

# Building the Buddhist Revival



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*Reconstructing Monasteries in Modern China*

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## Conventions

In this book I use *hanyu pinyin* for Chinese romanization, except in the case of proper names where an alternative form is normally used, for example, Sun Yat-sen. I use traditional Chinese characters (*zhengti* 正體) for Chinese materials from the 1950s and earlier, and traditional Japanese characters (*seijitai* 正字體 or *kyūjitai* 舊字體) for pre-1946 Japanese materials. Direct quotes from Chinese primary sources are marked with Sinitic single quotation marks: 「」. In giving dates before 1912, lunar years may be converted into normalized Common Era years, which may differ from the actual historical date by one month or more because of the variable overlap between lunar and solar years. Where possible, I include index numbers in the Buddhist Studies Person Authority Database 人名規範檢索 (Axxxxxx) for persons at their first appearance, and index numbers in the Place Authority Database 地名規範檢索 (PLxxxxxx) for monasteries.<sup>1</sup> If known, birth and death years are given at the first appearance of a person's name. Many sources are referenced with MFQ and MFQB; these refer to two multi-volume reprint editions of Republican-era Buddhist periodicals, listed at the start of the works cited section.

<sup>1</sup> *Foxue guifan ziliao ku* 佛學規範資料庫

Buddhist Studies Authority Database Project: *Renming guifan jiansuo* 人名規範檢索  
Buddhist Studies Person Authority Databases <<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/>>;  
*Difang guifan jiansuo* 地名規範檢索  
Buddhist Studies Place Authority Databases <<http://authority.dila.edu.tw/place/>>.

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# Introduction

## Monasteries as a Frame for Buddhist Life

Ancient monastery of the Jin and Sui where the teachings flowed freely,  
Where scriptures were translated in august halls.  
Dismay now that its thousand rooms have all been destroyed,  
But the slanting sunlight chanting *gāthās* testifies to true Emptiness.

Kang Youwei 康有為, 1924<sup>1</sup>

In occupied Beijing at the turn of the twentieth century, a monk arrived at Dafo Monastery 大佛寺 with a proposal. The monk, Junxiang 俊祥, had come to seek Master Datong 達通 to offer him his position as abbot of Cihui Monastery 慈慧寺. In exchange he wanted money so that he could afford to flee the chaos that was then raging in the capital as a result of the Boxer Rebellion. Cihui Monastery had been in a ruinous state for over two centuries, and under Junxiang it had continued to deteriorate, but nevertheless Datong was interested in taking over its leadership. Luckily, he happened to be in possession of \$150, entrusted to him by a eunuch who had earlier fled the rebellion and of whom nothing had latterly been heard. Datong decided that the eunuch was unlikely to return and retrieve the money, so he handed it over to Junxiang, thus purchasing both the position of abbot of Cihui Monastery and the responsibility for its future.

The monastery itself was dilapidated, with weeds and debris piled high. Datong worked day and night, and after several months the site started to become tidy. The roof eaves had long been missing tiles, and rain leaked

<sup>1</sup> 「晉隋舊剎暢宗風、翻譯經文殿閣雄。惆悵千房今盡毀、斜陽讀偈證真空。」 Punctuation added. Xi'an shi difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 西安市地方志编纂委员会, *Xi'an shizhi* 西安市志 (Xi'an: Xi'an chubanshe, 2009), 7:774. Kang wrote this poem on the occasion of visiting the ruins of Great Xingshan Monastery 大興善寺 in Chang'an 長安, which had been destroyed during the Taiping War. After lying in ruins for nearly a century, it was later reconstructed in the early 1950s.

through where the beams overhung. Datong wanted to solicit donations to fund repairs, but the Qing imperial court had just issued a new law that forbade ascetic practices for the sake of monastic fundraising, such as sitting for several weeks in a locked cage until enough donations had been collected.<sup>2</sup> One day Datong happened to notice a pair of magpies building a nest in the ancient locust tree in front of the main monastery hall. He then realized that, just as it would be unnatural for birds such as magpies to not build nests, so too would it be unnatural for him, a disciple of Buddha, to not reconstruct Cihui Monastery. He thus made a vow before the Buddha to have the monastery rebuilt, and his sincerity at this moment is said to have resonated throughout the cosmos.<sup>3</sup> Datong worked assiduously over the next decade to rebuild the monastery, soliciting funds for its reconstruction. On the advice of a benefactor in the Department of War, he tore down the few dilapidated buildings that remained on the site. After this benefactor died, his son honored his will in donating two hundred dollars to Datong's cause, completing an initial fundraising goal in 1906. The following year Datong left Beijing and traveled through his home region of Liaoning 遼寧 in the northeast of China. There he drew upon his social and kinship ties, including those from when he had taken the precepts at Wanshou Monastery 萬壽寺 in Fengtian 豐田, and raised even more funds for the restoration of Cihui Monastery. As a result, new halls, platforms, and images were built there, fulfilling his vow made in the monastery courtyard some years earlier.

This account of Cihui's reconstruction was later recorded for posterity on a stone stele, in which the author observes:

Since Buddhism came to China during the Han dynasty, it has flourished and declined, gone through periods of light and darkness. These two states are rooted in and lie dormant within each other, and come in cycles. . . . Since the rebellion of the *gengzi* year [1900], the Three Treasures have had their light sheathed, and Buddhism has declined. Yet things are only hopeless if we do not have pure hearts, practice through hardship, and persevere in spite of all difficulties. It's like the case of Master Datong: during a time

<sup>2</sup> Such practices are described in Vincent Goossaert, "Starved for Resources: Clerical Hunger and Enclosures in Nineteenth-Century China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62.1 (June 2002): 77–133.

<sup>3</sup> This was a common trope in traditional biographies of monastics; the power of the religious vow and its significance in monastery reconstruction is discussed later in the introduction.

of lost hope and when things seemed at an end, he was able to extend the thread of Shakyas's teachings, and pass on the line [to a new generation].

The inscription author also praises Datong for “manifesting the merit of protecting the Buddha realm” and restoring the Buddha light, ensuring that Cihui Monastery would never again “revert to wasteland.”<sup>4</sup>

Similar accounts of reconstructing ruined or destroyed Buddhist monasteries can be found throughout Chinese historical sources. Terse descriptions of reconstructions fill the sections on temples and shrines in local gazetteers (*difang zhi* 地方志), stone steles such as the one recording the story of Cihui Monastery inscribe these events in history, and from 1912 onward Chinese Buddhist periodicals have publicized reconstructions to a wide reading public.<sup>5</sup> Reconstructions are more than simply events in the history of Chinese Buddhist monasteries. They are landmark, transformational phases in the lifecycle of monasteries and are crucial to their survival; without periodic reconstructions, monasteries are left to decay and eventually fall into oblivion. Accounts of monastery reconstruction normally include a core set of narrative elements that reflect the deep religious significance of the event: the monastery left overgrown and abandoned by its religious community; the arrival of a charismatic and capable leader, often an outsider, who makes a sacred vow to rebuild the site; a fundraising campaign that reignites interest in the site and that draws investment from both the locality and from sponsors further afield; the material work of rebuilding the halls; the reconvening of an active religious community on the site; and finally the recording of the great work of the reconstruction leader and patrons, a testament to the meritorious deeds that they have accomplished. Religious histories are full of examples of “divine intervention,” where celestial forces intervene in human affairs; monastery reconstructions, on the other hand, are a type of “human intervention,” a recommitment to Buddhist practice, and a reinvestment in the future of a local nexus of religiosity.

<sup>4</sup> Zhang Zhihan 張知漢, *Qing chongxiu cihui si beiji bing yin* 清重修慈慧寺碑記并陰, Fu Ssu-nien Library, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, [1911], T653.81 1783. My thanks to Paul Katz and the graduate students at the Institute of Modern History for helping to provide me with transcriptions of the stele inscription rubbings cited here and following.

<sup>5</sup> The first Chinese Buddhist periodical, *Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報 [Buddhist miscellany], was published in October 1912. On early Chinese Buddhist periodicals, see Gregory Adam Scott, “Revolution of Ink: Chinese Buddhist Periodicals in the Early Republic” in *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China*, ed. Jan Kiely and J. Brooks Jessup (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 111–140.

This book is a history of the reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries in China between 1866 and 1966. Buddhist monasteries, like all types of Chinese religious institutions, are layered with historical and religious memory. They are economically and socially distinct entities that support resident religious specialists and attract visitors drawn by their reputation for discipline, teaching, and numinous efficacy.<sup>6</sup> The reconstruction of such a sacred site is a focused enterprise that involves deeply meaningful and symbolic religious actions and understandings. Reconstruction campaigns require the mobilization of capital and labor; the reform or banishment of corrupt internal elements; the recruitment of competent and committed religious specialists; the enthusiasm and support of lay supporters; and the negotiation of jural and regulatory systems on the local, regional, and national level. Perhaps more than anything else, a successful reconstruction hinges upon the religious charisma and social connections of a reconstruction leader, someone who can assemble the right group of people and not only convince them that such a project is worthwhile but also guide it through to material fruition. Monastery reconstruction thus operates simultaneously on the material, religious, and social levels. On the material level it involves the physical rebuilding of the material structures and other aspects of the space; on the religious level the charismatic leader must reform internal monastic discipline so that it will attract further popular support; and on the social level it requires a new relationship with donors, tenants, local and national elites, and the community of pilgrims who visit the space for worship. The reconstruction of a particular sacred space is thus always a reconstruction of the local religious community as well, and in this way has an impact on the larger religious culture within which it operates.

While monastery reconstructions have occurred in China for many centuries, between 1866 and 1966 there began to be significant shifts in how reconstructions were intellectually understood, physically undertaken, and economically underwritten. Owing in part to the groundbreaking scholarship of Holmes Welch in the late 1960s, and that of later scholars who have benefitted from his legacy and advanced the field, this period of history is widely recognized as one of a Buddhist revival in China.<sup>7</sup> Buddhist figures

<sup>6</sup> James Robson, "Monastic Spaces and Sacred Traces: Facets of Chinese Buddhist Monastic Records," in *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice*, ed. James. A. Benn, Lori Meeks, and James Robson (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 43–64.

<sup>7</sup> Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

from this era, from lay scholars to monastic leaders, continue to be widely revered among Chinese Buddhist communities today, who trace the roots of the recent Buddhist flourishing in China to the pioneering work that was undertaken during this earlier era. The full scope and significance of this revival, however, remains unclear; was it a revival of orthodox past practices and a recovery of vitality, as many of its proponents claimed, or, as Welch actually argued, was it in fact a fatally flawed deviation from tradition, doomed to failure?<sup>8</sup> There are additional, larger historical questions about this period, in which Buddhism constitutes only one element among many. The recent flourishing of scholarship on religion in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Chinese history has definitively banished the notion that religion was somehow absent from or unimportant in the making of modern China.<sup>9</sup> What precisely was its changing role in Chinese society during this period remains a complex and largely unanswered question. Monasteries and other religious institutions are embedded in localities; how were they and their local societies integrated into the nascent concept of a Chinese nation? How did Chinese Buddhist monasteries become emblematic of Chinese history and culture, and how did conceptions of this cultural legacy help to form national identities and inform international relations? Examining the history of Buddhist monastery reconstruction during this period can help address these questions.

Just as each Buddhist monastery is embedded in its locality and in Buddhism more generally, so too are monastery histories embedded in the larger scope of modern Chinese history. With monasteries we see a gradual shift in power, from being spread across a decentralized web of independent institutions toward concentration in a centralized authority, with each site integrated into a national cultural history and subject to national procedures for handling cultural relics of the past. The roots of these processes can be found in the historic role of the Buddhist monastery itself, a hybrid institution introduced from South and Central Asia but later on thoroughly imbued with Chinese religious symbolologies, understandings, and meanings.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory Adam Scott, "Buddhist Building and the Buddhist Revival in the Work of Holmes Welch," *Studies in Chinese Religions* 3.3 (September 2017): 204–219.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Jan Kiely and J. Brooks Jessup, eds., *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Paul R. Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014).



## The Plan and Function of Chinese Buddhist Monasteries

The notion of a sacred space, a special type of location naturally imbued with sacrality or deliberately sanctified, was already well established in China before the arrival of Buddhism in around the first century of the Common Era.<sup>10</sup> As early Buddhist missionaries and texts filtered into China, they brought with them South and Central Asian models of Buddhist monasterial layout and symbology, which themselves had already undergone centuries of development. As they did with so many other elements of Buddhist culture, Buddhists in China soon hybridized the imported monasterial form with native practices, applying to them new terminology and architectural models. In this section I will be guided by the following questions: What do we talk about when we talk about monasteries as built sacred spaces? How have people in the history of Chinese Buddhism understood the significance and role of monasteries? How might focusing on “material culture” help us better understand the role played by monasteries in Chinese Buddhism? This book will focus on constructed sacred spaces: buildings, shrines, stupas, and sites that have a significant human-built element. Such spaces are normally situated within a landscape of natural features, such as mountains, valleys, and forests, that are also components of the total religious environment. The constructed elements of sacred spaces are, however, uniquely tied to issues of material culture and are more often the focus of reconstruction campaigns, hence my foregrounding of them in this study.<sup>11</sup>

How are we to identify a Buddhist monastery in China? What distinguishes it from a popular religious temple, a Daoist monastery, a grand estate, or a magistrate’s office?<sup>12</sup> Early Buddhist monastic communities in South Asia either constructed huts for themselves or made use of structures donated by the laity, but in either case they were only inhabited during the part of the year when the monastics were not traveling from place to place. Within a few centuries of Buddhism’s birth, however, a model for a permanent monastic

<sup>10</sup> The use of shrines and altars such as the *sheji* 社稷 for sacrifice and worship is attested in the Zhou-dynasty classics.

<sup>11</sup> On natural landscapes as sacred spaces, see James Robson, “Introduction,” in *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue 南嶽) in Medieval China*, by James Robson (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 1–14.

<sup>12</sup> Chinese-language studies on the architectural and cultural histories of Buddhist monasteries have proliferated in recent years. Examples include Wang Heming 王鹤鸣, *Zhongguo simiao tonglun* 中国寺庙通论 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2016); Wang Luncheng 王倫成, *Hanchuan Fosi jianzhu wenhua* 汉传佛寺建筑文化 (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2013); Peng Xinglin 彭兴林, *Beijing Fosi yiji kao* 北京佛寺遗迹考 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2012).

residential and ritual space had emerged: the vihara was a quadrangle of cells surrounding a courtyard with a stupa in the center, a pattern that was equally suited to freestanding structures as it was for caves carved into the hillside.<sup>13</sup> Many early Buddhist monasteries in China during the first few centuries of the Common Era did not follow this model, simply because the sites had been converted from already-existing residential estates or bureaucratic offices that were donated to the sangha, and thus, at least initially, they had to make use of their pre-existing layouts.<sup>14</sup> Later on when Buddhist monasteries were newly built in China for the purpose, the South Asian stupa-centered model was used up to about the sixth century, after which the model changed substantially, but it continued in use in other places such as Tibet, Korea, and Japan for much longer.

The terminology used in Chinese to denote a monastery is diverse and has changed a great deal over the centuries.<sup>15</sup> Initially the terms *si* 寺, *jingshe* 精舍, and *jielan* 伽藍 were all used quite commonly, but from the Southern Liang dynasty 南梁 (502–587) onward, *si* became by far the most commonly used term in the corpus, with *yuan* 院 also being used to a significant degree, and the two terms come to dominate over time.<sup>16</sup> Older terms transcribed from the Sanskrit, however, never completely disappeared. In modern standard Mandarin, *simiao* 寺廟 is the customary compound term for “temple” or “monastery” and *si* 寺 the most common suffix for such an institution, although a number of other compounds remain in use.<sup>17</sup> Regarding the use of the English term “monastery” for these sites, James Robson has pointed out the danger of applying elements from our image of Christian monasteries—as communities of devoted religious specialists who

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Pichard, “Indian Buddhist Monasteries,” in *The Buddhist Monastery: A Cross-Cultural Survey*, ed. Pierre Pichard and Francois LaGirarde (Paris: Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient, 2003), 17–37.

<sup>14</sup> Johannes Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries: Their Plan and Its Function as a Setting for Buddhist Monastic Life* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1967; first published Copenhagen: G. E. C., 1937), 4.

<sup>15</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>16</sup> The significance of the frequency of *yuan* in this dataset is the most problematic, since instances of the character in the corpus may appear in reference to a government office or department, rather than a monastery.

<sup>17</sup> On the origins of *si* see Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 3rd ed. (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 38–39. The term *jingshe*, in particular, appears to have had a great longevity, and it also enjoyed a brief vogue in the final years of the Qing dynasty with the Pinjia *jingshe* 頻伽精舍 (Kalaviṅka Hermitage) established by Luo Jialing 羅迦陵 (1864–1941) in Shanghai in 1903, and the Qihuan *jingshe* 祇洹精舍 (Jetavana Hermitage) set up by Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837–1911) in Nanjing in 1908. Both of these institutions were set up for specific purposes (a private retreat for a particular monk, and a school for monks and laypeople) and were not intended to be monasterial spaces, which might explain their avoidance of the term *si*.

live isolated from the mundane world—to the historical realities of Buddhist monasteries.<sup>18</sup> European visitors to Chinese Buddhist monasteries were often shocked by what they found there, although in many cases their opposition to the monasteries' religious images, celibate clergy, and wealth on display in the form of religious art and offerings was simply a reflection of a thinly veiled anti-Catholic bias. In addition, while the semantic roots of “monastery” imply a singular (Gk. *monos*) practice, Chinese religion is marked by a very high level of diversity, and sacred sites in China have historically incorporated a variety of shrines, sacred wells, stupas, and so on from many different religious traditions coexisting together.<sup>19</sup> Using this term should therefore never distract us from the fact that in almost no case is a “Buddhist monastery” exclusively Buddhist, nor exclusively a monastery. European-language scholarship has largely adopted the convention of using the term “monastery” for large Buddhist religious institutions with resident monastics and where abbots can be selected from any lineage (*shifang cha* 十方刹 or *shifang conglin* 十方叢林), and thus following the work of Robson, Vincent Goossaert, and others, I use the term here.<sup>20</sup>

My understanding of Chinese Buddhist monasteries as sacred spaces draws heavily on the work of Johannes Prip-Møller (1889–1943), whose landmark work *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries: Their Plan and Its Function as a Setting for Buddhist Monastic Life* has provided essential insights on Chinese Buddhist monasteries to generations of scholars. Prip-Møller was a Danish architect trained at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. He received his MS from Columbia University in 1921, and the following year he went to Beijing to study Chinese and later opened an architectural firm in Shenyang 瀋陽 (Mukden), designing buildings for missionary societies in China and residences for Chinese officials. In 1926 he left China but received research funding to return from 1929 to 1933 to study Chinese architecture, specifically Chinese Buddhist monasteries, mainly in the middle and lower

<sup>18</sup> James Robson, “Introduction: ‘Neither Too Far, nor Too Near’: The Historical and Cultural Contexts of Buddhist Monasteries in Medieval China and Japan,” in *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice*, ed. James A. Benn, Lori Meeks, and James Robson (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 1–17.

<sup>19</sup> PewResearch Center, “Global Religious Diversity,” April 4, 2014. Available at <<https://web.archive.org/web/20190328021911/https://www.pewforum.org/2014/04/04/global-religious-diversity/>>. Although this study is based on the proportion of believers in five major religions, the index also takes into account smaller religious groups, including Chinese folk religions.

<sup>20</sup> In French, similarly, *monastère* is used. Welch argues that nearly all public monasteries used the suffix *sī*, with only one exception known to him, while hybrid and hereditary monasteries used a variety of terms. See Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900–1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 129–141, 485–486n6.

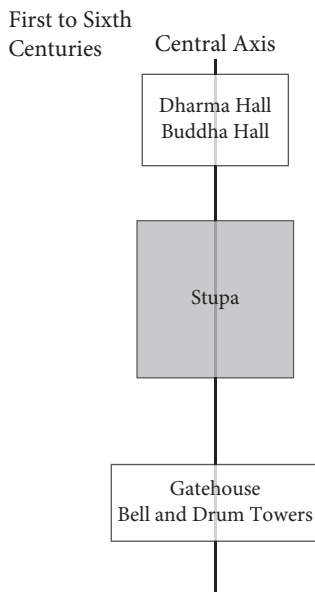
Yangtze valley region. His major publication resulting from this research, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, was published in 1937 and includes a detailed study of Huiju Monastery 慧居寺 on Baohua shan 寶華山 in Jiangsu province.<sup>21</sup> As he was a professional architect, it should not be surprising that Prip-Møller's work includes a high level of detail in its plans and drawings of Chinese Buddhist monasteries, especially in the case of four floor plans of Huiju Monastery included as folded large-format sheets in his volume.<sup>22</sup> In his investigation of monasteries, however, he was motivated by a search for an archetypal form of the structure that lay behind its varied and diverse instances. No single monastery was constructed exactly according to this ideal model, as each had been adapted to its setting and context in different ways, but he still believed that any student would come to glimpse such a pure model, "The True Buddhist Monastery," behind the "seemingly somewhat chaotic and heterogeneous mass of courts and halls," that characterized each individual site.<sup>23</sup>

I do not agree with Prip-Møller that there exists an ideal form of the Chinese Buddhist monastery; for every feature that might appear to be essential to their formation, at least a few historical exceptions can be found. Yet his insight into the shared repertoire of design elements generally common to monasterial structures—a common genealogy of structural elements and symbolic power for these elements—was a crucial one. This dialect of design among Chinese Buddhist monasteries shares its vocabulary with other types of religious institutions, private residences, official buildings, and other examples of symbolically significant architecture. For Prip-Møller the structure of the monastery was important, since it served as a physical and ritual *frame* for monastic and religious life; as the subtitle to his volume indicates, he was not only interested in the "bricks and beams" of the sites but also in how the monastery acts as the material basis for religious activity. As James Robson has put it, monasteries may be simply "containers" for religious

<sup>21</sup> This sketch is based on the "Biographical Note" appearing at the front of the 1967 Hong Kong University Press reprint edition of *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, and the author's preface to that volume. Huiju Monastery was renamed Longchang Monastery 隆昌寺 in the early 1930s at the behest of Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1891–1949).

<sup>22</sup> In all library copies of the 1967 reprint edition that I have consulted, these plans have been missing from their envelope in the inside back cover. I was extremely fortunate in 2016 to have found an original 1937 printing held in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, which contained copies of the plans.

<sup>23</sup> Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, 2, emphasis in original. *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* has sketches of some forty-three sites, which include general plans of their layout and drawn depictions of specific architectural and artistic features. My thanks to Henry Lohner who provided me with early proofs of his new translated edition of this book, *Buddhistische Tempel in China*.



**Figure I.1** The development of Chinese Buddhist monasterial layouts

practice, but they are “special containers” and sacred spaces in their own right that are worth serious attention.<sup>24</sup>

This structure is one that has developed over nearly two millennia of expansion, adaptation, and diffusion, from the earliest bureaucratic offices that were donated for use, such as Baima Monastery 白馬寺 in Luoyang in the first century CE, to the purpose-built skyscraper housing Zhongtai Chan Monastery 中台禪寺 in Nantou, Taiwan, completed in 2001.<sup>25</sup> Although today no original freestanding structures survive of Chinese Buddhist monasteries built before the very end of the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), textual and archaeological evidence indicates that monasteries from the first to sixth centuries followed South and Central Asian practice in placing the stupa (*ta* 塔) in the center as the ritual focus of the site (Figure I.1). The stupa was the most essential, most central, and often most visible element of the site, while other structures served to support devotional activity to it.<sup>26</sup> A few

<sup>24</sup> Robson, “Monastic Spaces and Sacred Traces,” 47.

<sup>25</sup> The latter was designed by C. Y. Lee (Li Zuyuan 李祖原, 1938–), known for designing Taipei 101, and the monastery was awarded the Taiwan Architecture Award in 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Isabelle Charleux and Vincent Goossaert, “The Physical Buddhist Monastery in China,” in *The Buddhist Monastery: A Cross-Cultural Survey*, ed. Pierre Pichard and François Lagirarde (Paris: École Française D’Extrême-Orient, 2003), 317–319; Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, “The Sixth Century in

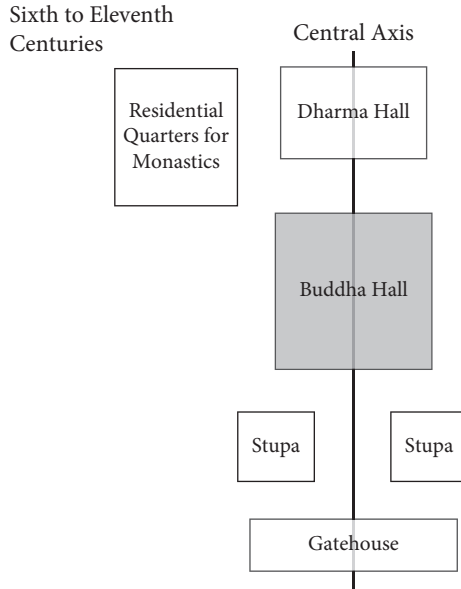


Figure I.2

monasteries that were centered around very important stupas retained them as their geographical and ritual focus throughout their history.<sup>27</sup> In most monasteries from around the seventh and eighth centuries onward, however, the stupa was no longer located in the center of the ritual space. In some cases twin stupas were featured in the courtyard in front of the Buddha Hall, which now became the most central and important feature (Figure I.2). Around the same time the influence of the Chan 禪 school and the withdrawal of direct imperial support meant that monasteries became, in some respects, more cloistered away from elite society, defining their boundaries with a perimeter wall and relying more on internal industries and local patronage for their livelihood.<sup>28</sup>

East Asian Architecture,” *Ars Orientalis* 41 (2011): 27–32. This layout mirrored that of some cave monasteries, in which the negative space of the cavern had a stone pillar representing a stupa in the center. Some of the earliest monasteries in China, however, were converted from grand estates that were donated as an act of devotion, so they likely did not greatly alter this basic domestic layout.

<sup>27</sup> One example is Xingjiao Monastery 興教寺 outside of Xi'an 西安, built in the late seventh century as a new home for the relics of the pilgrim and translator Xuanzang 玄奘 (c. 602–664) and those of his two chief disciples. Its history and its reconstruction in the twentieth century are discussed in chapter 3.

<sup>28</sup> Charleux and Goossaert, “The Physical Buddhist Monastery in China.”

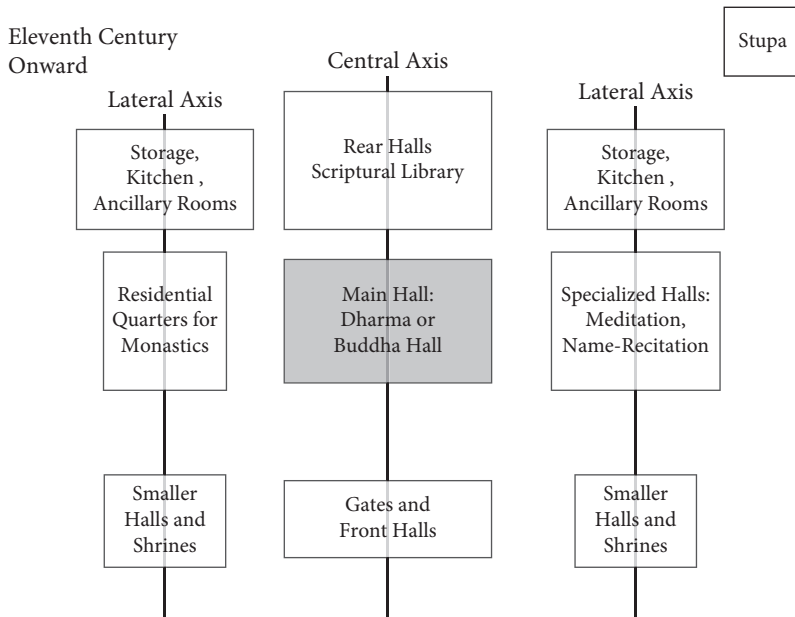


Figure I.3

From about the eleventh century onward, Chinese Buddhist monasteries on the whole began to assume a customary layout (Figure I.3), although as Prip-Møller points out, it is in every case implemented with exceptions and adaptations according to historical and local factors. The core repertoire of monasterial design is to have structures organized along a central axis, ideally running south to north with the main entrance gate to the south. The structures along the central axis are those that were opened to the public on festival days and to pilgrims for the rest of the calendar; they are also where large ritual events took place. This central spine of structures would normally be among the oldest in the monastery, and very rarely would new additions or expansions occur along this axis. In fact, some sites retained the bare foundations of halls on the main axis that had long ago burned to the ground, instead of significantly altering this grouping by replacing them.<sup>29</sup> Expansions necessitated by a rise in popularity, a growing number of resident monastics, the need for a new ritual space such as a name recitation hall, or

<sup>29</sup> See for example the layout of Kaiyuan Monastery in 1922, reproduced as figure 7 in Charleux and Goossaert, "The Physical Buddhist Monastery in China," p. 347.

simply the addition of a new structure funded by a generous donor would normally be added to one of the two lateral axes. More private areas of the monastery such as residence halls or more mundane features like kitchens or storehouses would also be located to either side, which formed a U-shaped zone cradling the central axis, a zone not normally open to visitors. Stupas containing the remains of former residents, cremation areas, vegetable gardens, and other areas would be relegated to this peripheral, private zone. The monastery site was thus very much a “working” space designed for function, with areas designated for ritual and devotional use; residential quarters for monastics and pilgrims; and sufficient toilets, kitchens, storehouses, and workshops required to maintain a community of upward of hundreds of residents. Yet they were also at the same time places of deep symbolical meaning, with histories that could span several centuries.

Proceeding from the main gate into the heart of the constructed space imparted upon the visitor an experience of entering into a physical manifestation of the Buddhadharmā: through the main gate, past the guardians of the faith, and into the Buddha hall and the presence of images of powerful deities, including also the scriptural library, which was the storehouse of valued textual and artistic objects. The development of new scriptural traditions and the emergence of new deities in popular texts often immediately preceded their addition as fixtures in the monasterial layout, and so the statuary residents of a monastery were thus reflections of the doctrinal and devotional fields in which the community was invested.<sup>30</sup> The experience of monastics who lived in these spaces, continually moving through and having their visual universe defined by a space filled with religiously charged symbols and deities, was likely much stronger.

Buddhist monasteries have maintained a deep cultural, social, and economic significance in East Asian history, but it is often difficult to determine precisely how many were active at any given time. Up to about the fourth century CE, most were converted from donated official or residential buildings. The *Luoyang jielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 (Record of Buddhist monasteries in Luoyang) notes that in the early fourth century there were only some forty-two Buddhist monasteries in Luoyang, but by the early sixth century, when the city served as the capital of the Northern Wei 北魏 dynasty

<sup>30</sup> Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, 33, 36.



(386–534 CE), there were 367 monasteries in the city.<sup>31</sup> No comprehensive survey of all monasteries in China was attempted until the modern era. The *Da-Qing yitong zhi* 大清一統志 (Great Qing unified gazetteer), compiled around 1820, lists 2,407 Buddhist sites (classified under the category of *siguan* 寺觀; figure I.4); around 1900 there were perhaps a million temples in China, of which 10%–20% had full-time resident clergy; and Welch cites survey figures collected in 1930 that counted 232,900 Buddhist monasteries with monastics in residence.<sup>32</sup> While we might never be certain of their precise numbers, Buddhist monasteries were to be found virtually everywhere in the empire. Some sites, such as Wutai 五台, Emei 峨眉, Jiuhua 九華, and Putuo 普陀, the four “mountains” believed to be the abode of major bodhisattvas, had been colonized by Buddhist shrines, temples, and images, although Daoist and popular religious elements remained an important part of their religious landscape.<sup>33</sup> Local and regional architectural styles also shaped the design of monasteries, with distinct northern and southern building styles and of course influences from Mongolian and Tibetan culture in the north and west of China.

Monasteries played a central role in the religious, cultural, political, and economic life of their locality, with the larger ones playing regional, national, and sometimes also international roles as well. They housed resident religious specialists who provided ritual services relating to ancestors and potentially dangerous spirits and hosted large ritual services at least once or twice annually. Their positioning in particular locations on the landscape was also significant, as negative geomantic influences could be interrupted and positive ones encouraged by the main monastery site and its related stupas or other monuments. The majestic landscapes and natural surroundings of many monasteries, far removed from bustling urban spaces, made them excellent environments for engaging in cultural activities: drinking tea, reciting or writing poetry, or even hosting a Christian missionary society picnic. In early twentieth-century China, as travel literature helped to inspire domestic

<sup>31</sup> Translated in Hsuan-Chih Yang and Ti-T'ung Wang, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). A digitized edition is available at: <<http://buddhistinformatics.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/ui.html?book=g001>>.

<sup>32</sup> “Buddhist Temples in China” dataset, part of China Historical GIS, release 4 (2007), <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~chgis/data/chgis/downloads/v4/>>; Charleux and Goossaert, “The Physical Buddhist Monastery in China,” 313, which cites Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 411–420.

<sup>33</sup> Putuo island does not quite rise enough in elevation to technically qualify as a mountain but is termed one nonetheless because of the strong religious connotations of mountains in East Asia. See Marcus Bingenheimer, *Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and Its Gazetteers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

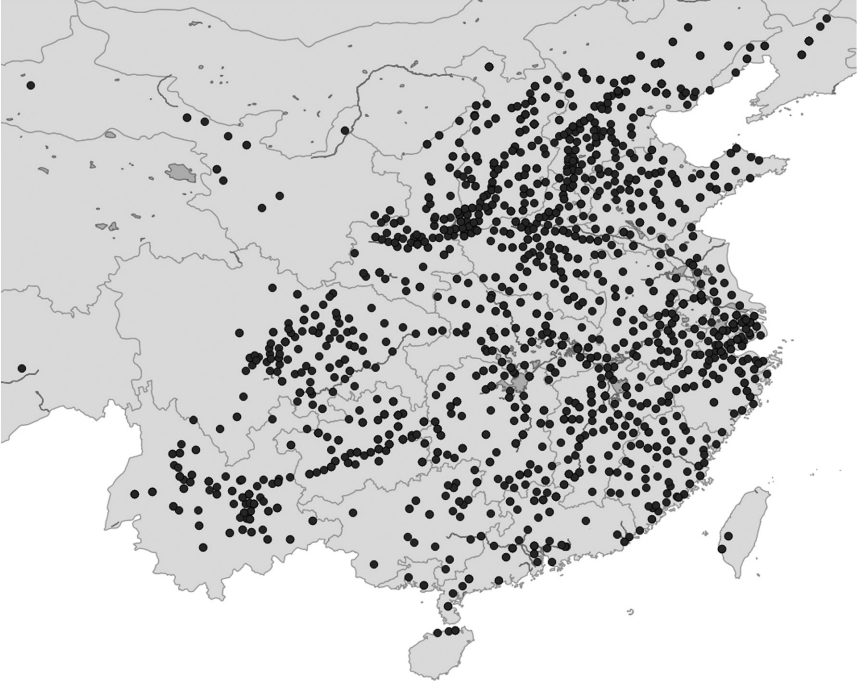


Figure I.4 Counties with one or more Buddhist institutions recorded, 1820

tourism and the expansion of the railroad made travel cheaper, monasteries were popular locations to be visited, appreciated, and written about. Foreign visitors also recorded their impressions of monasterial spaces and were struck by the majesty and sacrality of their environments.<sup>34</sup> As places imbued with sacred power, monasteries also played crucially important roles in the realm of statecraft in China, a realm that was always closely associated with religious elements, although the nature of these roles changed drastically over time. Emperors and imperial family members bestowed monasteries with gifts and calligraphic inscriptions and, up to the Tang dynasty, directly sponsored their construction. Political rivals were at times forcibly sent to monasteries to live out their days in peace, and they could also

<sup>34</sup> Examples of the former include the book series *Xin youji huikan* 新游記彙刊, first issued by Zhonghua Books 中華書局 in 1925. On the latter, see Gregory Adam Scott, “The Dharma through a Glass Darkly: On the Study of Modern Chinese Buddhism through Protestant Missionary Sources 彷彿對著鏡子觀看的佛法：藉由基督教傳教士的史料研究現代中國佛教,” *Shengyan yanjiu* 聖嚴研究 [Sheng Yen studies] 2 (July 2011): 47–73.

provide refuge for an official currently out of favor but with aspirations for a return to power. Finally, monasteries were important nodes in economic networks of capital and labor. In the ancient and early medieval eras they ran their own industries such as food production or the management of public works, but even in the late Imperial period they continued to attract massive amounts of investment in their construction and upkeep. They also collected rents from landholdings and accepted donations in return for religious services or merit.<sup>35</sup>

In considering how we ought to conceptualize monasteries as constructed, material sacred spaces, this economic aspect is particularly relevant. The “merit economy” of charitable giving (*bushi* 布施) and religious merit (*gongde* 功德) linked lay devotees with religious specialists and connected material stuff to numinous power. In contrast to how religious giving is conventionally understood in the field of religious studies, heavily influenced by Marcel Mauss’s *Essai sur la don, forme archaïque de l’échange* (1925), the merit economy in Buddhism operates quite differently, and I would suggest that Mauss’s work has only a limited applicability in this case.<sup>36</sup> Here the central process at work was termed *ganying* 感應 (stimulus and response): the notion that the stimuli of donation and devotion will elicit a response from powerful beings such as bodhisattvas (*putipusa* 菩提菩薩, or simply *pusa* 菩薩) and other deities, whose *modus operandi* is to heed the sincere calls of beings in need.<sup>37</sup> Chinese religion prior to the arrival of Buddhism had already established that the human and supernatural worlds were intimately linked together, with events in one realm inevitably producing resonance in the other, and so it was largely accepting of this Buddhist concept, linking the donation of material resources to the granting of benefits such as a trouble-free journey through the afterlife. Offering material support to a monastery was thus performed not in hopes of creating an obligation on the part of the monastery to return the favor but rather so that the acts would naturally produce merit that would flow back to the donor and their kin. Just as the

<sup>35</sup> John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Translated as *The Gift*, trans. Ian Cunnison (Grenco, IL: Free Press, 1954).

<sup>37</sup> Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*, 6–7; Robert Sharf, “Chinese Buddhism and the Cosmology of Sympathetic Resonance,” in *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, by Robert Sharf (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 77–133. A more literal translation of *ganying* would be “moved to response.” David Snellgrove, “Celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 3:134–143.

material donation was a form of transferable asset that the monastery could put to different uses, so too was merit believed to be transferable in order to aid deceased kin, to assuage potentially dangerous spirits, or to help other sentient beings who might be in need.

The production and transference of merit had a social quality that made large-scale meritorious activities very important public events. While many early Buddhist monasteries had received direct material support from members of the imperial household and officials in the state bureaucracy, this high-level support was much more rare by the end of the Tang dynasty, and the political and economic resources of monasteries in general appear to have declined through the Song 宋 (960–1279) and the Yuan 元 (1271–1368) dynasties. With the restoration of a relatively strong, centralized state in the Ming 明 (1368–1644), however, Buddhist monasteries emerged as one of the few large institutions that had their own bases of power independent from the political and social apparatus of the imperial state.<sup>38</sup> Ming-era gentry thus turned to patronage of local monasteries as a means of generating social and cultural power that did not depend on the civil service and bureaucratic structure of the Ming state. The potential pool of donors was, however, quite a bit larger than this elite stratum of society; nearly all Buddhist monasteries were accessible to the laypeople of their locality and pilgrims from elsewhere, so that they could deliver offerings.<sup>39</sup> Donors thus included people from both the elite and the folk, and although the scale of donations differed, all donors participated in the merit economy that monasteries helped to make possible. Recording the details of these meritorious acts was an integral element of the transaction, one that transmitted the event for posterity and publicized it to human and supernatural beings alike. Some of the earliest material artifacts associated with Buddhism in China are, in fact, stone stele that record the names of groups of donors and the recipients of the merit generated by their actions. Similar records are also recorded in manuscript and, later, printed form, furnishing scholars with clues regarding the types of people that were involved and the scale of the donations that occurred.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 33.

<sup>39</sup> Robson, "Introduction," 8.

<sup>40</sup> Dorothy C. Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

In order to connect the histories of the material sites with the religious economy of donors and patronage, insights from the field of material culture are immensely helpful. Material culture might best be understood as the role of *stuff* in human life, that is, the physical in contrast to the written, thought, and performed aspects of human cultures. The pioneering work in investigating the material culture of Buddhism in China was John Kieschnick's *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, published in 2003, which remains the authoritative work on the subject.<sup>41</sup> In his survey of different facets of Chinese material culture that have been influenced by Buddhism, from grand monasteries to the humble chair, Kieschnick argued that our understanding of Chinese Buddhism will remain incomplete unless we can understand the roles played by objects and the material. These roles were at times radically diverse; he notes that while monastics were supposed to live humbly and simply, when it came to designing religious images and buildings such as residential quarters for monastics, the use of precious materials and splendor was in fact encouraged as befitting the grandeur of the Buddha and the Dharma. For their part, Buddhist monasteries were unique landmarks in the material landscape of premodern China, outstanding physical structures and sites whose multiple historical layers evoked memories of past events, and donating to help build or reconstruct a monastery was widely believed to bestow especially great rewards on the donor.<sup>42</sup>

In this book, I approach Chinese Buddhist monasteries as human-constructed physical sites that served as a frame for the religious life of monastics and laypeople alike, which occupied a place of great significance in the religious *imaginaire*. Like Prip-Møller and others, I am interested in learning about the histories of monasteries' material *stuff*, the stones, tiles, bricks, beams, and human community supported by the site. But here I am not going to use this information to study their architectural design and construction; instead, I would like to better understand how and why people repeatedly generated the motivation and resources to reconstruct them after they had been destroyed, and how the means by which reconstructions were undertaken and the implications they had for

<sup>41</sup> Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*.

<sup>42</sup> Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*, 10–14, 23, 187–194. In the past decade there has been a growing number of studies focusing on the role of the material in Asian religions, in many cases directly inspired by Kieschnick's study. Examples include the *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia* volume already cited, as well as Benjamin J. Fleming and Richard D. Mann, eds., *Material Culture and Asian Religions* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

Buddhism in China changed over time. This book focuses on those key periods when natural disaster, neglect, or human mischief gave rise to the reconstruction of a monastery. This was a landmark occasion in the lifecycle of a religious site, but since the reconstruction was but a single phase within a cycle of growth, prosperity, decline, and rebirth, we must first understand what types of religious and cosmological narratives lay behind conceptions of the monastery lifecycle.

### Theorizing Reconstruction

As collections of physical structures often situated in harsh environments, from the steppes of the northwest to the subtropical hills of the south, it should come as no surprise that Chinese Buddhist monasteries needed periodic repair.<sup>43</sup> For certain, nothing made of matter can be expected to last forever. Yet massive changes in the conditions of monasteries, from periods of total ruin to those of splendor and back again, with dramatic destructive events and equally significant periods of reconstruction, punctuate the historical records of nearly every monastery. In spite of waves of destruction that might see every single structure within a monastery razed to its stone foundations, the identity of a monastery remained the same as its components were changed and replaced, as long as it continued to be reconstructed; in some cases monasteries had been wiped out and rebuilt half a dozen or more times.<sup>44</sup> Appreciating the depth of significance represented by reconstruction events in the lifecycle of a monastery first requires an understanding of important conceptual structures of time, cycles, and change that form their context.

At the heart of premodern East Asian ontological thought is the concept of the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行), which views all material elements as being in a continual process of transformation from one form to another, with each element exerting influence on another element.<sup>45</sup> This core model of change was used as a structure for comprehending a myriad of phenomena, from physical health to military strategy. Parallel processes can also be seen in Buddhist cosmology, which is based upon a narrative of endless cycles

<sup>43</sup> This section is based in part on Scott, "Buddhist Building."

<sup>44</sup> Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 90.

<sup>45</sup> C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 127–143.

of creation and destruction, realized on the cosmic level through immense spans of time such as the kalpa (*jiebo* 劫波 / *jie* 劫) and on the human level through the cycle of rebirth in the six realms (*liudao* 六道). Not only was the cosmos believed to pass through cycles of change, even the Buddhist teachings themselves were widely thought to be subject to decay over time. East Asian Buddhism has been deeply influenced by the notion that after a Buddha passes away, the Dharma they have introduced into the world gradually fades through periods of True Dharma (*zhengfa* 正法), Semblance Dharma (*xiangfa* 像法), and finally End Dharma (*mofa* 末法), until a new Buddha appears in the world to deliver a new dispensation of the teachings and begin the process anew.<sup>46</sup>

Yet crucially, in spite of what might appear to be fatalistic overtones in these narratives of change, it was equally the case that there always existed the potential to interrupt this trajectory through diligent and devoted effort. This intercession could result in either a delay of further decline or in a full restoration (*zhongxing* 中興) or renaissance as events bypassed the period of ruin and were propelled into the ascendant phase of the cycle.<sup>47</sup> Within Buddhist rhetoric, the narrative of the decline of the Dharma was used positively, not only to help introduce innovative teachings, such as doctrines and practices relating to the Pure Land (*jingtu* 淨土), but also as means of motivating people to recapture the energetic spirit of the past and reinvigorate their efforts toward Buddhist practice. Chinese Buddhists during the Ming dynasty faced the loss of direct imperial support, as already mentioned, as well as a movement to seize religious properties for conversion into Confucian schools. Yet under charismatic masters such as the late-Ming monk Lianchi Zhuhong 蓮池祿宏 (1535–1615), Buddhism underwent a “Great Awakening” in the early 1600s, in which a combination of devotional and meditative practice, coupled with the deployment of inspiring stories about exemplars from the Buddhist past, worked to renew monastic discipline and reinvigorate lay participation.<sup>48</sup> The notion that the Dharma would

<sup>46</sup> Jan Nattier, *Once upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 15–26.

<sup>47</sup> On the role of this notion in political philosophy, see Michael Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 55–60; Mary Wright, “The Idea of a Restoration,” in *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T’ung-Chih Restoration, 1862–1874*, by Mary Wright (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 43–67.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Katz, “Superstition and Its Discontents: On the Impact of Temple Destruction Campaigns in China, 1898–1948,” in *Xinyang, shijian yu wenhua tiaoshi* 信仰、實踐與文化調適, ed. Kang Bao 康豹 and Liu Shufen 劉淑芬 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan, 2013), 673, citing Sarah Schneewind, *Community Schools and the State in Ming China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press,



inevitably disappear from the world was thus pressed into service as a skillful means of encouraging individuals to dedicate strenuous efforts toward cultivation, so that they might break the cycle of suffering and achieve liberation.

Those involved with the reconstruction of a Buddhist monastery conceptualized their endeavors along the same lines as these patterns of intervention into a cycle of change. Although it was concerned with just a single site among the thousands of monasteries and untold millions of sentient beings in the imagined Buddhist community, for those monks, laypeople, and other locals who were involved it tapped into the same kinds of narrative tropes as those of much grander “reconstructions” and had the power to inspire, encourage, and enliven those who participated. Monasteries were locations where religious, social, and cultural power all intersected and were amplified, where the halls and inscriptions held layers of history, and where sacred images were emplaced into a highly symbolic physical matrix and ritual space.<sup>49</sup> Reconstructing a monastery was more than simply a matter of replacing tiles and shoring up brick walls; to reconstruct a monastery was to revive one facet of something much larger.

In the latter part of this section I present a framework by which we can model and theorize monastery reconstruction. There were multiple layers of religious, economic, social, and political dynamics behind these events, dynamics that drew their power in large part from the outlined narratives. My aim here is to identify certain patterns that are present in a great many stories of reconstruction, so that the key themes are made clear for the more detailed surveys and case studies in the chapters that follow. This section tends to focus on evidence from the period of this study, the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, although many aspects of these phases can apply to earlier periods. Finally, it is important to note that events recorded as “reconstructions” can range in scale from the repair of a minor priory to the restoration of entire monastic complexes, and everything in between. Here I direct my characterization toward relatively major reconstructions, the kind that on average will only be required once every few centuries or following an unusually massive destructive event.

2006); Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 171–192; Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>49</sup> Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*, 187.



## Destruction

A variety of destructive forces, from the intentional to the accidental, from rapid collapse to slow decay, could have an impact on a Buddhist monastery. Destruction occurred in one or both of two interconnected realms: the material stuff of the monastery's walls and halls, and the human resources of its resident monks and its social relationships with the locality and patrons. Damage in one area would nearly always have an effect on the health of the other. In his 1968 chapter on "Building and Publishing," Welch observed that the destruction of physical elements of a monastery was normally accompanied by a decline in the discipline and reputation of its monastic community.<sup>50</sup> It seems to have been a widespread understanding in Chinese religious culture that an efficacious monastery was also an ornate and well-equipped one, as popular support and people's experience of its numinous power was thought to be reflected in the material support evidenced by fine halls in good repair. When destruction did occur, then, it not only disrupted the physical frame for religious activity but also had a negative impact on its ability to attract donors and materially support its monastic community. In examining the destruction of monasteries, therefore, the material and human effects must both be considered as part of an interconnected whole.

The destruction of monasteries could result from a single, violent act. Extensive damage could be caused by flooding, a perennial threat in the delta regions of the Yangtze and other major river systems, or by a conflagration caused through carelessness or as collateral damage from a nearby battle. Such damage could be intentional as well, with monasteries being razed to the ground by forces in the Taiping War (1850–1864) because they represented idolatry and a heterodox belief system, or by local officials and warlords operating under a banner of anti-superstition or anti-religion. Local gazetteer and other historical records normally describe a monastery being *hui* (燬 or 毀, burned up, destroyed) when it suffers acute harm, sometimes specifically noting it as *xian* 燹 or *fen* 焚 if it was burned. In accounts of religious sites destroyed by Taiping forces, phrases of the format *hui yu kou* 毀于寇 (destroyed by bandits) are ubiquitous.<sup>51</sup> While such massive, acute destructive events can be found throughout historical materials on

<sup>50</sup> Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 90.

<sup>51</sup> In modern and contemporary China, demolishing a building to make way for new development is termed *chai* 拆, and the same is used for monasteries facing destruction. See, for example, the threat faced by Xingjiao Monastery in the 2010s, discussed in chapter 3.

monasteries, on the whole it was likely far more common for a monastery to reach a state of destruction through a process of slow decay. Without regular maintenance and the continual investment of labor and capital, monastery structures would soon fall victim to the elements and become unsuitable for either ritual or domestic use. Monasteries that have been destroyed through long neglect are termed *fei* 廢 (abandoned), *pi* 圯 (ruined), or *xu* 墟 (in ruins). Such monasteries could remain in such a state for centuries, with no active religious community on site and only the stone foundations or the remains of brick stupas to mark their identity. Countless Buddhist monasteries in Chinese history have been ruined and have never again recovered.

Monastery ruins, where people have abandoned the site completely, are an extreme example of the human toll exacted by destruction, but even in cases of minor damage to a site the resident community would inevitably be affected in some negative way. Just as the stones and tiles of monastery structures were subject to damage and decay, so too could the quality of the monastic community be damaged as well. Welch sees this process as being the result of skilled monastics leaving to seek better environments for practice elsewhere, with lax and undisciplined ones arriving to take their place, attracted by the prospect of an easy life.<sup>52</sup> The perceived numinous power of the monastic community would follow the trajectory of its human resources, and local support would be withdrawn in favor of other, perhaps better-run institutions. Material damage might thus initiate a self-perpetuating process of falling support and further decay, as repairs are postponed due to lack of funds and skilled specialists move elsewhere in search of a better environment for their work. At the nadir of this cycle, the monastery might simply be abandoned or, as in the case of Cihui Monastery already described, an unscrupulous abbot might sell off his position and seek to leave the sorry place behind altogether. All of the marks of a prosperous and numinously effective monastery would be gone: buildings in ruin, incapable and lax monastics in residence, and a locality that has withdrawn its support.

### Restoration Leadership

This is the turning point in the narrative of monastery reconstruction, when the life cycle of a monastery reaches its nadir and when, like all cycles, it tends

<sup>52</sup> Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 90.

to turn upward toward a new zenith. Initiating this pivot toward a new rebirth is often attributed to a monastic leader arriving on the scene, in some cases coming to assume the position of abbot at the invitation of the local laity, in others simply happening to encounter the ruins of a historic monastery and being struck by its condition. Outstanding monastics have long held a prominent place in Chinese Buddhist history, with their hagiographies collected in series of *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Records of eminent monastics).<sup>53</sup> They are recognized as persons of exceptional insight and ability, and their behavior is held up as an exemplar for later generations to emulate. Having the capable leadership of a skilled monastic at the center of a religious community became especially crucial during times of disaster. As in the case of the devastation wrought by the Taiping War discussed in chapter 1, monastic leaders were instrumental in sustaining their communities in exile after their monastery was destroyed. They were even more crucial in leading the process of reconstruction after the violence had been quelled. Welch cites the importance of finding the “right person” to lead the founding of a new monastery or the reconstruction of one, and he notes that afterward the person responsible for initiating and leading a monastery reconstruction would be especially honored and their name inscribed in monasterial and historical records.<sup>54</sup> It is important to note that in the vast majority of gazetteer entries that I have surveyed relating to religious reconstruction, the person credited with initiating reconstruction is simply a local layperson or monastic, not a person of any significant historical renown.<sup>55</sup> Yet for many historically significant sites, reconstruction was indeed led by a figure well known among Chinese Buddhists of the time, and in many cases these famous figures arrived from elsewhere, coming in from another region or lineage from that of the site to be reconstructed.

The destruction of a monastery affected both the material and human aspects of the institution, and so reconstruction efforts had to address both areas. A reconstruction leader thus had to possess a great deal of personal charisma as well as a mastery of religious discipline, so that the core of the liturgical community would respect their leadership and the community as

<sup>53</sup> John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

<sup>54</sup> Welch further writes that monastic leaders would be called *zhongxing zushi* 中興祖師, but this term does not often appear in the textual record of the late-Qing and Republican eras and was perhaps only used colloquially. Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 90.

<sup>55</sup> Gregory Adam Scott, “Survey of Religious Reconstruction in Modern China,” <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/ZKT6EJ>>.

a whole would be recognized by the laity as worthy of support. They also had to possess the ability to coordinate large projects involving upward of many dozens of people and to be able to attract skills and donations via well-established social networks of monastics and laypeople. To find such a combination of personal, ecclesiastical, and managerial skills in one person was rare, but there have been several figures throughout history, including in the modern era, who indeed excelled in all these areas. Some were serial reconstructors, moving from place to place and reconstructing monasteries and their religious communities as they went, having built up a reputation for being the kind of person who could succeed at these difficult projects. Xuyun 虛雲 (1864–1959) was responsible for reconstructing at least fourteen monasteries across China, and Tanxu 倓虛 (1875–1963) led about six reconstructions, mainly in the northeast of the country.<sup>56</sup> Such reconstruction leaders would leave their mark on a number of sites and were perhaps one means by which innovative ideas and methods were introduced into newly reborn communities at that critical, transformative moment of reconstruction. Xuyun is famous for reviving the Guiyang 潯仰, Fayan 法眼, and Yunmen 雲門 branches of Chan Buddhism, and Tanxu was instrumental in founding a number of seminaries for monastic education.<sup>57</sup> Such leaders could have a great deal of influence on what teachings and practices were emphasized at the newly rebuilt monastery.

The path toward monastery reconstruction was often signaled by the eminent monastic making a vow (*yuan* 願), normally highlighted as a key moment in the historical record of the reconstruction. Vows occupy a place of exceptional power in East Asian Buddhism, from the Great Vow (*dayuan* 大願) that buddhas and bodhisattvas undertake to liberate all sentient beings, to the vow to attain liberation, one of the ten types of perfected wisdom (*poluomi* 波羅蜜) in Mahayana Buddhism as elucidated in the Faxiang 法相 school.<sup>58</sup> Vowing to reconstruct a monastery signaled to human and supernatural beings alike that the monastic leader's powers were being directed toward that end and ritually initiated the reconstruction. In a stele recorded in 1883 commemorating Chan Master Wuliang 悟亮禪師 reconstructing an

<sup>56</sup> Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 90. Daniela Campo, *La construction de la sainteté dans la Chine moderne: La vie du maître bouddhiste Xuyun* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2013); James Carter, *Heart of Buddha, Heart of China: The Life of Tanxu, a Twentieth-Century Monk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>57</sup> Campo, *La construction*; Carter, *Heart of Buddha*.

<sup>58</sup> See "prañidhāna" in Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., eds., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 662.

unnamed monastery, for example, his vow marks the starting point of the reconstruction campaign:

Now it has been a little more than ten years since the master made his vow [to reconstruct the monastery], and to look back at his accomplishments in a little more than ten years from now, to see the results of his fundraising, which have exceeded a great amount of money, will he not be seen as someone who has greatly exceeded [the abilities of regular] people?<sup>59</sup>

The power of the vow linked the exceptional abilities of the reconstruction leader to the meritorious task of monastery reconstruction and invited others to participate in the generation of merit by contributing their own efforts and support. The vow was thus also an opportunity to publicly announce the project and to start the process of building up popular support and enthusiasm. In the late Qing, news of such a vow would be spread through communities via word of mouth, but as Chinese Buddhist print culture developed in the early years of the Republic, with Buddhist periodicals appearing from 1912 onward, the role of print media in spreading news of such projects began to expand.<sup>60</sup> A full-page photographic collage on the inside cover of the August 1, 1937, issue of *Foxue banyuekan* 佛學半月刊 (Buddhism semimonthly), for example, depicts Nanhua Monastery 南華寺 in Shaoyou 韶州 (present-day Shaoguan 韶關) and has a cameo photograph of Xuyun in the upper right. The title identifies this as an overall view of Nanhua Monastery, which Xuyun has vowed to reconstruct.<sup>61</sup> The readership of *Foxue banyuekan*, which was published and distributed by the Shanghai Buddhist Books Company 上海佛學書局, was thus informed of the reconstruction and the leading role that Xuyun played in it, indicated through reference to his vow.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> 「今師發願於十餘年之前、成業於十餘年之後、觀其設施之迹、動逾萬金、謂非有大過人者乎。」 Punctuation added. From *Qing Wuliang chanshi zhongxiu Fosi bei bing beiyin* 清悟亮禪師重修佛寺碑并碑陰, Fu Ssu-nien Library, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, T653.81 7220.

<sup>60</sup> Scott, "Revolution of Ink"

<sup>61</sup> 「圖為虛雲老和尚發願重修廣東韶州南華寺之全景」 MFQ 54:226.

<sup>62</sup> On the Shanghai Buddhist Books Company, see Shi Ruige 史瑞戈 [Gregory Adam Scott], "Pinghen gongde yu liyi: Shanghai Foxue shuju gufen youxian gongsi de jingli" 平衡功德與利益—上海佛學書局股份有限公司的經歷, in *Gaibian Zhongguo zongjiao de wushi nian* 改變中國宗教的五十年, 1898–1948, ed. Kang Bao 康豹 [Paul R. Katz] and Gao Wanseng 高萬桑 [Vincent Goossaert] (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2015), 193–223.

Just as meritorious acts were believed to generate merit through the mechanics of *ganying*, the power of the vow to reconstruct a monastery and the initiation of a reconstruction campaign were sometimes associated with miraculous events (*lingyi* 靈異), portents signifying that the reconstruction had the support of the supernatural powers. Portents are a key component of Chinese religion, signifying the intimate and interconnected relationship between events in the human realm and those in the supernatural. Some accounts of Buddhist monasteries describe the founding monastic first being granted a miraculous vision of the monastery (*huasi* 化寺) before its construction, a three-dimensional virtual blueprint that is then brought to material reality by having it built overtop the layout of the vision.<sup>63</sup> Portents were also associated with religious reconstructions, as described earlier with Datong seeing the pair of magpies nesting at Cihui Monastery. In the case of Xiannü Temple 仙女廟, a community of female Daoist adepts near Yangzhou 揚州, it was a miraculous event that helped to prevent the destruction of the temple and protect it against invasion, as related in its entry in a local gazetteer published in 1924:

In the eighth year of the Xianfeng era [1858], the southern [Taiping] bandits attacked Yangzhou. They reached the Wanfu Bridge and planned on crossing over to the east. That night there was a great thunderstorm, and in the flames of their lamps [the bandits] glimpsed the saintly image of a female immortal. The bandits were frightened and suspicious and were thus halted.<sup>64</sup>

Portents are an important part of the historical story of religious institutions; their appearance related to reconstruction affirmed that the human intervention in the monastery's fate was supported by the powers that be and further testified to the numinous power (*ling* 靈) of the site and the leader of its reconstruction.

<sup>63</sup> On *huasi* see Susan Andrews, "Tales of Conjured Temples in Qing Period Gazetteers," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (2011): 134–162; Raoul Birnbaum, "The Manifestations of a Monastery: Shen-ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106.1 (1986): 110–137.

<sup>64</sup> 「咸豐八年、粵賊竄揚。至萬福橋、欲東渡。是夕雷雨大作、燈火中隱見仙女神像、賊驚疑而止。」 Punctuation added. The full entry appears in *Xuxiu Jiangdu xianzhi* 續修江都縣志, ed. Gui Bangjie 桂邦傑 (n.p.: Wenxuan lou, 1926) [Erudition digital edition], 851–853.

## Fundraising

With the right leader, the right vow, and all the right signs in place, the next step was to raise some money. In normal times, monasteries maintained their own economic networks to sustain operations, which could include income from ritual services, landholdings and rights to collect rent from land, and established lineages of lay donation networks. These latter two sources of income, especially from the Ming dynasty onward when direct imperial support of monasteries virtually disappeared, closely tied monasteries to the fabric of local society and required the maintenance of good relations with lay donor lineages.<sup>65</sup> When large-scale destruction occurred, however, these sources of income were insufficient; the costs of a major reconstruction were far in excess of even several years of monastery income. Additionally, a monastery that had been destroyed or was in a serious state of decay could easily have already lost access to much of its economic network. Perhaps the larger chaos of which the destruction of the monastery was one part had also negatively impacted patron families and tenant farmers to the point that donations ceased, or else the mismanagement or complete abandonment of the monastery meant that rents had long gone uncollected and tenants had taken advantage of the opportunity to shirk their commitments. Neighbors may even have started to encroach on monasterial land, chipping away at the very ground on which the site was based.<sup>66</sup>

Fundraising for reconstruction (*muxiu* 募修 or *mujian* 募建) was thus a distinct endeavor from the regular management of monastery finances, one that was directed toward a specific limited goal but which was also intended to help establish the foundations for long-term economic stability. This was one of the key areas in which people were able to participate in the merit-generation of monastery reconstruction, and since calling upon previous donors may no longer be possible, and the scale of funds required was so much greater than usual, reconstruction fundraising tended to be especially public in nature. In the Ming this entailed the production of specialized images and texts designed to encourage donations, while in the late

<sup>65</sup> Weiwei Luo, "Land, Lineage and the Laity: Transactions of a Qing Monastery," *Late Imperial China* 36.1 (June 2015): 88–123. In his landmark survey of temple building activities, Wolfram Eberhard mentions a system in Taiwan where a hereditary committee of laypeople manages temple finances and the monastics play no role in financial matters, but this might have been unique to Taiwan and the modern period. Wolfram Eberhard, "Temple-Building Activities in Medieval and Modern China: An Experimental Study," *Monumenta Serica* 23 (1964): 313.

<sup>66</sup> See the example of Xingjiao Monastery, discussed in chapter 3.



Qing monastics would engage in ascetic practices to raise funds, having themselves locked into cages in the public square, with each lock assigned a set cost to have it removed, and foregoing sustenance until every lock was removed.<sup>67</sup> In the Republican era, periodicals generated publicity for reconstruction fundraising, just as they did for philanthropic and other causes, by featuring articles touting the project and announcing the call for donations. Donors ranged from high-ranking officials to monastics, from wealthy local gentry to commoners who pooled their funds together to donate as a group. Donation networks also extended to southeast Asia, where branch monasteries set up by immigrant communities grew into a key conduit for donations in the modern era, especially in the case of home institutions that were located along the south and southeast coasts of China.<sup>68</sup>

A sense of what reconstruction fundraising produced can be gained from a brief look at the record of Cihui Monastery, the reconstruction described at the start of this book.<sup>69</sup> In this inscription the donors, who are referred to as *shanshi* 善士 (a saintly or excellent person), are listed by name along with the amount of their donation, with high-ranking donors listed separately from groups of commoners. There are thirty-one groups of names with a total of seventy-nine names listed. Donations to the reconstruction took the form of raw materials such as stone; daily needs such as food to sustain the monastic community during the project; important ritual objects such as a bronze tripodal incense burner (*dinglu* 鼎爐); or currency, in this case either silver *liang* 兩 or dollars (*yangyuan* 洋元, Mexican Silver dollars). The total value of all currency donations is 866 silver *liang* and 300 yuan, the former equal to about sixty years' wages for a laborer, and the latter over two years.<sup>70</sup> Among the names listed there are none that stand out as especially well-known historical figures, although seven have official titles and two are eunuchs in the Imperial palace. Of the six monastic donors listed all but one are from Fengtian, the home region of Datong, who led the reconstruction of

<sup>67</sup> Elizabeth Kindall, "Envisioning a Monastery: A Seventeenth-Century Buddhist Fundraising Appeal Album," *T'oung Pao* 97 (2011): 104–159; Goossaert, "Starved for Resources."

