed Daoxuan the name of Chengzhao 澄照 as the posthumous name of the Buddhist master. He also gave the name Jingguang 淨光 to the stūpa which placed Daoxuan’s relics (Śarīra; sheli 舍利). 100

Daoxuan’s achievement lies in two fields. Daoxuan is a master in the study Buddhism and very prolific in writing commentaries on the four divisions of the vinaya. He is one of the founders of the Vinaya School. In his time, Dharmagupta-vinaya, the discipline of the Dhármagupta School, just replaced the great canon of monastic rules translated by Buddhabhadra (359-429 C.E.) and Faxian 法顯 (c.a.337—422 C.E.). Dhármagupta School is one of three surviving vinaya lineages Dhármagupta-vinaya became the general discipline of Chinese monastic groups in the Tang Dynasty. The vinaya of the Dhármagupta School have been named as the Four Divisions 四分律 (Sifen Lu) in China. The school which specialized in the study of Dharmagupta-vinaya is called the Vinaya School (Luzong 律宗) which is one of the ten major schools of Chinese Buddhism. Daoxuan was devoted to promote the spread of the vinayas of the Dhármagupta School, and had written a lot of comments and explanations on it. As he lived in Mountain Zhongnan (Zhongnanshan 終南山) located in Shaanxi Province, south of Xi’an, people call him Nanshan 南山. His representative works which is called the Nanshan wudabu 南山五大部 (Five most important works on

Dhārmagupta-vinaya written by master Nanshan) mark the establishment of Dharmagupta-vinaya in China.\(^\text{101}\) As a result, the Vinaya School is also called as Nanshan School (Nanshanzong 南山宗) after Daoxuan. In the last year of his life, he settled down in the Jingyesi 淨業寺, a temple in Mountain Zhongnan to transmit the commandments, which shows the Dharmagupta-vinaya, had been put into practice. Apart from his achievement in explaining Dharmagupta-vinaya, he had cooperated with the famous Chinese Buddhist monk, scholar, traveler, and translator Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664 C.E.) in the sūtra translation project that engaged in translating the sūtra that Xuanzang had carried back from India.\(^\text{102}\) Daoxuan was the chief assistant of Xuanzang.\(^\text{103}\)

Daoxuan was a social activist. This trait of Daoxuan coincides with the characteristic of Weituo. As a Buddhist protector, Weituo’s uniqueness lies the connection of the deity with the saṅgha. In fact, Daoxuan in Tang Dynasty helped to protect the right of the saṅgha.

Daoxuan was a leader of an important movement protecting the saṅgha from submitting themselves to the secular authority. Daoxuan lived in a time when Buddhism was fighting fiercely with the secular authority and Taoism. In 657 C.E., the emperor Gaozong of the Tang Dynasty 唐高宗 (628-683 C.E.) banned the saṅgha to receive worshiping from their family and the majesty.\(^\text{104}\) In the year 662 C.E., the emperor Gaozong let his chancellors discuss whether the saṅgha should be required to pay homage to the emperor or their relatives.\(^\text{105}\) Such behaviors destroyed the saṅgha’s right of being allowed to deviate from the common

\(^{101}\) Wang Yarong 王亞榮, Zhongguo hanchuanfojiao zuting yanjiu 中国汉传佛教祖庭研究 [Study on Primary Ancestor Temples of Buddhism Schools in China] (X'ian: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2006),190.


\(^{103}\) Wang Yarong 王亚荣, Zhongguo hanchuanfojiao zuting yanjiu 中国汉传佛教祖庭研究 [Study on Primary Ancestor Temples of Buddhism Schools in China] (Xian: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2006), 185-186.

\(^{104}\) Li Zhi 李治, “Sengni budeshou fumu ji zunzhe libai zhao” 僧尼不得受父母及尊者禮拜詔 [Order to Ban the saṅgha to receive worshiping from their family and the majesty], in Tang huìyào 唐会要, ed. Wang Pu 王溥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 836.

\(^{105}\) Li Zhi 李治, “Ming yousi yi shamen deng zhibai junqin chi” 命有司議沙門等致拜君親敕 [Order to let officials to discuss whether the monks should give salutes to the emperor or their relatives], in Quantangwen xinbian 全唐文新編 [New organized complete prose literature of the Tang], ed. Zhou shaoliang 周绍良 (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 2000), 178.
customs. Ten days later, Daoxuan, on behalf of the saṅgha, wrote a letter to the prince to explain their idea about the prohibition in processing. Daoxuan had been selected as the leader of the movement because he had enjoyed great popularity in both the saṅgha and the lay. Meanwhile, he wrote another letter of protest to the mother of Empress Wu 武則天 (624-705 C.E.), wife of the emperor Gaozong. The struggle of the saṅgha led to the final compromise of the emperor Gaozong on matters of urging the saṅgha to pay homage to the ruler. He announced the saṅgha did not need to be subject to normal codes of behavior.106

Weituo has been worshiped as a protector of the dharma in morning services by the saṅgha in China. The morning service is a part of the saṅgha's regular practice. The contemporary liturgy of the daily service is now commonly acknowledged as The Buddhist Daily Recitation (Fomen risong 佛門日誦) or The Morning and Evening Recitation (Zhaomu kesong 朝暮課誦). It was primarily completed in the Song Dynasty.107 Although Buddhism in China evolved different schools, the practice of the daily service is a consistent monastic code. Almost all monasteries follow the same liturgy for daily service.108 The morning service consists of three sections: main text, merit transference (the text of Pariṇāmanā; Huixiangwen 迴向文) and praise to the dharma-guarding Bodhisattva.109 The third section is devoted to Weituo Bodhisattva. Although different temples various in details of practices, the praise to Weituo is required in the morning service of the first and the fifteenth of the lunar month.110

107 Chen Pi-yen, “Morning and evening service: The practice of ritual, music, and doctrine in the Chinese Buddhist monastic community” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1999), 5.
110 Chen Pi-yen, “Morning and evening service: The practice of ritual, music, and doctrine in the Chinese Buddhist monastic community” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1999), 114.
The praise to Weituo consists of three parts. It begins with invoking the Weituo Bodhisattva thrice:

Blessed be Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas under incense-cloud canopies.

Blessed be Dharma Protecting Weituo, the honored Bodhisattva.\textsuperscript{111}

And then, the saṅgha recite the *Great-Propitious-Celestial-Main’s Dharani* for three times.

After that, they are to recite the *Weituo Praise*:

Weituo, the heavenly general, a Bodhisattva in transformation

To support Buddha Dharma, his vows are grand and profound.

With the precious thunderbolt he subdues the demonic army

His merits hardly matched

His prayers answer our collective wishes.

Blessed be the Pervasive-Eye Bodhisattva-Mahasattva

Mahaprajnaparamita.\textsuperscript{112}

The saṅgha worship Weituo in their regular practices.\textsuperscript{113}

Weituo has been linked with a series of rituals related to meditation. According to the *Karma*, he was linked with the Summer Retreat which referred to an annual retreat observed by Buddhist practitioners and takes place during the rainy season when it was “difficult to

\textsuperscript{111} “南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩，南無護法韋馱尊天菩薩” please see Sūtra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada trans., *The Buddhist Liturgy* (New York, San Francisco, Toronto: 1993), 59.

