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Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and Its Gazetteers

Marcus Bingenheimer
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Marcus Bingenheimer : Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and Its Gazetteers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and Its Gazetteers:

Among Chinese religious sites, Mount Putuo, the "Island of Guanyin," stands out as a fascinating embodiment of China's vibrant Buddhist tradition. A small island in the East China Sea, it has been the single most important pilgrimage site for the worship of Guanyin, the beloved Bodhisattva of Compassion, who is venerated from Sri Lanka

to Japan. Attracting thousands of visitors every year, the site has accumulated a multi-layered historical record, as it appears in different lights in poems, biographies, maps, and legends across the centuries. From its foundation in Mahayana Buddhist scriptures to its descriptions in local histories known as "gazetteers," Mount Putuo's distinctive profile makes it an abiding landmark throughout the checkered history of Chinese Buddhism. This book, the first monograph on Mount Putuo in any language, follows the structure of a gazetteer as it presents important texts about this sacred site, which are here translated for the first time, groups them according to the individual genres found in the gazetteers, and analyzes their function. This brings out the full meaning of the texts against their historical, geographical, and religious contexts, producing a panoramic view of Mount Putuo through the lens of its textual heritage. Revealing the dense fabric of one deep-rooted devotional tradition, the book will be of interest to all students of Asian Buddhism.

"This book is a must read for anyone contemplating the use of Chinese temple gazetteers in their research. Island of Guanyin does a great service to the field by bringing to our attention the richness of the gazetteer tradition and offering numerous insights into how to read these great repositories of writing on numerous Buddhist sites."--Reading Religion
"This book makes major contributions in two areas: studies of Buddhist sacred sites and the value of temple gazetteers in carrying out such studies. Putuo, the sacred island of Guanyin, is the subject of several temple gazetteers and Bingenheimer is the leading expert in the use of them as historiographical sources. He successfully shows how the site and the texts have been mutually constituted through the centuries. An exemplary guide to new approaches to the study of Chinese Buddhism." --Chun-fang Y, Professor Emerita, Columbia University
"Bingenheimer reconstructs a world of maps and miracles, pilgrimage and piracy, landscape and literati, examining the views of a wide cast of characters who worked with and against each other in the compilation of gazetteers from Mount Putuo over the course of five centuries. Consistently engaging and rich in detail, Island of Guanyin both contributes to our understanding of an important pilgrimage site in China, and provides an extended meditation on the relationship between community, place and devotion." --John Kieschnick, The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Professor of Buddhist Studies, Stanford University
"Marcus Bingenheimer's Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and its Gazetteers is a major study of two important subjects in the history of Chinese Buddhism: the Buddhist sacred site of Mount Putuo and the historiographical genre of the temple gazetteer. The book is extremely well-written, theoretically engaged yet free of academic jargon, erudite but always engaging, and addressed both to the specialist in Chinese Buddhism and the educated general-reader without prior knowledge of Mount Putuo or the literary genre of the Chinese gazetteer. It is a profoundly original and important work of scholarship that offers significant contributions to multiple fields of intellectual inquiry. It will be essential reading for anyone interested in Buddhist studies, Chinese religion, Chinese history, Chinese literature, book history, or cultural geography." --Max Moerman, Professor in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures, Barnard College
About the Author
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