<sup>68</sup> A contemporary example is described in Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, "The Politics of a Reviving Buddhist Temple: State, Association, and Religion in Southeast China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 65.2 (May 2006): 337–359.

<sup>69</sup> Zhang, *Qing chongxiu cihui si beiji bing yin*.

<sup>70</sup> Since wages were often supplemented with food, and exchange rates and wages varied widely, these are only rough estimates of the value of the amounts raised. Calculations based on the value for 1902 in table A1 in Robert C. Allen et al., "Wages, Prices, and Living Standards in China, 1738–1925: In Comparison with Europe, Japan, and India," *The Economic History Review* 64.S1 (2011): 8–38; and table 12 of *Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, Special Supplement (1926), 100.



Cihui Monastery. Datong's visit to his home region was evidently quite productive in convincing local monastics to support his cause.

Additional examples of fundraising and donation campaigns will be examined in the chapters that follow, but from this particular source it is evident that participation in a reconstruction project was open to even those of limited means: the smallest amount donated was one silver *liang*, a sum well within the reach of the modestly prosperous. Corporate donations, although not part of this particular record, also list relatively small amounts contributed by a group of people, further lowering the barrier for investment in the merit economy. One stele face is titled "Together Reaching the Meritorious Karma" (*tongdeng shanyuan* 同登善緣), reflecting the communal nature of donation and merit generation.<sup>71</sup> Cultivating wealthy donors, however, could also be extremely productive; of the 866 *liang* raised for the reconstruction of Cihui Monastery, 380 *liang* or about 43% of the total came from just seven donors, all of whom held imperial titles, official positions, or both. As this case demonstrates, existing social networks could be productively tapped as a source of donation, but donations could also create new social bonds as well. Donations created a karmic connection between the donor and the monastery. Small donations given as part of campaigns in public places might soon be forgotten, but after more substantial donations, especially if the donor's name and contribution were recorded for posterity, they could later be called upon again to further support the livelihood of the monastery and to deepen their bond with it and its monastic community.

## Rebuilding

The preparation phases of the reconstruction leader making their vow to reconstruct and collecting funds and materials culminate in the rebuilding of the physical and human elements of a destroyed monastery. The material reconstruction of even a large monastery could have very humble beginnings: many narratives include a stage where the monastic community raises one or more reed huts (*mao'an* 茅庵, *maolu* 茅廬) to serve as temporary accommodation and ritual space.<sup>72</sup> In time, however, the reconstruction proper would commence, with halls, shrines, pagodas, hallways, and other

<sup>71</sup> *Chongxiu tongming si bei* 重修通明寺碑, Fu Ssu-nien Library, Academia Sinica, T653.81 2023.

<sup>72</sup> Reed huts were also used by lone hermits or monastics practicing in the wilderness.

structures being built on the site. Although this stage was the most drastic in changing the outward appearance of the monastery, it is often given the least detail in recorded accounts of the reconstruction; in many records, only the most basic information about the identity and size of the buildings, expressed in bays (*jian* 間), is recorded.<sup>73</sup> The terminology used for reconstructing physical elements of a monastery varies greatly and is seldom used in a way that gives a definitive indication of the scale of work involved. By far the most commonly used term to describe monastery reconstructions is *chongxiu* 重修, which appears in nearly all of the stele transcriptions consulted here, as well as in the plurality of Buddhist periodical articles relating to reconstruction activities. Other terms such as *xiuli* 修理 and *xiuqi* 修葺 (repair) are used much less often, and although *zhongxing* 中興 (restoration) does appear, *chongxiu* is by far the most used term for restoration.

What, then, did a *chongxiu* involve? Unfortunately, this term is so widely used that its referent can range between minor repairs to a single building to the resurrection of an entire monastic complex from ruins. Terming an event a *chongxiu* was intended to emphasize the perceived significance of the event rather than be a reflection of its material scale on the ground. By analyzing reconstruction accounts very closely, however, and by using photographic and other evidence, we can often gain more precise details about what material elements of a monastery were actually reconstructed. Reconstruction naturally proceeded from the ground up. Prip-Møller observes that while the wood, brick, and tile structures of monastic buildings would regularly decay or be destroyed, the stone foundations of these buildings would normally survive just about any type of damage. Later structures could be rebuilt on the same foundations as their earlier incarnations, maintaining their overall size and footprint across reconstruction cycles. In some cases foundations were left in place while other buildings were reconstructed around them, the stone acting as a placeholder for a potential reconstruction yet to come. The new buildings on the old foundations would not, however, necessarily be built in the same style as their architectural ancestors; Prip-Møller again notes that Huiju Monastery near Nanjing had been rebuilt after the Taiping War in a simple, functional style, but based on gazetteer records, it had likely previously been much more ornate.<sup>74</sup> Thus even if reconstruction only sought to

<sup>73</sup> Most East Asian buildings before the modern era were built using a system of columns bearing the weight of the roof and, except for the grandest structures, would have a pair of stone or brick lateral walls covered in plaster. The spans or bays between these columns as viewed from the building's front were used as a conventional measure of their size.

<sup>74</sup> Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, 202.

replace those buildings that had been destroyed, rebuilding them on top of their old foundations, it was not simply a return to the status quo ante; it was also an opportunity for adaptation to changing circumstances.

In the case of Jiangtian Monastery 江天寺 in Zhenjiang 鎮江, a site that is examined in detail in chapter 1, a major reconstruction in the late 1860s was an opportunity to rebuild halls that had been in ruins, in some cases for over a century, prior to the damage caused by the Taiping War.<sup>75</sup> The central axial structures of the monastery were all rebuilt on the same footprint as before, but the majority of reconstructed buildings resulted in a layout that was substantially different from that before the war. As the stele inscription author Xue Shuchang 薛書常 (1815–1880) puts it, these structures “all inherited their old names but were not ones that were completely [rebuilt] on their former locations.”<sup>76</sup> My point here is that we should resist the temptation to think of *chongxiu*, “reconstruction,” as simply a return to the past material state of a monastery. Rather, it was a pivot point in the history of the monastery, one that had the potential to introduce significant amounts of change into what was otherwise a highly stable layout.

The material reconstruction of a monastery brought its own set of challenges, as the religious worlds of merit generation and monastic organization encountered the economic world of finance, labor, and markets. The inscription written by Yang Pu 楊溥 in 1871 includes a number of details regarding the logistics of reconstruction at Jiangtian Monastery. There he records a total reconstruction cost of just over 29,700 taels, of which materials cost 60%, skilled labor 30%, and miscellaneous salaries and expenses 10%. He notes as well that during the twenty-six months of reconstruction work,

with materials stacked up like a forest and several hundred workers on site, at the time we feared that laxity among the workers would ruin [the project]. In two years, however, there was never a single piece of material that disappeared, the craftspeople were neither disruptive nor lax, the work was not careless, and no expenditure was wasted.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> See the section on Jiangtian Monastery in chapter 1 for more detail.

<sup>76</sup> 「皆襲其舊名、而不盡仍其舊址者也。」 Punctuation added. *Xu Jinshan zhi* 續金山志, ed. Shi Qiuyan 釋秋崖 (1900), 68, <<http://buddhistinformatics.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/ui.html?book=g039>>.

<sup>77</sup> 「材木林立日役數百人、時恐懈弛愆事。乃兩年來材無遺失。匠無譁縱、工作不苟、經費不虛糜。」 Punctuation added. Yang Pu 楊溥, “Chongxiu Jiangtian si gongcheng ji” 重修江天寺工程記, in *Xu Jinshan zhi* 續金山志, 70–71.

The implication of Yang's praise for the efficient work carried out at Jiangtian Monastery is, of course, that the opposite situation, where building materials were pilfered and workers were not diligent in their labor, was both known and feared. This would present a particular challenge for any project that relied on a limited set of funds donated for meritorious purposes.<sup>78</sup>

As noted earlier, the material rebuilding of a monastery normally also entailed the reconstruction of its human elements: the resident monastic community of religious specialists. Apart from the reconstruction leader who, as already described, figures prominently in historical accounts, records are seldom as forthcoming about the larger monastic community as they are on the donation and physical reconstruction aspects. The account in Welch's *Buddhist Revival*, which although brief was likely based on material gathered from his interviews with refugee monks in Hong Kong in the late 1950s and early 1960s, describes the influence of the reconstruction leader and renewed standards of discipline resulting in the banishment of corrupt and lax monastics and the influx of capable ones. This in turn would help improve relations with the local laity, who would be much more willing to support a monastery that was serious about ritual and communal propriety and was thus more likely to be in good repair. A grand monastery in fine repair would likely be of little religious importance if it did not also house ritual specialists whose abilities matched the grandeur of their surroundings.

Yet there were other agendas pursued during the reconstruction of Chinese Buddhist monasteries, and the rebuilding of the religious community was not always assured. In chapter 3 I examine reconstructions during the period of the Nanjing decade (1927–1937) and the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). During this period leaders within the Nationalist Party (Guomindang 國民黨, GMD) and the Chinese Communist Party (Gongchandang 共產黨, CCP) were among those who supported the reconstruction of historic Buddhist monasteries to serve as symbols of China's enduring cultural heritage.<sup>79</sup> Such reconstructions, however, sought to create monuments to China's past, and the monastic community that would live and practice there was secondary in importance. This trend only intensified during the final period of this study, the early decades of the People's Republic

<sup>78</sup> Xue Shuchang 薛書常, "Chongxiu Jiangtian si gongcheng ji" 重修江天寺工程記, in *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 68–69.

<sup>79</sup> Traditionally the initialism used for the Nationalist Party has been KMT, from the Wade-Giles romanization *kuomintang*, but since *hanyu pinyin* 漢語拼音 is now the generally accepted standard internationally, I use GMD here.

of China (PRC), when under the leadership of state organs the structures of many ancient monasteries were reconstructed, but no monastic community was revived. In these cases, the human element of the monastery was, by design, either devalued or omitted altogether, resulting in a radically changed dynamic that is the subject of the final chapter.

## Recording

The final step in the reconstruction process is to record the details of the event for posterity, records that were later consulted when monastery and local gazetteers were compiled or updated. Generating a record of the reconstruction was important for two major reasons: First, the reconstruction represented a major event in the history of the monastery and was thus worthy of being entered into the historical record. Many entries in local gazetteers on religious institutions are little more than lists of dates when the site was founded, damaged or destroyed, and reconstructed. These landmark events furnish the essential chronology of the site for posterity. Additionally, the success of the reconstruction was testament to the continuing numinous efficacy of the religious site, and recording it helped to transmit this evidence to later generations. Second, given that reconstruction was a highly significant generator of merit for donors and other participants, recording the names of donors was essential for ensuring that the merit they received in response to their act would be properly recognized and awarded. As mentioned above, recording the names of donors in stone was a key part of the merit-generation process from very earliest period of Buddhism's presence in China.<sup>80</sup>

Such records were inscribed and printed in different types of media in the premodern and modern eras. Stone stele (*bei* 碑), originally likely a medium for funerary inscriptions, were intended to preserve their messages for eternity, as expressed by such masthead inscriptions as *tongchuan bukui* 同傳不朽 (transmitted together without decay) or *wan'gu liufang* 萬古流芳 (spreading their fame through ten thousand ages). Stele inscriptions normally include a short outline of the history of the monastery and details about the reconstruction process, as well as a list of donors and their donation, with this last element usually appearing on the obverse face. The text of these

<sup>80</sup> Wong, *Chinese Steles*.

narrative inscriptions was often copied into local gazetteers verbatim, and in many cases the reprinted text has survived while the stele itself has been lost. Stele and gazetteer records must, however, be approached with a critical eye, as with all historical sources; in both cases their authors had strong motivations to portray the events in a particularly positive light. Stele inscriptions were composed in celebration of the completion of a major project and were likely also funded by the same donation pool that paid for the reconstruction, while gazetteers were subject to a range of editorial influences and biases.<sup>81</sup>

With the emergence of the periodical as a new genre of Chinese Buddhist literature in the Republican era, monastery reconstructions begin to be publicized in print, with articles appearing throughout the planning, fundraising, rebuilding, and recording phases of different projects. In the case of the Shanghai branch of Qingliang Monastery 清涼寺, which had originally been established in 1926, a ritual event following a major reconstruction completed in 1938 provided an occasion for the publication of an eighteen-page special issue, *Chongxing Qingliang si shuili fahui tekan* 重興清涼寺水陸法會特刊 (Special issue on the Dharma assembly of [sentient beings on] water and land for the reconstructed Qingliang Monastery).<sup>82</sup> Included in the issue is a biographical sketch of the abbot, Qinghai 青海; a narrative description of the monastery's origins and reconstructions; lengthy lists of participants in the assembly; and two pages of photographs of the monastery's structures. While the issue is not specifically intended to record the reconstruction of the monastery, several aspects of reconstruction records are reflected here, including the prominent position of the monastic leader, an account of the events surrounding rebuilding, and lists of names of supporters. Modern mechanized print technology allowed for publications such as this to be produced much more quickly and cheaply than was previously possible, providing another medium for spreading publicity about a reconstruction of a monastery.

From the brief sketch outlined here we see that the reconstruction of a Chinese Buddhist monastery was a multifaceted phenomenon, one that involved both material and human elements, and was an event of immense

<sup>81</sup> Joseph Dennis, *Writing, Publishing and Reading Local Gazetteers in Imperial China, 1100–1700* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).

<sup>82</sup> Reprinted in MFQB 58:213–230. The date of the ritual assembly mentioned in the issue was determined by matching the given solar calendar date (8/21) and lunar calendar date (7/26) with the only calendar year in which those two dates coincide. Another article regarding the reconstruction, unfortunately illegible in the reprint edition, appears in the May 16, 1938, issue of *Foxue banyuekan*, in MFQ 54:265.

institutional, historical, and even cosmic significance. Narratives of monastery reconstruction are heavily imbued with emotive and inspirational power, dramatic episodes where a physical manifestation of the Buddhadharma is rescued from destruction by a devoted leader and a community of religious specialists and lay donors.

A few important aspects of the above outline are worth highlighting here:

- 1) Monastery reconstruction was not an abnormal occurrence, and monasteries' histories are punctuated with episodes of destruction and reconstruction. While both were seen as highly meaningful events worthy of lament or celebration, they were nevertheless understood as occurring within a larger historical cycle in which destruction and decay were inevitable but where there was always the potential for restoration. Rather than a rupture in history, reconstruction was one phase of the monastery lifecycle and in fact represented a valued opportunity for monastics and laypeople alike to participate in a major merit-generating project of great importance.
- 2) All facets of monastery reconstruction—the religious, material, social, and historical—are intertwined together, with each having the potential to affect and be affected by the others. Improvements to discipline and the regulation of the local monastic community, for example, while not immediately directed toward rebuilding monastery structures, could lead to greater lay participation and increasing income and thus help to raise funds for repairing the physical structures of the monastery. In contrast, concerted efforts in just one or two areas of reconstruction without developing the others could stall the overall project indefinitely. The implication for our study is that we must examine not only the religious but also the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of reconstruction history.
- 3) The leader of a reconstruction was a crucial figure to the process. In numerous cases of reconstruction, including many examined in the following chapters, this leader was an outsider, someone who arrived at an abandoned site, who came at the invitation of local lay leaders, or even, as in the case of Datong, through purchasing the leadership position of a ruined monastery. The outsider status of such a central figure in the process suggests a few implications. Monastics often traveled a great deal, and thus the reconstruction leader could introduce experiences and teachings from their past experiences elsewhere into

the newly rebuilt community. The new arrivals, however, also had to contend with the monastics already resident, who might be resistant to supporting the newcomer, and with the local lay community from whom the funding for major projects would have to come. Such dynamics could pose challenges but also represent opportunities for innovation and change.

These themes—reconstruction as one phase in a larger cycle, the interdependent nature of all facets of reconstruction, and the importance of outstanding leadership—reverberate throughout the histories of the sites examined in the chapters that follow. There are certainly important regional variations in how reconstructions proceeded, but the core elements of the process outlined are found in reconstructions throughout different parts of China. The ways in which these reconstructions drew upon this pattern but then began to undergo significant shifts within changing historical circumstances of the modern era are at the heart of what I seek to explore with this book.

### **From the Taiping War to the Cultural Revolution**

This book covers the period from 1866 to 1966, a scope that is intended to be both comprehensive in covering a wide range of reconstructions, and focused in that it is clearly book-ended between two massive campaigns of religious destruction. I start this study in 1866 because the destruction of the Taiping War had such a deep impact on religious institutions, and the need for reconstruction in its wake was so pervasive, that the period immediately following this war must be included in any discussion of reconstruction in the modern era. I end it in 1966 for a few reasons: one, in order to touch upon the history of Buddhism in the first seventeen years of the People's Republic of China, a period in which numerous Buddhist monasteries were reconstructed and which still awaits extensive study; two, to discuss trends that began in the Republican era but which continued and intensified after 1949; and three, to leave the Cultural Revolution itself, a campaign that resulted in unprecedented damage and disruption to Buddhist monasteries, as the definitive end to my story.<sup>83</sup> While this era is classified as “modern” Chinese history,

<sup>83</sup> The reconstruction of religious buildings and the resurgence of religion in China after the policy changes of the late 1970s, on the other hand, are better informed by discussions of contemporary religion in China.



I do not wish to view the history of this era as categorically different from that of previous periods, which can too easily lead to a false dichotomy between a static “tradition” that came before and a dynamic “modernity” that is radically and categorically new. Instead, drawing on the insights of Anne Blackburn and Alicia Turner in examining the history of Buddhism in modern South and Southeast Asia, I view developments within modern Chinese Buddhism as operating within established frames of intellectual and religious understanding but making use of newly introduced material and social technologies.<sup>84</sup> Throughout the cases examined in the chapters that follow, the people involved in reconstruction evidence both a strong awareness of the long history of monastery destruction and reconstruction, as well as an acute sense that the modern era brings with it its own unique challenges and opportunities that differ from those of the past.

In chapter 1 I start by surveying the damage brought by the Taiping War to Buddhist monasteries. The trauma of the war was felt through most of China and for generations after the war ended, and it had a severe impact on Buddhist institutions as well, particularly those that found themselves on the front lines of fighting between rebel and loyalist forces. I then examine two cases of important monasteries that were almost completely destroyed as a result of the war. In one case the site was only partially rebuilt and never again regained its position of importance, while in the other the entire site was reconstructed from the ground up with the help of some highly placed donors. In both cases the trauma of the Taiping War had an indelible effect on the monasteries’ futures. Chapter 2 continues this story from the period of the late-Qing political and educational reforms, through the turbulent early Republic, up to the formation of the new Nationalist government in Nanjing. During this era of reform and revolution, Buddhism found itself under threat from a modernizing nation, the leaders of which appeared all too ready to jettison elements of Chinese civilization, like traditional religions, that seemed to be relics of an obsolete era. With no strong central government, Buddhist monasteries were forced to navigate a shifting political scene of warlord coalitions and ideological campaigns. In both case studies examined in this chapter, reconstruction occurred in the face of, and strategically oriented toward, the shifting ideological terrain. Chinese Buddhists adapted

<sup>84</sup> Anne M. Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism: Colonialism & Modernity in Sri Lanka* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Alicia Turner, *Saving Buddhism: The Impermanence of Religion in Colonial Burma* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i press, 2014).

longstanding print culture and educational forms and began to incorporate them in new ways into reconstructed sites.

Chapter 3 begins at the start of the Nanjing Decade and continues into the period of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Both the newly unified government and the war posed threats to Buddhist monasteries, as the Nationalist state sought to penetrate its influence into every aspect of the daily lives of Chinese citizens and every element of Chinese society. Yet historic Buddhist sites had immense symbolic value to a state preparing for all-out war, and thus a great deal of effort was put into protecting these sites as enduring concrete symbols of Chinese civilization. Finally, chapter 4 deals with the first seventeen years of the People's Republic of China, during which the new communist party-state sought to regulate religion and to ensure its integration into new structures of social and ideological control. Buddhist monasteries were now stages for cultural diplomacy with other Asian nations, part of the global Cold War great game for influence, prestige, and establishing the international legitimacy of the new state. Monasteries reconstructed during this era were expected to serve as venues for visiting state and cultural delegations, and the Buddhist monastic and lay communities were mobilized to generate friendly relations with their coreligionists across the rest of Asia.

By the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, a period of political civil war and indiscriminate damage to religious and historical sites in China, the role of Buddhist monasteries in China and the meaning of their reconstruction had both undergone an indelible shift. The most significant shift exhibited in reconstructions of the sites examined in the chapters that follow is that over this period, the historical elements of monasteries come to eclipse their function as a frame for religious life. Reconstructions have gradually become a means for a central state power to assert its control over a site and transform it into a static museum of a Buddhist past, one that serves its conception of a national cultural legacy. If there was a living monastic community there, it is either excised or sharply circumscribed so that the site can function as a relic of the past, untouched by new uses. To borrow the wording of Gregory Schopen, in these reconstructed monasteries there are bones and stones but no Buddhist monks.<sup>85</sup> This could not contrast more sharply with the historical pattern of monastery reconstruction, in which the religious community of monastics and lay patrons was always an indispensable

<sup>85</sup> Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996).

element, one that equally needed to be reconstructed alongside the material structures. To be certain, this model never completely disappeared; it continued to be followed in some instances during the Republican period and even into the 1950s, but it fades rapidly from view over time, particularly in the case of the most historically important sites. This process, I would argue, began in the aftermath of the Taiping War, was accelerated by pressures experienced by Buddhist monasteries in the early twentieth century, and came to full fruition as the state asserted full regulatory control over religion in the early People's Republic. Throughout the reconstructions examined in the chapters that follow there is a growing shift in power, from the lay community and monastic leaders toward the state, as monasteries are reconfigured from religious sites toward cultural relics. The massive waves of destruction and disruption certainly helped this process, as the state emerged as one of the only bodies with sufficient resources to support very large reconstruction projects. To be certain, in this period there continued to be locally led reconstructions that succeeded in reviving their religious community, but as this period progresses, some of the most historically significant Buddhist monastery sites in China are completely transformed into cultural relics.

Examining the historical processes by which this shift occurred is crucial for our understanding of Buddhism in modern China. Monastery reconstructions occurred throughout the modern period, were important events in which massive amounts of capital and labor were invested, and produced merit for donors and monastics alike. Reconstructions also help us to see beyond the core revival narrative of Chinese Buddhism toward its relations with wider Chinese society and its integration into the national narrative. It further serves as a lens on power struggles between monastery communities and the state, struggles over the freedom of religious practice, property rights, and the right of stewardship over the material culture of a sacred site. Additionally, discussions of monastery reconstructions tell us something about changing Buddhist conceptions of their own history: is it indeed important to maintain the historical elements of a monastery, or should they be adapted to changing needs? Such questions continue to face Buddhist communities in China and elsewhere: how important ought monasteries be within a “modernist,” “humanistic,” or indeed an “ecological” Buddhism?

The reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries is, however, equally significant for our understanding of the history of modern China more broadly. Numerous prominent people in different areas of Chinese society were

interested in Buddhist monasteries and their fate, for reasons that were religious and otherwise. In the late Republic and early PRC, Buddhism became symbolic of Chinese culture and history—how did this happen, who were the principle figures involved, and what ramifications did it have for Buddhists and for Chinese statecraft? The story of Buddhist monasteries and their transformation in cultural relics can tell us a great deal about how local and religious elements were gradually incorporated into national narratives in modern China, how a national culture was built from disparate elements, and how some groups lost out in the process. It reminds us of the continued importance of elements of material culture as symbols of a national history, and prompts us to look more closely at the use of ideology and culture as a conceptual ground on which to engage in international relations. A closer look at the fate of Buddhism and Buddhist monasteries in modern China can provide a valuable lens on complex social and cultural transformations that continue to operate in Chinese communities today.

## The Post-Taiping Reconstruction

The iconoclastic tendencies of the Tai Pings are still in full vigour. Nowhere, apparently, do they leave the idols untouched. At [Pingwang, Jiangsu], near the residence of the chief in command, a temple was noticed which has been entirely cleared of its images. . . .

The floors of these buildings are bestrewn with relics of helpless gods, Buddhist and Tauist, male and female. Some are cast into the canals, and are found floating down the stream mingled with the débris of rifled houses and the remains of the dead.

Rev. Griffith John, 1860<sup>1</sup>

The Taiping War (*Taiping Tianguo yundong* 太平天國運動) erupted in 1850 and raged across much of China for fourteen years. In terms of human casualties it was likely the most destructive conflict in human history; it nearly toppled the Qing state and caused immense damage to its economic heartland.<sup>2</sup> During the war, Taiping forces occupied a vast amount of territory and established their own state in the Jiangnan 江南 region, the area of east-central China that lies just south of the Yangtze River, with the city of Nanjing as their capital. They also led military campaigns through much of Qing territory, campaigns that brought with them enormous human and material destruction at the hands of both Taiping and Qing loyalist forces. The Qing finally toppled the Taiping state in 1864, thanks in part to a series of military

<sup>1</sup> Griffith John, “A Letter from Rev. Griffith John,” July 16, 1860, in *Western Reports on the Taiping: A Selection of Documents*, ed. Prescott Clarke and J. S. Gregory (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 231–237. Originally published as *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* 24 (October 1860): 270–275. My sincere thanks to Dr. Carl Kilcourse for bringing this source to my attention. A version of this chapter was published in *Ming-Qing yanjiu* 明清研究 23.2 (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Although the Taiping conflict has most often been called a “rebellion,” Tobie Meyer-Fong has suggested using the term “civil war” to emphasize the depth of the conflict’s impact and to invite comparisons with the nearly contemporaneous American Civil War (1861–1865). Tobie Meyer-Fong, *What Remains: Coming to Terms with Civil War in 19th Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 1.

reforms, but in the post-war era its control over regional and local governance was greatly weakened. Regional military governors began to assert more autonomy, anticipating the eventual collapse of the Imperial system in 1911 and the rise of warlords in the decades that followed.<sup>3</sup>

The war had a deep and lasting impact on Chinese religion, particularly Chinese religious sites and institutions, for several reasons: first, Taiping military campaigns and battles between Taiping and Qing forces occurred within some of the most economically, culturally, and historically important areas of China, in particular the Jiangnan region. Jiangnan had grown into a cradle of economic productivity and wealth through the Ming and early Qing dynasties and had also supported a great number of religious institutions, including large Buddhist monasteries. The disruption of the war and its human casualties wreaked chaos in the complex economic networks and well-established systems of patronage that were crucial to sustaining these institutions. Second, Taiping religious ideology, which built upon a patrimony of fierce Protestant iconophobia and iconoclasm, motivated their followers to destroy religious idols wherever they could.<sup>4</sup> Since Chinese religious culture makes extensive use of sacred images, they were supplied with a great wealth of idols to be destroyed, the “helpless gods” described in the eyewitness account of Rev. Griffith John quoted at the beginning of this chapter. In addition to fulfilling ideological goals, smashing religious images also weakened the power of local religious communities, groups who might seek to challenge their own theocracy. Finally, in addition to disrupting the support networks of religious institutions and directly attacking those that fell within their territory of control, the war further caused collateral damage to those religious institutions unlucky enough to find themselves on the front lines. This included accidental damage from fires incidentally ignited, the military occupation of monastic buildings for use as ad hoc barracks or supply warehouses, and the exploitation of sacred sites as strategic elevated positions, many of which were built on hilltops for religious and aesthetic reasons. Buddhist sites in China had experienced wars, rebellions, and periods of religious persecution before, but the damage and destruction wrought upon monasteries as a result of the Taiping War was likely on a scale far beyond anything that had preceded it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Immanuel Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> See Carl S. Kilcourse, *Taiping Theology: The Localization of Christianity in China, 1843–64* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 54–68.

<sup>5</sup> Previous anti-Buddhist campaigns include those prosecuted by the Tang 唐 Emperor Wuzong 武宗 in 845 CE and by the later Zhou 後周 Emperor Shizong 世宗 in 955 CE.

The final pacification of Taiping forces in the early 1860s left vast swathes of territory abandoned and in ruins, many of which were not rebuilt or repopulated until decades afterward. This war, as well as those fought against the United Kingdom, France, and other foreign powers during this period, had exposed serious weaknesses in the Qing state and prompted a period of introspection and innovation among Chinese leaders that led to the gradual development of new military, technological, and academic systems. This period of reform following the end of the Taiping War came to be remembered as the Tongzhi Restoration (*Tongzhi zhongxing* 同治中興), named for the Tongzhi Emperor 同治帝 (r. 1861–1875), though developments associated with it continued into the early Guangxu 光緒 era (1875–1908).<sup>6</sup> After the destruction of the war China was being reconstructed, and in the process new ideas were being tentatively grafted onto the imperial system that had emerged under the Qing. The Tongzhi and early Guangxu eras are characterized by greater regional autonomy, further moves to modernize the Qing military, a new level of interest in foreign science and technology, and further expansion of treaty ports and the hypercolonial, translingual exchanges that they fostered.<sup>7</sup>

As part of this process of restoration, religious sites that had been destroyed during the war were also being reconstructed, and religious communities were being reconstituted after having been dispersed during the war. In this chapter, I focus on Buddhist monasteries that were damaged or destroyed during the war and then reconstructed between the end of the war in 1866 and the start of the Wuxu Reforms (*Wuxu bianfa* 戊戌變法) in 1898, a highly active period of reconstruction for religious institutions of all types in China. I end this chapter in 1898 because it marked the start of a new ideological and legal approach to religion, one that would have a marked effect on the fate of religion in modern China. It is important to note, however, that the work of reconstructing religious institutions that had been destroyed during the Taiping War continued at least into the 1920s. I begin here by surveying some of the thousands of religious institutions that were damaged,

<sup>6</sup> Mary Clabaugh Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih Restoration, 1862–1874* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 43–50. The concept is also referenced in many other works. See, for example, Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 776–777.

<sup>7</sup> Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004); Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity: China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

destroyed, repaired, and rebuilt during and after the Taiping War, making use of digital tools to collect historical data and formulate a sketch of what the vast destruction of religion might have been like. I also examine patterns of reconstruction among religious sites, including how long it took for them to be rebuilt and what types of people are recorded as being involved. Next I briefly discuss some Chinese Buddhist perspectives on the war to explore how experiences of wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction were incorporated into Buddhist memories and records. Finally I turn to a more in-depth examination of two focus sites: two historically important Buddhist monasteries and their fate during the war and its aftermath. One of these was toppled from its leading position in the region, while the other was propelled into a new level of prominence that it continues to occupy today.

### **Surveying the Religious Impact and Aftermath of the Taiping War**

The Taiping War caused untold destruction to Chinese Buddhist, Daoist, popular religious, and other religious institutions. The “idols” that Rev. Griffith John reports being broken apart were not just objects made of wood and stone but were powerfully charged symbols of religious potency. They functioned as focal points of ritual and worship in a religious system that linked people via bonds of kinship together in this world and beyond, and when religious sites were destroyed these social bonds were strained or broken.<sup>8</sup> As noted, destruction occurred not only as a result of deliberate attacks by iconophobic Taiping forces but for other reasons as well. Religious sites throughout China were burned to the ground, torn apart brick by brick for use as defensive fortifications, religious images were hacked apart, and resident monastics were killed or fled to areas outside of Taiping control. The war had its longest period of impact in the Jiangnan region, but Taiping forces also led military campaigns in southwest, west, northwest, and north China as well, bringing destruction to sites in their path. Even religious institutions that never found themselves within Taiping-occupied territory or on the frontlines of a battle were also indirectly but significantly affected by the war. On Putuoshan 普陀山, for example, miles away from the nearest

<sup>8</sup> On the connection between Chinese religion and local society, see, for example, David Johnson, “The City-God Cults of T’ang and Sung China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2 (December 1985): 363–457.



battlefront, the twin disruptions of the Opium Wars and the Taiping War sharply reduced the inflow of pilgrims, whose donations helped sustain its monasteries. Yongquan Monastery 湧泉寺 in Fuzhou 福州 also found its livelihood threatened by the indirect effects of the war, and in the post-war era it never recovered the same level of prominence and status that it had previously enjoyed.<sup>9</sup> The full scale of the war's impact thus extends not only to the territory highlighted in figure 1.1 but well beyond as well.<sup>10</sup>

Later historical accounts of the destructive effect that the war had on religious institutions emphasize the massive scale and unprecedented nature of the damage, but such general histories do not normally provide specific details about sites that suffered. Writing in the late 1920s, the historian of Buddhism Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873–1958) drew upon apocalyptic and millenarian terminology to describe the impact of the war on Buddhism:

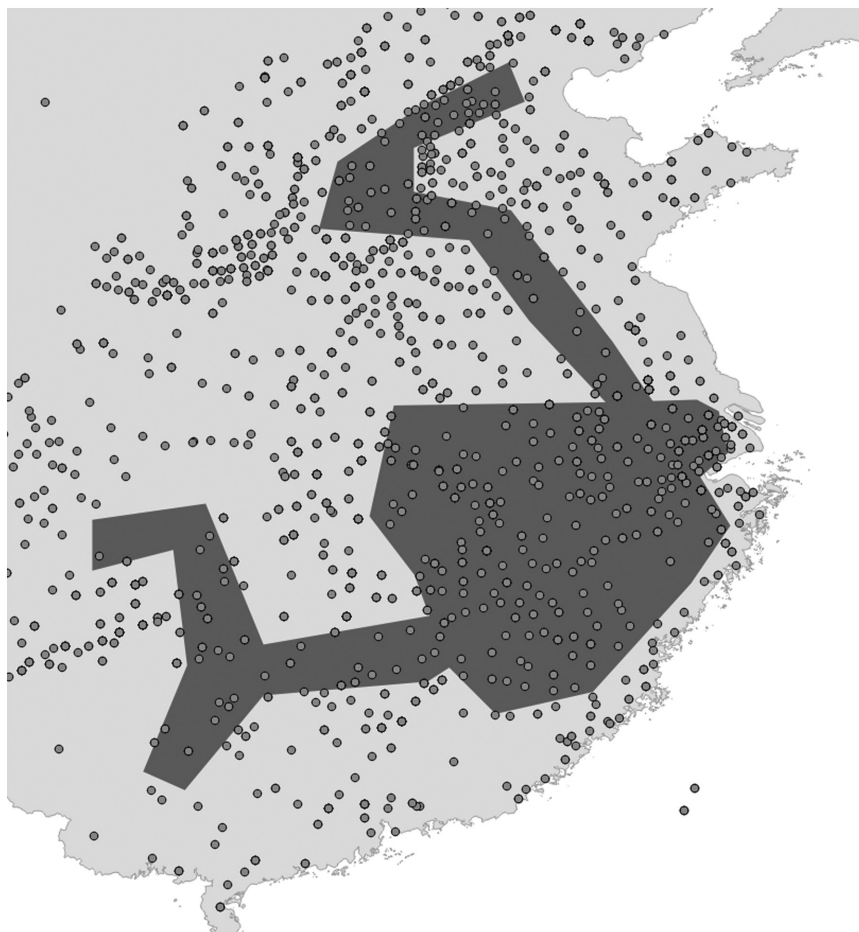
The area that [Taiping forces] occupied extended over more than ten provinces. All Buddhism within this area was thoroughly destroyed, such that to this day [i.e., 1928] in every province there are many famous monasteries from former times that have still not recovered. It was truly the great cataclysm of Buddhism.<sup>11</sup>

Jiang's description of the post-Taiping reconstruction that follows is similarly dramatic in tone but short on specific cases and examples. For accounts of the reconstruction of individual sites, we must turn to other sources. Descriptions of destruction recorded in local and monastery gazetteers are also characteristically brief and normally omit details that would be useful to present-day researchers, such as the exact scale of the destruction or a list of all the specific structures that were affected. They can, however, contain some evocative details. In the gazetteer for Wuxi Nanchan Monastery 無錫南禪寺, for example, the destruction of the monastery at the hands of Taiping forces in 1860 is recorded using a mere eight characters. It does, however, go on to describe how the monastery's Miaoguang stupa 妙光塔 had all its wooden

<sup>9</sup> Bingenheimer, *Island of Guanyin*, 10; Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬, *Zhongguo Fojiao shi* 中國佛教史 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1935), 4:40a.

<sup>10</sup> Based on China Historical Geographic Information System (CHGIS) data <http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chgis/> and map 15 in Franz Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), 216.

<sup>11</sup> 「佔領地域，十餘省之廣；凡在斯地之佛教，皆根本摧滅無遺；即至今日，各省尚多有舊時名剎，未曾恢復者，是誠佛教之大劫也。」Jiang, *Zhongguo Fojiao shi*, 4:10a.



**Figure 1.1** Buddhist sites recorded in 1820 overlaid on battlegrounds and territory occupied by the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

steps, banisters, and eaves burned up, with only the stone core left standing.<sup>12</sup> The full historical record of the destruction in the Taiping War and the post-war reconstruction of religious institutions is comprised of thousands of similar individual cases, scattered in localities throughout China.

<sup>12</sup> 「咸豐十年、寺燬于寇。塔內外梯級欄杆俱燼、層檐隕敝。巋然僅存。」 Punctuation added. “Chongxiu Nanchan si Miaoguang ta beiji” 重修南禪寺妙光塔碑記, *Wuxi Nanchan si zhi* 無錫南禪寺志 (1949, digital edition, < <http://buddhistinformatics.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/ui.html?book=y066> >), 81–82. The stupa and the monastery were both later repaired and rebuilt.

In order to obtain a better view of the macro-scale effect that the war had on Buddhist monasteries, to examine in detail the “great cataclysm” and the subsequent reconstruction alluded to by Jiang and other historians of Buddhism, we must sort through a large corpus of historical material to find data on cases of destruction and reconstruction. This is a task for which computing technology is especially well suited. Working in the early 1960s and using what was then a cutting-edge technology—punch cards—a research team led by Wolfram Eberhard (1909–1989) surveyed Chinese local gazetteer sources to amass data on over eleven thousand religious institutions in forty-three districts.<sup>13</sup> Compiling data on the dates of construction of new religious institutions, his team was able to identify a relatively low period of religious construction between 1800 and 1850 and a high period between 1850 and 1900.<sup>14</sup> Given the impact of the war, a higher than average rate of construction in the decades following the war is not unexpected, but whether or not the lower rate during the Jiaqing 嘉慶 (1796–1821) and Daoguang 道光 periods (1821–1851) is indicative of a “decline” in religious vitality in China—whatever that might mean—or simply represents a period of maintenance is as yet unclear.<sup>15</sup> The value of these methods for processing large amounts of historical data is now well established as part of what has become known as the digital humanities, an approach that provides a useful addition to the researcher’s toolkit.

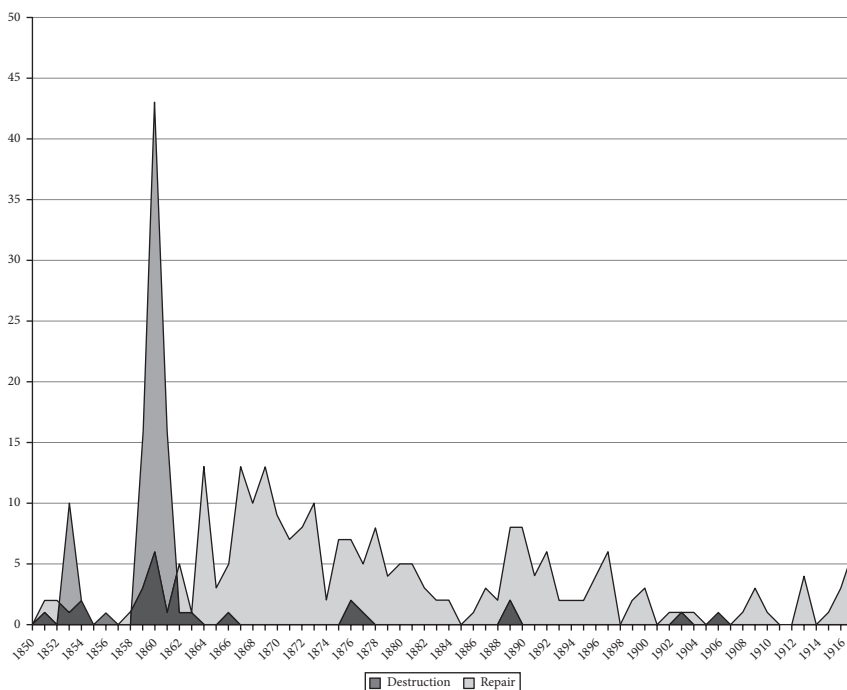
It was in this spirit that I undertook the digital project “The Survey of Religious Reconstruction in Modern China” 中國近代寺廟重建調查 as part of a collaborative workshop on Chinese local gazetteers at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (MPIWG) in Berlin.<sup>16</sup> My aim was to build up a corpus of historical data focused on the decades following the end of the Taiping War and restricted to a region of China that I knew had been significantly affected by it, in order to better understand the full picture of wartime religious destruction and the post-war reconstruction. While the parameters of the study are admittedly quite limited compared to the full scope of the war and its impact, my hope was to produce some general observations about the impact of the war on religious institutions

<sup>13</sup> Eberhard, “Temple-Building Activities.”

<sup>14</sup> Eberhard, “Temple-Building Activities,” 277–278.

<sup>15</sup> Scott, “Buddhist Building and the Buddhist Revival.”

<sup>16</sup> Gregory Adam Scott, “Survey of Religious Reconstruction in Modern China,” Harvard Dataverse (2016). The workshop was supervised by Dagmar Schäfer and Chen Shih-pei and generously funded by the MPIWG. My data is available under an Open Source license at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/ZKT6EJ>>.



**Figure 1.2** Number of destruction and reconstruction events per year

and to identify trends in how their post-war reconstructions were undertaken.<sup>17</sup> The data that I compiled resulted in 423 entries, each representing a religious institution affected in some way by the war, with 584 instances of destruction or reconstruction dating to a period between the 1850s and the 1920s.

While this set of 423 religious institutions represents just a small sample of the tens of thousands that were likely affected by the war, it is useful for suggesting some themes in the religious experience of the war and the post-war reconstruction. Prominent and historically important religious sites are the easiest to study, and they are featured in many of the case studies later in this chapter and those that follow, but this survey is intended to give us a glimpse into the mass of smaller, local sites. One way of making sense of the data is to plot instances of destruction and reconstruction on a timeline to see if there were any patterns of exceptionally large numbers of such events

<sup>17</sup> Details on my data processing methods can be found in appendix 2.

occurring around the time of the war. While most of the gazetteer entries only cite a dynastic era for events in the religious institution's history, a period of time that is too broad to be useful in visualization, there are 98 destruction events and 241 reconstruction events within the survey data for which a specific reign year is cited. Figure 1.2 depicts the number of each type of event associated with each year.<sup>18</sup>

Looking at the data in this way, the impact of the Taiping War on religious institutions in these counties is immediately evident, with spikes of destruction events, shown in dark gray, appearing around 1853 and 1860, far larger than the small clusters of destruction events later on. Reconstruction events, shown here in light gray, start to appear in significant numbers from 1864 and occur at small but steady levels through the following decades. This data suggests that reconstruction of religious institutions damaged or destroyed during the war began quite soon after peace had come to this region of China. While the numbers of each are not directly comparable—each event might represent any scale of activity from a minor repair to a complete reconstruction—there were approximately as many reconstruction events in the first wave of reconstruction spanning from 1864 to 1874 as there were destruction events in the last phase of the war. This suggests that although the war was greatly destructive to religious institutions in the region, there was also a great deal of repair and reconstruction that followed during the Tongzhi and Guangxu eras. This evidence of religious reconstruction following the war, when religious institutions continued to attract the capital and labor investment needed to rebuild them, further speaks to the continued importance of religious institutions in Chinese society during a very difficult period of post-war reconstruction.

We can also compare the dates of destruction and reconstruction events for individual sites, at least where such information is available. Within this dataset, seventy-four sites have at least one of each event listed with a specific year, and figure 1.3 visualizes the number of years separating the two, giving us a sense of how long on average it took for religious structures to be rebuilt after they were damaged. Although the available data is particularly limited, there does appear to be a pattern of most reconstructions occurring about ten to twenty-two years after destruction, with smaller numbers of others

<sup>18</sup> Note that in figure 1.2 era years have been normalized to the nearest Western calendar year, for example, Xianfeng 10 咸豐十年 to 1850 CE. This means that there will be an average error of about a month, since the lunar and solar calendars never match up exactly, but for the purposes of a general picture of the period this error is acceptable and does not greatly impact the overall conclusions.

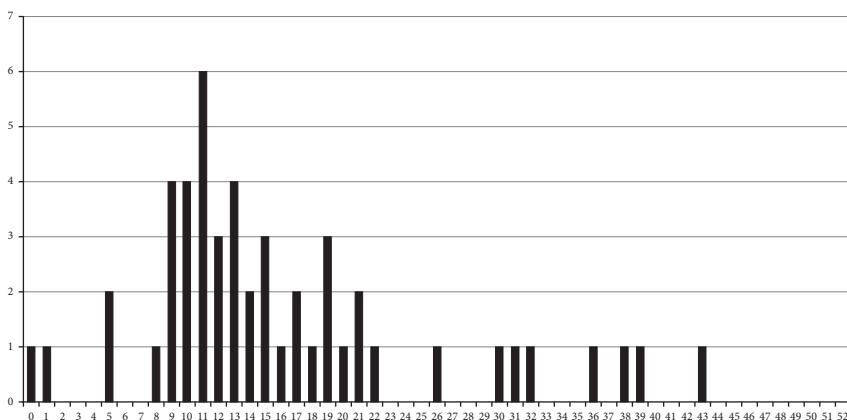


Figure 1.3 Number of years separating destruction and reconstruction events

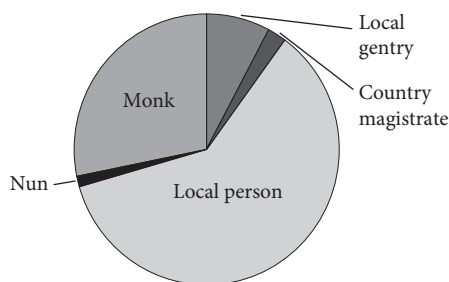


Figure 1.4 Recorded social positions of persons credited with reconstruction events

delayed by three decades or more. As for the people responsible for leading reconstruction campaigns, we can get a sense of their social positions based on how they are described in the gazetteer sources. For this period there is evidence that material support for monasteries, at least for the repair and reconstruction, was coming from a much broader base of support than that of the elite gentry. The data visualized in figure 1.4 shows that when the position of the person who led a reconstruction is noted, in the majority of cases they are described as a “local person” (*liren* 里人或 *yiren* 邑人) or a monastic (*seng* 僧 or *ni* 尼) and only rarely as a member of the local gentry (*yishen* 邑紳) or a county magistrate (*zhixian* 知縣).<sup>19</sup> Perhaps most importantly,

<sup>19</sup> Total numbers are: *seng* 僧: 48; *ni* 尼: 2; *liren* 里人: 83; *yiren* 邑人: 20; *yishen* 邑紳: 4; *zhixian* 知縣: 13; *xing* 姓 (one or more surnames): 16; *zhuchi* 住持 (abbot): 10.

in almost no cases in this dataset does the person credited with initiating reconstruction appear to be a degree holder of any historical renown, with Li Hezhang 李鶴章 (1825–1880) being the sole exception.<sup>20</sup> The prominent role of local people in religious reconstruction and the relatively limited role of gentry or officials is interesting, because it suggests that it was relatively rare to have an official at the level of the county and above involved in local religious reconstruction. It further indicates that we should take care to focus our research on local elites rather than prominent officials when looking at religious reconstruction. There are, however, exceptions to this, particularly in the case of exceptionally prominent religious institutions such as the two monasteries examined later in this chapter.

Taken as a whole, this survey data suggests that the impact of the Taiping War was indeed as severe and as widespread as indicated in contemporary accounts, with even counties outside of the battleground being affected. It also indicates, however, that within a generation of the war's end there was a wave of reconstruction work undertaken to repair and rebuild the religious institutions that had been damaged or destroyed during the war. These reconstructions lasted for many decades following the end of the war, with some institutions not being rebuilt for thirty years or more. The people who led these reconstructions were mainly local monastics or laypeople without any regional renown or official position. This macro-scale picture of the destruction of the war and the period of reconstruction that followed it is, however, made up of thousands of individual institutions and cases of damage and reconstruction, each with its own narrative and significance for those involved. Now that we have a general sense of the how religious institutions experienced the war, we need to look more closely at individual cases, particularly the ways in which experiences were recorded and incorporated into historical and religious memories.

<sup>20</sup> Li is credited in the *Wujin Yanghu xian zhi* 武進陽湖縣志 with initiating the reconstruction of Bailong Nunnery 白龍菴 near Changzhou.

## Buddhist Memories of the War and the Post-war Reconstruction

A general sense of the history of Taiping-era destruction and post-Taiping reconstruction is important, but it is equally important to remember that each instance of a temple or monastery being destroyed and the efforts to rebuild it were experienced individually by the people involved, and that each case contains within it its own particular set of narrative elements and religious significance. Additionally, many of these experiences were memorialized and incorporated into the historic record, either through inscription on a stele, inclusion in a monastic biography, or through citation in a local or religious gazetteer. In this section I will examine a few historical accounts of post-Taiping War Buddhist reconstructions and reconstruction leaders to outline how Chinese Buddhist understandings of the period were formed. These accounts are important not only for the historical details and perspectives they provide, but also because they help us better understand how sacred space reconstruction was conceptualized and later represented in historical sources. They additionally help us see how these events were understood by those who would later look to these accounts to help them make sense of destruction. The narrative themes in these accounts will also be important for contextualizing the histories of the focus sites in the two sections that follow, allowing us to view them as part of a range of experiences that emerged from this period and formed the popular memory of the war and its aftermath.

Entries on religious institutions in local gazetteers, like those on other topics, are normally quite terse and limited in detail. The information that is recorded, however, does tend to relate to the site's chronology of construction, destruction, expansion, and reconstruction. This is likely a reflection both of the importance of these events in the history of religious sites but also their importance in the minds of the chroniclers and compilers of historical records. Often this chronology of destruction and reconstruction is virtually the only type of historical data included in the entry, as with, for example, this entry for Tianning Monastery 天寧寺 in Changzhou 常州:

Tianning Monastery, formerly called Guangfu Monastery, is located on Dongzhi Street. It [was] built in the Tianfu era of the Tang dynasty [901–904 CE]. It was expanded in the Baoda era of the Southern Tang [943–957], reconstructed in the early Yuan, and expanded during the Hongwu



era of the Ming [1368–1398]. In the sixth year of Xuande [1431] it was reconstructed, and during the Jiajing era [1521–1567] it was repaired. During the Wanli era [1572–1620] it was expanded. In our own dynasty, in the sixth year of Shunzhi [1649] it was expanded. In the ninth year of Qianlong [1744] it was expanded, and in the fifty-eighth year [1793] it was repaired. In the fourth year of Daoguang [1824] it was repaired, in the second year of Xianfeng [1852] it was expanded, and during the Tongzhi and Guangxu eras [1862–1908] it was reconstructed.<sup>21</sup>

Records of construction, destruction, repair, and reconstruction constitute the core history of the site, the essential skeleton that defines its identity and bears testament to its continuing popular support and religious efficacy. The many instances of damage and repair described for very old sites such as Tianning Monastery remind us how typical such events were for religious institutions as they progressed through cycles of prosperity and decline, with events such as the Taiping War differing from several others that had preceded it only in the intensity of destruction experienced.

Gazetteer entries can also provide more detail about specific historical events in the life of religious institutions, events that are often related to an episode of destruction or reconstruction. One example of this can be found in an entry on Puguang Monastery 普光寺, near Hangzhou 杭州:<sup>22</sup>

In the Jiawu year of the Guangxu era [1894], there was a monk called Wukong 悟空, who came from the south seas and visited the ruins [of Puguang Monastery]. Seeing the majesty of its landscape, he was deeply moved and made a vow to restore it, chopping reeds [to build a hut]. With staff and bowl in hand, he collected donations for its completion. After eight or nine years, the task was complete, and the Buddha Hall, monastic quarters, guest quarters, refectory, and even the front gate and perimeter wall were all properly in place. The entire atmosphere [of the site] had been made lustrous and fresh.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> 「天甯寺、舊名廣福寺、在東直街。唐天\*福[error for 復]間建。南唐保大間增建。元初重建。明洪武間增建。宣德六年重建。嘉靖間重修。萬歷間增修。國朝順治六年增建。乾隆九年增建。五十八年重修。道光四年重修。咸豐二年增建。同治光緒間重建。」 Punctuation added. Wang Qigan 王其淦 and Tang Chenglie 湯成烈, eds., *Wujin Yanghu xianzhi 武進陽湖縣志* (1908, digital edition, *Zhongguo fangzhi ku* 中國方志庫), 2995.

<sup>22</sup> Likely <PL11990> in the Dharma Drum Place Authority Database.

<sup>23</sup> 「光緒甲午、有悟空僧者、自南海來、訪其遺址。覽其形勝、慨然興建復之願、乃伐茅。卓錫托鉢、募緣鳩工結構。閱八九寒暑、始訖事舉、凡佛殿、僧寮、客堂、齋舍、以及山門、園圃、悉皆布置妥帖。規模氣象、煥爾一新。」 Punctuation added. Chen

In this brief sketch there are several details that evoke important elements of the narrative of reconstruction outlined in the previous chapter. The leader of the restoration, one Wukong, came from elsewhere, in this case an unknown place in southeast Asia; the landscape of the site had retained its power to evoke awe, even though the monastery itself was in ruins; a reed hut served as temporary accommodation while the reconstruction was ongoing; Wukong traveled around collecting funds to rebuild; and fundraising and rebuilding the core structures of the monastery, which are listed here, took eight to nine years. Finally, the rebuilding of the monastery transformed the entire local environment, making it “lustrous and fresh,” reminding us of the symbiotic relationship between the built and natural elements of a religious site. At the same time, we must read such accounts with a critical eye; the account is intended to laud Wukong’s contribution and to celebrate the revival of the monastery, not to examine the oftentimes messy human details of raising money and rebuilding a religious community. Even though this account appears in a historical source and not in an ostensibly religious text, it includes terminology and imagery that have strong religious connotations.

The religious nature of the account is confirmed by an additional detail included later in the entry, where it relates how the mountain on which the monastery was located got its present name:

This mountain had formerly been called “Boat Shaped” [Mountain]. When Wukong first entered the mountain, he slept beneath a tree and dreamed that in front of the mountain there was a round sun that rose flying upward, vivid and bright. A ray of sunlight penetrated Wukong, and suddenly he gained insight. Thus the monastery was called Universal Light, and the mountain called Great Sun. This is the origin of the mountain’s name.<sup>24</sup>

Visions and dreams relating to a sacred place and its future development figure prominently in narrative accounts of monastic construction, often in the form of a *huasi* 化寺, an illusionary projection of a monastery complex seen prior to its concrete realization and a portent of its eventual

Changhua 陳常鏞 and Zang Chengyi 臧承宜, eds., *Fenshui xianzhi* 分水縣志 (1908, 1943 reprint, digital edition, *Zhongguo fangzhi ku* 中國方志庫), 224–225.

<sup>24</sup> 「是山舊名船形。當悟空入山之初、止宿樹下、夢山前輪紅日、騰騰而上、燦燦爛爛。光逼僧躬瞿然、而寤。因名其寺曰：普光。而呼其山為大楊。此山名所由昉也。」 Punctuation added. *Fenshui xianzhi*, 224–225.

construction.<sup>25</sup> Although the geographical scope covered by the gazetteer extends to the entire county, and it was not devoted specifically to monasteries or to religious phenomena, entries on sacred places often incorporate strongly religious imagery, narrative elements that are significant for our investigation of local religious history. Thousands of similar narratives of religious reconstruction can be found throughout the corpus of available local gazetteers and are also recorded in other historical media such as stone stele, collected writings, and later in periodicals and other Buddhist publications.

At the center of these accounts are a series of heroic figures, the reconstruction leaders such as Wukong, whose charisma, courage, and faith were sufficient to gain the support of their communities when their monasteries were at the nadir of their lifecycle and to propel them through restoration into a new era of prosperity. The exploits of some of these figures are described within gazetteer entries on religious institutions, but the most detailed and evocative of these accounts were recorded in stele inscriptions, historical works, and later in Chinese Buddhist periodicals.<sup>26</sup> In his history of Chinese Buddhism, for example, Jiang Weiqiao credited the reconstruction of Buddhist religious communities, particularly the re-implementation of correct standards of monastic conduct and the emergence of lay Buddhist leaders, for the revival and development of Buddhism from the Tongzhi era onward.<sup>27</sup> In the remainder of this section I will briefly examine two of these biographies to explore how they portray the monastic leaders of two post-Taiping religious reconstructions. Both of these reconstruction leaders exemplify qualities that appear time and again in similar biographies throughout the historical record. These two biographies were included as part of a set of biographical essays and funerary inscriptions composed by the Chan monk Jichan 寄禪 (Jing'an 敬安, 1852–1912).<sup>28</sup> Jichan did not experience the Taiping War himself; he was born in the midst of the war and was tonsured as a youth in 1868

<sup>25</sup> Andrews, "Tales of Conjured Temples in Qing Period Gazetteers."

<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that texts originally inscribed on stele were later included in local and monastery gazetteers, often in a specialized section called *beike* 碑刻 (stele inscriptions).

<sup>27</sup> Jiang, *Zhongguo Fojiao shi*, 4:11a.

<sup>28</sup> A004827 in the Person Authority Database. The inscriptions were originally printed in Jichan's collected works: Shi Jing'an 釋敬安, *Bazhi toutuo jiwen* 八指頭陀集文, 12a–26a, collected in *Xuxiu siku quanshu bianzuan weiyuanhui* 續修四庫全書編纂委員會, ed., *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 1575:515–522. They were later reprinted in "Ta'ming" 塔名 [Stupa inscriptions], *Haichao yin* 海潮音 13.2 (November 15, 1932), in MFQ 182:319–325. Each section is a biographical account of the monastic, with the original text of the inscription at the end. These essays were also reprinted in the Buddhist periodicals *Guanzong hongfa she kan* 觀宗弘法社刊, *Fohua xin qingnian* 佛化新青年, and *Shijie Fojiao jushilin linkan* 世界佛教居士林林刊.

just after the war had ended, but the experiences of the previous generation of monastics during the war and the post-war reconstruction were evidently part of the Buddhist monastic culture of which he became a part. Such reconstruction leaders had always been a part of the monastery reconstruction narrative, but during the Taiping War and the period of post-war reconstruction they assumed a new level of significance as a result of a wave of unprecedented destruction.

Hengzhi Wulai 恆志無來 (1811–1875) was originally from the region of Mount Heng 衡山 in Hunan. Although his family was poor and other children ridiculed him for this poverty as a child, he always responded with kindness. After he was tonsured and ordained, he sought instruction from Fayun Haiyao 法雲海耀 (1788–1874) in Chenzhou 郴州, who told him that the peerless Way could not be attained without arduous effort.<sup>29</sup> Hengzhi thereupon practiced day and night for several years, until one day he heard the sound of breaking bamboo and had an insight. After this he and his monk-brother Hengren 恆忍 traveled extensively throughout Jiangsu and Zhejiang visiting well-known monasteries, and at each one Hengzhi's insight received confirmation.<sup>30</sup> Some time later he was invited to serve as chief lecturer (*zhujiang* 主講) at both Ziyun Monastery 紫雲寺 in Hengyang 衡陽 and Wanshou Monastery 萬壽寺 on Mount Heng.<sup>31</sup> About ten miles from Ziyun Monastery stood the peaks of Mount Qi 岐山, home of Renrui Monastery 仁瑞寺. Although Renrui had never been directly damaged as a result of the Taiping War, the war did create an opportunity for some local gentry who had been forced to pay levies to support the raising of loyalist armies. Taking advantage of the disruption caused by the war, the local gentry gradually encroached upon and finally seized the approximately 165 acres of land to which the monastery held title, leaving the monastery without income. It eventually fell into ruin and was abandoned.<sup>32</sup>

The ruined site was not, however, forgotten, and in time it began to attract the attention of a number of monastics who were active in the area:

<sup>29</sup> 「無上妙道。非積劫勤苦不能得。汝且澄神寂照。收其放心。再為說。」

<sup>30</sup> MFQ 182:322–323. For more on Fayun and other contemporary monks in and around Chenzhou, see “Hunan sheng shekeyuan zongjiao wenhua yanjiu zhongxin dui Chenzhou Qingdai gaoseng Fayun Haiyao fahui lingta chong xiufu de yijian” 湖南省社科院宗教文化研究中心对郴州清代高僧法云海耀法师灵塔重新修复的意见, *Renwen Xiangnan* 人文湘南 3, <<http://rwxnw.com/ArticleShow.asp?ArticleID=1319>>.

<sup>31</sup> Translation based on Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 109.

<sup>32</sup> MFQ 182:322–325.

A monk named Ding from Ziyun Monastery was pained upon [seeing] this and so set up a reed hut to watch over this vital location. Master Mo'an 默庵 [Shangren 上仁, 1839–1902?] passed through here while on a preaching journey and was fond of its quiet seclusion, where footsteps hardly ever approached.<sup>33</sup> Ding invited [Hengzhi] to come and reside there, and students brought offerings of food to become his disciple. Not a year later the news had spread far and wide, and the “clouds and water” [i.e., visiting monks] rushed in. Wood was cut and a monastery built, with halls established following the local topography. Wells were bored for drinking, fields were plowed for food. When the Master gave a Dharma lecture, the entire “Vulture Peak” assembly was solemn and attentive.<sup>34</sup> The Dharma banner had been planted again, the Demon King quaked in fear, and word of this spread in the four directions.<sup>35</sup>

Renrui Monastery may have been effectively destroyed as a result of being starved of resources, yet the topography remained as secluded and amenable to religious practice as ever. The potential for its reconstruction and revival also remained. Ding played the role of the settler, building the most basic of structures to serve as a home and as a place of practice, while Hengzhi's arrival provided a central axis for the human community of monks that soon grew up around him. Note here that the community of master, close disciples, and the larger monastic group forms first, before the permanent monasterial structures are built. Once the material monastery has been rebuilt up around the community, however, the full power of Renrui Monastery is restored, spreading its fame and that of its new leader widely. Hengzhi was later mentor to a number of Hunan-based monks of the late Qing and Republican eras.

Faren 法忍 (Benxin 本心, 1844–1905) is described by Jiang Weiqiao as being among the most prominent of post-Taiping Chan Buddhist monastics.<sup>36</sup> He was tonsured in 1863, and although he was initially put to work in the monastery fields he later overheard a monk reciting the *Lotus*

<sup>33</sup> Mo'an was a fellow disciple of Fayun Haiyao. “*Hunan sheng shekeyuan zongjiao wenhua yanjiu zhongxin dui Chenzhou Qingdai gaoseng Fayun Haiyao fahui lingta chong xiufu de yijian*.”

<sup>34</sup> Vulture Peak (Lingjiu shan 靈鷲山) is the setting for many of the Buddha's discourses as recorded in the Buddhist scriptures, and thus the term is used to refer to a religious assembly for events such as Dharma lectures.

<sup>35</sup> 「紫雲定和尚傷之。葺茆守其基。有默庵法師闡化經此。喜其幽。人迹罕至。迎師來居。學者裹糧從之。不一年清風遠灑。雲奔水赴。乃伐木開林。依巖結宇。鑿石而飲。耕[耘]而飯。師說法其中。靈山一會。儼然未散。惟法幢復樹。波旬震懾。流言四散。」 MFQ 182:324.

<sup>36</sup> Jiang, *Zhongguo Fojiao shi*, 4:35a–b.

*Sūtra* and thereby gained sudden insight, leading to further practice and a recognition of his attainment at Jiangtian Monastery 江天寺 on Jinshan 金山. After a period spent practicing in isolation in the Zhongnan mountains 終南山, he returned to Jiangnan and held the rank of rector (*shouzu* 首坐/座) at Jinshan and Gaomin 高旻 monasteries.<sup>37</sup> But in spite of the high reputation of these two institutions, life there evidently did not agree with him:

The inquiries of the pupils there lacked determination, with the result that they tried to copy each other. Since his innate character was stern, he felt that this was incorrect, and thus he picked up his robes and left. In the *wuzi* year of the Guangxu era [1888] he passed through Red Mountain in Jurong and was fond of its remote stillness. He built a hut out of reeds to serve as a place to repose. Monastics from all around heard about this and flocked there, to the point that there was not enough room for them all. [Thus] they chopped branches and built halls, piled up stones and built walls. In leading the community, Faren was as strict as Baizhang. A day without work was a day without eating.<sup>38</sup>

While both Jinshan and Gaomin had been reconstructed after the war, Faren evidently found the quality of the monastics there not up to his standards and thus left for the isolation of Red Mountain, where a new community was attracted by his skill and constructed a new monastery around him.<sup>39</sup> This move might have been linked to his character, as he was reputed to be very strict and was not fond of idle discussion. Although Faren did not reconstruct a monastery, his establishment of his new community follows closely the pattern of other reconstructions, with him playing the role of a central axis driving the activity of the community that revolves around it.