\textsuperscript{112} “韋馱天將。菩薩化身。擁護佛法誓弘深。寶杵鎮魔軍。功德難倫。祈禱副群心。南無普眼菩薩摩訶薩。摩訶般若波羅蜜。” please see Sūtra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada trans., *The Buddhist Liturgy* (New York, San Francisco, Toronto: 1993), 62.

\textsuperscript{113} Chen Pi-yen, “Morning and evening service: The practice of ritual, music, and doctrine in the Chinese Buddhist monastic community” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1999), 114-115
move without injuring insect life.” On approximately the fifteenth day of the fourth month in Chinese lunar calendar, before the Summer Retreat meditation begins, the saṅgha needed to hold a ceremony which was called Receiving Vowing Sticks (shouchou 受籌). In this ceremony Weituo was worshipped together with the Buddha Śākyamuni. Two tablets with their names were placed on a desk. One was for Śākyamuni and the other is for Weituo. The process of this ceremony was that every monk put their sticks into the two pans put in front of the tablets. During the Summer Retreat, Weituo was supposed to help the saṅgha get rid of evils from both inside and outside when they were in meditation. Before yanguan 掩關, which means isolating meditation, the saṅgha also needed to worship Weituo. The procedures were: first, the abbot explains the Buddha's words and true principle of Buddhism to the monks. Then the abbot saw off the one who needed to do meditation and closes the door. The abbot pasted a seal with dharma-talk on the door. And then saṅgha recited the Weituo Praise and ended the ceremony. Weituo had been considering as a special protector of the saṅgha. On one hand, Weituo helps monks. There were miracle tales showing Weituo had helped monks when the monk was in meditation. Master Gaofeng 高峰禪師 (1238-1295 C.E.), one of the most respected Chan masters of the thirteenth century, was determined to resist the temptation of sleep and he had chosen to go to a cave in the cliff to do meditation. It was said that during

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115 “第三受籌結夏篇(六法) 初灑掃敷座法” 准根本百一羯磨云。安居前一日。授事人應掃塗房舍。令清淨已。於大食小食上。當告白云。諸大德。明日僧伽作夏安居。所有諸事。咸應思念(一說)。至日若有不白者。方丈前懸牌一面。上書今日受籌。明日安居。八大字。具知事者。於集眾處。令淨人掃灑已。於正中上面。供娑婆教主本師釋迦牟尼佛位。下面朝上左隅。供護法韋駄尊天位。並須香花羅列。燈燭幃煌。左右敷眾僧座。上面左隅。敷和尚座。於正中設一低桌。看人多少可為辨籌幾盤。應置二大籌。一者。先行佛位。二者。最後行護法韋駄尊天位。其籌不得粗惡曲戾。五分律云。極短並五極指。長一拳肘。簏不過小指。細不減粗著。以香水洗過。放淨盤中。鮮花覆上。應設二籌盤。二空盤。人多者。四籌盤。四空盤。放低卓上。整齊擺好。若伽藍大者。先應差堪能者受欲。待彼回堂已。時至鳴椎。此是打鐘三下。盡集界內僧。 “X.60 757c12--758a04.”

116 “內障外障以潛消.” “X.60 758b06.”

117 “掩關之模。始是閻閻經中。佛為修禪觀。行者。制期而設也。住持說法。說完。住持送關主進關。封鎖關門已。即以法語貼關壁外。結韋馱讚畢。各回本處.” “X.63 421c15--c19.”
his meditation, he had felled into sleep for three times and fell from the cliff. Weituo had saved him every time and helped him to comprehend the Buddha’s teaching. Finally after Weituo’s attunement, Gaofeng successfully resisted the desire of sleep and obtained the way. As a result, he built a temple in Tianmu Mountain for Weituo as a reward for the deity’s kindness. Later, this mountain became the Bodhi-site for Weituo. The deity was called as “Weituo Bodhisattva, the deity from the Heaven” (Weituo Zuntian Pusa 韋馱尊天菩薩). It should be noted, in this miracle story Weituo shows his wisdom in the teaching. The origin of such function came from Daoxuan’s article in which General Wei visited Daoxuan to discuss the Buddhist teaching.

On the other hand, as Weituo was supposed to warn or even punish monks who had done bad things, the statue of Weituo played as an icon to prevent the monks from bad behaviors. According to the Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations, abbots were required to show their respect to Weituo when they began to serve as the abbot of a temple or leave his post. These two ceremonies were respectively called Inauguration of the New Abbot and Retirement from the Office of Abbot. When the new abbot arrived at the temple, he needed to worship the main deities in each hall of the temple.

When he went to the first hall, he needed to worship Weituo who was one of the main figures in the hall. As a protective deity, Weituo’s function was to prevent the new abbot from power abuse. When the previous abbot was going to leave his post, he needed to explain the
reason of his departure in front of the Buddha and all the monks in the temple. All monks were responsible to test and verify his words. If there was anyone had doubts about the previous abbot’s words, they would draw lots in front of the statue of Weituo.\(^{123}\) The *saṅgha* believed Weituo had the magical power to know the truth because he “responded to the three continents.”\(^{124}\) On another hand, the deity with violence nature owned the power to punish the previous abbot if he were guilty to misconducts. In these two rituals, Weituo acted as the witness of the monks’s behaviors.

There are many stories on miracle stories of Weituo. Some of them are about how the deity used his magic power to punish the guilty. In many miracle stories, Weituo showed his violent characteristic and magic power when he punished monks who had made mistakes. Weituo acted like as wrathful god for those who had broken the commandments. He used magic power to punish people. For example, one monk was automatically tied and kneeled in front of the statue of Weituo when he stole lamp oil and said dirty words.\(^{125}\) There is another story about how a monk who was impolite to implements used in ritual was punished by Weituo:

Monk Bipan 碧璠 was furiously angry with the man and destroyed the three regulation garments and earthenware begging bowl. When he went into sleep at night, he saw the deity Weituo 韋駄尊天. Weituo shouts with anger, “who are you. How dare you destroy the sacred objects of Tathāgata?” The deity was about to hit him with the magic mallet. Bipan kowtowed and begged for mercy. Weitian 韋天 said, “[your donation] have helped the villagers build a defense

\(^{123}\) “而一時難定者，即於韋駄前，對眾以開占之。” X.63 434b10.

\(^{124}\) “擁護三洲之佛法。” T.45 874c23.

\(^{125}\) “順治丁亥年，鳩峰一行僧夜竊韋駄前燈油。口出吳俗俚語云，莫管他娘。次日僧忽自反縛。跪韋駄前，呵云，汝前日在玄墓偷喫一盤麫。我姑宥汝。今又竊我燈油。且口出惡語，罪死不赦。合院僧驚懼。代禮跪陳懺悔。乃曰。若非關聖垂慈解勸。立杵死，簡駄安香。一炷香將完，眾扶戰上禪單。又呵曰。尚有香二寸在灰內。依舊反縛跪床。眾揀灰內香果二寸。香畢乃放縛。罸翁曰。此安禪庵虛白老師親見為余說。” X.88 044c09.
This merit pays for your mistakes. Now I only remove your arm.” Then [Wei] pointed on his arm. The monk shouted loudly and waked up. In a few days, his right arm disappeared silently. 126

In this account, Weituo damaged the body of a monk because the monk had damaged “the sacred objects of Tathāgata.” The mallet was what the deity used to destroy the monk’s arm. It had obtained magic power.