Hundreds more stories similar to those outlined can be found in stele inscriptions, gazetteers, and other historical records. Those selected here demonstrate the very real threat to life and property posed by the Taiping War, whether from intentional destruction, collateral damage, or the indirect knock-on effects of the conflict. Yet they also highlight the strong personal charisma, deep faith, and vision of the reconstruction leader who is a feature

<sup>37</sup> On Chinese Buddhist monasterial offices and ranks, see Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 36–39.

<sup>38</sup> 「學者咨決心要。所至雲從。惟賦性嚴正。稍見非法。即拂衣去。光緒戊子過句容赤山。喜其地幽闊。把茅蓋頭。為休歇處。四方衲子聞風來者。至屋不能容。乃伐柯結宇。壘石為牆。領衆出坡。儼如百丈。一日不作。一日不食。」 MFQ 182:319–320.

<sup>39</sup> Jiang identifies the institution as Bo're Monastery 般若寺. Jiang, *Zhongguo Fojiao shi*, 4:35b.

of many of these stories, with these leaders later commemorated as heroes in the lifecycle of the religious community.<sup>40</sup> Such leadership had to be accepted by a number of monastic and lay supporters, however, who rallied around the visionary leader and brought their vision of reconstruction to life. These accounts of previous disasters and successful reconstructions of monasteries during the Taiping War were certainly part of the institutional and popular memory of religious communities later on, transmitted by authors such as Jichan, and helped inform their understanding of how destruction and reconstruction were part of a larger historical and cosmic cycle of decay and revival. As with many narratives, however, translating the model of monastery reconstruction into reality was always a challenge unique to the time, place, and other circumstances of the particular site. In the following sections we will examine two cases of historic Buddhist monasteries, both of which were seriously damaged during the Taiping War, but which each experienced a very different post-war fate.

### Linggu Monastery 靈谷寺

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Translation:	Monastery of the Numinous Valley
Location:	Zhongshan 鍾山, Nanjing 南京; 32.058, 118.863
Alternate Names:	Linggu Chan Monastery 靈谷禪寺
Authority Index:	PL000000008741
Damaged/Destroyed:	Taiping War, c. 1850s
Repaired/Rebuilt:	Repaired in Tongzhi era, later moved and repurposed in 1928

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The Jiangnan region had been strongly supportive of Buddhist religion since as early as the fourth century, with a series of dynasties based in the region lending their official support and patronage to monasteries in the area. The establishment of the Ming dynasty, with its capital at Nanjing, brought a new era of prosperity to the region, and although the capital was later moved north to Beijing, Jiangnan continued to grow in wealth during the early Ming, supporting a vibrant regional Buddhist material, literary, and

<sup>40</sup> Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 89–90.



artistic culture.<sup>41</sup> The *Jinling fancha zhi* 金陵梵刹志 (Gazetteer of Nanjing monasteries), first printed in 1607, chronicles the history and condition of Buddhist monasteries in the area around Nanjing as they were near the end of the dynasty. Of the 160 sites listed therein, only three were considered important enough to be classified as “major monasteries” (*dasha* 大刹): Tianjie Monastery 天界寺, originally located within the city walls but later destroyed and rebuilt on nearby Mount Feng 鳳山; Da Bao'en Monastery 大報恩寺, built just outside the main city gate and centered on its magnificent “Porcelain Tower” (*liuli ta* 琉璃塔); and Linggu Monastery 靈谷寺, located in a mountain valley to the northeast of the city.<sup>42</sup> Some two and a half centuries after the publication of this gazetteer, however, all three of these major monasteries would suffer greatly during the Taiping War, as the city of Nanjing and its suburban region was first a battlefield, then occupied territory, and finally renamed as Tianjing 天京, the capital of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Tianjie Monastery found itself at the center of a battleground, and after the war the site was abandoned and left fallow. Today only the foundations of a single corridor and a few trees remain to mark the original site. Da Bao'en Monastery was destroyed and its tower was pulled down in 1856 to prevent its possible use as an observation post in the war. Although there is presently a project underway to build an on-site replica of the tower, all that remains from the original site is a single stone stele and parts of a ceramic doorway held at the Nanjing Museum.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast, the third of Nanjing's Great Monasteries, Linggu Monastery, was to have a more complex history of reconstruction, relocation, and repurposing in the decades following the end of the war. The monastery traces its origins to the Kaishan vihara (Kaishan jingshe 開善精舍), built in 514 CE on Mount Zhong 鍾山 to the northeast of present-day Nanjing, under Emperor Wu of the Southern Liang dynasty 梁武帝 (464–549 CE). After

<sup>41</sup> Chün-fang Yü, “Ming Buddhism,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 8: *The Ming Dynasty, Part Two: 1368–1644*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 893–952; Brook, *Praying for Power*.

<sup>42</sup> Tianjie Monastery is cataloged as PL000000009061, Da Bao'en as PL000000008822. Although *liuli* is properly translated as lapis lazuli, the pagoda was popularly known as the “Porcelain Tower.”

<sup>43</sup> Ge Yanliang 葛寅亮, comp., *Jinling fancha zhi* 金陵梵刹志 (1607). Full text available at <<http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&res=2374>>. A visit to the Tower in the early 1840s is described in Granville G. Loch, *The Closing Events of the Campaign in China: The Operations in the Yang-Tze-Kiang, and Treaty of Nanking* (London: John Murray, 1843), 179–185. See also Wang Guixiang 王貴祥, *Zhongguo hanchuan Fojiao jianzhu shi* 中國漢傳佛教建築史 (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2016), 3:1799–1802. <<https://web.archive.org/web/20190413083315/https://twitter.com/NanjingMuseum/status/960616099804012544>>.



undergoing several changes of name, in 1381 the first emperor of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–1398), wanted to use the site to construct a palace, and thus a number of monasteries, including that founded as the Kaishan vihara, were consolidated and relocated to a valley between two mountain ridges. The resulting site was named Linggu (Numinous Valley) Monastery.<sup>44</sup> One structure that would later become one of the monastery's signature features was likely already present prior to this relocation and was incorporated into the new monastery: the Beamless Hall (*wuliang dian* 無樑殿). Also referred to in gazetteer sources as the Hall of Limitlessness (*wuliang dian* 無量殿), the hall differs from the norm of Chinese Buddhist monastic architecture in being of brick construction with vaulted ceilings enclosing three aisles. After an on-site investigation in 1929, Johannes Prip-Møller posited that the hall had originally been built as a Franciscan monastery in the early fourteenth century and was later adapted for use as part of Linggu Monastery.<sup>45</sup> At this time the monastery had more than 500 *mu* (roughly 82.5 acres) of land to support it, and although it was damaged in the early Qing it was repaired soon afterward, and by the early part of the nineteenth century it supported over a thousand monks.

Mount Zhong ended up on the frontlines of fighting early in the Taiping War, and Linggu Monastery was soon overtaken by an active battlefield with Qing loyalist troops fighting against Taiping forces within the city nearby. During the early phases of the battle for Nanjing in 1853, the loyalist general Zhang Guoliang 張國樑 (?–1860) established a few gravesites and shrines to fallen soldiers in the area around Linggu, but after the tide of the war turned, these were later destroyed by Taiping forces.<sup>46</sup> The last fascicle of the monastery's gazetteer, *Linggu chanlin zhi* 靈谷禪林志, includes a short description of what happened to these shrines:

<sup>44</sup> Place Authority Database <PL000000008741>; Wang, *Zhongguo hanchuan Fojiao jianzhu shi*, 3:1795–1799.

<sup>45</sup> Johannes Prip-Møller, "The Hall of Lin Ku Ssu, Nanking," *Artes: Monuments et memoires* 3 (1935): 167–211. Many thanks to the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek for providing me with a copy of this difficult-to-find article. While Prip-Møller's conclusion is fascinating and evocative, I would still consider it to be a tentative suggestion and not an established historical fact. His evidence is limited to the physical design of the hall, the likely date of its construction based on an analysis of the materials used, and scattered references in available historical materials.

<sup>46</sup> 「振威將軍張公新建部下陣亡將校祠堂記」 Shi Dekai 釋德鎧, ed., *Linggu Chanlin zhi* 靈谷禪林志 (1886, digital version, <<http://buddhistinformatics.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/ui.html?book=g067>>), front matter (reprint pp. 19–22). The gazetteer was revised and recarved in 1886 (光緒丙戌) and later expanded with an additional preface in 1933.

## Loyalty and Righteousness

Zhang Zhongwu [Guoliang] had established three Shrines of Luminous Loyalty. One is beside Linggu Monastery. Another is located at the small water lock at the Ming Tombs. The last is just beyond the Gaoqiao Gate. Those to whom they offer sacrifice, because the shrines were destroyed by the rebels, one cannot examine their names. Although all three sites have graves, most do not have stele inscriptions. [Thus Mixiu] Dekai has recorded their names here [in the monastery gazetteer].<sup>47</sup>

Although the physical graves and monuments to the fallen loyalist soldiers had been destroyed, their names were preserved through inclusion in the monastery gazetteer, and their names and ranks are listed in the remainder of the fascicle. This close association between Linggu Monastery and memorization of the war dead, an association that was forged during the Taiping War and that had not existed previously, would persist long after the war had ended and would later re-emerge in the Republican period.

The monk responsible for recording the names of the war dead, Mixiu Dekai 禰修德鎧 (1815–1880), was a leading figure at Linggu both during the war and in the immediate post-war era and also compiled the materials that would later form the 1886 edition of the monastery's gazetteer. Mixiu's brief biographical entry in the gazetteer centers on his actions during the war:

When Hong [Xiuquan's] rebels sacked Nanjing, loyalist forces constructed a long earthen rampart outside of the Chaoyang Gate to surround them. Every day there were battles. All those who fell in battle and those who died of illness in the military camps, [Mixiu] recorded their names in a ledger, so that those who would come later had something to consult. He collected the rotten corpses from the field and buried them. The monastery land was left fallow and overgrown. [Muxiu] found tenant farmers to reclaim the land and requested Zeng Guofan to have the Dragon Deity Shrine rebuilt.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> 「忠義/張忠武所建昭忠祠三。一在靈谷寺側。一在孝陵衛之小水關。一在高橋門外。其所祀者、以祠燬於賊、不可復考。三處雖有義塚、亦多無碑識。今就德鎧所記錄之。」 Punctuation added. *Linggu Chanlin zhi*, 15:1a (reprint p. 421).

<sup>48</sup> 「當洪逆負固金陵、官兵於朝陽門外、掘長濠困之。日有戰事。凡陣亡及軍營病故者、皆書之於冊、俾後人有所稽考。枯骸在野、拾而葬之。寺田荒蕪。招佃墾之、請於曾文正公重建龍神廟。」 Punctuation added. *Linggu Chanlin zhi*, 8:14a (reprint p. 235). Mixiu's biography was also later paraphrased and published as Guanglian 光蓮, "Qing Jinling Linggu si shamen Shi Mixiu zhuan" 清金陵靈谷寺沙門釋禰修傳, *Haichao yin* 海潮音 13.2 (February 15, 1932), in MFQ 180:208–209.

In spite of the immanent physical threat of the war, Mixiu, likely helped by other resident monastics, ventured out to where the bodies of fallen loyalist soldiers were being left in the open. Following a well-established role for religious specialists in China, the monks undertook caring for the dead by compiling a record of their identities and collecting their bodies so that their kin could later identify them and, if possible, collect them for reburial. The final phrase in the quoted passage indicates that much like other religious institutions affected by the war, Linggu was deprived of income because its tenant farmers could not or would not work its fields, so after the war Mixiu had to actively find new tenants to work the land again. The biography also mentions a request submitted to the victorious general and viceroy Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (Wenzheng 文正, 1811–1872) for help in adding a shrine to the Dragon Deity (*longshen miao* 龍神廟). This was likely a shrine to a rain-making deity intended to anchor the tenant farmer community and ensure the continued productivity of the owned lands.<sup>49</sup> As a result of being on the frontlines of fierce fighting and the actions of Mixiu and other resident monastics, Linggu had acquired a strong association with commemoration of the war dead.

After the war, Linggu itself was rebuilt, albeit on a much smaller scale than before. Like many temple gazetteers, the 1886 Linggu Monastery gazetteer includes a series of woodcut images of the monastery and its environs, but these represent a site that was already no longer extant.<sup>50</sup> The preface explains:

The previous gazetteer included a map [of the monastery]. After the Taiping War, the meditation hall, the abbot's quarters, everything was burned. The Beamless Hall was also partially destroyed. The present-day [i.e., 1886] Dragon Deity Temple and the Vajra Hall were not rebuilt to the previous

<sup>49</sup> Chuck Woodridge, *City of Virtues: Nanjing in an Age of Utopian Visions* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2015), 153; Kenneth Pomeranz, "Water to Iron, Widows to Warlords: The Handan Rain Shrine in Modern Chinese History," *Late Imperial China* 12.1 (June 1, 1991): 62–99. The shrine does not appear in the gazetteer map of the monastery grounds nor is it listed in the third fascicle on monastery structures (*jianzhi* 建置). Its mention in the biography of Mixiu says that it was reconstructed (*chongjian* 重建, p. 235), so perhaps it did exist prior to the war but was not considered important enough to be included in the gazetteer. There is reputed to be a stele called 靈谷寺龍神廟記碑, but I have not yet been able to see its text.

<sup>50</sup> The images are found on pp. 37–42 of the reprint edition.

model. Yet here we have copied the old map, and if we don't dare alter it, it is only to give [the reader] a glimpse of the monastery's former glory.<sup>51</sup>

Elsewhere in the text it confirms that post-Taiping, only the Beamless Hall and the Zhigong Pagoda 誌公寶塔 were the same structures as had existed during the Ming; everything else had been newly built. Important elements of the monastic site were either never rebuilt, such as the Tsong-kha-pa Hall 大寶法王殿, or only their foundations and pillar bases remained, as was the case with the original Vajra Hall 金剛殿.<sup>52</sup> Most of the structures that were newly built or repaired after the war were abandoned and ruined by the time that Prip-Møller visited the site in 1929, and the monastic population had dwindled to about six monks in residence attending the Dragon Deity Shrine. All that remained of the original structures were earth mounds and some stone foundations, the one exception being the ruined but still-standing Beamless Hall.<sup>53</sup>

Of the three major monasteries of Nanjing—Tianjie, Da Bao'en, and Linggu—none emerged unscathed from the Taiping War, and all were effectively destroyed. Only Linggu Monastery continued to operate in any capacity as a monastic community, and as a result of the war it gained an indelible association with the war dead, one that would come to define its identity in the following decades. The fate of these three well-known and previously well-financed monasteries underlines the deep and long-lasting effects that the war had on Chinese religious institutions in the region. Many smaller or less prominent sites were simply swept away, disappearing from the historical records, and while hundreds of others were rebuilt following the war, as with the case of Linggu Monastery the reconstructed site might only be a shadow of its pre-war incarnation. Its history between the 1870s and the late 1920s is still unclear, but it would seem that it continued to operate only on a vastly reduced scale, as witnessed by Prip-Møller in 1929.<sup>54</sup> The Taiping War was the end of Linggu Monastery's prominence in the region—and it would never again be classed as a “major monastery”; post-Taiping,

<sup>51</sup> 「舊志有圖。經粵寇之亂、禪堂、方丈、悉燬於火。無量殿、亦半就摧頽。今之龍神廟、金剛殿、非復昔時規模。而摹刻舊圖、未嘗改繪者、藉以見從前之盛也。」 Punctuation added. *Linggu chanlin zhi*, reprint p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> *Linggu chanlin zhi*, pp. 89–113. Tsong-kha-pa is a title that was bestowed on Tibetan Buddhist monastic leaders during the Yuan and Ming dynasties.

<sup>53</sup> Prip-Møller, “The Hall of Lin Ku Ssu, Nanking.”

<sup>54</sup> Only a few months after this visit, Linggu Monastery would undergo yet another radical relocation and transformation, discussed in chapter 3.

other monasteries would emerge as leaders in numinous efficacy and monastic training. One of these was located just downriver from Nanjing, and although it suffered just as badly during the Taiping War, its post-war history of reconstruction stands in sharp contrast to that of the three former Great Monasteries of Nanjing.

### Jiangtian Monastery 江天寺

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Translation:	The Monastery between River and Sky, Golden Mountain
Location:	Jinshan 金山, Zhenjiang 鎮江; 32.215, 119.416
Alternate Names:	Often referred to simply as Jinshan Monastery 金山寺
Authority Index:	PL000000011011
Damaged/Destroyed:	Taiping War, c. 1853–1857
Repaired/Rebuilt:	Reconstructed between 1869 and 1871

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The city of Zhenjiang 鎮江 occupies a strategically important position at the intersection of the Grand Canal and the Yangtze River; the city's name itself means "guarding the river," and it has long been a regional entrepôt for trade and transport. Until the construction boom of the late twentieth century produced its own concrete towers, one of the city's most visible landmarks was Jinshan 金山 (Golden Mountain), a natural outcrop of rock that was originally an island in the river but was later surrounded by reclaimed land and joined to the mainland. As with elsewhere in China, this elevated and distinctive location became associated with religion, and from as early as the Eastern Jin 東晉 dynasty (317–420 CE) Jinshan has been host to a number of temples, shrines, and monasteries. During the Song dynasty, however, one in particular emerged as the preeminent religious institution on the site: initially built as Zexin Monastery 澤心寺, in 1684 the Kangxi emperor bestowed upon it the name of Jiangtian Monastery 江天寺.<sup>55</sup> The main lineage of Chinese

<sup>55</sup> The two main temple gazetteers for Jinshan are: *Jinshan zhi* 金山志, compiled in the Qianlong era and reprinted in 1900, <http://buddhistinformatics.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/ui.html?book=g038>; and *Xu Jinshan zhi* 續金山志, compiled and printed in 1900, <<http://buddhistinformatics.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/ui.html?book=g039>>.

Buddhism taught and practiced there was the Chan school, and between the Ming and the early Republic it was the home monastery for twenty-two generations of Buddhist masters from the Linji school 臨濟宗 of Chan, ending with the prolific teacher Xiangting 霜亭 (1879–1952).<sup>56</sup> Like many religious institutions in the region, it benefited greatly from the economic growth experienced in Jiangnan in the late Imperial period. By the eighteenth century it encompassed over a dozen buildings, including a residence for visiting emperors (*xinggong* 行宮).<sup>57</sup>

Being situated at such a militarily and economically crucial junction, however, later became a liability for Jinshan, and like Linggu Monastery some thirty-four miles to its west, it suffered greatly during the Taiping War, with nearly all of its buildings completely destroyed. During the restoration that followed, Jiangtian was reconstructed from the ground up, and in the early twentieth century it continued to prosper, maintaining its reputation as a place of rigorous and effective monastic training. Why did Jiangtian Monastery rise from the ashes of the Taiping War while Linggu Monastery and so many others did not? Three factors appear to have been paramount in determining the post-war fate of Jiangtian Monastery: first, effective war-time and post-war leadership within the monastic community, very much along the lines of the reconstruction leaders discussed in the previous section; second, some flexibility in what was actually rebuilt: the monastery that emerged after the war was not quite the same as the one that had existed before it; and finally, the cultivation of good relations with highly placed patrons whose power was on the rise as a result of increasing regional autonomy and the military reforms of the Tongzhi and Guangxu eras. This last point should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the long history of lay patronage and Chinese monastic economies, but here the patrons had their own reasons for supporting the reconstruction that may not have matched the aims of the monastic leaders, reasons that were omitted from official accounts of the reconstruction of Jiangtian Monastery and Jinshan. Looking closely at the reconstruction of Jiangtian Monastery and comparing it to that of Linggu and other monasteries, we begin to see elements of the changing

<sup>56</sup> Shengyen 聖嚴, *Fayuan xieyuan* 法源血源 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 1999), chap. 44, <<http://www.book853.com/show.aspx?id=113&cid=101&page=45>>.

<sup>57</sup> *Jinshan zhi* 金山志, 91–117. The boundary between Jiangtian Monastery and the wider Jinshan complex of religious structures is never strictly defined; Jiangtian is sometimes referred to as Jinshan Monastery, and the entire mountain is sometimes considered as part of Jiangtian. In practice, several clusters of structures appear to have been treated as separate institutions, such as the series of Guanyin shrines to the rear of Jiangtian Monastery proper.

circumstances of monastery reconstruction that would come to dominate in the modern era.

At the very end of the First Opium War (1839–1842), Zhenjiang was briefly occupied by British forces, who assaulted it from ships anchored in the river near Jinshan.<sup>58</sup> The fighting prompted all but the most courageous monastic residents of Jinshan to flee, but religious institutions near the city, however, do not appear to have greatly suffered as a result of this battle. An illustration printed in 1858, for example, portrays fighting between British troops and Chinese defenders at the base of the city wall, while Jinshan stands untouched in the background.<sup>59</sup> This depiction is supported by the account of a visit to Jinshan in 1842 or 1843 by Royal Navy Captain Granville Gower Loch (1813–1853), who had participated in the battle for Zhenjiang. In it he describes the “gay and fantastic buildings” of Jinshan, where the only structures in visible disrepair were within the palace for visiting emperors, which he suspects had not been called into service since the southern tour of the Qianlong emperor nearly a century earlier. Although the appearance of the island as a whole gave Loch an otherworldly impression, the sorry state of the ruinous palace broke the spell of what he was expecting to find there:

The marble steps and slabs were dislodged and broken by intruding shrubs; and the almost obliterated carving upon the decayed wood-work indicated neglect and the lapse of time since the departure of its last royal occupant.

The fairy palace and charming retreat of the morning, like youth's first aspirations, melted, as many of those illusions do, upon the hard touch of cold reality.<sup>60</sup>

In spite of the evident disappointment that seeps out of Loch's prose, as well as a strong iconophobic bias evidenced elsewhere in his account, his and other contemporary depictions such as that pictured in figure 1.5 reveal Jinshan and Jiangtian Monastery to be a moderately prosperous and well-functioning

<sup>58</sup> Henry Pottinger, “Circular to her Britannic Majesty's Subjects in China,” *The Chinese Repository* 11.19 (1842): 512–514, 518–519.

<sup>59</sup> A section of the biography for Yuexi Xiandi, introduced later in this chapter, describes it thus: 「洋人犯京口、禪侶皆散。師苦守殘局、遇險不懼。」 Punctuation added. Xu *Jinshan zhi*, 126. Thomas Allom and G. N. Wright, *The Chinese Empire Illustrated* (London and New York: London Printing and Publishing, 1858), 2:126, <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British\\_troops\\_capture\\_Chin-Keang-Foo.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_troops_capture_Chin-Keang-Foo.jpg)>. Note that the Zhenjiang city wall certainly did not resemble the European-style battlements depicted here.

<sup>60</sup> Loch, *The Closing Events*, 85, 95–98.



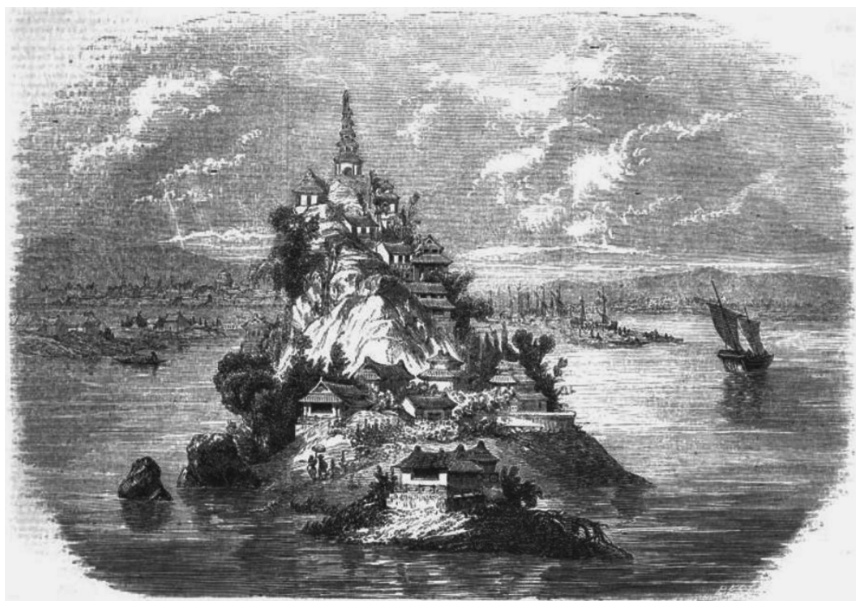


Figure 1.5 Jinshan as depicted in *The Illustrated Times*, March 12, 1859

religious community that had recovered from any disruption caused by the Battle of Zhenjiang.<sup>61</sup>

Only eight years after the end of the Opium War, the Taiping War would prove to have much more disastrous consequences for the city and its religious institutions. Zhenjiang fell to Taiping forces in 1853 and remained occupied until 1857. During this time religious sites in the area suffered greatly, both from collateral damage as a result of the war and from targeted destruction motivated by Taiping iconoclasm. One exception to this pattern of destruction, one that highlights the severity of the war's impact elsewhere, is Jiaoshan 焦山, often referred to as "Silver Island" in contemporary English-language accounts. Considered to be one of the three major religious complexes of Zhenjiang, along with Jinshan and Beigu shan 北固山, Jiaoshan is home to Dinghui Monastery 定慧寺 among other religious

<sup>61</sup> *The Illustrated Times*, March 12, 1859, 172. See also the illustration from T. Allom, *China: The Scenery, Architecture, and Social Habits* (London: Fisher, Son, 1856), reproduced in Keith Stevens, "The Yangzi Port of Zhenjiang down the Centuries: 鎮江: Part I," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 42 (2002): 317.



institutions.<sup>62</sup> According to an account in the *Jiaoshan xuzhi* 焦山續志 (Continued Jiaoshan gazetteer) compiled in 1904, and later included by Jiang Weiqiao in his history of Chinese Buddhism, the monastery was saved from destruction at the hands of Taiping forces thanks to the bravery of its abbot, Liaochan Yuehui 了禪月輝 (A014752) and his disciple Liuzhang Wuchun 流長悟春 (A014749):

Liaochan, courtesy name Yuehui, was originally from the Lei clan of Yuxi county [in Jiangsu]. In the *guichou* year of the Xianfeng era [1853] the Taiping soldiers burned Jinshan and Beigu shan and led their group to Jiaoshan. Liaochan and his disciple Wuchun steadfastly refused to leave. They went into the enemy camp and explained the benefit [of leaving Jiaoshan alone] and harm [of attacking it], and in the end the mountain was not attacked. After the Taipings arrived, of all the monasteries in the Jiangnan area, there were none that survived; only Jiaoshan was spared, and this was thanks to the efforts of Liaochan.<sup>63</sup>

Another account of Jiaoshan's fate during the Taiping War confirms that it escaped the total destruction faced by Jinshan and Beigu shan, but it also reveals that it did was not completely unscathed. In 1854 the American Presbyterian missionary Rev. Michael Simpson Culbertson wrote that:

Just below [Zhenjiang] is Silver Island [i.e., Jiaoshan], a place devoted to the service of Buddha. It is a round peak, rising very abruptly to the height of several hundred feet from the surface of the water. There are a number of large and highly ornamented temples, which have not been injured, although the idols have been broken to pieces.<sup>64</sup>

This account confirms the story from the Jiaoshan gazetteer but adds the additional detail that while the buildings themselves were spared, the religious

<sup>62</sup> Dinghui Monastery <PL000000010973> is also known as Jiaoshan Monastery, adopting the name of its location in the same way as Jiangtian is commonly referred to as Jinshan Monastery.

<sup>63</sup> 「了禪，字月輝；盱眙雷氏子。咸豐癸丑，太平天國兵，焚金山，北固，率衆至焦山。了禪與其徒悟春，死守不去；往敵營陳說利害，竟得免焚燒。自太平兵至，江南諸刹，無一存者；獨焦山獲免，了禪之力也。」 Jiang, *Zhongguo Fojiao shi*, 4:38a. See also Chen Renchang 陳任暢, *Jiaoshan xu zhi* 焦山續志 (1904, digital edition, Zhongguo fangzhi ku 中國方志庫).

<sup>64</sup> Michael Simpson Culbertson, "A Letter from the Rev. MS Culbertson," June 5, 1854, reprinted in *Western Reports on the Taiping: A Selection of Documents*, ed. Prescott Clarke and J. S. Gregory (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 138.

images were destroyed.<sup>65</sup> Only a few miles away, Jinshan, in contrast, suffered near total destruction of its religious structures. This may have been in part due to its strategic location overlooking the Yangtze river, making it an ideal observation and artillery post to guard the river approach to the Taiping capital upriver. This is supported by Rev. Culbertson, who also observed that Jinshan's religious structures were then "in ruins, and the materials are used for fortifications, which the insurgents are now constructing."<sup>66</sup>

Earlier in this chapter I outlined several accounts of wartime and post-war monastic leaders who emerged to lead their communities through difficult times and the difficult task of reconstruction. In the case of Jiangtian Monastery on Jinshan, the leader who emerged during the period of Taiping occupation and the post-war reconstruction was Guanxin Xianhui 觀心顯慧 (1810–1875; A021379), a Chan monk of the Linji lineage.<sup>67</sup> Guanxin's family was originally based in Dantu 丹徒 county, the area around Zhenjiang, and after he received full ordination he studied at Gaomin and Jiangtian monasteries, both well-known centers of Chan Buddhism and renowned for their high standards of discipline. After a period of travel, he settled at Jinshan in about 1847 as assistant instructor (*tangzhu* 堂主), studying under its abbot, Daohua Qingdeng 道華清登 (?–1865; A021377.) Daohua was recognized as the forty-first patriarch of the Chan Linji lineage and would later select Guanxin as one of his Dharma heirs (*fasi* 法嗣). Although Daohua had a more senior disciple, Yuexi Xiandi 月溪顯諦 (A021378; 1822–1890), it was Guanxin who would prove to play the most important role in determining Jiangtian's fate over the next two decades. The Taiping War erupted in the south of China just three years after Guanxin returned to settle at Jiangtian, and in 1853 Zhenjiang fell to rebel forces. Guanxin's memorial biography describes how he led the refugee monastic community during this time of crisis:

[Guanxin] followed the instruction of Daohua and escaped [Zhenjiang] to reside in a branch monastery on Mount Wufeng 五峰山. The entire monastic assembly followed him to the meditation hall. [There] meditation, [offering of] incense, and the rules of conduct were all as before.

<sup>65</sup> Perhaps Liaochan brokered a deal with the Taiping forces, agreeing to sacrifice their images so that their monastery buildings would be left alone?

<sup>66</sup> Culbertson, "A Letter."

<sup>67</sup> Guanxin was the teacher who recognized the attainment of Faren Benxin 法忍本心 mentioned earlier.

When the chief of the southern [Taiping rebels] occupied the area around Nanjing, [Guanxin] was overcome with emotion. [Now] on both banks of the Yangtze River, there was not a bit of Pure Land [remaining]. [Guanxin again] followed the instruction of Daohua, crossing the river to seek refuge in Rugao 如皋.<sup>68</sup>

[Later, Guaxin] returned to Mount Wufeng, chopping brambles and cutting grass, toiling alongside the rest of the assembly. Daohua appointed Yuexi as abbot and appointed [Guanxin] to the office of prior. [Guanxin] personally led [the community in their] work. They erected a thatched hut several beams wide, the Dhyana Meditation Hall of Penetrating Insight. This one stick of incense was again transmitted from this point onward, continued without interruption.

In this account, Daohua continues to direct the community but Guaxin undertakes a leading role, first in re-establishing the community at Mount Wufeng and later in building a temporary meditation hall for their “monastery in exile.” In spite of having lost access to the buildings and wealth of Jinshan, the monastic assembly was able to survive by holding on to their traditions of meditation, prayer, and discipline.

In the meantime, Jinshan was being converted for use as part of the Taiping defenses of the city: one Western account observes that a small military outpost had been set up on the hill.<sup>69</sup> The extent of the destruction and the impact of the war on Jinshan are evocatively described in the text of a stele inscription composed in 1872:

In the middle of the Xianfeng era [1851–1862], [Jinshan] suffered from the rebel uprising. Lofty terraces, remarkable pavilions, jade-like palaces, and cobalt-blue halls were all swept away, leaving no trace. In that time of sorrow those who were familiar with antiquity all mourned in their hearts. This was because since antiquity Jinshan had never been more prosperous

<sup>68</sup> 「師奉道公、避居五峰山下院。大眾踵至禪堂。坐香、清規如舊時。粵首踞金陵圍。師再潰。大江南北、無一片淨土。師奉道公、渡江避地如皋。再返五峰、斬棘誅茅、與眾同患難。道公以主席付月溪諦上座、仍命師為監院。師身先作務。數椽茅屋草創、安禪大徹堂。一枝香、從此又接、續不斷矣。」 Punctuation added. Xu Yueshen 許樾身, “Guanxin dashi ta ming” 觀心大師塔銘, recorded in *Xu Jinshan zhi* 續金山志, 1:128–136. The rector of Jiangtian during this period was Baowu Qiuyan 寶悟秋崖 (?–1875; A001925), who later retired from the position in 1861.

<sup>69</sup> Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*, 157.

than during our dynasty. The severity of any damage it had suffered in the past had never been more serious than that of these present days.<sup>70</sup>

The monastic community was able to maintain its integrity in exile, but the structures on Jinshan itself were swept away at the hands of Taiping forces. This brief account displays an awareness that although destruction had come to Buddhist monasteries before, the damage of the Taiping War was of an unprecedented scale. In December 1857, Taiping forces withdrew from Zhenjiang and the city was retaken by Qing loyalists, but as late as 1861 much of the land in the area still remained abandoned and fallow.<sup>71</sup> While the monastic community was now able to return to Jinshan, virtually all the structures were gone. Additionally, in 1857 much of the rental income upon which they relied would be impossible to collect, both because the war was still ongoing nearby, and because the documentation relating to land ownership and rental agreements would likely have also been destroyed or scattered. Large public monasteries such as Jinshan relied a great deal on this income, since their monastics spent a great deal of time in specialist practices such as meditation and less in performing rituals in exchange for donations.<sup>72</sup>

Guanxin had played a leading role in maintaining the monastic community in exile, and he rose to a new level of prominence after it was reconvened on Jinshan. In 1865, Daohua passed away, Yuexi Xiandi withdrew from his monastic office due to illness, and thus Guanxin was appointed abbot of Jiangtian Monastery. It was not long before his fame as a teacher spread, and talented students were attracted to come and practice on Jinshan:

After this, masters Jingbo 靜波, Weizhang 惟章, Baowu 寶悟, Hunrong 渾容, Baoyue 寶月, and Bengen 本根, all worked together to revive [Buddhism] and to teach students, and their fame spread everywhere. Of those who gathered [around Guanxin], eventually there were Langrun 朗潤, Weiqing 惟清, Dading 大定, and Langhui 朗輝 who joined the rank and file of community, each bowing and seeking his instruction. He

<sup>70</sup> 「逮咸豐中遭粵賊之亂。崇臺、傑閣、琳宮、紺宇、蕩焉無遺。憂時攬古者、眾以悼於其心。蓋依古以來、金山之勝未有過於我朝。其焚毀之烈、亦未有踰於今日者也。」 Punctuation added. “Chongxiu Jinshan Jiangtian si ji” 重修金山江天寺記, in *Jinshan xuzhi*, 62–63. Also recorded in “Dai Xiang xiang Zeng xiangguo chongxiu Jinshan Jiangtian si ji” 代湘鄉曾相國重修金山江天寺記, in Zhang Yuzhao 張裕釗, *Lianting wenji* 濂亭文集 (Chashi mujian zhai, 1882).

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, Clark and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*, 342.

<sup>72</sup> Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 220–228.

treated each according to their capacity and their abilities, discerning the achievements of each. These four each in turn gained insight and were appointed to the office of assistant instructor, while still more sought his instruction. Of those that he led toward insight, there were many hundreds. Those admitted to the Chan hall all at once highly praised [him].

[Guanxin] not only reconstructed [monastic] buildings, producing the merit of revival, but he restored this “broken bowl” with clear vision.<sup>73</sup>

As in other accounts of reconstruction, the presence of capable leadership, here provided by Guanxin, is a key step in reconstruction. Such leadership was required to foster the enthusiasm and support of the local community and the broader network of affiliated teachers and potential students. Guanxin gained the approval of Baowu 寶悟 (?–1875; A001925), who had served as rector of Jiangtian during the Xianfeng era (1851–1861) and retired from monastic office in 1871, only to be invited back to Jinshan a few years later where he gained renown as a Chan teacher.<sup>74</sup> Among Guanxin’s students was Dading Miyuan 大定密源 (1824–1906; A019661) who would be appointed abbot of Jiangtian after Guanxin’s death in 1875, and whose tonsure disciples would eventually number more than five hundred.<sup>75</sup> Guanxin was thus able to sustain and then revive the Chan community of Jiangtian, re-establishing it as a center of strict but effective training that helped produced some of the best-known monastic leaders of the early twentieth century.

As the monastic community was being re-formed, Guanxin also led the reconstruction of the buildings and other physical elements of Jiangtian Monastery and the rest of Jinshan. As mentioned, with the entire region

<sup>73</sup> 「於是靜波、惟章、寶悟、渾容、寶月、本根諸師、同時贊衰、提撕後學、十方闡風。翕然歸之、遂得朗潤、惟清、大定、朗輝為清眾、每叅叩師。皆以本分、接人隨機、勘別各得。其宜四人、次第有所開悟、命居堂主、其餘請益叅叩。領悟者、且數百餘人。禪堂得人、一時稱盛。師豈但締造營建、有興復功、而以明眼扶此破沙盆。」 Punctuation added. *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 132–133. The “broken bowl” (*posha pen* 破沙盆) refers to the line of Chan transmission. It is a reference to a case from the *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元, which uses the monastic bowl as a symbol of Chan transmission from master to disciple. Shi Puji 釋普濟, ed., *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 (digital edition, <<https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=8127>>), fasc. 20.

<sup>74</sup> Buddhist Studies Person Authority Database, #A001925, which is based on *Jiuhua shan zhi* 九華山志. Little is known of Baoyue (A007963) except that he was active in the Jiangnan region and was likely of the same generation as Baowu.

<sup>75</sup> See also Yu Lingbo 于凌波, ed., *Xiandai Fojiao renwu cidian* 現代佛教人物辭典 (Taipei: Foguang, 2004), 1.44a–c. Dading’s own students include the revolutionary monk Zongyang 宗仰 (1861–1921) and the Huayan master Yingci 應慈 (1873–1965). Langhui Shirong 朗輝事融 (1845–1910; A031258) does not appear to have stayed at Jiangtian for very long, but he later became abbot of Gaomin Monastery in Yangzhou. See Yu-Hsiu Ku, *History of Zen* (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 54.

devastated by the war and yet to fully recover, local elites and rental income were unlikely to be able to supply sufficient funds for a reconstruction of this scale. Instead, Guanxin appealed to two officials who had gained great fame and renown during the Taiping War: Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901).<sup>76</sup> Zeng was a military hero of the war and later held high political office, while Li had served under Zeng during the war and was later governor (*xunfu* 巡撫) of Jiangsu province between 1864 and 1866. Soon after Zhenjiang was retaken in 1857, Guanxin contacted these two officials requesting funds to rebuild Jinshan. Initially thirty thousand taels of silver were committed, but when the Yellow River flooded in Huaiyang 淮揚 county, however, these funds had to be diverted to flood relief. It wasn't until about 1866 that the reconstruction funds were finally delivered, thanks to the intercession of a friendly official and another appeal to Li Hongzhang, now viceroy (*zongdu* 總督) of Huguang.<sup>77</sup> Li's account of the reconstruction recalls how Ma Xinyi 馬新貽 (1821–1870), another veteran military leader of the Taiping War who was appointed viceroy of Liangjiang in 1868, assigned the Hanlin scholar and *jinshi* Xue Shuchang 薛書常 (1815–1880) to oversee the project. The reconstruction was finally initiated in 1869 and was completed in 1871 after twenty-six months of work.<sup>78</sup> According to a stele inscription composed by Yang Pu 楊溥 in 1871, total reconstruction costs were just over 29,700 silver taels, of which material costs were 60%, feeding and housing the workers represented 30%, and salaries and miscellaneous expenses made up the remaining 10%. Xue Shuchang records in his own stele inscription from 1872 that total costs were just over 32,344 silver taels.<sup>79</sup> A sum of this size was much more money than a monastic community could have hoped to raise in so short a time, even a prominent one such as Jiangtian; a wealthy monastery outside of Beijing, in comparison, had a yearly gross income of just 12,000 taels in the nineteenth century, and considering that Jiangtian likely had had its income sharply cut, it would have taken many years to raise this amount.<sup>80</sup>

Jiangtian Monastery and Jinshan were thus reconstructed in 1871, some eighteen years after they were destroyed by Taiping forces. Was this site that

<sup>76</sup> Zeng was already briefly mentioned earlier in the chapter in connection with rebuilding a Dragon Deity Shrine at Linggu Monastery in 1867.

<sup>77</sup> Xu, "Guanxin dashi ta'ming," 133–134; Yang Fu 楊溥, "Chongxiu Jiangtian si gongcheng ji" 重修江天寺工程記, in *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 69–70.

<sup>78</sup> Li Hongzhang, "Chongxiu Jinshan Jiangtian si ji" 重修金山江天寺記, in *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 63.

<sup>79</sup> *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 68, 69–71.

<sup>80</sup> Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 495n19.

re-emerged a recreation of what had existed before the war, or were there significant differences? Most historical accounts are characteristically vague about such details, simply stating that the monastery was “restored to its former glory.” A few sources offer additional details about the reconstruction, however, and an analysis of these combined with later accounts reveals that there was a great deal that was changed about Jinshan post-reconstruction, as illustrated in table 1.1.<sup>81</sup>

On the post-war reconstructed Jinshan, only five major buildings and four other structures were rebuilt in the same location as they had stood before the war. Importantly, the most public and essential buildings along the central axis of Jiangtian Monastery, namely the Hall of the Heavenly Kings 天王殿, the Dharma Hall 大雄殿, and the Scriptural Library 藏經樓, were all rebuilt on the same footprint and to the same dimensions as they had been before the destruction of the 1850s.<sup>82</sup> Beyond these nine structures, however, there was a great deal of variation in how and where structures were rebuilt. A number of structures, such as the Hall of the Exalted 雄跨堂 and the Hall of Content Enjoyment 至游堂, were now reconstructed but they had long ceased to exist even before the Taiping War; this large-scale reconstruction was thus an opportunity to revive them and reincorporate them into the monastery complex.<sup>83</sup> Most of large structures outside of the central axis, including halls, gates, pavilions, and small shrines, were either not rebuilt in the same location or were rebuilt to new dimensions. This includes a number of elements to the rear of Jiangtian Monastery that were devoted to Guanyin worship, which were physically and administratively separate from the main Jiangtian monastery complex. The Cishou Stupa 慈壽塔, on the other hand, the tallest and certainly the most striking feature on Jinshan, was not repaired until as late as 1900. For many decades only the stone core of the building stood, stripped of its wooden embellishments. The state of this structure between the Tongzhi-era reconstruction and its later repair can be seen in figure 1.6, a photograph from about 1871, where a cluster of grand buildings in excellent repair stands in stark contrast with the ruined tower and the presence of a single, leafless tree near an otherwise barren hilltop.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Contemporary physical evidence is of limited use in investigating the reconstruction of 1869–1871, since Jinshan was again destroyed by a major fire in 1948 and subsequently rebuilt.

<sup>82</sup> On the structure of the monastery's central axis, see Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, chap. one.

<sup>83</sup> *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 31–32; other structures elsewhere in this section are listed as having been “long in ruins” 久廢 but reconstructed during the Tongzhi era.

<sup>84</sup> John Thomson, *Illustrations of China and Its People*, vol. 3 (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low, and Searle, 1873). Cited in Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 351n71.

Table 1.1. Sample Structures Reconstructed at Jiangtian Monastery<sup>\*a</sup>

	Structure Name	Size in Bays (Stories)
Reconstructed in same location and to same dimensions as before the war	Hall of Heavenly Kings 天王殿	5
	Hall of Guandi 關帝殿	3
	Hall of the Dragon King 龍王殿	3
	Dharma Hall 大雄殿	5
	Stone Platform 石月臺	
	Scriptural Library 藏經樓	5 (2)
	Ordination Platform 石拜臺	
	Miraculous and Lofty Platform 妙高臺	2
	Covered Corridor 三面周軒	
Reconstructed but had previously been in ruins	Hall of the Exalted 雄跨堂	3
	Hall of Content Enjoyment 至游堂	3
Reconstructed in new locations or to new dimensions	Hall of Loyalty 勤王殿	
	Rectory 齋堂	5
	Kitchen 僧廚	5
	Ārāma Hall 伽藍殿	3
	Pavilion of Patriarch Lü and Hall of King Han 呂祖閣韓王殿	3 (2)
	Hall of Great Penetration 大徹門	
	Hall of the Awakened Mind 悟心堂	3
	Abbot's Quarters 方丈樓	3
	Hearing the Sound of the Tide Studio 聽潮軒	3
	Side Room 耳房	1
	Tea House 茶房	2
	Kitchen 廚房	4
	Covered Hallway 穿廊	1



Table 1.1. Continued

	Structure Name	Size in Bays (Stories)
	Arriving Crane Hall 來鶴樓	3 (2)
	Left Jade Pavilion 留玉閣	2
	Guanyin Gatehouse 觀音山門	3
	Single-Story Structure 平屋	1
	Guanyin Pavilion 觀音閣	5
	Wenchang Pavilion 文星閣	1 (2)
	Saintly Script Pavilion 奎章亭	
	Memorial Gallery 影堂樓	3
	Pavilion of Lingering Clouds 留雲亭	
Not repaired until c. 1900	Cishou Pagoda 慈壽塔	
Newly added after 1870s	Name-Recitation Hall 念佛堂	
Additional peripheral structures, newly built	Wooden Archway outside Gatehouse 山門外木牌坊	
	Stone Dock 石馬頭	
	Stone Steps on the Mountain 山上石臺坡	
	Brick Perimeter Wall at Base of Mountain 山下磚圍牆	

<sup>a</sup>Based on Xue Shuchang 薛書常, “Chongxiu Jiangtian si gongcheng ji” 重修江天寺工程記, in *Xu jinshan zhi* 續金山志, 66–68.

A number of structures, including a Wei Tuo Hall (*weituo dian* 韋馱殿), a hall for name-recitation practices (*nianfo tang* 念佛堂), and a hall for ill and elderly monks (*yanshou tang* 延壽堂), had never been part of the historical Jinshan and were newly added between the 1870s and 1900.<sup>85</sup> Rather than a strict return to the status quo ante bellum, the reconstruction of Jiangtian Monastery and other structures on Jinshan was thus, at least in part, an

<sup>85</sup> *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 30.



Figure 1.6 Jinshan in the early 1870s

opportunity to introduce change, either by rearranging existing elements or by reviving long-disused ones. This process of adding to the site continued in later years; for example, in 1879 a lighthouse on the island intended to help boats navigate on the river was completed under the direction of Changjing Michuan 常淨密傳 (A031378), who had succeeded Guanxin as abbot of Jiangtian Monastery.<sup>86</sup>

As mentioned, the funds to reconstruct Jinshan were procured through the intercession of Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang. The funds themselves were drawn from state revenue from taxes collected on the salt shipping monopoly (*cuoshang* 鹺商) in the southern Henan (Lianghuai 兩淮) region.<sup>87</sup> Bureaucrats in the late-Imperial Chinese state from the late-Ming onward did not normally use state funds to help rebuild a Buddhist monastery. Emperors might honor a monastery with a personal visit or grant them new titles, events that were commemorated in wooden plaques carved from their calligraphy. Any official might donate to a monastery, but such donations would come from their personal wealth, not state tax revenue. As the data explored earlier in this chapter suggests, most reconstruction funding in this era came from local sources, not from officials at regional or higher levels. A county magistrate might lead a reconstruction, but I suspect that such funding was mostly or exclusively for the purpose of rebuilding religious institutions with strong connections to local society, such as shrines of the land or the city walls. Zeng and Li working to fund Jinshan's reconstruction with state funds

<sup>86</sup> Chen Renyang 陳任暘, *Jinshan gongde tian ji* 金山功德田記, recorded in *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 95–98.

<sup>87</sup> Noted in Xue Shuchang's inscription, *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 68.

is thus quite unusual for this time, perhaps one example of the greater regional autonomy that started to occur as a result of the Tongzhi Restoration, when new initiatives were undertaken by governors and viceroys rather than under the direction of the Imperial throne, which in any case was held by a series of largely ineffective emperors.

Both Zeng and Li would be among the leaders of what came to known as the Self-Strengthening Movement (*zhiqiang yundong* 自強運動), a program of military reform and industrial development undertaken from the 1860s to about 1895, one that sought to maintain the political and social status quo in China while building up its technological and military strength. They and others were eager to selectively adopt what they saw as the best of modern technology to build up the material power of China in the wake of the war, and their projects included the construction of arsenals in Shanghai, Nanjing, and Tianjin, as well as the Fuzhou Dockyard (*Fuzhou zaochuan chang* 福州造船廠), founded in 1867 to build modern warships and other weapons of war.<sup>88</sup> Compared to these projects, the scale of the Jinshan reconstruction was relatively small; even the highest reported cost would be less than one month's operating budget for the Fuzhou arsenal.<sup>89</sup> It was, however, money that could be used elsewhere in the state's efforts to rebuild following the disastrous Taiping War. In stark contrast to the contemporaneous Meiji reforms undertaken in Japan, moreover, religious projects were decidedly not part of the late-Qing self-strengthening program. As it involved neither weapons nor technology, it is not immediately clear how the reconstruction of a Buddhist monastic site might fit into an agenda of national reform. What, then, were the motivations behind Zeng and Li investing state funds in rebuilding Jinshan?

Li Hongzhang's "Record of Reconstructing Jinshan Jiangtian Monastery" 重修金山江天寺記, composed in 1872, includes a discussion of the motivations behind rebuilding Jinshan that is worth quoting at length:

When the southern bandits took Nanjing, they surrounded the region of Wu, like a landslide or like a rushing flood, and the fields were left fallow. If one asked about the revival of this monastery, one may still glimpse its results today. Just as when the sun reaches its zenith it starts to set, and

<sup>88</sup> Wright, *The Last Stand*.

<sup>89</sup> David Pong, "Keeping the Foochow Navy Yard Afloat: Government Finance and China's Early Modern Defense Industry, 1866–75," *Modern Asian Studies* 21.1 (1987): 124.

when the moon is full it will wane. Barbarians to the west, uprisings to the east. The river flows and floods the mountains, valleys bulge and hills are ruined.

Throughout history, prosperity and decline, success and failure, good and bad, achievement and ruin, they have all followed upon each other in turn. Human affairs and the destiny ordained by heaven, all pivot upon this same hub. The Way of Heaven nourishes and then overturns the [aims of] the Way of Humanity.<sup>90</sup>

Li describes the destruction wrought by Taiping forces in cataclysmic terms but also points out that the revival of the monastery is now a concrete fact. His view of monastery destruction and reconstruction in history is precisely the cycle of decay and revival outlined in the introduction to this book, which serves to place into a historical and cosmic context both the unprecedented destruction of Jinshan during the Taiping War as well as its post-war reconstruction under the sponsorship of Zeng and Li. Disasters and destruction may be inevitable, but so are the efforts of human beings to rebuild what Heaven has destroyed. Li then proceeds to discuss the significance of Jinshan and its reconstruction in terms of this cycle narrative:

As for Jinshan, it is located at the confluence of river and mountain and occupies a point of great power in the southeast. If its prosperity were to decline, then it would exert an influence on whether the realm is being well governed or is in disorder and would thus transform the prosperity of future peoples into ruin. Since [Jinshan] was ruined and has now been revived, our future ruin or prosperity, our success or failure as ordained by Heaven will thus certainly be predicated upon [what has occurred] during this period of time. Or else how could [this restoration] not be considered part of our responsibility?<sup>91</sup>

The restoration of Jinshan and Jiangtian Monastery is, in this inscription text, explained as not simply a matter of restoring a single religious site but rather

<sup>90</sup> 「當粵賊盜據金陵、環吳之囂、如崩如沸、疇暇。問斯寺之修復、而今乃克觀其成。若是日中而移、月盈而虧。於西而夷、於東而隳。川流而澤山、谷填而陵圯。古今者、盛衰興敗、臧否成毀。遞相禪而成焉者也。人事與天運、故參會而乘於其機。天道培栽而覆傾人道。」 Punctuation added. *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 64–65.

<sup>91</sup> 「若金山者、處江山之交、而據東南之勝。其興若廢、乃尤與世之治亂、相為消息、以往者之盛、而至於廢。既廢矣、而復興於今、由今以往、廢興之運、成敗之應天、固實主其間。抑豈非人之與有責者哉。」 Punctuation added. *Xu Jinshan zhi*, 65.

restoring a nexus point with a direct impact on the larger prosperity of all of China. Harnessing the energies of the natural landscape and protecting people from harmful influences were important functions fulfilled by constructed sacred spaces throughout the history of East Asian religions.<sup>92</sup> Li's commemorative text sees this function of Jinshan as extending to the entire country, likely an important consideration during a crisis point when he and others were working to restore order after the war. Just as the Self-Strengthening Movement and the larger Tongzhi Restoration of which it was a part were intended to revive China after a period of destruction, the reconstruction of Jinshan is described as having a part to play in rebalancing the fate of the land and its people.

This source text, a stele inscription located on the grounds of the monastery and later included in its gazetteer, is but one perspective on the reasons behind Zeng and Li deciding to support the revival of Jinshan. It certainly does not tell us the whole story behind the reconstruction. Zeng Guofan, for example, may have had personal reasons for wanting to help with the reconstruction of Jinshan; Jiang Wei-qiao believed that Zeng thought highly of Guanxin and wanted to rebuild Jinshan for his sake.<sup>93</sup> Another possible motivation is provided in a private letter written by Li Hongzhang to Ma Xinyi, then governor of Liangjiang, dated June 30, 1869 (Tongzhi 8, 5/21). At the end of this letter, Li tells Ma that he had previously arranged for funds to be collected for the reconstruction of Jinshan, but that they were later distributed for other purposes. He then describes his reasons for wanting to rebuild the monastery in very different terms:

My original intent was: since Jinshan is a location of great power close to the foreign settlement (in Zhenjiang), one of them [might] seek to occupy the summit, and if they constructed a foreign building there, it would be a disaster of no small significance.<sup>94</sup> Thus we had to reconstruct [it] quickly, in order to avoid their coveting of [the site].<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> On Buddhist monasteries also fulfilling this function, see Robson, "Monastic Spaces and Sacred Traces."

<sup>93</sup> 「曾國藩器重之，為之重建江天寺。」 Jiang, *Zhongguo Fojiao shi*, 4:32.

<sup>94</sup> Zhenjiang was opened as a treaty port in 1861.

<sup>95</sup> 「初意實因金山形勝，切近洋市，彼每欲侵占山頂，若建洋樓，為患不淺，必須及早興修，以免覬覦。」 Li Hongzhang 李鴻章, "Fu Ma zhijun" 復馬制軍 (Document T8-05-002), in Guojia qingshi bianzuan weiyuanhui 國家清史編纂委員會, ed., *Li Hongzhang quanji* 李鴻章全集 (Hefei: Anhui chubanshijituan, 2008), 30:18–19.

In this letter, written in the same year that reconstruction work on Jinshan began, Li anticipates his inscription text he would write about three years later in identifying Jinshan as a location of great importance and power, but here Jinshan's importance stems from its strategic location and the danger posed by possible encroachment from the foreign settlement nearby. If the British residents of the Zhenjiang concession area were to take advantage of the ruinous state of Jinshan and gain control of it, the implications for the nation would be dire. Li does not elaborate on what precisely the effect of losing Jinshan to the foreigners would be, but based on his other writings we can guess that it would be a disaster both geomantic—losing a location of great power—and symbolic—losing a militarily strategic point to foreign powers. State investment in reconstructing Jinshan was, from this point of view, not primarily for the sake of the monastic community nor for Buddhism or religion more generally but rather to mark this important piece of territory as “Chinese.” This element is notably absent from the stele inscriptions that were inscribed to commemorate the event but fits much better within the overall aims of the Tongzhi-era project of national self-strengthening. We can also not ignore the possibility of a link to a growing consciousness of nationalism in China. Holmes Welch observed that in the modern era, to identify with Buddhism was to signify an identification with something indelibly Chinese. To protect Jinshan from foreign encroachment was not only wise from the strategic standpoint but also protected a symbol of Chinese culture and the Chinese nation that was just then starting to be imaginatively constructed.<sup>96</sup>

After the reconstruction of 1869 to 1871, Jiangtian went on to become one of the three most important Chan centers in the region, alongside Tianning Monastery 天寧寺 in Changzhou and Gaomin Monastery in Yangzhou.<sup>97</sup> Several well-known monastics of the early twentieth century were trained there, including Dading, previously mentioned, and Zongyang 宗仰 (1861–1921; A004880), who will appear in the next chapter. In the early twentieth century around the time of the Republican Revolution one of its halls was briefly used as barracks, but on the whole it survived and prospered.<sup>98</sup> Photographs taken some time in the early twentieth century before 1939 show the buildings to be in excellent repair, with fine ornamental details

<sup>96</sup> Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 261. My sincere thanks to the anonymous reviewer of the book manuscript who brought this connection to my attention.

<sup>97</sup> Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 4–5; Shengyan, *Fayuan xieyuan*, chap. 44.

<sup>98</sup> Stevens, “The Yangzi Port of Zhenjiang,” 274.

on the roof gables and the pagoda completely restored to its former glory.<sup>99</sup> Its recovery from the devastation of the Taiping War, however, only came about thanks to the patronage of two of the most powerful and influential statesmen of the era, a feat that few other monasteries could achieve. Other sites damaged during the war did manage to organize reconstructions, such as Huiju Monastery 慧居寺 near Nanjing, which was rebuilt in such a way that Prip-Møller described the architecture of the buildings as of a “plain and unpretentious character,” likely due to difficulty raising funds for ornamental construction.<sup>100</sup> The distance between the motivations expressed in Li’s private letter and those described in the commemorative stele inscription additionally speaks to the beginnings of a divergence in the goals of monastery reconstruction, with official patrons seeking to plant a concrete symbol of China’s history and monastic communities looking for help in bringing themselves through the lower end of the monastery lifecycle into a new age of prosperity.

## Conclusion

The destruction of Buddhist monasteries and other Chinese religious institutions brought about by the Taiping War was indeed unprecedented in its scale and ferocity, but the war was followed by a period of reconstruction lasting several decades, during which religious sites that could muster the required leadership and support were able to rebuild and recover. The exploits of the wartime and post-war religious reconstruction leaders would later be commemorated in text, positioning them as models of bravery and faith during trying times. Not all religious sites were able to re-emerge from the ashes of the Taiping conflagration; two of Nanjing’s three Great Monasteries were forever ruined, and even the third, Linggu Monastery, would never again attain the position of prominence and fame that it once held. The war served to reshape the religious landscape of China, with previously prominent sites falling off the map, while others were propelled into new roles. After the war, just as the Tongzhi Restoration worked to introduce important

<sup>99</sup> Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定 and Sekino Tadashi 関野貞, *Shina bunka shiseki* 支那文化史蹟 (Kyoto and Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1939–1941), 4:1–2.

<sup>100</sup> Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, 202. Huiju Monastery was later renamed Longchang Monastery 隆昌寺 in the early 1930s. Indexed as <PL000000056075>.

changes in the power balance of Qing China, and China's economic and culture power bases increasing shifted toward its east coast and urban centers, so too were Buddhist monasteries, and Buddhism more generally, at the start of a period of tectonic change in the way that the religion was understood and practiced. This is not to say that equally important and innovative changes did not occur before—one need only to look to the late Ming to see how dynamic Buddhism continued to be in the early modern period—but the Taiping War does seem to have inaugurated a period of Buddhist reconstruction and reimagining that would extend into the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>101</sup>

The roots of this late-Qing and Republican-era Buddhist “revival,” a notion that was cemented in academic discourse by the work of Welch and now forms a part of the standard history of modern Chinese Buddhism, are often traced back to the lay Buddhist publisher Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (Yang Renshan 楊仁山, 1837–1911; A001440), who began printing Buddhist texts in the immediate post-war period. Seeing the loss of so many wooden printing blocks and printed texts as a result of the war, Yang and his colleagues worked to reprint scriptural texts that had been lost, eventually setting up a permanent press, the Jinling Scriptural Press 金陵刻經處, on the grounds of his estate in Nanjing.<sup>102</sup> As Chinese Buddhist monasteries were being repaired and reconstructed across China, so too were Yang and others working to replace Buddhist texts and rebuild the contents of scriptural libraries. Yang was working within the model of monastery scriptoria in his use of woodblock printing and confining his output to scriptural and related genres, but he also introduced important innovations, including having lay management, networking with other scriptural presses and distributors, and working with foreigners such as the Welsh missionary Timothy Richard and the Japanese Buddhist scholar Nanjō Bunyū.<sup>103</sup> So too was monastery reconstruction an opportunity for innovation; in all cases reconstruction does not necessarily entail a return to the status quo ante, and new and revived elements are a central part of the process, even if the rhetoric surrounding the event focuses on

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*; Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*.

<sup>102</sup> On Yang and his press, see Gabriele Goldfuss, *Vers un bouddhisme du XXe siècle* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 2001).

<sup>103</sup> Gregory Adam Scott, “Absolutely Not a Business: Chinese Buddhist Scriptural Presses and Distributors, 1860s–1930s,” *KODEX: Jahrbuch der IBG* 6 (2016): 67–82; Goldfuss, *Vers un bouddhisme du XXe siècle*.



a return to the past. The Taiping War exerted an unprecedented impact on Chinese Buddhist monasteries, but the decades that followed the end of the Tongzhi Restoration would bring further challenges and pressures on religious institutions, including new legal and cultural attitudes toward religion, that would continue to reshape the religious landscape.

## 2

# Reconstruction in an Era of Revolution

One could change Buddhist and Daoist temples into [schools]. Today there must be tens of thousands of temples in the realm. A city will have over a hundred, a large county several dozen, a small county more than ten. All possess land, and their property has come from donations. If they were made into schools, then their buildings and land would be sufficient [to sustain them]. This scheme is both expedient and simple.

Zhang Zhidong, “Exhortation to Learning,” 1898<sup>1</sup>

Since monastics are also citizens of the Republic, their property ought to receive the same constitutional protections.

*Buddhist Miscellany*, October 1, 1912<sup>2</sup>

If the period from the 1860s to the 1890s in China was one of material and social *restoration* in the wake of the devastating Taiping War, the following period from the 1890s to the late 1920s was one of radical *revolution* amid internal disorder. The various projects associated with the Tongzhi Restoration had sought to rebuild the country through adopting foreign knowledge and purchasing foreign technologies, while keeping the core of Chinese society and the Imperial bureaucracy intact. The disastrous results of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the failure of the subsequent Wuxu Reforms (1898) prompted reformers and revolutionaries to seek much more radical

<sup>1</sup> 「可以佛道寺觀改為之。今天下寺觀何止數萬，都會百餘區，大縣數十，小縣十餘，皆有田產，其物皆由布施而來，若改作學堂，則屋宇田產悉具，此亦權宜而簡易之策也。」 Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, “Quanxue pian 勸學篇” [An exhortation to learning], in Zhang Zhidong, *Zhang Wenxiang quanji* 張文襄公全集, vol. 203 (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1971), 819.

<sup>2</sup> 「當以僧尼同為民國人民、所有財產、自應遵照約法一律保護。」 Punctuation added. “Chengqing jiaohuan miaochan” 呈請交還廟產, *Foxue congbao* 佛學從報 1, October 1, 1912, in MFQ 1:131.

change, and when a series of uprisings erupted in late 1911, the Qing was toppled from power and a Republic of China was proclaimed on January 1, 1912. The new republic was, however, soon torn apart by factional infighting, and from 1917 onward *de facto* power in China was held by a group of regional warlords. When in 1927 the country was again united under the Nationalist Party (*guomindang* 國民黨), heirs to Sun Yat-sen's political legacy, many former warlords were co-opted into the new state while they continued to enjoy a great deal of regional autonomy. During this era of disorder, rival warlord factions engaged in civil war almost continuously, bringing further collateral damage to religious sites caught in their path.

Throughout this period, however, monastic and lay leaders throughout China continued to work to reconstruct Buddhist monasteries. Many of the sites that were rebuilt during this period, and all of the focus sites that are examined in this chapter, had been destroyed earlier during the Taiping War. Due to the circumstances explored in the chapter, however, in many cases several decades would elapse before their reconstruction could commence. In the interim many continued to function as *ad hoc* religious sites with temporary structures that were never intended for long-term use, awaiting the funds, materials, and popular support to initiate a proper restoration. In sharp contrast to the immediate post-Taiping period examined in the previous chapter, in this era of rapidly shifting political and cultural contexts, challenging new conditions emerged that threatened the very livelihood of religious institutions in China. The new Republic brought with it a new, albeit provisional, constitution that guaranteed freedom of religious belief and the right to property, but the realities on the ground meant that these were never universally recognized or enforced, and people and institutions had to actively fight to protect both rights.<sup>3</sup> The shifting reality of warlord control on the ground meant that *de facto* governance of a religious property could change from year to year, bringing in a new group of leaders whose top priority was often simply to consolidate their military power and to gain advantage over their rivals.

For Buddhist monasteries and other religious institutions in China, one of the most significant changes during the period from the 1890s to the late 1920s was the fading away of the Imperial-era conception of religion and its replacement by a new conceptual category. In late-imperial China,

<sup>3</sup> Zhang Yufa 張玉法, "Minguo chunian de guohui" 民國初年的國會, *Jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 近代史研究所集刊 13 (1984): 83–196.

religion was considered to be integral to both human society and the trans-human cosmos, relevant both to civil governance and to understandings of a larger geomantic-cosmological system. Li Hongzhang's stele inscription text described in the previous chapter, in which he links the reconstruction of Jinshan Monastery to the maintenance of a proper geomantic balance in the region, reflects precisely this view.<sup>4</sup> From the late 1890s onward, a new model for religion emerged in China, one that was equally conceptual—in that it asserted the authority to determine which concepts belonged to the religious—and categorical—in that it sought to establish regulatory boundaries between the religious and the secular realms. This new model was partly based upon concepts derived from translations of political theory from the Japanese, and partly upon encounters with Western missionaries and the legal language that was introduced via international treaties to recognize their work in China and to establish protections for them. It was introduced into Chinese discourse along with a series of neologisms, including politics (*zhengzhi* 政治), society (*shehui* 社會), and education (*jiaoyu* 教育), that reflected modern approaches to conceptualizing and categorizing aspects of human life. *Zongjiao* 宗教 (“religion”) was thus not only a new term but also a new conceptualization for the religious in modern China, and along with its negative pair term *mixin* 迷信 (“superstition”), it staked out the field for how and where religious culture would operate in a new society. It was not immediately clear where Buddhism and other Chinese religious traditions fit into this new category, let alone how religious professionals and institutions fit into new categories of citizenship and property rights. Was Buddhism a religion, or should it instead be considered a philosophy (*zhexue* 哲學)? Was there a Confucian religion, or was it too a set of philosophical and moral teachings?<sup>5</sup> Should the multitude of Chinese popular religious traditions be treated as a single religious entity similar to the case of Shintō 神道 in Japan, or were they instead superstitions or spurious imitations of orthodox religions? During this era no one was able to establish definitive answers to any of these questions—and indeed they remain the subject of debate today—and in practice each regional power had their own approach to

<sup>4</sup> Though his private letter, mentioning his concerns over losing a strategic site to foreign occupation, reminds us that other factors, beyond the religious or geomantic, were often also in play.

<sup>5</sup> Anna Sun, *Confucianism as a World Religion: Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), chap. 1.

dealing with religion, leaving local institutions subject to systems that were inconsistent at best and capricious at worst.<sup>6</sup>

For their part, monastic and lay Buddhists both became increasingly active in the new public political and intellectual spheres of the Republic, and motivated in large part by the emergent threats to their livelihood, they worked to establish Buddhism in the public discourse as a legitimate *zongjiao*. They were also inspired by the opportunities offered by the new legal environment of the Republic: promises of freedom of association, freedom of expression in print, and by the potential for Buddhism to play a positive role in the building of a new China. The early Republic saw the first attempts to organize national Buddhist associations and the establishment of Chinese Buddhist periodicals, at least forty-nine of which were founded during this period. Buddhists founded new extra-monastic institutions, such as Buddhist academies (*Foxue yuan* 佛學院), scriptural presses (*kejing chu* 刻經處), and scriptural distributors (*Fojing liutong chu* 佛經流通處), to improve Buddhist education and access to texts.<sup>7</sup> While much of this new activity took place on the edges of the formal boundaries of the monastery, monasteries were no less important and they continued to be vital sites of religious training, ritual, and daily life. Such continued vigor was noted by foreign observers of the period: Heinrich Hackmann, for example, reported in 1910 that although many religious sites remained in ruins after having been destroyed during the Taiping War some fifty years earlier, many others, including Tiantong Monastery 天童寺 in Ningbo 寧波, Haihui Monastery 海會寺 on Lushan 廬山, and Tianning Monastery 天寧寺 in Yangzhou 揚州, were evidently prosperous, and he noted that monastic discipline at Huiju Monastery 慧居寺 on Baohua shan 寶華山 was particularly good.<sup>8</sup> Buddhist monasteries in China continued to fulfill their longstanding roles as training centers for religious specialists, symbolically rich ritual sites, and as retreats from the mundane world. Now they would also be made part of broader organizational, educational, and publishing efforts to establish Buddhism in the public sphere as a legitimate, modern *zongjiao*, serving as

<sup>6</sup> Katz, *Religion and Its Modern Fate*; Vincent Goosseart and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Scott, "Revolution of Ink"; Lei Kuan Rongdao Lai, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911–1949)" (PhD diss., McGill University, 2013); Scott, "Absolutely Not a Business."

<sup>8</sup> H. Hackmann, "Chinese Buddhism and Buddhist China," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* (December 1, 1910): 770.

concrete symbols of Buddhism's continued power to bring benefits and merit to the nation and to humankind.

This new role was lent a critical urgency by a new threat to religious institutions in China. Proposals initially drafted for the Wuxu Reforms in 1898 re-emerged a few years later under the slogan of "establish schools using temple property" (*miaochan xingxue* 廟產興學): a hydra-headed campaign aimed at seizing religious property and using it to found new-style public schools for national education. While this movement was never formally incorporated into a nationwide policy, it affected vast areas of China and had a particularly deep impact in urban centers, places seen by reformers as vanguard sites for the introduction of modernity. It gave local officials an excuse to attack religious institutions as superstitious and to seize their properties for their own uses, whether that be for public education or their own profit. Religious reconstructions during this era thus had to negotiate a rapidly shifting legal terrain, a political power vacuum at the national level, and a radical cultural vanguard that sought to do away with religion altogether. These anti-religion campaigns would only become more intense after 1927 under the new Nationalist party-state. Undertaking the reconstruction of a Buddhist monastery during this period of disorder and exigent threat was thus not simply a matter of rebuilding a single religious site; it was also taking a stand in the broader struggle to ensure the very survival of Buddhism in a rapidly changing China.

### Religious Property and Education in Revolutionary China

In early nineteenth-century China, religious matters were not treated as a separate sphere of human activity but rather as part of the warp and weft of the fabric of society. Officials recognized broad religious traditions such as Buddhism, Daoism, and Islam, as well as the officially sanctioned rituals of the imperial state, and were quick to identify and suppress heterodox religious trends that appeared to threaten social stability. The notion of religion as a discrete sphere, separate from a secular sphere that included governance and politics, that was the product of the European Enlightenment and its dismantling of the absolute power of the Church, was introduced into China initially through treaties that recognized religious freedoms of Christian missionaries and later through reformers who embraced these neologisms and the new ordering of society that they described. Whereas in the past

authorities distinguished orthodox teachings (*zhengjiao* 正教) from evil or errant teachings (*xiejiao* 邪教), now the new conceptual frames were religion (*zongjiao* 宗教), which, although it addressed supernatural matters, was ultimately understood as a rational belief, and superstition (*mixin* 迷信), which represented irrational, incorrect beliefs.<sup>9</sup> These new terms, *zongjiao* and *mixin*, did not appear in isolation but rather as part of a cluster of neologisms to translate terms of modernity from European languages, coined by Japanese authors drawing upon Classical Chinese terminology. The fact that up to the modern era both Japan and China had used Classical Chinese as the standard academic written language, and that Chinese students had flocked to study in Japan in the wake of the First Sino-Japanese War, helped to bring these terms back from Japan into the modern Chinese lexicon. These terms were not simply new labels for old things; they signaled an ideological shift in how religion would be understood in revolutionary China and were deployed to reorder Chinese society along modern lines, informing the regulatory and legal practice of twentieth-century Chinese states in their approach to dealing with religion.

Buddhist monasteries are religious institutions that also support the material needs of their residents and guests, and which rely upon complex social relationships of patronage and support from laypeople. As such they had always combined within them elements that in the new normative lexical regime would be considered religious, together with those that might now fall into the category of economic, social, or cultural. Rather than serving as living examples of the limitations—and perhaps unsuitability—of these new categorical terms, Buddhist monasteries were instead subject to overlapping and often contradictory regulatory and ideological demands from the state, depending on which facet of their existence was being scrutinized. When in the final decade of the Qing dynasty there emerged an urgent need to reform national education away from the classical text-based exam system toward a more comprehensive, universal educational system modeled upon European systems, several reformers proposed seizing religious properties and using their buildings and assets to build schools, what came to be known as the *miaochan xingxue* 廟產興學 (“Build education with temple property”) movement. The fact that many religious institutions were deeply embedded into their local economies and societies was ignored as the new category of

<sup>9</sup> Huang Ko-wu, “The Origin and Evolution of the Concept of Mixin (Superstition): A Review of May Fourth Scientific Views,” *Chinese Studies in History* 49.2 (2016): 54–79.

“superstition” imposed its own logic: these temples were not proper “religion” and thus had no place in a modern nation. Buddhist monasteries thus faced a new existential threat: instead of iconophobic Taiping soldiers, now reformist officials in the Qing government and anti-superstition ideologues threatened to evict the living heart of the monastery and use its structures for modern, *secular* education. Much of the richly diverse tapestry of Chinese religion, Buddhism included, faced the possibility of being jettisoned from the nation in a wave of modernist reform.

The *miaochan xingxue* movements emerged at the very end of the Qing as part of broader moves to deepen reform beyond the skin-deep industrial and technological program of the Self-Strengthening Movement. The basic educational reforms proposed in the 1898 essay *Quanxue pian* 勸學篇 (An exhortation to study) by the reformist official Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837–1909) were not in themselves revolutionary, as Western technological knowledge was to be added to the core of the Chinese education system. Zhang did, however, include the radical suggestion quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, in which temples would be seized and converted into public schools. Since religious sites had always served an educational function of their own, promoting good morality and exemplary conduct, the logic in now shifting them to a much more explicit educational task was not difficult to see. Although the Wuxu 戊戌 reforms of 1898 were ultimately quashed, many of their proposals ended up being enacted before the end of the Qing, including the abolition of the civil service exams and the gradual introduction of a comprehensive, primary-secondary-tertiary educational system. After the civil service exams were abolished in 1905, the entire educational system based upon knowledge of classical texts was upended. Given the urgent need for schools to educate Qing subjects and thereby strengthen the country against its foreign aggressors, calls to use temples and other religious sites for this purpose only grew in number in the last half-decade of the dynasty. The fall of the Qing and the establishment of the Republic of China brought a new legal and regulatory framework to religion, but its rapid fragmentation into regional warlord regimes meant that these new frameworks were not consistently or universally applied. Later on, the New Culture Movement (*xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動) that erupted on university campuses in the first decade of the Republic sought to go beyond piecemeal reform and revolutionize the soul of the Chinese nation. While being strongly anti-imperialist it was by no means anti-foreign, and it upheld science and democracy while vilifying superstition, especially



popular religious beliefs, and at times religion altogether. Religion was not excluded from the modern China envisioned by those associated with the New Culture Movement, but they were intensely skeptical of it. Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942) in the inaugural issue of *Xin Qingnian* 新青年 (*La Jeunesse*), for example, proclaimed his vision for China's future, one element of which was that it should be “scientific, and not fanciful,” thus excluding the metaphysical claims of religious traditions.<sup>10</sup> The early Republic thus brought with it a new justification for repurposing temple properties: these were superstitious institutions that were part of what had kept China weak in the nineteenth century. To transform them into educational institutions would thus be neutralizing a negative and creating a positive.

Local and regional officials throughout China took up the slogan of *miaochan xingxue* from about 1905 onward, seizing religious properties and transforming them into schools. Although it was never part of an organized, nationwide campaign, it had a devastating effect on those institutions unlucky enough to find themselves the target of an anti-superstition, reform-minded official. The impact of these campaigns varied greatly by region; they were likely more effective in the north of China than in the south, where temples were much more strongly backed up by local support.<sup>11</sup> No major Buddhist monastery of the type explored in this book—those with dozens or hundreds of residents, long and well-documented histories, and strong networks of lay patronage—fell victim to such a campaign, but the threat posed by anti-superstition campaigns was very much real. Large religious institutions were able to withstand them only through mobilizing official support and making a public case for their right to exist, innovative strategic responses that reflexively had an impact on how Chinese Buddhists and Buddhist monasteries comported and portrayed themselves in the new public sphere of the Republic. Writing after the end of the Warlord Period, when a Nationalist party-state had established de jure authority over all of China, Tai Shuangqiu 邵爽秋 (1897–1976) reviewed the development and impact of these campaigns in his 1929 book *Miaochan xingxue wenti* 廟產興學問題 (The question of establishing schools with religious property).<sup>12</sup> Where prominent

<sup>10</sup> Clarence H. Hamilton, “Religion and the New Culture Movement in China,” *The Journal of Religion* 1.3 (May 1921): 225–232; 「科學的而非想像的」, Chen Duxiu, “Jinggao qingnian” 敬告青年, *Xin Qingnian* 新青年 1.1 (1915), 1–6.

<sup>11</sup> Katz, “Superstition and Its Discontents,” 638–641.

<sup>12</sup> Tai Shuangqiu 邵爽秋, *Miaochan xingxue wenti* 廟產興學問題 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shubao liutongshe, 1929). Tai was not a neutral party in the history of *miaochan xingxue*. Just one year earlier in 1928 he had energetically advocated taking a similar approach for the department of education in

Buddhists and Buddhist monastic institutions are cited in the volume, they actually appear in support of the movement, arguing that heterodox religious sites ought to be transformed into schools, while Buddhist institutions need not be targeted, as they would establish their own schools for monastic and public education. The core argument in many of the Buddhist voices quoted in the volume is that the state need not intervene into reforming Buddhism for the sake of education; Buddhists would undertake reforms themselves as enthusiastic supporters of modernization.

Indeed many of the reforms undertaken by Chinese Buddhists in the early Republic, changes that were later seen as hallmarks of the Buddhist “revival,” were in direct response to real and perceived threats from state intervention. In recent years scholars have revisited this important period and have started to critically question the exact nature of this putative revival and the developments associated with it.<sup>13</sup> These reforms can be placed into three broad categories: organizational, with the founding of dozens of religious associations and branch offices; publishing, with the production of scriptural texts, Buddhist periodicals, and monographs; and educational, with the establishment of Buddhist seminaries and public schools for local children. Of these, lay Buddhists assumed leading roles in both the new Buddhist associations and nearly all of the major publication institutions, but it was in the last group of innovations where monastics led the way. The first such school, the Universal Sangha Study Hall (Putong seng xuetang 普通僧學堂), was founded at Yangzhou Tianning Monastery 揚州天寧寺 in 1906, and in the four decades that followed more than two dozen monastic schools, eventually termed Buddhist seminaries (*Foxue yuan* 佛學院), appeared in China.<sup>14</sup> Although most were short-lived, they exerted an enormous influence through the student-monks that they produced and who went on to work in monasteries across China. Chinese Buddhist monasteries had always

the new Nanjing government. Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 161.

<sup>13</sup> See the articles in “Revisiting the Revival: Holmes Welch and the Study of Buddhism in Twentieth-Century China,” Erik Hammerstrom and Gregory Adam Scott, eds., special issue, *Studies in Chinese Religions* 3.3 (September 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 12–13; Shi Dongchu 釋東初, “Zhongguo Fojiao jindai shi” 中國佛教近代史, in *Dongchu laoren quanji* 東初老人全集 (Taipei: Dongchu chubanshe, 1974), 1:78–79; Rongdao Lai, “Praying for the Republic” These strategies of setting up schools within Buddhist monasteries as a defense against state intervention were not limited to China; see Alicia Turner, “Religion Making and Its Failures: Turning Monasteries into Schools and Buddhism into a Religion in Colonial Burma,” in *Secularism and Religion-Making*, ed. Arvind Mandair and Markus Dressler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 226–242.

incorporated an educational aspect, training monks and nuns in religious rituals and scriptural knowledge, but now this function was formalized and organized along the lines of modern education, with many seminaries incorporating modern subjects such as foreign languages and science into their curriculum. In doing so they countered the charges of *miaochan xingxue* supporters that religious institutions contributed nothing to the modern state; monasteries would train monks to be educated citizens. This period is thus one in which the Republican state, fragmented into warlord-led regimes as it was, worked to penetrate local sites of religious activity, and in which Chinese Buddhists and others actively worked to meet the new impulses of state-directed education in order to maintain their autonomy and to avoid being swept away in the wave of reform and modernization. As the two focus sites now examined will illustrate, this back and forth played a central role in shaping how monastery reconstructions were undertaken during this period of revolution.

### Tianning Monastery 天寧寺, Changzhou 常州

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Translation:	Heaven's Tranquility Monastery
Location:	Changzhou 常州, Jiangsu 江蘇; 31.773, 119.969
Alternate Names:	Guangfu 廣福寺; Tian'an 天安寺
Authority Index:	PL000000009706
Damaged/Destroyed:	c. 1860
Repaired/Rebuilt:	1865–1904, main buildings 1896–1904

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The city of Changzhou 常州 in Jiangsu is an important commercial entrepôt located in the heart of the prosperous Jiangnan region on the Grand Canal between Zhenjiang and Wuxi 無錫. Although it had escaped destruction for the first decade of the Taiping War, on May 26, 1860, it was taken by Taiping forces.<sup>15</sup> As in other cities captured by Taiping armies, religious structures in Changzhou suffered greatly from both intentional and collateral damage. When the city fell, the two co-abbots of Tianning Monastery 天寧寺, located

<sup>15</sup> Bruce A. Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 53.

just outside the eastern city wall, fled the area and the monastery was completely destroyed.<sup>16</sup> After the city was recaptured by Qing forces in May 1864, the two abbots returned and initiated a reconstruction campaign that saw most of the monastery structures rebuilt over the following seventeen years. In contrast to Jiangtian Monastery in nearby Zhenjiang, however, the leaders of Tianning never sought support from regional or national elites for their reconstruction efforts and instead had to raise funds from local patrons. Perhaps in part due to limitations in available funds, some of the most important structural elements along the central axis of the monastery remained in ruins during this first phase, including the geographic and ritual heart of the site, the Great Hero (Buddha) Hall (Daxiong dian 大雄殿). It would be several decades before a campaign was started to have these key buildings rebuilt. By this time, however, the social, political, and cultural landscape of China had begun to change radically, and new ideological and legal movements were underway that would threaten the very survival of religious institutions in modern China.<sup>17</sup> The late-Qing reconstruction of Tianning Monastery was, like those of a generation earlier, intended to replace structures that had been lost during the Taiping War, but during this latter reconstruction phase of Tianning Monastery, from 1896 to 1904, the shifting ideological landscape in China had started to substantially alter the conditions surrounding religious reconstruction. It ended up threatening the completion of its most central structure and prompted the addition of new institutions and new types of activities to the monasterial complex.

Tianning Monastery, which would occupy an area of approximately 17.7 acres by the beginning of the Republic, traces its roots back to a structure built in the seventh century CE. Most of the buildings that were extant on the site in 1860 had been reconstructed as recently as the Qianlong era (1735–1796).<sup>18</sup> Tianning was well known as a center for the cultivation of the Linji 臨濟 branch of Chan 禪, the result of a transmission from Daxiao Shiche 大曉實徹 (1685–1757; A013468) of Jinshan in the early eighteenth

<sup>16</sup> 「咸豐庚申，粵逆肆亂，蕩為灰燼。」 Pu Yicheng 濮一乘, *Wujin Tianning si zhi* 武進天寧寺志 (digital edition, <<http://dev.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/ui.html?book=g035>>, 1948), 139. There is another local gazetteer, *Guangxu Wujin Yanghu xian zhi* 光緒武進陽湖縣志, that was first carved in 1879 and later updated in 1906, but it contains nearly no information about Tianning Monastery or indeed about local religious institutions in general.

<sup>17</sup> Some of these are outlined in the previous section.

<sup>18</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 15–16.

century.<sup>19</sup> In 1860 it was led by two abbots, both Dharma heirs of Xueyan Wujie 雪岩悟潔 (fl. 1830s–1850s; A031380) and heirs to the lineage of Shiche. The first, Puneng Zhensong 普能真嵩 (1794–1868; A000958), had come to Tianning in 1845 and soon afterward had received Dharma transmission from Wujie. The second, Dingnian Zhenchan 定念真禪 (1807–1875; A021868), had been ordained at the age of thirty and had practiced for several months before attaining insight, after which he traveled widely and eventually settled at Tianning where he received transmission and was appointed precentor (*weina* 維那).<sup>20</sup> In 1852 Wujie retired from the position of abbot and appointed both Zhensong and Zhenchan as co-abbots, citing the example of the renowned Chan master Yunmen 雲門 (864–949 CE), who appointed a pair of disciples to replace him as abbot, saying “with two banners standing side to side, their reputation will sound throughout the realm.”<sup>21</sup> For the next eight years the two together led the Tianning monastic community.

With the fall of Changzhou in 1860, Zhensong and Zhenchan both fled the city. Zhensong went north of the Yangtze river, traveling to Dongtai 東台 and Juegang 掘港, while Zhenchan went to the Zhongnan mountains in Shaanxi where he lived in a reed hut. In 1865, a year after the city had been recaptured by the Qing, “little by little the monks of the monastery began to return,” and in 1866 Zhensong arrived back at the ruined site.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps due to ill health, as he was to die two years later, Zhensong invited his Dharma-brother Zhenchan to return as well to Tianning Monastery and take up the position of sole abbot. After doing so, Zhenchan initiated a reconstruction program that would last from 1868 to 1874, which resulted in the rebuilding of thirty-nine structures totaling 159 bay-spans (*ying* 楹) in size.<sup>23</sup> After Zhenchan died in 1875, he was succeeded as abbot by Qingguang Qingzong 青光清宗 (fl. 1870s; A031381), but Qingzong left after only four years in the position to take up the abbacy of Chanyuan Monastery 禪源寺 on Tianmu shan 天目山.<sup>24</sup> In 1879 Shanjing Qingru

<sup>19</sup> Yu Lingbo 于凌波, “Changzhou Tianning si Shi Yekai zhuan,” 常州天寧寺釋治開傳 in *Minguo gaoseng zhuan (chubian)* 民國高僧傳(初編), by Yu Lingbo (Taipei: Zhaoming, 2000), 39.

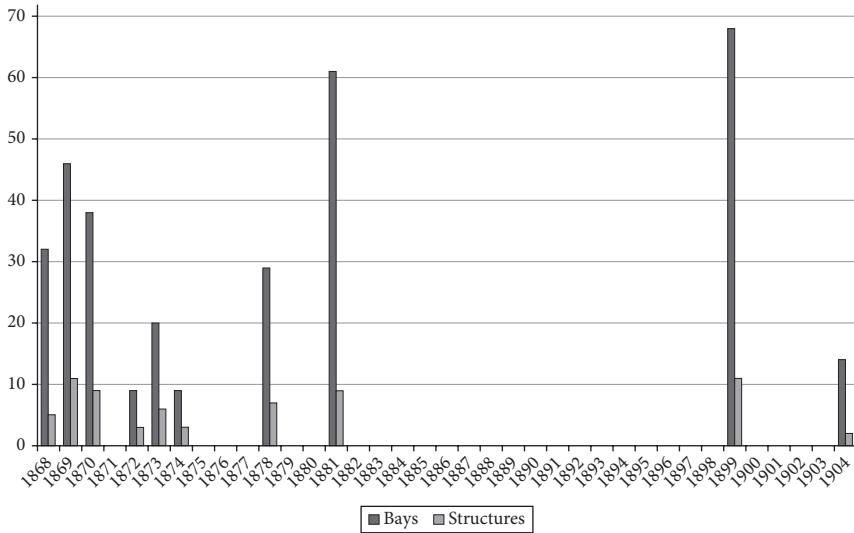
<sup>20</sup> Xiao Shuling 蕭淑玲, “Qingdai Linji zong sanda conglin fapai luèshu” 〈清代臨濟宗三大叢林法脈略疏〉, *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 2 (2006): 169.

<sup>21</sup> 「雙幢並峙，聲華籍籍」 Cited in Xiao, “Qingdai Linji zong,” 169.

<sup>22</sup> Xiao, “Qingdai Linji zong,” 169; Zhenchan 真禪, “Puneng faxiong xinglue” 普能法兄行略, in Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 222; Lu Dinghan 陸鼎翰, “Dingnian heshang ta’ming” 定念和尚塔銘, in Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 213. Quoted passage is from the latter source, Zhenchan’s stupa inscription: 「寺僧稍稍歸集」.

<sup>23</sup> Date based on Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 20–33.

<sup>24</sup> Xiao, “Qingdai Linji zong,” 169.



**Figure 2.1** Number of structures and bays reconstructed by year at Tianning Monastery

善淨清如 (1822–1896) was invited to become abbot of Tianning, a position he would hold for the next seventeen years. Qingru had been ordained at Baohua shan 寶華山 and had traveled widely before settling at Jinshan. When Zhenjiang was taken by Taiping forces in 1853 he too had fled the conflict, heading to Dinghui Monastery 定慧寺 in his hometown of Rugao 如皋. While in his own exile from Tianning, Zhensong had visited Dinghui Monastery while traveling in the area and had given Qingru his Dharma transmission. After Qingzong left Tianning Monastery in 1875, Qingru was invited to come to Tianning Monastery to become its new abbot.<sup>25</sup> Under Qingru, Tianning Monastery began a new period of reconstruction, with twenty-one structures totaling 124 bay-widths rebuilt under his leadership between 1878 and 1881 (figure 2.1).<sup>26</sup>

Thus under the leadership of two capable abbots, Tianning Monastery had been substantially reconstructed within about a generation after its destruction in 1860. During the first phase of reconstruction under Zhenchan

<sup>25</sup> Xiao, “Qingdai Linji zong,” 169.

<sup>26</sup> Year indicates when reconstruction was completed; many projects spanned multiple years between their initiation and completion. Structures with no specific date of completion have not been included in this data, meaning that the totals will be less than those described in the main text.

from 1868 to 1874, the structures that were rebuilt were mostly those essential to the day-to-day operation of the monastery, including storerooms, lay and monastic guest quarters, and the bathhouse. Smaller ritual spaces were also rebuilt, such as a Merit-Generation Hall (*gongde tang* 功德堂) and a Scripture Recitation Hall (*songjing lou* 誦經樓). In the second phase under Qingru, additional practical and ritual spaces were rebuilt, including a thirty-one-bay-width storehouse (*cangfang* 倉房), a dormitory for workmen employed at the monastery (*gongren liao* 工人寮), and several ritual halls. From 1882 up to just after Qingru's death in 1896, however, there was a lengthy period in which no reconstructions were completed. During this time several of the most important structures on the central axis of the monastery, chief among them the Buddha Hall, remained in ruins. Their reconstruction would only be initiated by the third post-Taiping abbot of Tianning Monastery, but by this time the social conditions in the locality and those of China more broadly had begun to shift, a shift that would impact this final phase of reconstructing Tianning. From about 1898 Buddhist monasteries were entering a new era of social and political conditions that would have a substantial impact on their material survival.

### Yekai Qingrong and the 1899–1904 Reconstruction of Tianning Monastery

Yekai Qingrong 冶開清鎔 (1852–1923; A019707) was originally from Yangzhou 揚州, and at the age of eleven *sui* was sent by his parents to Jiuhua shan Monastery 九華山寺 in Zhenjiang to be tonsured. He received his novice ordination one year later and full ordination at seventeen *sui*, after which he traveled, visiting monasteries throughout Eastern China. In 1871 he arrived at Tianning Monastery in Changzhou, which at the time was undergoing reconstruction under the leadership of its abbot, Zhenchan. The abbot recognized Yekai's potential and elected to give him personal instruction. After just over a year Yekai experienced an insight that was confirmed by Zhenchan, and Yekai was formally recognized as his Dharma heir and later confirmed as the forty-first patriarch of the Linji branch of Chan.<sup>27</sup> When Zhenchan died in 1875, Yekai left Tianning Monastery, first spending

<sup>27</sup> Yu, "Changzhou Tianning si Shi Yekai zhuan," 40–41; Xiao, "Qingdai Linji zong," 169. For a discussion of Dharma transmission at Tianning Monastery and the selection of abbots during this period, see Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, appendix 6, 450–453.



five years at the recently reconstructed Jinshan in Zhenjiang and then visiting famous Buddhist mountains around China. He ended up living for a time in the Zhongnan mountains in Shaanxi province, a well-known abode of hermits and ascetics, where he practiced in a reed hut. At that time several other Buddhist monks were in the mountains, including Xuyun 虛雲 (1864–1959; A004818), who would himself later become well known for reconstructing monasteries.<sup>28</sup>

In 1889 Yekai emerged from the mountains and returned to Tianning Monastery, at a time when Shanjing Qingru was the abbot.<sup>29</sup> Thirty years Yekai's senior but a fellow student of Zhenchan, Qingru had led Tianning Monastery's second major post-Taiping reconstruction from 1878 to 1881, but the reconstruction as a whole remained unfinished, with several of the most ritually important structures still needing to be rebuilt. Upon his return to Tianning, Yekai made a vow to complete its reconstruction and assisted Qingru in a decade-long fundraising campaign. When Qingru died partway through the campaign, Yekai was appointed abbot of Tianning Monastery, continuing to fundraise and initiating a final reconstruction campaign intended to restore Tianning to its pre-Taiping scale. Eleven major structures would be rebuilt by 1899, including the Meditation Hall 禪堂, shrine halls for the bodhisattvas Wenshu, Puxian, Guanyin, and Dixian, and a massive twenty-six-bay-width Luohan Hall.<sup>30</sup> While these structures were of immense ritual importance, there still remained the task of rebuilding the Great Hall, the ritual and structural heart of the monastery complex.

The rebuilding of the Great Hall began soon after Yekai ascended as abbot of Tianning Monastery in 1896, but the work quickly came to a halt and was delayed by three years in an incident that not only reflects longstanding rivalries between ideological institutions in Chinese society but also portends new pressures and power dynamics that were only just emerging to threaten the revival and survival of Buddhist monasteries. The introduction to the 1947 monastery gazetteer gives us a broad outline of the incident:

<sup>28</sup> Yu, *Minguo gaoseng zhuan (chubian)*, 41–42. The 1864 year of birth for Xuyun has been suggested by Campo, *La construction de la sainteté dans la Chine moderne*.

<sup>29</sup> Few biographical accounts give the exact date of his return to Tianning, and some sources such as Xiao Shuling give Guangxu 17 (1891) as the date. One biography, originally from the *Xin xu gaoseng zhuan* 新續高僧傳 (1923), states that Yekai was thirty-eight *sui* at the time of his return, which would make the year 1889. 清常州天寧寺沙門釋清鎔傳, in Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 223.

<sup>30</sup> Weikuan Xianche, "Yekai Rong chanshi xingshu" 冶開鎔禪師行述, in Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 237. Xianche mentions that Yekai had the help of two monastics, 高朗[?]月 and 有乾[?]宗, but I have not been able to trace their identities.



In 1896 [Yekai] Qingrong became abbot. Construction work started on the Great Hall, but among the local people there were those who thought that the hall should not be built taller [than the Confucian academy], and work on it was halted. In the end, it was found that important sites dedicated to the Sage and ordinary monastery buildings were different [types of places]. Furthermore, in the statutes and laws there was no text stating that Buddhist halls could not be taller than Confucian halls. What's more, the monastery is outside of the city walls, far from the Confucian school, and would have no negative impact on it. Yet going through the mediation of local gentry took another three years until these false notions were finally laid to rest. It wasn't until 1899 that work on the Great Hall could continue.<sup>31</sup>

The local Confucian academy in Changzhou is the Hall of Great Completion (*dacheng dian* 大成殿), one component of the city's Literary Shrine (*wenmiao* 文廟), originally built in the Southern Song dynasty and itself reconstructed in 1867 after being damaged in the Taiping War. Similar types of disputes between local cultural and religious institutions can be found throughout Chinese history, but a number of elements appear odd about this particular incident: for one thing, by the time the dispute emerged the reconstruction of Tianning Monastery had already been under way, off and on, for some twenty-eight years, but no objections had yet been raised. Work on the hall itself had already commenced more than a year before the incident. Finally, about 689 yard separate the two structures, and Tianning at the time was located outside of the city proper, separated from the city walls by a river, so the argument that it would overshadow the academy in some way is suspicious.<sup>32</sup>

As work on the Great Hall came to a standstill, with just the foundation and main structural columns in place, Yekai arranged to have the dispute

<sup>31</sup> 「廿二年丙申，清鎔繼席，大殿開工，而邑人有以寺殿過高[尼?]之者，幾中輟矣。卒以祝聖重地與尋常寺宇不同，并憑會典、律例，均無佛殿不准高於大成殿明文，而寺又在城外，距黉宮尚遠，無所妨礙；更經邑紳排解，往復三年，浮議始息。逮二十五年己亥，大殿乃克興作。」 Punctuation added. Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 19. This incident is also described in a biography of Yekai written by one of his disciples some time after Yekai's death in 1923: 「及興工，飛甍百尺，邑士夫以為陵駕夫子廟堂，阻之甚力。師持以堅忍，無片語相爭，徐請長老出為排解，良久，工卒竟。」 Xianche, "Yekai Rong chanshi xingshu," in Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 237.

<sup>32</sup> This and other details about the dispute are based on "Yishen yifu Tiantian si dadian gongcheng zhangchi chenwen" 邑紳議復天寧寺大殿工程丈尺呈文 in Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 371–373. The emergence of the dispute at this time raises a question: might it have had something to do with local opposition to Yekai's leadership? He had just taken over as abbot the previous year, and local elites, perhaps including the heads of the Confucian academy, might have favored a different candidate.

mediated by a number of local gentry.<sup>33</sup> A report dated April or May of 1899 and later included in the monastery gazetteer describes in detail the context of the dispute, the mediators' judgment, and their reasoning for reaching it. The report notes the long history of Tianning Monastery, its destruction in 1860, the difficulties it faced during its long period of reconstruction due to limited funds for materials, and the thirty-year-long fundraising campaign. Before the reconstruction of the Great Hall began in 1896 the local gentry of Changzhou were consulted on the planned structure, and it was determined that since the foundations of the original buildings were still extant, there was no question about what the height of the columns ought to be, since Qing building regulations stipulated that the dimensions of the foundations would determine the total height of the structure built upon them.<sup>34</sup>

After about a year of work the columns for the Great Hall were erected, and there were some who, upon seeing them, complained that they were too tall. When the gentry were brought in to investigate, they proceeded from the principle that the depth and total height of structures should be about equal. The Confucian academy was found to be 5.3 *zhang* (丈) deep and its roof ridge was 5.6 *zhang* high, giving a "lofty" impression.<sup>35</sup> The extant foundations for the Great Hall of Tianning Monastery, meanwhile, were 8.5 *zhang* deep, so the highest point on its roof ought to be built to a little more than 8 *zhang* in height. If the roof ridge were built 1 *zhang* taller than the current height of the columns, this would mean that the dimensions would be in good proportion. The monastics, not wanting to waste labor and materials by initially cutting the columns too long, had originally consulted several stele inscriptions that recorded their previous height at 7.2 *zhang* and had had them cut to this length. The mediating gentry determined that since the columns had already been erected, they could not now be changed, and since the main hall was the location of a stele dedicated to the longevity of the emperor, it had the potential of producing auspiciousness, not harm. They thus ordered that the workers build the roof ridge no higher than 0.8 *zhang* above

<sup>33</sup> I have been able to find basic biographical data for only one: Liu Yichen 劉翊宸 (1818–1910). Harvard University, Academia Sinica, and Peking University, *China Biographical Database* (September 2018), person ID 0075268, <<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cbdb>>.

<sup>34</sup> The authority for structural regulations cited later in the report is the *Da Qing huidian* 大清會典 [Legal Code of the Great Qing]. (digital edition, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=209451>).

<sup>35</sup> At this time the standard *zhang* was approximately equal to 10.5 feet. See Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asian Center, 2015), 555–556.

the column height, for a total height of 8 *zhang*, and they drafted an outline of the building's dimensions as proof that it was to code.<sup>36</sup>

Just as it seemed like the dispute had been definitively resolved, there were a number of local gentry who submitted a petition to order the monastery to stop any further reconstruction work, quoting slogans such as "If temple halls are built too tall, then the discourses of the scholars will not be consulted."<sup>37</sup> The mediators consulted all the involved parties and again proposed a resolution based on the following determinations, paraphrased here with my own reflections added after each:

- 1) In the Great Qing Legal Code there is nothing stating that Buddhist monasteries cannot be built taller than Confucian academies; in the capital and in the provinces there are temples that are tens of *zhang* in height. Furthermore, ritual spaces for the worship of the sages and ordinary temples are different types of structures, and nobody would deem the former less important than the latter. [This would seem to argue against the core argument of the petitioners regarding the impropriety of Tianning Monastery being built taller than the academy.]
- 2) The academy is within the city limits and the monastery is outside of them, so the monastery ought to have no ill effect on the academy. [This suggests that proximity was important when determining whether structures might have a negative geomantic impact.]
- 3) If the monastics were ordered to cut their materials shorter, not only would it make some of the prepared materials useless, if the work were to have to be halted at this point because of this, there would be no way of convincing them to do so. [This is a pragmatic viewpoint that recognizes the advanced stage of reconstruction.]
- 4) Among the local gentry there are those who have donated to support this reconstruction, and it would be difficult to avoid displeasing them; meanwhile the commoners who are doing the work are easily brought to disputes. [There are other local parties with a vested interest in seeing the reconstruction continue to conclusion.]
- 5) The location of the monastery is of geomantic importance: Changzhou is known as the "Dragon City" with the southeastern district being

<sup>36</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 371–372.

<sup>37</sup> 「寺殿過高、土論未洽」 Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 372. Three of the gentry who submitted the petition were Shen Xiejia 沈燮嘉 (*gongsheng*), author of a Shen family history 毗陵沈氏宗譜四卷 in 1904; Cao Xiejun 曹燮鈞 (*juren*); and Xue Nianzu 薛念祖 ([*juren*?]).

the “head” of the dragon, and in the past the main hall of the monastery had been rebuilt precisely to help lend protection and strength to this area. The report authors also cite an instance when in the Jiaqing era a structure was destroyed in the area, and while before this the region had produced many top exam scholars, afterward there were only a handful. The height of this hall would have no negative impact on geomantic energies, and in fact would have a positive impact on the region’s future exam results. [Thus having a ritually important structure located in this part of Changzhou would be supportive of the future good fortune of the entire area.]

- 6) Finally, scholars intend to revere the sage [Confucius], and their intentions are appropriate; these monastics intend to revere the ruler [the Emperor], and this principle too is proper. [The monastics are not engaged in anything improper.]

Some of the final observations of the report praise the importance of the reconstruction work at the monastery and minimize the fault of the monastics who had led the work:

Those who work toward reconstruction do so in order to repay the kindness of the nation’s protection and care; those who work vigorously for scholarly success, they bathe themselves in the pond of the sages’ education. In terms of sentiment and in terms of principle, both are equally complete, one cannot be partial to either one. In spite of material difficulties, the monastics of this monastery steadfastly set their minds to a project that was certainly not an easy one. Although before work had begun they had not consulted the scholars and gentry of the locality as to details about building regulations, they did have historical and stele inscription records that were followed. They may have erred in a small way, but they certainly did not intend to build too large a structure with an overly magnificent appearance.<sup>38</sup>

In the end, they had to modify their original resolution in order to pacify the scholars who had lodged the petition. They thus ordered that the roof ridge of the Great Hall be built to a total height of no more than 7.8 *zhang*,

<sup>38</sup> 「力圖興復，因報國家覆育之恩；奮志功名，亦沐列聖栽培之澤。於情於理，似宜兼全，未可偏執。況物力維艱，該寺僧苦志經營，殊非易易，雖其動工以前未經普請在郡士紳詳定重建規制，但以舊志碑記謂可依據，稍涉疏忽，尚非有意侈大以壯觀瞻。」 Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 373.

only 0.2 *zhang* lower than that specified in the earlier determination. Thus the already-erected columns would not have to be recut, and the work and materials already undertaken would not be wasted.

I believe that this incident, which delayed the completion of the Great Hall for several years and nearly cost the monastery a great deal in additional labor and materials, is best understood as a conflict over power: social power, geomantic power, and the cultural power of authority and prestige. The new Great Hall was not intended to be larger or grander than the structure that had stood on its foundations prior to the Taiping War. Yet the re-emergence of Tianning Monastery after many decades of being in an incomplete state came at just the same time when the future of local Confucian academies as educational institutions was under serious threat. The last decade of the Qing saw the first wave of educational reform and the spread of modern-style schools, leading toward the new educational systems of the Republic. The social influence of the local academy, its leaders, and those who had gained their position through the education system that it had supported was on the wane, thus it is likely that they responded defensively to the notion that the Great Hall of Tianning Monastery would overshadow—in dimensional terms, if not literally—the Confucian shrine. The substantial impact that the reconstruction of Tianning Monastery had on the local elite of Changzhou reminds us of the power that Buddhist monasteries continued to hold, power that could threaten established “orthodox” institutions such as the Confucian shrine. Yet it is also an early indication of how the power dynamics of Chinese society were changing—with the educational role of the academies disappearing, and the same new education system threatening religious institutions elsewhere through *miaochan xingxue* movements.

The Vajra Hall 金剛殿 and the Great Hall of Tianning Monastery, both seven bays in width, were finally completed in 1904. These two structures together restored the central ritual axis of the site: the Main Gate, Hall of the Heavenly Kings, Vajra Hall, and Main Hall. The result was a complex with over six hundred bay-widths of structures, with its rent-producing land increased from just over 1,500 *mu* to more than 8,000 *mu*.<sup>39</sup> This latter expansion of the monastery’s land was essential to ensuring the long-term fiscal health of the community and its ability to support its resident monks and the continued operation of the newly reconstructed structures. Movements

<sup>39</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 20; Xiao, “Qingdai Linji zong,” 169; Yu, *Minguo gaoseng zhuan (chubian)*, 43.

under the banner of *miaochan xingxue* were then just beginning to sweep across China, but as in this case most larger Buddhist monasteries were normally able to mount effective defenses against any move to seize their property or restrict their reconstruction. They did so by using local elite support, appealing to historical precedent, and also by adapting to the new conditions of the age.

### New Institutions at Tianning Monastery

In the previous chapter we saw how the reconstruction of Jiangtian Monastery on Jinshan involved the addition of new structures with new functions, structures that had never been part of the historical complex but were newly built as part of the reconstruction campaign. At Tianning Monastery, not long after the dispute over the Great Hall had been resolved but before the hall itself had been completed, two major new institutions were established, both of which would eventually occupy their own newly built spaces. Both were examples of important new types of Buddhist institutions that would become crucially important in China in the early twentieth century, and both were established with the help of Yekai's student Weikuan Xianche 惟寬顯徹 (1868–1937; A042189), who would later take over as abbot of Tianning Monastery. Weikuan's family was from Tai county 泰縣 in Jiangsu, within the area of Jiangbei 江北 called the Cradle of Monks and linked to Jinshan through its substantial land holdings there.<sup>40</sup> He was ordained in around 1887 and took the precepts at Baohua shan, after which he traveled to monasteries around the lower Yangtze river delta. He arrived at Tianning Monastery in Changzhou in 1897, right in the midst of the dispute over rebuilding the Great Hall previously discussed.<sup>41</sup> Weikuan reportedly took to Yekai's teaching quickly and received from him a prediction of future enlightenment. He was placed in charge of the Administration Hall (*kufang* 庫房) and helped with miscellaneous matters for the Guest Hall (*ketang* 客堂); both were vital to the smooth operation of Tianning Monastery.<sup>42</sup> In 1906 Yekai retired from his position as abbot due to illness,

<sup>40</sup> See Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 5, 255–257.

<sup>41</sup> His biography states that he was ordained for a total of fifty-one years and lived at Tianning for forty years, so based on the date of his death I have extrapolated these dates.

<sup>42</sup> This account is based on the two biographies included in Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*: “Weikuan Che chanshi ta'ming” 惟寬徹禪師塔銘 by Pu Yisheng 濮一乘, and “Weikuan chanshi yixiang tizhi”

and Weikuan's Dharma-brother Mingqing Xiankuan 明鏡顯寬 (A042190) was appointed abbot, but he too left the post in around 1910 and Weikuan was appointed abbot, a position he would hold until 1928.<sup>43</sup> It was in these roles that Weikuan would play an important part in the establishment and operation of two new institutions added to the monastery as part of its reconstruction under Yekai.<sup>44</sup>

The Piling Scriptural Press 毗陵刻經處 was established at Tianning Monastery in about 1901.<sup>45</sup> Chinese Buddhist monasteries had long had in-house scriptoriums (often called *jingfang* 經房) that carved woodblocks and printed copies of religious texts, but dedicated scriptural presses were a new type of Buddhist print institution and a relatively recent innovation. They were often established by laypeople outside of monasteries, had their own publishing catalogues, and were often also linked into national distribution networks. The first of these to appear was the Jinling Scriptural Press 金陵刻經處, founded in 1866 by Yang Wenhui, but it was only established in a permanent building in Nanjing in 1897, just a few years prior to foundation of the Piling press. Several more scriptural presses and distributors would be established in China in the first few decades of the twentieth century, and they would print and distribute tens of thousands of Buddhist publications during the period of the Republic.<sup>46</sup> Tianning Monastery already had a scriptorium (in this case called a *shuajing lou* 刷經樓) on site, originally built during the Qianlong era (1736–1795), and the structure in which it was located had been reconstructed under the leadership of Zhenchan in 1869.<sup>47</sup> One of Yekai's tonsure disciples, Xingshi 行實, was then working at the Jinling Scriptural Press and, owing to Yang Wenhui's then advanced age, asked Yekai if he would establish a press in order to continue the great work of printing the entire Buddhist canon. Weikuan and his Dharma-brother Yingci 應慈

惟寬禪師遺像題誌 by Wu Jingyu 吳鏡予, 239–246. Weikuan's arrival at Tianning in 1897 is indicated by accounts saying that he stayed at Tianning for forty years; he died there in 1937.

<sup>43</sup> Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 450–453.

<sup>44</sup> Yekai would continue to be active after his retirement, going on to gain renown as a rebuilder of monasteries. In the early Republic he assisted with the reconstruction of the Main Hall of Lingyin Monastery 靈隱寺 in Hangzhou 杭州. Yu, "Changzhou Tianning si Shi Yekai zhuan," 45.

<sup>45</sup> Mentioned in Jan Kiely, "Spreading the Dharma with the Mechanized Press," in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, Circa 1800 to 2008*, ed. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 188–189. The press was also referred to as the Changzhou Tianning Monastery Scriptural Press 常州天寧寺刻經處.

<sup>46</sup> Scott, "Absolutely Not a Business." Nearly all the presses that survived the Second Sino-Japanese War were closed in the early years of the People's Republic, and their printing blocks were consolidated in Jinling, which remained open until 1966.

<sup>47</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 29.



(1873–1965; A019766) were tasked with setting up the Piling Scriptural Press, Piling 毗陵 being a former name for Changzhou and nicely evocative of the use of Jinling 金陵 for the original press founded in Nanjing.<sup>48</sup> The press was placed under the management of the Guest Hall, and Weikuan worked as editor, checking the accuracy of manuscripts before they were to be carved onto wooden printing blocks.<sup>49</sup>

Yang Wenhui had long intended to print a new complete edition of the Buddhist scriptural canon, but the sheer enormity of this task had frustrated his efforts. In 1903, Yekai and two other abbots sent a memorial to the Qing court requesting that the Bailin Monastery 柏林寺 reprint a complete edition of the Buddhist canon for each of their monasteries, as although each of them was an ancient public monastery, none had a complete edition in their scriptural libraries.<sup>50</sup> In 1913 a publication catalogue for the Piling press appeared in the Buddhist periodical *Foxue congbao* (Buddhist miscellany), but a complete scriptural canon was not then on offer, perhaps because a new edition, *Pinjia da zangjing* 頻伽大藏經 (The Kalaviṅka canon), had just then been completed in Shanghai using movable type.<sup>51</sup> Instead the catalogue lists 160 volumes, many of which are comprised of two or more titles, a total of 1,129 fascicles, indexed by scriptural case according to the Thousand Character Text system, and each with a purchase price given in silver dollars (*yangqian* 洋錢).<sup>52</sup> It was a far cry from the 1,917 titles and 8,415 fascicles of the 1913 *Pinjia da zangjing*, but here each volume could be purchased separately with prices ranging from one dime to a few dollars, whereas the canon was intended to be bought as a complete set, with an initial discounted price of two hundred dollars, about a year and half of income for a skilled laborer in the capital at the time. Scriptural presses in China did not disappear after the publication of the canon in Shanghai, but rather they continued to thrive, providing individual scriptural volumes for readers through independent,

<sup>48</sup> In both cases the use of poetic, historical place names was likely intended to evoke the perception of the presses as being cultured, literary institutions.

<sup>49</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 240.

<sup>50</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 375. As far as I am aware this plan was never enacted.

<sup>51</sup> Gregory Adam Scott, “The Canon as a Consumer Good: The Pinjia Canon and the Changing Role of the Buddhist Canon in Modern China,” in *Reinventing the Tripitaka: Transformation of the Buddhist Canon in Modern East Asia*, ed. Jiang Wu and Gregory Wilkinson (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 95–125.

<sup>52</sup> “Changzhou Tianning si kejing chu shumu” 長州天寧寺刻經處書目, *Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報 7, June 1, 1913, in MFQ 3:145–148. The same catalogue appears again in the following issue, reprinted in MFQ 3:309–312. The fascicle (*juan* 卷) has no fixed character or page length but is roughly equal to a chapter-length. Each case in the scriptural canon was labeled with a character from the Thousand Character Text, similar in function to an alphabetical ordering system.



national distribution networks, and later through Buddhist bookstores. The Piling Scriptural Press was among the most prolific of these, producing at least known 549 volumes.<sup>53</sup>

The second new institution at Tianning Monastery was also established in 1901, as a private primary school for local children. Yekai is credited with founding the school to provide education to local students who otherwise might not have the opportunity to study, and as with the scriptural press, Weikuan was placed in effective control of its operation. In 1911 then-abbot Xiankuan renamed it from “Private School” (*sishu* 私塾) to the Tianning Junior Primary School 天寧初級小學校, reflecting the spread of the standardized education system in China at the very end of the Qing.<sup>54</sup> In 1920 Weikuan, then abbot of Tianning, established a Vinaya Academy (*xuejie tang* 學戒堂) within the primary school, with a three-year program of classes especially designed for monastic education. Pu Yisheng 濮一乘 (fl. 1910s–1940s), the author of one of the biographies of Weikuan collected in the 1948 monastery gazetteer, interprets the conditions that led to the formation of this academy in the early Republic in this way:

The nation had changed, and customs were changing with it. Outside of the monastery, talk of “promoting education” [*xingxue* 興學] had become popular, and more and more the new arrivals made noise about it as something to be pursued. Weikuan saw that the way the world was going, it was too strong to be suppressed, and that one must prepare against the ill effects it would bring in the future. Now, among the three pure academic disciplines, the study of vinaya is first, this is what the Buddha instructed. If education does not begin with the vinaya, how could it have firm roots? If education does not end with the vinaya, how could it have proper results? Thus after he became abbot, Weikuan engaged in work to found the Tianning Vinaya Academy.<sup>55</sup>

Establishing educational institutions—both monastic institutions such as Vinaya Academies and, later, Buddhist seminaries and public primary schools for laypeople—was a widely undertaken strategy among Buddhists in

<sup>53</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 85–108.

<sup>54</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 19.

<sup>55</sup> 「國體既更，風氣隨變，方外興學之說以起，而新進者漸浮囂喜事。師以運會所趨，勢不可遏，而未來流弊現亦不可不防。夫無漏三學，戒居第一，此佛訓也。學不始於戒，何以端其本？學不終於戒，何以範其末？故繼席後，遂又有創立天寧學戒堂之舉。」 Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 240.

Republican China. Many of the educational innovators of the day, including Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947; A004819), who founded some of the largest and most important seminaries, saw education as a key plank in their program of reform designed to revitalize Buddhism in China. Yet it was also a means of participating in the broader movement to save the nation through education (*jiaoyu jiuguo* 教育救國) and to avoid the possibility of having their property and livelihoods forcibly seized for that purpose.<sup>56</sup> Considering the resistance that Tianning Monastery faced from the Changzhou Confucian academy in the late 1890s over the reconstruction of their Great Hall, and the fact that the scriptural press and private school were both founded immediately following this incident, it's likely that the pressure to provide modern-style education was an important factor in prompting the development first of the private school and the press and later of the public primary school and Vinaya Academy. Xiao Shuling argues that Tianning Monastery was indeed targeted by *miaochan xingxue* campaigners during this period but emerged unscathed; perhaps this was in part thanks to the contribution represented by these new institutions.<sup>57</sup> Indeed education was a high priority for two of Weikuan's Dharma brothers, Yuexia 月霞 (1858–1917; A019708) and Yingci, both of whom declined the abbacy of Tianning Monastery and who went on to found Avatamsaka University 華嚴大學 in Shanghai in 1914.<sup>58</sup> The scriptural press was not, strictly speaking, an educational institution, but it did work to produce the textual materials that were at the heart of monastic and lay Buddhist education, and its mission of textual production and distribution for the public good fit in well with the ideals of the modern educational movement.

During the final years of the tumultuous warlord period of the early Republic, Tianning Monastery was again caught up in a civil war. In 1924 the Jiangsu-Zhejiang War broke out between warlords in the Jiangnan region, eventually sparking the larger Second Zhili-Fengtian War. Qi Xieyuan 齊燮元 (1885–1946), then commander of the Zhili armies, advanced into Zhejiang and in around September of that year occupied Tianning Monastery for use as his headquarters. The occupation continued for some time; one report from January 1925 states that troops from the 22nd infantry division of

<sup>56</sup> On Buddhist education in Republican China see Lai, "Praying for the Republic," chap. 2, 69–117. On Taixu and his early radical approach to Buddhist reform and modernization, see Justin Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in Modern Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>57</sup> Xiao, "Qingdai Linji zong," 169–170.

<sup>58</sup> Yu, "Changzhou Tianning si Shi Yekai zhuan," 44.

the 6th army were then being moved into monastery structures, including the Luohan, Zangyin, Dizang, Puxian, and Wenshu halls.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps partly as a result of repairs undertaken after this occupation had ended, in 1925 the Vinaya Academy was moved to a newly built structure of ten bay-widths in the southwest corner of the monastery, with a scripture study hall (*zangxiu lou* 藏修樓) on the upper floor.<sup>60</sup>

In 1927 a letter to Weikuan from Chen Boda 陳伯達 (1904–1989), a secretary in the Nationalist government who that year joined the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai, was published in the Buddhist periodical *Haichao yin*.<sup>61</sup> In the letter, Chen identifies the low level of education among monastics as one of the key factors behind Buddhism's decline and claims that those people who oppose Buddhism are opposed to neither the Buddha nor the Dharma but rather the current state of the sangha in China. He argues that apart from a few exceptional monastics, most are no better than parasites or vagrants and are unable to do anything in the real world. Citing the emergence of the *miaochan xingxue* movement at the end of the Qing to back up his claims, he further compares the current state of Chinese Buddhist monasticism to the corruption and incompetence of the Manchu Qing dynasty just prior to its fall a little more than a decade previously. Chen then, based on the idea that Buddhists ought to be engaged in activities that improve the world and benefit people, has a number of concrete suggestions for Weikuan and Tianning Monastery:

The resources of your monastery are vast, and it occupies a position of leadership for the monastics of our Jiangsu [province]. Thus it seems fitting that you ought to grasp this opportunity to undertake a great Buddhist enterprise: establish schools to train specialists and general personnel, to produce masters who will preach the scriptures and discourses in order to awaken monastic and lay scholars; establish orphanages to benefit the wretched; establish medical clinics to treat the

<sup>59</sup> "Arsenal Nearly Bare of Troops," *The North-China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, September 6, 1924, 362; "Changzhou kuaixin" 常州快信, *Shenbao* 申報 18634, January 11, 1925, 7.

<sup>60</sup> Pu, *Wujin Tianning si zhi*, 19, 24, 30. Later in 1941 it would be renamed the Tianning Buddhist Seminary 天寧佛學院, adopting what had by then become the standard term for monastic educational institutions in China.

<sup>61</sup> Chen Boda 陳伯達, "Zhi Tianning si fangzhang Weikuan heshang lun xingxue jiuwang shu" 致天寧寺方丈惟寬和尚論興學救亡書, *Haichao yin* 海潮音 8.6, July 18, 1927, in MFQ 168:103–105.

bodily illnesses of sentient beings; and all types of enterprises that benefit society.<sup>62</sup>

Chen proceeds to address a number of possible objections to the notion that Buddhist monasteries ought to get involved in education, medical care, and other socially beneficial enterprises, pointing out that Buddhists in China historically were already involved in similar types of activities, and thus these modern incarnations are by no means unprecedented in Buddhist tradition. He concludes by urging Weikuan to heed his suggestions, arguing that if the sangha is not sufficiently well-educated and moral, "it will be not be enough to continue to spread the Buddhadharma, it will not be enough to protect the sangha, and it will not be enough to protect monastic property [from those who might seek to seize it to build schools]."<sup>63</sup>

Although it was published in 1927, the letter itself is unfortunately undated, so we do not know whether it was written before or after the monastery's vinaya school was re-established in its new building after the military occupation was over. Nor is it clear whether Chen Boda was aware that Tianning Monastery had already been educating local children and monastics for several years. That it appeared in the pages of *Haichao yin* at all was likely because its editor, Taixu, had long advocated for structural reform of the sangha and for greater education for monastics and laypeople alike. But Chen's letter is relevant to our examination of Tianning Monastery and its reconstruction for two reasons. First, it is a distillation of the types of criticism faced by Buddhism in China during this period: monastics who are widely seen as being uneducated social parasites, and monasteries that are seen as making no positive contributions to education and social welfare. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it also outlines the positive responses that monasteries could make to respond to these pressures: establishing schools for local people and for monastics, producing well-educated monastics who could discourse on the Buddhist teachings with learned laypeople, and supporting the sick and destitute in their locality. In the case of Tianning Monastery we have seen how as part of its reconstruction at the end of the Qing it incorporated two new institutions, the school and the scriptural press, both of which engaged in the type of educational work later advocated by Chen. New

<sup>62</sup> 「貴寺財力厚。為我蘇僧界領袖。似應乘此時機。大作佛事。設立學校以造就專門與普通人材。廣延法師。宣講經論。以開悟四眾學人。設苦兒院以濟孤苦。建醫院以治眾生身病。以及各種有益社會之事業。」 Chen, "Zhi Tianning si fangzhang," 168:104.

<sup>63</sup> Chen, "Zhi Tianning si fangzhang," 168:105.

cultural and social pressures prompted monasteries to engage in activities that were not unknown in Chinese Buddhist history, but which had never been organized or undertaken in this way. As a leading monastery in the province, the addition of educational institutions meant that the reconstruction of Tianning Monastery was also a step in the direction of reforming and renewing Buddhism's place in Chinese culture and society.<sup>64</sup>

### Qixia Monastery 棲霞寺

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Translation:	Perch of the Sun's Glow Monastery
Location:	Nanjing 南京, Jiangsu 江蘇; 32.154, 118.954
Alternate Names:	Qixia Mountain 棲霞山; Gongde Monastery 功德寺
Authority Index:	PL000000009026
Damaged/Destroyed:	c. 1853
Repaired/Rebuilt:	1919–mid-1930s

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Like thousands of other religious institutions in the Jiangnan region, Qixia Monastery 棲霞寺 was completely destroyed during the Taiping War. Located just twelve miles northeast of the walled city of Nanjing, it was razed to the ground soon after Taiping forces took the city in 1853.<sup>65</sup> After the city was recaptured by Qing forces in 1864, effectively ending the Taiping regime, the monastery remained in ruins for many decades afterward, and the only religious activity there took place within a number of small reed huts erected on the site. This long fallow period finally came to an end in 1919 when a Buddhist monk, a former revolutionary and friend of Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (1866–1925), was invited there and initiated a period of reconstruction that would last into the 1930s. The proximity of Qixia to Nanjing, however, would

<sup>64</sup> Weikuan retired from the abbacy of Tianning Monastery in 1928, right in the midst of a rent strike on the monastic land holdings that lasted from 1927 to 1929. The monastery flourished in the decades following the reconstruction, and further repairs to Tianning took place in 1954. Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 452; He Zhenkai 何振凱, “Minguo shiqi Changzhou Tianning si yanjiu” 民國時期常州天寧寺研究, *Changzhou daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 常州大學學報(社會科學版) 13.2 (April 2012): 66. Today it is known chiefly for its new pagoda, opened in 2007, which towers over the monastery and the rest of the city, currently the tallest pagoda in the world.

<sup>65</sup> Zhu Jiexuan 朱潔軒, ed., *Qixia shan zhi* 棲霞山志 (digital edition, <http://buddhistinformatics.dila.edu.tw/fosizhi/ui.html?book=g071,1962>), 72, 75n16.

have additional consequences in the new context of the Republic: in 1927 the Northern Expedition of the National Revolutionary Army (*Guomin geming jun* 國民革命軍) took Nanjing and established it as the new capital of the Republic of China, a status that was confirmed the following year with the consolidation of a shaky coalition between the Nationalists and regional warlords, beginning a period that came to be known as the Nanjing decade (1927–1937). Throughout the early Republican period, civil and military leaders in the Nationalist Party took a keen interest in the state of Qixia Monastery, personally intervening in aspects of its reconstruction. During the Republican period, as in earlier eras, the state was very much interested in trying to regulate religion and many other aspects of citizen life, and individuals in the highest strata of the state apparatus had strong personal connections to Buddhism that at times influenced their official approaches to its regulation. Newly emerging organizational technologies, ideological imperatives, and exigent threats to the nation, however, meant that during the Republican era the depth of this intervention was far beyond any previously attempted.<sup>66</sup> A new pattern of state intervention in monastery reconstruction began to emerge, one that drew upon a history of elite patronage of religious institutions, the concerns over education and contribution to society that had emerged at the end of the Qing, and new understandings of what constituted the Chinese nation in an era when it appeared to be under threat of extinction.

Qixia traces its beginnings to a structure donated in 489 CE during the short-lived southern Qi dynasty 南齊 (479–502 CE), part of a tumultuous period of disunity and civil war that saw Buddhism penetrate deeply into the Jiangnan area and elsewhere in China. The monastery remained active throughout the medieval and early modern periods, undergoing several changes of name and periods of reconstruction, and since the fourteenth century has been known as Qixia Monastery. As a result of Nanjing and the surrounding area being taken by Taiping forces, in 1853 Qixia was razed to the ground.<sup>67</sup> It would remain in ruins for over fifty years, even while other prominent sites such as Jiangtian Monastery in Zhenjiang and Tianning Monastery in Changzhou were rebuilt. The 1960s gazetteer for Qixia offers

<sup>66</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

<sup>67</sup> Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi* gives a date of 1855 for its destruction (72, 75n16), but later research has suggested the more accurate date of 1853. See Zhang Zhifeng 張智峰, “Taiping tianguo shiqi Qixia si huifei shijian kao” 〈太平天國時期棲霞寺毀廢時間考〉, *Jiangsu difang zhi zazhi* 江蘇地方志雜誌 2 (2007): 62–63.

one possible explanation for why the reconstruction of Qixia was delayed for so long:

After the founding of the Republic, this was the era when the great community of Buddhist followers [was responsible for] supporting the religion. To rebuild a monastery was not like it had been formerly, when it was as simple as a ruler or high official giving an order and the task would be done. If there were no outstandingly able monastics, who had accumulated the power of a million-strong karma, then such a result could not be attained. This is what differs in the propagation of our great teaching between now and former times. The reconstruction of Qixia was beset with great difficulties due to the conditions of the age [in which it was undertaken].<sup>68</sup>

This explanation does appear to oversimplify the shift in conditions between the Imperial and Republican periods; as we saw in the case of Jiangtian Monastery, even with the support of highly placed officials, reconstruction was not a simple task. Yet it does highlight the increased importance of having a charismatic and capable monastic leader on hand to spearhead the reconstruction, someone who could mobilize the community of lay believers to lend their support to the project during an era when leaders and officials were unlikely to do so.

In the case of Qixia Monastery, this capable leader only appeared in 1919 in the person of Zongyang 宗仰 (Huang Zhongyang 黃中央, 1861–1921; A004880), who worked to rebuild Qixia for the final two years of his life. As indicated by my inclusion of his lay name, Zongyang moved between monastic and lay identities throughout his life, seeming to adopt one or the other as it suited his purposes. Zongyang was ordained at the reconstructed Jiangtian Monastery on Jinshan in 1880 and was in line to be appointed its abbot, but in 1892 he left to take up residence on the estate of Silas Aaron Hardoon (1851–1931) and Luo Jialing 羅迦陵 (1864–1941) in Shanghai, becoming involved in reformist and revolutionary societies in the city.<sup>69</sup> After a five-year period of political exile in Japan, he returned to Hardoon Gardens and oversaw the production of a new edition of the Chinese Buddhist

<sup>68</sup> 「民國肇造後，為信眾護法時期。興建一寺，不若前代帝王宰官，頤指氣使之易，非有雄猛德化之僧，積累萬千因緣之力，不克臻此，此大教弘揚，今昔之所不同，樓霞重建，時勢之所維艱也。」Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi*, 72.