Such plots can also be seen in popular novels. The Full biography of the Madman Ji (Qutoutuo zhuàn 郭頭陀傳), a novel on Jigong 濟公 (crazy Ji), describes a story of punishment. A monk whose name was Fanguang 梵光, in order to show how powerful he had been, lied to the audience about what he had experienced. When he was boasting, Weituo walked down from a black cloud and hit Fanguang on his head. Fanguang died immediately. 127 This novel was printed in 1569 C.E. 128 In the story he is a wrathful deity punishing who break the dharma. For this reason, Weituo’s statue had been considered as a symbol of the dharma. It’s not surprising to find such plot in Jigong’s Complete Biography (Jigong quanzhuan 濟公全傳), when Jigong a living Buddha who disguised as a crazy monk, was about to go on an alms round, he asked his followers Yang Meng 杨猛 to take a statue of Weituo with them. 129 The statue of Weituo acted as a certificate to prove that they are true monks because if they were not, they would not dare to touch or face the statue of Weituo.

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126 “碧璠毁如來衣缽頓縮一臂。麻城一富僧碧璠。曾捐百金。助村民築塞保衛一方。徒無窮欲受戒。璠不許。徒夜走至杏巖和尚處稟戒而回。碧璠一見大怒。裂碎三衣。撲破瓦缽。當晚方睡。即見韋馱尊天震怒痛罵云。汝是何人。敢毀如來法器耶。立欲以寶杵擊之。璠叩頭求懺。韋天曰。念汝修寨有功。姑去一臂。以杵輕輕向右臂一點。璠狂叫而醒。數日內忽右臂暗消。止長七八寸。手拳如小橘縣肩上。至今師徒皆在焉。罷翁曰。余師姪吼木與璠鄰居。述其事甚詳。” X88 31c19-31a04.


128 Tan Zhengbi 譚正璧 and 譚尋 Tan Xun, Guben xijian xiaoshuo huikao 古本稀見小說匯考 [Study on Old Version of Rare Novels] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1984), 303-306.

Weituo’s punishment is not one-sided. Weituo has revenged for monks who have been treated unfairly. Here was a miracle story on Weituo’s punishment on people who had been impolite to a monk:

Zhuang Qinxian 杖奇顯 came coming from Quanzhou 泉州. He was the Bangyan (the second place at Palace test) of the Imperial Examination of Guichou 癸醜. When he was young, he liked to drink alcohol. One day he was drinking in Chengtiansi 承天寺. When he was drunk, he went to the place preserving the canon. He saw a master teaching the Śūraṅgama Sūtra. He felt extremely angry and picked up the sūtra on the table. Then thrown it on the floor and stepped on it. After that, he threw the statue of Weituo on the floor. Several months later, when he tried to kick someone, he accidently kicked on a pillar. His toes were split and got infected and festered. It caused extremely pain, and then, he saw Weituo cursing him. Soon he died. 

This man was punished because he had disturbed the saṅgha’s religious activities and treated Buddhist object badly. In fact, Zhuang Qixian (1587-1622 C.E.) was a real person in history who died when he was young. This miracle story coincides with historical records on Zhuang Qixian’s personal information. This man was the second in the examination on 1613 C.E. and his hometown is Jinjiang 晉江, a town belongs to Quanzhou 泉州. He was dead of a terrible disease. In historical materials, he was a man of piety and died of terrible grief after his parents’ death. The miracle tale provides another possibility of his miserable death. 

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130 泉州莊奇顯。癸醜科榜眼。年少嗜酒。忽一日飲於承天寺。醉後往藏經所。見有法師講大佛頂經。遂大怒取案上經擲之。以腳踏之。又仆韋馱像於地。後數月以腳踢一廝。誤中柱上。腳指破裂成異瘡。漸腫至身。楚痛異常。見韋馱詰責而死。” X.88 023c18--22.
warned people to pay respect to the saṅgha, the sūtra and Buddhism. Zhuang Qixian was set as a negative example. He had paid for his impolite behavior to the dharma and the saṅgha.

According to the *Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations*, the saṅgha worshiped Weituo when there will be new buildings in temples. The procedures were firstly the saṅgha could request the abbot to worship Weituo. Then the abbot would settle down a date and informs both monks and lay members. In that day, when the bell tolls, monks wore their robe kāṣāya and got together in the main hall or the Heavenly Kings Hall and recited the *Great-Propitious-Celestial-Main’s Dharani* to worship Weituo.¹³²

Weituo had been considered as a protector of the sūtras. The ritual of Request of Sūtra (*qingjing* 請經) was supposed to be held by the Guest Hall 客堂. Before the ritual, two memorials talking about the purpose of the ritual were needed to be prepared. Every day when the board was beaten twice, or when the bell rang of three times, the monks got together. The receptionist asked the abbot to burn incense and the Karma dāna who manages the affairs of the saṅgha would take the incense and invoke the name of Weituo for three times. Every hour, the saṅgha were required to walk around the main hall or the statue of Weituo while chanting the *Great-Propitious-Celestial-Main’s Dharani*. After chanting it for 108 or at least 49 times, played the chime for twice. After that, every return to his place and then the memorial would be read in public. The abbot then would burn the incense, and the Karma dāna again would take the incense and recited the Weituo praise for three times. Then

¹³²凡遇荒歉，常住將絕糧，或為建造，或修理等事，維那及兩序，白住持已，預定日期。外則請化主通檀那，內則報客堂掛牌。（牌云）本月某日起，聞鐘聲，大眾師搭衣，齊詣大殿。（或韋馱殿）持善天女咒，祈禱韋餘。祈禱韋餘* X.63 391a12-a15.
the saṅgha would pay homage for three times and end the ritual of this day. Apart from this ritual, there were other evidences supporting Weituo’s connection with sūtras.

In the late imperial time, popular novels recorded Weituo’s connection with Buddhist sūtras. For example, in the novel Amazing Tales (Erke paian jingqi 二刻拍案驚奇), a collection of short stories, Weituo helped the monks to hold the sūtra. The earliest version if this book that existing now was printed in 1632 C.E. There was a famous Buddhist manuscript of the Diamond Sūtra (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, Jingang jing 金剛經) (509 C.E.) written by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846 C.E.), a famous poet. This sūtra was kept in a temple. However, a local official wanted to get this sūtra and he forced the abbot of the temple to hand over it. At that moment, the wind blew away a leaf of the sūtra. When the official saw the sūtra become incomplete, he gave up the idea of owning it and left the temple immediately. A few years later, the abbot found the lost leaf of the sūtra from a peasant. After hearing about the story, the peasant returned the lost leaf of this sūtra. The abbot believed it was Weituo who had showed his superpower to blow away the leaf in order to protect the sūtra. In this story, Weituo used his magic power to prevent the sūtra from being robbed. It is a way he protects the dharma. It seems to be a clear consensus about Weituo’s role as a Buddhist protector in society.