<sup>69</sup> Hardoon was then working for E. D. Sassoon & Co. and would later become one of Shanghai's richest men through land speculation. He married Luo Jialing in 1886. Luo was a Buddhist and a lay supporter of Zongyang.



scriptural canon, the *Pinjia da zangjing* 頻伽大藏經, completed in 1913.<sup>70</sup> In 1916, as Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916) tried and failed to establish himself as a new emperor and the country fragmented into the period of civil conflict known as the Warlord Period, Zongyang drifted away from revolutionary politics and tried to return to Jinshan and take up the position of abbot, but he was refused. This was reportedly because the resident monastics felt that since Zongyang had used his lay name and worn lay clothing during much of his time away from Jinshan, it would be improper for him to take on such an important and prestigious position. Blocked from becoming abbot, he instead went into sealed confinement (*biguan* 閉關) at Jinshan for three years of meditation and reflection.<sup>71</sup>

After Zongyang emerged from seclusion in 1919, he left Jinshan and was en route to visit Mount Jiuhua 九華山 in Anhui province, but when he was passing through Qixia he found it silenced. Its fields that had been donated by lay supporters were overgrown and fallow, and only a pile of broken stones remained of what had once been an exceptional site. He thus made a vow to restore it to its former glory with all speed.<sup>72</sup> The then-caretaker of Qixia Monastery, which at the time appears to have had few permanent structures to speak of, Fayi 法意 (A017956), invited Zongyang to take over the position of abbot and lead Qixia's restoration.<sup>73</sup> Zongyang brought with him his disciple Ruoshun 若舜 (1879–1943; A017842), and they worked together to rebuild Qixia from the ground up.<sup>74</sup>

Although Zongyang's history of working with revolutionaries and living as a layman had ostracized him from mainstream monastic society, it established a strong link between him and rising revolutionary powers in China

<sup>70</sup> Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 16–18; Shen Qian 沈潛, "Xinhai geming qianhou de Huang Zongyang" 辛亥革命前后的黄宗扬, *Huadong shifan daxue xuebao* (zhexue shehui kexue ban) 华东师范大学学报 (哲学社会科学版) 36.2 (January 1997): 108–114; Scott, "The Canon as a Consumer Good."

<sup>71</sup> Welch, *Buddhist Revival*, 18.

<sup>72</sup> 「...朝禮九華，道經棲霞，憫其圓音久息，蕪眾生之福田；斷碣荒殘，埋江山之勝蹟，爰發願力，馳驅再振。」Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi*, 72. The sorry state of Qixia around that time is attested to in a 1914 article from *Shenbao*, reporting on the theft of precious artifacts that had been donated to the monastery during the Ming and Qing dynasties: "Ming Taizu yixiang bei qie" 明太祖遺像被竊, *Shenbao* 申報 15002, November 13, 1914, 6.

<sup>73</sup> Holmes Welch, "Dharma Scrolls and the Succession of Abbots in Chinese Monasteries," *T'oung Pao* 50.1–3 (1963): 98–99. Fayi had formerly been a low-ranking military officer in the Taiping War and claimed that he had dreamed of the arrival of a restoration leader before Zongyang happened upon the place. Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi*, 62. Zongyang also in that same year helped to finance Ouyang Jian's new school, Zhina neixue yuan 支那內學院, in Nanjing. Welch, *Chinese Buddhist Revival*, 117–118. Welch surmises that the money for this was donated by Luo Jialing. Welch, *Chinese Buddhist Revival*, 319n30.

<sup>74</sup> A posthumous biography of Ruoshan is available in Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi*, 140–143.



that would prove to be helpful in his restoration work, a link that would continue to draw figures from the Nationalist party to Qixia Monastery even after his death in 1921. The monastery gazetteer includes a list of *zhongxing hufa* 中興護法—those who supported the Dharma during the period of reconstruction—that runs to 139 names. Unfortunately it does not usually list amounts donated or dates when the donation took place, so some of these donors could have been involved with Qixia any time between 1919 and 1947 and were not necessarily part of the initial two-year reconstruction campaign led by Zongyang. Looking at some of the names, however, it is clear that Zongyang's close connections to the early revolutionaries and later leaders of the Nationalist Party were instrumental in gaining the support of people that Holmes Welch describes as “high officials and prominent businessmen.”<sup>75</sup> Chief among these donors is Sun Yat-sen, whom between 1919 and 1921 was leading his Nationalists from their new base in Guangzhou. Zongyang's biography elsewhere in the gazetteer mentions that Sun donated ten thousand yuan to the reconstruction campaign, but the list of donors clarifies that these funds had earlier been raised by Zongyang for the revolutionary cause, and after Sun returned the sum, Zongyang put it to work for this new project.<sup>76</sup> Other high officials listed as donors include Lin Sen 林森 (1868–1943), who had a stele built for the monastery; Yu Youren 于右任 (1879–1964), who transferred control of 53.2 *mu* of land formerly used for sacrifices to the monastery; Sir Robert Hotung (He Dong 何東, 1862–1956) and his wife Clara Cheung Lin-kok (Zhang Lianjue 張蓮覺, 1875–1938), who are credited with repairing the Qixia reliquary stupa; supreme court justice Lin Xiang 林翔 (1882–1935), who helped the monastery recover control of lands that had been illegally occupied; Zhang Ji 張繼 (1882–1947) and Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1890–1949), who led construction of a stupa for Zongyang's remains; Han Guojun 韓國鈞 (1857–1942), who is credited with protecting ancient ruins at the monastery; and Ye Gongchuo 葉恭綽 (1881–1968), who helped with repairing the reliquary stupa.<sup>77</sup> Luo Jialing, Zongyang's patron in Shanghai, is also listed as having donated five thousand silver dollars to the campaign.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Welch, *Chinese Buddhist Revival*, 96.

<sup>76</sup> Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi*, 137, 164.

<sup>77</sup> Hotung was a businessman, one of the wealthiest people in Hong Kong and grandfather of Robert H. N. Ho. Lin-kok was Hotung's second wife and was later involved in his philanthropic work.

<sup>78</sup> Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi*, 164–190. Many of the donors have Guangdong listed as their native place, perhaps a reflection of the Nationalists being based in Guangzhou during this period, while others are Chinese businesspeople living overseas and some are monastics from Jinshan and elsewhere. A few wives are also included as donors along with their husbands.

These donor records provide evidence of close links between Qixia Monastery and high-ranking officials in the Nationalist party during the period of its reconstruction, both when the Nationalists were based in Guangzhou and after they established their capital in nearby Nanjing. Many of these donations of funds or other support appear to have occurred after Zongyang's death—note that Zhang Ji and Dai Jitao were involved with building Zongyang's memorial stupa. During the period of the Republic Qixia also recovered its property holdings and added to them, aided by supreme court justice Lin Xiang.<sup>79</sup> With the help of these elite patrons, Zongyang initiated a period of reconstruction at Qixia that lasted throughout the remainder of the Republican era and continued under the leadership of his disciple Ruoshun, who became abbot after Zongyang's death in 1921. Through the 1920s and 1930s there were normally about fifty to sixty monks in residence; the main hall was rebuilt around 1926.<sup>80</sup> In August 1927, as the National Revolutionary Army on its Northern Expedition to reunite China battled with the local warlord Sun Chuanfang 孫傳芳 (1885–1935) in the area between Qixia and the nearby village of Longtan 龍潭, the monastery again suffered collateral damage from the fighting.<sup>81</sup>

After the Nationalists had defeated Sun, Nanjing was declared as the new capital of the Republic, a situation that was solidified the following year when the Wuhan faction of the Nationalists rejoined Chiang's side and the Beiyang government in Beijing fell. Through the latter half of 1928 negotiations were underway in Beijing on the capitulation of the Fengtian warlords who held Manchuria, which would mean the final reunification of China under Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists. The monastic community at Qixia suddenly found itself in close proximity to the seat of power for the new national government, most of whom considered themselves the political heirs of Zongyang's old friend Sun Yat-sen. In the midst of these negotiations, on August 5, 1928, Qixia Monastery was host to a banquet put on by Tan Yankai 譚延闓 (1880–1930), chairman of the national government, and Li Liejun 李烈鈞 (1882–1946), member of the standing committees of both the

<sup>79</sup> By 1949 its total holdings were listed as being 1,449.05 *mu* of land, roughly equal to 241.5 acres, scattered in 124 separate plots. Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi*, 191–200. Conversion ratio based on Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, table 104, p. 557.

<sup>80</sup> Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬, "Qixia shan jiyou" 棲霞山紀遊, *Haichao yin* 8.11–12 (January 12, 1928), in MFQ 169:175–177; Welch, "Dharma Scrolls," 100, 103. By 1949, the meditation hall remained as the only major structure still left unbuilt.

<sup>81</sup> Zhang, "Taiping tianguo shiqi Qixia si," 62.

national government and of military affairs.<sup>82</sup> Their guest was Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 (1882–1948), a warlord who had commanded a powerful force in the 1920s and who had allied himself with the Nationalists just a few years earlier. The three men and their entourages left Nanjing by train at 8:30 a.m. in a special passenger car, along with a dozen other political and military leaders, listed in table 2.1.

These fifteen men, mostly members of the civil and military elite of the Nationalist Party and state apparatus, were accompanied in their journey by about a hundred bodyguards in a further six passenger cars. At 9:15 they arrived at Qixia, and although they had prepared wicker sedan chairs most of the men chose to walk on foot to the monastery, where a monk guided them to breakfast.

Noting the large number of monks there, Feng Yuxiang decided to address them with a speech, the general content of which was later included in an article in the Shanghai-based newspaper *Shenbao*:

The present revolution is a total revolution. Monks had always [been] considered to be outside of state influence and were treated with “abandonism.” But the present revolution is not like that. It considers monks to be one part of the national citizenry, to be treated with “assimilationism,” and this requires revolutionary assimilation.

Feng proceeded to describe three principles regarding monastic property, monastic life, and monastic celibacy, presumably intended to revolutionarily assimilate them into citizens of the new nation-state.

- 1) Temple property originally comes from the funds and structures [donated by] citizens, [and] it should upon the monastics’ own initiative be used to start schools and hospitals. Hospitals are of a beneficial nature and do not depart from the compassionate original teachings of our Buddha. Temple property should not be put to uses that have no [public] benefit.

<sup>82</sup> This account is mainly based on a series of three articles in *Shenbao*: “Tan Li Feng tongfu Qixia shan” 譚李馮同赴棲霞山, *Shenbao* 19895, August 5, 1928, 7; “Dang guo yaoren youlan Qixia, Tan Li sheyan Qixia si, xijian tanji zhongquanhui” 黨國要人游覽棲霞·譚李設宴棲霞寺·席間談及五中全會, *Shenbao* 19896, August 6, 1928, 4; “Feng Yuxiang deng you Qixiashan (fu tupian) 馮玉祥等游棲霞山 (附圖片)”, *Shenbao* 19897, August 7, 1928, 9.

**Table 2.1.** Attendees of the August 5, 1928, Banquet at Qixia Monastery<sup>a</sup>

Name	Position
He Yingqian 何應欽 (1890–1987)	Army group commander and chairman of the Zhejiang provincial government
Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1890–1949)	Head of the propaganda department for the Nationalist Party
Li Jishen 李濟深 (1885–1959)	Member of the national government and then-leader of the eighth route army
Yang Shuzhuang 楊樹莊 (1882–1934)	Commander of the navy and chairman of the Fujian provincial government
Zhu Peide 朱培德 (1889–1937)	Former commander of the third army and current chairman of the Jiangxi provincial government
Chen Jiayou 陳嘉佑 (1881–1937)	Member of the central committee of the Nationalist Party
Huang Shi 黃實 (d. u.)	[Unknown]
Zhang Zhijiang 張之江 (1882–1969)	Head of the Central Martial Arts Hall in Nanjing
Xue Dubi 薛篤弼 (1892–1973)	Head of the Hunan Province Civil Administration and minister of the Department of the Interior
Huang Shaogu 黃少谷 (1901–1996)	Head of the general staff of the second army group
Deng Jiayan 鄧家彥 (1883–1966)	Head writer at <i>Duli zhoubao</i> 獨立周報 (Independence weekly)
Xiong Bin 熊斌 (1894–1964)	Top-level advisor to the National Revolutionary Army and representative in the Hubei Provincial Government

<sup>a</sup> List based on the *Shenbao* article of August 6, “Dang guo yaoren youlan Qixia” 黨國要人游覽棲霞. Of the names listed, only Dai Jitao is also recorded as a lay patron of Qixia’s reconstruction.

- 2) The Buddha certainly must have offerings, but Buddha images need not be built extremely tall or large, just extremely magnificent. Would wasting funds like this suit good economy? Nor are monks foreigners, and thus they cannot lack a sense of patriotism. If those in a country don’t concern themselves with national issues, then this is a sign of the nation’s imminent demise. It’s like how Japan currently occupies

Shandong; I think that all monks have heard of that situation and are well-familiar with it. This is exactly a [case of] responding to the need for everyone to rise up and save the nation.

- 3) Monks should marry and should have the ability to marry equally [with other citizens]. Japanese, Tibetan, and Mongolian monks all marry; if [you] do not then those who believe in Buddhism will die out.<sup>83</sup>

*Shenbao* reports that Feng laughed as he gave his speech, during which the hall was filled with a boisterous clamor from the visitors and resident monks alike.

At the banquet that followed, the principal topic of conversation was the upcoming fifth general meeting of the central committee of the Nationalist Party. Afterward from 11:00 a.m. the party headed out of the monastery to view the hills, and again most went on foot. They visited sights such as the Thousand-Buddha Ridge 千佛嶺, the Temple of Three Mao Brothers 三茅宮, and the Pearl Spring 珍珠泉. The men took photographs as they walked, He Yingqian had brought hunting dogs and a rifle for bird-hunting, Feng Yuxiang chatted and picked a handful of wild flowers, and they chatted with the monks. At 3:00 p.m. several returned to the Great Hall to rest, had a vegetarian meal, and then rejoined the group. Feng Yuxiang, He Yingqian, and Zhu Peide mounted the summit of Monk's Hat Peak 紗帽峯, taking in the view, and the military filmographer of the Northwestern Army commemorated the event in several hundred meters of film. At 4:00 p.m. the entire party returned to Nanjing.

Coming just nine years after Zongyang initiated his reconstruction of Qixia Monastery that saw it rebuilt from the ground up, and just a few years after the completion of the main hall in which Feng Yuxiang lectured the monks, I interpret the events of August 5, 1928, at Qixia as the use of a historic monastery in close proximity to both natural beauty and the capital of the Republic as a stage for political negotiation. As a sort of "away day" for political and military elites, attending the banquet and wandering in the hills surrounding Qixia would have presented these men with an opportunity to chat about current affairs, discuss strategy and plans for the future, and cement alliances that were only recently forged as a result of the successful Northern Expedition. Visitors had an opportunity to explore both the monastery proper and the natural landscape that surrounded it, but note that the

<sup>83</sup> "Feng Yuxiang deng you Qixiashan."

resident monastics played no active role in the day apart from welcoming the visitors to the monastery and being the audience for Feng Yuxiang's impromptu lecture. This is not a pilgrimage to a sacred site in hopes of blessing the state or its citizens; instead the monastery and its surroundings are a place of natural and constructed beauty, where elites can escape the familiar environs of Nanjing and discourse within freshly reconstructed halls and surrounded by nature. It was additionally a public event that was reported upon in the press, an opportunity to show the citizens of the Republic its highest officials engaged in important discussions at a historic and culturally significant site.

Feng's speech to the monks of Qixia, however, reflects the darker side of state interest in religion generally, and in Buddhist monasteries more specifically. In speaking of the need for religious bodies to recognize the public interest in their property and to establish institutions such as schools and hospitals that serve the public good, Feng reiterates *miaochan xingxue* arguments that had been in circulation for the past thirty years.<sup>84</sup> In emphasizing the need for economy and the rational investment of scarce resources, as well as patriotic interest in national affairs, Feng integrates the monastery into the larger economic discourse of the Republic, in which all available human and material resources had to be mobilized to build up the nation. In suggesting the need for monastics in China to renounce celibacy and to marry, Feng may be in part reflecting his own biases as a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but the crux of his argument is that monks need to help produce new Buddhists, just as citizens of the Republic were encouraged to produce new citizens. Overall Feng is arguing for monasteries and monasticism to be brought into the revolutionary state, "assimilated," as he puts it, into the national citizenry. This represented a threat to the very foundations of Buddhist religious life—the independence of monastic institutions from the state; the material and merit economy of lay donations and the construction of sacred structures and images; and the monastic family as separate and distinct from the biological family, with its own lineages of discipleship and Dharma transmission. Although that day it was Feng who was grandstanding and making his opinions known to the community at Qixia, as we have seen earlier these same views were held by many in the state apparatus of the Republic.

<sup>84</sup> See the outline of *miaochan xingxue* earlier in this chapter.

We unfortunately do not know how the monks of Qixia reacted to this speech that day, but we do have a Buddhist response to Feng's ideas in the form of an article in *Haichao yin* from November of that year, titled "Feng Yuxiang and Qixia Monastery." Its author, Ning-Li Tai 寧李泰 (style name Mogong 墨公, 1887–1960), had been a military advisor to the fourteenth army group during the Northern Expedition.<sup>85</sup> In his article he addresses Feng's suggestions made to the monks of Qixia Monastery, defending Chinese Buddhist monastic practice and proposing that any reform of the monastic system ought to proceed from within the system itself. He argues that the old notion of divine right (*shenquan* 神權) has been overturned, implying that high officials such as Feng Yuxiang no longer have the moral authority to unilaterally impose change from above. Moreover, constitutional nations around the world all recognize the right to property, and the principle of *minquan* 民權 recognizes citizens' rights over their property; this also applies in the case of religious property. Buddhist buildings and images are like Christian crosses in being symbols of the religion and cannot simply be done away with. Feng's criticism that monks are not productive is already being addressed by monastic communities through enterprises such as establishing schools, and the notion that monks ought to marry and have children in order to save the Chinese race would make the Buddhist sangha into a laughingstock. Ning-Li suggests instead that Buddhists ought to work toward raising the religious knowledge and ability of laypeople, rather than trying to transform monks into householders. He calls the reforms taking place within Buddhism a "New Buddhist Three Principles of the People—ization" (*Xinde Foxing sanmin hua* 新的佛性三民化), leveraging the core values of the Republic and of the Nationalist Party to highlight the positive changes taking place within Buddhist monasteries and among Chinese Buddhists more generally.

The reconstruction of Qixia Monastery thus proceeded with the direct help and intervention of a group of highly placed civil and military officials. The reconstruction leader Zongyang was able to use his links to elite society to recruit them early on, and his close personal connections with this group, along with the proximity of the monastery to the new capital of the Republic, continued to attract official attention to and support of Qixia after his death. This official attention, however, came at a price, as the state and its high

<sup>85</sup> Ning Mogong 寧墨公, "Feng Yuxiang yu Qixia shan" 馮玉祥與棲霞山, *Haichao yin* 海潮音 9.10 (November 1928), in MFQ 171:295–297. Tai's original surname was Li, but he also adopted the surname of his paternal uncle by marriage.

officials had their own purposes and agendas for the monastery's future, with the visit and banquet of August 5, 1928, being one clear early example of this. Some of those now in power believed, like Feng Yuxiang, that monasteries and their communities ought to be forcibly assimilated into the nation, and that those elements that seemed to belong to a past age, such as monastic celibacy and the relative autonomy of monasteries, ought to be abolished. Qixia thus became a site of conflict between state interests in religion on the one hand, and religious defenses of their way of life and their value to Chinese society on the other.

Yet in this case, as in others, Buddhists such as Ning-Li Tai were able to articulate a public defense of monasteries and of monastic life, arguing that although they should be reformed, this ought to come from within, so that monasteries could make a positive contribution to the state without losing their independence and harming their established framework of religious life. In many instances this involved monasteries setting up institutions of their own accord for the public good, such as scriptural presses and schools, innovations that grew out of traditional monastery print culture and education, introduced to meet the challenges of the modern era. In the case of Qixia it later encountered a new exigent threat from a nearby normal school overseen by Tai Shuangqiu himself, which initially had cordial relations with the monastery but later made plans to take over all of its lands for its own use. This time, perhaps because Zongyang had never sought the protection of Buddhist associations or networks of eminent monks, mounting a defense was much more difficult, and most of the officials in Nanjing who had previously banqueted there and toured the grounds made no efforts to help. It took the intervention in 1936 of Dai Jitao, Zhang Ji, and Ju Zheng 居正 (1876–1951), who were then working to mobilize Buddhism as part of building a national Chinese identity, to resolve the dispute and protect the monastery.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 159–165. Later during the Nanjing Decade, Qixia entered into a dispute with a local school, Qixia Village Normal School 棲霞鄉村師範學校, that was established on monastery land without their consent. The dispute dragged on for several years until 1936, when former friends of Zongyang had the national government issue a statement of commendation for him. The dispute was resolved the following year, when the monastery agreed to lease 141 *mu* of land for the use of the school. Welch, *Buddhist Revival in China*, 153–154; Zhu, *Qixia shan zhi*, 200–203; Shen Qian 沈潛, “Zongyang shangren nianpu jianbian” 宗仰上人年譜簡編, *Wuzhong xuekan* (shehui kexue ban) 吳中學刊(社會科學版) 4 (1995): 87–93.



## Conclusion

Decades after the devastation of the Taiping War, while many Buddhist monasteries damaged or destroyed during the conflict still remained in ruins, new elements had emerged to threaten monasteries and other religious institutions in China. The waves of reform that swept over China at the end of the nineteenth century, and which continued to roll across the country during the first two decades of the fledgling Republic, sought to transform the core of Chinese society in order to construct a strong nation that would no longer be subject to humiliations and defeats on the world stage. There was among Chinese reformers and revolutionaries a deep skepticism of the value of religion and widespread uncertainty over whether religious institutions such as Buddhist monasteries had a role to play in a modern China. To many it seemed as if these institutions could make no contribution toward building the new civic values of education, rational anti-superstition, and economic productivity. But religious specialists and laypeople organized themselves and worked to counter these attacks, arguing that freedom of religion and the right to property meant that religious specialists had a moral and legal claim to their monasteries, temples, and other landholdings. Through religious associations, printing and publishing, and education they mounted a public defense of their right to exist and their continued role in a modernizing China. As explored in the cases of Changzhou Tianning Monastery and Qixia Monastery, reconstructing a Buddhist monastery during this era of revolution faced the additional challenge of winning over local and national officials to their cause, convincing them in the light of the new attention paid to religious institutions that they belonged in a rapidly changing nation. One strategy undertaken by many monasteries during this era was to preempt the criticisms of reformist officials by establishing their own in-house educational and publishing institutions. Another was to actively seek out support from highly placed officials, whose patronage would likely prevent a zealous lower-ranking official from daring to seize the monastery land.

Such attention and support, however, came at a high cost. Religious institutions could be viewed simply as places of superstition and backwardness, but their deep historical roots in Chinese history could also be viewed as justification for treating them as part of Chinese cultural heritage, and as such, as concrete symbols of a Chinese national identity. Rather than awkward reminders of a benighted past, in this view sites such as Buddhist monasteries were part of what made China distinct and special. This was not

such a strong theme during this era of revolution, when state power was highly fragmented, but the continued proposed intervention of the state in transforming temples into schools, the *miaochan xingxue* movements, were precursors to more direct involvement in religious sites on the part of the Nationalist state that would follow from 1928 onward. Rebuilding and restoring Buddhist monasteries could be useful to the nation, by protecting and rehabilitating symbols of the rich cultural past of the Chinese civilization. In the wake of the Mukden Incident and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, when a broader war with Japan appeared increasingly inevitable, and later during the war that did break out from 1937 to 1945, when the very survival of a free China was at stake, such a possibility of reconstructing symbols of the Chinese nation would become more and more attractive to a state—and a nation—itself under exigent threat.

### 3

## National Salvation

[Now], in all states, when [things are] on the brink of chaos and there are all [sorts of] disasters, difficulties, or bandits come to wreak havoc, you and the others and all kings should receive and hold, read and recite this Prajñāpāramitā. . . . If the king, the great officers, monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen hear, receive, read, and recite it and practice it according to the [prescribed] method, the disorders and difficulties will forthwith be eradicated.

*The Transcendent Wisdom Scripture for Humane Kings Who Wish to Protect Their States*, translated 765 CE<sup>1</sup>

The Laughing Buddha is now grief-stricken as many of the tens of thousands of Buddhist temples in which he had his sanctuary have been destroyed by the ruthless war machine of Japan. Two of the biggest and most famous Buddhist temples that are now gone were in Shanghai: the Liu Yun (Flowing Cloud) Temple in Nantao and the Lunghwa Temple. The latter was completely demolished by the Japanese when war was at its height in the Shanghai sector, while the former is a scar of barbarism left by the Japanese invaders in the wake of their departure from Shanghai.

*The China Weekly Review*, December 17, 1938<sup>2</sup>

When Nanjing was officially proclaimed as the capital of a newly reunified Republic of China on April 18, 1928, the nation was still in a state of crisis, with disasters, difficulties, and bandits of the type described in the Buddhist

<sup>1</sup> Charles Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of National Protection Buddhism* (State College, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 245–246.

<sup>2</sup> “China’s Laughing Buddha Stricken with Grief at Destruction of Temples,” *The China Weekly Review*, December 17, 1938, 86.

*Scripture for Humane Kings* seemingly in abundance. The new Nanjing government led by the Nationalist Party was facing a rival faction with its own capital in Wuhan 武漢, and the party was still reeling from the purge of Communist members that had begun the previous year. The shaky political coalition that was forged after the final clashes of the Northern Expedition later that year relied upon the cooperation of local warlords, newly integrated into the state as provincial governors but still largely autonomous, as well as cooperation between factions within the Nationalist party itself. One former warlord, Zhang Xueliang 張學良 (1901–2001), who controlled China's northeast, remained unable to prevent continued skirmishes between Soviet and Japanese forces in the region over control of the main railways and their associated territory. In 1931 Japan would stage the Manchurian Incident (Manzhou shibian 滿洲事變), creating a pretext for invading the entire northeast of China, leading to the Japanese Empire establishing the puppet state of Manchukuo (Manzhouguo 滿洲國) in 1932. Although Qing and later Republican China had been the subject of repeated colonial impositions on its sovereignty over the previous century, including the ceding of Taiwan in 1895, this was the first time in the modern era that a substantial portion of the Chinese mainland had been wrested away by a foreign power. Further disaster came with the full-scale Japanese invasion of China in 1937, after which Japan quickly gained control over vast areas of territory in eastern and southern China but became mired in fighting with Chinese forces who had fallen back to the west. After Japan attacked Allied colonial holdings in East and Southeast Asia in late 1941, China formally joined World War II as one of the “Big Four” powers alongside the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The end of the war in 1945 brought to China only a short pause in the fighting before the civil war resumed between the Nationalists and Communists. Warfare continued up to late 1948, after which Communist forces pushed the Nationalists off the mainland onto Taiwan and a handful of small offshore islands, and the Communists proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October of 1949.

This twenty-year period of national crisis, foreign invasion, and wars both global and civil was one in which religious institutions in China again suffered a great deal of intentional and collateral damage. The story printed in the *China Weekly Review* in 1938 about the destruction of two prominent Buddhist temples in Shanghai is one that could be repeated thousands of times through this period. Yet this was also an era in which the protection and repair of Buddhist monasteries and other Chinese historical sites

rose to become a matter of national importance. The official interest in reconstructing Buddhist sites examined in the previous chapter only intensified during this period of national crisis, when it seemed that the very survival of the Chinese nation was at stake. The specter of China becoming fractured into a series of Manchukuo-like puppet states, all in the service of the Japanese empire, was a pressing concern for Nationalist and Communist Chinese leaders alike. The preservation of a Chinese national heritage through its historical monuments became a core aspect of Chinese strategies to rouse the spirit of the Chinese people and to garner international support among potential strategic allies. We can view this as part of the broader deployment of nationalism during the period of the war, when the Nationalist state worked to build the Chinese *minzu* 民族 envisioned by Sun Yat-sen decades earlier: a distinct people with a defined territorial nation-state tied to a long history of culture and civilization. The struggle for national salvation was thus undertaken not just with soldiers and weapons but also with ideas, ideologies, and the construction of an imagined Chinese nation-state.<sup>3</sup>

Neither the Nationalists nor the Communists had incorporated religion as a central plank in their political platforms, and as heirs to the May Fourth and New Culture movements, members of both parties were on the whole highly suspicious of religion, seeing it as one example of the type of superstitious, backward culture that China had to leave behind. Yet both parties were led by individuals with strong religious beliefs, and both—in their own way—embraced notions of a national spirit or soul (*jingshen* 精神) at the heart of the Chinese nation, the modern roots of which can be traced back to the Meiji Restoration and its own revolution of Japanese religion.<sup>4</sup> The notion of *jingshen* incorporates many religious elements while not being part of an established religious denomination or tradition; it is rooted in historical narratives of a people, but it is highly determined by elites rather than being constructed by folk culture, which it interprets and represents for its own purposes. In the struggle to enliven the *jingshen* of the nation, and to save the nation from catastrophe, the protection of historical sites became crucially important: they would serve as concrete symbols of the nation's past and its identity, and control over them signified the state's ability to both inherit this

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, James Leibold, "Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China: From the Yellow Emperor to Peking Man," *Modern China* 32.2 (April 2006): 181–220.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Thomas Fröhlich, "Civil Religion on a Confucian Basis," in Thomas Fröhlich, *Tang Junyi: Confucian Philosophy and the Challenge of Modernity* (Leiden, The Netherlands and Boston: Brill, 2017), 240–249.

past and to guide the nation into the future. Buddhist monasteries were but one example of these historical sites, which also included tombs and other monuments, but they were among the most important for a few reasons. First, Buddhist sites represent some of the most artistically and architecturally significant historic sites extant in China; pagodas in particular stood as some of the oldest extant enclosed structures.<sup>5</sup> Second, Buddhism was originally introduced from outside China, and many neighboring countries continued to maintain Buddhism as part of their own cultural heritage; thus many Chinese historical sites have clear international ties with countries in South, Southeast, and Central Asia. This was an important feature in the context of the war as the Republic of China searched for allies against Japan; symbols of the long-standing links between China and these areas had an immense strategic potential for international relations. Finally, Japan had been working to catalogue Buddhist historical sites in China for decades, and Japanese scholars followed behind the invading armies, gaining access to Chinese monasteries, stupas, caves, and other important sites. Countering this academic power of representation could help to directly challenge the legitimacy of the Japanese presence in China.

In this violent and unsettled period of Chinese history, Buddhist monasteries and their monastic communities found themselves not only on the front lines of war but also thrust into the center of an ideological struggle for the future of the Chinese nation itself. As such, the nature of monastery reconstruction during this era shifted significantly, driven by these ideological pressures from the outside but also by Buddhist monastics and laypeople who embraced the notion of Buddhism being central to Chinese national identity.

### The Struggle to Save the Nation, 1929–1949

The establishment of a new unified government in Nanjing in 1927 under the leadership of the Nationalist Party was supposed to mark the beginning of a new era for China, one in which the promise of the 1911 revolution would finally be fulfilled after more than a decade of civil war during the Warlord Period (1917–1928). In fact, political authority in the newly unified

<sup>5</sup> Zhongguo kexue yuan tumu jianzhu yanjiu suo 中国科学院土木建筑研究所 and Qinghua daxue jianzhu xi 清华大学建筑系, eds., *Zhongguo jianzhu* 中国建筑 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1957).

Republic of China was still deeply divided. Factionalism remained strong within the Nationalist Party; the former warlords who had allied themselves to Chiang Kai-shek retained de facto control over their regions; and Chinese Communists would continue to operate from Soviet bases in the countryside for years to come. Chiang saw this latter group as the most pressing threat to the Chinese nation, and his attention would be focused upon wiping them out in a series of military campaigns culminating in the destruction of the Jiangxi-Fujian Soviet in 1935. Through the early 1930s, however, the Japanese empire was moving into an expansionist, militarist phase, building upon its acquisitions of Korea and Taiwan and eyeing greater influence on the Chinese mainland. Even after the Japanese invasion of the northeast and the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, Chiang continued to focus on the Chinese Communists, seeing them as an internal disease rather than an external pathogen attacking China. Chiang would finally relent in December 1936 when he was kidnapped and only released when he agreed to ally in a unified front with the Chinese Communists against the Japanese threat, a threat that would become reality the following year with the full-scale invasion of China.

In the midst of the military conflict between Chinese Nationalists and Communists, and later between China and Japan, there was also a struggle for control over the “soul” of the Chinese nation. As already mentioned, while many high-ranking officials in the Nationalist Party had strong personal religious affiliations, the party and the party-state that it established in 1928 were highly suspicious of—and at times outright hostile toward—religious beliefs among the Chinese people. Rebecca Nedostup has examined in detail how the nation-state during this period went to great lengths to calculate, regulate, and intervene in the religious beliefs, activities, and institutions of Chinese citizens.<sup>6</sup> In its place the Nationalists attempted to inculcate a new patriotic ideology based on the political writings of Sun Yat-sen and on the identification of a Chinese nationality rooted in its historical past. During the Nanjing Decade, there emerged a new level of attention to what today would be termed “cultural heritage,” consisting of the material structures and sites of China’s dynastic past. These included tombs, ruins, monuments, and also historical religious complexes such as temples and monasteries. In spite of their ideology of modernity and revolution, the Nationalists recognized the value of China’s past as symbols of national heritage and paid a great deal

<sup>6</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

of attention to historical sites. They had a crucial role to play in both the civil and international conflicts: controlling the historical heritage of the nation would help establish the authority to lead the nation into the future.

Officials in the Nationalist party-state were directly involved in the repair and reconstruction of several historic Buddhist monasteries during this period. These reconstructions were not undertaken as official state actions, but they often had a national profile thanks to the involvement of high-ranking party members. The rhetoric that surrounded these campaigns also incorporated the notion of national salvation (*jiuguo* 救國) that signified their importance to the future of the nation. The practice of having Buddhist monasteries adopting a nation-protecting role had already been well established in Imperial China, especially during the medieval era when emperors were more likely to lend monastic institutions their direct patronage. This role drew upon Buddhist scriptural teachings, in particular a set of three scriptures that describe the power of Buddhism to protect the state against disasters: *The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra for Humane Kings Who Wish to Protect their State* (*Renwang huguo bore poluomi jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜經), *The Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Dharma* (*Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經), and the *Golden Light Sūtra* (*Jin guangming jing* 金光明經).<sup>7</sup> These scriptures describe an economy of patronage and religious power flowing between Buddhist and state realms, with state leaders lending material support to religious specialists who ritually ensure the continued stability of the state. Given the scientific and anti-superstitious nature of the Republican state, it might appear surprising that elite party members were involved in securing the spiritual protection of Buddhists and actively organized ritual assemblies that were undertaken at Buddhist monasteries. It's likely that many party members participating in such rituals saw them as symbolic rather than as numinously powerful, but we should not discount the very real personal religious beliefs of party members.<sup>8</sup> One key figure behind the use of Buddhist sites and rituals in supporting the Chinese nation during this era of crisis was Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1890–1949), a Nationalist ideologue with an intense personal Buddhist faith, but other high-ranking officials, Nationalist and Communist alike, were also involved.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> T 245–246; T 262–264; T 663–665, respectively. Additionally, each of these scriptures has numerous exegetical works and commentaries that are also part of the Buddhist canon. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*.

<sup>8</sup> Katz, *Religion and Its Modern Fate*.

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Adam Scott, "The Buddhist Nationalism of Dai Jitao 戴季陶," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 39 (2011): 55–81.



It is, however, important to note that participation in this nation-protecting role was limited to a handful of the most prominent Buddhist monasteries in China. More generally during the Nanjing Decade there was increasing pressure to assimilate monasteries into the new apparatus of the nation-state and to incorporate monastics into the national citizenry. As explored in the previous chapter, religious property had in the first decades of the twentieth century been subject to seizure and repurposing by reform-minded local officials and warlords, and it was by no means inviolable in the newly reunified Republic. Citizens were guaranteed the freedom of religious belief under article eleven of the Provisional Constitution (*Zhonghua minguo xunzheng shiqi yuefa* 中華民國訓政時期約法) promulgated in 1931, but religious institutions themselves as well as their property and rights had no explicit protections. Threats of the *miaochan xingxue* type described in the previous chapter continued well into the 1930s.<sup>10</sup> Some scholars of Chinese architectural history during this period, chief among them Liang Sicheng 梁思成 (1901–1972) and his wife Lin Huiyin 林徽因 (1904–1955), worked to investigate and catalogue historically significant Buddhist buildings in order to preserve knowledge of their engineering and artistic elements. In a such a politically fractured era, however, no comprehensive national strategy for the preservation of cultural heritage was undertaken. Even when a religious site was identified for preservation, it was not necessarily undertaken according to best practices. Japanese documentary photographs of Buddhist sites from this era include an image of nationalist slogans painted on the columns of Guangxiao Monastery in Guangzhou and a botched preservation of a stupa in Guangzhou that covered the fine brick detail with thick paint and even moved the entire stupa to a new location on the monastery grounds.<sup>11</sup>

For their part, the Chinese Communist Party was not officially involved in religious reconstruction. Communist ideology shared the Nationalist deep skepticism of religion and thought even less of the value of historic sites. Moreover, they were fighting for their very survival after the purges of 1927 and were preoccupied just avoiding destruction at the hands of the Nationalists. Even when a stable base was established in Yan'an and the Chinese Communists learned to coexist with rural farmers whose religious beliefs were deeply ingrained, Mao's ascension as the Party leader meant

<sup>10</sup> Fu Haiyan 付海晏, "Geming, falü yu miaochan: Minguo Beiping tieshan s'ān yanjiu" 革命、法律與廟產—民國北平鐵山寺案研究, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 3 (2003): 105–120.

<sup>11</sup> Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bunka shiseki*, 3:1, 7.

that the Party would follow his long-term strategy to wipe out religion when the time was right.<sup>12</sup> Yet some individual Communists who were involved in the First (1923–1927) and Second (1936–1940) United Fronts with the Nationalists did personally support the preservation and reconstruction of historically significant Chinese religious sites, as will be described in the sections that follow. To many leading figures in both parties, the historical and symbolic value of these sites was more significant than their religious nature. For some Nationalists, moreover, even if religion was seen as superstition, Communism and socialism were always viewed as the most pressing threats to the Republic, so promoting the livelihood of religious sites might well serve as a bulwark against the influence of these atheist ideologies.<sup>13</sup> In the ideological civil war over control of China's future, historic Buddhist monasteries and other religious sites were strategically significant pieces for both sides.

### Impact of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945)

Just as heightened anticipation of full-scale war with Japan had a direct impact on the Chinese civil war, forging a temporary truce and a second United Front out of expediency, the outbreak of the war in late 1937 had an immense impact on not only the damage and destruction of Buddhist monasteries but also efforts to repair and reconstruct them. The longstanding threat to the Chinese nation had suddenly become immediate and concrete, as the invasion produced a vast moving front line of combat through Eastern China, first striking major urban centers in the east and then rolling onward into the Chinese hinterland. The Nationalists had already determined that their tiny number of well-trained and well-equipped troops backed by large numbers of ill-equipped conscripts would not be able to hold out against a full-scale Japanese invasion for long, and so Chongqing 重慶 and Xi'an 西安 had been prepared as wartime capitals in anticipation for a fighting withdrawal to the west. Personnel, machinery, and even historic artifacts from the Palace Museum could be transported west to the wartime capitals, but of course

<sup>12</sup> As early as 1927 Mao was already closing down religious temples and using their buildings for hospitals and other secular uses. See Holmes Welch, *Buddhism under Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 499–500n110.

<sup>13</sup> Brian Tsui, *China's Conservative Revolution: The Quest for a New Order, 1927–1949* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

complete historic sites could not. These stationary artifacts had to be left to the invaders along with the territory lost, and thus vast numbers of Buddhist monasteries in eastern China were very quickly overtaken by the Japanese front lines.

During the nearly eight years of war between China and Japan from 1937 to 1945, many Chinese Buddhist monasteries and other religious sites were damaged or destroyed as a result of intentional attack or collateral damage. This damage began with the initial attacks on China's northeast and the important urban port city of Shanghai. Photographs taken of Longhua Monastery 龍華寺 after the Japanese attack in 1937, a monastery located on the southern outskirts of the old walled Chinese city first established in the third century, show a Hall of the Four Kings in ruins, with one of the images stripped down to its wooden inner frame. Although the main hall is still standing, nearly half of its roof has been blown apart and remains exposed to the elements.<sup>14</sup> The 1938 article from *The China Weekly Review* quoted in the epigraph to this chapter describes how the damage to Longhua came as a result of the initial attack on the city, while Liuyun Monastery 留雲寺 nearby was intentionally destroyed by Japanese forces as they left the city, presumably on their way to sack the capital Nanjing.<sup>15</sup> For Chinese Buddhists caught up in the war, the conflict was another in a series of disasters and calamities visited upon them during the unsettled and chaotic period of the early Republic. Many of them were now faced with the issue of whether it was justified to break the Buddhist precept against killing if it were done in defense of one's nation and one's homeland. In addition, there was the added complication of the invading forces also being from a "Buddhist country," adding an additional dimension for those Buddhists who adopted an anti-Japanese stance. Articles in Chinese Buddhist periodicals lamenting the war and calling for peace criticized Japanese Buddhists for allowing their country to pursue an aggressive war on a fellow Buddhist country.<sup>16</sup>

Those Chinese Buddhists who now found themselves overtaken by the invasion and living within Japanese-occupied territory, and later under one of the Chinese puppet regimes such as the Reorganized National Government of the Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo guomin zhengfu*

<sup>14</sup> Lyons Institute of East Asian Studies, *Virtual Shanghai*, <www.virtualshanghai.net>, images 2229, 2252, 15162, 15163.

<sup>15</sup> "China's Laughing Buddha."

<sup>16</sup> Sueki Fumihiko, "Chinese Buddhism and the Anti-Japan War," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37.1 (2010): 9–20.

中華民國國民政府, 1940–1945), had little choice but to work within the new regime. Direct criticism of the Japanese occupation or reference to a War of Resistance was not possible, but Buddhists in occupied China could hold public rituals calling for world peace and the salvation of all sentient beings, themes that fit well into Japanese strategies of pacification in occupied China.<sup>17</sup> Those Chinese Buddhists who now found themselves in unoccupied China, or who had retreated along with the Nationalists to the west, now faced supply shortages, waves of refugees, air attacks from Japanese forces, and the looming threat of perhaps one day soon being overtaken by the Japanese front lines. The situation lasted until about 1941, when the war ground to a stalemate and Japan ceased to make any major advances, but the threat arose again in 1944 with the Ichi-Go Offensive (*Ichi-gō Sakusen* 一號作戰). This campaign sought to break the stalemate and overwhelm Chinese resistance in central China, and while it was ultimately not successful, it did spark a number of major battles in Henan, Hunan, and Guangxi provinces.<sup>18</sup> The Chinese Buddhist experience of the war, whether in occupied or free China, was one of vast damage, destruction, and material deprivation but overall also one of uncertainty over the future of the nation and of Buddhism's place in that future.

As they expanded their area of occupation through eastern China and its southern coast, Japan, and Japanese Buddhists, had their own reasons to occupy and gain control over Buddhist sites in China. The reformed and reorganized Japanese Buddhism that had emerged from the initial anti-religious threats of the Meiji era placed a great deal of value on scholarship of Buddhist history, and a great deal of the religious heritage of Japanese Buddhism very clearly traced its roots to Tang- and Song-dynasty China. Japanese Buddhist scholars had already visited China to do field research prior to the full-scale invasion of 1937.

One example of the work that they produced is *Shina Bukkyō shiseki* 支那佛教史蹟 (Chinese Buddhist historical relics), by Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定 (1870–1945) and Sekino Tadashi 関野貞 (1868–1935). Published in four volumes in 1925–1926, it features extensive photographs of Chinese Buddhist historical sites with Japanese and English captions.<sup>19</sup> The outbreak

<sup>17</sup> Jan Kiely, "The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses: Master Yinguang and his Pure Land Revival Movement," in *Making Saints in Modern China*, ed. David Ownby, Vincent Goossaert, and Ji Zhe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 63–64.

<sup>18</sup> Rana Mitter, *China's War with Japan, 1937–1945: The Struggle for Survival* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 338, and *passim*.

<sup>19</sup> Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定 and Sekino Tadashi 関野貞, *Shina Bukkyō shiseki* 支那佛教史蹟 (Tokyo: Bukkyō shiseki kenkyukai, 1925–1926).

of the war and Japan's rapid occupation of much of eastern China, however, brought with it unmediated and unrestricted access to Buddhist historical sites and artifacts within occupied territories. The Yungang grottoes (Yungang shiku 雲岡石窟) near Datong 大同 in Shanxi province, a series of carved Buddhist temple grottoes built from the fifth to the sixth centuries, were excavated and catalogued from 1938 to 1945 by the Institute of Oriental Culture (Tōhōbunka kenkyūsho 東方文化研究所), led by Mizuno Seiichi 水野清一 (1905–1971) and Nagahiro Toshio 長廣敏雄 (1905–1990), both graduates of Kyoto Imperial University.<sup>20</sup> The Japan-China Buddhist Research Association (Nikka Bukkyō kenkyūkai 日華佛教研究會) produced yearbooks from 1936 to 1940 reporting on both contemporary developments within Chinese Buddhism, such as the formation of the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary, as well as elements of Chinese Buddhist history.<sup>21</sup> Finally, a major photographic study of Chinese historical sites, many of which are Buddhist in nature, was published in Japan at the very height of the war. *Shina bunka shiseki* 支那文化史蹟 (Historical cultural relics of China), by Tokiwa and Sekino, was published in twelve photographic and twelve textual volumes from 1939 to 1941. It makes extensive use of photographs and investigations undertaken in occupied areas of China.<sup>22</sup>

Japanese Buddhist scholars were not necessarily supporters of the war, but they did benefit materially from new levels of access to Chinese historical sites and returned to undertake excavations and other studies in occupied China. Their interest in Chinese Buddhist history was part of their own efforts to better understand and articulate their own religious tradition, but these articulations were seldom unconnected to current events and the imperial aspirations of Japan on the East Asian mainland. For example, during the war Tokiwa revisited his earlier work in *Shina Bukkyō shiseki tōchi ki* 支那佛教史蹟踏查記 (Survey record of Chinese Buddhist historical relics), first published in 1938 with a reprint in 1942.<sup>23</sup> In the preface to both editions, Tokiwa reflects on how both Japan and China share a common

<sup>20</sup> Mizuno Seiichi 水野清一 and Nagahiro Toshio 長廣敏雄, *Unkō seikkutsu* 雲岡石窟 (Kyoto: Kyoto daigaku, 1952).

<sup>21</sup> Nikka Bukkyō Kenkyūkai 日華佛教研究會, eds., *Nikka Bukkyō kenkyūkai nenbō* 日華佛教研究會年報 (Kyoto: Ippun dō shuten, 1940–1944). The National Diet Library's digital collections contain scans of all four copies: <<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1073986>>, <<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1073992>>, <<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1073996>>, and <<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1073998>>.

<sup>22</sup> Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bunka shiseki*.

<sup>23</sup> Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定, *Shina Bukkyō shiseki tōchi ki* 支那佛教史蹟踏查記 (Tokyo: Ryūginsha 龍吟社, 1938).

cultural heritage, and how the modern era has been one in which the East Asian Spirit (東亞精神) has undergone a historic revival. Yet the cultural artifacts in China continue to be in a state of peril, subject to destruction and theft. Archaeological investigations such as that carried out by Japanese Buddhist academics were thus helping to protect China's cultural heritage from itself and to save the symbols of the common past shared by all East Asian nations.

For the Chinese Nationalists as well, fighting for their survival against an invading army, internal factions, collaborators, and communists, maintaining control over historical Buddhist sites had a significant strategic value. Asserting ownership over China's cultural heritage sites, and making this ownership a matter of public record through publicizing these sites in print, helped to support the argument that the Nationalists were still the legitimate rulers of China, in contrast to the puppet regimes of Manchukuo and the Nanjing-based government of Wang Jingwei 汪精衛 (1883–1944) established in 1940. Assertion of this control is crucial factor in the reconstruction campaigns discussed later in this chapter. Additionally, as mentioned in the previous section, Buddhist sites had links to other historical civilizations, and thus their protection and reconstruction had a role to play in wartime international relations as well.

One example of this latter role can be found in the Zhonghua Monastery (Zhonghua fosi 中華佛寺) built in Sarnath, India between 1936 and 1937. Originally conceived by the Chinese Buddhist monks Daojie 道階 (1870–1934; A019721) and Deyu 德玉 (A024167), and with the support of the modernist Sri Lankan Buddhist Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1934), construction of the monastery was funded thanks to the leadership of Dai Jitao. Returning from Germany in late 1935 where he was helping prepare for China's participation in the summer Olympic games in Berlin, Dai stopped in Singapore, where the local Chinese lay Buddhist Zhuang Duming 莊篤明 (1892–1947) asked him to support the project. Once he approved the project, a total of two thousand yuan was raised, and with Dai's help another local Chinese merchant, Li Juncheng 李俊成, contributed thirty thousand Singapore dollars to the cause. The monastery was intended to signify and solidify the historic relationship between China and India and would serve as a venue to host visiting Buddha relics and Chinese Buddhist exchange students alike.<sup>24</sup> Although this was a newly built monastery, Buddhist periodicals describe it as reviving the former glory of Buddhism and as bringing the

<sup>24</sup> "Yindu luye yuan Zhonghua si jianzhu jinxun" 印度鹿野苑中華寺建築近訊, *Fojiao gonglun* 佛教公論 1.6–7, February 15, 1936, in MFQ 146:54.

citizens of the two nations closer together, reconstructing the past Buddhist connections between the two civilizations within the new context of international cooperation.<sup>25</sup> That Dai Jitao, one of the highest-ranking officials in the Nationalist government and a lay Buddhist himself, was involved in this project is likely no coincidence, as Dai supported a number of Buddhist activities designed to save the Chinese nation through Buddhist means.

After the outbreak of full-scale war with Japan, in 1940 Dai Jitao left China on a cultural mission to Burma and India to try to gain support from these countries for China in its struggle against the Japanese invasion; he would also visit Chinese communities in Southeast Asia along the way. As the head of the Examination Branch (*kaoshi yuan* 考試院) of the Nationalist government, Dai's official remit had nothing to do with foreign affairs, but it was likely rather because of his personal involvement with Buddhism and his leadership of Buddhist projects in China and the construction of Zhonghua Monastery that he led this mission. In an address given in Chongqing before he left, while he rarely mentions Buddhism by name, Dai describes the longstanding close relationship between the Chinese and Indian peoples and cultures, mentioning the White Horse Monastery 白馬寺, the missionary monks who came to China during the medieval era, and the scholarship that they transmitted. After spending about ten days in Burma he traveled from Yangon to Kolkata, where from November 11 to 14 he met with Chinese community leaders and local officials, visited the Zhonghua Monastery in Sarnath, and then on the 18th he was to visit the Governor-General of India in New Delhi.<sup>26</sup> No great strategic breakthroughs were achieved as a result of this mission; British-controlled India was not yet at war with Japan, and its ability to provide aid was limited. But Dai was working to resurrect historic cultural connections, many of which operated through the medium of Buddhism, in order to generate sympathy and friendship that might one day result in concrete support in China's struggle for survival.

Even during an era of invasion and all-out war, when resources were scarce and the disruption of the war touched every part of Chinese society, Chinese Buddhists continued to work to reconstruct Buddhist monasteries. In fact, because of the importance of historic cultural symbols for the ideological war then taking place, the cultural and political value to the

<sup>25</sup> "Yindu Zhonghua si fuxing xiansheng" 印度中華寺復興先聲, *Fojiao yu Foxue* 佛教與佛學 2.19, July 1, 1937, in MFQ 79:92–96.

<sup>26</sup> Academia Sinica, Institute of Modern History Archives, Taipei, Taiwan, 11-EAP-02660.



state of Chinese Buddhist monasteries only increased during this era. As we enter the period of the early Nationalist party-state in Nanjing and into the Second Sino-Japanese War, the role played by Buddhist monasteries in the nation begins to undergo a radical change: whereas in Imperial China they were called upon for national protection (*huguo* 護國) from disasters and calamity, now the discourse shifts to national salvation (*jiuguo* 救國), a task that involved the entire Chinese nation struggling for its survival. This new role, however, was not necessarily compatible with the aims and values of historic monastery reconstructions, and several crucial questions begin to arise as the Chinese state took a closer interest and made an investment in Buddhist monasteries: Which historic elements are worth repairing and which are better consigned to history? Who decides the trajectory of a reconstructed site? Who is the final authority over leadership of the monastic community: the abbot, lay supporters, or the state? And finally, what is to stop these sites from being turned into museums of the past with no religious activity to speak of? If the value of a site is in its history, in its past, then what use is it as a frame for lived religion?

### Nanjing-Area Monasteries in Service to the Nation

From the very beginning of the Republic of China, Sun Yat-sen had envisioned that Nanjing would become the new capital of a modern China, built upon the heritage of Chinese civilization but radically revolutionized through the application of his Three Principles of the People (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義). When in 1928 the Nationalist Party under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek succeeded in pacifying the remaining Chinese warlords, the party set about transforming this historic city into a capital zone that symbolized both China's past glories and its bright future. The neighborhoods within the old city wall and the suburban regions nearby would all be transformed over the following decade into the political hub of the Republic of China.<sup>27</sup> Similar urban development plans were undertaken elsewhere in China, but the redevelopment of Nanjing was especially important as it was intended to serve as both the symbol of China for the

<sup>27</sup> Charles D. Musgrove, "Building a Dream: Constructing a National Capital in Nanjing, 1927–1937," in *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 139–157, 238–240; Woodridge, *City of Virtues*.



world, hosting diplomats and foreign investors, and a symbol for China's own citizens, where the authority of the Nationalist Party over China's past and future would be on display. As outlined in the previous section, it was the impulse to manage and control symbols of China's past that motivated Nationalist officials to intervene in historic religious institutions, and indeed few major Buddhist monasteries in the Nanjing area escaped the influence of the Nationalist state.<sup>28</sup> In none of the three cases described next does the state itself initiate a reconstruction along the lines of the historic reconstructions previously discussed, but in each case it stamps its influence on a Buddhist monastery that had been reconstructed after the Taiping War, with the result that it is indelibly changed.

### Huiju / Longchang Monastery

One example of the Nationalist state's influence is Huiju Monastery 慧居寺 (PL56075) on Baohua shan 寶華山, about twenty-two miles east of the Nanjing city center, a monastery first built in the early sixth century and historically associated with the Vinaya (*lǜ* 律) school. We know a great deal about the condition of this monastery in 1930 and 1931 thanks to Johannes Prip-Møller visiting it and making it the focus of his epic 1937 book *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*.<sup>29</sup> Like many other religious institutions in the region, Huiju had been destroyed during the Taiping War, but it had subsequently been rebuilt, though Prip-Møller notes that it had been reconstructed in a relatively simple and plain style compared to that depicted in historic records, likely due to limitations in available funds. Nevertheless, by the early 1930s it had regained its position as a major Buddhist monastery, especially well known for its monastic ordinations held twice per year, which in 1930 attracted over four hundred novices and lay supplicants.<sup>30</sup> Evidence from Prip-Møller's study shows that in that year visual symbols of the state had already begun to be integrated into the ritual life of the monastery. Photographs of the ordination ceremony taking place in front of the Great Hall show a pair of crossed flags just in front of the main altar, lashed to the support posts for the hall's roof: on the left, the white star on a blue field of the Nationalist

<sup>28</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 154–156.

<sup>29</sup> Prip-Møller first visited in spring 1930 and again in 1931. Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, 3, 304.

<sup>30</sup> Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, 202, 304.

Party; on the right, the same in the upper-left quadrant of a red field, the flag of the Republic of China. During the rehearsals for the actual ordination ceremony, however, these flags were not in place, so we can infer that they were put there specifically for the ritual proper.<sup>31</sup> Ordination certificates for monks from Huiju from May 1931, by which time the monastery's name had been changed to Huguo Shenghua Longchang Monastery 護國聖化隆昌寺, also feature a prominent white star on a blue background at the top center of the document, along with the slogan "Strengthen the Republic" (*minguo gonggu* 民國鞏固). A sample certificate for a nun from 1925, on the other hand, features no such party symbol and no nationalist slogan.<sup>32</sup>

Further evidence that the party-state was shaping practice at Huiju can be found in the role of Dai Jitao in changing the monastery's name and in holding a series of nation-protecting Dharma assemblies there in November 1931 and later in 1933, a topic that I have explored previously.<sup>33</sup> In April 1931 Dai first announced his intention to help repair structures at Huiju with the aim of holding Dharma assemblies there, and in June he instigated a change of its name from the Manchu-bestowed Huiju to the historical—and strategically significant—Huguo Shenghua Longchang Si (Nation-protecting, sanctifying, grand, and prosperous monastery). The link between these changes and planned events at Longchang and the large national crisis in which the Republic of China found itself was a result of Dai's plan to use Buddhism to strengthen the Chinese nation by giving it a single national religious ideology, and by using the symbolic power of Buddhism to further strategic goals. The ninth Panchen Lama (Thubten Choekyi Nyima, 1883–1937), then recently arrived at Nanjing to participate in the national government, led the first assembly in November 1931, designed to expiate the negative karma of the nation that had led it to its present state of calamity. Dai later suggested that Longchang Monastery ought to internally observe national public holidays associated with the founding of the Republic: the Xinhai revolution, Sun Yat-sen's birthday, and the death of revolutionary martyrs in Guangzhou.<sup>34</sup> Thus Dai Jitao saw Huiju Monastery, in its new incarnation as the Nation-Protecting Sanctifying Longchang Monastery, as serving to help support the nation through religious ritual, and as integrated into the state through displaying national symbols in its ceremonies and on its official

<sup>31</sup> Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, figs. 307, 310, 314, 326.

<sup>32</sup> Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, figs. 329, 330, 331.

<sup>33</sup> Scott, "Buddhist Nationalism."

<sup>34</sup> Scott, "Buddhist Nationalism."

documentation and in observing the sacred events of the national calendar. While neither the state nor Dai Jitao appear to have intervened directly in the operation of the monastery, their influence began to be felt, and although the monastery likely had no objection to hosting nation-protection assemblies and perhaps even benefited from the increased attention, it's clear that the impetus for this new role in saving the nation came from Dai Jitao and other high officials, not from the monastic leadership.

### Fashioning a “Chinese Arlington”: The Transformation of Linggu Monastery

Closer to the new capital of the Republic, other Buddhist monasteries were being affected by the state in a much more direct, and arguably destructive, manner. If the Nanjing city center, bordered by the Yangtze River, Xuanwu Lake, and the Qinhuai River, was to be the area developed into a symbol of China's future under the leadership of the Nationalists, then the mountainous and forested Mount Zijin 紫金山, also known as Mount Zhong 鍾山, to its east would symbolize China's past. Mount Zijin is the location of the tomb of Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–1398), founder of the Ming Dynasty, the era that had been upheld as a positive symbol of Han rule by anti-Manchu elements of the anti-Qing uprisings. It was also the location of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, built between 1925 and 1931. This area thus held two towering symbols of China's past: the resting place of the person who had founded the last dynasty before the “villainous” Qing; and that of the revolutionary credited with the toppling the Qing, founding the Republic, and leading the Nationalist Party.<sup>35</sup> It was also the location of the historic Linggu Monastery examined in chapter 1. In that chapter we saw how the monastery was destroyed during the Taiping War, later rebuilt on a much smaller scale, and how as a result of the war it gained an association with commemorating the war dead. At the start of the 1930s, Linggu Monastery would undergo yet another major transformation, from a diminished but still active Buddhist community into a national monument for the martyrs of the revolution.

<sup>35</sup> Lai Delin, “Searching for a Modern Chinese Monument: The Design of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64.1 (March 2005): 22–55. A photograph of the Sun Mausoleum, elements of which are still under construction, appears in Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bunka shiseki*, X–73.

As mentioned in chapter 1, Prip-Møller visited the site of Linggu Monastery in late summer 1929, publishing his architectural findings in an article later published as “The Hall of Lin Ku Ssu, Nanking” in 1935.<sup>36</sup> One of the few structures still standing from its Taiping-era destruction, the Beamless Hall (*wuliang dian* 無樑殿) was then in very poor condition, with much of the brickwork having fallen away, the roof missing from an entire section, and the walls overgrown with bushes and saplings. The granite column bases of two other main halls, formerly dedicated to Vinaya and Chan practice, were still extant, although the halls were not rebuilt after their destruction in 1659 and had not been part of the pre-Taiping site.<sup>37</sup> Since the post-Taiping reconstruction, the religious activity at Linggu had largely been relocated to a complex of buildings about fifty-five yards to the east of the Beamless Hall, which included the Dragon Deity Shrine erected in 1867 under the direction of Zeng Guofan. The site was not to remain in such a ruined condition for very long, however, and within just a few years after Prip-Møller’s visit, Linggu Monastery would be forever transformed. Lin Sen 林森 (1868–1943), then Chairman of the Republican government, explained the reason for this transformation in the preface he wrote in March 1933 for a new edition of the monastery gazetteer:

Linggu Monastery is located in the forests around Nanjing that curl a finger around the capital. Although it has a long history, it gradually had lost its former appearance. In recent years Mr. Chiang Kei-shek, in order to build a memorial to fallen soldiers to the left side of the monastery, planned on repairing the Beamless Hall and reviving the Record of Public [Service] stupa. This would help guide the flow of merit, improve the twice-yearly harvests, and produce a renewed glory for the location. The ancient site would thus still be protected and maintained.<sup>38</sup>

Lin’s description of the “repair” and “revival” of the site masks the fact that much of the Buddhist monastery was taken over by the Nationalist party-state, repurposed into a public memorial for martyrs of the revolution, and

<sup>36</sup> Prip-Møller, “The Hall of Lin Ku Ssu, Nanking.”

<sup>37</sup> Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, 2.

<sup>38</sup> 「霧谷寺、於金陵叢林、首屈一指、年湮代遠、漸失舊觀。前歲、蔣公介石、因建陣亡將士公墓、於寺之左、近□創議、重脩無量殿、及興復誌公塔。疏導功德水、經營兩稔、煥然一新。古蹟乃因而保存。」 Punctuation added. *Linggu chanlin zhi*, 3–4.

that while the ancient site would receive protection, it was to play a vastly different role than that of the pre-Taiping War Buddhist monastery.

As the Nationalist government settled in to its new capital of Nanjing, officials made grand plans for its transformation into a modern metropolis, the political center of a newly reunified Republic of China. Much of their work involved the state seizure of private land for public purposes, but few were on the same scale as the appropriation of land belonging to Linggu Monastery, which lost more than 2,053 *mu* of land, at least 85% of its landholdings.<sup>39</sup> The transformation of Linggu was first announced in *Neizheng gongbao* 內政公報 (The government gazette) in June 1931, where a brief note reports that the central government had approved plans submitted by the managing committee for the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum relating to the religious property belonging to Linggu Monastery, located within the boundaries of the mausoleum park.<sup>40</sup> In this brief publication it is clear that the work undertaken at Linggu was viewed as part of the larger memorial complex to Sun Yat-sen, whose tomb had just been completed in that year. An announcement in the Buddhist periodical *Weiyin* 威音 the following month, however, makes no mention of Sun's mausoleum and instead announces it as a reconstruction of Linggu Monastery, led by high-ranking figures in the Republican state:

#### Reconstruction of Linggu Monastery

Linggu Monastery, located at the base of Mount Zhong, is to be reconstructed thanks to Dai [Jitao]. Chairman Chiang [Kai-shek] and others have lent their support to the project, and donations have already reached hundreds of thousands [of yuan.] A nine-level stupa is to be built, at the cost of 360,000 yuan.<sup>41</sup>

While this report is indeed accurate, Buddhist readers of *Weiyin* may have been deeply disturbed to learn the purpose of the reconstructed Linggu Monastery site and its new, nine-level stupa. The entire complex was to be transformed into a memorial to those soldiers who have given their lives in the Xinhai Revolution and later revolutionary conflicts, including the

<sup>39</sup> Jeffrey W. Cody, *Building in China: Henry K. Murphy's "Adaptive Architecture," 1914–1935* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 182–190; Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 155–156, 165–175.

<sup>40</sup> “Neizheng bucheng” 內政部呈, *Neizheng gongbao* 內政公報 4.13, June 24, 1931, 28.

<sup>41</sup> 「鍾山下之靈谷寺經戴傳賢發起重修。蔣主席等均贊助進行。募款已達數十萬。建九層寶塔一座。費三十六萬。」 “Chongxiu Linggu si” 重修靈谷寺, *Weiyin* 威音 31, July 15, 1931, in MFQ 34:491.

Northern Expedition, that resulted in the reunification of China under Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists in 1928.