The cult of Weituo had been connected with cultivation and the food of the saṅgha. Piṇḍapāta originally refers to the Indian method of rolling the cooked food into bolus for eating. Chinese monks have changed it to a ceremony. It would be held during the winter
or summer or when the place is experiencing a crop failure. According to the *Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations*, the saṅgha also need to worship Weituo in this ritual. They need to make an individual ceremony in front of Weituo.

Ahead of the ceremony, the abbot needs to settle down a time with the donors. During that day, after the breakfast, monks gather in the main hall after the bell tolls for three times. The abbot leads monks to worship the Buddha and Weituo. And then they hold bowls and follow the abbot and beg for alms in streets. When they come back to the temple, they need to worship the Buddha and Weituo again to end the ceremony. In this ritual, Weituo is worshipped together with the Buddha. There is another example showing Weituo’s connection with food. The saṅgha would intone praises related with Weituo when a famine occurs.

Weituo had been popular in Buddhist rituals in the late imperial time. *The Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations* is a commentary on the *Baizhang Chan Monastic Regulations* (*Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 勅修百丈清規) (1335 C.E.).

It should be noted in the *Baizhang Chan Monastic Regulations* Weituo did not appear in the text. However, in the *Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations*, there is an independent section named the “Prayer Invocation for Weituo” 祈禱韋馱. It proved the popularity of Weituo received at that time.

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136 "鳴大鐘三下。眾集大殿燒香傳爐。知客請住持拈香。維那舉香讚。住持禮佛。并禮韋天已。悅眾鳴引磬。大眾齊禮佛三拜畢。班首持錫杖前行。眾依次而走。侍者捧缽在住持前。住持居未。而拄杖又在住持後。收供與知客兩岸寫呪僧一線緩行。威儀庠序。行則齊行。不得參差。若須抽解。當先收衣。付於同參。擇幽僻處抽解已。洗淨盥掌。即追前搭衣入眾。若遇施主施茶點。或施午齋。臨坐受食。更須威儀次序。使彼觀者。生恭敬心。發喜捨願。乃至回寺。仍到大殿。如常站班。維那鳴磬。大眾齊唱香讚。住持拈香禮佛。禮韋天大眾齊禮佛三拜。回堂。是晚大眾腐飯。直至圓滿日。“ X.63 491b01--b20
137 “凡遇荒歉。常住將絕糧……維那及兩序。白住持已。預定日期。外則請化主通白檀那。內則報客堂掛牌。（牌云）本月某日起。聞鐘聲。大眾師搭衣。齊詣大殿。（或韋馱殿）持善天女呪。祈禱韋天。” X.63 391a12--a15.
139 “凡遇荒歉。常住將絕糧。或為建造。或修理等事。維那及兩序。白住持已。預定日期。外則請化主通白檀那。內則報客堂掛牌。（牌云）本月某日起。聞鐘聲。大眾師搭衣。齊詣大殿。（或韋馱殿）持善天女呪。祈禱韋天。“ X.63 391a11--c09.
Weituo’s birthday had been celebrated by the saṅgha. According to the Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations, the saṅgha will celebrate Weituo’s birthday in the third day of the sixth month of Chinese lunar calendar. At that day, the saṅgha will hang a board with the words saying that today is the birthday of Weitian (another name for Weituo). At this day, they make offering to Weituo. At noon, monks play the drum for three times and they gather in the main hall and recite words showing their respect to the deity. They will chant:

We heard protective deity Bodhisattva Weituo respond to [people] in the three continents. His behaviors comply with the Buddha’s teaching. His merit is outstanding among the deities. He is a deity with high rank but eager to hear the sound of normal people. He responds to both the good and evil behavior of the saṅgha and lay man. He has wisdom as well as compassion. His dignity and kindness are equal to that of Bodhisattvas. His gain is not deliberated and he is outside the passion-stream. The saṅgha in the last years of the law have shallow roots. It is harder for them to get enlightenment. Thanks to Weitian’s protection, the evil from the outside cannot easily disturb them. I wrote this article to express the [our] pleasure to celebrate his [Weituo’s] birthday.

The saṅgha hold the ceremony for Weituo because he helps them to get rid of the evil. This record refers to Weituo as a Bodhisattva instead of a protective deity.

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140 There are two versions on the date of his birthday. One is in the 3rd of the sixth month, while the other is in the 13th of this month. For further information, please see Baizhang qinggui zhengyi ji 百丈清規證義記 [The Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations] (X.63 391c11).

141 “六月初三日。（或云十三。未知孰是）韋天聖誕。早粥客堂掛牌。（牌云）是日恭逢韋天聖誕。” X.63 391c11--391c23.

142 “蓋聞。三洲感應護法韋駄尊天菩薩。行齊佛化。德攝天人。居高聽卑。善惡隨僧俗之感。興悲運智。威慈等菩薩之權。妙證無為。功超有漏。伏念末法僧眾。福根淺薄。道力衰微。匪資韋天以護持。曷使外魔而不嬈，欣逢聖誕。特獻傲芹。” X.63 391c15--c23.
4.2 Weituo worship in secular society

Weituo enjoyed popularity both among the saṅgha and in the secular world. In Buddhist rituals that participated by both the saṅgha and the local people, such as the invocations for rains and crops, Weituo had been invited. In these rituals, the function of Weituo was close to a local deity. To the saṅgha such rituals had promoted the communication between the saṅgha and local people. “The Prayer Invocation for Weituo” in the Record of Testimony and Meaning of the Baizhang Monastic Regulations had mentioned if there is a crop failure, the saṅgha could ask Weituo for help. A historical material proved Buddhist record. A board with the words “benefitting the town of Qian” (Fuyou Qiancheng 福佑潛城) was said to be inscribed by the emperor Yongzheng 雍正 (1678-1735 C.E.) of the Qing Dynasty in 1889 C.E. as a reward for the deity’s response to the people who had prayed for rain. Such activities certainly helped Weituo to be favored by local people. In fact, people in the area around the Tianmu Mountain claimed that the Bodhi-site of Weituo was in the Tianmu Mountain. The book History of Zhaoming Temple in Eastern Tianmu Mountain (Dong Tianmushan zhaomingchansi zhi 東天目山昭明寺志) which was written in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries tells worshipping Weituo in Tianmu Mountain was most efficacious. Weituo is one of the few Buddhist figures who own Bodhi-site. The Tianmu Bodhi-site shows the cult of Weituo may have been prosperous at a certain period of time.

For the secular people, Weituo acted as a general protector and his functions sometimes adapted to the actual needs of people. In Chinese stories of court cases or storytelling (Pingshu 評書) Weituo had played diversified roles. Both of novels and storytelling were forms of entertainment with broad mass appeal in late imperial China. It

143 Chongxu xitianmushanzhi bianzhuanweiyuanhui 重修西天目山志編纂委員會編 ed., Chongxu xitianmushanzhi 重修西天目山志[Re-edited Gazetteer of West Tianmu Mountain] (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2009), 241.
displays people’s favor for him. Weituo sometimes was depicted as a deity showed his magical power to uphold justice. For example, in the Court Case of Yugong (Yugong an 于公案), a popular theme of storytelling, the official needed to resolve a difficult case but had not found any clue. In his dream, Weituo pointed out a part of the murder's name and left him a clue. Finally, the official correctly caught the real criminals. In this story, he safeguarded the justice. Sometimes, Weituo’s function is to protect the innocent people. In one of the stories in What the master does not speak of (Zibuyu 子不語), which is a collection of short stories written by famous literati Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1797 C.E.), Weituo saved innocent people from hurting by the demon. There was a man from Suzhou 宿州 in Anhui province named Li Jiu. He was a cloth merchant. One day, he passed Hoshan 霍山 a place in the south of Suzhou. The night came and hostels were full. He had to live in a temple. In four o’clock in the morning, when he was deep in sleep. Weituo touched his back and told him to wake up. The deity said, “Hurry, hurry. A monster is coming. You hide at my back so that I can save you.” Li is awakened. He felt there was a sound near the bed. Suddenly, a monster with whiter hair came out. The monster rushed at Li. Li climbed on the stage and hidden at the back of Weituo. The monster hugged the statue and bitten it. Li was shouting. Monks all awaken and came to the place with firebrands. The monster went back to the coffin, and closed it. In the next day, they saw Weituo’s statue had been damaged by the monster and the mallet had been cut off into three pieces. In order to repay Weituo’s kindness, Li donated a golden manifestation for the deity. In most stories related with Weituo, the deity had been depicted as a good deity. Being mentioned in popular novels indicated Weituo was popular Buddhist deity in secular people’s minds.

145 Yuan Mei 袁枚, Zibuyu 子不語 [What the master does not speak of] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2005), 254.
It was interesting that Weituo has been absorbed by Taoist novels. For example, the *Creation of the Gods* is a war novel set in Taoism. There was a character whose prototype is Weituo.\(^{146}\) His name was called Weihu 韋護 (Protector Wei). This novel was written during 1567 and 1619 C.E.\(^{147}\) The iconographical elements of this man are very confusing:

[Luyue] turns back and finds a man looks neither like a secular man or a follower of religions. He wears a helmet and a Taoist robe and carries a Demon-subduing mallet. He walks slowly. Luyue stands up and asks: who are you? The man answered: I’m Weituo who is a student of Daoxing Tianzun from Yuwu cave in Jinting Mountain.\(^{148}\)

He wore helmet but dressed robe of Taoist style. His weapon was named Demon-subduing mallet (*xiangmo chu* 降魔杵) rather than *vajra*-mallet. His master was Daoxing Tianzun, a well-known Taoist figure. His mission was to help Jiang Ziya 姜子牙 (a history figure of the eleventh century BCE), a friend of Weihu’s teacher, to establish a new regime and kept the order of the society. To some extent, he had been considered as one of the protectors of social justice in this novel. He had similarity with Weituo in many aspects including his names, his characteristics and appearance. In *Stories of the Deities of generations* (*Lidai shenxian tongjian* 歷代神仙通鑒), a novel put a great number of deities in the Taoist context, which was printed in 1645 C.E.,\(^{149}\) a Taoist transformed Weituo appeared:


\(^{147}\)Qi Yukun 齊裕焜, *Mingdai xiaoshuo shi* 明代小說史 [The history of novels in the Ming Dynasty] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1997), 190.


\(^{149}\)Dai Bufan 戴不凡, *Xiaoshuo jianwenlu* 小說見聞錄 [Study on novels I have seen] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1980), 267.
A man wears a helmet and armor. He balances a Demon-subduing mallet on his arms and press palms against each other. He said he was ordered to come by the Buddha, Dipamkara said: he has obtained the complete perfection since he was young. His name is Weituo and learns Taoist teaching from me. He was introduced to the world of deities by the Heavenly Kings. He could arrive any place in the three continents in one day. He responds when there is a sound. He is extremely powerful. As a result, he was called as the protective Tianzun of the three continents. Everyone answers: excellent! 150

The author used the Taoist theory to re-explain Weituo’s character in Daoxuan’s record. He used “complete perfection” (quanzhen 全真) to replace Buddha-son and meditative pure practices (tongzhen fanxing 童真梵行). It coincided with the name of the Complete Perfection School (Quanzhen jiao 全真教), one of the major schools in Taoism. Weituo’s master in this novel is Dipamkara who had also been depicted as a Taoist figure. What he was learning is Taoism. Therefore, although the deity in this novel was also named as Weituo, he was a Taoist transformed Buddhist figure. These novels had reflected the confusing situation for deities in Taoism and Buddhism in popular culture in late imperial time.

4.3 Conclusion

The worship of Weituo had displayed various functions of the deity. These functions reflected the characteristics of Weituo as a Buddhist protector with mentioned in his legend with Daoxuan. There were two kinds of worship that Weituo has received since the late imperial time. One is being worshiped as a protector of the dharma mainly by the saṅgha, the

150. 一人面胄贯甲，降魔杵横架臂上，合掌当胸，言奉佛旨来迎。燃灯曰：此子自幼全真，名曰韦驮，从吾学道，证位天王，能日遍三洲，寻声感应，法力无穷，以此称三洲感应护法天尊。众称“善哉”。 Please see Xu Dao 徐道 and Chen Yuqi 程毓奇, Lidai shenxian yanyi 历代神仙演義 [Stories of the Deities of generations] (Shenyang: Liaoning guji chubanshe, 1995), 644.
other is being worshiped as a general protector mainly by the local society. In the second kind of worship, Weituo help to promote Buddhist expansion into the secular world. The plots related to Weituo showed the worship of Weituo was widely spread in the secular world. He had been depicted as a powerful and kind deity in a number of popular novels. His popularity help Buddhism create social credibility
Chapter Five The Visual Representations of Weituo

According to the “Biography for General Weitian” edited by Xingting, from the reign of Emperor Gaozong in the seventh century, his sculpture had been establishing in Buddhist temples and practice halls. The earliest visual representation of Weituo existing now is possibly established in the ninth century. Since then, there are many changes has been made on the positions of Weituo’s visual representations. In the late imperial time, diversified visual representations of Weituo emerged and indicated the deity had enjoyed popularity. Along with the process, the main positions of Weituo’s visual representation had been settled down. There are two positions that Weituo has frequently occupied: in the Heavenly Kings Hall of each temples and in the front or last pages of a Buddhist pamphlet. At present time, Weituo’s images are still easy to find in these two places.

5.1 Weituo in Temples

As a protector of the Buddhist temple, the statue of Weituo has been put in a lot of places. His statues have been placed in the Main Hall, the entrance Hall and the kitchen in a temple. Sometimes, there was a separate hall dedicated to the deity, which indicated the importance of Weituo to a temple. The Heavenly Kings Hall became a certain part of a temple at least in the Ming Dynasty. At present time, Weituo had been usually placed in this hall.