The American architect who designed the overall plan for the site and two of its new structures, Henry K. Murphy (1877–1954), understood it to be a “Chinese Arlington,” a local version of the military cemetery and memorial in Virginia, just across the river from Washington, DC.<sup>42</sup> A burial ground, the Public Cemetery for Fallen Heroes of the Republican Revolutionary Army (*guomin geming jun zhanwang jiangshi gongmu* 國民革命軍陣亡將士公墓), was built on former Linggu Monastery land between 1931 and 1935, with additional tracts of land reserved for future soldiers and officers. The Beamless Hall that Prip-Møller had visited in 1929 was repaired and “rehabilitated” into a ritual hall (*jítáng* 祭堂) for ceremonies honoring the war dead.<sup>43</sup> North of the hall a large circular stone platform was constructed, and behind this were two new structures designed by Murphy in an adaptive intercultural style that he had pioneered in designing new structures for Chinese universities and colleges. First was a memorial hall, nine bays wide and two stories tall, standing on a thick stone foundation itself about the height of a person. The hall was built in the style of grand Chinese buildings and reflects a northern Chinese style, as it does not include the sharply curved gables commonly found in southern Chinese architecture.<sup>44</sup> Finally, behind and slightly above the memorial hall, the nine-level stupa mentioned in the *Weiyin* announcement was built between 1931 and 1933. Rather than serving a Buddhist function, however, this was to be a memorial stupa (*jìnián tā* 紀念塔) for the war dead and built of modern concrete rather than traditional brick. Murphy based his design on the Porcelain Pagoda (*bào'ēn tā* 寶恩塔), the landmark structure formerly in the south of Nanjing that had been destroyed during the Taiping War.<sup>45</sup>

What emerged from the so-called reconstruction of Linggu Monastery was thus not a monastery at all but rather an adapted site dedicated to memorializing and honoring the war dead. As explored in chapter 1, Linggu itself had already acquired an indelible association with the dead of the Taiping War as a result of being on the front lines of fighting and the work of its monks in gathering the remains of the fallen and recording their identities. Now under

<sup>42</sup> Henry K. Murphy used the phrase “Chinese Arlington” in reference to the new site, as quoted in Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 168; Cody, *Building in China*, 191.

<sup>43</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 167–170.

<sup>44</sup> See the plan in Cody, *Building in China*, fig. 44, p. 192.

<sup>45</sup> Cody, *Building in China*, figs. 45–47, pp. 192–194.

the new Nationalist state, it was reborn as a memorial to those who had fallen in conflicts that had taken place far away from Linggu and Nanjing, and the only connection between the site and these events was the implantation of the Nationalist government in nearby Nanjing, and the nearby interment of the Republic's founder Sun Yat-sen. While a few notices about the reconstruction of Linggu Monastery, such as that already cited, appeared in Chinese Buddhist periodicals near the start of the project, the reaction to what ended up being a radical repurposing of a historic Buddhist monastery was quite muted. One of the few instances in which Linggu Monastery is mentioned in Buddhist periodicals following its repurposing is when a biography of Mixiu, the abbot who had led the memorialization of the dead during the Taiping War, was published in 1932.<sup>46</sup> Buddhists did not register their opposition to the transformation of Linggu Monastery in print, but given the very diminished state of the Linggu monastic community prior to this time, as well as the vast power of the Nationalist state to seize and repurpose property at will, this lack of protest is perhaps not so surprising. After the Japanese invasion in 1937 and the fall of Nanjing later that year, the new memorial site appears to have been largely abandoned. An undated photograph by Hedda Morrison (1908–1991), who worked as a freelance photographer in China between 1938 and 1946, depicts the memorial pagoda behind the memorial hall for heroes of the revolution. The flat area in front of the hall is notably overgrown, although both structures appear to still be in good repair.<sup>47</sup>

From 1927 to its fall in 1937, Nanjing was the center of political and ideological power for the Nationalist government, a regime that was attempting to transform nearly every aspect of Chinese society and daily life. Religious sites in close proximity to the capital, including Huiju and Linggu Monasteries, were easy targets and convenient stages for nationalist theater for those officials based in the capital. The two sites present us with two extremes of the type of impact that the Nationalist state could exert on Buddhist monasteries. Huiju Monastery was recruited in service to the nation: it was given a new nation-protecting title, played host to nation-protecting ritual assemblies, and incorporated national symbols into its ordination rituals and documentation. Linggu Monastery was “reconstructed” by relocating the last vestiges of a living monastic community to an ancillary site, transforming the

<sup>46</sup> “Qing Jinling Linggu si shamen Shi Mixiu zhuan,” in MFQ 180:208–209. Mixiu is discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>47</sup> Harvard-Yenching Library, Hedda Morrison Photograph Collection, HOLLIS number olvwork603707, <<http://id.lib.harvard.edu/images/olvwork603707/catalog>>.

core axis of the monastery into a monument to the revolution, and adding two major newly built structures. The outward appearance of the memorial hall and stupa would by no means seem out of place in any Chinese Buddhist monastery site, but their purpose was clear: to memorialize sacrifices made in service of the revolution, the decades-long struggle that culminated in the founding of the new Nationalist government in nearby Nanjing. In both cases there is only a muted participation by the monastics who would traditionally have been the lifeblood of these sites. Huiju—later Longchang—monastics appear to have been at best tolerant of Dai Jitao's ritual performances within their home. Linggu monastics had to make do with a much smaller complex of buildings and would never again regain control over the Beamless Hall and what had been the main axis of Linggu prior to the Taiping War. This state intervention in historic Buddhist monasteries for the purpose of national protection, and later national salvation, would continue into the 1930s and during the period of the Second Sino-Japanese War. As in these cases, the resident monastics would have less and less agency in directing the reconstructions, and local donors would be more and more replaced by funds coming from the state or from the pockets of highly placed officials in the government.

### Xingjiao Monastery 興教寺

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Translation:	Monastery of the Flourishing Teachings
Location:	Near Xi'an 西安; 34.090, 109.038
Alternate Names:	State-Protecting Monastery of the Flourishing Teachings 護國興教寺
Authority Index:	PL000000042510
Damaged/Destroyed:	c. 1862–1863
Repaired/Rebuilt:	1922–1925, 1930–1932, 1939–1942

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Strategically located in the Wei 渭 river valley in northwest China, Chang'an 長安 had been the political and military center of several dynasties, including that of the illustrious Tang 唐 (618–907 CE). Along with Luoyang 洛陽 some 224 miles to the east, it was also an epicenter for the development of Chinese Buddhism, the site of several important monasteries and pagodas. By the



early twentieth century, however, the city, now known by the name of the Ming-era walled city built on the site, Xi'an 西安, was a relative backwater to the rapid economic, political, and cultural developments occurring elsewhere in China. Moreover, during the Warlord Period the entire Guanzhong 關中 region surrounding Xi'an was subject to continued battles between rival warlords, and even after the region was incorporated into the Republic of China it continued to suffer from banditry and unrest.<sup>48</sup> Its strategic significance suddenly re-emerged in 1931 with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and was intensified in 1932 with the January 28th Incident, when the Japanese attacked Shanghai in an attempt to further expand their sphere of influence in China. In response the Nationalist government temporarily relocated from Nanjing to Luoyang, anticipating a Japanese move on the capital. Although such an attack did not yet come, from this time plans were undertaken to develop Xi'an as a potential wartime capital (*peidu* 陪都), the "Western Capital" (*xijing* 西京) of the Republic, to which the government could retreat in the event of a broader invasion by Japan. Even though in the event this would not come to pass—in 1937 the government retreated first to Wuhan and then to Chongqing—the national-level planning committee for the wartime capital did develop Xi'an and its surrounding region into a Chinese bulwark against Japanese invasion.<sup>49</sup> While the city itself would never be directly assaulted by the Japanese, by 1940 Xi'an would end up not far from the frontlines of the war, as the zone occupied by Japanese forces extended as far as Tongguan 潼關, about seventy-five miles east of the Xi'an city walls.<sup>50</sup> From 1932 through to the end of the war, Xi'an would receive high priority in state-directed development projects intended to build it up in preparation for the expected invasion, preparations that were concerned not only with civil infrastructure and military matters but also with the rich historical and cultural heritage present in the area, a heritage that includes several historical Buddhist sites.

Xingjiao Monastery 興教寺 is located about sixteen miles southeast of the Xi'an city center, on the edge of the Zhongnan mountain range 終南山, a vast rugged area famous for its temples and hermitages. The monastery

<sup>48</sup> Pierre-Étienne Will, "Xi'an, 1900–1940: From Isolated Backwater to Resistance Center," in *New Narratives of Urban Space in Republican Chinese Cities: Emerging Social, Legal and Governance Orders*, ed. Billy K. L. So and Madeleine Zelin (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 223–274.

<sup>49</sup> Will, "Xi'an, 1900–1940."

<sup>50</sup> Based on United State Military Academy, "Japanese Occupation, 1940," <<https://web.archive.org/web/20190413093055/https://westpoint.edu/academics/academic-departments/history/chinese-civil-war>>.

was originally constructed in 669 CE to accompany a stupa built to hold the reinterred remains of Xuanzang 玄奘 (c. 602–664), which would later be joined by a flanking pair of stupas for his disciples Kuiji 窥基 (632–682) and Yuance 圓測 (Woncheuk [Wanjuk], 613–696).<sup>51</sup> All three are towering figures in Chinese Buddhist history: Xuanzang made a famous journey to South Asia to retrieve hundreds of Buddhist scriptures; Kuiji was the most famous of Xuanzang's disciples and considered to be the founder of the Weishi 唯識 or Consciousness-Only School of Buddhist philosophy; and the Korean monk Yuance is known for his commentaries on scriptural texts. These three stupas, most importantly that of Xuanzang, are both the reason why the monastery exists and the only element of the site that has remained essentially unchanged throughout its history. In fact, the accompanying buildings receive very little attention in historical sources. The monastery was almost completely destroyed during the Tongzhi era (1861–1875), likely as a result of fighting during the campaign of the Taiping military leader Chen Decai 陳得才 (?–1864) from 1862 to 1863.<sup>52</sup> For nearly six decades the monastery remained in ruins, with the three stupas as the only historical structures left standing.

### First Modern Reconstruction

The first post-Taiping reconstruction of Xingjiao Monastery began around 1920, led by one of the resident monks, Miaofa 妙法 (Zili 自理). Miaofa's master was one Yingchan 應禪, who was abbot of Jianfu Monastery 薦福寺 in Xi'an at the time, the location of the famous Small Wild Goose Pagoda (*xiaoying ta* 小雁塔). When Miaofa arrived at Xingjiao Monastery, it had already lost much of its rental property and its own monastery property had been encroached upon; at the rear of the monastery locals were engaged in firing clay vessels. Besides the three stone stupas there were only two leaky structures on the site. In order to restore the site, Miaofa petitioned the local official for more than a month, finally recovering control over the monastery's original land holdings. By 1922 he had gathered enough materials to rebuild the monastery buildings, but he was not yet able to raise sufficient funds to

<sup>51</sup> Chang'an xian difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 长安县地方志编纂委员会, *Chang'an xianzhi* 长安县志 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 761–762.

<sup>52</sup> There was a battle between Taiping, Nian, and Muslim forces and the Xi'an garrison on May 17, 1862. Jen Yu-wen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 470.

pay the laborers.<sup>53</sup> So far the reconstruction of Xingjiao Monastery had been undertaken with no help from elite monastic, lay, or official patrons, but this would quickly change with the arrival of Miaokuo 妙闊 (1878–1960), who would bring Miaofa's initial work to fruition. In 1922 the Shaanxi Buddhist Association, based in Xi'an and led by Kang Jiyao 康寄遙 (1880–1968; A004859), invited Taixu to come to Xi'an to lecture to the association, and it appears that Miaokuo, who had been lecturing at Huayan University in Shanghai, came along as well.<sup>54</sup>

After Miaokuo had finished his lecturing in Xi'an, he and a few disciples traveled through the mountains south of the city, and upon returning north they asked a few local people in the area the location of the famous Xingjiao Monastery. For some time they were unable to answer, until one hesitantly said, "Could it be the one in Wei 韋 village?," and so Miaokuo hiked up to the spot to see what was there:

I saw a place of thick brush and broken stems. A silent bell. Broken stele and smashed tablets, piled up in a mound. Three broken-down buildings, a rotten corridor, no monastics to be seen. Three stupas in the center. Knocking on the door, suddenly one or two monks appeared. Asking them about the stupas, they answered in a sad voice: "That large one is the relic stupa of master Xuanzang. The stupa will often emit light beams and relics will be scattered on the ground. They are as large as beans, like jade but golden-colored, and they cannot be cut. If one pays homage to the stupa with true faith then you can receive one, but if your intentions are even a little untrue, you won't receive anything. The other two stupas are for Kuiji and Yuance. That which looks like a little hill or a cave, overgrown with grass, is the former Great Hall. Other than that it would be difficult to explain in detail. We monks had for some time wanted to restore this place; if you were able to complete this task, our [gratitude] would be boundless and [your contribution would be] impossible to repay."<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Chen Jingfu 陈景富, *Da Ci'en si zhi* 大慈恩寺志 ([n. p.]: Santai chubanshe, 2000), 63.

<sup>54</sup> "Shaanxi Fojiaohui yangqing fashi han" 陝西佛教會延請法師函, *Haichao yin* 海潮音 3.4 ([June?] 1922), in MFQ 153:193–194.

<sup>55</sup> 「則見荒榛斷梗。啞鐘不鳴。殘碑斷碣。疊疊墳塚。破[室?]三間。腐廊兩楹。寺僧不見。三塔在中。叩其門忽見一二寺僧。問之彼悄悄然曰。其大塔者即昔之玄奘法師之舍利寶塔也。塔常放光舍利分散原上。大如豆。玉質而金色。剖不破。拜塔誠懇則能得之。意稍不誠。不得。二塔者。即昔之窺基圓測二師也。若垤若穴。或莽或茂者。即昔之大雄寶殿也。其餘殆難觀縷告焉。鄙僧早欲興之。卒莫克成其事。師能舉而成之乎。余茫然無以應。」 Miaokuo 妙闊, "Zhongnan shan Xingjiao si ji" 終南山興教寺記, *Haichao yin* 海潮音 12.6, July 15, 1931, in MFQ 178:234–235.

This account of Miaokuo's arrival at Xingjiao, published nearly a decade after the event, emphasizes not only the numinous power of Xuanzang's stupa but also the sorry state of the monastery surrounding it and the inability of its resident monks to reconstruct it. Notably it does not mention Miaofa by name, and indeed, despite the early work that he put into the reconstruction, Miaofa would soon be displaced. A monk from Da Ci'en Monastery 大慈恩寺 in Xi'an soon got in touch with Miaokuo to ask him to take over Xingjiao and eventually overcame Miaokuo's reluctance:

I was invited [to take up the position] three times, and so I was forced to accept. Thus I was publicly sent off to the monastery by the [Shaanxi] Buddhist Association. When the time came to be sent there, although I didn't even have a ceremonial straw hat to wear, the carriages and horses of the spectators [bustled about] like it was market day.<sup>56</sup>

Note that Miaokuo took over the leadership of Xingjiao neither on the invitation of the monastic community nor on his own initiative; rather it was thanks to the direct involvement of the lay-led Buddhist association based in Xi'an. Given the crowd of people gathered to view Miaokuo heading out of Xi'an to take up his position, it was likely an event of some significance for the association.

After he arrived, Miaokuo quickly got to work rebuilding Xingjiao Monastery. In a letter published in *Haichao yin* in February 1923 he called for support to repair and rebuild the monastery buildings. In it he refers to the three stupas at Xingjiao as "sacred relics" (*shengji* 聖蹟), and as part of his reconstruction plans he planned to "establish a school in order to effect the luminous compassionate transformation [of the people]." But the reconstruction of Xingjiao was not a task he could accomplish alone, and thus his request for help: "I believe that this matter needs many types of support. It must rely upon collaborative planning and efforts. The Dharma does not arise alone."<sup>57</sup> Within a few years Miaokuo was able to build a six-bay Dharma hall, making use of the materials that Miaofa had prepared. Accounts of this

<sup>56</sup> 「殷勤三請。故勉允之。於是經佛會公送入院。想送時雖無璵璠以待。而車輛馬匹觀者如市。」 MFQ 178:235.

<sup>57</sup> 「開設學院以期光慈恩之化。」「竊惟事有多端。要賴群策群力。法不孤起。」 Xianyin 顯蔭, "Chang'an Xingjiao si xiujian diantang muyuan qi" 長安興教寺修建殿堂募緣啓, *Haichao yin* 海潮音 3.11–12, February 5, 1923, in MFQ 155:137–138.

reconstruction indicate that Miaofa had departed Xingjiao around the time that Miaokuo arrived, but before long he returned and helped to build the corridors that would connect the lateral buildings, and from about 1924 to 1925 five additional buildings were built on the lateral axis of the monastery.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, in around 1923 Miaokuo was installed as abbot and Miaofa was ousted from leadership—but why? It would seem that Miaofa's reconstruction efforts had stalled, and the Shaanxi Buddhist Association, who had brought Taixu and Miaokuo to Xi'an in the first place, intervened in effecting a change of leadership at Xingjiao. Miaokuo was certainly better connected to the wider world of Chinese Buddhism at the time, having taught in Shanghai and being part of Taixu's social circle. In his 1931 article, he credits Taixu and Kang Jiyao especially for helping him with the reconstruction.<sup>59</sup> These social connections likely helped him to succeed where Miaofa had not. In 1924, while the reconstruction was still proceeding, Miaokuo paid a visit to the Wuchang Buddhist Seminary 武昌佛學院 to lecture on the Huayan school 華嚴宗, which would have been an excellent opportunity to ask for donations and support for his reconstruction work.<sup>60</sup> In 1928 the Shaanxi Buddhist Association dispatched him as a delegate to the second general meeting of the Chinese Buddhist Association in Nanjing, and it appears that he did not return to Xingjiao afterward. As Miaokuo observed, "now I don't know who is living there; first people plant trees, later people rest in their shade," meaning that his own contribution to reconstructing Xingjiao Monastery was finished and others could enjoy the fruits of his labor.<sup>61</sup> Reconstruction work continued at the site, however, and it continued to be initiated by lay Buddhists rather than monastic leaders. In the autumn of 1930, a group of Buddhist laypeople including Zhu Ziqiao 朱子橋 (Zhu Qinglan 朱慶瀾, 1874–1941), a former soldier and provincial governor, came to Shaanxi to undertake philanthropic work. They visited the monastery, where they made a vow to restore the three stupas and the drum and bell towers. This work began in autumn 1931 and was completed in one month at a cost of 1,800 yuan.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Chen, *Da Cien si zhi*, 63–64.

<sup>59</sup> MFQ 178:235.

<sup>60</sup> Tang Dayuan 唐大圓, "Zeng Miaokuo fashi hui zhu Shaanxi Xingjiao si" 贈妙闍法師回主陝西興教寺, *Haichao yin* 海潮音 5.7, August 20, 1924, in MFQ 159:401–402.

<sup>61</sup> MFQ 178:235.

<sup>62</sup> Chen, *Da Cien si zhi*, 64. An article from December 10, 1931, describes this repair work and further reports that two government officials had visited the site the previous month to pay homage at the stupas. They had been granted several *śarīra* (Skt., relics) and one of them, a Mr. Tan 譚, donated

Even though the major reconstruction work at Xingjiao Monastery between 1920 and 1925 was led by monks, first by Miaofa and then by Miaokuo, it was the Shaanxi Buddhist Association based in Xi'an that was the primary driving force behind it. They were able to link the reconstruction leader into regional and national networks of patronage that were predicated upon innovative developments in modern Chinese Buddhism, such as increased lay involvement and leadership, a new focus on education and textual study, and a heightened concern for the historical relics of China's Buddhist past such as the three stupas at Xingjiao. Just as this last reconstruction project was being completed, however, the monastery was propelled into a much higher stratum of national importance and began to attract the attention of an entirely new group of reconstruction leaders and patrons.

## Second Modern Reconstruction

As outlined at the start of this section, in late 1931 and early 1932 geopolitical events quickly transformed Xi'an from a historical relic and regional backwater into a strategic base and potential future stronghold for the government of the Republic of China. Xi'an was identified as a potential war-time capital and regional command center in the event of the expected future defensive war against Japan, mainly due to its location in north-west China, far from the eastern coast and the frontier with Manchukuo, which were immediately vulnerable to an all-out Japanese invasion. Yet its historical significance as the former capital city of the Western Zhou 西周 (c. 1045–771 BCE) state and the Qin 秦 (221–206 BCE), Western Han 西漢 (206 BCE–9 CE), Sui 隋 (581–618 CE), and Tang 唐 (618–907 CE) dynasties was nearly as important as its place in geographic and strategic considerations. Alongside investment in infrastructure and defenses in and around Xi'an during the period from 1931 to the outbreak of the war in 1937, historic sites in the area were also restored at the direction of the Nationalist party-state, including Xingjiao Monastery and a number of other Xi'an-area Buddhist monasteries. In doing so they sought to preserve, protect, but also control symbols of China's past, symbols that could be leveraged

one hundred silver dollars to support repair work. "Xingjiao si buxiu santa" 興教寺補修三塔, *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊 18, December 10, 1931, in MFQ 28:289.

during this era of crisis to show the Chinese people and the world that an ancient civilization with centuries of history was under unjust attack from the Japanese invaders. As discussed earlier in this chapter, historic sites were weapons in the wider ideological struggle over the spirit (*jingshen* 精神) of the nation, of East Asia, and of the future of the region. Asserting control over sites of historic cultural heritage, both in terms of occupying the territory surrounding them and asserting control over their representation in academic and popular media, was a powerful tool in this contest between rival nations, civilizations, and peoples. The move to incorporate historic Buddhist sites, and to some extent the Buddhist religious tradition itself, into a new articulation of Chinese civilization and culture was not solely a project of Chinese state actors. Many Chinese Buddhists welcomed this new positive attention from the state and lent their voice to critiques of Japan's recent aggressive moves in China. An open letter published in the December 10, 1931, issue of *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊 (Buddhist occasional), titled "A Telegram to the Buddhists in Japan on Its Violation of China," publicly criticizes Japanese Buddhists for failing to stand up to the militaristic and imperialistic moves of their government and calls upon them to join Chinese Buddhists in exhibiting a "heroic, compassionate, and strong Buddhist spirit."<sup>63</sup> This periodical issue itself was a special issue covering Taixu's visit to central Shaanxi, and many of its articles address the contribution that Buddhism ought to make to help support the work of national salvation (*jiuguo* 救國) and to address the threat posed by Japan.

Very soon following the reconstruction project led by Zhu Ziqiao in 1931, and right at the beginning of the growing national crisis precipitated by the invasion of Manchuria, Xingjiao Monastery underwent another period of repair and reconstruction. The three stone stupas were repaired in 1932, and in May 1933 a call was issued for support to repair the main gate (*shanmen* 山門) and other buildings and to construct a lecture hall (*jiangtang* 講堂). Leading the project was Kang Jiyao, the head of the Shaanxi Buddhist Association, who a decade earlier had invited Taixu to Xi'an and who had thus brought the reconstruction leader Miaokuo to Xingjiao. Several high-profile donors are also listed, including Zhu Ziqiao and his Wutaishan Universal Salvation General Buddhist Association 五台山普濟佛教總會, who had contributed six hundred yuan to complete stone carving and other

<sup>63</sup> MFQ 28:218.



works.<sup>64</sup> In another article from the same issue, however, it is revealed that problems had emerged with some of the recent repairs:

The work undertaken to repair the Xuanzang stupa was not solidly done. Cracks started to appear early on, and it is in urgent need of further repairs. The work required for this is quite substantial and is not something that a small amount of funds could cover. We estimate that 2,000 yuan is needed to complete the work. Thus we have printed two hundred donation vouchers, with each having a value of ten yuan.<sup>65</sup>

Luckily, Xingjiao was able to raise close to this amount, thanks in large part to the help of some highly placed government officials. A pair of accounting reports (*shouzhì baogào* 收支報告) in this same issue list the donors, amounts donated, and amounts expended on these repairs to Xingjiao Monastery (table 3.1).

Several of the donors listed here are, as one of the reports describe them, *zhongwei* 中委, “central committee members,” and most are elite members of the political stratum of the Republic: Shao Lizi (1882–1967) was one of the co-founders of the Chinese Communist Party, and at the time was chair of the Gansu provincial government; Ju Zheng (1876–1951) was one of the co-founders of the Nationalist Party, was then deputy head of the Judicial Branch (*sifa yuàn* 司法院), and would later become its head; Zhang Puquan (Zhang Ji 張繼, 1882–1947) was then deputy head of the Legislative Branch (*lifa yuàn* 立法院) and would later be appointed head of the committee for preparation of Xi’an as a wartime capital; and, as already mentioned, Dai Jitao was a founding member of the Nationalist party and then head of the Examination Branch. Other donors did not hold national-level positions but were still powerful figures in the political realm: Shi Qingyang 石青陽 (1879–1935) was then a representative in the National government and chair of the committee on Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs; Lin Jing 林競 (Lin Liefu 林烈敷, 1894–1962) was then head of the civil affairs office in the Gansu provincial government; and Chen Shaobai 陳少白 (Chan Siu-bak, 1869–1934) was formerly one of Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary compatriots, later becoming

<sup>64</sup> “Xingjiao si gongcheng jinkuang” 興教寺工程近況, *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊 19, May 1, 1933, in MFQ 28:383–384.

<sup>65</sup> 「所修奘塔，工不堅實，期已破裂，應急補修。然[此?]事工程浩大，非此少數財力所能成[?]，計尚需兩千元譜，即可俊事。茲[?]印捐冊二百份，每冊以十元為限。」 Punctuation added. “Xuanzang ta Xingjiao si muyuan shu” 玄奘塔興教寺募緣疏, *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊 19, May 1, 1933, in MFQ 28:407–408.



**Table 3.1** Donations and Expenses Reported for Xingjiao Monastery, May 1, 1933<sup>a</sup>

Donated	From	Amount (in Silver Dollars)
	Shao Lizi 邵力子	100, paid in full
	Ju Zheng 居正	100, of which 50 paid
	Chen Yingsan 陳英三	20
	Zhang Puquan 張溥泉	100
	Shi Qingyang 石青陽	20
	Chen Shaobai 陳少白	50
	Dai Jitao 戴季陶	400
	Lin Jing 林競	50, not yet paid
	[Not legible]	100, not yet paid
	Wutaishan Buddhist Association	600
<i>Paid Out</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Amount</i>
	To Taixu, for stele calligraphy	50
	Materials for stele rubbing	24
	For the study of Chan meditation 「學禪手用」	105
	Building a perimeter wall and repairs	1,285
<i>Total Paid Out</i>		1,464
<i>Total Outstanding</i>		724

<sup>a</sup> Based on “Xiuli Xingjiao si shouzhi baogao” 修理興教寺收支報告; and “Xingjiao si shouzhi baogao” 興教寺收支報告, *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊 19, May 1, 1933, in MFQ 28:410–412. Another report appears in a later issue from that year, MFQ 28:507. The amounts donated likely represent amounts in the ten-yuan-denominated donation vouchers mentioned: note that all amounts are in multiples of ten, and that some are listed as “paid” (redeemed) while others have been pledged but are still outstanding.

an industrialist in south China.<sup>66</sup> Among these men there are only a few, Dai Jitao chief among them, with known personal connections to Buddhism. The

<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately I have not been able to determine the identity of Chen Yingsan; perhaps he was a son of Chen Zengshou 陳曾壽 (1878–1949)?

sums donated are small but substantial; to put them in perspective, nominal wages for skilled laborers in China in the early 1930s were about one hundred yuan per year.<sup>67</sup> A stele to mark the event was also produced, the text of which was reprinted in a Buddhist periodical in 1934.<sup>68</sup>

Reflecting the broader importance of Xingjiao Monastery to the nation, especially that of its three stone stupas, photographs of the site were published in several Buddhist, academic, and popular Chinese periodicals in the early 1930s.<sup>69</sup> A pair of photographs printed in the Buddhist periodical *Haichao yin* in January 1933 depict two persons standing in front of an unknown structure at Xingjiao. On the right is one He Xupu 何敘浦, holding a carved figure of Kuiji. The caption describes him as a former military man who had turned to Buddhism and recounts how he believes that if all military men were to study Buddhism, then the world would be at peace. On the left is Zhang Puquan 張溥泉, whom we have already seen listed as a donor to the reconstruction project, holding an figure of Yuance. The caption here describes Zhang as a supporter of Korean independence, something he says would preserve peace in East Asia, and that his holding the figure of Yuance, originally from the Korean kingdom of Silla 新羅 (57 BCE–935 CE), symbolizes this.<sup>70</sup> At this time of course Korean independence means independence from the Japanese empire, the force then occupying much of northeast China and threatening the rest of the Republic. Similar photographs depicting the stupas as historical and cultural monuments appear throughout the 1930s in non-Buddhist academic and architectural periodicals. In 1933 a photograph of the three main Xingjiao stupas appeared in a publication by the Beiping Academy (Beiping yanjiuyuan 北平研究院), on the same page as photographs of the Zhou-dynasty tombs in the area. Two years later the Monthly Journal of Shaanxi Education (*Shaanxi jiaoyu yuekan* 陝西教育月刊) printed a photograph of the stupas along with a caption, crediting the Preparation Committee for the Western Capital (Xijing choubei weiyuanhui 西京籌備委員會) for having recently restored them. Finally, in 1937 the journal of the architecture society (*Yingzao xueshe*

<sup>67</sup> Se Yan, "Real Wages and Skill Premia in China, 1858–1936," SSRN (March 14, 2011), table 4, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1785230>>.

<sup>68</sup> Dong Fucheng 董黼丞, "Chongxiu Chang'an Fanchuan Xingjiao si beiji" 重修長安樊川興教寺碑記, *Shanxi Fojiao zazhi* 山西佛教雜誌 1.6, June 15, 1934, in MFQ 75:347–348.

<sup>69</sup> I have also seen an undated and unsourced photograph that is clearly of Xingjiao Monastery, showing the stupas in very poor repair. There are two small huts nearby, and the land surrounding it appears to be under cultivation. This might represent the state of the site prior to the first reconstruction of 1922.

<sup>70</sup> *Haichao yin* 海潮音 14.1, January 15, 1933, in MFQ 183:24.

營造學社) printed a photograph with detail of the brickwork of the main Xuanzang stupa. If this photograph represents its state in 1937 and was not taken earlier, then within a few years of the 1932 restoration the condition of the structure had already begun to deteriorate, as large sections of the outer layer of brickwork have clearly fallen away, and weeds can be seen growing on the upper edges of the stepped levels.<sup>71</sup>

This public display of the site in periodicals and contexts that display China's historical heritage for a national readership is evidence, I believe, of the growing national-cultural significance of historical Buddhist sites. The Xuanzang stupa signified China's glorious past of intercultural discourse and religious fecundity, just as the Zhou tombs signified its domestic dynastic traditions. Certainly many of the high officials and Buddhist associations involved in reconstructing Xingjiao were motivated by personal religious affiliations or the desire to see a historic site preserved for its own sake. Yet the growing national importance of historic sites as symbols of Chinese civilization, and their utility in an ideological war against a newly rising Japanese imperialist threat, is also part of the discourse surrounding this reconstruction and its public display. The weight of the historical value at Xingjiao Monastery was, of course, concentrated in the three stone stupas; notably, none of the ancillary buildings feature in these published accounts, as they had only recently been rebuilt, and while they certainly had value to the resident monastic community, they were not historical monuments like the stupas. The intervention of the state and of highly ranking state officials in reconstructing historical Buddhist monasteries, something we saw emerge as early as the post-Taiping reconstruction of Jiangtian Monastery on Jinshan, begins to increase in frequency and intensity during this period of the early 1930s, alongside the growing exigent threat to the nation following the Mukden Incident and the fall of Manchuria. The value to the nation of these Buddhist monasteries, however, lies primarily in the stone and brick artifacts of the past. The religious community, the central reason for constructing and reconstructing monasteries as a frame for religious life, while clearly important to officials who supported them through personal donations, is much

<sup>71</sup> "Xingjiao sinei zhi ta wei Xuanzang Kuiji Yuance zangdi" 興教寺內之塔為玄奘窺基圓測葬地, *Guoli Beiping yanjiuyuan yuanwu huibao* 國立北平研究院院務匯報 4.6 (1933): n. p.; "Xuanzang ta" 玄奘塔, *Shaanxi jiaoyu yuekan* 陝西教育月刊 7 (1935): n. p.; "Tang-Song ta zhi chuba fenxi: tuban yi:wu, Shaanxi Xi'an Xingjiao si Xuanzang ta" 唐宋塔之初步分析: 圖版壹: 戊, 陝西西安興教寺玄奘塔, *Zhongguo yingzao xueshe huikan* 中國營造學社匯刊 6.4 (1937): n. p. My thanks to Mark McLeister for his help in accessing digital copies of these sources. There is also an undated photograph of Xingjiao Monastery in Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bunka shiseki*, 9:56–57.

less important in the context of the state-driven support for reconstructing these sites.

Several other historic Buddhist sites, along with other symbols of Chinese culture and civilization in and around Xi'an, were also repaired or reconstructed in the early 1930s at the direction of local and national officials, part of building up the city as a "Western Capital" (*xijing* 西京) in preparation for war with Japan. Apart from the repair of Xingjiao Monastery already described, Da Ci'en Monastery 大慈恩寺, a large monastic complex within the Xi'an city walls and dating back to the Sui dynasty (581–618 CE), was reconstructed between 1931 and 1932.<sup>72</sup> An important site in the history of the Consciousness-Only School (*weishi zong* 唯識宗) of Buddhism, Da Ci'en was also one of the key sites in the Tang for translations of Buddhist scriptures into Classical Chinese. Its most distinguishing architectural feature is the Large Wild Goose Pagoda (*daying ta* 大雁塔) at its center, first built in the Tang, later damaged by an earthquake that reduced its height to seven stories, and then repaired in the Ming.<sup>73</sup> A detailed stele inscription produced in August 1932, with the title "The Revival of Xuanzang" (*Xuanzang fuxing* 玄奘復興) in calligraphy by Zhang Puquan, recounts the reasons for reconstructing not only Ci'en Monastery but other Buddhist sites in the Xi'an area as well. After recounting the important role that Buddhism played in the city during its heyday as the Tang capital, the inscription describes more recent events:

In 1930 there was a great famine around this ancient capital. Just at that time General Zhu Ziqiao received a sincere request from the monk Baosheng on Mount Wutai to come to Shaanxi and assist in raising funds to help those affected by this natural disaster. During his leisure time, Zhu visited famous monasteries in the area dating back to the Han and Tang dynasties, including Qinglong Monastery, Huayan Monastery, Qianfu Monastery, Xingjiao Monastery, Wolong Monastery, Tieta Monastery, and so on.<sup>74</sup> What had fallen down at these sites was propped up again, what

<sup>72</sup> Indexed as PL000000042410 in the Buddhist Studies Place Authority Database. Photographs of the site can be found in Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bunka shiseki*, 9:48–55.

<sup>73</sup> O. G. Ingles, "Impressions of a Civil Engineer in China," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 7 (1982): 141–150.

<sup>74</sup> Qinglong Monastery, 青龍寺, was built in the sixth century and important for the development of the Esoteric School (*mizong* 密宗) in China; Huayan Monastery, 華嚴寺, was built in the seventh century and known as the birthplace of the Avatamsaka School (*huayan zong* 華嚴宗) in China; Qianfu Monastery, 千福寺, also known as Tieta Monastery, 鐵塔寺, was later destroyed during wartime—Tieta Road in present-day Xi'an marks its original location; and Wolong Monastery, 臥龍寺, was built in the second century and best known as the location of the Forest of Steles (*beilin* 碑林).

had vanished from these sites was replaced. What had peeled off, fallen off, withered, or broken, was repainted and renewed. . . . Materials and labor costs were all provided by elder General Zhu Ziqiao, director of the department of railroads; Ye Yuhu, department head; Cha Mianzhong, head of the Wutai Universal Salvation Buddhist Association; Yang Zifan; Li Futian, and other lay donors.<sup>75</sup> Their merit is immeasurable.<sup>76</sup>

This account emphasizes the leading role played by Zhu Ziqiao in restoring not only Da Ci'en Monastery but also a number of other monasteries in the area. Each of these sites had deep historical significance for Chinese Buddhism, many of them known as the birthplace of a key Buddhist doctrinal and philosophical school. Yet these were not necessarily especially active centers for Buddhist practice at the time, in contrast to well-known ordination and training centers such as Jiangtian, Tianning, or Huiju Monasteries in distant Jiangnan. We can see, however, how developing Xi'an as a strategic bulwark against Japanese invasion would also involve restoring its historic monuments to the glory of its, and China's, past: they were intended to serve as symbols of the enduring spirit of the Chinese nation and concrete markers of its claim on Chinese territory.

A new institution was also added to Da Ci'en around the time of its restoration, a Buddhist seminary called the Ci'en School Monastery, likely modeled on the structure of Taixu's Wuchang Buddhist Seminary. A financial report published in the May 1, 1933, issue of *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊, a periodical produced by the Shaanxi Buddhist Society in Xi'an, details the finances of the seminary and records that it had received 1,000 yuan from the provincial government, 1,000 yuan from the North China Society (Huabei she 華北社), and a total of 160 yuan from Taixu and his Wuchang Buddhist Right Faith Society.<sup>77</sup> This shows that in this case at least, the site was not intended to be

<sup>75</sup> Ye Yuhu was Ye Gongchuo 葉恭綽 (1881–1968), painter, calligrapher, collector, and politician; and Cha Mianzhong was Cha Liangzhao 查良釗 (1897–1982), educator and philanthropist.

<sup>76</sup> 「民國庚午，關輔大饑，適朱子橋將軍由五台敦請寶生和尚賑災來陝，暇日遊訪漢唐名刹，發願恢復，如青龍，華嚴，千福，興教，臥龍，鐵塔等寺。傾者扶之，缺者補之，剝落凋殘者涂之新之。...材料、工資，悉由朱子橋老將軍、鐵道部總長葉公譽虎、查廳長勉仲、五台普濟佛會會長楊公子繁、李公福田諸大德慨助，其功德無量矣。」 Punctuation added. Liu Zonghan 劉宗漢, "Ci'en si gongde bei" 慈恩寺功德碑, in *Beijing tushuguan cang Zhongguo lidai shike tuoben hui bian* 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本匯編, ed. Beijing tushuguan and Jin Shizu (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1989), 97:23.

<sup>77</sup> "Ci'en zong si shouzhi baogao" 慈恩宗寺收支報告, *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊 19, May 1, 1933, in MFQ 28:408–409. This seminary is mentioned in Shi Dongchu, *Zhongguo Fojiao jindai shi*, 1:338–341.

transformed into a static museum of Buddhism's past but was also planned to help reform Chinese Buddhism from within through the promotion of monastic education along modern lines. In this case, as in others explored in previous chapters, the reconstructed site is not the same as what had existed before. Certain elements of the site, in this case scholarship and perhaps Buddhist scholastic identities, were being newly emphasized.<sup>78</sup>

The reconstructions of Xi'an-area Buddhist monasteries in the early 1930s, including that of Xingjiao Monastery, thus involved the participation of high-ranking local, regional, and national officials, and while some monastics were involved in the campaigns, in historical records and contemporary accounts it is the officials who are usually credited with leading and funding the reconstructions. In the case of Xingjiao a number of monastic structures were newly built or repaired as part of the reconstruction of the site, but in depictions of the reconstructed site the overwhelming emphasis is placed on the three stone stupas, the only elements of the site to survive the Taiping War. In the drive to build up Xi'an and its nearby environs in preparation for a likely Japanese invasion, it is the historical monuments of Buddhist monasteries and their ties to China's cultural heritage that hold value in terms of this national strategy, providing concrete symbols of the longevity and richness of Chinese civilization. These symbols were displayed to a reading public in periodicals of the time, a subtle part of domestic and international propaganda campaigns to gain support for the war of resistance. Although this concern was, I believe, clearly at the forefront of state support for these reconstructions, like many aspects of Republican-era statecraft it does not seem to have been done very effectively. One example: a new gazetteer of Xianning 咸寧 and Chang'an 長安 counties, an area that includes Xingjiao Monastery, was compiled and published in 1936. Although an entry for Xingjiao is included, it provides very little information either about the history of the site or about its then-recent reconstruction. Many local gazetteers contain scanty detail about religious institutions, but the omission of detail about a site that was intended to be culturally and nationally significant

<sup>78</sup> In the same issue, an article reports on a visit by Dai Jiao to Xi'an the previous month, during which he toured area Buddhist monasteries and heard reports from Kang Jiyao, Yang Shuji 楊叔吉, and Tanxu 談虛. Dai expressed his wish that the monuments of ancient Chinese civilization in the area be restored, and to this effect he would request that the Shaanxi provincial government intervene in restoring the nearby Zhou-dynasty tombs. He also lent his personal support to Buddhist institutions in the area, donating four hundred yuan to Xingjiao Monastery, three hundred yuan to a scripture society 經會, and three hundred yuan to the Shaanxi Buddhist association. "Fojie huanying Dai Jitao" 佛界歡迎戴季陶, *Fohua suikan* 佛化雖刊 19, May 1, 1933, in MFQ 28:383.

appears to me to have been a missed opportunity.<sup>79</sup> Religious heritage may have been of increasing importance to the nation, but perhaps anti-religious and anti-superstitious sentiments among Chinese literate elites still ran very strong.

### Third Modern Reconstruction: Reconstruction during Wartime

The Marco Polo Bridge incident in July 1937 provided Japan with a pretext for launching the full-scale invasion of China for which Nationalist authorities had been preparing. The capital Nanjing fell in late 1937, and Wuhan, which had briefly served as a fallback position for the central command, also fell in late 1938. After this the city of Chongqing 重慶, far to the west in the mountains of Sichuan province, would serve as the wartime capital of the Republic until Japan's surrender in 1945. From 1937 through to the end of the war, the Nationalist army fought a campaign of strategic withdrawal, forcing Japanese forces to spend time and resources in capturing and holding Chinese territory, while Communist guerrilla forces harassed Japanese troops from pockets of resistance in the mountains and rural areas. China's entire eastern region, its most densely populated and industrialized heartland, was lost to the invasion, and from 1940 much of Eastern China was under the rule of a Japanese puppet state led by Wang Jingwei, a former official in the Nationalist party.<sup>80</sup> Throughout the war, Buddhist monasteries and other religious institutions would suffer both collateral and intentional damage, as described at the start of this chapter. We might expect that protecting these sites would be a rather low priority for the Republic, since it was fighting for its very survival against a hostile invasion force, but, even during wartime, reconstructions of Buddhist monasteries were carried out under the direction of the state.

Although Chongqing was the official wartime capital and home to the central headquarters of the Nationalist forces, Xi'an served as an unofficial wartime capital for the north-western region known as Huabei 華北. From 1940

<sup>79</sup> Weng Cheng 翁裡 and Song Liankui 宋聯奎, *Xianning Chang'an liangxian xuzhi* 咸寧長安兩縣續志 (1936), reprinted in Huang Chengzhu 黃成助, *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書 229 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1969). Xingjiao Monastery appears on p. 360 of the reprint edition.

<sup>80</sup> Mitter, *China's War with Japan*.

Xi'an was almost on the front line of the Japanese occupied zone, and until the end of the war it would suffer airstrikes from nearby Japanese airbases and be under near-constant threat of being assaulted. It was during this period of strife and uncertainty that another major restoration of Xingjiao Monastery was again undertaken between 1939 and 1942. It was initiated by Cheng Qian 程潛 (1882–1968), a veteran of the Xinhai Revolution and a general in the National Revolutionary army, who while stationed in Xi'an in 1939 made a vow to build a Great Hall and Scriptural Library at Xingjiao Monastery. The ground-breaking ceremony took place on July 27, 1939, and when the project was completed in 1942, those two structures plus a pavilion, a perimeter wall, a main gate, and monastic quarters had all been built; images of Xuanzang, Kuiji, and Yuanze had been carved and installed; and twelve *mu* of land was purchased for the monastery, at a total cost of 127,060 yuan.<sup>81</sup> What, if any, personal relationship Cheng had to Buddhism is as yet unknown, but this campaign to expand and enhance Xingjiao Monastery during wartime also involved several more official figures in the Nationalist state, as recorded by the Buddhist periodical press.

In a one-page article published in the December 15, 1940, issue of *Fohua suikan*, the backers of the in-progress reconstruction campaign describe the undertaking to readers and announce that they are seeking donations to support it. The text of the appeal emphasizes the historical importance of Xingjiao as the location of the remains of Xuanzang and his two top disciples; mentions the previous reconstruction led by Miaokuo; and outlines the scope of Cheng Qian's present campaign. It ends by explaining the goal and importance of this reconstruction:

Today, we have taken on this task for the sake of spreading the Buddhist teachings, and it has also attracted the respect of scholars of governance. The engineers estimate that 70,000 yuan will be required. [Cheng] Qian thus repeatedly appealed to Generallissimo Chiang, and he has generously donated to the cause. What that amount does not cover, we shall appeal to the great worthies and elders of the nation, so that this amount may be successfully raised. If one views this as being done [simply] in order to gain

<sup>81</sup> "Shaanxi liunian lai Fojiao dashi ji" 陝西六年來佛教大事記, *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊 21, December 15, 1940, in MFQ 28:566; *Juanzi bei* 捐資碑, carved in October 1944, quoted in Chen, *Da Cien si zhi*, 65.



the benefits of a merit field, then that is not the original intent of our undertaking the repair of this monastery.<sup>82</sup>

Some support for the reconstruction thus came from the very top of the Nationalist party-state—Chiang Kai-shek himself—while the rest came from the named supporters of the campaign and other donations. The named supporters include several of the persons who had previously donated to the early 1930s campaign, such as Ju Zheng 居正, Zhang Puquan 張溥泉, and Dai Jitao 戴季陶, plus a few new names, including the initiator of this project, Cheng Qian. Also newly appearing are Yu Youren 于右任, then head of the Control Branch (*jiancha yuan* 監察院), who had previously supported the reconstruction of Qixia Monastery; the former warlord Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883–1960), then leading anti-Communist attacks on behalf of the Nationalist army; and Jiang Dingwen 蔣鼎文 (1893–1974), a career soldier and then commander of the tenth war theater, which covered Shaanxi province.<sup>83</sup> The abbot of Xingjiao Monastery, Miaokuo, is also listed, albeit last on the list, but apart from him no other monastic supporters appear on the list.<sup>84</sup> Judging by the leadership and by published records relating to the reconstruction, there was little involvement from local lay donors apart from the elite Buddhist and military men listed here. Indeed the number of current or former military men involved in this reconstruction continues a trend of martial figures supporting Buddhist reconstructions that we have seen appear several times in the course of this study.

Xingjiao Monastery, historically significant as the resting place of the remains of the heroic Buddhist figure Xuanzang and his most well-known disciples, was thus reconstructed three times in the modern era: first in the early 1920s under Miaofa and then Miaokuo; next at the start of the 1930s with some minor repairs led by Zhu Ziqiao and then a more substantial reconstruction under Kang Jiyao; and finally, in the midst of the war with Japan, led by Cheng Qian. As the war progressed, the entire area around Xi'an was deprived of material resources, and many of the then-recently restored

<sup>82</sup> 「今日，擔當為宏化、及治學者所索仰也。[爰?]召工師估計約□費七萬元。潛既亟請於總裁蔣公，慨施淨資。其不足者，同人尚擬告國中大德長者共[成?]此舉焉。若視為求福田利益者之所為，則非同人謀葺斯寺之本意也。」 Punctuation added. “Muxiu Chang'an Xingjiao si qi” 募修長安興教寺啟, *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊 21, December 15, 1940, in MFQ 28:577.

<sup>83</sup> On Yan Xishan, see Donald G. Gillin, *Warlord: Yen Hsi-shan in Shansi Province 1911–1949* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967). On Jiang Dingwen, see Chen Kanzhang 陳侃章, *Fei jiangjun Jiang Dingwen* 飛將軍蔣鼎文 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2012).

<sup>84</sup> “Muxiu Chang'an Xingjiao si qi,” in MFQ 28:577.

buildings were in disrepair, with the three stupas dangerously close to collapse. Da Xingshan Monastery 大興善寺 in the city center, which had also attracted donations for its reconstruction and repair, was later abandoned and has today been reduced to a museum of the Buddhist past, with no functioning religious community on site. Later, during the period of the People's Republic, Xingjiao Monastery was included on the first official list of protected historical sites promulgated in 1961, but it was Xuanzang's stupa that was the main item listed, with the other buildings included only as a footnote.<sup>85</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, the stone stupas were again left to decay, only to be repaired again in the early part of the twenty-first century.<sup>86</sup> More recently in 2007, local authorities began the process of proposing Xingjiao Monastery for inclusion as a UNESCO-recognized site of cultural heritage, but in 2013 it emerged that as part of the plan they proposed to demolish all of the monastic buildings that had been newly constructed in the 1930s and 1940s, leaving only the three stone stupas. This would have been a radical "reconstruction" of the site, stripping away the recent additions, reducing the site to its most historic core elements, and removing entirely the human element of monastic life. Opposition and protest from resident monastics and the local community, however, prevented this plan from being carried out.<sup>87</sup>

## Conclusion

The period from 1928 to 1949 began with the newly unified Nationalist party-state working to expand and deepen its influence into every aspect of Chinese culture and society. While their means to achieve these goals and their successes in doing so were often limited, the state had grand plans of fulfilling the promise of the revolution by eliminating Communism and transforming China into a strong, unified nation-state firmly under their leadership. One important aspect of this was transforming the city of Nanjing and its environs into the political hub of the newly rejuvenated state,

<sup>85</sup> "Wenwu baohu guanli zanzheng tiaoli" 文物保護管理暫行條例, *Zhonghua renmin gonghe guo guowu yuan gongbao* 中華人民共和國國務院公報, March 31, 1961, 76–79. These regulations and the first list of protected sites are discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>86</sup> See photographs published in Song Deming 宋德明 and Yin Zhinong 阴治农, eds., *Xi'an shi dili zhi* 西安市地理志 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1988); Wang Kaijie 王凯杰 et al., eds., *Chang'an xianzhi* 長安縣志 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999).

<sup>87</sup> Li Li'an 李立安, "Wuyue sanshi ri qian chai Xingjiao si" 5月30日前拆兴教寺, *Fenghuang wang* 凤凰网, archived at <[https://web.archive.org/web/20171025021833/https://fo.ifeng.com/news/detail\\_2013\\_04/11/24112888\\_0.shtml](https://web.archive.org/web/20171025021833/https://fo.ifeng.com/news/detail_2013_04/11/24112888_0.shtml)>.

with monuments to China's past and memorials to those who had sacrificed their lives for the revolution. Linggu Monastery, which had been rebuilt on a diminished scale after its destruction during the Taiping War, was completely transformed into a memorial for revolutionary martyrs, with a new Great Hall and pagoda designed on commission by a foreign architect. Yet the Nanjing Decade quickly turned into a period of crisis, as Japan occupied China's northeast and struck at Chinese forces in the treaty-port of Shanghai. Through the 1930s the Nationalists had to contend with a number of threats to the nation, and several high officials sought the support of Buddhism in doing so. Huiju Monastery served well in this capacity under the direction of Dai Jitao, hosting nation-protecting Dharma assemblies and incorporating national symbols into its ordination rituals. When the looming threat turned into reality in the summer of 1937, all of the Nanjing-area symbols of the Chinese nation, and those in most of eastern China, were lost to the invasion, and central command had to retreat to fallback positions in Chongqing, Xi'an, and other cities in the west of China. Here too, Buddhist monasteries continued to attract official attention, now as part of a series of historical monuments that officials within the state sought to protect.

The capacity of Buddhism to play a state-supporting role had long been a part of Chinese religious and political discourse, and certainly the periods covered in previous chapters had their own crises, calamities, and challenges of the type encountered during this period. What had changed now compared to how Chinese Buddhist monastery reconstructions were undertaken and understood during the post-Taiping era and the revolutionary era of the late-Qing early-Republic transition? First, the proliferation of Chinese Buddhist periodicals in the 1920s and 1930s meant that reconstruction projects received much more publicity in print than in previous eras. Secular magazines and journals, for example, printed photographs of the Xuanzang Stupa as a historical architectural relic, but the Buddhist journal *Fohua suikan* provided this study with much more detailed information about the motivations, funding, and people involved in the project, information that was also available to readers of the journal at the time that the reconstruction was taking place. Print media gave these reconstructions a more public exposure, especially among an educated Chinese Buddhist readership. Second, we find a large number of high-ranking civil and military officials involved in reconstructing Buddhist monasteries. Although lay Buddhists such as Zhu Ziqiao and monastic Buddhists such as Taixu were involved as well, most of the named donors for the latter two Xingjiao Monastery reconstructions

were officials in the state apparatus. Very rarely are government bodies credited with donating funds, the Preparation Committee for the Western Capital helping to restore the stupas at Xingjiao Monastery being one example of this; normally it is a case of officials donating as private persons, although their official personas are certainly not ignored when their donations are reported upon and lent their involvement some of the prestige and legitimacy of the state. Finally, in the case of the large, historically significant monasteries examined in this chapter, we see that during this period the reasoning behind the reconstructions and the perceived value of the site begins to shift, from being primarily a numinously charged sacred space serving as a frame for religious life, toward being a monument signifying an ancient civilization and the spirit of the nation that has inherited this past. This notion of Buddhism's value to the nation, as a link to its past cultural glory and as one component of the spirit of the Chinese people, was also under consideration by official bodies at this time. A proposal introduced at the Shaanxi provincial assembly in Xi'an some time in or shortly before 1940 suggested that protecting Buddhism would help to strengthen national cohesion. The deputy chair of the assembly, one Wang Zongshan 王宗山, introduced the plan, supported by six other members, which stated that in the face of the threat posed by the Japanese invasion, the provincial state should lend its official support to Buddhism and in particular should issue strict orders to the military to not damage or destroy Buddhist sites.<sup>88</sup>

The most straightforward way in which Chinese Buddhism could serve the nation, and perhaps also the way that was most likely to gain wide support, was thus through its historical monuments. Focusing on the built structures of Buddhism's past had an important added benefit: stripped of religious persons and rituals, these buildings were much more palatable to a state that was anti-superstitious and deeply skeptical of religion, even though many of its high officials were intensely involved with religion on a personal level. Two fragments of a stone stele, carved during wartime but later lost and only uncovered in September 1995, contain an inscription describing the importance of restoring Xi'an-area cultural heritage to the task of national salvation:

<sup>88</sup> Wang Zongshan 王宗山, "Weihe Fojiao jiaqiang minzu tuanjie" 維護佛教加強民族團結, *Fohua suikan* 佛化隨刊, December 15, 1940, in MFQ 28:574–576.

In 1931 the Japanese invaded Liaodong and later took Shanghai and the capital, whereupon central command discussed establishing Xi'an as a war-time capital. Luminaries of the party-state, Zhang Puquan, Dai Jitao, and Ju [Zheng], each visited for an inspection. Some promoted the repair of the Zhou tombs, in order to revive Chinese culture, while others promoted the repair of the Mao mausoleum, to signify that the Chinese nation still retained its martial spirit. In each case these were sites that showed that the people of the nation took returning to their roots and personal struggle to be a matter of national salvation and survival. In addition, they promoted the repair of the Ci'en stupa, which would rescue and rectify the hearts of the people by means of the Buddhadharma, thus uprooting disorder and returning to the original source of [stable] governance.<sup>89</sup>

Repairing the stupa at Da Ci'en monastery was thus linked to a broader plan of restoring monuments with symbolic value for a nation under threat: the Zhou tombs symbolizing the roots of Chinese culture, the mausoleum of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty symbolizing China's martial spirit, and the Ci'en stupa symbolizing a return to an "original mind" that resists disorder and is well governed. In the restorations of Buddhist monasteries undertaken during this age of national crisis and war, the leaders were thus not only restoring a *Buddhist* site but also a *Chinese* site, one that was intended to symbolize China's rich cultural heritage and to proclaim its continued ability to survive and thrive and in challenging and calamitous times. Of course, other reconstructions continued to take place during this period, but among the largest and the most widely publicized Buddhist monastery reconstructions of this era, state officials and national interests are seldom absent and were often among the leading elements behind the campaigns.

Xi'an, as a former dynastic capital and dynamic center of Buddhist activity, had a number of suitable historic monuments in and around the city. In the main wartime capital of Chongqing, in contrast, historic sites were harder to come by, and attempts to build a new national monument in 1940 ended

<sup>89</sup> 「民國辛未秋，倭入陷遼東，嗣又侵滬，侵及首都，於是中樞議建西安為陪都。黨國先進張公溥泉，戴公季陶，居公覺生，皆先後來視察或倡修周陵，以振興中國文化，或倡修茂陵，以表現中國民族尚武精神。皆示國人以反本自奮為救國圖存之地。又其余力倡修慈恩塔院，蓋以佛法救正人心，拔亂反[?]治之本原也。」 Fan Yaoting 樊耀亭, *Xingjiao Si* 興教寺 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1997), 20, quoted in Zhang Yan 張燕, *Shaanxi Fodao jiao wenhua liuyou ziyuan de kaifa* 陝西佛道教文化旅游資源的開發 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2003), 173.

up being a disaster.<sup>90</sup> The power of history and of historic structures was much more ideologically convincing and emotionally persuasive. They tied the present struggle against crisis to the rich Chinese cultural past without getting tied up in party politics or internecine conflict. It was this impulse that drove the state sponsorship of some of the largest Buddhist monastery reconstructions during this era, even during a time when resources and labor were in critically short supply. The value of these structures as monuments to the Chinese cultural spirit justified this investment. This raises, however, a critical question: If it was the monument, not the monastic life, that was being valued, was it even necessary to have a religious community on the site as well? If history is what is being channeled by these sites, a history that the state wishes to use for its own purposes in the present, then the living monastic community is at best a type of window-dressing for the important stones and bricks, and at worst an impediment to full exploitation of the site. This was not a question that, to my knowledge, was raised during the period of the war or during the civil war that followed. It would gain new urgency, however, during the period that followed, when China had a new state, a new guiding ideology, and a new set of approaches to cultural heritage and religion.

<sup>90</sup> See Lee McIssac, "The City as Nation: Creating a Wartime Capital in Chongqing," in *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 187.

## 4

# Cultural Relics

The Chinese Buddhists are fully aware of the responsibility which time has bestowed upon us. We are willing to follow the footsteps of our ancestors and strive together with our Buddhist brethren of different countries in an intimate cooperation in the task of studying and spreading the Dharma and of serving mankind with friendship and peace.

*The Friendship of Buddhism*, January 22, 1957<sup>1</sup>

It was historical restoration, an invitation to see it as it was, and to leave it, then, in the past tense.

Joseph R. Levenson,  
“The Communist Attitude toward Religion,” 1965<sup>2</sup>

During the first seventeen years of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) between 1949 and 1966, approximately one hundred Buddhist sites in New China were repaired or reconstructed, with most of these reconstructions taking place during the period between 1951 and 1958. These sites ranged from individual stupas to large sprawling monasteries, and while this is not a large number compared to the total number of Buddhist monasteries extant in China before 1949, it is significant considering the attitude toward religion taken by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), now in control of mainland China.<sup>3</sup> Much of this careful preservation work was, unfortunately, lost during the reckless and violent anti-religious destruction of the Cultural Revolution, during which only a handful of historic sites were fortunate

<sup>1</sup> The Buddhist Association of China, *The Friendship of Buddhism* (Beijing: The Nationality Publishing House, 1957), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Richard Clarence Bush Jr., *Religion in Communist China* (Nashville, NY: Abingdon Press, 1970), 328.

<sup>3</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 150.

enough to receive protection. Yet during this early period of the PRC, a time in which so much of Chinese society was being reshaped to fit the new ideological standards of the new era, the state invested substantial resources into rebuilding Buddhist monasteries that had suffered as a result of neglect or damage during the war. Why did the Communist party-state devote so much of its scarce labor and materials into preserving religious institutions? How do these reconstructions differ from those of the earlier modern era? Finally, how has Buddhism in China been itself transformed as a result of this new wave of reconstructions?

In the wake of the religious revival that swept through the PRC after restrictions on religious activities were lifted as part of the Reform and Opening Up (*gaige kaifang* 改革開放) campaign starting in the late 1970s, it is tempting to view the entire early period of the PRC between the revolution of 1949 and the death of Mao in 1976 as one of religious suppression and silence. Yet the first seventeen years of the new era was quite an active one for Chinese religions, who were encouraged to lend their support to nation-building within China and cultural exchanges with other nations, all under the watchful eye of the party-state.

During this era, the forces that shaped the fate of Buddhist monasteries in China mainly came from three groups: the domestic bureaucracy of the CCP party-state, lay and monastic Chinese Buddhist leaders, and state actors involved in the PRC's international relations.<sup>4</sup> Each of these groups had a different set of concerns that drove their involvement. The CCP was concerned with the management and regulation of Buddhism within the PRC, ensuring that Buddhist religious communities could not challenge the power of the party or its ability to enact revolutionary change. Buddhist leaders were concerned with ensuring the survival of their communities, the reconstruction of their monasteries, and the revival of Buddhism after the disruptions of the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War. They had to navigate a new political environment, but they had already had considerable successes in working under the Nationalist party-state. State actors saw the potential of a shared Asian Buddhist history in supporting diplomatic goals and cultivating ties with other Asian countries in the context of the Cold War, and the potential in preserving historic Chinese Buddhist monasteries to these ends. Each of these groups had conflicting aims and designs on Chinese Buddhist

<sup>4</sup> By "state actors" I mean those with a defined role to play in the state, such as diplomats, government officials, or high-ranking Party members, who participate in international relations.



monasteries, and none had absolute autonomy in terms of what they were able to do, at least not until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. Instead, monasteries were caught between competing local, national, and international power structures that were rapidly remapping the social and cultural landscape of China.

In many respects the experiences of Chinese Buddhist monasteries in the period from 1949 to 1966 were radically different from those that had preceded it. First, while the Imperial state and Republican-era states had bestowed patronage upon some religious institutions while attacking and sometimes destroying others, the extent of CCP intervention into religious institutions was unprecedented. The status of Buddhist monasteries in the early PRC was especially precarious; after decades of war, usable structures were in short supply and many monastery buildings were immediately repurposed for other uses. Furthermore, the ideology of revolution and progress inherent in Chinese socialism initially placed little value in historical structures. The focus of the new state was on modernization and development, not preservation. Religious property was redistributed, monastics were encouraged or coerced into joining the labor force, and patriotic religious associations were formed under party supervision. Religious groups that did not easily fit into one of the five official recognized religions were suppressed and scattered.<sup>5</sup> Second, the economic, social, and political circumstances of mainland China also underwent revolutionary change: with the land reforms of the early 1950s, large monasteries could no longer rely upon rental income or wealthy lay donors for support; the rituals and ceremonies that had tied them to local society were derided as superstitious and feudal; and elite officials in new China, organized around the ideals of an atheist socialism, were seldom sympathetic to religious causes. Third, the international political situation in which the PRC found itself was vastly different from that of the early twentieth century. Tensions that began to emerge immediately after the end of World War II had coalesced into the Cold War by 1950, with the PRC initially allied to the USSR and the communist states of Eastern Europe. Newly independent states in South and Southeast Asia, however, many of whom had achieved independence under an anti-imperialist banner but who were also wary of Communism, did not immediately ally themselves with either the USSR or the United States. These states did, however, share with China a Buddhist history among other cultural ties.

<sup>5</sup> Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 148–161.

There were also important continuities for Chinese Buddhist monasteries in the early Cold War era. As previous chapters have argued, since at least the post-Taiping era monastery leaders sought where possible to cultivate good relations with powerful officials in order to gain support for their reconstruction campaigns. Many large Buddhist monasteries could not have been rebuilt after such a disastrous period without this elite support. Officials in the PRC state may have been allied to new ideologies but, as we shall see later in this chapter, they were still in a position to offer support and funding to monasteries under the right conditions and for the right purposes. In terms of their scale or the challenge they represented to large religious institutions, the socio-economic changes of the early PRC were not totally unprecedented. The radical upheavals in the early Ming had presented Buddhist monasteries with similar exigent problems of survival, to which many responded by changing their strategies: seeking out wealthy patrons and establishing investments in land and rental income to ensure their long-term prosperity.<sup>6</sup> With the land reforms and new bureaucratic system of the early 1950s these longstanding economic ties were no longer viable, but new opportunities were about to present themselves.

Finally, Buddhist monasteries had historically served as nexus points for international cultural and intellectual exchange. Buddhists had long traveled across East Asia and the rest of Asia, serving as a conduit for ideas and practices that had a historical impact far beyond the religious sphere.<sup>7</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, most of the Cold War-era Asian states that had not yet firmly aligned themselves with either bloc happened to share strong historic Buddhist ties with China, and many of them, such as Cambodia, Laos, and Nepal, continued to identify as Buddhist cultures and nation-states. Perhaps Buddhism's historic role could be revived as a strategic tool in the international relations of the Asian Cold War. At first glance Buddhism would not appear to have anything to contribute to such a Great Game; Cold War communist states proclaimed the freedom to believe, and to not believe, in religion but in practice strongly advocated scientistic-atheist education and restricted the influence of religious institutions. Capitalist states maintained freedom of religion, but the great powers of Europe and North America had no particular connection to Buddhism. Yet the Cold War was at its strategic

<sup>6</sup> Brook, *Praying for Power*.

<sup>7</sup> Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*; Dorothy C. Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645–770* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2018).

level a war of ideas, and Buddhism remained a powerful idea, one with a strong historical connection to Asia and to a key ideological battleground of the era: peace.<sup>8</sup>

In this chapter I examine Buddhist monastery reconstructions in the People's Republic of China between 1949 and 1966, how the discourse surrounding their reconstruction and use developed, and how these reconstructed sites were put to new uses in the context of the Cold War. The different motivations behind these reconstructions, and the fact that the CCP party-state was behind all of them, necessitates a different approach than that in the previous chapters. Rather than examining a few focus sites in detail, I will instead proceed chronologically through the period, discussing a number of reconstructions that took place across China. My argument here is that the reconstructed monasteries of the early PRC were not intended to serve as the homes of living religious communities, the “frames for religious life” identified by Prip-Møller in the 1930s; instead, these sites were to be museums of a religious past and venues for international cultural events.<sup>9</sup> To reiterate the formulation from the start of this book, they were to be sites with no monastic community that resembled those of past generations—monasteries with bones and stones, but no Buddhist monks.

### **Drawing the Bow: The Chinese Communist Party and Religious Institutions**

The Chinese Communist Party (Zhongguo gongchandang 中國共產黨), founded in the French concession zone of Shanghai in 1921, developed what would become its official approach to religion over the span of several decades. In doing so it combined elements from the work of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895); strategies undertaken by the USSR as it took over the administration of what had been a religiously and ethnically diverse empire; early Republican-era Chinese discourses regarding science and superstition; the experiences of the Chinese soviet bases in rural China; and finally the guiding ideologies of Mao Zedong as he rose to become the preeminent leader of the party during the period of

<sup>8</sup> On the power of ideas and religion's role in the Cold War, see Andrew Preston, “Introduction: The Religious Cold War,” in *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective*, ed. Philip E. Muehlenbeck (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), xi–xxii.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 1.

the Yan'an Soviet. When, in October 1949, the People's Republic of China was proclaimed, the party began to reshape the nation along the social and political models that they had developed during their time as hunted enemies of the Nationalist state and as guerrilla fighters in the anti-Japanese conflict. As with nearly all aspects of society in New China, the boundaries of the religious sphere were determined by communist political ideology and revolutionary values. While freedom of belief in, and freedom to not believe in, religion were officially protected, religious practices, texts, institutions, and sites were subject to strict controls and supervision by the party-state from almost the very beginning of the PRC. The CCP did not seek to do away with religion altogether, even if their guiding Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology saw it as a false belief belonging to an earlier age of human civilization. Instead it would be harnessed to the engine of the party-state and would help to advance the cause of the revolution until such time as the people's revolutionary consciousness (*geming yishi* 革命意識) was raised to a level where religious belief withered away on its own.

The early CCP, founded with direct assistance from Soviet advisors, was heir to an intellectual tradition stretching back to Marx that was both strongly atheist and anti-religious, viewing religion as a false belief and popular delusion that formed part of the controlling apparatus used to oppress the masses. Many founding figures were also part of what became known as the New Culture Movement (*xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動), the wave of modernist, anti-imperialist, and anti-traditional thought that emerged in the wake of the Republican Revolution and the Great War, which was broadcast across China through periodicals such as journals and newspapers.<sup>10</sup> Most reformers associated with this movement had a very negative view of religion, viewing it as contrary to the scientific-materialist worldview that characterized modern nations. As mentioned in chapter 2, in the first issue of *Xin Qingnian* 新青年 (*La Jeunesse*) in 1915, editor Chen Duxiu proclaimed that China ought to be "Free, not enslaved; progressive, not conservative; improving, not regressive; global, not isolated; practical, not formalistic; and scientific, not fanciful."<sup>11</sup> For Chen and others, religious belief fell firmly into the final category of "fanciful" (*xiangxiang de* 想像的) beliefs. Among this vanguard of Chinese thinkers in the early Republic, religion was commonly derided as superstitious, regressive, and anti-scientific. The fact that

<sup>10</sup> Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 140–143.

<sup>11</sup> 「自由的而非奴隸的·進步的而非保守的·進取的而非退隱的·世界的而非鎖國的·實利的而非虛文的·科學的而非想像的」

Protestant and Catholic mission organizations had used their connections to imperial powers to gain access to China only worsened the view of religion among Chinese anti-imperialists. For many early Republican Chinese intellectuals, Christianity provided the exemplar of what a religion was, and thus for them it was forever tainted by its association with imperialist aggression against China and other countries elsewhere in the world. The leaders of the CCP during its first few years of existence had little respect for religious belief or for religious culture, whether it be indigenous Chinese religions or those religions recently brought into China by foreign missionaries.

First-hand experience with rural Chinese society, however, initially in the soviet zones in eastern China and later along the route of the Long March and in the communist bases in north-western China, gradually prompted CCP leaders to adopt a more practical, tactical approach to religion. The orthodox communist approach had been to seek support for revolution from the urban proletariat, the alienated and exploited factory workers who had the most to gain from seizing the means of production. Yet in the 1920s and 1930s China had only just begun to industrialize, and its proletarian population was exceptionally small compared to its tens of millions of rural farmers. Mao was one of the first CCP members to break with party leadership and advocate looking to the “peasants” (*nongmin* 農民) for support, seeing in them the Chinese version of the oppressed masses. Their deeply rooted religious beliefs, however, posed a strong obstacle to raising their revolutionary consciousness and mobilizing them to resist the Nationalist state and local landlords. In 1927 Mao wrote that although most peasants remain superstitious, they will eventually pull down their idols (*pusa* 菩薩, literally “bodhisattvas”) themselves. In the meantime, he advised the party using a quote from *The Mencius*: “Draw [the bow] but don’t fire, and be ready to spring.”<sup>12</sup> Through the 1930s and into the 1940s, the CCP relied on rural Chinese to support them in their struggle to survive Nationalist attacks and in their later guerrilla warfare against the invading Japanese military. They had to tolerate popular religious beliefs for the time being, as attacking them directly would risk alienating their main source of support in their struggle. During this same period, the communist leadership of the USSR,

<sup>12</sup> *Yin er bu fa, yueru ye*. 「引而不發，躍如也。」 Mao Zedong, *Hunan nongmin yundong kaocha baogao* 湖南農民運動考察報告, digital edition, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20190329012425/https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-192703.htm>>. The Foreign Languages Press translation is also quoted in Bush, *Religion in Communist China*, 30.

which continued to exert a strong influence on the thinking of the CCP, was beginning to discover that while simply destroying religious institutions in the Soviet republics was often difficult, co-opting them to help support state policies was much more effective. Especially in those areas of the USSR where ethnicity and religion were closely linked, religious institutions were powerful tools to help integrate the locale into the larger communist society.<sup>13</sup> Mao's strategy, and that of the CCP more generally up to 1949, was thus to tolerate religion while making plans for its future toppling by the peasants under the leadership of the party. The CCP also had to tolerate its political enemies during the period of the war: the brief periods of strategic alliance with the Nationalists against the Japanese, and later cooperation with "imperialist" Americans in the larger context of World War II, were justified ideologically as a temporary expedient means, necessitated by the conditions of the war.<sup>14</sup>

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, the CCP was able to translate their revolutionary ideology into national policy and transform their experience administering local revolutionary areas into programs for the entire nation. There was now a new state approach to religion and to religious property, differing from that of the Republic or the war-time states: in theory, the freedom of religious belief among the people was to be protected, but this freedom would only be granted to progressive elements of society and could be withdrawn if religious activities were determined to be counter-revolutionary. The CCP approach to religion had evolved a great deal in the decades leading up to 1949. In most respects, however, it was not all that different from approaches taken by the Nationalists and other state powers during the previous, fractious Republican Era: regulate, control, and direct religion toward nationalist ends, while suppressing anything identified as "superstition" and any religious group that proved intractable.<sup>15</sup> Most of these state powers, including the CCP, recognized that superstition and undesirable religion could not simply be swept away; it was too deeply embedded in local culture and society, and it would require time for people to be educated to the point where they left such beliefs and practices behind. Yet as explored in the previous chapter, state actors also wanted to lay claim

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Eren Murat Tasar, "Soviet Policies toward Islam: Domestic and International Considerations," in *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective*, ed. Philip E. Muehlenbeck (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), 158–181.

<sup>14</sup> Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 143–146.

<sup>15</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

to and assert authority over elements of Chinese history and culture, many of which were religious in nature, including folk customs (*minsu* 民俗), historic sites, art, poetry, and literature. Communist and CCP ideology was strongly anti-religious, but for the time being at least, they still had to tolerate the deeply ingrained religious beliefs among the masses, especially in the strategically important borderlands of China.

Freedom of religious belief did not exempt religious professionals and institutions from being integrated into the new centrally directed party-led political system and command economy of the new communist state. In the February 11, 1950, edition of *The China Weekly Review*, Alfred Kiang reported on the changes that were then already occurring in Chinese Buddhist monasteries.<sup>16</sup> Kiang's portrayal of Buddhist monks having been subject to "feudalistic backward influences," monasteries becoming corrupted as businesses for collecting donations and fees for services, and religion in general having enjoyed a parasitic existence in Chinese society, is right in line with the emerging approach to religion in the PRC. He reports on two early moves in Shanghai to organize monasteries into materially productive and politically aligned units: first in July 1949, immediately following the liberation of Shanghai by the communist People's Liberation Army, when the Shanghai Buddhist Association set up a Committee for Production and Austerity (生產節制委員會?) and opened mess halls at temples in the city to provide meals to soldiers, workers, and others; and second on January 20, 1950, when the Shanghai League of Democratic Youth (上海民主青年同盟) set up an Association of Shanghai Buddhist Youths (perhaps 上海佛教青年同盟?).<sup>17</sup> Kiang also cites numerous examples of Shanghai monasteries establishing farms, workshops, and factories to produce material goods. Although a new national Chinese Buddhist association was not established until several years later, already in Shanghai in 1950 we see numerous examples of Buddhist monasteries being shaped by new political and ideological realities.

<sup>16</sup> Alfred Kiang, "A New Life Begins in the Temples," *China Weekly Review*, February 11, 1950, 173–174.

<sup>17</sup> Kiang, "A New Life Begins in the Temples," 173. The League of Democratic Youth was an arm of the CCP initially founded in southwest China following the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War. In 1950 the formal name of the national organization was the League of New Democratic Youth, but the Shanghai branch may have maintained the earlier formulation as reported by Kiang here. In 1957 it changed its name to the Communist Youth League of China. See Victor C. Funnell, "The Chinese Communist Youth Movement, 1949–1966," *The China Quarterly* 42 (April–June 1970): 105–130; Bush, *Religion in Communist China*, 299 also mentions the establishment of early local party-guided Buddhist associations.



It is important to note, however, that depending on the zeal of local cadres and specific directives from the center, the impact of new regulations, imperatives, and pressures on the ground varied greatly by place and time. Some Buddhist institutions continued to have a nominally independent existence and were able to remain in operation for many years in much the same way as they had before liberation. The Three Times Study Society (Sanshi xuehui 三時學會), a lay association and publisher founded in Beijing in 1921, was still active as late as 1962; the Jinling Scriptural Press in Nanjing, founded in the 1860s, remained operational up to 1966 and served as a storehouse for printing blocks consolidated from other Buddhist scriptural presses across China; Shanghai Buddhist Books, founded in 1929 and one of the most prolific new-style Buddhist publishers of the Republican era, continued to print and sell Buddhist books until as late as 1956.<sup>18</sup> During this early phase of the PRC, the continued influence of the USSR as a model for regulating and shaping religion cannot be overlooked. The Soviet Union was then also pursuing a gradual approach of shaping religious institutions without destroying them, establishing local religious organizations under party direction and aligning religious institutions to serve party goals.<sup>19</sup>

As outlined in previous chapters, Buddhist monasteries were religious as well as material spaces with a wealth of historical and cultural meaning, and while in the first few years of the PRC the CCP began by applying a relatively light touch when it came to religion, the party faced a much more pressing crisis when it came to material buildings. Decades of war had left many usable structures in China's cities damaged or destroyed, and as the CCP worked to build New China in the early 1950s, there was an immense amount of pressure to fully exploit any surviving buildings, including monastic buildings, and put them to productive use. Even newly built structures were being designed for utility and productivity rather than beauty, as the fledgling PRC economy had to make do with very few resources.<sup>20</sup> There were instances when religious structures were targeted and destroyed in the first few years of the People's Republic, but much of this was the work of "over-enthusiastic"

<sup>18</sup> Bush, *Religion in Communist China*, 324; Zhao Puchu, *Buddhism in China* (Beijing: Chinese Buddhist Association, 1957); Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 543n61.

<sup>19</sup> Odd Arne Westad, "Struggles for Modernity: The Golden Years of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945–1991*, ed. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011), 35–62; Ilya V. Gaiduk, "The Second Front of the Soviet Cold War: Asia in the System of Moscow's Foreign Policy Priorities, 1945–1956," in *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945–1991*, ed. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011), 63–80.

<sup>20</sup> Wilma Fairbank, *Liang and Lin: Partners in Exploring China's Architectural Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 169–172.



local cadres rather than a result of targeted destruction from the center. Much of the early damage to Buddhist religious structures occurred from repurposing rather than destruction. The temporary occupation of monasteries or their permanent conversion for production-oriented uses was widespread from the early 1950s.<sup>21</sup> Yet even when cadres decided to mount an attack against local religious institutions, there was always the possibility that local people would defend their religious institutions from destruction.<sup>22</sup> There was also a very limited awareness in the early PRC of the value of historic sites, including religious sites such as Buddhist monasteries, and of the need to preserve them from destruction. Liang Sicheng, who had done so much work in the Republic to survey and research historic Chinese Buddhist structures, pleaded for the protection of China's architectural traditions and heritage, but for the first several decades of the PRC any such moves were rather limited.<sup>23</sup> Early laws regarding cultural heritage (*wenwu* 文物) were initially focused on preventing their removal from China, a legacy of the long history of foreign looting of Chinese artifacts. On May 24, 1950, the PRC produced guidance on "Interim Methods for Surveying and Excavating Ancient Cultural Ruins and Ancient Tombs" (*Gu wenhua yizhi ji gu muzang zhi diaocha fajue zanxing banfa* 古文化遺址及古墓葬之調查發掘暫行辦法), but there were no formal regulations regarding the protection of cultural heritage until 1961. Thus throughout the early 1950s many Chinese historic sites were torn down to make way for development. Nearly all of Beijing's city walls were demolished, and the historic area south of the Forbidden City was flattened to create Tian'anmen Square.<sup>24</sup> There were thus a number of reasons in the early PRC why Buddhist monasteries might be forever converted or simply destroyed in the name of progress, development, and material production.

There were several state and party organs developed during the first few years of the PRC that had authority over matters relating to religion and cultural and material heritage, and these overlapping jurisdictions meant that it was often unclear which branch of the PRC state had the final authority over

<sup>21</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 50–51; Katz, "Superstition," 668–670. One example of conversion is Chongxiao Monastery in the Xuanwu district of Beijing being converted into a primary school. Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 73–80. See also the list of converted Buddhist sites on 500n113.

<sup>22</sup> "Tantao nongcun zhong de renmin neibu maodun" 探讨农村中的人民内部矛盾, *Renmin ribao* 人民日報, May 8, 1957, 4.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Liang Sicheng 梁思成, "Woguo weida de jianzhu chuantong yu yichan" 我國偉大的建築傳統與遺產, *Renmin ribao* 人民日報, February 19, 1951.

<sup>24</sup> Barbara T. Hoffman, *Art and Cultural Heritage: Law, Policy, and Practice* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 499.

Buddhist monasteries. In 1949 the new central government of the PRC had been set up with a cultural bureau (*wenhua bu* 文化部), and the following year departments were established with purview over the arts, scientific education, cultural artifacts, film, theater, and cultural foreign relations. After a brief reorganization in 1951, in 1954 the *wenhua bu* became the National Cultural Bureau, part of the newly established State Council (*guowu yuan* 國務院), and it was in this incarnation that it would become involved in historic Buddhist sites. In the same year the Religious Affairs Bureau (*zongjiao shiwu bu* 宗教事務部) was established, also as part of the State Council, and it too would have authority over religious institutions in China. It would also, from the start, be involved in hosting foreign guests, especially when religion was important.<sup>25</sup> To these were added the national Chinese Buddhist Association (Zhongguo Fojiao xiehui 中國佛教協會; CBA) established in 1953; a Tibetan branch of the CBA in October 1956; and provincial CBAs in 1957, the latter a product of the short-lived Hundred Flowers period.<sup>26</sup> The aims, strategies, goals, and approaches of all of these organs could and did come into conflict with each other: for example, preserving a particular religious site as a historic cultural artifact might make sense to the National Cultural Bureau, but the Religious Affairs Bureau might see the resident religious group as “superstitious” and thus not deserving of protection.<sup>27</sup>

In the past, Buddhist monasteries had functioned as discrete economic and social bodies, with their own networks of support and patronage in the local area and among national elites. In the PRC, however, this independence no longer fit into the notions of a nationalized planned economy and a classless society. Monasteries were also highly decentralized in terms of bureaucratic governance, relying upon networks of Dharma lineage and doctrinal affiliation, and had long lacked any kind of centralized regional or national organization. Now all Buddhist religious professionals were de jure members of the CBA, but de facto power was held by an elite group, mostly based in the capital Beijing. Imperial and Republican China had had legal frameworks for the governance and regulation of religion, but in practice religious institutions tended to operate based on cultural norms and historical precedent, only rarely appealing to the state for legal protection or aid. Now

<sup>25</sup> See Bush, *Religion in Communist China*, 31.

<sup>26</sup> Bush, *Religion in Communist China*, 318.

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of related issues in pre-war and wartime USSR, see Catriona Kelly, “Religion and Nauka: Churches as Architectural Heritage in Soviet Leningrad,” in *Science, Religion and Communism in Cold War Europe*, ed. Paul Betts and Stephen A. Smith, St Antony’s Series (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 227–251.

there was a new state intent on thoroughly transforming China, but the question of how exactly Buddhist monasteries should fit into the new bureaucracy remained unsettled, and in many ways continues to be so at present: to what extent should monasteries be treated as cultural artifacts, as religious institutions, or as historical relics?<sup>28</sup> Buddhist monasteries faced an uncertain future in this new and rapidly changing environment.

Yet as noted at the start of this chapter, about one hundred Buddhist sites were reconstructed during the early PRC. Far from being attacked or neglected as symbols of feudal society and China's pre-revolutionary past, these sites were, at least up until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, treasured as examples of traditional arts, architecture, and culture. Data on some of these reconstructions is collected in table 4.1. This list of reconstructions is very likely incomplete and does not include smaller sites that may have been repaired locally during this period. It reflects, rather, those reconstructions that were led by the central state authorities and that were publicized during this period in Buddhist and secular publications. Note that the reconstructions took place across China, from the northeast to the southwest, and include sites in major cities as well as in mountainous rural areas.

Why should the CCP, during a period of economic hardship as they worked to rebuild China after decades of war, devote resources to repairing, rebuilding, and reconstructing what were, from a strictly socialist point of view, monuments to superstition and the oppression of the masses? I would argue that these reconstructions were directly linked to the larger geopolitical context of the Cold War, and that we cannot understand the Buddhist monastery reconstructions of this period except within that context. While these campaigns shared some aspects and goals with wartime reconstructions, the scope and direction of religious reconstructions changed drastically during this period, shaped by the emergent needs of a rising world power.

### **The Dawn of the Cold War, 1949–1953**

The earliest state-led reconstructions of Buddhist monasteries in the newly established People's Republic of China were undertaken during a time of revolutionary social change, when the foundations of the new communist

<sup>28</sup> Later on these roles would be joined by that of a sight-seeing and tourism destination, with serious implications for the economy, and autonomy, of religious sites.

state were being laid through land reform and violent purges of those determined to be enemies of the revolution. Even though it had achieved a decisive victory on the mainland, a future resumption of the conflict with the Republic of China seemed likely, and internationally the PRC initially was not diplomatically recognized by much of the world. Thus, while social reconstruction along communist lines proceeded within the PRC, the new nation-state had to work to “reconstruct” its diplomatic ties with neighbors in the region, neighbors whose opinions of the growing post-war communist movement ranged from supportive to hostile. Buddhist monasteries in China were subject to a number of pressures and threats in the early PRC, but they also held the unique value of being concrete symbols of historic cultural heritage, something that the Nationalists had tried, mostly unsuccessfully, to leverage during the war. Now as the alliances and battle-lines of the nascent Cold War began to form, these sites would again prove valuable to a Chinese state seeking to establish its authenticity in the world and friendship with strategic partners.

Even before the official founding of the PRC on October 1, 1949, the successes of the People's Liberation Army in the Chinese Civil War had already begun to shape the future of the Cold War in Asia and had placed China firmly within the communist bloc. The prospect of further communist states in the region, on the other hand, prompted the United States to build up Japan as a bastion of democracy, to pledge to protect the Republic of China on Taiwan, and later to intervene militarily in Korea and Vietnam. The PRC contributed to many of the “hot” conflicts between Cold War powers in the region, first pressuring the Republic of China on the Dachen islands 大陳島 and Jinmen 金門, then rescuing the nearly defeated Democratic People's Republic of Korea and helping to force a stalemate on the Korean peninsula. For its first decade of existence the PRC was a strong ally of the USSR, and even after their diplomatic break in 1959 it continued to support communist causes worldwide. This close alliance with the rest of the communist bloc was not, however, sufficient to establish the PRC on the world stage as the legitimate Chinese state. The map of Asia was quickly being redrawn as the disruptions of the war created opportunities for former imperial possessions to demand their independence, and most of these new states were not immediately drawn into either Cold War bloc.<sup>29</sup> For the PRC, gaining recognition from and establishing relations with these Asian nations

<sup>29</sup> Although the roots of the organized Non-Aligned Movement were established in the mid-1950s, it was not formalized until 1961, with the term not used officially until the 1970s.

Table 4.1. Buddhist Reconstructions in China, 1949–1966<sup>\*a</sup>

Region	Locality	Sites Reconstructed	Date(s)	Notes
Anhui	Anqing 安慶	Yingjiang Monastery 迎江寺, Zhenfeng Stupa 振風塔	1954	MFQB 72:19
	Fuyang 阜陽	Zifu Monastery 資福禪寺		
	Hefei 合肥	Mingjiao Monastery 明教寺, Guangji Monastery 廣濟寺		
	Langya shan 琅琊山	Kaihua Monastery 開化寺		
Zhejiang	Hangzhou 杭州	Lingyin Monastery 靈隱寺	1953–1958	500,000 RMB
	Putuo shan 普陀山	Jian Monastery, Foding Monastery, Hou Monastery, Ziju Monastery		
Fujian	Xiamen 廈門	Nan putuo Monastery 南普陀寺	?–1952	1,000 RMB
		Ri guangyan Monastery 日光岩寺		
	Quanzhou 泉州	Kaiyuan Monastery 開元寺	1952	30,000 RMB
	Fuzhou 福州	Yongquan Monastery 涌泉寺		
Heilongjiang	Harbin 哈爾濱	Dizang an 地藏庵		
Henan	Luoyang 洛陽	Baima Monastery 白馬寺	1952, 1954, 1957	
	Songshan 嵩山	Shaolin Monastery 少林寺		
	Dengfeng 登封	Huishan Monastery 會善寺		

*Continued*

Table 4.1. Continued

Region	Locality	Sites Reconstructed	Date(s)	Notes
Hebei	Zhengding 真定	Longxing Monastery 隆興寺		Included in 1961 list of important cultural properties
	Tianjin <sup>b</sup> 天津	Dabei Monastery 大悲院		
Hunan	Changsha 長沙	Kaifu Monastery 開福寺	1950–1952	13,000 RMB
Hubei	Wuhan 武漢	Guiyuan Monastery 歸元寺, Baotong Monastery 寶通寺		
Jiangxi	Lu shan 廬山	Dalin Monastery 大林寺		
Jiangsu	Nanjing 南京	Qixia Monastery 棲霞寺	1952–1954	8,000 RMB
		Pilu Monastery 毘廬寺		
	Wuxi 無錫	Huishan Monastery 惠山寺		
Guangdong	Guangzhou 廣州	Guangxiao Monastery 光孝寺		Included in 1961 list of important cultural properties
		Liurong Monastery 六榕寺		
Liaoning	An shan 鞍山	Longquan Monastery 龍泉寺, Xiangyan Monastery 香岩寺, Zuyue Monastery 祖越寺, Zhonghui Monastery 中會寺, Daan Monastery 大安寺		

Region	Locality	Sites Reconstructed	Date(s)	Notes
Shanxi	Jiaocheng 交城	Xuanzhong Monastery 玄中寺	1954–1956	155,000 RMB
	Wutai shan 五台山	Foguang Monastery 佛光寺, Xiantong Monastery 顯通寺, Luohan Monastery 羅漢寺, Pusa ding 菩薩頂, Shifang Hall 十方堂	c. 1952–1959	All Wutai shan monasteries through 1952: 163,000 RMB; through 1958: 477,740 RMB; in 1959: 100,000 RMB; for restoration of Foguang Monastery and its beamless hall: 400–500,000 RMB
Shaanxi	Xi'an 西安	Da ci'en si 大慈恩寺 and its Dayan Stupa 大雁塔		50,000 RMB
		Guangren si 廣仁寺		
Sichuan	Chengdu 成都	Da Xingshan Monastery 大興善寺	1955	
		Zhaojue Monastery 昭覺寺, Baoguang Monastery 寶光寺, Daci Monastery 大慈寺, Wenshu Monastery 文殊院		
	Chongqing 重慶	Huayan Monastery 華嚴寺, Luohan Monastery 羅漢寺		
	Emei shan 峨嵋山	Qingyin Hall 清音閣, Fuhu Monastery 伏虎寺, Baoguo Monastery 報國寺, Wannian Monastery 萬年寺		
Yunnan	Kunming 昆明	Huating Monastery 華亭寺		

*Continued*

Table 4.1. Continued

Region	Locality	Sites Reconstructed	Date(s)	Notes
Beijing	Beijing 北京	Guangji Monastery 廣濟寺		1,550,000 RMB
		Fayuan Monastery 法源寺		
		Wofo Monastery 臥佛寺	1955	
		Yonghe Temple 雍和宮		Included on 1961 list; 840,000 RMB
Shanghai	Shanghai 上海	Yufo Monastery 玉佛寺		

<sup>a</sup>Data based on the list in Welch, Buddhism under Mao, appendix D, pp. 423–424; the 1960 edition of Zhao, Buddhism in China; and Chinese Buddhist periodical sources as noted.

<sup>b</sup>From 1949 Tianjin was a separate municipality under the control of the central government, but between 1958 and 1966 it was again part of Hebei province.



in the region was essential: it would increase global pressure on the United Nations to recognize the PRC as the lawful government of China, gain further legitimacy for their new state, help stabilize their borderlands through negotiating agreements on borders, and establish economic links for the circulation of raw materials and industrial technology.<sup>30</sup>

While the PRC supported communist groups and movements overseas, their central goal in regional international relations was not to immediately create outright communist states but rather to show these non-aligned nations that communist states could be cultural and economic partners in spite of not being politically aligned with them. Those in the CCP seeking to do so were, however, faced with a difficult problem: how to engage in diplomacy in the absence of formal diplomatic relations? State-to-state discourse was not possible, so instead this work was undertaken through non-state, cultural diplomacy, drawing upon elements of history and culture to build up a platform for future concrete state-level diplomatic work. One historical cultural element shared by most Asian nations was Buddhism. Religious culture, including Buddhist culture, had been a crucial historical link between China and other countries in Asia for most of the Common Era, and this link was seized upon by the PRC in its international relations efforts of the 1950s and 1960s. To describe these efforts I will use the term “Buddhist diplomacy”: a term that has recently gained currency, which refers to the use of Buddhist-themed cultural exchanges in the pursuit of larger international relations goals.<sup>31</sup>

Nearly every nation in East, Southeast, and South Asia had Buddhism as part of its history, and several were actively constituting themselves post-independence as explicitly Buddhist states. Each was both a potential strategic ally for the PRC but also a potential adversary if it became too closely allied to the Western bloc or if it sought to pursue its own way. Next door in East Asia was Japan, which from 1952 was again free to conduct its own foreign relations. Although it remained closely allied to the United States, it was clear to Japanese leaders that the PRC’s vast natural resources and potential as a consumer market made it a natural trading partner for a developing economy, and thus tentative moves toward establishing trade links began

<sup>30</sup> See the “China at the United Nations” digital collection, Wilson Center, <<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/178/china-at-the-united-nations>>.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, the title of a talk by Anne Blackburn given at UC Santa Barbara in 2011: “Buddhist Diplomacy in Colonial Southern Asia,” <<http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/buddhist-diplomacy-in-colonial-southern-asia/>>.

soon after the end of the Allied occupation.<sup>32</sup> In South Asia, three states share a rugged border with Tibet and Xinjiang, and a fourth, Sri Lanka, is further afield but still strategically significant. Most important of these potential allies was India, not only one of the most populous states in the world but also the birthplace of Buddhism and the historical location of so much Buddhist history. While in modern India Buddhists are a minority group and do not figure strongly in national identity, maintaining religious freedom and diversity was a key plank of Indian governments. Nepal and Bhutan were both kingdoms organized around Buddhism, and both have close historical ties to Tibet. Ceylon (Sri Lanka since 1972) occupies an important position in the region, and its embrace of Buddhism in the modern period shared many features with developments in Chinese Buddhism of the same period.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps most importantly, no South Asian state was immediately drawn into the Western bloc of the Cold War, and states such as India began to emerge as early leaders of the non-aligned movement, so gaining their recognition of the PRC and establishing diplomatic connections was much more of a possibility.

In Southeast Asia several states gained their independence from France and the United Kingdom in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Cambodia, Laos, and Burma all began as independent kingdoms or republics with strong Buddhist identities and would remain so for the first few decades of their independent existence. Although each would later experience socialist upheavals, these Buddhist identities would persevere. Establishing good communication with Burma was especially important for the PRC, as the two countries share a long border that snakes through difficult terrain, and as late as 1960 Nationalist troops continued to harass the PRC from within Burmese territory. Vietnam gained recognition of its independence in 1954 but remained a divided country in a state of civil war, with the communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north being supported by the USSR. The Republic of Vietnam in the south promised freedom of religion, but in practice the largely Catholic elite put a great deal of pressure

<sup>32</sup> Amy King, *China-Japan Relations after World War II: Empire, Industry and War, 1949–1971* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Lauren Richardson and Gregory Adam Scott, “Diplomatic Salvation: Buddhist Exchanges and Sino-Japanese Rapprochement,” in *In Empire’s Wake: The Violent Legacies of Japan’s Imperial Expansion and the Reconstruction of Postwar East Asia*, ed. Barak Kushner and Andrew Levidis (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, forthcoming 2019).

<sup>33</sup> See Anne Blackburn, *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practice in Eighteenth-Century Lankan Monastic Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

on Vietnamese Buddhists, viewing them as likely communist sympathizers. With the exception of the two Vietnamese states, in the early Cold War these Southeast Asian states were also not strongly aligned with either bloc and thus presented the PRC with additional potential for fostering support of their claim as the single legitimate Chinese government, as well as potential trade and strategic alliances.

Several important nations in these regions had historical connections to Buddhism but did not present good opportunities for Buddhist diplomacy. Mongolia had been part of the Qing empire but gained its independence with help from the USSR and remained a Soviet client state. The USSR did promote Mongolian Buddhist institutions, but such connections were not, to my knowledge, pursued by the PRC.<sup>34</sup> From the start of the Chinese involvement in the Korean war, the Democratic Republic of Korea was already firmly allied with the PRC, and the Republic of Korea was unlikely to respond positively to any overtures while there remained a virulently anti-communist government in power and the threat of continuation of the war. Malaysia (and from 1965 independent Singapore) and Indonesia have their own Buddhist communities, but the historical connections to China were not as clear as they were in other cases, although individual Buddhist monastics did maintain links between branch temples in these areas, their largely Chinese-heritage communities, and their ancestral Buddhist communities back in China.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, regions within the PRC with their own cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities were strongly identified with Buddhism and presented an opportunity for engaging in a form of domestic cultural diplomacy to integrate these peoples into the new nation. Tibet had been largely autonomous during World War II and PRC control over this vast territory was still tenuous, while Inner Mongolia, a collection of provinces during the period of the Republic of China, shared its cultural history with the neighboring Mongolian People's Republic but now found itself within the borders of the PRC.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Even prior to the start of the Cold War, the USSR had leveraged Buddhism to help it govern the Mongolian client state. Ernst Benz, *Buddhism or Communism: Which Holds the Future of Asia?* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), 155. This strategy continued into the Cold War; see, for example, Bhikkhu Amritananda, *Buddhist Activities in Socialist Countries* (Peking: New World Press, 1961), 57–69.

<sup>35</sup> This is the subject of a forthcoming book by Jack Meng-tat Chia.

<sup>36</sup> On Tibet see Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

The PRC engaged in Buddhist diplomacy with Asian nations in part as a way of encouraging communist revolutions in those states, but even short of this direct intervention in the political systems of other countries, Buddhist diplomacy presented a means of engaging in international relations when Cold War alliances made direct contact either impossible or strategically problematic.<sup>37</sup> Western intelligence agencies tasked with gathering data on CCP activities were also very interested in the status of Buddhism in the new communist Chinese state, and they were especially concerned whether Buddhists might be supportive of the new regime, in spite of communism's institutional hostility toward religious belief. That Buddhism was being deployed by the CCP for cultural diplomacy purposes was known to Western intelligence organizations quite early on; a British Foreign Office report of January 20, 1953, noted as such:

It is evident that a strenuous effort to extend Communist influence into South and South-East Asia through the medium of Buddhism is now on the programme. The report herewith of the formation of a Chinese Buddhist Association, with the purpose of uniting Buddhists in the "peace" movement, is the more interesting in that the initiators are described as "of Tibetan, Mongolian, Han and Miao nationality and come from Tibet, Inner Mongolia, the north-west, south-west, and other parts of China." The prominent part assigned to the south-west frontier minorities in this movement seems designed to prove to their kinsmen beyond the border that Buddhists can and should support the Communist cause. The emphasis laid by Narawila Dhammaratana on the common origin of Mahayana and Theravada [sic] Buddhism is also obviously intended to the same end. The appeal to the pacifist tendencies of Buddhist thought is, of course, also obvious and may very likely be effective.<sup>38</sup>

The role of Buddhism as a cultural link binding the border regions of the PRC to those of neighboring Asian countries was a vital consideration in how the PRC managed and deployed Buddhism from the early 1950s onward. It had the benefit of engaging with local minority cultures in border regions such as Tibet and Inner Mongolia, areas that had been effectively

<sup>37</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Dhammaratana was a leftist Sri Lankan Buddhist monk who had studied in India. FO 371/99369, "Buddhism in China: Founding of a Chinese Buddhist Association (1952)," 3. Also see David C. Yu, "Buddhism in Communist China: Demise or Co-Existence?," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 39:1 (March 1971): 57.

outside of Chinese control for decades, while leveraging this culture in relations with neighboring nations. In spite of its being a religious tradition in an atheist state, and ostensibly a core part of the feudal society that the CCP sought to overthrow, Buddhism clearly ended up playing an important role in the early Cold War strategy of the PRC, although the full story of this role has yet to be explored.<sup>39</sup>

The CCP thus had very good reasons to restore and protect historic Buddhist sites in China: they were concrete symbols of the Buddhist past that formed the basis for Buddhist diplomacy, and they could serve as stages for diplomatic theater. But the approach was instrumental. Buddhism was valuable as a tool for influencing Buddhists at home and abroad, but in the end it was a religion and as such could not become part of the core ideology of the communist party or state. The Buddhist monasteries that were reconstructed in the PRC in the 1950s and early 1960s were financed with state funds and were rebuilt for state purposes. One CCP figure who was central to these reconstructions was Zhou Enlai 周恩來 (1898–1976), who, in his capacity as premier and foreign minister, was the PRC official most directly involved in the PRC's foreign relations. Although his personal or strategic connection to Buddhism remains unclear, Zhou is also credited with preserving Buddhist historic sites beyond their use in cultural diplomacy, both in the 1950s and later during the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. It appears to have been largely under his direction that the first Buddhist sites were restored at the start of the 1950s, in preparation to showcase China's historic links to Buddhism for foreign visitors and the political theater of cultural exchanges and diplomacy. It was thus perhaps appropriate that two of the earliest Buddhist reconstructions of the PRC era were situated in the new national capital of Beijing.

### Guangji Monastery

Located in the western part of the old walled city of Beijing, Guangji Monastery 廣濟寺 was first built in the Jin 金 dynasty (1115–1234 CE) but only came to prominence after the Ming court relocated the capital to Beijing in the early fifteenth century. The monastery had been substantially reconstructed in the 1920s under its abbot Xianming 現明, but during a planned forty-nine day ritual of prayers for the nation undertaken in late

<sup>39</sup> I hope to contribute to addressing this in the future through a project on Buddhism in the Chinese Cold War.

1931, either incense or a sparking electrical cord caused a fire to break out that ended up destroying many of the main structures, causing an estimated two million yuan of damage.<sup>40</sup> The main hall was reconstructed by 1934, and the monastery continued to be active into the 1940s, during which time a specialist Huayan practice hall (*Huayan daochang* 華嚴道場) was established.<sup>41</sup> In August 1949, as the CCP began to transform the new capital, the civil affairs bureau and its sanitation department initially earmarked Guangji Monastery and a number of other Buddhist sites in Beijing for use as cremation facilities as part of new regulations to regulate the handling of the dead. At this time, apart from mosques and Tibetan temples, which were not subject to the same set of regulations, there were 654 religious institutions in the capital but only 1,239 religious professionals. Even before the official proclamation of the PRC in October of that year, there was pressure on these religious sites to be productive and on religious professionals to receive education in new productive occupations.<sup>42</sup>

In 1952, however, Guangji Monastery suddenly rose to a new position of importance, not only within the capital but also for Buddhism throughout China and around the world. As a strategic move against American involvement in the Korean War, which had ground to a stalemate around the 38th parallel, the PRC hosted the Asia and Pacific Rim Peace Conference (*Yazhou ji taipingyang quyu heping hui* 亞洲及太平洋區域和平會) in 1952. The planning meeting for the conference took place in Beijing in June, and the conference proper held in October attracted some 278 delegates from 37 countries, many from labor organizations or communist political parties.<sup>43</sup> After the planning meeting of the peace conference but before its official opening, Guangji Monastery was reconstructed between August 5 and September 25, 1952, under the auspices of the Beijing City People's Government Construction Bureau (*Beijing shi renmin zhengfu*

<sup>40</sup> "Beiping Guangji si bei fen" 北平廣濟寺被焚, *Weiyin* 威音 37, January 15, 1932, in MFQ 36:230–232.

<sup>41</sup> "Jiaxu chongjian hongci Guangji si daxiong dian quanjing" 甲戌重建弘慈廣濟寺大雄殿全景, *Beiping Fojiao hui yuekan* 北平佛教會月刊 1.3 (January 1935), in MFQ 72:454; "Guangji si qijian Huayan daochang" 廣濟寺啟建華嚴道場, *Tongyuan yuekan* 同願月刊 3.3–4, April 25, 1942, in MFQ 91:71.

<sup>42</sup> "Jing chuangshe binyi guan huozang chang" 京創設殯儀館火葬場, *Renmin Ribao* 人民日報, October 5, 1949, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Mayumi Itoh, *Pioneers of Sino-Japanese Relations: Liao and Takasaki* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 79; "Peace Conference of the Asian and Pacific Regions in Peiping in October 1952," CIA file, General CIA Records, electronic collection, CIA-RDP83-00423R000200270001-9.

jianshe ju 北京市人民政府建設局).<sup>44</sup> Several attendees of the peace conference visited the newly reconstructed monastery during October of that year. Among them was the leader of the Ceylonese delegation, one Narawila Dhammaratana, who visited Guangji and presented Chinese Buddhists with a copy of a palm-leaf scripture and a sapling from the Bodhi tree. In return, Xuyun, then a respected elder monk of Chinese Buddhism, gave him a model stupa encased in glass containing a bone relic from Xuanzang, the Chinese monk who had visited India in the seventh century.<sup>45</sup> The intended symbolism here is clear: Ceylon provides China with examples of the recorded teachings of the Buddha and a link to the site of his awakening, while China responds with a physical piece of the pilgrim who visited the South Asian homeland of Buddhism over a millennium ago.

After the conclusion of the peace conference, in November of that same year preparations began to establish a Buddhist Association of China (Zhongguo Fojiao xiehui 中國佛教協會, BAC) as an officially sanctioned body to represent all of China's Buddhists.<sup>46</sup> Although all five of the PRC's officially recognized religions would eventually have their own national associations, only two were founded prior to the Anti-Rightist Campaigns that began in 1957. The other, the Islamic Association of China (中國伊斯蘭教協會), was first proposed in July 1952 and founded in 1953 with its headquarters in Beijing. The organization for a national Buddhist association began almost immediately following the peace conference, and the international significance of its formation is signified in part by the fact that official notices of its formation were sent by the PRC government to India, Pakistan, and Ceylon.<sup>47</sup> The national religious associations that would later be organized from 1957 onward would be much more strongly oriented toward the management and supervision of their religious adherents within China. These earlier ones, the BAC and the Islamic Association of China, in contrast, appear to have been most strongly directed toward relations with co-religionists outside of China. When the BAC was officially established in May 1953, Guangji Monastery was

<sup>44</sup> Beijing shi shizheng gongcheng gongsi zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 北京市市政工程总公司志编纂委员会, ed., *Beijing shi shizheng gongcheng zong gongsi zhi* 北京市市政工程总公司志 (Beijing: Zhongguo shichang chubanshe, 2005), 10. Welch estimates that between 1952 and 1960, 1,550,000 RMB was spent on reconstructing Guangji Monastery. Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 426.

<sup>45</sup> American Consulate General (Hong Kong), *Survey of China Mainland Press* 444–482 (1952): 8, 12, 15; Buddhist Association of China, *Friendship of Buddhism*, 8, 9. Other delegates are also pictured visiting Guangji Monastery, but I have not been able to confirm their identities.

<sup>46</sup> Zhao, *Buddhism in China* (1957 ed.), 39–40.

<sup>47</sup> FO 371/99369, 18–19.



selected as its headquarters, and as such the monastery would come to serve as a major showcase of Chinese Buddhism for foreign Buddhist visitors to the capital. A photograph of Guangji Monastery taken in or before 1957 depicts a series of large halls in excellent repair, and a photograph taken within the Great Hall shows that it contains an altar, hanging lamps, and hanging scrolls with calligraphy.<sup>48</sup> From 1956 the monastery would also house the Chinese College of Buddhism (Zhongguo Foxue yuan 中國佛學院), the official PRC version of the pre-liberation Buddhist Seminaries established by Taixu and others.<sup>49</sup>

Guangji Monastery had already been an important Buddhist site in Beijing since the Ming dynasty, but it was propelled to a new level of prominence as a result of the events of 1952. Selected to showcase China's Buddhist history for visiting Buddhist delegates to the peace conference, it was soon selected as the headquarters for a new official national religious association, and although it claimed to represent all Buddhists in China, most of its publicized activities through the 1950s would involve cultural exchanges and relations with foreign Buddhists and Buddhist minority groups within the PRC. From 1953 until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, Buddhism in China would assume a new role in the PRC's international relations strategy, and in many cases Guangji Monastery would be the central stage where this role would be played out.

### Yonghe Temple

For all its newly constructed importance as the seat of the BAC, Guangji Monastery was quite clearly associated with "Han" Buddhist traditions, and thus a different venue was needed for events involving Buddhist leaders from Tibet and visitors from countries with historical ties to Tibet. Another site in Beijing, Yonghe Temple 雍和宮, had a direct link to Tibetan-tradition Buddhism dating back to the beginning of the Yongzheng era (1722–1735) of the Qing dynasty.<sup>50</sup> Originally an imperial residence, the site was gradually

<sup>48</sup> Zhao, *Friendship of Buddhism*, photograph facing p. 16, third photograph after p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> Guangji Monastery would later be repaired again in 1972. A photograph published in 1981 shows the buildings to be in good repair. The Buddhist Association of China, *The Guang-Ji Monastery* (Beijing: [s. n.], 1981).

<sup>50</sup> Indexed as PL58474 in the Place Authority Database. I break with my convention of using "monastery" for Buddhist sacred sites with a resident monastic population here, since the *gong* 宮 in the original name is quite unlike that used in other place names. For a discussion of the layout and iconography of the site, see Kevin R. E. Greenwood, "Yonghegong: Imperial Universalism and the Art and Architecture of Beijing's 'Lama Temple'" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2013).



converted into a home for Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhist monks. The Manchu rulers of the Qing kept close ties with Buddhist leaders from both regions, and the temple was used as a monastic administrative center. Yonghe Temple lost this role after the fall of the Qing in 1911, since there was no longer an imperial administration in Beijing, but it continued to be an active center for Tibetan Buddhism and was restored in the 1920s near the end of the period of the Beiyang Government (Beiyang zhengfu 北洋政府).<sup>51</sup> A series of photographs taken prior to 1941 show the structures and religious images to be in very good condition, with only a very small amount of broken plaster as evidence of decay.<sup>52</sup>

After Beijing again became the national capital in 1949, Yonghe Temple, which had been damaged and left to become overgrown during the civil war, was repaired under the auspices of the new state. In the early 1950s the CCP was actively working to extend its authority over Tibet, and Yonghe Temple, with its historic role as administrative center for imperial rule and Tibetan Buddhism, was a strongly symbolic site that could productively be used again in a similar role. In May 1952 Zhou Enlai visited to inspect the site along with Tenzin Gyatso, the tenth Demo Rinpoche (1901–1973, Demu Qidemu huó Fó 德木奇德木活佛).<sup>53</sup> After seeing the halls, historic inscriptions, and images, Zhou is said to have remarked that considering the fine halls and beautiful images, the Tibetan lamas must certainly protect the site, and he mentioned that the state had recently been considering allocating funds for repair works on the temple. Four months later in September 1952 those funds were forthcoming, and reconstruction was completed in 1954, at an estimated cost of 840,000 RMB.<sup>54</sup> The reconstructed site was briefly opened

<sup>51</sup> See the series of photographs and articles in Tianjin jinguangming fahui tekan 天津金光明法會特刊 (n. d.), in MFQB 15:295–315; “Chongxiu Yonghe gong choubei chu kai chengli dahui” 重修雍和宮籌備處開成立大會, *Haichao yin* 海潮音 7.12, January 23, 1927, in MFQ 166:504–505.

<sup>52</sup> Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bunka shiseki*, 12:11–18.

<sup>53</sup> On Tenzin Gyatso, see André Alexander, *The Temples of Lhasa: Tibetan Buddhist Architecture from the 7th to the 21st Centuries* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2005), 216.

<sup>54</sup> 「雍和宮建築相當規格，布局完整，氣魄很大，佛像造形也很美觀，喇嘛們一定要特別保护好雍和宮。最近國家也考慮要撥款重修雍和宮。」“Zhongyang renmin zhengfu ji dang he guojiao lingdao ren zhongshi Yonghe gong” 中央人民政府及黨和國家領導人重視雍和宮, [https://web.archive.org/web/20120701184408/http://www.yonghegong.cn/2008-09/04/content\\_16389424.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20120701184408/http://www.yonghegong.cn/2008-09/04/content_16389424.htm). One article reports that funds had been earlier allocated in 1950 as well, but I have found no confirmation of this from other sources: Liu Ying 劉穎, “Yonghegong ‘sanjue’” 雍和宮“三絕,” *Renmin ribao haiwai ban* 人民日報海外版, April 29, 2002, 8, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20190409085255/http://www.people.com.cn/BIG5/paper39/6090/606444.html>>; Zhao, *Buddhism in China* (1957 ed.), 36; Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 426.

to the public for three days in February 1954.<sup>55</sup> Comparing later photographs of the site to those from the 1920s and 1930s, it appears to have been rebuilt along much the same lines; although some fine details are missing from ornamental features, all of the major buildings of the central site were preserved.

The reconstruction of Yonghe Temple took place a little later than that of Guangji Monastery, but both were undertaken precisely during the period that the BAC was being established and the CCP was working to build showcase venues for its continued protection and support of Chinese and Tibetan-tradition Buddhism. The importance of Tibetan Buddhism in the PRC's Buddhist strategy is underlined by the fact that after Yuanying 圓瑛 (1878–1953; A003587), the first head of the BAC, died in September 1953, his appointed successor was Sherab Gyatso (1884–1968, Xiruo Jiacao 喜饒嘉措), a Tibetan Buddhist monk who had formerly been a Nationalist party member, who would hold the position until 1966.<sup>56</sup> On September 18 and 19, 1954, the 14th Dalai Lama (1935–) and the 10th Panchen Lama (1938–1989), both of whom were in Beijing to participate as delegates to the first National People's Congress, led two days of Dharma teaching at Yonghe Temple. A report in the Buddhist periodical *Juexun* 覺訊 describes how the two Tibetan Buddhist leaders preached to an assembled group of over two thousand nuns, monks, laywomen, and laymen from all corners of Beijing. They are said to have stressed the importance of Buddhist followers “fervently loving the motherland” (*re'ai zuguo* 熱愛祖國). Over one hundred Buddhists from Inner Mongolia, upon hearing that the two lamas had come to the capital, came especially to hear them teach. The Dalai and Panchen Lamas also paid a visit to Guangji Monastery to meet with heads of the BAC, including the newly appointed president of the association, Sherab Gyatso; Vice-President Nenghai 能海 (1886–1967); and Zhao Puchu 趙樸初 (1907–2000), a Buddhist layman who had co-founded the BAC and who would soon rise to become the most prominent Buddhist layman in the PRC.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Greenwood, “Yonghegong,” 21.

<sup>56</sup> Zhao, *Buddhism in China* (1957 ed.), 40; Xirao Nima 喜饒尼瑪, “Xirao Jiacao” 喜饒嘉措, *Xizang lishi wenhua cidian* 西藏历史文化辞典, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20070627091909/http://www.tibetology.ac.cn/experts/showArticle.asp?ArticleID=470>>.

<sup>57</sup> “Dalai he Banchan zai Beijing Yonghe gong kaishi” 達賴和班禪在北京雍和宮開示, *Juexun* 覺訊 8:10, October 1, 1954, in MFQ 103:443. Later in October 1956, a Tibetan branch of the BAC would be established in Lhasa. On Nenghai, see Ester Bianchi, “Sino-Tibetan Buddhism: Continuities and Discontinuities; The Case of Nenghai 能海’s Legacy in the Contemporary Era,” in *Chinese and Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism*, ed. Yael Bentor and Meir Shahar (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 300–318.

Both Guangji Monastery and Yonghe Temple are historic Buddhist sites located near the heart of the new capital, neither of which had had a strong monastic resident community at the beginning of the PRC, but both of which presented the CCP with an element of strategic utility. Both sites were rebuilt to serve as showcases for Buddhism's continued vitality in New China; Guangji as the seat of the national Buddhist association, and Yonghe as the home for Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhist traditions. Each benefited from its historical authenticity, having been established sites for centuries, but they were also newly reinvented in the socialist age in ways that drew upon their past but were oriented toward the international strategic context of the Cold War. Buddhist delegates to Beijing were brought to these sites, and to others that would soon also be reconstructed under the direction of the state, to be shown how tolerant the new nation was toward religious freedoms and how respectful it was of the Buddhist cultural heritage that it shared with other Asian nations. As the Korean War cooled down and the superpowers of the Cold War moved into a new phase under the leadership of Eisenhower and Khrushchev, the PRC would expand this strategy of repairing and reconstructing Buddhist sites to cover much of the nation and would increasingly engage in a Great Game of cultural diplomacy with its Asian neighbors.

### Rebuilding Discourses of Peace, 1953–1959

Of the hundreds of Chinese Buddhist periodicals that appeared in print in the early twentieth century, only a handful survived the Second Sino-Japanese War, and only about three titles continued publishing after 1950.<sup>58</sup> One of these was *Juexun yuekan* 覺訊月刊 (Awakening news monthly), founded in 1947 by the Shanghai Buddhist Youth Association (Shanghai Fojiao qingnian hui 上海佛教青年會), which would remain in print until 1958. Its April 10, 1954, issue includes a special full-page photographic section titled “Asian Buddhists Are Striving to Implement Peaceful Democracy.”<sup>59</sup> A block of text on the page reports on efforts by Japanese Buddhists to repatriate the remains of Chinese forced laborers who had died in Japan during the war; Ceylonese Buddhist delegates to the peace conference promoting cooperation and

<sup>58</sup> Lianlong jushi 莲龙居士, *Zhongguo Fojiao bainian huigu* 中国佛教百年回顾 (s. l.: Trafford Publishing, 2013), 192.

<sup>59</sup> “Yazhou Fojiao tu zai wei zhengqu heping minzhu er fendou” 亞洲佛教徒在為爭取和平民主, *Juexun* 覺訊 8:4, April 10, 1954, in MFQ 103:306.

trade between Chinese and their country; Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian Buddhists' enthusiastic participation in their own national liberation movements; and Burmese Buddhists holding events in their country promoting world peace. The accompanying photographs depict Buddhists from these neighboring Asian nations visiting China and participating in Buddhist and peace-themed public events. This theme of Asian Buddhists from different nations cooperating in the name of peace, set against the background of a deepening Cold War, was very much at the forefront of Chinese Buddhist print discourse in the PRC during the period between 1954 and 1959. The *Juexun* spread reported on a few early examples of what would become a series of cultural delegations, exchanges, and public Buddhist events, intended to create ties between the PRC and other nations who shared a Buddhist cultural heritage. Between 1952 and 1966 at least thirty-six foreign Buddhist delegations visited China, and Chinese Buddhists also went abroad to visit other Asian nations with a Buddhist cultural heritage.<sup>60</sup> This phase of Buddhist diplomacy was only curtailed at the end of the 1950s by the economic pressures brought on by the Great Leap Forward movement, the political and social pressures of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, and the breakdown in relations brought upon by a series of military clashes.

This was also the most active period for Buddhist monastery reconstructions in the PRC, when a great number of historic Buddhist sites were repaired or reconstructed under the auspices of the PRC state. Additionally, there were state funds allocated and donated for the repair of Buddhist sites in other countries as well.<sup>61</sup> Monasteries and other historic Buddhist monuments in the PRC were part of a range of sites, including the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, to which visiting foreign delegates would be brought. Yet rather than seeking to rebuild the human religious communities that are the living heart of monasteries, the reconstructions of the 1950s sought to produce material-only spaces, more museum than monastery. In the middle of this period during the short-lived Hundred Flowers campaign, one lay member of the CBA is reported to have said that the repair and reconstruction of Buddhist sites was only intended to further suppress their institutional independence, removing the remaining autonomy from the on-site community.<sup>62</sup> The reconstructed sites were meant to be places where foreign visitors could be shown the concrete support and protection that the

<sup>60</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 151.

<sup>61</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 552n28.

<sup>62</sup> Bush, *Religion in Communist China*, 318.

PRC was giving to Buddhist history, in hopes of laying a groundwork of trust for official diplomatic relations to follow. Rather than a Buddhist-led cross-fertilization of ideas across borders, with monasteries acting as nexus points of intercultural exchange as they had done for centuries, the Buddhism on display here was carefully orchestrated and controlled, and while the strategic benefits were to be enjoyed in the near future, as Joseph Levenson notes in the epigraph to this chapter, Buddhism itself was meant to be left in the past.<sup>63</sup>

A number of Asian nations participated in events held at reconstructed Chinese Buddhist monasteries during this period, none of which were led by communist parties at the time but each of which had the potential of becoming a valued ally to the PRC in the Cold War. In the remainder of this section I will examine three of these, noting the reconstructed Buddhist sites that provided the venue for Buddhist diplomacy in each case.

## India

India was granted autonomy as a dominion of the British crown in 1947 and from 1950 achieved full independence as a secular republic. It shared with the PRC a strong anti-imperialist element in its founding ideology and was not strongly allied to either Cold War superpower. Yet the borderlands between the new states, the region of the Himalayan mountain range, had been contested territory up to and during World War II, and in the early 1950s the border between India and the PRC was disputed. Both nations had strong motivations to assert sovereignty over this strategically important area, including the region and people of Tibet. While Tibet had been part of the Qing Empire, after its fall and throughout the Republican Era it had enjoyed *de facto* autonomy, and India had offered its support for continued Tibetan autonomy in the early years of its independence.<sup>64</sup> The PRC on the other hand acted quickly to secure control over Tibet, and as already described, recruited the Dalai and Panchen Lamas into the People's Congress. India recognized the PRC in April 1950, the first non-communist state to do so, and although each new state was seeking in its own way to throw off the legacy

<sup>63</sup> Cited in Bush, *Religion in Communist China*, 328.

<sup>64</sup> Bérénice Guyot-Réchart, *Shadow States: India, China and the Himalayas, 1910–1962* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 55–162.

of Western imperialist domination and help establish a strong Asia led by Asians, cooperation in working toward this goal was complicated by overlapping claims over the strategically important Himalayan region.

Alongside the official Sino-Indian diplomatic negotiations that took place in the 1950s, there were a number of Indian cultural delegations that visited the PRC, most of which were not specifically of a Buddhist nature, but they normally included visits to a number of Buddhist sites in the PRC. One of the earliest of these took place from April to June 1952, just a few months prior to the Asia and Pacific Rim Peace Conference in Beijing. One participant, the Indian editor and author Frank Moraes, recorded his impressions of the experience in a book, *Report on Mao's China*, published in 1953.<sup>65</sup> During the journey they were taken to visit two Buddhist sites: the cave-temples near Datong and Yonghe Temple in Beijing. He came away from the experience, however, with a dim view of religious freedom in the PRC:

It had the atmosphere of a museum rather than a temple. No monks chanted their hymns, though later at a shrine in Peking I saw an old monk intoning his prayers. Not a wisp of incense coiled in the air. We saw no worshippers. . . . There is certainly as much "freedom" of religion in China as there is "freedom" of culture. But both are hedged by one paramount limitation. Such freedom can operate only within the bounds prescribed by the Communist party and along the lines laid down by the government.<sup>66</sup>

Elsewhere Moraes's account is full of praise for how the PRC authorities were then placing a high value on the protection of historical monuments, viewing them as examples of the hard work and artisanship of China's people in former times. Yet if the Buddhist stops on this itinerary were intended to impress the Indian visitors with New China's respect for Buddhist culture, they seem to have had the opposite effect, underlining how constrained and limited religious life was under the new regime.

In the spring of 1953, around the time that final preparations for the formation of the BAC were taking place, Zhou Enlai made a state visit to India, primarily to gain support there for an Asian peace bloc to counter American influence in the First Indochina War (1946–1954). He also planned to invite the Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964), to visit China

<sup>65</sup> Frank Moraes, *Report on Mao's China* (New York: MacMillan, 1953).

<sup>66</sup> Moraes, *Report on Mao's China*, 114–115.

around the time of the national day on October 1, but in the event this visit would only take place the following year.<sup>67</sup> After Zhou returned to China he anticipated bringing Nehru to visit Xingjiao Monastery near Xi'an, and so he initiated a series of renovations and repairs there. A primary school that had been recently built was moved off the property, and the state allocated funds for repainting some of the buildings and constructing a guest hall below the scriptural library.<sup>68</sup> The intended symbolism of bringing the state delegation to Xingjiao is clear: as the resting place of Xuanzang's remains, it signifies the long historical relationship between China and India. The history associated with this particular Buddhist site made it uniquely suitable for strategic signification in international relations.<sup>69</sup> Yet it's important to note that while Nehru supported freedom of religious belief and the constitution of India as a multi-religious society, personally he had a quite negative view of religion. His impression was that it tended to be used for "exploitation and the preservation of vested interests," a view that likely reflects his socialist and Marxist roots.<sup>70</sup>

In April 1954 Zhou attended the Geneva Conference, where a group of nations including the United States and USSR sought to resolve issues stemming from the Korean War and to stabilize French Indo-China, two conflicts that the PRC viewed as being within its sphere of influence and interest. It resulted in the separation of French Indo-China into the new nations of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, with the latter temporarily partitioned into communist and capitalist states, to be reunified in a few years after planned elections. China had helped to prevent the creation of a unified South-East Asian state under the tutelage of France, and the new nations that had emerged in the region presented new foreign relations opportunities. Later that year Nehru made the long-planned state visit to the PRC, the first non-communist leader to do so.<sup>71</sup> Part of the visit was taken up with top-level discussions between Nehru and Mao in Beijing, which touched upon future cooperation between the two nations to counter the growing influence of the United States, the growing autonomy of Nepal, and the issue of

<sup>67</sup> "Cable from Zhou Enlai, 'Premier's Intentions and Plans to Visit India,'" June 22, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 203-00005-01, 3-4, trans. Jeffrey Wang, <<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/11243>>.

<sup>68</sup> Chen, *Da Ci'en si zhi*, 65-66.

<sup>69</sup> Although Nehru did not end up visiting Xi'an or Xingjiao Monastery during his state visit, a cultural delegation from India did visit the Large Wild Goose Pagoda in Xi'an in September 1954, a site also associated with Xuanzang. Zhao, *Friendship of Buddhism*, 16.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Transworld, 2009), 68.

<sup>71</sup> Nehru had previously visited China in late 1939 and had met Chiang Kai-shek in Chongqing.



the Himalayan borderlands between the two nations.<sup>72</sup> Nehru then visited a number of Chinese cities: Guangdong, Shanghai, Nanjing, Hankou 漢口, Shenyang 瀋陽 (Mukden), Anshan 鞍山, and Dalian 大連. Although in his recorded notes he does not mention any Chinese Buddhist sites, he was in fact brought to see several. He visited Yonghe Temple in Beijing on October 21, accompanied by Zhao Puchu and other Chinese Buddhists, where he saw a group of lamas reciting sutras and met with the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.<sup>73</sup> As already described, Yonghe Temple had recently been reconstructed by the PRC state and was being used for events relating to Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism. As Tibet continued to be a point of contention between India and China, this meeting with the two Tibetan lamas was likely intended to help build a consensus for future relations between the region and India. In Beijing, Nehru also saw reproductions of Dunhuang cave paintings and copies of Buddhist figures in the Palace Museum.<sup>74</sup> On or around October 29, 1954, Nehru and his delegation visited Linggu Monastery in Nanjing, which, as described previously, has a Buddhist heritage but from the 1930s has instead been devoted to the memory of martyrs of the revolution.<sup>75</sup> Finally, on December 26 at the farewell dinner in Beijing for Nehru before his return to India, he was photographed shaking hands with Sherab Gyatso, the president of the BAC.<sup>76</sup>

Although, based on his notes of this visit, these Buddhist activities do not appear to have made a very deep impression on Nehru, the PRC continued to use Buddhist sites and institutions as a venue for Sino-Indian cultural exchange until the end of the 1950s. For example, another Indian cultural delegation to China in July 1955, led by Anil Kumar Chanda (1906–?), then Deputy Minister of External Affairs, visited Xingjiao Monastery near Xi'an and the Large Wild Goose Pagoda in the city. Later in 1956, Changzhou

<sup>72</sup> Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, vol. 2 (London: Johnathan Cape, 1979), figs. 23 and 24; "Nehru and Mao Hold Crucial Peiping Talk," *The New York Times*, October 20, 1954, 1; "Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Note on Visit to China and Indo-China,'" November 14, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, National Archives Department of Myanmar, Ascension Number 203, Series 12/3; "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to U Nu, Relating to Note on Visit to China and Indo-China (16.11.54)," obtained by You Chenxue, <<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121651>>.

<sup>73</sup> Until recently, photographs of this visit and other photographs were available via the Photo Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Government of India, but they have since been removed. I base my claims here on local copies of these images now in the author's collection.

<sup>74</sup> Buddhist Association of China, *Friendship of Buddhism*, 14.

<sup>75</sup> Photographs show Nehru and his entourage in front of the memorial stupa and descending the stone steps in front of the memorial hall. Author's collection.

<sup>76</sup> Buddhist Association of China, *Friendship of Buddhism*, 13.



Tianning Monastery sent 387 fascicles of scriptures and 4,043 printing blocks to India as a gift.<sup>77</sup> Modern India was constituted as a multi-religious republic, but the deep historical roots of Buddhism there were a key cultural foundation for PRC efforts to try and establish friendly relations and a positive cooperation moving into the 1950s. Such efforts eventually bore fruit during a brief period of strategic cooperation in the middle of the decade but were in the end not sufficient to prevent a larger breakdown of relations as a result of the Dalai Lama's flight to India in 1959 and the subsequent military clashes along the border.<sup>78</sup>

### Burma and Cambodia

Created from the former British colonial state in 1948, Burma (now Myanmar) presented the PRC with another neighboring potential ally that shared with it a common Buddhist cultural heritage. One major strategic concern in Sino-Burmese relations from the 1950s into the 1960s was the continued presence of Chinese Nationalist forces operating independently in the Burmese borderlands. These forces had been cut off from the Nationalist retreat to Taiwan and engaged in repeated, small-scale armed invasions of Chinese territory. The PRC also wanted to cultivate allies in its strategy of countering American influence in southeast Asia, particularly in light of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) that would be signed in September 1954, designed and led by the United States.<sup>79</sup> Burma was a majority-Buddhist nation, and its Buddhist religious culture had recently been transformed by a series of lay-led educational and structural reforms during the colonial era, producing an engaged and media-rich Buddhism that was very much in line with the mainstream of Chinese Buddhism that had emerged from the Republican Era.<sup>80</sup> Buddhism was thus a natural cultural field in which the CCP could work toward establishing shared goals and shared values with Burma and court it as a bulwark against the American-led southeast Asian bloc that was in the process of forming.