151 “自唐高宗已來。諸處伽藍及建立熏修。皆設像崇敬。彰護法之功。” X88 430b15--b16;
“每在伽藍或蘭若。熏修之功。” X88 430c02.
152 Fang Litian 方立天, Zhongguofajiaowenhua 中国佛教文化 [Buddhist Culture in China] (Hong Kong: Sanlianshudian xianggang youxiangongsi, 2008), 161.
In the Heavenly Kings Hall, the statue of Weituo is placed at the back of Maitreya. This hall has also been named as the Weituo Hall or the Maitreya Hall. It is the first hall facing the gate of a temple. Normally this hall contains the sculpture of Maitreya, Weituo and Four Heavenly Kings. Maitreya appearing as a laughing Buddha is placed directly facing the gate. The statues of Maitreya and Weituo are surrounded by the Four Heavenly Kings. According to *A Gazetteer for the Lingyin Temple (Lingyinsi zhi*) (1663 C.E.) people place the statue of Weituo in the Heavenly Kings Hall to make the deity face the Buddha. It was a way to show the deity’s function of protecting the three continents.\(^{153}\)

Besides, Weituo’s statue is the only one facing the inside of a temple and this special direction may be related with Weituo’s function as a protector of the *sangha*.

The earliest visual representation of Weituo has been placed on the stage of the Main Hall. It is in the East Hall of the Foguangsi (Fig 1.1). The statue of Weituo appeared on the main stage. Sitting on a cubic base, the right side of his body is in front of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. His eyes are looking down but his face is turning to the middle. The color of his face is golden. He has been identified by Liang Sicheng，a specialist on the art and architectural history of China, as Weituo in 1937 C.E. during their scientific investigation on ancient temple architects.\(^{154}\) If the sculpture was as old as the other sculptures around him,\(^{155}\) it would be the earliest sculpture that matches the iconographical characters of the new deity Weituo.

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155 Zhang Yingxia reckons that the sculpture of Weituo is not made in the Tang Dynasty because its style and color is very different from other sculptures on the stage. It is the only one was painted golden on its face except the three Buddhas. Besides, its position on the stage is weird and has no pair. Zhang Yingxia suspects it would be a sculpture moved from the gate which used to be a Weituo Hall. Because of the uncertainty of this suspect, she still take the sculpture as one of the sculptures made in the Tang Dynasty. Please see Zhang Yingxia 張映瑩, *Wutaishan Foguangsi 五臺山佛光寺* [The Foguangsi in Wutai mountain] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2010), 92
Weituo’s statue had been put in the kitchen of Chan temples. In this case, his statue adopted the look of a general clasping hand when balanced the weapon upon the wrist.\(^{156}\) Mujaku Dochu (1653-1744 C.E.) reckoned that this custom was generated from the tale of General Wei brought food to Daoxuan

In Chan temples, Weitian (alternative name for General Wei) is placed in the kitchen. I’m not sure what the reason is. It is said Weitian has served food from the Heaven for \textit{vinaya}-master Xuan [Daoxuan]. As Dahui pushuo 大慧普說 (Abbreviation for the \textit{General Sermons by Chan Master Dahui}) noted the deity Weituo responded to \textit{vinaya}-master Xuan and takes food from the Heaven to the monk every day. I have quoted this sentence before. Is it the reason why [Weitian is] put in the kitchen? Jigulue only says the deity responds to \textit{vinaya}-master Xuan and serves him food. It does not mention Weitian.

“Talking about setting Weituotian’s statue” in the \textit{Monk Yueanguang’s record} ("Weituotian anzuoyu" in \textit{Yueanguangheshang lu} 華顕光和尚録 蕭馴天安座語) from Damingsi 大明寺 recorded, “you are the greatest protector of the three continents and the son of the Heaven. Today, we particularly invite you to be the lord of food. Please remind to be strict to the serving and be punctual. Serve the Buddha and the \textit{saṅgha}. Protect the \textit{dharma} and make it remain. If you confronted my words, I will beat you with the wand.”\(^{157}\)


The function of Weitian in the kitchen is to serve food to the *saṅgha*. Mujaku Dochu reckoned that this tradition came from Daoxuan’s adventure with General Wei. In this text, he was called as “lord of the kitchen.” He was supposed to be responsible for food of the *saṅgha*. Meanwhile it was a mutual supervision. He was supervised by monks and monks had the power to punish him if he was careless with his work.

Weituo became so popular that, in some cases, the deity has a hall dedicated to him. For example, the Weituo Hall is the western side hall in the Upper Guangshengsi (Fig3.4). It was a statue of the Ming Dynasty. In this hall Weituo was the main figure. He had been depicted as a Chinese general sitting in the middle put one of his legs on seat. At the both side of Weituo, there are statues of a child and an official. It shows that Weituo used to be so important that sometimes his statue was placed in a separate hall.

At least in the twelfth century, there were statues of Weituo. At that time, the Heavenly Kings Hall did not become a certain part of a temple, and the positions of Weituo were flexible. In Ming Dynasty, the Heavenly Kings Hall was the first hall of most temples, and the position of Weituo’s statue was settled down. For temples containing the Heavenly Kings Hall, Weituo’s statue is commonly in this hall.

5.2 Weituo at the side of Guanyin

The second type of visual representations of Weituo refers to the portrait of Weituo appearing at the side of Guanyin. There is a folktale talking about the relationship of Weituo and Guanyin in the area around Mount Putuo 普陀山. It is said Weituo used to be a kind hearted poor man. He wanted to build a bridge over a dangerous river for the villagers.

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158 Please see notes on the location of Weituo in Zhongguo fojiao yanjiusuo 中國佛教研究所 and Shanxisheng wenwuju 山西省文物局 eds., *Shanxi fojiao caisu* [Shanxi Buddhist Color Sculpture] (Hong Kong: Zhongguo fojiaoxiehui, Hong Kong baolian chansi, 1991), 329.
Guanyin was moved by him and tried to help him make the dream come true. One day, Guanyin transformed into a beauty and stood on a boat in the middle of the river. She told if there was anyone hit her by money, he could bring her home. Many rich men were interested in her and threw everything they had to the girl but none of them hit her. Soon Guanyin raised enough money for building the bridge. At this time, Weituo passed by and saw her. He fell in love with the girl immediately. Lu Dongbin, a Taoist deity, played a trick on Guanyin and used his magic power to help Weituo hit Guanyin by a coin. Guanyin met Weituo in the boat and asked him to be in charge of building the bridge. When the bridge was established, Guanyin brought Weituo to Mount Putuo. According to the folk story, in the front of Guanyin Hall, there are supposed to be a statue of Weituo. The pair of Guanyin and Weituo was called as “couple right in front” 對面夫妻. 159

In Chinese Buddhist art, the images of Weituo have accompanied with various types of Guanyin in large numbers of images in various forms since the Yuan Dynasty 元代 (1271-1368 C.E.). The visual representation of Weituo and Guanyin has already emerged as early as in the thirteenth century. Presently, although it may not be as obvious as it used to be, depicting Weituo at the side of Guanyin in Chinese painting is a tradition remained at present time (Fig 5.1). 160 These two figures seem to form a pair in Chinese Buddhist art.

In a number of visual representations of Weituo made from Yuan Dynasty, Weituo appeared at the side of Guanyin. For example, in Feilaifeng, there are two niches built during the Yuan Dynasty contains statues of Weituo. In no. 35 niche there is a statue of a general who is on the right side of the main figure (Fig 5.2). Guanyin holds a lotus flower in his hand. This niche was established in the Yuan Dynasty. Guanyin’s attendant in the sculptures


160 In a ritual worshipping the Buddha’s bone relic in Macao in May of 2012, there are a number of Chinese paintings on Guanyin where Weituo’s images has appeared. For further information about the ritual, please see http://www.sara.gov.cn/ztzz/bdgsflfgagf/tpjbdgsflfgagf/index.htm (accessed in March 15, 2012).
matches a textual description of Weituo’s image in the Yuan Dynasty by Fu Yan 傅岩 who was one of the successful candidates (jinshi 进士) in the imperial exam in 1634 C.E.:

General Wei put mallet on his wrists. His hands clasp together. He wears helmet and armor. His face looks white. He has plump jowls without beard. As a general of Heaven, he has Baize 白澤 (name of a monster) pattern on the surface of his helmet. 161

In no. 35 niche, the figure is clasps his hands and puts mallet on his wrist. He wears a helmet with wings at both sides. He stands on a short platform, and turn to his left towards Guanyin. He has a round face without beard which makes him looks very young. Therefore, he has been identified the figure as Weituo.162 This is another example. In Chinese paintings, Weituo has appeared in images of multiple sets 相 depicting Guanyin. For example, in the picture Five Forms of Guanyin (Guanyin wuxiang 觀音五相) drew by Ding Yunpeng 丁雲鵬 (1547-ca. 1628 C.E.), Weituo is in the right upper side of the whole picture (Fig 5.3).163 The five forms of Guanyin include the White-robed Guanyin, the Water and Moon Avalokiteśvara, the Child-sending Guanyin, the Fish Basket Guanyin, and etc. All of them are feminine Chinese Guanyin. Ding Yunpeng was a famous artist of human figures and landscapes in the Ming Dynasty. Weituo appears with his standard iconography. He puts hands together in front of his chest and carries a mallet. He adopts a static posture. Yu Chunfang believes of all kinds of multiple sets depicting Guanyin, the one with five forms may be the earliest.164

162 Chang Qing 常青, “Feilaifeng and the flowing of Chinese Buddhist sculpture from the Tenth to Fourteenth centuries” (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2005), 276.
Weituo’s statue is sometimes very dynamic at the side of the Water and Moon Avalokiteśvara (shui yue Guanyin 水月觀音). It should be mentioned in the majority of visual representations of Weituo, the deity had usually appeared standing or sitting still. However, in no.95 niche of Feilaifeng and the Shuanglinsi, Weituo appears very dynamic. The sculptures consist of three figures. The composite of both are very similar. Guanyin is the main figure and at the opposite side of Weituo, there are other deities acting as another attendant of Guanyin. In both sculpture, Weituo and the other attendant turn their bodies to Guanyin. Water and Moon Avalokiteśvara is shaped as a figure seated on a rock in the traditional posture of ease, with the right arm resting on an upraised knee and the left leg pendant. In both no.95 niche of Feilaifeng and the Shuanglinsi, the main figures were created this way. The three figures in niche no. 95 had been identified as Water and Moon Avalokiteśvara, Weituo 韋馱 on the left and a boy (tongzi 童子) on the right. The sculpture of Weituo looks very wrathful. The way he carries his mallet is very similar to that of him in Lingyinsi, a temple near Feilaifeng. He put the weapon on the ground. In Thousand- Buddha Hall of the Shuanglinsi (Fig 5.4), Water and Moon Guanyin is in the middle. The statue of Weituo is on the right hand of Guanyin. The weapon was missing and his left hand is damaged. His lion hat shows the iconography of this deity had been influenced by Buddhist art in Central Asia. And on the left hand of Guanyin, there is a yakṣa. In another case.

167 In the picture book of Shuanglinsi edited in 2007, there is a picture shows a yakṣa existed in the Thousand-Buddha Hall near Guanyin. But when I went to there in the beginning of 2012, the sculpture of yakṣa had disappear. And now, the place of yakṣa is empty. Please see Shanxisheng Wenwuju 山西省文物局, Pingyao shuanglinsi caisuyishuguan 平遙雙林寺彩塑藝術館 eds., Shuanglinsi caisu 雙林寺彩塑 [Painted sculptures in Shuanglinsi] (Tianjin: Tianjin renminmeishu chubanshe, 2007), fig 77.
Weituo was depicted as a deity flying around Moon and Water Guanyin in *Shuilu Paintings* in Fahaisi (Fig 5.5).\(^{169}\)

### 5.3 Weituo in *Sūtras*

The portrait of Weituo most frequently appears on the first or last pages of Buddhist pamphlets.\(^{170}\) Normally, his images appear with “a tablet-like plaque stating the name, place, reason, and date the *sūtra* was printed for free distribution.”\(^{171}\) Weituo’s image occupies the position in Buddhist pamphlet since the Song Dynasty. The *Forest of Pearls in the Secret Palace* (*Midian zhulin* 秘殿珠林), a book records the collection of the royal family of the Qing Dynasty had recorded several examples of Buddhist pamphlets with Weituo’s images printed in Song Dynasty.

In the late imperial time, Weituo’s images were considered as a usual way to decorate the *sūtra*. In Chinese Buddhist Artifact Collection and Library in Fayuansi 法源寺, hundreds of woodblock print copies of *sūtras* connected with the cult of Guanyin such as the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddhārma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra*; *Miào fǎ liánhuá jīng* 妙法蓮華經) (286 C.E.) and the *High King Avalokiteśvara Sūtra* (*Gaowang Guanshiyin jīng* 高王觀世音經) (534-537 C.E.), two of the most important texts in the development of the Guanyin worship. Among them, the earliest one was dated to 1428 C.E. and the rest was dated to 1600s. At the back of each pamphlet, there is a portrait of Weituo.\(^{172}\) When the emperor of Qing Dynasty copied the *Diamond Sūtra* and the *Universal Gateway of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva* (*Guanyin pusa*...
Weituo’s images have been tightly connected with Buddhist sūtras. Not only Chinese sūtras, but also Tangut pamphlets contained pictures of Weituo. For example, there are portraits of Weituo at the back of a Tangut version of the Abhidharma Storehouse Treatise (Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra-śāstra; Api damo shunzheng lilun 阿毗達磨順正理論) (654 C.E.), printed in 1307 C.E. The images of Weituo not only appeared on pamphlets but also on scrolls. Capital Museum of China, Shanghai Museum and Palace Museum in Beijing each has preserved a silk scroll of the Lotus Sūtra with Weituo’s image (Fig 5.6). These pictures were made with embroidery. These banners were all coming from Jiaxing 嘉興 of Zhejiang province. They have an inscription shows that they were made in 1366 C.E. They indicated not only Buddhist pamphlet but also silk scroll contains the images of Weituo. The image of Weituo has been very common in Buddhist sūtras and it seems to be popular way to decorate sūtras. Besides, it is still very common to paint Weituo’s images on Buddhist pamphlets currently.