<sup>77</sup> "Yindu wenhua daibiaotuan zai Xi'an canguan Xingjiao si da'yan ta" 印度文化代表团 在西安参观兴教寺大雁塔, *Renmin ribao* 人民日报, July 5, 1955, 1; He, "Minguo shiqi Changzhou Tianning si yanjiu," 67.

<sup>78</sup> Guyot-Réchart, *Shadow States*, part 2, 93–162.

<sup>79</sup> See John K. Franklin, "The Hollow Pact: Pacific Security and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization" (PhD diss., Texas Christian University, 2007).

<sup>80</sup> Turner, *Saving Buddhism*.

Zhou Enlai had visited Burma briefly from June 30 to July 1 after his attendance at the Geneva Conference of 1954, and Burmese Prime Minister U Nu (1907–1995) made a state visit to the PRC in December 1954, traveling through Vietnam and arriving in Guangzhou. On December 2 he was photographed shaking hands with Sherab Gyatso, the president of the BAC, twenty-four days before Nehru would be similarly photographed.<sup>81</sup> In a speech delivered on December 3, 1954, and published in the national newspaper *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 (People's daily), U Nu mentions Buddhism as part of Burma's history but does not include China as sharing in this historic culture. On December 14 U Nu and his delegation visited Lingyin Monastery in Hangzhou, which was then in the midst of a 500,000 RMB reconstruction.<sup>82</sup> Nu later embarked on a tour of China that closely resembled that of Nehru. Later in September 1955, a Burmese cultural delegation led by Ne Win (1910/1911–2002) was brought to visit Guangji Monastery and Yonghe Temple in Beijing. U Nu would visit China again in October 1956 when he was temporarily out of office, a visit during which he saw the Chinese Buddhist Academy that had been established at Guangji Monastery the previous month.<sup>83</sup> A few months later the head of state of Cambodia would also make a state visit to the PRC, and his itinerary of Buddhist sites would again follow the pattern established for Nehru and U Nu. On February 14, 1956, Prime Minister (formerly King) Sihanouk (1922–2012) arrived at Beijing airport, where he was greeted by an assembled group of Chinese Buddhist monks. Two days later the delegation visited Guangji Monastery in Beijing, where Zhao Puchu presented him with a set of scriptures translated by two Cambodian Buddhist monks who had lived in China some fourteen centuries previously.<sup>84</sup>

In both the cases of Burma and Cambodia, these newly independent nations had Buddhist majority populations and a national identity that was closely linked to Buddhism. They also leaned toward socialist ideologies but had not yet been fully pulled into the communist Cold War bloc. Courting

<sup>81</sup> Buddhist Association of China, *Friendship of Buddhism*, 17.

<sup>82</sup> Buddhist Association of China, *Friendship of Buddhism*, 18–19; Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 423–424.

<sup>83</sup> Buddhist Association of China, *Friendship of Buddhism*, 22–23, 43.

<sup>84</sup> Buddhist Association of China, *Friendship of Buddhism*, 28–29, 30; “Xihanuke shouxian cangan xuexiao, gongchang he simiao” 西哈努克首相参观学校、工厂和寺院, *Renmin ribao* 人民日报, February 17, 1956, 1; Zhai Qiang, “Zhou Enlai and the Establishment of Cooperative Relations between China and Cambodia, 1954–1965” 周恩来与中柬合作关系的建立 (1954–1965 年), *Nankai Xuebao: Zhexue Shehui Kezue Ban/Nankai Journal: Philosophy, Literature and Social Science Edition* 1 (2014): 24–32.

them in this way, the PRC hoped to ensure their cooperation in fulfilling strategic goals in the southeast and to ensure that they did not fall into the sphere of influence of the United States and its bloc.<sup>85</sup>

Throughout this era the PRC made use of reconstructed Chinese Buddhist monasteries as venues for strengthening top-level diplomatic ties and for laying the groundwork for future international relations through cultural exchanges. This background of Buddhist cultural diplomacy cannot be ignored when considering the concrete international relations successes of the PRC during this era: India under Nehru withdrew all its remaining presence from Tibet in 1954, including civil infrastructure and military advisers, effectively accepting Chinese sovereignty over the region; and in April 1955 at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia, Zhou, Nehru, and U Nu met together and helped establish the foundations of the global Non-Aligned Movement. This strategy of Buddhist diplomacy continued with other Asian countries as well. For example, delegates from Nepal were invited to the PRC in 1957 and shown many of the same sites that Nehru, U Nu, and Sihanouk had seen.<sup>86</sup> The experiences of these delegations left an impression on their participants, but they also furnished excellent promotional material for a global readership. At the time of their publication they were intended as part of a publicity campaign to portray the PRC as both tolerant of Buddhism and religion within its own borders and as a cooperative neighbor to other Asian nations with a Buddhist history. The two main English-language translations authored by Zhao Puchu, *The Friendship of Buddhism* (1957) and *Buddhism in China* (1957 and 1960), were certainly intended for this purpose. On the stage of reconstructed Chinese Buddhist monasteries, the PRC was proclaiming to visitors and readers that it was a protector of Buddhism within China and a promoter of Buddhist values worldwide.

### Cultural Ruins, 1959–1966

Despite Buddhist diplomacy achieving some successes in the 1950s, creating at least the appearance of the PRC as a tolerant, multi-religious nation that was keen to maintain the historic cultural links between it and its Asian

<sup>85</sup> On the development of political relations between the PRC and Burma and Cambodia, see FO 371/110225, "Political Relations between CPG and Burma (1954)"; and FO 371/120903, "Political Relations between China and Cambodia (1956)."

<sup>86</sup> Amritananda, *Buddhist Activities in Socialist Countries*.

neighbors, the broader scope of Chinese international relations encountered several setbacks at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. Although U Nu had assured his people that the PRC had promised not to interfere in Burmese internal affairs, People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops briefly crossed the border in mid-1956.<sup>87</sup> Tibetans rose up against PRC rule in 1959, and the Dalai Lama, who had until then worked at the highest levels of Buddhist diplomacy on behalf of the CCP, fled to political asylum in India. Unable to agree on a mutually satisfactory border through the Himalayas, and in the wake of India granting asylum to the Dalai Lama, India and China went to war for just over a month in 1962. The Indian and Tibetan elements to China's Buddhist diplomacy were suddenly much more difficult, if not impossible, to deploy in practice. Notably, comparing the 1957 and 1960 editions of Zhao Puchu's *Buddhism in China*, in the later edition mentions of Tibetan leaders and most of Tibetan Buddhism have disappeared completely. India was now a rival, and Tibet a restive and potentially rebellious region. At this same time millions of Chinese citizens were starving as a result of natural disasters and the collectivization and misguided development of the Great Leap Forward campaign. Thus the labor, funds, and materials required for reconstructing and repairing Chinese Buddhist monasteries were in short supply.

Chinese Buddhists had welcomed a number of delegations from Asian countries that shared a Buddhist history, but their participation in transnational Buddhist movements was stymied by strategic and political conflicts. The CBA had sent delegations to the annual meetings of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) from 1956, but when Zhao Puchu tried to have the Republic of China expelled from the fellowship in 1961 relations soured, and the CBA did not attend the next meeting in India in 1964.<sup>88</sup> Unable to gain control over the WFB, the CCP established its own venue, the Buddhist Conference of Eleven Asian Countries and Regions, held October 17–19, 1963, in Beijing.<sup>89</sup> The theme of the conference was anti-imperialism, with a special emphasis on American interference in Vietnam. Outbound Buddhist delegations from the PRC ceased in 1965, and the last incoming delegation was one from Japan in 1966.<sup>90</sup> The use of Buddhist diplomacy succeeded for a time on a cultural level and may have even influenced high-level diplomatic

<sup>87</sup> Richard Butwell, *U Nu of Burma* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963), 178–179.

<sup>88</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 210–214.

<sup>89</sup> Bush, *Religion in Communist China*, 335–336.

<sup>90</sup> Yu, "Buddhism in Communist China," 58, who cites Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*.

events, but the exigencies of geopolitics of the early 1960s, in which Cold War antagonisms were only deepening, limited how far Buddhism could take the PRC on the world stage.

Finally, at the start of this last era of the present study, historic Buddhist sites in China were for the first time in the PRC era subject to a nation-wide set of regulations regarding historic cultural artifacts, the “Wenwu baohu guanli zanxing tiaoli” 文物保護管理暫行條例 (Interim regulations on the protection and management of cultural artifacts), passed by the state council in November 1960 and promulgated on March 4, 1961.<sup>91</sup> Earlier regulations had focused on preventing the removal of artifacts from China or had only applied to specific sites, but now all such sites in China that were deemed to have historic or cultural value would receive legal protection. The main regulation that would potentially have an impact on Buddhist monasteries and their reconstruction stated that if a memorial or historical building was to be put to a new use, then permission of the local authority had to first be granted, unless the plan was for it to be turned into a museum or a tourism site. Selection of protected sites and enforcement of these regulations was to be left to officials in the relevant level of the government, either provincial, autonomous regional, or the city cultural bureau. Everyday matters of protection and management, however, were to be the responsibility of the local authority. An initial list of 180 protected sites, organized into six categories, was published along with these regulations. About thirty-four Buddhist sites including stupas and monasteries appear in the list under the category of “Ancient Buildings and Structures Relating to Historical Events,” a number that is certainly drastically fewer than the total number of historically significant Buddhist sites in China. In contrast, thirty-three locations are listed in the category of “Historical Sites Relating to the Revolution and Buildings Relating to Revolutionary History.”

Article 11 of the regulations stipulates the permitted scope of repairs or reconstruction that are to be allowed at such sites:

For all memorial structures, ancient structures, cave temples, carvings, sculptures, and so on, including articles within such buildings, that have been approved as such by a Cultural Protection unit: when repairs or conservation work are being undertaken, they must strictly comply with the principle of restoring [the artifact] to its original state or preserving its

<sup>91</sup> “Wenwu baohu guanli zanxing tiaoli.”

current state, and no other building work may be carried out within the protected area.<sup>92</sup>

The inclusion of the site's "original state" (*yuanzhuang* 原狀) in this article of the regulations might appear to be supportive of preservation work, but it opens the door to the possibility of the site being damaged or destroyed as part of restoring it to an earlier state; those structures that had been repaired or newly added as part of a recent reconstruction could be swept aside, leaving only the most ancient elements deemed to be part of its original state. As explored in the previous chapters, Buddhist monasteries are highly layered locations, with structures and features that have been added and modified in different eras. What its original state might have been like is usually a matter of conjecture and extrapolation. Additionally, these regulations make no mention of the human religious community to be found living in religious sites. The focus is solely on the material elements.

## Conclusion

Despite the mainline Marxist view of religion as backward, superstitious, and a means of class domination, the CCP's experiences during its early years prompted it to proceed cautiously in dealing with it. From the beginning of the PRC it attacked the economic structures that had helped maintain large religious communities, such as landholdings and rent collection, and shut down religious groups that appeared to be intractable, such as Yiguandao 一貫道.<sup>93</sup> The new communist regime did not smash religious images and bulldoze religious institutions; rather, religious sites such as Buddhist monasteries were recognized as part of China's cultural history, and these artifacts were reimagined as symbols of the creativity and productivity of the Chinese masses in times past. Widespread and indiscriminate destruction of religious images and structures would not occur until the ideological civil war that took place later during the Cultural Revolution. A substantial number of Buddhist sites were repaired and rebuilt, mostly between 1953

<sup>92</sup> 「一切核定為文物保護單位的紀念建築物、古建築、石窟寺、石刻、雕塑等（包括建築的附屬物），在進行修繕、保養的時候，必須嚴格遵守恢復原狀或者保存現狀的原則，在保護範圍內不得進行其他的建築工程。」“Wenwu baohu guanli zanzheng tiaoli,” 78. Note that the original text uses a transitional simplified character set, so for clarity all characters are reproduced in their traditional format.

<sup>93</sup> Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 107–108.

and 1959, and eventually received legal protection under the regulations put into place in 1961. Buddhists from other Asian nations were invited to visit these reconstructed sites, and the CBA led a program of Buddhist diplomacy that drew upon the historic shared Buddhist culture of Asia and promised that Asian Buddhists would work for peace during this new era of the Cold War. The realities of Cold War alliances, border disputes, and the geopolitical impulses of the CCP in securing influence over their neighbors to counter that of the United States and its bloc, however, upended the promise of Buddhist international cooperation.

What was the impact of this on the Buddhist monasteries and the handful of monastics that were still able to live a religious life in the early PRC up to the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution? In the larger Buddhist monasteries that had long been known for their high quality of monastic practice and training, monastics were still practicing and being trained, and apart from having their landholdings redistributed as part of the 1950 land reforms, they were largely left alone up to 1966 and were neither destroyed nor rebuilt.<sup>94</sup> Yet they had lost the means by which they had financed repairs and reconstructions in the past, as they could no longer rely on donations, and had no autonomy on making changes to what was now recognized legally as a protected historical site. There were during this period only a handful of exceptions to this trend, one example being Yunju Monastery 雲居寺 in Jiangxi province, which was rebuilt along traditional lines under Xuyun's leadership and with funds from Buddhists abroad.<sup>95</sup> As the PRC took a harder line against south-east Asian nations in the 1960s, however, and remained on the other side of the "bamboo curtain" from much of the world until the early 1970s, such foreign contacts became more and more difficult to maintain.

For those Buddhist monasteries that were rebuilt using state funds, as described in this chapter, only one aspect of these multifaceted institutions was being reconstructed: their historical buildings. These reconstructions were not intended to recreate the whole monastic community as it had existed prior to a period of destruction. Instead they produced "hollowed-out" sites, with little or no active monastic community on site.<sup>96</sup> In some cases, sites were turned into static museums and no longer even pretended to host religious activities; the goal was to preserve them as artifacts, ready to

<sup>94</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 546n72.

<sup>95</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 547n77.

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, the description by Moraes previously cited.

be used for cultural or political purposes.<sup>97</sup> These were sites to be displayed, not sites to provide a frame for religious life. Buddhist history—filtered, ossified, categorized, and reimagined as part of a nationalist, Marxist historical narrative—found a role in the PRC's international relations. Historical Buddhist connections, symbolized through sacred sites, continue to be an important element in international relations, and issues continue to persist over control of property and who has the power to decide on destruction and reconstruction. To be certain, Buddhist monastics have carved out a place for themselves in contemporary China, but they remain only one of several forces competing over the fate of Buddhist monasteries in the country, with many sites long since emptied of religious life and relegated to being static artifacts of the past. This situation continues in the present day, with historic Buddhist monasteries continuing to be used for diplomatic purposes and monastic communities threatened by plans for historical preservation that jettison the people in favor of bricks and stones.

<sup>97</sup> Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, 537–538n24.



# Conclusion

## Beyond Bones and Stones

Thanks to the hard work and fundraising efforts undertaken by Datong 達通 in the last decade of the Qing dynasty, outlined at the start of the introduction to this book, the ruinous Cihui Monastery 慈慧寺 in Beijing was finally restored to working order. Yet in spite of his success, all that remains of the monastery in Beijing today is its gatehouse.<sup>1</sup> Reconstruction, like destruction, is ephemeral, and efforts to renew religious institutions must be undertaken time and time again as new threats and disasters arise. As outlined in the previous chapters, there were many types of destructive forces at work during the modern period of Chinese history between 1866 and 1966, from wars and revolutions to targeted destruction and neglectful decay. As Kang Youwei observed in the early 1920s while visiting a ruined monastery, however, even though “a thousand rooms were now completely destroyed,” there was yet a numinous power in the sunlight falling upon the bricks and stones, the true emptiness at the core of Buddhist doctrine that no conflagration could destroy.<sup>2</sup> With the right charismatic leadership, popular enthusiasm, lay support, official consent, and a bit of luck, the site could be reborn from burned tiles and stones into a religious complex of buildings and images, one that could again serve as a frame for religious life. Reconstructions were neither unusual nor exceptional in the lifecycle of a Chinese Buddhist monastery but rather expected interventions into their institutional health, necessitated by slow decay over time or a rapid-onset destructive event. These campaigns brought the religious community back into a state of health and vitality, but they also symbolized the dynamic relevance of the Buddhadharma itself, always ready to be reinterpreted and retaught for a new generation of practitioners. Records describing reconstructions of Buddhist sites commonly credit them with helping to revive the Dharma

<sup>1</sup> Peng, *Beijing Fosi yiji kao*, 316.

<sup>2</sup> 「千房今盡毀、斜陽讀偈證真空。」 Xi'an shi difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Xi'an shizhi*, 7:774.

more generally, erecting a small bulwark against the slow receding tide of the Buddha's teachings from this world.

In spite of the widespread rhetoric of "returning" (*fu* 復) that is so prominent in historical discourse surrounding Buddhist monastery reconstructions, I have repeatedly argued here that they should not be viewed as a return to the past. Historical elements of Buddhist monasteries are, of course, important and valued as monuments to the contributions of religious ancestors and recognition of the monastery's glory from the imperial court. Yet a monastery is at its heart a living community of humans and numinous beings, for which the structures and even the images are simply frames of material support. Thus, each monastery reconstruction is instead a *rebirth* of the community into a new generation, a rebirth that brings changes, innovations, and adaptations. Each instance produces a reconstruction of this frame for religious life, based upon the ruins of the past but not a reconstruction of that past. After the apocalyptic destruction of the Taiping War, Jiangtian Monastery, which had been completely burned, was rebuilt from the ground up within a few decades. In the context of a growing foreign presence in China, however, the site now also symbolized China's resistance to foreign encroachment in the treaty port of Zhenjiang. In Changzhou, it took nearly four decades for Tianning Monastery to be fully rebuilt, and by the time the main reconstruction campaign had gotten under way, local supporters of the Confucian academy, perhaps emboldened by the notion of building schools with religious property, protested the planned height of the monastery's Great Hall and held up work for several years. When the reconstruction was completed under the leadership of Yekai Qingrong, his student Weikuan Xianche led the introduction of two completely new institutions within the monastery, one dedicated to printing and distributing Buddhist scriptures, the other to monastic and lay education. While both scripture printing and education were activities that had taken place at Chinese Buddhist monasteries in the past, the organization, leadership, scale, and scope of these new institutions were truly innovative and revolutionary.

During the early part of the Nanjing decade, as a new Nationalist party-state established itself in its new capital, Linggu Monastery in the mountains just outside of Nanjing was again transformed, but now its "reconstruction" involved the hollowing-out of any remaining autonomous monastic community and the remaking of the site into a memorial for martyrs of the Republican revolution. Its former association with the war dead, a product of its monks being on the front lines of brutal combat during the Taiping War, was now used to help prop up its new incarnation as a "Chinese Arlington,"

with no active Buddhist religious life taking place in its Beamless Hall, the only major structure to have survived the reconstruction. Later during the war, when Linggu Monastery and other sites in Eastern China were lost to Japanese occupation, the historic stupas at Xingjiao Monastery outside of the wartime capital of Xi'an suddenly became invaluable as concrete symbols of China's cultural past and as evidence that the Nationalist government was still the rightful inheritor of the imperial legacy. While monastic structures were repaired or built at the site, it was the three stone stupas, and the three Buddhist monks for whom they were built, that received the most attention in published sources of the day. Finally, during the first seventeen years of communist rule in China, Buddhist monasteries found a new role as venues for cultural exchange and Buddhist diplomacy, used to showcase China's shared Buddhist heritage with other Asian nations. Chinese Buddhists struggled alongside their foreign brethren to achieve worldwide peace during an era of nuclear proliferation, and rebuilt sites such as Guangji Monastery and Yonghe Temple in Beijing provided the stages for this diplomatic theater. The reconstructions of the early PRC, however, ended up producing museums of China's Buddhist past, not workshops for training, practice, and education as they had once been.

In each of the cases of Buddhist monastery reconstruction examined, we can see that what emerges from reconstruction is never quite the same as what had existed *ante interitus*, and as time went on, the scope for transforming Buddhist monasteries into something quite unlike what they had been earlier only increased. One trend that emerges over the whole period of study is an increased role played by Buddhist print culture from the 1910s into the 1940s. During this era, Buddhist periodicals are replete with stories about monastery reconstructions, announcing appeals for funds, praising the reconstruction leaders, or reporting on the successful completion of reconstructions. Before the era of periodical print culture, textual information about reconstructions would only circulate years after the event, in monastic biographies or local gazetteers. Now Chinese Buddhists could learn of a reconstruction when it was just in the process of getting started, potentially greatly widening the field of possible donations and participation throughout the nation. We can also see a steadily increasing state interest and involvement in Buddhist monasteries, first as symbols of cultural heritage and later as stages and museums for cultural diplomacy. This demonstrates to me that the Chinese state was—and continues to be today—intensely concerned with and interested in religion, in spite of the scientific, anti-superstitious rhetoric exposed by late-Qing reformers and

both the Nationalist and Communist states.<sup>3</sup> Closely related to this, however, is the increasing identification of Buddhist monasteries during this period with Chinese civilization and the Chinese nation. Control over these sites and control over their public representation was an ideological battleground of the 1930s and 1940s; it was one way in which Japanese Buddhist scholars contributed to the cultural occupation of China during the war and a high priority even for the beleaguered wartime Nationalist state. After 1949, the PRC elevated historic Buddhist sites as monuments to China's past and its historic friendly relations with other Asian civilizations.

Throughout this hundred-year period, Chinese Buddhist monasteries came to assume a new public role as symbols of Chinese culture and history, and as they did the intended outcome of their reconstruction shifts: from the revival of a sacred site and its religious community toward the restoration of a historical relic and the museumification of China's Buddhist past. As symbols they represent elements of Chinese history that, though undeniably historically present, are selected and edited in order to support the agenda of those in power, elements such as a rich artistic heritage, the memorialization of monastics who traveled abroad, and a tradition of thought that emphasizes peace and moral cultivation. As relics they represent a material link to the past, concrete pieces of a history that comes to define a nation and its heritage, rooting the boundaries of the imagined nation to physical spots on its territory. As museums they represent a crafted narrative of the past and exclude the possibility of dynamic and innovative change, enshrining a version of the past and giving it the authority of modern scientific epistemologies. The end result is a monastery shorn of the life and charisma that propelled it through perhaps dozens of cycles of decay and revival, a monument to a constructed past in service of an imagined national culture. As the chief architect of nation building, the state and its operatives are most often the actors responsible for this shift, applying the power of official patronage and new regulatory regimes to channel monasteries toward this new role.

This use of Chinese Buddhist monasteries as symbols of the Chinese nation and as stages for diplomacy continues today. In 2015 the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, made a state visit to China, stopping first in Xi'an, which is both in Xi Jinping's ancestral home province of Shaanxi and also important in Chinese Buddhist history. While there the two leaders visited historic Buddhist monuments and exchanged Buddhist artifacts:

<sup>3</sup> A notion that was, I believe, definitively proven by Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

Later, Xi accompanied Modi to the Wild Goose Pagoda, and showed him around some of the Buddhist relics, in the way that Modi had personally taken him around the Sabarmati Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi. The two leaders chatted together, including for some time in the garden of the compound. Modi presented a sapling of the Mahabodhi tree to the temple, which was built in 652 A.D. during the Tang dynasty. Modi was accorded a traditional Tang dynasty welcome ceremony at the South City Wall. Later, he attended a banquet hosted by Xi. In a grand finale, Modi and Xi attended a spectacular cultural performance at the Pot City courtyard which reflected the close Buddhist links of the two nations. Modi presented Xi a replica of a casket containing the sacred relics of Lord Buddha. The casket was excavated from Dev-ni-Mori, near Vadnagar in Gujarat in 1957. He also presented Xi a stone statue of Buddha.<sup>4</sup>

The Large Wild Goose Pagoda (*dayan ta* 大雁塔) is located in Da Ci'en Monastery, which, as described in chapter 3, had been reconstructed with great fanfare between 1931 and 1932 as part of building up Xi'an as a potential wartime capital in the war against Japan. The monastery had been included on the 1961 list of important cultural heritage sites, but after the Cultural Revolution its monastic community was not reconstituted. Today it stands as a true museum of China's Buddhist past, a static monument that can serve to signify Sino-Indian relations, without an autonomous and potentially disruptive monastic body on site.

As important and necessary as reconstructions are in the lifecycle of a Chinese Buddhist monastery, they do not necessarily result in the rebirth of the religious community. The increasing levels of state involvement in controlling historic Buddhist monasteries, emerging first in the Republican era under threat of war and greatly expanding in the early PRC, have shifted the core value of reconstructions from reviving the religious body of the sacred site to returning it to a past state of bones and stones. How different this approach is from the enthusiastic hopes of reconstruction leaders such as Datong, who understood his true nature to be that of one who rebuilt religious communities, and who traveled throughout the north-east of China to fundraise for this purpose. He saw within the broken tiles and burned stones

<sup>4</sup> Embassy of India, Berne, Switzerland, "Amid Dollops of Culture, Modi, Xi Hold Extremely Productive Talks," April 12 2019, news release, <[https://web.archive.org/web/20190414090146/http://www.indembassybern.gov.in/news\\_detail/?newsid=172](https://web.archive.org/web/20190414090146/http://www.indembassybern.gov.in/news_detail/?newsid=172)>.

of Cihui Monastery not the raw materials of a historic monument but the potential for reconstructing a frame to support a religious life, a home for religious professionals like himself, and a refuge for lay visitors. It was this promise of a renewal of Buddhism, a rebirth into a new instance of a venerable institution, that helped motivate the hundreds of reconstructions surveyed here and that was also at the heart of many of the focus sites examined. Without this element, what remains is simply a monument to innovations and insights that are now ossified, the material frame for a religious life no longer present there.

The energy, enthusiasm, funds, and other resources that were mustered to revive a monastery helped to revive religious practice and engagement, but they also sparked innovations that changed how Chinese Buddhist monasteries operated in the modern era. Change, at times quite significant change, is clearly part of the lifecycle of Buddhist monasteries and their associated monastic and lay religious communities. The heritage and history embedded within the site is certainly invaluable, but in the end the “bones and stones” support a vibrant religious life that changes and develops according to the age. I would therefore suggest that while Buddhist monastery reconstruction in China operates under the guise of a return to the past, it is in fact a confident, energetic step into the future. This is perhaps a better conceptual framework for understanding the revival of Buddhism in modern China, the revival that flummoxed Holmes Welch for not preserving and returning to the old ways.<sup>5</sup> Just as with a successful monastery reconstruction, in the broader Buddhist revival, religious culture was rebuilt on much the same footprint but with new structures serving new functions and long-abandoned elements newly reintroduced, an important structural change enacted upon a solid and venerable foundation.

<sup>5</sup> I explore this in Scott, “Buddhist Building and the Buddhist Revival.”

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Chinese Terminology for Monasteries

Table A1.1. Frequency of Terms for “Monastery” in the Buddhist Scriptural Canon<sup>\*a</sup>

<i>Term</i>	<i>Related Compound Term</i>	<i>Related Sanskrit Term</i>
<i>jielan</i> 伽藍	shortened form of 僧伽藍摩	<i>saṃgha-ārāma</i>
<i>jingshe</i> 精舍		<i>saṃgha-ārāma</i>
<i>fancha</i> 梵刹	<i>fanyu</i> 梵宇, <i>chaduoluo</i> 刹多羅	<i>ksetra?</i>
<i>piheluo</i> 毘訶羅		<i>vihāra</i>
<i>alanshi</i> 阿蘭室		<i>araṇya</i>
<i>si</i> 寺 <sup>b</sup>	<i>simiao</i> 寺廟, <i>chansi</i> 禪寺, <i>jiaosi</i> 教寺, etc.	<i>vihāra, saṃgha-ārāma, etc.</i>
<i>miao</i> 廟	<i>simiao</i> 寺廟	
<i>yuan</i> 院	<i>siyuan</i> 寺院	<i>ārāma?</i>
<i>lin</i> 林	<i>conglin</i> 叢林, <i>chanlin</i> 禪林, <i>jushi lin</i> 居士林	
<i>an</i> 庵 / 菴	<i>anshi</i> 庵室, <i>ansi</i> 庵寺	
<i>ci</i> 祠		<i>yajña</i>
<i>gong</i> 宮		<i>antaḥ-pura</i>
<i>guan</i> 觀	<i>siguan</i> 寺觀	

Data for Table A1.1

伽藍	精舍	寺	院	庵	
後漢	1	48	33	0	0
曹魏	15	1	12	0	0
吳	2	37	26	0	0
西晉	0	145	225	0	0
東晉	124	502	114	31	7
前秦/符秦	0	5	12	0	0
姚秦/後秦	306	187	297	3	16

伽藍	精舍	寺	院	庵	
西秦	0	6	1	0	0
北涼	13	49	73	1	0
新羅	2	4	79	11	1
劉宋	12	221	116	1	4
北魏/後魏/元魏	32	73	325	1	4
蕭齊	9	27	148	0	0
梁	29	221	1,686	7	3
北齊/高齊	6	8	4	0	0
陳	16	1	19	0	0
隋	51	121	732	32	46
唐	125	107	1,916	843	15
宋	25	138	107	31	0
元	1	2	3	2	0
清	0	2	17	2	1

<sup>a</sup>Data based on a full-text count of instances within the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Archive (CBETA) online corpus of the terms 伽藍, 精舍, 寺, 院, and 庵 from texts attributed to the given period. <<http://www.cbeta.org/>>. Full data is available in appendix X of the archive.

<sup>b</sup>In pre-Buddhist China, *si* 寺 originally referred to an official court or office, equivalent to *ting* 廷, or the holder of such an office.

## Appendix 2: Project Details for “The Survey of Religious Reconstruction in Modern China” 中國近代寺廟重建調查

The source data for the survey was drawn from a series of two thousand volumes of scanned and digitized Chinese local gazetteers provided by the company Erudition (Airusheng 愛如生). Through an agreement with Erudition, the full text of these two thousand volumes, which had not been selected using any particular geographical or chronological criteria, was made available to the Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte (MPIWG; Max Planck Institute for the History of Science). From these I selected eleven county-level gazetteers representing ten counties from areas that I knew contained Buddhist monasteries that had been affected by the Taiping war. I also included two gazetteers from districts near Fuzhou, neither of which were occupied or contested by Taiping forces during the war but which were indirectly impacted by the conflict, to see if there was a significant difference in the level of religious destruction and reconstruction there.

For each local gazetteer source, I identified those sections that contained relevant data on religious institutions. The internal organization of gazetteers varies a great deal across different examples and even between different editions for the same locality. Choices regarding section structure were determined by bibliographic tradition, editor idiosyncrasies, and changing norms over time.<sup>1</sup> My working list of section titles to check for

<sup>1</sup> Dennis, *Local Gazetteers in Imperial China*.



Table A2.1. Primary Sources Used in the Survey

Nearest Urban Center	Title	Publication Year
Zhenjiang 鎮江	<i>Chongxiu Danyang xianzhi</i> 重修丹陽縣志	光緒 10 (1884)
	<i>Xu Dantu xianzhi</i> 續丹徒縣志	民國 14 (1925)
	<i>Danyang xian xuzhi</i> 丹陽縣續志	民國 16 (1927)
Nanjing 南京	<i>Gaochun xianzhi</i> 高淳縣志	民國 7 (1918)
Changzhou 常州	<i>Wujin Yanghu xianzhi</i> 武進陽湖縣志	(1906?)
Yangzhou 揚州	<i>Xuxiu Jiangdu xianzhi</i> 續修江都縣志	民國 15 (1924)
Hangzhou 杭州	<i>Lin'an xianzhi</i> 臨安縣志	宣統 2 (1910)
	<i>Yuqian xianzhi</i> 於潛縣志	民國 2 (1913)
	<i>Fenshui xianzhi</i> 分水縣志	民國 32 (1941); preface 光緒 32 (1906)
Fuzhou 福州	<i>Changle xianzhi</i> 長樂縣志	民國 6 (1917)
	<i>Lianjiang xianzhi</i> 連江縣志	民國 10 (1921)

Table A2.2. Regular Expression Search Keywords

Topic	Keywords Used
Religious Structures <sup>a</sup>	寺; 伽藍; 精舍; 院; 禪林; 庵; 菴; 廟; 祠; 宮; 宮; 觀; 殿; 閣; 壇; 堂; 塔
Damage, Destruction, Repair, Reconstruction	重修; 中興; 修復; 募修; 募建; 修理; 修葺; 復建; 重建; 募貢; 修建; 捐貲; 建復; 修; 燬; 毀; 燹; 廢; 圯
Era and Period Names	咸豐; 同治; 光緒; 宣統; 民國

<sup>a</sup>Where multiple local branches of a religious institution were present in a county, entries would often give the full name for the root location and then list local branches under the heading *yizai* 一在 (one at), so this was also included as a structure name keyword and was interpreted in this context.

relevant data included *simiao* 寺廟 (monasteries and temples), *tanmiao* 壇廟 (altars and temples), *cisi* 祠祀 (shrines and sacrifices), *gongzhi* 公署 (public buildings), *jianzhi* 建置 (buildings), *zongjiao* 宗教 (religion), *mingji* 名蹟 (famous sites), *guji* 古蹟 (ancient sites), and *mingsheng guji* 名勝古蹟 (famous sites and ancient sites). Once the useful sections from the gazetteers had been identified, the full text of each was marked up using Regular Expression (regex) searches that I constructed using keywords for religious structures, destruction and reconstruction, and the era names of the period of study, listed in table A2.2 below.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A Regular Expression defines an exact sequence of characters or wildcards in a text search. In this case, it allowed me to very efficiently highlight the names of religious institutions listed in the text, which in the original full-text source are not distinguished with any special formatting.

Using a digital markup tool developed by the MPIWG, I highlighted each occurrence of a phrase that included one or more of the keywords from each category, adding descriptive XML tags so that I could quickly distinguish entries that contained both a religious institution and information on its destruction, reconstruction, or both during the period of study.<sup>3</sup> For these entries, I trimmed down their text so that only the essential data remained: the name of the institution, its location within the county if any given, and information relating to its destruction or reconstruction.

<sup>3</sup> Extensible Markup Language (XML) is a system of encoding documents so that the meaning and function of its data is both machine- and human-readable. <<https://www.w3schools.com/xml/>>.

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# Index

*For the benefit of digital users, indexed terms that span two pages (e.g., 52–53) may, on occasion, appear on only one of those pages.*

Tables are indicated by *t* following the page number

- Anti-Rightist Campaign, 203–4
- Asia and Pacific Rim Peace Conference  
(Yazhou ji taipingyang quyue heping  
hui 亞洲及太平洋區域和平會),  
198–99, 206
- Avatamsaka University 華嚴大學  
(Huayan University), 112–13, 154–55
- Bailin Monastery 柏林寺, 111–12
- Bandung Conference, 211
- Baoguang Monastery 寶光寺, 189*t*
- Baoguo Monastery 報國寺, 189*t*
- Baohua shan 寶華山, 100–1, 145–46.  
    *Also see* Huiju Monastery
- Baotong Monastery 寶通寺, 189*t*
- Baowu 寶悟, 74–75
- Baoyue 寶月, 74–75, 75*n*74
- Beigu shan 北固山, 70–71
- Beijing 北京, 197
- Beijing City People's Government  
    Construction Bureau (Beijing shi  
    renmin zhengfu jianshe ju 北京市人  
    民政府建設局), 198–99
- Beiping Academy (Beiping yanjiuyuan  
    北平研究院), 162–63
- Beiyang Government (Beiyang zhengfu  
    北洋政府), 200–1
- Bhutan, 193–94
- Blackburn, Anne, 37–38, 193*n*31
- Buddhist academy (or Buddhist seminary;  
    Foxue yuan 佛學院), 46–47, 97–98
- Buddhist Association of China (Zhongguo  
    Fojiao xiehui 中國佛教協會, BAC),  
    199–200
- Buddhist Conference of Eleven Asian  
    Countries and Regions, 212–13
- Buddhist diplomacy, 193, 196, 212–13
- Burma (Myanmar), 194–95, 209–11
- Cambodia, 178–79, 194–95, 210
- Cao Xiejun 曹燮鈞, 106*n*37
- Ceylon (Sri Lanka), 193–94, 198–99
- Chan 禪 Buddhism, 10–11, 24–25, 67–68  
    Linji school or branch 臨濟宗, 67–68,  
    99–100, 102–3
- Chanda, Anil Kumar, 208–9
- Chang'an 長安, 152–53. *See also* Xi'an
- Changzhou 常州, 98–99, 106–7
- Changzhou Tianning Monastery  
    Scriptural Press 常州天寧寺刻經處.  
    *See* Piling Scriptural Press
- Changjing Michuan 常淨密傳, 77–80
- Chanyuan Monastery 禪源寺, 100–1
- Chen Boda 陳伯達, 114–16
- Chen Decai 陳得才, 153–54
- Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, 95–96, 180–81
- Chen Jiayou 陳嘉佑, 123*t*
- Chen Shaobai 陳少白 (Chan Siu-bak),  
    160–62, 161*t*
- Chen Shih-pei, 49*n*16
- Cheng Qian 程潛, 167–68, 169–70
- Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石, 121–22, 134–35,  
    144–45, 148, 149, 168–69
- China Weekly Review, The, 183
- Chinese Buddhist Association  
    (Zhongguo Fojiao xiehui  
    中國佛教協會; CBA), 185–86,  
    212–13, 214–15
- Chinese Civil War, 176–77
- Chinese College of Buddhism (Zhongguo  
    Foxue yuan 中國佛學院),  
    199–200, 210



- Chinese Communist Party (CCP). *See* Gongchandang
- Chongqing 重慶, 138–39, 167, 170–71, 173–74
- Ci'en School Monastery, 165–66
- Cihui Monastery 慈慧寺, 1, 29–30, 217–18, 221–22
- Cishou Stupa 慈壽塔, 77–80
- Cold War, 39, 176–77, 187–93, 214–15
- Culbertson, Rev. Michael Simpson, 71–72
- Cultural bureau (*wenhua bu* 文化部), 185–86
- Cultural heritage, 135–36, 184–85, 213, 220
- Cultural Revolution, 37–38, 39–40, 175–77, 197, 200, 214–15, 221
- Da Bao'en Monastery 大報恩寺, 61–62
- Da Ci'en Monastery 大慈恩寺, 156, 164–66, 173, 189*t*, 221
- Da-Qing yitong zhi* 大清一統志, 13–14
- Da Qing huidian lili* 大清會典律例, 105*n*34
- Da Xingshan Monastery 大興善寺, 169–70, 189*t*
- Da'an Monastery 大安寺, 189*t*
- Dabei Monastery 大悲院, 189*t*
- Dachen islands 大陳島, 188–93
- Daci Monastery 大慈寺, 189*t*
- Dading Miyuan 大定密源, 74–75
- Dai Jitao 戴季陶, 9*n*21, 119–21, 123*t*, 127, 136, 142–43, 146–47, 149, 151–52, 160–62, 167*n*79, 169, 170–71, 173
- Dalai Lama, fourteenth, 202, 207–9, 211–12
- Dalin Monastery 大林寺, 189*t*
- Daohua Qingdeng 道華清登, 72–74
- Daojie 道階, 142–43
- Datong 大同, 140–41
- Datong, Master 達通, 1–3, 29–30, 217–18, 221–22
- Daxiao Shiche 大曉實徹, 99–100
- Deng Jiayan 鄧家彥, 123*t*
- Deyu 德玉, 142–43
- Dhammaratana, Narawila, 196, 196*n*38, 198–99
- Dharma, the (*fa* 法), 19–20
- Dharma heir (*fasi* 法嗣), 72
- Dharmapala, Anagarika, 142–43
- Dinghui Monastery 定慧寺, 70–71, 100–1
- Dingnian Zhenchan 定念真禪, 99–100, 102–3
- Dizang an 地藏庵, 189*t*
- Duli zhoubao 獨立周報, 123*t*
- Eberhard, Wolfram, 28*n*65, 49
- Engels, Freidrich, 179–80
- Faren 法忍 (Benxin 本心), 59–60
- Fayi 法意, 119, 119*n*74
- Fayuan Monastery 法源寺, 189*t*
- Fayun Haiyao 法雲海耀, 58
- Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥, 121–24, 125
- Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行), 19–20
- Foguang Monastery 佛光寺, 189*t*
- Fohua *suikan* 佛化隨刊, 158–59, 165–66, 168, 171–72
- Forbidden City, The, 184–85, 204–5
- Foreign Office, British, 196
- Foxue banyuekan* 佛學半月刊, 26
- Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報, 3*n*5, 89, 111–12
- France, 194–95
- Fuhu Monastery 伏虎寺, 189*t*
- Fundraising. *See* Monasteries: fundraising for reconstruction of
- Fuzhou Dockyard (*Fuzhou zaochuan chang* 福州造船廠), 81
- Gaomin Monastery 高旻寺, 59–60, 84–85
- Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, 23–24
- Golden Light Sutra, the, 136
- Gongchandang 共產黨, 33–34, 137–38, 175–76, 179–80
- Goossaert, Vincent, 7–8
- Great Leap Forward, 203–4, 211–12
- Great Wall, The, 204–5
- Guangji Monastery 廣濟寺 (Beijing), 189*t*, 197–200, 210, 218–19
- Guangji Monastery 廣濟寺 (Hefei), 189*t*
- Guangren si 廣仁寺, 189*t*
- Guangxiao Monastery 光孝寺, 137, 189*t*
- Guanxin Xianhui 觀心顯慧, 72–80
- Guiyuan Monastery 歸元寺, 189*t*
- Guomindang 國民黨, 33–34, 89–90, 177
- Gyatso, Sherab (Xiruo Jiacao 喜饒嘉措), 202, 207–8, 210

- Gyatso, Tenzin, tenth Demo Rinpoche (Demu Qidemu huo Fo 德木奇德木活佛), 201–2, 201n53
- Haichao yin* 海潮音, 114, 115–16, 156–57, 162–63
- Haihui Monastery 海會寺, 92–93
- Hall  
Administration (*kufang* 庫房), 109–10  
Beamless (*wuliang dian* 無樑殿), 62–63, 148, 218–19  
of Content Enjoyment (*zhiyou tang* 至游堂), 77–80  
of the Exalted (*xiongyue tang* 雄跨堂), 77–80  
of Great Completion (*dacheng dian* 大成殿), 104  
of the Great Hero (or Buddha Hall, or Great Hall, or Dharma hall; *daxiong dian* 大雄殿), 77–80, 98–99, 101–2, 103–8  
Guest (*ketang* 客堂), 109–10  
of the Heavenly Kings (*tianwang dian* 天王殿), 77–80  
for ill and elderly monks (*yanshou tang* 延壽堂), 77  
Luohan (luohan tang 羅漢堂), 103  
Meditation (*chantang* 禪堂), 103  
Merit- Generation (*gongde tang* 功德堂), 101–2  
for name- recitation practices (*nianfo tang* 念佛堂), 77–80  
Scripture Recitation (*songjing lou* 誦經樓), 101–2  
Scripture Study (*zangxiu lou* 藏修樓), 113–14  
Vajra (*jingang dian* 金剛殿), 66, 108–9  
Visiting Monks' (shifang tang 十方堂), 189*t*
- Han Guojun 韓國鈞, 119–20
- Hardoon, Silas Aaron, 118–19, 119n70
- He Xupu 何紱浦, 162–63
- He Yingqian 何應欽, 123*t*, 124
- Hengzhi Wulai 恆志無來, 58–59
- Hotung, Sir Robert (He Dong 何東), 119–20, 120n78
- Huang Shaogu 黃少谷, 123*t*
- Huang Shi 黃實, 123*t*
- Huating Monastery 華亭寺, 189*t*
- Huayan Monastery, 華嚴寺, 164–65, 165n75, 189*t*
- Huayan University. *See* Avatamsaka University
- Huguo Shenghua Longchang Monastery 護國聖化隆昌寺. *See* Huiju Monastery
- Huiju Monastery 慧居寺 (Longchang Monastery 隆昌寺), 84–85, 92–93, 145–47, 151–52, 165, 170–71
- Huishan Monastery 會善寺, 189*t*
- Huishan Monastery 惠山寺, 189*t*
- Ichi-Go Offensive (*Ichi-gō Sakusen* 一號作戰), 139–40
- Iconophobia, 44, 94–95
- India, 193–94, 205–9
- Indochina War, First, 206–7
- Inner Mongolia, 195, 202
- Institute of Oriental Culture (Tōhōbunka kenkyūsho 東方文化研究所), 140–41
- Islamic Association of China (Zhongguo yisilan jiao xiehui 中國伊斯蘭教協會), 199–200
- Japan, 193–94
- Japan-China Buddhist Research Association (Nikka Bukkyō kenkyūkai 日華佛教研究會), 140–41
- Jianfu Monastery 薦福寺, 154–55
- Jiang Dingwen 蔣鼎文, 169
- Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬, 47–48, 57–58, 59–60, 60n39, 70–71
- Jiangtian Monastery 江天寺, 32–33, 59–60, 67–85, 98–99, 116–17, 118, 163–64, 165, 218. *See also* Jinshan
- Jiangbei 江北, 109–10
- Jiangnan 江南, 43–44, 46–47, 61–62, 98–99
- Jiangxi-Fujian Soviet, 134–35
- Jiaoshan 焦山, 70–72
- Jiaoshan xuzhi 焦山續志, 70–71
- Jichan 寄禪 (Jing'an 敬安), 57–58, 60–61
- jingshen* 精神, 133–34, 158–59
- Jinling fancha zhi* 金陵梵刹志, 61–62

- Jinling Scriptural Press 金陵刻經處, 86–87, 110–11, 184
- Jinmen 金門, 188–93
- Jinshan 金山, 59–60, 67–68, 67n55, 68n57, 90–92. *See also* Jiangtian Monastery
- Jiuhua shan Monastery 九華山寺, 102–3
- John, Rev. Griffith, 43
- Ju Zheng 居正, 127, 160–62, 161t, 169, 173
- Juexun 覺訊 (Juexun yuekan 覺訊月刊), 202, 203–4
- Kaifu Monastery 開福寺, 189t
- Kaihua Monastery 開化寺, 189t
- Kaiyuan Monastery 開元寺, 189t
- Kalpa (*jiebo* 劫波 / *jie* 劫), 19–20
- Kang Jiyao 康寄遙, 154–55, 157, 159–60, 167n79, 169–70
- Kang Youwei 康有為, 1, 217–18
- Katz, Paul, 3n4
- Kiang, Alfred, 183
- Kieschnick, John, 18, 18n42
- Kilcourse, Carl, 43n1
- Korea, Democratic People's Republic of, 188–93, 195
- Korea, Republic of, 195
- Kuiji 窺基, 153–54, 167–68
- Langhui Shirong 朗輝事融, 74–75, 75n75
- Laos, 178–79, 194–95
- Levenson, Joseph R., 175
- Li Hezhang 李鶴章, 51–53
- Li Hongzhang 李鴻章, 75–76, 80–82, 83–84, 90–92
- Li Jishen 李濟深, 123t
- Li Juncheng 李俊成, 142–43
- Li Liejun 李烈鈞, 121–22
- Lianchi Zhuhong 蓮池祿宏, 20–21
- Liang Sicheng 梁思成, 137, 184–85
- Liaochan Yuehui 了禪月輝, 70–71
- Lin Huiyin 林徽因, 137
- Lin Jing 林競 (Lin Liefu 林烈敷), 160–62, 161t
- Lin Sen 林森, 119–20, 148
- Lin Xiang 林翔, 119–21
- Lin-kok, Clara Cheung (Zhang Lianjue 張蓮覺), 119–20, 120n78
- Linggu chanlin zhi 靈谷禪林志, 63–64
- Linggu Monastery 靈谷寺, 61–67, 68–69, 147–52, 170–71, 207–8, 218–19
- Lingyin Monastery 靈隱寺, 110n45, 189t, 210
- Liu Yichen 劉翊宸, 105n33
- Liurong Monastery 六榕寺, 189t
- Literary Shrine (*wenmiao* 文廟), 104
- Liuyun Monastery 留雲寺, 139
- Liuzhang Wuchun 流長悟春, 70–71
- Loch, Granville Gower, 69–70
- Longchang Monastery 隆昌寺. *See* Huiju Monastery
- Longhua Monastery 龍華寺, 139
- Longquan Monastery 龍泉寺, 189t
- Longxing Monastery 隆興寺, 189t
- Lotus Sutra, the*, 59–60, 136
- Luo Jialing 羅迦陵, 7n17, 118–20, 119n70
- Luohan Monastery 羅漢寺, 189t
- Luoyang 洛陽, 152–53
- Luoyang jielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 13–14
- Ma Xinyi 馬新貽, 75–76, 83
- Malaysia, 195
- Manchukuo (Manzhouguo 滿洲國), 131–32, 134–35, 142
- Manchurian Incident (*Manzhou shibian* 滿洲事變), 131–32
- Mao Zedong 毛澤東, 137–38, 138n12, 176, 179–80, 207–8
- Marx, Karl, 179–81
- Material Culture, 6, 18
- May Fourth Movement (*wusi yundong* 五四運動), 133–34
- McLeister, Mark, 164n72
- Meiji Restoration, 133–34
- Mencius, The*, 181–82
- Merit (*gongde* 功德), 16–17
- Meyer-Fong, Tobie, 43n2
- miaochan xingxue* 廟產興學, 93, 94–97, 108–9, 112, 114, 128–29
- Miaofa 妙法 (*Zili* 自理), 154–55, 169–70
- Miaokuo 妙闊, 154–58, 169–70
- Mingjiao Monastery 明教寺, 189t
- Mingqing Xiankuan 明鏡顯寬, 109–10
- minquan* 民權, 126
- minsu* 民俗, 182–83
- minzu* 民族, 132–33
- Miraculous events (*lingyi* 靈異), 27

- Mixiu Dekai 彌修德鑑, 64, 150–51  
 Mizuno Seiichi 水野清一, 140–41  
 Mo'an, Master 默庵, 59, 59n33  
 Modi, Narendra, 220  
 Monasteries  
   destruction of, 22–23  
   fundraising for reconstruction of  
     (*muxiu* 募修 or *mujian* 募建), 28–30  
   merit economy of, 16–17  
   miraculous vision of (*huasi* 化寺),  
     27, 56–57  
   rebuilding of, 30–34  
   recording reconstruction of, 34–35  
   restoration leadership of, 23–27,  
     36–37, 51–53  
   structure of, 9–13  
   terminology for, 7–8  
 Mongolia, 195, 195n34  
 Moraes, Frank, 206  
 Morrison, Hedda, 150–51  
 Mount Jiuhua 九華山, 119  
 Mount Wufeng 五峰山, 72–73  
 Mount Zhong 鍾山, 62–63, 147  
 Mount Zijin 紫金山. *See* Mount Zhong  
 Murphy, Henry K., 150  
  
 Nagahiro Toshio 長廣敏雄, 140–41  
 Nan putuo Monastery 南普陀寺, 189t  
 Nanhua Monastery 南華寺, 26  
 Nanjing Decade, 33–34, 39, 116–17, 135–  
   36, 170–71, 218–19  
 Nanjō Bunyu 南条文雄, 86–87  
 National People's Congress, 202  
 National protection (*huguo* 護國), 143–44  
 National Revolutionary Army (*guomin*  
   *geming jun* 國民革命軍), 116–17, 121  
 National salvation (*jiuguo* 救國), 136,  
   143–44, 158–59, 172  
 Nationalist Party. *See* Guomindang  
 Ne Win, 210  
 Nedostop, Rebecca, 135–36  
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 206–7, 211  
*Neizheng gongbao* 內政公報, 149  
 Nenghai 能海, 202  
 Nepal, 178–79, 193–94, 207–8, 211  
 New Culture Movement (*xin wenhua*  
   *yundong* 新文化運動), 95–96,  
   133–34, 180–81  
  
 Ning-Li Tai 寧李泰 (Ning Mogong  
   寧墨公), 126  
 Non-Aligned Movement, 188n29, 211  
 North China Society (Huabei she  
   華北社), 165–66  
 Nu, U, 210, 211  
 Numinous power (*ling* 靈), 27  
  
 Opium War, First, 69  
  
 Panchen Lama, ninth (Thubten Choekyi  
   Nyima), 146–47  
 Panchen Lama, tenth, 202, 207–8  
 People's Liberation Army (PLA), 211–12  
 Piling Scriptural Press  
   毗陵刻經處, 110–11  
 Pilu Monastery 毘盧寺, 189t  
 Pinjia da zangjing 頻伽大藏經,  
   111–12, 118–19  
 Porcelain Pagoda (*baoren ta* 寶恩塔), 150  
 precentor (*weina* 維那), 99–100  
 Print culture, Buddhist, 219–20  
 Prip-Møller, Johannes, 8–10, 18–19, 66–  
   67, 145–46, 148, 179  
 Pu Yisheng 濮一乘, 112  
 Public Cemetery for Fallen Heroes of the  
   Republican Revolutionary Army  
   (*guomin geming jun zhanwang*  
   *jiangshi gongmu* 國民革命軍陣亡將  
   士公墓), 150  
 Puguang Monastery 普光寺, 55–56  
 Puneng Zhensong 普能真嵩, 99–100  
 Pure Land (*jingtu* 淨土), 20–21  
 Pusa ding 菩薩頂, 189t  
 Putuoshan 普陀山, 46–47  
  
 Qi Xieyuan 齊燮元, 113–14  
 Qianfu Monastery, 千福寺 (Tieta  
   Monastery, 鐵塔寺), 164–65, 165n75  
 Qingguang Qingzong 青光清宗, 100–1  
 Qingliang Monastery 清涼寺, 35  
 Qinglong Monastery, 青龍寺,  
   164–65, 165n75  
 Qingyin Hall 清音閣, 189t  
 Qixia Monastery 棲霞寺, 116–27, 128, 189t  
 Qixia Village Normal School  
   棲霞鄉村師範學校, 127n86  
*Quanxue pian* 勸學篇, 95–96

- Reed hut (*maoàn* 茅庵, *maolu* 茅廬), 30–31
- Reform and Opening Up (*gaige kaifang* 改革開放), 176
- Religious Affairs Bureau (*zongjiao shiwu* 宗教事務部), 185–86
- Renmin ribao* 人民日報 (People's daily), 210
- Renrui Monastery 仁瑞寺, 58–59
- Reorganized National Government of the Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo guomin zhengfu* 中華民國國民政府), 139–40
- Residence for visiting emperors (*xinggong* 行宮), 67–68
- Restoration (*zhongxing* 中興), 20–21, 30–31. *Also see* Tongzhi Restoration
- Ri guangyan Monastery 日光岩寺, 189*t*
- Richard, Timothy, 86–87
- Robson, James, 7–8
- Rugao 如皋, 72–73, 100–1
- Ruoshun 若舜, 119
- Schäfer, Dagmar, 49*n*16
- Schopen, Gregory, 39–40
- Scriptural Distributor (*Fojing liutong chu* 佛經流通處), 92–93
- Scriptural Library (*zangjing lou* 藏經樓), 77–80
- Scriptural Press (*kejing chu* 刻經處), 92–93
- Sekino Tadashi 関野貞, 140–41
- Self-Strengthening Movement (*zhiqiang yundong* 自強運動), 81, 82–83, 95–96
- Shaanxi Buddhist Association, 156, 157–58, 159–60, 165–66
- Shaanxi jiaoyu yuekan* 陝西教育月刊, 162–63
- Shanghai Buddhist Books Company, The 上海佛學書局, 26, 184
- Shanghai Buddhist Youth Association (Shanghai Fojiao qingnian hui 上海佛教青年會), 203–4
- Shanghai League of Democratic Youth 上海民主青年同盟, 183, 183*n*17
- Shanjing Qingru 善淨清如, 100–1, 103
- Shanshi 善士, 29–30
- Shao Lizi 邵力子, 160–62, 161*t*
- Shaolin Monastery 少林寺, 189*t*
- Shen Xiejia 沈燮嘉, 106*n*37
- Shi Qingyang 石青陽, 160–62, 161*t*
- Shina Bukkyō shiseki* 支那佛教史蹟, 140–41
- Shina Bukkyō shiseki tōchi ki* 支那佛教史蹟踏查記, 141–42
- Shina bunka shiseki* 支那文化史蹟, 140–41
- Shintō 神道, 90–92
- Shrine to the Dragon Deity (*longshen miao* 龍神廟), 65, 65*n*49, 148
- Sihanouk, 210, 211
- Singapore, 195
- Sino-Japanese War, First, 89–90, 93–94
- Sino-Japanese War, Second, 33–34, 39, 138–44, 176–77
- Six Realms, the (*liudao* 六道), 19–20
- Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), 209
- Soviet Union. *See* USSR
- Sri Lanka. *See* Ceylon
- State Council (*guowu yuan* 國務院), 185–86
- Stele (*bei* 碑), 34–35
- Stimulus and Response (*ganying* 感應), 16–17
- Stupa (*ta* 塔), 10–11
- Sun Chuanfang 孫傳芳, 121
- Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙, 89–90, 116–17, 119–20, 132–33, 135–36, 144–45
- Mausoleum of, 147, 148*n*36, 149
- superstition (*mixin* 迷信), 93–94
- Tai Shuangqiu 邵爽秋, 96–97, 96–97*n*12, 127
- Taiping War, 22–24, 32, 38–40, 43–44, 68–69, 81, 85–86, 89–90, 98–99, 104, 108, 116–17, 128, 145–46, 170–71, 218–19
- Buddhist memories of, 54–60
- Taixu 太虛, 112–13, 115–16, 154–55, 157, 161*t*, 171–72
- Tan Yankai 譚延闓, 121–22
- Tanxu 倓虛, 24–25, 167*n*79
- Three Principles of the People (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義), 144–45

- Three Times Study Society (Sanshi xuehui 三時學會), 184
- Tian'anmen Square, 184–85
- Tianjie Monastery 天界寺, 61–62
- Tianjing 天京, 61–62
- Tianning Junior Primary School 天寧初級小學, 112
- Tianning Monastery, Changzhou 常州天寧寺, 54–55, 84–85, 98–116, 117–18, 128, 165, 208–9, 218
- Tianning Monastery, Yangzhou 揚州天寧寺, 92–93
- Tiantong Monastery 天童寺, 92–93
- Tibet, 193–94, 195, 211–12
- Tokiwa Daijo 常盤大定, 140–42
- Tongguan 潼關, 152–53
- Tongzhi Restoration (*Tongzhi zhongxing* 同治中興), 45, 85–87, 89–90
- Transcendent Wisdom Scripture for Humane Kings Who Wish to Protect Their States, the*, 131, 136
- Turner, Alicia, 37–38
- UNESCO, 169–70
- United Kingdom, The, 194–95
- United Nations, 188–93
- USSR, 179–80, 181–82, 184, 188–93, 195
- Vietnam, 194–95
- Vinaya Academy (*xuejie tang* 學戒堂), 112
- Vinaya (lǜ 律) school, 145–46
- Vow (*yuan* 願), 25–26
- Great (*dayuan* 大願), 25–26
- Vulture Peak (Lingjiu shan 靈鷲山), 59n34
- Wang Jingwei 汪精衛, 142, 167
- Wang Zongshan 王宗山, 171–72
- Wannian Monastery 萬年寺, 189t
- Wanshou Monastery 萬壽寺, 58
- Warlord Period, 134–35
- Wei Tuo Hall (*weituo dian* 韋馱殿), 77–80
- Weikuan Xianche 惟寬顯徹, 109–10, 218
- Weishi 維識 (Consciousness-Only) School, 153–54, 164
- Weiyin 威音, 149
- Welch, Holmes, 4–5, 8n20, 13–14, 22, 24n54, 33, 119n74, 119–20, 222
- Wenshu Monastery 文殊院, 189t
- White Horse Monastery 白馬寺, 143, 189t
- Wild Goose Pagoda, Large (*daying ta* 大雁塔), 164, 189t, 207n69, 208–9, 221
- Wild Goose Pagoda, Small (*xiaoying ta* 小雁塔), 154–55
- Wofu Monastery 臥佛寺, 189t
- Wolong Monastery 臥龍寺, 164–65, 165n75
- World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), 212–13
- Wuchang Buddhist Right Faith Society, 165–66
- Wuchang Buddhist Seminary 武昌佛學院, 157, 165–66
- Wudeng huiyuan 五燈會元, 75n73
- Wuhan 武漢, 131–32
- Wukong 悟空, 55–56
- Wuliang, Chan Master 悟亮禪師, 25–26
- Wutaishan General Buddhist Association 五台山普濟佛教總會, 159–60
- Wuxi 無錫, 98–99
- Wuxi Nanchan Monastery 無錫南禪寺, 47–48
- Wuxu Reforms (*Wuxu bianfa* 戊戌變法), 45–46, 89–90, 95–96
- Xi Jinping, 220
- Xi'an 西安, 138–39, 152–53, 156, 158–59, 169–71, 173–74, 206–7, 218–19
- Xiangting 霜亭, 67–68
- Xiangyan Monastery 香岩寺, 189t
- Xianming 現明, 197–98
- Xiannü Temple 仙女廟, 27
- Xiantong Monastery 顯通寺, 189t
- Xiong Bin 熊斌, 123t
- Xin Qingnian* 新青年 (*La Jeunesse*), 95–96, 180–81
- Xinhai Revolution, 149–50, 167–68
- Xingjiao Monastery 興教寺, 28n66, 152–65, 171–72, 206–7, 208–9, 218–19
- Xinjiang 新疆, 193–94
- Xuanzang 玄奘, 153–54, 155, 163–64, 167–68, 169–70, 198–99, 206–7
- Xuanzhong Monastery 玄中寺, 189t
- Xue Dubi 薛篤弼, 123t

- Xue Nianzu 薛念祖, 106n37  
 Xue Shuchang 薛書常, 32, 75–76  
 Xueyan Wujie 雪岩悟潔, 99–100  
 Xuyun 虛雲, 24–25, 102–3, 198–99, 215
- Yan Xishan 閻錫山, 169  
 Yan'an Soviet, 179–80  
 Yang Pu 楊溥, 32, 75–76  
 Yang Shuji 楊叔吉, 167n79  
 Yang Shuzhuang 楊樹莊, 123*t*  
 Yang Wenhui 楊文會, 7n17, 86–87, 110–12  
 Yangzhou 揚州, 102–3  
 Ye Gongchuo 葉恭綽, 119–20  
 Yekai Qingrong 冶開清鎔, 102–12, 218  
 Yiguandao 一貫道, 214–15  
 Yingchan 應禪, 154–55  
 Yingci 應慈, 75n75, 110–11  
 Yingjiang Monastery 迎江寺, 189*t*  
 Yingzao xueshe 營造學社, 162–63  
 Yonghe Temple 雍和宮, 189*t*, 200–3, 207–8, 210, 218–19  
 Yongquan Monastery 湧泉寺, 46–47, 189*t*  
 Yu Youren 于右任, 119–20, 169  
 Yuan Shikai 袁世凱, 118–19  
 Yuance 圓測 (Woncheuk [Wanjuk]), 153–54, 162–63, 167–68  
 Yuanying 圓瑛, 202  
 Yuexi Xiandi 月溪顯諦, 72  
 Yuexia 月霞, 112–13  
 Yufo Monastery 玉佛寺, 189*t*  
 Yungang grottoes (*Yungang shiku* 雲岡石窟), 140–41  
 Yunju Monastery 雲居寺, 215  
 Yunmen 雲門, 99–100
- Zeng Guofan 曾國藩, 64–65, 75–76, 80–81, 148  
 Zexin Monastery 澤心寺. *See* Jiangtian Monastery  
 Zhang Guoliang 張國樑, 63  
 Zhang Ji 張繼 (Zhang Puquan 張溥泉), 119–21, 127, 160–63, 161*t*, 164, 169, 173  
 Zhang Xueliang 張學良, 131–32  
 Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, 89, 95–96  
 Zhang Zhijiang 張之江, 123*t*  
 Zhao Puchu 趙樸初, 175, 202, 207–8, 210, 211–12  
 Zhaojue Monastery 昭覺寺, 189*t*  
 Zhenjiang 鎮江, 32, 67–68, 98–99, 218  
 Zhigong Pagoda 誌公寶塔, 66  
 Zhonghua Monastery 中華佛寺, 142–43  
 Zhonghui Monastery 中會寺, 189*t*  
 Zhongnan mountains 終南山, 100–1, 102–3, 153–54  
 Zhou Enlai 周恩來, 197, 201–2, 206–8, 210, 211  
 Zhu Peide 朱培德, 123*t*, 124  
 Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, 62–63, 147  
 Zhu Ziqiao 朱子橋 (Zhu Qinglan 朱慶瀾), 157, 159–60, 164–65, 169–70, 171–72  
 Zhuang Duming 莊篤明, 142–43  
 Zifu Monastery 資福禪寺, 189*t*  
 Ziyun Monastery 紫雲寺, 58  
 Zongyang 宗仰, 75n75, 84–85, 118–21, 126–27  
 Zuyue Monastery 祖越寺, 189*t*