5.4 Conclusion

There are three types of visual representations of Weituo depicting the deity as an independent protector. The first type is Weituo’s statues in Buddhist temples. The second one is Weituo’s visual representation appearing at the side of Guanyin. The third type is the

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173 Zhang Zhao 張照, Midian zhulin 秘殿珠林 [Forest of Pearls in the Secret Palace] (Wenyuange sikuquanshu dianzi ban 文淵閣四庫全書電子版 Electronic version of Wenyuange Sikuquanshu) vol.1, 3-82.
portrait of Weituo appearing in Buddhist sūtras. Among the three types of visual representations of Weituo, the first and last types are most common at present time. The second type had been popular in certain period of time but is not as distinguishing as it used to be.

Examples above have discussed three types of Weituo’s visual representations: Weituo’s statues in Buddhist temples; Weituo’s visual representation appearing at the side of Guanyin and the portrait of Weituo appearing in Buddhist sūtras. The first and last types of Weituo’s visual representations are popular ways of depicting Weituo in Chinese Buddhist art. The images and sculptures of Weituo have been placed in a number of places. Presently, the portrait of Weituo in Buddhist sūtras and Weituo’s sculpture in Heavenly Kings Hall are the most common among other positions of Weituo’s visual representations.
Chapter Six Conclusion

This thesis is a general study on Weituo in Chinese Buddhism. It is consisted of four parts. They respectively discussed the formation of Weituo’s legend, the deity’s distinguishing iconography, the worship and visual representation of Weituo. The Chinese legend of Weituo decided the iconography and characteristics of the deity. The functions of Weituo in worship reflected his characteristics while the visual representation of the deity mirrored his iconography. These four parts together illustrate the whole picture of Weituo worship in China.

The first part talks about the formation of deity Weituo in the twelfth century from his two origins on studying his legend. Weituo used to be the Chinese name of Skanda, who used to be a subordinate deity in the *Golden Light Sūtra*. This name appeared in Chinese Buddhist texts in the fifth century when the *sūtra* was translated into Chinese, but did not draw much attention. In the twelfth century, Weituo was frequently referred to by Chinese monks and was widely regarded as a deity responded to master Daoxuan in the seventh century. He had been considered as General Wei who appeared in Daoxuan’s writing. This original record had been modified and re-explained by latter monks in the twelfth century. Some records of the eleventh to the twelfth century showed that monks such as Zongxiao and Pujue replaced the General Wei in the original record with Weituo. The legendary encounter of Daoxuan was borrowed to be a legend of Weituo. At the end of the twelfth century, these two deities had been explained as different names of Weituo. Therefore the new deity Weituo was formed. This legend determined the characteristics of Weituo. Weituo is a Chinese transformed Skanda because he and Skanda are different in legend, iconography, characteristics and
functions. Weituo is a new figure who had an Indian origin and borrowed a Chinese legend. This part displays diversified origins of Weituo. A fully understanding of the characteristics of Weituo is the first step to a comprehensive study on Weituo, so that he would not be treated as an absolutely Indian god or a Chinese deity. The process of Weituo’s transformation will possibly benefit researches on deities of foreign origins.

The second part intends to show the distinguishing iconography of Weituo and how did it form. The deity Weituo was derived from origins including Chinese general and Vajrapāṇi. Weituo had been depicted as a Chinese general because of his legend with Daoxuan. Usually, he appears as a figure wearing helmet and armor. Vajra-mallet was his weapon. General Wei was clearly the basis of Weituo’s iconography. Because of him, Weituo possessed features such as military uniform and baby-face. Meanwhile, statues of Weituo shared certain similarities with Vajrapāṇi in the visual representations. Weituo’s weapon was a vajra in essence. In some cases, Weituo wore the lion headdress that used to be a trait of Vajrapāṇi such as the in the Thousand-Buddha Hall of the Shuanglinṣi. The iconography of Weituo showed how a foreign god adopted to the new Chinese legend. Besides, the vajra was a trait of Weituo in iconography and it was new for the Chinese legend of the deity. It indicated the iconography and legend of the deity had their own development in the very beginning.

The third part tries to show the two roles Weituo has played in Buddhist rituals: a protector of the dharma and a general protector in the secular society. Each of them focused on different points of Weituo’s function, practices and characteristics. As a protector of the dharma, his function was especially linked with the saṅgha. He participated in a series of Buddhist rituals related to the life of the Buddhist monastic group such as the saṅgha’s meditation, the temple and the sūtra. Among these rituals, Weituo has particularly connected with the saṅgha as a means of protecting the dharma. Buddhist texts and a number of
literature materials supported his role as a protector the saṅgha. Miracle stories showed that he had acted as a special protector of the saṅgha’s meditation. He also punished those who try to damage the dharma. In popular novels, he had been considered as a proof of a true monk. In these stories, he was more likely to show his violent nature while his characteristic as a practitioner had been underlined. His statue appeared in Buddhist temples as a symbol of the dharma. Meanwhile, Weituo had been worshiped by the secular society. In rituals connected with the secular people, he was transformed to an agricultural related or weather related deity. The worship of Weituo was especially popular in the area around the Tianmu Mountain. Novels in the late imperial China showed his popularity in the secular society. In these novels, he had been considered as a symbol of justice. The characters he played in novels are actually generated from his characteristics as mentioned by Daoxuan. The study on the worship of Weituo deserves more attention. Previous studies on this topic are in lack. Weituo is widely worshipped by both the saṅgha and the secular society, and it proves the importance of the deity. Furthermore, in this way, the worship of Weituo promoted the communication between the Buddhist monastic groups with local society.

The fourth part explains visual representations of Weituo. The visual representation mirrors the worship of the deity and shows Weituo is tightly connected with the saṅgha’s daily life. There are three types of visual representations of Weituo as an independent protector. The first type refers to Weituo’s statues in the Heavenly Kings Hall. There were statues of Weituo at least in the twelfth century, and the statues of this deity had been placed in the Main Hall, the kitchen and there were sometimes a separated hall dedicated to him. When the Heavenly Kings Hall became a certain part of a temple in the Ming and Qing dynasties, the statues of Weituo are commonly placed in this hall. The second one is that Weituo occupied a position at the side of Guanyin. A number of such works in Chinese Buddhist art seems to show the connection of these two deities. Weituo appeared as an
attendant of Guanyin as early as in the Yuan Dynasty and this pair became popular in the Ming and Qing dynasties. The third type is Weituo’s images appearing in sutras. Usually there is a portrait of Weituo on the first or last pages of a Buddhist pamphlet or scroll. The first and last types are very common nowadays. Depicting Weituo at the side of Guanyin shows Weituo’s popularity in the secular society. Weituo and Guanyin who is another popular figure in the secular society had been paired up in certain period of time. People even make up folk stories for the two figures. Unfortunately, this type of visual representations of Weituo is not as distinguishing as it used to be, which possibly hints to the decline of Weituo worship at present time. The process of how Weituo’s visual representation was settled down reflected people constantly put Weituo into Chinese Buddhist Art.

The discussion above explained how the position of Weituo in Chinese Buddhism and Buddhist art was settled down. Before the seventh century, there are no materials talking about the worship of Weituo. The Chinese legend, iconography, visual representation and worship of the deity played important roles in this process. This thesis shows how he was transformed from a subordinate role in the Golden Light Sūtra to a important protective deity in Chinese Buddhism. The development of Weituo’s transformation is important to the worship of the deity which is widely existed at present time. Meanwhile, it will benefit people’s understanding of the development of foreign deity in China.
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